

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating July 29, 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 section, commentaries on the second and third readings for the seventeenth Sunday in ordinary time follow. Tom Keene poem is *Madonna*. See <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php> for more of Tom's poems. After the poem is a statement on the treatment of migrants and refugees by theological educators and faith leaders, which I found on the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest (Austin) webpage.

Our friend in the New York City area, Pierre Hegy, maintains a blog and news site that Pax Christi friends and followers may find interesting: <http://wakeuplazarus.net/>

Calendar

In Austin

Monday July 30, 9:30am-1:30PM, adult formation class on ecumenism. Diocesan Pastoral Center, St. Joseph classroom, 6225 E. Highway 290. Register at www.austindiocese.org or call (512) 949-2492.

Tuesday July 31, 5:30pm (bar opens), 6:00pm-7:30pm, Texas Tribune and KUT fm, "How Long Can You Afford to Live Here?" Panel on property values in Texas cities: Greg Anderson (Austin Habitat for Humanity), Francine Enriques (Glasshouse Policy), Marc Fort (Texas Music Office), Ashley Phillips (Impact Hub Austin), Christine Rosales (Texas Housers), and Rey Saldaña (San Antonio City Council). Eberly, 615 S. Lamar Blvd.

Tuesday September 11, 12:00pm-1:00pm, discussion: “Racism—The Sickness of the American Soul.” Sorin Oak, immediately east of the Main Building, St. Edward’s University, 3001 S. Congress. Sponsored by the SEU Center for Ethics and Leadership. Bring picnic.

In Houston

Saturday August 25, 9:00am-3:30pm, “Keeping Faith in a Multifaith Society.” Robert Hunt (Perkins School of Theology), and Gregory Ham (Interfaith Ministries, Houston), and local faith leaders. St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, 5501 Main St. \$70-\$80; contact Denise Espinosa Lloyd (281) 437-6018.

Tuesday September 18, 12:15pm-1:30pm, Simranjit Khalsa, “Practicing Minority Religion: A Study of Sikhs in England and the U.S.” Kyle Morrow Room, Fondren Library, Rice University.

In San Antonio

Thursday July 26, 6:00pm-8:00pm, Bexar County Commissioners and County Judge, *Bexar County Criminal Justice Reform Town Hall*. Focus will be on the court-appointed attorney system. Last Chance Ministries, 404 Brady Blvd.

Saturday July 28, 10:00am-**Sunday July 29**, 4:00pm. EcoFest@Eco Centro. Environmental exhibits. Bill Sinkin Eco Centro, 1802 N Main.

Sunday July 29, 7:00pm-5:00pm, “A Line in the Sand: Stories from the US/Mexico Border.” Drama based on August 2005 interviews. Our Lady of the Lake University, 411 SW 24th St. Info: rchavez@ollusa.edu.

Monday August 30, 7:00pm-8:30pm. Panel discussion: “Faith During and After Hrvey: One Year Later.” Alexander Johnson (Wheeler Ave. Baptist); Paula Pipes (Pipes Research); Jason Plotkin (Congregation Emanu El); Omar Samji (Aga Khan Council); moderated by Elaine Howard Ecklund (sociology, Rice University). Info for registration: Hayley Hemstreet, hjh2@rice.edu.

Saturday August 4, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting, Maria Tobin host. 8715 Starcrest, #27. Tony Blasi will be at the parking lot of the church across Starcrest at 9:59 for those unfamiliar with the site.

Friday August 17, 6:00pm-10:00pm, movie premiere: “Walk on the River—A Black History of the Alamo City.” Carver Community Cultural Center, 226 N Hackberry. \$10.00

Monday September 17, 1:00pm-Tuesday September 18, 5:00pm, “2018 Mayor’s Housing Summit.” For program, see <https://www.sanantonio.gov/Housing-Summit>. Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center, 900 E. Market. Tickets: \$30-\$55.

Wednesday September 19, 7:00pm, Kenneth R. Miller, Ph.D. (Biology Dept., Brown University), “Darwin, God, and the Cosmos: Is faith still Relevant in a Scientific World?” University Center, Conference Room A, St. Mary’s University, One Camino Santa Maria.

Friday September 21, 6:00pm-**Saturday September 22**, 6:00pm. “Cesar Chavez: Faith Seeking Justice.” Oblate Spirituality and Social Justice Institute. \$60.00. Whitley Theological Center, Oblate School of Theology, 285 Oblate Dr. Information and registration: Noemy, (210) 341-1366, ext. 212.

Wednesday November 7, 7:00pm, John F. Haight, Ph.D. (Theology Dept., Georgetown University), “Evolution ad Faith: What Is at Stake?” University Center, Conference Room A, St. Mary’s University, One Camino Santa Maria.

Second Reading (Ephesians 4:1-6)

The reading, a brief excerpt from an essay by followers of Paul, presents the figure of Paul the prisoner: “So I appeal to you, I a prisoner in the Lord...” It speaks clearly from outside the circle of established and approved-of power. It would have the bond—or more graphically, the cuffs,—of the prisoner be a bond uniting together those who are called out to be Christians: “...walk in a manner worthy of the call..., being eager to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace....”

The unity in question goes beyond that of an organized religion; it is cosmic in its dimensions. *Ephesians* speaks of “one body, one spirit, one hope,” “one God and father of all who is over all, through all, and in all.” Using the feature of grammatical gender in the Greek original, it emphasizes inclusiveness by employing the different genders: “one Lord” (masculine), “one faith” (feminine), “one baptism” (neuter).

Third Reading (John 6:1-15)

The reading is the traditional narrative of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, as given in the Johannine gospel. The narrative has obvious Eucharistic symbolic weight, but the evangelist wanted to connect it with the symbolic weight of the Exodus as well, noting, “Now it was near the Passover, the feast of the Jews.” Jesus’ disciples point out how difficult feeding the crowd would be. Jesus’ response in the Johannine version hints at the imagery of shepherds leading sheep to pasture: “Now there was much grass in the place.” When the crowd had eaten, it wanted to establish a kingdom; so Jesus “withdrew again to the mountain....”

...Withdrew to the mountain: Moses did that too. When the crowd set up a golden calf, he broke up the terms of the Covenant written in stone, destroyed the golden idol, and withdrew to the mountain. And what is the new idol, the new gold calf re-incarnate that sent Jesus back up the mountain? The crowd wanted to seize him and make a kingdom.

It was not too far back in history that the Catholic Church was a kingdom, with the pope a monarch over Papal States. Norms about marriage, for example, were a

matter of legal decree. Providence has changed matters; the idol has been destroyed and replaced by conscience.

That leaves us with the responsibility of cultivating a well-formed conscience rather than relying on laws. No longer are virtues to be denatured by replacing them with acts of legal observance. It seems that also in antiquity, Jesus wanted faith, hope, and charity to increase rather than himself compelling conformance.

This is a greater civilizational challenge than may first appear. Training for obedience, analogous to military regimen, is simply not up to that challenge. The cultivation of conscience requires a clear-headed and questioning populous, an unsilent majority whose strength lies in being unmanageable. Moreover, organized civilization, always spiritually agitated, needs make itself more so.

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Poem

Madonna

Amid a buzz of crowd,
a flit of a glance
lands on the mother and child,
at repose with each other,
a growing of two out of one.

A picture,
it strikes,
as sun through cloud,
making in mind
a refuge of sorts,
where, if only for this moment,
cold and rain
hold themselves at bay.

Here we are,
beholding
a rainbow of meanings,
each
a field of flowers,
hosting seeds of hope.

Tom Keene
February 3, 2016

Interfaith group of religious scholars unite to speak out on US Immigration Policy

A group of religious and theological scholars – including several faculty at Seminary of the Southwest – that represents a wide range of interfaith perspectives have release a statement speaking out against US Immigration Policy. The statement is below:

ALL RIGHTS FOR ALL, WITHOUT BORDERS

Austin, TX — June 21, 2018 —

As scholars and teachers of religion, we rejoice that public pressure led to initial steps to end family separation. Yet, we remain deeply concerned with the Trump administration's attempt to substitute mass detention of families as a "solution" for family separation. These practices continue to be rooted in an inhumane policy of "zero tolerance" that is morally, ethically, and spiritually reprehensible, and we exhort all people of faith, and all people of good will, to reject and resist this immoral approach.

Our current immigration policies based on the principles of deterrence violate the basic commitments of our different faith traditions, which 1) emphasize the sacred dignity of all humans; 2) see humanity as belonging to one family, thus no one is a stranger; 3) demand that society and individuals care for the needy and stranger among us; 4) demand truth, instead of the lies used by this current Administration concerning the character and personhood of brown people to justify draconian and cruel policies; and 5) call the faithful to fight for a just society free from the abuse and oppression of others.

Even with President Trump's partial policy reversal, we are concerned that the underlying dehumanization and criminalization of refugees and asylum seekers at the border remains in place. These policies violate both national and international law. Moreover, such inhumane practices continue this country's original sin: racism defined by targeting and tormenting people of color in the name of supposed self-defense as rule of law. That many refugee children and families find abuse at the hands of our government instead of favor is merely the latest instance of the racism that infects our country's soul.

We abhor both the separation of families and the fact that families seeking refugee status are being incarcerated instead of receiving aid. We acknowledge that some of the people employed to carry out unjust orders despise the directives that the Trump administration has given them. So we call on one another to declare, unequivocally, the

equal and full humanity of all who find themselves on our borders – regardless of their documentation status – for we are all members of God’s Creation.

We encourage full participation in actions that resist these unjust policies. We remind this administration of the immense network which we represent and that our base is prepared to use its theological, political and legal resources to ensure the safety and wellbeing of these children and their families. Our diverse faith traditions speak with one voice, calling us to embrace refugees and secure their protection. Indeed, we deny our faith, ethics, and humanity when we remain silent or complicit in the death and dehumanization of others. Our convictions demand that all of us stand in solidarity with the oppressed in this struggle for liberation.

‘TODOS LOS DERECHOS PARA TODAS Y TODOS, SIN FRONTERAS’

Como estudiosos y maestros de teología y religión, nos alegramos de que la presión pública haya dado los primeros pasos para terminar con la separación familiar. Sin embargo, seguimos profundamente preocupados por el intento de la administración de Trump de imponer la detención masiva de familias como una “solución” para la separación familiar. Estas prácticas tienen sus raíces comunes en una política inhumana subyacente de “tolerancia cero” que rechazamos moral, ética y espiritualmente, y exhortamos a todas las personas de fe, y a todas las personas de buena voluntad, a rechazar y resistir este paradigma excluyente.

Nuestras políticas migratorias actuales basadas en los principios de disuasión violan los compromisos básicos de nuestras diferentes tradiciones de fe, que 1) enfatizan la dignidad inherente y sagrada de todas las personas; 2) comprenden a la humanidad como perteneciente a una sola familia, que implica que por lo tanto, nadie es un extraño o una extraña; 3) demandan que la sociedad y las personas se sientan interpelado/as y comprometido/as con los extraño/as entre nosotros; 4) exigen la verdad y la justicia, en lugar de las mentiras utilizadas por esta Administración actual con respecto al carácter y la dignidad de las personas y comunidades de color para justificar políticas crueles e injustas; y 5) llaman a los fieles y personas de conciencia a luchar por una sociedad justa libre del abuso y la opresión de los demás.

Incluso con el logro parcial de frenar la política de separación de las familias impuesta por el presidente Trump, nos preocupa profundamente que la deshumanización y criminalización subyacente de los refugiados y solicitantes de asilo en la frontera siga vigente. Estas políticas violan el derecho nacional e internacional. Además, tales prácticas inhumanas le dan continuidad a, y profundizan el pecado original de este país: el racismo caracterizado por la explotación y victimización de las personas de color en nombre de una supuesta defensa del estado de derecho. Que muchas niñas y familias de solicitantes de asilo y refugio sufran por el abuso a las manos de nuestro gobierno en lugar de la protección a la que tienen derecho, es simplemente la última instancia del racismo que infecta el alma de nuestro país.

Aborrecemos tanto la separación de las familias como el hecho de que las familias que buscan el estatuto de refugiado estén siendo encarceladas y penalizadas en lugar de recibir la ayuda que merecen. Reconocemos que algunas de las personas empleadas para ejecutar y cumplir órdenes injustas desprecian las directrices que la administración Trump les ha impuesto. Llamamos a todas y todos a proclamar, proteger y defender, inequívocamente, la humanidad igual y plena de todas las personas que se encuentran en nuestras fronteras, independientemente de su estado migratorio, ya que todas y todos somos miembros de la comunidad mundial de la Creación de Dios.

Alentamos la participación plena en acciones efectivas que resistan estas políticas injustas. Recordamos a esta administración la inmensa red que representamos y que nuestra base está preparada para usar y movilizar sus recursos teológicos, políticos, sociales, culturales y jurídicos para garantizar la seguridad y el bienestar de estas niñas y niños y sus familias. Nuestras diversas tradiciones de fe hablan con una sola voz, llamándonos a abrazar y darle la bienvenida a las personas que solicitan asilo y refugio y migran en búsqueda de una vida mejor, y asegurar su protección. De hecho, negamos nuestra fe, nuestra ética y nuestra humanidad cuando permanecemos en silencio o somos cómplices de la muerte y la deshumanización de los demás. Nuestras convicciones exigen que todas y todos nos solidaricemos con los oprimidos en esta lucha por la liberación.

Signatories (as of June 21st):

1. Dr. Danielle Tumminio, Seminary of the Southwest
2. Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre, Iliff School of Theology
3. Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño, San Francisco Area of the United Methodist Church
4. Dr. Peter Heltzel, New York Theological Seminary
5. Dr. Pamela R. Lightsey, Meadville Lombard School of Theological School
6. Dr. Shannon Craigo-Snell, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
7. Dr. J. Kameron Carter, Duke Divinity School/Indiana University, Bloomington
8. Keisha E. McKenzie, Auburn Seminary
9. Dr. David E. Wilhite, Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary
10. Traci Blackmon, United Church of Christ
11. Dr. Gene L. Green, NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community and Wheaton College
12. Laura Rambikur, Boston University School of Theology
13. Dr. Tommy Givens, Fuller Seminary
14. Dr. Amos Yong, Fuller Seminary
15. Brian Bantum, Seattle Pacific University
16. Dr. Eric Barreto, Princeton Theological Seminary
17. Shelly Rambo, Boston University School of Theology
18. Dr. Katharine Rhodes Henderson, Auburn Seminary
19. Dr. Serene Jones, Union Theological Seminary
20. Dr. Emilie M. Townes, Vanderbilt Divinity School
21. Cornel West, Harvard University
22. Dr. Miroslav Volf, Yale Divinity School
23. Dr. Stephen G. Ray Jr. Chicago Theological Seminary
24. Dr. Lee Barker, Meadville Lombard Theological School
25. Dr. Deanna Thompson, Hamline University
26. Dr. W. Anne Joh, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary/Northwestern University
27. Chris Boesel, Drew Theological School
28. Dr. Randy Woodley, Portland Seminary

29. Michelle Gonzalez Maldonado, University of Miami
30. Kaji Dousa, Park Avenue Christian Church
31. Luis-Alfredo Cartegena Zayas, Park Avenue Christian Church
32. Damarius Whitaker, Fort Washington Collegiate Church
33. Dr. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, Chicago Theological Seminary
34. Mary Fulkerson, Duke Divinity School
35. Brian D. McLaren, author
36. Dr. Jennifer M. McBride, McCormick Theological Seminary
37. Dr. Reggie Williams, McCormick Theological Seminary
38. Dr. Sharon Welch, Meadville Lombard Theological School
39. Dr. John R. Franke, Second Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis
40. John J. Thatamanil, Union Theological Seminary
41. Teri Merrick, Azusa Pacific University
42. Russ Jennings, Host/Producer, Love in a Dangerous Time podcast
43. Dr. Andrew Sung Park, United Theological Seminary in Ohio
44. Fred Davie, Union Theological Seminary
45. Benjamin Perry, Union Theological Seminary
46. Jonathan Soto, Union Theological Seminary
47. Dr. Gary Burge, Presbyterian Church USA
48. Dr. Valerie Bridgeman, Methodist Theological Seminary in Ohio
49. Ann Craig, Affirmation LGBTQ United Methodists
50. Dr. Elizabeth D. Rios, The Passion Center | VP, Plant 4 Harvest
51. Krista E. Hughes, Newberry College (South Carolina)
52. Dr. Traci C. West, Drew Theological School
53. John White, Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University
54. Gerald Shenk, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
55. Dr. Monica A Coleman, Claremont School of Theology
56. Dr. Christian T. Collins Winn, Bethel University
57. David W. Congdon, University Press of Kansas
58. Keri Day, Princeton Theological Seminary
59. Dr. Willie James Jennings, Yale Divinity School
60. Dr. Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, Claremont School of Theology
61. Dr. Drew G. I. Hart, Messiah College
62. The Rev. Dr. James Farwell, Virginia Theological Seminary
63. Dr. L. Daniel Hawk, Ashland Theological Seminary
64. Dr. Sathianathan Clarke, Wesley Theological Seminary
65. Erica M. Ramirez, Auburn Seminary
66. Stephen Roach Knight, Transform Network
67. Dr. John Flett, Pilgrim Theological College (Australia)
68. Debbie Almontaser, Muslim Community Network
69. Phillis I. Sheppard, Vanderbilt Divinity School
70. Melinda Weekes-Laidlow. Esq., Founder, Beautiful Ventures
71. Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Dietrich Werner, Referat Theologische Grundsatzfragen; Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V.
72. Noel Castellanos, Christian Community Development Association
73. Michael-Ray Mathews, The Prophetic Foundry and Faith in Action
74. Sarah Azaransky, Union Theological Seminary
75. Dr. Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Earlham School of Religion
76. Darby K. Ray, Bates College
77. Dr. Eboni Marshall Turman, Yale Divinity School
78. Dr. Elaine A. Heath, Duke Divinity School
79. Dr. Patrick T. Smith, Duke Divinity School
80. Catherine Keller, Drew Theological School
81. Elias Ortega-Aponte, Drew Theological School
82. Kate Ott, Drew Theological School
83. Kyle Roberts, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

84. Dr. Linda E. Thomas, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
85. Megan K. DeFranza, Boston University School of Theology
86. José Humphreys, Metro Hope Covenant Church
87. Laurel C. Schneider, Vanderbilt University
88. Dr. Emmett G. Price III, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
89. Angel Kyodo Williams, new Dharma Community
90. Jessica Wong, Azusa Pacific University
91. Stephen Fowl, Loyola University Maryland
92. Joy Ann McDougall, Candler School of Theology, Emory University
93. Kay Higuera Smith, Azusa Pacific University
94. Justin Marc Smith, Azusa Pacific University
95. Robert Mullins, Azusa Pacific University
96. Dr. Kirsten S. Oh, Azusa Pacific University
97. Joseph Strife, Fordham University
98. Dr. Javier A. Viera, Drew University Theological School
99. Dr. Melanie Johnson-Debaufre, Drew University Theological School
100. Erik Leafblad, Bethel University
101. Rob Muthiah, Azusa Pacific University
102. Andrew C. Wright, Fuller Seminary; Mennonite Central Committee, Central States
103. Dr. Brian Lugioyo, Azusa Pacific University
104. Dr. Boyung Lee, Iliff School of Theology
105. Dr. Justo L. Gonzalez, AETH
106. Dr. Jared E. Alcántara, Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary
107. Emily M. D. Scott, Mission Developer, Delaware-Maryland Synod, ELCA
108. Dr. Efrain Agosto, New York Theological Seminary
109. Dr. Humberto Alfaro, New York Theological Seminary
110. Dr. Eleanor Moody Shepherd, New York Theological Seminary
111. Dr. Wanda Lundy, New York Theological Seminary
112. Dr. Nancy Fields, New York Theological Seminary
113. Dr. C. Vernon Mason, New York Theological Seminary
114. Dr. Jill Schaeffer, New York Theological Seminary
115. Dr. Wesley J. Wildman, Boston University School of Theology
116. Anthony Baker, Seminary of the Southwest
117. Dr. Doris Gracia Rivera, Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico
118. Camilo Pérez-Bustillo, J.D, Hope Border Institute/Instituto Fronterizo Esperanza, El Paso TX
119. Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
120. Michelle Gonzalez Maldonado, University of Miami
121. Steven Bishop, Seminary of the Southwest
122. Dr. Amy Laura Hall, Duke University Divinity School
123. Dr. Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, Seminary of the Southwest
124. Very Rev. Dr. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, Seminary of the Southwest
125. Steven Tomlinson, Seminary of the Southwest
126. Awa Jangha, Seminary of the Southwest
127. Thorn Coyle, Solar Cross Temple
128. Dr. Laurie Pound Feille, First Christian (DOC), Minneapolis, MN
129. Stephanie Ramirez, Seminary of the Southwest
130. The Rev. John G. Lewis, D.Phil., Seminary of the Southwest
131. The Rev. Dave Scheider, D.Min., Seminary of the Southwest

An online petition that continues to collect signatures can be found here:

<https://action.groundswell-mvmt.org/petitions/all-rights-for-all-without-borders>

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>

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/

Climate Change
www.creation-care.com