



# 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 3, 2019

## Readings

*This week:*

Wisdom 11:22–12:2

2 Thessalonians 1:11–22

Luke 19:1–10

*Next week:*

2 Maccabees 7:1–2, 9–14

2 Thessalonians 2:16–3:5

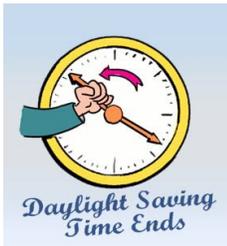
Luke 20:27–38

## Psalm

I will praise your name forever, my king and my God. (*Psalm 145*)

## 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, November 6, 7:00 pm

STA Site Committee, Thomas House

## From Thomas Merton

The “active life” can in fact be that which is most passive: one is simply driven, carried, batted around, moved. The most desperate illusion and the most common one is just to fling oneself into the mass that is in movement and be carried along with it: to be part of the stream of traffic going nowhere but with a great sense of phony purpose. It is against this that I revolt. Because I revolt, my life at first must take on an aspect of total meaninglessness: the revenge of the social superego. The perception of the absurd. Freedom begins with the full acceptance of the absurd: the willingness to *realize* and experience one's life as totally absurd in relation to the apparent meaning that has been thrown over life by society, by illusion.... This implies the capacity to see that *realizing* and *knowing* are not the same., Knowing is... a matter of registering that something is objectively verifiable... Realization is not verification but “isness.” Solitude is necessary for this “isness... In solitude I become *fully able to realize what I cannot know.*

--*The Intimate Merton*

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

## 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 for the next couple of Sundays..

Thanks, Rosana Madrigal de Beattie

## Altar of Remembrance up today:



Themed on the Mexican tradition of the Day of the Dead, our Altar of Remembrance is ready today to welcome your photos of deceased loved ones. Bring photos of persons whom you want to remember and place them on the altar, which will remain throughout November until coming down just before Christmas.

Be sure to label your photos on the back with your name and phone number, so they can be returned to you if you forget to pick them up at the end of November.

## Save Dec. 7: Advent Morning with Fr. Percell:

**Saturday, December 7, 9:00 a.m.-12 pm: Advent Morning of Reflection**, led by Fr. Larry Percell at St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center, 1095 Chan- **ADVENT—hope** ning Ave., Palo Alto. Fr. Percell will lead us into the Advent Scriptures to deepen our awareness of the call to holiness and hope in the Advent season.

**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.]**

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## Sr. Irene Loina on alternative rite of passage for Kenyan girls on November 16:



Sr. Irene Loina of Kenya will speak Saturday, November 16, 2:00-3:30 pm, in the St. Albert Hospitality Room, 1095 Channing Ave., PA.

Sr. Irene is an Incarnate Word sister and was here last year to tell us about her work to reverse the tradition of FGM (female genital mutilation) among the Pokot people of Kenya. This initiative was part of her ministry with women and girls in very traditional tribes in Kenya. In that context she took infant and maternal care to the most remote areas of East

Pokot to provide pre-natal care, well-baby checks, immunizations, HIV/AIDS information and education of traditional midwives. She has expanded her work against FGM with the support of the Pokot elders, both men and women, opening up incredible educational possibilities for girls destined otherwise to be married off at puberty. All are welcome!

## Kids' books for St. Francis in EPA:



A TMC member was given enthusiastic support by Fr Goode at St Francis of Assisi in East Palo Alto to set up a book lending (or keeping) library in their church vestibule.

As you know, many Seton students are part of the St Francis family.

It has been a delight to see many books being taken home each week. If you have any children's books that need

a new home at the St Francis bookshelf, call Terry at 650-714-2131.

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.

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## **[Church for sale, continued from page 4.]**

nonreligious nonprofits that advance conservative political and ecclesial ideologies.

**Timothy Busch**, a founder of the Busch Firm, specializing in high-net-worth estate planning, tax law and corporate litigation. He also has extensive business and real estate holdings, including hotels and resorts, and is the major donor to the Catholic University Busch School of Business. He is a co-founder of the Napa Institute. The headliner for the institute's most recent conference was Cardinal Raymond Burke, among the leaders of the opposition to Francis. Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) was also invited and led an unchallenged Republican luncheon rally.

**Frank Hanna III**, another lawyer, merchant banker and philanthropist, who advocates "the rejuvenation of right thinking about the virtues of capitalism." His 2008 book is *What Your Money Means* (and How to Use It Well). He is active in Regnum Christi, the lay arm of the Legionaries of Christ, founded by the disgraced Marcial Maciel Degollado. Hanna donates to and has high praise for the Acton Institute, and he believes that spiritual, not material, prosperity is the world's greatest challenge. Among affiliations listed on his website are EWTN, the Ethics and Public Policy Center, the American Enterprise Institute and the Napa Institute.

**Sean Fieler** was described as an "ideologically motivated funder" in a 2015 profile published by Inside Philanthropy. The headline described him as "The Hedge Funder Who Promotes Conservative Values." He runs the Chiaroscuro Foundation, to which he is the major donor. The list of recipients of donations from the fund contains some familiar names: the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a legal organization that advanced objections against the Affordable Care Act's contraception mandate even though major Catholic institutions, including the Catholic Health Association, approved of the exceptions provided for religious organizations; Catholic University's Busch School of Business; the Ethics and Public Policy Center; and First Things, a publication that has published stinging criticism of Francis.

**Thomas Monaghan**, founder of Domino's Pizza and once owner of the Detroit Tigers, is also founder of Legatus, an organization for Catholic business leaders, with requirements for membership that guarantee only those of significant means need apply. He is also the founder of Ave Maria University and a purpose-built community to hold it, the town Ave Maria, near Naples, Florida. Busch has cited Monaghan and Legatus among the principal Catholic evangelizers in the country.

Our reporting, extensive as it is, only begins to map out the deep funding streams that seep into the fabric of parish life, that influence programs, such as FOCUS

(Fellowship of Catholic University Students), on college campuses. The money feeds media outlets and the production of catechetical materials; it purchases the presence of purple and red zucchetos to legitimize the events of the Catholic right. Members of the hierarchy are abundantly present for all the wining and dining and not-so-subtle politicking.

The record is extensive and growing. And we'll keep reporting on the phenomenon. The Catholic community deserves to know what is driving and shaping so much of the messaging about the church in the United States.

Busch is by far the most ambitious and loquacious of the evangelists of market-driven Catholicism. In an unscripted moment at one of his events, he pronounced: "The evangelization of our country is being done by private foundations, Catholic NGOs, like Napa Institute and Legatus." Those nonprofits, he argued, are "what's making a difference in the American church and why we're so vibrant, and the rest of the world is not vibrant. ... They have access to capital that the church doesn't." ...

At that same gathering, a cardinal who ran through a history of the church's social justice teaching was described by Busch as representing one view to be considered.

Some who connect the dots and realize what is happening in the church posit the understandable suggestion that what's needed is an infusion of money from the left. But that would only set up a kind of blood sport of the wealthy.

The essential corrective lies much deeper than a competition — it is a new vision of church, one that Francis lived in his home country and now pleads for against great resistance. The central question is: How do we, ordinary Catholics, move toward becoming a church of and for the poor?

We suggest the first step is understanding what is going on, understanding that the very idea of Catholic culture is being squeezed into a narrow frame where God conforms to American norms and ambitions....

While there may be nothing inherently illegal or immoral about this development in the Catholic Church in the United States, it is not without consequence. Taken to its logical conclusion, it becomes an endeavor in which powerful figures with access to wealth use all means to rationalize a church wrapped in the flag and where the bull of Wall Street resides comfortably amid the statuary. The conclusion is a revamped clericalism of the laity. It will not be a church of the poor but a church of the self-sufficient.

Bishops, take note. And then take the bold step of pulling up the "For Sale" sign.

## ***US Catholic Church is for sale:***

[Editorial, *National Catholic Reporter*, 10/25/19]

In quiet investments over a period of decades, wealthy entrepreneurs and flush nonprofits have supplanted elements of church life that once were the province of official church organizations. Church leaders have watched as individuals and groups with substantial resources became the voice of the church in the public square, fashioning a Catholic narrative for the wider culture.

Collectively, the efforts of the new ecclesial entrepreneurs have resulted in structures, many of them on the right to extreme right of the spectrum, that challenge the authority and the voice of the U.S. bishops. In some recent examples, influential individuals and groups have also embraced and amplified the most acerbic critics of Pope Francis.

Most of this development has occurred through the nonprofit sector, a peculiarly American phenomenon that has exploded during the past half century in terms of numbers of organizations, the amount of money they're able to attract, and the political influence they now exert both within and outside the church.

Our coverage on this began five years ago with reporting on a Napa Institute conference. More recently, NCR tracked the growth of money and its influence on Catholic life beginning with an extensive look at the considerable amounts the Knights of Columbus has donated to think tanks, news organizations and the generous grants it has made to church leaders and projects that conform to a conservative political ideology. Through detailed investigation and analysis of public tax documents and reporting on events, NCR has demonstrated that such spending provides individuals and other organizations entrée to the highest levels of church leadership and affords others an inordinately large say in church affairs.

Outlets like EWTN, the Ethics and Public Policy Center, First Things, the right-wing Federalist Society (a kind of scouting organization for conservative jurists), the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and the libertarian Acton Institute were beneficiaries of funding from the Knights and other wealthy Catholics who have successfully constructed a Catholic story for public consumption. The story is uncomplicated, sectarian, defined by the binary choices of the ongoing culture wars and a sanctified version of libertarian economics that comes dressed in gauzy Catholic attire.

It is a purely American concoction. The attire is a tawdry knockoff of the real thing. The narrative is an embarrassment when viewed against our sacred texts and the richness of the Catholic social justice tradition.

What we are witnessing is not the result of a program, at least none openly stated or described. It is, rather, the result of opportunity cleverly and creatively exploited. And the bishops themselves, especially those violative of the community's trust during the past 30-40 years, are most to blame for providing the opportunity.

We say up front that what is being done is neither illegal nor immoral. There is nothing inherently wrong with someone who backs up strong convictions with money. People with significant resources are often the means to survival for those of us in the nonprofit 501(c)(3) world. After all, Vatican II called for laity to bring the church into the world.

But our reporting details something quite extraordinary that has been developing for decades, made possible by the nonprofit mechanism in the United States and by the leadership vacuum that now exists in the U.S. episcopacy.

Several forces created that vacuum. The first was a document issued personally by Pope John Paul II in 1998.

**Titled *Apostolos Suos***, it was aimed at severely reining in the authority and teaching role of episcopal conferences.

Another is **the ongoing clergy sexual abuse scandal**. It has become a global scandal in which bishops the world over engaged in systematic cover-up of horrendous abuse of children and young people. As old patterns of abuse and cover-up continue to be revealed, it has drained the credibility of the bishops as a group.

**A lack of leadership** was also baked into the character of bishops appointed during the 35-year span of the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. It became clear shortly after John Paul was elected in 1978, as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith under him hauled in a string of distinguished theologians for disciplining and silencing, that his preferred candidates for the episcopacy would be submissive, devoid of questions or the slightest challenge to authority...[and] resulted in a conference acquiescent to Rome's every wish.

With the Vatican exerting unprecedented control over the American bishops, the conference turned inward, its meetings dominated by long discussions about liturgy, the language of prayers and promulgation of loyalty oaths for church workers and theologians. The conference had lost its voice and its place as an actor in the larger society.

Who has stepped into the breach as the primary conveyers of this uniquely American version of Catholicism? Mostly powerful men, no doubt well-intended in their love for the church and their particular vision of how it should look and function. Access to wealth is the common bond. A sampling of the most recognizable:

**Supreme Knight Carl Anderson**, political operative who once worked for Sen. Jesse Helms and President Ronald Reagan, now heads an organization whose members provide extraordinary resources and personal time to charity causes at home and across the globe. Millions of dollars raised by ordinary Knights of Columbus in parishes and via the group's insurance business go to such efforts. But Anderson also has the discretion to designate recipients of Knights' largesse, allowing him to donate millions to select dioceses, and to spend millions on Vatican projects and on media outlets and think tanks, even

*[Church for sale, continued on page 3.]*