



# The Epiphany of the Lord

January 6, 2019

## Readings

*This week:*

Isaiah 60:1–6

Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6

Matthew 2:1–12

*Next week:*

Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11

Titus 2:11–14; 3: 4–7

Luke 3:15–16, 21–22

## Psalm

Lord, ev'ry nation on earth will adore you (*Psalm 72*)

## 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

**Thursday, January 10, 7:00 p.m.** TMC Board Meeting, Thomas House

### From Thomas Merton

As long as I assume that the world is something I discover by turning on the radio or looking out the window, I am deceived from the start. As long as I imagine that the world is something to be "escaped from" in a monastery--that wearing a special costume and following a quaint observance take me "out of this world," I am dedicating my life to an illusion. Of course, I hasten to qualify this. I said a moment ago that, in a certain historic context of thought and of life, this kind of thought and action once made perfect sense. But the moment you change the context, then the whole thing has to be completely transposed. Otherwise, you are left like the orchestra in the Marx Brothers' *A Night at the Opera*, where Harpo had inserted "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" in the middle of the operatic score.

*--Contemplation in a World of Action*

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*

## ***Multifaith Peaceful Presence January 11:***

Let us come together for much needed time of healing, prayers, strength and gratitude: Friday, January 11, 7-7:30 pm, First Baptist Church, 305 North California Avenue, Palo Alto.

Peaceful Presence is a monthly gathering (on the 11th of each month) hosted by diverse faith communities in a service of multifaith prayers for peace and strength for the journey.

Hosted by different faith communities in their places of worship, all are welcome: those of all faith traditions and of no defined faith, those who are suffering at the hands of their own government, those who need a pause in the midst of intensive work on behalf of others, and all who would like to pray with others for the benefit of all.

[Will be held February 11, 2019, at Our Lady of the Rosary Church, 3233 Cowper St., PA.]

## ***TMC Board meeting January 10:***

The TMC Board will hold its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, January 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the Thomas House dining room. The last regular meeting of the Board was in October. The absence of Board members in November and December accounted for the cancellation of those meetings.

If you have matters to bring to the Board, please contact Board chairman Gerard McGuire at 650-814-2223, or [gerardmc@aol.com](mailto:gerardmc@aol.com).

## ***Dollars for Heart & Home Shelter:***

The parish Human Concerns Committee is looking for monetary contributions for the Heart and Home Collaborative Shelter (overnight women's shelter, operating Dec. - Mar.). Heart and Home is a non-profit organization serving unhoused women in Palo Alto, California. It brings together unhoused and housed Palo Alto residents to create dialogue, leverage resources, and develop services (such as shelter, outreach, and community...

Write a check and place "H&H Collaborative" in the memo field and place in the Sunday collection. Cash donations are also welcome. Thanks so much.

The Human Concerns Committee has signed up for Friday, January 25, to bring a meal again.

Read more about the Heart and Home Collaborative at: <https://www.hhcollab.org/> Volunteer to help at: <https://signup.com/Group/11056662780112/>

## ***Fred Dietrich has died:***

Longtime TMC member Fred Dietrich died on January 1, following a fall a few days earlier while he was at Barnes & Noble. This is particularly poignant since Pat, Fred's wife, is in a care facility suffering from dementia. The four Dietrich daughters are planning a memorial service for Fred, probably in February. When that date is set, we will announce it.

## ***TMC prayers answered:***

Dear TMC Prayer Partners,

As I was preparing for this past week's first reading of Hannah asking God for a child...I remembered that, in 2016, I asked for prayers for my friend Mari and her husband Erik who longed to adopt, despite a failed adoption. In 2017, our prayers were answered with the successful adoption of Samuel. After some 20 years of trying to conceive, in 2018, our prayers were furthered answered with Mari giving birth to our beautiful little girl Magdalena Susanna.

God is good!

With love & gratitude,

Mari, Erik, big brother Samuel, baby Magdalena and Rosana Madrigal de Beattie

## ***Blood Drive Feb. 16--save the date:***

The Stanford Bloodmobile will be at Our Lady of the Rosary parking lot on Saturday, February 16, providing an opportunity for STA parishioners to help save lives in our community by donating blood. More details will be forthcoming.

**PRAY FOR US:** Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, George Bouche, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Jim Davis, 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.]**

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# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## **Thanks from St. Vincent de Paul:**

Thank you for your generous support of our local families in need of food, rents, utilities, and other necessities through our St. Vincent de Paul efforts. Prayers, please, for the people we serve in your name.

### **Your St. Vincent de Paul conference has been quite busy:**

- Thanks to your generous donations to our parish St. Vincent de Paul in November, we have been able to provide emergency rents, including for a woman who dealt with a personal illness in addition to taking care of her parents in illness and a broken hip.
- Thanks to your generous donations to the collections and to the Giving Tree you have been able to buy gift cards for 12 families and invite parents to choose gifts for their kids.

### **During our Annual Food Drive:**

- Your food donations at St. Thomas Aquinas Church and St. Albert the Great Church provided food for the Downtown Food Closet, and for St. Francis of Assisi parish families in East Palo Alto.
- Your food donations at Our Lady of the Rosary Church provided food for our local needy people at the parish, and for the South Palo Alto Family Food Closet.

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## **Public life...(continued from page 4)**

Before we demand a “distinctive role” for the layperson, first we all (bishops, priests, and laypeople) need to grow more comfortable about disagreeing and compromising with one another. We need to see those with whom we disagree as being, possibly, partially right. We need to embrace the idea that none of us has all the answers. We must begin from the idea that we need one another, and that fundamental bond of community must hold us together amid our disagreements while we search together for solutions to our difficult problems.

If there is any way to be “Catholic” in political life at all, that is it. Nancy Pelosi, John Boehner, Paul Ryan, you, and I are at our best as faithful Catholics when we approach political questions in that way. That is the vision Vatican II calls us to live out. Bearing witness to that vision with one another in politics and in the church, over and despite our differences, is the only real way to be faithful Catholics in public life. #

[Steven P. Millies is associate professor of public theology and director of The Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. His most recent book is *Good Intentions: A History of Catholic Voters' Road from Roe to Trump* (Liturgical Press, 2018)]

## **“With the end in mind...”:**

[By Mary McDonough, *Commonweal*, 12/27/18]

In the third act of *Richard III*, Sir William Catesby tells Lord Hastings: “’Tis a vile thing to die, my gracious lord, when men are unprepared and look not for it.” Although written around 1592, Catesby’s words still ring true today. Many of us are not prepared for our own deaths. In fact, death remains a topic that makes most of us so anxious and unsettled that we spend much of our lives avoiding the subject entirely. Complicating matters even further is that we live in a culture that shields us from death with the use of euphemisms, such as he “passed away” or she “lost” her husband, rather than the word died.

British palliative-care physician Kathryn Mannix has spent more than thirty years working with the terminally ill. She wants us to regain “the familiarity we once had” with dying because “death itself has become increasingly taboo.” Often separated from loved ones and familiar surroundings, we “now die in ambulances and emergency rooms and intensive care units, our loved ones separated from us by the machinery of life preservation.” Yet all of us will eventually die. So, Mannix decided: “It’s time to talk about dying.” She does just that and much more in her powerful testament to dying well, *With the End in Mind: Dying, Death, and Wisdom in an Age of Denial*.

Mannix draws us into the world of the dying through stories of her patients. Heart-wrenching and heart-warming at the same time, these poignant tales carry us directly into the core of that mysterious territory we try so hard to avoid. Her stories are not for the faint. Mannix spares no details of the physical and emotional toll the dying process takes on both patients and their support systems. Yet she does so in such an eloquent and tender manner that we do not object to being transported into the private worlds of the terminally ill. Instead, we are inspired and uplifted by these ordinary people and how they deal with the extraordinary pressure of trying to live while they know they are dying. Questions about suffering, meaning, fear, and transcendence emerge on every page....Mannix, who is also trained in cognitive behavioral therapy, has valuable insights into how to interact with terminally ill people and their caregivers.

In today’s world of medical technology, it has become easier to live longer but more difficult to die well. Mannix’s book offers us lessons, not just on dying, but also on living. She beautifully illustrates how the awareness of our deaths can bring meaning and purpose to our lives.

[Mary McDonough, a former legal services health-care attorney and state legislator, is a bioethicist. She is the author of *Can a Health Care Market Be Moral?*]

## ***Faithful Catholics in public life:***

[By Stephen P. Millies, *U.S. Catholic*, 1/2/19]

This month, the Speaker's gavel in the U.S. House of Representatives passes from Catholic Paul Ryan to Catholic Nancy Pelosi. The event comes as a reminder that the Speaker's gavel has not been out of Catholic hands since 2007.

Largely unnoticed and entirely unheralded, this is an extraordinary development in the history of U.S. Catholicism. For a dozen years, one of the most senior elective posts in the federal government has been held by a once-excluded minority, and not because of the long tenure of a single person who happened to be Catholic. The gavel has passed among three speakers during these 12 years.

Of course, this occurs against a larger backdrop where a majority of seats on the U.S. Supreme Court now are held by Catholics and, for countless other reasons, Catholics have largely secured their place in American life. It hardly should surprise us that no one has noticed this Catholic grip on the Speakership. Catholics are just like everybody else, after all.

That last sentence is largely true. But it also offers us a complicated set of problems to deal with.

For reasons having nothing to do with becoming accepted in the halls of American power and social life, it is good that Catholics are like everybody else. Catholic faith does not teach us that the world is a problem. Instead, the world is a place where nothing is untouched by the hand of a loving Creator.

Catholics cannot hold the world in contempt and still, really, be Catholic. Our faith draws us into the world, closer to one another and even to those who do not share our faith. To seem like everybody else is a vital recognition that, in this created way, we are like everybody else. Each of us is loved by God, just as we are called to love one another.

Yet we are not wrong to hope that Catholic faith might make some difference or distinguish Catholics from non-Catholics. This is the problem that comes into focus when we reflect on the differences we see at work in the political leadership of Nancy Pelosi, John Boehner, and Paul Ryan. For all of the 12 years that the Speakership has been held by Catholics, it would be difficult to name a Catholic way of being Speaker of the House.

That difficulty should give us pause whenever we want to speak with any certainty about Catholic citizenship.

Simply being Catholic does not dissolve differences between Paul Ryan and Nancy Pelosi any more than it dissolves the differences between two people sitting in the same pew. Our lives are complex and we all respond differently to circumstances in the light our experience, our judgment, and our consciences. No surprise, we do not always see eye to eye about all sorts of things.

Since 1976 the U.S. bishops have looked ahead to each presidential election by publishing a guide for Catholic voters under the title "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship." More recent editions have been explicit about "forming consciences" for political decision-making. The timing of that voter's guide's emergence is not coincidental. It came with the first presidential election that followed the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* to help Catholics be politically active citizens. But, of course, there is a larger story.

In 1976, the Catholic Church had just emerged from the Second Vatican Council. The Council called Catholics to become more involved with the world so that "all the earthly activities of the faithful will be bathed in the light of the Gospel." That includes political activity.

Of course, even as the bishops were publishing a guide for Catholic voters, they might have read how the Second Vatican Council also cautioned church leaders to "let the layperson not think that pastors are always such experts, that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily give him a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission. Rather, enlightened by Christian wisdom and giving close attention to the teaching authority of the Church, let the layperson take on her or his own distinctive role" (*Gaudium et Spes*). Bishops and pastors, whose lives are so little like the lives laypeople live in the world, should be learning from laypeople's experiences.

More than 50 years ago, the Second Vatican Council laid the foundations for a more worldly church where lay women and men would exercise leadership. We know that promise has not yet been fulfilled. It would be easy to blame bishops or perhaps a pope. But I think we would want to notice the differences between Nancy Pelosi and Paul Ryan before we cast too much blame toward a hierarchy.

Worldly problems are complicated. Oftentimes even when we agree about a goal we can disagree completely about how to achieve it. That is in the nature of politics. Almost never is there a clear-cut absolutely right answer to any question. Instead, most times we muddle. We disagree, too. And so, hopefully, we compromise.

*(Continued on page 3)*