



The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

June 18, 2017

Readings

This week:

Deuteronomy 8:2–3, 14b–16a

1 Corinthians 10:16–17

John 6:51–58

Next week:

Jeremiah 20:10–13

Romans 5:12–15

Matthew 10:26–33

Psalm

Praise the Lord, Jerusalem. Alleluia! (*Psalm 23*)

Today

Today's presider is Msgr. John Sandersfeld.

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

Monday, June 19, 7:00 p.m. TMC Spiritual Education Committee, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

...[T]he dialogue conducted by theologians and bishops on the level of doctrine and of practical adjustment can never have any serious meaning if, in the background, there persists a deep conviction that the non-Christian religions are all corrupted in their inner heart, and that what they claim as their highest perfection and their ultimate fulfillment is in fact nothing but a diabolical illusion. However, I do not think that serious scholars and theologians are really making such sweeping generalizations today.

The Second Vatican Council in its Declaration on Non-Christian Religions clearly recognized the validity of the “profound religious sense” which has enabled men of all races and peoples to recognize God, “to contemplate the divine mystery and express it,” and to seek liberation from the anguish of the human condition.

—“Contemplation and Dialogue,” *Mystics and Zen Masters*

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

Summer reading books given to Seton kids:

The new books donated by parishioners to St. Elizabeth Seton 2nd graders were distributed on June 6 by Fr. Mikalonis to the excited children. These books will provide hours of reading enjoyment and learning while the students gain an awareness of a large caring community. Thank you for your generosity.

—The STA Human Concerns Committee

Torture banner up again:

Torture violates the basic dignity of the human person that all religions, in their highest ideals, hold dear. It degrades everyone involved -- policy-makers, perpetrators and victims. It contradicts our nation's most cherished ideals.

Any policies that permit torture and inhumane treatment are shocking and morally intolerable. Our nation halted the use of torture in interrogations – but we have a President who still calls for it, and who said “If [torture] doesn’t work, they deserve it anyway.” Further, the prison at Guantanamo remains open – with most of the 41 people held there imprisoned for over a decade without charge or trial. Likewise, despite proof that solitary confinement causes deep mental and psychological harm – putting both prisoners and society as a whole in greater risk – on any given day, 80,000 to 100,000 people are held in solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and jails.

Now we see a new threat from drones that are used to threaten entire communities with the possibility of unseen and instantaneous death raining down from above – striking the guilty and the innocent alike. And all of these things are only possible because of our leaders’ success in dehumanizing entire groups of people – leading to bigotry toward our Muslim brothers and sisters and hardening our hearts against even refugees fleeing violence and terror. Nothing less is at stake than the soul of our nation. Let America abolish torture and bigotry now, without exceptions.

Throughout June our churches will display a banner with the above wording. (See the Homer Ave. side of the church building.) Our parish is participating in the National Religious Campaign Against Torture,

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Sr. Fran Ciluaga, 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, 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 in adjacent column.]

Catholic Charities compassionate care:

Finding compassionate care for the people you love can be a challenge. Dealing with the issues of Alzheimer’s, dementia, and other aging issues is difficult enough.

Catholic Charities now has an Elder Care Line available to assist you in navigating through different scenarios, and choices that come with aging as well as the services and resources available to aide you on your journey.

Catholic Charities Elder care line offers confidential support, encouragement, and referrals for elder care service needs. Our professional elder care specialists understand the needs of seniors as well as their loved ones and offer a host of services and support when you need it most.

Elder Care Line and Homecare: (408) 831-0441.

Senior Activity Centers, in San Jose and Sunnyvale: (408) 270-4900.

Behavior Health Clinic in downtown San Jose: (408)-899-716.

sponsored by Pax Christi U.S.A. June is "Torture Awareness Month". Such a public display is rare for our parish. It is not to say that torture is the major issue of Catholic moral teaching - you can think of many others - but it is one of them.

During this month we ask ourselves what message faith communities might send to world leaders about employing torture as a principle of government policy. And, very importantly, to pray. In the words of the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" (#2298) "It is necessary to work for their [use of cruel practices] abolition. We must pray for the victims and their tormentors." Let us pray.

Read the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishop's "Torture is a Moral Issue" Study Guide: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/stoptorture/>.

—The STA Human Concerns Committee

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.

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

New cardinals are not run-of-the-mill:

[By Rita Ferrone, *Commonweal Magazine*, June 16, 2017]

When Pope Francis announced another five appointments to the College of Cardinals last month, journalists and other observers of the Vatican were quick to assert that his selection showed a preference for those “on the peripheries.” This well-worn expression should be retired. It hides more than it reveals. These appointments are significant and interesting, but not so much because these cardinals-elect are “outsiders” to the traditional ecclesiastical power centers. What is interesting about them is their character.

Take for instance, cardinal-elect Louis-Marie Ling Mangkhanekhoun of Laos. Talk about “peripheries”—he doesn’t even have a diocese. He is the apostolic vicar of Paske, a territory that includes a million inhabitants and only 14,500 Catholics. His mission is focused on evangelizing animists living in the mountains. As of 2015, when he gave an interview to *Asia News*, he had a total of six priests in his charge. Six! Yet he cheerfully shepherds along what he calls his “baby diocese.”

The positive thing is that we have married catechists who are true missionaries, who go to live in the villages and become the ‘roots’ of evangelization. They go, live, they begin to build bonds.... We offer this experience to the seminarians. Seminary students must study three years, then they must stop for at least a year, up to three years to mature in their decision, but also for pastoral experience as catechists, carrying medicines, aid, prayers for the people of the mountain. They integrate with the villagers, live as the villagers do in everything.

Pardon me while I pick myself up from the floor. The married catechists put down the roots of evangelization? The seminarians follow them to gain pastoral experience as catechists? They do all this before they are ordained, during a gap year (or three)? They live as the villagers do? This sounds nothing like the hot-house environment seminaries typically strive to create in North America. Our bishops fear the corrupting influence of “non-priests” so much that their tender recruits are sequestered, not even allowed to share a classroom with lay catechists, much less learn from them or strive to integrate themselves with the people they will serve.

Not everyone from faraway places eschews luxury or witnesses to the truth as Francis does.

Consider Bishop Anders Arborelius of Stockholm. Much has been made of his being the first Swedish-born Roman Catholic bishop since the Reformation.

Catholics are about 1 percent of the population of Sweden, hence more talk of “peripheries” (this time the wilderness consists of secularized Lutherans). From the outside, it may seem like Arborelius’s chief accomplishment is holding the Catholic fort. But a closer look reveals a different picture. David Michael reported on the situation for *Commonweal* last year:

As debates about immigration and refugees have engulfed Swedish politics, resulting in the closure of Sweden’s borders, the Catholic Church has come to be a major advocate for refugees. In Lund, a group of Catholics have banded together with the local Islamic Cultural Center, students, and a local Christian council to found Refugees Lund, which raises support and collects donations for refugees in Sweden and abroad. Not only can the Catholic Church in Sweden speak with the authority of a branch of the world’s largest religion, but it also can speak in the voice of the marginalized because it is comprised of the marginalized. It is, in short, a missional church.

Arborelius seems to understand what Francis calls “the ecumenism of walking.” He co-hosted the commemoration of the Reformation that the pope attended in Lund in 2016. He was also honest enough to go on television saying he informed the Vatican of SSPX Bishop Richard Williamson’s anti-Semitic remarks *before* Pope Benedict lifted his excommunication, which embarrassed the Vatican and earned him the wrath of Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos. (Williamson was eventually ejected from the SSPX because of his views.)

Some of the talk about “peripheries” is economic. Francis has drawn cardinals from some of the poorest countries of the world. Archbishop Jean Zerbo of Mali, which ranks among the ten poorest nations on earth, is only the latest example (Francis earlier appointed cardinals from Burkina Faso and Haiti). But is this why Zerbo was chosen, or was it his role in the peace negotiations of 2012 when his country was torn apart by civil war, or his continuing work with Caritas Internationalis, a Rome-based Catholic organization committed to dignity, solidarity, and justice for the poor?

When Pope Francis appeared on the balcony on the night of his election he presented himself as one sought out from “the ends of the earth.” As we got to know him, however, his character as a person emerged and this has made a difference. After all, not everyone from faraway places eschews luxury, stands with the poor, or witnesses to the truth as Francis does. Similarly, saying that these new cardinals are “from the peripheries” tells us a fact, but it’s not enough. What matters in the end is character—that is where you find the gold.

[Rita Ferrone is the author of several books about liturgy, including *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Paulist Press).]

BLESSING OF MEN

Loving God,
In your wisdom and love you made all things.
Bless these men
That they may be strengthened
In their Christian faith.
Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.
Grant that we, their sons and daughters,
Wives and friends,
May honor them always
With a spirit of profound respect.

Institutional church persists in spite of spiritual maturity:

[By Tom Smith, NCR, 5/30/17, "Soul Seeing"]

It used to be more intense, but the struggle is still there. Even now, it is sometimes a battle worthy of war images, but most often it is a quiet, cold conflict that simmers in my soul. I doubt if I will ever get it completely resolved. I may need a couple more lifetimes to be reconciled with it, or, at least, a finely tuned purgatory. The institutional part of the Catholic Church that once powerfully attracted me now haunts and hurts me. I can't quite get it out of my system. And this conflict messes with my spiritual life.

When I was a young man, I became a priest after 12 years of training in two greenhouse seminaries. I was a priest for seven years, five of them teaching religion to high school boys. I then left the priesthood, was laicized but continued working within the institution as a parish director of religious education, and ultimately at the diocesan level in two different dioceses. I also worked for 10 years at American Airlines, but when I retired in 2006, I was the director of pastoral services for my diocese.

I self-identify as a Catholic and, to all appearances, I am a "practicing Catholic," attending weekly Eucharist at my parish most of the time, participating in parish-sponsored small faith groups, and accepting some leadership roles within that faith community.

So I know the institutional church from the inside looking out and from the outside looking in. There is much about the institution that I flat out reject, and I can say that more freely now that I am no longer a public person representing the institutional church.

I have come to believe that, of the 1.2 billion Catholics in the world today, the institutional church focuses on only a portion of them. For centuries, the official church, consciously or subconsciously, focused on the religious education of children and zeroed in on adults with little developed spiritual maturity. The church's dogmatic and doctrinal rigidity, the either-or moral absolutes, the frozen liturgical rituals, the overpowering hierarchical structures, all seem aimed at adherents who are at an early stage of spiritual awareness — as I was until I was about 30. Unless we are lucky at the

parish level, the rest of us are left mostly on our own to find an adult faith.

St. Paul said it well in 1 Corinthians 13:11: "When I was a child I used to talk like a child, think like a child, reason like a child. When I became an adult I put childish ways aside." Much of the institutional church presumes we are still children, and that focus interferes with my spiritual journey. At the risk of sounding arrogant, I am no longer a child. I can handle ambiguity, mystery, both-ands, expandable morality, spontaneity, my own informed conscience, and personal spiritual experiences. To discover support for these adult spiritual traits within the church, I have to sift through the predominantly child-centered veneer. At this point, many Catholics simply leave the church and find their spiritual resources elsewhere or conclude that the church doesn't connect with their adult lives in any meaningful way. I am tempted to follow them out the door.

But I remain stuck in the middle, trying to balance my spiritual life with parts of the church that remain relevant to me. I am deliberately a cafeteria Catholic, skipping most of the institutional food and being selective about the rest of the buffet. Who can eat all of that fatty food anyway?

I do have criteria for determining what helps my soul see what is real and beneficial. There are four of them:

- I must take time for prayer and meditation in order to recognize the God within me.
- I must have a community of believers to share my story, create and discover our own story, and roam around within the story of God in and for all of us.
- I must experience some ritual that celebrates this God within and among all of us.
- I must do something for other people as Jesus did, some service that helps them in some way.

When I live within these four impulses of the spiritual life, I'm OK. When I slip away from any one of them for a long enough period, I lose my spiritual footing.

At this point, I still experience sufficient support within the umbrella of Catholicism to keep me connected to the official church. My parish community, Pope Francis, spiritual teachers like Fr. Richard Rohr, NCR, and the remarkable service provided to humanity through our hospitals, schools and charitable organizations all meet one or more of my criteria for my spiritual life. Obviously, there are spiritual resources beyond Catholicism that also nourish these four principles.

Life, love and suffering fuel my spiritual journey. I choose the direction and the help I need along the way. Despite its faults, I continue to choose part of the institutional church as an aid to living one or more of these criteria for spiritual growth. I also choose to live with the internal conflict this choice entails. My spiritual growth is what matters most.

Most of the time that choice is worth it. Other times ... not so much. This is just what it is.

[Tom Smith is the author of eight books, most recently *Church Chat: Snapshots of a Changing Catholic Church*. He and his wife, Fran, live in Shiloh, Illinois.]