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# Tui Motu

InterIslands

FEB 2023

25 YEARS  
NEW LOOK!

**Embrace Synodal Way for Mission**

NEIL DARRAGH

**Family, Faith, Heartstrings  
and Decisions**

MARY BETZ

**About Synodality**

BRENDAN DALY, STUART HENRYS

**and Introducing New Columnist**

ROSEMARY RIDDELL

**Embrace 2023  
Awhi i te tau 2023**

INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC MAGAZINE

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# Editorial

## A New Year

HAPPY NEW YEAR to you! It's already February and the mystery of 2023 is evolving moment by moment. We know some of what's coming, like Waitangi Day and the general election; we know some situations we'll struggle with, like the rising cost of living; some we'll yearn for, like peace in Ukraine and a combined global effort on poverty and the climate crisis. Other invitations are ongoing, like the Synod on Synodality; and yet others will challenge, shock, surprise, gladden or disappoint us. Yet we go into this year with hope — awahi i te tau.

This year *Tui Motu* celebrates its 25th year of publication. Throughout that time the magazine has continued to fulfil the vision of its founders, thanks to the editorial teams, the contributors and the loyalty of subscribers.

We begin this silver jubilee year with unexpected changes. Greg Hings, who has designed the magazine since April 2011, died suddenly in December last year — just a week after finishing issue 277. With Greg's death we've lost a valued friend from our team. You can read more about him and his contribution on our website. Greg's death propelled us into a search for a new designer and this year we welcome Lilly Johnson in Auckland/Tāmaki Makarau to the team.

Lilly's introduced a different mode of working — via the cloud. We make the most of moments between admiring two-year-old Juni's latest creation and the four-month-old darling's need for Mum's attention. They're all my nibblings so I'm revelling in these quick catch-ups. But when the littlies are asleep Lilly converts the pile of files into a *Tui Motu* issue that honours each contribution — it's the reverse of Cinderella's midnight experience at the ball! So this year we hope for early bedtimes and settled sleep for the wee ones during the design phase of each month.

As well as our designer, we welcome two new columnists to the back page, now titled: "For What It's Worth." Rosemary Riddell has her inaugural column in this issue and we look forward to Bruce Drysdale's reflection next month. They will share the column bimonthly.

We welcome back our regular columnists and writers. We're grateful to all the contributors whose research, reflection, writing, art and craft combine to give us a good read in this 278th issue.

And as is our custom, our last word is of blessing and encouragement.

Ann Gilroy



# Turning the Mirror on Ourselves

THIS MONTH my mother turns 90. Milestones like this inevitably lead to reflection on family relationships and interwoven generational dynamics. Achieving 90 is no mean feat, especially when accompanied by good mobility, general health and sharp faculties like my formidable mum. It's a special time for our family, but not in itself unique.

Last year's passing of Queen Elizabeth II brought home to me the stark reality that no matter who you are and how much of a fixture you seem to be, life ends. Despite this being a self-evident revelation, I believe that in our hearts we all secretly imagine immortality for ourselves and our loved ones.

This cognitive dissonance aside, the exposed family relationships and intergenerational dynamics of the English royal family are impossible to ignore in the wake of the Queen's death and the slow motion car crash of a public accountability roadshow being conducted by her grandson and his wife.

As a proponent of Aotearoa New Zealand extricating itself from the tentacles of an anachronistic, monarchic system I could be pigeonholed as an anti-royalist cynic. Instead, I just feel sad and worried for them. The lot of them. After all, as a family they have in the last year lost two parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, one of whom had been the mainstay of monarchic rule in the Commonwealth for 70 years. That's a very long time. It was never going to last forever. Now that Elizabeth's era has ended, a period of instability and questioning will ensue with strengthened debates on what relevance and value the English monarchy has today.

So I ask myself, Why? Why do I read the articles, watch the interviews, have conversations with people about whose side to be on? Why do I care?

I care because at the heart of our fascination with the public airing of their dirty but private linen is a system that has not only enabled but actively feeds our public addiction to this family's pain. It will never heal or be resolved because the news media requires it to continue. It's at the heart of what I believe is a sick culture. I'm no

fan of a monarchy in my own country, but I absolutely respect its right to exist and thrive within its own borders. Sadly, the UK fourth estate from which our own originates has become a parasite requiring the royals' existence while at the same time trying to destroy them.

In my valedictory speech given to New Zealand parliament in 2020 I spoke about the role of our media in Aotearoa New Zealand. I said:

"It's time to have a serious discussion about how we practise politics in this country and how politics is reported.

Is the adversarial, centuries-old Westminster system fit for purpose in Aotearoa? I don't believe it is. For a progressive country, highly respected in the world, we practise this system, in my view, in an immature and destructive

way. Politicians and the news media focus on conflict, perceived or real slip-ups, rather than substance and the quality of ideas. The objective is to catch people out and take them down, rather than providing a platform of

**... at the heart of our fascination with the public airing of [the royals] dirty but private linen is a system that ... actively feeds our public addiction to this family's pain.**

discussion for and against the best improvements to the lives of New Zealanders. Politicians should be held accountable, but we are not prey. The accountability lacks perspective—if you don't believe me, go ask the public.

"I address our news media today, particularly those in the press gallery. You are not unaccountable, though you act as though you are. Your mandate derives from the citizens of this country. Please use it wisely and maturely. You are neither judge nor jury. Remember that your power, and the notion of media freedom that you protect so fiercely, rests on a promise of service to the democratic public—you are accountable to them. To be credible, you must turn the mirror on yourselves."

There are parallels to be drawn with our English cousins. While not politicians, royal family members play an important symbolic cultural role in their nation. Media behaviour is arguably responsible for much of Harry and Meghan's woes and for many less salacious, but still damaging, obsessive exposés in our own nation. If enough of us consistently demand media accountability, we may make headway.

In the meantime, happy big birthday to my mum Shirley Curran who is a valued reader of, and volunteer for, *Tui Motu*. And a genuine Happy New Year to all of you. 💎

**Clare Curran**, former MP, is a committed advocate and representative on social justice issues and writer of novels.





# Church and Mission



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## Neil Darragh asks if our models of Church are fit for mission.

I WAS CAUGHT UP recently in an argument about the “mission” of local Christian communities, parishes in particular. It was an argument rather than a discussion because all of us had “skin in the game”. We all had commitments and relationships at stake here. The argument started because I had advocated making a shift from a self-focused church to a mission-focused church (*Tui Motu*, December 2022). It became clear quite soon that our differences weren’t just about “mission” but also about what we mean by “church”.

Identifying our “models” of the church is a quick way of pinpointing where my idea of the church is different from, or the same as, yours. Our underlying (not quite conscious) models of the church create different expectations about what we should be doing together. In the late 20th century, models such as institution, communion, sacrament, herald and community of disciples were often used as ways of focusing what were seen to be the key characteristics of the church. More recently, we have come to need models of the church that are more obviously fit for mission.

### Church as Institution

One of the most persistent ways of understanding the church has been the institutional model. The church, in this model, is seen as an organisation with a hierarchical structure, run mostly by priests and bishops, assisted by vowed religious women and men. It has its own established customs, laws and roles. This model applies particularly to Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican Churches but in lesser degree to other denominations also. For many people, most of the time, this organisation provides a secure (or at least best available) guide for moral responsibility and personal salvation.

Any church with a largish number of people, with its own objectives, and expecting to survive over time needs to be institutionalised to some degree. The danger in this model however is that it can allow, even encourage, a church to become bureaucratic, autocratic and controlling. People who have experience of more democratic forms of organisation often abandon it for more participative styles of being church.

This model of church can be supportive of a mission outreach but its main priorities are more likely to be focused on the church itself, its own good functioning and growth in numbers rather than outwards to the wider world.

### Pastoral Care

In recent decades, the model of pastoral care has seemed more attractive than the institutional model of the church. It stresses kindness and care for others rather than lines of authority. It puts more emphasis on the people than on the organisation. It is now a widespread and strong motivator for the work of church personnel. It is also more participative. Many people, not just ministers, priests and administrators, can become involved in the “pastoral care” of others.

The foundation for this model is Christ the Good Shepherd who looks after his flock. It does not usually look too far into the deeper or longer-term implications of the shepherd's motivation, the longer-term destination of the sheep (wool or dinner), or the implications of regarding the majority of people in the church as sheep. This is a “soft” model in the sense that it often lacks hard lines of accountability. It is more familiar with forgiving than with holding to account.

This model of church is supportive especially of a mission of compassion. Compassion often reaches beyond the boundaries of the church to anyone in need regardless of church affiliation. In this sense it is a mission action. Nevertheless, the all-absorbing needs of people in want are a priority in this model that may leave little time or energy for a mission focused on fairness in society or ecological responsibility.

### Safe-guarding and Self-guarding

The pastoral care model has come under serious criticism from the new safeguarding model that followed the revelations of abuse by people in pastoral roles within churches. Pastoral care sometimes provided a cover for the actions of abusers. Especially damaging to the pastoral care model were the revelations of failures by church leaders to eliminate and prevent such abuse. The safe-guarding model requires strict accountability for any

abuse of vulnerable people and the reporting of any known abuse to the relevant authority.

An important component of a safe environment for everyone, is self-guarding for church personnel themselves. Church personnel themselves may be vulnerable to false accusations of abuse. They are particularly vulnerable in situations which require confidentiality and one-on-one relationships. To protect themselves from such accusations, pastoral carers need to adopt a strategy of self-guarding. This means following strict rules about how and where they meet with vulnerable people, making sure there are witnesses to all such encounters, recording these encounters and working under professional supervision.

**Mission is about how we contribute to the evolving realm of God in the world. Church is about how we organise ourselves to make this contribution effectively.**

The self-guarding component which seeks to protect the pastoral carer from the real possibility of false accusations severely restricts pastoral care and discourages altogether many traditional forms of care. It has also brought with it a new kind of institutional model through new laws, tribunals, monitors and reporting requirements.

This model of the church includes a mission to promote an environment, both within and outside the church, which respects and acknowledges the dignity of everyone, an environment where people feel valued and safe. The safeguarding model is also intended to combat one of the major contemporary obstacles to mission, namely the abuse of vulnerable people by church personnel.

### The Synodal Way


The three models of church I have noted above all have their own worth as well as their defects and dangers. All of them are interdependent; they each promote some priorities rather than others; some of them clash with others; each of them provides

a corrective to the others. These models are interdependent but they are not equal and we clearly cannot follow all at once. Most importantly, none of them is specifically mission-focused. A fourth model, the synodal way, may be a way forward.

Synodality means “walking together”. It is the name Pope Francis is giving to a new process of renewal of the Catholic Church ([www.synod.va/en.html](http://www.synod.va/en.html)). It is hoped that all members of the church will take part in this process. The process begins with everyone in the church listening as much as possible to everyone else. This process has been underway now for nearly two years and as a formal process it will culminate in the Synod of Bishops in 2014.

This “walking together” has three dimensions: communion, participation, and mission. Communion emphasises the deep roots we share in the love and unity of the Trinity. We share a common “instinct” of faith. Participation emphasises that we all have gifts to share. Mission emphasises that we can never be centred on ourselves. The church exists not for itself but in service to the coming reign of God.

This process is founded on an institutional model promoted by church hierarchy but it calls for high participation from all members of the church. It is not yet clear what the “mission” dimension will eventually become but it is at least a strong call for a better Church more fit for its mission.

It is unhealthy for Christian communities to focus too much on ourselves and getting everything right. Yet we do need to notice how the ways in which we relate to one another (the “models” we use for the Church) help or hinder us from getting on with what we are really for. Mission is about how we contribute to the evolving realm of God in the world. Church is about how we organise ourselves to make this contribution effectively. 

Neil Darragh is a pastor, writer and theologian. His latest book is *But What Is the Church For? What Is the Mission of the Local Church?* (2022)







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# NAVIGATING LIFE CHANGES

*Mary Betz shares the pulling of heartstrings that accompanies making decisions for the future.*

## Grandparenthood

Holding our first grandbabies last October — one four-and-a-half months, the other six weeks old — was a taste of heaven. The indescribable warm downy feel of their little heads under my chin, their tiny bodies, their scent — all those things had not changed from the sensations I cherished when their mothers were my newborns 37 and 35 years ago. There was the same walking with and singing to the unsettled baby and burping the satiated one.

And there was a difference. As the grandmother I watched the way each set of parents worked in sync, with or without words, to care for their baby's needs, and observed each parent's special bond and way of relating to their

offspring. What gifts of welcome, warmth, care and pure love they offered their little boys.

In return — and far beyond return — the new babies offer their parents that unique, though transitory, gift and responsibility of being absolutely needed by another human being. They gift to parents, grandparents and increasingly to others, trusting attentiveness and those endearing smiles and sudden uproarious laughs that melt all hearts. They also unknowingly draw their extended family closer together.

## Relationships by Distance

We had come together from three countries and across the Pacific — Australia, Aotearoa and Canada. A few generations ago, families separated by immigration might never see one

another again and would rely only on letters for continued contact. Even when I came to Aotearoa 35 years ago, letters were my primary way of keeping in touch with family and friends, as long-distance phone calls were prohibitively expensive. Not everyone had PCs and email yet, and to fly back meant a few years of saving up.

Now, although I lament the geographical distance between our families, we have the formerly unimaginable luxury of being able to video chat for free anytime with various devices and can share precious photos and videos via email. It means that when those precious babies begin to roll over, grab their toys, suck their fingers, “sing” or “read” along with their parents, we grandparents can be part of it in real time.

Yet it is hard saying goodbye, and the end of each Skype chat tugs at my heartstrings. I want to be there more than just virtually. Technology is great, but it's less than “being there”. We lack the touch, smell and awareness of others' larger context — the fuller reality of “being there”. Many people found the same thing during Covid: much work could be done remotely, meetings could be held online, time and energy were not wasted in travel or the running of offices, but the “being there” factor was missing. Human relationships (with family, friends and colleagues) can be maintained digitally for a time, but something is not quite the same.

### Ageing and Retirement

Last month I celebrated with friends the milestone of turning 70. The windows and doors were open wide to the summer breeze and we spread out on the balcony and patio to keep any Covid at bay. It was a wonderful opportunity for many (mostly older) folk to meet over festive food, punch and bubbly and catch up — for some it was the first time since the BC (before Covid) era. Again, that sense of being there bodily was at play. As much as Zoom meetings sustained various groups of us during the pandemic, there is no way that the comfortable feel of togetherness, the warmth of conversations, and sharing

of food and drink could possibly be duplicated online.

Last month also brought the final paycheque for my husband, Peter, who has retired after many years of teaching, ministry and dairy research engineering. For him, there is the usual kind of to-do list of jobs around the house and section, and extra time for reading, watching YouTube science and technology videos and e-biking. For me, it raises questions about how long I will continue preaching, spiritual companioning or even (but probably not!) writing. For us both, it opens the possibility of travel and the challenges of keeping resultant carbon emissions to a minimum, the opportunity to become a one-car family and the idea of downsizing our house.

### Life Alternatives

For many people, the move to a smaller home is not a huge issue, especially if their family and friends live in the same city, or at least in the same country. But for us, the issue is not only what kind of a house to look for, but where. Both of us have friends and have lived in a number of places in New Zealand and, for Peter, his whole family of 12 siblings and their many descendants are in this country. We have lived for nearly 22 years in Auckland and are connected into several communities here. But I have only lived half of my life in Aotearoa, and have friends and family all over North America, particularly in British Columbia.

Which brings us back to being grandparents. People say: “Don't follow your children” but what if I am faced with the prospect of not “being there” for them and their young children, and am actually free to lessen that distance of almost 12,000 km?

There would be hurdles: negotiating new rules for superannuation and taxation, (re-) establishing residency, medical insurance and practitioners; (re-) learning another country's language usage and cultural expectations; gradually finding new friends, Church and other community. There is also the wrench of leaving a loved home in

beautiful native bush, a long-standing Eucharistic community, many friends and family here. At our ages, what would all that be like?

### Discernment

Ignatian spirituality offers us ways of discerning when equally good and attractive alternatives present themselves and there is no obvious reason to choose one over the other. Ignatius gives feelings priority when it comes to discernment — in your heart of hearts, is there a decision which will give you a deep sense of peace?

Sometimes simply waiting until a choice becomes clearer is a good way to proceed. Another way is to logically list pros and cons (a good thing to do even if we have strong feelings toward one direction over another): this may be especially important when two people are involved in discernment together. Other ways include asking ourselves questions: if I were looking back as a much older person, which direction would I choose? Or, if a best friend were in my situation, how would I advise them to look at this decision?

We are not the only ones, of course, who face decisions in this new year. People of all ages will be deciding on career choices, negotiating changes brought about by new relationships or the dying of old ones, opportunities to go overseas, decisions which come to the fore because of children, grandchildren, age, illness or other life events.

Ignatian discernment may be of help because it gives us the assurance that God works in our innermost selves, leading us to decisions by attending to the feelings which reflect our — and God's — deepest desires. ✨

As well as being a grandmother **Mary Betz** is a spiritual companion with a background in ecology, theology, justice and peace.







## OUR PILGRIMAGE IN THE NORTH



IMAGES SUPPLIED



visited St Mary's Catholic Church in Motuti, where Sister Magdalen told us stories about Bishop Pompallier's mission. We celebrated the liturgy, and several members of our group reflected on how powerful the service was for them. We felt a strong connection being home to the Catholic faith we have grown up with. This part of our haerenga also opened our eyes to the central aspect of the faith within Māori people. Whaea Rangi gifted us with the story of her mother who, along with other pilgrims, made the journey from France bringing Bishop Pompallier's remains home to bury in Aotearoa.

On a personal level, the haerenga also allowed us to appreciate life, strengthening existing friendships and forming new ones along the way. We learned to step outside our comfort zone and take part in the activities and opportunities open to us. We became more aware and appreciated the hospitality shown to us by people we had only just met. We were reminded to deepen our connections with family and friends and make the most of our time with them.

The overall takeaway from this experience is that stories must continue to be told through generations for history not to be lost. It is important to learn the roots of our country and the significant events of the past. We need to keep the Māori culture alive, along with the Catholic traditions built into our identity, for them to endure. We in Aotearoa need to understand one another's cultures, languages, views and traditions to unite all of us as one nation as we move forward to the future. 💡

**At the end of last year a group of students from Liston College, Auckland, made a pilgrimage in Northland to immerse themselves in stories of Māori and the Church in the Hokianga.**

Our pilgrimage to Hokianga has been a spiritually and culturally enriching experience for all of us – students and staff. Many aspects of the immersion were both educational and enjoyable, from learning about different people and cultures and how they influenced their perspectives and worldviews, deserving to be heard and respected, to the personal connections that came alive or were discovered throughout the haerenga (journey).

One of the highlights was learning about the rich history behind some of the local Māori tribes and communities. This included the significant people who were once part of their community and continue to be influential in their lives long after their deaths. An example is Dame Whina Cooper, who is known for leading the Māori Land March to Parliament in Wellington. It was an act of leadership to spread a powerful message not just in Aotearoa but also around the globe.

The visit to the Treaty of Waitangi grounds was also a standout and memorable learning experience for everyone. The articles, remnants and carvings in the museum conveyed the significance of this crucial moment in history for Aotearoa. New Zealanders need to know that Māori culture is richer than we may think. It is full of tradition, mannerisms, food, music and dance, and tools that serve a specific purpose central to the history and ongoing presence of the Māori culture in Aotearoa.

Our haerenga gave us a greater appreciation of the Māori people's passion for their culture, which we would like to teach the rest of Aotearoa to admire and respect. When we visited surrounding towns around Pikipāria Marae, we heard people speaking Te Reo Māori with great pride and fluency – from both the people who had grown up in the area and those who had traced their whakapapa and made their way back home to Hokianga. Evidently, they have strong bonds with the people in the community and are connected through their rich culture and history.

The other significant part of our haerenga was tracing the birthplace of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa. We



# A Prayer and a Mayor

IN DECEMBER the new mayor of Kaipara Craig Jepson made the headlines with a prayer. Not that he said it, but that he refused to have it said. "We're there to do business," he said. For Jepson prayer and business don't mix.

Kaipara is a large area north of Auckland, mostly rural with a few small towns. It has a population of about 20,000, of whom 20 per cent are Māori.

Māori have long been underrepresented in their local politics, so before the last election a Māori ward was created in the district in order to improve this. Pera Paniora is Māori ward representative on the new council.

Paniora offered a karakia (prayer) and was repeatedly interrupted and told to desist by the new mayor.

Allegedly the mayor said some other things, too, which if true do not enhance the standing of his office. It is a mayor's duty to represent and treat all their constituents with dignity and respect.

I can sympathise with Mayor Jepson's view on prayer. Christian prayers slide, following the trajectory of the past, into the public domain in a way that often presumes that we are all — or all should be — Christian. But the statistics tell us that we are a land of many faiths, and that many in Aotearoa say they have no faith. Why should Christianity assume a pre-eminent place?

There are also some of us who cringe on hearing the public prayer language of fellow Christians. Not all of us want to ascribe to God a male gender, or the power of a feudal king to hear our petitions and mercifully grant our wishes. It feels very reductive to so anthropomorphise God.

But there is wisdom in taking time at the beginning and end of meetings, even business meetings, to pause in order to acknowledge our gratitude for life, the people in our care, our responsibilities and the issues before us. There is always more going on in the room than just the items on the agenda.

So I welcome that pause, even if some of my co-religionists fill it with a language I find lacking.

Two of the things going on in the room are always history and culture, which have determined who has power and who doesn't, who determines the language, and who sets the rules. And in Aotearoa New Zealand we are talking about colonisation, Pākehā and Māori, and the mahi of decolonisation – namely how to weave cultures together with dignity, redress, and justice, leading to new ways of operating and empowerment.

This weaving work of decolonisation has been going on for some time now in places where Pākehā are usually numerically in the majority. In schools, universities, hospitals, community groups and organisations, businesses, Churches, and in local and national politics. Sometimes the weaving is gently helping people see anew and coaching them to act a little differently. Sometimes the weaving is the result of fiercely contested debate and protest. For some this process is too slow, for some too fast. Yet it is moving.

In Te Ao Māori (the Māori worldview) karakia is not an add-on. It's not something you just do on Sunday, nor is it only about your private relationship with God. It's not something separate from the business of your everyday work and life. It is threaded



HEI'TIKI LOVE LOVE LOVE BY JIMMY JAMES KOURATORAS ©  
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through all and in all. It is threaded through your land, your genealogy, your tribe, and who you are. Indeed, it is integral to who you are.

Karakia recognises the mana (innate status and authority) of everyone present and invites the voice and experience of the ancestors (tūpuna) in order to move forward safely and wisely. This wairua (spirit) is expressed through the karakia and is the thread that extends to build connections. For karakia is about connection.

I believe that deities are always about connection — with a source or energy beyond our understanding, with the language and beliefs of the past. We connect with a cluster of values that will hopefully guide our actions. And deities always reflect history and culture.

Mayor Craig Jepson needs some assistance to see beyond the restraints of his own history and culture, learn about reconciliation as a path to restoration (*hohou te rongo*), and in so doing hopefully see the value and gift of a bicultural future.

What Mayor Jepson has trodden on is not just the simple idea of having a religious prayer at the beginning of a business meeting. Like many Pākehā leaders before him, he has trodden on Māori tikanga (cultural ways of operating), with the unsaid message that his tikanga is superior. And he has trodden on the mana of Pera Paniora and her constituents in the Kaipara Māori ward. In doing so, without knowing so, he has diminished and harmed his own mana and the mana of his council.

Whether he wants it or not, Jepson has now set a new agenda for the Kaipara Council. Prayer has become the business. ❖

**Glynn Cardy** is the minister of the Community of St Luke, Auckland. With Stephanie, his wife, their household includes four adult children and two cats.



# WHAT YOU CANNOT SEE, YOU CANNOT BE!

**Thomas O’Loughlin** shows how images in Catholic media fail to reflect the whole Church.



PHOTO BY ARRON OF LA/SHUTTERSTOCK

I’VE HEARD PEOPLE from marginalised groups say they watch out to see one of themselves in books, radio reports or TV programmes. It seems that one of the lesser-known elements in the way we humans establish our relationship with the world around us is that we look to see ourselves out there. If I cannot see myself — somehow — in a scene, then I will conclude that it is not really for me. I have seen young people crushed, sometimes even by their parents, when they

were told that their ambitions were meaningless. It could be done with a single phrase: “The likes of us don’t end up in those places!” The world is now somehow more limited and we know we are excluded.

This has led many — such as those active in the women’s movement — to adopt a shorthand: what you cannot see, you cannot be!

Before I can aspire to something, I have to be able to imagine myself there. That is why those who go first into any situation are so special —

they forge the future; but most of us, we just need to know it is possible, and then we can get there.

More importantly, when we cannot see ourselves in something, we usually conclude that it has little or nothing to do with us. When I am invisible, I vote with my feet, thinking there is little or nothing there relevant to my life, happiness or existence. You may not believe this — but just look at the care and effort and expense incurred by advertisers so that no potential spender is invisible in their marketing!



I have seen young people crushed, sometimes even by their parents, when they were told that their ambitions were meaningless. It could be done with a single phrase: “The likes of us don’t end up in those places!” The world is now somehow more limited and we know we are excluded.

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## A TEST CASE

With this in mind, I went this morning (11 Jan 2023) to the website of *La Croix International* — that most useful way to keep up with the developments in Catholicism worldwide — to see what sort of people can see themselves in its opening page under the “Religion” tab. There are 22 news stories each with a masthead photograph. The most recent story (11 Jan) is an encomium of Cardinal Pell who died yesterday (10 Jan) and the oldest story on the page is from 3 Jan and is about tributes paid to the memory of Pope Benedict XVI by representatives of other Churches — the pope emeritus died 31 December. So, my first thought on these stories is that two men who spent their lives in the service of the Church have gone to their reward: *requiescant in pace Domini*.

Now, today, is not a good time to carry out my experiment of what one sees about the Catholic Church in this front page — two major figures’ deaths can be said to dominate it, but it is still informative.

### Here is a list of what I can see:

- Jan 11: Head and shoulders of elderly male cleric in uniform.
- Jan 11: Excommunicated male cleric in uniform.
- Jan 10: Male cleric in uniform; with picture of the Pope Francis in the background.
- Jan 10: Pope Benedict surrounded by men (one a cleric); presumably some women in the audience.
- Jan 9: Two male clerics in uniform; one woman in uniform as server in background; one other male in uniform.
- Jan 9: Pope Francis with a male cleric in uniform.
- Jan 7: Christmas card scene of the three kings coming to Bethlehem.
- Jan 7: Head and shoulders of elderly male cleric in uniform.
- Jan 6: Pope Francis and three other clerics in uniform.
- Jan 6: Pope Francis leaving aircraft.
- Jan 5: Pope Benedict’s coffin with 22 people in the picture — only 5 are women and these are clearly ‘in the audience’.
- Jan 5: Pope Benedict’s coffin; five males in uniform; two women in the background congregation.
- Jan 5: Pope Benedict’s coffin; and Pope Francis with three male clerics in uniform.
- Jan 5: Three men signing a book of condolences in front of a picture of Pope Benedict.
- Jan 4: Eight male clerics in uniform.
- Jan 4: The body of the late pope lying in state; 17 blurred images in background but only three are definitely women.

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## THIS IS AN EXCEPTION?

Yes — these weeks, with their focus on Rome and the papacy are exceptional. But it is at these exceptional times that those who are not of the Catholic or Christian world might see us. And what do they see?

They see clearly that this is a male organisation in which women are only allowed into the peripheral and supporting roles.

Clearly, this is an organisation that loves its own structures and constantly likes to display its relationship to its pope. They wear uniforms as normal — and a uniform is there to tell us a story of power and importance, not for utility like the overalls of a carpenter.

Clearly, this is a group which sees itself as servicing a group of followers rather than seeing itself as part of the larger group.

And the more we know about how distinct this clerical group is, the more it looks like an old boys’ club with some really weird rules about belonging to it such that subscribing to the club is more important than the family life of the individual.

I could go on and on — this is a caste system based on the most subtle codes to demonstrate inequality.

Now look up Mark 10:42-44.

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## TRY YOUR OWN TEST

Look at your diocesan newspaper or parish magazine. Count the number of times the bishop’s picture appears. Count the number of times images of clergy appear. Count the women. Count the number of times that members of minorities appear.

Then, think of what that says about us.

I suspect that in a world where uniforms are suspect as props to power, and where we have discovered that women and men are equal in dignity, this photo parade is not exactly an advert to welcome our sisters and brothers into the People of God.

It is a virtue, bringing wisdom, to see ourselves as others see us. And, sometimes, it can be quite shocking. 💎

**Thomas O’Loughlin** is Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology. *In Christ Now We Meet Both East and West: On Catholic Eucharistic Action* (2023) is his latest book.





# Pope Benedict XVI

MASSIMO FAGGIOLI writes that Pope Benedict XVI as the Vatican's former doctrinal chief and the first pope to resign in 600 years had an enormous influence on redefining Church leadership and theology, especially in the United States.

WITH THE DEATH of Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI (30 December 2022), contemporary Catholicism has lost one of its most iconic figures. The former pope had such influence that the terms "Ratzingerism" and "Ratzingerian" were coined to identify a version of Catholicism that embodied his peculiar conversion from being a proponent of Vatican Council II during its four sessions (1962-65) to becoming a fierce critic of the conciliar progressives a few years later.

His intellectual, ecclesial and ecclesiastical persona was strengthened by the authority of German academic theology. His influence went well beyond his widely-read books and essays, beyond the boundaries of the Catholic clergy and intelligentsia, and even beyond the doctrinal policies that he shaped and enforced for more than 30 years

— first as a cardinal-prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1981-2005), and then as Bishop of Rome (2005-2013). He became the symbol of the Vatican's regaining control over the energies that the Council had unleashed. Ratzinger was a controller in ways beyond what is typical of other Roman Curia cardinals and top officials. His reach extended further.

## Redefining Church Leadership

The periods that follow ecumenical councils normally redefine the Church leadership. The post-Vatican II episcopacy was reshaped in ways that, especially after the election of John Paul II in 1978, steered the Church away from the sirens of progressivism and responded to the anthropological challenge coming from biopolitics and the secularisation of legislation and ethics. Ratzinger played a key role in this process, which ultimately produced a new

model of bishops designed to put the brakes on post-conciliar Catholicism. They were sent to dioceses where they ended up in an open conflict with their local Churches — and in the last few years, also in declared opposition to Benedict's successor on the Chair of Peter, Pope Francis.

## Remaking the US Episcopacy

Appointments of bishops in the US Church illustrate this. Shortly after 1980 the Vatican began appointing new bishops aimed at undoing what the liberal papal diplomat Archbishop Jean Jadot from Belgium had done between 1973-1980 during his tenure in Washington. Not only were these new bishops more conservative, but they were also younger. This policy was intensified during Benedict XVI's eight years as pope.

Almost a full decade after his 2013 renunciation of the papacy, the



majority of US bishops are still those he appointed, so much so that that their confreres who are closer to Pope Francis regularly fail to get elected to the key posts in the national episcopal conference.

Even before being elected pope, Ratzinger's writings on Vatican II and contemporary theological issues expressed views contrary to the mainstream of the post-conciliar period. These writings began attracting conservative US Catholics in the 1980s. Initially critical of certain aspects of Vatican II's implementation, this kind of conservative US Catholicism later took aim at the Council itself.

### Conservative Theologians and Right-wing Politicians

Long before he became Pope, Ratzinger was the hero of those who saw the reception of Vatican II being taken far from what they thought the real intention of the Council Fathers was. This was recognised by Ratzinger's frequent and intense relationship with institutions of Catholic academia in the United States, which bestowed on him honorary degrees.

## Benedict XVI's funeral was more than a requiem for a former pope. It marked the final obsequies of one of the few Church leaders who reshaped Catholicism in the last century.

After the terroristic attacks of 11 September 2001, his politically incorrect views on the compatibility between Islam and Western civilisation shaped by Christianity further boosted his popularity among conservative theologians and right-wing US politicians.

Benedict's visit to the US in April 2008 was important. George W Bush was president at the time and the papal trip solidified Benedict's

following within the ranks of the militant faithful. It encouraged vocations to a more traditional priesthood and religious life, sparked conversions to Catholicism and accompanied the reshaping of American Catholic culture at the institutional level. This was especially true among the clerical and episcopal elites, in ways that were clearly in opposition to the liberal-progressive turn taken by the academic elites in Catholic theology and certain religious orders, such as the Jesuits.

Benedict's pontificate initiated two separate investigations (in 2008 and 2009) on the doctrinal adherence to the magisterium by progressive women's religious orders and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) in the United States. This was part of a larger plan to discipline US Catholic theologians, especially leading women thinkers such as Elizabeth Johnson (in 2011). The special relationship that Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI had with certain groups and individuals in the United States was at the forefront of the "culture wars". That was quite visible when the US bishops made their "ad limina" visits to Rome in 2011 and 2012.

### More Than a Requiem for a Former Pope

Now almost a decade after the Jesuit pope's election, the two theological identities represented by Benedict and Francis still struggle to co-exist peacefully. The part of the Church that identifies with Ratzinger is a minority, but a militant one, and not quite as small when we look at the culture of the young clergy.

This has little to do with what Benedict did after his resignation. Rather, it has to do with what he did as a pope and before as a cardinal. For instance, his best-selling book *Ratzinger Report* (1985) became the manifesto for an age of policy reversals.



This culminated with *Summorum Pontificum*, his 2007 "motu proprio" to liberalise the use of the pre-Vatican II liturgy. It prompted a flourishing of traditionalist Catholicism in areas where Ratzingerism had already taken root quietly, often ignored or disdained by liberal academic theologians.

Benedict XVI's funeral was more than a requiem for a former pope. It marked the final obsequies of one of the few Church leaders who reshaped Catholicism in the last century. For most Catholics it was the funeral of a leader of their Church. For many others that of a father figure, not just a hierarchy, to whom they felt indebted spiritually and intellectually.

But for still others it was the funeral of a hero of a certain type of Catholic culture that sees itself as swimming against the tide both in the world and in the Church. These latter have sometimes tried to show themselves to be the heirs of Joseph Ratzinger's legacy in ways that embarrass those who, while not agreeing with the whole of his theology, recognise the former pope as having played an important part in the Catholic intellectual tradition of the last century.❖

For longer article see: [international.la-croix.com/news/signs-of-the-times/ratzinger-and-the-reshaping-of-post-vatican-ii-catholicism/17100](https://international.la-croix.com/news/signs-of-the-times/ratzinger-and-the-reshaping-of-post-vatican-ii-catholicism/17100)

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# NEW ECONOMIC SYSTEM?

**DEBT-INDUCED POVERTY** continues to cause concern in Aotearoa. The December 2021 amendments to the Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act (CCCFA) relating to affordability and suitability assessments puts the onus more directly on lenders to know clearly the financial situation of those seeking financial assistance. The penalties for not doing so are significant.

In recent years, the industry has witnessed the harm caused by insufficient knowledge of whether loans are affordable and has received consistent education from the Commerce Commission. Robust legislative amendments and a 100-page Responsible Lending Code provide the industry with the guidance they requested. However, debt spirals have not disappeared and poor lending practice continues.

The public outcry from financiers early last year after the introduction of the 1 December amendments, revealed a blinkered view of the repercussions from credit

innovations flooding the market and an overzealous lending market.

## **Amendments Are Having an Effect**

Amendments to the CCCFA in 2019 curbed the practice of short-term high cost lending. Rates of up to 800 per cent per annum have been stopped and a specific market of 33 lenders was swiftly reduced to three. More recently Moola, the only remaining short-term high cost lender, was reported to be seeking liquidation.

Once Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) schemes entered the market, evidence of harm was instant. People racked up multiple unaffordable BNPL payments used to supplement inadequate incomes. While BNPL schemes are interest free, missed payments incur ongoing fees. Noting the propensity for debt spirals, the government is now looking to place BNPL lenders under the CCCFA.

While these schemes may have a place for those who have enough real surplus from a few pay cycles without it leading to a debt trap, many people are struggling to adequately finance

their living costs. There are reports of up to 32 arrangements being approved at one time, for purchases increasingly for purchases of meat and groceries. Interestingly, people do not consider these arrangements as debt as they do their credit card and personal loans. Even more alarming are the individual total debt balances of non-mortgage debt, up to \$100,000.

So, with new credit iterations sidestepping legislation, supermarkets and banks recording huge profits in constrained times and exorbitant rents making life a misery for many, we need to look to arrange things differently.

## **Alternative System**

In his book *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (first published in 2011, and republished in 2021), social anthropologist David Graeber encourages us today to think about the way power imbalances in credit systems in the old world were mitigated, and applying them to new world economic realities.

Graeber explains how in our earliest known urban civilization,



2350BC Mesopotamia, “general debt cancellation edicts were issued (with regularity)... Cancelling not only all outstanding loans but all forms of debt servitude — the only thing excepted being commercial loans. Similar declarations are to be found again and again in Sumerian and later Babylonian and Assyrian records, and always with the same theme: the restoration of ‘justice and equity’, the protection of widows and orphans and to ensure ‘that the strong might not oppress the weak’.... New Year’s Eve ceremonies celebrated in Spring being the designated occasion for clearing the financial slate, restoring economic balance as part of the calendrical renewal of society along with the rest of nature.”

Graeber concludes *Debt* by stating: “I have largely avoided making concrete proposals but let me end with this one. It seems to me that we are long overdue for some kind of Biblical-style Jubilee: one that would affect both international and consumer debt. It would be salutary not just because it would relieve so much genuine human suffering, but also because it would be our way of reminding ourselves that money is not ineffable, that paying one’s debts is not the essence of morality, that all these things are human arrangements and that if democracy is to mean anything, it is the ability to all agree to arrange things in a different way.”

His pathway into writing the history of debt sprang from a conversation with a colleague who insisted: “Surely, one has to pay one’s debts.” What followed exposes this principle as a lie, as it turns out only some of us do, testified to by the bail-out of banks and big business post-2008.

### Promoting a Different System

With economic forecasting slipping well short of the mark recently, who else might we engage with to help us arrange things differently when our dominant capitalist paradigm is showing signs of fatigue?

Leilani Farha visited Aotearoa in February 2020 as UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing and warned that “we face a significant human rights crisis if we [don’t] employ measures such

as a capital gains tax, rent freeze, and eviction ban.” In RNZ interview with Kim Hill last year, Leilani noted that housing, a basic human right, was being used increasingly for profits. Laying down the Green Party priorities for 2023 Marama Davidson talks about putting up ideas for economic transformation: “Currently wealth in the hands of a few needs to be better redistributed, and that’s a core part of rearranging the way that our economy works at this time

... and the way that housing has been used as an asset instead of a place for people just have a home.”

UK author, environmental campaigner and outspoken critic of capitalism George Monbiot, challenges the status quo: “There is a poverty line below which no one should fall, and a wealth line above which no one should rise. We need wealth taxes, not carbon taxes.”

Others, too, suggest different ways of managing our economies. French economist Thomas Piketty encourages supporting approaches to counterweight hyper-capitalism. World-leading South Korean economist Ha-Joon Chang, who teaches at the University of London, says that a single free market philosophy is bland and unhealthy and that it is essential to listen to a variety of economic perspectives.

### Options Discussed in Aotearoa

And in Aotearoa, we are also thinking of alternatives to the status quo. Local identities Helen Dew, founding member of Living Economies Trust, and Joseph Cederwall, founding Director of Action Station Aotearoa have been offering wisdom around reimagining our economic structures. More recently Raf Manji, leader of The Opportunities Party, has suggested ways to reform our monetary, tax and welfare systems.

**SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST DAVID GRAEBER ENCOURAGES US TODAY TO THINK ABOUT THE WAY POWER IMBALANCES IN CREDIT SYSTEMS IN THE OLD WORLD WERE MITIGATED, AND APPLYING THEM TO NEW WORLD ECONOMIC REALITIES.**

We have abundant creativity to devise a better system. In the interests of the common good, we need to fervently pursue a better, fairer future. We need to look determinedly for the new seeds emerging in our economic and political landscape as a way to combat the prevailing sense of hopelessness, “to ensure the strong might not oppress the weak” and to restore justice and equity to our communities.💡

**Adrienne Gallie RSJ** lives in Wellington and shares a fervour to arrange things differently for the common good.



# Liminal space

Here is the liminal space  
awaiting grace that comes  
like wind over water.  
Someone showed you once how  
to read wind on water  
spot the movement  
see the direction and know  
the way to go.

Here is the liminal space  
awaiting grace that comes  
like wind-stirred embers  
in the hearth of memories.  
All your stories are here  
to disturb or to invite.

Here is the liminal space  
awaiting grace that comes  
like a footfall of silence  
on the green forest floor  
or a cyclone overturning all  
you ever knew  
until a prayer forms and  
you know  
the miracle of “we”.





Again we begin.  
We imagine space for the marvellous.

Anne Powell ©





Image by graffiti-273981 from Pixabay

# Peace Shrouded in Fog of War

**KEVIN  
CLEMENTS  
WRITES  
THAT AS  
WINTER  
GRIPS  
UKRAINE  
AND RUSSIA  
IN THE  
SECOND  
YEAR OF  
WAR THE  
PROSPECT  
OF PEACE  
SEEMS  
HIDDEN IN  
FOG.**

THE WEST CELEBRATED CHRISTMAS on 25 December 2022, but Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Christians celebrated theirs on 6 January 2023. There were, therefore, two opportunities to think about and work for love, non-violence and peace. Neither Christmas (despite a cynical offer of a pause in the fighting from President Putin) resulted in any conciliatory gestures, olive branches, a ceasefire, or a congenial climate for peace negotiations. Both Russia and Ukraine are now trapped in a vicious cycle of war and violence that could carry on for months if not years. As we near the second year of this war, it is important to ask why it continues when most analysts know that all wars are disastrous ways of resolving political differences.

## **WAR AND POLITICAL LEADERS**

Wars begin and persist when political leaders think that they can secure a better outcome by fighting than through normal politics and diplomacy. They continue when both parties fear for their personal and regime survival. If both President Zelensky and Vladimir Putin, for example, believe that military defeat will end their regimes and their power, that gives them the incentive to continue fighting.

Wars also continue when both sides believe that they will win, even if the justifications for this belief are problematic and often distorted by the “fog of war”. At the moment Ukraine (with massive support of its Western allies) believes that

it can win, even though it is unclear whether Ukraine can drive all Russian troops from occupied areas and its success depends on the West’s willingness to continue funding and supplying large-scale logistic and military support.

On the other side, Russia believes that it can and must win the war despite high casualties, changes in military high command and profound economic challenges. These overly optimistic beliefs in military victory, and the fact that both political leaders are committed to fighting rather than strategic concessions and negotiations, make it challenging for either side to initiate or pursue a ceasefire or a negotiated settlement. This means that



until there is a hurting stalemate the prospects for negotiated solutions look very bleak indeed.

The recent battle over Soledar, for example, demonstrates the challenges of knowing what victory means. On 11 January, Soledar was under the control of the Wagner mercenary group allied with Russia. On 13 January, Russia claimed victory. On 14 January, Ukraine said the town was still in contention. The only truth is that the fighting is intense, the casualties enormous and the territorial gains slight. No one is absolutely sure who is in the ascendent but both sides persist in pursuing maximalist objectives and are unwilling to do things that will create ripe conditions for negotiations.

## PROBLEM FOR ALLIES

This poses particular problems for the US and its allies. If the West feels some ambivalence about Ukraine regaining the Donbas and Crimea by military means, (which would be provocative to Russia), it makes sense to begin thinking about a negotiated settlement that will result in Ukraine trading some territorial sovereignty for independence, self-determination, membership in the EU and guaranteed national security. If there is Ukrainian unwillingness to do this because the concessions required are too great, the war will continue until the costs of the war exceed the expected benefits.

Recently, Henry Kissinger and a few well-placed Pentagon officials urged Ukraine to assess when it might be useful to enter negotiations and trade some sovereignty for peace. These overtures have largely fallen on deaf ears in Kyiv which believes it is winning (despite Russian missile attacks, nuclear threats, mass mobilisation and the recent success of Russian mercenary groups). Ukraine, at this stage, remains

committed to a military rather than a negotiated solution to the war, as does Russia.

This joint commitment to an ongoing war makes it very difficult for analysts and policy makers on both sides to make suggestions about the prerequisites and components of a negotiated solution. Those that do tend to be dismissed as unrealistic idealists or as traitors to the military cause. The marginalisation of those committed to diplomatic resolutions of the war means that few people in Washington, Brussels or Moscow have been able to discuss how to end the war.

Even if a negotiated end to the war seems challenging right now, the United Nations, the USA and its NATO allies need to start thinking about when to push for negotiations and how to initiate discussions with both Ukraine and Russia about the costs of fighting versus the benefits of negotiations.

There have been high-level discussions between the US and Russia, and between Russia and Ukraine in Ankara Turkey on prisoner exchanges. These must continue and be expanded. If a negotiated solution is to succeed it has to respond to the needs and interests of both Ukrainian and Russian peoples. These negotiations should be aimed at carefully calibrated removal of Western sanctions in return for significant Russian concessions.

## TOWARDS PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

Absolute victory for either side is a pipedream. The question is how to cost the conflict for the protagonists so that they can see the benefits of carefully facilitated negotiations. And, further, the question is not whether negotiations are needed to end the war but when and how they should take place.

In relation to Ukraine, policy makers inside and outside the country should focus on their core interests,

such as preserving Ukraine's sovereignty and providing security to the population, rather than trying to retake all its pre-2014 territory or punishing Russian leaders. Ukrainian policy makers should pursue objectives that will create

**Russia believes that it can and must win the war despite high casualties, changes in military high command and profound economic challenges. These overly optimistic beliefs in military victory, and the fact that both political leaders are committed to fighting rather than strategic concessions and negotiations, make it challenging for either side to initiate or pursue a ceasefire or a negotiated settlement.**

ripe conditions for negotiations. In relation to Russia, there has to be an end to the invasion, a ceasefire and withdrawal in return for a calibrated end of sanctions and an agreement to respect Ukrainian sovereignty, territorial borders and a government that suits the interests of all Ukrainians. If both countries persist in pursuing maximalist objectives, the bloodshed will continue and the peaceful promise of both the Western and Orthodox Christmases will remain a distant illusion. 

**Kevin Clements** is Director of the Toda Peace Institute. He works in academic analysis and practice in peacebuilding and conflict transformation.



# SYNODALITY AND CHURCH STRUCTURES



**Brendan Daly says that synodality needs the commitment of all in the Church.**

Pope Francis wants the third millennium to be the era of the ecclesiology of synodality. Synodality means the active participation of all members of the Church in its processes of discernment, consultation and cooperation at all levels of decision-making and mission.

The General Secretariat of the Synod published *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent* in October last year. It is the working document for the continental stage of the Synod and is a summary or synthesis of documents sent by conferences of bishops to the apostolic see — including our document from Aotearoa.

The title of official Church documents is taken from the first few words. “Enlarge the space of your tent” indicates that the Church must strive to include everyone. We read: “This tent is a space of communion, a place of participation, and a foundation for mission.” We are to be in communion with our brothers and sisters and our common Father. This communion is expressed in mission.

### **Synodality Flows from Vatican II**

The term “synodality” has not been commonly used in Catholic theology. Vatican II did not use the term “synodality” at all. The closest that Vatican II came to speaking about synodality was “collegiality” between the bishops and the Pope. However, synodality is a more expansive and embracing concept than collegiality. When they were preparing *Lumen Gentium*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, the Vatican Council fathers decided to insert chapter two, the “People of God”, before the chapters on the hierarchy, the laity and consecrated life. Chapter two teaches that all the faithful together make up the body of Christ because they have all been baptised in Christ. However, although the Council bishops placed the “People of God” first, they did not draw out

the consequences flowing from this for the hierarchy in the next chapter. The reality is that chapters two and three of *Lumen Gentium* stand side-by-side without being integrated with each other.

Throughout his pontificate, Pope Francis has placed the people of God at the centre of the Church and he understands that the hierarchy are in service to the people of God to assist them to fulfil their mission. It is clear from the liturgy for the ordination of a bishop that the bishop does not receive a diocese, but that a diocese receives a bishop who is ordained to serve it.

Synodality captures the Vatican II vision of Church in dialogue and enlightening the whole world (LG 92). The Church is the sign and vehicle for dialogue for the world. We need to create mutual esteem and diversity in the Church. We all contribute to fruitful dialogue whether we are pastors or other members of the faithful.

### **Vatican II Introduced Synods of Bishops**

The Second Vatican Council introduced synods of bishops to the life of the Church and they have been very effective for the universal Church. Since Vatican II synods of bishops have usually met every two years. But Pope Francis understands that synodality is much more than this and believes that the Church must find new ways to live and work in the world using the prayer, advice and experience of all members including the laity at the parish, diocesan and national levels. The problem is that despite the 1983 Code of Canon Law a bishop can still govern his diocese without, for example, having a Diocesan Pastoral Council — a basic structure for the participation of the laity in governance. The whole Church is to be engaged in the process and it is not just a synod of bishops.



## Vision of Synodality for All the Church

Pope Francis said in his address opening the Synod in 2021 that it is “not a parliament or an opinion poll. The synod is an ecclesial event and its protagonist is the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is not present there will be no synod.” All the faithful are to discern and listen to the Spirit as part of the process of synodality.

Soon after his papal election in 2013 Pope Francis expressed his vision of what a renewed Church could be like: “I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open”.

## Now Is the Time for Change

Pope Francis believes that this renewal of the Church cannot be deferred. He has stated: “the path of synodality is the path that God expects from the Church of the third millennium.” Change in institutions and synodal methodology is needed at all levels of the Church not by producing documents but by opening horizons of hope for the fulfilment of the Church’s mission. To that end, *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent* recommended the reform of virtually all ecclesiastical structures.

## Canon Law to Support Synodality

Canon law is a practical expression of the official theology of the Catholic Church, providing order and structuring the Church community. It establishes leadership and authority in parishes and dioceses and the powers held by office holders. It establishes the procedures, consultation and consents that office holders need in order to act. It contains procedures to obtain one’s rights; requirements for the celebration of the sacraments; laws for administering parish and diocesan property; penalties for those who commit crimes; and a way for victims to receive justice.

## Commitment of Clergy and People Essential

Canon law must provide the structures and help for the Church community including its leaders to be motivated and formed as a synodal Church. Unfortunately, we know of dioceses without diocesan pastoral councils, some going without for a long time. We know of parishes without parish pastoral councils or parish finance committees. A recent example illustrates the lack of understanding of lay participation. A priest in Australia was told by his bishop to have a parish finance committee. The priest asked a parishioner who was an accountant to be on the parish finance committee. The

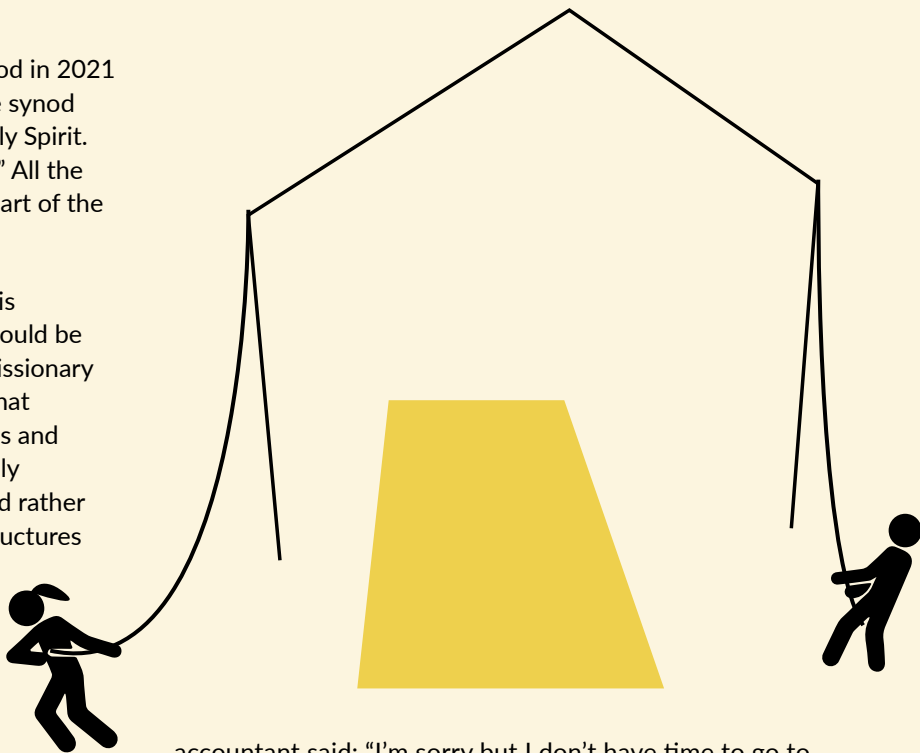
accountant said: “I’m sorry but I don’t have time to go to any more meetings.” The parish priest answered: “Don’t worry. There won’t be any meetings.”

This story illustrates how the structures alone do not bring about synodality. No matter how well institutions are governed by law, if there is no internal commitment to bring synodality to life in them, then the institutions will be ineffective.💎

To read *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent* see: [www.synod.org](http://www.synod.org).

**SOON AFTER HIS PAPAL ELECTION IN 2013 POPE FRANCIS EXPRESSED HIS VISION OF WHAT A RENEWED CHURCH COULD BE LIKE: “I DREAM OF A ‘MISSIONARY OPTION’, THAT IS, A MISSIONARY IMPULSE CAPABLE OF TRANSFORMING EVERYTHING, SO THAT THE CHURCH’S CUSTOMS, WAYS OF DOING THINGS, TIMES AND SCHEDULES, LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURES CAN BE SUITABLY CHanneled FOR THE EVANGELISATION OF TODAY’S WORLD RATHER THAN FOR HER SELF-PRESERVATION.**

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*Law in Action* (2015).



# Towards Synodality



THE JOURNEY of the Synod on Synodality is into the third stage of its four stages — the Continental Stage. After the opening stage, the second stage in 2021 focused on hearing the hopes, concerns and dreams for the Church from as many people as possible around the world. That was the Local/National phase and many of us participated in parish and other groups. With the pandemic raging, groups found their newly-learned Zoom skills valuable.

## Local/National Stage Responses Collated

Responses from around the globe were synthesised into the document *Enlarge the Space of your Tent*. At over 100 pages it's a lengthy read but because it includes actual quotes from participants, it's accessible and interesting. A number of common themes had surfaced around the world.

## Continental Stage Started

*Enlarge the Space of your Tent* (DCS) is the focal document for the Continental Stage, the third phase of Synod preparation. For this stage the world is divided into seven continental groups — Oceania, Asia, Africa and Madagascar, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and North America — and each continent was asked to reflect on the document in terms of the vision and renewal needed in their particular continental region.

We finished our local response to *Enlarge the Space of your Tent* in early December 2022 in Aotearoa. We're one of the participant countries of the Oceania continent. Our Discernment period lasted six weeks — from late October to early December 2022. In January this year, the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference published *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission: New Zealand discernment on the Document for Continental Stage*, a synthesis of the responses gathered from the 37

participant groups across the country. The New Zealand document is available on the NZCBC website. At less than 20 pages, and with many participant quotes illustrating the points made, it is well worth reading.

Of special interest are the priorities, recurring themes and calls to action identified by New Zealand for attention at the First Session of the Synodal Assembly to take part in October this year. They ask that:

- \* We begin embedding synodality as “the way of being Church” at every level.
- \* We engage the whole Church in the urgent struggle to preserve Earth and its life and provide economic justice for Earth's people.
- \* We find solutions to counter systemic issues regarding authority, governance and leadership which may currently prohibit the faithful from living their baptismal call to active participation.
- \* We accept that all the baptised are called to and capable of pastoral ministry in Church and this may include sacramental ministry.
- \* We address the aspects of Church teaching which are perceived as exclusionary or hurtful, or which cause people to walk away from the Church. These issues include teaching on sexuality, the situation of divorced and remarried, inter communion with other Christian denominations, including the Third Rite of Reconciliation.
- \* We address the divisions in the global Church about women, including clerical attitudes towards women and the ordination of women to the priesthood and diaconate (see pages 17-19 of the Synthesis).

## Oceania's Responses Collated for Assembly of Bishops

The New Zealand document, along with those from other areas of our “continent”, was sent to the Oceania Taskforce, composed of representatives from across the continental region. They prepared a draft report that is the focus of the assembly in Fiji of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO) held from 5-10 February 2023.

Feedback from the discernment of the assembly will inform the refinement of the document. The final report from Oceania will be sent to the Holy See to help prepare the working document (*Instrumentum Laboris*) for the first assembly of the Synod of Bishops for a Synodal Church, which will be held during October this year.

Similar reports are being prepared in all seven continents.

We don't yet know the details of the process to be used between the first assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October this year and the second assembly in October 2024.

However, we can imagine that we'll keep journeying together so that synodality develops and embeds as a way of life in the Church. 💡

**Ann Gilroy** has been the editor of *Tui Motu* magazine for the last eight years. She is an author of *Act, Love Walk: Praying in the Josephite Spirit* (2015).





## ENLARGE AND SUPPORT THE TENT

**Stuart Henrys** reflects on the document summarising the Synod responses to date.

WE WERE ASKED to discuss the working document for the Continental Stage (DCS) of the 2021-2024 Synod. It was another step in our journeying together. The title of the document is taken from the prophet Isaiah: *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent* (Is 54:2), and considers three elements of the tent: cloth, rope and pegs. But what about the tent poles? My own enduring memory of many camping adventures is of one of the family desperately holding tent poles in place as a safeguard against southerly gales determined to sweep all away. The omission of poles is, I think, an oversight: every tent, meeting house, wharehau or *fale* needs poles or posts for support.

In many other respects the DCS is a remarkable document. It represents a step forward to a synodal Church “scrutinising the signs of the times” (*Gaudium et Spes*). It draws together voices and experiences of many people, including 112 episcopal conferences — one of them is our own NZ Catholic Bishops Conference, 15 Eastern Catholic Churches, 17 Roman Curia dicasteries and many other groups. The document notes a universal call for more recognition

of the role of women in Church, highlights the need for the Church to reach out to the marginalised, to listen to the young and to engage with the cultural richness of indigenous peoples.

The DCS also acknowledges the ongoing findings of clerical sexual abuse. It records our hope that the voices of all the baptised will be heard and that we learn how it is that our Church institutions have cultivated abuse and certitude. Overwhelmingly, the document awakens the desire for change in Church structures, teachings, practices, systems and culture, and is a call to admit mistakes and provide justice to the victims.

If we are called to enlarge the tent, then I think it is vital we also identify the guiding principles which support the structures and the frame at its heart. The poles join the other tent components and together are integral to the Christ-centred Church that the Holy Spirit is calling us to be. We seek our poles to uphold equality and justice and ask when is the Church going to sign up to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

We also yearn for our Church to

be built on gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching of co-responsibility, equal participation in decision making, representation, transparency, accountability, stewardship and subsidiarity.

For the bishops of Aotearoa assembling for the continental assembly for Oceania, “enlarging the tent” should include radical inclusion of structures that reflect the signs of our society, our cultures, our communities, Te Tiriti and mission. A larger tent, to me, embraces and empowers the inspired skills of all the baptised and can express our struggles, aspirations, and identities to sustain us on our journey together.

I learnt early on that strong poles are critical to an enduring, welcoming and safe tent. Without them the roof collapses. 💎

To read *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent* see: [www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va)

**Stuart Henrys**, a research scientist and a member of the St Thomas More community, Ōtari Parish, is keenly participating in the 2021-2024 Synod.





# Blessed are You

**Kathleen Rushton** writes that Matthew 5:1-48 describes the way Jesus acted in proclaiming God's reign.

MATTHEW 5:1-48 IS SITUATED within the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). The chapter begins with Jesus teaching the beatitudes (Mt 52-11). He began each beatitude with “blessed are” — *makarios*, the first word of the Book of Psalms in the Greek Scriptures. Jesus had gathered the sentiments of the beatitudes from the prophets, psalmists and rabbis, so that they while they were familiar to his listeners, in his format they were entirely new and challenging.

Psalm 1 lays out human “happiness” or “blessedness”, a theme that continues through the psalms. In Psalm 1 the blessed are those who delight in the law of God and meditate on it day and night. As the psalms progress, the blessed are described as “the poor”, “the suffering” and “the little ones” who take “refuge” or “shelter” in

God who is their “rock” and “hiding place”. The blessed are the ones who trust in God. The psalms speak of them living among “the scoffers” or “the wicked”. The “wicked” does not mean “evil” but those who do not trust in God.

The Sermon is not a step-by-step, how-to book. Jesus offers “examples” for engaging in God's present and future reign. The beatitudes involve not just personal qualities or emotions but concern God's favour for certain human situations and actions. The Sermon, indeed the whole Gospel, informs and forms disciples in their commitment of discipleship. It shapes and confirms their identity as a minority and marginal community in a new future that will come about through God's power and faithfulness.



*Just as for the first listeners Jesus's words were challenging, we can find that the beatitudes reawaken our interior dimension to structures of grace and solidarity.*

## Guide for Discipleship

Jesus lived and preached God's *basileia* which is translated as "reign" or "kingdom". The word *basileia* is used also for the Roman "empire". But Jesus is describing an alternative to the empire and the beatitudes sum up the reign of God. Theologian Gerald O'Collins says that the beatitudes are a self-description of Jesus. They are the programme he set himself and the way he acted in ministry. Joseph Ratzinger (the late Benedict XVI) wrote in *Jesus of Nazareth* that the beatitudes are "the transposition of the cross and resurrection into discipleship". They are a sort of veiled interior biography of Jesus. We can see the beatitudes as a road map for the Church for what the Church is called to be. These directions for discipleship apply to all those who respond to their Christian calling.

## Call to Engagement

Jesuit Monty Williams says that as contemporary disciples of Christ, we are pilgrims who give our lives to the Mystery we call God "not in some abstract way, but here and now, concretely" in the situation of our lives and immediate communities. Being poor in spirit "allows us to discover community, which is the kingdom of God in our midst". It enables us to imagine and form structures of grace in the midst of structures of sin which according to John Paul II "are rooted in personal sin, and thus always linked to the concrete acts of individuals who introduce these structures, consolidate them and make them difficult to remove." The real responsibility lies with individuals "who cause or support evil or exploit it; who could in some way eliminate or limit harm but do not do so through fear, laziness or the silence of complicity or indifference; or who shelter under the supposed impossibility of changing the world or who sidestep the effort and sacrifice required."

Just as for the first listeners Jesus's words were challenging, we can find that the beatitudes reawaken our interior dimension to structures of grace and solidarity. The Sermon on the Mount contrasts a culture of affluence with a culture of inner freedom committed to creating conditions for social and environmental justice. "The Sermon on the Mount is not a social programme *per se* ... But it is only when the great inspiration it gives us vitally influences our thought and our action, only when faith generates the strength of renunciation and responsibility for our neighbour and for the whole of society – only then can social justice grow, too" (Benedict XVI).

## Responding Now

The sermon involves three "parties": Jesus, the disciples (Church) and the afflicted crowd. The sermon informs and forms us in God's way by shaping and confirming us as a community of disciples in our own context who are committed to living in such a way that brings about God's mission — to humanise/divinise the world.

De La Salle Brother Peter Bray, Vice-Chancellor of Bethlehem University in Palestine, was recently in Aotearoa speaking about how Kiwis can help bring peace to the Holy Land. He said that 2022 was the deadliest year for the oppression of Palestinians that he'd experienced in his 14 years in the Holy Land. He discussed his concerns for the students and their families living in this situation. Their desire to strike back and react is real, as is the pull to dehumanise all Israelis. Peter is a New Zealander and is clear that he does not know what it is like to be a Palestinian. It would be arrogant of him to tell the Palestinian students what to do. But he can support ways of responding that are grounded in peace that is not dependent on the outcome. Non-violence does not mean being passive. Just as Jesus showed, it is about responding to evil with good, being resistant to violence — "to exist is to resist."

South African Bishop Desmond Tutu said: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressors." When he visited the Holy Land Pope Francis said: "May we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banish violence from our hearts, words and deeds and to become non-violent people building non-violent communities caring for the common good." New Zealanders, too, are invited to discern how to be in solidarity with Palestinians and help bring peace to the Holy Land.

This election year particularly we will have opportunities to discern and promote directions and policies that will best serve the common good — to become informed about policies that will reduce the suffering of the poor rather than increase the wealth of the already well-off. We need to discern in the rhetoric of speechmaking and electioneering the voices of those who offer challenging and hopeful ways forward. 💡

Lectionary Dates: 29 January — 19 February

Kathleen Rushton RSM is a Scripture scholar and author of *The Cry of the Earth* and *The Cry of the Poor: Hearing Justice in John's Gospel* (2020).





# RETURNING FROM INDIA



I SPENT PART of this summer in India, both in the town where I spent my adolescence, and in Lucknow, where I lived briefly after finishing high school. It was the first time that I've spent time in India as a visitor, without it being my home.

Visiting Lucknow was particularly special as it was the first place I ever lived alone. The narrow gullies, smelling like a mix of fresh-cooked roti and rotting rubbish, hadn't really changed. There were still goats browsing the streets looking for kai; still people living in small rooms made of bare brick and cement. The air was still pale, nearly white, with air pollution, even when the sunshine was warm, and homing pigeons and kites tracing their paths through the air.

The five years since I lived there have given me new ways to see this familiar place. As an 18 year old, I was focused on the sensory: eating jewel-like pomegranates in my room, the slosh of water over the floor when taking a bucket bath, the cacophony of horns across the streets while I waited for a bus on the route towards work. This time, though, I was noticing the way that this community was able to care for one another.

The people living in this area of Lucknow, largely in illegal dwellings built on land owned by the government, have been let down by the parts of the state that are supposed to care for those who have the least. The government schools are often teacherless; many people are illiterate. Getting pensions or food rations is a battle with bureaucracy for those who have little paper documentation. Receiving healthcare at under-resourced public hospitals requires long waits in queues and idiosyncratic instructions.

Despite this, people take turns cleaning the gutters to prevent blockages; people stopped in the street outside the room we were renting to help pick up a massive sack of spilled rice. With limited financial resources, there is generosity with time. Hanging out the washing, I had a long chat with two of the women living in adjacent rooms about why neighbours are

important to help take care of children and that young people don't want to get married as quickly these days.

I am wary of turning poverty into a tidy anecdote for my column: of course, a few days spent in the slum where I used to live does not give me access to the deep complexities of misery created by inequality. But while external support and money, can help change people's lives, I was reminded that people living in poverty are often talked about by the relatively wealthy in ways that ignore how these communities already use the resources they have to look after one another. In how I think about and relate to people with different backgrounds from mine, I want to remember that most people are open to the needs of their communities and hopeful about what can change. 💡



**Shanti Mathias** is a journalist living in Tāmaki Makaurau who loves Jesus, is usually enthusiastic and is possibly a dilettante.

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# Reviews

## Catholic Women Preach: Raising Voices, Renewing the Church (Cycle A)

Edited by Elizabeth Donnelly & Russ Petrus

Published by Orbis Books, 2022. (USD 20)

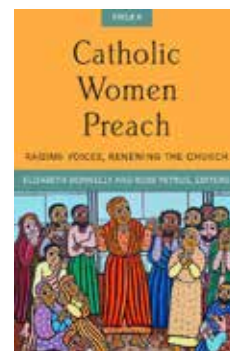
Reviewed by Margaret McLean

EXERCISING THEIR CHARISM to preach, 65 women scholars from around the world fill this book with their reflections based on the lectionary readings for Year A — the readings for this year.

The authors remind us we are called to serve instead of participating in what Pope Francis has called “the globalisation of indifference”. The contributors, locating their reflections in their own diverse lives and cultures, suggest ways to make justice and generosity tangible. Grandmothers use personal examples of family life

and hospitality to suggest ways to care for those who are left out. Prison chaplains cite experiences of restorative justice used in response to harm, and feminists question why women have been edited out of events like the nativity and the last supper. LGBTQ Catholics find they are viewed as unimportant, and their dignity overlooked.

These reflections draw us from our comfort zones into mission. Service, they stress, implies learning to live within a new moral framework, challenging unjust social structures and excluding no one. This is a book for preachers and those bereft of good preaching. It offers models for memorable sermons grounded in theological education, pastoral experience and imagination. ★



## Sacred Nature: How We Can Recover Our Bond with the Natural World

by Karen Armstrong

Published by Penguin, 2022. (NZD 40)

Reviewed by Beverley Smith

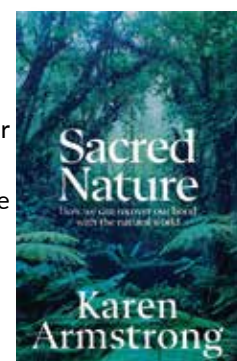
IN SACRED NATURE Karen Armstrong writes that for most of human history world cultures believed that nature was sacred and that the Divine was present everywhere in the natural world. However, in modern times Western belief has separated God from nature — the result is not just a profound breach from the thousands of years of accumulated wisdom but has also set in train the destruction of the natural world.

Armstrong illustrates the loss of our sense of the sacred: “We walk in a place of extreme beauty while

talking on our mobiles or scrolling through social media: we are present, yet fundamentally absent. Instead of sitting contemplatively beside a river or gazing in awe at a mountain range, we obsessively take one photograph of the view after another.” But we can regain our sense of the sacredness of nature, Armstrong writes.

I found many of her examples from the wisdom traditions of the world illuminating and also familiar, for example, from a Chinese writer: “All people are my brothers and sisters, and all the things [in nature] are my companions.”

I recommend this book, especially in this time of climate crisis. ★



## The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi

by Ned Fletcher

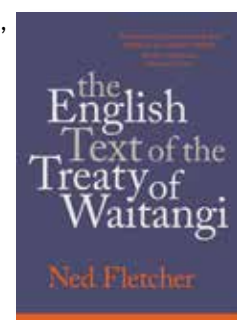
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2022. (NZD 69.99)

Reviewed by Richard Wild

THE ENGLISH TEXT OF THE TREATY OF WAITANGI is a comprehensive, scholarly account of the Treaty of Waitangi, focusing especially on its background and context. Fletcher’s key argument is that the English version of the Treaty, which appears to clearly establish the ceding of sovereignty, is compatible with ongoing Māori autonomy, as seen in the Māori version. He bases this argument on evidence from the British Colonial Office, which (until the late 1840s) sought to establish pluralistic forms of government and law throughout the developing empire.

Fletcher, unlike other Treaty scholars, notably including Ruth Ross, contends that the British government, and specifically the Colonial Office, were extremely concerned with the effects of British colonialism on indigenous peoples within the empire. In the New Zealand context, Colonial Office officials were troubled by British land-sharking and lawlessness. Their instructions to Hobson envisaged a pluralistic future for New Zealand, where understandings around sovereignty were more subtle and nuanced than the “one size fits all” interpretation advanced since 1972.

Ned Fletcher’s tome marks a significant advance in the study of New Zealand’s constitutional history; but it is definitely not for beginners! A prior working knowledge of the Treaty and its context is highly recommended. ★





## The Banshees of Inisherin

Directed by Martin McDonagh

Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

My daughter compared watching this film to being trapped in a disturbing and unpredictable dream induced by eating too much cheese before bedtime! Director Martin McDonagh is at home with the unsettling and the bizarre, as witnessed by his first film, *In Bruges* — also featuring *The Banshees*' protagonists, Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson — where reality is skewed, leaving us unsure of our footing. Both films depict a kind of vengeance that involves the exacting of bloody forfeits.

Set in 1923 on a tiny island off the west coast of Ireland, during the Irish Civil War, the film examines the souring of a long friendship between the happy-go-lucky Pádraic and Colm, a serious musician who finds the other's small talk and obsession with the minutiae of everyday life "boring". Threats are made, events escalate, the mood darkens and we know that catastrophe can't be too far away.

Just as the Civil War acts as an unmissable metaphor for the breakup of the friendship, so the island functions as a symbol of personal and social stresses and tensions that lack an outlet. Relationships are constantly under threat as the islanders are compelled to interact with those they would rather avoid, and escape to the mainland is never as straightforward as it seems, as the experience of Pádraic's sister and housemate Siobhán, reveals.

If I was to put a genre label on this film it would be black comedy, like *In Bruges*. While there are plenty of silly gags, and the performance I attended was punctuated by laughter — often wary or shocked — it is the blackness that predominates. Comic stereotypes like the local gossip or village simpleton are set up only to be turned inside out; the island's policeman is "fiddling his son when he's not beating up on him", as Pádraic unwisely informs the patrons of Inisherin's only pub. Characterisation segues into folktale in the ancient figure of Mrs McCormick, a spooky doomsayer who incarnates the banshees of the title.

Despite the film's retreat from realism, it is the theme of friendship that holds the action together. In the closing scenes, what seems to be the most destructive act of all delivers a kind of catharsis, potentially reigniting the relationship between Pádraic and Colm through its sheer violence. In a tiny community like Inisherin, it seems foolish, even impossible, to break a longstanding friendship, however unlikely it may seem to outsiders. Opposites need each other even as they repel. ★

## Ronald Rolheiser: Essential Spiritual Writings

by Ronald Rolheiser

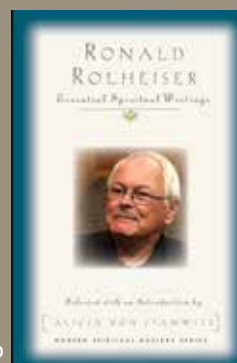
Published by Orbis Books, 2021.  
(USD 22.00)

Reviewed by Peter Matheson

Ronald is a much-loved Canadian priest, brought up in a hardworking German-Russian farming family in Canada. Over the years he has taught, written and broadcast with enormous resonance on spirituality. He is a gifted communicator whose integrity shines through. For him spirituality is earthed in every aspect of daily life. It is not an élite pursuit. He says each of us has within us the inner fire, the energy, the eros, the memory of the primal touch of love. Deep within us is a sacred unwounded place, the image of God, and from this wells up our deepest longings for intimacy, beauty, truth.

Rolheiser is well-read in psychology, anthropology, philosophy and literature. Kierkegaard is a favourite and he enjoys the dictum of Ernst Käsemann that our problem in the Church is that the liberal are not pious and the pious are not liberal! His reflections on sexuality, ageing and the dialectic of faith and doubt are peppered with lively stories from life. He knows that all transformative growth comes through vulnerability.

Some of the essential writings date back three decades and bear a transatlantic stamp that may not connect with everyone today, but his distinctive voice needs to be heard. ★







# Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins

IT'S RAINING IN NELSON as I write this. It's lovely, in its way, for a visitor like me; the bush glistens, the hills are wrapped in mist. But the rain won't be welcomed by everyone here. Those who experienced the August floods are bound to feel anxiety at the issuing of a heavy rain warning this morning, and at the forecast of days more rain ahead. In the 15 years of my visits to Nelson, this promises to be the wettest January that I can recall.

As we head into 2023, the currents of 2022 come with us. Those of us fortunate enough to have had a joyful Christmas season and a summer break can, perhaps, bring renewed energy to this start of the year. Sustained by faith and community, we can involve ourselves in these ongoing challenges with hope and dedication.

Extreme weather events like the 2022 Nelson deluge are here to stay. As the 1.5 degree target agreed to in Paris in 2016 threatens to slip away from us, there is plenty of scope for action, whether working on transport, energy and food waste choices in the households and organisations to which we belong, or making our voices heard in local and national

government to push for urgent climate action.

Covid is still with us, too, locally and globally. People are tired of it, of course. We wish that it would end as quickly as it began, but it won't. There are people for whom catching Covid continues to be a life-threatening event. The community-minded choices are clear: mask-wearing, vaccination, testing and staying home when appropriate. Somehow these actions have become politicised in a profoundly unhelpful way. Fortunately, most people recognise that their own individual rights are not the only concern.

The Church continues its synodal journey begun in 2021. Continental meetings, informed by diocesan and national meetings the world over, are being held in the first quarter of this year. The Oceania meeting is in Fiji, from 5-10 February and will be followed by meetings in Rome this year and next.

One of the important themes that has emerged from the synodal process to date has been a desire for a Church that celebrates "radical inclusion" — welcoming people, rather than judging them. Consistent with this desire, the New Zealand's

Bishops' Conference has recently issued the statement *Aroha and Diversity in Catholic Schools: Guidelines for good practice* demonstrating compassion, respect and sensitivity in Catholic schools and colleges regarding sexual diversity.

The document calls for Catholic schools to be communities "of support, animated by the Gospel, in which all members, the young people and their whānau should feel loved, supported, nurtured and protected." The document is not as radically inclusive as some would wish, but it reminds us that the guiding principles of Catholic Social Teaching are themselves radical.

The document highlights four principles. Human dignity: we are made in the image of God. Solidarity: we live in relationship and walk alongside others as our neighbours, including (especially) the marginalised. The common good: we journey not as individuals alone, but together in community. Subsidiarity: we should be able to participate in decisions that affect us.

These are surely ideal touchstones for us as we journey together into 2023.



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The magazine invites contributions from writers of Catholic and other Christian traditions or faith backgrounds, who can offer our readers insights which resonate with the Gospel as it affects us today. We value diversity and seek contributions which are representative of our church and our society: Māori, Pākehā, Pasifika, other cultures, a range of ages and genders, lay and ordained. We offer feature articles, interviews, reviews, poetry, comment and opinion on theology, spirituality and history, as well as on social justice and ecology.

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## Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words.

The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters while keeping the meaning.

Opinions in letters are not necessarily those of the Magazine.

### RANGATIRATANGA FOR MĀORI KATORIKA

According to Vatican II teaching in *Christus Dominus*, indigenous people who belong to the Church have the right to their own cultural and pastoral leadership, sovereignty and self-autonomy that comes from within their own culture and people. The principle of rangatiratanga grants that right. It seeks that areas and

places reserved to Māori katorika in the rightful fulfilment of their pastoral and ecclesial needs fall under the jurisdiction of Māori katorika sovereignty and self-autonomy. Māori katorika constitute a particular cultural and social body with “special conditions of their way of life” and there is a clear obligation on Church leaders to provide, in the best possible way, a jurisdictional structure that corresponds with the peoples’ needs and circumstances.

Rangatiratanga can be applied in the local Church and on a consistent basis through Church leaders allowing for the provision of Māori leadership, empowering Māori to self-autonomy within the juridical-hierarchical structure of the local and universal Church.

Since Māori Catholic constitute a particular cultural and social body with “special conditions of their way of life” a clear obligation rests on Church leaders to provide a jurisdictional structure that corresponds with the needs and circumstances of Māori katorika. This could be achieved in keeping with the Church’s social justice values of participation, subsidiarity and natural justice by establishing with Māori an Ordinariate with a prelate in charge and endowed with due faculties. In fact Church law demands

this passage. The prelate would be Te Rangatira of te Hāhi Katorika o Aotearoa entrusted with the ministry of raranga (weaving together) Māori katorika of iwi across Aotearoa and serving their pastoral and spiritual needs. The person would be an Ordinary with the same rights and responsibilities as a diocesan bishop.

The Ordinariate would be juridically comparable to a diocese with a special ecclesiastical territory, governed by proper statutes. This would be achieved on a consistent basis through the Māori Ordinary belonging by right to the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference in which the Ordinariate would be situated, forging a close bond of communion and coordination in pastoral action between Māori and local Churches.

So rangatiratanga in New Zealand’s Catholic Church is an equitable and sensible step towards ensuring the dignity and integrity of Māori katorika. As well as achieving this through the establishment of a Māori Ordinariate, it is currently being realised through the revitalisation of mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori in the liturgy of Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Christopher Longhurst, Wellington/  
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## THANK YOU KAAREN MATHIAS

I want to give thanks for Kaaren Mathias's extraordinarily generous contribution to *Tui Motu* these past almost 20 years. I have just (belatedly) read her November column and learned how it came about – and gladly received her gift of the Rilke poem. What a wise spiritual director, and what a game advisee. And all hail to Michael Hill for agreeing. I always read this page first – it was so handily on the back outside cover but also I loved hearing about Kaaren's life in India and back here too. Just as she had hoped, she brought into focus a working mother's experience of keeping faith and prayer alive in amid everything else. How hard it is. How much of the everything else. And how inspiring she has been to others of us who have walked the same road. I will miss her. I was really glad to read these bravely honest lines about the need to reset priorities: "I spend too many hours on a laptop. I hope this means more time outside with the wind on my face." May your hopes be realised, Kaaren. May the wind refresh your spirit as your writing has done for others for so long.

**Barbara Grant, Auckland/  
Tāmaki Makaurau**

## SILENCE IN EUCHARIST

Recently I wrote a poem "The Trinity of Calm". In it I refer to "the calm of the Eucharistic meal and the calm of the gathered flock" both important factors for my husband and me in our decision to join the Catholic Church. Talking with a 90-year-old lifelong Catholic recently, I discovered the reason for this special character. She told me that the Sisters who taught her instilled in her the importance of silence during the Eucharist – that this was not the time for chatter. What a gift to those who had this training: here is an opportunity to listen rather than talk. What a gift to God and the Church: honouring the reverence of this holy meal. What a gift to others who gather for worship: giving them the opportunity to be centred and focused without distraction. However, recognising

the importance of silence can take time. Silence does not feature in our culture. Sometimes those who call us to worship at the beginning of Eucharist say we will have a time of silence, but they barely pause. Basically, it's hard to hear others and it's hard to hear God if we are talking all the time.

**Marilyn Wilkinson, Waikanae**

## TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

The comments of Cardinal Dew and Tim Duckworth SM to the Royal Commission (Seconi, TM Dec 2022) were no doubt factually true though in context bewildering in their implications. That bewildering aspect also characterises past Vatican responses, which in various ways trivialised the criminal offences committed; so offending priests might well do likewise. Are we not all prone to do so? We use soothing euphemisms to camouflage what is in fact child rape: terms like "molestation", "interference", "sexual

abuse". We have lived for years in total ignorance of the biased, unjust procedures prescribed by past canon law and papal decree for dealing with reported cases of child rape. When we belong to an institution or organisation we have a moral obligation to know what the organisation is capable of, and is doing. Can we now shrug off our responsibility for not knowing?

For generations we have acquiesced in and thereby supported Vatican power structures whose main purpose was to impose a straitjacket of control and conformity on the Body of Christ. When as Cardinal Bergoglio, Francis addressed the conclave that was to elect him pope, he quoted Revelation where Jesus is presented as standing outside, knocking on the door asking to be allowed inside. Bergoglio had sensed in recent times that Jesus had been knocking on the door from inside begging in vain to be allowed out. A chilling insight into how misguided our whole Church had become.

**Jim Howley, Auckland/Tāmaki  
Makaurau**

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# For What It's Worth

They say there are two certainties in life — death and taxes. But I venture to suggest there's a third which is equally inevitable. That is change. At the start of a new year we may be feeling optimistic or guarded about what the future holds, but we know for sure it will hold change. Children will grow up and leave home. A trusted neighbour moves away. A comfortable job comes to an end. And how do we make sense of change when it invades our lives? How can we move forward? Where is God when it feels like everything hurts? And how do we drill down to the essence of who we are and find peace?

It was Lao Tzu, born centuries before Christ, who said that new beginnings are often disguised as painful endings. I am only starting to see a tiny glimpse of that truth after my husband Mike died last March. The rest of the year was like being in God's waiting room, a shadowy place of doubt and loss. My faith felt mechanical rather than lived and I feared this new existence of being alone after 48 years. I hadn't cooked a meal in 20 years. Nor had I backed a trailer or owned a toolbox. Much has changed. I feel like I am living in a new country, adjusting to the huge changes of culture and language, wondering when things will feel normal again.

If you have been to England, you may have heard the call at British Rail: "All change please." Sooner or later we have to change. Reluctantly, enthusiastically, inevitably. They say a new year rings in the changes. It can be a good opportunity to review where we are up to. I still feel a bit held by grief to be making any resolutions. But if there was something

I would want, it would be peace. Resolutions like losing weight, or reading more books seem dependent on effort. And I'm not sure it's effort I need to achieve a peace about letting Mike go, but probably more like relinquishment.

So, here we are in the early days of 2023. We can peer into the future with a sense of foreboding or curious hope. We can lug our baggage along with us, that odd collection of hurts, resentments and disappointments that make up our pain. It seems to me the older we are, the more loss there is to carry. This sounds sad, but I have seen so many friends and family lean into sadness and change with an inner resilience that I admire enormously. For some, their faith in God is the bedrock of their lives. For others it is a simple belief in the hopefulness of life. They are the kind of people who subscribe to the wisdom of Anon, whoever he or she was, who said: "We have no right to ask, when sorrow comes: 'Why did this happen to me', unless we ask the same question when happiness comes our way". True, but hard. Like change, I guess. ♦

**Rosemary Riddell** lives in Otarehua, Otago. She is author of *To Be Fair: Confessions of a District Court Judge* (2022).



*May blessings,  
like sunshine,  
warm and dry,  
refresh and energise us  
for the days ahead.*

From the Tui Motu Team

