



22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 28, 2016

Readings

This week:

Sirach 3:17–18, 20, 28–29

Hebrews 12:18–19, 22–24a

Luke 14:1, 7–14

Next week:

Wisdom 9:13–18b

Philemon 9–10, 12–17

Luke 14:25–33

Psalm Today

God, in your goodness, you have made [a home,] a home for the poor. (*Psalm 68*)

Today's presider is Fr. Jerry Brown, S.S.

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

No TMC meetings this week.

From Thomas Merton

If we are afraid of being alone, afraid of silence, it is perhaps because of our secret despair of inner reconciliation. If we have no hope of being at peace with ourselves in our own personal loneliness and silence, we will never be able to face ourselves at all: we will keep running and never stop. And this flight from the self is, as the Swiss philosopher Max Picard pointed out, a "flight from God." After all, it is in the depths of conscience that God speaks, and if we refuse to open up inside and look into those depths, we also refuse to confront the invisible God who is present within us. This refusal is a partial admission that we do not want God to be God any more than we want ourselves to be our true selves.

Just as we have a superficial, external mask which we put together with words and actions that do not fully represent all that is in us, so even believers deal with a God who is made up of words, feelings, reassuring slogans, and this is less the God of faith than the product of religious and social routine. Such a "god" can become a substitute for the truth of the invisible God of faith, and though this comforting image may seem real to us, he is really a kind of idol. His chief function is to protect us against a deep encounter with our true inner self and with the true God.

—*Love and Living*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Ballot propositions unpacked October 2:

This is a banner year for California voters! Take this chance to get your head around the propositions on the California ballot on Sunday, October 2, when the League of Women Voters will present an overview at 10:00 a.m. in the Thomas House basement hall, immediately following the 8:45 Mass. Coffee and doughnuts will be served in the basement, so there's no excuse to miss this opportunity to educate yourself about the pros and cons of the propositions.

Of particular note is the contest between Proposition 62 (abolish the death penalty, replacing it with life sentence without possibility of parole) and Proposition 66 (speed up the delivery of the death penalty). A quick reference right up front: **YES on 62, NO on 66.** You'll learn the difference at the Oct. 2 meeting. (Full disclosure: the League of Women Voters of California has taken a position in support of Proposition 62, as have the Catholic bishops of California.)

But there are other propositions that require your attention, too. So come to the Thomas House basement hall on Sunday, Oct. 2 at 10:00 am, and settle in with coffee for an illuminating presentation and discussion.

TMC bulletins online:

Go to www.thomasmerton.org to find copies of the Sunday TMC bulletins. Thanks to Jim Davis, the TMC website is up and running in an inviting and clear format—and has a place for the bulletin.

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339
Bulletin: Kay Williams (Aug. 28, Sept. 18) kaywill@pacbell.net
Michelle Hogan (Sept 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
SpeakOut: Diana Diamond, 650-323-4787, dianaldiamond@gmail.com

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.]

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.

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!*

CROP Hunger Walk October 2:

Please join in again for this year's CROP Hunger Walk, Sunday, October 2, Burgess Park, Menlo Park. Last year, \$22,000 was raised to fight hunger, making a huge difference around the world and here on the Peninsula in places where it has mattered most. Let's go for a new record this year with the event on October 2nd.

Register by going to "cropwalk2016.com" to "join" a team or "start" a team!

Here's the schedule for this year's event:

1:00 p.m.: Arrive for sign-up, food (more and better!), fellowship, great music, silent auction and quizzes to test your knowledge of global hunger and poverty issues

1:45 p.m.: Walk, saunter, or run to make a difference. One mile, two miles, or whatever you can do.

After walk: When you return, there will be more opportunity to eat and visit.

We all read the daily headlines about people impacted from war, flooding, forced migration and other tragedies, and we wonder: what can we do on an individual basis that would even matter? We all want to do something to help, but exactly what? Well, participating in CROP Walk 2016 is a simple and great way to help. Let your friends and family near and far know how important this is. Tell them you are walking—or running—and ask them to join you on your team, here or wherever they are that day, or if they can't join to donate in your name.

Let them also know that 25% of the money raised will be used locally, right here in East Palo Alto, to support the effective work of the Ecumenical Hunger Program (www.ehpcare.org).

The rest of the funds we raise together support Church World Service's work with people suffering because of war, natural disasters, or economic stagnation in their country. It is nearly unimaginable what people, just like us – loving, hard working, striving people – are going through. But we can imagine doing something to change that. Coming together as a community can make a real difference.

COMMUNITY FORUM

I d e a s O p i n i o n s R e f l e c t i o n s C o n c e r n s

August is Muslim Appreciation and Awareness Month:

To all Thomas Merton Center Members and all readers of this TMC Bulletin—Greetings:

We cannot help but be aware of the wave of vindictiveness and xenophobia that is sweeping our country during this primary and election campaign for President of the United States. We believe this is not who we are as citizens of this nation. Nor does the Assembly of the State of California believe this. In an act of civic courage and celebration of our diverse and rich heritages, our legislators formulated and passed the following resolution that we urge all members of our respective communities to accept and to share with others. Our two communities - Anjuman-e-Jamali (San Jose), and The Thomas Merton Center and St. Thomas Aquinas Parish of the Catholic Diocese of San Jose, initiated a coming together (with a community luncheon) earlier this year. Again we come together to support this California State Proclamation.

Zoaib Rangwala, Anjuman-e-Jamali Secretary

Richard Placone, TMC Member

August Declared Muslim Appreciation and Awareness Month in California

SACRAMENTO: California has stayed ahead of many states in the past as it has celebrated “Muslim Day” at the State Capitol before. But now August in its entirety has been declared “Muslim Appreciation and Awareness Month” as was witnessed by many in the area community here on 08.01/2016 when House Resolution No. 59 was unanimously adopted.

Part of the resolution reads:

“WHEREAS, Freedom of religion holds distinction as a cherished right and a foundational value upon which the laws and ethics of the United States are based; and WHEREAS, Enriched by the unparalleled diversity of its residents, the State of California takes great pride in supporting individual religious freedoms and is strengthened by the many varied religious, political, and cultural traditions of its diverse population, including those Americans who practice Islam; and

WHEREAS, The history of Islam in this country dates back to before its founding, originating with African slaves who brought their Muslim beliefs with them to the Americas and who later contributed in numerous ways to the founding of the nation, and there are today millions of Muslim Americans, both immigrant and native-born, of diverse backgrounds and beliefs; and

WHEREAS, The United States benefits greatly from the expertise, patriotism, and humanitarianism of Muslim Americans, who represent 10 percent of America’s physicians, helping to heal hundreds of thousands of Americans each year; who have long distinguished themselves as courageous and dedicated

members of the United States Armed Forces, fighting and sacrificing in every major war from the American Revolutionary War to present-day conflicts; and who regularly contribute to the health and vitality of their communities, giving food to the hungry, sheltering the needy, and providing inexpensive or free health services, among other community services; and

WHEREAS, The earliest Muslim immigrants to California mostly worked on farms and made significant contributions to early agricultural efforts, and since the abolition of the national quota on immigration in 1965 by the passage of the Hart-Celler Act, more and more Muslims have migrated to California, with approximately one million Muslim Americans currently residing in communities throughout the state, the highest number in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Similarly, there are currently more than 240 mosques in California, more than any other state in the nation, and the people of California and the greater United States benefit from the several large Muslim religious, educational, charitable, advocacy, and empowerment organizations that operate within the state, as well as from the countless prominent Muslim community leaders who distinguish themselves professionally as business owners, law professionals, doctors, engineers, teachers, and farmers, among numerous other valued professions; and

WHEREAS, Although the majority of Muslim Americans within California and throughout the nation strive to promote peace and understanding between all faiths, identities, and nationalities while upholding those values and principles that define the American people, they have nonetheless been forced to endure harassment, assault, and discrimination since the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, and during the year 2015 alone, there were approximately 174 reported incidents of anti-Muslim violence and vandalism in the United States. It is therefore appropriate to acknowledge and promote awareness of the myriad invaluable contributions of Muslim Americans in California and across the country, and extend to them the respect and camaraderie every American deserves; now, therefore, be it.”

With all the rhetoric leading up to the upcoming Presidential Elections in November, it is nice to witness a positive move such as this one. What HR 59 contains is language that can apply to just about every group which has contributed and continues to contribute positively to the success of the great state of California.

For Muslim-Americans whose patriotism has been questioned because of the violent acts of a small minority, this resolution offers a strong message: Islamophobia is counterproductive and Muslims should keep contributing to make our state and country better because they belong here!

Just peace better than just war:

[Excerpts from *NCR Online* post, 8/24/16, by Eli S. McCarthy, director of justice and peace for the Conference of Major Superiors of Men. He also teaches at Georgetown University in justice and peace studies. McCarthy is the author of *Becoming Nonviolent Peacemakers: A Virtue Ethic for Catholic Social Teaching and U.S. Policy.*]

In April, I was called to be a participant at a conference in Rome with about 80 other people from around the world, many living in violent conflict zones. The Non-violence and Just Peace conference met with the goals of deepening Catholic understanding about nonviolence, enhancing our commitment to developing non-violent practices, and considering shifting to a new moral framework for situations of conflict. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International co-sponsored and participated in the event.

...There were attendees who valued just war theory, some who saw reason for violent force in policing or peacekeeping, some who were committed to nonviolent resistance to injustice, and some who identified as pacifists. What drew us together was our openness to understanding and commitment to Gospel nonviolence in the Catholic church...

The vision emerging from the conference is a new and bold commitment to Jesus' nonviolence -- its centrality to the heart of the Gospel and its centrality to the life and mission of the church. **One thing that flows from this is to let go of using and officially teaching "just war theory" as a Catholic approach...**

The focus of our appeal was to "further Catholic understanding and practice of active nonviolence on the road to just peace." We make several points, including calling on Pope Francis to write an encyclical on nonviolence and "no longer use or teach 'just war theory.'"

We also call for the "Catholic Church to develop and consider shifting to a Just Peace approach based on Gospel nonviolence. A Just Peace approach offers a vision and an ethic to build peace as well as to prevent, defuse, and to heal the damage of violent conflict."...

It was notable at the conference that all the speakers from violent conflict zones were mostly from the global South and, as far as I could tell, were supportive of the Catholic church focusing on nonviolent strategies and no longer using the just war theory....

If the Catholic church were to recommit to the centrality of Gospel nonviolence and even develop a just peace approach to conflict,...it would enable us to more effectively witness and draw people to Christ, to develop more effective nonviolent practices to transform conflict, and to better draw the broader society, including politicians, toward less violence and more sustainable peace.

We spend so much talent and treasure preparing for what we think might be a "just war" that we have almost no resources available for nonviolent prevention,

protection and community-based programs that could help heal the root causes of war. We spend little, if any, time trying to imagine how to humanize or illuminate the dignity of our enemies, which is not only a Gospel mandate but may be an essential step in overcoming even extremist violence.

So much response to the conference has focused on just war and not on how the Catholic church can and should develop more Gospel nonviolence in our education, sacramental life, preaching, seminaries, advocacy, agencies and practices. This response illustrates how maintaining the just war theory in the church too often obstructs our attention, imagination and even will to commit to more nonviolent conflict transformation.

Governments and the U.N. might still resort to violent force, but the appeal at the conference was for the Catholic church to shift to deeper nonviolence and just peace, and away from using just war theory. International law and states will still maintain just war norms for now. However, if the Catholic church were to make this shift, then it will likely liberate us to develop more nonviolent practices in a way that would better limit war (compared to even restrictive just war theory), as well as even help draw society away from war.

As some have brought up, there are atrocity situations such as the Holocaust and today's Islamic State. Don't we need a just war theory for these cases? These norms will remain in international law for now.

However, it's important to note that nonviolent resistance did work against the Nazis in Norway and Denmark, the Rosenstrasse women protest, and with Fr. Maximilian Kolbe in the concentration camp. We also know that the use of violence in World War II included massive killing of civilians by both sides of the conflict, the first atomic bomb, and a nuclear arms race, i.e. the Cold War and many proxy wars.

...Research has shown that over the last 100 years or so, nonviolent resistance has been twice as effective as violent resistance and at least 10 times more likely to lead to durable democracies. For example, serious nonviolent options have been underutilized with ISIS.

Thus, when a large-scale lethal threat is near, the church -- as the body of Christ -- should urgently draw on just peace analysis, advocacy, intervention and healing. If governments or the U.N. decide, based on international law, for military action in such genuine atrocity cases, the church's role is not about condemning those persons who took such action.

Instead, the church's role is to clearly name the atrocities and the response of violent action as a tragedy, a failure on the way of just peace, as well as inconsistent with human dignity and a culture of human rights for all. The church's role is to keep a just peace approach center in all such cases and to advocate, even in the midst of violence, for just peace actions that will transform the violence. #