



24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 17, 2017

Readings

This week:

Sirach 27:30–28:7

Romans 14:7–9

Matthew 18:21–25

Next week:

Isaiah 55:6–9

Philippians 1:20c–24, 27a

Matthew 20:1–16a

Psalm

The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion. (*Psalm 103*)

Today

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

Monday, September 18, 7:00 p.m. TMC Spiritual Education Committee, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

One thing that has kept me very busy in the last few weeks is the international crisis. It is not really my business to speak out about it, but since there is such frightful apathy and passivity everywhere, with people simply unable to face the issue squarely, and with only a stray voice raised tentatively here and there, it has become an urgent obligation. This has kept me occupied and will keep me even more occupied, because I am now perfectly convinced that there is one task for me that takes precedence over everything else: working with such means as I have at my disposal for the abolition of war. This is like going into the prize ring blindfolded and with hands tied, since I am cloistered and subject to the the most discouragingly long and frustrating kinds of censorship on top of it. I must do what I can. Prayer of course remains my chief means, but it is also an obligation on my part to speak out insofar as I am able, and to speak as clearly, as forthrightly and as uncompromisingly as I can. A lot of people are not going to like this and it may mean my head, so do please pray for me in a very special way...

—“Letter to Etta Gulick, October 1961,” 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

Parish Picnic today at OLR:

The annual STA Parish Picnic is on from 11:15 am till 2:30 pm today at Our Lady of the Rosary Church playground.

The Knights of Columbus will again provide tasty cooked food, and individuals are invited to bring salads and desserts to share. [Last names starting A-O bring salads/side dish and P-Z bring desserts.] Entertainment will be provided by Palo Alto Dancercise, Drum and Tai Chi (PADDT) and Sound Sounds of Praise.

Join in the Free-Cycle tables: bring/take books, small electronics, plants/produce, CDs/DVDs, art supplies, toys, household items.

Benefit for Seton School October 11:

On Wednesday, October 11, Seton School presents Ron Hansen and Tobias Wolff, two distinguished award-winning Catholic authors, in conversation.

St. Elizabeth Seton School
1095 Channing Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301

6:30 p.m. - Welcoming Wine Reception
7:30 p.m. - Ron Hansen and Tobias Wolff
8:15 p.m. - Questions and Answers
8:30 p.m. - Book Signing Opportunity

Tickets: Adults: \$35.00
Teachers, Students and Seton Alums: \$20.00
Purchase tickets online at <http://www.setonpaloalto.org> (<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3081810>).
Make check to "St. Elizabeth Seton School." Tickets will be held at the door.

Questions? Carmel Caligaris, 650-326-1258
or carmelcaligaris@setonpaloalto.org.

Ron Hansen is an American Catholic novelist, essayist and deacon. He is the Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J. Professor in the Arts and Humanities at Santa Clara University in California, where he teaches fiction and screenwriting. He holds a B.A. in English from Creighton University, an M.F.A. in creative writing from the University of Iowa, and an M.A. in spirituality from Santa Clara. He is also a graduate of Creighton Jesuit Preparatory School in Omaha. Deacon Hansen has won a number of book awards and literary prizes, including an award in literature from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Tobias Wolff was born in Birmingham, Alabama, and grew up in Washington State. He attended Oxford University and Stanford University, where he now teaches English and creative writing. He has received the Story Prize, both the Rea Award and PEN/Malamud Award for excellence in the short story, the Los Angeles Times Book Award, and the PEN/Faulkner Award.

CROP Hunger Walk, Sunday, Oct. 8:

A St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Team has been created to support the CROP HUNGER WALK, on Sunday, October 8 at Nealon Park, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park.

Walk with us, make a donation or both! Festivities begin at 1 pm; walks start at 2 pm. Walkers may choose a .6-mile, 2-mile or 5-mile walk and enjoy live bands, food, games and a silent auction. Thanks to our parishioners who raised \$1,140 last year!



CROP Hunger Walk is sponsored by Church World Service, a cooperative

ministry of 37 Christian denominations. Over 5 million walkers have participated in more than 36,000 CROP Hunger Walks in the last two decades alone. This ecumenical effort helps children and families in need to have food for today, while building for a better tomorrow. CROP Hunger Walkers, volunteers, and sponsors put their caring into action, raising funds to help end hunger and poverty at home in the US and around the world.

An important note: One-quarter of funds raised by us will be contributed to the Ecumenical Hunger Program in East Palo Alto for distribution to the needy in our local community.

For information, please call Paul Chestnut, Human Concerns Committee, 650-426-8499 or email pcchestnut@comcast.net. Website to register for walk and donate is <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/menloparkca>.

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 in adjacent column.]

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339
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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Action must mount to end death penalty:

The California Supreme Court's recent affirmation of PROP 66 (limiting the time allowed for death penalty appeals), with the caveat that the 5-year limit was not mandatory, is a wakeup call for us.

As it stands, 18 persons have completed their appeals and executions could start within a year. These results act as a call to action for death penalty opponents. We must now seriously join the battle to end the death penalty in California. Our goal must be to put together a campaign in which an electorate favors abolition of the death penalty at a rate well in excess of 50%. We must also raise sufficient funds for a successful ballot initiative.

We need to bear in mind we are not starting from scratch. In 2016 over 5 million voters supported abolition of the death penalty. In large areas of the state a majority of voters supported PROP 62 (replacing the death penalty with life in prison without possibility of parole). For example in Los Angeles County 51.7% voted for PROP 62. Likewise, in the Bay Area 58.5 % supported PROP 62.

In the short term we need to activate our base and launch a campaign to educate and win the hearts and minds of the public. Also, in the short term we need to hold our District Attorneys' feet to the fire and ensure that they do not seek the death penalty. This is particularly the case in Los Angeles, where the District Attorney is an ardent proponent for the death penalty.

Your support for our campaign is critical. There are short term efforts that you can do to get the ball rolling: Letters to the Editor, voicing your support in your religious services for abolition of the death penalty, winning over high profile members of our community and the media—all are key. Attend rallies, attend California People of Faith chapter meetings, establish Speaker Bureaus, hold speaking events and tell your friends.

—Terry McCaffrey, President, California People of Faith 650-324-7517, terrymc0531@gmail.com

Collections in Sept. for disaster victims:



Bishop McGrath has asked all parishes to take up a special collection to support and assist those who suffer from the catastrophic disaster of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Special Disaster Relief envelopes can be found in the pews. Please be generous as the need is great. You may place your donation in the collection at any Mass during the month of September. Proceeds will be forwarded to Catholic Charities USA.

“Dies Miraculum,” (a poem by Brian Doyle):

Imagine this: You are standing at the stove, first thing in the morning,
And the dog is sprawled too close to your feet, as is his usual custom,
On the off chance something good to eat will fall from the sky (bacon
That one time, which he never forgot, surely the best day he ever had)
And there are just enough coffee beans, and miraculously there is milk,
And there is a subtle mysterious unknowable woman in the other room,
Her unknowability probably being the very font and essence of interest,
And there are three children sleeping like logs, and you have a job that
Doesn't feel like work at all, and the heat grumbles on when you ask it,
And no one is shooting at us, and the water is crystalline and abundant,
And the electricity works, and the roof doesn't leak, and an osprey flies
By, so my question is this: isn't this the wealthiest man who ever lived?
It occurs to me that he is. It occurs to me that occasionally he realizes it.

[—In *U.S. Catholic*, Aug., 2017: Brian Doyle, long time contributor to *U.S. Catholic*, editor of *Portland Magazine*, poet, essayist, story teller, celebrated the miraculous in the most mundane. He died in May 2017.]

Francis jolts again, continued from Page 4:

U.S. Catholics was in place.

So Francis' rollback of that authority is actually a realignment with the council's intent. It is, in political terms, a return to center, to moderation and to a trust of the community's local leaders. Whether the U.S. bishops will claim that trust — whether, indeed, they can regain the capability to robustly debate items without falling into ideologically driven discord — is to be seen. But Francis has restored their adulthood and given them again a latitude to discern that mature spiritual leaders should possess.

It is a Pauline gesture of sorts that acknowledges that not all cultures are the same, that not all believers need to take on the effects of an ancient, mostly European, expression of the faith. The Latin Mass, still a glorious and inspiring liturgy for some, need not be the norm for everyone, nor the benchmark against which all other worship forms are measured....

On several fronts, then, Francis has asked us to walk away from that paralysis and to take new steps in freedom.
#

Francis jolts us again:

[By the Editorial Staff, *National Catholic Reporter*, 9/15/17]

The most recent papal pronouncement giving more control to national bishops' conferences over the translation of liturgical texts had the quality of another of the jolts we've become accustomed to during the Francis papacy.

As his tenure advances, however, those moments increasingly feel less like jolts and more like a series of coherent adjustments, long overdue, for a community that had become top-heavy and overly dependent on rigid legalism in an attempt to maintain order.

Correcting that imbalance won't occur without struggle. The varied interests in the church who have already spent inordinate time and influence debating everything from the manner of translation to the material composition of eucharistic vessels are no doubt gearing up once again to join the fight...[T]he reality is that discussion of our public worship and changes to it can evoke deep emotions and the zero-sum passions of a political contest.

It is perhaps not persuasive to those who deeply oppose the direction of the Francis papacy... [T]he sermon the pope gave in Medellin, Colombia, was a fitting companion piece to the liturgy announcement. Christianity, said Pope Francis, is not an exercise in how perfectly one follows laws and dogma. More important is the life of faith....

The tensions, of course, are as old as the community. They are as evident today as they were when the original community's leaders argued over who could join and what they could eat. And aren't we fortunate that the visions they saw and the hearts they were developing answered: everyone and everything. All are blessed and good in God's sight.

Francis seems to be conveying two basic ideas in the document issued on his own initiative (*motu proprio*). Titled *Magnum Principium*, it diminishes the authority of the Vatican from "authorizing" all translations to a simple "review" of such documents. **First**, that mature leadership of national bishops' conferences can be trusted to maintain fidelity to the essence of liturgical worship while tailoring language to particular circumstances, and, **second**, that universality and unity are not synonymous with sameness.

By extension, one might add that it also acknowledges that a rigid adherence to some narrow conception of translation from Latin is not a measure of fidelity.

The phrase "liturgy wars," ... crept into the discussion because liturgy became the subject not only of heated debate but also of a kind of ecclesial subterfuge in recent years.

That condition was understandable, if regrettable, because, as we wrote earlier: "Liturgy, our central act of

worship, embodies the genetic code of the community. It holds the key to what we think about God; about Christ's action in human history; about our relationship to the Trinity; about our relationship to each other; about the relationship between ordained and lay, between the community and the wider world."

A lot is at stake, and that was evident from the moment the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) affirmed its first document, the groundbreaking "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," which led the era's reform of church life.

Altars were turned around, language changed from Latin to the vernacular, the humanity of Christ was recognized in profound ways along with reverence for the divinity of Christ, and the liturgy acknowledged that in addition to our individual, vertical relationship with God, a horizontal relationship with God existed through the community.

Liturgy was no longer a static exercise of mumbled Latin, a language the vast majority of Catholics worldwide did not speak, in which individual devotion and docility were key elements. It became, instead, the act of worship that undergirded and fortified a community in service beyond the walls of the worship space.

Also inherent in that council document was a significant shift in ecclesiology, which then-Fr. Joseph Ratzinger described approvingly as the "decentralization of liturgical decision-making" and "the long-desired strengthening of episcopal power." ...[T]here was no mistaking the intent of the council document.

Pope John Paul II moved most aggressively to rein in the authority of national conferences, and there was no more telling example of the lengths he would go to in accomplishing that ambition than what he did to override English-speaking bishops, their liturgical experts, and especially the U.S. bishops.

The "reform of the reform" became inevitable when the Vatican, in 1997, decided to countermand decades of process and expert work and appointed a committee, whose members brought none of the required expertise to the table, to rework translations... 11 men met in secret in the Vatican to overhaul the American lectionary, or readings used in Mass. Short-circuiting a six-year debate over 'inclusive language' by retaining many of the most controversial uses of masculine vocabulary, and revamping texts approved by the U.S. bishops, this group decided how the Bible will sound in the American church.

It was the ultimate exercise of centralized power. In the intervening years, all of the mechanisms that permitted collegiality and respected the work of experts in liturgy and translation were essentially dismantled. Over a quarter of a century, John Paul II had his bench in place...and the will of the Vatican on the particulars of translation for

Francis, continued on Page 3.

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.