



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 5, 2020

Readings

This week:

Zechariah 9:9–10

Romans 8:9, 11–13

Matthew 11:25–30

Next week:

Isaiah 55:10–11

Romans 8:18–23

Matthew 13:1–23

Psalm

I will praise your name forever, my king and my God. (*Psalm 145*)

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, July 5, 1:00 pm, via Zoom

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

Wednesday, July 8, 5:00 pm, via Zoom

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

Thursday, July 9, 7:00 pm, via Zoom

TMC Board Meeting

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 face 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 dedicated TMC Zoom account log-in information.

On Sunday, July 5, at 1:00 pm, please join the TMC Coffee and Donut Hour—via Zoom. Here is the information: (no password necessary—yet):

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

Food distribution at St. Athanasius by Catholic Charities:

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County sponsors drive-through food distribution on the 2nd & 4th Saturday of the month from 10:00 am till noon at St. Athanasius Catholic Church, 160 N. Rengstorff, Mtn. View.

Already Catholic Charities and members of our community are feeling the economic and social burden of the Coronavirus. Access to basic emergency supplies, especially health supplies, is extremely limited. As the economy takes a hit, small businesses and gig workers without benefits are more at risk. Those who are already on the edge are most at risk, seniors, immigrants, the homeless, people with disabilities, and those without access to health care. In addition, fear of the stranger can strain the bonds of community and compassion.

Our community needs the calm, consoling presence of Catholic Charities now more than ever in this time of heightened anxiety. Being grounded in our faith and in our community, we remain steadfast in our care for those who are poor and our most vulnerable neighbors.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please contribute financially by going to www.CatholicCharitiesSCC.org/donate.

We can also use bulk supplies of sanitizers, alcohol wipes, C-95 masks, and nitrile gloves. We need volunteers to help make wellness calls and serve food.

Thank you for your support in this difficult time of uncertainty in our community and our world. Please be assured that Catholic Charities continues to be committed to caring for those who are poor and vulnerable in our community on your behalf.

TMC Board: Gerard McGuire, gerardmc@aol.com, 650-814-2223

Bulletin: Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net

Finance: Helena Wee, 650-520-7556, shhwee@sbcglobal.net

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Sally Benson, 408-464-0750, sallymbenson@gmail.com

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Adult Education: Jim Davis, 650-704-8002, Jim_Davis@pacbell.net

Mary Coady, 650-261-9155, coady_94025@yahoo.com

Website: Jim Davis, 650-704-8002, james_davis@pacbell.net

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, Terry Atkinson, 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, T. J. Wooten. [Add/subtract names by e-mailing Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net.]

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Anti-racism resources from Stanford Catholic Community:

The Catholic Community at Stanford has sent a listing of a myriad of resources for learning about racism in the present context.

“It provides a non-exhaustive list of ways to support current Black Lives Matter efforts and stand in solidarity with eliminating all forms of racist violence perpetrated against people of color. As Catholics, we are called to put our prayer into action. The resources listed below are an effort to aid in doing so. Where resources are also available in other languages, we have provided links. A more comprehensive list of Spanish resources is linked immediately below. The resources provided offer information to help you learn more about racial injustice and discern how you are called to action. The views and opinions expressed in any article or by a specific organization do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Catholic Community at Stanford.”

Please email Kay Williams who can send you a copy: kaywill@pacbell.net.

Dates set for federal death penalty executions:

[By Mark Pattison, *Catholic News Service*, 6/16,20]

Critics of the death penalty denounced the decision June 15 by Attorney General William Barr to set execution dates for four federal prisoners on death row.

The executions of three of the men are scheduled within a five-day span in mid-July. If carried out, these would be the first executions of federal prisoners since 2003. Three of the men had been given execution dates last July, but before the executions could be carried out, court fights ensued over the drugs to be used in the executions.

“The federal government’s decision to pursue executions is wrongheaded. It is profoundly disappointing to see our federal government take such great pains to restart executions—a practice which plainly violates Catholic teaching and disregards the sacred dignity of human life,” said a June 16 statement by Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy, executive director of the Catholic Mobilizing Network.

“It is even more disheartening,” she added, “when one considers the widespread failures of the federal death penalty system, including issues of racial bias, arbitrariness, innocence and more.”

“Each of these inmates has exhausted appellate and post-conviction remedies, and no legal impediments prevent their executions, which will take place at U.S. Penitentiary Terre Haute, Indiana,” the Justice Department said in a June 15 statement announcing the impending executions.

“That’s bull,” said Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, which he

added does not take a stand “one way or the other” on capital punishment, but critiques its application.

The Trump administration, which had been trying to set execution dates, won a court victory in April when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit set aside a district judge’s injunction that blocked four death penalty sentences from being carried out.

But Dunham noted an appeal to stay the injunction’s lifting was filed “several weeks ago” at the Supreme Court, and he expects the justices to rule on the request before its current term ends in early summer.

The inmates scheduled for execution are Daniel Lee on July 13, Wesley Purkey on July 15, Dustin Honken on July 17 and Keith Nelson on Aug. 28....

When the first bid to execute the prisoners was made last summer, “a number of corrections officials who had themselves carried out executions or supervised executions wrote to the Justice Department warning that such a compressed schedule magnifies the risk of an error and also increased the level of trauma that would be experienced by the prison personnel who are tasked with carrying out the executions,” Dunham added.

“One has to wonder what possible penological justification there is for carrying out three executions in five days after nobody in the federal system has been involved in any execution in 17 years,” he said. “That would be much more like a political act than an act that has any legitimate policy justification.”

Dunham noted that under the original schedule, the first executions would have been carried out just before the first presidential primaries. Now, they will bracket the Democrats’ and Republicans’ national conventions. “If the administration respected the rule of law and the integrity of the court, it would not be able to carry out executions at a time in which it believes it could drive political benefit from it,” he said.

Lawyers for three of the condemned prisoners also blasted the Justice Department’s announcement.

The Justice Department also announced more executions would be set “at a later date.” “Over the past few months, our nation has faced a seemingly endless stream of death, suffering and loss. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost in the coronavirus pandemic, and thousands more have taken to the streets to condemn the death-dealing racism that is pervasive in our criminal legal systems and structures,” Vaillancourt Murphy said in her statement.

“It is difficult to comprehend why, after everything our country has been through, the federal government is bent on taking more life.”... #

[To learn more, go to <https://catholicismobilizing.org>. There you will find the petition to sign and sample letters to write. As we look ahead to the California elections, we anticipate that a bill to end the death penalty in California will be on the 2024 ballot. The drum beat must swell as that date approaches.]

White privilege at the border:

[By Tracey Horan, NCR, 7/3/20]

It was the adventure of a lifetime. My friend Karen and I decided to take time out from our Spanish studies in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, to travel around the country for a week. Somehow, with my limited Spanish, we had made it to Livingston, a town on the east coast known for its African-influenced culture.

We were both pretty open to whatever experiences the journey laid in front of us, so when a young English-speaking man offered to give us a tour of the town, we agreed without much hesitation. Another woman from the United States joined us on the tour. As we made our way through a grassy field toward one of the town's beautiful beaches, it dawned on me that it was July 4.

Although we were in a different country, I thought we U.S. Americans should still acknowledge the occasion.

"Hey, it's Independence Day! Happy Fourth of July!" I yelled out to my U.S. American comrades. The other woman on the tour with us turned around and said, "Not all of us celebrate. Not all of us are free."

My 20-year-old self couldn't understand why a Black woman would harbor such feelings. I remember thinking, "Slavery is over. Why can't she just move on?" ...

It's painful for me to acknowledge this incident and my callousness in the face of another's real hurt, lived at the expense of my privilege. At that time in my life, I assumed that my white experience was the common experience. I was just beginning to touch the complexities of what it means to be U.S. American and why some people, now myself included, hesitate to embrace that identity and its history of oppressive implications.

My experience living at the Mexico-U.S. border has added to the hypocrisy I see in our country's pledge to stand for "liberty and justice for all." Supposed "closure" of the Mexico-U.S. border to nonessential travel since March has made it clear that this "liberty and justice" doesn't apply to everyone.

Government officials claimed this closure was for the purpose of limiting the spread of COVID-19. Yet for weeks after the Trump administration announced it would close the border for this reason, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the ports of entry processed hundreds of people each day without wearing face masks and continued to stand around in clusters of 10 to 15 people. This same reported concern about the spread of COVID-19 has not prevented the daily deportation of people from U.S. detention centers to Mexico and Central American countries without any testing for the virus. In some cases, these deportations have been the sole cause for the spread of COVID-19 to some remote areas that may never have seen these cases otherwise....

[The] words "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" fall flat in the face of the U.S. government's selective border closure. We'll allow for essential travel, they say; that is, essential travel defined on our terms.

A month ago, I got in my car and headed to the port of entry with a friend. As we waited in line to cross from Mexico to the United States, I was nervous that our excursion would not fly under the nonessential travel restrictions. In fact, I was very clear that what we were doing was not essential by any stretch of the imagination: We wanted to go for a hike at a park on the U.S. side. When my friend announced to the Border Patrol officer that this was our plan, he simply nodded his head, unquestioningly. After all, we were two white U.S. Americans with passports. Somehow, this was essential travel.

This weighs on me every time I greet the people who show up at the Kino Border Initiative's migrant aid center. I look into their eyes, calling to mind some of their stories of fleeing violence and persecution, their courage to fight for their lives and the lives of their families, and knowing that the U.S. government does not consider their passage into the United States to seek asylum as "essential travel." I can't help but wonder if this travel would be considered as "essential" if these asylum-seekers were white...

This is how "America First" plays out. (And let's be clear: This slogan is meant to apply to white, cisgender U.S. Americans with citizenship.) Earlier this spring, when my housemates and I visited some Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist in Agua Prieta in Sonora, Mexico had still not seen nearly the numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases compared to almost anywhere in the United States. As we chatted about the threat of the virus and rumors that the United States would close the border, we joked that maybe such a border closure would actually help keep the virus out of Mexico.

One sister commented that Mexico was already seeing the impacts of the virus, but in a different way. As many U.S. residents jumped into panic mode and emptied the shelves of local grocery stores in Douglas, Arizona, they began to cross the border to buy from Mexican stores the supplies they couldn't find in the United States. This is what "America First" looks like to some up close: unbridled hoarding with a blind eye to the shelves we leave empty across the world....

I'm not sure I'll ever come to a place in my life when I'll be able to say with sincerity that I'm proud to be U.S. American. It is difficult for me not to equate patriotism with white supremacy when I see the priorities of U.S. government officials playing out in damaging and racist policies. The liberty and justice I dream of and desire is out of reach in our current U.S. reality. ...

Still, miraculously, I see this dream of freedom alive and well around me: in the revolutionary vision of the Black Lives Matter movement; in the slow work of anti-racism; in efforts to replace violent, oppressive policing with community-based solutions. As I mourn the ways white supremacy continues to show up in me and in U.S. policy, I desire to dig deep into this dream of freedom and to follow the lead of courageous change-makers in the United States and around the world. Together, our humble and courageous steps attest to the possibility of freedom, a freedom I believe is also God's dream for us.

[Tracey Horan is a member of the Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana. She is the education coordinator at the Kino Border Initiative in Nogales, AZ, & Sonora, Mexico.]