



Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2017

Readings

This week:

Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11

2 Peter 3:8–14

Mark 1:1–8

Next week:

Isaiah 61:1–2a, 10–11

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

John 1:6–8, 19–28

Psalm

Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. (*Psalm 85*)

Today

Today's presider is Rev. Jack Izzo, SJ.

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

Friday, December 15, 6:00 p.m. STA Fish Fest Dinner, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

I think sometimes that I may soon die, though I am not yet old (forty-seven). I don't know exactly what kind of conviction this thought carries with it or what I mean by it. Death is always a possibility for everyone. We live in the presence of this possibility. So I have a habitual awareness that I may die, and that if this is God's will, then I am glad. "Go ye forth to meet Him," and in the light of this I realize the futility of my cares and preoccupations, particularly my chief care, which is central to me, my work as a writer.

I do not feel very guilty about it, but it remains as "care," a focus that keeps my "self" in view, and I feel a little hampered. Though I know by experience that without this care and salutary work I would be much more in my own way, much more obstructed by my own inertia and confusion. If I am not fully free, then the love of God, I hope, will free me. The important thing is simply turning to him daily and after, preferring his will and his mystery to everything that is evidently and tangibly "mine."

—*Confessions of a Guilty Bystander*

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 December 15:



All are welcome to the STA Friday Fish Fest on Friday, December 15, at 6:00 pm at the Thomas House next door to the church.

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, hbaumann@aol.com (so ample food is available).

Outdoor Nativity crèche scene coming:

The STA Site Committee has been looking all year for a suitable outdoor Nativity scene for the lawns in front of STA. We are happy to have found a lovely set for sale in San Jose, made by a local artisan and sold on: www.mynativity.com.

Some compelling features of this Nativity set:

- Easy assembly and storage.
- Made of the highest quality, marine grade PVC available.
- Built to withstand all kinds of weather.

A donor has kicked off the effort and we have reserved a life-sized edition of the basic set (includes manger and donkey).



We save on the auxiliary characters if we order them with the basic set: angel, donkey, ox,

father & son shepherd set, standing shepherd set, wise men and camel set. (Check mynativity.com.)

If you would like to contribute by donating the full or partial cost of one of these auxiliary sets, please let Kay Williams know (650-270-4188, kaywill@pacbell.net).

And you can "pay" for the characters with a check made out to STA Parish, with "STA crèche" in the memo line, and put it into the parish collection basket.

Adopt-a-Family gifts collected today:

Today we are collecting the gifts for the Adopt-a-Family program outside the church. Contact Barbara Kent if you need to drop off a gift at her home (650-323-0879, bakent@earthlink.net). Thanks for your generosity.

Kenya crafts fair today:



Kenya Help is back today from 10 am -12 pm, with handmade Kenyan crafts for your holiday giving. There are new items, as well as old favorites (wooden bowls, table top crèche sets, puzzles, cloth shopping bags, jewelry, carved animals for your Christmas tree ornamentation, African mama & baby dolls, etc.). The display tables are in the Thomas House Bride's Room, next door to the church. With a donation to Kenya Help, you may select from the array of handmade items. Pay by cash, check or credit card.

Check out the Kenya Help website: www.kenyahelp.us for information about the work of this very local non-profit, which supports women and youth in Naivasha, Kenya, founded by Merton Center member Margo McAuliffe.

Help our friends in need:

During the month of December, 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. Put your offerings in the basket behind the last pew as you enter the church.

Taizé Prayer December 12 at SAG:

You may have heard about Taizé prayer and wondered what it is and why this special prayer experience is offered during Advent and Lent each year. This form of prayer service originated in the small town of Taizé, France, in 1940 and is ecumenical in origin. Taizé Prayer uses the psalms, scripture, songs, candles and silence. There are chants, music, prayer and meditation which promote a sense of inner peace.

The Taizé music, songs and chants, are simple to learn and sing. Chris Lundin leads us on the piano. This is an opportunity to take a few moments for yourself and for your soul.

Please join us, Tuesday, December 12! It is only an hour at Saint Albert the Great Church from 7:00 until 8:00 pm.

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. Register on the website at 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, (650) 327-5339
Bulletin: Kay Williams (Dec. 10, 17, & 31) kaywill@pacbell.net
Michelle Hogan (Dec. 24) myhogan@comcast.net
Finance: Helena Wee, 650-323-7987, shhwee@aol.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
SpeakOut: Diana Diamond, 650-323-4787, dianaldiamond@gmail.com

Hello from TMC member Valerie Kockelman:



Valerie left Palo Alto this past year for Spring Lake Village in Santa Rosa. Here's what she said in a recent letter:

"Frankly, it's hard moving after you have lived in the same house for 40 years.... This is a retirement community of about 350 seniors, and my daughter, who

lives 20 minutes away in Sebastopol, thought I should move here...

There was a huge, devastating fire near where we're located, but we were not affected (except for having to move in with family members for almost two weeks).

Anyway, I now have a piece of paper scotch-taped to my door for the twenty items I should take if we ever have to suddenly move away because of something like a nearby fire. Anyway, that's my advice: write down the important things you should take if you ever have to vacate your premises at a moment's notice, the way we had to (laptop, phone and charger, pictures on your wall, or valuable art objects, pills and meds). Inasmuch as many of us thought we'd be away only that day after we were ordered to evacuate, most of us DIDN'T THINK of what was important. So there I was late in the day -- at TARGET -- buying underwear, makeups, pajamas, etc.

I do miss our church group, and free lectures at Stanford... Tell everyone I somehow enjoy living in one very large room (plus kitchen and bathroom) -- with no yard work. But, it is hard to move to an unfamiliar city and have to learn the streets and such. If any of you visit this area, I would just love to see you!!! Give my best to everyone."

-Valerie Kockelman (valerie.kockelman@comcast.net)

Please join us after Mass in the Thomas House for coffee and donuts. We especially encourage newcomers or those passing through town to stop by for food and fellowship.

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.

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.]

Advent Wreath Prayer (2nd Sunday of Advent)



Loving Creator,
We pray in thanksgiving for the John the Baptists of the world
Who hold up a mirror to our faces and urge us to repent.
In this second week of Advent, we ask that you help us
Listen to John the Baptist and prepare the way.
May we be found without spot or blemish.
May we prepare a party fit for a King. Amen.

Sexual harassment & Catholic social teaching:

[By Brianne Jacobs, *America*, Dec. 5, 2017]

The cornerstone of Catholic social teaching is the defense of human dignity. ...All actions in and by society may be judged as just or unjust, good or sinful, based on whether or not they uphold this fundamental dignity intrinsic to every human life. Sexual harassment violates Catholic social teaching because:

1. Sexual Harassment Violates Human Dignity.

Sexual harassment violates the dignity of the person being harassed. If you are a victim, it communicates that your value is not based on your dignity as a human person. Your value is based on the sexual role you play, without your consent, for the person harassing you. It is diminishing: It reduces you from a full person to an object for use by the harasser...

There is a spectrum of inappropriate harassment. Al Franken's grope and Matt Lauer's locked door are different. But everything along the scale communicates the same message: I have the power to lock you down, the power to make you the object I want. It is terrifying and humiliating...

We live in a society that tells women and girls that the tug of dignity we feel pushing back against the narrative of our sexual objectification somehow makes us crazy or mean.

2. Sexual Harassment is a Violation of Participation.

The complement to the principle of human dignity in Catholic social teaching is the notion of solidarity. The assurance of individual dignity rests on protections guaranteed by society. We often think about this in terms of the common good...Water, education and health care are all examples of things C.S.T. holds up as common goods...Participation is the idea that every person has the right to contribute to society as an aspect of his or her dignity. In other words, not only does everyone have the right to get what they need (common good); in order to fulfill one's dignity, everyone must be able to give as well... [H]uman dignity flourishes when one is able to participate in society, whether as a waiter or builder or banker.

..In the workplace, sexual harassment is not really about sex. The natural expression of male sexuality is not violent. The reason men express sexuality violently in the workplace is that women are a threat to male

dominance. The goal is to intimidate women and remind them of where exactly they stand in the power structure. By taking away women's humanity, men take back their workplace dominion.

3. Sexual Harassment Violates the Dignity of Work.

C.S.T. argues that work itself must be dignified...It means that whatever you are doing to participate—fixing cars or computers, teaching first graders or leading business meetings, cleaning an office or performing surgery—you should be able to do your work with dignity. ...Dignified work enables a person to participate and flourish.

The headline stories in the news around sexual harassment have been about women who are, for the most part, white and who work in elite circles: prestigious newsrooms, movie production companies and political bodies. Many of these women were able to walk away from their jobs...For the poor, particularly those who work in the service industry, retail, restaurants or domestic work like cleaning and child care, there is no other option but to remain employed. This kind of work, often in intimate and less regulated settings, is plagued with sexual abuse. Such work is often done by women of color, women whose bodies have historically been treated as open sexual property....

At the intersection of this historical and political reality, sexual abuse thrives today. The maid at the hotel may not be coming for your job, but she still needs to be reminded grotesquely of her place, while her harasser reminds himself that the power to take defines his humanity and place in the world.

All three of these violations of C.S.T. arise from the same lie...The lie is that male libido is uncontrollable, that the desire to take is natural. Our social norms for men tell them that they reach the fullness of their human dignity as insatiable takers. Kindness, accepting refusal, mistakes, failure, trying again, tenderness: These are not acceptable ways of being a man. They must take.

Our current president represents the apex of what it means to be a man in this mindset. This leads to violence by men all over our nation. Ironically, this imperative to take, to harass...robs men of the experience of the fullness of their own human dignity. □

Brianne Jacobs is a postdoctoral teaching fellow in the theology department at Fordham University.