



FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 7, 2006

Readings

This week:

Acts 4:7-12

1 John 3:1-2

John 10:11-18

Next week:

Acts 9:26-31

1 John 3:18-24

John 15:1-8

Psalm

The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone. *Psalm 118*

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Richard McBrien.



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, May 8, 7:30 pm

Liturgy committee meeting, place TBA.

Thursday, May 11, 7:30 pm

TMC Board meeting, STA basement hall.

From Thomas Merton

Perhaps the reason why so few men believe in God is that they have ceased to believe that even a God can love them. The man who is not afraid to admit everything that he sees to be wrong with himself, and yet recognizes that he may be the object of God's love precisely because of his shortcomings, can begin to be sincere. His sincerity is based on confidence, not in his illusions about himself, but in the endless, unending mercy of God.

—*No Man is an Island*

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

TMC 10th Anniversary party:

There's only one word for it—DELIGHTFUL! After a month and more of rain, even the sun showed up to add to the glow of good feelings as we gathered last Sunday evening to remember, celebrate and thank all those who have made the Thomas Merton Center a reality. We see each other every week, yet there was a special buzz and warmth to the many conversations that accompanied wine and hors d'oeuvres on the picture-perfect terrace of the Stanford Faculty Club. Indoors at our dinner tables, we felt truly blessed as Fr. Tenny Wright, now recovered from a heart attack, and Fr. Daniel Kiriti, who had come all the way from Kenya, led us in a blessing of the meal. We missed Msgr. Gene Boyle who had to excuse himself in order to prepare for the Immigrant Rights March the following day.



Dinner was delicious, graciously served, wine freely poured.

Dick Freeman as our polished M.C. briefly recalled our history and thanked our founders, and Anna Jaklitsch spoke of our current projects.

Then came the dancing!! Whether you were among the dancers or the watchers, you had to be amazed at the talent in the room—too many pros to mention here, but certainly Fr. Kiriti out on the dance floor, showing us the very meaning of joy, was a highlight of the evening.

We were celebrating many things: our 10 year survival, our agreement with the Bishop, our beautiful liturgies, our excellent Spiritual Education program, our efforts toward greater justice in the world, but most of all we were celebrating each other as we've come to know ourselves in a spirit-filled community.

Our great thanks to the hard-working people who put it all together: LaVerne Sheehan, chair, Mary Dowley and Henry Organ, assistant chairs, Jim Davis, Judy Creek, Eleanor Kraft, Dick and Corkie Freeman, and Kay Williams.

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, Chris Lippart and family, Carol Locke, Judy Mendelsohn, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullinex, Joe Narewski, Lynne Owens, George Peinado, Nora Peinata, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, Dolores Walsh, Virginia Worthington, and Rosamond, Chris, and Janie, friends of Jean Gill.

TMC's founding board:

We would not have had a 10th anniversary party were it not for our founders who had the vision, talent, courage, and determination to build the Thomas Merton Center from the ground up. Thanks to those members who served on our founding board— April 10, 1996: Dick Placone, President, Maureen Locke, Vice President, Dick Freeman, Secretary, Mark Dowley, Diana Diamond, Eleanor Kraft, and Tom Williams. Gerard Marer, who is no longer living, was added to the board in May of 1996, and was much loved for his sage advice.



PIA "Just Healthcare" action:

The time has arrived for action on health insurance for all low income residents of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. A public event will take place at St. Mathew's Church in San Mateo on May 16 to present a proposal for this action in both counties. Great progress has been made in both counties in providing

health insurance for all children.

Join us at this Peninsula Interfaith Action (PIA) sponsored public event to push to extend insurance to all low income

adults in the two counties and to expand insurance for all children throughout the state.

Tuesday, May 16, 2006; 7:30 - 8:45 pm

St. Matthew's Catholic Church Auditorium, 9th Ave at El Camino, San Mateo.



Contributions to the Kiriti fund:

It is not too late to make a contribution to the *Kiriti Grant Fund* to help Fr. Kiriti build a much needed girls' high-school in his parish in Naivasha, Kenya. Girls had to be phased out of the present high-school due to problems associated with co-ed education of adolescents. (Fr. Kiriti apologizes for the choice he had to make.) These young people face many difficulties, and the only thing he can offer the youth of his parish is education. Without an education which enables them to find work, girls of 14 are often forced into early marriages with older men. If you wish to help you can make out a check: *Thomas Merton Center-Kiriti Grant Fund*. You can bring it to church or mail it to Thomas Merton Center, P.O.Box 60061, Palo Alto, California 94306.

Community Forum

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Let's pay, pray, and have our say:

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN WAS ONE OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED Catholic intellectuals of the 19th century. Already an accomplished theologian within the Church of England, Newman became a figure of national controversy when he decided to become Roman Catholic in 1845. Soon after, Newman made what he thought was a modest proposal well grounded in Catholic tradition. He suggested to English Catholic bishops that they consider consulting all the faithful on matters of both practical and doctrinal concern. He noted that this was a practice common to the early church and that even Pope Pius IX, before defining the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, first queried the bishops regarding whether the faithful already believed in it.

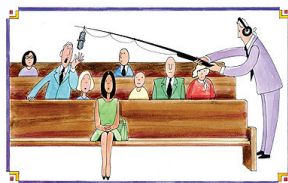
Needless to say, Newman's proposal was not well received. One of the leading members of the Roman curia, Msgr.

George Talbot, contended that Newman's provocative views made him "the most dangerous man in England." Talbot wrote in a letter: "What is the province of the laity? To hunt, to shoot, and to entertain. These matters they understand, but to meddle with ecclesiastical matters they have no right at all." His reaction to Newman was fairly representative of most church leaders at the time.

The proposal to consult the faithful is often met with the same disdain today, usually with the dismissive rejoinder: "The church is not a democracy!" This is certainly true in so far as Christians believe that the church is not its own lord; we cannot simply reinvent ourselves as we wish. We are bound by the gift of divine revelation offered to us in Christ and testified to in scripture and tradition.

But that gift of revelation must be received in the life of the church, and this does not happen all at once. Moreover, all the baptized, not just clergy, are participants in the ongoing development of church tradition. It follows that church leaders ought to consider what the baptized have to say. The Second Vatican Council, which convened more than 70 years after Newman's death, largely vindicated him when it taught in *Lumen Gentium* that every baptized Christian possesses a supernatural instinct for the faith (*sensus fidei*) such that the whole people of God "receives not the word of human beings but truly the Word of God . . . The people unfaithfully adhere to this faith, penetrate it more deeply through right judgment, and apply it more fully

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In gray zones, incline toward life:

CARDINAL CARLO MARIA MARTINI, former cardinal of Milan, in the Italian news magazine story in which he said married couples could use condoms if one spouse is infected with the AIDS virus, also talked about artificial reproduction and abortion. The story in *L'espresso* is an exchange between Martini, widely considered one of the leading intellectual lights in the church, and Dr. Ignazio Marino, an Italian transplant surgeon at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. On the issue of artificial reproduction, Marino said new technologies are emerging that would not create and freeze surplus embryos, but ovocytes, well before the masculine and feminine strands of chromosomes are combined, and hence before new DNA exists. In other words, what would be created and frozen, Martino argued, would not be a human being.

Martini was cautiously approving. "It also appears to me that what you propose could overcome the rejection of all forms of artificial reproduction that's present today in a number of circles," he said. "It produces a painful split between a practice that's commonly accepted by most people and approved by law, and the attitude—at least in theory—of many believers." Martini also supported "embryo adoption," meaning allowing frozen embryos to be implanted in women who volunteer to bring them to term, even if the women are not married, if the alternative is that the embryo will eventually be eliminated. "The insertion [of the embryo] in the womb of a woman, including a single mother, would seem preferable to its pure and simple destruction," he said.

"Where there is a conflict of values, it seems to me ethically more important to incline to that solution which permits a life to expand, rather than allows it to die," Martini said. "But I understand that not everybody will be of this opinion. I just don't want us to clash on the basis of abstract and general principles, when instead we're in a gray zone where we can't start with apodictic judgments."

On abortion, Martini firmly upheld the moral teaching of the church, but acknowledged the complexity of writing it into public policy. "It seems to me difficult [to imagine] that, in situations like ours, the state would not distinguish between acts that are punishable in a penal fashion, and acts for

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Let's pay, pray, and have our say:

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in daily life.” Pope John Paul II reaffirmed this important teaching in his pastoral letter, *At the Beginning of the New Millennium*, quoting St. Paulinus of Nola: “Let us listen to what all the faithful say, because in every one of them the Spirit of God breathes.” On another occasion, while addressing the U.S. bishops in September 2004, he said: “A commitment to creating better structures of participation, consultation, and shared responsibility should not be misunderstood as a concession to a secular democratic model of governance, but as an **intrinsic requirement** of the exercise of episcopal authority and a necessary means of strengthening that authority.” So how successful have we been in fulfilling the council's teaching? The code of canon law recommends, but does not require, the creation of diocesan pastoral councils and the convocation of diocesan synods; in both instances lay participation is envisioned. Even where these do exist there is often no guarantee that participants will be allowed to speak freely and have their insights taken seriously by church leaders.

How might the consultation of the faithful work today? Here are some proposals: 1) We must renew our commitment to adult Christian formation. Members of a mature and well-formed Christian community are better equipped to engage their spiritual instinct in processes of communal discernment. 2) Church leaders must see consultation as vital to their own ministry of leadership. This means having the courage to consult people who are likely to disagree. One of the perennial temptations of consultation is to only consult with people already inclined to agree with you. 3) One of the most important areas in which consulting the faithful might be applied is in the appointment of church leaders, as was done in the early church. This did not mean that the people thought the bishop was their delegate or representative, as would be the case in a liberal democracy; rather the early church believed that the will of God in the selection of a bishop could be discovered in the Spirit-guided discernment and insight of the people. 4) We must be willing to differentiate between what is essential in the life of the church and what is

Waking up this morning, I smile,
Twenty four brand new hours are before me.
I vow to live fully in each moment
And to look at all beings with eyes of compassion.

—*Thich Nhat Hanh*

In gray zones, incline toward life:

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which penal solution doesn't make sense,” he said. “That doesn't mean a ‘license to kill,’ but that the state doesn't intervene in every possible case. Its efforts should be to reduce the number of abortions, to impede them with every means possible (above all after a certain period from the beginning of the pregnancy), to reduce the causes of abortion, and to take precautions so that women who decide to take this step, especially during the period when it's not illegal, do not suffer grave physical damage or have their lives placed at risk.”

Martini noted that the risk of serious physical injury is especially grave in the case of clandestine abortions, and hence said that, all things considered, Italy's abortion law—which permits abortion during the first trimester—has had the positive effect of “contributing to the reduction and, eventually, elimination” of back-alley procedures. In a case in which a fetus threatens the life of the mother, Martini said “moral theology has always sustained the principle of legitimate defense and of lesser evil,” in order to justify a procedure that would save the life of the mother while terminating the pregnancy.

Article by John L. Allen in National Catholic Reporter, May 5, 2006.

and development. The church cannot invent itself, but we should remember the ancient axiom quoted in Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes*, “Let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is doubtful, and charity in everything.” We must remain faithful to that revelation that comes to us in Christ in the form of scripture and church teaching, but we must not forget the need to listen to the Spirit of Christ speaking today in the hearts and minds of the whole Christian community.

Abridged from an article in the May 2006 issue of U.S. Catholic by Richard R. Galliardetz, professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo in Ohio.

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