Tui Motu

InterIslands

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New Zealand General Election 2014

elections! elections! elections!

What a month this is for us New Zealanders. We've been thrown into the midst of the 'dirty politics' debate, with allegations and counter-allegations coming thick and fast, and some tough but important points made. For example, ministers do need to be accountable for their actions. Neither is the whole debate to be dismissed as just some type of conspiracy dreamed up to destabilize the election. We must be aware of the pressures of lobbyists, and their dangerous relationships with people in positions of power.

Despite this, each of us as voters wants to go to the heart and core of what is there for us to take note of. As Christians in an increasingly secular society, there are three principal values that will help us in deciding our vote.

The core matter is the gift of community. We need to look at the whole of our society and its good first, before we look to the needs of each individual. Remember the situation in the original Jerusalem community where we are told the faithful 'owned everything in common, sold their goods and possessions and distributed these among themselves according to what each one needed.' (Acts 2:44) This may seem amazingly ideal. But it affirms clearly that only together can our love inspire us in voting.

Undergirding this will be another 'heart' principle: that of the dignity of each and every New Zealander, seen against our wider world. Now we want policies that will respect the human dignity of each, not just the privilege of some.

The third set of most pressing values are those of mercy and compassion. We certainly see the need for these more easily when looking at the world scene (in Iraq, Gaza, Syria and West Africa) and the ways governments and people are attempting, or not, to bring sanity and grace into the global equation. However, mercy and compassion remain absolutely crucial values for us electors to ponder here also.

From my privileged place as editor, one practical matter I see that may help our people the most would be the giving of a living wage to all, along with the creation of a suitable employment base for the young. Placing more money in the hands of the majority of our people would mean more money to spend and more jobs created. And in the present economic climate, government has wriggle-room to do this.

A second theme we treat this month is the centennial of World War One, a hugely seminal event in the life and history of this country. In upholding the courageous people who gave their lives in battle, we also uphold those who gave their lives for peace (cf the story of Ben Salmon). War is never to be glorified for its own sake. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu says of the present Israel/Gaza conflict, 'Violence begets violence and hatred, that only begets more violence and hatred'. War will never solve our human problems. In fact, he reminds us strongly of the futility of war — 'there is no military solution' — and of our need to use a non-violent political toolbox to stop fighting wherever it occurs.

Good thinking and good voting!

KT

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Cover illustration: Donald Moorhead

pleas to the people of israel

Pleas for help from two people involved with the people of Israel and Gaza are vitally important at present when life there is extremely frayed. The first is from Dr Bernard Sabella, who works in Gaza with the Middle East Council of Churches and their service to Palestinian Refugees, and who has labored all his life to seek to find answer to the Israel/Palestine problem. The second is a quote from a remarkable piece by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, commenting on the rallies around the world seeking an end to the Gaza crisis, and supporting sanctions and divestment from Israel. Dr Bernard is a concerned 'insider'; Archbishop Desmond is a concerned 'outsider'. However, coming from completely different viewpoints and parts of the world, there is a marked coincidence of view pushing for a way forward. Pray for that new path to humanity and freedom.

Dr Bernard Sabella:
'The times are difficult indeed and they will become more difficult in the coming weeks and months … While we tend to the wounds of our Palestinian brothers and sisters and their children, we have to remember that this tragedy in Gaza would not have happened if the Israeli politicians had opted for peace and gone on with the peace negotiations. Some, particularly in Europe and the west, put the blame on Hamas for shooting rockets into Israel. But what is the root cause for this, can we ask? If we Palestinians have to behave like good boys, on Israeli conditions and accept all the infractions committed against us, are we really human? Who can convince us that what Israel is doing with its siege on Gaza, its settlements in the West Bank, its policies and measures in East Jerusalem are all for our good and for the future of our children? Is Israel preparing the ground for good neighbourliness or is it creating the environment for further war and bloodshed? When will Israeli politicians wake up?'

Archbishop Desmond Tutu:
'My plea to the people of Israel is to see beyond the moment, to see beyond the anger at feeling perpetually under siege, to see a world in which Israel and Palestine can coexist — a world in which mutual dignity and respect reign.

It requires a mind-set shift. A mind-set shift that recognizes that attempting to perpetuate the current status quo is to damn future generations to violence and insecurity. A mind-set shift that stops regarding legitimate criticism of a state's policies as an attack on Judaism. A mind-set shift that begins at home and ripples out across communities and nations and regions — to the Diaspora scattered across the world we share. The only world we share.

People united in pursuit of a righteous cause are unstoppable. God does not interfere in the affairs of people, hoping we will grow and learn through resolving our difficulties and differences ourselves. But God is not asleep. The Jewish scriptures tell us that God is biased on the side of the weak, the dispossessed, the widow, the orphan, the alien who set slaves free on an exodus to a Promised Land. It was the prophet Amos who said we should let righteousness flow like a river.

Goodness prevails in the end. The pursuit of freedom for the people of Palestine from humiliation and persecution by the policies of Israel is a righteous cause. It is a cause that the people of Israel should support.

Nelson Mandela famously said that South Africans would not feel free until Palestinians were free.

He might have added that the liberation of Palestine will liberate Israel, too.' ■

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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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suzanne aubert

Tui Motu is a read a wee bit beyond my intellectual capabilities and I find the Salvation Army's *War Cry* easier to understand.

I have the book *The Story of Suzanne Aubert* written by Jessie Munro. It's wonderfully done. The historian, Michael King, who died far too early, included this comment in his review of the book for the *Listener* (November 9, 1996):

'In a telling cameo, Munro describes Aubert's funeral cortege headed for Karori Cemetery on October 4, 1926: "small square cars threaded neatly like beads". As the vehicles pass without a gap, a bystander asks, "What religion was that woman?" His companion, a workman leaning on a shovel, answers, "That's a question she would never have asked you or me".'

Lovely. Enough to bring tears to my eyes. She was a saint, even before her death.

Paul Cotter, *Invercargill*

god with us

The photo of the German military belt from WW1 in the August issue reminded me of my time in Frankton many years ago. I visited an elderly man who declared that he was an atheist. His affirmation came from his experience during WW1 — 'We were stepping over bodies of Germans who had on their belt GOTT MIT UNS. We thought that God was with us too!'

That was a lovely recollection in the April issue of Teilhard de Chardin (Mr tayer) by Jean Houston when she encountered him as a young girl. He was man of vision and humanity. A true son of God, in love with wonder he was wondrous himself.

I believe that the greatest evolutionary leap that humanity has experienced and will ever experience is Jesus the Christ. Humanity has not even started to catch up with the one who said, 'you are gods'. The refusal to accept or the misunderstanding of what it means to be made in God's image and a brother/sister of Jesus has led to the violent death of billions. Given the violence that humans inflict on one another for whatever reason, we have a long way to go.

Peter was very sincere when he said that he would never deny his Lord. He reacted to his arrest by taking up the sword to defend him. He defended with violence and probably was prepared to accept the consequences. However when he was told this was not the Way, he gave way to fear. The alternative which Christ his Lord chose is the sort of fidelity that at that stage of his faith Peter was unable to achieve. However after the Resurrection that grace came to him.

Jim Vercoe Austing, *Dannevirke*

cross without redemption?

Paul Sorrell's review of the film *Calvary* (*TM*, August) is well titled, 'The Cross without Redemption'. Clerical paedophilia is indeed the cross of the Body of Christ in our age, and redemption is nowhere in sight.

What does history tell us? Did clerical paedophilia exist in the middle ages? Until we have documentary evidence to the contrary, the answer is no; it is proper to our age alone.

It is not pure coincidence that this poison reared its head at the same time that obedience became the be-all and end-all of priestly life, and the divine balance of trust and obedience was knocked out of kilter. 'Divine' because the Father trusted Jesus (John 10: 29 Knox trans) and Jesus became obedient to the Father.

When the authorities of the Catholic Church are big enough and great enough to trust all their priests, even as Christ trusted Judas, then, and only then, will redemption appear.

Fr Max Palmer OSCO, *Takapau*

objective journalism

Two articles in August's issue demonstrate once again that *Tui Motu* has no interest in objective journalism.

☞ 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.

In 'Time to Share the Land', Cecily McNeill makes not the slightest condemnation of the terrorist organisation sthat is Hamas. All one has to do is Google 'Hamas Charter' to find out everything you need to know about Hamas.

In 'Being Real Solid', Shaun Davison makes much of racism against African-Americans in the USA, but I'd like to ask: Who shot Parnell Wilson's cousin? The fact is, black-on-black violence constitutes the majority of the violent crime taking place in America today.

Felix Daniher, *Omokoroa*

exploiting migrant workers

Jim Consedine

As a member of a small task group based at the *Catholic Worker* in Christchurch, I have been working with some of the Filipino migrant workers who have come to Christchurch to help in the re-build. They have left their homes and their families and travelled half-way around the world to bring their skills to the re-build. What we have found after several months' involvement has left us ashamed at some of the exploitative practices being carried out by some construction companies in regard to their workers' pay rates, rental accommodation and living conditions.

Recently, I was at a meeting in a small house with 21 Filipino workers, only a few of whom had been given the jobs promised in their initial contracts. The rest still had no work, hence no income. They had only the promise of work sometime in the future. In addition to leaving their wives and partners, they left nearly 40 dependent children of school age back home. When we met with the migrant workers here, they were broke, relying on charity to get by, uncertain as to what they were allowed to do in relation to their two-year work visas, and worried sick about their families and the fact that they couldn't support them from here with their wages. The tradesmen — they were all men — had worked in a variety of countries all over the world for some years and were very mature and obviously hardworking. None had experienced this uncertainty before in countries like Qatar, Japan, Saudi Arabia, the Maldives and Dubai, to mention a few. Only in Christchurch were they unplaced and unpaid.

When they came to Christchurch they found themselves in the middle of winter, huddled into sub-standard accommodation in 60-80-year-old houses with little heat, few modern amenities, and no jobs. Being Filipinos, they are often reserved, with English very much a second language. So engagement with their employers who seemed to hold all the cards, they usually found difficult, if not impossible. As a culture, they are deeply religious and deferential to authority, be it employers, the State or the Church. This doesn't mean they don't feel injustice or take it lying down. When you hear them talking on their own, they are passionate about such things. But because they perceive all the cards to be held by the authorities, they are seen by some as being ripe for exploitation. And too many have been exploited right here in Christchurch.

> New Zealand has a proud heritage of giving people a fair go and treating workers with decency and respect. Foreign guests should be treated no differently.

Through pressure from outside sources, the situation outlined above has now been partially rectified. But the same fate awaits other groupings who are left at the mercy of unscrupulous employers.

Some treat their workers well and have few problems. But others appear to have a paternalistic approach to their workforce, displaying a sense of superiority to their 'poorer' foreign workers, who happen to be primarily Asian. Such attitudes are not apparent in their dealings with Australians, the Irish, Scots or English migrant workers. It reflects a deeply ingrained attitude of racism, never acknowledged but poisonous nonetheless.

The company contracts many sign at home in order to come to New Zealand, rarely tell the whole story. They are often tightened up upon arrival. For example, some sub-contractors will claim an hourly rate of say $30 per hour for a qualified tradesman and pay the worker only $23. Everyone appears to be clipping the ticket down the supply chain. The worker usually does not know this. If they do, there is nothing they can do 'without muddying their own patch.' As I say, as a culture, they are unusually deferential to authority.

Few are encouraged to join a trade union and many feel discriminated against if they buck the trend and do so. This is despite the fact that belonging to a union is perfectly legal and is usually the best thing they can do if their wages and conditions are not up to scratch. As First Union secretary, Paul Watson, says 'The free market rhetoric promotes the idea that supply and demand will push the cost of labour up and workers will benefit from that. The reality is the reverse for migrants, as some opportunist employers seek to draw excessive profits by suppressing labour rates often five to six dollars an hour below wages paid to New Zealand workers doing the same job.'

New Zealand has a proud heritage of giving people a fair go and treating workers with decency and respect. Foreign guests should be treated no differently. This is particularly so with so many coming to Christchurch to help us recover so much of what was lost in the quakes and their aftermath. They bring skills, energy and goodwill to the tasks at hand. The Church has for 130 years been insistent upon fair wages for workers and their right to join trade unions for the benefits they provide, not least of which is solidarity with one another and the power to limit exploitation.

It is time employers in Christchurch took note and treated all migrant workers justly. ■

Jim Consedine is a priest of the Diocese of Christchurch and editor of The Common Good.

how to vote?

Elections tease us into thinking. What are the kinds of policies that we really want to have? How are our policies formed? To serve self interest or the wider common good? Equality or inequality? What kind of society do we want to live in?

Mike Riddell

Breaking with all journalistic conventions and possibly contravening the Electoral Act, I'm about to tell you how to vote in the forthcoming election. Your bishops won't direct you, and all the media can do is feed you a steady stream of propaganda in the hope you'll work it out for yourself. Enough pussy-footing around. I intend to lay it on the line for you. But first, allow me to provide some rationale for my transgression of your political autonomy.

The current system is broken. I once had an old Vauxhall that developed an engine knock. For a while I tried to convince myself that it was the fan belt, but deep in my heart I knew it was the fatal sound of bearings. Eventually, in a desperate act, I pulled the sump off, sanded the crankshaft with wet and dry sandpaper, fitted new bearing shells, and threw in an intercessory prayer. I got a few more miles out of the car before it inevitably died.

Neo-liberal capitalism is on a similar journey to the scrapyard. The knocking in its engine has been audible for at least the last decade. But it defies death, propped up by an alliance of self-interested multinationals and partisan spin doctors. The only question is whether this decrepit economic power train will come to an end gently or with a bang. Once the basic engine parts are shot, it's going to be one or the other.

But it's not just the motor that's wonky. The whole political vehicle is in such a state of disrepair it needs ordering off the road. And yet we keep patching it up and marvelling at the entertainment system, seemingly oblivious to the fact we're travelling toward a looming disaster. The New Zealand politcal contest has become, to use the words of Saul Bellow, 'a cross between a popularity contest and a high school debate'.

the kind of society we want?

Individualism is to politics what salt air is to rustbuckets. During the current election campaign you will have been targeted with specific policies, paraded with all the subtlety of a Harvey Norman ad. These tempting baubles are the result of careful research to discover what rocks the boat of people like you. Do you want a tax cut or more spending on health? Is it parental leave or less red tape that rips your nightie? We have what you want …

And therein lies the problem. We've become a nation of political consumers, lured by self-interest. The vast majority vote for whatever suits their personal circumstances the most. Whereas the whole enterprise of politics in a democracy is about so much more than that. It's not what works for me, but who we want to be as a nation. What sort of society do we want to live in?

For people of faith, the concept of common good is a starting point. As Pope Francis says, 'the common good should not be simply an extra, simply a conceptual scheme of inferior quality tacked onto political programmes. The Church encourages those in power to be truly at the service of the common good of their peoples.' Politics is not the marketing of wishlists to individuals, but the shaping of a human community.

In New Zealand we have a triennial opportunity to participate in determining the core values of our society. The work of voting is that of choosing what sort of land we would be proud to be citizens of, not that of asking what would ease our personal circumstances. While the general consensus of commentators is that the nation is sleepwalking toward more of the same, each and every election has the potential to be a circuit breaker.

No Humans Allowed! [*Photo of cows in wetland: Dave Allen, NIWA*]

dream of a fresh start

There was a dream at the heart of our communal journey. It was that of a fresh start. A nation free from the entrenched powers of wealth, where birth did not predetermine your future. A society in which the chance to flourish was as fresh and raw as the landscape. A country unbowed by precedent or status or foreign influence. Migration was an opportunity to reboot the political operating system.

Somewhere it has gone horribly wrong. We have woken to rampant inequality, where those who count in millions scapegoat the most vulnerable members of society as a drain on the national economy. Whole families and communities are locked into cycles of generational poverty, while a coterie accumulate assets beyond their capacity to enjoy. Our socially innovative population has grown compliant to the numbing narcotic of foreign capital; we are lotus-eaters whose only goal is a larger screen to feed our fantasies.

This year, the electoral symbol that encompasses all of this for me is that of our rivers. I grew up swimming in rivers, drinking from rivers, fishing in rivers. Their silver braiding embroidered the land, joining mountains to sea. It is part of my heritage that I wanted my children and grandchildren to enjoy — a *taonga* of which we were *kaitiaki.*

But now we are told that the ability to swim safely in a river is too high a standard to achieve. The recently released National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management aims to make rivers safe to boat or wade in, but not swim. It seems that two-thirds of our rivers are currently unsafe to frolic in. We must revise our expectations. It is toxicity that should be the limit-factor, not recreation.

> Politics is not the marketing of wishlists to individuals, but the shaping of a human community.

power of dollar notes?

Swimming doesn't earn export dollars. Perhaps if we could find a way to monetise it and attract foreign investment, then it would become a priority. For now rivers must remain efficient drains to transfer the waste from dairy farms away to the sea. It is dairy farming that is the economic power train of the economy. Why else would overseas investors be buying up our farms? Only people with no understanding of commerce would resist this boon.

I confess my ignorance. I don't understand why dollar notes are more important than clear rivers. It's beyond my limited imagination why casinos snatch our attention more than children with rickets. I have somehow failed to grasp that cynical arrogance is a higher virtue than simple kindness. In my ignorance, I begin to doubt that businessmen have a more accurate view of the world than parliamentary cleaners. Sometimes I even wonder if it's really inevitable that New Zealand should be a vassal of the United States.

But who am I to challenge orthodoxies? A single voter, with a pen and a paper, and a mind to make a difference. Which brings me back to the notion I started with. I promised to tell you how to vote. So here it is, in words as plain as I can make them. Go into the privacy of your voting booth, cross yourself, and follow the instructions. ■

Mike Riddell is a writer and filmmaker, living in Cambridge.

poverty, inequality, the bible and the election

Here is another take on the link between poverty and ineqality as two of the principal issues facing New Zealand as the election looms. As christians, it is important to view these in the light of our scriptural tradition.

Chris Nichol and Max Rashbrooke

A quarter of New Zealand's one million children live below the poverty line. Many go to school hungry, or without decent shoes or a raincoat. Their parents simply do not have enough money left at the end of the week.

For the biblical writers, as for many Christians today, this is an outrage. They understood the whole point of an economy was to sustain community and protect the most vulnerable. Isaiah, Micah and Zechariah reserve some of their sharpest criticism for rulers who are not committed to ensuring everyone's basic needs can be met. But increasingly we seem intent on securing the peace of the wealthy at the expense of the most vulnerable.

Income inequality is a primary reason we have child poverty in this country. And while we may be appalled at the power inequality wields over New Zealanders who struggle and fail to make ends meet, our shame at the way it drains life from vulnerable people is nothing new.

Inequality is a New Testament headline. Mary, the mother of Jesus, spoke of filling the hungry with good things and sending the rich empty away (Lk 1:46ff). Jesus himself challenged people to sell their possessions and give to the poor (Lk 12:33). He saw inequality as an affront, a disgrace.

Why then have we been so willing to accept the fact of child poverty? Perhaps it's because of a flawed theology that suggests the rich deserve their wealth and the poor are so by their own bad choices. But this misguided prosperity gospel flies in the face of the insight of Genesis that all people are created in the image of God and all entitled to enjoy the fruits of God's creation.

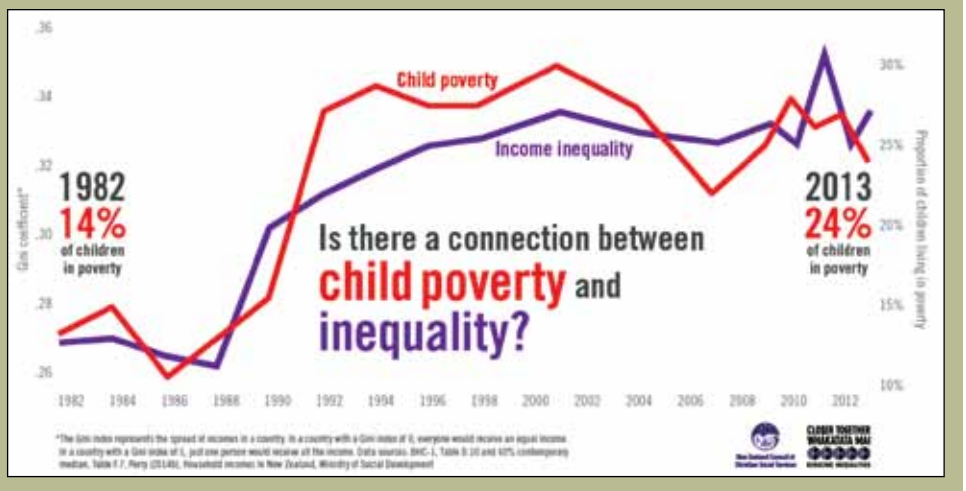
The Jubilee laws in Leviticus propose one way of achieving this. Those who buy up the lands of the poor cannot retain them permanently. While these laws may not envisage an egalitarian society they provided a redistributive mechanism that helped address inequality.

The early church had others. The Jerusalem community shared their goods to ensure everyone had enough. Through the metaphor of the body Paul insists that, in the fellowship of Christ, social status has no importance. He charged the Corinthian church to share its goods with a poorer fellowship (2 Cor 8:13–14). Again and again the Bible affirms the fundamental equality of all people before God and the responsibility of those with wealth to ensure all members of the community enjoy all the necessities of life.

That insight remains true. Until income inequality is addressed the alleviation of poverty remains a pious dream. All of us, rich and poor, must rediscover we are in this together. We cannot build our success in isolation. If we want to see progress on poverty we will need change at the other end of the spectrum.

If we take this seriously there are implications for what we might look for from our would-be political leaders as the election looms. What policies will help close the gap between rich and poor in New Zealand?

All parties have something to say about income inequality, positively or negatively, sometimes both. In trying to identify the most constructive of those it can be useful to distinguish between two groups of policies: those



that directly reduce income gaps immediately, and those that reduce the impact of those income gaps and help prevent them recurring in future.

closing the gaps now

When it comes to policies that directly reduce income gaps, there are three main areas to focus on.

1. Getting people into skilled jobs

One of the first steps towards reducing income gaps is to create more well-paying and rewarding jobs — and make sure people have the skills to fill them. Policies to look out for here include:

- Shifting the economy into high-skilled areas that employ lots of people
- More research and development to stimulate new areas of job growth
- More skills and trade training, so people can take advantage of the opportunities available

2. Closing the salary gap

Once people have work they need to receive a fair reward for their effort. The following suggestions would help ensure a narrower range of salaries:

- Support for a Living Wage (presently $18.80) paid by organisations that can afford it
- Encouraging stronger collective bargaining to give low-paid staff more bargaining power
- Pay ratios linking top and bottom pay, and more transparency about how high pay is set

3. Tax and benefits

There will always be people unable either to work or to find the right job right now. And there are tens of thousands of people doing important unpaid work, like child-rearing. They all deserve better support and this can be achieved by increasing payments to beneficiaries, especially those with children

We can also use our tax system to ask those who can to contribute more through:

- A more progressive tax system with higher rates for top earners
- A capital gains tax so that tax is paid on all income

the impact of income gaps

We can also invest more in softening the present impact of inequality and breaking the cycle of poverty. Three areas matter most here: education, health and housing, and democracy.

1. Education

Schools can offer all children the chance to realise their potential. This helps reduce the influence of family background on their life choices and provides a long-term route out of poverty. Policies to look out for here include:

- Support for a high-quality public system encouraging schools to collaborate
- Boosting teachers' training so they can maximise their students' potential
- Supporting high-quality early childhood education as a 'head start' in life

2. Health and housing

Good health is crucial to people's chances of earning a decent income. Good quality health care should be available to all. We need warm, safe houses that don't make us sick. That means policies like:

- A Warrant of Fitness for all homes so children have somewhere safe to grow up
- Improving access to primary healthcare so we can tackle more health problems at source
- A commitment to reducing health inequalities

3. Democracy

Democratic participation in New Zealand is declining. But we are likely to move towards a fairer future only if everyone has a genuinely equal political voice. This means encouraging parties that offer:

- Support for high-quality public broadcasting as a means of keeping people informed
- New ways for people to be involved in politics, like devolving public funding to communities
- Developing measures of progress beyond GDP, such as national well-being

Many more things could be added to this list. But parties ticking most or all of these boxes will make a significant difference in the battle against inequality.

It's up to us what values we want our economy and policy settings to cultivate. Policies reflecting a biblical vision, with genuinely human interests at heart, will safeguard everyone's participation in society, including poor and vulnerable people. Policies that penalise the poor in the interests of the rich undermine this goal. But that's the direction we've let ours drift. It's time for a re-alignment. ■

Chris Nichol and Max Rashbrooke write on behalf of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services.

For more information about income inequality see:
www.closertogether.org.nz

Prayer for Aotearoa New Zealand in an election year

God, give us a vision of our country

As a land of tolerance where all races and creeds can live together in unity,

A land of justice where basic human rights are respected,

A land of compassion where poverty is unknown and oppression is ended,

And a land of peace where order does not depend on force.

God, help us to make this vision our reality.

Amene.

— Ron O'Grady

forming the cloak of community

This article provides an overview of the five priorities of the Gospel Manifesto 2014 which Tui Motu *has brought to readers in its last five issues.*

Vaughan Milner

In an increasingly secular society with diverse ethnic groups and many faiths, a Gospel Manifesto has to engage the spiritual and a sense of inclusive community to be relevant.

From this angle, it is often the heart-felt tug of community *aroha* or compassion that inspires the pursuit of social justice. When we reach out in love to others, we acknowledge our interdependence and one-ness. In Hildegard of Bingen's terms, it is through this empathy in action that we recognize we are feathers on the breath of God.

shameful signs of breakdown

It is shameful in modern day Aotearoa that there are many signs of societal breakdown and of gaps and fragmentation across society. Statistics and a variety of international reports tell us we are not doing so well in raising our children, having affordable homes to live in, equitable access to adequate income, or restoration and reconciliation. There is also a looming bulge in the numbers of older people and increasing evidence of social isolation and poverty particularly amongst elders who don't own their own homes. This graying group of the vulnerable will put greater pressure on health services and increase demand for affordable housing and access to adequate care and support.

The breath of God needs freshening and the feathered cloak of community restored if New Zealand is to regain its place as God's own and be a genuinely just and fair society.

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services publicized a call for action in 2007. Many of the issues still require attention. The Council promoted an injection of Government funding to eliminate poverty by providing adequate income to those on benefits at 60 percent of median disposable income; strengthened control of gambling; low cost and culturally appropriate credit alternatives for those on low incomes struggling with debt; increased investment and more social and affordable housing; implementation of *Te Tiriti* in social policy.

The five priorities of the Gospel Manifesto

- *Every Child Counts*
- *Healthy Homes Lead to Healthy Lives*
- *Gross Inequality Costs Everyone*
- *Towards a Less Punitive and Fearful Society*
- *NZ as a Better World Neighbour*

adequate income and poverty

The issue of adequate income and poverty has been put in the too hard basket by successive Governments and business leaders. New Zealand's low wage economy relies heavily on Working for Families and Tax credits yet at the same time many large companies are returning very healthy profits to small groups of shareholders. Similarly, pay differences between highest and lowest paid within some sectors, and between some sectors, have become the subject of much debate and concern. Contemporaneously benefit payments to those unable to work (apart from superannuitants), create a poverty trap. Somewhere there must be a fairer balance able to be achieved. The current national government (or a new government) is well positioned to capitalise on its economic successes, provide ethical social leadership, and do something about poverty. It is promoting balanced budgets and making much of the performance of the economy. Reform of health, education, justice and welfare is well advanced.

Fundamental reform of the income and tax systems should now be a top priority. A capital gains tax would enable redistribution of money to the worse off. Regulatory control to reduce pay differences would free up some money to redistribute to lower paid workers; employer tax incentives and penalties could similarly boost wages and enable retargeting of some Government working for families funds to beneficiaries. Everyone would be better off, and some companies and individuals would reap greater triple bottom line rewards from their increased social contribution.

affordable housing

Unaffordable housing is one of the major causes of poverty. The Government is currently reforming the way it administers income related rental subsidies. There is further scope

Vaughan Milner

to reform this area significantly by targeting the accommodation supplement to benchmark rents related to tenants' income, and to housing that meets standards for energy efficiency and health. This measure could be used to incentivise rentals that cost 30 percent or less of income. Such a measure might also have the result of driving highly geared or unscrupulous landlords out of the market and freeing up housing for home ownership or for socially minded landlords. Perhaps some form of capitalisation of accommodation supplement for low income earners could become another mechanism for access to home ownership.

effects of social isolation

One of the insidious effects of poverty is that of social isolation and being alone. There is a vicious circle whereby lack of funds often accompanied by health or functional issues leads to withdrawal from social networks and loss of confidence and identity. Over time there is an accompanying erosion of respect and acceptance from the wider community, leading to greater vulnerability and marginalisation. We all have a part to play in helping others to feel included so they can be aware and active in their community and accept their roles, functions and responsibilities. Individual responsibility is built on the accountability that comes through reciprocity, feeling that you belong, are respected and valued, and can contribute in a meaningful way. This personal engagement as part of community is not straightforward because everyone is so different, and liking and respecting others tugs at our emotional core — our hopes and fears.

the cloak of community

There is however a wider collective sense that forms the cloak of community. It is this sense that enables people to find a place, to be supported and to take part. There is no doubt maintaining a sense of community is an enduring challenge for each generation. Poverty requires more than charity. Poverty requires a response from hearts and minds, a generosity of spirit and a willingness to make the money go round in a different way. Political and public leadership alongside determined action is essential.

The election campaign creates an opportunity for everyone to debate and do something about the people and groups who are being left behind. We need a commitment to action on child poverty, reducing inequality, affordable housing, and a valued and dignified life with positive choices for our elders society's — *kuia* and *kaumatua*. We should not only be kind to one another but look to ensure the blessings of being in community with one another are fairly shared. ■

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The Gospel Manifesto 2014 has been coordinated by a working group within 'Ecu-Action', an ecumenical grouping under the convenorship of the Rev Dr John England.

Further information on 'Ecu-Action' can be obtained from John England, email: rmpe22@xtra.co.nz

[Detail of feather cloak - Wikipedia]

individualism in an election year

The ideas of the individual and of community have undergone many changes over the centuries. Once again, in our post-modern environment they need to be examined and rejigged. Every human being has dignity and value in a community setting where noone is left out.

Gerard Aynsley

As the date of the New Zealand Election draws near we are once again given the opportunity to consider what our society should be like. It can seem for many of us that modern approaches to government and economics work on the hypothesis that self-interest is the primary driving force of the voting public. Inherent in this approach is the belief that benefits will come to society and the wider community as a consequence of individual interests being met. However, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that we should be rather sceptical about such assumptions. Take for example the evidence of growing inequality and the statistics around child poverty and the growing numbers of young people failing to find meaningful employment. As well as doing things differently maybe there is also a call to *think* differently, an urgent need for a new, less individualistic, mind-set to be formed. Can our Catholic social tradition provide us with a new lens with which to envisage what our society should look like? Before exploring this, I will draw upon the writings of Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, in order to highlight how a modern individualistic mind-set has taken shape and why it is not only practically flawed, but also logically unsound.

a critique of liberal thought

For close to half a century, Charles Taylor has provided a critique to modern society's interpretation of liberal thought. He has addressed a great range of topics: secularism, individualism, morality and politics, and comes with a profound grasp of the philosophies and ideas that

Gerard Aynsley

arose in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment periods. These ideas came to shape the Western mind. While Taylor challenges common preconceptions, he does not propose that liberal thought should be entirely abandoned, nor does he suggest that the Enlightenment ideals of liberty and individual freedom are wrong. Rather, he challenges how liberalism is interpreted and practised from an individualistic standpoint.

fulfilling individual needs?

Taylor proposes that liberal individualism is logically and practically flawed because of the atomistic idea of the human person that arises. This means that the individual is imagined as existing in isolation from others. Society, with this way of thinking, is seen to be formed merely from the sum total of individual choices and with the sole task of fulfilling individual needs. For Taylor, it is incoherent that the individual be imagined as somehow existing outside and apart from society.

The individualism that Taylor critiques manifests itself in a variety of ways. Take for example some of the thinking that undergirds the arguments for a change in legislation to allow for voluntary euthanasia: 'If you're Christian etc, don't have euthanasia … that's your belief and kia ora to that … but if someone wants to end their life … [then that is their choice]' states one respondent on the *Stuff* website in response to an article by Nathaniel Centre Director, John Kleinsman. The suggestion made by Kleinsman that such legislation may have a detrimental impact on society and in particular on the vulnerable seems to hold little sway. Or consider how much emphasis is placed today on the individual's capacity to rise above their state in life as a result of their own enterprise, ability and hard work. This is indeed something noble.

However, too often we downplay the social context in which this occurs. We then conclude that those who don't manage to raise themselves above a state of poverty are simply lazy or cowardly or unmotivated. Never mind about challenging the existence of a level playing field; the playing field by this way of thinking is inconsequential. Interestingly, in the first of the social encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII challenged exactly this way of thinking, insisting that poverty was not a moral problem (the result of laziness, as was commonly thought to be the case) but a social one.

building positive community

As an alternative to liberal individualism, Charles Taylor proposes a form of communitarianism. For Taylor the individual is embedded in society

(not separate from it) and is a product of community relationships. This is not some form of 'collectivism'; as if expressions of individual freedom are to be curtailed. Rather, communitarianism advocates that a positive community setting is crucial for the individual to thrive and it is within this context that individual freedom is formed. Individual and societal interests are not, for Taylor, opposed or in competition. This mirrors the way that Catholic Social Teaching (CST) envisions the relationship of the individual to society.

the heart of cst

The principle of human dignity that lies at the heart of CST urges us not to lose sight of the individual. At the same time the individual is envisaged as one who lives within and finds meaning within a social framework — as a family member, friend, neighbour, workmate, etc. Individual choices occur in this framework and invariably impact on the social fabric. Similarly, although an individual has the capacity to form judgements and decisions, making choices that will affect them as an individual, the social fabric will in turn influence how individual choices are made.

The Church has long had a theological language to express human dignity — drawing on the scriptural ideal that we are all created in the image of God and on a natural law understanding of humanity (the individual as well as society as a whole) as having a transcendent (divine) origin and a transcendent end. An overplaying of the transcendent end to which life is directed has resulted at times in the ignoring of here-and-now realities.

The Church's social documents counter this tendency by grounding Christian thinking in the real concerns of the day — how workers are treated; alleviating hunger and challenging its existence; upholding the environment, etc. It is also the case, however, that if we lose a sense of the transcendence of the human being our concerns will be so grounded in here-and-now realities that deeper truths will be forgotten. CST, founded as it is on this transcendent vision of the human person and society, insists that just having enough food in your belly is not sufficient for a full human life; that economic prosperity cannot be our sole concern; that peace is not simply the absence of war and that the work we do needs to be meaningful.

valuing every human being

The social teaching of the Church reminds us that if society is structured in such a way that each individual is not valued and if society requires the participation of only some of her members, then there is something fundamentally flawed with that society. CST helps expand our outlook beyond mere self-interest to a concern for the other. Therefore, what mind-set do we bring to the polling booth? Can we and the party we vote for seek something more than self-interest? Are we voting for a political vision that upholds the dignity of the individual while stressing the need for a society where the good of all is sought? When we consider the social challenges mentioned in the first paragraph there is little doubt we need to do some things differently. Maybe the gradual forming of a new, less individualistic mind-set, and making this our voting criteria, will assist us in forging a new way forward. ■

Gerard Aynsley is a priest of the Diocese of Dunedin, and a philosopher.

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ARRUPE NEW ZEALAND

stepping stones to hope

Using appropriate Aotearoan metaphors, the author seeks to draw us further in our dreaming about the needs and values which will be the stepping stones to a better future for our grandchildren.

Out of my study window high above Blueskin Bay, the eye wanders up the coast as far as Matanaka, shrouded in morning mist. Manuka fronds wave in front of me, pittosporum, akeake, broadleaf, the rustling cabbage trees. The bird-life is a delight, their aerial traffic as much as their song. For medieval people birds signified the soul. You can see why.

In these idyllic surroundings it is easy to light a candle for peace, for friends in trouble, for a breath of graciousness to touch the ungracious world of politics. And, of course, you need only to watch programmes such as *Campbell Live*, to realize that generosity, thoughtfulness, communal spirit are by no means dead in Godsown. People respond in hordes when issues are personalized. Sympathy flows for individual victims of flooding, or insurance delays, or health breakdowns, because people can put a face on the problem. The tough question, though, is how to generate such energies in the wider social and political scene. On the national level where has our moral imagination gone? What transcends the push for sectional and personal needs and greeds in the political realm?

> How do we find a window of hope onto long-term, redemptive policies, recover some sense of our core values?

Our medical centres, childcare facilities, old people's homes, our schools, and social services are the arteries which channel life through the body politic. But if such arteries start narrowing is it enough to insert stents here and there as each particular crisis raises its head? It was seriously suggested by one of our abler local politicians when a therapeutic pool lost its funding that patrons would just have to pay their way. A typical market economy solution! But who are these patrons? We are talking about the vulnerable, the biblical widows and orphans, those for whom any half-decent society makes provision. Such cuts in services raise the question what our core values are.

Our heads are down, though. Successive blows to corporate welfare have left us somewhat punch-drunk. Resignation Rules OK! How do we lift our heads when it comes to planning for equity, for sustainability, for a healthy democracy? What are the stepping-stones for that journey?

Little point, I believe, in blaming the politicians. We know that they inhabit an anything but idyllic world. John Key talked recently of

19-hour days. Clamant issues apart, our political leaders have to cope with the rasp of aggressive interviewers, the urgent demands of constituents, the muck-raking of opponents. In their world smooth-talking see-saws with personal polemics. No place for the soul there!

So how do we bring hope, graciousness into their situation? (Discourage these ludicrously long work-days, for one!) Or into ours as their constituents? Let's drop our habitual problem-seeking and analyses for the moment. How do we find a window of hope onto long-term, redemptive policies, recover some sense of our core values?

Cilla McQueen's latest collection of poetry, *An Island*, dances its way through a succession of images: coastline, shelter, altar, beacon, well, island. Let's ask some different questions: Where are the beacons of hope for our inner cities, our suburbs, our rapidly emptying country towns? What is sacred for us, what altars do we worship at today? Where will the over-crowded families in Auckland find shelter, or the disabled folk in Dunedin, threatened with the removal of their precious therapeutic pool, their one relief from stiffness and pain. As the voluntary societies struggle to keep going and the churches empty out, how do we locate the wells where we can slake our thirst for justice, savour snatches of good news, nourish friendships?

Let's start with the well. The Renaissance and the 16th century Reformations were fired up by Erasmus's call to leave the muddy lagoon of contemporary culture and tap into the pristine sources of the apostolic age, of classical Greece and Rome. Where are our wells, our pristine waters, here in Aotearoa? Well, we have unparalleled access in this land to beach and bush and hills, to the crash of the surf and the awesome silence of the wilderness. If we drink deep from that it will slow us down, sober us up, take us out of ourselves, not just on holiday or at retreat, but as a constant reminder in the day-to-day business of living that we are part of a quite wondrous creation.

So we have wells to draw on. But surely we also have our beacons? On St John's Day, midsummer, fires used to light up the hills in old Europe. You will have your own list of light-throwers, great prophetic figures, such as Rutherford Waddell, Kate Sheppard, James K Baxter, and all the humbler men and women who took fire from them. Their craggy witness still flares out to inspire us.

What is sacred for us? Where are our altars? The network of marae across our land is a quite unique feature of our country. Latin used to be the sacred language. Today, increasingly, to mark an occasion we call on *te reo*. It lifts us out of the habitual, challenges the chit-chat and the argy-bargy. Sacred space, threshold crossing …

Shelter. Where are our sanctuaries, our safe-houses, refuges? One fine Iona prayer names the church as the shelter-house of the poor. Many of our churches still deserve that name. We can be proud of that. But we can all think of other sanctuaries as well.

Coastline. Let's trace in our head the bays and inlets, the in-and-outness, up-and-downness of our land.

Peter Matheson

Remember the raw energy of settlers determined to hammer out a better life for their children, to get away from a class-ridden, cap-doffing society to a more equitable one. Practical, if partial, utopias.

Island. Every city needs an island. We leave home in order to come home, to find — away from it all —where we really belong. To advance we must first retreat, gain distance from the immediacies. The way we spend our money, the degree to which our taxation system is progressive, the priority we give to social and cultural projects is the best litmus test of our values.

Maybe we can use images like these as stepping stones. There's nothing wrong with dollars, with economics, with accounting, with doing the profit and loss stuff, with enhancing GDP. It just needs to be for something. So what are we really on about as a little country at the far end of the world? What solidarity do we feel with endangered island neighbours such as Kiribati? Maybe a metaphor or two will help us to sharpen up our expectations as the election campaign gets under way, and to nudge the candidates to rise above point scoring.

As voters, what do we see as the core values which need to be given national priority not just in rhetoric but in action? How does each candidate's party programme shelter the vulnerable, steward the resources of land and sea for future generations, offer work and creative vision to our young people, draw on wells that meet the thirst for human life in its fullness? And let's ask the candidates straight out: Why should we trust you and your leaders? What code do you personally live by? Where do you see Aotearoa/New Zealand heading in your grandchildren's time? ■

Peter Matheson is a retired principal of Knox Theological College living and writing in Blueskin Bay, Waitati, Dunedin.

Kapayapáa Pokój Smirom Friede Rauha Sìth سلام Maluhia Friður
Runyaro Vakaçegu Iow Maungãrongo Béke Miers Lâfí Keamanan

Vrede Pasch **PEACE** Rukun Heddwch Paco Khotso Filemū Paix שלום Peoc'h Pace Mir Isithangami

Come let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.

Then God will judge between the nations and arbitrate between many peoples. *They will hammer their swords into ploughshares and their spears into sickles.* Nation will not lift sword against nation, no longer will they learn how to make war.

— Isaiah 2:3-4

"All [war] seriously offends God and seriously offends humanity. You cannot bring hatred in the name of God. You cannot make war in the name of God!"

— Pope Francis (7 August 2014, Angelus message)

memory and guarantee

It is in the bonds of communitaran spirit that the humane 'other' is revealed, just as Jesus at the Last Supper revealed himself to us in the deepest way as the infinitely loving and giving Other.

Laetitia Puthenpadath

Recently, while attending a conference, twenty of us were taken out to dinner. With me at the table were several Jewish participants. When they heard where I originally came from, one of them began to describe her recent tour of the city Kochi in Kerala, South India, where I was born and where I spent my formative years. She was so touched by the historical fact that the Jews were totally protected in the ancient kingdom of Kochi, to the extent that the king, as a precautionary measure, built underground passages connecting his palace and the Jewish quarter. In the case of any unforeseen violence, the ruler was making sure that the Jewish community could gain safe access into the king's palace. I was thrilled to witness her delight in the memory that in a distant past, a place existed on earth where the safety of her people was guaranteed by the sovereign himself. The other Jews at the table wanted to know my personal memories of the Jewish people of my city. I told them that if I closed my eyes right then, I was back in the beautiful streets where exclusive Jewish shops did their trade and I was able to evoke in my mind the sights, sounds and aromas of those yesterdays. For me, this dinner became one of the most memorable events of the conference.

a eucharistic moment

My experience of the dinner gave me fresh insight into the mystery of the Eucharist. In fact, this dinner became for me, in the terminology of Michael Barnes SJ a 'eucharistic moment'. On the night before his passion, Jesus shared a meal with his disciples to remember the past thereby making sense of the present. In doing so, Jesus attempted to guarantee his disciples a future in God. The dinner I celebrated with my Jewish friends, due to the sharing of memories, created a spirit of trust between us which guaranteed emotional safety for them while providing me with a profound sense of meaning. They were guaranteed the freedom to be visibly Jewish in my presence; I was no longer a stranger from another country, race and culture, but rather a humane 'other' who unmistakably cherished their Jewishness. We shared an emotional bond with each other guaranteeing the emergence of a communitarian spirit.

Later on, upon reflection, I realised that two millennia before, what Jesus did, opened for me this possibility of community. The sense of community that I was experiencing today was the realisation of the promise he made to his disciples. This was the future he wanted them to anticipate. Because only in the Spirit of Jesus are we attractive to one another and only in the Spirit are we able to create bonds of love.

An Indian Jewish family of Kochi (Cochin), India. [*Wikipedia*]

jesus' last passover meal

The first Eucharist was nothing like the celebratory dinner I shared with my Jewish friends. The ambiance of the last supper was dark and foreboding. A frightened and confused group of disciples gathered around the table for the Passover meal. Jesus was well aware of his disciples' fragile state of mind

Laetitia Puthenpadath

and of the imminent threat to his life. He had every reason to believe that all of them would leave him at the dangerous moment and one of them would even walk away from the eucharistic table as a traitor. Under intense emotional distress, Jesus was drawn out of himself into the extremity of symbolic thought.

The institution of the Eucharist, with its radical symbolism, was an unparalleled act of imaginative love. Jesus realised that the act of breaking the bread and sharing the cup was symbolic of how he himself would be broken and his blood spilled within a few hours. He identified himself totally with the broken bread and the cup of wine shared. He inscribed his identification in the mind of the fragmented community of disciples present at the table. This foundational moment in time is etched in the collective memory of the community of faith of all ages. Gestating within the womb of this memory is the guarantee that whenever the community gathers in his name, the enlivened Jesus is present. The guarantee is ultimately about Jesus overcoming death and entering into the reality of Christ and thus achieving the fulfilment of his earthly mission, a world restored to God.

Thus the brokenness of the world is ever present within the Eucharist because the very first Eucharist took place in the midst of a very fragmented group of disciples with the master looking squarely at his own imminent violent death. Therefore within the Eucharist there is an ineluctable paradox of an ultimate love and a radical vulnerability. The first Eucharist was the meeting place of the divine rendered vulnerable by its self-giving love, and of humanity in its basic fault lines encountering the divine.

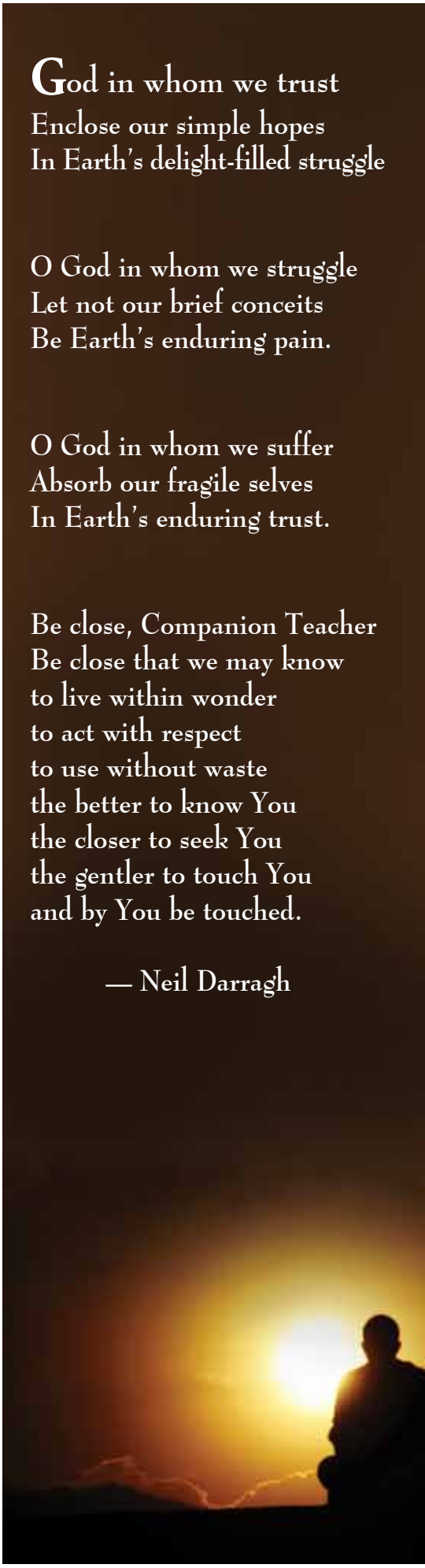
awakenened to mystery

In every celebration of the Eucharist, we are awakened to the mystery of the infinite love of the master, broken in death but risen to be the 'new creation' (Gal 6:15) and his unfailing bond with the fragmented and still fragmenting community. The risen Jesus is someone the world had never experienced before. Because of his resurrection, we are guaranteed the completion of Jesus' redemptive act in the fullness of time. In the risen Jesus, the guarantee of healing and wholeness awaits the fractured world as its inheritance, even though it does not know that it is so deeply loved.

Hence Eucharist is not a triumphant celebration of the totally redeemed. The faith community is still ruptured and continues to be cracked open. But as the second letter of Peter proclaims, 'What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heaven and the new earth the place where righteousness will be at home' (2 Peter 3:13). This is the pledge of Jesus, a world redeemed, a universe coming alive with the Spirit of Jesus.

This is our shared narrative. ■

Laetitia Puthenpadath, a member of the Anashim Community in Auckland, is a registered psychotherapist and a staff member of Mercy Spirituality Centre, Auckland.



ben salmon, a 'confessor of the faith'

This is the story of Ben Salmon, a barely known Catholic conscientious objector during the First World War in the USA. He faced opposition from government, the Catholic church and the military, but held out in an extraordinary example of non-violent discipleship. His story of 'the army of peace' deserves to be better known.

John Dear

One of the inspiring Christians of the last century was Ben Salmon, the American Catholic conscientious objector to World War I. His was a lonely, steadfast stretch of discipleship to the nonviolent Jesus.

Imagine! Long before Mahatma Gandhi, Franz Jagerstatter, Dorothy Day — before the Catholic Worker or Pax Christi, before Archbishop Romero, Vatican II or the Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Peace — this lone man stood and said that because of Jesus, he would not be a soldier.

The story begins on April 6, 1917, the day President Wilson declared war on Germany, and Congress ratified the decision. Two weeks later, Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore issued a letter: all Catholics were to support the war. This was followed by the founding of the US Bishops' 'National Catholic War Council' — to mobilize Catholics for 'war work.' Peacework? Peacemaking? That was never an option.

the crucial letter

As the darkness descended, on June 5, 1917, 28 year-old Ben Salmon took up his pen. He wrote to the president, saying he would refuse to fight. 'Regardless of nationality,' he wrote, 'all men are my brothers … The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is unconditional and inexorable … The lowly Nazarene taught us the doctrine of non-resistance, and so convinced was he of the soundness of that doctrine that he sealed his belief with death on the cross. When human law conflicts with Divine law, my duty is clear. Conscience, my infallible guide, impels me to tell you that prison, death, or both, are infinitely preferable to joining any branch of the Army.'

A brave missive in those days. Congress wasted little time getting a new law outlawing activities 'detrimental to the war effort' — public anti-war statements, anti-war literature, utterances that might encourage draft resistance — all these punishable by up to 20 years behind bars. The authorities arrested hundreds, harassed thousands. And the law was upheld by the Supreme Court; necessary for 'national security,' they decreed.

Undeterred, Ben rose to leadership in Denver's 'People's Council for Democracy and Peace,' a national anti-war organization. In defiance of law, he wrote letters, gave speeches, and distributed pamphlets catching the attention of *The New York Times,* which hotly denounced him.

refusing registration

On Christmas day, Ben's Army registration arrived. Ben returned it, accompanied by a letter explaining, 'Let those that believe in wholesale violation of the commandment, "Thou Shalt not Kill" make a profession of faith by joining the army of war. I am in the army of peace, and in this army, I intend to live and die.'

On January 15, 1918, Denver policemen arrived at his door. The Knights of Columbus, the prominent Catholic lay association, in a fit of indignation revoked his membership. In March he was tried and convicted and sentenced to nine months' jail.

While he was out on appeal, his draft notice arrived. Report for induction, it ordered, in three days. A second refusal, a second arrest. And this time in the clutches of the military authorities he was hustled into solitary confinement at Fort Logan, Colorado.

At Fort Logan Ben was ordered to work. He refused. What to do about this trouble-maker? Guards and other prisoners nearly lynched him that night. And so the authorities trundled him, in chains, to Camp Funston in Kansas. There they told him he would face court martial for 'desertion and propaganda.' For desertion? 'I've never actually been inducted,' he said. On July 24, 1918 in his own defense, he argued three points. 1) He had been inducted illegally, 2) he was responsible for a dependent wife and mother, and 3) conscription violated the first and fifth Amendments.

more imprisonment

The court found Salmon guilty; the verdict came down in minutes. The sentence: death. Second thoughts came, and before long the court commuted the sentence to 25 years in prison. More second thoughts came, with lures and enticements. Be a legal clerk in an army office, they offered, and no more troubles. All charges dropped. His wife, having just given birth, urged him to accept, but the recalcitrant Ben again said no. Even non-combatant service, he said, entails cooperating with an institution 'antithetical to Christianity.'

They hauled him under heavy guard to Leavenworth, Kansas. He arrived on October 9, 1918, and a month later an armistice was declared. The war was over. But not for Ben; his imprisonment had just begun.

Ben was assigned to a unit comprised of hundreds of conscientious objectors and there, with them, expected to work. He was quickly consigned to 'The Hole' — solitary confinement — when he refused all orders. Five months he suffered in a

Conscientious objectors at Ft. Douglas (Utah), Oct. 18, 1919. Ben Salmon is marked '54'. [*Swarthmore College Peace Collection*]

dark, rat-infested cell. No toilet but a pail, bread and water his only food.

Matters grew worse yet when in June, 1919, the authorities transferred him to a military prison in Utah, where sadistic guards took a dim view of conscientious objectors. The guards inflicted beatings, withheld food and kept prisoners underdressed against the cold.

ben's appeal

Still, Ben refused to buckle, and instead pushed things to their logical conclusion. A hunger strike. He wrote to the Secretary of War: 'Unless you [release me], you will cause my death from starvation, for I cannot honestly continue to support [the God of War] as I have in the past. I now realize that even the tiny bit of assistance that I was rendering in the way of accepting your food was too much.'

And he added: 'Christ's doctrine to overcome evil with good' is the 'most effective solution for individual and societary ills that has ever been formulated. It is a practical policy … My life, my family, everything is now in the hands of God. His will be done.'

Two weeks later death loomed and Ben asked to see a priest. The priest refused to offer him Communion, hear his confession or anoint him. Two other priests arrived some days later. After sizing things up, one of them agreed to the request for Communion. The sacrament was done. When word made its way back to the diocese, a fury descended. The priest was sent packing. Off to minor and punitive assignments in Oregon for pitying a traitor.

Force-feeding followed — 135 days of it — then a one-way ticket to Washington DC to St Elizabeth's Hospital for the Insane. While there he kept busy — thinking, praying and writing.

ben's theological thinking

Much of Salmon's thinking depended on the Apostle Paul, who admonished. 'Overcome evil with good,' (Rom 12:21).

'We do not attempt to overcome lying with lies; we overcome it with truth. We do not try to overcome curses with curses, but we overcome with silence or with words of friendship … And the successful way to overcome the evil of war is by the good of peace, a steadfast refuse to render evil for evil.'

A sad matter when faithfulness, nonviolence, sanity, as it was in Jesus' own day, is regarded as — insanity.

Eventually, adamant feelings were assuaged. *The New York Times*, previously Ben's detractor, wrote about his plight and hunger strike. The well-respected Msgr John Ryan of Catholic University personally lobbied the Secretary of War.

The War Department, in a feeble way, finally relented — they would release 33 conscientious objectors, Ben among them. Thanksgiving 1920, he was released and, from the army he had never joined, dishonorably discharged. This was front page news across the nation.

Persona non grata thereafter, Ben struggled to find work. With the Depression, he and his family landed in deep poverty. His health never recovered — the forced feedings had taken their toll — and in 1932 he caught pneumonia and died — a man all but unheard of in our day and age.

confessor of the faith

Ben Salmon isn't just a faithful Catholic, but a 'confessor of the faith,' a saint for the ages. He took on the nation, he took on Christendom. He took them on in reverence toward the Christ of peace. He shows us what allegiance to the nonviolent Jesus looks like.

Since Ben's days, little has changed. A handful of great peacemakers have been given us: Franz Jagerstatter and Dorothy Day, Philip Berrigan and Howard Zinn. Yet most bishops and priests, and following their lead, most of the laity, still cheer on state-sanctioned mass murder, especially when committed in Jesus' name. They go along, they rock few boats.

Among our US military, a third are Catholic. Vastly more theologians than not, pursue justifications for war. And today, as in Ben's own day, an eloquent president, elected on promises of peace, has taken war-making to new heights. The times, Ben's and ours, run parallel. And that being the case, one of the brightest beacons we have is Ben.

His example urges us to refuse to cooperate with the war-making state. Is the stand costly? Are the stakes high? No matter. 'Peacemaking is hard, hard almost as war,' to quote the poet. The vocation falls to us, Christians everywhere, to follow the nonviolent Jesus.

May we all be inspired to join Ben's Army of Peace. It is the witness most required by our times. ■

John Dear is a priest and a life-long advocate of peace and non-violence. This is an abridged version of an article published with the author's permission.

commemorating the first world war

Honouring those who died in war without glorifying war itself is an important historical task in order to help the present generation gain insight into the terrible reality that war is, and its immense costs on society.

Tom Brooking

The term 'lest we forget' seen on so many of our World War One memorials now relates to more than just observing anniversaries because capturing stories from the descendants of those who experienced war may help explain the legacy of this seminal, yet little understood, event in New Zealand's history.

Local committees organising events and exhibitions to show the war's effect on their communities are trying hard to catch the multiple meanings of Rudyard Kipling's famous phrase. Commemorations are aiming to reflect the tragedy and scale of the loss of life, honouring the soldiers' sacrifice without glorifying it, in a manner that is relevant to current generations and helps them to gain insight into the harsh realities of war. It's a challenge, because it was such an important event in our history. We must give some understanding of the impact on those who went, on the home front and on post-war society.

war's beginning

Although now viewed in light of the tragedy and loss associated with the conflict, patriotism and fervour combined to create an almost jubilant mood when New Zealand entered the conflict in late 1914, with perhaps more than 80 percent of people, men and women, supporting the war. Explaining this excitement 100 years on is complex.

Most recent migrants were from Anglo-Celtic countries and 'New Zealanders' in the early 1900s were British subjects who often referred to Britain as Home with a capital 'H', even if they had been born here. Although the former British colony of New Zealand had been granted dominion status in 1907, an imperialistic political mindset prevailed at the outbreak of war.

During the Boer War (1899-1902) we gained a reputation as the most loyal of the self-governing colonies. Our troops were good horsemen suited to mobile warfare and rugged terrain, and we didn't suffer high losses. Accident and disease accounted for most casualties, with only about 75 dying in combat and a further 153 dying from disease or as a result of accidents. Hence memorials associated with this war tend to be triumphant expressions of imperial might, resplendent in white marble.

The widespread desire to serve King and Empire was reflected in 1914 in the high rates of volunteers. About 37 percent of eligible men joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces and other armed services, a very similar level to Australia and Britain.

Despite a lack of modern equipment, New Zealand was relatively well prepared for hostilities; 30,000 troops were war ready in 1914, most of whom had taken part in school cadet programmes (introduced in 1877) and compulsory military training (introduced in 1909). After 1910, British General Alexander Godley had overseen national training and, although he had a mixed reputation as a wartime commander, he had organised the army and prepared for deployment scenarios such as the occupation of German Samoa, which was New Zealand's first act of war on 29 August 1914.

Most New Zealanders were keen to enter the war for 'sentimental and pragmatic' reasons; many felt it was the country's imperial duty but If we wanted continued access to the greatest trading block the world had ever seen and the lucrative London market we would have to earn our place.

New Zealand's agriculture-based pre-war prosperity increased during the war after the British introduced the war commandeer system, which guaranteed prices of produce at about 50 percent above market rates. Exports buoyed the economy and tax did not increase to the same extent as it did in Britain under Lloyd George. Inflated land prices, though, hurt returned soldier settlers and others starting out in farming.

opposition to war

With the exception of small pacifist denominations, most churches supported the war. Some first-wave feminists and the socialists were other minorities that voiced strong opposition.

The tale of Brighton farmer Archibald Baxter — father of poet James K Baxter — highlights the treatment of the few conscientious objectors. Despite imprisonment at Trentham Military Camp, transportation to France and brutal treatment, Baxter's resolve was undiminished and a Dunedin group is working to have a memorial erected recognising his courageous stand against the establishment.

Later, the publication of casualty lists, the return of the wounded, and the failure of the Gallipoli campaign saw an element of 'quiet disillusionment' develop. Against the backdrop of majority support a few regional newspapers began to voice criticism of the war. By war's end about 18,800 of 103,000 New Zealand troops sent overseas had been killed and over 40,000 wounded.

Infantry from the 2nd Battalion, Auckland Regiment, New Zealand Division in the Switch Line near Flers, taken some time in September 1916. {*Wikipedia]*

effects of war

Some argue we were already New Zealanders by the end of the Boer War and the war consolidated this sense of national identity. We need to get away from the notion that the nation was born on the bloody slopes of Gallipoli — that is too simplistic. Also, one tenth of the population went to war, what about the other 90 percent? In many ways we were more imperialistic after the war and only about eight of the 450 plus memorials have any New Zealand originality about them.

As the colonial experiences of previous generations were incorporated into a more nostalgic view of society, prominent interwar figures were vocal supporters of the British Empire. Before the war leaders such as Richard Seddon were nationalist first, then imperialist. Later leaders such as William Massey shifted the balance to imperialist nationalist. Also, many educators, like Frank Milner (headmaster of Waitaki Boys' High School between 1906 and 1944), were ardent imperialists.

Several hard-hitting books, published in the 1930s – such as Robin Hyde's 1931 novel *Passport to Hell*, *The Silent Division* and Baxter's *We Will Not Cease* — also prompted a reevaluation of the impact of the war.

The experiences of Premier Richard Seddon's three sons show how the fortunes of war could smile, or otherwise, on those who served. Richard junior was a professional soldier who had served in the Boer War and was killed in France in 1918 while serving as an infantry Captain. The second son Thomas returned after being decorated for bravery, served as a long-standing Member of Parliament and helped set up the Braille Society with Clutha Mackenzie, son of former Prime Minister Thomas Mackenzie. Seddon's youngest son, Stuart, spent the rest of his life in psychiatric care as a result of trauma experienced at war.

They are roughly representative — about a fifth of those who served were killed or seriously wounded, a fifth had serious health problems and the remainder would have had a range of experiences, from awful to relative normalcy.

the costs of war

The social cost of the war remains relatively little understood. But the effect was somewhat muted as the bulk of men killed were single; there were more orphans and nearly as many widows created by the influenza pandemic of 1918 as by the First World War. New Zealand women raised their public profile through their work in patriotic societies but did not make the gains of their Second World War sisters, who entered traditional areas of male employment.

Post-war, there was a need to move on. However, the proliferation of war memorials throughout the country reflects the profound effect not being able to repatriate those casualties had on subsequent generations. It indicates communal grieving marked in the most elaborate ways even if communities had to pay for these memorials themselves.

Several publications in the 1960s and documentaries such as *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story* (1984) in which 26 survivors of the campaign all aged in their 80s and 90s talked candidly about their experiences, were vital in reintroducing the public to the realities of the conflict. Before then the 'baby-boomers', those born just after the Second World War, grew up in a very martial society and a reaction to that came in the 1960s, specifically in the form of opposition to the Vietnam War. In the late 1970s there was consequently very little interest in the First World War.

Numbers attending Anzac services then took off in the 1990s, as the realization occurred that something pretty extraordinary had happened. Gallipoli remains the focal point for Anzac involvement in the war, even though the majority of casualties occurred in Europe; 2,752 New Zealanders were killed in Gallipoli, whereas more than 13,000 died on the Western Front and 500 in Sinai.

Many young people attend Anzac services because of interest in the human cost and the great tragedy of so many people losing their lives, rather than the greater narratives of nationhood or Empire. That is why national and local commemorative events will emphasize the human aspect, and why future efforts at remembrance are so important. ■

Tom Brooking is a professor of history at the University of Otago.

catholics and the great war

Sectarian tension, charges against Catholics of 'shirking' and arguments over conscription were some of the matters which flared up during World War I. These facts are largely forgotten, and bring a sense of incredulity when recalled. Have you ever heard of the Green Ray*? Read on!*

Seán Brosnahan

As we commemorate the outbreak of war in August 1914, it is worth recalling the special challenges war posed for New Zealand's Catholic community. A recurring accusation was that Catholics weren't enlisting in proportion to their numbers ('shirking' at best, being actively disloyal to Britain at worst). There were sharp conflicts over Irish affairs, conspiracy theories about papal responsibility for the war itself, and arguments about the conscription of clergy and religious brothers. No other major religious group faced such pressures and from the distance of a century it might seem odd that Catholic New Zealanders should have.

Sectarian tension had been a minor theme in New Zealand life from the country's very beginning. Though part of the broader community in most ways, Catholics held themselves distinctly apart in others, notably in education. This separateness had become more marked in the immediate pre-war years. A national organisation (the Catholic Federation) had been established to agitate for state support of the Catholic education system and oppose the pan-Protestant 'Bible in Schools' movement. Meanwhile the Pope offended Protestant sensibilities with his *Ne Temere* decree against the validity of mixed marriages outside the Church. Ongoing agitation in Britain over Irish 'Home Rule' also ratcheted up sectarian ill-feeling here.

The outpouring of patriotic fervour that followed the declaration of war created a new mood of national unity. Social and religious distinctions suddenly seemed petty and were set aside. In Britain this extended to the Irish issue. A bill granting Home Rule for Ireland was passed, to come into force at the conclusion of hostilities. To seal the deal huge numbers of southern Irishmen volunteered for the British Army. Young Catholic men in New Zealand likewise rolled up to recruitment offices to volunteer for war service alongside their mainly Protestant countrymen. Priest chaplains accompanied them overseas, with Auckland's Bishop Cleary leading the way.

So far so good. Catholic New Zealand's young men were paying 'the price of citizenship' with their blood. But then disaster struck. A small group of radical Irish Republicans staged a rebellion in Dublin over Easter 1916. Think of 9/11 to get a sense of the outrage this caused around the Empire. The position of Muslims in America after the World Trade Centre attack is also an apt comparison for the rebellion's implications for New Zealand Catholics. All the old suspicions and sectarian enmities were suddenly reactivated. Protestant New Zealand stridently demanded public demonstrations of 'loyalty' from their Catholic countrymen.

Catholics were initially just as horrified as everyone else by the 'stab in the back' in Dublin. Soon, however, some were having second thoughts. They were privy to news from Ireland of heavy-handed repression by the British authorities in the wake of the failed rebellion that mainstream papers did not publish. Catholic sources also reported growing Irish support for the Republican aspirations of the *Sinn Fein* (Ourselves Alone) movement. This was further than most New Zealand Irish were prepared to go in 1916. Small groups of Irish radicals, however, many of them recent immigrants to New Zealand, were committed to complete Irish independence. They established the Maoriland Irish Society as a ginger group to advocate for the *Sinn Fein* cause. In late 1916 its Dunedin branch began publishing a monthly journal *The Green Ray* to provide a platform for their views. Think of Al Qaeda sympathisers and post 9/11 Jihadi websites.

Aggravating sectarian sensitivities further, the human cost of the war was beginning to bite. Conscription was introduced in New Zealand in late 1916 to enforce 'equality of sacrifice' by balloting those liable to serve (using numbered balls like Lotto but with a ticket to France as the only prize). New Zealand's Irish Republicans were not prepared to serve the British King. Many went 'underground', relying on a network of sympathisers around the country to avoid the police or stowing away on boats to Australia. Those who were caught were imprisoned. Some were subjected to the same ghastly abuse in Army camps as pacifist objectors like Archibald Baxter.

Conscription posed an additional threat to Catholics. By focusing on single men with no family commitments, the ballot system was stacked against Catholic priests, seminarians, and religious brothers. Protestant clergy, mostly married with families,


THE GREEN RAY

ERIN

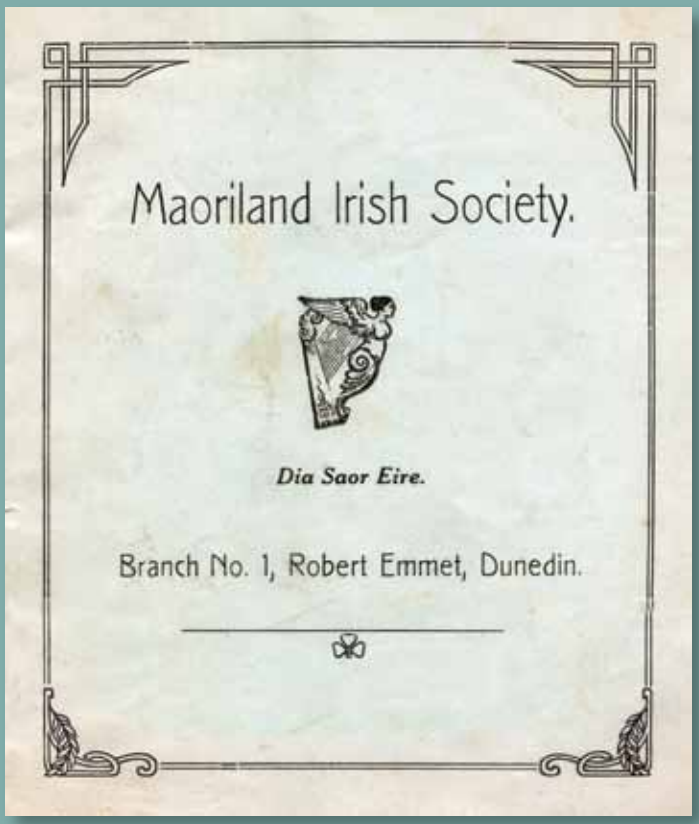
A REVIEW OF CURRENT AFFAIRS, POLITICS, LITERATURE, ART, AND INDUSTRY.

DUNEDIN: JUNE 1, 1918. PRICE SIXPENCE

SINN FEIN WILL SAVE THE SOUL OF IRELAND.

"Sinn Fein needs no vindication from me or anybody else. We had almost ceased to be Irish until Sinn Fein arose and struck the English rust from the soul of Ireland. Unfortunately, that rust had eaten deep, and spoiled many a good Irish heart. For one thing, I hope we are done for ever with that mockery of a Constitution, the English House of Commons.

—Bishop Fogarty.


Maoriland Irish Society.

Dia Saor Eire.

Branch No. 1, Robert Emmet, Dunedin.

Cover images supplied by Seán Brosnahan

were much less likely to face a call up. Unfortunately the government had made no provision for automatic clerical exemptions. When the name of Christchurch's Bishop Brodie appeared in the very first ballot he had to make a formal appeal against his call up. So did every priest or brother whose name was gazetted thereafter. Eventually almost every Marist and Christian Brother in the country received a conscription notice.

There were howls of protest when the religious were not forced to serve. Protestants simply could not understand why these fit and able single men should be excused from doing their duty. To Catholics, however, the Brothers' vows precluded war service. More practically, New Zealand's Catholic boys schools would have collapsed without the Brothers' free labour. It was a bitter debate, which made the name of the Marist Brothers a recurring element in newspaper headlines through 1917, and not in a good way. The government was caught between pressure from irate Protestants and equally vociferous lobbying from Catholic interests. In the end they fudged the matter by effectively granting automatic exemptions for all school teachers.

Meanwhile the *NZ Tablet,* under a fiery new editor Fr James Kelly, had caught up with the *Green Ray* in its support for the *Sinn Fein* cause by mid-1917. This was dangerous ground in the context of wartime, when harsh sedition laws allowed for tight control of the news media. Both journals were skating on thin ice over the next few months and the government contemplated suppressing the *NZ Tablet*. Fearing Catholic reaction, it opted to prosecute the less popular *Green Ray* instead. Police detectives swooped on its Dunedin office and the editor and manager were arrested. They were to spend 11 months in prison doing hard labour for publishing 'seditious utterances'.

While thousands of Catholic men served New Zealand with honour through WW1, their service did not protect the Catholic community from accusations of untrustworthiness. Deep-rooted sectarian enmities and controversy over Ireland proved a potent mix under the pressure of wartime. These long-forgotten controversies are a reminder of New Zealand's dark history of intolerance for minority views. Through the war, and for some years afterwards, Catholics endured a storm of antagonism for their perceived disloyalty to a narrow view of Empire. ■

Seán Brosnahan is Curator of the 'Dunedin's Great War' exhibition at Toitū Otago Settlers Museum.

a listening church 'with large ears'

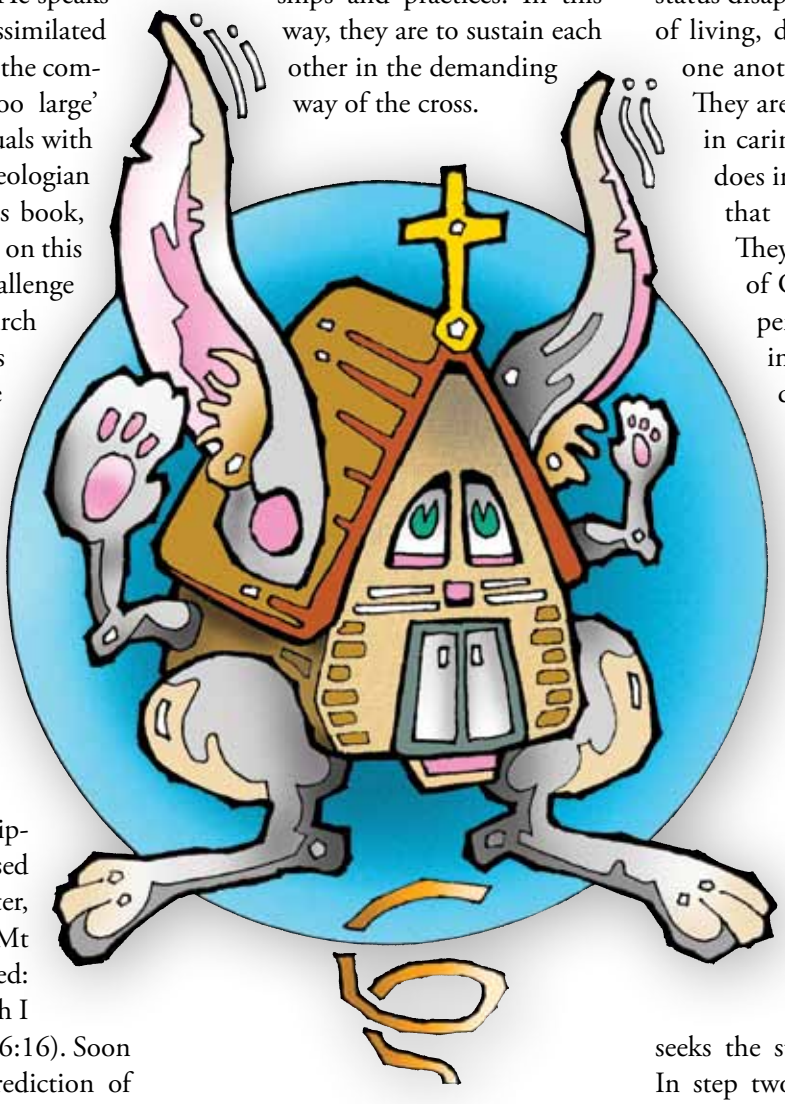
Matthew 18:15-20 and 18:21-35
23rd and 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time – 7 and 14 September 2014

Kathleen Rushton

Among the Manja of the Central African Republic the totem for the chief is the rabbit. Why? This unassuming animal has 'large ears.' The chief's 'large ears' bring him close to God, to the ancestors and to the conversations taking place in the community. He speaks last as he has listened, assimilated and digested the Word in the community. The Word is 'too large' for the mouth of individuals with 'small ears.' Nigerian theologian Elochuwu Uzukwu in his book, *A Listening Church*, draws on this tradition critically as a challenge to be 'a listening church with large ears.' He takes care to underline that he is not talking about 'the bastardization of the image of the chief by African dictators' or 'the imported Roman and feudal autocracy' that is the dominant model of the Roman Catholic Church today.

the way of the cross

My last two monthly scripture reflections have focused on Peter. Across the water, Jesus called: 'Come!' (Mt 14:29). Later Jesus declared: 'You are the rock on which I shall build my church.' (16:16). Soon afterwards is the first prediction of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus (16:21). If a title for Matthew chapter 17 is wanted, 'the way of the cross' would fit. Then Jesus speaks for a time of his passion (17:22-23). To live the way of the cross which Jesus outlines is difficult (16:21-17:27). So in Matthew chapter 18, Jesus talks about 'the church' (18:15, 17, *ekklesia* cf 16:18; see Tui Motu, July) as a community of sustaining relationships and practices. In this way, they are to sustain each other in the demanding way of the cross.



As an alternative community, they are 'to change and become like children' (18:1-5). The image of children is a paradox of greatness in the against the grain alternative life of the cross. Their social status is one of insignificance, being on the margins and powerlessness. This is the conversion of the church into 'the little ones' (10:42; 18: 6, 10, 14) where rank and status disappear. In this difficult way of living, disciples are not to cause one another to stumble (vv. 6-9). They are to be active and vigilant in caring for each other as God does in the parable of the sheep that goes astray (vv.10-14). They are to embody the love of God. Yet disciples are not perfect (v.15). Conflict is inevitable. How the church deals with such conflict is crucial to its life and integrity.

reproof and restoration

Jesus sets out what could be called a three step process of communal reproof and restoration (18:15-20). Step one is initiated privately, one to one, by the person wronged. A broken relationship needs restorative action. The wronged one is to act as does the shepherd who seeks the strayed sheep (18:10-14). In step two, if the one wronged is not listened to, Jesus requires another visit with, according to legal principles, two or three witnesses (18:16; Dt 19:15). The purpose is to seek

agreement on what has happened and work towards reconciliation through forgiveness as shown in the words of Jesus elsewhere (Mt 6:14-15; 18:12-14; 21-35). The emphasis is on listening. Jesus uses this verb three times here and elsewhere (13:10-17; 17:3). The hope is that the offence will be acknowledged, repented of and forgiven. There is no guarantee about the outcome.

In step three, if the member has not listened, tell the community of church. Once again the outcome is not certain. If the person refuses to listen even to the church (18:17), Jesus said: 'let that one be to you as a Gentile or a tax collector.' This seems to be about not dismissing that person but rather about not giving up! These two are representative of wider groups whom the disciples are to surpass in inclusive love (5:43-48). Jesus moves among tax collectors — Matthew and several others — and is their friend (9:9, 10-13; 11:19). The centurion and the Canaanite woman are Gentiles who are people of faith (8:5-13; 15:21-28). Isaiah is quoted as associating Gentiles with the coming of the Messiah (12:18, 21). These represent the focus of the mission of Jesus and are to become part of the church.

The mandate given previously to Peter (16:19) is given here to the whole community of the church which has a role in the binding and loosing of offences (18:18). Jesus uses the phrase 'truly I tell you,' an indication of authoritative speech, twice in the context of the community of the church, forgiveness and prayer. Further, in this context a special characteristic of Matthew's gospel reoccurs — Jesus as Emmanuel, God-with-us (1:25): 'Again truly I tell you if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name I am there among them.' (18:18-19; cf. 25:43, 45; 28:20)

a church of repeated forgiveness

Spokesperson Peter chimes in again asking how often one is to forgive (18:21). His question focuses on the offender. Without taking from the seriousness of the offence, Jesus focuses on the one who is to forgive 'seventy times seven,' that is, forgiveness which knows no limits. Then Jesus tells a how-not-to-do-it parable (18:23-35). A basic point permeates the parable of the unforgiving-but-forgiven slave: God requires disciples to forgive one another. The image of 'king' is a common one for God. To this point of Matthew's gospel, however, 'king' has been used negatively for a tyrannical and oppressive rule (1:6-11, ch 2; 6:29; 14:1-12; 17:25; 20:25). This autocrat is not an image for God. In contrast, God has been presented as a merciful loving God.

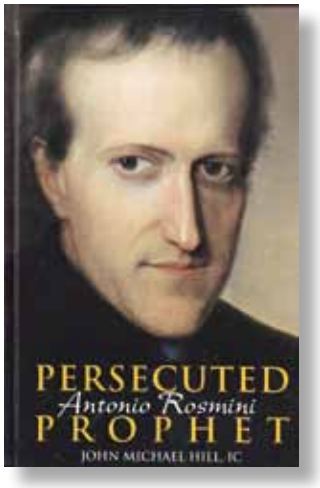
listening 'with large ears'

Through the vivid image of 'large ears,' Uzukwu calls for the African churches to listen to their people and for the Church in Rome to listen to the churches in Africa. This way of living Church is '*to listen fully in order to release the Word that belongs to the community, the Word that is too large for the mouth of one individual, the Word that heals.*' (Italics Uzukwu's). This 'suggests a renewal of the structures of church through listening and hearing the other, through consultation and deliberation, through real decentralization.' Significantly, Uzukwu recalls the remarkable history of the North African church in the time of Cyprian. The writings of this mid-third century bishop of Carthage on the relationship of the African church with Church of Rome are 'suffused with this principle of oneness and multiplicity manifest in communion.'

May this call for a listening church 'with large ears' reverberate within each person in our local churches and in the Church in Rome where the Synod on the Family begins in October. The invitation for the faithful to contribute to the synod through the questionnaire was a step. For the next step, profound life-giving reflection and prayer on Matthew 18 would offer hope for action towards the re-birth of 'a listening Church with large ears' because Jesus assures all: 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.' ■

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

the foundation story



Antonio Rosmini – Persecuted Prophet

By John Michael Hill IC

Published by Gracewing, 2014.

ISBN 978-0-85244-831-1

Reviewer: Carmel Walsh OP

Michael Hill's recently published biography of Antonio Rosmini is not the first to be written – but this new work is the fruit of pilgrimage, research and reflection to enable readers to understand a modern approach to this gifted, saintly, complex character and prolific writer.

Rosmini lived an eventful life, from his privileged upbringing in a period of political instability; his university education; his response to his vocation as 'priest, philosopher and patriot'; his role as founder of a new religious order, the Institute of Charity, and later the Sisters of Providence; his experience as a teacher, a writer, a loved parish priest (his first sermon to his people bears striking resemblance to similar utterances by Pope Francis); his capacity for friendship; his fateful mission to Rome in 1848 and his final years of acceptance of God's will.

The author succeeds in placing his subject in context, and in admiration grants him a further deeply significant title — that of Persecuted Prophet.

Antonio was born on 24 March 1797 in Rovereto, a small north Italian town in the Trentino Alpine district. Six months earlier Napoleon had defeated the Austrian army at Rovereto, though the Alpine district remained under Austrian rule until 1918. This meant that Rosmini was legally an Austrian citizen. At heart he was an Italian patriot and loyal to the Pope.

After studies at Padua, he returned home for six years instead of joining the seminary in Trent. There his spirituality deepened, his involvement in charitable activities increased and his serious philosophical studies were leading to a political awareness of the possibility of a united Italy in conjunction with the Papacy. On 21 April 1821, he was ordained 'in his own patrimony so he was not directly under the authority of the local bishop.' However, this meant he was still available to the local church for pastoral duties.

Each successive chapter enables the reader to build a portrait of Rosmini and the establishment and growth of the Institute of Charity, whose members were committed to becoming better persons and carrying out works of charity offered to them by God's providence. Later missions were to Ireland, England, the United States of America, East Africa, India and New Zealand.

Sixteen pages of high quality coloured photographs and three appendices provide further insights of Rosmini as the writer, the philosopher and the countryman. Three maps by David Moorhead are most helpful. I would have appreciated a few more. The Afterword leaves the reader and the Church at large with ongoing challenges to ponder regarding justice and love of neighbour.

Fr Michael Hill's critical evaluation of the founder of the Institute to which he belongs is exceptional in its balanced portrayal of Blessed Antonio Rosmini's genuine goodness in the face of injustice over the Church's condemnation of his writings. The impact on the two Institutes was devastating but their perseverance was rewarded a century later. The years 2001 and 2007 are of special significance for all Rosminians.

This beautifully written book will bring enlightenment and inspiration to many readers. ■

saving paris

Diplomacy (*Diplomatie*)

Director: Volker Schlöndorff

Reviewer: Paul Sorrell

Think of Paris without the Louvre, the Arc de Triomphe, the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame Cathedral, not to mention its famous bridges and railway stations. Yet these irreplaceable monuments were threatened with destruction by the retreating German army of occupation in August 1944. This arresting drama tells the story of how Paris was saved by the courage and humanity of two very different men.

Many already know the story through the bestselling book (and film) by Lapierre and Collins, *Is Paris Burning?* This was Hitler's question after he had ordered the razing of the city; if Berlin lay in ruins, Paris could not be left standing. Focussing squarely on the two protagonists in this dramatic story — Swedish consul Raoul Nordling and German general Dietrich von Choltitz, the military governor of Paris — the film shows how the tide of history was turned in a single day in what many would regard as the world's most beautiful city.

Wisely, scenes of military action are kept to an essential minimum, and the focus falls on the developing relationship between the two men. The consummate diplomat, Nordling's job is to convince von Choltitz to abandon his plan of blowing up the city — literally pushing the plunger to level the buildings, monuments and historic bridges that have been wired for destruction. Seen from the general's luxurious headquarters in the Hotel Meurice, the city's famous skyline echoes to the sound of desultory explosions and small-arms fire as resistance fighters take to the streets. The Germans are reduced to increasing panic as French and American forces enter the suburbs.

As the crisis unfolds, Nordling uses all his urbane charm and powers of persuasion to appeal to von Choltitz's humanity: 'You will be remembered as the man who saved Paris.' At first, von Choltitz dismisses his overtures, asserting his authority as a German general and commandant of Paris. When the consul hands him a letter from a French general outlining peace terms, he tears it in pieces. However, von Choltitz is no Nazi fanatic, but rather the product of an aristocratic military family, a man whose human and cultural values are still largely intact beneath an uncompromising exterior. Yet his decision is not an easy one, as Hitler has one final hold over him that means that disobeying orders will come at enormous personal cost.

Although *Diplomacy* largely takes the form of a conversation between two men holed up in a sumptuous apartment in a Paris hotel, the tension never flags and the issues at stake are still alive in our conflict-ridden world. See it if you can. ■

Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

not their fault

It has long been acknowledged that NZ is a low wage society. The reason is low productivity. Therefore it follows that if workers were more productive it would be possible to increase their pay. The natural assumption is that the problem lies with the workforce.

In April the *NZ Herald* published a summary of a report by the Productivity Commission in which three OECD economists made known their findings on the NZ scene. The main culprit seems to be insufficient investment in such things as software and databases, research and development, designs, market research, brand equity, worker training and organizational change. An essential factor in improving performance is for management to adapt business practices to ensure that these changes are not simply add-ons to their traditional way of doing things; for example, it is useless to buy a computer and carry on as before. In other words, the basic problem lies with management — and some regulatory matters — not the worker.

nicea 2?

In the first few centuries of Christianity there were various disputes between sections of the church — often doctrinal, often 'political' dressed up as doctrinal — with temporary or permanent effects. Constantinople (Istanbul) regarded the apostle Andrew as its founder, just as Rome regarded his brother Peter as its founder. The Patriarch of Constantinople is the '*primus inter pares*', or honorary leader of the various Orthodox churches. A schism began in 1054, ostensibly over the nature of the Holy Trinity, arising from subsequent misinterpretations of who said what at the Council of Nicea in 325. This led to a reciprocal excommunication.

In 1964 Pope Paul VI met with Patriarch Athenagoras in Jerusalem as a first step towards healing the rift, including lifting the mutual excommunications. Francis celebrated the fiftieth anniversary with the current Patriarch, Bartholomew. The two leaders have a close relationship and are working to overcome differences. Francis is reported as calling for meaningful progress by 2025 — Nicea's 1700th anniversary. And Bartholomew has spoken of a 'second Council of Nicea in 2025'.

A major obstacle is the Russian Orthodox Church's desire to supplant Constantinople as leader of the Orthodox. Attempts by John Paul II and Benedict XVI to develop relations with the Russians met with a brick wall.

poverty

Why are some people seriously poor? *NZ Herald* Economic's Editor, Brian Fallow, recently pointed out there is a need for proper longitudinal studies to provide a sound basis for analysis. However, he said a 2012 Treasury report on a study done between 2002 and 2009 gave some clues.

It appears that income levels alone don't provide an answer. People suffering deprivation need far more than just financial assistance; in general they cannot cope for a variety of reasons, and their children grow up likewise. This is hardly surprising, but the remedies are complex and ultimately depend on the general attitude of society.

In this context it is salutary to read the philosophy underpinning our economic system, introduced by Roger Douglas in 1985 — a date that coincides with the beginning of our rapid increase in inequality. It derives ultimately from von Hayek, the patron saint of ACT, whose apostle is Milton Friedman.

In his *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics* Hayek wrote: '… the market order … operates on the principle of a combined game of skill and chance in which the resource from each individual may be as much determined by circumstances wholly beyond his control as by his skill or effort. Each is remunerated according to the value his particular services have to the particular people to whom he renders them, and this value of his services stands in no necessary relation to anything which we could appropriately call his merits and still less to his needs.' He sees 'no reason why a rich society should not provide, outside the market' so-called 'charity' for the victims of the market economy.

Thus the primary value is not the person; productivity determines one's worth as a citizen.

faith and politics

At the beginning of last century the church in America was regarded by Rome as too liberal. By the time of Vatican II it had become more authoritarian and inward looking. Under Paul VI men were appointed bishops who were predominately pastoral, to the dismay of the old guard. This changed with the advent of John Paul II, who replaced Paul's US Delegate Jean Jadot with someone who chose more authoritarian men. Some current bishops have even refused Communion to prominent Obama supporters.

Archbishop Joseph Tobin recently warned about serious divisions today. 'What I've seen is how disruptive Pope Francis has been within the hierarchy of the United States,' he said. '… a couple of brother bishops a while back [remarked to me] that bishops and priests were very discouraged by Pope Francis because he was challenging them … I think there is some resistance to a different way of doing the Gospel mission of the church.' ■

election 2014: what do we really want?

Robert Consedine

I have just received a letter from the Prime Minister which informs me how well off I am under this National Government. I won't argue with that. I've got a gold card. Vote for us they say! The economy is in good shape and we will make you safe and rich. When I scrutinize the Government policies I discern no ethical compass. The corporate world — oil-mining companies, alcohol industry, casinos, foreign investors, rich immigrants, low corporate tax built on a low wage economy.

National and Labour economic policies should be studied. The differences are significant.

what's missing?

Child poverty: is simply not on the political horizon. 'In 2012, 27 percent of children (285,000) were poor. Hardship gaps between children and older people in New Zealand are the largest in the OECD. New Zealand comes 18th out of 27 countries in terms of child hardship.' The social consequences are horrendous!

Demonising the Poor: 'In 2011 tax evaders cheated the country of $7.4 billion ($1500 per New Zealander). Welfare fraud cost $22 million in 2010 ($5 per New Zealander). Tax evasion is 25-50 times the financial amount of welfare fraud with only a one 1 in 5 chance of being jailed.'

'From 2008-2011 people found guilty of tax offences of over $800,000 received a non-custodial sentence while those found guilty of benefit fraud of over $67,000 were imprisoned.'

The prejudice of society against the poor is reflected in the courts.

Afghanistan: Nicky Hager summed it up when Willie Apiata received his VC. 'A good guy in a bad war.' The invasion of Afghanistan has nothing to do with fighting terrorism or making our country safer. What are we doing there? No Afghan was involved in 9/11 yet Labour and National signed NZ up for another American war. In the last seven years NZ has spent NZ$220 million and sacrificed eight kiwi lives. Next year we will commemorate the 100th anniversary of Gallipoli. We appear to have learnt nothing.

The Christchurch Earthquake and Pike River: Both tragedies abandoned by the National Government 'to the market' except for regular photo opportunities! No Government electoral backlash — all Labour electorates. 115 deaths in the CTV building collapse; 29 deaths at Pike River Mine — no prosecutions despite massive negligence in both cases. Thousands of Christchurch taxpayers are still waiting for EQC settlements.

Rogernomics economy: corrupts almost everything. The Public Service now serves ministers — not the public; donations to political parties are exchanged for favourable policies; corporate welfare to Hollywood studios and law changes in exchange for foreign investment; crooked finance companies, dodgy businesses and sports celebrities, rich boys get millions of tax-payers' money to go sailing; millions of dollars granted in corporate welfare — the list is endless!

Prison population: New Zealand has the second highest incarceration in the OECD — doubled since the 1980s — 10,300 prisoners projected rate by 2017.

The separation of economic from social policy: Before 1984 economic policy was social policy. The political system had full employment as a primary economic goal. Inequality was relatively modest. Now the economic growth has a separate life regardless of the social and environmental consequences. Oil drilling, environmental degradation, massive corporate profits and low wages are separated from the consequences on the lives of ordinary New Zealanders and future generations.

We are living in a society led by people with no principled or ethical sense of themselves in a global economic system which, I believe, is destroying the planet.

Pope Francis, in his powerful proclamation *The Joy of the Gospel*, urgently exhorts us to demand 'thou shalt not' to an economy of exclusion and inequality. ■

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a Mother's Journal

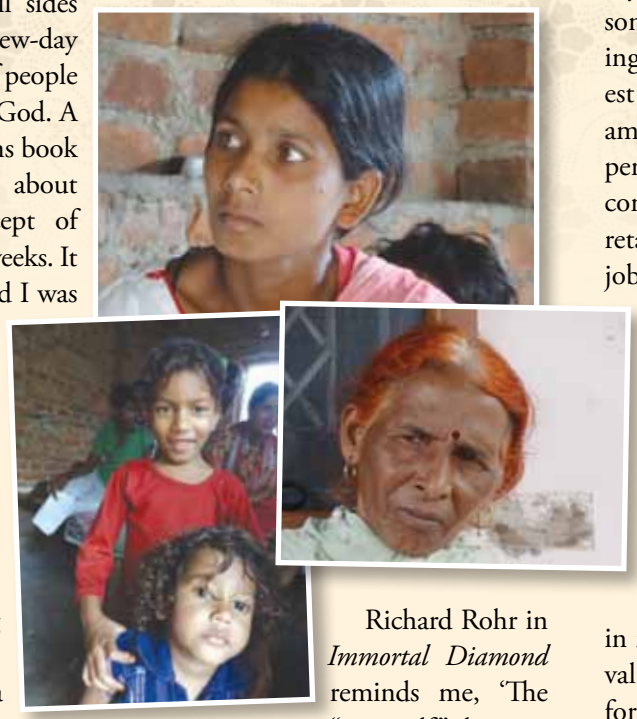
by Kaaren Mathias

Made in the image of God. What an audacious concept!

Yesterday morning on a crowded train in Delhi, pressed on all sides by the warm skin and busy-new-day commuting, were thousands of people — each made in the image of God. A sermon, a book and a devotions book have all colluded and talked about this preposterous core concept of Christian faith in the last few weeks. It had just alighted upon me, and I was looking at other travellers in this new light. This carefully turned out young woman in a dark skirt and jacket, tapping texts into her smart phone. A reflection of God's image. Four slightly spaced-out youths in low-slung skinny jeans, sitting in a row sharing ear phones. Each an image of God. An older man with a long henna red beard leafing through the newspaper, also made in God's image. The woman in her 60s with over-plucked eyebrows, clutching her handbag close to her chest. Another made in God's image.

So what must God be like — with currently over seven billion people on earth — all of us facets of God's image?

But representing the divine image is one thing. Divine character is much more elusive. In this last month, I have several times found my words disappointingly out and unable to be retrieved. Words that were hurtful, distorting truth and thoughtless of others. I feel so disappointed at how far I am from being able to control my tongue, let alone becoming like Christ.



Richard Rohr in *Immortal Diamond* reminds me, 'The "true self" lives in the big body, puts little trust in its private virtue, and feels no undue surprise at its personal weakness …'

These words I find hugely helpful when I feel self-recriminating, and disappointed with myself and my words or actions. A realistic perspective of myself, does not feel surprised at personal weakness but neither do I need to settle into believing I am incapable of change or renewal. It is a challenge for me not to sink into despair at how slowly I learn — and to believe that God still loves me unconditionally despite my many failings.

Being a parent helps me to believe in God's generous benevolence when I think about how I respond when my children disappoint. When my son doesn't do the dishes with willingness or grace, or when my youngest is ungracious in sharing toys, I am not unduly surprised at their personal weakness — and of course I continue to love them hugely and to retain hope that they can do a better job next time. So maybe God is at least as gracious a parent when it comes to me?

So as I write now, on another train, surrounded by uptight, animated, tired, chirpy and bored faces, I am struck by the delightful absurdity that all of us are made in God's image. While all of us are also flawed in many ways, this in no way means we are less loved or valuable. There are many invitations for forgiveness and renewal. And I am so glad to be part of this 'vast horde rumbling toward heaven', as Flannery O'Connor says so well. ■

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