


Testimony
A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating December 29, 2019

Communications with the editor may be sent to j6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com. 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 Liturgical Reading reflections are based on readings for the Feast of the Holy Family. Tom Keene's poem is *We Metaphors*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. Following the poem is a letter from American faith leaders to the 2020 presidential candidates, calling on them to reorder the federal government's budgetary priorities.

Calendar

In Austin

Sunday January 19 (3rd Sunday of the month), 7:00pm, Pax Christi Austin meeting. Fr. Payne House, St. Ignatius Church, 126 Oltorf St.

Tuesday January 7, 9:00am-12:00pm, and **Saturday January 11**, 9:00am-12:00pm, discussion and plan for action, "Five Myths on Immigration." McCord Hall 204, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 100 E. 27th St. \$25, includes breakfast. Information: <https://www.austinseminary.edu/contact-lifelong-learning>

Monday January 20, 9:00am, Martin Luther King March, Festival and Food Drive. Short program at the MLK statue on the UT campus, followed by march to Huston-Tillotson University, where further activities are planned.

Thursday January 30, 12:30pm-1:30pm, discussion on "Colleges Must Choose: Pursue truth or Harmony/Social Justice." Read for the discussion the article at <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Are-Colleges-Failing/244544>. Fleck Hall 305, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress.

In El Paso

Fridays, 12:00pm-1:00pm, Pax Christi El Paso joins Border Peace Presence in front of the Federal Courthouse (corner of Campbell and San Antonio).

In Houston

Saturday January 11, 9:00am-11:30am, Prayer and Labyrinth Walk to End Human Trafficking. This is in observance of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day and commemoration of St. Josephine Bakhita, patroness of trafficking victims. Dominican Center for Spirituality, 6501 Almeda Rd. contact Ceil Roeger @713-440-3714 or croeger@domhou.org

Sunday January 19, 9:45am, "Voter Registration in the Civil Rights Movement and Today," Cherry Steinwender (Center for the Healing of Racism). Room 201, St. Philip Presbyterian Church, 4807 San Felipe.

Monday January 20, 10:00am, 26th Annual MLK Grande Parade begins at San Jacinto & Elgin St. Information: <http://www.mlkgrandeparade.org> or call 713-953-1633.

Friday January 24, 8:00am-9:00am, "Evangelicalism and Whiteness in the Age of Trump," Jessamin Birdsall (Ph.D. cand., Princeton U.), joining virtually. Lovett Hall, Suite 402 (accessible via bldg.. entrance C), Rice University. Information: Hayley Hemstreet, hjh2@rice.edu.

Tuesday January 28, 12:15pm-1:30pm, "Death of the Black Church: How Religious Diversity Erodes Racial Solidarity among African Americans," Jason Shelton (U. of Texas, Arlington). Kyle Morrow Room, Fondren Library, Rice University. Information: Shirley Tapscott, sht1@rice.edu.

Tuesday January 28, 7:00pm-8:30pm, panel discussion "Evangelical Politics," Richard Mouw (Fuller Theological Seminary), Jason Shelton (U. of Texas, Arlington), Janelle Wong (U. of Maryland). Sewell Hall 309, Rice University. Information: Hayley Hemstreet, jh2@rice.edu.

Saturday February 29, Racial Wealth and the Income Gap, presented by NETWORK. Dominican Center for Spirituality, 6501 Almeda Rd. Contact Ceil Roeger @713-440-3714 or croeger@domhou.org

In San Antonio

Friday January 10, 7:30am-9:00am, Dreamweek 2020 Opening Breakfast. Keynote speaker is Paul Rusesabagina, who hid refugees during the Rwanda genocide and founded the Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation to fight for human rights. \$65.00. Briscoe Western Art Museum, Jack Guenther Pavillion. 200 W. Market. <https://dreamweek.org/events/>

Sunday January 12, 4:00pm-6:30pm, panel discussion "Religion and Violence: It's Complicated," Roger Barnes (U. of Incarnate Word), Sajida Jalalzai (Trinity U.), Simran Singh (Union Seminary, NY), Derick Wilson (Ulster U., Northern Ireland, scholar-in-residence St. Philip's College). SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Free, but register by January 8 at <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration/>

Monday January 13, 7:00pm-8:30pm, Vigil for Interfaith Justice: Somebody's Hurting Our People and We Won't Be Silent Anymore. Main Plaza. Organized by Poor People's Campaign San Antonio.

Tuesday January 14, 6:00pm-7:30pm, "MLK: His Legacy of Resistance," Jewish Voice for Peace. Travis Park Church, 230 E. Travis Street.

Saturday January 18, 5:00pm mass, followed by dinner and social; 7:15 "Restorative Justice and Marianist Faith Communities," Rosalyn Collier. Holy Rosary Parish, 159 Camino Santa Maria. To attend the dinner, RSVP to SARAH.MARIANIST@gmail.com.

Thursday January 23, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Martin Luther King Commemorative Lecture, Robert D. Buyllard (Texas Southern University), scholar on the Environmental Justice Movement. Laurie Auditorium, Trinity University, One Trinity Place.

Tuesday January 28, 7:00pm, Lecture by Eboo Patel (Interfaith Youth Core). Jackson Auditorium, Weston Center, Texas Lutheran University, 1000 W. Court Street, Seguin.

Second Reading (Colossians 3:12-21)

This literary work, imitating the letters of St. Paul, turns to general exhortations to Christ-like behavior before ending with various greetings. At the end of the excerpt that is included in the Lectionary there is the controversial statement, “Wives, be subordinate to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love the wives and do not be embittered against them.” After references to how to act toward children and how children are to behave toward their fathers, the Lectionary leaves out “Slaves, in everything obey the masters....” The author is clearly writing from within a cultural context that no longer exists. Nevertheless there are fundamentalists who insist that the text of scripture is to be taken without any consideration of the context; before they were even called “fundamentalists,” they defended slavery. Today they still defend the subordination of wives.

Third Reading (Luke 2.41-52)

“And his parents went every year to Jerusalem for the Paschal Feast. And when he was twelve years old, they were going up at the feast as usual.... And after three days they found him in the Temple precincts sitting amidst the teachers listening to them, and questioning them....(A)nd his mother said to him, ‘Child, why did you do this to us?’ ...and he said to them, ‘Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be in the house of my father?’”

Luke leaves us clues that he was drawing a parallel with the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. It was the Paschal time. At age twelve, Jesus was ready for a transition of some kind. He was away three days.

Luke’s passage is occasioning in our thinking feelings and attitudes about Jesus. The *mind* about Jesus, how we are to regard him, is that we miss him, that we hope to find him, and that we cannot understand why he is absent, or seems absent, even when he is God with us. The fact that he became very much with us and then leaves, leaves us precisely how we ourselves are supposed to be for the time being. Our religion, the way that we are with him and he with us, is but a prelude. In order for him to *seem* as he really *is*, as an absence because of his dwelling in a house not of our making and beyond our understanding, is not only disquieting but humbling. And if it is too much for us, he will go down to Nazareth with us—for a time.

Poem

We Metaphors

The rabbi called himself a son of humanity
and gave out metaphors for himself and us:

A mother hen and her chicks
that we look out for the weak.

A gate that opens to all.

Bread that we nourish ourselves.

Wine that we in-spirit and inspire.

Shepherds who give their lives.

He showed us how heaven happens among us.

Tom Keene and Muse

August 26, 2019

Letter from Faith Leaders to 2020 Presidential Candidates

December 9, 2010

Dear 2020 Presidential Candidates,

As faith-based groups and local faith leaders, we see the challenges that our communities face up close. We also witness first-hand the growth and joy that can be nurtured through wise investments of our bountiful national resources. Our faith and daily experiences tell us that our nation does best when our taxpayer dollars are spent on proven interventions that help make our communities healthier, safer, and stronger—like educating children, caring for the sick, feeding the hungry, and building peace in communities torn by violence.

We are therefore deeply troubled by our federal budget's increasingly distorted emphasis on spending to fight and equip for war, at the expense of investments in our communities at home and our pursuit of peace abroad. We call on you to reverse this harmful trend and reduce military spending,

reinvesting our nation's resources in our communities and peacebuilding instead.

We represent a diversity of faith teachings on the question of when—and whether—the organized violence of war is morally acceptable. Where our faiths all agree is that war must never be a first resort or a mindless preference. The immediate effect of war and military violence, even when pursued with the aim of protecting others or ending wrongs, is to wreck, wound, and cut short lives. Faith calls on us to build, heal, and nurture.

With the July 2019 budget agreement, Congress voted to spend over half of the discretionary federal budget on war and today's military. With this decision, we see even more clearly how distorted our national priorities have become. Today the federal budget allocates over \$2 billion each day—more than \$1 million every minute—to spending on war, weapons, and the military. The budget agreement will increase spending on the military by at least \$20 billion over last year; just that increase is more than double the entire annual budget of the Environmental Protection Agency, and fully one-third of last year's total foreign aid and diplomacy budget.

While roughly 40 million people in the United States are not sure they can afford enough food for their family, Congress and the president have agreed to spend more than \$70 billion of our nation's resources on another year of fighting overseas wars. Salaries for the nation's teachers have fallen by 4.5% over the past decade, yet our latest budget devotes another \$9 billion for F-35 war planes. Veterans of our nation's wars are dying of suicide and drug overdose at alarming rates, yet Congress is poised to spend well over a trillion dollars to refurbish a nuclear weapons arsenal for a type of war that Ronald Reagan once said "cannot be won and must never be fought."

This misallocation of our tax dollars is a gross misrepresentation of our values. Our faith insists that spending ever more resources on the tools and threats of violence will not bring us true security. In order to be truly secure, our communities need a just peace built on the dignity and strength of education, healthcare, housing, nutrition, sustainable employment, and lasting conflict resolution. Instead, Congress has repeatedly put our tax dollars towards weapons and war—tools and actions that harm communities, rather than build them.

Over half a century ago, President Dwight D. Eisenhower reminded us of what our nation loses when it wastes its resources on the tools and business of war:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

Our faith calls on us to choose a better path today. Though varied in practice and theology, all of our various faith traditions call us to honor the sacred dignity of each person and to attend to the needs of society's most vulnerable people both in the United States and abroad. It is immoral to spend excessively on the weapons and conduct of war, especially at the cost of food for the hungry, healthcare for the sick, education for our children, and prevention of and recovery from violent conflict.

We urge you to call for significant cuts to our nation's military budget, for major reinvestments in our communities at home, and for a more peaceful approach to the world beyond.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists
American Friends Service Committee
Berkeley Friends Church
Christian Peacemaker Teams
Church of the Brethren
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Conference of Superiors of Men (Catholic)
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Disciples Center for Public Witness
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Priests of the Sacred Heart,
US Province
Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice
Marquette University Center for Peacemaking
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Mountain View Friends Meeting Peace & Justice Committee
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund
National Council of Churches
Passionist Solidarity Network
Pax Christi Metro DC-Baltimore
Pax Christi USA
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians)
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Sisters of Mercy NH
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice Team
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

Faith Leaders:

Pastor Adam Ulm
Rabbi Alexis Pearce
Rev. Amy Yoder McGloughlin
Pastor Andrew Duffey
Dr. Anne S. Nash
Arlen Daleske
Aura Kanegis
Fr. Bill Remmel, SDS
Rabbi Brant Rosen
Brent Ridley
Brian McLauchlin
Bruce Hodel Thron-Weber, Quaker Minister
Carol Blythe
Carol Dague
Charles Simpson
Chester McCoy
Rev. Christy Dowdy
Claire M. Cohen
Damon Motz-Storey
Rev. Daniel Dale
David Horvath
Rev. David J Poirier, SA

Rev. David J. Theroux, SSE
David Robinson
Brother Edward Driscoll,CFX
Sister Eileen Gannon
Rev. Emily Heitzman
Mr. Eric Wright, Quaker
Rev. Gregory Davidson Laszakovits
Rabbi Hannah Spiro
Reverend Ignatius Harding OFM, Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Triangle
Rev. Jay Wittemeyer
Rev. Jennifer Hosler
Rev. John Converset
John G Deikis
Rev. Dr. John Patrick Colatch
Rev. John Peeters, CSV
Johnny Zokovitch
Fr. Joseph Monahan, T.O.R.
Fr. Joseph P. Keenan, S.T.
Joyce Ajlouny, General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee
Ms Judy Danielson, Quaker
Keith Barton
L B Parker, M.Ed, MA
Rev. Lauren Seganos Cohen
Liz Baker, Clerk of Sacramento Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of
Friends
Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis
Lou Gordh
Louise Neal
Lucia Kalinosky, Quaker
Lucille Mostello, M.D.M.
Elizabeth Ullery Swenson,
Pastor Marla Allred
Br. Michael Gosch, CSV
Rev. Michael Neuroth
Rev. Dr. Nathan Hosler
Niels de Terra
Rev. Paul L. Boling
Dr. Paula R. Rhodes
Rebecca Anderson
Rev. Amanda North
Rev. Sandra L. Strauss

Minister Sarah Nahar
The Rev. Scott Lipscomb
Rev. Shawna Bowman
Rev. Timothy Heishman
Rev. Timothy J Hickey
Tomi Nagai-Rothe
Rev. Valerie Showalter
Zach Schroeder

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 Dallas
<http://www.Paxchristidallastx.org>

Pax Christi San Antonio
<http://www.paxchristisa.org>

Marianist Social Justice Collaborative
www.msjc.net

Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, International JPIC Committee
<http://saccvi.blogspot.com/>

San Antonio Peace Center
<http://www.sanantonioplace.center>

Texas Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty
www.txccedp.org

Dialogue Institute of San Antonio

www.thedialoginstitute.org/san-antonio/

Climate Change

www.creation-care.com

NowCastSA

www.nowcastsa.com/