



19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 12, 2007

Readings

This week:

Wisdom 18:6-9

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

Luke 12:32-48

Next week:

Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

Hebrews 12:1-4

Luke 12:49-53

Psalm

Today

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

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, August 13, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 15

Monday, August 20, 7:30 p.m.

TMC Liturgy Committee, location TBD

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

—Mass 7:30 p.m. at St. Albert's, 8:00 pm

Gregorian Mass at STA, plus regular daily Masses

TMC Spiritual Education Committee, Thomas

House basement hall

From Thomas Merton

Two of the great minds of the 20th century lived only 12 miles apart in Kentucky—Sister Mary Luke Tobin, Superior General of the Sisters of Loretto at the Mother House and Thomas Merton at Gethsemani. They were good friends and shared speakers between the two establishments as well as a lively correspondence. Sister Mary Luke Tobin was one of the few women invited to participate in Vatican II. (When told she could attend any and all of the sessions that interested her, "Good," she said, "I will attend them all.") Merton writes to her at her cloister in assisting her and her order in the celebration of the Mass:

"The liturgy is the expression of the Church's love for God. Hence it is a school of love. It forms our hearts, minds, wills, sensibilities, and tastes. But this formation is not merely psychological. We are formed by the objective reality of God's love for us acting upon us in and through the liturgy. This formation gives us a 'mind' greater than our own. It takes us above and beyond ourselves. We rise to the level of the liturgy and this makes us greater than we were before. The liturgy elevates us, it broadens our horizons, makes us capable of greater things. Jesus himself forms our souls as we pray with the liturgy."

—from a recent *Merton Seasonal* magazine, via Dick Freeman

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

Thomas Merton: Soul of the Age—Sept. 15:

A retreat led by Sr. Kathleen Deignan, C.N.D., M.A., Ph.D., on **Saturday, September 15, 2007, 9:30 am to 3:00 p.m.** is an opportunity to reflect on the writings of Thomas Merton (1915-68), monk, mystic and prophet. In the sylvan location of Palo Alto Foothills Park Interpretive Center, we will hear about the themes and issues that Merton struggled with during his life. Sr. Deignan will lead us in word, song, and prayer as we explore the terrain mapped by Merton's deep exploration of the soul of our age.

Sr. Deignan is a professor of religious studies at Iona College in New Rochelle, N.Y. A member of the board of the International Thomas Merton Society, she is the author of *When the Trees Say Nothing: Thomas Merton's Writings on Nature*, and *Thomas Merton: A Book of Hours*. In addition, she has written over 200 songs for worship and prayer and is co-founder of Schola Ministries, a project in service to the liturgical and contemplative arts.

There is no fee for the retreat, but donations to TMC will be welcomed. Pre-registration is necessary, due to restrictions by the City of Palo Alto which allow only Palo Alto residents or their guests to enter Foothills Park at 3300 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto. Contact Kay Williams, (650) 328-2781, or kaywill@pacbell.net, conveying your name, phone number, and city of residence, in your phone or email message. Or write to TMC, PO Box 60061, Palo Alto, CA 94306.



Sr. Kathleen Deignan

Faith Formation Conference, Sept. 21-22:

"Prophetic People Speak Truth" Faith Formation Conference 2007

On September 21-22, 2007, the Diocese of San Jose will be joining with the Archdiocese of San Francisco, and the dioceses of Monterey, Oakland, and Stockton for the annual Faith Formation Conference at the Santa Clara Convention Center. Join over 2,000 attendees coming from all over Northern California. A variety of workshops will be offered in English, Spanish and Vietnamese and will connect with prayer and call forth an action for justice. Information and registration is available online at http://sitecreator.com/faithformation/main_page.html or at the Pastoral Center. The persons who register by August 31st will pay \$25.00 per day.

Spirituality and the new cosmology—Sept. 14:

Sr. Elizabeth Avalos and Elizabeth Fitting will be leading a discussion/meditation group on the unfolding paradigm of spirituality based on the discoveries of the new cosmology (new scientific understanding of the world, matter and the universe), based on the ideas presented by Sr. Helen Thompson at a workshop at St. Albert Hospitality Center in June. This may sound rather erudite but it is actually very basic. Just as the discovery by Galileo changed our perception of our place in the universe (which the Church so adamantly resisted), so once again scientific discoveries are changing our awareness of our relationship to the universe.

The book that will be the starting point for the discussion is *Radical Amazement*. Author Judy Canto opens by quoting St. Thomas Aquinas, who said that "a mistake in our understanding of creation will necessarily cause a mistake in our understanding of God." Pause and think about that for a moment. If you want to explore it even further you will have a chance as we explore and contemplatively ponder what the change in perception could mean for us personally in our everyday lives, and how we function as individuals, with our families and in our communities. Sr. Elizabeth Avalos will be sending out details about the **first meeting on Sept 14, from 7 - 8:30 p.m.** If you would like to be included in this notice, please contact Elizabeth Fitting at eafitting@hotmail.com or by phone at (408) 530-8636.

Volunteers are always welcome...

- ▶ Take responsibility once a month or less for making coffee and cutting up doughnuts for Sunday hospitality.
- ▶ Take responsibility once a month or less for arranging flowers for the altar.
- ▶ Join the Liturgy Committee and help plan and execute our Sunday Mass and occasional extra liturgical events.
- ▶ Join the Spiritual Adult Education Committee and help find speakers and make an event happen.
- ▶ Speak to Kay Williams or Anna Jaklitsch after Mass, or contact them (see page 4 for information.)



Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Barbara Jane Ferrall, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Suzanne Kast, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Kami Ladd, Carol Locke, Mercedes McCaffrey, Eileen McNevin, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullenix, Joe Narewski, Dorothea Nudelman, Hank Okonski, Lynne Owens, Hayden Pastorini, George Peinado, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, George Schardt, Dolores Walsh, and T. J. Wooten.
[Add or subtract names by e-mailing the Bulletin editors: Jane Bahr, Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams.]

Please join us for coffee, juice and pastries after Mass in the Memorial Garden next to the church. If this is your first time at this Mass, or you are visiting today, you are especially encouraged to stop by the garden; we'd like to get to know you.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Assumption of Mary little understood:

[*The Assumption of Mary*, by Gertrud Mueller Nelson, in *Celebration*, August 2007, edited.]

When I was a youngster, my mother was in the habit of telling us stories while she worked...Greek myths. Fairy tales. Gospel stories. Parables. Fables. Saints' legends. And many an obscure and fascinating bit from Mystical Apocrypha.

...I stowed away the stories...Steamy August stories included one about Mary's Assumption into heaven.

Mary, mother of summer's abundance....

After Jesus ascended to heaven, our mother told us, Mary went to live with John — when he wasn't away on a mission to preach. Indeed, from time to time, all the apostles were away on missions. As Mary grew old and longed to see her Son in heaven, an angel came and announced that in three days she would be called forth from her body and go to her Son. But she asked the angel to allow her to see her sons and brothers, the apostles — that they be gathered to her before her soul would leave her body. And so it was that while John was preaching in Ephesus, a cloud caught him up and set him down on Mary's doorstep. He entered and found Mary preparing for her death and he said, "Oh, would that all the apostles were here that we might pay you fitting praise." And with that, all the apostles were plucked up by clouds from the places where they were preaching and put down at Mary's door. All, save Thomas, who, it seemed, was always one step out of the loop.

When Mary saw all the apostles gathered, she sat among them with lighted candles around her and they told stories and recalled the things that Jesus had taught them. When it was time, her soul was taken from her and the apostles, weeping, carried her to a new tomb and sealed her within even as they chanted...

From above, Christ called her: Arise my dear one, My dove, tabernacle of glory, vessel of life, heavenly temple. And straightaway, her soul rejoined her body and, by a multitude of angles, she was assumed into heaven's glory.

After three days, Thomas-come-lately arrived from India where he had been preaching and, finding himself on the doorstep of Mary's house, discovered all the other apostles within, who told him that he had missed being with Mary in her last hours. Grieved that he had missed a chance to see her for the last time, he begged them to tell him more. They told him they had witnessed clouds of angels at her tomb and that her body

had been taken up to heaven. They took him to see her tomb, and not only was her body no longer there, in her stead was a heady aroma of flowers and herbs filling the place where she had lain.

Since all flowers had lost their scent after the sin of Adam and Eve, and all herbs had lost their medicinal powers, Mary's assumption into heaven had returned to Earth's fruits the pleasing and healing properties they were meant to have for the good of humankind.

Thomas found all these stories really quite unbelievable and even as he protested he was surprised when the sash that Mary had always worn suddenly fell from heaven into his hands so that he might understand that she had been assumed body and soul.

This story and variations of it I later found depicted in very early iconography and illumination...

Certainly, just as the Jews have a long tradition of mystical contemplation and midrash, Christians had a period of entering biblical revelation and, seeking further depth and insight, spun out from it stories of their own making.

They embroidered texts which brought them some kind of revelation or interaction with the Divine. Thus, these stories took on certain assumptions and when people were particularly in need of feminine values, sightings of Mary seem to proliferate among simple peoples at such times.

Pius XII proclaimed Mary's bodily assumption into heaven a dogma. This was in 1950 and theologians of every stripe, when the topic came up for consideration, advised the pope to heave it right there, in the realm of myth and legend, and not make of it a dogma!

...The Space Age followed directly on the heels of the proclamation and, with it, our religious maturation took a developmental turn. The decidedly masculine impulse to fire a rocket to probe the mysterious moon took us there to find nothing but gray dust. Furthermore, any notion about the earth being the focus of the universe dissolved as we looked past our planet into the endless beyond. No one found Mary, body and soul, floating in space.

Rather, we turned and looked back and saw ourselves in a new light. There, floating like a luminous, mystical balloon, we saw that fragile, blue-green sphere that was our own home and, for the first time in a new way, saw her worth, her beauty and her life....The only person rejoicing in this proclamation was the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung. Look, he told us, the pope, despite the objections of the intelligentsia, had spoken out of the dream-world of the church. Deeper than any literal understanding was the mythical acceptance of the feminine principle as wor-

(Assumption continued on page 4.)

(Assumption continued from page 3.)

thy of the divine! Earth was finally taken into heaven. Matter was finally joined with Spirit. The mad rift of our simplistic religious development in which dualism ruled, now had a chance of healing ...an all too masculine Godhead had been joined by a material, feminine, bodily, earthly being.

Remember the point of the mystery of the Incarnation: heaven came to earth. Stand it on its head: The earth is in heaven!...

Mythic truth has equal rights to scientific truth. Or as one of my children said at age five when asked by the school psychologist what were these myths her mother was reading to her: "Myths?" she said. "Well, myths are stories that aren't true on the outside, but they are true on the inside."

Now we can look back at our beautiful earth and see again her beauty. The richness of her fruits and flowers, the healing herbs. The foods we eat and enjoy. our own bodies, imbued with spirit. The holiness of everyday things and what we take for granted. Return to equality not just women, but feminine value, the earthly, the bodily, the ordinary, the darkness, the instinctive, the intuitive, the mythical, the forgotten, the poor, the humble, the non-rational, the poetic.

Mary has given us back to ourselves. As mother of God and our mother, she is in heaven and heaven is on earth. While her feast in August is probably a displacement of pre-Christian festivals of a fruit-bearing earth goddess, thei time, this woman is precisely *not* a goddess! She is a human like us. Mary gives us back the ground under our feet—as the angels said when Christ ascended: "Why stand there looking up in the sky?" (Acts 1:11).

Look down. Heaven is on Earth. Earth is in heaven. We're it. We are the ones, privilege and called to care for the very ground we stand on. And it is our duty to embrace a holy sense of ecology and justice and act accordingly. Holy are the forgotten ones among us who labor over the crops we eat or who clean and order and manufacture the material things we thing we can't live without. We must bring about justice. Holy is the feminine. The earth. The darkness. The soil. Compost. Seeds. Crops. Foods. Herbs. Holy is the Earth.

Or as an Italian poet put it, looking at that awesome image of the earthrise: "What are you doing, Earth in Heaven? Tell me, what are you doing, Silent Earth? Who is she that comes forth as the rising dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun?"

—Gertrud Mueller Nelson is an artist, speaker and author. Send her your comments at: www.gertrudnelson.com.

Bulletin submissions must be e-mailed by Thursday 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, (650) 967-8246.

Aug 5 and 9 and just war:

Sixty-two years ago on August 6, 1945, I was a fifteen-year-old boy when the first report of the atomic destruction of Hiroshima, Japan, came to us. At that point in time, the world had been engaged in massive and terribly destructive war since 1939, and the U.S. had entered it in 1941. The newspapers, radio news, and the movies (there was no TV then) were filled with reports of death and destruction.

The people in my neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Penna.,... were scared because we reasoned that if we had the bomb then Japan probably had it, too, so we expected them to attack us at any minute.

Three days later, on August 9, 1945, we heard about the similar destruction of the city and people of Nagasaki, Japan... For teenagers like myself, it was a very frightening time and I have never forgotten it.

I don't recall anyone saying it was a bad thing to do, and I don't remember the priests having much to say against war during the four years we were engaged in it.

That is why I am sharing with you the following quotes from the *Catholic Catechism* regarding the mass destruction of people and cities.

Catholic Catechism #2314:

"Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation....A danger of modern warfare is that it provides the opportunity to those who possess modern scientific weapons, especially atomic, biological, or chemical weapons, to commit such crimes."...

In 2007, the U.S. has 5, 736 nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert... There are an additional 4,614 American nuclear weapons waiting in silos. Internationally, there are more than 28,000 nuclear weapons already manufactured. [Since 2003] the U.S. [has] spent \$27 billion every year preparing for a nuclear war.

My question is this:

When will local bishops and their priests, or the lay faithful, begin to speak these teachings from the *Catechism* and about the preparations already made to violate them? ..If they are not used or referenced, I wonder why these teachings are in the *Catechism* at all.

—Joe Coudriet, Social Justice Minister and JustFaith facilitator, Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Endicott, NY 13760, jpacjoe@aol.com.

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