



25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 18, 2016

Readings

This week:

Amos 8:4–7

1 Timothy 2:1–8

Luke 16:1–13

Next week:

Amos 6:1a, 4–7

1 Timothy 6: 11–16

Luke 16:19–31

Psalm Today

Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor. (*Psalm 113*)

Today's presider is Rev. Jack Izzo, S.J.

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 19, 7:00 p.m. TMC Spiritual Education Committee,
Thomas House Library

From Thomas Merton

What does the contemplative life or the life of prayer, solitude, silence, meditation, mean to man in the atomic age? What can it mean? Has it lost all meaning whatever?

When I speak of the contemplative life I do not mean the institutional cloistered life, the organized life of prayer....I am talking about a special dimension of inner discipline and experience, a certain integrity and fullness of personal development, which are not compatible with a purely external, alienated, busy-busy existence. This does not mean that they are incompatible with action, with creative work, with dedicated love. On the contrary, these all go together. A certain depth of disciplined experience is a necessary ground for fruitful action...

Meditation is one of the more important characteristic forms of this discipline. Prayer is another.

—*Contemplation in a World of Action*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Ballot propositions presented October 2:

The League of Women Voters will present an overview of the propositions on the California ballot on October 2, at 10:00 a.m. in the Thomas House basement hall, immediately following the 8:45 Mass.



Coffee and doughnuts will be served in the basement.

Of particular note is the contest between Proposition 62 (abolish the death penalty, replacing it with life sentence without possibility of parole)

and Proposition 66 (speed up the delivery of the death penalty). A quick reference right up front: **YES on 62, NO on 66.** You'll learn the difference at the Oct. 2 meeting. (The League of Women Voters of California has taken a position in support of Proposition 62, as have the Catholic bishops of California.)

TMC bulletins online:

The TMC website awaits your perusal. Go to www.thomasmerton.org to find copies of the Sunday TMC bulletins, notices of events, and background on the Merton Center. Web master Jim Davis awaits your submissions: email them to him at jim_davis@pacbell.net.

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PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Sr. Fran Ciluaga, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Dean Judd, Michael Kiriti, 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 below.]

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.

STA Parish adult education series resumes Sept. 20:

Beginning Tuesday, September 20: Spirituality Tuesday Assembly starts again

September 20th: Saints and Sinners: Are the great Saints of the past still good role models today? Fr. Jose Rubio.

September 27th: Women's Lives in Early California. Professors Beebe and Senkewicz from Santa Clara University

October 4th: Environmental Issues in Current (and Pending) Legislation. Melissa Hippard from the Sierra Club and the STA Green Committee

October 11th: The Bible and the Quran – A Comparative Study – Part 1 (Video). Fr. Matt

We meet most every Tuesday from 7:00 - 8:30 pm in the Hospitality Center at St. Albert the Great Church, 1095 Channing Ave. Join in!

Online voter registration:

As the elections approach, if you have not yet registered to vote, here is convenient way to do it online: <http://registertovote.ca.gov/>

To register online you will need

- Your California driver license or California identification card number,
- The last four digits of your social security number and
- Your date of birth.

Your information will be provided to the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to retrieve a copy of your DMV signature.

If you do not have a California driver license or California identification card, you can still use this form to apply to register to vote by completing the online interview by 11:59:59 p.m. Pacific Time on the 15th calendar day before an election.

Food Closet never closes:

Keep bringing food for the Food Closet. The needs continue: flip-top soups and entrees, as well as small bottles of water, crackers, granola bars, fruit cups, juice pouches. Your generous donations (including cash) are always welcome, particularly now as the summer winds down when the stores have been depleted. Leave your offerings in the baskets at the back of church as you come into the sanctuary. The Food Closet clients will be grateful.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

The death penalty: End it, don't try to 'mend' it Catholic Worker education history:

[By Henry Organ, in *The Almanac*, Sept. 14, 2016]

There are two initiatives on the November ballot pertaining to the death penalty. Briefly, one is to replace the death penalty with life without the possibility of parole, and is retroactive to those sentenced to death (Proposition 62). The other initiative seeks to "...mend, not end..." the death penalty (Proposition 66).

Governments should not be in the business of taking lives, but saving and enhancing them. There are modern-day measures available to protect the public from those found to be a future threat to life through nonlethal means. Retribution is not moral justification for taking life, even that of a confessed murderer. Vengeance is not a state's right or privilege.

The suggestion that the death penalty be perfected, made error-free, by legislative mending is mendacity. The suggestion that the appeal process can be abbreviated without creating an imbalance on the scales of justice is lacking in honesty and jurisprudence. Why the rush to "final" judgment? And, the death penalty can never be included in the spectrum of justice; the two concepts are incompatible.

The state should accept the seasoned and reasoned conclusion of the late Justice Harry Blackmun: Stop "tinkering with the machinery of death." He had referred to the death penalty as an "experiment" that has failed. Why this thirst for accelerating final judgments, when there is no evidence that it is a deterrent, and thus is nothing more than plain retribution and vengeance?

Financial cost should never be at the crux of discussions, or votes, on the death penalty. No cost saving, not one dollar or trillions, is worth a single inmate's life, even if that inmate is factually not innocent. At its core, the death penalty is morally bankrupt, unconstitutional, and eternally flawed. It is always susceptible of taking an innocent life.

The California District Attorneys Association is an active participant in originating and lobbying for Proposition 66 to mend the death penalty. This is questionable and troublesome, ethically, given the basic mission of district attorney offices to engage in law "enforcement," not law "formation," an important distinction. It is noted that the current president of the association is the district attorney of San Mateo County.

Vote yes on Proposition 62. Vote no on Proposition 66, please. End, don't try to mend, the death penalty.

[TMC member serving on the TMC SpeakOut Committee and retired Stanford Development Officer Henry Organ has lived in Menlo Park for more than 40 years. He was a member of the San Mateo County 2010 Charter Committee.]

Dear Friends,

For over 40 years the Redwood City Catholic Worker has had two major priorities – housing and education...

Almost all of the hundreds of teens who have lived with us were required to go to high school or college (every day and every class) and get "C" grades or better. The majority of our teens eventually graduated from H.S. and many went on to college...

For over 25 years, our English Language School (also here in Redwood City) has helped women learn English. At our school, 15 volunteer teachers help 45-55 adult women learn to speak English. In the afternoons, another group of volunteer tutors help children with homework and reading and math skills.

Last year we helped 7 teens with college scholarship grants of \$2,000 each. Six of them did very well and one dropped out. For the past 10 years we have annually funded school scholarships to Tanzania for children and adults. At one time, there were 44 scholarships there. This program is called "The Mission" and was started by a local group of women and their families. The organizers of "The Mission" travel to Africa (on their own dime) every year to interview the recipients of these grants before, during and after their schooling.

For the past two years, we have helped raise "seed money" (\$10,000 a year) for an exciting Summer School program in San Francisco's inner city. To qualify for this innovative program a student (mostly minorities) must have major academic problems at their H.S. (June Jordan) The teachers for this program are hand picked. At the culmination of their educational experience, the teens must give oral presentations to their classmates and to the people who helped fund their rescue schooling. When I attended their presentations, their tearful descriptions of being raped, being impoverished and homeless while going to high school and their joy and hope at finding teachers who cared, was overwhelming.

In addition to these regular commitments, we have also been able to facilitate the donation of truckloads of business furniture (chairs, desks, tables, filing cabinets, paper products, etc) to Notre Dame High School, Our Lady of Mt Carmel School, St. Matthias Preschool, Roy Cloud Elementary School, Woodside High School, Sequoia High School and miscellaneous other schools. The source of most of these donations is none other than the famous Brother Robert (retired). It was his contact that donated 4 pallets of new cases of paper. That paper went everywhere. God is good....

We thank God for the grace to do this work and we thank you, our supporters, for helping us help.

Love, Larry Purcell for all of us.

What's worse than terrorism:

[By Jo McGowan, *Commonweal*, 9/9/16]

One of the things that makes the spate of recent terrorist attacks so chilling is that the choice of targets seems both random and comprehensive: an airport, a train station, a night club (straight or gay), a concert, a fireworks display, a city bus. The plane you are flying in could drop suddenly from the sky. Don't think prayer will save you, because you could well be attacked in a church, a temple, or a mosque. Don't try and protest anything because they'll get you at the demonstration. And if you have a disability, don't imagine your vulnerability will win you any sympathy—you could well be attacked in your own bed....

We feel as if danger lurks around every corner, as if our children—who now seem to be in constant motion, always visiting yet another city—are trapped, fragile, and unlikely to make it through the night. We are simply waiting for our turn to come.

We are right to be worried. But we are worrying about the wrong things. And this is because we are listening to the wrong people. If Donald Trump and most of the mainstream media are your source of information, then terrorism will be your main concern, and panic, anxiety, and free-floating distress your dominant emotions. But a simple glance at the data, culled from neutral, reliable sources, should calm us down. According to the U.S. State Department, terrorist events in 2015 were down 13 percent from the previous year. While more than 28,000 lost their lives in these attacks, that number is minuscule in terms of the world's total population. Indeed, according to 2011 data, the probability of being killed in a terrorist attack is around one in 20 million.

What, then, *should* we be afraid of? We could start with hunger and malnutrition, which kill 3.1 million children under the age of five every year. Then there are diseases that can be prevented with vaccination, which claim the lives of 2.5 million children under five every year. Or how about climate change? Climate-related disasters since 2000 are up 44 percent from the previous decade and the fallout for the world is unprecedented in terms of human suffering. As crops fail because of drought or flooding, mass migration has become routine. The refugee crisis currently being felt throughout Europe is directly related to climate change. People simply cannot continue to live in areas where they can't grow food, find clean water, or build safe homes. Scarce resources automatically escalate violence and armed conflict. These are all issues we can do something about.

But it doesn't serve the interests of businessmen like Donald Trump or corporations like Dow Chemical for us to think too much about these problems. That's one reason that 2013 will be remembered more for the Boston Marathon terrorist attack that killed five people and injured 264 than for the landslides in Uttarakhand that killed over *six thousand* people, left thousands more homeless and unemployed, and about which you have probably heard nothing. These landslides were directly related to the construction of a hydroelectric power plant along Uttarakhand's rivers and are just one example of what over-development has in store for the world if allowed to continue unchecked.

The U.S. elections, the Brexit decision, the European refugee crisis, and here in India, simmering conflicts between Hindus and Muslims and between the upper caste and dalits all mean that we can expect misdirection and fear-mongering to continue and perhaps even increase in the months ahead. We will be encouraged to worry about travel, public places, and large events. Cable news will offer us blow-by-blow details of every terrorist attack. We will be shown images of refugees arriving en masse and creating intolerable burdens in their host countries. The media will encourage us to feel like helpless victims, while opportunistic politicians will incite jingoism and suspicion. Us and them. Black and white. Those who belong and those who don't. This is Donald Trump's philosophy, and he's not alone. Like all strongmen (Vladimir Putin, Narendra Modi, Recep Tayyip Erdogan—the list is long and growing), Trump instills fear in his followers and then declares that only he can protect them from the outsiders who are out to get them.

It isn't actually like that at all. We are human beings first, last, and always. We all breathe, bleed, and grieve. We all love our children and want to protect them. The differences between us are minor compared to the fundamental things we all have in common, wherever we live or worship, whatever we look like. When my husband Ravi and I were filling out the forms for our marriage license, in the space for "race" I dutifully wrote "Caucasian." Ravi? He wrote "Human."

[Jo McGowan is a *Commonweal* columnist who writes from Deradoon, India. American by birth and writer by profession, she is a former criminal (peace movement organizer jailed in America on a dozen occasions) and the mother of three. She has lived in India for the past nearly 40 years with her Indian husband. She is a co-founder and director of the Latika Roy Foundation benefitting children with disability. She believes passionately in the power of ordinary people to change the world.]