



1st Sunday in Lent

February 25, 2007

Readings

This week:

Deuteronomy 26:4-10
Romans 10:8-13
Luke 4:1-13

Next week:

Genesis 15:5-13, 17-18
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 9:28b-36

Psalm

Be with me Lord, when I am in trouble. *Psalm 91*

Today

Today's presider is Fr. José Antonio Rubio.

The Thomas Merton Center community worships and celebrates Sunday liturgy each week at the regularly scheduled 8:45 a.m. 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, Feb. 26, 7:30 pm
Wednesday, Feb. 28, 7:30 pm

Liturgy Team, Thomas House Basement
St. Thomas Aquinas Site Committee
Thomas House Basement

From Thomas Merton

Even the darkest moments of the liturgy are filled with joy, and Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten fast, is a day of happiness, a Christian feast. It cannot be otherwise, as it forms part of the great Easter cycle.

The Paschal Mystery is above all the mystery of life in which the Church, by celebrating the death and resurrection of Christ, enters into the Kingdom of Life which He has established once for all by His definitive victory over sin and death. We must remember the original meaning of Lent, as the *ver sacrum*, the Church's "holy spring" in which the catechumens were prepared for their baptism, and public penitents were made ready by penance for their restoration to the sacramental life in a communion with the rest of the Church. Lent is then not a season of punishment so much as one of healing.

—*Seasons of Celebration*

Community Notes

News Announcements Requests

Pope Benedict sets the theme for Lent 2007

This is an excerpt from the Text of Pope Benedict XVI's message for Lent 2007 as found in CATHOLIC ONLINE, www.Catholic.org 2/13/2007.

"They shall look on him whom they have pierced" (John 19:37) This is the biblical theme that this year guides our Lenten reflection. Lent is a favorable time to learn to stay with Mary and John, the beloved disciple, close to him who on the cross consummated for all mankind the sacrifice of his life (cf. Jn 19:25). With a more fervent participation let us direct our gaze, therefore, in this time of penance and prayer, at Christ crucified who, dying on Calvary, revealed fully for us the love of God. . . . Jesus said: "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself" (Jn 12:32). The response the Lord ardently desires of us is above all that we welcome his love and allow ourselves to be drawn to him. Accepting his love, however, is not enough. We need to respond to such love and devote ourselves to communicating it to others. Christ "draws me to himself" in order to unite himself to me, so that I learn to love the brothers with his own love. . . . May Lent be for every Christian a renewed experience of God's love given to us in Christ, a love that each day we, in turn, must "regive" to our neighbor, especially to the one who suffers most and is in need. Only in this way will we be able to participate fully in the joy of Easter.

Day Worker Center:

After winter it's time to think about the garden, clean up the yard, do that pruning and bare root planting, and get the house ready for Easter (cleaning, cooking, decorating)!



A day worker can lighten the load and help you paint, clean the garage, the windows, and the gutter; and do landscaping, moving, janitorial assistance, housecleaning, and other skillful jobs faster.

Contact Maria at (650) 930-4102, The Day Worker Center, 1880 California St. at Escuela, Mountain View.

Don't forget to bring food:

During these cold months we are encouraged to bring more non-perishable food and drop it in the baskets in the vestibule of the church. Staple items are especially welcomed: cereals, canned soups, fruits and vegetables, pasta, rice, beans, canned meat .Let's not forget our hungry neighbors!

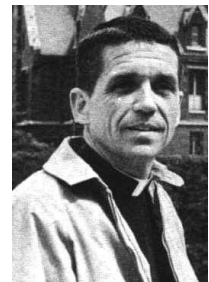
Envelope Sunday at TMC:



Today is the last Sunday of the month, so this bulletin includes an envelope for your donation to the Thomas Merton Center. Because of your generous support, TMC makes a monthly donation to Seton School, puts on programs and lectures, publishes this weekly bulletin and other printed items, buys liturgiv-cal supplies, and provides hospitality (coffee, donuts, cookies, fruit, etc.) after Sunday Mass and at other meetings. We depend on your support to keep TMC going!

Save March 6 to hear Dan Berrigan:

On Tuesday, March 6, 2007, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Daniel Berrigan will be speaking on the topic "Christians, Peacemaking and the War-making State," at Mercy Center, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame. This is a wonderful and rare opportunity to hear one of our country's foremost peacemakers. Admission: \$25 in advance.



Daniel Berrigan is a Jesuit priest, poet, and peacemaker who has been nominated many times for the Nobel Peace Prize. He has written over fifty books, including *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, *The Bride*, and *Uncommon Prayer*. A member of the Catonsville Nine and Plowshares Eight, Daniel Berrigan continues to demonstrate against war and nuclear weapons and give lectures across the country about the scriptures and the call to peacemaking. He lives at the West Side Jesuit Community in New York City. Daniel will be accompanied by a group who will do interpretive reading of his poetry. Composer and Liturgist Bob Hurd will perform to open and close the evening. Pre-registration required: call (650) 340-7454 or go on-line at www.mercy-center.org.

Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Msgr. Gene Boyle, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Tom Jaworowski, Joanne Hasegawa, François Jamati, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Kami Ladd, Carol Locke, Mercedes McCaffrey, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullinex, Joe Narewski, Dorothea Nudelman, Hank Okanski, Lynne Owens, Hayden Pastorini, George Peinado, Nora Peinata, Kay Pulskamp, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, Norm & Jane Shirle, Jean Vistica, Dolores

Community Forum

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

From Operation Rice Bowl – First week of Lent

Jesus went to the desert after his baptism to reflect on God's word, and specifically God's call to Him. He was tempted by the devil with worldly goods, but always remained faithful to God, knowing that "no one who believes in Him shall be put to shame."

In our own day many people struggle to find adequate work and earn a living wage for their families. As Catholics we believe that all people should be respected for their work and that all people have certain basic rights, including the right to earn a wage that is adequate to support a family. Catholic Relief Services helps individuals and small groups in Mexico and other countries start their own businesses, such as farm cooperatives or small stores, so that they may earn enough for food and to pay for their children to go to school. Please support CRS' micro-finance projects with your **prayers, fasting, learning, and giving** with Operation Rice Bowl this week. (At the end of Lent, please put your Rice Bowl savings into a check made out to Catholic Relief Services.)



Visit www.crs.org/orb to learn more and to read the story of Salvador Garcia of Nogales, Mexico. Father of 7, Salvador was fired from his job at age 50 because his employer wanted to hire younger workers. He began selling tacos and other foods from a cart on the street. A year ago he joined a community bank through the BanComún Northern Border Micro-Finance Project started by Catholic Relief Services and its partner, Borderlinks. Salvador received a loan for \$200 to start a small restaurant. His restaurant is doing well, but business fluctuates. Through the BanComún, he took basic business classes and learned how to plan for his restaurant's growth. Members of the BanComún are required to place 10% of their loan amount into savings so they will have money to use for emergencies. Salvador is now investing in kitchen supplies, and has the savings to help him during the slow times.

Religious identity in America:

Abridged from an article by Andrea Unseem in National Catholic Reporter Conversation Cafe (<http://ncrcafe.org>), 2/16/2007.

When Aurora Turk was growing up in Mexico City, being Catholic was a given. "It was taught to me by the nuns at school and my mother at home," she recalled. "My whole world was Catholic." But Turk's adult life has been marked by religious exploration. Married to a Brooklyn-born Jew, the 38-year-old mother now follows the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda, an Indian spiritual teacher; she and her husband plan to raise their infant son in the Self-Realization Fellowship, a group founded by Yogananda, at their home in Springfield, Va.

Turk's story is not unique. According to experts who study the phenomenon, believers are exercising their freedom of choice more than ever before. Sixteen percent of Americans have switched their religious identities at some point in their lives, according to the 2001 American Religious Identification Survey, one of the largest studies of its kind. "People are making more choices in everything, from lifestyle to sexual identity. It's not surprising if they are making more choices in religion," said Peter Berger, professor of sociology and theology at Boston University.

Barry Kosmin, co-author of the 2006 book

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Opposition to death penalty strengthens:

Timothy Lavin in The Tablet 2/24/2007

The Archbishop of Denver, Colorado, picked up an increasingly urgent theme among US clergy when he told parishioners last week, "The time is right for Colorado to turn its back on capital punishment," writes Timothy Lavin.

In a column for the Denver Catholic Register, the archdiocesan newspaper, Archbishop Charles Chaput wrote: "We don't need the death penalty, and as people of sense and conscience, we shouldn't want it." His comments coincide with the tenth anniversary of Colorado's last execution. The state legislature is debating a measure that would abolish the death penalty and redirect the millions of dollars it absorbs to create a police unit dedicated to resolving unsolved murders.

Colorado is one of 18 American states considering the repeal of the death penalty or invoking a moratorium on its use.

Children's health care:

SAN FRANCISCO (Catholic News Service, 2/21/2007) -- "If we do what is right, we can take care of all our children and raise the healthiest generation in American history," Archbishop George H. Niederauer of San Francisco told House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. He urged her to "include adequate funding in the federal budget to sustain and

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Religious identity in America, cont'd:

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“Religion in a Free Market: Religious and Non-Religious Americans,” which is based on the 2001 survey data, said “more switching is to be expected.. Family and ethnic loyalties -- the old glue that maintained inter-generational religious identification -- has weakened.” In addition to moving more frequently, Americans are also more likely to be “searching” for religious truth, often outside their own traditions, wrote Kosmin.

The 2001 study showed clear winners and losers in the competition to attract and retain members: Twice as many Americans left Catholicism as joined the faith, while evangelical Christianity registered a net gain, with more than three times as many people joining than leaving. The biggest change, however, was registered among Americans who said they had no religious identity at all, increasing from 8 percent of the U.S. population in 1990 to 14 percent in 2001. For Cindy Belsky, the journey has been in the opposite direction, from the “California spirituality” of her parents to a family-centered version of Conservative Judaism. Belsky’s mother was Presbyterian and her father Lutheran, but the family didn’t practice any formal religion. When Belsky married her husband, who grew up in an observant Jewish household, she agreed to raise their children in her husband’s faith. When her oldest son, Daniel, started preschool at a nearby Conservative synagogue, Belsky was surprised by what she found. “I walked into the preschool and was enveloped in warmth. I felt so at home,” she recalled. Today she is seriously considering converting to the faith. “My own religious background was so slippery, not concrete. I want to belong to the community, and I want that sense of identity for my children.”

While religious switching may bring satisfaction to individual seekers, the phenomenon can be unnerving for religious leaders, who are vying for “customers” ever more aware of new options, according to Kosmin. “We have a supply-side religious market with more competing firms each year,” he wrote in an e-mail interview. Mega-churches are successful in part because they actively reach out to “potential” members, of which there are many in high-mobility suburbs and exurbs, Kosmin says. Daniel Olson, a sociologist at Indiana University South Bend, observes, “There is a strong relationship between rates of leaving and rates of joining, both for congregations and whole denominations.”

Surprisingly, Olson noted, smaller religious groups

Children’s health care continued:

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expand the highly successful State Children’s Health Insurance Program.” He made the comments in a personal letter to Pelosi that was delivered to her Washington office Feb. 12 by George Wesolek, director of the archdiocese’s Public Policy and Social Concerns Office. Archbishop Niederauer advocated “access to affordable health insurance for every child through proven, successful federal-state partnerships” as the “right place to start in tackling the health care challenges facing our country.” The archbishop was to join other religious, civic and health care leaders at a public rally Feb. 22 on the plaza of St. Mary’s Cathedral at which a “Report on Children’s Health” was to be released. The report, organizers said, would be presented to Pelosi at both her district and Washington offices.

are better at recruiting new members. Most switching happens through social relationships, like marriage and friendship, explained Olson, and members of a small religious group are more likely to have lots of relationships with non-members, whom they are able to pull into the faith.

Berger, the Boston University sociology professor, argues that “modernity in its essence means an enormous change in the human condition, from fate to choice.” Encountering other people’s religious beliefs—and perhaps being persuaded by them—is “an inevitable part of modernity.”

Berger cited the example of his 6-year-old granddaughter—born to a Protestant father and a Hindu mother—who holds fascinating theological conversations with a girl across the street, whose parents are missionaries for the group Jews for Jesus.

“I would say inter-religious communication by 6-year-old little girls is more significant than interfaith committees set up by the Vatican,” he said at a Pew sponsored forum, “because there are many more little girls than there are theology professors.”

Board: Anna Jaklitsch, 327-0978, annajak@accesscom.com
Kay Williams, 328-2781, kaywill@pacbell.net

Bulletin: Jane Bahr (February 25)

Michelle Hogan (March 11)

Kay Williams (March 4)

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

Sally Benson, (408) 972-5843, red5@svpal.org

Membership: Mary Washburn, 327-3915

Spiritual Ed. Mary Coady, 261-9155, coady_94025@yahoo.com

Jim Davis, 328-2584, Jim_Davis@pacbell.net

Please join us for coffee, juice and pastries after Mass in the Memorial Garden next to the church. If this is your first time at this Mass, or you are visiting today, you are especially encouraged to stop by the garden; we’d like to get to know you. If you want to know more about the Merton Center, ask around at coffee, or contact one of the people listed in the masthead above.