



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

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Sunday Liturgy

10:00 AM

2800 Rolston Street
Fort Wayne

All are Welcome!

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HOLY WEEK APPROACHES

While it is true that we are now into the third week of Lent, we don't have that long before Holy Week is here. Lent calls to us to consider suffering and it culminates in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. It seems strange that suffering ends in glory, that death ends in resurrection. It's not what we often experience when one of our loved ones dies. It's not what we see when we observe bombings in Syria on the news or in the media. We see only the suffering. Yet each year, those of us in the northern hemisphere see the world around us die. The leaves come off the trees. Flowers, once beautiful, lie brown and lifeless and soon turn to humus. As we celebrate the resurrection, we witness the earth rising up, renewing itself. Flowers burst forth, trees blossom, and the earth joins in the resurrection of Jesus. The gospel is written in the cosmos!

+John

Thoughts for Reflection from Jon Sobrino

(Jesuit Catholic Priest and Liberation Theologian from South America)

Bishop Romero told some terrorized peasants who had survived a massacre, "You are the image of the divine victim," and in another sermon he said that Jesus Christ, the Liberator, is so closely identified with the people that interpreters of scripture cannot tell whether the Lord's servant proclaimed by Isaiah is the suffering people or Christ who comes to redeem us. Ignacio Ellacuria said the same: "The crucified people is the historical continuation of the Lord's servant, whom the sin of the world continues to deprive of any human decency, and from whom the powerful of this world continue to rob everything, taking everything away, even life, especially life . . ."

Above all, the crucified peoples offer values that are not offered elsewhere. We may discuss whether they create these values because they have nothing else to hold on to, and whether these values will disappear when their present economic and social circumstances disappear and are devoured by the western capitalist world and its "civilization." But they are there now and are offered to all (and those who work to bring the people down from the cross also work to prevent these values disappearing) . . .

The crucified peoples also offer hope, foolish or absurd, it might be said; because it is the only thing they have left, others argue. But once again, it is there, and it must not be rivalized by other worlds. That it is hope against hope is obvious, but it is also active hope that has shown itself in work and liberation struggles. What success these have is another matter.

The crucified peoples offer great love. It is not masochism or an invitation to suicide, nor making a virtue of necessity, but it is simply true that Latin America's innumerable martyrs show that love is possible because it is real, and great love is possible because many have shown it. And in a structurally selfish world based on selfishness and making a virtue of it - not in so many words of course - that love is a great offer of humanization.

The crucified peoples are ready to forgive their oppressors. They do not want to triumph over them but to share with them. To those who come to help them, they open their arms and accept them and thus, even without knowing it themselves, they forgive them. In this way they introduce into the world that reality which is so humanizing and so lacking, which is gratuitousness: not only what you get for yourself but also what you are given unexpectedly, freely and without having to earn it.

The crucified peoples have generated solidarity: human beings and Christians mutually supporting one another in this way and that, open to one another, giving and receiving one another's best. On a small scale it offers a model of how people, and churches can relate to one another in a human and Christian way.

Finally, the crucified peoples offer faith, a way of being the Church and a more genuine Christian and relevant holiness for the world today, that gives more of Jesus. Again, this is more like a leafy tree, but it is there.

Creation The Story that Defines Us

*This is Richard Rohr's reflection on Rob Bell's film
which we are viewing.*

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, is not the oldest book of the Bible. The Genesis account of creation was likely compiled in its present form as late as 500 BC, and in fact, there are at least two different accounts that you can see in the first chapters. At the time it was written, the Jews were likely in exile, having been conquered by Babylon. There they were exposed to many creation stories, and they were inspired with this very positive account.

Rob Bell described one of the most popular stories of that time, the Babylonian Enuma Elish, at CAC's

CONSPIRE 2014 conference. Within the Enuma Elish, creation happens after a battle between two gods. The male god kills the female god, then tears her body apart and uses half of her to create the heavens and half to create the earth.

Rob points out that the driving engine of this story is violence, carnage, and destruction. The exiled Jews decided to write down their oral tradition, a confrontive narrative to the dominant creation story, in order to stay cohesive as a tribe among all the foreign influences. In the Judeo-Christian story of Genesis 1, God, who is "Creator" in verse 1, "Spirit" in verse 2, and "Word" in verse 3 (foretastes of what we would eventually call Trinity), creates from an overflowing abundance of love, joy, and creativity! Rob contends that the question of whether the engine of the universe is violence and destruction or overflowing love, joy, and creativity is still the question. He says we live our lives according to these deep forces within us, and the engine that drives us is deeply connected to the way we view the Universe. Is our starting point love or is it fear and hatred? How you begin is invariably how you end. And both possibilities are rather visible in our world today.

Our creation story says that we were created in the very "image and likeness" of God (Genesis 1:26) and out of a fully generative love. I love how Rob, and many other evolutionary Christians, say what this means for us: "We are created with a drive to self-transcend, to move beyond oneself for the joy and blessing of others." It is all positive, an original blessing instead of an original sin, sending us toward a cosmic hope. There is something within us, which Christians call the Holy Spirit, that makes us aware that we are here to co-create with God and make something beautiful of the world. Like the Trinity, the perichoresis (divine dance) of God, we are made to encircle others and creation in self-giving love, generosity, blessing, and service. When you start positive, instead of with a problem, there is a much greater likelihood you will move forward positively too.

Our starting point is totally positive, and not just the sad overcoming of a problem. Blessed John Duns Scotus, OFM (1266-1308) said that the Christ is Plan A, and we got off to a very bad start by making Jesus (or the Christ) a mere problem-solving technique of God—or Plan B. God creates the first premise and meaning of reality, not human sinfulness. The first chapter of the Bible repeatedly says creation is “very good” (Genesis 1:10-31)! Are we really that obtuse? It sure seems so. From such a blessed and unitive beginning, we were given to know the clear direction of the whole tangent—we came from goodness, we are slowly ticking toward goodness, and we will end in goodness. And all this goodness is pure gift.

More than the Ides of March in March

Archbishop Emeritus Peter

Welcome to the new month. We are in the midst of Lent, a sober, serious, important part of our church year. But that ain't all there is for March. In this piece, you will be introduced to other occasions in this event-filled month. Here are how the Sundays of March can be celebrated. Oh, you know, beyond your penitential observations here at St Mary's.

March 4 Holy Experiment Day. Perhaps we have a coals-to-Newcastle thing here, but we are encouraged to try out something religious that is new for us. Pray for a friend's restoration to good health? Pray for sunshine? Remember to say grace before a meal? Or find something else truly adventuresome for your spirit. Not into churchy stuff? An alternative event is “Hug a GI Day.

March 11 Worship of Tools Day. Ah, another event with a spiritual connection. In my experience, tools are revered, if not worshipped, when they perform as needed and cursed when they don't. This might be a good day for you to check out your tool shed or tool box and make sure your tools are in good shape and ready for use in the coming, warmer months when DIY-ness takes control of our consciousness. Alternative event is Johnny Appleseed Day. Apple pie and ice cream, anyone?

March 18 Supreme Sacrifice Day. This is a heavy, serious event. Each of us can recall and honor the memory of someone who has made the ultimate sacrifice. Perhaps a visit to the memorial room at the Coliseum, or some time paging through your old photo albums to recall friends whose sacrifice

touched your soul. An alternative event is Goddess of Fertility Day. The Greek goddess Aphrodite is the most famous fertility goddesses, but even in prehistory we see fertility as a cult issue. From your art appreciation classes you might remember the Venus of Willendorf, which was created about 27,000 years before the common era. Statues of the diminutive but voluptuous goddess are available at the Walmart web site for \$28.

March 25 Waffle Day. Originating in Sweden, Waffle Day is associated with both the Feast of the Annunciation and the traditional beginning of spring. Cultures always have such associations, for example, in England, pancakes are the traditional food for the day before Ash Wednesday. Alternative event. Today is also Pecan Day. Pecan trees are the only nut tree native to North America. Enjoy this delicious treat on this day. Pecan pie and ice cream, anyone?

Is that all there is? Of course not, Never! Here are other days for revelry.

March 6 National Frozen Foods Day; March 8 International Working Women's Day (originated 1911); March 9 Panic Day; March 13 National Earmuff Day (Chester Greenwood invented them in 1877); March 14 National Pi Day (think about it—the value of Pi is 3.14; March 25 Chocolate Covered Raisin Day; March 28 Weed Appreciation Day; March 30 I am in Control Day (Words spoken by Alexander Haig in 1981) is perhaps best celebrated in partnership with March 9 Panic Day; March 31 Bunsen Burner Day (honors the inventor chemist Robert Wilhelm Eberhard von Bunsen, who was born on this date in 1811.

“Retired but not retiring” is how Archbishop emeritus Peter (Bob Zahrt) describes himself. As many of us know, he delights in irony and the quirky bits of life and language. He wants us to know that you can spell his name, Bob, backwards and forwards without becoming confused.

**God who has adorned the
whole earth with flowers is
crowned with thorns.**

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Please remember Jim Tobolski in your prayers. He is receiving treatments at Mayo Clinic for the next few months and needs our support.

Remember also Fr. Jim's friend in Cleveland who is recovering from surgery and treatment.

Please pray for Bishop AJ in Nebraska as he continues his recovery as well.

Remember all those in our parish and community who are sick. Pray for their recovery and renewed strength.

Pray for all those experiencing the intense cold and intense storms this winter.

Pray for all people in those places that are experiencing or have experienced violence, destruction or any other events causing suffering.

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 have asked us to pray for them. Pray for those who are unemployed or under employed, for those who are lonely and alone.

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.

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.

CLERGY FOR MARCH

Mar 4	Cliff+	
Mar 11	Jim+	
Mar 18	Cliff+	
Mar 25	Jim+	Palm Sunday
Mar 29	+John	Holy Thursday
Mar 30	Cliff+	Good Friday
Mar 31	+John	Easter Vigil (Sat)
April 8	Jim+	Easter 2

READINGS FOR MARCH

Third Sunday in Lent (HOLI)

March 4, 2018

Exodus 20:1-17 Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 1:18-25 John 2:13-22

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 11, 2018

Numbers 21:4-9 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10 John 3:14-21

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 18, 2018

Jeremiah 31:31-34 Psalm 51:1-12 or
Psalm 119:9-16
Hebrews 5:5-10 John 12:20-33

Liturgy of the Palms & Passion

March 25, 2018

Sixth Sunday in Lent

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Mark 11:1-11
Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11 Mark 15:1-39

Good Friday

March 30, 2018

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 Psalm 22
Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
John 18:1-19:42

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil

March 31, 2018

various readings

Second Sunday of Easter

April 8, 2018

Acts 4:32-35 Psalm 133
1 John 1:1-2:2 John 20:19-31



Lenten 'Share the Loaves' Food Drive

Associated Churches is introducing a simple opportunity for your congregation to host a food drive during the Lenten season, Feb. 14 to Mar. 29. We encourage church members to approach Lent as an opportunity to make their sacrifice a blessing for the hungry.

After Easter Day, April 1st, drop off your collected items to our warehouse at 602 E. Wayne Street. If you need assistance with delivery, please contact Associated Churches by phone: 260-422-3528 or email: foodbank@associatedchurches.org



Operation Lifting Hope" is in Need of Support

There is a particular individual in our community that Associated Churches would like to spotlight in this week's e-Pistle. His name is Dave Hernandez, owner of Sud'N Impact Gym and Associated Churches' Father's Day 5K event sponsor. A distinct event has sent Hernandez on a course of helping people and rebuilding communities.

That event was hurricane Maria, regarded as the worst natural disaster on record in Dominica and Puerto Rico. At its peak, the hurricane caused catastrophic damage and numerous fatalities in September of 2017. The damage included destruction to Puerto Rico's electrical grid, causing thousands to be without power and presently, has not been fully restored.

Hernandez has created "Operation Lifting Hope" to aid in Puerto Rico's relief by delivering supplies to people who have suffered major losses during the hurricane. Hernandez has 2 trips planned for 2018. The first will be March 5th -11th to deliver clothing and food. The second trip will be in the summer.

If you would like to help Dave Hernandez and the people of Puerto Rico:

- Donations are accepted at [GoFundMe](#)
- Volunteers are welcome to join. (A round-trip plane ticket is required.)

Follow Hernandez's mission on the "[Operation Lifting Hope](#)" Facebook Page

The Andalusian Trail, Music & Dance from India, North Africa & the Middle East

CANTERBURY HIGH SCHOOL, March 10 at 6:30 pm

\$25/Adults, \$5 Student

Contact Joan Coslow at 260-424-2430 or joancoslow@gmail.com for tickets

Supports the Indiana Center for Middle East Peace

Made possible in part by support from Arts United Simplify Art! program

LENTEN EVENING PRAYER

St. Mary Magdala Spiritual Center

6:30 pm Thursday Evenings During Lent

Join us for quiet, simple evening prayer led by Fr. Jim

SUNDAY LENTEN REFLECTIONS

After Liturgy each Sunday at St. Mary Magdala's

Join us for coffee and a short film or discussion

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Holy Thursday 6:00 pm Seder

This will be at the Cove of Covington Creek on Covington Creek Trail off of Covington Road. Bring your own dinner plate, silverware, wine glass and a dish to share with all. Lamb, chicken and wine will be provided.

Friends are welcome - just give us an idea of how many will be coming

Good Friday at 1:00 pm

Holy Saturday (Easter Vigil) at 7:00 pm

No services Easter Day

LENTEN PRAYER OF ST. EPHREM OF SYRIA

O Lord and Master of my life!

Take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness,
lust of power, and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility,
patience, and love to Thy servant.

Yea, O Lord and King!

Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brother;
For Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen