
July 24, 2011



Annual Report of

*The Thomas Merton Center
of Palo Alto*

Prepared for the membership for the period between May 2010
through May 2011.

Co-presidents' Report

SUMMARY

The Thomas Merton Center (TMC) continued its mission and deepened the contribution of its members by encouraging more involvement in active committees. Throughout the year, TMC sponsored a weekly Sunday Mass, arranged thought-provoking educational forums and speakers, supported St. Elizabeth Seton School in Palo Alto with its regular monthly donation, and facilitated the fundraising efforts of various TMC members, including Marci Ariagno and Margo McAuliffe, on behalf of the St. Francis Xavier High School for Girls and the *Mji Wa Neema* orphanage in Naivasha, Kenya.

TMC continued to rely on the annual year-end appeal, member contributions and donations received at our public events as its primary income.

HIGHLIGHTS

The year's highlights:

- Met with Fr. Michael Marini in February to discuss ways to sustain and grow our TMC community and increase membership.
- Met with new pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Fr. Matt Stanley, to acquaint him with the Thomas Merton Center.
- Participated in hosting a celebration at Seton School on January 22 to honor Deacon Carl Bunje's retirement.
- Held a dinner on February 13 at the St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center honoring Msgr. Eugene Boyle on the occasion of his retirement.
- Continued outstanding speaker series through the Spiritual Education Committee.
- Continued to sponsor the 8:45 AM Sunday liturgy at St. Thomas Aquinas church in the spirit of Vatican II.
- Continued monthly financial support of St. Elizabeth Seton School.
- Increased the mailing list of "friends" due to the outreach of TMC public events.
- Continued fundraising for special projects (such as seminars for young adults) to assist Fr. Daniel Kiriti in his parish in Naivasha, Kenya, and advertised and supported Kenya Help, a non-profit organization founded by TMC members, so that the next class of girls was accommodated and the first class graduated.
- Continued our "Adopt a Family" Christmas project by providing gifts for four specific families in need from East Palo Alto.

We remain an all-volunteer organization. Individual members continued to volunteer many hours of their personal time, many performing multiple services. Their wide-ranging talents assure that the good works of the organization were well conceived and effectively executed. Our volunteers are recognized each Pentecost Sunday with a special blessing during Mass in the sanctuary.

BOARD MEMBERS

Current Board members include Vicki Sullivan (Acting Secretary), Eleanor Kraft, Bob Foley, Donna Johnston-Blair (Treasurer), Barbara Kent and Rosana Madrigal (Co-presidents). Mary Coady and Judy Creek are each completing multiple terms of dedicated service to the TMC Board. Diana Diamond submitted her resignation this year.

Kiriti Grants Fund

SUMMARY

The Kiriti Grants program has returned to its original goals of funding special projects proposed by Fr. Daniel Kiriti for the youth of his parish in Naivasha, Kenya.

Financial Report

**FY 2010
GENERAL FINANCIAL
SUMMARY**

- Overall contributions to TMC were lower for 2010. While contributions for Spiritual Education events increased in 2010, monthly contributions decreased by about 11%.
- Spiritual Education expenses increased from \$4,695 in 2009 to \$6,819 in 2010, offset by \$4,504 in donations received from those attending our programs.
- Liturgy Committee expenses decreased from \$5,492 in 2009 to \$5,056 in 2010.
- Expenditures include \$1,000 monthly to St. Elizabeth Seton School in Palo Alto, Calif.
- Printing expenses decreased from \$2,995 in 2009 to \$2,315 in 2010.
- In 2010 TMC gave \$1,000 to St. Thomas Aquinas Parish for the Thomas House renovation.
- Late in 2009, TMC was the recipient of a generous stock grant from Jane Bahr's estate (see Addendum II, revised Financial Statement for 2009). In early 2010, the stock was sold and the proceeds put into a money market account with Morgan Stanley. Jane had requested specific uses for the money: donating to St. Vincent de Paul in Palo Alto and East Palo Alto (including the Hidden Villa summer camp program); updating and maintaining the TMC website; and funding a noted speaker for Spiritual Education. In 2010 a total of \$4,000 was given to St. Vincent de Paul in Palo Alto and East Palo Alto and the Hidden Villa summer camp program per the direction of the Jane Bahr Fund. In the near future, some of this fund will be used for the TMC website and a speaker.

See Addenda II and III: Statements of Revenues and Expenses by Year for the Years Ended December 31, 2009 and 2010.

**FINANCE TEAM
MEMBERS**

The finance team of Donna Johnston-Blair and Judy Creek continued to serve TMC as treasurer and bookkeeper, respectively.

Hospitality Committee Report

SUMMARY

The Hospitality Committee continues to be active in providing refreshments after Sunday Mass and during most events of the TMC. The committee consists of a number of community members who alternate responsibilities or volunteer for specific duties as needed. Jim Davis coordinates the group.

The good work and success of this group of dedicated individuals is vital to our community's effort to reach out to all who attend and participate in education seminars, retreats and liturgies sponsored by the TMC.

We continue to use Fair Trade Coffee and other Fair Trade products to the maximum extent possible. This commitment helps support small farm cooperatives all over the world in order to foster sustainable agriculture and to build pride, independence and community empowerment in those areas. We also use recyclable and compostable materials to help assure the sustainability of our natural environment.

Much gratitude is extended to the following community members who volunteer their time to perform the various tasks and faithfully organize the hospitality aspects of our events:

**HOSPITALITY
COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Rudy Bahr	Dean Judd
Jim Davis	Eleanor Kraft
Corkie Freeman	Mercedes McCaffrey
Dick Freeman	Terry McCaffrey
Carmen Gutiérrez	Bill Voorhees
Juan Gutiérrez	Sandy Voorhees
Nancy Hogan	and others

Liturgy Committee Report

RESPONSIBILITIES AND FOCUS

The TMC Liturgy Committee (LC) is the liturgy committee for the St. Thomas Aquinas 8:45 Sunday mass. The LC is responsible for all aspects of these liturgies.

The LC interviews, screens and invites all presiders and guest homilists and provides them with stipends for each liturgy. The LC trains, co-ordinates and schedules all the ministers involved in these liturgies. The LC provides the books, linens, vessels and wine used in these liturgies. The communion bread used each Sunday is baked by community members assigned to that ministry. The LC is also responsible for decorating the church and providing and caring for flowers throughout the year.

The 8:45 liturgy is a parish liturgy. The LC is responsible for coordination and communication with parish staff which includes providing the pastor with names and information on all new presiders, providing a monthly schedule of the presiders, scheduling the church for other liturgies and events, and coordinating with the parish liturgical coordinator regarding the church environment (flowers and other seasonal decorations).

The 8:45 liturgy is regularly attended by TMC members, non-TMC members who were regulars at the St. Ann's Sunday liturgies and other members of the parish community who have no association with either TMC or St. Ann's. Average Sunday attendance is 120. Because the church is located downtown we do have some regular attendees from nearby retirement facilities and some regular or occasional visitors from the homeless community. We also have visitors to events at Stanford and families of patients at Stanford hospital.

It is one of the goals of this committee to make all feel welcome and included. The members of our ministries include both TMC and non-TMC members. All attendees are welcomed and greeted as they enter and are invited to make and to wear name tags. The LC requests all presiders to welcome newcomers at the beginning of each liturgy and to ask for any special events to be celebrated and shared. Hospitality, which includes coffee, juice and donuts, is provided after each Sunday liturgy and all who are attending the liturgy are invited. A special invitation is extended to visitors and newcomers attending that morning.

MINISTRIES

Another goal of the LC is to include as many individuals as possible in each liturgy. Our ministry groups are purposely large. Liturgy should be seen as a participatory experience. The Eucharist is sacramental: experiencing God in our lives as Church, as community. The community attending each liturgy can see that all who serve, whether as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, musicians,

sacristans, collection takers, etc., come from the pews, from the assembled community.

During the last year the liturgical ministries included the following: liturgy committee, 7 members; lectors, 20; Eucharistic ministers, 25; musicians, 18; sacristans, 7; bread bakers, 5; collection takers, 6; greeters, 9; bulletin editors, 3; and hospitality, 11. The LC provides a recommitment evening once a year for both the Lectors and Eucharistic ministers.

COMMUNICATIONS

The TMC Sunday bulletin is edited by Michelle Hogan and Kay Williams. It is a ministry of the TMC Board and not specifically the LC but the articles are closely coordinated with the liturgical events. In addition, the LC provides spiritual inserts in the bulletin during Advent and Lent.

PRESIDERS

During the past year, we have used a rotation of priests. They are, Msgr. Gene Boyle; Fr. Matthew Stanley, the St. Thomas Aquinas parish pastor; Fr. Randy Valenton, Pastoral associate; Fr. George Aranha; Fr. Michael Marini; Fr. Jerry Brown, S.S.; Fr. John Sandersfeld; and Fr. José Antonio Rubio. We had two guest presiders during the year: Bishop Patrick McGrath in February and Fr. Daniel Kiriti in October, who was visiting from Kenya.

We also had guests (community members) providing reflections on the Gospel on Mother's Day: Maureen Locke, Jean Gill and Susan Fisher.

The LC has chosen the number and range of presiders in order to provide the community with different spiritual, theological and liturgical views. It would be difficult to find one priest who pleases all the people all the time. We encourage the community to be open to all who preside so that they may experience the blessings of this spiritual richness.

MUSICIANS

During the past year, our liturgical music has been led by two different groups. There are 9, occasionally expanding to 11, (regular) members of the TMC Community Singers led by Larry Schemel. From time to time Bill McFarland has led this group when Larry has not been available and another group has not been scheduled. The Eke-Sete Family Choir is led by guitarist and cantor John Eke and includes Lani Eke on the piano, other adults, and always children. The number of the choir members varies, but it is never less than six. The Eke-Sete Family Choir will be leading the music twice a month in the coming year, rotating with Larry Schemel and with Bill McFarland, on occasion,

FROM THE COMMUNITY

Each leader/group brings its own style and repertoire of sacred songs and encourages the 8:45 community to join in the singing. The community seems to enjoy the variety of music and the spiritual lift they provide for our Sunday celebrations. Our liturgies are enriched and our spirits renewed by the musical talents and spiritual gifts of these talented musicians.

SPECIAL LITURGIES

The LC planned one special liturgy at St. Thomas Aquinas church. This was an evening liturgy for Ash Wednesday, which was attended by many members of the parish community as well as by the TMC community.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

On a monthly basis during the announcements at the end of mass, TMC's sponsorship of the Sunday liturgy and the educational programs has been announced and all have been invited to donate to support these efforts and TMC.

LITURGY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Our team consists of two co-chairs and six other members, each of whom is responsible for coordinating some aspect of the liturgy. Our goal always is to seek ways to make our liturgies reverent, spiritually enlivening, nourishing, inclusive and meaningful to all who attend them. We welcome the comments and suggestions of the community to help us achieve that goal. Committee members are: John Arnold (co-chair), Sally Benson (co-chair), Barbara Narewski, Michelle Hogan, Maureen Locke, Larry Schemel, Judy Washburn, and Kay Williams.

SUMMARY

The LC meets the second and fourth Monday of every month to plan and to coordinate these liturgies and related activities. All decisions are made during these meetings. We do not vote; we talk things through and reach agreement. Therefore, we ask that you bring your ideas and requests to us early so that we can discuss and accommodate them. We invite and welcome input from the community. We want to know what we do well as well as suggestions for improvements. We also invite and welcome all community members to participate in liturgy in whatever way you feel comfortable. We believe that the participant has a different and deeper spiritual experience than the observer.

Membership Coordinator's Report

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS AND INFORMATION

The number of members registered with TMC as of June 22, 2011, is 151, representing 108 families. Membership renewals and the corresponding participation in TMC committees and projects among members show support of TMC programs.

Memberships are accepted throughout the year. Visit the TMC website for information and forms, <http://thomasmerton.org> .

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mary Washburn (Chair), Barbara Kent (outreach), and Kay Williams (database and lists).

TMC Needs Net

SUMMARY

Roberta Kehret coordinates a network to link those members who must deal with a difficult or stressful situation in their lives with others who can help in some way to alleviate the immediate stress or difficulty. Currently Needs Nets has five core-members : Nancy Hogan, Fran McVittie, Bonnie Shirley, Helen Short and Roberta. This committee welcomes additional participants for this ministry. Contact information for Needs Net is listed in the Sunday bulletin.

Spiritual Adult Education Committee Report

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

The goal of the Adult Education Committee is to present quality programs that are informative, spiritual, lively, timely, and broadening. Our programs are open to all, and we hope to attract individuals regardless of religious affiliation.

In 2010 and early 2011, the Committee sponsored a variety of programs. The team met approximately once per month and more frequently during the later planning stages of major events.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Major events since the last full Adult Education report published in mid 2010:

- **Sr. Kathleen Deignan PhD**, theologian, author, singer/songwriter and teacher, presented a multifaceted two-day retreat on spirituality, nature and the environment in the form of a dialogue between Thomas Merton and Thomas Berry. The retreat was held at the Presentation Center in Los Gatos, CA which offered a secluded, environmentally friendly venue new to TMC. The event was held on September 10 and 11, 2010.
- **Fr. Daniel Kiriti**, Pastor of St. Xavier Parish, Naivasha, Kenya, renewed old friendships and gave an update on his various projects, many of which are supported by TMC and members of the community. The event was held on October 16 in the OLR facility meeting room.
- **Susan Cabrera**, author, lecturer, researcher and management consultant, lead the advent retreat this year amid fall splendor at Vallombrosa Center in Menlo Park on December 10. Her presentation was entitled *Embracing the Greatest Commandment*. She used her personal and professional experiences and spiritual beliefs to help participants reach a deeper understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ and to grow closer to God.
- **Bro Guy Consolmagno S.J.**, Vatican astronomer and author/researcher, was unable to deliver the Annual Walt Gill lecture on science and religion on February 3, 2011, as scheduled, due to travel

difficulties. Bro. Guy offered his apologies to the community and is willing to make it up on his next visit from Rome.

- **Catherine Wanjohi**, executive director of LifeBloom International Services, spoke on her work among sex workers in her native Navaisha, Kenya, and throughout Africa. Ms. Wanjohi is a dynamic woman and gave a lively talk at the St. Albert the Great Center on March 27, 2011. She was hosted by TMC's Margo McAuliffe who spends time in Navaisha enhancing educational opportunities and fundraising for projects that have had a major impact on youth in the community there.

EVENT VENUES

The Vallombrosa and Presentation centers worked out well this year for the events we had in those facilities.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

TMC programs are promoted through our web site (www.thomasmerton.org), through cross promotion with other groups, through the TMC bulletin and through flyers and emails sent to interested individuals and organizations. Over the past few years we have developed an extensive mailing list of those who have attended our programs and wish to be kept informed of others.

HOSPITALITY

The hospitality team and other members of TMC have generously offered their time and effort to help host our programs, providing refreshments and greeting program attendees.

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members of the Adult Education team are Mary Coady (Co Chair), Judy Creek, Jim Davis (Co-Chair), Anna Jaklitsch, Barbara Kent, Pat McCarthy, and Kay Williams.

The Spiritual Education committee's work has been supplemented with creative suggestions by other members of TMC.

Web Master's Report

SUMMARY

The TMC website, www.thomasmerton.org, continues to function as an online presence for TMC. TMC Sunday Bulletins are currently being posted to the website. The site has suffered some irregularities due to the age of the authoring software (it is not being supported by the provider). New software is being reviewed as well as a redesign and updating of the site itself. Any suggestions or offers of help would be gratefully appreciated.

WEB CONTENT MANAGER

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Addendum I: TMC Vision and Mission Statement

VISION

Members of The Thomas Merton Center (TMC) strive to develop a spirituality based on Jesus Christ's message of love, compassion and forgiveness, and to live His message in today's world. The TMC community seeks to attract those who are on a quest for a deeper spiritual life and invite them to share in this vision.

MISSION

The purpose of The Thomas Merton Center is to provide means by which interested persons can enhance their spiritual development through education, spiritual practice and social outreach. From its Catholic roots, TMC seeks to join with members of other faiths, Christian and non-Christian, to support religious education and spiritual development.

The principal spiritual development pathways provided by The Thomas Merton Center are:

- ◆ Adult Spiritual Education programs, retreats and days of recollection
- ◆ Sunday liturgies and other Catholic liturgical programs
- ◆ Support for organized religious education schools and programs
- ◆ Social outreach programs
- ◆ Community development activities

BACKGROUND

The Thomas Merton Center for Catholic Spiritual Development was founded by a group of Roman Catholic lay persons committed to the future of the Catholic Church. It is through the Merton Center that the founders and current leaders develop and present programs which foster a renewed spirituality for those who seek it. Reflecting the themes of the Second Vatican Council, the Merton Center offers "a new way to be Catholic."

The Thomas Merton Center offers its programs without restriction to all who are interested.

PRINCIPLES

The Thomas Merton Center is:

- ◆ Independent
- ◆ Ecumenical
- ◆ Collegial
- ◆ Inclusive
- ◆ Self-ministering
- ◆ Self-propagating
- ◆ Self-supporting
- ◆ Non-profit

The Thomas Merton Center will explore new and varied ways for persons to discover, develop and foster a renewed spirituality through a continued examination of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. The TMC will promote renewed dedication to this basic message and under it encourage reunification among active and non-practicing Catholics. Lay leaders will work with members of the clergy in a manner that establishes the layperson as a partner in all matters pertaining to spiritual growth, education and development.

GOALS

The basic goals are:

- ◆ To provide a variety of ways by which Catholics and other Christians may develop a deeper spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ and, through Him, with God and each other.
- ◆ To plan and offer religious education and spiritual development programs to all who are interested.
- ◆ To augment, support and lead the development of ecumenical spirituality, bringing together Christians and non-Christians in areas of common interest and values.
- ◆ To create and sponsor Catholic liturgy, inviting as presiders ordained priests in good standing who share our belief in the principles of spiritual and liturgical renewal espoused by the Second Vatican Council.

THE MODEL OF THOMAS MERTON

Thomas Merton (1915-1968), a deeply spiritual priest and monk of the Trappist Order, demonstrated throughout his life and in his many published works a desire to explore the complex relationship between God and all of God's creation. Internationally known for his religious profundity, insightful reflection, and his great interest in inter-faith and social action work on the problems and possibilities of the world, Merton's courageous spirituality was chosen as a model for what we intend to do and be at The Thomas Merton Center.

LEGAL ORGANIZATION

The Thomas Merton Center is organized as a private, tax-exempt, non-profit religious education organization, incorporated under the laws of the state of California on February 23, 1996. A board of directors has legal and fiduciary responsibility for The Thomas Merton Center, accountable to the applicable state and federal laws, to its bylaws, to its mission statement, and to its registered members. Though Catholic in its origins, intent, and liturgies, The Thomas Merton Center is an independent religious education organization not legally affiliated with any church.

Subject to general requirements as specified in the bylaws, membership in the Merton Center is open to all persons without regard to gender, race, religious creed, national origin or sexual orientation. Nominal membership dues are paid annually.

LOCATION OF SERVICES

The Thomas Merton Center community sponsors and celebrates a Eucharistic liturgy each Sunday at 8:45 a.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, corner of Waverley and Homer Streets in Palo Alto.

Members of the TMC Liturgy committee participate in planning these liturgies in the spirit of Vatican II and its call to "full, conscious and active participation" in Catholic liturgical life. Our liturgies are inclusive and open to all.

[Vision and Mission Statement last Revised in February 2002.]

*Addendum II:
Statement of Revenues and Expenses by Year for the
Year Ended December 31, 2009*

*Addendum III:
Statement of Revenues and Expenses by Year for the
Year Ended December 31, 2010*

[Attached.]
