



31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 30, 2016

Readings

This week:

Wisdom 11:22–12:2

2 Thessalonians 1:11–2:2

Luke 19:1–10

Next week:

2 Maccabees 7:1–2, 9–14

2 Thessalonians 2:16–3:5

Luke 20:27–38

Psalm Today

I will praise your name forever, my king and my God. (*Psalm 145*)

Today's presider is Rev. 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

Tuesday, November 1

All Saints Day: see parish bulletin for Mass times

From Thomas Merton

I will ask you to stand and all join hands in a little while. But first, we realize that we are going to have to create a new language of prayer. And this new language of prayer has to come out of something which transcends all our traditions, and comes out of the immediacy of love. We have to part now, aware of the love that unites us, the love that unites us in spite of real differences, real emotional friction...The things that are on the surface are nothing, what is deep is the Real. We are creatures of love. Let us therefore join hands, as we did before, and I will try to say something that comes out of the depths of our hearts. I ask you to concentrate on the love that is in you, that is in us all. I have no idea what I am going to say. I am going to be silent a minute, and then I will say something...

—Special Closing Prayer (offered at the First Spiritual Summit Conference in Calcutta, 1968), *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

TMC donation envelope enclosed today:



An envelope for your donation to the Thomas Merton Center is attached here. The Merton Center is a non-profit religious education membership organization, founded in 1995. We rely on your support to make possible this Sunday Mass, spiritual education events and retreats, and publications. Please support our lay-led, progressive, Vatican II-inspired, open membership organization. *Merci!*

Kenyan craft fair today:



Come out to the Memorial Garden (weather permitting) or the Thomas House Bride's

Room (in the main back of the floor) after Mass and inspect the variety of craft items from Kenya, plus some locally crafted items made by Margo McAuliffe and Gladys Low. Tell friends to stop by also, as Margo has brought back from Kenya some new items as well as the things you have loved in the past (jewelry, carved animals, Christmas tree decorations, woven bowls, shoulder bags, and creche sets).

CANCELLED...to be rescheduled

Yes on 62 — No on 66:

The TMC SpeakOut Committee and the TMC Board urge you to vote "yes" on Proposition 62 to abolish the death penalty in California. Vote "no" on Prop. 66 which limits the time allowed for appeals on behalf of inmates on Death Row but does not abolish the death penalty.

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339
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Michelle Hogan (Nov. 6 & 13) myhogan@comcast.net
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PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Sr. Fran Ciluaga, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Dean Judd, Michael Kiriti, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, Edna and François Jamati, 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.

[Add or subtract names by e-mailing Bulletin editors: Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams. See listings below.]

TMC bulletins online:

The TMC website awaits your perusal. Go to www.thomasmerton.org to find copies of the Sunday TMC bulletins, notices of events, and background on the Merton Center. Web master Jim Davis awaits your submissions: email them to him at jim_davis@pacbell.net.

Altar of Remembrance is up:

In November, Catholics and Christians remember their beloved dead. Our Altar of Remembrance here at St. Thomas Aquinas Church is themed on the Mexican tradition of the Day of the Dead. You are invited to bring pictures of your loved ones (no larger than 8" x 10" with your name and contact info on the back) and place them on the altar throughout the month of November. Then remember to pick them up on the last Sunday of November (the 27th) before the altar is dismantled.

"The Ewe" is coming February 18:

In preparation for a presentation on Saturday, February 18, 2017, 10 am - 12 pm, at Mitchell Park Community Center in Palo Alto, we recommend to you a blog, "Questions from a Ewe" (questionsfromaewe.blogspot.com). The "Ewe" will be the presenter; she describes the reason for her writing:

"'Test everything: retain what is good.' (1 Thessalonians 5:21) A laywoman expresses concerns about issues in the Roman Catholic Church to foster positive dialogue by posing and exploring questions. Please remember that Canon Law says it is not only a right but a duty to question the Church. Also, Canon Law provides an over-riding power to the *sensus fidelium* ("sense of the faithful"). By this, Canon Law says that if the *sensus fidelium* ("collective of the faithful") rejects a law, it is not valid."

Mark your 2017 calendar and don't miss this stimulating discussion.

--TMC Spiritual Education Committee

Food Closet never closes:

Keep bringing food for the Food Closet. The needs continue: flip-top soups and entrees, as well as small bottles of water, crackers, granola bars, fruit cups, juice pouches. Your generous donations (including cash) are always welcome, particularly now as the summer winds down when the stores have been depleted. Leave your offerings in the baskets at the back of church as you come into the sanctuary.

Bulletin submissions must be e-mailed by Thursday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. Kay, kaywill@pacbell.net, (650) 270-4188. Michelle, myhogan@comcast.net, (650) 493-8452.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

A look back to Bishop McGrath's 2002 Pastoral Plan:

[Notes taken by TMC member Maureen Locke during Bishop P. J. McGrath's homily in March 2002 where he launched the new Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of San Jose.]

(Bishop McGrath prefaced this first part by referring to the destruction in October '89 resulting from the Loma Prieta earthquake. He said many of the homes and other buildings were destroyed because they had not been built to be flexible and move with the movement of the earth. They were too fixed in their foundations.)

"If we as the Church remain fixed in our position and do not build in the forces of change, we run the risk of destruction and disintegration. The Church must have the flexibility to move in the earthquake of changing conditions.

"Everything that is Church is a means toward the end, which is God. Sometimes we have to let go of some of those means to follow God, to reach the End which is God. Sometimes we have to leave the comfortable and the familiar in order to fulfill the mission of God.

"We have to become a Church of prayer, (so) that our work will be carried out in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and not in the worldly spirit.

"If we are to be truly (engaged with the Holy Spirit in) doing the work of God, our local church will be a church of unity, peace and charity, not of division and enmity. And we can have unity in diversity."

(He made reference here to the many different ethnicities and cultures present in the county of Santa Clara, which comprises the Diocese of San Jose.)

He then went over the three main areas on which this new pastoral plan will concentrate, in accordance with the identified priorities of all those diocesan communities which were asked to participate in naming those priorities:

1. Develop lay leadership.
2. Involve youth and young adults in our Church.
3. Live Catholic social justice teachings.

A copy of the finished Plan was given to representatives of all the parishes who participated in the planning process over the preceding 18 months. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish was represented by Chris Lundin, Chair of the Pastoral Stewardship Council.

Don't vote based on Supreme Court:

[By Jim Wallis, *Sojourners*, 10/27/16]

I can't count the number of times that conservative Christians have named "the Supreme Court" as the only deciding question of this election. No matter what else a candidate says or does or will do on any other issue, the only concern some people have is what future Supreme Court justices will decide on one issue — abortion. Things like intellectual competence, moral character, honesty, emotional maturity and temperament — and gospel issues like racial bigotry and the treatment of women — apparently do not matter in the end to some. Really?

As a Christian who truly believes that abortion is a moral issue, I am deeply committed to dramatically reducing them. But criminalizing an often desperate choice is not the answer. We must also be deeply committed to the economic security, healthcare, and child-care choices that women need, which are critical to reducing abortion. I believe in the sacredness and dignity of life from womb to tomb. But a "consistent ethic of life" also includes ending poverty, human trafficking, the death penalty, ceaseless and senseless wars, and weapons of mass destruction.

But what are the ways to best protect the integrity and dignity of all life? A consistent ethic of life is a moral principle but also involves very human judgments over strategy. In *Christianity Today*, Executive Editor Andy Crouch speaks theologically and powerfully about the "idolatry of strategy" in an editorial called "Speak Truth to Trump."

"Most Christians who support Trump have done so with reluctant strategic calculation largely based on the president's power to appoint members of the Supreme Court ... But there is a point at which strategy becomes its own form of idolatry—an attempt to manipulate the levers of history in favor of the causes we support—at the expense of our dependence on God who judges all nations, and in defiance of God's manifest concern for the stranger, the widow, the orphan, and the oppressed. Strategy becomes idolatry when we betray our deepest values in pursuit of earthly influence."

Crouch sums up the consequences of the problem in this election by saying, "Enthusiasm for a candidate like Trump gives our neighbors ample reason to doubt that we believe Jesus is Lord." He says that strategy becoming an idol is putting politics over theology, and he concludes, "And because such strategy requires capitulating to idols and princes and denying the true God, it ultimately always fails."

[Read entire article at *sojo.net*.]

Catholic women speak on “family values”:

[By Brian Roewe, *nronline*, 10/26/16]

Politicians seeking office on Nov. 8 who speak of family values would do well to understand all that term entails, says a letter from 44 lay and religious Catholic women, including the leaders of several major U.S. Catholic organizations.

"'Family values' isn't simply a buzzword on the campaign trail," the letter stated...Broadly, "family values," the women said, means honoring the dignity of families. Specifically, they singled out the need for policies that reject a consumer culture viewing sex as a commodity; provide access to paid parental leave for both parents and affordable child care; produce jobs paying a living wage; and develop "a humane immigration system that keeps families together."

Too often, the language of the current presidential campaign between Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton and Republican nominee Donald Trump has been "characterized by the toxic politics of fear," they said, particularly in discussions of Muslims, refugees and immigrants ..."

The letter was signed by the heads of Catholic Charities USA, Dominican Sr. Donna Markham; Catholic Health Association, Daughter of Charity Sr. Carol Keehan; and Pax Christi USA, Notre Dame de Namur Sr. Patricia Chappell. Other signers included:

- Holy Cross Sr. Joan Marie Steadman, executive director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious;
- Social Service Sr. Simone Campbell, social justice lobby NETWORK executive director;
- Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International;
- Patricia McGuire, president of Trinity Washington University;
- Helen Osman, the former communications secretary for the U.S. bishops' conference and the incoming president of the North American region of the World Catholic Association for Communication;
- Helen Alvaré, law professor at George Mason University.

The leadership teams of several congregations of women religious also lent their names to the letter.

A copy of the letter, organized by Faith in Public Life, is set to be published in upcoming editions of three Catholic news publications: *National Catholic Reporter*, *Our Sunday Visitor* and *America* magazine.

Rather than a period of fear, elections, the women stated, should serve as an occasion for a national examination of conscience.

"The Hebrew prophets remind us that nations will be judged by how the least among us are treated," they said. "Jesus taught us that our neighbor is not defined by language, religion or geography but our common humanity. All children, born and unborn, are created in the image of God..."

"Our faith calls us to affirm the sacred dignity of all life. This is why our Church defends life in the womb, the

undocumented immigrant and the inmate on death row," the letter read.

Amid the verbal barbs exchanged between Trump and Clinton, the candidates have at times addressed several of the issues outlined in the Catholic women's letter.

Paid parental leave is one of the few issues where the candidates share at least some ideas.

Clinton has pledged to guarantee parents of newborns up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave, while Trump's plan would provide six weeks of paid leave to new mothers.

Clinton would also offer a maximum of 12 weeks to people caring for an ill family member or themselves recovering from a serious injury or illness. For those on leave, at least two-thirds of current wages would be guaranteed. The Democratic nominee said her program would not impose additional costs on businesses, and would be covered by increasing taxes on the wealthiest.

Trump focused much of his plan on changes to the tax code, beginning with a rewrite that would allow working parents making under \$250,000 individually to deduct from their income taxes expenses related to a max of four children or elderly dependents, and to enroll in tax-free dependent care savings accounts. He would also establish an expanded earned income tax credit, through a child care rebate, for low-income families and provide a matching \$500 contribution to their savings accounts.

As for a living wage, Clinton supports raising the federal minimum wage to \$12 per hour, and local efforts in cities and states to raise it further. Trump has been less clear on his position, His campaign told *The Washington Post* in August he supports raising the federal minimum wage to \$10 an hour, "but believes states should set the minimum wage..."

On other issues, including immigration and abortion, the divisions are clearer, with both discussed during the final debate.

Trump has pledged to build "an impenetrable physical wall" on the U.S. southern border, to end sanctuary cities and to make anyone in the country illegally subject to deportation — a population currently estimated at roughly 11 million people ...

While he has not explicitly said he would break up families lacking proper documentation, in a speech on immigration in Phoenix in late August, Trump said the only core issue in the immigration debate is "the well-being of the American people. Nothing even comes a close second..."

On abortion, Clinton in the final debate reiterated her support of *Roe v. Wade* and that she would defend against attempts to defund Planned Parenthood. ...

Trump, who says he is pro-life, said during the debate that should the Supreme Court overturn *Roe* under his presidency, the case would return to the states "and the states will then make a determination." #