

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating October 20, 2019

Communications with the editor may 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 Liturgical Reading reflections are based on readings for the Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *Refugees*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is a statement on the U.S. policies toward El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala by a multitude of Catholic organizations, too many to enumerate, including Pax Christi USA. It called for a protest on September 29; how many Catholic churches had the statement read from the pulpit?

Calendar

In Austin

Monday October 14, 5:15pm, "Doubt as an Integral Part of Calling: The Qur'anic Story of Joseph" Younus Mirza (Georgetown University). Carter Auditorium, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress.

Wednesday October 16, 12:30pm-1:30pm, discussion, "You Can't Be Pro-Life and Against Immigrant Children." See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/16/opinion/sunday/pro-life-immigrant-children-separation.html>. Fleck Hall 314, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress. Information: Sherri Defesche, sherrid@stedwards.edu.

Sunday October 20 (3rd Sunday of the month), 7:00pm, Pax Christi Austin meeting. Fr. Payne House, St. Ignatius Church, 126 Oltorf St.

Thursday October 24, 5:00pm-6:30pm, Doug Smith, "Imagining Justice Outside the Prison Cell." Fleck Hall 305, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress. Information: Sherri Defesche, sherrid@stedwards.edu.

Wednesday October 30, 7:00pm, film, *The Penalty*, on the death penalty, followed by a panel discussion. Carter Auditorium, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress. Free, but register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-penalty-cel-film-series-tickets-66336527339>. Information: Sherri Defesche, sherrid@stedwards.edu.

Wednesday November 6, 5:00pm-6:30pm, Paul Allen Miller (U. of South Carolina), Internationalizing the University. Prof. Miller discusses the rise of nationalist movements in the U.S. discouraging international students from studying in the U.S. Fleck Hall 305, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/paul-allen-miller-on-internationalizing-the-university-cel-speaker-series-tickets-63300782344>. Information: Sherri Defesche, sherrid@stedwards.edu.

In Columbus, Georgia

Saturday November 16, 7:00pm, Pax Christi USA program at the school of the Americas protest, "The Spirituality of Nonviolence Lived Out in the Central American Martyrs and Today." Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 1953 Torch Hill Road.

In Dallas

Monday October 14, Reception 6:30pm, program 7:00pm-8:30pm, Faiths in Conversation: The Role of Intellect from the Major Faith Perspectives. This is the second of a series. Students free; price varies for others \$10-20 per session. Information, location, and tickets: dallasinstitute.org/faith-in-conversation/

Tuesday October 22, 1:00pm-3:30pm, "Restorative Justice and Prison Abolition," Vincent Lloyd (Villanova University) and respondents. Prothro Hall 106, 5901 Bishop Blvd.

Sunday October 27, 10:30am-12:00pm, Fr. Charles Curran, "Crisis in the Church: Where Did It Come From and Where Are We Going?" McCord Auditorium, 3rd floor, Dallas Hall, Southern Methodist University. Park north of Dallas Hall. Coffee and bagels.

Monday November 11, 7:00pm-8:30pm, continuation of the Faiths in Conversation series. Information, location, and tickets: dallasinstitute.org/faith-in-conversation/

In El Paso

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

Friday October 11 to Sunday October 13, Latinx Catholic Leadership Coalition meeting. Early Childhood Head Start Center, 11670 Chito Samaniego. Information and registration at <https://www.hopeborder.org/jornadaporlajusticia>.

Saturday October 12, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Charlie King Concert for Immigrant Justice. Columban Mission center, 816 Magoffin Ave.

Sunday October 13, 3:00pm, film "91%: A Film About guns in America." St. Joseph School Auditorium, across from the church rectory at 1315 Travis St.

October 30, 12:00pm-1:00pm, execution vigils in front of the El Paso County Courthouse. Information: 740-3962. (Check whether execution has been cancelled.)

In Houston

Wednesday October 23, 7:00pm-8:30pm, Henry Cisneros, “Building Equitable Cities.” Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet St.

Friday November 1, 8:00am-9:00am, Brandon Vaidyanathan (Catholic University of America), “Mercenaries and Missionaries: Capitalism and Catholicism in the Global South.” Lovett Hall, Suite 402 (accessible via Door C), Rice University. Free; register at https://events.rice.edu/#!view/event/date/20191101/event_id/55440.

Monday November 11, 7:30pm-9:30pm, Karen Armstrong, “The Lost Art of Scripture: Rescuing the Sacred Texts.” Congregation Emanu El, 500 Sunset Blvd. \$45.00-\$150.

In San Antonio

Tuesday October 15, 6:30pm-8:00pm, Michael McGuire, “Inequality and Climate Change.” Bill Sinkin Eco Centro, 1802 N. Main.

Friday October 18, 6:00pm-8:00pm, “Butterflies without Borders: Migration, Immigration, Climate change,” John Burnett and Rodrigo Medellin. Pearl Stable at the Historic Pearl Brewery, 302 Pearl Parkway #300.

Thursday October 24, 6:00pm, film, *The Sultan and the Saint*, and interfaith gathering to share the *Document of Fraternity for Humanity for world Peace and Living Together* of Pope Francis and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Tayyeb (Abu Dhabi, February 4, 2019). St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 4201 De Zavala Rd. Free, but tickets required: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-sultan-and-the-saint-an-interfaith-gathering-tickets-66686409847>.

Monday November 4, 7:00pm-8:30pm, “Mass Incarceration: A Policy Crisis.” University of the Incarnate Word Concert Hall, 4301 Broadway. Information: Lisa Epstein, epsteinl@fsatx.org. Co-sponsored by UIW and the Jewish Federation of San Antonio.

Wednesday November 6, 7:00pm-9:30pm, bishop Robert McElroy, “Rebuild My Church.” Conference Room A, St. Mary’s University, One Camino Santa Maria.

Monday November 11, 3:30pm, video, *Inhabit—A Permaculture Perspective*. Christus Heritage Hall, The Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Thursday November 14, 6:00pm doors open, 6:30pm-8:00pm program. “Island Energy—From Hawaii to the Texas Grid,” Jim Ajello (Hawaiian Electric Industries) and Cris Eugster (CPS Energy). Chapman Great Hall, Trinity University, One Trinity Place. Register at <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/EnergyInnovationCenter/t4p-1.html>.

Monday November 18, 6:30pm, video, *American Prophet*, followed by a panel; sponsored by Pax Christi San Antonio. The video focuses on the early career of Bishop Gumbleton and his emergence amidst the then-controversial racial integration of Catholic parishes in Detroit. Tom Gumbleton would later become the Bishop President of Pax Christi USA. Christus Heritage Hall, The Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Second Reading (2 Timothy 3:14-4:2)

This passage calls attention to how one comes to faith. The author depicts Timothy as one who knew his teacher Paul and could observe how Paul lived: “But you, keep to what you learned and been convinced of, knowing those by whom you were taught....”

One way we can ascertain that this letter was not written by Paul is that it refers to Christian scriptures; Paul’s authentic letters, of course, are the earliest works in the New Testament. “...and because you know the holy scriptures from early childhood, which are able to instruct you for salvation through fidelity in Messiah Jesus.” And in speaking of the scriptures, the author does not propose seizing upon a passage here and there, “proof texting,” but to take into account the whole of scripture. “All scripture,” perhaps better translated as “The whole of scripture,” “is God-inspired and suitable for teaching, for reproof, for improvement, and for training in justice, so that a person who is of God may be effective, equipped for every good work.” I say the meaning is “The whole of scripture” because not every part is good for each of the purposes the author lists; for example, one would not use a blessing for reproof.

Third Reading (Luke 18.1-8)

The reading tells the parable of an unjust judge who had been refusing to pay attention to a widow’s repeated petitions for justice; in the end he gives in, only because she was causing him trouble. Homilists usually use this parable as an occasion for preaching about prayer, and rightly so. But look closely at Luke’s introduction to the parable: “And he was telling them a parable about it being necessary for them to pray always and not lose heart....” It is always worth while giving such passages a “slow” reading.

1) Pray always: Obviously, prayer as envisioned by Luke consists not only in occasions of addressing words to God. It goes beyond talk into “always.” Indeed, imagining God as a listener is an anthropomorphism. Verbal prayer is important for its effect on the one praying, not for some effect it would have on God. In fact, the statement that follows the parable, about God being so much more than..., points to going beyond anthropomorphisms.

2) Do not lose heart: Luke saw that it was important for him to give encouragement to his fellow Christians. Prayer as an activity that is not limited to occasions of verbalization is important to others as well as to oneself. Conduct for justice, a life lived for such, is an “always” prayer that can keep others from losing heart. Moreover, it can cause unjust officials trouble.

Poem

Refugees

We are water
oozing over walls,
under and around.

We are music and poems
wafting in air
for all to breathe.

We are truth
facing down lies,
ever risking, ever rising.

Tom Keene and Muse
December 18, 2018

It's Not Just Migrants, It's the Sovereignty and Fraternity of the Central American Peoples

On this September 29, which the Catholic Church and affiliated organizations celebrate as World Migrants and Refugees Day, the following organizations offer this statement to public opinion and public authorities:

Since the month of June, the United States has pressured Mexico to be a "Safe Third Country" in order to impede citizens of Guatemala from reaching the United States, and then pressured Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Panama to change their migration policies. In the last decades we have not seen such a crushing intervention, not only using diplomacy but economic blackmail: threats of tariffs on our products, and taxes on remittances.

Nor have we seen such a servile and humiliating response from our governments who compete to see who can better obey Donald Trump. The president of El Salvador requested from the United States different treatment than Honduras and Guatemala, and on September 12 deployed 1,100 border patrol to stop migration, funded by the United States.

In June, the government of Guatemala offered the Trump administration the possibility of allowing North American troops to control the borders of Guatemala. On June 26, the government then signed a dishonorable migration agreement, which in the United States is called "Safe Third Country," and in Guatemala is called by a different name to disguise its impact. It is an agreement whose content was hidden from Congress, the future president, and the office of the United Nations in charge of these matters, such as UNHCR, in a mockery of our people and our sovereignty. For their part, Honduras announced an agreement of this kind, despite the fact that their president is being charged by judges of the United States as a

collaborator in drug trafficking. Donald Trump supports corrupt governments in exchange for their supporting these migration policies of detention. THE WALL IS BEING BUILT IN OUR OWN COUNTRIES.

The most serious thing is the division which has been fomented among our peoples when they blame violence on migrants of the neighboring country, identifying them with delinquents, or when they try to end the Central American Border Control Agreement (CA-4) with Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. The government ministry of Guatemala, in an interview with *The Washington Post* on June 5, affirmed that they are working with lawyers from the Department of National Security of the United States in order to revise this agreement and say that “the caravans are a criminal form of mobilization.”

For all these reasons we manifest our resounding rejection of:

The agreements that were signed with the United States, even though they are not called “Safe Third Country,” that criminalize migrants who come from sister countries.

The growing manipulation that the governments have made with the trafficking of persons to provide a rationale for their struggle against migration. They want to make the right to migrate into a crime in order to justify their focus on security and forget the focus on human rights that this phenomenon requires.

The confusion created between migration and refuge in the agreements being signed. The growing need of refuge for the victims of generalized violence in Central America requires complying with the international conventions ratified by our countries. The growing militarization financed by the United States in order to once again rely on the army to repress citizens. The state of siege decreed in 22 Guatemalan municipalities and the militarization of the borders will not resolve the problems of drug trafficking and corruption in which military and political authorities have been implicated on multiple occasions.

The businessmen who put their interests ahead of ethics and humanism, pronouncing in favor of these policies with the United States. We know what kind of country they want when at the same time they demand lowering the minimum wage. In a diabolical logic of free competition, if they close the borders the workers will have no other option than to accept smaller salaries.

We call on the peoples of Central America to not only protest together on September 29 but to work for a truly Central American unity, putting an end to a corrupt, servile, unpatriotic political system.

Hopefully, we can celebrate in 2021 the 200 years of independence of our peoples with a renewed sense of FRATERNITY which the migrants offer us, by tearing down borders and walls.

September 29, 2019
World Migrants and Refugees Day

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>

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/