**Testimony** 

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

 Anticipating September 27, 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 Twenty-sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time. Tom Keene’s poem is *Bombs* . For more of Tom’s poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. Following the poem is a brief essay by Bishop Anthony Taylor of Little Rock, first published online by Pax Christi Little Rock.

**Calendar**

Monday September 21, 12:00pm-1:00pm, panel discussion “How Religious Organizations Can Respond to Educational Inequality in a Time of COVID,” Marilyn Lee (Loving Houston), Esmeralda Sanchez Salazar (Rice University Religion & Public Life Program), Brandon Walker (The Summer Institute), and moderator Elaine Howard Ecklund (Rice U. Religion & Public Life Program). Register at: <https://riceuniversity.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bhHsllcqQF2rvqxlmaSCrw>

Tuesday September 22, 4:00pm-5:00pm, online presentation “A Knock at Midnight: A story of Hope, Justice, and Freedom,” Brittany K. Barnett (attorney, founder of Buried Alieve Project), relates taking on a pro bono case that changed her life. She asks, “What does freedom mean in a country that is home to the world’s largest incarcerated population?” Donation-based ticket; register at <https://www.dfwworld.org/registration/brittany-barnett>

Tuesday September 22, 6:00pm, conversation with Anthony Ray Hinton, who served 30 years on death row in Alabama though innocent, author of *The Sun Does Shine*. Register at: <https://junghouston.org/jung-centers-fall-benefit-2020/>

Tuesday September 22, 6:30pm-8:00pm, virtual Courageous Conversation on Racism, hosted by the Holy Cross Catholic Church (Austin) Social Justice Ministry. For information, call Johnnie Dorsey 512-217-9616. The link for the meeting is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84844915005?pwd=M1pDM2JDYjZyU2IydXY4Ly80Qy9FQT09#success>

The meeting ID is 848 4491 5005; Passcode 026019

Saturday September 26, 9:00am-12:00pm, "Theology on the Run: Black Churches Congregating, Conjuring and Conspiring with the Future," an Afro-futurist reflection on Habakkuk 2:2-4, Walter Earl fluker (Candler School of Theology, Emory University), sponsored by the Sankofa Institute, Oblate School of theology. Register at: <https://ost-edu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dVWx05vISfioh92-8taG5Q>

Sunday September 27, 9:30am, “Darwin, Race, Slavery, and the Tree of Life,” Bruce Yeager. Information: contact mmcgm63@gmail.com. Posted by St. Philip Presbyterian Church, Houston. Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564638381?pwd=MTBtSFl6eVhoTUF3SXJ2VlBWd0N2QT09#success>

Tuesday September 29, 12:00pm-1:00pm, webinar “Overturning Wrongful Convictions in Texas,” Christopher Scott (House of Renewed Hope) and Mike Ware (Innocence Project of Texas). Register at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfG9LHysup1Fv1RPTewUben6UpvMvMEPwWXUxB5F87qxnbanw/viewform>

Wednesday September 30, 8:00pm, [*Blood on the Wall*](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001DC_CtZNYirvtfDaZGHTG971lhhTh6GgpunswkT_yLz-yCdGStMPLaAqIXD6Zz7o6Kiq2qotGD4bdeEdBcKimCRACBWEwr16GUlYwPF-MOpzvRc7Gz7T2NVDeRXGu8CX-QigCABGAxJq2t65jfeH349L2d-hyrpIWdpaf8D0Vu3OxL6IABGh019HdjeNEUU3Q9_aFQtsdVpCbJeXIG1XknJ_e0gnMElD6SgyJwsj2vgDA3bgk0CabShLG-v5sbyyv&c=CZX40C1A2_LNAjLhZu6Vbog-JRMC7ZPjFeQvyxJak7ntxOUiDJD_hw==&ch=kZkQmiCSOq4mp6ebv90W5ID4FAAz9z27El65Uy8QttiYFiIec4Wr_Q==)*- Humanizing the Immigration Debate,* on the National Geographic Channel.

Wednesday September 30, 8:00pm-9:30pm, panel "Elections 2020: Justice Signs of Our Times," Marianist Social Justice Collaborative, Association of Marianist Universities, and the University of Dayton. RSVP at: <https://files.constantcontact.com/bbbab666001/ba04b139-eb5c-4984-87d5-9b97c000b265.pdf>

Saturday October 3, Voice of the faithful is holding its 2020 Conference online, with Phyllis Zagano and Fr. Richard Lennan as keynote speakers. $50. Register at <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=votf&id=9>

Monday October 5, 3:30pm-4:30pm, webinar “Why Scientists Need to Talk about Religion to Address Race and Gender Disparities in Science” Elaine Howard Ecklund (Rice University) and Brandon Vaidyanathan (Catholic University of America), moderated by David R. Johnson (University of Nevada, Reno). Register at: [http://bit.ly/science-religion-diversity](https://rice.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5cef5c559523db783faa96d3a&id=3f88bb2f4b&e=fd540c7511)

Monday October 5, 4:00pm-5:30pm, Faiths in Conversation: Islam Religion in Sciety,“ Iman Dr. Khalil Abdur-Rashid (Harvard Univrsity), reponse fro Hussain Rashid. Register at: <https://35468.blackbaudhosting.com/35468/packagetickets?tab=3&txobjid=44b9c877-6897-4881-9fd8-760c4f9507f0>

Tuesday October 6, 12:00pm-1:00pm (1:00pm-2:00pm ET), Ta-Nehisi Coates (New York University), “Racial Equity and Housing Justice during and after COVID-19.” Register at: [https://bit.ly/32yRqi6](https://nlihc.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e702259618becdc3f0451bd5d&id=86e617b726&e=054f5f0b07).

Wednesday October 7, 4:00pm (5:00pm ET) „Showing Up: The Radical Work of Commitment in Unceretain Times,“ Sr. Colleen Gibson, SSJ. 20th Annual Anne Drummey O’Callaghan Lecture o Women in the Church, at Fairfield University. Register at fairfield.edu/cs

# In Houston

# Tuesday September 29, 12:00pm, "Justice Over Equity with Houston Coalition Against Hate." Join Houston Coalition Against Hate Executive Director Marjorie Joseph for an introduction to a network of 65+ organizations, institutions, and individuals who are committed to reducing hate and increasing belonging in our city. Ms. Joseph and Assistant Director Liz Peterson will offer an overview of the Coalition's history and development along with a look at the context of hate in Houston and efforts to respond. Additionally, they will share the Coalition's new Justice Statement and discuss ways organizations, institutions, and corporations can join the movement for justice over equity. Register at: <https://riceuniversity.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ETxxVQYdTEGdBpCZpjqORA>

**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>

**Second Reading** (Philippians 2:1-11)

 This passage opens with a call for Christians to act not for personal advantage but with "humility, holding one another as leaders over yourselves, not looking after each one’s own interests but those of each other" (Phil 2:3b-4). Then to press his point, he calls to mind the iconomic example of Jesus:

 Who beginning in the form of God

 Did not deem being equal to God something to seize upon

 But emptied himself, assuming the form of a slave,

 By becoming a human likeness,

 And being found in figure as a human. (2.6-7)

How this contrasts with officials whose power "goes to their heads." There are rulers and even would-be rulers who think citizens are lesser beings not entitled to the truth. There are superintendents and managers who demand loyalty rather than competence.

 It might be noted that in the modern world, expertise should not be over-ruled by corporate, bureaucratic, or governmental power, that genuine authority, grounded in truth, ought not be over-ruled by power structures. And this for the common good. This could not be if people adopted the Christian way to begin with in not fearing the powers of the world.

**Third Reading** (Matthew 21: 28-32).

 “From where comes the baptism of John? From heaven or from humans?” (Mathew 21:25) This question, which Jesus posed to the Judean religious authorities who had challenged him in the Temple enclosure, sets the stage for today’s reading. Jesus had come to Jerusalem, at great risk to his life. He proceeded to cause an incident in the Temple, interfering with the exchange of commercial currency for ritual currency and upsetting the selling of ritual sacrificial animals so as to put a stop to the religious routines. Then he had the gumption to come back the next day.

 “By what authority are you doing these things?” asked the high priests and elders. He answers with a question of his own: “From where comes the baptism of John?” If he were merely countering a question with a question, it would have been a facile rhetorical ploy. In fact, however, his question is the same as theirs: Does (or does not) authentic religion require authorization?

 This is the context for the continuation of the back-and-forth between Jesus and the authorities that today’s reading presents. “What do you think?” Jesus asks. “A man had two sons. And approaching the first he said, Son, go, work today in the vineyard.” The son replies he would not, but then repents and goes to work. The second son does the reverse, saying he would but not actually doing so. The contrast is between actuality and pretense.

 “Amen I say to you, the tax farmers and prostitutes are preceding you into the kingdom of God. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not trust him; and the tax farmers and prostitutes trusted him….” Temple, high priests, elders—all the trappings of religion, but no faith or trust in John the Baptizer, the desert preacher who came in the way of justice. Tax farmers were from the wrong political establishment, but they were open to someone who came in the way of justice. Prostitutes—in antiquity divorcees who had been abandoned by their husbands and engaged in their trade out of desperation—were from an unaccepted element of society, but they too were open to someone who came in the way of justice.

**Poem**

*Bombs*

An Air Force colonel,

a co-worker with me

in The War on Poverty,

told me he flew fighter-bombers

over North Vietnam,

dropping munitions that

scattered delayed action explosives

in and around city streets,

school yards and restaurants

meant to discourage civilians.

A woman, shared with me,

how, as a surgeon-officer with

the Air Force in South Vietnam,

she would cut into children’s bellies,

and withdraw their intestines

to carefully pick out bomb slivers.

A neighbor, carrying a bible

on his way to a study group,

expressed his fervent hope

that we would nuke the city of Bagdad.

A friend confided to me

that before becoming a priest

he was a conscious objector to World War Two

and was confined to a prison camp

till the war ended.

Such tellings:

   What do I do with them?

Tom Keene and Muse

December 6, 2019

**Just Peace**

Anthony Taylor

Bishop of Little Rock

Since the time of St. Augustine, the Catholic Church has used the Just War theory to help discern when and how force might be applied in the defense of the nation in time of conflict. The teaching of the Church regarding war and peace is spelled out very clearly in articles 2265-2267 and 2302-2317 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC). According to the Just War theory, all of the following must be in place before a military response could be considered legitimate: 1) It can only be undertaken in defense (CCC 2263-2267) against an aggressor bent on inflicting damage that is lasting, grave and certain, 2) all other means of putting an end to the conflict must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective, 3) there must be serious prospect of success against the enemy, and 4) the use of arms must not produce evils greater than the evils to be eliminated. And then once war has begun, the acts of war 1) must not target the civilian population and 2) must not target enemy combatants who have surrendered or otherwise no longer present an immediate lethal threat. The Just War theory sets high standards for a legitimate entrance into a war and even higher standards for right conduct within a war, standards that no armed conflict in recent memory has ever met-indeed, probably very few in the last 1600 years since St. Augustine! Therefore, the time has come to recognize that since the Just War criteria are almost never met, conflicts need to be resolved through nonviolent means instead.

There are now many within the Church who recognize that the Just War theory is inadequate. First of all, the thought that a war might be just is not only an illusion, it also makes war less unthinkable and thus plays into the hands of those who invent justifications for their aggression, often portraying it falsely as self-defense. But secondly, ever since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is no longer possible to assume that the civilian population will necessarily be spared, nor in this nuclear age can we possibly be assured that the anticipated benefit of waging war would remain greater than the expected harm, nor that conventional warfare might not escalate into something far worse. For that reason, the Catechism insists that “Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation. A danger of modern warfare is that it provides the opportunity to those who possess modern scientific weapons--especially atomic, biological, or chemical weapons--to commit such crimes.” (CCC 2314).So, if the Just War theory is inadequate, especially in this nuclear age, there remains only what we should have been doing all along anyway, namely Just Peace, which in the words of the Catechism is “the work of justice and the effect of charity.” (CCC 2304). And here I note the high praise of the Catechism for “Those who renounce violence and bloodshed and, in order to safeguard human rights, make use of those means of defense available to the weakest, bear witness to evangelical charity, provided they do so without harming the rights and obligations of other men and societies. They bear legitimate witness to the gravity of the physical and moral risks of recourse to violence, with all its destruction and death.”

What does this Just Peace look like in practice? Pax Christi International, the world-renowned Catholic peace movement, teaches the tools of nonviolent resolution of conflict, which are directly rooted in the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself: “You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you, whoever, is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raqa,’ will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to fiery Gehenna.” (Mt 5: 21-22).

Just Peace has at its disposal numerous nonviolent practices and strategies, including 1) nonviolent resistance, 2) restorative justice, 3) trauma healing, 4) unarmed civilian protection, 5) conflict transformation, 6) peacebuilding strategies, 7) mediated dialogue, 8) legislative advocacy, 9) economic sanctions and boycotts, and of course 10) negotiated nuclear, biological and chemical arms reduction and elimination. A fuller description of many of these practices can be found at the Pax Christi Catholic Non-violence Initiative page on the Pax Christi International website, at https://paxchristi.net/programmes/catholic-nonviolence-initiative/. Note also that while the Just War theory limited itself to addressing conflicts between nations, Just Peace efforts apply also to the resolution of conflicts within communities and advocacy for the protection of human rights within societies--for instance as taught by Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1965 when Pope Paul VI visited the United Nations, he implied that the time had come to move beyond Just War theory when he declared, “No more war, never again war. Peace, it is peace that must guide the destinies of people and of all mankind.”

*First published online by Pax Christi Little Rock in its newsletter. Bishop Taylor cited the Catechism of the Catholic Church Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994.*

**Links**

Pax Christi International

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

Pax Christi U.S.A.

[http://www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org/)

Pax Christi Texas

[http://www.paxchristitexas.org](http://www.paxchristitexas.org/)

Pax Christi Dallas

<http://www.Paxchristidallastx.org>

Pax Christi San Antonio

[http://www.paxchristisa.org](http://www.paxchristisa.org/)

* + 1. Marianist Social Justice Collaborative
		2. [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](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>