

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating May 12, 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 Fourth Sunday of Easter. Tom Keene's poem is *Voice Knows*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. The staff of Pax Christi International has conducted conversations on the future of the European Union. Much of what they heard can be applied to the United States as well. An executive summary of their report follows the poem.

Calendar

In Austin

Beginning Tuesday May 7, the Dialogue Institute, Austin, is sponsoring a series of Ramadan Iftar Dinners at various churches and other groups. One is scheduled for almost every day of the month of May and some in June. A schedule is located at <https://www.dialogueatx.org/events/2019-05/>

Monday June 3-Thursday June 6, 9:30am-1:30pm, Church History course, sponsored by Catholic Diocese of Austin. Fleck Hall 206, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress. \$60. Register: <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=98ad94>

Monday June 10-Thursday June 13, 9:30am-1:30pm, Ecclesiology course, sponsored by Catholic Diocese of Austin. Fleck Hall 206, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress. \$60. Register: <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=98ad94>

Monday June 17-Thursday June 20, 9:30am-1:30pm, Morality course, sponsored by Catholic Diocese of Austin. Fleck Hall 206, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress. \$60. Register: <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=98ad94>

In Dallas

Beginning Monday May 6, the Dialogue Institute, DFW, is sponsoring a series of Ramadan Dinners at various churches and other religious centers. A schedule is located at https://www.facebook.com/pg/DialogueInstDFW/events/?ref=page_internal

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).

Tuesday May 7, 6:45pm, Pax Christi El Paso Meeting. "The Church and the Just War Tradition: An Ongoing Challenge." Centro Mujeres de la Esperanza, 1101 Birch St. Information: 915-740-3962.

Saturday May 11, 9:00am (register by Wednesday May 8), HugsNotWall7 march to the wall (1.3 miles), beginning at Sunland Park, NM, City Hall. Demonstrators are advise to arrive by 8:00am. Shuttle bus return available. RSVP at <https://forms.gle/3Po3bgBfKxbT:Z3C8/>

Sunday May 19, 2:30pm-4:00pm, panel discussion, "Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Toward a Just and Rational Immigration Policy." Josiah Heyman (UTEP), Marisa Limón (Hope Border Institute), Carlos Specter (attorney), moderator Mark Lusk (UTEP). Maud Sullivan Gallery, El Paso Public Library Downtown, 501 N. Oregon.

Sunday May 19, 3:00pm, film: "Dreamer: A True American Story." St. Joseph School Auditorium; center through school parking lot across from church rectory 1315 Travis St. Information: 915-740-3962.

Monday May 20, 6:30pm, "What is Zen Buddhism?" Bobby Kankin Byrd, at Interfaith Alliance meeting. Both Sides/No Sides Zen Community, 2718 Campbell St.

In Houston

Thursday May 9, 6:30pm, Pink Iftar: women only Ramadan Iftar dinner, with discussions on women's experiences in Islam. \$45. St. Philip Presbyterian Church, 4807 San Felipe. Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pink-iftar-2019-tickets-60166179663>.

Sunday May 19, 9:30am, Joel Goza (U. of St. Thomas), "America's Unholy Ghosts: The Racist Roots in Our Faith and Politics." St. Philip Presbyterian Church 201, 4807 San Felipe.

In San Antonio

Saturday May 11, 8:30am-4:00pm, Social Justice Teaching 101 (for K through 12 teachers). Free, but register at <https://bit.ly.tmipl>. TMI, The Episcopal Academy, 20955 W. Tejas Trail.

Tuesday May 14, 6:00pm-8:30pm, Andries Coetzee, "When the Powers that Be Co-opt Sacred Texts: Dinner and Conversation." \$25. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Register: <http://www.upcsa.org/registration/>

Saturday June 1, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting. Residence of Tom Wakely, 16406 Ledge Point St.

Monday June 10, 4:00pm-Wednesday June 12, 8:30pm, Daniel P. Horan, ofm; Alana Levandoski, David Haas, Meg Hunter-Kilmer, and Ron Rolheiser, omi, Summer Institute 2019: Fear and Faith. Examines fear as a factor in stoking hatred. \$75-\$290. Whitley Theological Center, Oblate School of Theology. Lodging available in Oblate Renewal Center. Information: Noemy Colon, ncolon@ost.edu, or 210-341-1366, ext. 212.

Second Reading (Revelation 7:9, 14b-17)

The Book of the *Revelation from Jesus, Messiah*, often called the *Revelation of John*, has a particularly sect-like quality, i.e. one that presupposes great hostility between the religious community and the enviroing world. This is understandable given that the Christian movement was illegal and on occasion experienced bloody persecution. The hostility between the environment, especially the government, and the church came not from the church but from the government. The reading from *Revelation* used for today's liturgy is from a vision recorded by the author that offers solace to those who faced persecution.

As with many early Christian texts, this one speaks first of the solace offered to Christian Jews and then that offered to Christian gentiles. The section about solace for the Christian Jews features a second Passover; a messenger "holding the seal of the living God" calls out to those ready to destroy the world to desist until a 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel have been sealed. The number is clearly symbolically, with 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Fundamentalists have taken this in an arithmetical sense, so as to limit the number of the "saved." That reflects a tendency often found in sect-like stances—limiting the number of people whom God would want to associate with Himself.

The excerpt used for this Sunday takes up the solace offered to Christian gentiles. "After these things, I looked, and behold there was a great crowd that no one can number, from all nations, tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the lamb, dressed in white robes, and palm branches in their hands" (Rev. 7:9). The white robes and palm branches reflect an early form of the Holy Week ceremonies, culminating in the Easter Vigil, at which adults are baptized.

Third Reading (John 10.27-30)

In 200 BCE King Antiochus III of Syria took Judea from King Ptolemy V Epiphanes of Egypt. The new ruler allowed the Jewish people to live according to their own ethnic customs. However, 25 years later his son, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, invaded Judea at the instigation of a Hellenizing faction from Jerusalem and put a stop to the sacrifices that had been offered daily in the Temple in Jerusalem. In 167 he even had a statue of Zeus set up in the Temple and had swine sacrificed to it. A revolt that was begun by Mattathias and led to victory by Judah Maccabeus liberated the Temple in 165. Judah ordered the Temple to be cleansed, a new altar built in place of the polluted one, and new holy vessels made. According to ritual tradition, a light was supposed to be kept burning in the Temple, using undefiled olive oil with the seal of the high priest

on its container; but there was only one such bowl of oil to be found, enough for one day only. It would take eight days to collect and press enough olives to make more oil. Judah ordered an eight day feast of songs and sacrifices anyway to celebrate the rededication of the Temple, and the one bowl of acceptable oil miraculously burned for eight days. This gave rise to the annual Jewish celebration of Lights, Hanukkah, and to the Menorah with eight lights.

The Gospel of John (10.22ff.) says that Jesus was walking in the Portico of Solomon in the Temple precincts during the feast of Hanukkah. His critics demanded to know whether he claimed to be the Christ (Messiah), i.e. the one dedicated by an anointing with oil. He replies that they would not believe him if he told them such a thing, and that they should observe his works. Then he adds the words that comprise the reading for this Sunday: "My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish at all, and no one will seize them from my hand. My Father, Who gave them to me, is greater than all, and no one can seize them from the hand of the Father. I and the Father are one."

We might take Jesus' walking in the Temple precincts during Hanukkah as a gratuitous detail in the Fourth Gospel; but more likely, as the sanctified oil lasted to the end of the feast that celebrated the liberation and rededication of the Temple, the Christ or Anointed one was not to come to an end but would show the way to the Final Day. "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish at all." There is a stubborn refusal in the little light to die out, a persistence drawn from the conviction and reality that the anointed one and the One by Whom the anointed one is anointed are one. And again, the work of the Father in this life is not to be parted from and distanced from the Father Himself, is not to render the Father a harmless idol in a temple.



Photo by John Dauer

Poem

Voice Knows
(to our grandchildren)

Hear from us older others
how the world is;
how people are;
how things work;
how to get along.

You've got a lot to learn from us,
for at times what we say *is*
how the world is;
how people are;
how things work;
how to get along.

But there is a small, strong,

whispering Voice
within that sometimes says
No, that is *not* the way it is.

We who love you tell you *now*:
Listen to the whisper,
for it is Voice.

Voice is more than us,
more than you,
yet more truly us and you
than we together are.

If you can, tell us then
what Voice tells you.
We will listen to you.

Sometimes we may not
understand Voice.
You may not understand
your own understanding.
But understanding will come
for we too know Voice.

As you come to attend to Voice,
you will trust the love that feels right,
hold gently the trust that feels true.
When the face of trouble grins,
Voice will say, "Don't be afraid."
Fear may flood you anyway.
Float on the fear, swim upstream.
Voice will carry you.
Other voices will sing in chorus:
 You are not worthy.
Voice will reply, softly, gently:
 You are worth everything.

April 25, 1998 Tom Keene

The European Union as a Peace Project Scenarios for 2040

Jair van der Lijn
(Pax Christi International staff)

Foreword

The European Union is one of many European institutions, but it is the most important one, and we see the EU (and its predecessors, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Community (EC)) as a successful peace project. These bodies for European cooperation and integration have indeed stopped the cycle of wars that tormented the European continent for centuries.

The EU's values, such as respect for human dignity, solidarity, the rule of law and subsidiarity, are crucial to guiding the continued process of European integration. Over the last few decades we have seen that these values are easily forgotten; for many millions of Europeans, the EU is primarily about economic cooperation and economic growth. But we need to remember and revitalize these

European values more than ever in these turbulent times, in which the relationship with the transatlantic partner, the United States of America, is under pressure, the principles of international law are flagrantly ignored in countries such as Syria and Yemen, more people than ever are adrift and populism is on the rise worldwide, including in many EU member states. The challenge is to find new ways to operationalise those values, within the EU as well as in its external relations.

Yet it seems that there is very little open debate about Europe. Quite often it looks like you are simply either for or against 'Europe'. This is a non-dialogue from entrenched positions and it will bring no good. We need to find ways to have a true dialogue in search of renewed common ground for a value-based EU that can continue to play its role in the promotion of human dignity, democracy, solidarity and the rule of law.

To that end, PAX undertook a scenario exercise. We pictured a few scenarios for Europe in the year 2040, precisely to get away from the current polarised non-debate on the EU, and to challenge ourselves and others to reflect on what the future might bring if we make certain choices today and in the next few years (or fail to make them). These scenarios were developed in three two-day meetings, held in November and December 2018 in Utrecht (the Netherlands), Belgrade (Serbia) and Kyiv (Ukraine). The participants in the Utrecht meeting were from EU member states. In the other two meetings, we deliberately involved people from regions that are not EU members (at least, not yet) in order to get an 'outside' perspective. As it turned out, the participants focused mostly on the institutions and governments, and far less on the role the citizens of Europe (both in EU member states and non-EU states) can and should play. This is despite the fact that we at PAX feel strongly that citizens are crucial actors in the process of securing and strengthening the EU as a peace project. Why and how can be read in a separate document, the PAX Position Paper on the Future of Europe (see our website: www.paxforpeace.nl/EU2040).

The intention of this scenario report is to initiate and stir up the debate. For us at PAX, interestingly, none of the four scenarios fits fully with our wishes and ideas. We

want the European values to be maintained and respected, and we feel that the integration process should continue, but even so we are not comfortable with the scenario entitled 'The United States of Europe', in particular because of its positioning of Europe in the world. We are looking forward to discussions about the four scenarios, so please share your reflections and ideas with us!

Miriam Struyk,
Director of Programmes at PAX
March 2019

Executive Summary

The process of European integration that resulted in the European Union (EU) is often perceived as a 'peace project'. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) regulated under one central authority the production of two resources that were essential for warfare. And in 2012 the Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU, arguing that the integration of Central and Eastern Europe into the EU contributed to peace on the continent. However, over recent years the EU and its 'peace project' have increasingly come under pressure. This growing uncertainty about the future direction of the EU raises many questions about what the EU as a 'peace project' will look like, for instance in 2040, and what that will mean for Europe in that year.

Four scenarios were built for the EU as a 'peace project' in 2040 on the basis of scenario-building meetings in Utrecht (the Netherlands), Belgrade (Serbia) and Kyiv (Ukraine), plus desk-top research and extensive reviews. The scenario-building meetings were held in November and December 2018 and involved 52 people (30 men and 22 women). Two key uncertainties lie at the core of the four scenarios:

- Will respect for EU values (e.g. democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights) remain, or will they increasingly be disregarded?
- Will the EU integrate further or disintegrate?

The Four Scenarios for 2040

Paranoid Android: The EU as a 'peace project' has been redefined as it now focuses on security and stability for its citizens. It does so at a high cost, prioritising security over civil liberties when necessary. It resembles a super-state and has the technological tools to be in full 'control' by means of internal surveillance and strict external border control. It is an inward-looking union, afraid of dangers from the outside world. To ensure stability at its borders and to keep migrants out, it supports illiberal regimes in the buffer of countries surrounding it.

United States of Europe: The EU as a 'peace project' thrives. Europe has come together in a federation of European states. Collaboration has not only deepened—EU armed forces, an EU government and EU taxes—but also broadened as the Western Balkans and countries like Ukraine have acceded, and the UK has returned. While internally the EU peace project has brought prosperity, security, democracy and rule of law to its member states, externally its soft-power approach means it prefers talks to the

use of force. Consequently, a number of illiberal regimes in the Middle East and Africa are able to get away with human rights violations, oppression and conflict. Moreover, there are groups of citizens that continue to perceive the EU as an elite project.

East, West, North Best: The EU has been replaced by a number of light regional networks, of which the North European Union, the NEU, is the most prosperous and prominent. The fact that there is no longer an EU as an integrated 'peace project' does not mean that European values such as human rights and rule of law have evaporated. After all, they already existed before the EU. European governments have even enhanced democracy through the use of modern technology and brought decision-making closer to their populations. There is no longer structural EU collaboration on foreign, security or defence policies, or justice and home affairs. Apart from collaboration in NATO, countries, regions and cities seek flexible solutions to emerging challenges. Consequently, in the international arena European countries have lost relative power and influence to actors such as China and Russia. Moreover, this network experiment is vulnerable to internal social unrest and external manipulation and attacks.

All Against All: The EU and NATO have fallen apart. States pursue short-term security and economic interests and collaborate for that purpose on an ad hoc, opportunistic basis. State and majority-group security are the leading principles of governance, and oppression of minority groups and dissent are a government's principal tool. Nationally, social unrest, jihadism and separatism are frequent, but international tensions and conflict are also common. Countries therefore invest heavily in defence and security. The Western Balkans in particular face violent conflict and renewed genocide.

The Main Messages

1. 'Peace projects' and peace as such should not be taken for granted and require continuous maintenance. The EU has great potential to remain a 'peace project' for the future, but the fact that there is an EU does not mean that it will also inevitably be a 'peace project'.
2. Four challenges seem to play a particular role in how the future of the EU as a 'peace project' will unfold and require attention, including from peacebuilders:
 - How to bring internal and external solidarity in line
 - How to ensure that technology is used as a force for good
 - How to ensure that liberal policies include solutions for those who lose out or feel they lose out from them
 - How to put citizens at the centre of all efforts

Policy Implications

On the basis of the scenarios, the participants listed the following policy implications for the peacebuilding community:

1. Ensure that technology is used as a force for good
2. Better understand the motivations that drive people to support populism, and address their concerns
3. Think of modernising or redefining norms and values and updating the social contract

4. Continue to support peacebuilding outside the EU
5. Build civil-society and peacebuilding organisation networks across borders
6. Invest in environmentally friendly solutions
7. Embrace and integrate migrants
8. Involve citizens in general more in developing the EU of the future
9. Involve in particular more youth in developing the EU of the future

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://sacsvi.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/