

# Testimony

## A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating February 17, 2019

Pax Christi San Antonio does not solicit donations. Thoughtful comments, however, may be sent to the editor at [j6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com](mailto: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



(photo by John Dauer)

After the calendar section, the Sunday reading reflections are based on the lectionary selections for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *Ode to Resurrection*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. A CNS news report on commemorations of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Francis's visit to Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil amidst a crusade war follows the poem.

### Calendar

#### In Austin

**Tuesday February 12**, 5:00pm, Simran Jeet Singh, "Channeling Our Outrage: What It Really Means to Respond to Hate with Love." Carter Auditorium, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress.

**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 8<sup>th</sup> St. Information: [tcadp.org](http://tcadp.org)

#### In Dallas

**Thursday February 21**, 6:30pm-8:30pm, "Forced Flight Surviving Migration," introducing new organizations: Human Rights Initiative and International Rescue Committee in Dallas. Room 123, Fondren Science Building, Southern Methodist University, 3215 Daniel. RSVP at <https://humanrightsdallas.eventbrite.com>

#### In El Paso

**Fridays February 15, 22**, 12:00pm-1:00pm, peace vigils. In front of Federal Courthouse, corner of Campbell and San Antonio.

**Sunday February 10**, 3:00pm, Film, "Hidden Figures." St. Joseph School Auditorium; enter through school parking lot across from church rectory at 1315 Travis St.

**Friday February 15**, 6:00pm, Eduardo Scarel, "Learning More about 'Laudato Si.'" St. Joseph school Auditorium; enter through school parking lot across from church rectory at 1315 Travis St.

**Saturday February 23**, 9:00am-5:00pm, and **Saturday March 2**, 9:00am-5:00pm, Restorative Justice Training. #30. Register with Tepeyac Institute, 872-8420.

**Sunday February 24**, 2:30pm-4:00pm, panel with Jesus Chavez and others, "Gerrymandering and Social Justice: Toward Fair Redistricting in Texas." Maud Sullivan Gallery, El Paso Public Library Downtown, 501 N. Oregon.

**Tuesday February 26**, 6:30pm-8:00pm, Border gathering and public witness with Hope and Bishop Mark Seitz. At the Anapra Fence, New Mexico. Information: (915) 872-8400, ext. 200.

**Thursday February 28**, 12:00pm-1:00pm, 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, [jhj2@rice.edu](mailto:jhj2@rice.edu), 713-348-3974. Register: [https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20190215/event\\_id/20201](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](mailto: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](https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20190222/event_id/20202).  
Information: Hayley Hemstreet [hjh2@rice.edu](mailto: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](mailto:rsvpcswgs@rice.edu). Free; no RSVP required.

**Saturday March 2**, 9:00am-3:00pm, and **Sunday March 3**, 12:30pm-3:30pm, Paul K. Chappell, Peace Literacy Forum and Training. Dominican Center for Spirituality, 6501 Alameda Rd. Light lunch served. Suggested donation \$40. (Catherine Foley, [stbsig@yahoo.com](mailto:stbsig@yahoo.com)).

### **In San Antonio**

**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](mailto: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.

**Monday March 4**, 6:00pm, 14<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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 15:12, 16-20)**

The excerpt from Paul's *First Corinthians* reiterates the traditional teaching that had been handed down to him. Because someone in the Corinthian church had said there is no resurrection of the dead, he repeats the tradition about the Messiah, or Christ, rising from the dead. Paul was not interested in exactly what resurrection meant; the concept mystifies us to this day. But he was very interested in the belief that our

resurrection is tied up with the Messiah's resurrection, that our hope is tied up with the powers of the Messiah to emerge.

It is noteworthy that Paul impresses upon his readers exactly what he received and the hope contained therein, but no more. He had not received an explanation in philosophical or scientific categories and hence did not insist upon such. His fidelity to the good news kept him from going beyond it when he was making a presentation of Christian tradition.

Many contemporary Christians insist upon a variety of anti-modern stances, but their knowledge of tradition is far from profound. There is a tendency to confound nostalgia with tradition. The latter is not simply the repetition of yesteryear's errors; it neither adds nor subtracts, but grasps the essence of a source's inspiration. In Catholicism, the temptation is to accept Pope Pius X's campaign against "modernism" as tradition, while in all probability Paul of Tarsus and the ancient apostles would be puzzled over what the anti-modernist crackdown was all about. In fact, the anti-modernist Emperor of Austria, Franz Joseph, used a dated prerogative of Catholic monarchs to veto the election of a pope, and Pius X was elected instead. The Emperor's anti-modernist pope got one thing right—he eliminated the prerogative of Catholic monarchs to interfere in the elections of popes.

### **Third Reading (Luke 6.17, 20-26)**

This is the Lukan version of the beatitudes. Luke makes it the principal teaching of Jesus, given immediately after Jesus selected twelve of the disciples and named them apostles. The teaching was meant for people of all nations, Jews and gentiles alike: "...and there was a great crowd of his disciples and a great number of people from all of Judea, Jerusalem, and the coastal area of Tyre and Sidon."

"Blessed are you poor, because yours is the kingdom of God." This is not a charitable donation. The kingdom is not *for* the poor but rather belongs to the poor; it is theirs by right. And it does not belong to other people who are poor, but to "you," disciples. A true disciple is poor, not living the "good life" based on services provided by the poor.

"Blessed are you who hunger now, because you will be filled." Sustenance does not bring enjoyment to someone who is not hungry. Happy are you if you can enjoy and give thanks.

"Blessed are you who are weeping now, because you shall laugh." Someone who does not know to weep will not share in the laughter of others.

Blessed are you when people treat you like a prophet—better yet, when you speak truth to power as prophets tend to do—"...when people hate you and when they excommunicate and insult you and spurn your name as evil because of the son of humanity. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy; for behold your reward will be great in heaven; for accordingly their fathers treated the prophets." Particularly happy are you if you speak truth to power because of Jesus, who referred to himself as the son of humanity.

To be someone poor, an owner of the kingdom, to be able to enjoy what nourishes, to know when to weep with others, to break through the self-justifying rhetoric of power and to state the truth—such is the principal teaching of Jesus.

## Poem

### *Ode to Resurrection*

You body:  
you extension of eternal me  
into finite time, limited space  
immersed in the ocean  
of living, dying and rising anew,

you spiral strands of DNA,  
in genes and cells  
of organs humming in concert:  
    blood and breath,  
    skin and skeleton,  
    muscles and nerves,  
each and all  
knowing what to do,

coming alive, passing away,  
birthing again,  
day by day, year by year,  
ever-old-ever-new.

Tom Keene and Muse  
November 2, 2018

### **Pope looks back 800 years to St. Francis' Dialogue with Muslim Sultan**

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

1.31.2019 10:52 AM ET

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis will have St. Francis of Assisi on his mind when he visits Abu Dhabi Feb. 3-5 and Morocco in late March.

As he told ambassadors to the Holy See early in January, "These represent two important opportunities to advance interreligious dialogue and mutual understanding between the followers of both religions (Christianity and Islam) in this year that marks the 800th anniversary of the historic meeting between St. Francis of Assisi and Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil" of Egypt.

The anniversary has a special meaning in the United Arab Emirates, which along with Oman and Yemen, are served by the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia, a church jurisdiction entrusted to the Capuchin Franciscans.

Most of the 65 priests who work in the vicariate and Bishop Paul Hinder, the apostolic vicar, are Capuchins.

The order's website -- ofmcap.org -- has a special page dedicated to the pope's visit to Abu Dhabi, which begins by noting: "This year marks the 800th anniversary of the visit of St. Francis of Assisi to the sultan of Egypt."

Father Michael A. Perry, minister general of the Franciscans, issued a long letter about the anniversary in early January, describing how St. Francis traveled to Egypt during the Crusades, arriving at "the camp of the crusading army, among Latin Christians who through years of preaching and the rhetoric of holy war had been taught to scorn Muslims. Those same Muslims had every reason to scorn Francis, assuming that he, like most in the crusader camp, was an enemy and not a bearer of peace."

Yet, Father Perry wrote, "we today celebrate what no one at that moment could have foreseen: that a Spirit-filled man with nothing of his own crossed the battle lines unarmed to request a meeting with the sultan, was received with grace by that sultan, enjoyed an extended period of hospitality with the Muslim leader and emerged from the visit to reflect anew on the mission of the Friars Minor."

In 2019, the minister general said, Franciscans should renew their commitment to walking "together with Muslims and people of all faiths as fellow travelers, as builders of civility, and most fundamentally, as sisters and brothers, children of Abraham, our father in faith."

He called on all the order's members "to celebrate this anniversary as a moment when the light of the Gospel can open one's heart to see the 'imago Dei' (image of God) in a person one regards with fear and distrust, or even worse, in a person one has been urged to hate."

"We live in a time when people of various faiths traffic on the demonization of Muslims and incite others to fear them," Father Perry said.

Beyond just studying and praying about dialogue, he said, "I encourage followers of Francis who lack much personal exposure to Islam to recall the experience of our founder by taking a simple and concrete step: meet a Muslim. Get to know him or her, beyond the pleasantries of a cup of tea and social nicety. Try to learn and appreciate what experience of God animates him or her and allow your Muslim friend to see the love God has poured into your heart through Christ."

Father Perry also recognized that some Franciscans live in lands where they are a minority and find themselves "caught up in political and sectarian strife and may feel the threat of violence." But he urged them to hold firm to St. Francis' conviction that God is patient and follows a timetable no human being could understand.

"Amid the groanings of the world for interreligious understanding," he wrote, "may our humble, patient and merciful God show all of us the deeds and words that are most pleasing to God."

## 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](http://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](http://www.txccedp.org)

Dialogue Institute of San Antonio  
[www.thedialoginstitute.org/san-antonio/](http://www.thedialoginstitute.org/san-antonio/)

Climate Change  
[www.creation-care.com](http://www.creation-care.com)

NowCastSA  
[www.nowcastsa.com/](http://www.nowcastsa.com/)