

Testimony 
A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating February 9, 2020

Communications with the editor may 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 Liturgical Reading reflections are based on readings for the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *Seekers*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>.

Following the poem is a historical note about Pax Christi and a reflection by Anne Dodd of the British Section of Pax Christi upon her visit to the town and church where it all began. The background is actually quite startling.

Calendar

In Austin

Monday February 3, 3:00pm, documentary *Emanuel*, on the aftermath of the shooting at the Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC. Sharon Risler, whose mother was one of the victims, will be present to sign copies of her book, *For Such a Time as This: Hope and Forgiveness after the Charleston Massacre*. Austin Presbyterian Seminary, 100 E. 27th St.

Wednesday February 5, 12:00pm-2:00pm, "Exploring Religious-Policy/Security Nexus in Addressing Global Security Challenges," Kelley Coblenz (St. Edward's University), Jennifer Veninga (St. Edward's University), Louis Brusatti (emeritus, St. Edward's University), and Imam Yahya Pallavinci (Islamic Religious Community, Italy). Carter Auditorium, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress.

Sunday February 16 (3rd. Sunday of the month), 7:00pm, Pax Christi Austin meeting, Fr. John Payne House, St. Ignatius Catholic Church, 126 W. Oltorf St.

In Dallas

Wednesday February 5, 12:00pm-1:30pm, “*Colin Powell: Seeking Monsters to Destroy: How America Goes to War from Jefferson to Trump*,” Jeffrey A. Engel (Southern Methodist University). Hughes-Trigg Student Center, Southern Methodist University Center.

Thursday February 13-Friday February 14, conference, “‘In the Face of Barbarism:’ Dietrich Bonhoeffer on Culture, Humanity and the Importance of Ordinary Life.” Perkins School of Theology. Registration for the full conference is \$10 for students and \$25 for the general public. Pricing includes lunch on Friday. Please note that both the keynote lecture on Thursday evening and the one-person play on Friday evening are free events open to the public. Perkins School of Theology, 5915 Bishop Blvd. Contact the Perkins School of Theology for details: (214) 768-8436.

Thursday February 27, 6:30pm, “Building the Good Society,” Lloyd Jeff Dumas (University of Texas, Dallas). Times 10 Cellars, 6324 Prospect. Books \$28. Sponsored by Nuclear Free World Committee, Dallas Peace & Justice Center.

Saturday March 21, 7:00pm-9:00pm, “and You Welcomed Me: A Catholic Meditation on Immigration and Race for a Changing *Community*,” Hosffman Ospino (Boston College). Church of the Incarnation, 1809 Maher Lane, Irving.

In El Paso

Fridays, 12:00pm-1:00pm, Pax Christi El Paso joins Border Peace Presence in front of the Federal Courthouse (corner of Campbell and San Antonio).

Tuesday February 4, 6:30pm, Rupert Wates Concert, Columban Mission Center, 816 Magofin. Suggested donation \$15.

Tuesday February 4, 6:45pm, Pax Christi El Paso meeting, Centro Mujeres de la Esperanza, 1101 Birth St. Visitors welcome.

Thursday February 6, 12:00pm-1:00pm, death penalty vigil, across the street from the El Paso County Courthouse, unless there is a reprieve.

Thursday February 6, 6:30pm, Rupert Wates Concert, Kenney's residence, 6092 Via Hermosa. Suggested donation \$15.

Sunday February 9, 3:00pm, film, *500 Years Later*, St. Joseph School Auditorium. Enter through parking lot across from the church rectory, 1315 Travis St.

In Houston

Thursday February 6, 4:00pm, "Antisemitism, Pornography, and American Jews," Josh Lambert (University of Massachusetts). Information: jewishstudies@rice.edu. Registration: https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20200206/event_id/69900

Friday February 7, 8:00am-9:00am, "Making Monday Matter: American Evangelicalism and the Deprivatization of Economic Orientations in the 20th Century," Andrew Lynn (University of Virginia). Information: Hayley Hemstreet, RPLP Program Manager, hjh2@rice.edu, 713-348-3974. Register: https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20200207/event_id/69060

Saturday February 8, 9:00am-2:00pm, bus tour, "Toxic Tour of Houston." Guides Juan Parras and Yvette Arellano; focus will be on East Houston. Begins at Rothko Chapel, 3900 Yupon St. \$20. Register at rothkochapel.org.

Thursday February 20, 10:00am-6:00pm, Workshop: The Medical Ethics of Consciousness, Sunil Kothari (Memorial Hermann Hospital), Christos Lazaridis (University of Chicago), Andrea Lavazza (CUI, Italy), and Lan Li (Rice University); discussant Tim Bayne (Monash University). Founders Room, Lovett Hall, Rice University. Information: Dr. Uriah Kriegel, uriah.kriegel@rice.edu.

Sunday February 23, 9:45am, "Physician-Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia after the Holocaust," **Sheldon Rubinfeld, M.D., FACP (Baylor College of Medicine)**. Room 201, St. Philip Presbyterian Church, 4807 San Felipe.

Saturday February 29, Racial Wealth and the Income Gap, presented by NETWORK. Dominican Center for Spirituality, 6501 Alameda Rd. Contact Ceil Roeger @713-440-3714 or croeger@domhou.org

In San Antonio

Monday February 3, 3:30pm, screening, *Super Hummingbirds*. Christus Heritage Hall, The Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Thursday February 6, 6:00pm-8:00pm, “Reversing the Pipeline to Prison in Texas,” students and experts. Esperanza Center for Peace & Justice, 922 San Pedro. Register at www.eventbrite.com/e/reversing-the-pipeline-to-prison-in-texas-tickets-91168590709.

Saturday February 8, 5:00pm-7:00pm, Jewish Voice for Peace open house. 467 E. Park Avenue.

Monday February 10, 5:30pm, “Material Circularity for Sustainable Cities: Lessons from Portland,” Shawn Wood (City of Portland) and David Greenhill (Good Wood Deconstruction). AIA San Antonio, 1344 S. Flores St.

Monday February 10, 7:00pm-9:00pm, LGBTQ+ and the Spiritual Journey Series: “Interfaith Insights on Human Sexuality,” Father John Markey, op (Oblate School of Theology) and Rabbi Samue M. Stahl (Temple Beth-El, emeritus). \$10 before Feb. 3, \$15 after. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Registration: <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration>.

Wednesday February 12, March 25, and April 20, 7:00pm-9:00pm, “Living Together in Difference: Upending Violence through Alternative Community Building,” Derick Wilson. \$15.00 before Feb. 5, \$20 after. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Registration: <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration>.

Tuesday February 18, 6:00pm, “SAWS’ Policies Hasten San Antonio’s Growing Water Crisis,” Meredith McGuire (emeriti Trinity University). Eco Centro, 1802 N. Main.

Tuesdays February 18 and March 24, 7:00pm-9:00pm, discussion of being an ally to oppressed groups, Miriam Sobre and Jake Erney. \$15 one session, \$25 two sessions. . SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Registration: <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration>.

Wednesday February 19, 7:00pm-9:00pm, “Activism through a Buddhist Lens,” Thomas Bruner. \$15 before Feb. 12, \$20 after. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Registration: <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration>.

Monday February 22, 1:30pm, screening, *Journey of the Whooping Crane*. Christus Heritage Hall, The Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Tuesday February 25, 7:00pm-9:00pm, “The Trouble with Fracking,” Sr. Elizabeth Riebschlaeger, ccvi. Free; register by Feb. 18. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Registration: <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration>.

Saturday February 29, 8:30am-4:00pm, Texas Coalition Against the Death Penalty 2020 Annual Conference. Whitely Theological Center, Oblate School of Theology, 285 Oblate. Pre-register, \$60.00, at <https://tcadp.org/tcadp-2020-annual-conference-registration/>

Second Reading (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

This brief passage is sometimes given an anti-intellectual meaning; in fact the way it is usually translated lends itself to such a reading. For those who believe in a creator God, one cannot reject any truth, however subtle, direct, simple, or complex it may be. A more accurate translation from the Greek suggests that Paul did not want an acceptance of the faith to depend on the human constructions that were used to present it but a faith that outlasts human constructions. “And when I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you concerning a superiority of thought and wisdom. For I decided to know nothing before you but Jesus Messiah, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching were not in a persuasiveness of words of wisdom but in

a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your faith would not be in a human's wisdom but in the power of God.”

Third Reading (Matthew 5:13-16)

This coming Sunday, the First Reading, Isaiah 58:7-10, catches attention more readily than does the Third. The Isaiah passage reads, “Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless.... Then your light shall break forth like the dawn....” If our light is shining, then we will be feeding the hungry and sheltering the oppressed and homeless. The import of the gospel reading, in contrast, is less obvious and requires some thought. In fact, its own meaning has been faded by its metaphors becoming clichés.

“You are the salt of the earth.” The salt that we know comes in cylindrical boxes that are sold in supermarkets; the expression “salt of the earth” seems even odd to us. In the time of Jesus, salt had to be mined or gathered from distant locations where sea water had evaporated; it was a valuable commodity that people used as money. The Empire, in fact, often paid its soldiers in salt. Valuable as it was, if it became bland people threw it out. The “you” in the statement is in the plural; it suggests that we are like salt—not you or I but we the people. A special value is lost with a singular you or I, but retained when there is a genuine we.

“You are the light of the world.” In both Greek and English “world” can be either the earth or the total human environs. We the people are light for the earth and the total environs. We the people are what make all persons see and have insight. We are like a city that cannot be hidden. “So let your light shine before people.”

Just as Isaiah was not counseling merely personal charitableness but speaking to his nation, Jesus is speaking to us, a people. We are called to see to it that the hungry eat and the oppressed and homeless have a home. The point is not to maintain a mean society so that we can be isolated points of light in it, if so inclined, but to maintain a home illuminated throughout by our people's light.

Poem

Seekers

Somewhere within we seek
the breathing force in gaseous galaxies,
that seeks to know itself,
that forges itself in suns,
explodes into fiery planets,
cools to mirror itself
in polar ice and tropical pools,
and brings the mix to life,
from pulsing molecule to single cell,
then many, so that we and our children
will launch our craft, our selves,
to sail the gaseous galaxies,
seek the seeker,
know the knower,
whence we come.

Tom Keene
January 30, 1990

Historical Note



Marthe Dortel-Claudot

The origins of Pax Christi in **1945** lie in an initiative of *Marthe Dortel-Claudot*, a teacher in the south of France, who began a campaign of prayer for Franco-German reconciliation. *Bishop Pierre Marie Théas* of Montauban, who had been imprisoned for protesting about the persecution of the Jews, and who had prayed for the German people and urged others to do so, became the first President. The original objective was enlarged and Pax Christi became a “crusade of prayer for the nations.” This spiritual basis underpinned the work of the movement which, as it developed, called for socio-political action in public life as a means of bringing about the Peace of Christ.

In **1950** Pax Christi was constituted as “*The International Catholic Movement for Peace*” with a new President, *Archbishop Feltin* of Paris. The first summit meeting was attended by representatives (lay people and religious) from Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Switzerland. From its foundation Pax Christi attracted every kind of member; men, women, young, old, lay people, priests, without social, racial or cultural distinction – Peace for All, Peace by All.

Reflection on Agen and Oradour in France and the connections with Pax Christi

by Anne Dodd

(Chair of the British Section of Pax Christi, August 2015)

We were on holiday in France a few weeks ago and – only because of a chance remark by a friend in Oxford and then another in Limoges – changed our plans to include a brief visit to Agen and Oradour. We had never been to either place before but wanted to learn more about each place, with their connection with Pax Christi.

I knew something of the story of Marthe Dortel-Claudot, but never knew that she had been living in Agen when Pax Christi began. Finding – with some difficulty – the church where she worshipped and where Pax Christi was born made her courage come alive for me. There is a plaque inside the church – St Hillaire – to mark the birth of Pax Christi, 70 years ago, in that church where Marthe, together with a war widow, the daughter of a deportee and one or two others – in the midst of the hatred, fear and violence of wartime France – took literally Jesus' words Love your enemies and began to pray publicly for the German people. For her, there was no Other, the Germans were her brothers and sisters in Christ. What breathtaking courage that must have taken. We catch something of how much that risked when we read the other plaque in the church – half way up the front of the church. This records the death of a young man of 22, Andre Delacourtie (called Arthur) killed in that same church on 9th October 1943. He was the organiser of the Resistance in the area of Lot and Garonne. `Tue for La France` it said on the plaque. Killed in the defence of France. The same church, the same time.

The fear, hatred, division and suspicion that surrounded Marthe and all those in that neighbourhood – as all over wartime France – were an oppressive reality that it is impossible for us, who have never known wartime occupation, to fully imagine.

In Oradour, near Limoges, we can see every reason for the bitter hatred of the enemy, the Other. The village of Oradour was the site of the worst Nazi massacre of civilians on French soil - 642 men, women and children, the entire population of that village - on 10 June 1944. Rounded up, shot, women and children herded into the church which was then set on fire, bodies burned, all buildings torched in a few hours on a summer Saturday afternoon. Only 6 escaped. We were there on Aug 6th – Hiroshima Day – and the parallels with Hiroshima were haunting and chilling – the suddenness, the randomness, the

burned, twisted remains of metal toys, reading glasses, watches... the complete annihilation of a population, men women and children.

Oradour was deliberately left as burnt-out ruins by the French authorities after the war and a new church and village built next to the ruins of the old. The legacy of bitterness and hatred cannot be imagined. What hope of reconciliation in the midst of this?

Sometimes it is only the power of symbol and gesture that can do anything.

The German section of Pax Christi came to Oradour after the War and offered a chalice to the new church – a symbol that in Christ there is no Other. The Eucharist is the symbol and reality of that oneness, no Jew, no Gentile, no French, no German. We are One in Christ and can be no other.

It was that Oradour Chalice that was used in a moving open-air Mass, during the Pax Christi International Assembly in Strasbourg in 2010, part of a pilgrimage of reconciliation to the Peace Cross of Bühl in Germany. The Buhl Kreuz is a monument to French–German reconciliation after WW2.

These events at Agen and Oradour were 70 years ago. There's always the danger in looking back and seeing events in the past as a 'museum of remembrance' instead of a challenge to us in the new and here.

In the homily at the opening Mass at the Strasbourg Assembly, 5 years ago we were all reminded of this. It was a homily about Jesus' final words to his disciples, his followers. This is an extract from that homily.

"It is you who are the witnesses"

This was the final message of Christ to his disciples.

He did not say: "When I'm gone, do this, do not do that."

No, his words were: you are my witnesses,

the work for which I came to join humankind.

You are responsible to ensure that it remains alive,

and be a constant source of renewal and transformation.

In his humble farewell speech, Jesus teaches us something important:

the Holy Spirit places the apostles within the heart of its mission.

They are not the guardians of a museum of remembrance

they are responsible for the relevance of the message of Christ for today

In our turn we are called upon, not only to make known but also to make effective the love and peace of Christ.

In this context, the word "witness" bears a great strength and great resonance. It is not only about telling what we saw, but to carry in

ourselves this event. We must be accountable, absorb it in ourselves, transform it to be able to transmit it not simply as information but as an urgent request, as a call that challenges.

If we want to be witnesses of peace, that is to say, messengers and builders of peace, we must first be ourselves, men and women of peace, inhabited by a genuine sense of justice, a spirit of charity and of reconciliation.

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.sanantoniopeace.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/