



# 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 12, 2017

## Readings

*This week:*

Wisdom 6:12–16

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

Matthew 24:42a, 44

*Next week:*

Proverbs 31:10–13, 19–20, 30–31

1 Thessalonians 5:1–6

Matthew 25:14–30

## Psalm

Blessed are those who fear the Lord. (*Psalm 128*)

## Today

Today's presider is Rev. 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 13, 7:00 p.m. TMC Liturgy Committee, Thomas House Library  
Friday, November 17, 6:00 p.m. STA Fish Fest Dinner, Thomas House

## From Thomas Merton

Music is pleasing not only because of the sound but because of the silence that is in it: without the alternation of sound and silence, there would be no rhythm. If we strive to be happy by filling all the silences of life with sound, productive by turning all life's leisure into work, and real by turning all our being into doing, we will only succeed in producing a hell on earth.

If we have no silence, God is not heard in our music. If we have no rest, God does not bless our work. If we twist our lives out of shape in order to fill every corner of them with action and experience, God will silently withdraw from our hearts and leave us empty.

—*No Man Is An Island*

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*

### ***Next Fish Fest dinner is November 17:***



All are welcome to the STA Friday Fish Fest on Friday, November 17, at 6:00 pm at the Thomas House next door to the church.

We have our own large, portable convection oven now! And a cart was donated by Paul Deisinger to hold and move the oven. So we are ready for the Fish Fest supper this month.

Come prepared to enjoy fish and chips, tasty Asian coleslaw, beer and wine in an informal setting, getting to know STA Mass attendees and others from Our Lady of the Rosary and St. Albert's (nametags make it easy to strike up a conversation).



Lemonade is gratis; \$2.00 for a glass of wine or a beer. Sponsored by the STA Site Committee, a \$5 donation would be appreciated but not required. You are welcome to

bring a bottle of wine or dessert to share. RSVP to Helen Baumann, 650-327-9236, hbbaumann@aol.com (so ample food is available).

### ***Day of the Dead altar for your pictures:***

During November, all are invited to display pictures of their deceased loved ones on the Day of the Dead altar, which will remain up until Advent begins on Dec. 3. Please label your pictures, limited to 8"x10", please, on the back with your name and phone number, so they can be reunited with you when the altar is dismantled on December 1.

### ***November food drive:***

During the month of November, we ask you to be especially generous in your giving to our food collection program. Since most of the people we help are homeless, we ask for foods that are portable and highly nutritious: hearty soups or chili in flip top cans, Vienna sausage, boxes of crackers packed in 'small stacks', fruit cups, granola bars, juice pouches, and small bottles of water.

### ***Cards for First Baptist Church in Texas:***

We want the congregants of First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas to know our prayers and hearts are with them in the senseless killings of their families and friends in their place of worship this past Sunday.

If you care to join our effort to send condolences and hope to this church, please place your card in the collection basket on Sunday. The Human Concerns Committee will mail them together in one package from our parish.

### ***Adopt-a-Family program:***

Today we begin our TMC Christmas Adopt-a-Family project. At our table outside, we will provide tags for specific gifts or gift certificates for members of several Seton families in need. You can pick up a tag or 2 for a gift of about \$40 to help to make someone's Christmas special. This is not connected to the tree we usually have in the back of the church. Thank you!

### ***Spirituality Tuesday Assembly this week:***

***November 14th: The Dark Nights, According to St. John of the Cross.*** with Father Kevin Joyce, Ph.D.

In the writings of St. John of the Cross, one of the greatest mystics in history, thousands of people have found a path for drawing closer to God. What frees us from the bondage of unhealthy habits and leads to liberation of the human spirit is what St. John of the Cross calls, the "Dark Night," referring to the experience of privation or void. The soul has to be emptied of what is not God in order to be filled with God. There are 4 dark nights that Fr. Kevin Joyce will apply to our personal spiritual journeys. Join us for an inspirational evening!

This talk will be held at the St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center, 1095 Channing Ave., Palo Alto, from 7:00—8:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

### ***Advent retreat Dec. 2 with Fr. Kevin Ballard:***

The TMC Spiritual Education Committee is very happy to present a morning retreat with Fr. Kevin Ballard, S.J. on Saturday, December 2, 9:00 am—12:00 noon at St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center.



Fr. Ballard will lead us in a consideration of Pope Francis's encyclical, *The Joy of the Gospel*, with the emphasis on "joy." So come prepared for a few short hours of joyous prayer, laughter, and community.

Coffee and morning wake-up snacks provided. Donations gratefully received.

### ***Nov. 19: Campaign for Human Development***

In the U.S., one in six people live in poverty. With the collection next weekend, you support programs that address the causes of poverty and provide a sustainable future for those who are struggling across the country. In addition, 25% of funds collected remain in our diocese to fund local anti-poverty projects. Please help support those who are on the margins of our society.

Bulletin submissions must be e-mailed by Thursday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. Kay, kaywill@pacbell.net, (650) 270-4188. Michelle, myhogan@comcast.net, (650) 493-8452.

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## **Merton Conference in January:**

A conference titled "Thomas Merton: A Prophet for Our Times" with Brother Don Bisson, FMS, is now accepting registrations for January 13-14, 2018, at Mercy Center, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame.

The conference will study Thomas Merton's writings, messages, and prophetic vision for our times.

We are living in a time of political chaos and a regression on many of the issues of the 1960s. By staying with Merton's own words, we will be challenged, in this new generation, to face racism, violence, political shadows, and war.

Come and create a spiritual community, to engage our world in the light of wisdom.



Don Bisson, FMS is a spiritual director, trainer, and supervisor of directors, who is widely respected as a commentator and workshop leader on the interrelationship of spirituality and psychology. A Marist brother based in New York, he has graduate degrees in liturgy, spirituality, and transpersonal

psychology, and a D. Min. from the Pacific School of Religion in the area of Spiritual Direction and Jungian Psychology.

For more information, go to [www.donbisson.org](http://www.donbisson.org). Register on the website at [www.mercy-center.org](http://www.mercy-center.org) or by calling 650-340-7474. Registration deadline is January 6, 2018. The program begins Saturday, January 13 at 9:30 a.m. and concludes Sunday with lunch. Cost: \$195/\$120 commuter.

Don't miss Don's other programs at Mercy Center:

*Men's issues in Spiritual Direction*, Sat., Jan. 6

*Dreamworks as Spiritual Practice*, Sun., Jan. 7.

**Board:** Vicki Sullivan, [vickisullivan@comcast.net](mailto:vickisullivan@comcast.net), (650) 327-5339  
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Dear Fellow TMC Members,

Below is an article about the letter sent to the Trump Administration re the proposed income tax reform. In my view and that of others, this is "Robin Hood" in reverse, i.e. rob the poor to give to the rich. If enacted as written, this so called reform will seriously hurt poor members of our country and will harm the middle class, while greatly rewarding the ultra rich. Please contact our congressional representatives (Feinstein, Harris, and Eshoo), asking them to strongly oppose this bill.

--Richard Placone

## ***U.S. bishops speak out on tax bill:***

(By Michael O'Loughlin, *America*, 11/8/17)

Catholic bishops say the G.O.P.-backed tax reform plan is "unconscionable" and "unacceptable," pointing to "fundamental structural flaws" that they say "will raise income taxes on the working poor while simultaneously providing a large tax cut to the wealthy." In a letter sent to members of the House of Representatives, three U.S. bishops who head committees on domestic justice, international justice and Catholic education examined the tax proposal, which cleared a key procedural hurdle on Nov. 9, saying that the proposal did not meet moral criteria "centered on care for the poor and concern for families."

The bishops charged that the G.O.P. tax proposal "appears to be the first federal income tax modification in American history that will raise income taxes on the working poor while simultaneously providing a large tax cut to the wealthy. It must be changed for the sake of families—the bedrock of our country—and for those struggling on the peripheries of society who have a claim on our national conscience," reads the letter, signed by Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Fla., Bishop Oscar Cantú of Las Cruces, N.M., and Bishop George V. Murry, S.J., of Youngstown, Ohio.

The letter cites many areas of concern, including estimates that show tax rates going up for the poor while the wealthiest Americans would see big tax cuts. "No tax reform proposal is acceptable that increases taxes for those living in poverty to help pay for benefits to wealthy citizens," the bishops wrote. They note that the Catholic Church supports a "progressive tax code" that places a higher burden on the wealthy than the poor, and they said that this plan fails in that regard. "In the years that the working poor suffer a tax increase under this bill, millionaires

*(Continued on page 4.)*

**PRAY FOR US:** Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Wayne Cummings, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, Edna and François Jamati, 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 Bulletin editors: Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams. See listings adjacent.]

### ***(Bishops on tax bill (continued from page 3)...***

and billionaires will see significant tax decreases,” they wrote. “This must be fixed.”

The Trump administration and congressional Republicans want to pass tax reform before the end of the year, following failures to deliver on many of the president’s campaign promises, including a pledge to repeal the Affordable Care Act. But bishops say the deadline does not allow enough time for debate. “Because tax policy is far-reaching, Congress must provide ample time for Americans to discuss the complexities of these reforms and fully understand their effects,” they wrote. “The current timetable does not provide adequate time for that discussion.”

The bishops did praise some elements of the bill, including an expansion of the child tax credit and a provision they say could expand “access to schools of choice.” But overall, the bishops said the process had been too rushed and that the bill needed to be reworked. The bishops also fear that the resulting deficit from the tax proposal will be used as justification for future cuts in social welfare programs

“Rather than exploring even modest reductions to these dramatic cuts for the wealthiest, the bill raises taxes on the vulnerable and creates a strong incentive to cut the social safety net,” they wrote. In a section about how the bill would impact families, they wrote that the bill “places new and unreasonable burdens on families, especially those who welcome life or experience serious hardships.” They highlighted the removal of a tax credit for adoption as one area of concern, though an amendment to the original bill inserted it back into the bill that could be voted on as early as next week. (A separate plan under consideration in the Senate also retains the adoption tax credit, the Associated Press reported.)

Other items they say could harm families include the elimination of a tax credit for medical debt and child care and stricter rules around parents’ social security numbers, a provision they say could harm immigrants. The letter also takes aim at a provision of the bill that critics say could result in lower donations to charities and churches.

### ***Death penalty contrary to Gospel says Pope:***

[By Gerard O’Connell, *America*, Oct. 11, 2017]

Pope Francis declared today that the death penalty is “contrary to the Gospel.” He said that “however grave the crime that may be committed, the death penalty is inadmissible because it attacks the inviolability and the dignity of the person.”

He did so in a major talk on Oct. 11 to an audience of cardinals, bishops, priests, nuns, catechists, and ambassadors from many countries on the 25th anniversary of the promulgation of the catechism, affirming that there has been a development of doctrine in the church and a change in the consciousness of the Christian people on the question of the death penalty. The pope’s comments and the timing of them suggest that a revision of the Catechism of the Catholic Church may be forthcoming to reflect this new development in the church’s understanding....

Reiterating an observation in his Letter to the President of the International Commission against the Death Penalty, March 20, 2015, Francis said that “No man ever, not even the murderer, loses his personal dignity, because God is a Father who always awaits the return of the son who, knowing that he has done wrong, asks pardon and begins a new life.”...

His statement is sure to be welcomed by bishops’ conferences and the overwhelming majority of the Christian faithful around the world, many of whom have long called for the church to take this stance. His predecessors have been slowly moving towards the position taken today by Francis. Every pope since St. John XXIII has appealed to governments worldwide on behalf of persons condemned to death, asking for clemency.

When St. John Paul II published the catechism in 1992 it still admitted the use of the death penalty (No. 2266). But strong reaction from bishops and the faithful in many countries led him to revise the text in 1997, with the help of then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. The revised text (No. 2267), however, still did not exclude the death penalty on moral grounds as Pope Francis did today; it said that given the possibilities the modern state has of rendering the criminal incapable of doing harm again, then “the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity ‘are very rare, if not practically non-existent.’”

...[T]oday [Francis] took a much greater step than any of his predecessors by declaring publicly on a solemn occasion, directly related to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, that the death penalty is “contrary to the Gospel” and “inadmissible,” making clear that the catechism must address the question in this more complete way....He described the catechism as “an important instrument” for presenting and helping the faithful understand better the faith and for coming close to our contemporaries by presenting the faith as “a significant response for human existence in this particular historical moment.”

In a highly significant statement, Pope Francis emphasized that “it’s not sufficient to find a new language to announce the faith of always; it is necessary and urgent that, faced with the new challenges and new horizons that are opening for humanity, the church can express the new things of the Gospel of Christ that, while enclosed in the Word of God, have not yet come to light.”...

Aware that some will question this radical change in the light of what happened in the Papal States and church in the past, Francis explained that “in past centuries, when faced with a poverty of instruments of defense and social maturity had not yet reached a positive development, recourse to the death penalty appeared as the logical consequence of the application of justice which had to be adhered to.”...

Clearly anticipating objections of a theological nature from some quarters, Francis explained, “Here we are not in the presence of any contradiction with past teaching, because the dignity of human life from the first instant of conception to natural death has always found in the church its coherent and authoritative voice.” Indeed, he said, “the harmonious development of doctrine requires putting aside positions in defense of arguments that already appear decidedly against the new understanding of Christian truth.”

—Contributed by TMC Member Terry McCaffrey