

# Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating November 1, 2020

Communications with the editor should be sent to [j6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com](mailto: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 Sunday Liturgical Reading reflections are based on readings for the Solemnity of All Saints. Tom Keene's poem is *Dia de los Muertos*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is a press report on a TED talk Pope Francis recently recorded, dealing with the environment.

## Calendar

Times are given for the Central Time Zone.

**Tuesday October 27**, 11:30am (12:30pm ET), online panel "The Moral and Public Obligations of Political Winners, Losers, and the Rest of Us," Christine Emba (*Washington Post*), Joe Goldman (Democracy Fund), Cherie Harder (Trinity Forum), Denis McDonough (University of Notre Dame), and Michael Steele (MSNBC), moderated by John Carr (Georgetown University). RSVP at: <https://catholicsocialthought.georgetown.edu/events/election-2020-the-moral-and-public-obligations-of-winners-losers-and-the-rest-of-us#rsvp>

**Tuesday October 27**, 5:00pm-6:00pm, "Race and Religion in the Presidential Election," Gerardo Marti (Davidson College) and Stephanie Y. Mitchem (University of South Carolina). Register at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564638381?pwd=MTBtSF16eVhoTUF3SXJ2VIBWd0N2QT09#success>

**Wednesday October 28**, Peace Day Events at University of the Incarnate Word. Three online broadcasts:

1:30pm-2:45pm, Roger Barnes on three civil rights workers murdered in 1964 for registering African Americans to vote in Mississippi.

3:00pm-4:15pm, About Face: Veterans Against the War, with Jovanni Reyes, Hart Vigas, Jake Tucker, Julie Vaquera, and others.

4:30pm-5:45pm, Free Speech Theory: Understanding the Controversies, with Brandon T. Metroka (University of the Incarnate Word).

7:00pm-9:00pm, Earth Justice in Light of *Laudato Sí*, Diane M. Duesterhoeft (St. Mary's University)

Register for all at: <https://uiw.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0pc-mspjgsE9K18KEyIWRJpaUddM-V7tgL>

**Thursday October 29**, 7:00pm-9:00pm, documentary film *Separated: Children at the Border*, followed by discussion with Maia Felix-Ortiz and Brando Metroka (both of University of the Incarnate Word). Register at: [https://uiw.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEscemsrTMuGtZ6f0sT-Fc\\_J7Nxfuk-yYhp](https://uiw.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEscemsrTMuGtZ6f0sT-Fc_J7Nxfuk-yYhp)

**Monday November 2 and Monday November 16**, 6:30pm-8:30pm, online conference "Faith in Humanity: A Pre- and Post-Election community Conversation," hosted by Compassionate san Antonio, Interfaith San Antonio Alliance, and the San Antonio Compassionate Institute 2020, organized by Ann Helmke (City of San Antonio). Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/faith-in-humanity-a-pre-and-post-election-community-conversation-tickets-125265347025>

**Saturday November 7**, 10:00am, live streamed border mass, accessible on the Catholic Diocese of El Paso web page. The dioceses of El Paso, Las Cruces, and Ciudad Juarez will join in the celebration of the mass, with bishop Peter Baldacchino of Las Cruces officiating.

**Saturday November 7**, 2:00pm, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting, with Lauren Bailey from Pax Christi USA. For zoom invitation contact Anthony Blasi: [J6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com](mailto:J6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com)

**Sunday November 8**, 10:00am, zoom discussion "How to Calculate Carbon and Plastic Footprints," Jim Blackburn (Rice University). St. Philip, Houston, Church & Society Program. Access at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564638381?pwd=MTBtSF16eVhoTUF3SXJ2VlBWd0N2QT09#success>

**Tuesday November 10**, 6:00pm (7:00pm ET), Pax Christi USA “Grassroots Leadership Call,” primarily for Pax Christi members. Link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86492056719>

**Tuesday November 10**, 7:00pm (6:00pm MT), bilingual online discussion “Pope Francis and the Current Economy of Exclusion,” Fr. Fabian Marques (El Buen Pastor Church, Sparks) and Carlos Marentes (Centro Sin Fronteras). Link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85608443210?pwd=QIN2WGZHS0laeEhmU1hoMEJjOUFLZz09>  
Meeting ID: 856 0844 3210; Passcode: ecofran

**Wednesday November 11**, 12:00pm (1:00pm ET), “Drawdown for Congregations,” online presentation about congregations using less carbon in their buildings. Elizabeth Bagley (Project Drawdown). Registration information TBA.

**Wednesday November 11**, 7:00pm (6:00pm MT), bilingual online discussion “The economy of inclusion,” Fr. Mario Serrano, ofm.conv (chaplain, University of Texas El Paso). Link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82373438626?pwd=d3pWQTVvWklKRUZ0TE9BanhJdHRwQT09>  
Meeting ID: 823 7343 8626; Passcode: ecofran

**Wednesday November 11**, 7:00pm-8:30pm, online lecture “The Life & Witness of Ben Salmon: On the Front Line of the ‘Army of Peace,’” Michael Baxter (Regis University, Denver). Ben Salmon was an American World War I war resister. Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-life-witness-of-ben-salmon-on-the-front-lines-of-the-army-of-peace-tickets-125403490215>.

**Monday November 14**, 12:00pm (1:00pm ET), webinar “Drawdown for Congregations,” on congregations reducing carbon emissions, with Elizabeth Bagley (Project Drawdown). Register at: <http://bit.ly/IPLDrawdown>

**Sunday November 15**, 10:00am, online presentation “Carbon Offsets and How to Purchase Them,” Jim Blackburn (Coastal Exchange). Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564638381?pwd=MTBtSF16eVhoTUF3SXJ2VIBWd0N2QT09#success>

**Tuesday November 17**, 7:00pm (6:00pm MT), bilingual online conversation “How to Build an Economy Centered on Inclusion,” Sebastian Chacon (Just Catholics young adult group). Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84451678674?pwd=YjJPcDVLauZwd042cG9uWTUreHZ0UT09>

Meeting ID: 844 5167 8674; Passcode: ecofran

**Wednesday November 18**, 7:00pm (6:00pm MT), online bilingual conversation “From Reflection to Action,” Marco Rapozo (Catholic Diocese of El Paso). Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84873915944?pwd=SSt4UEFuenJHNjQ3STlacU90a2ZDQT09>

Meeting ID: 848 7391 5944; Passcode: ecofran

**Thursday November 19**, 2:00pm-3:00pm (3:00pm-4:00pm ET), online conversation “Religion & the 2020 Election,” Amanda Friesen and Andrew Whitehead (both of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis). Register at: [https://iu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_J8h\\_mPr9QVKBjsT6wbS2Dg](https://iu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_J8h_mPr9QVKBjsT6wbS2Dg)

## Notices

**Online Resource for families or small groups:** If you’re needing some social interaction with depth, more than just listening to zoom webinars, longing for the social time that used to happen before and after Mass, consider using the *Maryknoll Weekly Reflection Guides*. Gather as family or small group and use these guides in Facetime, Skype, Zoom etc. This an easy online structure with prayer, an introductory theme, a link to the Sunday Readings and some reflection questions to guide group conversation. Using the SeeJudgeAct methodology, you will be led as a group to consider where, in light of the shared reflection, the Spirit is calling you this week. The Global Solidarity charism of the Maryknoll family will feed you spiritually for these challenging times. Find the Guides in both Spanish and English at:

<https://mission.maryknoll.us/reflection-guides-ordinary-time>

**This is Not a Game** (brief video on why we should vote). Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAfIDdqj5Fk>

### **Second Reading (1 John 3:1-3)**

The author, who identifies simply as “the presbyter,” develops the idea of people becoming the children of God. The idea implies some continuity from the character of God. “If you know that he is just, you also know that everyone who acts justly is born from him. See what love the Father gave you, that we may be called children of God” (1 John 2:29-3:1). The passage includes both the exhortation to be children of God and an affirmation that they are in fact such. It explicitly leaves open what the children of God will become after the coming of the Son.

### **Third Reading (Mathew 5.1-12)**

What is a saint anyway? The point of sainthood is not in an afterlife, since people are declared saints for what they do in their earthly lives. And saints need not be canonized, *i.e.* officially recognized as saints; the Solemnity of All Saints suggests that saintly lives are lived, unrecorded in any official dossiers. The very idea of a feast of “All Saints” admits to some degree of anonymity and even neglect.

To offer one approach to All Saints, the Beatitudes appear as the gospel reading for the solemnity. “Blessed are the poor in spirit....” These poor serve God’s kingdom. They are not poor by default, reluctantly, but with deliberation. Even if they have title to some goods, they live as if not owning them for themselves.

“Blessed are they who mourn....” Mourning over a loss can be an occasion of conversion toward unselfishness. Mourning over others’ losses could be an occasion of compassion.

“Blessed are the meek....” Those who are pushy and consume as much of the earth as possible leave nothing to be inherited. [By way of contrast, an old man once told me that environmental issues did not concern him, since he will be dead by the time environmental disasters come!]

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice....” Here, justice is not a velleity or preferential option but a second-nature quest, analogous to hunger and thirst. Many preachers and homilists seem to forget that justice is featured in this core passage of Christianity! Indeed, justice appears a second time in the list

of beatitudes where it is noted that those who are persecuted for the sake of justice are blessed.

“Blessed are the merciful, because they will be shown mercy.” This is a way of saying what we pray in the Lord’s Prayer.

And peacemakers are God’s children. Saints’ allegiance is to God as their father and mother; human tribalism is transcended.

## Poem

### *Dia de los Muertos*

Wake and rise, all of us,  
all forgotten souls,  
sweep our craven selves  
from the corners of our crypts  
into the sunlit cemetery,  
toward the grotto aflame with flowers,  
candles and food.

Behold the shaman/priest,  
hear his bold bellows echo down Hades' halls  
to shake the roots of our indifference,  
cut open the cocoons we wove in life.

Hear the heartbeat of the drum,  
the plaintive mantras from the mandolin's mouth,  
dance the litanies chanted to North and South, East and West  
to rouse the bowels of memory in the Father-creator,  
in the Holy Mother and all the saints,  
that they may waken in us the Receptive Spirit,  
the Beginning and the End of our being.

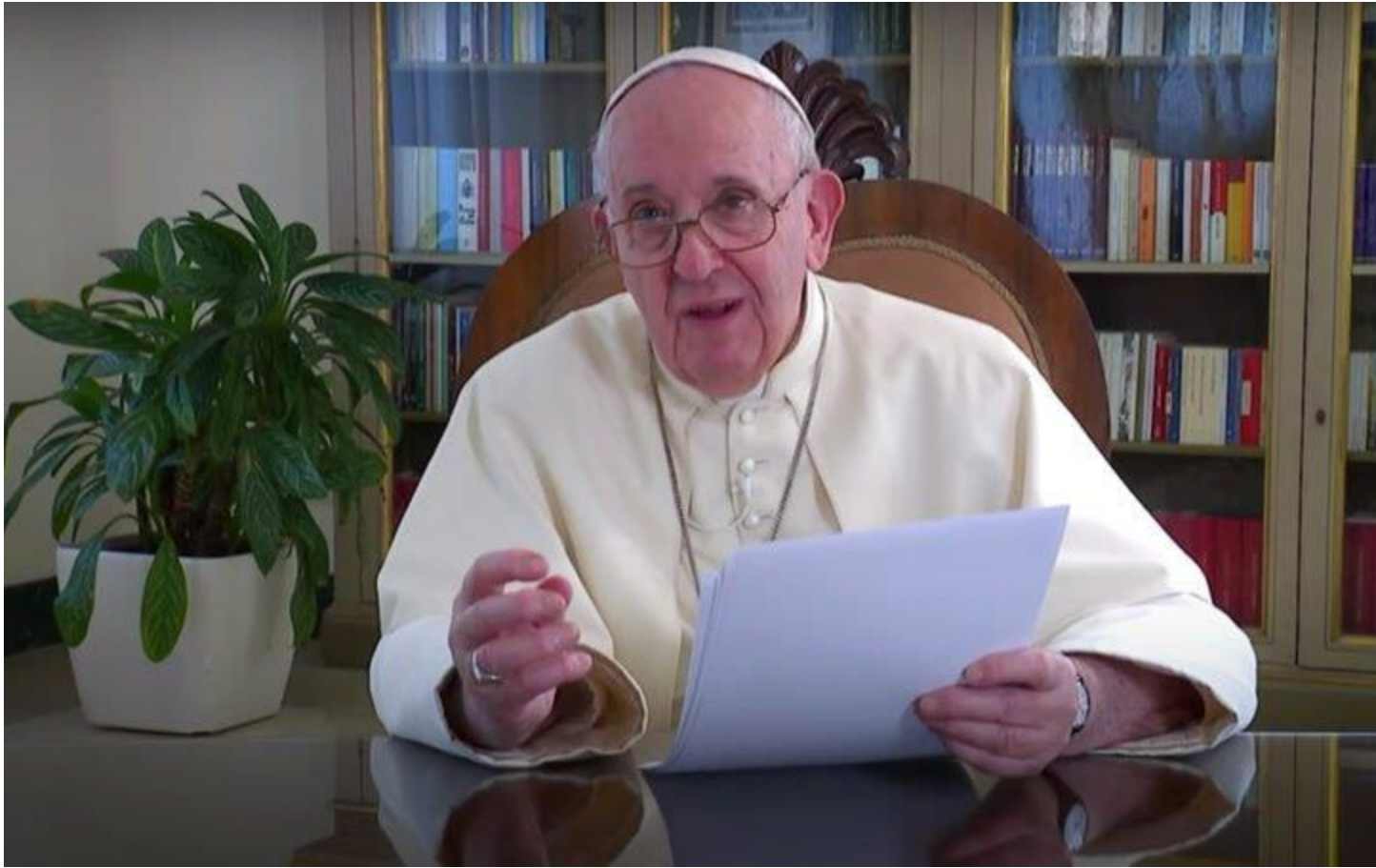
See the breads, sweet with life,  
fresh from the fires of ovens.  
Let us gather them in our skeletal frames  
and remember the food we forgot to share.

Let us gorge ourselves on grace  
and with it feed the worms that eat our isolation.

Look how the living proceed in a circle  
to prophesy our completion.  
Come, fuse our smoky souls  
to the grey curls of incense  
and with them ride the autumn winds to clouds  
to wait the dawning of our destinies.

Tom Keene

A native American rendering of Dia de Los Muertos on November 1, 1991, Our Lady of the Lake cemetery and grotto. With thanks to Dr. Bernardino Verastique and his acolytes.



Pope Francis gives a prerecorded TED talk that was streamed on Saturday, Oct. 10, 2020.

October 12, 2020

By

Claire Giangravé

VATICAN CITY (RNS) — Pope Francis used a prerecorded TED talk that was streamed on Saturday (Oct. 10) to urge policymakers to side with science and to deal with climate change as a “moral imperative.”

“Science tells us each day with greater precision that urgent action is needed — I am not exaggerating; this is what the science tells us! — if we want to have the hope of avoiding radical and catastrophic climate change,” Pope Francis said in the message.

Saturday’s video appearance was the second time Francis has appeared at the TED conference, the 35-year-old series of gatherings.... His first, in 2017, also touched on climate change.



In his 13-minute talk, Francis continued a recent focus on economic and political systems as the driver of climate change and other ills facing humankind, including income inequality and the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The current economic system is unsustainable,” he said. “This leads to a new economy where the production of wealth is directed to the integral well-being of the human person and to the improvement — not the destruction — of our common home.”

In the same way as we must rethink today’s economic models, Francis said, it’s necessary to reform politics, which the pope described as “one of the highest forms of charity.”

Francis took inspiration from his 2015 “green encyclical,” *Laudato Si*, which called out government and business leaders for placing profit above the interests of human development, especially indigenous peoples. Sitting at a desk against a background of bookshelves, the pope invited people to embark “on a journey together” to solve a socio-economic crisis with action rather than words.

The pope outlined three steps to address the crisis.

“My first proposal is to promote at every level education geared toward the care of our common home, developing the understanding that environmental problems are linked to human needs,” Francis said.

This education, according to the pontiff, must be “based on scientific data and on an ethical approach.” He also praised the “new ecological and social sensitivity” shown by many young people committed to social justice and the environment.

Francis’ second proposal was to remake the distribution of food and water in ways that are respectful of the environment. Finally, the pope called for “a continuous substitution, but without delay, of fossil fuels with clean energy sources.”

“Scientists calculate approximately fewer than 30 years — we have few years, fewer than 30 — to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere,” the pontiff cautioned.

Francis has been a strong supporter of the 2016 Paris Agreement for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. He has also often stressed the importance of committing to the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations, which tackle everything from climate change to eliminating poverty.

As the pope wrote in his newly released encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* (Brothers All), the challenges and choices humanity faces today cannot be faced alone. The

COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the interconnectedness of society today and the need for concerted solutions, Francis said.

Individuals, Catholic and non-Catholic organizations as well as multinational companies and governing bodies need to come together in order to ensure that the earth is “cultivated and protected.”

### **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.sanantoniopace.center>

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/)

Migrant Center for Human Rights  
<https://Migrantcenter.org>