



11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 15, 2008

Readings

This week:

Exodus 19:1–6

Romans 5: 6–11

Matthew 9:365–10:8

Next week:

Jeremiah 20:7, 10–13

Romans 5: 12–15

Matthew 10: 26–33

Psalm

We are his people: the sheep of his flock. (*Psalm 100*)

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

Sunday, June 15

Happy Father's Day!

Monday, June 16, 7:30 p.m.

TMC Spiritual Education, SAG Hospitality Center

From Thomas Merton

The message of God's mercy to man must be preached. The word of truth must be proclaimed. No one can deny this. But there are not a few who are beginning to feel the futility of adding more words to the constant flood of language that pours meaninglessly over everybody, everywhere, from morning to night. For language to have meaning there must be intervals of silence somewhere, to divide word from word and utterance from utterance. He who retires into silence does not necessarily hate language. Perhaps it is love and respect for language which imposes silence upon him. For the mercy of God is not heard in words unless it is heard, both before and after the words are spoken, in silence.

—*Disputed Questions*

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

Receive Kenya updates:

Margo McAuliffe will be returning to Naivasha, Kenya, for two months this summer. If you would like to be on her e-mail list to receive her colorful, engaging updates of day-to-day life in St. Francis Xavier Parish, please e-mail Kay Williams at kaywill@pacbell.net. Margo leaves for Kenya on June 22.

“Small change. Big change”:

Jesus calls us to take care of the poor numerous times. However, we often despair at this huge challenge and do nothing.

There is an opportunity to help the poor pull themselves out of poverty with just the small change we may have in our home or cars by using MicroPlace (www.microplace.com), an online brokerage specializing in socially responsible investments that address poverty. According to Coinstar, the average American household has about \$100 in spare change around the house. It is easy to get started on eliminating poverty. A simple one-hundred-dollar investment can provide ten ten-dollar micro-loans in third world countries or a one-hundred-dollar loan to help a poor Silicon Valley resident start or re-supply a cleaning business.

“You could earn from one-to-three-percent on your investment,” said Tracey Turner, founder and general manager of MicroPlace. “That is about the going rate on a CD or a bank account. You can either use your return or re-invest it to help others get out of poverty.” MicroPlace does not charge you an investment fee. It charges the credit companies that make the micro loans in the US and around the world.

To encourage investors to ask their friends to join them in making a difference, MicroPlace will offer uniquely handcrafted artisan piggy banks from Chile to groups of investors who invest at least \$500. The more people who invest, the more funds are available to lend to more poor entrepreneurs.

Investors can track their impact and the impact of their friends on the campaign website, www.smallchange-bigchange.com. They can read stories from the people receiving loans and can track how many loans they are enabling to the world’s working poor. “Small change. Big change.” hopes to build a community of socially responsible people who are making a difference through investments that address poverty while earning a financial return. “Small change. Big change.” investors can have a direct impact on the working poor, and in a way that honors their dignity and hardworking nature.

MicroPlace is a wholly-owned subsidiary of eBay Inc. (Nasdaq:EBAY). KLIV aired a feature with Tracey Turner, founder and general manager of MicroPlace, on June 11, 2008. To download a podcast log onto www.KLIV.com then click on Features at the top of the page then click on The Economy and Silicon Valley.

Two chances to hear Edwina Gateley:



Edwina Gateley is dedicated to following the call of God in her life. To date this has led her to ministering in Africa, sojourning into the Sahara Desert and the Wilderness to pray, founding the Volunteer Missionary Movement, befriending and ministering to the prostitutes and street people of Chicago, “God’s little ones,” and

preaching the Good News: God is With Us. Edwina is a poet, theologian, artist, writer, lay minister and modern-day mystic and prophet, She gives retreats, talks and conferences throughout the United States, Canada, Britain and Ireland.

July 20-26 at Vallombrosa Retreat Center, 250 Oak Grove Ave. in Menlo Park:

“Soul Sisters – Women Called to Connect, Bond and Heal in a Broken World.”

Begins: Sunday at 6:00 pm with Dinner

Concludes: Saturday at 1:00 pm after Lunch

Cost: \$495 (private) \$470 (Shared) \$320 (Commuter)

(These are reduced rates. Scholarships are available)

During this retreat for women, explore the feminine divine and how women have a significant role to play in bringing balance and healing to our world of war and suffering. Look at the role of women in scripture as well as the call to transformation in the Christian tradition. The history of God as Mother will be examined and the importance of compassion in the process of healing for ourselves as individuals, as well as the global community. We will also look at the experience of some contemporary women whose struggle for new life is a testimony to the resilience of the human spirit and the redeeming power of God’s grace.

For information, contact:

650-325-5614, Fax 650-325-0908

www.vallombrosa.org / ingrid@vallombrosa.org

Sunday, July 27: a talk by Edwina Gateley from 4-6 p.m., sponsored by the Thomas Merton Center, at the Mitchell Park Community Room, Palo Alto. More information to follow.

Please join us for coffee, juice and pastries after Mass in the Memorial Garden or basement of the Thomas House next door. 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

Torture and the death penalty:

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops is to be complimented for its opposition to torture, and its current campaign on the subject. According to the Conference's website: "The Church stands firm in denouncing torture as it undermines and debases the dignity of both victims and perpetrators. Pope Benedict XVI 'prohibition against torture cannot be contravened under any circumstance.'" (February 28, 2008).

Indeed, this discussion on torture mandates inclusion of the death penalty.

There are several methods of executing, and torture is present in each of them, differing only in the degree and duration of the torture. Yet, the Catechism does allow for the death penalty in cases of extreme gravity (#2267). Therefore, there appears to be a discrepancy between the Church's unequivocal opposition to torture (under no circumstances), versus the Church's equivocation in allowing the death penalty (in extraordinary circumstances).

As to the "extraordinary" allowance for the death penalty, this attempted diminishment is overshadowed by the fact that 1102 individuals have been executed in the US since the penalty was re-instituted in 1976. There should be a reminder that not one single life is "ordinary." There is the further reminder that there are currently 669 individuals on death row in California: not an extraordinarily small number. Executions stand to be "ordinary," unless addressed and abolished. If, as the Pope and the Conference proclaim, that torture is never allowable, then the death penalty should never be allowed.

The Thomas Merton Center currently has a position paper before the Diocese, requesting, in summary, for it to review the Catechism, as it pertains to the death penalty. It is commendable that individual members of the clergy and the Conference oppose the death penalty. Nevertheless, the death penalty is not abolished in the Catechism or the canons of the Church. .

There is the considered belief that the Diocese of San Jose has the moral compass, and the will, to address this issue, irrespective of the enormity, difficulty and unlikelihood of change.

—Henry Organ

To the dull mind nature is leaden. To the illumined mind the whole world burns and sparkles with light.
- Emerson

Deacon Carl Bunje on torture:

June is torture awareness month. Our parish is participating in the National Campaign Against Torture, sponsored by Pax Christi, USA.

Jesus instructs us in the Gospel to listen to his words and to act on them.

The first step in becoming a doer of the word is to become a prayer of the word. We must take the word to heart, reflect on it, and try to see how it applies to us and our lives.

For example, take Jesus' words, "My commandment is this: Love one another, just as I love you."

The first step in translating Jesus' words into action is to ponder them prayerfully. In today's world, we seem to have substituted the word torture for the word love. Let us torture one another has become an all too common occurrence. So I decided to talk with Jesus and hear how he viewed the subject of torture.

Jesus replied, "I am very familiar with the subject of torture. Before and during my passion at Calvary, I experienced excruciating pain and anguish inflicted on me as a means of punishment, coercion and revenge. Why do you ask?"

"Well, Jesus," I answered, "nationally and internationally we on this earth are talking about torture being permissible in combating terrorism. Some of us know that torture is fundamentally incompatible with the dignity of the human person—and ultimately counterproductive in fighting terrorism. The terrorist will give any answer to avoid the torture. The outcome is unreliable."

"Jesus, one more question, please!"

"I read that among the very early writers they questioned why did you, Jesus, die so much more rapidly than most of the condemned at the time. Cicero wrote that crucifixion on the cross was the most terrible and cruelest of tortures, that the torments lasted longer.

Josephus wrote that those who were nailed to the cross died more rapidly than those who were tied with ropes. St. Luke wrote your words: 'Father, not my will, but thine be done. And Jesus grew dismayed and distressed and was in an agony and prayed still more earnestly; his sweat fell to the ground like clots of blood.' St. Mark said, 'and Jesus began to fear and to be heavy.' So, Jesus, what was the ultimate cause of your death?"

In reply, Jesus answered with another question. With a sly smile, Jesus asked, "And what do your scientists say was the speed and the final cause?"



(Continued on page 4.)

Blessing of Men for Father's Day

Loving God,
In your wisdom and love you made all things.
Bless these men
That they may be strengthened
In their Christian faith.
Let the example of their faith and love shine
forth.
Grant that we, their sons and daughters,
Wives and friends,
May honor them always
With a spirit of profound respect.
Amen.

(Bunje on torture, continued from page 3.)

I replied, "Ok, but please tell me if what the scientists say is true."

"The scientists working on the shroud of Turin say that when Jesus was placed on the cross, his shoulders and two arms were placed in an upward position conforming to the form of the cross. The wrists were nailed to the cross, wrenching the delicate median nerves. Then the feet were held in position and the hammer crashed into the nail. Upended on the cross, Jesus experiences thirst and hunger.

Then a strange phenomenon occurs. The muscles of his arms stiffen of themselves and then contract. His deltoid muscles and his biceps become strained and his biceps become strained and stand out. His fingers are drawn sharply inward. It is cramp!

Jesus cannot relax the contracted muscles because on his legs and thighs are monstrous rigid bulges and his toes are bent. He suffers from tetanus. His breathing becomes shorter and lighter. His sides are drawn upwards by the traction of his arms. The solar-plexus sinks inward. The air enters with a whistling sound, but scarcely comes out. He breathes in but cannot breathe out. He thirsts for air. He is asphyxiating.

His lungs are loaded with air, but they can no longer empty themselves. Soon rigor mortis has seized him." "Jesus, any comment?"

Jesus speaks: "Your scientists are quite astute. I could stand a lot of the pain, the torture inflicted upon me. But the asphyxiation, the not being able to breathe, was an impossible pain; it was horrendous! Everything inside you bursts. There is no control, no resistance, no hope. It is the worst torture conceivable!"

I hastily said: "Jesus! You won't believe it! We are using a very similar torture today. We call it waterboarding—a type of simulated drowning where the vic-

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.

Church growth highest in Africa:

VATICAN CITY (*ReligionNewsService*) — Africa is the Catholic Church's region of biggest growth, with rising numbers of faithful, clergy and religious orders, according to Vatican statistics. The church's growth in the Americas has largely stalled, meanwhile, and Europe's share of the world's largest church continues to decline.

The findings appeared in the May 18 issue of the official Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*, in an article summarizing the new edition of the church's statistical yearbook, which features a survey of worldwide Catholicism in the period 2000-2006.

Though the world's proportion of baptized Catholics remained roughly the same over the seven-year period, amounting to 17.3% of the world's 1.1 billion people in 2006, its geographical distribution shifted markedly. The most notable change was in Africa, whose share of the worldwide church rose from 12.4% to 14%...#

tim cannot breathe or exhale. It was a well-known technique in South America during the era of military regimes in the 1970s and 80s. Then it was called 'the submarine.'"

This is the same torture that Jesus experienced on the cross!

The targeting of combatants in acts of terror, torture, racism and genocide are all threats to the sanctity and the dignity of human life. When we tolerate disrespect for one aspect of human life, we erode and diminish respect for all life.

Our consciences call us to oppose these inherently evil actions. Our conscience demands the recognition of the dignity of all human life. We have to oppose the laws and policies that violate human life and weaken its protection. Conscience is the voice of God resounding in our heart, revealing the truth to us and calling us to do what is good while avoiding what is evil.

Father Gerald Coleman, S.S., former rector of St. Patrick's Seminary and now lecturer at Santa Clara University, reiterates a statement from the U.S. bishops on the forming of consciences for faithful citizenship: "The use of torture must be rejected as fundamentally incompatible with the dignity of the human person."

Jesus said, "Love one another, as I have loved you!"

—Deacon Carl Bunje

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