



Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 22, 2018

Readings

This week:

Acts of the Apostles 4:8–12

1 John 3:1–2

John 10:11–18

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 9:26–31

1 John 3:18–24

John 15:1–8

Psalm

The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone. (*Psalm 118*)

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

All good meditative prayer is a conversion of our entire self to God. One cannot, then, enter into meditation, in this sense, without a kind of inner upheaval. By upheaval I do not mean a disturbance, but a breaking out of routine, a liberation of the heart from the cares and preoccupations of one's daily business.

The reason why so few people apply themselves seriously to mental prayer is precisely that this inner upheaval is necessary, and they are usually incapable of the effort required to make it. It may be that they lack generosity, and it may also be that they lack direction and experience, and go about it the wrong way.

They disturb themselves, they throw themselves into agitation by the violent efforts they make to get recollected, and finally they end in hopelessness. They compromise, in the end, by a series of frustrated routines which help them to pass the time, or else they relax into a state of semi-coma which, they hope, can be justified by the name of contemplation.

--Thoughts in Solitude

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

Bequest from Susan Thomas:



The Merton Center Board is pleased to announce that a generous bequest from the estate of Susan Thomas has been received. Susan died suddenly in early January at the age of 80. As a longtime member of TMC, Susan was

a quiet, gentle presence in our community; she served as a communion minister at the 8:45 and 7:30 Masses and volunteered for years in the Stanford Hospital Chaplaincy program.

Susan was married to John H. Thomas, professor of biological sciences at Stanford, from 1966 until his death in 1999. Her sudden death was a shock to all her family and to those who knew her in so many different ways. She was shy, funny, analytical and kind. She loved her friends and family, saw and admired the best in them, and is deeply missed.

Her bequest will encourage and enable TMC to continue its mission of liturgical, ecumenical, and spiritual education for Catholic Christians in the Bay Area.

Bystander Intervention Training, May 2:



What do you do if you are in a public place and witness hateful harassment?

You don't have to be a bystander!

Wednesday, May 2, 7-9pm
St. Albert the Great Church
1095 Channing Ave., Palo Alto

Gain tools and practice to be able to respond to hate incidents due to religion, ethnicity, sexuality, gender or any other factors.

Learn how to overcome the bystander effect and de-escalate the situation in a non-confrontational way.

Led by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and sponsored by Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice, this is the first time this training will be presented in Palo Alto.

Everyone is welcome. Registration is very helpful, but not required. The workshop is free. Donations will be accepted at the event. This is a two-hour training with a mix of information and hands-on practice.

For more information: 650/569-3416.

LWV to discuss CA ballot propositions May 6:

It's likely that you are barely aware that there is an election on June 5, 2018. There is so much political noise this year that the mid-term elections are effectively being buried. But there are propositions on the CA ballot that deserve your educated attention.

Representatives from the local League of Women Voters will be here on Sunday, May 6, in the Thomas House living room from 10:15 - 11:15 am to present the six propositions and answer questions. The titles of each proposition alone need elucidation, and the League spokespersons will give an objective perspective for each.

So grab your coffee and donuts and come to the Thomas House living room at 10:15 on May 6. At least you'll know more when you leave than when you walked in the door!

May 6: Parish-wide Afternoon of Reflection:



ValLimar Jansen

All parishioners (young and old alike) are invited to an afternoon of prayer and reflection on our "Call to True Discipleship" on Sunday, May 6, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Seton School Auditorium at St. Albert the Great with special guest, ValLimar Jansen.

ValLimar is dynamic woman of faith who will inspire people of all ages to grow as disciples of Christ with her heart-felt stories and songs. An inspirational speaker, singer and storyteller, ValLimar Jansen is well known for her powerful voice and captivating presence.

She is a regular presenter at the Los Angeles Religious Education Conference and has shared the Gospel message at churches around the country and in nations around the world. The event is free to all. Refreshments will be served.

Contact Susan at the Pastoral Center (suolsen@dsj.org, 650-494-2496 Ext. 25) if you have questions.

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.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Millennial philanthropy teaches Church:

[By Christian Mocek, *National Catholic Reporter*, 4/19/18]

In 2015, 84 percent of working millennials gave money to a charity....

Growing up hearing stories of Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, and Martin Luther King Jr. in the classroom, millennials are a decidedly socially conscious generation. They prefer to financially support organizations that have a compelling cause. More specifically, they like causes that seek to alleviate burdens associated with poverty.

Millennials,... born 1983-1996, also came of age in the throes of the sexual abuse scandal of the Catholic Church, the 9/11 attacks and two endless wars that subsequently followed, and the economic recession of 2008. In light of that, as shown in polls by Pew Research, millennials are generally wary of traditional institutions, such as banks, the government — and the church.

This is problematic, ...because over 90 percent of millennials would never financially support an organization they don't trust...

What... can Catholic institutions learn from a generation that is not dropping money in the collection basket on Sunday morning, but instead is donating to their friends' GoFundMe pages and volunteering to serve lunch at the local soup kitchen? Can the church learn any lessons from what millennials expect from charities?

My answer — yes, and below I offer three.

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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.]

1. Mission first, everything else second

[M]ost [Millennials] only support organizations that a friend or peer endorses. In other words, the preaching is second to the personal invitation of a friend... There are many reasons young people are leaving the Catholic Church, as pointed out in a recent study by St. Mary's Press, and there is not one easy solution. But if the organizations that millennials financially support can teach us anything, it's that a clear mission lived out in every aspect of the organization's work is the most important.

For a Catholic parish, that means authentically witnessing the message of Christ's love and mercy in every part of its members' work. It means that the parish priest is a compassionate servant leader who is an intelligent, thoughtful and relevant preacher. It means the parishes' ministers are professional, educated and empowered. It also means that those in the pews are the same — willing to courageously live out the great commission of Christ in their homes and workplaces.

The evangelizing process starts with an invitation from someone authentically trying to live the Gospel in their life. Both the institutional church and those who call themselves Catholic should try to do that. For the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of his love, mercy and forgiveness, is our mission.

Mission first, everything else second.

2. Transparency is essential

[O]ver 60 percent of millennials like to learn about the organization's mission, history, financial condition and volunteer opportunities through the website... [and] want the organization's website to provide giving guidelines that explain how their support will directly make a difference. This speaks to both how millennials wish to receive information and the kind they want.

...To know how money is spent, how budgets are decided, who is making them, and the reasoning behind those decisions is essential to share. How many Catholic have shown up one Sunday to church to find that their parish school is going to close, leaving them shocked and not understanding how the finances got so bad? Too many. Not to mention the countless Catholics who have shown up to church to learn of their parish priest's sexual improprieties....

...If we want millennials to come to church, the church should stop the institutional cover-ups and start honestly discussing mistakes while also inviting a more diverse group of people into decision-making processes. Pope Francis' recent letter to Chilean bishops admitting his "grave errors" in Chilean child sex abuse cases is a notable step in the right direction.

(Millennials, continued on page 4)

What did Pope Francis mean when he said the unborn and the poor are equally sacred?

[By Cindy Wooden - *Catholic News Service*, 4/18/18]

When Pope Francis insisted that the lives of the unborn and of the poor are "equally sacred," he was not trying to shift the focus of Catholics from fighting abortion to fighting poverty, he was trying to show they are part of the same battle, said Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

The life of the unborn must be "promoted and defended with great determination and given an effective priority," the archbishop told Catholic News Service April 17.

"At the same time," he said, "we must keep in mind that the dignity of every human being is equal and inviolable at every stage throughout his or her life."

In "Rejoice and Be Glad," his apostolic exhortation on holiness, Pope Francis wrote that living a Christian life involves the defense of both the unborn and the poor, and he criticized what he termed the "harmful ideological error" of thinking one's own cause is the only important one.

"Our defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred," Pope Francis wrote. "Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection."

Pope Francis' words reminded many people of the "seamless garment" approach to life issues promoted by the late Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago. While applauding its recognition of the sacredness of all human life, some people criticized the approach, saying it could give people a mistaken impression that, for example, the church teaches abortion and capital punishment are equally serious sins. Others worried that some Catholics would claim their defense of life in one area meant that they did not have to pursue the protection of life in other areas.

But "Pope Francis has reaffirmed that abortion is evil without mincing words," Archbishop Paglia said. At the same time, he asks that "the pro-life commitment be enlarged."

The pope's words in the exhortation reflect the same vision the pope had in renewing the statutes and membership of the Academy for Life, he said; the pope believes "true support for life cannot be limited to isolated moments of its existence, but also must promote the conditions of justice and peace" life needs to thrive.

What Pope Francis is telling Catholics, he said, is "to

be pro-life always, in every situation and everywhere, not only in one moment, in one country or one aspect. We must rediscover the prophetic call to defend life in its concrete situations, not as an abstraction, by defending human beings from the very beginning of life to its end."

Rather than watering down Catholics' commitment to ending abortion, the archbishop said, attention to defending life at every stage and in every circumstance "should make us stronger, including in effectively combatting the absurd prospect of abortion."

By putting together abortion, euthanasia, hunger, immigration, the death penalty, weapons trafficking, war and other serious issues, he said, Pope Francis makes it clear that all human life always must be defended. A prophetic pro-life stance, Archbishop Paglia said, "has no limits," while an "ideological approach" zeroes in on particulars. "Ideology moves the mind, while prophecy moves the mind, but also the heart and the hands because it dares to dream of a future that is beautiful for everyone."

"We must never do death's job," the archbishop said. "Never." #

(Millennials, continued from page 3)

3. Focus on transformation over transaction

... Millennials won't go to church because they feel guilty and they certainly won't give.

It is generally accepted that millennials give to "causes" and are not motivated by campaigns that seek support for the bottom line. In other words, they are motivated by organizations that are actively on mission doing good work in the community, not by ones that are only asking for their money to keep going.

To bring millennials back to church, parishes must be transformative communities of service and prayer. Too often, a floundering parish is kept open only because it has been there for years. Church can't be a transaction, where one goes in for an hour on Sunday to punch the Eucharist card. Church must be both a place and a mission...

The Catholic Church and her institutions have existed for over 2,000 years and will live beyond the millennial generation. But as the church inevitably grows smaller and as parishes begin to close, let it also be a time of learning. Is it possible the world has something to teach the church about how to not be like the world?

[Christian Mocek is director of alumni relations at St. Meinrad, a Benedictine monastery, seminary and school of theology in southern Indiana. You can find his reflections on parenthood, marriage and young adulthood at mocekmusings.com.]