

# Testimony

## A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating November 12, 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](mailto: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](mailto:J6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com).

### Editorial

After the calendar, the *Third Reading* commentary is based on the gospel reading for the thirty-second Sunday in ordinary time. Tom Keene's poem is *Unity?* See <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php> for more of Tom's poems. Two messages on peace-making by Pope Francis follow, one an August letter to the meeting "Paths of Peace" and one a greeting from September to a delegation from "Religions for Peace."

I have come across a video, *Searching for the Sacred Mountain*, which features an environmental journalist in China who discovers the spiritual dimensions of environmentalism and converts to Tibetan Buddhism. The video runs for a brief 20 minutes; it can be accessed at <https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/china-searching-sacred-mountain>.

I highly recommend the posting by columnist Tony Magliano, "Las Vegas Shooting, Let's Not Forget Americas Fatal Obsession with Guns," on the Pax Christi USA website (site address below under **Links**). His columns are always thoughtful, but this one seems particularly striking.

### Calendar

**Monday November 6**, 3:30pm, video, *A Fierce Green Fire—Battle for a Living Planet*, on early leaders of the environmental movement. Christus Heritage Hall, Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

**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.

**Wednesday November 8**, 7:00pm, performance by the Matsiko World Orphan Choir, of the international Children's Network. Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, 8900 Starcrest Dr.

**November 9-11 and 16-18**, 7:30pm, **and November 12 and 19**, 2:00pm, theatre production, *A Piece of My Heart*, tours of duty I the Vietnam War occasion profound

change for six women. Palo Alto College, Performing Arts Center, 1400 W. Villaret. \$5.00 to \$8.00.

**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.

**Tuesday November 14**, 12:00pm-1:00pm, Ecumenical Thanksgiving Prayer Service. Our Lady's Chapel, University of the Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway.

**Tuesday November 14**, 6:30pm, Clair Hein Blanton (doctoral student, University of Aberdeen, religious ethics) Luther, Ant-Semitism, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Reflection on the Legacy of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Holzman Auditorium, Jewish Community Campus, 12500 N.W. Military Highway. RSVP to [events@hmmsa.org](mailto:events@hmmsa.org).

**Wednesday November 29**, 2:00pm-4:00pm, video, *Written on Water*, on the tension between property rights and state-mandated pumping limits in west Texas. Mabee Library Room 221, University of the Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway.

### Third Reading

"Then the kingdom of heaven may be likened to ten maidens, who taking their lamps go in to meet the bridegroom." The marriage custom was for a bridegroom to visit the home of the bride's father and to bring the bride back with him. The parable has five of the maidens who brought extra oil for their lamps when they held vigil in the bridegroom's home and five who did not bring enough oil and were away buying more when the bridegroom belatedly returned and the celebration could begin. The "foolish" five were unable to get in and celebrate when they arrived afterwards with their oil.

The parable contrasts the five sensible maidens with the five foolish. All ten were to have lamps for light. Such lamps, even in our own day, symbolize wisdom and learnedness. Being supplied with enough oil for the lamps obviously refers to being ready to shed light, apply wisdom. Oil is a multi-themed symbol, calling to mind both the Holy Spirit and being anointed for personal calls and mission.

It is notable today that for some people facts do not matter when it comes to making decisions about public policy. There are people who are more impressed with the forcefulness with which claims are asserted than with carefully assembled evidence. This is particularly true with questions about such ecological phenomena as climate change and the effects of fracking. The parable favors wisdom over spin, light over noise. The symbolism in general calls upon us to use our skills and opportunities open to us rather than simply pray for a magical intervention from God.

## Poem

### *Unity?*

Is it really all one anyway?  
That up and down  
are somehow the same?  
Also, right and left,  
crazy and sane,  
evil and good?  
That in the end,  
and even now,  
the dualities dissolve back  
to Unity?

Will murderers and their victims  
each understand self and other  
enough to embrace?

Will war makers and peacemakers  
come to terms as illusions  
of otherness terminate,  
and the truths of being One begin?

Is Adonai echad, the Lord our God is One,  
our first, last and ultimate prayer?

Some Great Spirit within us  
that leaks truth,  
arouses love,  
inspires courage,  
that connects our separations,  
completes our accord with  
all that was, is now,  
and will become?

Some Creator of all  
abiding in all creation?

Some One Source  
from which we come,  
to Whom we all return?

Tom Keene    January 19, 2008

**LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING “PATHS OF PEACE”  
[Münster and Osnabrück, Germany, 10-12 September 2017]**

*Distinguished and dear Representatives of the Churches  
and Christian Communities, and of the World's Religions*

To all of you I offer cordial greetings and the assurance of my closeness in prayer.

I thank the Dioceses of Münster and Osnabrück, and the Community of Sant'Egidio for bringing you together once more for this international meeting, whose theme is *Paths of Peace*. Last year we celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of this process of peace and dialogue initiated by Saint John Paul II in Assisi in 1986. It remains timely and necessary, as conflicts, violence, terrorism and war increasingly threaten millions of persons, violate the sacredness of human life, and make us all more uncertain and vulnerable.

This year's theme is an invitation to forge new paths of peace. How greatly this is needed, especially where conflicts seem intractable, where the will to undertake processes of reconciliation is lacking, where trust is placed in arms and not in dialogue, thus leaving entire peoples plunged into a dark night of violence, without hope for a dawn of peace. Yet countless of our brothers and sisters continue to “thirst for peace”, as we affirmed last year in Assisi. Alongside political and civil leaders, who are responsible for promoting peace everywhere, today and in the future, the religions are called, by prayer and by humble, concrete and constructive efforts, to respond to this thirst, to identify and, together with all men and women of good will, to pave tirelessly new paths of peace.

Our *path to peace* is not that of those who profane God's name by spreading hatred; it has nothing to do with the bane of war, the folly of terrorism or the illusory force of arms. Ours must be a *path of peace*, uniting “many religious traditions for which compassion and nonviolence are essential elements pointing to the way of life” (cf. [Message for the World Day of Peace](#), 1 January 2017, 4). Making space for peace calls for humility and courage, tenacity and perseverance; more than anything else, it demands prayer, since – as I firmly believe – prayer is the taproot of peace. As religious leaders, particularly at this present moment of history, we also have a special responsibility to be and to live as people of peace, bearing insistent witness that God detests war, that war is never holy, and that violence can never be perpetrated or justified in the name of God. We are likewise called to trouble consciences, to spread hope, to encourage and support peacemakers everywhere.

What we may not and must not do is remain indifferent, allowing tragedies of hatred to pass unnoticed, and men and women to be cast aside for the sake of power and profit. Your meeting in these days, and your desire to blaze new paths of peace and for peace, can be seen as a response to the call to overcome indifference in the face of human suffering. I thank you for this, and for the fact that you have gathered, despite your differences, to seek processes of liberation from the evils of war and hatred. For this to happen, the first step is to feel the pain of others, to make it our own, neither overlooking it or becoming inured to it. We must never grow accustomed or indifferent to evil.

Yet the question remains: What can be done to respond to such growing evil? Is it not too strong? Is every effort useless? In the face of such questions, there is the risk of paralysis and resignation. You, however, have embarked upon a journey, and today you gather to offer an answer. Indeed, your very gathering represents a response of peace: no longer are some against others; now all stand beside one another. The religions cannot desire anything less than peace, as they pray and serve, ever ready to help those hurt by life and oppressed by history, ever concerned to combat indifference and to promote paths of communion.

It is significant that your meeting takes place in the heart of Europe, in this year that marks the sixtieth anniversary of the signing in Rome of the founding treaties of the Union. Peace has been at the heart of Europe's reconstruction following the devastation caused by two disastrous world wars and the terrible tragedy of the Shoah. May your presence in Germany be a sign and a summons for Europe to cultivate peace through a commitment to paving new paths to a solid unity within and a greater openness without. May we never forget that peace is not only the fruit of our human efforts, but of openness to God.

Together let us continue to forge new paths of peace, lighting candles of peace amid the darkness of hatred. May all men and women long "to break through the barriers which divide them, to strengthen the bonds of mutual love, to learn to understand one another, and to pardon those who have done them wrong... May all peoples accept one another as brothers and sisters, and may the peace for which they yearn ever flourish and reign among them" (JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter [\*Pacem in Terris\*](#), AAS 55[1963]. 304).

*From the Vatican, 28 August 2017*

*Francis*

**GREETING OF Pope Francis  
TO A DELEGATION FROM "RELIGIONS FOR PEACE"**

*Wednesday, 18 October 20*

Dear Friends,

I offer you a warm welcome and I am grateful for your visit. I thank Cardinal Tauran for his kind presentation.

Peace remains an urgent task in today's world, where so many peoples are scarred by war and conflict. Peace is both a divine gift and a human achievement. This is why believers of all religions are called to implore peace and to intercede for it. All men and women of good will, particularly those in positions of responsibility, are summoned to work for peace with their hearts, minds and hands. For peace has to be "crafted". In this effort, peacemaking and the pursuit of justice go together.

The religions, with their spiritual and moral resources, have a specific and unique role to play in building peace. They cannot be neutral, much less ambiguous, where peace is concerned.

Those who engage in acts of violence, or try to justify them in the name of religion, gravely offend God, who is peace and the source of peace, and has left in human beings a reflection of his wisdom, power and beauty.

I express my esteem and appreciation for the work of "Religions for Peace". You provide a valuable service to both religion and peace, for the religions are bound by their very nature to promote peace through justice, fraternity, disarmament and care for creation.

There is a need for a common and cooperative effort on the part of the religions in promoting an integral ecology. The Bible helps us in this regard by reminding us of the Creator, who "saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (*Gen 1:31*). The religions have the wherewithal to further a moral covenant that can promote respect for the dignity of the human person and care for creation.

Thanks be to God, in various parts of the world we have any number of good examples of the power of interreligious cooperation to oppose violent conflicts, to advance sustainable development and to protect the earth. Let us continue along this path! We trust in the Almighty's help and in the good will of believers and so many others.

May God bless you and make your commitment to peace bear rich fruit!

## 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/](http://www.copsmetro.com/)

Marianist Social Justice Collaborative  
[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>

Interfaith Radio, (*Interfaith Voices*)

<http://www.interfaithradio.org/>

Texas Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty

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