



## Testimony

### A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating May 3, 2020

Communications with the editor should be sent to [j6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com](mailto: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 Sunday Liturgical Reading reflections are based on readings for the Fourth Sunday of Easter. Tom Keene's poem is *Just the Right Word*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. Following the poem is a statement issued April 15 by the Hope Institute and Faith In Action (National and International), calling for the protection of the rights, especially the right to health services, for refugees and migrant detainees; Pax Christi USA has endorsed the statement.

We have added a link to our list at the end of this newsletter, for the Migrant Center for Human Rights. Take a look.

### Calendar

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

### El Paso

**Sunday April 26-Monday May 11**, Mondays-Sundays, 7:00am-3:00pm, Isaiah House annual fundraiser. Order a red cheese enchilada plate take-out (915) 593-8490, pickup Lunch Box, 667 N. Carolina Dr. Tickets previously purchased can be redeemed. Isaiah House offers men leaving prison a temporary place to reside.

### Alternatives

**Any time:** Conversation, "Re-Opening the Nation: What Values Should Guide Us?" Danielle Allen (Ethics, Harvard University), Zeke Emanuel (Medical Ethics & Health

Policy, University of Pennsylvania), moderator Mildred Z. Solomon (Hastings Center & Global Health, Harvard University).

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahjo9oQ4lk8&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahjo9oQ4lk8&feature=emb_title)

**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/>

**Wednesday April 29**, 4:00pm Eastern Time, 3:00pm Central; second in a World Without War Webinar Series on Divesting. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/divest-from-the-war-machine-webinar-series-registration-102039713530>. After registering you will be sent the Zoom address and password.

**Saturday May 2**, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio Zoom Meeting. Focus will be on environmental issues and action. Zoom address is <https://maryknoll.zoom.us/j/94992051703>, and the meeting ID is 949 9205 1703.

### **Second Reading (First Peter 2: 20b-25)**

The author of this homily, writing pseudonymously in the name of Peter, was trying to calm the fears of his readers, who were experiencing the injustice of religious persecution. He cites what was taken for granted in antiquity, that one obeyed masters if one were a slave, even if the master treated one unjustly. It would be similar to continuing to do one’s work well even if dealt with unjustly by a boss or supervisor. He notes that Jesus too was treated unjustly. The Messiah, who “bore our sins with his body on the cross, so that having died to sins we may live in justice.” When we do our work well despite the behavior of those above us, we act justly toward those who need the work that we do.

### **Third Reading (John 10:1-10)**

The *Johannine Gospel* has footnotes, as it were. They are not placed at the bottom of a page, since the original was written on a scroll. Rather, in all likelihood, the notes were placed in the margins. In the case of the *Johannine Gospel*, those margin notes included excerpts from a list of sayings of Jesus that began with “Amen I say to you....” When the narrative about Jesus and the accompanying discourse reminded the ancient author or editor of one of these sayings, that person, whom we identify as an “evangelist,” wrote “Amen” at the spot to refer to the “Amen saying” to be written in the margin. So when reading the passage aloud for copyists to make copies, the result was a double “amen” followed by the saying. It is useful to keep this in mind because the reading for this Sunday could otherwise become a confusion of mixed metaphors. The first double “Amen” saying talks about a thief breaking into a home not by coming through the front door, which would have a fenced-in sheep yard in front of it, but by climbing in at some other place.

The main text is not about a thief climbing in over a wall but about a familiar scene in which a shepherd approaches with his sheep after some days away; a gate-keeper recognizes him and opens the gate so that he and the sheep can come into the yard for the night. The next morning the gate-keeper opens the gate again, and the shepherd heads out toward the pastures, with the sheep following the one whose voice they know.

A second double “Amen” saying interrupts the narrative again. Similar to the first one, it talks about thieves and bandits. When the main narrative resumes, Jesus is saying that he actually *is* the sheep gate; shepherds often spent the night out in the open, sleeping in the opening of a circular rock-fence enclosure to keep the sheep safely inside it at night.

Note that the evangelist(s) of the Johannine tradition used multiple sources of information and imagery. They did not simply stick to one preferred way of presenting Jesus. They found one voice with which they were familiar and comfortable, but through multiple ways.

## Poem

### *Just the Right Word*

*The difference between almost the right word and just the right word  
is like the difference between the lightning bug and lightning.*

*Mark Twain*

The first air we breathe,  
the mother's milk we suckle,  
earth's grains and fruits, we take,  
the sun in which we bask.

Is there a word for all that?  
A word that pulls it all together,  
that when we think it, say it,  
strikes us?

Tom Keene  
March 23, 2018

### **Statement initiated by the Hope Border Institute and Faith in Action National and International calling for migrant and refugee protection during the COVID- 19 pandemic**

April 15, 2020

Slowing the spread of COVID-19 requires that everyone be included in prevention and protection strategies, especially the most vulnerable, including migrants and refugees. This pandemic is a public health crisis that brings home how interconnected we are. It is our collective responsibility to act rapidly and in solidarity.

As grassroots and faith-based organizations and religious leaders from across Central America, Mexico and the United States working to address the root

causes of poverty, violence and corruption that force people to leave their homes, we offer this framework for action to protect migrants and refugees and help all of our communities survive this crisis and rebuild with justice and equity.

***1. We demand the rapid, safe and orderly release of as many migrants and asylum seekers from detention as possible***

- a. Identify and prioritize the immediate release of those at risk due to underlying medical conditions or age.
- b. No migrant should be detained in a facility that is unable to follow required COVID-19 prevention steps.
- c. Those managing detention centers must identify, protect and refer those suspected of being ill to specialized health care services.

***2. Take immediate steps to slow the spread of the virus in refugee camps, migrant shelters and detention centers***

- a. Officials and others who are responsible for the management of facilities sheltering refugees and migrants should receive the information, advice and support necessary in order to follow WHO recommended protocols for preventing the spread of COVID-19, including providing staff and those detained with clean water, soap, sanitizer, cleaning supplies and protective equipment.
- b. Public health officials should carry out appropriate testing, ensure suitably equipped quarantine areas and provide adequate medical care and treatment, as well as a referral system for the sick to specialized hospitals.
- c. Governments should provide appropriate financial and medical support to migrant shelters, while respecting their legitimate autonomy. These shelters provide indispensable services by providing hospitality to numerous vulnerable and at-risk people, including families, children and adolescents.

d. Governments must guarantee the protection of the rights of migrants in quarantine, including adequate medical attention, until they can be released and returned safely.

*3. Provide migrants and refugees equitable access to prevention, testing, treatment and emergency support*

a. There can be no discrimination in access to accurate public health information and resources and protocols for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Immigrants and refugees must receive testing and treatment if they become sick, at no cost and without barriers.

b. No one should be punished, detained or deported because they are ill or suspected of being ill.

c. Programs that provide emergency food and other aid to those unemployed and suffering as a result of the pandemic must include migrants and refugees, regardless of immigration status.

*4. Guarantee the right to asylum*

a. Countries must continue to allow the entrance of asylum-seekers under international law.

b. Governments should offer integral assistance to and guarantee the human rights of migrants and asylum seekers, including those being repatriated.

c. Rather than blanket exclusion of asylum-seekers, countries should use public health protocols, including screening, testing, quarantine and self-isolation.

d. We call for the immediate suspension of the 'Remain in Mexico' Program or the 'Migrant Protection Protocols', allowing asylum-seekers to stay in the United States, with due protections against the pandemic.

*5. Make immediate and large-scale investments in public health systems and food and income support for vulnerable families*

- Central America and Mexico urgently need more financial resources from regional, international and United States aid agencies to strengthen public health systems, including testing, the provision of personal protective equipment and training for health workers, specialized equipment for pandemic care, as well as support to hospitals and other facilities to isolate and treat people who contract COVID-19.

We call for an international solidarity that promotes the economic recovery of the countries of the region and as well as the human and integral development of the most vulnerable families and communities.

ENDORSERS:

Organizations

Faith in Action

Hope Border Institute

Catholic Relief Services

La 72, Hogar – Refugio para Personas Migrantes

Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña (OFRANEH)

Justicia, Paz y Integridad de Creación (JPIC)/Honduras

Catholic Charities of Southern New Mexico

Centinelas por la Dignificación del Estado

Comunidades de Fe Organizadas en Acción (COFOA)

Congregation Action Network

New Mexico CAFé

Catholic Labor Network

Christian Community Development Association

Coalición Pro defensa del Migrante AC / Baja California Norte

Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

Comisión de Justicia, Paz e Integridad de la Creación de CONFREGUA

Comisión de Justicia, Paz e Integridad de la Creación de las Conferencias de Religiosas y

Commission on Migration of the Diocese of El Paso

Religiosos de Centroamérica y México (CONFERCAM)

Derechos Humanos Integrales en Acción, A.C.  
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries  
Faith in Public Life  
Holy Name Province, Franciscan Friars, NY, NY  
Ignatian Solidarity Network / La Red de Solidaridad Ignaciana  
Inner Change  
Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology  
JPIC Familia Franciscana Guatemala  
JPIC - Misioneros Claretianos  
Kino Border Initiative  
La Red Jesuita con Migrantes Guatemala  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
Migrant & Refugee Services, Diocese of El Paso  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA  
National Justice for Our Neighbors  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
Pastoral de Movilidad Humana - Honduras  
Pax Christi International  
Pax Christi USA  
Red CLAMOR  
Red Franciscana para Migrantes  
Scalabrinianas Misión con Migrantes y Refugiados (SMR)  
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province  
Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes México  
Sisters of Loretto/Loretto Community  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas – Justice Team  
Somos Uno por Juárez  
Stuart Center  
Union of Sisters of the Presentation of BVM (USA Province)

#### Religious Leaders

Bishop Mark Seitz, Diocese of El Paso  
Cardinal Álvaro Ramazzini Imeri, Diocese of Huehuetenango  
Cardinal Joseph Tobin, Archdiocese of Newark  
Archbishop John Wester, Archdiocese of Santa Fe  
Archbishop Charles Thompson, Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Bishop José Raúl Vera López, Diocese of Saltillo  
Bishop Edward Weisenburger, Diocese of Tucson  
Bishop John Stowe, Diocese of Lexington  
Bishop Oscar Cantú, Diocese of San Jose  
Bishop Emeritus Ricardo Ramirez  
Bishop Emeritus Gerald Kicanas  
Bishop Elías Samuel Bolaños Avelar, SDB, Bishop of Zacatecoluca (El Salvador)  
Rev. Scott Santarosa, S.J., Provincial, Society of Jesus, Jesuits West

#### Individuals and Clergy

Irma A. Velasquez Nimatuj, Profesora Invitada, Universidad de Stanford  
Fr. Vidal Rivas  
Rev. Manuel F. Ibarra  
Sr. Norma Pimentel, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley  
Rev. Deborah Clugy Soto, President of the Interfaith Alliance of the Southwest  
Hna. Magdalena Silva Rentería. Casa de Acogida Formación y Empoderamiento de la Mujer Migrante y Refugiada (CAFEMIN)  
Hna. María Antonia Bobadilla, Scalabrinianas Misión con Migrantes y Refugiados (SMR)  
Rabbi Jonah Layman  
Rabbi Jeremy Kridel  
Rev. Dr. Matt Braddock  
John Gehring, Catholic program director, Faith in Public Life  
Rev. Charlene Belsom Zellmer, Congregation Action Network  
Cynthia Lapp, Pastor, Hyattsville Mennonite Church  
Fray Gonzalo Ituarte, O.P., Parroquia Universitaria  
Rev. Peter Jarrett Schell

#### 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](http://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](http://www.txccedp.org)

Dialogue Institute of San Antonio

[www.thedialoginstitute.org/san-antonio/](http://www.thedialoginstitute.org/san-antonio/)

Climate Change

[www.creation-care.com](http://www.creation-care.com)

NowCastSA

[www.nowcastsa.com/](http://www.nowcastsa.com/)

Migrant Center for Human Rights

<https://Migrantcenter.org>