

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating December 30, 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

After the calendar section, the reflections are based on the second and third readings for the Feast of the Holy Family. Tom Keene's poem is *Family Circle*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. A few weeks ago, I reproduced a clinical biography of World War I resistor Ben Salmon. Mr. Salmon had been referred to a mental hospital because he resisted involvement in the war. After the poem, a report proposing Ben Salmon for beatification and canonical sainthood follows.

Calendar

Second Reading (Colossians 3:12-21)

In this selection from the *Letter to the Colossians*, the author presents one of the "household code" statements to be found in the New Testament as well as in ancient secular literature. The first century household was quite different from the modern family; it was patriarchal, wherein the male household head even had, under Roman law, the power of life and death over the others in the household. The household included the married couple, their children (and adoptees), and slaves. In a misguided literalism, some would apply an excerpted statement to the modern family as a command. For example, "Wives be subordinate to your husbands...."

To begin with, the contemporary family is not a "household" (*oikos* in Greek) in the ancient sense. It has no patriarchal head who rules with the force of imperial law. More importantly, an excerpt needs to be read in totality to get its point: "Wives be subordinate to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord." What kind of subordination is "fitting in the Lord"? We know that Paul in his *First Letter to the Corinthians* had distinguished between having a spouse in the Lord and not in the Lord. The author of *Colossians*, who often takes over Paul's terminology, actually describes what is fitting in previous verses, where features are given: compassion, kindness, humility, considerateness, patience.... These provide the context for any code. It would be ironic if Christian features, which may well have helped transform households into families, would be ignored in a literalist attempt to bring households in the ancient sense back.

Third Reading (Luke 2:41-52)

Luke provides a narrative of Jesus staying behind in Jerusalem to take part in discussions with teachers in the Temple, without Joseph and Mary knowing it. After looking for him and finding him in the Temple, they ask why he had done that. "Did you not know that I had to be in the house of my father?" According to Luke, "...they did not understand the words he was speaking to them." And this after the Annunciation by an angel (Luke 1:28-38), an acknowledgement by Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45), Mary herself acknowledging what was occurring (Luke 1:46-56), a heavenly chorus at the nativity in Bethlehem (2:14), the welcome by Simeon in the Temple (Luke 2:25-35) and Anna's thanking God for Jesus's coming and talking about him (Luke 2:36-38)? How could Mary and Joseph not understand?

The ancients knew that Luke collected and embellished legends and that the legends did not have to make narrative sense when juxtaposed in his gospel. Concerning the family of Jesus, Luke seems to accept the fact that Jesus' teachings were to depart from anything that Joseph and Mary could have taught him.

Poem

Family Circle

I see where our faith-filled yes,
our sacred surrender to life
led us:

round this family table
celebrating in our presence
the past that brought us here,
the future that draws us forth,
and this time-shattering moment.

I see how, amid minutiae of defeats,
and trivia of tiny failures,
daily decisions to endure made of us:

a circle of flesh,
warmed with memories of all of us,
multiplied in each of us,

a ring that links us,
to the kept secrets of ancestors,
the myriad mysteries to come,

an episode in the tale
humanity is coming to tell,
a rhyme in the odyssey yet to be sung
round cosmic campfires to circles of angels.

Tom Keene
January 3, 1991

Project on the Beatification of Ben Salmon
Friends of Franz and Ben

1) We Friends of Franz and Ben are happy to announce that our colleagues in Denver have decided to formalize their participation in the effort to motivate their Archbishop to take seriously our proposal by establishing the BEN SALMON GUILD OF DENVER. This uses the same language as the Archdiocese of New York when it set up THE DOROTHY DAY GUILD (www.dorothydayguild.org) That Guild, with an office in the Archdiocese of New York's Pastoral Center, is well-advanced in the process in seeking the beatification of Dorothy Day.

2) The Ben Salmon Guild of Denver has announced their signing a contract to produce an 11 minute documentary about Ben Salmon. The contract calls sets the cost at \$2,000, a very manageable sum. We, the Leadership Team of "Friends of Franz & Ben", have sent \$500 as an initial contribution. We invite you, as an endorser of our Petition, to make a donation of whatever amount by a check made out to "St. Francis of Assisi Parish", memo note: "Ben Salmon Cause," and sent to Fr. Tim Taugher, 1031 Chenango Street, Binghamton, NY 13901. Acknowledgement if desired, will be sent to the donor if the donor provides a postal address.

3) Much more important than monetary help for the Ben Salmon documentary, is using your personal influence to persuade others to endorse the online petition. It was personal invitations from one of us that have added such endorsers as Bishop Anthony Taylor of Little Rock, AR, Robert Ellsberg, publisher of Orbis Books, and Fr. Mark Francis, CSV, President of the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. While such high profile endorsements are desirable, a voluminous response from the People of God will surely be heard from On High, as well as in the Archbishop's office in Denver. Please appeal to your circle of friends and professional colleagues to endorse either on the website or to snail mail their endorsement to Fr. Taugher's address above. Comments are always appreciated, if only a one-liner.

4) Finally, consider offering yourself to be listed as a member of Friends of Franz and Ben ADVISORY COMMITTEE. Such an adviser's only additional obligation would be to monitor and advise this campaign. Only an Adviser's name will be listed on the website, unless the adviser

chooses to have his/her contact information published as well. An adviser can choose at any time to be de-listed as an adviser. Once a minimum number of TEN advisers are received, a conference call with the Leadership Team will be set up to get to know one another. Note: The Ben Salmon Guild of Denver is an organization separate from Friends of Franz and Ben who are the administrators of the website and The Petition. We expect at least one person among the Leadership of THE GUILD will also be a member of The Advisory Committee as described above.

For the Leadership Team:

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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
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Interfaith Radio, (*Interfaith Voices*)
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Texas Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty
www.txccedp.org

Dialogue Institute of San Antonio
www.thedialoginstitute.org/san-antonio/

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www.creation-care.com

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