



26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 29, 2019

Readings

This week:

Amos 6:1a, 4–7

1 Timothy 6:11–16

Luke 16:19–31

Next week:

Habakkuk 1:2–3; 2:2–4

2 Timothy 1:6–8, 13–14

Luke 17:5–10

Psalm

Praise the Lord, my soul! (*Psalm 146*)

Today

Today's presider is Rev. Russ Roide, S.J.

The Thomas Merton Center community worships and celebrates Sunday liturgy each week at the regularly scheduled 8:45 am parish Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Waverley and Homer Streets, Palo Alto. Members of the Thomas Merton community participate in planning these liturgies in the spirit of Vatican II and its call to “full, active and conscious participation” in Catholic liturgical life.

The Thomas Merton Center is supported by your donations. If you choose to donate, there are return envelopes in the bulletin on the last Sunday of each month for your convenience (donations by check or cash are welcome). The donation basket is in the back of church after Mass or available by the coffee pot after Mass—or you can use the envelope to mail your donation. **Please do not put your TMC envelope in the collection baskets passed during Mass (these are for parish contributions only).**

Calendar

Wednesday, Oct. 2, 7:00 p.m.

STA Site Committee, Thomas House Library

From Thomas Merton

We must not imagine Paradise as a place of ease and sensual pleasure. It is a state of peace and rest, by all means, but with the Desert Fathers sought, when they believed they could find “paradise” in the desert, was the lost innocence, the emptiness and purity of heart which had belonged to Adam and Eve in Eden. Evidently, they could not have expected to find beautiful trees and gardens in the waterless desert, burned by the sun. Obviously, they did not expect to find a place, among the fiery rocks and caves, where they could recline at ease in shady groves, by cool running water.

What the Desert Fathers sought was paradise within themselves, or rather above and beyond themselves. They sought paradise in the recovery of “unity” which had been shattered by the “knowledge of good and evil.”

--Zen and the Birds of Appetite

The Thomas Merton Center for Catholic Spiritual Development, P.O. Box 60061, Palo Alto, California 94306, was founded by a group of Roman Catholic lay persons in 1995, and incorporated in 1996, to offer Catholic liturgy, to augment, support and lead the development of ecumenical spirituality, and to foster new ways for Catholics and other Christians to develop a deeper spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ and, through him, with God. From its Catholic roots, it seeks to join with members of other faiths, Christian and non-Christian, to support religious education and spiritual development.

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Planning a funeral: October 12 workshop:

How do you go about planning a Catholic funeral or memorial Mass liturgy? Don't wait till the death has happened and you or your family are faced with the event, suddenly realizing you or they want to gather together at a proper funeral service but don't know where to start.

The TMC Liturgy Committee, under the leadership of Maureen Locke, will offer a workshop on how you can think in advance about your own or a loved one's funeral/memorial Mass.

**Come Saturday, October 12, 10:00 a.m.
to the Thomas House Living Room.**

Resource materials will be available (check lists, suggested Scripture readings and hymns), and guidance about including family members in the service. Identify what's most important to you and your family in this informal and intimate gathering of TMC members and friends.

Kenyan craft fairs Oct. 20 & Dec. 15:

Margo McAuliffe has returned from her summer in Kenya and will be displaying handmade items on behalf of Kenya Help at two Kenyan craft fairs here at STA after the 8:45 Mass on Sunday, October 20, and December 15. Save the dates with an eye to your holiday gift needs, which directly benefit scholarships for Kenyan youth.

Please join us after Mass in the Thomas House for coffee and donuts. We especially encourage newcomers or those passing through town to stop by for food and fellowship.

CROP Hunger Walk Oct. 20 in Menlo Park:

A St. Thomas Aquinas Parish team has been created to support the CROP HUNGER WALK at Nealon Park, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Walk with us, make a donation or both! Festivities begin at 1 pm; walks start at 2 pm. Walkers may choose a .6-mile, 1, 3 or 5-mile walk and enjoy a live band, food, and personal testimonies. Thanks to our parishioners who contributed a total of \$1,085 in 2018 and several parishioners who walked.

CROP Hunger Walk helps to provide food and water, as well as resources that empower people to meet their own needs. From seeds and tools, to wells and water systems, to technical training and micro-enterprise loans, the key is people working together to identify their own development priorities, their strengths and their needs in partnership around the world.

CROP Hunger Walk is sponsored by Church World Service, a cooperative ministry of 37 Christian denominations. Over 5 million walkers have participated in more than 36,000 CROP Hunger Walks in the last two decades alone. This ecumenical effort helps children and families in need to have food for today, while building for a better tomorrow. CROP Hunger Walkers, volunteers, and sponsors put their caring into action, raising funds to help end hunger and poverty at home in the US and around the world.

An important note: 25% of funds raised locally will be contributed to the Ecumenical Hunger Program in East Palo Alto for distribution to the needy in our local community.

For information, to register and donate, check the Crop Hunger Walk at <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/menloparkca> or contact our parish Human Concerns Committee at 650-714-2131.

No matter how you pray, God wants to meet you: by James Martin, S.J.

What's your favorite way to pray? That's something of a loaded question, because among some Catholics, and more broadly Christians, the answer can land you in hot water. If you say, "Well, I like to pray the Rosary or go to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at my local parish," some people will think that you're too old fashioned or too traditionalist. If you say, "Well, I like to pray centering prayer or pray when I'm outside in the middle of nature," some people will say that you're too radical or too progressive.

One of the things you learn after being a spiritual director for some time is that God meets people where they are and that there is no "right" or "better" way to pray. The right way to pray is the way that helps you find God the most easily. And, over the last 25 years as a spiritual director, I've met people who pray in almost

every imaginable way: Ignatian contemplation, lectio divina, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, nature prayer, centering prayer, and on and on. The way you relate to God will depend on who you are—your personality, your likes and dislikes, your whole history.

It's terrible when people critique the way another person likes to pray just because it doesn't fit their categories. It not only shows arrogance—I mean, who are they to say what is good and what is bad?—it also can harm the person who's praying. Why? Because it can make the person feel embarrassed or inadequate. The key in prayer is being faithful to it, and also open to new ways of praying. For if you never change your prayer you might not be open to the new ways that God may want to meet you.

[The Rev. James Martin, S.J., is a Jesuit priest, author & editor at large at *America*.]

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

DACA students challenge migration narrative:

[By Jesse Remedios, *Nat. Catholic Reporter*, 9/26/19]

Undocumented student activists want to set the record straight. Tropes about undocumented immigrants, even positive ones, can be detrimental to the undocumented community.

At a Sept. 24 panel discussion at Trinity Washington University, four student panelists from Washington's three Catholic universities shared their own stories and thoughts on what they believe is often overlooked in mainstream narratives about undocumented immigrants. By giving voice to the hardships, diversity and uncertainty of the undocumented immigrant experience, all four expressed their hope to inspire other undocumented people to also speak out on behalf of their community.

The event, titled "Undocumented and Unafraid: Student Activism in the Era of Deportation," was co-sponsored by Trinity Washington University and Faith in Public Life, a Washington-based advocacy organization, and was moderated by John Gehring, a contributing writer to NCR.

"I think there's this huge narrative that migration is beautiful and it's not," said Arlin Tellez, a student at Trinity. "The trauma that you have to go through is not beautiful."

Tellez, who immigrated to the United States from Mexico as a young girl, recounted the trauma she suffered as a result of being an undocumented immigrant, from the intense fear that either she or her family members could be deported to missing her father's death after a battle with brain cancer in 2008.

Tellez also drew from her experience working as a researcher on federal prosecution cases for illegal entry and reentry, saying that she knew migrants who were

assaulted, raped and placed in solitary confinement in detention centers in Texas.

"The 'migration is beautiful' [narrative] cuts so many people out of what it is," said Tellez.

Another popular narrative the students argued is incomplete is that of "dreamers" – those who receive protection under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals to attend college in the U.S.

Mizraim Guerrero, a student at Georgetown, said he thinks elevating dreamers as the "model undocumented person" can be detrimental to other immigrants who don't fit that mold and feeds into the criminalization of communities of color. He pointed out that there are roughly 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the U.S., but only 800,000 are beneficiaries of DACA.

"To only bring dignity and to only bring the voices of high achieving undocumented folks, dreamers, really does a disservice to the broader undocumented community that ... need to be treated as human beings at the end of the day," he said.

Daniela Zelaya, a student at Trinity, discussed the anxiety she feels about her uncertain future as a result of her undocumented status. She said the possibility of having to take care of her younger siblings, one of whom has Down Syndrome, should her parents be deported is "really scary."

Similarly, Jose Gutierrez, a student at Catholic University, raised the issue of undocumented people's mental health as an important concern.

"Something that I think is left out of the immigrant story is mental state. I'm sure a lot of us have experienced sadness before and some of us have even experienced depression," said Gutierrez, who added that he has experienced depression for the past five years.

"When I realized that my peers were taking all these opportunities, I felt hopeless. I felt like, what is the point? Why should I continue to motivate myself and keep driving through these obstacles if one day they could just disappear?" Gutierrez said.

Despite the difficulties they face, all four panelists said they have hope.

Tellez said her hope is rooted in that her "people have always been here and our people will continue to be here." Guerrero, who described himself as shy, said advocating for undocumented immigrants' rights has helped him find his own voice. Zelaya aspires to be the first Latina secretary of education in the U.S. to help others have the access to education she had growing up in Silver Spring, Maryland. And Gutierrez, who said he is agnostic, said that although he doesn't have faith in God, he has faith that others will hear his story and be inspired.... #

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PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, Kerry Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Jim Davis, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, Alicia Kot, Fr. Bill Leininger, Andre and Alyssa Lippard, Deacon Ysidro and Dolores Madrigal, Patricia Markee, Nancy Marty, Maureen Mooney, Hayden Pastorini, Alicia Placone-Combetta, Paul Prochaska, Anne Rush, Priya Smith, Bernice Sullivan, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, and T. J. Wooten.

[Add/subtract names by e-mailing Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net.]

Levada's faithful and pragmatic wisdom:

[By Michael Sean Winters, NCR, 9/27/19]

Cardinal William Levada died peacefully this week in Rome. He was 83 years old. I remember the day in 2005 when Pope Benedict XVI announced he was naming then-Archbishop Levada of San Francisco to lead the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). "I didn't see that one coming," was the universal reaction.

The new pope had been a renowned academic theologian before his surprise appointment as Archbishop of Freising and Munich in 1977. Since 1981, he had presided over the CDF for 24 years and he knew its challenges, especially as it became the office through which clergy sex abuse cases were handled. If anyone knew what was needed in the post, it was him, and he had chosen Levada, who had helped Ratzinger acclimate to the CDF all those many years before...As prefect, Levada earned a reputation for managing well the far flung responsibilities of the office.

The more I learned about Levada, the more I admired him. It was not always so. I recall hearing him called "Darth Levada" when he was appointed to San Francisco. Certainly, he was seen, and was, more conservative than his predecessor Archbishop John R. Quinn. But, the nickname was unfair: He was not a culture warrior.

In 1997, Levada worked out a compromise after the San Francisco City Council enacted an ordinance requiring all agencies that contract with the city government to extend health care benefits to those living in domestic partnerships, the precursor to gay marriage. Levada wanted to find a way to honor two teachings of the Church that were, suddenly, at odds: Our long-time advocacy for universal health care and our belief that marriage is uniquely that friendship formed by a man and a woman. The "Levada Solution" allowed employees to designate anyone who was legally domiciled with the employee to share their benefits: a gay partner or an aging aunt or an unemployed cousin. It was brilliant.

Can you imagine his article explaining his solution – which appeared in *First Things* no less – being issued by today's U.S. bishops' conference? Or from the pens of the two archbishops who currently sit where Levada had, in San Francisco and Portland, Oregon? Today, the culture warrior bishops can't or won't even allow themselves to use the word "gay" as Levada did. The idea that we should look for workable solutions and not grandstand has gone out of favor with many U.S. bishops.

I asked Bishop Robert McElroy, who was a vicar general under Levada, for his thoughts about the now departed cardinal. "I witnessed three anchors in Cardinal Levada's service as a priest and bishop, all of which are much needed in our day," McElroy told me in an

email. "The first was a continual devotion to the coherent articulation of Catholic faith and the development of a real-world catechetics capable of bringing that faith into the hearts and minds of believers. The second was his unswervingly nonjudgmental disposition toward the human failures that lie within each one of us. And the third was a natural graciousness and optimism that could bridge barriers of ideology at key moments. So many of us from the Cardinal's days in San Francisco have lost a friend, a mentor and a true pastor."

Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe also collaborated with Levada in San Francisco...Wester wrote in an email: "He was never shy about expressing his point of view but he also listened attentively to others and gave everyone a fair hearing." ...

In 2013, I was finally looking forward to meeting Levada. We were both going to San Juan, Puerto Rico, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Archbishop Roberto Gonzalez's ordination as a bishop. The celebration was especially important because of the controversy that had surrounded Gonzalez when the Apostolic Delegate convinced Rome to initiate an apostolic visitation of the archdiocese, and false allegations of covering up sex abuse were leveled at Gonzalez. Rome had demanded his resignation.

"When I celebrated my 25th anniversary as a bishop, Cardinal Levada travelled from Rome to be present for the anniversary Eucharist, a luncheon with the priests and another gathering with the bishops, my family and friends," Gonzalez told me by email ... "His fraternal support was especially notable at a crucial moment during my episcopacy." ...

Levada's support was well placed. We now know that the visitation was instigated by the Apostolic Delegate at the time, Archbishop Jozef Wesolowski, who was later convicted by a church court of sexually abusing children and defrocked. In a classic case of projection, he had accused Gonzalez of what he himself had done...

His life was not without controversy. He got blamed for the doctrinal assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), even though that plot was hatched at the USCCB and Levada resisted undertaking it. His decision to name Bishop Peter Sartain as the prelate to work with the women religious on the issues identified was a sure way to lower the temperature and find conclusions that were acceptable to all concerned.

It is a measure of how much damage was done to the American episcopate while Cardinals Justin Rigali and Raymond Burke sat on the Congregation for Bishops that "Darth Levada" would probably be too liberal — I had almost written "too conciliatory" — to win an election in today's USCCB. It is noteworthy that Pope Francis removed Rigali and Burke from that Congregation and left Levada on it until he turned 80....

His death has robbed the U.S. church of a seasoned churchman whose wise counsel the bishops need....

[Winters covers the nexus of religion & politics for NCR.]