



Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 26, 2006

Readings

This week:

Hosea 2:16b, 17b, 21-22

2 Corinthians 3:1b-6

Mark 2:18-22

Next week:

Genesis 9:8-15

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:12-15

Psalm

The Lord is kind and merciful. (*Ps. 103*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Michael Marini.

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, February 27, 7:30 p.m.

Liturgy Committee, place TBD

Wednesday, March 1, 6:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Mass at STA

Saturday, March 4, 7:30 p.m.

A Killing in Choctaw, by Carl Ray

Cubberley Theater, 4000 Middlefield Rd., P.A.

From Thomas Merton

If you want to have a spiritual life you must unify your life. A life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all. No man can serve two masters. Your life is shaped by the end you live for. You are made in the image of what you desire.

To unify your life unify your desires. To spiritualize your life, spiritualize your desires.

To spiritualize your desires, desire to be without desire.

To live in the spirit is to live for a God in Whom we believe, but Whom we cannot see.

To desire this is therefore to renounce the desire of all that can be seen. To possess

Him Who cannot be understood is to renounce all that can be understood. To rest in

Him Who is beyond all created rest, we renounce the desire to rest in created things.

By renouncing the world we conquer the world, rise above its multiplicity and recapitulate it in the simplicity of a life which finds all things in God.

This is what Jesus meant when He said that any one who would save his life will lose it, and he who would lose his life, for the sake of God, would save it.

—*Thoughts in Solitude*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Bring a new person to coffee:

Invite the new person or new-to-you person standing next to you in the pew to join you for coffee and doughnuts after Mass. Part of the call of stewardship is to welcome the stranger. It's easy duty and often yields rich rewards on both sides. Especially on these Sundays as the warmer weather comes, there is no nicer spot after Mass than the garden adjacent to the church building. Come and bring a new friend!

Kepler's Community Donation Program:

Kepler's Books was revived last fall, after a near-death experience. We have just learned that the Community Donation Program sponsored by Kepler's is also awakened. In fact, Clark Kepler just sent TMC a check for the donation earned by TMC member purchases from June-November 2005. This means that 5% of every purchase at Kepler's by a person who mentions TMC at the time of checkout will be donated to TMC. So buy, buy, buy your books, calendars, magazines, cookbooks, children's books at Kepler's in Menlo Park, and tell them TMC sent you.

Fr. Kiriti to talk April 21:

Fr. Daniel Kiriti is coming to Palo Alto after Easter (April 17—May 2) to catch us up on the work in his parish in Naivasha, Kenya, and help us in the efforts to raise funds for the new school, the orphanage, and student tuitions. Mark your calendar on Friday, April 21, 7:00 p.m., for a reception and conversation with Fr. Kiriti, to be held at Our Lady of the Rosary Hall.



Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Msgr. Gene Boyle, Maureen Carleton, Tom Carmody, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Joanne Hasegawa, François Jamati, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Kami Ladd, Carol Locke, Logan Magnuson, Judy Mendelsohn, Georgia Monsen, Stephanie Mullenix, Barbara Narewski, Joe Narewski, Lynne Owens, George Peinado, Nora Peniata, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, Rob Walker, Dolores Walsh, Fr. Tenny Wright, and Rosamond, Chris, and Janie (friends of Jean Gill).

Seton School greeting and thanks:

Each month TMC receives a formal thank-you letter from St. Elizabeth Seton School's development director. TMC's monthly \$1,000 contribution to the school is always graciously acknowledged: "Your on-going and faithful support is greatly appreciated." Consider adding another kind of support to Seton by volunteering in some capacity: call (650) 326-9004.

Keep TMC strong with your donation:

On this last Sunday of the month, a return envelope is enclosed in the bulletin. Your donation to the Thomas Merton Center provides the means for the liturgical and educational programs that identify TMC to the parish of St. Thomas Aquinas and to the spiritually seeking community in Palo Alto and beyond. Help TMC celebrate its 10th anniversary year of 2006 by contributing your dollars to the pot that brings you this Sunday Mass each week and the adult educational programs that expand your horizons and deepen your soul. Many thanks for all your support!

TMC 10th Anniversary bullets:

- * When you are reserving for dinner at the TMC 10th Anniversary Party on Sunday, April 30, please send your check, for \$35 per person, made out to "TMC", to: TMC, 490 Ferne Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306. Note on the check: "April 30 party". Do not combine your payment for the party with other payments to TMC—membership, spiritual ed programs, or regular Sunday donations. This will help our book-keeping maestro keep it all straight!
- * The TMC Board invites all TMC members and friends to join in the various 10th Anniversary events that will be occurring throughout this year of 2006. In the tradition of getting the most out of a milestone anniversary, several events planned for 2006 are designated as "anniversary" events—from the March 4 evening with Carl Ray presenting his play, "A Killing in Choctaw," to the April 30 dinner and dancing celebration at the Stanford Faculty Club, followed by Fr. Richard McBrien's talk on May 6 and Hershel Shanks' talk on October 21. We look forward, too, to spending time with Fr. Daniel Kiriti who will be here for the April 30 dinner party and for a talk on April 21. Each event helps TMC highlight the achievement of completing ten years as a lay-led, independent, Catholic faith community.
- * Bring your friends to one or more of our 10th Anniversary events. The spiritual education programs will touch, engage, enlighten, and excite those who are present. The dinner party plans are gathering steam with every meeting of the planning committee. Use these events to help grow TMC with new members and friends.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Direct action needed by California bishops:

A statement by Bishop Patrick McGrath, dated January 30, 2006, was inserted into the parish bulletin last Sunday, February 19th. It was entitled: "A Statement from San Jose Bishop Patrick J. McGrath on the Impending Execution of Michael Angelo Morales." I applaud the Bishop for this statement, but I would like to pursue it, in part.

Bishop McGrath states that "Catholic teaching on this (the death penalty) is clear...." Catholic teaching on the death penalty and its associated actions are not clear, but are ambiguous. Indeed, as Bishop McGrath writes, the Conference of Bishops did call for the end of the death penalty twenty-five years ago. The Catechism from which Bishop McGrath quotes, however, also states that executions are allowed in "rare" cases, but nonetheless allowed by doctrine.

Just last Fall, the US Conference of Bishops stated that "the death penalty is not intrinsically evil." It is disturbing that the Bishops allow for rare cases; it is more disturbing to learn that the death penalty, in their view, is "not intrinsically evil."

I acknowledge that Bishop McGrath calls upon the Governor to offer clemency to Michael Morales, and that His Excellency asks us to "...work together to reject the death penalty."

I have sought to get the California Catholic Conference of Bishops, and Bishop McGrath, to seek a meeting with the Governor to urge a moratorium on the death penalty while that sentence is being studied. Both have refused. The seriousness of the problems attributed to this sentence, and Church doctrine (leaky as it is) demand that the California Conference seek a meeting with the Governor, and not just hurl declarations from afar. I am confident Bishop McGrath has this level of influence within the California Catholic Conference, and I appeal to him to take this leadership role.

I would like to see a moratorium on, or the abolition of, the death penalty---in my lifetime. I do not look forward to a life of attending vigils. —Henry Organ

“Vatican III” at Stanford:

As part of religious studies professor Tom Sheehan's Stanford University class "New Pope, New Church", the students are putting on a Third Vatican Council, addressing issues in Catholicism ranging from the ordination of women priests, homosexuality, and priestly celibacy to liturgy and ecumenism. The date is March 15; time and place to be determined. Mark your calendars!

Carl Ray's "A Killing in Choctaw" March 4:

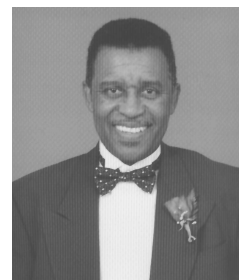
The many faces of Carl Ray will be on display during his performance of the two-act, one-man play, "A Killing in Choctaw," next Saturday night, March 4, 7:30 p.m., at the Cubberley Theater, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

Here's what TMC's Jim Davis says about Carl Ray and his play:

"I met Carl through a mutual acquaintance in the spring of 2005. Carl invited me to a screening of the documentary "A Killing in Choctaw" with the film's Chike Nwoffiah at the annual Independent Black Film Festival at Stanford University. I came away both stunned and uplifted by Carl's life story depicted in the film documentary. I was stunned by the senseless death of Carl's father at the hands of a racist, and the pain that caused him and his family.

Yet I was uplifted by the way in which Carl overcame, or at least confronted, that pain. As a person of faith I am often challenged by the need to practice what I preach and to live up to what I hear preached on Sunday mornings. It is rare that I am as vividly aware of the power of forgiveness as I was while watching the compelling film. The film kindled in me a desire to see the companion play "A Killing in Choctaw." So I invited Carl to join us, TMC (Thomas Merton Center of Palo Alto), in putting on a benefit performance to help raise awareness and funds for Carl's work with college-bound African American youth and to aid TMC's work with an orphanage in the town of Naivasha, Kenya..."

Ticket price for this benefit performance is \$30, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Come and be "stunned and uplifted" by this compelling story—and give what you can.



Carl Ray's publicity photo



Carl Ray in *NY Times*



Carl Ray as young comedian

Bulletin submissions must be e-mailed by Friday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. For Kay, e-mail kaywill@pacbell.net or (650) 328-2781. For Michelle, e-mail myhogan@earthlink.net or (650) 493-8452. For Jane, e-mail bahrjunior@comcast.net, or (650) 967-8246.

Misunderstanding Muslims:

By James Carroll | February 13, 2006

When the Koran was said to have been denigrated by American guards at Guantanamo last year, Muslims reacted with rage, but most observers in the West misunderstood why.

It was easy for Christians and Jews -- the other "people of the Book" -- to think that such an insult to the Koran was like an insult to the Bible. That would be sacrilege enough, but it was worse than that.

Drawing analogies between religions can mislead, but the Koran stands in Islamic belief more as Jesus does in Christian faith than as the Bible. As this Christian understands it, the Koran embodies the incarnational principle, with the chanting of the holy words that came from God to Mohammed as the way God's presence is experienced again.

Non-Muslims tend to think that the Prophet is to Islam something like what Jesus is to Christianity (which is why non-Muslims have mistakenly called the religion "Mohammedanism"), but it is the Koran that holds such a central place. Hence, Islamic visual celebration is calligraphy, not images. Therefore when the Koran is disrespected, the insult Muslims feel is nothing less than insult to God.

Insult, of course, is the issue that has been put so explosively before the world recently. The Danish cartoons were a flame applied to a primed fuse, and the extraordinary reactions to the images from across the whole House of Islam point beyond the immediate provocation to a far broader sense of insult that Muslims have been made to feel.

One need not excuse the indiscriminate violence of mobs in the streets, nor dismiss the good question of why such rage is not directed against the blasphemy of suicide-murders carried out in the name of Allah to take a lesson from what has happened. The Islamic world seems astoundingly united in sending a stern message to "the West," and instead of focusing again on "what went wrong" with Islam Europeans and Americans would do well to take that message in.

Thinking of deep history, for example, we might recall that the very structures of politics, culture, and thought that define western civilization were expressly erected in opposition to Islam more than 1,000 years ago.

What we call "the West" was born in the clash of civilizations that climaxed in the Crusades, with Muslims assigned the role of the external "negative other" against which Christendom defined itself positively (The internal "negative other" were the Jews). Among Europeans, and then Americans, that intellectual polarity was sublimated over the centuries, but its insult remained current among Muslims, and was powerfully

resuscitated by the assault of colonialism.

The economics of oil, including the creation of an oppressive local class of Western-sponsored oligarchs, locked the grievous insult in place. As if to be sure it was more sharply felt than ever, Europe imported "guest workers" from the Islamic world, openly consigning them to an underclass that is as religiously defined as it is permanent.

And then the United States launched its wars. One of the major disconnects in the present conflict is the way in which European and American analysis obsesses with the apparently anarchic outbursts of violence in the "Arab street" without taking in how brutally violent the post-9/11 "coalition" assault has been, not only physically but psychologically.

Mobs throw stones through the windows of European consulate offices, and the legion of CNN watchers recoils with horror. Meanwhile, unmanned drones fly across stretches of desert to drop loads of fire on the heads of subsistence farmers in their villages; children die, but CNN is not there.

Billions of dollars are being poured each month into the project of imposing an American solution on an Arab problem, and increasingly the solution looks, from the other side, like annihilation. Muslims, that is, understand the new reality far better than non-Muslims do -- the state of open cultural warfare that "the West" imagines is a narrowly targeted war against "terrorism." Muslims, as Muslims, experience themselves as on the receiving end of a savage -- but, alas, not unprecedented -- assault.

Are they wrong? In the argument over "Enlightenment" values, sparked by the cartoons, some champions of free expression have fallen into the deadly old mistake that led, in the 20th century, to a grotesque betrayal of those very values -- the over-under ranking of human beings, with the lives of some being counted as cheap. Why are we killing them? As with multiple problems today, this one comes back to the misbegotten American war. It threatens to ignite the century, and must be stopped.

James Carroll's column appears regularly in the *Boston Globe*.

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