

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating April 7, 2019

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, the *Liturgical Reading* reflections are based on readings for the Fifth Sunday of Lent. At some masses, the narrative about the man born blind, from the Johannine Gospel, may be read. That reading is selected from the "Year A" cycle, to co-ordinate the mass with the RCIA Program (for initiating adults who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil or Christians affiliating with the Roman Catholic Church through Confirmation at the Easter Vigil). The reflection that follows below after the Calendar is for the "C Year" cycle of readings, which is intended for those who have already been initiated into the Church.

Tom Keene's poem is *Beliefs and Faith*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>.



Last month the world lost one of its peacemakers, Cardinal Godfried Daneels, he former ecclesiastical president of Pax Christi International. The Pax Christi International announcement of his passing comes after the poem below.

Calendar

In Austin

Thursday April 25, 6:30pm-**Friday April 26**, 4:00pm, Women in Charge at Church: Reimagining Authority and Power. Presenters: Cynthia Rigby, Jacqueline Lapsley, Bridgett Green, and Beverly Gaventa. \$100.00, includes meals. Westminster Presbyterian Church, 3208 Exposition Blvd. Information and registration: <https://www.ptsem.edu/events/women-in-charge-at-church-reimagining-authority-and-power>.

Tuesday April 30, 12:00pm-1:00pm, discussion: What is the Future of Speculative Journalism? (re nyti.ms/2MBsDRv). Fleck Hall 305, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress. Information and parking: <https://www.stedwards.edu/contact-us/main-campus-united-states>.

In Dallas

Thursday April 4, 6:00pm-8:00pm, "Gun Violence: A Right to Life Issue." Panel discussion, including a trauma surgeon, a representative from the SMU Black Students Association, and a representative from Moms Demand Action. Sponsored by the Catholic Community at SMU, SMU Office of the Chaplain and Religious Life, the Catholic Diocese of Dallas, Texas GunSense, the Dallas Peace and Justice Center, and the SMU Embrey Human Rights Program. Information: Sheila@Levatino.net. SMU McCord Auditorium, 306 Dallas Hall, 3225 University Blvd.

Thursday April 11, 12:00pm-1:30pm, Paul Sedra, "Egypt's Church-State Partnership and the End of Equal Citizenship for Coptic Christians. Hughes-Trigg Forum, 3140 Dyer St., Southern Methodist University. Free, but register by April 8: <https://whoozin.com/HJE-FWD-RHUV-6WJX>. Information: Bora Laci, blaci@smu.edu, 214-768-4716.

Thursday April 18, 12:30pm-2:00pm, Elzbieta Gozdziat, "Global Migration and Human Trafficking." Room 106, Florence Hall, Dedman School of Law, Southern Methodist University, 3330 University Blvd. Register by April 15, <https://whoozim.com/43P-944-NH6M>. Information: Bora Lacy, tower@smu.edu.

In El Paso

Fridays, 12:00pm-1:00pm, Pax Christi joins Border Peace Presence in front of the Federal Courthouse (corner of Campbell and San Antonio).

In Houston

Friday April 5, 8:00am-9:00am, John Schmalzbauer (Missouri State University), "The resilience of religion in American higher education." Lovett Hall 402, Rice University (use entrance C). RSVP at

https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20190405/event_id/20205. Information: Hayley Hemstreet, hjh2@rice.edu, 713-348-3974.

Sunday April 7, 9:30am, Garland Pohl, "Does the Pope Run the Church?" St. Philip Presbyterian Church, 407 San Felipe.

Friday April 12, 8:00am-9:00am, Craig Considine, "Muslims in America: Examining the Facts." Lovett Hall 402, Rice University (use entrance C). RSVP at https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20190412/event_id?20206. Information: Hayley Hemstreet, hjh2@rice.edu, 713-348-3974.

Friday April 19, 8:00am-9:00am, Annelle Sheline (Baker Institute for Public Policy), "Branding Islam: The Strategic Use of Official Religion." Lovett Hall 402, Rice University (use entrance C). Register at <https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date20190419/event-id/20207>.

Friday April 26, 8:00pm, Asma T. Uddin (U.C.L.A.), "When Islam Isn't a Religion." River Oaks Islamic Center, 3110 Eastside St. Information: tolerance@rice.edu.

In San Antonio

Wednesday April 3, 6:30pm-8:00pm, Erica Schommer, J.D., "Representing Migrants in Texas." Fiesta Room, Coates Student Center 111, Trinity University, One Trinity Place.

Wednesday April 3, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Pub Theology with Ron Nirenberg. The Friendly Spot Ice House, 943 S. Alamo.

Friday April 5, 12:30pm-4:30pm, Future Ready? EcoExchangeEdu's 5th Annual sustainability showcase. McCreless Theatre, San Antonio College, 799 W. Dewey Place.

Saturday April 6, 9:30am, the annual March for Science begins at the downtown UTSA campus and ends at Main Plaza.

Saturday April 6, 10:00am, rally for Medicare for all begins at Travis Park.

Saturday April 6, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting, residence of Maria Tobin, 8715 Starcrest Dr., #27. Information: matob@aol.com.

Tuesday April 9, 7:00pm-9:00pm, screening of "Lindy Lou, Juror Number 2," documentary on a juror in a capital punishment case. Discussion led by Kristin Houle and Sam Millsap. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Free, register at [https://www.upcsasorg/r, 7:30pm, registration/](https://www.upcsasorg/r,7:30pm,registration/)

Wednesday April 17, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Nancy McLean (Duke University) "Issues in Contemporary American Democracy." Fiesta Room, Coates Student Center 111, Trinity University, One Trinity Place.

Second Reading (Philippians 3:8-14)

The context for the reading is Paul's own crisis of faith. Earlier in the passage, he recalls his own religiosity: "If anyone else presumes to rely on the flesh, I did more so: circumcision on the eighth day, from the nation of Israel, tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew from Hebrews, under the Pharisaic law; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness, becoming faultless in the Law." All this he did until he found himself setting out to seize upon innocent people and drag them to the death penalty for being followers of a teacher named Jesus. That simply could not be right! He came to see all that had moved him and assured him in the past to be loss rather than gain.

How would we phrase Paul's insight today? Baptism at birth or having been reborn in the Spirit—a Christian—a saved Christian—the correct denomination—a member of a nation with a special divine destiny—obedient to all the rules and rulers—as for righteousness, persecuting people who are socially wrong, probably heretics anyway!

How mysteriously God-like is faith, which begins with a loss of a faith!

Third Reading (John 8.1-11)

The passage commonly called "The Woman Caught in Adultery" was a free-floating piece of tradition that the ancients inserted in various places in their manuscripts of the gospels. Modern publishers place it in the Gospel of John at the eighth chapter. It was and is too precious a narrative to lose. What it says about judgmental Christians is obvious. But what was the writing in the dirt routine? Let's put that into context.

The scribes and Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus. All the people in Judea were caught between a formalized, even fossilized, Law that mandated death penalties now and then on the one hand, and a less formal but more certain Roman imperial sway that reserved execution to the Romans. The Romans did not want anyone else to look too much like a government. If Jesus did not condemn the woman to death, he would be depicted as weak. If he did condemn her to death, he would be depicted as a revolutionary against Rome. So he engaged in some pretend.

The bureaucratic Roman judges had to commit their judgments and sentences to writing and then read them out loud. Jesus acted out the part of a Roman judge. But he read out a judgment pertaining as much to the accusers as the accused: "Let he who is without sin..." What sin on their part was at issue? The Law said that an adulterous *couple* had to be prosecuted (Leviticus 24.10 and Deuteronomy 22.22-24), but the accusers had done only half their job, if they saw it as their job to impose the letter of the Law in a fundamentalist manner. In applying the Law to women alone, they were perpetuating an evil. Is that why the accusers left, beginning with the eldest? I doubt it. The reason was that they did not want to upset the Romans and appear themselves to be revolutionaries. Jesus pretended to play the part of a Roman judge again and started writing; there was no telling what he might say, what sentence he would say would be in store for *them*.

But what is this narrative to leave us to think about the Law and other parts of the Bible? Jesus did not accept it all, word for word. He hardly left his disciples in a position to hide behind scriptural mandates. Indeed, a text is no substitute for a heart.

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Poem

Beliefs and Faith

What a difference.
One is about what.
What's out there?
The other is about who.
Who are we becoming?

One puts its trust in authority.
The other in experience.

We believe in atoms
not because we saw but
that's what our teachers said.
Like they told us in the army:
*"There are three ways to do things.
The right way, the wrong way, the army way.
Do it the army way."*

That worked.
Saved us the fuss and bother
of figuring it out for ourselves.
Secure as oysters in their shells.

But faith. That is another matter.
There we undergo happenings
like hope and fear, love and hate,
by living them.

It's facing truths, so powerful
that we surrender to them.

Developments that envelop us,
change us, so we can never go back
to whatever we were before.

Now and then they make us deep.
We feel a freedom to risk.

Even mistakes become
windows to see,
doors for going through
to brave out our becoming.

Tom Keene and Muse
January 17, 2019

In Memoriam: H.E. Cardinal Godfried Danneels, Former President of Pax Christi International

14/3/19 - Cardinal Godfried Danneels, former Archbishop of Mechelen Brussels, passed away on 14 March 2019, at 85 years of age. He was President of Pax Christi International from 1990 through 1999. The International Catholic Peace Movement offers its condolences and prayers to his family and to the Archdiocese of Mechelen Brussels.

Cardinal Danneels became president after the years of political transitions in Central and Eastern Europe and with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, in particular. He guided the movement for about a decade and at a time of great change in the world. Cardinal Danneels became president after the years of political transitions in Central and Eastern Europe and with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, in particular. He guided the movement for about a decade and at a time of great change in the world.



The end of the Cold War between East and West, for which Pax Christi had worked, was a moment of great hope for a disarmed and more just world order. However, it soon became clear that the human family was facing new versions of old problems: poverty, ethnic conflict, racism, refugees and new wars, such as in Iraq/Kuwait in 1990/1991.

Europe also suddenly faced many changes and challenges. The Cardinal participated, together with delegates of Pax Christi International, in the Special Assembly of Bishops for Europe in December 1991.

Under the leadership of Cardinal Danneels, several members of Pax Christi responded on many levels to the violent conflict in the former Yugoslavia – including practical help in refugee camps, facilitating interfaith meetings between religious leaders, and exchanges between young people from Serbia, Albania, Kosovo and Northern Ireland. The Cardinal visited the city of Sarajevo in the midst of the hostilities. That visit was a sign of solidarity with the victims of violence and the ongoing war between the different fractions.

Cardinal Danneels played a crucial role in bringing religious leaders from the Balkan region together for common reflection on the role of religious leaders in conflicts and in the wars in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo in particular. He also led a delegation visiting the Serbian Orthodox leadership in Belgrade.

At the same time, contacts between the Russian Orthodox Church and Pax Christi International were of great interest to the Cardinal. Several meetings took place with the heads of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. Cardinal Danneels spoke about the findings of these contacts with the Secretariat of State and with the Pontifical Council responsible for these relations. The Cardinal also participated in interreligious meetings at the Vatican on the situation in the Middle East in particular.

As International President, Cardinal Danneels visited different countries and regions in conflict in Africa. In 1993 he was invited to preach at a retreat in Rwanda,

and, on that occasion, the foundation was made for Pax Christi Rwanda. Unfortunately, the mass killings and genocide which took place in April 1994 killed several of our Pax Christi members or they had to flee for their lives.

Cardinal Danneels headed a small delegation visiting several Pax Christi contacts in South Sudan during the violent events there in 1994. The personal experiences of visiting that part of Africa moved him deeply. He saw the suffering of the people and he was aware of his responsibility to witness about what he had seen and heard. A report was published and forwarded to the United Nations and other (inter)governmental bodies.

As International President, Cardinal Danneels was invited by different Pax Christi sections in, for instance, Germany, France, Slovakia, United Kingdom, USA, the Netherlands, Flanders and more. He attended all the Worlds Assemblies of the movement in Fatima, Assisi and London. Cardinal Danneels led the yearly ceremonies for the Pax Christi Award in different countries such as in the USA and in Vienna. Cardinal Danneels guided the International Board with members from different countries and regions like Poland, Haiti, Angola, USA and from elsewhere. At the same time the Cardinal had plenty of individual talks and meetings with political and church delegates from countries in which Pax Christi members are active.

Under his presidency, Pax Christi International played an active role in many international coalitions, such as those working to ban landmines and cluster munitions and to stop the use of child soldiers, the co-founding of IANSA - the International Action Network against Small Arms and Light Weapons, and much more.

In 1995 Pax Christi International marked its 50th anniversary with a celebration in Assisi, Italy, attended by about 700 members from 37 countries. On that occasion the delegates had been invited to meet Pope John Paul II who stated that Pax Christi International is very much needed as an international movement both within the church and in the world.

The presidency of Cardinal Danneels is also characterised by the broadening of the movement into the wider world. As it spread to more countries across the world, Pax Christi International initiated a series of meetings to bring together its partners within different regions. These regional consultations started in Asia Pacific, in 1991 (Hong Kong) and in 1996 (Philippines). The first World Assembly held outside Europe took place in Amman (Jordan) and Jerusalem in 1999. Patriarch Michel Sabbah of Jerusalem was elected as the movement's first non-European President succeeding Cardinal Danneels.

The funeral of Cardinal Danneels is taking place in the Saint Rombouts Cathedral in Mechelen on Friday 22 March 2019. Pax Christi International will be present at the funeral.

May he rest in God's peace.

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

NowCastSA

www.nowcastsa.com/