

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating May 30, 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 Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. Tom Keene's poem is *God's Glory*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. Following the poem is a recent statement of scientists and Catholic religious leaders calling upon President Biden to work toward a nuclear weapon-free world. Recently, Pax Christi Dallas projected a light message on the west side of Dallas City Hall and held a banner, both pointing to the Treaty for the prevention of Nuclear Weapons.

There is a vibrant debate among Catholic leaders and intellectuals over the proposal to deny access to communion to politicians who publicly support a pro-choice position on abortion. Some bishops would have the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops endorse the proposal. The soundest argument against the proposal that has come to my attention is that by Bishop McElroy of San Diego; a link to it may be found in the **Notices** section below. Good as the statement is, I have a different take on it and on similar arguments: Governments refraining from prohibiting abortion is not about abortion but about government. Free societies, such as Americans generally wish to model in our constitutional framework, are ones that place limits on what government can do. The "limited" aspect of limited government is an essentially conservative position that characterizes the legal framework of a free society. In such a framework, there are all manner of immorality that the state does not venture to control. It is perfectly appropriate for a religious organization to preach and agitate against immorality, including abortion. A church may want to excommunicate those who perform abortions or promote racial violence; I do not object to that. However, involving the state in the legislation of morality is quite another matter,

and politicians can legitimately and morally differ on such matters, and should not be excommunicated when they do so. And I must ask, where does excommunicating stop? At the death penalty? At the sale of alcohol on Sundays? At segregation? At nuclear weapons?

Calendar

[Times are for the Central Time Zone.]

Online

Tuesday May 25, 11:00am (12:00pm ET) "Demographic Data & Trends on Religious Diversity," Conrad Hackett and Samirah Majumdar (both of Pew Research Center). Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tanenbaums-religious-diversity-leadership-summit-2021-tickets-148382292431>

Tuesday May 25, 6:30pm, online "Courageous Conversations on Racism," hosted by Holy Cross Church, Austin. Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83170171756?pwd=Vm1qRExNK2lXdVVEaGN0YTQvNndHUT09#success>

Wednesday May 26, 9:00am, to **Saturday May 29**, 7:00pm, online national symposium "The Future of Tulsa's Past: The Centennial of the Tulsa Race Massacre and Beyond," John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation, \$99.00. Information and registration: <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ehkbesxec eb7034b&oseq=&c=&ch=>

Wednesday May 26, 7:00pm, discussion of the film *Hit and Stay*, on Catholic peace activists resisting the Vietnam War in the 1960s and '70s. The discussion is hosted by Pax Christi Dallas. The Zoom link for the discussion is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86491298415?pwd=cTFtWk9ZZFBRU2hJSWdXbUtGVEJqQT09>. (Meeting ID: 864 9129 8415; Passcode: 519047). Watch the 90 minute film ahead of time at: https://tubitv.com/movies/414052/hit-and-stay?start=true&utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed

The film link will ask you for your age before you can access the film itself, apparently because of adult content in other films.

Thursday June 17, 6:30pm, "Seeds of Peace: The Case for Nuclear Disarmament," Ira Helfand (Physicians for Social Responsibility). Contact Pax Christi Little Rock for the Zoom link: paxchristilr@gmail.com.

Saturday July 10, 1:30pm (12:20pm MT), Pax Christi Texas state conference, part 2. Presentation by R. Khari Brown (Wayne State University): "Religion and Black Lives Matter," followed by Q & A. Some members expressed the wish to visit and catch up after the program. Save the date; link information will be forthcoming.

Friday July 30-Saturday July 31, 49th anniversary Pax Christi USA conference, online. Keynote Speaker: Olga Segura, author of *Birth of a Movement: Black Lives Matter and the Catholic Church*. Conference mass presider: Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv. SAVE THE DATE

In Dallas

Tuesday May 25, 11:00am-11:45am, silent vigil, 12:00pm mass, in honor of George Floyd. Cathedral Guadalupe, 2215 Ross Avenue. (Masks required.)

Notice

Statement by Bishop McElroy of San Diego against Denying Communion to Politicians Who Support a Pro Choice Stand Concerning Abortion. Access his statement at: <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2021/05/05/joe-biden-communion-eucharistic-exclusion-abortion-us-bishops-240596>

Michael Waldman of the Brennan Center on Voter Access. Access his essay at: <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/people-act-would-stop-voter-suppression-its-tracks>

Second Reading (Romans 8:14-17)

This section of Paul's *Letter to the Romans* points out that we owe nothing in response to the claims of the world, claims that would lead us to take the small rewards of this life as ends in themselves rather than means to an enhanced level of life. Paul does not advocate an other-worldliness, whereby one would live as if there were no world or were not in the world, but a life of directed values and imperatives that would prevent us from "having a price." In the way people make sacrifices for the sake of family, he would have Christians see the way of life Jesus represented as that of a family. "For you do not receive the spirit of slavery, again into fear, but you receive the spirit of adoption, by which we cry out, 'Abba,' 'Father'; the spirit itself testifies for our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom 8:15-16).

Third Reading (Matthew 28:16-20)

In the post Easter appearances as narrated in the *Gospel of Matthew*, Jesus gives instructions that the disciples were to meet him at a mountain site in Galilee. The eleven core disciples did so. The reference to a mountain recalls the law given on Mount Sinai, and a mountain in Galilee recalls a new law given in the form of the Beatitudes in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount. And this time at the mountain Jesus had two things to tell them—that all authority had been given to him, and that therefore they were to make disciples among all the gentiles, baptize them with the Trinitarian formula, and then teach them his commands. He concluded by promising to be with them up to the end of the age.

The "therefore" after the recognition of the authority of Jesus the Messiah is interesting. The authority of the humble Jesus was superior to that of states and empires, and therefore people should be baptized into his teachings. But Jesus did not reveal anything about authority and government; and his method of instruction was to formulate parables that left people to draw their own conclusions. This is where the Trinitarian formula comes in. God the father, as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish culture in general, was the creator. The will of the creator is reflected in creation. Humans, having the power of reason, can recognize the divine will by observing creation. What Jesus, the human son, revealed was a reiteration of what could be observed in creation. The dynamism of recognizing and reckoning is the work of the Spirit.

Poem

God's Glory

We pray: Glory be to God.
What is God's glory, I asked.
God said:

*My glory is your healing,
your justice, your peace,
that we partake
in doing together.*

Tom Keene and Muse
April 18, 2021

Leading Scientists and Catholic Leaders Call on President Biden to Work for a World Free of the Nuclear Threat

Statement released 5/12/21

We are scientists committed to protecting health and safety, and Catholic leaders committed to the common good of all people. We are united in calling on President Biden to reduce the nuclear threat as our nation works with others for a world without nuclear weapons.

Scientific research has provided ample evidence of the devastating humanitarian and ecological consequences of the production and use of nuclear weapons. Testing and production has killed or impaired the health of many thousands. One nuclear bomb dropped on a major city could kill millions; a nuclear war could bring on a nuclear winter and kill billions. Spending on nuclear weapons diverts scarce resources from programs that improve human health and security.

Catholic social thought, whose principles find resonances in other religious traditions, forbids the use of weapons of mass destruction that would cause indiscriminate harm to civilians and damage disproportionate to any legitimate objective. The Catholic tradition has condemned the nuclear arms race as a theft

from the poor. The arms race robs humanity of the resources it needs to address basic human needs and aggravates the underlying causes of war.

The year following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Albert Einstein warned: “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.” During his 2019 visit to Nagasaki, Pope Francis declared, “...[A] world without nuclear weapons is possible and necessary.... We need to ponder the catastrophic impact of their deployment, especially from a humanitarian and environmental standpoint....”

Together we affirm President Biden’s extension of the New START Treaty with Russia as a solid first step. We pledge our support for additional steps to reform U.S. nuclear weapons policy, reduce nuclear dangers, and reaffirm a U.S. commitment to pursue a world free of the nuclear threat. We urge the Administration to:

- declare that the United States will never use nuclear weapons first;
- work with Russia and then with other nations to verifiably reduce nuclear arsenals;
- redirect spending from new nuclear weapons and modernization programs toward other pressing needs that build human security;
- affirm the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as complementary to existing agreements, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty;
- work for a successful conclusion at the Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, with nuclear states honoring their disarmament obligations;
- aim to ratify and bring into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty;
- promote a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty to prohibit production of weapons-grade materials;
- strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency to monitor compliance with disarmament obligations; and
- extend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, set to expire in 2022.

We will urge bipartisan support of an ambitious nuclear disarmament agenda. In his second inaugural address, President Reagan supported “the elimination one day of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth.” In his Prague speech, President Obama “state[ed] clearly and with conviction America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.”

We call on President Biden to reaffirm the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and to take concrete steps to realize it.

Dr. Pierce S. Corden, Former Official, Arms Control Agency* and State Department*; Expert Adviser at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the UN*

Marie Dennis, Senior Advisor, Co-President (2007-2019), Pax Christi International

Tara Drozdenko, Ph.D., Acting Executive Director, Outrider Foundation

Elise D. García, OP, President, Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Laura Grego, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, Co-Director, Global Security Program, Union of Concerned Scientists*

Susan Gunn, Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Dr. Gregory Hall, Associate Professor, Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce*

Dr. Maryann Cusimano Love, Associate Professor, The Catholic University of America*; Board Member, Arms Control Association*, Catholic Peacebuilding Network*

Most Reverend Robert W. McElroy, Bishop of San Diego

Yuki Miyamoto, Ph.D., Associate Professor, DePaul University*

Most Reverend John Stowe, OFM Conv., Bishop of Lexington, Bishop President, Pax Christi USA

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., Archbishop of Newark

Aditi Verma, Ph.D., Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School*

Frank von Hippel, Ph.D., Co-Founder, Program on Science & Global Security, Princeton University*, former White House official*

* Organizational affiliation for identification purposes only.

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.sanantoniopace.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>