

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating February 3, 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 section, the Sunday reading reflections are based on the lectionary selections for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem, *To a Young Poet*, is actually in honor of an eighth grader and poet who joins Tom and others in a discussion group. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is an opinion piece about justice in New Zealand, taken from the Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand newsletter (11:1: December 2018/January 2019). It needs to be read slowly because of the introduction of Maori language terms, but it should be read since to a great extent the New Zealand story is also our story.

Calendar

In Austin

Monday February 4 to Wednesday February 6, Mid-Winter Lectures. Dr. Robert M. Franklin, Jr., "Moral Agency and Leadership." Dr. Miroslav Volf, "Trampling on Pearls? Theology and What Matters the Most." Katelyn Beaty, "New Norms for New Era." Shelton Chapel, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 100 E. 27th St. For details and registration, see <https://www.austinseminary.edu/page.cfm?p=3657>.

Wednesday February 6, 12:00pm-1:30pm, Charles R. Porter, Ph.D., "Water Security: Local, state, and International Challenges." Carter Auditorium, St. Edward's i, 3001 S. Congress. For parking permit: <https://www.stedwards.edu/contact-us/main/main-campus-united-states>.

Thursday February 7, 5:00pm-6:30pm, Rita Stephan, "Women in the Muslim World." Fleck Hall 305, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cel-speaker-series-rita-stephan-on-women-in-the-muslim-world-tickets-46805163504>. For parking permit: <https://www.stedwards.edu/contact-us/main/main-campus-united-states>.

Friday February 8 & Saturday February 9, 7:30 performance, "Sister Moses. The Story of Harriet Tubman." Desert Dance Theatre. Contact Huston-Tillotson University.

Saturday February 16, 8:00am-4:00pm, Texas Coalition against the Death Penalty 2019 Annual Conference: Uniting for Justice. St. David's Episcopal Church, 301 E 8th St. Information: tcadp.org

In Dallas

Friday February 8, 8:00am-10:00am, Tom Wong, "Public Charge & Voter Mobilization: Immigration Policy Concerns Debunked." 5th Floor, Jones Day Law Firm, 2727 N. Harwood St. Information: Bora Laci, tower@smu.edu, 214-768-4716; or use "register" button at <https://calendar.smu.edu/site/centerinstitutes/event/lcld-policy-forum/>

Friday February 8, 12:00pm-1:30pm, Bolin Family Public Life Personal Faith Scholarship Luncheon. Judy Woodruff, PBS Newshour, interviewed by Peggy Wehrmeyer. Information: John Martin, johnma@smu.edu, (214) 768-2026.

Friday February 8, 2:00pm, Jeffrey Kopstein, "Intimate Violence: anti-Jewish Pogroms on the Eve of the Holocaust." Davidson Auditorium, University of Texas Dallas.

In El Paso

Wednesday January 30, 12:00pm, death penalty vigil, in front of El Paso County Courthouse, 500 E. San Antonio.

In Houston

Wednesday February 13, 7:00pm-8:00pm, Richard Rothstein, on government creating racial segregation. Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet St. Paid parking available at 1144 Binz St.

Friday February 15, 8:00am-9:00am, Nathan Mallonee and Jonathan Wiles (both of Living Water International), "Most Significant Change Methodology: A Presentation from a Faith-Based NGO Addressing Water Inequalities." Lovett Hall, Rom 402, Rice e (use Entrance C). Info: Hayley Helmstreet, jhi2@rice.edu, 713-348-3974. Register: https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20190215/event_id/20201.

Friday February 15, 11:00am, Brianne Donaldson, "Jainism and Bioethics: From Consequences to an 'Ethic of Carefulness.'" Mechanical Laboratory 209 (Campanille Road, between Ryon Engineering Laboratory and Campanille Lot), Rice University. Free; includes lunch. Information: chao.center@rice.edu.

Thursday February 21, 7:00pm-9:00pm, panel on spirituality ("spiritual but not religious") and public action: Ashley Clemmer (Ruthko Chapel), Sean Fitzpatrick (Jung Center), moderated by Elaine Howard Ecklund, Ph.D. (Rice University). Jung Center, 5200 Montrose.

Friday February 22, 8:00am-9:00am, Tony Brown (Sociology, Rice University), "Disaffiliation among emerging adults: Implications for life satisfaction, moral relativism, and support of social justice." Lovett Hall 402, Rice University (use Entrance C). Free,

but register at https://events.rice.edu/#/view/event/date/20190222/event_id/20202.
Information: Hayley Hemstreet hjh2@rice.edu.

Thursday February 28, 4:00pm-5:30pm, Nayan Shah, "Seeking Asylum, Precarity and Bodily Defiance at the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands." Location to be determined. Info: rsvpcswgs@rice.edu. Free; no RSVP required.

In San Antonio

Tuesday January 29, 12:00pm, "Shut Down the Wall Open the Government Speak-Out." Senator John Cornyn's San Antonio Office, 600 Navarro, Ste 210.

Wednesday January 30, 12:00pm-1:00pm, death penalty vigil, across from Bexar County Justice Center, 300 Dolorosa.

Wednesday January 30, 6:00pm, Former Congressman Charles Gonzalez and Sheriff Javier Salazar, "Gun Violence: What Can Be Done." Central Public Library, 600 Soledad.

Wednesday January 30, 6:00pm-8:00pm, film, *Renewal* (documentary on religious environmentalist activists). Sinkin Eco Centro, 1802 N. Main. For parking permit: <https://www.stedwards.edu/contact-us/main/main-campus-united-states>.

Saturday February 2, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting, residence of Maria Tobin, 8715 Starcrest Dr., #27. Information: matob@aol.com.

Tuesday February 5, 4:00pm=5:00pm, William Egginton, Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins University) on our educational system embodying the very social and economic inequality it should challenge. Chapman Center Auditorium, Trinity University, One Trinity Place. Parking at Alamo Stadium.

Tuesday February 19, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Green Sacred Texts (environmentalist passages in the Bible). \$10. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Register at <https://www.upcsa.org/registration/>

Thursday February 21, 3:00pm-6:00pm, pre-immigration symposium. Keynote speaker, Sarnata Reynolds, "Building a Lifeline: A Proposed Global Platform and Responsibility Sharing Model for the Global Compact on Refugees." Sarita Kenedy East Law Library, Law Alumni Room, St. Mary's University, 1 Camino Santa Maria. Information: pmartinez46@stmarytx.edu.

Tuesday February 26, 7:00pm, Marie Dennis, "Active Nonviolence: A Paradigm Shift to a More Peaceful World." Student Engagement Center Ballroom, University of the Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway. Marie Dennis was a primary organizer of the 2016 Conference on Nonviolence and Just Peace co-sponsored by the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and Pax Christi International.

Tuesday March 5, 6:00pm, 14th Annual Dialogue and Friendship Dinner. Keynote speaker, Abdulhamit Bilici (former editor *Zaman*, newspaper in Turkey), “Free Press and Democracy: An Exiled Editor’s View.” University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg Skyroom, 847 E. Hildebrand. \$45; RSVP at www.dialoguedinner19.eventbrite.com.

Tuesday March 19, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Green Sacred Texts (environmental passages from diverse traditions). \$10. SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell (park off Shook). Register at <https://www.upcsa.org/registration/>

Second Reading (1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13)

This is a controversial passage among biblical scholars because they are unsure whether the beautiful love poem (“Love waits patiently; love shows kindness....”) was written by Paul as a part of his letter or whether it was accidentally included as part of the letter later on. Paul’s Corinthians letters had been scrambled, with the pages getting out of order. In fact, *Second Corinthians*, as we now call it, is a mixture of several letters. *First Corinthians* has kept its order better, but there is a seam toward the beginning of today’s lectionary reading.

First, let’s take the letter as it reads without the love poem. Paul had been talking about the different assignments that existed in the church, a discussion in chapter 12 occasioned by some people speaking in “tongues”.

³⁰Not all have the gifts of healing, do they? Not all speak tongues, do they? Not all interpret, do they? ³¹But strive for the greater gifts. And I am showing you a still more superior way. **14**¹Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. ²For one speaking in a tongue is not speaking to humans but to God, for no one is heard but is speaking mysteries in the spirit; ³but one prophesying is saying something constructive, an encouragement, and a consolation to humans.

Note how smoothly the discussion proceeds with the Love Poem of Chapter 13 taken out. Note also how Paul highlights useful ministry.

The Love Poem (1 Corinthians 12:31b-14:1a) itself is a sublime work. “If I speak in the tongues of humans and messengers, but do not have love, I have become a brass-noise gong or a clashing cymbal.” “Love waits patiently; love shows kindness....” One can readily see why, upon finding it with Paul’s correspondence, someone would assume it went with the discussion of assignments in the church.

Third Reading (Luke 4.21-30)

“Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” The scripture was about good news being proclaimed to the poor and a Jubilee Year in which debts would be written off. And all “...were amazed at the words of good will that were coming from his mouth.” Many see what comes afterwards in the narrative as evidence of skepticism in Nazareth about Jesus, but it should be understood as evidence of local pride: “Is he not the son of

Joseph?” Luke has Jesus understanding it that way: “Undoubtedly you will recite the proverb to me, ‘Physician heal yourself. Do what we heard came about in Capernaum also here in your homeland.’” But Jesus would have nothing to do with even the slightest parochialism. His mission was to proclaim good news to the poor, not boost local pride. Local pride would be a distraction.

So Jesus cites two cases from the Hebrew scriptures where divine favor was shown to foreigners rather than to Israelites—Elijah’s extension of the meagre food supply of the generous widow of Zarephath in Sidon (1 Kings 17) and Elisha’s curing Naaman the leper from Syria (2 Kings 5). His citing such cases reversed the attitude of the people in Nazareth: “And when they heard these things in the synagogue, they were filled with much anger...”

Parochialism, of course, is not unique to first century Nazareth. It is not simply a matter of reluctance to find wisdom in a faith tradition other than one’s own, but also a refusal to extend good will to the “other” in general. That begins with a repressed doubt about one’s own homeland, i.e. an underlying lack of confidence: The locals in Nazareth “...were amazed at the words of good will that came from his mouth.” The accompanying doubt about other homelands is usually less repressed.

Poem

To the Young Poet, A.J. Hill

Doing poetry is never a task
we sit down to do.
It’s a moment when your muse
taps your shoulder and says:
*Let’s dance,
get into the music that moves us.*

So, you share this rare awareness
how in this cosmos
all is saturated with soul,
dripping with meanings
and as one render them
into sounds and rhythms
that vibrate, resonate, beckon.

Then, take some time to refine,
trim any edges not needed,
streamline for clarity,
terse and to the point.
Get naked with listeners and readers.

For feedback, join in common

with other devotees of tendering truth,
while ever trusting the muse,
till not even death do you part.

Tom Keene and Muse
January 11, 2019

**Pax Christi Peacemaking:
The Call To Decolonisation**
by David Tutty

Working for peace in Aotearoa New Zealand requires that we take our context and history seriously. There is an ongoing history of overt and institutional violence in this land that needs to be addressed with non-violent active responses. This violence is at three basic levels. Māori have been colonised and deprived of much of their rights as indigenous peoples. The land itself has been colonised so that it contributes to capitalistic market expectations. And underpinning these actions has been the ongoing historical colonizing of theologies and philosophies of justice, of ownership and even of the very nature of God. Key to Aotearoa New Zealand's colonisation story is the British recognition of the 1835 northern chiefs' Declaration of Independence and the British signing with Māori chiefs of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840. Key also is the fact that the vast majority of signatures are on the the reo version which emphasises the Crown's acknowledgement and agreement to Māori continued exercise of their tino rangatiratanga over their lands, resources and treasures.

But, as we know, the Crown did not keep their side of the treaty agreement. In the years following 1840, Crown representatives imposed more and more control over Māori through the creation of colonial structures, through brute force and through the active theft of Māori land. In case after case, the Waitangi Tribunal acknowledges this reality. The settlers desire to have total control left Māori a marginalised, deprived, oppressed minority with little remaining of their lands and resources. They were denied their tino rangatiratanga, language and culture, reduced to poverty and powerlessness, and were placed on the receiving end of structural racism and discrimination. For Māori today, colonisation still continues, institutional violence still continues.

One key issue internal to the British Isles that contributed to the final annexation of Aotearoa was the growing numbers of unemployed who were named by those controlling British industry as surplus. In order to entice huge numbers of people away from the mother country, a new understanding of life in the colonies was required. Reinterpretation of Genesis' call to be fruitful, to multiply, to replenish the earth and subdue it was combined with an Exodus naming of New Zealand as a biblical land of milk and honey, ripe for the plunder. The promise of land and of a good living in time dictated the urgent need to acquire by any means possible Māori land and to bring it into the western productive economy.

Most tauīwi (Pākehā and others who have come since Captain Cook) will know something of the processes of decolonisation that led to the independence of many colonies after the Second World War. Basically, political authority was handed over to an indigenous leadership and the majority of the colonials returned to their home land. However, British colonies like Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa (till 1994) and the United States followed a very different path. Each had significant populations of people of European descent and, for them, independence from Britain did not return authority to indigenous inhabitants.

In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, decolonisation does not mean Pākehā and other tauīwi need to return to the lands of their ancestors. Māori, in their graciousness—in their manaakitanga—have guaranteed a home for us in Aotearoa. Yet this guarantee requires that we take Te Tiriti o Waitangi's second article seriously. Māori never ceded their absolute authority and the second article emphasises the Crown's acknowledgement and agreement to Māori continued exercise of their tino rangatiratanga.

In this context, non-violent active peacemaking must take the challenge to decolonise seriously. Given that the reality of colonisation continues, decolonisation, therefore, is an urgent and necessary task. Yet in no way can it be named as easy or simple. Accepted unquestioned Pākehā cultural assumptions and practices need to be critiqued and changed. Yet any process of critique is difficult. Many Pākehā will experience it as an attack on their very identity and deny the negatives that underpin continued colonisation. Therefore, the most basic necessary first step in the decolonisation journey is to listen to and take seriously what Māori have to say. Māori are astute observers of Pākehā assumptions and ways of acting as their existence has depended on learning these. Māori also have insights into how a Te Tiriti future could unfold.

Pākehā decolonisation of Māori requires that Pākehā again recognise and respect the 1835 Declaration of Independence (He Wakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni) and the te reo text of the Treaty of Waitangi which was signed by the vast majority of chiefs. These need to be deliberately named as the basis of a new constitution that is worded so that Māori rangatiratanga can be again exercised within their hapū and iwi and over their traditional lands, resources and treasures.

Alongside this, Pākehā need a collective inward journey to challenge and change their cultural desire to dominate. This requires critiquing their formative history: The claim to being at the peak of enlightened evolutionary civilization arising from the greed that underpinned the imperial theft of indigenous lands, resources, labour and bodies, the assumptions that supported a sense of privileged entitlement and superiority, and the theologies that glorified power and power over all need challenging and changing.

Pākehā decolonisation of the land requires a new way of living in harmony with the created environment. Given that all land belonged to various hapū and iwi, the future management and working of land would arise from valuing local Māori hospitality and guidance. In the light of global warming and the current capitalistic exploitation of land for extracting the best profit possible, new values, priorities and behaviours need to guide the way forward.

Decolonisation of the land urgently requires new concepts and understandings of ownership. Individual, exclusive, tradeable concepts of land ownership can no longer be accepted. Responsibility to care for the land in the context of the bigger global warming challenge requires Māori voices and Māori values.

Decolonisation of the ways Pākehā think about what is just, what is good, and what is right is also necessary. Their dominant theologies and philosophies have supported and empowered a Pākehā sense of superiority that has justified and enabled power over Māori, the theft of their land, and the creation of structures that have continued colonial oppression. Key has been the attributing to God power language that then has justified the human use of power over those named as less favoured.

Openness to Māori spirituality, philosophy and law will aid the decolonising journey. Being formed by the dynamics of whanaungatanga (the centrality of relationships), and manaakitanga (the nurturing of relationships and care of people), taking on board the realities of mana (the importance of spiritually sanctioned authority and the limits on leadership) and tapu (the respect for the spiritual character of all things), and the seeking to live out utu (the principle of balance and reciprocity) and kaitiakitanga (the guardianship or stewardship of all that is created).

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/