

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating October 10, 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 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *What Is His Name*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is the recent Pax Christi USA statement on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Calendar

[Times are given for the Central Time Zone.]

Monday October 4, 10:00am-11:00am (11:00am-12:00pm ET) online webinar on the *Ecumenical and Interreligious Guidebook: Care for Our Common Home* (published by U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Assn. of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers, and Catholic Climate Covenant), Sister Pamela Smith, SS.C.M., hosted by Rev. Walter F. Kedjierski (USCCB). Register at: <https://creation.cadeio.org/events/care-for-our-common-home-an-overview/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=06358db3-6954-4ad5-bce9-ffe94950bfb#02232021anchor>

Monday October 4, 7:00pm, online "Build a Time Machine: What Comes Next for Afghanistan and Other U.S. Wars," Matthew Hoh (Center for International Policy, critic of the war in Afghanistan for many years; sponsored by North Texas Peace Advocates. Register at: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckcOCsqTijHtdDCV7YN9CGv-b8GPs_D6KU

Wednesday October 6, 7:00pm-8:30pm (8:00pm-9:30pm ET) online workshop "Faith in Action: What is Catholic Social Teaching?" Cynthia Gonzalez (Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach), Marylu Vazquez (Just Catholics El Paso), Wesley Cocozallo (Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach), and Alexandra Carroll (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). RSVP at: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_crGC76PwSDa9_-l8RwcjIA

Thursday October 7, 4:30pm-6:00pm (5:30pm-7:00pm ET) online "Promoting a New Yes to Life: Religious Education Amidst a Decline in Religious Affiliation," Tom Beaudoin (Fordham University). Register at: https://htmlbprod.bc.edu/prd/f?p=458:2:::NO::P2_GPM_PROGRAM_LIST_ID:2439

Thursday October 7, 5:00pm (6:00pm ET) re-aired panel discussion "Theology Racialized: Policing & Justice Reform," Danielle Brown (University of Minnesota), Delonte Gholston (Peace Fellowship Church, Washington, DC), Michael McBride (The Way Church, Berkeley, California), Essau McCaulley (Wheaton College), and Lauren Relifor (*Sojourners*). RSVP: <https://act.sojo.net/page/34030/survey/1?ea.url.id=1000274&forwarded=true>

Thursday October 7, 6:00pm (7:00pm ET) online "Who Is My Neighbor? Washington, Afghanistan, Haiti," young Muslim and Christian people brought together for the discussion by the Archdiocese of Washington at the request of Pope Francis. Welcome by Cardinal Wilton Gregory; panelists include Muzhgan Azizy (refugee and former English professor from Afghanistan), Juan Aznaran (Catholic Archdiocese of Washington), Omayma El Ella (Democracy Fund), Reynald Hyppolite (Catholic Relief Services, Haiti), and Gerald Smith (St. Thomas More Catholic Academy, Washington), moderated by Anna Gordon (Georgetown University). RSVP at: <https://catholicsocialthought.georgetown.edu/events/who-is-my-neighbor#rsvp>

Friday October 8, 11:00am-12:30pm (12:00pm-1:30pm ET) online "Overcoming Intersections of Oppression: Immigrant and Racial Justice in the U.S.," Brittney Nystrom (American Civil Liberties Union, Utah), sponsored by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies University of Notre Dame. Register at: https://notredame.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZXWJ0xg_QfqszwFzUkaK2g

Friday October 8, 5:00pm-7:00pm (6:00pm-8:00pm ET), online "Developing Catholic Moral Teaching: A 30,000-foot View," Dr. Helen Marie Burns, RSM. First in a series on moral theology as it pertains to sexual minorities. Register at: <https://fs18.formsite.com/jennhardin/1w3acsjqd3/index.html>

Monday October 11, 11:30am-12:45pm (12:30pm-1:45pm ET) online "Roadmap for Green Energy Future," Bill Hederman (former U.S. official, advisor to the Ukrainian government for converting from natural gas dependence). Register at: https://notredame.zoom.us/webinar/register/7716327489108/WN_ZSdAWAO1R2-LqhF7-LmaeQ?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Bill+Hederman+First+Event&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fnotredame.zoom.us%2fwebinar%2fregister%2f7716327489108%2fWN_ZSdAWAO1R2-LqhF7-LmaeQ&utm_id=575518&sfmc_id=16334564

Tuesday October 12, 5:00pm, online "Latinos and the Re-creation of American Catholicism in the Twenty-first Century." Hosffman Ospino (Boston College). McCarthy Lecture, St. Edward's University. Register at: https://stedwards.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FqJn4VRQSPuYf6njk0_p7w

Thursday October 14, 4:30pm-6:00pm (5:30pm-7:00pm ET) online "The Legacy of Oscar Romero: Conversion, Prophecy, and Martyrdom," O. Ernesto Valiente (Boston College). Register at: https://htmlbprod.bc.edu/prd/f?p=458:2:::NO::P2_GPM_PROGRAM_LIST_ID:2442

Monday October 18, 5:30pm-6:30pm, "Finding Agreement about Climate Change in a Divided World," see **In Dallas**, below.

Tuesday October 19, 6:30pm, online Courageous Conversations (Holy Cross Church, Austin, Social Justice Ministry). Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81763786694?pwd=MWRtRldjeDZUZlRhT3FEcitiaHN3dz09>

Friday October 29, 8:00am-9:00am, "Islam in America: Debunking Myths and Valuing Diversity," see **In Houston**, below.

Tuesday October 26, 6:00pm-7:30pm, online "Unequal Impact: Climate and Environmental Racism in a Warming World," Gerald Durley (Interfaith Power and Light) and Jehann El-Bisi (documentary film maker). Register at: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/unequal-impact-climate-and-environmental-racism-in-a-warming-world-tickets-168881648557?keep_tld=1

Saturday November 13, 11:00am-1:00pm (12:00pm-2:00pm ET), online "Catholic Moral Teaching: Centrality of Conscience," Dr. Linda Hogan (Trinity College, Dublin). Second in a series on moral theology as it pertains to sexual minorities. Register at: <https://fs18.formsite.com/jennhardin/1w3acsjqd3/index.html>

Friday December 10, 6:00pm-8:00pm (7:00pm-9:00pm ET) online "Catholic Moral Teaching: What It Is and Is Not," Dr. Jamie Manson (*National Catholic Reporter*). Third in a series on moral theology as it pertains to sexual minorities. Register at: <https://fs18.formsite.com/jennhardin/1w3acsjqd3/index.html>

In Dallas

Monday October 18, 5:30pm-6:30pm, "Finding Agreement about Climate Change in a Divided World," Katherine Hayhoe (author). McCord Auditorium, Southern Methodist University, 3225 University Blvd., Dallas; or online. Information: Karisa Cloward kcloward@smu.edu. Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/katharine-hayhoe-climate-scientist-registration-172048480637>

In Houston

Friday October 29, 8:00am-9:00am, "Islam in America: Debunking Myths and Valuing Diversity," Craig Considine (Rice University). Information: Hayley Helmstreet jhj2@rice.edu. Register at: https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20211029/event_id/219472

In San Antonio

Thursday November 18, 7:00pm-8:30pm, "U.S. Immigration and Biblical Interpretation: The Politics of Belonging," Francisco Lozada (Bright Divinity School, Fort Worth). Assumption Chapel, St. Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria.

First Reading (Wisdom 7:7-11)

Speaking of Wisdom, the author says, "Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem, because all gold is but a little sand in her sight, and silver will be accounted as clay before her" (Wis 7:9). This is undoubtedly why the editors of the *Lectionary* selected this reading to be paired up with the narrative in the gospel of the rich young man disappointed that Jesus would have him give up his riches.

It should be noted first that even compared to the indefensible aspects of today's economy, accumulating wealth in antiquity usually involved oppression and gross injustice. It came from successful war, taking slaves, and colonialism; the wealth itself took the form of plantations that were worked by slaves. Inequality, with some humans treating other humans as subhuman, was of the essence of wealth.

The author of *The Wisdom of Solomon* (with the reference to the monarch a mere literary convention) begins with a far different mentality, egalitarian in its perspective, noting that he was a mortal, like all humans. "And when I was born, I began to breathe the common air, and fell upon the kindred earth, and my first sound was a cry, like that of all. I was nursed with care in swaddling clothes. For no king has had a different beginning of existence..." (7:3-5). It was from this insight that the author realized that he should pray for wisdom and understanding. And "...I accounted wealth as nothing..." (7:8).

Second Reading (Hebrews 4:12-13)

The Letter to the Hebrews is a very early Christian essay, but it already uses some Christian theological discourse. It speaks of Jesus as the Word of God, and it assumes the readers are familiar with the image of a final Judgment Day. The passage read in the liturgy has a consideration of the knowledge that the Word will have of us on Judgment Day: "For the Word of God is alive, active, sharper than any two-edged sword, and penetrating to the divide of soul and spirit, of joint and marrow also, and able to discern deliberations and thoughts of the heart."

Soul and spirit—the ancients distinguished between unreflective life and minded consciousness. In contrast to the deities of some pagan or folk religions, God could not be fooled. And the Word is present in the world of flesh and blood too, "sharp" enough to penetrate to the divide between joint and marrow. In contrast to the deity of the philosophers of old, the Christian tradition reflected in

Hebrews did not imagine God to be far removed from this world or uninterested in it. The Christian God is neither a force that is subject to manipulation nor, having been incarnate, a disembodied center of spiritual attention. This god is essentially ethical.

Third Reading (Mark 10.17-27)

“But after becoming sad at the saying he left annoyed, for he was in possession of much property.”

My father used to tell this story: After working his way through college as a Ferris Wheel operator, he had found work with General Electric in Connecticut. He was living in and commuting from a walk-up apartment on the wrong side of the tracks since his father died, in otherwise prosperous Westchester County, New York, with his brother, sister, and mother. It was the mid-1930s, during the Great Depression, and anyone who had gainful employment at all was lucky.

A childhood friend worked as a chauffeur for one of the rich men of Westchester County. One weekend the friend came to him and said his boss wanted to meet him. “Me? What for?” His friend didn’t know. So he dressed up in his Sunday best and went with his friend to a mansion up on a hill. What was it all about? His friend’s boss wanted to know whether he could get a General Electric radio at a discount. “No, I can’t do that.” “All right. Good to meet you. Have a nice weekend.”

Poem

What is His Name?

He was born in a barn.
He hung around bad company.
He upset people in high places.
He comforted people in low places.
He taught people to pray that all have their daily bread
and that no one should suffer from unforgiving debt.
He believed he had come to free the prisoners
and to liberate the captives.

He asked that we visit the prisoners,
that they may have comfort and hope.
Then he got himself arrested,
imprisoned, tortured and executed.

Today, he lives on, embodied in prisoners
and those who visit the prisoners,
and who mourn the executed,
fleshed out in us who hunger for justice,
and who suffer persecution for the sake of justice.

His name is Jesus.

Tom Keene and the muse.

**Pax Christi USA statement on the International Day for the Total Elimination of
Nuclear Weapons**
September 24, 2021



This Sunday, September 26th is the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Pax Christi USA notes that this year, for the first time, nuclear weapons have been outlawed by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force in January 2021. On this day we celebrate the nuclear weapons ban treaty as a major step toward elimination of nuclear weapons and as a significant opportunity for nuclear-armed states, starting with the United States, to take steps to comply with the treaty.

To that end, we urge President Biden and the U.S. Congress to declare a new U.S. policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and to reduce the current U.S.

nuclear arsenal by significant numbers. At a minimum, the nuclear modernization program, estimated to cost trillions of dollars over the next generation, should be put on hold and subject to public debate.

In urging immediate steps to reduce the threat of nuclear war, Pax Christi USA acts in accordance with many statements by Pope Francis condemning the possession of such weapons as a grave sin. In November 2019, for example, he said at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial:

“The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral.”

He also has noted the environmental and humanitarian cost of even a “small” nuclear war in many statements and has observed that spending on nuclear weapons diverts funds that should be used to care for the most vulnerable people around the world. Programs that address climate change, shelter the homeless and improve healthcare and education for all create more jobs than spending on weapons. At the present time, we reflect on which is more urgent: funding weapons that pose an existential threat or funding actions to face the existential threats brought on by climate change, inequality, injustice and the COVID-19 pandemic?

Pax Christi USA urges all people of good will on this occasion to act to advance the elimination of all nuclear weapons. Some possible actions include:

- Write your local bishop and diocesan finance council to request they review their investment portfolio and disinvest from companies involved in financing, designing, building and maintaining nuclear weapons;
- Join the Back from the Brink campaign (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKnsH13YuRijkGJOZidZM0Ke_wqzpSSVUYDY3jLu9Q2GnEU5w/viewform) and organize to have your local government adopt a resolution to prevent nuclear war;
- Write your local Representative and Senators urging them to cut the military budget, especially the nuclear modernization plan;
- Take part in the upcoming “The Gospel and Nuclear Disarmament Study Circle”.

Let us continue together the work to which this day is dedicated: the total

elimination of nuclear weapons, so that one day, neither war nor the threat of war endangers us, “for the earth will be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea” (Is. 11:9).

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>

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>

Beloved Community Project
<http://belovedcommunityproject.org/>