



28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 15, 2006

Readings

This week:

Wisdom 7:7-11

Hebrews 4:12-13

Mark 10:17-30

Next week:

Isaiah 53:10-11

Hebrews 4:14-16

Mark 10:35-45

Psalm

Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy! (*Psalm 90*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. George Aranha.

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, October 16, 7:30 pm

Liturgy Team, location TBA

Saturday, October 21, 7:30 pm

Hershel Shanks talk, Lucie Stern CC

From Thomas Merton

If I insist on giving you my truth, and never stop to receive your truth in return, then there can be no truth between us. . . . Whatever India may have had to say to the West she was forced to remain silent. Whatever China had to say, . . . the message was generally ignored as irrelevant. Did anyone pay attention to the voices of the Maya and the Inca, who had deep things to say? By and large their witness was merely suppressed. . . . One shudders at the voice of cerebral Western arrogance even then eviscerated by the rationalism that is ours today, judging the living spiritual mystery of primitive man and condemning it to exclusion from the category on which love, friendship, respect, and communion were made to depend. God speaks, and God is to be heard, not only on Sinai, not only in my own heart, but in the *voice of the stranger*.

—“A letter to Pablo Antonio Cuadra Concerning Giants,” in *The Collected Poems of Thomas Merton*

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

Hershel Shanks on Dead Sea Scrolls:

This Saturday, October 21, at 7:30 pm at Lucie Stern Community Center, Hershel Shanks will speak on the Dead Sea Scrolls. This talk is sponsored by TMC's Spiritual Education Committee.



Photo by Berle Chorney

Shanks is the premier communicator of biblical archaeology to general readers, "probably the world's most influential amateur Biblical archeologist," according to the *New York Times*. He was also a leading figure in making the complete scrolls available to the world. He is the editor of the *Biblical Archaeology Review*, *Bible Review*, and *Archaeology Odyssey*, and is the author and editor of several major books on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Day Worker Center fiesta:

You are invited to a community fiesta next Sunday, October 22, to mark the tenth anniversary of the Day Worker Center in Mtn. View. There will be games, Latin food, booths for Latin American consulates, a soccer tournament, the Raging Grannies, music by the Grupo Germinal, folk dancing, and public dancing to Los Jornaleros del Norte. Time is 2:00-10:00 pm, and place is St. Joseph School, 1120 Miramonte Ave., MV.

Our immigrant story:

Tuesday, October 17, 7:00-8:30 pm at Our Lady of the Rosary Hall, 3233 Cowper, **Fr. Jon Pedigo** (Director of the Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform for the diocese and pastor of St. Julie Billiard Parish), **Liz Lilly** (Catholic Charities director of community and parish partnerships), and **Daniela Santos** (PACT and PIA organizer) will speak on *Our Immigrant Story*. Come learn a way to talk about our immigrant roots, reflect on how we respond to immigrants in our midst, and think about what our faith is calling us to do. Sponsored by JustFaith Alumni of STA.

California ballot measures explained:

The League of Women Voters will present the pros and cons of the 2006 fall election ballot measures on Tuesday, October 17, 7:00 pm, at Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero, LAH. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Female genital cutting still takes place in Africa and other parts of the world. If you would like to protest this barbaric practice, go to www.care.org, where you can sign a petition to end it.

Fr. Kiriti's phase 1 almost complete:

About a year ago, TMC participated in a campaign to raise funds to build a high school for girls in Fr. Daniel Kiriti's parish in Naivasha, Kenya. About \$75,000 was raised, and phase 1 of the school is almost complete. In January 2007, the school will open its doors to welcome eighty girls into Form 1 (9th grade). SUCCESS!



Phase 2, to be completed by January 2008, is awaiting another \$75,000—a new challenge for us. Phases 3 and 4 will follow, each requiring about \$75,000.

School provides young Kenyan women a chance not only to learn but also to develop self-esteem, and to be empowered. Without school, many of them face a life of hardship and poverty.

As you consider your Christmas giving this year, consider donations to the school in the names of family and friends as Christmas gifts. There will be gift cards available that include the story of the school and photos of its construction. Watch for further information and sample cards next week. Questions? Contact Margo McAuliffe at margomca2@sbcglobal.net.

Margo reports on three months in Kenya:

Next Sunday (October 22) Margo McAuliffe will speak after the 8:45 Mass about her three months in Kenya in Fr. Kiriti's parish. The talk will be the basement of the Thomas House next door.

She will share her pictures and adventures with Archbishop Ndingi Secondary School, the new girls' school in various stages of growth, the Life Bloom ladies and the orphanage. Don't miss this interesting presentation!

Age of Aquinas October events:

Saturdays, 9:00 am: Hike & Coffee: Contact Randy, (408) 739-2881, age-of-aquinas@paloaltocatholic.org.
Wednesdays, 7:30 pm: Transitions Support Group: Contact Randy or transitions@paloaltocatholic.org.
Saturday, October 21, 7:30 pm: Dance—Halloween Hop (costume): Contact Randy. Friday, October 20, 6:45 pm: CSF Regular Monthly Gathering. Contact the CSF Event Line, (408) 535- 0368.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Celebrating interfaith unity—October 2006

As we continue through the sacred days of October, we are invited to pray with each other and work together for peace, justice, human rights, and the healing of our wounded earth. Today is the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, author of The Interior Castle, one of the most remarkable spiritual biographies of all times. It is also the Jewish Simhat Torah, on which the last Torah portion is read, followed immediately by the first chapter of Genesis, reminding us that the Torah is a circle, and never ends.

Guru Granth Sahib (the holy book of the Sikhs) was installed in the center of the inner sanctuary in 1604, and this installation is celebrated on October 20. Diwali, a Festival of Lights, is a five-day Hindu festival that begins on October 21. During this time, homes are thoroughly cleaned and windows are opened to welcome Lakshmi, goddess of wealth. Gifts are exchanged and festive meals are prepared. The celebration means as much to Hindus as Christmas does to Christians. Diwali is important also for Jains, who also celebrate the Nirvana of Lord Mahavira at this time.

Friday, Baha'i followers celebrate the Birth of Bab, considered to be a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad.

St. Teresa of Avila:

Saint Teresa was born in Avila, Spain, in 1515, and died in 1582. At age 20 she ran away from home and entered the Carmelite Monastery of the Incarnation at Avila. She was a reformer of the Church, and over the course of her life founded dozens of convents for both women and men. Teresa served as prioress at the Incarnation monastery in Avila, and with the help of St. John of the Cross, who served as a confessor for the nuns, she was able to bring about a great improvement in the spiritual condition of the community.

Teresa wrote the *Visitation of the Discalced Nuns*, a part of *The Foundations*, and her greatest book, *The Interior Castle*, there. She then turned to visiting her convents and resumed the founding of new ones. In *The Interior Castle*, Teresa depicts different stages of the life of prayer in metaphorical terms taken from the manner of securing water to irrigate a garden. The “first water” is laboriously obtained from a well and carried in a bucket to the garden; this is in reference to beginners who, liberated from mortal sins, apply themselves to discursive prayer of meditation, although they experience fatigue and aridity from time to time. In the “second water” stage, the gardener secures water through use of a windlass and bucket; here Teresa refers to the “prayer of quiet, a gift of God through which the individual begins to have a passive experience of prayer.” The third method of irrigation is the employment of water from a stream or river; the application made by Teresa is to the “sleep of the faculties.” The fourth method of irrigation is God-given: the rain; Teresa employs this metaphor to describe a state of union in prayer in which the soul is apparently passive. *The Interior Castle* is the principal source of mature Teresian thought on the spiritual life in its integrity. Chief emphasis is laid on the life of prayer, but other elements (the apostolate, for example) are also treated. The interior castle is the soul, in the center of which

Birth of Bab:

The birthday of Bab, celebrated on October 20, is a holy day for people of the Baha'i faith. The Bab was born in Persia in 1819, and is considered to be a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad and a guide sent to the world by Allah. The Bab proclaimed a message of spiritual renewal and societal transformation. Today the Baha'i community has a strong history of being committed to social and economic justice. Baha'is from around the world work closely with the United Nations and other organizations on many important human rights issues such as sustainable development, gender equality, and fair trade.

Baha'i Prayer for Peace

Be generous in prosperity,
and thankful in adversity.

Be fair in judgment,
and guarded in speech.

Be a lamp unto those who walk
in darkness, and a home
to the stranger.

Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light
unto the feet of the erring.

Be a breath of life to the body of
humankind, a dew to the soil of
the human heart,

and a fruit upon the tree of humility

dwells the Trinity. Growth in prayer enables the individual to enter into deeper intimacy with God—signified by a progressive journey through the apartments (or mansions) of the castle from the outermost to the luminous center. When a person has attained union with God in the degree permitted to him in this world, he is “at the center” of himself; he has integrity as a child of God and as a human being. Each of the apartments of the castle is distinguished by a different stage in the evolution of prayer, with its consequent effects upon every other phase of the life of the individual.

Reflection on the death penalty, October 2006:

October is Respect Life Month. In the words of Bishop McGrath from San Jose, “life is to be respected at all stages.” This means that we support the life of the unborn and it also means that we support the life of those who kill.

Although I am fortunate that none of my loved ones has been murdered, I would like to share some of my experiences with those that have been touched by the death penalty. I have met family members who have lost a loved one to violence. Their pain is enormous. Some are very angry. But some have transformed their pain and have come to forgive the perpetrator.

But there are others that who are also suffering. I have met a mother whose son is on death row. Every other weekend she travels from Santa Monica to visit her son in San Quentin. She is devastated.



Then there are those who carry out executions. A few years ago I interviewed a warden who was in charge of executing people. In his interview he said, “Each night after an execution, I went home to my house in the middle of the night and climbed into the shower and scrubbed and scrubbed and scrubbed. But I can’t make myself feel clean. I was troubled as I stood and watched these guys die in the gas chamber thinking: What are my children deep down thinking of their father? And ultimately what is my God going to ask of me when my time comes to be judged?”

So you see there is plenty of pain to go all around. For me the crucial issue about the death penalty is what does Jesus have to say. We have a direct answer. When Jesus was confronted by the woman who was about to be stoned to death he said “Let any who is without sin cast the first stone.” Jesus was about love, compassion and forgiveness. There is no love and compassion about killing someone.

The message of forgiveness and reconciliation is a very difficult one to bridge. Yet in our culture of violence we have a recent sterling example that stands out. You will all be familiar with the killing of five Amish school girls in Lancaster County in Pennsylvania. The universal response of the Amish community was one of forgiveness. In fact they have set up a trust fund to take care of the family of the perpetrator of this crime.

The challenge of the Gospel is not an easy path to follow. This is the challenge we face regarding the death penalty.

—Terry McCaffrey

Movies that matter:

The Fall 2006 Palo Alto Film Series—*Movies That Matter*—features acclaimed documentaries all released in 2006. They look at a diverse and timely range of issues from global warming through local elections to consumer awareness. The documentaries include Robert Greenwald’s new film *Iraq for Sale*, 2006 Academy Award nominated *Street Fight*, and a collection of inspiring short films from the *Media That Matters Sixth Annual Festival*. The full schedule is at <http://www.worldcentric.org/filmseries/current.htm>. All films are on Fridays at 7:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church at 505 E. Charleston, Palo Alto. There will be speakers for some films, discussion, socializing, drinks and snacks following each screening. Suggested donation for each is \$5-10, though no one is turned away. The next film in the series is *Street Fight* on November 3, which chronicles the bare-knuckles race for Mayor of Newark, NJ, between Cory Booker, a 32-year old Rhodes Scholar and Yale Law School grad, and Sharpe James, the four-term incumbent and undisputed champion of New Jersey politics.

Catholic Charities on immigration reform:

Rev. Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA, wrote a letter to Pres. Bush last week urging veto of the Secure Fence Act of 2006 (H.R. 6061):

On behalf of Catholic Charities USA and nearly 1,800 local agencies and institutions, I write to ask that you veto the Secure Fence Act of 2006. By vetoing this bill, you have the opportunity to send a strong message to members of Congress, that they must get serious about enacting just and fair comprehensive immigration reform. Any immigration bill signed into law should do a better job of protecting our nation’s security—and of protecting the dignity of newcomers to our nation. An enforcement-only bill that focuses solely on building barriers at our borders is the wrong approach. . . . Catholic Charities USA believes that any legislation signed into law must also put undocumented workers and their families on a path to lawful permanent residence and citizenship, create greater legal avenues for necessary workers to enter the United States, and integrate and promote the success of newcomers.

The position of Catholic Charities is based on more than 100 years of experience in assisting and employing immigrants. Each year, Catholic Charities agencies help more than half a million immigrants and refugees with legal services, language instruction, job training and placement, and social services. Our agencies are witness to the incredible capacity for hard work and strong family life of newcomers who are looking to succeed in their adopted country. . . .

Notes from Fr. Kenan Osborn mission:

Franciscan father Kenan Osborne, president of the Franciscan School of Theology at the GTU in Berkeley, spent three delightful evenings with us last week. Below are “snapshots” of some of my notes from his talks. —Ed.

♥ Christian spirituality requires (1) you; (2) God/Jesus; (3) the community. We don’t have a Christian spirituality for individuals; it’s only community-based. For Church renewal we need the notion of a gospel-oriented community of people. As Murphy O’Connor said, “There can be no Eucharist in a community in which its members do not love one another.”

♥ A community that loves (1) is one (like marriage, in which you learn to adapt to each other); (2) is foundational (individual is changed by entrance into the community, by caring for other people); (3) is alive in Christ (major symptom of a sinful community is disunity). Community must be reconciling, reach out to all.

♥ We must always remember that the Church is not the light of the world, Jesus is. The Church should reflect Jesus, like the moon. The Church is church when it reflects Jesus. When it doesn’t, it isn’t.

♥ The Church has too many regulations that are not the word of God.

♥ God forgives over and over, infinitely. If we teach the younger generation only one thing about Christianity, it is this. God is a God of infinite compassion. Christianity is about reaching out and loving the world.

♥ Jesus didn’t say “I’m starting a Church,” or “I’m the second person of the Trinity.” He preached (1) the Kingdom of God, which he said “is *now*.” (2) He preached that the Kingdom of Satan is on its way out. Evil is not the final answer. (3) He preached that the spirit of God has returned. (4) Finally, he preached compassion, that “the poor have the good news preached to them.” The poor are those that the religious leaders close the door to (for example, in the Church it has been women).

♥ The major issue in the Church today is globalization—how does Christianity relate to other religious cultures. As it is now, Christianity destroys other cultures. Is that Good News? Is it good news when the Church says that Jesus is the only savior in the world?

♥ We were told that Jesus died on the cross to save us. However, atonement is not a doctrine of the Church. It is a theory started by St. Anselm. It is the theory that Jesus came and paid the price. But would a loving God demand the death of his own son? Franciscans say “no.” Also, since Jesus was a human being, he couldn’t pay an infinite amount to atone for our sins. Finally, we have a God who forgives and forgets.

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Marketing therapeutic religion:

Abridged from an article by Ted Schmidt at *thesocialedge.com*. Schmidt is the former editor of *Catholic New Times*.

Bob, whose locker is adjacent to mine in the club where I play squash, often engages me in discussions about religion. Recently, this retired professor was chuckling about his friend’s newfound “religion.”

“These suburban churches have it all figured out, Ted. My friend is an ex-Greek Orthodox who recently married into his wife’s evangelical religion. . . .He complained that his experience in the Orthodox Church had been negative. . . .Now, he goes to the ‘mall church,’ and boy, have things changed. Lots of parking—first good marketing ploy. He’s greeted at the door by a guy who welcomes him. . . .Then some guy who’s been on *Canadian Idol* belts out a hymn. More sing-along music, then a ten-minute sermon (very upbeat—God loves you) and you’re out of there in an hour feeling good about yourself.” . . .How did we go from the crucified Galilean carpenter to a crossless Christianity? . . .to a Lord who told Bush to invade Iraq? . . .

Fear is the driving engine of fundamentalism. The decline of the U.S. Empire, the disappearance of good paying industrial jobs under globalization, the decline of unions and the Walmartization (low wages, poor benefits) of the economy have increased fear everywhere in the US. Michael Moore’s *Fahrenheit 9/11* is a good popular summary of the fear culture. When fear predominates in a culture, the people seek not so much truth (a slow, painful, and incremental process) but security. Within Protestantism the answer is the Word—the return to black-and-white answers that tolerate no ambiguity. Within Catholicism we find a variant: Popolatry and the Magisterium. Neither can be questioned or challenged. . . .

Conservative churches like the one that opened this essay may be in the vanguard, but this proves nothing. The prophets of Israel never gave the people what they wanted, but what they needed. Ditto for Jesus. That people flock to churches where no cross is offered or discipleship demanded is lamentable. A church which permits no spiritual exploration, no new questions to rise, but which freezes itself in outmoded forms denies the ongoing work of the Spirit whose work is not to conform us to the culture or the country, but to Christ. . . .Nowhere was it phrased better than in *Gaudium et spes* (Vatican II): “He taught us by example that we too must shoulder that cross which the world and the flesh inflict upon those who search after peace and justice.” This will not be popular; it may not be therapeutic, and its insistent demand may not fill your congregation on Sunday, but it remains the only authentic Gospel we have. All the rest is simply cheap grace.

Congress is not working—it's time for a change:

Under the above heading, Network, the Catholic Social justice lobby in Washington, sent the following bulletin insert.

November 7 is one of the most important days in 2006! That day, we, the citizens of the United States, can change the direction of our country by electing our leaders, our members of Congress. NETWORK has been working with Congress for 35 years, and we can tell you that in 2006, Congress is not working and it is time for a change. NETWORK and other advocates worked for many social justice issues over the past two years, but Congress did not. Here is a partial list of things that were left undone by the 109th Congress:

- ⊗ Accountability and a plan for Iraq
- ⊗ Appropriations for critical social and human services
- ⊗ Comprehensive immigration reform
- ⊗ Environmental and Energy policy that would reduce our consumption of oil
- ⊗ Ethics reform
- ⊗ Housing for the Gulf Coast hurricane areas
- ⊗ Raise the minimum wage
- ⊗ Reduced prescription drug prices

And politicians barely even mentioned poverty. Why? It seems that many of our country's leaders have lost the sense of the general welfare and the common good. We need to elect people who know that **we're all in this together**, and our common interest is served when society works for all people. We need to rid Congress of those who are immersed in partisan and special interest politics and power, and do not respect minority rights or listen to the voices of the people.

NETWORK has joined with Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good to spread the message about Catholic Social Teaching and the **common good**. This is especially important during this election season. We strongly encourage all NETWORK members and supporters to participate in this effort by obtaining and distributing the following two resources:

- 1 "Voting for the Common Good: A Practical Guide for Conscientious Catholics"

Available at www.thecatholicalliance.org/new/voting-guide/guide.html

- 2 A flyer, suitable for parish bulletin inserts, about the Common Good

Available at www.thecatholicalliance.org/new/files/common-good-insert.pdf

Watch for more Election 2006 e-mails from NETWORK over the coming weeks, with more ideas and resources to help you and others evaluate the candidates and get out the vote! . . . NETWORK's ministry of justice is funded through the generosity of our supporters. To join or donate: www.networklobby.org/finsupport/ntkdonate.html.

Fr. Kenan Osborne, continued:

♥ Isn't there another way to look at the death of Jesus and our salvation? The Trinity is like the activity in a volcano, according to Franciscans. Its eruptions are "creation." The action is "love." God loves Jesus into being. God loves creation into being. Creation is an act of love. God doesn't need me or you. We come out of love. God also sent Logos into a human nature called Jesus. God and creation and incarnation are all hooked together, and also Spirit. There is a primal unity among them.

♥ The Spirit goes everywhere—beyond the chancery, beyond the Vatican. We can find the Spirit of God in every religion, every corner of the world.

♥ Forgiveness and salvation is what God does. God finds us. We don't have to earn anything. God says "I still love you." The only answer is "Wow!" "Wow" means "amen." God is saying "[Your name], I still love you" each time I receive Communion.

♥ Salvation is the gift of God to you wherever you are,

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, Chris Lippard & family, Carol Locke, Judy Mendelsohn, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullinex, Joe Narewski, Lynne Owens, George Peinado, Nora Peniata, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, Norm and Jane Schirle, Dolores Walsh, and T.J. Wooten.

right now. It is God saying "I still love you." We really don't do anything to earn it.

♥ We are saved by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—not just the death. He was an example of how we are to live and die. Like MLK or Gandhi or JFK, you may be aware of the possibility of assassination for your beliefs, but you have to live your life and values. Jesus was a mortal human being who lived his values and principles.

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Newsletter submissions must be e-mailed by Friday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. For Kay, e-mail kaywill@pacbell.net or phone 328-2781; for Michelle, myhogan@earthlink.net or 493-8452; for Jane, BahrJunior@comcast.net or 967-8246.