



# Third Sunday of Lent

March 19, 2006

## Readings

*This week:*

Exodus 20:1-17

1 Corinthians 1:22-25

John 2:13-25

*Next week:*

2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23

Ephesians 2:4-10

John 3:14-21

## Psalm

Lord, you have the words of everlasting life. (*Psalm 19*)

## Today

Today's presider is Fr. José Rubio.

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

No meetings this week!

### From Thomas Merton

...In modern warfare the real moral problems are not to be located in rare instances of hand-to-hand combat, but in the remote planning and organization of technological destruction. The real crimes of modern war are committed not at the front (if any) but in war offices and ministries of defense in which no one ever has to see any blood unless his secretary gets a nosebleed. Modern technological mass murder is not directly visible, like individual murder. It is abstract, corporate, businesslike, cool, free of guilt-feelings and therefore a thousand times more deadly and effective than the eruption of violence out of individual hate. It is this polite, massively organized white-collar murder machine that threatens the world with destruction, not the violence of a few desperate teen-agers in a slum.

—“Toward a Theology of Resistance,” in *Faith and Violence*

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*

### ***Friday film series:***

The Friday film series continues on March 24 at 7:30 pm with *The Real Dirt on Farmer John* (82 minutes, 2005), an award-winning film about John Peterson, a farmer, artist, and revolutionary innovative thinker in rural Illinois. The film captures the rise and fall of the Peterson family farm and its resurrection through John's courage to build a new form of community. Film is at the Unitarian Hall, 505 E. Charleston. There is discussion after each screening. Suggested donation is \$5-10.

### ***Justice speakers forum:***

Ascension Parish in Saratoga is sponsoring a Justice Speakers Forum based on the justice writings of Pope John Paul II. The next meeting is tomorrow, March 20, with Joseph Hastings, West Coast Director of Catholic Relief Services, speaking on *In the Words of John Paul II: Creating Networks of Peace*. Registration begins at 7:15 and the program is from 7:30 to 9:00 pm. 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.

### ***Multifaith voices for peace and justice:***

Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice and a host of other groups are sponsoring *An Evening with Scott Ritter, Ray McGovern and Iraqi Faiza Al-Araji* on Saturday, March 25, at 7:00 pm at First Presbyterian Church, 1140 Cowper St., Palo Alto.

SCOTT RITTER was the UN's top weapons inspector in Iraq between 1991 and 1998. Before working for the UN he was an officer in the US Marines and a ballistic missile adviser to General Norman Schwarzkopf in the first Gulf war. Seymour Hersh wrote, "The important thing to know about Scott Ritter is that he was right."

RAY MCGOVERN is a member of the Steering Group of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS). He worked as a CIA analyst for 27 years, and now works for Tell the Word, the publishing arm of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in Washington, DC.

FAIZA AL-ARAJI is an engineer, married, and currently living in Amman, Jordan. She is Shia and her husband is Sunni. Her son Khalid, a student at Baghdad University, was arrested by Iraqi officials from the Ministry of the Interior without ever being charged.

The family had to pay ransom to secure his release, and then fled to Jordan. Faiza and her sons write an interesting blog called A Family in Baghdad ([afamilyinbaghdad.blogspot.com](http://afamilyinbaghdad.blogspot.com)).

### ***"Truck of love" speaker for Lent:***

The Adult Spiritual Formation team of the parish has been assembling some sterling speakers for Lent. This Wednesday, March 22, at 7:00 pm, *Pete Fullerton* will speak about his life journey from performer (bass and vocals) in a '60s folk-rock quintet (We Five, which introduced *You Were on My Mind* and *Let's Get Together*) to advocate for social justice through his Truck of Love Ministries.



Pete will be at the Our Lady of the Rosary Hall, 3233 Cowper St.

Truck of Love Ministries is a nonprofit that helps those

in need in the San Francisco Bay Area, in the Tohono O'odham (Papago) Reservation in Arizona, in Tujuana, and "wherever else we find ourselves."

In 1972, Pete accompanied a friend to deliver a truck full of clothes and toys to Fr. Elias Galvez, OFM, serving the native American population in Arizona. Pete went with his friend to Arizona twice a year for the next four years, until after his friend's death in 1976, when Pete took over the trips. Over time, his work has expanded to outreach for the local poor and for the poor of northern Mexico.

### ***Citizenship day Saturday:***

Catholic Charities in San Jose is presenting a Citizenship Day and Immigrant Pride Day on Saturday, March 25, sponsored by the Santa Clara County Citizenship Collaborative. Volunteers are needed who are bilingual in English and either Spanish or Vietnamese. If you want to help, or want more information, please call (408) 534-5451.

### ***Remembering the war's start:***

The third anniversary of the Iraq War is tomorrow, March 20, and on that day Gold Star mother Celeste Zappala from Philadelphia will speak at an Interfaith Service, *Remembrance and Resistance*, at 7:00 pm, at First Congregational Church of Berkeley, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. Other speakers are Prof. Michael Nagler, Ali Sheikholeslami, Rita Nakashima Brock, Rev. Patricia de Jong, and Gail Adams of Chochmat HaLev, as well as musicians Joanne Henry, Betsy Rose, and Alice Templeton. All people of conscience, religious, spiritual, or secular, are welcome at the service; reception to follow.

## Operation rice bowl:

The CRS Rice Bowls that we picked up two weeks ago are a symbolic representation of the small amount of food (often rice) on which many people in the world subsist each day. They signify the hunger faced by our brothers and sisters around the world, and their hope of a better future. This Third Sunday of Lent, we read of Jesus cleansing the temple. It's not about anger, but about transformation. Jesus is saying: "No more business as usual." As we continue our Operation Rice Bowl, journey let us remember in prayer that the ability to work to earn a living is a right of all people. May our fasting keep us mindful of the workers who provide food for their families. May our almsgiving assist CRS as we lean about agriculture projects and Fair Trade coffee farmers in Nicaragua. (On Palm Sunday we will offer our rice bowls at the offertory of the Mass.)



## Thoughts on A killing in Choctaw:

On February 25 and March 4, TMC sponsored the documentary film and play *A Killing in Choctaw* to raise money for Fr. Kiriti's work with the children of Naivaisha, Kenya and Carl Ray's work with college-bound African American youths. For those who missed the presentations, they are the story of Carl Ray's life (the story continues to evolve) and how a southern white racist killed Carl's father while Carl looked on. Worse yet, Carl blamed himself for the killing because he had confronted the killer, a neighbor, earlier in the day. He had "sassed" the man by saying "yes" and "no" instead of "yes sir" and "no sir" in answer to the man's questions. Carl, a college-bound black teen, had violated a significant Jim Crow law; part of the myriad of unwritten rules that served to perpetuate racial superiority in places like Choctaw County, Alabama, circa

continued on page 4

### Lent 2006—Living simply:

From "The Big Economy, The Great Economy," by Michael Schut, in *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective*.

This essay asks you to consider connections that may not be immediately apparent: connections between overconsumption, poverty and ecological degradation. Consider nature's cycles. First, circles represent ongoing cycles where "waste equals food." The Great Economy is the first and most efficient recycler. All sloughed off life-forms become food for another life-form. Nothing is wasted and there is no "away" (as in "throw it away"). Death brings on new life.

Second, a circle signifies a closed system; except for solar energy, earth's economy operates solely on the limited bounty of earth's "one-time endowment."

Third, the Great Economy thrives on local resources. A tree grows in the soil and feeds off the nutrients of a certain place. It does not and cannot usurp nutrients from soil thousands of miles away. . . . The Big Economy, however, does not see waste as food. The Big Economy hopes that the Great Economy will somehow assimilate all waste, a hope we now know is futile; the waste generated each year in the United States would fill a convoy of ten-ton garbage trucks 145,000 miles long—over half-way to the moon. . . .

All inputs. . . come from the Great Economy, and all wastes return to it. Yet the Big Economy refers to its effects on the natural world as "externalities." . . . Examples of externalities include water pollution, soil erosion, ozone depletion and toxic waste.

These externalities profoundly affect people and places—in our own backyards and around the world. . . . Notice the linkages: the Big Economy produces waste for which it does not take responsibility; waste leads to ecological degradation, the effects of which are more pronounced for poor and minorities; people's health and human communities suffer. . . .

What can we do? Each one of us can and does make a difference, but first we must wake up! We must wake up to the advertising industry's manufacturing of needs. . . . We must resist being sold a "bill of goods" and wake up to the fact that the global economy is dependent upon our consuming its products. What we buy, how we eat, and our means of transportation are, in a very real sense, votes that can move us toward or away from abundant living. . . . Try eating lower on the food chain (eating less meat) more often. Discover ways to buy local fruit and vegetables; support local farmers. . . . Ultimately, we must realize that we are all (all humans, all animals, all ecosystems) in this together. There is no "away." The pollution our consumption habits creates today shows up tomorrow as increased cancer rates, birth defects, and oil-soaked birds. . . . In many ways, the Big Economy is a reflection of brokenness, of separation from each other, from the earth, and from our very selves. We can pray for the healing of relationships—that we might see these connections, that we might "love our neighbor as ourselves."



## ***Making room for the strangers in our midst:***

Part of the Lenten message of Cardinal Roger Mahony,  
Catholic Archbishop of Los Angeles.

To take up our Lenten practice this year in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, we face a unique challenge in this call to make room for God. In recent months and in different parts of the world, we have seen the escalation of strong sentiments against immigrants. These sentiments appear to be mounting in our own country as well. How might our various Lenten practices such as prayer, fast-



ing, and almsgiving, our effort to empty ourselves so as to make room for God, relate to the complex reality of immigration, especially in the face of increasing hostility toward immigrants? Pope Benedict

XVI's first Encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* (*God is Love*) is helpful to us here. Writing on love as the heart of the Christian faith, our Holy Father says:

“ . . . If in my life I fail completely to heed others, solely out of a desire to be devout and to perform my ‘religious duties,’ then my relationship with God will also grow arid. It becomes merely ‘proper’ but loveless. Only my readiness to encounter my neighbor and to show him love makes me sensitive to God as well. Only if I serve my neighbor can my eyes be opened to what God does for me and how much he loves me. . . . Love of God and love of neighbor are thus inseparable, they form a single commandment. . . . No longer is it a question, then, of a ‘commandment’ imposed from without calling for the impossible, but. . . a love which by its very nature must then be shared with others” (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 18).

To the question “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus’ answer is clear. As his disciples, we are called to attend to the last, littlest, lowest and least in society and in the Church. This Lenten season, join me in committing our Lenten practices to making room for the stranger in our midst, praying for the courage and strength to offer our spiritual and pastoral ministry to all who come to us, offering our prayer and support for the ones in our midst who, like Jesus, have no place to rest their heads (Matthew 8:20).

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Board: Anna Jaklitsch, 327-0978, annajak@accesscom.com  
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Bulletin: Michelle Hogan (March 19 and April 2); Kay Williams (March 26);  
Jane Bahr (April 9)  
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Sally Benson, (408) 972-5843, red5@svpal.org  
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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.

## ***Thoughts on A killing in Choctaw, continued:***

1962.

Carl’s story was not uncommon for the times and as I talked him into doing the play for us at a lunch a year ago, I had the worry that people had heard it all before, and possibly would be discomforted when reminded once again of the more brutal aspects of America’s apartheid era. Then Carl told me at that first meeting how his feelings of guilt and depression in the aftermath of the killing were instantly assuaged by a more powerful spiritual notion. By a series of what Carl believes were inspired circumstances, he was goaded into forgiving the man who killed his father, at first insincerely, but it led to Carl eventually forgiving himself as well, instantly lifting years of guilt and self-doubt.

Writing and acting out the play is one way Carl has come to cope with that singular defining event in his past. While Carl Ray’s story stems from a deep personal tragedy, the lesson for me is not found in the tragedy itself but rather in Carl’s life-altering experience with the redemptive power of forgiveness, with the steadfast love of his family, and with his academic mentors at Tuskegee Institute who refused to allow him to fail. In spite of the dark, sad event that inspired the play, I found Carl’s performance uplifting, at times humorous, and profoundly inspiring.

Carl was most gracious in answering questions after the play and the film. Many who asked questions seemed incredulous that such a senseless killing could have happened for a reason so petty. Indeed, one comment made to me after the film implied that the whole thing was probably fictional, an exaggeration. Carl acknowledged that there were probably other underlying reasons for the crime that had to do with his father’s independence. He was the only Black in Choctaw County who owned rather than sharecropped his land.

I am doubly pleased if the film and play enlightened some who were not fully aware of the nature of racial killings prevalent in the south through the 1960s, but I can’t help but remind those who might happen upon this writing that forgiveness, love, and simple caring are often overlooked as tools for moving past all kinds of angst. During the recent presentation of *A Killing in Choctaw* that message may have gotten overshadowed by the starkness of the crime.

—Jim Davis

### **Food for Thought**

The United States, with less than 5% of the world’s population, uses about one-fourth of the world’s energy. [And] the United States contributes 25% of the world’s greenhouse gases, again more than five times its share.