



Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 28, 2020

Readings

This week:

2 Kings 4:8–11, 14–16a

Romans 6:3–4, 8–11

Matthew 10:37–42

Next week:

Zechariah 9:9–10

Romans 8:9, 11–13

Matthew 11:25–30

Psalm

Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord. (*Psalm 89*)

Today

In this time of COVID-19 restrictions, we are not celebrating Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church at 8:45 as usual. When we are able to resume in-person liturgies, we will be starting our Mass at 9:00 a.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, located at Waverley and Homer Streets in 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. While we are sheltering-in-place, donations can be made through our website, www.thomasmerton.org. Click on the “Donate” tab to make a donation via credit card or direct deposit. Or you may mail your donation check to: TMC, P. O. Box 60061, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

Calendar

Sunday, June 28, 1:00 pm, via Zoom

TMC (virtual) Coffee and Donuts
(Zoom link to meeting is on Page 2.)

Wednesday, July 1, 5:00 pm, via Zoom

TMC Racism Discussion Group (contact
Bob Foley at bob.foley@gmail.com)

Wednesday, July 1, 7:00 pm, via Zoom

STA Site Committee

From Thomas Merton

It is not by words only that we speak. Our aims, our plans of action, our outlook, our attitudes, our habitual response to the problems and challenges of life, “speak” of our inner being and reveal our fidelity or infidelity to ourselves. Our very existence, our life itself, contains an implicit pretension to meaning, since all our free acts are implicit commitments, selections of “meanings” which we seem to find confronting us. Our very existence is “speech” interpreting reality.

But the crisis of truth in the modern world comes from the bewildering complexity of the almost infinite contradictory propositions and claims to meaning uttered by millions of acts, movements, changes, decisions, attitudes, gestures, events, going on all around us. Most of all, a crisis of truth is precipitated when men realize that almost all these claims are in fact without significance—when they are not, in great part, fraudulent.

—*Seeds of Destruction*

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

TMC Coffee Hour invitation (via Zoom):

NOTE: This is our new dedicated TMC Zoom account log-in information.

On Sunday, June 28, at 1:00 pm, please join the TMC Coffee and Donut Hour—via Zoom. Here is the information: (no password necessary):

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81402157461>

Meeting ID: 814 0215 7461

One tap mobile:

+16699006833,,81402157461#,,1#,158515# US (San Jose)

Or by telephone: +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Questions: Call Kay Williams, 650-270-4188

TMC donation envelope (not) enclosed:

Please make your monthly contribution to the support of the Thomas Merton Center.



Your dollars make possible the sponsorship of the 8:45 Sunday Mass, monthly contributions to Seton School (\$1,000) and the Ecumenical Hunger Program, spiritual education talks, retreats, and the publication of this bulletin. Lay-led, self-sustaining, self-generating—this is TMC. Thanks to all who contribute.

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STA exterior renovation continues:



The team from Teevan is climbing up and down the scaffolding which encircles STA church, hard at work prepping the church siding. Helen Baumann reports that there will be no scaffolding on the front. Ladders will be used so that there is complete access to the church at all times.

This renovation is fully funded by the Mary Baracci Restricted Bequest. The project will cost \$337,200. Teevan is a company which specializes in the restoration of historic buildings and will provide ongoing maintenance of the exterior for 15 years. Fr. Stasys is extremely grateful for Mary’s generous legacy, and also for all the faithful stewards working to get this project done!

Masses streamed from STA church:

1) **Parish Mass:** Attend Mass at 11:00 am, streamed from STA church every Sunday morning and celebrated by STA pastor Fr. Stasys Mikalonis or vicar Fr. Sev Kuupuo: <https://dsj.zoom.us/j/759166471>

2) **Stanford Catholic Community:** Attend Mass at 4:30 p.m. every Sunday, streamed from STA church and celebrated by the Dominican priests of the Stanford Catholic Community (including Fr. Xavier Lavagetto, who has celebrated the TMC Mass once a month for several years): go to www.stanfordcatholic.org for that day’s link to the YouTube channel.

Outdoor daily Mass:

Daily Mass is celebrated @ Saint Elizabeth Seton School Playground, Mon-Sat at 8:30 a.m.

On 6/15, STA Parish was able to resume our daily masses with a very good attendance. We are happy to slowly and carefully get back together. As a reminder, we will continue our outdoor Masses for a maximum of 25 people, including the priest. Join us at 8.30 am (Monday through Saturday), at the Saint Elizabeth Seton School Playground (1095 Channing Ave). We will follow the following protocol discussed at our Liturgy Board.

1. Sign up online the day before: <https://signup.com/go/BFXCBjR>

2. Upon arrival: A. Sanitize your hands. B. Cross off 1 number per individual on the white board chart. C. Sanitize your hands again. - Person #26, sadly, will not be admitted. This is painful and hard to write. However, we really must follow safety instructions.

Non-signed up people: If you happen to walk by and would like to attend Mass, check the chart. If there are spots available, you are welcome to come in (but not before 8.30 am, to respect those that signed up). Please, follow A, B and C instructions. Have your face mask and hand sanitizer ready, just in case.

- Bring and wear your face mask at all times during the Mass.
- Bring and use your own chair or mat. No benches or chairs will be provided. (We will have special accommodations for those who might need it.)
- Bring and use your hand sanitizer.
- Keep social distance (minimum of 6 feet) at all times.
- No daily missals will be provided.
- Holy Communion reception will be explained on site.

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, Mercedes McCaffrey, Maureen Mooney, Susan Miller, Hayden Pastorini, 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]

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

How Church can respond to cult of personality:

(By Phyllis Zagano, *NCR*, 6/25/200)

The sudden appearance of new communities, linked to the personality of some preachers ... can conceal the danger ... of enclosing the experience of faith in protected and reassuring environments.

— Pope Francis, to participants at the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Sept. 28, 2019.

The cult of personality is a very scary thing. No matter where or how it forms, it usually crashes and burns with the death or diminishment of the individual who gained a following. What Pope Francis spoke of here, to the assembled participants at the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, was the theme of their conference: "Pentecostals, charismatics, and evangelicals: Impact on the concept of unity." His words found their way into the final document of the Amazon synod about a year later.

The dynamics in the Amazon region are clear: The largest numbers of former Catholics there now affiliate with one or another of these groups, too often tied to a single preacher in a single village for a limited time.

Why? One would hope that the gospel is the principal attraction for the adherents to whatever Pentecostal, charismatic or evangelical preacher has won their hearts. But one must recognize the underlying circumstances causing people to gather around him or, increasingly, her.

It often has to do with language and culture. The local preacher comes from the people, or somehow is inserted into the locality, and gains a following. He, or, we must remember, she, is, or at least becomes, a known quantity whose joys, hopes and fears echo those of the followers. The preacher knows them, knows how to heal their wounds, knows how to salve their sorrows. The people hear common sense mixed with promise.

Elsewhere, when the discussion is political, the same scenario plays out. Now the cult of personality moves to a larger stage. Media pick up the promises, the claims, the arguments. Media carry the politician-preacher to the farthest reaches of the Earth. And when media do not present the politician in a favorable light, they are disparaged as the carriers of "fake news."

So, too with some televangelists, whose followers number in the hundreds of thousands and who live large on astronomical collections. Media exposés of

lavish lifestyles are called comments from the Evil One.

Where are the Catholic churches in all this? The ongoing pandemic has displayed the preaching skills of hundreds of priests and bishops. Some are very good. Some are just plain awful. Sacraments, gone by the wayside, inch back into daily life endangered by the predicted second wave. Which brings the Catholic experience back to simple preaching, the skill so well-honed by Pentecostals, charismatics, evangelical and by certain politicians. Their words energize and excite and send individuals out with new purpose, new energy.

Meanwhile, the church languishes, in the Amazon and elsewhere.

What to do?

It is not enough to argue that ordaining married deacons as priests will bring people back to Catholicism. It is not enough to answer the synod participants' call to restore the tradition of ordaining women as deacons. It is certainly not enough to ask for more foreign missionaries to take up residence in one or another country bereft of Catholic ministry.

While married priests and women deacons might address the twin problems of language and culture just about anywhere in the world, the church needs something else.

No, these solutions are not enough. While married priests and women deacons might address the twin problems of language and culture just about anywhere in the world, the church needs something else. The added benefit to restoring married priests and women deacons, of course, would be to demonstrate belief that women do not defile the sacred and that women can indeed image Christ. But even that may not be enough.

The problem presents its own solution. Catholicism survives where it adapts to and is adopted by the local culture. Local languages and customs are the key. Respect for women must be unlocked.

We can only hope for today. Tomorrow may be too late.

[Phyllis Zagano is senior research associate-in-residence at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. She will speak at the Oct. 3 online Voice of the Faithful Conference "Visions of a Just Church." Her books include *Women Deacons: Past, Present, Future*, *Study Guides* are available for free download at <https://sites.hofstra.edu/phyllis-zagano/>. Her most recent book is *Women: Icons of Christ*.]

Civic leaders and the common good:

(Editorial, *America Magazine*, 6/26/20)

The conventional wisdom goes something like this: The foundations of American civic life are buckling. Polarization drives our national life, from cable news to the lecture halls to the conversations at Thanksgiving dinner. Trust in nearly every institution, government, the media and religion has plummeted. In a certain light, it seems as if Americans have given up on the idea of a common project or the common good.

Yet the events of 2020 have revealed that even in the face of concurrent political, economic and public health emergencies, the American people still have deep reservoirs of patience, prudence and concern for the commonweal.

The coronavirus continues to deal a heavy blow. More than 100,000 of our neighbors have died. We have lost family, friends, millions of jobs, along with the normal order and sacred rituals that organize our responses to moments of hardship and loss. Life as we knew it has effectively ground to a halt. And that has required us to temper our individual actions (even if in vastly varying degrees) for the health and safety of all.

Some of these measures were imposed by the power of the state, but individual Americans were taking precautions seriously before they were legally obligated to do so. A poll in March found that 90 percent of Americans had ceased going out and had started to practice social distancing. GPS data from Cuebiq, a private data company, confirmed that in every state, Americans were staying home before stay-at-home orders were issued. We will need this spirit of sacrifice again when the epidemic spikes or returns in a second wave.

If widespread compliance with stay-at-home orders—despite the cost to livelihoods and mental health—evinced a latent commitment to the common good, the mostly peaceful responses to the killing of George Floyd have also called forth our better national instincts, as Americans were again reminded of the plight of those who have been denied prosperity and justice for far too long. While the proper balance between social distancing and protesting was not immediately clear, the widespread use of masks in the protests made it clear that Americans were concerned about both, but many judged that the need for justice was urgent enough to require immediate response.

In a letter to America in the days following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jeane Joseph Daly, C.S.J., of St. Louis, expressed her hope that “the example of his life and the shock of its tragic ending [would] summon all white Americans to join our black brothers in completing the work he was not permitted to finish.” Tragically, many white Americans did not heed the call—not then, nor even after the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland and so many others.

Yet in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, there are signs of a new solidarity. Canvassing by researchers shows that there are significant numbers of white

men and women among the protesters marching throughout the country. Citizens are organizing to demand greater accountability from corporations and public figures, as well as meaningful action instead of the customary posturing on social media and through public statements. Books opposing racism have shot to the top of best-seller lists; and documentaries like “13th,” released in 2016 and directed by Ava DuVernay, are among Netflix’s most-streamed offerings.

Just as the pandemic requires our continued vigilance, we must maintain the momentum toward social and political change. Bob Moses, an icon of the 1960s civil rights movement, recently told *The New York Times* that George Floyd’s murder “has opened up a crevasse, so to speak, through which all this history is pouring, like the Mississippi River onto the Delta. It’s pouring into all the streams of TV, cable news, social media.... And the question is, can the country handle it?” Mr. Moses concluded soberly, “We don’t know.... [The United States] can lurch backward as quickly as it can lurch forward.”

If the pandemic and the swell of protests have shown that Americans are still capable of heeding the call of their better angels, it has also exposed the flaws and deficiencies of our political leadership.

As St. John XXIII pointed out in his encyclical “*Mater et Magistra*,” individual citizens and the state “must work together in harmony, and their respective efforts must be proportioned to the needs of the common good.” But when individual citizens fulfill their end of the bargain while “the good offices of the state are lacking or deficient, incurable disorder ensues: in particular, the unscrupulous exploitation of the weak by the strong.”

To be sure, there have been a few profiles in courage throughout these days, leaders like Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, who has led the federal response to the pandemic, and Keisha Lance Bottoms, the mayor of Atlanta, who has rallied her city to the standard of justice and public order. But there are too few examples of such leadership. President Trump seems incapable of viewing events through any lens save that of how it might affect his own political survival. But the crisis also extends beyond the White House gates.

Our leaders were given early warnings and ample time to address the coronavirus. Yet their actions were often too timid and too late to save more lives. Sustained protests against racism have rallied widespread public support for substantive reforms to policing and the criminal justice system. Yet some of our political leaders seem content to wait for this moment to pass, anticipating, perhaps, a return to the status quo.

But the country will not return to the status quo, nor should any American wish for it to do so. The world has been changed by these events, and we are only beginning to grasp fully the implications. More dramatic change is surely coming. If that change is to be positive and far-reaching, then the country will need civic leaders who embody the selfless spirit and true concern for the common good that its people have thus far amply demonstrated. #