



The Epiphany of the Lord

January 8, 2017

Readings

This week:

Isaiah 60:1–6

Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6

Matthew 2:1–12

Next week:

Isaiah 49:3, 5–6

Corinthians 1:1–3

John 1:29–34

Psalm Today

Lord, ev'ry nation on earth will adore you. (*Psalm 72*)

Today's presider is Rev. Xavier Lavagetto, O.P.

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, January 9, 6:00 pm	TMC Liturgy Committee, remove altar decorations
Monday, January 9, 7:00 pm	TMC Liturgy Committee, Thomas House Library
Thursday, January 12, 7:30 pm	TMC Board meeting, Thomas House Library

From Thomas Merton

It can be said that ecumenism in its deepest and most living form has been born in the trenches and barracks of wars and concentration camps. Certainly the rich flowering of ecumenism in Germany was due in large part to the fact that pastors and priests were thrown together in destitution of the camps, worked and suffered together in the greatest deprivation, without any chance, humanly speaking, to accomplish anything. Yet it was here, by God's grace, that wonderful things were indeed accomplished and a new understanding, blessed by a new charity and a new humility, came to light.

The brotherhood and understanding which have brought to life such miraculous new hopes and fruitful efforts toward unity were certainly born of poverty, suffering, humiliation, degradation. Let us never forget that the ecumenical movement in its very origins is sealed with the sign of poverty.

—*The Poorer Means: A Meditation on Ways to Unity*, 1965

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 Book Club to resume meeting Jan. 15:



The Merton Center Book Club is rising up again under the leadership of Bob Foley. We are looking at resuming our 3rd Sunday meetings following the 8:45 Mass—gathering in the Thomas House library with coffee and doughnuts in hand. Our book choices are usually arrived at by consensus, with members suggesting books they know or would like to know. Past books have been *The Seven Storey Mountain*, by Thomas Merton, *Essential Writings of Edith Stein*, some encyclicals by Pope Francis, Pope John XXIII biography, etc. If you would be interested in joining the group, please contact Bob Foley and ask him to put you on the notifications list: bob.foley@gmail.com, 650-483-8988.

Catholic-Muslim prayer service January 16:

On Monday, January 1—MLK Holiday—members of the Catholic community of the San Jose Diocese, led by our Bishop, Patrick J. McGrath, will join with the Muslim community of the greater San Jose area in a joint prayer service to show solidarity with the people of the Muslim community. This will be an effort to make it clear to all that the Catholics of Santa Clara County stand with our brothers and sisters of the Muslim faith, in what has become a difficult time for them in our country. Bishop McGrath and various Imams of the several Mosques will lead the faithful of both communities in prayers common to both faiths. Following the service, there will be an opportunity for all to gather together for refreshments and to get to know one another.

The event will be held at the Saba Islamic Center, located at 4415 Fortran Court, San Jose. This is in northeast San Jose, on North First Street, right off Highway 237 heading East toward Fremont. The plan is for those Catholics interested to meet at Our Lady Star of the Sea (1385 Michigan Ave., Alviso) for a procession led by Bishop McGrath to the Saba Mosque (25-minute walk). The time for the procession to start is around 12:00 noon. Those not wishing to join the procession may go directly to the Mosque.

Please mark your calendars to participate in this important event. More detailed information will be made available in the TMC Sunday Bulletin, January 15.

This event is being announced by Bishop McGrath and has been coordinated by Fr. Jon Pedigo at the Diocese of San Jose. For more information you may call or e-mail Richard Placone: 650-493-7217, rplacone@sbcglobal.net.

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.

Kenya Help hosts Julia Gatwiri January 15:



Julia Gatwiri at the *Mji Wa Neema* reunion in August 2016 with the oldest resident, Cyrus, who is soon to complete 5 years of pharmacy school.

Julia Gatwiri, matron for *Mji Wa Neema* children's home (where Margo McAuliffe stays in Kenya) will be "at home" at Margo's house Sunday January 15, 2-4 pm. Please come meet her and find out more about the children we have been supporting since 2005. She will show slides of the kids and talk about where they are now. RSVP to Margo: margo@kenyahelp.us or 650-322-0821.

"The Ewe" is coming February 18:

Plans for a presentation and discussion with "The Ewe", a perceptive and provocative commentator on the present-day Catholic Church, are proceeding. The TMC Spiritual Education Committee has arranged for the event on Saturday, February 18, from 10:00 am till noon at Mitchell Park Community Center, 3700 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto.

"The Ewe" writes an anonymous blog (www.questionsfromaewe.blogspot.com) on topics that provoke thought and criticism of the Church that she loves. She holds a master's degree in theology from Loyola (Master of Pastoral Studies, M.P.S.). She is not employed by the Catholic Church but is an executive consultant for a large corporation. (She will be introduced by name in person, but we recommend a look at her blogs before the presentation.)

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, Fr. John Hester, 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.]

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Consider the immigrants during National Migration Week:

National Migration Week 2017, an initiative of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, will take place January 8-14. This year's theme is "Creating a Culture of Encounter." ...

With over 65 million people forcibly displaced from their homes globally, the world is increasingly affected by migration. National Migration Week offers a time to educate Catholic communities about migration and to come together to encounter immigrants and refugees in parishes, dioceses, and communities....

The observance of National Migration Week began over 25 years ago by the U.S. bishops to give Catholics an opportunity to honor and learn about the diverse communities of the Church and the work that the Church undertakes to serve immigrants and refugees. The week serves as both a time for prayer and action to highlight the contributions of immigrants and vulnerable populations coming to the United States.

In the face of statements made by President-elect Trump, it is important to understand some lesser-known facts about immigration and the U.S. economy. Certain premises should be set forth: first, the economic impact of immigrants varies from state-to-state, and according to immigrants' education level, age, and skills; second, the magnitude of unauthorized immigration on the U.S. economy is relatively small (.03% of GDP, in one study) and thus should not be overstated either positively or negatively; and third, determining the net economic impact of immigrants depends in part on the timeframe used to measure it (short-term or long-term).

Immigrants tend to complement the native workforce, rather than compete with it.

- The percentage of Americans without a high school diploma has fallen—from 50% in the 1960's to 7% today—and immigrants are filling the jobs vacated by increasingly educated Americans.
- Unemployment in border states remained below the national average despite a decade of high-immigration levels (1998-2008).
- Immigrant workers (authorized and unauthorized) boost the wages of 90% of native U.S. workers.
- Studies show that legalization would likely improve wages for all workers.

Immigrants contribute to the Social Security System.

- Studies show that unauthorized immigrants provide a net gain of \$7 billion to the Social Security system each year.

Immigrants boost state revenues.

- Reports from several states such as Texas show that unauthorized immigrants contribute as much as \$1.5 billion to state revenues. Legalization would force unscrupulous employers to contribute payroll taxes for their immigrant workers and thus further increase state revenues.

Immigrants do not drain the economy.

- Unauthorized immigrants are ineligible for most state

and federal public benefits; even legal immigrants are ineligible for many benefits during their first five years in the United States.

- The net fiscal impact of unauthorized immigrants on the U.S. economy is "close enough to zero to essentially be a wash." Estimates range from an average net positive impact of \$80,000 per immigrant to an average net negative impact of \$-31,000 per immigrant, depending on educational level.

Immigrant workers help to produce lower cost goods for U.S. consumers.

- Many unauthorized immigrants are low-wage employees whose hard work has helped produce more affordable goods for all U.S. consumers. Deporting these workers will lead to labor shortages that will increase the costs of U.S. goods.

Immigrants are consumers too.

- Immigrants are also consumers themselves, which increases demand for the goods and services of U.S. industries.

Immigrants are needed to grow the tax base for an aging workforce

- Immigrants are needed to grow the labor force to support the retiring generation.
- Immigrant workers are suffering alongside native workers during this recession.
- Growth in the foreign-born population began slowing following the onset of the 2007 recession.
- Immigrant workers are just as vulnerable during recessions as native workers due to their lower levels of skill and education, their relative youth, and their overrepresentation in the most vulnerable U.S. industries.
- Unemployment rates for foreign-born Latinos have exceeded that of non-hispanic workers during the current recession..

Legalization of immigrants would help stimulate the U.S. economy

- Legalization may increase short-term incomes, create jobs through increased consumption, boost net tax-revenues among low-wage workers, and expand the middle class.
- The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), which contained a broad legalization program, produced wage and consumption gains, enhanced tax-revenue collection, and increased educational, home, and small business investments by newly legalized families, even in the midst of a recession.

Legalization would help create new job opportunities for Americans.

- Increased legal and illegal immigration in the past fifteen years has not increased the number of people living in poverty in the United States. In fact, the number of people living in poverty decreased during this period as U.S. economic growth expanded, and native-born Americans attained higher levels of education and new job skills. Legalization combined with a new worker program would likely continue this trend, creating additional middle-class job opportunities for native-born workers.

—All data from U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website

Fr. Ron Rolheiser's favorite books of 2016:

So much of life, particularly today, constitutes an unconscious conspiracy against reading. Lack of time, the pressure of our jobs, and electronic technology, among other things, are more and more putting books out of reach and out of mind. There is never enough time to read. The upside of this is that when I do find time to pick up a book this becomes a precious, cherished time. And so I try to pick books that I read carefully: I read reviews, listen to colleagues, and keep track of my favorite authors. I also try to make sure that my reading diet, each year, includes some spiritual books (including at least one historical classic), some biographies, some novels, and some essays.

Among the books that I read this year, these are the ones that touched me. I cannot promise that they will touch you, but each of them left me with something.

Among books in spirituality

Gil Bailie, *God's Gamble, The Gravitational Power of Crucified Love*. Bailie again takes up Rene Girard's anthropology to shed some new light on how the cross of Christ is the most monumental moral and religious event in history. The text is very dense and (truthfully) a tough read, but its insights are exceptional.

Heather King, *Shirt of Flame, A Year with Saint Therese of Lisieux*. This book will make for a very good, private retreat for anyone struggling with an addiction or obsession, or just with mediocrity in his or her spiritual life.

Christophe Lebreton, *Born From the Gaze of God, The Tibhirine Journal of Martyr Monk, 1993-1996*. This is the diary of one of the Trappist monks who was martyred in Algeria in 1996. It is the intimate journal of a young man which chronicles how he moves from paralyzing fear to the strength for martyrdom.

Kathleen Dowling Singh, two books: *The Grace in Dying* and *The Grace in Aging*. According to Singh, the process of aging and dying is exquisitely calibrated to bring us into the realm of spirit. In these two remarkable books, she traces this out with the depth that, outside of the great classical mystics, I have not seen.

Christine M. Bochen, Editor, *The Way of Mercy*. This is a series of remarkable essays on mercy, including some by Pope Francis and Walter Kasper.

The Cloud of Unknowing. I finally had the chance to study this classic in some depth and it is, no doubt, the signature book on contemplation centering prayer.

Among biographies and essays:

Marilynne Robinson, *The Givenness of Things, Essays*. These essays are dense, deep, robustly sane, and are Marilynne Robinson, the gifted novelist, at her religious best.

Michael N. McGregor, *Pure Act, The Uncommon Life of Robert Lax*. This is the biography of the man who was Thomas Merton's closest soul-friend, lived out his life as a secular monk, and who carried his solitude at a very high and noble level. It will help re-awaken your idealism.

Fernando Cardenal, *Faith and Joy, Memoirs of a Revolutionary Priest*. This is a great read about an exceptional man, a priest and a Jesuit, who played a leading role in Daniel Ortega's government in Nicaragua and was commanded by John Paul to step down. It is a private journal that tells the other side of what much of history has one-sidedly recorded about the struggles for justice in Latin America.

Daniel Berrigan, *Essential Writings*, Edited by John Dear. Daniel Berrigan died in late April of this year. His writings set the compass for what it means to be a Christian prophet, and this is an excellent selection of his writings.

Three books that deal with facing aging and dying:

Michael Paul Gallagher, *Into Extra Time, Living Through the Final Stages of Cancer and Jottings along the Way*. A man of faith and letters, Gallagher shares the journal he kept during the last nine months of his life, when he already knew he was dying.

Katie Roiphe, *The Violet Hour, Great Writers at the End*. How did a number of great writers, including Sigmund Freud, John Updike and Susan Sontag face terminal illness? This book tells us how.

Paul Kalanithi, *When Breath Becomes Air*. This is a remarkable journal of a young doctor facing a terminal diagnosis that documents his courage, faith, and insight.

Three novels that I recommend:

Paula Hawkins, *The Girl on the Train*. This didn't make for a great movie, but the book is a page-turner.

Ian McEwan, *Nutshell* and **Edna O'Brien**, *The Little Red Chairs*. The pedigree of these two authors alone is enough of a recommendation, but neither will disappoint you here.

A wildcard:

Kenneth Rolheiser, *Dreamland and Soulscapes, A Prairie Love Story*. Full disclosure, Kenneth is my brother and I lived through many of the stories he shares, so there is admittedly a huge bias here. But the book delivers on its title and will give you a more realistic sense of what it was like to grow up in a Little House on the Prairies.

Happy reading!

[Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I. (born 1947 in Cactus Lake, Saskatchewan), is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He received his doctorate at the University of Louvain, and is a member of the Catholic Theological Society of America, the Canadian Theological Society, and the Religious Studies Association of Alberta. Before taking his current position, he taught for many years at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, Alberta. He is a specialist in the fields of spirituality and systematic theology. Rolheiser has a regular column in the *Catholic Herald* which is featured in approximately 100 newspapers in five different countries.]