



22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 2, 2018

Readings

This week:

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8
James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Next week:

Isaiah 35:4-7a
James 2:1-5
Mark 7:31-37

Psalm

The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord. (*Psalm 15*)

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. 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

Thursday, September 6, 7:00 pm

TMC Board, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

Strong hate, the hate that takes joy in hating, is strong because it does not believe itself to be unworthy and alone. It feels the support of a justifying god, or an idol of war, an avenging and destroying spirit. From such blood-drinking gods the human race was once liberated, with great toil and terrible sorrow, by the death of a God who delivered himself to the cross and suffered the pathological cruelty of his own creatures out of pity for them. In conquering death he opened their eyes to the reality of a love, which asks no questions about worthiness, a love which overcomes hatred and destroys death. . . .It is easier to serve the hate gods because they thrive on the workshop of collective fanaticism. To serve the hate gods, one has only to be blinded by collective passion. To serve the God of Love one must first be free, one must face the terrible responsibility of the decision to love in spite of all unworthiness whether in oneself or in one's neighbor.

—*New Seeds of Contemplation*

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

Meet Sr. Irene Loina:

Kenyan Sr. Irene Loina will be here on Saturday, September 22, to share with us some of her experiences running a mobile medical clinic that drives the back-roads of Kenya to treat women, doing prenatal checks and well-baby checks, giving immunizations, bringing nutritional supplements, and educating local midwives. She was the recipient of a program, introduced into that area by TMC member Dr. Ron Ariagno, called Helping Babies Breathe. She accomplished the organization of a coming-of-age ceremony for 134 Pokot girls, committing to end traditional female genital mutilation by convincing local elders, chiefs, and midwives and parents to do so. More about time and locations in subsequent bulletins, but please plan on coming and supporting this important work!

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!



COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

We can only move forward when we name the evil of clericalism:

Abridged from an article by Basilian Fr. Thomas Rosica, the founding CEO of the Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation and Television Network in Canada. Published in National Catholic Reporter (ncronline.org), August 23, 2018.

As finger pointing and efforts to blame individuals or groups for the massive crisis in the church today continues, and many church leaders, experts, those claiming to be theologians and justifiably angry and indignant Catholics diagnose the current tragic state of affairs in the church, theories abound. In some misinformed minds, the current abuse crisis is caused by obligatory celibacy for priests in the Latin Rite, homosexual members of the clergy and episcopacy, alcoholics, bishops unwilling to submit their resignations, etc., yet there is one glaring word that many avoid speaking: the evil of clericalism that is at the root of the crisis.

... Having worked with the Vatican on many large and small projects over the past years and having had the opportunity to preach retreats to many groups of bishops in the United States, Canada and Ireland, I often heard criticisms from bishops against Francis for his frequent reprimands against clericalism. ... Francis is wise and knows exactly of what he speaks. We are facing what is at the core of the current crisis: clericalism, the club mentality and a corrupt system of cronyism and ugly *omertà* that

continued on page 3

What will it take to redeem the soul of America?

By Fr. Bryan Massingale, at uscatholic.org, August 27, 2018. Fr. Massingale is a professor of theological and social ethics at Fordham University in New York. He is the author of Racial Justice and the Catholic Church.

“Without a vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18).

This biblical wisdom comes to mind as I ponder the state of our nation. I write this reflection in the immediate aftermath of the policy of separating families at our nation’s border with Mexico. Although that practice was subsequently changed in light of outrage and protest, the damage was already done and is likely to be profound. Such early childhood trauma is not reversed as easily as it is perpetrated. The psychic scars will be, without doubt, long lasting.

But the wounds to the families torn asunder are not the only injuries that need attention. We as a nation have been deeply wounded and traumatized as well. We are a country that has ripped families apart in the belief that brown-skinned refugees fleeing persecution and death are “infestations,” in the words of our president.

I mention the color of these families deliberately, for it is no accident that white families have not been separated. Nor have immigrants from European countries “like Norway,” to quote President Trump, been labeled as originating from countries of excrement.

Something catastrophic is happening in our country.

continued on page 4

. . .The evil of clericalism, continued:

has seriously infected the church.

In his conclave-changing address to the cardinals on March 7, 2013, four days before his election to the See of Peter, then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio identified what he believes is the church's fundamental illness: ecclesiastical narcissism. . . . In his daily homilies at the Santa Marta Guest House where he resides, Francis speaks often about clericalism. It is a path taken by those who, unlike the good shepherd, concern themselves with money and power and not with people who are suffering and neglected. . . . Good shepherds like Jesus who "are not ashamed of touching the wounded flesh" of the suffering are a "grace for the people of God" and a reminder that "not only them, but us as well, will be judged" on the treatment given to the hungry, the sick and the imprisoned, he said. . . . Clericalism, the pope wrote, "nullifies the personality of Christians" and it also "leads to the functionalization of the laity, treating them as 'errand boys [or girls]'."

"Our role, our joy, the joy of the shepherd is precisely in helping and stimulating, as many did before us, so that it's the mothers, the grandmothers, the fathers who become the true protagonists of history," Francis wrote. Helping the laity to become the real protagonists, he said, is not "a concession of our good will," because it's their "right."

"The laity are a part of the holy, faithful people of God, and for this reason, the protagonists of the Church and the world, whom we're called to serve and not by whom we're to be served," Francis wrote.

Francis has warned the hierarchy against the temptation of believing that a "committed lay person" is she or he who does the work of the church or things for the parish or the diocese. The church, Francis wrote, must recognize the lay person "for their own reality, for their own identity, for being immersed in the heart of social, public and political life."

. . . Francis concluded his letter to the people of God with these stirring and penetrating words: "It is essential that we, as a Church, be able to acknowledge and condemn, with sorrow and shame, the atrocities perpetrated by consecrated persons, clerics, and all those entrusted with the mission of watching over and caring for those most vulnerable. Let us beg forgiveness for our own sins and the sins of others. An awareness of sin helps us to acknowledge the errors, the crimes and the wounds caused in the past and allows us, in the present, to be more open and committed along a journey of renewed conversion.

Likewise, penance and prayer will help us to open our eyes and our hearts to other people's sufferings and to

continued on page 4

How the Church is stepping up in the 2018 midterms:

By Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, the first female Executive Director of the Congressional Black Caucus (1974-1981) and now CEO of the Skinner Leadership Institute, which provides the mechanism for networking, bridge-building and leadership development among congressional leaders, business executives, college students, faith leaders, young professionals, and urban youth. Published August 22, 2018, at sojo.net.

The startling finding of the 2000 census that by 2060 there would be no majority race in America sent shock waves through the country, terrifying many white Americans. It also set in motion bold efforts to diminish the growing political power of African-American citizens. Among these were the census undercount, gerrymandering to dilute heavily black voting areas, and voter suppression. Today, at least 33 states have intentionally erected barriers to voting by enacting voter suppression laws. These laws include such deliberate actions as reducing the number of voter registration days, removing voting precincts from inner-city churches to remote locations with limited public transportation, and cutting early voting days, including Sunday voting.

Nothing diminishes the rule of law and our precious democracy more than voter suppression and efforts to marginalize and reduce the power of vulnerable voters. The right to vote in America is one of the most priceless benefits of citizenship. Laws and policies aimed at suppressing the vote of African Americans and other vulnerable citizens is an attack on their very rights as citizens as free persons in a democracy. . . .

Our faith teaches us that all people are created in the image of God. Protecting the right to vote affirms the divine imprint and inherent value of all of God's children. Nothing diminishes the rule of law and our precious democracy more than voter suppression and efforts to marginalize and reduce the power of vulnerable voters.

. . . The church is called by God to protect and uplift the poor, the oppressed, and the vulnerable. More than 2,000 Scriptures clearly state God's preferential concern for the voiceless and locked out in society. . . . Nowhere have the rights of underserved Americans been trampled on more than in the denial or suppression of voting rights. In defending African Americans, Latino Americans, the elderly, and students whose voting rights have been curtailed, the church is courageously "standing in the gap" in obedience to God's word.

The Lawyers and Collars program (lawyersandcollars.org) is a nonprofit, multiracial and interfaith voter protection effort of Sojourners and Skinner Leadership Institute in partnership with faith-based and civic engagement organizations to monitor the Midterm Elections in 2018 to ensure every citizen can exercise their right to vote.

continued on page 4

...The evil of clericalism, continued:

overcome the thirst for power and possessions that are so often the root of those evils. May fasting and prayer open our ears to the hushed pain felt by children, young people and the disabled. A fasting that can make us hunger and thirst for justice and impel us to walk in the truth, supporting all the judicial measures that may be necessary. A fasting that shakes us up and leads us to be committed in truth and charity with all men and women of good will, and with society in general, to combatting all forms of the abuse of power, sexual abuse and the abuse of conscience.

Francis has begun the exodus leading to this reform, taking us by example to the peripheries of human existence and tracing for us the journey ahead. Will we follow?

How the Church is stepping up in the 2018 midterms, continued

The program will also provide state-level gatherings and voter protection training sessions during this period of the campaign.

...The Lawyers and Collars team recommends a few critical steps every faith leader can take:

1. Make sure all your members are registered to vote.
2. Educate your house of worship about updated voter identification laws, polling places, dates, and rights.
3. Preach and teach the importance of voting as a core part of discipleship and advancing justice in your house of worship.
4. Recruit clergy and church leaders to spend Election Day at the polls supporting and assisting voters working alongside lawyers. Where possible, churches should help people with transportation to the polls.

In launching the Lawyers and Collar Program, Skinner Leadership Institute and Sojourners urge pastors and clergy leaders to join us in protecting the right to vote, a fundamental right of citizenship.

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What will it take to redeem the soul of America?, continued:

These events at our border—and the vile, cruel, and racist rhetoric that led to them—reveal a deep malady at the core of America. A coldness. A callousness. A soul-warping disease. For racism is a soul sickness.

There are many ways to understand racism, but at its deepest level, racism is a sickness, a profound warping of the human spirit that enables human beings to be indifferent to their darker sisters and brothers. In the words of one of my colleagues, “The real meaning of race comes down largely to this: *Is this someone I should care about?*”

Race in America has become a spiritual cataract that limits our vision and determines who is beyond the reach of our concern or interest. Racism today is revealed not only in verbal taunts and slurs, and not only in the scourge of killings of unarmed black men. Racism today is revealed in a lack of empathy and profound indifference, that is, the pervasive lack of concern and the social callousness of the majority of society to the horrors and scandals that are unfolding in our midst.

It is also revealed in the complicit cooperation of so many ordinary people who enable, enforce, carry out, or approve of manifestly unjust policies, or who by their silence allow such things to happen without comment. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. declared that his mission, and the goal of the civil rights movement, was “to redeem the soul of America.” He was engaged in something far deeper than simply promoting changes in segregation laws or challenging social practices, as important as these strategies were. Such laws and practices were merely the external signs of a much deeper reality that needed to be addressed for the sake of social justice. The ultimate goal was the moral and spiritual transformation of the nation.

His insight was that communities as well as individuals have souls, deeply held values and beliefs that motivate their collective practices. He was convinced that without such deep soul work, without what he called a “revolution in values,” the racism of the past would simply mutate and take different forms and expression.

King’s perspective describes the urgent challenge before us in light of this past summer’s events: Who are we as a nation? What do we really stand for? Will we have the courage to expose the demon of racism within and demand that we live according to another vision? Why do we fear those who are different? Our future as a nation depends upon our willingness to face—and answer—such questions. And upon the ability of our church’s leaders to help us address them.