Tui Motu

InterIslands

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on earth as in heaven

Easter and the resurrection of Christ is nothing if not the story of our becoming a new Creation in Christ, of becoming a new Heaven and a new Earth. It is the story of the risen Jesus as the giver and source of this new Creation — given through the holy Spirit of Jesus who brings us grace and life and who is the divine energy propelling our world to new birth.

In our popular Christian way of thinking, Jesus opened our path to heaven by living, dying and rising to free us from our sins. If we live a good life here on earth, our souls go to Heaven — those who do not live life well face Hell. This focuses our present hope on the life hereafter, making the getting of that place in heaven the focus of our present life. There is, then, less reason to look at the new Earth that is a huge part of God's new creation in Christ.

This wholly exclusive focus on Heaven gives Christians no incentive to help transform our fragile society into a place where everyone has a chance of living well, and where there is a radical equality in the way we treat one another ("... you have only one Rabbi, and you are all sisters and brothers." Mt 23:8) — what a new place Earth would then be! Yet this is the very thing that Jesus asks of us.

If the Church is to recover some of this Christ energy, it will recover this Gospel story. The Gospel story, in fact, moves from Heaven to earth — Jesus came from heaven as God's messenger of a new world — not the other way round! And this is what we pray in the Our Father — that God's will be done on earth as it is eternally done in Heaven.

The whole of the New Testament sees Jesus as the person in whom God's future enters our world now. This is the very point of all Jesus' healings and miracles, his exorcisms and Jesus' continuous offers of forgiveness. And the resurrection means nothing if not that in Jesus the Spirit of God has broken into this world. As Jesus repeats, "the Kingdom of God is among you." This Kingdom life of God has come and flooded our world. We remember and take to heart the example of the first century Christians who were full of this belief. Think of St Paul: "If anyone is in Christ there is a new Creation; everything old has passed away; see everything has become new." (2 Co 5:17). Christ fills us completely with new life and with all that God values most — a love and a freedom that promotes peace and justice. And we are called to oppose everything that is opposed to this kind of life that has come to us in the person of Jesus.

In Aotearoa's 2014 election year, what might this "new creation" look like? One of the simplest ways of doing this would be to support T*he Living Wage* campaign. Another would be to seek an effective form of Capital Gains Tax. The equality and fairness of the Gospel call would be enhanced — and the power of Christ's new creation would blossom in a more level playing field.

Restful, energising reading! And a very blessed Easter. **KT**

contents

Cover illustration: Donald Moorhead

ukraine

Sources in Ukraine say Father Mykola Kvych, a pastor and a Ukrainian military chaplain in the Crimea, was abducted by pro-Russian forces after celebrating the liturgy.

"Every abduction is a terrible event for everybody involved," said Bishop Borys Gudziak, the Eparch of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Eparchy. "It's a gross violation of human rights and God-given human dignity."

Earlier this month, Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests received threats warning them to leave Crimea. "Our priests and bishops are close to the people," said Bishop Borys. "We've been inspired by the example of Our Lord [who] went a long distance from fellowship with the Father to incarnate himself and be in our reality." They have also been inspired by Pope Francis who said a pastor needs to have the smell of his sheep. Our pastors are with the people enduring this Crimean occupation."

With the whereabouts of Father Mykola unknown, Bishop Borys appealed "to the Russian Orthodox Church authorities, who have supported the occupation of Crimea, to do all in their power to have Father Kvych released and to stop the persecution of Catholic priests and faithful on the Crimean peninsula." ■

obituary – ron o'grady

Tui Motu's debt of gratitude to Ron O'Grady flows principally from his long standing love of art and more especially the connection which he had, in tandem with his wife Alison, in helping begin the Asian Christian Art Association and publish its fine periodical, *Image*. Many times in the last few years Ron has written short pieces around a chosen Asian religious art theme in response to a particular request from us. All of us benefited from his wisdom and knowledge.

Ron died in Auckland on 27 February after a long battle with cancer. If his last years were spent in Auckland, a greater part of his life had been spent in both Europe and Asia where his ecumenical involvement through the Christian Conference of Asia and the World Council of Churches, again with Alison, was a major part of his life's work. And if this work was outstanding, it is less well known than his involvement as founder in 1990 of ECPAT International, an organization to stop child-trafficking and sexual tourism. From small beginnings ECPAT has become an international force to be reckoned with, such that Ron has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.

Sister Elizabeth Mackie, assistant editor of *Tui Motu*, speaking of her ecumenical association with Ron and Alison, said that rarely has there been a man who in his lifetime was such a significant witness to the extraordinary events which have taken place in our world and in the Christian Church — the Vietnam war and the independence of South Africa are just two examples. We give God thanks for the rich life of Rev Ronald Michael O'Grady and extend our prayerful sympathy to Alison and their family. Alison, although your loving team-mate is no longer with you, the strength of your joint witness in faith and hope will live on.

May Ron rest in God's peace. ■

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

The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

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fair go

Bryan Watts (*Tui Motu*, March 14) says I am one-eyed. Guilty, M'Lud, with a capital G, and proud of it. Our generation of parish clergy, with their enormous workload, are as fine a group of men as ever graced the annals of the Catholic church. The *sensus fidelium* does not err. The faithful love and revere their priests for their total dedication.

What a pity Rome cannot show a modicum of respect for these good priests (who had no say in the language of the liturgy) and trust them to elect their own bishops. As St Teresa of Avila said, "If that's how you treat your friends, Lord, no wonder you have so few."

Max Palmer OSCO, *Kopua*

CAPITAL LETTERS

I have not read *Tui Motu* for quite sometime and was given a copy today. Please tell me what sort of gimmick you are using not to use capital letters when grammatically needed. To ask my young grandchildren (who know better), "What is wrong with this page?" "There are no capital letters," they shout. To see Jesus in small case; Pope Francis, in small case — it's a gimmick in total bad taste.

Therese Carey, *Christchurch*

serving time

The World Briefs section of the *Christchurch Press* (20 Feb) included a snippet about the imprisonment of an 84-year old nun for breaking into a US nuclear weapons complex. I was reminded of a nun I corresponded with many years ago. She was "serving time" for a similar "ploughshares" action. The motivation of both women was their opposition to warfare and the corporations that profit from war.

It's all very well for John Kerry to speak in Indonesia about climate change, but will he say the same in the US? Wars are fought for energy resources, while at the same time consuming vast amounts of energy.

If the US were to focus on reducing emissions for the sake of the world's climate, it would have to restructure its militarized economy, a challenging task as the corporations involved are politically very powerful. Instead all effort would need to be directed at "greening" the US economy, creating conditions for a more equitable, just American society and into relieving abject poverty worldwide. A fraction of the US military expenditure could accomplish all of these good projects.

Such transitional change would offer hope for humanity's survival. And one result would be: no more headlines "US nun jailed."

Lois Griffiths, *Christchurch*

☞ letters to the editor

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not changing the meaning.
We do not publish anonymous letters otherwise than in exceptional circumstances.
Response articles (up to a page) are welcome — but please, by negotiation.

The Art of Politics

The main task of the present generation of politicians is not, I think, to ingratiate themselves with the public through the decisions they take or their smiles on television.

It is not to go on winning elections and ensuring themselves a place in the sun till the end of their days.

Their role is something quite different: to assume their share of responsibility for the long-range prospects of our world and thus to set an example for the public in whose sight they work.

Their responsibility is to think ahead boldly, not to fear the disfavour of the crowd, to imbue their actions with a spiritual dimension (which of course is not the same thing as ostentatious attendance at religious services), to explain again and again – both to the public and to their colleagues – that politics must do far more than reflect the interests of particular groups or lobbies.

After all, politics is a matter of serving the community, which means that it is morality in practice.

Václav Havel, first President of the Czech Republic (1993-2003),
Commencement Day address, Harvard University, 1995.

providing for all children

"The right of every child in New Zealand to security, food, shelter, education and healthcare."

This article is part of the GOSPEL MANIFESTO 2014 (see *Tui Motu*, March 2014)

Michael O'Brien

Matthew's Gospel records Jesus saying the children should be allowed to come to him and not be hindered from doing so. In this, and other contexts, children were to be given a special and promoted place in the society in which they lived. Here then lies the genesis for reflecting on how well we provide (or fail to provide) for children and their needs in contemporary society. While New Zealand does well in providing for many of its children, there are far too many for whom our care and provision are woefully inadequate.

This is most clearly illustrated in ensuring all children have the basics they need in such fundamental areas as food, clothing, educational opportunity, health care access and the opportunity to participate in the recreational activities that their peers enjoy. Irrespective of how we measure it, around one in five (20 percent) of New Zealand's children live below the poverty line. While for a very small number of these children this may be the result of not spending money appropriately or wisely, the vast majority of these children live in families which do not receive enough money. The majority are also families receiving a benefit of some kind. However, there is also a very significant group (around 40%) who are in households where there is somebody in paid work. Maori and Pacific children are significantly over-represented among children living in households below the poverty line.

What we do to improve the lives of these children and what we demand of our political leaders to put in place policies which reduce child poverty will be the most important test for this year's election.

By themselves, children are unable to change their own circumstances — they depend on what their parents do and what we do as a society to ensure that all children are adequately provided for. Concretely, this means that if we are to improve the income of families with children so that poverty levels are reduced, we will need to do three things.

First, benefit levels will have to be increased.

Second, wages for those in low paid work need to be improved.

Third, we will need to remove the discrimination faced by children in benefit households whose parents are denied the Work Tax Credit simply because their carer is not in paid work.

What we do to improve the lives of these children and what we demand of our political leaders to put in place policies which reduce child poverty will be the most important test for this year's election.

Children have only one opportunity to enioy and learn from the experience of being a child. As a society, we can do a great deal to make that experience the best possible for all children, supporting and encouraging parents or carers to provide for children. As well, we need to make demands of our politicians. Phrases such as "every child counts" and "no child left behind" have been expressed frequently in recent years. This is an opportunity to demand that these phrases are given some real and concrete meaning for all children. The critical place to begin is with policies and programmes which reduce child poverty. These policies and programmes are important for the children now and important for us as a society, both currently and looking ahead.

So, the Gospel message about the special place of children in New Zealand society in 2014 contains two closely related elements.

First, ALL children matter and policies need to reflect this.

Second, reducing child poverty must be treated as a critical priority. The question we all need to ask of all policies is: how do these policies treat children and reduce child poverty? ■

Michael O'Brien is Associate Professor in the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at the University of Auckland. He is a member of the Child Poverty Action Group.

christ our light

Sandra Winton

Light falls. Aslant and from above, it falls on mountains, on the sea, on trees, buildings and fields. We say light hits but I think rather that it lays itself on the earth. Each morning I watch it move upon the hillside outside my windows, making everything, houses, trees, roads and craggy Flagstaff step forward into colour and aliveness. Light comes like a blessing. We use words of tenderness to describe its ministrations: it bathes, washes.

And sometimes light comes from below, and we crouch over its birth.

Many years ago I saw light made in the hands of people.

I was working in a small village in Vanuatu, subsidiary of a large and thriving parish with a substantial concrete church and six-classroom school. Mahe village had a bamboo church, no school and a cluster of thatch huts lived in by mainly first generation Christians. One year the priest decided that they could have their own Easter ceremonies. It was the first time. We explained the rites and they immediately seized on the symbol of the Easter fire. We could make the fire, they said. For us jovial Kiwis, used to the priest putting a cigarette lighter to the barbie prepared with sticks and kerosene, so that it flares up quickly and we can get back into the church smartly, it is hard to imagine what light and fire can mean when taken back into bare human hands.

It was pitch black in the large clearing in front of the church. Everyone gathered around two men who crouched with sticks prepared. In the faint moonlight I could see the whites of the eyes of awestruck children. Even the adults were witnessing something rarely attempted now. The murmuring stopped. There was silence. The men twirled their sticks and slowly the tiniest glow of red appeared. The size of a pinhead or a seed, it was tenderly cupped, blown on and tipped onto crumbled dry leaves. Gentle breath nourished it until the minute flame caught. First tiny twigs and then larger were brought to the glow until everyone had a burning brand. We walked around the whole clearing holding our flaming bamboos. We pushed back the darkness. We gathered singing in the glowing church.

Light is a central symbol of Easter. Christ is depicted liturgically as the sun that rises over the horizon onto a dark world. His rising is enacted symbolically in the lighting of a candle. One symbol is drawn from nature, the other created by human hands.

Perhaps it is like this too in our experience of the divine. Sometimes it is given to us, surrounds us, unbidden and regular as the alternation of light and dark. Love, life, healing fall on us and over us and we can do no more than open our eyes and be grateful. The kindness of people, everyday courage, small gestures of understanding, the daily devotion of parents, the miracle of children, the beauty of a flower, a cloud or a turning wave. We do not create these — we merely receive.

Then there are the times when divine light kindles in our hands. We may not be aware of it but we can be co-creators of the light that pushes back the darkness. A gentle word, a small gesture, a holding faith, a refusal to give up, planting a seed, feeding a bird, a step to forgiveness. One day we are blowing on the flame; on another we are receiving it from someone else. It is fragile. The darkness is immense — war, poverty, exploitation and despoiling of the planet, human greed and cruelty. It can take a powerful act of faith to keep blowing on the tiny embers of hope and believing that death and darkness are not the ultimate destination.

The hand of God can sweep over the heavens and entrust itself into a human palm. The light of Christ is both immense and fragile. It soars above us and is passed among us. This is Easter. ■

Sister Sandra Winton is a psychotherapist living in Dunedin. She was a foundation member of the Dominican Sisters' Mission in Vanuatu.

Illustration by Donald Moorhead.

every child counts

This article is part of the GOSPEL MANIFESTO 2014 (see *Tui Motu*, March 2014)

Susan St John

"The right of every child in New Zealand to security, food, shelter, education and healthcare."

Christians are called to help their 'neighbour' and do so willingly on a person to person basis according to the teachings of Jesus. But in an election year, Christians have a special responsibility to challenge each and every political party to show how they will care for the poor with appropriate, workable national policies. Continuing with the present ones will just see more and more families swept away to become the flotsam and jetsam at the margins of society. A badly structured economy where desperately poor people need foodbanks and loan sharks to survive, means churches and other NGOs become overwhelmed in meeting basic needs. This leaves too little time for the church's key role of nurturing the spiritual growth of families and helping to strengthen relationships and build cohesive communities.

Politicians must say how they will make sure that all low income families, especially the most marginalised, those supported by benefits, have enough money to survive on and to prevent the damaging effects of poverty on their children.

Current policies for families have been driven by a focus that has made paid work, of any kind, society's ultimate goal and source of value. Families on benefits have become the new pariahs in a judgemental, punitive and uncaring society. A mother's unpaid work of nurturing her children has been rendered invisible and treated as of no worth.

The welfare system does not allow parents to supplement their benefits in meaningful ways and the tax system is punitive. Another cruel policy is adding GST at 15 percent on to all the basics families must have, like food and electricity. Policies such as Working for Families, Paid Parental Leave, and early childhood care and education subsidies are discriminatory, badly designed and inadequate. With high costs for school fees, uniforms, daycare, school trips, doctors' visits and medicines for over 6s, many children have blighted and restricted childhoods. But worse, a regime of benefit sanctions is now tipping the most vulnerable into an abyss from which they may never recover. In an election year these policies must be challenged by Christians.

Christians understand the need for inclusion and the power of redemption. No one deserves to be shut outside, let alone innocent children. For the past three years we have been told by the Ministry of Social Development that 175,000 of our children live in families where the disposable income after housing costs is less than 50 percent of the median household income adjusted for family size. This line is impossibly low and these families have nothing in reserve, hence the growth in foodbanks and debts to loan sharks and hospital admissions for third world diseases.

We should remind our politicians that shocking as 175,000 of our children in significant hardship sounds, we were actually misled. After correcting for Treasury's major blunder in counting, we now know that as many as 250,000 children are below the 50 percent line. Many are well below.

Can our politicians please pledge to treat all children equally, to change policies such as Working for Families to give the proper support to all of the worst-off children, to see all work as valuable, and to treat those who cannot work with respect? ■

Susan St John is the Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Auckland.

requiem for the fallen

This year many nations commemorate the centennial of the beginning of World War I, global war on a scale never before seen. The composer of the libretto of a new Requiem writes about the profound feelings which only music and poetry can evoke when reflecting on the complex and ordinary relationships, both individual and collective, that underlie this unique event in New Zealand history.

"Men do not die in battalions or in crowds, but one by one by one, until the total is beyond counting"

Vincent O'Sullivan

When we were invited to write a Requiem commemorating the New Zealanders who died in World War I, Ross Harris and I jumped at the chance, before quite realising where we were going to jump. A Requiem after all is one of the time-honoured forms in Western music, as well as a solemn ecclesiastical occasion. A quick glance at Google brings up not just the great composers we expect — the Verdi, Mozart, Berlioz and Britten — but hundreds of others who have used the form in various historical settings. But we both were deeply interested in "the war to end all wars" — surely the most absurdly optimistic phrase of the century — while in Ross's Second Symphony a number of years ago we already had worked together on the events surrounding a young soldier from Invercargill, who was executed on the Western Front for desertion when he walked from the trenches back to a village and the woman with whom he had fallen in love.

What also attracted us to the proposal of "Requiem for the Fallen" — the name was early decided on — was that neither of us saw anything in the least "glorious" about war, and yet we had a profound respect, a reverence even, for the young men who died in it. As an English poet killed in France once wrote in a letter, "war is indescribably disgusting." He also spoke of "the individual horror, the fine personalities smashed suddenly into red beastliness." Rupert Brooke's silly words about spilling "the sweet red wine of youth," or the vapid recruitment phrases of dying "for King and Country" repelled us. The Duke of Wellington's despicable term, "cannon fodder", seemed to us far closer to the truth of how so many died. As a programme note would say, "No commemoration is just that does not bear as well the dreadful physical reality that deprives men finally of all that *Home* entails."

Home then — that was to be central in how we approached the work, and what we wanted to emphasise for its audience. For those who read experience in traditional requiem terms, this could mean the return to what Wordsworth called "God, who is our home." For those whose emphasis is more focused on time and place, the end emotional point is not so different — what mattered most through life mattered most at its end as well, the love for individuals, the love for and of a community.

So as musician and writer, we were attempting to do two things. One was to treat the grand traditional form of the Requiem, with its dramatic arc from the approach to the altar, through to the final committal and the congregation's drawing together, fairly much as always it had been treated. Each section had, you could say, its own musical expectations, an inherited approach that the Latin words impose. But the other was to make this communal event attend to the individual dying soldier — how the value and centre of an ordinary life is precisely there, in its splendid ordinariness. So a piece that paid tribute to what was everyday for fellow New Zealanders, that too is what we were after.

The Mass began with Horomona Horo, a marvellous exponent of *taonga puoro*, with both his chanting and playing against a solo cello. Then the *Libera nos* brought its traditional Latin plea to be set free from evil. This set the piece as a Requiem for one man, as much as it was for each of those who died with him, and who had shared his hopes:

"From the fear that we have of
fear,
Libera nos, Domine,
From the hate we return for
hate,
Libera nos.
From the menace that scars,
from the wound that grieves,
From the racket of battle
as hope deceives,

From the stalking of death
and unmarked graves,
Libera nos, Domine."

And so it went on through the rest of the Mass, alternating the traditional Latin lines, the voice of the bewildered, fearful man obsessed with what he has left behind and what it is he hopes to see again. For that is the deepest story of war. Men do not die in battalions or in crowds, but one by one by one, until the total is beyond counting. The *Agnus Dei,* for example, dramatically serves both strands of this approach, with the time-laden prayers of the Mass finding their resonance and counterpart in the thoughts of one man in extremis.

"Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
Lamb of God, who takes to himself the weight of the world,
Stand beside us, beside us now, in encroaching dark.
Lamb of God, who has gone before us to the slaughter,
Be with us in the pressing of death's flock."

The writing needed to be simple and direct as songs must be, for one hears them only once. And unlike a poem, which is already completed and must stand by itself, a song is merely an outline, a possibility, until music expands and defines it. Ross's way of taking the words and drawing them towards something so much larger and more resonant allowed him to write both plangently and gently, yet also to take the vastly dramatic possibilities of the *Dies Irae*, with its emphasis on fear and destruction, to turbulent and chromatically passionate levels.

Our main point of departure from the usual Requiem pattern was towards the end, when in the *Memento Mori* an old digger sings an unaccompanied lament for the mate he remembers who died beside him, but a lament too for the extended tragedy which survival can also mean. His words are for the survivors as well as the victims, and the line between may indeed be a thin one. It is he who delivers the *In paradisum*, a direct summing up of what the entire work has been driven by — where, living or dead, we want to be. Again, the hope is that "ordinary" becomes in itself a word of blessing.

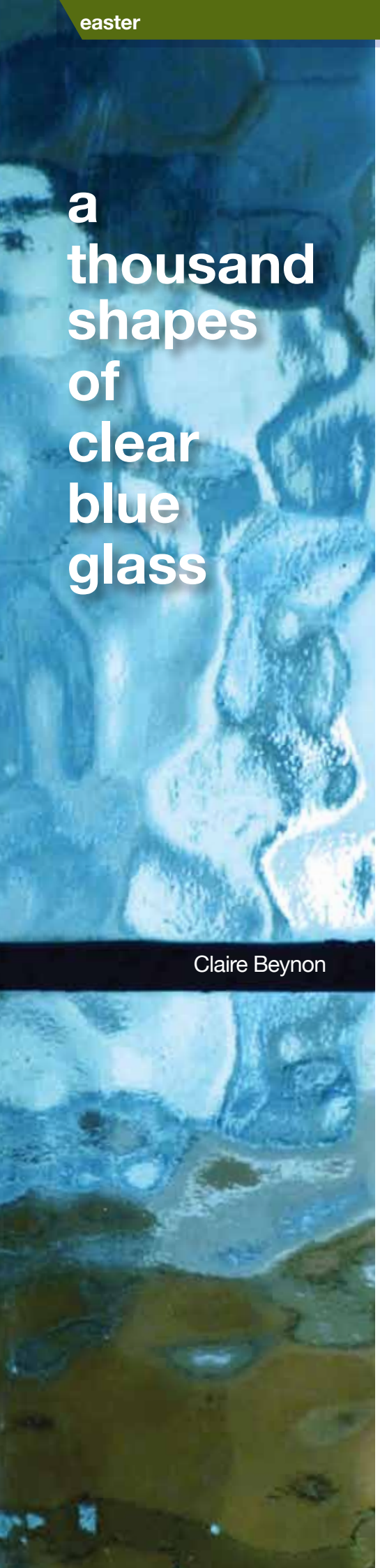
"Where are they, the streets of the new Jerusalem?
Where do they lead,
the paths of glory,
Where does the spirit walk in the risen dust?
I have told you that.
I have told you that.
I have even joked about it in my lemon-squeezer hat!
In the streets of home,
that is where — at home.
How the bliss we crave at last is what we have known.
Veni, creator spiritus,
Creator, come.
Comrades,
Our abiding word for Home."

Nothing by way of commemoration alters by a jot the reality of another's death. Everything, for us, comes down to as much respect, as much resolve, as we can bring to the final phrases of any Requiem, and especially for one for our own, and for those who survive.

"Requiem in aeternam.
Dona nobis pacem." ■

"Requiem for the Fallen" with music by Ross Harris and text by Vincent O'Sullivan, was given its first performance at St Paul's Cathedral, Wellington, during the New Zealand Arts Festival in late February. It was performed by the New Zealand String Quartet, Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir, Horomona Horo and Richard Greager. John Button, music reviewer for the Dominion Post, declared it "a major work", and critic Lindis Tyler thought it "one of the major events in any genre in this year's festival … It captured the essence of one of the most profound experiences in the history of this country."

Vincent O'Sullivan is the current New Zealand National Library Poet Laureate (2013-15). As well, he is a novelist, short story writer, playwright, music librettist, critic, essayist and and literary editor. He is emeritus professor of English at the Victoria University of Wellington.



a thousand shapes of clear blue glass

Claire Beynon

A short story for Easter

The first time Tim came to see me was the Thursday before Easter, scrolls of tightly-rolled drawings under his arm. He greeted me with a nod, walked silently across my office space to the plans' chest in front of the window and set the drawings down. Without speaking, he scanned the view of the city beyond my office — telephone wires threading their way around stone and concrete, stealthy, century-old yews, the mute bell-tower of St. Catherine's Cathedral.

His initial letter of contact served as an introduction to himself and his proposed project. He'd outlined his ideas and intentions, clarifying at the outset that should I choose to work with him, my involvement would be professional, but peripheral. Nothing in his plans could be changed. There would be no probing, no questions asked. His intention was not to be in any way awkward or obstructive — to the contrary, he would go out of his way to facilitate the process — but it was imperative that the baton remain firmly in his hands. Plainly, I was the man with the contacts, the easy access to builders, stonemasons and crafts people. He trusted my reputation when it came to site sensitivity, my creative use of traditional materials: these were the things that had urged him to come to me in the first place. How else could he find out whom to commission to create the stained glass for the windows? To whom should he entrust the intricate carving of a pedestal font?

He would, of course, see to it that my contributions to the building were appropriately acknowledged. Did I think we'd be able to work together on such a project? Did I think I could tolerate his restrictions?

In my office, he unrolled his drawings, carefully flattening them out on the chest's wooden surface.

Lightening sparked from somewhere inside the piles of paper.

Despite the day's high blue sky, I heard the far-off growl of thunder.

Dust motes collided in sudden stripes of light.

He had brought layers and layers of detailed working drawings. Black and white draughtsman-like diagrams were at the top of the pile, followed by increasingly expressive renderings of the small chapel he had in mind. I was mesmerized, under a spell.

At first glance, his line drawings appeared stiff and brittle, embedded deep within the weave of the paper. They seemed lifeless, stuck down fast. But as we moved from one page to the next, marks begin to tremble and stir. They detached themselves and slid across the page, rearranged themselves in the top left hand corner, mid-page, off-centre right bottom. Every now and then, one threatened to leave the paper altogether, to take off and dart instead around the room. I ducked instinctively. There was a passion in his plans that betrayed the calm and quiet of his meticulously typed letter, his careful shirt and tie. By the time he'd begun introducing colour to the windows of his building, I was shaking my head and nodding, diving to my desk for contract and pen.

Outside the window, clouds churned and massed on the horizon, misshapen athletes lining up for a race, waiting for the starters' gun.

He's insisting on a basic rectangular ground plan. There's nothing complicated about this building. It's a small, simple stone structure, foundations laid out precisely along the axes of a compass. North. South. East. West. It's the stained-glass windows that are complex — after all, he explains, it's the windows

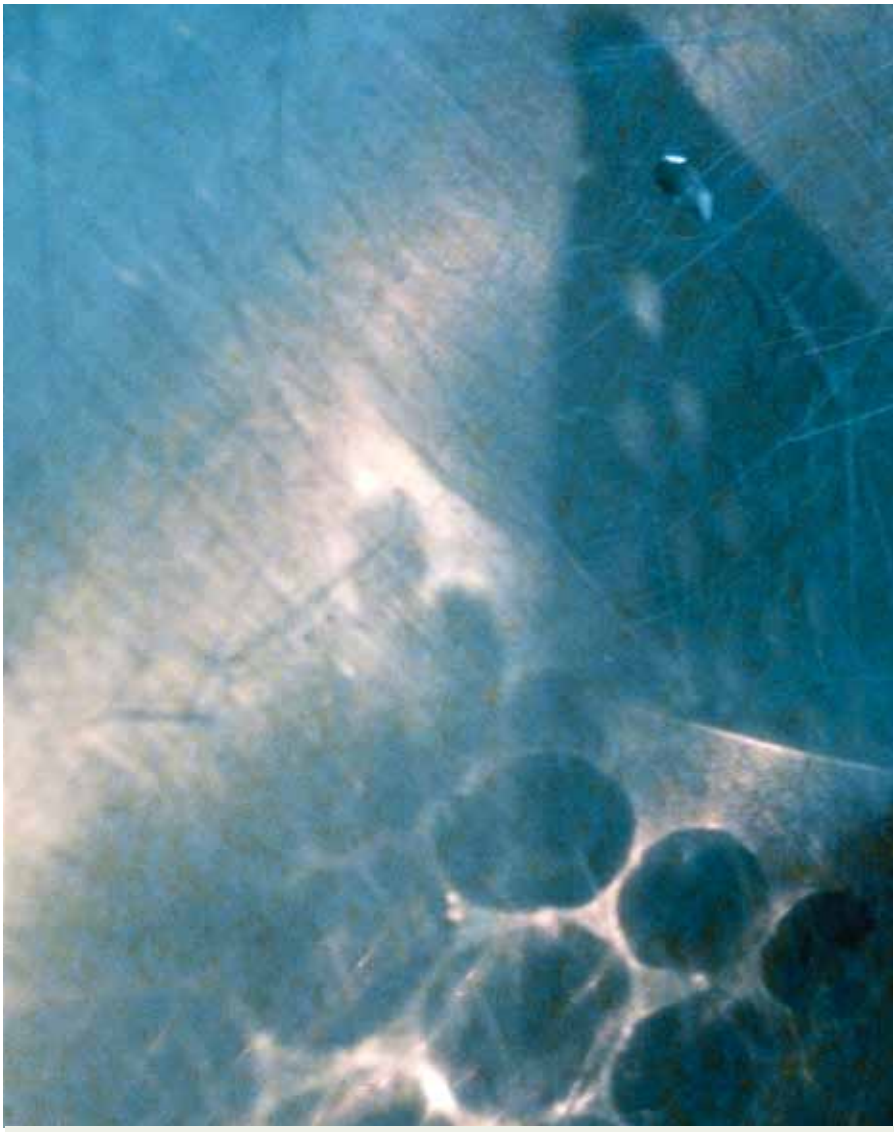
that will tell the story. He wants fourteen of them, is as adamant about this as he is about everything else. Ten or twelve won't do. Yes, he knows, it's a tiny space, but by his calculations (and given the high vertical thrust), fourteen would not present a problem.

He's designed the two short walls to accommodate the widest, three-paneled windows. Facing due East and West, they will describe the beginning and end of the story, deliberately positioned to catch the light from the rising and setting sun. His drawings give the impression of a continuous unbroken window — a luminous wall of coloured light, held up by roughly-chiseled stone blocks, interrupted only by the necessary support of the slimmest stone pillars. Floor-to-ceiling stained glass will tempt light into the room, he says — hold it there like a slow inward breath.

Have I noticed how effectively light nudges shadows into corners?

The two long sidewalls will reveal the finer details of the story, coloured glass the perfect medium to chronicle a life — her life — chapter by chapter. One window for each of the years he had with her, for the combined age of their children. One for each day of their two-week holiday. Fourteen windows for the fourteen minutes it took from the time she entered the sea — laughing her way in, her sun-browned hands scooping up the waves — to that final moment when bitter salt water flooded through her body.

I read what he doesn't tell me in the drawings of the windows. They describe it all — deliberate groupings of line and pattern following the passage of time, the subtleties of light moving across the hours and moods of a day. A predominance of orange and yellow glass set into the Southern wall takes me to the beach where I stand at ease, bare toes burrowing into gritty warmth on what seems like any ordinary morning. I hear children. They're a little way away, carting buckets and spades, paddling in the shallows. A group of tanned teenagers plays volleyball. Bluebottles lie washed up on the sand, foam stuck half-heartedly to their deflating balloons. Crabs sidle up to empty shells and sandcastles.



Photographic artworks (opposite and above) by Claire Beynon.

She drowned on a Sunday. First up in the morning, she'd tiptoed out of the house around sunrise, closed the door on him and their sleeping children, and gone out for a walk around the Valley. They'd woken an hour or so later to find her in the kitchen, humming — a bunch of freshly-picked flowers loosely arranged in a jam jar and set out on the kitchen table. On the marble cutting board, two lemon halves, one red onion, the obligatory head of unpeeled garlic. At the front door, the new red umbrella, four folded swimming towels, a brown paper bag filled with organic oranges …

Tracing the blue North wall now, I hear her cry. Shadows fall. Darkness stalks an unsteady sea. I hold my breath, dive below the surface, swim into the watery silence of a thousand shapes of clear blue glass.

The light in my office shifts. I turn on my feet.

There'll be no apse or nave, he says.

Just enough room, I say, for a font, a single pew, a jam jar of flowers. ■

Clair Beynon is a painter, poet and writer who lives in Dunedin: www.clairebeynon.com

Jerusalem Poems

These six sonnets, previously unpublished, were given to *Tui*

1
I wait for an hour in the car at Parakino
While Father Te Awhitu catechises the children,

That gentle priest — these mild green hummocked hills
Are a herd of bulls, the toughs from Bashan

Waiting to tear me to pieces - dear John,
I have my old rucksack loaded with provisions

From Wanganui — bread, sardines, bread,
Biscuits, chocolate, even oysters — how can I be poor

When the gut rumbles after a day's digging
On milk and watercress? So bitter an enemy

Never was known, brother, as I am to myself,
The tarantula hidden in the rock! And now I possess

The Jerusalem Psalms Father Caulfield bought for me,
Robbing myself yet again of mental poverty.

2
Yet if they wanted to share out what I am wearing
It would not go far among them—first, the quilted coat

With a cigarette hole burnt by Hone Tuwhare
Whose wife stitched aroha into the clever seams —

Then, the sandals, well worn, and the calfskin jacket
I rubbed over with Dettol to kill the crabs,

Each in its way a gift — then, Father Te Awhitu's trousers
(A chastity belt I used to call them in Grafton

And slept all night once beside a doll,
Wearing them, upsetting her apple cart

For that night at least) — then, a tiny medal of Mary
Round my neck — last, the football shirt

From a Cistercian abbot — they would have enough
For one man's wardrobe, but one only.

3
The wind that blows from my left hand
Riddles me with evil of my own making —

'Augustine sinned and repented; this man makes repentance
The cloak of sin' — 'How soon till Mother Church

'Finds out the snake she carries in her breast?' —
'Will the Bishop have to support his illegitimate children?'

My sin is God's business; He who is Love
May judge our loves differently from men

Or demons — but the wind that blows from my right hand
Shows me myself as God will make me,

A rotten kumara with a white ruff
Of mildew round his neck, who has given sap to others,

And has no place in the hangi, only to be thrown
Over the fence to lie on the ground of God's terrible mercy.

4
'The moment I was born I was thrown upon You' —
Indeed, Lord, indeed,

Merciful Master whose image is Te Ra
Shining in midheaven — it is Your Beauty

Leads me to darkness among Your creatures,
Making me weep in Grafton

For that great beauty thrown down in the mud —
Gipsy, Bob, Yancy, Clarissa,

Jeremy, Norma, Russ — my litany
As Francis told over the names of Adam's joy —

And now I weep again in a cold kitchen
Unable to distinguish You from them

Except that You can join me to the tree
From which Your blessing flows to them.

BY JAMES K BAXTER

Motu for publication by Father John Weir SM.

[Photos: Cathy Harrison]

5
I have seen Your church in the face of a Maori girl
Hour after hour watching —

Afraid to move my arm in case she wakened
From the dark mercy of the drug — lit only

By the one candle burning
Below Your arms extended — if the ploughshare

Breaks through the clay of this old heart,
Let there be harvest — 'Nigra sum

'Sed formosa' - the song of the Bride is heard
By You only — but when I lie down

A hundred times like a sack of dung
On the church floor when the nuns have gone to bed

Is it so different to love those children
And to love You from whom no thought is hidden?

6
Merciful Master, let it be cold here
In order that their souls may get heat;

Let what I do not eat become their food,
And what I dare not ask, because of fear,

Let Your absence from this poor man be Your presence
Among them — I am that Samaritan woman

Who pleaded for her tribe — Hemi the nobody
Who sat cross-legged at the Marton dance

Because he loved the homosexual singer
And taught him to say — 'Hari Krishna,

'Hari Ram' — strange to himself,
An old goat with a grey beard and sandals —

Merciful Master, forget You made this creature
In whose breast You burn tonight,

And remember those You permit me to love,
The children who do not know You as their Father.

— *Hemi*

"... a letter to god"

This interview is part of a longer conversation which TM had with Father John Weir SM about the life and work of James K Baxter, one of New Zealand's best known and finest poets.

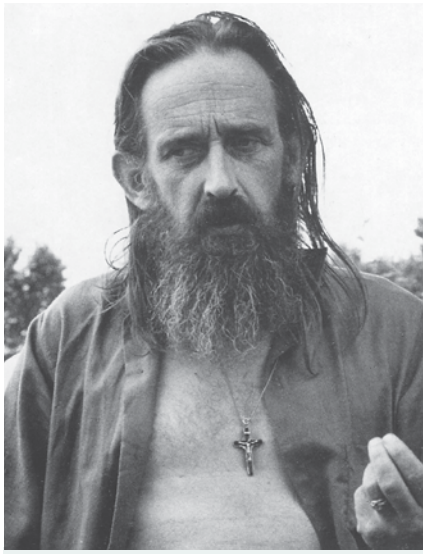
After a good morning tea, John came and sat down with me in the office. Without more ado, we began talking about the unpublished poems, printed on pp 12–13 of this issue.

Were these poems written in the context of the already published* Jerusalem Sonnets*?

"These unpublished poems were written early in Jim's stay at Jerusalem, after returning from Auckland where he was living on his own. He wrote these poems out of desolate isolation, feeling lonely for the absence of friends. And that was always part of his reason to establish community. This came about as a substitute family, and in my understanding, from the isolation he felt as a child in the family he grew up in in Dunedin. He had a loving but remote father, a martyr to the pacifist movement; and a very clever, intellectual, highly educated mother, daughter of Professor Macmillan Brown, to whom he was closely attached. But she was quite unphysical in her demonstration of affection to the children. He received intellectual stimulation, but no hugging or kissing. That wasn't part of the Baxter tradition.

"Jim's brother, Terence, and he were very different kinds of people. They didn't share a close friendship. So Jim felt lonely in the family, lonely as an adolescent and at Kings High School where he was persecuted to a degree as a pacifist. He was the only lad in the school who didn't do military training, but went with the school gardener to the gardens.

"It was from his cleverness and isolation that he wrote poems. They



James *(Hemi)* K Baxter

seem to have been expressions of his feelings and ideas, written as if to a friend. Looking back now, we see that his best poems are overt conversations, like these six poems. A dialogue occurs. The other poems are also dialogues but they are written to unknown friends. He always wrote with someone in mind. Sometimes he dedicated them to a particular person, and sometimes he turned them into a letter-form, diary form. It was the concept of communication within friendship. It was that communication that was the key thing, within friendship.

"And of course, if a poem isn't a communication, it's nothing, because it is a word or words. When Jim read his poems, they became part of his ordinary speech, like a conversation. So it is from that loneliness that was at the heart of his life, through childhood, then through adolescence, through unhappy love affairs, and then through a partly unfulfilled marriage, these various isolations became the impetus to write poems.

"The poems are very connected, though written in isolation, always. But then he needed to fulfill another part of himself and so he would go out and connect with others, in particular people who were different, intellectually too, and who were on the margins in society. It was with these people Jim felt most comfortable. It was important to him that people retain their individuality. One of his criticisms of society was that it oppresses people and reduces their individuality and uniqueness and forces people to act in the same way and be the same, and he was opposed to that.

"And there was always a religious dimension to Jim's life too, always. The very first time that I read his poems as a seminarian, it was with astonishment because there was both a NZ environment encapsulated and transfigured into the poem and also a deep spirituality, though at that stage Baxter had not become a formal Christian. Yet there was this deep spirituality, quite profound, linked with the New Zealandism of the poem. I struck that for the first time in an early poem called *Sea Noon* written when he was about 16."

When did you have first contact with him?

"Well, I was writing poems as a young man myself in the seminary. Like Baxter I had been writing poems since the age of seven. Lots of people write poems, but they do that only sporadically. After I had written a group of them in my early seminary years, I wrote to him in 1959, just after he became a Catholic, and sent

some poems asking him to comment on them. Jim wrote back saying kind things, such as, there was promise there, but I needed to suffer a bit more, and then the true poems would emerge.

"A couple of years later, not sure about the suffering, I sent more poems. This time he accepted that I was a poet. But much more importantly he asked me to write back to him and become his friend. That letter began a lifelong friendship. I sent a poem to him which I wanted to dedicate to him. He wrote back, "Dear John Weir, your poem came to me like water from the dry ground. I have lived so long in the desert that I had thought it would last forever" (In becoming a Catholic he had lost confidence in his non-religious friends, because they were not religious; and yet among all the Catholics he had met since his reception the year before, he hadn't found among them any poet, any writer who knew or understood anything about literature or poetry). And so he missed his non-Catholic friends who knew a great deal about literature and yet didn't know anything about religion and weren't interested. And he believed he could find both of these attributes in me, a seminarian who wrote poetry. And that's what caused him to say I had come like water from dry ground, because it contained these two elements of New Zealand writing and spirituality.

"That's how our contact began. It began a formal correspondence; I have about 100 letters from him, and lots of poems — among the poems this group of poems written from Jerusalem. They are really like letters. In themselves they become the substitute for letters, and are part of ongoing communication. In fact, in some piece of writing, Jim said that all poems are part of the one poem which he wrote, and that one poem was really a letter to God. So all poems are part of the one poem, and the one poem is part of the letter to God. And of course, God is also one of us so we become part of the communication."

Father John Weir SM
[Photo: Cathy Harrison]

This is very clear on the last of our poems, where he writes "You have made this creature in whose breast you burn tonight.

"Yes, exactly — along with

And remember those You permit me to love,
The children who do not know You as their Father.

So it's interaction, the person and the divine, the natural and the divine, the human and the divine."

The idea of suffering comes out here very strongly too.

"Yes. Suffering, of course, can take many forms but it is asceticism in one form or another."

I see here the theology of nothingness.

"Yes, yes, indeed."

I abandon myself completely and I am nothing. It reminds me of Catherine of Siena.

"Or St John of the Cross, who might have been Baxter's special source for that concept. There is a theology of the Cross implicit in his personal theology and implicit here too is a theology of resurrection."

Say more about that. That's important.

"It is very important. But that never became the strong emphasis in Baxter's life or writing, because of the nature of his experience and because of the kinds of people with whom he felt most at home and whom he most wanted to help. Their experience of resurrection was a very dull and glimmering light, and it really was for him too. So his experience of the Cross was much deeper and the dark night was much more profound than his experience of the resurrection. That note keeps coming through."

It's here in these poems.

"Yes, it could be. During 1972, the year that he died, he had an experience of conversion to Pentecostalism or the charismatic movement in the Catholic Church."

This was very early in the history of the charismatic movement in New Zealand?

"Yes, it was. And he told me in about June of that year — he died in October — that he felt that he had been healed. Then he wrote a number of poems, and one book in particular, which expressed this charismatic tradition and concepts and his experience of the charismatic movement.

"After he returned to Wellington and then to Jerusalem, Jim underwent some other experience which removed that joy from his life. And so the last months of his life were unhappy ones where, for me, there is no sign of the resurrection. Indeed, if you read the last poems in the *Collected Poems* (all of which are in chronological order) that sense of dullness will come through until the final poem, the *Ode to Auckland.* This poem is a devastating appraisal and utterly uncharismatic in any sense."

At this point we took a break in the conversation — to be continued in the next! ■

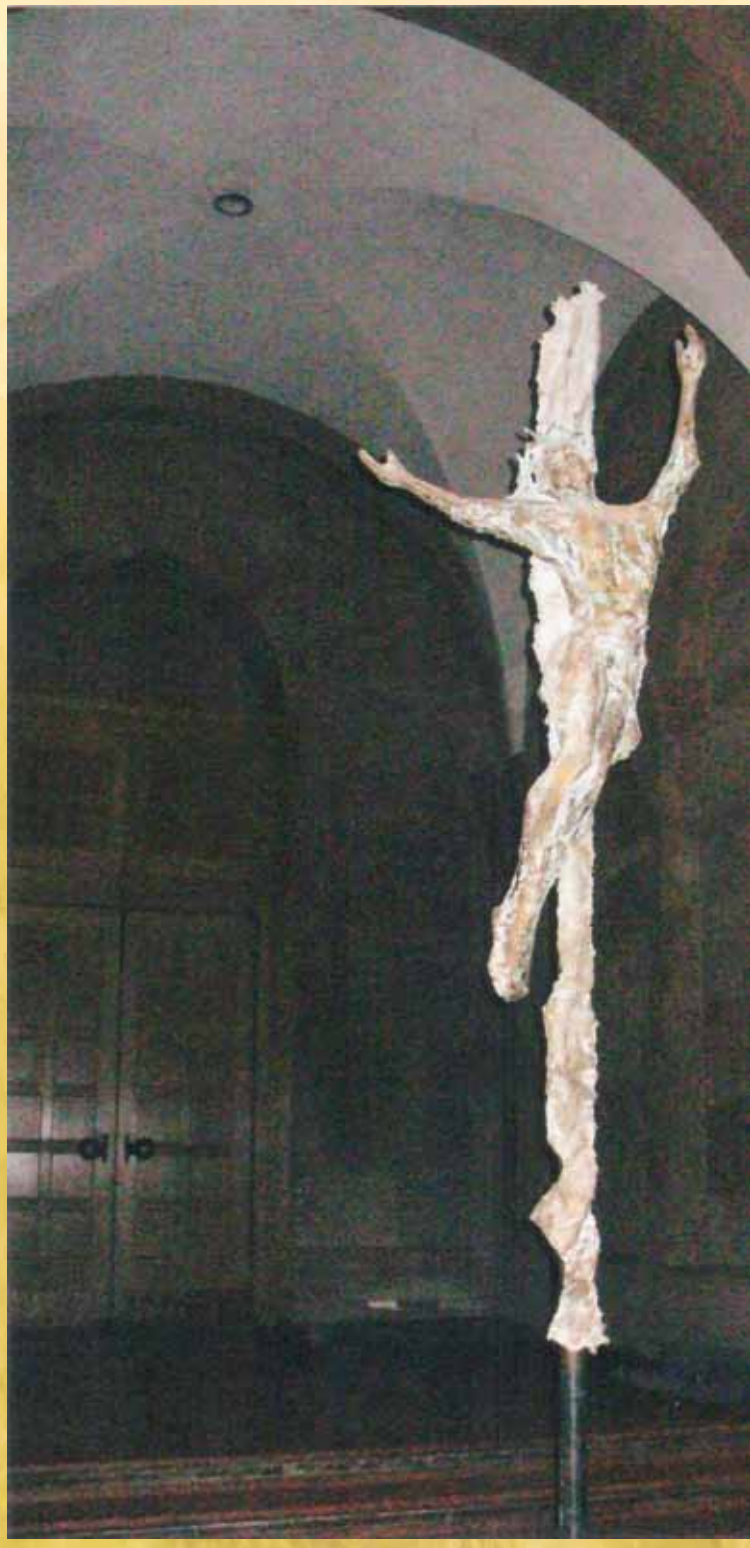
John Weir is a Marist priest who was a close friend and confidante of James K Baxter, and became his editor. Recently he has been preparing for publication Baxter's Complete Prose *and also his* Complete Poems.

THE RESURRECTED

Send forth your spirit

Lord send out your spirit
to hands outstretched
upraised
to receive it
passed hand to hand above heads
in a darkened church
the journey of your cross
amongst your people on Good Friday
their crosses touching yours
mixed, imitated,
accepted
as you take them in your passion
in your death
and your life each Sunday
of our lives
transformed as our hands touched
touch your cross
your life in us
spreading throughout the darkness
on Easter Sunday
on that Easter morning
as the women ran shouting
and we passed the light from the Easter
fire, the flame
heartbeat of community
the mass of light
spreading to the darkest recesses
of minds afraid
then and now
of hearts that yearned
yearn
for you to recreate
our lives
in your passion
and your resurrection

— Joanie Roberson



Sculpture by Karlheinz Oswald, Mainz Cathedral, Germ

CHRIST

any. [Photo: K Toomey OP]

Walk in a damp forest

on a still spring day
glassy waters lie idle
reflecting grey clouds
onto nature's estuary

devastated by quakes
savaged by chain saws
the forest stands adjacent
resilient still
daring to come again
confound the elements

under its canopy
dancing with joy
a carpet of needles
squelches softly underfoot
scenting the air
with divine fragrance

— Jim Consedine

Surrounded in Resurrection

Shell of Cicada
how was it for you
forced from your home
through such a small gap
did you know this was
your destiny
to sing from the
tree tops
announce Summer's surrender
introduce us
to Autumn days?

Holding your empty shell
reminds me
I can do it,
metamorphosis
after metamorphosis.

The Gum tree too
has her story
bark of protection
lies at her feet
her splendid nakedness
a delight to behold

Heat of summer days
required to reveal
the new layers
of your beauty.

— Bridie Southall

missing the point

Modern technology and social networking have fuelled a compulsive "fear of missing out" among many people, especially the young. Only when we discover that our real strength comes from within not without will we be truly free.

Daniel O'Leary

"Please turn back," my passenger said after we had travelled six or seven miles, "I've forgotten my mobile." There was panic in her voice. Even though there was no emergency in her life just then, and we would be back in a few hours, the thought of being phoneless was very distressing. Full-blown "fomo" — the Fear of Missing Out — is one of the most insidious social anxieties of our age.

The word itself made it into the *Oxford English Dictionary* a few months ago. The addictive state of mind it refers to is fuelled by our increasing engagement with modern technologies and social networking sites of all kinds. It is more than a deep desire to keep in touch. It carries a compulsive fear of being left out of the loop in terms of the latest fashions, of gossip and gadgets, of popularity among peers, or of keeping ahead of competition at work.

Extreme fomo, in all its shapes and forms, and at any age, is an exhausting, competitive and obsessive mental and emotional condition that can consume people's energy and seriously affect the quality of their lives. Neuroscientist Baroness Susan Greenfield believes the condition will get worse. In her recent first novel, *2121: a tale from the next century*, she writes, "I think the quality of our existence is threatened — and the kind of people we might be in the future."

There are, currently, an increasing amount of reports and warnings about people's deep fear of losing a sense of themselves, of right relations with others, of getting lost in a compulsive and unreal way of living. Social media is seen as a major contributor to this condition. Last November, the term "internetuse disorder" was added to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the international psychiatric manual.

Especially vulnerable are younger people. Addicted to pocket computers, such as smartphones and tablets, anxious teenagers are constantly monitoring their popularity among their peers, tormented by feelings of inadequacy and doubt. Easy access to pornography fosters this paranoia, offering a distorted image of human bodies and relationships. Unchecked, all of this transparent neurosis can lead to a disastrous loss of privacy, to the torture of being bullied, to self-harm and despair.

For young and old, the use of drugs only compounds the issue. Desperate, stressed out executives are taking performance enhancers in their struggle to stay on top, not to miss out on their competitors' progress. A growing number of businessmen and women, seeking an edge over colleagues and rivals, are taking "smart" drugs to keep them awake and alert, victims of phobias and unbalanced ambition.

Richard Kingdon, co-founder of City Beacon, an addiction clinic for workers in London's Square Mile, whose clients are young City workers, said that such abuse will eventually damage their minds and bodies, leading to depression and thoughts of suicide, and that his clients represent "barely the tip of the iceberg".

In his recent *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis acknowledged the "epochal change" set in motion by the enormous qualitative and quantitative advances occurring in the sciences and in technology. "We are in an age of knowledge and information," he wrote, "which has led to new and often anonymous kinds of power."

He referred to the "diagnostic overload" in which people become desperate. Seduced and confused by "the new idolatry" of a culture of consumption and competition, people lose their sense of direction, of self and, ultimately, of reality. There is a destruction of the human spirit happening, a "process of dehumanisation" inflicted by these silent assassins of the soul. Despite many useful suggestions, why is the situation getting worse?

Essentially, we are here dealing with questions of a spiritual order — a sense of one's identity, of one's origin and destiny. "In the deepest part of me, who really am I?" In a postmodern, post-religion world, there are no easy answers.

Yet no matter how neglected it may be, is there still not some inchoate intimation of a better life in everyone, waiting to be nudged awake, an unconscious, primal memory waiting to be unlocked?

However driven, drained or damaged people may be, is there not always some inner belief in a feeble flicker of a finer self, a moral, mystical seed still alive in the depths of their buried life? Their essence, their DNA, their very being — are they not all somehow quickened by the breath of a mystery we call God?

Deeper than their heart, their most intimate soul, they carry an original beauty and blessing, but their fearful compulsions and desperate drives

keep blocking the hints and traces of that faint but graced awareness.

From that awareness emerges their true identity. It is the treasure hidden in the neglected fields of their souls. No longer trapped in a false persona, it is called "the true self".

This is very different from who they were told they were, and who they think they are. Relentlessly, they are persuaded they will radiate personality, presence and popularity with their peers, once they enhance their appearance, their fashion, their ambition, their success rate.

Nobody tells them they are already chosen and cherished into existence by a primal and loving being; that long before they were born, their names were already written in Heaven.

Christians believe in each one's individual worthiness, their inner dignity, with no overpowering ego-desires for popularity, prestige or profit, no more need for envying, pretending, accessorising and competing so as to get on. All of that belongs to the new idolatry, the old self and a lesser God.

The divine genes in everyone are what names and defines them. Treasured beyond measure, their identity is found in their kinship with God from the very beginning. A key self-identifying moment is when God is no longer perceived as "out there" but inextricably within. They do not look out at God as a separate identity; rather, they look out from the God who is already utterly incarnate in them.

They will no longer have to build, protect or promote any idealised, unreal self-image — what others think of them, whether they are "good enough", popular enough, successful enough. What matters is who they are before themselves and before God. ■

Fr Daniel O'Leary's website is www.djoleary.com
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EASTER CONVICT

Caught by the sound of my own name

A prisoner am I
on the run from Truth
threatening, I claim,
to hold me captive.

What more need I yield?
Where else can I hide
from that look at once
terrifying yet melting
this wayward heart
so obstinate and unlicensed?

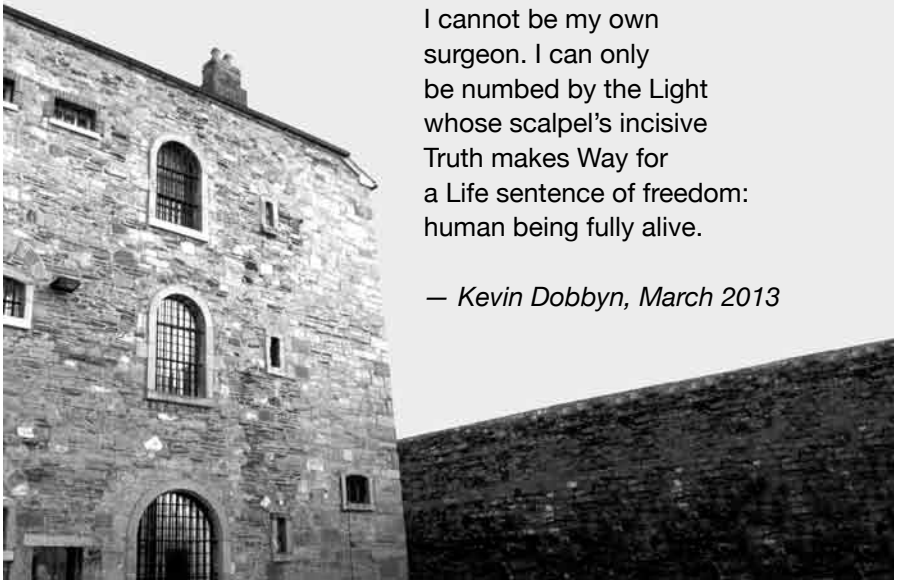
Is this the freedom Truth
brings and sets me free?

This taser-like hit upon
my soul holds, captures
and seizes me surely;
Captive and yet captivated
I run wild and free?

Not yet for I am shackled
still. Not by chains
but by movement and
distraction, my eyes
averting that healing,
searing gaze,
that look of love
that scalpels the depths
of my soul.

I cannot be my own
policeman. I can only
turn myself in:
arrested, my soul's at rest.
I cannot be my own
surgeon. I can only
be numbed by the Light
whose scalpel's incisive
Truth makes Way for
a Life sentence of freedom:
human being fully alive.

— Kevin Dobbyn, March 2013



"if you have faith ..."

The writer reflects on the experience of a sabbatical/renewal time last year: on faith — and on the perennial underpinnings of such adventures: faith, tourism, and money making.

Susan Smith

I became aware of the importance of pilgrimages in the Catholic tradition as a young sister studying English when we were introduced to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, that wonderful collection of stories — exhortatory and ribald — that Chaucer's pilgrims shared as they made their way from Southwark to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. Such pilgrimages were part and parcel of Catholic life before the Protestant Reformation.

pilgrimages before

In the middle ages, people would journey to the Holy Land, a pilgrimage that became more difficult when Palestine was absorbed into the Ottoman Empire. People also journeyed to Rome and other places associated with the Apostles, notably Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Pilgrimages highlight the multifaceted religious and spiritual life of Catholicism in the Middle Ages until the 16th century when the Tridentine reforms introduced a stifling uniformity that sought to suppress that extraordinary diversity that pilgrimages had encouraged.

pilgrimages now

In the 20th and 21st centuries many believers have made or make their way to sites associated with apparitions of Mary — Lourdes, Fatima, Czestochowa, or Medugorje. The Catholic Church's 2013-4 Year of Faith here in New Zealand involved pilgrimages to the Hokianga to celebrate the life and work of the first missionaries. Pilgrimages are about being in touch with an aspect of our Christian heritage that enlivened the faith life of those who make them.

Today pilgrimages are inextricably linked to three realities – faith, tourism, and money-making. Not that these are entirely new phenomena. I recall reading that bishops in the middle ages actively promoted and encouraged pilgrimages to their dioceses. Pilgrimages were and are lucrative operations for the non-pilgrims associated with them. It is a challenge preventing money-making and tourism from obscuring the deeper reality that pilgrimages can mean for the believer.

the more

But pilgrimages often require something. For example, if one is going to walk to Santiago de Compostela, physical fitness emerges as an extremely important part of being a pilgrim. People who made this pilgrimage tell me they averaged up to twenty-six kilometres a day. This type of pilgrimage is not for me! The doubts I had about the Compostela pilgrimage and my ability to make it were confirmed by American spiritual writer Joyce Rupp's 2005 publication, *Walk in a Relaxed Manner: Life Lessons from the Camino.* Rupp probably did not intend that the lasting messages I took from her book were the lack of adequate sleeping, showering and toilet facilities, and the need for such physical preparedness that walking the Camino demanded. I also went to the Hollywood take on the Compostela pilgrimage, *The Way* (2010), and was not wholly convinced about that either.

Pilgrims at Chartres Cathedral

In 2013, I was offered the possibility of two months' sabbatical/renewal time by my community and so discerning what would be best was not so easy. Eventually we planned an itinerary that included joining the Chicago-based Catholic Theological Union's study tour, 'In the Footsteps of Paul', where I visited cities where almost 2,000 years ago Paul proclaimed the good news; Ireland where we stayed at Glendalough, the most important centre of early Irish monasticism and where the hermit priest, St Kevin, emerged as a key figure in its history; and France, where our congregation had come to birth in 1861 in Lyon. In hindsight. I could see that we had planned mini-pilgrimages to places important in our church and congregational histories.

extraordinary faith

What was important for me about our pilgrimage time in Europe? Most significantly I was struck by the extraordinary faith that led people like Paul and his companions to go to the Aeropagus and stand up with a message that was so new and yet at the same time demonstrated such a sensitivity to the beliefs of the Athenians (see Acts 17:22–28), and such a willingness to challenge the commonly held assumptions of Jewish believers. I was amazed too at the faith

Pilgrims at the Byzantine Icons Factory, Kalambaka.

and generosity which inspired people to build monastic cities in Celtic Ireland or great cathedrals and monasteries in France. We had ample opportunity to wander around the ancient monastic city of Glendalough now in ruins, and to visit three or four nearby churches also in ruins. All these buildings were constructed without the technological support taken for granted today. This allowed me to appreciate the faith of our spiritual ancestors who expressed in such a tangible way their belief in a bountiful God.

paris

On to Paris where we visited Sacred Heart Basilica in Montmartre. Construction of the basilica began in 1875 and was finished in 1914. The building, full of African, Asian, American, Oceanic and European tourists when we visited, witnessed to the revival of Catholicism after the persecution of the Revolutionary decades, and the harassment and discrimination experienced by French Catholics in the latter part of the 19th century. It was packed with tourists and also with Mass-goers so that we experienced that meeting of two groups with sometimes converging and sometimes different expectations. Immediately behind the basilica is St Peter of Montmartre church built in the 11th century on the site of an ancient temple dedicated to Mars. When we visited it was remarkably free of tourists, and its Cistercian-like simplicity was in stark contrast to its grand neighbour. As I sat there relishing its relative quiet and solitude, I felt an extraordinary sense of relationship with those who had gone before me.

chartres

From Paris it was but a short train journey to Chartres to visit the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres, now a UNESCO world heritage site. The cathedral was completed in 1250, the fifth church to be built on that site. Four previous churches had been constructed there since the 4th century. Its artistic splendour explains it is a UNESCO heritage site, but that same artistic splendour spoke to me of the loving faith that led to the creation of the wonderful stained glass windows, and the amazing statues and friezes that adorned both the exterior and interior walls. The large congregation gathered for Mass in the crypt again spoke to me of our faith tradition, and our need to celebrate the heritage that is ours.

lyons and taizé

And then on to Lyon where we spent some time in the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, completed in 1476, and again constructed on the site of a more ancient church where St Irenaeus would have gathered with other disciples in the 2nd century. We found, too, the Church of St Nizier another fine example of a Gothic cathedral constructed on the site of an ancient temple honouring the Roman god, Attis. More recently in the 19th century Suzanne Aubert was baptised in the church of St Nizier. Lyon was also where my own congregation was founded in 1861. So it was good to wander around the streets of old Lyon, to know that physically we were following in the footsteps of our sisters, or to pray in the chapel in which they too had prayed the prayer of the Church. I remembered those many sisters who had had made physically demanding journeys in the 19th and early 20th centuries from Lyon to New Zealand, India, the Pacific Islands, Canada, and Vietnam to name but some of the places where Mission Sisters now live and work.

Because Taizé is close to Lyon we went there for our Sunday liturgy. The ecumenical monastery of Taizé was built in 1940, not far from the ruins of the famous monastery at Cluny. The summer season which sees enormous numbers of pilgrims at Taizé was over but still there was a large congregation for a prayerful and simple Eucharistic celebration. The universality and richness of contemporary ecumenical Christianity was obvious.

cherish the tradition

The experience of being in these wonderful cathedrals and monasteries thronged with tourists and fellow Christians from all over the world allowed me to appreciate more deeply what "the communion of saints" means. Visiting these places reminded me that we are part of something much greater than our own particular parish or diocese. We are part of a tradition that stretches back through the centuries, that stretches outwards to all the world's peoples, and that touches us within as we stand in awe at the faith of previous generations. ■

Susan Smith is a biblical scholar, and a Sister of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM) living and working in Whangarei, and teaching in many parts of the world.

dan

*After meeting with Marc (***Tui Motu***, December 2013), I've often wondered about the life experiences of the many homeless people I came across in Europe and the USA. On a snowy winter's day in Chicago, I met up with Dan Suerth. This is his story, spoken in his own words.*

Shaun Davison

Dan Suerth. [photos: Carmel Henry]

"I used to be a union carpenter, but when the recession hit I lost my job. I got another job in a factory but I lost that as well. My girlfriend was a waitress and we had an apartment but after a while we fell behind on the rent and got evicted. She went down to St Louis with our daughter, to live with her mam. I stayed on here, looking for work. I stayed with a friend for a while but when his daughter came to live with them I had to go. I lost everything little by little and then I ended up living under a bridge. That's where I stay now.

"At first I slept on the trains but they kick you off trains when you get to the end of the line. I've been walking around at night, just so tired, looking for a place to sleep. If you come to the train station here and sleep on the bench, the police will move you on. So I found this place under the bridge. People will still come and rummage through my stuff when I'm not there but I don't have anything valuable.

"My parents got divorced and I don't see them any more. I stayed with my uncle but he died of a heart attack five or six years ago. So I haven't really got anyone here.

"They do have homeless shelters and when it's cold they fill up real fast. Those places are for women and children first and then older people, which is fair enough, but I'm pretty much bottom of the list. I'm in my early 30s. I'm the last guy they're gonna give a bed to.

"I made these flyers looking for construction work and I handed out about 200 but not one person called. Even if I can get a job interview, I've still got to figure out how to shower and clean up for it. Once you get to the point I'm at, it's real hard to get back. All you can do is keep trying.

"Another thing about being homeless is that people really take advantage of you. One guy said that he wanted me to paint this house. I said that I'd do it and normally I'd charge say six or seven hundred dollars. But I wanted the money before Christmas to go down to St Louis to see my daughter. So I said that I'd do it for $200. Then when the time came to pay me he said, "I'll pay you next week." And now he doesn't even answer his phone. I was kind of banking on that. That would've given me the money to take the bus down.

"When you're in a situation like I am, people want to pay you the least they can because they know you're desperate. When I was a union carpenter I was getting at least $35 an hour. But now I work for three or four dollars an hour, just to get something to eat.

"It took me a long time before I could get the guts to go ask people for some money. Some people are

real mean to you and that kind of kills your self-esteem. I would say 90 percent of the people just completely ignore you. It's like you don't even exist.

"I've had plenty of days when I've eaten nothing. When it gets real cold, the food is second priority. Getting warm is first. I'd rather be hungry and warm then the other way round. And it does get cold here. It was like minus ten degrees the other day.

"I got arrested by three detectives for panhandling, that's asking for money. I was just asking people for change and they arrested me. They took me to the police station, fingerprinted me and I had to wait there for eight hours before they let me go. Then I had to go to court. If you don't ask for money and just shake a cup — that's okay. But if you actually ask people for money then you can get arrested.

"There are a whole lot of homeless people who have mental illnesses but I'll tell you this funny thing. One day I was so tired, I hadn't slept for 3 to 4 days. I was walking around and I was talking to my buddy when I looked around and he wasn't there. He'd never been there. I had just been talking to myself. After that I'll never look at homeless people that are talking to themselves the same way, because I know I did that. That's what happens when you're sleep deprived. You start imagining things.

"When people say you just gotta get a job I say, "Well give me one. I'd love to work."

"Under the bridge I still keep a bottle of water and I keep my toothbrush. Of the four of us I'm the only one who brushes his teeth and tries to keep clean. I've probably got more teeth in my mouth than all the others put together! And they are always making fun of me when I brush my teeth. They say, "Who are you trying to impress?" But I say I'm just trying to keep my teeth.

"I've seen so many people here who have let themselves go. One guy is his late 50s and I look at him and think, "I don't want to be here when I'm that age."

"There's this one guy that I hang out with and we look out for each other. If I have some money or some food and I see that he doesn't have anything, I'll give him some. I'll share things with him.

"When I graduated high school I joined the carpenters' union right away. I used to hang out with my buddies in the bars all night. I'd go to concerts and football games. I never wanted to get married or nothing but when I met this girl and I had my daughter, I realised that's the sort of life I wanted to have. I'm more of a family type of guy. That's what I want to get back to. I can't give up on that. I know that every day I'm getting further away from it — but that's what's keeping me going. If I give up on that I'm just a guy that's walking around asking for change all day.

"It hasn't been a good experience but you know I've learned from it. I've learnt to appreciate things like a warm place to sleep, some food and just having a little bit of money. When I was making good money, I didn't value money at all. A hundred dollars was nothing but now it's like a million dollars. That's what a millionaire would have.

"Mainly what keeps me going is my daughter Audrey. She's two. I have this picture of her here. She's a daddy's girl. That's why I wanted to go down to see her at Christmas. But now I'll get down for her birthday on January 20th."

Conclusion

Dan showed me a photo of himself with Audrey. Due to an unexpected event, Dan had obtained the money for the bus ride down. We stayed talking about seeing his daughter, avoiding the authorities and appreciating the simple things in life. ■

Shaun Davison is the Director of Religious Studies at Pompallier College, Whangarei, and the author of On a Mission *(Steele Roberts, 2013)*

HOMELESS

On any given night, approximately 656,000 men, women, and children are homeless in the USA.

- 56% are living in shelters and transitional housing, while 44% are unsheltered.
- 59% are single adults and 41% are persons living in families.
- Lack of affordable housing and health care, lack of support services and low-wage jobs are the primary cause of homelessness among families in the United States.

Source: Chicago Coalition for the Homeless website

An estimated 34,000 people, or about one in every 120 New Zealanders, were unable to gain access to housing in 2006. A quarter of these people were children under 15 years, living with their families.

About a third of the adults in our population were working, but still could not get a house for themselves or their family.

http://www.statisphere.govt.nz/further-resources-and-info/official-statistics-research/series/2013.aspx

mr tayer

A short story for Easter

Jean Houston

When I was about 14, I was seized by enormous waves of grief over my parents' breakup. I had read somewhere that running would help dispel anguish, so I began to run to school every day down Park Avenue in New York City. I was a great big overgrown girl (5' 11" by the age of 11) and one day I ran into a rather frail old gentleman in his 70s and knocked the wind out of him. He laughed as I helped him to his feet and asked me in French-accented speech, "Are you planning to run like that for the rest of your life?" "Yes, sir," I replied. "It looks that way."

"Well, Bon Voyage!" he said. "Bon Voyage!" I answered and sped on my way.

About a week later I was walking down Park Avenue with my fox terrier, Champ, and again I met the old gentleman.

"Ah," he greeted me, "my friend the runner, and with a fox terrier. I knew one like that years ago in France. Where are you going?"

"Well, sir," I replied, "I'm taking Champ to Central Park."

"I will go with you," he informed me. "I will take my constitutional."

And thereafter, for about a year or so, the old gentleman and I would meet and walk together often several times a week in Central Park. He had a long French name but asked me to call him by the first part of it, which was "Mr Tayer" as far as I could make out.

The walks were magical and full of delight. Not only did Mr Tayer seem to have absolutely no self-consciousness, but he was always being seized by wonder and astonishment over the simplest things. He was constantly and literally falling into love. I remember one time when he suddenly fell on his knees, his long Gallic nose raking the ground, and exclaimed to me, "Jeanne, Look at the caterpillar. Ahhhh!" I joined him on the ground to see what had evoked so profound a response that he was seized by the essence of caterpillar. "How beautiful it is," he remarked, "this little green being with its wonderful funny little feet. Exquisite! Little furry body, little green feet on the road to metamorphosis." He then regarded me with equal delight. "Jeanne, can you feel yourself to be a caterpillar?"

"Oh yes," I replied with the baleful knowing of a gangly, pimply-faced teenager.

"Then think of your own metamorphosis," he suggested. "What will you be when you become a butterfly, une papillon, eh? What is the butterfly of Jeanne?" (What a great question for a 14 year-old girl!) His long, gothic, comic-tragic face would nod with wonder. "Eh, Jeanne, look at the clouds! God's calligraphy in the sky! All that transforming, moving, changing, dissolving, becoming. Jeanne, become a cloud and become all the forms that ever were."

Or there was the time that Mr Tayer and I leaned into the strong wind that suddenly whipped through Central Park, and he told me, "Jeanne, sniff the wind." I joined him in taking great snorts of wind. "The same wind may once have been sniffed by Jesus Christ (sniff), by Alexander the Great (sniff), by Napoleon (sniff), by Voltaire (sniff), by Marie Antoinette (sniff)!" (There seemed to be a lot of French people in that wind.) "Now sniff this next gust of wind in very deeply for it contains… Jeanne d'Arc! Sniff the wind once sniffed by Jeanne d'Arc. Be filled with the winds of history."

It was wonderful. People of all ages followed us around, laughing — not at us but with us. Old Mr Tayer was truly diaphanous to every moment and being with him was like being in attendance at God's own party, a continuous celebration of life and its mysteries. But mostly Mr Tayer was so full of vital sap and juice that he seemed to flow with everything. Always he saw the interconnections between things — the way that everything in the universe, from fox terriers to tree bark to somebody's red hat, to the mind of God, was related to everything else and was very, very good.

He wasn't merely a great appreciator, engaged by all his senses. He was truly penetrated by the reality that was yearning for him as much as he was yearning for it. He talked to the trees, to the wind, to the rocks as dear friends, as beloved even. "Ah, my friend, the *mica schist* layer, do you remember when …?" And I would swear that the *mica schist* would begin to glitter back. I mean, *mica schist* will do that, but on a cloudy day?! Everything was treated as personal, as sentient, as "thou". And everything that was thou was ensouled with being, and it thou'ed back to him. So when I walked with him, I felt as though a spotlight was following us, bringing radiance and light everywhere. And I was constantly seized by astonishment in the presence of this infinitely beautiful man, who radiated such sweetness, such kindness.

I remember one occasion when he was quietly watching a very old woman watching a young boy play a game. "Madame," he suddenly addressed her. She looked up, surprised that a stranger in Central Park would speak to her. "Madame," he repeated, "why are you so fascinated by what that little boy is doing?" The old woman was startled by the question, but the kindly face of Mr Tayer seemed to allay her fears and evoke her memories. "Well, sir," she replied in an ancient but pensive voice, "the

game that boy is playing is like one I played in this park around 1880, only it's a mite different." We noticed that the boy was listening, so Mr Tayer promptly included him in the conversation. "Young fellow, would you like to learn the game as it was played so many years ago?" "Well… yeah, sure, why not?", the boy replied. And soon the young boy and the old woman were making friends and sharing old and new variations on the game — as unlikely an incident to occur in Central Park as could be imagined.

But perhaps the most extraordinary thing about Mr Tayer was the way that he would suddenly look at you. He looked at you with wonder and astonishment joined to unconditional love joined to a whimsical regarding of you as the cluttered house that hides the holy one. I felt myself primed to the depths by such seeing. I felt evolutionary forces wake up in me by such seeing, every cell and thought and potential palpably changed. I was yeasted, greened, awakened by such seeing, and the defeats and denigrations of adolescence redeemed. I would go home and tell my mother, who was a little skeptical bout my walking with an old man in the park so often, "Mother, I was with my old man again, and when I am with him, I leave my littleness behind." That deeply moved her. You could not be stuck in littleness and be in the radiant field of Mr Tayer.

The last time that I ever saw him was the Thursday before Easter Sunday, 1955. I brought him the shell of a snail. "Ah, escargot," he exclaimed and then proceeded to wax ecstatic for the better part of an hour. Snail shells, and galaxies, and the convolutions in the brain, the whorl of flowers and the meanderings of rivers were taken up into a great hymn to the spiralling evolution of spirit and matter. When he had finished, his voice dropped, and he whispered almost in prayer, "Omega … omega … omega." Finally he looked up and said to me quietly, "Au revoir, Jeanne."

"Au revoir, Mr Tayer," I replied, "I'll meet you at the same time next Tuesday."

For some reason, Champ, my fox terrier, didn't want to budge, and when I pulled him along, he whimpered, looking back at Mr Tayer, his tail between his legs. The following Tuesday I was there waiting where we always met at the corner of Park Avenue and 83rd Street. He didn't come. The following Thursday I waited again. Still he didn't come. The dog looked up at me sadly. For the next eight weeks I continued to wait, but he never came again. It turned out that he had suddenly died that Easter Sunday But I didn't find that out for years.

Some years later, someone handed me a book without a cover which was titled *The Phenomenon of Man*. As I read the book I found it strangely familiar in its concepts. Occasional words and expressions loomed up as echoes from my past. When, later in the book, I came across the concept of the "Omega point" I was certain. I asked to see the jacket of the book, looked at the author's picture, and, of course, recognized him immediately. There was no forgetting or mistaking that face. Mr Tayer was Teilhard de Chardin, the great priest-scientist, poet and mystic, and during that lovely and luminous year I had been meeting him outside the Jesuit rectory of St Ignatius where he was living most of the time. I have often wondered if it was my simplicity and innocence that allowed the fullness of Teilhard's being to be revealed. To me he was never the great priest-palaeontologist Père Teilhard. He was old Mr Tayer. Why did he always come and walk with me every Tuesday and Thursday, even though I'm sure he had better things to do? Was it that in seeing me so completely, he himself could be completely seen at a time when his writings, his work, were proscribed by the Church, when he was not permitted to reach, or even to talk about his ideas? As I later found out, he was undergoing at that time the most excruciating agony that there is - the agony of utter disempowerment and psychological crucifixion. And yet to me he was always so present – whimsical, engaging, empowering. How could that be?

I think it was because Teilhard had what few Church officials had — the power and grace of the Love that passes all understanding. He could write about love being the evolutionary force, the Omega point, that lures the world and ourselves into becoming, because he experienced that love in a piece of rock, in the wag of a dog's tail, in the eyes of a child. He was so in love with everything that he talked in great particularity, even to me as an adolescent, about the desire atoms have for each other, the yearning of molecules, of organisms, of bodies, of planets, of galaxies, all of creation longing for that radiant bonding, for joining, for the deepening of their condition, for becoming more by virtue of yearning for and finding the other.

He knew about the search for the Beloved. His model was Christ. For Teilhard de Chardin, Christ was the Beloved of the soul. Years later, while addressing some Jesuits, a very old Jesuit came up to me. He was a friend of Teilhard's — and he told me how Teilhard used to talk of his encounters in the Park with a girl called Jeanne. ■

Jean Houston, a principal founder of the Human Potential Movement, wrote this story in March 1988.
(Permission to republish this short story has been requested).

death and resurrection of jesus

Matthew 27:45 – 56: Good Friday; and Matthew 28:1 – 10: Easter Sunday 18 – 20 April, 2014

Kathleen Rushton

The gospels are like diamonds with skilfully cut edges which show beauty otherwise hidden. A skilful "cut" in Matthew's gospel repeats that Jesus is "Emmanuel — God-with-us" who assures "where two or three gather in my name I am there in your midst" (18:20). God-with-us is present in the least of his brothers and sisters (25:40, 45) and will be with us to the end of the age (28:20). God-with-us is earthed, one of us. Among earthy fishing and farming folks, he talked of nets, catches, flowers in the field, seeds, sowers and shepherds who, to quote Pope Francis, "know the smell of the sheep." We are to be earthed as disciples taking the good news to all nations (28:18-20).

Yet, in another "cut" Matthew shows that there can be no understanding of the birth of new life, which God-with-us brings, without connection with the total cosmic setting. At his birth, his star was observed rising (2:2). Darkness from noon on, accompanied his dying three hours (27:45). Earthquakes occurred at his death (27:54) and his resurrection (28:2). Even though earthquakes and other startling imagery accompany his return in glory, the emphasis is on birth (24:7-8).

Cosmology, which comes from a word which originally meant beautiful order, is a scientific world-view of the cosmos. Ancient cosmologies held there was a connection between the cosmos and humanity. The Earth was seen as resting place for humanity. Cosmology was linked to a wisdom which led to contemplation as the precursor to ethical action.

three tiered universe

When Jesus died, Matthew tells of three things that happened: 1 "the curtain of the temple was torn in two" (this curtain was a symbol of heaven); 2 "the earth shook"; and 3 "the rocks were split" (27:51). Then, "the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised." The three tiered universe of ancient cosmology (heaven, earth and under the earth) are shaken. This total cosmic setting shows the significance and the meaning of Jesus' death. Death is not about escaping or withdrawing from the world. Death has meaning in connection with the heavens, the earth and the deep.

Ninth Century Ivory Crucifixion Plaque from Metz

Similarly, at the resurrection of Jesus there was another earthquake (28:2). The tomb, the Earth and an angel of the Lord descending from heaven suggest that the universe is linked also with new life. There is, also, no understanding of the significance of the resurrection of Jesus without its total cosmic setting. The Earth is emphasised for there is no ascension account in Matthew. God-with-us continues to with be the disciples saying: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (28:18). Earth, as well as heaven, is the focus of the authority given to Jesus whose death and resurrection are unified in the context of creation.

the metz ivory crucifixion

The Church's Liturgical Year centres on the Easter Triduum. The Paschal Mystery which is celebrated then, and is at the heart of daily Christian life, is conveyed in the tiny ninth century Metz Ivory Crucifixion Plaque which was a book cover. The holes once had precious gold studs. It is one of many similar works in which symbols and figures associated with the classical culture of the old Roman Empire are set within a Christian culture. In what seems cluttered to the present day viewer, the crucified Jesus is shown in the cosmic setting of a three tiered universe.

The top section is the heavens. In its centre are two circular plaques of a personified sun and moon. Scriptural references are recalled: the greater and lesser lights of the Genesis creation story; the sun and moon praising God (Ps 148:3); and darkening (Joel 2:10). On either side, two angels reach down to receive the spirit of Jesus.

In the middle section, below the arms of the cross, *ecclesia*, the figure of the Church receives the blood from the side of Christ, symbolising the Eucharist. On the other side, another figure, synagogue, holding a banner looks up in awe. The familiar figures of John and the mother of Jesus are on either side. At the foot of the cross, are a soldier with the lance and another with a sponge. The dead come out of two circular burial chambers. Curled around the foot of the cross and symbolising Jesus' cosmic conquest of evil is the snake. Below are the symbolic figures of Water riding a sea monster and Earth clutching two of her children. Greenery comes from her hand. Leaves and flowers border the whole scene.

What the artist(s) celebrated is the universal, cosmic centrality of the crucified Christ. All creation is evoked. Every aspect looks towards the figure on the cross. Sun, moon and angels look down. In the middle section, Church and Synagogue, the living and the dead look towards him. The head of evil is under the cross. In the third section, Earth with her children and Water look up. Even the head of the monster of the deep is raised. Everything, seen and unseen, in the heavens and on the earth, the living and the dead, looks toward Christ and gazes on him.

imaging death–resurrection today

How might the Paschal Mystery be imaged in 21st century evolutionary cosmology? For Benedict XVI, Jesus' resurrection "was like an explosion of light, an explosion of love ... It ushered in a new dimension of being ... It is a qualitative leap in the history of "evolution" and of life in general towards a new future life, towards a new world which, starting from Christ, already continuously permeates this world of ours, transforms it and draws it to itself." (April 15, 2006, Easter Vigil Homily). Ilia Delio concludes, "The risen Christ is the inner power of this evolutionary universe that impels us to go forward into a greater unity of love." It would seem timely to appeal to artists in Aotearoa New Zealand, those recognised and those aspiring such as youngsters in schools, to celebrate in our context, as did the Metz artists, that everything, seen and unseen, in the galaxies and on the earth, the living and the dead looks towards and gazes on the crucified-risen Jesus. Perhaps an Aotearoa New Zealand version of Blake Prize (Australia) would encourage dialogue between art and religion cosmologically inspiring wisdom, leading to contemplation as the precursor for ethical ecological action. In the meantime, next time you are doodling, how would you show this? ■

Kathleen Rushton is a Sister of Mercy working in adult education in the Diocese of Christchurch.

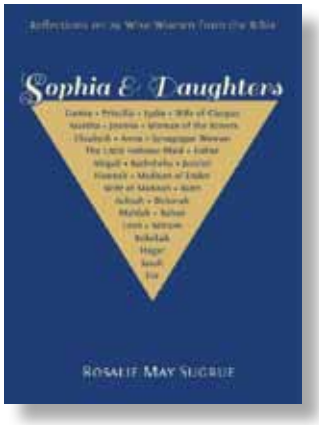
evocative stories

Book: Sophia and Daughters

By Rosalie May Sugrue

Steele Roberts
ISBN: 9781927242308, NZ$30-00

Reviewer: Sr Madeline McAleese OP



Shirley Murray, in a comment on this book, says: "Rosalie Sugrue's imagination, insight and teaching skills enliven this material". This is eminently true. In *Tui Motu* (Feb 14, pp16-17) Mary Horn's art shows the strength and holiness that can be seen in wise women of the present day. Rosalie Sugrue does the same with the wise women of the Bible, from both testaments. Her telling of their stories and the history of their times with imagination and compassion makes them come alive. Some may be mentioned by name as with Mary, wife of Clopas or Priscilla, wife of Aquila; others have no name at all as in "The Little Jewish Maid" (Naaman's servant girl). But the stories woven about them make them real people.

The stories are told in language that is easy to read, even for children. You can read one story at a time or more if your fancy takes you. The use of "pet'" names Like "Abie" (Sarah's name for Abraham) or "Zech" (Elizabeth's anme for Zechariah) is an endearing touch. They give us an insight into the lives of women of their time and may change our thinking from women who are repressed by their male counterparts to women who are in control of their own destiny.

The sources of the stories are well documented so that after reading Rosalie's story you can take up your Bible and read from the source. So the story of the Jewish Maid comes from 2 Kg 5.

The stories, however, are only part of the work. There are also poems; prayers for worship; prayers of intercession; dialogues which could be used for dramatic productions; blessings for various occasions; reflections on creation, on aging, on the simple pleasures of life. The list seems endless.

For those who follow the Church liturgical cycle, there are themes to be used at various times. Palm Sunday has the words used in the shape of palms. The Eucharist is evoked in the shape of a chalice. And for those who wish to raise their voices in song, there are references to appropriate hymns from our New Zealand "With One Voice" hymn book.

This a small book. But an enormous amount of work and thought has been put into its production. With imagination and sensitivity it provides an insight into the wise women who have played an important part in our history and who are sometimes almost forgotten or unknown. ■

accuracy with

Book: The Vatican Diaries

By John Thavis

Penguin Books Ltd
ISBN: 9780241967416

Reviewer: Bishop Charles Drennan

Journalists claiming to be experts generally leave me skeptical. And those claiming inside knowledge of the Vatican ... yeah right.

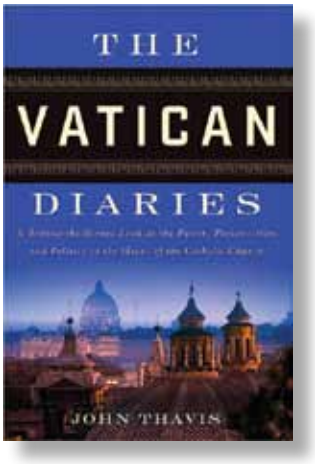
John Thavis' *The Vatican Diaries* however is exceptional. It is gripping without being nauseatingly so and it is free of the hyper-analysis that afflicts so many would-be experts.

Thavis is a Vaticanista of thirty-plus years' experience. Clearly he knows the Vatican journalists' den inside out and his claims to informative friendships among the sea of Monsignori who are the majority group churning out the work of the Vatican are no doubt true. Thavis is well informed and knowledgeable.

What I find most edifying with this book is that his description and analysis of life in Vatville is free of sensationalism. It is telling — he shies from no tough topic — yet it is measured. He leaves space for the reader to do his or her own thinking, having briefed us with just the right quota of detail.

Thavis picks seven main topics (a lesser author would have tried to squeeze out more) and in keeping with his central thesis, presents them through the humanity of the key players. It is the weaknesses and strengths of human character that draw the reader to the text. Rather than merely observing a pantomime or tragicomedy, we cringe in parts and nod in others at the actions of the protagonists.

insight



The Legionaries of Christ, the Society of St Pius the X, Pope Pius XII, Aids, archaeological digs, and the black sheep of the Secretariat of State are all given ample airing. The account of Pius XII's work with the Jews and the analysis of Pope Benedict XVI's dealings with the Pius X leadership are particularly illuminating. His description of Foster, a Carmelite Friar, nicknamed the *idraulico* (plumber, because of his blue "suit"), world's greatest living Latinist, infamous denizen of the Secretariat of State, alcoholic and proud, will have you gasping or laughing aloud. It's all true!

Weaker points? I felt the book didn't take off until chapter three after, ironically, a long description of a papal flight. While I didn't agree with it all I willingly recommend it as a worthwhile read. Indeed, much matches accuracy with insight. *The Vatican Diaries* was published early in 2013. At one point Thavis says "virtually nothing happens in the Apostolic Palace unscripted or without traditional form". Francis, it seems, will furnish a different diary. ■

chronicle of injustice

Film: 12 Years a Slave

Director: Steve McQueen

Reviewer: Paul Sorrell

This unflinchingly realistic depiction of Solomon Northup's 12 years spent as a slave in Louisiana in the 1840s and 1850s is based on a book he wrote about his experiences. A century later, his memoir was plucked from obscurity by local historian Sue Eakin, who devoted her life to proving wrong the bookseller who handed a copy across the counter with the words "It's nothing but a pack of lies".

A talented musician living a free life in Saratoga, New York, with his wife and children, Solomon is drugged by a pair of con men and smuggled by paddle steamer to America's Deep South. There, under the slave name of Platt, he undergoes 12 years of unrelenting brutality, degradation and humiliation at the hands of a series of slave owners. Warned that any reference to his true identity and status as a free man, or the fact that he can read and write, will lead to his death, Solomon learns that he must guard every thought and action if he is to survive. Forced to act as "dumb niggers", slaves reinforce their owners' perception that blacks are an inferior race.

The film's depiction of slavery is relentlessly unsentimental. A group being sold is treated like cattle, made to strip naked and have their bodies inspected. They are forced to put up with all kinds of mistreatment without any hope of redress, sexually abused and subject to vicious floggings at their owner's whim. Time and again, slaves pay a heavy price for jealousies and conflict among their masters. Challenged about his treatment of his workers, Solomon's erratic and violent master, Edwin Epps, snarls: "I can do whatever I like with these people — I own them." So oppressive is this catalogue of abuse that we long for even a momentary escape. A brief scene showing caterpillars feeding on cotton bolls — a plague for which his slaves are absurdly blamed by Epps — comes as a visual and emotional oasis.

The film raises a whole raft of urgent moral issues. How could an ostensibly Christian society justify this institutionalised inhumanity? The cruel Epps uses the Bible to justify flogging and, while Solomon's first master, the kindly Mr Ford, preaches to his workers from Scripture with something approaching Christian conviction, he is still a "slaver". The film's most subversive character is an outsider — a jobbing builder from Canada who states his belief that laws are one thing, moral absolutes another. This leads the thoughtful viewer to consider modern forms of slavery, from sex tourism to the garment sweatshops of Asia. Or, in wider terms still, the injustice of a world built on an economic and political system where the many labour with little reward to enrich the privileged few. Food for thought, indeed. ■

Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

new life . . . and ice cream

A recent *NZ Herald* report describes how a local entrepreneur is building a business aimed at helping unemployed young people to start their own ice-cream enterprises. 12-metre-long shipping containers with an area of 29 square metres are converted into mini-factories by a local firm. Multiple rooms are built into the container, allowing for temperature variations of 40 degrees between them.

There are currently four of these "factories" operating in Auckland, with another five more planned to open throughout the country this year. The co-founder, James Coddington, said the portable factories would provide increased product consistency when the company launches overseas in countries where youth unemployment is a problem. Some possibilities are Spain, Portugal, Argentina, South Africa and Kenya. And, of course, as they are housed in shipping containers, exporting the factories is simplified.

. . . and radical surgery

Vatican financial matters have not hitherto been seen as reflections of the new life we celebrate at Easter. Tales of incompetence and intrigue have been common for years. This situation has arisen mainly because of the general Italian culture which, lacking a history of the professional, neutral public administration we are used to, meant leaders had to rely on personal connections. This engendered patronage, jealousy, cronyism and corruption.

Several popes have tried to overcome this culture and many excellent priests and bishops have worked assiduously in spite of the background, but the old culture remained. However, little resurrections occur from time to time.

Pope Francis has brought to a conclusion the formation of a radical approach regarding financial affairs begun by Benedict XVI, with the establishment of a new Department as recommended by his special advisory group of eight cardinals.

The "Secretariat for the Economy" has as its head (Prefect) Cardinal George Pell, who will report directly to the Pope. No more situations where intermediaries can dress up the truth. This is radical surgery.

Francis has named Maltese Mgr Alfred Xuereb as its secretary general. He has been personal secretary to Pope Francis since the early days of his pontificate. The Secretariat will be run by lay people who are yet to be selected.

The Secretariat for the Economy will implement policies determined by a new Council for the Economy – eight Cardinals/ Bishops, and seven lay experts with strong professional financial experience, all from various parts of the world. The Council will meet on a regular basis, consider policies and practices, and prepare and analyze reports on the economic-administrative activities of the Holy See. In addition, the Pope will appoint an Auditor-General who will be empowered to conduct audits of any agency of the Holy See and Vatican City State at any time. "The aim is to manage the Church's resources as best as possible so that some can also be allocated to the poor," Cardinal Pell said. "This new body will oversee all of the economic and administrative activities of the Holy See and the Vatican City State. It will also be in charge of setting an annual budget, financial planning, and offering support in the form of human resources and procurement, as well as putting together a detailed balance sheet. It will control the financial activities of the individual departments, starting with the spending review. There will be a check on revenue and expenses every three months."

. . . and women's role

Pope Francis asked Cardinal Walter Kasper, one of his favoured theologians, to give the main address on the family to the recent meeting of cardinals. In a subsequent press interview Kasper made some radical suggestions regarding the role of women in the Church.

"Women's role in the Church should be rethought and integrated into the Pope's ideas for greater synodal dynamism and a missionary conversion: women should be offered leadership roles within the pontifical councils (minor Vatican departments) and in the future Congregation for the Laity … The intuition which the female mind has to offer is a vital resource … There is a high concentration of bishops in the Curia today," the cardinal noted. "Many are bureaucrats and this is not good. Bishops are (supposed to be) pastors."

Regarding Congregations (major departments) he said, "Although the boundaries of authority remain clear, a woman can still be present in decision-making processes and can easily carry out the role of under-secretary … even under the current canon laws some things can be done … The criterion for choosing the candidates should be competence and spirit of service. Naturally, women can also be driven by the desire to build careers for themselves, just as men are."

"A Church without women is a mutilated Church," he said. "There are so many of them actively involved in Church bodies. Can we imagine community, charity and cultural centres today with no women? Without them, parishes would close down tomorrow. Women are already ahead and out there in a Church like Francis', one that is 'going out'." ■

graciousness

Peter Norris

Every Sunday in St Margaret's College, a variety of guests talk to students. The number of students participating has increased from 12, when we first started, to about 80, and the shape of the room holds it at that. By the time this is publsihed, we will have the Archbishop of York as our guest. The fact that he is Primate of the Church of England and a Member of the House of Lords is irrelevant to the students. The fact that the regime in his home country of Uganda tried to execute him for treason when, as a civil judge he found someone guilty of a crime, captures their imagination. The students are intrigued that someone got him released on a technicality, and while the government was fixing their paperwork, friends smuggled him to England, where he eventually studied for the priesthood and ended up as Archbishop of York. Our students do not know anything about the Archbishopric of York, the politics of the Anglican church, or Reformation history. They were, however, very interested in the story of someone who triumphed over injustice.

Its looks to me like we are being told something by a new generation. We are concerned with structures and positions but the students are not. I know that many people are trying to get the Archbishop to visit them, to speak to them and pray in public, when he is really here for a break. By accident I ended up sitting next to the Archbishop for two meals when he visited New Plymouth for the consecration of the Anglican cathedral some years ago. He was actually a fun conversationalist and invited me to stay if I was ever in York. I passed through the next year and, besides arranging some tours, he kindly offered a room and ended up cooking a sumptuous meal for the four people in the house. It struck me how this simple yet well educated man enjoyed being a host. He loved cooking and this was a concrete way of exercising hospitality.

Over the years I have been associated with a variety of church leaders from various denominations and have heard them talk about ecumenism. They have very good arguments and convincing language but the only thing that really makes any difference is their hospitality and their graciousness to one another.

I have seen people become friends not because of logic but because of mutual appreciation. Oddly enough the next step after people start to appreciate one another is to listen to one another. I saw this myself with the two Archbishops, Philip Richardson and David Moxon. They are lovely, gracious people with great senses of humour. The same can be said of Archbishop John Dew and some of our other bishops. It is amazing how good humour replaces logic and argumentation in bringing people closer to one another.

We probably need to have our appropriate formal groups but we should remember that they are not essential for church unity. They may help us if we want to be closer, but innate graciousness will help more. The more I read about the current Pope, and some of his appointments, the more I realise that he is really a conservative. Yet, at the same time, I read of his graciousness and the lack of pretence in his daily life. The graciousness and lack of pretence will call not only Catholics but people of other and no denomination to holiness. ■

Father Peter Norris is the Master of St Margaret's College, on the campus of the University of Otago in Dunedin.

a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

"I am feeling uncomfortable. I tap on my new laptop, looking out the window of a high-up aeroplane. Thousands of metres below is the real world of rocky soils, floors needing cleaning, kids with homework … I haven't encountered an international airport for over a year and I'm reeling from my rite of passage from home to this high and privileged perch. The huge air-travel industry with its hefty carbon footprint feels particularly offensive to me today. The worst of it is that I am in no position to rant or shake my fist — my own air ticket purchase gives cash votes to an industry which fume by fume continues to push up global CO_2 levels and underline global inequalities. Burrowing through the airport aisles of perfumes, liqueurs and make-up, blinking in the glare of chrome and shiny marble feels impossibly distant from the gritty afternoon I spent last week sitting in a house with no electricity and a dirt floor, listening to Lata:

"So then after the birth of my eldest son, I really was too unwell to work in our fields or even to do the usual housework. We went to two different doctors and they said we had to get a CT scan. To pay for that scan we had to sell one of our small fields and also borrow some money for the treatment. But the medicines helped a little bit and my husband said to me and our other children, 'What use is land to us if the mother of my children is only able to lie on the bed?' Now I am much better and it is good that we could get some treatment to help."

"So have you been able to pay back all those loans? It must have been quite a stressful time for you all?"

"No, it has taken us eight years to pay back Rs20,000 (NZD400) which was half of the amount. The interest is Rs5 per RS100 borrowed each month (annual interest therefore a whopping 60 percent) so we are only able to pay that most months. We are hoping to pay off the last Rs20,000 (NZD400) in the next two or three years so we can save up some money for my daughter's wedding."

So back up in my high-up perch I remember Lata, and I am squirming. Again.

My conscience was assaulted less often when I lived with oceans of separation between me and people with far far less. In New Zealand I didn't have to butt my eyeballs against facts as glaring as the fact that the sum I just spent on this new laptop would relieve Lata's family from oppressive interest payments and an eight year debt. This debt I remind myself is because India has the most privatised health system in the world — and the structural and policy forces from "developed" countries that have been pushing an agenda of privatisation which ensures Lata and others cannot access good, affordable primary health care.

So do I remind myself not to drop in on Lata and her neighbours again? (Real flesh stories and relationships are harder to ignore than aid agency tales on a glossy brochure). Can I flee from the uncomfortable face-offs with gross injustice and inequality? Do I go home and talk about Lata and her situation with my children and husband and see if collectively we have ideas on how we could respond? Do I reflect aloud about my angst in *Tui Motu* and then carry on with my busy life?

I don't know to be honest. But there are things I must do:

Keep sitting and listening to Lata's story and the stories of many others.

Keep making friends with people in low places.

Keep my heart soft.

Bear witness. ■

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