



Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

November 20, 2016

Readings

This week:

2 Samuel 5:1–3

Colossians 1:12–20

Luke 23:35–43

Next week:

Isaiah 2:1–5

Romans 13:11–14

Matthew 24:37–44

Psalm Today

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord. (*Psalm 122*)

Today's presider is Rev. Michael Marini.

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

Monday, November 21

TMC Spiritual Education Committee, 7:00 pm,
Thomas House Library

Thursday, November 24

Thanksgiving Day Mass at 9:30 at Our Lady of Rosary

From Thomas Merton

For some “faithful” — and for unbelievers too — “faith” seems to be a kind of drunkenness, an anesthetic, that keeps you from realizing and believing that anything can ever go wrong. Such faith can be immersed in a world of violence and make no objection: the violence is perfectly all right. It is quite normal — unless of course it happens to be exercised by Negroes. Then it must be put down instantly by superior force. The drunkenness of this kind of faith — whether in a religious message or merely in a political ideology — enables us to go through life without seeing that our own violence is a disaster and that the overwhelming force by which we seek to assert ourselves and our own self-interest may well be our ruin.

Is faith a narcotic dream in a world of heavily-armed robbers, or is it an awakening? Is faith a convenient nightmare in which we are attacked and obliged to destroy our attackers? What if we awaken to discover that *we* are the robbers, and our destruction comes from the root of hate in ourselves?

—*Faith and Violence*

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

Altar of Remembrance comes down Nov. 26:

The Altar of Remembrance will be taken down on Saturday, November 26, in preparation for the First Sunday of Advent on November 27. The pictures you have placed on the altar will be put in a box and placed in the church vestibule for you to pick up at your convenience.

Adopt-a-Family begins today:

Adopt a Family's 2016 Christmas Season begins today. Before and after the 8:45 Mass on Nov. 20 and 27, information and gift tags for students and families chosen from St. Elizabeth Seton School will be available. You may choose to purchase a child's or family's specific gift request or purchase a gift certificate from Target or a similar store for a child to purchase a second gift. We are suggesting a \$40 value per gift this year.



All gifts are to be wrapped, tagged and returned to the TMC table at church by Sunday, Dec. 4 or 11. Contact Barbara Kent 323-0879 with questions. Please stop by our table to pick up a tag. Merry Christmas to all TMC elves!!

Annual Christmas crèches December 3-7:

The LDS Church is having its annual crèche show at their church, 3865 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto, December 3-7 from noon to 9 p.m. each day.

This annual showing of art of the Christmas Season is a treasure for all, with 350 displays of nativity crèches from 50+ countries around the world and over 100 exhibitors of many faiths—some from our STA parishoners. The exhibit features a community service project, hands-on activities, a Children's Room with crafts and costumes, daily puppet shows and live holiday music. And admission is free.



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, 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.

"The Ewe" is coming February 18:

Have you become acquainted yet with the blog "Questions from a Ewe"? (questionsfromaewe.blogspot.com). The writer of this provocative series of reflections on the contemporary Catholic Church will be joining us for a presentation on Saturday, February 18, 2017, 10 am - 12 pm, at Mitchell Park Community Center in Palo Alto.

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

--TMC Spiritual Education Committee

Multifaith Thanksgiving Celebration Nov. 20:

Gather with others from our diverse faith communities for thanksgiving and healing—where love is never-ending. The location is First Church of Christ, Scientist, Sunday, November 20, 7:00 p.m., 3045 Cowper, Palo Alto

Keynote speaker is Rev. Floyd Thompkins, Director of the Center for Innovation in Ministry, San Francisco Theological Seminary, one of the most influential thinkers and creative doers in the entire Christian community.

The program includes a Call to Prayer from Our Many Faith Traditions, as well as Dance, Music, Choir and Refreshments.

Children are welcome!

A gratitude collection will be given to a local and global charity.

For more information contact:

Rev. Margaret Boles semfemmb@aol.com

Rabbi Shelley Lewis shellyj.lewis@gmail.com

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339

Bulletin: Kay Williams (Nov.20 & 27) kaywill@pacbell.net
Michelle Hogan (Dec 4 & 11) myhogan@comcast.net

Finance: Judy Creek, 493-5371, grannyjam2@gmail.com

Hospitality: Jim Davis, 328-2584

Liturgy: John Arnold, 325-1421, jsaoso@comcast.net
Sally Benson, 408-972-5843, sallymbenson@gmail.com

Membership: Kay Williams, 650-270-4188, kaywill@pacbell.net

Needs Net: Roberta Kehret, 650-494-1488, robkehr@yahoo.com

Adult Education: Jim Davis, 650-704-8002, Jim_Davis@pacbell.net
Mary Coady, 650-261-9155, coady_94025@yahoo.com

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

Catholic Campaign for Human Development:

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development is the national anti-poverty program of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, working to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ "... to bring good news to the poor ... release to captives ... sight to the blind, and let the oppressed go free." (Luke 4:18)

The Second Collection today supports this important program.

The belief that those who are directly affected by unjust systems and structures have the best insight into knowing how to change them is central to CCHD. CCHD works to break the cycle of poverty by helping low-income people participate in decisions that affect their lives, families and communities. CCHD offers a hand up, not a hand out.

CCHD has a complementary mission of educating on poverty and its causes. This strategy of education for justice and helping people who are poor speak and act for themselves reflects the mandate of the Scriptures and the principles of Catholic social teaching.

CCHD provides the Catholic faithful with concrete opportunities to live out the love of God and neighbor in ways that express our baptismal call and continuing Eucharistic transformation.

CCHD has compiled a poverty index from data found in the 2014 U.S. Census Bureau: In 2014, 47 million people lived in Poverty USA. That means the poverty rate for 2014 was 15%. The 2014 poverty rate was 2.3 percentage points higher than in 2007, the year before the 2008 recession. This is the fourth consecutive year that the number of people in poverty has remained unchanged from the previous year's poverty estimate.

Though the official census data gives seniors a 2014 poverty rate of only 10%, the Supplemental Poverty Measure, which accounts for expenses such as the rising costs of health care, raises the senior poverty rate to an astounding 14%.

In 2014, 21% of all children (15.5 million kids) lived in Poverty USA—that's about 1 in every 5 children.

In 2012, the National Center on Family Homelessness analyzed state-level data and found that nationwide, 1.6 million children experience homelessness in a year.

Luckily, there are programs that help. The National School Lunch Program provides low- or no-cost meals to impoverished children. In 2012 alone, the program served subsidized lunches to more than 31.6 million children—and has served 224 billion lunches since its founding in 1946.

Check out www.povertyusa.org for a fascinating poverty map. Compare poverty rates among all of the United States. You might be surprised to learn that states with the lowest poverty rate (below 11%) are Maryland, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont and Minnesota. California is in the 15-17% bracket with 11 other states. Those above 17% number 9 states, and the count stops there.

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Election reflection:

[By Jim McDermott, S.J., *America Magazine*, 11/11/16]

We have made this mess of an election. It's ours. What are we going to do about it?

There is a story about "Saturday Night Live" actor Chris Farley's time as a student at Marquette University ... Apparently one night he and some of his roommates went out and really tied one on... When they got home, Farley crashed hard. Meanwhile his roommates got some permanent marker and wrote on him, then followed up by wiping food all over him. Stuff like butter, potato chips, leftover pizza. (Because college students.)

The next morning when Farley got up and came out of his room everyone was waiting, anticipating his reaction. But Farley just poured himself a bowl of cereal and sat down with them to watch TV, like nothing had happened.

Before long his roommates started to get irritated—not only because he was not giving them what they wanted, but because he was still covered in all that food. It was dripping off of him. He stank of it. It was disgusting. So someone told him he needed to get up and take a shower. But he just looked at them and smiled.

"Oh no," he said. "You made me. You live with me."

I had been using that story as an analogy to electing Donald Trump. You elect the guy who has said and done the things he has said and done, you better be prepared to live in the America he creates.

But in the wash of emotion and confusion that was the day after the election it strikes me that maybe that story is actually not about electing Donald Trump, but about America, how we as a country have allowed large parts of our nation to become both more and more disenfranchised and more and more comfortable with prejudice and misinformation.

Some this week are arguing the election is a repudiation of "liberal elites" and their "arrogant dismissal of the common man." But to believe that is to ignore that much of what those "elite" voters fight for are things like justice for all and the protection of our weakest and most vulnerable. It is also to miss that Mr. Trump's election equally repudiates the nation's right.

It is the entirety of the establishment that has been condemned and what is perceived as their weasel-worded disinterest and/or just plain hostility toward

(Continued on page 4)

Book for the end of the Year of Mercy:

Mercy Matters: Opening yourself to the Life-giving Gift is not the kind of book I normally review because it is not the kind of book I normally read. ...It arrived just when I was thinking about the Year of Mercy and how this year, which closes on Sunday, may be a part of the renewal of the church.

Schmalz is a professor of religious studies at College of the Holy Cross, and his deep learning runs through the book. It consists of a series of personal accounts that could have been penned by anyone, but Schmalz's learning brings a deeper perspective than most of us could achieve...

Schmalz's opening chapter reflects upon several events in his last days before his decision to get sober. People in AA talk about the need to be "brutally honest" and he has mastered that need. He recalls getting drunk with a homeless man and his friend, and that he bought the booze, and that they drank in an empty lot. "The next day, I realized that alcohol wasn't exactly the universal solvent that could dissolve distinctions of race and class — after all, I woke up in a bed, with a blanket, and there was a roof over my head, even as terrible as I felt," he writes. "But maybe, I thought, just maybe I had performed an act of mercy, beyond simply buying the booze. I had shown the homeless that I cared, that I was willing to share. It was the mercy that mattered — not the uncomfortable fact that I couldn't remember anyone's name." Grace was stalking him.

Stories of sobriety — like stories of conversion — are all different, but they're all the same. They're stories of mercy — stories about love and hope entering into the seemingly most desperate situations after we finally surrender to ourselves and to God.

St. Augustine makes an appearance in this chapter. And, his mom. Schmalz tells us that, "St. Augustine's Confessions is often passed around in recovery circles just as it is in Catholic ones: if you're a Catholic in recovery — it's required reading." I didn't know that. He recalls the scene in which St. Monica goes down to the cellar for some more wine, and her maidservant calls her "Boozer!" Saint Monica never drank again. No wonder she is the patron saint of alcoholics. But Schmalz not only recalls the story, he explains the theology: St. Monica received " 'actual grace', a supernatural impulse that allows us to act, to respond to God's call." And, sometimes, it is a maidservant calling her mistress "Boozer!" that evidences that grace.

He closes the chapter with the observation, "I'm sure that someone was praying for me: I had reached a place where only prayers could find me." As I say, this is powerful writing, drawing theological insight from the circumstances of his life...

[Michael Sean Winters is *National Catholic Reporter* Washington columnist and a visiting fellow at Catholic University's Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies.]

Election (continued from page 3):

the concerns of many, many Americans. And not just white male working class Americans, either; as "Saturday Night Live" demonstrated so perceptively in its recent Black Jeopardy sketch, in many ways the insights and anxieties of Trump supporters are exactly the same as those of Black Lives Matter.

Over the course of a generation at least, we have allowed this mess, if not helped create to it. Now we have to live with it.

There is one further point to make. Long before the world had any concept of a representative democracy, an "election" was understood as a personal choice of long-term significance. Usually it referred to the action of the divine: God, Rem-Hotep or Our Lord Bob the Ever-Hungry Bovine would choose his people—that choice was his election, they his elect. And with that choice came a sense of responsibility on his part. Much as we think about the bonds of marriage, an election implied a commitment.

Even today, in a religious context, the term "election" has that layer; an "election" is a choice that a person makes to follow a certain path. It is a choice that entails one's personal commitment to a specific way of life.

In many ways our representative democracy has lost this sense of things. We have spent all this time and money arguing over who we as a country should "elect," it becomes easy to think our responsibility ends at that ballot box. Mr. Trump got elected, it is going to be awful and/or awesome (depending, I guess?); either way, there's little for us to do.

Especially in light of this election's clear expression of outrage about the status quo, maybe it is helpful today to consider our individual votes as having been not the culmination but just the beginning of our action, as the commitment we have now each made to the life we want for ourselves and our communities.

Social media is fun (and by "fun" I mean "crazy making"; at this point our entire culture desperately needs a parent to tell us to spend more time playing with our friends outside), but it's a distraction. If we voted the way we did because we want Muslims or refugees or whomever to feel welcomed and at home, then we should join groups that work to do that. If we voted as we did because we are fighting to get our country to value and protect life, then why not get involved in that issue?

An election is about putting not just our country, but ourselves on a path. We have all each made commitments. Now let's begin the work of seeing them through. #