

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating October 8, 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. Send comments on the newsletter to J6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com.

Editorial

After the calendar, the *Third Reading* commentary is based on the gospel reading for the twenty-seventh Sunday in ordinary time. Tom Keene's poem is *Hymeneal for Francis*, for the occasion of the Feast of St. Francis, October 4. See <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php> for more of Tom's poems. After the poem Kathleen Kelleher offers her explanation of why she went to stand in opposition to the alt-right white supremacist demonstration in Charlottesville.

There is an action alert on the Pax Christi USA web page, calling upon the public to contact the Trump administration to support extending the Temporary protected Status of 58,000 Haitians who are in the U.S. because of the 2010 Haitian earthquake and subsequent related disasters: <https://paxchristiusa.org/2017/09/29/action-alert-temporary-protection-status-for-haitian-immigrants-needs-extended/> Instructions can be found there to endorse a PCUSA letter, as well as further information.

Calendar

Sunday October 1, 6:00pm, "Let People Vote." An ACLU program to expand rather than reduce voting. Esperanza Center, 922 San Pedro.

Monday October 2, 3:30pm, film: *Thomas Berry: The Great Story*. "At the heart of the film is Berry's experience of the universe as a cosmic liturgy." Christus Heritage Hall, The Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Tuesday October 10, 6:00pm-8:00pm, Texas Climate Change: Panel with Councilwoman Anna Sandoval, Associate professor Hazem Rashed-Ali (UTSZA), Professor Kay Cook (UT Austin), Sister Martha Ann Kirk (UIW). Special Collections Room, Mabee Library, University of the Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway. RSVP at <http://bit.ly/TXclimateTourSA>.

Wednesday October 11, 10:00am-8:00pm, film: *Stolen Education*, about the 1956 federal court case from South Texas that found illegal the tracking of Mexican American elementary school children into a three-year first grade to keep them separate. Film maker Enrique Aleman, Ph.D., whose mother was one of the students who testified in

the case at age 9, follows up after sixty years. Vista Room, Central Academic Building, Texas A & M University at San Antonio, One University Way. Doors open, snacks, at 5:30pm.

Saturday October 14: Assemble 1:00pm-3:30pm, March 3:30pm, Program 5:30pm-7:00pm, Indigenous Dignity Day Human Rights march. Assemble at Columbus Park (W. martin and San Saba). March to Main Plaza. Program is at Main Plaza. Themes: Human rights, deportations, immigration reform, private prisons. Sponsored by the Texas Indigenous Council: Antonio Diaz, 210-542-9271.

Sunday October 15, 2:00pm-4:00pm, Theater Performance: *To Be Honest*. Play based on research on San Antonio people's views of Islam. Stieren Theater, Trinity University, One Trinity Place. Park at Alamo Stadium.

Monday October 16, 5:00pm: Educators are invited to a house party in connection with COPS-Metro to develop issues for future action, including participation in a November 16 COPS-Metro Action Assembly. 1810 Oakline Drive, 78232 (US 281 or Henderson Pass to Brook Hollow, going southeast; right onto Oakline Drive going southwest). RSVP Bob Comeaux: bobtheunionguy@aol.com or 210-326-2655.

Tuesday October 17, 7:00pm-9:00pm, St. Mary's University History Department, Latino Catholicism: San Antonio and the Transformation of the U.S. Church. Rev. David Garcia; Timothy Matovina. Conference Room A, University Center, St. Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria.

Thursday October 19, 6:00pm-7:30pm: Cory Dolgon, Ph.D., "Kill It to Save It: An Autopsy of Capitalism's Triumph over Democracy" (Dr. Dolgon argues that the public accepts the destruction of the public sector and accepts arguments that "feel right" without regard for facts). University of Texas at San Antonio, downtown campus, Buena Vista Street Bulding, Aula Canaria (BV 1.328).

Friday October 21, 4:30pm-7:00pm; **Saturday October 22,** 9:00am-4:45pm, Iran in the World. Presentations by experts on the historic 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and the U.S., china, Russia, France, Germany, U.K., and European Union. Chapman Auditorium, Trinity University, One Trinity Place. Park at Alamo Stadium.

Monday October 23, 6:00pm-9:00pm, Catholic Relief Services Solidarity Event: Global Migration seminar. 6:00 rosary; 6:30-7:30 Nahren Anweya presentation on the Syrian refugee crisis; 7:30-7:45 Q & A. Our Lady's Chapel, University of the Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway.

Thursday October 26, 5:00pm-6:00pm, **in Austin,** Thomas P. Rausch, S.J., "Pope Francis: reclaiming the vision of Vatican II." Jones Global Events Center, Ragsdale Center building, Saint Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress Ave., Austin, 78704.

Tuesday November 7, 6:00pm-8:30pm, Community Conversation with San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg. Foyer and Conference Room A, University Center, Saint Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria.

Friday November 10, 7:30pm-9:30pm, **in Seguin**, film, *(Re)Formation*. A group of artists renovate a transition home for discarded youth and explore the meaning of church, holy ground, and Jesus' mission. Studio Theatre at Weston Center, Texas Lutheran University, 1000 West Court St., Seguin.

Third Reading (Matthew 21: 33-43)

This Sunday's gospel is the parable of a householder "who planted a vineyard and placed a wall around it and dug a winepress in it and erected a tower; and he rented it out to tenant farmers and journeyed away." When he sent a slave to collect the landlord's share of the harvest, the tenant farmers killed the slave. They did likewise with a second delegation and even the householder's son. Patently Matthew has Jesus aim the parable at the Temple authorities, whom Jesus characterizes as avaricious and treacherous.

By the time Matthew was composing his gospel, the Temple and Jerusalem authorities were things of the past. A more primitive version of the parable (*Gospel of Thomas* logion 65) leaves out an exchange between Jesus and the authorities that Matthew places after the parable: "Then when the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenant farmers?' They say to him, 'He will put the wicked to an end and lease the vineyard to other tenant farmers....'" The addendum is obviously meant to refer to the role of Christian church functionaries.

The parable presupposes the first century economy, in which there were no banks, stock markets, and stock and bond portfolios. Savings took the form of land and slaves. The householder in the parable is described as foregoing field slave ownership and, instead, leasing his fields out. It is an interesting exercise to consider what the equivalent situation would be in our economy. There are still people who invest in property and collect rents, often through retirement plans rather than directly. But there is far more to it than that. We have enormous corporate entities that operate enterprises with investors' funds. This is true of the private sector—manufactures, for example—as well as the public sector, where the funds in question have been taxed by a government.

So who are the equivalents of the avaricious and treacherous tenant farmers? Chief executive officers, especially ones who control enough shares of a corporation to be beyond the control of other stockholders, may enrich themselves well beyond their worth to the corporation. In doing that, they enable city managers, non-profit executives, and university presidents to argue that to obtain talented executives such as themselves extraordinarily high compensation packages are necessary. The avarice of such people is evident, but are they treacherous? Many who have worked in a large entity have seen the injustices perpetrated on employees who dare point out that the policies and practices that enrich the CEOs but weaken the effectiveness of the entity itself. There is

no limit to the lengths CEOs (and those who sell out to them) will go to discredit their critics, especially when the critics are right.

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Poem

Hymeneal for Francis

In his unsealed celibacy
Francis did not deny love
or try to force it,
but let it squeeze itself
into all forms and beyond.

The wet dream from which he woke,
in red stained stigma,
promised the consummation
his hungry heart had courted.

A lover's juice
oozed from his hands,
feet and side,
a once invisible ink
legible at last.

Ultimately,
Sister Death and Francis,
engaged since birth,
completed kept love.

Like a Jewish groom's
crystal crushing step,
they shattered the glass
that separates.

At Death's patient urging
Francis broke her bloody seal,
bled himself into the waiting womb
of the Universe.

Tom Keene, October 4, 2017

Why I Went to Charlottesville: "I don't want to be a good person who does nothing."

by Kathleen Kelleher

God works in mysterious ways. At an Advent retreat last December I listened to an older woman struggle to make sense of the U.S. Presidential election. She said, "I don't want to be a good person who does nothing." I nodded in agreement, wondering what I



would do with my own disbelief and foreboding. Fast forward to Lent; I was invited to offer a reflection at a Good Friday service. My station of the cross was Jesus is crucified. I began by singing the refrain from the African-American slave spiritual...Were You There When They Crucified My Lord? I then reflected the following.

I wonder where I would have been? Would I have stayed to witness Jesus' last moments of being one of us? Could I have functioned through the shock and trauma to comfort anyone else, or would fear and survival have ruled me? I am grateful that I have not been tested, or, are we all called to witness the crucifixions of today? Can I still tremble or am I numb to new atrocities? Some ask, "How can a loving and merciful God allow it all"? But I do not blame God, then or now. I ask myself how am I crucifying Jesus today? When I reject another and turn away, when I judge and don't make room in my heart or home, when I'm too tired to make an effort? When will my love and courage rise, when and where will I stand for something? (April 2017 excerpt)



Fast forward again to the end of July. A colleague forwarded an email to me from a resident of Charlottesville; the city's faith community was calling for a 1,000 clergy, Catholics in particular, to come stand against a planned Alt-Right/white

supremacist rally. At first I thought the best use of my time would be to pass the information and request along to faith and social justice networks I knew in Washington, D.C. However, as the days moved closer to the rally, the information coming out of Charlottesville was sobering if not frightening; violence was not only threatened but promised.

I began to back off organizing others to go, and I discerned that I needed to go. My resolve grew as I considered the logistics and meaning of making the trip south. My courage was bolstered by a friend in faith who is no stranger to putting right faith into right action. We would journey together and, in word and deed, join with the Body of Christ that is once again being crucified by the coalescing of hearts and minds that have turned away from God. As the Irish political philosopher Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." So we two Catholic women went to be a prayerful presence, witness, and opposition to free speech that is hateful, false, and inciting. We carried signs that read, "The Body of Christ is present" and "Who is my sister, my brother?"

We went because we were asked, because we could, and because it was important to say, "This is not who we are." We went for those who could not go, for those told to stay home or to go back home for their own safety. For those who fought this fight in the 1860s, 1940s,



1960s and for those who never stopped fighting because racism and anti-Semitism never stopped. For all people who are hated for who they are, for where they come from, for who they love, and how they worship. For the Jewish woman who hadn't gone home since July when her Charlottesville address was chanted outside her place of work, because nooses are being left in public places, because black men, innocent or not, are being shot dead in American streets. For my friend Harry from South Chicago, whose mother was on the bridge at Selma, for the memory of my friend Dave who labored on a chain-gang for registering blacks to vote. For friends and co-workers who could still be lynched, shot, fired, not hired, or denied housing because they do not look like me. For the University of Virginia student who screamed in panic, "Where are you America?" while tiki-torch bearing white supremacists marched through his campus. For Heather Heyer, whose last public posting read, "If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention."



We went because it was the right stand to take at this time of national confusion, rage, false narratives and empty promises. We were told that it was not smart to go, but we did not go because it was smart. Is this a new moment in our American experiment? Can we

be outraged and pay attention long enough to finally deride the wounds of racism and anti-Semitism, which only survive as long as they are

taught and learned? America seems broken at this moment in time, and it is up to all who call her home to stand up and heal her.

Kathleen is a member of Pax Christi USA, has her Master's of Divinity, and is a hospital chaplain in Quincy, MA. All pictures by Kathleen during her time in Charlottesville the weekend of August 12, 2017.

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.sanantoniopeace.center>

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

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