



28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 9, 2016

Readings

This week:

2 Kings 5:14–17

2 Timothy 2:8–13

Luke 17:11–19

Next week:

Exodus 17:8–13

2 Timothy 3:14–4:2

Luke 18:1–8

Psalm Today

The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving pow’r. (*Psalm 98*)

Today’s presider is Rev. Michael Gazzingan.

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

Monday, October 10, 7:00 p.m. TMC Liturgy Committee, Thomas House Library.

From Thomas Merton

Here is one more quotation from one of the ascetic rabbis of the seventeenth century: “No matter how low you may have fallen in your esteem, bear in mind that if you delve deeply into yourself you will discover holiness there. A holy spark resides there which, through repentance, you may fan into a consuming flame, which will burn away the dross of unholiness and unworthiness.” That spark of holiness is the “yes” which, according to this view, cannot be extinguished. And this is also the Christian view. Deep in our hearts is the most profound meaning of our personality, which is that we say “yes” to God, and the spark is always there. All we need to do is to turn towards it and let it become a flame. That is the way we are made, and the monastic life and the contemplative life should be built on this religious conception of man which you do not find in ordinary psychology....There are almost infinite potentialities in this concept and we must realize that what we are here for is to develop them. There is so much in us that can be brought out if we let God do it.

—*Thomas Merton in Alaska: The Alaska Conferences, Journals and Letters*

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

League of Women Voters educated us Oct. 2:

A standing-room only crowd filled the Thomas House basement hall on Sunday, Oct. 2, from 10-11 a.m., and heard from two members of the League of Women Voters about the primary propositions on the California ballot.



In a lively presentation by Jean Lythgott and Gloria Hom, attendees heard the pros and cons associated with the most complicated propositions. Since the California ballot has a total of 17 state propositions, there was a lot of information to digest. The speakers encouraged us to consider several of the propo-

sitions very carefully, as the arguments for and against did not always reveal the likely consequences of the proposition.

Of particular note for Catholics is the contest between Propositions 62 and 66: 62 calls for an end to the death penalty with the substitution of life without possibility of parole, and 66 seeks to speed up the implementation of the death sentence by limiting the time for death penalty appeals. The California Conference of Catholic Bishops, including Bishop P.J. McGrath of San Jose, is urging a **YES vote on 62** and a **NO vote on 66**. Whichever of these two propositions receives the most vote prevails.

Go to www.lwvc.org for more information on the propositions and the League's recommendations.

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PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Sr. Fran Ciluaga, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Dean Judd, Michael Kiriti, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, Edna and François Jamati, Alicia Kot, Fr. Bill Leininger, Andre and Alyssa Lippard, Deacon Ysidro and Dolores Madrigal, Mary Rose McGuire, Maureen Mooney, Hayden Pastorini, Paul Prochaska, Anne Rush, Priya Smith, Bernice Sullivan, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, Kay Williams, and T. J. Wooten.

[Add or subtract names by e-mailing Bulletin editors: Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams. See listings below.]

Bulletin submissions must be e-mailed by Thursday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. Kay, kaywill@pacbell.net, (650) 270-4188. Michelle, myhogan@comcast.net, (650) 493-8452.

TMC bulletins online:

The TMC website awaits your perusal. Go to www.thomasmerton.org to find copies of the Sunday TMC bulletins, notices of events, and background on the Merton Center. Web master Jim Davis awaits your submissions: email them to him at jim_davis@pacbell.net.

Save date: Kenyan crafts show October 30:

Margo McAuliffe will be bringing crafts from Kenya to STA on Sunday, October 30. For your donation to Kenya Help you can pick from the array of handmade animals, jewelry, baskets, etc. that Margo found in Nairobi this summer. Tables will be set up in the Memorial Garden, weather permitting.

Parish Holiday Faire is Saturday, Nov. 5:

Plan to come to the STA Parish Holiday Faire, Saturday, November 5, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the Our Lady of the Rosary Hall, 3233 Cowper Street, Palo Alto.

A fun new feature this year is that ALL holidays are included - Valentine's, St. Patrick's, Easter, 4th of July, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas! Featured items will include handmade holiday pillowcase sets, gift tags, baked goods, and festive decor.

The Parish Community Life Committee is collecting holiday decorations the first two weekends in October after Masses. Only new or like-new items, from any holiday! Homemade crafts will be collected up until the week prior to the event.

Come to a Faire prep/crafting session on Sat., Oct. 15, 10-12 noon (even if you aren't "crafty"). There are many tasks that are easy to do. Supplies provided, bring a pencil and scissors. High school youth are invited as well.

Contact Anne Morrison (650.493.2998 / ahbert55@aol.com) or Natalie Lucha (650.494.1178/nlucha22@yahoo.com)

Food Closet never closes:

Keep bringing food for the Food Closet. The needs continue: flip-top soups and entrees, as well as small bottles of water, crackers, granola bars, fruit cups, juice pouches. Your generous donations (including cash) are always welcome, particularly now as the summer winds down when the stores have been depleted. Leave your offerings in the baskets at the back of church as you come into the sanctuary. The Food Closet clients will be grateful.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Election prayer from Religious of Sacred Heart:

We invite you to join us (Religious of the Sacred Heart) and several religious congregations in praying quite intentionally for the elections. The attached prayer was created by the Adrian Dominican sisters and we have adapted it slightly. The team will pray this prayer at noon (wherever we are) every Tuesday from now through the elections and we hope you will pray with us. Praying the intention of this prayer and holding it in silence for five minutes offer a powerful witness of our faith and our *Cor Unum*.

Of course, pray the prayer at any time you like!

**O God,
we live in a time of peril and promise.
We ask that you infuse each of us,
voters and candidates for elected office,
with a longing for peace and the common good
of all your people and creation.**

**Rooted in the Gospel,
with this intention deep in our hearts,
we place our trust in You, O God,
and in the power of our communal prayer
in Jesus' name.
Amen.**

Francis: legalisms make Christians stupid:

[Catholic News Agency, Vatican City, Oct 6, 2016]

The Holy Spirit is the “great gift” of God the Father who helps us avoid the stupidities of a legalistic faith while leading us forward in Christian life, Pope Francis has said.

“May the Lord give us this grace: to open ourselves to the Holy Spirit, so that we will not become stupid, bewitched men and women who sadden the Holy Spirit,” the Pope remarked in his homily at morning Mass at Casa Santa Martha Oct. 6.

The Pope said that continual prayer to open ourselves to the Holy Spirit “helps us understand where our weaknesses are, those things that sadden Him; and it carries us forward, and also carries forward the Name of Jesus to others and teaching the path of salvation.”

Pope Francis’ homily drew on St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians, which included several rebukes and warnings about legalism....

The Pope noted the spiritual danger of “those who preach with ideologies” and speak in a mindset that is “absolutely just.”

“They bewitch: it’s all clear,” he said. “But look, the revelation is not clear, eh? The revelation of God is discovered more and more each day, it is always on a journey.”...

Second naiveté:

[By Richard Rohr, 10/2/16]

My life journey began as a very conservative pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic, pious and law-abiding, living in quiet Kansas, buffered and bounded by my parents’ stable marriage and many lovely liturgical traditions that sanctified my time and space. I was a very happy child and young man, and all who knew me then would agree. That was my first wonderful simplicity.

I was gradually educated in a much larger world of the 1960s and 1970s with degrees in philosophy and theology and a broad liberal arts education given me by the Franciscans. I left the garden of innocence, just as Adam and Eve had to do. My new Scriptural awareness made it obvious that Adam and Eve were probably not historical figures, but important archetypal symbols. I was heady with knowledge and “enlightenment,” no longer in “Kansas.” Though leaving the garden was sad and disconcerting for a while, there was no going back.

As time passed, I became simultaneously very traditional and very progressive, and I have probably continued to be so to this day. I don’t fit in with the liberals or the conservatives. This was my first strong introduction to paradox, and it took most of midlife to figure out what had happened—and how and why it had to happen. I found a much larger and even happier garden (note the new garden described in Revelation 22). I thoroughly believe in Adam and Eve now, but on about ten different levels, with literalism being the lowest and least fruitful.

This “pilgrim’s progress” was, for me, sequential, natural, and organic as the circles widened. I was steadily being moved toward larger viewpoints and greater inclusivity in my ideas, a deeper understanding of people, and a more honest sense of justice. God always became bigger and led me to bigger places. If God could include and allow, then why couldn’t I? If God asked me to love unconditionally and universally, then it was clear that God operated in the same way.

This process of transformation was slow, and the realizations that came with it were not either-or; they were great big both-and realizations. None of it happened without much prayer, self-doubt, study, and conversation. I could transcend precisely because I was able to include and broaden.

It seems we all begin in naiveté and eventually return to a “second naiveté” or simplicity, whether willingly or on our deathbed. This blessed simplicity is calm, knowing, patient, inclusive, and self-forgetful. It helps us move beyond anger, alienation, and ignorance. I believe this is the very goal of mature adulthood and mature religion. #

Where have pro-life Catholics gone?

[By Stephen Seufert, *Sojourners*, 10/5/16. Seufert is state director of Keystone Catholics, an online social justice advocacy organization in Pennsylvania.]

“I do not believe that just because you're opposed to abortion, that that makes you pro-life. In fact, I think in many cases, your morality is deeply lacking if all you want is a child born but not a child fed, not a child educated, not a child housed. And why would I think that you don't? Because you don't want any tax money to go there. That's not pro-life. That's pro-birth. We need a much broader conversation on what the morality of pro-life is.” —Sister Joan Chittister

A common misconception is that to be a pro-life Catholic, one simply has to be anti-abortion and anti-contraception. For years this “pro-life” definition has largely been unchallenged. That is, until recently.

A poll conducted in 2014 by the Public Religion Research Institute found a majority U.S. Catholics favor greater government involvement on economic issues via minimum wage increases, infrastructure investments, and universal healthcare. Furthermore, U.S. Catholics believe that to promote economic growth, the government should raise taxes. These aren't just pro-growth policies, they're pro-life policies.

Recently, Pope Francis stated, “Health is not a consumer good but a universal right, so access to health services cannot be a privilege.”

And in *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis hints at a support for higher wages for the poor and low-skilled workers.

“A just wage enables them to have adequate access to all the other goods which are destined for our common use,” he wrote in the 2013 document.

This year, in one of his most talked-about statements, Pope Francis decried anyone who “thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges.”

Aside from the metaphorical meaning, I think Pope Francis favors balanced and widespread infrastructure investments. In the past, Pope Francis has repeatedly spoken about the dignity of work [10] and the necessity for universal employment and shared prosperity. And time and again, reports have shown infrastructure investments promote widespread economic growth and prosperity.

Being pro-life doesn't end with economic issues.

In 2012, Fr. James Martin, the editor of the Jesuit run *America* magazine, called gun control a pro-life issue. Last year, in a statement with over 100 signers, among them 31 presidents of Catholic colleges and universities, Catholics called on elected officials to recognize immigration as a pro-life issue. On climate change, a majority of U.S. Catholics believe greenhouse gases are

causing climate change and that humans are largely to blame.

Most recently, Catholics began seriously questioning the just war theory. Eighty Catholic activists and educators met in Rome, at the request of Pope Francis and the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to discuss the concept of a just peace. This discussion is necessary because war itself is the enemy of life.

Whether the Church officially recognizes it or not, being pro-LGBT is part of the pro-life movement.

And on LGBT questions, roughly six-in-ten U.S. Catholics now support same-sex marriage. Eighty-five percent of U.S. Catholics ages 18 to 29 say homosexuality should be accepted, and three-quarters of that age group also supports same-sex marriage.

Even among churchgoing Catholics, that is those who attend mass weekly, acceptance of homosexual people stands at 60 percent.

In an article for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sr. Mary Scullion uplifted the life of Margie Winters, an LGBT Catholic in a same-sex civil marriage.

“The Church is at its best when it listens to the Spirit speaking in our times and through human experiences,” she wrote.

Whether the Church officially recognizes it or not, being pro-LGBT is part of the pro-life movement.

This insistence by some pro-life U.S. Catholics that government can't work to solve social problems, or at least alleviate social problems — from poverty to climate change, gun violence, access to affordable healthcare, LGBT rights, war, etc. — is total nonsense. One way or another, these issues must be addressed by the Church. If U.S. Catholics are concerned about the integrity or effectiveness of government, their efforts should be on greater oversight and reform, not lower taxes and less government.

The role of government isn't to make a profit, like in the private sector. Rather, its purpose is to enact policies which seek to promote the general welfare of each and every citizen, be it economically or socially.

To that end, Pope Francis calls on governments to “ensure that all citizens have dignified work, education and healthcare,” and that they not act “without regard for shared responsibility.”

Pro-life Catholics who ignore these and other truths are diluting their pro-life credibility. Pro-life Catholics who only talk about abortion and contraception have hijacked a truly pro-life Catholic movement. These kind of “pro-life” Catholics may have coined the term pro-life in the mid-20th century, but that doesn't mean they own the pro-life label.

It's unfortunate there's not currently a unified pro-life Catholic coalition. Such coalition would be a political force to reckon with in 2016 and beyond. #