Tui Motu

InterIslands

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The challenge of youth

the challenge of youth

The challenge of youth is a double-edged sword. It is a challenge for the young to grow up enjoying their maturing from a carefree time of adolescence to the responsibilities of adulthood. At the same time, the direct challenge is to us adults: to model the path, a good straight furrow that ploughs deep into fertile soil and produces abundantly and well.

So when, as often, I hear people bemoaning the shortcomings of youth, the question is not how can we 'fix' them? No, the question is always: what and where are our shortcomings? How are we helping our young to maturity? To name just two pressing matters: youth binge drinking is an adult problem. The question of youth violence is a challenge to us — not just to social welfare agencies and the police.

And for the churches, how can we find ways of developing communities of faith for young people? Communities that will be spiritually nourishing and ever outwardly focused — in the service of the poor and marginalised towards a more just and peaceful world. In New Zealand, we have a number of such communities. To name just three: Urban Vision, Challenge 2000 and Logos Marist Youth Development project. These have worked hard to put the gospel into practice in ways that attract young people. In the struggle to do that, they have achieved much.

Arguably the most serious problem facing New Zealand is the way in which our current economic system has fierce consequences for youth. If the general rate of unemployment is 6.8 percent, that for youth is much higher: 17.1 percent for 15-24 years-olds as at March 2012 (Labour Dept fact sheet).

It is the task of government to do all in its power to ensure that there are sufficient training programmes and apprenticeships. At the same time it has the obligation to structure the economy in such a way that productive employment can be maintained for the future and for the common good of all, especially the young. It is disheartening to learn that 40,000 jobs have disappeared from the manufacturing sector in the last four years. As Jane Higgins puts it so well in her article on the spirituality of the young of the neo-liberal generation, "the model New Zealander is the self-responsible citizen-worker, able to support him/herself in financial independence", and our young are being sold this misleading message. If they fail it's their own fault. And yet they yearn rightly for meaningful work, and fair pay.

Helen Kelly sets out well the lack of safeguards within our system to allow for a fair wage bargaining system, and speaks of 'the ideology of Austerity' set up to maintain the present system. Here are urgent ongoing challenges for government and all political parties.

Among the many other goodies in this edition, I enjoyed Jim Elliston's vignette of good Pope John through the eyes of a 97 year old Archbishop; and Robert Consedine's wry comment on papal infallibility.

Read well, and may your reading savour your spirit. ■

KT

contents

This month's cover photo by Michael Fitzsimons. Back row: L-R: Peter Gasologa, Kotuku Riwaka, Heath Hutton. Front row: L-R: Thérèse Kyne, Lezza Moananu, Shona Kuvarji.

a moment of dialogue

Rabbi Adi Cohen.
[Photo: courtesy Otago Daily Times]

On 3 September, the ninth annual peace lecture entitled 'Words, concepts, deeds. Peace as a way of living', sponsored by the Dunedin Abrahamic Interfaith Group and the University of Otago Chaplaincy, was held. It was given by Rabbi Adi Cohen of Temple Sinai, the Wellington Progressive Jewish Congregation. In his lecture, Rabbi Cohen spoke of people of different faiths reclaiming their common humanity as a precursor to being able to talk to one another. Deepening understanding between different faiths starts with respectful talk between individuals, so as to recognise their shared humanity.

At the end of the lecture, questions were invited. One of these sparked the following dialogue between Mrs Mai Tamimi, a doctoral student at the Otago University, and Rabbi Cohen.

Mai Tamimi:
"Rabbi, in your lecture you were talking about making changes, and you were referring to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I am here in front of you, a Palestinian living in New Zealand. I talk to you, we can talk to each other. I have Jewish friends. We go to one another's places and we enjoy time together. We are human beings. What sort of change, that small change you were talking about, can happen, so we can work together to make the change bigger?"

Adi Cohen:
"Sadly enough, I am an Israeli standing in front of you. We are in New Zealand. I don't know why this cannot occur in the Middle East or in Israel. One of the reasons we are here, my family and I, is because my wife and myself — I am an officer in the Israeli Army, a search and rescue officer — didn't want our kids to grow up to be soldiers and to have this ethos that the army needs to protect us from Arabs — that Muslims are the enemy. I am here in New Zealand. You are here in New Zealand for a similar reason. So maybe this is where the dialogue should start, not in the Middle East. Maybe we need a third party that will say, 'Enough is enough. If you can't handle the crisis, we are going to make it for you.' Unfortunately the only body that can do this is the biggest supplier of weapons to the Middle East.

"I don't know. It's not a black and white question. We're talking. Yesterday I was sitting in a Syrian restaurant with a Pakistani friend drinking Turkish coffee and we asked ourselves, 'Why can't we do this any other place than New Zealand?'

"I don't know. I don't have a good answer. Maybe we need to detach ourselves from our natural environment in order to appreciate each other, and once again to recognize the value of each other as humans — and leave the land, the ground, the soil aside. Maybe we need to remind ourselves that what is important is the fact we can live together." ■

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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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the bicycle wheel

"A wobble-free wheel spinning smoothly is a beautiful visual metaphor for inclusion." (Kaaren Mathias, *TM* October)

I thought that is exactly what the council fathers were thinking of when they called us 'the people of God'. While the Bishops were to be the spokes connecting us to the Pope. Unfortunately some people in Rome are loosening the spokes so that the 'wobble-free wheel spinning smoothly' is only a dream.

Let us hope the Holy Spirit has a spanner to tighten things, so everything will soon run smoothly.

Brian Kelly, *Levin*

'hope is the thing with feathers' ?

As with Jo Ayers and Pat Snedden (October issue) where children stand in relation to the Church is of concern to families of which I am aware, including my own.

Vatican II's Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (Chapter 3, The Family)states:

'To attain the ends of their apostolate more easily it can be of advantage for families to organise themselves into groups'.

A suggestion then, so we can hear the tune being sung in the souls of others:

Substitute the word 'households' for 'families' and support efforts at diocesan level to enable priests together with their pastoral councils to

1. facilitate the grouping of households, and
2. find ways to ensure each purpose-driven group of households is offered a house-Eucharist several times per annum.

Criteria for entitlement might include a minimum of three households and/or twelve eligible communicants who agree to meet at least twice between each house-Eucharist.

Of course ramifications for priests would be considerable. Those parishioners privileged to avail themselves of daily Mass *et cetera* might also need to adapt.

Workaday Catholics though, taught, led and encouraged to practise discernment could, given the opportunity, become closer to God.

Among other things they, together with the priest, could become better equipped, more effective than the current regime, in reaching out to those whose spiritual needs/desires might be known only to them, or their group.

Terry Gooding, *Whangaparoa*

a lament for the church

The last few issues of *Tui Motu* have read as a lament in the prophetic sense of the word, in the footsteps of Jeremiah.

My heart goes out to the loyal people in the institutional Catholic church who are grieving the oppressive edicts from Rome on liturgical language and the range of other restrictions and abuses of power. At a recent meeting with Australian spiritual directors I heard that there is the same pain and frustration across that country as there is here. The Holy Spirit's work leads us to a freer expression of our relationship with the Divine. So many are feeling this leading, this invitation! What is it that holds intelligent people in thrall to oppression by the institution? What is it that is more important than travelling the Way with integrity? The Holy One is bigger than the institution, bigger than Christianity.

The Kairos Document, drawn up by a large inter-denominational group of theologians in apartheid-dominated South Africa, offers a prophetic theology. They say it is sin "to persuade those of us who are oppressed to accept our oppression". And "… like Jesus we must expose this false peace." And as disciples "we should promote truth and justice and life at all costs, even at the cost of creating conflict, disunity and dissension along the way…"

So I pray that the prophetic courage shown by writers and by *Tui Motu* will strengthen and bear fruit in change, that those who feel oppressed will claim their freedom to worship as they must, in confidence that the Love which draws them will bless their steps.

Trish McBride, *Wellington*

☞ 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.

hope ahead

Marilyn Elliston (*TM*, Sept 12) seems to take a very narrow view of the sacrament of Holy Orders. We have to accept that deacons functioned in the early Catholic Church (Phil 1:1) and my own patron, St Francis, was a permanent deacon, preaching at Mass. The Holy Spirit caused the Fathers of Vatican II to re-introduce the permanent diaconate for married and celibate men, a significant development. I have read that there are over 10,000 deacons in the USA, but only the dioceses of Hamilton and Auckland have them in New Zealand.

Marilyn should surely see that clerical celibacy is a law only in the Western church. In the near future, the Holy Spirit may well inspire the introduction of priestly ordination of permanent deacons aged over 40 who have completed a two-year theology course. Not all might wish to proceed further, but most would. Then those dioceses which have permanent deacons would be like the wise virgins who brought extra oil to the wedding feast of the Lamb — thousands of new priests would become available in the course of a few years. Areas such as South and Central America, where the ratio of priests is now one for 6000 Catholics, would have a doubling of Sunday masses for the faithful. I am convinced that this will happen in my own lifetime — and I am 78!

Derek Blackburn, *Pakuranga*

who owns the water?

Mike Riddell

The notion that anyone can own water is pretty stupid. Water moves; it flows; it seeps. It evaporates into the air, it falls as rain, it streams from mountain to coast without a thought of what borders it may be crossing. It's the staple of life — without water we die.

How can anyone possess it, claim it as their own? It seems to defy reason. Surely water comes as the gift of God, or through the generosity of Gaia? No partisan group can claim it as their own, any more than they can claim the earth as their possession. And yet they do: claim the earth as their possession, that is.

We draw lines across the landscape, divide it into squares, and hawk the pieces on the market. None of us think it preposterous that we should own 'a chunk of dirt'. Land is clearly a tradable commodity, and one that in the history of humanity has built many fortunes.

It is deeply ironic that Pākehā should now be protesting the ridiculous notion of owning water, when it was European colonization that introduced the concept of legal land ownership to Māori. The very arguments used against the commercialisation of *te wai* are those that might have been mocked by *tangata whenua* in an earlier age.

In 1879 Te Whiti's followers began following the surveyors who were parceling up confiscated Taranaki land. They created chaos by removing survey pegs, building fences across proposed roads, and ploughing up land allocated to settlers. It was a creative use of non-violent tactics to poke fun at the very notion that lines on paper might define land.

When we come to the commodification of water, the process has already started. As many have observed, most of us pay water rates, and the allocation of water rights in rural areas is a highly legislated game. While local authorities might protest that their charges are for infrastructure rather than the water itself, that is of small comfort to consumers who feel they are paying for the stuff that comes from their taps.

The recent discussion over water has become highly politicized, with John Key's declaration that 'no one owns water'. It can only be assumed that the Japanese fishing industry welcomed the news, and made immediate plans to exploit what were formerly New Zealand's territorial waters.

Māori have been castigated as being money-grubbing and devious because of their assertion of rights over the waterways. This is ludicrous given that the Treaty of Waitangi specifically grants to Māori 'full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates, Forests, Fisheries and other properties'.

They therefore have a valid stake in the exploitation of such resources for a commercial purpose — a practice that the various power generating companies have enjoyed for many years. The Waitangi Tribunal has rightly called for a halt to the asset sales programme as far as it involves the permanent alienation of resources that may be subject to Treaty claims.

But the debate raises a much deeper question in relation to how the natural world is regarded. The very term 'natural resources' implies that the ecoscape is something available for commercial exploitation. It has no value in and of itself other than its potential to produce profits for 'owners'.

This attitude harks back to the approach taken by European settlers in their initial encounters with Aotearoa. The majority regarded the 'bush' as an eyesore and hopelessly untamed. They were disappointed to find that what had been promised as farmland (i.e. able to be exploited for an income), was overgrown with unproductive flora.

So they began a programme of land clearance that was enthusiastic and violent. We've all seen those grainy photos of stalwart colonists standing beside their Victorian cottages against a backdrop of bare land populated with the odd tree stump, still smoking from the burn-off. The scene resembles a miniature holocaust.

By contrast, land is for Māori *whenua*: a living and life-giving entity that demands respect and relationship. It is the source of the people's life, and also part of the ongoing story of those who live from it. The same attitude is extended to the entire natural world, which has a sacrality that resists casual exploitation.

The question 'who owns the water?' thus becomes one of the notion of ownership itself. Is it possible to possess that which predates and outlives our own existence? The more correct question, as John Key and all politicians know, is 'who controls the water?'

With important asset sales on the agenda once again, that is a question well worth asking. ■

Mike Riddell is a writer, theologian and film-maker living in Cambridge.

‘who are you going to be?’

The writer looks at the spirituality of the young adults of the post-1984 generation. She seeks to find what makes the young people who grew up in the neo-liberal context of the 1980s and the 1990s tick: their uncertainties; their possibilities, and above all their need for a deep meaning.

Jane Higgins

Young people get a lot of bad press. They have, we’re told, an unearned sense of entitlement, a poor work ethic and an unwillingness to take responsibility or to consider consequences. They are, in short, a problem. But consider this:

It does feel really like as soon as you come out of school, it’s, you know, ‘what are you going to do?’ Rather than ‘who are you going to be?’ and ‘how are you going to live your life?’ it’s ‘what are you going to do?’ I think that focus is something I’d advise against, yeah.

The speaker was a participant in a research project funded by the Royal Society of New Zealand in which I was a project leader. We were exploring how young people belonging to the post-1984 generation were navigating their transitions from school.

project focus

We talked with about 100 young people from around the country over a two-three year period. We were interested in how these young people, who had grown up in the context of the economic and social reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, were approaching their post-school lives. Had the neo-liberalism of those years shaped the way they saw themselves, their relationships with family, peers, educators and employers, their plans for the future? Had it influenced their spirituality?

What we found, not surprisingly, was diversity and complexity. But we also found some common themes running through their talk. Two of these are encapsulated in the extract cited above.

> Against the ‘spirituality’ of the neoliberal age that equates worth with employment, we have this: ‘Who are you going to be?’ and ‘How are you going to live your life?’ These are deeply spiritual questions.

older generation’s concerns

The ‘what are you going to do’ question is perhaps the most-asked question of teenagers. One of the reasons for this is that we — parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers — are anxious for them. We want to know they are heading in a direction that will give them security in the future. Often this takes the form of trying to pin down a particular job for them.

One of the research findings from the project was that by the end of participants’ first year out of school, it was common for plans to have changed and for pathways to be taking unexpected directions. The young people themselves often reported feeling fine about this — it was their parents who were anxious. That’s one reason to rethink or rephrase the ‘what are you going to do’ question. It doesn’t necessarily help someone who’s exploring an uncertain and complex world.

think again

But another reason to rethink this question is that it contains a prevailing assumption about how we measure worth, namely, by the job we’re paid to do. This is a long-standing assumption but I suggest that it has been given added emphasis since 1984: the model New Zealander is the self-responsible citizen-worker, able to support him/herself in financial independence.

The young people in our study understood this very well indeed. In fact, the single most common assumption made by young people that I have come across in a range of research projects in recent years is this one: ‘it’s all just down to me.’

personal success/failure

Again and again, young people have explained to me that if they work hard enough, they are sure that they will succeed in whatever they set out to do, and conversely, if they fail it will be their own fault. This individualising

impulse was a central message of the economic and social reforms, and continues to lie at the heart of much public discussion.

This message has been accompanied by promises: 'get the right qualification (usually a university qualification) and a high paying job is yours'; 'work hard and you'll succeed in whatever you set out to do'. The young people I have spoken with in recent years set great store by these promises. We can't blame them for this confidence: they've been told these things over and over again.

not expert economists

But, and this is a big 'but': they don't have a clear idea about how the labour market or the economy works. They don't understand that in New Zealand the supply of qualified workers hasn't driven demand for qualified workers, or that people who work extremely hard can lose their jobs. As young people move along their chosen pathways into adulthood, particularly in the context of the on-going global financial crisis, what will they make of the individualising impulse that tells them it's their fault if they don't fulfill their dreams?

Let's return to the quotation above. Against the 'spirituality' of the neoliberal age that equates worth with employment, we have this: 'Who are you going to be?' and 'How are you going to live your life?' These are deeply spiritual questions.

a place to think?

When we lament the absence of young people from our congregations, let's ask ourselves whether they encounter in church an opportunity to think seriously about these questions. Here's my take on this: they aren't looking for rules to answer these questions, they aren't looking for right and wrong answers, and they certainly aren't looking to be told that certain areas of life and faith can't even be discussed. Young people are looking for meaning.

Jane Higgins

Often in the course of the research they told us that they dreamed of a future in which they found happiness in family, friends and relationships, and work that was meaningful: this meant work that they were interested in, that was fun, and that made a difference in other people's lives.

let's live alongside

If there appear to be contradictions here with the neoliberal impulse towards individualisation and the importance of making money, there are. Our research participants were adept at struggling — and playing — with contradictions and complexity. They know they live in a confusing and uncertain world and that this isn't going to change. We found that they worked hard to make meaning from this and that there was a lot of wisdom in what they told us.

So let's listen, even (or especially) when it makes us anxious, let's walk alongside, let's trust that they have a great deal to contribute to the big questions. 'Who are you going to be?' 'How are you going to live your life?' ■

Jane Higgins is senior research fellow at Lincoln University, and the writer of an award-winning novel for young adults, 'The Bridge.'

The research behind this article is taken from Karen Nairn, Jane Higgins and Judith Sligo Children of Rogernomics: a neoliberal generation leaves school *(Otago University Press, 2012)*

empathy in action

Armed with a psychology degree and a compulsion to help the disadvantaged, Heath Hutton works with many different types of young people, including young offenders. Heath talks with Michael Fitzsimons about what motivates him.

New Zealand's adult criminal justice system is not working — we have the second highest rate of imprisonment in the Western world and two-thirds of people who do time in prison reoffend.

"It's a system that takes away offenders' dignity and their sense of hope for the future. Some fresh thinking and a big dose of empathy are urgently required," says youth worker, Heath Hutton.

"A lack of empathy stops us from understanding and thinking about why people do what they do. I think a lot of people in society are suffering a lot themselves, including those who are doing very well materially, and that stops them thinking deeply about others. I have a lot of friends who are doing very well materially, but have a real poverty of spirit and belief."

Heath is employed by Challenge 2000, an innovative youth development and community agency in Wellington. His role includes coordinating a Supported Bail Programme for young offenders.

"The Supported Bail Programme is an intensive six-week programme for young people who offend. We come on board when they're arrested, at their bail hearing, and try to keep them in the community. We give them fairly intense wrap-around support.

"We're often involved after that, too, through other programmes like mentoring and court-supervised camps. At Challenge, it is a real struggle to marry our philosophy of working with young people and never really dropping them, with the reality of being a Charitable Trust that relies on applying for funding and our own fundraising efforts to ensure we can continue to support young people and families in the community."

In New Zealand, the youth justice system (which deals with people under the age of 17) is exploring options other than imprisonment to address the needs of young offenders in a constructive way, such as alcohol rehabilitation, therapeutic interventions, parenting education and mentoring. That's where organisations such as Challenge 2000 come in.

> "If I'd had as few opportunities as many of the young people I meet, there's every chance I'd be in the same position they are."

Heath's interest in the justice system led him to get involved with Justspeak, a forum for young people to have a say on criminal justice matters.

"Justspeak is a community of young people who are interested in learning more about justice issues, speaking up and trying to make change in our justice system," says Heath. "We're non-political and non-religious. We're trying to harness a lot of those things young people at their best can have: hope, passion and creativity. We believe that overall the criminal justice system isn't working — too few people are being rehabilitated.

"At a wider level, it's a societal problem. People see criminals as being very different from themselves. They believe that actions are the responsibility of the individual, and that everyone can do well if they try hard enough. I think that choices and opportunities make life a lot easier for certain people, though, and there's a lack of empathy and understanding in the general population."

Heath doesn't look at youth crime through rose-tinted glasses. Experience has taught him that rehabilitation of young offenders is no walk in the park.

"I do accept that it can be really, really hard to work with young offenders who've had a terrible background and a terrible life. I've had the experience of trying to help someone live a different life, and I know it's very difficult. But you don't want to get too pessimistic.

"My deepest motivation is the belief that everyone is worth something, everyone has the ability to be a great person. My personal experience in life is that certain opportunities I was given made me a better person. If I'd had as few opportunities as many of the young people I meet, there's every chance I'd be in the same position they are."

Heath was raised in a fairly affluent family in a well-to-do suburb in Wellington. He believes affluence has its problems too.

"One of my big things growing up was seeing all the white picket fences around me, belonging to

Heath Hutton (at left) with a group of trainee youth workers at Challenge 2000.

seemingly very functional people, who had lovely lives. But inside there was a lot of unhappiness and pain. I often got frustrated by that disconnect and sense of falseness. I've always been very inquisitive, I've always sought understanding."

Heath went to college at St Patrick's College, Wellington, which played an important role in his development.

"St Pat's exposed me to lots of different people from different backgrounds. The spirit of that school was huge. It was always reinforced to seek deeper understanding and pursue Marist values, like justice. You don't always receive that message in a school environment, but at least it's being put out there."

Heath has been involved with Challenge 2000 since he did a confirmation programme at the age of 14. Over the years he has helped with Church youth ministry and volunteered for many Challenge initiatives. With its strong spiritual and community values, and grassroots social outreach, Challenge has been very influential in his life.

After school he studied psychology and law (which he dropped after three years), and worked at Challenge part-time as a youth worker.

"I finished my psych degree in 2009. Then I did some case management work in Sydney for an organisation called Marist Youth Care. That was where I got far more interested in the social work side of things. I'm not a qualified social worker, I'm a youth worker, but I do social work quite often. I plan to do my Masters in social work."

In addition to his work with young offenders, Heath also coordinates a Gap Year at Challenge — a grassroots alternative to the overseas option — for people coming out of school. It focuses on personal development, youth work training and includes a big emphasis on spiritual development.

Heath is a committed Catholic but has "strong difficulties" with the current model of Church, which he sees as lacking a sense of genuine community.

"I see different ways of 'being church'. I'm very hopeful about the church community that exists around Challenge for example, because it's very integrated into our lives. We probably wouldn't even call it church, even though it is. It's very like the communities of the early disciples.

"We're trying to follow the example of Jesus, to be counter-cultural and to serve. I don't think the current model of church will exist for much longer, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing. I think the Catholic community will survive, but it'll look different. The church is the people, and I think we focus far too much on the building and the Sunday service."

For the foreseeable future, Heath is keeping his attention on the people who aren't getting a fair go, who don't experience many opportunities in life.

"There's an enormous amount of suffering out there which compels me to act. I try to follow the teaching of St Francis: 'Preach the Gospel and if necessary use words.'" ■

young and catholic

The writer has recently completed a doctorate devoted to the lives and thought of young Pākehā Catholics: what now makes them tick, and where do they see the path of faith in their lives. Here Chris gives us an overview of his conclusions, interspiced with some of their thinking.

Chris Duthie-Jung

It has been hard to miss the significant decline in the number of young people participating in Sunday Mass in NZ over the last two decades. Despite earnest, if often fragmented, efforts to address this situation the on-going reduction in young Catholic presence in local parish communities has continued unrelentingly. This is particularly so among young New Zealanders of European descent, our 'Pakeha' young people. With this in mind it was the religious identity of a sample of Gen Y (18–28 years old) Catholics that I set out to study in my recent doctoral research exploring the extent to which these young people identified with a traditional Catholic worldview and how they may have reshaped Catholic faith in their own lives.

Chris Duthie-Jung

spiritual boom or bust?

One school of thought emergent from contemporary studies of spirituality among Gen Y indicates that the level of interest in spirituality is as high today as it has ever been. Australians Gary Bouma and David Tacey separately reach this conclusion identifying religious decline as an experience of the traditional churches rather than any real loss of spiritual interest among the young. Bouma believes that it is Pentecostalism that is best positioned to benefit from the changes we are seeing while Tacey asserts that what the young find simply incredible today is not spirituality but the dogged defence of an outdated worldview by the institutional churches. He goes further in asserting that, when this worldview is put aside, what is discovered among the general population is an interest in spirituality that has never been greater.

> "When I think of God I think of him as … um, he's a … him and me, like he's very personally mine but he, you know, everyone else has their own God, like their own one to look after them. He is out there."
> – *Hannah*.

But others disagree, finding in their studies varying degrees of what we might call the 'dilution of religiosity'. In the USA, Smith and Denton identified the now well known notion of Moral Therapeutic Deism — a de facto system of transcendent belief that they found prevalent among their study's young participants. Its generalised creed centres on belief in a God who somewhat distantly watches over human life on earth, while expecting people to be 'good, nice, and fair' to one another. Closer to home, Mason, Singleton and Webber largely concur, finding that only about 41 percent of Gen Y Australians really engaged with spirituality and just 17 percent with any form of Christianity.

Whether spirituality is on the up, sliding or holding steady, the impact on traditional religious behaviour seems undeniably negative.

> "… there's four sacraments right? (Interviewer: Seven.) Seven! Okay, see I'm not very good on that. But there's four in the Mass — there must be because that's what the priest told us …?" – *Frankie.*

a catholic worldview

My own qualitative research in New Zealand involved a geographically spread, gender-balanced sample including a range of Catholic young people from the keenly involved to the disconnected. Key among the findings was an overwhelming religious illiteracy, i.e. having significant difficulty describing or explaining the Church, sacraments, salvation, ecclesial roles, etc. More positively, the participants generally did recognise that Catholicism is characterised by the 'sacramental' and their responses indicated an inherent sense of the grace-filled nature of the God-human relationship, of human nature itself, and of the world in general. But awareness of the importance of sacrament did not run to any significant knowledge of the seven official sacraments nor any substantial understanding of everyday sacramentality.

A surprising number of otherwise

well-educated young Catholics felt that there was a substantial unresolved tension between faith and science. Many thought that Catholic faith still required literal belief in a seven-day-creation while for others ethical problems were rightly identified as the big challenge in the scientific enterprise today. While almost all were comfortable with a concept of mystery at the heart of faith, it appeared that a clash between this mystery and their own upbringing in an evidence-based scientific culture led to an ongoing tension.

Salvation was a seemingly impenetrable concept to most participants and, when asked what it meant to them, 'being saved from hell' was the common reflex answer beyond which many struggled to go. With regard to 'sin', while one or two objected to the very idea, most could explain a balanced concept of wrongdoing though this remained initially very individual-focussed. When pressed however, the importance for Catholics of issues of social justice (ecology, life issues, sexual morality and poverty) was well recognised. Finally all participants agreed that gathering as community was essential for Christians, an assertion that paradoxically posed little problem for the majority of my interviewees who themselves participated only irregularly or not at all. Overwhelmingly, the participants were proud and pleased to self-identify as Catholic, an identity that appeared, however, to have much more to do with cultural affiliation to school and home than with any currently active association to Christian community.

> "Being Catholic …was almost … was a way of life really. Just, Catholicism was … has been and always will be a part of it really."
> – *Robert*.

catholic identity

You may remember Andrew Greeley's 1976 concept of 'communal Catholics' — those who identify with Catholicism, enjoy being Catholic, but participate minimally, hold low expectations of the Church and do not take Church teaching and guidance seriously. Although at first this appears to be an accurate description of what almost all of the research is finding among Gen Y today, deeper analysis suggests that the term is in fact becoming less applicable to a younger generation who decreasingly experience the church as a distinct community and cultural tradition of which they are a part. Rather than being 'communal Catholics' themselves, they are the children of 'communal Catholics' and almost every indicator points to far less Catholic connection and commitment than their parents.

As my research confirmed, their knowledge of the language and symbolism of the tradition is relatively sparse — as is their experience of Catholicism as a tight-knit culture system. Although they share with Greeley's 'communal Catholics' a remarkable belief in the uniqueness of Catholicism, they struggle to articulate any grounds for this uniqueness. While they may desire to remain identified as Catholic they are less and less sure what it actually means to be so. The sense of uniqueness of Catholic identity felt among young adults appears to be more related to assertions such as, 'I can't imagine being anything else!' than with any sense of institutional Catholicism having a unique role in salvation history.

secularity

Rather than viewing institutional church decline as the harbinger of the end of religion, Canadian philosopher and secularization specialist Charles Taylor sees the present era as an 'age of authenticity' in which people have become focussed on identifying and realizing their own individual humanity. External and older models are strongly resisted and society-wide individualism is manifest in the consumer revolution within which there is a deliberate targeting of the young. Raised to believe in the importance of their own self-directed journey, the young judge the place of religion and spirituality in their lives on the same consumer criteria as everything else. Active involvement in church life is usually found undesirable and simply unnecessary.

> "But I do believe in God and I've sort of like just carved my own little religion sort of … I just do my own thing but still talk to God." – *Dave.*

As the research shows, one can taper off one's involvement while maintaining the conviction (at least initially) that such commitment is not really essential to being Christian or Catholic. God becomes the somewhat distant figure of Moral Therapeutic Deism and Catholicism becomes (in Dean Hoge's words) "a cultural tool kit of symbolic religion (&) spiritual wares from which it is possible to construct a personal religious identity." This conviction that today one must craft one's own religious identity appears to be part of the DNA of the young Catholic. It is certainly evident in my own research as illustrated in the way more traditional Catholic indicators (devotions, sacramental participation, and even attendance) give way to a more detached Catholicism of childhood and educational memories coupled with occasional visitation. It would appear that Gen Y Catholics in New Zealand still do willingly embrace a Catholic identity but it is an increasingly customized version. ■

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Readers who wish to obtain a PDF copy of the author's doctoral thesis entitled: *Faith Amid Secularity - A Critical Exploration of Catholic Religious Identity among Young Adult Pakeha Catholics in Aotearoa New Zealand*, should send an email request to **c.duthie-jung@tci.ac.nz**

forgotten prophet – rutherford waddell

Rutherford Waddell was the subject of a day-long seminar, entitled 'The Sin of Cheapness' in Dunedin on 28 August, run by the University of Otago Centre for Theology and Public Issues. Many who came (like the author) had never heard of this man before attending. He is one of New Zealand's neglected heroes.

Michael Hill

Rutherford Waddell was born in Ballyroney, County Down in Northern Ireland, between 1850 and 1852, the son of a Presbyterian minister. He studied at Queen's University, Belfast and afterwards prepared for the ministry at the Presbyterian Theological College. In 1877 he came to New Zealand, and after a couple of placements in Canterbury he was appointed in 1879 to St Andrew's parish in Dunedin, where he served as pastor for 40 years.

St Andrew's started as a missionary offshoot of the well-established First Church and Knox parishes. It served that area of the city south of the city centre. At first, services were held in the open, then in a tent. Even when the first chapel was built, an early photograph shows that much of the hillside behind the church was covered with tents. It was a very poor part of the city. Not until 1872 when the parish was 10 years old could it afford to pay for the services of a minister.

Dunedin was growing rapidly through immigration, mostly from Scotland, Ireland and Australia. Its prosperity was fed by the gold boom and also through the rapidly developing clothing industry supplied by Central Otago and Southland wool. Although the congregation at St Andrew's was socially mixed, a thriving tram network brought people from across the city, especially after the arrival of the eloquent and fiery young preacher, Rutherford Waddell. His congregation therefore always included rich and influential folk from upper High Street, as well as the local poor families.

Waddell soon established a reputation as an 'advanced' thinker. Retired University church historian Peter Matheson describes him as a true prophet, steeped in Biblical scholarship and in literature, especially poetry; with a pragmatic concern for the interface of wealth and poverty — the profile of his congregation; and with an analytical and critical mind.

In Europe, Christian Socialism was in the air. William Morris in England, Robert Owen in Scotland and Saint-Simon in France were provoking Christian churches to challenge capitalist orthodoxy.

> It is a lamentable fact that such an outstanding contributor to the early development of New Zealand has been largely forgotten. Most contemporary histories simply ignore him.

Waddell was also possibly influenced by Thomas Chalmers' Free Church vision of the 'godly commonwealth' that made room for working people and treated them fairly. Waddell was a voracious reader and scholar — Matheson describes him as a kind of 'Kim Hill in a dog collar' — he saw himself as a conduit for all this accumulated wisdom. In his sermons he used Biblical stories and parallels as means to promote the progress of society in a Christian direction.

social reformer

During the 1880s after he had been a decade in the parish, a severe economic depression hit the country. Employers reacted by making economies. One of these was to cut wages. Waddell became appalled by the plight of the poor working women in his parish. The wages of the seamstresses had been reduced to below subsistence. In the spring of 1888, he preached a famous sermon — on the Sin of Cheapness. Unfortunately the text has been lost, but at the time it created a sensation.

His campaign to improve the lot of the workers was soon taken up by the local press. The editor and chief reporter of the *Otago Daily Times* became his allies, and the data they published began to sway public opinion. Waddell raised these issues with the local Presbyterian Synod, where he quoted a local trades unionist as accusing the capitalist employers of "praying for their workers on a Sunday and preying on them for the rest of the week." Many of his fellow ministers voted to support his campaign against sweated labour.

But he was strongly opposed by some of the well-to-do employers in Dunedin. One honourable exception was the Jew, Bendix Hallenstein, founder of the clothing dynasty. Politicians in Wellington took up the cause, especially John Ballance, Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader from 1890 until his death in 1893. A Royal Commission was set up in 1890 to investigate sweatshops across the colony, and Waddell was invited to be a member. But many leading politicians opposed the movement on the grounds that the freedom of the market was sacrosanct and wages must be allowed to attain their natural level.

However, in 1891 far reaching legislation was passed which regulated

hours of work, set a minimum wage and created an Arbitration Court. Meanwhile Waddell was determined that the seamstresses should have their own voice, so he founded the Tailoresses Union, of which he became the honorary President. It was the first female Trades Union in New Zealand.

Another social cause he took up at this time was temperance. Insobriety was just as common in Dunedin as in the industrial cities of Britain. Here he worked closely with the local Salvation Army. The first Catholic Bishop of Dunedin, Bishop Moran, was a fellow campaigner. Another was the Rev William Ready, founder of the nearby Methodist Central Mission, who ridiculed what he termed 'the divine right of brewers': this sally was aimed at the Licensed Victuallers' Association.

At the grassroots of the temperance movement were ordinary working women, whose menfolk often drank a high proportion of their wage before their spouses could lay their hands on it. The momentum of this joint campaign was such that by 1893 the Women's Suffrage Bill was passed by Parliament, so that New Zealand became the first country in the world to give women the vote. The great campaigner for this was Kate Sheppard, supported in Dunedin by Catherine Fulton and Rachel Reynolds of the St Andrew's congregation. One of Waddell's great strengths was his ability to work with and alongside a wide range of people, not least women.

waddell as educator

Waddell was also greatly influenced by poetry and Victorian English literature. He often quoted it and gave lectures to his parishioners on its great themes. One of his favourites was George Eliot, whose high moral tone appealed to him although it worried him that Eliot should have lost her Christian faith. For him, moral integrity demands a strong faith. He firmly believed that good reading helped to enhance the Christian faith of his people.

Rutherford Waddell. [Photo: Presbyterian Archives]

He was influential in founding many literary societies throughout Otago and Southland. He wrote a regular column in the weekly *Star* newspaper. In 1894 he founded and was first editor of Outlook, the official weekly paper of the Presbyterian Church. He also started a debating society in the parish, and encouraged debating throughout the province.

Among his other activities were the launch of the Free Kindergarten Association and the founding of the Prison Reform Association. He continued to labour as an advocate of the Temperance movement. He strongly supported a campaign to introduce Bible study in schools, in opposition to the official secularism of the state educational system. For all these achievements he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Divinity by the Theological College of Belfast in 1897.

Professor Matheson summed up his assessment of this extraordinary character in this way. Waddell loved and respected his people: they were for him the 'poetry of God'. He proclaimed that the road to salvation would always be a struggle. He thought the churches of his time were more diligent in proclaiming Christian truth than in keeping it.

He saw Jesus Christ as the greatest master of the human heart. Christ was a warrior, and Waddell's vision of Christ could be apocalyptic. He maintained that society exists for people, not for business. This made him a thorn in the flesh of his wealthy fellow citizens. Yet his sound theology and pastoral zeal won over many contemporaries.

It is a lamentable fact that such an outstanding contributor to the early development of New Zealand has been largely forgotten. Most contemporary histories simply ignore him. Matheson sees this as an indictment on the mores of contemporary society. In Waddell's day most people were at least nominally Christian. They subscribed to the Ten Commandments and to the basic teachings of Christianity. Therefore Waddell had some common ground to appeal to — something largely lost in contemporary secularist society.

In bringing Rutherford Waddell to the attention of the people of Dunedin, the Centre for Theology and Public Issues has rendered a singular service, supported as it was by the University of Otago Theology and History departments. It has helped restore Rutherford Waddell to the consciousness of the people of Dunedin. Let others take note. ■

Father Michael Hill is the editor emeritus of Tui Motu, presently writing a biography of Blessed Antonio Rosmini, founder of the Institute of Charity to which Michael belongs.

where have all the voices gone?

At the recent seminar on 'The Sin of Cheapness', Helen Kelly, the president of the New Zealand Council of Trades Unions, gave the keynote address. We abridge that here. Her's is a strong voice, committed to the cause of workers and their rights. What would Rutherford Waddell be fighting against today? Why? What are the dominant options in play? Where to now for unions and unionists?

Helen Kelly

What would the visionary Presbyterian minister reformer, Rutherford Waddell, focus on today if he were preaching about the condition of workers and work in NZ? Helen posed this question, and focused on two major situations: the the casualisation of labour and other insecure forms of work mainly through contracting out of labour; and ongoing attempts to get rid of collective bargaining.

"It is true to say that for many, many workers in this country, working life is extremely hard and terms and conditions are in the decline … Over 300,000 workers earn on or near the minimum wage, and those growing numbers of contracted workers are able to be paid even less than the minimums … Two out of five children now living in hardship are in families where at least one adult worker is in full time work.

"Work has to make a greater economic and social contribution than that and it is not a deal that anyone I know has signed up to. It has crept up with the deregulation of the labour market in the 1990s and in particular the treatment of employment as simply a commercial transaction. It is the workers' version of leaky homes without the outrage!"

ports of auckland dispute

Helen focused on the Ports of Auckland recent standoff as an example where decent working conditions are under attack as privileged — "as dreaming, as unrealistic."

"The Port of Auckland planned to replace its workforce with contract labour. It would still roster this new labour, train it, allocate it and effectively dismiss this new labour by retaining the right to refuse entry to the Port of any worker not in its favour, or by changing contractors.

"It was seeking a predetermined agreement with any contracting company on the terms and conditions of employment they entered into with any employees.

"The Port however would not be the legal employer. It would not be directly responsible for enforcement of health and safety or for things like any unpaid wages. All good faith obligations could be removed, any demands for better terms and conditions would not be made to the Port and by splitting the workforce into three competing contracting units — the ultimate hope was that the union would also be removed from the Port.

> The story being run is that working people are beneficiaries of work; that employers are benefactors who provide jobs by way of charity.

Anytime workers sought better terms they would risk their employer losing the contract to supply labour to the Port in favour of someone cheaper.

"It was a ruse to reduce the cost of labour and to transfer money from the workers' pay packets to the contractors' and the Port's pockets, a model that would allow the Port to dominate its workforce. A modern sweatshop model."

Because of the massive union campaign, the port was forced to go on the defensive and seek public support for its plans — it did so by attempting to create an image of an undeserving workforce…

"The Wharfies changed the narrative from overpaid, lazy wharfies who had it coming, to a story about decent working people trying to hang on to a family life. It took effort and a counterintuitive campaign to that which the Port expected. It expected ships stopped all over the country, manufacturing close downs, little Mary's christening dress to be stuck in a container on a wharf. It got families talking about their work, their kids, their life already hugely influenced from working in a 24/7 industry with few limits on when they had to be available. And Aucklanders got it. They stood up — they turned up in their droves — 7000 marching in support of these 300 working people: ministers, priests, rugby league stars, actors, iwi, community leaders, even some major leaders of business who broke with the employer organisations' line and supported these workers. People saw the story and like Rutherford Waddell spoke out in solidarity.

"So how do these employers … politicians and others think they can get away with this type of behaviour? They do so within a dominant narrative about work, working people and those that run business.

Helen Kelly [Photo courtesy of NZCTU]

workers are beneficiaries

"The story being run is that working people are beneficiaries of work; that employers are benefactors who provide jobs by way of charity — that workers should be grateful to have that job, grateful to the employer, not challenge anything, not ask for decent pay and that Government should do all it can to support those charities because in the end the beneficiaries need them as well.

Helen also spoke about the furore that surrounded the making of the film *the Hobbit*, and the Pike River mine disaster as two further examples of the 'work as charity' model. For the first, "… the actors, simply seeking to negotiate collective minimum terms and conditions, were depicted as uppity ungrateful beneficiaries of those jobs, that were biting the hand that was going to feed them. Warners was depicted as the slighted benefactor."

The change of the law which the Government undertook "… removed permanently any reciprocity inherent in an employment relationship and now these major film corporations are free to receive the labour of NZ workers to make their films without any responding employment obligations. These performers were simply asking to bargain — an international human right exercised by all the international actors on the film."

Helen says that in a climate where work is a charity, public servants such as teachers and police will be the next workers to be targeted.

new worker legislation

Soon "… the Government intends to introduce new legislation to make working life even harder. In particular it is targeting workers starting new jobs and public sector bargaining. Government's own Cabinet papers boast that the changes will enable reductions in wages and reduce options for public sector collective bargaining. The paper acknowledges that almost every proposed change increases the power of corporations as employers and reduces work rights including breaching New Zealand's international obligations.

"Attacks on the public sector are a long term ideological plan. The ideology of austerity is here for the next 20-30 years unless something gets in its way — it is not a one hit wonder. It is not short term pain."

no backups for fair distribution of wages

"So how did we get in this pickle? … New Zealand is one of a small group of OECD countries that don't have a fair distribution system for wages and where workers are not involved in some way in a discussion about work, its purpose and how the economy and work are interlinked. Further, …wages in this country have steadily declined since the industrial regulations system was dismantled … it's a cold hard fact ...

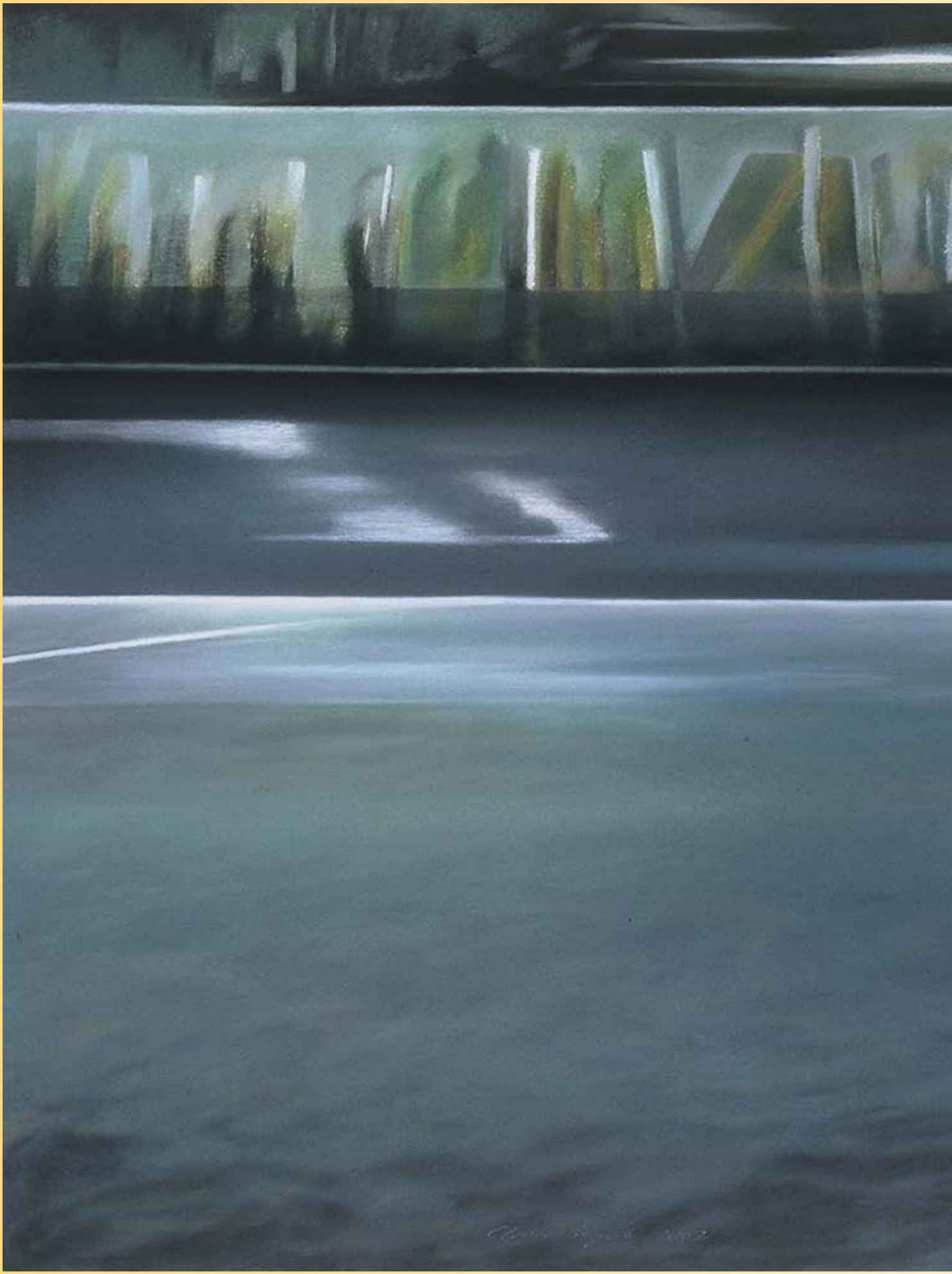
"There are lots of options for a fair wages distribution system that provides not just a place to talk about wages, but also to discuss industry training, development and the future industry. They are a recognition that work is important and without state mechanisms, wealth will become over concentrated and wages will not rise. A fair system [asks] employers to innovate on technology and research rather than the price of wages."

where to from here?

Helen turned to 'where to from here?' and spoke of four major thrusts for unionists: To seek new laws that would adequately protect the interests of workers; to continue the programme already begun of revitalising the union movement; to make the union movement's values better known and to work with those of like values; and finally to fight against deference, that subconscious turn of mind that allows politicians and big business to operate in such a way that no one takes any notice. "The government is busy generating [the narrative] — cutting benefits, silent on the wealthy who yesterday it was revealed are not paying sufficient tax, cutting legal aid for the poorest defendants in the knowledge that no one cares."

In conclusion, Helen saw two stories: first that of Rutherford Waddell standing with and working for those, like the wharfies, who are speaking out and trying to change the dominant story of government and big business. The alternative story is to accept what government and big business do in a benign mood of deference, accepting what is done, while "hoping that we are the exception to a rule". It is clear which story Helen opts for. ■

Helen Kelly is the president of the New Zealand Council of Trades Union (CTU), and lives in Wellington.



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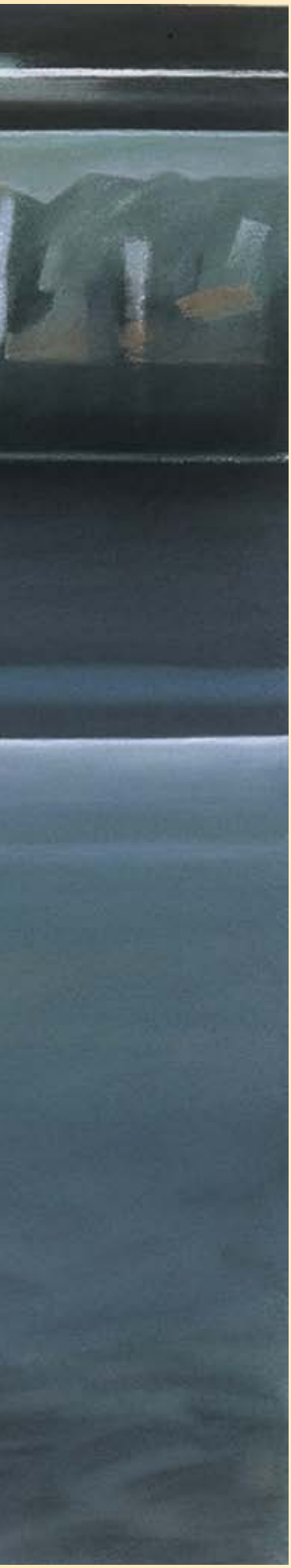


ng: *Replenished*, by Claire Beynon.

Replenished

O, You who are
ever giving life to
all life, moving all
creatures, root of all
things, washing them
clean, wiping out their
mistakes, healing their
wounds. You are our
true life, luminous,
wonderful, awakening
the heart from its
ancient sleep.

— *St Hildegard of Bingen*

On 7 October 2012, Pope
Benedict XVI proclaimed
St Hildegard a Doctor
of the Church.

brightest presence in the darkest places

Liturgy for its own sake is always a danger for the Church and a ritualism that can deter people from belonging to it. As the Year of Faith is fast coming upon us, it behoves the Church to renew its worship and root it in all the mess, misery and riches of people's lives.

Daniel O'Leary

"Give me one good reason for going back to the sacraments." Priests are often faced with this question by those quitting the liturgical life of the Church. Such disaffected Catholics get tired of the relentless catechism of warnings and the litanies of instructions, but perhaps most of all the irrelevance of Sunday worship to their difficult lives. That irrelevance is the tipping point for many disillusioned Catholics today.

Professor John Baldovin SJ, in his acclaimed *Reforming the Liturgy* (2009), reminds us that liturgy must never separate the sacred from the profane. "Giving attention to the liturgy for the liturgy's sake alone, as an end in itself", he said, "is not Christian faith: it is narcissistic obsession." The revered liturgical pioneer Fr James Crichton referred to it as "the meaningless performance called ritualism".

In *Porta Fidei,* the recent apostolic letter, Pope Benedict saw the upcoming Year of Faith as "a good opportunity to intensify the celebration of the faith in the liturgy and the Eucharist". But the liturgy, at the moment, has lost its way, having drifted from its secure anchor in the human condition, the Word made flesh. The recent imposition of the 'new translation', the lifting of restrictions on the Extraordinary Form of the Mass, the relentless and subtle pressure to return to the liturgical mentality and practice of the past, are all affecting the faith of God's people. How can a peaceful balance be restored to this graceless running battle that the liturgy has become?

> Liturgy has, you might say, become too heavenly to be of any earthly use.

For a start we need to look again at the spirit of Vatican II's *Sacrosanctum Concilium.* "The liturgy", it states, "sanctifies almost every event in (people's) lives (61)." Weekly worship is the Incarnation made tangible for God's needy people, it states. Parishioners want to experience God in the middle of the mess and mystery of each day. Liturgy has, you might say, become too heavenly to be of any earthly use. When a more life-centred, incarnational and truly traditional theology of liturgy is unpacked for parishioners, a radical shift in how they understand the sacraments will follow. Liturgical celebration is not about inviting God into the 'secular' lives of parishioners. Nor is it about inviting parishioners' 'secular' lives into the holiness of the Church on a Sunday morning. Rather it is the sublime ritual for making explicit what is already and always at the heart of our loves, our lives and our pain, thus healing and encouraging us, revealing to us that God's brightest presence is hidden in our darkest places. There is nothing in life so scientific, so secular or so sinful, as St Paul points out, that we cannot find God in it.

This seriously neglected understanding of liturgy urgently needs to be restored. It breathes again in the English and Welsh Bishops' Conference study *On the Way to Life* (2005). The Jesuit authors, basing their work on the implications of the Incarnation, emphasise that, "The theology of nature and grace that informs Vatican II recovers 'the ordinary' as the place of grace; hence holiness is not something exceptional ... The liturgy celebrates our embodiedness."

The unacknowledged assumption still is that it is primarily to the liturgy that we must look for the experience of the sacred. But this is not a truly incarnational belief. "Liturgical celebration", observes theologian Richard McBrien, "does not cause grace in the sense that grace is otherwise unavailable. The offer of grace is already present to the world in God's original self-giving. The sacraments signify, celebrate and draw out of us, what God is, in a sense, already doing everywhere and for all."

The theologian Karl Rahner reminds us that sacraments must be seen as manifestations of that grace, which is at work everywhere in human history where women and men are getting on with their lives in everyday ways. A real understanding of the Eucharist, he holds, reveals the milieu of that mysterious grace which governs our whole life — "the grace that finds its victory in the monotony, pain and ordinariness of daily life".

Another perspective may help to clarify these reflections. Rahner has often written about a sacramentality of humanity — a 'liturgy of the world' as well as a 'liturgy of the Church'. He sees the progress of the human story and the evolving universe as a liturgy of human life. By this he means that the material world itself, and our place in it, are already an intimate dimension of the glory of God.

The liturgy of the Church, then, gives explicit and dramatic expression to the liturgy of the world, to the hidden holiness of what seems 'ordinary'; it completes, purifies, celebrates and intensifies it. Without the liturgy of the Church, we would not be able to grasp fully the astonishing height and depth, the love and meaning of the daily liturgy of the world, first revealed in the mystery of Incarnation.

We have difficulty recognising the holy liturgy of our lived lives in the world not because it occurs so rarely, but because it occurs so often. That is why the real world must forever be at the centre of our liturgical celebration. Without honouring the authentic lives and experiences of people, the raw reality of their emotions, our Sunday liturgy will betray the radical revelation of the Incarnation.

We gather for Sunday worship not because our secular lives are empty of divinity, but because we need to honour all the grace-filled moments already trembling in those same human lives, often dark and hidden in our hurting hearts, sometimes shining like hope in our eyes. Church liturgy has the same hopes and goals and dreams for each human heart as Jesus had when he walked among us. The experience in church of true, life-nourishing liturgy will bring home to wavering Massgoers the tangible implications of Incarnation — that the presence of God is in their efforts to stay in love, in the families they struggle to hold together, in the terrible anxiety about money and mortgages, in the fears for their health, in their depressions and temptations, in their despair before a world in pain, in their loss of faith, in all their experiences of death and hope, in their desire to worship God.

Will reflections such as these cut any ice with those who ask "Give me one good reason for going back to the sacraments?" Will they get the Year of Faith off to a promising start? ■

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

This article is reprinted with the kind permission of the London Tablet

A stunning gift for Christmas...

A recent comment to editorial staff was: "*Tui Motu* is so good I want to share it with my children." *Tui Motu* is truly a great and useful Christmas gift: for your children to bring another perspective to their lives; for a friend who may enjoy reading *Tui Motu* occasionally, and who would be delighted by a year's subscription; for a kiwi overseas who would be enriched by this magazine.

As in past years, we want to offer you discounted Christmas gift subscriptions: within New Zealand: $50 for a full year, and $25 for five issues; $65 for Australia and the South Pacific, and $70 for the rest of the world.

To help make this very easy, in this month's issue only you will find an insert. For the early birds among you, who like to deal with Christmas cards and gifts early, we have again placed this insert in the November magazine rather than in December's.

The right hand part is a Christmas gift card that you may fill out, sign and send to your chosen loved one or friend. The left hand side of the insert contains instructions and the subscription form that you will send back to us. All you have to do is to follow the instructions on the card, and return it to us at our **freepost** address.

We hope that you will take advantage of this Christmas gift offer.

how faith has formed me

We are printing as a series of three articles an address Bishop Peter gave earlier this year entitled 'This I believe'. In the first part, the bishop looked at the mystery of existence, meditated on some parables of daily life and asked, 'What now?' Read on!

Peter Cullinane

This is where I must part company with those of our contemporaries who settle, too easily, for what they call 'spirituality'. By this they often mean no more than taking one's place in the universe, living a good life, and being in harmony with the cosmos. Catholic faith, on the other hand, is intrinsically linked to certain historical events involving One who lived, died and rose. Core activities of the Christian faith, namely liturgy and sacraments, are about becoming personally linked to those historical events. Mere spirituality would be the same even if those events had never happened.

from nature to history

In other words, I must look beyond what nature can do (it doesn't do resurrections) to the realm of history where we discover a "mystery hidden from generations and centuries and which has now been revealed… the mystery is Christ among you" (Col. 1: 26 - 27).

Christ's real presence among us comes into focus in the liturgy and the sacraments. Nothing influences our Christian and Catholic identity more profoundly than the feasts and seasons of the liturgical year. In a real sense we re-live the events of our salvation. We get our identity, and renew it, from doing that.

A theist is one who believes in God, whose real presence we can experience in nature. A Christian is one who believes this God became one of us, really present in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, a participant in human history. A Catholic is one who believes that Jesus of Nazareth is now really present in those who share his risen life, and through whom he still participates in human history. Their name, according to the New Testament scriptures, is: the disciples of Jesus, the saints, the body of Christ, the Church. It is in their midst that I see Christ and find my deepest assurance:

In the community called Christian,
I find people of flesh and blood and ordinary lives
living in expectation of meeting you,
undefeated by their personal failures or by death itself.
I have watched their faces in quiet prayer and in songs of joy;
I have heard their professions of faith and confessions of failure;
I have felt humbled no less by their repentance than by their faithfulness;
I have known their sacrifices,
been empowered by their serenity
and learned the reason for the hope that is in them.
Their sureness is not based on any success of their own
but on what they believe you have done for them.
There is power in what they seem to know,
the more because human nature is weak.
I thank you, Father, for having revealed great things to little ones.
In the community of those who live
now not they but Christ living in them,
I have seen frail human nature raised up
reaching heights of hope and depths of peace
which nothing in the world could give, nor take away.
IN THEIR MIDST I COME TO KNOW
THAT HE who enabled the lame to walk and the blind to see
and sinners to start again
IS RISEN, for that is what their lives proclaim.
And so I believe in Him in whom they have placed their trust.
(I Believe Within the Church, Veritas, 2006, *pp. 20–21)*

vocation

It was within that community that I found myself called to serve in ordained ministry. Who will ever know the real origins of a vocation? I have tried to account for mine as follows:

The fabric of my vocation has been cut from
the raw materials of an ordinary life and humble background,
my family and those who loved me before I could understand
losses and broken hopes, personal failures and healing grace,
work in the paddocks in Oringi and songs from the cow shed
(where I was happy to be),
centres of learning and far away places,
times of turmoil and trusted friends.

Above all, you have shaped me for ministry to your people
by their own wonderful faith and prayers, hopes and love
in which you revealed to me
your assurances, your love and your expectations.
Helping them to know how much they mean to you
is the privilege your call bestows on me.

Being entrusted with their secrets
and faced with their pain, struggles, hopes and joys;

Bishop Peter Cullinane

being privy to the mysteries
of your own dealings with them;
discovering that it was Christ they met
in things I said and did in his name,
and finding I have been ministered to in ministering to them
– these are experiences that surprise, humble and amaze me –
and confront me with the mystery of my own calling.

If now 'the flower beside me tells of you',
it is because many years ago, one who loved her flowers
told me your name.
I thank you for a grandmother's hand
that led a five-year-old-boy, on frosty mornings,
a mile's walk on a country road
to where we caught a train that took forever
– smoke from coal and wooden seats –
so that I could start with a Catholic education.
It couldn't last, and didn't, but could it be
that long forgotten conversations along that country road
sowed flowers that still bloom?
(ibid, *pp. 55–56)*

My brief allusion to 'centres of learning, far away places, times of turmoil and trusted friends' deserves amplification. From the Brothers at Marist Brothers High School, Palmerston North I picked up my enthusiasm for the Acts of the Apostles, which also played an early part in my vocation. With the Jesuits at Holy Name Seminary Christchurch I first discovered my affinity with philosophy and classical music, and unforgettably learned that 'Jesus of Nazareth was passing by'. With the Vincentian Priests in Genoa I discovered my love for theology, and I learned from one of the most remarkable men I have ever known the need for humaneness in interpreting Church law. Studies at the Angelicum, Alphonsianum and Gregorian Universities in Rome, the experience of being there during the Second Vatican Council, my times of teaching at Holy Cross College Mosgiel, parish ministry in Wellington, and my role at the Pastoral Centre during the 1970s, were all part of my preparation for what was to come.

I thank God, too, for what Catholic Charismatic Renewal did for me and for the Church during that era. And at various times Religious women especially have contributed to my human and spiritual formation through spiritual direction, directed retreats, truth telling and friendship — especially in 'times of turmoil'.

my journey and the church's

My journey and the Church's journey belong to each other. It seems that in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, the Church wanted bishops who could help implement the reforms intended by the Council. I remain committed to the Council. When I hear talk of 'reforming the reform' I think of what G K Chesterton said of Christianity: "it's not as if it has been tried and found difficult; it was found difficult and not tried." Wherever the Council was misapplied, or where it was hardly applied at all, the missing factor, in my estimation, was adult catechesis. A previous generation of NZ Bishops — those who personally participated in the Council — could not be accused of failing to provide a post-conciliar adult catechesis. I was involved in it on their behalf. What they didn't do, and couldn't, was prepare us for the Council.

There is something to learn from the closure, in recent decades, of many Catholic institutions that had been involved in the Church's healing and teaching ministries.

Whatever about the strengths and weaknesses of some of our institutional practices, on the whole these institutions did great work, and gave the Church a significant profile and a public platform, the loss of which I grieve. Rightly, the public could point to them as representing 'the Church' and doing 'the Church's work'. But that tended to make 'the Church' look like other people out there. Now the changing landscape is bringing it home to us that by reason of baptism, we are all the Church, and we are all called to make Christ present in society. Holiness is the calling of all of us (not of some more than others), and responsibility for the mission of the Church is the responsibility of all of us (even though in different ways).

That is the fundamental shift of focus that will re-shape and re-image the Church. ■

Bishop Peter Cullinane was the first Bishop of the Diocese of Palmerston North. He retired as Bishop in 2011.

(The third and final part of this address will be published in the Christmas issue of *Tui Motu*.)

the saints our friends and mentors

How do we look at the saints? As distant and aloof, or as near and with us? And who are our saints? The writer uses the more modern wisdom to give us a new way of looking at the saints.

Ann Gilroy

For the first two days of November in the Catholic tradition we remember those who have died. On the first we celebrate the feast of All Saints and then the next day, All Souls. Both feasts make sense within a particular world view, but I wonder if there might be more helpful ways of thinking about life after death that would fit with the scientific world view that we now understand? My question arose while we were exploring how to tell Mary MacKillop's story now that she is canonised, in a way that doesn't turn her into a perfect model or a woman on a pedestal. How can we think about our dead in ways that give us hope, resilience and motivation to live as the kindom of God?

our litany of saints?

The feast of All Saints may traditionally refer to canonised saints but most of us would want to add people who have loved us and inspired us but are not famous or notable outside a certain network. We would want to add others — such as our parents or grandparents, or people, like Terry Dibble, who genuinely lived for justice; or Mere and Hoane, who fostered children with great kindness for over 20 years; or Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi who led the Parihaka community prophetically as non violent in the face of war; or Jan, who was a reconciling presence wherever she went; or Kate Sheppard, who finally won for New Zealand women the right to vote; or Suzanne Aubert, whose Congregation has shown active compassion for the poor for over 100 years; or Judy Cannato, whose teaching and writing on evolutionary spirituality is bringing about change. Our litany of names could continue. To limit saints to the canonised could be like thinking of Olympians as only those who won a gold medal in archery.

Our new knowledge does open us to the wondrous interconnections and relationships of all things and assures us that death and new life are continuous in the universe. Though our connections change through death from the energies that hold our living bodies together, we are still connected in creation. For the living, the memories we have of those who have died are ways in which we continue to be connected and inspired by those who have gone before.

our relationship with the dead

Indigenous people can open for us ways of understanding our connection and relationship with those who have lived before us. Māori people especially respect their interconnection with those who have passed on, their ancestors, as if separated from them by a mere thin skin. While no longer physically tangible they are remembered, connected, counted and honoured in their *whanau* relationships.

And Aboriginal people go even further, understanding themselves in a familiar network of relationship with all things, animals, insects, rocks, earth and stars. Everything in the network of relationships is respected and known and their interconnected relationships are active and influential in their lives. These understandings of kinship relationship surviving in creation between those alive and those who have died make sense in a world view influenced by contemporary cosmology.

So do those who have died have influence with God that we don't have? For example, some of us have been in the habit of asking Mary MacKillop or Catherine McAuley to 'intercede' for us with God, or of asking for their 'intercession'. The Mary MacKillop novena prayer speaks of asking Mary MacKillop's 'intercession'. This way of talking about saints and prayer may not represent how we want to continue thinking about our relationship with God and with saints now and into the future.

what's intercession about?

When we explore the idea of someone 'interceding' for us it conjures up a judicial context in which we ask a lawyer or sponsor to put our case forward to the judge because that person is trained in the ways of the court system and in the language of the court. Sometimes it could even be prejudicial to our case for us to speak for ourselves in court unless we are conversant with the proper language of the court.

A more historic way of thinking of intercession is within a monarchical context where the monarch and the nobles hold the power and the majority of the wealth and they operate by granting favours to those of less consequence in the system. In such situations those more favoured in the monarch's eyes can represent a less favoured person's case to the monarch. In each situation, the person hopes that the lawyer, sponsor or noble will get them a better outcome to their situation than they could negotiate on their own. In each scenario, the person needing the favour is not able to approach the judge or the monarch themselves either because they do not hold a particular role or education; or their social class makes them unworthy to approach the monarch face to face; or they don't have sufficient talent or funds.

Do we think, or even want to think, of God — as a judge, a monarch — being distant from us and unreachable? We can also ask, do we think that Mary MacKillop, Terry Dibble, or Catherine McAuley would consider us too

unworthy to speak to God ourselves?

If we make God into the judge, the monarch of our scenarios, we can continue to think of God as distant and even aloof from us. We can continue to get the help of go-betweens to approach God instead of speaking for ourselves. We can continue to think of ourselves as unworthy to approach God directly even though we have pressing needs and worries. And we can wait for the outcomes of our intercessory efforts wondering if God is hearing us.

All Saints, by Fra Angelico (1395/1400–1455)

a new approach

I don't think that God is distant from us in the way of a judge or monarch and therefore needs to have only special people approaching. Instead I think that God is very near and is listening with particular keenness to those suffering, worrying, ill and anxious. God knows our heart's desire, our deepest hopes and yearning. God certainly knows about our illness, our unemployment, our child's diagnosis of cancer. We read in Scripture images of God as listening as a mother to her child, as one truly upset by injustices meted out to people, as one aware of suffering and as one conscious even of a bruised reed. God is at the heart of our universe.

We also know that God does not have a protocol as to who can speak and how we speak. Jesus, consumed by God's mission, welcomed little children to him, listened to tax collectors and sinners, to the mothers and fathers worried sick about their children, to Peter's mother-in-law sick in bed, and to Mary and Martha grieving their brother Lazarus' death. In fact, Jesus showed that God's mission favours the lifting up of the downtrodden and anxious and the bringing relief to the worried. Jesus believed this so strongly that he died rather then retract his commitment when he was threatened, judged and condemned.

People like Mary MacKillop, Terry Dibble and maybe our parents, lived in God's presence. They found God's presence in the kitchen and the church, in school and the prison, in the rain and on the beach, in their families and in strangers, in the soil and in the starry night. Like the psalmist they could ask, "God, where can I go from your presence?" and like the psalmist they found that God's presence is everywhere. They didn't speak of God as being aloof or distant but rather as being concerned for them and for those with whom they were concerned.

pray WITH

How then can we speak about Mary MacKillop, Francis of Assisi, or Judy Cannato and prayer and not use intercessory language? I think that we find an answer by watching what happens when people come to Mary MacKillop Place to pray at Mary's tomb. Every day dozens of pilgrims come alone or in groups. They often share their stories of why they have come with those engaged in pastoral ministry in the chapel. They come to Mary as to a friend and mentor and as someone who would really understand what they are going through. They sit quietly, pray *sotto voce*, weep, converse aloud, pray traditional prayers, and sing. They act like her friends! I think that the reason so many make the journey to the chapel is that they are coming to someone who will understand and accept their anguish or joy, their fear or their hopelessness. Their actions indicate that they are asking Mary MacKillop to pray WITH them rather than to pray on their behalf. They too want to have in their lives what they perceive as the qualities of her life — courage in the face of disappointment, anxiety, illness; hope in the face of a diagnosis of infertility; trust in the face of personal hurt; steadfastness in the face of another employment rejection. To acknowledge this we Sisters of St Joseph are changing the prayers to ask Mary MacKillop to pray WITH us rather than for us. By asking all the saints to pray WITH us, rather than FOR us, you and I claim our own worthiness to approach God and we can learn from their belief in and experience of God's creative, provident presence.

retelling the stories

So when All Saints day arrives, let's ritualise our memories of those we know who witnessed in their lives that they were friends of God. Let's tell the stories again of granddad with his generosity and green fingers, and Nana Wise with her cheery kindness, and Christine Clark knocked down on the picket line, and Elisabeth who put a roof over the head of her boozy cousins, as well as St Catherine the Great, Sts Peter and Paul and Terry Dibble. And then on All Souls day let's remember again our friends who have gone before us. Let the memory of their generosity, kindness, inclusiveness, endurance, humour, forgiveness and courage seep transformatively into us. Let our memories and the telling and retelling of their stories connect us more richly and strongly in ordinary life and more mindfully into the kindom of God. ■

Sister Ann is on the Leadership Team of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, living in Sydney. She was a lecturer at CIT and the School of Theology of the University of Auckland.

my personal experience of ecology and mission

These are thoughtful reflections about one person's voyage of discovery over his adult life in making sense of the demands of ecology in modern life. Michael asks the question: what sort of world do we want to pass on to future generations?

Michael Gormly

My quest for ecological integrity springs from overseas mission experience in Asia. My task has been to make connections between the human spirit and the natural world. The cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth challenge people of faith to live in ways that enhance life. The alternative is to stand back and watch disaster. Mission starts with a very deliberate perception about a divine presence, with spiritual imagination on how we relate to nature.

early challenges

In Korea from the 1970s interconnected global issues unfolded in front of my eyes. Each called for a choice either to promote or to deny the thrust of the Gospels in favour of life. Events challenged me to face estrangement from nature and to acknowledge the sacredness of Earth. Aspects of justice, peace and integrity of creation emerged at the heart of my mission practices. Mission experience provided me with a unique perspective to appreciate the sacredness of the Earth. I also became aware of the dangers threatening the Earth. Every situation demanded deliberate, basic, radical and alternative questions about structures and institutions, religion included. The critical task for missionaries like me was to motivate people of faith to re-discover sensitivities and awaken convictions.

Consciousness of ecological crises led me to shape fresh perspectives related to the church in the world. I discovered insights about church, priesthood, sacraments, prayer and missionary practices. Genetic engineering, third world debt, overpopulation, destruction of mangroves and rainforests, global warming, nuclear threats and the like challenged me. Beginning with a fresh look at Scripture and spiritual traditions, appreciation for the historical relationship between the churches and nature became vital. A religious faith that fails to appreciate the ecological paradigm only adds to the crisis. Along with their counterparts in educational, industrial, political and financial organisations, church leaders are slow to respond. It is disappointing when authorities avoid the pressing issues and fail to make environmental concerns a priority.

A religious faith that fails to appreciate the ecological paradigm only adds to the crisis.

shift of focus

Why are we so deaf to the cry of the poor, and the cry of the Earth? Why are we on a collision course? Why are we polluting air, water and the life-giving quality of sun-light? Why is every ecosystem in every part of the globe being affected? My focus moved in the 1980s to the modern economic patterns of production, distribution, consumption, trade and development that tax the regenerative capacity of the biosphere. This is a serious indictment, diminishing life on Earth for future generations of humans and other creatures. The stranglehold of international debt on the Third Word came to the fore. Social teaching told me that the goods of the world are meant to sustain all human life on Earth. The cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth challenged the dominant institutions in society, religious institutions included.

relation to the natural world

Environmental crises challenged me to face the ways I personally relate to the natural world. I found myself retracing notions that underlie my thinking about the place of the human in relation to the rest of the Earth community. The challenge for me is to establish completely different ways of influencing a world in deep peril. Scholars must discover in scripture

and theology insights to animate the churches. Poets and contemplatives must critique life-denying situations and evoke fresh imagination. The moral and prophetic voices of activists among us must be heeded in every public policy debate. In facing social and environmental concerns, justice, peace and integrity of creation are essential.

prophetic voices

The prophetic voices of Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry were significant for me in bringing spiritual elements to the fore in scientific and evolutionary discussions. They shaped my sensitivity to the sacredness of God's creation and awakened ways for me to listen to the language of the universe, and to understand the history and functioning of our planet. Imagination, enchantment and gratitude are therapies suggested to meet a disconnection from the natural world. My missionary task was to celebrate that I belong to a community of Earth and share its existence, life and self-expression.

everything is interconnected

My spiritual response was constantly influenced by mission colleagues. Scholars like Sean McDonagh, Denis Edwards, and others, narrated for me a new story of creation where everything is interconnected in an integrated religious system. Network groups across New Zealand also encouraged me to reflect on how eco-systems are organised and what it means to be part of a sacred universe that is alive. And those who take strong prophetic stands in the face of denial, threats and exploitation took my attention and support. The current work is to develop a personal vision that generates life for the world with integrity and dignity, with reverential and sensitive care for the Earth and all of creation.

more learnings

One passionate plea came to save species under threat of extinction. More and more habitats, such as coral reefs, and mangroves and rain forests, came under threat of destruction. I urged churches to join cultures and organisations in preserving biodiversity and saving habitats and species under threat. Global warming and climate change were also issues firmly on the mission agenda. I encouraged people with deep spiritual perspectives to make very deliberate efforts to participate in the debates with competence, professionalism and passion. This also applied to engaging the transnational corporations that promoted biotechnology in agriculture, causing fears about the safety of foods produced by genetic engineering. Food security came under threat in patenting seeds of staple crops and in controlling food production. Instead of feeding the world, those patenting were devaluing life, and exacerbating hunger and malnutrition.

new missionary ways

As issues arise, I tried not to be one-dimensional, and not too distracted by a media fascination with the political, social and financial personalities. Overall, my approach is to bring a deliberate mission and spiritual perspective to every question and debate. For example, water quality has come to the fore, with varied consequences of human activity exploiting waters in rivers, lakes and oceans. This is a complex environmental issue for the 21st century. Respect for water can never simply be an environmental matter in the hands of a government, but one with profound religious and cultural implications for everyone.

Integrity of creation is not high on the agendas of church institutions, yet the mission movement keeps committed to ecological conversion. New prophetic ways of being missionary arise from the endangered Earth, often built on a connection with the poor of the Earth. The challenge is not to adjust and harmonise secular science to the catechism, but to find fresh ways to ponder and converse about such matters.

hopes for the future

My hope is that a dynamic mission perspective will be absorbed in the local context of Aotearoa New Zealand. A first step is surely to absorb how a sacredness of creation is inherent in Pacific culture and in Māori spirituality. Here stories of origin are told and questions arise about how we got here, what brings us together and how we are living in God's world. The mission concern is: what sort of world environmentally, culturally and spiritually will be entrusted to future generations of Kiwis? ■

Father Michael Gormly, a Columban, has worked as a missionary overseas, and presently coordinates the Columban Mission Project in New Zealand.

the widow's mite

Mark 12:38–44

32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time (11 November)

Kath Rushton

The golden background of the sixth century mosaic in the Basilica of St. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna allows us to contemplate Jesus watching the poor widow making her offering in the Temple. We hear what we perceive to be his words of praise which contrast her genuine devotion and the hypocrisy of the scribes. In so doing we are oblivious to the far from golden background of Mark's critique of the Temple and its religious leaders.

Basilica of St. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna (6th Century).

background of the temple

This story is found after Jesus' harsh criticisms of and teachings in the temple (11:11-12:44) and near the introduction of the passion narrative where the tension between Jesus and his opponents increases. Then Jesus warns (13:1-37) that the temple, the political and social symbol of the religious state, will be destroyed: "Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down." These words have even stronger impact if we remember that at about the time Mark's gospel was written, the temple which was enlarged a few decades before by Herod the Great had been threatened or recently destroyed by the Herodians and the Romans.

background of the scribes

Jesus warns the crowds against the scribes (lawyers) by caricaturing them. They love to walk about in long robes, be greeted in the market place, and have the best seats in the synagogues and at meals (12:38-39). Jesus' words get harsher — their wealth is made because they "devour widows' houses; and for the sake of appearance, they say long prayers" (12:40). Through their reputation for piety and trustworthiness, scribes earned the right to administer estates in return for a percentage of the assets. This was subject to abuse.

biblical background

In the biblical tradition there are warnings against injustice done to widows, who are shown as poor and suffering much hardship. They are associated with orphans, the poor, day-labourers and aliens. The Hebrew word for 'widow' is close to the word for 'unable to speak'. Widows were without the legal power of speech.

A long tradition of helping the needy existed among the Israelites: "there will be no one in need among you" (Deut 14:28-29, 15:4, 11). No social security system was institutionalised as such but a part of the tithe was redistributed to help the needy in practical ways. The temple was the centre for storing and distributing the tithes. In addition, the Torah speaks of a voluntary offering custom, 'a freewill offering' (Exod 35:29, 36:3). Made to the temple treasury these offerings were meant for redistribution among the poor.

the story

Jesus "sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury" (12:42). There he could see donors who had to state the amount of their gift, and the purpose for which it was intended, to the priest in charge. Thus one's offering was able to be seen and heard by onlookers through an open door. This giving in public was open to pressuring the donor to give more than she or he could afford.

The poor widow gave two *lepta*, the smallest coins in circulation. Jesus addresses his disciples beginning with a phrase that indicates he is about to give an important teaching: "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty

has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." Ched Myers puts the last verse as "They all gave from their affluence. She in her destitution gave everything she had — her whole life."

offering her whole life

In the cleansing of the temple (11:15-18) and later in 13:1-2, Jesus attacks the system of the temple religion and the state. His words are a lament for the widow who has been encouraged to give as she does. He condemns the value system that motivates her action and those who condition her to give as she does. The ruling authorities' power to motivate and control the collection and distribution of resources, that 'freewill offering' belonging to the people, is challenged.

The woman bears silently her own unjust situation even to neglecting her own needs. Her devoting her whole life, Hisako Kinukawa suggests, is a model of what Jesus will do. Her presence led Jesus to his final collision with power that leads to his death. It is for such a person as the widow that Jesus confronts authority, endures hostility and rejection. He, too, gives everything, even his whole life.

Yet the widow is still alone. At this point, Jesus cannot do anything for the widow. She is a victim of the exploiting power of her society. She who should have been helped through the 'freewill offering' of her people had offered everything. She was led by blind faith into misguided piety by the deceitful piety of her religious leaders. This widow pouring everything out for her God, yet untouched by God, will continue to trouble the community of faith.

Like me, are you troubled by the echoes of this story in Aotearoa New Zealand? Our taxes and our social welfare system are our country's means of re-distribution. This is lost in government rhetoric and action towards beneficiaries. The origins of stated-owned assets were people's taxes which contributed to essential services for the common good. We are reeling here in Christchurch over decisions handed down on the future of schools when according to the principle of subsidiarity decisions are to be made at the level of those affected by them. Are these two central principles of Catholic Social Teaching heard from our pulpits? Where and who is Jesus sitting watching in our land? Does this widow pouring everything out for her God yet untouched by God continue to trouble the community of faith?

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

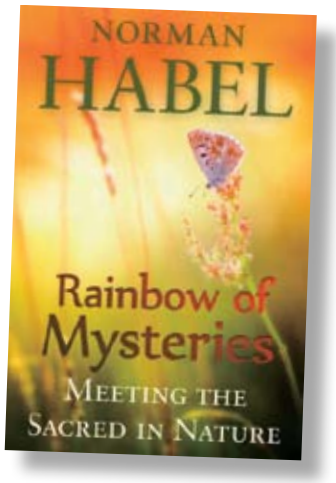
ecology and spirituality

Rainbow of Mysteries: Meeting the Sacred in Nature.

by Norman Habel

Kelowna BC Canada: CopperHouse, 2012

Reviewer: Mary Betz



Norman Habel decided that after 60 years reading and writing on biblical texts, he would now follow his ecological heart and read the 'sacred text of nature'. If I do this, he asks, "what would I discover about God, life and myself? I have lived my life reading the Scriptures to discern dimensions of God. Can I now do the same as I read nature and hear her response?"

Habel identifies seven spiritual dimensions of nature, and invites us to accompany him to meet the divine in each of these mysteries of creation: Presence, Being Earth-Born, Wonder, Life, Voice, Wisdom and Compassion. Each mystery is approached in five steps: exploring Biblical texts in which a given mystery is alive; facing how this mystery may have been suppressed in our particular Christian tradition; looking at how the mystery is discerned through the lens of ecology; asking how, in our personal experience, we have met the sacred in this mystery of nature; and discerning what is needed to sustain this mystery in our spiritual, political, religious and everyday lives.

Wonder is one of the ways in which I most experience the sacred in nature, so I was especially curious to see how Habel explored it. Job 38 is a text which Habel says, "portrays the phenomenon of wonder in a bold and provocative way." In this text, God challenges Job to acknowledge the wonders of earth, oceans, light, stars, weather, the deep, and clouds — and to recognise that they are not under human control nor are they created for human benefit. They exist in their own right and have their own integrity. Job realises that he has not just heard about a Creator, but has seen God.

Habel notes that our church rarely moves beyond thanking God for earth as our habitat or as a resource to be exploited. Shouldn't it be encouraging us to explore the wonder of creation and to experience the divine in the natural world? We might discover God as the 'perpetual nudging' of elements to form the cosmos, or the evolutionary web which connects all the wonders of earth. We can see "earth as a magic moment in the cosmos, a sacred site." 'Wonder is everywhere if we but have the consciousness to discern it.' Wonder can be sustained in ourselves "by taking time out to be in touch with nature, to be aware of wonder, and to be surprised by the spiritual in creation." It must be sustained in our communities by speaking out for the many earth creatures and ecosystems under threat because their worth is too often seen only in economic terms.

Norman Habel is no stranger to those who share his passion about the interfaces between biblical theology and ecology, spirituality and nature. This latest book takes us more deeply into the spirituality which sustains his more academic work (The Earth Bible, The Season of Creation and An Inconvenient Text), and offers story, poetry and liturgy as well as a joyful account of meeting the sacred in nature. ■

stranded in the catlins

Two Little Boys

Director: Robert and Duncan Sarkies

Reviewer: Paul Sorrell

If I liked this movie better, I would have started this review by saying that Dunedin's loss was Invercargill's gain. Instead of Nige burning up Tay Street at 3am in his clapped-out Ford Laser, he would have been hooning around the Octagon. And he and his mates Deano and Gav would have been chasing sea lions and penguins on Otago Peninsula beaches, rather than down in the Catlins. It seems that the Dunedin City Council put too many bureaucratic hurdles in the way of this latest offering from the Sarkies brothers (*Scarfies, Out of the Blue*), whereas the Republic of Invercargill under Mayor Tim Shadbolt pulled out all the stops to smooth their way.

The result is a curious blend of blood and guts, paranoia, male bonding, off-the-wall humour and stunning Southland landscapes. The mainspring of the action is the well-worn 'we need to get rid of the body' conceit. On one of his early morning jaunts, Nige (Flight of the Conchords' Bret McKenzie) runs down Jurgen, a young Norwegian backpacker. Wearing an expression akin to a possum caught in headlights, he puts himself in the hands of his former best friend Deano (Australian actor Hamish Blake), and they combine forces in a series of abortive attempts to dispose of the body. Finally determining to throw what's left of Jurgen down Jack's Blowhole, they take off for a weekend in the Catlins. With them is their friend Gav (Dunedin's Maaka Pohatu), a big affable Maori lad who seems to be at one with the universe but is ignorant of their plot.

Things get darker still when it becomes increasingly clear that Deano's attachment to Nige — they have been best mates since childhood — is pathological, and threatens all three friends. The problem is that whenever an issue that we might want to take seriously is raised, it is undercut by the wacky humour that runs through the movie like a soundtrack. Is Deano a homicidal psychopath? Do he and Nige share some sort of homosexual realationship? In the end, we don't really care, because the relentless flow of cartoon-like humour never allows us to establish a stable relationship with the characters.

So, despite the clever plotting and well-paced action, the zany characterisation and authentic bogan banter — not to mention the gorgeous Southern scenery — I came away feeling that something was missing. Is there a major deficiency in the Kiwi psyche? Or perhaps the two little boys of the title are a pair of young directors who still have some growing up to do. ■

Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

a lay group's faith

Pope Benedict has proclaimed a 'Year of Faith' to mark the 50th anniversary last month of the start of Vatican II, asking for emphasis on formation of mature faith in adults.

What is true religion? Jesus gives the answer (Matthew 25) in his discourse on the Last Judgement: "For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me. As long as you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me."

I have learnt of a few apostolic parishioners who adopted a low decile state school to try and meet some obvious needs. They began in a small way, encountering various difficulties from which they learned. They are now a group of volunteers with a professional approach, observing clear guidelines to ensure they both respect those they are trying to help and cater for their real needs. Importantly, they have formal parish backing.

Some of their activities cover reading help, sewing help for parents and children, providing furniture (solicited from parishioners) and food to homes for breakfast. In the beginning there was a certain amount of wariness on both sides, but over time trust built up and there were some interesting developments. For example, some of the recipients returned the favour by passing on things they no longer needed.

This is obviously an inclusive, outward-looking parish, neither passively waiting for others to join nor proselytizing. A growing number of parishioners are experiencing working for a common purpose. Sunday Mass attendance is growing: coincidence?

a pope's faith

The following is a transcript of a TV interview earlier this year with Archbishop Loris Capovilla concerning his time as private secretary to Angelo Roncalli.

"I am 97. I had known Pope John since 1935… Five days after his election, Cardinal Ruffini (followed by the other Cardinals in turn) came to see him. Ruffini said, 'We have many problems, difficult situations — religious, historical, diplomatic.' And on a piece of paper the Pope wrote, for the first time, the word 'council'. All other cardinals also raised various topics. Many favoured reform of the liturgy, seminaries, of priestly life — not doctrinal but pastoral.

"Twenty days later he told me: 'My desk is piling up with problems, questions, requests, hopes. What's really necessary is a Council.' I kept quiet. John said: 'I ask myself why my secretary, when I confide in him, says nothing. I know why. Yes, you worry; you mean well, you think I am too old, you think I'll make a mess out of this enormous task, that I don't have time — because you think like a manager, a bank director. That's not the way you reason with faith. To receive a great inspiration, to regard it with surprise, and imagine your pleasure in it, is clearly of great merit. If God allows one to carry on with great collaborators who encourage one to move ahead, even better. And if one begins only with the Preparatory Commission, that is of great merit. If one dies, another will come. It is a great honour just to begin.'"

But why did Pope John call the Council? Talking with his Secretary of State he said: "After the second World War it was very good that there were three international institutions. They were born in America: the United Nations for peace, the Food and Agriculture Organization for bread, and UNESCO for culture. I, the Pope, am always hearing of conferences on philosophy, on literature, on trade. Why don't we get together and talk?" Precisely because he was a great conservative he was able to bring the world a message of love, hope and of faith.

faith and morality

Early last century Hans Vaihinger took Immanuel Kant's philosophy to its logical conclusion when he wrote: "God doesn't exist." However, he promulgated the idea that "we must act as if He does." Religion's role: to support morality, without which citizens cannot govern themselves.

His ideas still have many followers. However, a non-existent deity is hardly solid ground. Conformity to rules imposed by authority (with some form of sanction associated) is but one step in our moral development. We need guidance; we also need to grow to take personal responsibility for our attitudes and actions — that is, to develop a mature faith. We are called to get to know Christ Jesus in a personal way, to absorb his attitude as the base on which we build our daily life. The Church's teachings, whether on belief or morality, are meant to serve as clarifications of Jesus' teachings — and they are inevitably clothed in the cultural trappings of their time. They are not the objects of our faith, Jesus is. Morality is not a set of rules; it is a way of living. ■

the infallibility question?

We were sitting in the Vatican gardens. We had to pour our own lattés. The butler had been unavoidably detained. The Pope wanted my advice — again!

"What am I going to do about infallibility," he asked? "Nobody knows what it means. The Curia and the Ultramontanists want to make everything I say infallible. The world simply can't take it seriously. The people of God ignore me. Bishops are ambivalent."

As I listened I knew what I had to say. "Your holiness, you are not infallible. Infallibility is not the personal prerogative of the Pope. It was orchestrated by a bitterly resentful Pope Pius IX back in 1870 at Vatican I. The Bishops, mostly Italians, gave a highly restricted decree to him as a consolation prize for the loss of the Papal States. Even then, they carefully avoided saying that the Pope, when teaching, could or should act by himself.

"Although they passed the decree the Council was completely polarised. Fifty-seven Bishops actually left Rome the day before the final vote, to avoid voting against it.

"Cardinal Newman initially refused to recognise the validity of the decree describing it as a 'tyrannical act'.

"Listen to what Maximos Patriarch of Antioch had to say about infallibility at Vatican II: 'The principal cause of the evil (of disunity) we believe, is the tendency of most Latin theologians and canonists to concentrate all authority of Christ granted to his Church in the person of the Sovereign Pontiff and to make him the source of all power, and consequently, to give practical sovereignty and completely centralized power to the Roman Curia which acts in his name.' Maximos is also inspired by the Holy Spirit.

"I wonder if it is time to let this entire infallibility issue go. It causes more grief and division amongst God's people than any other issue emanating from the Papacy. The new oath of allegiance to a monarchical authority in the 21st century is preposterous. With this level of entrenched denial, the abuse of power will inevitably continue at every level.

"Your holiness, why not take a lesson from early Christianity. In the first 1000 years agreement on truth emerged by convergence, consensus, debate and painful and costly processes which took decades to crystallize. Only God was thought of as infallible.

"Become the servant you always claimed to be? Vatican II pointed the way. The Church was to become a Church of service, not of power — which Jesus refused to embrace.

"The best way to achieve this divestment of power is to throw your lot in with the oppressed and exploited in the struggle for a more just society. This will free the Church from the burdens of wealth and power to follow Jesus. Study the signs of the times.

"There will be a price. The groups which control economic and political power will not forgive the church for this. There will be consequences.

"How about a bit of restructuring at the Vatican? The Curia is still functioning as though Vatican II never happened. We don't need any more documents, investigations, Canon laws and encyclicals — which few people read. Start trusting the people of God. Give yourselves — and us, a break. The world needs more love — not more law!

"After all, Vatican II affirmed that, united with you and the Bishops, the whole of the people of God are infallible.

"John Henry Newman said it well 'the body of the faithful... and their consensus is the voice of the infallible Church ..."

The Pope was visibly relaxed. As we shared another latté he asked me for my thoughts on evolution. ■

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a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

Celtic spirituality uses the concept of *thin places* as locales where the visible and invisible worlds come into their closest proximity. Thin places have a particular quality where our senses are heightened and we open ourselves to a presence greater than ourselves.

In the Himalayan foothills in Northern India, we are moving from the lush, verdant excess of monsoon towards the autumn with its huge views over the plains towards the Ganges and Yamuna rivers. There is a luminosity — a clear, golden light. All the dust and smoke particles have been washed away by the long rains. This blue sparkly autumn is so welcome. We are in the somehow sacred junction between Mussoorie's starkly different seasons.

Two heralds call out to me of this transition. The *samp ki bhutta* (snake's corn cob) has suddenly turned its rows of berries a siren red, announcing the end of the mist and the start of sunshine. Alongside in the forest, the quivering fringes of tree ferns that line trunks and branches are turning yellow. Within a few weeks they will be brown and gone.

Changing seasons feel to me like a liminal space or threshold, a meeting point between spiritual and temporal realms. They make a place where suddenly God is closer. Walking home from school last week, holding a sticky four-year-old hand, I suddenly glimpsed my first beacon-red *samp ki bhutta*. My eyes blurred. I realised I'd walked into a thin place. God cartwheeling in with autumn and sunshine. God amongst us. ■

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