



Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

January 1, 2017

Readings

This week:

Numbers 6:22–27

Galatians 4:4–7

Luke 2:16–21

Next week:

Isaiah 60:1–6

Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6

Matthew 2:1–12

Psalm Today

May God bless us in his mercy. (*Psalm 67*)

Today's presider is Msgr. 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

Wednesday, January 4, 5:15 p.m.

Wednesday, January 4, 7:30 p.m.

TMC SpeakOut Committee, TH Library

STA Site Committee, Thomas House Library

From Thomas Merton

To be truly Catholic is not merely to be correct according to an abstractly universal standard of truth, but also and above all to be able to enter into the problems and the joys of all, to understand all, to be all things to all men...

For myself, I am more and more convinced that my job is to clarify something of the tradition that lives in me, and in which I live: the tradition of wisdom and spirit that is found not only in Western Christendom but in Orthodoxy, and also, at last analogously, in Asia and in Islam. Man's sanity and balance and peace depend, I think, on his keeping alive a continuous sense of what has been valid in his past.

—*Confessions of a Guilty Bystander*, 1966

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

TMC seeking volunteer bookkeeper:



After many years of faithful service to the Thomas Merton Center community, Judy Creek has asked the Board to find another volunteer to shoulder her responsibilities as TMC's bookkeeper.

There are two parts to the bookkeeping job for TMC:

Deposits:

1. Pick up checks from TMC basket after Mass on Sundays and from Cambridge Ave. PO box (approx 2 times per week).
2. Make copies of checks and either mail to Wells Fargo or take to bank (approx 3 deposits per month). A small copier comes with the job.
3. There are approx 45 checks to be deposited every month.

Check writing:

1. Write checks to priest presiders, musicians and various vendors weekly and or monthly (approx 13 checks per month).
2. Get checks with envelopes ready for signatures—usually at Sunday Mass.
3. Copies of deposits and check register to TMC treasurer Mike McMahon at beginning of following month.

If you are interested, please contact Judy at (650) 493-5371, grannyjam2@gmail.com or Mike McMahon at (650) 493-7392, m-mcmahon@sbcglobal.net.

Adopt-A-Family report:

Once again the 8:45 Mass Community adopted 5 families of Seton School students for Christmas. Our generous members took tags for specifically requested gifts for 26 individuals in the families, and returned about 50 wrapped and tagged gifts.



The volunteers who delivered the gifts during the days before Christmas reported the delight that each family expressed at seeing the armloads of gifts. One mother arranged a secret meeting for her delivery so she could surprise her children for Christmas. Donors made possible Christmas dinners also. We were pleased to brighten the lives of these families this Christmas.

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.]

Quaker meeting for USA's future January 7:

Please consider joining "A Quaker Meeting Called with a Concern for the Future of our Country," 11:00 am, Saturday, January 7, 2017, Lytton Plaza, 202 University at Emerson, Palo Alto

It is a challenging time for Americans, and world citizens. Those who believe in nonviolence as a means to dialogue are especially concerned about the changes in our Federal Government, anticipating a time of extreme partisanship, ill-informed and intransigent government officials, a backward step in our country's tradition of talking loudly, but listening to each other. How can we bridge the political rifts that divide our country? Can we find new ways to speak with those who seek to divide us from each other, and so maintain, even strengthen, the bond that makes us all Americans?

The Religious Society of Friends, a traditional Peace Church, has no instant solutions, but offers to the community an opportunity to listen deeply and humbly to each other and to the Spirit which guides human affairs. For an hour, we will settle into the silence of worship as practiced by Quakers, wherein anyone moved by the Spirit may rise to speak. Silence follows each spoken message, to allow its full meaning to sink into our hearts.

Worship and Witness: In the political turmoil of late 17th Century England, it was not safe for divergent religious groups to meet except in secret. The Religious Society of Friends was different, gathering at known times in Meetinghouses that were open to the public. At times, Quaker meetings for worship attracted so many seekers they overflowed into the street

Today, while Quaker meetings for worship are still open to anyone, seldom are they held in the street. Yet, it is the silent waiting for the urging of the Spirit which is the foundation of all Friends' testimonies on Peace, Unity, Simplicity, Equality, Community, Integrity. Social action based on these testimonies is strengthened by arising from worshipful silence. The inner calm that grows within people engaged in worship as they act helps to overcome fear and doubt.

Palo Alto Friends Meeting <www.pafm.org>
co-sponsored by Multifaith Voices for Peace & Justice
<www.multifaithpeace.org>

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339
Bulletin: Kay Williams (Jan. 1 & 8) kaywill@pacbell.net
Michelle Hogan (Jan. 15 & 22.) 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

Patricia Markee at Day Worker Center:



Patricia Markee teaching ESL

STA Parishioner and TMC member Patricia Markee was recently featured in the Fall issue of the Day Worker Center of Mountain View newsletter:

“¿Como se llama?” With this basic question volunteer ESL (English as a Second Language) coordinator Patricia Markee begins the journey of finding out about a new class of English language learners. Each student’s answer, in English, helps Patricia gain a sense of the student’s experience in and knowledge of their new language. Once a week for 90 minutes, Patricia teaches up to 18 workers to read and speak English. ESL classes are mandatory for those looking for work at the Center. They help *compañeros* better negotiate the work world and more readily adapt to living in the U.S. Teaching ESL at the Day Worker Center comes with particular challenges. As new workers arrive, staff assign them to either a beginning or advanced class.

ESL is taught year-round, Monday through Friday. But with jobs being the top priority, work schedules may prevent students from attending class for several weeks in a row. So teachers must gear lessons to students with widely varying knowledge skills. Those who need extra help may receive tutoring in small groups, if the teacher has an assistant. Patricia compares this challenge to teaching in the one-room schoolhouse of yore.

Beyond teaching, in her role as coordinator Patricia chooses the students’ texts. She also helps to screen new ESL tutors, teaching assistants, and teachers. About the Center’s instructors, Patricia says that ultimately “María chooses teachers with heart.” According to Patricia, student turnover can make personal connections challenging; instructors may begin to feel isolated. To help overcome this, Patricia arranges regular meetings where instructors can discuss their challenges with one another. Although now retired, Patricia’s several careers as software engineer, dissertation editor for a local university, and credentialed ESL teacher of teens and adults gave her a rich, extensive background for this volunteer work teaching English to newcomers. Enthusiastic yet unassuming, this long-time volunteer claims she still “stumbles” in Spanish, even after several semesters of Spanish. But one thing is clear: Patricia embraces life-long learning — for herself, and for her students.

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.

(Winters, continued from page 4)

ple’s lives,” Debbie Mills, an Obamacare enrollee who voted for Trump, told Kliff. “I mean, what are you to do then if you cannot pay for insurance?”

It is impossible to calculate the degree to which Trump’s emergence onto the national stage first as a reality TV star affected people’s inclination to take him at his word, but surely the bipartisan admixture of politics and celebrity has blurred important lines in our culture.

And if Trump’s lack of concern for facticity was a product of his background in reality television, Democrats’ inability to communicate effectively has been hobbled by their conflation of politics and marketing.

Hillary Clinton, especially, seemed to have absorbed the norms of “media training” a little too much. Media training teaches you to stay on message, refuse to answer questions you do not want to answer, to keep from making a major blunder on tape. Over time, the dodging slides into an obvious lack of candor. Voters noticed and became far more willing to forgive Trump his frequent verbal missteps and deepen their distrust of Clinton.

The collapse of the neoliberal order is not a bad thing, but that does not mean it will be replaced by something better. The internal contradictions of neoliberalism, like those of communism, were bound to collapse upon themselves. But while neoliberalism betrayed the humane ideals it touted, at least it aspired to a humane vision. The danger is that its replacement will play instead to the darker sentiments of the human soul, and that Trump will pull off just enough news stories, like his negotiating with Caterpillar to save jobs in Indiana, to keep people convinced that his success warrants tolerating his flaws. The fact that Caterpillar still sent as many jobs to Mexico as Trump “saved” for Indiana will be lost in footnotes, and low-information voters don’t read footnotes.

As the year comes to a close, it is foolish to think Trump will not find a way to be “successful,” but it is equally foolish not to worry that his version of success will be morally vicious.

Our democracy is not as healthy as many of us thought. It is prone to the same right-wing populism that has been gaining ground in Europe.

Citizens identify as consumers first and foremost and, as Obama famously observed, they like “that new car smell.” There is no provision for a test drive in our constitutional order. The American people wanted change and they got it, but they got a lot more, much of it ugly, much of it dangerous. How Trump will manage the whirlwind he has ridden into office remains to be seen.

[Michael Sean Winters is NCR Washington columnist and a visiting fellow at Catholic University’s Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies.]

Americans wanted change, got it with Trump:

[By Michael Sean Winters | Dec. 28, 2016 | Distinctly Catholic, *National Catholic Reporter*]

(Part 1 of a three-part series looking back on the events of 2016)

The dominant fact of our nation's political life this year was the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States....Much ink has been spilled on analysis of Trump the man and the candidate. And it is true that his unconventional campaign warrants serious analysis, not least because time and time again, it seemed he had overstepped the bounds not only of campaign etiquette but of human decency in ways that would have disqualified any other candidate....

Trump won for a reason, a singular reason. While we in the media were focused on him, he was focused on his core message: He would bring change. Government was not only broken, but was fast breaking the country in its dysfunction, politicians didn't care about the people they were supposed to represent, indeed those politicians had betrayed America, and he alone could change it.

When he violated a norm, it confirmed his willingness to not play by the rules, and the rules, he assured us, were rigged....Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton touted her qualifications, which only reinforced the fact that she was the candidate of the establishment and the status quo.

Trump's core message of change affected two key groups of voters who proved decisive. To be sure, the vast majority of people who voted for Trump were Republicans and independents who lean Republican in every election. Both parties claim the allegiance of about 45-48 percent of the electorate. Democrats had hoped that enough highly educated, suburban Republicans, especially women, would be so revolted by Trump's misogyny and his affinity for alt-right racism that they would not support him. In the end, enough of them did support him that Clinton was unable to run up the large margins she needed in the suburbs.

This group of highly educated Republicans are plugged into the global economy in one way or another. The status quo has been reasonably good to them. But they may be conservative on social issues and worried about four more years of liberal court appointments and a Democratic attorney general making a federal case out of which bathroom transgender children use in local schools.

Some are small-business people who have borne the brunt of government regulations that President Barack Obama never even tried to rein in as Bill Clinton had done in the 1990s. ...They expressed concerns about Trump but, in the end, they voted for him, no doubt hoping that Republicans in Congress would serve as a mitigating force to keep him from doing anything too crazy.

I am sympathetic with people who hold different political calculations from my own, or who estimate values

differently from the way I do. But I still have a hard time forgiving this group of educated Republicans who should have known better. They have vested a narcissist with enormous discretionary power.

Indeed, they have risked the values they claim to hold dear by placing Trump in a custodial role over the party that has championed those values: Limited government, family values, free trade and a strong national defense are all threatened by this man's erratic and idiosyncratic behaviors....

The second group of voters who delivered the White House to Trump has received a great deal of attention since the election: white, blue-collar workers. The neo-liberal order has not been kind to them and they saw Clinton as a representative of that order, not without reason....These voters wondered why Clinton always talked about her plan to make college affordable but never said much about those kids who would not be going to college, their kids. They wondered why Obama lit up the White House in the colors of the rainbow flag when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage, and were hard-pressed to think of anything the president had done, even symbolically, to highlight their lives.

Democrats had grown detached from large swaths of rural America. In one of the best analyses of the Democrats' trouncing in rural parts, Dan Balz quoted Katherine Cramer of the University of Wisconsin: "I would say it's not speaking to people," Cramer explained. "There's so much respect that has to be conveyed to people before they start listening to the message."

"From the causal point of view, symbolism appears as a sort of short-circuit of thought," wrote the great Dutch historian Johan Huizinga. "Instead of looking for the relation between two things by following the hidden detours of their causal connections, thought makes a leap and discovers their relation not in a connection of cause and effects, but in a connection of signification." Clinton and Obama both spoke about the circumstances of the Rust Belt, when they spoke about it at all, in anti-septic, clinical terms: globalization, demographics, the free flow of capital. Trump said he would make America great again, evoking memories of good jobs at the mill, and these people remember when their America was certainly greater than it is now. And there were a lot of them.

The most stunning statistic about the 2016 election is this: Of the 676 counties that voted for Obama twice, 209 flipped and voted for Trump....

Many commentators on the left disparage these blue-collar workers, noting that they are "low-information voters." In one sense, this is true. Sarah Kliff, at Vox, went to Kentucky after the election, a state that has benefited hugely from Obamacare yet voted overwhelmingly for Trump. "I guess I thought that, you know, he would not do this, he would not take health care away knowing that it would affect so many peo-

(Winters, continued on page 3)