



# 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 22, 2007

## Readings

*This week:*

Genesis 18: 1-10a  
Colossians 1:24-28  
Luke 10:38-42

*Next week:*

Genesis 18:20-21, 23-32  
Colossians 2:6-14  
Luke 11:1-13

## Psalm

He who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord. *Psalm 26*

## 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

Today, Sunday, July 22

Wednesday, July 25, 7:30 pm

Feast day of St. Mary Magdalene

STA Site Committee, Thomas House Basement

## From Thomas Merton

The heresy of individualism: thinking oneself a completely self-sufficient unit and asserting this imaginary "unity" against all others. The affirmation of the self as simply "not the other". The true way is just the opposite: the more I am able to affirm others, to say "yes" to them in myself, by discovering them in myself and myself in them, the more real I am. I am fully real if my own heart says yes to everyone.

I will be a better Catholic, not if I can refute every shade of Protestantism, but if I can affirm the truth in it and still go further.

So, too, with the Muslims, the Hindus, the Buddhists, etc. This does not mean syncretism, indifferentism, the vapid and careless friendliness that accepts everything by thinking of nothing. There is much one cannot "affirm" and "accept," but first one must say "yes" where one really can.

If I affirm myself as a Catholic merely by denying all that is Muslim, Jewish, Protestant, Hindu, Buddhist, etc., in the end I will find that there is not much left for me to affirm as a Catholic: and certainly no breath of the Spirit with which to affirm it."

*~ Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

# Community Notes

News Announcements Requests

## Help Catholic Charities welcome refugees:

This summer the number of refugees entering our country legally will be over 30,000. Sixty (60) families are expected here in Santa Clara County. You may remember the Lost Boys of the Sudan and the

people who came from Bosnia a few years ago. Once again, we have the chance to welcome our brothers and sisters.

Imagine arriving in a place where very few people speak your language. Imagine arriving with only your identity papers.

What would you do?

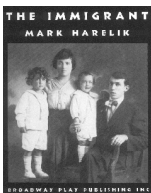
**Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement** staff meets new refugees at the airport and brings them to a transition house in Sunnyvale. The case manager guides the family on the path to creating a new life and a new home in our community. Now they need your help! To help welcome a refugee family – with supplies, with transportation, with rent, with friendship - contact Reza at REZA@ccsj.org or Archana at asharma@ccsj.org or 408 325-5215.

## Call to Action statement on ecumenism:

In response to the Vatican's document asserting that other Christian churches "suffer from defects." CTA has released its own statement that affirms the importance of ecumenical relations based on the example of Jesus who welcomed all people to the table.

CTA expresses disappointment that the Vatican has chosen to exclude and distance itself from other Christian churches. Not only does its document hinder and potentially damage years of positive ecumenical dialogue and relationships, but it also disregards the example of Jesus. Jesus, who was Jewish, invited all people to the table, regardless of religious affiliation. The Vatican should follow Jesus' model of inclusion and love of all God's people.

If you would like to take action on this issue, CTA encourages you to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper to a) express your concern over the Vatican's recent letter and b) to state your own respect for other Christian churches so that our brothers and sisters in Christ know that in this case the Vatican does not speak for all Catholics.



Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Barbara Jane Ferrell, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Kami Ladd, Carol Locke, Mercedes McCaffrey, Eileen McNevin, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullinex, Joe Narewski, Dorothea Nudelman, Hank Okanski, Lynne Owens, Hayden Pastorini, George Peinado, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, George Schardt, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, and T. J. Wooten. [Add or subtract names from this list by e-mailing the three bulletin editors: Jane Bahr, Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams.]

## A special birthday:

Next weekend on Saturday, July 28 **Sue Kast**, long time TMC member, will be celebrating her **98th! Birthday**. We miss having her with us at Mass, sitting in the front left pew. She would certainly be happy to get a card or phone call. Her address: 25712 Hayward Blvd. #213, Hayward CA 94542. Her phone (510) 733-2389

Do you find yourself in need of a helping hand, a last minute car ride, a cat sitter, or the like? Call Roberta at **The Needs Net** (650) 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. Roberta will direct you.

## Petition to end war in Iraq:

Catholics United, Pax Christi USA and NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby have launched a collaborative petition drive called **Catholics for an End to the War in Iraq**. The purpose is to insist that our lawmakers move now to legislate a solution to the Iraq War that includes diplomacy, re-development, and responsible withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Our voice is important because Catholics account for more than 1 in 4 voters nationwide, and our lawmakers know that Catholics will push for action on Iraq. This petition will help remind our policymakers that anything short of immediate action on this issue will come as a slap in the face to the millions of U.S. Catholics who are fed up with the present "stay the course" Iraq policy.

**Catholics for an End to the War in Iraq** needs to show the world that our voice is a force to be reckoned with by gathering 20,000 names between now and September 1st. If you wish to help us reach this goal you can sign the petition, and encourage your friends and family to do the same, by going to **www.catholicsforanend.org**.

Once the goal of 20,000 is reached, the petition will be hand delivered to our Congressional leaders in Washington. Our Catholic voice matters and our faith calls us to use it.

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!

# Community Forum

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## **Who was Mary Magdalene?:**

*Scholars seek to correct Christian tradition on Mary Magdalene: from an article by Jerry Filteau in Catholic News Service, May 1, 2006*

Modern scholars are seeking not only to correct the fanciful fictions about Mary Magdalene in Dan Brown's "The Da Vinci Code," but they are also trying to set straight centuries of erroneous Christian tradition regarding her that developed, especially in the West.

In A.D. 591 Pope St. Gregory the Great preached a sermon in which he identified as one person the New Testament figures of Mary Magdalene, the sinful woman who anointed Jesus' feet and washed them with her tears, and the Mary who was the sister of Lazarus and Martha of Bethany. This tradition had gained some ground in the West (but was resisted by many of the church's early theologians), Gregory's sermon became a reference point for later scholarship, teaching and preaching in the West, Father Raymond F. Collins, a New Testament scholar at The Catholic University of America, said in an interview. The Greek Fathers -- the great theologians of the early church in the East, who wrote in Greek -- consistently maintained that Mary Magdalene, the unnamed repentant sinner, and Mary of Bethany were three distinct women. That remains the tradition in the Orthodox churches. The identification of Mary Magdalene as a repentant sinful woman was solidified in the Latin Church for centuries by the use of that story, reported in the seventh chapter of Luke, as the Gospel reading for Mary Magdalene's feast, July 22. In fact, in the Roman Calendar before the Second Vatican Council, the day was called the feast of "Mary Magdalene, penitent."

Father Collins noted that this changed in 1969 with the reform of the Roman Missal and the Roman Calendar. Since then the Gospel reading for Mary Magdalene's feast has been Chapter 20, verses 1-2 and 11-18, of the Gospel of John.

The first two verses tell of her coming to Jesus' tomb early Sunday morning, finding it empty and running to tell Peter and John that someone has removed Jesus' body. The second part of the reading tells of Mary staying behind, weeping, after Peter and John leave, and the risen Jesus speaking to her and telling her to announce to the rest of his followers, "I have seen the Lord."

Sister Elizabeth A. Johnson, a theologian at Fordham University, said the version of Mary Magdalene as "the prostitute to whom Jesus forgave much and who loved him ... took on a profound Christian ideal of a sinner who repents and therefore is a model for Christians in that way. But what got lost in the process was her actual role as a leader of witnessing to the Resurrection in the early church." Of the repentant prostitute version of the Magdalene, she said, "What a lot of us who've done some work on her say is ... it's a wrong one and in the process it's robbing us of (appreciation of) women's leadership at a crucial moment in

*(Continued on page 4)*

## **Magdalene at the Tomb:**

*By Lisa M. Galek, Seven Hills, Ohio*

When people die –  
they're dead.  
A man doesn't just get up  
out of his grave  
and start walking around  
tending to gardens  
and eating fish dinners again.  
She knew that.  
Everything she knew told her,  
*don't hope.*  
So she wept.  
And wasn't she right to weep?  
We treat her so harshly.  
*Why didn't she know he would rise?*  
But I like to imagine  
there was a little voice inside her  
that said, *believe it,*  
*for has he ever uttered*  
*an untrue word to you?*  
But she was a realist.  
We are realists.  
We can't believe it.  
The Earth doesn't just  
start spinning backwards,  
A lake doesn't dry up over night,  
the dead don't just get up,  
toss their burial clothes into a pile,  
and walk away from their graves.  
But I suspect  
she suspected he might.  
I think we suspect it to.  
Why else would we venture with her  
out to the edges of town  
on a dark Jerusalem night -  
cold, alone, and afraid?  
What other reason brings us there  
on the morning of the third day  
unless we think it will happen  
just as he said?  
She would be present  
when history reversed itself,  
when the natural order came undone,  
when God said  
something incredible  
without uttering a single word.  
She would stand in for all of us.  
All of us realists  
and rationalists  
who know without a doubt  
that the dead  
don't come back to life.  
They don't rise up from  
their graves  
and start handing out  
fishing advice and forgiveness  
and they don't approach us  
in the orange glow of morning,  
as we kneel  
in the thick garden brush  
offering the gift of life.

## Women in the early Christian church:

*Excerpted from the brochure Jesus and Women written by Sr. Christine Shenk, and published by Future-Church. See the website [www.futurechurch.org](http://www.futurechurch.org).*

In Jesus' time as in ours, all cultures were patriarchal. Women were subordinated first to their fathers, then to their husbands. However, their socio-economic status varied markedly according to the degree of civil and inheritance rights each of their Mediterranean cultures permitted them. In Greece, wives, not concubines or mistresses, were allowed to vote and to have limited property rights. Macedonian women built temples, founded cities, engaged armies, and held fortresses. Egyptian women were buyers, sellers, borrowers, and lenders. Roman matrons, had power and influence as the de facto heads of households and business managers while their spouses were off fighting in Caesar's legions. Palestinian Hebrew women were among the poorest in the world in Jesus' day. They had no inheritance rights and could be divorced for the flimsiest of reasons—from burning the dinner to adultery. In their culture women had no chance of survival unless they were linked to the patriarchal household. Thus divorce for them was disastrous, and Jesus proscription of it was protective of women.

The women of first century Judaism were invisible and powerless. That is, to nearly everyone but Jesus who, as the Gospels show, had a special love for those discounted by others. Jesus welcomed women into his closest discipleship. In Luke 8:1-5 we read of the women, apparently well-to-do, who accompanied Jesus and the Twelve as he journeyed through towns and villages. . . Mary, called the Magdalene, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who were assisting the group out of their means.

It is in Paul's letters that we read of the coequal leadership roles of women and men in the infant church. Eucharistic celebrations were often held in the homes of prominent women. In Paul's letter to the Romans he seeks favor of 29 churches—ten of which had women as leaders. Phoebe and Prisca head the list. By the end of the first century, as worship services moved out of the home, the leadership of women was already meeting resistance. Nevertheless, female leaders flourished alongside male leaders in the egalitarian and orthodox Valentinian and Montanist churches of Asia Minor until the fourth century, when under Constantine they were suppressed.

## Who was Mary Magdalene, continued:

*(Continued from page 3)*

the early church. In other words, in a way it's easier ... to deal with her as a repentant sinner than as she emerges in the Gospels in her own right."

Father Collins says, "Luke describes Mary Magdalene as a woman from whom Jesus cast out seven demons, and that characterization of Mary Magdalene is repeated in the longer canonical ending of Mark's Gospel." But he noted that in Jesus' time it was not uncommon to attribute physical or mental afflictions to demonic possession and this did not imply that the possessed person was sinful.

"Whatever affected Mary Magdalene was considered to be the effect of demonic possession so she would not have been considered a public sinner the way the medieval legends have made her out to be," he said. She is called the Magdalene because she comes from Magdala, "a fishing village up in northern Galilee." One also learns from Luke "that she supported Jesus from her resources," suggesting that she was a woman of some means, and that she was one of several women from Galilee who were disciples of Jesus and followed him.

Only in Luke's gospel is she mentioned by name in the narration of Jesus' public ministry. But all four Gospel writers place her as a witness to Jesus' death on the cross, a witness to his burial and the chief witness to his resurrection, making her one of the most significant female figures in the Gospels apart from Jesus' own mother, Mary.

When one looks at the Magdalene's biblical role as the one the risen Christ appears to and commissions to announce the good news to the others, Sister Elizabeth says it has "many implications for how we tell the story of the origins of the church. There is the typical story of where Jesus chose the Twelve and put Peter in charge and the women, you know, were accessories. When you put Mary Magdalene into the picture, you can't tell the story that way so simply anymore." When asked for her own view of what that should mean for the church today, she said, "I would draw the implication that if the risen Christ saw fit to ask a woman to go and preach the good news of his resurrection, the church should do no less nowadays."

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