



# Palm/Passion Sunday

April 1, 2007

## Readings

*This week:*

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Luke 23:1-49

*Next week:*

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Colossians 3:1-4

John 20:1-9

## Psalm

My God, My God, why have you abandoned me? (*Psalm 22*)

## Today

Today's presider is Fr. Michael Marini.

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

April 5, 6, 7

Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday),  
See parish bulletin for Holy Week event times and locations

### From Thomas Merton

My Lord, I have no hope but in Your Cross. You, by Your humility, sufferings and death, have delivered me from all vain hope. You have killed the vanity of the present life in Yourself and have given me all that is eternal in rising from the dead. My hope is in what the eye has never seen. Therefore let me not trust in visible rewards. My hope is in what the human heart cannot feel. Therefore let me not trust in the feelings of my heart. My hope is in what the hand has never touched. Do not let me trust what I can grasp between my fingers, because Death will loosen my grasp and my vain hope will be gone.

Let my trust be in Your mercy, not in myself. Let my hope be in Your love, not in health or strength or ability or human resources. If I trust You, everything else will become for me strength, health and support.

—Dialogues with Silence

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*

### **Barbara Narewski leaves Lit Com:**

Barbara Narewski has resigned from the Liturgy Committee—a big news story because, for nearly seven years, Barbara is the person who has hired our presiders for us, Sunday after Sunday. And you've also seen her each Sunday checking in the Eucharistic Ministers, and making sure they know their assignments.



Barbara has been a member of the Liturgy Committee since its formation in 1997 (as have the other members of the committee). She took over the duty of finding presiders from Mary Washburn, who did the job for about three years. We are very grateful to her and Mary for their generous service!

For forty years Barbara was a nurse at Stanford Hospital, where she worked in post-op positions—and in the recovery room for the last 25 years—until her retirement in 2001. She is looking forward to spending more time “exercising the cats,” and in enjoying her garden and her family and friends.

The Thomas Merton Center is fortunate to have its own Liturgy team and hire its own priests. Our vibrant Sunday liturgy happens because of us, and the time we put into making it meaningful for all. Please consider joining the Liturgy team next month at Pentecost when we restaff!

### **JustFaith goes ecumenical:**

Liz Lilly writes that JustFaith Ministries is partnering with Bread for the World to create an ecumenical version of the JustFaith program. “In my new position at Catholic Charities, I am promoting JustFaith as one way for churches to deepen their commitment to charity and justice in organized, communal and sustainable ways. JustFaith is a 30-week (school year) curriculum to inform and empower people of good will to transform themselves and our world through compassion, service and advocacy.”

Jack Jezreel, the founder of this program, will be in San Jose on April 22—a Sunday—leading a four-hour workshop that afternoon. For more info, contact Liz at (408) 325-5262 or [elilly@ccsj.org](mailto:elilly@ccsj.org).

Please join us in the garden next door after Mass for coffee, donuts, and good conversation. Especially if you are new here, please come by—we'd like to get to know you!

### **Easter flowers:**

Please donate Easter flowers this coming Saturday—azaleas, freesias, lilies, anything growing colorfully in a pot. The church will be decorated for Easter next Saturday, April 7, beginning at about 8:30 am. And please stay to help with the decorating if you can.



### **Course on discernment tomorrow:**

How do I make decisions about where to put my time and energy? How can I tell when I'm making a grounded, sustainable decision? With all the good work that there is to do in the world, how do I know which is “my” work? What is the quality of energy and emotion in the various activities in which I invest?

Pace e Bene, a Franciscan program on nonviolence, will be offering a course tomorrow, April 2—*Cultivating the Soil of Discernment: Freedom to Say “No”*—from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, at the First Congregation Church of Oakland, 2501 Harrison St.

Cost is \$20 or whatever you can afford, and to find out more about the class, e-mail Liz at [lizwalz@juno.com](mailto:lizwalz@juno.com).

### **Get a new nametag:**

The TMC Liturgy Committee is refurbishing the nametag board and making new nametags for regular attendees of the 8:45 Mass. Please check the list next to the nametags and be sure your name is there and spelled correctly, or add your name to the list. It is hoped that all of us will wear a nametag each Sunday, and get to know each other better.

### **Embracing radical Jesus:**

Call to Action Sacramento, a progressive Catholic organization dedicated to peace and justice issues, will be holding a conference, *Embracing Radical Jesus in a Changing World*, on April 13-15 at the Holiday Inn Northeast, 5321 Date Street, Sacramento. Speakers include Matthew Fox on mature Christianity, Edwina Gateley on Healing the World's Despair, Bernard Cooke on Tradition, and Patty Hawk (co-prez of CTA National) on Called to Change the Church. There will also be ten break-out sessions to choose from. Fees are \$60 for the conference only, \$155 for the conference and five meals. For registration or other information, go to [www.saccta.org](http://www.saccta.org) or contact Barbara Wilson at (916) 427-1239 or [Barbara.wilson@comcast.net](mailto:Barbara.wilson@comcast.net).

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## ***The savagery of sin:***

When asked to explain his reasons for directing and financing the movie *The Passion of the Christ*, Mel Gibson cited several, not the least of which was the encouragement offered to artists by the late Pope John Paul II to do “redeemable work” that pierces the world’s darkness with the light of truth. . . . Portrayed in *The Passion of the Christ* are the last 12 hours of Jesus’ earthly life, beginning with a poignant scene set in the garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. . . . His acquiescence to God’s will did, as we believe, lead Jesus on a horrendous journey through suffering, rejection and humiliation to life and eternal glory. . . .

Whatever else we may think of Gibson, his behavior, political leanings and religious preferences, it seems that his motivation here was genuine. For those who judge his portrayal of Jesus to be extreme, too realistic, or too savage, this writer asks “Isn’t human sin far more savage?” Don’t the all too common realities of abuse, apathy and neglect speak a sad commentary on the savage nature of the selfish human heart? Isn’t genocide a savage act? Isn’t greed, either personal or corporate, that would rob another of his/her livelihood equally base? Could we not also describe as savage the rejection of another on the basis of race, social status, gender, age or religious persuasion? Cannot war be deemed savage in that human lives are deemed expendable and the helpless innocents caught in the crossfire are simply inevitable statistics of the struggles between the powerful? Indeed, wasn’t the passion of Jesus and all he innocently suffered for the sake of the guilty made all the more intense and unrelentingly extreme by human sin? Therefore, rather than be offended by a portrayal that shocks our sensibilities and leaves us disconcerted and uncomfortable, shouldn’t the horrifying sufferings of Jesus be our focus as we journey toward the celebration of life that is Easter and toward the forgiveness that has become our gift in Jesus?

Surely it was the passion of Jesus that effected our salvation in a manner that was neither expected, welcomed

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Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Msgr. Gene Boyle, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Tom Jaworowski, Joseph Kehret, Barbara Kent, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Kami Ladd, Carol Locke, Eileen McNevin, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullinex, Joe Narewski, Dorothea Nudelman, Hank Okonski, Lynne Owens, Hayden Pastorini, George Peinado, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, George Schardt, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, Sarah Washburn, and T.J. Wooten.

Do you find yourself in need of a helping hand, a last-minute car ride, a cat sitter, or the like? Contact the Thomas Merton Center **Needs Net**—call Roberta at 494-1488. Roberta has also volunteered to get the TMC **Lending Library** up and running. If you have books and periodicals on topics spiritual, theological, environmental, political, or historical that you could contribute, bring them to the Thomas House basement. Library “hours” will generally be after the 8:45 am Mass on Sundays.

## ***When it’s about women, you’ve gone too far:***

*Abridged from an article by Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister on the National Catholic Reporter Conversation Café web site for March 15, 2007—<http://ncrcafe.org>.*

It is possible to go too far. . . . I got another lesson on that one recently. Last week, in Ireland, Trocáire, the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland, began its regular Lenten ad campaign. The interesting thing about the campaign—which is not uncommon to most churches in Lent—is that it is about more than “charity.” It asks people to contribute to movements that seek justice. It puts its resources to the service of social consciousness and social change. It calls for change in the system that is creating the oppression, contributing to the poverty, or justifying the discrimination.

So, in previous Lenten campaigns, for example, it called attention to apartheid in South Africa and channeled money to organizations there that were working to develop a democracy in that country. The Irish government and the church supported that campaign. Then, in another year, Trocáire concentrated on the liberation of child soldiers and Ireland supported them in that campaign, too. Finally, Trocáire turned the light and the money on the plight of slave laborers around the world and were applauded for that effort, too. In all their Lenten drives Trocáire uses public information spots on Irish television. It mounts a poster campaign across the country. It publishes public information brochures throughout the republic. . . . All of these campaigns have revolved around clearly political issues. And all of them have gotten widespread support. Till this one. This one features an unending grid of diapered babies, black and white, all infants, all charming and bright-eyed and lively. Finally the voice-over says, “These children will have less education, live in more poverty, contract more disease, suffer more violence, face more disadvantage than if they had malaria or HIV. They will never even be given a chance. Why? Because they’re female.”  
Bingo!

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### *The savagery of sin, continued:*

nor immediately understood. Only gradually did the early Christians realize that Jesus' messiahship would not be exercised as a victorious general at the head of an unstoppable army. . . . That the early Christians did eventually become convinced of the necessary, albeit savage, cost of our salvation is shown in the fact that the account of Jesus' passion was the first part of his story to be remembered, preserved and passed on. As the Lucan version of Jesus' Passion is proclaimed today among us as good news, let us resolve to leave aside the savagery of sin and respond as best we can by worthily loving and serving God and one another.

#### *Bedtime Prayer of Forgiveness*

YOU, my ETERNAL FRIEND, WITNESS now that I forgive anyone who hurt or upset me or who offended me—damaging my body, my property, my reputation or people that I love; whether by accident or purposely; with words, deeds, thoughts or attitudes.

I forgive every person who has hurt or upset me. May no one be punished because of me. May no one suffer from karmic consequences for hurting or upsetting me.

Help me, Eternal Friend, to keep from offending You and others. Help me to be thoughtful and not commit outrage by doing what is evil in Your eyes.

Whatever sins I have committed, blot out, please, in Your abundant kindness, and spare me suffering or harmful illnesses. . . .

I seek peace, let me BE peace. I seek justice, let me be just. I seek a world of kindness, let me be kind. I seek a world of generosity, let me be generous with all that I have. I seek a world of sharing, let me share all that I have. I seek a world of giving, let me be giving to all around me. I seek a world of love, let me be loving beyond all reason, beyond all normal expectation. . . .

Source of goodness and love in the universe, let me be alive to all the goodness that surrounds me. . . . Let me be energized to more fully contribute with my heart, my full dedication of time and money and energy, and my mind and soul, to the task of tikkun, healing the world, and finding the best ways that I can personally do that.

Hear the words of my mouth and may the meditations of my heart find acceptance before You, Eternal Friend, who protects and frees me. Amen.

—Rabbi Michael Lerner, [www.tikkun.org](http://www.tikkun.org)

### *When it's about women, continued:*

This ad, on gender equality, the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) has decreed, must be removed from its commercial airwaves because it is "political." Oh, give us a break. Racism isn't political. Child soldiers aren't political. Slave labor and human trafficking aren't political. But gender equality is? . . . In columns and letters to the editor everywhere, the Irish are raising some very pointed questions. They are asking why Trocáire doesn't focus on the Catholic church itself, its sponsoring institution, as a justifying agent of female discrimination. They want to know why a government commission can dare to question the need for this ad in a world where two-thirds of the poor are women.

They are pointing out that 66% of the illiterate of the world are women who are being denied the right to an education. They are not unaware that 70% of the refugees and internally displaced population of the world in war-torn countries are women. They know that women, even in Ireland and in developed countries in general, are still earning only 69% of male wages for the same level of work. . . . Women produce 80% of the planet's food but get less than 10% of the world's agricultural assistance and aid, even from nations like the United States.

And, finally, they are acutely conscious of the fact that women who are the backbone of the church everywhere, including in Ireland, are barred from the theological formulations of the church. They know that, however much women serve the church, they are nevertheless left out, even of its restored diaconate—simply because they are female. Best of all, the questions are getting more numerous, more pointed, more revealing every day.

Why the problem with only this campaign and not with any of the others? Is it because this campaign is so much closer to home for all of us than malaria and child soldiers and apartheid will ever be? Is it because down deep they—and maybe even we—know that this is discrimination in our own society that is hiding in plain sight? Is it because a change in this social issue would turn both society and church upside down? Or maybe, more to the point, would a change finally turn society and church right side up?

. . . The very idea that the attempt to focus on the issue of gender equality can be gagged, can be denied public consciousness, on the grounds that it is a "political problem"—for whatever reason—is itself the real problem. The very idea that we cannot discuss the questions of women in church and society without facing either theological or social recrimination is the issue behind the issues. . . .

Board: Anna Jaklitsch, 327-0978, [annajak@accesscom.com](mailto:annajak@accesscom.com)

Kay Williams, 328-2781, [kaywill@pacbell.net](mailto:kaywill@pacbell.net)

Bulletin: Michelle Hogan (April 1 and 8), Kay Williams (April 15),  
Jane Bahr (April 22 and 29)

Finance: Ed Hannibal, 321-0203, Judy Creek, 493-5371

Hospitality: Jim Davis, 328-2584, George Locke, 854-1539

Liturgy: John Arnold, 325-1421, [jsaoso@earthlink.net](mailto:jsaoso@earthlink.net)

Sally Benson, (408) 972-5843, [red5@svpal.org](mailto:red5@svpal.org)

Membership: Mary Washburn, 327-3915

Needs Net: Roberta Kehret, 494-1488, [robkehr@yahoo.com](mailto:robkehr@yahoo.com)

Spiritual Education: Mary Coady, 261-9155, Jim Davis, 328-2584