



The Ascension of the Lord

May 13, 2018

Readings

This week:

Acts of the Apostles 1:1–11

Ephesians 1:17–23

Mark 16:15–20

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 2:1–11

1 Corinthians 12:3b–7, 12–13

John 20:19–23

Psalm

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

Today's presider is Fr. Jack Izzo, S.J.

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

Sunday, May 13, 8:45 a.m.

Second Collection: for Catholic Charities

Monday, May 14, 7:00 p.m.

TMC Liturgy Committee, Thomas House Library

Friday, May 18, 6:00 p.m.

STA Fish Fest Dinner, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

You will perhaps find that my thought has taken on a sentimental tinge. But since the times have become what they have become, I dare to blurt this out.

Have you and I forgotten that our vocation, as innocent bystanders--and the very condition of our terrible innocence--is to do what the child did, and keep on saying the king is naked, at the cost of being condemned criminals?

Remember, the child in the tale was the only innocent one: and because of his innocence the fault of the others was kept from being criminal, and was nothing worse than foolishness. If the child had not been there, they would all have been madmen, or criminals. It was the child's cry that saved them.

--Raids on the Unspeakable

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

TMC Annual Meeting May 20:

The Thomas Merton Center Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 20, from 11 am - 1 pm at the home of Bob and Judy Foley, 1927 Emerson St., Palo Alto.

TMC's charter as a non-profit corporation requires an Annual Meeting. Over brunch, we will share our vision for our TMC community as we move forward. We will also continue to seek guidance from the membership on issues for action by TMC in 2018-2019. We will pay particular attention to TMC committee reports and recognition of the past year's accomplishments in the TMC community.

Three current Board members rotate off the Board in 2018: Vicki Sullivan, Mike McMahon, and Rosana Madrigal de Beattie. Nominees for the open positions are: Ann Akey, Eleanor Hansen, and Mary Seabury. ***(See short bios on page 3.)***

All TMC members will receive an email invitation and request for approval of nominated Board members. Please respond quickly to let us know if you are attending and your "vote" for new Board members. Contact Rosana Madrigal: cell: (650) 969-3844, rhmadrigal@yahoo.com.

High Tea at Seton School May 22:

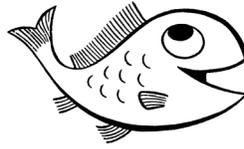
On Tuesday, May 22, you're invited to tea! The St. Elizabeth Seton School Student Council would like to do an 'End of Year Thank You' for parishioners and our school volunteers. It will just be a tea and cookie reception in the St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center that the students will organize themselves - and it's open to all! TMC contributes \$1,000 monthly to Seton School, so TMC members are especially encouraged to attend the tea.

Please RSVP so they know how many are coming! Thanks! (650)326-9004, emaguire@setonpaloalto.org.

St. Vincent de Paul Conference update:

Your generous donations to the work of your St. Vincent de Paul Conference at the end of April enabled us to pay for four emergency hotel stays and rents this month, including 2 families, one with 2 children living in a motel for the last two nights before getting into a LifeMoves apartment, and a woman recovering from cancer. We also help people who come to our parish door with daily food, a grocery card, and always a listening ear and prayer.

Friday Fish Fest May 18 at Thomas House:



Shut your kitchen door and come on down to the Thomas House for a tasty fish and coleslaw supper at the STA Friday Fish Fest on May 18.

We start at 6:00 p.m. and finish by 8:00, and in between there is camaraderie, laughter, sharing, learning about folks whose faces may be familiar but whose stories are not. Sponsored by the STA Site Committee, the Fish Fest draws folks from all the STA Mass communities-- there are 6 distinct groups, each clustered around a particular daily or Sunday Mass. This is a chance to cross-pollinate!

We ask for a \$5 donation for the meal, and \$2 each for a glass of wine or a beer. You are free to bring a dessert to share, but otherwise, the fare is simply fish and chips with coleslaw on the side.

RSVP is necessary, to be sure we have enough fish! This month, respond to Vicki Sullivan, (650) 740-0124, or 327-6339, vickisullivan@comcast.net.

Wear red Sunday, May 20: it's Pentecost!

Pentecost is from the Greek word 'Pentekostos', which means 'fifty'. It's the 50th day after the Sabbath of Pass-over week and in Judaism is called the Feast of Weeks (Leviticus 23:16).

The main sign of Pentecost in the West is the color red. It symbolizes joy and the fire of the Holy Spirit. Priests or ministers, and choirs wear red vestments, and in modern times, the custom has extended to the lay people of the congregation wearing red clothing in celebration as well. Plan on wearing red to Mass next weekend!

STA Garden grooming June 9:



Save Saturday morning, June 9, from 9:30 till noon (or any portion thereof) to get your hands dirty in the St. Thomas Aquinas church garden beds. Vicki Sullivan will be leading the troops to refresh the flowers and shrubs that surround our church. There will be compost and mulch, dead-heading, planting azaleas and hydrangeas rescued from the Easter altar, and general grooming behaviors.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

TMC Board nominees:

Three TMC members have agreed to be nominated to serve on the TMC Board of Directors for a 3-year term. At the TMC Annual Meeting on May 20, these nominees will be confirmed by a vote of the membership.

Ann Akey: Joined TMC several years ago; formerly attended SAG with children and was involved in the catechetical program. Environmental science teacher at Woodside High School, member of the STA Green Committee, former Peace Corps (Benin) and Mennonite Central Committee (Zambia) volunteer. I am married (William) and have two children in their 20's (Willa, Ben). I like plants, bugs, hiking/backpacking, bicycling, gardening and I help out on a Christmas tree farm. Alumna of Gunn High, Grinnell College, Iowa State University and the University of Wyoming. Currently an usher at the 8:45 Mass.

Eleanor Hansen: Joined TMC about 2010; formerly attended St. Ann's while a student at Stanford, then the Angelo Roncalli Community (with Fr. John Duryea), then Companions on the Journey until joining TMC. Born and raised in a large Catholic family in San Diego, I attended San Diego College for Women, San Diego State University, Stanford University, San Jose State University and Golden Gate University. Moved from biology degree to accounting and worked as a tax accountant. Widowed in 2003, no children, lots of nieces and nephews. At TMC, I have been on the Hospitality Committee.

Mary (Purcell) Seabury: Born and raised in Palo Alto, I am a CPA and finance professional, the CFO of the Jim Joseph Foundation, an organization that supports Jewish education. Lived in Davis for 35 years until 2012 when I and my husband relocated to the Peninsula; we have two grown children. My mother, Marguerite Purcell, recommended that I join the Merton Center. Currently on the STA Parish Finance Advisory Committee, treasurer for the Palo Alto Chapter of AAUW and serves with TMC Board member Judi Swope on the AAUW Board. Currently an usher welcoming people to the 8:45 Mass.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, 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 editors: Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams. See listing adjacent.]

Mother's Day reflection:

Whether your mother is alive or dead, Mother's Day brings forward a waterfall of memories. Here are some mother memories by poet Julia Kasdorf.

What I Learned from My Mother

I learned from my mother how to love the living, to have plenty of vases on hand in case you have to rush to the hospital with peonies cut from the lawn, black ants still stuck to the buds. I learned to save jars large enough to hold fruit salad for a whole grieving household, to cube home-canned pears and peaches, to slice through maroon grape skins and flick out the sexual seeds with a knife point. I learned to attend viewings even if I didn't know the deceased, to press the moist hands of the living, to look in their eyes and offer sympathy, as though I understood loss even then. I learned that whatever we say means nothing, what anyone will remember is that we came. I learned to believe I had the power to ease awful pains materially like an angel. Like a doctor, I learned to create from another's suffering my own usefulness, and once you know how to do this, you can never refuse. To every house you enter, you must offer healing: a chocolate cake you baked yourself, the blessing of your voice, your chaste touch.

—Julia Kasdorf

(From *Benetvision* newsletter, compiled by Mary Lou Kownacki and Benetvision Staff, May 2018)

[Kasdorf is Associate Professor of English and Women's Studies at Penn State University and has published 3 volumes of poetry. Raised Mennonite, she took the initiative to express not only personal issues of Mennonites but to publish them and become an award-winning poet for her courageous acts and writing. She covered many non-Mennonite topics such as desires, marriage, domestic life, and personal encounters she had with other Mennonites, whether it was in her hometown or on her journey to becoming a writer.]

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339
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Mary Coady, 650-261-9155, coady_94025@yahoo.com
SpeakOut: Diana Diamond, 650-323-4787, dianaldiamond@gmail.com

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.

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, hus-
bands, and friends,

May honor them always with a spirit of
profound respect.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Log off or pray: Christian Disagreement and Dislike Online

[By B.D. McClay, *Commonweal*, 4/28/18]

My Blue Notebooks is the record of a French courtesan named Liane de Pougy—famous, among other reasons, for her bisexuality—who ended her life as a Dominican tertiary caring for disabled children. She keeps much the diary you would expect such a person to keep, moving from moments of piety to sapphic interludes to catalogs of possessions (“buried in dresses to the point of ruin!”) to regrets, to scorekeeping, with a steep uptick in piety toward the end of her life. In short, very fun, if not particularly revelatory.

The passage in it that’s stuck for me, however, was this little entry that I pull up from time to time to reread on my phone:

August 15. Mary, Holy Virgin, I offer you this day. I hail you and I ask your forgiveness for everything within me which might offend you. I shall be tolerant, kind and gentle. I offer to you Max Jacob and André Germain, whom I do not like, but whom I shall try to like in your name, with all my compassion.

Admissions of actual dislike are not something I come across that often in spiritual writing (which, of course, *My Blue Notebooks* isn’t precisely). While I’m sure Henri Nouwen disliked plenty of people, he doesn’t exactly fill *Return of the Prodigal Son* with comments along those lines. Liane, on the other hand, simply says it straight out. Is it a little self-serving to get a dig in at the same time as practicing your piety? Maybe, but as prayers go, it mostly seems honest.

I don’t think that any observer who pays attention could fail to notice that most intra-Christian (let alone intra-Catholic) conversation, especially online, is indeed toxic—that it creates and sustains “networks of verbal violence,” as Pope Francis recently put it in *Gaudete et exsultate*: “even in Catholic media, limits can be overstepped, defamation and slander can become commonplace, and all ethical standards and re-

spect for the good name of others can be abandoned.”

...Possibly the most beloved topic of people on the internet is how terrible it is to try to talk about anything on the internet. ...But like it or not, the internet—and Twitter and Facebook—are where a lot of writing and thinking happens these days. If you post an article ... to Facebook, you are, at least implicitly, admitting you’re ready to discuss it, and often that discussion descends into a fight. Even those of us who don’t have a particularly large online “presence” still end up in situations where we want to talk through things that matter to us without, as the song goes, losing our religion. And to do this, as it turns out, is hard.

As a Christian who writes and thinks online, and also has a taste for argument, how best to conduct myself is something I think about often. The kind of advice that you’ll often get about how to deal with ugly online interactions is to log off and exit the whole scene as quickly as possible....If your online life produces nothing but discord, it might be the right advice for you.

But while individuals might benefit from logging off and deleting their accounts, “log off” can’t be a general rule, and I often feel like the advice to check out of hard conversations does more harm than good in the bigger picture. Arguments can be generative, and sometimes things are important enough that you need to fight them out even if it makes you feel worse. ...

... An air of fair-mindedness, however well-intentioned, is disingenuous if you don’t actually think you’re dealing with honest interlocutors. While it’s easy to call out bad behaviors—outright lying and cruelty and so on—it’s harder to figure out good behaviors that aren’t really designed to make you look better than the opposition.

Ultimately, ...the question is how to disagree strongly in a Christian way, not a Christian-seeming way. Being a good participant in a poisoned conversation requires more than self-protection.

So back to Liane de Pougy. I think the admission she makes in her diary..is a valuable one, though probably not one most of us need to make public. If we realize that we are largely motivated by dislike of particular people, we can offer that up in prayer. If we think other people are habitually dishonest, we can pray for them. The more we dislike people or consider them bad actors, the greater the reasons we have to pray for them.

And prayer ultimately keeps all of these disagreements rooted where they belong: God....

In that sense, perhaps the best model for how to act actually does come from Francis—not from his exhortation itself, but from his recent apology to sexual abuse victims in Chile: “I acknowledge, and ask you to convey faithfully, that I have made grave errors in assessment and perception of the situation.”

This isn’t false humility or covering your tracks; it’s a genuine admission of wrongdoing. Speaking honestly, humbly, and charitably doesn’t start with others; it starts with you. So let it. #