

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating February 28, 2021

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 Second Sunday of Lent. Tom Keene's poem is *We See At Last*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is an essay on the treaty on the abolition of nuclear weapons, which recently took effect, by Joyce Hall of Pax Christi Dallas.

Calendar

Monday February 22 to Friday February 26, St. Mary's University annual Conference on Justice and Social Concerns. Registration and access information: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfjLw6e9H5jL7VuxmjNMUo2SepVltyrSMLgmoaHMT05I9TBvw/viewform>

Monday: Interview with Karla Scott Solomon, survivor and outreach specialist on sex trafficking. On international trafficking: Brenya Twumasi (UTSA & Alamo Colleges). Pane on prison outreach: Robert Leibrecht, Justin Miller, and Cody Brown (all Archdiocese of San Antonio). **Tuesday:** On Latino economic justice: Lindsay Passenger Wieck (St. Mary's U.), Noel Andrés Poyo (U.S. Dept. of Treasury), Monica Limón (National Assn. of Latino Community Asset Builders), and Victoria Villaseñor (St. Mary's U.). **Wednesday:** On hunger: Anthony Pogorelc (St. Mary's U.), Sue Nash (St. Mary's U.), Jeanne Holcomb (U. of Dayton), Diane Cuy Castellanos (U. of Dayton), Lorin Ramocki (Chaminade U.), Allison Jerome (Chaminade U.), and Brother Edward Brink (Chaminade U.). **Thursday:** On diversity of voices: Deborah Omowole Jarmon (San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum), Sarah Zenaida Gould (Mexican American Civil Rights Institute), Margaret Cantú-Sanchez (St. Mary's U.), Rick Sperling (St. Mary's

U.), Gisela Reyes (Northwestern U.), José Medina (Northwestern U.), and Charles Miller (City University of New York). **Friday:** On social action: Him Vogt (Marianist Social Justice Collaborative), Kevin Matula (Zachry Group), Carla Ortiz (Catholic Relief Services), Jenee Gonzalez (Marianist Province, US), Daniel Vasquez (Holy Rosary Parish), Kiran Bains (SA 2020), and Brian Halderman (GivePlus).

Monday February 22, 12:00pm (1:00pm ET), “A *Laudato Sí* Focus on Environmental Justice,” Maria Lopez-Nuñez (Ironbound Community Corporation, Newark, NJ), Donela Wilkins (Green Door Initiative, Detroit, MI), and Jonathan Pruitt (Catholic Charities, Stockton, CA). This is the 2nd part of a 2-part series.

Register at:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7939325387580942859?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=11fbd746-a87b-4dfd-ad0f-d7384f2b2b6c>

Monday February 22, 3:00pm, panel on race: “‘Make America Great Again,’ Racial Pathology, White Consolidation, and Melancholia in Trump’s America,” Stephen Finley (Louisiana State U.); “Now It Is Always Now; blackness, Time, and State-Sanctioned Violence,” Biko Gray (Syracuse U.); “The Devil’s Work: Race, Witchcraft, and the Demonization of the Black Lives Matter Movement,” Margarita Guillory (Boston U.). RSVP at:

https://riceuniversity.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_y79cT2gtSy62qoBpbSH9Sw

Tuesday February 23, 7:00am (3:00pm Kiev) **to Friday February 26**, 3:00pm (10:00pm Kiev), conference on Integral Human Development in the Digital Age: Poverties, Migrants, Pandemics, and the Idea of a New Social Ethics, sponsored by the Ukrainian Catholic University, Georgetown University, the University of Notre Dame, the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Rome), and the Lviv Lab for the Activation of Democracy. Information and registration at:

<https://ihd.ucu.edu.ua/ihdda2021#rec268998987>

Tuesday February 23, 11:30am-12:30pm (12:30pm-1:30pm ET), online “Religion, Identity, and Power in Turkey and the Balkans. A conversation with Ahmet Öztürk,” Ahmet Öztürk (Coventry University and London Metropolitan University) and Mukhet Sandal (Ohio University). Register for Zoom link at:

https://georgetown.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GxR8nDP6Qqy92jybYhC-ZA

Tuesday February 23, 6:30pm-8:30pm, online Courageous Conversations, Holy Cross Church, Austin. Criminal defense attorney Walter Long will discuss eliminating the death penalty. Link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87228586124?pwd=RzRrazRSWFRtQXNlcytjMDEya2Y0Zz09#success>

Wednesday February 24, 3:00pm-4:15pm (4:00pm-5:15pm ET), online panel discussion "COVID Vaccination Challenges: Ethical Imperatives and Local Realities," Sharon Eubank (LDS Charities) and Gerald McGlone, SJ (Georgetown University), moderated by Katherine Marshall (Georgetown University). Register for Zoom link at:
https://georgetown.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_2qGGVfMRReKVHskiWw8H5w

Wednesday February 24, 7:00pm-8:00pm livestream panel on overcoming racism, Jonathan Butler (City of San Antonio), Christopher Whitt (Creighton University), and Tiffany Galvin Green (John Carroll University). Access at:
<http://www.stmarytx.edu/conference>

Thursday February 25, 5:00pm-6:00pm (6:00pm-7:00pm ET), "Immigration 101 for Catholics: Welcoming the Suffering Neighbor," Linda Dakin-Grimm, attorney). Register at:
https://bccte.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mxEIF48RcWqDGnCxgcr4w?utm_source=+February+2021+Immigration+Webinar+plus+new+course&utm_campaign=2021+STMCE+February+25+webinar+plus+new+course&utm_medium=email

Thursday February 25, 7:00pm-8:00pm, online "Meet the Author of *Baby in the Bag*, Featuring Hafza Girdap, Ph.D.Cand.," on human rights violations in Turkey. Sponsored by the Raindrop Foundation San Antonio. Register at:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/meet-the-author-of-baby-in-the-bag-featuring-hafza-girdap-tickets-138717889943?utm_term=attend&invite=MjAyMjc4NDUvajZhbnRob255Ymxhc2lAeWFob28uY29tLzA%3D%0A&utm_campaign=inviteformalv2&utm_source=eb_email&utm_medium=email&ref=enivtefor001

Friday February 26, 10:30am (11:30am ET)-11:30am (12:30pm ET), “Sixty Minutes with Europe’s Top Climate Action Official, Mauro Petriccione.” Register at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/9095590506583880971>

Saturday February 27, 9:00am-2:00pm, online state conference, Texas Coalition for the Abolition of the Death Penalty. \$50.00; information and registration at tcadp.org. Scholarships are available for people who can’t afford the \$50 fee. People should contact Kristin Houle at khoule@tcadp.org if they are interested in the scholarship.

Thursday March 4, 6:30pm-8:00pm, online panel discussion “As We Forgive Those who Trespass Against Us: Lent, Forgiveness, and Restorative Justice,” Sr. Donna Liette, cpps (Precious Blood Reconciliation Team, Chicago), Leonard Rubio (Insight Prison Project), and Bill Fischer (University of Dayton). Register for Zoom link at: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYldu2vrT8pG9PGP3TKeZqHNm_AnIjji5-

Saturday March 6, 2:00pm, online Pax Christi San Antonio meeting. Guest speaker is Stephen Locke, environmentalist educator. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82820478273>

Wednesday March 10, 6:30pm (7:30pm ET), webinar “Birth of a Movement: Black Lives Matter and the Catholic Church,” Olga Segura (*National Catholic Reporter*). Register at Fairfield.edu/cs

Tuesday March 16, 6:30pm (7:30pm ET) webinar “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing: Jewish and Christian Women as Allies in Anti-Racism,” Ann Millin (former historian, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum). Register at Fairfield.edu/cs

Saturday April 3, 1:45pm-4:15pm, Pax Christi Texas State Conference. Keynote speakers: Daniel Castillo (Loyola University, Maryland) “Ecological Theology of Liberation”; and Jere Locke (Texas Drought Project) “Urgency of Climate Change and Consequences If Our Response Is Inadequate.” Online, link information coming soon.

Wednesday April 7, 6:30pm (7:30pm ET), "Walking with the Saints: My Writing Life," Robert Ellsberg (Orbis Press, formerly with the *Catholic Worker*). Register at Fairfield.edu/cs

Notices

Lenten resources with a Social Justice Focus, from Maryknoll. Designed to be used virtually in a small group you can form with friends or family, or your parish small group (or your Pax Christi friends), or easy to use at home with those in your pod. Each week applies the Sunday scriptures, to an issue of global solidarity. <https://www.maryknoll.us/resources/mission-spirituality/lent-2021>

Second Reading (Romans 8:31b-34)

"If God is for us, who is against us? He Who did not spare even His own son but handed him over for us all, how will He not also favor with all things us along with him?" (Rom 31b-32) What is this saying? The context is a contrast between what God can do for humans and what humans can do to one another: "For I think that the sufferings of the present age are not worthy next to the glory about to be revealed to us" (Rom 8:18). It is not quite a matter of a bigger prize in an afterlife than any prize in an earthly life or eternal life being longer than a time on earth. What Paul says is that what comes from God is more "worthy." It is a matter of quality, not quantity.

Leading up to the reading, Paul speaks of creation and our life in creation groaning, as he put it, groaning in a hope for a liberation from the limits of this world. The very nature of humans and their world point toward something worthier than what we experience. Experience hints at what is greater. The message of hope implies a dissatisfaction with what is already in hand.

Third Reading (Mark 9:2-10)

This is the earliest version of the Transfiguration narrative; Matthew and Luke based their versions on this one. It is often said that Mark took some post-Easter tradition and placed it before the narrative of the passion and crucifixion in

order to introduce some hope, in order to prepare the reader for the awful realities that were to follow. His readers—in Rome after the traumatic experience of the macabre persecution of Christians by Emperor Nero—were indeed in need of hope in the face of trauma.

The Transfiguration narrative has Jesus and four chosen disciples going up a mountain; Jesus is transformed into a glorious image, in which he converses with Moses and Elijah. Peter, who plays the part of the well-meaning but un-insightful student in Mark's gospel, says how wonderful it all is. Then God the Father speaks from a dark cloud, and Jesus is seen as an ordinary earthling.

The point of this strange scene is the need for disciples of Jesus to have a double vision. What disciples see in this world is traumatizing, but what they see in the tradition of law (Moses), prophecy (Elijah), and enlightened engagement with these (Jesus conversing) is exhilarating.

But why not talk about that? The narrative has Jesus instructing the four disciples to keep quiet about it until after the Resurrection. Scholars have referred to this as the "messianic secret." It is true enough that the early Christians had an in-group secret, but there may be more to it. An adage has it that someone who has insight does not speak, and that someone who speaks does not have insight. The wisdom of communicative silence derives from experience, not formulae. One needs recognize the limits of verbal teaching, god-talk, formulaic orthodoxy, and similarly the limits of unexamined trauma.

Poem

We see at last

(Peter muses: Mark:9:2-8 and 9:14-29)

On ascending,
we sit in a circle.
We see ourselves brilliant,
a gazing into sun without going blind.

Elijah, Moses, Jesus, John, James, me.
Hard to tell us apart,
blurring bleeding into one corona,
where notions of each other

make sense no more.

On descending,
we find the man,
screaming blather,
flailing futility,
begging to burst his prison.

Our common gut
seized by a loathing,
a panic to flee, to cast out.
Then, as in a sudden dawn,
he's struck with calm.

We see at last,
from heady highs
to feet-in-the-dirt hurt,
the Healing Wholeness.

Tom Keene

International Law Now In Line With Vatican Teaching On Nuclear Weapons
Joyce Hall
Pax Christi Dallas

Did you know that? Well, it became a fact on January 22, 2021, when the *Treaty for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons*, TPNW, entered into force.

Let me back up a bit. In 2017, 122 nations signed the Treaty for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons. But in order for it to become international law, fifty nations had to ratify, then a wait of 90 days. Hence, the date of January 22, 2021. It is more than worth mentioning that the Holy See/Vatican was the first nation to ratify. Now 49 others have done so with more coming on board.

We must give credit to the effort of ICAN, The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, to help bring it about. For this, they received the Nobel Peace Prize. Now our work begins, to educate folks about this treaty, to

encourage the U.S. and other nations to sign on, and to make this a nuclear weapons free world.

This treaty bans the development, testing, production, manufacture, acquisition, possession or stockpiling, transfer, control or receipt, use or threat to use, stationing or deployment of nuclear weapons. This applies to the signatories of the treaty, of course, but the nine nuclear states are looked down upon by most of the rest of the world in this regard.

The possession, development and threat to use nuclear weapons is immoral. There are no safe hands for these weapons. The accidental or deliberate detonation of a nuclear weapon would cause severe, long-lasting and far-reaching harm on all aspects of our lives and our environment throughout the world. Further, these technologies are part of structures and systems that bring about great suffering and destruction. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists have said that it has been only luck that has kept one from being accidentally detonated and that we can't continue to depend on good luck. In the past 10 years four high level conservative persons in our government and military have come together and tried to tell us that we have to get rid of nuclear weapons, because the unthinkable will eventually happen if we don't.

Entry into force means that public pressure increases on governments and businesses that engage in any way with nuclear weapons. This may impose new legal restrictions on financial institutions that fund nuclear weapons. The TPNW becoming law offers many opportunities to discourage banks, pension funds and stock brokers from investing in nuclear weapons. Actually, some are already realizing this and have become one of the 'good guys' by divesting. You can look up a document, Don't Bank on the Bomb, for more information and to see if your bank or your investment company makes money on nuclear weapons. Disinvestment is a natural next step toward total abolition that is enabled and reinforced by the ban treaty taking effect as international law.

We can logically ask if the total elimination of nuclear weapons is a task that can never be surmounted. But, we must realize that the world is changing. Of the top 10 most populous nations, five are nuclear weapons states and five are TPNW states. Population and power structures are changing places. One example is that of Nigeria, a signatory of the TPNW, one of the fastest growing nations in our world, predicted to be one of the largest economies in 50 years, and to surpass the U.S in population by 2080, taking the place of the U.S. as the third largest in population. The UK and France are rapidly losing influence and becoming medium sized countries, not leaders. The U.S. is imploding in many

ways and also in the international arena. There are new power structures, many of them banning the powers of the Security Council of the U.N. Look at it from another perspective. It is a lot easier than climate change. It is just nine states, not the whole world.

New weapons are high tech but nukes are old-fashioned, wiping out a whole city and releasing radioactive fallout. Not the best strategy of any kind of warfare situation. We seem to be good at taking action after tragedies happen, but not at preventing them. It is impossible for significant clean up after nukes, so we are really responsible for not letting it happen in the first place.

There are emerging technologies and algorithms which could make a nuclear war/accident happen without human intent. The nuclear power countries are not thinking through the potential consequences. Nuclear weapon states can easily be confused into believing that they are under attack and so respond in like manner. Having nukes makes us a target for them.

Perhaps this can be a turning point in our nation and our world, developing better relationships with all nations, search out ways to serve all life and the common good. Better national security would be to use the trillions of dollars going to revitalize our nuke stockpile to instead improve health care and education for all of our citizens.

For more information on ICAN, go to : www.icanw.org

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

Catholic Books Review
<http://catholicbooksreview.org>