



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2006

Readings

This week:

Micah 5:1-4a
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45

Next week:

Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14
Colossians 3:12-21
Luke 2:11-52

Psalm Today

Lord, make us turn to you: let us see your face and we shall be saved. *Psalm 80*

Today's presider is Fr. Michael Marini.

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

Sunday, December 24, 6:00 pm

Christmas Mass, St. Thomas Aquinas Church
Music begins at 5:20 pm

From Thomas Merton

How is the Christian of the twentieth century to read the Gospels, and especially the Gospel story of the Nativity of Christ our Lord? . . . Must we carefully consider each detail, examine what the critics have said, reject all they have rejected, keep only what they have all kept? . . . Or should [we] simply ignore all this, adopt a fundamentalist position, maintain that every word is to be taken literally? . . . The Church did not in the beginning . . . self-consciously reflect upon the narratives to determine how far they were historic and how far poetic. She was concerned with one truth—the revelation of God's saving love for man. . . . The Nativity message is the message not only of joy but of *the* joy: the GREAT JOY which all the people of the world have always expected without fully realizing what it was. It is the joy of [ultimate] fulfillment that we seek, in the depths of our hearts. . . . All the ambiguities are swept aside. . . . In Christ we see man as he is intended to be: a child of God, capable of growth in God, a child for whom growth as man is growth to find himself in God. . . . *Each human person* has the option of accepting or rejecting the new life which Christ offers us because we share the *human nature* which he took in the Incarnation. . . . But it is *by our decision as persons*. . . our response as persons to his personal and saving love, that our manhood is seized and transformed by the life-giving Spirit. Christ is born in our nature that we may be reborn in the fullest sense as persons.

—“The Good News of the Nativity” in *Love and Living*

Community Notes

News Announcements Requests

Catholic Worker House:



In his Christmas message Larry Purcell forwards a letter from a former resident of Catholic Worker House in Redwood City so that those who have helped may know the meaning of this place.

I just want you to know how much I appreciate everything you've done for me. I've never really thanked you. I don't know—and don't want to know—where I would be today if it wasn't for you and all your support. Letting me move into the Catholic Worker, honestly, saved my life. If I hadn't done that, I'd probably be a dropout and out on the streets or something. After moving to the house though, I realized I had to get my life together. . . I just can't say enough how thankful I am for everything you've done for me—especially school. You've helped me see that I can do it—and I will. (*Editor's note. She has done it.*) Without all the help you got me from people like Bill Somerville, I probably wouldn't have taken the first step. Now that I have and have saved that money, I can't wait to finish and have a degree. I owe so much of this to the Catholic Worker. It's nice to know there are such kind people in the world. . . I hope you and I stay close. (*Ed. Note—We do.*) I consider you family and I love you. Thank you so much for everything. I just can't say

Gifts of household items such as fire wood or of sleeping bags and sweatshirts for men and women on the street are always welcome. You may also send gifts of money to Catholic Worker House, 545 Cassia Street, PO Box 513, Redwood City, CA 94064.

Please remember to bring food:



During these cold months 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 not forget our hungry neighbors!

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.

Interfaith events coming up:

Thursday- Saturday, February 1-3, 2007.

Facing Violence: Justice, Religion & Conflict Resolution World Forum 2007.

Keynote Speakers **Elie Wiesel, Madeline Albright** and more. Engage with world leaders and conflict resolution experts • Change reactivity to response • Identify ways to deliver lasting justice, locally and globally • Acquire communications skills to bridge diverse viewpoints • Learn to harness the energies of conflict and develop creative solutions • Commit to personal initiatives to take back to communities.

Location: Argent Hotel, San Francisco. Sponsored by the RockRose Institute; for more information and registration, go to www.rockroseinstitute.org.

Sunday, December 31, 2006, 8:00 am, San Jose

A Service of Lament and Healing in which the names of those who died a violent death in the county during 2006 will be read. We will lament each life lost and ask God for healing for the victim's families, the perpetrators, the perpetrators' families and the community. All are welcome to share in this time. Santa Clara County Building 70 W. Hedding, San Jose. Sponsored by the Council of Churches of Santa Clara County.

Tuesday January 23-25, 2006 Berkeley

Pacific School of Religion Earl Lectures: All the Rivers of Paradise: Christian Responsibility in an Interfaith World.

Americans today live in an interfaith world never before imagined. What does this mean to Christians, and what is Christianity's role and responsibility in such a world? For full schedule of lectures and list of workshops go to www.psr.edu/docs/PSR_EL07.pdf

Thursday, January 25, 7:30-9:00 pm, Stanford
Spirituality and Social Change:

An Interfaith Roundtable

To celebrate the publication of *Advocate of the Social Gospel*, volume VI of *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.* and to probe the meaning of Dr. King's preaching, we present an interfaith roundtable discussion that focuses on the relation of spiritual practice and social change. The roundtable is moderated by **Rabbi Patricia Karlin-Neumann** of Stanford's Office for Religious Life. It includes representatives from a range of faith traditions. Kresge Auditorium, Stanford University. No charge. More information contact events coordinator, Linda Miller at lgmiller@stanford.edu, or (650)248-5160.



Community Forum

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Advent 2007—a look at nonviolence:

For the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we invite you to consider ways in which some of the deeper questions and changes which nonviolence calls for relate to family life. The article “From the Family to the World,” today’s insert, was written by Kathleen McGinnis and originally published in 2002 in a *National Catholic Reporter* supplement called *Paths to Peace*. The article encourages us to think of ways we can build peace in our homes, peace in our hearts.

Nonviolence was the way of Jesus, of Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and many others. We are called this Advent and Christmas to join together to pray, reflect, act, and support one another in the ways of peace and justice. Our Christian faith calls us now more than ever to join with one another to take nonviolent action to end war, to fashion economic and racial justice, to protect the earth, and to champion the well-being and inclusion of all.

Imagining the unimaginable:

From an article by Fr. Leo O’Donovan, president emeritus of Georgetown University, in National Catholic Reporter, December 22, 2006.

As we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus, we continue the journey into hope that gives us our future. Reaching toward the Holy Mystery at the center of our lives, we listen for voices that will speak of infinite compassion—as the prophets did. We look for signs of the justice they called for, yearn for a peace beyond all the narrow boundaries of national self-interest. Once more we seek to imagine the unimaginable: that goodness, truth and mercy might pitch a tent among us, dwell in our midst, be the solace and savior of our world. We are preparing to open our hearts to “the hint half guessed, the gift half understood”: the birth of eternity in time, a young girl’s womb bearing the fruit of the ages. Recently I discovered several telling images of the miracle in the works of Latin American colonial art on view this Advent at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. There is an 18th-century painting from vice regal Peru of “The Christ Child Wearing the Imperial Inca Crown and Catholic Priestly Robes.” In the pose of Savior of the World, his right hand extended in blessing, his left securing the orb of the world, the earnest child wears an elaborate neo-Inca headpiece from which the scarlet tassel of royalty hangs over his forehead. A bishop’s cape and gilded tunic worn over his white linen alb identify him also as priest: *rex et sacerdos*. Most likely this painting represents a statue from a celebration like that reported from Cuzco in 1610—an almost month long celebration of the beatification of Ignatius of Loyola during which various parishes marched in turn to the main square carrying symbols and chanting songs of their Inca forebears adapted to honor Ignatius.



(Continued on page 4)

Peace in our homes:

While we pray for peace in our homes, peace in our hearts, we know that there are many homes around the world where peace is still a dream. Violence against women remains a worldwide problem. Here in Santa Clara County help is given through the ***Support Network for Battered Women..*** This organization offers help in the form of counseling, shelter, legal assistance, and support groups to the community’s victims of domestic violence twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year. Its crisis line is 1-800-572-2782. You can learn more at www.snbw.org. Contributions can be sent to the business office at 1257 Tasman Drive, Suite C, Sunnyvale, CA 94089.

The ***One in Three*** campaign emphasizes that one in three females will be treated with violence in their lifetime. The campaign works worldwide to create a broad network, exchange expertise, build relationships, and collaborate on effective methods toward ending gender-based violence. While raising global awareness about violence against women and girls, the campaign is strengthening and promoting efforts between international anti-violence programs, and especially those programs with fewer resources and less privilege. For articles/ resources go to : info@oneinthreewomen.com.

The ***Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies*** (M.I.G.S. Greece) works to raise awareness of the phenomenon of trafficking in women for sexual exploitation as well as the living conditions of trafficked women in Cyprus.

The ***European Union’s Stop-Discrimination Truck*** has made three EU tours travelling through 22 cities in 13 countries to promote equal opportunities in employment: www.stopdiscrimination.info.

At ***People Opposing Women Abuse*** (POWA) you can read a report put out by the *Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation* on the links between violence against women and HIV/AIDS in South Africa. These two epidemics seem to be converging in new and lethal ways, yet responses to them remain split from one another: www.powa.co.za/Display.asp?ID=21.

Imagining the unimaginable continued:

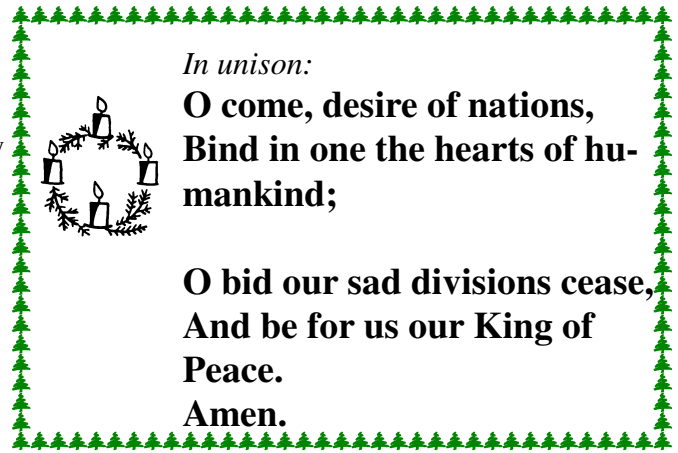
(Continued from page 3)

If a royal tradition honored the child of Bethlehem by associating him with the Inca King, another, more populist tradition assimilated him to the style of newly baptized Indians. In the beguiling “Christ Child of Huanca (circa 1610-10), from the Church of San Pedro in Lima, the boy savior is imagined in plainer terms. The wide-eyed figure, barefoot and with his thick black hair cut in the style of an Indian convert, wears a handsome red and gilded tunic. In his right hand he holds aloft a heart bearing the initials of Mary Queen of Heaven, in his left hand a halved avocado as a symbol, presumably, of nourishing welcome.



Whether imaging the boy savior as Inca king or Indian convert, this art tenderly reminds us of the searching heart’s age-old impulse to imagine what is ultimately unimaginable. We have begun to reach for the depths of Advent hope only when we hold together, in mind and heart, two great truths. On the one hand, there is the infinite, unbounded, incomprehensible, transcendent glory and majesty of the Holy One we faltering call God. But there is also the utterly particular, vulnerable and tender, intimate embodiment of God in incarnate Word, human son and savior, child of Mary born of the Holy Spirit. The God of our daily faith is never at our disposal, is inexhaustibly greater than we can ever imagine and transcends the most solemn proclamations of church doctrine as well as the most inspired prayers of our saints. And yet the mystery is given to us, walks with us, touches, teaches and suffers for us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. As there are four Gospels, and not simply one pseudo-journalistic report on the life of Jesus, so there are countless ways to imagine how he became one of us—and how he is incomplete until we are all one with him. (A Dominican nun once had us second-graders portray the Nativity taking place in Japan. And she did that in the days immediately following Pearl Harbor.)

While the most tender of our liturgical celebrations, Christmas is also utterly realistic. It kneels not before a single child, but before all the children for whom this child was born. It kneels in the parish church we visit with our families, but also on every continent where loving mothers bend over newborn girls and boys of every color, tongue and culture. Whether in suffering or joy, at times of peace or war, among the rich or the poor, Christmas is the charter of the Christian imagination to see again and again, in ever new ways, and without end, how Christ was born in Bethlehem so that his brothers and sisters might be born of his same Holy Spirit until the end of



In unison:

**O come, desire of nations,
Bind in one the hearts of hu-
mankind;**

**O bid our sad divisions cease,
And be for us our King of
Peace.
Amen.**

Our Christmas wish to you:

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Of water flowing, rising and falling,
Sometimes advancing, sometimes receding.
May the stream of your life flow unimpeded!
Deep peace of the running wave to you!

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
Who, herself unmoving, harbours the movements
And facilitates the life of the ten thousand crea-
tures,
While resting contented, stable, tranquil.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you!

Deep peace of the watching shepherds to you,
Of unpretentious folk who, watching and waiting,
Spend long hours out on the hillside,
Expecting in simplicity some Coming of the Lord.
Deep peace of the watching shepherds to yo!

Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you,
Who, swift as the wave and pervasive as the air,
Quiet as the earth and shining like a star,
Breathes into us His Peace and His Spirit.
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you!

—Mary Rogers, adapted from the Gaelic

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

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

Bulletin: Jane Bahr (Dec. 24 and January 14)

Michelle Hogan (January 7 and 21)

Kay Williams (December 31 and January 28)

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@svpal.org

Membership: Mary Washburn, 327-3915

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

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

Newsletter submissions must be e-mailed by Friday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. For Michelle, myhogan@earthlink.net or (650) 493-8452. For Kay, kaywill@pacbell.net or (650) 328-2781. For Jane, bahrjunior@comcast.net or (650) 967-8246.