

Tui Motu

InterIslands

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***“reaching for
the sky...”***

inside

- leadership training in outdoor education
- focus on divorce, remarriage and the church



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Cover picture:

Roncalli College, Timaru, Outdoor Education (see pages 16-19).
6th Former Amelia Zandbergen,
ready for action!

The unforgivable sin

On the First Sunday of Lent Pope John Paul will preside over a *day of pardon* when he will publicly apologise on behalf of the Catholic Church for many wrongs done to people in the name of Christ. Meanwhile Cardinal Ratzinger is issuing a document, at the Pope's instigation, seeking forgiveness for sins committed in the past. Its intention is to 'purify the memory' of the church for the Year of Jubilee. While this is entirely praiseworthy, why should the church's focus be on the *past* when there are glaring deficiencies in the *present*? Surely, Lent during Jubilee Year is an ideal opportunity to redress these.

With this in mind, our focus this month is the plight of the separated and divorced, especially in the Catholic community. Once upon a time Catholics smugly considered divorce as something that happened to other, lesser mortals. It was, after all, forbidden by the church. Today, Catholic marriages at least in Western countries are as vulnerable to breakdown as anybody else. It is a massive and universal problem.

Fr Frank Kelly, of the Christchurch diocese, writes eloquently and with deep feeling (pages 6-8) of the plight of the separated and divorced. He has been dealing with such groups over many years. He describes the alienation of those who can see no path back into the church: "it's like being divorced twice". If they are remarried without having gone through the annulment process, they are forbidden officially from receiving Communion. In other words they are deprived of the sacraments, treated as if guilty of an unforgivable sin. Fr Frank states bluntly, "these adults who have committed their lives to God, have come to an impassable wall."

It is not difficult to see how the church has come to take such an unwavering stance. The integrity of marriage is an essential base for stable family life. Christian marriage is a sacrament. The covenant relationship between husband

and wife reflects the covenant love between God and Israel – and between God and the church. Dr Jack Dominian (pages 14-15) suggests: "Marriage is not just a Sacrament; it is *the* Sacrament, through which the majority of Christians will find God through each other". The church has interpreted literally the words of Christ in condemning divorce and sexual sin.

However, this is not the issue here. Marriage breakdown is not always the result of infidelity or sexual sin. Far more commonly, what happens is that the marriage relationship dies. The couple, either through incompatibility or neglect or original error, fall out of love. The home ceases to be a loving place, and it may be better for both parties and for the children that the couple separate. A death has occurred. Sadly the church – precisely because of the high store it sets on the holiness of marriage – is not seen as the place to go for comfort. It is a classic case of the "lost son" as described in the gospel parable – with the church failing in the role of loving father.

The situation is not without hope. On pages 9-11 an article describes the journey of one couple who went through all the trauma of separation, divorce and eventual remarriage. Yet they are in the church. Their resurrection came through the love and acceptance of the church community, whose action and judgment points the way to a change which has to come.

The bishops of the world have called for this change. The New Zealand Bishops were emphatic in seeking some redress for the separated and divorced at the 1998 Oceania Synod. So far their pleas seem to have fallen on deaf Roman ears.

Let the final word come from Fr Humphrey O'Leary, himself a distinguished Canon Lawyer. He surveys (pages 12-13) the way the church's marriage laws have changed over the centuries and will continue to change. He concludes with the pithy comment: "it is not so much a question of *whether* but of *when*!" *M.H.*



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Tui Motu-InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed.

The name **Tui Motu** was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God.

Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

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Promoting healing justice: a new way forward

*L*isten to me! Such an easy statement to make. But who truly listens? In a radical shift from the adversarial criminal justice system, victim's stories are being heard in a safe environment where offenders are taking responsibility for the harm they have caused.

New Zealand is leading the way by experimenting with restorative justice conferences for serious adult offenders, in a new project in West Auckland. With the financial assistance of *Methodist Mission Northern* a 50 case pilot is about to start in the Waitakere District Court. Community facilitators are being trained with a view to continuing the opportunity for restorative justice conferences when the trial is complete. The government will independently evaluate the project to determine whether victims' needs are being met and whether face-to-face meetings can make a difference to offending rates.

Numbers of restorative justice groups have been set up around New Zealand by community volunteers, but this process will be the first that involves victims and thorough professional scrutiny of the restorative justice process.

We all know what it feels like when we are not listened to. "Do I exist at all for this person?", we wonder. But we also know what it feels like when we are truly listened to. It can be an awesome experience. We encounter no resistance, but complete openness and receptivity. Its effect can be profound.

Being listened to in such a way is a gift to the speaker who becomes the one who receives. The listener becomes the giver of their open mind and attention. Spaces exist where silence has a place. The place is like a temple that is created from the living threads which flow from one being to another. An environment can now be created for those victims of crime who seek to

be heard and seek healing.

Restorative Justice conferences seek to provide such an environment. Parties meet and sit in a circle so that the victim can dialogue with the offender if she/he chooses. Skilled facilitators are able to work in a gentle, compassionate way with both victims and offenders. Providing an uninterrupted listening space for this work means that both the victim and the offender are able to work with the spiritual significance of the crime as well as with the emotional and physical harm.

*T*his alternative system is at odds with the current adversarial Western criminal justice system. The two processes can be explained symbolically by comparing a triangle with a circle. The triangle represents the hierarchical nature of Western law as a pyramid of power. In contrast, the circle shows equality in relationship, and implies that discussion within the circle promotes the respect required for a decision by consensus.

Respect can only be obtained when the parties engage and listen in an authentic way. Authenticity enables the offender to take responsibility, while the victim moves from feeling aggrieved to being listened to and having his/her experience validated.

The offender begins to understand the effects of his actions, while the victim learns to put the offence in the context of the offender's life. Both start to learn about the other. Respect and understanding grow, and fear lessens. A profound degree of listening takes place. The parties seek resolutions which can heal and even strengthen the relationship. The end result is the restoration of social harmony.

Helen Bowen

(Helen Bowen is a criminal lawyer practising in Auckland, and working especially with youth)

On the Cross

*Scrub hills of giant mushroom shapes,
sprouted nimbly in her line of vision;
in the furthest distance, a dark worm-like mass
crawled forward with unrelenting urgency.*

*All around her, gathered a mighty crowd,
to view the undulating form from afar;
in the deepening silence, distance slid away;
clear light revealed a fearsome division of dragoons.*

*Winding slowly, the column ebbed forward,
towards the gathering of spectators;
in the forefront, she saw him with his cross,
his face alert and eyes keenly focused.*

*The march came to a halt before the throng
of strong, earnest, high-profile persons,
learned and wise in all manner of ways,
who held the helm of our stratified society.*

*He stood utterly still, scanning their faces,
seeking an unwavering, fundamental answer;
warned by her instinct, she retreated to the rear,
into the safe anonymity of a coward.*

*Crowd remained indifferent and unmoved,
apathetic to his errand, unflinching before his scrutiny;
concerned with matters of global significance,
his cause seemed feeble in their estimation.*

*Wretched with her familiar fear of pain,
she waited for her moment of appraisal;
recognition of the inevitability of her destiny,
plunged her into swirling elemental panic.*

*All of a sudden his eyes met hers;
teacher and disciple stood face to face;
his captivating steady gaze,
propelled her into the centre of his mind.*

*He appealed to her soul, while she pleaded frailty,
soliciting reprieve from the imminent terror;
was she given a choice with no alternatives?
Could she refuse him without damage to his mission?*

*Granted no respite, she bowed weakly;
with lightning speed roles were reversed;
with full weight of his cross on her back,
she began her slow climb to the crest.*

*He walked beside her in deliberate hush;
his relief sustained her on the final stretch;
captive as she was, his freedom
broke the bondage, releasing her from fear.*

*At the summit, standing steadily, he witnessed
the rubrics of nailing in its thematic unfolding;
as every atom of her body wracked with pain,
his silent eyes enfolded her in a soothing ambience.*

*In his presence she was suspended,
hung between rocky ground and the vault of sky;
he rested his abiding glance on her
without once disrupting the current of calling.*

*A consuming fire blazed at the base;
fiery tendrils leapt into the air scorching her;
at the zenith of suffering, she spurted out
the 'yes' that was her final surrender.*

*With supersonic speed reality altered;
absolute pain turned into unalloyed rapture;
she was transported out of this realm
into the frontier of ineffable joy.*

*Cool breeze unfurled its tender hands to anoint her;
along the silver blue sky came white clouds,
sailing in with fine luminous shrouds,
as the teacher received disciple's libation in silence.*

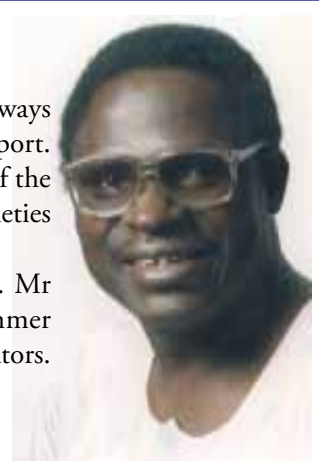
Laetitia Puthenpadath



Bible Society workers killed in crash

Four leading Bible workers were killed on January 30 when a Kenya Airways Airbus crashed into the sea minutes after taking off from Abidjan airport. Among the 169 people who lost their lives were the general secretary of the Bible Society of Nigeria, the Rev Gaius Musa and the United Bible Societies media consultant for Africa, the Rev Dr Stephen Niyang. Also killed in the crash were Canadians Robert and Ruth Chapman. Mr Chapman had recently been appointed Africa director of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a translation arm of Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Tui Motu joins the general secretary of the United Bible Societies, the Rev Fergus Macdonald, in extending profound sympathy to the Bible Society and the bereaved families.



When Dreams Die

A few years ago the New Zealand Catholic bishops issued a very compassionate document regarding Catholics who had gone through separation, divorce and, perhaps, remarriage. *Tui Motu* talks to a priest working in this field, a couple who have been through it and a Canon Lawyer. Each asks serious questions of the official church's present stance

For 15 years a Christchurch priest, Fr Frank Kelly, has been ministering to groups of separated and divorced people. It is just like a death, he says. But where is the resurrection?

we going?" They recall their experience it and then begin to name the stages. And they do it together, because the others have usually experienced something similar. There is empathy in the group because they have all been through the same separation and they don't have to pretend.

The next stage for them is to begin to recover some self-esteem. We in the team are not there to blame them or to find fault. We are there to listen, and only respond if they wish us to. Our approach has to be totally non-judgmental. The best compliment I ever received was when someone said, "Frank, you could have been divorced yourself!"

The group

We can never make any assumptions because each group is a new group and each separation is unique. We are always learning. At the very first gathering I got a real shock because so many of the participants were in their 50s and 60s. I had expected they would be much younger people.

Sometimes they had been separated for five or ten years. They realised the cupboard was bare; they needed to go shopping to find something to mend a broken heart. One person helped us understand the stages they go through by describing how defensive he had been at first – "it was all her fault, not mine". After three years he could see that it

was at least 30 percent his fault. And after five years he admitted it had been 50-50. Those who are not so far down the track are still coping with parents and friends who instinctively defend their side of the argument.

Another thing we have to look at is how the break-up is affecting the offspring. Children of all ages will often be emotionally disturbed by what has happened. They don't know how to handle it, and do not find it easy to communicate their feelings to their peers. So they blame one or both parents – or even start blaming themselves. The parents have to continually reassure them: "it wasn't *your* fault!" And then there is the social stigma.

Lawyers are rarely helpful. They are concerned with the division of property and defending their client's interest. They are not objective. Their client is usually in a mixed up and confused state – but they do nothing to help them deal with that. One lawyer sent a letter to the estranged party which was so outlandish that he took it to his ex-spouse, and both agreed the letter was a fictional account. The lawyer had made it up!

Aim of the weekend

The model we follow is one of recovery and hope. Christians and non-Christians begin to see a spiritual path for themselves. They discover people who care for them, and they start to care

again for themselves. Some of them have simply let themselves go; they are living in a pigsty, or perhaps they have started drinking, or got themselves into another relationship which isn't going to work, or taken refuge in abnormal behaviour. But with genuine sympathetic help they will come out of their darkened caves.

Occasionally a person will find healing and even be able to return to their original partner. That is certainly the option I would prefer. But usually irreparable damage has been done, and there is no going back. The first marriage is simply dead. They have to learn to 'read' the apparently hostile behaviour of people, perhaps when they go to church. They can be ignored – or they feel people are hostile. But, in fact, their friends simply cannot cope with what has happened.

By the time the weekend comes to an end, most participants seem to be in a much better space. Depending on the group, they may agree to meet together socially in six weeks or three months. I am included, so I continue to be involved. One thing is certain: everyone is poorer after a break-up – except perhaps the lawyers.

Where does the church come in?

Often I will ask them who did they consult when things started to go wrong. Most say the doctor. Very few go to their minister or priest. The church

Long ago, when I was a seminary student at Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, the poet James K Baxter came one evening to give us a talk on poetry. He brought with him a new work entitled *A Ballad for the Men of Holy Cross*. It was especially for us students. Towards the end of the talk he said: "Have compassion. Do not be too hard on people." It was refreshing to hear of the importance of this virtue in the life of someone who was a convert to Catholicism and a reformed alcoholic. Years later, with these words still

House team and two lay people, who often enough have done the weekend Course themselves earlier on.

Pope John Paul has stated that divorced people should be shown compassion, love and support. Yet often enough, the experience in the church of the participants who come to Rosary House has been just the opposite. The Catholic church, for the most part, does not have a problem celebrating the marriage of widows and widowers. Their former spouse has died, leaving the way open for them to remarry in church.

closely at a marriage relationship which is 'dead' and cannot be revived.

Furthermore, an increasing number of Scripture scholars have investigated the theme of divorce in the New Testament. For instance, R David Kaylor, in his book *Jesus the Prophet*, has reached this conclusion regarding the statement by Jesus in *Matthew* on divorce: "The saying on divorce should refer to the internal quality of the marriage relation rather than the inadmissibility of divorce on any grounds except one". Marriage should not be viewed as a legal form only; rather the quality of the married relationship must be addressed as well.

After 15 years of pastoral work with divorced and separated people I find the majority of separated people would say the trauma of divorce has been a death experience. Many view it as a crucifixion – left, abandoned and desolate, like an executed criminal. What they are saying to the church is: *where is the resurrection?*

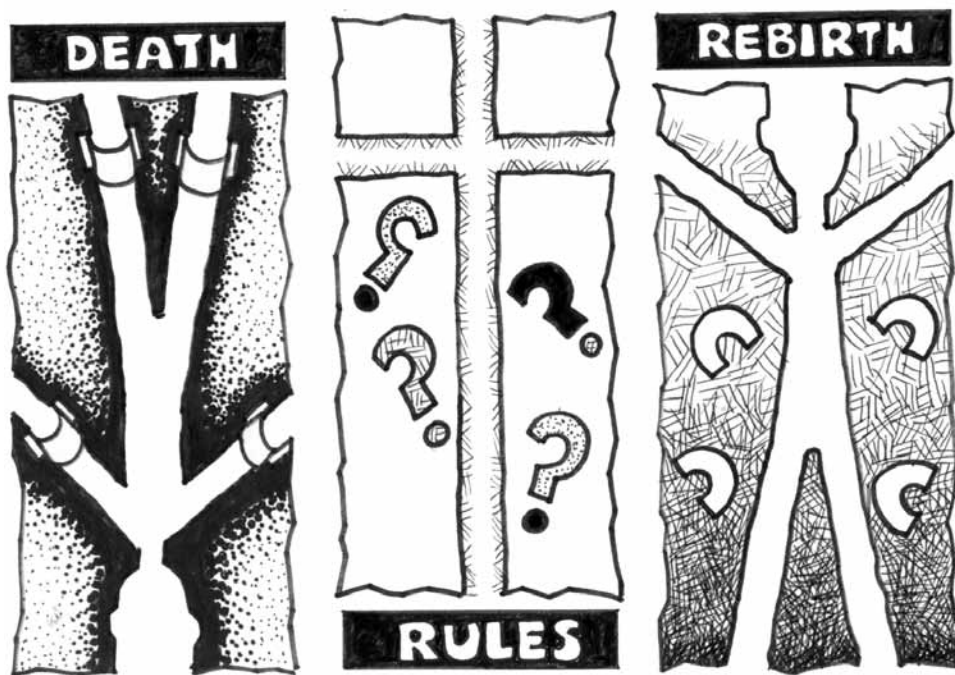
Anger

Each group that comes to Rosary House is unique. Yet one of the first things that always surfaces for them is anger: anger directed at someone apart from their estranged partner. The anger is not at first directed against themselves either – that may come later. The anger seems to come because they looked to people they thought they would get help from – and it wasn't forthcoming. The situation worsens where there were family friends who are friends no longer: perhaps they have sided with the estranged partner or simply shut both out of their friendship circle.

Death

Often they express deep recriminations – 'If I didn't nag him, perhaps he wouldn't have drunk so much!' Or 'If I'd bought her flowers, perhaps she would still be here.' Once they had an idealistic picture of their marriage; gradually it became tired and sick; eventually it died.

In the course of the weekend, by using ▷▷



in mind, I accepted an invitation to enter into the area of pastoral care of separated and divorced people.

Divorce or separation are rightly described as 'death without any ritual'. Funerals are celebrated for those who die physically – with readings, songs, stories, eulogies, flowers, Eucharist, even with balloons. The death of a marriage receives no such recognition; there is little or no comfort for the grieving one, who may be left to face social shame and an uncertain future.

Once a year in the Christchurch area, the *Rosary House Spirituality Centre* provides an opportunity for divorced and separated folk to have a retreat/seminar weekend. The team – apart from me – consists of one of the Rosary

When a divorced person wants to remarry – one for whom the annulment process is not possible – then the wedding cannot be celebrated in church, even though the original marriage is quite dead. It is time for our church to look closely at death, not simply as a physical ending: we need also to look *they consult the doctor:*

very few go to their minister or priest

a grief model the participants are able to recognise stages of dying and death: they look back and name the process that is going on within them. They recall times when they knew things were going wrong and perhaps confronted their partner – "Why can't we talk? Where are

▷▷ does not appear to them to be a healing place for them. It offers an exalted picture of the marriage ideal – and they feel excluded! They are ‘failures’ or ‘sinners’. The clergy naturally will uphold the good of marriage, but that seems to exclude them. And when they can see no path back into the church, it’s like being divorced twice.

Meanwhile other Catholics may be

*when they can see no
path back into the church,
it’s like being divorced
twice*

and knees in order to be reinstated. Compassion does not rule here; the documentation must be correct.

Recently I had a person come to me who had been married several times, but because their case conformed to the rules they could get remarried in the church! For others the only way is for their previous partner to die. These situations are very unequal. The church simply prolongs the suffering for these people. The Pope says that we must show compassion. That is good – but it is a kindness that excludes sacramental life. These people are in the situation of the ‘unforgivable sin’: there is no way back for them, and there is no way forward.

Children from non-practical families can go through the First Communion process, come to the sacrament with little or no faith, and they are blessed by the church, even though they may never return to church again. But these adults who have committed their lives to God have come to an impassable wall. There seems to me to be something radically wrong with this.

Some priests will offer solutions where there is insufficient lead from those in the church who make the rules. Should people have to come to us priests and ask permission to approach the sacraments – as if priests are the owners

asking themselves, “what are we to do?” “This situation is a bad model for our children. We should not associate with someone who is divorced and in a *de facto* relationship.” So the person is avoided. And it isn’t only the Catholic church. Sometimes a minister may appear to take one side or the other – and for the injured party that results in a disintegration of their religious focus. Even the Social Welfare people may make them feel inferior.

In turn, they feel ostracised. They lose their friends, their self-esteem. They lose financially, and often there are huge legal battles over property and children. The estranged couple may continue to war over the children and fill them with poisonous information about the other party.

New relationships

Not many who come to our weekends are in a new relationship. We have to warn them about the sobering statistics regarding second marriages – that 60 percent fail. Sadly many divorcees carry their old ‘baggage’ into a new relationship. They will choose someone with a similar temperament or situation to the previous partner. I recall a woman whose first husband was an alcoholic, who found another alcoholic; and one woman whose husband beat her, proceeded to find another who also bashed her up.

*to deny such people
all sacramental life
within the church,
seems grossly unfair*

and they are just clients? Other churches don’t quite have this problem.

If Pinochet can qualify to go to the sacraments – unrepentant as he seems to be – surely there must be a far stronger case for these people when they hunger for the sacraments but are faced with a legal obstacle the church has imposed?

Some will come back to me having found another partner. If it is a case of annulment, then the matter is relatively straightforward. But some refuse to go through the process. “I went through hell”, they say, “and I don’t want to go through that again”. There are others who, deep down, still love the person who has apparently rejected them. For them there is a quiet desperation in their lives: they don’t know where to go. I always suggest they come back to me if they cannot face the annulment process – or if they are turned down.

Sacraments and the remarried

To deny such people all sacramental life within the church, seems to me to be grossly unfair. The church appears to ‘own’ the situation as regards sacramental marriage. “These are the rules – and that’s that!” If a person marries outside the church, then they are expected come back in on hands

*These lost children
are the very ones who
cannot come back
home*

These lost children are the very ones who cannot come back home!

Conclusion

For me personally this work is one of the times when I am really close to Christ. These people are very much ‘on the cross’. Many who have done the course, have found God and a new spiritual strength, and are on the way to being made whole again. People may say: “I’ve matured. I’ve come of age. I may have been like a stupid teenager when I first got married. Now I feel fully mature.” It is like the lame walking again, running

In reaching out to our separated, divorced and remarried Catholics, we offer an assurance that you are loved... we pray that the care with which you are held in your respective parish communities, will be the seed of hope and joy in your own lives, and that you will find peace.

(N.Z. Catholic Bishops: When Dreams Die, 1982)

A tale of homecoming

What happens when Catholic marriage falls apart? What happens when later on another relationship starts? And what if both seek and find total acceptance within the church community?

Jackie Brown-Haysom

Jill and Rex are in their fifties. They have four adult children, and their first grandchildren are on the way. He's tall, dark and on the quiet side. She's little, blonde and loaded with warmth and enthusiasm. She works in a parish office. He teaches at a Catholic school. They've both served on the parish council, studied and tutored with the National Centre for Religious Studies and led RCIA. She has a gift for linking music and liturgy. He's a eucharist minister. Both have been divorced.

Jill's story

Jill was a 'cradle Catholic', educated in Catholic schools. She was married at 21, not long after breaking off a previous engagement. "In retrospect, I probably got into marriage because I felt it was the only sort of responsibility that would overtake the responsibility I had for my parents", she says.

Her husband later identified Jill's heavily dependent, alcoholic mother as the primary cause of their marital breakdown, but Jill is not one to apportion blame. "I guess I just needed to get away from home, having been thwarted in my vocation to enter a convent because my mother wouldn't sign things. But I was a very staunch Catholic. I knew my catechism, my rule, my law – marriage was once and for all.

"I probably knew before I married that I shouldn't go through with it, but I suppose I worried about losing my credibility by breaking another engagement. I remember having in my mind that I would definitely make it work."

Sadly her determination was not rewarded. "The marriage lasted 13 years before I could get out. I agonised at it for so many years. Eventually I became quite sick and kept going along for tests, but I was just a nervous mess I suppose. I got to the stage where I was dreaming that everybody around me had died, and the only people I felt concerned about were my two kids."

A marriage guidance counsellor at Catholic Social Services told Jill she had a 'feelings block' and referred her to a specialist clinic. "That was where I actually came to understand, for the first time in my life, that I had choices. It seems unbelievable to me now that as a 33-year-old I had never really known that.

"I'd never had to consider the morality of anything, because I knew if I did this it was right, if I did that it was wrong. Very black and white, but in our church that was the way it was."

When Jill at last resolved to leave her husband, it was a huge relief.

"Having made the decision, I never had any problems with it. There was such a sense of healing it was unbelievable."

By the time Jill and her children – then aged 7 and 9 – moved out, her grieving had been done, but in its place was a lingering sense of failure. "I had been very active in my netball club, and they were looking to select their first life member. Someone said, 'Oh, you would be absolutely ideal' – and I was so ashamed. Although I felt forgiven, there was still this sense that I wasn't worthy to be any kind of model because I had a failed marriage."

Jill remained active in her church, leading children's liturgy and serving on parish council.

Remarriage

After she met Rex she sought annulment so she could remarry. "I had a very good case, based on my background, but my mother was very 'on the edge' and even suicidal occasionally. In the end I just felt I couldn't put her through it for the sake of what I was doing."

The couple agreed to marry anyway, and arranged a celebrant, planning a quiet ceremony in the knowledge that church laws would prevent their Catholic friends from attending. "But when I told my friends they

▷▷ intended it to be only a short-term thing.”

The church’s attitude to the sanctity of Rex’s first marriage was equally upsetting. “I was a nominal Anglican and married in a registry office, but because my parents baptised me, the church still saw it as a Christian marriage which had to be annulled.”

But if Catholic legalism was an irritation to Rex, the Catholic community that Jill brought him into was a delight. “It was a very accepting community. After my divorce I had taken a year off and gone to training college so I was looking for a teaching job. Through the community I found out about a job at the local Catholic school.

We got married and two weeks later I started teaching there, so I jumped into a totally Catholic situation. It was a slight shock to the system.”

Rex became a regular attendant at Mass, with Jill and the children, although he says it was in part Jill’s determined adherence to her faith that prompted him to look more closely at Catholicism. “Seeing the way Jill stuck to her guns and defended this dumb notion that the church had, in spite of everything; I think I probably started to think, ‘well, there’s got to be something in this.’ And then there were the people at school – both lay and religious. It’s bound to have an effect on you when they’re doing something that’s a little bit out of your experience.”

Rex attended sessions on *Becoming a Catholic*, then moved on to a three-year *Walk by Faith* course. “People would say things like, ‘Gosh you’re doing well for a non-Catholic.’ I hated being called that, because, after all, they were just ‘non-Anglicans’.”



When the *Catholic Institute of Theology* started, Rex decided to do “a few papers”. Six years later he had completed a degree, although still nominally Anglican. “Most people probably did regard me as Catholic by that time. I gradually got sort of sucked in I suppose.”

His anger at the church’s legal structure had abated somewhat. “I had come to realise that the church had useful rules, but they could sometimes be interpreted or applied too rigidly. There is room, I think, for a pastoral approach to these things.”

Reception into the church

For 11 years Rex went to Mass each week, still struggling with the annulment issue, which he saw as his only route into the church. “Then, almost out of the blue, I was taken aside for a couple of talks about being received into the Catholic church. I suppose someone

put a word in for me. I didn’t ask for it because I wasn’t aware that it was a possibility, but we had a small semi-private ritual and I was received.”

Rex’s colleagues at school and friends from the parish were ecstatic, celebrating his new status with parties. “From that point on it’s never been an issue. You have people who are drawn to a church by traditions, but personally I was drawn to it by the people rather than the institution itself. I never felt pushed out of the Catholic community as such, only the church institution, so it was very comfort-able really.”

After 18 years of marriage, Rex and Jill see their re-acceptance into the church as a success story. “There are some good people around and it’s a shame to lose them through divorce and remarriage if you can find ways of incorporating them effectively”, Rex says. ■

said, 'Oh you can't do that'; so we ended up getting married in their garden. A number of our Catholic friends were there, although I know that there were also phone calls to the presbytery telling the priest that Catholics were witnessing this marriage."

Jill gave up her work within the church, but believed she could still receive communion because her conscience was clear. "I knew that Christ Jesus wouldn't have refused me, so I went and had a chat with the priest.

"He said to me: 'Jill, before we start, don't ask me anything because I will have to give you the church view.' I said I wasn't going to ask anything – I was going to tell him. But he talked about the witness aspect – how other people would see it – so I didn't receive communion after all."

Communion

The family continued to attend Mass and found the church community very accepting. "That was very important, to have friends there. Yet I know they were not affirming what I had done. What they were affirming was that they knew me

*if legalism was an
irritation, the community
that Jill brought him into
was a delight*

was no reason to exclude her from receiving Communion, and was urged by her community to share in it, but wanted "an official okay. A priest can't dispute with an individual's conscience. If you have gone through the 'internal forum' he can't refuse communion or the sacraments.

"I reached the point of saying,

well enough to believe that what I did was right for me.

"They weren't saying the church is wrong and this should be allowed. Had I gone to communion I think I would have had a very different response, so I think in the end the witness aspect was really very important."

As the years passed, Jill began to sense a new attitude. "One day this fellow sidled up to me and said, 'Jill, it breaks my heart to see you and Rex unable to receive communion. I

*personally I was
drawn to the church by
the people rather than the
institution itself*

'Look, you don't want me. I'm damned if I'm going to come to communion', when I realised I was actually depriving myself. So I went back."

Rex's story

Rex grew up in Britain. He married at 23 and had two daughters. After the family moved to New Zealand his marriage began to fall apart, and he separated from his wife after 17 years.

Remarriage

When he and Jill began to consider marriage, his first encounters with the Catholic church brought nothing but frustration. "The Catholic legal system was telling us where we could marry and what the story would be. I found the whole annulment process really frustrating, and to a certain extent I guess I still do. The process seems to be based on your situation the moment you go into a marriage, and as far as I'm concerned I had gone into my first marriage with quite good intentions. I hadn't

want to share my communion today with you, in my heart.'

"It just blew my mind. Then people started giving me permission to go to communion. Sometimes friends would bring back half a host, and things like that."

Jill had resumed her involvement in other aspects of Catholic life, teaching music at a Catholic school, although her offer to help with RE was tactfully declined. Later she began work in a parish, co-ordinating sacramental programmes. She enrolled for a course with the NCRS, and chose as her special study topic the place of remarried Catholics in the church.

"So many people are not aware of the situation because it's not talked about. I was fortunate to know a bit about where we were at, but many people even now think that when you're divorced, that's it – you're automatically cut off. In fact that's not how it works. In effect you cut yourself off, and that was very real for me.

"I knew where the law was at, yet I did this. I didn't have to. It's very hard to get that across to people who are sympathetic to you."

Jill still longed for official approval. She believed in her heart that there

But God our Father, contemplating us like any father, hugs us, his children, close to his breast. Because he is God he has the tender love of a father for his children. And his Son brought back the lost sheep, bearing them on his shoulder, precious stones and pearls with which to grace the lump of dark clay that he hugs to his breast.

(Hildegard of Bingen, taken from *That You May Live*; see page 32)



The church's teaching on the indissolubility and fidelity of marriage needs to be seen alongside her teaching on the need to be compassionate and understanding towards those in any kind of difficulty. We want our people to understand this, so that the separated and divorced have a sure sense of belonging, and feel encouraged to participate in the sacramental life of the Catholic community.

(N.Z. Catholic Bishops: When Dreams Die, 1982)

The parish community should reflect the warmth of a loving family. When the parish opens its arms in welcome and love to touch the disadvantaged, it embraces Jesus.

Compassion has little to do with pity or simply feeling sorry for the other. It is a freely offered and active sharing in whatever suffering the other is enduring. Such a sharing, which is always careful not to force itself on the privacy of the sufferer, brings hope and joy for it restores a sense of belonging to the person alone and afraid.

(quotations from When Dreams Die)

Re-marriage and

*Theologian Humphrey O'Leary
evolving teaching of the*

existed. Annulment, or as it is more properly called, a 'decree of nullity', is a declaration that because of a fatal flaw that existed from the beginning of the marriage, there has in fact never has been a true marriage.

The parties are free to enter a new marriage which will be for them their first marriage. Such a decree of nullity is made, following exhaustive investigation of the facts by a church tribunal. The deployment of church resources for the purpose of juridically investigating the null status of failed marriages, has increased dramatically in recent decades.

Current church practice may thus be summarised:

The church reaffirms her practice, which is based upon Sacred Scripture, of admitting to Eucharistic Communion those divorced and remarried persons who are living together as brother and sister, or who have received a decree of nullity, or whose previous valid marriage – being either non-consummated or non-sacramental – has been dissolved by the Church.

There has been over the course of 2,000 years a steady widening in church practice of the categories of the divorced and remarried who are considered living in good standing in their second union. Has this process of development of church tradition now come to a full stop? Many would believe it has not.

Archbishop Derek Worlock, of Liverpool, speaking in 1980 in the name of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, expressed views that many other bishops have echoed: "Many pastors nowadays are faced with Catholics whose first marriages have perished and who have now a second and more stable union in which they seek to bring up a new family. Often

such persons, especially in their desire to help their children, long for the restoration of full eucharistic communion with the church and its Lord. "Is this spirit of repentance and desire for sacramental strength to be forever frustrated? Can they be told only that they must reject their new responsibilities as a necessary condition of forgiveness and restoration to sacramental life?"

This is not a position that the church has adopted. If it were to be adopted, the church's official position would have to be stated as:

The church reaffirms her practice, which is based upon Sacred Scripture, of admitting to Eucharistic Communion those divorced and remarried persons already allowed to receive communion, and widens this practice to embrace those involved in a previous sacramental marriage, provided...

- that their first marriage has irreparably failed;
- that they acknowledge any responsibility for the failure of the first union and meet any responsibilities resulting from it;
- that the second marriage has been in existence for some time, morally speaking it is impossible to separate because of new obligations arising from the second union, and that the partners to it are genuinely doing their best to live an authentic Christian life;
- that such eucharistic sharing should in no way be seen as a questioning of Church teaching on indissolubility.

It must be stressed that the above is not at this moment official Church teaching. But there are those who look at the development of church practice over the past 2000 years and speculate on the possible future adoption of this position by Rome. For them it is not a question of *whether* but of *when*. ■

church tradition

takes a critical look at the still church on Marriage

The official Church position was expressed succinctly by the present Holy Father in 1982 in *Familiaris Consortio*: **The church reaffirms her practice, which is based upon Sacred Scripture, of not admitting to Eucharistic Communion divorced persons who have remarried.**

While not naming the passages of Sacred Scripture, Pope John Paul would have had in mind such as *Luke 16:18: Every one who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.* Such passages seem to constitute an absolute prohibition that the divorced and remarried receive communion. But is that really the case?

Leaving aside analysis of the Scriptures, let us concentrate on the practice of the church. The church right from the first century has allowed certain categories of the divorced and remarried to enjoy full participation in Christian life. There has been a pattern of steadily multi-plying the instances in which this is allowed.

For instance, St. Paul (*1 Corinthians 7:12-16*) spoke of the right of Christian converts unsatisfactorily married to a pagan, to separate from their partners. Later the church came to accept that the separated party could enter a new marriage. This is called the *Pauline Privilege*. The thinking behind it is that if one partner to the marriage is not baptised, the marriage was not sacramental and can be dissolved. If the circumstances warrant it, divorce is possible.

Over the centuries, with a deepening in the understanding of divine revelation, this principle came to be more broadly applied. In the 16th century the Holy See significantly widened the instances in which there could be dissolution of

valid but non-sacramental marriages.

In this century the church has gone even further. When there is irretrievable breakdown of the first marriage and the Catholic concerned would benefit from being allowed to enter a second marriage, the Holy Father will dissolve any marriage in which one party is not a Christian. This church practice of granting divorces is known as the *Petrine Privilege* or the *Privilege of the Faith*. For a marriage to be non-sacramental and hence to be potentially dissoluble, it is essential that one party be non-baptised.

It is not enough that they be non-Catholic. Marriages between non-Catholic Christians or between them and Catholics are as much sacramental marriages as are marriages between two Catholics. It is *baptismal status* that makes a marriage sacramental, not its being contracted with the performance of Catholic religious rites.

In medieval times the church came to the understanding that a marriage was not made indissoluble until it was physically consummated. If the parties had not come together and were not likely ever to do so, such a non-consummated marriage could be dissolved. A further possibility for the remarried to receive communion is for them to live together as brother and sister, not engaging in sexual intimacy. The Holy Father in *Familiaris Consortio* gave recognition to this path to Communion.

For many centuries there has been another path to admission to the sacraments for the remarried – annulment. Annulment is very different to dissolution. Dissolution puts an end to a marriage that previously

Fr Humphrey O'Leary is Rector of the Redemptorist community in Christchurch



Separation and divorce mark the death of a dream, and dreams die when hope no longer holds meaning... The stress and the sense of loss can be compared with the reactions to separation through physical death. This is true also for the children.



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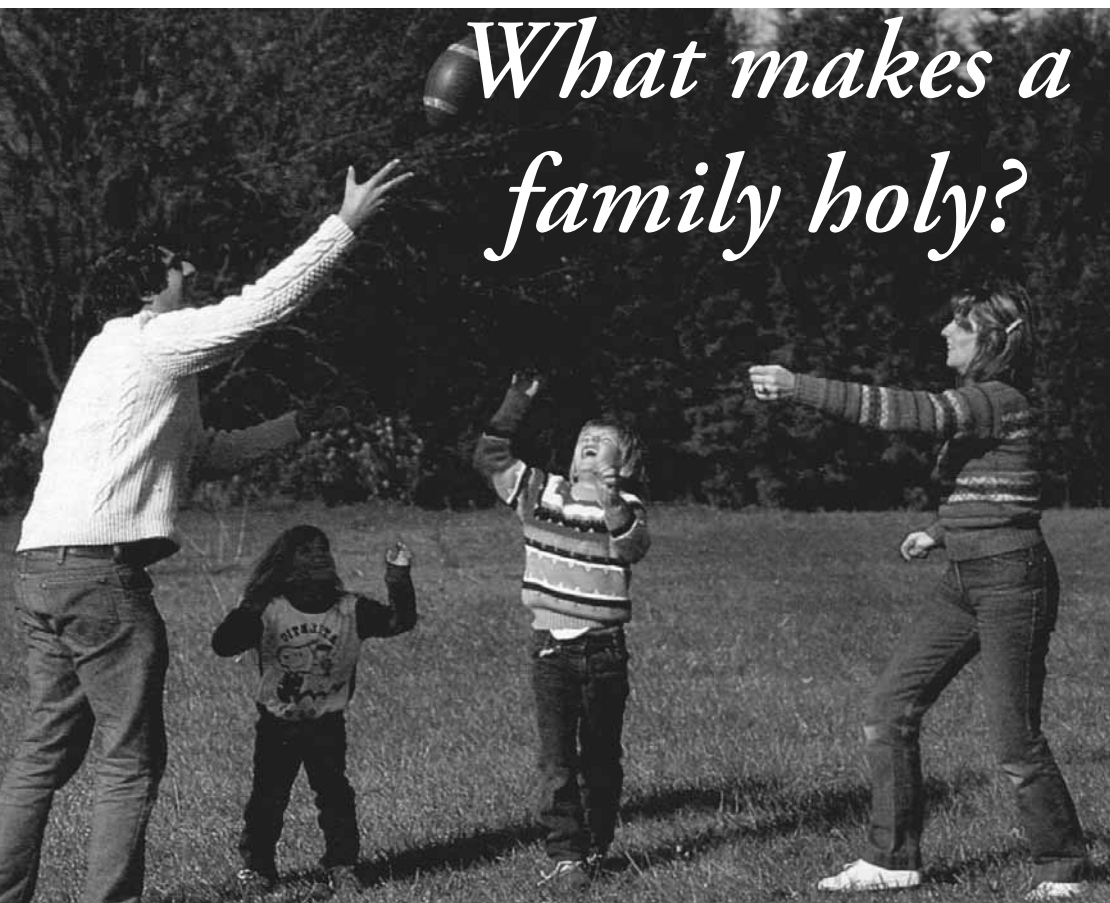
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the couple and their children are participating in this loving they are praying. The spirituality of marriage is to be found in the daily endeavours to love.

Healing

In the depths of sustaining, people reach each other's strengths and weaknesses. We are all wounded people, and our wounds show in the intimacy of the relationship. A profound form of loving is to identify these mutual wounds which are usually emotional, and try to help each other to heal them.

This can be done by offering security for insecurity, acceptance for rejection, appreciation for poor self-esteem, courage for fear, perseverance for withdrawal in the face of problems, and so on. The Vatican Council says: *Marital love is an eminently human one... and is worthy of special gifts of healing and perfecting.*

Growth

This perfecting is to be seen in mutual growth. Over the decades the couple facilitate the development and growth of each other, seen through achievements in social, emotional and intellectual goals.

This holiness is the daily prayer of the family life as couples engage with each other in sustaining, healing and growth, which is sealed by sexual intercourse.

Another phrase of the Second Vatican Council for the family is the *domestic church*. The events which engage the couple

and their family every day become the daily liturgy of everyday life. In addition to overt prayers said by the family, it is essential to grasp that the minute by minute engagement of loving becomes the prayer-life of the married couple, and the holiness of the family is to be found in the constant struggle to sustain, to heal and to grow.

Conclusion

In the past we saw the glory of family life in the children, and our Catholic schools bear witness to their importance. Children are still important, but the more we know of family life, the more we realise that the health, happiness and integrity of the couple is the key to the success of the care of the children.

We have to appreciate something which as a church we sometimes find difficult to grasp. Marriage is not just *a* Sacrament; it is *the* Sacrament, through which the majority of Christians will find God through each other. This is the Sacrament which reflects the covenant of love between Yahweh and his people, and Christ and the church. As a church we need to become increasingly marriage orientated.

To sum up, the holiness of the family is to be found in the efforts of its members to love each other, and the Christian community to support these efforts through preaching, education, preparation for marriage, support after the wedding, and appropriate liturgies. ■

What does holiness in the contemporary family consist of? By holiness is meant the participation of the couple and their children in the life of God.

Traditionally, holiness in family life consisted, first, in obedience to the rules. These rules for family life were the proper conduct of the couple before marriage – abstinence from sexual intercourse – followed by having a wedding according to the directives of the church, continued by having children and educating them, and abstaining from adultery. In addition, there were prayers in the home for the whole family. Many generations of Catholics grew up within these traditions.

The whole theology of the church and of marriage has moved on since the Second Vatican Council: I want to outline what constitutes holiness in the church today. At the Council the church gave up the traditional language of centuries by abandoning the language of primary and secondary ends for marriage. Instead, it called marriage and family life a *community of love*. In this enormously rich leap forward it is possible to see that whenever the couple or their children are caught in genuine authentic love, they are expressing the deepest elements of this Sacrament.

God present

Marriage is a Sacrament which fosters and encourages a life of love, and in all the moments of love between the couple and their children God is present. Holiness is now found to be in the myriad of moments when the couple are loving each other. The trouble lies with the word *love*. What constitutes genuine loving in contemporary marriage?

Traditionally, marriage was a contract of social roles. The husband was the head of the family, the wage earner, the decision maker, the ambassador of the family to the outside world. The wife was the child-bearer, the keeper of the home, who looked after it, rarely worked outside it, but cared for her husband and her children. Authentic love was seen in maintaining these roles to the best of their ability. Personal life often existed, but it was not essential.

Love

Today the traditional pattern of marriage has been changed radically. The roles have been vastly modified. Women work in ever larger numbers outside the home, the relationship is egalitarian, and the size of the family is greatly reduced. The emphasis has shifted from maintaining a contract of social

roles to initiating and maintaining a relationship of love. This is a

much harder thing to do, for, unlike the social roles, marital love has no clear demarcation. It can be truly said that in the space of a few decades love has come to dominate all personal relationships, and that the rise in divorce is a reflection of the gap between the high expectations of love and the competence

to realise them.

What defines love in contemporary marriage? There is no consensus, no agreed formula. Men and women fall in love with each other. *Falling in love* is a stage of idealisation, in which the beloved is considered to be an ideal of physical, intellectual and social excellence, and is treated as such. This stage of idealisation continues for a brief period of time, and then it subsides.

It is followed by 50 years or more of *loving*. The step from 'falling in love' to *loving* is the first problem. There are men and women who cannot tolerate the dilution of the intensity of falling in love, and move from person to person, always hoping to be *in love*.

Loving

But loving is a deeper and more enduring experience. Here I will summarise what I have written extensively elsewhere. By loving I mean three things essentially: sustaining, healing and growth.

By *sustaining* I mean the minute by minute behaviour towards each other. It consists of five things. First there is availability, being physically and emotionally close to each other; that is, spending time with, and reading accurately the inner world of each other.

Availability is followed by communication, making known to each other,

marriage is not just a Sacrament; it is *the* Sacrament, through which Christians will find God through each other

chiefly through words, what is going on in each other. Communication is about talking, listening, sharing and confronting each other. Beyond communication there is the demonstration of affection: that is, the reassurance that each matters to the other. This is done with a kiss, a hug, an embrace, or just the right word.

Demonstration of affection is followed by affirmation, which means showing each other appreciation of what has been achieved and carried out for the family. Finally there is resolution of conflict. Couples and their children quarrel, have arguments and can be nasty to each other. Forgiveness and reconciliation are the ways of restoring friendship.

These five ways of loving are central to marriage. Within them the major events of the sacraments occur. Every time

We must not forget the suffering and grief sin causes in all creation...

But in Our Lord's voice I never heard a hint of blame, and since we who are guilty are not blamed, why should we in turn blame God?

Out of his tender love he consoles us, saying: "True, sin caused this pain – but all will be well".

(Julian of Norwich, taken from *That You May Live*; see page 32)



Gerry Fennessy, Deputy Principal and HOD Outdoor Education

Leadership training in the great outdoors

Deputy Principal Gerry Fennessy, of Roncalli College, Timaru (pictured left) is a great believer in outdoor education – it's fun, it builds community, it instills leadership and self-reliance. And it brings the young closer to God

Kathleen Casey

The mountain scenery is stunning on Lake Wakatipu, but the senior students in kayaks are aware only of the blustery conditions which have dramatically arisen. Within minutes a couple tip out into the piercingly cold water.

"We'd practised so that we could get them back into their boat in 60 seconds," says Gerry Fennessy, deputy Principal and outdoor education HOD at Roncalli College in Timaru. The plan worked.

Supporting a vigorous NZQA accredited outdoor education programme, Roncalli College, with a role of 380, has 80 students annually enrolling for the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and two or three qualifying for Gold Awards. That is but the tip of the iceberg. Down below is where the work begins. The week-long fourth form camp, a major event, packs five days full of such activities as rock climbing, abseiling, river crossing, tramping, rafting, a ropes course and a solo bush period. Last year's two camps catered for 80 enthusiastic students.

"You did things you hadn't done before and finished them, you felt more

confident," says Kylie Panckhurst. "You felt you had achieved something different," adds Andrew Scott.

What wasn't so good? "The food - we had to cook it." "At the end of the week you had no clean clothes, you had to put on dirty socks and stuff," adds another. Showers were out of range as groups were largely tenting.

They speak of working together, getting to know teachers and Sixth Form leaders,

being scared and having bundles of fun. Built into the outdoor programme also are camps for Sixth Form Outdoor Leadership students, Sixth and Seventh form transition, geography, biology and other Duke of Edinburgh Award tramps to places like the Abel Tasman and the Greenstone-Caples.

The man behind this move to the mountains is Gerry Fennessy. He has 'smiling faces' stuck on holidays on his

Launching their raft at the Boyle River are Peter O'Connor, Eamon Haggart, Katie Hogue, Miranda Scannell



wall planner and little animals on the camp weeks. As Deputy Principal he's busy - but passionate about the value of outdoor education. In 1999 he led no fewer than six of these trips out of school. It was back in 1974 he launched his first ever school camp – from Casebrook Intermediate in Christchurch.

“You get to see the kids in a different light,” he says, “and they get to know you. We challenge them to do everything and encourage them ... but if at the end they say ‘I don't want to do this, that's okay.’ But he says they often regret later not having tackled the tough stuff. “They can learn from that as well. If they get another chance they will have that much more determination.”

Students are better equipped now, he says, reflecting on 12 years organising camps at Roncalli, but he sees a greater need for them to be prepared to confront today's challenges. “If they've been tramping ... they go back and do those things again. If they're unemployed, they still have confidence to go sailing. We have a large number of kids who continue with their outdoor experiences long after they leave school.”

Burgeoning self-confidence – parents, teachers and students awill all say this – is the paramount benefit from such challenging activities. “I trusted myself more and learnt to trust others,” says Megan Fitzgerald, a 1999 Sixth Form Leader. “You get a lot of confidence, you build it up, doing stuff on your own, especially things you don't usually do like rock climbing and abseiling,” adds Simon Mann, another leader.

The self-reliance emerging would delight the corporate business plank. “If you see the task, you get up and do it. At home you get everything done for you. In these camps you have to get it done or organise someone to do it,” David Fennessy says.

New talents appear. Gerry Fennessy tells a story of one student – not academically inclined – who had the breakfast organised before others were out of bed.



Mary de Villiers and Emma McCarthy

“Some can set up a whole campsite no trouble at all.”

The resources at Roncalli College are impressive. A 50-page management document *Education outside the Classroom* includes a risk analysis and management system and accident reporting sheets. For a surfing trip, an exam must be passed requiring full marks on rules and 90 percent on the rest of the paper. Along with a modern gym, Roncalli now has a large supply of outdoor equipment. It makes some



Inching along over the Clarence River is Danielle Chambelain





Paul Hannan

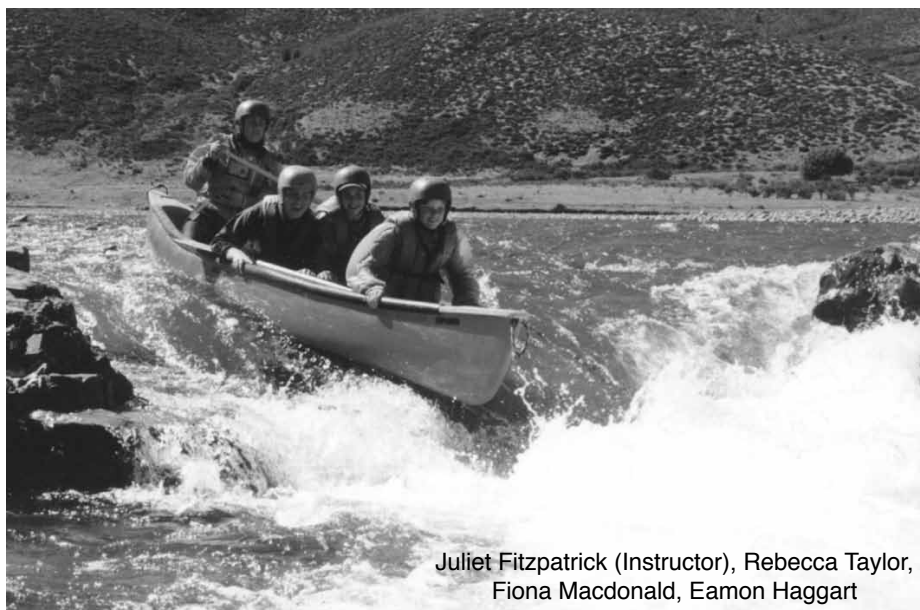


L-R: Dean Murray, Sharolyn Rathbone, Megan Cameron, Jim Stevenson, Ruth Burrows



Sarah Whyte and Mary de Villiers enjoy the Abel Tasman track

- ▷▷ enjoyment, adventure, challenge
debriefing what have we done today; what have we learnt from that and how might I apply it to other situations? what's the one thing you've done well, not so well, can improve on? What was it that forced you to dig deep – how can you apply this at school, at home?



Juliet Fitzpatrick (Instructor), Rebecca Taylor, Fiona Macdonald, Eamon Haggart

staff and Board, Fennessy has enhanced and extended the programme remarkably, says Principal John Hogue. "In my personal experience it is the best organised outdoor programme that I have seen – it's integrated into the whole special character of the school." It encourages mixing of older/younger, male and female students, and places senior students as role models.

Outdoor Leadership is a Sixth Form elective, and a teacher and two leaders accompany each group of eight Fourth form campers. Hogue says feedback

indicates that Roncalli students are well ahead when they start other tertiary outdoor education courses.

Just how does a smallish school manage so many trips? Hogue speaks of committed staff - there is no extra funding. "With four teachers out for a week at a time, the cost in terms of staffing is quite high, but the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages."

Stringent efforts are made to ensure every student can go (98 percent do), and community trust money is allocated for this purpose. Saleable goods are available for students

fundraising.

Dramas occur. Caught in a blizzard on the McKellar saddle on the Routeburn, Fennessy admits: "That's scary. The kids put on sunglasses to prevent hail damage." Hearing a massive avalanche while walking through the Greenstone Valley... watching another avalanche crash on the Milford Track. Panic, however, is more likely on water, he says. But there has never been a serious injury on a Roncalli camp.

Funny stories abound – the two girls still sound asleep in the morning with rivers running through their tent; the kelp the kids gathered and cooked because Fennessy had jokingly put it on the menu, a solo dance by a teacher who couldn't answer a quiz question.

Campers gather for morning and evening prayer. Do they object to this? "It's not up for discussion," Fennessy says firmly, adding that some "amazing prayers" are written by students, which would never occur in class.

Carrying house, clothes and food on their backs, pushing their horizons, forging trust: it's an education for a lifetime. *Go to it, Roncalli.* ■

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Verena Wright Lovett reflects on a double healing story in Mark (Mk 5:21-43), noting the two sick people are women. The lectionary (13 Sunday Year B) links this gospel passage with a Wisdom reading celebrating God's act of creation "where no fatal poison can be found". The writer concludes that this bringing female life back into balance has a contemporary message

To have life – in its fullness

*Death was not God's doing,
God takes no pleasure in the extinction
of the living.
To be – for this God created all;
the world's created things have health
in them,
in them no fatal poison can be found,
and Hades holds no power on earth; for
virtue is undying.
...God made humans in the image of
his own nature;
it was the devil's envy that brought death
into the world
(Wis 1:13-15; 2:23-24)*

The message of this reading is that health means life, a state of well-being, as in divinely-created nature where "no fatal poison can be found".

In looking at the Gospel story, it is possible to see the message of the first reading put into action. It is brought into an everyday context through the presence of Jesus, who brings a new perspective, a new way of seeing, onto a scene which was probably as common then as it is now.

The story contains two main 'characters' besides Jesus, with minor roles played by disciples and a synagogue official. While we know the names of these men: Peter, James, John and Jairus, all we know of the main figures is that they are women. One is a girl on the verge of womanhood (we learn that she is 12 years old), the other a woman of indeterminate age, but pre-menopausal.

They are not named, but share a common acknowledgement as *daughter*. Jesus calls the woman "my daughter" in parallel to Jairus' description of the girl.

I have often puzzled as to why these two episodes are brought together in one story: what more do we learn by reading them together – one in fact sandwiched within the other – than we could learn from reading them separately? What are the links? What is brought out through Jesus' perspective, through his interaction with the women?

Both women, as I've said, can be seen as daughters (a parallel perhaps with the many stories about sons – prodigal or otherwise?). Both could be said to represent the female aspect of

humanness (*that is, biological difference*): each is positioned at either end of the menstrual experience of woman (*which can thus symbolise that difference*) – one beginning, the other moving on to the next phase. Both are dying: that is *all* we know of the girl, who is said to be on the point of death, while at the threshold of woman-life. The woman *does* have a history – one of painful suffering and continual bleeding, where treatment has had a worsening rather than a healing effect (*so much of modern women's gynaecological experience attests to that also*).

Both then, need help, and while the girl's father pleads her cause, the woman, we are told, has no advocate. Instead, she finds courage: her faith and trust



(and perhaps desperation?) enable her to dare – to reach out and touch a garment belonging to someone she believes *will* help her. This is despite standing alone in a crowd, which must in itself have been terrifying for someone weakened by many, many years of bleeding, and thus severely anaemic. She has bled for 12 years – that is, throughout the period of the girl's life. She is also *everywoman*, culturally taboo in her bloodflow (*and while we as women may no longer feel shame, there is still an aspect of ourselves, our essence, which from an early age we learn to 'hide', to understand as negative; a 'problem', from which society must be protected*).

So this woman dares – she reaches out because she trusts that Jesus will recognise and affirm her through healing and acknowledgement: *"If I can touch even his clothes... I will be well again"*.

And this is just what happens, though we hear it from the narrator, not through the direct voice, the witness, of the woman. Jesus persists in looking around for her, despite the disciples' insistence that an individual can't possibly be identified in a crowd – particularly, it would seem, a woman, who would be 'invisible' and 'unheard' within the public life of that culture. (*I think of the scene on the hill: "Now 4000 had eaten, to say nothing of the women and children" Mt 15:38.*)

Perhaps then, this is why the story is not told through the woman's voice? We hear simply that *"she had thought to herself 'If I can touch... I shall be well again'"*, and, *"the source dried up instantly and she felt in herself that she was cured"*. But it is only when Jesus *asks*, that she is encouraged to speak *"and tell him the whole truth {of} what had happened to her"*. And in doing that, her voice, her witness, *is* heard (and the narrator can record it in writing). It is interesting too, that at this point she parallels Jairus in falling at Jesus' feet. Then Jesus speaks, risking censure not only in talking to a woman, but one who is said to be taboo: *"Go in peace and be free... your faith has restored you"*.

Meanwhile, we learn that the girl has died – in giving time to one woman, another has suffered; a difference from other healing episodes in the gospels where there is not this sense of limit – the 12 lepers, for instance. Is there perhaps a sense in which time should be limited, should not be wasted in dealing with women? Jesus however, refuses this, confounding and ignoring those who declare the girl to be dead, by speaking directly to her, commanding her to live.

In this gospel, as in the story it contains, there are two episodes 'squashed' into one space – one enwombed within the other. There's even an option in the lectionary for omitting the bleeding, 'invisible' crowd-woman and focussing on the more sympathetic image of the dying girl.

The effect then, of bringing the two episodes together is to focus on the restoration of God-given order, of bringing female health back into balance, so that these two women can experience new life to the full. And – since the women will have effects on those around them – from that balance, spread new life and energy throughout the community. This, I suggest, is what a feminist – a woman-focussed – perspective, offers to the church, in seeking the justice of full humanness for all, through the energy of prophetic witness.

So perhaps we can see from this reading a message that full humanity can only be reached when we work to achieve a balance, a sharing of life and resources between all people, no matter our difference or lack of voice. No-one, whether child, woman or man should be invisible, no-one should be left to suffer



their 'fate'. Those who are powerful (like the synagogue official) and strong and healthy (like the disciples) need to listen to and work together with those who are weak and invisible, to bring balance and healing to the world.

To be – for this God created all ■

Verena Wright Lovett is a Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Portsmouth, U.K. She is presently on an extended visit to New Zealand

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1. *Ecological action – but what sort,
asks Dr Tony Russell*

readers'

We live in a time of ecological crisis. This is clearly evident from what we see, hear and read in the media. The arguments of scientists and layfolk alike give us incontrovertible evidence of the crisis we face in safeguarding the very life of our biosphere.

It is fair to test any Christian reflection on the current ecological crisis in terms of the action it proposes in order to remedy the crisis. The lodestone of all Christian words is action: by our deeds we prove our discipleship.

The foundational premise in the reflection on ecology in the February issue of *Tui Motu* was surely the editorial assertion that “we have to understand what is going on, and if necessary, take decisive action” (p 2). But what sort of decisive action, what models for eco-action did the five commentators in the *February* issue propose? What did they offer as a model of action in a time of crisis? Did they present us with decisive Christian community based action or options for individuals? How do they propose solving the crisis? Are they actually hopeful of resolving the crisis? Or did they leave us floundering with no really decisive proposals about action to save the planet and give our *mokopuna* a future?

These are not idle questions. In our brief history as a nation Aotearoa New Zealand has stood as a challenge to the world over issues of nuclear disarmament, race relations, ecological sanity and gender equity. We both believe and know that it is possible to transform worlds of thought and action.

The eco-action options proposed by the writers in the *February* issue were practically all highly individualistic. Yet Christianity is par excellence communitarian. The models for action proposed in Christian reflection on the grave moral crisis we face in the

biosphere must be charged with daring, imagination, community challenges: they might even propose a radical about-face in the way Christian churches are involved in political struggle.

Individual eco-action is fine, but it is essentially non-communitarian and sadly it will be radically insufficient in solving our ecological global crisis. It is important, but it is not enough. Recycling, getting into alternative lifestyles, retiring into the bush to do one's own 'eco-thing' are not the answer. In fact they may be ways of avoiding the radical action which Christian communities need to take.

I say this because in a time of crisis which involves all living humanity and our *mokopuna*, we must test our response to see that it is both the best it can be, and the most effective. The best response for Christians in this case is a community response.

There have been times of great crisis in Christian history: war, plague, famine, natural disasters, nuclear catastrophe, violent dictatorships and the like. Christians have had to make choices in the midst of these crises: choices about the rights of individuals and the rights of the community, choices about backing or not backing political parties and forces; choices which will mean being judged by history as heroic and prophetic or immoral and cowardly. It has meant taking risks, but it has always meant taking action. This has meant a choice for decisive involvement in human affairs, not just being caught up and swept along by them.

In fact, there is probably only one option for Christian churches: namely, getting massively involved in political action in favour of saving the planet. Such an option might be seen by some as distasteful, even downright unthinkable. That means getting into the muddy waters of politics, party

policies and political alliances. It would require a theological quantum leap. It would imply churches (Assemblies, Conferences, Synods) actually coming out in favour of Green politics, and espousing any political party prepared to take action in favour of saving the planet.

All this would mean prophetic persistence by church leaders and members. It would mean arming ourselves with educated and competent layfolk. That could entail churches training to advanced levels (Ph.D.) many young men and women who could be informed voices in the eco-political debate. Church leadership groups would have to lobby Pacific church leaders to do the same, and carry on lobbying until they achieved results. There is no moral vindication for church leaders of whatever ilk, lamenting the symptoms of ecological catastrophe, which are daily present to all of us, if they are not prepared to get involved in helping to solve the crises.

God's Word, the prophet Isaiah wrote, is not sent into the world to return to God empty (*Isaiah Ch.56*). Rather it is sent to perform what it is meant to do and to return to God with full hands. Isaiah similarly writes (*Ch.43*): “Behold, God is doing a new (novel) thing”. Whatever your reading of the notion of stewardship of the planet presented in *Genesis* as a task and duty for humankind (it is a much debated text) there is no denying that we all have grave moral responsibilities to act in a time of planetary and ecological crises. God's new or novel thing may be the churches really mixing it with politics and political power in order to save this our planet. Other action options – individual, personal – may be good, but not enough.

The only action option for Christian churches is definitely communitarian and quite possibly radically political. ■

responses

2. Birth control – why not the natural

Contraception seems to be the accepted norm for most Catholics today despite the church's teaching against it. Why is this? I think it is because the delivery of the church's teaching lacks broadness: it fails to acknowledge and address why people assume a need for contraception. This is because the church itself operates within, and is tainted by, a society whose character is fundamentally discordant.

A balanced and informative explanation of the church's position is given by Bishop Peter Cullinane in his pastoral letter *On Matters of Life and Love*. "The church's teaching on married love, when it is properly understood is a prophetic voice on the side of human dignity, love, growth and freedom. And the church's teaching when it is not properly understood or is badly presented, results in unnecessary human suffering."

I believe that intrinsic harm surrounds the contraceptive mentality in the objective sense. In an article entitled *Priestliness of the Human Heart* John O'Donohue says this:

*Behind the veneer of our external lives
The eternal is at work.
There is a secret immensity in every life.
Each of us has a task of creativity to realise
That no one else can accomplish.
We are artists of the eternal*

(from the Jesuit Journal

The Way)

In the vocation of marriage and the experience of sexual intercourse these words hold fundamental meaning. The creative effusion in sexual intercourse is obvious. Which is not to say that we should unintelligently procreate *ad infinitum*. But what is being expressed is an attitude of openness to the life force energy within us.

Margaret Hofziger describes the basic concept of natural birth control in her book: "I want to put forward a word for love. This is the only form of birth control that is a cooperative adventure. Neither husband nor wife has to do it alone. It is the only non-sexist form of birth control, requiring the love and understanding of both. The basis of the method is the agreement to pay close attention and lovingly abstain for a bit in order not to conceive at this time.

This way, when you do make love it is complete and open to all the life force energy there is. And when you are not prepared to conceive you don't do what causes conception... Learning how to cooperate on this issue tends to draw couples together." (*A Cooperative Method of Natural Birth Control*)

This dynamic of openness to life challenges our whole lifestyle, our goals, dreams and visions, calling us be more in tune with our primal nature. Let us look at some contemporary attitudes and institutions which conflict with or dilute the pro-life ethic.

Consumerism and materialism

These are seductive. *Contraptions* both con and trap us into believing that life has become too difficult to live without them. Disposable nappies, for example, have become an absolute necessity. Indispensable to us – and alas! indisposable for our planet. Television is another contraption that beguiles us into compromising our values. We cannot afford to fill our lives with *Warehouse* clutter and at the same time remain open to life. Materialism gradually dulls our perspective of life.

Paranoia over cleanliness

Modern advertising bids us to be 'squeaky clean': pink, white and sterile – and smelling powerfully unnatural! Why do we go on believing the pushers of a thousand-and-one cleaning and beauty products? Most do nothing for our health and pollute our waterways. We make superficial judgments about each other based on appearances.

Children seen as a burden

Children can be extremely demanding and can easily enslave us. If we fail to set clear boundaries, they will test parental authority. We can be very clear about some issues, like sunhats, yet lack the same clarity about values. Children need love and security and acceptance. They do not need to be bribed by buying them fashion clothes simply to make them feel accepted. The pressures placed on today's parents make children seem burdensome, whereas in reality they are a beautiful blessing.

Education

Schools – with some exceptions – fail to teach fundamental truths of philosophy and wisdom. The system itself propagates the fallacy that success means fitting into a predetermined mould aimed at gaining personal wealth and power. Thinking 'outside the square' rarely scores high marks. Meanwhile peer pressure backs up the pressure to conform.

Health

Our health system does not enrich the whole person. Instead we have a business enterprise where once again money and power dictate methodology. Drugs come on the market which appear to be miraculously liberating and are dispensed indiscriminately. This includes contraceptives.

Employment

The work place is an environment where it is difficult for women to remain open to their life force energy for making a family. Much re-evaluation and change is necessary so that the value of women and motherhood becomes important in the workforce. Presently the demands of the workplace are inhuman, particularly in respect of the time and dedication demanded by some employers of women and men alike.

▷▷ Jane Matlary, a delegate of the Holy See to the *Beijing Conference on Women*, wrote: "Women do need political and economic power – but as a means, not as an end. They need to get rid of men's terms for determining how they should live (and work) so as to be able to fulfil their own special qualities. Modern feminism is silent on the question of what women are in their essence, and therefore has nothing to say on the importance of motherhood. There has to be an acceptance that women who are mothers need to be able to function first as mothers – and as professionals or politicians second." The last point goes for men who are fathers as well.

World Resources

Someone born into Western society uses up on average 20 times the resources as a person in the Third World. Meanwhile contraception is seen as the only answer to the population explosion in Third World countries. Those who push this solution are justifying the appalling imbalance in use of resources, while attempting to trivialise or 'Westernise' the wisdom and culture of indigenous peoples. To have children is just one part of the richness of their life style.

Conclusion

There are other examples. My point is that many of these trends are not life-giving and, indeed, detract from the fullness of life. If we were not so engulfed by this anti-life propaganda, we as Christians would never have dreamt of artificially blocking the procreative life-force within us. I do not believe we can gainsay the need of some to artificially prevent conception, even though the action goes against the rhythm of creative nature. We need to be compassionate in such cases.

Nevertheless, life is an abundant gift: wonderfully teeming, energetic, dynamic and powerful. Every human person is created for a purpose within the profundity of God's love. And we are a priestly people, called to be alive to the possibilities of making the divine presence real. Human conception is a most powerful way of achieving this. It is my contention that contraception negates this flow of grace.

There is a new way of church emerging in our times. Many Christians long for something more real and organic. It would be a pity if this new birth were undermined through

Jesus and the power élites

T.A.Mikkelson (February letter) took to task editorial writer, Ron Sharp (Tui Motu, December 1999) for use of hyperbole and emotional language. Ron Sharp replies:

T.A.Mikkelson is, in my way of looking at human society, another of the many half-awake people under the sedative prescriptions of the power élites of our world.

To supply statistics and facts to back up previous statements about the enslavement of 80 percent of the workforce would need a book. I will pursue one avenue. The so-called 'economic miracle' that we were led to believe took place in the 90s, was in the view of Alan Greenspan, chairman of the US Federal Reserve, due to "greater worker insecurity, which has led to significant wage restraint." (from his address to the US Congressional Banking Committee). It is also well documented by the NZ Statistics Department that the 'miracle' was only a miracle for the top 20 percent of those in industry. The other 80 percent stayed where they were or declined in fact with greater debts than assets. 'Worker insecurity' is an Employers' Federation euphemism for "too intimidated to ask for a raise"

letters

because workers' unions have been effectively silenced. Another platitude of the free-marketeers is "flexible labour force, which means that people go to sleep each night wondering whether they will have a job tomorrow.

This is just one aspect of a struggle that has gone on since time began. From the beginning of the Industrial Revolution concentrations of power have recognised that people were forced into meaningless lives and might revolt. In order to control them they extended the concept of liberty to the mass of the population in a limited form. Advertising identifies liberty with the freedom to consume, so that people perceive their needs in terms of consumption of goods rather than quality of life and work.

People who are awake, alive, healed, reconciled, risen are designing and following the different plans of Jesus:

- to overcome the injustice and needless suffering that defaces contemporary civilisation,
- to defend the substance of society,
- to enrich society for themselves and for others
- to show that human beings are something better than the ridiculous

creatures crafted by contemporary society and the power élites that it serves.
Ron Sharp, Motueka

A fillip at bedtime

I was tired but not quite ready for sleep. As I reached over to turn off the light, I leant on my as-yet-unopened *February Tui Motu*. Fr Paul Andrew's article (pp18-19) was short, and the startling illustration captured my imagination. I read the article. I broke down and wept.

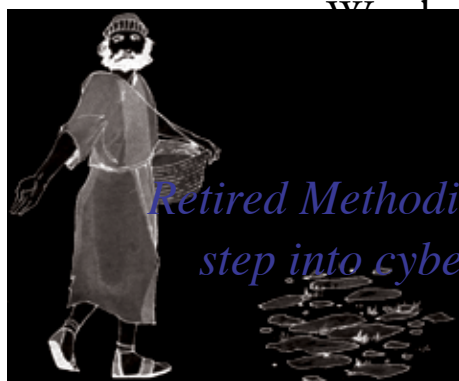
Thank you, Father Paul, for your story acknowledging initially your own mother, and then recognising and thanking all women in the beautiful prayer at the end. You have articulated so artistically the invisibility of women in the church throughout the ages. Indeed, this is still the situation.

Don't get me wrong – I am not an ardent feminist. I am, however, increasingly concerned at the Catholic Church's continued stance on women. Yes, we have come a long way – but we sure do have a long way to go.

Colette Brockley, Dunedin

A bane or a blessing

Wheat and good grain on the internet



Retired Methodist minister Selwyn Dawson takes a timid step into cyberspace – and finds it a mixed blessing

The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his fields: but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did not you sow good wheat in your field? Where then did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this". The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, collect the weeds first and bind them into bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat unto my barn".

(Matthew ch

13:24-30)

Bastard wheat was the name then given to the darnel weed which, stealthily sown among the growing grain, mimicked its growth. Even if the farmer recognised the counterfeit plants at an early stage, he could do nothing since its roots were so intertwined with the main crop that any attempt to tear them out would only pull up the adjacent wheat as well. Only when the whole field had ripened and been harvested could workers painstakingly sort out the poisonous darnel from the good grain, and toss it into the fire. Thus Jesus uses the normal seasonal sowing of the local farmer, and the attempt of his enemy to sabotage the crop to teach how closely good and evil are intertwined in

our hearts and in the world, and how difficult – if not impossible – it is to sort them out prematurely.

It is unlikely that our Lord had our 21st century with its computer-generated cyberspace in mind, but as a recent timid visitor to the arcane world of the computer and the internet, I find his story peculiarly apposite. One becomes aware of a vast gossamer-like mesh of interconnections covering the world, enabling the individual to participate as much or as little in its teeming traffic as he wishes.

Is the internet a bane or a blessing? Whichever it is, it is still in its extreme youth, and no one, neither scientist nor technician, moralist nor policeman, businessman or futurologist, can stop its spread or predict in what manner it will develop and affect our lives.

Already e-mail and the internet have revolutionised the nature of business
*a vast gossamer-like mesh
of interconnections enabling
the individual to participate
in its teeming traffic*

One soon learns to use e-mail, and for immediate communication anywhere in the world it far exceeds the speed and ease of conventional snail-mail. Recently I sent e-mail greetings to a young friend in Tokyo, only to receive a reply within hours – from Colorado where she happened to be on holiday.

and science, entertainment and sport, knowledge and communications, crime and terrorism. It is barely ten years since the internet became accessible to ordinary people, yet it has wrought changes in our common life commensurate with those springing from the invention of printing, the telephone or radio-television.

Those who use them know that computers are not just complex machines, but mysterious agents of both angels and devils. Oldies should not go near them unless they have saintly and patient gurus readily at hand. (Grandchildren can be especially helpful.) If however they do venture, they will find a new world making available to each user a different cornucopia of interest and usefulness.

Some will use their computer to keep household accounts, some to play games, some to compose greeting cards, some to follow the news, some to link up in chat groups with new friends with similar interests elsewhere. Many will use it to keep in almost instant touch with friends or family near or on the other side of the world, while others will go shopping on the internet without ever leaving home.

I have come to the computer late in life and am far from adept, using only a fraction of its functions, but even so, I have found it opens a new world to me. As a word processor, I find the computer invaluable – something far more enabling than any typewriter. ▷▷

▷▷ By plugging into the ever-growing internet, one can pursue almost any interest, seek any kind of information, make new discoveries and contacts in a host of fields. One's main frustration comes from the super abundance of information and contacts 'out there'. It can be intimidating to find, in answer to one's search for information on a certain topic, that there are over a million associated references on the web, and would one please refine the question?

Nevertheless, even a tyro will be rewarded. I have registered (at no cost) with the *World Council of Churches* in Geneva, and most days receive one or two brief paragraphs of information about current events in the world church. I can follow up-to-the minute news and comment in the *Times* of London, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* or any other designated newspaper. I read the full text of the Reith lectures from the BBC almost as soon as they were delivered. Through the Public Questions Committee of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches (www.pq.godzone.net.nz) I have access to the latest Christian social comment and significant information on current issues. I followed the doings of the Anglican Lambeth Conference while it was in session, and from time to time catch up with the Holy See through its lavish website, by which it communicates in many languages with its vast worldwide family.

In a lighter mood, I can tune in to one of the Jokes sites, and print off as many pages of rib-tickling – or corny – jokes as I want, or I can visit a famous art gallery or museum anywhere in the world. There is no end to the interest and information available to all, even the most isolated and sedentary.

So much for the good seed sown in the internet – and I have hardly begun to describe the widened horizons it offers to the older and less active, or the way it can be used in schools or in third world countries to break the log-jam of ignorance, backwardness and poverty. It

has shown particular value in enabling isolated activists to keep each other in the picture, and, where necessary, work together in mass campaigns of social protest and betterment. For good or ill, the recent protests at Seattle and Davos against the wholesale efforts to further the globalising programmes without considering social consequences, could not have taken place without the orchestration of scattered and incoherent protest on the internet.

But that is not the whole story. The computer with all its powers is a technical instrument and is morally neutral. Its ability to do harm as well as good seems limitless. For instance,

*electronic wheat and
darnel have been sown
side by side, and no
agency can separate the
good from the bad*

The farmer in the parable would not abandon his fields because of the possibility that his enemy would sow bastard wheat. Believing in the Lord of the harvest he would perhaps be more vigilant, sow more generously, set guards to ward off intruders, accept the need for the final sorting of the grain, but there would be no folded hands, untilled fields or barns left empty.

Meantime we might see our task as being the guardians of the good seed, as prophets warning our careless neighbours to be on the lookout for the enemy. Above all, we must know that the Lord of the harvest, in his own time and way, will have the last word. ■



no one can censor the internet with its millions of web sites able to provide a meeting place for people with the most distorted perceptions. Porn sex is available in all its varieties, and its enticements and sale seem a major preoccupation. Sometimes it masquerades as adult entertainment. Paedophiles can solicit their young victims and bolster each other's depravities on the internet. Racial and political prejudice has a free run, and draws together widely separated people whose attitudes – as the US has found to its cost – can harden into murder and mayhem. Restless and unsettled young people can learn in their bedrooms how to construct bombs, and can form the most unhealthy relationships and ideas, as the Columbine College shootings proved.

Voyeurism has become big business. Commercials pop up on the screen trying to inveigle us into investing in dodgy money schemes or overseas gambling ventures, and one can now gamble on the stock exchange on one's home computer. The very mechanism which enables protest groups to network also enables criminals to operate globally and launder their ill gotten gains with impunity. Commercial interests are investing hugely in e-commerce, enticing people to buy unlimited quantities of merchandise without ever leaving their own homes – another avenue for Mammon to offer its devotees unlimited opportunities to bow down to consumerism. People can become as addicted to their computers as time-fillers as they can to alcohol, gambling or drugs.

The electronic wheat and darnel have been well and truly sown side by side, and no agency or government can separate the good from the bad. Must we then sit back helpless and admit that we are in the grip of a more powerful demon than our race has ever confronted, and can do nothing about it? Not if we read this parable aright.

Land, The Treaty and Jubilee in Aotearoa

Nga Tapuae: Journeys

Produced by the Legal Services Board

Price: \$39.95

Retailer: Whitcoulls Bookstore

Review: Louise May

Nga Tapuae: Journeys is an educational video series, funded by the Legal Services Board and released late last year, about the Treaty of Waitangi, the law relating to the Treaty, and the settlement process. *Nga Tapuae* addresses the need for wider knowledge and understanding among New Zealanders on the Treaty and the legal settlement process.

While I was watching the series, I couldn't help but give some thought to what Jubilee means in the New Zealand context. The themes underpinning Jubilee are about use of land, freedom from oppression, and restoration of justice in our world. The themes running through *Nga Tapuae* are also about use of land, issues relating to oppression, and questions of justice, but they are about these issues in our own country, not somewhere 'out there'.

The first in the series of three videos is a drama set in a fictional New Zealand community called Onehora. Onehora could be any small NZ town. The drama alternates between the time of the signing of the Treaty and the present day. It looks at why the Treaty was signed and what it meant to Maori, to the Crown and to Pakeha in that area, at that time.

When the drama switches to modern day Onehora, it examines the current legal status of the Treaty, and how a land claim can arise from a breach of the Treaty. We are shown what emotional and personal issues can arise from the legal process of taking a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal. The characters speak to us from their different perspectives as local iwi and hapu, as local pakeha families, and as city councillors and business people. Everybody articulates

their understanding of the situation, their hopes and fears, their anger and frustration. It ends with the discovery of a solution that satisfies both local iwi and pakeha, one that offers hope and meaningful development to the whole community.

Video Review

an opportunity to appreciate why the claims process is so lengthy, and why it is important that both parties regard it to be fair.

Nga Tapuae takes the viewer on a journey. It transports us to the past, places us in the present, and shows us a vision of a possible future. It helps to build knowledge and to foster deeper understanding. However, *Nga Tapuae* leaves it up to the viewer as to how they choose to respond to the information provided and the issues raised.

I believe Jubilee year is a kind of wake-up call. It encourages us to renew our commitment to action on behalf of justice. This is a good time to ask ourselves how we can respond to the call of Jubilee as it relates to the need for restoration of justice for Maori - one of the more enduring social justice issues in this country.

Nga Tapuae is a resource which is easy to understand, which presents different perspectives on the issues relating to the Treaty and land claims, and which encourages meaningful discussion. If you believe Jubilee calls you to respond to these issues, a viewing of *Nga Tapuae* might help you on your way. If you simply want to learn more about the document upon which our country was founded, and how the principles of the document relate to the present day, then *Nga Tapuae* might just be what you are looking for. ■

The drama illustrates how restoration of justice to Maori through acknowledgment of, and compensation for loss of land and past wrongs can be positive not only for Maori, but for Pakeha also. It challenges common misperceptions about what the land claims process means for both groups, including the fears that pakeha have about losing their homes, their farms, and their businesses.

I must admit that at times I felt frustrated by the woodenness and stereotyping of some of the characters in the fictional drama. But fortunately the clarity with which the issues are presented does not allow this awkwardness to get in the way of the messages the series aims to convey.

The second video uses archival and television footage in a documentary style to explain how the Waitangi Tribunal functions, and how the legal status of the Treaty has changed and evolved over time. We witness footage of some of the major events and personalities influencing the development of the law relating to the Treaty. We see what has already been settled between the Crown and Maori, including the Tainui and Ngai Tahu settlements and the Sealord deal.

The final video in the series shows an actual land claim in process. The claim is based in the land disputes of the North Taranaki region. These arose from local Maori opposition to their land being surveyed and settled without consent, and from the fragmentation that occurred when Maori were driven from their homes and lands (most notably from Parihaka and surrounding districts). The video takes us through the release of the Tribunal report and the negotiations that ensue between Crown and Iwi. It exposes the pain, passion, and complexity involved in this particular claim. The viewer is given

Louise May is the Research-Policy Analyst for Caritas

“One of the greatest English theologians...”

The Julian Mystique – Her Life and Teachings

by Frodo Okulam

Twenty-Third Publications

Price: \$17.50 approx.

Review: Pauline Gallagher, RSM

A reader unfamiliar with the life of Julian of Norwich may think it strange that a book written by this woman mystic in 1393 should remain virtually unknown for nearly 600 years; yet when it surfaced in the late 20th Century it was destined to place its author high on the list of the literary and theological giants of classic western spirituality. This was a woman whom Thomas Merton described as “one of the greatest English theologians of all time”. So it is not surprising that many books have been written about her; of these *The Julian Mystique* by Frodo Okulam is one of the most readable.

The book begins with a short but informative chapter on the place of women in the Middle Ages, so that the reader can appreciate the historical and social context in which Julian lived and worked. It was a time of conflict and human disaster similar to our own. The writer introduces the grassroots spiritual movement known as the Beguines, an unprecedented way of life open to women of all social classes. Did Julian belong to this movement? We are not sure for it seems that Julian preferred we should know very little about herself, wanting us rather to focus on the message she felt called to transmit.

But before we read this message Okulam pauses to give us an interesting look at the kind of enclosed solitary life lived by the Anchorites, in particular the lifestyle of Julian herself in an anchorage attached to the church of St Julian in Norwich, from which she received her name. In this chapter the reader learns some fascinating details about this woman to whom God chose to reveal in a dramatic way the amazing love and grace in which we are all enfolded. There follows a short but vivid description of the effect on the people of Norwich of the plague known as the Black Death. Yet, somehow, Julian managed to transcend such experiences of human disasters and in her writings there is no specific mention of her world’s turmoil. Instead, she refuses to be trapped by them in her unswerving confidence in God’s assurance that “all things will be well, all manner of things will be well”.

Thus prepared, the reader begins the story of Julian’s 16 revelations, or *Showings* which took place over a period

of two days in 1373, when Julian was 30 years old. The reader is lead gently into Julian’s theology of Divine love, especially that of the Trinity. We are introduced also to her Christology as revealed in the Parable of the *Lord and Servant*. Of special interest to the author is Julian’s theology of Motherhood to which she devotes her longest chapter. Julian writes: “And so I saw that God rejoices that he is our Father, and God rejoices that he is our Mother.” (Ch52)

Okulam points out that Julian’s reference to Mother is not a simile but an unequivocal title for God. Those who are opposed to this image of God would do well to read this section with an open mind. For it shows Julian did not invent this theme, nor did the many well-read women and men in the Church who find consolation in it. In fact, from earliest biblical times, through patristic writers in the first century to Julian’s medieval contemporaries, the motherhood image has served to express divine love. The list includes medieval scholars Peter Lombard, Abelard, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure.

The final chapter places Julian’s theology in today’s context thus supporting the writer’s introductory claim that “by looking at Julian’s work in its own context and in relation to our times, we can arrive at a deeper understanding of the theology and spirituality of Julian of Norwich, with insights relevant to our spiritual needs today”. I consider that claim to be more validly supported in her book than Okulam’s other claim in the Introduction that “in this book we will look at Julian’s *entire* theology” (emphasis mine). While there are passing references to the mystic’s understanding of sin and suffering as revealed in the *Showings*, Julian’s holistic approach to body and soul, our human sensuality and its unique relationship to God, is barely touched upon.

The book is only 79 pages in all, but includes a very good bibliography for further study, a helpful chronology of Julian’s life, and at the end of each chapter there are questions for reflection and discussion. I consider the questions at the end of the later chapters more helpful than the earlier ones.

While some readers who have studied Julian before picking up Okulam’s treatise may find little new in it, other students could well choose this little book as a very good one on which to begin. Through it they will hopefully be enticed to read Julian’s own account of her *Revelations of Divine Love*. ■

Bruno

by Roger Booth

Canterbury University Press

Review: Mike Crowl

Bruno Lawrence, who died in 1995 of lung cancer, was a star in a country that has very few of them, especially in the movie business. Never formally trained as an actor, he still carried off several brilliant roles, most particularly in *Smash Palace*. He acted partly by instinct and partly by using a personal magnetism that only a few film actors have, the sort of magnetism that was more common amongst the stars in the earlier days of movie-making. Given the chance, he *could* act, and this has been acknowledged not only by those who worked with him but also by overseas reviewers who saw him in some of his better roles.

His real gift, however, was in music, and it was a sort of accident that he got into movies as well. Before the movies came along his name was almost a household word amongst musicians, (at least in the North Island), and he continued to play throughout his life. Though he taught himself the saxophone, and

played it publicly, his special musical ability was as a drummer and he was widely acknowledged as superb in this role, both at home and abroad, making a living out of it for much of his life. Again his talent lay in a sort of instinctive approach, a constantly experimenting style that left some lesser musicians and singers on the hop, but was generally appreciated for the way in which it lifted the music out of any rut and took it off in new directions.

He might have been seen as the epitome of the Wild Man type of male – macho, into risk-taking, attractive to women and attracted by them, a drinker and a gambler – yet he balanced these aspects of his character with a vulnerability and gentleness and generosity of spirit that all who knew him spoke of with warmth. He had a great love of family, including both the extended family that was BLERTA, and the community that he and others formed at Waimarama. He was down-to-earth both in the musical scene and the film world, and never behaved publicly as the star he truly was.

A life of contrasts

Roger Booth's biography of him is straight down the line, a no-nonsense piece that lets Bruno shine. The facts and stories are there, everything is in order, and there is little philosophising or analysing. Booth has kept himself well out of the picture, even though he was a friend of Lawrence's, first through the children, and later as the proposed writer of the biography. He never treats Bruno's sometimes outlandish behaviour with sensation, he doesn't play up the darker sides of his character and give them more value than they're worth, and overall he lets Bruno the man stride through the book as himself.

The only curiosity is chapter 27, entitled Curriculum Vitae. This does offer some extra comments from friends and work colleagues, but for the most part takes us back through the 300 pages we've just read, like a precis of the whole. That chapter apart, this is a thoroughly readable biography, with plenty of photographs and good appendices, and it does one of New Zealand's top artists great credit, reminding and informing us of the breadth of his achievements. ■

This Lent indulge yourself...!

Ave Maria Press has a series of meditation booklets of readings from the spiritual classics to be spread over a month. They have now added one for the forty days of Lent, entitled *That You May Have Life*. (see advert page 32).

The readings are taken from Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, Meister Eckhart, Francis de Sales, Thomas a Kempis, Francis of Assisi, Teresa of Avila, rounding off on Easter Sunday with John Chrysostom. The translations are in clear, limpid English, and the layout is simple and attractive.

An introduction is provided suggesting how to use the book each day of Lent. The Western tradition is to compose one's daily prayer around reading, reflection and petition. So each day begins with a passage from the author of the week. "Proceed slowly", we are counselled. "Don't read to get to the end, but to savour each word, each phrase, each image." From the reading is selected a sentence to be used during the day as a mantra – a phrase to return to again and again to give salt to one's working hours. Finally, evening space with a simple prayer of petition to round off the day.

This book reminds me of the similarly useful booklet for Lent prepared some years ago by Delia Smith. Good wholesome fare. It will be my Lenten nourishment this year. I recommend it. ■

M.H.

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Crosscurrents

John Honoré

Stranded students

At the university this week, covering the campus as far as the eye could see, were queues of harassed students trying to cope with the latest monu-mental botch-up of WINZ. 1600 students at Canter-bury were unable to enrol, because their loans had not been ratified. This means not only that they cannot pay their fees but also that they have no access to the library, no cash for living expenses and no student identification for the essential services allied to tertiary education. The university is sympathetic and is trying to cope with the unprocessed loans. With some wit, a “whinge table” has been set up to deal with complaints, but after a week the queues are still there.

WINZ’s bungling is becoming legendary. No amount of grandstanding by Christine Rankin can disguise the fact that her organisation is incompetent. Education Minister Steve Maharey must make up his mind about this Chief Executive Officer and stop calling for her head one day and praising her as a good public servant the next. The National Party’s grandiose plan to merge Income Support and Employment Services has not worked. It has resulted in a Public Service devoid of quality leadership which relies on the hiring of consultants, PR firms and lawyers to mask its incompetence. Christine Rankin must step down.

Media icons edged out – at a price?

In the media, Radio NZ and Television NZ, people are stepping down or being pushed to resign. Radio NZ seems bent on reshaping its programmes from top to bottom and discarding, among others, the redoubtable Brian Edwards. From a constant stream of articles, particularly from Edwards, the truth will never be known about the confrontation with Sharon Crosbie. For myself, I was tired of his self-confessed atheism, spurious “never read books” and “Brian’s week”, which more often than not had become a platform for telling us about such things as his cats, dinner parties, moving house and road rage.

But really, it is more fundamental than that. Sharon Crosbie is the boss, she makes the decisions. In her opinion, *Top o’ the Morning* had become “predictable and boring”. So, goodbye Brian. But, Edwards continues with a stream of press releases. Kim Hill’s interview with him, was exemplary. Her ability and professionalism revealed the petulance and bruised ego of Edwards. At least Crosbie did not have to give him a golden handshake.

However, Television NZ gets first prize for payouts. John Hawkesby was awarded over \$5 million from arbitrator, Sir David Tompkins. The affair has had plenty of coverage in the media and most readers will be familiar with the details.

Again, there are basic issues here. For the breach of contract and the loss of earnings, Hawkesby has every legal right to that amount. Further, TVNZ, working from the directive given by the National Party to produce profit (never mind the quality), made a bad commercial decision. It must pay compensation. The National Party appointee to the chair of TVNZ, Rosanne Meo, saw the writing on the wall and quit while she was slightly ahead.

What is left is TVNZ looking battered and stupid. It has had to produce dividends, no matter how, as well as having executives who are not worth the big money they are paid. Already, the new chairman of TVNZ, Dr Ross Armstrong, questions “what’s behind those sort of salaries?” The government is acting as the new broom. So, New Zealand can be pleased with some things.

Perhaps the Americas’ Cup can be added to the list, by the time you read this issue of *Tui Motu*.

Vintage Marlboro’

My father used to point out, with true Gallic logic, that Christ’s first miracle was symbolically very significant and that it pointed the way to the enjoyment of wine. I was reminded of this during a recent trip to Marlborough and Nelson, where the whole countryside seems to have been transformed into a mosaic of vineyards, which covers 3200 hectares and includes over fifty wineries. Here, the wine industry has developed rapidly into a mature and sophisticated business. This is despite punitive taxes and New Zealand’s poor record in dealing with matters associated with alcohol. The wineries of this region offer great food to complement their wine and both are served in idyllic surroundings which make you appreciate God’s own country and the expertise of the wine makers.

Cloudy Bay is a beautiful place and its wines can compete with anything France could produce. Father, having lived in New Zealand during the years of six o’clock closing and the odd bottle of Bakano, would have been overjoyed to see these endless rows of grapevines covering the land as far as the eye can see. New Zealand is blessed in many ways. It has reason to be proud of its wine. ■

Englishing the liturgy

ICEL – the International Commission on English in the Liturgy – was established during the Vatican Council by English-speaking bishops. Bishop Peter Cullinane is currently the New Zealand representative. ICEL's most important work has been the compiling of official liturgical texts in the English language. It can be a slow, laborious task. For instance, when the revision of the Missal was completed in 1993, Bishops' Conferences deliberated on the new text for four years before approving the final version.

Up to now it has been accepted that the system, although time consuming, was the best way to produce acceptable translation. English-speaking bishops were deemed to be the best final judges. It seems this is now to change. The Roman Congregation for Divine Worship intends to assume direct control over ICEL, including the appointment of staff and advisers on the Commission. Cardinal Estévez, Chilean Prefect of the Congregation, said this was a response to many complaints made about ICEL. The charges included 'political correctness', overuse of inclusive language and the Commission overstepping its mandate.

Many people have been upset by the Congregation's move. One Commission member, who declined to be named, expressed a fear of a "deeper motive, namely the sidelining of bishops and the local church by a centralising Curia. Yet church documents... place responsibility for liturgy in the hands of Bishops' Conferences. Now an attempt is being made to erode their authority. It should be resisted."

'Britain's most celebrated dissident'

This description was given to Lavinia Byrne by Tim Sebastian in a recent BBC *Hardtalk* interview. This well-known theologian, writer and broadcaster recently left her Order (the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or IBVM) after 35 years as a Religious. The reason she gave was the treatment she received from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), treatment she likened to the Inquisition.

In 1994 she published a book *Women at the Altar*, where she proposed that the ordination of women to the priesthood was supported by sound Catholic theology. Later that year Pope John Paul issued the statement that "the Church has no authority whatsoever to

confer priestly ordination on women". Sr Lavinia's book was condemned by the CDF, and her publishers, St John's Press, Minnesota, burned all copies held in stock. At no time did anyone from the Vatican contact her directly. But through her Superior General, they insisted that she sign a public declaration assenting to Papal teaching against contraception and the ordination of women.

Cardinal Hume had spoken with her, agreeing she had been singled out for unjust treatment. He sent a strongly worded letter to the Cardinal Secretary of the CDF, saying "Sr Lavinia is a much respected person in this country. I advise no further action be taken in the matter of her book..." Cardinal Hume died during 1999.

Late last year Sr Lavinia came to the conclusion that the threat to silence her would make her life impossible, so she asked to be dispensed from her vows. She insists, however, that she continues to be an active member of the Catholic Church. Her Provincial Superior stated: "We accept that each individual must ultimately follow the dictates of her own conscience... She knows she has our own warm wishes in her future as a lay member of the Church".

Jim Neilan

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Cup fever

If you are not caught up with “the Race” in Auckland you could be accused of inattention. The Hauraki Gulf, *Luna Rossa* and *Black Magic* are bywords; *America's Cup* fever is rampant; nobody is complaining or wondering why: only the occasional kerbstone philosopher (like me – a latter-day Auckland citizen to boot, since 1993).

Is the occasion an outrageous display of opulence – big toys for the big boys? Tell that to the taxi drivers, restaurateurs, hoteliers and associated workers. You would have even less success with Auckland boaties coming as they do from every age group and social strata. Local legend assures us that one in seven of Auckland citizens are part owners or crew members of a boat. Being out on the water for many Aucklanders is more natural than walking along a city street, especially if you have grown up in the midst of a city built around two harbours.

Sailing is probably the most ancient mode of transport. (Did it beat the wheel?) What a combination: water, wind, wood, and canvas! The yacht is the undisputed princess of the gulf, gliding or surging as conditions allow, with a grace, ease, and placidity that makes other boats look like lesser beings.

And there is such an extraordinary variety ranging from the very large and powerful to the seemingly inconsequential, like the “butterfly” yachts we see fluttering on the harbour on a Saturday morning, guided by nine-year-olds. Environmentally the yacht is a joy: no noise, no oil slicks, scant threat to other craft or people and less likely to dump waste.

In the context of the *America's Cup* however a few other reflections emerge. The first is a plus: it is accessible to all Kiwis who have television, an international sporting event not walled off like New Zealand cricket. Its competitive characteristics are more controversial: there are two household

perspectives on this. One says winning looks obsessional and humourless (like when a skipper cannot front for a press conference after winning a race); the other says winning demands focus, discipline, professionalism – the grinning can be left for the celebrations.

Losing is an art too though – the gracious acceptance of reality, and one senses that the Italians might handle this better than their opponents if they must. They have added continental spice to the metropolis and been enormously popular, being cheered home by the natives as winners of the Louis Vuitton Cup. Another bonus from the Cup event is the restoration of the ubiquitous and wondrous Rangitoto Island as the icon of Auckland. *Eat your heart out, Skytower!*

The organisation of this festival of sails has been superb. It must be one of the world's best boating settings but the professionalism of the sailors has been matched by the administrators on land. Most people here would say that we should make a habit of this. Say, every

Tom Cloher

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