



First Sunday of Lent

March 1, 2020

Readings

This week:

Genesis 2:7–9, 13:1–7

Romans 5:12–19

Matthew 4:1–11

Next week:

Genesis 12:1–4a

2 Timothy 1:8b–10

Matthew 17:1–9

Psalm

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned. (*Psalm 51*)

Today

Today's presider is Msgr. John Sandersfeld.

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 coffeepot 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

Tuesday, March 3, 7:00 pm

Fr. Jose Rubio speaks on "Satan in the Bible," SAGH

Wednesday, March 4, 7:00 pm

STA Site Committee, Thomas House library

From Thomas Merton

Human nature is not evil. All pleasure is not wrong. All spontaneous desires not selfish. The doctrine of original sin does not mean that human nature has been completely corrupted and that man's freedom is always inclined to sin. Man is neither a devil nor an angel. He is not a pure spirit, but a being of flesh and spirit, subject to error and malice, but basically inclined to seek truth and goodness. He is, indeed, a sinner: but his heart responds to love and grace. It also responds to the goodness and to the need of his fellowman.

--Life and Holiness

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. Visit: www.thomasmerton.org.

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

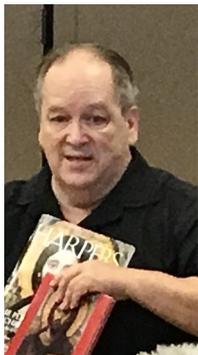
Fr. Rubio on Satan in the Bible, March 3:

Fr. Jose Rubio will consider what the Bible says about Satan and what it might mean for us today, on Tuesday, March 3, 7 - 8:30 p.m. at St. Albert Hospitality Center, 1095 Channing Ave., Palo Alto.

Fr. Jose is a retired priest in our diocese. He studied at UC Berkeley, Santa Clara, Catholic U of America, and has his PhD from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley. He has served as chaplain at San Jose State University's Newman Center and taught at St. Patrick's Seminary.

Fr. Rubio is a knowledgeable and provocative speaker, as we know from his homilies here at the 8:45 Mass. This is a lecture in the parish Spirituality Tuesday Assembly series. All are welcome.

Lenten Retreat with Fr. Ballard March 21:



Fr. Kevin Ballard, S.J., will lead a Lenten morning retreat, "Making Room YOURSELF for Getting to Know God: How are you GIVING IN for Lent?"

Come to St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center, 1095 Channing Ave., Palo Alto, from 9:00 am till noon for this time to listen, reflect, discuss, meditate on Fr. Ballard's unique blend of soul work and humor.

Light refreshments available. No cost to attend, although donations to Thomas Merton Center, are appreciated.

Heart & Home Women's Shelter update:

Many thanks to all parishioners who contributed to our parish effort this winter season! A small army of people offering a variety of help provided plentiful meals to some 15 ladies housed in the Heart and Home women's overnight shelter. Our nourishing hot meals were provided at Peninsula Bible Church on December 19, University Lutheran Church on January 31 and again on February 19. Some parishioners stayed to join in the meals and conversation with the ladies. It is nice to get to know them better, hear their stories and their appreciation for our meals. Many Stanford students providing their assistance were an inspiration!

If anyone would like to provide a fourth meal at Universalist Unitarian church until closing on April 4, please feel free to contact Human Concerns at 650-714-2131. Perhaps another meal can be organized.

Take a meal to STA parish priests:

Please join a new parishioner-led project, which will provide Sunday dinner to our priests. Named **Take Our Priests A Meal**, the meal project is an outreach program that lets the parish priests know they are appreciated.

To participate, parishioners cook and deliver a meal on the busiest day of the week for the priests, Sunday. If you choose to join, you will pick a date that is convenient for your schedule and prepare a meal for three; Fr. Stasys, Fr. Sev, and Fr. Maurice. There are no food allergies, although dietary stipulations include low salt and mild to medium spice. Also, when beef is served, please include an alternative dish such as chicken, pork, or seafood for one.

Delivery is set on Sunday between 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM to the Saint Albert the Great rectory. Located in the rectory carport is a blue Coleman Cooler where prepared food will be placed inside. Our priests are not always home for dinner at 5 PM, but they are happy to reheat the meal when arriving back in the evening.

If you have further questions or you are ready to sign-up, please reach out to Julie Sanford at julsan@umich.edu or by phone @ 408-829-8717.

Seton School books collection: March 14-15:



Our parish collection for new books for Seton 2nd grade books will be held on March 14-15. Your generosity in past years has provided a package of 5-7 books for each 2nd grade student to read at home during the long summer weeks. These emerging readers benefit from this educational opportunity inspiring them to read, learn and share these books with others while maintaining skills during their school break.

Last year, each 2nd grader received 4 favorite individual choices which was a real winner! Recent feedback from those students was very positive!

Any cash donations may be given to a Human Concerns rep after each mass that weekend. We are happy to shop for you! You will see lots of smiling faces in photos of the handing-out event come June.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Art Adams, Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, Char Buchholz, 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, Mercedes McCaffrey, Maureen Mooney, Susan Miller, Hayden Pastorini, Dick and Jeanne Placone, Paul Prochaska, Anne Rush, Priya Smith, Bernice Sullivan, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, KathyAnne Woodruff and T. J. Wooten.
[Add/subtract names by e-mailing Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net]

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Catholics still don't get it:

[By Robert Mickens, Editor in Chief, *LaCroix International*, 2/27/20]

We continue to hear of incidents that more than suggest that Catholics – and, in particular, their bishops – have learned very little from the clergy sex abuse crisis.

This is quite alarming and depressing, because the Church in North America has been dealing with issues regarding priests who abuse children and teenagers for at least thirty, if not forty years.

Catholics in Great Britain, Ireland and Australia have been facing this "plague" for almost as long. And those in the countries of northern Europe began reckoning more openly with abuse among the clerical ranks shortly after the turn of the millennium.

In the last several years, Catholics in the rest of the world have also been forced to admit that there are recurrences of priest sex abuse in their countries, too.

This includes places in the former Catholic bastions of Latin America and southern Europe, the largely homophobic continent of Africa and the mostly non-Christian expanse of Asia.

It seems like wherever 2 or 3 (hundred thousand) people are gathered in the name of Catholicism, there is clergy sexual abuse in their midst.

As Catholics, we don't like to hear that. And we don't want to admit it, either. But what is worse is that many of us do not want to see – or maybe we're too blinded by culture and history to see – what sexual abuse is really all about. It is not about sex....

For most Catholics, this is probably even harder to hear, because we don't deal with sexual things very well. Our confused Church teachings on the subject tend to either make human sexuality an idol or (and, thankfully, this is less common today) something that's dirty.

Reactions to recent revelations that Jean Vanier sexually abused several women prove the point. The French-Canadian layman, who was seen as something of a living saint for his extraordinary work with mentally disabled people, was not guilty of committing sins against the Sixth Commandment....The women say Vanier abused them sexually. But they also say he did this under the pretext of some sort of mystical spirituality. As much as this was sexual abuse in the physical sense, it was even more a spiritual abuse of these women, in the way he used the things of God to manipulate or control them.

Jean Vanier used spirituality – what I have learned to call from my own painful experience "encroaching intimacy" – as a way to obtain what the other person would not or could not offer freely. I've never heard any theologian or preacher speak of it this way, but I

am convinced that this is what it means to violate the Second Commandment, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."

There are people in the Church, especially among the ordained ministers (deacons, priests and bishops) or even lay leaders with a certain charism (like Vanier), who do this in a variety of ways. They use their position in the Church or their spiritual authority to satisfy their own self-centered needs or desires. They do so – and often with little self awareness, it seems to me – by convincing people in the name of God to give them money, sex, honors, private information about others and all sorts of things.

Tele-evangelists who get rich peddling the so-called "prosperity Gospel" are the most obnoxious and blatant example of this. Certain scandal-stained Catholic religious orders that bilk widows and other wealthy people are no better. We tend to look disapprovingly on them and rightly so.

Yet we fail to see how our own good priests and bishops – and other charismatic spiritual leaders – can fall prey to the same temptation to use their religious status (and, often unconsciously!) to feed their own personal needs.

And when I say "we", I mean all of us Catholics. We tend to be blinded to this reality. We don't want to see it.

It is probably no coincidence that in a Church (and a society) that is male-dominated, the vast majority of those who sexually or spiritually take advantage of others are men. The desire of men to manipulate or even abuse those who are weaker or under their authority – women, other men, teens or children – is probably also reinforced, even unwittingly, by the simple fact that men have always been able to do so in a patriarchal system like that of the Church.

Patriarchy and its first-born son, clericalism, have allowed men of God to violate the true meaning of the Second Commandment, probably from the days when the giants of our faith walked the earth.

They will continue to do so until women truly become equal members of the Church, equal to men at every level of decision-making authority and at every level of ministerial service.

We will not get to the root of the Church's crisis of abuse until that happens. #

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Time to fast:

[By Pat Marrin, *National Catholic Reporter*, 2/27/20]

“This the fasting that I want” (Isiah 58:6).
(Isa 58:1-9a; Matt 9:14-15)

Official efforts in China to tamp down news of the seriousness of the coronavirus outbreak was countered by an online activist who posted: “News coverage should stop turning a funeral into a wedding.” The post, with due irony, went viral.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus responds to criticism of his disciples for not fasting with the question: “Can the wedding guests mourn while the bridegroom is with them?” His presence was a wedding feast, so his disciples did not fast, though they would fast and mourn his funeral, “when he was taken away from them.”

The imagery invites us into a deeper Lenten reflection about how joy and sorrow are both part of our journey as disciples of Jesus. Those familiar with Ignatian spirituality will recognize the terms “consolation” and “desolation,” the funerals and weddings of life. Each moment has its role in disciplining us for discerning God’s presence in our experience. Loss is as important as gain in producing a mature individual. Those who only know how to celebrate are ill prepared for life’s downturns and crises, a lesson the whole world now seems to be entering as a serious epidemic threatens the global community both physically and economically.

Perhaps now is a time for everyone to pray, fast and give alms, a worldwide awakening to the Lenten call to take God and our neighbors seriously. We will in fact be faced with involuntary fasting from unlimited consumption and easy access to material goods that rely on global commerce, travel and money. Our interdependence will be highlighted as both a source of contagion and an invitation to solidarity, one human family working together to solve a health crisis that will affect us all.

The scourge of war led to the inscribing of these words of Isaiah 2:4 on the wall of the United Nations: *They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

The question is, when will we weary of funerals and welcome a wedding to celebrate the rise of the Beloved Community that Jesus proclaimed as the goal of history? Then, perhaps, another quote from Isaiah will be added to remind the world of the remedy for the many injustices that cause so much suffering in our world:

This the kind of fasting I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke, setting free the oppressed, sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked and not turning your back on those in need (Isa 58:6-7). #

Dining hall leftovers turned into energy:

[By Catherine M. Odell, *NCR Earthbeat*, 2/25/20]

In 2016, [the University of Notre Dame in Indiana] adopted a comprehensive sustainability strategy that featured six major areas the university intended to work on. One of them was a commitment to reduce waste, including food waste. At Notre Dame, food waste comes primarily from its two main dining halls and from campus catering events. Food waste was painfully visible on home football game weekends....

“One of the first things I realized when I started working at the university was that we were generating an awful lot of waste on campus, and most of it was food,” recalled Allison Mihalich, senior program director at Notre Dame’s Office of Sustainability.

Until two years ago, Mihalich worked for the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C...[S]he saw that Notre Dame administrators had a growing commitment to sustainability and wanted to both recycle and rescue food.

Mihalich said she first encountered Matthew Magiera, a chemical engineering major from Pittsford, New York, in the university’s sustainability office conference room....Magiera had been tasked as an intern with calculating the amount of food waste from dining hall food trays and from catering....For months, “waste weighs” of food were painstakingly recorded, analyzed and re-analyzed.

“We realized that we were generating a ton of food waste a day,” Mihalich told NCR’s EarthBeat...[T]he research soon led to Notre Dame’s installation of three Grind2Energy systems, one near each of the two dining halls and one by the catering office.

Last year, Notre Dame began utilizing the Grind2Energy systems in order to process its food waste and then send it to another site for anaerobic digestion, the biological break-down of organic material that produces biogas that can be used to generate electric power...

The three Grind2Energy systems in use at Notre Dame are essentially industrial-sized garbage disposals capable of grinding up all types of food except for some hard-shelled mussels. The ground-up food is piped outside into 5,000-gallon holding tanks. Once or twice a week, the tank contents, known as slurry, are piped into a septic truck and transported to a large dairy farm 30 minutes from campus, in Plymouth, Indiana.

On the farm, Notre Dame’s slurry is combined with other food wastes and cow manure. The smelly stew soon generates methane gas inside massive tanks. The methane is captured and used by a local power company to generate electricity for 1,000 homes a day in Plymouth.

Leftover food from student trays. Giant garbage disposals. Holding tanks and anaerobic digesters. And then, electricity for 1,000 homes! The initiative at Notre Dame is expected to help reduce the university’s overall waste by 10 percent a year... #