

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating April 14, 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 Palm Sunday. Tom Keene's poem is *Holy Mother Earth*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is a report from Pax Christi International on a Vatican conference on sustainable development goals in which a Pax Christi delegation participated.



Photo by John Dauer

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 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.

Friday April 26, 8:00am-4:00pm, Paving the Way to Inclusion: Race, Place, & Schooling for Educational Equity. George W Bush Institute, SMU Campus, 2943 SMU Blvd.

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).

Sunday April 7, 3:00pm, film viewing: "Human Footprint." St. Joseph School Auditorium; enter through school parking lot across from church rectory at 1315 Travis St.

Thursday April 11, 12:00pm-1:00pm, death penalty vigil, in front of El Paso Courthouse.

Saturday April 13, 6:00pm, 20th Anniversary Awards Dinner. \$50 pr peson, \$500 table of 10. St. Pius X Community Center, 1050 N. Clark. Tickets: mperez@bnhr.org, or 915-433-7748.

Wednesday April 24, 12:00pm-1:00pm, death penalty vigil, in front of El Paso Courthouse.

In Houston

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, jhj2@rice.edu, 713-348-3974.

Friday April 19, 8:00am-9:00am, Annelie 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.

Sunday April 28, 9:30 Earth Care Congregations Certification. St. Philip Presbyterian Church 201. 4807 San Felipe.

In San Antonio

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/>

Wednesday April 10, 6:00pm-8:00pm, San Antonio Speakup: Fair Housing. Central Library Auditorium, 600 Soledad.

Thursday April 11, 6:00pm-8:00pm, San Antonio City and Release. Community conversation. Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church 407 N.Calaveras.

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 2:6-11)

Most commentators see this passage as an early Christian hymn; some suggest that Paul broke out in song as he was dictating the letter to the Philippian church. He had mentioned the Messiah, Jesus, who---

“Beginning in the form of God

Did not deem being equal to God something to seize upon....”

One cannot help thinking of petty tyrants who refuse to let go of little offices and who seek to expand the importance of every post they happen to fill.

“But emptied himself, assuming the form of a slave,

By becoming a human likeness.

And being found in figure as a human.”

He was not indifferent to the lowly status of human; it was not a matter of a personality predisposition. He chose that status.

Third Reading (Luke 22:14—23:56)

Palm Sunday has two gospel readings from the *Gospel of Luke*; the first (Luke 19:28-40), read at the beginning of Mass, describes the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The second is a full Passion account.

Luke took the triumphal entry from the *Gospel of Mark*, where it is a parody of the Romans' triumphal parade after the conquest of Jerusalem, with Jewish slaves and Temple treasures in tow as testimony to the Empire's glory. Unlike Mark, Luke was not writing for people who had seen the Romans' victory parade. He nevertheless captures the irony of the narrative by having Jesus comment about the cheering disciples, "...if they were silent, the rocks will cry out." Why rocks? In the continuation of the narrative, which is not read in this Sunday's mass, Jesus predicts and even justifies the doom that will come upon the Temple, saying, in the words of the Prophet Hagai (2.15), that not a stone of the Temple will be left upon stone. The rock structure would be thoroughly dismantled, yet still cry out.

The Passion reading begins with the meal of a new covenant: "I greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer....This is my body, which is given for you; do this in my memory...." The elements of a sacrificial ritual are there, but the new covenant transcends received religion. It is a *new* covenant. The Temple priests do not know how to deal with a new covenant; they want to kill it but fear the covenant people and the imperial outsider. The Roman governor does not know how to deal with it: "I find no cause against this person." Herod Antipater does not know how to deal with a new covenant: Throw something gorgeous on him and send him back to Pilate! But the crowd had an idea of how to deal with the matter: Release Barabbas, who really hated the outsiders, and kill the man who would not stoop to hatred.

And the disciples? They did not know how to deal with the new covenant either. Judas Iscariot trafficked with the received religion. Peter drew a sword. The new covenant transcended both the ways of the old religion and the ways of Caesar. This should leave one unsettled.

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Poem

Holy Mother Earth

Whales and dolphins choke on plastics.
Fossil fumes poison what we breathe.
Oceans brimming over turn coast dwellers into refugees.

From our ancestors' communing with Holy Mother Earth,
we discover ourselves as cocky, know-it-all adolescents,
muttering, "Damn, we're good."

Tom Keene
July 9, 2018

Pax Christi International attends Vatican conference, 'Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals: Listening to the cry of the earth and of the poor'



18/3/19 - The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, together with the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious dialogue, convened a conference on “Religions and the SDGs” in the Vatican from 7 until 9 of March in which Pax Christi International participated. The conference aimed to create a deeper understanding of the SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals—AB] among faith leaders and to discuss the contribution that religions can make to their implementation.

The conference began with speeches from the Vatican’s Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the Secretary and Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and the Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva expressing the importance of the conference. Afterwards, the fulfillments of the SDGs regarding the 5 P’s of the 2030 Agenda (people, prosperity, planet, peace and justice, and partnership) were discussed through different panel sessions.

During the course of the three days, interesting discussions took place between representatives of a variety of religions and beliefs (Christianism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism, Sikhism, Jainism, Taoism and indigenous) as well as from academia, civil society, faith based organization and international organizations. Some important points that participants discussed on the role of religions and the SDGs were the following:

- There is urgency with regard to the implementation of the SDGs and needed resources, we have a bit more than 10 years left to achieve them, so action needs to be accelerated especially for the most marginalized ensuring ‘that no one is left behind’.
- In the process towards the adoption of the SDGs little attention was given to the role of religions, which is now changing in the implementation phase.

- At the UN and other international organisations there is growing awareness of the role of religion, as they influence how people see the world and act.
- The SDGs are central to all religions through the values of peace, justice, respect for the earth, co-existence and non-materialism.
- Religions can contribute, promote and push for the implementation of the SDGs both in the North and the South. They have an important role as they have a massive reach, so support through the mobilization of their people is needed to meet the SDGs.
- Religious institutions run a lot of schools around the world and can include sustainable development education in the curricula and train teachers.
- It's important that faith leaders understand the gravity of the situation as there is increasing degradation of the environment and social and economic inequality. If our generation doesn't act, other generations cannot repair the damages anymore.
- Faith leaders were challenged to think if they are contributing or going against sustainable development and there was an appeal for them to be responsible stewards.
- Faith leaders and organizations should strongly commit to the SDGs and 'walk the talk' such as through transparency and their investments. The ZUG-guidelines for faith-consistent investing were mentioned as an important tool.
- Decision making in churches and its leadership should be inclusive for both men and women in line with SDG 5 (as we celebrated international women's day).
- Interfaith and intercultural dialogue is fundamental for the implementation of the SDGs and partnerships.... Also innovative platforms between religions and secular organizations and groups are also important in this regard.
- Dialogs on the SDGs have to be a dialogue between generations. It's important to support youth, learn from them and tap into the energy of young people and bring it in so that religions can harvest that energy.
- Churches and faith actors can only do so much, as policies are in the hands of politicians, so it's also important to address the SDGs at those levels as faith leaders and actors.
- The German government for international cooperation wants to expand its cooperation with faith based organizations, which can be an example for other governments. Basic values as human rights have to be respected for cooperation.
- The Vatican on his turn can become a hub for the SDGs in similarity with the 'SDG cities' and to be the first CO2 neutral state in the world.
- Pope Francis addressed the participants of the international conference on Friday affirming the importance of the SDGs and calling for accelerating and adapting our actions in responding to both the cry of the earth and the poor.... In follow up of the workshop session of the conference, an outcome document with calls from participants will be finalized and released by the Vatican in the coming weeks.

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/