



# 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 13, 2017

## Readings

*This week:*

1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a

Romans 9:1-5

Matthew 14:22-33

*Next week:*

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

Matthew 15:21-28

## Psalm

Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation. (*Psalm 85*)

## Today

Today's presider is Fr. Jack Izzo.

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, August 14, 7:00 pm

Liturgy Committee, Thomas House

## From Thomas Merton

That God should assume Mary into heaven is not just a glorification of a "Mother Goddess." Quite the contrary, it is the expression of the divine love for humanity, and a very special manifestation of God's respect for His creatures, His desire to do honor to all beings . . . If Mary is believed to be assumed into heaven, it is because we too are one day, by the grace of God, to dwell where she is. If human nature is glorified in her, it is because God desires it to be glorified in us too, and it is for this reason that His Son, taking flesh, came into the world. . . . It is because she is, of all the saints, the most perfectly poor and the most perfectly hidden, . . . that she can most fully communicate to the rest of us the grace of the infinitely selfless God. And we will most truly possess Him when we have emptied ourselves and become poor and hidden as she is, resembling Him by resembling her. And all our sanctity depends on her maternal love. The ones she desires to share the joy of her own poverty and simplicity, the ones whom she wills to be hidden as she is hidden, are the ones who share her closeness to God.

—[www.catholic.org/clife/prayers/merton.php](http://www.catholic.org/clife/prayers/merton.php)

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

### Where do we get the Marian dogmas?

*Tuesday is the Feast of the Assumption, which is a Holy Day of Obligation. By John Switzer, Associate Professor of Theology at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. Published at www.uscatholic.org, July 20, 2010.*

Although the Roman Catholic dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption of Mary are relatively new (1854 and 1950, respectively), the pious attitudes that generated these promulgations are ancient.

Scholars of early Christianity are in agreement that interest in the mother of Jesus was mostly initiated by the need to clarify the church's teachings about the nature of Christ, his relationship with God, and the salvation Christ accomplished.



Through Mary the fullness of Christ's genuine humanity was guaranteed, in opposition to those who argued that Jesus only appeared to be human. As christology continued to develop, new insights were drawn from St.

Paul's understanding of Christ as the New Adam who completes and perfects creation (1 Cor. 15). A natural correlation was seen between Jesus and Mary, with the latter being understood as the New Eve by second-century theologians like St. Justin Martyr and St. Irenaeus of Lyons. While some early teachers understood Mary as less than perfect, even arguing that she could be ambitious and doubtful, others argued for her sanctification or consecration to God even prior to her birth. Similar ideas abounded for St. John the Baptist, whose conception was celebrated as a feast even before that of Mary.

Doctrinal development in the West, supported by pious fervor, eventually led to Mary's conception being promulgated as "immaculate" by Pope Pius IX in 1854. The intention was to signify that she had been preserved from all stain of sin (the Latin word for stain being *macula*) by a unique and singular act of God, based upon the redemptive merits of Christ's future. In the Roman Catholic Church, the liturgical feast of Mary's conception, celebrated on December 8th, became the celebration of her "immaculate conception." Mary is considered sinless in the Orthodox Church as well, though her conception is not described as immaculate because of Eastern hesitancy concerning Western ideas about original sin.

The belief in Mary's assumption into heaven probably

### Friday Fish Fest continues:

All are welcome to the STA Friday Fish Fest on Friday, August 18, at 6:00 pm at the Thomas House (adjacent to St. Thomas Aquinas Church) at 745 Waverley. Come



prepared to enjoy fish and chips, tasty Asian coleslaw, beer and wine in an informal setting, getting to know STA Mass attendees and others from Our Lady of the Rosary and St. Albert's (nametags make it easy to strike up a conver-

sation). Sponsored by the STA Site Committee, a \$5 donation is appreciated but not required. You are welcome to bring a dish or dessert to share. RSVP to Helen Baumann, (650) 327-9236 or hbbbaumann@aol.com (we want to have enough food for all)!

### Support our kids:

The Ecumenical Hunger Program (EHP), in East Palo Alto since 1975, assists people through immediate crises and to help them regain stability and independence. It provides food, clothing, furniture, household essentials, support, and advocacy. At present, it needs new shoes and other school supplies for children in that community, many of whom are students at St. Elizabeth Seton School. You may contact EHP at (650) 323-7781 or go to the website at ehpcare.org for information and donation information.



evolved from the tendency in early Christianity to describe her life in ways similar to that of her son. By the fifth century the end of her life was celebrated in various places in a feast of her dormition, or "falling asleep." In an interesting parallel to Jesus, Thomas the apostle doubts her passing until seeing her empty tomb, from which she has been assumed into glory. Eastern Christians tend to think of her assumption as occurring after her passing, while Western Christians usually understand her passing and assumption as a unified reality.

In 1950 the dogma of the Assumption was declared by Pope Pius XII as a singular gift to Mary and as an anticipation of the general resurrection of believers. Perhaps it is best understood as a dogma of hope extended to all Christians who strive to be faithful to Christ and who embrace his resurrection as their own. The final chapter of *Lumen Gentium* describes Mary as the most faithful disciple of Jesus. By extension, her fate represents our own longing for life without end.

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## **Good news despite what you've heard:**

*Abridged from an article by Nicholas Kristof, July 1, 2017, at nytimes.com.*

Cheer up: Despite the gloom, the world truly is becoming a better place. Indeed, 2017 is likely to be the best year in the history of humanity. . . . Perhaps the optimism doesn't feel right. You're alarmed by President Trump (or Nancy Pelosi), terrorism and the risk of rising seas, if we're not first incinerated by North Korean nukes. Those are good reasons for concern, but remember that for most of history humans agonized over something more elemental: Will my children survive?

Just since 1990, more than 100 million children's lives have been saved through vaccinations and improved nutrition and medical care. They're no longer dying of malaria, diarrhea or unpleasant causes like having one's intestines blocked by wriggling worms. . . . Nine out of 10 Americans say in polls that global poverty has been staying the same or worsening. So let's correct the record. There has been a stunning decline in extreme poverty, defined as less than about \$2 per person per day, adjusted for inflation. For most of history, probably more than 90% of the world population lived in extreme poverty, plunging to fewer than 10% today.

Every day, another 250,000 people graduate from extreme poverty, according to World Bank figures. About 300,000 get electricity for the first time. Some 285,000 get their first access to clean drinking water. When I was a boy, a majority of adults had always been illiterate, but now more than 85% can read. Family planning leads parents to have fewer babies and invest more in each. The number of global war deaths is far below what it was in the 1950s through the 1990s, let alone the murderous 1930s and '40s.

[My wife] Aneri and I are reporting from a country whose name, Liberia, evokes Ebola, civil war and warlords like General Butt Naked. That's partly because we journalists have a bias toward bad news: We cover planes that crash, not planes that take off. Together in Liberia, Aneri and I saw children missing school or suffering from excruciating ailments, but the larger narrative is the opposite—less death and more literacy.

Journalists and aid organizations need to highlight conflicts, disease and suffering, but we also need to acknowledge the backdrop of progress. Otherwise, people perceive global poverty as hopeless and simply tune out. The truth is that the world today is not depressing but inspiring.

. . . So let's pause from our pessimism for a nanosecond

## **A message of hope:**

*Subtitled "How Our Small Actions can Change the World," by Elizabeth Manneh, June 5, 2017, from bustedhalo.com. Manneh is a freelance writer for many publications, sharing her time between the UK and The Gambia, West Africa. She is on a lifelong exploration to find ways of bringing God into all aspects of her everyday life.*

Sometimes, I wonder what an outsider would think of our world. How can a planet, so small within the vast universe, be so terribly at war with itself? Just a quick glance at the news paints a gloomy picture. Every day there's another story of anguish: suicide bombings, outbreaks of disease, wars in Syria and Yemen, and thousands of refugees crossing borders in search of safety for their families.

When I pray for the world, I sometimes find myself lost for words and feel discouraged when I think of where we're headed. Yet, in his recent TED Talk, "Why the Only Future Worth Building Includes Everyone," Pope Francis views the future more positively. He outlines where he believes we're going wrong and offers a message of hope for everyone who genuinely cares about the future.

Pope Francis believes that our problems stem from the fact that we've become separated from each other, mistrustful of those who are different from us, uncaring and contemptuous of those we view as beneath us, and too focused on our individual lives.

In his TED Talk, the pope summarizes his view that we've developed a culture of waste, not only of the world's resources, but more importantly, of people too. . . . Sometimes it's hard to feel a connection with those who are different from us, those who have different beliefs or hold opposing political views. Fear of the unknown can make us focus on our differences rather than what we have in common. . . . When we stand in solidarity with others, we have the power to change the future. When we stand side-by-side, we remember that everyone else is also a living, breathing, feeling person.

Pope Francis offers a solution to our selfish and wasteful ways: "To Christians, the future does have a name, and its name is Hope." In today's language, the word hope

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of celebration about a world that is actually getting better. The most important historical force in the world today is not President Trump, and it's not terrorists. Rather, it's the stunning gains on our watch against extreme poverty, illiteracy and disease. . . .

## ***A message of hope, continued:***

implies wishful thinking rather than firm conviction. But the hope we read about in Scripture is totally different. Bible.org defines biblical hope as a “strong and confident expectation,” giving us a firm foundation for believing in the future.

“Feeling hopeful does not mean to be optimistically naïve and ignore the tragedy humanity is facing,” Pope Francis says. He goes on explain that hope is a virtue of the heart that doesn’t focus on the past and isn’t simply about getting by in the present. The pope views the future with optimism.

...Pope Francis also calls for a “revolution of tenderness,” and corrects the idea that sometimes tenderness is considered to be a weakness, saying that showing true tenderness in the face of adversity, is an act of strength. “Tenderness is the path of choice for the strongest, most courageous men and women. Tenderness is not weakness; it is fortitude.”

Since first listening to Pope Francis’ TED Talk, I’ve tried to think more about my part in the world. I can’t change great world events like a war, a terrorist incident, or a famine. But there are small steps I can take to stand in solidarity with those who are different from me. I can buy a snack for a homeless person and spend a few moments speaking with them, instead of rushing by and averting my eyes. I can raise money to help refugees, or volunteer to help a struggling kid learning to read. Thinking of small daily actions I can take has made me realize that I do have the power to change one person’s life for the better. And when many people each do their small part, that adds up to a great change—perhaps even a movement.

So, let’s not be discouraged by what we see around us. Let’s all do our small part in bringing God’s hope to a suffering world.

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## ***A favorite prayer, by Sr. Joan Chittester:***

*Sr. Joan Chittester was one of nearly a hundred prominent men and women from every religious tradition and region of the world to share a favorite prayer and offer their own reflections on its meaning in the book, A World of Prayer: Spiritual Leaders, Activists, and Humanitarians Share their Favorite Prayers, edited by Rosalind Bradley, Orbis Books 2012. From joanchittester.org.*

I bow to the one who signs the cross.  
I bow to the one who sits with the Buddha.  
I bow to the one who wails at the wall.  
I bow to the OM flowing in the Ganges.  
I bow to the one who faces Mecca,  
whose forehead touches holy ground.  
I bow to dervishes whirling in mystical wind.  
I bow to the north,  
to the south  
to the east,

## ***Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses:***

*By Sr. Maureen Fiedler, Ph.D., a Sister of Loretto, at ncronline.org, August 7, 2017.*

Just about everyone would recognize the title of this post as words from the poem displayed at the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor. They speak eloquently of the ideals that are supposed to—and I emphasize *supposed to*—inspire this country and our immigration policies. I have often thought that there is the essence of the Gospel in those words. Jesus welcomed the tired and the poor—as does Pope Francis today. But now, it seems, President Donald Trump wants to change that basic legacy.



It’s not that we can take everyone into our national bosom, but we have long welcomed a diversity of peoples with wide-ranging skills, often women and men fleeing oppression elsewhere. . . .That policy, I daresay, has been part of the genius of this country’s development, even if it was not always recognized at the time. . . .

Not all were warmly welcomed to be sure—just ask the Chinese. And of course, African-American slaves were not willing “immigrants.” But the diversity of European immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries enriched our culture and eventually built an industrial economy. And with the civil rights movement of the 20th century, we began a slow appreciation of our African-American heritage (that still has a long way to go). All of this has been enriching our culture for generations. . . .Now, Trump wants to limit immigration through a “points” system. . . .Sounds like he wants to rewrite the Statue of Liberty message to say, “Give me your well-educated, your wealthy—yearning for yet more money.” But that’s not what we are about. We surely don’t need more Trumps!

to the west.  
I bow to the God within each heart  
I bow to epiphany,  
to God’s face revealed.  
I bow. I bow. I bow.

—Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB

I chose this prayer because it points us all to the awareness that it is an enlightening excursion, this wandering into the spiritual insights of other whole cultures, other whole intuitions of the spiritual life, other whole traditions of holy ones. It depends for its fruitfulness on openness of heart and awareness of mind. But the journey is well worth the exertion it takes to see old ideas in new ways because it can bring us to the very height and depth of ourselves. It can even bring fresh hearing, new meaning to the stories that come down to us through our own tradition. My prayer is that those who make the journey become aware of our God, our world, in whole new ways for that is the one great task of life. . . .