



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 14, 2010

Readings

This week:

Jeremiah 17:5–8

1 Corinthians 15:12, 16–20

Luke 6:17, 20-26

Next week:

Deuteronomy 26:4–10

Romans 10:8–13

Luke 4:1–13

Psalm

Blessed are they who hope in the Lord (*Psalm 1*)

Today's presider is Msgr. Eugene Boyle.

Today

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, February 15, 7:30 p.m. TMC Spiritual Education Committee, St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center

Wednesday, February 17, 6:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Mass with distribution of ashes

From Thomas Merton

The ultimate perfection of the contemplative life is not a heaven of separate individuals, each one viewing his own private intuition of God; it is a sea of Love which flows through the One Body of all the elect, all the angels and saints, and their contemplation would be incomplete if it were not shared, or if it were shared with fewer souls, or with spirits capable of less vision and less joy.

I will have more joy in heaven and in the contemplation of God, if you are also there to share it with me; and the more of us there will be to share it the greater will be the joy of all.

—*New Seeds of Contemplation.*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Lenten events at Vallombrosa:

Lenten Prayer Service with the Vallombrosa Choir - February 21, 2:00 - 3:00 pm, under the direction of Patrick Feehan, a local composer, teacher, and conductor who has assembled a choir of more than 50 for liturgical celebrations throughout the year. Held in the Vallombrosa Chapel, 250 Oak Grove, in Menlo Park, and open to all.

The Busy Persons Retreat - February 21-25

Each retreatant will meet immediately afterwards with a spiritual director and schedule individual spiritual direction sessions for the following four days. Retreatants will be provided with materials for reading and reflection. The Busy Persons Retreat will conclude with a prayer service at 6 PM on Thursday, February 25. Fee: \$100.

Private Silent Retreat - March 5-7

Vallombrosa opens its doors several weekends throughout the year to people to make a silent retreat beginning Friday afternoon and concluding midday Sunday. Enjoy opportunities for spiritual direction, morning and evening prayers each day, and Reconciliation and Mass on Saturday afternoon. Lodging & meals: \$214; One session of spiritual direction is \$40. For additional information or to register call 650-325-5614 or visit www.vallombrosa.org.

Nancy McGaraghan on Ignatian Exercises:

This week's Spirituality Tuesday Assembly (STA) will be on "The Spirituality of St. Ignatius" with Nancy McGaraghan, at St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Nancy will talk about St. Ignatius and how his spirituality and the formation of the Jesuit order grew out of his life experiences. Also in her presentation will be different prayer methods that characterize Ignatian spirituality and some time will be spent experimenting with one prayer practice.

Nancy McGaraghan has a Masters Degree in Theology and is currently in her third year of training as a director of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. She is a long time member of St. Thomas Aquinas parish, where she is a lector and Communion minister, has directed retreats and occasionally offers reflections on the readings at Sunday Mass.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Cecilia Aranha, Sr. Fran Ciluaga, Joanne Claus, Ron Clazie, Mary Connors, Wayne Cummings, Ken Dias, the family of John Gill, Arlen Hagen, Joanne Hasegawa, Howard Hatcher, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Alicia Kot, Kami Ladd, Andre and Alyssa Lippard, Joe Narewski, Janice O'Brien, Lynne Owens, Sr. Anne Owour, Collin Parsons, Hayden Pastorini, Anne Rush, George Schardt, Molly Sessions, Ellen Thieme, Jean Vistica, Peter Voll, Dolores Walsh, Tucker Wolf, and T. J. Wooten. [Add or subtract names by e-mailing Bulletin editors: Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams.]

Don't forget the Food Closet:



In these difficult times, there is an ongoing need for food at the St. Vincent De Paul food closet. We encourage you to bring a few items each Sunday. As an alternative, you can

also place a check in the small basket in the vestibule. Primary food closet needs: Soups, Tuna, Beans, Rice, Crackers, Cereal, canned meats and pasta, Pasta, tomato and pasta sauce, peanut butter, jellies and jams, canned fruits, canned vegetables.

Appreciation from Bishop McGrath:

Anna Jaklitsch received a letter from Bishop P. J. McGrath, expressing his thoughts about his morning celebrating Mass and hospitality with the 8:45 Mass community on February 7:

Dear Anna:

Just a note to thank you and all those involved with my recent visit to the Thomas Merton Center for a most enjoyable morning. Everything seemed to go very well, and I know that that was due, in no small way, to all your preparation and attention to detail.

I would be grateful if, on my behalf, you would please convey my thanks to the other members of the organizing team, as well as to all those who attended the liturgy that morning. My thanks, too, for the thoughtful gifts of the coffee mug and generous check. I am truly grateful for your kindness.

*With every best wish and kind regard, I remain,
Sincerely yours,
Patrick J. McGrath
Bishop of San Jose*

Lenten reflections by Thomas Merton:

The Merton Institute for Contemplative Living in Louisville, Kentucky is offering daily reflections beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 17, and continuing through the Lent season. Each reflection will feature a selection from the writings of Thomas Merton and a prayer from the Psalms. (Cistercians pray the psalms each time they gather for prayer throughout the day.)

To receive the Lent reflections please email to ecaskey@mertoninstitute.org to add yourself to the Lent Reflection email list.

Bulletin submissions must be e-mailed by Thursday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. For Kay, e-mail kaywill@pacbell.net or (650) 328-2781. For Michelle, e-mail myhogan@earthlink.net or (650) 493-8452.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

World Day of Prayer for the Sick:

Since 1992, February 11, the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, has been observed as the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. The day is marked around the world with special Masses for people who are sick, as well as medical staff and healthcare chaplains.

This is a good opportunity to give special attention to the needs and witness of the sick in our communities. This special day of prayer for the sick reminds us also that we can pray for the sick at any time:

Father, your Son accepted our sufferings to teach us the virtue of patience in human illness. Hear the prayers we offer for our sick brothers and sisters. May all who suffer pain, illness, or disease realize that they have been chosen to be saints and know that they are joined to Christ in his suffering for the salvation of the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Work of the People, Diocese of San Jose*

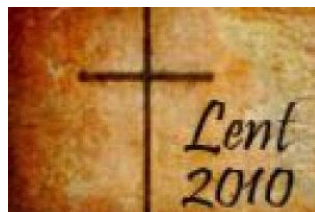
Anointing of the sick at all Masses:

The special grace of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has as its effects:

- uniting the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church;
- the strengthening, peace, and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age;
- forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the Sacrament of Penance;
- restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul;
- preparation for passing over to eternal life.

Anointing of the sick is not a sacrament only for those who are at the point of death. Hence, it would be fitting to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick as soon as anyone begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age. If a sick person who received this anointing recovers his health, he can in the case of another grave illness receive this sacrament again. If during the same illness the person's condition becomes more serious, the sacrament may be repeated. It would be fitting, also, to receive the Anointing of the sick just prior to a serious operation. The same holds true for the elderly whose frailty becomes more pronounced. The Sacrament could also help those who are unable to cope with the major issues of life and need spiritual strength to move forward.

There's fasting...and then there's fasting:



Lent is a marvelous invitation to look at the ashes of devastation caused by our failure to love as God wills. How often our good intentions can turn to dust.

Resolve and perseverance are sometimes hard to come by. Lent provides a focused time where we can assess where and how we have distanced ourselves from God. But Lent is not just a personal journey. It is a communal one. Historically, penance was not a private matter, but a public act of atonement. On Ash Wednesday, the ashes on our foreheads make public our faith and our failings. Reflect on the places in our lives and in the world that cry out for the atonement of the misuse of power and influence.

Fasting day by day:

Wednesday, February 17: Today, fast from distraction. Give your undivided attention to the person or task in front of you. Listen intently.

Thursday, February 18: Fast from inaction. Resist the tendency to avoid getting involved. Take one step, make one phone call to respond to a need that you see in your midst. Encourage family and friends to do likewise and multiply the impact of one simple action.

Friday, February 19: Today fast from the urge to give into cultural pressures that tell you what you "must" have in order to be beautiful, successful, or powerful. Resist the messages that create false needs and waste both material and ecological resources.

Saturday, February 20: Fast from finger-pointing and the temptation to blame others. Take responsibility for your words and actions and in this way let your light shine.

Sunday, February 21: Fast from the impossible expectations you place on others to live up to your ideals of behavior, love, generosity. Accept others just as they are and free up wasted, misdirected energy.

Please join us for coffee, juice & pastries after Mass in the Memorial Garden or basement of the Thomas House next door. If this is your first time at this Mass, or you are visiting today, you are especially encouraged to stop by; we'd like to meet you.

Looking at David and Goliath:

I had a most instructive conversation this week with Elizabeth Warren, the Harvard economist who is also the Chair of the TARP Congressional Oversight Panel. Warren has a way of cutting through the jargon and confusion of many economists and of this economic crisis -- right to the moral core of the issues at stake. I knew her for her keen insights, but I didn't know she was from, as she puts it, a "mixed marriage from Oklahoma" -- Baptist and Methodist -- and that she is a former Methodist Sunday school teacher. ...[H]er moral and even theological comments were as impressive as her economic analysis of our present crisis. She said the battle for financial regulatory reform is like the battle between David and Goliath.

Warren's narrative of the U.S. economy, and the banking industry in particular, was very clarifying. For most of U.S. history, our country went through repeated periods of boom and bust, with all the consequences of those cycles. But after the Great Depression, a number of new financial regulations -- rules for the road -- were put into place that were designed to protect average Americans in particular from the continued abuses of the big banks and the often terrible results in bad times for ordinary people. Two important examples were the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) to protect people's savings and the Glass Steagall Act of 1933 to prevent banks from speculating with depositors' money. And the new rules worked for several decades, creating both prosperity and security for many American families and an emerging middle class. But starting in 1980, the rules were first watered down and gradually removed, and banks were free again to engage in both the abusive and very risky speculative behavior that helped to bring on the Great Depression, and resulted again in the current Great Recession. She explained how credit card and mortgage application forms used to be only a page or two and were both clear and understandable to the average person -- even allowing people to easily compare and contrast the deals offered. But now, as all of us know, these forms have expanded to 30 pages or more with lots of complications, hard to comprehend provisions, and "fine print" that cleverly hides a long list of traps, tricks, and a myriad of both exploitive arrangements and outright abuses that greatly benefit banks at the expense of borrowers and card holders. In clear moral terms, Warren described the current behavior of our biggest banks as deliberately deceiving, entrapping, and cheating unsus-

pecting customers into very precarious and ultimately disastrous financial positions. And with no more rules of the road, the banks were leading their customers into the financial ditch. An economic crisis has been the result with massive suffering and pain for millions of Americans.

We are now living in a "lawless" economic environment, according to Warren, where our biggest banks have become our most dangerous predators -- and with no protections for the rest of us against the "law of the jungle," as she puts it. The consequences for our economy, our culture, our families, and even our souls have been disastrous. This is not the way we should want to live, Warren says, and it is creating a world which we should not want our children to grow up in. She makes the urgent case for reform with the compelling analysis of a top economist, the family values of a grandmother, and the moral arguments of a person of faith. The sins of the financial world have become both a moral, and even religious, issue from the perspective of the Methodist tradition "which still shapes me."

Warren is the "mother" of the idea for a **new Consumer Financial Protection Agency (CFPA)**, which is in the current financial reform bill recently passed by the House of Representatives, and is now slowly making its way through the U.S. Senate. But the big banks are aggressively fighting back, trying to prevent their own regulation only one year after the financial meltdown for which they were in large part responsible. There seems to be no remorse, let alone repentance, from the big banks -- only record new profits enabled by their taxpayer-funded bailouts, and enormous bonuses to the executives who made the very decisions that brought the economic system down on the heads and hearts of so many Americans. The biggest banks in America are giving shame a bad name. Why are new rules, regulations, and protections necessary? Because of the human condition, the realities of human nature, and a biblically orthodox understanding of human sinfulness. Yes, the reasons we need the protections offered by a Consumer Financial Protection Agency are as theological as economic. ...It is simply bad theology to trust large corporations not to pollute our waters, poison our air, or cheat their unsuspecting customers. They have to be *prevented from doing so* for the sake of the common good. Good financial and economic rules reflect, not only good economics, but also good theology. And the free market fundamentalism of Wall Street's defenders is, among other things, bad theology.

But as Elizabeth Warren... warns, the banks are trying everything they can think of to kill financial reform. And we must not let them do that. In the name of a fairer economy, of family values, of moral values, and of sound biblical theology, the faith community must now make itself heard on the urgent issue of financial regulatory reform... People of faith across the land must now tell their elected representatives that we will be "watching and praying" to see what they will do about necessary financial reform....

—Jim Wallis, *Sojourners*, 2-11-10

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