



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 9, 2006

Readings

This week:

Ezekiel 2:2-5

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Mark 6:1-6

Next week:

Amos 7:12-15

Ephesians 1:3-14

Mark 6:7-13

Psalm

Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy. (*Psalm 123*)

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, July 10, 7:30 pm

Liturgy Team, location TBA

From Thomas Merton

Perfect spiritual freedom is a total inability to make any evil choice. When everything you desire is truly good and every choice not only aspires to that good but attains it, then you are free because you do everything that you want, every act of your will ends in perfect fulfillment.

Freedom therefore does not consist in an equal balance between good and evil choices but in the perfect love and acceptance of what is really good and the perfect hatred and rejection of what is evil, so that everything you do is good and makes you happy, and you refuse and deny and ignore every possibility that might lead to unhappiness and self-deception and grief. Only the person who has rejected all evil so completely that he is unable to desire it at all, is truly free. . . .

Therefore, the simplest definition of freedom is this: it means the ability to do the will of God. To be able to resist His will is not to be free. In sin there is no true freedom.

—*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

Age of Aquinas:

Saturday, July 15, 7:30 pm, Age of Aquinas—a ministry of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish to singles 40+—presents *A Midsummer Night's Dance* with Sharp 9—blues, jazz, and rock music—at St. Albert Community Center, 1095 Channing. Doors open at 7:30 pm. Social hour is 7:30-8:30. Sharp 9 will begin playing around 8:30 or 9:00. Snacks and beverages will be provided. Admission is \$5.00. For more info, go to <http://paloaltocatholic.org/AofA.html> or contact Randy Jones, (408) 739-2881.

In addition, every Saturday in July, Age of Aquinas sponsors a hike and coffee. Meet at the Lakeside Cafe, Shoreline Park, Mtn. View, at 9:00 am. For more info, contact Randy Jones at (408) 739-2881 or go to the web site above.

And on Thursday, July 13, at 6:30 pm, the Catholic Alumni Club is sponsoring Dining Around the World, featuring a Thai restaurant in Santa Clara. RSVP by July 12 to Jim Chinn at (650) 948-1144 or jychinn@sbcglobal.net.

Teach us to pray:

Franciscan Fr. Rusty Shaughnessy is leading a five-day silent contemplative retreat—*Teach Us to Pray*—at San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville on July 23-28.

This retreat honors the longing, desires and hungers of our heart, as well as our deep desire to know that we have a father who calls us “good” and “beloved,” and who desires to teach us how to pray.

Fr. Shaughnessy is the former director of retreats at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale. For more information or to register on-line, go to www.sandamiano.org.

Summer retreats at Presentation:

Presentation Center in the Santa Cruz Mountains above Los Gatos is offering several retreat opportunities this summer:

July 22: *Soul Visioning: Discovering Your Soul Through Artwork.* Explore what makes your heart sing and solidify the vision for your life and soul, with Suzanne Coll, OD Consultant and Intuitive Coach.

July 17-24 (also three dates in August): *Eight-Day Guided Imagery and Music Retreat* with Dominican sister Joan King and her retreat staff. Call (415) 924-9252 for more information about this retreat.

For more general info, go to www.prescenter.org.

PP&J summer film festival:

The Peninsula Peace & Justice group, of which our parish is a member, is sponsoring a Summer Film Festival of twelve films—on War, Occupation, and the Art of Resistance—on four Wednesday evenings at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 505 E. Charleston, Palo Alto. The sliding-scale donation is \$5-15. The first three films on July 19 at 7:30 pm, each a half-hour long, are Deep Dish TV's *Shocking and Awful* series featuring independent filmmakers:

The Real Face of the Occupation: How the U.S. military occupation looks from the other end of the gun barrel. Was Abu Ghraib an exception or merely an extreme? How has Iraq changed since the fall of Saddam? What is life like under the occupation? On-the-ground footage shows the humiliation and dehumanization inevitable in a colonial situation.

Dance of Death The American Military in Iraq: Led to the slaughter or centurions for the Empire? Either way, U.S. troops are locked in a deadly interaction with the people of Iraq. Soldiers and their families speak out against the war, and their lost loved ones.

The Art of Resistance: The growing impact of artists and cultural performances that have invigorated and enlivened resistance to America's war on Iraq. The event URL is <http://peaceandjustice.org/article.php?story=FilmFestival>

Upcoming events at Vallombrosa:

Vallombrosa Center, 250 Oak Grove Avenue, Menlo Park, is offering several opportunities for spiritual enrichment this summer:

July 13-16: *Just a Closer Walk with Thee*, led by Fr. Kenneth Westray, pastor of St. Sebastian Church in Kentfield, which will look in the scriptures at those who walked with the Lord. “We will explore how their encounter transformed their lives and the invitation that is extended to us to walk with the Lord daily.”

July 21-23: *Women Searching, Women Connecting*, a retreat for women led by Ursula Caspary-Frankel, MFCC; Jack Frankel; and Monica Barnes. This retreat will look at our sense of belonging, our connections, all that unites us and divides us in this fear-focused world.

July 26-30: *Celebrating the Quality of Your Presence: Native American Spirituality and Ritual*, with Franciscan Sr. Jose Hobday, a popular speaker and retreat director who lives on the Yaqui Reservation in Tucson. For more info about the above retreats, go to www.vallombrosa.org.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Finding God in the busyness:

There seems to be a great longing for stillness and silence these days. People go to obscure monasteries and retreat houses, hoping to capture something they feel they have lost or perhaps never had. . . . There is the implication that quiet and withdrawal are prerequisites for spiritual health. So many people have bought the notion that it is only in silence and solitude that we can connect to the spiritual, to God. Consequently, there are people who sincerely believe that they have to disconnect from their real lives to connect with God. But this is not so.

Recently I've found God in the busyness of life. The irony is that I haven't gone looking for her there. She came looking for me. S/he kept popping up, in a very in-your-face kind of way, so much so that I could not ignore her. . . . I was juggling several projects for different clients in two provinces and another at the national level. For some reason, they all needed to be done at once. All the projects centered on issues in indigenous communities: Health, land claims, neglected and denied aboriginal rights. Sometimes I felt despair; other times, I was elated. I felt many emotions in between and I never, ever felt bored. I learned something almost every minute. I have almost never felt so alive. I felt God as my head crashed onto the hotel pillows, through my husband's supportive voice on the phone, in the wind that pushed the planes over Quebec farms, Manitoba prairie, and Labrador barrens. I saw God in the face of an Elder from the Yukon and heard him in the prayers we said to open our meetings. I met God in the bubbly Turkish man who drove me to Ottawa airport and in the Mexican professor-taxi driver. . . . God is in our difficult, often heart-breaking work. Through our good will and optimism, she is at every meeting, in every document, on the side of the angels. She is there at 6:00 in the evening when we are just getting to the meat of the issue after sitting in a windowless room since before 9:00 am. She keeps us going. . . . When your schedule is crazy, it's tempting to say to yourself "when it calms down, when this is all over. . . ." But this—the busyness, the chaos—is life, too. It's part of the script, the story; it's more than something you have to get through. It's more than part of the waiting, whether you're waiting for cherished quiet time or go on that retreat you booked months ago. Through my indigenous work, I have learned that God is absolutely everywhere. Indigenous people have al-

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2006 poverty quiz*:

- T F 1. The number of people living in U.S. poverty decreased in 2004.
- T F 2. Most Americans could get out of poverty if they only had a job.
- T F 3. Non-Hispanic white Americans experienced the greatest increase in poverty.
- T F 4. The government says that a family of four is poor if it earns less than \$35,000 annually.
- T F 5. The "working poor" in America are growing even poorer.
- T F 6. The majority of poor children are African American.
- T F 7. The rate of child poverty in America is higher than it is in most of the world's industrialized countries.
- T F 8. The federal minimum wage is now \$5.15 per hour.
- T F 9. The elderly poverty rate is higher than any other age group.
- T F 10. Most Americans believe that the federal government should play less of a role in helping the poor.

*Answers are on page 4.

—CCHD, www.povertyusa.org

Poverty is not a family value:

The following is excerpted from Jim Wallis's address at the Sojourners/Call to Renewal Pentecost 2006: Building a Covenant for a New America conference.

We are gathering here in the season of Pentecost, . . . when we celebrate the church coming down from that upper room into the streets with the power of the Spirit to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. . . . To a church whose mission statement hasn't always reflected his, we are here simply to say this: whatever else the gospel of Jesus Christ is able to change about our lives—overcome our sinful habits and addictions, save our marriages and families, make us responsible people—IF the gospel that we preach does not "bring good news to the poor," it is simply not the gospel of Jesus Christ—and it is about time that we said that. To the political leaders of this capitol city, and from the places you all live across this country, we are here to say something else: the days when you could win the support of the religious community by merely speaking the language of family values and the sacredness of life while ignoring the desperate plight of poor people in this wealthy nation and around the world are over. Because for a growing number of people of faith across the political spectrum, you will now be held account-

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Poverty quiz, continued:

1. FALSE. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of poor people increased by 1.1 million last year, from 35.9 million to 37 million. One out of every eight Americans is living in poverty
2. FALSE. Most Americans living in poverty are too young, too old, or physically incapable of working due to illness or disability. In fact, nearly two-thirds of all Americans living in poverty have to depend on someone else in the household to bring in money to live.
3. TRUE. The number of non-Hispanic white Americans living in poverty rose the greatest among all groups, to 8.6% and 16.9 million people in 2004, an increase from 8.2% in 2003. The poverty rate remained unchanged for African Americans at 24.7% and Hispanics at 21.9%. The rate decreased for Asian Americans from 11.8% in 2003 to 9.8% in 2004.
4. FALSE. The federal government puts the poverty threshold at \$19,307. However, a 2000 poll revealed that a majority of Americans believe it takes at least \$35,000 annually to provide adequately for a family of four.
5. TRUE. The working poor in America grew poorer during 2003, with incomes dipping farther below the poverty line than in any other year since 1975, the first year for which such data is available. The average amount by which people living in poverty fell below the federal “threshold” (\$19,307 for a family of four) was \$3,018 in 2003.
6. FALSE. Although African Americans and Latino children are disproportionately likely to be poor, white children comprise the largest group of children living in poor families—35% of all poor children are white.
7. TRUE. In fact, the U.S. child poverty rate is two to three times higher than other major industrialized nations. The child poverty rate in Sweden in recent years has been less than 4%; France, 7%; Germany, 10%; Australia and Japan, 12%; Canada, 14%; while, in the United States, the child poverty rate has remained at over 16% percent for the past two years.
8. TRUE. But for a mother who works full-time at minimum wage to support one small child, that translates to earnings of \$10,712 a year—which is \$1,622 below the 2004 poverty threshold for a family of two.
9. FALSE. The poverty rate for America’s elderly population—those people over 65—stands at 9.8%, or one out of every ten seniors, while the child poverty rate is 17.8%, or one out of every six children in America.
10. FALSE. Nine out of ten Americans believe the federal government has a responsibility to alleviate poverty. A strong majority believes that government should do more, not less, to help people move from welfare to work by providing skills needed to be self-sufficient.

Finding God in the busyness, continued:

ways seen God in everything and that is just where God is. We can go to a monastery or on a retreat, but we don’t have to. Contrary to some religious thinking, there is no need to withdraw from the world to meet God. God will come to you because God is all around.

—*www.maurahanrahan.com. Dr. Maura Hanrahan is a writer, anthropologist, and painter.*

Poverty is not a family value, continued:

able for how the leadership you offer and the policies you support impact the lives of those whom Jesus called “the least of these.” You see for many of us, poverty is also a life issue and as our bumper sticker says “Poverty is NOT a family value!”

We need a new moral logic that merges personal and social responsibility—a more honest assessment of both the individual decisions and social systems that trap people in poverty. . . . We need a new grand alliance between liberals and conservatives to create effective cultural, political, and economic strategies. We need a moral renewal of our priorities and a commitment to advancing the common good. . . .

We covenant together here, before God and our neighbors, to work and pray for a new America: An America where everyone able to work is working and able to support a family. An America where those who are unable to work are compassionately supported. An America where no child lives in poverty and goes to bed at night hungry. An America where every person has a roof over his head. And an America that opens its heart and its budget to our neighbors around the world. A new America—where all of God’s children have the life and dignity they deserve. . . .

We invite the churches and the wider religious community to reach beyond our divisions and our differences in order to make a profoundly moral appeal to the nation. . . . We invite the nation’s political leaders to set party divisions and rivalries aside to address this fundamentally moral issue and challenge. . . . While the world fears American domination, it still looks for American leadership. And the very best defense against terrorism would be the example of the world’s strongest nation leading the world in the moral battle against poverty, disease, intolerance, and oppression. . . .

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