Tui Motu

InterIslands

July 2005 Price $5

the living word of God

The wild, creative energy of God

Contents

Like lots of other Kiwis, I went last week to see the *Da Vinci Code movie.* When I see a good film I find that my imagination often drifts back to memorable scenes or fine acting moments. The *Da Vinci Code*, however, disappeared without trace. While one could simply dismiss Dan Brown's fiction as harmless rubbish, there is one disquieting aspect. The story is based on a heresy which some gullible folk evidently find seductive: the notion that Jesus left progeny, that somewhere there is a secret dynasty, the true bloodline of the Son of God.

Why is that disquieting? Because it destroys one of the fundamental truths of the Incarnation. As one contemporary spiritual writer puts it: "Jesus left few traces of himself on earth. He wrote no books... A wanderer, he left no home or belongings that could be enshrined in a museum. He did not marry, settle down and ***begin a dynasty*** (*my italics*). We would, in fact, know nothing about him except for the traces he left in other human beings" (Philip Yancey: *The Jesus I Never Knew* p 228).

What Jesus did bequeath to his followers was his Spirit. It is that truth that Dan Brown is denying. St Augustine put it very succinctly: "You (Christ) ascended from before our eyes, and we turned back grieving, only to find you in our hearts". The early Christian communities struggled to follow the Way of Jesus Christ. The memory of his words and actions began to change them, and under the inspiration of his Spirit those first believers left us a precious written memory in the New Testament books.

But the work of the Spirit didn't cease when the last witnesses of Christ died. Each time a Christian community gathers to celebrate God's word, it is the very same Spirit which prompts the hearts and minds of those present to reshape their lives. *Tui Motu* asked visiting Dominican scholar Barbara Reid to describe what she understands by the term 'the inspired word of God'? Her interview is reported on pp 6-7 and fleshed out further in two of her lectures (*pp 7-8*), also by a fascinating interview with another American Biblical scholar, Walter Breuggemann (*pp 22-24*), and in a spiritual odyssey by regular *Tui Motu* writer Glynn Cardy (*p 20-21*).

Perhaps the richest initiative of the Second Vatican Council was to reintroduce Catholics to the Bible. The 3-year cycle of readings guarantees that Sunday congregations today receive a balanced diet of Old and New Testament themes. How important it is that the Word of God is proclaimed intelligently and effectively – and that it is prayerfully and wisely explained. Parishioners are very forgiving of the failings of their pastors. However, one thing they expect is to be nourished on Sundays and weekdays. Good preaching is a precious service.

Pentecost is behind us. We are in the season of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that prompted Peter to preach and Paul to write is alive and vibrant in the hearts of each one of us. Barbara Reid's closing words were: "I pray that the Spirit help us to be open to the wild, creative, unpredictable energy of God doing astounding things for us, bringing God's purposes to fruition in ways we can never plan, anticipate or control."

The great 2nd. Century bishop Irenaeus of Lyons said: "The glory of God shines forth in human beings who are fully alive." That means you and me!

M.H.

Tui Motu covers. People sometime ask us who is our artist. It is of course our regular illustrator, Dunedin artist and musician Donald Moorhead.

And, yes, this cover is the match of *June*: one celebrating Eucharist, the other the Word of God – two ways that God touches us everyday.

July 16 – *National Bible Sunday*

The English word 'Bible' comes from a Greek phrase, which means 'the books' – 46 of them in the Old (or First) Testament, including the Apocrypha; 27 in the New. The books of the Old Testament were made up using the Hebrew (and Aramaic and Babylonian) language, literature, thought-forms and imagery. We find stories, narrative, speeches, poetry, genealogy etc. They use the imagery and symbolism of their social, geographical and historical context: farming, trade, food supply, climate, family, politics, neighbours such as Egypt and Assyria, and the power of their God, Yahweh, in the world.

Likewise the New Testament was written in Greek between 60 and 100 AD, after those disciples who had known Jesus, had died. The new churches founded in Asia Minor, Greece and Rome had no experience or link with Jerusalem. They needed an explanation of what had happened in the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus, and why they had become Jesus people.

It is highly mischievous and manipulative when some Christians, ignorant of Hebrew and Greek, deliberately lift the Bible text out of its social and literary context and promote it as the one, literal and infallible 'word of God', ie a political agenda with which to condemn fellow Christians and other faiths.

We know some of the Bible authors but most are unknown. The Scriptures did not 'fall' unmediated from heaven. They evolved over hundreds of years; there were many editors, translators, interpreters and scribes as well as powerful groups in Temple and Palace. We have one Bible but many voices. How something is said is as important as what is said.

We need to ask what were the aims of the writers, for only when we determine, as far as possible, what the text meant to the speaker and the first audience can we then ask what the text can mean for us and the church of our time. Both Testaments bear witness to the One Lord in different ways, at different times and to different people, and therefore both should be read on their own merits.

The content of the books reflect not only the language of the first speakers and audiences but also their values and prejudices. We, in our turn as 'modern' people, read the Scriptures with our preferences, prejudices and Western mindset. We must let the text reveal itself as we wait in the presence and mystery of God and let it resonate with us and our society.

The authority of the Scriptures lies not in the writings themselves but in the Triune God to whom they bear witness. We are not the original audience, and we cannot ignore the previous 3000 years. Each new generation of believers and enquirers (and sceptics) must read the Bible afresh and take time to ponder and wrestle with it.

New contexts alter meanings, so preachers and scholars must help us to reinterpret God's Word for our day and generation, and always seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are heirs to the first listeners/readers and not independent of them. Without the Spirit the Bible is just a book of ancient texts. The Holy Spirit is the great communicator and companion to every generation and every faith community (Christian, Hebrew and to a lesser extent, Islamic) who seek to accept and witness to God's revelation, grace and creativity.

"How do we sing the Lord's song in the 21st Century?" In the first gospel a significant conversation is recorded concerning the greatest commandments (*Mk 12, 28-34*). In the process Jesus and one of the Scribes resonate with the Law of Moses as recorded in the Books of *Deuteronomy* (*6,4-5*) and *Leviticus* (*19,18*).

That conversation highlights why we observe National Bible Sunday. God did not give the world a book so much as a community of people to whom he was unconditionally committed, and in whom he continually acts through his divine Word and Spirit. Both the People of Israel and the church of Jesus Christ received the same promises, the same demands and the same surprises. Both communities have the same hopes to hope for and the same obediences to obey, without guilt, fear or coercion: to love God and our neighbours as ourselves. ■

John Bruerton *is an Anglican layman living in Christchurch. From material prepared for use on 16 July, Bible Sunday, at the Halswell Union Church*

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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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Priestly celibacy

Christopher Carey in your June issue refers to "a 10th century man-made law which restricted Catholic practice of priesthood to celibate unmarried males".

With the greatest respect, the practice of celibacy for the clergy has far more ancient origins and looks back to the example of Jesus himself and his earliest followers.

In reply to the question from St Peter, our Lord talks of the rewards promised to those who have left "house, wife, brothers, parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God" (*Lk18, 28-30*).

Early church councils which refer to the celibacy of the clergy, such as Elvira (305), Arles (314), or Nicaea (325) all adopt the tone of simply repeating a teaching which was already well known and widely accepted.

I have no difficulty with discussing the issue of celibacy, but we should not do so with the idea that it is simply some bizarre 10th Century innovation.

+*Patrick Dunn*, Bishop of Auckland

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 altering meaning.

Response articles (up to a page) are also welcome, but need to be by negotiation

For better, or for worse

Many would concur with Fr Humphrey O'Leary's plea for a better deal for married couples whose separation could seldom be predicted (**The state of marriage:** *June TM*). The gospel is full of second chances.

Making a case for boredom as a reason for marriage break-up is another matter though. Marriage is vulnerable enough without adding boredom to the hazards. We are all of us capable of being boring.

'***For better or for worse***' ought surely take care of that challenge.

Harry Hutchinson, Auckland

No jargon please: we're kiwis

Why do the powers-that-be continually nullify good initiatives with peculiar words and language?

The Christchurch diocese has issued a plan for future directions the diocese will take. In it four pastoral principles are laid down: *holiness, communio, collaboration, mission*.

I would say the majority of lay people would stop reading when they got to the word ***communio***. They would think: "That's got nothing to do with us. That is for a small band of clerics in their ivory tower. Let's get back to the real world."

So... they have made a bad start. Will they please, for the sake of all that's holy, not give us any more ecclesiastical jargon. (***abridged***)

Tony Scott, Timaru

Hello Tui Motu Readers

Over the past couple of weeks I've had the opportunity to talk to a number of readers who indicated a willingness to financially support our *Tui Motu Project 100 Foundation***.** It's been wonderful to find out how highly thought off *Tui Motu* is. That level of support has already translated into numbers of debentures between $1,000 and $20,000 being received or promised.

A number of people asked questions about *how* the debenture system would work, so I thought it might be useful to answer the common questions you might ask if you were in a position to consider supporting *Tui Motu* in this way. (*see right*)

We also received a number of other responses from our questionnaire that indicated a willingness to help. Unfortunately we have had some trouble deciphering a few addresses and phone numbers. If you indicated that you would like to donate or are now considering a debenture, please contact me at *Tui Motu*.

Thank you all for your support of the magazine. It is truly heartening to be part of this initiative to secure *Tui Motu* into the future.

Katie O'Connor
Chair

Tui Motu Project 100 Foundation

What is the Foundation?

The foundation is a Charitable Trust separate from *Tui Motu* (owned by *Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd*)

Why is the Foundation separate from Tui Motu?

The *Tui Motu* Board believes it is imperative to ensure that the Trust is separate to protect investors' money should anything ever happen to *Tui Motu*.

What is a debenture?

A debenture is a loan given for a set period of time eg: 2, 5 or 10 years where the interest from the loan is used by the Trustees for the purpose of the Trust.

What is the purpose of the Trust and how will it work?

Its purpose is to accumulate capital either via gifts or interest from loans. The Trust Fund needs to be an asset which will grow steadily. These cash assets will belong to the Foundation (not to the donors, or lenders, or to the *Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd*).

An investment portfolio is being drawn up by Forsyth Barr for these funds to enable them to be prudently invested; and also to ensure that cash will be available when a debenture comes to its term and is due for repayment.

New wine, fresh skins

Piet Luiten

The new wine of women's emancipation, democracy, science and globalisation does not go well in the old wineskins of church and states. In trying to put this new wine into the old skins the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins too. No – new wine, fresh skins (*Mk 2,21-22*)

When Jesus created the new wine of associating publicly with women, eating with sinners, uplifting the strict laws of fasting and the Sabbath, and stopped stoning as punishment for adultery (and in fact, did not even condemn the culprit), he clearly upheld the interests of people over the sacred cows of his religion.

No wonder the priests and lawyers sought to get rid of him. No wonder also his new ideas did not go well into the old wineskins of Judaism with its strict rules and a special God, Jahweh, for Jews only. And so the new way, the fresh skins of Christianity, was called into being. Those skins are now 2000 years old, and Christianity is holding on to a lot of sacred cows of its own that urgently need revising.

It may well be said that the sacraments (like the Sabbath) are made for 'man' – humankind – and not the other way round. Infant baptism rests on the premiss of original sin, a story as old as Adam and Eve, and made obsolete by Jesus' saying that infants belong to the kingdom of heaven (*Mk 10,15*). The initiation rite of confirmation would be well served by teaching youngsters a sense of identity, initiative and competence as children of God, their Father.

Forgiveness of sins is readily available to anyone who forgives others their misdemeanours (*the Lord's Prayer*). And the idea of making compulsory 'going to Confession' obsolete might also serve to get rid of the compulsion about sin and guilt that seems to occupy our church so obsessively in its rules and liturgies.

The benefit of the Eucharist, in which Christ makes himself available to us under the forms of bread and wine, is far more important to us for his presence than the exact words spoken by a priest during the consecration at Mass. In fact the 'sacrifice' of the Mass would be better called by its original name of *Agape*, Love Feast.

Likewise, priesthood (Jesus called them 'servants') was made for humankind: not special, male only, selected and ordained men to fit in the 'vocation' of a celibate priesthood. God does not have 'specials': we are all called to service. Finally, couples are made for marriage, not marriage for couples. Is it right to make a sacrament more important than the people in it, and hence unbreakable because of its sacrosanct nature?

We need a new Reformation, one that makes us all more aware of the spiritual reality in which we live, move and have our being. What Jesus saw through in his own religion, and warned his disciples to be wary of, was what I would call the 'corporate ego'. ie making the church or any community more important than the people in it and then, seeing the splinters in individual eyes rather than dealing with the beam in its own.

What kind of Gospel is that?

This is what the church wants: to bother your conscience, to provoke a crisis in the times we are living in. A church that doesn't stir up a crisis, a Gospel that doesn't make us uncomfortable, a word of God that – to put it crudely – doesn't bring us out in an allergic rash, a word of God that doesn't touch on the specific sins of the society in which it is spoken, what kind of Gospel is that? Very pious concerns that won't bother anyone is how many want sermons to be.

And those preachers who, so as not to bother anyone and so as not to have conflicts and difficulties, do not shed light on the reality they are living in, lack the courage of Peter to say to the mob, which still has the bloodstained hands that killed Christ, "You killed him" (*Acts 2,23*). Although he would lose his life because of this accusation, he proclaimed it.
It is the courageous Gospel; it is the good news that came to take away the sins of the world. ■

***Oscar Romero** – from a sermon given in San Salvador Cathedral, April 16, 1978.*

Being attentive to the word of God

Barbara Reid OP in conversation with Fr Damian Wynn-Williams, himself an Old Testament scholar

"Inspiration is what the Holy Spirit does in our lives – especially through God's Word."

Sr Barbara Reid, an American Dominican, recently lectured throughout New Zealand as part of the 800th Dominican Jubilee celebrations

What do you understand by 'inspiration'?

Inspiration, in its root meaning, is what the Spirit does in our lives, the breath of God that infuses everything we do. In the Biblical context it means that privileged mode of God's revelation to us and with us – a vehicle by which the Spirit of God suffuses the whole process of the life of God's People.

Inspiration enables portions of the Biblical story to be preserved. It is a continuing interpretative endeavour by the whole community to embody the word of God in the here-and-now. This process is ongoing: God being made manifest to us and we finding our meaning in God. The formation of a canonical text is a privileged moment in the process.

As we continue to interpret our life story with the aid of the Scriptures, the Word continues to be a living word, not a dead letter. It becomes the way we discover the meaning of God in our own lives. God offers us an invitation through Jesus, which we must take seriously and act upon.

the 'word' becomes the way we discover the meaning of God in our lives – a living word, not a dead letter

Let me give you an example. The violent endings in some of *Matthew*'s parables (*see page 8*) are metaphors to underscore the extreme seriousness of our need to respond: there will be awful consequences if we do not heed and act on the compelling invitation of God's love. These are our final choices. It is not that God is violent: the parable is a metaphor to shock the hearers into making a decision, hopefully the right one.

God is always constant, always offering life. So these violent endings are not there to be emulated, say, by a punitive parent. The consistent message all the way through Scriptures is that ***God is Love***, strongly reinforced by the message and example of Jesus.

When the Evangelist writes the word, when a preacher preaches the word, when we listen to that preacher, then the Spirit is working in us and in the whole of the community gathered to listen. It is the Spirit that transforms hearts and minds. The Biblical word is a privileged partner in that communication between God and the congregation.

The written word itself was fashioned in a community, so what happens in Sacred Heart church this Sunday is reflecting what happened in the community of *Mark* in the First Century. Jesus plays a peak role in the process. Jesus is central. He is named by *John* as 'the Word'. For Christians, the word of God becomes incarnate, human like us yet living the divine life in a unique way which opens for us the promise, so we too can live the life of God.

What is the role of the scholar in this process?

The scholar immerses herself in the Scriptures. Her role is to develop the tools so as to *understand* the text in its original context as best as possible. She seeks also to know the world *behind* the text, the history of the times and peoples and events being described. As a lover of literature she will understand the world *of* the text: the way figures of speech are used, the development of plot, characters etc. Finally she must be attentive to the world *in front of* the text: what it means in our lives, how it enhances how we live as Christians, how it will help us to be more just and compassionate: how we as a community can embody the kind of life that Jesus lived.

How is a scholar 'inspired' by a text? Everyone has favourite texts. The lectionary cycle, however, also demands that the preacher wrestles sometimes with a text which is not a favourite, one which is really difficult and challenging. So a very mixed diet is offered. The reading of the day is the one we have to preach from: and that fixes us.

Sr Barbara speaking with two Dunedin Scripture scholars, Rev, Claire Brown and Judith McKinlay

Can you give an example of a 'difficult' text?

An example, for me, has been the parable of the workers in the vineyard (*Mt 20, 1-16*) I have never liked it, because I identify with the resentment of the workers who bore the heat of the day and were angry that the latecomers received the same as themselves.

A personal story. As a family, we had constantly prayed for the conversion of my grandfather. On his deathbed he received five of the seven sacraments. The preacher at his funeral used this parable, identifying my grandfather as an 11th hour customer. I accepted that happily.

Later on, when I preached on this parable, I used this interpretation. But a woman said to me afterwards: "That was all very nice about your grandfather, but that's not how I see it. You see I'm one of the people who stand on the street corner all day. I have three small children; my husband has left me; I have no marketable skills.

"I think the ones in the marketplace are the sick, the disabled, the unskilled, the elderly and unemployed, those left in the lurch like me. If at the end of the day I don't receive a day's wage like those who have worked, how am I going to feed my children – or pay the medical bills? The ones working all day long have the satisfaction of knowing they will be able to feed their children. That parable teaches me that God's justice is not like our justice."

In my wrestling with that text I had only got so far. But that woman had experienced the truth of that parable from a totally different social location. My experience would be that listening to those who are marginalised, those at the bottom of the social ladder, helps me to better understand what Jesus means by his stories. It was necessary for me to hear how she experienced that parable in her life for my understanding of it to grow.

Conclusion

Inspiration is the work of the Spirit in our midst. We are still needing a renewal of the theology of the Spirit. Our imagination needs the stimulus of knowing that it is through imagination that the Holy Spirit works upon us. We, as humans in an institution, are too keen on boxing things in, on defining every 'jot and tittle' of the law. I pray that the Spirit help us to be open to the wild, creative, unpredictable energy of God doing astounding things for us, bringing God's purposes to fruition in ways we can never plan, anticipate or control. Inspiration is truly a work of the Holy Spirit. ■

Southern Solstice

At every
cloud-free winter's chance
the sun
slides rainbow sleeves along
new spiders' threads
heaps
snow on alpine-crowded clouds
after rain
gleams pearls along bent boughs
fires diamonds at the tips of leaves
gilds cows and seagulls, lights
water with a silken sheen –
prodigious gifts
in a lean season

Beatrice Hoffmann

Violence in the gospel of Matthew

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus preaches an ethic of non-violence. *Blessed are the peacemakers* is like a recurrent theme running through these three chapters of *Matthew*'s Gospel (5-7). Yet, at the end of the same Gospel is a series of parables all of which culminate in a gruesome threat of violence, a threat which appear to be definitive. How come this seeming discrepancy in the teaching of Jesus?

In fact there are many passages throughout *Matthew* which refer to violence. The infant Jesus is a victim of Herod's determination to kill him. Three times Jesus predicts that he will be arrested and die a cruel death. The Jewish leaders conspire to arrest him, simply because he has a mission of healing (*12,14*). Jesus warns his disciples that they too must expect the same sort of fate (*10,34-36*). Violent treatment is the destiny of prophets.

Responses to violence in the Gospel

There are various responses to violence described in this Gospel. One is *flight* – the parents of Jesus flee with him from Herod into Egypt, the classic place of refuge in Scripture. Another response is to *rejoice* (*5,12*): rejection and persecution are seen as signs you are preaching the Good News! Another is to *pray for rescue*: "deliver us from evil" in the Lord's Prayer.

But most characteristic as a response to suffering violence is the imperative pronounced in the Sermon on the Mount – *love your enemies*. Jesus' teaching is not so much a contradiction to the Torah ('an eye for an eye..') as its fulfilment. The antitheses that we read in *Mt 5, 38-48* all take the Law of Moses a further step. Jesus counsels his disciples not to retaliate.

In *5,39* the common English translation "offer no resistance" is misleading – because Jesus is constantly resisting violence. What it means is 'don't respond to violence with further violence'. Turning the other cheek is a non-violent response intended to bring the aggressor to a sense of what he is doing. It aims to lead to reconciliation rather than escalate the violence.

Likewise, "giving coat as well as cloak" implies shocking those who oppress by revealing one's nakedness. This was taken literally by women at a squatter's settlement in S Africa. They were alone, the men away at work, when soldiers came to drive them off the property. They formed a line and stripped naked. The soldiers retired from the scene in confusion.

"Going the extra mile", also, is a way of upsetting the status quo – interrupting the cycle of injustice by doing the unexpected, 'disarming' the aggressor. On the other hand, a violent response simply provokes further violence by the oppressors, when the strong and powerful always prevail.

The ideal which *Matthew* offers is loving one's enemy. In the Old Testament to love was also an imperative – but towards one's own, within your own community. Jesus is simply extending the boundaries of love until there are no limits. Love becomes universal.

Jesus concludes the passage by the daunting command to "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect". Expressed thus it suggests an impossible ideal. But the words can be interpreted, not as moral perfectionism, but simply as a striving not to put limits on one's goodness, imitating the generosity of God.

The violent parables

At the end of *Matthew* there are no fewer than eight parables all of which have violent endings. Typical is the parable of the wicked husbandmen who, having maltreated and murdered the Master's servants and his son, are suitably condemned: "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end..."(*21,38*). Most of these parables end with the ominous refrain, that the guilty are consigned to a place "where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth".

It is significant that when such a parable also appears in *Mark*, *Mark*'s version is much less harsh. So, do we conclude that *Matthew*'s God has changed and narrowed the boundaries of his love and forgiveness? Was the *Sermon on the Mount* a sanitised version of the fuller picture? Or has *Matthew* simply got the message wrong?

The end times

The key to understanding this enigma is the fact that all these parables refer to the end-times. They do not concern the everyday here-and-now. They refer to that unique moment in one's life of definitive choice. Faced with the door into eternity there won't be another chance. The violent language is there to impress us with the dire consequence of making an evil and irrevocable decision. If we choose evil, then we condemn ourselves. The fate of the unjust steward is directly linked with his own calamitous choice (*Mt 18,32-35*).

What we cannot draw from these parables is any sort of justification for condemning others. They are not proof texts for the righteous. Nor can they be used to prompt a retaliation on our part for alleged wrongs. They are there to impress on us that the Gospel is not a take-it-or-leave it recipe. It has a finality which demands attention and action now. Universal love demands total commitment. ■

The Passion and sacrifice

The Passion of Jesus lies at the heart of Christian life and worship. Yet we know that the asceticism of the 'cross' has often been abused to conceal violence. Women especially have been counselled to accept violence from men 'as a cross'.

Why did Jesus have to die such a cruel death?

(*Note first*: in the mosaic of Gospel accounts of the Passion there is nothing like the gory details which Mel Gibson presents in his film.)

Many Scriptural images have been applied to Jesus' death:

• a blood sacrifice – the blood of Jesus shed for our sins;

• atonement – paying a ransom on our behalf exacted by the Father for human sin. (But Paul uses the word *justification* in the sense of restoring humanity to a right relationship with God; and by faith we participate in this.) Jesus is seen as substitute, or scapegoat;

• martyr – Jesus died a martyr for us. Jesus is the *Lamb of God*, led to the slaughter (Is 53,7) as a redeeming act;

• the *suffering servant* (*Is 52,13 – 53,12*) – *Mark* often echoes this theme of the just one unjustly treated by wilful human beings.

This tradition of sacrifice is a strong vein in the Christian tradition: parents sacrificing for their children, people giving their lives for their faith.

But did Jesus die in order that we too might suffer? Or did he die that we might "have life and have it to the full", as *John* says (*10,10*)?

The Passion tradition has been used to justify remaining silent under oppression. The *Mark* version of Jesus' Passion might support this – but, again, not in *John*'s account. There Jesus speaks out clearly against the High Priest's injustice (*18,23*). The Passion should never be used to excuse injustices, which should be resolutely opposed.

The danger of saying "Jesus died for my/our sin" is that it puts sin at the centre, when the whole Biblical tradition is to put God's love at the centre. Like any true martyr Jesus chose to die rather than deny the truth. It was a free choice, made out of love. It was also a last resort against injustice. This is quite different from, say, the death of a suicide bomber who chooses suicide to attain his/her goals.

The suffering that Jesus invites us to share is that which is entailed by our faith journey. It is a consequence of discipleship. It cannot be avoided. *John* insists that Jesus freely lays down his life for his friends.

The woman who washes Jesus' feet (*Lk:7,36-50*)

This woman is usually described (in subheadings) as a 'sinner'. And it's true she *used to be* a sinner. His host, Simon, continues to judge her as such on her past reputation. Jesus uses her as a parable to show Simon he is not seeing things rightly. Her sins have been forgiven: hence she shows such abundant love and gratitude. The women now sits at Jesus' feet as a disciple. The parable is open-ended: we never hear if it results in Simon's conversion.

In her action of washing and anointing Jesus' feet, she mirrors the later outpouring of Jesus' own blood. The Father sent Jesus into the world on a mission of life. Like the prophets before him and martyrs since, Jesus ran the risk of opposition and death.

But, like Oscar Romero who predicted he would "rise again in the Salvadoran people", the Cross of Christ leads to his Resurrection. The outflow of blood

and water (*Jn 19,34*) is seen by many early writers as a symbol of the birth of the church (like Eve, from the side of Christ) with an abundant outflow of sacramental life.

The Cross is never just an ending; Jesus is resurrected in our midst. The death of Jesus remains a mystery but it cannot be properly understood without the Resurrection. ■

Barbara Reid OP lectures in New Testament at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. These talks were part of a series given to commemorate the Dominican 800th Jubilee

Hell hath no fury – *not any more*

We cannot simply pick and choose what we accept from the tradition of faith, says writer and theologian Mike Riddell. So what can today's Christians make of the doctrine of hell?

Hell may once have frightened the masses into repentance; does it now serve to keep them from it? Often wielded as a blunt instrument, the doctrine of eternal punishment smacks of mediaeval torture practices to contemporary ears. In its popular conception at least, it raises questions against the core Christian declaration: that *God is love*. What sort of God is it who would torture souls endlessly to satisfy the divine imperative for justice: where do the vindictive aspects come from?

(*left*) Parable of Dives and Lazarus*: from the Codex Aureus of Echternach, 10th Century.*

And yet we cannot pick and choose which parts of the faith we like. To be part of the tradition of faith is to be forced to wrestle with aspects of it which are both difficult and seemingly archaic. In fact, it is often those areas of our heritage that trouble us most that offer the greatest possibility of creative reflection. If hell proves a stumbling block to the modern mind, it may be worth considering why.

For most people in the West, the prospect of damnation and consequent punishment has ceased to be a credible influence on the way they live. Many believe that life on earth carries sufficient suffering as to constitute 'hell on earth'. The pressing issue is that of finding the strength to face present demons, rather than forging bargains in order to escape those to come. Hell has lost its fury and its menace.

Undoubtedly the church has abused the notion of hell in its long and sometimes shameful history. Many generations of preachers found in the symbolism of hell's flames a terror useful for herding unbelievers toward the Cross, and for controlling them once within the walls of salvation. When James Joyce caricatured such preaching in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, he replicated a sermon which would have sounded familiar in the ears of many:

Consider then what must be the foulness of the air of hell. Imagine some foul and putrid corpse that has lain rotting and decomposing in the grave, a jelly-like mass of liquid corruption. Imagine such a corpse a prey to flames, devoured

by the fire of burning brimstone and giving off dense choking fumes of nauseous loathsome decomposition. And then imagine this sickening stench, multiplied a millionfold and a millionfold again from the millions upon millions of foetid carcasses massed together in the reeking darkness, a huge and rotting human fungus. Imagine all this, and you will have some idea of the horror of the stench of hell.

Certainly those imaginations that did dwell on such images were sobered if not seriously disturbed. The short term strategy of preaching brimstone was nominally effective; the long term legacy was a view of God as a seemingly sadistic despot. Given that the central question of theology is not the existence of God but the nature of God, the enthusiastic promotion of hell was and is an impediment to the Gospel.

So – why hell at all?

If we can speak of the development of hell (and there is no doubt that it came late on the scene in Biblical terms), then the idea it seeks to reinforce is that of *responsibility*. As such it draws attention to that most sacred gift of humanity – the freedom to choose. To use an analogy, parents seek to protect their children from danger; but at some stage they also teach the connection between foolish choices and the consequences which follow. When children are young, punishment might be used to make this point. But it is only ever a means of pointing to something more profound.

The threat of external consequences is ultimately an unsustainable means of achieving good outcomes, as all parents learn when their children grow into adulthood. Surely this is the meaning of God's promise: *I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.* (*Ezek 36:26*). The history of salvation involves the replacing of the external framework of the law with the impulse of the indwelling Spirit.

As Paul reminds us, "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption" (*Rom 8:15*). We must be careful not to reignite responses to God based on fear and punishment, and allow these to diminish the Gospel and its eternal good news. The church should never seek to limit human freedom, but rather to guard it as a prerequisite to grace.

Where the tradition can help

How then are we to treat our own tradition with respect and reverence, while seemingly ignoring the image of hell which is undoubtedly present in Scripture? I suspect a starting point is to identify with the bulk of humanity who find their lives painful and complex, standing with them instead of to one side, wagging scolding fingers. To do so is to lose some of the enthusiasm for predicting further punishment beyond death.

My own means of reconciling the tradition of hell is to draw upon an image in the *Apostles' Creed*, which asserts that Jesus "descended into hell". There are two ways in which it seems to me this image helps us. The first is in terms of our own impetus and vocation. If we are to be disciples, should we not join our Lord in the descent into hell?

In other words, we are called to enter the arena of human suffering and injustice; leaving behind our own rights to security and salvation in order to be with others in their cries of pain and humiliation. Rather than those who sit on high and pronounce judgment, we are invited to enter into the furnace of suffering, taking hope with us. If people assert that they are enduring 'hell on earth', perhaps we can embody something of grace with them there.

Secondly, this teaching reminds us that there is no realm which is unvisited by the love of God. If Christ has entered into hell, has he not thereby robbed it of its terror? However it might be imagined, it can no longer be held to be entirely godless. *Romans* reminds us that nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of Christ (*8,35-39*).

If there is any power left in hell, it is of our own making. The very freedom which allows us to receive grace also enables us to refuse it. So inviolate is the human capacity to choose that even God will not trespass upon it. We have all witnessed people who deliberately distance themselves from light and love, fleeing from it as if it were the enemy.

Do they have any hope at all? Do they condemn themselves to a hell which is the absence of light and love? Such judgments I am happy to leave to God. But it seems to me that the message of the Gospel is that Christ has overcome all barriers, making himself present even where people have condemned themselves to determined isolation. Hell hath neither fear nor fury for those who believe this. ■

Place of horror

During his recent visit to Poland Pope Benedict XVI paid a visit to Auschwitz camp where millions of Jews, Poles and gypsies were incinerated during the Holocaust. He said:

"How many questions arise in this place? Where was God in those days? Why was he silent? How could he permit this endless slaughter, this triumph of evil?

"We cannot peer into God's mysterious plan – we see only piecemeal, and we would be wrong to set ourselves up as judges of God and history...

"Let us cry out to God, with all our hearts, when all the forces of darkness seem to issue anew from human hearts...

"Let us cry to God that he may draw men and women to conversion and help them see that violence does not bring peace, but only generates more violence – a morass of devastation in which everyone is ultimately the loser."

Celebrating creation in Christian worship

We celebrate the season of Advent before Christmas. We celebrate the season of Lent before Easter. When do we celebrate *The Season of Creation*? And where did this season begin?

This new season of the church year is celebrated during the four Sundays of September that precede St Francis of Assisi Day (4 October) or from the 1st of September to the second Sunday in October. Around the world, churches are becoming acutely aware of the environmental crisis. Our precious planet is at risk. In response, many congregations in the Western world have celebrated Earth Day, World Environment Day or St Francis of Assisi Day.

The origin of *The Season of Creation*, however, is first of all a local story. Like many in Australia, I grew up in the bush. I climbed every tree within miles of my home. I felt close to creation – to the soil, the streams and the sounds of the bush. Celebrating the creation I love has long been one of my dreams.

In 2000, at St Stephen's Lutheran Church, Adelaide, we decided to celebrate creation. For four weeks we relived the great creation stories in the Bible. We also confessed what we have done to creation and how God is working to renew creation. It was an exciting beginning. From 2001 to 2003 I worked with the Uniting Church's Commission for Mission in Melbourne. After a series of workshops, their leaders agreed to explore the idea of a special season. The idea was a genuine local dream, not a product from abroad.

As part of the mission of the church, it was agreed we should develop *The Season of Creation*. In September 2004 the season was trialled in about 50 congregations in Melbourne and Adelaide. I am thankful to the Uniting Church for taking the risk to support this venture of faith in the Southern Hemisphere. In 2005, The Season of Creation became an option across Australia. In addition, a number of Lutheran churches and the National Council of Churches in America also trialled *The Season of Creation*. Especially significant is the decision of a group of Roman Catholic bishops in the Philippines to also support *The Season of Creation*.

The Season of Creation is ecumenical, providing an opportunity for churches to select from or develop a variety of creation liturgies, to introduce new visual elements into their worship, to pursue Bible Studies for a new series of readings and to explore an earth care ministry. All resources available free on the website: www.seasonofcreation.com

A distinctive feature of The Season is the naming of Sundays, in a three year cycle, with specific designations such as Forest Sunday, Land Sunday, Planet Earth Sunday and River Sunday. Congregations can turn the sanctuary into a vibrant part of creation as they celebrate with a particular domain of creation.

The 2006 Calendar:

2006 Series B: The Word in Creation

Sept. 1		*Creation Day*
Sept. 3	1st Sunday in Creation	*Planet Earth Sunday*
Sept.10	2nd Sunday in Creation	*Humanity Sunday*
Sept.17	3rd Sunday in Creation	*Sky Sunday*
Sept.24	4th Sunday in Creation	*Social Justice Sunday*
Oct. 1	5th Sunday in Creation	*Blessing of Animals*
Oct. 4		*St Francis of Assisi*
Oct. 8	Final Sunday	*Mountain Sunday*

Rejoicing at God in Creation

Some years ago I sat in an Aboriginal church in Wujal Wujal in Queensland. I looked out across a forest valley to the hills beyond. I had a sense of God's presence in creation as I worshipped. Why? There were no walls or stained-glass windows to block out God's presence in the forest around me.

In *The Season of Creation* we celebrate God's presence in creation. We follow the cue given by Isaiah in his vision. In the temple of God he heard the seraphim cry: Holy, holy, holy! Lord God of hosts! The whole Earth is filled with God's glory! (*Isaiah 6:3*).

And what is this 'glory' that fills Earth? It is the mysterious presence of God! The glory settled on Mount Sinai in the form of a cloud filled with a mysterious fire. Then that same glory 'filled' the tabernacle in the wilderness. Even later the glory 'filled' the temple of Solomon. Now Isaiah hears the cherubim declare that the glory of God 'fills the whole Earth'!

This means that Earth, like the tabernacle, is a sanctuary 'filled' with God's presence! In *The Season of Creation* we celebrate in that sanctuary.

We are not the only creatures who celebrate and praise God. The Psalm writers tell us that all the fields rejoice and all the trees of the forest sing for joy (*Ps 96,12*). One calls on everything from the sun, moon and stars above to the monsters deep in the ocean below to 'praise the Lord' (*Ps.148*).

Are we sensitive to the fact that both animate and inanimate creatures are praising God, each in their own way? Are we aware that the hills are indeed 'alive with the sound of music', the music of creation praising God? In *The Season of Creation* we consciously join with creation in celebration. We invite forests, fields, rivers and wildlife to join us in worship. We, in turn, join with the rest of creation in their hymns of praise and jubilation.

Creation suffering

Creation, however, also groans, as St Paul reminds us (*Rom 8,18–27*). Creation groans, first of all, because it is suffering. This sacred planet has been abused by one of God's creatures – human beings! We need to confess not only that each of us sins daily against God but also that human beings have polluted, denuded and desecrated God's sanctuary.

Sometimes we have tended to view Earth as of relatively little value compared to heaven, and so we have not treated Earth with the love and care it deserves. But Earth is God's sanctuary and our home.

Creation is also groaning in hope. Paul describes the groaning of creation as being its birth pangs. Why? Because deep within the cosmos there is a yearning for the day when creation will be liberated from the curse of decay and destruction. Creation is longing for the renewal of all things. In *The Season of Creation* we not only confess what we have done to creation but we also seek to empathise with creation as it suffers from the sins of humans and as it yearns for the day of renewal.

Christ in Creation

In this season, while the context of our worship is creation, the heart of our message is Christ. Jesus Christ, as the Word of God, was the impulse from God that brought all things into being (*Jn 1,1–3)*. That Word, however, did not remain as the impulse that kept all things alive. That Word became flesh (*1:14*)! And what is flesh? Earth, air and water – the basic components of creation. In other words, God the Creator became a creature, an embryo that was born and lived life as we know it. In *The Season of Creation* we celebrate this amazing mystery, that God joined the web of life. God became a piece of Earth!

This mystery is even more amazing when we realise that the risen Christ is in, with and under creation. The risen Christ, says St Paul, is a cosmic presence – right here in our planet! And this cosmic Christ, who created all things, is at work in creation, reconciling all things, filling all things and renewing all things (*Col 1,15–20; Eph1,9,10,23*).

Caring for Creation

How should we respond to these amazing mysteries? How should we respond to the healing that Christ offers us and all creation? How should we respond to the environmental crisis we face in our corner of creation?

In *The Season of Creation* we make a commitment to listen to the cries and groans of creation. We promise to nurture our kin in creation. We affirm the word of God, first spoken to Adam, that humans are to 'serve and preserve' this garden planet (*Gen 2,15*). We agree to be partners with Christ in restoring this planet, this sanctuary of God and the home we enjoy as humans.

A sample from the liturgy for Forest Sunday Call to Worship

L1 *We invite the forests to worship with us:*
People: Mountain ash and eucalypts, quivering ferns and glistening moss!

L2 *We invite tall trees to celebrate life:*
People: Huon pines and ironbark, tall timber where lizards and lichen find their home!

L3 *We invite the forest nightlife to sing:*
People: Green tree frogs and timid moths, ancient owls and swirling bats!

L1 *We join with the fauna of the forest in praising God:*
People: Lyrebirds and black cockatoos, platypuses, pythons and butterflies!

L2 *We celebrate the song of the forest!*
People: Sing, forest, sing!

Dr Norman Habel is a theologian, Biblical scholar and retired pastor of the Lutheran Church of Australia

Home – a holy place

Daniel O'Leary looks for Christ's presence in the complex fabric of family life,

My brother Joseph had Down's Syndrome. Every so often, in my dreams, he still comes storming back to deeply disturb my life. My mother adored him. And during those most difficult times, especially when Joseph's severe diabetes demanded unrelenting attention, she was sustained by the certainty that in caring for Joseph she was entertaining angels unaware. If I had my mother back now I would tell her that it was even more than that. It was the Lord himself who was there.

The same is true for every member of every family. Even today, when the notion of 'family' is undergoing radical change, it is still true. The mystics believed that God is born anew in every child. "Here comes God again", they would say, "in deep disguise. The seed of God becomes God. Just as the pear seed becomes the pear tree, and the hazel seed becomes the hazel, so too, God's seed in us becomes God."

And all of this happens in the living rooms and kitchens of every family. The home is, indeed, a holy place. It is the nursery of divinity. And, as with our Joseph, it can be a long nursery with no graduation day. As midwives of mystery, the work of many parents is unrelenting. Their whole lives are spent in persuading and coaxing, with the mother-tongue, God's incarnate, unfamiliar beauty from within reluctant shadows into the light of day.

When parents are gathered on Judgment Day, the Lord will gently say: "I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink, naked and you clothed me, homeless and you sheltered me, imprisoned and you visited me. Come; enter the kingdom I have prepared for you." And the parents will be bewildered and ask: "Are you sure, Lord? When did we see you hungry and feed you?"

The Lord will reply, "Do you really not know? Do you not remember the way you carefully fed me when I was a baby; the way you loved me into my first small steps across the kitchen into your arms, and later, my bigger steps into the waiting world. All the time, that was me you were nourishing. Yes, of course it was your child. But it was me, your God, as well."

"When were you thirsty, Lord?" they asked. "I needed your love and comfort. You held me to your breast and I could hear your heart. As tenderly as the sun opens the daisies, your gentle voice and loving eyes opened my soul to the mystery of my true identity. I, your God, became your vulnerable child so as to experience your tenderness to me."

"But naked, Lord? and homeless?" The Lord replied, "I was born naked and homeless, and you sheltered me, first in your womb and then in your arms. In my rebellious years I left home, blinded by lesser lights and loves. You did not judge me; your great heart never doubted me; you forgave me, you believed in me, you drew me into a higher way of life-making, light-making and love-making. No matter what, on my return home, your face at the door was always a smiling sacrament of welcome."

"But imprisoned, Lord? Surely not!" The Lord paused. "There are many kinds of prison. When I was imprisoned in my fears I cried out in the night; you came and lifted me from behind the bars of my cot and folded me in your arms. Years later you lifted me from behind the bars of bigger fears – fears of my own inadequacy, of my own intense emotions, of the terror and beauty of the unknown life ahead."

Perhaps nowhere more than in the heartfelt dynamic of married life, where the human spirit stretches itself, in its trusting and letting go, to the limits of its potential, is this expression of incarnate love more clearly sacramentalised. We discover that every ordinary human home is the

unexpected place where God dwells. Even where there is suspicion and deceit, married life must remain an epiphany of mystery; a participation in God's own challenging essence. Anytime we say "I'm trying to forgive you" or "I still believe in you" to each other, that is also the ever-present expression of God's incarnate covenant within us, constantly healing and completing all that is imperfect.

Holy Week teaches us that we can only experience the Risen Christ when we have undergone some kind of loss or disillusionment. Most of these 'little deaths', and the more awful ones, too, are found within the world of the home. Because of its potential for creating joy, family life can also be a den of destruction. Where is the divine heart in the way we crush the life out of each other behind closed doors? And yet, is not the very hopelessness of our lives the only place for hope to happen? Where else, if not in this loveless noise, and against all the odds, can the faint music of Easter be recognised within us?

There is an urgent energy within our domestic world waiting to be released into the church. The home is a cauldron of emotions, all now charged with redemptive presence; for that reason it is also a powerhouse of renewal within the church. The passions and prayers, the storms and whispers, the blame and the blessing – are all part of that graced energy.

Everything that happens in the unbelievably complex fabric of family life, the light and the dark of it, has God's life-giving heartbeat within it, God's loving signature set to it. And we go to Mass to remember and to celebrate together the extraordinary revelation that no moment is 'merely' human or worldly, but rather a place of grace; every threshold a door to heaven.

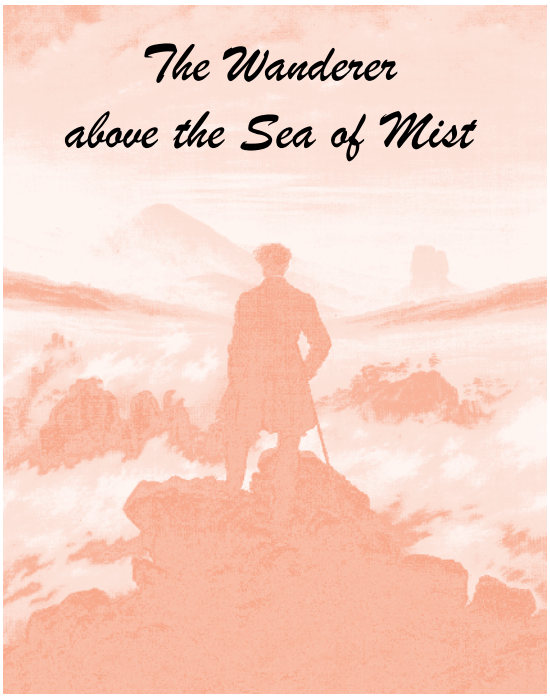
With this vital 'secret' in mind, we insisted on incorporating a welcoming living room into the foyer of the lovely new church we built a few years ago. In this hearth, people sit around the open fire, tell stories, read poetry, or chat. And each day, too, the same sacramental space is used for celebrating the Eucharist; nature and grace again embrace in the one small kitchen table of life. We placed these words on the mantelpiece so as to always remember:

"Smiling broadly with great delight, Jesus, our only true host, sets a place for absolutely everyone at this table. He embraces every family, each with its own stories to tell him – the hurting and the healing, the sinning and the gracing. He then sits down and explains to us, amazed, how those ordinary moments of raw human life are his life too... Comforted, we eat and drink his words with the bread and wine of joy.

"He kisses each one of us before we leave. Our hearts are burning within us as we recall his parting words of comfort – our kitchens, too, are little Bethlehems, our breakfast tables are small altars, our whole lives, with their calvaries and resurrections, are one long consecration and communion. 'Don't be sad,' he says, 'I'll be waiting for you at home.'" ■

Daniel O'Leary is a priest of the diocese of Leeds, England. Reproduced with permission from The Tablet, *London*

Oil painting (98x75 cm), 1810
by Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840)



As a viewer I feel immediately drawn into this picture. We can identify with the lonely figure contemplating the craggy mountains from a great height above the mists. We can no doubt recall some 'mountain top' experience where we too felt on top of the world, elated to have reached the peak of a hill or mountain. We can even imagine the feeling of triumph in climbing Mount Everest. But – as we are reminded by recent events – mountaineering is a risky venture; we are vulnerable to its costs.

Caspar David Friedrich lived for most of his life in Dresden in south-east Germany, and this scene may be from the nearby region which is nicknamed the "Saxon Switzerland". He flourished in the great period of German Romanticism in literature and the arts of the early 19th Century (like his contemporaries Wordsworth, Coleridge and Blake, in England).

He was a fervent lover of nature, which he called "Christ's Bible". For him, God was everywhere, even in a grain of sand. So Friedrich could paint the Cross of Christ reared up on a mountain top. But he could also paint scenes of an Arctic shipwreck or a lonely monk standing by the sea, conveying the disquieting vastness and power of Nature.

In this painting our wanderer contemplates the awesomeness of Nature. He is a microcosm of the infinite Universe because he has a spiritual inner space. But he is also mortal and vulnerable in a world of dizzy heights and depths. ■

Albert Moore

The Way of the Cross:
Sculptures – Llew Summers;
Poems – Bernadette Hall

(published by the *Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament Charitable Trust*, Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, 136 Barbadoes Street, P.O.Box 4544, Christchurch.)

price $24.95. Available in bookshops and from Christchurch Cathedral

Review: Sandra Winton OP

A naked man

To mark its centenary in 2005, Stations of the Cross were commissioned for the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch. Alongside these, Christchurch poet Bernadette Hall was invited to write poems, one for each station. Llew Summers' stations and the poems are beautifully presented in this 46-page book, each station and its corresponding poem being given a full page.

The Stations, in their white-grey marble, focus on the central figures, the core emotions and relationships at the heart of each captured moment. They look as if all artifice has been stripped away; the figures are solid, grounded on heavy feet, bulky with earthy humanity. A gesture, a look, a perspective invites us in. These sculptures draw us into stillness, feelings we recognise, into contemplation.

Bernadette Hall's poems result from such contemplation as another creative mind gazes and responds. She does not fasten the sculptures to an interpretation, but rather loosens our associations, drawing our minds towards the scenes depicted, inviting us to notice more. Her words take us to the Christ, yet speak in our own language, the language of a parent, the language of this country.

So at the 14th Station (***left***) she writes:

The women rest their chins
on the hillside of his cold body.

He is the canoe that must be launched,
the precious manuscript that must be studied,
te wakahuia, the carved treasure chest.

His hair hangs down like a braided river.

The Christ of these stations is silent, childlike, naked, caught in a huge movement:

The thing that stirs in me is bigger
than my fear. You want to stub it out.
It is too simple. (from 1st Station)

XII Jesus dies on the cross

XIV Jesus is placed in the tomb

V Simon helps Jesus carry his cross

on a cross

The nakedness of Summers' Christ has been controversial, but it is essential to his vision. It is the nakedness of one who is defenceless and wholly laid open to what is occurring both in its human dimension and its theological.

So in the 11th Station (***right***), *Jesus is Nailed to the Cross*, we become the watcher, placed by the curled right hand, looking across and down the body. The poet elaborates in the voice of Jesus:

I am stranded like a frost fish on a stony beach.

I have no more moves to make, just this slow
folding and unfolding of my big hands,
this opening and closing of my exhausted lungs,
my heart ticking over.

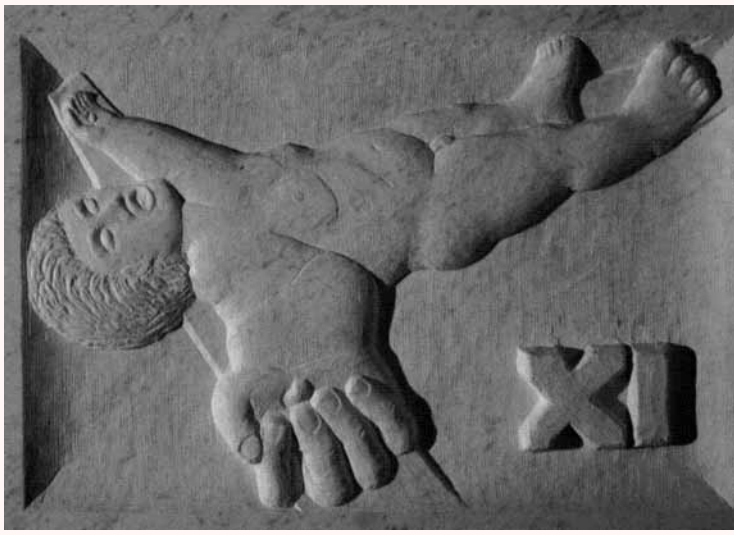
I stretch my hand to you beyond the frame.
My arm is a road through suffering and pain.
My arm is a bridge to forgiveness.

In the splendid Cathedral these works sit as a reminder that, as Albert Nolan once said, in the midst of the pomp of the church and its apparatus hangs this incongruous thing, a naked man on a cross. This book draws us back to that reality and to the mystery of Christ's life and our own.

Both sculptures and poems speak to human suffering, the ways in which we can feel powerless before the depredation of people and the earth. Here suffering is not transcended or even transformed by faith – rather it is simply lived. Through that living somehow hope is kindled. These works point also to the mysterious role of witness and of art in the emergence of redemption.

This is a carefully prepared book with pictures locating the stations in the cathedral and text explaining the tradition of the Stations of the Cross and the genesis of this art work. It is a book for prayer, a lovely gift. For me it has borne many readings. And for those who do not read poetry, even a poetry-phobic friend admitted – I really liked this. ■

Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Christchurch



XI Jesus is nailed to the cross

VIII Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem

VI Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

The Treaty and the Gospel

Pat Snedden and Makareta Tawaroa explain how honouring the Treaty of Waitangi has moulded their whole life's work

Maori health – an authentic path of reform

In 25 years of professional life I have found that adopting a Treaty-based approach to organisational decision-making where appropriate is neither mysterious nor divisive. My approach is simple. We simply set a basic benchmark that the outcome must be better than the status quo and that the benefits should be available to all.

Let me illustrate the point. For the 12 years I have been a business advisor to *Health Care Aotearoa*, a not-for-profit grouping of primary health providers. This network comprises 55 health providers, mostly general practices. Over half the provider organisations are owned and operated by Maori, and offer services to all the general population. The balance of provider membership is under community, Pacific Island and union ownership.

This network was initiated by trade unions. In 1993 the market-driven health reforms based on the implementation of the Gibbs Report (*Unshackling the Hospitals*) were under way, and the unions decided the most effective means of improving access for low-income patients was to form coalitions.

In the event the strategy succeeded, with the union services coalescing with Maori, Pacific and community not-for-profit organisations to represent the interests of those with the greatest difficulty in accessing affordable, quality care. The coalition named their network *Health Care Aotearoa* Inc (HCA), and its provider members now service over 150,000 low-income New Zealanders.

Today this initiative has inspired a huge change in primary health care as the Government implements its policy of PHOs (*or primary health organisations*), predicated on a way of targeting health funding called the deprivation index. PHOs are all not-for-profit, have community representation on their governance structures, are funded on a population basis, provide low fees for high-needs patients and have Treaty-based relationships in their governance. The insistence that the people being served must have a say in the policy by which the PHO functions originated from this group's core philosophy.

This is a great example of a grass-roots initiative informing national policy and benefiting the lives of all New Zealanders. But it would not have occurred, had it not been for a quite explicit application of a Treaty-based process.

The most important personal catalyst was Tariana Turia who spoke at the first annual hui. She presented her perspective on health from the standpoint of leading a kaupapa Maori health service, and provided a simple, eloquent and clear account of the elements that constituted good health for Maori. This traversed her personal experience and that of her husband, George.

She covered the tribal history of her hapu and the life experience of being Maori in that small community. It was a spell-binding first-hand account of the world as seen through the eyes of Maori, not as victim, nor as a social drain on the state, but as one person's story representative of a people determined not to relinquish their own authenticity as tangata whenua. It was about health, but not as we knew it.

Pivotal to her explanation were two inescapable truths. There would be no health for Maori without recovery of their *whenua* (land) and recognition of their *rangatiratanga* (ability to exercise their chiefly authority as trustees over their own taonga). If HCA was to be serious about addressing the determinants of Maori ill-health, it needed first to decide its own position on the Treaty. Where did it stand on the issue of affirming and protecting te tino rangatiratanga?

The network response was two-fold. It both affirmed the Treaty and the protection for the rangatiratanga of tangata whenua, whilst at the same celebrating the authentic standing and legitimacy of tauiwi deriving from that same Treaty. From this base it gained a licence to address the matters of health outcomes from a much wider perspective than just the medical intervention strategies. This wider perspective offers a whole-of-life view of health that can be understood just as easily by Pakeha as Maori, even if the language of description is different.

Health Care Aotearoa can claim modest success as a Treaty-based organisation that manages not only to enhance the capacity of its membership to do its business better, but promotes results that benefit all New Zealanders. The Maori dimension, fully enfranchised and engaged with the non-Maori dimension, has created the change in practices and increase in understanding that have charted a successful pathway to success.

It therefore meets the benchmark. ■

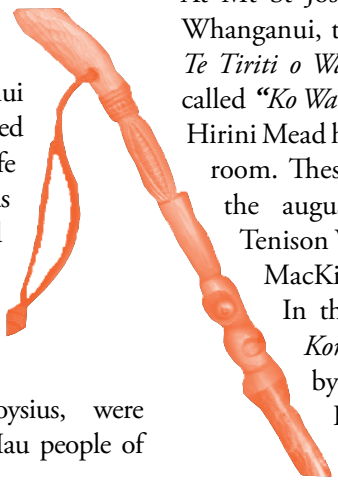
Pat Snedden, an Auckland Catholic, is head of NZ Housing Corporation


Makareta with the mokopuna

front l to r Manaaki Baron McRitchie, Karere and Kaea Rhind Hepburn, Joseph Huatahi Barber. Makareta is holding Te Ao Maro Baron McRitchie

A bicultural journey

Ko Aotea te Waka
Whanganui te Awa
Tongariro te Maunga
Kaiwhaiki te Marae
Nga Paerangi te Iwi
Tihei mauri ora



My name is Makareta Takahia Tawaroa. I am a Whanganui Iwi Josephite. I have lived the last 40 years of my life as the only Maori Religious in our Congregation and it has been a wonderful experience. Our bicultural journey began in 1883 when our Foundation Sisters, Teresa and Aloysius, were welcomed by the Ngati Hau people of Hiruharama.

Chapter - Hui 2000

This same journey was given a major boost at our Chapter, Hui 2000. Tikanga Maori values became part of the inner sanctum of our Congregation and Te Reo Maori found a place in our official documents. Short mihi or poroporoaki are included whenever our Sisters speak at tangi and public functions. Both Teresa and Aloysius received lessons from Suzanne Aubert, Foundress of the Compassion Sisters, way back in 1883. The Vision Statements of our two Aged Care Institutions and our Conference and Retreat Centre here in Whanganui, are translated into Te Reo, recognising Te Reo as an official language.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Our Congregation Trust Board Constitution's exhort us *"to live by the Treaty of Waitangi…* I was deeply touched when the Sisters decided to transfer the ownership of a bach house we've owned in a small coastal town, to a hapu who have mana whenua in this area. While full occupation is suspended for another 25 years, a compromise agreed by both parties, this is a partnership prompted by the sharing of resources and healing of wounds.

Maori Icons

At Mt St Joseph, our hearthplace in Whanganui, there is a framed copy of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* and of a carving called *"Ko Waitangi Ahau"* by Professor Hirini Mead hanging in the conference room. These two icons have joined the august company of Julian Tenison Woods and Blessed Mary MacKillop, our Co-founders. In the chapel there is *Rakau Korero,* a carved talking stick by Master Carver, Dean Flavell which tells the story of our four original Sisters who came to Whanganui in 1880, represented through the design elements of hai hai, patiki and papamoa.

Powhiri

At Hui 2000 the *Tangata Whenua Liaison Group* was set up. This group has initiated most of the changes and, as a consequence, is often misunderstood. For example, not everyone is happy about the welcoming ritual of Powhiri which is used for certain Congregational occasions. There's a lot of uncertainty about the place and extent of biculturalism within the Congregation's ministry.

In the '80s our Mission Option stated that our commitment was to biculturalism and an indigenous church. It is clear that we all need to listen more deeply to each other and to consult more widely before adopting certain practices, while at the same time, seeking a ***"blessing"*** for those areas where consensus may not be possible. Biculturalism will always evoke tension, so the Sisters' concerns are perfectly legitimate. Our Congregation has done things only one way for so long that it's easy to think it is the only way.

Being Indigenous

Last year we celebrated 125 years of presence in the Whanganui community – mainly the pakeha community. As a Congregation, we still have much to learn about the many and diverse sections of the Maori community. Our own Trust Board Constitution exhorts us to: "***live by the principles of indigeneity***". In the book "Passion for Christ, Passion for Humanity" by the International Congress on Consecrated Life, it says that ***"consecrated life will not survive nor fulfil its mission if it is not inculturated in the diverse places and contexts where it exists".***

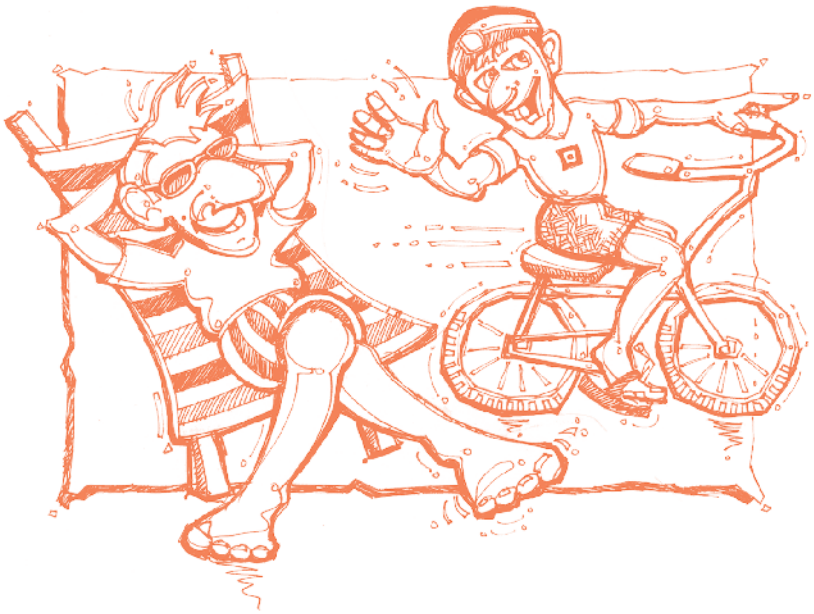
Other Milestones

Looking back over the last 40 years, there have been many other milestones in our Congregation's bicultural journey; working alongside my beloved cousin, the late Piki Takiari who connected rangatahi to their River roots; setting up Te Kainga Wairua, a small training place for mainly women in rangatiratanga principles; turning our extended garage into Te Kura Kaupapa o Atihaunui a Paparangi for several terms; helping to establish Maori health services and the training of Lay Ministers, to name a few.

I now live home here in Kaiwhaiki, part of a project that incorporates both my Kaiwhaiki whanau and a small group of dedicated Sisters, working together to nurture the land, growing kai, establishing an orchard, planting native trees and planning a home for ducks and birds. ■

My spiritual odyssey

Glynn Cardy



The metaphor of journey is used in relation to spirituality. We are often guided in our early years, learning one travelling tradition, and then finding it unsatisfactory and leaving it, maybe never to journey again. But more often than not I suspect most people do travel again. Some will travel with companions down a well-known road and be satisfied. Some will travel on a less-known path. Others will leave the known altogether and head out across the fields or over the seas.

On the journey beliefs are like cairns. Useful things, marking the path others have followed, bringing travellers to this point. We need to remember the beliefs, the cairns, of the past and learn from them.

Some people camp around cairns, building churches or theological colleges on the spot. After a while however, especially when the discussions seem to be about who's got the biggest cairn or how to make the spot more comfortable, many move on. Beliefs are not an end point.

Faith is not belief, or having beliefs. Faith is that urge to move on. Faith is about taking the risk of leaving the familiar to journey into the unfamiliar. Faith though is not irrational in the sense that it is unreasonable or folly, though to some it will seem so. Rather faith can come after carefully weighing up of the options, the known versus the unknown, and then taking a step.

Lastly the spiritual journey has no end point. You don't necessarily find God at the end; or heaven; or even self-fulfilment or contentment. Some would say that you find these things along the way. I'm not so sure. Sometimes they can be quite elusive. There are few guarantees in the spiritual life. The person who is comfortable camped with a set of beliefs, enjoying the security of certainty, is not to be pitied. When new events or knowledge shake their world they will try hard to incorporate those things within their camp. I envy them in some ways. That is until they start imposing their beliefs on others. I know for myself and many others that we have no option but to take leave of the familiar camps and travel on. Not for any reward. Not for any peace of mind.

I first learnt about prayer in a church. Week by week I sat in a half-empty church, kneeling quietly, and listening to the Minister exuding a pious ambience say words which had little meaning for me. What did have meaning, though I could not have articulated it at the time, was the feeling that I was in the presence of something larger than myself or the other people present. Whether it was the candles, the darkened wood, the stained glass, or high-ceilings, I don't know… but something conveyed to me the mystery and wonder of the Holy.

I was then fortunate to be inculcated into a 1970s form of evangelicalism. By means of a simple formula I took Jesus to be my personal saviour and lord. One result of this was to be taught another way to pray. Instead of reciting responses in church I was now encouraged to imagine an invisible Jesus in my bedroom to whom I could chat at will. God was a human-shaped being who wanted to be my personal friend.

Chatting to Jesus served me well through adolescence. I remember walking through the bush on the way home from school sharing all the ups and downs of my day with my invisible friend, one who would never interrupt my monologue with his own needs. Of course I still went to church, though usually to services where songs were accompanied by guitars and repeated over and over. The personal god, Jesus, I was told wanted us to endlessly sing his praises.

Sometime in my teens Jesus the personal God became too small for me. I wanted something more, something that would interrupt me, even disturb me. I wanted to find a God who didn't need sycophants to sing his praises. I was dissatisfied too with the glib and circular answers to hard questions like the persistence of pain, suffering and evil.

A mother's journal...

Kaaren Mathias

There are days when parenting is just tiring and repetitive – in fact those sort of days seem to happen relatively often. I'm not quite sure what I did with the oceans of time I must have had before children. Did I lie in bed in the morning and just choose when to rise? Did I only have to do a couple of washing machine loads a week? Did I sit through an entire church service without interruptions? Did I read books in less than a month? Did I talk on the telephone uninterrupted? I'm just guessing, but I think it must have benen unrelenting peace and ease.

Here in Himachal Pradesh there's the added challenge of home-schooling. There are moments of real illumination and zinging learning – suddenly understanding the water cycle or how to 'carry one' when adding. It's really fun to share and even facilitate that on occasion… There are also moments of feeling unvalued, disrespected, like a bad mother and teacher with out-of-control children and a career that's going nowhere fast… and all those feelings can wash in and out in the same half hour!

But I also love the way having children in my life flips things upside down and turns them around and sideways. My six-year-old girls open my eyes to pretty beetles I've rushed straight past. Four-year-old Rohan squawks with laughter at the story of a cat peeing into my friend's slippers. There is silliness every day. We have had two weeks of fever pitch excitement about the prospect of getting kittens tomorrow. I don't remember birthdays being nearly as much fun – in fact most things are more exciting with our children on the scene.

We went for a family trek last week. We were all ready for some family time away after having had too many visitors staying with us. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, and the air was Granny Smith crisp. As we walked up the banks of the Tirthan river we picked sweet, tangy Leh berries. It felt great to be alive. The Tirthan was a glacial blue and very 'bubbly'. Lunch on the rocky beach beside the river was garnished with real cheddar cheese from Delhi. We watched the flitting and tail-wagging of the handsome redstarts and a Himalayan bulbul. In the afternoon we hauled ourselves slowly up the shady forested hill and near the top startled a Monal pheasant. The flash of electric blue wings and red tail was beautiful.

The campsite, Coili Poi, was named after the huge cedar that was split and felled by lightening years ago. It gave views over to snowy mountains. Underfoot we were careful not to slip on the many huge Himalayan slugs. Our children had walked really well. We were tired and happy. Beautiful rivers, large mountains, colourful birds and healthy strong bodies… and a campfire with damper… my idea of a great day! It was Rohan's idea of great day too but his source of joy was quite different from mine. His goodnight prayer as he curled up in the sleeping bag went:

"Thank you God that we could go trekking so that I could come here and play with the slugs. I like their tentacles poking back into their heads. Help us not to tread on the slugs and hurt them. Amen" ■

Kaaren Mathias is a mother of three, living and working in a village in Himachal Pradesh. She is focussed on keeping her kids happy, improving public health and enjoying the beautiful surroundings.

I then began a different type of journey, walking without knowing the destination, finding sustenance amongst unlikely people and thoughts, and all the time looking for ways to pray and being sustained by them. I meditated with other Christians, learnt Christian mantras, went on prayer walks and pilgrimages, was nourished by Taize and the Daily Office, and sat staring at candles for long periods of time. Poetry, music, prose, and silence were all part of my prayer.

I also attended many churches and the holy places of other traditions, enjoying the beauty of some buildings and the care people took of them, and being repulsed by others. I enjoyed a variety of communities, worshipping styles and musical traditions, each trying to express that which was beyond words: a yearning and connectedness with the Divine.

Over these past 30 years I have sought a God whose vastness is honoured and who resists being reduced to fit our needs. I've sought a God who is both mystery and intimate, both lover and tormentor.

My experience has been that whenever I grab a model of God too hard it cracks. Father God cracked long ago. Mother God didn't last too long either. God as Santa Claus was always seriously flawed. God as a being was doomed too. God as 'being' lasted longer. God as comforter didn't survive Elie Wiesel's writings. God as ocean has enduring properties as does God as love, but both can be elusive. Even God as noun cracked.

This ongoing iconoclastic experience of searching, finding, relating, holding on, being held, letting go, and losing, has shaped my prayer. It's been a spirited exchange on the edge of ultimate mystery and nothingness. ■

The Bible and chaos; blessings and canaries

When the American Episcopal Church's General Convention was debating whether rites of blessing be developed to support "relationships of mutuality and fidelity other than marriage which mediate the Grace of God", Julie Wortman approached the eminent Presbyterian scholar Walter Breuggeman for his views

Julie Wortman: You are a Biblical scholar whose social and political views are grounded in Scripture and ancient tradition. Is it your experience that Scripture is the chief authority for moderate Christians, and is it the chief authority for you?

Walter Brueggemann: The answers to both those questions are : "Yes"... Most people, including the movable moderates, probably make up their minds on other grounds than the Bible, but then they are uneasy if it collides with the Bible or at least they have an eagerness to be shown how it is that the Bible coheres.

I don't think, on most of these contested questions, that anybody – liberal or conservative – really reads right out of the Bible. I think we basically bring hunches to the Bible that arrive in all sorts of ways and then we seek confirmation. I try to help people make those connections with the hunches they already have.

Julie Wortman: Do you think lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (lgbt) folks are sinners?

Walter Brueggemann: Yes – like we all are. So I think that our sexual interpersonal relationships are enormously hazardous, and they are the place where we work out our fears and our anxieties, and we do that in many exploitative ways. So I don't think that gays and lesbians and so on are exempt from the kind of temptations that all of us live with.

Julie Wortman: Is their struggle for full inclusion in the life of the church a justice struggle?

Walter Brueggemann: Yes. Martin Luther King famously said that the arc of history is bent toward justice. And the parallel statement that I want to make is that the arc of the Gospel is bent toward inclusiveness. That's a kind of elemental conviction through which I then read the text. I suspect a lot of people who share this approach sort out parts of the text that are in the service of inclusion and kind of put aside those that move in the other direction.

Julie Wortman: And what do you do with those other parts?

Walter Brueggemann: Well, I think you have to take them seriously. It is clear that much or all of the Bible is time-bound and much of the Bible is filtered through a rather heavy-duty patriarchal ideology... For me, the conviction that you have to make a distinction between the Gospel and the Bible is a terribly important one...

It's very scary now in the church that the Gospel is equated with the Bible, so you get a kind of a biblicism that is not noticeably informed by the Gospel. And that means that the relationship between the Bible and the Gospel is always going to be contested, and I suppose that's what all our churches are doing – they're contesting.

Julie Wortman: You've done a lot of work on the Hebrew prophets. What do you think we can learn from the prophets about justice in this issue of lgbt people?

Walter Brueggemann: As you know the prophets are largely focused on economic questions: they are concerned with the way in which the powerful take advantage of the vulnerable. Obviously gays and lesbians are the vulnerable, and the very loud heterosexual community is as exploitative as any of the people that the prophets critiqued. Plus, on sexuality questions you have this tremendous claim of virtue and morality on the heterosexual side, which of course makes heterosexual ideology much more heavy-handed.

Julie Wortman: You once said: "The church has made a centrepiece of our worship how bad we are." Can you say something about that again?

Walter Brueggemann: That's a judgment I make of my Calvinist liturgics tradition. I never have that feeling in Episcopalianism – even though there's a regular confession of sin, it doesn't seem as weighty as a Calvinist confession of sin. But I incline to think that the weight of God's graciousness readily overrides our guilt, and what we ought to talk about is God's grace.

I don't think people are troubled by guilt in our culture: they are troubled by chaos. And therefore most of our talk about confession and forgiveness is beside the point. The reason that's important to me is that I have the deep conviction that the adrenalin that gathers around the sexuality issues is not really about sexuality. It is about the unarticulated sense people have that the world is falling apart.

The anxiety about chaos is acute among us. Obviously, 9/11 makes that more so, but it was there before that. The world the way we have known it is passing away from us, and I believe that people have taken the sexuality issue as the place to draw a line and take a stand, but it's not a line or a

stand about sexuality. It's about the emotional sense that the world is a very dangerous place. Sexuality is, I think, one way to talk about that.

Julie Wortman: It is said that many young people are hungry for a life of sacrifice and service. Does that connect with what you're talking about?

Walter Brueggemann: I would have some wonderment about whether it's that clean and simple. But people are becoming aware that the recent practices of material consumption are simply destructive for us, and they do not contribute to our humanness. And the more people that know that, the more encouraging it is.

Julie Wortman: The sexuality debate seems so beside the point given the church's call in these times.

Walter Brueggemann: In my own (Presbyterian) context, I have the sense that continuing to argue about sexuality is almost a deliberate smokescreen to keep from having to talk about anything that gets at the real issues in our own lives.

I think those issues are economic, and many of the great liberals in my church don't want to talk about economics. The reason for that is many of us liberals are also into consumption in a big way. So this is something else you can talk about without threatening them.

Julie Wortman: Say something about the nature of blessing in the Old Testament? How is it used?

Walter Brueggemann: It's used in a lot of ways, but I believe that the primary meaning is that it is the life force of creation that makes abundance possible. If you look at the recital of blessings, for example, in *Deuteronomy 28*, it's about very mundane material matters. 'May your livestock prosper. May your bread rise. May your corn grow'. So I think it has to do with abundance, productivity, the extravagances of the material world. And a curse then, as in *Deuteronomy 28*, is that the life force of vitality is withdrawn from us and our future just kind of shrivels up.

Julie Wortman: Is that different from the way Jesus would use it in the New Testament? Especially thinking about the Beatitudes?

Walter Brueggemann: No, I think the Beatitudes are exactly that way when it says *blessed are the peacemakers*. I think this means the life force of God's creative spirit is with people who live that way. And that they are destined for abundant well-being. So when you talk about a ritual of blessing, it is the church's sacramental act of asserting that this relationship will be a place in which God's generativity is invested.

Julie Wortman: So why do you think folks baulk at the idea of rites of blessing for same-sex relationships that are free of promiscuity, exploitation and abusiveness and are marked by "fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection, respect, careful honest communication and the holy love that enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God," as they said at the Episcopal Church's 2000 *General Convention*?

Walter Brueggemann: I think it's very complex and it's about anxiety and all of that, but in the light of what I was saying, I think it's a moralistic judgment that people like this are not entitled to well-being. And therefore for the church to sacramentally guarantee well-being for these people is an unearned gift that falls outside the moral calculus.

Now in Presbyterianism the question that's sometimes put is 'are too many people being saved?' You don't want all these people saved. That's called 'universalism'. I think it's the same calculus that is articulated by Job's friends, that only the obedient are entitled to well-being. If these relationships are understood to be an act of disobedience, then the church ought not to be asserting well-being for them.

Julie Wortman: So there's a logic to the baulking?

Walter Brueggemann: It is a sort of logic. I think it's a logic that's rooted in fear and it's rooted in resentment. It is parallel to welfare reform in which the undeserving poor ought not to get food stamps.

Morality *does* matter and living obediently and responsibly *is* important. But that is always in tension with the other claim we make that the very fact that we exist as God's creatures gives us some entitlements.

Julie Wortman: As a person who bases what he thinks on Scripture, what would you say the Biblical standards are for relationships?

Walter Brueggemann: Well, I think ***fidelity***. It takes a lot of interpretation, but it's basically to love God and love neighbour. And the first neighbour I suppose we love is the one to whom we make these holy vows. So that has to do with relationships that are honourable and just and faithful and reliable. This is relational thinking.

But the sort of thinking that you can establish out of *Leviticus*, where so much of this anti-same-sex blessing stance comes from, involves a substantive material sense of ***contamination*** that has nothing to do with relationships.

To this way of thinking there is a palpable poison that is turned loose in the community that must be resisted. People who think this way cannot take into account the relational dynamics that we're trying to talk about. That way of talking about physical contamination is deeply rooted in the Bible, though, which is a problem.

Julie Wortman: There are people who say the situation of lgbt people is analogous to that of the canary in a coal mine.

Walter Brueggemann: I've said that in the city homeless people are the canaries, but I think that's right about lgbt people. A general principle is that whoever is most vulnerable is the canary. That is, it is always the test case about whether we are following Jesus. And then, if you extrapolate to say that gays and lesbians are the most vulnerable in this issue, then they are indeed the canary.

This interview was first published in the November '02 issue of The Witness

Siblings

Irish Jesuit priest and psychotherapist Paul Andrews looks at sibling rivalry in families and how it may be resolved

Eighty eight-year-old Eileen was wrong when she thought that her active days were over. Though she had been a widow for ten years, and barely stirred from her armchair, she had left a will, and through that she went on making waves. She had thought carefully about the will, and divided her treasures between her two daughters as fairly as she could. To Una she left her old table and bed-linen.

When Eileen died, and the solicitor read out this clause of the will, you could feel the tension in the air. Anne, the younger sister, put her head down in fury. She walked out afterwards without a word to the others. She read the legacy as final, unarguable proof that mother preferred Una to her. Before the end of the year, Una had thrown out the linen, which was so threadbare and stained with age that she could not use it. But both girls knew how mother had prized it, so it became a barrier between them.

Friends could not understand how sisters could stop talking to one another over such a trifle. But rivalry between siblings had led to more than silence in the past. In a symbolic story at the beginning of the Bible, Cain murders his brother Abel out of jealousy that Abel's offering was more pleasing to God than his own. Later, in *Genesis*, Jacob's older sons plan to kill their brother Joseph because they think he is Daddy's favourite. In Jesus' parable, the brother of the Prodigal Son will not join his father's welcoming party for the young brother, out of jealousy at the fuss Daddy was making over his return.

Sibling rivalry is in all of us, and it can co-exist with a delightful personality. I knew a lovely girl – call her Ruth – a favourite with teachers, attractive, and competent both in class and at sport. She could not see herself that way. She saw herself as the outsider in a family of three girls. She saw big sister and little sister as holding the central position, and more loved by her parents.

She scrutinised every birthday gift to the others, and compared them with her own presents with a mathematical eye. She felt every treat to the others as an insult to herself. When mother gave Ruth something special, she gave nothing back, always wanting more, never acknowledging that it had been a kindness, a treat. So for her parents she was the least rewarding of the three girls, the hardest to satisfy, the one who never made them feel good and loved.

As children we always wanted to know that we had a place in our parent's mind and heart. When my father came back from a journey, I looked to see had he anything in his bag for me. I watched the gifts he brought for brothers and sister. Sibling rivalry centres on the question of how much father or mother has time for me – and how I compare in their minds with my siblings.

Jealousy is not so much wanting what someone else has – Anne would have had no use for her mother's old linen – as being anxious about what I lack. Anne did not want the linen for herself, but she was angry because she felt it was love-linen, a symbol of the affection and security which Una enjoyed and Anne did not. Jealousy is about feelings, not about objects or events.

The psychologist Alfred Adler saw birth-order in terms of a power-struggle between children. He described the first-born as a power-hungry conservative, unconsciously trying to hold on to the position of dominance with which s/he started. The second child he saw as the rival, relating to others competitively. The last child, the baby, is the one with secure power, because she has no rival threatening her from behind, and for that reason she often enjoys more of her mother's time and attention.

In fact recent studies suggest that youngest children tend to be more radical, whether in science or in politics. History shows that youngest sons (for instance Charles Darwin, Lenin, Ho Chi Minh) have the sort of self-confidence that can fuel revolutionary proposals, which are opposed by conservative eldest children.

Take any family – I look at my own. My siblings and I may imagine we grew up in the same family environment. Not so. The eldest has a different experience of family from the youngest. Each of us is interacting with a different set of individuals, older or younger than themselves, and parents respond differently to different children. It is no use pining for happy families with perfect parents. That expectation only paves the way for disappointment. As Ogden Nash wrote:

> One would be in less danger
> From the wiles of the stranger
> If one's own kin and kith
> Were more fun to be with.

For Una and Anne, parents are no longer there to respond; they survive only in the emotionally charged memories of their daughters. What remedy is there for the jealous silence between the sisters? It is tragic and destructive. Jesus suggested that in a case like this, the jealous one should not try to make any offering to God – in other words go to Mass – until she has gone first to be reconciled to her sister. Her heart is blocked, incapable of love, until she has faced the reality of her jealousy, understood where it comes from, and rid herself of this ulcer. ■

Lively Spirit

Magaret Lamont 1923-2006

My dear friend Margaret died at 83. I shouldn't have been surprised – but I was. No matter how much I prepare for it, death always catches my breath and reminds me of how fragile and precious my life is and how hard it is to part with those we love.

I never thought of Margaret as old. She was young at heart, an activist, a strong feminist, a mentor and an inspiring role model to many of us around her. Most importantly, she was a passionate advocate for peace and social justice, and had a deep respect for the earth and its creatures. Both she and her husband Don, who survives her, have been active members of a number of environmental and justice groups including Forest & Bird, Farm Forestry Association, Men of the Trees and the Gore Peace and Justice Group.

At her funeral celebration her brother, Emeritus Professor Kevin O'Connor, described her as a tough-spirited individual in her own assertive defense and in the defense of others – and she was. One of my lasting memories of this courageous 80-year-old was her walking the boards in Lysistrata as part of a world-wide theatrical protest against the war in Iraq (see Tui Motu Nov/Dec 2003).

Margaret was a deeply spiritual person with a strong sense of faith who loved the mystics and Celtic spirituality. But, as Father Pat McGettigan in his tribute to Margaret said, the church was a difficult place for her and at times she struggled. She believed in the inclusivity of language, that men and women should be treated equally, and struggled with the patriarchal side of the church which appears to exclude women's voices in decision-making.

Margaret loved life, saw the beauty in everything and everyone, and lived each moment to the full. I believe one of her last great gifts to those she loved was in her dying. She took all of us, her family and friends, with her on her last great journey – openly and honestly talking about her life and her impending death. Individual pearls of wisdom for each of us.

But it would be wrong to give the impression that Margaret found death easy. At times she admitted it was painfully difficult to let go. There were moments filled with tears and sadness. Poignancy often tinged with great humour and insight. Right up to her last hours she was vibrantly alive with a ready smile for everyone, serene and, until those last hours, relatively pain free.

I think Margaret died a good death. She died as she lived. As more than one person remarked she lived and died with great flair and style. Her death is a testament to the strength of her spirit, her great faith, and most of all, her compassion and love for those around her.

"Life is not a rehearsal, it's the real thing: Loving and sharing of God's blessings. Death is the mystery. It gives us back to God, she wrote before she died. God loves the cheerful giver. Let me go!"

Margaret was a writer and poet. This is the poem that Margaret wrote her daughter Trish as she nursed her during the last few weeks of her life.

May she rest in Peace

For Tricia

There's an angel in blue jamas
that knows when I'm awake
follows me to the bathroom
any time of night.
Refills my hottie
and helps me back to bed
tucks me in, and says "I love you"
and toddles off to sleep.

I remember in their childhood
my long blue nightie used to creep
around the little beds at night
to see if they were asleep.
For coughs there was honey,
lemon and aspro
a turned pillow
and "I love you" and off to sleep

I wonder now in Alex, Adelaide,
Ballarat and Pine Bush
do other angels creep
in their various pyjamas
checking out the beds.
Maybe now "are they home yet?"
Each age brings different needs

But most of all I remember
their father's lullaby
to the arm-held baby
who cries and cries and cries

"Go to sleep my baby
close your pretty eyes
angels up above you
watch you from the skies.
Great big moon keeps shining
stars begin to peep
time for little pickaninny
to go to sleep".

So angels in blue jamas
wherever you may be
feel welcome to say "I love you"
as you creep around the world

M. Lamont
Mum to Trish
30 May 2006

Women in Priestly Ministry.... Uncovering the Lost History

Mary Betz

In recent years, despite the assertion in Pope John Paul II's *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* that "priestly ordination … has in the Catholic Church from the beginning always been reserved to men alone", evidence from many sources has accumulated to show that this is not quite true.

For many years, scholars and even casual readers of Scripture have pointed out that women served as deacons in the early years of the Church. In *Romans 16:1*, Paul commends Phoebe, a deacon in the church at Cenchreae. The first letter to Timothy (*3:8-12*) stipulates the behaviour expected of both male and female deacons.

Many women deacons are known, some from their correspondence and relationships with well-known Church leaders: Olympias of Constantinople (d. 418), a friend of SS Gregory of Nazianzen and St John Chrysostom; Procula and Pentadia, to whom St John Chrysostom wrote letters; Salvina, known by St Jerome; Macrina, the sister of St Basil the Great; Theosebia the wife of St Gregory of Nyssa; and so on. Other deacons are known by inscriptions on their tombstones, for example, Sophia of Jerusalem, Theodora of Gaul, Eneon of Jerusalem and Athanasia of Delphi.

But what about women priests or bishops? Tourists and pilgrims who have visited the catacombs and churches of Rome and other places in the ancient world may have puzzled over the occasional fresco or mosaic depicting women who appear to be celebrating Eucharist, wearing priestly vestments or even episcopal crosses. These were explained away with claims that women were simply praying or the women were actually the wives of bishops. But scholarship over the past three decades has uncovered archaeological and literary evidence of the existence and Eucharistic ministry of women priests (called presbyters in the early church) and bishops in both the Eastern and Western church from the second to the ninth centuries.

Who were these women? Kale's tombstone was found in Centuripe, Sicily, and dates from 350-450 based on the script, which reads simply "Here lies Kale the presbyter who lived 50 years irreproachably she ended life on the 14th of September." The inscription ends with a chi-rho. One hundred years ago, the tombstone of Leta was found in Tropea, Italy, and is dated by scholars to 320-470. Her inscription reads: "Of blessed memory Leta presbitera who lived years 40, months 8, days 9 whose husband prepared her burial she departed in peace the day before the Ides of May." Vitalia is known from a fresco in the Catacomb of San Gennaro in Naples. Written on the fresco are the words "Bitalia" (Vitalia) and "in pace" (in peace), and the fresco shows Vitalia dressed in a red chasuble and standing at an altar with her hands raised above two cups and a flat loaf of bread. Portrayed above her are books of the gospels with the names Joannes, Marcus, Matteus and (illegibly) Luke. The fresco is dated between 350-500.

If women such as these were functioning as priests, why do church documents of the time seem to have so little to say about them? A few are beginning to be found, for example, mentions of both male and female presbyters in the fifth century *Testamentum Domini* (which may have originated in Egypt) in connection with community prayer. If something is not an issue, then there is likely to be little mention of it. But if a practice existed and then became objectionable, there are likely to be records of sanctions, and that is mostly what has been found. In 494, Pope Gelasius I (a pope known for his liturgical reforms) sent a letter to four episcopates (dioceses) in the south of Italy when he discovered they had traditions of women priests: "divine affairs have come to such a low state that women are encouraged to officiate

at the sacred altars and to take part in all matters imputed to the offices of the male sex." Also in the second half of the fourth century, the Council of Laodicea prohibited the ordination of women, as well as the Eucharistic ministry of those women already ordained: "It is not allowed for those called presbyterae to be appointed to preside in the church."

Such church documents together with repeatedly studied evidence of women ministers from tombstones, a mummy tag, mosaics and frescoes, indicate that bishops in many places in Christendom had ordained women over hundreds of years, and that the women were faithfully carrying out their ministries. Evidence of women deacons, priests and bishops has come to light not only in Italy, but in France, Belgium, Turkey, Jordan, Israel, Greece, Egypt and Algeria.

One of the most accessible depictions of women in orders is in a chapel at the Church of St Praxedis in Rome. A beautiful mosaic portrays four women, the first identified in the mosaic as "Theodo-Episcopa" (Bishop Theodora). The women to the right include St Praxedis, Mary the mother of Jesus, and St Pudentiana. Praxedis and Pudentiana were thought to be slave and descendant, respectively, of Pudens (a second century Christian, perhaps the one mentioned in *2 Timothy 4:21*), who owned the properties on which this church and the nearby Church of St Pudentiana now stand. The two women are revered as leaders in the early Roman church when Christianity was still an 'underground' religion. Their heads and that of Mary are surrounded by round halos, attesting to their sainthood. The head of Theodora is surrounded by a square halo, signifying that she was alive when the mosaic was created, about 820. She and St Praxedis both wear episcopal crosses, and their portraits together with Mary and Pudentiana, indicate that Theodora was the bishop of the Church of St Praxedis in succession of office through Praxedis, Pudentiana and Mary.

The Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome house a number of underground chambers in which women are depicted celebrating Eucharist, in the robes of a deacon, and dressed in priestly vestments being ordained by a bishop. The early church also flourished in North Africa, and Hippo (present day Annaba, Algeria) was the seat of St Augustine. There on the floor of the cathedral is a mosaic with a Latin inscription covering the tomb of Julia, which reads (in English) "Julia Runa priest (feminine) passed away in peace she lived 50 years."

As more and more evidence comes to light of the 'ordered' ministries (deacon, presbyter/priest and bishop) of women in the early centuries of the Christian church, especially evidence which has been thoroughly examined by scholars and corroborated by church documents, it makes one wonder that this history has been erased from ecclesial memory. Surely it is a tradition that Catholics can celebrate – and join with our many sister Christian churches in building on. ■

Mosaic AWTM calendar 2003 Courtesy of Dorothy Irvin. This article with footnotes can be read on www.tuimotu.org

Reflecting on Mark

The story of the Syro-Phoenician woman is the story of the Gentile woman who challenges Jewish Jesus to heal her daughter. It follows after an account of Jesus' argument with the Pharisees that the barriers supposedly created by the Mosaic Law to separate Jew and Gentile are of little account in the Reign of God. Jesus is then challenged to cross those barriers himself. He leaves Galilee and enters into Tyre, a predominantly non-Jewish area where a Gentile woman challenges him to practice what he preaches, that is to transgress both gender and ethnic boundaries.

Josephus, the Jewish historian writing some 30 or more years after the event but at about the same time that *Mark* was writing his gospel, tells us that the people of Tyre were bitterly opposed to the Jews, and at the outbreak of the Jewish revolt against the Romans in 66 C.E., killed and imprisoned many Jews. Jesus was also entering territory that *Mark's* readers would have regarded as hostile.

The woman then initiates an extraordinary dialogue with Jesus, a dialogue which depicts a Jesus whose first response to the woman seems extraordinarily harsh and rude. The woman gets the better of Jesus in the subsequent debate, Jesus exorcises her daughter, and the woman returns home to find her daughter quietly asleep in bed. The woman's belief that Jesus can effect a miracle for her daughter stands in stark contrast to the male disciples who in the previous chapter had doubted that Jesus could feed the crowds who had followed him into the desert, and who had doubted that Jesus could calm the storm at sea. Even after witnessing to both miracles, *Mark* tells us that "they did not understand about the loaves … their hearts were hardened" (*6:52*). In later church tradition, the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman and her daughter, now identified as Justa and Berenice respectively, appears in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies:

There is among us one Justa, a Syro-Phoenician, by race a Canaanite, whose daughter was oppressed with a grievous disease. And she came to our Lord, crying out, and entreating that He would heal her daughter. But He, being asked also by us, said, "It is not lawful to heal the Gentiles, who are like to dogs on account of their using various meats and practices, while the table in the kingdom has been given to the sons of Israel".

Despite the apocryphal nature of this text, it points to a major concern of the early church, namely the relationship of Jewish Christians to Gentile Christians, and in this instance, the Mosaic laws governing the relationship of Jewish men to Gentile women. *Mark's* narrative suggests that the Reign of God demands a transgression of such laws.

In the contemporary church, ethnic and gender issues still figure prominently on church agendas. How far should we go with inculturation? What are appropriate roles for women in the church today? *Mark's* gospel and early tradition provide some good answers. ■

Susan Smith

Dr Susan Smith is a Mission sister who teaches Biblical Studies at the School of Theology, University of Auckland

Modern man's road to wholeness

From Wild Man to Wise Man – Reflections on Male Spirituality
Richard Rohr with Joseph Martos
St Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, Ohio, 2005, pb182 pages
Review: Christopher Carey

In some ways this is an easy book to review, in other ways it is not. It seeks to encompass the whole dimension of men's spirituality and offer ways forward for men seeking holiness. In this it offers both a brilliant modern analysis of western men and a rich reflection to help them move forward. It is an updated version of an earlier work, *The Wild Man's Journey.* (1990)

It is difficult from the perspective that it covers so much ground. We see men under many forms. Their psychology, their emotions, their culture, their archetypical forms, their spiritual needs. All come under scrutiny. All are dealt with in an informative, uncomplicated and caring way.

Richard Rohr is an American Franciscan monk and the founder and animator of the *Centre for Action and Contemplation* in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and an internationally known retreat master and writer. He is a specialist in men's retreats. In the years he has being running them, he has come to observe many things about men's lives and spirituality – or the lack of it. Joseph Martos is a retired professor of philosophy, theology and religious studies, and an author. The book draws on decades of teaching experience and insight from both men.

This book is full of insightful observations which can only be of help to men seeking spiritual growth. The authors lament the absence of positive role models for men today in western culture and the absence of traditional rites of passage. They claim this leaves huge gaps in men's growth process from boyhood through adolescence to manhood.

They also set out to look at some of the wounds within the male psyche which men generally share in one form or another. A man might be wounded through addictions, through sexual aberration or deep unexpressed grief, through a lack of self worth or a propensity towards violence, in the way he deals with authority. There are many others. Most flow from childhood experience. Drawing on Jungian theory, they present these wounds as 'sacred wounds' which, when understood this way and not seen as simply aberrations to be fought and overcome, can become the means of spiritual growth and transformation. These are just two illustrations of many that could be used to reflect the book's contents.

From Wild Man to Wise Man is a brilliant, easily readable work which one could return to time and again. While it is a book geared to men, it will be appreciated by all who value the human search for holiness. ■

A little gem from Hans Küng

World Religions – Universal Peace – Global Ethic
Hans Küng
Global Ethic Foundation, Tübingen, 2005
English translation: John Bowden. Price: $17.50 (Pleroma Supplies)
Review: Michael Hill IC

This slim volume summarises in a most concise and accessible format the recent efforts of the eminent Swiss theologian, Hans Küng, towards world peace. It has been made available in New Zealand through the initiative of the Dominican Sisters as part of their 800th Jubilee celebrations.

Since 1990 Küng has applied his energies almost exclusively to the establishment of a global ethic. The underlying assumption is that without some sort of accepted common ethical standards international relations cannot flourish. Küng is convinced that the great world faiths have an essential part to play in this process.

His case rests on four simple statements:
• No peace among the nations without peace among the religions
• no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions
• no dialogue between the religions without global ethical standards
• no survival of our globe without a global ethic, supported by both religious and non-religious people.

In 1993 a parliament of world religions took place in Chicago attended by 6000 delegates, which proclaimed a common adherence to two basic principles: that every human being is entitled to be treated humanely; and the so-called 'golden rule': do to others as you would have them do to you.

In the booklet Küng reviews the great world faiths and shows how these basic principles can be drawn out from what each of these religions teaches. They therefore represent a common platform, on which a movement for world peace can be established. This is backed by extensive quotations from contemporary religious authorities.

The booklet is attractively laid out. It could be easily used by Justice groups, in parishes especially by Lenten groups, for ecumenical discussion and for study by senior school classes. Here we have it available in excellent English.

Hans Küng has been shabbily treated by the Catholic hierarchy, but that has not blunted his enthusiasm for the cause of Christian truth. Now in his 80th year he continues to contribute wonderfully to what is surely the most urgent of all contemporary causes. We are deeply indebted to him for this work. ■

C.S. Lewis – his life, his loves and his faith

The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C S Lewis
by Alan Jacobs
Published Harper SanFrancisco 2005.
NZ Price: $49.95
Review: Mike Crowl

Publishers have swamped shops with books on Narnia and C S Lewis in the last six months to such an extent that already much of the material is finding its way into remainder and sale bins. Jacobs' book, however, is of such merit that it ought to survive the hype that's arisen with the movie.

Jacobs is never afraid to sanely deal with issues other biographers have quibbled over; he interweaves the life with the imagination in a wonderful way, never trying to prove more than can be proved but always coming to sound conclusions; and he dialogues with his reader in a way that some biographers might not think was the done thing, but which gives us insight into Jacobs' own thinking.

The basic 'facts' of Lewis's life are by now well-known: he was a confirmed atheist until his late twenties; he discovered the reality of God but took some time to grasp it; he was always an extraordinarily prolific writer but even more so in the midst of his teaching duties at Oxford (and later Cambridge); he had an unusual relationship with Mrs Moore, a woman old enough to be his mother; and, late in life, after she died, he finally found the love of his life with Joy Davidson, who then died herself not long after their marriage.

He produced a crop of successful books (many of them Christian apologetics for the man in the street), the wondrous Narnia stories, three fantasy novels and the intriguing *Till We Have Faces*. But he was also highly regarded in his time for his work in English Literature: two of his books, *The Allegory of Love* and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, are classics of their kind.

Jacobs is an Anglican, and a Professor of English at Wheaton College, which makes him well able to appreciate both Lewis's Christianity and his love of literature. It's likely, in fact, that any Professor of English would appreciate a man like Lewis, who, in preparation for work on his book on English literature, read every single 16th Century book in the Duke Humfrey's Library, the oldest part of Oxford's great Bodleian Library.

Jacobs is good at delineating the relationships between the various people in Lewis's life: the tensions between Lewis and the closest members of his family (his father and brother - his mother died when he was young); his friendships with other writers and the men who formed the 'Inklings;' his long-suffering care of Mrs Moore and her daughter, who both lived with Lewis for many years, and, as his popularity grew, the vast army of people who wrote to him for advice, comfort and friendship.

Though Lewis lived as a true disciple of Christ he struggled in the same way any Christian does, with ethical matters, with crises of faith, with pride, and with loving those who didn't necessarily love in return. Though he was a superb apologist, he could still dig himself into a hole; though he was widely regarded as an excellent teacher, he hated some aspects of the job.

There must now be at least a good half-dozen biographies of Lewis out there (including A N Wilson's often wrong-headed one), but for me this is by far the pick of the crop. ■

The Israel Lobby

Crosscurrents
John Honoré

An academic paper, titled *The Israel Lobby* and published in America by two political scientists, has created a furore by suggesting that Israel is a strategic liability to the interests of the US in the Middle East. The US unwavering support for Israel has "inflamed Arab and Islamic opinion and jeopardised not only US security but that of much of the rest of the world". The paper argues that Israel has become an economic and moral burden for America, whose unquestioning support for it is now injurious to both countries. Both professors are realists and consider that national interest is the only effective ground for making foreign policy.

The response of the media was immediate and predictable. *The Atlantic Monthly*, which originally commissioned the essay, rejected it. Israel's supporters accused the two professors of anti-semitism. One of the main points propounded by Walt and Mearsheimer was immediately proved correct – to say anything against the lobby is to be labelled an anti-Semite. These scholars have opened a door to a more realistic evaluation of Israel's policies regarding its access to the technology of US nuclear weapons and its persecution of the Palestinians. Both these matters are obviously responsible for the unrest in the entire Middle East.

American support of Israel appears as strong as ever. Indeed, further billions of dollars have been pledged for the next financial year. Both political parties continue to be in thrall to the Israel lobby. However, there are growing divisions within the American foreign policy elite who are beginning to count the cost to the American taxpayer of a negative return. There must be a wider debate about the policies of Israel which are endangering the lives of Jews not only in Israel but around the world. *The Israel Lobby* could be the basis of such a debate.

Who won?

The response to my usual question of 'who won?' brought looks of puzzlement. "What game are you talking about, Brazil? Venezuela? Australia? Germany?". Nothing was mentioned about the All Blacks against Argentina. The football *World Cup* has arrived, 64 qualifying matches between 32 national teams! I have friends who look bleary-eyed from watching football 24/7, as they say. Football is not only in the frame but is gaining ground rapidly in New Zealand.

The 'beautiful game' is easily the most universal sport, played at some level by both men and women. It seems to transcend class distinctions. It is played by children who delight in manoeuvring the ball around a ground which could be a paddock, a mud-caked paddy, a parking lot, a beach or an imaginary Olympic Stadium in Berlin.

People love football. Its heroes seem to pop up from all walks of life. Pele, Maradona, David Beckham, Ronaldinho are all familiar names, larger than life. They would be recognised in any country in the world and congratulated for their participation, whether they played well or badly in their last match. When Ronaldinho says his task is to deliver a team-mate alone in front of the rival goalkeeper, he encapsulates all that is noble in a team sport. It is an object lesson in the art of living in society.

The *World Cup* will end at the final in Berlin on Sunday 9 July, about the time this edition of *Tui Motu* will appear. It is expected that a third of the world's entire population will see it on television. There will be absolutely no need to ask who won. Rather, ask who has read *Tui Motu*?

In the bleak midwinter

Is it just midwinter blues or is it true that everything seems to be turning sour in New Zealand at the moment? Finance companies are going bankrupt leaving thousands of 'Mums and Dads' out of pocket. Health services continue to decline with more thousands of 'Mums and Dads' wiped off waiting lists, and junior doctors are on strike.

The winter weather, particularly in the South Island, exposed the inadequacies of the national grid. Power cuts in the next month seem inevitable. Immediately the government was blamed for everything. An outage in Auckland – and thousands of Aucklanders could not get their *caffe latte* – shock, horror, and the business gurus spoke of millions of dollars lost. The public health system and power supply were again the subject of bitter debate. Then things got really serious and micro-chipping dogs became the issue.

The extraordinary achievement of the double-amputee, Mark Inglis, climbing Mt Everest also turned into a bitter debate. The moral dilemma of leaving a dying man to his fate in order to reach the top at any cost was the issue. Sir Edmund Hillary, that iconic New Zealand hero, was not impressed. The next in line to blame was God who, in his wrath about global warming and everyone making such a mess of the planet, sent foul weather to remind us all who was the boss around here.

On the home front, a series of disasters occurred. The dishwasher died, the radio packed it in, the electric blanket did an ominous *Poof!* and had to be dumped, the car was refused a WOF, and the cat door came off its hinges. I am writing a nasty letter to Helen Clark. ■

Making saints – another look

While I have had a number of wise suggestions to offer in Tui Motu over the years as to how the church can improve its performance, I have had one constant regret. I did not seem ever to have secured the ear of the Pope in Rome. Until now, none of these suggestions has been taken up.

No longer so. Three years ago I criticised in this monthly the saint-making factory presided over by John Paul II. Almost 500 saints canonised in less than 30 years versus 300 by all the other popes in the previous 400 years. Now, in admittedly more measured tones than mine, but nevertheless quite real ones, the present Holy Father has taken up the same complaint. The processes prescribed for canonisation have been too loosely followed. Beatification has been given an undue emphasis by public participation in the ceremony by the Pope himself. There must be a real 'fame of holiness' and not just a conviction among a small group of people that the person in question was a good Christian.

Now in all honesty I cannot claim that it was my paragraphs in Tui Motu that have brought about this change in papal policy. But it is nice to have the Holy Father thinking along the same lines as myself, and doing so in an official letter to the Congregation superintending Saints' Causes.

The Pope's recent visit to Poland indicated his dedication to reform. No encouragement was given to any repetition of the cry of "Subito Santo" ("Make him a saint right away") as at last year's funeral of John Paul II. Benedict believes that even in the case of the canonisation of a pope, due process and a degree of time for reflection should be followed.

The re-enforcement by Benedict XVI of the requirement that there be a real fame of holiness is significant. Of the saints and blesseds proclaimed by John Paul II, how many of them can you name? Of how many was there a widespread appreciation of their holiness? Widespread appreciation of Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta, yes: of Blessed Charles de Foucauld, maybe; of Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, at least in southern Italy. Certainly also of Bishop Oscar Romero and of Dorothy Day. Sorry, my error. Neither of the latter two has been beatified. Is it my error or that of the Holy See?

The requirement that there be a real fame of holiness, just though it is, raises a problem as to how to canonise people who are the genuine role models that the Pope rightly wants to provide. The latest batch of 24 individuals recently approved in Rome to have the requisite miracles, heroic virtues etc to proceed further on the path to canonisation, consisted entirely of bishops, priests, religious. Not a single lay person. Twelve of them were founders of religious orders, mostly orders little known across the church. Very much what the Holy Father has warned of – small groups pushing forward their candidates. In this case religious institutes putting up their founder or foundress for the cachet it will give the institute. Sadly, we do not have canonisations of mothers of families, devoted fathers, rank and file laity. And that is what we need if the saints are to be true role models.

I have no advice to offer the Holy Father as to how to ensure an adequate representation of lay men and women among those raised to the altars of the church. I can only warn him that unless this is secured, his efforts to reform the canonisation process will be futile. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

Fr Humphrey O'Leary is rector of the Redemptorist community in Glendowie, Auckland

Eucharist a lived experience

Eve Adams

I was interested to read last month's *Tui Motu* and the articles on the Eucharist.

It is a subject that is important to anyone on the stile, considering withdrawing from the Institutional Church but not their faith. I know that the idea itself is incomprehensible to many. How can one keep a faith and yet not belong to a community?

It is a relatively new idea for the Church as well. Mostly in the past people have left when their faith has diminished and it has been an all or nothing decision. These days we are experiencing a different dilemma where for many such as myself, faith in God/Christ is not the issue but belief/trust/faith in the Institution is. The answer regarding community will vary but for me, I believe we need community to keep us honest and stop us drifting off on some self-absorbed spiritual flight of fancy. However, the shape and form of that community is quite another question.

Interestingly enough there are an increasing number of people like myself, some of whom have found each other and come together to meet and share their faith in a less formal way. There is even a NZ book out on these 'post-church' groups. I think this is a growing worry for the Institution but then I've never been concerned about being a worry.

But what about the Eucharist? People remind me that I'd miss it, and I would if I thought I would have to. I know of two small groups of people who meet locally and share a 'breaking of bread' twice a week. The members are from different denominational backgrounds, some still formally connected to their Church, some not, and even include a retired minister or two. All group members take turns leading the twenty minute worship/ 'communion', male or female, ordained or not. Is this a Eucharist? I leave that for you to decide.

Some of my criteria:
Is it a coming together in Christ/God?
Is it mindful and respectful of the tradition/scripture?
Does it have safe boundaries for participants?
Does it involve self-examination and build forgiveness?

Does it involve giving thanks and intercessionary prayer?
Is it inclusive and respectful of difference?
Is the power given to God and no one member?
Is it compassionate?
Is the process open to critical discussion?
Is it prayerful?
Does it build faith?

Now I'm sure someone will find something lacking on my list but then I'm not sure the Institutional Eucharist stacks up at times either. Are these meetings dangerous to the faith? Probably no more than the Institution is dangerous to the faith? Authority claimed of any kind is potentially dangerous, individual or institutional.

In the end for me, Eucharist is a lived experience. Eucharist is not the act or ritual in itself. Rather it is the amount of love faith and compassion that are grown through participation that is the real benchmark of validity. ■

Rogan McIndoe