

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating June 27, 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 Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *To Be To Do*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is an essay by a Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace, Joseph Nangle, OFM, "The U.S. Catholic Church should learn from history so it isn't doomed to repeat it," warning contemporary Christians about the danger of authoritarianism.

Calendar

[Times are given for the Central Time Zone.]

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

Wednesday June 23, 11:00am-12:15pm (12:00pm-1:15pm ET) online "the Next Generation of the Irish Peace Process: The US Role in Renewing the Peace Process," Barbara J. Stephenson (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Peter Shirlow (University of Liverpool), Alison Grundle (formerly Northern Ireland Assembly Ministry of Justice), and Michael D'Arcy (Center for Cross Border Studies Ireland), moderated by Patrick Griffin (University of Notre Dame). Follow-up sessions on Thursday June 24 and June 30. Register at: https://notredame.zoom.us/webinar/register/4616234272912/WN_PT0z_FbpTiyLILKphoMR6A?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=6.2021+Northern+Ireland+Series&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fnotredame.zoom.us%2fwebinar%2fregister%2f4616234272912%2fWN_PT0z_FbpTiyLILKphoMR6A&utm_id=519477&sfmc_id=16334564

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/>

Thursday July 1, 7:00pm, San Antonio Audubon Society meeting, online presentation "Protecting Texas through Responsible Stewardship: The Watershed Approach," Eugenia Spears (Texas A & M University). Access at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89065967722?pwd=UFIVZIZrOHNRdHFmeXVVYVBycWliZz09#success>

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

Thursday July 22, 6:30pm-8:00pm (7:30pm-:00pm ET) **OR Sunday August 8**, 6:00pm-7:30pm (7:00pm-8:30pm ET) Trans 101 Workshop for understanding transgender members of families and communities, presented by the Mariansit LGBT Trans Advocacy Committee. Register for July 22 at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/trans-101-workshop-tickets-158674811633>

Register for August 8 at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/trans-101-workshop-tickets-158802686109>

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/>

Notices

Joint letter of Pax Christi USA and 162 other Catholic organizations inviting US, Mexican, Salvadoran, Honduran, and Guatemalan bishops to speak out for migrants. Access at: <https://paxchristiusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Migration-Letter-to-Bishops-Carta-a-los-obispos-sobre-migracion.pdf>

President Biden Must End the Federal Death Penalty, by Andrew Markquart, *Newsweek* 6/14/21. Access at: <https://www.newsweek.com/president-biden-must-end-federal-death-penalty-opinion-1598620>

Documentary movie, *the Phantom*, to be released July 2, on the wrongful 1989 execution of Carlos DeLuna. For information, access:
<https://innocenceproject.org/the-phantom-the-killing-of-an-innocent-man/>

US ranked 2nd worst for families out of 35 industrialized nations. Opinion column by Nicholas Kristof, *New York Times*, "turning child Care Into a New Cold War." Access at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/05/opinion/sunday/child-care-pre-K-republicans.html?smid=em-share>

We Must End the Nuclear Threat Before It Ends Us, Cardinal Blase J. Cupich (Archdiocese of Chicago), *The Hill* 6/11/21. Access at:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/trans-101-workshop-tickets-158802686109>

Second Reading (2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15)

This is a brief passage in which Paul thanks the Corinthian Christians for a contribution they had made for the relief of needy "saints" (presumably Christ followers) in Jerusalem. Paul does not stop at expressing his thanks but also advises prudence in making contributions so that no one gives more than can be afforded or less than they are really able.

The Greek is elliptical, and the Lectionary chops parts out in an effort to make the translation more readable. The result is that Paul's basic theology, which calls for Christ followers to imitate the life ethic of the Messiah Jesus, is left out. I prefer to restore verses 8 and 10-12:

⁷But as you excel in everything, in faith, speech, knowledge, all eagerness, and the love from us among you, excel also in this kindness.

⁸I do not speak by way of a precept but judging from the earnestness of others and the genuine love which is yours; ⁹for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus, Messiah, since being rich he became a beggar for you, so that you may become rich in that poverty. ¹⁰And I give an opinion on this: for it is useful for you not only to do but also to complete what you began last year; ¹¹but complete doing it especially now, according to the desire to thus finish it, and completing it from what is in hand. ¹²For if the desire lies ahead, it is acceptable according to what one would have, not

according to what one does not have. ¹³Not so that others are relieved but you in distress, but in fairness ¹⁴in the present season, your abundance for their want, so that their abundance also may come to be for your want, thereby fairness coming to be; ¹⁵as it has been written: "He who had much did not take too much, and he who had little did not have too little."

Paul's citation is Exodus 16:18.

Third Reading (Mark 5:21-43)

The Lectionary provides for the option of skipping the middle section of this Sunday's reading, which is unfortunate. The reading is the narrative of Jesus setting out with Jairus, who had asked him to heal a daughter who was sick at home. On the way a woman suffering from an issue of blood touched Jesus' cloak in the hope of being healed. She was. This is the section that some would skip.

Mark sometimes makes his point through indirection, juxtaposing different narratives so that the juxtaposition says something more than each story would say taken alone. Here he accomplishes his purpose by having one story interrupt the other. That they are to be read together is made evident by some parallels—the woman had suffered for twelve years, the daughter of Jairus was twelve years old; the disciples mock Jesus ("You see the crowd pressing around you, and you say, 'Who touched me?'"), and the mourners at the home of Jairus laughed at him ("The child did not die but is sleeping.' And they were laughing at him").

The passage is commonly understood to be a figure of the New Covenant replacing the Old. I disagree: The issue of blood afflicts the woman; the girl has no blood-related problem. The Old Covenant did not come about with bleeding; Moses was not crucified. The New Covenant came about with the crucifixion of Jesus. Moreover, the narrative associates the synagogue and its official, Jairus, with the girl, who is raised up, not with the woman.

It helps to consider for whom Mark was writing—Roman Christians soon after the year 70. The Roman Christians had suffered a gruesome persecution under Nero, and many of them had been killed by the State. Problems broke out throughout the Empire, but Nero was too occupied with political intrigue and lavish living to rise to the occasion; he chose instead to take his own life. The Roman church, wounded for sure, survived Nero, and emerged anew, lively like a youngster.

Try as it might to eliminate and obliterate anything Christian, misused power does not outlive the force of life that the Creator breathes into humanity.

Poem

To Be, To Do

Lungs breathe in, lungs breathe out,
hearts take in, hearts pump out,
we let ourselves sleep so we can wake,
we let ourselves be healed that we can heal others,
we learn how to love as we let ourselves be loved.
we take so we can give.

Such is the being that flows into doing,
completing us.

Tom Keene and Muse
March 15, 2021

The U.S. Catholic Church should learn from history so it isn't doomed to repeat it

Joseph Nangle, OFM
Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace
June 11, 2021



This essay points to the well-known aphorism, “Those who don’t remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” It is a result of two insights that caught my attention recently. The first was a comment by an émigré from Europe who compared the current moment in this country to 1930’s Germany. The second was a chilling opinion piece this week in the Washington Post entitled “Too Many People Still Underestimate Trump”.

Subject matter of this sort could be labelled “politically partisan” and therefore inappropriate for this site. However, I believe that the reflections which follow come under the rubric of “social analysis” and deal ultimately with questions of public morality. Also, in reflecting on them, I felt a kind of affirmation from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 16, where Jesus rebukes the religious leaders of his time for their failure to “read the signs of the times”.

The reference to Germany of course has to do with the rise of Hitler and the horror that resulted. While it would be entirely wrong to draw a parallel between that historical event and today’s U.S. reality, certain similarities come to mind. Hitler it seems was ridiculed as a strange-looking little man from Austria. He had “achieved” the low rank of lance-corporal in the German Army during World War I; an American cardinal wrote him off as a “wallpaper hanger”. Yet he worked his way through legitimate political processes to the pinnacle of power as Chancellor and solidified his hold on power after the parliamentary election in 1938 when 99% of the population voted for Hitler’s Nazi Party.

The Washington Post opinion editorial covers the ridicule and dismissive attitude toward Mr. Trump on the part of those whom the author calls the “bien pensant” (someone who accepts or espouses a fashionable idea after it has been established and maintains it without a great amount of critical thought). Many considered his descent from Trump Tower on the gold escalator in 2015 to announce his candidacy for President of the United States a joke at worst or a publicity stunt at best. As the seriousness of his intentions became clearer, Democrats hoped he would win the Republican nomination so easily it would be to defeat him. The rest as they say is history. The United States and the world reaped a bitter harvest of outlandish xenophobia, mean-spirited racist attitudes against those who “do not look like us”, dangerous withdrawals from serious peace negotiations (Iran Nuclear Agreement; Paris Peace Accords), cozy and submissive relations with some of the world’s despots – the list goes on and on – and a general coarsening of our public life.

Yet 72 million Americans voted in favor of a second Trump term! Trump won 50% of the Catholic vote!

A study of the Lutheran Church, the largest Protestant denomination in Germany at that time, reveals three responses to what was happening there.



The first was approval. Hitler's first years in power were more than successful after a post-World War I and the vengeful Treaty of Versailles crippled Germany. Hitler turned the economy around, ending unemployment and instituting a flourishing rearmament industry. The handy slogan was, "he made the trains run on time again".

A second and more generalized reaction was indifference. There was a non-involvement posture as long as the regime allowed them to carry out their religious practices. Years later Hitler's top ally, Hermann Goering, told the Catholic chaplain at the Nuremberg War trials that he had advised, "give them religion – that will keep them quiet."

And finally there was the "Confessing Church". These were men and women of faith who saw clearly what was happening and opposed it vigorously. Many of these exceptionally courageous souls were martyred for their convictions and actions.

In the light of this history where does the Catholic Church, hierarchy and laity, in the United States stand at this moment in our national life?

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>