



Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating April 26, 2020

Communications with the editor should be sent to j6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com. Pax Christi International was founded in 1945 with the encouragement of Bishop Pierre Marie Th  as 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 Sunday Liturgical Reading reflections are based on readings for the Third Sunday of Easter. Tom Keene's poem is *Jesus in Nazareth*.

For more of Tom's poems, see

<http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>.

Following the poem Sr. Matha Ann Kirk reiterates the calls by Pope Francis and United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres to establish truces in all ongoing wars during the pandemic.

Calendar

Events in Texas cities involving a gathering of ten or more people have been canceled because of the global pandemic.

Alternatives

Article by Meredith McGuire in the April 7 San Antonio *Express News*: "Pandemic Shows Why City's Utilities Need to Restructure Rates:

<https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/commentary/article/Commentary-Pandemic-shows-why-city-s-utilities-15185164.php#article-comments>

Tuesday April 21, 4:00pm, online lecture, "Greening at Home," Rick Wilson, Lisa Lin, and Richard Johnson (all of Rice University). Zoom meeting:

<https://riceuniversity.zoom.us/j/513997842>

Meeting ID: 513 997 842

Wednesday April 22, 12:00pm-1:00pm, virtual presentation, “Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, and Human Flourishing, Mark Graves (St. Edward’s University). <https://stedwards.zoom.us/j/305282341>, Password: 780021

Thursday April 23, 9:00am-10:30am, Earth Day webinar: Catholic-Buddhist Dialogue—Solidarity and Engagement in Climate Change,” Dekila Chungyalpa (University of Wisconsin), Kathleen Deignan, CND (Iona College), Leo Lefebure (Georgetown University), David Loy, moderated by Joshua Basofin. Register at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8777089468415379981?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=6bd4de12-eece-4e8f-9319-4a1f1ebb057c>

Thursday April 23, 8:00pm, followed by 4 subsequent dates; online classes about divesting from war and fossil fuels industries. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/divest-from-the-war-machine-webinar-series-registration-102039713530>

Wednesday April 29, 12:00pm-1:00pm, Discussion by Zoom, “Making Anger a Positive Rather than a Negative Force.”

Address: <https://stedwards.zoom.us/j/592928716>

Password: 923736

Prior reading material:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/01/charles-duhigg-american-anger/576424/>

Saturday May 2, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio Zoom Meeting. Focus will be on environmental issues and action. Zoom address to be announced next issue of *Testimony*.

Second Reading (1 Peter 1:17-21)

As something superseding the human condition, redemption challenges human cognition. It is mysterious, at one and the same time baffling and revelatory. It was accomplished by the cross, but not some substitute vengeance to satisfy an angry God. You “were not redeemed from your futile inherited way of life with perishables—gold and silver—but with the precious blood of Messiah, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb...” This is the language of ritual

inherited from Hebrew antiquity; Jesus is being likened to a religious offering, yet he brought the human and divine together rather than reaffirm the gap that religion would acknowledge.

Third Reading (Luke 24:13-35)

“Are you the only foreigner in Jerusalem not also knowing what happened there in these days?” So asks Cleopas of the unrecognized Jesus on the way to Emmaus. *Cleopas* was the commonly used nickname for *Cleopatros*, a foreign name to any native Judean. Cleopas and his companion did not yet recognize Jesus in the Galilean they met on the road, also a foreigner. The two expected the typical foreigner to see what the natives to Judea did not see: How the legitimate Judean officials handed over an innocent prophet to a death by crucifixion.

We have a cliché for what Cleopas understood: the gold fish not knowing that it is in water. Local routines and expectations serve as blinders sometimes, blocking any recognition of what is most salient in a life situation. Yes, the early American Jesuit superiors could agree that slavery was technically an evil, but why were the church bureaucrats in Rome insisting that they be the only plantation operators in Maryland to free their slaves? Yes, technically the church teaches that workers are entitled to a living wage but why should the clergy be the ones to say so to Catholic and other Christian business owners? Yes, the principle of subsidiarity, which would leave families free to decide where they are to live and work, is technically a Catholic Christian doctrine, but why expect bible-believing Christians to welcome foreigners and refugees? The blindness or insensitivity in question might be termed the *Cleopas phenomenon*.

“Stay with us for it is evening and the day has already receded.” And he went in and stayed with them. And it happened while he reclined to eat with them taking the bread, he blessed it, and breaking it he gave it to them. And their eyes were opened....” The time of worship is the time to clear away the mental syndromes that keep us from being insufficiently foreign to our accustomed worlds.

Poem

Jesus in Nazareth

He came back to our village,
this bastard son of Mary,
this carpenter, now notorious
for healings and teachings.

He came with his rabble of
women and men hanging on
to his doings and words.
Who does he think he is?

Some of us went to him for healings.
We listened to his ramblings
about this Kingdom of God,
coming soon, already growing among us.

We elders hung back.
We knew this guy as a kid
coming to synagogue,
raising befuddling questions.

Some of his healings took
but a lot more didn't.
Most of us knew him too well.
Off he went with his groupies.

Word came back about his troubles
with the Romans and temple chiefs.
The Romans dispatched him
in their Roman way.

Now, his minions disrupt our synagogues
with claims he is our urgently needed messiah.
imagine that: a crucified savior
and still making trouble.

Tom Keene

In this COVID-19 crisis can we recognize we are one human family? Both Pope Francis and the UN Secretary General Call for a Global Cease-fire

Sr. Martha Ann Kirk



U.N. Secretary General calls for a global cease-fire

“Pope Francis issued two passionate humanitarian appeals on Sunday, March 29, 2020, in response to the coronavirus pandemic. First, he joined the U.N. secretary general in calling for the cessation of armed conflicts ‘in all corners of the world.’ Second, he called on governments worldwide ‘to avoid tragedies’ that could result from the spread of Covid-19 in overcrowded prisons. . . . He prayed that ‘the common effort against the pandemic may bring everyone to recognize our need to strengthen the fraternal bonds as members of the one human family.’

“On Monday, March 23, U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres appealed to warring parties ‘to lay down their weapons.’ He said, ‘It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives.’ In a message that was transmitted to a global audience by Vatican Media, Francis said, ‘I associate myself with all those who have accepted the appeal, and I invite all [parties in conflicts] to follow up on the appeal by stopping every form of warlike hostilities.’ He called on leaders to facilitate the creation of humanitarian corridors for aid, to open avenues of diplomacy and to attend ‘to those who find themselves in situations of great vulnerability.’

According to the 2020 report from the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, there were some 41 active armed conflicts over the last year, in places like Yemen, Syria, Libya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Venezuela. The global powers, including the United States and Russia, are involved in many of them.” Read more in [America Media](#)

If you would like to stand with the Pope speaking for a cease-fire and signing in support of the message of the Secretary General, click [here](#). UN Secretary General António Guterres wrote, "Let us take inspiration from coalitions and dialogue slowly taking shape among rival parties in some parts to enable joint approaches to COVID-19. But we need much more. End the sickness of war and fight the disease that is ravaging our world. It starts by stopping the fighting everywhere. Now. That is what our human family needs, now more than ever."

To end the sickness of war, we need to disarm our hearts and start facing the truth. Our greed and unreasonable fears are main things that fuel violence and war in the world. Am I willing to face this truth, choose to live in simpler ways, learn to control my fears, and lessen the suffering in the world?

Start to learn from spiritual groups like the *Catholic Nonviolence Initiative* or *Pace e Bene* or *Compassionate Integrity Training* how to disarm our own hearts. Start to learn from educational groups like *World Beyond War* how to face realities and abolish war. Do I understand the meaning of the word “security” or has my understanding been high jacked?

When compared to other countries, the U.S. has more COVID-19 cases and is very vulnerable. “The military occupation of the American mind has brainwashed Americans with strictly military concepts of ‘defense’ and ‘security,’ perverting federal spending priorities in the interest of war and militarism at the expense of all our country’s other vital needs, including the health of Americans.

Why can’t we just bomb the virus?

Of course, this question is ridiculous. But this is how U.S. leaders respond to every danger we face, with massive diversions of our national resources to the military-industrial complex (MIC) that leave this otherwise wealthy country starved of resources to tackle problems our leaders can’t pretend to solve with weapons and war. Depending what is counted as ‘defense’ spending, it accounts for up to two-thirds of federal discretionary spending. . . . At the end of the Cold War in 1989, senior officials told the Senate Budget Committee that the U.S. military budget could safely be cut by 50% over the next ten years. Committee chairman Jim Sasser hailed the moment as ‘the dawn of the primacy of domestic

economics.'” Have we in the U.S. chosen to do that so that people could have the security of food, housing, health care, education, and environmental protection? ...This is the time that each of us could seek to disarm our hearts and disarm our countries and seek authentic securities, such as those laid out in the *U.N. Sustainable Development goals*. Listen or read and learn from *Pace e Bene*. Learn to be compassionate towards your self, towards others, and infuse compassion into our global systems, a way to authentic security, a way to peace.

We could seek to disarm our words. As Pierre Thompson writes in *“We Must Resist the ‘War’ on Coronavirus,”* we are invited to examine our rhetoric which may lead us in dangerous directions. “Being ‘at war’ requires us to accept a dualistic and confrontational worldview: winners vs. losers, allies vs. enemies, us vs. them.” The word war “stifles our empathy and compassion for other human beings.” Each of us can choose to use words that indicate the solidarity of the human family, that lead to the common good, and that unite us in nonviolent energy. We are not in a time of war, we are in a time of joining Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Beloved Community." We are in an era of joining the global *circle dance of compassion*.

From <http://saccvi.blogspot.com/2020/04/in-this-covid-19-crisis-can-we.html>. You are invited to regularly read and share comments on [Justicia, Paz y Tierra / Justice, Peace and Earth](http://saccvi.blogspot.com/search/label/peace), <http://saccvi.blogspot.com/search/label/peace> a blog from the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word

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.sanantoniopace.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/