



Most Holy Trinity

June 11, 2006

Readings

This week:

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

Romans 8:14-17

Matthew 28:16-20

Next week:

Exodus 24:3-8

Hebrews 9:11-15

Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

Psalm

Blessed the people the Lord has chosen, chosen to be his own. (*Psalm 33*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Tenny Wright, SJ.

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 12, 7:30 pm

Liturgy Team, location TBA

Saturday, June 17, about 6:00 pm

Potluck dinner celebration for Msgr. Eugene Boyle's 60th anniversary, St. Albert Hospitality Room (see article)

From Thomas Merton

Just as the light of faith is darkness to the mind, so the supreme supernatural activity of the mind and will in contemplation and infused love at first seems to us like inaction. That is why our natural faculties are anxious and restless. That is why they refuse to keep still. They want to be the sole principles of their own acts. The thought that they cannot act according to their own spontaneous impulsion brings them a suffering and humiliation which they find it hard to stand.

But contemplation lifts us beyond the sphere of our natural powers.

When you are traveling in a plane close to the ground you realize that you are going somewhere: but in the stratosphere, although you may be going seven times as fast, you lose all sense of speed.

—*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

Msgr. Boyle celebrates 60 years as priest:



Congratulations to Monsignor Eugene Boyle, who celebrates the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood this week, on June 15. A potluck celebration of this event will be held on Saturday, June 17, at Seton School Auditorium, 1095 Channing, following the 5:00 pm Mass at St. Albert's. Come and honor this special friend.

This is a trust potluck: please bring a main dish, salad, fruit, veggie dish, or bread. Dessert and beverages will be provided. After dinner, there will be a special program honoring Msgr. Boyle. And if you can help with setup and or cleanup, please come early and/or stay late. For info or to volunteer, contact Helen Bunje at (650) 327-8727 or hvcbunje@aol.com, or Eleanor Kraft at (650) 213-8827 or meaker44@comcast.net.

Diocese sponsors second justice symposium:

Saturday, June 24, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, the SJ Diocese is sponsoring its second Justice Symposium—*Catholic Social Teaching: Good News in a Broken World*. This conference will feature a keynote address by John Carr of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. There will also be an afternoon legislative briefing by San Jose Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren on the current immigration issues facing the U.S. Congress. There will be workshops and exhibits. The conference will be held at Benson Center, Santa Clara University. Cost is \$45 including lunch and materials. You can get a registration form at the diocesan web site, www.dsj.org, or you can call or e-mail Linda Batton at (408) 983-0158, or batton@dsj.org, to register.

PPJC movie night—Outfoxed:

Thursday, June 15, at 8:00 pm, the Peninsula Peace and Justice center is sponsoring a movie, *Outfoxed*, which examines how media empires, led by Rupert Murdoch's Fox News, have been running a race to the bottom in television news. This film provides an in-depth look at Fox News and the dangers of ever-enlarging corporations taking control of the public's right to know. The film will be at the Unitarian Universalist Church main hall at 505 E. Charleston, Palo Alto. Donation is \$5-15, sliding scale.

Final talk in Justice Speaker series:

Ascension Parish in Saratoga concludes its Justice Speakers Forum tomorrow at 7:30 with Diane Clyne, Justice Coordinator for the Mercy Sisters, Burlingame, speaking on *Free Trade Agreements and the Loss of Lands and Livelihood of Indigenous Peoples*. Admission is free, though a \$5 free-will donation is suggested (refreshments will be served). Call Fr. Charlie at (408) 725-3939 for more info.

Pope Paul VI awards today:

Today at Mass, the recipients of the 2006 Paul VI awards will be honored. The Diocese of San Jose provides this honor to liturgical ministers who have served our community. Congratulations to those from our Mass community who serve us and are being honored today: Marci Ariagno, Ron Ariagno, Jane Bahr, Helen Bunje, Ruth Chippendale, Fred Dietrich, Corkie Freeman, Dick Freeman, Ginny Fruin, Jean Gill, Edna Jamati, Roberta Kehret, Eleanor Kraft, Maureen Locke, Mike McMahon, Barbara Narewski, Armand Neukermans, Eliane Neukermans, Bob Park, Dick Placone, Jaynie Schemel, Katie Schemel, Larry Schemel, Kathy Schneidwind, Jean Vistica, Judy Washburn, Mary Washburn, Kay Williams, and Tom Williams.

Liz Lilly celebrates 25 years:

Liz Lilly, who served on the STA parish staff from 1987 to 1995 as Liturgy Coordinator and Catechumenate Director, invites you to help her celebrate her 25th anniversary of parish ministry at a Mass and reception at Sacred Heart parish in Saratoga. The Mass is at 5:00 pm with a reception following on Saturday, June 24. RSVP to Jean Ramacciotti, (650) 326-5256 or e-mail pajeannr@yahoo.com. Sacred Heart is on Saratoga Avenue, a mile west of highway 85.

Age of Aquinas hike next Saturday:

Age of Aquinas, a group for Christian singles 40+, will hike in the baylands on Saturday, June 17. Meet at the Lakeside Cafe in Mtn. View's Shoreline Park at 9:00 am. After the hike, there is coffee and/or brunch about 10:15 or 10:30 am at the cafe. For more information, visit <http://paloaltocatholic.org/aofa.html>, or e-mail age-of-aquinas@paloaltocatholic.org, or call Randy at (408) 739-2881.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

To protect the common good:

Abridged from an editorial by Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourners magazine, at www.SojoMail@sojo.net.

According to the biblical prophets, the greatest moral offense of poverty is the inequality that often lies behind it. When poverty abounds and the wealthy refuse to share their prosperity, God gets mad. If the congressional leadership has its way, American inequality is about to take a giant step forward with their efforts to destroy or gut the estate tax—an effective measure to combat inequality that has been working for 100 years. Sometimes, there are public policy choices that simply make no moral sense. When a nation is at war, when deficits are rising at record rates, and when everyone knows that even more budget cuts are coming that will directly and negatively impact the nation's poorest families and children, you don't give more tax breaks to the super-rich. But that is exactly what the administration and the Republican leadership are strenuously trying to do. And with the latest Census Bureau income and poverty report showing that the poverty rate has gone up for the fourth straight year, the moral offense is compounded. There are 37 million Americans now living below the poverty line, 4 million more than in 2001. That includes 13 million children.

. . . A repeal of the estate tax will cost an estimated \$1 trillion in federal revenue over the next 10 years (that's right, \$1 trillion), substantially increase the deficit, dra-

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A friend in need

There are times when we feel quite alone. Situations arise that are too big, too emotional, too sudden or too soon. (Examples: a ride to, or companion during, a major medical incident; closing down a home; making arrangements during a stressful event.) Or maybe we just need a lift home when the car is in the shop.

Times like this we can help each other only if we know about the situation.

TMC Needs Net can provide a system so that when one of us needs help, the word can get out. Then those who wish to pitch in can lend a hand. Among us all, we have information, skills, time and life experience.

"Many the gifts. . . we are given to share."

If this ministry touches a chord in your soul, please let me know so we can work on getting this going.

—Roberta Kehret (robkehr@yahoo.com)

Robert Blair Kaiser on the church:

Journalist Robert Blair Kaiser spoke to a large group at OLR last Sunday about the some of the topics of his new book, *A Church in Search of Itself*. Kaiser started by going back to Vatican II and its vision. Though the documents of Vatican II are compromises, two promises of that conclave are (1) that the future of the Church lies in going back to the first two centuries, learning from that time, and (2) that the Church is a people's Church, in which the role of the hierarchy is to serve people. In early Christianity there were no priests. The Church was a house church, with liturgies in the home, many of them presided over by women. Kaiser pointed out that Jesus gave the movement no authority structure at all. Everybody in the upper room at Pentecost was given authority. (The tongues of fire rested on everybody—both men and women—and there were no priests or bishops present.) And he pointed out that a group thinking together tends to make better decisions than an individual thinking alone.

So what happened? The accretions of time, he said. Constantine in the 4th century made Christianity the official religion of the Empire, which was the beginning of the end for house churches. Even through the 5th century, the Church was still mostly a democracy, but under Pope Gregory in the 11th century, the Church became a monarchy. So today the weight of ten centuries of history is impeding change in the Church.

Kaiser would like to see an "autochthonous" Church in the United States. This is a home-grown church, home rule, as now exists in about twenty different branches of the Church (Copts, Malachites, orthodox sects, etc.). It is what the Catholic Church was in the United States into the 19th century. Bishop John Carroll was elected by the priests of the U.S. in 1789, and there were three "councils of Baltimore" (in 1852, 1866, and 1884) that steered the U.S. Catholic Church. The Church was loyal to Rome, but decisions were made independently. This model turns the hierarchical pyramid upside down, and affirms that bishops are not monarchs (though some live that way) and *should* be serving us.

At Vatican II, the bishops wrote a charter for a new kind of Church and cautiously accepted enculturation in local churches (in Africa and Asia, for example).

Canon law, in fact, endorses the concept of national governance. Regional or national synods can include up to 50% non-bishops, according to canon law.

Kaiser would like us to write a Declaration of Autoch-

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Merton in Asia:

Excerpted from an article by Paul Wilkes in the June 2, 2006 Commonweal. Wilkes, writer, director, and coproducer of the documentary Merton: A Film Biography, is the author of numerous books, including Merton: By Those Who Knew Him Best.

Near the end of his posthumously published *Asian Journal*, Thomas Merton described a remarkable visit he made in December 1968 to Gal Vihara, a Buddhist shrine in central Sri Lanka. "I am able to approach the Buddhas barefoot and undisturbed," he wrote, "my feet in wet grass, wet sand."

Gal Vihara is one of Buddhism's most sacred sites, set within the ancient city of Polonnaruwa, and Merton—well grounded in Buddhist thought and practice—had looked forward to this day. . . .The statues at Gal Vihara, set within a hollow surrounded by trees, bear testimony to the desire of the people to present their beloved Buddhas so eloquently that current residents and future generations might stand in their presence and know that the journey toward enlightenment is worth the struggle. As the expressions on the statues' faces so profoundly embody, fulfillment awaits the pilgrim. . . ."Looking at these figures I was suddenly, almost forcibly, jerked clean out of the habitual, half-tied vision of things, and an inner clearness, clarity, as if exploding from the rocks themselves, became evident and obvious," Merton says. . . .His heart and soul were so completely subsumed on that day at Gal Vihara that there was no longer any need to do anything. He could simply rest in the simplicity of it all. . . .

I approached closer to the huge reclining Buddha. Its head lies gently on an outstretched hand, which in turn rests on a pillow. . . .The Buddha's left leg is ever so slightly bent, [and] the massive toes on the left foot are similarly askew. . . .As Buddhists know, that position represents the pregnant moment just before the Buddha received enlightenment. . . .

Although Merton was given to overstatement and sometimes-ephemeral enthusiasms, he had never before claimed what he wrote in his journal that day: "an inner clearness, clarity, as if exploding from the rocks themselves became evident and obvious. . . .I don't know when in my life I have ever had such a sense of beauty and spiritual validity running together in one aesthetic illumination." . . .

But as my own eyes took in those massive stone toes and then rose to look into the face of the Buddha, I could begin to understand the sense of rest that Merton must have felt, standing exactly where I stood. "I don't know what else remains," he wrote, "but I have now seen and have pierced through the surface and have got beyond the shadow and the disguise."

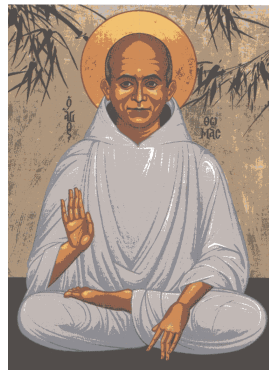
Kaiser on the church, continued:

thony, to start a new revolution. He has dedicated his web site—www.takebackourchurch.org—to collecting a million names to put pressure on the Vatican to make this happen, so we can again elect our own bishops (like China). We need to wean ourselves of our addiction to hierarchy, and we need leadership (including a couple of courageous bishops) to make this happen. (Power, he pointed out, is not delegated; it's seized.) There are 60 million American Catholics and only 293 American bishops, so we have the resources to bring about an autochthonous Church. We need, he concluded, to have a Fourth Council of Baltimore.

To protect the common good, continued:

matically diminish the resources available to help low-income families escape poverty, and further increase the pressure on the budget from the high cost of war. . . .

The tax affects only the wealthiest 0.5% of Americans—estates with a net value of more than \$2 million (\$4 million for couples). That is exactly what this tax



was supposed to do when it was introduced in 1906 by President Theodore Roosevelt (a Republican, remember) to counter the European practice of passing on enormous wealth from generation to generation, thereby encouraging aristocracy. The more American idea was to ask those who have benefited enormously by accident of birth to contribute back to the common good and

expand opportunity for all. Many wealthy people, such as Bill Gates Sr. and Warren Buffett, agree and vigorously support the estate tax. . . .

Is this the America that we want? One whose top policy priority is to make the rich richer while abandoning the most needed efforts to reduce poverty and protect the common good? . . .It is time for. . .people of good social conscience across the county to draw a line in the sand against this administration's radical policies to redistribute wealth from the bottom and middle to the top of American society. It's time for a moral resistance to such unbalanced social policies and the place to begin is to defeat the dangerous and disingenuous effort to destroy the estate tax. In the name of social conscience, fiscal responsibility, equality of opportunity, protecting our communities, and the very idea of a "common good," it's time for the moral center of American public opinion to say "enough." The repeal of the estate tax would literally be an attack upon the common good and it must not succeed.