



The Ascension of the Lord

June 2, 2019

Readings

This week:

Acts of the Apostles 1:1–11

Ephesians 1:17–23

Luke 24:46–53

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 2:1–11

1 Corinthians 12:3b–7, 12–13

John 20:19–23

Psalm

God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord. (*Psalm 47*)

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, June 5, 7:30 p.m.

STA Site Committee, Thomas House Library

From Thomas Merton

The measure of our being is not to be sought in the violence of our experiences. Turbulence of spirit is a sign of spiritual weakness. When delights spring out of our depths like leopards, we have nothing to be proud of: our soul's life is in danger. For when we are strong we are always much greater than the things that happen to us, and the soul of a man who has found himself is like a deep sea in which there may be many fish; but they never come up out of the sea, and no one of them is big enough to trouble its placid surface. A man's “being” is far greater than anything he feels or does.

--No Man Is an Island

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

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

UPDATED

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.

The ITMS has sent out a request for volunteers to work at registration either June 26 or June 27th for 2.5 hours. In exchange, there is a tuition reduction to \$235 for the meeting. Contact Anna Jaklitsch about how to volunteer: annajak14@yahoo.com or 650-327-0978.

In addition they have notified us that Fr. Cyprian's concert, 7:30 pm in Mayer Theater on Thursday June 27th will be open to the community without charge

TMC Board: Gerard McGuire, gerardmc@aol.com, 650-814-2223
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Wear red next Sunday, June 9: it's Pentecost!

Pentecost is from the Greek word 'Pentekostos', which means 'fifty'. It's the 50th day after the Sabbath of Passover week and in Judaism is called the Feast of Weeks (Leviticus 23:16).

The main sign of Pentecost in the West is the color red. It symbolizes joy and the fire of the Holy Spirit. Priests or ministers, and choirs wear red vestments, and in modern times, the custom has extended to the lay people of the congregation wearing red clothing in celebration as well. Plan on wearing something red to Mass next weekend!

Paris to Pittsburgh

a National Geographic Film - screening and talk

All are invited to see this inspiring film about how people across the country are working together on solutions to reduce their carbon footprint and to deal with the impact climate change has on their communities. With the U.S. pull-out from the Paris Climate Accord, cities and states are taking action.

Tuesday June 11, 7:00 pm

St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center
1095 Channing Avenue
Palo Alto

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, Tom Carmody, Kerry Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Jim Davis, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, 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, Patricia Markee, Nancy Marty, Maureen Mooney, Hayden Pastorini, Alicia Placone-Combetta, Paul Prochaska, Anne Rush, Priya Smith, Bernice Sullivan, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, Tom Williams and T. J. Wooten. **[Add or subtract names by e-mailing editor Kay Williams,**

Please join us after Mass in the St. Albert Hospitality Center for coffee and donuts. We especially encourage newcomers or those passing through town to stop by for food and fellowship.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Women Need Christian Discipleship, Not 'Female Discipleship'

[By [Lindsay Mustafa Davis](#) 4-10-2018, Sojourners (sojo.net)]

At a Campus Crusade for Christ retreat eight years ago, I sat with 50 other young women at a Young Life camp in Goshen, Va., listening to a female speaker give a lecture about marriage. The topic was "being faithful while we wait."

What I remember most from the event is not what it took to be a good Christian wife. It is what my male friend told me about what the guys learned during their session: how to follow the spirit's calling toward their specific, unique ministries.

That was the first time I felt outrage over how my future was being handled, compared to that of the guys. It was suddenly clear to me: Men were free to be discipled without the constraints of gender, while women, like me, remained shackled to a gendered role.

At the time, I wanted to question this difference in teaching, but I didn't know how. If this discipleship was what "biblical womanhood" looked like, how could I question what God had deemed my proper station?

But I knew I wanted something more.

I knew I wanted to learn how to follow Christ, because I was in love with Jesus and his message. This was what I thought discipleship was, but the retreat was sending a different message: As a woman, the only way I could follow Christ and learn about God's plans for me was through the lenses of marriage and motherhood.

I am not the first nor the only woman let down by "female discipleship." Most evangelical Christian literature caters toward marriage and parenthood for women, instead of discipleship and spiritual engagement. There is, even today, a dearth of guidance for when we feel called beyond those spheres.

But women are called to bear the fruits of the spirit, not to "biblical womanhood." Our calling is to bear the fruits of self-control, faithfulness, and love, wherever they find expression, not to specifically, or only, cultivate the fruits of purity, marriage, and motherhood.

The spirit-filled fruits, not the cultural norms atop false pedestals, are the true measures of Christian discipleship. It is crucial that we reorient our teaching, to girls and boys alike, toward these three biblical fruits.

1. Self-control, instead of purity

A central tenet of evangelical discipleship for women is the concept of "purity." While purity can mean holy living, historically it has been socially constructed to shame women, urging them to "maintain" themselves as the "pure property" of their husbands.

Many young evangelical women, out of a sense of conviction over this aspect of their discipleship, sign virginity pledges vowing to not have sexual intercourse until their wedding night. While purity culture is preached to women and men alike, an inordinate burden is placed on the woman, to "uphold" their virtue in the face of "normal" male sexual appetite. The social consequences for sex outside marriage likewise fall heavily on the woman, not the man.

While there is nothing wrong with a woman's decision to abstain from sexual activity until marriage, the shame with which evangelicals inundate Christian women who consider otherwise is despicable. Pastors still compare women who engage in premarital sex to chewed gum, used tape, licked lollipops, and crumbled flowers, linking their self-worth to their sexual activity.

Thankfully, where shame damages, the fruit of self-control can heal. Self-control empowers women to pursue God in healthy boundaries, instead of shaming them when they fall short of patriarchal standards of "purity."

Self-control focuses on and develops a Christian's gifts to grow closer to God and neighbor, and to help the Kingdom of God come on earth as it is in heaven. Concerning sexuality, self-control empowers women and men alike to understand their own needs and desires, and use their autonomy and empathy to engage in them. In the act of harvesting the fruit of self-control, women may choose to be abstinent or sexually active, both out of conviction guided by the Holy Spirit.

2. Faithfulness, instead of marriage

The desire to put marriage on a divine pedestal excludes the [42 percent of evangelicals](#) who have never married or are widowed, divorced, or separated. This divining of marriage also ignores the biblical and historical examples of Christians who did not marry. If marriage is intended

to be such a significant part of Christian women's discipleship, then the apostle Junia, the deaconess Phoebe, Julian of Norwich, Mother Theresa, and every nun in history could not be considered true disciples.

In contrast, the fruit of faithfulness emphasizes faithfulness to God's calling, whether it manifests in marriage and motherhood, service and ministry, or any combination thereof. The fruit of faithfulness empowers women to embrace their holy vocations in any stage of life.

When a Christian cultivates the fruit of faithfulness, the focus shifts from a spouse, potential or actual, to God's will. This breaks the confines of the marital realm and makes discipleship accessible to every person, married or single. Discipling women in faithfulness invests in the growth of a woman's gifts and into her God-given self as she is, not until she is married or as she "waits."

3. Love, instead of motherhood

When motherhood is an elevated trait of discipleship, it excludes the women who make the conscious decision to not have children, and those who struggle with infertility. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that [nearly 19 percent of women](#) live with some degree of infertility. And many more women make the conscious decision to not have children at all. Nearly [50 percent of women ages 25-29 do not have children](#), as do nearly 29 percent of women ages 30-34, due to a variety of external factors and personal choices.

There is *no* biblical evidence to suggest motherhood is a prerequisite to a woman's relationship with God. We do not know if Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, or Anna, all prophetesses, had children, and God's interactions with these women changed the world. Female mystics and monastics, who did not marry or bear children, wrote intimate accounts of God's interactions.

Instead of the fruit of the womb, these and other women bore the spiritual fruit of love. Women who raise this fruit show care to all in Christ's family, which surpasses the physical bonds of biological parent and child. This love shows compassion for the children of injustice around us, from DREAMers to CHIP recipients, from children threatened by law enforcement to families broken apart by corrupt justice systems, from moms demanding action for common-sense gun laws to nuns caring for the poor and sick.

Eight years separate me from that fateful Cru retreat, and if I could go back in time with the voice I have found, I would ask the leader to instruct us in how to be disciples of Christ not for the sake of an imaginary

spouse, but for the sake of the Gospel.

I would ask her to please help us understand our own bodies, so we may make wise decisions with them for our sake, to help us become more faithful to God's calling when our faith is shaken, and to learn to love God's most vulnerable people.

Women are called to bear the fruit of the spirit. Evangelical leaders must honor this calling — as they honored it in my brothers all those years ago.

Lindsay Mustafa Davis lives in Ashburn, Va. When she's not working or writing, you can find her reading, watching TV, or debating social justice/liberation theology with anyone willing to listen.

Eternal life is hard to imagine—but this is what we know

[Except by Rev. [Terrance Klein](#), May 15, 2019 America The Jesuit

It is in the nature of genius to reset the routine in a way that is revelatory. In one paragraph of her novel [The Lost Children Archive](#), Valeria Luiselli offers compassionate insight by working with a very common word: wait. Whatever your political stance on border control and immigration, try to imagine what it would be like to choose between your home and your life and then...to wait.

In the novel, a husband and wife travel across the country with two small children, constantly seeking ways to avoid hearing the dreaded phrase, "How much longer?" Listening to a news feature on refugee children, the 5-year-old girl asks her mother what the word "refugee" means.

I look for possible answers to give her. I suppose that someone who is fleeing is still not a refugee. A refugee is someone who has already arrived somewhere, in a foreign land, but must wait for an indefinite time before actually, fully having arrived. Refugees wait in detention centers, shelters, or camps; in federal custody and under the gaze of armed officials. They wait in long lines for lunch, for a bed to sleep in, wait with their hands raised to ask if they can use the bathroom. They wait to be let out, wait for a telephone call, for someone to claim or pick them up. And then there are refugees who are lucky enough to be finally reunited with their families, living in a new home. But even those still wait. They wait for the court's notice to appear, for a court ruling, for either deportation or asylum, wait to know where they will end up living and under what conditions. They wait for a school to admit them, for a job opening, for a doctor to see them. They wait for visas, documents, permission. They wait for a cue, for instructions, and then wait some more. They wait for their dignity to be restored. . . .

The Rev. Terrance W. Klein is a priest of the Diocese of Dodge City and author of *Vanity Faith*.