



17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 30, 2017

Readings

This week:

1 Kings 3:5, 7–12

Romans 8:28–30

Matthew 13:44–52

Next week:

Daniel 7:9–10, 13–14

2 Peter 1:16–19

Matthew 17:1–9

Psalm

Lord, I love your commands. (*Psalm 119*)

Today

Today's presider is Rev. Larry Percell.

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, August 2, 5:30 p.m. TMC SpeakOut Committee, Thomas House Library
Wednesday, August 2, 7:30 p.m. STA Site Committee, Thomas House Library

From Thomas Merton

When I pray for peace I pray God to pacify not only the Russians and the Chinese but above all my own nation and myself. When I pray for peace I pray to be protected not only from the Reds but also from the folly and blindness of my own country. When I pray for peace, I pray not only that the enemies of my country may cease to want war, but above all that my own country will cease to do the things that make war inevitable. In other words, when I pray for peace I am not just praying that the Russians will give up without a struggle and let us have our own way. I am praying that both we and the Russians may somehow be restored to sanity and learn how to work out our problems, as best we can, together, instead of preparing for global suicide....

If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed — but hate these things *in yourself*, not in another.

—*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 NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Pivotal players in Catholicism begins July 31:

Who are the “pivotal players” in our Church? Explore the lives of six of the most significant people in the life of our Church: men and women whose friendship with Christ transformed not only their lives but also the world.

Invest 90 minutes a week this summer in a continuation of the *Catholicism* series, the groundbreaking and visually stunning documentary films created and hosted by Bishop Robert Barron.

When: Monday evenings beginning July 31 (Aug. 4, 11, 18 & 25, Sept. 11) - 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Where: Our Lady of the Rosary Hall

Questions: Contact Susan Olsen in the Faith For-

Prayer of an Unknown Confederate Soldier:

The "Prayer of an unknown soldier" is a well known prayer found on the body of an anonymous Confederate soldier during the American Civil War. Fr. Lavagetto quoted it in his sermon on July 23.

I asked God for strength that I might achieve
I was made weak, that I might learn humility to obey.

I asked for health, that I might do great things.
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.

I asked for riches, that I might be happy.
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.

I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men.
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life.
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing I asked for - but everything I hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.

I am among all men, most richly blessed!

—*WikiChristian*

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Wayne Cummings, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, 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 in adjacent column.]

Request from St. Vincent de Paul Conference:



Should you, or someone you know, be planning to stay in a hotel or motel, kindly consider bringing back unused small bottles of shampoo, lotion and soap for those without. Place in the recepta-

cle in your church vestibule along with needed non-perishable foods. Remember we need these items year around. Thank you for your generosity.

TMC bulletins online:

The TMC website awaits your perusal. Go to **www.thomasmerton.org** to find copies of the Sunday TMC bulletins, notices of events, and background on the Merton Center. Web master Jim Davis awaits your submissions: email them to **jim_davis@pacbell.net**.

TMC donation envelopes today:



Please use the envelope enclosed in this bulletin to make your monthly contribution to the support of the Thomas Merton Center. Your dollars make possible the sponsorship of the 8:45 Sunday Mass, monthly contributions to Seton School (\$1,000) and the Ecumenical Hunger Program (\$40), spiritual education talks, retreats, and the publication of this bulletin. Lay-led, self-sustaining, self-generating—this is TMC. Thanks to all who contribute.

Today is Nametag Sunday:

Pick up a nametag today when you come into church—there is a table at the entrance. Community is built when we can call each other by name. The Communion ministers also appreciate being able call you by name when they offer you the Eucharist.

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.

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339
Bulletin: Kay Williams (July 30 & Aug. 6) kaywill@pacbell.net
Michelle Hogan (Aug. 13 & 20) myhogan@comcast.net
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COMMUNITY FORUM

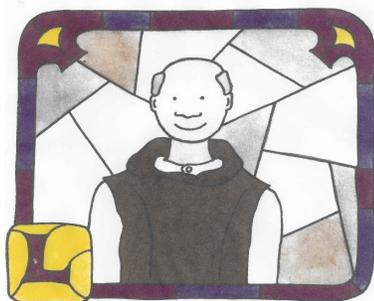
Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Thoughts on folly:

Folly is a more dangerous enemy to the good than malice. You can protect against malice, you can unmask it or prevent it by force. Malice always contains the seeds of its own destruction, for it always makes men uncomfortable, if nothing worse. There is no defense against folly. Neither protests nor force are of any avail against it, and it is never amenable to reason. If facts contradict personal prejudices, there is no need to believe them, and if they are undeniable, they can simply be pushed aside as exceptions. Thus the fool, as compared with the scoundrel, is invariably self-complacent. And he can easily become dangerous, for it does not take much to make him aggressive.... The fool can often be stubborn, but this must not mislead us into thinking he is independent. One feels, somehow, especially in conversation with him, that it is impossible to talk to the man himself, to talk to him personally. Instead, one is confronted with a series of slogans, watchwords, and the like, which have acquired power over him.

[Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Translated by Reginald Fuller. 1953: Macmillan. Paperback edition, 1962. (pages 22-23) Bonhoeffer, a German and a Lutheran theologian and pastor, wrote these words when he was imprisoned for plotting against Hitler. He was executed in 1945.]

Book review: The ABCs of Thomas Merton



Subtitled “A Monk at the Heart of the World,” this picture book by Gregory and Elizabeth Ryan, published by Paraclete Press in April 2017, is targeted toward

young readers (age 5-9), parents, grandparents, teachers, and catechists, who will enjoy learning about the major events in Thomas Merton's life and the choices he made along the way to become the world's most famous monk and hermit.

The playful ABCs format used in this book will help children to remember what they are learning about Thomas Merton and the Christian life in general. With childlike simplicity, the book creates an open and contemplative mood for the child and grown-up sharing in the reading experience.

Death penalty abolishment — next steps:

It appears as though an initiative to abolish the death penalty will not be sought in California in 2020. The major obstacle may be the funds required, reported to be in excess of \$3 million, to get the measure certified for the ballot. While it is hoped this will not remain as an obstacle, alternatives should be considered and pursued in the interim. One such alternative is to request the Governor of California to commute the sentences of inmates on death row. This request was the subject of a letter from The Thomas Merton Center Board of Directors, and the SpeakOut Committee, to Governor Brown, dated January 20, 2017. (The letter may be viewed on the TMC website.)

One such alternative is to request the Governor of California to commute the sentences of inmates on death row.

The subject of commutation was brought to mind again last month when the Governor of Virginia, Terry McAuliffe, also a Catholic, was requested to commute the sentence of an individual on death row. The Governor refused; the execution occurred on July 6th. To its credit, the Virginia Catholic Conference did release a statement “...timed for...the execution,” reaffirming the Church's opposition to the death penalty. (See *National Catholic Reporter*, July 7, 2017)

Clearly, the continued issuance of statements by conferences and members of the episcopacy across the nation against the death penalty is not enough. More aggressive and direct action must be pursued. Non-confrontational engagement should be encouraged by the Catholic Conference with Governor Brown, a Catholic, now and not await executions to begin in California, which be accelerated as a result of the passage of Proposition 66. In fact, Death Penalty Focus reported this week that “...20 inmates have exhausted their appeals and, if executions are allowed to resume in the next few months, could all soon be killed by the state of California if we do not act.” Governor Brown must be urged to “preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words.”

—Henry P. Organ,
Member of the TMC SpeakOut Committee;
Former Member of The TMC Board of Directors

A sample entry:

“**L** is for Louis. When Merton became a monk, he changed his name from Thomas to Louis because from that day on, he would be a ‘new man.’ The other monks called him Father Louis. The younger monks, whom he taught, nicknamed him ‘Uncle Louie.’”

—The book is available from Amazon.

There goes the neighborhood:

[By Phyllis Zagano, *National Catholic Reporter*, 7/22/17]

In recent weeks, the United States withdrew from the Paris climate agreement and an iceberg the size of Delaware broke off from Antarctica. As one penguin said to another, "There goes the neighborhood."

Funny? Not.

Maybe everybody's summer reading should include *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter "On Care for our Common Home."

That common home would be Earth.

Despite its annoying English translation — Earth is "she" rather than "it" — the recommendations of *Laudato Si'* could be enough for us to moderate the air conditioner, if not turn it off. Along with the document, we can recite both the causes and effects of environmental sins: "The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life."

We know about the problems, yet daily we collaborate in the ruination of the planet. Our highly mobile throwaway culture needs more heating and cooling than ever before. We want the newest, latest, brightest and best thing on the market. We want to move faster and farther in more comfort, by land, sea and air. We want what we want and we want it now.

Fossil fuels, fertilizers and fracking damage the planet. Greenhouse gasses damage the planet. Oil spills and waste runoff damage the planet. Yet not enough is happening to change the trajectory of the end game we are so dangerously playing.

Even so, the world's leaders seem to be getting it — 195 countries signed on to the Paris Agreement. The signers included China, India and the United States, which collectively produce as much as half of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. While President Trump famously withdrew from the agreement, that cannot take effect for some time. The United States' prior ratification stands until Nov. 4, 2020, one day

after the next presidential Election Day. Things might be different then.

Also, by then three non-signers, Nicaragua, Syria, and the Holy See, might find ways to sign on. Nicaragua said it would go it alone, complaining about no punishment mechanism for offenders; Syria's warfare got in the way; and, in 2015, the Holy See said it would sign after it becomes a member of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. That has not happened. It takes a while for things to get from the Vatican in Rome to the Holy See Mission to the United Nations in New York. The Paris Agreement closed for signature on April 21, 2017.

The real reasons behind the United States' withdrawal from the agreement is anybody's guess. The agreement is aimed at limiting global warming and these months in the Northern Hemisphere might encourage folks — especially those who live in Washington, D.C. — to truly believe Earth's temperature is rising, weather systems are changing, and dirty air is not very conducive to healthy life of any kind.

Meanwhile, beyond the D.C. Beltway, in Antarctica, the ice shelf called "Larsen C" plunked a trillion tons of ice into the ever-warmer Southern Ocean. The newly named iceberg "A-68," about 2,300 square miles big, is floating north.

Did one thing cause the other? Did global warming cause a shrinking polar ice cap? And, after all, who cares? Scientists say it will take another 80 or 90 years for the seas to rise three feet.

Hello? Three feet. That means most coastal settlements will disappear by the end of the century. And, excluding the residents of exclusive beach front communities in affluent nations, the most seriously impacted persons will be the poor who depend on ocean waters for food, climate control and transport.

We can talk all we want about solar panels and rain barrels, but the fact is that most of the developed world is doing little or nothing to help Earth recover from its injuries. Unless we bring about real initiatives, unless we invest in robust plans to cool and clean the planet, we risk the kind of destruction American writer Cormac McCarthy warned about in *The Road*. And the destruction, the devastation, will begin — is already beginning — for the least members of the human family.

The day he was elected, Pope Francis sat next to Franciscan Cardinal Cláudio Hummes, who leaned over and said "do not forget the poor." He has not. Have we?

[Phyllis Zagano is senior research associate-in-residence at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y. Her books include *Women Deacons: Past, Present, Future*