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Relating and Dialogue
Pātaha me te Kōrerorero

Brendan Daly on the Changes to Canon Law

Emma Kelly on working in Africa and London

Mike Riddell, Mary Eastham, Jane Higgins & others on conversation for facilitating community

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EDITORIAL

Keep Listening and Engaging

We cannot quickly or easily solve the world's complex problems: the pandemic, the climate crisis, the prevailing neoliberal economic philosophy, the cost of housing, the effects of colonialism and racism. Yet we must always be working to unearth and uproot the sources of these problems. This requires the coming together of hearts and minds — a process of inestimable value — achieved by patiently building relationships and engaging in conversations. Decisions and actions for change will follow.

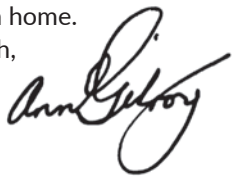
Last month the G7 leaders discussed funding a vaccination programme for the poorest countries of the world. They promised 1 billion doses, a fraction of the 11 billion the World Health Organisation said we need to vaccinate 70 per cent of world's population, which would end the pandemic. That initial agreement, though inadequate, is a start. Talks will continue and include other countries because it is in everyone's interests to vaccinate the world. Although the principle of the common good may not motivate every country, we hope there will be enough common ground for coming to the right decisions.

We've heard of the desperation of families — often our own — to find suitable housing to rent or to buy. Such is the market that modest houses are selling for over a million dollars and rents are set beyond reach. Yet shelter is a basic human right and a Christian work of mercy. Like the vaccination problem, this situation can be changed. And for change we need the gathering of hearts and minds to listen to one another, to engage with the options and to be bold in taking the agreed steps.

Without change, the issues grow. Some unaddressed problems have festered in our society, such as the "dawn raids" of the 1970s effected by government, police and media on Pasifika families "suspected" of overstaying their visas. Now we recognise the institutionalised racism supporting the scapegoating of the Pacific community. The bulk of overstayers in New Zealand at the time were from Europe and North America yet Pacific people were targeted in their homes and regularly asked to produce their documents on the street. It has been those with a keen sense of justice, and the humility to reach across the racist divide to dialogue, who have conscientised our society and paved the way for a formal apology to the Pasifika community by the government. These steps are scaffolding the process of our transformation into a society that respects and values every person equally.

The contributors to this 261st issue offer their experience on dialogue for living together in our common home. We thank all of them for sharing their research, reflection, art and craft.

And as is our custom, our last words are of encouragement and blessing. ●



Social Media

Free speech is an ideal. In reality, free speech is hotly contested — we see this when divergent views appear along with a sudden urge to simply shut them down altogether.

In our digital world, there are more opportunities to both voice alternative perspectives and quickly silence them. The internet allows us to spread and publish ideas as well as to censor them.

Social media has enabled some of the great democratic movements of the last decade, the platforms which made the Arab Spring possible and inspired people to challenge decades-old regimes in countries from Tunisia and Libya to Egypt.

More recently, the Hong Kong protests were facilitated with the help of Chinese platforms WeChat and Weibo. Even when residents faced censorship from pro-mainland Chinese authorities, the online world provided a means by which Hong Kong residents could disseminate essential information and organise offline.

This is critical when governments and bad actors can coerce and control more traditional media platforms. But the most important function of the internet is its ability to shine a light on what would have otherwise been left in the dark.

Take the Black Lives Matter protests that recently erupted across the United States. While, tragically, George Floyd was one of many black men murdered by police, his death helped reignite the movement and calls for justice.

It was the viral video of the police officer kneeling on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes while Floyd gasped: “I can’t breathe” that became the rallying point for a racial justice movement there. Social media and a camera phone helped catapult this uncomfortable truth into the spotlight where it could not be avoided. This year US courts found the officer responsible guilty, to the surprise of many.

Social media has the power to make visible what has been invisible. While black and migrant communities in many parts of the world may be well aware of the real consequences of a police encounter, many have been ignorant. Whether we want to or not, the internet can make us confront the truth, be it calls for structural reform or calling out corruption.

Of course, the same tools can be used against those same people. Social media algorithms mean we only see the kind of content we already consume and personalities similar to those with which we already engage. The ensuing echo chambers can mean that we’re mirrored, rather than exposed to new ideas — we just don't see people who aren't like us. As a result we’re constantly surprised that people think and act differently from us in the real world.

Sometimes, those dissenting views are removed altogether from a platform or hidden from view. On many official Chinese language apps, the detection of any sensitive words means posts are automatically deleted from public view.

But the issue is broad. In neighbouring India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pressured Twitter, an American company, to remove content critical of his government, especially his handling of the coronavirus pandemic and protests by farmers who are unimpressed by his liberalisation policies.

More than 100 tweets have been removed from the platform including those of opposition leaders and journalists and 500 accounts have been suspended altogether after Modi applied political pressure. While the platform was initially defiant of such orders, local executives, threatened with jail time, eventually capitulated.

Other governments have opted out of social media altogether. North Korea is the only country to choose not to have the internet while others, like Pakistan and Myanmar, have periodically shut it down in an attempt to stymie rebellion.

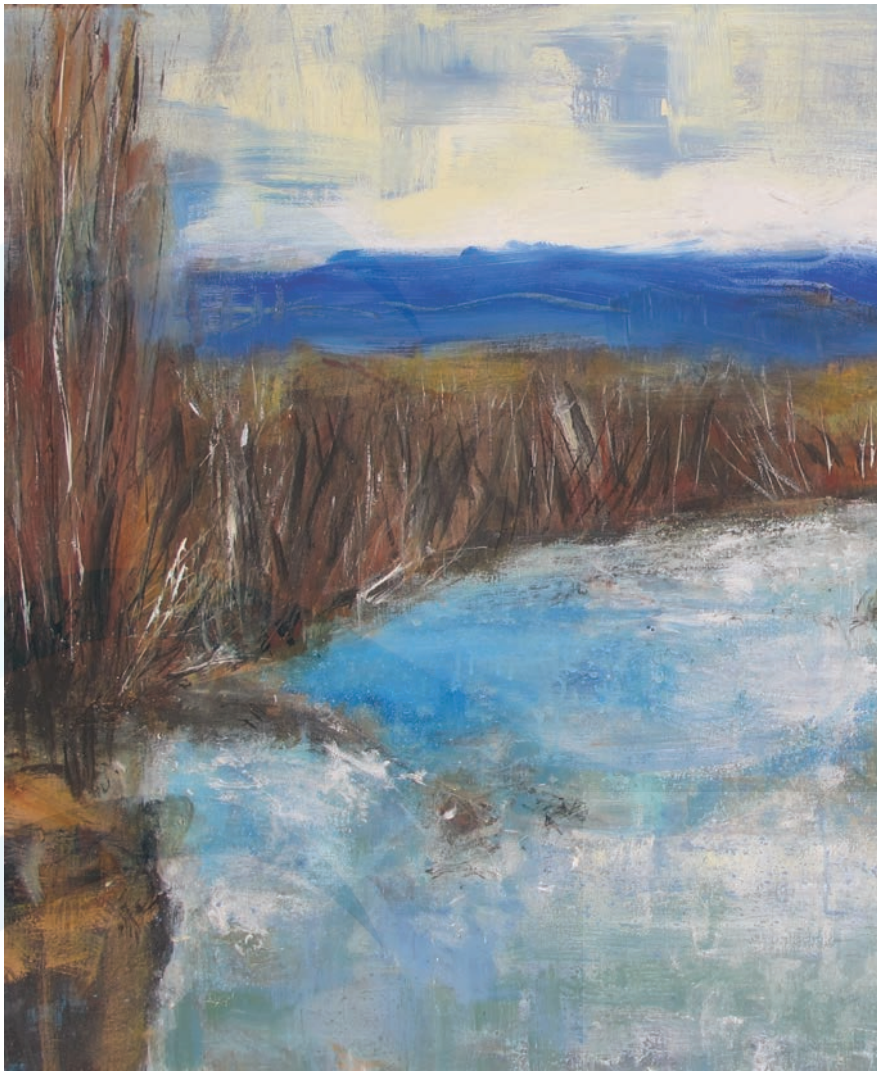
This perhaps is the crux of the social media problem. Like so many others, the tools can be invaluable in the hands of the many, and dangerous under the influence of the few, be they powerful politicians, corporate billionaires, or corrupt despots.

Many kinks still need to be ironed out and the platforms have brought forward their own problems, from trolling to misinformation. But these new public spaces need to be better cultivated so as to empower individuals, spread ideas efficiently and minimise harms. While the question of how best to run them remains elusive, it's critical we manage them carefully. There’s much at stake. ●

Jack Derwin is a senior reporter at *Business Insider Australia*. His interests include all aspects of social justice particularly in the South Pacific region.

Bringing Us to Community

MIKE RIDDELL describes the significance of dialogue at local and national levels to break through polarising propaganda.



I live in a divided community. The majority of people in my valley are farmers of one sort or another, and I'm an environmentalist. In fact I chair the Central Otago Environmental Society, and as a consequence am often producing pointed media releases. Some of my neighbours regard me as the antichrist, and would like nothing better than to see me silenced in one way or another.

There's a good reason for this. I, and a good number of others, advocate for the awa which provides life to the region — the Manuherekia River. It is seriously damaged and stressed. The main cause is that its water is over-extracted for irrigation purposes. One farmer has a permit that allows him to draw 488 million litres of water per year, or 400,000 litres per hour.

The agricultural community is already feeling embattled. They face numerous social and financial pressures, most of which are faceless and remote. But my local greenies and I are annoyingly visible. We are seen as a proximate threat to the livelihood of families who have been on their farms for generations. It's not surprising that they've become angry.

When my friends and I protest, we are doing it on behalf of the natural world. Our rural neighbours, on the other hand, are nervous about their incomes. Many of them have made significant investments in irrigation equipment that allows them to have higher stock levels. That, and the value of their land, is directly related to and dependent on their rights to extract water from the river. They see us as high-minded saboteurs.

It doesn't help that I only arrived in the area some three years ago. In a letter to the *Otago Daily Times*, a group of farmers pointed out that Mr Riddell had "recently come to live within our farming community, yet [he] seems intent to 'continue his carpet-bagging career as a mischief-maker'". To which I plead guilty as charged. My only defence is that the mischief I'm making is on behalf of the environment.

All of this is by way of introducing the significance of dialogue. If we were Māori, we would gather in a place where we could thrash all this out in kōrero, rather than trading barbs through the media. Our belonging together would be the baseline from which the discussion proceeded.

But, instead, we have been schooled in confrontation and lobbying to ensure that we get our way against the other side.

Crippled by Polarisation

I guess this is all a variation on the theme of identity politics which has grown to dominate the Western world. Rather than a starting point of geographical community, we come from a perspective of tribal affiliation. Society has fragmented into interest groups and subcultures in which our own views are reinforced by fellow members. We come from a starting point of "over-against" rather than "together-with".

The resulting strategy is to fire shots at other groups that we imagine are impeding our own wise motives. Issues that arise and may attract differing perspectives are the fuel for conflict and name-calling.

Few of us take the time to either listen or to understand views that are in opposition to our own. Consensus is something that no longer appeals, and we seem to have lost the motivation toward achieving it.

Difference Is Enemy-Making

This is not simply a problem for rural communities such as my own, but for national and international politics. The classic example is the United States, where partisanship has reached ridiculous proportions. It has gone beyond the normal two-party bickering in the electoral system; indeed the mutual hate of liberals and conservatives may well portend the end of democracy in the nation that thinks it invented it.

If we're all in it together, then maybe we can keep talking — not to bring us to compromise, but to bring us to community. Only then can we move forward together.

The polarised population is mired in so-called "fake news" which is in reality a framework of codified lies that are intended to discredit the enemy: in other words — propaganda. Fact-checking has become irrelevant because the whole concept of "facts" has become contestable. There seems to be no middle ground — only the certainty of one's own position.

It is obvious that the 45th President of the United States was both the proponent of and permission-giver for unsubstantiated rhetoric, in which truth was whatever he declared it to be. However, we have all inherited the divisive consequences of the petty squabbling that has come to inhabit both politics and social discourse. People become enemies because others are different from us, or at least appear to be.

This is the unravelling of society as we have come to know it. Without a base understanding that we're all part of the same game — that we have a common identity — variations of opinion cease to be enriching and become actionable. As Rebecca Solnit puts it in her essay "The Loneliness of Donald Trump", "There is a democracy of social discourse, in which we are reminded that, just as we are beset with desires and fears and feelings, so are others."

I suspect we are now on the very precipice of such social discourse, where people who think or speak differently from us are automatically discounted. We do not listen because we are preoccupied with getting our own opinion across. Instead of the cross-pollination of diversity, we end up with the tyranny of personal certainty, which is reinforced by our friends who think the same way we do.

We Need Consensus

Consensus is only possible in a milieu of mutual trust and respect, in which I vigorously defend your right to disagree with me. It is precisely this element of social cohesion that seems to be dissolving before our eyes.

When each of us respects the other's legitimacy, it becomes possible to find a way forward. Without that, it is simply the loudest or most powerful party that "wins". Inevitably, we all lose.

Build Trust and Friendship

In order to resist the current chasm of suspicion that divides us, whether communities or nations, the only workable strategy is to build mutual trust and friendship between people with divergent views. I'm not even sure whether that's possible or not. But it is incumbent on us to attempt it. As someone may have said, the greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them. The question then becomes who our friends are.

Working and Relaxing Together

As for me in this isolated corner of Central Otago, I've made the decision to do my best to remain friends with my fellow residents, no matter how different our perspectives. I join in on our communal rosters: cleaning the toilets, splitting firewood, preparing for the Brass Monkey rally. We work side by side, farmers and environmentalists, and strengthen our bonds through plain old mahi.

I drink down at the village pub of a Friday evening, and swap a few yarns with people who I know think quite differently from me. It earns me a bit of grudging respect because I've thrown my lot in with folk whose values are other than mine. If we're all in it together, then maybe we can keep talking — not to bring us to compromise, but to bring us to community. Only then can we move forward together. ●

Painting: *Manuherekia River at Galloway* by Nigel Wilson © Used with permission www.nigelwilsonart.com

Mike Riddell writes novels, plays, films and apology notes. He cooks when he can and breathes intentionally on a daily basis.

BECOMING A FAMILY OF FAITHS

MARY EASTHAM shares her experience of interfaith dialogue.

No one coming of age in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s could have ignored the harm caused by racial discrimination and religious prejudice. It had always been part of my cultural experience. And no one could have experienced the euphoria generated by the liberation movements of the time without coming to believe that justice based on respect and openness to people of other races and religions was possible — if only we would talk to one another.

When I was in my early 20s, this vision of human possibility inspired me to study John Courtney Murray and Gustavo Gutiérrez at the Catholic University of America. Murray's vision of a "conspiracy of cooperation" was based on the conviction that people of goodwill, regardless of religious differences, could establish a community of understanding by "breathing together" and "thinking together" for the sake of the common good. We might not automatically connect Gutiérrez, the father of liberation theology, with interfaith dialogue until we realise that his critique of institutionalised violence underscored the importance of listening to and privileging the voices of people who had suffered discrimination and persecution at the hands of powerful elites.

When I came to New Zealand, my strong interest in interfaith dialogue intensified because Palmerston North is precisely that multicultural, multi-ethnic, multifaith community for whom a conspiracy of cooperation could create a community of understanding.

Therefore, when Bishop Peter Cullinane appointed me to be his representative on the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Committee for Interfaith Relations 10 years ago, I had a unique opportunity to put into practice the insights of these great scholars.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Fortunately for me, the interfaith soil was beginning to be turned in Palmerston North by St David's

Presbyterian Church and their visiting American minister Jim Symons. Their interfaith initiative in 2011, *TalkBack on the Terrace*, brought together in dialogue Buddhist, Anglican, Jewish, Muslim, Catholic and Presbyterian speakers — not in a lecture room or a church but in a coffee house. Here, where flat whites and long blacks could mingle freely, great conversation took place, with the organisers and speakers becoming the nucleus of the Palmerston North Interfaith Group (PNIG).

We began to get to know one another as people. During a series of conversations on how our faiths marked life cycle events, people shared stories about naming their children, becoming adults and getting married. By the end of the series, people from different faiths and ethnicities, who had first met at the evening on "baby naming", felt comfortable enough to share deep feelings evoked in rituals marking the death of loved ones.

Visiting the sacred spaces of our partners in dialogue became a key element in breaking down barriers between people of faiths whose histories were often riddled with conflict and persecution. Being together in one another's worship space encouraged us to understand what is most precious in the faith foundations of one another's lives. From this, bridges of friendship, trust and cooperation began to develop.

Over the last 10 years, we have been privileged to attend a Bat Mitzvah, a Shabbat service and learn about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur at Temple Sinai in Wellington. We have celebrated Eid al-Fitr with the Muslim community; the spring festival of Vaisakhi with the Sikh community; Naw-Rúz, the Bahá'í New Year, with the Bahá'í community; and meditation classes with our Buddhist brothers and sisters. We were even invited to the puja of our very dear friend, Gen Kel-sang Demo, the former resident teacher at the Amitabha Buddhist Centre, when she passed away in 2019. All these experiences have been unique revelations of the divine presence in our midst.

IT'S ABOUT HOPE

We have never found it difficult to find common ground. Our faiths have taught us to become deeply engaged with the crises of our time — to toil in indefatigable hope for justice, harmony and peace.

Today, no issue affects the entire human family like global climate change. But where you live — whether in New Zealand with its more developed infrastructures, or islands in the South Pacific, in which global warming means the flooding of their homeland — defines a vast array of justice issues and how they need to be tackled.

In 2015, we hosted the Regional Interfaith Forum of the North Island. *Sharing Care of the Earth: Science-Faith-Action* brought together scientists, faith leaders, students and politicians to share their informed views about how to mitigate the damage already caused by climate change and to prevent further damage.

OUR FAITHS HAVE TAUGHT US TO BECOME DEEPLY ENGAGED WITH THE CRISES OF OUR TIME — TO TOIL IN INDEFATIGABLE HOPE FOR JUSTICE, HARMONY AND PEACE.

In 2016 and 2017, we privileged the voice of young Pasifika Massey University students sharing stories of climate-induced devastation in their homelands. The video which emerged from these conversations, "Making Waves: Stories of Courage and Hope", was given to the Papaioea Pasifika Community Trust.

Suffering is also common ground for the human family. The shock and horror of 15 March 2019 struck us all and required an immediate response to mourn the premeditated murder of innocent Muslim men, women and children at prayer, and support their families and friends whose lives had been shattered. Within two days of the tragedy, PNIG had organised a multi-faith vigil in which the most heartfelt prayers, hymns, chants, meditations and poems from the Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh communities combined to express our love for the Muslim community, and our grief. The Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Spirit created a space for us all to mourn. Four hundred people attended the vigil; the entire city had become a family.

BECOMING A FAMILY

At the 2011 inaugural meeting of PNIG, a founding member stated quite simply that interfaith dialogue was important because "life is about relationships." This statement defines our mission to one another as well as the community at large. We are called to be brothers and sisters to one another. This goal has transformed relationships among faith communities, which once were confined to silos, into those of an ecumenical, interfaith family.

In our 2018 "Faith Family Feast" we shared both the sacred words and music of our traditions and a feast of ethnic cuisine — truly a family celebration.

We are increasingly nourished by the energy, insights and commitment of our interfaith youth leaders. Their forum, *Generation 20/20: Agents for Change*, addressed the present perils of climate change and racism from their faith- and lived-experience. Their insights, and a comprehensive history of PNIG, became the foundation of a book by the same title.

This year, Generation 2021 is "breathing together" through a city-wide conversation with young people age 15 to 25 on gender discrimination and religious and ethnic diversity.

When the dialogue becomes intergenerational, the "thinking together" for the sake of the next generation becomes the transcendent glue that gives hope to all. ●

Read the book: *Generation 20/20: Agents for Change* at www.pndiocese.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Generation-2020-Agents-for-Change.pdf.

Painting: ***Sacred Origins*** by Zoë Cohen © Used with permission www.zoecohen.com

Mary Eastham has two daughters and two grandsons. She is an author and founding member of the Association of Practical Theology in Oceania, established in 2004.

Talking Can Bring SURPRISES

JENNY BECK **reflects on her experience of mediation to resolve workplace and family conflict.**

Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison in South Africa, many of them on harsh, isolated Robben Island in Table Bay. In his autobiography *Long Walk To Freedom* he says that in those long, lonely years he realised that the "enemy" wasn't going to be vanquished by force of arms; his mission was to win people over using "heart and mind". So he made a deliberate choice to use words to explore political accommodation, and it was from a position of emotional strength that he entered into talks with the White-led government.

Nelson Mandela's example inspires me in my law practice to stop to consider the other side's position constructively and explore alternative outcomes. Above all, to talk. Because when you talk — honestly, with your heart — barriers are set aside, and astonishingly, people start using the same language.

Mediation Is the First Step

I'm a family and employment lawyer practising in Dunedin, and I can tell you that every day is filled with conflict — I wouldn't have a job otherwise! The question is what you do next, after the battle lines are drawn.

When I was a "rookie lawyer", my mentor Frazer received a remarkably short letter from the opposing side in a building case, which consisted of these four words and nothing else: "See you in Court!"

This isn't actually how it works, Frazer explained to me. We're obliged to explore settlement before people work themselves into positions so entrenched that there's no coming back. This was an entirely fresh thought to me being schooled until that point in *LA Law* and *Boston Legal*!

In the employment sphere what typically happens is that the disaffected employee by letter raises a personal grievance usually based on unfair treatment

of sorts, for example discrimination, lack of proper process, bullying, harassment, or possibly even unfair dismissal. The employer responds by letter. The next step is mediation where employer and employee meet over the table with a trained mediator leading the discussion.

I've had employee clients refuse initially to attend such a meeting wanting rather to "stick it to them, let's go to Court!" The last thing they want to do is exchange mere words! I have to explain to them that talking can't be avoided. That the law requires the two sides to eyeball each other, and try to reach resolution.

Honestly, it feels miraculous to me sometimes. Those employment mediators are skilled at helping both sides open up and listen with their hearts. "Feeling heard," I've realised, is a great thing. In perhaps 90 per cent of cases the parties end up signing a Record of Settlement, bringing the dispute to an end. The parties usually leave the building separately, their haste indicating an urgent need to leave the past behind. But in a few cases there are handshakes all round and tears suggesting a deeper conciliation.

At such times I stand amazed at the capacity of human beings to forgive one another, or, if forgiveness isn't possible yet, to move on from the past. Indeed, sometimes it feels like holy ground that we're treading.

Family Court Encourages Talking

In 2014 broad changes were introduced into the process of handling parenting disputes in the Family Court. In a non-urgent case parties are required to attend Family Dispute Resolution (FDR), essentially mediation, in what is described as an "out of Court space". The idea is that in this non-threatening environment the parties will talk; they'll look carefully at each other's viewpoint and, hopefully, reach a mutual position. Above all, they'll consider what's in the best interests of their children. If the parties reach resolution at FDR, their accord is set out in a Parenting Agreement and they might never have to go to Court.

But if they do, the opportunity for dialogue continues through the process. Even after Court proceedings are issued, we organise Round Table Meetings (RTMs) for parties and lawyers, which are held on a "without prejudice" basis, ie, the discussion is full and frank and any concessions made in that environment can't be held against anyone later.

Advice for Entering Mediation

The emphasis on talking and the effect it has of slowing things down is difficult for some clients to take. They urgently want a third party — the Judge — to make a pronouncement. They want punishment for the other party for being a "useless parent". They want vindication for themselves. They don't see the exchange of words as giving justice.

At such times I stand amazed at the capacity of human beings to forgive one another, or, if forgiveness isn't possible yet, to move on from the past ... sometimes it feels like holy ground that we're treading.

I challenge such thinking. A lot depends on what you carry with you into the mediation/RTM, I tell my clients. I say further:

- Hear what the other side has to say; listen with your heart not just your head.
- Know what your bottom line is and what you can afford to give away.
- Then do give it away but be strategic about when.
- Help the other side (and yourself) be the best, most effective parent possible.
- Don't be scared of showing emotion because "feeling makes us."
- But don't be so stuck in the past that you can't move forward into the future.

While giving my clients support and encouragement along those lines, I also pray hard, because I know God uses discussion and open hearts to shift people who are "stuck," and give them a vision for a different future for themselves.

Surprise in the Divine Presence

Indeed, God can intervene at any time, changing hearts through talk, even if the proceedings reach hearing. Sometimes spiritually-laden events occur in the Court room unlikely though that might seem. Here's an example from a few years ago.

My client Mr NSR (Not So Righteous) was in the witness box. He'd listened to the evidence; he'd given some himself. He was crying suddenly out of horrified regret at all the losses sustained by the family, and his own contribution to the mess before him. The Registrar popped across the space to give him tissues.

The Applicant Mrs NSR was sitting behind me. I could hear her weeping. Beside me the young woman who'd accompanied me as junior suddenly couldn't bear the conflict and pain of it all. She reached for a tissue. I could feel a lump rising in my own throat. Ending my re-examination I fought against stinging eyes. The Judge took a long, long while. When he spoke I could tell from the timbre of his voice that he was shaky without and within.

This was a luminous moment, one of potential healing. It seemed that the opportunity for transformation had been offered unexpectedly in a wholly unfamiliar place because people's ears and hearts were receptive. It was as if God's Spirit was hovering near, suggesting that this could be a choice for wholeness and forgiveness for all of us, not just the parties.

Very often Judges give advice to the parties before them in two simple but essential words: "Keep Talking." Because it's in the commitment to a posture of discussion, exchange and openness that the magic happens. ●

Sculpture: ***Reaching Out*** by Dimphy de Vaan

www.DimphyArt.com

Jenny Beck, originally from South Africa, is mother to eight sons and has a general law practice in Dunedin.

Relationship Needed *for* Genuine Conversation

JANE HIGGINS outlines 10 thoughts to help engender dialogue among those holding seemingly polar positions.

On a Florida campus in the autumn of 2011 a young man named Matthew Stevenson invited a fellow student, Derek Black, to Friday night dinner. What made this a notable moment was that Matthew was an observant Orthodox Jew, and Derek was a passionate and active white nationalist, the godson of a former head of the Klu Klux Klan, and heir apparent to white nationalist "royalty" in the United States.

Six months earlier, Derek had been outed on campus as a leading figure in white nationalism and was shunned by fellow students. After a period of careful thought, Matthew decided that confrontation was not the answer he wanted to give to the presence of this white nationalist in their midst. He sent Derek a text inviting him to a Shabbat meal with other Jewish friends.

Over the next two years Derek became a regular attender at Matthew's Shabbat meals and the friendship between the two men grew. Then in the summer of 2013, while on a visit home, Derek wrote a letter to the Southern Poverty Law Centre, a civil rights organisation that his father regarded as a major enemy. In the letter, which he invited the SPLC to publish in full, Derek Black renounced white nationalism.

This is a remarkable story, told well in a conversation with Matthew and Derek on the Civil Conversations thread of the *On Being* podcast (May 17, 2018) hosted by Krista Tippett.

Listening to these two men in conversation helped me to think about how we might make our own (no doubt less dramatic) connections across divisions that characterise both public and private discourse these days. Here, then, are 10 thoughts informed by this conversation and by others in the "Civil Conversations" thread of the *On Being* podcast.

Groundwork for Conversations

Conversations begin before words are spoken. The origins of the word "conversation" lie in the Latin conversari, meaning "to live with", "to keep company with". Matthew Stevenson didn't invite Derek Black to Shabbat dinner to talk at him, or even with him, about white nationalism. In

fact, there was no talk of white nationalism at that weekly meal for many months. Matthew invited Derek as a friend among friends to break bread together.

Derek had a well-honed case for his beliefs and was accustomed to airing it. He recalls: "I think I was less worried about being grilled than what actually happened, where I wasn't grilled and had to spend, ultimately, years of really enjoyable time among people who — the fact that I was friends with them was contradictory to my worldview. And that was a lot more uncomfortable than had I been grilled."

Recognise Complexity

Genuine conversations recognise people in their fully human complexity. Violence is done when exchanges reduce others to their values and opinions. Social media applications and algorithms are ideal mechanisms for this violence. Their form makes simple the reduction of others to the worst epithets that can be thrown at them. That abstraction is harder, as Matthew Stevenson knew, when we are in the presence of the other person, when we share food together, learn about the context of each other's lives, and talk about things other than the point of contention. When, in other words, we enter into relationship.

Understand Limits

It is not always possible or useful to seek common ground and not every situation calls for polite civility. Derek Black experienced a campus community that unreservedly condemned his ideology.

He reflects: "I really worry that someone will hear the fact that I had quiet conversations over two years and then, ultimately, abandoned my ideology, as proof that being loud and saying 'I condemn that in my society' is counter-productive, and I don't think it is. They are both essential … The outrage alone would have made me a more firm adherent to being a white nationalist, but the quiet conversations couldn't have happened without the outrage."

Learn Why People Believe

There's great value in gaining a better understanding of why people believe as they do. This doesn't mean agreeing with them but it does open the way towards a deeper conversation and encounter. Derek Black was a passionate advocate of "race science" with all its faulty use of statistics about IQ, false accounts of cultural histories and the wrong-headed idea that "racial purity" is a meaningful concept. Gradually his friends entered into well-informed conversations with him about these things. He also did his own study, through his College courses, of cultural histories, particularly of the Islamic world. These encounters were integral to his dismantling of the belief system that he had held close his whole life.

Not for Everyone

Not everyone is called to have these kinds of conversations. For some people right now, the most important priority is to be safe and to protect those they love. But those of us who are safe enough are called to get less comfortable and to have some difficult conversations.

Derek mentions that one person "did the brunt of all this labour of listening to me … and then doing the labour to say, 'You are misusing crime statistics. Here's how statistics works', and having that sort of conversation happen sort of naturally. It was… doing things like, 'Let's go down to the bay to watch the sunset and just spend time as people.'"

Take the Long View

Take the long view. One conversation is unlikely to change the world or even an opinion. There was no road to Damascus moment in the transformation of Derek Black. In his letter to the Southern Poverty Law Centre, he describes his movement as "a slow but steady disaffiliation from white nationalism".

Most of us are not going to have an opportunity to engage with people as extreme as a white nationalist leader-in-waiting. For our more everyday encounters with people of different opinions from our own, here are a few final thoughts.

Work on the Middle Ground

There is benefit in working to enlarge the middle ground. People at the extremes are loud and they use that volume to try to frame the discussion, but they are not as numerous as they would like to be. There is good to be done in seeking out conversations with, for example, the vaccine hesitant rather than the anti-vaxxer, or the person puzzled by climate change debates, rather than the climate change denier.

Be Open and Curious

When we approach conversations with curiosity about difference, when we leave open our capacity for surprise, then we have a good chance of a genuine encounter that may change opinions on both sides.

Be Honest

Honesty in our dealings with one another can be a brave way forward and a way to live with more understanding of difference. For those wanting to talk "across the aisle", Frances Kissling, former president of Catholics for Choice, offers the following invitation to honesty. Consider what it is in your own position that gives you trouble. Consider what it is in the position of the other that you are attracted to. Then talk about that.

Build the Relationship

Relationships are at the heart of it all. We come to the shared life of genuine conversation through relationship. ●

Painting: ***Talking Friends*** by Liviu Mihai © Used with permission
Instagram @liviumihaiart www.liviumihai.com

Jane Higgins is a Christchurch-based community researcher and evaluator who writes fiction in her spare time.

SHARING IN COMMUNICATION

SUSAN SMITH **writes that to communicate effectively we need to see and listen to others' experience.**

Three cheers for Francis who began his message for 2021 World Communications Day with these wonderful words: "The invitation to 'come and see' (John 1:46), which was part of those first moving encounters of Jesus with the disciples, is also the method for all authentic human communication."

Leaving People Out

Francis's preferred way of communicating stands in stark contrast to some of his brother bishops in the United Kingdom and Ireland who seem to be moving towards authorising a new lectionary that will rely on the *English Standard Version — Catholic Edition (ESV-CE)*. This version, reflecting an indebtedness to the Calvinist heritage of the evangelical Protestant American scholars who have produced it, is committed to a literal translation. For example, the Greek *adelphoi* is translated as "brothers" not the inclusive "brothers and sisters".

It looks as if the various editions of *The Jerusalem Bible*, formerly used in the Catholic lectionary, might be dumped. And unfortunately the bishops are not thinking of using the *New Revised Standard Version* with its inclusive language at the horizontal level. An *ESV* lectionary is going to be imposed on Catholic communities in the UK and Ireland, and possibly in Australia and New Zealand.

Sadly, so far there is nothing to indicate that bishops in these English-speaking countries have communicated with Catholic biblical scholars, the wider Church community, or the many faithful Catholic women already barely coping with the clerical culture characteristic of our Church today, about what translation might best serve the Church in the 21st century.

Language is a key element in communication, and how we use language makes or breaks effective communication. Episcopal leadership has something to learn in this area as does papal leadership. Francis's third encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, subtitled "On Fraternity and Social Friendship", demonstrates this only too well.

Communication Means to Share

"Communication" comes from the Latin word, *communicatio* (noun) and *communicare* (verb) meaning to share. We share something with somebody — such sharing is evocative of a certain equality, a reciprocity between two people or two groups. It is different from monologue. This sharing often uses the medium of language, so it makes sense to have a look at language and how we are using it.

Significance of Language

If we were to use socio-economic

categories to describe *Tui Motu* readers, many of us will be categorised as middle class. We cannot presume that our experience is the same for others when we are engaged in pastoral and caring outreach. This means that we need to go and see the reality of those we are ministering with, we need to listen to them and then we need to respond to them.

I discovered when I was working as a volunteer budget adviser that clients often used expressions and terms that were not part of my everyday language. Sometimes this was attributable to our age differences but just as often it was because my language and experience was different from theirs.

I've been challenged, too, by living and working in cultures outside of Aotearoa where English is not the *lingua franca*. One of the realities I have encountered is that while local people are really happy if the visitor makes learning their language a priority, we, the foreigners in their midst, can often avoid making this effort because English has become the international language in contemporary society.

I was aware of this at our Congregational Chapter last year. I was struck by how challenging the Chapter processes were for many of our Asian, African and Latin American Sisters. Not only was the whole programme in English, but the Sisters also had to contend with the different accents — New Zealand, Australian, Canadian, American, English, Irish and Scottish.

While it is easy enough for someone like me to manage my way in the world with English, it can be a huge challenge for many others. I have been heartened to read about the significant numbers of Pākehā trying to understand and improve their understanding and use of te reo. In fact, many more are interested in te reo than those who create an outcry about media personnel using too much te reo!

Prayer Is More than Words

Our prayer life can teach us about communication. When I was growing up, attending Catholic primary and secondary schools, and indeed for a large part of my religious life, prayer was about saying prayers — thousands of them — to God. We did not devote time to listening to God.

But growing older hopefully means also growing wiser in our spiritual journey. My experience of prayer now is more about listening and seeing than talking. God is constantly asking each of us to “come and see” those places or those people through whom God’s Spirit is present in new and mysterious ways in our lives.

Communication through Art

I was looking at Russian Andrei Rublev’s *Trinity* icon. This 15th-century ikon demonstrates the power of communication.

I looked, too, at Luca Rossetti da Orta’s painting *Holy Trinity*. Da Orta’s representation suggests hierarchy, age difference, and it depicts God as male. A woman, possibly Mary, is almost out of sight in the bottom corner, while the dove is hovering uncertainly above. I have to agree with Sandra Schneiders' comment that God is much more than "two men and a bird"!

When we compare da Orta's image with Rublev’s icon, there are striking differences. Rublev gives us three figures, all the same age, androgynous, and sitting around a table with a cup/chalice in the middle. In his depiction of the Trinity, Rublev writes a resounding “no” to difference as a key to hierarchically ordering life and communication.

If a Rublev way of depicting the Trinity was to inform our communication, it would not unconsciously prioritise age, or gender, or male-ordered hierarchies.

Rublev uses yellow/gold for the Father, blue/green for the Spirit and dark red for the Son. So, though he appreciates difference, above all, his Trinity suggests equality and mutuality, never-ending communication and an everlasting flow of life and love. The empty space in the middle of the circle is the space for hospitality and creativity.

How wonderful it would be if we could embrace communication as a conversation between equals, and allow space in which to be creative. This would prevent episcopal conferences in the English-speaking world from making decisions with the potential to hurt millions of women and men. Gendered hierarchies have no place in a Church which seeks to enter more fully into the life of the Trinity. ●

Icon: ***Trinity*** by Andrei Rublev

Painting: ***Holy Trinity*** by Luca Rossetti da Orta

Susan Smith, a Sister of Our Lady of the Missions, is an author, scholar and environmentalist living in Northland.

Questions I'm Often Asked

ZAHRA MUHAMMED shares some of the conversation starters she's had about her Muslim faith.

Curiosity is in our nature. It was through the early humans experimenting with stones and sticks that they discovered fire. That same curiosity fuels the way we learn, find faith, explore and pose questions about things around us. So living in New Zealand and wearing a head scarf as a Muslim practice, I find it understandable that people have questions for me.

I am fair-skinned with blue eyes and when I speak it's clear English is my first language, so most New Zealanders don't initially associate me with being Muslim. Yet I wear a head scarf and people want to know why. I'm amazed, though, at how often Muslim people mistake me for Middle Eastern. I have genetically Jewish features and when I'm wearing a head scarf I look similar to many nationalities who are Muslim. So, between Muslims and non-Muslims, I am no stranger to questions.

You might wonder if it is okay to ask questions and if so, how. I cannot speak for all Muslims but personally I am more than happy to answer questions as long as I am approached in a kind manner — and at an appropriate time. If I am juggling my three children in a supermarket I may be less likely to have the time, attention or patience to answer questions about me and my faith. Some Muslim people may be more reluctant to answer as their faith can be a very personal thing or they may not be confident to answer in English. But most Muslims I know are happy to answer questions because we know doing so helps to build relationships. We may relieve anxiety about Muslim people and help others realise how similar we are and how much our faiths have in common. Understanding one another helps us to set aside our preconceived notions and to see ourselves in others.

These are questions I am often asked. A surprisingly common one is:

Are you bald?

No, I have hair.

Do you wear your scarf at home?

No. I take it off the moment I walk in the door. I don't wear it in front of my family.

Are you forced to wear it?

I started wearing a scarf years before I met my husband, and my parents aren't Muslim so, no, it's a personal choice.

Will you make your daughters wear a scarf, and if so, when?

There is no compulsion to do this in our religion. My daughters' journey of faith may look different from mine. Most Muslim women who want to wear a scarf usually choose to do so from puberty onward. However, that's their personal choice.

Why on earth do you wear that scarf!?

Freedom of choice, that's why! In Aotearoa we are blessed to live in a country where we are free from

religious persecution. We can choose to wear or not wear what we like and practise our different faiths freely and openly A*lhamdulillah* (Praise God)! Just like wearing a cross is a symbol for Christians, wearing a head scarf is a symbol of my faith.

I have seen Muslim women wearing different kinds of head coverings. What do you call them and why are they different?

A scarf is often just called a hijab, a face covering is called a niqab and is optional. A burqa is a one-piece scarf that covers the woman from head to toe and has mesh over the eyes. It is not considered essential to Islam but it is often seen in countries like Afghanistan. I know from personal knowledge that this practice is mostly enforced by misinformed men in power.

Do you have family prayer at home?

We pray at home, or at a mosque, or a park, or anywhere really. If we are together we pray together and if we are alone we pray alone.

Do you believe in Jesus?

Yes I do — as a religious figure but not in the way Christians do. Some of the stories of Jesus in the Qur'an are similar to, but not identical, to those in the Bible. We even have a whole chapter about Mary, mother of Jesus, in the Qur'an.

Do you read the Qur'an in English or Arabic?

Personally I read it mainly in English. I can recite it in Arabic but with English being my first language I prefer to read and understand it that way.

Do you go to pray at the mosque? Do the children go too?

Life is busy and I don't go to a Mosque as often as I would like. My husband goes every Friday and we always take the kids on holidays.

What makes Muhammad so special?

Muhammad (peace be upon him) we believe was the last and final prophet of God, and like all the prophets before him (Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus, etc.) he wanted people to worship only one god as opposed to idols.

Why is halal meat important?

Halal refers to the preparation of animals for human consumption and is guided by religious criteria. Those who slaughter the animals do so in the name of God. It also requires that the animals have a quick death with the least amount of pain as possible.

I've heard there are differences in the way Muslims practise their faith, like Sunni and Shia. What are the main differences? Do we have them in New Zealand? Do they have different mosques?

There are different types of Muslims, just as there are different types of Christians. The base of the religion is the same but there are differences in opinions on various other topics such as who was the leader of the Muslim people after the death of the Prophet Muhammad and about the celebration of certain holidays. We have this diversity in New Zealand and all over the world.

So, if you see me, feel free to approach me to ask me questions. Even more importantly feel free to shout me a coffee and who knows — we may end up being good friends. ●

Photo by Rawpixal/Shutterstock.com

Zahra Muhammed, originally from Canada, now calls Dunedin home where she lives with her husband and three children. She is an avid ice hockey player and advocate for Steiner education.

The Attendant

He is looking for an attendant,
a forecourt concierge they like to call them,
but he can find no-one. Just me.

He is stunned,
like a bird that has slammed into a window.

He asks me to help him fill his red plastic can
with $5 worth of petrol to mow his lawn.
He waves a $5 note in the air.
Last time he made a mistake
and the petrol kept flowing and the cost too.

Together we work out the right buttons to push.
There are so many.
The petrol begins to flow
and after just a few seconds it slows right up,
inching its way to the $5 mark.
He must have a very small lawn.

The sun is washing over us both.
He is so grateful. He thanks me again, with a big unshaven smile.
I think he comes from a country where there are no lawns to mow.

Then he says his mother died on Monday. It was her heart.
She asked for the pink spray to put under her tongue
but that didn't help much.
This was more than angina.
She just slumped forward, like this, he says.
And he leans into me,
puts his arm around my shoulder and his head on my heart.

Michael Fitzsimons

Photo by Estúdio Galpão on Unsplash

CHANGES in CHURCH PENAL LAW

BRENDAN DALY explains the recent changes Pope Francis has made to the Penal Sanctions in the Church in Canon Law.

Pope Francis has revised Book 6 of the Code of Canon Law, "Penal Sanctions in the Church", consisting of canons 1311-1399. Of these 89 canons, 63 have been changed and others have been renumbered. Pope Francis said bishops had not been implementing penal law and this had led "to tolerating immoral conduct, for which mere exhortations or suggestions are insufficient remedies. This situation often brings with it the danger that over time such conduct may become entrenched, making correction more difficult and in many cases creating scandal and confusion among the faithful."

Since the 1983 Code came into effect, there have been many significant changes in penal law via other documents which cover the more grave crimes including the sexual abuse of minors. Most of these other changes which included the imposition of penalties have been incorporated into the new book 6. These include raising the age for sexual abuse from under age 14 to under age 18; a 1988 law imposing penalties for recording confessions; penalties for the attempted ordination of a woman; penalties for bishops failing to report or take sufficient measures against perpetrators of sexual abuse; and for clerics using child pornography.

The 1983 Code allowed bishops and religious superiors wide discretion in whether to impose penalties or not. Many people have complained about clericalism and "cheap mercy" being granted to offending clergy without sufficient account being taken of: justice for victims; protection of the community of the faithful; prevention of scandal; and compensation for the harm that has been caused. Offending clergy have a right to forgiveness, but this does not mean that they can simply be given new appointments with access to future potential victims. The Vatican has listened and the revised law prevents dismissed clergy being given other jobs or positions in the Church.

The 1983 Code recognised that sexual abuse of a minor under age 14 years by a religious brother or sister was a grave offence for which there was an administrative process for dismissal from the religious institute (c. 695). However, few religious brothers and sisters were ever dismissed from religious institutes. Canon 1398 §2 now makes the sexual abuse of minors by religious brothers and sisters a crime. In addition, lay employees of the Church who abuse someone

commit a canonical crime and can now receive canonical penalties. This major change in Canon Law reflects the significant sexual abuse by laity in Catholic institutions. The Australian Royal Commission, for example, found that 29 per cent of the offences in Catholic institutions were committed by lay people in roles such as school caretaker, youth leader, etc.

The canon concerning the sexual abuse of minors in the 1983 code was in the section under "Offences against Special Obligations" i.e. as an offence against the obligation to observe celibacy. Victims and the Australian Royal Commission recommended a canon specifically related to sexual abuse and Pope Francis has responded to this recommendation with a new canon 1398 in the section of the Code appropriately entitled "Offences against Human Life, Dignity and Liberty".

A significant addition to penal law is the legislation making grooming a crime (c. 1398 §1 no. 2). Grooming, however, is not defined and what exactly it encompasses will be shown by the jurisprudence of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith or another canonical document. We currently have significant issues with the observance of the 2020 Privacy Act and other legislation concerning photographing minors and sharing the pictures on social media. It has been the experience that people recognise how an offender was grooming only in hindsight. Now bishops have the capacity to take preventative measures in particular law to penalise clergy and lay Church officials who carry out clearly recognised grooming practices such as: having people under age 18 stay alone with them; or spending time alone with them. Experience has demonstrated that guidelines on behaviour are insufficient. There is a need for safeguarding laws that have consequences if they are not observed.

Vos Estis Lux Mundi in 2019 made sexual abuse of a vulnerable person a crime. Significantly, there is criticism that there is no mention of "vulnerable" in the revised penal law. Bishop Arrieta, the secretary for the revision process, said at the press conference after the promulgation of the changed penal law, that vulnerable people were encompassed by the phrase "one to whom the law recognises equal protection" in canon 1398. Arrieta also added that "vulnerable" is not accepted in many countries as a legal category of persons who should receive special protection. The revised penal law, however, does restate that abuse of authority as a cleric is a crime. It is recognised that equal consent is absent in many so-called "consenting adult" relationships and that vulnerable people have been manipulated.

"Charity thus demands that the Church's pastors resort to the penal system whenever it is required, keeping in mind the three aims that make it necessary in the ecclesial community: the restoration of the demands of justice, the correction of the guilty party and the repair of scandals."

Experience shows that victims take a long time to report sexual abuse. In Australia, victims took 33 years on average to report being abused. New Zealand victims seem to have taken a similar length of time. Many felt there should be no prescription, which is similar to a statute of limitations, for crimes of sexual abuse. The revised penal law retains prescription although the Doctrine of the Faith can decide prescription does not apply in a particular case.

Vos Estis Lux Mundi introduced mandatory reporting so that all clergy and religious brothers and sisters must report sexual abuse by clergy to the Ordinary. They must report even suspicions that abuse is happening. This includes a cleric or religious abusing their authority by having sexual contact with anyone. This requirement is now reinforced by canon 1371 §6 making provision for penalties for clergy and religious who fail to report an offence as required by canon law.

Although the revised penal law does not provide a penalty for not reporting to civil authorities, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* still requires bishops, religious and clergy to obey civil reporting laws except if the knowledge was under the seal of confession. Bishops and religious superiors can be removed from office or punished for covering up sexual abuse and not cooperating with civil investigations.

Changes have been made, too, to laws around property. There have been a number of financial scandals at the Vatican and a significant number of cases of financial mismanagement in dioceses around the world. Clergy have used parish money for gambling and drinking, and Church property has been sold or alienated contrary to Canon Law. A new canon 1376 includes the crimes of stealing and misappropriation, selling Church property, including that of parishes, without the required consents and consultation. These crimes could result in the removal of office-holders.

Pope Francis said in promulgating the changes: "Charity thus demands that the Church's pastors resort to the penal system whenever it is required, keeping in mind the three aims that make it necessary in the ecclesial community: the restoration of the demands of justice, the correction of the guilty party and the repair of scandals." These criteria have been the key elements for the revision.

It will be interesting to see how, in an environment where the Church is routinely engaged with the civil legal system — such as via Royal Commissions — bishops choose how and when to apply the penal sanctions in Canon Law. ●

Photo by Riccardo De Luca/Shutterstock.com

Brendan Daly lectures in canon law at Good Shepherd College. He has a doctorate in canon law and is Judicial Vicar of the Tribunal for New Zealand.

When Giving Is Receiving

EMMA KELLY shares her experience of volunteering in Africa and working in London during the pandemic.

When I embarked on my journey to Africa I was walking in blind — a young, single and slightly naïve woman taking a leap of faith into the unknown. Passion runs forcefully through my veins, and with optimism as a close companion I was excited to set foot.

South Africa

I started my journey in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. I was met by vast rolling green hills dotted with pink and blue mud huts, which overlooked the vast deep blue waters of the Indian Ocean. I began volunteering at Zithulele Rural Hospital as a physiotherapist and spent nearly two months submersed in a wonderful Xhosa community. We saw many different situations: domestic violence victims, disabled children, tuberculosis, HIV. We saw patients at the hospital and we also ventured along sometimes-treacherous roads in mobile clinics. We were fortunate enough to work with Xhosa translators from the community — without them our job would have been nearly impossible.

The poverty in this area was severe and many children did not attend school past primary, so the average health literacy was low. I was struck by how we take education for granted in the Western world. I relied on the translators to guide me in these situations — I didn't then know much about communication. To the wonderful medical and rehab team at Zithulele: you are one in a million.

Emma Kelly is a 26-year-old physiotherapist from Rotorua. Emma has a passion for travel, people and community.

Tanzania

Following my time in South Africa I ventured to Tanzania, where I volunteered in a small hospital at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. The sight of that incredible mountain at dusk from my seat on the back of a moped is something I never want to forget. Despite its immense beauty, travelling through Tanzania was hard: there were very limited medical resources and not speaking the language hindered my ability to do my job and communicate with patients. This woke me up to the hard truth that making lasting change in a short period was not going to happen.

Uganda

Over the course of the next three months I worked my way to the north of Uganda to a small town called Moroto. Moroto is known for being very isolated and has at times been a centre of serious political unrest. I was blessed enough to live on-site at a girls' home where I became a big sister to 24 incredible young women. I was the resident seamstress, cooking apprentice and, much to my joy, an amateur African dancer. The older girls could speak English and laughing with them was one of the highlights of my trip. The younger girls, who had come more recently to the girls' home, spoke very little English and my Karamojong was no better. My attempts usually resulted in fits of laughter from the girls. So much of what we communicated was actually not through words but through smiles, laughter, tears, looks, hugs and of course dance! I cannot

tell you how much I grew to love these wonderful girls.

Continuing my travels I saw so many beautiful mountains, rivers, oceans and wonderful faces. I surfed in Morocco. I worked on eco projects on the banks of the Nile River. I visited the Serengeti National Park, saw the Ugandan mountain gorillas and so much more.

England

It was a culture shock when I landed in England a year later. Then three months later the COVID pandemic hit. I had moved to London one week prior to New Zealand going into Lockdown and despite desperate pleas from my mother to return home, I decided to set up camp in England.

I began working in the Croydon Hospital in London where I was trained to work in intensive care and refreshed my respiratory physiotherapy skills to be administered at ward and intensive care level. To the team of physiotherapists, doctors, allied health professionals and nurses I worked with: you are amazing and I am forever grateful for what I learned from you all during this time.

Like any other health professionals, we just got on with things over the next nine months. Our communication with patients and families changed almost completely. Families were not allowed into the hospital unless the patient was dying. Communicating while wearing something approaching an astronaut suit — our faces fully covered — made it hard to reassure and comfort patients in times of immense distress. I am not going to sugar-coat the fact that we saw a lot of people die. I did not see anyone in intensive care older than 61 years and the youngest person my colleagues saw pass away was just 21 years old, with no preexisting medical conditions.

Following long stays in intensive care, patients were often unable to function normally and needed a mix of physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech language therapy to learn to walk and do life again. A lot of these patients may never fully recover but adaptations can be made to assist them in the community.

It's hard to deliver bad news, but setting clear goals and expectations was key to empowering these patients and allowing them to get back to life.

Communicating with both the medical and allied health team showed me the power of how strong we are in numbers and what incredible outcomes we can achieve for patients and their families. Seeing some of our patients walk out of hospital was priceless.

Aotearoa

Now, though it was just last year, it all seems like a dream somewhere far away. I look back with gratitude and awe at my wonderful and sometimes incredibly challenging experiences, the friends I found, the friends who became family and the light that carried me through it all: God. My travels took me to places I wasn't expecting, taught me things I hadn't set out to learn and threw me into experiences I will never forget. I continue in daily life with 1 Corinthians 16:4 encouraging me: "Do everything in love." ●

Photo by John Gomez/Shutterstock.com

REWEAVING THE KETE

PAUL BARBER **asks how Budget 2021 will bring transformation for the people and communities caught in the web of injustice.**

The work of social transformation is tugging away at the strands of the web of injustice that holds people in poverty and re-weaving the kete of social connection to create lives of dignity, purpose and hope.

The Government Budget of 20 May sees more of those threads of injustice re-woven, including increasing core welfare benefits for the second year in a row, along with a significant set of initiatives focused on Māori housing and associated infrastructure.

When more than half of those needing social housing and more than a third of those receiving welfare support are Māori, the changes provide direct help to those in need and especially Māori, who are disproportionately affected.

But "this is not going to be a game-changer" said Salvation Army and Parliamentary Analyst Director Ian Hutson in response to the Budget. The small increase of $20 per week in core benefits comes on 1 July and the remaining increases will not be paid out for nearly a year in April 2022. This is at a time when the 360,000 people currently needing welfare support is more than 50,000 higher than before COVID and the Minister for Social Development forecasts the number will further increase to 384,000 in March 2022.

Symbolic Milestone

By March 2022 benefit rates will have reached or surpassed the levels recommended by the Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG) two years ago. This is a symbolic milestone, but those WEAG recommendations were based on living costs from mid-2018. Living costs for beneficiaries have increased by 6.6 per cent since then (StatsNZ Household Living Cost Index) and can be expected to increase by a further 2 per cent by March 2022. Rents in lower income areas have increased substantially over that time. The lower decile rent for a 3-bedroom house in Manurewa, Auckland has increased by 17 per cent since June 2018 (Tenancy Services Market Rent). As a result, the deficit between an adequate income to meet living costs and actual income provided by welfare benefits, identified by the WEAG work nearly three years ago, remains high, in excess of $100 per week.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has said that the next steps are work on reviewing Working for Families

(WFF) and the Accommodation Supplement (AS), which provide other essential elements to income support for low income households. Reforms of these areas were further key recommendations from the WEAG report. Entitlements and thresholds for support from those two programmes have not been adjusted for inflation or housing cost increases for several years, meaning with every passing year they become less effective in reducing poverty and hardship. The Salvation Army will be actively engaging with any work on these reviews, building on work previously done (eg, Beyond Renting Report 2018).

The WEAG group also recommended developing a minimum income standard measure to help guide policy decisions about benefit levels. This should also be progressed urgently. The median equivalised household disposable income after housing costs in June 2020 was $31,717 per year or $610 per week (StatsNZ). Currently the single Jobseeker unemployment benefit is $259 per week — 42 per cent of the after housing costs (AHC) median income. The Budget increase means it will reach $315 per week in April 2022, 52 per cent of the current AHC median.

The problem for anyone on a welfare benefit is not just the core benefit rate but the complex set of additional income supports. It is vital that the reviews of WFF and AS are given priority for urgent change because they address the housing costs and costs of supporting children.

Pasifika-light?

Pasifika households are heavily affected by high housing costs, low benefit levels and high child poverty rates. The Budget initiatives directed specifically towards Pasifika communities focused on increased employment training for 7,500 more places in the Tupu Aotearoa programme, as well as boosting support for language teaching and education. But missing from the announcements was any specific funding initiatives for Pacific-led community housing projects or other targeted housing support.

Pasifika children suffer poverty rates well above those of other children in this country. The Budget Child Poverty Report forecasts falling child poverty for the next two years, but the inequity in poverty rates is not expected to be reduced for Pasifika children. This is in contrast with tamariki Māori, whose poverty rate is expected to reach parity with the rate for all children by mid-2023. It looks like more needs to be done to overcome the depth of poverty experienced by Pasifika families in our communities.

The family and sexual violence funding package is a key part of the Budget announcements and includes asking for public feedback on the plans for "community-led, whānau-centred" responses to violence and protections against harms. Is this enough to be a "game-changer" for families and whānau?

Other encouraging changes in the crime and justice area included additional funding to speed up the Family Court processes and the support of children caught up in this, increases in legal aid funding and funding for more Te Pae Oranga iwi community panels to resolve low-level offending by young people.

Addictions and Mental Health

Addiction and mental health treatment services received little attention or direct new funding initiatives in the Budget. The huge programme of health reform the government has announced will undoubtedly impact the way such services are funded and organised, but no further insights can be drawn from the Budget, other than to note that overall health funding per person is actually budgeted to decrease from 2024 onwards. How will people in our communities find the help they need and how will our country rebuild a health system capable of meeting the growing need for mental health support and other future health needs out of a budget that is planned to decrease?

Budgeted government spending for future years looks inadequate for the changes needed in our health, education and welfare systems to respond to the huge social challenges of an ageing population, continuing high inequality, and climate change. There is still room for government to go further to support and fund the transformation needed to secure the better future we hope for out of this disrupted present.

We can be thankful for the progress made, for all who have worked hard to see this happen. But the kete is still being worked on, we will need to keep tugging away at the strands that tie people into hardship. ●

Photo by ChameleonsEye/Shutterstock.com

Paul Barber is a senior analyst in the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit, The Salvation Army Te Ope Whakaora.

Bread for the World

KATHLEEN RUSHTON highlights aspects of John 6 as a guide for our contextualising the Gospel in our lives and world.

Gospel stories invite us into a two-way creative wrestle: with being Christian and with culture. John 6 presents Jesus in a dynamic process of *contextualising*, understanding his place, in his place. It also invites us into a process of contextualising, understanding our place, in our place. Taiwanese theologian Shoki Coe explains that we move beyond the past-orientated processes suggested by "context" or "contextual" to a process of contextualising. It is an on-going work of being in the present and always on the way. It can remind us that we are on pilgrimage, called to be in one place and also to be frontier-crossing.

John's contextualising of the feeding the 5,000 was written probably during the 90s in Ephesus in the prosperous Roman province of Asia Minor. Today we are invited to understand the significance of the story for contextualising in our world. Particular features of John 6, such as, Tiberias, the portrayal of Jesus, barley loaves, fragments and abundance and other aspects of the discourse may help us.

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

Contextualising in the 90s — Significance of Tiberias

Jesus went to the other side of the "Sea of Galilee, of Tiberias" and a "large crowd kept following him". At the time the marginalised crowd living under Roman occupation could not afford to go up to Jerusalem for Passover. The establishment of the nearby Roman cities of Tiberias and Sepphoris meant that many had lost land and been displaced. Jesus understood that many were unmoored from the faith of their ancestors. He adapted the Wisdom and Exodus traditions to their situation in prophetic critique of the way things were.

Portrayal of Jesus

Chapters 5-10 in John's Gospel are structured around Jewish feasts. After the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 CE, the question about where Wisdom was located was debated. By John 6, Jesus is established as Wisdom-Sophia. He evokes the female wisdom figure in Proverbs 9:5 who takes the initiative and gathers her disciples: "Come, eat of my bread and drink of my wine". Whereas the other Gospels have the institution narrative at a Passover meal the night before Jesus died, in John Jesus washes the disciples' feet. The Passover-Eucharist link is made in John 6:4: "the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near."

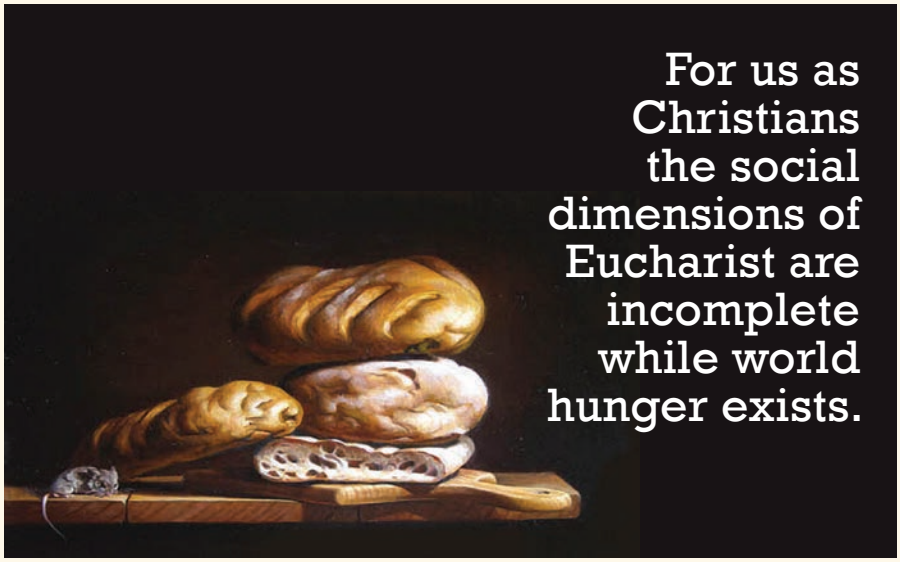
Barley Loaves

Jesus took the initiative on behalf of the crowd whom he "looked up and saw" and asked Philip where they could "buy bread for these people to eat". "Buy" comes from *agora* (marketplace). Jesus and the disciples had money and to give to poor people (Jn 12:5-8; 13:29). Philip took a business manager's approach — they did not have enough money to feed the crowd. They had only five loaves made from barley, the food of the poor.

Fragments Mean Abundance

Jesus gave thanks *(eucharistein)* and distributed the bread to the crowd himself. (This evokes the other Gospels' last supper accounts

where he took the loaves, gave thanks and distributed them.) And there are biblical echoes: Elisha feeding a multitude with barley loaves (2 Kgs 4:42-44) and having some left over; the Exodus feedings, and other biblical feedings where there was always some "left over". In John 6:12, "left over" has the sense of extraordinary, overflowing abundance. The expression "gather up the fragments" is also found in early Christian writings referring to Eucharistic fragments.



Contextualising in the 2020s — Bread for All

In proclaiming: "I am the bread of life" and "I am the living bread" (Jn 6:35,51) Jesus gives human grounding to the Eucharist. We speak familiarly of bread as a specific food and, as well, we use bread to include food in general. Sayings such as to "earn our bread by the sweat of our brow" and to put "bread on the table" mean to provide the food necessary for life.

Jesus's "I am" statements are not about who he is but about what he does. He nourishes with bread. When the crowd asks: "What must we do to perform the works of God?" (Jn 6:28) Jesus replies: "This is the work of God that you believe into him whom [God] has sent." This can cause us to reflect about the situations of hunger in our world.

According to the United Nations, nearly 690 million people in the world are hungry or affected by hunger. The more we know about world hunger, the more we spread the word and the more likely we will contribute to achieving the UN's second Sustainable Development Global Goal of erasing hunger completely in the world. Hunger in the world is not just a political and economic problem. It is a moral and spiritual problem. For us as Christians the social dimensions of Eucharist are incomplete while world hunger exists. Like Jesus-Wisdom-*Sophia*, we can become agents of change.

The good news is that Earth produces enough food to feed everyone. We have an abundance of food. The bad news is that too much food is wasted. Every year about one-third of the food produced for human consumption — approximately 1.3 billion tonnes — is lost or wasted, especially in rich countries. This is an imbalance we have to correct as we place wellbeing at the centre of our choices — choices we make as individuals, households, civil society, local government and the global community. We must make these choices for the common good.

In the Johannine story the boy gives the disciples five barley loaves — a tiny amount considering the size of the crowd. We can gather our food "fragments", too, making sure we don't contribute to food waste. We can develop habits such as composting and donating food we don't need. We can contribute food to the supermarket food bank bin, or the St Vincent de Paul collection. We could volunteer at a food save, Meals on Wheels, or other organisation. We can support local and international ventures to feed the world.

John's Gospel insists that the life that Jesus gives us is right now. "Eternal life" is not about the future but is concerned with what is necessary to sustain life today. Bread — our daily bread — is linked to what Jesus wants to give – "the food that endures for eternal life" (Jn 6:27). It is about enabling us to live contextualising a new way of being in and for Earth and all people. ●

Reading from John 6: 25 July — 15 August
RL 17th – 21st Ordinary Time
RCL 9th – 13th Sunday After Pentecost

Photo by Pesce Huang on Unsplash

Painting: ***Bread and Friend*** by Michael Timothy Davis © Used with permission
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Lyndall Brown is a Sister of St Joseph who has spent many years in the Ministry of Spirituality. Her spirituality draws on a growing consciousness of the Sacred at the heart of our lives and in relationship with one another and Earth.

Seeing My Face and Place

Photo by Ronit Valfer on Unsplash

I am the only brown person at the party. I say this to my friend jokingly; it is his 21st. "Hey, I can't help that all my family is white!" he says, and I smile back, because this is true. I am leading a prayer at Church the next day. I love this congregation — all the people who have come from different parts of the world and different experiences. But this is a wealthy suburb, and most weeks, I am the woman with the darkest skin in the congregation.

A few days later, and I have to leave the room at a "Young Leaders in the Church!" training session, to go and cry, hard, in the bathroom, smearing abrasive paper towels across my face, sobbing more violently just when I think I've almost stopped. The topic was about leaders in the Church, and it suddenly hit me: in my Church, in the people of the Church I interact with from day-to-day, there are no people who look like me. I'm a brown woman; there are no brown women to follow. "How do they not get it?" I think. Again and again: "How do they not get it?"

I know that there are brown women leaders in many Churches around this country but it's a slow process of inclusion. This is something to be angry about: the people who make decisions in the Church in Aotearoa (and, more broadly, around the world) do not represent the people who attend Churches. Worldwide, most Christians are not white; in New Zealand 70 per cent of Pacific people are Christian, as well as 41 per cent of Middle Eastern/Latin American/African people, 26 per cent of Asian people and 29 per cent of Māori. Only 35 per cent of people who identify as European are Christian. People with non-white ethnic backgrounds are making up more and more of the Church.

Including different races and genders is of course only one part of making the Church bigger and more welcoming; there are also questions about class, disability, education, the location of a church, as well as justice in international mission. I also know that Churches are working faithfully through these questions, and that leadership is becoming more diverse — the resources invested in me by current church leaders are an example of that.

But the questions are bigger than any one person and any one Church. I expect to belong to Churches all of my life, and I want to be attentive to the way that power works within them; how we, as the Body of Christ, mistakenly imitate the brokenness of the world, so full of injustice. Here is a space for prayer and trust, and I pray through the tears (and talk to people, white and brown — conversations are a place where change happens). Through the Church's faithfulness, and in its brokenness, Christ dwells among us. I am made in the image of God: my skin, my body, my gender.

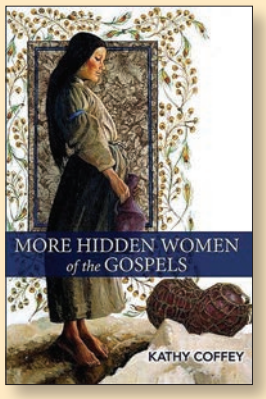
I'm still figuring out what it means for me to be both Indian and Christian. It will be a question to keep asking, to pull into different places and contexts. I love being elbows deep in the Church, entangled in the day-to-day, but I'm remembering, too, that God is bigger than the Church. ●

Shanti Mathias is at Victoria University, Wellington, enjoying using long words and immersing herself in the intricacies of media, politics and literature.

More Hidden Women of the Gospels

by Kathy Coffey
Published by Orbis Books, 2021
Reviewed by Christina Reymer

Kathy Coffey's second collection of stories of the women of the Gospels draws out the stories of women more deeply hidden, many of them with no name, such as "the woman who called out" or "the woman who caught crumbs". Kathy Coffey brings them to life with her creative imagination, delivering their stories in the first person for immediacy. Through them she connects us to a Jesus who understood humanity, male and female, Gentile and Jew, slave and free. "No human experience was foreign to him. With keen sensitivity ... he shaped his dominant metaphors from women's experience: leaven in dough, patches on cloth, lamps in stands, vines and branches, washing feet, and drawing water".



Coffey then brings these women into our time, considering a mother, daughter, grandmother and sister of today, the parent of a child with an affliction or disability today, a mourner today, a lover today etc. There is something for everyone in this book. It is a book to dip into as a treat, or keep on your bedside table or other close place. ●

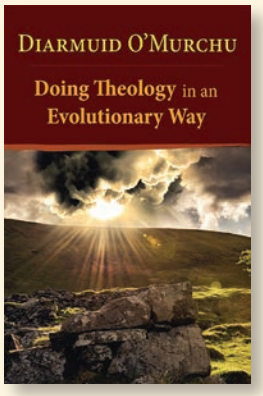
Doing Theology in an Evolutionary Way

by Diarmuid O'Murchu
Published by Orbis Books, 2021
Reviewed by Neil Darragh

In this latest of many books, O'Murchu reviews three theological paradigms. The first is the *codependent* paradigm where the emphasis is on the flawed nature of everything in creation; Jesus is missioned to rescue this flawed reality, a task continued by the Christian Church.

The second is the *imperial Judeo-Christian* paradigm. Central to this paradigm is the rescuing imperial God of the Hebrew scriptures. This becomes the model for understanding Jesus as Messiah, and has morphed into institutions of male clergy upholding patriarchal power.

O'Murchu argues for a third *evolutionary* paradigm. Here the Birthing Holy One, energised by the Great Spirit, begets *creation*, setting in motion *evolution*. The evolving creative enterprise eventually gives birth to (incarnates) consciously embodied creatures called *humans*, for whom the historical Jesus serves as an archetypal model.



In place of the notion of God the Patriarchal Creator, O'Murchu advocates the metaphor of God the "Great Birther". Empowered by the creative Spirit, the divine life force in the world forever gives birth — to stars and galaxies, planets and bacteria, flowers and humans.

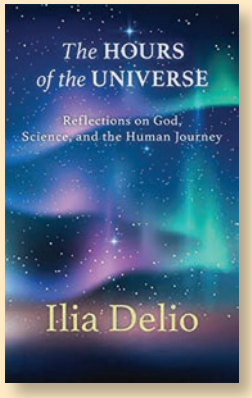
Tui Motu readers who find their own spirituality caught up in the idea of a Patriarchal God (King, Ruler, Judge) may well find this book eye-opening and transformative. Those who already have an evolutionary understanding of spirituality/theology may still find O'Murchu's grand narrative of creation inspiring, even if it comes with a niggling irritation at the way he stereotypes and dismisses other expressions of spirituality. ●

The Hours of the Universe: Reflections on God, Science, and the Human Journey

by Ilia Delio
Published by Orbis Books, 2021
Reviewed by Mary Thorne

I find Ilia Delio's writing intensely exciting and challengingly brain-stretching. I will have to read her discussion on consciousness in relation to matter several more times in order to grasp and retain this insight but it doesn't matter because this book is so satisfying and full of beauty that the time and concentration we spend with it is worth every second.

In *The Hours of the Universe* Delio questions why the Church still relies on medieval theology to explain the mysteries of Christian faith. She insists that the Church is missing the vital opportunity to reinvent itself for a world in evolution and urges a new synthesis between science and religion. If we embrace science, we find in it the wondrous connectedness of God and matter.



Delio engages with the thought of Teilhard de Chardin and Beatrice Bruteau regarding the evolutionary nature of created reality and the core energy of love. She also relates to *Laudato Si'* and the necessity for an essentially religious remedy for the ecological crisis.

This book is arranged in accordance with the monastic Hours to signify the cosmos as the new monastery in which we seek God. It offers access for those straining at the boundaries of Church to dip into and return. I wholeheartedly recommend it. ●

The Gardener

Directed by Sébastien Chabot
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

Part of the Architecture and Design Film Festival 2021, *The Gardener* is a tribute to American horticultural pioneer Frank Cabot and the celebrated garden, *Les Quatre Vents*, he established at La Malbaie in the Charlevoix region of Quebec. Scion of a patrician New England family, Cabot took on the garden project to distract him from a series of business failures after his family had acquired the rural property close to a "vacation colony" for wealthy Americans.

The film consists of interviews with Cabot shortly before his death in 2011, interspersed with commentary by his wife Anne, son Colin and others who knew and admired him and the garden he created. Garden guru Penelope Hobhouse describes him as a visionary eccentric, "a genius — or almost a genius".

Cabot was also a philosopher of the outdoors, and muses articulately about the impact that the garden has on visitors — sometimes bringing them to tears as they make connections with key moments of joy or loss in their own lives. For Hobhouse, gardens like this can not only enhance a person's physical health, but bolster their moral wellbeing.

Cabot believes that visiting a garden should be a sensual experience, appealing to all our senses and eliciting the full range of human emotions, from joy to fear — the latter effect provided by a pair of swing bridges inspired by travels in the Himalayas. The last thing he wants his garden to be is predictable. He seeks to surprise and delight visitors — even disconcert them — by offering a series of sharply contrasting vistas as they move from one area to another. Tree-lined avenues culminating in impressive arches or towers are one way of achieving this. Intensive thought and planning is involved in introducing new features. Two Japanese structures took many years to be completed — four years alone for the wood to be selected and seasoned by the expert Japanese builder.

The film works hard to reassure us that Cabot was no elitist. He first threw the gardens open to the public to support a local nature centre, and later established a garden conservancy programme that has preserved many fine North American gardens that might otherwise have been lost. *Les Quatre Vents* acknowledges the garden's place in the wider landscape, leading visitors out to the fields and woods of the Quebec countryside beyond its borders.

Even if you are no gardener, this easy-going doco is worth a look. ●

CROSS CURRENTS

BY MARY BETZ

Synodality

Pope Francis has mooted synodality over past years, and its meaning has been increasingly explored by Catholics around the world. Literally, synodality means "walking together". In 2018, the International Theological Commission issued *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church* which defined a synodal Church as one of "participation and co-responsibility", a "mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn", and in which the faithful, presbyters, bishops and pope listen to one another and to the Holy Spirit.

In 2020, Francis announced a synod called "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission", now to convene in 2023, with global consultation of the faithful in all dioceses to begin in October of this year. Cardinal Mario Grech, the General Secretary for the Synod of Bishops, explains that the date was re-set so that "every voice might be heard" because "only in this way can we understand how and where the Spirit wants to lead the Church."

Aotearoa has had diocesan synods, in which the voices of laity, as well as clergy, determined practice, most notably in Wellington. As Cardinal John Dew reminded listeners on a recent online segment of *Flashes of Insight*, when the 1998 synod voted against the permanent diaconate because it might have excluded many lay people (especially women), now-retired Cardinal Tom Williams surrendered his own wishes, and instead recognised the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking through the people. We await the Spirit's next moves in Aotearoa.

A Rocha and *Laudato Si'*

Pope Francis announced a *Laudato Si'* action platform during May's *Laudato Si'* week, with good goals but vague draft actions appearing online promoting conservation and sustainability, solidarity with indigenous and vulnerable people, ethical investment, ecological education and spirituality. While suggestions are helpful, definitive actions must originate in every culture and community. Have any of our parishes or dioceses seriously incorporated *Laudato Si'* values into their own pastoral plans?

Catholics would do well to look at non-denominational orgnisation A Rocha International, which had its beginnings as a creation care organisation in England and Portugal in 1983. Now it has affiliates in 19 countries, including Aotearoa. Its conviction that Christianity calls us to care for creation has involved it in research, conservation, restoration and environmental education; development of close relationships internally and in the communities where it works; cooperation with other organisations which share a commitment to sustainability; and the use of insights and skills from our many cultures. This is a perfect opportunity for ecumenical ecological action at global and local levels.

Climate Changes

With the Government's Budget 2021 failing to allocate funds for many of the transformative changes needed to reduce carbon emissions in line with our own and global targets, the June release of the final climate advice from the Climate Change Commission will hopefully have upped the ante. Immediate incentives are needed for solar (particularly photo-voltaic panels on schools, homes, churches, commercial and industrial buildings) and wind energy in order to lessen the need for using fossil fuels when we have low-water years in hydro-generating areas. Also needed are targeted incentives for moving to EVs — far above and beyond the provision for the Government fleet — as well as serious investment to assist farmers to transition to lower-emissions agriculture. The time to action this generation's "nuclear-free moment" is now. ●

TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

Tui Motu magazine provides Catholic as well as ecumenical and inter-faith perspectives and discussion on current issues in church and society. It focuses particularly on issues affecting Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific. Its intent is to promote the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, engaging faith and the world through informed, thoughtful comment and discussion for a general readership. The magazine publishes 11 issues per year in print and regular digital postings on social media.

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: Maori, Pakeha, 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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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.

GIVE BIDEN A CHANCE

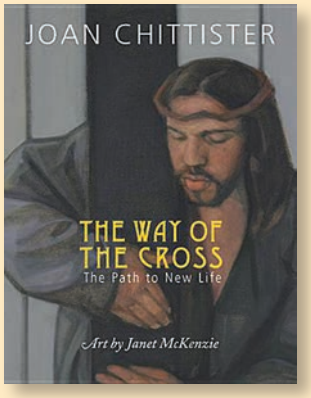
I generally agree with most opinions voiced in *Tui Motu*, however, I take issue with Jack Derwin's opinion *TM* June 2021: 3. Overall he is correct that the USA is largely responsible for its spoiled step-child Israel's violence. Also I hold no sympathy for that wealthy nation. As a US citizen I am frustrated that the Israel lobby is able to buy the favourable policies it desires. But Joe Biden has been president for approximately four months. Mr Derwin, I'm sure, wrote his opinion piece no later than April. About half way down his first column he is decrying the fact that Biden has not reversed Trump's movement of the Embassy and in the process makes it sound like the "several years" intervening are Biden's fault. I don't know who Mr Derwin works for, but in a country as large as the USA and with as many deviant policies enacted under Trump that President Biden must correct and reverse, I think he could be a little more sympathetic regarding the Embassy. Foreign policy is generally not a high priority item with the US voting public. The fundamentalist evangelical Christians are rabid supporters of Israel. It's tied to their belief in the imminent second coming of Christ. Between that voting bloc and the Israel lobby, Biden is loath to create a new issue for them.

Kevin Burke, Mosgiel

The Way of the Cross: The Path to New Life

by Joan Chittister
Published by Orbis Books, 2021
Reviewed by Jill McLoughlin

This captivating book by Joan Chittister with exquisite artwork by Janet McKenzie will not disappoint. Many of us are familiar with Joan's reflective writing style. In this book she uses the Stations of the Cross in a personal, contemporary way inviting readers to reflect on their lives. Each station follows a pattern — the Experience, the Call, the Model and the Rising. We are invited to read contemplatively, responding to soul-searching questions. Joan's helpful insights encourage us as we recall our own difficulties and struggles. Janet's art complements the text beautifully but can also be savoured on its own. The images are evocative, drawing us into a profound experience of Christ as he journeys the Way of the Cross.



While the Stations of the Cross are traditionally prayed during the Lenten season, this book could be helpful any time of the year as the themes apply to our everyday lives. It is appropriate that Joan includes the 15th Station, the Resurrection — crucifixion is not the end point. As Joan writes: "The focus of our faith is the awareness that the Christ who lives beyond the cross calls us beyond it as well. It is the resurrection that brings faith to wholeness."

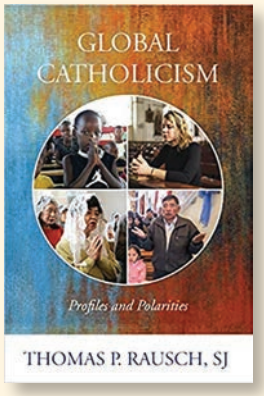
I recommend this book to anyone who is looking for the reminder that "there is new life at the end of every daily death." ●

Global Catholicism: Profiles and Polarities

by Thomas P Rausch
Published by Orbis Books, 2021
Reviewed by Lyn Smith

This is a fascinating book — an easy read about the place of Catholicism in the world. Each chapter gives an overview of Catholicism in a global region before looking at some of the countries in detail. The reader can dip in and out: I started with Chapter 1, "A Global Church", then moved on to the Pacific, through Europe, North and Latin America, Asia, before Africa of which I knew very little. I finished with Rausch's "A Tentative Look Ahead".

There are differences between regions, but the Church also faces global issues, such as how Church teaching is dealt with pastorally, the tensions or challenges of an ecumenical or interfaith setting, the sexual abuse crisis, the shortage of priests and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the Church community. Rausch also points out the amazing work done by the Church across all the regions in healthcare, education and social justice.



My favourite line is Rausch quoting African bishops in a letter to priests, warning them "not to moonlight as witchdoctors and fortunetellers". Something I never expected to read.

This book will be useful for those wishing to broaden their understanding of the Catholic Church; for teachers to use in the classroom; and for parish communities to learn about different conceptions of Church. *Global Catholicism* could help us to understand our global Church and to work together to build a stronger and more inclusive Church community. ●

Looking OUT and IN

As the eldest daughter in a family with four kids, I have always benefitted from hierarchy and quietly supported it, both intentionally and inadvertently. I made sure I was allowed to stay up 15 minutes later than my next sister, and kept an attentive tally on privileges and chores that made sure I retained my edge as the eldest.

In more recent years the hierarchies that benefit me are more subtle and structural — like the ease with which I could rent a house in a hurry last year as a white professional woman in her middle years. Unfortunately for me, the Gospels don't provide compelling support for people on the top exerting power: If you want to be great in the reign of God, learn to be a servant of all.

In my public health work in recent years I have been challenged to think about who develops and designs health programmes and policies. In spheres of mental health and disability there has been a strong cry of "Nothing about us without us" from people who use services, which requires flipping traditional hierarchies where only health professionals have led governance and delivery of care. Unsurprisingly, research also shows that when people who are most impacted are involved in governance, policy making, programme design and service delivery, the programmes achieve better outcomes.

In Aotearoa this concept is built into the new health system structure (Health New Zealand) with Māori now commissioning health services as well as being a requisite part of governance, design, delivery and evaluation of health services.

In Burans, the programme I lead in India, we are working to engage more actively with people who are "experts by experience" in designing programmes and tools to promote mental health. We haven't been that great at it, often (unintentionally) making unilateral decisions to speed things up. It is too easy and natural for the people with the power to keep themselves there. Co-production (one word for this process) takes a lot longer but the final programme design is much more relevant in communities.

Making decisions in a non-hierarchical way is not that easy in a family either. Currently we are trying to plan a long weekend away as a family for mid-winter, and we have been asking all our kids what suits and when. Plans are stalled as one child wants to do the 40-hour famine with friends while another wants to go tramping. We probably won't find a plan that suits everyone perfectly but we all like the idea that everyone is asked their preference. Of course, there are some decisions where families require clear rules which aren't up for negotiation each day, like bedtimes or whose turn it is to cook dinner.

Then there are hierarchies in Churches too! I have been wondering about how to get more diverse representation in decision making in the Church we are part of. Could we think about having perspectives from children and young people in our governance? What about including a woman with Down's syndrome in group planning the women's retreat? How do we challenge the older men and women who share their views at length in group discussions, meaning we hear little from those less confident?

None of this is very easy and sometimes living with other people's decisions is not fun. But often surprises happen and good things unfold. Last month I managed to restrain my sergeant-major self while my youngish nephews organised a fabulous surprise birthday party for my sister. I enjoyed the event and had few responsibilities. Note to self: turning hierarchy upside down and sharing decision-making around is good for me and good for everyone. ●

Kaaren Mathias based in Christchurch writes, parents, promotes health, prays and is learning the ukulele.

Bless us, loving God
with an understanding of
the power of listening
the invitation to openness
the perspective of another
the journey to truth together
for the common good here and in our world.

From the *Tui Motu* team

Photo by ChameleonsEye/Shutterstock.com