

  
**Testimony**  
A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating June 14, 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 Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. Tom Keene's poem is *Body of Christ*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. Many statements have appeared respecting the murder of George Floyd and others by police. Two follow the poem. One is a statement by the Hope Border Institute, from May 31. The other by the archbishop of Newark, New Jersey, Joseph Cardinal Tobin, who is known not only for progressive statements but also actions consistent with them. Cardinal Tobin's statement was forwarded to me by Sr. Martha Ann Kirk.

**Notices**

Johnnie Dorsey in Austin recommends this article: Bryan N. Massingale, "The Assumptions of White Privilege and What We Can Do About It": <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/assumptions-white-privilege-and-what-we-can-do-about-it>

In this fifth anniversary year of the encyclical of Pope Francis on the environment, check out the San Antonio Archdiocese's website with relevant materials: <https://www.archsa.org/care-for-creation>

*On June 6 Pax Christi San Antonio voted to issue the following statement:*

Out of concern for our planet, we affirm the Encyclical, *Laudato Si*, of Pope Francis. We understand that this is an urgent matter and will act, as we are able, to address this concern.

1. We are supportive of the implementation of solar energy in our community and affirm its use by churches and other public institutions.
  2. We support the efforts of Catholic Charities and others involved in the community gardens at the Guadalupe Center, as well as the gardens of Eco Centro of the Alamo College District.
  3. We support the creation of more Green Jobs, in the tradition of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The environment as well as employment concerns are connected in many ways.
  4. We encourage auto manufacturers to produce more electric cars, and laud those who are doing so.
  5. We promote clean air and water as a right for all.
  6. We support HR 763 which addresses the Carbon tax.
  7. We encourage and support the message of Pope Francis, who has said to do one extra thing for our environment. We honor those who have planted trees and recycled plastics.
- We ask for your support and that of your organization to honor our planet.

## Calendar

### Online

**Wednesday June 10**, 2:30pm (3:30 ET), online presentation, "Using Media well Together: Co-Responsibility & Church Communication (Brett Robinson, Notre Dame). Register at:  
[https://mail.yahoo.com/d/folders/1/messages/AJfpH75sab\\_hXteDcg8DwAQLivg](https://mail.yahoo.com/d/folders/1/messages/AJfpH75sab_hXteDcg8DwAQLivg)

**Thursday June 11**, 7:00pm-8:30pm, panel "Stay Woke: A Critical Discussion on the Racial Divide," Dr. Claudette Copeland (New Creation Christian Fellowship), Rabbi Mara Nathan (Temple Beth-El), Pastor Garrett Vickrey (Woodland Baptist Church), Pastor Kenneth Kemp (Antioch Missionary Baptist Church), Imam Omar Adib Shakir (Masjid Bilal Ibn Rabah). [www.Panpals.org](http://www.Panpals.org).

**Monday June 15**, 6:30pm-8:30pm, Zoom "courageous Conversation." The courageous Conversations have historically met in person at Holy Cross Parish, Austin. Join the meeting at <https://zoom/j/97117585742>. If you have a problem connecting, call Johnnie Dorsey at 512-217-9616.

**Tuesday June 16**, 6:00pm, “Tackling Climate Change: Addressing Methane Pollution and Natural Gas Flaming in Texas’ Permian Basin,” Emma Pabst Environment Texas). Sierra Club meeting: RSVP at this link: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSevT4T6ZjV95JpmYx3u\\_8NHwIOlyg0Jy1FpVjrrQFoMrKYExg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSevT4T6ZjV95JpmYx3u_8NHwIOlyg0Jy1FpVjrrQFoMrKYExg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

**Saturday June 20**, all day, The Poor People’s Campaign is hosting a “virtual” march on Washington. “The march and ongoing campaign will highlight voices of the oppressed in our nation as well as make concrete demands of our State and National elected leaders.” Join at [www.poorpeoplescampaign.org](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org).

**Three events commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki:**

**Thursday August 6**, online commemoration of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with Ira Helfand. Free.

**Friday August 7**, online nonviolence training by Pace e Bene. \$20.00

**Saturday August 8**, online conference, “Educating and Advancing a Nonviolent World (Rev. Richard Rohr, Dr. Erica Chenoweth, Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Jr., Dr. Ira Helfand, Kazu Haga, George Martin, Dr. Kit Evans-Ford, Veronica Pelicaric, Dr. Ken Butigan, Rev. John Dear). \$50.00

Information and tickets for all three:

<https://paceebene.org/cnvconference2020?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=7c490eaa-7087-4e9f-b3ab-6e0553d76d0a>

### **In all locales**

**Monday June 8**, 4:00pm (%:00pm ET), The Poor People’s Campaign calls for 8 minutes, 46 seconds silence in memory of the death of George Floyd.

### **In Houston**

**Wednesday June 10**, 11:45am-1:15pm, Lunch & Learn Dialogues: Racism in Criminal Justice; representatives from Pure Justice. Bring lunch. Center for the Healing of Racism, 3412 Crawford Street (at Holman). RSVP at <https://www.centerhealingracism.org/event/lunch-and-learn-dialogues-6/>

### **In San Antonio**

**Tuesday June 16**, 12:00pm-1:00pm, vigil occasioned by a death penalty execution. Across the street from the county justice building.

### **Second Reading (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)**

The words in this reading are familiar: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion in the blood of the Messiah? The bread that we break, is it not a communion in the body of the Messiah? Because the bread is one, we are many in one body, for we all partake of the one loaf of bread.” This was received doctrine, even in Paul’s time. Why was he invoking it in his letter to the Corinthian church?

The question had come up whether Christians should join with non-believers in dining out. The practice was to go to a shrine as we would go to a restaurant; some of the food would be offered to a pagan deity, and the rest served to those dining. Was one joining oneself to a pagan deity, a demon, just as one was joining oneself to the Messiah when dining with Christians? The pagan deities, of course, are fantasies. So, “If anyone of the non-believers invites you to eat and you want to go, eat all that is set before you, not inquiring on the basis of conscience” (1 Cor 10:27). But what if someone *thinks* the Christian is joining with a pagan deity? “Let no one look out for oneself but for the other” (1 Cor 10:24). He goes on to say that if anyone says it is a sacrifice to a deity, “do not eat because of the person and conscience who makes that known” (1 Cor 10:28).

This is practical advice. The key is to look out for the other person. An obvious application during the Corona Virus pandemic is to wear a mask in public out of consideration for the other.

### **Third Reading (John 6:51-58)**

The lectionary selection begins, “Jesus said to the Jewish crowds.” That sentence does not actually appear in the gospel passage. Rather, the gospel narrates the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, with obvious Eucharistic symbolism, and then follows it up with a series of relevant sayings, all situated in Galilee, not Judea. Thus either the *Johannine Gospel* is referring to Galileans as “Jews” (hence, one would translate it that way rather than as “Judeans”), or it is placing Jewish vs. Christian disputation discourse from a later time into the gospel narrative.

In addition to “Double Amen” statements (in this passage, “Amen. Amen I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of humanity and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.”), the *Johannine Gospel* contains “I am” statements (in this passage, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven.

If anyone eats from this bread, that one will live forever; but the bread that I will give is also my flesh for the life of the world.”).

Catholics may hear these sayings with some satisfaction, in light of their explicit belief in the real presence of the risen Messiah in the Eucharistic celebration. But one may ask what the point of the real presence might be. In antiquity, beliefs in deities and revelations did not pose intellectual problems; such beliefs were culturally acceptable. The intellectual problem with the Christian tradition was the Incarnation, the presence of God in human corporeality. Indeed, it was in response to that problem that the church spelled out in doctrinal form that Jesus was human as well as divine and that Mary was therefore the mother of God. The Church also instituted the Feast of the Nativity, Christmas, as a major feast day.

Today there are sincere people who say they are spiritual but not religious. This is analogous to the ancient acceptance of deities and revelations without these being corporeal in any way. They take in the wonders of creation and sense the awesomeness of the Creator. Spirituality, taken alone, cultivates a valuable interiority, a resource for principled action in the world, but its potential is stymied without action.

There can be, of course, principled action in the world that is not religious, but such seems to force a muteness about the source of principled action. Religion makes principled action articulate, gives it voice. The incompleteness of spirituality without religion, of course, can be compared to another incompleteness—religious symbolism that neither nurtures a consciousness of the divine (religious motions without a developed mentality or intellectual dimension) nor issues in action. The point of a corporeal real presence takes the form of a “both...and,” a consciousness of revealed deity and this-worldly corporeal action, both made explicit in sacramental form: An openness to God’s initiative in the Word and a pledge to take on and continue that Word’s life.

## Poem

*Body of Christ*  
(At breakfast with fellow activists)

We dare to embody you in our communion  
over tacos and coffee, amid laughter at ourselves,  
our talk about matters that matter.

We embody you in our recall:

of your presence then,  
your healing touches,  
your startling stories,  
your embracing glances  
that seized us to the core.

of your presence now,  
in our hungers for justice,  
in our grief over cruelty,  
in our pleasure at each of our  
faltering forward steps,

of your lasting presence  
as the arc of our becoming  
bends toward the all we can together be.

Tom Keene  
August 12, 2016

### **Statement of the Hope Border Institute | May 31, 2020**

*That is why I CANNOT BE QUIET. In my anguish of spirit I SHALL SPEAK. In my bitterness of soul, I SHALL COMPLAIN. (Job 7,11)*

The love of God is universal. But God is not neutral. For when some are strangled of the breath of life by those with guns and batons and tear gas, doing nothing would be to take the side of the oppressor and ignore the death rattle of the oppressed.

No. God hears the cry of the poor. George Floyd was murdered. Those whose breath of life is daily made precarious by the heavy knee of power can truly know the value of life and liberty and what is at stake when it is threatened. And, like God, before the question of the sacredness of life all of us must take a

side. Not just in words but in action. In active solidarity with those who will no longer be quiet.

The past few days have unmasked the brutality and viciousness that lurk just below the surface for those who are black and brown. Even at protests of police brutality.

If you are uneasy about unrest and destruction, but are not calling out police brutality, you are not neutral. If you are not working for healthcare and just wages and housing and education and freedom of movement as universal human rights, you are enabling oppression.

In the words of Oscar Romero, 'Yo no me cansaré de señalar que si queremos de veras un cese eficaz de la violencia hay que quitar la violencia que está a la base de todas las violencias; la violencia estructural, la injusticia social, el no participar los ciudadanos en la gestión pública del país, la represión...' *'I will not tire of noting that if we really want a real end to violence, we must remove the violence that lies at the root of all violence: structural violence, social injustice, exclusion of citizens, repression.'*

Border communities know the reality of state violence and discrimination. Of laws that racial profile, like SB4. Of CBP helicopters that circle about every day. Detention centers. Checkpoint arrests. Zip ties. Restrictions on movement. Marker rounds. Boots on the ground. The paraphernalia of racism, militarization and white supremacy. If it wasn't clear before, the imperative to de-escalate and de-militarize, from El Paso to Minneapolis, from Washington, DC to Los Angeles, is on display for everyone to see.

On that first Pentecost, 'a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind...' (Acts 2,2).

*Listen.*

Tonight we hear the mighty rumble of the cry of the oppressed, the complaint of the afflicted, shaking the foundations of racism and white supremacy.

Now may the Spirit bring together black and brown and white and yellow fists raised in complaint and resolve. Our destinies linked. To shake this continent top to bottom until it is purified of every stain of hatred, indifference, division and oppression.

*Ven, Espíritu Santo, llena los corazones de tus fieles y enciende en ellos el fuego de tu amor.*



*Archdiocese of Newark*  
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP



June 3, 2020

The people of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark join with Catholic dioceses across the United States as well as all people of goodwill in condemning the senseless and brutal murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25. We extend our deep sorrow to his family and friends, who face soul-sapping grief because of his terrible death.

We offer heartfelt prayer for the people of Minneapolis and St. Paul, expressing special solidarity with our beloved brother, Archbishop Bernard Hebda and the people he serves.

The murder of George Floyd, which is simply the latest instance of a person of color dying at the hands of those sworn to protect the community, has provoked justified anger and peaceful protest across the United States. Rage, as well as shameful exploitation of this tragedy, have spawned inexcusable violence in cities throughout this nation. As we witness the asphyxiation of our country,



many of us cry in anguish: why?

How we answer the question is crucial because we will then know what to pray for and how we must act. No one comes to Jesus with the lame request of wanting to feel better. They name the evil and ask for relief. We need to turn to the Lord of the Universe, for the malice we name cannot be eradicated by our unaided efforts.

The necessity of naming the evil of racism humiliates us, since so many events in our lifetime, let alone the history of our nation, have compelled us to shamefully recognize the national sin that obliges African Americans to endure unique and relentless humiliation, indignity, and unequal opportunity. Our tolerance of racism as well as collective deafness to the cry of those so grievously offended and the conscious and unconscionable promotion of divisions in this nation has encouraged the heinous evil of racism to propagate.

Certainly, tolerance of tribalistic factions in the United States, especially in our political forum, promotes a savage law of the jungle and an immoral ethos of "might makes right". Violent rhetoric, selfishness and even the crude appropriation of religious symbols conspire to produce a malevolent miasma in which the sin of racism may flourish unchecked. Our society will make no progress in addressing the evil of racism without the will to leave behind the purveyors of polarization.

The Archdiocese of Newark must renew our commitment to making the dream of peace built on justice and racial equality a reality for all our sisters and brothers, here in northern New Jersey as well as throughout the United States. Since this is our goal, we embrace gratefully the prophetic words of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

In great sorrow, but also with profound hope, we turn to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, and ask for her protection and care during these troubled times. This young woman sang of One whose mercy is from age to age to those who fear him...who has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart...who has thrown down the rulers from their thrones, but lifted up the lowly (Luke 1, 50-52). May she inspire us with courage to do the work of justice and to eliminate—once and for all—all hatred, bigotry, and violence from our hearts, our homes, and our communities.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

## **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.sanantoniopeace.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>