



# Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 8, 2008

## Readings

*This week:*

Hosea 6:3-6

Romans 4:18-25

Matthew 9:9-13

*Next week:*

Exodus 19:2-6a

Romans 5:6-11

Matthew 9:36-10:8

## Psalm

To the upright I will show the saving power of God. (*Psalm 50*)

## 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

Monday, June 9, 7:30 pm

TMC Liturgy Team, location TBA

Thursday, June 12, 7:30 pm

TMC Board, St. Albert's Hospitality Room

## From Thomas Merton

The very obscurity of faith is an argument of its perfection. It is darkness to our minds because it so far transcends their weakness. The more perfect faith is, the darker it becomes. The closer we get to God, the less is our faith diluted with the half-light of created images and concepts. Our certainty increases with this obscurity, yet not without anguish and even material doubt, because we do not find it easy to subsist in a voice in which our natural powers have nothing of their own to rely on. And it is in the deepest darkness that we most fully possess God on earth, because it is then that our minds are most truly liberated from the weak, created lights that are darkness in comparison to Him; it is then that we are filled with His infinite Light which seems pure darkness to our reason.

—*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

### **Bishop Robinson to speak in SF:**

Geoffrey Robinson, retired Catholic bishop of Sydney, Australia, and author of *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church*, will be speaking at USF (Handlery Dining Room, Lone Mt. Conference Center) on June 13 at 7:00 pm. The event is sponsored by Voice of the Faithful San Francisco, and is free and open to the public.

Bishop Robinson's book explores the structural and doctrinal causes at the heart of sexual and authoritarian abuse in the contemporary Catholic Church, including the culture of secrecy and cover-ups that allowed systemic clerical abuse to go unchecked within its ranks for decades. In his foreword to the book, Bishop Robinson revealed that he had been abused sexually as a teenager, a long-suppressed memory that he had to confront as coordinator of the Australian church's response to revelations of sexual abuse by priests and religious. He cochaired the panel on behalf of the Australian bishops from 1997 to 2003.



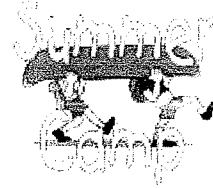
Also at USF (Fromm Center, Xavier Hall), Prof. Paul Lakeland, author of *Catholicism at the Crossroads: How the Laity Can Save the Church*, will speak on Sunday, June 15, at 1:00 pm. Dr. Lakeland is Aloysius P. Kelley, SJ, Chair in Catholic Studies at Fairfield, a Jesuit university in Fairfield, Connecticut, and his book won first place for theology in the Catholic Press Association for 2005. This talk is also free and open to the public. Go to [www.usf-ca.edu](http://www.usf-ca.edu) for further information and directions.

#### **Agenda—TMC Board meeting June 12:**

- Opening prayer
- Approval of May minutes; changes to agenda
- Recap—Annual meeting May 18 at Sullivan's
- Search for Board candidate
- Election of Board officers
- Seton school clarification of objectives
- Volunteer needs—questionnaires follow-up
- Outreach to Catholic Community at Stanford
- Fr. Patrick LaBelle inquiry—Vallombrosa Center
- Invitation to Bishop to celebrate Mass
- Service led by women
- Committee reports (Finance, Liturgy, Spiritual Education, STA Site Committee)
- Adjournment and closing prayer

### **Hidden Villa summer camp starts next week:**

This summer scholarships have been provided for 27 children from East Palo Alto to attend a week at Hidden Villa summer camp in Los Altos Hills. However, whether these children can attend is dependent upon our finding volunteer drivers. The morning drive would be for four days of any one week, Monday through Thursday, picking up the children at their homes at about 8:00 am. The afternoon drive is for three days, leaving Hidden Villa at 4:00 pm. There are nine weeks of camp, with three children per week. The children stay overnight on



Thursday and leave for home at 11:45 on Friday. Fifty overnight campers also rely on volunteer drivers for their transportation to/from the camp on Mondays and Fridays. The Monday departures from East Palo Alto are at 9:00 am, 11:00 am, and 1:30 pm depending on the camp. The Friday departures from the camp are at 9:45 and 11:45 am.

Volunteer drivers are desperately needed. Call Ann Idzik at 493-7350 or George Chippendale at 856-6350.

### **Service trips to El Salvador:**

Palo Alto Quakers are organizing two trips to El Salvador on July 6-13 (emphasis on language school) and July 20-27 (emphasis on the communities that Friends support) to which you and/or your teens are invited. Both weeks will include opportunities for service. The projects have two main focuses, to raise money for K-12 programs in four rural communities of El Salvador, and to raise money to provide university-level education for qualified students (about \$1,000 per student per year). Since 1999, when the university student loan program was started, 41 students have graduated as teachers, nurses, and technicians. More information on the El Salvador Projects can be found at <http://www.pafmelsalvadorprojects.org/index.htm> and there is also a link to the trip information under Teen Trips.

The world is overcome not through destruction, but through reconciliation. Not ideals, nor programs, nor conscience, nor duty, nor responsibility, nor virtue, but only God's perfect love can encounter reality and overcome it. Nor is it some universal idea of love, but rather the love of God in Jesus Christ, a love genuinely lived, that does this.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Meditations on the Cross*

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## **The Dutch plan:**

*Abridged from an article by Robert J. McClory, a long-time contributor to NCR who spoke here last year, in National Catholic Reporter, December 14, 2007.*

The 11 a.m. Sunday liturgy at St. Dominic Church in Amsterdam exemplifies the paradoxes of Catholicism in Holland. It is—or is meant to be—a Mass, with a soaring eucharistic prayer sung in alternative parts by the presider, the choir and the congregation. Other parts of the Mass familiar to Catholics are missing. This is an ecumenical Mass, unlike anything most Catholics would encounter at their local churches. The church was packed, as it is regularly, with some 600 worshipers, the majority elderly or middle-aged but with a substantial representation of younger people, including families with children. So powerful was the music and singing and so involved the congregation, it was impossible not to be moved. It did not look like something dead or dying, as Catholicism in Holland is reputed to be, but like something impossibly new.

There is a saying among Dutch Catholics these days that the situation of the church in the Netherlands is “hopeless but not serious.” This Zen-like assessment reflects dual realities of the Dutch church: It is the place where some of the most dramatic innovations in Catholic practice in the past half-century have occurred simultaneously with one of the most precipitous drops in church membership in the Western world.

International interest in the state of Catholicism in this part of the world was stirred in September when the Dutch province of the Dominican religious order sent shock waves around the world with a 34-page booklet benignly titled *Church and Ministry* and distributed to all 1,425 parishes in the country. The booklet proposes that because of a serious shortage of priests and a revised theology of ministry coming from Vatican II, the time is at hand for parish communities to designate laypersons to preside at the Eucharist in place of priests—a form of ordination from below. It also declares that current church law, which bars women and married men from priestly service, stems from a “historically outdated philosophy of humankind and an antiquated view of sexuality.” Similar declarations have come from progressive theologians and other reform-minded Catholics for years, but this document, approved by an entire province of a respected religious order, is particularly dramatic and bold. What did these Dutch Dominicans hope to achieve? . . . The Dutch Dominicans in Holland have remained exceptionally progressive, said Marit Monteiro,

## **A church to hope in:**

*Abridged from an editorial by John McGinty in America, May 26, 2008. McGinty is assistant director of the Institute of Religious Education at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass.*

In his second encyclical letter, Pope Benedict XVI affirms the centrality of hope as a Christian virtue, one that carries those imbued with it to the doorway of salvation. The Christian’s ultimate hope is in Christ the savior. What might the church look like, feel like, live like in a future worth hoping for? I propose seven hopes for the future church.

**A Church of In-Spirited Structures:** Church structures are vessels of the divine Spirit, able to inspire believers and potential believers with the living presence of Jesus Christ. In the church of the future, ecclesial structures will be living, open channels of effective, transforming communication. . . .

**A Church of Porous Borders:** . . . The church of the future will be recognized by its distinctive frontier; but that frontier will be a porous border, because it will be a line of living communication with other Christian churches, with other faiths and with nonbelievers. If the church of Christ understands itself as grounded in the Scriptures and the ministry of Jesus, there are no aliens. There is no one to fear.

**A Church of Servants:** . . . All Christians have in common the call to serve. We are called by God to serve one another in the church, and the church as a body is called to serve the world. This is the defining mark of the community that bears Christ’s name. It is a community of loving servants, each one seeking not the good of self, but first the good of the other. . . .

**A Transparent Church:** The church of the future ultimately seeks invisibility in the sense that it will always strive toward transparency. Whatever is a barrier to that transparency—property, modes of dress, ways of acting that may bear the imprimatur of centuries of usage or new ways that may be suggested to respond to new needs—will be examined in the light of a single question: Does this help to make clear and accessible to the world the message of Jesus? . . .

**A Person-Centered Church:** The future church will be distinguished by its gentleness toward each person. . . . The church must be the place where gentle regard for each person is the universal and unbreakable rule. . . .

**A Church That Looks Outward:** We must understand “church” as a verb. It denotes an action, an ongoing activity. The church, rather than having a mission, is a mission. The church’s movement is directed outward toward

## ***Torture is a moral issue:***

In January 2006, NRCAT, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, introduced a statement of conscience titled *Torture is a Moral Issue*. June is Torture Awareness Month. You can join people from all over the U.S. by signing the NRCAT statement today at <http://www.nrcat.org/>:

Torture (as defined in the U.N. Convention Against Torture) violates the basic dignity of the human person that all religions hold dear. It degrades everyone involved—policy-makers, perpetrators and victims. It contradicts our nation's most cherished ideals. Any policies that permit torture and inhumane treatment are shocking and morally intolerable. For millennia, the fundamental principle of mutual respect for all humanity has been inspired by Scriptural passages such as the following: "And God created humanity in God's image, in the image of God, God created them . . ." *Genesis 1:26-27*. "Remember the tortured as if you yourself were being tortured." *Hebrews 13:3 (paraphrased)*.

Torture and inhumane treatment have long been banned by U.S. treaty obligations, and are punishable by criminal statute. Recent developments, however, have created new uncertainties. By reaffirming the ban on cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment as well as torture, the McCain amendment, now signed into law, is a step in the right direction. Yet, its implementation remains unclear. Furthermore, in a troubling development, for the first time in our nation's history, legislation has now been signed into law that effectively permits evidence obtained by torture to be used in a court of law. The military tribunals that are trying some terrorist suspects are now expressly permitted to consider information obtained under coercive interrogation techniques, including degrading and inhumane techniques and torture.

We urge Congress and the President to remove all ambiguities by prohibiting:

- Exemptions from the human rights standards of international law for any arm of our government.
- The practice of extraordinary rendition, whereby suspects are apprehended and flown to countries that use torture as a means of interrogation.
- Any disconnection of "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" from the ban against "torture" so as to permit inhumane interrogation.
- The existence of secret U.S. prisons around the world.
- Any denial of Red Cross access to detainees held by our government overseas.

We also call for an independent investigation of the severe human rights abuses at U.S. installations like Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, and Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan.

Let us be guided by the Scriptural injunction, "Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." *Romans 12:17,21*. Nothing less is at stake in the torture abuse crisis than the soul of our nation. What does it signify if torture is condemned in word but allowed in deed?

Let America abolish torture now—without exceptions.

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## ***The Dutch plan, continued:***

professor of Catholic history at Radboud, who has written a history of the order in Holland. "They are courageous," she said, "but now they are old and frail." She described the new booklet on ordination of the laity as "their swan song."

. . . There still exists a healthy and creative interchange between Catholics and Dutch Protestants. Informal liturgies are organized by laypeople, priests and ministers on a larger scale than the public realizes. . . . The Netherlands branch of the Catholic peace organization Pax Christi recently merged with the Protestant-led Interchurch Peace Movement, and Catholics are active members of the Dutch National Council of Churches. The ecumenical activity that prospered following Vatican II is largely ignored by church authority today. Nevertheless, it seems clear from the abundance of surviving and ongoing ecumenical contact that the future of Dutch Catholicism, however limited, will have a distinctive, even radical ecumenical character. . . .

## ***A church to hope in, continued:***

all those others. . . .

**A Joyous Church:** The future church is a church of joy. It does not ignore humanity's pain. But it is a community marked by absolute trust in the presence and faithfulness of God.

These seven hopes for the future church are but an opening, an initiation. Developing this opening and deepening this initiation is the continuing work of all who are and will be the church.

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Kay Williams, 328-2781, [kaywill@pacbell.net](mailto:kaywill@pacbell.net)

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