



32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 10, 2019

Readings

This week:

2 Maccabees 7:1–2, 9–14

2 Thessalonians 2:16–3:5

Luke 20:27–38

Next week:

Malachi 3:19–20a

2 Thessalonians 3:7–12

Luke 21:5–19

Psalm

Lord, when your glory appears, my joy will be full. (*Psalm 17*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Larry Percell.

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, November 11, 7:00 pm	TMC Liturgy Committee, Thomas House
Thursday, November 14, 7:00 pm	TMC Board meeting, Thomas House
Friday, November 15, 6:00 pm	Fish Fest Supper, Thomas House
Saturday, November 16, 2:00 pm	Sr. Irene Loina, Report on FGM Alternative Rite of Passage, St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center

From Thomas Merton

I used to think it would be a good thing to die young and die quickly, but now I am beginning to think a long life with much labor and suffering for God would be the greater grace. However, the greater grace for each individual is the one God wills for him. If God wills you to die suddenly, that is a greater grace for you than any other death, because it is the one he has chosen, by his love, with all the circumstances of your life and his glory in view.

--The Sign of Jonas

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.

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Donate bath towels to Clara House:

Volunteers at Casa de Clara in downtown San Jose offer showers through its "Showers to the People!"

Since Hope Village was closed, the mobile shower trailer goes to several sites, such as church parking lots. The Thomas Merton Center of Palo Alto members donated about a dozen bath towels & a local physical therapy business donated about 35-hand-towels that will be washed every week, ready for the next guests.



Other "Showers to the People!" needs are gallons of vinegar, super-size liquid bath soap & shampoo. Casa de Clara in downtown San Jose is a small Catholic Worker House that offers hospitality for women and children experiencing homelessness.

If you are willing to volunteer call 408.297.8330 or email info@sjcw.org Casa de Clara is located at 318 N 6th St. San Jose CA 95112.

[<https://www.catholicworker.org>. The Casa de Clara website is under construction.]

Rosana Madrigal de Beattie is willing to collect items for Casa de Clara's "Showers to the People!" Bring them to Mass or call Rosana to arrange a pickup: (650) 969-3844.

November Food Drive begins this week:

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Confirmants and Youth Groups and the St. Vincent de Paul Parish Conference are seeking non-perishable foods for the annual November Food Drive.

Some people in our parish and in our neighborhoods face emergencies or adversity. Your gift of non-perishable food is an ideal opportunity to provide them the strength to overcome these challenges.

Grocery bags with the shopping list of most useful items will be handed out today after Mass. Please return the bags with your donations to the boxes in the back of the church for the next two November Sundays. The foods will be packaged up for distribution by St. Vincent de Paul volunteers.

For homeless clientele:
Vienna sausage/any flip-top canned meat, chicken, fish
Hearty soups with meat (flip-top)
Ready-to-eat meals (flip-top, e.g. chili)
High-protein snack bars
8-12 oz bottled water
Crackers (in sleeves)

For housed clientele:
Hearty soups (with meat or beans)
Chili & other ready-to-eat meals
Canned tomatoes, pasta sauce, salsa
Canned meat, chicken, tuna
Mayonnaise, condiments
Cooking oil
Cereal--hot & cold
Peanut butter & jelly
Crackers & Pasta

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!

Fish Fest Dinner this Friday, November 15:



The STA Site Committee has resumed the Friday Fish Fest dinners on the "teenth" Friday of the month.

Are you ready once again for tasty fish filets, chips, and tangy cole slaw? Come November 15 at 6:00 p.m. for this traditional fish supper in the Thomas House in the friendly company of others in our parish. Take a break from kitchen duty and join us on November 15. Suggested donation is only \$5 for dinner and \$2 for a beer or glass of wine--lemonade is free. And this Friday, we expect to enjoy a sing-a-long after supper led by Larry Schemel on guitar and banjo. It doesn't get much better than this!

BUT: Please, please RSVP to Helen Baumann, 650-327-9236, hbaumann@aol.com in advance. We need to be sure to have enough fish for all of you.

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 Channing 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

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Adopt-a-Family begins next Sunday:

Adopt a Family's 2019 Christmas Season begins next Sunday. Before and after the 8:45 Mass on Nov. 17 and 24, information and gift tags for students and families chosen from St. Elizabeth Seton School will be available. You may choose to purchase a child's or family's specific gift request or purchase a gift certificate from Target or similar store for a child to purchase a second gift. We are suggesting approximately a \$40 value per gift this year. [This is a separate initiative from the tags on The Giving Tree displayed at the back of church each year.]



All gifts are to be wrapped, tagged and returned to the TMC table at church by Sunday, Dec. 8 or 15. Contact Barbara Kent 650- 323-0879 with questions. Please stop by our table to sign up for a tag. Merry Christmas to all TMC elves!!

Solidarity across generations is key to future:

[By Kevin Clarke, *U.S. Catholic*, Sept. 2019]

Generational conflict has been a conceit in American pop culture since at least the Patty Duke Show, but rarely has it seemed closer to open combat than lately. While Baby Boomers find weekly examples of the ways Millennials ruin everything, younger folk can be equally robust in their scorn for “unwoke” elders departing into their golden years trailing a wake of broken economic and ecological promises.

The latest assessments of climate change's acute threats suggest the kids are, mostly, alright. Researchers say global leaders, mostly Boomers, have about a decade of carbon-enriched breathing space left, not to prevent climate change but maybe to mitigate its worst impacts.

But a degraded planet is only the beginning of the woes America's next generations can convert into listicle memes for Instagram-challenged seniors. Unemployment may be low, but so are the contemporary rewards of full-time work; young people are often saddled with mortgage-sized college tuition debt, and they face unaffordable housing and child care options as they transition into adulthood.

Margaret Mead long ago pointed out that in a fast-changing culture it is the insights of young people that must be listened to. They are not always speaking with words.

Gun violence—the second leading cause of death for the young—and the opioid epidemic have contributed to three consecutive years of diminished life expectan-

cy in the United States, but suicide has also taken a shocking toll, especially among the very young. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the suicide rate between ages 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 increased in 2017 to its highest point since 2000, spiking especially among teen boys.

Between ages 15 and 19, the suicide rate in 2017 was about 12 per 100,000—an increase from the 8 per 100,000 recorded in 2000. Tellingly, the rate was essentially flat between 2000 and 2007—most of the increase occurred after 2014.

The odds of adolescents suffering from clinical depression grew by 37 percent between 2005 and 2014 according to a study at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and the National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 3.2 million adolescents have had at least one major depressive episode in the past year.

Americans love to describe young people as the nation's future, but do our social welfare priorities offer real-world corroboration of such platitudes? One in 5 children in America is growing up poor even as public aid spending remains the target of choice among budget hawks in Washington, D.C.

Politicians chasing older voters push social and fiscal policy that prioritizes tax reductions for the already wealthy, obsess over Social Security and Medicare benefits, and sink deep resources into health and social services tilted toward seniors. Kids don't vote, and Congress seems content to bequeath Gen-Nexters staggering national debt and backward environmental policy. Young people have come to believe that instead of paternalistically watching out for them, Boomers are parasitically feeding off them.

“Young people are not meant to become discouraged,” writes Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit*, his post-synodal apostolic exhortation to the world's youth, “They are meant to dream great things, to seek vast horizons, to aim higher, to take on the world, to accept challenges and to offer the best of themselves to the building of something better.”

The good news is that this rich land has all the resources it needs to protect the human dignity of young and old alike. The needs and hopes of the young and old need not be pitted against each other. A determined, mindful intergenerational solidarity can help wrestle those resources from the wealthy and warmongering, cross generational divides, and put the wealth of the nation to the service of all.

[Kevin Clarke is the chief correspondent for *America* magazine and author of *Oscar Romero: Love Must Win Out* (Liturgical Press)]

What comes after the American empire?

[By Nathan Schneider, *America*, 11/5/19]

The condition of crisis has become so familiar in our politics, we forget what crisis really is and what it can do to us. Crippling polarization, climate catastrophe, military overreach, moral degeneracy—these and other threats to the American juggernaut are real. Are we ready for our crises to finally catch up to us?

This is a very un-American question, but it is a reasonable one. Every empire comes and goes, even fabulously wealthy ones with armies stationed all over the world, even ones whose language and pop culture has become a universal tongue, that hold such dominion and then demand of themselves even more greatness. Every period of alleged greatness is also a precursor to decline.

Recall the most shocking political lesson that Jesus taught his Jewish followers, who craved liberation from foreign rule: Rather than being a revolutionary leader, he died on a cross. Rather than bringing the troubled Roman Empire renewed glory, Christianity helped usher in its collapse.

his lesson is the social version of that medieval reminder, *memento mori*—remember that you will die. And from such remembering comes *ars moriendi*, the art of dying. At a time of plague and brutal wars, when decline was the general condition, handbooks spread across Europe for how a person can make the best of death, through the example and guidance of Christ. They instructed not just patients but their families and loved ones. The art of dying is not just personal; it is social.

Is there an art of dying for empires, too? What if our political culture were to ask not just how we will cling to some version of greatness or be even greater, but how this country will enter its eventual post-great future? Will we go down with guns blazing and nukes bursting, burning the planet to a crisp and locking ourselves in behind impenetrable walls? Or will America's decline bring about a more peaceful and equitable world, where more people can have opportunity and voice regardless of where they are born?

This is an unspeakable subject for our politicians, whose profession requires bowing to the idolatry of our greatness. Their range of motion extends only from whether America is already great or should be great again. But we can read between the lines to notice who among them is and is not able to imagine a universe not eternally subject to American might. Do they have a theory of graceful decline?

So far, the Democratic presidential nominees have been asked little about their foreign policy visions. This should change since presidents have more power over war and peace than any domestic legislation. For his part, President Trump has danced a perplexing

dance with decline—withdrawing troops from the most sensitive conflicts while escalating military spending and testing out several new conflict opportunities, like with Iran and China. He seems to enjoy living in a tin-derbox, while President Obama and Hillary Clinton preferred more calculated forms of world domination through secret drone strikes and sweeping trade pacts.

Decline is not only pertinent abroad, however. We tolerate our crises of poverty and inequality on the assumption that with the next round of greatness there will be riches enough to drown them. A *memento mori* culture would have no such dream to suffer toward; it would accept that the present abundance might be all we get and take on the hard questions of how to distribute that abundance more equitably. Rather than forestalling basic justice until greatness, what if we were to let ourselves experience more justice now?

I wonder what a politics would look like that could tolerate discussing the inevitability of decline. What would politicians say if we had a debate on what should follow the Pax Americana? What would their constituents expect them to say? Like the Iroquois Confederacy, what if our Constitution required that leaders plan for seven generations after our own?

The work of *ars moriendi* requires a humility and self-giving that American politics is not presently capable of—and never has been, I suspect. But that does not have to stop us from trying to practice the art of dying, in politics as well as in our lives. Can we help bring about a world that has grown out of the need for a super-power? Do we trust God to reign or only ourselves?

[Nathan Schneider, a contributing writer for *America*, is a reporter and professor of media studies at the University of Colorado Boulder.]

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, George Bouchee, 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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