



# Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 28, 2007

## Readings

*This week:*

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13

Luke 4:21-30

*Next week:*

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

## Psalm

I will sing of your salvation. (*Psalm 71*)

## 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

Wednesday, January 31

Thomas Merton's birthday (#92)

Friday, February 2

Presentation of the Lord

### From Thomas Merton

The true spiritual life is a life neither of Dionysian orgy nor of Apollonian clarity: it transcends both. It is a life of wisdom, a life of sophianic love. In Sophia, the highest wisdom-principle, all the greatness and majesty of the unknown that is in God and all that is rich and maternal in His creation are united inseparably, as paternal and maternal principles, the uncreated Father and created Mother-Wisdom.

Faith is what opens to us this higher realm of unity, of strength, of light, of sophianic love where there is no longer the limited and fragmentary light provided by rational principles, but where the Truth is One and Undivided and takes all to itself in the wholeness of Sophia. When St. Paul said that Love was the fulfillment of the Law and that Love had delivered Christ we were incorporated into Christ, Himself the "power and wisdom of God." . . .

—*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

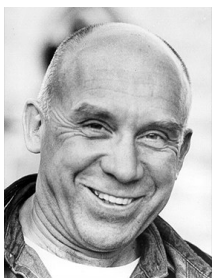
## *News Announcements Requests*

### ***Justice forum continues at Ascension:***

Fr. Charlie reminds us that the Justice Speakers Forum will reconvene tomorrow—Monday, January 29, at 7:15 pm at Ascension Parish in Worner Hall. Elissa Test from Stanford will speak about the genocidal war being waged by the government of Sudan against its own citizens in the Darfur section of the country. She will also speak on the nationwide effort to raise consciousness on this crime against humanity as well as efforts being made on Bay Area campuses to spread the word about Darfur. There is no admission fee for the Forum, but free-will donations are gratefully accepted. Refreshments will be served.

Today is the last Sunday of the month, so this bulletin includes an envelope for your donation to the Thomas Merton Center. Because of your generous support, TMC makes a monthly donation to Seton School, puts on programs and lectures, publishes this weekly bulletin and other printed items, buys liturgical supplies, and provides hospitality (coffee, donuts, cookies, fruit, etc.) after Sunday Mass and at other meetings. We depend on your support to keep TMC going!

### ***Merton anniversary this week:***



Thomas Merton was born in Prades, France on January 31, 1915—92 years ago this Wednesday. His New Zealand-born father, Owen Merton, and his American-born mother, Ruth Jenkins, were both artists. Merton converted to Roman Catholicism while at Columbia University and on December 10, 1941, he entered the Abbey of

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### ***Peninsula Interfaith Action anniversary:***

Today PIA is ten years old! Founded in 1997 at St. Francis Church in East Palo Alto, PIA has grown from 15 member congregations to 32. To celebrate, PIA is inviting you attend a bilingual “reunion” at St. Francis, 1425 Bay Rd. The event—*Ten Years of Building Justice and Faith*—features speakers Fr. Bob Moran, St. Joseph’s Church, Mtn. View, and Rev. Darcey Laine, Unitarian Universalist Church, Palo Alto, clergy from two of PIA’s founding congregations. Choirs from the Jerusalem Baptist Church and the Congregational Church of San Mateo will perform. Please come and help us celebrate tomorrow, January 29, at 7:00 pm. Contact George Chippendale at 856-6350.

### ***Lector training and “liturgy w/o a presider”:***

The annual lector gathering to review the protocols for the 8:45 mass will be Thursday, February 15, at 7:30 pm in St. Thomas Aquinas Church. At this meeting, we will also focus on the procedures for conducting “Liturgy Without a Presider,” an ever-increasing possibility. Whether you are a current lector or want to become one, please plan on attending. If you have questions, contact John Arnold at 325-1421 or [jsaoso@earthlink.net](mailto:jsaoso@earthlink.net).

### ***Milestone blessings next Sunday:***

If you will be celebrating a “milestone” in 2007—a wedding anniversary or birthday that ends with a “5” or a “0,” please let the Liturgy Committee co-chairs know this week. Next Sunday there will be a special blessing for all those who wish to celebrate their special anniversary or birthday with us. Contact John ([jsaoso@earthlink.net](mailto:jsaoso@earthlink.net)) or Sally ([red5@svpal.org](mailto:red5@svpal.org)) before Friday.

### ***Lay convocation/Call to Action coming up:***

Mark your calendar for a “first” on Saturday, June 2 at St. Mary’s Cathedral in San Francisco. On this Saturday there will be an historic 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. You will not want to miss it! There have been only two other lay synods in the United States, and this is the first at a Catholic site, thanks to the Archdiocese of SF!

Also, plan to attend the 2007 West Coast Regional Call to Action Conference on April 13-15 at the Holiday Inn Northeast in Sacramento. The theme this year is *Embracing Radical Jesus in a Changing World*. Keynote speakers include Matthew Fox (president of the University of Creation Spirituality in Oakland), Edwina Gateley (international author and retreat leader), Bernard Cooke (professor of theology), and Patty Hawk (co-president of CTA National). Cost if you register before February 1 is \$155. For registration information, visit the web site: <http://www.saccta.org>.

Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Msgr. Gene Boyle, Tom Carmody, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Kami Ladd, Carol Locke, Eileen McNevin, Judy Mendelsohn, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullinex, Joe Narewski, Hank Okonski, Lynne Owens, George Peinado, Nora Peniata, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, Norm and Jane Schirle, Dolores Walsh, and T.J. Wooten.

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## ***The religious cancer of racism:***

*By James H. Cone, Charles A. Briggs Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York, and author of many books including A Black Theology of Liberation. Abridged from the Grace Cathedral web site. Published 2/16/2000 but worth rereading.*

People often ask me whether I am still angry as when I wrote *Black Theology and Black Power*. When I hear that question I smile to contain my rage: I remain just as angry because America, when viewed from the perspective of the black poor, is no closer to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of a just society than when he was killed. While the black middle class has made considerable economic progress, the underclass, despite America's robust economy, is worse off in 1998 than in 1968. The statistics are well known, yet they still fail to shock or outrage most Americans. America is still two socie-

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## ***Merton anniversary, continued:***

Gethsemani, and became a Trappist priest. The twenty-seven years he spent in Gethsemani brought about profound changes in his self-understanding. His ongoing conversion impelled him into the political arena, where he became, according to Daniel Berrigan, the conscience of the peace movement of the 1960s. Referring to race and peace as the two most urgent issues of our time, Merton was a strong supporter of the nonviolent civil rights movement. For his social activism Merton endured severe criticism, from Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

During his last years, he became deeply interested in Asian religions, particularly Zen Buddhism, and in promoting East-West dialogue. After several meetings with Merton during the American monk's trip to the Far East in 1968, the Dalai Lama praised him as having a more profound understanding of Buddhism than any other Christian he had known. It was during this trip to a conference on East-West monastic dialogue that Merton died, in Bangkok on December 10, 1968, the victim of an accidental electrocution.

He is arguably the most influential American Catholic author of the twentieth century. His autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, has sold over one million copies and has been translated into over fifteen languages. He wrote over sixty other books and hundreds of poems and articles on topics ranging from monastic spirituality to civil rights, nonviolence, and the nuclear arms race.

—Abridged from [www.merton.org](http://www.merton.org).

## ***Sisters of Selma:***

February is Black History Month, and KQED is celebrating with a month of programs on the black experience. On February 25 at 5:00 pm, a new documentary calls attention to an amazing group of women—*Sisters of Selma: Bearing Witness for Change*.

This program is, as described by KQED, “an unabashedly spiritual take on the Selma, Alabama, voting rights marches of 1965 from some of its unsung foot soldiers—Catholic nuns. Following the violence of ‘Bloody Sunday,’ sisters from around the country answered Dr. Martin Luther King’s call to join the protests in Selma. Never before in American history had



avored Catholic women made so public a political statement.”

The violence of “Bloody Sunday” stunned Americans, focusing nationwide attention on civil rights. A group of American nuns from St. Louis were among the first to protest the violence. At a time when many church leaders were reluctant to address the treatment of blacks in the South, these courageous women defied authority to take their message to the streets of Selma. The Missouri sisters were welcomed by the black residents, due in large part to decades of bridge-building by sisters from Rochester, New York, who had met the education and health care needs of the poor blacks of Selma. The Archbishop of Mobile-Birmingham had prohibited them from joining the marches, so they fed, housed, and cared for waves of civil rights activists from elsewhere. This is a story of a few women who took it upon themselves to become agents of change. What did they change? How were they themselves changed by the experience? Now in their 60s and 70s, the women reassess their roles in the Civil Rights Movement in this documentary.

## ***The religious cancer of racism, continued:***

ties: one rich and middle-class and the other poor and working-class. William J. Wilson called the underclass “the truly disadvantaged,” people with few skills to enable them to compete in this technological, informational age. To recognize the plight of the poor does not require academic dissection. It requires only a drive into the central cities of the nation to see people living in places not fit for human habitation.

What deepens my anger today is the appalling silence of white theologians on racism in the United States and the modern world. . . . Progressive white theologians, with few exceptions, write and teach as if they do not need to address the radical contradiction that racism creates for Christian theology. They do not write about slavery, colonialism, segregation, and the profound cultural link these horrible crimes created between white supremacy and Christianity. The cultural bond between European values and Christian beliefs is so deeply woven into the American psyche and thought process that their identification is assumed. White images and ideas dominate the religious life of Christians and the intellectual life of theologians, reinforcing the “moral” right of white people to dominate people of color economically and politically. White supremacy is so widespread that it becomes a “natural” way of viewing the world. . . .

How do we account for such a long history of white theological blindness to racism and its brutal impact on the lives of African people? Is it because white theologians do not know about the tortured history of the Atlantic slave trade, which, according to British historian Basil Davidson, “cost Africa at least fifty million souls?” . . .

Two hundred forty-four years of slavery and one hundred years of legal segregation, augmented by a reign of white terror that lynched more than five thousand blacks, defined the meaning of America as “white over black.” White supremacy shaped the social, political, economic, cultural, and religious ethos in the churches, the academy, and the broader society. . . . Even when white theologians reflect on God and suffering, . . . they almost never make racism a central issue in their analysis of the challenge that evil poses for the Christian faith. If they should happen to mention racism, it is usually just a footnote or only a marginal comment. They almost never make racism the subject of a sustained analysis. It is amazing that racism could be so prevalent and violent in American life and yet so absent in white theological discourse. . . .



## ***Our image of God:***

*By John Dear, SJ, on NCR's Conversation Café on Jan. 9.*

Just before Christmas, Daniel Berrigan and I spent an evening with Franciscan priest and teacher Richard Rohr at the new Catholic Worker house in Albuquerque, NM. A blizzard swirled outside, and the conversation inside swirled nearly as briskly. Dan and I had spent the day touring Los Alamos. And we came away shocked by business as usual, an entire culture, a worldview, a way of being, built around the Bomb.

A culture of peace, on the other hand, rises from the Catholic Worker, and the conversation soon turned to the nonviolent Jesus and the God of peace. Richard said he now thinks the church's ancient teaching of a theology of sacrifice has helped bring about our culture of violence. For eons, we've been told that God, out of some vague need, variously explained over the centuries, required Jesus to be killed in order to save us. The time has arrived, Richard said, for a new theology of nonviolent atonement, a theology that upholds the nonviolence of God and Jesus. . . .

Jesus reveals a God of perfect nonviolent love.

Throughout his life, death, and resurrection, he manifested perfect love, compassion and nonviolence.

“Nothing changed on Calvary,” Richard said. . . . I heartily agree with Richard Rohr. The hallmark of the Gospel message is the summons to love God, neighbor—and even our enemies. Surprisingly, Jesus commands us to love our enemies not because it is the right, the moral, or the practical thing to do. He commands it because God loves enemies. God lavishes love widely, promiscuously, universally. . . .

But imagine God as nonviolent, and worship takes on the fragrance of peace. We enter a deep mystery and bow our heads in awe and wonder and finally, ever so gradually, in imitation of the God of love, evolve into people of nonviolence and peace. . . .

Thus the task at hand: to envision the God of peace.

For our souls and for the world. The more we envision and grasp the image of the God of peace, the more we'll fathom Jesus' teachings, comprehend how to be human, become a peacemaking church of all-inclusive love, and come upon a way or two to help disarm a world armed to the teeth. . . .

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