



# 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 10, 2017

## Readings

*This week:*

Ezekiel 33:7-9

Romans 13:8-10

Matthew 18:15-20

*Next week:*

Sirach 27:30–28:7

Romans 14:7-9

Matthew 18:21-35

## Psalm

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts. (*Psalm 95*)

## Today

Today's presider is Fr. Jack Izzo.

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

Monday, September 11, 7:00 pm

Liturgy Team, Thomas House

Thursday, September 14, 7:30 pm

TMC Board, Thomas House

## From Thomas Merton

There should be at least a room, or some corner where no one will find you and disturb you or notice you. You should be able to untether yourself from the world and set yourself free, loosing all the fine strings and strands of tension that bind you, by sight, by sound, by thought, to the presence of others. "But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret. . . ." Once you have found such a place, be content with it, and do not be disturbed if a good reason takes you out of it. Love it, and return to it as soon as you can, and do not be quick to change it for another.

—*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*

## ***A call to action re death penalty:***

The California Supreme Court's affirmation of Proposition 66 [which would speed up death penalty appeals], with the caveat that the five-year limit on appeals was not mandatory, is wake-up 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 in the high 50's percent. 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 Proposition 62 [which would repeal the death penalty and replace it with life imprisonment without possibility of parole]. For example in Los Angeles County 51.7% voted for Proposition 62. Likewise, in the Bay Area 58.5 % supported Proposition 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, and winning over high-profile members of our community and the media are key. Attend rallies, attend California People of Faith chapter meetings, establish Speaker Bureaus, hold speaking events and tell your friends.

—Terry McCaffrey, (650) 324-7517  
President, California People of Faith

## ***Peaceful presence gathering:***

Monday, September 11, from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm, at King Plaza (in front of City Hall, 250 Hamilton Avenue), join us for prayers, reflections, music and rituals from diverse religious traditions that will call us to unity and compassion as we make a public witness for peace. We will affirm our common humanity and shared commitment to a world of peace, justice and inclusion. There will be a youth choir, sharing hopes, singing and a candlelight ritual. People of all ages and faiths, or of no formal faith tradition, are welcome. Sponsored by Multi-faith Voices for Peace & Justice. See [www.multifaith-peace.org](http://www.multifaith-peace.org) for more information.

## ***Parish picnic next Sunday:***

Next Sunday, September 17, the annual Parish Picnic will take place beginning at 11:15 am at Our Lady of the Rosary. The Knights of Columbus will again provide tasty cooked food, and individuals are invited to bring salads and desserts to share. Last names starting with A-O bring salads/side dishes and P-Z bring desserts. There will be entertainment by Palo Alto Dancercise, Drum and Tai Chi (PADDT) and by Sounds of Praise.



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*

## ***Catholic leaders get personal over threat to DACA:***

*Abridged from an article by Dan Stockman at ncronline, August 30, 2017. Stockman is national correspondent for National Catholic Reporter.*

The criticism of the Trump administration's immigration policy from Catholic leaders and organizations is becoming

more pointed—and personal. On Tuesday, August 29, Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas, and others in a phone conference with reporters called out Trump's chief of staff, Gen. John Kelly, asking him to shield Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, known as DACA. The

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### **. . .Threat to DACA, continued:**

policy protects from deportation up to 800,000 young people who were brought to the United States as children. Begun five years ago under President Barack Obama, the program allows those with DACA status to legally work in the United States, but Trump is considering ending it. Church leaders often take pains to avoid singling out individuals when criticizing civil leaders, but Seitz said the calls to end DACA—including the threat of a lawsuit if Trump doesn't—are so unjustified that it merited calling out Kelly specifically, because he is a prominent Catholic in the Trump White House.

"Christians are fundamentally a loving, forgiving people, but there are some things that angered Jesus and they should anger us, as well," Seitz said. "Some things should anger us enough to have the courage to speak out to people against their politically motivated assaults. . . . These children, in most cases, were brought here in order to save their lives," Seitz said. "They didn't make this choice, they are innocent."

. . . One of those currently protected by DACA is José Cabrera, a senior at Xavier University in Cincinnati, who was brought to the United States from Mexico by his mother when he was 4 years old. "I really want to ask our leaders in D.C.—do you want my talent to leave this country? And not just mine but at least 800,000 other students?" Cabrera said. "We work here, we have our homes here. Going back to being undocumented would be so bad that a lot of people are looking at just taking their talents and going elsewhere." Cabrera said America is his home and he has never known life anywhere else.

. . . Jesuit Fr. Timothy Kesicki, president of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, said more than 1,100 educators in Jesuit colleges and universities have signed a letter to Kelly urging him to fight for DACA. . . . "Dreamers are woven into our schools," Kesicki said. "I've seen it personally."

Meanwhile, Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez added his voice, writing in his weekly magazine column that. . . "we need to keep in mind that beneath all the politics, there are real people, real issues and legitimate differences of opinion. That should not be an excuse for inaction. It should be the reason for coming together and finding a way to move forward," he wrote. . . . "It would be a tragedy to cancel DACA and declare these 800,000 young people 'illegal' and begin deporting them."

. . . "It's not just about these 800,000 young people, but young people who are working, paying taxes, going to school and serving in the military," Franciscan Action Network executive director Patrick Carolan told NCR. "The question is, what kind of nation are we? Can we be a moral nation when we're talking about deporting people like this?"

### **The Muslim Jesus provides common ground. . . :**

*" . . . for Christianity and Islam." Abridged from an article by Ra'fat Al-Dajani, published August 25, 2017 at ncronline.org. Al-Dajani is a Palestinian-American businessman and political commentator.*

As the country sits transfixed with one of the strangest, divisive and most unpredictable presidencies in the history of the United States, lost in the madness has been the increase in Islamophobia since Donald Trump was elected president. Islamophobia. . . has become frighteningly commonplace in the U.S. and this hatred and misinformation has found fertile soil in the past eight months of the Trump presidency. The Council on American-Islamic Relations has documented 451 incidents that stemmed from anti-Muslim bias between April 1 and June 30, 2017, 15% of which were acts of violence against Muslims. This represents a 91% increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes during that time compared to the same time period in 2016. . . .

The irony here is that most Americans really have no idea what is in the Quran. . . . They have no idea that the three monotheistic religions that follow the same Abrahamic tradition, namely that Abraham was the first prophet of God, are Judaism, Christianity and yes, Islam.

. . . The Quran specifically protects Jews and Christians as Peoples of the Book, the "Book" meaning revelations from God to Jews and Christians which gives them a spiritual connection to Islam. As such, Islam recognizes as prophets many of the figures revered by Jews and Christians, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. For Muslims, Muhammad is not a divine being. Instead he is a prophet through whom God delivered his message and an example of piety to emulate. . . . It would surprise many to know that the Prophet Muhammad is only mentioned a total of four times in the Quran while Jesus, the son of Mary, is mentioned 25 times and Moses 136 times. The Quran dedicates a whole chapter to Mary, who is the only woman mentioned by name in the sacred text.

The Islamic version of the Jesus story is quite similar to the Christian version. Jesus is variously referred to as "Spirit from God," "Word from/of God," "Prophet-Messenger of God," and the "Messiah" who will come back on the Day of Judgment to destroy the Antichrist. Beginning with his birth, Muslims believe that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary in a miraculous birth ordained by God. . . .

Muslims believe Jesus performed miracles throughout his life. . . . Naturally there are theological differences between Muslims and Christians regarding Jesus but there are far more similarities and these similarities are what should be emphasized in order to show the common ground between these two faiths, which together represent 4.1 billion followers worldwide and 55.3% of the world's population.

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