



Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)

April 23, 2017

Readings

This week:

Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 2:14, 22-33

1 Peter 1:17-21

Luke 24:13-35

Psalm

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting. (*Psalms 118*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Jack Izzo.

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. Members of the Thomas Merton community plan 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 by check or cash, every Sunday there is a donation basket in the back of church or by the coffeepot after Mass—or you can use the envelope in the bulletin the last Sunday of every month to mail your donation. Please do not put your TMC donation in the collection baskets passed during Mass (these are for parish contributions only).

Calendar

No meetings this week.

From Thomas Merton

In the holiness of God, all extremes meet—infinite mercy and justice, infinite love and endless hatred of sin, infinite power and limitless condescension to the weakness of His creatures. . . . We can have the mercy of God whenever we want it, by being merciful to others: for it is God's mercy that acts on them, through us, when He leads us to treat them as He is treating us. His mercy sanctifies our own poverty by the compassion that we feel for their poverty, as if it were our own.

Filling us with divine charity and calling us to love Him as He has first loved us and to love others as He has loved us all, God's mercy makes it possible for us to give full satisfaction to His justice. The justice of God can, therefore, be best satisfied by the effects of His own mercy. Those who refuse His mercy satisfy His justice in another way. Without His mercy, they cannot love Him. Without love for Him they cannot be "justified" or "made just." That is to say: they cannot conform to Him Who is love. . . . It is their own injustice that is condemned by His justice. And in what does their injustice consist? In the refusal of His mercy.

—*No Man Is an Island*

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

Annual TMC meeting is May 7:

All TMC members are cordially invited to the Annual Meeting of the Thomas Merton Center and brunch on Sunday, May 7, 11:00 am, at the home of Bob and Judy Foley.

If you're not yet a TMC member and would like to join, look for membership forms in St. Catherine's Corner (the nook outside the church restroom) or contact Kay Williams at kaywill@pacbell.net or call her at (650) 270-4188.

Understanding Islam:

Tuesday, May 9, at 7:00 pm, there will be a discussion of the politics, policies, and current events that affect U.S. understanding of Islam and Muslims. Moderator is county supervisor Joe Simitian, and panelists are Ameena Jandali, Islamic Networks Group, and Jihad Turk, President of Bayan Claremont Islamic Graduate School. The event is in the Embarcadero Room at the Rinconada library, 1213 Newell, and is free. You can RSVP at www.commonwealthclub.org or (408) 299-5050.

Seton Scramble on May 8:

88% of the children at Seton school need financial support to be able to go to school there. The school's primary fundraiser is the annual golf tournament at Stanford's golf course, on Monday, May 8. You don't have to play golf to support the school at this event. There is a silent auction after the tournament, and the school is collecting donations now, to be auctioned on May 8. These can be old or new treasures from your closet, or a trip or a stay in your Sierra cabin, etc. All proceeds from the golf tournament and auction event benefit the St. Elizabeth Seton Scholarship Fund. Contact the Seton office at tbarragan@setonpaloalto.org, or call (650) 326-9004.

What is Divine Mercy Sunday?:

By Santiago Cortés-Sjöberg, a speaker, writer, and supervising editor at Loyola Press in Chicago. Published on www.uscatholic.org.

The world was in the midst of the Great Depression in 1931 and the memories of World War I were still very much alive in the minds of Europeans when in Poland a sister of the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938), is said to have been personally visited by Jesus.

According to her diary, which was listed on the Index of Forbidden Books for more than 20 years, an image was revealed to her of the risen Lord, from whose heart shone two rays, one red (representing blood) and the other "pale" (symbolizing water), with the words "Jesus, I trust in you" at the bottom. Faustina wrote in her diary that Jesus told her, "I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish."

When she was canonized in 2000 under the direction of fellow countryman Pope John Paul II, he proclaimed that the Second Sunday of Easter would henceforth be known as Divine Mercy Sunday, thereby widely promoting the devotional practices associated with Faustina's visions, already popular in many communities.

St. Faustina, a poorly educated daughter of a humble Polish family, kept a 600-page diary of the apparitions she claimed continued for years. Her entries focus on God's mercy, the call to accept God's mercy and to be merciful, the need for conversion, and the call to trust in Jesus. It had been Jesus' own wish, she wrote, to establish a feast day: "I [Jesus] desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls. . . . I am giving them the last hope of salvation; that is, the Feast of My Mercy."

Among the practices associated with the devotion are its

continued on page 3

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

The Gospel's Easter promise: Love will win out over sin and death:

Abridged from an article by Fr. Terrance Klein, a priest serving in the Diocese of Dodge City and author of Vanity Faith, at www.americamagazine.org

Benjamin Franklin famously asserted that life offers only two certainties: death and taxes. In the long course of human history, some have escaped taxes but no one eludes death. And the only surety about death is that it closes life. There are no taxes on the other side. Earth's

joys and pleasures, its sorrows and trials end at death. And, says St. Paul, so, too, does sin.

For a dead person has been absolved from sin. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him. As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his

continued on page 3

What is Divine Mercy Sunday?, continued:

novena, the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy (a series of prayers organized similarly to a rosary), the Hour of Great Mercy (a time of prayer traditionally celebrated at 3:00 pm), and the plenary indulgence granted to those who receive the Eucharist and celebrate reconciliation on Divine Mercy Sunday.

But the road to the universal recognition and institutionalization of the devotion was anything but smooth. Since Sister Faustina's diary, which she claimed Jesus himself had asked her to keep, had been previously listed on the Index of Forbidden Books, it curtailed the exercise of the devotional practices. Detractors claimed that her writing contained theological errors, while her defenders attribute mistakes to a faulty translation from Polish to Italian. While the diary is no longer on the Index and her canonization has officially put away concerns regarding the orthodoxy of her writings, critics remain.

The celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday is an opportunity to reflect on the theme of how God's mercy can overcome sin and, as the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments states, "a perennial invitation to the Christian world to face, with confidence in divine benevolence, the difficulties and trials that mankind [sic] will experience in the years to come."

Love will win out over sin and death, continued:

life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as being dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:7-11).

Taxes are a part of the law, and the intention of all laws—whether the Mosaic covenant or that of nations—is to do good and to resist evil. Yet, as St. Paul knew so vividly, in a world of sin, a world profoundly alienated from God, sin can turn the law into a curse rather than a cure for evil. That is certainly true in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), where the poor are driven off the land, quite legally and utterly without mercy. The intention of law is to give life, but, in this American classic, it becomes so oppressive, such an instrument of evil, that the impoverished Joad family must break the law to live, must defy it even to die with dignity. Twelve members of the Joad family, along with the Rev. Jim Casy (does that number strike anyone as significant?) pile into one woebegone truck, headed west. Grandpa Joad prattles about the California grapes, which he will soon crush over his head, yet he dies before they reach the Oklahoma border.

Pa said, "We got to figger what to do. They's laws. You got to report a death, an' when you do that, they either take forty dollars for the undertaker or they take him for a pauper." Uncle John broke in, "We never did have no

continued on page 4

The US has a fear crisis, not an immigration crisis:

Abridged from an article by Fr. Peter Daly, pastor of St. John Vianney parish in Prince, Frederick, Maryland, March 28, 2017, at www.ncronline.org.

When did we get to be so mean?

When did we start fearing our neighbor more than we love our neighbor?

Like every pastor who tries to lead a diverse community, I have become increasingly aware of the tensions and division in my own parish over immigration. There are some who feel that the current political climate has given them permission to reject the migrants among us. There are also the migrants, who have been part of our community for many years, and are now living with considerable fear and anxiety.

Pope Francis says, "A church without charity does not exist." But some people seem to think that charity should begin *and end* at home.

In my middle-class, largely white parish, on the periphery of the Washington, D.C., area, there is a new "hostility" to immigrants, even though these migrants have been here for years.

We have had a Spanish language Mass for more than 19 years. When it began, it was well attended because we had a large group of seasonal workers. Those workers came here on H-2B seasonal workers' visas to pick the crabmeat out of the crabs caught in the nearby Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Usually they stayed here for six months, living in communal housing. But the factory suddenly closed about 17 years ago. The immediate cause of the closure was tax theft and tax evasion. Evidently the factory manager was collecting the withheld taxes as he should, but not sending them into the IRS. In effect he was stealing from both the government and his workers. He figured that these migrant workers would not file their tax returns. But one year our parish helped them file their tax returns, and he got caught.

The factory closed on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 2001. The workers, largely from Hidalgo, in central Mexico, were in tears. Most went home immediately. But a few stayed in the area and got jobs elsewhere. They are the classic "visa overstays." They became illegal when their visas expired.

Visa overstays are the real source of most illegal immigration. According to the Center for Migration Studies, run by the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles, "overstays have exceeded EWIs [entries without inspection] every year since 2007, and 600,000 more overstays than EWIs have arrived since 2007." They did not swim a river or climb a fence. Trump's wall would do nothing to deter them.

But our visa overstays have been here a long time. In our

continued on page 4

The US has a fear crisis, continued:

community they have been here nearly two decades. Their children were born here and have gone through our public schools. They play on our sports teams and join our scout troops. They come to our churches and are in our confirmation and first Communion classes. Now these families are in considerable fear that they will be separated. Children are anxious that their parents will be deported. Parents are afraid that they might not be with their children.

One lady, who runs a thriving business in our community, told me that she goes only between her house and her business. She does not go to stores or parks. She is afraid she might get picked up and leave her 5-year-old without a mother. She listens to Spanish language broadcasts for news of the latest Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids. She now lives in fear in a place where she has lived in peace for a long time.

Some of my native-born parishioners say, "Good. They should be in fear. They are illegal. Let them leave." Really?

We wanted and used their cheap labor for years. But now we want them out.

My answer to the people who say "deport them all" is "you should tell them yourself." Don't leave it to the government. You go over to the restaurant where you so often have eaten lunch and tell the people there that the illegals in the kitchen and waiting tables should leave.

You tell the man who cuts your yard for a pittance that he should leave. You tell the lady who has cleaned your house for years that she should leave. You tell the kids on your child's soccer team that their parents should be deported. You tell the young man in the junior ROTC program that his mother should be deported, even as he enters the Navy.

I think that in our heart of hearts we all know that if we had been in the position of these illegal immigrants, we would have done what they did.

On our mission trips to Mexico and Central America, we have seen people living in shacks made of mud and sticks. We have seen people who are hungry. They are people just like you and me. They want what we want, to feed their families and to live in peace. These are the workers that came here on temporary visas and stayed on to support their poor families back home and to raise their children here.

"Consider this," I have said to parishioners, "If your family was hungry or homeless or in danger, wouldn't you do the same thing? Wouldn't you swim any river and climb any fence to save your family? I know that I would."

We don't have an immigration crisis. What we have is a crisis of groundless fear and a lack of charity.

Love will win out over sin and death, continued:

paupers." Tom said, "Maybe we got to learn. We never got booted off no land before, neither." "We done it clean," said Pa. "There can't no blame be laid on us. We never took nothin' we couldn't pay, we never suffered no man's charity. When Tom here got in trouble, we could hold up our heads. He only done what any man would a done." "Then what'll we do?" Uncle John asked. "We go in like the law says an' they'll come out for him. We on'y got hundred and fifty dollars. They take forty to bury Grampa an' we won't get to California—or else they'll bury him a pauper." The men stirred restively, and they studied the darkening ground in front of their knees. Pa said softly, "Grandpa buried his pa with his own hands, done it in dignity, an' shaped the grave nice with his own shovel. That was a time when a man had the right to be buried by his own son an' a son had the right to bury his own father." "The law says different now," said Uncle John. "Sometimes the law can't be follere'd no way," said Pa. "Not in decency anyways. They's lots of times you can't. When Floyd was loose an' goin' wild, law said we got to give him up—an' nobody give him up. Sometimes a fella got to sift the law. I'm sayin' now I got the right to bury my own pa. Anybody got somepin to say?" The preacher rose high on his elbows. "Law changes," he said, "but got to's go on. You got the right to do what you got to do."

... They are both plainspoken stories, our Gospel *and The Grapes of Wrath*. Both tell of the power of sin to subvert the law, to make of it an instrument of death rather than of life. Both speak of how love can sacrifice itself in the cause of life and thus deliver us from the law. At the close of *The Grapes of Wrath*, we have no promise that love will win out over sin and death. At the close of the Gospel, God insists that it will.

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, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Michael Kiriti, Hunter Kubit, Fr. Lavagetto's mother, 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.

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