

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating June 20, 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 Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *Longing Belonging*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is an insightful essay by Rabbi Lisa Kingston (Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo, California), on justice in Israel/Palestine. The essay came to my attention by way of the Pax Christi El Paso newsletter.

"Tell Our Catholic President and Members of Congress: Start Now to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons!" This is the title of a full-page advertisement in the June 11-24 issue of the *National Catholic Reporter*. The ad notes, "In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis reiterated the Church's complete opposition to nuclear weapons, describing the total elimination of nuclear weapons as 'both a challenge and a *moral and humanitarian imperative*.' The Holy See was one of the first countries to ratify the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which went into effect on January 22, 2021." Signatories to the ad from Texas include Karen Ball; Anthony J. Blasi; Dr. Rita Cotterly; the Dominican Sisters of Houston; Kelly Epstein; Catherine Clubb Foley, Ph.D.; Joyce Hall; Sr. Martha Ann Kirk, Th.D.; Luanne Miller; Pax Christi Austin; and Pax Christi El Paso. Ball, Blasi, and Kirk are members of Pax Christi San Antonio, and Joyce Hall a member of Pax Christi Dallas. Our neighbors in Arkansas, Pax Christi Little Rock'; Louis Arceneaux, C.M., and Vic and Rose Hummert in Louisiana; and Brock Parker in Oklahoma also signed.

Calendar

[Times are given for the Central Time Zone.]

Monday June 14, 11:00am-12:15pm (12:00pm-1:15pm ET), Zoom webinar "Religious Discrimination During Crises: A Global Perspective," Mahan Mirza (Ansari Institute), Susan Hayward (Harvard Divinity School), Sabrina Dent (Americans United for Separation of Church and State), and Knox Thames (Institute of Global Engagement), moderated by Jason Klocek (U.S. Institute of Peace). Register at:

https://notredame.zoom.us/webinar/register/9716221209079/WN_Nskq_3oDR3OxervFm0pc5g?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=06.14.2021+Religious+Discrimination&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fnotredame.zoom.us%2fwebinar%2fregister%2f9716221209079%2fWN_Nskq_3oDR3OxervFm0pc5g&utm_id=510662&sfmc_id=16334564

Thursday June 17, 6:30pm, "Seeds of Peace: The Case for Nuclear Disarmament," Ira Helfand (Physicians for Social Responsibility). Sponsored by Pax Christi Little Rock. Access at Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89158450068>

Thursday June 17, 7:00pm-8:30pm, Zoom online, Juneteenth Racial Equity Event (prayer, songs, dialogue), sponsored by the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative, the St. Louis Social Justice for All Team, and the West St. Louis County Collaborative. Register at:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdgR2xqWpHMT3Jyf4CiBHM2eiM6HWcFc3GFYWf3u1CX3O2Kdg/viewform>

Monday June 21, 11:30am (12:30pm ET), online "A Faith and the Faithful Dialogue on Voter Participation and the Common Good: Political Strategies, Moral Questions, Catholic Principles," Sr. Anita Baird, DHM (Archdiocese of Chicago), Justin Giboney (AND Campaign), Michael Steele (U.S. Vote Foundation), and Karen Tumulty (*Washington Post*), moderated by John Carr (Georgetown University). RSVP at: <https://catholicsocialthought.georgetown.edu/events/voter-participation-and-the-common-good#rsvp>

Wednesday June 23, 1:00pm-2:00pm (2:00pm-3:00pm ET), online "Catholic Sustainability Champions, Part 1," Molly Sutter (Bethlehem Farm), Lorie Heber (White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods), and Matthew Jones (Little Portion Farm). Register at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dAEMG1ppSxmEgNZhH0X7vQ?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=6efd681a-11f5-40a2-a598-b9e47e49b095

Thursday June 24, 6:00pm (7:00pm ET) online "Seeds of Hope for Our Planet: Thomas Berry and the Great Work," Joe Mitchell (Earth & Spirit Center). Register at: <https://justfaith.org/june-24th-webinar-with-fr-joe-mitchell/>

Saturday July 10, 9:00am-10:00am (10:00am-11:00am ET), Zoom online "The Mysticism of Ordinary Life: Which Mysticism? Whose Ordinariness?" Andrew L. Prevot (Boston College), using Latinx and Black/Womanist sources. Register at: https://bccte.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AKO8O0YURfCkc97QV4T7zA

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.

Tuesday July 13, 6:30pm-Thursday July 15, 8:00pm, *Laudato Sí and the U.S. Catholic Church. A Conference Series on Our Common Home*, sponsored by Catholic Climate Conference and Creighton University. Addresses by Blasé Cardinal Cupich (Archdiocese of Chicago), Maureen Day (Franciscan School of Theology), Bishop Joseph Tyson (Diocese of Yakima, Washington), and Sister Ilia Delio, osf (Villanova University).

Complete schedule: <https://www.creighton.edu/catholicclimate/schedule/>

Register at:

https://reg.abcsignup.com/s_reg/reg_registration_maintenance.aspx?ek=0036-0013-440150ea4e6b4155aae2e37436d164b1

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. For further information:

<https://paxchristiusa.org/2021/06/03/registration-opens-next-week-for-the-pax-christi-usa-national-conference-july-30-31-2021/>

In San Antonio

Friday June 18, 6:30pm, "Forum For the People," with San Antonio Police Chief William MacManus and San Antonio City Manager Eric Walsh. First Unitarian Universalist Church, 7150 I-10, San Antonio, TX 78213.

Notices

James Martin, s.j., video on Pride Month, 2 minutes:

<https://twitter.com/JamesMartinSJ/status/1400170007783514112?s=20>

June 2021 issue of *Peace Policy* (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame), featuring articles on resistance against the Vietnam War within the U.S. military and by U.S. military veterans, in observance of the 50th anniversary of the release of the *Pentagon Papers*. Access at: <https://peacepolicy.nd.edu/>

Bishop John Stowe apologizes to fired LGBT Catholic educator at theology gathering. Access article at: <https://paxchristiusa.org/2021/06/09/bishop-apologizes-to-fired-lgbt-catholic-educator-at-theology-gathering/>

Second Reading (2 Corinthians 5: 14-17)

In the passages preceding the reading for the day Paul has been arguing that humans are innately oriented to a life that lies beyond everydayness. "For still being in this tent we groan, weighed down, not that we want to be stripped of it but clothed with a layer over it so that what is mortal may be absorbed by life" (2 Cor 5:4). He identifies this added layer of life with the risen Christ. In one sense, he would have us know no one in the flesh, but live instead in a new creation. Consequently, it is not even important to have known Jesus in the flesh, but rather to know anyone in the Messiah, the Christ, as a new creation.

Third Reading (Mark 4:35-41)

There are social activists who are critical of Christianity, dismissing it as a "pie in the sky" philosophy that encourages passivity rather than activism by

compensating for injustice and suffering in this life with the promise of an eternal reward in another life. Insofar as some Christians, dare one say many, see the faith in transactional terms, those critics have a point. The real problem they represent is that they contain and restrain faith within the confines of a transaction or exchange: “I am doing what you want, God; so you please do what I want.” The “prosperity gospel” often preached on television even brings the reward—God doing what I want—down from the sky and into the worldly market place.

Mark’s image of Jesus sleeping on a cushion in the stern of a boat during a great storm counters any transactional view of Christian faith. First, it takes us beyond any this-worldly reward; the image alludes to the death and resurrection of Jesus—going over to the other side, sleeping. Second, those in the boat with Jesus do nothing in particular but exclaim in terror, “Teacher, isn’t it a concern to you that we are perishing?” The response by Jesus will be gratuitous.

The narrative also alludes to the very creation of the world: “And a great wind storm developed, and the waves crashed against the boat.” “And the wind of God was moving over the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2b). Life is to be understood in a context that is greater than those of immediate events. And the implication is not that one should be passive: “Why are you timid? Have you no faith?”

The sensibilities fashioned by the contours of the larger realities are to engender an active response. Despite storms—and storms there will be—it will come with a confidence that one experiences as an inner calm in the face of any storm: “Quiet! Be still!” And the wind abates.

Poem

Longing Belonging

Attached to our separate identity,
we hunger for oneness with all,
absorbed in what we are,
we search about for who we are,
we yearn to love and be loved.

This winding journey
taking us home to

where we belong.

Tom Keene and Muse

May 31, 2021

Two-Way Street for Yom HaShoah | Never Again: Not Just a Slogan

Rabbi Lisa Kingston

April 5, 2021

Each year in our synagogue's religious school, our middle school students are introduced to the period of history when Jews lost civil rights, places of worship and learning, homes, family and lives at the hands of the Nazis. The Shoah, the systematic attempt to annihilate the Jewish people, forever haunts our community while also offering us inspiration to act for justice. Never Again is not just a slogan, but a call to action for Jews to stop hatred of all kinds. Inevitably as students learn about this dark moment in history, the same question arises year after year, "Why didn't the Jews just leave [their home countries]?" And while some with luck or privilege did leave, where could six million have gone?

In many ways, commemorating *Yom Hashoah Ve-HaGevurah* (Remembrance Day of The Holocaust and Heroism) is entwined deeply with the foundation of the modern State of Israel. The Jewish people needed a home when antisemitic hatred drove us out of our businesses, schools and countries. This narrative is symbolically solidified when exiting *Yad Va'Shem*, Israel's Holocaust memorial, museum and educational institution in Jerusalem. We learn that one ending of the *Shoah* is the beginning of our homeland as we take in beautiful views of Jerusalem, shining in gold, upholding its promise to the Jewish people to be a place of safety, security and welcoming.

But in this panoramic vision, who are the people left out of the promise? Is Israel truly upholding its lesson of Never Again when just to the east of that beautiful view, there are Palestinians without citizenship, residing in refugee camps with no home of their own? While Jews are always careful never to exploit or cheapen our experience of the Holocaust by comparing our plight with the challenges of others, we do need to be reminded of the lessons from our collective history.

In early March, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) passed a definition of antisemitism that includes drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis. Palestinians deserve a state of their own and if they seek citizenship in a country of their own or refugee status in neighboring countries of their choosing, let them not face the same response Jews once did — ‘Sorry, we’re closed.’ Never Again means learning from our past.

Just two weeks ago, Jews sat around tables (or on laptops) to read the Passover Haggadah together, each imagining ourselves personally as if we went out from Egypt. How can we not provide the same level of empathy to others seeking a home, for safety, for refuge? This *Yom HaShoah*, let us heed the lessons we learned years ago and include all in the struggle for a home of one’s own.

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.sanantonioplace.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>