



# Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 26, 2006

## Readings

*This week:*

2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23

Ephesians 2:4-10

John 3:14-21

*Next week:*

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 5:7-9

John 12:20-33

## Psalm

Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you! (*Ps. 137*)

## Today

Today's presider is Msgr. Eugene Boyle.

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, March 27, 7:30 p.m.

Liturgy Committee, place TBD

## From Thomas Merton

Here are some of the wrong notions of what faith is.

First of all, it is not an emotion, not a feeling. It is not a blind sub-conscious urge towards something vaguely supernatural. It is not simply an elemental need in man's spirit. It is not a feeling that God exists. It is not a conviction that one is somehow saved or „justified“ for no special reason except that one happens to feel that way. It is not something entirely interior and subjective, with no reference to any external motive. It is not something that bubbles up out of the recesses of your soul and fills you with an indefinable "sense" that everything is all right. It is not something so purely yours that its content is incommunicable. It is not some personal myth of your own that you cannot share with anyone else, and the objective validity of which does not matter either to you or God or anybody else.

But also it is not an opinion. It is not a conviction based on rational analysis. It is not the fruit of scientific evidence. You can only believe what you do not know. As soon as you know it, you no longer believe it, at least not in the same way as you know it. Faith is first of all an intellectual assent. It perfects the mind, it does not destroy it. It puts the intellect in possession of Truth which reason cannot grasp by itself....

—*Seeds of Contemplation*

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*

### **Urban Ministry needs help:**

Help Urban Ministry and Clara-Mateo Alliance fight hunger with a challenge grant from the Feinstein Foundation!

A portion of each dollar received and each item donated for Urban Ministry's food programs throughout the months of March and April will be matched by the Feinstein Foundation, a national organization determined to end hunger. (Not a 1:1 match)

This challenge grant comes at a crucial time as food support from Second Harvest has decreased and the

Downtown Food Closet is facing critical shortages.

Designate your check for "FOOD PROGRAMS" to help Urban Ministry fight hunger in our community and mail to InnVision at the address at the end of this article.



Needed food items include:

- ❖ Canned meats
- ❖ Canned vegetables
- ❖ Canned soups
- ❖ Canned fruits
- ❖ Pasta
- ❖ Canned beans
- ❖ Dry soups
- ❖ Cereals (hot & cold)
- ❖ Powdered milk
- ❖ Fresh produce

—Brooke Scharnke, Regional Director  
InnVision, Peninsula Programs  
P.O. Box 702, Palo Alto, CA 94302  
650-324-5357 [www.innvision.org](http://www.innvision.org)

### **Donation in honor of Jim Davis:**

Many thanks to the anonymous donor who gave a donation to TMC in honor of Jim Davis, former TMC Board member and co-president of the Board. Good thing Jim isn't going anywhere with pull like that!

### **Fr. Kiriti to talk April 21:**

Fr. Daniel Kiriti is coming to Palo Alto after Easter (April 18—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, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Joanne Hasegawa, François Jamati, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Kami Ladd, Carol Locke, Logan Magneso, Georgia Monsen, Stephanie Mullenix, Barbara Narewski, Joe Narewski, Lynne Owens, George Peinado, Nora Peniata, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, Rob Walker, Dolores Walsh, Fr. Tenny

### **Operation Rice Bowl:**

During Lent, we are called to give alms as a way to reach out to our brothers and sisters who are in need. The sacrificial contributions you make to Operation Rice Bowl provide concrete assistance to our neighbors around the world who struggle with hunger and poverty.

**What does the money do?** Your support helps families around the world through Catholic Relief Services' development projects.

75% of Rice Bowl proceeds come to Catholic Relief Services and help fund development projects designed to increase food security in communities in 40 countries around the world.

- Agriculture projects help farmers improve crop yields.
- Microfinance projects encourage the growth of small businesses.
- Mother and Child Health projects provide basic health and nutrition services.
- Education projects provide resources and training.
- HIV/AIDS projects support the local Catholic Church in communities around the world in addressing the many needs of people affected by this disease.

### **Where does the money go?**

Operation Rice Bowl is the Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services, the official overseas relief and development agency of the Catholic Community in the United States. 75% of contributions to Operation Rice Bowl come to CRS and help fund programs which positively affect tens of thousands of lives around the world. 25% of contributions support hunger and poverty alleviation efforts in dioceses in the United States.

The Diocese of San Jose has set up a grant process for local food banks and hunger alleviation programs. In 2005, they distributed \$8,000—its 25% of Operation Rice Bowl funds, through this program.

### **It's Envelope Sunday for TMC:**

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. Many thanks for all your support!



✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ *Lent 2006—Living simply: another view* ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿

...In my work as an anthropologist studying consumer issues, I have found it useful to think of the environment as more than air, land, and natural resources. Thinking about the consumer environment, from my perspective, requires also thinking about access to important resources: transportation, education, food, shelter, and increasingly, technology. The consumer environment also includes accessibility of businesses and services, whether social, medical, artistic, or electronic. This approach does not utterly ignore more traditionally defined environmental issues, but my aim is to contextualize choices and options in ways that can account for poverty as well as abundance -- and to explore how those two extremes are connected....

Simplifying, for the wealthy, has become a task, a burden, an end in itself. (When I say "the wealthy," I mean nearly every citizen of every wealthy nation.) For so many people in wealthy worlds, simplifying has also become an industry which, ironically, turns out an array of alluring products: toxin-free paint so wholesome it's known as "milk"; clothing woven from hemp fibers; even the fat, glossy magazine *Real Simple*. But conscious simplicity is not what it appears to be. After all, Thoreau's idyll at Walden Pond was made possible by the fact that someone else did his laundry. Which is to say: for most people, living simply is a luxury, and one that still ends up consuming a great deal -- whether new categories of goods, other people's labor, or both.

While the wealthy struggle to shovel out from under their possessions and prepossessions, the poor must struggle on a daily basis to acquire much of anything of value -- including flesh on their bones. This is most evident, perhaps, in places like Kenya or India or Brazil, where cadres of children scramble over mountains of garbage to find bits and pieces from which they can cobble together the stuff of life. In the U.S., poverty is usually not quite so nightmarishly stark, or indeed so visible. Still, with the official poverty level at a yearly income of \$19,307 for a family of four, the environmental problems facing the poor in the United States are vast -- and they don't have much to do with managing the stresses of overabundance.

What is abundantly clear is that for the poor, access to most resources is limited at best, the result of a combination of financial limits and larger social disinvestment. While wealthier households struggle to balance schedules overloaded with activities and commitments, the poor often spend an inordinate amount of time negotiating basic needs. The limited nature of their consumer environment means that everyday tasks take much longer, and usually end up costing more. Given that low-income neighborhoods are unlikely to house large supermarkets, consumers are faced either with buying higher-priced and often lower-quality goods in local markets, or figuring out some way to travel the miles to the supermarket and back, often with kids in tow. Imagine grocery shopping for a family of four using only a bus or train. Distances become exponentially more important when relying on public transportation's service schedules, routes, holidays, and glitches. (Interestingly, while contributing far less than "their share" to problems like automobile emissions, the poor model at least one portion of a solution, being the large bulk of public-transportation users. What they teach all of us, however, is that it is impossible to rely on public transportation and manage, as many well-off families do, to be in nearly three places almost simultaneously.)

Powerful folk beliefs in the United States portray the poor as profligate, undisciplined consumers. In fact, those who have carefully studied the day-to-day purchases and economic behavior of the poor know better, and the poor know best of all how carefully their resources are managed, bartered, exchanged. Without access to the supersized reservoirs of credit that the middle class can amass through both property and little plastic cards, the poor are often laid flat by large expenses: a refrigerator, a car, a hospital stay. Savings accounts, retirement funds, mad money -- these are not options, not so much because the poor are incapable of thinking about these things, but because, as one anthropologist described it, "there's a lot of month left at the end of the money."...

As I sit at my kitchen table with my own daughter, a girl whom I urge to fashion homemade valentines and who loves to make biscuits from scratch, I am keenly aware that my sense of too-muchness is itself a sign of my privilege and my wealth -- even if, like many, I experience this wealth as loss and emptiness. I am aware that the array of choices before me is itself a form of excess, of extravagance....

I once heard it said that the United States is the wealthiest nation on the globe and in all of human history. Our history, as Americans, is one where swaths of ancient forests were stripped for timber and replaced by mirage-like forests of choices -- forests through which many of us wander in the hopes of finding a clearing, space to breathe without choking. Perhaps we ought better to seek to uproot these trees.

Changing the world is a pretty tall order...To combat an environment that gives me too many choices to count, I try to fight -- not so much by changing all my choices, but by helping to make choices available to those who have too few.

—by *Elizabeth Chin*, associate professor in the department of critical theory and social justice  
at Occidental College in Los Angeles, in *Grist Magazine*, March 1, 2006.

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## ***Immigration reform turmoil continues:***

The Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Senator Arlen Specter R-PA., is currently considering the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006. The committee has met twice to consider the bill, but has only made progress on Titles I and II on border and interior enforcement. The most controversial issues, such as the criminalization of the undocumented and those who assist them, the temporary worker program, and the fate of the undocumented population, is being taken up now.

**It is crucial that you contact your Senators this week to ask them to support comprehensive immigration reform**, most particularly an earned legalization program for the 11 million undocumented in the country. As background, Senator Frist has stated he will bring enforcement-only legislation (most likely Titles I, II, and III of the legislation) to the floor the week of March 27 if the Committee does not report a bill to the floor. Such a move would diminish chances that comprehensive immigration legislation will be considered during the current Congress.

We urge you to contact the Senators with a two-part message: 1) Only a comprehensive immigration reform bill is acceptable and the Senate Judiciary Committee should be given time to complete its work, and 2) Please support an amendment to the bill which would provide an earned legalization program for the 11 million undocumented in the country. (An earned legalization program would provide temporary work visas for currently undocumented. It would require them to pay a fine, begin learning English, and work for six years before becoming eligible for a green card/permanent residency)

Our own **Senator Diane Feinstein** is a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee; **call her office at (202) 224-3841**.

—*Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope, The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform*  
[www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

## ***TMC Anniversary Committee invites you:***



The 10th anniversary party celebrating TMC's life and work is getting closer: 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.

## ***Jesus, the Bible, and homosexuality:***

On **Saturday, April 1, 7:30 p.m.**, attend a lecture and book signing on the new book, *Jesus, The Bible, and Homosexuality: Explore the Myths, Heal the Church*, at St. John's Presbyterian Church, 2727 College Avenue, Berkeley. Author Dr. Jack Rogers' profoundly challenging new book has just been published by Westminster John Knox Press. Rogers, Professor of Theology Emeritus at San Francisco Theological Seminary and Moderator of the 213th General Assembly, spent seven years reviewing the literature on both sides of the issue, including many original church documents.

"I want to heal the church," Dr. Rogers says, "I believe that Jesus and the Bible call us to treat all of our members equally."

Rogers' book explores the moral and spiritual issues of how the church lives up to the highest ideals of Jesus Christ, and how we can most faithfully act according to the central principles of the Bible.

St. John's is a progressive church that addresses local, national and international concerns. Its members strive to promote the mission of inclusive love and invite all people to work together on behalf of peace and justice. Contact: Nelly Coplan, Administrator, St. John's Presbyterian Church, 2727 College Avenue, Berkeley; <http://www.stjohns.presbychurch.net>

## ***Eco Spirituality: Prayer and Reflection:***

On **Saturday, April 1**, Pax Christi will sponsor a day of prayer, reflection, and discussion on the relationship between our spirituality and protection of the world around us. Mercy High School, 3250 19th Ave., SF, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, facilitated by **Sr. Patricia Ryan, RSM**. Soup lunch provided. Mass celebrated at 2:00 pm. Ed Ehmke (650-326-7988, [ehmke@stanford.edu](mailto:ehmke@stanford.edu)).

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Kay Williams, 650-328-2781, [kaywill@pacbell.net](mailto:kaywill@pacbell.net)

Bulletin: Kay Williams (March 26 and April 23)  
Michelle Hogan (April 2 and 16)  
Jane Bahr (April 9)

Community Builders: Barbara Kent, 323-0879  
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Finance: Ed Hannibal, 321-0203, Judy Creek, 493-5371  
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Bulletin submissions must be e-mailed by Friday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. For Kay, e-mail [kaywill@pacbell.net](mailto:kaywill@pacbell.net) or (650) 328-2781. For Michelle, e-mail [myhogan@earthlink.net](mailto:myhogan@earthlink.net) or (650) 493-8452. For Jane, e-mail [bahrjunior@comcast.net](mailto:bahrjunior@comcast.net), or (650) 967-8246.