



14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 8, 2018

Readings

This week:

Ezekiel 2:2-5

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Mark 6:1-6a

Next week:

Amos 7:12-15

Ephesians 1:3-14

Mark 6:7-13

Psalm

Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy. (*Psalm 123*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Kevin Ballard.

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

Monday, July 9, 7:00 pm

Liturgy Committee, Thomas House

Thursday, July 12, 7:30 pm

TMC Board, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

The world is the unquiet city of those who live for themselves and are therefore divided against one another in a struggle that cannot end, for it will go on eternally in hell. It is the city of those who are fighting for possession of limited things and for the monopoly of goods and pleasures that cannot be shared by all. But if you try to escape from this world merely by leaving the city and hiding yourself in solitude, you will only take the city with you into solitude. . . .

For the flight from the world is nothing else but the flight from self-concern. And the one who locks himself up in private with his own selfishness has put himself into a position where the evil within him will either possess him like a devil or drive him out of his head.

This is why it is dangerous to go into solitude merely because you like to be alone.

—*New Seeds of Contemplation*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Backpacks for Seton students:

We are again taking on a project this summer to purchase backpacks and school supplies for the children of St. Elizabeth Seton School. Our goal is to provide 50 backpacks in any color except red or blue. You can pick them up at Costco or Target (or anywhere else), or you



can contribute cash and we'll buy the backpacks and supplies. Checks can be made out to St. Elizabeth Seton school, with "Backpacks" on the memo line. Checks or purchases should be brought to St. Thomas

Aquinas Church by Sunday, August 12. If you have questions, call our coordinator, John Arnold, at (650) 269-2950, or e-mail him at jsaoso@comcast.net.

Care for the soul during troubled times:

Midpeninsula Voices for Peace and Justice is hosting a prayer service on the 11th of each month, offering a time of quiet multifaith prayer. All are welcome! On Wednesday, July 11, the service will be 7:00 to 7:30 pm at First Congregational Church, at 1985 Louis Road. On Saturday, August 11, the hosts will be the Mountain View Palo Alto Mosque, 849 Independence Avenue in MV, also 7:00 to 7:40 pm. On Tuesday, September 11, there will be a picnic and program from 7:00 to 8:00, and from 8:30 to 8:30, Peaceful Presence Prayers marking the end of Rosh Hashanah, closing with a candlelight vigil at King Plaza, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto.

Day Worker Center helps with summer projects:

The Day Worker Center of Mountain View is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization serving the day laborer community in Mountain View, Los Altos, and surrounding communities. Its mission is to provide a safe and supportive environment in which to connect day workers and employers with dignity. In addition, it strives to empower day workers and improve their socio-economic condition through fair employment, education, job skills training, and community service. The Center also supports advocacy efforts on issues that affect day workers.

The Center is located at 113 Escuela Ave, Mountain View, CA 94040. It is open 7:00 am-5:00 pm Monday-Saturday. Give them a call at (650) 903-4102 for workers to help with your summer projects!

Please remember in your prayers this week: Denise Alonghi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chipendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Jean Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Dick Jackman, Hunter Kubit, 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.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Our need to pray:

Unless you somehow have a foot outside of your culture, the culture will swallow you whole.

Daniel Berrigan wrote that and it's true too in this sense: Unless you can drink in strength from a source outside yourself, your natural proclivities for paranoia, bitterness, and hatred will invariably swallow you whole. The disciples in Luke's Gospel understood this. They approached Jesus and asked him to teach them how to pray because they saw him doing things that they did not see anyone else doing. He was able to meet hatred with love, to genuinely forgive others, to endure misunderstanding and opposition without giving in to self-pity and bitterness, and to retain within himself a center of peace and non-violence. This, they knew, was as extraordinary as walking on water, and they sensed that he

was drawing the strength to do this from a source outside him, through prayer.

They knew they themselves were incapable of resisting bitterness and hatred and they wanted to be as strong as Jesus and so they asked him: *Lord, teach us to pray.* . . . Jesus, himself had to struggle mightily at times to ground himself in God, as we see from his prayer in Gethsemane. His struggle there is described as an "agony," and this needs to be carefully understood. "Agony" was a technical term used at the time for athletes. Before entering the stadium or arena for a contest, athletes would first work their bodies into a sweat, a warm lather, an agony, to make their muscles warm and ready for the contest. The Gospels tell us that Jesus also worked himself into a

Our need to pray, continued:

sweat, except in his case he sweated blood as he readied himself in his heart for the contest, the test he was about to enter, his passion.

And what was that contest? The test he was readying himself for wasn't as it is commonly believed an agonizing over the decision whether to let himself be crucified or whether to invoke divine power and save himself from this humiliation and death. That was never the issue in his struggle in Gethsemane. He had long before accepted that he was going to die. The question was how, how would he die, in love or in bitterness?

In the end, it was a struggle to strengthen his will so that he would die with a loving, warm, forgiving heart. And it was a struggle; a positive outcome was in doubt.

Amidst all the darkness, hatred, bitterness, injustice, and misunderstanding that surrounded him, amidst everything that stood unfairly against him and was antithetical to his person and message, Jesus struggled mightily to cling to a source that could give him the strength to resist the hatred and violence around him, that could give him the heart to forgive his enemies, that could give him the graciousness to forgive the good thief, and that could give him the inner strength to turn humiliation, pain, and injustice into compassion rather than bitterness.

The Gospels put this metaphorically as a struggle to "stay awake." . . . In Gethsemane, amidst everything that invites him (and us) into moral amnesia, Jesus manages to stay awake to his deeper reality and to his identity as God's beloved. His disciples don't. As the Gospels tell us, during Jesus' great struggle they fell asleep and their sleep ("out of sheer sorrow") was more than physical fatigue. This is evident when, immediately after Jesus has managed to ground himself against hatred and non-violence, Peter succumbs to both and cuts off the ear of the high priest's servant. Peter was asleep, in more ways than one, in a sleep that signifies the absence of prayer in one's life.

Prayer is meant to keep us awake, to keep us connected to a source outside our of natural instincts and proclivities which can keep us grounded in love, forgiveness, non-retaliation, and non-violence when everything inside of us and around us screams for bitterness, hatred, and retaliation. And if Jesus had to sweat blood in trying to stay connected to that source when he was tested, we can expect that the cost for us will be the same, struggle, agony, wanting in every fiber of our being to give in, clinging to love precariously by the skin of our teeth, and then having God's angel strengthen us only when we've been writhing long enough in the struggle so that we can let God's strength do for us what our own strength cannot do. *Lord, teach us to pray!*

—Fr. Ron Rolheiser, *The Valley Catholic*, April 10, 2018

Of caterpillars and butterflies:

We live a caterpillar existence and are completely incapable of conceiving of a butterfly existence. It is an awful thing to be told—or rather asked—to be willing to die to our caterpillarness in order to be something we have no notion of and no desire for. We like being caterpillars—we have cabbage leaves to feed on, our world is circumscribed and manageable, it's solid.

God's agonizing struggle is to get his human creatures to love and trust him enough to make the decision, to accept to die to their caterpillar life.... But Jesus accepted. This is the great triumph. He accepted, with all the adoring love of his heart, to lay down his life. This act was his supreme expression of the greatness of his love for his Father—that he, the Father, mattered alone, and that all Jesus wanted was to do his will, and to allow the Father to do in him and through him whatever he pleased.

And it is then God's good pleasure to fill his creature with blessings.

—Sr. Ruth Burrows, *Living Love*

A soul-searching time as a nation:

Abridged from an article by Sr. Nancy Sylvester, founder and director of the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue and former President of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Prior to that, she was national coordinator of Network, the national Catholic social justice lobby. From global-sistersreport.org, June 27, 2018.

These past weeks, a number of things have happened in the United States that signal to me we are entering a critical soul-searching time as a nation. We experienced the administration's hardened position regarding those who are entering our country, even for those seeking asylum. For a time it included separating children from their parents and placing them in detention centers without any plan for reuniting them with their families.

We heard President Donald Trump insult our closest neighbors and strong allies—Canada and Mexico—even speaking of Mexicans as "infesting"

our country. We watched as Trump separated himself from our Western allies and sought closer relationships with the dictators of Russia and North Korea.

Who the United States has been, both nationally and internationally, is being turned upside down. Although some of us may not totally agree with how things have been and desire change, the actions of Trump are focused on appealing to his political base, a minority of the people in the US. The good of the whole is being ignored.

There is a heartbreaking silence from members of Con-



Millennial midterms:

Abridged from an article by Mark Riddle, president of the New Leaders Council, at washingtonspectator.org. Submitted by Dick Lacone.

. . . In the common imagination, millennials are—we are told—entitled new urban professionals, highly educated and densely packed into the newly vibrant coastal cities of America. . . . The average millennial is actually in her early to mid-thirties, likely living with a partner (though they are unmarried), renting a home in the suburbs of a midsize “flyover state” city. She likely does not have a college degree, though she took some college-level courses and therefore has student loan balances that cannot be repaid with college-required wages. She is likely held about eight jobs since entering the workforce and has had a full-time job since age 18. For all this, she has been rewarded with a job that could be taken away at any time, with compensation well below a living wage and has seen regressive policies enacted that will further entrench these trends.

This is a far cry from the avocado-eating caricature that dominates the political discourse about millennials. But progressives and—more importantly—their candidates must understand the language of the millennial generation if they hope to win back Congress in 2018. This is the largest voting bloc in American history. And what binds . . . the millennial generation together is this: they came of age in the wake of the financial crisis, and their lives were profoundly affected by the perception of corrupted governmental institutions supporting exploitative financial practices. From their earliest days, the real average millennials have faced the albatross of financial insecurity—be it student loans (shared by those who have degrees and, worse, those who don't), inability to own a home due to stagnant wage growth, or growing (and more widely understood) inequalities of wealth. In a word, the millennial experience is founded on a shared sense that the system of American society established before them is fundamentally corrupted.

. . . The carried identity of millennials is . . . a lived and bone-deep understanding that the system is not just corrupted—but that it is corrupted specifically against them. And moreover, it can break one of two ways: either it is a spark that engenders outrage and action, or it will result in the kind of learned helplessness that leads to apathy and disengagement. The former could lead to Democrats taking back Congress, and the latter will lead to another term of listless corruption of our basic civics. So what, then, should we do? A few key points, both structured and substantive.

First, we must accord the millennial generation the dignity and respect it deserves. This means providing opportunities for leadership within existing party struc-

tures, or changing the party structures to include them. Millennial candidates exist. They run. And they win. Yet far too often they are relegated in intraparty discussions to side tables and sub-subcommittees. This cannot go on any longer. If we are to win the millennial vote, we need to ensure that millennials have the choice to elect someone like themselves—like other generations. Second, we must tighten our messaging. There should not be a campaign message generally and then a millennial message. These are prime working-age adults with significant policy concerns—their agenda is the agenda. And so we need to focus our language on the issues central to them. While this usually is conceived as student loans. . . it is more than that. The issue most central to millennial participation is the sense of corruption identified above. Our message—at every campaign level from local office to the United States Senate—needs to be anti-corruption.

The Republicans will likely throw around the blame-game name tag—trotting out hits against Nancy Pelosi, Hillary Clinton, and Chuck Schumer. They will try to tie progressive candidates to these leaders on the premise that the association will sink them. For Democrats to be successful, we need to pivot the conversation to an anti-corruption narrative. To have the freedom to build a better future, we need to remove corruption. And we need more than a negative anti-corruption plan; we need to tie it to a positive economic message. That is key to economic prosperity, it is key to blunting the tired conservative messaging machine, and it is key to securing the enthusiasm of millennial voters—and any voter. And finally, we need to follow through. Once we succeed electorally, these issues cannot be placed on the back burner. We need to enact an anti-corruption agenda—or else we risk total disengagement and continued conservative rule. Anti-corruption means money in politics, it means student loan reform, it means equitable health care reform, it means expanded voting rights, it means antitrust enforcement, it means pro-consumer reforms of business practices, and it means rebuilding the basic social trust that has been so frayed among millennials by decades of public disinvestment and political duplicity.

If we can do those things, we may have a shot of connecting with millennials. And they will provide the raw material for a new burst of reform energy in America. But in all likelihood we only get one shot. 2018 is the most important election cycle in recent history, and if we do not separate caricatures from reality, and if we do not speak honestly about the future, and if we do not follow through on our promises to the largest voting generation, we may fail the test of history.

Bishop McGrath's message on separated families:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are hundreds of miles from the border, yet what has happened along the US-Mexico border over the past few weeks has a direct impact on many of our own people. Images of crying children, separated from their mothers, and the anguish of mothers whose infants have been taken from their arms has increased the anxiety and fear of mothers and children living here in many of our parishes and neighborhoods. I write to assure you that we stand with you, that we support Church efforts to keep families together and to reunite those that have been separated.

The separation of detained minor children from their parents is un-American, un-Christian and inhumane. This practice is mean-spirited and betrays our nation's tradition of welcome to migrants and refugees. Coupled with this, the United States Attorney General's decision to deny welcome to victims of domestic and gang violence is a further betrayal of the values that have until now characterized the immigration policy of the United States. The Attorney General's attempt to justify these actions by citing Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans is a final betrayal of millennia-old principles. Blind obedience to the state has never been the mark of our democracy, which has historically been characterized by civil discourse and compromise.

Indeed, early Christians were often at odds with secular society and the government. When questioned about allegiance to the Roman Empire, Jesus instructed his followers to "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, but to God, the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). As the Christian message began to take hold, early communities of believers found themselves in deep conflict with the Roman government. Thus, it is a perversion of Scripture to teach that God's people must blindly obey the government, even when the government is enacting unjust laws. We believe that the Department of Homeland Security's barbaric practice of separating children from their parents is void of justice, charity and compassion. This policy must be vigorously opposed. As Saint Augustine taught, "An unjust law is no law at all."

We cannot lose what is at the heart of this tragedy: the fact there are children and families in the crosshairs of our government's actions and that the trauma that these children suffer will have long term effects on their spiritual, emotional and physical well-being.

We encourage Congress to fix our broken immigration system, to honor promises made to children who were brought to the United States ("DACA recipients"), and to include the good of families in their deliberations.

In closing, let us all remember the words addressed to the Israelites on their desert journey: "You shall not oppress a resident alien; you well know how it feels to be an alien, since you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 23:9). And let us treat with compassion those who today knock on the doors of our hearts.

—With every best wish and kind regard, I remain, Patrick J. McGrath, Bishop of San Jose

A soul-searching time as a nation, continued:

gress—both Democrats and Republicans. Party politics and the next election are paramount, regardless if in the process the basic values for which America has stood are violated. We don't all agree about our future. The divisions we experience, the cultural war waging in our country, did not happen overnight. The cultural, social, economic and political shifts over these past 50-60 years have been experienced by us in very different ways.

For some, having policies that support the free exchange of goods and services across national borders is part of trying to create a global community. For others, it is the taking away of jobs that devastates one's local community. For some, acceptance of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer community is a natural extension of one's belief in human rights. For others, it signaled another stripping away of the moral order. For some, addressing racism and sexism in all of its insidious forms is necessary to who we are as a country. For others, it signals political correctness and bias against white men. For some, the immigration issue is about obeying the law and securing our border, keeping us safe. For others, it is a humanitarian issue calling forth compassion and open arms for those who are fleeing violence and persecution. Many situations we face as a people touch on issues of culture, identity and meaning, and we experience them differently.

These divisions are deepened when the rhetoric stokes the fires of anger and fear among us. This is complicated by the way that truth and actual facts are being manipulated so as to sideline rational debate, appeal to emotions, use negative stereotypes, and erode standards of mutual respect.

These techniques often lead people to be deceived from seeing what is in their own best interest, and in a world of social media and 24/7 news cycles they can cement worldviews and create unswerving loyalty to one's tribe or political base.

To be concluded next week

5 ways Catholics can take action to help immigrant families:

By Michelle Fordice at www.uscatholic.org, June 25, 2018. Michelle Fordice is project manager in the communications department at the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC).

The separation of children from their parents at the border has thrown our country's immigration problems into high relief. Many Americans responded to the administration's policy change with outrage. Though the president signed an executive order on June 20 that nominally ends this family separation policy, the crisis is not over. We, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), know this from our long experience working with immigrants and from the witness of our 330 affiliates across the country. Every day we aim to ensure the dignity of all newcomers under an onslaught of attacks on humanitarian and family immigration. Here is what you can do to help us and our many partners in this effort.

Educate yourself and keep informed

This latest spectacle at the border did not appear out of thin air. The termination of Temporary Protected Status for hundreds of thousands of people, the abandonment of DACA recipients, and the slashing of the refugee resettlement program are all part of a plan to limit all forms of immigration. Although there's been no increase in the number of asylum seekers trying to present themselves at ports of entry along the US-Mexico border, many have been turned away or made to wait in line for a week or longer. With no end in sight, some feel the risk is necessary and cross illegally.

Even if this type of family separation is "ended," family detention is not a solution. Detention centers cause serious irrevocable harm to a child's health and development.

If you are angry over about what has happened in recent weeks, there are plenty of reasons to stay alert. Family separation was an egregious example of our nation's unjust immigration policy, but it is not unique. Follow organizations like CLINIC, the Kino Border Initiative, the Hope Border Institute, and Justice for Immigrants, a campaign of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, to stay aware of the latest developments in immigration and how you can help.

Contact your representatives: Demand oversight and a plan to reunite these families

Much damage has been done. It isn't over until every child is reunited with their family in a safe environment. Demand that the Department of Homeland Security release a plan to fix their mistakes. Call on Congress to provide oversight and investigate what is happening. Remind your representatives that the administration's decision to separate families increased costs to the taxpayer. In addition the money for the facilities the administration tossed together to hold these children, those kids will now be in separate immigration proceedings from their parents, adding duplicative cases to an already overburdened system.

Finally, ask for a legislative solution that does not pit one group of immigrants against another—family reunification, refugee resettlement, asylum and skills-based immigration are equally important forms of migration that benefit our country and reaffirm our values.

The USCCB has long worked for immigration reform that would accomplish those goals. Past failed legislative proposals have come close to these goals and won the support of the U.S. bishops. You can see a breakdown of specific principles the USCCB and other Catholic agencies have supported here.

To be concluded next week

CLINIC is lifeline for immigrants and refugees:

Abridged from an article by Fr. Peter Daly, a retired priest of the Washington Archdiocese and a lawyer. After 31 years of parish service, he now works with Catholic Charities.

The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., or CLINIC, is probably the most influential Catholic organization that you have never heard of. CLINIC is a loose network of more than 330 organizations that provide legal services to immigrants and refugees. One hundred sixty-eight of the 177 Catholic Charities agencies in the US have some level of legal assistance for migrants and refugees. Nearly all of them are members of CLINIC, plus many independent groups and groups from other denominations.

CLINIC is part of our church's effort to fulfill the gospel mandate to "welcome the stranger" (Matthew 25:35). It trains lawyers and "accredited representatives" (a sort of super paralegal) to represent refugees and immigrants in immigration courts and proceedings. It also offers some direct representation to people who are appealing their cases in immigration courts or to federal courts.

It is a lifeline for people fleeing persecution, war and poverty or simply trying to keep their families together. Immigration law is bewildering even to American lawyers who speak English. It is impenetrable to immigrants, who are often very poor and struggling to navigate a complex legal system in a foreign language.

To be concluded next week

