

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating August 13, 2017

Pax Christi San Antonio does not solicit donations; however, anyone wishing to join should make a donation to Pax Christi U.S.A. and notify Maria Tobin, matob@aol.com, to receive email messages sent to members. Pax Christi International was founded in 1945 with the encouragement of Bishop Pierre Marie Théas of Montauban, France, by Marthe Dortel Claudot, as a Christian lay organization dedicated to preventing a repetition of the savagery of the twentieth century's world wars.

Editorial

After the calendar, the *Third Reading* commentary is based on the gospel reading for the nineteenth Sunday in ordinary time. Tom Keene's poem is *Sister Aimee*.

Two items from the July Marianist Social Justice Collaborative's *Justice Jottings* arrived in my electronic mail, concerning our government's treatment of refugees—specifically, Christians who had been persecuted in Indonesia. Richard Sroczyński's brief account is based on his personal experience. This is followed by an editorial from the New Jersey *Star-Ledger*, first posted on June 24 and updated July 5.

Calendar

Monday August 7, 3:00 PM, film: *Revolution*. The film “looks to the evolution of life and past revolutions in order to uncover the secrets necessary to save our world. Joining the activists and youth fighting to save their future, Stewart's journey of hope is startling, beautiful and provocative, revealing this crisis as an opportunity for everyone to become a hero.” Christus Heritage Hall, Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Thursday August 10, 6:00pm-8:30pm, Dine out to support Headwaters. The mission of Headwaters, a non-profit sponsored Earth care ministry of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, is to preserve, restore, and celebrate the rich natural, cultural, historical, spiritual, and educational values of the headwaters of the San Antonio River. At The Hoppy Monk, 1010 N. Loop 1604 (east-bound service road, between Stone Oak Parkway & U.S. 281). 15% of the bill will be donated. **Note:** Make reservations before August 4 at www.groupraise.com/events/33070.

Tuesday August 15, 6:30pm-9:00pm, Sierra Club Meeting: Justice-focused Environmental Movement in Texas. Bill Sinkin Eco Centro, 1802 N. Main Ave.

Tuesday August 15, 7:00pm, meeting of the San Antonio Sanctuary Network. First Unitarian Universalist Church, 7150 I-10 frontage road.

Saturday September 2, 10:00am-2:00pm, **in Austin**, Rally: Day of Resistance and Noncompliance with SB4, organized by Jolt Texas and Basta Texas. Texas State

Capitol, 1100 Congress Ave., Austin. More information:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1308974945890276/>

Tuesday September 5, 3:00pm, film, *Seed*, depict the struggle to defend the future of food. Christus Heritage Hall, Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Thursday September 7, 6:00pm-8:30pm. Performance: To Be Honest (Islam in American Politics). Dramatic readings from 2016 interviews with San Antonians about the perception of Islam in American politics. McNay Art Museum, 6000 N. New Braunfels.

Thursdays September 7, 14, 21, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Ron Rolheiser, O.M.I., "Simply Being Good-Hearted is Not Enough: A Spirituality of Charity, Justice, and Prophecy, parts 1, 2, & 3." \$60.00; 20% group discount. Contact Brenda, 210-341-1366, ext. 212. Oblate School of Theology, 285 Oblate Dr., Whitley Theological Center.

Wednesday September 13, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Lecture by Devery S. Anderson, "The Murder of Emmett Till." University of the Incarnate Word Concert Hall, 4301 Broadway. The concert hall is next to the Administration Building, facing Broadway at the Hildebrand-Broadway intersection. Parking is in front. It has sign ("Concert Hall") in front.

Saturday September 23, 9:00am-4:00pm, Rosalyn Falcon Collier and Rev. Ann E. Helmke, "P.E.A.C.E. Is Our Birthright." Experiential learning session. \$60.00; bring a bag lunch. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell Avenue (park off Shook). Registration through www.upcsa.org/registration. Info at 210-732-9927.

Wednesday September 27, 7:00pm, Abdullah Ahmed An-Na'im, "Religious Freedom and the Universality of Human Rights: A Modernist Islamic Perspective." Saint Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria, University Center, Conference Room A. Parking in Lots D and H.

Thursday September 28, Robert George, "Constitutional Structures, Civic Virtue, and Political v. Culture." Saint Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria, University Center, Conference Room A. Parking in Lots D and H.

Third Reading (Matthew 14:22-33)

In this reading Mathew inserts the allegory about Peter walking on the water into the brief narrative found in the *Gospel of Mark* about Jesus appearing on the Sea of Galilee during a windy storm. Wind is commonly symbolic of the Holy Spirit in Christian imagery. Jesus appearing and being mistaken for a ghost is a similar reference to the Easter experience. In such a context, Peter can be understood to represent the Church.

In the early era in which the *Gospel of Matthew* was composed, the Christian movement had spread beyond Palestine to lands where most people were not culturally Judean. Indeed, the Jewish War and destruction of Jerusalem had forced the followers of Jesus into new unfamiliar lands. This is “Peter walking on the water.” When the Spirit blew where it willed, Peter, the Church, was fearful and even had doubts.

One can think of the effort of Matteo Ricci to insert Christianity into Chinese culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the Church authorities found fault with his efforts and mandated that Christian missions had to convert non-European people into a Latinized version of Christian tradition. It took three centuries for that policy to be changed, at the Second Vatican Council. Ricci, not his authorities, is still remembered with appreciation in Chinese history; in 1987, when I was asked by Chinese scholars in Taipei what “Blasi” means in English and replied that it is an Italian name, they began to exclaim “Li Ma-to! Li Ma-to!” (Matteo Ricci!).

At the present time in the United States, the composition of the society and of the Christian churches is changing. Inevitably American Christian culture will change; indeed it is already changing. The challenge is not to be paralyzed by fear and doubt.

Poem

Sister Aimee

Age six, first grade.

Sister Aimee tells us of guardian angels:

Everyone has one.

You do too.

Give yours a name.

Move over in your seat.

Invite them to sit with you.

Remember, you are never alone.

Age eighty-two, retired and tired.

Moments of terror and bliss.

Years of delight and despair.

Decades of surplus and scarcity.

Yet never alone.

May the Voice of the Muse

be heard in our land

www.tomkeenesmuse.com

Personal Reflection on the Plight of Immigrants from Indonesia

Richard Sroczyński

Four men from our local Indonesian community have been in this country for 20 years--hardworking fathers and grandfathers, all of them; none with any criminal blemish. Each has dependents, many American born. Every year they have reported for their annual Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) check-ins.

In May, they were due again. They were most anxious and were accompanied by one of the elders of their church who assured them they should cooperate fully. During a long, friendly session, in which the accompanier was not even permitted to enter the room nor be on the same floor, the ICE officials asked and received lots of information about their dietary needs, their health, etc. Then, after they had gathered all this information, the tone changed and they demanded passports and said they were to be detained. That was the last they were seen. The person who had cooperated fully and brought his passport was taken to the airport and put on a plane to Indonesia.

We are beginning to organize various approaches and strategies to address this action for the remaining three if possible, but more so for the larger community.

I share all this to make it vividly clear this immigration crisis is here and now, life or death, for some persons and families. Yes we should accompany immigrants and refugees threatened with deportation, and maybe high profile clerics may help some cases--which is all to the good. But let's be 'eyes wide open' about the reality and realize much more will have to be done and much, much more is needed. Perhaps cooperating and accompanying are not always the best. I do know most of the folks active in helping here are saying that now we should advise immigrants not to report (which then potentially further criminalizes them) and to seek or accept sanctuary, potentially long term, if they can.

Thanks to Trump, a Father's Day without a father | Editorial

[Star-Ledger Editorial Board](#)

eletters@starledger.com

Take a moment tomorrow, at your barbecue or pancake breakfast, to remember a 13-year-old New Jersey boy spending Father's Day without his deported dad. Joel Massie, a Metuchen 7th grader and American citizen, will have no more happy Father's Days, thanks to President Trump's immigration agents. They just put his dad - a New Jersey resident for 16 years - on a plane to Indonesia, where he'd fled violence and religious persecution many years ago.

Arino Massie was put on a plane and immediately deported yesterday, after failing to win a reprieve from immigration authorities. He will likely be separated from his son, Joel, for the rest of his life. He's far from the only one. Despite the President's promise to target the "bad hombres," Trump has been deporting a record number of

harmless parents and longtime U.S. residents. He now says the "Dreamers," who arrived in the United States as children, will be spared. But he is still aggressively deporting their entire families. Arrests by federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement have shot up more than 40 percent under Trump, and more than half that increase was arrests of immigrants with no criminal history. N.J. lawmakers promised to help Arino Massie of Metuchen return to the U.S. from his native Indonesia.

We saw it in our own state this month, as Trump's agents put four Indonesian Christian men on planes back to the Muslim-majority country where they fled religious persecution up to 20 years ago. A place where Christians are still jailed for so-called blasphemy against Islam. These longtime New Jersey residents missed the deadline to apply for asylum and were ordered deported under the Obama administration, but ICE stayed its hand, allowing them to remain here because they were so clearly not a threat. That reprieve is now over, thanks to Trump. Left behind are their U.S. families: abandoned wives, daughters and sons who didn't even have a chance to say goodbye. Some are now without their primary breadwinner, their daily ride to school with grandpa, or his reliable pair of hands at home to help care for a four-month-old infant recovering from two heart surgeries.

Joel spoke haltingly about losing his father at a recent press conference in Washington, where he was supported by New Jersey's Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-6th Dist.) and Sen. Bob Menendez. "The rest of us are choked up as he's speaking, because we know what this will mean for him," recounted Rev. Seth Kaper-Dale, an immigrant advocate and Green Party gubernatorial candidate. But the boy's greatest fear was for his dad. "That really struck me," Kaper-Dale said. "I don't know when that changes -- when you start to realize that now it's hard to pay for rent; that now, when I get home from school, I'm alone."

Pallone, who was told by immigration authorities that the only way to protect these men in his district is through legislation, is now sponsoring a bill to allow Indonesians who arrived in the U.S. from 1997 until 2002 and missed the one-year deadline to re-apply for asylum - including those already deported. While we don't like the idea of carve-outs for specific immigrant groups, it's not unprecedented. A provision of a Senate immigration reform bill in 2013 would have made 5,000 visas available to immigrants born in Tibet and living in India or Nepal. China opposed recognizing them as refugees, and it was a legislative fix.

Pallone's bill is not specifically aimed at Christians, although their minority status is the reason they'd qualify for asylum here. Under the current administration, a broader bill that allowed any asylum applicant who missed the deadline to reapply would have even dimmer prospects. Imperfect as this is, the bill appears to be Joel's only hope of getting his father back. And it's hard to imagine a worse solution than Trump's deportations.

Links

Pax Christi International
<http://www.paxchristi.net/>

Pax Christi U.S.A.

<http://www.paxchristiusa.org>

Pax Christi Texas

<http://www.paxchristitexas.org>

Pax Christi San Antonio

<http://www.paxchristisa.org>

COPS / Metro Alliance

www.copsmetro.com/

Marianist Social Justice Collaborative

www.msic.net

Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, International JPIC Committee

<http://sacsvi.blogspot.com/>

San Antonio Peace Center

<http://www.sanantoniopace.center>

Interfaith Radio, (*Interfaith Voices*)

<http://www.interfaithradio.org/>

Texas Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty

www.txccedp.org