

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio Anticipating August 5, 2018

Pax Christi San Antonio does not solicit donations. Thoughtful comments, however, may be sent to the editor at j6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com, with the understanding that permission to publish them is implied. 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

The Second Reading and Third Reading commentaries are based on readings for the Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time. This is followed by Tom Keene's poem, *thank you....* For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. A statement from Pax Christi Italy on an incident of the militarization of public education follows.

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 Dallas

Wednesday September 5, 5:30pm-7:30pm, Lawrence Wright on his book, *God Save Texas: A Journey into the Soul of the Lone Star State*, an ethical-political commentary. McCord Auditorium, Southern Methodist University, 3225 University Blvd. Free, but reservation required: 214-768-3210 or CPHInfo@smu.edu

In Houston

Monday August 30, 7:00pm-8:30pm. Panel discussion: "Faith During and After Harvey: 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.

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

Wednesday August 1, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Pub Theology with John Garland and Eric Vogt, "Border Update." The Friendly Spot, 943 S. Alamo St.

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.

Saturday August 11, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Poets for Peace: Words and Music to Encourage, Uplift & Inspire. Kelly John Clark, Marisol Cortez, Chuck Gibbons, Pamela Ferguson. Hosted by Rosalyn and Jim Collier. Bring snack and drink to share. 2114 Letitia. RSVP dellisphelps@gmail.com

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; ticket in advance at www.eventbrite.com/e/black-history-of-san-antonio-movie-premiere-walk-on-the-river-tickets-45187484984?aff=efbevent

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., GeorgetownUniversity), "Evolution ad Faith: What Is at Stake?" University Center, Conference Room A, St. Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria.

Second Reading (Ephesians 4: 17, 20-24)

Curiously, the lectionary skips verses 4:18 & 19 from *Ephesians*. Presumably, the editors wanted to retain the main clause of the extended sentence as a lead-in to verse 20, which they believed presented the main point of the passage. The deleted verses are participial constructions, which tend to be cumbersome in English. So the edited reading begins, "So I say and testify to this in the Lord, that you walk no longer as the gentiles walk in the transitoriness of their knowledge...." The author is speaking of converts to Christianity. The text goes on to describe the non-Christians' lives as "darkened in consciousness, estranged from the life of God on account of the ignorance that was among them, because of the obstinacy of the heart of those who, having become callous, gave themselves in sensuality to works of every uncleanness in avarice."

We moderns read in a hurry. We want what we read to get to the point, assuming there is only one point. So modern editors of ancient texts accommodate us; even when they do not, we scan ahead anyway. Let's look at what the ancient writer wanted to say: The Christian life is not "darkened in consciousness." Packaged in conventionality, church Christianity does not jar the consciousness; would-be Christians go about unperturbed by the barbarity and injustices of the world. What knowledge there might be does not connect to anything; it is transitory. The author asks the reader to consider what Christianity is all about. One should not be "estranged from the life of God on account of the ignorance" that is to be found about. The ignorance in question is not an invincible condition; rather it is a studied avoidance of what gets in the way of every kind of indecency that is based on avarice.

Here is where the lectionary resumes: "But you did not learn from the Messiah thusly, if you heard him indeed and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus...." The author calls to mind the figure of Jesus, with his disturbing parables. The truth is so disturbing that one must cast off an old self and become quite a different person. The new person is taught by Jesus' teaching "to put off the old person, corrupted by the passions of deceit, with respect to the former way of life, and to be renewed in the spirit" of consciousness. One is to "put on the new person which was created by God in the justice and holiness of the truth."

Third Reading (John 6.24-35)

"Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness...." The crowd wanted Jesus to make bread in a miraculous way once more. The last time he had done that, they wanted to set him up as a king.

"Would you like some bread, sir?" The young waiter threw the question out as an afterthought.

"Sure." I was between meetings and had stopped at a large sandwich shop in a mall for a quick lunch. The waiter brought a round wooden platter with warm bread and

a small bowl of olive oil in the center to keep me occupied before the kitchen delivered my order.

How many thousands of years of accumulated experience brought me some bread and oil? And how many hands worked on this loaf, this platter, this bowl, this oil, these spices in the oil? Who planted the wheat and harvested it? Who pressed the olives? Who worked the lathe to shape the bowl? What were the aspirations of the “geek” who worked out the credit card system I would use to pay the tab? And what contributions to everyday life have the fellow diners at their tables, a sundry lot indeed, made—the young ladies across from me in their light blue team T-shirts? The silent old man with his cane and the three talkative ladies with him? The young couple in their stylishly torn Saturday array?

The background music suddenly blares out of control. The chatter stops. Then everyone laughs in amusement, knowing that somewhere some unseen clerk bumped against an overly-elaborate sound system and was frantically turning one or more knobs counter-clockwise.

Somebody in a gated community is making a great deal of money from all this, proud of an accomplished business career. That sense of accomplishment fences off people who work fields, operate olive presses, bake bread, take orders for turkey breast sandwiches.

“Amen. Amen I say to you, Moses did not give you bread from heaven....” No human alone gave me the platter of warm bread with the little bowl of oil. Without the thousands of years’ experience, the farmer, and even the diners who comprised a market for the unknown entrepreneur to exploit, I would have never had it to enjoy. This is all a prefiguring: “... but my Father will give you genuine bread from heaven. Indeed, the bread of God is that coming down from heaven and giving life to the world.”

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Poem

Thank you...

hens, for these eggs, your lives,
pigs, for this bacon, your lives,
cows, for this butter, your lives,
wheat, for this bread, your lives,
beans, for this coffee, your lives.

May this relish ripple
through the lives of all,
the waves of energy enlivening us,
the particular particles
of atoms and molecules,
galaxies and dust of stars,

whence we arise
to celebrate these

tastes in our mouths,
tang in our noses,
feel in our bellies,

this body-delight in our souls.

Tom Keene
July 11, 2015



Italy: The "Demilitarised Schools" campaign expresses its solidarity with Antonio Mazzeo

From Pax Christi Italy
July 9, 2018

With regard to the Pax Christi campaign on "Demilitarized Schools", we must highlight that numerous voices besides that of Pax Christi have been raised to express solidarity with Antonio Mazzeo, the Messina teacher subjected to disciplinary proceedings in the institute where he teaches for disputing military propaganda in his school.

Mazzeo, a journalist and pacifist, has for many decades been engaged in the defense of peace and in promoting the nonviolent solution of all conflicts.

On 17 April 2018, the Messina Institute "Cannizzaro-Galatti" hosted a delegation of the Aosta Brigade with its band, which had performed at school. In the days prior, Prof. Mazzeo had sent a letter to the head teacher in which he emphasized that the initiative was in contradiction with the educational values of the institution and that it had not been resolved by the collegiate bodies, thus expressing his dissent from the course of events.

In the following days, Mr. Mazzeo expressed the same point of view publicly. On 15 May the head teacher initiated a disciplinary measure against him for having

damaged the image of the school, discredited the manager and denigrated the educational institution.

We point particularly to the petition of Eleanora Corace in solidarity with Mr. Mazzeo, posted on change.org: “No to militaries in the schools. Solidarity with objective education,” including:

- The immediate revoking of the unjust and illegitimate disciplinary measure against Mr. Antonio Mazzeo.

- The rejection of every form of militarization of institutions of education and knowledge.

- The rejection of every action of armed force, by means of a school turned into a laboratory of a culture of peace and disarmament.

- Respect for freedom of opinion of every citizen and employee.

- The protection of the constitutional principles and of the educational calling of the Italian school.

- Conformity to the Geneva Convention on the rights of children (article 38), which rules out the involvement of minors in any military activity.

Translated by Anthony J. Blasi



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