



# Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2006

## Readings

*This week:*

Baruch 5:1-9  
Phillipians 1:4-6, 8-11  
Luke 3:1-6

*Next week:*

Zephaniah 3:14-18a  
Phillipians 4:4-7  
Luke 3:10-18

## Psalm Today

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy. *Psalm 126*

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 collec-

## Calendar

Today, December 10  
Monday, December 11, 7:00-9:00 pm  
Wednesday, December 13, 7:30 pm  
Thursday, December 14, 7:30 pm

Anniversary of Thomas Merton's death  
Advent Evening of Reflection – Fr. Meier  
Liturgy Team, location TBD  
TMC Board Meeting, STA

## From Thomas Merton

It would be a serious mistake to regard Christian nonviolence simply as a novel tactic which is at once efficacious and even edifying, and which enables the sensitive person to participate in the struggles of the world without being dirtied with blood. . . . It is not out for the conversion of the wicked to the ideas of the good, but for healing and reconciliation. . . . Nonviolence has great power, provided that it really witnesses to truth and not just to self-righteousness. . . . The quality of nonviolence is decided largely by the purity of the Christian hope behind it. The Christian knows that there are radically sound possibilities in everyone, and believes that love and grace always have the power to bring out those possibilities at the most unexpected moments. Therefore if one has hopes that God will grant peace to the world it is because one also trusts that humanity, God's creature, is not basically evil; that there is in us a potentiality for peace and order which can be realized provided the right conditions are there. Christians will do their part in creating these conditions by preferring love and trust to hate and suspiciousness.

—*Blessed Are the Meek: the Roots of Christian Nonviolence*

# Community Notes

*News Announcements Requests*

## ***Anniversary of death of Thomas Merton:***

On December 10, 1941 Thomas Merton entered the Trappist monastery at Gethsemani, Kentucky, and 27 years later on December 10, 1968, one month short of his 54th birthday, he died in Bangkok, Thailand, apparently as a result of an accidental electrocution by a lamp with faulty wiring. In life he had written about death as follows:

All created life is limited. . . . Man physically and mentally declines, having given everything that he had to life, to other men, to his love, to his family, and to his world. He is spent or exhausted, not in the sense that he is merely burned out and gutted by the accumulation of money and power, but because he has given himself totally in love. There is nothing left now for him to give. It is now that in a final act he surrenders his life itself. . . . *a culminating gift*, the last free perfect act of love which is surrender into the hands of God and acceptance of death. . . . Death brings life to its goal. But the goal is not death—the goal is perfect life.

—“Seven Words” in *Love and Living*

## ***Migrant Posada in San Jose:***



The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform, Diocese of San Jose, invites you to a Migrant Posada—*A Journey of Hope*—on December 16 at 6:30 pm, starting at the John XXIII Neighborhood Center, 5th and San Fernando in San Jose, to celebrate our faith and cultural diversity. We

walk with those who are seeking shelter, posada, today. There is free parking in the 4th Street garage. Please bring your own candle. For more information, contact Daniela Santos at (408) 835-6708.

## ***Age of Aquinas—December:***

Contact Randy Jones, (408) 739-2881 or [age-of-aquinas@paloaltocatholic.org](mailto:age-of-aquinas@paloaltocatholic.org), for information about Transitions (from couple-hood to single-hood) meetings on Wednesdays and about hikes on Saturdays. For Dining Around The World on Thursday December 14, 6:30 pm contact Jim Chinn by December 13, (650)948-1144 or [jychinnf@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jychinnf@sbcglobal.net)

## ***Advent evening of reflection December 11:***

Fr. Tim Meier, SJ, will lead us in prayer, conversation, and music this Monday, December 11, 7:00-9:00 pm, here at St. Thomas Aquinas Church. reflecting on the theme Hope in Dark Times. Fr. Tim is now serving in the military as a chaplain, so this is a wonderful opportunity to spend some time with him on our way to the light of Christmas.

## ***Letter from Dorothea Nudelman:***

November 30, 2006

Dear Friends,

I know it's been forever since I've written, but you are in my mind and heart always. I am writing now to tell you who know and remember me that I am facing my biggest life challenge yet and I need your support as well as your prayers. This week, after numerous scans and tests, I learned that I have lung cancer. I returned to the Bay Area to seek the best medical help available. I have engaged a thoracic surgeon with a specialty in oncology and I will begin treatment (which will likely be surgery) probably the second week in December at El Camino Hospital. It will be great to be among you again, even for a short time, before returning to Nevada City! You can help by praying that the surgery is successful and that I will have a full and speedy recovery. I am full of hope for this. I am fairly exhausted from tests and waiting and would appreciate hearing from you only by email or note card for the present and near future. ([dnudelman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dnudelman@sbcglobal.net)).

It will be some time before I will be well enough to join you for 8:45 mass, but I hope that I will have the pleasure of your company when I am sufficiently recovered. If you would like to do more, I'd love it if you'd make me a list of funny, light, or trashy books to read while I recover. Laughter is a great gift!

Love and peace,

*Dorothea*

## ***Please remember to bring food this month:***

During this cold month 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 and the like. Let's make the Christmas baskets for our hungry neighbors plentiful!



# Community Forum

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## ***Advent 2007—health and well-being for all:***

**W**E are accustomed to thinking that all people are equally susceptible to infectious diseases, but Dr. Paul Farmer, founder of Partners in Health, sees the situation differently. To him it seems that pathogens such as the ones that cause tuberculosis and AIDS show a “preferential option for the poor.” Not only do the poor lack access to effective health services, he points out, but they are also systematically forced to live in circumstances that undermine their health and all too frequently claim their lives. In his book, *Pathologies of Power*, he presents case studies that have three main themes. First, the poor are not the victims of their sins but of their circumstances; instead of sitting in judgment on the sick and dying, the rich countries should be helping to save them. Second, the poor can be successfully treated and cured of disease, even in the most unlikely and impoverished circumstances. Third, the human rights community should be defending the rights of the poor to health, for without the right to health, all other human rights are likely to prove empty. Nothing, Farmer argues, except practical, physical resources—in ample supply throughout the rich world—is keeping the poor world from undergoing a revolution in health.

Farmer’s moral stance is grounded in what is called the “preferential option for the poor,” a principle of Roman Catholic social teaching that enjoins the rich to offer dignity and material support to the poor. He has shown that the poor can be treated successfully even under extraordinarily adverse conditions. In his clinic in impoverished Haiti, treating tuberculosis and AIDS, and in the shantytowns of Peru and the prisons of Russia, treating multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, he has demonstrated that high-quality medical care can be delivered successfully in what would seem to be the least propitious of settings.

Jeffrey D. Sachs, Special Advisor to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the Millennium Development Goals, draws from Farmer’s work a recognition that the battle is to instill a deep sense of mutual obligation between rich and poor. The rich have an obligation to help the poor stay alive in the face of structural impediments of lethal dimensions. The poor have an obligation to work to ensure that assistance is well used and delivered to those who most urgently need it. And all of us have an obligation to heed Farmer’s deep witness of our common humanity.

—Jeffrey D. Sachs, writing in *Natural History*, February, 2004

## ***Partners in Health vision: whatever it takes: A weekend of prayer for Darfur:***

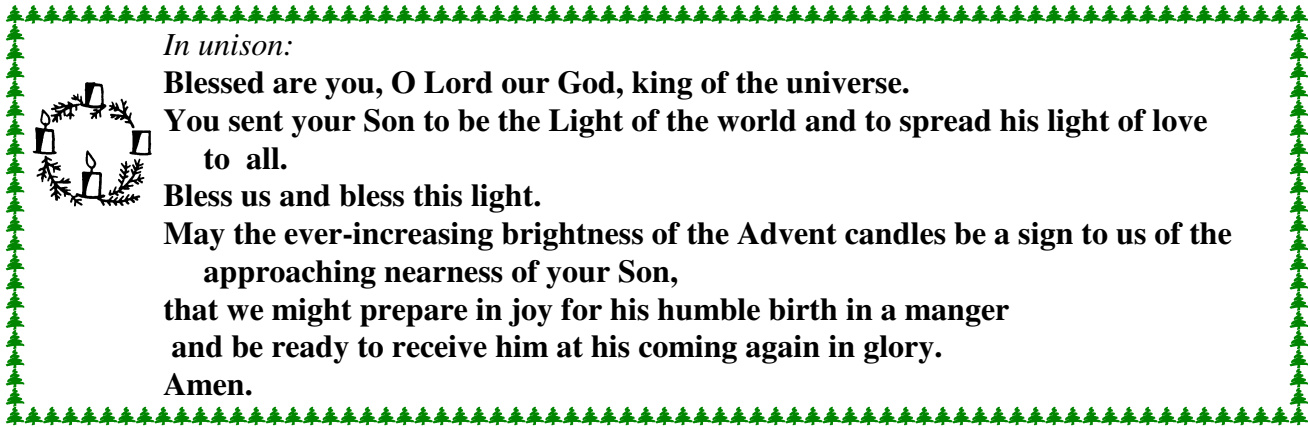
Partners In Health is a nonprofit corporation with a presence in Latin America, the Caribbean, Russia, and the United States. It coordinates innovative programs to combat AIDS and women's health problems in rural Haiti and urban Massachusetts, groundbreaking tuberculosis treatment projects in the prisons of Siberia and the shantytowns of Lima, and health policy initiatives on a global scale.

By establishing long-term relationships with sister organizations, PIH strives to achieve two overarching goals: to bring the benefits of modern medical science to those most in need of them and to serve as an antidote to despair. In doing so, they draw on the resources of the world's leading medical and academic institutions, and on the lived experience of the world's poorest and sickest communities. Their staff of physicians, scholars, and activists tackles health crises deemed "unsolvable" and does whatever it takes to solve them—pressuring drug manufacturers, lobbying policy makers, as well as providing medical care and social services.

*(Continued on page 4)*

*Faithful America*, a ministry of the National Council of Churches, urges us to make this a weekend of prayer for Darfur. In this season, which is Holy for so many of us, we are being asked to do something simple and sacred – feel, pray, and act – for the men, women, and children who are dying of the worsening genocide in Darfur. As we count our blessings, wrap gifts, attend beautiful services of worship, and gather our families together, men, women, and children in Darfur are facing unimaginable horror at the hands of militia who have stepped up their brutal rampage of terror and killing. We are being urged, as members of churches, synagogues, mosques, study groups meditation groups or other gathering, to share this critical information with our groups, and to join with thousands of others around the nation to pray for the people of Darfur during this National Weekend of Prayer. Simple expressions of care make a great difference in this world. Our voices can be instruments of hope. Please talk about this crisis to as many friends, colleagues, and family members as you can.

Please join us for coffee, juice and pastries after Mass 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 on page 4.



*In unison:*  
**Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe.**  
**You sent your Son to be the Light of the world and to spread his light of love to all.**  
**Bless us and bless this light.**  
**May the ever-increasing brightness of the Advent candles be a sign to us of the approaching nearness of your Son,**  
**that we might prepare in joy for his humble birth in a manger and be ready to receive him at his coming again in glory.**  
**Amen.**

***Partners in Health; continued:***

*(Continued from page 3)*

The founders of PIH did not set out to establish an organization spanning three continents. They began in 1983 with a personal commitment to a few villages in rural Haiti, a country just 90 minutes from Miami by air. The principle that motivated them was simple: everyone, whether poor or affluent, deserves to benefit from the same high standard of medical care. Their first step was equally direct. They asked their Haitian colleagues what ailed them. The work that followed grew complex—not because the vision was complicated, but because the sources of their illness ran so deep.

Initial questions, it turned out, were answered not just by a litany of diseases, but had deeper roots in a legacy of social and economic inequality. To cure the infections, it was necessary to address the conditions that had given rise to them. They fought pneumonia simultaneously with antibiotics and by helping people to replace their thatch roofs with tin. They cured tuberculosis not just with isoniazid and rifampin, but by training residents as doctors, technicians, and health outreach workers, so that they could help diagnose and treat their neighbors. And even as they arranged for local heart patients to undergo surgery in top U.S. hospitals, they enabled their Haitian colleagues to build and equip operating rooms, laboratories, schools, and inpatient facilities. Whatever it takes. Just as you would do if a member of your own family—or you yourself—were ill.

***Ways to help:***

**Partners in Health:** You can learn more about this organization and, if you wish, make donations at [www.pih.org](http://www.pih.org).

**Help Darfur Now, Inc:** Several years ago high-school students in Livingston, New Jersey, studying the Nazi Holocaust, recognized the similarity with what was happening in Darfur. The students formed a non-profit organization committed to the goals of raising public awareness of the atrocities currently unfolding there, and providing much-needed financial aid to refugees and refugee camps.. You can buy **Help Darfur Now** tribute cards to send to friends and family at [www.HelpDarfurNow.org](http://www.HelpDarfurNow.org).

**Doctors Without Borders:** Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has more than 162 international volunteers and 2,000 Sudanese staff providing life-saving assistance in 24 locations in Darfur. Across the border in Chad, MSF assists refugees from Darfur in 11 locations with a total of 33 international staff. Find out more, at [www.doctorswithoutborders.org](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org).

**Catholic Relief Services:** Among its many relief services, CRS in rural southern Haiti, runs a bustling medical facility using a holistic approach to helping families and vulnerable children stay afloat physically and economically in the face of AIDS. As part of the clinic's CRS-supported programming, students tend to gardens as a means to earn income, provide food for their families and obtain life skills that will teach them to survive even after their parents have departed. [Www.catholicreliefservices.org](http://Www.catholicreliefservices.org)



Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Msgr. Gene Boyle, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Joanne Hasegawa, François Jamati, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Kami Ladd, Carol Locke, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullinex, Joe Narewski, Hank Okanski, Lynne Owens, Hayden Pastorini, George Peinado, Nora Peinata, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, Norm & Jane Shirle, 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. See e-mail addresses next column.*

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Board: Anna Jaklitsch, 327-0978, [annajak@accesscom.com](mailto:annajak@accesscom.com)  
 Kay Williams, 328-2781, [kaywill@pacbell.net](mailto:kaywill@pacbell.net)  
 Bulletin: Jane Bahr (Dec. 10 and 24)  
 Michelle Hogan (December 17 )  
 Kay Williams (December 31)  
 Finance: Ed Hannibal, 321-0203, Judy Creek, 493-5371  
 Hospitality: Jim Davis, 328-2584, George Locke, 854-1539  
 Liturgy: John Arnold, 325-1421, [jsoaso@earthlink.net](mailto:jsoaso@earthlink.net)  
 Sally Benson, (408) 972-5843, [red5@svpal.org](mailto:red5@svpal.org)  
 Membership: Mary Washburn, 327-3915  
 Spiritual Ed. Mary Coady, 261-9155, [coady\\_94025@yahoo.com](mailto:coady_94025@yahoo.com)  
 Jim Davis, 704-8002, [Jim\\_Davis@pacbell.net](mailto:Jim_Davis@pacbell.net)