



Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 15, 2017

Readings

This week:

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

John 1:29-34

Next week:

Isaiah 8:23-9:3

1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

Matthew 4:12-23

Psalm

Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will. (*Psalm 40*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. José Rubio.

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

January 8-14, 2017

January 15

January 16

January 18-25

National Migration Week

103rd World Day of Migrants and Refugees

Martin Luther King Day

Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

From Thomas Merton

In his journal dated April 6, 1968, Thomas Merton reflected on the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., just two days before. King had been planning to visit the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani to make a retreat with Thomas Merton shortly after his trip to Memphis, where he was murdered on April 4, 1968. Here are some of the thoughts that Merton wrote two days later as he reflected on the event.

The murder of M. L. King. . . finally confirmed all the apprehensions—the feeling that 1968 is a beast of a year. . . Is the human race self-destructive? Is the Christian message of love a pitiful delusion? Or must one just "love" in an impossible situation? . . .

. . . Yesterday I wrote a letter to Mrs. King and sent it via June Yungblut. June had written a letter Wednesday from Atlanta—a curiously sensitive and prophetic letter: "Martin is going to Memphis today. . . I hope both he and Nhat Hanh will soon go to Gethsemani. . . If Martin had taken a period there he might have had the wisdom in repose to stay out of Memphis in the first place, and it was a mistake to go there. If there is violence today Memphis will be to King what Cuba was to Kennedy."

—*Faith and Violence*

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Julia visiting from Mji Wa Neema, Kenya:

If you've been reading Margo's blogs, you know Julia Gatwiri well. She is the beloved matron of *Mji Wa Neema* children's home where Judy and Margo (and many other visitors) stay. She mothers visitors along with the 35 children to whom she has been Mom for the past ten years.



It is the dream of nearly every Kenyan to visit the United States. We thought Julia deserved a treat and now you can share the treat of meeting her. Julia is here for a visit, and she will share her wonderful stories of the children of *Mji Wa Neema*, how they came to be there, where they are now and what are their hopes for the future. She is fun and funny, and she loves to laugh! Please join us this afternoon 2:00-4:00 pm, at Margo's house, 179 East Creek Drive, Menlo Park. Please let Margo know you're coming—margo@kenyahelp.us or (650) 322-0821.

Prayer shawl ministry:

Do you like to knit or crochet? The Prayer Shawl Ministry would love your help creating a simple shawl, one of your own design, for a person in great need of comfort and prayer. Our Pastoral Home Ministry and other parishioners come to us for a shawl appropriate for a gentleman or lady and we need to provide a good selection for any specific request. Before shawls are wrapped and delivered,



they are blessed by a parish priest following a morning Mass with attendees adding their prayers for the creator of the shawl and the future recipient.

Please call Terry (650) 714-2131 or Judi Swope (650) 856-6972 with any questions. Your beautiful warm shawl will provide lots of love and prayers. Knitting might even help you stay warmer this winter!

Book Club resumes today:

Our third-Sunday meetings of the TMC Book Club, under the aegis of Bob Foley, resume today after Mass! You are welcome to join the group, with coffee and doughnut in hand; just let Bob Foley know after Mass. Book choices are arrived at by consensus, and past books have been *The Seven Storey Mountain*, *Essential Writings of Edith Stein*, some encyclicals by Pope Francis, and a biography of Pope John XXIII. If you can't come today, but want to join, you can reach Bob at bob.foley@gmail.com or (650) 483-8988.

Muslim-Catholic unity prayers:

Tomorrow, January 16, at 1:00 pm, members of the Catholic community throughout the diocese, led by Bishop McGrath, will join with the Muslim community of the greater San Jose area to pray for unity among our faiths. The event will be held at the Saba Islamic Center, 4415 Fortran Court, San Jose. Interested Catholics can also meet at Our Lady Star of the Sea, 1385 Michigan Avenue, Alviso, for a procession to the mosque that will start at noon.

The event is being coordinated by Fr. Jon Pedigo; for more information call Dick Placone at (650) 493-7217 or e-mail rcplacone@sbcglobal.net.

2017 World Day of Migrants and Refugees:

Today is the 103rd World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The theme of Pope Francis' message is "*Child Migrants, the Vulnerable and the Voiceless.*"

In his message, the Holy Father wants "to draw attention to the reality of child migrants, especially the ones who are alone. In doing so I ask everyone to take care of the young, who in a threefold way are defenseless: they are children, they are foreigners, and they have no means to protect themselves. I ask everyone to help those who, for various reasons, are forced to live far from their homeland and are separated from their families."



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.

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Where are our bishops?

The racism of “alt-right” nationalism:

Abridged from an article by Stephen Schneck at uscatholic.org, January 9, 2017. His blog, Church and state, is updated twice a month.

It is long past time for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to speak out against the evil of today’s racism. The “alt-right” white nationalist racism that surged alongside the political campaigns of 2016 is an evil that the church in America cannot ignore. After endorsing candidate Trump during the campaign, the Klu Klux Klan celebrated the president-elect’s win in its publications and websites. A Klan chapter in North Carolina even held a victory parade. In Washington, the white supremacist National Policy Institute celebrated during its convention in the Ronald Reagan Building, some attendees replete with Hitler haircuts and “Heil Trump” salutes. The scary “alt-right” leader of the institute, Richard Spencer, spoke glowingly of how the election had awakened a movement of white nationalism in America. Since the election, a tide of hate crimes has swept across the country.

What should be a Catholic’s response? Section 34 of the USCCB’s 2015 guide to voters, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, condemns racism in the same words as it does abortion, identifying both sins as “intrinsically evil.” By its very definition, white nationalism is utterly racist. *Faithful Citizenship* goes on to say that voters who vote to advance or promote intrinsic evils like racism are guilty of grave, formal cooperation with that evil.



Sixty percent of white Catholic voters chose Trump in November. That’s a higher percentage of white Catholic support than

voted for either of the Presidents Bush or President Reagan. Some voted because of his position on abortion. Some believed that the billionaire and reality TV star from 5th Avenue would be their champion against East and West Coast elites. And, while surely not even a majority of his Catholic supporters were enthusiastic about the confluence of Trump’s campaign with white nationalist racism, none can claim to be ignorant of that association. White nationalism, then, is not only a rising social

continued on page 4

Praying with MLK Jr.:

Abridged from a prayer service at [Education for Justice.org](http://EducationforJustice.org).

Dear God, a collection of Dr. King’s prayers edited by Lewis Baldwin, provides a glimpse of Martin Luther King’s prayer life. This aspect sometimes goes unnoticed. Prayer was the “sacred heart of his faith,” the



foundation of his calling to serve as a prophetic social witness in an overall effort to free, humanize, and empower humanity. . . . Dr. King. . . prayed with hope. His prayers affirm his faithfulness to black and oppressed cultures. He prayed with the hope that all oppressed people would be delivered from the Egypt of slavery and from the wilderness of segregation,

and that they would one day reach the promised land of freedom, justice, human dignity, and equality of opportunity.

The Higher Principle of Love (1956): “God grant that . . . we will be able to move into this new world, a world in which all will live as brothers [and sisters]; a world in which people will no longer take necessities from the masses to give luxuries to the classes. A world in which people will throw down the sword and live by the higher principle of love.” . . .

A Great Nation (prayer during Democratic National Convention, 1956): “O God our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank Thee. . . for all the opportunities of life, and we stand together today and discuss what matters confronting our nation and confronting our world. We ask Thy guidance; be with us in all our deliberations and help us at all times to seek to do those things which are high, noble, and good, and to make our nation a great nation. . . that follows all of the noble precepts of the Christian religion and. . . of democracy.”

I Can’t Face It Alone (after receiving a phone call from a white racist who threatened his life, home, and family. 1956): “Lord, I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership, and if I stand with them without strength and courage, they, too, will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I’ve come to the point where I can’t face it alone.

Help Me to See That I’m Just a Symbol of a Movement (1957): “O God, help me to see myself in my true per-

continued on page 4

Trump: Here he comes, ready or not:

Abridged from an article by Fr. Thomas Reese, SJ, January 5, 2017, at ncronline.org.

Democrats and establishment Republicans are responding to the election of Trump in the same way that people respond to death: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Most Republicans have made their way to bargaining and acceptance. They have accepted Trump as their president and they are bargaining to retain as many of their traditional Republican policies as possible. Democrats, on the other hand, are responding with anger and depression. Their anger is directed at their leaders and voters, and they are depressed because they don't know what to do next.

The greatest fear of both Democrats and Republicans working inside the beltway is that although Trump proved to be a formidable campaigner, he is simply not up to the job of president. His unnuanced Twitter blasts reveal a temperament that many find scary. Is this a case of attention deficit disorder or does he truly believe he can understand and solve any problem in five minutes? His disregard for facts may be a good campaign strategy, but for a policymaker, it could prove disastrous. Is he incapable of changing his views when presented with facts or is he simply a serial liar?

It is the uncertainty that many find most disconcerting. . . . Uncertainty is heightened by Trump's making outrageous statements that are later qualified by his staff. . . . All of this is a recipe for chaos.

. . . [But] all of this could be another example of underestimating Trump. Other presidents have surprised their critics by doing the unexpected—for example, Richard Nixon going to China and Ronald Reagan making a nuclear weapons deal with the Soviet Union. Could Trump's much-talked-about relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin lead to another nuclear arms deal, further reducing the number of nuclear weapons? Such a deal would be good for both countries and prove that Trump truly is a dealmaker.

Even more surprising would be Trump's following through in his attacks on the Washington establishment, Wall Street and big banks. . . .

Anyone who thinks they know what the Trump administration will do is bound to be confounded. Trump has surprised pundits and experts so often that you would think they would be humbled. We may see a mix of chaos and achievements as Trump continues to go his merry way, impervious to media attacks. Or he may finally crash and burn. Whatever the case, here he comes, ready or not.

Newsletter submissions must be e-mailed or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. For Kay, e-mail kaywill@pacbell.net or phone (650) 328-2781; for Michelle, e-mail myhogan@comcast.net or phone (650) 468-3386.

Where are our bishops?, continued:

evil in American society at large, it is also a serious moral danger within the church that must concern the community of the faithful.

Why then has the bishops' conference remained almost entirely mum in the face of this election's mounting racism when it has been so courageous in speaking moral truth to power in regard to other so-called intrinsic evils of contemporary public life? . . .

Even were tweaking of the theological language needed, the embarrassing duration of the silence by the conference of bishops is unconscionable. The danger that renewed racism poses to American society and to the community of the church is immediate and the church's moral duty is imperative. . . .

In all fairness, the USCCB must be credited for making some movement. Last summer they named a task force to develop a conference-wide statement or pastoral letter from America's bishops to address the issue of racism. That task force was a belated response to the national tensions that erupted last winter over police shootings of African Americans. Unfortunately, this worthy step was eclipsed by the metastasis of white nationalist racism during the presidential campaign. The timetable for completion of the task force's statement appears painfully slow—with a possible release as late as 2020. . . .

Martin Luther King, continued:

spective [that] I'm just a symbol of a movement. Help me to see that I'm the victim of what the Germans call a zeitgeist and that something was getting ready to happen in history. . . . Help me to realize what I am—because of the forces of history and because of the fifty thousand Negroes of Alabama who will never get their names in the papers and in the headlines. O God, help me to see that where I stand today, I stand because others helped me to stand there and because the forces of history projected me there. And this moment would have come in history even if ML King had never been born.”

“Life's most persistent and urgent question is:
What are you doing for others?”

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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