

Anticipating August 25, 2019

Pax Christi San Antonio does not solicit donations. Thoughtful comments, however, may be sent to the editor at i6anthonyblasi@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, the Liturgical Reading reflections are based on readings for the Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *One Man's Story*. For more of Tom's poems, see http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php. Following the poem is the second part of my review—more a summary than an evaluation—of *Father Luis Olivares*. *A Biography*, by Mario T. García of the University of California at Santa Barbara. Claretian Father Olivares was a native of San Antonio who brought a characteristically San Antonio perspective to his activist ministry in East Los Angeles. He had become a highly successful bureaucrat before undergoing a conversion that led him to reach back to his childhood values. The first part of the review appeared in the newsletter anticipating August 18.

"Ring it in the morning, ring it in the evening...." In light of official and unofficial American racism—from spontaneous responses by p9lice, to intentional bullying in the school yard and bureaucratic persecution of refugees—the Pax Christi USA Anti-Racism Team is joining members of the Episcopal Church in a Healing Day of National Bell Ringing. Toll the church bells at 3:00pm Sunday, August 25, to commemorate the 400 years of African History and culture in the U.S. and continue the work of racial healing. Wherever you are, find a bell, walk outside, and ring a bell for the liberation of those too long denied human dignity and human rights.

Calendar

In Austin

Sunday August 18 (3rd Sunday of the month), 7:00pm, Pax Christi Austin meeting. Fr. Payne House, St. Ignatius Church, 126 Oltorf St.

Friday August 23, 6:30pm, Courageous Conversation on Race meeting. Family Life Center, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 11th St.

In Dallas

Monday September 9, Reception :30pm, program 7:0pm-8:30pm, Faiths in Conversation: What Is Religion. This is the first of a series. The Dallas Institute, 2719

Routh St. Students free; price varies for others \$10-20 per session, \$40-80 per semester. Information and tickets: dallasinstitute.org/faith-in-conversation/

Saturday September 14, 8:00am-4:00pm, conference, "Compassion in Action: Applications in Today's Times." For information see https://compassionconference2019.simpletix.com/SimpleTixExpress/Events/EventsSectionDetail.aspx?Showid=41594&EventTimeId=10124#ShowDetails. First United Methodist Church, 503 N. Central Expressway, Richardson, TX 75180. \$55.00 to \$65.00.

Saturday September 14, 8:30am-after 3:00pm, The Open Window, a conference on priestly ordination of women in the Catholic Church. Featured speakers: Gretchen Kloten Minney, author of *Called—Women Hear the Voice of the Divine*, and Rev. Patricia Sandall. White Rock United Methodist Church, 1450 Old Gate Lane. Preregistration \$35.00; check made out to The Open Window should be mailed to Joan Dolan, 3732 Townsend, Dallas, TX 75229-3722, along with name and contact information. Walk-ins \$40.00. Lunch included in the conference fee.

Friday September 20, 11:00am, to Saturday September 21, 5:00pm, conference: The Art of Resilience—Latinx Public Witness in Troubled Times. Speakers include Fernando Segovia (Vanderbilt Divinity School), Daisy Machado (Union Theological Seminary), Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (Duke University). Free; registration required, at door or online up to September 13 at smu.edu/artofresilience. Multiple locations in Meadows School of the Arts and Perkins School of Theology. Information: https://www.smu.edu/Perkins/PublicPrograms/LatinoCenter/Events/The-Art-of-Resilience

In El Paso

Fridays, 12:00pm-1:00pm, Pax Christi El Paso joins Border Peace Presence in front of the Federal Courthouse (corner of Campbell and San Antonio).

Friday September 27, 7:00pm, film: *The Sultan and the Saint*, about the meeting of Sultan Malik al Kamil and Saint Francis of Assisi. Following the viewing, panel discussion moderated by Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv. Of Lexington, Kentucky, bishop-president of Pax Christi USA.

In Houston

Wednesday August 21, 6:30pm, film: Ay Mariposa, documentary on attempt by US Border Patrol to seize the National Butterfly Center for a border wall site in the Rio Grande Valley. Panel discussion follows. Rice Media Center, Cinema Auditorium, room #100. Use Entrance #8 via University Boulevard and Stockton Dr. Information: info@cechouston.org.

Tuesday September 3, 12:15pm-1:30pm, Simranjit Khalsa, "Experiencing Othering: The Intersection of Religion and Race among Sikhs in England and the US." Kyle Morrow Room, Fondren Library, Rice University. Information: Shirley Tapsatt, shirley Tapsatt, <a href="mailto:shirley-tapsa

Sundays September 22 and 29, Bruce Yeager, "The Jail and Torches that Never Were: Debunking the Scopes-Trial Myth (Background to the Trial). St. Philip Presbyterian Church, room 201, 4807 San Felipe. Information: mmcgm63@gmail.com.

Saturday September 28, 3:00pm, and Sunday September 29, 9:30am, film: "Out of Order," documentary on struggles of LGBTQ clergy. St. Philip Presbyterian Church, 4807 San Felipe. Information: tolerance@rice.edu.

In San Antonio

Tuesday August 20, 6:00pm, Alamo Group, Sierra Club meeting: Daniel Boice (Scientific Studies & Consulting) and Michelle Garza (San Antonio River Authority), "The Head is On! Understanding San Antonio's Urban Heat Island Effect and What We Can Do about It." Eco Centro, 1802 N. Main.

Thursday August 29, 2:00pm-5:00pm, workshop on exploring how compassionate one's involvements are, facilitated by Ann Helmke, City of San Antonio. The Impact Guyild,708 W. Summit. Tickets (free): www.eventbrite.com/e/compassion-integrity-training-tickets-67240954505.

Saturday August 31, 6:00pm-12:00am, Viva El Paso fundraiser benefiting the El Paso Community Foundation El Paso Shooting Victims' Fund. Cherrity Bar, 202 Montana.

Saturday September 7, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting. Guests welcome. Residence of Tom Wakely, 16406 Ledge Point.

Wednesday September 11, 7:00pm-9:00pm, Gilbert King, author of *Beneath a Ruthless Sun. A True Story of Violence, Race, and Justice Lost and Found.*" The book "plunges the reader deeply into the legal practices, civil rights battles, and stubborn sexual inequalities of the mid-20th century..." McCombs Center Rosenberg Skyroom, University of the Incarnate Word, near the entrance at the US 281 northbound frontage road immediately north of Hildebrand.

Saturday September 14, 9:00am-3:00pm, Spirituality and Social Justice Institute, Restoring Justice: Breaking the Cycle of Violence, Crime, and Incarceration. Featured speaker: Fr. Greg Boyle, S.J. Whitley Theological Center, Oblate School of Theology, 285 Oblate Dr., Suggested payment \$50.00. Mealincluded. Information and payment: https://ost.edu/event/ssji2019/

Wednesday September 18, 7:00pm-9:30pm, Peter Steinfels, "Sex Abuse and the Future Church." University Center, Conference Room A, St. Mary's University. Parking in Lots D and H. Information: Cynthia Stookesberry, cstooksberry@stmarytx.edu, 210-436-8054.

Thursday September 19, 4:00pm-8:30pm, symposium, "Moving the Church Forward," featuring Peter Steinfels. University Center, Conference Room A and Foyer, St. Mary's University. Information: Susie Elias selias@stmarytx.edu, 210-436-3516.

Monday September 23, 4:00pm-6:00pm, Stephen Sheehi (William and Mary University), "Decolonizing the Humanities." Northrup Hall 040, Trinity University, One Trinity Place.

Second Reading (Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13)

The passage from *Hebrews* forewarns the early Christians in the Jewish community that they may need to endure persecution. The passage, beginning with a verse prior to that included in the lectionary, addresses the readers as if they were well known to the author: "You have not yet stood opposed, struggling against sin up to the point of blood, and you have completely forgotten the encouragement that speaks to you as sons" (Heb 12:4-5). Then comes an exaggerated saying from the *Book of Proverbs* about fathers whipping sons, which becomes a metaphor for God's treatment of those who would eventually share in His holiness. Fundamentalists have been known to miss the point about enduring opposition and to have taken the passage and the proverb to mean fathers should whip their male children.

Third Reading (Luke 13.22-30)

"After the master of the house rises and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Sir, open it for us,' and replying he will say to you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will begin to say 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught us in the streets,' and he will say to you, 'I do not know where you are from; go away from me, all you workers of injustice.'"

We cannot speak directly of heaven and hell because we have not experienced either directly. Moreover, if we were to face a revelation of heaven and hell in this life, we would still not be able to comprehend it. So we use the metaphorical language of the slave trade (redemption) or danger (salvation). The New Testament book, *The Revelation of John*, and the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Gospel of Matthew* use a judicial metaphor, inspiring Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* depiction in the Sistine Chapel. Our own culture is heavily influenced by psychology; so many today think in terms of developing (or not) an openness to a highest good; heaven would be a state enjoyed in a developed openness and hell would be a blindness or deafness to highest good. Perhaps we are insufficiently distant from our own culture to see this too as metaphorical.

Luke once more uses a metaphor that probably goes back to Jesus—that of a traveler arriving at night and knocking on the door of the household at the intended destination. The parable is spoken in the narrative in the lifetime of Jesus, and it refers to a post-Easter end-time: "After the master of the house rises and shuts the door...."

What are the grounds for redemption, salvation, acquittal, or psychological fulfillment? The judicial metaphor articulates those grounds in terms of rules broken or

not. The psychological metaphor would render such violations as learning experiences and speak instead of a fundamental option for the good. Luke's metaphor has the master of the house recognizing or not recognizing the voice of the one knocking. The recognition does not depend on belonging to the correct church: "We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught us in the streets...." Rather, the master of the house says to those not recognized, "...go away from me, all you workers of injustice."

Poem

One Man's Story (Why have you forsaken me?)

A story of life, death, resurrection, a persisting cycle we share with all creatures:

rocks and stars, tigers and trees, our body's trillions of quick-witted cells, our cosmos of uncounted galaxies.

From heights of intimacy to depths of isolation into a completion to be shared with all.

A story without end.

Tom Keene and Muse December 28, 2018

Book Review, Part 2

Father Luis Olivares. A Biography. Faith Politics and the Origins of the Sanctuary Movement in Los Angeles, by Mario T. García. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018. Reviewed by Anthony J. Blasi.

Part 1 of this review left off with the Claretian priest from San Antonio, still a financial officer of the Claretians but becoming involved in social justice concerns in his East Los Angeles parish. Specifically, he began attending meetings held in his parish to organize boycotts in support of the United Farm Workers Union, and he had a conversion experience upon meeting and befriending César Chávez.

In 1969, Chicano Catholics began demonstrating against archconservative Cardinal James McIntyre of Los Angeles, disrupting his Christmas midnight mass in a

new church built for moneyed people—a Catholic school for Mexican Americans had just been closed. Under Vatican pressure, McIntyre retired and the new, more diplomatic archbishop, Timothy Manning, began discussion with the people who had led the protests. The Vatican also appointed a Latino auxiliary bishop, Juan Arzube—albeit an Ecuadoran rather than a Mexican American—who belonged to PADRES, an association of Latino priests who exerted pressure for Mexican American rights in the Church. Bishop Arzube attended a PADRES festival at the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio in 1975 and learned about the newly established, COPS, San Antonio's Industrial Areas Foundation organization for community organizing. Revising the Saul Alinsky model by basing COPS manly on parishes, COS was successful in making San Antonio politicians responsive to neighborhood needs in the largely Latino west side of San Antonio. Bishop Arzube also met then-auxiliary bishop Patricio Flores and the COPS organizer Ernie Cortes. Back in East Los Angeles, he called a meeting of barrio pastors, who in turn organized UNO (United Neighborhoods Organization). Fr. Luis Olivares, having just transferred to a parish, Soledad, joined. UNO was not affiliated with the Archdiocese, so that it could operate independently, but Bishop Arzube served as a liaison between it and the Archdiocese. The formal establishment of UNO occurred in the fall of 1976, explicitly modeled on San Antonio's COPS, and with Ernie Cortes coming to East Los Angeles as the IAF organizer. Olivares acquired IAF training in Chicago, New York, and San Antonio, learning t use confrontation as a tool.

The first issue UNO took was insurance companies charging more for car insurance in East Los Angeles than elsewhere, with loss rates not justifying the high premiums. Olivares was selected to lead the action committee. He chaired wellrehearsed mass meetings designed to put officials on the hot seat. He was especially good as a spokesman with the English and Spanish media covering the mass meetings. So many people turned up at a well-rehearsed presentation before the County Board of Supervisors that the overflow was directed outside to hold a rally. Then they had a mass meeting with a subcommittee of the state legislature, and then with the state insurance commissioner, whom Governor Jerry Brown had to order to meet with them. The insurance commissioner forced the companies to lower East Los Angeles premiums. and the legislature passed some reforms. Three delegates, including Olivares, even testified in Washington before the Federal Trade Commission. By 1978 there were meetings with insurance company executives, from which memoranda of agreement emerged. Actions on other issues followed, with Olivares involved but not necessarily as the main public figure. UNO would expand beyond east Los Angeles to become Los Angeles Metro.

Olivares had been elected president of PADRES in 1979, which publically involved him in the effort to normalize the presence of "illegal" Mexican "aliens" in the U.S. He also lobbied on behalf of the Latino clergy, encouraging the appointment of a Mexican American as archbishop of San Antonio when Archbishop Francis Furey died. The pope appointed Patricio Flores. During this period, Olivares became increasingly influenced by liberation theology. He led PADRES only two years because the members did not want to admit lay members or affiliate with IAF. PADRES folded in 1989. Meanwhile, in 1981 Olivares was transferred to La Placita Church (Our Lady Queen of Angels) in downtown Los Angeles.



La Placita is the original parish in L.A. founded in 1781, not really having any parish boundaries. Staffed by the Claretians 1908-2015, it is a center of Latino culture. As a small church serving a vast number of people, it had eleven masses every Snday and a social services center. By the 1980s, refugees, mostly Salvadorans fleeing a brutal military dictatorship that was at war with its own people, were arriving in Los Angeles in great numbers. The Reagan administration would not grant them refugee status in the vast majority of cases. Olivares provided meals and lodging for the refugees as best he could. His focus on corporal works of mercy and advocacy for the refugees met with resistance from some of the Claretians at La Placita; this caused some turnover in personnel. Once his team was in place, he delegated authority. Lay people—some of them refugees—sisters, and Fr. Mike Kenned, S.J., were added to that staff. Kennedy was given responsibility for an expanded refugee center. The Center staff, including at times Olivares himself, interviewed people who arrived; at first, to avoid creating evidence that could be used by prosecutors, they took no notes and made no recordings. Later in the 1980s, they made typed summaries of what the refugees had been through. Depending on needs, the refugees were provided food and clothing or referred to cooperating hospitals, counselors, or employers. The Centro also offered language classes—English for Salvadorans, Spanish for Mayans from elsewhere. They also made contacts with attorneys and, when necessary, spirited those in danger of deportation away from the border regions and even to Canada. Because La Placita had such a large clientele, parish income from Sunday collections and fund raising events funded it all. The refugees themselves developed their own leadership by telling their stories at masses, at press conferences, and at other churches.

Olivares allowed both homeless men and refugees to sleep in the church and basement hall at La Placita. This required rules and regimen as well as a daily clean-up, and it was controversial. The numbers kept increasing, even though refugees were limited to three nights before being referred to shelters. Eventually, the numbers

subsided when Dolores Mission also accepted refugees overnight. Women were placed in an empty convent at Blessed Sacrament parish. The effect of all this, intended, was to embarrass the City of Los Angeles and the Archdiocese.

Olivares and Kennedy made many trips to Central America, especially El Salvador. Olivares took thousands of dollars in cash, supplied by donors, to give to people to help them leave the country. The Salvadoran military and death squads tried to find him when he was in the country, but people hid him. He also visited Salvador refugee camps in Honduras, calling their existence and conditions to the attention of the press. On one trip, he wa part of a delegation that handed Salvadoran President Napoleon Duarte thousands of letters calling upon him to end the civil war.

In 1982 Quaker congregations in Arizona, soon joined by others, began publically declaring their churches sanctuaries for Central American refugees. Olivares and his congregation did so in Los Angeles in 1985. Privately, La Placita had been sheltering the refugees for years, but now it was making a public statement. Unlike many Protestant and Jewish denominations, the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops did not endorse the sanctuary movement, though it called for the U.S. government to recognize the Central Americans as legitimate refugees. Declaring public sanctuary wa left to individual parishes. The federal government prosecuted some clergy and sisters in Arizona, resulting in convictions. That prosecution was the catalyst for Olivares, Michael Kennedy, and La Placita. Moreover, the heritage of his refugee grandparents urged Olivares to do it. The Claretian authorities allowed Olivares to make the declaration. The announcement was made at an elaborate mass and press conference on December 12, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The new archbishop of Los Angeles, Roger Mahoney, at first encouraged the declaration and said he would participate, but he later proved to be hesitant and at the last minute did not show up. Auxiliary bishop Juan Arzube arrived to be the main celebrant at the mass instead, with numerous Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish clergy in attendance with the parishioners. Hooded refugees, dress in black, gave testimonies at the end of the mass. The declaration and a press conference followed.

In subsequent years, the press played up a rivalry between Olivares and Archbishop Mahoney, and the two differed in private as well over confronting the Reagan administration and violating federal law; however, the two never went public with their differences.

While Central American refugees received the most media attention in the 1970s, undocumented Mexican migrants began to draw attention in the 1980s. The services Olivares provided for refugees began to be extended to Mexican economic migrants in large numbers. In 1987, citing Pope John Paul II, Archbishop Mahoney, and the Bible, Olivares and other local priests and sisters called on Catholics to hire "illegals" in contravention of federal law; they also announced that they would do so themselves. On the following December 12, La Placita was the site of a public declaration of an expanded sanctuary, one extended to undocumented Mexican immigrants. Bishop Gilbert Chávez, auxiliary of San Diego, with Archbishop Mahoney's permission but not presence, was the main celebrant at the mass and personage at the news conference. Jesuit Father Greg Boyle, also participating, announced that Dolores Mission would also be a sanctuary for undocumented Mexican immigrants.

Archbishop Mahoney agreed that U.S. immigration law was unjust, but he was unwilling to violate it. He could have removed Olivares and Kennedy, but that would have been a political disaster. So he asked the Claretian and Jesuit provincials to reassign them; both refused. Then he tried to silence Fathers Olivares, Kennedy, and Boyle on the subject of immigration, but they never complied wit his demand (which was subsequently withdrawn quietly). The INS threatened criminal prosecution b that never occurred. Rather, INS and the Los Angeles police conducted surveillance of La Placita. The regional INS commissioner, Harold Ezell, a conservative Evangelical who was hostile toward immigrants and Catholics, frequently denounced Olivares in the media.

During this time, Olivares was asked to serve as Chair of the Coalition for Human Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, which received over a million dollars to advertise and promote the process for people who had been in the U.S. without documentation to become legal prior to 1990. He was also on an advisory board for the Southern California Ecumenical Council Interfaith Task Force on Central America, and spoke at many of its demonstrations. He was a Board member of the Central American Relief Center, and he often marched in Casa El Salvador demonstrations. He was often the main speaker at protest events, at which he always spoke calmly but directly. He participated in a picket by the Packing House Workers' Union, attracting the press, which followed him, and thereby raising the profile of a strike. Other unions, whose members often included undocumented immigrants and refugees, sought him out, and he could often be seen on their picket lines. Strained relations with Archbishop Mahoney were revealed again when Mahoney opposed the unionization of grave diggers who worked at Catholic cemeteries. When police hassled street venders and day laborers who congregated on street corners waiting for potential employers to come by and hire then, Olivares arranged space for both on La Placita property. By the late 1980s, he was receiving death threats.

After the U.S.-backed Salvadoran military murdered six Jesuits at their university, along with a house keeper and her daughter, Olivares joined clergy from a number of denominations as well as prominent lay people in blocking the entrances to the federal building in Los Angeles. This was a frequent occurrence, at which some, including Olivares several times, would be arrested. Demonstrations would set out from La Placita and end at the federal building. On one occasion in 1990, even Archbishop Mahoney joined in a rally.

Claretian pastors served two three-year terms, and by 1990 Olivares had already served three such terms. A new Claretian provincial abruptly announced Olivares would be replaced; there had been no transition discussions with either the parish or Olivares, which were traditional. Father Michael Kennedy, the Jesuit who had worked with Olivares the nine years, moved the refugee ministry to Dolores Mission, which the Jesuits staffed. The press promoted the theory that Archbishop Mahoney was behind the pending removal of Olivares, but both Olivares and Mahoney denied it and took to praising one another. Nevertheless, with Mahoney's encouragement, a new pastor would end the political rallies, turn away the homeless, and keep the street venders and those looking for work off the parish grounds.

In the course of 1990 Olivares' health was failing. He had never been robust, and he suffered for years from diabetes. He had been hospitalized, but insisted on being brought to La Placita for his farewell mass, which was described at the beginning of the

book. Father Michael Kennedy, S.J., officiated, and Olivares gave the homily from a wheel chair before returning to the hospital. He was suffering from meningitis and AIDS, the latter probably contracted when getting an insulin shot at a rural hospital in EI Salvador on one of his many trips there. Once recovered from the meningitis, he lived out his remaining years at the Claretian provincial headquarters. There was no good treatment for AIDS in 1990. Investigative reporters tried but failed to find an alternative way Olivares could have contracted HIV/AIDS. Olivares had informally become a member of the Espinoza family of La Placita Parish, and Juanita Espinoza wa allowed by the Claretians to care for him at the provincial house. He had many visitors and phone callers; frequently coming by ere the Jesuits Mike Kennedy and Greg Boyle, Claretian Richard Estrada, actor Martin Sheen, and Henry, Luis Olivares's brother. Others included former INS official Ernest Gustafson, César Chávez (himself soon to die), and now-Cardinal Mahoney.

The last visit by Luis Olivares to San Antonio was for Christmas 1991. He participated as a speaker at fund raisers back in Los Angeles, largely for Central American support ventures. At one of these he joined famed poet and Nicaraguan minister of culture Ernesto Cardenal. He also participated in AIDS prevent events, often at churches, but he was never invited by a Catholic church to do that. His last appearance was January 19, 1992, as a speaker at MacArthur park, Los Angeles, at the celebration of the peace accords that ended the civil war in El Salvador. Meanwhile under the new U.S. president, George H.W. Bush, the deportation of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees ceased.

After bouts of depression, he was hospitalized again in March 1993 for palliative care. He died March 18 at age 59 and is buried in the Claretian graveyard at San Gabriel Mission.

"Luis Olivares was my best friend"

"He never said no to any request we made of him. He joined us in demonstrations, fasted with us, joined us in victory—and he never doubted in the victory and justice of our cause."

"He had the gift of faith, of knowing what is truly important in this lfie. He taught us a lot about social justice. We have a responsibility to Father Luis, his memory, to do something for the poor to keep his spirit alive."





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/