



Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 16, 2020

Readings

This week:

Isaiah 56:1, 6–7

Romans 11:13–15, 39–52

Matthew 15:21–28

Next week:

Isaiah 22:19–23

Romans 11:13–36

Matthew 16:13–20

Psalm

O God, let all the nations praise you! (*Psalm 67*)

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, August 16, 1:00 pm, via Zoom TMC (virtual) Coffee and Donuts
(Zoom link to meeting is on Page 2.)

Monday, August 17, 5:00 p.m. via Zoom TMC Spiritual Education Committee

Wednesday, August 19, 5:00 pm, via Zoom TMC Racism Discussion Group (contact
Bob Foley at bob.foley@gmail.com)

From Thomas Merton

You cannot be a man of faith unless you know how to doubt. You cannot believe in God unless you are capable of questioning the authority of prejudice, even though that prejudice seems to be religious. Faith is not blind conformity to a prejudice—a “pre-judgment.” It is a decision, a judgment that is fully and deliberately taken in the light of a truth that cannot be proven.

—*New Seeds of Contemplation*

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: The recurring standing TMC Coffee & Donuts Hour meeting has been renewed, and this is the new Meeting ID:

On Sunday, August 16, at 1:00 pm, please join the TMC Coffee and Donut Hour—via Zoom. Here is the **NEW** information: (no password necessary):

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83624814842>

Meeting ID: 836 2481 4842

One tap mobile:

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

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

Prayer shawl ministry—calling all knitters:

If you enjoy knitting and have a little extra free time these days, making a prayer shawl is a wonderful way to help someone else in need.

To date, almost 100 shawls have been given to people who are going through a very difficult time and wish to enjoy the warmth, love and prayers of a hand-knitted prayer shawl.

IF YOU KNOW of someone who might also be comforted by a prayer shawl, we are happy to currently offer a small selection from which to choose. They are distributed by our parish Home Ministries.

Call Judi Swope 650-856-6972 or Terry Atkinson 650-714-2131 for information. We look forward to hearing from you.

Back-to-School supplies for Seton students:



Many of our pre-K through 8th grade students at St. Elizabeth Seton School need assistance purchasing back-to-school supplies and

our parish would like to lend those parents a helping hand. While students will be starting in mid-August learning from home, individual supplies will still be needed to support them in their learning experience.

Your donations will enable principal Evelyn Rosa and her staff to purchase needed student personal supplies.

Please write your checks to St. Elizabeth Seton School, and mail to:

St. Elizabeth Seton School
c/o Carmel Caligaris
1095 Channing Ave
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Thank you on behalf of the many people who have contributed to this effort over several recent years. For any questions, pls call or text Terry at 650-714-2131.

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. for an allowed number of 60 attendees. No prior sign-up is necessary. (Average attendance has been 15-20.)

Outdoor Masses on Sunday at SAG will begin Aug. 23: 8:00 am English; 9:30 am Spanish. The 11:00 am livestreamed Mass from STA church will continue.

Prior signup is required for the Sunday Mass only; 60 attendees are allowed. See the parish website for details: www.paloaltocatholic.net.

- Upon arrival:
 - A. Sanitize your hands (bring your own sanitizer).
 - B. Cross off 1 # per person on the white board chart.
 - C. Sanitize your hands again.
- Bring and wear your face mask 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)
- Keep social distance (minimum of 6 feet) at all times.
- No daily missals will be provided.
- Holy Communion reception will be explained on site.

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

Bulletin: Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net

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

Hospitality: Jim Davis, 650-704-8002

Liturgy: John Arnold, 650-269-2950, jsaoso@comcast.net

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

Membership: Kay Williams, 650-270-4188, kaywill@pacbell.net

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

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, Josie Colbruno, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Jim Davis, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Eleanor Kraft, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, Alicia Kot, Fr. Bill Leininger, Andre and Alyssa Lippard, Deacon Ysidro and Dolores Madrigal, Patricia Markee, Mercedes McCaffrey, Tom McKay, Maureen Mooney, Susan Miller, Hayden Pastorini, Paul Prochaska, Bill Risch, Anne Rush, Priya Smith, Bernice Sullivan, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, Kay Williams, T. J. Wooten.

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

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Redwood City Catholic Worker news:

The Redwood City Catholic Worker continues our work with the very, very poor. As Dorothy Day said, “Love is the answer.” We continue to offer hospitality and food to the poor. Each Friday, we distribute 200 bags of food to 80 families in need. Every week volunteers visit the homeless encampments throughout Redwood City. And 6 days a week we offer breakfast to about 30 homeless men and women in desperate need. In front of our home because of the foot traffic of those in need, the city has installed and maintains a mobile hand washing station and a portable toilet to help control the spread of the virus. To help families stay in their apartments, we have distributed about \$90,000 in rent subsidies. All of us at the Catholic Worker are healthy so far, thank God. **The following is written by Susan Crane, one of our full-time live-in-workers.**

Arundhati Roy, in ‘The pandemic is a portal’ (in *Financial Times*, April 2, 2020) explains that “Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.” [She goes on: “We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.”]

In his Leningrad lab, Ivan Pavlov used dogs to study learning and conditioning. The dogs naturally salivated when they were given meat and Pavlov conditioned the dogs to salivate when they heard a bell, which meant that the meat was coming. During the massive flood of 1924, Pavlov’s dogs were totally traumatized; and to Pavlov’s surprise, they completely lost their conditioned responses.

We have all been conditioned to believe certain things about how we need to live. We need capitalism as our economic system and anything that communism or socialism could offer is suspect. It’s normal for 3% of the people to be incredibly rich while a huge percent of us live month to month. It’s normal for health care to be tied to a job, and for insurance companies to make gigantic profits off healthcare. It’s normal for nuclear weapons to exist and threaten the lives of whole countries. It’s normal for some to have plenty of food and for others to pick up the scraps from dump sites. It’s normal to live, knowing that we are destroying the earth, the air, and the water around us. It’s normal, knowing that “Doctors Without Borders” sends medical workers around the world, and the USA sends soldiers and weapons (about 800 bases in other countries). It’s normal to think we have good schools, good health-care and the best legal system in the world, while facts tell us otherwise. If the earth is destroyed by climate change or a nuclear exchange, it will all be legal. It’s normal to know that families are being poisoned by radiation because they live near uranium mining or weapons production sites. It’s even become normal to think of unions as being outdated, even now when more and more people are losing their jobs.

Perhaps the pandemic has given us a chance to be open to other ideas. Last March, Antonio Guterres, the Secretary General of the UN, called for an “immediate global cease fire in all corners of the world.” Could we imagine a world where we cooperate with other nations? Could we imagine that we treat others as our brothers and sisters? Could we imagine not using sanctions and nuclear weapons to constantly threaten our neighbors? Could we imagine a system where workers have agency in their workplace, and can manage the workplace themselves?

The movement and resistance of Black Lives Matter has radically changed our conversations about racism, police violence and funding for entire police departments. What was unimaginable at the beginning of the pandemic, is now part of our national conversation.

Here at the Catholic Worker House, with your help, we continue to help our neighbors and attempt to live as if we live in the beloved community. For the first time in the 40 years of our existence, a couple from our immediate neighborhood spontaneously came to help with our food distribution. Hard times create more cooperation and feelings of mutuality. We try to live as if “Love is the answer.”

Visiting several of the homeless camps in Redwood City each week has been more sobering than I had expected. People are hidden away in the bushes along the tracks and highways, living next to rodents and garbage. We help with underwear, t-shirts, body-wipes and food. It’s not much, but it is a consistent effort to affirm their dignity and humanity. Additionally, so many of you (our supporters) have showered us with snack bags, meals, socks and hygiene kits and other items that we give away including tents, sleeping bags, bikes and rent subsidies. People have stepped up to buy rice and beans, put them into small bags and bring them every Friday for the food distribution. People we have never met are bringing food for the breakfasts and other needed paper items. Teachers have brought books for the children here at the house to read. When people do hopeful things, hope lives.

We know that the food we give out in reality belongs to the people who are hungry. In our often-failed attempts to be kind and help others, we know that God writes straight with crooked lines. We ask forgiveness from the poor. We ask forgiveness from those we work with when our social skills are desperately lacking.

Love, Susan for all of us (Larry Purcell, Sr. Mary Jane Floyd, Ronnie Georges, Jan Johanson, Aida Figueroa, and J Arthur White.)

Needs:

Food: in any amount. Rice, beans, canned goods (protein), frozen meals etc. Folding carts to carry bags of food—the elderly, especially, need these carts.

Household needs: hand sanitizer, toilet paper, wipes, black garbage bags, reusable or paper bags for food distribution, Kleenex, Clorox, lap top computers, bikes etc. If you have a computer that needs cleaning up or repairs, call Alfredo Chorro (650-796-5713).

The Homeless: sleeping bags, tents, tarps, ropes, bikes, bike locks and lights, bike tools, jackets, sweats, socks, etc. These days we are serving breakfast to 30 + homeless 6 days a week. We need quick frozen meals (tamales, lasagna, hot dogs, etc.)

Money to help with rent subsidies for the unemployed poor including: day laborers, dishwashers, house cleaners, restaurant employees and others who are not only out of work, but don’t qualify for federal aid, unemployment or disability. ...what you give to us, we will give away.

Your prayers for Fr. Steve Kelly S.J. who is waiting for sentencing after spending over 2 years in custody for non-violently protesting at a Trident nuclear submarine base in Georgia.

Your ongoing love and support.

[545 Cassia St PO Box 513. Redwood City CA 94063 -2016. Phone: 650-366-4415.]

When Jesus changed his mind:

[By Sr. Mary M. McGlone, NCR, 8/15/20]

Try it. Name a time when a man got Jesus to change his mind. In a Gospel we'll soon hear, Peter tried to sway Jesus from accepting suffering — but Jesus quickly stopped that conversation.

We see plenty of men questioning Jesus, but apparently no guy ever convinced him to change his mind. But women? Well, as Matthew would say, "Behold!" (That's Gospel talk for, "Hang on to your hats!")

In John's Gospel, Mary told Jesus that the wine at a wedding was about to run out. Although he seemed to disregard her implicit request, he quickly provided far more wine than anyone had hoped for. In today's Gospel, Jesus jousted verbally with a clever pagan woman, and, "Behold!" Jesus ceded his position.

Perhaps it might be better to say they conceded, suggesting that both sides were involved in the resolution: She placed her faith in him as Lord and he responded to her need.

Matthew [in today's Gospel: Matt 15:21-28] positioned this story immediately after an unfriendly interchange between Jesus and some of Jerusalem's elite, the religious purists who critiqued the disciples' irreligious table etiquette. Jesus undercut their complaints by saying that nobody is defiled by food, while what comes out of one's mouth reveals and reinforces what's in the heart. Then he ran into a woman who was ready to use her mouth.

Scholars and preachers make excuses for the way Jesus talked to this unnamed woman but their justifications are generally more pious than historically probable. The story is stark: Jesus first ignored and then insulted this woman. He acted like a man of his time. This audacious woman, whom later tradition named *Justa*, started with two strikes against her: her gender and the fact that her people, the Canaanites, were traditional enemies of the Jews.

Justa flouted both those disadvantages. She breached her gender role by approaching a man for help. She defused the ethnic antagonism by calling on him as the Son of David, thereby showing respect for him and calling on the Jewish tradition that made kings responsible for the welfare of widows, orphans and foreigners.

Hearing him say that his mission was only to Israel, she simply intensified her approach and bowed before him as one who worships. He retorted that his mission was to God's children, not foreign dogs.

Rising to the occasion as no one ever had before, she used his own words to disarm him. Picture her at his feet, looking up with a unique combination of pleading and mischievousness. Throwing him entirely off guard, she replied: "Ah Lord, but those puppies jump for the scraps wherever they fall!"

That got him. "O woman, great is your faith!"

Of all people, *Justa*, like the centurion whose servant Jesus healed, expressed the sort of faith Jesus sought but didn't find in his disciples. In fact, her faith was great enough to call Jesus to enlarge his vision.

Justa and *Mary* are unique personalities in the Gospels. While many people moved Jesus to compassion, these two women opened his mind to new possibilities. In John 6, when Jesus asked Philip where to find bread for the crowd, the author quickly explained that Jesus already knew what he was going to do. But there is no such pretext when Jesus produced wine after telling his mother, "My hour has not yet come." An honest reading of *Justa's* story depicts the second woman who influenced Jesus to change his plan and welcome the faith of foreigners.

The passage from Isaiah chosen to comment on this Gospel makes a similar point. Isaiah tells the Israelites who have come back from exile that salvation is not limited to their nation alone. The people who see themselves as belonging to God must understand that God's house is a place for all people. Later, Isaiah (66:21) tells his people that foreigners can be priests just like Israelites.

Why did Matthew tell us this story? First, the story illustrates the kind of faith Jesus sought. *Justa* believed that Jesus not only could, but should respond to her need — gender and nationality aside. Additionally, the story depicts Jesus adjusting his plan because a woman led him to see something differently.

In our day, the document produced by the Amazon synod calls the church to be as open as Jesus was. That meeting called the church to "synodality," a way of moving forward in harmony by listening to God's call together. They said this includes paying special attention to the laity and favoring the participation of women, including the possibility of ordaining them to the diaconate.

We might look at today's Gospel as the prototype of the synod on the Amazon and the future of the church. Behold! God may be calling the church to a newly open mind.

[St. Joseph Sr. Mary M. McGlone serves on the congregational leadership team of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.]

Community members: updates:



Rudy Bahr: (from his daughter Jean) is in fairly stable condition, on oxygen, needs a walker, but he has not been in any pain for the last few months, so the "palliative" radiation treatments he had earlier this year seem

to have had the desired effectthe hospice care has been aides who come to help him bathe and a nurse to check on his vitals. I'm glad to be able to be with him, allowing him to remain in his own home. Best to all of you. Rudy misses the coffee, doughnuts and good friends.

Mary Connors tripped and fell and broke her femur this week. She is home, managing on her own for now.

Tom McKay: is in hospice care at home in Atherton. He and Mary Rita have been TMC members for years and he is on his final journey home. His family is gathered around him (son, daughters, sons-in-law)—add Tom to your prayers.

Margaret Herte is home from the hospital, recovering from mini-strokes, with Larry in attendance and their daughter Mardi and her niece helping as they can.