



First Sunday of Advent

November 27, 2016

Readings

This week:

Isaiah 2:1–5

Romans 13:11–14

Matthew 24:37–44

Next week:

Isaiah 11:1–10

Romans 15:4–9

Matthew 3:1–12

Psalm

Today

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord. (*Psalm 122*)

Today's presider is Rev. Xavier Lavagetto, O.P.

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

No TMC meetings this week.

From Thomas Merton

Do not depend on the hope of results. When you are doing the sort of work you have taken on, essentially an apostolic work, you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself. And there too a great deal has to be gone through as gradually you struggle less and less for an idea and more and more for specific people. The range tends to narrow down, but it gets much more real. In the end, it is the reality of personal relationships that saves everything...

The big results are not in your hands or mine, but they suddenly happen, and we can share in them; but there is no point in building our lives on this personal satisfaction, which may be denied us and which after all is not that important...

The real hope, then, is not in something we think we can do but in God who is making something good out of it in some way we cannot see...

—Letter to James Forest, 1965, in *The Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*

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

Altar of Remembrance pictures:

The pictures you have placed on the Altar of Remembrance are in a box placed in the church vestibule for you to pick up at your convenience.

Adopt-a-Family continues today:

Adopt a Family's 2016 Christmas Season continues today. Information and gift tags for students and families



chosen from St. Elizabeth Seton School are available at the table in front of the church. You may choose to purchase a child's or family's specific gift request or purchase a gift certificate from Target or a similar store for a child to purchase a second gift. We are suggesting a \$40 value

per gift this year.

All gifts are to be wrapped, tagged and returned to the TMC table at church by Sunday, Dec. 4 or 11. Contact Barbara Kent 323-0879 with questions. Please stop by our table to pick up a tag. Merry Christmas to all TMC elves!!

Annual Christmas crèches December 3-7:

The LDS Church is having its annual crèche show at their church, 3865 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto, December 3-7 from noon to 9 p.m. each day.

This annual showing of art of the Christmas Season is a treasure for all, with 350 displays of nativity crèches from 50+ countries around the world and over 100 exhibitors of many faiths—some from our STA parishioners. The exhibit features a community service project, hands-on activities, a Children's Room with crafts and costumes, daily puppet shows and live holiday music. And admission is free.



Share canned goods with neighbors in need:

Please bring a food item or two to church each Sunday! Most needed are soups, canned meats/tuna, pasta/sauce, beans, peanut butter, rice, powdered milk, crackers, jelly/jam, cereal, & canned fruits/vegetables.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Sr. Fran Ciluaga, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, 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 below.]

TMC donation envelope enclosed today:



An envelope for your donation to the Thomas Merton Center is attached here. The Merton Center is a non-profit religious education membership organization, founded in 1995. We rely on your support to make possible this Sunday Mass, spiritual education events and retreats, and publications. Please support our lay-led, progressive, Vatican II-inspired, open membership organization. *Merci!*

Homelessness is topic November 29:

You are invited to the Spirituality Tuesday Assembly (STA): "Homelessness in the Year of Mercy", at St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center, 1095 Channing Ave., Palo Alto, Tuesday, November 29, 7—8:30 p.m.

The panel presentation will explain the community plan to end homelessness in Santa Clara County, as well as several local on-going efforts to relieve the suffering of local people. There are four presenters, each one a member of our parish Human Concerns committee:

- **Veronica Duluk** will start off with a discussion of showing mercy to people all over the world.
- **Anne Fillin** will then tell us how the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and other helping agencies do not give up on those with ongoing problems.
- **George Chippendale** will explain the concept of the "Safety Net," established by United Way over thirty years ago.
- **Mike Veuve**, who was the CFO of both Catholic Charities and Emergency Housing Consortium, and **Veronica Duluk**, the Vice President of the board of directors of Santa Clara Catholic Charities, will talk about the community plan to end homelessness in Santa Clara County.

They will describe the programs coming along that the general public needs to support to provide the facilities and the personnel for doing Corporal Works of Mercy.

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339
Bulletin: Kay Williams (Nov.27, Dec. 18 & 25) kaywill@pacbell.net
Michelle Hogan (Dec 4 & 11) myhogan@comcast.net
Finance: Judy Creek, 493-5371, grannyjam2@gmail.com
Hospitality: Jim Davis, 328-2584
Liturgy: John Arnold, 325-1421, jsaoso@comcast.net
Sally Benson, 408-972-5843, sallymbenson@gmail.com
Membership: Kay Williams, 650-270-4188, kaywill@pacbell.net
Needs Net: Roberta Kehret, 650-494-1488, robkehr@yahoo.com
Adult Education: Jim Davis, 650-704-8002, Jim_Davis@pacbell.net
Mary Coady, 650-261-9155, coady_94025@yahoo.com

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

Advent wreath tradition:

The Advent wreath...is a Christian tradition that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent in the liturgical calendar of the Western church.

It is usually a horizontal evergreen wreath with four candles and often, a fifth, white candle in the center. Beginning with the First Sunday of Advent, the lighting of a candle can be accompanied by a Bible reading, devotional time and prayers. An additional candle is lit during each subsequent week until, by the last Sunday before Christmas, all four candles are lit. Many Advent wreaths include a fifth Christ candle which is lit at Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. The custom is observed both in family settings and at public church services.



The concept of the Advent wreath originated among German Lutherans in the 16th Century... Research ... points to Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808–1881), a Protestant

pastor in Germany and a pioneer in urban mission work among the poor as the inventor of the modern Advent wreath.... During Advent, children at the mission school *Rauhes Haus*, founded by Wichern in Hamburg, would ask daily if Christmas had arrived. In 1839, he built a large wooden ring (made out of an old cartwheel) with 20 small red and 4 large white candles. A small candle was lit successively every weekday and Saturday during Advent. On Sundays, a large white candle was lit. The custom gained ground among Protestant churches in Germany and evolved into the smaller wreath with four or five candles known today. Roman Catholics in Germany began to adopt the custom in the 1920s, and in the 1930s it spread to North America. ..

In Medieval times Advent was a fast during which people's thoughts were directed to the expected second coming of Christ; but in modern times it has been seen as the lead up to Christmas, and in that context Advent Wreath serves as a reminder of the approach of the feast.

In Catholic churches, the most popular colors for the Advent candles are violet and rose, corresponding with the colors of the liturgical vestments for the Sundays of Advent. In the Western church, violet is the historic liturgical color for three of the four Sundays of Advent: Violet is the traditional color of penitential seasons. Rose is the color for the Third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday from the Latin word meaning "to rejoice"—also from the first line of the traditional entrance prayer (called the Introit) for the Mass of the third Sunday of Advent. Rose-colored vestments are used on Gaudete Sunday, as a pause to the penitential spirit of Advent.

—Wikipedia

Catholic Worker in Redwood City:

Dear Friends,

As Thanksgiving approaches, we bow to our God and to our supporters in deep, deep gratitude for all of the gifts that make our lives and work possible.

So much is happening!!! Susan Crane (who lives and works at our home for teens) and two other supporters (Ed Ehmke and Mary Jane Parrine) are off to North Dakota. They will stand with our Native American brothers and sisters in solidarity. They and hundreds of others will non-violently and prayerfully oppose the oil pipeline that threatens sacred burial grounds, towns and waterways, that service millions downstream. Again and again big oil interests threaten and destroy life.

Erika and her two sons have just moved into our home for children "at risk." The boys are in Hoover School and their mom just got a full time job. They need everything. With your donations we purchased school uniforms, shoes, jackets, underwear and a few other things. As soon as mom saves money for car insurance, we'll find a donated car so she can shuttle the kids to school and herself to a better job.

Another young woman (a student from Notre Dame University in Belmont) just joined us for the rest of this school year. She is from the Middle East and had no place to live. Believe me, it's complicated! She joins Marissa (another Notre Dame student). Marissa used to live with us when she was a little girl and is one of the teens that we have been helping with a \$2,000 scholarship. In addition to 15 academic units, Marissa is also working almost full time.

Aida, Susan and I (Larry) have been at the house for years. Doug is our newest live-in worker. A lawyer, a graduate of the Peace Corps, and former monk, and with some experience at other Catholic Worker Houses, Doug comes with loads of talent and history. God willing, he'll be here a while too.

In addition to our home on Cassia Street (for children in need) which is totally free, we continue to offer very, very low cost housing to 12 day laborers and six families. In these residences, the first month is free, December is free, and if you lose your job, then your minimal stipend for room and board is forgiven. This is bad capitalism at work and is the way Christians can treat one another.

Altogether, each night, we help house about 25 people, not counting the campers on our front porch. By the way, after 2 years of working with veterans, we've de-

(Catholic Worker, continued on page 4)

Advent Wreath prayer: First Week of Advent:



Loving God, be with us as we wait in joyful hope for the birth of your Son. Prepare our hearts to celebrate his coming this Christmas. Give us the strength to live in peace with

everyone, especially those closest to us. Help us to make amends to those we have hurt. Help us also to forgive anyone who may have hurt us. We light this first candle of our Advent wreath as a symbol of your light and love. May the flame of your love always burn brightly in our hearts. Amen.

(Catholic Worker, continued from page 3)

cided that they need “care” and “management” that we can’t provide. I must say, that when I write this it feels like a defeat.

This Thanksgiving and Christmas, we will adopt over 300 families with food and gifts. All of our work relies on the grace of God and the Body of Christ, which you all are.

Thank God we are in good hands.

Peace and gratitude,

Larry Purcell, Ronnie Georges, Mary Jane Floyd, Jan Johanson, J Arthur White, Aida Figueroa, Susan Crane and Doug Herbek.

[Catholic Worker House, 545 Cassia St., PO Box 513, Redwood City, CA 94064, (650) 366-4415]

Pope Francis on doubts about faith:

(By Cindy Wooden, *Catholic News Service*, 11/23/16)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- “I have” many times, Pope Francis said -- but such doubts can be “a sign that we want to know God better and more deeply.”

“We do not need to be afraid of questions and doubts because they are the beginning of a path of knowledge and going deeper; one who does not ask questions cannot progress either in knowledge or in faith,” the pope said Nov. 23 at his weekly general audience....

The key, he said, is to see those doubts as a call to deepen one’s faith either through study or through seeking the guidance of another believer.

“To do this, it is necessary to listen to the word of God and understand what it teaches us,” he said. “But, at the same time, an equally important path is that of living the faith as much as possible.” When faith is seen mainly as “an abstract theory,” he said, “doubts multiply.”

But when faith is lived and shown in service to others, the pope said, “then many doubts vanish because we feel the presence of God and the truth of the Gospel in the love that, by no merit of ours, lives in us and that we share with others.” #

Disassociate abortion from politics:

[By Pat Perriello, Nov. 22, 2016 *NCR Today*, a retired educator from the Baltimore City Public Schools, served as the coordinator of Guidance and Counseling Services and an associate professor at Johns Hopkins University. He is a former seminarian from St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore. Pat has long been interested in religion and politics and is currently concerned about the direction of the institutional church as well as the state of politics in the country.]

Donald Trump received 52 percent of the Catholic vote in the presidential election. That is 4 percentage points higher than what Mitt Romney received four years ago. The vote of Hispanic Catholics for Hillary Clinton was 67 percent. Four years ago, President Barack Obama received 75 percent of the Hispanic Catholic vote.

People, including Catholics, have a wide variety of reasons for voting the way they do. Yet it is also true that many priests and bishops continue to apply pressure to the faithful to vote based on a candidate’s position on abortion. A priest in San Diego told his flock that they would go to hell if they voted for Clinton. His bishop had to inform the people that this was not true, and that Catholics need to vote their consciences. He made it clear that the church does not tell Catholics how to vote.

It is past time for the issue of abortion to be disassociated from politics. Consider what we have seen from Trump thus far. We have chosen to elect an individual whose views on foreign policy are disturbing. We chose a candidate who attacks Muslims, immigrants and women. He has and continues to be a divisive figure who fosters hate and even violence among many groups.

While we cannot know at this point what a Trump presidency will be like, Trump’s words and actions since winning the election do little to alleviate the concerns he has created throughout his campaign.

The notion that none of these global or social justice issues matter as much as the question of abortion is just not a tenable position. When we consider the damage that could be done to this country and the world by selecting the wrong person for the job of president, it is irresponsible not to consider every pertinent issue before voting.

Pope Francis told us early in his papacy that it was time to stop talking so much about abortion. His point was that our position on this issue is well-known and there are other issues that need to be addressed. Certainly, there are other issues that need to be addressed by the president of the United States in 2016.

The presidency is a difficult job and yet we have selected someone who has shown no grasp of the complexity of the issues he faces. It is inconceivable to me that in the face of the challenges of the 21st century, it could be considered appropriate to vote for a presidential candidate based solely on their position on abortion. #