



Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 5, 2007

Readings

This week:

Acts 14:21-27

Revelation 21:1-5a

John 13:31-33a, 34-35

Next week:

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

John 14:23-29

Psalm

I will praise your name forever, my king and my God. (*Psalm 145*)

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 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 7, 7:30 pm

Liturgy Committee, location TBA

May 10, 7:30 pm

TMC Board, location TBA

From Thomas Merton

The absence of activity in contemplative prayer is only apparent. Below the surface, the mind and will are drawn into the orbit of an activity that is deep and intense and supernatural, and which overflows into our whole being and brings forth incalculable fruits. . . . Contemplative prayer is a deep and simplified spiritual activity in which the mind and will rest in a unified and simple concentration upon God, turned to Him, intent upon Him and absorbed in His own light, with a simple gaze which is perfect adoration because it silently tells God that we have left everything else and desire even to leave our own selves for His sake, and that He alone is important to us, He alone is our desire and our life, and nothing else can give us any joy.

—*New Seeds of Contemplation*

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

Lay convocation on June 2:

Coming of Age
The First Annual
Northern California
Lay Convocation

Saturday, June 2, 9AM-3:30 PM
Cathedral of St. Mary,
1111 Gough Street, San Francisco

*Join in This History-Making
Lay-Convoked Event*

- Learn and celebrate the Church's early tradition and post-conciliar focus of lay leadership.
- Bring our voices to the table to discuss the successes and challenges of the present.
- Develop strategies for increased lay voice in the Church of the future.

Registration info: www.NorCalLayConvocation.org

Tanzania mission needs your support:

The Tanzania Health and Education Mission is a non-profit established by Sherry Cassidy of our parish and three other women to support the local schools and health clinics in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania. On Friday, May 11, 6:00-11:00 pm, at the Elks' Club in Redwood City, there will be a live *Auction for Africa* of a week in a luxury ocean-view condominium on Kauai, a week in west Lake Tahoe for either summer or winter season, a Yamaha motorcycle and Tanzanian artwork. A silent auction includes gift certificates for spa treatments, restaurants, hotels, and sports events, as well as crafts and photographs from Tanzania. The evening includes dinner and music as well as discussion and entertainment from Tanzania. Tickets are \$50 in advance and \$60 at the door. To purchase, e-mail sherrycassedy@aol.com or call (650) 856-8638.

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.

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

Zitrin on the death penalty:

Elizabeth Zitrin, an attorney and California death penalty abolition coordinator for Amnesty Int'l, will talk about recent developments re the death penalty at All Saints Episcopal Church, Waverley and Hamilton, on Tuesday, May 8, at 7:30 pm. Light refreshments will be served. For more information call Terry McCaffrey at (408) 257-4611 or e-mail terrymc@igc.org.

Day workers available:

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

Needs net and lending library:

Do you find yourself in need of a helping hand, a last-minute car ride, a cat sitter, or the like? Contact Roberta at the *Needs Net*—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:

Wednesdays in May at 7:30 pm, the Transitions Support Group meets at the Pastoral Center. Contact Randy Jones at (408) 739-2881 or age-of-aquinas@paloalto-catholic.org for more information. Saturdays in May at 9:00 am, there is an Age of Aquinas Hike & Coffee. Contact Randy for info. Friday, May 11, at 6:45 pm, a CSF dinner is sponsored by St. Lucy's Christian Singles Fellowship. Contact the CSF Event Line at (408) 535-0368 or e-mail singles@stlucy-campbell.org.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

CTA and Catholic consciousness:

A wonderful West Coast Call to Action 2007 conference—*Embracing Radical Jesus in a Changing World*—was held last month in Sacramento. Some fifteen breakout sessions were held over the two days of the conference, plus four “plenary sessions” with national speakers.

One of the breakout sessions was led by Sr. Helen Thompson, BVM, who condensed a course she teaches at the GTU in Berkeley into a presentation on the *Evolution of States of Consciousness in Our Roman Catholic Spiritual Development*. Her talk created a synergistic framework for the messages of the plenary speakers that identified four stages in the evolution of consciousness in the life of the individual and in Western culture. First was the **Egocentric World View**, pre-modern thinking patterns that were dominant in the West until about the sixteenth century, characterized by magical, mythical thinking, a God who is Sky Father—a Warrior God who lives outside creation and protects his people. Human beings were the “poor banished children of Eve” destined to live in this “vale of tears” as long-suffering servants, and the world was the arena outside Eden to which God banished humankind. Jesus was the Savior who works miracles, rescues us from bondage, and delivers us from sin and evil; the Church was a sanctuary, with the mission to propagate the faith, convert heathens, exhort sinners, and save souls. Second was the **Ethnocentric World View**, modern thinking patterns dominant from the seventeenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, characterized by individualism and fundamentalism (the mainstream U.S. world view). God is a transcendent lawgiver who orders the universe and we are children of God marred by original sin but striving to exercise virtue and do good works. The Jesus of this world view is the Son of God sent to earth by his Father who “humbled himself and became man.” The church is organized with Christ at the head, and the pope, the bishops, and other ordained male clerics organized as a hierarchy to teach, rule and sanctify the faithful members.

Third was the **Holistic World View**, postmodern thinking that dates from the mid-twentieth century to the present, and with which most of us would now identify—“the kingdom of God is within us,” which extends beyond beliefs about God to our experience of the Divine. We experience God as immanent, the ground of our being, and transcendent, the creator and sustainer of all

New hope for Catholic schools:

Abridged from an article by Fr. Andrew Greeley in the Tucson Sun Times of March 2, 2007.

This is a period when the American Catholic Church is as dry and dull as the Sonoran Desert. The hope and joy generated by the Vatican Council is dead. The separation between the leaders and the followers has grown wider. The former speak on many things; the latter barely hear them. The latter have created for themselves a Catholic identity based on the resurrection of Jesus, concern for the poor, Jesus in the Eucharist, God in the sacraments, and devotion to the Mother of Jesus; the former hassle them about secularization and relativism. To the repulsive sexual abuse crisis, one must now add the financial embezzlement crisis. . . . All of this pessimism troubles me because I’ve spent much of my life doing research on Catholic schools. Catholic schools are among the best things that the church in this country has done, they are resources in social capital that the church should treasure, and they are more important in a time of change in the church than in a time of stability. Most people laugh at my research, which is the fate of a sociologist whose findings conflict with conventional wisdom.

Now, however, and suddenly, I hear a clarion call in support of Catholic primary and secondary schools from beneath the shadow of the Golden Dome. The university’s “initiative” for Catholic education vigorously celebrates Catholic schools, not only in word but in deed. Its Alliance for Catholic Education program trains future teachers and school principals. I learned about it both from a former ACE teacher writing a dissertation and from the presence of ACE here in the real Sonoran desert. The principal of our parish school and the vice principal of the nearby Catholic high school are impressive and dedicated young Catholics. Two ACE volunteer teams teach in minority schools here. The bishop and the priests who work with them are almost ecstatic.

Eighty seniors from dozens of Catholic universities are recruited every year, though most of them are Domers. They go through an intense summer of educational training and spiritual formation—with emphasis on the vocation of a teacher—and are assigned to teach in poor Catholic schools, mostly in the South. They live in a community of a sort, have a common prayer life, and even eat together. The second summer back under the Dome they learn more about education and the

CTA, continued:

things. We participate with the Divine in co-creating ourselves and our world.

Fourth is the **Quantum or Cosmic World View**, emerging in the twenty-first century and learned from quantum physics. We recognize that mystics in many world wisdom traditions and contemporary physicists share some common understandings about the nature of Being, its source, and our share in that source. We are conscious beings who participate in the Divine Mystery. The Risen Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the ground and the goal of evolution who is a human incarnation of the Divine.

Theologian and author **Bernard Cooke**, the plenary speaker on Saturday, talked about *Tradition*, or the Ethnocentric World View, which he said is shifting from the authoritative teaching of doctrine to a more dynamic view involving the community. Tradition, he said, is the handing down of faith and we in community are tradition, a dynamic, changing people. But the word has been hijacked and given a new meaning by some conservative people—"don't change anything!"

Edwina Gateley told stories about what might be characterized as our journey from the second stage—the church that most of us grew up in—to the fourth stage—the church that is being prepared for our grandchildren and future generations, and about which we are just beginning to learn. Her message was to follow the heart of the passionate Jesus; to remember that we have a God who deeply loves us. Jesus encourages us never to give up for we are the light and leaven and salt of a renewed church, a church dependent on the authenticity and intensity of our commitment. The 10% of committed Catholics have the potential to draw in the 80% in the middle, and God is longing for us to continue this journey of faithfulness, no matter what the institutional church tells us.

Matthew Fox took us into the fourth world view. He said that all the amazing "coming together" of progressive Christians and non-Christians that we observe today is the Spirit asking us to be reborn. He quoted Deepak Chopra, who observed of Christians, "who are we to condemn anyone [gays or abortion supporters or divorced people, for example] since Christ did not." And "It is disastrous to allow extremists [fundamentalist Christians] to take over the moral ground." A major problem today is the revenge of the "punitive father" religion. Fundamentalism is waning, but we must seize the moment, get rattled, and express our moral outrage [e.g., over trivializing religion by reducing it to a "sexual litmus test" re gays and abortion rights]. We are reclaiming the Wisdom tradition of Israel, and when

New hope, continued:

practice of the spiritual life, and then return to their work. At the end of the two years, they receive a master's degree in education. More than half continue to teach—three quarters of these in Catholic schools.

The ACErs continue to hang together, they swarm in certain cities, they date one another, even marry; they belong to a Fellowship foundation that seems to be a kind of alumni association. A few of them become priests. The Holy Cross Fathers may have found one shape for the religious life of the future.

The ACErs' concern is Catholic education. They aim at helping Catholic schools in a local and direct-service way. They are not a reformist pressure group like Voice of the Faithful. Yet, a woman I taught more years ago than either of us cares to remember with two ACE children observed to me: "Be careful, Andy, those kids are going to take the church away from you."

To which I replied, "Please God!"

Prayer for May:

Mary, our mother, mother of all,
We journey as pilgrims to sacred spaces,
Where all are welcomed, all are family.

Guide our steps as we search for your face
In the faces of those who suffer,
Those who thirst for healing, for justice, for peace.

May we know the place we are called to
When we recognize and embrace them,
And know we have reached home.

Wisdom arrives, he said, there is a rebirth of creativity. The Goddess is back, he said, "and she is pissed." We must reconnect to the grace of nature, he said. We are collectively going through a Dark Night of the Soul, and we can see it as a school for learning compassion. The Dark Night is a time of purification of our longing—not for an addiction to religion but for a spiritually mature life.

Board: Anna Jaklitsch, 327-0978, annajak@accesscom.com
Kay Williams, 328-2781, kaywill@pacbell.net
Bulletin: Michelle Hogan (May 6 and 13), Jane Bahr (May 20),
Kay Williams (May 27)
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
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Spiritual Education: Mary Coady, 261-9155, Jim Davis, 328-2584

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.