



## 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 20, 2019

### Readings

*This week:*

Exodus 17:8–13

2 Timothy 3:14–4:2

Luke 18:1–8

*Next week:*

Sirach 35:12–14, 16–18

2 Timothy 4:6–8, 16–18

Luke 18:9–14

### Psalm

Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 121*)

### Today

Today's presider is Rev. Daniel Kiriti.

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

Monday, October 21, 7:00 p.m. TMC Spiritual Education Committee,  
Thomas House Library

### From Thomas Merton

There is nothing more positive, more creative than the faith by which the Creator of all dwells and acts in our hearts. And yet, as we know from our own past history, the ideal of “keeping the faith” can sometimes dwindle into something very negative, resentful, and obtuse: a mere “no” to everything that we do not agree with. We can no longer afford to barricade ourselves in our Catholic environment and regard it as a little smug fortress of security in a world of pagans. Now most of all we are obliged by our faith and by our love of truth to commit ourselves humbly and completely not only to the message of Christ but also to all that is valid in human culture and civilization: for this too is His by right. Not only is it something that we must salvage for Him, but more, it is not unconnected with our own salvation. If the Lord of all took flesh and sanctified all nature, restoring it to the Father by His resurrection, we too have our work to do in extending the power of the resurrection to the whole world of our time by our prayer, our thought, our work and our whole life.

--Loretto and Gethsemani

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. Visit: [www.thomasmerton.org](http://www.thomasmerton.org).

# COMMUNITY NOTES

*News Announcements Requests*

## ***Kenya Help craft fair October 20:***

Take the opportunity this morning after Mass to visit the **Kenya Help Craft Fair** in the Memorial Garden next to the church.

Margo McAuliffe found new crafts and old favorites during her summer visit to the Nairobi market. There are Nativity creche sets in multiple designs, woven baskets, wooden animals, ornaments, shopping bags, handbags, stone carvings and bowls. Your donation to Kenya Help is acknowledged when you find a craft item that you like, and it benefits the ongoing scholarship program of Kenyan-based NGO Empower the World, which supports African girls and boys in high school and university or professional schools.

If you miss the crafts today, there will be another chance on December 15. In the meantime, for a private viewing at Margo's home in Menlo Park, contact Margo: 650-322-0821, margo@kenyahelp.us.

## ***Donate bath towels to Clara House:***

Volunteers with Clara House in San Jose are providing showers for those without a home.

There is a need for bath towels which are provided for these showers; and then volunteers wash and dry them for the next guests.

I will be happy to collect them after our 8:45 TMC Mass on October 20 and 27.

*Thanks, Rosana Madrigal de Beattie*

## ***Learn about the Bahá'í faith October 22:***

The speaker at the parish Spirituality Tuesday Assembly series on Tuesday, October 22, is Vera Michalchik, who will talk about the Bahá'í faith, whose great teacher 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "Love ye all religions and all races with a love that is true and sincere and show that love through deeds..."

Come to the St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center, 1095 Channing Ave. in Palo Alto, from 7 - 8:30 pm to hear this informative presentation. Refreshments, too!

**PRAY FOR US:** Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, Kerry Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Jim Davis, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, 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, Patricia Markee, Nancy Marty, Maureen Mooney, Hayden Pastorini, Alicia Placone-Combetta, Paul Prochaska, Anne Rush, Priya Smith, Bernice Sullivan, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, and T. J. Wooten.  
[Add/subtract names by e-mailing Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net.]

## ***Seton School literary fundraiser October 30:***

Award-winning author and educator Francisco Jiménez comes to Seton School, Wed., Oct. 30, 6:00-8:30 pm.

Professor Francisco Jiménez emigrated with his family from Tlaquepaque, Mexico to California and worked alongside his parents in the fields of California. With no English and a fear of being sent back to Mexico, his books beautifully unfold his inspiring and thought-provoking journey. He is currently a professor at Santa Clara University. His son Miguel Jiménez will interview him.

◆ 6:00P pm: wine reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres and a student-led tour of the school.

◆ 7:00 pm: a conversation on stage with Francisco Jimenez.

Purchase Your Tickets: <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4332873> or [www.setonpaloalto.org](http://www.setonpaloalto.org). Please call Carmel if you have any questions: (650) 326-1258. OR: from TMC member Barbara Kent, after Mass today and next Sunday.

## ***Eyeglasses collection:***

Donate eyeglasses for Lions Recycle For Sight Program.

The parish Human Concerns Committee continues collecting eyeglasses you no longer need to help improve the lives of children and adults living in low and middle income communities around the world. Many will experience corrected vision for the first time enabling them to lead productive lives. The World Health Organization estimates that 120 million people are visually impaired due to uncorrected vision.

Our Lions Club representative has told us that in the past few years, for some reason, they have been receiving fewer eyeglasses donations. Through our generous parishioners, we donate more than 100 pairs every few months. (Donation boxes are available at all the church vestibules and Pastoral Center.)

*--Human Concerns Committee*

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# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## Looking Backward

By Allyson McKinney Timm

The 2018 state-sponsored execution of Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi journalist and Washington Post columnist, was a brazen violation of his right to life by a repressive regime, yet the U.S. executive branch responded with near indifference. Then Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had already said that advancing U.S. interests should come before promoting U.S. values—such as defending human rights—and his successor Mike Pompeo has followed suit.

The Trump administration has disavowed the longstanding commitment to human rights by the U.S. in foreign policy. It has withdrawn from the U.N. Human Rights Council, ceded a voice on the U.N. body addressing racial oppression, and ignored the chorus of international condemnation of its family separation policy.

So when Pompeo announced the creation of a new State Department commission to revisit philosophical questions at the heart of the U.S. commitment to human rights, public outcry has been fierce, and rightfully so. Pompeo's Commission on Unalienable Rights, tasked with "fresh thinking about human rights discourse" - based on "our nation's founding principles of natural law and natural rights" - provoked objection from secular and religious advocates alike. The advisory body's mission, membership, and origin story all sparked concern, despite the proviso that it would speak to principles, not policy.

People of faith have further reason to oppose the commission: Its backward-looking terms of reference impose an unconscionable constraint on theological reflection about matters of justice.

The founding of the United States was not the last word on human rights—not for those who fought to abolish the blasphemous and bloody scourge of chattel slavery, eradicate the brutality of child labor, or afford women a voice in our democracy. Every decisive social justice movement in the United States has involved a public theological contest in which the radically egalitarian theme of Christ's teaching eventually triumphed. That each liberation struggle is celebrated in the clear hindsight of history testifies to the ex-

pansion of God's reign through greater justice for an ever-widening circle of humanity.

The adoption of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights heralded a global recognition of universal human dignity. It safeguards equality more consistently and understands rights more expansively than does the U.S. Constitution. It endowed human rights with import apart from the nation-state, whose power was relativized in favor of the individual's sanctity. It is the framework that lets shared denunciation of Nazism and apartheid speak wisdom to contested contemporary struggles for gender and LGBTQ equality. A transnational coalition of Protestant and Catholic leaders, alongside Jewish and black freedom advocates, urged this historic achievement. The Christian worldviews of key contributors helped shape the Universal Declaration. Building on common ethical ground across religions and cultures, it gained unparalleled international adherence and effect.

Questions posed to the Pompeo commission are profound "Why do we have human rights? Who or what grants them?" For Christians, these questions invite sacred conversations about human dignity rooted in God's love for each person. Christ's example of inclusive neighbor love, our status as divine image-bearers, and more. A deeper understanding of our faith-inspired commitments supports the cross-cultural dialogue on which a global system of human rights depends.

We must not submit such sacred conversations to a government office—least of all to one that has made power politics, not human rights, its priority. Nor should we accept 1776 as the ethical touchstone, and thus hinder the salutary movement of the spirit toward equality and liberation.

We must hold our leaders accountable to respecting the Universal Declaration. It reflects Christian ethical commitments far better than this new commission can.

*Allyson McKinney Timm, founder of Justice Revival, is a theologically trained human rights lawyer and elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).*

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.

## The Amazon synod is halfway over. Here's what we know so far.

(excerpt from America Magazine)  
Luke Hansen, S.J. October 16, 2019

As the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon reaches its halfway point, leaders of indigenous communities who are participating in the synod as auditors are speaking with passion about what is at stake for their communities and their hopes for this synod.

“The church is the only institution that is crying out so the whole world awakens,” said José Gregorio Díaz Mirabal, the president of the Ecuador-based Congress of Amazonian Indigenous Organizations, at a Vatican press briefing on Oct. 14. “If we don’t do anything for the planet, we will all disappear.”

Mr. Mirabal, a member of the Curripaco indigenous group in Venezuela, said the people want “a say over our lands” and to “stop the great invasion of foreign companies” involved in extraction and the pollution of the air and water. “We cry against” this land grabbing, and “our cry is heated because so many of us are put in prison,” he said.

Amazon indigenous leaders and religious men and women who are present in the synod hall see “a sign of hope” that this synod is “at the center of the church’s attention” at this moment, said Bishop Eugenio Coter of Pando, Bolivia, at a press briefing on Oct. 15.

Josianne Gauthier, the Canadian general secretary of CIDSE, an international alliance of Catholic solidarity organizations, said at a Vatican press briefing on Oct. 14 that her role at the synod is “to be in a listening position, to listen to voices we don’t have direct access to all the time” and to consider how to support indigenous communities after the synod through “political pressure” in international political instruments.

People who live in Europe and North America, she said, have a “heightened responsibility” for this political action since “we live from the benefits of this tragic exploitation in most parts of the world.” Ms. Gauthier, a “special invitee” to the synod, said that her small language group, which consists of English and French-speaking bishops and other social actors from various parts of the world, is discussing divestment as a way for the church to think about “coherence between words and actions” in light of “[Laudato Si](#).”

In plenary sessions on Oct. 14 and Oct. 15, according to summaries published by Vatican News, synod participants have raised a broad range of issues: inculturation and liturgy, youth ministry and lay collaboration,

forming effective communicators, the economy, migration, the protection and safeguarding of water, human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children.

What is emerging in the synod “is a picture in which everything is connected,” said Giacomo Costa, S.J., the synod’s secretary for information, at a press briefing on Oct. 14. Pope Francis’ encyclical “[Laudato Si](#)” “is not just a source of inspiration but something lived out completely” in the Amazon region, he said.

Synod participants have also put forth several specific proposals, including the establishment of a “permanent observatory of human rights and protection of the Amazon,” a new church law “relating to the duties of Christians toward the environment” and for Catholic universities to make a “preferential option” for the education of indigenous people.

One key proposal that has emerged is the creation of a “permanent and representative episcopal organization,” coordinated by the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (Repam), to promote synodality in the Amazon, to implement the synod, defend indigenous rights, assist the formation of ministers and address common problems like land exploitation, drug trafficking and human trafficking. On the much-discussed questions of [married priests and the role of women](#) in the Amazonian church, some synod members have shown themselves ready for bold action, while others have expressed caution.

“I support the importance of being able to ordain married men for priesthood so that the Eucharist may become a reality that is closer to people and communities,” said Bishop Carlo Verzeletti of Castanhal, Brazil, at a Vatican briefing on Oct. 14.

“If the pope would decide” in favor of married priests, the bishop said he already knows candidates in his local church who “would do an extraordinary job.”

According to Vatican News summaries, a view expressed in the synod is that “under the action of the Spirit, *cum Petrus and sub Petrus*,” the church is “spurred to a conversion in an Amazonian perspective and to undertake without fear a discernment and a reflection on the theme of the priesthood,” mindful of the infrequency of the celebration of the Eucharist in the region. One proposal is that “the criteria for selecting and preparing the ministers authorized to administer this sacrament [of the Eucharist] be changed so that it is not destined to only a few.” . . . One intervention in the synod hall, however, suggested that the questions of married priests and female ministries should be dealt with in an ordinary synodal assembly since these themes have a “universal scope.” Another intervention advised that having married permanent deacons “can represent a real laboratory” before committing to married priests. . . .