



Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 1, 2008

Readings

This week:

Deuteronomy 11:18, 26-28, 32
Romans 3: 21-25, 28
Matthew 7:21-27

Next week:

Hosea 6: 3-6
Romans 4:18-25
Matthew 9:9-13

Psalm

Lord, be my rock of safety. *Psalm 31*

Today

Today's Presider is Fr. Tenny Wright, S. J.

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

No meetings this week. Enjoy the beautiful outdoors!

From Thomas Merton

Christians are now asking themselves curious questions about something called the "world." . . . We must begin by frankly admitting that the first place in which to go looking for the world is not outside us but in ourselves. *We are* the world. . . . Through our senses and our minds, our loves, needs, and desires, we are implicated, without possibility of evasion, in this world of matter and of men, of things and of persons, which not only affect us and change our lives but are also affected and changed by us. . . . The question, then, is not to speculate about how we are to contact the world—as if we were somehow in outer space—but how to validate our relationship, give it a fully honest and human significance, and make it truly productive and worthwhile for our world. . . . It is when the Christian learns to recognize the world as redeemed and enters into an "I-Thou" relationship with all other persons in it seen as loved and sought by Christ that he obtains spiritual leverage to free the world from the tyranny of its own worldliness. . . . The Christian does not learn a new set of unworldly laws which he opposes to the ways of the world, but by the Cross and Love of Christ and the indwelling Spirit of freedom, he learns to live in the world as Christ did, in perfect liberty and with unlimited compassion and service.

~ "Seven Words" *in Love and Living*

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

Voice of the Faithful in San Francisco:

Voice of the Faithful Northern California and the Lane Center for Catholic Studies and Social Thought at the University of San Francisco are sponsoring two significant addresses in mid June.

BISHOP GEOFFREY ROBINSON, retired Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Sidney Australia will speak at the Handlery Dining Room in the Lone Mountain Conference Center at the University of San Francisco at 7PM on Friday June 13, 2008. He is the author of *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus*. The Bishop is a prominent theologian who was co-chairman of the National Committee for Professional Standards, coordinating the response of the Catholic Church in Australia to revelations of sexual abuse. Bishop Robinson will sign copies of his book following the presentation.



PROFESSOR PAUL LAKELAND holds the Aloysius P. Kelley SJ Chair in Catholic Studies at Fairfield University. He is the author of *Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church*, which won first place for theology in the Catholic Press Association 2005 Awards. *Catholicism at the Crossroads: How the Laity Can Save the Church* is his most recent work and the subject of his address which will take place on Sunday June 15, 2008 at 1 PM in Xavier Hall in the Fromm Center at the University of San Francisco.



The University is located at 2130 Fulton Street in the heart of San Francisco. A downloadable and printable map is available on the website: usfca.edu. Each presentation is open to the public and there is no admission fee. A suggested donation of \$20 per person would help to defray the expenses of the presenters.



Please remember in your prayers this week Cecilia Aranha, Helen Bunje,, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Lydia Cooper, Ken Dias, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François & Edna Jamati, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Andre, Allysa, and

Ric Lippard, Carol Locke, Mercedes McCaffrey, Stephanie Mullinex, Joe Narewski, Dorothea Nudelman, the family of Hank Okanski, Lynne Owens, Hayden Pastorini, George Peinado, Matthew Rausch, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, George Schardt, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, and T. J. Wooten. {Add or subtract names by e-mailing Bulletin editors: Jane Bahr, Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams}

Crisis in health care—learn more June 1:

Half of all Americans have inadequate health insurance and 47 million have none. Lack of coverage and high premiums are a crisis for many individuals and families. How is the Catholic Church responding? What are the moral and ethical dimensions of this crisis? What can the average person do to improve health care access and affordability? **Join us on Sunday, June 1, at 7 pm** for “*A Catholic Response to the Crisis in Affordable Health Care*,” given by S. Joan Steadman, CSC, Associate Director of Health Care Ethics for the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University. This free program will be held at the St. Athanasius Parish Hall, 160 N. Rengstorff Ave., Mountain View. For more information contact Mike Cavera, mikepcavera@yahoo.com, (650) 967-7939.

Drivers needed for Hidden Villa campers:

Don't forget to call Ann Idzik at 493-7350 or George Chippendale at 856-6350 to volunteer to drive campers during all or part of the **nine-week period from June 16 to Aug 11**. This is a vital ministry !

Election night special, June 3:

On Tuesday night, June 3, Peninsula Peace and Justice Coalition presents *Stealing America: Vote by Vote*, an election night special—a conversation with Dorothy Fadiman, Emmy-Winning, Oscar-Nominated Documentary Filmmaker and Producer/Director of this film. Clips from her new documentary will be shown. It documents significant irregularities in the Presidential election of 2004 while underscoring the fact that election fraud and reform are not partisan issues. The film weaves together dramatic behind-the-scenes experiences of poll workers, computer security experts, journalists, politicians, activists, and voters of all ages. We hear from those who feel their communities were targeted for intimidation during the election, side-by-side with descriptions of irregular machine tallies, in which the number of votes tallied don't equal the number of votes cast.

You can be an important part of the conversation. Come with your questions and comments and be a part of the studio audience.

Location: Community Media Center, 900 San Antonio Road, Palo Alto

Watching from home or on the internet? Phone in with your questions: (650) 856-1491.

Simultaneous Live TV Broadcast on Cable Channel 27 - Mid-Peninsula Cable

Simultaneous Live Webcast at www.communitymediacenter.net

June is stop torture month:

Led by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), June has been designated "Torture Awareness Month." At our parish's Pastoral Stewardship Council meeting on May 14, it was decided by unanimous vote to display a "Torture is wrong" banner from each church in the parish during June. You surely noticed the banner as you entered church this morning. The following is a letter dated January 30, 2008 from the USCCB on the subject of torture written to the United States Senate, and signed by Bishop Thomas G. Wenski, Bishop of Orlando, Chairman of the Committee on International Policy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Dear Senator:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Policy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I am writing regarding proposed legislation in HR 2082, the Intelligence Authorization Act, to prohibit torture as an interrogation technique. I urge you to make sure that the United States continues to insist upon the highest ethical standards and fully complies with U.S. commitments to observe international law in its treatment of detainees, whether here in the United States or abroad.

Earlier, our Conference of Bishops encouraged Congress to adopt provisions in the FY2006 Defense Appropriations Act prescribing uniform standards for the interrogation of persons under the detention of the Department of Defense and prohibiting cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment of persons under the custody or control of the United States government. Now we want to support provisions in HR 2082 in order to expand the prohibition against torture to all U.S. government agencies and their agents.

Experts have told us that the U.S. Army Field Manual, as revised and published in September 2006, includes specific wording that explicitly bans morally questionable interrogation practices. While the Conference is not in a position to assess its specific provisions, we understand that the Field Manual provides a standard that requires humane treatment during interrogation. In particular, we note one guiding principle in the revised Army Field Manual that echoes the Golden Rule: "If in attempting to determine if a contemplated approach or technique should be considered prohibited and therefore should not be included in an interrogation plan, consider. . . if the proposed approach or technique were used by the enemy against one of your fellow soldiers, would you believe the soldier had been abused?"

Adherence to the Golden Rule would allow the United States to answer the profound moral question of how we should treat detainees and regain the moral high ground. This issue has a major impact on human dignity and on the way the United States is viewed abroad. As you know, the United States has long supported Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, which prohibits "cruel treatment and torture" as well as "outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment..." Our own troops and citizens benefit from the protections of this standard. We are opposed to any proposed or adopted legislation or other actions that would appear to once again decriminalize torture and abusive conduct. We believe any legislation adopted by the Congress must be unambiguous in rejecting torture and cruel treatment as dangerous, unreliable and illegal.

While we recognize that combating terrorism remains a top priority for Congress and the Administration, we also recognize that any report of prisoner mistreatment by military or civilian agents of the United States or its allies could seriously undermine U.S. efforts to defeat terrorism. More importantly, prisoner mistreatment compromises human dignity. Our nation must not embrace a morality based on an attitude that "desperate times call for desperate measures" or "the end justifies the means." A respect for the dignity of every person, ally or enemy, must serve as the foundation of security, justice and peace. There can be no compromise on the moral imperative to protect the basic human rights of any individual incarcerated for any reason. The inherent justice of our cause and the perceived necessities involved in confronting terrorism must not lead to a weakening or disregard of U.S. or international law.

In a time of terrorism and fear, our individual and collective obligations to respect dignity and human rights, even of our worst enemies, gains added importance. Reaffirming the standards contained in Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions would reflect the conviction that our nation must treat its prisoners as we would expect our enemies to treat our own military personnel or citizens. We urge you to support proposed legislative language in HR 2082 that would definitively implement America's commitment to Common Article 3 and expand the application of standards of humane treatment during interrogation, as exemplified in the revised Army Field Manual, to all U.S. government agencies and their agents. Preserving the strong U.S. commitment to humane and ethical treatment of detainees would continue your efforts to restore the moral credibility of the United States at a crucial time.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on the just treatment of prisoners and detainees. ###

Please join us for coffee, juice and pastries after Mass in the Memorial Garden next to the church. If this is your first time at this Mass, or you are visiting today, you are especially encouraged to stop by the garden; we'd like to get to know you! If you would like to learn more about the Thomas Merton Center, people listed in the masthead on page 4 will be happy to answer.

Community Forum

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Effort to silence Bishop Robinson:

Abridged from an article by Rocco Palmo and Mark Brolly in the Tablet of London, May 24, 2008.

The Australian bishop whose "devastating critique" of sex abuse in the Church became a controversial best-seller last year has come under fire from the hierarchy at the start of a month-long US tour.

On the eve of his first overseas trip to promote *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus*, retired Sydney Auxiliary Bishop Geoffrey Robinson was "den[ied] permission" to speak in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles by Cardinal Roger Mahony after a statement from the Australian bishops cited "doctrinal difficulties" in Bishop Robinson's "questioning of the authority of the Church".

In a private letter to the prelate leaked by an Australian website, Cardinal Mahony urged Bishop Robinson, whose book examined how the Church handled the sex-abuse crisis, to "cancel the entire speaking tour", which began last week in Philadelphia and includes stops in New York, Seattle, San Diego and Boston, where the US Church's sex-abuse crisis came to international attention in 2002. The cardinal noted that the prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for Bishops, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, had likewise insisted that Bishop Robinson not appear in America.

While Bishop Robinson is due to appear in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in mid-June, he did not seek permission to speak there. A week after Cardinal Mahony's letter, the author's 12 June engagement at a retreat centre in suburban Encino remained on his calendar. Critics alleged that the move by Cardinal Mahony - one reportedly echoed by bishops in other locales where the Robinson tour had been scheduled - had less to do with "safeguard[ing] the teachings of the Church" than the Californian prelate's desire to contain the fallout from the abuse scandals, which saw the Los Angeles Church pay \$660 million (£334 million) to victims last summer.

The Church-reform group *Voice of the Faithful* protested over what it saw as an attempt to "silence" a "courageous Catholic".

Meanwhile Bishop Robinson has responded to a critical statement from the Australian bishops (The Tablet, 17 May) by citing "impossible restrictions on any serious and objective study" of sexual abuse in the Church as the reason for his breach with his colleagues.

The Australian bishops distanced themselves from him over his attacks on compulsory celibacy for priests, the Church's handling of sexual abuse by clergy, its teachings on sexuality and the centralized focus on the Pope and Curia at the expense of the local Church. In his own brief statement Bishop Robinson said: "The statement of the Australian bishops is not unexpected, but it is disappointing. My book is about the response to the revelations of sexual abuse within the Church. Sexual abuse is all about power and sex, so it is surely

Pope applauds vigor of lay movements:

Rome, May. 20, 2008 (CWNews.com) - New lay movements within the Church are "one of the most important novelties the Holy Spirit has generated," Pope Benedict XVI told a May 17 audience. The Holy Father spoke with participants in a conference on new ecclesial movements, which had met May 15- 17 outside Rome under the auspices of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Lay movements, the Pope said, have "restored vitality, faith, and hope to the entire Church" in the years since Vatican II. The groups deserve to be promoted, he said, encouraging Church leaders to reach out to new lay groups and recognize that they are "not a problem" but in fact "a gift from the Lord." The new movements have been forced to overcome "no small amount of prejudice, resistance, and tension," the Pope said. He recognized that new groups require some guidance from the hierarchy, but said that bishops should adopt an attitude of "paternal solicitude" to the movements, helping them to understand and develop their particular gifts.

"The authenticity of the new charisms is guaranteed by their willingness to submit to the discernment of ecclesiastical authority," the Holy Father said. When the groups approach them, he said, bishops should respond carefully and lovingly, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, their needs and their potential contributions to the Church.

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reasonable to ask questions about power and sex in the Church.

"In their statement the bishops appear to be saying that in seeking to respond to abuse, we may investigate all other factors contributing to abuse, but not ask questions concerning ways in which teachings, laws and attitudes concerning power and sex within the Church may have contributed. This imposes impossible restrictions on any serious and objective study, and it is where I have broken from the bishops' conference. We must be free to follow the argument wherever it leads."

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