



St. Mary Magdala Spiritual Center is the ministry center of The Community of the Cross, an intentional community of Christians affiliated with the Orthodox-Catholic Church of America. ALL ARE WELCOME



St. Mary Magdala Spiritual Center

## FIRST SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 2019, Vol 123 Issue 2

2800 Rolston Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46825

### St Bridgid of Kildare - Icon in upper left corner

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ARTIST: Lewis Williams, OFS

ARTIST NARRATIVE: Most revered of all of Ireland's early female saints, Brigid was born of pagan\Christian parentage, and raised in the fosterage (early Irish practice of youth education) of a druid. She converted to Christianity at age 17. Noted for her prayerfulness, compassion, humility, and generosity, she founded the earliest known Celtic double monastery, housing both men (renowned for a school of art in illuminated manuscripts) and women (expert in wool industry and weaving of cloth).

She professed a profound belief in "anam cara," or soul friends, unique persons God offers us as companions on our pilgrim road. This extended to the idea that love and intimacy were essential to a sound marriage, also quite unique for her time.

Exceptional in another aspect, St. Mel of Ardagh, inebriated by her virtues or by 'spirits', ordained her a bishop and she was respected as such. A perpetual fire was kept in her honor from her time till extinguished by King Henry VIII's order in 1540 of the Dissolution of Monasteries. Recently it has been rekindled.

In this icon she is noted for her beauty, holding the crosier (based on the famous Lismore crosier), symbolic of a Bishops staff and shepherds of men. Her clothing is the fine wool work of her sisters. She also holds a 'Brigid Cross,' an ancient solar symbol traditionally made to welcome Spring (Feb.1, in Ireland). Dawn barely touches the sky over her right shoulder, a time when the veil between worlds is very thin, and her perpetual fire burns through the night.

Also known as 'Brigid of Kildare' ("Kildare"= church of the oak) and 'Bride' ("bright or exalted one"). Her feast day is February 1.

I love St. Brigid and believe it is a story made of a mixture of truth and myth, like many stories of many of our saints. She was a strong and fiercely independent woman who challenged authority, both civil and ecclesial. She was a prophet, healer, leader of women and men as well, honored as bishop or "mitred abbess" as some would say, and was honored much liker her name sake, Brid, the Celtic goddess of fire.

Besides the feast of St. Brigid, February is also the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple or the Purification of the Blessed Virgin - it's more common name is "Candlemas" and this feast in some regions is known as the end of Epiphany Season but others continue the theme of Epiphany until the last Sunday before Lent which is Transfiguration Sunday. The Presentation took place 40 days (inclusive) after the birth of Jesus to fulfill the "purification" of his mother. Remember that Jewish tradition said the mother was unclean for 7 days after the birth of a boy and is

### Sunday Liturgy

10:00 AM  
2800 Rolston Street  
Fort Wayne

All are Welcome!

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to remain home for 33 additional days. If it's a girl, she is unclean for 14 days and is to remain home for an additional 66 days for a total of 80.

So 40 days after his birth, Jesus is taken to the temple along with Mary and it's at this point in his very early life that Jesus met Simeon, a holy man who had been promised that he would not die until he had seen the "annointed one." Upon meeting Jesus, Simeon recognizes that he is the annointed one and he proclaims a beautiful prayer that is used each evening in the office of Compline. It's called the "Nunc dimittis" or Canticle of Simeon and is a beautiful night prayer, Luke 2:29-32. "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel."

This "light for revelation" was where the "Candlemas" day idea came from. People would bring candles to the church to be blessed and they would be blessed outside the church and then people would carry them into the church, representing Christ entering the temple for the first time.

So, now you have some ecclesiastical trivia that can carry you through this last dismal month of winter as we head toward spring, symbolized by the coming of Lent - which this year is the first week of March. Look for those little signs that light the way to living in the light of Christ!  
+John

## REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

I ask for your prayers for myself this week as I am having eye surgery on Wednesday. While I am not worried about the surgery itself, I am more worried about being patient enough to keep head focused on the ground for the next 5 days during which the healing takes place. Pray for patience for the bishop, plesae.

We have others among us who also need prayers for healing. Remember Jim Tobolski, Joni Weber, Dick Hurley, Buzz Buchman, Joan North, Christine Itt, and all in our community who are ill and those who are helping care for those who are ill.

Pray for all people in those places that are

experiencing or have experienced violence, destruction or any other events causing suffering.

Pray for victims of violence and injustice. Pray most of all for justice - justice would prevent so much of the misery and problems that we face in our world and in our communities.

Pray for a sense of outrage at the violence, greed and waste in our world.

Remember all of the Church in your prayers, each of us is struggling with something. We all have challenges as we go on our journeys.

Pray for those who are unemployed or under employed, for those who are lonely and alone.

Honor the earth, the waters and the sky and do what you can to stop pollution.

Pray for an end to genocide, apartheid and the displacement of people from their lands all over the globe. Let go of any form of racism, sexism, homophobia, agism and other forms of hatred and bigotry.

Pray that we may all grow stronger to be able to witness to the true Gospel message, a message of good news that God is Love and we who love God love our neighbor - God is here and we are one - all else is failing.

Pray for our country and for all those who feel excluded for any reason.

## EXIT, PURSUED BY A BEAR

Archbishop Peter

The phrase above is perhaps the most famous stage direction in the entire canon of English literature. With that teaser, today's essay from your "retired but not retiring" (RBNR) archbishop takes us to the world of the theatre.

IN JANUARY, the legendary Carol Channing passed into the arms of God. Her passion was the stage, and it was her safest place in the world. The role she owned, quite famously, is "Hello Dolly," and another song from "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes", "Diamonds are a girl's best friend." She performed that role as Dolly well into her seventies, but didn't limit herself to those big hats and

sparkling gems. She had a range that made even rap easy for her. Imagine that: a huge blonde hairdo, enormous eye glasses, and rapper in the same package! Memory Eternal, Carol Channing.

SPEAKING OF THEATRE, the production of a controversial play at Purdue-Indiana Theatre, a/k/a PIT Theatre, came to mind this week. It drew audiences and protests both local and from out of state. Threats of protests and violence; the former happened, thank God the latter did not. We saw crowd control barricades and security staff. Actors transported in a van from a separate building across campus, then walked through Kettler Hall's sub-basement to get backstage. With all this, I can tell you of two important God moments.

Outside, along the barricades, an older couple stood apart from other protesters. They were not prepared for the shouting and violent mood; they were intimidated and embarrassed. Perhaps they also felt frightened. Larry Life, the director, engaged them and in a brief exchange they discovered that Larry was not a monster and the play was not diabolical.

Another God moment occurred inside. As the lights went down at the end of the performance, the two principle actors remained on stage, in a posed position, like a pieta. Walking to the stage apron, two older women stood gazing at the tableau in what for them was clearly a spiritual moment. The actors, God bless 'em, stayed in character on stage until the women departed.

Carol Channing is right when she describes the theatre as a safe place—it is in my usage a place of holiness, of sacred moments wherein the divine and the human meet, embrace, and are each transformed.

SCHOLARS tell us that theatre is the parent of liturgy. You will read of some Orthodox writers describing the Sunday communal prayer as “a play (or performance) acted out for God,” and in the west there is healthy tradition connecting public

prayer and dramatics. The whole thing: language, movement, costume, setting, and so on. In early modern times, writers like the Bard expanded acting from sacred scenes acted out in the doorways of churches to plays exploring the vastness of the human condition, stories told in an entirely secular building such as the Globe. The potential for acting of scenes increased exponentially. Still sacred, but a broader definition of what was sacred.

IT WAS REFORMERS in both Geneva and Scotland in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries who transformed the worshipping moment into one denuded of its dramatic, multifaceted character, changing the focus to the pulpit in new churches. The Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Anglican communities kept a richer tradition, though truth be told, the Anglicans had their struggles – Anglican clergy had to petition the crown for permission to return to the mass the little rite of mixing water with the wine, for example, and the use of copes for worship survived only because Queen Elizabeth I preferred their use in her private chapel.

“Exit, pursued by a bear,” if found in *A Winter's Tale*, by Shakespeare. Here's what Wikipedia tells us: “The play contains one of the most famous Shakespearean stage directions: Exit, pursued by a bear, presaging the offstage death of Antigonus. It is not known whether Shakespeare used a real bear from the London bear-pits,[23] or an actor in bear costume. The Royal Shakespeare Company, in one production of this play, used a large sheet of silk which moved and created shapes, to symbolize both the bear and the gale in which Antigonus is travelling.”

May the bears in your life be more like Teddy Bears, friendly not fearsome. And

keep an eye out for those many God moments around you.

### A SHORT QUIZ JUST FOR FUN

Q. Which of these women is known for her rendition of "Diamonds are a girl's best friend"?

- a. Marilyn Monroe
- b. Lady Gaga
- c. Judi Dench

Q. Which actress played the role of Dolly in a film version of "Hello Dolly"?

- a. Carol Burnett
- b. Barbra Streisand
- c. Sophie Tucker



### Max Blumenthal "Occupied Politics: Israel's War on Palestine and Its Supporters"

**Plymouth Congregational Church,  
501 West Berry Street,  
Thursday, February 21, 6:30pm.**

Max Blumenthal is a celebrated Jewish-American author, journalist, commentator, and filmmaker. Fellow at the *National Institute*, formerly writer for *The Daily Beast* and *Media Matters*. He is the author of *Goliath: Life & Loathing in Greater Israel* (2013), *The 51-Day War: Ruin & Resistance in Gaza* (2015), and producer of a film about Christian Zionism, and his latest film, *Killing Gaza* (2017). Free, open to the public.

### READINGS FOR FEBRUARY

#### Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany February 3, 2019

Jeremiah 1:4-10                      Psalm 71:1-6  
1 Corinthians 13:1-13              Luke 4:21-30

#### Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany February 10, 2019

Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)              Psalm 138    1  
Corinthians 15:1-11              Luke 5:1-11

#### Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany February 17, 2019

Jeremiah 17:5-10                  Psalm 1  
1 Corinthians 15:12-20          Luke 6:17-26

#### Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany February 24, 2019

Genesis 45:3-11, 15    Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40  
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50    Luke 6:27-38

#### Transfiguration Sunday March 3, 2019 (Last Sunday before Lent)

Exodus 34:29-35                  Psalm 99  
2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2          Luke 9:28-43a)

### CLERGY FOR FEBRUARY

Feb 3	+Peter	4th Epiphany
Feb 10	Charlene+	5h Epiphany
Feb 17	+John	6th Epiphany
Feb 24	Cliff+	7th Epiphany
Mar 3	+Peter	Transfiguration Sunday

#### HOW COULD YOU FORGET St. VALENTINE'S DAY, FEBRUARY 14?

*My bad! Don't forget St. Valentine's Day, one of the most commercialized feast days after Halloween, Christmas and Easter - every day should be Valentine's Day - tell those special someone's that you love them! Chocolate is optional.*