



Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating June 21, 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 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 Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *Voice Knows*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. Following the poem is my review of *Mary and Early Christian Women. Hidden Leadership*, by Ally Kateusz.

Notice

Documentary film, *Suppressed: The Fight to Vote*. The film reveals a number of racially motivated vote suppression tactics; its focus is on the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial election. (Recently, of course, the Georgia primary was an operational disaster.) You can view the film at <https://www.bravenewfilms.org/suppressed>

Calendar

Online

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.

Monday June 15, 7:00pm-8:30pm, Online: "Black Lives Matter: A Reading & Rally for Change." Scholars and writers on systemic racism. Access Zoom, enter meeting ID 917 0667 7739, and password 357477. If you want to read one of your

own writings or a text that has inspired you, email Margaret Cantú Sánchez at mcantusanchez@stmarytx.edu

Tuesday June 16, 2:30pm-3:30pm (3:30 ET-4:30ET), panel discussion, “The Liturgical Formation of the Family for Co-Responsibility,” Timothy O’Malley (University of Notre Dame), Karen Shadle (Archdiocese of Louisville), Katherine E. Harmon (Marian University). This is part of a series organized by the McGrath Institute at Notre Dame on co-responsibility in the Church. Register at <https://mcgrath.nd.edu/conferences/academic-pastoral/called-co-responsible-summer-seminars-for-church-life-renewal/>

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_8NHwIOlyg0Jy1FpVjirQFoMrKYExg/viewform?usp=sf_link

Tuesday June 16, 6:00pm-8:00pm, Sustainable Landscape design Workshop. Register at: www.eventbrite.com/e/sustainable-landscapes-by-eco-centro-tickets-106563921558

Wednesday June 17, 7:00pm, „Racism as a Public Health Crisis,“ anna Sandoval (San Antonio City Council) and Michelle Williams (Harvard University, dean Chan School of Public Health). Watch at [Facebook.com/AnaSandovalD7/live/](https://www.facebook.com/AnaSandovalD7/live/)

Thursday June 18, 12:00pm-1:00pm, panel discussion, “Women’s Guide to Healing the Racial Divide: How to Talk to Each Other and Our Children about Race,” Shonn Brown (Kimberly-Clark Corp.), Christa Brown-Sanford (partner, Baker Botts), Katherine Crooms (Thrive Integrative Counseling), Courtney Barksdale Perez (partner, Carter Arnett), Angela Zambrano (partner, Sidley Austin). RSVP at <https://dallaswomenlawyers.org/event/womens-guide-to-healing-the-racial-divide/>

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.

Three events commemorating the 75th 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>

Second Reading (Romans 5:12-15)

This reading is part of a much contested passage in which Paul describes a reconciliation between God and humanity with or without the Law. These particular sentences focus on the "without." It presupposes a reality that weighs on many of us even today. "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...." Sin in the world today comes in the form of racism; the racism of one or a few "white" people brings a form of death to all. It also comes in the form of trapping people in poverty. The neglect of the poor collectively, if not individually, by the better-off is a trap in the form of a death for all the better-off. *Death* only rarely means the cessation of vital signs in this context; the word is a metaphor for the absence of the Spirit. "I can't breathe" has become a slogan; the truth that underlies it is WE can't breathe under such circumstances.

Third Reading (Matthew 10:26-33)

The gospel passage is the one about preaching from the roof tops. The point is not simply to be bold, but to stand for what might elicit retaliation. "And do not be afraid of those killing the body but cannot kill the spirit." "So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." The heavenly Father will protect what is worth saving.

I do not think human retaliation would be elicited by most Sunday homilies. Most of them consist of feel good discourse and appeals to be nice and give to the poor. So it is worth taking pen in hand and listing what should be said in public but which one might be wary of saying because of retaliation. Different people will likely create different lists. A caution about trying to enter the ranks of the undeserving rich would make most people's lists.

I once had a pastor who was courageous or foolish enough to let me help out in the RCIA program—the formation program for adults wanting to become Catholics. In leading a discussion on the problem of materialism, I posed the question, should a Christian spend good money on an impressive car rather than on one that is simply good enough for getting around. I thought the question was straightforwardly Christian enough, but it was a pedagogical disaster. The local cult of race cars, flashy cars, cars with psychological implications that I could not quite fathom—this cult of chrome and motor simply had too strong a hold over the otherwise open-minded and “liberal” people. Vocal members of the class objected to the very idea that one might question the value represented by THE CAR. I was surely failing as a catechist.

One week later, a young lady pulled me aside. She told me that she had been embarrassed by her own beat-up car with a side door that was a different color from the rest of the body. She actually parked it at her in-laws' house every Sunday and would borrow their car to show up at the middle-class Catholic church for mass. Not this Sunday: She came in her own car, and onlookers in the parking lot could think what they may.

Poem

Voice Knows

Hear from us older others
how the world is;
how people are;
how things work;
how to get along.

You have a lot to learn from us,
for at times what we say *is*

how the world is;
how people are;
how things work;
how to get along.

But there is a small, strong, whispering
Voice within you that sometimes says,
No, that is *not* the way it is.

We who love you tell you *now*:
Listen to the strong, small whisper,
for it is Voice.

Voice is more than us,
more than you,
yet more truly us and you
than we together are.

If you can, tell us then
what Voice has to say.
We will listen.

Sometimes we may not
understand your Voice.
You may not understand
your own understanding.
But understanding will come,
for we too know Voice.

As you come to attend to Voice,
you will trust the love that feels right,
hold gently the trust that feels true.

When the face of trouble grins,
Voice will say, "Don't be afraid."
Fear may flood you anyway.
Float on the fear, swim upstream.

Voice will carry you.

Other voices will sing in chorus:

You are not worthy.

Voice will reply, softly, gently:

You are worth everything.

Tom Keene

April 25, 1998

Book Review

Mary and Early Christian Women. Hidden Leadership, by Ally Kateusz. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan (Springer), 2019. Hb, xviii + 295 pp. Reviewed by Anthony J. Blasi.

The role of women in Christian ministry has been at issue in many Christian churches through the last century and into the present one. Some denominations now admit women as full members of the clergy while others do not. Part of the debate centers on what was practiced and accepted in the early Christian movement, since the writings of the apostolic era (the new Testament) and early practices and beliefs (tradition as content and activity) are taken to be normative. Whether normativity entails exact replication of past activity, of course, is another matter; denominations differ from one another on that. They also undergo changes in the course of their respective histories.

Ally Kateusz is affiliated with the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, a think tank that advocates greater ministerial opportunities for women in the Roman Catholic Church. She earned a Ph.D. in history at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. A reading of her work reveals that she is a careful and responsible historian who has a view but does not allow her view to predetermine her historical findings.

As a New Testament scholar, I have long dismissed the non-cannonical gospels and narratives as unreliable because of their late, post-apostolic dates of composition. The main exception was the Coptic language *Gospel of Thomas*, a fourth century collection of Jesus sayings that included both independent versions of sayings that appear in the *Gospel of Matthew* and the *Gospel of Luke*, along

with later gnostic material. My criterion was how likely a text was to reflect the first century Christian movement of the decades following the execution of Jesus and the Resurrection experience of his followers. This is reflected in my chapters on the four canonical gospels and the *Acts of the Apostles* in my three-volume work *Social Science and the Christian Scriptures* (2017). My interest was not in the historical events reported in those five books but in the nature of the churches for which the narratives were written. One might call this a sociological "audience criticism."

The focus of Dr. Kateusz is similar insofar as she is interested in the religious lifeways of the churches for which narratives in the Christian literature of later centuries, generally prior to the year 1000, were written. Her focus differs from mine, and from those of New Testament scholars in general, in that she is interested not so much in the churches of the late first and early second century, those of the normative apostolic era, but rather the subsequent heritage through the following eight or so centuries. This is very Catholic; the content and processes of tradition are as normative as those of the apostolic era. And because art works as well as literary ones date from the later centuries, she examines artifacts as well as texts. This too is very Catholic.

In my work, I found the role of women in Christian ministry a contested matter. *Romans 16* is a letter of recommendation from Paul to a recipient in Ephesus, on behalf of the deacon Phoebe; he instructs the recipient to introduce Phoebe to all the churches in the area and to make them accept her. *First Timothy* is a part of a pseudepigraphic triptich; it says the author only allows once-married men to serve as bishop (1 Tim 3:2); indeed the author contrasts the roles of men and women: "So I wish that men in every place to pray, lifting prayerful hands without ire and argument; and likewise that women dress in respectable apparel..." (1 Tim 2:8-9). Note the expression "lifting prayerful hands"; it becomes important in Kateusz's exposition. In her work, Kateusz finds that references to women baptizing, leading liturgical prayer, or serving as bishop were suppressed over time, and earlier artistic representations depicted women alone or male and female couples lifting their hands (leading liturgical prayer). Significantly, no early art showed men alone lifting hands in liturgical settings.

Kateusz notes the contested nature of female ministry in the New Testament as background. The *Gospel of Mark* and the *Gospel of Matthew* denigrate Mary and Jesus' family, while the *Gospel of Luke* and the *Fourth Gospel* retain hints that Mary and Mary Magdalene were leaders in the early Christian movement. She notes that a second century work, the *Protoevangelium of James*,

presents Mary as a central figure in Christian heritage and associates her with the high priesthood of the Temple in Jerusalem. About the year 113, Pliny the Younger wrote that he interviewed female Christian ministers (*ministrae*), and later in the second century the Greek philosopher Celsus listed seven founders of Christian groups, five of whom were women.

Many of the narratives in early Christian literature have long and short versions. Scholars have generally accepted the shorter versions as earlier and explained the longer ones in terms of additions. Kateusz rejects this procedure; she explains the shorter versions as the result of deletions of passages that highlight female ministry. By noting the varying ways different short manuscripts lack varying passages, she notes that the deletion explanation is more plausible than the addition explanation. This is a major methodological departure in literary analysis, and it has consequences in the dates assigned to different versions of early Christian narrative literature.

The literary and artistic evidence that Kateusz assembles in her book presents Mary and other women in priestly and authority-wielding roles. Among the items are these major ones:

1. A Dormition of Mary narrative (2nd century composition preserved on 5th century palimpsest); the narrative written over it in the 9th century deleted relevant passages. A palimpsest is an almost completely faded text over which something has been written on the same papyrus.
2. Around 220, Tertullian complains about Christian women in Africa baptizing etc., using wording that parallels the Dormition palimpsest.
3. The earliest painting of the Annunciation, in the Dura-Europas church baptistry (3rd-4th century, Syria), has the event located in the Temple in the inner sanctum, i.e. with Mary as high priest. There were Jewish traditions of women as high priests.
4. Other Dormition narratives describe Mary using a censor and giving liturgical instructions to the male apostles.
5. Mary (which one is unclear—"Mariamne") in the *Acts of Philip* (2nd-5th centuries) is called an apostle; she performs liturgical functions for women while a male does so for men.
6. San Nazaro, Milano, silver reliquary box (ca. 380) has Mary holding Jesus, flanked by two men carrying pattens or platters.
7. An ivory reliquary box (ca 425-50) found in 1906 near Pola, Croatia, depicts a liturgy in Old St. Peter's in Rome; two women and two men officiate, flanking a third pair (woman and man inside the canopy).

Kateusz had to spend much time on this because a 1950s Vatican archeological report misrepresented the shape of the canopy in Old St. Peter's, apparently to cast doubt on the reliquary box actually depicting Old St. Peter's.

8. A carving from the second Hagia Sophia (ca. 430) shows paired male and female officiants, the latter, accompanied by a boy, probably depicting Pulcheria, said to customarily accompany her younger brother in services.
9. The *Life of Thecla* (usually dated 5th century) calls her an apostle and refers to her baptizing people. This is not to be confused with the shorter *Acts of Thecla* (usually dated 2nd century). The respective dates are in dispute.
10. Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis, late 4th century, complains that the belief that Mary was conceived without human seed, which Epiphanius accepted, was used to justify, inter alia, women priests.
11. Pope Gelasius (492-96) decrees that a long list of books be destroyed, including the *Acts of Philip*, the *Acts of Thecla*, and Dormition narratives.
12. The Georgian language *Life of the Virgin*, based on earlier Greek manuscripts but attributed to Maximus the Confessor (580-662) reports Mary being with Jesus throughout his ministry and presiding with him at the last supper. One of the sources seems to be the *Gospel of Bartholomew's* Annunciation narrative, which places the event in the Temple in Jerusalem with Mary at the altar, ie. as a high priest. Another source is the papyrus Bodmer 5, 3rd-4th century manuscript of the *Protoevangelium*, with Mary similarly in the Temple.
13. Many examples of liturgical vessels from 500 to 650 depicting both Jesus (beardless youth) and Mary, Mary often with Eucharistic cloth or pallium and arms raised in prayer. One bishop's pectoral medallion bears an inscription, "Lord help the wearer," with *wearer* in the feminine.
14. Sixth century art from Palestine depicting women with censers, some of them depicting the two Marys visiting the tomb of Jesus. Only later would art show men with censers.
15. Euphrasiana Basilica (ca. 550), Poreč, Croatia, shows women wearing the episcopal pallium and a second portrayal, a Visitation scene, with both Mary and Elizabeth each wearing a pallium.
16. Church of Maria Antiqua, Rome (5th-6th century) depicts Mary with maniple, cloth used for handling liturgical objects.

17. Apse of the Coptic Bawit Monastery (5th-7th century) has a depiction of Mary with maniple.
18. Painting in the Commodilla Catacomb, Rome (mid-6th century) shows Mary and the widow Turtura with maniples.
19. The San Vitale Basilica, Ravenna (ca 550) has a mosaic showing Empress Theodora carrying a chalice in procession, accompanied by women carrying maniples. This is particularly important because it is an example of art from the Eastern Church that was not destroyed by iconoclasts.
20. The Saint Demetrios Nave mosaics (ca 500-700), Thessaloniki, portrayed Mary wearing pallium. Iconoclasts plastered over them, only uncovered in 1907. They were subsequently destroyed by fire in 1917.
21. San Venantius Chapel, Lateran Baptistery, Rome (ca 650), begun by Pope John IV (640-642), completed under Pope Theodore I (642-49), shows Mary wearing the episcopal pallium; it is now hidden by a huge altar piece. An 1890s painting shows a red cross, which would undisputably indicate the cloth is a pallium, but some time after 1899 the mosaic was altered to remove the red cross from the pallium.
22. An ivory icon from Egypt or Palestine, ca 720-970) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art shows Mary with arms raised in prayer and wearing a festival pallium, flanked by bishops (men each with pallium and carrying a large gospel book). Gospel books represent bishops because the ordination of bishops involve, even now, open gospel books.
23. Depiction of Mary wearing a pallium, Ravenna Cathedral altar apse (ca 1112), now located in the Archbishop's Museum in Ravenna.

The general conclusion that Kateusz offers is, "What is certain is that for centuries, gender parallelism persisted in the Christian liturgy, the most symbolic place where the divine gender order is modeled" (p. 182). By gender parallelism, she means that there were two liturgical officiants, a male for ministering to male Christians and a female for female Christians.

What are we to make of the evidence that Ally Kateusz has assembled in this book? The double traditions of accepting and rejecting liturgical ministry by women persisted for a thousand years in Christianity. Indeed, the issue is still argued today. *Ressourcement*, the principle of the Second Vatican Council, leads us back not only to literature and practices that are consistent with what we knew in our childhoods (in my case, in the 1950s), but also to what had been suppressed, as in the case of the permanent diaconate. A restoration of female liturgical ministry would be similar to the restoration of the diaconate. Such a

restoration could come about with a strong program, with the ordination of women as presbyters and bishops, or a weak program, with the ordination of female only as deacons, so that, for example, baptism by women would be routine rather than an emergency exception.

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/

Migrant Center for Human Rights
<https://Migrantcenter.org>