



## Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 18, 2007

### Readings

*This week:*

Joshua 5:9a, 10-12  
2 Corinthians 5:17-21  
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

*Next week:*

Isaiah 43:16-21  
Philippians 3:8-14  
John 8:1-11

### Psalm

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. *Psalm 34*

### Today

Today's presider is Fr. George Aranha.

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, March 19, 7:30 p.m.

Adult Education, Thomas House basement

### 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. For contemplation is not ultimately perfect unless it is shared. We do not finally taste the full exultation of God's glory until we share His infinite gift of it by overflowing and transmitting glory all over heaven, and seeing God in all the others who are there, and knowing that He is the Life of all of us and that we are all One in Him.

—*New Seeds of Contemplation*

# Community Notes

News Announcements Requests

## Today, 3/18, Rosemary Radford Ruether:



Don't miss this talk on *Healing Ourselves, Healing the Earth: Justice and Third World Women*, today at 4:00 p.m., at Our Lady of the Rosary Church Hall, 3233 Cowper Street, Palo Alto. Dr. Ruether, professor emerita at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, argues that Westerners must learn from 3rd-world women that women's impoverishment is linked to ecological destruction. Her book *Sexism and God-Talk* is a classic in the field of feminist theology. A good will offering of \$20 is being asked, but no one is turned away.

## Flowers for the Easter Altar:



Please donate colored flowers (azaleas, freesias, lilies, anything growing colorfully in a pot) for the Easter altar. Bring the potted beauties to STA on Saturday, April 7, after 8:30 a.m. when the decorating crew will start. Stay to help with the decorating if you can.

## Nametags:

The TMC Liturgy Committee will be re-furbishing the nametag board over the next few weeks. A list of names of regular 8:45 a.m. attendees will be compiled and laid out for your review. If your name is not on the list, please add it. New Nametags will be prepared by Kathy Schniedwind, a new display board will be "built" by Judy Washburn. It is hoped that this will make it more convenient for everyone to find and wear his/her nametag each Sunday. Getting to know one another is sometimes as simple as greeting one another by name.

## TMC Needs Net:



Do you or someone you know find yourself in need of a helping hand, a last-minute care ride, a cat-sitter, or the like? Contact the TMC Needs Net for that sudden need: Roberta Kehret, 494-1488. Maybe you can't help your friend who has a need, but you can call the Needs Net for him or her.

## Operation Rice Bowl project:



A reminder that we will be collecting Rice Bowl donations on Palm Sunday, April 1. On that day checks, made out to Catholic Relief Services, will be collected, as well as the actual Rice Bowls with any cash or change in them. Checks will be forwarded directly to CRS; cash will be converted to check and sent from TMC.

For more information about the work of Catholic Relief Services in Cambodia, featured this fourth

## Immigration conference on March 31:

The World Affairs Council of Northern California together with the local Leagues of Women Voters and Avenidas are presenting **Immigration: Opportunities and Challenges**. This half-day conference on immigration will address the historical importance of immigration to the nation's growth, culture, energy, and job creation. The speakers will address immigration's impact on social, demographic and economic trends, foreign relations with neighboring countries, legal issues and legislative status, and offer a perspective of the immigrant community.

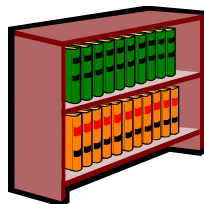
Check-in & Refreshments: 9:00 AM, Program: 9:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Free to all.

Hewlett Packard Headquarters, 3000 Hanover Street, Bldg 20 Auditorium, Palo Alto

For more information about the conference and the speakers go to [www.itsyourworld.org](http://www.itsyourworld.org).

## TMC lending library coming soon:

Roberta Kehret has volunteered to get the TMC lending library closet up and running. Watch for an announcement for the formal "opening." In the meantime, gather books and periodicals on topics spiritual, theological, Catholic or other religions, environmental, political, historical, fiction, non-fiction (if you liked it, probably someone else will, too) and plan to bring them down to the cabinet in the Thomas House basement. Library "hours" will generally be after the 8:45 a.m. Mass during the hospitality time.



There is still a chance locally today to speak out against the war. At 12:00 Noon 3/18 *Mountain View Voices for Peace* is sponsoring a Memorial consisting of a wall displaying the names of U.S. Troops who have died in the Iraq War, 331 blank dog tags representing each of the women and men from California who have died in the war. The names of US casualties will be read starting at noon. CIVIC CENTER PLAZA, corner of Castro and Mercy, 500 Castro Street, Mountain View.

# Community Forum

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## ***From Operation Rice Bowl: fourth week of Lent***

Jesus' stories are full of rural images: mustard seeds, flocks of sheep, harvests ready and laborers few. These metaphors matched well the everyday world of much of his audience. That is still the case today, where farming and rural life continues to be the chief source of income and sustenance for of the world's poor. In Sunday's story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:1-3,11-32) Jesus points not only to the prodigious love of a forgiving father, but also subtly crafts an image of what a "whole" estate requires: a community that is intact. A son that is lost results in a family that is broken and a way of life that is compromised. The act of return and forgiveness reverses that process. In your prayer this week, hold up the broken relationships that are in your circle of family and friends. Pray too for the families whose sustenance is compromised by war, famine, and economic policies that undermine agrarian communities.

In this fourth week of Lent, we visit a farmer in Cambodia. For Cambodian subsistence farmers, the need to supplement their income as day laborers often takes them far from their families. Ek Sakhorn, a farmer whose wife has struggled with illness for eight years, joined in 1998 a CRS-sponsored program that trains farmers in integrated farming (an interdependent system of crops, livestock, and aquaculture) as well as management of fish hatcheries and tree nurseries. He also learned how to link their production to market demands. Here is his story: With the help of Santi Sena, a local agriculture group that works with Catholic Relief Services, I learned how to improve my farm. I built a fish pond, pigpens and a vegetable garden, and now I produce a variety of things to sell at the market. I also received a small grant from CRS to build a tree nursery where I grow fruit-tree seedlings to sell to other farmers.



My farm is now thriving and we have enough money to pay for food and clothes for my family and school for my children. We also built a new home which is on stilts so it won't flood during the rainy season. My wife is receiving treatment for her illness and now is well enough to help me with the farm. We are planning to start a new business soon near a new factory being built in our village. We will sell food to the workers and build a new building that they can rent for lodging. I look forward to the future which continues to get brighter for me, my wife and our children. Before that, he says, he used only traditional farming methods, which he described as simply planting seeds and hoping for the best.

### ***On gender equality:***

*Adapted from an article in National Catholic Reporter by Joan Chittister, OSB, 3/15/2007.*

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 does not ask for alms alone. It asks people to contribute to movements that seek justice. It always calls for change in the system that is creating the oppression, contributing to the poverty, or justifying the discrimination. So, in previous Lenten campaigns it called attention to apartheid in South Africa, concentrated on the liberation of child soldiers, and turned the light and the money on the plight of slave laborers around the world. The Irish government and the church supported all these efforts.

In all their Lenten drives Trocáire uses public information spots on Irish television. It publishes public information brochures throughout the republic to focus attention on issues that are at the base of oppression or poverty and collects money to be used

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### ***A moderate denunciation of Jesuit Jon Sobrino:***

*Adapted from an Editorial in The Tablet of London, 3/17/07*

The Vatican's denunciation of certain works by the Jesuit theologian Jon Sobrino will be widely seen as a renewal of its campaign against liberation theology. He is one of its leading exponents. Nevertheless, the terms of the latest judgement differ significantly from previous actions against this theology in two respects. First, the grounds of disapproval, somewhat arcane to secular commentators, are not so much to do with Fr Sobrino's politics as with his ecclesiology and Christology, particularly as set

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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, Ric Lippard, 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, George Schardt, Norm & Jane Shirle, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, and T. J. Wooten.

## ***On gender equality continued:***

*(Continued from page 3)*

to change the system as well as to alleviate the effects of the oppression. 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. 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! The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) has decreed this ad must be removed from its commercial airwaves because it is "political."

They're saying racism isn't political, child soldiers aren't political, slave labor and human trafficking aren't political, but gender equality is!

Protests about the ban are coming from everywhere, true. Radio Television Erin refuses to comply. They will show the ads, but they will confine them to noncommercial television and public radio channels only—where there are no sponsors who might withdraw their own advertising support. The campaign itself has also not been withdrawn. And in columns and Letters to the Editor everywhere, the Irish are raising some very pointed questions.

They are asking things like why Trocáire doesn't focus on the Catholic church itself. They are pointing out that 66 percent of the illiterate of the world are women who are being denied the right to an education. They are not unaware that 70 percent 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 percent of male wages for the same level of work.

A people in an agricultural country who have known desperate starvation themselves, realize deeply that women produce 80 percent of the planet's food but get less than 10 percent of the world's agricultural assistance and aid, even from nations like the United States. 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.

Is the problem here that a change 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?

## ***Jesuit Jon Sobrino continued:***

*(Continued from page 3)*

forth in his two books *Jesus the Liberator* (1993) and *Christ the Liberator* (2001). Liberation theology has tended to equate the Church of the apostolic tradition as stated in the Creeds with "the Church of the poor", usually particularized as the poor of Latin America. While the Vatican statement in no way repudiates the "preferential option for the poor", which is one of liberation theology's most important innovations, it finds Fr Sobrino's expression of it defective. But liberation theology does not stand or fall by his exposition of it.

Secondly, although it has done so in the past with theologians it has found unacceptable, the Vatican has not ordered him to recant, or ordered his books to be withdrawn, or even tried to ban Catholics from reading them. It has simply warned the faithful that Fr Sobrino is, as it were, offside. Any further measures necessary to protect the flock from error are left to local hierarchies.

This more grown-up way of doing business may reflect the influence of Cardinal William Levada, the new prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. As an American he can be presumed to believe firmly in the civilized virtues of due process and freedom of speech, which should be interrupted only in extreme circumstances.

Leaving it to local bishops to exercise their discretion as they think fit is a more mature way of handling theological controversy, which Cardinal Levada said recently that he did not want to stifle. From the Sobrino thesis and the CDF's antithesis could come a synthesis that moves the debate on: certainly the last word has not been said about the relationship between Christ's humanity and his divinity, nor about how he understood them himself. In steering the debate this way, rather than stopping it altogether, the Congregation has done theology a service that will, in time, bear fruit for the Church.

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Kay Williams (March 25)

Michelle Hogan (April 1)

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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. The coffee and doughnuts are free; just come and enjoy. 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.