



# 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 15, 2007

## Readings

*This week:*

Deuteronomy 30:10-14

Colossians 1:15-20

Luke 10:25-37

*Next week:*

Genesis 18:1-10a

Colossians 1:24-28

Luke 10:38-42

## Psalm

Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live. (*Psalm 69*)

## Today

Today's presider is Msgr. Gene Boyle.

The Thomas Merton Center community worships and celebrates Sunday liturgy each week at the regularly scheduled 8:45 am 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

No meetings this week.

### From Thomas Merton

Every other [person] is a piece of myself, for I am a part and a member of mankind. Every Christian is part of my own body, because we are members of Christ. What I do is also done for them and with them and by them. What they do is done in me and by me and for me. But each one of us remains responsible for his own share in the life of the whole body. Charity cannot be what it is supposed to be as long as I do not see that my life represents my own allotment in the life of a whole supernatural organism to which I belong. Only when this truth is absolutely central do other doctrines fit into their proper context. Solitude, humility, self-denial, action and contemplation, the sacraments, the monastic life, the family, war and peace—none of these make sense except in relation to the central reality which is God's love living and acting in those whom He has incorporated in His Christ. Nothing at all makes sense unless we admit, with John Dunne, that: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."

—*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*

### ***George still needs drivers:***

George Chippendale is still looking for generous parishioners to help drive three children to and from the day camp at Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills, through August 10. Could you do a morning pickup—about 8:00 am on Monday-Thursday (the kids stay overnight on Thursday)? Or an evening pickup, taking the kids home about 4:00 pm, Monday through Wednesday? Please call George at 856-6350 if you can help out for four mornings or three afternoons.

### ***Hotel de Zink meal signups, August 1-15:***

Ruth Chippendale will be signing up people this month to bring part of a dinner for our homeless guests during August 1 through August 15. Please check your calendar and see if you can volunteer to bring something during this time. Or call Ruth at 856-6350 if you want to sign up for a slot in advance.

### ***PP&J theater night:***

Stanford Summer Theater is sponsoring a benefit performance of *Les Blancs* by Lorraine Hansberry on Sunday, July 22, 8:00 pm, at Pigott Theatre, Memorial Auditorium, Stanford. Tickets are \$20, and proceeds will benefit the Peninsula Peace and Justice Center. Only tickets purchased through the Peninsula Peace and Justice Center qualify for the benefit. Go to [www.peaceandjustice.org](http://www.peaceandjustice.org) for tickets, or write PPJC, 457 Kingsley Avenue, Palo Alto 94301.

This classic play by Lorraine Hansberry (best known for *A Raisin in the Sun*) deals with the revolt against colonialism in an unnamed African state, and the dilemmas facing blacks and whites when rebellion challenges personal loyalties. Combining African rhythms, lyrical expressivity, and deep human insight, *Les Blancs* explores the costs of resistance, pitting friends and family against the ideals of liberation.

*Les Blancs* plays Thursday through Sunday, July 19 through August 5, at 8:00 pm in the Pigott Theater.

Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Tom Jaworowski, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Kami Ladd, Andre Lippard, Ric Lippard, Carol Locke, Eileen McNevin, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullinex, Joe Narewski, Dorothea Nudelman, Hank Okonski, Lynne Owens, Hayden Pastorini, George Peinado, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, George Schardt, Dolores Walsh, and T.J. Wooten.

### ***Hospitality volunteers needed:***

Could you come a little early to the 8:45 Mass once a month, and stay a little late, to help with our “coffee in the garden” after Mass? Many hands would make the work a lot lighter. If you’d be willing to help, please see Jim Davis or George Locke after Mass, or call Jim at 328-2584 or George at 854-1539.

### ***Help prepare meals for homeless:***

InnVision is looking for volunteers to help prepare meals for the homeless—cooking, serving, and cleaning up at various local churches. The teams rotate every five weeks, as follows:

**Tuesdays, 3:00-7:00 pm**, Grace Lutheran Church, 3149 Waverley, 6 volunteers needed. Dates for 2007: Jul. 17, Aug. 21, Sept. 25, Oct. 30, Dec. 4.

**Fridays, 9:00 am-1:00 pm**, All Saints Episcopal Church, 425 Hamilton, 8 volunteers needed. Dates: Aug. 17, Sept. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 23, Dec. 28.

**Saturdays, 9:00 am-1:00 pm**, Covenant Presbyterian Church, 660 E. Meadow, 8 volunteers needed. Dates: Aug. 18, Sept. 22, Oct. 27, Dec. 1.

If you can help, please contact Trina, Volunteer Coordinator at InnVision/Peninsula, 795 Willow Road, Building 323-D, Menlo Park 94025, or call (650) 853-7076, X-205, or e-mail [Tlovercheck@innvision.org](mailto:Tlovercheck@innvision.org).

Do you find yourself in need of a helping hand, a last-minute car ride, a cat sitter, or the like? Call Roberta at (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.

### ***Age of Aquinas:***

Saturdays in July at 9:00 am the Age of Aquinas Hikes & Coffee continue at Shoreline Park. Contact Randy Jones at (408) 739-2881 or [age-of-aquinas@paloalto-catholic.org](mailto:age-of-aquinas@paloalto-catholic.org).

Wednesdays in July at 7:30 pm the Transitions support group meets at the pastoral center. Contact Randy about this too.

Friday, July 20, at 6:45 pm, is the CSF regular monthly gathering sponsored by St. Lucy’s Christian Singles Fellowship. Dinner is \$15. Contact the CSF event line at (408) 535-0368 or [singles@stlucy-campbell.org](mailto:singles@stlucy-campbell.org).

Saturday, July 28, there is an Aquinas outing, *Free Shakespeare in the Park*, in Cupertino. Contact Randy.

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## **Listening to the “millennials”:**

*Adapted from Woodstock Report, June 2007, by William Bole available at <http://woodstock.georgetown.edu>.*

“I’m frankly interested in whether there’s going to be somebody around to bury me,” Fr. Raymond Kemp said at *Young Adult Catholics: Believing, Belonging, and Serving*, a Woodstock forum earlier this year that examined the loosening ties of young Catholics, the so-called “millennial generation.” Although he was joking in a sense, his remark was close to the bottom-line concern of the evening, which was, as he rephrased it, “Are we building a lively kind of Church, present and future?” Ultimately, the question centered. . . on the question of whether the Church will offer credible answers to questions and doubts raised by Catholics born after 1979. “Millennials are the least likely [among all generations of Catholics] to identify with the faith, and they’re the least attached to the Church,” Purdue University sociologist James A. Davidson said. . . At the forum he presented research from *American Catholics Today* (Rowman & Littlefield), on which he collaborated with social scientists Dean Hoge, William V. D’Antonio, and Mary L. Gautier. . . .

How different are the “millennials” from Catholics who have come before them? In some important ways, not very different at all—according to research gathered by Hoge, Davidson, D’Antonio, and Gautier. . . . “What we’re finding is that a majority of Catholics of all generations agree that some elements of the faith are more central than other elements,” Davidson said. “People in all generations attach more importance to things like Incarnation, Resurrection, Real Presence, sacraments, concern for the poor, than they do to sexual reproductive issues or rules having to do with who is and who’s not eligible for the priesthood.” . . .

On other important questions the millennial Catholics stood strikingly apart from other generations. . . . One third of the pre-Vatican II Catholics [identified strongly with the Church], as did around one quarter of both the Vatican II and post-Vatican II Catholics, but millennial Catholics were another story: a scarce 7% of them identified strongly with Catholicism.

Millennial Catholics were often a distinct minority on questions about commitment to the institutional Church: not one of them in the survey, for example, answered in the positive when asked if the Church is the “most important part of your life.” Only 27% regarded the Church’s teaching authority as important, compared with a little over half of the pre-Vatican II

Lo, soul, seest thou not God’s purpose from the first?  
The earth to be spann’d, connected by network,  
The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage,  
The oceans to be cross’d, the distant brought near,  
The lands to be welded together.

—Walt Whitman

We build walls around our hearts, around our land, around our borders to keep out the strangers, the different, the other; to protect ourselves from getting hurt or from having to share our space with others. We guard our hearts, our land, and our country with great vigilance until the very guarding obsesses us and we become so outwardly focused and defensive that we lose touch with ourselves and our humanity. In our efforts to protect and defend we become disconnected and fragmented.

God, who will have nothing of walls and barriers, is like the Great Illegal Immigrant—ever looking for cracks in our walls and defenses, seeking vulnerability so that She might slip through our barriers to convert and transform us. God, in great longing for wholeness, constantly invites us to dismantle all that is exclusive. We cannot be whole until we come to embrace all that God has made and to share all that God has given. In matters and issues of exclusion we may be sure that God is always on the outside with those very people whom we do not accept. We diminish ourselves and we diminish God until we break down our walls. All of them.

—Edwina Gateley, in *A Mystical Heart* (New York: Crossroad, 1998).

## **Rebuilding Christ’s church:**

*Abridged from an article in America magazine, July 16, 2007, by Martin Pable, O.F.M. Cap., a retreat director at St. Anthony Retreat Center, Marathon, Wis.*

As my spiritual directee described what she called “a meltdown,” she sighed, “I just don’t care anymore.” Things were not going well at the parish where she is on staff. She was fatigued; her husband was not recovering well from an injury; she saw little that was positive in church leadership. But she then went on to tell how she recovered her usual zest during a weekend retreat led by a Capuchin friar and a secular Franciscan woman. She came to the realization that she truly does care—about the parish, about the wider church, about her call to minister to God’s people. . . .

[Her] cry found an echo in my own heart. . . . On Easter Sunday the church where I offered Mass was filled to the rafters. The next Sunday the music was just as uplifting, and I preached with the same enthusiasm—but the church was back to its usual half-fullness. “Where is everybody?” Every survey paints the same dismal picture. Catholics are divided; they no longer believe many church teachings; they are angry and hurt by the

### ***Listening to the “millennials,” continued:***

Catholics and 40% or more of the other generations. More strikingly, only 7% viewed the Church’s pro-life position as a core teaching, in contrast to 58% of pre-Vatican II Catholics and around 45% of those in each of the other generations. Millennial Catholics also diverged markedly from Church positions on other sexual and gender issues including homosexuality as well as whether to ordain women. On that latter point, 87% of them favored an end to the male only priesthood compared with 61% of Vatican II Catholics. . . .

Noting the shakier sense of religious identity among young adult Catholics, Hoge said, “The older people ask: ‘Will tomorrow’s Catholics still support our beloved institutions?’ Universities worry about this. Bishops worry about this. Everybody who’s responsible worries about this.” Added to these worries, Hoge pointed to opinion data indicating that the younger Catholic laity is moving in ideological directions nearly opposite to those of the younger Catholic clergy, which is considered notably more traditional than priests who came of age around the time of Vatican II. . . .

Just because young adult Catholics have certain attitudes now, does that mean they will have the same basic outlook when they are no longer young adults? The question came up during the discussion period, and Davidson’s response was, in essence, yes. He allowed that millennial Catholics will adapt and change as they journey through the life cycle, but he also explained that each generation retains its distinctive character even as its members take on new responsibilities at home, at work, and in the community. . . .

Young adult Catholics do seem to have a sense of God’s presence in their lives. “They feel that God is all around them, that God is caring for them and looking out for them,” Davidson said, though he added that their spiritual practices such as prayer tend to be infrequent and informal. As Aileen Tejada of New York (class of ’07), remarked during the forum, “I’m not really into formal prayer.” Then she added without skipping a beat—“And I talk to God a lot. I talk to Him like He was right there.”

Speakers at the forum offered nothing like a ten-point plan for engaging young adult Catholics more deeply in the life of the Church. They agreed that the Church needs to let young adult Catholics speak out loud and that it needs to listen. As Davidson, a Vatican II Catholic, put it during the discussion period, “If they know we love them, they can respond to the Church. If they think we [look at them as] a problem or they think we’re going to look down on them and not trust them, they’re not going to have any interest in us, and their belief will grow weaker as a result.”

### ***Farm bill reform:***

The U.S. bishops, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities USA, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and Network, a Catholic social justice lobby, are joining more than a dozen other religious groups in advocating reforms in federal farm policy that could be implemented through the farm bill now working its way through Congress.

The organizations have coalesced into a body called the Religious Working Group on the Farm Bill to propose changes in the legislation that they say would benefit farmers, rural communities and Americans’ nutritional needs. . . .

The working group outlined for consideration for the farm bill a broad agenda of issues that would increase investments that combat rural poverty and strengthen rural communities; strengthen and expand programs that reduce hunger and improve nutrition; strengthen and increase investment in policies that promote conservation and good stewardship of the land, and; protect the health and safety of farmworkers. . . .

—Abridged from an article by Catholic News Service

### ***Rebuilding Christ’s church, continued:***

sexual abuse scandals and by the closing of parishes; they have little confidence in their leaders. . . .

Yet the words “I don’t care” stick in my throat. I cannot say them, because I do not really mean them. I am haunted by the words of Jesus to Francis of Assisi: “Go and rebuild my church, which you see is falling into ruins.” I hear those words not as a “should” but as a gentle, loving invitation. They make me want to give my best, even though I may never see much in the way of measurable “rebuilding.” . . .

I have often been touched by the ending of T. S. Eliot’s poem *Ash Wednesday*: “Teach us to care and not to care/ teach us to sit still/ Even among these rocks.”

Yes, there are things we ought to care about, and others that we ought not. How are we to separate them? That is the function of discernment, of contemplation.

Hence we need to “sit still,” to make time, to pray. . . .

So, what should we care about? Briefly: what God cares about. I do not think God cares who wins the Academy Awards, or the N.B.A. championship or the next “American Idol” competition. God does care about the protection of human life, the safeguarding of human rights and dignity for all people, economic justice and adequate health care for everyone, the protection of children from violence and exploitation, equal opportunities for women and about the ending of war as a means of settling disputes and the commitment of all nations to live in peace. . . .