



30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 23, 2016

Readings

This week:

Sirach 35:12-14,16-18

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

Luke 18:9-14

Next week:

Wisdom 11:22–12:2

2 Thessalonians 1:11–2:2

Luke 19: 1-10

Psalm

The Lord hears the cry of the poor. (*Psalm 34*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Xavier Lavagetto.

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

No meetings this week.

From Thomas Merton

Today, with the enormous amplification of news and of opinion, we are suffering from more than acceptable distortions of perspective. Our supposed historical consciousness, over-informed and over-stimulated, is threatened with death by bloating, and we are overcome with a political elephantiasis which sometimes seems to make all actual forward motion useless if not impossible. But in addition to the sheer volume of information there is the even more portentous fact of falsification and misinformation by which those in power are often completely intent not only on misleading others but even on convincing themselves that their own lies are “historical truth.”

—*Faith and Violence*

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Kenyan crafts: back by popular demand:

Kenya Help will again offer a variety of craft items from Kenya, plus a few homemade items by Gladys Low and Margo McAuliffe. The event will be Sunday, October 30, right after our mass until about 11:30. Please tell



your friends. Margo has found a few new items as well as the things you have loved in the past. Please note this is not a sale. All items are gifts for donations. The craft display will be outside,

weather permitting. Otherwise we'll be in the bride's room at the back of the Thomas House.

Kenya Help is happy to announce that they can now process donations by credit card. Margo would greatly appreciate anyone who would like to help: please call 322-0821 or e-mail margo@kenyahelp.us to volunteer.

Parish holiday faire:

Saturday, November 5, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, the Parish Community Life Committee is sponsoring a holiday faire in the Our Lady of the Rosary Hall (3233 Cowper). The committee is collecting holiday decorations during October after Masses. You can donate new or like-new items, from any holiday—Valentine's, St. Patrick's, Easter, Fourth of July, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Featured items will include handmade holiday pillowcase sets, gift tags, baked goods, and festive décor.

Contact Anne Morrison at (650) 493-2998 or ahbert55@aol.com or Natalie Lucha at (650) 494-1178 or nlucha22@yahoo.com if you have questions.

The Food Closet never closes:

As we move into the cooler days of Fall, please keep bringing food for the Food Closet. Donations have been down, and the Food Closet still needs flip-top soups and entrees, as well as small bottles of water, crackers, granola bars, fruit cups, juice pouches. Please continue to be generous with both food donations, and dollars too!

Please remember in your prayers this week: Denise Alongi, George Bouchev, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Sr. Fran Ciluaga, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Michael Kiriti, Hunter Kubit, Fr. Lavagetto's mother, 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.

Altar of Remembrance is coming:

November is the month of remembrance for Catholics and Christians the world over. Here at St. Thomas Aquinas we have a tradition of our Altar of Remembrance, which you will see on the left side of the church at the "Mary altar," beginning on Sunday, November 6. You can bring your pictures after October 31 and leave them in the box near the Mary altar, or you can bring them on November 6. The pictures will remain on the altar until the end of the month. They should be no larger than 8" x 10" and should have your name and phone on the back, so they can be returned to you if you forget to pick them up when the altar is dismantled at the end of November.



Talk on gender justice at SCU:

Discussions of gender and gender-related concerns are ubiquitous in the landscape of the 2016 election. Santa Clara University's Bannan Lecture Series will continue on October 25, 2016, at 4:00 pm in the St. Clare Room with a discussion of "What Is at Stake for Gender Justice in 2016? Rethinking Gender and the Politics of the Possible," with Sharmila Lodhia, Associate Professor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies, and Stephanie Wildman, John A. and Elizabeth H. Sutro Professor of Law.

Yes on 62:

The TMC SpeakOut Committee and the TMC Board urge you to vote "yes" on Proposition 62 to abolish the death penalty. Proposition 62 replaces the death penalty with a strict life sentence and would save taxpayers an estimated \$150 million per year.

The Thomas Merton Center of Palo Alto...

URGES YOU TO...

Vote Yes on Prop. 62.

End the death penalty now!

Vote No on Prop 66.

Stop a fast pass to execution!

You must vote on both initiatives.

[Initiative with most votes prevails.]

The Thomas Merton Center of Palo Alto, incorporated as a non-profit, religious education association in 1996, is an organization of lay Catholics inspired by the teachings of Vatican II to offer Catholic liturgy and ecumenical spiritual education programs, and to support local and national social justice initiatives.
www.thomasmerton.org

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Cardinals herald church's changing season:

Abridged from an editorial by the NCR Editorial Staff, October 17, 2016, at www.ncronline.org.

Rarely is change in the church proclaimed with any fanfare. The daily Vatican *bollettini* don't announce policy changes; members of the Curia aren't invited to seminars on "new directions" for the church. Catholics are left to discern newness in other ways, like noticing the first hint of a changing season in the subtle alteration of sunlight. The light's angle just became a little clearer with Pope Francis' appointment of 17 new cardinals from 11 different countries, including three from the United States. These appointments should dispel any doubt that a new season is upon us, one that expands our views of the peripheries in several ways: in terms of geography, in terms of what sees are considered important, and in terms of how leaders think about and approach building the church in this era of Francis. . . .

Francis is walking past some of the old established sees that expect to have a cardinal at the helm. He is going to the peripheries of the church, selecting leaders who understand by experience the pastoral needs of the poor and how the church operates far away from the entrenched palace culture of the Vatican. In the United States, the change of seasons is apparent with the selections of Chicago Archbishop Blase Cupich, Indianapolis Archbishop Joseph Tobin, and Bishop Kevin Farrell, last of Dallas and just appointed to head the newly created Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life.

It is not a surprise that Farrell and Cupich will receive red hats. It's a natural move for Farrell since he will be a Vatican official and for Cupich because Chicago's archbishop traditionally has been named a cardinal. The surprise was in their initial appointments—clear signals that Francis was selecting men who rejected the culture-warrior model and exemplified a pastoral, not a legal, approach to church leadership.

The real surprise was the choice of Tobin. Philadelphia and Baltimore, traditional cardinalatial sees, were overlooked yet again, this time in favor of Indianapolis, an archdiocese that has never been represented in the College of Cardinals. Tobin, a member of the Redemptorist religious order, is in many ways a leading indicator of the change afoot. He became head of the Vatican's congregation for religious when the investigations of the U.S. women religious were already underway. It is said that he argued against the investigations and lost that fight, but retained the respect of Pope Benedict XVI, who appointed him to Indianapolis. The combination of Cupich,

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Tobin makes case for welcoming Syrian refugees:

Abridged from an article by Michael O'Loughlin, October 16, 2016, at www.americamagazine.com. O'Loughlin is the national correspondent for America and author of The Tweetable Pope: A Spiritual Revolution in 140 Characters.

Concerning the debate over admitting refugees from Syria and other war-torn regions to the United States, the Indianapolis archbishop who clashed with Gov. Mike Pence and who will be made a cardinal next month by Pope Francis, has a message for Americans: Be not afraid. "We need to urge public officials to avoid reactions that politicize events abroad, or in this country, and to avoid misplaced blame that creates an atmosphere of fear," Archbishop Joseph Tobin said in an Oct. 14 speech at the University of Notre Dame. "Instead we urge public officials to stand in solidarity with Syrian refugees who themselves are victims." . . .

The archbishop recalled his clash last November with Mr. Pence, who is now running for vice president alongside Republican presidential nominee Donald J. Trump. Mr. Trump has proposed banning refugees from Muslim countries from entering the United States, and while the governor was once critical of such a ban, he now supports his running mate's views.

About a month before a family of four Syrians was due to arrive in Indiana last year, Mr. Pence asked the archbishop to direct Catholic Charities not to move forward with the placement. The pair met in the Indiana State House. . . . During the meeting, the archbishop recalled, the governor spoke about his desire to protect Indiana residents from terrorism. . . . "He advised me to pray and seek God's guidance before deciding," Archbishop Tobin said. "I was happy to follow that advice," he said with a smile.

"After a day or two of that sort of stuff," the archbishop said to laughter, "I was convinced the decision to bar the family was immoral, capricious and probably illegal." The next day, he called the governor to say that the church would move ahead with the resettlement and fund its immediate needs if the state refused to dispense federal cash it had received to help with resettlement costs, as Mr. Pence had threatened.

Archbishop Tobin said that the wider Indianapolis community stepped up after the governor announced he would not welcome Syrians to Indiana. . . . "It's crucial that the Catholic community and people of good will contest the climate of fear that has festered in this country, particularly in the past 15 years," he said. "This fear dehumanizes us all, causes us to abandon our most precious religious and civic values."

Clinton e-mails on Catholicism:

Abridged from an article by Fr. Edward L. Beck, October 16, 2016, at cruxnow.com. Father Beck is a Passionist priest and on-air commentator for CNN on faith, religion and ethics.

Some Catholics were left scratching their heads by the kerfuffle created by the revelation of hacked e-mails of the Clinton campaign. Conservative Catholic groups and some members of the hierarchy were quick to accuse the writers of participating in an anti-Catholic smear.

. . . Not all Catholics agree with such grandiose assessments, which suggest a nefarious plot against the Catholic Church. More progressive Catholics view the e-mail exchange as an honest dialogue—intended to be private—between people (all Catholics themselves, by the way) discussing how to respond to a conservative element in the Catholic Church that seems intent on turning back the advances of Vatican II. In the e-mails, John Halpin, a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, suggests that the Catholicism of some socially conservative Catholics, including members of the Supreme Court, is “an amazing bastardization of the faith. . . . They must be attracted to the systematic thought and severely backwards gender relations and must be totally unaware of Christian democracy.” Jennifer Palmieri, the Clinton campaign director of communications, responds, “I imagine they think it is the most socially acceptable politically conservative religion. Their rich friends wouldn’t understand if they became evangelical.”

As Pope Francis has often indicated, the Catholic Church is a large tent that allows for many opinions and perspectives within its flaps. The writers of the e-mails in question can be seen as Catholics expressing their views about how their faith intersects with public policy and social agenda. The e-mails can likewise be interpreted as drafted by Catholics who are concerned that their Church risks becoming irrelevant, rather than being interpreted as smears on a Church they disdain.

Many Catholics do believe, as the e-mails suggest, that Church teaching needs to evolve more quickly if it is to have a relevant impact on a rapidly evolving world. Those Catholics are also sympathetic to the reality that private-mail exchanges may be less than diplomatic and not always politically correct in expressing those heartfelt concerns.

. . . Pope Francis has said, “A good Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of himself, so that those who govern can govern.” The meddling of a few wonky Catholic Clinton campaigners should be less concerning to us than the meddling of far more impious entities who hack private e-mails and illegally release them, to a populace all too ready to put its own spin on them.

. . . Church’s changing season, continued:

widely regarded as a model of pastoral leadership, with Tobin, means that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will now have among its members two more cardinals who strongly represent Francis’ vision of church leadership. That is significant, given the resistance to adopting Francis’ approach, evident in the bishops’ recent national meetings.

In his 2014 address to the U.S. bishops in Washington, Francis insistently called for dialogue—in all directions and with everyone—and rejected “harsh and divisive language” while appealing for a culture of encounter among church leaders. It was a clear repudiation of the kind of leadership that had been ascendant in the U.S. church for decades and under which the church had experienced significant losses of traditional members and their children. . . . The church, however, faces a headwind of crises in the coming years, the principal one stemming from the decline in the number of priests and sisters since the 1960s. Nuns and priests provided a workforce for the local communities from the mid-1940s to around the mid 1960s. It turns out that those years of full convents and rectories, often viewed as a norm to replicate, were actually an anomaly. Such numbers never existed prior to that period and the demographers are fairly certain they will not occur again. In 2009, researchers at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University projected that half the priests available for service at that time would be either retired or deceased by 2019.

If the Catholic community in the United States is to survive as a coherent community, it will require leadership able to imagine new forms and structures to sustain the church in this new reality. It will take pastors such as Cupich and Tobin, leaders who have shown themselves to be unafraid of the new questions and willing to accompany the flock in order to understand its needs. Diktats from the pulpit and the threat of law will not inspire people to holiness or lead them to take a seat in the pews. Francis’ deep insight is his recognition of the need for a theology of accompaniment. It is a new season, not fully in bloom, but well underway.

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