



Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

April 14, 2019

Readings

This week:

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Luke 22:14-23:56

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43

Colossians 3:1-4

John 20:1-9

Psalm

My God, my God, why have abandoned me? (*Psalm 22*)

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, 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

Monday, April 15, 7:00 pm	TMC Spiritual Education Committee, Thomas House
Saturday, April 20, 9:00 am	Decorate STA altar for Easter: <i>come to church to help.</i>
Sunday, April 21, 8:45 am	Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord, at the Mass During the Day

From Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

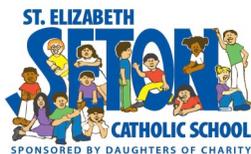
--Thoughts in Solitude

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

Save the date for Seton Golf May 6:



Play golf on the renowned Stanford Golf Course and support Seton School students at the 24th Annual Seton Scramble for Students on Monday, May 6th.

Seton School empowers children of low-income families to reach their full potential--helped by the monies raised from the golf registration fees.

In addition to the golf, there is food: Coupa Café catering, food, wine, beverages. Awards and a Silent & Live Auction cap off the day's golfing exertions.

Proceeds will directly support St. Elizabeth Seton School students. For more information: email Carmel Caligaris at ccaligaris@setonpaloalto.org.

Register at:
www.setonpaloalto.org.

24th Annual Seton Scramble May 6 at Stanford!

Help decorate altar for Easter:



The Liturgy Team will be marshalling forces at 9:00 am on Saturday, April 20, to place the lilies, etc. around the altar. Please come and help if you can!

Thanks from Heart & Home shelter:

Many thanks to all parishioners who contributed in any way to our effort this winter season. Four evening meals plus generous gift cards from Target were provided to fifteen ladies housed this winter. The ladies wrote a thank you letter to you, all 15 ladies signing their names:

Dear St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, The women here at Heart and Home Collaborative Shelter would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all the love, support, warmth and kindness. words cannot express how much you are appreciated. From all the ladies here at the shelter, we thank you and treasure your good deeds, will never be forgotten."

--The Human Concerns Committee

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International Thomas Merton Society 16th General Meeting at Santa Clara University June 27-30

This biennial meeting carries out the mission of the ITMS to promote an understanding and appreciation of the multifaceted character of Thomas Merton and encourages study and research to make better known the unique contribution he has made to the literature of spirituality and to American literature and religious life.

This year's conference theme is "O Peace, bless this mad place," a line from a poem by Merton. Keynote speakers include Rose Marie Berger, Fr. Cyprian Consiglio, O.S.B. Cam., Robert Ellsberg, Ron Hansen, and Richard Rodriguez, a panel on Dan Berrigan, and many concurrent sessions on topics such as Merton and Racism, Merton and the Ignatian Tradition, Merton and Peace, Merton and Ecology. Sr. Kathleen Deignan, who has led several retreats for TMC in the past, will participate in a workshop, as will Morgan Atkinson, the filmmaker who has shown two of his films on Merton at TMC events.

Registration for the 3-day conference is open now at: **merton.org/2019**. Registration fee is \$350 for ITMS members (TMC is a member) or \$400 for non-members and includes 3 days of meetings and meals. (There is no option for partial registration.) Several members of the TMC Spiritual Education Committee will be attending. Contact Anna Jaklitsch with questions: annajak14@yahoo.com or 650-327-0978.

Reconstruction of church front stairs April 29:

The reconstruction of the front steps at St. Thomas Aquinas Church is scheduled to start on Monday, April 29. We expect that workmen from Hough Construction will begin demolishing the steps right away. They have until July 3 to complete the work, as there is a wedding on July 6. We expect to be able to maintain access to the church from the handicapped ramp during the process. But flexibility is the watchword, as it is for all such building projects.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, George Bouchev, Tom Carmody, Kerry 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, and T. J. Wooten. [Add or subtract names by e-mailing editor Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net.]

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Teaching Empathy in a World That Creates Religious 'Others':

[Commentary from Sojourners (sojo.net) by Rev J. Dana Trent, 3/20/19]

Let me tell you what it's like to walk into a classroom studying world religions after a mass shooting at a house of worship.

I know because I've done it twice in six months. Last October, my students and I returned to class after 11 people were gunned down in Pittsburgh during Shabbat services. Last Friday, we awoke to a shooting that

The goal is for students not only to grasp the learning outcomes, but to learn that proximity to story reduces prejudice.

killed 50 people during Jumu'ah prayers at a New Zealand masjid.

In each instance, my community college students had been studying the very traditions that were terrorized.

The Friday before the Tree

of Life shooting, a Jewish guest practitioner had visited our classroom. A week before the Christchurch massacre, we'd taken a field trip to our local masjid.

My community college students are younger, ethnically diverse millennials, and hold many religious identities: Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Pagan, Agnostic, Atheist, and "spiritual but not religious." Most were born to Christian families — or, at the very least, they grew in the "Christ-haunted South" of the Bible Belt. They are familiar with the narratives in which these two targeted groups — Jewish and Muslim — are seen as "other."

"Empathy" is the first vocabulary word I write on the board each semester. It's not what they expect; it seems abstract, maybe even mundane. But empathy is the crux of the academic study of religion. It's the idea that, no matter the students' own religious/spiritual identification of birth or choice, as scholars, their job is to study each tradition within an academic framework *and* from a place of understanding.

So, when I walked in the classroom last Friday, they understood. "Can we have a moment of silence for the New Zealand Muslims?" a young white Christian student requested.

We explore each world religions unit with an academic, yet hands-on, approach. We complete our required reading and lectures — but then, an insider to each tradition visits our classroom, and we take field trips to local houses of worship. The goal is for students to not

only to grasp the learning outcomes, but to learn that proximity to *story* reduces prejudice.

They find the class to be timely; this course arrives for them amid an American and global climate fertile with obstacles to critical thinking. Though my students are likely the most globally connected generation history has yet seen, white supremacy and hatred for immigrants rages on.

I know I am also part of the problem. I am a white, female, Baptist professor teaching world religions in the United States. But from my privilege comes responsibility. It is not the job of the oppressed to teach religious literacy. It's mine. It's the job of activist-minded, critically thinking Christians who often hesitate to publicly refute the assertions that continue to fuel anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, and hate-filled rhetoric against the immigrant, the refugee, LGBTQIA+ individual — whoever is deemed "other."

When I walk into my world religions classroom, there's no better time for me to confront my own white fragility by acknowledging the ways in which I — a Baptist living in the Bible Belt — am culpable.

The morning of the New Zealand shooting, a student I'd had several academic years ago wrote to me: "One of the most impactful things I learned in our class was that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' religion. We are entitled to our own beliefs and we should treat one another with respect, whether we share the same beliefs or not."

Yet again, a sacred place of refuge and peace has been terrorized by white supremacy. And yet again, I walk into a classroom full of young, anxious eyes looking to me for hope amid hate. I don't have the right words, but I write one word again on the board again: "empathy." Then I say, "There are three things I know to be true: first, empathy makes the 'other' our neighbor; second, empathy increases with use; third, it's difficult to hate that which you take time to understand." If they — and I — can learn these lessons, hate cannot survive in the face of that pluralism. When you listen to your neighbor, you see that deep down we're the same and you hunger to deepen that connection.

Let the left and right stand for endless political war. The moderate seeks the beloved community. That, too, is a magnetic idea.

[The Rev. J. Dana Trent is a graduate of Duke Divinity School, professor of World Religions, and author of *One Breath at a Time: A Skeptic's Guide to Christian Meditation* (Upper Room Books, January 2019).]

“The King of Glory”

Refrain:

The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices.
Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.

Who is the King of glory; how shall we call him?
He is Emmanuel, the promised of ages.

In all of Galilee, in city or village,
He goes among his people curing their illness.

Sing then of David’s Son, our Savior and brother;
In all of Galilee was never another.

The Shortness of Life: Seneca on Busyness and Living Wide Rather Than Living Long

[An Excerpt By Maria Popova, *Brain Pickings*, 9/1/14]

“How we spend our days,” Annie Dillard memorably wrote in her soul-stretching meditation on the life of presence, “is, of course, how we spend our lives.” And yet most of us spend our days in what Kierkegaard believed to be our greatest source of unhappiness — a refusal to recognize that “busy is a decision” and that presence is infinitely more rewarding than productivity. I frequently worry that being productive is the surest way to lull ourselves into a trance of passivity and busyness the greatest distraction from living, as we coast through our lives day after day, showing up for our obligations but being absent from our selves, mistaking the doing for the being.

Despite a steadily swelling human life expectancy, these concerns seem more urgent than ever — and yet they are hardly unique to our age. In fact, they go as far back as the record of human experience and endeavor. It is unsurprising, then, that the best treatment of the subject is also among the oldest: Roman philosopher Seneca’s spectacular 2,000-year-old treatise ***On the Shortness of Life*** (*public library*) — a poignant reminder of what we so deeply intuit yet so easily forget and so chronically fail to put into practice.

Seneca writes:

It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste a lot of it. Life is long enough, and a sufficiently generous amount has been given to us for the highest achievements if it were all well invested. But when it is wasted in heedless luxury and spent on no good activity, we are forced at last by death’s final constraint to realize that it has passed away before we knew it was passing. So it is: we are not given a short life but we make it short, and we are not ill-supplied but wasteful of it... Life is long if you know how to use it.

Millennia before the now-tired adage that “time is money,” Seneca cautions that we fail to treat time as a valuable resource, even though it is arguably our most

precious and least renewable one:

People are frugal in guarding their personal property; but as soon as it comes to squandering time they are most wasteful of the one thing in which it is right to be stingy.

To those who so squander their time, he offers an unambiguous admonition:

You are living as if destined to live for ever; your own frailty never occurs to you; you don’t notice how much time has already passed, but squander it as though you had a full and overflowing supply — though all the while that very day which you are devoting to somebody or something may be your last. You act like mortals in all that you fear, and like immortals in all that you desire... How late it is to begin really to live just when life must end! How stupid to forget our mortality, and put off sensible plans to our fiftieth and sixtieth years, aiming to begin life from a point at which few have arrived!

Nineteen centuries later, Bertrand Russell, another of humanity’s greatest minds, lamented rhetorically, “What will be the good of the conquest of leisure and health, if no one remembers how to use them?” But even Seneca, writing in the first century, saw busyness — that dual demon of distraction and preoccupation — as an addiction that stands in the way of mastering the art of living:

No activity can be successfully pursued by an individual who is preoccupied ... since the mind when distracted absorbs nothing deeply, but rejects everything which is, so to speak, crammed into it. Living is the least important activity of the preoccupied man; yet there is nothing which is harder to learn... Learning how to live takes a whole life, and, which may surprise you more, it takes a whole life to learn how to die.

In our habitual compulsion to ensure that the next moment contains what this one lacks, Seneca suggests, we manage to become, as another wise man put it, “accomplished fugitives from ourselves.” Seneca writes:

Everyone hustles his life along, and is troubled by a longing for the future and weariness of the present. But the man who ... organizes every day as though it were his last, neither longs for nor fears the next day... Nothing can be taken from this life, and you can only add to it as if giving to a man who is already full and satisfied food which he does not want but can hold. So you must not think a man has lived long because he has white hair and wrinkles: he has not lived long, just existed long. For suppose you should think that a man had had a long voyage who had been caught in a raging storm as he left harbor, and carried hither and thither and driven round and round in a circle by the rage of opposing winds? He did not have a long voyage, just a long tossing about. #