

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating July 30, 2017

Pax Christi San Antonio does not solicit donations; however, anyone wishing to join should make a donation to Pax Christi U.S.A. and notify Maria Tobin, matob@aol.com, to receive email messages sent to members. 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 *Third Reading* commentary is based on the gospel reading for the seventeenth Sunday in ordinary time. Tom Keene's poem is *Wordless with my father*. See <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php> for more of Tom's poems. Last June marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories; Pax Christi International issued a statement on the occasion, which appears below.

Calendar

Thursday July 27, 12:00pm-1:00pm, death penalty vigil (Mr. Taichin Preyor). Across from the Bexar County Justice Center, which is 300 Dolorosa.

Saturday July 29, 10:00am-2:00pm, Medicare for All March. Hemisfair Park, Yanaguana Garden, 434 S. Alamo.

Saturday July 29, environmental film extravaganza. 1:00pm, *Written on Water: A Modern Tale of a Dry West*. 2:15pm, *Watershed: Exploring a New Water Ethic for the West*. 3:45pm, *Revolution*. Mabee Library Auditorium, University of the Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway.

Saturday August 5, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting. Residence of Maria Tobin, 8715 Starcrest Dr., Apt. 27. (Go north on Starcrest from I-410; Starcrest becomes a divided road. The apartment complex is located between Hidden Drive and Granby Court, on the south-bound side of Starcrest. It is possible to park on Hidden Drive.)

Thursday August 10, 6:00pm-8:30pm, Dine out to support Headwaters. The mission of Headwaters, a non-profit sponsored Earth care ministry of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, is to preserve, restore, and celebrate the rich natural, cultural, historical, spiritual, and educational values of the headwaters of the San Antonio River. At The Hoppy Monk, 1010 N. Loop 1604 (east-bound service road, between Stone Oak

Parkway & U.S. 281). 15% of the bill will be donated. Make reservations before August 4 at www.groupraise.com/events/33070 .

Tuesday August 15, 7:00pm, meeting of the San Antonio Sanctuary network. First Unitarian Universalist Church, 7150 I-10 frontage road.

Saturday September 2, 10:00am-2:00pm, **in Austin**, Rally: Day of Resistance and Noncompliance with SB4, organized by Jolt Texas and Basta Texas. Texas State Capitol, 1100 Congress Ave., Austin. More information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1308974945890276/>

Thursdays September 7, 14, 21, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Ron Rolheiser, O.M.I., "Simply Being Good-Hearted is Not Enough: A Spirituality of Charity, Justice, and Prophecy, parts 1, 2, &3." \$60.00; 20% group discount. Contact Brenda, 210-341-1366, ext. 212. Oblate School of Theology, 285 Oblate Dr., Whitley Theological Center.

Wednesday September 13, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Devery S. Anderson, "The Murder of Emmett Till." University of the Incarnate Word concert Hall, 4301 Broadway. (The concert hall is next to the Administration Building, facing Broadway at the Hildebrand-Broadway intersection. Parking is in front. It has sign ("Concert Hall") in front.)

Wednesday September 27, 7:00pm, Abdullah Ahmed An-Na'im, "Religious Freedom and the Universality of Human Rights: A Modernist Islamic Perspective." Saint Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria, University Center, Conference Room A. Parking in Lots D and H.

Thursday September 28, Robert George, "Constitutional Structures, Civic Virtue, and Political v. Culture." Saint Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria, University Center, Conference Room A. Parking in Lots D and H.

Third Reading (Matthew 13:44-52)

"Finders keepers!" That is what I accepted as common wisdom when I was a child. So the brief parable that begins the reading for the day long mystified me: "The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure that had been hidden in the field; when someone finds it he hides it and in his joy sells all that he has and purchases that field." Why purchase the field? Well, it turns out that happening upon something of value is not an entitlement to own or control it. Even when purchasing a major item, one takes care to determine whether the seller actually owns it in the first place; one would have a title search done when purchasing real estate, for example.

It turns out that much of the wealth in our world is, legally speaking, in the hands of people who inherited it. Did they do anything to merit it? They happened upon it, but, figuratively speaking, there has been no equivalent to purchasing the field in which it had been hidden. Furthermore, there is no real inquiry whether the wealth had been

accumulated justly or honorably in the first place. When it comes to governmental power, Americans are suspicious of inheritance; it is even in our Constitution that noble entitlements to power are not to be recognized. However, people tend to be less democratically inclined when it comes to resources such as wealth that can be critical in obtaining governmental power.

The heavenly kingdom is similar to the treasure hidden in a field. One may simply happen upon it, but one takes care to establish rights to the property where it is found lest someone else, who happens to own the field, claim it. So we happen upon the realm of divine things, and we dispose of all else so that our claim upon that realm is secure.

Sometimes we forget that transcendent treasures do not come to us transcendentally but hidden in earthly life. Our grasp of the latter needs to be secure; we cannot simply assume that claims upon what is valuable do not inhere in the everyday world. We may need to dispose of what we think we possess in order to afford that field in which the treasure is hidden. We may think in terms of a spiritually childish "Finders keepers!" But a secure grasp depends upon a disposition and acquisition, a process that turns out to be a genuine project.

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Poem

Wordless with my father

We never really talked, I thought,
not in the words I was learning to love.
But I knew of you more than I knew. I
knew-not-knew your code:
your tools, your bricklaying, your care of the Buick,
that your bought brand new in forty-one
and sold to me fifteen years after for a dollar I never paid you.

In the dream, you drove our first car I ever remember,
the tall, slim, rumble seated Ford, black, on skinny wheels,
across a winter field, cropped with harvest stubs,
straight to a well, tapped into Underworld's dark river waters.
the car returned without you.

The dream fled, hiding its face,
but returned to stay after the call came.
To be with you, I hitchhiked across the cold December desert,
deferring to the random fortune of sequential cars:
rides-no-rides to take me to our talk-no-talk,
the silent drives to the clinic, the patient hush of the waiting room.

Later, I sent letters that I knew you'd not return,
streams of recollections, beneath the absence of words,
sifting for nuggets of connections.
Like the time, while learning to drive,
I tore the door off the garage, and we worked all day to fix it,
without one chiding word from you.

When next I saw you, the robber and radiation
had reduced your workman's body to bone-hung flesh.
As if it were all that was left,
you put my wordless wish, at last, into words,
"I hope when you die your son takes as good care of you as you have me."

The night before the funeral, my sisters and I had dreams of you.
In each you showed off your vigor with leaps and strides.
Next spring, the stingy citrus you had long tended,
dug round and fed, burst into lemon-yellow utterance.

Press release: Pax Christi International in collaboration with its members, calls for the immediate end of the 50-year Israeli occupation and for a renewed peace process

Brussels, June 1st – Beginning with the Six Day war, 5-10 June, 1967, five decades of military occupation in disregard for international laws and U.N. resolutions and the willful expansion of settlements has led to dire conditions on the ground that systematically violate the human rights of the Palestinian people.

"It is time for the international community to say, 'Enough!'", states Pax Christi International, in the light of this month's 50th anniversary of the occupation.

This call comes at a moment when commemorative activities are being held around the world to raise awareness of the impact that five decades of occupation has had on the lives of Palestinians. In this symbolic month, Pax Christi International calls for governments, civil society and all people of good will to exercise their influence, through any means available – political, economic, public and private advocacy – to seek an end to the occupation.

For 50 years the international community has been witness to the denial of human rights and the deterioration of conditions throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. We have watched the slow ebbing of hope as lives are damaged by the policies of this occupation which:

- deny freedom of movement;
- limit access to critical services, especially health care;
- monitor and curtail access to basic necessities, especially water and electricity;
- diminish opportunities for education and employment;

- obstruct normal family life and the exercise of religious worship;
- negatively affect the Palestinian economic infrastructure, especially in the agricultural sector;
- punish legitimate, nonviolent expressions of resistance and protest;
- and impose regulations that create segregation and inequality.

Recently, Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, has expressed his deep concern about the deteriorating situation: “The systemic human rights violations that accompany this occupation – collective punishment, confiscation of property, excessive use of force and unlawful killings, lack of freedom of movement and steady settlement expansion, among others – are intensifying an already perilous situation.”^[1]

Rania Giacaman Murra, Director of the Arab Educational Institute in Bethlehem, explains, “The occupation severely affects especially Palestinian youth and women. Palestinian children and youth don’t know how it was before the occupation, what it means to live in a land without walls, how it feels to breath the air of the sea, what it means to pray as Muslims and Christians without being checked and humiliated at checkpoints. Mothers often live in fear that their children will not come back home safe, that they are killed or injured or humiliated.”

The current situation is not sustainable. Reaching a political solution is the only path to peace.

Therefore, Pax Christi International calls for the parties to return to the negotiating table to establish a peace agreement that recognises and protects the human dignity and rights of the Palestinian and Israeli people as equals. We believe that the revival of a peace process must be based on a steadfast commitment to abide by international law and U.N. resolutions.

To promote and support such efforts for peace, Pax Christi International strongly recommends a ban on the sale and delivery of arms to Israel and Palestine and an immediate cessation of any military cooperation which contributes to violent conflict.

Marie Dennis, Co-president of Pax Christi International, stated: “We are commemorating a sad milestone this month with 50 years of devastating occupation. It is urgent that it is resolved, as for both Palestinians and Israelis their future and hope depend on it. This is the moment for an increased commitment to reach a just and sustainable solution in accordance with international law.”

In recognition of this solemn occasion and to highlight the impact of 50 years of occupation Pax Christi International and its members will be involved in a number of activities and events. An overview can be found here:

<http://www.paxchristi.net/news/pax-christi-international-together-members-and-partners-commemorates-50-years-occupation#sthash.gn2e4eSc.dpbs>

Contact: Alice Kooij Martinez, Senior Advocacy Officer, Email: a.kooij@paxchristi.net

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 San Antonio
<http://www.paxchristisa.org>

COPS / Metro Alliance
www.copsmetro.com/

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>

Interfaith Radio, (*Interfaith Voices*)
<http://www.interfaithradio.org/>

Texas Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty
www.txccedp.org

[1] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'No end in sight,' says UN human rights expert after five decades of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory', 19 May 2017, online available at:
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21639&LangID=E>