



# The Nativity of St. John the Baptist

June 24, 2018

## Readings

*This week:*

Isaiah 49:1–6

Acts of the Apostles 13:22–26

Luke 1:57–66, 80

*Next week:*

Wisdom 1:13–15

2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13–15

Mark 5:21–43

## Psalm

I praise you, for I am wonderfully made. (*Psalm 139*)

Today's presider is Fr. Kevin Ballard, S.J.

## Today

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

No TMC meetings this week.

## From Thomas Merton

The world of men has forgotten the joys of silence, the peace of solitude which is necessary, to some extent, for the fullness of human living.

If man is constantly exiled from his own home, locked out of his own spiritual solitude, he ceases to be a true person. He no longer lives as a man. He is not even a healthy animal. Man becomes a kind of automaton, living without joy, because he has lost all spontaneity. He is no longer moved from within, but only from outside himself. He no longer makes decisions for himself, but lets them be made for him.

Such a man no longer acts upon the outside world, but lets it act upon him. He is propelled through life by a series of collisions with outside forces. His is no longer the life of a human being, but the existence of a sentient billiard ball, a being without a purpose and without any deeply valid response to reality.

--*The Silent Life*

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*

## ***TMC donation envelope enclosed 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. Laid, self-sustaining, self-generating—this is TMC. Thanks to all who contribute.

## ***Backpacks for Seton School students:***

Dear Friends of St. Elizabeth Seton School,

This year, we are again taking on a project to purchase backpacks and school supplies for the children at Seton School. Our goal is to purchase 50 backpacks (35 for elementary and 25 for middle school)--in any color except red and blue (NO red or blue please, although designs are OK) from Costco, Target, etc.

There are two ways you can contribute:

Make a financial contribution and let us do the shopping. Checks to be made out to Saint Elizabeth Seton School, with “backpacks” on the memo line.

Donate backpacks and school supplies. If you choose this option, please indicate the grade level on the backpack, or school supplies.

Bring all items to St. Thomas Aquinas Church by Sunday, August 12. If you have additional questions, John Arnold is our coordinator and can be reached at [jsaoso@comcast.net](mailto:jsaoso@comcast.net), or by phone at (650) 269-2950.

(People could “club together” to make a purchase. Backpacks can be pricey! Check with John Arnold for specific school supplies needed.)

These are our children, our future, and we can help to make a difference. Thank you for your support.

## ***Thomas House says “thanks but no thanks”:***

Thanks to everyone who has donated books, household tools, art objects and other items to the Thomas House. It is full!

We have many extra dishes, baskets and trays and a set of drapes in excellent condition left in the closet outside of the women's restroom in the basement. Please take home serving and other items brought to the Thomas House for social events--including the drapes!

We may need to donate some of the excess items to allow space for basic hospitality supplies.

## ***How St. Vincent de Paul dollars work:***

This weekend the Second Collection is for St. Vincent de Paul.

The goal of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is to offer tangible assistance to those in need on a person to person basis and to offer spiritual services. A key strength of the Society is in the personalized delivery of help. This aid may take the form of intervention, consultation or often through direct dollar or in-kind service. St. Vincent de Paul has thousands of volunteers all over the world.

Your generosity in this weekend's 2nd collection will assist our own local conference of St. Vincent de Paul to help our neighbors in need.

## ***Help distribute food at Food Closet:***

A volunteer or two is needed for the South Palo Alto Food Closet. There is a special need for the fourth Monday of the month, 12-2:00 pm shift, working with our parishioner, Mary Fong. If you can help please call Marilyn Whitten, the Monday co-ordinator at 650-493-4226 or e-mail Mary at [fongmt@hotmail.com](mailto:fongmt@hotmail.com).

## ***Fr. Matt's last Mass in parish is today:***

STA Pastor Fr. Matt Stanley's farewell Mass and following reception is at St. Albert the Great today, June 24 (after the 9:00 am Mass). Swing by and wish him well in his new parish.

## ***Seton School summer reading for 2nd graders:***

Thank you, generous parishioners!

1). About \$850 remained in this church account from last year so another collection was not requested this spring.

2). About \$765 was spent for new books on Amazon for all second graders this year, giving them each four of their individually requested books.

3). Any remaining funds will remain in the account towards next year. There was not enough to give each student a fifth book.

4). Wednesday, June 6, at 10:30 the books were handed out in the second grade classroom by Ms. Evelyn Rosa (Principal) on behalf of the entire parish. Ellen McGuire (Assistant Principal) and Carmel Caligaris (Development Director) and Terry Atkinson of the HCC also were in attendance.

There will be no Seton summer school this year so new books should help the children maintain and perhaps stimulate reading interests.

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## ***Separation of children challenges Christians:***

Greetings,

From the beginning, being a Christian was not convenient for His followers, so we can not expect it to be easy for us now.

We learn from the Bible: whatsoever you do for these the least ones, you do unto me.

So when we tear children away from their mothers, we are tearing the Christ Child from the arms of the Holy Mother.

If we call ourselves followers of Christ, then we are called to follow His words and actions.

Let us be creative in the actions we take to fulfill our responsibility to defend asylum seekers and refugees, especially the children. --Nicole Sault (TMC member)

## ***Across the universe:***

[By Guy Consolmagno, S.J., director of the Vatican Observatory, in *the Tablet*, 6/21/18]

The students of the Vatican Observatory's biennial summer school (this year's topic, "Stellar Variability in the Era of Large Surveys") were received by Pope Francis in a private audience on 14 June. Introducing them, I mentioned to the Pope that along with four weeks of heavy astrophysics our school is also including special lectures to reflect on not only what we are studying, but why we study it.

"Why does the Vatican have an Observatory?" That common question begs the bigger one, "Why does anyone study astronomy?" Contrary to what our culture preaches is most desirable, astronomy doesn't make you rich, powerful or sexy. (Maybe that's why the Jesuit vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience felt so natural to me.) What astronomy does do, however, is give you the space to contemplate questions bigger than "What's for lunch?"

Doing science is a way of becoming intimate with creation, and thus with the Creator. The urge to know the truth above all else is common to all scientists, even

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

those who don't recognise that their devotion to truth is a devotion to God. To me it is an act of prayer.

But there's a deeper level to the question. Why does any individual person choose to become an astronomer? Interviewing each of our 25 summer school students, I found that no matter what culture or country they come from, one common theme they each share is the decisive role their family played in their vocation.

Certainly in my case, it was not so much "Our Father" as my father. My dad would describe his childhood lying on the roof of the garage behind his home in suburban Boston, watching the stars and waiting to see if one would "fall". Seeing Zeppelins flying overhead, he dreamt of being a pilot. Instead, his bad eyesight and good maths skills earned him a spot as a navigator in the US Army Air Corps... where they taught him the stars for navigation.

He guided a squadron of B-17s to Hawaii to look for the Japanese fleet before the Battle of Midway, and then as part of the 306th Bomb Group he was among the first American flyers to come to Britain in late 1942. By April 1943 he'd been shot down over Belgium and sent to Stalag Luft III. There, his agile mind was set not to solve astronomical problems but to write letters home that courted a certain sweet Irish-American girl in New York while simultaneously containing coded messages passing on military intelligence.

After the war Dad's writing skills landed him a job as a journalist. From him I learned writing and storytelling... and the names of the brightest stars. Meanwhile, his job paid for my education in planetary sciences at MIT. Years later, writing these science columns for *The Tablet* I'd always email him my latest work for his comments before submitting it. (He got his first home computer in the late 1970s and was an early user of the internet.) Once, when asked for a review for a book he'd bought online, he replied: "I am delighted to oblige, because it's a great book; and because it's edited by my son. It cost me \$26 from Amazon. And Guy's tuition at MIT."

He'd bought it before I could send him a copy. He explained: "When I passed ninety, I stopped waiting for things."

At our audience on 14 June, Pope Francis spoke to me privately. He offered me his personal condolences... my father, Joseph Edwin Consolmagno, had died on 11 June. He was 100 years old. #

[Fr. Guy Consolmagno has spoken to TMC audiences here in Palo Alto on several occasions; on one visit he addressed children at Seton School. Perhaps he inspired one of those students to become an astronomer!]

## Resurrect ideal of welcoming immigrants:

[By Maureen Fiedler, *National Catholic Reporter*, 6/22/18]

Today, I pulled a favorite T-shirt out of my drawer and put it on because it has a message for today. It shows a drawing of Jesus, Mary and Joseph heading into Egypt. The caption on the T-shirt says "Illegal Immigrants of the Bible." I love wearing it to places like my local supermarket. I don't know if anyone reads it, or even notices it, but if they do, I hope it causes them to ask serious questions about current news stories about immigrants.

The message? Good people are often forced to flee a homeland to seek a new place of refuge.

Now, of course, we have hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Central Americans and Mexicans seeking refuge by crossing our southern border from Mexico. Most are good people fleeing desperate poverty as well as violence of gangs and cartels. Yet they are meeting strong resistance and long delays even when they try to enter the United States legally.

Watching this scene on TV caused to me think back to the 19th century when my ancestors (especially my maternal ancestors from Ireland) were in a similar situation, although they came by ship. I wonder how they were greeted and how long it took to get accepted. I often wonder if they saw those infamous signs, recorded in history books, saying "No Irish Need Apply."

So what Central Americans and Mexicans are facing today is — unfortunately — not new. We may be a "nation of immigrants," but we have often not been a nation welcoming immigrants.

To say this needs to change is simplistic, and perhaps a pipe dream. But welcoming the stranger is not only the moral thing to do, it's the pragmatic thing to do. Most immigrants to the United States have a positive impact on our country. They bring new talents, energy and ideas.

The tech industry is perhaps the most obvious example. According to a 2016 article in the *Washington Examiner*, "Thirty-seven percent of Silicon Valley's population are non-citizens who entered the U.S. to fill a specific job in the tech industry. Compare that to California's 27 percent of the population that is from another country and a 13 percent national average."

But, whether immigrants bring special talents or not, we need to resurrect our ideal of welcoming immigrants to the United States. It is the moral thing to do ... and it's in the finest Christian tradition.

[Maureen Fiedler is a Sister of Loretto and has been involved in interfaith activities for more than three decades.]

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

## What you can do to help immigrants:

[By James Martin, SJ, *America*, 6/19/18]

Recently, I've received many messages asking: How can I help migrants and immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border?

**1. Call your legislators**—your representatives in Congress, your Senators and the White House—and express your opinions. You can find their contact info easily at <https://callyourrep.co/>. Also, in the next election remember that these issues matter.

**2. Inform yourself with facts**, not uninformed opinions and baseless rumors. The misinformation about migrants and refugees is often driven by racism and fear. Listen to the stories of migrants and refugees, and encounter them as individuals.

**How can I inform myself?** I recommend visiting the following websites:

- The Vatican's Migrant and Refugee Office
- The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops office of Migration and Refugee Services
- Jesuit Refugee Service/International
- Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
- The Kino Border Initiative
- International Catholic Border Initiative

**3. Help organizations, financially**, who are helping the migrants now, including:

- Catholic Charities/USA
- Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley (directed by Sister Norman Pimentel)
- Kino Border Initiative (a Jesuit ministry)
- Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC). Legal help is very important right now particularly for asylum seekers.
- The Family Reunification Fund

**4. Advocate for migrants with friends, family and publicly.** They need advocates. The voiceless need your voices. You can also read and sign the Advocacy Action Alert on Family Separation (<https://ignatiansolidarity.net/blog/2018/06/11/action-protect-immigrant-children-families/>)

**5. Pray for them!**



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