



Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating July 19, 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 Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *Our Lady of the Streets*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. Following the poem is a commentary by Pax Christi member Anthony J. Pogorelc, a Sulpician priest and sociologist: "Police Reform Must Start with Holistic Officer Training." The commentary was first published in the June 24 *Rivard Report*. We are grateful to the author for allowing us to use his essay.

Calendar

Sundays July 12, 19, 26, & August 2, 1:30pm-2:30pm, SoL and Raindrop Foundation book club, discussion of Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for Whites People to Talk about Racism*. Beacon Press, 1918. Contact stek@thedialoginstitute.org.

Wednesday July 15, 7:30pm, Texas Coalition Against the Death Penalty book group discussion of John Grisham, *The Guardians* (Random House, 2020). RSVP at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScWORN7DdsUiXJlgb_Eyq9G0JF8uMn5JVuS9ix3wV1ihtk1_w/viewform

Thursday July 16, 6:30pm, Kwami Abdul-Bey (co-author of *The Tables Have Turned: A Street Guide to Guerilla Lawfare*)_ meets with Pax Christi Little Rock online to discuss Black Lives Matter:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87022781842?pwd=MmoOeURaWDVqYVlabTdSY11tcUFxdz09>

Tuesday July 21, 12:00pm-1:00pm, webinar, *The Evolution of the “Modern” Era of the Death Penalty*, Anna Otero (Thurgood Marshall School of Law). Registration, information, and Zoom invitation:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdDyIX-zok222bXffJKLI75wH15aH75zOH0yb4WihEL47-Vig/viewform>

Wednesday July 27, 6:00pm (7:00 ET), screening of *Profiled*, filmed following the NYPD killing of Eric Garner, followed by panel discussion: Kathleen Foster (the filmmaker) and Chauniqua D. Young (civil rights attorney). Sponsored by the National Writers’ Union. Register at:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSczfzphQqBassDWhXm1owowsYUOJVkxTMei-h_Xx7XttW6aw/viewform

Tuesday July 28, 12:00-m-1:00pm, webinar, *The Execution of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Texas*, Anna Otero (Thurgood Marshall School of Law).

Registration, information, and Zoom invitation:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdDyIX-zok222bXffJKLI75wH15aH75zOH0yb4WihEL47-Vig/viewform>

Thursday August 6, 12:30pm-1:30pm, webinar: “The History, Present and Possible Future of Gandhian Nonviolence and the Nonviolent Way of Jesus in Methodism,” Natalya Cherry. \$15.00, Register at:

https://secure.touchnet.net/C21403_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=1929&SINGLESTORE=true

This registration site is actually quite cryptic; check out the information at:

<https://www.smu.edu/Perkins/PublicPrograms/Webinars/United-Methodist-Studies-Webinar-Series>

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. Register at:

paceebene.org/hiroshimaday2020

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 Pelicarić, 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>

Thursday August 13, 12:30pm-1:30pm, webinar : "Social Responsibility of Religious Communities: New Traditions," George Mason (Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas). \$15.00. Register at:

https://secure.touchnet.net/C21403_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=1930&SINGLESTORE=true

In Austin

Monday July 13, 6:30pm-8:30pm, Courageous Conversation, focusing on Black Lives Matter. Please read ahead of time:

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/amp/pope-sends-strong-message-to-us-catholics-after-floyd-death/5457528.html> Zoom meeting information:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82264184969?#success>

Meeting ID: 822 6418 4969

Password: 024557

Notices

Online Resource for families or small groups:

If you're needing

some social interaction with depth,

more than just listening to zoom webinars,

longing for the social time that used to happen before and after Mass,

consider using the *Maryknoll Weekly Reflection Guides*. Gather as family or small

group and use these guides in Facetime, Skype, Zoom etc. This an easy online

structure with prayer, an introductory theme, a link to the Sunday Readings and

some reflection questions to guide group conversation. Using the SeeJudgeAct

methodology, you will be led as a group to consider where, in light of the shared

reflection, the Spirit is calling you this week. The Global Solidarity charism of the Maryknoll family will feed you spiritually for these challenging times. Find the Guides in both Spanish and English at:

<https://www.maryknoll.us/home/resources/mission-spirituality/ordinary-time-2020>

Wednesday July 1-Friday July 31, website for plastic free eco challenge. Check out <https://plasticfree.ecochallenge.org/>

Pax Christi International has issued a statement opposing Israel annexing of any West Bank Land: <https://paxchristi.net/2020/06/19/pax-christi-international-opposes-israels-plans-for-annexation/>

The Independent Lens documentary, *True Conviction*, on the work of three exonerated former Texas prisoners, is available through July 26 at: <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/videos/true-conviction/>

Webinar on building peace between Iran and the U.S., recorded July 7, 2020: Nabi Sonboli (Counselor, Iranian Mission to the United Nations), Mary Yelenick (Pax Christi USA), and Doug Hostetter (Pax Christi USA). <https://paxchristiusa.org/2020/07/07/watch-our-webinar-on-building-peace-between-iran-and-the-u-s/>

The newsletter of Pax Christi Little Rock can be accessed at: <file:///C:/Users/Anthony/AppData/Local/Temp/PC%20newsletter%20July%202020.pdf> . It includes an interesting essay by Bishop Anthony Taylor of Little Rock.

Second Reading (Romans 8:26-27)

Prior to this excerpt, Paul has just referred to hope, which is a virtue that we need because we cannot know what is to come. Since our powers of cognition are limited, we also cannot know what to pray for: "Similarly the spirit also helps in our weakness; for we do not know what we should pray for as is fitting, but the spirit itself intercedes with ineffable groanings.... " There is a tendency to pray in a way that asks God to bring about what we want. It is as if we know better than God what is best. No wonder the Spirit groans! It intercedes, yes, but the

intercession is with us, not God. Spiritual masters have long noted that the point of prayer is not to change the mind of God but to change ourselves. The divine will comes by way of surprise.

Third Reading (Matthew 13:24-43)

Surprise! The full third reading of the day has three parables about surprises in the “kingdom of the heavens”: The farmer who sowed good seed and discovered noxious tares growing up with the wheat, the tiny mustard seed growing into a tree, and yeast expanding the size of bread. The shortened reading that may be used in some services has only the surprise of finding tares growing along with the wheat. While Matthew based the other two parables on Mark and “Q” (a sayings source also used by Luke) respectively, the surprise of finding an infestation of tares is unique to Matthew’s gospel; it is something he uniquely wanted to communicate. He wanted to point out that it was not merely the growth of the Christian movement that was surprising, but that it was also contaminated.

“An enemy did this.” The farmer makes a cold assessment. He does not blame the seed or the slaves who handled it, but analyzes the situation. “Let them both grow together until the harvest....” The slaves will have the added labor of harvesting the tares and the wheat separately; the farmer will be inconvenienced in having to direct a work made complex by an enemy. In general, those who would make themselves into enemies inconvenience their rivals, burden workers, and dishonor themselves. Note that it is the people low on the totem pole who most endure the effects of malice.

Poem

Our Lady of the Streets

(Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God)

Luke 6:20

Down graffiti graced streets, “Hey Zeus. Hey Zeus,”
she calls her fatherless son.
She scans the gang scrawlings for signs of a truce.
Hungry for tomorrow,

she picks through yesterday's garbage.
She finds a rose and puts it in the night deposit.
As street cleaners hose down a people's blood,
she clutches the crucifix on the rosary round her neck.
Dry weeds in sidewalk cracks anticipate her tears.

"Hey Zeus. Hey Zeus."

Her cries echo down concrete canyons.
Her son tarries in the state pen, but she forgets,
and sees him in shadows and vanishing faces.
Hope is the alley cat she feeds, for certain as sunrise
her boy will come and take her to McDonald's.
They will invite her pals from the street
and her friends she has yet to meet.
They will toast each other and all with cold Coca Cola.

Tom Keene September 20, 1995

Police Reform Must Start With Holistic Officer Training

Anthony J. Pogorelc, P.S.S.

For years now, as I followed television and online news, I have seen police officers brutalize individuals. Consistently, I have asked myself: Why do they do this? As a Catholic priest who works at the diocesan seminary training future priests, I wonder: How were these officers trained or formed?

The Catholic Church certainly has its problems. The history of sexual abuse and its cover-up is a horror in which those charged with caring for people abused them. One avenue of response by the church was to examine and reform the process of formation for those who aspire to the priesthood.

As a sociologist, I know that formation socializes someone into a culture constituted by shared, socially learned behavior. Reforming a formation process requires a serious examination of the culture and its values. What are we forming aspirants to be a part of? Individual and social change goes hand in hand. Today, it is essential to do this for the institution of policing. Enabling those on the front

lines to properly carry out the institutional mission is an essential investment in human resources.

In the church we realized that formation is not only about the acquisition of skills; it is about shaping the human being. In priestly formation, we focus on four dimensions that could also be relevant to the formation of aspiring police officers:

Human Development

Psychological screening assists us in knowing the history and dispositions of the person and one-on-one mentorships support this process of ongoing development.

We ask: Who is this person? What do they bring from their family and social background? What issues do they need to address? How can we help them to develop as a human being in relationship to others?

Both priests and police have authority: power legitimately granted by a church or government institution. Good order depends on the appropriate exercise of authority by its officers. For example, if someone comes from a background where others are seen as opposing forces, they are likely to exercise authority in a heavy-handed way. Priests and police officers must have the capacity to know themselves and how they use their power so they can promote the common good.

Spiritual Development

Priests are meant to be spiritual servant leaders who represent God. Police are meant to represent their communities. Both need an internal moral compass to do their jobs. The values priests represent are found in scripture, and the values police represent are found in the law. To be effective, both must internalize the values they represent.

In seminaries, classes and one-on-one spiritual direction assists priests to do this. Police departments can draw on classes, as well as mentors and chaplains, to help officers to achieve this development.

Intellectual Development

In every profession, there is a body of knowledge that successful practitioners must master. Seminarians study theology and pastoral ministry for at least four years in order to gain the necessary knowledge.

Police deal with stressful situations regularly. Like priests, they sometimes need to be short-term social workers, counselors, and relief agents. A curriculum

oriented toward force does not give police all the skills that they need. A broad curriculum that includes the cultural and social history of a locale as well as the practical skills to negotiate issues faced on the job is important.

Service

Priests are meant to be servants of the Gospel and police are meant to be servants of a government of laws. It must be clear that the mission of the police is to protect and serve. When clergy or police form self-serving clubs, they cannot carry out their mission. The sex abuse scandal persisted because of cover-ups by the clergy. This is the same as the “blue wall of silence.” The training of priests and police must ensure that the mission is clear. It must provide them with the human, spiritual and intellectual tools they need to effectively carry it out.

Effective reform of both institutions requires the input of many voices and the contribution of many skills. Though the connection may not be obvious, the clergy and the police have many things in common in the service of their communities, and those engaged in the holistic formation of clergy have a useful contribution to make in conversations about the reform of policing for the good of the whole society.¹

Links

Pax Christi International

<http://www.paxchristi.net/>

Pax Christi U.S.A.

<http://www.paxchristiusa.org>

Pax Christi Texas

¹ First published as a commentary in the June 24, 2020, *Rivard Report*. Anthony J. Pogorelc is a priest of the Society of St. Sulpice and a sociologist. He is a scholar in residence at St. Mary's University and coordinator of pastoral formation at Assumption Seminary. He is also a Fellow of the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America

<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>