



Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 3, 2019

Readings

This week:

Jeremiah 1:4–5, 17–19

I Corinthians 12:31–13:4–13

Luke 4:21–30

Next week:

Isaiah 6:1–2a, 3–8

I Corinthians 15:1–11

Luke 5:1–11

Psalm

I will sing of your salvation. (*Psalm 71*)

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, 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

Wednesday, Feb. 6, 7:30 p.m.

STA Site Committee Meeting, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

As a nation, we have begun to float off into a moral void, and all the sermons of all the priests in the country (if they preach at all) are not going to help much. We have got to the point where the promulgation of any kind of moral standard automatically releases an anti-moral response in a whole lot of people. It is not with them, above all, that I am concerned, but with the "good" people, the right-thinking people, who stick to principle, all right, except where it conflicts with the chance to make money. It seems to me that there are very dangerous ambiguities about our democracy in its actual present condition. I wonder to what extent our ideals are now a front for organized selfishness and systematic irresponsibility. If our affluent society ever breaks down and the façade is taken away, what are we doing to have left?

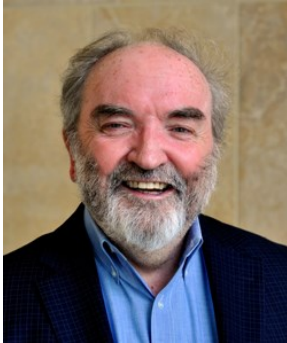
--Seeds of Destruction

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

Merton scholar Michael Higgins to speak February 23 in Menlo Park:



Save the date: Saturday, February 23, at 3:00 pm to hear a talk by Prof. Michael W. Higgins entitled “Thomas Merton and Martin Luther King: Prophets for Today.” Location is the Menlo Park Recreation Center at 700 Alma Street in Menlo Park.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the deaths of Merton and King in 1968, the TMC Spiritual Education Committee is bringing Professor Higgins from Connecticut to speak on Merton and Martin Luther King and what might have been had they had an in-person conversation, as they had hoped to do. Higgins says: “Both men understood the power of a vision electrified by words, a vision biblical and epic in its range and yet grounded in the real.”

Higgins is Canadian-born and educated, a celebrated scholar, writer and gifted speaker. He is a leading biographer of Merton and of the Dutch priest-psychologist Henri Nouwen, a popular spiritual writer in the post-Vatican II years.

In the meantime, we suggest you peruse one of Higgins’s many books; he has several biographies of Merton and a couple on Henri Nouwen, as well as volumes on the Jesuits, Catholic education, women and the church, saint-making, and the clerical sex abuse scandal. Most are available on Amazon or other used book websites. Here are some titles:

The Unquiet Monk: Thomas Merton’s Questing Faith
Thomas Merton: Faithful Visionary
Heretic Blood: The Spiritual Geography of Thomas Merton

Fred Dietrich Memorial Mass February 16 at 2:00 p.m. (corrected time):

Longtime TMC member Fred Dietrich passed away January 1, 2019. There will be a memorial Mass celebrated on Saturday, February 16, at 2:00 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church. All are welcome.

Blood Drive Saturday, Feb. 16--save the date:

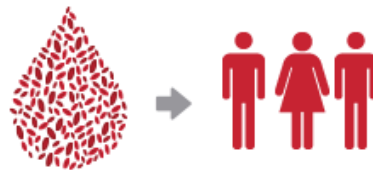
The parish has arranged with the Stanford Blood Center to come to our parish Saturday, February 16, between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at Our Lady of the Rosary Hall (3233 Cowper Street, Palo Alto) to accept blood donations.

NOTE: You do not need a physician’s consent to donate. If the nurse at the time determines there is a medical condition requiring consent, then this is the only case in which one would be required.

You can schedule an appointment in advance:

Online: www.sbcdonor.org; use Sponsor Code 2581
Phone: 650-723-7831 (for eligibility requirements)

Contact STA parishioner Chris Lundin (clundin@stanford.edu, 650-213-6640) with questions.



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PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, George Bouche, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Jim Davis, 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 editor Kay Williams at kaywill@pacbell.net.]

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Why so many risk it all to cross the border:

[By Kevin Clarke, *U.S. Catholic*, 1/24/19]

Watching a huddled mass escape Central America this fall inspired an urge among many to rush to the border with food and water, while others chose to politicize the spectacle with calumny and disdain. President Trump ginned up his base before the midterm elections by repeatedly describing the so-called migrant caravan as an "invasion."

An odd way to prepare for an invasion: Collect your children and what little you can carry and then begin a 2,600-mile walk. What might compel people to make such a desperate journey? The point of origin for the initial body of this march—San Pedro Sula, Honduras—offers some clues.

The second largest city in Honduras, San Pedro Sula has been a hot spot of opposition to President Juan Orlando Hernández since his fraud-marred reelection in November 2017. Scores of demonstrators and community activists around San Pedro Sula have been killed by government security forces as resistance to Hernández persists.

But political violence is not the only mortal threat to the people of Honduras. Gangs and drug trafficking also contribute to one of the highest rates of homicide in the world. And some of the participants in the Honduran exodus have joined not because of crime or political oppression but because of economic inequity and lack of opportunity. Normally mere economic desperation is not enough to make a legal claim for asylum at a U.S. port of entry, as many in the caravan plan to do.

According to church teaching, however, economic necessity is sufficient to supersede a more prosperous nation's normal expectation to control its borders. It is hard for many who have made an idol of border security to hear, but the church teaches that "people have the right to migrate to sustain their lives and the lives of their families"—especially when wealthier nations can accommodate the migration flow. If bread cannot be brought to the people, the people may proceed to the bread.

In the 20th century the political and economic "pulpo," the octopus of the United Fruit Company, kept its tentacles tightly wrapped around the lives of people and nations throughout Central America. Its reach extended to Washington. For decades what was good for United Fruit was good for U.S.-Central American policy, and the company shaped the structures of social inequity and labor exploitation in the region that continue to this day.

One of the company's more notorious escapades was the overthrow of President Jacobo Árbenz in Guatemala in 1954, orchestrated with the help of a couple of shareholders, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and his brother, C.I.A. director Allen Dulles. Árbenz had

attempted a redistribution of UFC-controlled land to the nation's subsistence farmers. That U.S. intervention laid the groundwork for decades of civil war and a distorted political order that still contributes to the violence and instability that is driving migrants north.

After a period of declining influence and a bribery scandal, United Fruit tried to improve its image, rechristening itself as Chiquita Brands International. But in Colombia thirteen Chiquita executives have been indicted for their role in funneling money to death squads as Honduras trudged through a long civil war in the 1990s. And in San Pedro Sula workers staged a sit-in for months on Chiquita's banana plantations after the company unilaterally terminated critical health services for workers. That strike was broken last March after national police entered the plantations and scores of strikers were terminated by Chiquita.

One may wonder how many ex-Chiquita workers were among those heading north through Mexico, denigrated by U.S. politicians as a mob of thugs and criminals, in a long, exhausting journey to what many still believe is the promised land.

[Kevin Clarke is a writer living in New York.]

(Abuse...continued from page 4)

ered up," Faggioli told the audience. "It has become part of an ecclesial fragmentation that really puts at risk one of the four things that every Catholic says when he or she says the creed," alluding to the "one" Catholic Church and the bishops who appeared to lay down a challenge to the pope.

Bottom line, there is one thing a Catholic bishop has to be about — communion with the bishop of Rome, he noted: "If that element fails, we have moved to a very dangerous situation."

The crisis, he continued, has revealed a series of fractures in what's called "global Catholicism."

"The sex-abuse crisis is being manipulated into a crisis to radically delegitimize a pope that certain quarters in American Catholicism, from the very beginning, never acknowledged as legitimate," Faggioli said....

"This version of the abuse crisis is really an American problem," because it is linked inextricably, inseparably, to the divisions in the church about sexuality, homosexuality and gender, he said.

This had led to a "theological crisis which you don't have in other countries with the same passion, with the same vitriol, with the same potential for, really, an ecclesial division," he added....

"The crisis is asking us: Do we want a centralized Catholicism as it used to be until yesterday or do we want to, do we think that we can, decentralize?" he asked. #

[Robert McCabe is a former reporter for the *Virginian-Pilot*.]

Hatred and the Gospel:

[By Ron Rolheiser, OMI, *Newsletter*, 1/29/19]

Hatred might be described as cold, wounded, frustrated, and grieving love, love gone sour. You can't conjure-up a powerful hatred for someone unless at some level you first love him or her. When love is wounded and frustrated, the tears it provokes can be warm and cleansing, but they can also be bitter and cold.

That's part of the anatomy of love and that's why love can so quickly turn into hatred and why most murders are domestic. When love breaks down what follows is rarely indifference (a parting in good friendship). What follows is often hatred, bitterness, coldness. Affairs mostly grow sour, not indifferent, and the same is sadly true of love in almost all its aspects.

Hatred needs to be understood, whether it's at a personal level or at the level of whole civilizations hating each other. Hatred is not the opposite of love. It is a perverse form of love, cold grief, bitter disaffection, that needs not to be met in kind, with a reciprocal form of coldness, but with warmth and forgiveness, tough as these are in the face of their opposite.

One of the great moral struggles of our lives lies precisely in this. When people hate us what spontaneous feeling rise within us? Feelings of coldness and anger, along with the wish, secret and not-so-secret, that their lives will go badly and that, in the ensuing misery, they will be forced to see their error and have to swallow against their will the fact that they are wrong, particularly about us.

But none of that will be productive for those who hate us, or for ourselves. Only if good things begin to happen in the lives of those who hate us, only if they feel the warmth of love and blessing, can their hearts let go of the bitterness, jealousy, and hatred that's there. Hearts don't thaw out inside of bitterness and jealousy. They break.

It's not when people are bitter that they admit the error of their ways and the unfairness of their hatred. Hearts begin to see how wrong their hatred is only when the very object of their jealousy and hatred is itself strong enough to not give back in kind, but instead to absorb the hatred for what it is, wounded love, love gone cold when it would want to be warm. #

[Ronald Rolheiser, a Roman Catholic priest and member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas.

He is a community-builder, lecturer and writer. His books are popular throughout the English-speaking world and his weekly column is carried by more than seventy newspapers worldwide.]

Sex abuse crisis biggest threat in 500 years:

[By Robert McCabe, *National Catholic Reporter*, 1/25/19]

A month before the start of a global summit in Rome on the sex abuse crisis, a prominent church historian and theologian said last week that the issue poses the biggest challenge to the church in 500 years.

"This is not like the Protestant Reformation; it's not," Massimo Faggioli, a Villanova University professor, said in a talk at Immaculate Conception Church in Hampton, Virginia. "But in my opinion, it's the most serious crisis in the Catholic Church since the Protestant Reformation."

In an hour-long presentation, Faggioli set out to show how and why this particular moment in the history of the church has become so critical and what the crisis is telling Catholics about the state of the church. ...

While the crisis has gone global, said Faggioli, one strain of it is peculiar to the United States, where it is inseparable from such hot-button issues as sexuality, homosexuality and gender. The scandal in the United States has resulted in a "theological crisis," he said. The crisis is also being used by some, according to Faggioli, to mount a campaign opposing Pope Francis.

Last year was a game-changer in the unfolding of the sex-abuse crisis, Faggioli said, a phenomenon that has become unrelenting....It was... the firestorm that erupted in the U.S. church over the alleged abuse of seminarians and priests by former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, followed by the extraordinary letter by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, accusing Pope Francis of having known about and having covered for McCarrick, that pushed the crisis to a new level, Faggioli suggested.

When more than two dozen U.S. bishops later backed Viganò, the church moved to a place it had not seen for hundreds of years, he said: "You have to go back six centuries — the 1400s — to see a national church being split publicly about the legitimacy of a pope."

The shocking part of the Viganò controversy was not his letter, but the decision by the band of U.S. bishops to take his side, creating the "church equivalent of the Cuban missile crisis," Faggioli said.

In late August to mid-September, as the Viganò debate played out, Faggioli said he found himself "going to bed not knowing the next morning if we had one church or multiple churches."...

Sandwiched in between the McCarrick disclosures and the Viganò uproar: the release of the Pennsylvania attorney general's sex-abuse report in mid-August, leading to a domino-like series of similar investigations in other states around the country...The crisis has exposed fault lines in the U.S. Catholic Church, he suggested.

"It has become clear, more than before, that the abuse crisis is not simply a series of abuses that were cov-

Abuse...continued on page 3.