



23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 9, 2018

Readings

This week:

Isaiah 35:4-7a

James 2:1-5

Mark 7:31-37

Next week:

Isaiah 50:4c-9a

James 2:14-18

Mark 8:27-35

Psalm

Praise the Lord, my soul! (*Psalm 146*)

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. 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, September 10, 7:00 pm

TMC Liturgy Team, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

Let this be my only consolation—that, wherever I am, You my Lord are loved and praised. The trees indeed love You without knowing You. Without being aware of Your presence, the tiger lilies and cornflowers proclaim that they love You. The beautiful dark clouds ride slowly across the sky musing on You like children who do not know what they are dreaming of as they play.

In the midst of them all, I know You and I know of Your Presence. In them and in me I know of the love that they do not know and, what is greater, I am abashed by the presence of Your love in my life. O kind and terrible love which You have given me and which could never be in my heart if You did not love me!

In the midst of these beings that have never offended You, I am loved by You, most of all as one who has offended You. I am seen by You under the sky and my offenses have been forgotten by You.

—*Thoughts in Solitude*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Day Worker Center needs teachers:

The Day Worker Center of Mountain View does not just provide jobs for day laborers. It also provides worker-led community services, trash pickup on local streets, and help in community events (such as Rotary Club, runs, and other events). It also offers English as a Second Language classes to the workers, facilitating their communication with employers and teaching them about local culture.

At present, the Day Worker Center has an urgent need for teachers and assistants. You don't need any teaching experience, but if you're new to teaching, we do encourage you to first audit and assist other teachers. The intermediate and advanced classes are taught in English, and the beginning classes are taught in Spanish. Our classes are held between 8:30 am and 11:00 am on Mondays through Fridays, and last for 60-90 minutes—but be warned that volunteering at the center can be addicting, fun, and rewarding.

Volunteering enables you to be a conduit for positive change in our community. If you have a few hours to spare and would be interested in exploring a volunteer job, go to www.dayworkercentermv.org and fill out the Volunteer Sign-up Form you'll find there. Or you can contact the ESL Coordinator who is also a member of the Thomas Merton community—Patricia Markee at pmmarkee@hotmail.com or 493-6242—for more information.

With a route mapped to Mar-a-Lago, Nuns on the Bus will hit the road again:

By Dan Stockman, national correspondent for Global Sisters Report, at globalsistersreport.org.

The nuns are getting back on the bus.

Network, a Catholic social justice lobby, announced August 20 the advocacy group will hit the road in its popular Nuns on the Bus tour for a sixth time, hosting 54 events in 21 states over the course of 27 days. This year's tour will begin October 8 in Los Angeles and end November 2 in Palm Beach, Florida, at the Mar-a-Lago resort owned by President Donald Trump, where the sisters plan to present the stories they heard on their cross-country journey.

Social Service Sr. Simone Campbell, Network's executive director, said she's not yet certain what will happen at or near Trump's resort. "We don't know what we're going to do—but it will probably end with a fiesta for the common good, where we'll have a potluck where everybody contributes."

The Nuns on the Bus tours are a media and fundraising

continued on page 3

Peace picnic:

On Tuesday night, September 11, 7:00-8:30 pm, American Muslim Voice invites us to a Multifaith Peace Picnic in King Plaza, at City Hall, to honor the victims of 9/11, their families and first responders, as we strive to transform this tragic day into one of peace and community building. This event is free and open to ALL.

You will enjoy complementary dinner, music, children's performances and a multifaith prayer service. We invite you, your friends and family members to be a part of this peace and community building event. Let us nurture old friendships and sow the seeds of new ones. Now more than ever our country needs us to come together as the United States of America. American Muslim Voice Foundation encourages ALL Americans to move "from fear to friendship."

Parish picnic:

Save Sunday, September 16, 11:30 am until 2:30 pm, for the annual parish picnic at Our Lady of the Rosary Hall. The Knights of Columbus will be the cooks, and you are encouraged to bring a salad or casserole (last name A-P), or a dessert (last name R-Z). There will be the usual dancing and games, as well as a Free-Cycle event, to which you can donate things you no longer need but are willing to pass on to someone new. This will also be a great time to meet and congratulate our new pastor Fr. Stasys, as well as your fellow parishioners. Hope to see you there!

Meet Sr. Irene Loina:

Sr. Irene Loina of Kenya will speak Saturday, September 22, 10:00-11:30 am, in the St. Albert Hospitality Room. In 2014 Sr. Irene organized the first coming-of-age training for 134 Pokot girls that did not include "the cut" (i.e., female genital mutilation). This historic event was part of her ministry with women and girls in very traditional tribes in Kenya. In that context she took infant and maternal care to the most remote areas of East Pokot to provide pre-natal care, well-baby checks, immunizations, HIV/AIDS information and education of traditional midwives—including information from the Helping Babies Breathe program for premature infants. Since that time, Sr. Irene has earned a master's degree in Program Management from Nairobi University in order to expand her ministry to other remote areas of East Africa. Sr. Irene will share her insights, experiences, challenges and successes. Refreshments will be available (coffee, tea, bagels, fruit). All are welcome, and there is no cost, although donations are welcome. Sponsored by the Thomas Merton Center.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

...Nuns on the Bus, continued:

juggernaut, but planning them involves much more than simply renting a bus and rounding up some sisters to ride it. . . .The decision wasn't so easy this year, but she said traveling across the country, meeting people and hearing their stories changes her perspective, which is especially important when you work in the bubble of Washington, DC. "The biggest existential threat to our democracy is the rampant individualism. Everyone feels they can do it alone," Campbell said. "The bus is about community.



It's about 'We the people.' That's really the more important piece for me: the engagement, the sense that we can make a difference together, that I'm not alone."

Daughter of Charity Sr. Mary Ellen Lacy, a Network grassroots mobilization specialist, said nothing

can replace the bus trips. "This will be my fifth bus trip, and you never walk away from it without being transformed," Lacy said. "The community you see and help build—you'd never get that otherwise." Once the decision was made, the work to make it happen began. The first job: raise money. . . .Once the route is set, events have to be planned, and that's when the work really begins. "We reach out to every community in terms of site visits, asking who we should talk to," Campbell said. "We have the government relations team pull all the data on an area so we can be specific when we talk about things like unemployment and poverty rates. The communications team works on everything from decorating the bus to building the website. And the development team keeps working with me on the fundraising to make it all happen."

. . .Lacy said listening to people's stories feels like part of a sacred trust. "People want to feel like they're listened to. They want to feel like they matter," Lacy said. "They're finding us as a trustworthy person to tell their stories and not let it die. . . .I'm not just listening for the sake of listening. It's to take it back [to Washington, D.C., where Network is headquartered] and use it for better policy.

. . .A month-long bus trip can be grueling. But Campbell said it's worth it. "It's so glorious to meet all these people across the country. It's so life-giving," Campbell said. "I find it just sacred. Last year, not having a bus and not traveling as much, I got hungry to be connected with folks who are engaged in their community. It's one thing to give a talk. It's another to receive their knowledge and experience their worries."

As the church faces another crisis, look to women for help:

By Valerie Schultz at americamagazine.org, September 3, 2018.

. . .I was recently chafing on Jesus' behalf at the inherent sexism lurking behind some dress code notes in a parish bulletin. The text implied that women and girls who come to Mass in skimpy clothing—and we have all seen them—are responsible for causing sinful thoughts in the minds of "others" (meaning: men). Apparently, men cannot ever grow up or be trusted to treat women like fellow human beings. I am not a fan of cleavage in church, but it occurred to me that female rape victims are the only victims of crime who are ever asked, "What were you wearing?"

. . .This example of small-scale sexism in the Sunday bulletin cannot, of course, compare to the deeper pit of the sex abuse scandals in which the church currently sprawls. I am sickened to the depths of my soul by the recent grand jury report in Pennsylvania, detailing episodes of pedophilia, sexual assault and rape committed by 301 members of the Catholic clergy on over 1,000 victims, along with the by-now-familiar cover-up of criminal behavior by the church hierarchy. . . .It is high time for us to understand how this keeps happening and to stop it. But as long as we continue to treat clergymen as though they are somehow more angelic than us inferior lay people, as long as we expect them to be asexual super-humans, as long as we do not monitor them as we do any adults who interact with our children, we will suffer sexual predation. As long as we shy away from any honest discussions of sexuality and cloak sexuality in shame-filled secrecy, as long as we refuse to allow women to occupy positions of real authority within the church, we will bring these revolting abuses and subsequent headlines on ourselves.

Jesus relied on women to get it right. From his own mother to the women who questioned or challenged him to the women who befriended him to the women who braved the crucifixion to the women who proclaimed the resurrection, Jesus treated women as equals and as holy. We have been there with him. That is our historical and spiritual birthright. Over the centuries, we have tended to the sick and fed the hungry and taught the children and laundered the linens and staffed the offices and offered our envelopes and witnessed our faith and kept the church's home fires burning, but we have not been in power. We have not been empowered. And maybe that

continued on page 4

On friendship:

Abridged from an article by Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, president of the Oblate School of Theology, at ronrolheiser.com.

One of the richest experiences of grace that we can have this side of eternity is the experience of friendship. Dictionaries define friendship as a relationship of mutual affection, a bond richer than mere association. They then go on to link friendship to a number of words: *kindness, love, sympathy, empathy, honesty, altruism, loyalty, understanding, compassion, comfort*, and (not least) *trust*. Friends, the dictionaries assert, enjoy each other's company, express their feelings to each other, and make mistakes without fear of judgment from the other.

That basically covers things, but to better grasp the real grace in friendship a number of things inside that definition need explication.

First, as the Greek Stoics affirmed and as is evident in Christian spirituality, true friendship is only possible among people who are practicing virtue. A gang is not a circle of friendship, nor are many ideological circles. Why? Because friendship needs to bring grace and grace is only found in virtue.

Next, friendship is more than merely human, though it is wonderfully human. When it is genuine, friendship is nothing less than a participation in the flow of life and love that's inside of God. Scripture tells us that *God is love*, but the word it uses for love in this case is the Greek word *agape*, a term which might be rendered as "family," "community," or "the sharing of life." Hence the famous text ("*God is Love*") might be transliterated to read: *God is family, God is community, God is shared existence, and whoever shares his or her existence inside of community and friendship is participating in the very flow of life and love that is inside the Trinity.*

... Deep, life-giving friendship, as we all know, is as difficult as it is rare. Why? We all long for it in the depths of our soul, so why is it so difficult to find? We all know why: We're different from each other, unique, and rightly cautious as to whom we give entry into our soul. And so

it isn't easy to find a soulmate, to have that kind of affinity and trust. Nor is it easy to sustain a friendship once we have found one. Sustained friendship takes hard commitment and that's not our strong point as our psyches and our world forever shift and turn. Moreover, today, virtual friendships don't always translate into real friendships. Finally, not least, friendship is often hindered or derailed by sex and sexual tension. This is simply a fact of nature and a fact within our culture and all other cultures. Sex and sexuality, while they ideally should be the basis for deep friendship, often are the major hindrance to friendship. Moreover, in our own culture (whose ethos prizes sex over friendship) friendship is often seen as a substitute, and a second-best one at that, for sex.

But while that may be in our cultural ethos, it's clearly not what's deepest in our souls. There we long for something that's ultimately deeper than sex—or is sex in a fuller flowering. There's a deep desire in us all (be that a deeper form of sexual desire or a desire for something that's beyond sex) for a soulmate, for someone to sleep with morally. More deeply than we ache for a sexual partner, we ache for a moral partner, though these desires aren't mutually exclusive, just hard to combine.

... Sometimes poets can reach where academics cannot and so I offer these insights from a poet vis-à-vis the interrelationship between friendship and sex. Friendship, Rainer Marie Rilke suggests, is often one of the great taboos within a culture, but it remains always the end-game: "In a deep, felicitous love between two people you can eventually become the loving protectors of each other's solitude.... Sex is, admittedly, very powerful, but no matter how powerful, beautiful, and wondrous it may be, if you become the loving protectors of each other's solitude, love gradually turns to friendship." And as Montaigne once affirmed: "The end of friendship may be more important than love. The epiphanies of youth are meant to blossom and ripen into something everlasting."

... *Look to women for help, continued:*

is partly on us. We allowed generations of societal norms to obscure Jesus' example. What are we to do? What would Jesus do? Maybe Jesus would agree with Mr. Rogers's mother, who advised Mr. Rogers, in times of confusion and tragedy, to "look for the helpers." We are the helpers. We women, the proven and time-honored helpers, must stand for the littlest ones, the injured ones, the vulnerable ones. Regarding church personnel and practices, we must keep the best and throw out the rest, the sexism, the clericalism, the dishonesty, the hypocrisy. We must welcome the fresh and feminine breath of the Holy Spirit. That is exactly what Jesus did.

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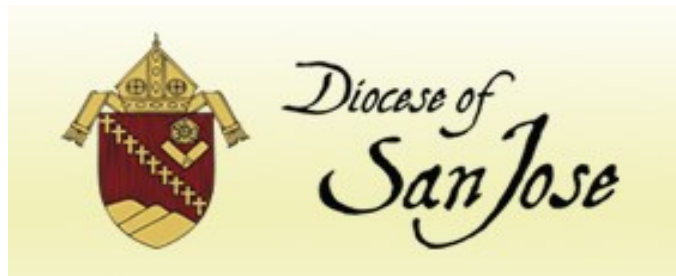
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Our Path to Reconciliation and Healing

This is a statement issued by Bishop P.J. McGrath of the Diocese of San Jose on August 31, 2018.

Recent news of abuse and misconduct in Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and other places in the world has shaken our local community and eroded trust in the Church and its leadership. These events are horrific. We must review and, if necessary, renew our efforts to heal all victims and others affected by these crimes and sins, bring perpetrators to justice and preclude further abuse.

The Diocese of San Jose remains committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The Diocese of San Jose has long undertaken significant initiatives to protect all with whom we have contact.

Here follows a brief timeline of the development of our policies for the protection of children and vulnerable adults, a summary of our systemic efforts to ensure a safe environment, and an outline of our response to accusations of abuse and misconduct that highlights these efforts. In 2002, the Bishops of the United States approved the *Dallas Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The *Charter* provides policies for dioceses of the United States to address incidents of abuse and facilitate a safe environment in our parishes, schools, and Catholic organizations, the places where we worship, gather, educate and serve. It includes procedures for reconciliation, healing, and accountability. The *Dallas Charter* was updated and strengthened in 2005, 2011, and 2018.

The Diocese of San Jose has adopted and implemented the *Dallas Charter*. We have also successfully undergone annual audits to ensure compliance and ongoing growth and development in our efforts of protection.

In 2002, the Diocese of San Jose established the Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. This office oversees and coordinates the pastoral care and outreach to victims of clergy sexual abuse (as well as other victims who may have been abused within parishes or Catholic institutions—here or in other dioceses). This outreach and care include counseling, support groups, spiritual assistance, and other support services. Throughout the years, we have had the service of Victim Assistance Coordinators, who organize these efforts and accompany victims through their healing.

The independent Diocesan Review Board was established in 2002. This board evaluates any allegation of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults by clergy (deacons, priests, and bishops), Church personnel or volunteers within the Diocese, even if civil authorities have chosen not to pursue legal action. The board also evaluates accusations of clergy sexual misconduct that point to possible violations of pastoral relationships.

Following its evaluation, the board advises the Bishop of San Jose regarding recommended action. The Diocesan Review Board is presently chaired by the Honorable Edward Panelli, a retired Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court, and includes other qualified lay persons and one pastor, as mandated by the *Dallas Charter*.

The Diocese of San Jose has ongoing programs to ensure screening and training of all clergy, diocesan employees, seminarians, and Church volunteers in Santa Clara County. All clergy, seminarians, employees, and volunteers must be fingerprinted and undergo a background check before they can minister in the Diocese. Approximately 46,000 persons have been fingerprinted and undergone background screening since 2002.

Additionally, all clergy, employees and volunteers are required to undergo comprehensive “Safe Environment Training” every three years. The Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults coordinates and monitors this training. Over 46,000 persons have undergone safe environment training in the Diocese since 2002. We provide age-appropriate safe environment training in our schools and catechetical programs. Additionally, the Diocese requires that employees complete training regarding sexual harassment and workplace conduct every three years.

While important, training and background checks cannot prevent all misconduct. All clergy, school personnel, and pastoral ministers are mandated reporters in the State of California and must report any suspected abuse immediately. When we receive an accusation of sexual abuse, we notify civil authorities immediately. The Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults then notifies the Bishop, the Vicar General, and the Chair of the Diocesan Review Board.

The Diocese of San Jose cooperates fully with any investigation.

The victim’s safety and care are the primary concerns, and a Victim Assistance Coordinator is assigned to facilitate an immediate response to the victim and family and to coordinate ongoing care.

If the accusation is deemed “credible,” we remove the accused from ministry, pending the results of further investigation. Following the civil investigation and any legal action, the Diocese will pursue additional sanctions within the Church.

As a Diocese, we have adopted and exceeded national norms. Our churches and schools are much safer since the *Dallas Charter* was promulgated by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002. Through the *Charter*, Catholic dioceses across the United States, including San Jose, have committed to conducting background checks for all persons who work with minors and vulnerable adults and to training minors and adults to recognize signs of abuse and of grooming by sexual predators.

Although we are not perfect, our efforts help ensure that our churches and schools in Santa Clara County are much safer.

The Diocese of San Jose remains committed to the protection of all persons to whom we minister, to the facilitation of safe and healthy parishes, schools, and organizations, and to healthy pastoral relationships that foster each person’s relationship with our loving God. To that end, we will continue to review our policies and procedures to learn if there are ways that we may improve our efforts on behalf of children, youth and all vulnerable persons.

Pope Francis has asserted that “We have realized that these wounds never disappear and that they require us forcefully to condemn these atrocities...” He continues, “The heart-wrenching pain of these victims, which cries out to heaven, was long ignored, kept quiet, or silenced.” He calls us to prayer and penance: “Penance and prayer will help us to open our eyes and our hearts to other people’s sufferings.”

We continue to do all that we can, through prayer and action, to promote reconciliation and healing for those who have suffered and to create a safe environment for every person.