



The Thomas Merton Center

*for Catholic Spiritual Development*

**The Thomas Merton Center  
25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
Sunday, May 24, 2019, 1:00 – 2:30 pm  
(via Zoom; Bob Capriles - host)**

**MINUTES:**

- 1) **Opening Prayer:** Gerard McGuire – *Stewardship Prayer*
- 2) **Call To Order And Welcome:** Gerard McGuire – In addition to the welcome, Gerard thanked Kay and Bob for making the video conference possible.
- 3) **Quorum Announcement: Kay Williams,** Membership Status: The stay at home order happened just at the time we usually begin the membership drive. One hundred people have emails in the Google group. We made the decision to proceed as if everyone is still a member. Kay's goal is to print another updated directory this summer. Jim Davis has made it possible to donate online. In terms of a quorum almost half of members were present. We will report to those unable to attend esp. those unable due to technology. Jim Davis has made membership payment possible on the website.
- 4) **Financial Report: Mike McMahon:** The financial report spreadsheet was shared on screen. Mike compared revenue and expenses for 2018 – 2019. The 2019 tax return was submitted and approved. He thanked Helena Wee for taking care of the bank account. There weren't any questions.
- 5) **Board of Directors Report: Gerard McGuire**

This is the 25<sup>th</sup> annual meeting; the first one was Feb. 23, 1996. Gerard apologized on behalf of the 7 Board members for the late notice and suggested we might hold a Town Hall type meeting in August/September. He spoke about the process of modifying bylaws; Rosana Madrigal mentioned (in Zoom Chat) that the bylaws were updated 8 years ago. This year's budget is already approved. The money donated to the Ecumenical Hunger Project in EPA has been raised from \$100/month to \$500/month. The minutes of the TMC Board meetings are on the TMC website and in the Thomas House Library. Gerard acknowledged that the Board is a figurehead group; most work is done by committees and volunteers.
- 6) **Committee Reports:**
  - i) **Spiritual Education: Mary Coady & Jim Davis:** The committee is planning to bring in Sister Joan Chittister next year (2021). They are looking at inviting Robert Ellsberg to speak in September. It may be web based. Fr. Ballard needed to postpone the Lenten retreat for personal reasons and then it was no longer possible to hold it. Peter Reynolds and Nicole Sault, TMC members, may be able to speak via a webinar. They are archeologists/anthropologists and have a cultural/spiritual perspective on faith. The Spiritual Ed. Committee continues to meet once a week via Zoom. Members of of the committee commented that they found the International Thomas Merton meeting last June a rich experience that gave them leads on possible speakers. They thanked TMC for making that possible. Anna Jaklitsch was researching a TMC Zoom account to facilitate large meetings/webinars.

- ii) **Liturgy: John Arnold:** There have been two recent Liturgy Committee meetings via Zoom during the Shelter in place. Fr. Stasys is considering holding outdoor masses at OLR and SAG. A major challenge is the age of many of our participants; they may not be able to participate safely even when restrictions are loosened. John Arnold and Maureen Locke are in lockdown in their respective retirement communities. The group decided to continue paying presiders and musicians. The parish will be investing in permanent hardbound hymnals for the parish but TMC will purchase and continue to use *Breaking Bread*.
  - iii) **Church Site: Vicki Sullivan:** The STA Site Committee meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month. Vicki is also the representative to the Parish Stewardship Council that meets every second Wednesday. News is shared through *Steeple Talk*. A lot of work has been done in the interior of the church – including the new altar furniture finished in 2019. The painting of the church exterior will begin in June. A garden-grooming day hasn't happened for a while but after some discussion it was decided to hold one – with social distancing--on June 6<sup>th</sup> from 10 to 12. Interested volunteers should contact Vicki. The Kenya Help sales were successful but are now shut down. The same is true of the Friday fish fries. Vicki and Helen were considering marking of pews for social distancing; they wanted to seek approval of Fr. Stasys..
  - iv) **Community Outreach: Barbara Kent:**
    1. The Adopt-a-Family program was very successful this past year. It reached 6 families with 32 members – providing 56 gifts. Seton School provides names of those families least able to celebrate Christmas.
    2. The Seton Golf Tournament was cancelled. Carmel Caligaris (Seton Development) was able to raise a significant amount of money without the event but still needs help. Private donations are encouraged.
    3. TMC members living on their own can be very lonely and may appreciate a quick phone call. Josie Colbruno in particular was mentioned. Josie is getting food from Meals on Wheels. This is another good organization to support. It was suggested that we should let Kay know of anyone else in the community who might need help. Bill Voorhees expressed concern for Richard Marty, who is taking care of his wife Nancy, hospitalized after a fall recently, and Art and Fran Adams who were in a bad automobile accident but both home now. They have a caregiver living with them.
  - v) **Hospitality: Bill Voorhees** expressed appreciation for the efforts of Larry Lopez and his daughter Maya, Nancy Hogan, and Sandy Voorhees.. The committee seems to be within budget. TMC is still paying Happy Donuts and they are very appreciative and surprised.
  - vi) **Kenya Help:** Margo McAuliffe reported that Fr. Kiriti has left his parish because the bishop did not practice social distancing and his health is compromised by asthma. The Kenyan non-profit set up to distribute Kenya Help donations, Empower the World, is purchasing food and offering it to any family in our sponsorship group. Margo recommending that TMC members consider supporting two other feeding programs. If we write checks to Kenya Help Margo can forward them the money: Life Bloom – helping people affected by the closing of the flower industry, and Sister Irene Loina's program. She is feeding 160 people in a Nairobi slum whenever she can. Conditions in Kenya are dire, due to floods and famine; schools are closed.
- 7) **Community Comments/suggestions/news:**
- a) Ron – Can we have a Zoom mass with our presider?

- b) Maureen said she would pursue. She then read quotes from Msgr. John Sandersfeld and Paul Prochaska, thanking us for sending the stipends. She also shared a quote of Fr. Mike Marini: “Our highest holy calling is to be the church not to go to church”. She asked how we can continue to connect.
  - c) Mary Coady suggested we might consider hiring gardeners for STA garden grooming days, providing work for such gardeners. Further plans were made for the June 6<sup>th</sup> garden work day.
- 8) ***Thank You to Members of Our Community:*** Gerard said that all current members of the Board have agreed to serve another year, recognizing the difficulty of recruiting new Board members in this pandemic.
- 9) ***Next Annual Meeting:*** May 16, 2021
- 10) ***Adjournment/ Closing Prayer:*** Inspirational Video – Kevin McCormack [“If This Time”](#)
- 11) ***Other Conversations (1:30 to 2:00)***
- ❖ Maureen again thanked Bob and Kay.
  - ❖ Dick Placone shared via email his concern that the meeting was only accessible to “the technological elite.”
  - ❖ Helen Baumann asked how to get hold of the statement by Catholic doctors that Ron Ariagno had shared. Kay will forward the link.
  - ❖ Gerard described practices in Ohio where churches are re-opening – 6 foot distances, no singing, changes in communion. It was suggested that Ohio is not being cautious enough and may not be the best model.
  - ❖ It was mentioned that continuing to stream Mass on a permanent basis would help those unable to attend Mass even when this pandemic is over. It was also pointed out that a virtual Mass does not need to be offered in a church. One of our presiders could conceivably record Mass at home.
  - ❖ Helen Baumann suggested we consider an outdoor mass in the park across the street. Larry Sullivan pointed out that the County still has restrictions on gatherings of any size even if outdoors.
  - ❖ Bob Busch had left the meeting by this point but he shared concerns via Zoom chat about how we can counter the pro-Trump conservative Catholic message in an election year – how can we help share a more progressive view?
  - ❖ Another point from Bob Busch: Concern for the institutional reform of the church– in particular Bishop Dolan’s obeisance to Trump.
  - ❖ Bob also suggested that our virtual church presence could help us attract visitors beyond our geographical boundaries.
  - ❖ Anna pointed out that Governor Newsom was expected to issue more guidelines on Monday.

The meeting ended at 2:59 p.m.

Notes by Ann Akey (with additional notes by Kay Williams)  
(prepared 26 May 2020)