

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating December 31, 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 Feast of the Holy Family. Tom Keene's poem is *331 East Kings Highway*. See <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php> for more of Tom's poems. A statement follows that was issued by Pax Christi International, on the U.S. government's controversial recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Calendar

Tuesday January 2, 3:30pm, film on western photographer Ansel Adams. This Spring the video series at Christus Heritage Hall will feature artists who promoted ecological consciousness through their works. Christus Heritage Hall, The Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Tuesday January 2, 6:30pm-8:30pm, Common Sense Gun Legislation Forum, organized by Maestranza. Brick at Blue Star Arts Complex, 108 blue Star.

There are numerous events during Dream Week in San Antonio. Consult the 2018 Dreamweek Schedule at Dreamweek.org/events

Friday January 5, 6:30pm-8:30pm, Religion and Its Relationship to the Trans Community—A Conversation. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). RSVP at dreamweek.org/events/

Saturday January 6, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting, residence of Maria Tobin, 8715 Starcrest Dr., #27. (Go north on Starcrest from I-410; Starcrest becomes a divided road. The apartment complex is located between Hidden Drive and Granby Court, on the south-bound side of Starcrest. (It is possible to park at a church across the street.)

Monday January 8, 4:00pm-9:00pm, SoL Center, Building Bridges: Naming & Negotiating Differences. Economic and Socio-Cultural Divides Panel, 4:00-6:00; Sol

Reception 6-7; Religious Differences Panel 7:00-9:00. University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (Park off Shook). Register at www.upcsa.org/registration/. The title needed in the online form is Building Bridges: Naming & Negotiating Differences.

Tuesday January 9, 6:30pm-8:30pm, film and discussion, "Sin by Silence," on the imprisonment of battered women who defended themselves. Panelists include Cathy Maston, Patricia Castillo, Doshie Piper, and Bill Bush. Alamo Drafthouse Cinema Park North, 618 Northwest Loop 410 (Park North Shopping Center).

Thursday January 11, 7:00pm-8:30pm, MLK Jr. Commemorative Lecture, Kathleen Neal Cleaver, human rights activist. Laurie Auditorium, Trinity University, One Trinity Place. Park at Alamo Stadium, off Stadium Drive.

Thursday January 11, 7:00pm, to **Saturday January 13**, 12:00pm, From Conflict to Communion: 500 Years of Christian Reform. Multiple speakers. Whitley Theological Center, Oblate School of Theology, 285 Oblate Dr. \$40 + \$10 box lunch for Friday. For complete schedule: <https://ost.edu/events/conflict-communion-500-years-christian-reform/>. Register with Brenda Reyna at breyne@ost.edu or 210-341-1366, ext. 212.

Sunday January 14, 2:00pm, Wreath-Laying Ceremony in honor of the life and struggles of Martin Luther King, Jr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Plaza, intersection of E. Houston and N. New Braunfels.

Sunday January 14, 4:00pm, Citywide Interfaith Worship Service. San Fernando Cathedral, 115 Main Plaza.

Monday January 15, 8:00am, Early Morning Worship Program. MLK Academy, 3101 Martin Luther King Drive.

Monday January 15, 10:00am, 50th Anniversary MLK March, begins at 3101 MLK Drive and ends at Pittman-Sullivan Park, 1101 Iowa (3 mile route). Information at sanantonio.gov/mlk.

Monday January 15, 11:30am-3:30pm, MLK Commemoration Program. Pittman-Sullivan Park, 1101 Iowa.

Thursday January 18, 6:00pm-8:00pm, film about the death penalty: "The Last 40 Miles," followed by dialogue with film maker Alex Hannaford and with Kristin Houlé, Executive Director, Texas Coalition Against the Death Penalty. Chapel Auditorium, Our Lady of the Lake University, 411 SW 24th St. More information from cwcs@ollusa.edu.

Thursday January 18, 7:30pm-9:30pm, Dr. Luke Peterson, "Knowledge and Power in Middle Eastern Studies," extent to which knowledge is deliberately fashioned for pre-determined purposes. Northrup Hall 040, Trinity University, One Trinity Place. Park at Alamo Stadium, off Stadium Drive.

Saturday January 20, 5:30pm-10:30pm, Night of Hope Fundraiser for the Children of Gaza. St. George Maronite Catholic Church, 6070 Babcock Road. \$50.00; beneficiary is Middle East Children's Alliance (<https://mecaforpeace.org/>). Purchase tickets from <http://nightofhope2018.doatend.com/>.

Thursday January 25, 2:00pm-3:30pm, **in Austin**, Kimberly D. Russaw, Ph.D., "What Shall We Tell our Sons and Daughters," addressing violence against women as narrated in the Bible. Agard-Lovinggood Auditorium, 900 Chicon St., Huston-Tillotson University. Parking available on Chalmers Avenue. Information: Rev. Donald E. Brewington, debrewington@htu.edu.

Sunday January 28, 3:00pm-5:00pm, Annual Blessing of the Peacemakers and Announcing 2018 San Antonio Peace Laureates. Whitley Theological Center, Oblate School of Theology, 285 Oblate.

Tuesday January 30, 4:00pm. Laurie Brink, O.P., Ph.D., "Love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt 5:44): Interpreting gospel ethics in an age of polarization." Reinbolt Hall, Assumption Chapel, St. Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria. Park in Lot D near the NW 36th St. entrance, or in Lot H near the Culebra Rd. entrance.

Third Reading (Luke 2:22-40)

Some parishes may choose to use a short form of the reading, Luke 2:22, 29-40.

The passage narrates Joseph and Mary bringing the newborn Jesus up to Jerusalem since he was a first-born. The narrative has them doing this when the days of their purification had been completed; "their" in this case would refer to Mary and Jesus. The Law specified a length of time of impurity for new mothers, and by tradition a new born infant was impure by association with her. A circumcision could occur after this period, eight days after birth. The narrative presents the family as ritually observant.

Luke's narrative has the family meet Simeon, "a just and decent man," in the Temple precincts. This seems to be a legendary reference to Simeon the son of Hillel. The point of the reference is that ritual observance was not an end in itself but an expression for a forward-looking hope, since Simeon was "awaiting the comfort of Israel," and "it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the anointed one of the Lord."

"And there was a prophetess, Anna, daughter of Phanuel, from the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her maidenhood, and she had been a widow for eighty-four years." No doubt this is another legend. She "thanked God and kept talking about him" (the infant) "to all who were expecting the redemption of Jerusalem." Anna would have been about 105 years old, a parallel to Judith (see Judith 16:23), who in a popular work of fiction freed her people from an oppressor.

Unimportant families situate themselves in the matrices of history and the social world by preserving passing relationships with notables; the notables themselves may

not recall the non-notables at all or only if reminded. My late “Uncle Tony” (first cousin once removed) earned a medical degree at his father’s alma mater in Rome, it being noted now and then that his father had been a classmate of Maria Montessori, the first woman to earn the M.D. degree in Italy as well as being a noted educator. The legend about Uncle Tony is that he earned money while a medical student as a chess hustler, playing chess with notables for large sums of money and letting the notables win now and then so that they would not give up. Years later back in the U.S. he was recruited by the OSS (predecessor to the CIA) to accompany Vice President Truman on a ship to Malta; from there Truman would go by air to Tehran on a diplomatic mission. In the course of the trip as far as Malta, Uncle Tony was to keep the Vice President from being photographed with any Fascists or Communists—all of whom Uncle Tony knew. The legend is that the two got along very well, both tending to use rather earthy language. The fact may be, however, that we can blame Harry Truman for my cousin’s manner of speech.

So Jesus was blessed by Simeon the son of Hillel and the 105-year-old prophetess Anna. His own family was not notable; at the time he was otherwise not notable either. But now we try to set our calendars by years before and after his birth; it was not so in Luke’s day. And Jesus’ family behaved like a non-notable family, repeating legends about dealings with notables.

“And his parents went every year to Jerusalem for the Paschal Feast. And when he was twelve years old, they were going up at the feast as usual.... And after three days they found him in the Temple precincts sitting amidst the teachers listening to them, and questioning them....(A)nd his mother said to him, ‘Child, why did you do this to us?’ ...and he said to them, ‘Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be in the house of my father?’”

Luke leaves us clues that he was drawing a parallel with the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. It was the Paschal time. At age twelve, Jesus was ready for a transition of some kind. He was away three days.

Luke’s passage is occasioning in our thinking feelings and attitudes about Jesus. The *mind* about Jesus, how we are to regard him, is that we miss him, that we hope to find him, and that we cannot understand why he is absent, or seems absent, even when he is God with us. The fact that he became very much with us and then leaves, leaves us precisely how we ourselves are supposed to be for the time being. Our religion, the way that we are with him and he with us, is but a prelude. In order for him to *seem* as he really *is*, as an absence because of his dwelling in a house not of our making and beyond our understanding, is not only disquieting but humbling. And if it is too much for us, he will go down to Nazareth with us—for a time.

Poem

331 East Kings Highway

When sounded, the words, for us,
are more than an old address,
touching us still, half a century later.

At a monthly rent, we could barely afford,
we moved in with kids, ages two, three and five,
to find rooms of breakfast, dining, living, sleep,
even one for office and visitors.

Space, enough to share,
with hippies from the coffeehouse,
newlyweds who lived in our attic.

The priest who returned to Mexico
and passed the word to travelers
that, in San Antonio, a welcome awaited them.

Eight years.
Then the letter came: the house is sold.
We had thirty days to pack and get out.

Our oldest,
her voice edging to tears,
asked us, Why?

It rests now, that abode,
in the mists of memory.

More than a shelter
to eat, sleep, hang our clothes.

A space and time where happenings,
beyond all saying, happened.

For Marilyn.
Happy anniversary, August 30, 2017
Tom Keene

STATEMENT: Pax Christi International calls upon UN Security Council members to strongly oppose the US government's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel

Pax Christi International is appalled by the decision of U.S. President Trump, on 6 December 2017 (1), to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel as well as to start the process of moving the U.S. embassy there. We are very concerned about the

devastating consequences it will have for reaching a just resolution to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In line with the EU, the UN and governments around the world, we condemn this unilateral decision by the U.S. government which violates international law and is detrimental to any Israeli-Palestinian peace effort. We call upon UN Security Council members to strongly oppose this decision in the emergency meeting that is expected to take place on 8 December 2017 at the UN in New York.

We recall that in UN Resolution 181 (2), the international community, including the U.S., decided that Jerusalem should have special status, given its pluralistic and religious importance. With its latest decision, the U.S. government is departing from the foreign affairs policies of governments around the world which respect the 'status quo' of Jerusalem.

Pax Christi International also wants to highlight that with UN resolution 478 (3), which followed the enactment of "basic law" in the Israeli Knesset proclaiming a change in the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem (annexation of East-Jerusalem), all states are obliged to have their embassies in Tel Aviv.

Pax Christi International urges respect of the 'status quo' as any change should be the outcome of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. A letter from the Patriarchs and Heads of Local Churches in Jerusalem to President Trump states, "We are certain that such steps will yield increased hatred, conflict, violence and suffering in Jerusalem and the Holy Land moving us farther from the goal of unity and deeper toward destructive division." (4)

We are convinced that the decision of the U.S. government is an international threat to peace and security in the Middle East region and the world. We welcome the request of eight UN Security Council Member States (5) to schedule an emergency meeting to discuss the decision. We ask the UN Security Council members to take the following action:

- To strongly condemn the decision of the U.S. government as a violation of international law and UN resolutions and to demand the continued recognition of the present international status of Jerusalem.
- To reaffirm the position taken by UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (6), in 2016, that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 boundaries, including in regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations.
- To confirm its determination to support the Israelis and Palestinians to reach a just and sustainable solution, guaranteeing the fundamental rights of both Israelis and Palestinians.
- To consider, as a possible solution, the reunification of the city of Jerusalem by recognising two legal, political parts, each with its own political capital, working to ensure equal rights for all.
- To protect and preserve the unique religious interests of the city: the three great monotheistic faiths of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Pax Christi International welcomes the recent statement of Pope Francis during his General Audience in Paul VI Hall on 6 December 2017 in which he called for the maintenance of the "status quo" of Jerusalem:

“Jerusalem is a unique city, sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims, where the Holy Places for the respective religions are venerated, and it has a special vocation to peace. I pray to the Lord that such identity be preserved and strengthened for the benefit of the Holy Land, the Middle East and the entire world, and that wisdom and prudence prevail, to avoid adding new elements of tension in a world already shaken and scarred by many cruel conflicts.” (7)

Brussels, 7 December 2017

1. His statement can be found on the website of the Whitehouse:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/12/06/statement-preside...>
2. UN Security Council Resolution 181, 29 November 1947, A/RES/181(II), online available at:
<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C33006...>
3. UN Security Council Resolution 478, 20 August 1980, S/RES/478 (1980), online available at:
<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/DDE590C6FF232007852560DF006...>
4. Patriarchs and Heads of Local Churches in Jerusalem, letter of 6 December to USA President Donald Trump, online available at: <https://www.lpj.org/heads-local-churches-send-letter-to-president-donald...>
5. Bolivia, Britain, Egypt, France, Italy, Senegal, Sweden and Uruguay
6. UN Security Council Resolution 2334, 23 December 2016, S/RES/2334 (2016), online available at: <http://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>
7. Zenit, ‘Jerusalem: Pope Urges Status Quo’, 6 December 2017, online available at: [https://zenit.org/articles/jerusalem-pope-urges-status-quo/.](https://zenit.org/articles/jerusalem-pope-urges-status-quo/)

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>

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