



First Sunday of Lent

March 5, 2017

Readings

This week:

Genesis 2:7–9; 3:1–7

Romans 5:12–19

Matthew 4:1–11

Next week:

Genesis 12:1–4a

2 Timothy 1:8b–10

Matthew 17:1–9

Psalm

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned. (*Psalm 51*)

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, 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 8, 5:00 p.m.

TMC SpeakOut Committee, Thomas House Library

Wednesday, March 8, 7:30 p.m.

STA Site Committee, Thomas House Library

Thursday, March 9, 7:30 p.m.

TMC Board, Thomas House Dining Room

From Thomas Merton

There is a general and well-founded sense that the Churches are no longer adversaries. At least this much has been achieved, and almost miraculously achieved. So it is right that there be meetings. That the highest dignitaries should embrace one another, without hypocrisy, that this should be seen and known, and that many should be moved by it to love one another where before they only feared and distrusted, perhaps despised, one another....

If this is celebrated in the press, and if now “the thing to do” is to engage in dialogue with someone, and if the gestures of friendship are multiplied, very well. They can be both public and sincere. And they must certainly be public, for this has been a public sin, a universal scandal. It is Christ whom we have torn with our petty refusals, our standing upon our dignity, our institutional arrogance, our relentless and intransigent demands. —*The Poorer Means: A Meditation on Ways to Unity* (1965)

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

Lenten morning retreat March 11:



Sr. Marilyn Wilson, BVM

“Return to me with all your heart. . . return to the God who made you, for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” (Joel 2:12-13)

During this beginning of Lent, how might we respond to the call to conversion and transformation, to active faith, to compassionate justice in this climate of fear, distrust, anxiety and seeming lack of hope? Let us explore together the Scriptural messages of hope, the current stories of strength and our own spiritual practices which lead us to be the Lenten “good news” leading to Resurrection.

Facilitated by Sr. Marilyn Wilson, BVM. Saturday, March 11, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm at Our Lady of the Rosary Hall, 3233 Cowper St., Palo Alto. Light refreshments provided. Sponsored by the Thomas Merton Center. All are welcome.

Hotel de Zink sign-ups in March:



Our parish will be taking meals to the homeless shelter (Hotel de Zink) at the Church of Christ on Middlefield Rd. from April 1st to April 15th.

Ruth Chippendale will be signing people up after the Masses during March. If you miss her after Mass and would like to bring food, please call her at 856 6350.

March means Membership in TMC:



Thomas Merton Center (TMC) membership materials has been sent or given to all current TMC members.

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

The Thomas Merton Center is a membership-based nonprofit 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.

New books for Seton 2nd graders:

New books for summer reading for St. Elizabeth Seton School 2nd graders will be collected from March 11 through March 19 after each Mass. Your generosity in past years has provided a package of 5-7 books for each student to keep and enjoy at home during valuable summer weeks out of school.



These emerging readers benefit from this educational opportunity inspiring them to read, learn and share these books with others.

New books which you purchase for these 2nd graders may be placed in the collection boxes at each of our three parish churches. If you are unable to shop, your cash donations are also most welcome. We are happy to shop for you!

Please look for us near our display poster and collection box at each mass March 11 through March 19. Thank you for your support for these students.

—STA Human Concerns Committee

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouche, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Sr. Fran Ciluga, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, Edna and François Jamati, 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 below.]

During the flu season, please observe these restrictions during Mass: No holding hands during the Our Father, and no shaking hands at the Sign of Peace.

Please join us after Mass in the Thomas House for coffee and donuts. We especially encourage newcomers or those passing through town to stop by for food and fellowship.

If you need help planning a baptism or funeral, call or e-mail one of the Liturgy coordinators listed below. We will be happy to help you.

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339

Bulletin: Kay Williams (March 5 & 26) kaywill@pacbell.net
Michelle Hogan (March 12 & 19) myhogan@comcast.net

Finance: Judy Creek, 493-5371, grannyjam2@gmail.com

Hospitality: Jim Davis, 328-2584

Liturgy: John Arnold, 325-1421, jsaoso@comcast.net
Sally Benson, 408-972-5843, sallymbenson@gmail.com

Membership: Kay Williams, 650-270-4188, kaywill@pacbell.net

Needs Net: Roberta Kehret, 650-494-1488, robkehr@yahoo.com

Adult Education: Jim Davis, 650-704-8002, Jim_Davis@pacbell.net
Mary Coady, 650-261-9155, coady_94025@yahoo.com

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Coordinating a Response and Resources for the Immigrant Community:

Office of Social Ministry, Diocese of San Jose
February 27, 2017

Greetings from Father Jon Pedigo, Director of Projects for Peace and Justice:

May the God of Journey and Conversion bless you this Lenten Season.

I want to get right to the point: many of our sisters and brothers in the immigrant community are feeling incredibly threatened. One of several catechists from in the diocese remarked, "A parishioner who had a visa went to Mexico and was detained for a week at the border and was told 'Welcome to the Trump era.'" From Gilroy to Palo Alto, our own parishioners are feeling the pressure of the new executive orders that severely impact their everyday lives. One catechist said, "The families are afraid to leave their homes." A catechist talked about a family in westside San Jose where an entire family is depressed because the father, who is undocumented, is laying low until his son is old enough to sponsor him. The catechetical director at that parish lamented that there was nothing that she could say except, "how horrible."

Many parishes are doing something to help alleviate the fear and prepare families for possible deportation; however, imagine how much more powerful our impact might be if we were to work on all this together! Bishop McGrath's seal says, "Together in Christ." Together in Christ we can coordinate resources, offer practical support and assist individuals and families impacted by detention, deportation and sudden loss of income.

I will host two meetings for the purpose of developing a Catholic response to this crisis:

Monday, March 6 from 8:30 am and concluding with mass at noon at the Chancery Office. I will invite various service agencies to help us work on a support plan.

The following night, ***Tuesday, March 7 at 7 pm***, I will host a similar meeting with parish leaders from throughout the diocese. This meeting will be co-sponsored and co-led by PACT. The location is yet to be confirmed. Please check the [Office of Social Ministry Facebook Page](#) for details.

May God bless you and keep you safe in this Lenten Season.

Father Jon Pedigo <jpedito@dsj.org>
Director of Projects for Peace and Justice

Volunteer: Peninsula Food Runners:

Are you looking for a satisfying but flexible volunteer opportunity? Peninsula Food Runners is a volunteer organization dedicated to alleviate hunger and reduce food waste and we are looking for volunteers to assist us.

Volunteers pick up excess perishable and prepared food from participating Donors (restaurants, corporate cafeterias, etc.), and then deliver the food directly to our Recipients (shelters, day centers for the elderly, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.).

We are in urgent need of drivers in the Palo Alto area. Surplus food is available, but we have too few drivers to transport the food to local non-profits, which feed the hungry.

Shifts normally take less than 90 minutes and can work around your schedule. Come join our team of volunteers! Go to www.peninsulafoodrunners.org and register under Volunteer Sign-Up. Or, feel free to email Molly Rhine at m.rhine@comcast.net or call her at (408) 396-8705.

Sunday, March 19: "Fred Korematsu Speaks Up"

Noon at First Presbyterian Church Palo Alto
1140 Cowper Street Palo Alto

Fred Korematsu challenged the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans when few others did. A new children's book, *Fred Korematsu Speaks Up*, explores this civil rights hero's life and its relevance today.

Join authors Laura Atkins and Stan Yogi to learn about Fred's lifelong fight for justice. They will read excerpts from the book, talk about the larger historical context, and lead a discussion about what people can do today to speak up for justice. This event is for children, families, teachers, librarians, and anyone who wants to join. FREE - Light snacks and beverages will be served. All ages welcome! Books Available for Sale and Signing from Reach And Teach.

Sponsored by Reach And Teach, Japanese American Citizen's League San Mateo, Peninsula Peace and Justice Center, Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice (of which our parish is a member), and American Muslim Voice.

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

"The Shack": Finding God in the dark:

[By Sr. Rose Pacatte, *NCR Today*, Mar. 3, 2017]

The Shack, based on the 2007 best-selling novel by William P. Young, is now a major motion picture starring Sam Worthington and Oscar-winning actress Octavia Spencer. In wide release today, the film, in my humble opinion, far surpasses the novel.

... I am not a fan of the "Christian" genre, because most of those movies lead with a message rather than the story. I prefer to figure out what the movie means rather than sit in a theater as if it were a Sunday school classroom or a church with a preacher teaching me. I prefer to have the filmmaker trust me, the audience, to figure it out.

It's fine to make Christian films, but films about people who happen to be Christian are much more interesting. Here, producer Gil Netter and director Stuart Hazeldine get it right. The team of writers unclutters the wordy and sometimes confusing dialogue of the novel, leaving us to ponder and marvel at what is going on between Mack, Worthington's character, and the deity.

But here's the deal about "The Shack." It is completely unique in the realm of films about Christians, Christian theology and spirituality. It deals with a grieving, guilt-ridden man's grief over the loss of a child by introducing him to the persons of the Trinity (Spencer and Graham Greene as the feminine and masculine expressions of God the Father, Sumire Matsubara as the Holy Spirit, and Avraham Aviv Alush as Jesus the Son) over a weekend in the woods.

Sometime after the kidnapping and murder of his youngest daughter, Missy (Amelie Eve), Mack returns to the shack in the woods where her bloodstained little dress was found. He is determined to find the murderer and even brings a gun with which to kill him.

There, he encounters a young man in the woods who disarms him and invites him to walk with him. All of a sudden, they pass from winter's frozen forest to a lovely country home. Mack is greeted by a woman, "Papa" (Spencer), and soon meets Sarayu (Matsubara). It becomes evident to Mack that he is in the presence of the Holy Trinity.

But Mack is angry and confused. His plans of revenge have been thwarted. The perennial question of why God permits evil is addressed throughout the weekend and the conversations invite Mack to think about his identity as a man, his relationship with God, his family and his neighbor.

The vibrant, almost surreal atmosphere and the saturated color scheme of the dwelling place of heaven in "The Shack" reminded me of director Vincent Ward's 1998 fantasy drama of the afterlife, "What Dreams May Come." At some point, it might be interesting to compare and contrast the two films, but "The Shack" is a completely different cinematic experience because God, as the Trinity, plays gentle, loving and patient counterpoint to Mack's anger and anguish, offering

great solace to a grieving father....

"The Shack" is an honest consideration of a Christian theological explanation for why bad things happen to good people. If you loved the book, I think you will be able to say the film surpasses it. If you had a hard time reading the book, as I did, but you are open to an experience of the Christian imagination informed by Trinitarian theology, well, take a chance that you may be inspired.

If you know grief and loss, the film offers comfort. If you are angry at God for any reason, test it out at the movie theater. Take a risk during Lent that you may find God in the cinematic art, and in the dark, at the multiplex. #

Lent: a time to grow in the faith:

[By Thomas Reese, S.J., *NCR Today*, March 2, 2017]

For me, Lent is all about the weekday Scripture readings. These readings were the original "Catechism of the Catholic Church." It was only centuries later that the catechism, under the influence of Martin Luther and Robert Bellarmine, became what it is today, with its emphasis on doctrine.

The original catechesis was more about living the faith than knowing the faith. It was based on Scripture, not doctrinal teaching. Selected for the Lenten weekday readings were what the church considered the most important passages that a new Christian needed to know in order to practice the faith. In ancient times, the catechumens would gather in the cathedral each day during Lent where the bishop would instruct them using the Scripture readings.

Today, these same weekday Scripture readings can be a splendid way of reminding us of the essentials of our faith.

The Lenten Scripture readings include the story of Jonah, the story of Susanna, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the parable of the prodigal son, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, parts of the Sermon on the Mount, the two great commandments, the Last Judgment (Matthew 25), and many other favorites, including hopeful passages from Isaiah and Ezekiel. Themes of God's compassion and our duty to the poor are repeated throughout Lent....

Lent is the perfect time to immerse ourselves in these wonderful Scripture passages. Sadly, most Catholics do not read or pray the Scriptures. For too many centuries, the clergy preferred it that way, lest the laity start getting ideas on their own. That day is over. While we can criticize the bishops for many things, we can no longer blame them for keeping the Scriptures out of the hands of the laity.

In fact, the bishops have gone out of their way to make the daily Scripture readings accessible on the Web at the [website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) where they are available [to read](#) or [be listened to](#). They are also available through apps like [iBreviary](#) or as audio downloads using podcasts (search for "Daily Readings from the New American Bible"). ...

Without reflecting on the Scriptures, it is almost impossible to become an adult Christian.... #