


Testimony
A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating March 1, 2020

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 First Sunday of the Lenten Season. Tom Keene's poem is *Earth and Sun*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is Tom's essay, *Ego and Soul: A Love Story*.

Calendar

In Austin

Thursday March 5, 12:30pm-1:30pm, discussion, "Laws Treating a Fetus as a Person and the Woman Less of One." Fleck Hall 305, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress. Discussion
article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/05/opinion/letters/fetus-abortion-law.html>

Monday March 9, 6:30pm, video, *Reconstruction: America After the Civil War* (part 3), Family Life Center, Holy Cross Church, 1110 Concho St.

Sunday March 15 (3rd. Sunday of the month), 7:00pm, Pax Christi Austin meeting, Fr. John Payne House, St. Ignatius Catholic Church, 126 W. Oltorf St.

In Dallas

Wednesday February 26, 6:00 food and conversation, 7:00pm Edward Fischer on U.S. foreign policy toward Guatemala. Home of Joyce Hall, 4330 Crowley Dr.

Thursday February 27, 6:30pm, “Building the Good Society,” Lloyd Jeff Dumas (University of Texas, Dallas). Times 10 Cellars, 6324 Prospect. Books \$28. Sponsored by Nuclear Free World Committee, Dallas Peace & Justice Center.

Thursday March 12, 12:00pm-1:30pm, “Who Would Drop the Bomb? Attitudes towards Nuclear Weapons in the United States, Britain, France,” Benjamin Valentino (Dartmouth College). Free, register before March 8 at <https://whozin.com/QKP-YFG-WMEH-MFNX>.

Saturday March 21, 7:00pm-9:00pm, “and You Welcomed Me: A Catholic Meditation on Immigration and Race for a Changing *Community*,” Hosffman Ospino (Boston College). Church of the Incarnation, 1809 Maher Lane, Irving.

Tuesday April 7, 7:00pm, “Ending War.” David Swanson. Peace Chapel at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road.

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

Monday February 24, 7:00pm, “The First Century Jewish World of Jesus,” on how ahistorical biblical interpretation led to anti-Semitic readings; Deborah Forger. St. Philip Presbyterian Church 209, 4807 San Felipe.

Tuesday February 25, 6:00pm, “Biography and the History of Slavery in West Africa,” Sandra E. Greene. RMC/Ley Student Center, Farnsworth, Rice University.

Thursday February 27, 7:00pm-8:30pm, Foreign Policy Social. Café Express River Oaks, 1422 W. Gray Street. Information: <https://www.hpjc.org/event/foreign-policy-social/>

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

Sunday March 1, 2:00pm-3:00pm, a conversation on living the change (Interfaith environmental Network). Live Oak Friends Meeting House, 1320 W 26th St.

Sunday March 8, 9:45am, "Restorative Justice - Bridges to Life," Gay and John van Osdall. St. Philip Presbyterian Church 201, 4807 San Felipe.

Thursday March 26, 6:00pm-7:30pm, "Strangers at the Gates: Women, Religion, and Immigration at the Border," Miguel de la Torre (Iliff School of Theology), Sr. Norma Pimentel (Catholic Charities South Texas), Anne Snyder (*Comment Magazine*). Hudspeth Auditorium, Anderson-Clarke Center, Rice University.

In San Antonio

Wednesday March 25, and April 20, 7:00pm-9:00pm, "Living Together in Difference: Upending Violence through Alternative Community Building," Derick Wilson, \$20. Three part series that began Feb. 12. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Registration: <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration>.

Tuesday February 25, 7:00pm-9:00pm, "The Trouble with Fracking," Sr. Elizabeth Riebschlaeger, ccvi. Free; register by Feb. 18. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Registration: <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration>.

Wednesday February 26, 7:00pm-8:30pm, "From Moments to Movements: The Power of Community Activism and Organizing," Rosa Clemente. Northrup Hall 040, Trinity University, One Trinity Place.

Saturday February 29, 8:30am-4:00pm, Texas Coalition Against the Death Penalty 2020 Annual Conference. Whitely Theological Center, Oblate School of Theology, 285 Oblate. Pre-register, \$60.00, at <https://tcadp.org/tcadp-2020-annual-conference-registration/>

Saturday February 29, 9:00am-12:00pm, discussion, "Gun Violence in Our Community, Deanna Hollas (Presbyterian Peace Fellowship). Harlandale United Methodist Church, 6025 S. Flores St.

Tuesday March 3, 6:30pm-8:30pm, “The Legacy of Hate: How the Holocaust Still Haunts Us,” Roger Barnes. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook), \$5. Register at <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration/>.

Wednesday March 4, 7:00pm-9:30pm, “Heeding the Cal” (in the aftermath of the abuse crisis), Carolyn Woo (Purdue University, former director Catholic Relief Services). Conference Room A, University Center, St. Mary’s University, One Camino Santa Maria.

Saturday March 7, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting. Residence of Tom Wakely, 16406 Ledge Point St.

Tuesday March 17, 6:30, “Towards a Texas Nantahala: A Proposal for the Guadalupe River, from New Braunfels to Gonzales,” Gib Hafernick, sponsored by the Sierra Club. Eco Centro, 1802 N. Main.

Saturday March 21 (3rd Saturday of the month), 11:00am, reflection and prayer service at the paupers’ cemetery in southwest Bexar County. Contact Arthur Dawes, 210-213-5919, arthurdawes@att.net.

Tuesday March 24, 7:00pm-9:00pm, “Creating an Ally,” Miriam Sobre and Jake Erney. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook), \$15. Register at <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration/>.

Thursday March 26, 7:30pm-9:30pm, “My Evolution as an Economist,” Richard Thaler. Stieren Theatre, Trinity University, One Trinity Place.

Second Reading (Romans 5:12-19)

The ancients wrote about human nature by means of stories. In his letter to the Roman churches, Paul refers back to the Genesis myth of sin entering into the human world: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one human and through sin death, so also death spread to all humans; in him all sinned...” (Rom 5:12). If sin is natural humans, how can we look to doing better? Paul says that we humans are just pardoned, and that we can enter into the life of the Messiah: “So

then, as through one, transgression led to condemnation for all humans, so also through one, pardon led to a living justification for all humans” (Rom 5:19). The progression of Paul’s argument can be made very confusing by taking the myth of Adam’s fall out of the realm of story.

Third Reading (Mathew 4:1-11)

“If you are the son of God, speak so that these stones may become bread loaves.” Jesus was not interested in what would be convenient magic: “Not by bread alone shall a human live, but by every utterance coming through the mouth of God.” *Every* utterance—the problem is not that Jesus could be hungry but that his impact would be incomplete.

The tempter led Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple, the top of a religious edifice. “Throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He has instructed his messengers about you....They shall carry you on their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” How often people who present themselves as religious select proof texts from scripture, out of context, in order to demand faith in unlikely claims. To some people, faith must be placed in something unlikely and difficult for reason to accept, before they accept that faith as genuine. Again Jesus is not interested; he would not have people testing the divine.

Then the tempter points to kingdoms and their glory: “All these I will give you if, falling down, you worship me.” Again Jesus is not interested. Ultimate commitment is to God alone.

This narrative is often interpreted in terms of Jesus rejecting material comfort, false religion, and devotion to worldly power. It is interesting, however, to consider what Jesus accepts: those aspects of revelation that are not about oneself, those aspects of religion that are not about proving oneself religious, and ultimate commitment. The narrative is about purifying religion.

Poem

Earth and Sun

We consider our Sun,

in whose on-going light
our tiny planet bathes,

a fertilizing intimacy
where earth comes to life in:
jungles and deserts,
amoebas and whales,
parrots and pumpkins,

each nourishing all,
all birthing life:
Mother Earth, Father Sun.

Tom Keene and Muse
December 30, 2019

Ego and Soul: A Love Story

By Tom Keene

“Who am I?” That may be one of the most important questions we can ever ask ourselves. One of the great insights into that question comes from distinguishing our ego, or what we take to be our personal identity, from the deeper dimensions of what it is to be human, to be a person.

Many have yet to realize that there is more to being human than just looking out for one’s *separate* ego-identity. What is that more? Some call it the Higher Self, the Deeper Self, the soul/spirit, even God. For now, let’s call it soul. Some of us sense its presence when we look up into a star filled night, when we behold a single instance of beauty, truth or goodness. Something dear, that is somehow us yet more than our mere egos.

This leads us to ask, “What is the ego-soul relationship about? What do they do for each other?” To answer deep questions like this it is best to start with a story.

I find such a story in Chapter One of the Gospel according to Luke. An angel asks a young woman, Mary, to let herself become pregnant for the sake of God and her people. She hesitates, considers, decides and then responds, “Behold the handmaid/servant of the Lord. Let it be. Do to me as you say.”

We can consider that story in terms of ego-soul. Mary puts her ego (and its expectations) aside to attend to a greater concern: the healing of her people. In that very act she models for us what may be, if we so choose, our ego's role for helping soul realize its destiny.

As with Mary, so with us. In some sense we are, according to the nature of ego-soul relationship, called to realize, to make real, to incarnate, to flesh out in our live bodies our own "Let it be." A happy happening for our people. Every day we engage in opportunities to put our own ego-energies to work. To work for what? That is the crucial choice.

Ego's characteristic flaw is an inclination to always choose its own *separate* agenda independent of others. Not only that but also independent of ego's own soul: the source out of which ego evolved: the soul that formed the ego as a blank slate on which to write a new story of life. To the extent that our egos prioritize ego expectations over our own soul-stories, we miss out on the discovery of our own possibilities as healers of our people.

Ego and soul were not meant for *separate* agendas. They were meant to recognize each other and begin a beautiful friendship built around a *common* destiny: A love story of two dancers doing follow and lead to music that takes them to new horizons.

We find that music in Mary's story and our own stories. It is echoed in the lives of people like Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, Gandhi and King. It is echoed in our own lives whenever we set aside our surface expectations for what is more important. From that point on the trick is to sharpen our discernment about what is more important. Might that be the ultimate question as we consider and decide?

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.sanantoniopeace.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/