



# 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 4, 2016

## Readings

*This week:*

Wisdom 9:13-18b

Philemon 9-10, 12-17

Luke 14:25-33

*Next week:*

Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Luke 15:1-32

## Psalm

In ev'ry age, O Lord, you have been our refuge. (*Psalm 90*)

## Today

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. 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

Thursday, September 8, 7:30 pm

TMC Board, Thomas House

### From Thomas Merton

The requirements of a work to be done can be understood as the will of God. If I am supposed to hoe a garden or make a table, then I will be obeying God if I am true to the task I am performing. To do the work carefully and well, with love and respect for the nature of my task and with due attention to its purpose, is to unite myself to God's will in my work. In this way I become His instrument. He works through me. When I act as His instrument my labor cannot become an obstacle to contemplation, even though it may temporarily so occupy my mind that I cannot engage in it while I am actually doing my job. Yet my work itself will purify and pacify my mind and dispose me for contemplation.

—*New Seeds of Contemplation*

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 FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## **Gardening day on September 17:**

Gather your gardening gloves and come Saturday, September 17 for the gardening work day at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 9:00 am till 12:00 noon. It's time again for spreading compost and mulch around the plants in the STA garden.



Beverages and caloric refreshment will be provided. This is a great opportunity to bring grandchildren (and their parents, too) to help, because those young bodies

are flexible and strong and can move quickly. The older ones among us really appreciate the youthful assist!

Contact Vicki Sullivan to volunteer: (650) 327-5339, vickisullivan@comcast.net.

## **Multifaith peace walk and picnic:**

Join together with brothers and sisters of many backgrounds and spiritual traditions as we say "no" to fear and "yes" to friendship by walking together in south Palo Alto to show the way to community and peace.

We will gather on Sunday, September 11, at 1:30 pm at Congregation Etyz Chaim at 4161 Alma Street for a brief service at 2:00 pm, and then walk down Alma, then Charleston, then Middlefield, stopping at Our Lady of the Rosary for another brief service. After the walk we will gather at Mitchell Park for the annual 9/11 Peace Picnic hosted by American Muslim Voice. Shuttle buses are being planned to take folks from OLR and/or Mitchell Park back to their cars.

More details are available at [www.multifaithpeace.org](http://www.multifaithpeace.org).

## **October 2—LWV on ballot propositions:**

Sunday, October 2, the League of Women Voters will present an overview of the ballot propositions at 10:00 am 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). You'll learn the difference at the Oct. 2 meeting. But there are other propositions that require your attention, too. So come and settle in with coffee for an illuminating presentation and discussion.

## **A day to lift up workers:**

### ***(Rather than lay down our labors)***

*Abridged from an article by Michael Caine, September 1, 2011, at [oldfirstucc.org](http://oldfirstucc.org) (Old First Reformed United Church of Christ).*

The first Labor Day in the United States was observed on September 5, 1882, by the Central Labor Union of New York. It became a national holiday twelve years later, following the deaths of a number of workers at the hands of U.S. marshals and the military during the Pullman Strike, signed into law a mere 6 days after the end of the strike.

... Labor Day as a day off of work, a national day of rest, has always seemed oxymoronic to me. Like observing Martin Luther King's national holiday with sales and shopping. Why not, instead, focus and act for workers' justice and racial justice respectively? Since the labor movement is weak in our current difficult economic times, it is hard for me to imagine either any broad-based recognition of our dependence on the common worker or demonstration for worker's justice. Still, perhaps, as Christians, we ought to make room for reflection...



## **LABOR DAY**

It's not just an extra Sabbath day God created because we work so hard the rest of the time! Between our last picnics and beach visits of the summer, could you find a moment to reflect on the religious meaning of work?

Do you even think about what you do to make a living through the lens of your faith? How do your hours and labors on the job serve and witness to God's love? Or do they stand in opposition of God's will and the reign of God Jesus preached? Can you find room at work for your commitments as a Christian: compassion, justice, responsibility, love? On the job, do you seek to empower those who have no power and to help those who are in need? Or approaching the question from another angle, do you ever think how much of your life and comfort depend on

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Please keep bringing food this summer. 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 your food donations, and with your dollars too!

# COMMUNITY NOTES

*News Announcements Requests*

## ***A day to lift up workers, continued:***

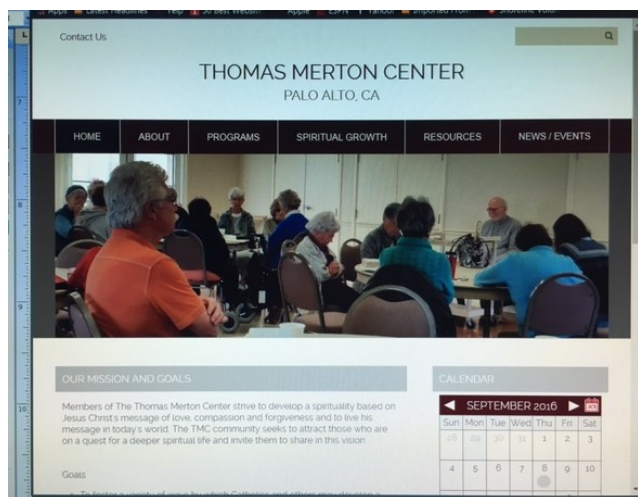
the labor of others—untold workers hardly recognized who do difficult work for less than just wages? Farm-workers and the food on our tables. The folks who clean up public places or after we have vacated hotel rooms. Police who protect us and firemen who rescue us. Medical personnel who expose themselves to infectious diseases to treat us. People who work nights and holidays to keep services we count on operating. And the foot soldiers in our country's endless wars.

As well, in these difficult economic times, I think our Christian duty includes praying for all the people looking for work. And how people are no longer even counted in the unemployment statistics because they have given up altogether searching or hoping for work?

Church is not just what we do for a few hours on Sunday mornings. And it's never narrowly only about our own needs. Instead, it's more than what we do when we are together. It's about the whole world around us. Church is who we are, how we are, and how the world meets us everywhere and all the time.

Have a blessed day remembering workers.

## ***TMC website redesigned:***



Home page of the new Thomas Merton Center website.

Thanks to Jim Davis, our webmaster extraordinaire, the Thomas Merton community website has been redesigned. It will now include PDFs of the weekly bulletin, as well as news from other groups in the community. Be sure to check it out at [www.thomasmerton.org](http://www.thomasmerton.org). And if you have an item that you'd like to see included in the website, contact Jim at [Jim\\_Davis@pacbell.net](mailto:Jim_Davis@pacbell.net).

## ***Mother Teresa canonized today:***

*Abridged from an article by Tom Gallagher, a regular contributor to NCR, at [globalsistersreport.org](http://globalsistersreport.org).*

Mother Teresa once said, "If I ever become a saint, I will surely be one of 'darkness.' I will continually be absent from Heaven—to light the light of those in darkness on earth." [Today,] September 4, Mother Teresa will indeed be made a saint by Pope Francis at a ceremony at the Vatican. Hundreds of thousands from all corners of the world are expected to attend the event.

...When a priest or woman religious is on a pathway to sainthood, he or she becomes part of the larger church, and of the world, and it falls to the religious order to take steps to manage the heritage of that holy person. In late 2003, I received a telephone call from my friend Jim Towey, a . . . longtime friend of Mother Teresa's who often assisted her and her religious community with various legal matters. Due to his federal government position, Towey had to step back from active involvement with the Missionaries of Charity. He asked if I would help Missionaries of Charity Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, an advocate for the cause of canonization, to consider ways to . . . enable the promotion of, and devotion to, Mother Teresa. As a lawyer, I . . . was happy to do so. . . .

The great affection so many people around the world have for Mother Teresa prompted more than a few to write books about her. . . . To commemorate the current Jubilee Year of Mercy called by Pope Francis and the canonization, the Mother Teresa Center, in collaboration with Image, just published *A Call to Mercy: Hearts to Love, Hands to Serve*, based on unpublished material from Mother Teresa.

With the world filled with so much darkness, St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata will surely be continually absent from heaven.



A statue of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata holding a child is seen in a prayer garden at Cure of Ars Church in Merrick, N.Y. (CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz)

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, Dick Jackman, Francois 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.

## **Labor Day statement from USCCB:**

*Abridged from an article by Michael O'Loughlin, August 29, 2016, at americamagazine.org.*

Good jobs and decent wages lead to stronger families, which lead to peaceful and stable societies, and Catholics have an obligation to provide assistance to those struggling financially while simultaneously urging their lawmakers to enact just employment laws. That's the message U.S. bishops are promulgating in their annual Labor Day statement, in which they also bemoan empty political promises and the lack of opportunity for middle and low-income Americans.

"Millions of families still find themselves living in poverty, unable to work their way out," says the letter, written by Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami, in anticipation of the holiday. A lack of opportunity, it continues, has contributed to the breakdown of family life, often at the hands of divorce and substance abuse.

...With the presidential election now about 12 weeks away, the letter takes aim at politicians for trying "to divide as a means to gain support. . . . Our leaders must never use anxiety as a means to manipulate persons in desperate situations, or to pit one group of persons against another for political gain," it continues. "For our dynamics to change, we must replace fear with a fuller vision that can be powerfully supported by our faith." The letter makes just passing reference to labor unions, calling them "imperfect" but conceding that they "remain an essential part of the effort, and people of faith and goodwill can be powerful leaven to ensure that these groups, so important in society, continue to keep human dignity at the heart of their efforts." . . . The number of people in private and public-sector unions has plummeted since the 1980s. In 1983, one in five U.S. workers belonged to a union. By 2014, that number had fallen to about one in 10. . . .

Archbishop Wenski's letter highlights the church's teachings on solidarity and subsidiarity, the notion that solutions to societal problems should begin at the local level, laying out steps Catholics can take to support better labor opportunities. At the local level, that means offering those struggling with finding employment "food, money, counsel, friendship, spiritual support or other forms of love and kindness."

The letter also reminds employers to treat workers fairly. "If you are an employer, you are called to respect the dignity of your workers through a just wage and working conditions that allow for a secure family life," it says. . . . Last year, Archbishop Wenski and Sister Donna Markham, president of Catholic Charities USA, wrote to federal lawmakers urging an increase in the federal minimum wage, which currently stands at \$7.25 per hour.

## **Put yourself in the shoes of a refugee:**

*Abridged from an article by Tony Magliano, August 15, 2016, at ncronline.org. Magliano, an internationally syndicated columnist on peace and justice issues, is a columnist for National Catholic Reporter.*

Imagine, right now at this very moment you and your loved ones need to run for your lives! With hardly more than the clothes on your backs, you and your family must flee from an invading armed force. Or imagine your quick exodus is due to the fact that gang members have threatened to kill your family because your teenage son or grandson has refused to join their murderous drug gang. Or imagine that because of your religion, race, nationality, political belief or membership in a particular social group you and your family are being persecuted. So you decide that, despite the very dangerous risks involved, the only reasonable hope you and your family have is to move quickly toward somewhere, anywhere, where life is safer than where you are now.

That's exactly what more than 65 million desperate people have done—greater than the combined population of Canada, New Zealand and Australia. On average 34,000 people per day were forced to flee from their homes in 2015; that's four times more than a decade earlier. And there appears to be no end in sight to this nightmare. Last year well over 3 million fellow human beings sought emergency asylum in foreign countries, while more than 40 million people were displaced within their own country. . . . The reason for the increasingly huge numbers of displaced persons is partly long-term ongoing conflicts like Somalia and Afghanistan. Also, new and reignited armed conflicts are occurring more often. With Syria being the largest and worst example, recent wars in Yemen, Burundi, Ukraine, Central African Republic and South Sudan have forced millions to flee.

... Followers of Jesus cannot ignore all this suffering. We must not allow ourselves to be part of what Pope Francis calls a "globalization of indifference." In similar sentiments, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon said, "We are facing the biggest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. Above all, this is not just a crisis of numbers; it is also a crisis of solidarity." For Catholics there should never be a crisis of solidarity. For solidarity is one of the essential principles of Catholic social teaching. The opening words of *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II's constitution on the church in the modern world, beautifully reveal what being in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable means for the Christian: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of [people] of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ." . . .

[See full article for how you can help.]