



33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 19, 2017

Readings

This week:

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

Matthew 25:14-20

Next week:

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

Matthew 25:31-46

Psalm

Blessed are those who fear the Lord. (*Psalm 128*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Kevin Ballard.

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

Monday, November 20, 7:00 pm

Spiritual Education, Thomas House

Thursday, November 23

Thanksgiving Day



From Thomas Merton

The saints are what they are, not because their sanctity makes them admirable to others, but because the gift of sainthood makes it possible for them to admire everybody else. It gives them a clarity of compassion that can find good in the most terrible criminals. It delivers them from the burden of judging others, condemning others. It teaches them to bring the good out of others by compassion, mercy and pardon. We become saints not by conviction that we are better than sinners but by the realization that we are one of them, and that all together we need the mercy of God.

—*Peacemaking: Day by Day*

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

Today is CCHD Sunday:

The national collection for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) takes place today. The theme of this year's collection is *CCHD: Working on the Margins*.

"In the gospel of Luke, Jesus told his disciples, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring



in here the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame.' This is the mission of CCHD" said Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, California, chairman of the U.S.

Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

"CCHD works on the margins, alongside our brothers and sisters to bring new hope, build community, and address the root causes of poverty," said Bishop Soto. "With its focus on long-term solutions, CCHD transforms the lives of families and communities in need, bringing them to the table of God's Kingdom of jus-

continued on page 4

Workshop on Thomas Merton:

Brother Don Bisson, FMS, will be leading a conference on *Thomas Merton: A Prophet for Our Times* on January 13-14 at Mercy Center in Burlingame. Bisson, a Marist brother based in New York, has graduate degrees in liturgy, spirituality, and transpersonal psychology, and a D. Min. from the Pacific School of Religion in the area of Spiritual Direction and Jungian Psychology, and he is widely respected as a commentator and workshop leader on the interrelationship of spirituality and psychology. He will study Thomas Merton's writings, messages, and prophetic vision for our times.



You can register at www.mercy-center.org or by calling (650) 340-7474. Registration deadline is January 6, 2018. Cost is \$195 for overnight guests or \$120 for commuters. Bisson is also leading two other retreats at Mercy Center: *Men's Issues in Spiritual Direction*, on Saturday, January 6, and *Dreamworks as Spiritual Practice* on Sunday, January 7.

Adopt-a-Family is back:

As Christmas approaches, we begin our TMC Christmas Adopt-a-Family project. At our table outside, we have tags for specific gifts or gift certificates for members of several Seton families in need. Please come by and pick up a tag or two for a gift of about \$40 to help to make someone's Christmas special. This is not connected to the parish-wide toy collection—the tree we usually have in the back of the church. Thank you!

—Barbara Kent

Food closet needs your help:

During the month of November, we ask you to be especially generous in your giving to our food collection program. Since most of the people we help are homeless, we ask for foods that are portable and highly nutritious: hearty soups or chili in flip-top cans, Vienna sausage, boxes of crackers packed in 'small stacks,' fruit cups, granola bars, juice pouches, and small bottles of water.

Fr. Ballard leads morning retreat on December 2:

The TMC Spiritual Education Committee is sponsoring a morning retreat with Fr. Kevin Ballard, SJ, on Saturday, December 2, 9:00 am-12:00 noon, at St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center.



Fr. Ballard will lead us in a consideration of Pope Francis's encyclical, *The Joy of the Gospel*, with the emphasis on "joy." So come prepared for a few short hours of joyous prayer, laughter, and community.

Coffee and morning wake-up snacks will be provided. There

is no fee for this event, but donations are always gratefully received.

Send a condolence card:

We want the congregants of First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas to know our prayers and hearts are with them in the senseless killings of their families and friends in their place of worship this past Sunday.

If you care to join our effort to send condolences and hope to this church, please place your card in the collection basket on Sunday. The Human Concerns Committee will mail them together in one package from our parish.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Private conscience and the Church:

By Fr. John Catoir, JCD, a canon lawyer and a priest of the Diocese of Paterson, New Jersey. From Catholic San Francisco, November 9, 2017; submitted by Maureen Locke.

The late Bishop Fulton Sheen explained that there are two kinds of truths: “Outer truths, which we master, like the distance of the sun from the earth; and inner truths, which master us; for example: God is merciful to the penitent. Inner truths affect a person’s destiny, like a vocational calling; they are matters of conscience.” In 1965, the Second Vatican Council defined conscience as “the most secret core and sanctuary of the person, where alone with God, in one’s innermost self, each one perceives the voice of God.” Now consider this, if a couple, after much prayer and sincere reflection, considered themselves to be truly married in the eyes of God, but many others considered them to be living in sin, would you judge them to be sinners? Or would you give them the benefit of the doubt? Pope Francis once said, “Who am I to judge,” and he disturbed a lot of people. The Church has always taught the primacy of conscience. The law is the remote norm of morality, while the individual conscience is considered the proximate norm. This traditional teaching of moral theology has certain consequences; for instance, a law does not bind in conscience until the individual knows it exists, and until he or she accepts it as objectively true and morally binding. There is such a thing as licit dissent. . . . In doubtful matters, Catholics should be guided by the teaching authority of the Church, which is referred to as the Magisterium. What exactly does that mean? At the 1991 workshop for the hierarchy, theologian Avery Dulles, SJ, who later became a Cardinal, explained it this way. “The Magisterium is one, but only one informant of conscience. In matters of individual conscience Catholics have the right to examine all available information in forming their conscience.” This teaching is not new. There has always been an emphasis on God’s mercy in the teaching of the Church. Jesus said, “Go and learn what this means, I desire mercy, not sacrifice”(Matthew 9:13). . . . Pope Francis has been emphasizing mercy quite a bit. To

continued on page 4

Please remember in your prayers this week: Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François 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.

Prayer as both gift and task:

Abridged from an article by Susan Rose Francois, a member of the Congregation Leadership Team for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and a Bernardin scholar at Catholic Theological Union. From ncronline.org.

Prayer is getting a bit of a bum rap these days, at least when it is tagged on to the end of the platitude most often employed in the face of senseless disaster and heart-wrenching tragedy—“thoughts and prayers.” In the wake of the avalanche of natural and human-caused disasters over the past few weeks, the U.S. news and social media have been filled with “thoughts and prayers.” Thoughts and prayers for the victims of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Juan, Maria and Nate. Thoughts and prayers in response to the devastation wreaked by fires in the Columbia River Gorge and now the Napa Valley. Thoughts and prayers for the innocent lives lost in Las Vegas to gun violence. There also has been more than a bit of critique of the efficacy and true intentions behind this catch phrase. When politicians whose campaigns have been well-funded by the gun lobby make public statements promising their thoughts and prayers in the face of the latest mass shooting, one is left wondering what it is exactly that they are thinking and praying about.

. . . Clearly, thoughts and prayers are not enough in response to times such as these, but I hope (and pray!) this does not lead us to dismiss the transformative power of prayer. You see, I firmly believe that offering thoughts and prayers is a natural and honest response to tragedy, grounded in our vulnerability as a human community. It gives us an opportunity to pause, reflect and tap into some power beyond ourselves. Sharing our thoughts and prayers with people of good will, no matter their faith or creed, draws us together and counters the isolating effects of violence and suffering.

. . . When my mother passed away, I could no longer pray. This was a dry time for me spiritually, and yet also a deeply transformative one. Simply put, I was very angry at God. I found solace in the Psalms, especially the ones with a lot of detailed and juicy complaining and questioning, the angrier the better. One day, a wise priest friend of mine helped me to realize that anger is a very intimate emotion. In my sheer anger with God, I grew closer to the source of everything that is good. This was pure gift, and it moved me to action.

. . . Perhaps the questions we need to ask ourselves honestly are these: Are we present to God and others through the heartbreak and sorrow? . . . We can pray to be transformed, so that our prayer leads to action, while our action leads us to pray.

Litany for Thanksgiving:

The following litany reflects Pope Francis's concern for our common home and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Together, let us give thanks to God for our common home.

For Creation and all its blessings, we give thanks, O Lord.

For water that runs clear, for water that quenches our thirst, for water that cleans our bodies, clothes, and homes, for water that irrigates our crops, for water that falls as a blessing from the heavens: we give thanks, O Lord.

For the seas that cover our earthly home, for the variety of fish that still swim in the oceans, for the beauty of the whales and dolphins, for the coral reefs and ocean plants that still grow, for the majesty of the ocean swells and waves: we give thanks, O Lord.

For the land and the soil that provide our food, for the land on which our homes are built, for the land that offers shelter to humans and all created beings, for the land that offers us the beauty of forest and mountain, for the land that is a gift we must treasure and protect: we give thanks, O Lord.

For Pope Francis's call and challenge to us to restore and protect Creation, for all the efforts to build sustainable ways of life. For the concern of the United Nations to promote sustainable development for peoples in poverty: we give thanks, O Lord.

For all the gifts we have been given that we strive to share in solidarity to build the global common good, for the persons and the communities that nurture and support us in this work: we give thanks, O Lord.

For Creation and all its blessings: we give thanks, O Lord.

—Education for Justice

Private conscience and the Church, continued:

some, he seems to be breaking the rules. The truth is, he has been manifesting the Spirit of Jesus, who excoriated the Pharisees of old. Here's what Jesus said, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you will not lift a finger to help them" (Luke 11:46). The Pope's canonical critics demand greater rigidity. Are they wise? I think not. In view of the fact that Jesus issued this command: "Judge not that you be not judged," wouldn't it make more sense if these papal critics calmed down, and left the matter of judging souls to God. Divine Mercy is something we're all going to need one day. Better to be safe than sorry. May the Lord be your strength and your joy.

Today is CCHD Sunday:

tice, love and peace."

Examples of CCHD-funded groups include Urban Tree Connection, which works with low-income communities to develop local gardening projects. Urban Tree Connection Coop has turned vacant land in Haddington, Pennsylvania, into space for food production, teaching low-income residents how to grow and sell food. These projects not only give residents access to nutritious foods but they also create an opportunity for people to develop leadership skills and build community bonds.

With a grant from CCHD, the Parish Peace Project in Chicago aims to address the continuing violence in Latino neighborhoods and the large number of struggling Latino youth and young adults. This project, a collaboration between 15 parishes and the Office of Young Adult Ministry at the Archdiocese of Chicago, works with those caught up in the criminal justice system, brings support services to schools, as well as providing mental and medical health services to the undocumented. By connecting pastoral ministry, restorative justice work, and community organizing, the Parish Peace Project prepares young at-risk Latino men and women to build safer and stronger neighborhoods in Chicago.

CCHD carries out Jesus' mission of mercy. For over 40 years, CCHD has been the national anti-poverty program of the USCCB working to break the cycle of poverty in the United States and educate on poverty and its causes. The Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development allocates grants from funds received via the national collection each year. This national collection is the primary source of funding the CCHD's anti-poverty grants and education programs working to provide lasting solutions for the estimated 46 million people who live in poverty in the United States. Twenty-five percent of funds collected remain in each diocese to support local anti-poverty projects.

More information about the Catholic Campaign for Human Development is available at www.povertyusa.org. Other resources can be found at www.usccb.org/cchd/collection.

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, 327-5339
Bulletin: Michelle Hogan (November 19 and 26; December 3), 468-3386
Kay Williams (December 10 and 17), 679-9015
Finance: Helena Wee, 520-7556
Hospitality: Jim Davis, 328-2584
Liturgy: John Arnold, 325-1421, jsaoso@comcast.net;
Sally Benson, (408) 972-5843, red5@svpal.org
Needs Net: Roberta Kehret, 494-1488, robkehr@yahoo.com
Spiritual Education: Mary Coady, 261-9155, Jim Davis, 328-2584