

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating September 5, 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 the readings for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *Consider Bread*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is my review of *The Peacemaker's Paradox. Pursuing Justice in the Shadow of Conflict*, by Patricia Hayner.

Calendar

Times are given for the Central Time Zone.

Monday August 30, 11:30am-12:20pm (12:30pm-1:30pm ET) online "The Catholic Church's Global Education Footprint: A Conversation with Quentin Wodon."

Register at:

https://georgetown.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Eb9zQpynTreiURCoLEcQmw

Tuesday August 31, 2:00pm (3:00pm ET) webinar, "Season of Creation Training: How to Engage Our Church Leaders for Climate Action," Catholic Climate Covenant and Ignatian Solidarity Network staff. Register at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_C9J1XZp7SUEdn-p_1M-6-w?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=229352fc-3b15-4be5-81b2-f091a65b4cbc

Wednesday September 1, 10:00am-11:00am (1:00am-12:00pm ET) online ecumenical dialogue in celebration of the *Ecumenical and Interreligious Guidebook: On Care of Our Common Home*, published jointly by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers, and Catholic Climate Covenant. The panel includes

Manohar Singh Grewal (Parliament of World's Religions and World Sikh Council), Gopal D. Pattel (Bhumi Global), Bhikkhu Dhammadipa Sak (United States Zen Institute), and Anthony Cirelli (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops), moderated by Walter F. Kedjierski (United States Conference of Catholic bishops). Register at: <https://creation.cadeio.org/events/care-for-our-common-home-interreligious-dialogue/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=06e2966a-39b2-4c27-b444-3c9b2ccb5cf2>

Thursday September 2, 3:00pm (4:00pm ET), webinar "AU's Public Opinion Research on Church-State Separation," Rachel Laxer (Americans United for Separation of Church and State). Register at: https://secure.everyaction.com/VU3Qwx_BD0ermF30RzvDjQ2?contactdata=Z7XCQb4yj2hdGJEh3nHLINKXAjgcvc3cGeUs8L%2fUKVJd8BshOOalNdWGDYzyXIQEW9qdmMJ5FVquEs%2fse0r6A568YRpVWGOghh3Zm3YbMKKNeWJ4Eteg%2fntfrVda1o%2ffa2gXSM4Hgm7lcaTlujhDALwO817SHmShfZmPBAjDgYNrb1QCc90pR2SpZcqgeRpMIJXTTsNPZMbZCdBPPMXsJEGtCso5e64x9EVDZn5eVMOoPy6eS9rut0eUx3vb5mvYmdAEd0zfQzzSPe415Wb%2fPQ%3d%3d&emci=762987b7-b4f4-eb11-b563-501ac57b8fa7&emdi=659e90be-62f5-eb11-b563-501ac57b8fa7&ceid=3722020

Tuesday September 21, 3:00pm-4:30pm (4:00pm-5:30pm ET), online (or in person at the Hesburgh Center for International Studies, auditorium, U. of Notre Dame) International Day of Peace: Recovering Better for an Equitable and Sustainable World; Catherine Bolten (Anthropology and Peace Studies, U. of Notre Dame), Maira Hayat (Environment and Peace Studies, U. of Notre Dame), Hop Hopkins (Sierra Club), Emmanuel Katongole (Theology and Peace Studies, U. of Notre Dame), Luis Miranda (Sierra Club), and Roy Scranton (Krok Institute, U. of Notre Dame). Register at: https://notredame.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fkOCYhYrQJqTbtX2Z2NVlg

In Dallas

Thursday September 16, 8:15am-3:30pm, Jno Owens Conference: Impact of Migration on Economic and Human Development, at Federal Reserve Bank, Dallas. Information and registration: <https://calendar.smu.edu/site/centersinstitutes/event/owens-conference-2020/>

In San Antonio

Wednesdays September 22 and October 13, 7:00pm-8:00pm, discussion class: "Dr. King's Beloved Community: Where Do We Go from Here—Chaos or Community?" with Bishop Trevor Alexander. \$15.00 registering before September 15, \$20.00 after. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell Ave.; park off Shook. Register at: <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration/>

Notice

Series of essays: Palestinian Citizens and Religious Nationalism in Israel.

Contributors are Arnon Degani (Hebrew University), Raphael Cohen-Almagor (U. of Hull), Nadeem Karkabi (U. of Haifa), Rami Zeedan (U. of Kansas), Lori Allen (U. of London), Atalia Omer (U. of Notre dame), and Maha Nassar (U. of Arizona). Access at: <https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/palestinian-citizens-and-religious-nationalism-in-israel>

First Reading Isaiah 35:4-7a

The chapters in *Isaiah* preceding this one dwell on political disasters the Kingdom of Judah had experienced under a faithless king. The reading for today is excerpted from an abrupt burst of joy in which a national recovery is likened to the exodus from Egypt, the memory of which had been retained in the Moses legends. Isaiah shows a remarkable ability to transcend the problems and irritations of his immediate world. The imagery of the deaf being enabled to hear and the dumb being enabled to sing led the Lectionary editors to associate this passage to the gospel narrative in which Jesus cures a deaf and dumb person. The cure should not be thought of at a superficial level, a work of magic; rather one should contemplate the interior human process of moving from not-hearing to listening and from meaningless chatter to discourse.

Second Reading (James 2:1-5)

The author of the *Letter of James* contrasts faith in human honorifics and Jesus' faith: "My brothers and sisters, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus, Messiah, as a faith in reputation, by showing partiality." The passage goes on to contrast the treatment that might be accorded a man wearing a gold ring and radiant clothing, and that accorded a poor man in filthy clothes.

It was not unusual in antiquity for rich and poor to dress differently. The poor often had no clothes but their work clothes. Today in our democratic society

we deny class differences in our attire. The practice of 1960s college students “dressing down” in protest against class inequality has persisted to this day, but as a disguise rather than a protest. It has extended into the general society, even church. People are more likely to express their claims to upper class status with their automobiles and residences than with their attire. It should be asked whether the claims to superiority that one dare not make in church should be made elsewhere.

Third Reading (Mark 7.31-37)

When does child-like simplicity of heart verge upon the childish and infantile? It is child-like to be open to rich and poor alike; making distinctions is something learned on the way to adulthood. To be childish is to be self-centered, not allowing others to matter. I used to walk to work in a small Ohio town, and a little girl of four or five would wait for me in the morning on the porch of a frame house, and run out and excitedly squeal my name and embrace me at the knees until her mother called her back. The child was child-like in being so welcoming to a “man in the street,” but childish in allowing her every impulse to overrule the requirement of someone having to go to work. There was enough of the former to make one smile.

At the frontier of pagan territory, with its “I do for you and you do for me” religion, they brought Jesus a deaf and speech-impaired man, “and they demanded of him that he lay his hands on him.” There was no sympathy for the deaf and speech-impaired man; he was not given a chance to speak in his impaired way. They just wanted a good magic show. Jesus was willing to do an act of mercy, but he took the man away from the crowd so as to avoid making a spectacle. He looked to heaven and sighed; there was too little child-likeness to lead him to smile, and too much childishness. He ordered that no one be told of the cure, but the show had to go on: “as much as he ordered them, the more excessively they proclaimed it.”

The deaf man began to hear, but the crowd did not begin to listen. The speechless man began to speak, but the chatter of the crowd was superficial. “He makes the deaf hear,” but do the hearing listen? He makes “the speechless speak,” but do those who chatter inspire meaning?

How much prayer is childish rather than child-like? How much of it is intended to bring God around to satisfying our own impulses rather than embracing the Divine where Divinity is to be found? And oh, the show that must

go on.... Sigh! So much of the religious programming in the electronic media is infantile! It is about “me” and “my salvation.”

Poem

Consider Bread

Consider how we provide Coca Cola worldwide
for any who can pay just a little bit of cash.

Consider how we let 24,000 people, mostly kids,
die every hour for lack of daily bread.

Consider how a grain of wheat must fall
from its life-giving stem, bury itself and die
in order to rise and yield a hundred-fold.

Consider how our dreamy prayer
of daily bread for all may require
us also to die and rise.

Consider us trading Coca Cola
for just plain bread for all to eat
if only we all rise-up and,
if necessary, die for it.

Tom Keene and Muse
January 12, 2019

Book Review

Priscilla HAYNER. *The Peacemaker's Paradox. Pursuing Justice in the Shadow of Conflict*. New York: Routledge, 2018. Pp. 220 + xiv. \$42.95 pb. ISBN 978-1-138-30343-0. Reviewed by Anthony J. Blasi, San Antonio, Texas
(J6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com)

Readers of this review, especially members of Pax Christi, are likely committed to both peace and justice. Discussions of peace have traditionally focused on preventing war and resisting wars and the preparations for them; discussions of justice have generally focused on advocating the fair treatment of the vulnerable. Priscilla Hayner's book features two often neglected topics: bringing warring parties into peace negotiations and prosecuting perpetrators of war crimes and other crimes against humanity. Unfortunately, there is an inherent tension between efforts to further these latter two. It is the leaders of warring parties who can bring about the end of violence through negotiations, and it is these same leaders who bear ultimate responsibility for war crimes and other crimes against humanity. The author refers to this problem as the peacemaker's paradox.

The author is not an uninvolved observer. She has participated in peace negotiations in several parts of the world, interviewed key players in other such negotiations, and co-founded the International Center for Transitional Justice in 2001, working for a time as head of its Geneva office. Her analysis of the peacemaker's paradox readily leaves behind discussions of ideal outcomes and focuses itself on practical concerns.

The post-World War II prosecution of Nazi perpetrators of human rights violations was conducted by victors; the accused were in custody. In the wake of the Nuremberg trials, non-governmental advocacy organizations led a movement to prosecute later human rights violators. Most right thinking people saw this as a positive development. It led to a United Nations policy against amnesty from war crimes in 1999, and the European Union adopted a similar policy in 2015. Meanwhile, the International Criminal Court came into being by a treaty among participating nations in 2002. The problem is parties involved in wars—be they in-nation civil wars, wars among nations (often new ones), or conflicts that simply cross borders—will not enter into peace negotiations if a chorus of non-governmental agencies build up public pressure for accountability and prosecution, and especially if the prosecutors for the International Criminal Court indict them. By treaty, the ICC member nations are required to arrest those who have been indicted and turn them over to the Court. Negotiating peace is

complicated from the outset; the parties need to want peace, be able to meet in a neutral place hosted by a third party, and develop some initial trust and respect for one another. Add the prospect of third party prosecutions, especially ICC prosecution, and the process becomes increasingly difficult.

The author reviews an ongoing debate between peace advocates and justice (i.e., prosecution) advocates. She also lays out the tactics used in negotiations to handle the peacemaker's dilemma. If warring parties' leaders become obstacles, the tactic may be to side line them; an ICC indictment will sometimes accomplish that. Generally negotiators cannot prevent an ICC indictment and prosecution; so they may substitute a state government process for the international one, with sentences of restorative justice rather than incarceration, accompanied by informal promises not to turn anyone over to the ICC. High profile cases may involve such formal procedures, while subordinates' misdeeds may be forgiven after admissions and apologies in truth-and-reconciliation proceedings modeled after that used in South Africa. Sometimes the leaders of the warring factions engaged in deeds so offensive that some kind of prosecution and condemnation is necessary to satisfy public opinion and international interest, but to persuade the perpetrators to cooperate, the prison sentences need to be mild and therefore not really match the gravity of the crimes. Reparation funds are often agreed to in negotiations, but subsequent funding of them may not come about. And complicated as the negotiations may be, what happens once the violence ends may turn out quite differently from what was envisioned in the negotiations themselves.

After the rather drawn-out general discussion, the author provides fascinating studies of a number of recent cases. These include negotiations to end violence in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Libya, and Colombia.

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>