



Third Sunday of Lent

March 4, 2018

Readings

This week:

Exodus 20:1–17

1 Corinthians 1:22–25

John 2:13–25

Next week:

2 Chronicles 36:14–16, 19–23

Ephesians 2:4–10

John 3:14–21

Psalm

Lord, you have the words of everlasting life. (*Psalm 19*)

Today's presider is Msgr. John Sandersfeld.

Today

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

Wednesday, March 7, 7:30 pm

STA Site Committee, Thomas House Library

Thursday, March 8, 7:30 pm

TMC Board, Thomas House Dining Room

From Thomas Merton

The world of our time is in confusion. It is reaching the peak of the greatest crisis in history. Never before has there been such a total upheaval of the whole human race. Tremendous forces are at work: spiritual, sociological, economic, technological and, least of all, political. Mankind stands on the brink of a new barbarism, yet at the same time there remain possibilities for an unexpected and almost unbelievable solution, the creation of a new world and a new civilization, the like of which has never been seen. We are face to face either with Antichrist or the Millennium, no one knows which.

--The Silent Life

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

Life Bloom founder to speak March 11:



All are invited to hear Catherine Wanjohi on Sunday, March 11, 3 -5 pm, in Menlo Park. Catherine will speak about Life Bloom, the program she founded to help commercial sex workers reclaim their sense of self-worth and find alternative ways to support their families. Over time she has be-

come the go-to person in Naivasha and Nairobi, Kenya, to counsel abused women and children and is recognized throughout the region as a leader in women's empowerment and health. She has organized educational programs and materials for men regarding HIV/AIDS, how it is spread and using condoms.

Catherine left her job as principal of a girls high school to found Life Bloom Services International in 2003. Since that time, Life Bloom has served over 10,000 women, men, girls, boys and children. She has 3 children, Laura (20), Louis (15) and Michael (14), whom she adopted from Mji Wa Neema children's home. In addition, she fosters 2 brothers from Mji Wa Neema, Lucas (16) and Joseph (12).

Please join us as Catherine tells us the story of Life Bloom's founding and learn about the homegrown, innovative strategies addressing the challenges faced by women. Hear stories of successes as well as disappointments and learn how she raises her children to achieve their goals and share their gifts. You will come away with a much deeper understanding of what her clients face, why they do sex work and ways they have been able to leave it.

Available will be Catherine's 2 books: *A Walk at Midnight: Journeying with Abused Women and Girls Towards Inner Wholeness and Dignity*, in which she tells about going with the women to bars to see what they face every day, and *Stepping Out and Stepping Up: Former Sex Workers Now Flying Wing to Wing!*

Where: Home of Margo McAuliffe
179 East Creek Drive, Menlo Park

When: Sunday, March 11, 2018, at 3 pm
RSVP to Margo.(650) 322-0821, margo@kenyahelp.us
Light refreshments will be served.

Hanidcapped parking behind church:

Reminder: On Sunday, all spaces in the driveway behind the church are signed for people with handicapped designation except for the space marked for the President. These spaces are in great demand. Please save spaces for those with the appropriate hanger/license plate.

Have a Heart collection report:



Thank you to all parishioners who contributed in any way to the recent Have A Heart collection. A total of \$1981 was donated which will help meet important needs of the Opportunity Center clients as they arise over the coming year.

A bag of new wrapped items was also donated which will be given to the OC.

Your donations will be kept safe in a church account until purchases have been made. Many thanks to all!

--The STA Human Concerns Committee

TMC Board meeting March 8:

The TMC Board of Directors meets monthly on the 2nd Thursday in the Thomas House Dining Room at 7:30 pm. The next meeting will be March 8; at that meeting the agenda will include a review of the March TMC Membership letter, preparation for the talk on March 24 on the Sierra Roots project in Nevada City by original TMC co-founder Janice O'Brien, and details about local volunteer opportunities, especially at Seton School. All are invited to attend.

March is TMC Membership Month:



Thomas Merton Center (TMC) membership materials are being distributed this month to current TMC members.

If you would like to support TMC, a membership application form is available in the church vestibule.

The Thomas Merton Center is a membership-based non-profit religious education organization required by its bylaws to register its membership annually. Membership fees are minimal—\$15 per individual or \$30 per family. Your choice to become a member helps to keep this Catholic, lay-led, progressive faith community active. Your membership shows your support for sustaining the Sunday 8:45 a.m. Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas church, the adult spiritual education programs, and educational opportunities at St. Elizabeth Seton School in Palo Alto.

Please contact Kay Williams for more information:
kaywill@pacbell.net, 650-270-4188.

Fish Fest on hiatus until April:

Next Friday Fish Fest will be April 13 in the Thomas House at 6:00 p.m. The usual March date (of the "tenth Friday" of the month) is too close to the parish St. Patrick's Day Dinner (March 17). See you in April!

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Catholics and the LGBT community:

The parish Human Concerns Committee is discussing our parish response to LGBT Catholics. Please join in the discussion. The committee meets the third Wednesday of every month in the OLR Hall at 7:30 p.m. (Thursday, March 21).

James Martin, S.J., the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything* and *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, turns his attention to the relationship between LGBT Catholics and the Church in *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity*.

On the day after the Orlando nightclub shooting, James Martin S.J. posted a video on Facebook in which he called for solidarity with our LGBT brothers and sisters. "The largest mass shooting in US history took place at a gay club and the LGBT community has been profoundly affected," he began. He then implored his fellow Catholics—and people everywhere—to "stand not only with the people of Orlando but also with their LGBT brothers and sisters." A powerful call for tolerance, acceptance, and support—and a reminder of Jesus' message for us to love one another—Father Martin's post went viral and was viewed more than 1.6 million times.

Now, Martin expands on his reflections in this moving and inspiring book, offering a powerful, loving, and much-needed voice in a time marked by anger, prejudice, and divisiveness. Adapted from an address he gave to New Ways Ministry, a group that ministers to and advocates for LGBT Catholics, *Building a Bridge* provides a roadmap for repairing and strengthening the bonds that unite all of us as God's children.

Martin uses the image of a two-way bridge to enable LGBT Catholics and the Church to come together in a call to end the "us" versus "them" mentality. Turning to the Catechism, he draws on the three criteria at the heart of the Christian ministry—"respect, compassion, and sensitivity"—as a model for how the Catholic Church should relate to the LGBT community. #

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339
Bulletin: Kay Williams (Mar. 4 & 11) kaywill@pacbell.net
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Praying for the sick is a practice of love:

[by Mary Ann McGivern, *ncronline*, 2/28/18]

I just was on a vacation to Paris — a wondrous trip. I visited a church, Montmartre's Sacré-Coeur in Paris and I lit a candle. Traveling with my mother, we always lit a candle for my father and my two deceased brothers. Now I named Mom as well. And then I said to them, David, your son and brother, my brother, too, is sick. He has lymphoma. Get on the stick. Intercede for him.

Thinking of David, I thought right away of Nathan, the son of a dear friend who was just diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I lit another candle for Nathan's deceased father and brother and then I added on Leo's parents and my friend's parents, even though I didn't know their names, and I said to the lot of them, get on the stick. Intercede for Nathan.

My traveling companion Paulette and I began a candle-lighting campaign church to church, calling on our own deceased family members and the families of Nathan and of Eldon and Ana as well — our friends who are seriously ill, for whom we have been asked to pray.

In the midst of this solemn candle lighting we laughed again and again. We were enlisting, in old-fashioned terms, the army of the church triumphant. We were calling on all our family saints to work miracles. It was an audacious action, and our prayers and the pressure we were trying to put on these family saints gave us hope and moments of joy. We felt a union with so many people we love.

At Notre-Dame, I knelt at the small altar that holds the blessed sacrament. I knelt to pray, but quickly I got to wondering about our candle-lighting endeavor. How does the intercession of saints work? How does prayer work? Who is this God we are calling on?

I took a breath and a mental step back. God is love. I know that. Our practice of lighting candles is a practice of love. That's enough to know.

[Mary Ann McGivern, a Sister of Loretto, works with people who have felony convictions and advocates for criminal justice.]

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

Phenomenology of the gun:

[By B. D. McClay, *Commonweal*, 2/20/18. McClay is senior editor of the *Hedgehog Review*, and a contributing writer to *Commonweal*. She lives in New York.]

I've shot a gun exactly one time, when I went skeet shooting over a Christmas holiday. The amount of discomfort I felt was, to say the least, surprising. I find guns aesthetically thrilling, and I certainly have my share of pent-up aggression that could be safely directed toward a clay pigeon...But here I was, holding a weapon in my hands, surrounded by people also holding weapons, and all I could see was myself tripping and somehow shooting another person in the head. Everything depended on me doing things correctly, even though I rarely do things correctly. What lunatic had allowed this?...

Looking back on it, I should have realized I'd become wary of objects that I was supposed to keep around solely for aggressive purposes. As a single woman living alone, people told me I should buy a gun. A man at a hardware store was unwilling to sell me basic tools, but kept trying to get me to buy wasp spray—which he wasn't legally allowed to tell me could be used on human beings, but if I had to use it on one, well...

But I didn't want a gun. And I seemed as likely to shoot the wasp spray at myself as at a—well, what? A Funny Games-style home invasion team? A homeless person I somehow mistook for a threat? I did want a hammer, and needle-nose pliers, and a screwdriver or two. But the hardware store clerk kept asking: "What do you want tools *for*? What do you need tools *for*?" But what I wanted wasp spray *for*—or should want it *for*—was, to him, self-evident. I needed to keep it around to use on human beings....

However, his question has proved to be a kind of gift. "What do we want this tool *for*?" is one question that, when applied to guns, isn't always easy to answer. Owning a hammer means you might anticipate tacking down a floorboard or hanging a picture. A screwdriver is a tool you keep around for a variety of purposes, some wholly predictable, some unpredictable. Owning a screwdriver means you anticipate interacting with screws from time to time. A gun is a tool that anticipates something else entirely. It's meant to kill something.

Sometimes, that something is clearly defined. A person who keeps guns around to go hunting knows why they're there. And hunting itself isn't simply spree-killing wild animals; when you can go hunting is carefully regulated, certain animals are off-limits, and obligations to the animal—like a clean death—are enforced. In imbuing guns with a clear purpose, hunting also gives them an ethical framework.

But the United States is full of guns—including not only those owned by private individuals, but also the police—that have no purpose at all except to be used, one day or

another, on human beings. How or why or when they will be used is almost impossible to answer. When they are, the only ethical guide available to consult at that moment is the user's fear. If you're sufficiently afraid, you can shoot a woman through the door. If you're sufficiently afraid, you can shoot a man at a traffic stop for no reason at all, or a child who is doing nothing but playing outside.

And if you are sufficiently alienated, you can pick up one of these supposed tools of self-protection that you've collected and use it until you feel better, leaving seventeen children dead behind you. But look—that's why you had it in the first place.

Of course I don't have any solutions. That we've obscured the purpose of guns to ourselves seems clear enough; that the solution will not finally depend upon a proper philosophy of guns also seems obvious. The scope of our gun problem is vast—and complicated. The history of gun control is itself frequently racist, and any attempt to more tightly regulate and limit the purchase of guns will have to address this fact.

But that guns transform the people who own them still seems significant. Ta-Nehisi Coates, in a 2012 conversation, explained why he didn't own a gun thusly: "It is not enough to have a gun, anymore than it's enough to have a baby. It's a responsibility. I would have to orient myself to that fact." But we aren't, as individuals or as a culture, oriented to that fact ourselves. Guns are just something we get to have and to use, and we don't have to justify that to anyone. They're ours by right. But what is the accompanying obligation?

I didn't buy a tool to defend myself because I knew it would make me afraid—not that it would *admit* fear, but that it would transform the world around me into a world of potential threats. And while in fact I've had my share of low-level ugly encounters walking around my neighborhood—from nasty comments to someone blocking my way across the street with his car—I never wished that I had a can of wasp spray sitting in my pocket. If I had to say what I wished, it would be for the people who made it their business to intimidate me to see me as a person, too.

But if I had come to meet them armed, I would not have seen them as people either. They would have been unreal targets of potential violence—mine. And all I really know is that price is too high to pay. #

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouchev, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, 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 on page 4.]