



# Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 2, 2006

## Readings

*This week:*

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 5:7-9

John 12:20-33

*Next week:*

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Mark 14:1—15:47

## Psalm

Create a clean heart in me, O God. (*Psalm 51*)

## Today

Today's presider is Fr. Tim Meier, 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

Saturday, April 8, 8:30 am

Decorate STA Church for Palm Sunday;  
bring Rice Bowls/envelopes tomorrow!

### From Thomas Merton

We have to a great extent lost the sense of sacrifice. . . . Popularly, even among Christians, a sacrifice is regarded only as a moral act, a work of piety or of virtue, which is marked by a special difficulty. . . . The implication seems to be that sacrifice is something *subjective* and *hard*.

The true notion of sacrifice is, on the contrary, something quite objective and the note of difficulty or pain is not essential to it except in so far as our weak and fallen nature comes into conflict with the divine will. . . . A sacrifice is an action which is *objectively sacred*, primarily of a social character, and what is important is not so much the pain or difficulty attached to it as the *meaning*, the *sacred significance* which not only conveys an idea but *effects a divine and religious transformation* in the worshipper, thus consecrating and uniting him more closely to God.

—*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*

## **Friday film series:**

The Friday film series continues on April 7 at 7:30 pm with *T-Shirt Travels* (57 minutes, 2001). What happens to all those old clothes you bring to the Salvation Army or Goodwill Industries? Focusing on Zambia, this award-winning film is about the second-hand clothes business, the role it plays in the world economy, and the growing inequalities between the first and third worlds. The film will be shown at the Unitarian Hall, 505 E. Charleston, and there will be a discussion afterward. Suggested donation is \$5-10.

## **Justice speakers forum:**

Ascension Parish in Saratoga continues its Justice Speakers Forum on April 24 with Fr. Joseph Sands, SJ, speaking on *Justice in the Americas: The Continuing Disparity of Wealth*. Registration begins at 7:15 and the program is from 7:30 to 9:00 pm. Admission is free, though a \$5 free-will donation is suggested (refreshments will be served). Call Fr. Charlie at (408) 725-3939 for more info.

## **Singles events:**

Saturdays in April at 9:00 am, there is an Age of Aquinas singles hike in the Baylands and coffee afterward. Contact Randy Jones, 408-739-2881, or e-mail age-of-aquinas@paloaltocatholic.org for more information. On Thursday, April 20, at 6:30 pm, the Catholic Alumni Club sponsors Dining Around the World. RSVP to Jim Chinn, (650) 948-1144 or e-mail jychinn@sbcglobal.net by April 19. On April 21 at 6:45 pm a CSF regular monthly gathering is sponsored by St. Lucy's Christian Singles Fellowship. Contact the CSF event line at (408) 539-0368 or e-mail singles@stlucycampbell.org. On April 22 at 7:30 pm, come to the Age of Aquinas Spring Fling III with live music by Sharp 9, conversation, and dancing. Snacks and beverages provided. Cover charge is \$5. Contact Randy Jones at (408) 739-2881 or e-mail age-of-aquinas@paloaltocatholic.org.

Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Msgr. Gene Boyle, Tom Carmody, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Joanne Hasegawa, François Jamati, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Kami Ladd, Carol Locke, Judy Mendelsohn, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullinex, Barbara Narewski, Joe Narewski, Lynne Owens, George Peinado, Nora Peniata, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, Dolores Walsh, Virginia Worthington, Fr. Tenny Wright, and friends of Jean Gill.



This isn't the 7:30 Mass starting late. Today Daylight Savings Time begins—the day we set our clocks forward one hour!

## **Bring your rice bowl next week:**

Next Sunday is Palm Sunday. **Please bring your Operation Rice Bowl check or rice bowl to Mass next Sunday**, and we will process up and offer them at the Offertory. **If you write a check, make it out to Thomas Merton Center for Operation Rice Bowl.** A single check will then be forwarded to Catholic Relief Services.



As we continue our Operation Rice Bowl journey this Lent, let us remember in prayer that we are one human family, regardless of our differences. In today's gospel, Jesus reminds us that judgment, repentance, and dying to sin are necessary before we can truly know the joy of God's mercy, forgiveness, and new life in Christ. Jesus put it this way: "If you love your life, you must let it go. . . . If you want to serve me, you must follow me and do what I do."

## **Meeting violence with love:**

Dr. Pamela Bjorklund, spiritual director, clinical psychologist, and adjunct professor at Santa Clara University, will facilitate a retreat at Presentation Center next weekend—*Meeting Violence with Love: Jesus' Response to the Passion*. Fee is \$195 for a double room, \$175 for a shared room. Take a deep look at Jesus' radical loving and prayerfully explore how it relates to your own life today. Call Presentation Center at (408) 354-2346 or go to [www.presentationcenter.org](http://www.presentationcenter.org).

## **CTA Arizona on faith and politics:**

Call to Action—Arizona and the Arizona Center for Theological Studies are sponsoring an ecumenical conference the weekend of April 28-29 on *Faith and Politics in the 21st Century: Connecting Progressive Faith Values with Pragmatic Political Action*. Speakers include Michael Morwood, author of many books on spirituality; Ken Butigan, a trainer in nonviolent approaches to justice and peace; and Ched Myers, on church renewal and faith-based witness for justice. If you'll be in the Phoenix area that weekend, check out [www.cta-arizona.org](http://www.cta-arizona.org). Full registration is \$100.

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## ***Lent 2006—A reflection on living simply:***

From *Out of the Ordinary*, by Sr. Joyce Rupp (Ave Maria Press, 2000).

I was standing in an aisle in the grocery store when a sharp spiritual pain pinched by awareness and let me see the rest of the world. I was appalled. I realized I could buy anything in the store that I wanted. The richness of my life slapped me in the face as I stood there, thinking about how many people do not even have a store like that available to them, let alone the money to purchase what is in it.

Not long after that experience, I read some statistics in an article by Joan Chittester (*National Catholic Reporter*, February 20, 1998) that increased my awareness of my own richness in light of the world's poverty:

Social statisticians tell us that if the earth's population were a village of 100 people, there would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, and 8 Africans. Only 14 people in the village would be from both North and South America combined. Seventy of the people in this village would be nonwhite. Seventy would be non-Christian. Seventy would be illiterate. Fifty of them would be malnourished. Fifty percent of all the money in the village would be held by six people—and all of them would be white, male Americans. . . .

Reading *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt increased my awareness of how fifty percent of the world are impoverished while I sit in my comfortable shelter, feasting daily on good food. As McCourt described going hungry day after day in his memoir of a childhood in



Ireland's desolate time, I thought of how rarely I consider the rest of humanity, while day after day I am in my snug, smug little world of satisfaction.

My awareness continued to deepen as I read McCourt's description of the three small boys sleeping on one old, raggedy coat, covered by two thin ones in the damp, cold climate, and of his licking the newspapers he found in which someone's fish and chips had been wrapped. This is not just something that has happened in the past. This kind of situation continues to exist, day after day, in many cities, villages, and isolated country places.

But there is also hope. There are people in wealthy nations whose awareness of the rest of the world is making a difference. They are working to change the great gap between the haves and have-nots. Their selflessness and kind-heartedness encourages me to make better decisions about how I live and how I give. I do not believe that it is a matter of condemning a comfortable life but, rather, of wanting this for all people. It is good that we are challenged to use our resources in such a way that others can also have a more humane life. It is essential that we are reminded often that each human being is our sister or our brother. It is the message that Jesus taught so long ago. It is an ageless teaching and we are always in need of relearning and living the message. Lent is a good time to reenter the heart of this teaching.

## ***Catholic Charities on immigration reform:***

Catholic Charities USA, which represents more than 1,700 local Catholic Charities agencies and institutions nationwide that assist more than half a million immigrants and refugees a year, called the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee's action [on March 27] a positive step toward much needed just and fair comprehensive immigration reform.

"We are pleased with the progress the Senate Judiciary Committee has made proposing enacting immigration reform that not only promotes the security of our nation, but also puts undocumented workers and their families on the path to lawful permanent residence and citizenship," said Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA, which strongly opposes a House-passed enforcement-only proposal. "We look forward to working with senators as the measure is debated in the Senate over the coming weeks to ensure

## ***Mexican bishops on immigration bill:***

Abridged from an article by Jason Lange, Catholic News Service. See [www.catholicnews.com](http://www.catholicnews.com) for more information.

Mexican bishops say they are hopeful about the prospects of a new bill in the U.S. Senate that would allow millions of illegal immigrants to legalize their status, though they worry the bill may be changed to criminalize undocumented workers. . . .Of the estimated 11 million to 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States, about half, or around 6 million, are Mexicans. The Mexican bishops also called on their own government to pass economic reforms that would create more jobs in Mexico and give workers an incentive not to migrate to the United States. Each year, Mexico generates only around half of the jobs necessary to meet the demand of young people entering the workforce, and economic reforms have been stuck in Mexico's congress for nearly a decade. "The politicians need to put

### ***Catholic Charities, continued:***

that an overhaul of our nation's immigration system is fair and just and protects the dignity of immigrants." In addition to providing a pathway to legal citizenship and worker protections, the committee's draft legislation includes a "Good Samaritan" provision that will protect groups like Catholic Charities that may provide aid to illegal immigrants. "Catholic Charities USA is grateful that the senators recognize that those providing humanitarian assistance should not be subject to criminal penalties for fulfilling their mission of helping those in need," said Father Snyder.

Over the past few weeks, Catholic Charities agencies and grassroots efforts nationwide mobilized hundreds and thousands of people to speak out for fair and just immigration reform. As the debate continues on Capitol Hill, Catholic Charities USA will continue to press Congress to enact comprehensive reform that:

- \*provides a path to lawful permanent residence and citizenship for the 11-12 million undocumented persons in the United States,

- \*sustains and reunites families,

- \*promotes the security of our nation,

- \*creates greater legal avenues for necessary workers to enter the United States in the future,

- \*integrates and promotes the success of newcomers, and

- \*improves the economic prospects, health, labor protections, and stability of all U.S. residents, including newcomers.

### ***More on simplicity:***

From *The Challenge and Spirituality of Catholic Social Teaching*, by Marvin L. Krier Mich.

Our Christian vocation is to be a disciple of Jesus as Americans. We can celebrate all that is life-giving and good about our cultural values, but we must have a discerning eye and ear regarding the messages of American culture. Father Richard Rohr. . . points out the paradox of Christian discipleship and spiritual growth: "Paradoxically, our soul does not grow by being fed. It does not develop by taking more and more into itself, by adding experience, by increasing information or activity. Spiritual development is not a matter of addition but subtraction. It is not an aggressive activity but a passive activity, not by taking in but in letting go" (*Why Be Catholic?*, p. 66). Our spirits are filled not by acquiring more, but by enjoying the gifts in our lives already: our family, our community, our faith, our modest home, our work, and creation. We are enriched not by adding more stuff, but in seeing the goodness and beauty in our present situation. . . .

### ***Mexican bishops, continued:***

their party interests aside. This is what has gotten in the way," Tijuana Bishop Rafael Romo Munoz said.

The bishops urged the Mexican government to put together a better migration policy for Central American workers living illegally in Mexico or passing through on the way to the United States. Central Americans frequently complain of abuses at the hands of Mexican authorities. "Mexico's fight for migration reform should also bring a new sense of responsibility with Central America. We want to be treated well in the United States, but we need to treat [Central Americans] well, too," said Bishop Rogelio Cabrera Lopez of Tuxtla Gutierrez. The Mexican government has been actively lobbying the U.S. Congress since 2000 for a migration reform that would legalize Mexican migrants' stay in the United States. . . .

The Senate Judiciary Committee March 27 approved a measure that would, among other things, allow illegal immigrants already in the country to legalize their status, after waiting their turn in a backlogged system, paying a fine and meeting other requirements. The bill, however, could still be changed on the Senate floor.

Also, it probably will have to be reconciled with a December House bill that authorized building a 700-mile fence along the Mexican border and would make being an illegal immigrant a criminal offense. Under current law, illegal migrants violate civil and not criminal codes. Even the softer bill passed by the Senate committee would nearly double the number of U.S. Border Patrol agents over the next five years and would speed the deportation of illegal immigrants from countries other than Mexico.

The Mexican bishops said they were opposed to any measure that would stand in the way of migrants seeking work. "Trying to stop migration with different types of barriers is impossible," said Archbishop Alberto Suarez Inda of Morelia. He said U.S. lawmakers have the moral obligation to "make a special effort to create a legal way so that Mexican workers can find jobs in that country that allow them to have a dignified life."

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Newsletter submissions must be e-mailed by Friday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. For Kay, e-mail kaywill@pacbell.net or phone 328-2781; for Michelle, myhogan@earthlink.net or 493-8452; for Jane, BahrJunior@comcast.net or 967-8246.