

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating November 7, 2021

Communications with the editor should 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 Sunday Liturgical Reading reflections are based on the readings for the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *Consider Bread*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. After the poem is a letter from outgoing National Council Chair, Isaac Chandler, which provides a nice summary of Pax Christi activities during the course of the past two years.

Calendar

Times are given for the Central Time Zone.

Monday November 1, 11:30am (12:30pm ET), online "Catholic Faith, Communion, and Public Life: Voices from the United States and a Report from the Vatican," Sr. Mary Bader, DC (St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth, and Families, Washington, D.C.), Carmen Nanko-Fernández (Catholic Theological Union, Chicago), Gloria Purvis (Consultor, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Religious Liberty), and Christopher White (*National Catholic Reporter*), moderated by John Carr (Georgetown University). RSVP at: <https://catholicsocialthought.georgetown.edu/events/catholic-faith-communion-and-public-life#rsvp>

Tuesday November 2, 8:00pm (7:00pm MT) online, joint meeting of Pax Christi El Paso and Pax Christi San Antonio. The discussion will focus on Rev. Bryan N. Massingale's (Fordham University) address at the July Pax Christi USA Conference. Watch video #1 at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnKdnZlt_EiurTkQuKk4zn1WqfM1-mrZ8.

To receive the Zoom link for the meeting itself, contact Patricia Delgado: phdelgado3583@gmail.com; 915-740-3962.

Thursday November 4, 9:00am-12:30pm online "The Way Forward: Immigration Reform for the 21st Century." For the full program, see: https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20211104/event_id/242253
To register, contact bipprsvp@rice.edu, or 713-348-2183.

Thursday November 4, 6:00pm (7:00 ET) online dialogue "Resisting a Throwaway Culture: Protecting Life and Creation," directed to young people; Charles Camosy (Fordham University), Shideya Parrilla (campus ministry, American University), Teresa Tsoie (DRE St. Jude Parish, Tuba City, Arizona), and Bishop Joseph Tyson (Yakima, Washington), moderated by Molly Herrera (Archdiocese of Washington). Request RSVP by Nov. 3 at: cathsocialthought@georgetown.edu

Friday November 5, 8:00am-9:00am, online or in person "Religion and Aging," Andrea Henderson-Platt (University of South Carolina). Register at: https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20211105/event_id/230042
To attend in person, see **In Houston**, below.

Saturday November 6, 1:00pm-3:00pm Pax Christi Illinois annual gathering is open to the entire Pax Christi community. Featured presentation is "A Time of Reckoning," by Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv. (Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky).
Zoom link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86923802622?pwd=UHhJY2JEV3kveIJ2bHVIUWhrYXJndz09#success>

Sunday November 7, 3:30pm, online or in-person, 2021 National Peacemakers Honorees; the George Floyd family will be honored. See **In Houston**.

Sunday November 7, 6:00pm-7:00pm (7:00pm-8:00pm ET) Pax Christi Metro DC-Baltimore Peacemaker of the Year celebration, honoring Kim Lamberty, who has a record of directing parishes away from a charity model of international development and toward a focus on economic justice and peace making. Register at: <https://ssl.charityweb.net/paxchristimdcb/event/POY.htm>

Tuesday November 9, 3:00pm-4:15pm, Mercy Earth Challenge webinar "Eating Together Faithfully," Jimmy McKinnell and Rev. Laura Hamrick (both with Life Around the Table). Register at: mercyfarm@mercyecology.org

Tuesday November 9, 3:00pm-4:00pm (4:00pm-5:00pm ET) in-person or online, "Sacred Spaces for Healing and Reconciliation," Tecla Namachanja Wanjala (Kenyan Peace Advocate). Hesburgh Center for International Studies auditorium, University of Notre Dame, or online Zoom registration at: https://notredame.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Ux68UpmnQNi4J03Uqlzg3A

Saturday November 13, 11:00am-1:00pm (12:00pm-2:00pm ET), online "Catholic Moral Teaching: Centrality of Conscience," Dr. Linda Hogan (Trinity College, Dublin). Second in a series on moral theology as it pertains to sexual minorities. Register at: <https://fs18.formsite.com/jennhardin/1w3acsjqd3/index.html>

Tuesday November 16, 3:00pm-4:15pm, Mercy Earth Challenge webinar "Planet or Plastics," Judith Enck (Beyond Plastics and Bennington College). Register at: mercyfarm@mercyecology.org

Sunday December 9, 2:00pm-3:00pm, online "Jesus and Muhammad: On Peace, Forgiveness, and the Golden Rule," Craig Considine (Rice University). \$10.00 registering before November 26, \$15 after; register at: <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration/>

Friday December 10, 6:00pm-8:00pm (7:00pm-9:00pm ET) online "Catholic Moral Teaching: What It Is and Is Not," Dr. Jamie Manson (*National Catholic Reporter*). Third in a series on moral theology as it pertains to sexual minorities. Register at: <https://fs18.formsite.com/jennhardin/1w3acsjqd3/index.html>

In Houston

Friday November 5, 8:00am-9:00am, online or in person "Religion and Aging," Andrea Henderson-Platt (University of South Carolina). Kraft Hall 339, Rice University. Register at: https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20211105/event_id/230042

Sunday November 7, 3:30pm, 2021 National Peacemakers Honorees, sponsored by the Houston Peace and Justice Center and by My Brother's Keeper. The George

Floyd family will be honored. Third Ward Multi-service Center, 3611 Ennis St., Houston, or online via Zoom. Information and registration, or to take out an ad in the program: HPJC.org.

In San Antonio

Thursday November 18, 7:00pm-8:30pm, "U.S. Immigration and Biblical Interpretation: The Politics of Belonging," Francisco Lozada (Bright Divinity School, Fort Worth). Assumption Chapel, St. Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria.

Saturday November 13, 8:30am-12:00pm, A Day of Racial Reckoning & Healing, sponsored jointly by Source of Light (University Presbyterian Church) and San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum. Themes include stereotyping, diasporic education, and institutional racism. University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell; park off Shook. Register at: <https://saaacam.ticketing.veevartapp.com/tickets/view/list/a-day-of-racial-reckoning-healing>

Notice

Pax Christi International has published *A Policymaker's Tool for Effective, Nonviolent Strategies for Sustainable Peace*. It can be downloaded from: <https://paxchristi.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/PCI-brochure-POLICYMAKERS-TOOL-NONVIOLENCE-21.pdf>

First Reading (1 Kings 17:10-16)

The first and third readings each feature a poor woman being generous. In the first reading, from the Elijah cycle in *First Kings*, a poor woman extends hospitality from what little she had during a drought. Elijah blesses her hospitality with a miracle that made her meagre provisions last for a year. Extending hospitality is a common theme in both the Hebrew Bible and the Christian. Surely it is needed today in light of desperate refugees fleeing both ecological and political disasters.

Second Reading (Hebrews 9:26-28)

The author of *Hebrews* continues an extended contrast between the sacrifices that were offered in the Jerusalem Temple and the sacrifice of the Messiah. The former were copies, the latter the genuine deed. "For the Messiah did not enter hand-made sanctuaries, replicas of the genuine ones, but heaven itself, now to be made manifest before the face of God on our behalf..." Such a statement bore more weight when many Christians still looked to the ceremonials in the second Jerusalem Temple, which was still standing. The destruction of that Temple in the year 70 CE would change matters. The Christians' habit of looking to ceremonials was broken, at least for a time. Judaism also was undergoing a significant change from ceremonial in a temple to a study of the Law, a study in how to live. However, when the author was writing, all this had not happened yet.

"And in the way it is destined for humans to die once, but after that judgment, so also the Messiah, offered up once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time without sin to those awaiting him for salvation." The Messiah or Christ is not punished as some kind of stand-in for sinners. He "bears the sins of many." Humans killed the Messiah, so contrary to their ways was his. He endured the sins of many. He will "...appear a second time without sin..." This is metaphorical language; there will be no physical eyes to see; the appearance will not be the exact same thing as the matter of ophthalmology, and "time" will not be what Big Ben and numerals on cell phones mark. But what the metaphor portends, the *coming*, not the departure, of the Messiah is salvation.

Third Reading (Mark 12.38-44)

The lectionary has the option of using only verses 41-44, which describe Jesus watching first the wealthy and then a poor widow bringing money to the Temple treasury. The teaching, that the small offering of the poor widow was actually greater than the nominally larger offerings of the rich, was not unique to Jesus or Christianity. What is unique to Christian tradition is the context in which Mark places it. Thus verses 38-40, which lead up to the narrative, are important and should not be left out. Jesus is criticizing the established religion: "Beware of the scribes, wishing to walk around in robes and wanting salutations in the market and the chief places in the synagogues and the first seats at banquets; swallowing up the houses of widows and on a pretext praying at length, these will receive the greater condemnation." There is a background assumption missing here; in Jesus' day everyone would know that the Temple and the entire religious

establishment were supported by rents that the poor who worked the land had to pay. In antiquity, the rich made themselves famous by funding showy religious works, giving out of their abundance, but the poor paid rent out of their want.

One cannot help thinking of the religious establishment today.

Megachurches located strategically nearby upscale residential areas and media networks that are linked to a variety of denominations provide feel-good religion to the comfortable and solicit donations. They often use wedge “social” issues to separate out the uninformed as well as those unwilling to be informed, and they ignore, except to vilify, politicians who oppose moneyed interests. Many people of modest means are drawn into yea-saying in this context of Christian-colored paganism, simply because the mass of the many are under the illusion that by doing so they will be counted among the number of the few.

But there is more: “...on a pretext praying at length...” It is a pernicious superstition that God wants or needs lots of prayers. Prayer always, for sure, but not necessarily prayers out of verbosity.

Poem

Consider Bread

Consider how we provide Coca Cola worldwide
for any who can pay just a little bit of cash.

Consider how we let 24,000 people, mostly kids,
die every hour for lack of daily bread.

Consider how a grain of wheat must fall
from its life-giving stem, bury itself and die
in order to rise and yield a hundred-fold.

Consider how our dreamy prayer
of daily bread for all may require
us also to die and rise.

Consider us trading Coca Cola
for just plain bread for all to eat

if only we all rise-up and,
if necessary, die for it.

Tom Keene and Muse
January 12, 2019

A letter from outgoing National Council Chair, Isaac Chandler

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Greetings to you all! I hope that the grace and peace of our Lord continue to shine upon you during this time. As I reflect upon my time as Chair of the National Council, I am filled with many feelings: feelings of hope, anxiety, and gratitude.



During this time we have all been changed by the pandemic, the rise of social justice movements, and by the change in the leadership of our government. *In spite of all of these changes, Pax Christi USA's membership has made its presence known.* We have witnessed a proliferation of Pray-Study-Act opportunities and issued statements on a variety of timely topics, including: the withdrawal from the war in Afghanistan, the recent 9/11 anniversary, and the Black Lives Matter movement. It is my sincere HOPE that in this time of transition, Pax Christi USA will continue to speak out and educate our members on current events.

This pandemic has caused many of us to isolate ourselves and this may heighten feelings of high ANXIETY and stress. This anxiety and nervousness is

exacerbated by all the news/media coverage of both information and misinformation regarding various issues. However, many of you used this time to learn new skills, read, and learn more about yourselves. You have taken this time to know yourselves and figure out where your passion lies. Many of you have found creative ways to stay connected with your local groups, state chapters and regions, and with the National Office. Zoom and GoToMeeting have made virtual meetings possible. Many of you have participated in our various study circles where books on timely topics as nuclear disarmament and the gospel of nonviolence are discussed within the context of our four priorities. As a National Council, monthly Zoom meetings have become the norm (*pictured above: Isaac and Sherry Simon of the Pax Christi USA National Council earlier this month*). This summer we made history by holding Pax Christi's first virtual National Conference where over 400 of you participated in some way. A tremendous accomplishment!!!!

Finally, I leave you with a sincere sense of GRATITUDE. I am grateful for the leadership of our Executive Director, the National Office Staff, and the 2020-2021 National Council, without whose support and direction I would have been lost. *Trust me when I say that all of these entities have worked hard throughout this entire time.* They worked to make sure that we were continuing God's work in spreading the gospel of nonviolence and most importantly, to propagate a sense of solidarity with our general membership.

Finally a note of gratitude to you, the membership of Pax Christi USA. *Throughout this time, it was YOU, the membership who let us know that you were there with us as well.* You showed up for our programs. You commented on our posts. You clicked on our webpages and social media. You freely gave to us your time, your talent, and your treasure. Because of your generosity, the organization is as strong as ever; both in a programmatic and financial way are we able to continue to help keep you informed, engaged, and spiritually nourished. I hope we can continue to earn your trust and continue to lead on issues critical to our shared humanity.

As we move towards the 2022 year, your support is needed now more than ever before. Not only are we grappling with newer threats to our planet

and our people, but also 2022 is a milestone year for us as it marks our 50th anniversary. A milestone like this must be marked as a sign to celebrate, and so we are looking to make the celebration one to remember. Plans are underway for the planning of our 50th Anniversary National Conference. Even if you are unable to join us there in person, there will be many opportunities to celebrate together, whether it be locally or regionally. This will be a celebration throughout 2022. *We can't mark this occasion without you.*

Thank you all very much for your support of Pax Christi USA and of me. Serving you has been a tremendous honor. And don't fear, I won't be far away!!!



In peace,

Isaac Chandler

Pax Christi USA National Council Chair, 2020-21

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>

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

Catholic Books Review
<http://catholicbooksreview.org>

Beloved Community Project
<http://belovedcommunityproject.org/>