



First Sunday of Advent

December 2, 2018

Readings

This week:

Jeremiah 33:14–16

1 Thessalonians 3:12–4:2

Luke 21:25–28, 34–36

Next week:

Baruch 5:1–9

Phillipians 1:3–6, 8–11

Luke 3:1–6

Psalm

To you, O Lord. I lift my soul. (*Psalm 25*)

Today

Today's presider is Rev. Msgr. Eugene O'Donnell.

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, Dec. 5: 7:30 p.m.: STA Site Committee, Thomas House Library

Sunday, Dec. 9, 9:45 am-12 pm: Kenya Crafts Fair in Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

The great temptation of modern man is not physical solitude, but immersion in the mass of other men, not escape to the mountains or the desert (would that more men were so tempted), but escape into the great formless sea of irresponsibility which is the crowd.

There is actually no more dangerous solitude than that of the man who is lost in a crowd, who does not know he is alone and who does not function as a person in the community either. He does not face the risks of true solitude or its responsibilities, and at the same time the multitude has taken all other responsibilities off his shoulders.

Yet modern man is by no means free of care; he is burdened by the diffuse, anonymous anxiety, the nameless fears, the petty itching lusts and the all pervading hostilities which fill mass society the way water fills the ocean.

--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

Today's presider and musicians:

Msgr. Sandersfeld cannot be with us today, due to a temporary health issue. He has graciously arranged for a substitute, Rev. Msgr. Eugene O'Donnell, recently retired pastor (of St. Francis of Assisi in San Jose), to take his place.

In addition, we welcome today as guest music leaders Mary Elaine McEnery on piano and cantor Carol Daly. They have been introduced to us by Father Larry Percell who knows them as musicians who support the St. Nicholas Church music program.

Kenya crafts faire December 9:

Each year Margo McAuliffe brings back handcrafted items from Kenya, which are available to those who make a donation to Kenya Help, a non-profit whose mission is to educate and train women, children and youth in Kenya by providing resources and support.

Come to the Thomas House between 9:45 a.m. and noon on Sunday, December 9, and enjoy the varied handmade items on display in the Bride's Room on the main floor in the back. There are charming Nativity sets, tree ornaments, colorful woven baskets, soap stone bowls, jewelry, shopping bags, fetching crib mobiles, fabric purses, carved wooden animals, Africa puzzles, greeting cards, and more. These make great gifts as well as home décor enhancements.

For a private viewing in Menlo Park, contact Margo at (650) 322-0821.

Altar of Remembrance photos:



Photos from the Altar of Remembrance have been saved in a box in the back of the church. Please check there if you did not remove your photos last weekend or during the week.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, 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 editors: Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams. See below.]

Seton School Library needs volunteers:

Seton School turned its library into offices about a year ago, and the library books need to be catalogued before being installed in other classrooms.

Vicki Sullivan is looking for volunteers to help with this project on Mondays and Fridays from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Contact her at (650) 740-0124, or vickisullivan@comcast.net.

Next Fish Fest December 14 at 6:00 pm:



Fish Fest! Tasty breaded fish filets and the ever-tangy Asian cole slaw will be served at the Thomas House on Friday, Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. We are hoping for a post-prandial sing-along under the guitar of one of our music ministry leaders.

Many thanks to people who generously bring snacks and desserts to share as well. All this for only \$5 per person, plus \$2 for a beer or generous glass of wine.

Join fellow pew-mates and friends who take advantage of this satisfying meal, chat and laugh together, enjoying the liberation from deciding "what's for dinner?"

IMPORTANT TO RSVP: Helen Baumann, 650-327-9236, hbbbaumann@aol.com, or Kay Williams, 650-270-4188, kaywill@pacbell.net.

Seton School pupusas & flan reception Dec. 9:

St. Elizabeth Seton School families would like to show their gratitude to all St. Thomas Aquinas parishioners with a little reception in the St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center next Sunday, December 9th: 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Our Seton School choir will sing some jolly songs for you; parents will make delicious *pupusas** and flan, and coffee/tea/lemonades will be there to enjoy too. Student-led school tours will also be available as we love to show off our school!!

All are invited: please join us for a little Christmas cheer. Questions? Please call Carmel Caligaris at 650-326-1258.

*A traditional Salvadoran dish of a thick corn tortilla stuffed with a savory filling. It is typically accompanied by *curtido* (a spicy cabbage slaw), and tomato salsa.

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Seminaries breed clericalism:

[By Ken Briggs, *NCR Today*, Nov. 16, 2018]

How do you learn "clericalism"? As the Broadway show "South Pacific" said about human prejudice, "you've got to be carefully taught."

It's an attitude inculcated mostly in subtle ways, in little gestures and tainted language. It's absorbed in behavior and habits considered normal rather than aberrant, accepted as a natural way of life.

The upheaval sparked by priests' sex abuse and bishops' cover-up has pointed to clericalism as a major factor. The phenomenon has long plagued Catholicism as a contrived power grab based on arrogance and superiority. Its audacious presumption was that ordination was God's method of conveying higher status and authority on certain individuals, conferring rights to rule the church without the consent or advice of the laity. They alone were entitled to espouse what the church officially taught and exact sanctions for disobedience.

Clericalism as much as any other factor triggered attacks against the church for many centuries, the most explosive being the French Revolution. In the post-Reformation era, rising temporal powers with vain ambitions of their own found an equivalent in clerical efforts to preserve their accumulated privileges. The tensions have remained as the ordained class has struggled to hold on to its relative monopoly in the face of growing opposition from, among other things, the flowering of democratic spirit.

Pope Francis has voiced his disdain for clericalism front and center. He has bewailed tendencies by hierarchy to adopt the trappings of royalty and scorned exclusivity and smugness among clergy of every stripe.

It seems beyond doubt that this attitude of exceptionalism and impunity, however disguised it might be, has contributed greatly to abuse of many kinds, most grievously sexual exploitation in our time.

In the most twisted way, clericalism has been consciously or unconsciously used to justify the abuse as necessary to the fulfillment of the abuser's vocation. Years ago, I heard this first in the voices of women

who had wanted to break off sexual relations with priests but were deterred by the priest's argument that she was enabling him to sustain his God-given ministry.

The presumption that clergy are set apart and above the laity is rarely a blatant act of egotism or power-seeking, but a process of osmosis through a thousand suggestions and hints. But stopping it seems to me the major objective if abuse is to end. The deeply embedded notion of entitlement must be reversed.

Perhaps steps are being taken to do that. If so, they are welcome, perhaps far-reaching. My focus is on how remedies might affect what seems the heart of the matter, seminary preparation. It is there I suspect the code language has been imparted and the rationalizations passed along, however covertly. Typically, those four years of shaping mind and spirit center on character and the priest's theological and pastoral relationship to the rest of humanity. Where specialness is injected at least subliminally in courses on moral doctrine and canon law. It is a profound formation conducted within a closed circle in relative isolation.

Perhaps it's time to let more fresh air into those rooms, to paraphrase Pope John XXIII's metaphor to introduce the Second Vatican Council. Open up seminary education to mainstream participation for a wide variety of Catholics who would offer insight, challenge and a different prism through which to appreciate the greater sources of wisdom and understanding of the Gospel. Emphasize collaborative learning. Abandon titles and special prerogatives.

This shift could begin to reorient would-be leaders away from the two-tiered hazards of clericalism and dreadful, isolated apartness. Priests immunized against clericalism likely become bishops free of that malady. It could be achieved under a variety of educational conditions.

The aim would be to crack open the casing that has too often served as an incubator for the attitude that has been devastating, a frame of mind that has torn asunder the very conviction of Oneness that gave rise to Christianity.

[Ken Briggs reported on religion for *Newsday* and *The New York Times*, has contributed articles to many publications, written four books and is an instructor at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania.]

Bulletin submissions must be e-mailed by Thursday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm, to:
Kay, kaywill@pacbell.net, (650) 270-4188,
and Michelle, myhogan@comcast.net, (650) 493-8452.



First Sunday of Advent

Loving Creator,
We pray in thanksgiving for the many ways
That you entrust your creation to us.
As we begin Advent, we pray that we can stay alert and watchful,
So that when you come you don't find us sleeping.
As Isaiah says, "We are the clay and you are the potter;
We are all the work of your hands."
Shape us to do your will and work. Amen.

The election is over. Now what?

[By Sr. Simone Campbell, NCR, Nov.15, 2018]

The 2018 election is over. We the people have spoken. Voters chose to expand Medicaid, voters rebuked the 2017 Republican tax law, and voters chose a House controlled by Democrats for the first time in eight years. In short, Election Day demonstrated that care for the common good is in the hearts of our people.

Now we have to ask ourselves — what's next? ... before focusing on the next election, the new Congress must fix what the last one broke!

In December 2017, the Republicans in Congress passed a sweeping tax law that promises to have devastating effects on our communities by burdening our nation with \$1.9 trillion in debt and leading to deep cuts to vital programs. My organization, Network, the lobby for Catholic social justice, and other partners, worked hard to stop these tax cuts from becoming law, but the Republicans in Congress pushed it through without any input or votes from Democrats. ...That's why the Nuns on the Bus went on the road this October, visiting 21 states over 27 days before the midterms to hold elected officials accountable for their votes that hurt their constituents.

Let me tell you about some of the people we met on the road who have been hurt by the Republican tax law.

In Detroit, we met with Cass Community Social Services that has bought three blocks of land in their neighborhood and is building beautiful tiny homes for low-income community members as a path to home ownership. Owning a home is an important source of...Cass Community Social Services is mending the racial wealth gap — it revitalizes communities and deserves support. They depend on some federal money and tax credits to create this thriving community.

In Savannah, we heard the story of Niema Ross, a young working mother of three who had died that weekend because she couldn't afford the inhaler she needed to breathe. ... Because Georgia hasn't expanded

Medicaid, Niema never got her inhaler and her three kids will grow up without a mother. ...Health care is the right of all people, and Medicaid expansion is crucial to protect that right.

In Cleveland, we visited Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry and heard about their Chopping for Change program, which addresses the intersection of living wages and criminal justice...by collaborating with the Ohio prison system to prepare women currently in prison to enter the workforce after they have served their time, and ensures that they have access to a living wage when they reenter the community. While only two years old, Chopping for Change has served 100 women and had a 90 percent graduation rate and a 95 percent non-recidivism rate....With reasonable revenue, second chance programs that ensure access to a living wage could expand to serve folks all around the country.

All across the country, our people are hurting — but there is hope! Nuns on the Bus has seen so many examples of responsible programs that rely on some tax revenue. Justice-seekers are working together in every community to address the problems of our nation. Community members have found solutions that work, but they need access to reasonable revenue that the Republican tax law is undermining.

... As Nuns on the Bus traveled across the country in the lead up to the election, we heard thousands of stories from folks hurt by the terrible tax law. They shared their struggles, their needs and their hopes. And then, they voted.

I am pleased to report that out of 13 Republican members of Congress whose offices that the Nuns on the Bus met with directly, constituents ousted at least eight Representatives because of their voting record...

Voters know that our budget is a moral document that should reflect the values of our nation. They also know that taxes are the way we generate reasonable revenue for responsible programs. We need a tax code for the common good, not one rooted in the unpatriotic lie of individualism preferencing the 1 percent at the expense of the 99 percent.... #