



Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 14, 2017

Readings

This week:

Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14:1-12

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 8:5-8, 14-17

1 Peter 3:15-18

John 14:15-21

Psalm

Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you. (*Psalm 33*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Larry Percell.

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

Monday, May 15, 7:30 pm

Spiritual Education, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

In all the great mystery of Mary, then, one thing remains most clear: that of herself she is nothing, and that God has for our sakes delighted to manifest His glory and His love in her.

It is because she is, of all the saints, the most perfectly poor and the most perfectly hidden, the one who has absolutely nothing whatever that she attempts to possess as her own, that she can most fully communicate to the rest of us the grace of the infinitely selfless God.

...All our sanctity depends on her maternal love. The ones she desires to share the joy of her own poverty and simplicity, the ones whom she wills to be hidden as she is hidden, are the ones who share her closeness to God.

—*Seeds of Contemplation*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Annual meeting reprise:

Members of the Thomas Merton community met for the 21st year last Sunday to review the previous year and talk about the future of the community. After a hearty brunch, committee reports—Spiritual Education, Liturgy, and Speak Out—as well as other reports—on the TMC web site, the church site renovations, community outreach, and Kenya Help, displayed the vital work that the community continues to do in education, liturgy, and social justice.

Community reports were presented by Dick Placone, Bob Foley, and Helen Baumann. Dick would like to convene a general meeting of the community to brainstorm ways that we can reach out beyond our own community. He suggested that we consider donations to the Stanford Blood Bank, which has a 5% contribution rate and always needs donations. He also spoke of tutoring at St. Elizabeth Seton School, especially now that many of the families are living in fear of deportation.

Bob Foley said that he and Fr. Jack Izzo went to high school and college together, and even worked together at one time. They are now working with Jesuits in Spain to develop Camino Ignaciano, a lesser-known pilgrimage route. In 1522, St. Ignatius Loyola's leg injuries, incurred at the Battle of Pamplona, were sufficiently recovered for him to walk again, and during his recover from surgery, he had undergone a religious conversion. Jesuits hope to assemble promotion materials to invite people to a spiritual pilgrimage on the Camino Ignaciano by the 500th anniversary of the famous 1522 journey made by St. Ignatius from his home in Spain's Basque country to Montserrat and Manresa.

Helen Baumann says that newcomers are not well served by the parish, and she would like to see us institute a First Friday Fish & Chips dinner at St. Thomas for all the newcomers in the parish, and whomever else would like to come. It would be a drop-in dinner, and she would like to start it in June (June 2). She needs people to sign up to help, and she needs all of us to support it and welcome newcomers. She also spoke about the successful opening of the church last Saturday for the May Day children's parade, which ended at the park across the street. Lemonade was served and Bill Mahrt played organ mu-



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Inspiration from mother witnesses:

By Sr. Joan Brown, May 4, 2017, in globalsistersreport.org. Sr. Joan is a Franciscan sister and executive director of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light.

In 1905, the year that Ann Reeves Jarvis died, her daughter Anna Jarvis began the process to make Mother's Day an official holiday. Her intention, to honor her mother, a peace activist who cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the U.S. Civil War, took an unexpected turn after Mother's Day became an official holiday in 1911. Commercialization of the holiday, beginning with Hallmark, led her to boycott Mother's Day, threaten lawsuits, and stage protests at a candy convention that was exploiting the day for profiteering.

Finally in 1925 she was so angered by the selling of carnations by American War Mothers to raise money that she got herself arrested for disturbing the peace. Reflecting upon this history and that Mother's Day originally was to celebrate life and state that mothers did not want their children killed by war, I believe the added history is significant in our time. As we face the emergency of climate change, we can celebrate the true spirit of Mother's Day, which is to honor and affirm strong women standing up for life. We may need to move out of our comfort zones to live out the principal meaning of Mother's Day, just as Anna Jarvis did. We have many "witnesses of motherhood" from whom we can draw inspiration. Several have died because of their fearless and persistent actions for life and we honor them as *Presenté!* in our own work and struggles each day:

Sister Dorothy Stang, SND, who died February 12, 2005, in Brazil, worked for decades with the land-based farmers to protect the rainforests and the livelihood of the people. She received many death threats from loggers and large land owners before her actual murder at point-blank range while she was doing her work in the state of Para.

Shehla Masood, an Indian environmental activist, was killed in 2011 for her work in protecting wildlife, especially around investigating the deaths of tigers in sanctuaries. She was also shot at point-blank range outside her home. She was killed because of her work probing the illegal diamond mining and/or hunting of tigers.

Berta Caceres, a Honduran woman organizer, was assassinated March 3, 2016. She worked for years with her

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Margo McAuliffe's follow-up:

In my report on Kenya Help at our annual meeting I presented a rather bleak picture. What I failed to point out is the work of Kenya Help continues with the strength we've always had. While Fr. Kiriti is no longer associated with either Mji Wa Neema children's home or with St. Francis Secondary School for Girls, he is a very strong presence in Empower the World, (ETW) the Kenyan nonprofit we set up when he was transferred from the Naivasha parish. This proved to be a very smart move, as it has safeguarded the funds we send from any sticky-fingered persons who came after him.

ETW hires one paid person, Hiliary Agisa, a social worker who receives scholarship applications, vets the families to verify need, and presents a report to the ETW board, which then votes on the neediest candidates. Fr. Kiriti is the chairperson of that board. Hiliary also mentors all our students, offering encouragement, advice, and an occasion a warning to those who must bring up their grades. He is very good at responding to my questions and requests—much better than previous social workers. We will continue to support the education of the Mji Wa Neema young people until they have completed their schooling. We may also need to support them with more money, since they now don't have "home" to go to when they are on school vacation, April, August and December each year. The future will unfold, but rest assured, we will not let them down.

We will also continue with the other children on our list and will continue to add new ones each year, as long as our supporters are here to provide those funds. Thank you all so much. —Margo McAuliffe

[Visit Kenya Help to make a donation at kenyahelp.us. It has no paid positions, and operating costs were approximately 3.3% of the 2013 budget, so 96.7% of your donation goes straight to Kenya. —Ed.]

Annual meeting, continued:

sic. A pamphlet about the history of the church was distributed. The event garnered \$75 in donations, and she ended with an invitation to all of us to come to this event next year.

The program ended with thank you's to Ruth and George Chippendale, given a 2017 Lifetimes of Achievement award by the city for their work over the years, and to Judy Creek and Bill Voorhees. Judy has just retired from being our treasurer for the past 20 years, and Bill has just ended his term on the board.

Inspiration from mother witnesses, continued:

indigenous community through COPINH (Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras) fighting construction of a dam and hydroelectric project on the Rio Blanco that poses threats to the environment, river and indigenous Lenca people.

But there are many mothers around the world working to care for mother Earth and address environmental degradation, climate change and human dignity. In the Franciscan Canticle of Creation we pray, "Praised be sister, mother Earth who sustains and governs us." These women know the meaning of not only birthing and sustaining life, but also the qualities of leadership that break through greed and misdirected exploitation that does not allow Earth to govern us.

Monica Maigari, from Kaduna State, Nigeria, is one of the 60-79% percent of women farmers in Nigeria who grow food amidst the violence of Boko Haram. She was the first woman farmer to stand before the chief of her province advocating for land rights for women because women farmers own only 7.2% of the land. She works for food sovereignty amidst climate adaptation.

Majd Chourbaji, a Syrian woman organizer, was exiled with her children after suffering imprisonment and her husband's death. She works for the education of Syrian children in exile. She is a strong proponent of non-violent action, including a hunger strike that resulted in the release of 150 women detainees from prison.

Ursula Rakova of the Cartaret Islands [Papua New Guinea islands in the South Pacific] helped lead her island nation people, the first climate refugees, to a new land. She and the other leaders have planted thousands of trees for food and economic survival in their new land, as they deal with the loss of culture, spirituality, and livelihood in making a new home.

While we might try to convince ourselves that these are exceptional women and that each of us does not have the time, courage, wisdom or intelligence for the type of motherhood our times require—we are wrong.

Each of us knows what mothers do to "sustain and govern" households. As we sign the Mother's Day cards of gratitude, let us invoke the name of the founder of Mother's Day, Anna Jarvis, and the other mother witnesses caring for Earth. May our greeting cards be transformed into letters to the editors, rally signs, and petitions to public officials offering motherly advice. May we point out that it is no longer acceptable to leave a mess in our home, Earth.

Blessing of Liturgical Ministers

Lord God, in your loving kindness
You sent your Spirit to call us to be the eyes and hands
of Christ. Continue to be with us and our community.
Bless our brothers and sisters,
who have responded to the needs of our community
and who have committed themselves to your service.
Grant that their ministries may be fruitful
and our worship pleasing in your sight.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mother's Day Blessing

Loving God, as a mother gives life and nourishment to
her children, so you watch over your Church.
Bless these women, that they may be strengthened
as they nurture others.
Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.
Grant that we, their loving children, husbands, and
friends, may honor them always with a spirit of profound
respect. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen

An Easter insurrection of hope:

Subtitled Accompanying Jesus in Trump's America by Geila Rajae and published May 2017 on Sojourners at sojo.net.

How does one celebrate the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ while crippled with fear? There have been a handful of times in my life of faith that have been filled with sadness. One of those was in November when, according to research, 81% of white evangelical Protestants and 52% of white Catholics—enthusiastically or not—decided to vote for a president with a platform hostile to the teachings of Jesus. A debilitating fear and despair began burrowing into the marrow of my bones. It's hard to await the next executive order or policy change or nomination that will instill fear in my community.

As a health-care chaplain and student in public health, I'm keenly aware of the impact repeal of the Affordable Care Act would have on access to basic health care and in the lives of people I've worked with in hospitals from coast to coast. . . . I have sat at the bedside of thousands who have fought to survive their illness. Now they are targeted. Alone, it's easy to become lost in the distortion brought on by hate rhetoric. I need to connect to something with deeper roots than my fear.

. . . We celebrate Easter as a story of triumph over death, but the point of that death and resurrection is to allow us to persevere in the struggle of life. We celebrate the resurrection while we participate in the work of Christ. Catholic author John Dear wrote, "We opt to be with Jesus, to serve Jesus, to accompany Jesus among the world's poor in the nonviolent struggle for justice." The transforming hope of the resurrection reminds us that "we hope for what we do not see" even while the Spirit of God "intercedes with sighs too deep for words" (Romans 8:25-26). The Easter liturgy should be an insurrection of hope. The liturgy of the church needs to translate into acts of solidarity and connection with our neighbors. We need to lend our voices and our bodies in acts that embody hope. I, and we, need the church. . . . Jesus has shown us the way. It is not safe. We may experience threats or fear that shake us to our core. This Easter, I need the work of the people of God to be a transformative force in me and in the world. Alleluia.

Oppose without hatred:

By Gareth Higgins, May 2017, at <https://sojo.net>.

One of the characters in the original *King Kong* (1933) says that "it was beauty killed the beast." This line is spoken after the magnificent ape is hounded to his death by buzzing planes that knock him off the side of the Empire State Building, so it's not strictly true. Beauty is actually what he wanted to *save*. . . .

Two of the biggest-scale movies of the year [are in theaters now:] The enormous monkey homage *Kong: Skull Island* and Disney's live-action remake of its own *Beauty and the Beast* don't immediately invite comparison, but the stories they're based on are actually about the same thing: finding vulnerability behind terrifying facades.

What initiates change is the risk taken by the vulnerable to imagine they are looking at something more than just a monster. The tenderness of the original Kong's approach to Ann Darrow (Fay Wray) and Belle's openness to the light that might be hiding behind the Beast's frightening demeanor are mirrors. But it's inaccurate to think that the transformation—or the risk—in these stories travels only in one direction. Ann gets rescued and the Beast turns back into a man. But Kong also experiences love and Belle undergoes a rite of passage that leaves her more whole than before.

What initiates these changes is the risk taken by the vulnerable to face something fearful and imagine that they might be looking at something more than just a monster. Behind every face, there's always something that could lead us to empathize with even our worst enemies.

Today there are policies to resist, people to protect, and practices to embody that will nurture us for these challenging tasks. . . . Because of the ease with which we can slip into dehumanizing talk, perhaps we need to turn our attention to beauty even more than opposition. To turn to beauty as *part* of our opposition.

One vital thing that any of us can do to help transform divisive aggression into passion for the common good is to ask strangers curiosity questions about their lives. We may all be invited to be Ann Darrow, or Belle, open to the hidden light behind a face that frightens us.