



Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 13, 2007

Readings

This week:

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

John 14:23-29

Next week:

Acts 1:1-11

Ephesians 1:17-23

Luke 24:46-53

Psalm

O God, let all the nations praise you! (*Psalm 67*)

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

May 13

Happy Mother's Day!

May 17

Ascension (celebrated next Sunday)

From Thomas Merton

The message of hope the contemplative offers you is that whether you understand or not, God loves you, is present in you, lives in you, dwells in you, calls you, saves you, and offers you an understanding and light which are like nothing you ever found in books or heard in sermons. The contemplative has nothing to tell you except to reassure you and say that if you dare to penetrate your own silence and risk the sharing of that solitude with the lonely other who seeks God through you, then you will truly recover the light and the capacity to understand what is beyond words and beyond explanations because it is too close to be explained: it is the intimate union in the depths of your own heart, of God's spirit and your own secret inmost self, so that you and He are in all truth One Spirit.

—Letter to Dom Francis Decroix, 8/21/1967

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

Sign a letter today:

Today is letter-writing day for our parish for Bread for the World. Please stop by after Mass and sign a letter to your representative to urge her/his support of an approach to broad reform of the U.S. farm bill. This legislation touches everyone who eats—and especially those who struggle to have enough to eat.

PPJC event this week:

On Tuesday, May 15, at 7:30 pm, the Peninsula Peace & Justice Center is sponsoring Camilo Mejia talking about his private rebellion as the first known veteran to refuse to fight in Iraq. Now released after serving almost nine months in prison, he tells his own story, from his upbringing in Central America and his experience as an immigrant in the U.S. to his service in Iraq. Mejia was raised by prominent Sandinista revolutionaries and draws inspiration from Jesuit teachings. He argues passionately for human rights and the end to an unjust war. The talk is at the Fellowship Hall, First Presbyterian Church, 1140 Cowper Street. Admission is \$7-15, sliding scale, and proceeds benefit PPJC and Mejia.

Affordable housing in Palo Alto?:

May 12-20 is Affordable Housing Week. Join Palo Alto mayor Yoriko Kishimoto for a bus tour of affordable housing communities in Palo Alto on Saturday, May 19, 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. A \$10 registration fee includes a light breakfast and lunch. For more information call (408) 501-7870 or e-mail bchang@svlg.net.

Needs net:

Do you find yourself in need of a helping hand, a last-minute car ride, a cat sitter, or the like? Between now and June 10, while Roberta is away, contact Bonnie at the Needs Net—(650) 838-9011.

Lay convocation on June 2:

On Saturday, June 2, 9:00 am to 3:30 pm at St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco, come to the history-making "first annual" Lay Convocation, a gathering of the People of God to talk about issues of concern. This event is hopefully the start of a new way of communicating within the Church in Northern California, organized for and by the laity. Registration (and other) information is at www.NorCalLayConvocation.org.

Mother's Day proclamation:

Each year the president issues a Mother's Day Proclamation, but the original Mother's Day Proclamation was made in 1870, and written by Julia Ward Howe, perhaps best known today for having written the words to *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* in 1862 when she was an antislavery activist. The original Proclamation was an impassioned call for peace and disarmament. In the years following the Civil War, Howe's political activism increased, as did her condemnation of war. Here are the words to her original 1870 Mother's Day Proclamation:



Arise then...women of this day!
Arise, all women who have hearts!
Whether your baptism be of water or of tears!
Say firmly:
"We will not have questions answered by irrelevant agencies,
Our husbands will not come to us, reeking with carnage,
For caresses and applause.
Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn
All that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy
and patience.
We, the women of one country,
Will be too tender of those of another country

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Please bring food on Sunday:

Only a few of us are doing most of the donating for the food basket each Sunday, and the need invariably outstrips the donations. Please, everybody, bring at least one item of nonperishable food and place it in the basket in the vestibule before Mass. Staple items are always needed: cereals, canned soups, fruits and vegetables, pasta, rice, beans, canned meat. Please remember our neighbors who are struggling to make ends meet!

Age of Aquinas:

Thursday, May 17, at 6:30 pm, Catholic Alumni Club sponsors Dining Around the World at Pedro's Restaurant, Santa Clara. RSVP to Jim Chinn, (650) 948-1144 or jychinn@sbcglobal.net, by May 16.
Saturday, May 19, at 6:30 pm, Age of Aquinas sponsors a Star Party with Peninsula Astronomical Society. Contact Randy Jones, (408) 739-2881 or age-of-aquinas@paloaltocatholic.org for more information.

Mother's Day, continued:

To allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."
From the voice of a devastated Earth a voice goes up with
Our own. It says: "Disarm! Disarm!
The sword of murder is not the balance of justice."
Blood does not wipe our dishonor,
Nor violence indicate possession.
As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil
At the summons of war,
Let women now leave all that may be left of home
For a great and earnest day of counsel.
Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate
the dead.
Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the
means
Whereby the great human family can live in peace...
Each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of
Caesar, but of God—
In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask
That a general congress of women without limit of nationality,
May be appointed and held at someplace deemed most con-
venient
And the earliest period consistent with its objects,
To promote the alliance of the different nationalities,
The amicable settlement of international questions,
The great and general interests of peace.

CC launches new blog:

To keep people up to date and engaged in its new Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America, Catholic Charities USA has launched a new blog at www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/poverty/. The new blog includes an archive of Campaign activities, news, field events, etc.
Earlier this year, Catholic Charities USA launched the Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America—a multi-year initiative aimed cutting poverty in half by 2020. The campaign urges Congress to give a much higher priority to the needs of the 37 million Americans living in poverty on issues such as health care, housing, nutrition, and economic security. This broad effort will involve partners in social service agencies, the faith community, and other groups in a sustained effort to convince government officials of the importance of making systemic changes in government programs to help the poor and most vulnerable in our society.

Day workers available:

The Day Worker Center reminds you that it has workers to help you with Spring projects. Workers are available for painting, garage cleaning, window and gutter cleaning, landscaping, moving, janitorial assistance, house-cleaning and other skillful jobs. Call Maria at the Center in Mountain View—(650) 903-4102—or check their web site at www.dayworkercenter.org.

Stages in our spiritual development:

Elizabeth Fitting is sponsoring an opportunity to explore *The Evolution of Stages of Consciousness in Our Spiritual Development* with Sr. Helen Thompson, BVM, a member of the core faculty at the School of Applied Theology in Berkeley, where she has taught Spirituality for Leadership and Ministry. The date is Saturday, June 16, 9:30 am to 3:00 pm, at St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center. There is no charge, but a free-will offering will be appreciated.
RSVP by June 1 to Sr. Elizabeth Avalos at sociateabvm@mac.com or call her at (408) 569-7222 for more information.

Mental health conference:

The Caring Ministries of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church are sponsoring a Mental Health conference—*Out of the Depths: The Healing Power of Faith Communities*—on Saturday, June 2, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, at the Fellowship Hall, 950 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park. Keynote speakers are John Ortberg, pastor of MPPC, and Dave Zucker, a mental health minister. Workshops cover suicide prevention, mental illness in adolescents, borderline personality disorder, developing a mental illness support group, and spiritual tools for coping with mental illness.
Cost is \$25. Register online at www.mppc.org or call Brad Kellar for info: (650) 722-0985.

Eleanor Roosevelt poem:

Thanks to Randy Jones, here is the Eleanor Roosevelt Prayer that Fr. Rubio quoted from last Sunday. It is called A World Made New:

Our Father,
who has set a restlessness in our hearts
and made us all seekers
after that which we can never fully find:
forbid us to be satisfied with what we make of life.
Draw us from base content
and set our eyes on far-off goals.
Keep us at tasks too hard for us
that we may be driven to Thee for strength.
Deliver us from the fretfulness and self-pitying;
make us sure of the good we cannot see
and of the hidden good in the world.
Open our eyes to simple beauty all around us
and our hearts to the loveliness men hide from us
because we do not try to understand them.
Save us from ourselves
and show us a vision of a world made new.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

We have lost our way in Iraq:

Abridged from the April 30 edition of America magazine, this article by Msgr. Robert W. McElroy, pastor of St. Gregory's Parish, San Mateo, Calif., was recommended by Msgr. Boyle.

... We have lost our way in Iraq—strategically, militarily and morally—and we need to forge a pathway forward. To do so we must have a vigorous, sustained public debate on the future of American involvement in Iraq to resolve the question whether justice can best be served by continued military operations on a massive scale in Iraq or, alternatively, whether measured but vigorous steps should be undertaken to end the war. This debate must be characterized neither by the skeptical deference that typified the initial decision to invade Iraq, nor by the partisan rancor that threatens to engulf the current congressional discussion. What is needed is true public argument, as the Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray (1904-67) used the term, argument that is civil, reasoned, critical, broadly penetrating of American society and, above all, moral in its nature and tone.

For the Catholic community in the United States, that argument must be molded by two elements—the church's fundamental stance toward war in the modern age and the principles of the just-war tradition. . . .

The primary background against which the church has interpreted the just-war tradition for the past 50 years is not the limited destructiveness of medieval warfare, but the enormous destructive potential of contemporary warfare. Against this background, the leadership of the church has been unswerving in its presumption against war. From the assertion of Pope John XXIII's 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris* that "it is hardly possible to imagine that in an atomic era, war could be used as an instrument of justice" to Paul VI's clarion call at the United Nations in 1965, "No more war, war never again!" to Benedict XVI's questioning whether it is even licit, given the current destructiveness of war, to admit the possibility of a just war, the popes of the contemporary era have unequivocally taught that a presumption against war lies at the very center of Catholic thinking on war and peace.

One implication of this strong presumption against war in Catholic moral teaching is that moral scrutiny of the decision to wage war should take place not merely at the beginning of a conflict, but at every stage of its duration. If it is morally required by just-war thinking that there be a just cause, approval by competent authority,

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Why people leave the church:

Abridged from an article by John Garvey in Commonweal, April 6, 2007.

We have grown used to people who have problems with "organized religion" and "the institutional church," who say that they are spiritual but not religious, and who pick and choose from things as light as aromatherapy and the less demanding forms of meditation to cobble together a personal devotional observance. This sort of thing can seem fluffy and irritating. But some people who have moved away from churches and synagogues are more serious in their search, and their disenchantments are real and grounded. We should pay attention to them. . . .

It is too easy for some of us who stick with the church to say, "Where else have we to go?" That was said of Jesus Christ, not of the institution. These days there are many other paths a seeker might choose—not only other churches (all of which have their own share of sorrows), but an honest, individual, inquiring search that might or might not end up leaving the searcher open to the truths of the gospel. Such an individualistic course is a great loss, I think, where the life of the sacraments and spiritual counsel is concerned; but I can see how someone might end up there.

We excuse the institution and its representatives too easily. One of my teachers, the late historian and theologian John Meyendorff, pointed out that Jesus' denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, the representatives of organized religion at the time, can—and should—be understood as a criticism of a similarly complacent and self-satisfied Christianity. . . .

Despite the failings of the institution, I remain committed to it because I have been influenced personally by many serious, holy men and women who were themselves nourished by a church that has many flaws but also many saints. A rich experience of the church can anchor you, despite the frustrations. The venality and cowardice of some—even many—bishops can't make me leave the company of such people, or make me forget such people as Mother Maria Skobtsova, who was martyred by Hitler for helping Jews, or St. Silouan of Mount Athos, or St. Seraphim of Sarov, whose radiant life took place during a bad period in the history of Russian Orthodoxy.

... But what if your experience and knowledge of the church is not very deep or rich, and you aren't even aware of these people, or the depth of your tradi-

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We have lost our way in Iraq, continued:

the presence of right intention, reasonable hope of success and proportionality of means in any initial decision to wage war, is it not also morally required that these conditions be present throughout the conflict if war is to be continued? The moral warrant for war can hardly be said to continue if the foundations for that warrant have disappeared.

Scrutiny of the current situation in Iraq reveals that four of the required foundations for the moral use of force are not currently being met. . . .

The original moral warrant for the intervention in Iraq has collapsed along with the American dreams of a swift and relatively peaceful democratization of Iraqi society. Any just-war argument that a new moral warrant has emerged founders upon the difficulty of demonstrating that the current situation meets the tests of just cause, right intention, last resort and reasonable hope for success. . . .

In an Orwellian twist of politics, the burden of proof in the current debate about U.S. withdrawal from Iraq is being placed upon those who advocate withdrawal; they must prove that withdrawal will not destabilize Iraq. In Catholic thinking, the calculus is just the opposite.

Those advocating continued military action in Iraq face the burden of proof not only to demonstrate that remaining in Iraq is clearly more likely to yield more good than evil, but also to show that such continued action meets the conditions imposed by just-war thinking. Facing the current realities in Iraq, this burden is impossible to meet. The only moral warrant that emerges from any effort to apply rigorous just-war thinking to Iraq is the warrant to move immediately toward a measured and prudently crafted American military withdrawal.

Catholics demand response to Iraqi refugee crisis:

Abridged from Salt of the Earth, April 2007.

In a joint statement issued at a recent U.N. human rights council meeting in Geneva, a group of American Catholic religious communities called for a broader effort to shelter thousands of people escaping deteriorating conditions in Iraq. In the statement, the Dominicans for Justice and Peace, Franciscans International, Dominican Leadership Conference, Pax Christi International, International Catholic Peace Movement, Congregations of St. Joseph and Sisters of Mercy of the Americas expressed their "deep concern for Iraqi internally displaced persons and refugees."

There are approximately 1,800,000 Iraqi displaced persons in the country. An estimated 100,000 Iraqis leave

States rethink death penalty as national tide turns:

Abridged from an article by Patrick Mulvaney, a freelance journalist and law student at the U. of Pennsylvania, in National Catholic Reporter, March 16, 2007.

As Maryland's Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee prepared to debate legislation to abolish the death penalty on a Wednesday in February, hundreds of spectators scrambled for seats in the Annapolis hearing room. It was a political and philosophical clash featuring the governor, former death row inmates and many others. The legislation, if passed and signed into law, would affect the eight offenders currently on death row in Maryland. The Annapolis hearing provided not only a provincial dialogue, but a telling snapshot of a nation questioning its commitment to capital punishment. . . .

The abolition issue swept through state capitols across the nation in the early months of 2007. In New Jersey, a legislative commission tasked with reviewing the state's death penalty delivered a report recommending abolition by a 12-1 vote in early January. With Democratic Gov. Jon Corzine supporting the recommendation, Trenton's legislature is expected to act on it by the year's end.

New Mexico's House of Representatives passed a bill abolishing the state's death penalty Feb. 12. That same chamber passed a similar bill in 2005 (only to see it fail by a single vote in a Senate committee), but garnered a larger majority this time around. In Montana, the state Senate voted in favor of abolition 27-21 in a preliminary ballot Feb. 23, and in Colorado and Nebraska, legislative committees have passed abolition bills.

"We know that in most of these states we won't win this year," said David Elliot, communications director at the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. "But one year you get a bill, the next year you get it through committee, the next year you get it through a chamber, and the next year you pass it. When we get through 2007 we'll have one or two states that have abolished the death penalty. And then we'll start all over and do it again." . . . Twelve states currently prohibit the death penalty (not including New York, where the state's highest court struck down the existing death penalty statute in 2004). Though a 30-state consensus against the death penalty itself is probably decades away, the current debates mark the beginning of a lengthy drive toward national abolition.

Why are these states, all of which reinstated the death penalty in the past four decades, now open to changing course? Toward the end of the 1990s, there was a rash of innocence cases, some with DNA evidence. With the public realizing that mistakes were made, confidence in the death penalty has eroded. No one wants innocent people executed. . . .

Mother's Day Blessing

Loving God, as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children,
So you watch over your Church.
Bless these women, that they may be strengthened
As they nurture others.
Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.
Grant that we, their loving children, husbands, and friends,
May honor them always with a spirit of profound respect.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Offertory song: Ruah:

Ruah, the feminine Hebrew word, means breath, wind, or spirit. The first image of God in scripture is that of the moving, dancing, creative Spirit hovering over the chaos bringing forth life. The image suggests a mother hovering over her brood.

Why people leave the church, continued:

tion? . . . What if. . . this is the only home you have known? When you see corruption at that level, and a way of living that simply contradicts the gospel, both its letter and its spirit, it is easy to see why someone might reasonably say, "No thanks; I'll look elsewhere." And while it is tempting to blame the spirit of the age for people who wander away, it really isn't that simple. . . . The church, and those of us who are supposed to represent it, shouldn't be let off the hook so easily.

Catholics demand response, continued:

their country each month, including many of Iraq's best educated professionals. Approximately 2,000,000 Iraqis have fled since the 2003 U.S. invasion. According to the statement, "The humanitarian needs of these people are extreme and urgent. An immediate response to the humanitarian crisis is required to attend to the basic needs of those who have left their homes. . . . Furthermore, current refugee assistance and support for the internally displaced are extremely underfunded. "Middle Eastern countries, including Syria and Jordan, have shown openness in welcoming the refugees. As the numbers have increased, the overburdened public services of the host countries are becoming overwhelmed by the increased refugee population. . . ."

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.

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