

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating March 4, 2018

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.

Please do not respond to this newsletter's address; but 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 Third Sunday in Lent. Tom Keene's poem is *Radicals*. See <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php> for more of Tom's poems. Pax Christi's review of the year 2017, issued February 2 of this year, follows.

Rhett Smith brings to our attention a February 2017 lecture by legal attorney Adam Winkler on the history of gun laws in the United States. Professor Winkler demonstrates that legal precedent has consistently allowed for balancing the Second Amendment with concerns for public safety: <https://youtu.be/ZUykTeUYIMU>

Please note Tuesday is election day in Texas, and that the annual Dialogue Institute fundraiser in San Antonio is that evening. The proceeds support a variety of worthy charities. Information is in the San Antonio section of the calendar.

Calendar

In Austin

Monday February 26, 12:00pm-1:00pm. "Failed Christianity," on refusing shelter to refugees. Hosted by the Center for Ethics & Leadership. Fleck Hall, Room 305, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress, Austin.

Thursday March 1, 6:00pm-9:00pm, Annual Dialogue & Friendship Dinner 2018: "Racial Reconciliation—The Role of Faith Communities." Keynote speaker: Laila Muhammed. \$100: [Eventbrite.com/e/2018-annual-friendship-and-dialogue-dinner-tickets-40851416687](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-annual-friendship-and-dialogue-dinner-tickets-40851416687). Asian American Resource Center, 8401 Cameron Rd.

Wednesday April 4, 12:00pm-1:00pm, "The Church and Transgender Identity." Discussion based on article: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/church-transgender-identity>. Fleck Hall 305, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress.

Thursday April 5, 12:00pm-1:00pm, Susannah E. Prucka, former Maryland appellate prosecutor, “Is the Criminal Justice System Really Broken?” Fleck Hall 305, St. Edward’s University, 3001 S. Congress.

Friday April 15, 12:00pm-1:00pm, discussion; The Gamer’s Dilemma-Are we comfortable with children killing an average of 100,000 people in video games by the age of 18?” Recommended reading:
https://iainews.iai.tv/articles/the-gamers-dilemma-is-virtual-murder-morally-wrong-aid-827?utm_content=buffer890be&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer
Fleck Hall 305, St. Edward’s University, 3001 S. Congress.

In Dallas

Monday February 26, 6:30pm-8:00pm, Dr. Thupton Jinpa Langri, Buddhist Emptiness and Compassion.” Prothro Hall 106, Southern Methodist University.

Tuesday February 27, 2:00pm-7:00pm, “Faithful Citizenship: Religious Perspectives on Voter Responsibility.” Bruce Marshall, Steve Long, Robert Abzug, and Mohamed Lazzouni. Great Hall, Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Bldg., Southern Methodist University. Make reservation by Feb. 26 at whoozin.com/YRQ-FP6-JTG6/RSVP

Thursday March 1, 6:00pm, “Table of Abraham: Justice for Women. Perspectives from the Abrahamic Tradition on Harassment & Abuse.” Free for attendees; organizational sponsorship \$100. Christ Lutheran Church, 3001 Lovers Lane.

Wednesday March 7, 12:00pm-1:30pm, Paul B. Stares, “America’s Next War and How to Prevent It.” Tower Center Boardroom, Carr Collins Hall 227, Southern Methodist University.

In Houston

Tuesday March 20, 12:15pm, Mary Patillo, “Statutory Inequality: Monetary Sanctions in State Law.” Venue TBA—check with Dept. of Sociology, Rice University.

Saturday March 24, 8:45am-evening. **Pax Christi Texas State Conference: Paul K. Chappell of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, “Warrior Strategies for Waging Peace in a Time of Nuclear Weapons.” Dominican Center for Spirituality, 6501 Almeda, Houston, Texas 77021.** Doors open 8:00am. Program: 8:45am-3:45pm, closing liturgy 4:00pm. Suggested donation \$40 individual, \$50 couple/family. Mail registration check to Pax Christi Texas, 3901 Mattie St., Austin, TX 78723, by March 1. Some single rooms with shared bath available at the Center, \$40 per night; breakfast included. Contact Sr. Adrian Dover 713-440-3708.

In San Antonio

Tuesday February 27, 7:00pm-8:00pm, Carmen M. Nanko-Fernandez, ¿Dio Bendiga America? Beisbol, Identity, and Competing Theologies of Patriotism.” Student Engagement Center, University of the Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway.

Tuesday February 27, 5:30, the border Catholic bishops of Texas and Mexico will celebrate a mass, “We are one with the dreamers,” at San Fernando Cathedral.

Wednesday February 28, 1:00pm-2:45pm, David Swanson (RootsAction.org), “War is Never Just.” Mabee Library Auditorium, University of the Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway.

Sunday March 4, 11:00am-12:00pm, 18th Annual Empty Bowls. Purchase a hand-crafted bowl for \$25 and enjoy soup and bread from local restaurants. Proceeds support San Antonio homeless families and ones on the brink of housing disaster. Southwest School of Art, 300 Augusta.

Monday March 5, 3:30pm, film: “Winds of Heaven: Emily Carr, Carvers and the Spirits of the Forest.” Christus Heritage Hall, the Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Tuesday March 6, 6:00pm-9:00pm, 13th Annual Dialogue and Friendship Dinner: “Teaching Compassion and Making a Difference.” Keynote speaker: John Phillip Santos (Honors College, UTSA, author and documentary producer on Mestizo culture). Proceeds support a variety of charities: \$45. Register at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/13th-annual-dialogue-and-friendship-dinner-tickets-39734988420. Rosenberg Sky Room, University of the Incarnate Word, 847 E. Hildebrand Ave.

Wednesday March 21, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Salman Hameed, Ph.D., “The Crescent in the Scientific Age: Muslim Perceptions of Science and Religion.” University Center, Conference Room A, St. Mary’s University, One Camino Santa Maria.

Wednesday April 4, 11:00am-12:15pm, Multi-faith Dialogue Panel: “Beyond the Gender Divide,” on gender inequality and religious traditions. Huisache Hall, Northwest Vista College, 3535 N. Ellison Dr.

Tuesday April 10, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Lauren Turek, Ph.D., “Religion, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement.” SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook): \$20. Register at <http://www.upsa.org/sol-calendar/2018/4/10/religion-race-and-the-civil-rights-movement-with-lauren-turek>.

Saturday April 14, 9:00am-12:00pm, Rev. Dr. Mitzi J. Smith, “Womanism, Biblical Interpretation, and Social (In)Justice.” Whitley Center, Oblate School of theology, 285 Oblate Drive, \$40. For information: Thelma at 210-341-1366, ext. 230.

Third Reading (John 2:13-25)

[Instead of this reading, some masses may use those from Cycle A, which coordinate with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program.]

“And it was near the Passover of the Judeans.” The Christian community for which the Johannine gospel was written used a different religious calendar from that used by the Judean officials who were in charge of the Temple in Jerusalem. Thus in order to set the scene, the gospel specifies that the *Judeans’* Passover was near. Many translations render the Greek term “Jews” rather than “Judeans,” thus obscuring the meaning of the text.

There was a great deal of business going on in Jerusalem, with the buying and selling of oxen, sheep, and doves. The mention of oxen suggests secular as well as ritual-related commerce. We can compare this with our Christmas season. In addition, in the Temple precincts money changers were at work so that the purchases of animals to be used liturgically could be made without using impure imperial coinage.

Jesus targeted the money changers, overturning their tables, and he ordered dove-sellers out of the Temple area: “...do not make my Father’s house an emporium.” Why not? The problem seems to be that of mixed motives. There is worship, and there is money-making; and these are two separate, if not opposed, activities.

Then the Judeans—the authorities over Judea—said to him, “What sign have you to show us, since you do such things?” In other words, “Who do you think you are?” When Jesus answered this question about himself, he responded, “Destroy this sanctuary and I will raise it in three days.” Why did he say, “Destroy?” Obviously, he was under threat. The gospel is making a case that those who later accused Jesus of threatening the Temple were deliberately misquoting him. He “was saying that about the shrine of his body.”

The irony of it all is that the very stratagem for keeping worship from pollution was itself a source of pollution. For sure, this was, and is, not unique to Judea.

Poem

Radicals

In circles,
from center to circumference,
from circumference to center.

Roots,
as in radishes reaching
up into air,
down into dirt.

As in touches that heal
receivers and givers.

As in dreams,
from here to deeps,
to heights and back again.

As in journeys
of shamans and heroes
down to depths of dread,
returning with treasures
for us their people.

As in echoes
of our inner Buddha, Moses,
Jesus, Mohammed, Gandhi, King,
resonating, sounding themselves
in our deeds.

Tom Keene
March 19, 2016

Pax Christi International's "Year-in-Review" of 2017

2/2/18 - Below is an English-language synopsis of the 2017 year-in-review at Pax Christi International.

Twenty-seventeen was an eventful year with conflicts and uprisings worldwide, with the members of Pax Christi International in different regions experiencing less room to move for civil society. It was also a year with high points, with the enormous boost being the new UN treaty against nuclear weapons and the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

In 2017, our work was organised on 4 policy priorities: a UN treaty on nuclear weapons; a renewed peace process between Israel and Palestine; nonviolence as peace policy; and extractive industries in Latin America.

Momentum for nuclear disarmament

Following negotiation sessions in the first half of the year, a UN Convention on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted in New York on 7 July 2017. ICAN, in which Pax Christi International and several of its member organisations are actively involved, made this treaty possible, together with diplomats and negotiators of progressive governments, many other NGOs, and, in particular, the survivors of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (the *hibakusha*). Together with our members and our UN representatives, Pax Christi International set up a working group on nuclear disarmament that regularly - and in support of the work of ICAN - undertakes global initiatives for national and international policy influencing.

In 2017 Pax Christi International also worked closely with the World Council of Churches and the Vatican in the area of nuclear disarmament. An impressive delegation

from Pax Christi International attended an international conference on nuclear disarmament organised by the Vatican on 10 and 11 November 2017. More than 350 experts, diplomats, church leaders, Nobel Peace Prize winners and representatives of civil society endorsed the position of Pope Francis in which he also condemned the possession of nuclear weapons as illegal and immoral.

On 20 September the Treaty opened for signatures. A number of countries, including the nuclear arms countries and NATO member states, are refusing to sign the Convention for the time being -- so there is still a lot of work to be done. But the momentum was fueled by the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize 2017 to the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons on 10 December in Oslo, which included representatives from Pax Christi International.

North Korea crisis: diplomacy is the only option

Pax Christi International issued a statement on 16 August and 6 September 2017 following new escalations in the crisis between North Korea and the United States. Tensions continue to rise with a new nuclear test by North Korea, answered with muscular, combative rhetoric from the U.S. during the UN Security Council meeting on 4 September 2017. Pax Christi International expressed deep concern about the ongoing crisis but we are convinced that this crisis can be resolved and that threatening or proceeding with military action is absolutely not an option: it only leads to further provocations and possibly to catastrophic devastation. We called upon the international community to use its broad experience and appeal to its best, most creative diplomats. They have to use caution to find confidence-inspiring alternatives in order to get the parties involved back to the table.

Conflict Israel/Palestine

Pax Christi International participated in the annual Holy Land Coordination (with Roman Catholic bishops) in January and in the meeting of the World Council of Churches in Beit Sahur in June 2017.

On 6 February 2017, the Israeli parliament approved the 'Expansion of Regulation Bill'. The bill stipulates that 4000 homes illegally built by Jewish settlers on Palestinian private grounds in the West Bank will be legalised retroactively. On 7 February 2017, Pax Christi International wrote a letter to Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, and we launched an online petition to reinforce the appeal. This petition was signed by 2350 people. Following the petition, a delegation from Pax Christi International visited the EU High Representative's office on 21 April regarding the inhumane consequences of Israel's permanent occupation of Palestine, the situation of Christians, and the importance of a new peace process.

Following the statement by U.S. President Trump to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem and thus recognise the city as the capital of Israel, Pax Christi International responded with a statement that refers to resolution 181 of 28 November 1947 saying that Jerusalem is the double capital city for Israel (West) and an Arab/Palestinian state (East) and it will be the Eternal City for the three monotheistic religions with free access for all believers to the religious sites in the Old City.

Networking in Africa

As a follow-up to the continental consultation with the African member organisations in December 2016 in Johannesburg, Pax Christi International recruited a regional coordinator in the spring to further supervise the African network. Dieudonné Serukabuza now has a permanent place at the Secretariat in Brussels.

One goal is to create a regional Pax Christi network for the Great Lakes. The first steps were taken at two meetings, in Goma in May 2017 and in Kisangani in November 2017. The network focuses on promoting active nonviolence by forming young people, the most vulnerable group in the Great Lakes region, in nonviolent resistance.

In May 2017, the International Board accepted "Africa Reconciled" from Goma as a new member.

In the context of the construction of a globally connected Pax Christi network, the International Secretariat has started to strengthen the ties between members among each other per region, but also across regions and around international themes. This has led to our members in DR Congo being asked to conduct lobbying work on the treaty of nuclear disarmament. The government of the DR Congo has responded positively to the question of signing the treaty.

International Peace Prize for indigenous environmental and rights movement

On 29 October 2017 Pax Christi International presented at the Istituto Maria SS. Bambina in Rome the annual Peace Prize to the Mexican organisation ZODEVITE, a movement of the indigenous Zoque community from southern Mexico, which works for the protection of the environment and human rights in the Chiapas region. The movement is part of the larger MOVEDITE, a platform of indigenous peoples who campaigned nonviolently in recent years to put an end to fracking, oil extraction and mining in southern Mexico. ZODEVITE organises nonviolent protests against the extraction of hydrocarbons and mining projects in the municipality of Tecpatán, together with Pax Christi member organisations FRAYBA (Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas) and SIPAZ (Servicio Internacional para la Paz, an international human rights organisation that monitors the region).

Extractive industry in Latin America

Pax Christi International has a project in Peru, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Chile, and Paraguay that forms local communities in nonviolent conflict transformation and legal mechanisms to respond more efficiently to the impact of mining industries on local communities.

On 31 October 2017, Pax Christi International, CIDSE and COMECE in Brussels organised a debate on the mining industry in Latin America, its impact on local indigenous communities and the EU/UN policy in response. Policy makers and representatives from NGOs took part in the panel discussion. Prior to the panel discussion, lobby discussions took place with policymakers responsible for Latin America, trade and development co-operation of the European External Action Service, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The delegation consisted of Mikeas Gómez from ZODEVITE; Gilberto Hernández of the Pax Christi member organisation Frayba, and Colombian Martha Ines Romero, Regional Coordinator for Latin America of Pax Christi International. Prior to the panel discussion and lobby

discussions, Pax Christi International published its position on the mining industry in Latin America. In order to support this regional advocacy priority, a working group was set up in 2017 in which members from Europe, the U.S., Canada and Latin America participate.

Pax Christi International consultation in the Asia-Pacific region

From 27 November to 1 December 2017, the Pax Christi member organisations of the Asia-Pacific region gathered in Manila, Philippines for a regional consultation with the theme, 'Towards a Sustainable Peace through Active Nonviolence in Asia and the Pacific'. Pax Christi Philippines acted as host for some 30 representatives from Australia, Indonesia, India, Japan, Philippines, New Zealand/Aotearoa, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, and Myanmar.

The program included keynote presentations, group discussions and visits to arrive at a collective analysis of the problems in this immense continent and more specifically the role and vision of a movement such as Pax Christi in the region. The International Secretariat gave a workshop on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the coming months, the publication 'Pax Christi International Guide: Contributing to the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region' will be published.

A poignant meeting took place in Saint Peter's Parish in Manila with relatives of the victims of the "war on drugs". The Philippine government is implicated in extrajudicial executions of drug dealers and users. The Catholic Church has started a pastoral project to assist the affected families because when families organise they are stronger and they can prevent executions.

Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

In 2017, the process of exchange and discussion continued to make more work of nonviolent alternatives as a form of (peace) politics. There is regular consultation with those in charge of the Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development. The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (CNI) runs for an indefinite period. A CNI steering committee supervises the entire process. There are dozens of Catholic international organisations and religious congregations involved, many academics (including moral theologians and polemologists) and - above all - (local) peace workers worldwide. Five international working groups (in Round Tables) have regular consultations. One of the ultimate intentions of this process is to come to a papal encyclical on active nonviolence as a style for peace policy.

'Nonviolence: a Style of Politics for Peace'

On 21 April 2017, Pax Christi International organised a panel discussion in Brussels on nonviolent strategies and methods with speakers from Pax Christi International, the Free University of Brussels and the European External Action Service. The focus was on EU policy and the European approach to conflicts in the world. The EU and its Member States have moral and legal obligations to use all possible nonviolent solutions to combat violent conflicts on a global scale. They can use means of action that help prevent violence and support peacebuilding and play an active role in diplomatic consultation and mediation. Despite these investments, the EU is increasingly looking for military initiatives and the defense budgets of various EU

countries have become very important. The EU Global Strategy nevertheless states that preventing conflicts is more efficient and effective than combatting crises once they have broken out.

International Governance

The International Board met twice, in April in Brussels and at the end of October in Rome. An executive committee of 4 people (the two co-chairs, the treasurer and the general secretary) has the day-to-day management of the movement.

Communication and Young Peace Journalists

Special focus is on communication. With the newsletter, website, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, all available resources are used to keep the network of Pax Christi International running and also to influence policy. Because influencing policy is also communication and vice versa! Our posts on the Peace Stories blog have increased, including the many interviews that our Young Peace Journalists publish with people who have had to flee their homeland.

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

Dialogue Institute of San Antonio

www.thedialoginstitute.org/san-antonio/