



21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 27, 2006

Readings

This week:

Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b

Ephesians 5:21-32

John 6:60-69

Next week:

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8

James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Psalm

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

Today

Today's presider is Fr. José 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, August 28, 7:30 pm

Liturgy Committee, STA basement hall

Tuesday, August 29, 7:00-9:00 pm

JustFaith introductory workshop

St. Joseph Rectory, 582 Hope St., Mtn. View

From Thomas Merton

If Christ has died and risen from the dead and poured out upon us the fire of His Holy Spirit, why do we imagine that our desire for life is a Promethean desire, doomed to punishment?

... Why do we reproach ourselves for desiring victory? Why do we pride ourselves on our defeats, and glory in despair?

Because we think our life is important to ourselves alone, and do not know that our life is more important to the Living God than it is to our own selves.

Because we think our happiness is for ourselves alone, and do not realize that it is also His happiness.

Because we think our sorrows are for ourselves alone, and do not believe that they are much more than that: they are His sorrows.

There is nothing we can steal from Him at all, because before we can think of stealing it, it has already been given.

—“Prometheus: a Meditation” in *Raids on the Unspeakable*

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 Annual Meeting September 14:



The Thomas Merton Center (TMC) will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, September 14, 7:30 p.m., in the basement hall of the Thomas House, 745 Waverley St., Palo Alto. All members of the Merton Center, and any interested persons, are invited to attend. Nominees for two open positions on the Board of Directors of the Merton Center will be elected. The nominees are Anna Jaklitsch and Barbara Kent. Retiring Board member Vicki Sullivan will be honored at the meeting. The Annual Report and Member Directory will be distributed. And members will take time to have a discussion on the role of TMC members and the laity in general in the future of the Catholic Church in the U.S. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, contact TMC Board Co-president Anna Jaklitsch or Kay Williams (see pg.3).

It's Envelope Sunday for TMC:

On this last Sunday of the month, a return envelope is enclosed in the bulletin. Your donation to the Thomas Merton Center provides the means for the liturgical and educational programs that identify TMC to the parish of St. Thomas Aquinas and to the spiritually seeking community in Palo Alto and beyond. In particular, donations subsidize our Sunday 8:45 Mass needs and our spiritual education programs. Many thanks for all your support!



Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Msgr.



Gene Boyle, Maureen Carleton, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Joanne Hasegawa, Frank Hayes, François Jamati, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Kami Ladd, Chris Lippart and family, Carol Locke, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullinex, Joe Narewski, Lynne Owens, Hayden Pastorini, George Peinado, Nora Peinata, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, Dolores Walsh, and Virginia Worthington.

[Add or subtract names from this list by e-mailing the three Bulletin editors: Jane Bahr, Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams. See last page for email addresses.]

Memorial service for Fr. John Duryea:

In celebration of the life of Fr. John Duryea who died in Oaxaca, Mexico, on July 22, 2006, a memorial service will be held Sunday, September 3, 4:00 p.m., in the garden of the home of Kathryn and Kirk Hanson, 186 University Ave., Los Altos (between Main and Edith Streets). Please bring a sit-upon or stool for your personal comfort, as seating may be limited. Also, if you could bring finger food to share, that will add to the beverages and cookies that host Kirk Hanson is providing. If you have a favorite photo of John Duryea, or something else which you wish to share, please bring it to hang on a memorial wall during the service.

The 8:45 a.m. Mass here at St. Thomas Aquinas Church on Sunday, September 17, will be offered in memory of Fr. Duryea.

Jim Wallis in Berkeley, September 11:

Christian leader Jim Wallis, author of *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, will speak about faith and politics at the First Congregational Church of Berkeley on Monday, September 11 at 6:00 pm in an event co-sponsored by the Graduate Theological Union, the Sojourners organization, and the Beatitudes Society. Executive director and editor-in-chief of *Sojourners*, Wallis brings a progressive message that links personal values with public issues. Doors will open at 5:15 p.m. Following his talk, books will be available for purchase and signing.

First Congregational Church of Berkeley is located at 2345 Channing Way in Berkeley, California 94704. Contact David Myers at 510/649-2420 or dmyers@gtu.edu.

Jim Lovelock on climate crisis:

In one September week there will be three opportunities to hear Jim Lovelock lecture on "Earth's Climate Crisis and the Fate of Humanity." Lovelock offers a compassionate (as well as passionate) and extremely competent view of the relationship between science and society and he is one of the most respected and creative environmental thinkers of the twentieth century. Extremely adept at presenting scientific data to the general public, his latest book and best seller in Britain, *The Revenge of Gaia*, carries the message that it's a lot later than you think.

Sept 13, 7:30 pm Calif. Academy of Sciences in SF
Sept 14, 7:30 pm Jordan Hall, Rm 420-040, Stanford
(conflicts with TMC Annual Meeting)
Sept 15, 7:30 pm Kepler's Menlo Park

Community Forum

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Katrina response—one year later:

The National Alliance to Restore Opportunity to the Gulf Coast and Displaced Persons calls for a Season of Prayer and Call to Action. Nearly a year ago, the Gulf Coast was struck by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The ability to escape the flooding was affected by one's location in the racial and economic hierarchy of U. S. society. The Alliance believes that the depth of the ensuing tragedy is owed largely to the failure to fund adequately essential governmental functions, such as health care, education, affordable housing, infrastructure, and emergency services. FEMA had been degraded and the maintenance and improvement of New Orleans's levees had long been under-funded. In September, we will be going to Washington, DC, to lay out a Platform of Opportunity for the Gulf Coast and Displaced Persons and calling upon the Congress and Administration to respond to that platform. And we will go back when the new Congress is seated in January to check on how they are doing. To learn more about the Alliance, please go to www.linkedfate.org.

The ability to escape the flooding was affected by one's location in the racial and economic hierarchy of U. S. society.

Called to act in faith:

Nadia Stefko, a volunteer from Sojourner's/Call to Renewal staff, writes of her week in July, helping in home rebuilding in the gulf area:

I spent my first day in Biloxi hammering nails into the floorboards in GERALYN Wilson's house on Nichols Street. . . .By the end of that first workday, I had lost the ability to grip with my right hand. I needed

(Continued on page 4)

Board: Anna Jaklitsch, 327-0978, annajak@accesscom.com

Kay Williams, 328-2781, kaywill@pacbell.net

Bulletin: Jane Bahr (August 27, September 3)

Michelle Hogan (September 10)

Kay Williams (September 17)

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@sypal.org

Membership: Mary Washburn, 327-3915

Spiritual Education:

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

Jim Davis, 704-8002, Jim_Davis@pacbell.net

Christianity in Africa:

Abridged from a column by John L. Allen in National Catholic Reporter August 25, 2006.

The future of world Christianity may be captured in slogan form as "the dawning of the Age of Africa." The Christian population of that continent grew by 6,708 percent in the 20th century, adding something like 16,000 converts a day. Indeed Africa has become a big-time exporter of evangelical zeal. This reality has not yet fully registered on the Catholic radar screen. But that may change as we get to know more of the thought of Professor Lamin Sanneh of the Yale Divinity School. Sanneh is also an editor-at-large of *The Christian Century* and may become a high-profile interpreter of African Catholicism, just as Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez and ex-Franciscan Fr. Leonardo Boff were for Latin American "liberation theology."



Sanneh, a Gambian by birth, grew up a devout Muslim. His grandfather and uncle were both influential Muslim clerics in West Africa, and he was destined to follow in their footsteps, attending a strict Islamic school where he became well-versed in Arabic and Islamic theology. Yet the more Sanneh studied, the more he became fascinated by the figure of Jesus in the Koran. [Jesus is mentioned roughly 100 times in the Koran, one of the reasons that Christians initially thought of Islam as a Christian heresy rather than a separate religion.] Meditating on the deep meaning of the Cross, Sanneh came to what he describes as a decisive conclusion: Suffering is not alien to the nature of God, as his Islamic teachers had insisted, but is at the heart of God's compassion.

The precocious young Muslim then decided to convert to Christianity, well before he had ever been to a Christian liturgy or attended a Christian school. His astonished family initially thought he must have fallen in love with a Christian girl or simply wanted to drink booze, underestimating his determination by a country mile. Sanneh began a long journey, with stops in Methodism and Anglicanism before he became a Catholic in the mid-1990's.

African Christianity, he argues, only really began to

(Continued on page 4)

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 just above this invitation.

Christianity in Africa, continued:

(Continued from page 3)

take shape after Western missionaries had largely abandoned the field. He's a passionate advocate of allowing Christianity to be shaped by the cultures it encounters, a strong critic of colonialism and the injustices associated with globalization, and he believes in an inclusive Catholicism without "litmus tests."

At the same time, Sanneh understands the dangers of jihadist Islam and largely agrees with Benedict XVI about the difficulties of reconciling Islam with pluralist democratic cultures. Yet he's

no Cultural Warrior. He speaks admiringly of the religious seriousness of Muslims, and says he's working on efforts to nudge them into a more moderate direction.

Believers in the Global South, he says, are less concerned with drawing borders and defending

Catholicism in terms of what should be excluded.

The Third World orientation to church is different.

In the West, "the church" means the hierarchy. On the frontier, "church" means the People of God who turn up at Mass and receive the sacraments. They're less conflicted about papal authority, papal teachings, drawing borders, and so on. They're passionate about a church that is open to the world, embracing the world, and celebrating life in the world. Fellowship groups these people organize are very impressive. Small faith communities are a natural endowment of frontier Catholicism. Ordinary Catholics, for example, are doing heroic work in villages. The nature of church leadership in the future will reflect this. We're beginning to see evidence of the same phenomenon in China. There is in rural areas an emerging leadership with little formal theological education but with tremendous wisdom. This is a tremendous pastoral gift. Theological education will change to reflect all this.

We will notice this in the United States as the Irish Catholic leadership changes. The American church is already changing, becoming more Hispanic. It is more active in mission, and it's more Third World-oriented. It will bring a Third World point of view to issues such as immigration and asylum seekers, employment and labor.

For Catholic leaders in the Global South, whether bishops, theologians, or pastoral workers, the most important question is, "What can we do to help our neighbor?" rather than "What are my rights in the church and how can I protect them, to make sure

In the West, "the church" means hierarchy. On the frontier, "church" means the People of God who turn up at Mass and receive the sacraments.

Called to act in faith, continued:

(Continued from page 3)

both hands to swing the hammer to drive in the one-inch nails. . . [As we drove to our host church at the end of our first workday] I gazed out the window at the miles and miles of roofless homes, destroyed bridges, abandoned businesses, and mountains of debris. This is the new coastal landscape. It was clear that a hurricane had come through here. What wasn't clear was that it had happened a year ago, not last week. At that moment I was overwhelmed by the smallness of our progress. A feeling of despair crept through my exhausted body and down my sore and swollen forearms. How will I do this again tomorrow? Can I really get through three more days of this? So much remains to be done—what's the point of coming, only to leave at the end of a week. [Then I remembered the words written of] Archbishop Oscar Romero. "We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very, very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along

. . . a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and to do the rest."

This week we were blessed with opportunities to visit with and hear the stories of the people of Biloxi and Gulfport, Missis-

sippi. What we found were communities exhausted by what they have seen and lived through in the past year but waiting and working in patient hope for the resurrection of their homes, churches, and communities. They—and now we—have learned that resurrection is not going to come at the hands of the federal government alone. It will only come, with God's grace, at the dusty and splintered hands of friends and neighbors distant and near who come to bear witness and lend their time and their labor to the journey of rebuilding.

We cannot rebuild the levees—only the federal government can do that. But we are called to do what we can, and to do it in faith and with love. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) concludes with Christ's command to "go and do likewise." A year after Katrina, the need remains vast. And our faith still compels us to act.

—SojoMail8/23/06

they're not infringed upon?' That's not Catholicism for them. We feel a real responsibility for the shaping of society. Our societies are new. They have to reinvent themselves, and Catholics want to be sure that their church makes a significant contribution. It