

Testimony



A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating February 13, 2022

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 Sixth Week of Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *Ode to Resurrection*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. Following the poem is a link to the full text of the pastoral letter of Archbishop Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico, on nuclear disarmament. The letter is more than a statement of conscience but contains much useful information that can be used for educational purposes.

My apologies for being a few days late with this issue. Medical circumstances necessitated it.

Calendar

Times are given for the Central Time Zone

Tuesday February 15, 5:30pm-7:30pm (6:30pm-8:30pm ET) online, Network's 50th Anniversary Intergenerational Dialogue, between the sister founders of Network and younger social justice advocates. Individuals in the latter group (ages 18-30) are invited to apply to join the panel:

<https://networklobby.org/intergendialogue/>. All applicants will receive a recording of the event. Special guest speaker will be Olga Segura, author of *Birth of a Movement: Black Lives Matter and the Catholic Church*.

Tuesday February 15, 3:00pm (4:00pm ET) online From Rhetoric to Reality: What is Really Happening on the US/MEX Border? Rafael Garcia S.J. (Sacred Heart Parish, El Paso) and Cristina Coronado Flores (Missionaries of Society of Saint

Columban). Register at: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XcC9Q-yVS8CzEwP_fcbu7A

Wednesday February 23, online "Women in Ministry: What About the Diaconate?" Phyllis Zagano (Hofstra University). Information at: <https://www.sacredheart.edu/academics/colleges--schools/college-of-arts--sciences/departments/catholic-studies/center-for-catholic-studies-spring-speaker-series/>

Wednesday February 23, 7:00pm-8:00pm online Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty membership meeting. Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMcPfsnWvWSjOz0sKvjMsL5pLJOg4Q0F_xiWoeXg5k8GZzQ/viewform

Saturday February 26, 9:00am-2:00pm, online, Texas Coalition for the Abolition of the Death Penalty annual conference. The keynote address will be given by Sister Helen Prejean. There will be four concurrent breakout sessions, as well as a panel discussion on successful abolition efforts in other states: LaKeisha Cook (Virginia), Rep. Robert Renny Cushing (New Hampshire), and Denis Maes (Colorado). Prices vary by category: \$50 to \$90. Register at: <https://tcadp.org/tcadp-2022-annual-conference-registration/>

Wednesday March 2, 6:00pm (7:00pm ET) online "Women's Ordination and the Synodal Church" KateMcElwee (Women's Ordination Conference) and Heidi Schlumpf (National Catholic Reporter). Information at: <https://www.sacredheart.edu/academics/colleges--schools/college-of-arts--sciences/departments/catholic-studies/center-for-catholic-studies-spring-speaker-series/>

Saturday March 12, 1:00pm (11:00am Pacific), online "The Nonviolence of St. Francis and St. Claire," Ken Butigan (DePaul University). Register by March 8 at: <https://beatitudescenter.org/>

Saturday April 9, 11:30am-2:00pm (12:30pm-3:00pm ET) online "White Supremacy and American Christianity," Robert Jones (Public Religion Research Institute), Bryan Massingale (Fordham University), and Marcia Chatelain

(Georgetown University). Register at:
<https://networklobby.org/uschristianityconvo/>

In Austin

Thursday February 24, 6:00pm-8:30pm, Community Engagement Meeting Hosted by the Austin Police Department. Holy Cross Church Family Life Center, 1110 Concho St., Austin.

First Reading (Jeremiah 17:5-8)

This excerpt from the *Book of the Prophet Jeremiah* is one of several brief wisdom sayings found in the book. It takes the form of a curse of humanity without God and a blessing of humanity with God. The importance placed on a proper interiority, as opposed to mere external conformity, made an impression in the Hebrew world of antiquity, so much so that Psalm 1 appears to be dependent on this passage.

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

Link to the Letter on Nuclear Disarmament by Archbishop Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico:

[https://archdiosf.org/documents/2022/1/220111_ABW_Pastoral_Letter_Livingint
heLightofChristsPeace_Official_Reduced.pdf](https://archdiosf.org/documents/2022/1/220111_ABW_Pastoral_Letter_Livingint
heLightofChristsPeace_Official_Reduced.pdf)

Other 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/>