



Second Sunday of Easter

April 23, 2006

Readings

This week:

Acts of the Apostles 4:32-35

1 John 5:1-6

John 20:19-31

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 3:13-15, 17-19

1 John 2:1-5a

Luke 24:35-48

Psalm

Lord, send out your spirit and renew the face of the earth. (*Ps. 104*)

Today

Today's presider is Reverend Daniel Kiriti.

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, April 24, 7:30 p.m.

Liturgy Committee, place TBD

From Thomas Merton

But what is love and how do we come to love as sons of God? Surely love is everywhere; man cannot live without it. If everybody loves, or tries to love, why is it that we are not made happy and redeemed by all this constant effort? The answer is that all that seems to be love is not so in reality.

The reality of love is judged, then, by its power to help man get beyond himself, to renew himself in transcending his present limitations. Though the function of natural love is to perpetuate man in time, the function of spiritual love is much greater still—to give man possession of eternity. This is done not merely by "saving man's soul" as an individual, but by establishing in time the eternal kingdom of God. The function of love is to build this spiritual kingdom of unity and peace, and to make man not only the expliuter of creation but truly its spiritual head and king.

A love that merely enables man to "enjoy himself," to remain at peace in a life of inert comfort and to bring into being replicas of himself is not to be regarded as true love. It does not represent a renewal, a progress, a step forward in building the kingdom of God.

True love leads a man to fulfillment, not by drawing things to himself but by forcing him to transcend himself and to become something greater than himself....

—*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

TMC Anniversary Committee invites you:



The 10th anniversary party celebrating TMC's life and work is upon us: Sunday, April 30, at the Stanford Faculty Club, 5—9 p.m., \$35 a person for a lovely meal, good company, live music and even—if you are in the mood—dancing. Reservation forms are available after Mass by the coffee and doughnuts. Or contact committee chairperson LaVerne Sheehan, 321-7883.

Fr. Daniel Kiriti here today:

We welcome Fr. Daniel Kiriti of Naivasha, Kenya, today as our celebrant and friend. Take a minute after Mass at the coffee and doughnut table to greet him. He is here from Kenya until May 4, connecting with old friends (he was at Santa Clara University in 1997-98 and lived in our parish) speaking about his work in St. Francis Xavier Parish in Naivasha. The Merton Center several years ago set up the Kiriti Grant Fund to make it possible for those who wish to contribute to Fr. Kiriti's projects in Naivasha to do so through the Merton Center. Hearing first hand from Fr. Kiriti about the orphanage, the boys' and girls' high schools, the need for education of the youth in the face of the HIV epidemic is inspiring. And if you miss him today, you will be able to catch him at the TMC Anniversary Celebration dinner on April 30.

Kepler's Community Donation Program:



Kepler's Books was revived last fall, after a near-death experience. The Community Donation Program sponsored by Kepler's is also awakened—and TMC can benefit from your book purchases at Kepler's. 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 your books, calendars, magazines, cookbooks, children's books at Kepler's in Menlo Park, and, *before* you hand over your cash, check or credit card in payment, tell them TMC sent you.



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

Fr. Richard McBrien to speak on the role of the laity on May 6:

A rare appearance in the Bay Area will be made on Saturday, May 6, by Fr. Richard McBrien, when he speaks on *Catholicism in 2006 and Beyond: The Role of the Laity in the Present and Future Church*. The talk is at 7:30 p.m. at the Mitchell Park Community Hall, 3800 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto. Free will donations to the Merton Center will be gratefully accepted to cover the cost of bringing Fr. McBrien here for this timely and provocative discussion.

A prominent theologian and writer, Fr. McBrien is a long-time observer of the Catholic scene in the U.S. and worldwide. He has authored many books, including *Do We Need the Church?* and he writes a weekly column that appears in many diocesan newspapers and occasionally in the *National Catholic Reporter*. A former president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, he is currently on the faculty of the University of Notre Dame. He is a priest of the Archdiocese of Hartford, CT.

Fr. McBrien will celebrate the 8:45 a.m. Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church on May 7.

For more info, call (650) 261-9155 or e-mail to: information@thomasmerton.org.

Events not to miss this week:

Mon., April 24: Fr. Joseph Sands, SJ, on *Justice in the Americas: The Continuing Disparity of Wealth*. 7:30 pm., Church of the Ascension, 12033 Miller Ave., Saratoga. Info: (408) 725-3939. Free will donations.

Wed., April 26: Fr. Thomas Reese, SJ, on *A Survival Guide for Thinking Catholics: Conscience and the Roman Catholic Life*, 6:00 pm, Mayer Theater, Santa Clara University. Free but pre-register on-line at www.scu.edu/events or call (408) 554-5319.

Thurs., April 27: Michael Parenti presenting his new book, *The Culture Struggle*, 7:30 pm, First Presbyterian Church, 1140 Cowper St., Palo Alto. Cost \$10-\$20, sliding scale.

Fri., April 28: Dean David T. Link, of Univ. of Notre Dame, on *Peace in the Middle East*, 7:30 pm, Little Theater at St. Francis High School, 1885 Miramonte, Mt. View. 2006 Hesburgh Lecture. Free. Info: (408) 345-0105.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns



Earth Day: April 22, 2006: reflections and musings from experts and thinkers:

Kelpie Wilson: mythmaking to save the earth:

...The most transfixing narratives in present-day culture are those that build on old familiar stories—Plato’s Atlantis, for instance; or Noah’s flood. Tales of ancient sunken cities offer tantalizing clues that human culture may have encountered global warming before, though for very different reasons.

Geologists are finding hard evidence that when the last ice age ended, it created floods of biblical proportions. Sediment cores show that around 7600 years ago a rising Mediterranean spilled suddenly into the Black Sea in a torrent mightier than a dozen Niagara Falls. The deluge raised the Black Sea’s water level by six inches a day, quickly displacing the Neolithic farmers who must have inhabited the fertile plains around its shores. Several centuries earlier, melting ice sheets had raised the global sea level by 5 to 10 meters. Just as today, a large portion of the Earth’s human inhabitants lived along shorelines. Is it any wonder, then, that nearly every culture surveyed has myths of a cataclysmic flood?

A theme of many flood myths is that the deluge was punishment for failure to respect the gods and their creations.... The ancients were inclined to take any natural cataclysm—an earthquake, a flood, or a storm—as a sign that their actions might be out of harmony with the cosmic order. The great floods at the end of the last ice age came just at the time that the earliest civilizations were forming. The deluge became a powerful image to instill guilt as a tool for maintaining the social order and to motivate faith in the founding religions of civilization.

How ironic then, that a past climate change for which humans bore no blame should inspire such a tremendous sense of collective responsibility, while the current one, for which we are certainly culpable, inspires only a mad rush to place the blame on anyone or anything but ourselves....The mainstream political culture continues to downplay or ignore or even silence evidence showing that the warming oceans are powering ever-larger tempests.

The *logos* of our science tells us that human behavior is a primary cause of today’s climate chaos; but we have as yet no *mythos* that allows us to take it to heart and to admit our guilt. And we will never act to save ourselves until we do.

Bill McKibben pinpoints the biggest challenge we face

in creating the new *mythos*: “...there’s no real chance of a happy ending. We can do better, or we can certainly do much worse— but we’ve already pushed the carbon concentration past the point where the atmosphere can easily heal itself.”

The new *mythos* cannot emerge from the art of today’s popular culture, in which the hero saves the day. Art as entertainment only drives us deeper into denial. Art as a cathartic experience is different.

The Greek tragic plays, based on the sacred stories of the gods, provide examples of such catharsis, or “purification.” The art we need is an art that can confront us with the tragic results of our actions and embolden us to accept our culpability, while at the same time offering hope that we might salvage what is left of the Earth and our humanity. Is it possible to create new sacred stories, built on the familiar, that will restore both reverence and hope?

Through the story of Noah, the Bible has already grappled with both climate change and human responsibility. In the Talmudic tradition, which admits new interpretations and even new stories into the sacred literature, Rabbi Ari Kahn has written an interesting commentary examining context that gives us a starting point. Kahn says: “The saga of Noah and the flood is well known, yet Noah remains an elusive personality. What was the nature of Noah’s goodness? The description of Noah is *tzaddik*—which can be variously translated as a good, just, righteous man; in other words, a saint—but with the qualification ‘in his generation,’ it sounds like a back-handed compliment. The implication seems to be that in a rotten generation, Noah looked good.”

Kahn then compares Noah with Moses. Noah passively carried out God’s instructions without bothering to try to save anybody but himself; but when God threatened to destroy Moses’ followers after catching them worshipping the golden calf, Moses pleaded with God to relent...and he did. Through the comparison Rabbi Kahn reveals the deeper lesson: it is not enough to be concerned with one’s own survival. We are all connected and we must each take some responsibility for the actions of community as a whole.

One might imagine a *mythos* that both responds to Bill McKibben’s clarion call and extends Rabbi Kahn’s thoughts in the context of our current and near-term future predicament:

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(Wilson, continued from page 3)

God saw that his great flood had not rid the world of evil. Though he had done his best to help good men like Abraham and Moses along, the people had multiplied and there was still much evil in the world.

After a time, God decided to send the people a test. He gave them a gift of awesome power, power distilled from the remains an earlier creation. The oil, coal, and gas would allow the people to fly through the air, to build great cities, and to perform other stupendous miracles. If the people were to use this gift justly and wisely, then they would be worthy of inheriting the Earth.

But the people used God's gift to build temples and great houses for a few while the many starved. They built to such excess that they destroyed much of Creation in the process; and their greed led them to make wars upon each other such as the world had never seen.

And so God said that he would take the Earth from Man since he had not been a good steward. He said that henceforth Man would live on an Ark, surrounded by the catastrophes he himself had wrought. He said: "Man is a builder. Let him then live in that which he has built."

And those who heard God's words and heeded them were afraid. They implored their brethren to cease from their building and their drilling and cutting and mining and burning lest they destroy even more of the Earth and make the Ark smaller still.

All of Heaven heard their cries and wept. The tears filled oceans and they rose. The ice melted and the seas rose higher and smote the land and many of the works of Man tumbled and were gone. There was great death and destruction and multitudes perished.

Finally a day came when those who were left looked upon each other and said: The Earth as we knew it is gone. It has been diminished and it is now only a small island in space. Let us open our hearts to each other and work together to preserve what is left to us. Our new world will be smaller than it was before, but now that we truly see that our home is an Ark, we will treasure every life form and greed will have no place here.

For related information:
Earth Ministry: www.earthministry.org

Center for a New American Dream's "Turn the Tide" program: www.newdream.org

Rocky Mountain Institute and the concept of "zero emissions design (ZED)": www.rmi.org

The Interfaith Climate Change Network: www.protectingcreation.org

National Religious Partnership for the Environment: www.nrpe.org

Leading us to a new reality, the story offers new choices. As we have seen with the response to Hurricane Katrina and other disasters, many people have opened their hearts to each other and many more have seen the terrible results of our government's corporate hard-heartedness.

In the coming years there will be ever-increasing op-

portunities to ask ourselves: Shall I be like Noah, concerned only with myself and my immediate family? Or shall I be like Moses, and participate in the struggle to lead the larger human community out of its moral wilderness? This choice involves more than soul salvation. It is an immensely practical one. Lifeboats won't be able to save the wholeness of Creation and there will be no way to patch up our planet without global cooperation. Noah and Moses don't speak to everyone. But there is a wealth of traditions to tap for sacred art that will help us understand that with global warming and its aftermath we shall reap what we sow. Storytellers, start your engines.

—Excerpted from www.oriononline.org, March/April 2006

Kelpie Wilson is the environment editor for truthout.org. Her first novel, *Primal Tears*, has been published by North Atlantic Books.

Bill McKibben on SkyMall offerings:

If there's any piece of writing that defines our culture, I submit it's the SkyMall catalogue, available in the seat-back pocket of every airplane in North America. To browse its pages is to understand the essential secret of American consumer life: we've officially run out not only of things that we need, but even of things that we might plausibly desire.

Here are just a few available items:

- ▶ a \$4,000 massaging recliner with voice control, synthetic leather...and thirty-three airbags;
- ▶ the closet organizer trouser rack to keep twenty pairs of slacks neatly hung and readily accessible...;
- ▶ a giant-capacity mailbox that holds up to two weeks of mail (catalogues, presumably);
- ▶ a \$300 case that will shake dozens of watches all with "intermittent timers and directional controls" to mimic the action of a human wrist and hence keep them fully wound at all times;
- ▶ a digital barbecue fork that I can stick into my burger or steak and receive a readout indicating whether it is currently rare, medium, or well done;
- ▶ a dishwasher-safe Toastabag into which I can simply place a slice of cheese between two slices of bread and pop it in my toaster...

There are a few problems SkyMall can't solve (the lack of community that comes when you live in a giant stuff-filled house marooned on its half-acre lot, the lack of security that comes when your country is spending its money on remote-control golf balls instead of, say, healthcare and retirement savings)...

But this kind of talk sounds tired, clichéd, left over from the '60s. Everyone knows that the most important thing we can do is grow the economy. When you buy the Designated Driver, a faux golf club that you store in

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RUSTLE THE LEAF™

BY PONCÉ & WRIGHT

TO THOSE
WHO REALLY CARE
ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT,
IT'S AN ISSUE OF
RIGHT VS. WRONG...



TO THOSE
WHO DON'T,
IT'S AN ISSUE OF
RIGHT VS. LEFT.

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—www.oriononline.org

Paper or plastic, cloth or disposable?

You've just unloaded your groceries onto the checkout stand. Paper or plastic? — the inevitable question. For those concerned about environmental impacts, there's not an easy answer.

Faced with this and other similar questions at every turn, it's easy to begin to feel disempowered or overwhelmed. Which is precisely why the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) wrote their excellent book *The Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices*. Some choices have a huge impact on the environment while others are of negligible importance. The book informs consumers about those everyday decisions that most significantly affect the environment.

After conducting extensive research, UCS identified the following "Priority Actions for American Consumers":

Transportation:

1. Choose a place to live that reduces the need to drive.
2. Think twice before purchasing another car.
3. Choose a fuel-efficient, low-polluting car.
4. Set concrete goals for reducing your travel.
5. Whenever practical, walk, bicycle, or take public transportation.

Food:

6. Eat less meat.
7. Buy certified organic produce.

Household Operations:

8. Choose your home carefully.
9. Reduce the environmental costs of heating and hot water.
10. Install efficient lighting and appliances.
11. Choose an electricity supplier offering renewable energy.

The authors go on to point out that "Just three of the household activity areas—food, household operations, and transportation—account for the majority of our environmental impact. The reason is not simply that peo-

ple spend more money in these areas than in others.

We spend as much on medical care and personal items as we do on household operations, yet the latter produce six times the emissions of greenhouse gases. Rather, something about the way these services are provided or used results in a much greater impact on the environment."

That "something about the way these services are provided or used" is often related to how energy is used. In our current fossil-fuel based energy system, energy use is a *primary* contributor to global warming...

Back at the grocery checkout stand. Ideally, you've brought your cloth bags. If not, though, with the help of the Union of Concerned Scientists, you can see that the more important questions are: "How did you get to the store: efficient automobile, walking bussing?" and "Where did the food you are purchasing come from, and was it grown organically?"

—from *The Cry of Creation: A Call for Climate Justice, An Interfaith Study Guide on Global Warming*, by Michael Schut & Tanya M. Barnett, www.earthministry.org

(McKibben, continued from page 4)

your bag to dispense forty-eight ounces of cold beverages, then you grow the economy. No doubt about it. ... Only a real jerk or a Christian or something would point out that there might possibly be items in this world that it would make more sense to spend our money on. (Insecticide-impregnated bednets to stop the spread of malaria run about five dollars. If only they came in self-erecting pastel versions that would also rouse you out of bed with gentle nature sounds.)

—Excerpted from *www.oriononline.org*, March/April 2006.

Bill McKibben is an *Orion* columnist and the author of eight books. Among his many honors he counts Guggenheim and Lyndhurst fellowships. He lives in Vermont, where he is writer-in-residence at Middlebury College.

Justice for immigrants:

As you prepare to contact our senators over the next two weeks to encourage them to continue to make progress in fashioning a comprehensive solution to the immigration crisis, bolster your resolve by considering these “myths” about immigration and then the facts:

Immigrants don’t pay taxes:

- Immigrants pay taxes, in the form of income, property, sales, and taxes at the federal and state level. As far as income tax payments go, sources vary in their accounts, but a range of studies find that immigrants pay between \$90 and \$140 billion a year in federal, state, and local taxes. Undocumented immigrants pay income taxes as well, as evidenced by the Social Security Administration’s “suspense file” (taxes that cannot be matched to workers’ names and social security numbers), which grew by \$20 billion between 1990 and 1998.

(Source: http://www.immigrationforum.org/about/articles/tax_study.htm)

Immigrants come here to take welfare:

- Immigrants come to work and reunite with family members. Immigrant labor force participation is consistently higher than native-born, and immigrant workers make up a larger share of the U.S. labor force (12.4%) than they do the U.S. population (11.5%). Moreover, the ratio between immigrant use of public benefits and the amount of taxes they pay is consistently favorable to the U.S. In one estimate, immigrants earn about \$240 billion a year, pay about \$90 billion a year in taxes, and use about \$5 billion in public benefits. In another cut of the data, immigrant tax payments total \$20 to \$30 billion more than the amount of government services they use.

(Source: “Questioning Immigration Policy – Can We Afford to Open Our Arms?”, Friends Committee on National Legislation Document #G-606-DOM, January 25, 1996. <http://www.fas.org/pub/gen/fcnl/immigra.html>)

Immigrants send all their money back to their home countries:

- In addition to the consumer spending of immigrant households, immigrants and their businesses contribute \$162 billion in tax revenue to U.S. federal, state, and local governments. While it is true that immigrants remit billions of dollars a year to their home countries, this is one of the most targeted and effective forms of direct foreign investment.

(Source: <http://www.cato.org/research/articles/griswold-020218.html>.)

Most immigrants cross the border illegally

- Around 75% of today’s immigrants have legal permanent (immigrant) visas; of the 25% that are undocumented, 40% overstayed temporary (non-immigrant) visas.

(Source: Department of Homeland Security (<http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/index.htm>))

Immigrants don’t want to learn English or become Americans:

- Within ten years of arrival, more than 75% of immigrants speak English well; moreover, demand for English classes at the adult level far exceeds supply. Greater than 33% of immigrants are naturalized citizens; given increased immigration in the 1990s, this figure will rise as more legal permanent residents become eligible for naturalization in the coming years. The number of immigrants naturalizing spiked sharply after two events: enactment of immigration and welfare reform laws in 1996, and the terrorist attacks in 2001.

(Source: American Immigration Lawyers Association, “Myths & Facts in the Immigration Debate”, 8/14/03. <http://www.aila.org/contentViewer.aspx?bc=17,142#section4>)

(Source: Simon Romero and Janet Elder, “Hispanics in the US Report Optimism” *New York Times*, (Aug. 6, 2003).

The war on terrorism can be won through immigration restrictions:

- No security expert since September 11th, 2001 has said that restrictive immigration measures would have prevented the terrorist attacks—instead, the key is effective use of good intelligence. Most of the 9/11 hijackers were here on legal visas. Since 9/11, the myriad of measures targeting immigrants in the name of national security have netted no terrorism prosecutions. In fact, several of these measures could have the opposite effect and actually make us less safe, as targeted communities of immigrants are afraid to come forward with information.

(Source: Associated Press/Dow Jones Newswires, “US Senate Subcommittee Hears Immigration Testimony”, Oct. 17, 2001.)

(Source: Cato Institute: “Don’t Blame Immigrants for Terrorism”, Daniel Griswold, Assoc. Director of Cato Institute’s Center for Trade Policy Studies (see: <http://www.cato.org/dailys/10-23-01.html>)

For more myths and answers: www.justiceforimmigrants.org

Board: Anna Jaklitsch, 650-327-0978, annajak@accesscom.com
Kay Williams, 650-328-2781, kaywill@pacbell.net

Bulletin: Kay Williams (April 23 and May 21)
Michelle Hogan (April 30, May 14 and 28)
Jane Bahr (May 7)

Community Builders: Barbara Kent, 323-0879
Michelle Hogan, 493-8452

Finance: Ed Hannibal, 321-0203, Judy Creek, 493-5371
Hospitality: Jim Davis, 328-2584, George Locke, 854-1539

Liturgy: John Arnold, 325-1421, jsaoso@earthlink.net
Sally Benson, 408-972-5843, red5@svpal.org

Membership: Mary Washburn, 650-327-3915

Spiritual Education:

Mary Coady, 650-261-9155, coady_94025@yahoo.com
Jim Davis, (650) 704-8002, Jim_Davis@pacbell.net

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.