



# Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 28, 2018

## Readings

*This week:*

Deuteronomy 18:15–20

1 Corinthians 7:32–35

Mark 1:21–28

*Next week:*

Job 7:1–4, 6–7

1 Corinthians 9:16–19, 22–23

Mark 1:29–39

## Psalm

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts. (*Psalm 95*)

Today's presider is Fr. Kevin Ballard, 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

No TMC meetings this week.

## From Thomas Merton

The extreme progressives seem to me...to be hasty, irresponsible, in many ways quite frivolous in their exaggerated and confused enthusiasms. They also seem to be at times to be fanatically incoherent, but I do not sense in them the chilling malice and meanness which comes through in some of the utterances of extreme conservatives.

The thing that disquiets me the most is the fact the the progressives, though perhaps a majority, do not seem to have the dogged and concerted stamina of the conservatives. The extreme conservatives seem to me to be people who feel themselves so menaced that they will go to *any length* in order to defend their own fanatical concept of the Church. This concept seems to be to be not only static and inert, but in complete continuity with what is most questionable and indeed scandalous in the history of the Church: Inquisition, persecution, intolerance, Papal power, clerical influence, alliance with worldly power, love of wealth and pomp, etc. This is a picture of the Church which has become a scandal and these people are intent on preserving the scandal at the cost of greater scandal.

--*Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (1966)

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*

## **Memorial Mass for François Jamati Feb. 3:**

We mourn the passing of François Jamati, who died on December 16. Edna Jamati and her family have arranged François's memorial Mass for Saturday, February 3, at 2:00 pm at St. Thomas Aquinas church. The celebrant will be Fr. Jack Izzo, S.J. The TMC community and all who know the Jamatis are invited.

## **Sacristan help needed at 7:15 am daily Mass:**

A regular sacristan helper at the 7:15 daily Mass here at STA is temporarily unavailable due to a family illness. Others are filling in, but more hands would be so welcome. If you would be interested in serving in this vital ministry in the early morning once or twice a week, please contact Mary Lou Hanley at (650) 248-8287, hanleytm@sbcglobal.net. Training is provided,

## **New art in SAG Hospitality Center:**

The first of a planned series of St. Thomas Aquinas parishioner art exhibitions has been hung in the St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center. The artists contributing to this first show are Fran Adams, Louise Gibler, and Carol Pulliam.

If you would like to participate in this activity—or know of someone who may be interested—please contact Neil Barrett at 650-330-1762 or, by email,

## **Today is Nametag Sunday:**

Pick up a nametag today when you come into church—there is a table at the entrance. Community is built when we can call each other by name. The Communion ministers also appreciate being able call you by name when they offer you the Eucharist.

Bring your 2017 blessed palms to Mass Feb. 4 and 11, so they may be turned into ashes for Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14. A basket receptacle will be in the vestibule.

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

## **TMC donation envelope enclosed today:**



Please use the envelope enclosed in this bulletin to make your monthly contribution to the support of the Thomas Merton Center. Your dollars make possible the sponsorship of the 8:45 Sunday Mass, monthly contributions to Seton School (\$1,000) and the Ecumenical Hunger Program (\$40), spiritual education talks, retreats, and the publication of this bulletin. Laid, self-sustaining, self-generating—this is TMC. Thanks to all who contribute.

## **“Who are the ‘Nones’?” January 30 speaker:**

The next Spirituality Tuesday Assembly is Tuesday, January 30, 7:00 - 8:30 pm in St. Albert's Hospitality Center, 10 95 Channing Ave., Palo Alto. The topic is: “Who are the “Nones” and why should we care about them?” with guest speaker Father Joseph Kim.

The fastest growing religious denomination in the US is the religiously unaffiliated or “nones.” This is true for those in their late 20s and early 30s. They are our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. On January 30, Fr. Joe Kim will present on identifying the “nones,” how they think, and how we can present the Gospel to them.

Fr. Joe Kim is the Vocations Director for the Diocese of San Jose and emeritus Director of Evangelization. His full-time job is to work with young people to fulfill God's plan for their lives. Come with your questions, concerns and hopes for the next generation of leaders of our country and our Church.

## **Sunday, Feb. 11: Multifaith Prayers for Peace:**

Sunday, February 11, 7-7:30 pm, First Lutheran Church, 600 Homer Ave., Palo Alto:

In the midst of difficult times, Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice will host “Peaceful Presence,” a monthly prayer service on the evening of the 11th of each month, offering a time of quiet multi-faith prayers for peace and strength for the journey. All are welcome: those of all faith traditions and of no defined faith, those who are suffering at the hands of their own government, those who need a pause in the midst of intensive work on behalf of others, and all who would like to pray with others for the well-being of all. The prayer time will include elements from several religious traditions.

### *Upcoming:*

Sunday, March 11, 7-7:30 pm, Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Rd., Los Altos Hills

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## **Francis' blind spot on sexual abuse:**

[by Thomas Reese by Religion News Service, in *National Catholic Reporter*, Jan. 25, 2018]

The overwhelming consensus in the media is that Pope Francis has a blind spot when it comes to sexual abuse. He may be on the side of refugees, migrants, the sick, the poor, the indigenous and other marginalized peoples, but he just doesn't get it when it comes to victims of abuse.

The evidence for this assertion is the pope's unwavering support for Juan Barros, whom he appointed bishop of Osorno, Chile, despite accusations from victims that he witnessed and covered up abuse by the Fr. Fernando Karadima, the charismatic priest who in 2011 was found guilty by the Vatican of abusing minors in his upscale Santiago parish....Francis' defense of Barros has been excessive, accusing his detractors of calumny and being leftist agitators. He said he would not believe the accusations until he was given proof.

Cardinal Sean O'Malley publicly corrected the pope's words: "It is understandable that Pope Francis' statements yesterday in Santiago, Chile, were a source of great pain for survivors of sexual abuse by clergy or any other perpetrator. Words that convey the message "if you cannot prove your claims then you will not be believed" abandon those who have suffered reprehensible criminal violations of their human dignity and relegate survivors to discredited exile."

Francis accepted O'Malley's criticism and apologized for saying the victims need to show "proof" to be believed. But he continued to say that anyone who made accusations against the bishop without providing evidence was guilty of slander....But O'Malley is right. It is often impossible to produce evidence of crimes that are committed in secrecy. It can often come down to whether you believe the victims.

One of the few journalists to come to Francis' defense is Austen Ivereigh, contributing editor at *Crux* and author of one of the best biographies of Francis.

"Victimhood doesn't just elicit sympathy," he writes, "it lends credibility, and confers moral authority. So, despite the fact that the bishops consistently and firmly deny that they witnessed Karadima's abuse (and, in the case of Barros, that he ever received a letter detailing that abuse while serving as secretary to Cardinal Juan Francisco Fresno of Santiago), and despite no verified evidence in any civil or canonical case so far that the bishops are lying, the charges against them have stuck in the media." He notes that the victims are so far unsuccessfully suing the Archdiocese of Santiago for \$450,000. The case "depends on demonstrating that those in authority knew and failed to act on the abuse they suffered."...

I would argue that both Barros and the victims deserve their day in court, both in civil court and in ecclesiastical court.

Francis is not helping by throwing around accusations of slander and calumny. It is wrong to declare, before the process is completed, that he is convinced the bishop is innocent and his accusers are lying. His job is to see to it that there is a transparent and legitimate process in place to handle such accusations and then get out of the way. To appoint a bishop to a new diocese before his name was cleared was a serious mistake. ...

The fundamental problem is that the church has no process for judging bishops that is transparent and has legitimacy with the public.

The bishop may or may not be innocent, but no one will trust a secret process that involves clerics investigating clerics, clerics judging clerics.

The past decades have shown that no profession is good at judging its own, whether police, doctors, lawyers, teachers, politicians, government workers, athletes, coaches, entertainers, spies, the military or clergy. Too often colleagues look the other way and don't want to believe that their friend is guilty. When guilt becomes apparent, there is the temptation to deal with it internally and keep it secret lest the profession suffer.

It took too long, but the church now has procedures in place for dealing with abusive priests that involve lay review boards, suspension while an investigation takes place, collecting evidence, hearing from victims and zero tolerance for abusers. It is not a perfect system, and sometimes it is ignored, but at least it exists.

There is no similar process for handling accusations against bishops for failing to report and deal with bad priests....

The Catholic Church could learn from secular governments on how to structure itself to deal with crimes and cover-ups, especially those that do not come under the jurisdiction of secular authorities.

The Vatican needs a department of justice with professional investigators and prosecutors who could deal with sexual abuse and cover-ups, as well as financial corruption, theft and other crimes. A separate judicial system should determine whether the evidence of guilt is convincing. The roles of investigators and judges could appropriately be held by lay women and men.

No one should be above the law. ...The status quo is not working. Pope Francis needs to make dramatic changes in the way in which the Vatican investigates crimes, especially those by bishops.

[Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese is a columnist for Religion News Service and author of *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*.]

## How can fiction help during polarized times?

[By Margot Patterson, *America*, January 18, 2018]

I spent the last few weeks immersed in Susan Cooper's enthralling novel *The Dark Is Rising*. Cooper's book is the second in a quintet of novels and gives its name to the series. Like the Harry Potter books or *The Lord of the Rings*, it is categorized as young adult fiction but is just as enjoyable for adults.

The novel is set in England; the action takes place between Dec. 20th and Twelfth Night, the last day of Christmas, during which time Will, the 11-year-old protagonist, is drawn into the struggle between the Light and the Dark.

I had never heard of *The Dark Is Rising* before the British nature writer Robert Macfarlane recommended it, suggesting a worldwide read to run from Dec. 20 to Jan. 5, the same time period as in the book. Reading it was a way of embracing the cold, dark winter outside and the Advent and Christmas season. I was just one chapter into it when, on Dec. 21, I went to a friend's winter solstice party, where an acquaintance buttonholed me for 20 minutes to talk about another dark book and why I should read it. "You think it's just about the Koch brothers, but it's about so much more," she said of Jane Mayer's *Dark Money*. "I really think it's the most important book for Americans to read right now."

She was persuasive enough that I bought the book last week. It joins another on my must-read list for the winter: *The Deep State*, by Mike Lofgren, a Republican Party insider who served for 16 years as a senior analyst on the House and Senate budget committees. Mr. Lofgren uses the term "Deep State" to refer to entrenched interests in the government, Wall Street and Silicon Valley that he says shape our foreign and national security policy, along with our priorities on trade, investment and economic equality, with little regard for what most Americans want or need. The result is the oligarchic, runaway military state that lacks sufficient funds to rebuild crumbling infrastructure or provide social services but has inexhaustible resources to surveil its citizens and to mount an ever-escalating number of wars. Both books examine the corruption of U.S. democracy from within by actors who often work behind the scenes or in secret to manipulate the system for their own ends.

The debasement of our democracy is not a cheerful topic. But while enlightenment is not always comfortable, it is clarifying. Around the world people are rising up against the venality of their governors and demanding reform. If protests against corruption have not happened here as they have recently in Iran, Israel, Romania and Panama, it is not because there is no reason for

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

them. Public dissatisfaction with a political system skewed by partisan gerrymandering and big money is widespread. In our polarized political environment, one of the few issues that majorities of voters in both parties agree on is that money has too much influence on our politics today. The complicity between politicians seeking funds and corporations, lobbyists, special interest groups and billionaires providing them in pursuit of special tax breaks, weaker regulations and political and economic favors is destroying the integrity of our political system.

In the wake of my reading *The Dark Is Rising*, one of my New Year's resolutions is to try to keep pace with time, not lag behind it as I usually do. Look out the window. Be aware of the change of seasons. Welcome it. Winter is a good time to contemplate the dark. When the weather is cold and the days short, we notice the dark more, think about it longer, realize its effects. Corruption grows in the dark, avoids the light, waxes and wanes with the tolerance afforded it.

In our polarized political environment, one of the few issues that majorities of voters in both parties agree on is that money has too much influence on our politics today. I will read Ms. Mayer and Mr. Lofgren's books with interest, but I do not need to be convinced that the corruption from within poses a far greater danger to U.S. democracy than undocumented immigrants, Islamic terrorists, Russian hackers or any of the other external threats distracting us. We do not need a wall or government surveillance half as much as we do an engaged citizenry pressing a reform movement to purge our politics of the outsize influence of money, especially secret money.

Fiction can be not only a wonderful distraction from the present but a window into it. I doubt Susan Cooper was intending a political parable when she wrote *The Dark Is Rising*, but her 1973 coming-of-age novel is splendidly apt. Young Will learns the truth both about himself and about the society he lives in, a society threatened by the age-old struggle between the Dark and the Light. He has a key role to play in this struggle. Will he be up to the challenge? Will he take it on? His very name suggests both the question and the answer necessary.

In every era the Dark is rising, both within us and around us. What will we do in our own time and place? The question never gets more pertinent than now.

[Patterson has written for a variety of newspapers and magazines in the United States and abroad. Most recently, she worked for the *National Catholic Reporter* for seven years as Senior Writer and then Opinion and Arts Editor.]

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