# Tui Motu

## InterIslands

*June 1998 Price $4*

*Families...*

*Is the world giving them a fair deal?*

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**Clarification**
In the article *When does Art become Sacrilege*, in our *May* issue pp 16-17, we should have attributed all three pictures illustrating the article, to Donald Moorhead, the interviewee. Our apologies to Donald and to readers who may have been wondered who the artist was. Likewise an apology for a typographical error in Anne Powell's poem, *Dream Rising (p 18)*: the first line should read "Souks awaken", not "Souls awaken".


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# Devil Take the Hindmost

Last month saw two events which were matters for rejoicing: the referendum votes in Ireland in favour of the Good Friday Peace Agreement – and the fall of Dictator Suharto in Indonesia. Suharto's departure is only the first step of necessary change, but it is an opportune time for New Zealand to examine its own policy of inaction and apparent tolerance of rampant injustice in Indonesia.

Recent questions made to Minister of Defence, Max Bradford, produced the usual stonewall response: Indonesian military will continue to be trained here in techniques which may be – and undoubtedly are – used against dissident pro-democracy groups or those striving for the independence of East Timor. Among skills to be learnt are "military operations in an urban terrain" – which presumably means mowing down defenceless students with rubber or live bullets. Earlier the Deputy Prime Minister pleaded that the soldiers also learn skills in dentistry. Pull the other tooth, Winston!

New Zealand's supine attitude towards the evil actions of the Suharto regime is a golden example of the classic cop-out by politicians, business leaders, even Rugby Union bosses. Turn a blind eye to the internal injustices of other nations as long as we can play rugby with whoever we like, play soldiers with whoever we please, and make financial gains in whatever manner we find most personally profitable. A recent *20/20* programme on TV3 took its cameras into the sweatshops of Saipan, off the Chinese coast, to show us where some of our imported clothes are made – and at what cost to the workers who fashion them. This is an aspect our government seems to turn a blind eye to, when making tariff cuts. New Zealanders are cast out of work while the importers make a fat return on the backs of exploited labour offshore. Out of sight, out of mind – and the devil take the hindmost!

One thing we cannot accuse our present government of is inconsistency. If they are heedless of the plight of destitute and oppressed people overseas they are equally callous in the treatment of the most defenceless and needy within our own population. It is difficult to conceive anything more anti-Christian than Mrs Shipley's current campaign to scapegoat beneficiaries. This comes hard on the heels of the health reforms which have driven increasing numbers to recourse to private health insurance and send those who cannot afford that option further down the ever-growing waiting lists for urgent medical treatment. This in spite if the fact that it is commonly held that private health insurance is the most wasteful way to ensure a nation's health. 'Sound' fiscal management policies are, in the meantime, depriving the police of essential resources and about to throw the fire services into chaos. It would seem that soon the whole country will be able to enjoy the turmoil of essential services presently suffered by the Auckland Central Business District.

However, there are signs of possible political change on the horizon. New Zealand First, whose poll ratings are now consistently below the 3 percent margin for error, must surely give way as coalition partners to ACT and Mr Richard Prebble. The knights of the Round Table will rejoice, and we may be sure there will be no let-up to the diet of upskilling, downsizing, despoiling and exploiting which our society has now endured for 15 years. In which case Mrs Shipley will certainly need to equip herself with an even longer spoon. And God help God's Own Country! ■ ***M.H.***

# The Queen's Good Servant – but God's First

*Kevin Campbell*

These politicians "have to lie. It's not really their fault. If they don't lie, they can't get things done". These words were spoken to me by a young man of Taranaki when I stood at his door as Alliance candidate during the recent Taranaki-King Country by-election. I was saddened by what he said, although not surprised. His words continued to haunt me throughout the campaign.

What hope is being offered to our youth when they cannot get themselves a secure job? Is it any wonder they become cynical when they are surrounded by increasing crime, a shocking youth suicide rate; when despair and boredom drives so many of them to alcohol and the misuse of drugs?

Later in the campaign I found myself shedding a tear with a young woman crying outside Taranaki Base Hospital: the health reforms will mean funding cuts for the hospital and the break-up of the child unit where her seven-year-old son with cerebral palsy receives treatment. Despite the pleas of the doctors the downsizing will result in diminished quality of care. I knew in my heart that "downsizing and restructuring" is followed by "corporatisation and privatising".

During the campaign I often found myself praying that whatever I said and did I would always herald the Gospel. My part was to offer these people a choice among the candidates and parties. As the Alliance candidate I was offering a choice for economic and social justice directed at achieving the common good. Dealing with issues of the downgrading of rural services – health, roading and other essential services – I thought often what the much loved Pope John XXIII said in his encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961): "It is necessary that everyone, and especially public authorities, strive to effect improvements in rural areas... highway construction, transport services, pure drinking water, housing, medical services, schooling... Where these requirements for a dignified farm life are lacking to rural dwellers, economic and social progress does not occur – or else very slowly"(*MM 127*).

Likewise I thought of Pope John Paul's caution on foreign investment when I called on the voters to oppose this Government's unilateral decision to sign the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) without a vote in parliament. The Pope advises that there is always a cultural and moral dimension to any investment, and it cannot be just for profit but directed towards the common good (*Centesimus Annus* 36).

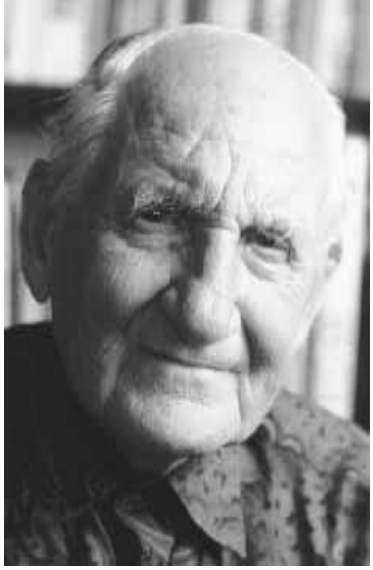
The New Right ideology has dominated New Zealand government since 1984. It is part of an alarming global movement. In our land it has ripped the heart out of public service and stripped us of our public assets. The churches cannot be excused from speaking about it, any more than we can excuse the churches for failing to ensure the treaty of Waitangi was implemented.

Returning to work after the election campaign was a sobering experience. As Duty Solicitor in Palmerston North I was first confronted with two people charged with stealing petrol, each about ten dollars worth. Both are struggling to survive on benefits. They should not have stolen – but I could understand why they were driven to steal. Then two psychiatric patients were chaperoned into the dock by a psychiatric nurse. They were due to be marked for life by a criminal conviction, because government policy has decided on a new definition of mental illness. What will the world think of this country when it discovers that it is our Justice system which deals with the mentally ill rather than the more costly care in mental hospitals?

We did not win the election, but every day I become more convinced that for a Christian the fight for a just and caring society has never been more necessary. ■

*Kevin Campell is a Palmerston North lawyer. The Alliance Party increased its share of the vote in the Taranak-King Country by-election by 80 percent.*

# Think Again, Mr Luxton



*Selwyn Dawson casts a very critical eye on the 'dobbing in' commercials*

The East German communist regime found an excellent way to keep tabs on the population; they invented the Stasi – the secret dobbing-in service which set half the people spying on the others in the interest of state security. Our Income Support Service has adopted some of the same tactics. We are nightly exhorted on television to look with suspicion on beneficiaries in case they are ripping off the system.

Little thought seems to have been given to the larger majority, who for whatever reason are unable to earn their own living, yet are scrupulously honest. Anyone who imagines living on a benefit is easy should try it. Yet most beneficiaries struggle on, caring for their families and remaining good citizens. Now they must put up with this nightly implied slur. They must wonder how the benefit frauds of a tiny number compare with the harm done by businesses trying to beat Fire Service levies, set up tax avoidance schemes, wind back used car odometers or embroil customers in mortgage schemes which through inflation may cause them to lose their homes.

There is one difference between beneficiary fraudsters and the other kind; the accused beneficiary has neither the know-how nor the money to hire an expensive QC – so he is punished, while others use every legal means to sidestep the penalty.

These cleverly crafted commercials spread a miasma of distrust as neighbour dobs in neighbour and the stereotype dole bludger image is reinforced. No one defends benefit fraud, but there has to be a better way of detecting it and dealing with it.

Someone should take John Luxton aside and explain to him the law of unintended consequences: nothing ever works out exactly as planned. That's why economics is fraught with controversy and littered with grand theories. In his youth John was seized with the idea of a level playing field, competition being the only guarantee of efficiency and free trade a panacea for all evils. "Tariffs are bad," he says. So at midnight new cars are cheaper. Never mind that factories close down, sacked workers thrown on the mercy of the state and towns lose their sustaining industries.

Now John has turned his guns on the clothing and footwear industries. If he has his way the same thing will happen. Too bad for the displaced, but he optimistically predicts that new industries will crop up. So they may if the market follows text book rules, but suppose it doesn't?

The same faith drives arguments in favour of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment which theoretically works in favour of all but can leave undeveloped or weak economies like striplings on a level playing field facing an opposing team of thugs.

Will the rushed-through edict on parallel importing seriously hinder New Zealand writing and book publication? I doubt if the question has even crossed the minister's mind. Doesn't he care that the consequences could wreak havoc with individuals, families, communities and our culture? Apparently not.

Today's economic wisdom may tomorrow look as wacky was Pol Pot's blueprint for a better Cambodia. ■

*(Reproduced with permission from the Bay and Remuera Times)*

**Bouquet and Brickbat**

I have just been introduced to *Tui Motu*. Refreshing – a nice mix of protest and piety. I was moved, really moved, by the beautifully crafted piece by Peter Murnane (*March* issue). How many 'Andrews' are there out there? And how many priests brave enough to buck an *Instruction* from Rome?

But then to my dismay I read "The Lone Presider" (*April* issue). Here is an Auckland liturgist who wants to turn the Mass into an extension of Toastmasters eg. "Many (of the better educated 'non-clergy') are eloquent speakers... who can lead their communities in prayer and discernment".

Middle-class matrons in "mostly pakeha" parishes elocuting the Scriptures at Mass is bad enough – but this is ridiculous! Notwithstanding the poor parish priest will be the poor servant of his congregation, Jo Ayres has him cast in a "leadership" role. Why not make him the Parish Manager and relieve him altogether of the onerous role of preaching?

For goodness sake this whole concept of "leadership" is so un-Christlike: "Neither be called masters, for you have one Master, the Christ". Real people go to their parish church to hear Mass, not their social superiors.

So, congratulations on a thoroughly even-handed publication!.

*Kevin Gallagher,* Waikouaiti

# The Politics of the New Right – the only way to go!

*..but is it? asks Larry Elliott of the Weekly Guardian*


The trouble with social democracy is simple. Over the past 20 years social democrats have thought like Norwegians but acted like New Zealanders. There was a time this would scarcely have mattered since both were shining beacons of the post-war social contract, and Norway could almost be described as the New Zealand of the North Atlantic.

But since the early 1980s the paths of these two nations have deviated somewhat. Norway remains a deeply pre-monetarist redoubt, so much so that Keynesian demand management is not a museum piece but the whole basis on which economic policy is run. Wages are controlled not by the crude instrument of higher unemployment but by an incomes policy known as the Stability Alternative.

New Zealand, by contrast, has become a laboratory for every crackpot *laissez-faire* notion considered too extreme to be road-tested even in Thatcher's Britain or Reagan's America. The International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and just about every other part of the new world order love the way Wellington has slashed welfare, given the Central Bank governor a binding contract to hit an inflation target and removed legal recognition from unions.

Growth has been sluggish, unemployment remains high, the increase in inequality has been unmatched across the Western world.

Norway is making no attempt to "modernise" its welfare state in the prescribed Clintonesque fashion of ending "welfare as we know it", which means dragooning the poor and the jobless into lowpaid work. On the contrary, the government in Oslo has the rather old-fashioned belief that generous maternity leave, decent pensions and unemployment pay at rather more than subsistence level are badges of a civilised country.

There are other features of the Norwegian way that are inimical to the basic tenets of the new global model. There has been a carbon tax since 1991, forcing companies to be more energy efficient. There is a vigorous regional policy. But it is Norway's apostasy when it comes to economic policy that really sticks in the throat of the *laissez-faire* gurus because, far from signing up to the neo-liberal plan of inflation targeting, deregulated pay bargaining, weak unions and a spurning of Keynesian demand management, the Norwegian government acts as if Milton Friedman had never existed.

Policy, says the ministry of finance, "is geared towards maintaining stable economic growth consistent with low price and wage inflation, while gradually achieving reductions in unemployment". Monetary policy is confined to keeping the exchange rate stable, while the central role of regulating growth is given to fiscal policy. The Stability Alternative completes the picture. This is corporatism in all its glory, with centralised pay bargaining designed to ensure that the externally traded sector remains internationally competitive. The main labour organisation is seen not as the enemy but as an important social partner that can ensure wage moderation across the whole economy.

Of the three traditional tests of social democracy – jobs for all, reducing inequality and increasing democratic control over the economy – Norway passes them all. ■

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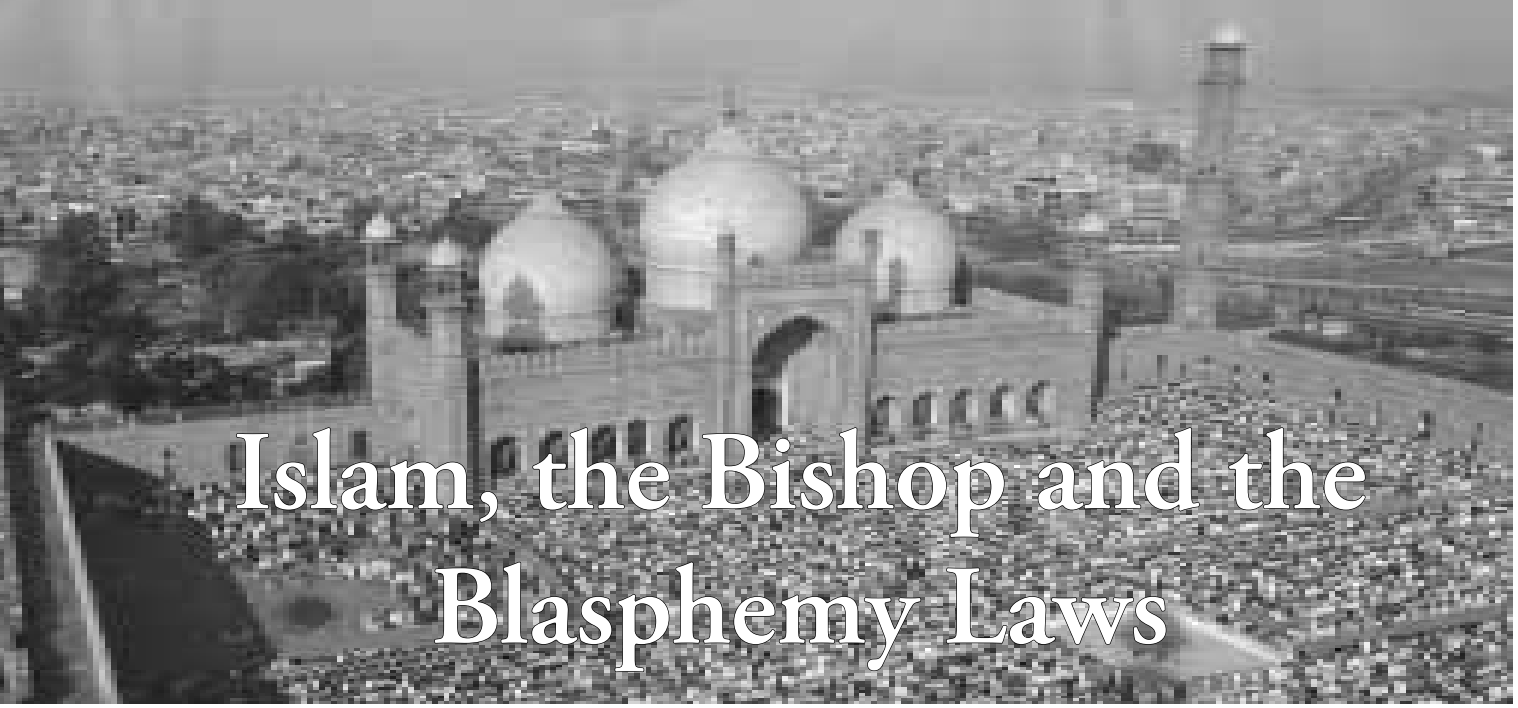


# Islam, the Bishop and the Blasphemy Laws

On 6 May a Pakistani Catholic bishop, John Joseph, shot himself through the head outside a court building where a young Christian man had just been sentenced to death for blasphemy against Islam.

Since becoming bishop of Faisalabad (population 4 million) in 1984, Bishop John had devoted much of his energy working for human rights for minority groups. In Pakistan Muslims make up 97 percent of the population. Over recent years he has been fighting the effects of the Blasphemy Laws introduced in 1985. These deal with disrespect for the Koran and blaspheming the prophet Mohammed – the latter carrying an automatic death penalty. The laws are so loosely worded that they have sometimes been used to carry out personal vendettas and revenge. Once a charge has been made it seems impossible to convince a Muslim that it's untrue: the accused is sometimes killed on the spot without recourse to police or courts.

The charges in the case which brought about the Bishop's ultimate protest were obviously false. Ayub Masih, a 25-year-old Catholic, is illiterate, but was charged with quoting from Salmon Rushdie's book *Satanic Verses* and thereby blaspheming the prophet. It is thought the charge was trumped up by some local farmers who were furious that two Christian families had won the rights to own freehold land. The night the charge was laid 1300 Catholics were driven out of the village. Ayub was convicted on 27 April. The judge accepted the word of the Muslim 'witnesses' on the basis that in Islamic law a Muslim witness is worth two Christian witnesses, irrespective of the evidence. Bishop John had been fighting about a dozen such cases all over the Punjab basin. The word of a bishop carries some weight, whereas the ordinary people are afraid of losing their lives if they speak out.

On 6 May Bishop John went back to the town where Ayub's family lives and took part in a two-hour prayer service and a day of fasting. In the evening he and the local parish priest went to the place where a man had tried to assassinate Ayub during his first appearance at the court. After praying together Bishop John told the priest to go back to the car as he wanted to continue praying for a few minutes. A few seconds later he shot himself.

He had written a letter to a newspaper saying that he had acted to bring about the reconciliation of Muslims and Christians, and also to call attention to the terrible effects the blasphemy laws were having on the Christian community. He referred to his death as a sacrifice for this purpose.

In a paper he was due to deliver in Rome later in the month at a symposium accompanying the Asian Bishops' Synod, Bishop John's closing words were: "I shall count myself extremely fortunate if on this mission of breaking the barriers, Our Lord accepts the sacrifice of my blood for the benefit of his people... This is the only effective response to the evergrowing phenomenon of violence around us... Are we ready to drink the cup of suffering to the bitter end, as Jesus did? Each one of us has to formulate his or her own personal response. May the crucified and risen Lord give us the courage to do so. Amen".

In Pakistan there have been large scale protests, but a government minister has stated that no laws will be changed. There have been memorial services for the bishop in Faisalabad. The bishop's colleagues are devastated. Sister Naseem OP who worked with the bishop in Peace and Justice issues, said that she felt abandoned and left to fight the cause by herself. So far there has been no official response from the Vatican.

From Rome Fr Kevin Toomey writes: "There needs to be a coordinated campaign outside Pakistan to bombard the Pakistani Government with messages that this is not on... I hope to convince Cardinal Etchegaray to send out messages to episcopal conferences throughout the world asking them to send messages to their own governments and to the Pakistani one". Fr Kevin also appeals for support by people in New Zealand, writing to the Government and to the Pakistani President. ■

# Developing an Asian Face of Christ

*Last month the bishops of Asia gathered in Rome for a Synod.* ***Des O'Grady*** *discussed the prospects with Fr Kevin Toomey, a New Zealand Dominican, assistant to the Master-General of the Order and responsible for the Dominicans of those regions*

The Synod could give the Church in Asia a greater sense of its own identity and diversity, thinks Fr Kevin. "A stronger sense of identity of the Church in various countries will lead to an increased co-operation among them: the Synod participants will hear each other's stories and realise once again they are not alone with their difficulties and can help one another."

Toomey, fair-haired with a ginger beard, has spent the last six years on the Asia beat where nearly 700 Dominican friars and almost 3,000 sisters work. He travels in some 20 countries whose combined population is more than half that of the whole world, but where Christians are often only a small minority.

"The Synod will be a success", he suggests, "if the Vatican is willing to give the Church in Asia space to grow and to show trust in the people on the spot developing their own ways of thinking and talking about God, while always being in dialogue with Rome."

When the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan received from Rome the *Lineamenta* or Outline Document for the Synod, they sent a strong response insisting that judgment should not be made from a European framework, but must be seen on the spiritual level of the people who live in Asia. So the bishops prepared their own questions for the Japanese Church, coming up with many suggestions about how to present the universal message of salvation in ways that can be understood by Asians. They proposed that future relations between the Holy See and the Churches of Asia be based on collegiality rather than control. They commented: "It is strange that approval should have to be obtained from the Holy See even for Japanese translations of liturgical and catechetical texts already approved by the Bishops' Conference."

"The Japanese Bishops' response", said Toomey, "shows the importance of trust. Situations throughout Asia are so diverse that an overriding concern about control inhibits growth. The Synod should build on the considerable progress made by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences since it was founded a quarter of a century ago. From the start it decided to pursue dialogue with cultures, with religion and with the poor."

Fr Toomey quoted a recent document from the Asian bishops: "'A Church which appears a powerful organisation may arouse admiration, but fails to impress as an instance of inspiration for it seems to lack what is most important for Asia – the inner power of the Spirit.' The Spirit enables a creative response to the great needs seen in Asia," Toomey commented. "Each country is different, and the Spirit's power is at work in each in a different way. Let me give you a few examples.

"Since 1975, when Indonesia annexed Timor, Church population has grown from 20 percent to about 80 percent of the population, as the Church has become the champion of East Timorese rights and dignity. They call this 'the Polish effect!' At the other end of the scale, we have Pakistan, where about one percent of the population is Catholic. The Church is made up of people of low-caste origins or coming from tribal situations, formerly animists, people who have never been Muslim. Islamic fundamentalism is rife here, often leading to violence, which can make life difficult for Pakistani Catholics. Despite this they live their lives as Christians courageously. There are vibrant religious vocations, and much missionary work inside Pakistan still.

"The Indian Church sends missionaries to many places, especially in Africa, and Filipino missionaries go all over the world. Indian priests are also engaged in helping emigrant Indian workers in the Middle East, just as Filipino priests help the 200,000 migrant workers in Hong Kong. And the Church in Korea is growing stronger by the day. But it was an almost entirely parish-based Church, until John Paul II, after his visit to Korea in the 1980s, asked religious congregations to go there – to enrich the Church with their special gifts."

Continuing to illustrate the variety of the Church in Asia, Toomey mentioned the Dominicans in Vietnam. "Even when the Communist regime was at its height, Dominicans continued to work secretly. They managed to form a new generation of friars with a great love for

preaching and teaching the faith. The results can be clearly seen. I'm thinking of one of our parishes where youth are a large proportion of the 10,000 people, who squeeze into a small church for the five Sunday Masses. These Dominicans are also interested in getting to know Vietnamese culture and traditions better. They welcome exchanges with Buddhists without any fear of being undermined or swamped by them. Both Buddhists and Catholics suffered under hardline Communism. And this has forged new bonds between them, but dialogue with the Buddhists will remain a challenge for the Church in the future.

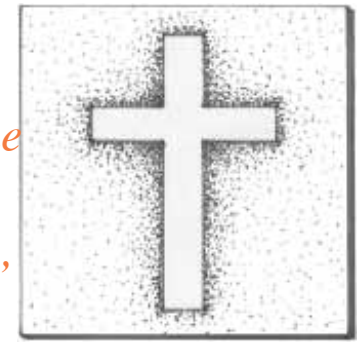
"Nowadays the regime is less hostile to Catholics who form 7 percent of the population. But the Church still lives under restriction, in the ordination of priests and the assigning of clergy; in setting-up and running seminaries; and with education, where the Church is confined to running kindergartens. Vietnamese Catholics are wonderfully resourceful in finding ways around difficulties. Some believe that their biggest problem won't be the government, but galloping consumerism. They are intent on building up Christian communities, as an antidote to the rampant individualism which this is bringing".

In Toomey's opinion, religion continues to enjoy great respect in Asia. Followers of the majority religions happily recognise Catholic communities as fellow spiritual wayfarers. But Catholics everywhere, except for the Philippines, know they are a minority.

"There are many senior army, government and professional people throughout Asia who have had positive experiences with Catholic schools or hospitals", Toomey observed. "It's more difficult for Catholics to make an impact through mass media. Radio is easier, and the Catholic *Radio Veritas*, broadcasting from Manila, is heard throughout Asia. TV, often because of costs, is much more difficult. Some congregations in the Philippines, including the Dominicans, have made a great start at producing good quality religious programmes, but more is needed.

"The Synod should be about all this variety. Personally I rejoice in the richness of its diversity. And I am sure the Synod will too. I hope it will be about encouraging the local church to take its true place with local flair and difference. That will mean encouraging it to develop an Asian face of Christ, and to be able to communicate that without fear and in a spirit of hope – in the media, too. We are at the edge of a new stage of the Church's growth in Asia, one that needs time and space to develop. That should be encouraged by the Synod. To recognise this would be the Synod's greatest gift to the Church in Asia." ■

# Islam – Religion of Peace



*The violent image of Islam as seen through the eyes of most Christians is unjust, according to Dr James Badawi, a Muslim from Canada, here on a recent lecture tour*

Dr Badawi sought to make a distinction between the ideals of Islam and the distorted message given by some Islamic politicians. It is what the Koran teaches which should be the standard for judging the Muslim world.

The word "Islam" is derived from three syllables SLM which means "peace" or "submission to God". The peace envisaged in this definition is threefold:

• peace in our relationship with God. The fundamental action of worship is to submit to God. All actions, whether formal prayer, or work or recreation, are done to please God alone.

• peace within oneself. Our relationship with God may be dominated by fear of punishment; or fear of displeasing our Creator; or the hope of gaining his blessings – the business man's religion!; or it may be simply that we act out of love and respect towards God. This love is the source of inner peace. Loving compassion is a sign of its presence; pleasure seeking is a sign of its absence.

• peace with others. There are four circles of human relationship: the closest is between husband and wife – a relationship of mutual love acknowledging the complementarity of roles.

Next comes the love of other family members, one's children, parents etc. The Koran insists on kindness and respect due to parents. Motherhood is respected. Neighbours and acquaintances are also encompassed by this circle.

Thirdly, there is one's relationship with the human race as a whole. Humanity is to be seen as one family. The diversity of humankind is something willed by God. It is like a bouquet of flowers of many hues. There is nothing in the Koran which parallels the story of the Tower of Babel. God has created us diverse: each person is beautiful in his/her own right. Distinction arises only by way of righteousness, not through race or sex.

The last circle contains those who differ from us. The Koran clearly accepts pluralism. Had it been God's will, there would have been created one race only, who would be all believers. But that is not how things are. God tests us through the variety of people and opinions. A fanatic cannot accept this variety.

## The Jihad.. or Holy War

Koran or in the writings of Mohammed. It literally means a struggle or exertion. There are three levels of Jihad:

• **within the person**. This is the waging of war against the evil that lies within each of us.

• **in society**. There is an obligation on all of us to resist evil and to promote good in society. In this sense 'jihad' is a spur to charitable action.

• **on the battlefield**. It is legitimate to go to war in self-defence or against oppression. Mohammed was patient with persecution for 13 years before he reacted.

But Islam forbids unprovoked, aggressive war. So, the Koran forbids attacks on women and children, on the innocent, on non-combatants; it forbids mutilation or pillage. War can only be for a just cause, never for personal gain. In this respect the Koran is found to be in total accord with the Geneva Convention.

Kindness to animals is included as part of reverence for creation. The Koran supports the idea of a sustainable ecology. It asserts the beauty of animal and plant creation. To plant a tree will bring a reward in paradise.

Propaganda in the West against Islam grew especially at the time of the Crusades. They produced a legacy of bigotry. But as people travel more and races mingle, many of these barriers are breaking down. One of the problems has been that both Christianity and Islam are proselytising religions (compared with Buddhism or Judaism) and therefore they will easily come into conflict.

*The Koran forbids attacks on the innocent – on women and children*

The divisions in India have been a two-way problem of intolerance. In so far as the actions of Muslims transgress the Koran they are to be condemned. Traditionally, the spread of Islam in India was via the Sufi mystics, not by warlike means. Where Muslimism is imposed by force it does not flourish.

The sense of the loving forgiveness of God is a central tenet of Islam. God put into each of us a sense of right and wrong. If we sin and repent, then there is no infringement of God's justice. Good Muslims do not fight against each other. It is part of the design of God to create the world imperfect, a world of success and failure. God leaves it to us who live in this divided world to strive constantly to build a better society. Therefore Islam is fundamentally a religion of peace. ■


Photo: John Bishop

# . . . is the world giving them a fair deal?

*Last year the charismatic Chief Rabbi of Great Britain wrote a widely acclaimed book* **The Politics of Hope**, *described as an ambitious attempt to restore faith, family and community to a central position in public life*. ***Judith Graham*** *reviews this timely book and looks at family life in New Zealand*

Suddenly you can detect the faintest change in wind direction: Prime Minister Shipley invites all citizens to consider and report to a select committee on what we ought to value in our New Zealand society. Media commentators find newsworthy Paul McCartney's statement that he and his late wife, Linda, spent only one night apart in their 30 years of marriage. Tony Blair is voted, not Politician of the Year – yet –, but 'Father-Family-Man of the Year'. British commentators find a new awareness of community and classless openness in the demonstration of national grief after Princess Diana's death. Is this a time to take stock of where we are, or more pertinently, who we are as individuals in society, to re-examine our goals and values, to dissect the current mood of disenchantment? Or is this just a pre-Millennium symptom?

And then in 1997, pat on cue, comes Jonathan Sack's 12th book *The Politics of Hope*, an oxymoron surely? Is his work a cure for what ails us? Chief Rabbi Sacks does not promise an outright cure but the means to promote it. In his preface he says he wrote it "because of my concern about certain acute structural weaknesses in contemporary society, and my dismay at the quality and depth of our public conversation as we approach the Millennium and think about our collective future". The book is, he states, a political work and not a religious one although his Jewish background and upbringing provide telling exemplars.

His method is admirable in its broad scholarship. He goes deeply into political philosophy, social policy, education, criminology and the history of welfare. He quotes from ancient Hebrew texts (Mishnah, *Shabbat*); he cites Aristotle, Wittgenstein, Locke, Edmund Burke and Hilary Clinton. He examines various facets of the 90s' society, be it education, employment contracts, dysfunctional families, youth suicide in relation to a historical background and in today's intellectual context, summing up his findings in passages of succinct argument. The text is so carefully argued that to quote from any part could distort the logical balance of the whole. Yet it is worth the risk.

*"We need to be cared for before we can learn to care for others. We need the formative experience of personal stability if, as adults, we are to make the sacrifices necessary to sustain a stable moral order"*

For example, in Chapter 16, on *Family Matters,* Sacks gives his argument for the commitment of marriage. He comments: "these values will not speak to everyone. They never did. Nor will we live up to them all the time. We never do. But unless they live as ideals at the heart of our civilisation, it will not survive. The devaluing of the family and the legitimation of sexual licence, whether in ancient Greece or contemporary Britain, is the beginning of the end of a social system. We need to be cared for before we can learn to care for others. We need the formative experience of personal stability if, as adults, we are to make the sacrifices necessary to sustain a stable moral order."

The 22 chapters are divided into three parts. Part I, *Starting a Conversation,* shows how we no longer have a moral language to discuss the kind of society we would like to have. Although Sacks avoids the trivialised term "political correctness", he argues that we no longer think of right and wrong as moral concepts but rather as legal contractual ones. We have been taught we all have rights as individuals and (he quotes Isaiah Berlin's *Two Concepts of Liberty*) "the fundamental liberty which we should strive to secure is a 'negative' one, namely the ability of each of us, so long as we do not harm others, to pursue our own ends without interference". Sacks argues that this cannot be done. "Freedom", he states, "is a moral accomplishment." He wonders whether it is possible "to have praise without blame, law without guilt, reward without responsibility and a free society without moral institutions".

He asserts we have run out of solutions in our public life. "From the mid-1940's to the mid-1970's, governments relied on public ownership and control to improve the workings of society. From the mid-1970's to the mid-1990's, a different model emerged. Its driving force would be individual initiative. State-owned utilities were privatised. The govern-ment would concentrate on managing the economy, reducing inflation and leaving as much as possible to the free market. So a period of individualism replaced an era of collectivism."

It is this individualism based on libertarianism that becomes the fundamental argument for Sacks. He traces its growth from the philosophical writings of Locke and later, Mill, in the period we call the Enlightenment. Many of the 18th Century arguments were good, even necessary, but they have been taken too far. Liberalism for Sacks denotes a tolerance for others based on morality. Libertarianism, however, maintains that a free society is "ideally one in which individuals are free to pursue their own choices, both political and moral". He shows again and again that libertarian societies have not worked and do not work.

Photo: Jim Neilan

Part II, *The Social Covenant*, is the heart of the dense argument. It cannot be read quickly and the reader will find he/she

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will want to test its assertions with anyone who will care to listen. Sacks argues the need for people to grow as real individuals in society. "It is not right for the man to be alone", God said of Adam (*Gen 2,18*), and Sacks sees this divine statement as the origin of all love and conflict. Liberalism, he argues, derives from civil society – the institutions built round families, communities and traditions bound by a common faith, or at least the shared pursuit of the good. These institutions were threatened by the Industrial Revolution where villages gave way to sprawling industrial cities. They were further undermined by the enormous growth of the custodial Welfare State after the two World Wars. Never again, governments decided, should the miseries of these wars threaten the fabric of society. As the State took over the care of the sick, the elderly and the unemployed, voluntary community organisations became redundant. Yet the Welfare State with its virtues and vices gave way in the 1980s to the *laissez-faire* regime of privatisation and deregulation. Individuals ceased to be seen as part of society but over and against it.

This is what Sacks calls Libertarianism – where the State allows individual freedom to flourish. "The autonomous agent reigns supreme." "The project of this movement was little short of the elimination of

## *from Britain...*

All the peoples of the Book have a common belief in the family as the basic building block of society. The family is the basic community. It is the place where values are transmitted, where children are nurtured and the elderly valued, where individual refuge can always be found, and where life can best be discerned and lived in all its fullness.

For most people all this used to be true. However, law upon law and budget after budget have made breaking up easier and fragmentation more likely. Strong families are now the exception rather than the rule. 750,000 British children now have no contact with their fathers; since 1961 marriage breakdown has increased by 600 percent – with the number of divorces doubling since 1971. More than 40 percent of marriages now end up in divorce. Many children simply have no experience of family life and no model on which to build loving and caring relationships. The traditional family has been ruthlessly and wantonly dismantled, piece by piece.

Everywhere in society we can see the fruits of an unguided and unloved generation. We have lost sight of our children and their needs – their vulnerability, their innocence, their joyousness and their love. Far from valuing the extended family everything possible has been done to destroy it. The concept of faithful, life-long covenants, made between two partners and God, is regarded as a quaint anachronism.

In his *Wedding Sermon from Prison* Dietrich Boenhoffer says: "Marriage is more than your love for each other. It has a higher dignity and power, for it is God's holy ordinance... in marriage you are a link in the chain of the generations... in marriage you are placed at a post of responsibility towards the world and humankind..., live together in the forgiveness of your sins, for without it no human fellowship, least of all a marriage, can survive. Don't insist on your rights, don't blame each other, don't judge or condemn each other, don't find fault with each other, but accept each other as you are, and forgive each other every day from the bottom of your hearts."

Every survey of children consistently reveals that even in families where parents constantly argue and fight, their children would prefer them to stay together. Best for everyone? Certainly not best for the children. You can divorce your husband or your wife, but not your children. A survey of what British people thought the family was for is instructive. In secular Britain 60 percent thought it was for *self*-fulfilment. In Spain 60 percent thought the family was primarily for bringing up children. *(from the Louis Caplan Memorial Lecture given earlier this year by Lord Alton.)*

morality in its traditional forms. Punishment was no longer retributive. Benefits were not administered on the basis of merit. Neither the family nor the school were to be places where virtues were taught or customs passed on across the generations. The central concepts of morality – individual responsibility and the internalisation of restraint – had come to seem scientifically misguided and psychologically damaging"(p.120). Even our language reflects this elimination of morality: "marriage and parenthood are no more than a contract... conflict is to be resolved by litigation rather than civility". What happens to care in the community, he asks, when there is now no community? "What becomes of parental responsibility when fathers cannot be found?"

In Part III, *The Good Society*, Sacks proposes how we can restore civility and rebuild society. He looks first at how the Jewish civilisation survived catastrophe after catastrophe. There were two means: the institutions of the civil society and the transmission of an identity based on a distinctive way of life and its associated values. Communities and voluntary organisations which help individuals and families help themselves, ought to receive adequate recognition. He quotes Osborne and Gaebler's book, *Reinventing Government* (USA 1992): "Governments create clients; communities create citizens. Governments give rise to dependency; communities to competence. Governments encourage people to think in terms of what they lack; communities foster people who think in terms of what, collectively, they can do".

Sacks then looks at modern education where "the task has been not to hand on a tradition but to enhance the consciousness of choice... Curricula were devised in 'values clarification', teaching children simply to articulate their personal preferences. Critical to this process were non-judgmentalism and relativism on the part of the teacher".

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## *from New Zealand...*

What is truly chilling is the belief that seems to have spread that marriage is just another contract. And, as with any other contract, there is nothing intrinsically sacred about it: there is nothing about marriage that has a special moral status. So, just as with any other contract, if you're prepared to pay the forfeit, then go ahead – break the agreement's terms. But at what cost? Because what costs there can be for the children. And what costs there can be to the community at large – even for supposedly innocent bystanders.

Between 1986 and 1991 the number of people in *de facto* relationships increased by 40 percent – to almost 162,000. The majority were between 25 and 34 years of age. In the same period the number of separated couples rose by nearly 20 percent and the number of people divorced by over 30 percent – there were 10,000 divorces in 1996. That is approximately half the number of marriages. In 1966 12 percent of all births were ex-nuptial. In 1996 it was 42 percent: almost 24,000 children. In 1995 there were 13,650 abortions... in 1995 5000 women and 8000 children sought the safety of women's refuges. Last year there were 104,000 solo mothers on the DPB.

These are distressing and depressing figures. If you accept the premise – and most people did until quite recently – that the family is the basic unit in society, that society's health depends on healthy family life and that healthy family life is best assured by a loving, permanent relationship between husband and wife, then there is something, plainly, that has gone dreadfully wrong with New Zealand society. It is no consolation whatsoever to know that other Western societies are in a similar predicament. ( *from a speech made earlier in the year by the Governor General, Sir Michael Hardie-Boys*)

*"A society which harms its children is not a place in which one can live at ease."*

Sacks maintains this is not how we learn. He compares the process with Wittgenstein's and Chomsky's theory on acquiring language skills which is based, not on private experiences – John Locke's 'blank sheet' where a child learns words by generalising from what it perceives – but on shared understanding and rules. "We do not learn how to behave – just as we do not learn how to speak – by private reflection on the basis of experience. We do so by acquiring socially constituted rules, from our first faltering conversations with our parents to our ever-widening dialogue with others." He concludes: "We develop languages because we seek communication. We develop moralities because we seek community. The task of restoring community and morality is one and the same and derives from the same need – to rescue the self from solitude."

In the chapter entitled *Family Matters,* Sacks writes with firmness and uncompromising courage – even with "grave trepidation (for) I want to say what others believe... cannot be said". He italicises his statements: "if we have any moral responsibilities at all, then we have moral responsibilities to those we brought into being... if we have a duty to fulfil any undertaking, we have a duty to honour the pledge of marriage... if marriage is holy, adultery is a sin. If it is moral, then adultery is wrong".

We ourselves know the appalling statistics. It is not surprising that on the cover blurb to Joanna Trollope's latest novel, *Other People's Children*, a claim is made that by the year 2010 there will be more step-families than birth families in Britain. Sacks imagines Dickens returning to Britain in the 1990s and asking, when confronted by the statistics of marriage breakdown: "I understand the principle of consenting adults. But what about the children?" This is a key question for Sacks, but he knows that "it is almost impossible to speak about the family without being accused of launching a moral crusade" (a heinous crime). We know the importance of the family – "the crucible of much that happens in later life... A society which harms its children is not a place in which one can live at ease."

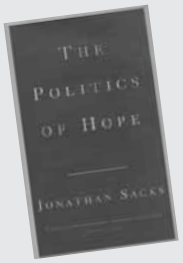
Is Jonathan Sacks' book just another moral tirade? A facile argument to put back the clock with vague generalisations about past centuries and their social values? I believe not. The very evident in-depth scholarship, the use of pertinent examples we can all recognise, the close examination of philosophical arguments from the past and the present: all make for a compelling argument for a better future. In the chapter entitled *The Common Good*, he quotes Charles Murray's answer to a question of how an individual can be a productive part of a properly run society: "I was a good parent to my children; I was a good neighbour; I always pulled my own weight."

He draws a telling example of this from his own personal experience: "When our son went on holiday in the North of Scotland recently, his rented bicycle developed a fault. The owner of the shop

lent his car to our son's friend to go and collect him and told him to leave the bicycle on the side of the road. No-one would steal it, he said, and he himself would pick it up later. There was a trust (there) missing elsewhere; and trust... can be part of the atmosphere, a public graciousness, not just a private relationship... a society in which such ordinary virtues are highly prized will be one that optimises the pursuit of happiness" (p 23).

This is a provocative and thoughtful book, a continuation of the 1995 discussions offered by Gertrude Himmelfarb in her book *The Demoralisation of Society* and by Patricia Morgan's *Farewell to the Family.* But where those authors focus on the Victorian past and what Himmelfarb calls the "Neo-Victorian" present, Jonathan Sacks makes us look firmly to a moral future with hope. He asserts this is a political book, and yet the reader could be forgiven for thinking it is a moral one. How can the two go together? Sacks maintains one determines the other: "Civil society rests on moral relationships... we can change the world if we can change ourselves; indeed that is the only way the world is changed... that is why morality is prior to politics. Renewing society's resources of moral energy is the urgent but achievable programme of a new *Politics of Hope*". ■

Photo: Mary Ann Bishop




*The Politics of Hope*
By Jonathan Sacks
Random House
$39.95

# Parents as Partners

We made a response only to those sections that directly concern us (1,4,7,8,9). We stressed the point that as parents in partnership we are taking responsibility for our own families... we want to be recognised for that. At present only the income-earner of the household is recognised. The non-employed partner remains invisible. We are not asking for a handout from the government, but only that we are both recognised when we are taxed for the income that is ours in the first place. Irrespective of whether we work as income-earners or caregivers, we both support the partnership which supports our family. ■

*Parents as Partners* is a Hamilton organisation which desires to "assert the right to parent our own children and not be regarded as second-class citizens for doing so. Our aim is to achieve economic recognition for our work as parents by means of establishing a partnership for tax purposes. This is an independent campaign: we are not affiliated with any particular groups or organisations."

For a copy of the Campaign Brochure write to:
**Christine Reymer,**
**3 Armagh St, Hamilton**
(ph **07 855 4699**)
In May *Parents as Partners* launched an 'Apron Campaign' to create visibility for mothers who feel their work is not counted and not valued in real terms. Mothers (and fathers, if they are the primary caregiver) are invited to send in their oldest, well-worn aprons (or oven-mitts if they don't use aprons) to signify the work they do, and create some visibility for themselves. The aprons and mitts will be collected up over the next few months, and then bundled up and sent to the Minister of Women's Affairs and Prime Minister, Jenny Shipley, in September on Suffrage Day. Parents are invited to send their aprons and mitts to us, with a brief note giving their first name, and a few details about themselves and how they feel about their work. Send in a large flat envelope to the above address.

**Response of *Parents as Partners* to the Code of Social Responsibility**.

# Scripture Images

*In the Scriptures there are three images of the Holy Spirit which stand out: Fire, Wind and Water. When you cast your inward eye over these images you will notice that they are all dynamic: each of them is mobile; each causes change*

## Fire

In the Old Testament the Glory of God's presence is often denoted by fire and smoke. God spoke to Moses in the burning bush. Later, at Mount Sinai, fire envelopes the mountain top when Moses goes to receive the commandments of God. The fire burnishes the countenance of Moses so that no one can look at him. Afterwards it is a pillar of flame that lead the people through the wilderness: cloud by day, fire by night.

The Book of Deuteronomy describes God as "a consuming fire, a jealous God". Fire is an element which both destroys and purifies. It is this dual function which Jesus refers to when he says: "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already" (Lk 12,40). At Pentecost the Spirit descended on the Apostles in the form of "tongues of fire, which separated and came to rest on the head of each of them" (Acts 2,3).

Fire is always changing; it has a mysterious energy which transforms things. At Pentecost it is the sign to us of the transforming power of the Spirit taking those timid, doubting disciples and changing them into heralds of the Word, who went out and fearlessly preached the Risen Christ.

A good local image is the Australian bushfire which rages with uncontrollable power fanned by the wind; yet afterwards the forest regenerates as if the fire were a necessary purification.

# of the Holy Spirit

## Wind

The 'wind' of the Spirit is an image especially used by Paul: *pneuma*, wind or spirit, means all that is highest in human beings, the spark of the divine within us. This harks back to the beginning of the Bible where the breath of the Spirit is the agent which created the world in the first place (Genesis 1). The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost is heralded by the "sound of a violent wind" (Acts 2,1). Pentecost is like the Creation all over again: the Spirit creates a new heart within us, and God is sealing a new covenant with believers. At the same time the presence of God is betokened for Elijah by the "gentle zephyr — the soft murmuring of the wind".

A good image is the sailing ship: nothing is more dead than a becalmed vessel in the doldrums. But when the sails are filled with wind, the ship is like a being full of life and power. Spiritual writers speak of the presence of the Holy Spirit within people as a power within, which enables them to achieve the

Water is both cleansing and life-giving.

unimagined and do great things for God.

## Water

In Jewish tradition the ceremony of baptism was like a cleansing, whereby the believer puts his/her old life behind them and starts afresh in the life of faith. The ritual of immersion in water reminded the Jews of passage through water (the Red Sea, the Jordan) from danger to safety, from the wilderness to the Promised Land.

The image of life-giving water is vividly described by Ezechiel in his vision of the restored Temple, which would be washed by a spring of life-giving water "wherever the water goes it brings health, and life teems wherever the river flows" (Ez 47,1-12).

Jesus proclaims in the Temple: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me; let anyone who believes in me come and drink. As Scripture says: From his heart shall flow streams of living water"(Jn 7, 37-8)

This image is most beautifully developed in the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. "The water I shall give will become a spring of water, welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4,14). Little wonder the woman replies: "Sir, give me some of that water so that I may never be thirsty..".

The image of water is especially powerful for those who live in the desert and can witness the extraordinary transforming effect of water on the arid and parched ground. Without water life ceases; irrigating the land enables it to yield abundantly.

## Without Face

*The privilege was mine recently, to see a faceless agony,*
*when Wairua went on holiday.*

*Flashing past, I glimpsed him walking,*
*with sightless, uncaring ease.*

*The whanau followed with noise of celebration.*
*In my memory remains that look of utter aloneness,*
*among many.*

*Which way The WELL?*

By Caroline Leaf

### *My Heart the Seed*
### *My Faith the Nutrient*
### *My Self the Growth*

*Kinship of Maori, in a line of welcome, can be a banquet of emotions*
*Two faces touch, tears shared, memories rekindled,*
*The healing touch of WAIRUA.*

*Historically, the well is a tool of physical survival.*
*In literature it is portrayed as a place of magical mystery.*

*The coming together of whanau and friends, for each will be different.*
*Children visit with their parents.*
*If the memories are happy, they willingly return.*
*To sit among whanau and feel the essence of joyous welcome*
*is to take an extra long draught at the WELL.*

*There is no specific time, place, gender, class order or event.*
*It is my belief that WAIRUA!!!*
*is AUTOMATIC!! INTRINSIC!!*
*to the very faithful framework of*
*ME!!!*
*YOU!!!*
*US!!!*

### *To Nurture*

*Sunday, the Parish whanau sit together in the Whare Karakia.*
*A time to replenish the human spirit to maintain the balance of self.*

*Pa holds the Host on high,*
*pauses.*
*The -i- of spirit is dotted.*

*Pa holds the blood of Christ on high,*
*pauses.*
*The -t- of spirit is crossed.*

*Jesus in two parts, the binding ingredient.*
*WAIRUA TAPU.*

### *The Well*

*"HE IKA KAI AKE I RARO, HE RAAPAKI AKE I RARO"*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Silence* | | *Solace* |
| *Vision* | **Source** | *Depth* |
| *Energy* | | *Purity* |

*WAIRUA TAPU THE HOLY SPIRIT*

*I TIMATA TATOU – I TE WAIRUA*
*KA HOKI AI TATOU – I TE WAIRUA*

# The Holy Spirit the definition of love

***R**onald **R**olheiser*

There is something in every one of us that loves a list; especially in those of us who are cradle Catholics. Our classical catechism contained lists of everything – sacraments, deadly sins, commandments, cardinal virtues, minor virtues, even types of angels.

There are two such lists for the Holy Spirit, one listing the fruits and the other listing the gifts. Both have a solid biblical foundation. The fruits of the Spirit are based on a list of virtues that Paul (Galatians 5,22-23) describes as coming from the Spirit. Our catechisms list 12 of these fruits: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity.

The gifts ascribed to the Spirit are based upon two biblical lists, the first is given by the prophet Isaiah (11,2) and the second is revealed by Paul in 1 Corinthians (12,4-11). Our catechisms, both the old and the new, summarise these gifts in a list of seven: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. In order to understand what these gifts are, and what precisely they bring to us, it is necessary first to situate them in their ultimate source, their generation within the life of the Trinity.

How is the Holy Spirit generated within the Trinity and how do the gifts of the Spirit flow out of that?

The Holy Spirit has classically been defined in theological terms as 'the love between the Father and the Son'. This is not simply an abstract formula but a phrase that tries to express, however inadequately, what results anywhere – here or in heaven – whenever there is a genuine, reciprocal flow of love.

Thus, simply within the normal flow of human love, it is possible to see the following dynamic:
Someone, out of love and gratitude, gives a gift to another. That gift helps fire love and gratitude in that other, who then in gratitude reciprocates.
This reciprocation fires a deeper love and gratitude within the initial giver, who can now give, in an even deeper way, to that other.
This, in turn, fires a still deeper love and gratitude in that other, who can then respond, even more deeply, in love and gratitude to the original giver.

As this dynamic works, an energy, a fire, a palpable force, a spirit, begins to build which affects and infects for the good everything it comes into contact with, drawing it into its own joyous energy.

That is, by way of analogy, how the Trinity works and the Holy Spirit is generated. Thus the Godhead can be described: God the Father, the source of everything, is always creating life and is giving it in love to the Son.
The Son is lovingly receiving that life and is, in gratitude, giving it back to the Father. This enables the Father to give that life back in an even deeper way. The Son, then, is able to respond even more deeply to the Father.

As this reciprocal flow of love and gratitude deepens and intensifies, an energy, a fire, a palpable force, a person, the Holy Spirit, is born and that force infects everything around it, drawing it into a palpable charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, fidelity and chastity.

That very ambience, in turn, affects perception. The gifts of the Spirit flow from its fruit: when one's heart and mind are coloured by love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, fidelity and chastity (as opposed to anger, bitterness, fear and lust) one will also understand things and react to them from a different wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.
The Holy Spirit is now working. ■

## The God Within us

For too long have we believed that the divine is outside us. This belief has strained our longing disastrously. This is so lonely since it is human longing that makes us holy. The most beautiful thing about us is our longing; this longing is spiritual and has great depth and wisdom. If you focus your longing on a faraway divinity, you put an unfair strain on your longing. Thus, it often happens that the longing reaches out to the distant divine, but, because it overstrains itself, it bends back to become cynicism, emptiness or negativity. This can destroy your sensibility. Yet we do not need to put any strain whatever on our longing. If we believe that the body is in the soul and the soul is divine ground, then the presence of the divine is completely here, close with us.
Being in the soul, the body makes the senses thresholds of soul. When your senses open out to the world, the first presence they encounter is the presence of your soul... This is a profoundly spiritual perspective. Your senses link you intimately with the divine within and around you. Attunement to the senses can limber up the stiffened belief and gentle the hardened outlook... Then, we are no longer in exile from the wonderful harvest of divinity that is always secretly gathering within us. ■

*(From* Anam Cara*, by John O'Donohue)*

# Music

*Recently* Tui Motu *asked three local musicians how healthy is church music in New Zealand*

Colin Gibson (left), Professor of English at Otago University, musician, choral director and hymn-writer

## 1 – in Prayer and Worship

I believe that as church musicians we need to be open to the whole Christian musical treasury which is so enormously rich, as well as enjoying freedom of access to a varied cultural exchange between ourselves as creators of liturgy and virtually the whole wide world of music. It's a 360 degree circle and this terrifies some Christians who want to keep the doors shut and the blinds down. There is a breed of musician who locks himself into 18th or 19th Century church music as being the ultimate in perfection — but as if there was nothing else.

Wesley believed that a liturgy without song was a contradiction in terms. The Anglican tradition to which he belonged throughout his life, was richly musical, but it had become a choral tradition in which congregations took very little part. It was a strategic decision on Wesley's part that people should be involved. He developed a 'hands on' type of liturgy, and hymn-singing is very much a part of that. Putting songs into the Christian liturgy for people to sing is very ancient. Ambrose of Milan wrote songs for his people in the 4th Century. Indeed Paul himself used hymns. The psalms were probably intended to be sung by the ordinary people.

What happens in the development of liturgy is a sort of cyclical process. The professionals tend to take over in the course of time, so ordinary worshippers are excluded and become listeners. Then there is a reaction, and liturgy is opened up again. Wesley's movement was an example of this opening up, as was Luther in his time. Choral music can be seen as an embellishment but also as a threat. The perfection of choral music is one of the greatest graces there is – yet it can totally exclude the ordinary members of the worshipping community. So hymn singing sits uneasily poised between the songs **of** the people and songs **for** the people.

**You yourself are a hymn-writer. That is your gift.**

Writing hymns is a highly specialised area, an expertise in its own right. I stumbled into it by accident. I was invited to translate a Taise piece to be sung to music. I found then that I was asked to adapt psalms for modern settings. For a time I used classical or folk tunes; and then I tried writing my own tunes. But I never liked to be tied down to a particular style. I liked to explore the whole gamut.

Later I started to write my own hymns along those Methodist lines in which hymn-singing is a form of instruction, of theological thinking and discourse, as well as an incitement to social action. Which is quite different from that other way, characteristic especially of charismatic hymns, – the recycling to music of biblical words and phrases where the texts are sung repetitively like a mantra, over and over again, until they become part of your thinking. My way is to draw on the biblical tradition but with the intention of encouraging appropriate thought and feeling – and in the end, of addressing social issues.

In church I like to use a wide range because any congregation contains within itself such a diversity of sensibility and thinking. For choir music I use John Rutter who harks back to the medievals, and Hildegard of Bingen as well as African and Guatemalan music of today. There is such a range of emotions and vocabulary whereby people express who they are and how they stand before God. The whole gamut needs tobe employed.

*The beauty of the best should never become a test for the ability of the ordinary*

For instance, at the moment I am developing the theme of **laughing in the presence of God** – a jovial, relaxed 'unbuttoned' sort of hymn-singing. It may be seen as 'irreverent' – but, I ask, what is reverence? If you see worship as a very special activity where you withdraw into a rarefied world of high seriousness and

intense beauty, that's okay – but it is not the way I want to express my sense of worship. I think Christian worship needs to reflect a whole range of feeling from deep sorrow to intense joy with all the grades in between. Concentrating exclusively on either gravity or joy is a form of narrow-mindedness. You know, as church people we tend too easily to move to either pole and insist that that's where religious music lies.

**So what is the place of Cathedral choirs?**

The glory of God is to be acknowledged in our highest achievements as well as in ordinary behaviour. I would want these talented people singing choral music to go on producing the very best they can, and not merely as models but simply because it is the best. I believe that everyone is gifted and each has his/her own excellence. The danger is that people can be so daunted by the beauty of great performers that they become disabled from doing anything themselves. The beauty of the best should never become a test for the ability of the ordinary congregational member. Church music tends to sit uneasily between reaching for the very highest standards of performance and the place where ordinary people labour to do whatever they can groan out! The fact is they are doing what they are capable of.

**Music draws us nearer to God in prayer – when it's the right kind of music. What sort of music, do you think?**

Firstly, music is a powerful means of evoking memory. People will carry in their heads snatches of favourite hymns long after they have forgotten eloquent sermons. The right music is as potent a means of drawing us close to God as anything I know. It opens us up to God in a way which is free from rational thought processes. In worship it is important to allow time for this to happen: it can't be rushed. Then people will respond to the music enveloped in a time of quietness.

The snag is that what may carry you to the heights may be putting somebody else off completely! It's a very personal thing. It is not easy for liturgies to find appropriate music – which stands somewhere in the middle for most people.

**You mentioned Taise music. Do you use that yourself?**

When used properly and not rushed, Taise chants have a special intensity. You have to allow the space for the music to be breathed and repeated and sung, until you lapse into silence. It can be extraordinarily powerful, but should never be used in brief snippets.

In its words and emotions it has a special appeal to the young. The quiet, intense and repetitive phrases work like a mantra. I think it is the deeply thinking person's version of the repetitive charismatic chorus, in which a congregation can become deeply involved through repetition. I think it is like special food and drink: suitable for some occasions and not others!

But I don't regard it as escapist music even though it carries you away from the immediate and the now. God is in that area as much as in the now. In worship we are confronting a 'God presence' which is everywhere.

**You have done a lot for New Zealand church music. How important is it for you?**

In New Zealand a composer, whether religious or secular, ought to be specially sensitive to our world. The songs should be responsive to our landscape, our bush, our birdlife – not simply to the world of the bible. It is sad if we are just acting as foghorns for somebody else's culture. *Alleluia Aotearoa*, the collection of religious songs by New Zealand writers, has been very successful and is now in its third printing. We can now say proudly we have in New Zealand a collection of music which is as much 'ours' as 'theirs'.

**Do you find that sometimes congregations latch on exclusively to certain hymn-writers?**

There is a danger of a congregation getting stuck in a groove, endlessly repeating the same small repertoire. One virtue of the old hymnbooks was that they offered a huge variety. I think it's a sign of growth when a congregation starts to explore a range of good music and does not get stuck with whoever happens to be the 'flavour of the month'. I say: keep exploring, keep on walking. And although I'm a strong advocate of having lots of local content in the liturgy I would not want to sweep away our crucial inheritance from the past.

**My last question could touch a sensitive nerve. Why do you think the selection of music in worship sometimes cause rows and rifts?**

I think people form attachments and loyalties to a style of music based on their childhood experiences – but they may get locked in to it. "This is music! This is Christianity! This is the only way!" – that's what they tell themselves. But we must know that there is a 360 degree circle around us. Human nature may push us into focussing on just a small segment. I want that smallness to be as large as possible. And I think it's sad if people come into the ordained ministry with precious little training and experience of the musical component of liturgy. The musical part could be as much as a third of the length of the service, so it's very important.

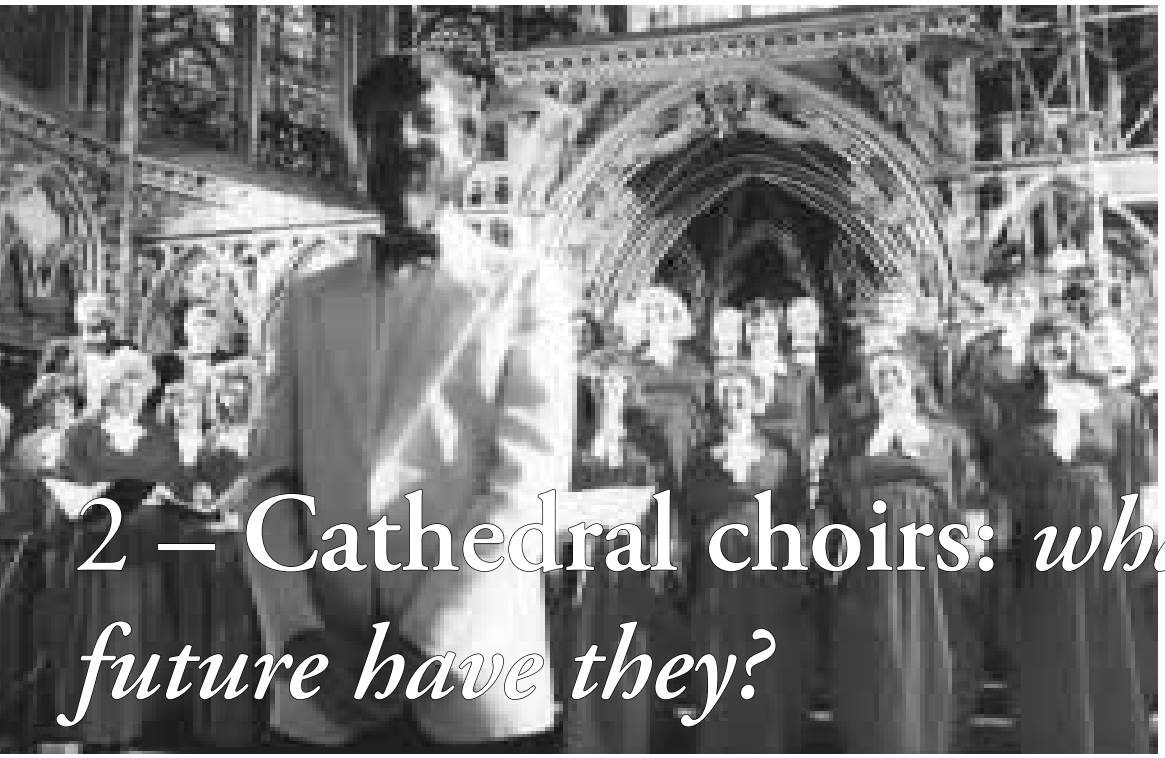
*It's sad if we are just acting as foghorns for somebody else's culture*

When someone comes up after a service and says: "I missed the old hymns today", they are right. There should have been at least one of the golden oldies for them not to have to say that.

As Christians we must never say to ourselves:

*Let no new thoughts be thought;*
*let no new images be found;*
*let no new composers compose –*
*because I have enough.*

All the time I hark back to the Gospel of Jesus, ever open to the new and the untried. ■



***Michael McConnell,*** *(right) Director of St Joseph's Cathedral Choir in Dunedin, has no doubt that Cathedral choirs have a function and a future*

# 2 – Cathedral choirs: *what future have they?*

Don Whelan with the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament choir, Christchurch, on tour in Europe

Michael McConnell has been Director of St Joseph's Cathedral Choir in Dunedin since 1965. When Michael took it over it was already a mixed choir whose repertoire was Gregorian Chant and polyphony: it was still very much in the pre-Vatican II era. One of his first tasks as choirmaster was to guide both the choir and the cathedral congregation through a total revolution.

The immediate challenge when the Council revised the form of Sunday liturgy was to introduce hymns suitable for singing as Mass. In fact, for the congregations too it was a total change of style of worship. Hymn singing in the Catholic tradition had been largely confined to evening devotions and benediction. At Mass the custom had been to listen passively both to the word of God read in Latin or English and to music provided by the choir. So Catholic morning congregations had to be taught to sing, and a whole new range of hymns and suitable settings had to be provided. Ideally these hymns had to suit the liturgical season and match the theme of the Readings. The old devotional hymns inherited from an earlier age were seldom suitable. At first most of the new hymns were imported from America, but in Michael's opinion a lot of these were of dubious musical quality.

In New Zealand an excellent start was made to provide settings of the Common of the Mass in English. The "masses" of Douglas Mews and Fr Dave Jillett were soon known throughout the country. Indeed New Zealand was probably unique in the English-speaking world in that you could attend Mass anywhere in the country and hear the same settings of the Common of the Mass and the sung *Our Father*.

But what was the role of the choir, now its principal function at Mass had been transferred to the Congregation? The polyphonic repertoire was a thing of the past; the grand Masses of Mozart and Perosi became concert pieces. The Vatican urged musicians to preserve something of the Gregorian chant in public worship, but it was largely a lost cause. Meanwhile there was an inevitable reaction in parish communities against the traditional dominance of the choir in the Sunday liturgy. In Dunedin in 1965 there were six parish choirs. Now there is only one left, although in many parishes there is a music group of instrumentalists who lead and accompany the congregation.

The Cathedral choir in Dunedin has survived, indeed as choirs have in most large city churches throughout the world. But, in Michael's view its function has had to evolve drastically. It was often quite a painful transition, and in his opinion the row presently going on in the Anglican Cathedral in Dunedin is a replay of the sort of tension between the old and the new which many Catholic congregations went through after the Council.

In the new liturgy the choir's first role is to lead the congregation in singing the Common and the hymns: it must lead – but not supplant the people's part. The *Gloria* is usually sung by the choir although it can be performed antiphonally, that is, with the people responding as if singing a chorus. The responsorial psalm can also be sung in this way. Unfortunately there are few parishes were the singing talent in the congregation is adequate to sustain these chants. This is where a choir – or at least a music group or single cantor – is invaluable. Finally, there are certain

times during the Mass where motets can be sung or instrumental music provided as a quiet background to prayer: the 'offertory', or time of preparation of the gifts, is one; during and after communion is another opportunity.

The choir, therefore, has reclaimed a role for itself, not competing with the congregation but complementing it. Michael's belief is that where there is a choir there needs to be an integrated programme of music for the Mass which gives a balance. There are always those special occasions when it is good to give the congregation a feast of some of the classic choral repertoire. The Cathedral choir has survived the radical changes of recent years into a time when, in Michael's opinion, there is more quality hymn-writing available, suitable for the differing moods and themes of the liturgical year. He looks forward confidently to the future of the Cathedral choir.

# 3 – Music at Mass: *Keep it simple!*

Cecily Sheehy OP is a music teacher based in Auckland. She has been involved in the music ministry for many years. Her settings of the Mass and her hymns are used in Catholic churches and schools throughout New Zealand.

Music, in Cecily's opinion is at the centre of the Church's worship. Music provides the atmosphere for prayer, and it lifts people above the pedestrian 'talk level'. The best messages of the spirit come through to us when vested in song: words come to life when they are sung rather than spoken. Music is a wonderful art form for giving messages which prompt creative thinking.

In the Sunday liturgy there is a whole variety of music demanded. The **Entrance** hymn should be a high energy piece of singing. It is an invitation to the people to become fully present, and it ushers them into the main theme of the liturgy. *Come to the water*, for instance, gently but insistently invites us into the theme of baptism.

Next there is the sung **Response** between the readings. Whatever the people sing here should be something personal for them. Themes "out there" are inappropriate. This is not the time to be projecting everything onto God. We have listened to the readings – and now we are being challenged to make them real for us, to allow the message to touch our lives and move us. So it isn't the moment for further theological instruction. The Response is designed to take up the theme of the readings and carry it a little bit further in a way that makes connections for the worshipper. If a psalm is being sung or chanted, the people's antiphon has to reflect the theme as simply and clearly as possible.

Cecily sees a real problem in too many words and concepts being thrown at the congregation in quick succession. While acknowledging why the second reading on Sundays is there, she has real doubts about how effective it is."There is a danger of confusion. The busy-ness of the world is being duplicated in the liturgy. So, I say keep it simple!". And, for children's liturgies, one reading is quite enough.

The **Common** of the Mass (*Holy Holy, Lamb of God* etc) is a real challenge to composers. Cecily prefers the wording to be kept brief and the music simple, not florid and repetitious. If one theme is used several times for the different parts of the Common, then this has a unifying effect. Good quality musical settings which are easy for a congregation to sing: that's the ideal. The *Lamb of God* lends itself to a more solemn treatment. It is an opportunity to have a repetitive 'mantra' which can accompany the Fraction rite and the distribution of communion.

At the end of Mass Cecily does not like having two wordy hymns in quick succession often with totally different themes. Either have a song after communion and a musical 'voluntary' for the recessional. Or have reflective instrumental music at communion, and then a stirring hymn sung at the end.

Her pet 'dislikes'? Hymns which are long-winded disquisitions on theology: telling God about all the divine attributes! She is not happy when a congregation has imposed on it an extreme view: either **all** guitars or **no** guitars! There is a real place for the old classics which have stood the test of time: *Now Thank We All Our God* and the Hymn of St Francis; just as there is equally a place for young people to play and sing and bring a freshness to the liturgy.

The music we hear and sing in church needs to be attractive. A repertoire of 'classical' songs in the vernacular for our times takes more than 20 years to put together. Cecily is appreciative of the 'justice' songs which have entered the

*(continued overleaf)*

# New Dawn in Ireland – Deo Gratias

## A Personal View

In 1979, at Killineer outside Drogheda only a few miles from the border between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland, Pope John Paul appealed in language of passionate pleading to the men and women of violence: "On my knees I beg you to turn away from the paths of violence and return to the ways of peace".

Drogheda is my home. I was privileged to be a cantor at the Pope's Mass in 1979 and to hear him utter that prayer. I spoke briefly to one of the readers at that Mass, John Hume, (now leader of the SDLP Party and one of the architects of the Peace Agreement) and I congratulated him on his work for peace and his vision. It was Hume who first used the expression "An Agreed Ireland". It has taken 20 years for John Hume's vision and the Pope's appeal for peace to be realised. For over 30 years we have lived in the shadow of political violence in Ireland: as the Taoisach, Bertie Ahearn, said: "...from the last atrocity to the next fear".

Last Saturday morning I crossed the Bridge of Peace in Drogheda and wondered at the note of despondency in the lines from Austin Clarke's poem about the Civil War of 1922:

*I thought of the last honey by the water*
*That no hive can find.*

By early afternoon, however, the trend in the voting on the referendum was evident. A feeling of euphoria was sweeping the country. The people of Ireland, North and South, had given their verdict, an overwhelming "Yes", to the *Good Friday* Agreement. The principle of mutual respect and the principle of consent would be the guiding philosophy for the future. Ireland had voted to go forward in an enlightened way respecting differences.

Next Saturday (30 May) my son Colm will marry Fiona from Ballymena in County Antrim (the scene of many bitter confrontations between Catholic and Protestant). I can think of no better present that Ireland can bestow on them than the gift of peace, as they set out on their new life together.

*Owen Devine*

## Prospect for the Future

Constitutionally, the formal abandonment by the Irish republic of its claim to jurisdiction over the whole island removes the theoretical underpinning for republicans to engage in violence. This is coupled with recognition that the union of Northern Ireland with Britain cannot change in the future except with the consent of the people of Northern Ireland. It is amazing that those republicans and their supporters who for years engaged in or condoned violence and atrocities, appear to have voted for an agreement removing their territorial claims.

The Unionists have, in effect, divided nearly equally over the agreement. The 'Fors', including many business people and young voters, have bought into the promise of progress and stability. The 'Nos' do not believe these promises and will have "no truck with the terrorists".

*Let us build bridges of trust*
*Across rivers of fear.*
*Let us live for today*
*leave the past behind.*
*Let us look forward not backwards*
*For to do not today*

*Tui Motu* is grateful to Drogheda schoolteacher Owen Devine for this immediate response to the Irish Referendum result. The city of Drogheda figures prominently in Irish history: it was sacked by Oliver Cromwell in the 1640s; nearby, William of Orange defeated Catholic King James II at the battle of the Boyne in 1688.

*(continued from previous page)*
repertoire. What they do is state prophetically that unjust things are happening and that human beings have within them the goodness to put things right. But she does not believe in battering people, telling them what they **ought** to be doing – a crime she confesses having been guilty of herself.

And why, she asks, are creation-centred hymns so foreign to the Catholic Church? There is an immense need for people to be encouraged to care for the planet, to have a reverence for nature, to value it as the creation of a loving God. Her fear is that hymns tend to be too exclusively between 'me and God', too anthropocentric. But she rejoices that some of these problems are being put to rights by some excellent New Zealand composers.

What she loves best is to hear a big congregation in full song. That is why it's so important to have hymns which will encourage everyone to join in: hymns which are well-written and musically attractive. It is a part of her vocation to work away at filling that need. ■

# Veteran Peace Campaigner Calls for New Means of Arms Control

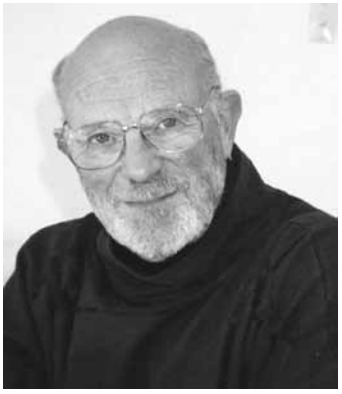
*While India and Pakistan make a dramatic entrance to the Nuclear Club, Canon Paul Oestreicher looks at other ways to achieve National Security*

Canon Oestreicher began by setting our modern problems in the perspective of history and prehistory. Prehistoric man sought security by fashioning a club, a weapon he could use not only for defence but for aggression. The fascinating story of weapons goes hand in hand with technology from the time of bows and arrows to the invention of the rifle, the machine gun and the aerial bomb.

For over half a century the nuclear age has framed our thinking on national security. During the cold war the nuclear deterrent appeared to achieve a balance of power and a sort of peace. Oestreicher points out however that there have been some close encounters arriving at the brink of nuclear warfare. The ever-present danger lies in the continuing possession of these weapons of destruction and the readiness of the possessors to use them. The very idea of a deterrent implies this.

Preserving a balance of peace depends on the sanity of the people making the final decisions. At some point in the course of history this sanity is likely to break down, and one of these leaders will unleash untold destructive power. In the 1990s we are still trying to rid ourselves of the legacy of weapons from the Cold War era. The Non-Proliferation Treaty is of dubious effectiveness, while the destruction of nuclear weapons themselves is a slow and laborious process.

Meanwhile recent developments in the field of chemical and bacteriological indicate that such weapons could be secretly produced and prove far more devastating than nuclear



weapons, even making them out of date. There is a pressing need for a new international survival strategy to cope with these new developments. The problem is we are still living with the heritage of an old political system based on the traditionally regarded 'right' of each independent nation to fight for its security with its own weapons of mass destruction.

**Keys to a new survival strategy**

As regards the future Ostreicher is both realistic and cautiously optimistic. Working through the United Nations there must continue to be a total ban on weapons of mass destruction. For this to be effective there must be new instruments of international control. The whole pattern of military training for national security must be transformed into a United Nations police force. The goal is no longer to win wars but to stop other people fighting them. This force must be sufficiently armed so as to stop those about to launch a military conflict. In the case of the former Yugoslavia the Peace-keeping Force were too late on the scene to try to stop the fighting, but its presence did eventually arrest further slaughter.

Sadly there are powerful forces at work to slow down this transition to a new survival strategy:

- The armaments industry (of which the British example is a notably profitable one) has a vested interest in selling weapons to warring nations each intent on maintaining its old-style national security. Local wars (such as that between Iraq and Iran in the 1980s) provide a lucrative market. The Gulf War became a testing ground for new 'high-tech' weaponry.
- National prestige is a persistent source of the desire to acquire arsenals of new weapons. The major Asian powers want to be seen as big players just as the major nations of Europe and America sought to maintain their place in the nuclear club 50 years ago. How will a UN Force be able to police new super powers such as China?

Here, the issues of nuclear power and national prestige are clothed in largely symbolic forms of weapons which may soon be outdated. But war and nationhood still have a glamour which is expressed in stirring songs and in the display of deadly weapons. How then can a less glamorous Peace-keeping Force acquire a symbolic meaning to inspire the imagination of the world's peoples? Perhaps through education and peace studies over the long term.

And, insists Oestreicher, through practical examples of forgiveness. One example in our own recent history was the ban on the visits of nuclear warships during the 1980s: this proved to be a significant symbol far beyond any political clout which New Zealand might have exerted. ■

(*Canon Paul Oestreicher, recently retired as "International Director" for Coventry Cathedral, England, has been on a visit to New Zealand in recent months. This lecture was reported for* Tui Motu *by Albert Moore*)

# Secularism versus Secularity: the Legacy of John Courtney Murray

*Mary Eastham*

At the UNESCO Values in Education Conference held 25-26 March in Wellington, Prime Minister Jenny Shipley charmed many New Zealanders by suggesting that the time had come to repeal the secular clause in education. That would make it possible for religion to be taught in State schools. Whether one sees this move as progress or regress depends on one's understanding of secularity. Is it a blessing or a curse?

Americans were embroiled in a similar controversy in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1950s, Catholic schools were asking government to give them their fair share of the public purse, arguing that all schools, religious or secular, which served the public purpose of education should be entitled to tax dollars collected equally from all tax-paying parents. Opponents argued that State aid to Catholic schools violated the Constitutional separation of Church and State. It was a simple equity issue, but Catholic schools lost their case. Indeed, American Catholics still dream of the kind of integration that exists between State and Catholic schools in New Zealand.

In the 1960s a mother who happened to be an atheist appealed to the Supreme Court to end prayer in public schools, arguing that this practice violated her son's freedom of conscience. It was a simply case of the tyranny of the minority; and yet she won.

In the case of State aid to Catholic schools, the separation of Church and State was interpreted as a great divide between Church and State, pushing the Church into the private sphere even when Catholic institutions like schools rendered an important public service. The State was seen to be synonymous with secularity, and secularity was interpreted as the sanitised public realm where divisive religious values dare not tread.

Enter John Courtney Murray, the articulate Jesuit who not only made an invaluable contribution to civil discourse in a pluralist society, but also led the way for the development of doctrine at the Second Vatican Council. Murray helped the Council Fathers understand that religious freedom was a basic human right, and that State establishment of religion was not always beneficial to the mission of the Church in the world.

*a member of a religious minority knows how precious is the right to religious freedom*

Because the religious meaning of secularity underpinned both contributions, it may be useful to look more closely at the moral and political reasoning of this great Catholic scholar of the modern world.

Murray made careful distinctions between secularity as a political principle and secularism as an ideology. The former describes the social reality of a religiously pluralist democracy like the United States where many different religious and ethnic groups occupy the same public space. If these groups are to participate fully in public life, they must be free to do so without fear that their religious convictions may be held against them socially or politically. This is the meaning of the separation of Church and State. It means freedom for religion, not freedom from religion. One need only be a member of a religious minority in a country with an established religion to know how precious is the right to religious freedom.

Secularism is quite different. It is an ideology that is hostile to religion. It seeks to keep religion in the private sphere, in the realm of personal belief and family life. It will not tolerate the public expression of religious convictions. It interprets the separation of Church and State as freedom from religion.

How do these distinctions shed light on the American cases cited above as well as the current discussion in New Zealand about the role of religion in State schools?

In both cases, Murray believed the ideology of secularism prevailed. The separation of Church and State was interpreted as freedom from religion. Such hostility to religious values in public life could only endanger democracy because a just and fair society demands the free expression of the moral convictions of everyone.

Murray was equally adamant that the principle of secularity be the starting point for discussion. The separation of

Church and State meant that no religion or value system had a monopoly in public life. Murray saw four communities of meaning and value in his day – Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Secularist – each wishing to contribute to public policy discussions. These groups must be empowered to do so, bringing to bear their moral convictions on every political and economic problem with which the nation was grappling.

However, they must all play by the rules. They must acknowledge disagreement, learn to translate their religious convictions into ethical principles which serve the public purpose, and accept the wisdom of the majority in cases of controverted ethics. In this way civil discourse in the United States might become a great "conspiracy of co-operation" where all religious and secular groups participate fully in shaping domestic and foreign policies that can be respected by all.

Applied to the values debate in New Zealand, the principle of secularity would demand that all groups with an interest in public education play by the rules. No religion or value system has a monopoly in public education. Religion can be taught in State schools as a humanistic discipline without violating a student's freedom of conscience. Good education is not propaganda or brainwashing but critical awareness of the world in which we live. This includes religion because it is a treasure house of wisdom.

Knowledge about religion is not the same as faith. Faith is a gift that some possess, and others do not. It can be "caught", however, whenever people encounter the "real thing" – a human being fully alive to the transformative power of God, whose life then becomes an instrument of healing and enlightenment for others. ■

*Mary Eastham is Director of the Pastoral Centre, Palmerston North*

## *Farewell to the Decade – Lighting Fires for the Future*

The Women's programme of the Conferences of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand is offering a series of workshops, seminars and presentations throughout the country. Consider such possibilities as a day teasing out some of the latest approaches and discussions in women's theology and biblical studies; taking part in interactive structural analysis workshops; honing skills in creative writing; enjoying dance, music, art.

A number of women from around the country are offering a wide range of presentations. Most are prepared to travel to any town or city. The travel fares of the presenters are covered by a Project Fund. Among the presenters are: Anne Taylor, Nan Burgess, Rosemary Russell, Sue McCafferty, Helen Bergin, Josie Dolan, Sandra Winton & Mary Horn, Gillian Swift, Erice Fairbrother, Mary Betz, Janet Crawford, Jill Preston, Jo Ayers, Judith Courtney, Jenny Dawson, Christina Reymer, Rosemary Neave, Jean Brooks & Catherine Wood, Pat Booth, Ceridwyn Coles & Danielle Melton, Ethel Bignell, Judith McKinlay, Susan Smith & Mary Maitland, The Sophia Catholic Women's Network.

*For details, write to Project Co-ordinator: Josie Dolan, 36 Stenhope Crescent, Dunedin*

### Promoters' Corner

Dear *Tui Motu* People,

I hope the greeting doesn't sound too formal. It's meant to convey the opposite ie the increased sense I'm getting that we're in this venture together. It's a 'we' journey, not a 'me', nor a 'you and us' journey. *Tui Motu* is going to succeed because all of its readers are stakeholders – we're in this together.

Listen to this response to our recent appeal for promoters at parish level: "*Tui Motu* reminds me that **we** are the Church. I thoroughly enjoy discovering a world of thinking, caring and challenging Catholics, and take heart from the intelligence and honesty of its writers. I would be happy to speak at our three Sunday Masses to promote it". Thank you, Kathy, and others who have responded to my appeal to publicise *Tui Motu* at the parish level.

Remember: I have a two-minute text that works. Parish priests have invariably responded positively for these moments at the end of Mass; and people are free to leave their names and addresses for a complimentary copy. Write to **26 Hopkins Crescent, Kohimarama, Auckland 1005** or phone **09 521 1342**, if you can help in this way – or any other to ensure that *Tui Motu* gets its best chance.

*Tom Cloher* (Director, Promotions)

# *Un*thinking Film of the Year

*Good Will Hunting*
**Review: Nicola McCloy**

Much has been made of this 'blue-collar worker turned genius' flick, written by and starring Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. The pair won an Oscar and have generally been praised highly in film media. As a fan of Affleck's work with director, Kevin Smith, I had high hopes for *Good Will Hunting* to lift itself above the usual dross that Hollywood seems to champion.

Certainly the recipe for *Good Will Hunting*'s success is apparent before even seeing the film. Directed by Gus Van Sant (*Drugstore Cowboy*, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*), the film stars three of Hollywood's hottest young properties Damon, Affleck (*Mallrats*, *Chasing Amy*) and Minnie Driver (*Circle of Friends*), and one of Hollywood's hottest middle-aged properties, Robin Williams, star of just about every movie for the past 15 years and *Mork and Mindy*.

Sadly, for me the film failed to live up to its hype. Certainly it was well written, well cast and dealt with several important issues, but the film didn't reach out and grab me and make me want to know what was going to happen. It didn't do enough to really separate itself from the Sunday Night family movie genre that New Zealanders became nauseatingly familiar with in the 1980s.

The tale of a 20-year-old janitor, Will Hunting, who solves an advanced mathematical theorem, is taken under the wing of a frustrated Maths Professor, goes into counselling and has to make a whole bunch of tough decisions about what to do with his life, is all too predictable.

The film makes Hunting's transition from construction worker to genius all too easy, and the difficulties he faces are resolved in textbook fashion with the help of Williams as a kooky psychologist and Driver, who plays his upper crust, English, Harvard-going girlfriend. These problems largely revolve around his difficult childhood, his troubled adolescence, the woman he loves and what to do with his future. All of which are resolved with cartoonish ease, a bit of counselling and a few manly tears.

For a movie touted as the thinking film of the year, I caught myself at various points in the film thinking. Unfortunately, I was thinking about what to have for dinner, thinking about whether it was raining outside and, worst of all, thinking about the housework I could have been doing instead of sitting watching this.

That said, the film did have a few moments of near redemption. Affleck's excellent performance as Will's blue-collar best buddy, a couple of great Unabomber gags and the odd stylish Freud quip unfortunately didn't go far enough to rescue it from being little more than a big budget, big name Sunday night weepie. Save your money and wait for it to be on TV. ■

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*Earth Has Its Voices*
**Review: Keith Harrison**

*Earth Has Its Voices* is a 15-minute video which is produced by the Justice, Peace and Service programme of the CCANZ (Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand). It presents the viewer with an account of different projects which ordinary New Zealanders have undertaken to increase ecological awareness and understanding. These are New Zealanders who see a link between their own spirituality and their care and concern for the environment. The video stresses the importance of Christian groups working together in environmental projects and illustrates the spiritual and emotional return which such involvement brings.

From whale watching in Kaikoura, to native tree planting projects and on to an ecologically aware District Council, the video offers a wake-up call to members of Christian congregations throughout New Zealand to "honour the earth".

Video Review

Perhaps the most moving moments in the video are those which capture the faces of the people watching the whales in Kaikoura. The awe and wonder at the sight of these great mammals was a reminder of the mystery of nature and of our responsibility to protect and sustain it.

In the resource booklet which accompanies the video, Colin Gibson's hymn to the earth finishes with the verse:

*Song of the great whales*
*singing in the blue,*
*calling from deep to deep;*
*but the song is sorrow,*
*sorrow for an empty*
*tomorrow in the oceans of the earth.*
*If we only plunder,*
*if we always blunder,*
*we may lose the wonder,*
*silence all the voices of the earth.*

Available, complete with resource booklet, from:
**CCANZ, Private Bag 11 903, Ellerslie, Auckland, 1131**
Cost: $15 – suitable for working with groups

# Why People Stop Believing in God

*On Not Understanding God.*
By Martin Henry,
Dublin/Maynooth: Columba Press, 1997. pp. 320.
$NZ 74.00
**Review: Greg McCormick**

Perhaps one of the more surprising consequences of Nietzsche's declaration, barely a century ago, that 'God is dead' has been a recent spate of studies by many philosophers and theologians, all of whom have been asking, in way or another, why it is, if God is indeed dead, that thinking about God continues to lie at the centre of so much intellectual activity in the Western academy?

Martin Henry, who teaches dogmatic theology at Maynooth, has written a very good account of the nature of these debates, beginning with the scriptures and the medieval understanding of the issue, and discussing in considerable detail the contributions of a number of seminal nineteenth century thinkers whose agenda, as Henry rightly argues, has largely set the scene for the contemporary framework within which the 'God question' largely arises. So, rather than an exercise in defensive apologetics, Dr Henry engages sympathetically with his conversation partners, especially Hegel, Feuerbach and Nietzsche to show why they thought the way they did about the possibility or impossibility of belief in God.

It is basic to the approach taken throughout this book that the 'secular-isation' of religious ideas and commitments always involves the secularisation of a particular or specific notion of God. Where these specific ideas arose from, and how they came, often uncritically, to be simply accepted as the orthodox Christian understanding of God, is the leading question guiding the reader through this book.

And Dr Henry does not disappoint. Without lapsing into jargon or taking many potentially tempting detours along the way, he presents a lively, intelligent, stimulating, literate and elegantly written account of how people have thought about God in such ways as to have largely determined the way many people think - or do not think - about God today. Even the Marquis de Sade - not a figure usually to be found in a book on theology - has his say.

At the same time, and despite the formidable array of sources and citations, the central theme of the book is never lost sight of: what accounts for the historically unprecedented intellectual rejection, from about 1800 to the present, of the Christian God? And more particularly, how is it that this modern repudiation arose after centuries of Christian culture and, indeed, from within that culture as almost its atheistic apotheosis? A further, allied, theme explored throughout concerns the relationship between transcendence and immanence, and the possibility - no longer believed in either by Nietzsche or numerous contemporary post-modernists - of divine transcendence.

This is one of the clearest, most cogently written books on this subject it has been my pleasure to read. As an introduction to an issue few thinking Christians today can afford to remain in ignorance of, I highly recommend it. It is, however, to be regretted that the price of this volume is so steep. The book deserves a wider readership than $74 a copy is likely to provide. ■

# Time Out with the Daily Readings

*Jesus 2000: A Contemporary Walk with Jesus*
By Mark Link SJ
Thomas More, Allen, Texas
Price:$25
**Review: Michael Hill**

Mark Link will be no stranger to those who seek out easy-to-read, attractively produced books on spirituality. This time he has produced a pocket-sized meditation guide for every day of the year. Each page consists of a quotation from the daily Readings, a story and a short literary quotation.

The author suggests that it can be used for personal reflection and for small groups: the idea is to meet once a week with a group of friends and in a prayerful atmosphere to share personal reflections on the daily meditations. It would certainly provide an ideal medium for such an exercise.

What is impressive is the richness and variety of comment, quotation and story compressed into such a small compass. I can recommend this little book as an ideal companion for individual or group use, particularly as it is linked up with the daily Mass readings so that in its scope it covers a range as wide as the liturgy itself. My only reservation is that I wonder how well the rather modest binding will stand up to 365 days of fingering and pocket wear. Nevertheless it is great value. ■

# Pilger: Man of Passion

*Keith Harrison*

The role of the television journalist has never been better explored or explained than in a recent *Hard Talk* interview with Australian writer and commentator, John Pilger. Interviewer Nisha Pillai asked the right questions to maintain the flow of dialogue and the continuity of the discussion while Pilger's philosophy and vision for himself and for his profession, did the rest. There was a particular reason for this interview which was to mark the publication of his latest book, *Apartheid Did Not Die,* a critical appraisal of Nelson Mandela's government in South Africa and its failure to deliver the promised reforms.

Growing up in Bondi, a Sydney suburb, he recalled knowing nothing about the Aborigine and it was only later, with the experiences of war and genocide behind him, that he realised there was a Third World society existing within the comfort and security of the First World he regarded as home. He uses this analogy to illustrate the importance of the journalist standing apart in whatever society he finds himself or herself. The journalist, he believes, must be the bystander looking on, the eternal outsider who views events with a certain scepticism and cynicism – the maverick who is suspicious of power. Journalists are too often flattered by power and are corrupted by their easy access to the sources of power. He believes that a journalist should do more than simply report a situation or an event. The responsibility of the journalist is to look behind the scenes, to push aside the illusion or image which screens the reality behind the power and try and explain what he/she has seen.

Pilger himself put this philosophy into practice when his television documentary of *Year Zero* in 1979 let the world know the horror of what was happening in Cambodia and uncovered the Asian holocaust. The story of East Timor had been neglected by the world's media and concealed by the Indonesian government until Pilger and others revealed the killing and the oppression.

In South Africa he travelled around the country talking to ordinary men and women, looking at the quality of their lives and seeking their opinion of the government. It was his first visit in 30 years and he expressed amazement at the resilience of the people struggling to exist in an economy which is failing them. He noted that there were always two types of apartheid: the cruelty and division of the system which used colour as a basis for deprivation is one, and the other is economic apartheid. This second type of apartheid, a separation by money, goes back beyond Cecil Rhodes and has corrupted South African society.

Pilger believes that the compromises made to reach power have affected the ability of the ANC government to move to a more equitable society and that the only beneficiaries under Mandela's administration were the whites and a small black elite. The vast majority of the people were living without hope in a country where jobs are being lost at the rate of 100,000 a year. He believes that Nelson Mandela has had a calming influence on the political and social situation but that as he fades from the scene there is serious trouble ahead for the government. Pilger notes that in the apparent news saturation on our screens the truth is often concealed because journalists are subdued into accepting government or official explanations for the newsworthy events and crises in their countries.

This provocative and controversial journalist has twice won the British Journalist of the Year Award and is a winner of the UNESCO peace prize. Collected writing was published in *Heroes* while his concern with the position of the Aboriginal in Australia is explored in *The Secret Country* (1989).

The interview with John Pilger revealed a man of passion who sees his role of professional journalist as being very different from that of the writing hack who simply reports various happenings around the world. Pilger sees himself as a crusader for the rights of ordinary people, a writer who uses his pen as a sword to fight for the oppressed and an advocate who uses his skills of reporting to speak for those who are deprived of their freedom. His actions may well have played a part in curbing greater excesses in a particular government or country.

It is a sad fact that in New Zealand we have no John Pilger. Ian Fraser, who has sometimes conducted memorable studio investigations in his search for truth, is not employed at present because TVNZ hasn't the money to pay him. He couldn't go out with a camera and production team to research an issue, as Pilger does, and then sell it to a particular network. Our economies of size and scale do not allow this, but we have a Coalition government which is still looking for a return from its two television stations. In the last financial year they have managed to hand in excess of $30 million back to the government. Why is the profit motive placed ahead of delivering quality programmes?

One can only wonder why some of this money could not be diverted into re-employing Ian Fraser and other able commentators who are available. Could it be that the Coalition Government prefers a silent, shackled, emasculated television medium without any lean and hungry Pilger clones searching for the truth. Perhaps the Prime Minister and her Deputy would share the sentiments of Julius Caesar who was wary of the restless searching energy of the thinking person:

*Let me have men about me that are fat;*
*Sleek-headed men such as sleep o' nights;*
*Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;*
*He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.*

**Guatemalan Bishop Murdered**

On 26 April just two days after publishing a damning report on atrocities committed by the army during Guatemala's civil war, Msgr Juan Gerardi, auxiliary bishop and head of the church's human rights bureau, was murdered in the capital, Guatemala City.

The 1400 page report estimates that the civil war left 150,000 people dead and 50,000 unaccounted for, as well as 200,000 orphans and 40,000 widows. Gerardi, who had been a bishop since 1974, had set up the Human Rights Bureau, the most reliable source of information on atrocities committed by security forces, death squads and guerrilla groups.

More than 250 bishops and priests attended the funeral of the dead bishop, who has been compared with Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador, murdered in 1980.

**Move for Catholic women deacons**

A women's diaconate network has been set up in Germany. The German bishops have been called upon to seek permission from Rome to ordain women as deacons. Groups of interested women have been set up in several dioceses and a training course is being prepared. The bishops are reported to be divided about this proposal, and some women church workers are nervous that the move might jeopardise their jobs.

**Priests Accused of Genocide**

Two Catholic priests in Rwanda have been condemned to death and others imprisoned for their alleged participation in the genocidal war of 1994. The two priests were found guilty of being party to the slaughter of thousands of people in their church compound about 50 miles west of the capital, Kigali.

The Catholic Church in Rwanda was openly supportive of the regime of President Habyarimana who is said to have planned and executed the 'ethnic cleansing'. Priests and nuns are accused of doing nothing, even appearing to go along with the mass killings. The Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference comments that Tutsis were looked upon as an inferior ethnic group, and people who killed them believed they were carrying out the will of God.

**Debt Relief in Africa**

The World Bank and the IMF have agreed that Uganda should receive debt relief from all its creditors, worth US$350 million. This amounts to 20 percent of the country's external debt. At the same time Mozambique is to have its external debt reduced by US$1.4 billion in June 1999. This relief represents 70 percent of Mozambique's gross domestic product.

During the Meeting of the G7 leaders in Birmingham, England, last month some 50,000 protesters formed a human chain round the meeting, appealing to the leaders of the world's wealthiest nations to abrogate Third World debts as part of the Millennium Jubilee celebrations.

**Lost Opportunity for the Church**

After the 'Velvet' Revolution of 1989 which ousted the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia, the Catholic Church chose to ally itself with one of the new political parties: it is thought that this entry into national politics has robbed the Church of much of its public influence.

One area to suffer is the training of the clergy. The Prague Faculty of Theology, founded in 1347, is said to be the world's oldest. The new Dean of Theology was a state appointment, and his policy seemed to be to keep out "the insidious influence of Western thinking". Future priests are allegedly being prepared for a church which stresses authority, power, wealth and hostility to dialogue with the non-Catholic environment.

**Nobel Laureates Appeal**

"Too many children today are living in a 'culture of violence'." So say a group of Nobel Peace Prize laureates, who are appealing to heads of state of all United Nations member countries to declare the first decade of the new millennium a "Decade for the Culture of Non-violence" and the year 2000 itself to be a Year of Education for Non-violence.

*(CWS Update)*

# Should Bishop John have died?

A Catholic bishop, Fr John Joseph, has shot himself in the head in the ultimate protest against the persecution of Christian minorities in Pakistan. "Dedicated people do not count the cost", he had earlier written. The fact of this shocking sacrifice is difficult to assimilate and presents every Christian with a dilemma. There is a long-standing theological taboo against suicide which makes the rational consideration of the bishop's sacrifice difficult. Yet, the gospel of John says in Chapter 15, 'Greater love you cannot have than to lay down your life for your friends'. How does a Christian cope with this appalling death?

The significance of this death for the modern-day Christian is that it points to the fact that things can go too far before there is a reaction. The pace of life is such that an individual has no time to stop and protest. Society suffers and individual rights are eroded. Vigorous protest was demonstrated by Christ when he removed the money-lenders from the temple. Christ publicly showed anger at this violation. The Christian of today can only justify this new calamity and seek a solution to it, by no longer ignoring grievance.

The bishop's death is a gesture of powerlessness in the face of authority, hopelessness at 'legalised' injustice. It tests the boundaries of theological and metaphysical protest. The relevance for us in this terrible demonstration lies in our own inaction against injustice. Every wrong decision, every dubious action, every false God in the form of money in this capitalist society should be opposed. We must stand up and be counted, however small we think the issue to be. Every injustice allowed to pass without protest is a weakening of the Christian philosophy of love, for it is against our fellow human beings. We are called to bear witness for Christ. Any injustice not challenged is a negation of human liberty, and the bishop's death is a weakening of the human spirit in all of us.

The moral question of whether the bishop is a martyr or not, is, I believe, unanswerable. It is just as imponderable as the question: "What is truth"? Is the bishop's death futile or magnificent? One cannot make a judgment. Nevertheless, it should not hide the necessity of involvement in everyday moral issues presented to us all. The bishop's death is tragic; our own inaction in the face of injustice is even more so. ■

*John Honore*