

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating February 14, 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 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *Rollercoaster*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>.

On January 25, the Catholic magazine, *America*, which is published by the Jesuit provinces of the United States, reported a public statement by a number of American Catholic bishops in support of LGBT youth. The *America* reporter interviewed Archbishop Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico, who cited his experience as a high school teacher seeing the trials youths went through because of their sexual orientations. The reporter also interviewed Bishop Stowe of Lexington, Kentucky, who spoke of faculty in Catholic high schools laughing at remarks students made about their classmates because of sexual orientation; he also spoke of sexual minority students being traumatized.

This very morning, as I write, I received an email message that Jay Feierman, a retired research psychiatrist, had sent to a number of people. He points out the ignorant way some people refer to transwomen as "biological" men "identifying" as women. He notes, "The word 'man' is wrong. The word 'male' would have been a little better, if the determination of 'male' is only on the basis of one's genitals...." He goes on to note that a transwoman does not "identify" herself as a women. The word "identify" implies an ability to be otherwise. "Scientifically, during fetal development the genitals differentiate as female or male in the first trimester of pregnancy. The default is female. The more testosterone that bathes the fetus in the first trimester, the more what would have been female genitalia becomes male genitalia. By contrast, the brain sexually differentiates in the third trimester of pregnancy as male or female. The brain of a male is different from the brain of a female. If one's genitals and brain are of the same sex, one is considered "cis-gendered." If one's genitals are of one

sex and one's brain is of the other sex, one is "trans-gendered." About 1 in 1000 people are born transgendered." Elsewhere, Dr. Feierman has pointed out that homosexuals do not choose to be such but experience sexual attractions on the basis of their prenatal development.

The statement of the bishops in support of LGBT youth follows Tom Keene's poem.

Calendar

Tuesday February 9, 10:00am (11:00am ET) online panel "Where Next for Myanmar?" Carolina Hughes (University of Notre Dame), Ingrid Jordt (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee), and Tharaphi Than (Northern Illinois University), moderated by Michel Hockx (University of Notre Dame). Register at: https://notredame.zoom.us/webinar/register/7016123845581/WN_oysQ8fflSgSjNmNzEXrIXw?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Register%20Now&utm_campaign=Washington

Tuesday February 9, 6:30pm, online panel "Modern Migration: Ongoing Challenges and Potential solutions," James F. Hollifield (Southern Methodist U.), Pia Orrenius (Federal Reserve Bank, Dallas), and Ahmed Abbas (Asylum Seeker Assistant Program at Refugee Services of Texas, Austin). Register at: <http://hcdallas.clubs.harvard.edu/article.html?aid=656>

Thursday February 11, 10:00am-11:00am (11:00am-12:00pm ET), online "Care for Creation as a Common Denominator: Interfaith approaches to Environmental Peacebuilding," Huda Alkaff (Wisconsin Green Muslims), Elena Cedillo (Lutheran World Federation), Rabbi Yonatan Neril (Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development), and Gopal Patel (Bhumi Global), moderated by Mahar Mirza (Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion). Register at: https://notredame.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Wr_qczZfRQ6erIEp6mliSg

Friday February 12, 1:30pm-3:00pm (2:30pm-4:00pm ET), online panel "American Christianity and the 'Fegacy of White Supremacy,'" Robert P. Jones (Public Religion Research Institute), Anthea Butler (University of Pennsylvania), and

Khyati Joshi (Farleigh Dickinson University). Register at:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oUXF8h2cQHUKJAI08qvWbA

Thursday February 18, 10:00am (11:00am ET, 5:00pm Geneva), online
“Decolonizing the Land. Christian Grassroots Approaches to Environmental Peacebuilding,” Fr. Emmanuel Katongole (Bethany Land Institute), Daod Nassar (Tent of Nations), and Katie Chustak (Red Cloud Indian Institute), moderated by Elsa Barron (University of Notre Dame). Register at:
https://notredame.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Wr_qczZfRQ6erIEp6mliSg

Thursday February 18, 6:00pm, online “New Realities at the US-Mexico Border,” Douglas Massey (Princeton University). Register at:
https://smu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kwLJfi96RNmJU6V4mySVOQ

Monday February 22-Friday February 26, St. Mary’s University annual Conference on Justice and Social Concerns. Connect to pre-recorded program each morning at <http://www.stmarytx.edu/conference>. **Monday:** Interview with Karla Scott Solomon, survivor and outreach specialist on sex trafficking. On international trafficking: Brenya Twumasi (UTSA & Alamo Colleges). Pane on prison outreach: Robert Leibrecht, Justin Miller, and Cody Brown (all Archdiocese of San Antonio). **Tuesday:** On Latino economic justice: Lindsay Passenger Wieck (St. Mary’s U.), Noel Andrés Poyo (U.S. Dept. of Treasury), Monica Limón (National Assn. of Latino Community Asset Builders), and Victoria Villaseñor (St. Mary’s U.). **Wednesday:** On hunger: Anthony Pogorelc (St. Mary’s U.), Sue Nash (St. Mary’s U.), Jeanne Holcomb (U. of Dayton), Diane Cuy Castellanos (U. of Dayton), Lorin Ramocki (Chaminade U.), Allison Jerome (Chaminade U.), and Brother Edward Brink (Chaminade U.). **Thursday:** On diversity of voices: Deborah Omowole Jarmon (San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum), Sarah Zenaida Gould (Mexican American Civil Rights Institute), Margaret Cantú-Sanchez (St. Mary’s U.), Rick Sperling (St. Mary’s U.), Gisela Reyes (Northwestern U.), José Medina (Northwestern U.), and Charles Miller (City University of New York). **Friday:** On social action: Him Vogt (Marianist Social Justice Collaborative), Kevin Matula (Zachry Group), Carla Ortiz (Catholic Relief Services), Jenee Gonzalez (Marianist Province, US), Daniel Vasquez (Holy Rosary Parish), Kiran Bains (SA 2020), and Brian Halderman (GivePlus).

Monday February 22, 3:00pm, panel on race: “‘Make America Great Again,’ Racial Pathology, White Consolidation, and Melancholia in Trump’s America,” Stephen Finley (Louisiana State U.); “Now It Is Always Now; blackness, Time, and State-Sanctioned Violence,” Biko Gray (Syracuse U.); “The Devil’s Work: Race, Witchcraft, and the Demonization of the Black Lives Matter Movement,” Margarita Guillory (Boston U.). RSVP at:
https://riceuniversity.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_y79cT2gtSy62qoBpbSH9Sw

Wednesday February 24, 7:00pm-8:00pm livestream panel on overcoming racism, Jonathan Butler (City of San Antonio), Christopher Whitt (Creighton University), and Tiffany Galvin Green (John Carroll University). Access at:
<http://www.stmarytx.edu/conference>

Thursday February 25, 7:00pm-8:00pm, online “Meet the Author of *Baby in the Bag*, Featuring Hafza Girdap, Ph.D.Cand.,” on human rights violations in Turkey. Sponsored by the Raindrop Foundation San Antonio. Register at:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/meet-the-author-of-baby-in-the-bag-featuring-hafza-girdap-tickets-138717889943?utm_term=attend&invite=MjAyMjc4NDUvZjZhbnRob255Ymxhc2lAeWFob28uY29tLzA%3D%0A&utm_campaign=inviteformalv2&utm_source=eb_email&utm_medium=email&ref=enivtefor001

February 24, 7:00pm-8:30pm, online panel “A Conversation on Race, Equality, and Equity,” with Jonathan Butler, Esq. (City of San Antonio), Christopher Whitt (Creighton University), and Tiffany Galvin Green (John Carroll University). For information about registering, contact Susan Elias selias@stmarytx.edu.

Saturday February 27, 9:00am-2:00pm, online state conference, Texas Coalition for the Abolition of the Death Penalty. \$50.00; information and registration at tcadp.org.

Notices

Black History Month: Dr Vicki Vernon Lott on “The Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr” (video). Access at: <https://paxchristiusa.org/2021/02/04/black-history-month-dr-vicki-vernon-lott-on-the-legacy-of-martin-luther-king-jr-video/>

This Is America: A Conversation about the Black Lives Matter Movement in light of the Capitol Insurrection (video). Cleve Tinsley (Virginia Union University) and Brandon Mack and Kandice Webber (both of Black Lives Matter Houston). Access at: https://riceuniversity.zoom.us/rec/play/_o4C38QyKt7-JZqDwBdOgfU3pUUNKP2q5KDbVBQBFkvhLk0ew_gMIGil3tU4bfwFB4SGRAXS88JjyEVo.1Ktx-1Eia13xCPSX

Lenten resources with a Social Justice Focus, from Maryknoll. Designed to be used virtually in a small group you can form with friends or family, or your parish small group (or your Pax Christi friends), or easy to use at home with those in your pod. Each week applies the Sunday scriptures, to an issue of global solidarity. <https://www.maryknoll.us/resources/mission-spirituality/lent-2021>

Maryknoll's Lenten resources with a call to global solidarity

Second Reading (1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1)

“Whether you eat, then, or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). So begins the reading of the day. There was a major controversy in earliest Christianity, over whether it was necessary to observe the dietary rules of the biblical law. Paul had been referring to this controversy in the previous section of *First Corinthians*. He begins by advising his readers not to feel obligated to follow the rules: “Eat everything that is sold in the market, not inquiring on the basis of conscience, for ‘The Lord’s is the earth and its fullness’” (1 Cor 10:25-26, citing Psalm 24:1). And “If anyone of the non-believers invites you to eat and you want to go, eat all that is set before you, not inquiring on the basis of conscience” (10:27). Strict interpretations and applications of rules were not encouraged in earliest Christianity.

“But if anyone should say to you, this is a sacrifice to a deity, do not eat, because of the person and conscience who makes that known” (10:29). The

spiritual well-being of the other takes precedence over one's own preference. "Let no one look out for oneself but for the other" (10:24).

Third Reading (Mark 1:40-45)

"And a leper comes to him asking for help, kneeling, and saying to him, 'If you would wish, you will be able to make me clean!'" This is a difficult passage because of varying readings in the next sentence in the ancient manuscripts. But when we carefully read the very first sentence, a difficulty already appears: "If you wish..." The leper is doubting Jesus' intentions from the outset. In fact, the leper himself appears to be a difficult person, perhaps made that way by the social isolation resulting from leprosy in ancient times.

The *New American Bible*, which the U.S. Catholic Church uses in the liturgy, reads the next sentence as follows: "Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, 'I do will it. Be made clean.'" Most published Bibles translate similarly. But then the next verse doesn't make sense if one stays with that translation; Jesus is said to "warn sternly," but the Greek has him expressing displeasure, not simply being stern.

The alternate ancient reading does not have a showing of compassion but anger. It is a principle of text criticism that an ancient copyist would change a text to remove a difficulty but not to introduce one. Choosing the variant that described Jesus as having compassion violates that principle, and the editorial committee responsible for the critical Greek edition of the New Testament that stands behind modern Bibles expressed their qualms about the matter in their textual commentary.

The early 20th century scholar Kirsopp Lake solved the problem by noting the ambiguous nature of the pronouns in the passage. Following Lake's reading, one would translate the passage this way: "'If you would wish you will be able to make me clean.' And being angry and stretching forth his hand he grasped Jesus, and Jesus says to him, 'I wish it, be made clean'; and straightway the leprosy left him and he was made clean. And troubled by him, Jesus straightway sent him away...."

The easier text that was selected for the published Bibles provides good homiletical material about reaching out to stigmatized people. The more difficult text selected by Lake not only has Jesus willingly engaging with a stigmatized person but doing so even when the individual proves to be difficult and troublesome. And troublesome he proved to be. After Jesus had cured him and

told him to follow the standard procedure for being declared “clean” (showing oneself to the priests as prescribed in the Law) and not to tell anyone, the cured man “began to proclaim it a great deal and publicize the report, so that Jesus was no longer able to enter a city openly...” Jesus might have been unable to enter cities openly because crowds of people wanted additional cures—a pattern found elsewhere in the *Gospel of Mark*—but it might also have been because he himself had become unclean by having made contact with a stigmatized leper.

Poem

Rollercoaster

Between getting on and getting off
is where the fun happens.

Between birth and death
life celebrates itself.

Between sorrow and bliss
waits mystery and meaning.

Feeling the rollercoaster.

Tom Keene and Muse
July 27, 2020

God Is On Your Side: A Statement from Catholic Bishops on Protecting LGBT Youth

As Catholic Bishops in the United States, we join with the Tyler Clementi Foundation in standing up for at-risk LGBT youth in our country.

As we see in the Gospels, Jesus Christ taught love, mercy and welcome for all people, especially for those who felt persecuted or marginalized in any way; and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that LGBT people are to be treated with “respect, compassion and sensitivity.”

All people of goodwill should help, support, and defend LGBT youth; who attempt suicide at much higher rates than their straight counterparts; who are often homeless because of families who reject them; who are rejected, bullied and harassed; and who are the target of violent acts at alarming rates.

The Catholic Church values the God-given dignity of all human life and we take this opportunity to say to our LGBT friends, especially young people, that we stand with you and oppose any form of violence, bullying or harassment directed at you.

Most of all, know that God created you, God loves you and God is on your side.

If you are a Catholic Bishop and would like to add your name, please email Jane@TylerClementi.org

GOD IS ON YOUR SIDE: A STATEMENT FROM CATHOLIC BISHOPS ON PROTECTING LGBT YOUTH



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin

Archdiocese of Newark
New Jersey



Archbishop John C. Wester

Archdiocese of Santa Fe,
New Mexico



Bishop Steven Biegler

Diocese of Cheyenne
Wyoming



Bishop John P. Dolan

Diocese of San Diego
California



Bishop Joseph R. Kopacz

Diocese of Jackson
Mississippi



Bishop Robert McElroy

Diocese of San Diego
California



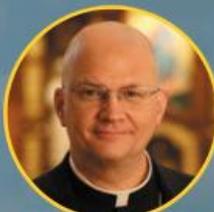
Bishop John Stowe

Diocese of Lexington
Kentucky



Bishop Anthony B. Taylor

Diocese of Little Rock
Arkansas



Bishop Edward Weisenburger

Diocese of Tucson
Arizona



Bishop Thomas Gumbleton (Ret'd.)

Archdiocese of Detroit
Michigan



Bishop Denis Madden (Ret'd.)

Archdiocese of Baltimore,
Maryland



Bishop Ricardo Ramirez (Ret'd.)

Diocese of Las Cruces
New Mexico

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>