



# 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 3, 2017

## Readings

*This week:*

Jeremiah 20:7-9

Romans 12:1-2

Matthew 16:21-27

*Next week:*

Ezekiel 33:7-9

Romans 13:8-10

Matthew 18:15-20

## Psalm

My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God. (*Psalm 63*)

## Today

Today's presider is Msgr. John Sandersfeld.

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. Members of the Thomas Merton community plan 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 by check or cash, every Sunday there is a donation basket in the back of church or by the coffeepot after Mass—or you can use the envelope in the bulletin the last Sunday of every month to mail your donation. **Please do not put your TMC donation in the collection baskets passed during Mass (these are for parish contributions only).**



## Calendar

No meetings this week.

## From Thomas Merton

The requirements of a work to be done can be understood as the will of God. If I am supposed to hoe a garden or make a table, then I will be obeying God if I am true to the task I am performing. To do the work carefully and well, with love and respect for the nature of my task and with due attention to its purpose, is to unite myself to God's will in my work. In this way I become His instrument. He works through me. When I act as His instrument my labor cannot become an obstacle to contemplation, even though it may temporarily so occupy my mind that I cannot engage in it while I am actually doing my job. Yet my work itself will purify and pacify my mind and dispose me for contemplation.

—*New Seeds of Contemplation*

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

### ***Taking a stand with America's struggling labor force:***

*By Kevin Clarke at uscatholic.org (this article appeared in the September 2013 issue of U.S. Catholic). Kevin Clarke is a writer living in New York.*

The summer... may go down as one of the most scorching in recorded history. The blazing sun broke records and spirits from Death Valley to the island of Manhattan. Labor Day may not come soon enough this year for many who will be happy to see such a summer end; among them will be many thousands of American laborers. This summer has been a scorcher as well for working people in the United States.

Labor Day has always offered something of a mixed bag for U.S. workers. Its September date was locked in to keep the American acknowledgement of labor several months removed from international labor's "communist" May Day observances, even though May Day has its origins in American workers' fight for the eight-hour workday. Labor Day was hastily introduced nationwide in 1894, intended as a cultural balm to U.S. laborers six days after the bitter and bloody Pullman Strike had collapsed.

Despite a brief period of expansion arising out of the Great Depression and ending in the 1950s, the story of organized labor in United States since then has been one of frustration and decline. Unions now represent less than 7% of the nation's private sector workforce, and poverty and economic uncertainty are at historic levels for a majority of Americans. Labor Day may now be most associated with barbecues and a chance to pick up some bargains at a local Target or Walmart, among the giant U.S. retailers who will celebrate labor's holiday by clearing surplus summer wear and squeezing big profits out of their minimum or near-minimum wage, nonunion workforce.

Wealth inequality in the United States has grown worse since the 2008 economic crisis devoured 8 million jobs and tossed thousands from their homes in often fraudulent foreclosures. Since 2009, job growth has been steady but short of what is needed to put "discouraged workers" back in the workforce, and jobs that have been created have been low-paying or temporary fills with few benefits. Despite a presumably pro-labor White House and Senate, efforts to make it easier for unions to organize workers and raise the profoundly diminished national minimum wage have gone nowhere, as has legislation to introduce mandatory sick days and other family-friendly

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### ***Mystery donor:***

While Margo was in Kenya, a generous donor gave Kenya Help a large check dated June 20, through a Schwab account. The check came with a note from the donor, but the person who was doing the banking lost the note and doesn't remember the name. Not only would we like to thank that donor, but also, we need to write a letter at tax time for the donor's tax deductions. I believe the donor was from TMC because the check was written to "Thomas Merton-Kenya Help." If you were that wonderful person, please call Margo at (650) 322-0821 or e-mail her at [margo@kenyahelp.us](mailto:margo@kenyahelp.us). And thank you so much!!!

### ***Stanford Medical Center is looking for volunteers:***

Stanford Medical Center/Stanford Health Care is looking for bilingual volunteers to assist in their Catholic Holy Communion to the Sick program through the Spiritual Care Department. If you are a compassionate listener and would consider becoming a volunteer, please contact Raksha Patel at (650) 723-5101 or [spiritualcare@stanford-healthcare.org](mailto:spiritualcare@stanford-healthcare.org) for more information.

### ***Support our kids:***

The Ecumenical Hunger Program (EHP), in East Palo Alto since 1975, assists people through immediate crises and helps them regain stability and independence. It provides food, clothing, furniture, household essentials, support, and advocacy. At present, it needs new shoes and other school supplies for children in that community, many of whom are students at St. Elizabeth Seton School.

Gift cards and donations can be sent to Ecumenical Hunger Program, 2411 Pulgas Avenue, East Palo Alto 94303. Or for more information, you can contact EHP at (650) 323-7781 or go to their website, [ehpcares.org](http://ehpcares.org).

Please keep bringing food for the Food Closet this summer. Donations have been down, and the Food Closet still needs flip-top soups and entrees, as well as small bottles of water, crackers, granola bars, fruit cups, juice pouches. Please continue to be generous with your food donations, and with your dollars too!

Please remember in your prayers this week: Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Michael Kiriti, Hunter Kubit, Fr. Lavagetto's mother, 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.

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## ***Taking a stand. . . continued:***

policies. Remarkably, even overtime pay has become a target in Washington.

The Catholic Church has long filled the ranks of America's union organizers and continues to do so, but the once reliable support of U.S. Catholic bishops has faltered in recent years. Some bishops have offered rhetorical support to persistent campaigns against public-sector unions, as organized labor's last stronghold became a target of opportunity for forces hostile to unions and collective bargaining rights.

So what's a laboring person to celebrate this Labor Day? For one thing, nothing brings out the best in people and institutions than the worst of times. Crisis management has energized labor before, and union organizers have suffered and succeeded under far worse circumstances. Maverick unions are having localized successes and taking nontraditional approaches, such as the "Fight for \$15" and OUR Walmart campaigns, which strive to galvanize nonunion workers, suggesting that new thinking and strategies are possible in the pursuit of economic justice for working people.

Traditional connections between labor and religious communities are being restored and reinvigorated, and new networks—such as the coalition of labor, religious, and immigrant communities intent on seeing comprehensive immigration reform—are being created. The energy from that effort will likewise propel a new generation of Catholic union organizers, many from the U.S. Latino community.

They will be men and women solidly grounded in the suffering and struggle of today's working people, besieged on many sides by forces which seem insurmountable, but discovering anew the power of solidarity.

## ***Prayer for Labor Day:***

God of Creation, help us celebrate Labor Day by recalling the Church's teaching on work and workers' rights, as well as by praying for all workers and those seeking work.

We celebrate the Church's long history of defending workers' rights and the right to unions.

We acknowledge that we are all called to work as co-creators of the Kingdom of God, as Saint Pope John Paul II has instructed us, and as builders of the common good.

We affirm that work is central to the development of the human person and enables each person to contribute to the common good.

We know that work is first for the good of workers and their own human flourishing, and not primarily for profits.

We recognize that all workers have dignity and that all workers must be treated with respect.

We call for a just minimum wage so that all families might have decent living conditions.

We support the calls for workers' health and safety in all working environments.

As we reflect on our Church's teachings, we pray for all those currently employed and ask that they enjoy the dignity of work and all the rights to which workers are entitled.

We especially pray for those who are unemployed and seeking work; may they know the support of our communities and may they be graced by solace and hope so they do not despair.

We pray that our local, state, and federal government leadership work together to find solutions so that all who seek work may find a decent position in workplaces that uphold the dignity of the worker.

Give us all the gift of good work and the satisfaction of jobs well done. God of creation, hear our prayer. Amen.

—Dr. Jane Deren, *Education for Justice*

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,  
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,  
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,  
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,  
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,  
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

—Walt Whitman, 1819–1892

## ***Fact Sheet: Productivity and profits are increasing; minimum wage isn't:***

From 1948 to 1973, productivity increased by 96.7% and real minimum wage increased by 91.3%.

From 1973 to 2013, productivity increased by 74.4%, but real minimum wage increased by only 9.2%.

Real minimum wage reflects the purchasing power of money. When real minimum wage decreases, this means that inflation has grown faster than minimum wage, making the actual value of the wage lower.

When it comes to the pace of annual pay increases, from 1979 to 2013, the top 1% wage grew 138% since 1979, while wages for the bottom 90% grew 15%. If the wages of the bottom 90% had grown at the average pace over this period—meaning that wages grew equally across-the-board—then the bottom 90%'s wages would have grown by 32%, more than double the actual growth. The current federal hourly minimum wage is \$7.25. This works out to an annual full-time salary of \$15,080. As the U.S. Catholic Bishops' 2012 Labor Day Statement states:

*This Labor Day, our country continues to struggle with a broken economy that is not producing enough decent jobs. Millions of Americans suffer from unemployment, underemployment, or are living in poverty. This represents a serious economic and moral failure for our nation. As people of faith, we are called to stand with those left behind, offer our solidarity, and join forces with 'the least of these' to help meet their basic needs. We seek national economic renewal that places working people and their families at the center of economic life.*

—Education for Justice



## ***The Catholic bishops' honeymoon with Trump is over:***

*Abridged from an article by Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese, August 24, 2017, at ncronline.org. Fr. Reese is a columnist for National Catholic Reporter and author of Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church.*

Although many evangelical ministers warmly embraced Donald Trump as the Republican Party presidential candidate, the U.S. Catholic bishops never publicly endorsed him. They did express strong support for some of his positions—for example, his opposition to abortion and his support for religious freedom. That, together with their negative response to the views of Hillary Clinton, made many observers believe that although they did not publicly endorse him, they were happy to see him elected. . . . But the relationship between Trump and the Catholic bishops appears to be a marriage of convenience rather than the love affair he has with evangelical ministers. Already there have been some public spat.

Most recently, in response to the events at Charlottesville, the bishops have established an ad hoc committee against racism. . . . Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago spoke out in a way that could be interpreted as critical of the president's wishy-washy response to Charlottesville. "There can be no equivocating," Cupich wrote in his archdiocesan newspaper. "Racism is a sin. White supremacy is a sin. Neo-Nazism is a sin."

This is not the bishops' first break with President Trump. At the beginning of February, the bishops found it "troubling and disappointing" that he did not roll back the Obama executive order prohibiting federal contractors from discriminating on the bases of sexual orientation and gender identity. Here Trump was more liberal than the Catholic bishops. Nor has he yet dealt with their

concerns about the contraceptive mandate in the Affordable Care Act. But what really bothers the bishops is the president's actions on immigration and refugee policy. During the first seven months of the Trump administration, the bishops issued over 20 statements on the treatment of immigrants and refugees, all of them very critical of the Trump administration. Nor did they mince their words. The bishops said they were "disheartened," "deeply troubled," "deeply concerned," and "disappointed" by the president's actions on immigration and refugees. They worried about "bigotry," "fear, and intolerance." . . .

Likewise, the Catholic bishops, who had not supported Obamacare because of their concerns about abortion and birth control, failed to come to Trump's assistance in its repeal. During the first seven months of this year, they strongly argued in 11 statements against repeal of Obamacare unless something better for the poor were enacted. They especially fought any roll back in the expansion of Medicaid or subsidies to low-income people buying insurance, which were at the heart of the Republican plans.

. . . The bishops are exhibiting all the signs of a potential breakup with Trump. The honeymoon is over. Corporate America is already distancing itself from Trump as if he were a lame duck with no future. Even Republican members of Congress are grumbling. Since in the bishops' minds this marriage never took place, it may be easy for them to quietly climb out of bed and disappear into the night. They have gotten most of what they wanted out of the liaison; it is time to move on before it is too late.