



Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 21, 2017

Readings

This week:

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

1 Peter 3:15-18

John 14:15-21

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 1:12-14

1 Peter 4:13-16

John 17:1-11a

Psalm

God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord. (*Psalm 47*)

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

Violence rests on the assumption that the enemy and I are entirely different: the enemy is evil and I am good. The enemy must be destroyed but I must be saved. But love sees things differently. It sees that even the enemy suffers from the same sorrows and limitations that I do. That we both have the same hopes, the same needs, the same aspiration for peaceful and harmonious human life. And that death is the same for both of us. Then love may perhaps show me that my brother is not really my enemy and that war is both his enemy and mine. War is *our* enemy. Then peace becomes possible.

—*No Man Is an Island*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Chippendales receive award today:

Lifetimes of Achievement 2017 is celebrating our own George and Ruth Chippendale today! You're invited to join them at the Avenidas 2017 Lifetimes of Achievement



event, an afternoon Garden Party today, May 21, 3:00-5:00 pm. to celebrate the accomplishments of Marion Mandell, Dexter Dawes, Judy Sleeth, Terry & Carol Winograd, and Ruth & George Chippendale, this year's distinguished group of honorees.

Enjoy award-winning wines, tasty appetizers & desserts and music by the Jazz ConneXion at the Feldman Family House at 2121 Waverley in Palo Alto. Proceeds help fund the programs for positive aging that Avenidas provides to over 7,000 people on the mid-Peninsula. Tickets are \$75 and are available online.

Margo McAuliffe honored last night:

The Midpeninsula Media Center's Annual Local Hero Awards Ceremony was held last night, honoring Local Hero Award winners, those who have overcome significant hardship or made outstanding contributions to the community. One of those honored was our own Margo McAuliffe of Kenya Help. You can read about Margo and all the award winners at midpenmedia.org.



Please keep bringing food this summer. Donations have been down, and the Food Closet still needs flip-top soups and entrees, as well as small bottles of water, crackers, granola bars, fruit cups, juice pouches. Please continue to be generous with your food donations, and with your dollars too!

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

The Ascension: Why look at the sky?

Abridged from an article by Richard Gaillardetz, Professor of Catholic Systematic Theology at Boston College and the author of An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, in Give Us This Day.

In the modern mind the story of the Ascension can seem a bit odd, recounting as it does Jesus' physical ascent upward through the clouds. . . .In Catholic teaching, the Paschal mystery refers to Christ's suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. The Ascension, [which we celebrate this Thursday,] is not a quaint add-on to the Easter story; it is integral to it. Two



important Christian convictions flow from this. First, in ascending to the "right hand" of God, Jesus brought his full humanity—the totality of all that he experienced, lived, and loved on earth—into the fullness of the divine reality. All that we humans experience—our hopes and fears, what delights us and what terrifies us—is now forever embraced and transformed, through Christ, in the divine life of God.

Second, we are called to heed the query of the angels, "Why are you looking at the sky?" Jesus' ascension signals that we are no longer to encounter him as his first followers did. . . .Henceforth, we are to encounter Christ only through "the eyes of our hearts," as St. Paul puts it.

Pope Francis says give to the homeless, don't worry about how they spend it:

Abridged from an article by Michael O'Loughlin, America magazine's national correspondent, at www.americamagazine.org.

As the debate over the appropriate response by rich countries to the global refugee crisis barrels on, Pope Francis said in a new interview that Catholics should offer housing or financial assistance to families settling in a new country. He called on Catholics not to make excuses when it comes to giving to those asking for change.

"Here in the Vatican there are two parishes, and both are housing Syrian families. Many parishes in Rome have also opened their doors and others, which don't have a house for priests, have offered to pay rent for families in need, for a full year," he told *Scarp de'tennis*, a magazine run by the homeless and socially excluded in Italy.

Some critics of the pope have derided his stance on refugees, claiming that the Vatican is a walled city (it is not)

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Jesus no longer walks among us in some discrete, localized form but is to be encountered through the sacraments, the preaching of God's Word, the work for justice, and the proffering of mercy—we encounter him now as the one "who fills all things in every way."

Cardinal Tobin urges solidarity with people facing deportation as immigration arrests spike:

Abridged from an article by Wyatt Massey, May 17, 2017, at www.americamagazine.org.

Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark called on President Trump and Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform in an address in Brooklyn during which he urged solidarity with people facing deportation.

“You really have to believe in inflicting cruelty on innocent people to choose to support the policies we’ve seen in recent months while possessing the power to change the law,” Cardinal Tobin said.

Christian virtues of grace and mercy should drive lawmakers to rethink how the United States treats immigrants, according to the cardinal. He said Republican control of the U.S. executive and legislative branches of government represented essentially one-party rule, putting GOP politicians in a unique position to pass comprehensive reform, if they had the will to do so.

“They could bring nearly 12 million people out of the shadows, if they wanted to,” Cardinal Tobin said. “This isn’t about border security. It’s about being attentive to the reality of people who are already in our communi-

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. . . Give to the homeless, continued:

or that he only talks about helping migrants instead of directly assisting them (he has). Earlier this month, for example, the right-wing news outlet Breitbart posted a tweet criticizing Pope Francis for his stance toward migrants, accusing the pontiff of hypocrisy: “How many refugees are living inside your walls bruh,” read the tweet, which linked to a Breitbart story about a speech given by Francis in which he called for greater protections for migrants. . . .

People who worry about how the money might be spent should ask themselves what guilty pleasures they are secretly spending money on, Pope Francis said. “There are many excuses” to justify why one does not lend a hand when asked by a person begging on the street, he said. Some may think, “I give money and he just spends it on a glass of wine!” Francis said. But, he joked, a “glass of wine is his only happiness in life!”

Giving something to someone in need “is always right,” the pope said, adding that it should be done with respect and compassion because “tossing money and not looking in [their] eyes is not a Christian” way of behaving, he said. . . .

On the Ascension the followers of Jesus look up to heaven. The angels ask them “Why?” It is as if they are saying: “Why don’t you just look around and then maybe you will see the Christ?” Look around and you will see the presence of Christ. Look around and you will hear the call of God. Look around and you will know the power of the Spirit. Look around and you will be empowered. Look around and you will be filled with joy. You will be involved in the struggle for justice and peace. You will hear the voice of God among the poor and needy of the world. You will hear God speak in the struggle for peace and justice. You will see God in the goodness and faith of people. You will see God in those who struggle to do what is right and good. You will be led into life and grace. God dwells in the world.



In a sense the Ascension experience sends the followers of Jesus into the world to “find God in all things.” The spirituality of Christ is not a spirituality that looks to get out of the world and its challenges. The spirituality of Christ is a spirituality connected to the world around us—the world of people and nature—a world with rich and poor, men and women, young and old, nature and grace, conflict and reconciliation, war and peace, sin and virtue, etc. The disciples are sent out not with a rigid ideology or a fully spelled out set of rules, but rather with a spirit—a spirit of openness—a spirit that proclaims “repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations.” Even though our world today, on a certain level, is radically different than the world of 2000 years ago, Christ can still be found. Christ is still alive and present. The Ascension is the key that allows all this to happen. Jesus says: “It is better for you that I go, for if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:7) Catholic Social Teaching affirms and supports our involvement with all the richness, diversity, and mystery of human life. We can “find God in all things.” We can make a difference in all the big issues of our day.

—Education for Justice

Cardinal Tobin, continued:

ties.”

Cardinal Tobin spoke at the Diocese of Brooklyn’s annual World Communications Day on May 17, where he received the St. Francis de Sales distinguished communicator award. Just a few hours before he delivered the keynote address at the conference, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency reported that in the 100 days since Mr. Trump issued new executive orders on immigration enforcement priorities, ICE agents had arrested more than 41,000 individuals “who are either known or suspected of being in the country illegally,” an increase of 37.6% over the same period in 2016.

Cardinal Tobin, the leader of New Jersey’s largest archdiocese, is known as an . . . outspoken critic of Mr.

Trump’s immigration policies. He joined a lobbying effort in Washington, D.C., of nearly 1,000 business leaders and politicians against the president’s moves in February. At the time, Cardinal Tobin called Mr.

Trump’s temporary immigration ban on seven Muslim-majority countries “misbegotten” and “demonizing.”

In March, he led a rally of several dozen clergy members to support Catalino Guerrero at his deportation hearing. The 59-year-old Mr. Guerrero, who entered the United States illegally in 1991 and later applied for asylum, was granted a one-year extension on his stay in April.

“The service of communicating hope today begins with putting a face on apparently hopeless situations, situations like Catalino’s, who without the solidarity of his brothers and sisters, might well have been taken away from his wife and four children and their grandchildren,” Cardinal Tobin said.

His decision to accompany Mr. Guerrero represented more than making a difference for one person, Cardinal Tobin said. The act put a face on the deportation debate and helped others understand the plight and fear of immigrants in the United States today, according to the cardinal, who added a similar gesture is something every cardinal, bishop or city mayor could do. Well meaning people, even religious people, can ignore the realities of their neighbors, he said.

This sense of facelessness is perpetuated by politicians, as well as members of the news media. When the for-profit media chase ratings, they can lose sight of an important responsibility to inform the public, Cardinal Tobin said. He added that faith must lead us to act on behalf of others to spread hope, as Pope Francis said in his World Communications Day message.

“As Christians, we have no option but to be disciples of hope,” Cardinal Tobin said. “I suggest that the way we do that is by putting a face on people and situations that are rendered faceless or whose faces have been distorted.”

God’s nature—exuberance or the cross?:

Abridged from an article by Fr. Richard Rohr, OMI, in The Valley Catholic, September 6, 2016.

It’s funny where you can learn a lesson and catch a glimpse of the divine. Recently, in a grocery store, I witnessed. . . a young girl, probably around 16 years of age, along with two other girls her own age, [who] came into the store, picked up a grocery basket and began to walk down the aisle, not knowing that a second basket was stuck onto the one she was carrying. At a point the inevitable happened, the basket stuck to hers released and crashed to the floor with a loud bang, startling her and all of us around her. What was her reaction? She burst into laughter, exuding a joy-filled delight at being so startled. For her the surprise of the falling basket was not an irritation but a gift, an unexpected humor happily fracturing routine.

If that had happened to me, given how I’m habitually in a hurry and easily irritated by anything that disrupts my agenda, I would probably have responded with a silent expletive rather than with laughter. Which made me think: Here’s a young girl who probably isn’t going to church and probably isn’t much concerned about matters of faith, but who, in this moment, is wonderfully radiating the energy of God, while I, a vowed religious, over-serious priest, church-minister and spiritual writer, in such a moment, too often radiate the antithesis of God’s energy, irritation.

But is this true? Does God really burst in laughter at falling grocery baskets? Doesn’t God ever get irritated? What’s God’s real nature? . . . God is the energy that lies at the base of everything that is. And that energy, as is evident in both creation and scripture, is, at its root, creative, prodigal, robust, joy-filled, playful, and exuberant. If you want to know what God is like look at the natural exuberance of children, look at the exuberance of a young puppy, look at the robust, playful energy of young people, and look at the spontaneous laughter of a sixteen-year-old when she is startled by a falling basket. And to see God’s prodigal character, we might look at billions and billions of planets that surround us. The energy of God is prodigal and exuberant. . . .

Jesus promises us that if we take up his cross, God will reward us with an exuberance that no one can ever take from us.

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