



The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

December 31, 2017

Readings

This week:

Genesis 15:1–6; 21:1–3

Hebrews 11:8, 11–12, 17–19

Luke 2:22–40

Next week:

2 Samuel 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16

Romans 16:25–27

Luke 1:26–38

Psalm

The Lord remembers his covenant forever. (*Psalm 105*)

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, 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, January 3, 7:30 p.m. STA Site Committee, Thomas House Library

From Thomas Merton

This Child and Redeemer Who comes amid the songs of angels to answer the prayers of all the Patriarchs and Prophets, and to satisfy the unrecognized longings of the whole lineage of Adam, exiled from Paradise, comes also to quiet the groanings of all creation. For the whole world has been in labor and in mourning since the fall of man. The whole created universe, with all its manifold beauty and splendor, has traveled in disorder, longing for the birth of a Savior. The Patriarchs and Prophets prayed for the coming of Christ in Bethlehem, and this first coming did not silence the groanings of creation.

The mystery of Christmas therefore lays upon us all a debt and an obligation to the rest of men and to the whole created universe. We who have seen the light of Christ are obliged, by the greatness of the grace that has been given us, to make known the presence of the Savior to the ends of the earth. This we will do not only by preaching the glad tidings of his coming but, above all, by revealing him in our lives. Christ is born to us...in order that he may appear to the whole world through us.

--Seasons of Celebration

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Merton Conference with Don Bisson at Mercy Center in January:

A conference titled "Thomas Merton: A Prophet for Our Times" with Brother Don Bisson, FMS, is now accepting registrations for January 13-14, 2018, at Mercy Center, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame.

The conference will study Thomas Merton's writings, messages, and prophetic vision for our times.

We are living in a time of political chaos and a regression on many of the issues of the 1960s. By staying with Merton's own words, we will be challenged, in this new generation, to face racism, violence, political shadows, and war.

Come and create a spiritual community, to engage our world in the light of wisdom.



Don Bisson, FMS is a spiritual director, trainer, and supervisor of directors, who is widely respected as a commentator and workshop leader on the interrelationship of spirituality and psychology. A Marist brother based in New York, he 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.

For more information, go to www.donbisson.org. Register on the website at www.mercy-center.org or by calling 650-340-7474. Registration deadline is January 6, 2018. The program begins Saturday, January 13 at 9:30 a.m. and concludes Sunday with lunch. Cost: \$195/\$120 commuter.

Temp housing for grandparents in March:

First Baptist Church had a phone call last week from a mother in Texas who was inquiring whether the church had provisions for housing folks from out of state who were here visiting and supporting a child having surgery at Stanford.

The lady's 2-year-old son is having his third heart surgery at Stanford in March. She and her husband and other child have space at Ronald McDonald House, but the child's grandparents would like to come for part of the month.

While First Baptist does not have the housing resources, the pastor there promised he would check with other churches in the area and see if anyone could help.

Can you help? Please contact the parish e-Bulletin Editor, Chris Lundin, (clundin@stanford.edu) if you can.

Heart and Home Collaborative Winter Shelter:

The Heart and Home Collaborative winter shelter, organized by Stanford students, (similar to Hotel de Zink) is spinning up again this year (lack of permits last year doomed it).

From their web site: "Heart and Home Collaborative is a non-profit organization serving unhoused women in Palo Alto, California. We opened our doors on December 1st, 2017! Our shelter will run for six weeks at Unitarian Universalist Church (505 E Charleston Road) and then for another six weeks at University Lutheran Church (1611 Stanford Ave)."

The parish Human Concerns Committee is planning to provide a meal at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Friday night, January 12. If you would like to contribute funding for that meal, you can put a check in the collection with "Heart and Home Meal" in the memo section.

Read more at: <https://www.hhcollab.org/> (which also offers ways to volunteer)

Farewell to our music leader Taber Dullea:

Today is the last day for us to revel in the musical leadership of Taber Dullea. Taber has moved back to his roots in Marysville, CA, and the commute to Palo Alto is not feasible (!). We will send him off with a blessing full of gratitude for his lively and professional guidance in the art of communal church singing.

Please join us after Mass in the Thomas House for coffee and donuts. We especially encourage newcomers or those passing through town to stop by for food and fellowship.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouche, 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 adjacent.]

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

What we owe America's farmworkers:

[The Editors, *America Magazine*, Dec. 27, 2017]

U.S. agriculture is facing a silent crisis.

The Trump administration's crackdown on undocumented immigrants has sown fear among farmworker communities, making workers harder to find than ever. Farm owners across the country are anxious about meeting their labor needs. Millions of dollars worth of crops are at the risk of rotting.

The present labor shortage reveals U.S. society's dependence on farmworkers. The hands that pick what Americans eat are hands the country relies on. And with almost no native-born Americans willing to do the job, Latino immigrants have become indispensable. Even in the midst of the severe fires in California, farmworkers could not stop working lest harvests be lost.

Yet the nation's collective reliance on farmworkers is not reflected in the way they are treated. In California, which produces two-thirds of the nation's fruits, rates of food insecurity for farmworkers and their families range from 40 percent to 70 percent. Farmworkers' low wages directly contribute to growers' profit, but farmworkers regularly cannot afford to buy the food they pick.

Working conditions for farmworkers can be harsh. Even under the best conditions, a day of work is one of hard manual labor, with long hours and often high temperatures. The Trump administration's Environmental Protection Agency has approved the use of a pesticide known to be harmful to human beings. Farmworkers have already gotten sick on the job as a result.

The nation's collective reliance on farmworkers is not reflected in the way they are treated. Society's failures toward farmworkers extend beyond poor working conditions. The children of migrant farmworkers endure seasonal displacement that can make staying in school difficult. Social mobility is weak for those born into farmworker communities, creating a generational cycle of poverty. State and local governments resist attempts by farmworkers to organize for greater protections. And despite being dependent on farmworker labor, many local communities are openly hostile to migrant workers.

It does not have to be this way. In 2016, California

recognized the right of farmworkers to equal overtime pay. In Florida, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers secured commitments from fast-food chains to buy only from agricultural sources that meet improved standards on pay and work conditions.

That model of direct pressure on major companies is spreading. In Vermont, immigrant dairy workers just claimed victory in an agreement with the ice cream maker Ben and Jerry's.

It is curious that so many Americans care about eating ethically (vegan, vegetarian, organic or free range) but do not think as much about the poverty and exploitation among the largely Latino farmworkers who are making their meals possible. Labeling programs, including the Equitable Food Initiative label, the Food Justice Certified label and the United Farm Workers Union label, support the fair treatment of farmworkers, but there is little indication that products carrying those labels are sought out by consumers.

The United States must do more to treat farmworkers with justice. A huge step would be to lift the threat of deportation that looms over many farmworkers by passing comprehensive immigration reform that recognizes both the need for labor in the United States and those laborers' right to dignity and opportunity. Rectifying the injustice of the 1930s—when farmworkers were excluded from new federal labor standards—and finally offering farmworkers the same labor protections as other workers is also necessary.

Farmwork, like all work, carries an inherent dignity and should be a viable path for immigrant families into the American middle class. The common thread in all the challenges farmworkers face is a lack of urgency. Perhaps every time Americans say grace before a meal, they could spare a moment to remember those who make that meal possible. □

Help our friends in need:

During these cold winter months, 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. Put your offerings in the basket behind the last pew as you enter the church.

Ten resolutions for 2018:

[By Jim Wallis, Sojourners, Dec. 28, 2017]

While away with my family over the holidays, I took time to write up some New Year's resolutions for 2018. While it's not always easy to come up with multiple thoughtful, practical resolutions to keep through the year, I recommend the practice — especially in a time like this. 2017 required a deeper attention and commitment to our nation's public life, in the face of unexpected political leadership that some are trying to "normalize." The shocks, dangers, worries, anger, and vulnerability for so many people this year have indeed required us to go to a deeper place. 2018 looks very uncertain, and things could get worse before getting better.

So, some New Year's resolutions are in order.

Here are mine. I'll be praying and working through these resolutions as we head into 2018. I pray for your strength and courage as you set, and work to keep, your own ... and please share yours in the comments below.

10 resolutions for 2018:

1. To start each day with a "yes!" to my faith — and to my personal and public morality. Especially since I will be saying no to so much this next year, I want to start by saying yes to God's love, yes to my allegiance to Jesus Christ, yes to my discipleship, which means that Jesus is Lord — against any other powers who think they have or should have absolute political authority. I want to say yes to engaged citizenship, civil discourse, service to what is right, and courageous resistance to what is wrong. I want my "no" to begin with a deeper "yes!"

2. To have the courage to say "no!" when that is required, wherever it is required. This includes the public arena, the political sphere, in the media and culture, in schools, in workplaces, and even in the church. It will mean sometimes saying no to fellow Christians, and possibly even to members of my own family, when they defend and support ideas and actions that are antithetical to the gospel. I will try to demand conversations in churches about our gospel values, and to hold political discussions in Christian communities accountable to those values.

3. To not wait to say "no," or wait to stand in opposition to wrong and dangerous ideas and actions, until I see how others will respond. To not be among the last to react to breaches of moral and civic behavior, but to count the cost and show my commitment to justice by being one of the first.

READ: *Is Contemplative Life Still Possible?* [4]

4. To hold the Bible in one hand and the news in the other as I go through each day. I will try to hold public decisions and events accountable to what our Scriptures teach and demand of us. I will also hold the Con-

stitution close at hand, and try to hold political leaders accountable to that, too.

5. To better answer the biggest challenges of 2018 by acting on my faith, rather than reacting from my emotions. To respond to genuine outrages with deeper commitment, instead of cyclical anger; to respond to despair with action, instead of cynicism, to combat hatred with deeper love; and to counter feelings of hopelessness with decisions to act in hope, rather than feelings of optimism, because of my faith.

6. To see crisis as both danger and opportunity. And to always be attentive to both, in every situation.

7. To see evil and injustice as a call to go deeper. Deeper into the disciplines and practices of my faith; deeper into my relationships with allies and friends, especially across racial lines; and deeper into my relationships to those who are most vulnerable and targeted by injustice.

8. To spend even more time with my family. Our children and grandchildren need to know what is going on, and how we and they can respond to it. I will try to explain things, and pray over things that happen in the world with them, not try to keep them from seeing or understanding dangerous things that are occurring. I will work to protect them by helping them interpret those things, and by assuring them that we will be together through it all.

I will try to demand conversations in churches about our gospel values, and to hold political discussions in Christian communities accountable to those values.

9. To pray for particular people who will be playing critical roles in the outcomes of political events in this country. I commit to praying for the courage of press — including media reporters, broadcasters, columnists, editors, producers, and owners — that they would search earnestly and endlessly for the truth, and have the courage to print and tell it. I will pray for the judiciary to face the hardest questions with a commitment to the rule of law, more than the rule of politics. I will pray for the leaders in Congress, and all its members, that they would understand themselves as a separate branch of government that holds a necessary check on the Executive. Our Scriptures instruct us to pray for our political leaders, so I will also try to pray for President Donald Trump — that he would not see himself not as absolute, but as a public servant. In particular, I will pray every day for Special Counsel Robert Mueller, and his investigation of the 2016 Trump campaign and presidency. I will pray for him daily, because I believe he may have the future of American democracy in his hands.

10. To work and pray to grow in my trust of God, friends, and community. Even if life in this country continues to spiral morally downward, I will try to trust in faith, hope, and love — to believe the greatest of these is love — and to be ready every day to act, by faith, in hope, upon what I believe. □