



19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 12, 2018

Readings

This week:

1 Kings 19:4-8

Ephesians 4:30–5:2

John 6:41-51

Next week:

Proverbs 9:1-6

Ephesians 5:15-20

John 6:51-58

Psalm

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. (*Psalm 34*)

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, August 13, 7:00 pm

Liturgy Team, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

The shallow "I" of individualism can be possessed, developed, cultivated, pandered to satisfied; it is the center of all our strivings for gain and/or satisfaction, whether material or spiritual. But the deep "I" of the spirit, of solitude and of love, cannot be had, possessed, developed or perfected. It can only be and act according to deep inner laws which are not of man's contriving, but which come from God. They are the laws of the Spirit, who, like the wind, blows where it will. This inner I, who is always alone, is always universal; for in the inmost I my own solitude meets the solitude of every person and the solitude of God. Hence it is beyond division, beyond limitation, beyond selfish affirmation. It is only this inmost and solitary I that truly loves with the love and spirit of Christ. This I is Christ himself, living in us and we in Him, living in the Father.

—*Notes for A Philosophy of Solitude, pp. 206-207*

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

Check out updates to our website:

Do you ever check out the Thomas Merton Center website? It is full of interesting information, and there are several new sections, one summarizing homilies we've heard, called "Homily Excerpts," and one called "What's New" that lists the following:

- Updated Board Membership status
- Added Board Meeting Minutes (see Bulletin section)
- Updated celebrant schedule for Sunday Mass on the liturgy page and in the calendar
- Added update on the reprehensible practice of immigrant children being separated from their parents on the U.S. border in the "Of Interest" section
- Added new page, selected *Homily Excerpts* by TMC presidents
- Latest TMC Bulletin is posted
- New Steeple Talk is posted

So if you missed a bulletin or Steeple Talk while on vacation, or wish to revisit a particularly inspiring sermon, be sure to check out www.thomasmerton.org.

Next Fish Fest is this Friday, August 17:

The next Friday Fish Fest is planned for August 17 in the Thomas House. We start at 6:00 pm and are finished by 8:00. In between, we enjoy a good dinner, camaraderie, and getting to know each other.

An after-dinner sing-along with guitarist Paul Prochaska will cap off the evening.

We ask for a \$5 donation for the meal, and \$2 each for a glass or wine or beer. You are free to bring a dessert to share, but we will provide fish and chips, with coleslaw on the side.

Final day for Seton backpack drive:

Today is the final day of the drive to provide backpacks and school supplies for St. Elizabeth Seton School.

There is a basket in the vestibule for donations. If anyone would like to assist in assembling the backpacks, you can call Carmel Caligaris at Seton School, (650) 326-1258.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Surviving Trump and journeying toward hope:

In August 1942, in the middle of the dark night of World War II, Carl Jung wrote:

Is there still a chance to save ourselves from this spiritual decay? Yes, but a miracle will have to happen, and miracles only happen when one believes in miracles. Small islands, like mountaintops, would have to grow out of the chaotic sludge, islands of contemplation and a sense of justice. . . .Perhaps a new world will develop from these islands!

Since the election nearly two years ago, many of us see our current political scene as another dark night. "Trust feels bruised; God seems far and distant; prayer is dry and faith is tested. This is not mere disappointment at political loss or one-sided politics. It has the quality of a spiritual battle. The shadow of the collective has grabbed us. We struggle to find light in the darkness." This was the introduction of Don Bisson (Marist brother, spiritual director, and Jungian psychologist) to a retreat at Mercy Center in Auburn last month—*Confronting the Collective Dark Night & Journeying Toward Hope*.

Bisson began with an exploration of the shadow at three levels. Our Personal Shadow is that portion of our thoughts and experiences that we repress, based upon our one-sided view of self and reality. This shadow is both what we fear and what we unconsciously desire and need. On the second level is the Collective Shadow, the group's or culture's ideals, which are also vulnerable to defensiveness around ego ideals and resist change. Jung saw the American collective shadow as a preoccupation with money, success as defined in material terms only, rampant consumerism, economic imperialism, etc. (Last Sunday's bulletin article, "U.S. Created the Conditions for Latin American Migrations," is one example of our collective shadow.) The third level is the Archetypal Shadow, which he said can cause our collective shadow to turn into malevolent energy (which is the case for many of us, in this current political scene). As Jung wrote about this archetypal shadow in *Psychology of the Unconscious*, it can consist of:

. . . not just little weaknesses and foibles, but of a positively demonic dynamism. To the individual, it is incredible that he [sic] should ever in any circumstances go beyond himself. But let these harmless creatures form a mass, and there emerges a raging monster; and each individual is only one tiny cell in the monster's body, so that for better or worse he must accom-

Surviving Trump, continued:

pany it on its bloody rampages and even assist it to the utmost. Having a dark suspicion of these grim possibilities, man turns a blind eye to the shadow-side of human nature.”

So how do I create communities of resistance to the hatred, violence, and toxic language of politics today? How can I choose to be in touch with my just anger and not surrender to hatred? In Jungian terms, when Ego gets bigger, personal conscience gets smaller, as we keep trying to hold onto our illusions. When Ego is more in relationship to its true self, Ego deflates and our relationship with ourselves becomes one of freedom, compassion, and energy; there is no separation between self and God. Hope is born from this connection—the capacity to trust in God. Hope is transpersonal; it is the sense that God is using me as an instrument.

What can I do to be open to hope? Some practical suggestions for rebuilding hope:

- Unearth and challenge irrational beliefs and ways of thinking; e.g., jumping to conclusions, over-generalizing, or discounting the positive
- Develop supportive, caring, mutual, empowering and liberating relationships that supply what is necessary for life: trust, caring, belonging, courage, confidence, and endurance
- Have spiritual practices that strengthen faith
- Name and confront depression. Develop resilience, an ability to cope with stress and anxiety, to rebound from crises and maintain equilibrium in the midst of chaos
- Name and address fears—of being oneself, of loss, of success, of death

Creating contemplative communities of resistance:

Don Bisson, in *Confronting the Collective Dark Night*, suggested that one avenue of hope is Pax Christi, the international Catholic peace movement, which works for nonviolent social change through a three-step process:

Pray – Coming together through prayer, sharing, and silence to create safety and vulnerability, the gift of community and hospitality in isolating times.

Study – Studying the facts and issues of a problem, and entering into a contemplative discernment to respond individually or as a group.

Act – Responding directly to a situation. As a community, prayerfully assessing what happened and how you were touched by God. Praying in gratitude for the transformational seed that has been sowed, and then beginning the process over again



Everyone forgets about Mary Oliver’s grasshopper:

Abridged from an article by Mark Piper, director of Mercy Associates for the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas West Midwest Community, at ncronline.org, June 28, 2018.

It was a summer day when I realized there’s nothing recorded of Jesus between the ages of 12 and 30. . . .Realizing the Bible was oddly silent on his young adult development, I read Mary Oliver’s poem “The Summer Day,” and then I heard it again and again. . . .In point of fact, no one can escape its final 14 words. The preceding 85 percent of the poem seems to get forgotten in most re-tellings. What people repeat is this big question: “. . .what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

However, I don’t think that does justice to the whole poem, which begins:

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

The poem continues with a profound reflection on the grasshopper. . . .What have I done with my 30 years on this planet?. . .What have I done that has had purpose, which has helped others or created value (material or immaterial), or brought, discovered or created joy and beauty? . . .Not unlike the fully-human Christ going from 12 to 30 in the Bible, we know that neither he nor we are on auto pilot for those 18 years; we’re creating and re-creating what we want for our lives in that curious and quixotic phase of life. Religion dies in silence. . . .You can pray, as Jesus instructed, in silence, but if you don’t converse about your faith it dies. . . .

The average age that someone reports leaving the Catholic faith is now 13 years old. Many folks who are now ex-Catholics or non-practicing Catholics report that when they left the church none of their close friends were Catholic or religion wasn’t important to them. You talk with friends. If faith—your faith—is not shared by your friends, you’re not going to talk about it and it will wither like summer grass in a field beset by days of unyielding heat without rain. Therefore, there’s a strange irony about the silence of Christ’s life between 12 and 30. . . .

Now at 30, having recently passed through those silent years, I think of Mary Oliver on these summer days. I think often of the enormity of her first question, “Who made the world?” and the last “what am I doing with my life?” but I am trying now to think about the littleness in between; the blades of grass in a field, a grasshopper and her mandible, wings and eyes. And I try to be idle and blessed because as Mary Oliver asked and Jesus lived, everything dies at last and too soon. I pray that perhaps I can pay attention, fall down into the grass and be idle enough to hear from the grasshopper what Elijah heard at the entrance of the cave, a light silent sound—God.

Are women “substantially incompatible” for the priesthood?:

Abridged from an article by John Wijngaards published in National Catholic Reporter (ncronline.org), June 18, 2018.

Wijngaards is a professor emeritus of the Missionary Institute London, and founder of the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research.

What do these popes have in common? Nicholas V (1454) authorized Christian conquerors to enslave native peoples. Innocent VIII (1484) endorsed the torture and execution of witches. Benedict XIV (1745) condemned taking interest on capital loans as a mortal sin. Pius IX (1864) declared non-Christians could not obtain eternal salvation. John Paul II (1994) taught that priesthood is reserved only to men. All defended errors based on a mixture of misread scripture and ill-informed prejudice. The only difference is that whereas the other erroneous teachings have now been discarded by the official church, the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith last month still repeated Pope John Paul II’s mistaken view. . . .

Jesus only chose 12 men in the original band of apostles. This was a symbolic act. He wanted these leaders of the new Israel to match the 12 tribal patriarchs of old. But he never created the 12 as a permanent institution. Nor did he want to establish a permanent norm of male leadership. The intention of instituting a male-only priesthood was only ascribed to Jesus by later generations who projected onto him their own conviction of female inferiority. Some women presided at the Eucharist in early Christian communities. But the Hellenistic-Roman context in which the church grew up soon strangled such “anomalies.” The reason? Women were considered mentally and physically inferior. Roman law deprived them of public office. As Augustine succinctly remarked: “Women rank below men by nature and law.” In other words, the substantial obstacle to ordaining women lay in their inferiority as human beings. . . . So is this why Jesus excluded women from his priesthood? Were they simply not fully human? Then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in his 1977 commentary on *Inter Insigniores*, rejected women’s inferiority as a valid reason. But he did not acknowledge that throughout the centuries this prejudice justified the presumed ‘tradition’

of barring women from the priesthood. . . .

A commentary on *Inter Insigniores* by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1976) had already stated: “Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church, whom he won for himself with his blood. By using this language, revelation shows why the incarnation took place according to the male gender. It makes it impossible to ignore this historical reality. For this reason, only a man can take the part of Christ, be a sign of his presence, in a word ‘represent’ him in the essential acts of the covenant.” In *Mulieris Dignitatem* John Paul II expands on this theme. It was God’s will from the start, he says, that the incarnation should happen in a man, a male. “The Bridegroom—the Son consubstantial with the Father as God—became . . . the ‘son of man,’ true man, a male. *The symbol of the Bridegroom is masculine,*” he writes. John Paul II then goes on to explain that we may “legitimately conclude” that this was the reason why Jesus disqualified women from priestly service.

Are John Paul II’s speculations sufficient ground to claim that the masculinity of the ordinand is substantial to the sacrament of holy orders? He cannot claim real support in tradition. On the contrary, as numerous theologians have pointed out, his view contradicts the overwhelming evidence for the incarnation embracing both men and women. “The Word became flesh,” we read in the Gospel of John. The word flesh does not have a gender. As theologian Sr. Elizabeth Johnson points out, if the incarnation was restricted to the male, the female would not be redeemed since the ancient principle applies here *quod non assumitur, non redimitur*—“what is not taken up [in the incarnation], has not been redeemed.”

The truth of the matter is that Jesus did not, in principle, exclude women from holy orders. Attempts through the ages to conjure up intrinsic reasons for linking maleness and priesthood have failed the test. And history delivers the knockout blow. Women have been *verified* compatible. Enter women deacons. During the first millennium, tens of thousands of women *were* ordained deacons.

Their rite of ordination has been preserved. It proves that women were ordained like the men, that is, *sacramentally*, to use the classic term. In other words, they qualified for holy orders. . . .

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Please remember in your prayers this week: Denise Alonghi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Jean Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Dick Jackman, Hunter Kubit, 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.

