

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating October 25, 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 Thirtieth Sunday of Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *The Man Misunderstood*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>.

As many may know, Pope Francis published a new encyclical letter on October 4. Many such encyclical letters take something from Christian tradition and give it special emphasis. Others apply a traditional teaching to an issue of the day. Then there are a few that change the global culture by taking a general traditional value and spelling out its implications. The 1891 encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum*, on economic justice was one such encyclical. Two others were penned by the elderly Saint Pope John XXIII: *Mater et magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in terris* (1963), respectively on human rights and peace-making. Along with Pope Francis' *Laudato sí* (2015) on the care of the earth, this new encyclical, *Fratelli tutti*, may turn out to be one of the ones that changes the global culture. Pax Christi International posted an appreciation and summary of the new encyclical on October 9, which follows the poem below.

Calendar

(Times are given in Central Time)

Tuesday October 20, 2:00pm, webinar "Immigration and Asylum: Mission and Solidarity at the El Paso-Juarez border," Hedi Cernaka (attorney and Maryknoll missionary). Register at:

https://mission.maryknoll.us/elpasajuarezborder?utm_campaign=2020%2010%20Webinars&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=95731585&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9OPwT20QEBVfhKli3Fc8g90QlqIFSoLjl-UIkk53I7-

Zl4hZwjW_YQu5XJIMwQ8dl37zZ5cguv7MonU1dzQxy9wEAB6g&utm_content=95731585&utm_source=hs_email

Tuesday October 20, 6:30pm, online, Courageous Conversations, Holy Cross Church, Austin. Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89622504855?pwd=cEdDbTEzbGJTWVlaSldzSnpxVGJOUT09#success>

Zoom meeting ID 896 2250 4855; Passcode 734843

Wednesday October 21, 5:00pm (6:00pm ET), virtual panel, “#VotePax on (Im)migration & the U.S. Elections,” Azadeh Shahshahani (Project South), Dévora González (SOA Watch), and Nina Macapinlac (Bayan USA), Moderator: Roxana Bendezú (Pax Christi USA). Register at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUrc--oqjsqHdzwj4M-h7u0Qu9q3s2klrM6>

Thursday October 15, 6:30pm, Pax Christi Little Rock meeting, with a presentation, “Just War vs Just Peace: An Examination of Church Teachings on Nonviolence,” bishop Anthony Taylor (Little Rock). Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8769414122>

Tuesday October 20, 1:00pm (Part I) and **Tuesday October 27**, 12:00pm (Part II), “Texas’s ‘Future Dangerousness’ Special Issue,” Gretchen Sween (Austin, Texas, attorney). Register at:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScTGdhjmus1Z8VVPE2EivDhFmmNERaWSZzeyuHs6XrJgXF_hw/viewform

Tuesday October 20, 2:00pm, webinar “Immigration and Asylum: Mission and Solidarity at the El Paso-Juarez Border,” with Hedi Cerneka, attorney and Maryknoll Lay Missioner Register at:

https://mission.maryknoll.us/elpasojuarezborder?utm_campaign=2020%2010%20Webinars&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=96794130&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--YXNO88pvx2ShopaoMk7b8U81RylvJTPMZNu9tq0wXZjduuqjJoB6UfYTUUZb8UznJmvaacx_4ByB-MHcKyhv3CYhxxg&utm_content=96794130&utm_source=hs_email

Tuesday October 20, 7:00pm-9:00pm, webinar “Voting and Catholicism, a Critical Discussion of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, Bishop John Stowe

(Lexington Kentucky and Pax Christi USA) and Cathleen Kaveny (Boston College). Register at:

https://creighton.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_M2bBxgeKR5ONYL6JrA6Hwg?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=96248df8-cde9-4812-b55d-34b5ab32f5f1

Wednesday October 21, 1:00pm (2:00pm ET), webinar “New START: Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue on Nuclear Disarmament,” concerning the February 2021 deadline for renewing the US-Russia Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. Register at: https://notredame.zoom.us/webinar/register/9516015727938/WN_qZIZxfU4T9WdtoHe4vjzYw

Wednesday October 21, 7:00pm-9:00pm, online panel “Faith and Politics: How Does Catholic Social Teaching Address the Issues of Today,” Shirley Gonzales (San Antonio City Council), Elizabeth Lutz (The Health Collaborative), Steve O’Neil (St. Mary’s University), Donald A. Page (Faith Community Baptist Church), and Vincent D. Rougeau (Boston College), moderated by Thomas M. Engler (President, St. Mary’s University). Register at: <https://stmarytx.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlpc-pqT4pGNwpZBa4p2TTTuTiTyE40SzE>

Wednesday October 21, 7:30pm, Texas Coalition Against the Death Penalty book club online discussion of *A Lesson Before Dying*, by Ernest J. Gaines. Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScWORN7DdsUiXJlgb_Eyq9G0JF8uMn5JVuS9ix3wV1ihtk1_w/viewform

Thursday October 22, 3:00pm, online lecture “Confronting Race in Popular Culture,” Adilifu Nama (Loyola-Marymount University). Rice University Rockwell Lecture. Register at: https://riceuniversity.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UOsSVHjLQj2dCmRgEgROkw

Thursday October 22, 5:00pm (6:00pm ET), Daniel Daley (Boston College) “Catholic End of Life Ethics and the COVID Crisis.” Register at: https://bccte.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mJxED4O3S1SPixilnyNmuQ?utm_source=Catholic+End+of+Life+Ethics+%26+the+COVID+Crisis+Webinar+-+22+October+2020+first&utm_campaign=Catholic+End+of+Life+Care+%26+COVID+webinar+-+first&utm_medium=email

Sunday October 25, 10:00am, James Anderson (University of St. Thomas and St. Mary's Seminary, Houston), "The Catholic Church's Ongoing Response to the Reformation." Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564638381?pwd=MTBtSF16eVhoTUF3SXJ2VIBWd0N2QT09#success>

Tuesday October 27, 5:00pm-6:00pm, "Race and Religion in the Presidential Election," Gerardo Marti (Davidson College) and Stephanie Y. Mitchem (University of South Carolina). Register at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564638381?pwd=MTBtSF16eVhoTUF3SXJ2VIBWd0N2QT09#success>

Wednesday October 28, Peace Day Events at University of the Incarnate Word. Three online broadcasts:

1:30pm-2:45pm, Roger Barnes on three civil rights workers murdered in 1964 for registering African Americans to vote in Mississippi.

3:00pm-4:15pm, About Face: Veterans Against the War, with Jovanni Reyes, Hart Viges, Jake Tucker, Julie Vaquera, and others.

4:30pm-5:45pm, Free Speech theory: Understanding the Controversies, with Brandon T. Metroka (University of the Incarnate Word).

Register for all three at: <https://uiw.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0pc-mspjgsE9K18KEylWRJpaUddM-V7tgL>

Thursday October 29, 7:00pm-9:00pm, documentary film *Separated: Children at the Border*, followed by discussion with Maia Felix-Ortiz and Brando Metroka (both of University of the Incarnate Word). Register at:

https://uiw.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEscemsrTMuGtZ6f0sT-Fc_J7Nxfuk-yYhp

Monday November 2 and Monday November 16, 6:30pm-8:30pm, online conference "Faith in Humanity: A Pre- and Post-Election community Conversation," hosted by Compassionate san Antonio, Idnterfaith San Antonio Alliance, and the San Antonio Compassionate Institute 2020, organized by Ann Helmke (City of San Antonio). Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/faith-in-humanity-a-pre-and-post-election-community-conversation-tickets-125265347025>

Saturday November 7, 10:00am, live streamed border mass, accessible on the Catholic Diocese of El Paso web page. The dioceses of El Paso, Las Cruces, and Ciudad Juarez will join in the celebration of the mass, with bishop Peter Baldacchino of Las Cruces officiating.

Saturday November 7, 2:00pm, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting, with Lauren Bailey from Pax Christi USA. For zoom invitation contact Anthony Blasi: J6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com

Sunday November 8, 10:00am, zoom discussion “How to Calculate Carbon and Plastic Footprints,” Jim Blackburn (Rice University). St. Philip, Houston, Church & Society Program. Access at:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564638381?pwd=MTBtSF16eVhoTUF3SXJ2VIBWd0N2QT09#success>

Tuesday November 10, 6:00pm (7:00pm ET), Pax Christi USA “Grassroots Leadership Call,” primarily for Pax Christi members. Link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86492056719>

Sunday November 15, 10:00am, online presentation “Carbon Offsets and How to Purchase Them,” Jim Blackburn (Coastal Exchange). Link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564638381?pwd=MTBtSF16eVhoTUF3SXJ2VIBWd0N2QT09#success>

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://mission.maryknoll.us/reflection-guides-ordinary-time>

Second Reading (1 Thessalonians 5c-10)

Last week I noted that the clause, "as you know what sort we were for you among you," is in my reading the close of the previous sentence rather than the beginning of a new one. Because ancient Greek had no punctuation, it is up to a translator to group clauses and phrases. The translation used in churches makes the clause the beginning of the next. The reflection given here begins with verse 6 for that reason.

"And you became imitators of us and of the Lord..." (1 Thess 1:6a). Paul begins a series of people taking previous ones as examples for action. First, Paul imitates Jesus, accepting affliction with joy. Then the Thessalonians imitate Paul, themselves being subject to affliction. Then, after Paul went on his mission to Macedonia and Achaia, people in those places heard about the Thessalonians and were ready also to accept the word in affliction. This presupposes the importance of someone being ready to be a first person to speak up or set a precedent.

Third Reading (Matthew 22: 34-40)

"'You shall love the Lord your god with your whole heart with your whole soul,' and with your whole mind..." This is the well-known response by Jesus to the question, "Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" His response continues, "And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Here Jesus is depicted quoting Hebrew scripture; the first several portions about loving God are from *Deuteronomy* 6:5, and the second commandment is from *Leviticus* 19:8. Loving God "with your whole mind" is Matthew's own teaching, changing the wording from Mark's "from your whole strength."

The underlying teaching is the priority of loving God and neighbor. Regulations and practices that do not have one accomplishing those two objective can be set aside, and they ought to be set aside when they prevent one from loving God and neighbor.

Matthew was deliberate in the way that he composed his gospel. His community consisted of people who were familiar with the Hebrew scriptures and, in all likelihood, with the traditional Jesus sayings—and possibly even with

the *Gospel of Mark*. Matthew's added wording, "...and with your whole mind," would have stood out as an emphasized point when Matthew's version was read aloud. Here, "mind" translates *dianoia*, which means "common sense" or "intelligence in the use of knowledge." Why did Matthew introduce this?

The Christian and Hebrew scriptures comprise a hefty volume. It can be quoted with a wrong purpose in mind; the narrative of the temptation of Jesus in the desert has even the devil quoting scripture. In addition to scripture, many religious traditions and communities have additional rules, regulations, precedents, and extrapolations. Matthew's point is that one cannot legitimately hide behind texts, be they canon law, customs, or even scripture itself. It is necessary for all to think for themselves with skill and circumspection, in deciding what loving God and neighbor requires. Such comes not by way of license but obligation.

Poem

The man misunderstood

"Don't *cling* to me,"
I am said to have said
to Mary, my friend.
I had to go.
Unless I did,
you wouldn't get
the spirit of it all.
You wouldn't get
the whole point of my life,
or of yours.

So, surrender forever
the notion you can own me.
It is enough to remember me
with wine and bread,
where you can taste
the blood-spurting, fleshy
meanings of me.

And please don't reduce me to doctrine
or trivialize me with comfy feelings.
If you want God's kingdom,
dump your images of kings.
If you want God's peace,
let go the hope that war will bring it.

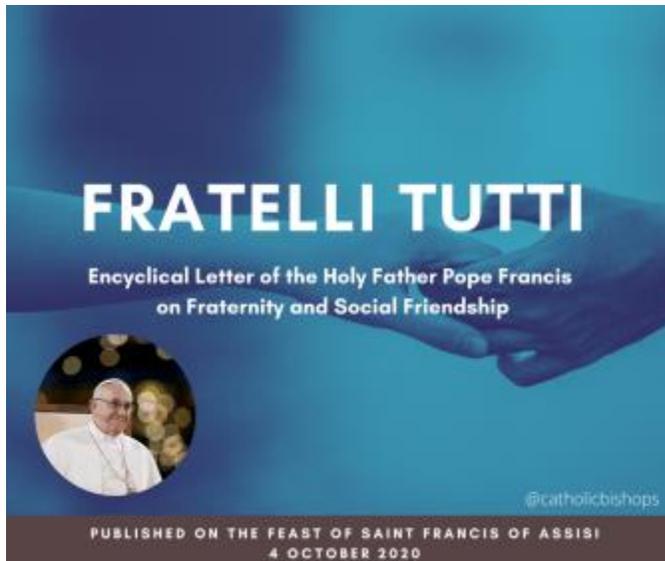
If mythologize me you must,
let the myths *be* myths,
doors to the Unknown.
Don't bury my meanings
in tombs of words taken literally.
If you would explain me with words,
let them be lyrics to music.

So, don't cling.
If you want to meet me, feed the hungry,
free the prisoners, touch your enemies with love.
Such are the real presences
where universal compassion abides,
and I wait for you.

Tom Keene February 26, 2008

Fratelli Tutti: A foundation for advancing nonviolence in a violent world

Pax Christi International



Pax Christi International is grateful for Pope Francis' new encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship." This timely document grapples with the realities of a polarized, violent and unjust world amid the worldwide crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic and envisions a new way forward to a more just, peaceful, equal, hopeful and nonviolent future.

Although *Fratelli Tutti*, does not explicitly use the term nonviolence, the encyclical offers a clear foundation for developing and integrating the theology and practice of nonviolence in the teaching of the Church, an effort to which Pax Christi's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative is dedicated. In particular, Pope Francis' clear analysis of global violence, including structural violence, sets the stage for a deeper understanding of nonviolence.

Early in the document, Pope Francis describes the "unjust normal," with its interlocking economic, political, social, and technological structures dividing the privileged from billions of others, including the impoverished, migrants, women, those who are sick, the elderly. To nonviolently transform the world, we must first glimpse its violence, and Pope Francis does not spare us in this.

The pope, though, does not simply describe the reality of our unjust world; he responds to it with key themes grounded in a primordial spiritual vision, which is also the basis of the universal ethic of nonviolence: that all beings everywhere are interrelated. Inspired by Saint Francis of Assisi, who made the sisterhood and brotherhood of all beings a touchstone of his spirituality and concrete action in

the world, Pope Francis dissolves all barriers that keep us from seeing, and living, this reality.

In the encyclical, a series of themes logically follow from this. If we are all related, if we are all one family, then we must challenge everything that destroys this unity by: showing radical care for one another; building a culture of authentic encounter; making dialogue central to our way of being; and putting solidarity into action with those most excluded, dispossessed, dehumanized and systematically under attack. Pope Francis is here relentlessly calling us to the nonviolent life, especially illuminated by his extended analysis of the story of the Good Samaritan.

Pope Francis in this encyclical also takes action, even as he calls the world to do so. He reiterates the inadmissibility of the death penalty, but perhaps even more far-reaching is Pope Francis' reflection on war, which we believe goes further than any papal encyclical in history.

Emphasizing how the just war tradition fails in the face of modern warfare, he writes, "We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits. In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a 'just war.'" In footnote #242, he is even more direct: "Saint Augustine, who forged a concept of 'just war' that we no longer uphold in our own day, also said that 'it is a higher glory still to stay war itself with a word, than to slay men with the sword, and to procure or maintain peace by peace, not by war' (Epistola 229, 2: PL 33, 1020)."

Pax Christi International and its Catholic Nonviolence Initiative are enormously thankful for Pope Francis' vision of such a world, which he has shared since the beginning of his papacy. In response to this vision, we have been exploring nonviolence as a spirituality, a way of life, a programme for social transformation, and a universal ethic. *Fratelli Tutti* offers a basis for advancing the theology and faithful practice of nonviolence.

Pope Francis invites us to a reflection on the reality of war and on another reality when we "choose peace." Let us take this journey with the pope as we move this reflection together in search of a more just, peaceful and nonviolent common home.

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>