



26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 1, 2006

Readings

This week:

Numbers 11:25-29

James 5:1-6

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

Next week:

Genesis 2:18-24

Hebrews 2:9-11

Mark 10:2-16

Psalm

The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart. (*Psalm 19*)

Today

Today's presider is Reverend Jose 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 TMC meetings this week.

From Thomas Merton

Where there is carrion lying, meat-eating birds circle and descend. Life and death are two. The living attack the dead, to their own profit. The dead lose nothing by it. They gain too, by being disposed of. Or they seem to, if you must think in terms of gain and loss. Do you then approach the study of Zen with the idea that there is something to be gained by it? This question is not intended as an implicit accusation. But it *is*, nevertheless, a serious question. Where there is a lot of fuss about "spirituality," enlightenment" or just "turning on," it is often because there are buzzards hovering around a corpse. This hovering, this circling, this descending, this celebration of victory, are not what is meant by the Study of Zen—even though they may be a highly useful exercise in other contexts. And they enrich the birds of appetite.

Zen enriches no one. There is no body to be found. The birds may come and circle for a while in the place where it is thought to be. But they soon go elsewhere. When they are gone, the "nothing," the "no-body" that was there, suddenly appears. That is Zen. It was there all the time but the scavengers missed it, because it was not their kind of prey.

—*Zen and the Birds of Appetite*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Kenan Osborne, OFM, in Palo Alto in October: Dead Sea Scrolls speaker October 21:



The Adult Spirituality Ministry of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Palo Alto is pleased to announce a three- evening Parish Mission, October 9 – 10 – 11, at St. Albert the Great Church. 7-9 pm. It will be presented by Fr. Kenan Osborne, OFM, an internationally known

teacher, educator and theologian. Currently he is a Professor Emeritus from the Graduate School of Theology in Berkeley. A spirited and animated teacher, students at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley have been crowding into his popular classes since 1967. In recent years he has traveled and taught in mainland China, learning the language in order to unite the Christian ways of thinking with Asian ways of thought. Having served in every conceivable capacity from local chaplain to international lecturer, Fr. Kenan Osborne has in the truest sense been the bridge between the old, pre-Vatican II world and the contemporary global village we now inhabit.

Topics: “Becoming Christ bearers in today’s culture”; “How to grow in Christian spirituality for a healthy life”; “How to develop a conscience today”.

Information: Susan Adams at (650) 321-5565,
Deacon Carl Bunje at (650) 327-8727.

Justice reflection for today:

*“Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets.”
Numbers 11.*

Catholic Charities story: A 17-year-old orphaned refugee girl from Iran found a loving foster family, is learning English, attends high school, and is a big sister to the family’s very excited 10-year-old daughter.

Catholic Charities opportunity: Become a foster parent for an Unaccompanied Refugee Minor. Call Coleen Gulbraa, 408-325-5159, for information.

John Duryea sermons:

Roberta Kehret is hoping someone has also saved the transcripts of Fr. John Duryea’s sermons from the 70s. She is hoping to launch a retrospective of his homilies in the form of a discussion group that would read John’s sermons and see how they sound today and how they resonate with our thinking about church and God. Please contact Roberta if you have any copies of the Duryea homilies: (650) 494-1488, robkehr@yahoo.com.



Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, will be speaking on the Dead Sea Scrolls in Palo Alto on **Saturday, October 21, 7:30 p.m., at Lucie Stern Community Center Hall, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.** Get a head start on preparing for this en-

gaging and erudite amateur Biblical archaeologist by reading his most popular book, *The Mystery and Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Mr. Shanks has made it his life’s work to bring the complete Dead Sea Scrolls to the world through his magazines, books, and conferences.

Don’t miss this rare opportunity to be in discussion with Mr. Shanks.

[Free will offering of \$20 suggested; no one turned away.]

Justice speakers October 7:

Cindy Sheehan and Amy Goodman ... Together!

Saturday, October 7, 2006 @ 6:30 p.m., Spangenberg Theatre, 780 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto.

These two women will present their new books:

Peace Mom, A Mother’s Journey through Heartache to Activism, by Cindy Sheehan, and
Static, Government Liars, Media Cheerleaders, and the People Who Fight Back, by Amy Goodman.

\$10 ~ \$25: Sliding scale admission.

Proceeds benefit Peninsula Peace and Justice Center and Democracy Now!

Please note:

Correction to TMC 2006 Directory:

Mary Connors’ correct home phone is: 650-321-6778.



Please remember in your prayers this week Elaine, Msgr. Gene Boyle, Chloe Chang, Joanne Claus, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Joanne Hasegawa, François Jamati, Joseph Kehret, Alicia Kot, Joan Kuhn, Kami Ladd, Chris Lippard & family, Carol Locke, Maureen Mooney, Stephanie Mullenix, Joe Narewski, Lynne Owens, Hayden Pastorini, George Peinado, Nora Peniata, Ramona Rocha, Anne Rush, Norm and Jane Schirle, Dolores Walsh, and T. J. Wooten.

[Add or subtract names from this list by e-mailing the three Bulletin editors: Jane Bahr, Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams.]

COMMUNITY FORUM

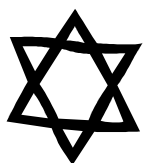
Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Celebrating interfaith unity, September—October, 2006

“The truth is that interreligious contacts, together with ecumenical dialogue, now seem to be obligatory paths in order to ensure that many painful wounds inflicted over the course of centuries will not be repeated, and indeed that any such wounds still remaining will soon be healed. Your work contributes to the fulfillment of what I have always considered a very important part of my ministry: the fostering of more friendly relations with the followers of other religious traditions.”

—John Paul II. *Message to the Pontifical Commission for Interreligious Relations*, November 1992

October 1-2: Yom Kippur: A Jewish Holiday



Yom Kippur means “Day of Atonement” and it completes the 10-day period of reconciliation that begins the Jewish New Year (“Rosh Hashannah”).

During a series of solemn prayer services at the synagogue, Jewish people

come together to remember and ask forgiveness for their sins against God in the past year, and they also focus on correcting wrongful actions with others. Most of the day is spent in the synagogue, where the people use the *machzor*, or prayer book.

The opening prayer of the service, *Kol Nidrei*, meaning “All Vows,” is recited three times before sunset, with the voices getting louder each time. The people, in recognition of their moral frailty, ask God to annul any personal vows that they might make to God in the next year. Then, a confession of sins of the community takes place. The last hour of service involves a final opportunity for repentance. The services end with a long blast on the *shofar*, a Jewish musical instrument from Biblical times made of rams’ horns. In some congregations, worshipers choose to stay at the synagogue and break the fast with a celebration.

Yom Kippur is considered a “complete Sabbath,” meaning that no work can be performed during this time and a fast from food and drink begins before sunset and ends after nightfall. The color white is often worn during this holiday to symbolize purity and remind Jews that their sins can be made as white as snow. Yom Kippur marks God’s decision to forgive everyone who repents for sins of the past and reminds us all that it is never too late to transform one’s inner self and also to respond to the injustices in society. God’s mercy on Yom Kippur can inspire us to have mercy on one another and to believe in the goodness of all human beings; all have the potential to be transformed. #

Sept. 24-Oct 23: Ramadan: A Muslim Holiday



“Allah” in Arabic

Ramadan is celebrated during the 9th month of the Muslim Calendar and this year the month of Ramadan lasts from Sept. 24 to Oct. 23 on our calendar. Ramadan is the month in which Muslims believe the Qu’ran—the holy book of Islam—was first re-

ceived by the prophet Muhammad in Mecca. It is believed that the Angel Gabriel showed Muhammad the verses of the Qu’ran during this time, the first revelation being on the *Lailat ul-Qadr*, or Night of Power, which is celebrated on the 27th night of the month. Because Ramadan is a very holy month for Muslims, they fast, or refrain from eating or drinking and from any sexual activity from sunrise to sunset during the 30 days of Ramadan. During the hours of fasting, Muslims try to particularly focus on worship, reading the Qu’ran, giving to the poor, purifying themselves, and doing good deeds. Many people read the entire Qu’ran, broken into thirty sections, during the month of Ramadan. Fasting helps Muslims to develop sympathy for the less fortunate and learn to appreciate God’s goodness and charity is encouraged, especially at the end of Ramadan.

Fasting during Ramadan helps Muslims feel close to God, practice self-discipline, and reflect on their lives and on the plight of the poor who struggle for food every day. Ramadan also emphasizes the importance of the community of Islam. Families and community members join together to break the fast in the spirit of generosity and good will. Finally, Ramadan, with its focus on charity and goodwill toward humankind, can be a great way for people of different faiths to ignore their differences, especially during this time when the U.S. continues its war in the Muslim country of Iraq. #

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. If you want to know more about the Merton Center, ask around at coffee, or contact one of the people listed on page 4.

Sr. Helen PreJean: "On Values Voting"

When voting, I look for political candidates with a proven record of support for certain values. I also look for cautionary signs that lead me to avoid a candidate like the plague. What are those values and those warning signs? Here's a working list:

* I look for candidates whose spiritual beliefs harmonize with the practical way they pursue policies and programs for a sustainable lifestyle with Earth and justice for people, especially destitute people and minorities.

* I'm wary as all get out of candidates who talk a blue streak about God, who, they claim, favors the U.S. as the "elect," invested with divine authority to destroy "evil doers" such as Muslim terrorists or convicted felons on death row.

* I hate seeing politicians use God and religion to invoke fear of gay people, which quickly translates into prejudice and abrogation of their civil rights....

* I trust candidates who see our national budget as a "moral document", as Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr, referred to it, and who are outraged by the \$400+ billions spent annually on instruments of destruction and war. Every month we pour \$8 billion into the war in Iraq. Think what could happen if we poured those resources into reinvigorating public education, libraries, and the arts; universal health insurance; affordable housing; and alternatives to incarceration. Presently two million people are incarcerated in the U.S., more, per capita, than any other nation, and over half of those are imprisoned for non-violent crimes.

* I don't trust candidates who claim to be "pro life" simply because they publicly state their opposition to abortion. What good is that if they do not also work vigorously and consistently to create social conditions in which healthy babies are born, children cared for, and families thrive?

* I look for "pro-life" politicians to list "eradication of poverty" as a top priority. Poverty in our nation is on the rise. During the last six years those living at or below the poverty line in the U.S. rose 17 percent. To allow even the existence of poor people in this rich nation, much less poverty on the increase, is totally unworthy of us as Americans and certainly not pro-life.

* I *greatly fear* candidates who advocate turning over responsibility for our poor and needy to religious volunteers and so-called "faith-based initiatives" while diminishing government's rightful and necessary responsibility for the social welfare of all of our citizens. The code word here to watch for is "tax cuts," especially when tax cuts are weighted to benefit the wealthy.

* I look for candidates who see us as global citizens, respecting and promoting international agreements which address our planetary crises (global warming, deforesta-

tion, depletion of potable water) and human rights (the Geneva Conventions, the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the U.N. Convention against Torture). In the wake of 9/11 we desperately need political leaders who turn to dialogue and diplomacy as first and necessary steps for building peace rather than turning immediately to dropping bombs and sending in the troops as the way to get our "enemies" to submit to our demands at the negotiating table.

Finally, I look for candidates who have the wisdom of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who teaches that we will never win the "war against terror" by using violence. Such a war is un-winnable, he says, "as long as we have conditions in the world that make people desperate. When you are a father and you see your child go to bed hungry, something happens to you."

—9/27/06: *Sojourners Online*

Sister Helen Prejean is a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille and a prominent anti-death penalty advocate whose work was featured in the film *Dead Man Walking*. Her most recent book is *The Death of Innocents: An Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions*.

American piety in the 21st century:

The Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion, part of Baylor University in Waco, Texas (<http://www.baylor.edu/isreligion>), has compiled findings from an extensive survey on religious beliefs in America. Field work was completed by the Gallup Organization. It plumbs all facets of American religion and spirituality in depth. They assert that previous surveys have presented religion in America as predominantly homogenous or "monolithic." That is, we all believe in God in the same way. However, their survey tries to dig deeper into the complexity and uniqueness of American religion in the 21st century, including even data from our pop culture habits, such as *The DaVinci Code*, paranormal belief, and Joan of Arcadia. It's an interesting study with lots of graphs and charts for the visually-minded.

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

Bulletin: Kay Williams (October 1 and November 5)
Michelle Hogan (October 15 and 29)
Jane Bahr (October 8 and 22)

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 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, or (650) 967-8246.