TUI MOTU
InterIslands

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS *1997–2017*

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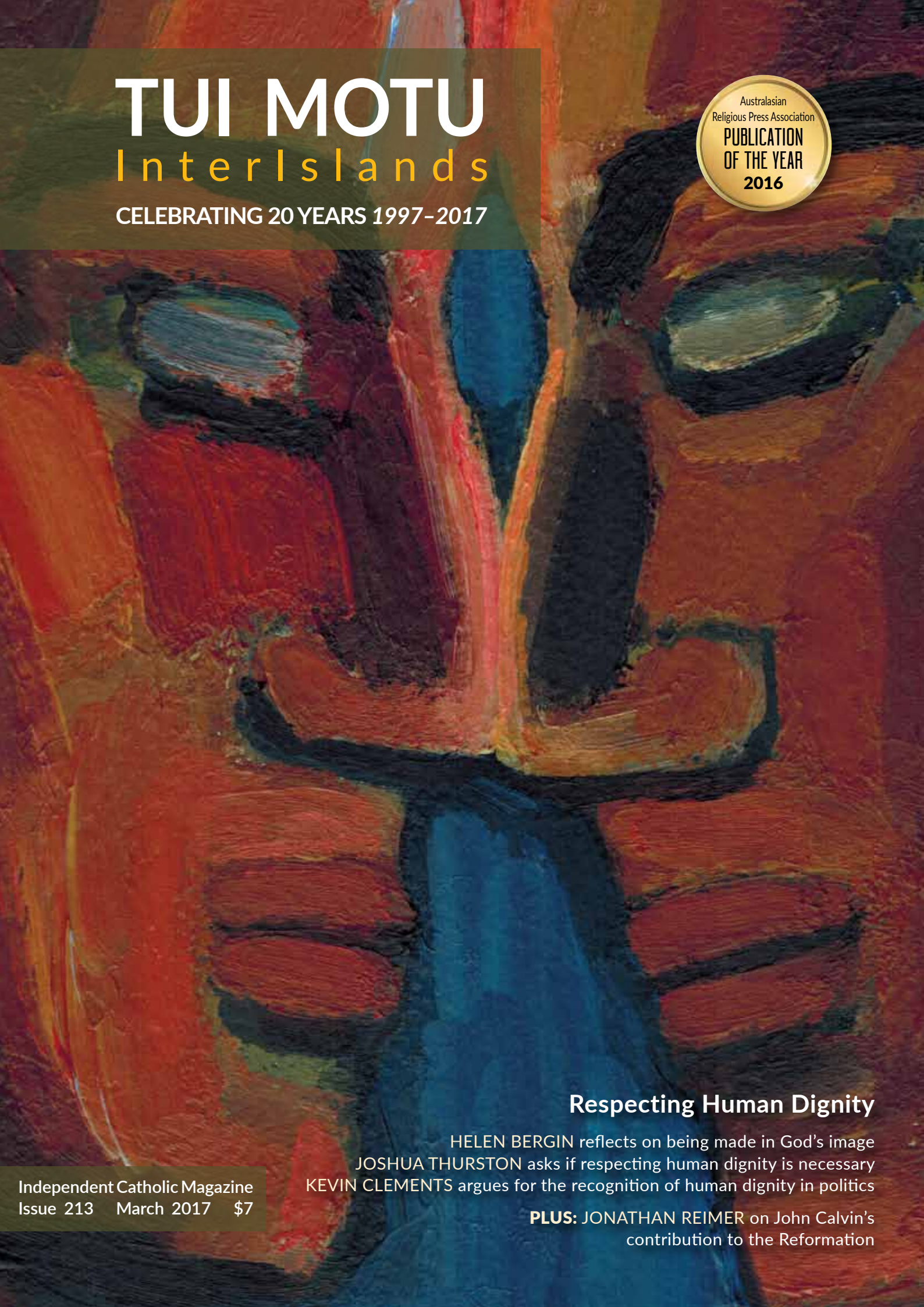

Respecting Human Dignity

HELEN BERGIN reflects on being made in God's image
JOSHUA THURSTON asks if respecting human dignity is necessary
KEVIN CLEMENTS argues for the recognition of human dignity in politics

PLUS: JONATHAN REIMER on John Calvin's contribution to the Reformation

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CONTENTS

FEATURES

COMMENT

COLUMNS

SCRIPTURE

REFLECTION

REVIEWS

LETTERS

Cover painting: *Hongi* by Fiona Stirling.
 www.fionastirling.co.nz

In the hongi, the *ha* or breath of life, is exchanged and intermingled. This breathing together can be thought of as sharing each other's spirit.

TuiMotuInterIslands Tuimotumag

Website: www.tuimotu.org

EDITORIAL

It's All About Dignity

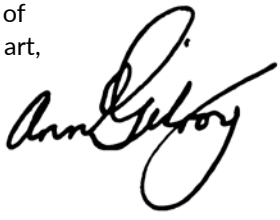
This issue ushers in Lent with a feast of reading around the principle of respecting the dignity of every person. I confess to a dignity-stumble last year that reminded me of how influenced I am by others' goodness. I had called on Ruth immediately before Christmas and found her up to her neck in little children — only three her own. The parents of the others were packing up their rented house to be out the next day, so Ruth was minding their littlies. Then the family of six was squeezing into Ruth's because they had nowhere else. To my mind the family's story unfolded in a litany of disorganisation and poor decisions. I imagined them squatting in Ruth's lounge and spare bedroom into the future. But this was not the attitude of Ruth and Justin. While they joined extended family for Christmas, the homeless family was going to "house-sit" for them — an arrangement they dignified with mutual benefits. Their generous interpretation illumined my prejudice and disrespect — to my shame. They demonstrated how respect is homegrown and that dignity is conveyed in language, attitude and behaviour. There is such a world of difference between "bludging" and "house-sitting", as different as that painted by reading Brian Bilston's poem *Refugees* in the centrespread from each end.

We need the Ruths, Justins and Brians around us, "a community breathing in reverence," to challenge our insularity and show us what respecting the dignity of others really looks, sounds and smells like. We need their imagination of a world where people's diversity in race, class, faith, gender, age, nationality, civic status, health, decision-making and education is appreciated, understood, valued, supported and included. These home-grown prophets — and we'll all recognise someone in our lives — offer an alternative story to those being broadcast aimed at labelling, denigrating and belittling groups of people.

Similarly our writers and artists in the March issue offer perspectives and reflections. Michael Hill and Kaaren Mathias lament the lack of awareness and passivity which allow the destruction of people and the environment to continue almost unchecked. Louise Carr-Neil and Jack Derwin highlight the hidden damage caused by particular political decisions of the USA and Kevin Clements lays out the dignity groundwork from which politicians need to work. Joshua Thurston describes the practice of giving and receiving respect as a virtuous cycle, certainly one we'd encourage to spin out of control in our world.

We are grateful to all our contributors to this 213th issue of *Tui Motu* magazine in its 20th-year of publication, who by sharing their thoughts, art, craft and experience offer a fresh look at a long-held principle.

And as is our custom, the last word is of blessing. ■



The Punisher *is* Challenged

President Rodrigo Duterte has been in power in the Philippines for barely half a year but he has already lived up to the nickname "The Punisher" he earned while mayor of the city of Davos. His conduct so far as President has been so violent and ruthless that he makes Donald Trump by comparison look like the angel Gabriel.

Duterte was the longest serving mayor in Davos's history and he waged an all-out war on the drug trade, encouraging the police to shoot on sight. It is said that he would ride around the city on a motorcycle personally gunning down criminals. When challenged with the accusation that innocent people, even children, had been caught in the crossfire, he excused these deaths as "collateral damage". His policy has been termed "extrajudicial killing". He has pledged that "until the last drug lord is killed, this campaign will continue until the very last day of my term".

According to *Amnesty International*, 7,000 people have been killed by the President's campaign in his first seven months. Police reported that roughly 3,000 of these were actively engaged in the drug trade. The other 4,000 were unexplained killings. *Amnesty* has accused police of bribing people to kill alleged drug offenders, offering $US100 for addicts and $200 for drug dealers.

The Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country, yet Duterte was elected President in a landslide victory. Even if the average Catholic voter may have disapproved of these extrajudicial killings, they saw Duterte as sympathetic to the poor and providing opportunities for escaping poverty. They certainly supported his avowed intention to clean up the drug trade, which Duterte claimed was utterly out of control.

The official Church at first kept quiet about the rumours of the police's "licence to kill". Fr Edwin Gariguez, secretary of the Bishops' Secretariate for Social Action, commended Duterte's serious intention to help poor people. He also noted the President's "green" credentials, since he had already audited several major mining operations in the country and cancelled some concessions. Gariguez said: "We do not only blame and criticise; we need to do something more constructive."

However, in recent weeks there has been a change. The Bishops' Conference has warned: "In our dream to wipe out drug addiction, are we not becoming a 'killing fields' nation?" In Manila, before the close of Pope Francis's Year of Mercy, the local Church launched a *Thou Shall Not Kill* campaign.

And in a statement issued at the beginning of February, the President of the Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Socrates Villegas, stated: "We, your bishops, are deeply concerned due to many deaths and killings in the campaign against prohibited drugs. This traffic in illegal drugs needs to be stopped and overcome. But the solution does not lie in the killing of suspected drug users and pushers. We are concerned not only for those who have been killed. The situation of the families of those killed is also cause for concern."

There can be no moral justification for the indiscriminate killing which Duterte has espoused. In recent decades the Catholic Church has steadily moved towards a position of condemnation of all deliberate killing, except in a case of self-defence and even then as a last resort.

One of the classic statements on this subject was by Cardinal Joseph Bernardin in *The Consistent Ethic of Life*. He states that it is not sufficient for Christians to be pro-life only in the sense of being anti-abortion. Their stance must include all deliberate actions against human life, including capital punishment and mercy killing.

President Duterte, "The Punisher", is not merely flouting the need for due process of law in the treatment of criminals; he is going directly against the fifth commandment of God. The fact that he may have been actively supported by a majority of Filipino Catholics is a scandal. The Bishops' recent stand against Duterte is not before time. ■

Michael Hill IC, the founding editor of *Tui Motu* magazine, assists in Dunedin parishes and enjoys writing, friends and golf.

The Dignity of Being in God's Image

HELEN BERGIN reflects on why we need to acknowledge the dignity of every human person and what we learn about God when we respect human dignity.

In today's world the meaning of the word "human" is being expanded and sometimes challenged through scientific developments. Mechanical apparatus implanted in human bodies has enabled millions to benefit from stronger hearts, better hips, more flexible knees, improved hearing or eyesight. Modern drugs and technology enable some humans to run faster, jump higher and cycle further thanks to "other-than-human" elements being consumed or imbibed. There is a fine line between "solely" human success and success which is greatly enhanced by medicinal and technological support. The list goes on.

However, this article has another focus. It examines the *dignity* which every adult, youth and child possesses in light of the biblical understanding that all are created "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27).

We will look first at the giftedness yet fragility of all human beings, then at the document *Made in God's Image* (1980) which explored the situation of Catholic women in the Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. Finally, we will turn to the biblical and theological tradition to underline the importance in Catholic Social Teaching of the principle of "human dignity" or of being "made in God's image."

Gift and Fragility of Humanness

While all creatures are gifts, we often hold that human beings have distinctive gifts such as capacities to be creative, make decisions, assume responsibility and show love — for good and for ill. However, humans are also born vulnerable and dependent as tiny infants. And many elderly persons spend their final years dependent on the goodwill and support of others. In between, many humans flourish through using all their gifts — caring for family and neighbours, being involved in satisfying employment and, in using personal gifts, they make others' lives more "human".

Yet there is more. Humans contemplate the world. They wonder about the beginnings of their particular lives as well as the origin of the planets and stars. They yearn

to love and be loved — and not just temporarily. While many forebears risked leaving their countries of origin in search of peace, food and a place to stand, their descendents reflect on their own existence now, believe in life's goodness and sense that life is fundamentally "given" to be shared. Others contemplate stars, oceans or even tiny insects — and are deeply thankful. They experience a sense of graciousness arising from elsewhere.

At the same time, too many people today know only fear, poverty, war, being trafficked or being trapped within abusive or oppressive family, social, political or financial situations. They long for communities of safety, acceptance and freedom. In all of this I suggest that many desire a sense of human worth as well as recognition from others. It is especially in such circumstances that a Christian understanding of human beings as having been "made in God's image" can offer some insights.

Fundamentally, when we describe children, women and men as "imaging God" we do not suggest that they reveal God literally or in some artistic form. Christian tradition has always understood God to be "Other" than any created reality, including the human. Yet, at the same time, God became one with humanity in Jesus who assumed finite flesh as a child, and God's Spirit still nudges and befriends creation. Humans possess immense dignity thanks to the ancient biblical belief that they are made in God's image.

Research on Women in Church

In 1980, local laywoman, Christine Cheyne presented a report entitled *Made in God's Image* to the NZ Catholic bishops. The report was based on significant research regarding sexism in the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand. The views of many women contributed to this report and the initial study was then followed up by theological reflection from a group of NZ Catholic women. Finally the NZ Catholic bishops offered their response. While numbers of helpful initiatives were taken to ensure that women's presence and voices were more widely included in local Catholic parishes and on national Catholic committees, the possibility of Catholic women exercising "real" authority in dioceses was precluded by the situation of ministerial priesthood and ultimate decision-making being closed to women. It seems that the consultation of women rather than inclusion in major decision-making is the lot of Catholic women.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone.

Women are Made in God's Image

For our purposes, therefore, one question arising from this might be: "Does such a situation preclude women from being 'made in God's image'"? My response, and the response from many in our Christian tradition, would suggest not. Let's focus on one significant voice from our biblical tradition and four voices from our theological tradition.

Genesis 1:27 states: "So, God created humankind in his image, in the image of God, God created them: male and female God created them."

Thomas Aquinas, theologian of the 13th century, understands "the image of God" as best reflected when human beings use their intellects — a gift offered to women and men, to youth and to children.

John Macquarrie, 20th-century theologian, describes "the image of God" as being exercised when adults and the young express responsibility, creativity and love.

Mary Catherine Hilkert, 21st-century theologian, discerns "the image of God" as present when people are called into and live in right relationships with one another.

And, Elizabeth Johnson, significant 21st-century theologian, expresses a pivotal understanding of "the image of God" as reflected when women, men, children and the earth are all in community with one another.

Insights into Dignity of All

If one links the above understandings of "being made in God's image" with an appreciation of human dignity, one might highlight the following aspects.

First, women and men, adults and children can and do reveal God's image. *Second*, when women and men use their intellectual gifts to seek truth at depth, they reflect God's image. *Third*, when children and adults, male and female act responsibly, are creative and love truthfully, they reveal God's image. *Fourth*, when human beings foster community relationships, the image of God is made manifest. *Finally*, when human beings recognise and treat Earth as an inter-dependent reality, they reflect God's image.

Each of the above situations invites human beings to express God's image by seeking to discover and honour truth, and by honouring and loving human beings in their diversity of sex, gender, ethnicity, age, religious affiliation and social position.

And the final scenario reminds human beings not simply to honour the earth but to take pro-active measures as communities towards the long-term gift of planet Earth. When Earth is honoured, humans also reveal God's image in relation to the whole of creation.

One corollary to the above is that if every human being whether frail or strong, male or female, young or elderly, atheistic or religious, Afghani or Kiwi, reveals "the image of God," every person is fundamentally worthy of respect, of a "hearing," of inclusion and of community support. Even the seemingly most abject person deserves dignity and respect precisely because they bear within themselves "the image of God" their Creator.

Nelson Mandela's words from his 1994 Inaugural Speech fittingly remind us of the innate human dignity of all people. He says: "We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone." ■

Helen Bergin, a Dominican Sister, lives in Auckland. Having previously taught theology she hopes now to focus on some theological writing.

REFLECTING ON HUMAN DIGNITY

JOSHUA THURSTON **explains why respecting the human dignity of all people is foundational to a just and inclusive society.**

Do all people have intrinsic value separate from their personality, appearance, employment, beliefs, and actions? Is dignity something which people possess and other people choose to recognise or does the act of treating a person with dignity itself grant that person dignity? Much as in answer to the old philosophical adage: "Does a tree falling in the woods still make a sound if no one is there to hear it?" the practical person may wonder: "Who cares?".

I believe these are live questions with great importance for our interactions. This is not because I consider myself to have the answers but because people disagree on the answers and that changes the way that people are treated in different circumstances. When we believe that the value of a person is variable based on their characteristics (personal, social, physical), we can justify any number of behaviours towards others that do not recognise or show concern for their human dignity. This is not to claim that if we believe all people have intrinsic worth we always behave according to our belief. Simply our beliefs — conscious or otherwise — can and do shape our actions.

Actions Reveal Our Character

"Never trust someone who is rude to a waiter." "The measure of a society is found in how it treats its weakest and most helpless citizens." These may be common refrains — the first when discussing dating with friends and the second, when pontificating about the great evils of modern society — but they speak to a common belief. It is that the way we treat a person over whom we have some advantage demonstrates our character — the kind of person we are. I think that the sayings capture the importance of recognising and respecting human dignity in others in all circumstances.

It is important to be empathic when relating with others — to consider the impact our actions will have on a person. We find this as a core principle, the "Golden Rule," in Christian and most religious

systems — to treat others as I wish to be treated. It directs us to behave reflectively, justly, compassionately and with kindness. This is the practice of respecting human dignity.

Treating All with Dignity

But why is this important? Why does it matter whether the tree of respect for others makes a sound when falling if only people of little importance are around to hear it? Surely it is sufficient to show appropriate deference to those with power, wealth and importance or who are more attractive than we are?

We learn in criminological studies that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. So if we are inconsistent and selective in our recognition of others' dignity, it shows the problem in our own character. In fact, treating others with anything less than dignity will likely reduce the esteem in which we are held by others. Treating others with dignity is nothing less than a call to be treated with dignity. And this is the beginning of a virtuous cycle in which we can demonstrate to others the ease, simplicity and benefit of respecting human dignity and by doing so we call for the recognition of our own dignity.

Why We Respect Everyone

But, again, why is this essential? It is not sufficient to say simply that people have intrinsic dignity which must be respected on its own merits — this would be rather circular. Why should we acknowledge the human dignity of others? I think there are two reasons for treating others with dignity and to persuade others to do so, too.

Firstly, to maintain our highly valued societal norms and structures. If we want to be thought of as a compassionate, useful and acceptable people, treating others with dignity is vital. Social relationships and interactions are intrinsic to the human experience and to deny the dignity of others is to fracture and lose access to the cultural, social and personal relationships that create communities. If we routinely treated one another with disregard or distaste — and discrimination and slavery demonstrate this — we do not have a free, healthy, relational society.

Workplaces, clubs, places of worship and education function on the basis of mutuality, honesty and goodwill. It would be difficult to negotiate the world of employment if there were no social contracts about fair, honest and responsible treatment. This is why such behaviours as bullying, cheating, discriminating against and forced labour are so damaging in their disrespect of the dignity of colleagues or employees. Our ability to thrive in modern society depends on our making respect for human dignity the foundation of interpersonal and professional relationships.

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Secondly, I believe that the recognition and practice of respecting human dignity builds hope. When we grow up experiencing an inclusive, supportive context we learn values and resilience. We have tools to draw on for addressing our problems. We even have the trust to rely on the goodwill of others.

We know that many people live with grief, trauma, poverty, neglect and invisibility. Being pushed to the margins, living in poverty, terror and corruption can create a context of hopelessness for them. We know of millions of displaced Syrians escaping from the bloody, sectarian, civil war raging in their country. Too often the media labels them as a potential terrorist threat and demonises them. Seeing refugees as the spectre of terrorism has led some nations to reduce or stop their humanitarian resettlement efforts. It is true that attacks by radicalised idealists drives the fear to new heights. In such instances we can understand the wish to withdraw, build walls, or embrace isolationism. But also we know it is not the answer. Doing so does not build understanding and community but only increases division and enmity between peoples.

The Challenge to Our Belief

As fortunate, wealthy and free people we have a responsibility to help and share the resources we have. I think it is our moral obligation to take and resettle refugees, sharing our citizenship, education, employment and hope with them. A future world without this is inconceivable.

We cannot leave millions of people stateless and abandoned subsisting in abject poverty. We cannot allow ourselves to think of their problems as being so far away that they do not affect us.

Even the smallest amount of compassion calls us to think differently. How would we hope for others to respond if we happened to be born in these circumstances? Certainly not with rejection. If we do not acknowledge other people as humans worthy of dignity, we reduce our own humanity.

Many people in New Zealand and across the world speak up and fight for social justice issues. There are many reasons for doing so — some purely philosophical, some more personal. I believe that underlying any demand for justice, rights or freedom is demonstrating a belief — conscious or otherwise — that people have dignity and worth. It is important that we hold people, institutions and governments accountable for how they treat the vulnerable among us and in our world. ■

Joshua Thurston, theology graduate, lives in Wellington, likes tramping, criminal justice issues and video games.

A Journey of Care

Looking back over 50 years of nursing SHONA LOWSON notices how she developed sensitivity to the dignity of people and the way that impacted on her caring.

My nursing journey began more than 50 years ago and I find it difficult now, so many years later, to reflect on my reasons for starting on this road in life. It has been one of the best choices I have made with the exception, of course, of marrying my best friend.

I grew up in a supportive, Catholic family with my brother and sister, my exceptional, caring parents and a large, extended family circle. I know this network developed in me a particular way of respecting people.

My nursing training in the school of the public hospital remains with me as a time of support, learning, fun and community with colleagues whose friendship I still treasure.

I realised, when on early placements caring for patients with critical cardiac diseases, that I needed also to connect somehow with their families and friends in their moments of stress. I discovered that every person has a story about their life. As I look back to that time, my experience of nursing three people affected and inspired me and has stayed with me.

Martin, a judge, was in the same room as Colin, who worked in the local dump. Colin was filled with anxiety fearing that he would not be able to work again. Martin listened to him and encouraged him and a bond formed between them. They arranged to share a car when they left hospital and discussed how they could travel together to their check-ups. I saw mutual respect and support developing between them.

Then there was 21-year-old Tania, mother of three-year-old Sam. Tania was very ill and little Sam sat on my knee and talked to her during her dying. The two had no close family to support them and I had a big fear in my heart for Sam's future. Strangely, his name came my way many years later and it brought back the memory of the little boy on my knee and his strong bond with his mother. I remembered Tania's obvious love and

how she smiled and spoke of him, the plans and goals she had for him and of her bringing him into this world. She was amazing.

Changing to Aged Care Nursing

I left nursing when I married and had children and then returned to nurse in an aged care facility until both my children were at school. In that environment I saw women and men slowly reducing in their physical and mental abilities. But I found that we could relate in their spiritual and emotional lives and it enhanced my respect for them.

I remember Maggie in her 80s who had lost a leg in the Napier earthquake as a young girl. She had been sitting on the toilet and was knocked to the floor when the door had fallen off. She looked out and could see a leg in front of her. "It was mine," she said. "I had to crawl to see where my mother was. She was dead in the space where the kitchen had been." Maggie went on to make supporting others the focus of her life working in a social service area. She shared with me that even in her 80s she still had so many things left to do. I know I learnt a lot about relating respectfully with others through people like Maggie.

Nursing in Palliative Care

Later I moved into palliative care and hospice nursing and found the doors just opened for me. I could care, connect, communicate and empower people in their choices for life to their very last breath. And I could walk with each supporting their dying, respecting and valuing their uniqueness.

I've found that every person is an individual. Everyone has an individual life story which is different from mine. When I am caring, I stop to clear my mind of all that is going on in my own life so that I can focus on the person in my care. The time belongs to them and my attention and careful listening acknowledge the importance of their experiences, their thoughts and feelings. I believe that as I listen I look behind their eyes and connect with their inner selves in those moments. I hear their stories and empathise with the experience they are sharing — the joys, fears, sadness, love and grief. It is not mine — it belongs to them. I am aware of the trust they give me when they share their lives. It calls forth my compassion and respect and, too, my encouraging of their hope for their future. Without hope their lives are reduced.

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I remember Helen with awe and fondness. She was a relational person embracing everyone she met throughout her life. She talked of her life as a tapestry, a piece of embroidery — unfinished, she said, until the last stitch completes the picture. It was as if she had handed on the needle to me when she turned her head towards me and took her last breath. Her tapestry was completed. Her life was well lived and she died with dignity leaving me her example of living fully.

Caring Develops Our Humanity

How I practise is I how I live. Caring for people is an important value in my life and little human connections, such as a smile, laugh, or touch communicates this. A period in my life I treasure was when I took leave from the hospice, and with my brother, sister and our families we looked after our dying Dad. The whole time was precious. We wove the days with memories sharing incidences and experiences of our childhood and of Mum's and Dad's love for us. We retold our stories and in so doing we began building a new shared story with the younger generation. Dad's last illness provided us with this opportunity and was his last gift to the family.

I have found that when I think of people in a wholistic way, of mind, body and soul, I feel enriched with my interactions with them and it enhances my practice. I've noticed that I am influenced by other staff whose respect for each patient and their needs is palpable. I hope I also affect those I work alongside. Working within a team in an open and honest way increases our awareness of and sensitivity towards each person.

When I look back now and reflect on the development of my philosophy of care over the years, I am amazed at the journey. My ongoing learning and sharing of experiences has given me a greater appreciation of my colleagues. Every carer contributes something of themselves to the team enhancing us all. The key to our work is honest communication, relating respectfully with the person we are caring for and reflection on our practice to improve it. Our own spirituality is shaped by our strengths, values, dreams and goals and is the source of the deep energy of love dwelling in us and spilling into our connections with others. It creates a calmness within our centre flowing through our body, mind and soul. I've learnt hope in the way I live each day, respect for the dignity of each person and enough love to celebrate the humanness of each person. ■

[Note. The names of people in this article have been changed.]

Shona Lowson lives in Timaru and works in Waimate. She and Harry love walking, biking and meeting people when they travel.

A Call Echoing Deep Within

Delphina Soti has a long association with the St Vincent de Paul Society and told ANN GILROY about her call to this work.

Delphina was just out of hospital where she'd heard she had serious cancer but she didn't want to "let me down" so we sat in her lounge with a couple of friends and listened to her story.

"Though born in Dunedin I grew up in Samoa where my great grandparents were ministers in the Congregational Church, as were my grandparents and my parents. So there was a sense of mission and we were transient — going where we were needed.

"My parents had just finished a stint with a Church in Tokoroa and were to take a sabbatical in Samoa. When they arrived they were called by a little community in the village of Sogi on the outskirts of Apia. They were the descendants of people brought over from the Solomons by the Germans to work in the copra plantations after WW1. The Government had given them a strip of land in the mangroves to live in.

"I remember the houses built on stilts in the mud. Our house was very humble — a small, basic structure with one open space. The kitchen sink was a piece of roofing iron outside with a tap next to it — quite different from the two-storey manse in New Zealand. Mom was at first really nervous because of us three kids. I was five and sickly. But my grandfather had this thing that "a call is a call" — so we went.

"I remember the heat, the smell of the mangroves, trying to catch hermit crabs and mudskippers with my brother covered in sores from mosquitoes and allergies. When the tide came in it was just below the floor of the back house. We could see the fish.

Sense of Worth of Each Person

"I think my social-critical edge came from a combination of being around my parents, being educated, hearing other viewpoints. I had a rich life though some was really hard and we all had chores. My parents always had a lot to do attending to people. Being so young it was hard getting carted off to the extended family while they went on with their mission.

"I have amazing memories of Sogi village. We were like family, sharing everything, rites of passage, the breaking of bread, laughter and banter, White Sunday and Christmas celebrations. Everybody knew what everyone was up to.

"There was hard stuff. Dad and Mom at times would have to settle domestic violence in the village. My justice orientation developed and when anyone was hurt I'd go straight for the wounded and stand alongside them. I felt this deep sense in me to support them. Because of an unfortunate experience when I was away from my parents as a child, I became very aware of how I treated children. When you get hurt from a young age, you get an underdog mentality.

"Storytelling was my thing. I felt that kids were like little tape recorders and I had to be careful of what I said. I was formed in knowing people are sacred. I didn't have the words then but I knew I couldn't mess with people. When I saw kids being told off, hurt and slapped it disturbed me in a fundamental way.

"I struggled with being a pastor's kid. The focus was on Mom and Dad, on us, on working hard and tithing and there were also a few really poor families living on mud floors. Although we didn't have much, we had enough to make me feel uncomfortable and I just wanted it to be different.

Beyond the Village

Del won a government scholarship when she was 17 and left Samoa to study in Melbourne. She commented wryly: "I did everything I wasn't supposed to do and I failed my first year. I didn't want to go back home with the shame. The decision was made for me to study in Otago. It took me a few years to settle. I moved to Christchurch where I continued to study and worked part-time to support this. I did a lot of youth work and community volunteering. It just drew me."

Call to St Vincent de Paul

A cousin already working for the Society called on Del to help with Vinnies' School Camps and the prisons in Auckland. She remembers her first visit:

"We went into Mt Eden Prison and they automatically thought we were Vincentian Sisters, as in nuns, so we got roped into doing the homily in the big wing — "The Rock" they called it. The big gates shut behind us and we walked into a massive building like an old monastery. They took us into a huge open space with cage fencing. There were stairwells between the three floors and the men sat on the stairs. We were brought into the foyer and there were the choir and chaplains. It began with the readings and the choir erupted and then they said: 'We'd like to invite our Vincentian Sisters to share the message for today.' I was looking at my cousin and she literally thumped me and I stumbled forward. I remember a Māori man with a full facial tattoo sitting at the front and he saw how nervous I was. He just looked me in the eye and said quietly: *'Kia ora*! Just go for it, Sister!' The good thing was that the reading of that day was the same one I had done at a youth rally. So I visualised being back there and it worked. We were asked back.

"After that day I had a real sense of purpose. I volunteered over six years supporting the Vincentian work but my focus was the prisons. The chaplains were my mentors and they took me under their wing. They advised me: 'Don't use the prodigal son in here'. They taught me about hope and not to use judgement stories. 'Use the hopeful, happy stories. Tell stories — that's your thing.'

> ***I felt that kids were like little tape recorders and I had to be careful of what I said. I was formed in knowing people are sacred. I didn't have the words then but I knew I couldn't mess with people. When I saw kids being told off, hurt and slapped it disturbed me in a fundamental way.***

Empowering the Wounded

"I'd had hurt in my life that I hadn't faced and some of my reconciliation and formation came from being among these people and the chaplains. A significant understanding came through theology studies. It gave me a discourse for what was going on and informed my practice inside prison. I'd say *tika* and *pono* and the guys would just light up because they'd understand. They so wanted to connect and share the broken bits of themselves. The more they shared the more empowered they felt.

Focus on Social Justice

"The current focus of St Vincent de Paul youth programmes addresses the underlying reasons why people need help. The Society came from a young lawyer, Frederic Ozanam, who fought for justice and was an advocate trying to get systemic change.

"We run various formation and service programmes based on the themes of homelessness, food insecurity, social exclusion and poverty. There's a lot of formation needed — missiology — ways for the young ones to find their way, to hear others' voices, to participate and be in relationship. It's not always easy but after the preparation there are experiences which will change them — change us all. They experience their own *metanoia*.

"The highlight for me is when the penny drops for a kid. When a group comes out of prison they may be weeping and say: 'It could have been my brother, or my sister.' Yes — that's a moment of connection.

"There are moments when they come out of serving food at the emergency accommodation hostel and say: 'The people there are so normal.'

"When I hear of students who have created their own project, mobilised a team and stepped out to respond to the need they see, it really moves me. I know at that moment, they have crossed over and can never look back."

Del reflected and said: "It reminds me of that saying in the window of the Mary MacKillop Centre chapel: 'Go out! You cannot rest secure for needs call loudly. Seek God there.' I know this is what I was called to do."

Good News

Delphina has finished her cancer treatment for now and is back working at Vinnies. ■

Photo: Delphina Soti (waving the flag) at the *Hikoi for Homes* organised by the Child Poverty Action Group.

Ann Gilroy RSJ the Editor of *Tui Motu* magazine lives in Dunedin and has newfound interests in gardening and baking.

dignifying politics by according dignity to all

We are living in both interesting and deeply worrying times. The neo-liberal world order and the democratic project are both under very severe threat. While neo-liberalism has many critics, myself included, it did generate trans-national openness, more porous boundaries between nation states and gave an impetus to positive and negative globalisation.

Positive globalisation is all about national and regional problems being seen in one-world terms. Negative globalisation is about growing inequality and poverty (nationally, regionally and globally) and the world being seen through the lens of markets, trans-national finance and corporations. All of these dynamics are linked.

The challenge confronting humanity is how to ensure that globalisation is positive rather than negative and build a world that is empathetic and cosmopolitan. This means acknowledging our global interdependence, species solidarity, and recognising that none of the major problems confronting the world can be resolved at national levels alone. Unfortunately, there are some who choose to respond to the negative consequences of globalisation with a retreat to atavistic nationalism.

Retreat into White Elitism

The first big shock of 2016 was "Brexit" — the British referendum vote in favour of leaving the European Union (EU). While there are many explanations for why the vote went against regional institutions and integration, the fact is that post-referendum Britain is in a state of deep political and economic uncertainty. The UK government is now charged with negotiating a withdrawal from the EU, which — despite its many flaws and inadequacies — is one of the major achievements of post-war Europe and has succeeded in keeping the peace in the region for the last 60 years.

The task for Britain now is to manage relationships with the EU from the outside rather than from inside, which is problematic for regional unity, energy, climate change, economic regulations, 21st-century concepts of sovereignty and new foreign policy positions.

But perhaps the biggest downside of Brexit is that it also activated and generated a permissive environment for old-style bias, prejudice and racism. Withdrawal from the EU is being associated with a promotion of white English/British privilege.

> We dignify by making people feel that they belong within their own families, communities, organisations and nation. We dignify by making people feel safe rather than insecure, by forbidding bodily harm, shaming and humiliation and, instead, encouraging others to speak their minds in safe spaces.

Retreat into Intolerance

The second big shock was the election of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States. His personality, campaign pronouncements and actions since his inauguration have generated high levels of systemic unpredictability as his office and administration advances an "America First", isolationist, protectionist and assertive stance towards friends and enemies alike. He won the election with a politics of fear and seems intent on maintaining that fear even if the "facts" don't support him. The refugee and migrant ban was the most egregious manifestation of these tendencies but on many other other issues — the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction) Treaty, climate change, multilateralism, free trade, co-operative security, arms control and disarmament, relations with Iran, sustainable development — the prospects are equally gloomy.

After the Presidential election, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* moved the Doomsday Clock to two-and-a-half minutes to midnight in acknowledgement of the President's unpredictability, nuclear challenge and fears about climate change. But here again the major casualty of this election has been the generation of a permissive environment for naming and blaming others, for bias, prejudice and hatred against people of colour, foreigners, and those who don't conform to some mythical notion of how an "ideal" American should look and act.

The political leaders of the Brexit movement and Donald Trump have created environments in which prejudice rather than respect, hate rather than empathy, fear rather than fearlessness and dishonour rather than dignity are shaping attitudes and behaviour. These attitudes generate deep insecurity, anxiety and discontent.

Policies Threaten Democracy

Donna Hicks argues in her 2011 book, *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict*, that if we do not accord dignity to others we run

the risk of forfeiting the right to be treated humanely ourselves. I would go so far as to say that the Western democratic project will unravel unless we start treating friends and foes alike with dignity and respect. This is a prerequisite for civilised, humane behaviour and for rule-based politics.

Without it our kith and kin in the UK and US will be seduced into thinking that the only future they have is one in which diversity is eradicated in favour of "tribal solidarity" with the white Anglosphere. These are the deeper negative consequences of both Brexit and Trump.

Practising Respect for People

So what can we do to bring respect and dignity to New Zealand politics and more importantly to US and UK politics? Hicks has the following suggestions.

First, we need to accept the identities of others so that they can express their authentic selves without fear of negative judgement. There is no place for prejudice, bias or discrimination — each person has their own integrity and we must nurture that within them.

The second element is recognition: we need to validate others for their talents, hard work and thoughtfulness and give them credit for their ideas and wisdom.

Third, we accord people dignity by acknowledgement and attention. Simone Weil said that attention was the rarest and purest form of generosity. The act of listening itself dignifies the other.

Fourth, we need to practise inclusion rather than exclusion: we dignify by making people feel that they belong within their own families, communities, organisations and nation.

Fifth, we dignify by making people feel safe rather than insecure, by forbidding bodily harm, shaming and humiliation and, instead, encouraging others to speak their minds in safe spaces.

Sixth, fairness is critical to dignity: we must treat others as equals and work within agreed laws and rules.

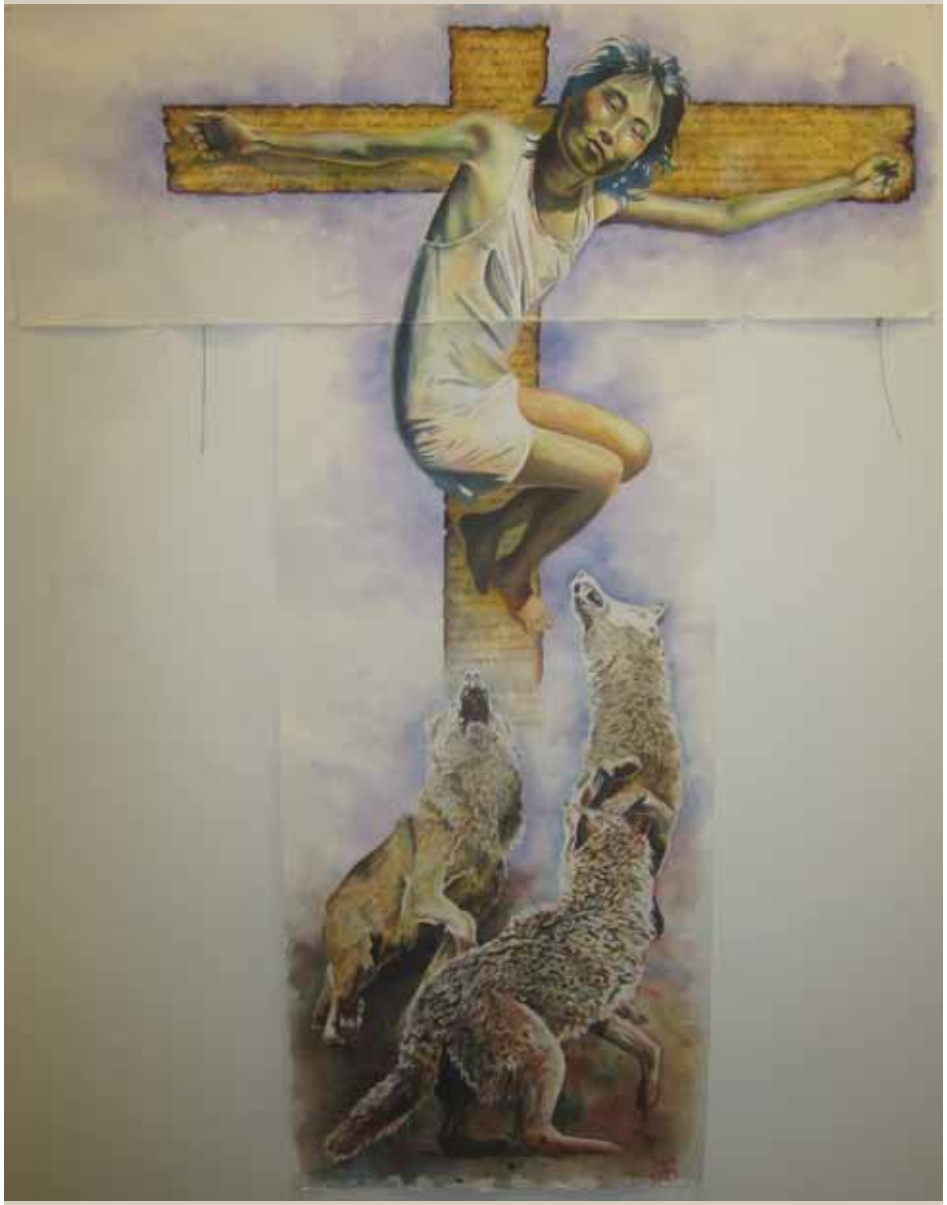
Seventh, we need to treat others as independent and free; eighth, as empowered; and ninth, understood.

Finally, Hicks argues that we should treat people fairly according to agreed laws and rules; as independent, free, empowered, understood and trustworthy. This means starting from the premise that others have good motives and are acting with integrity.

In all of this each of us needs to be accountable for our actions. If we violate the dignity of the other we need to apologise and make a commitment to change our hurtful behaviour. Right now, in both the United Kingdom and the United States, we are a long way from this ideal of dignified exchange. On almost every criteria, both Nigel Farage and Donald Trump, for example, are pursuing undignified and undignifying policies of disrespect, hate, bias and prejudice.

Nothing will unravel the Western democratic project faster than a reassertion of 19th-century imperial intolerance, a disrespect for human rights and the rule of law and a manichaen dualistic division of the world into them and us, good and bad, included and excluded. This is a recipe for violence, insecurity, injustice, unfairness and unpeacefulness. It has to be resisted and stopped now so that there is a flickering chance the democratic flame might be rekindled — then, justice and peace will indeed kiss each other. ■

Kevin Clements is Professor & Director of the NZ National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Otago University.



The Living Hell of Modern Slavery

ANDREA DEAN notes that modern slavery is happening under the radar in New Zealand and Australia and suggests ways we can help counter this human trafficking.

"When we talk about "human trafficking," we're talking about slavery — modern-day slavery that still today claims more than 20 million victims on any given time. And all 20 million are people just like everybody here. They have names. They have or had families in many cases. And they are enforced to endure a hell — a living hell in modern times that no human being should ever have to experience." (John Kerry 2016)

Like me, you had probably presumed that human trafficking happens somewhere else. I thought: "Sure it is a problem but not here where I live!" Let's dip into some stories of modern day slavery to make it clear that this happens to real people, with names, with families and who endure a living hell in our own times.

Pang's Story

At 15 years of age Pang was offered the opportunity to work at a restaurant in New Zealand. Her family in Thailand paid thousands of dollars to help her make a new life. With a group of four other girls she travelled to New Zealand. Upon arrival their passports were confiscated by the traffickers. The young women were imprisoned and forced into prostitution, living in overcrowded conditions. Pang lived under guard and was compelled to work in the sex trade. The majority of her earnings were taken by the traffickers.

Min-Jun's Story

Min-Jun, a 35-year-old construction worker, was lured to New Zealand from Korea with the promise of a better life. Immediately after being collected from the airport, he found himself living on a rural property and sharing a room with seven other men. They were taken in a van each day to a building site, not knowing where they were or who they were working for. He was paid below award wages and then charged exorbitant rates for substandard food and lodging.

Maria's Story

When Maria arrived from the Philippines, having paid for her own visa and airfares, she hoped to earn enough money to support her mother and her young son. Her fiancé took her passport and put her to work in the family shop seven days a week. Maria was given only $20 a fortnight and was never paid a wage. The promised English classes never happened. Maria spent all her time at the shop or at her fiancé's house cooking, cleaning and gardening. She was trapped.

Bohai's Story

Bohai, a Chinese international student studying business in Auckland at a private training college, works 55 hours a week for a cleaning contractor. He has a massive debt from his college fees and receives just $11 an hour from his boss. This is in breach of both the minimum wage and his student visa, which allows only 20 hours of employment per week.

Facing Up to Trafficking

These four stories just scratch the surface of what human trafficking looks like. It is true that most of the victims are women and girls but that is not the whole story. Right now, there are millions of people who are ensnared in the cycle of trafficking and their experience is diverse. While 22 per cent of those who are trafficked are forced into sexual slavery, 68 per cent of human trafficking supplies labour to produce everyday low-cost services and items. To get to the root of a human rights violation, it is important to represent it accurately and it helps to understand that there are various forms of trafficking.

Trafficking in Local Regions

Although people are at greatest risk of human trafficking in poor countries (particularly India, which has the highest rates of trafficking worldwide), modern slavery also exists in low-income regions. In fact, trafficking does not always mean transportation across-borders, but also refers to compelled service and often happens close to home. About 35 per cent of those trafficked end up being exploited domestically, with about 37 per cent reported as crossing borders within their original sub-region.

Why don't they escape? While there are instances where people are virtually imprisoned, at other times trafficked individuals are in a cycle of self-blame and deep fear, which makes escaping or asking for help difficult. They may not know the local language or may live with the threat of violence against themselves or their loved ones.

Confronting the Evil

What changed my perspective about human trafficking was meeting a Catholic religious sister who is a member of ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans). There is an equivalent group in New Zealand, ANZRATH (Aotearoa New Zealand Religious Against Trafficking in Humans). The members of these groups are working for change, raising consciousness of the issues, developing educational materials, helping individuals affected by trafficking and lobbying governments.

The ACRATH and ANZRATH websites urge us to ask questions about how and by whom the products we purchase are made, and identifies the fashion and chocolate industries as notorious for instances of forced labour and exploitation.

The idea is not immediately to drop our favourite clothing brand but to lobby the company to improve its practices. Again, the idea is to explore the reputation of our favourite chocolate brands and lobby for change.

Taking Action

"Who is making my clothes?" Once we identify our favourite clothing brands, it is an easy step to see how the company measures up on workers' safety, wages and other conditions. A helpful guide is *The Truth Behind The Barcode*, a report on manufacturing conditions within the fashion industry produced by Baptist World Aid. The idea is not immediately to drop our favourite brand but to lobby the company to improve its practices.

"How 'sweet' is my chocolate?" Easter is a huge occasion for giving chocolate. It is an opportunity for us to be aware that internationally most chocolate is made using cocoa beans picked by children, many of whom have been enslaved or forced to work in exploitative conditions. Again, the idea is to explore the reputation of our favourite chocolate brands and lobby for change.

Be Alert and Aware

With regard to human trafficking close to home anti-trafficking groups recommend that all of us, as members of our local community, can:

- Report any suspicious activity or people that may seem to be involved in human trafficking.
- Email the website link (ACRATH or ANZRATH) to all your friends, family and co-workers.
- Call our local travel agents and inform them of the issue so that they can be aware of and prevent potential predators from taking trips by signing the *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism*.
- Write to our local MP and encourage them to fight for more money to go towards ending slavery and trafficking as well as strengthening laws to prevent trafficking in New Zealand.
- Help start, promote and support a walk-a-thon or other such event in our area to raise money and awareness.

We can exercise respect for human dignity by learning the names of those who live and work around us. In this way they will no longer be faceless and nameless. We can call them by name, find out about their families and bring their stories of struggle and injustice into the light. We'll find that they are people with hopes and dreams and who frequently make extraordinary sacrifices for their families.

Together, taking these concrete steps we can make a difference to the lives of real people who endure "a living hell in modern times that no human being should ever have to experience". ■

Painting: *The Savage Art of Political Gain* by Steve Cavallo ©. Used by permission. www.stevecavallo.com

Andrea Dean is the acting director of the Office for the Participation of Women set up by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

REFUGEES

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are
Chancers and scroungers
Layabouts and loungers
With bombs up their sleeves
Cut-throats and thieves
They are not
Welcome here
We should make them
Go back to where they came from
They cannot
Share our food
Share our homes
Share our countries
Instead let us
Build a wall to keep them out
It is not okay to say
These are people just like us
A place should only belong to those who are born there
Do not be so stupid to think that
The world can be looked at another way

(Now read from bottom to top)

– by Brian Bilston

Photo: Refugees in Mosul, Northern Iraq. November, 2016. [Wikipedia Commons]

Beginning with our HEARTS

In this year of 2017, DANIEL O'LEARY reminds us that we have a beautiful story to share as a blessing for those who feel overwhelmed by anxiety.

January was a month for courageous beginnings. Yet, so many of us started the new year with less conviction than usual. This is an extraordinary moment in our history. Fragmentation and confusion are casting heavy shadows over our lives. Populist power is a growing phenomenon in a radically changing world — so fragile and wounded by the nightmares of terrorism, political upheaval and global warming. Even more so now in March, the challenges that we face are huge indeed. The journey to a healing wholeness will be slow and complicated. Our hearts are apprehensive. We need courage to hope.

This year is surely a challenge for the human soul, a time when we try again to believe in a deeper, more harmonious way of living our lives on this Earth. Beyond retreating into a naïve spirituality of wishful thinking, we search for a vision and a language that give hope to a perplexed and threatened society. There is no denying the spreading anxiety, the sense of a growing menace, of a lost order. In a pre-Christmas statement about this deep-seated concern, a multi-racial group of Christian scholars, including Richard Rohr, wrote that it challenges us at a core, religious level: "This is no longer governance as usual but a moral and theological crisis."

Irish-born **Daniel O'Leary** is a priest of the Diocese of Leeds UK, an author and teacher. He is an award winning author of 12 books. His website is www.djoleary.com

Holding on to Stories of Hope

Is this the time to reach for our true traditions, to remember the stories we grew up with, to rekindle in our world the powerful fire of faith? Hope or despair can spring from the stories we choose to tell. Stories can be told that pander to the weakness in us, or we can reach for stories that will empower us to imagine and create a better world. And we have already, of course, if we listen to it, a story of reconciliation and redemption that touches each of us personally and universally. In 1986, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger wrote about "awakening the memories and stories of our goodness and beauty so as to open the doors of hope".

The man who shot the Russian ambassador to Turkey in December 2016 shouted: "Allahu Akbar" — God is truly great. There is a blasphemous theology underlying the misuse of that phrase by a terrorist. Giles Fraser in his *Guardian* column hoped — provocatively — that people would be more extreme in their faith, not less: that they would trust wholeheartedly in God's greatness, not kill brutally and indiscriminately for a distorted version of it. Divine greatness does not need violent human protection.

Witnessing to Unity

People wait for our Christian Churches to clarify a theology, a faith-story, that inspires and engages with the issues of our time, one that envisions the ultimate unity of the human race and strengthens the resilience of the human spirit. Such a theology will proclaim and sustain a confidence in the enduring love and compassion at the heart of our ever-green story — the Incarnation story that we celebrated at Christmas in churches across the world. We are the custodians of those beliefs and values — of justice, fairness, mutual respect and of the equality and holiness of all people.

We desperately need to hear that perennial story, especially now during these anxious, liminal times of breakdown in government, in religion, in ecological awareness. This story of hope is wonderfully set out in Pope Francis's encyclical L*audato Si'*, which captures the essential vision of a truly sacramental Christianity springing from a very traditional belief — the belief in the original blessing that is creation, that is humanity, that is God's unfailing, unconditional love. Our Christian faith essentially stands by the hope that the ultimate future will be blessed, too.

Begin with Hearts

God, already present in our planet from the first moment of Creation, is always emerging from its inmost heart as the ultimate force-field — that graced and urgent energy that motivates and commits us to become, in our very fleshed presence, the responsible healers and reconcilers, living and acting within society from a new level of consciousness. In spite of the sinister signs of the times, we continue to believe that humanity is still, and always, evolving toward that final *Omega*-point of a peace-filled belonging. It is from our inner, passionate vision that others will catch the fire of a new possibility. We must begin with hearts. It is where hope is born.

Too often, in our weakness, we collude with the *status quo* by our silence, our fear, our mindless consumerism, our selfish voting, our resistance to change. We forget that for the Christian, love itself is the beginning and end of Creation, the energy that sustains all life, the reason for our hope. "Not to love is a vote for war", wrote Etty Hillesum, before the Nazis took her to the gas chambers. The world is increasingly insecure because people are disconnected from the soul of the earth, from the incarnate love-energy of the Creator-Mother we call God.

God, already present in our planet from the first moment of Creation, is always emerging from its inmost heart as the ultimate force-field — that graced and urgent energy that motivates and commits us to become, in our very fleshed presence, the responsible healers and reconcilers, living and acting within society from a new level of consciousness.

Waiting in Hope

Meanwhile, we must endure the waiting. Hope emerges when the future is utterly uncertain and unpredictable. In *Hope in the Dark* the cultural historian Rebecca Solnit, referring to the current apprehension across the globe, writes: "We don't know what is going to happen or how, or when, and that very uncertainty is the space for hope." Our Christian faith hinges on that story. Despair creeps in when we forget the story; hope grows in our memory of it. As within, so without.

In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech William Faulkner said: "We tell stories to help men and women endure by lifting their hearts." We are called to tell our beautiful story as a blessing for those who feel overwhelmed by today's defeatist perspective, giving them new ground to stand on. We believe that an evolving creation is now the human flesh of the divine, incarnate Being. The peace and unity we wish for are already present within the world. Nightmarish though it now is, this is the time, this is the year, this is the new moment of waiting for the star of a faith-filled imagination to guide us towards horizons of hope. ■

Reprinted from ***The Tablet*** 7 January 2017.
Printed with permission.

As I Grow Old I Will March Not Shuffle

As I grow old
I will not shuffle to the beat
of self-interest
and make that slow retreat
to the right.

I will be a septuagenarian insurrectionist
marching with the kids. I shall sing
'La Marseillaise', whilst brandishing
homemade placards that proclaim
'DOWN WITH THIS SORT OF THING'.

I will be an octogenarian obstructionist,
and build unscalable barricades
from bottles of flat lemonade,
tartan blankets and chicken wire.
I will hurl prejudice upon the brazier's fire.

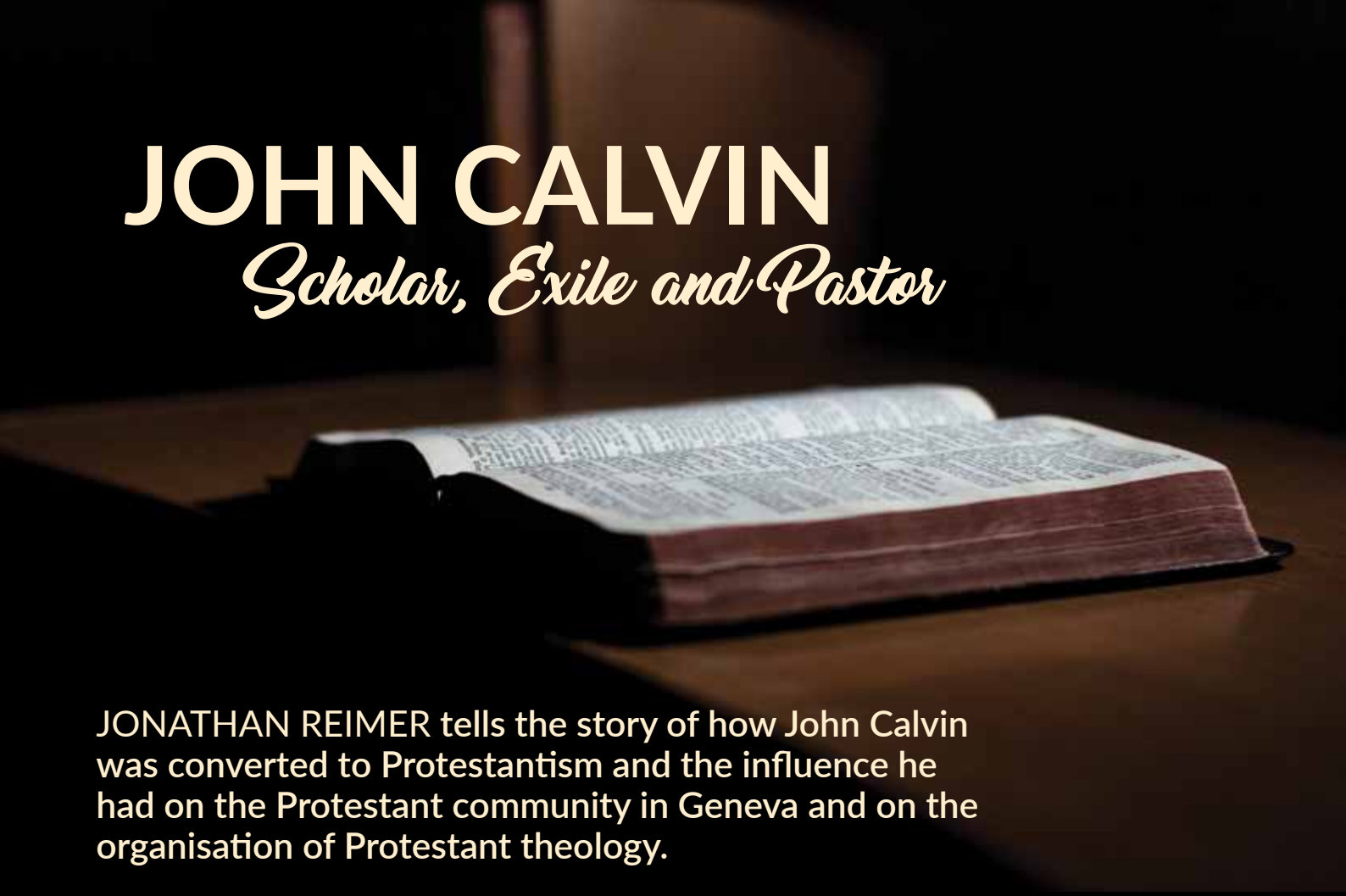
I will be a nonagenarian nonconformist,
armed with a ballpoint pen
and a hand that shakes with rage not age
at politicians' latest crimes,
in strongly-worded letters to *The Times*.

I will be a centenarian centurion
and allow injustice no admittance.
I will stage longstanding sit-ins.
My mobility scooter and I
will move for no-one.

And when I die
I will be the scattered ashes
that attach themselves to the lashes
and blind the eyes
of racists and fascists. ■

Brian Bilston
(Printed by permission)

A collection of Brian Bilston's poetry *You Took the Last Bus Home* was published by Unbound in October 2016.



JOHN CALVIN

Scholar, Exile and Pastor

JONATHAN REIMER tells the story of how John Calvin was converted to Protestantism and the influence he had on the Protestant community in Geneva and on the organisation of Protestant theology.

The Protestant reformer and theologian John Calvin casts a long shadow. Though he died over 450 years ago, his theology continues to influence many Christian denominations and diverse cultures across the globe. To some, his thought is a precursor to modern democracy; to others, it is an archetype of religious intolerance. He is credited with both systematising Protestant theology and with subverting it. Behind these legacies lie a remarkable individual and the most significant thinker of the second generation of the Reformation.

Early Life in French Catholic Family

Calvin was born in northern France, in the town of Noyon, in 1509. Though little is known about his early life, it is clear that he was raised in a devout Catholic home. His mother was enthusiastic about pilgrimages and he later remembered how members of his parish had decorated the images of saints on feast days. His father, with support from the local bishop, had climbed several rungs up the social ladder to become an administrator at Noyon Cathedral. Like many pious and socially ambitious parents, his aspirations for his son vacillated between the sacred and the secular. Initially, he wanted Calvin to study for the priesthood but later opted for the more lucrative practice of law.

In 1523, at the age of 14, Calvin was sent south to Paris to study for a career in the priesthood. At first, he enrolled at the Collège de la Marche, but soon transferred to the Collège du Montaigu, where Ignatius of Loyola, who would later found the Jesuits, was also a student.

Though the following years were challenging as life at Montaigu was viciously austere, they provided him with a firm foundation in the liberal arts, intended to prepare him for the study of theology. However, in 1528, perhaps in light of a change in circumstances at home, his father directed him to study law; which he did, first in Orléans and then in Brouges. Though he never practised law, this legal training deeply shaped his later theology.

Conversion to Protestantism

Calvin's conversion to Protestantism is difficult to date with precision, though most scholars believe that it happened sometime during 1533.

Looking back on this shift over 20 years later, he related how "by sudden conversion" God had brought his mind to a "teachable frame" *(docilitas)*. Wulfert Greef points out that, for Calvin, this word had to do with submission to Scripture and it is likely that he wanted to highlight the fact that his conversion happened *sola scriptura*, by scripture alone. However, he was not reading the sacred text alone, but rather in the company of avid Protestants. It is therefore likely that relationships as well as reading underlay this process.

From France to Switzerland

If the origins and timeline of Calvin's conversion are difficult to discern, its result is not. In October 1534 he was forced to flee France in the wake of the so-called Affair of the Placards. He moved to the Swiss city of Basel, where he composed the first edition of his masterpiece, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*.

Though exiled from his native land, he still hoped for the retiring life of a scholar. This desire, however, was soon derailed by a chance encounter.

Photo of Bible (opposite) by Jazmin Quaynor

While travelling from northern Italy to Strasbourg, where he intended to settle, Calvin was diverted to Geneva. Upon hearing of his arrival in the city, the fiery preacher Guillaume Farel, another French exile, intruded himself upon the quiet scholar and insisted that he stay in Geneva to serve the fledgling Protestant church. When Calvin tried to refuse this offer, Farel threatened that God would curse the peace that he hoped to find in scholarship if he did not serve in this time of need. Terrified by this conversation, Calvin stayed in Geneva and became a pastor.

Protestant Pastor in Geneva

The decision to remain in Geneva was the turning point of Calvin's career, and he spent the remainder of his life working to transform this city into a model of biblical piety and discipline. This undertaking was far from easy and it almost failed when a fight with local magistrates resulted in the expulsion of Calvin and Farel from Geneva. However, upon his return in 1541, Calvin gained unprecedented control over the city and began to reform it root and branch.

He instituted four offices in the Genevan Church, each with its own vocation. Pastors were to preach and maintain discipline; elders were to scold those found living sinfully; doctors were to instruct and root out ignorance; and deacons were to care for the poor and the sick. Such efforts had a profound effect: the Swiss city-state soon became known as the Protestant Rome.

Organising Protestant Theology

While Calvin was reorganising the Genevan Church, he was also systematising the theology of the Reformation. Early Protestant leaders, such as Martin Luther, had chiefly composed short pamphlets addressing particular subjects, leaving the job of systematising Protestant theology to younger authors, such as Philip Melanchthon. Given his scholarly and legal training, it is unsurprising that Calvin's writings soon ranked first among these endeavours. His most influential work, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, is a summary of Protestant doctrine, intended to instruct readers in how to read the Bible and apply it to their lives. Arranged thematically in four books, treating the Creator, the Redeemer, the Holy Spirit and the Church, the *Institutes* persuasively enfolds its readers into the story of God's saving action. This book was the first Protestant classic.

In systematising Protestant theology, Calvin not only reiterated the core tenants of earlier reformers (i.e., that Christian doctrine was to be determined by scripture alone, and salvation resulted from grace and faith alone), but also broke new ground.

His account of the Eucharist attempted to bridge the central theological division of the first generation of the Reformation. Rejecting both Luther's belief in Christ's real presence in the bread and wine and Ulrich Zwingli's reduction of the elements to mere symbols, Calvin argued that Christ was spiritually present in Communion. Though this interpretation satisfied neither party, it tried to solve an increasingly intractable Protestant debate.

Doctrine of Predestination

Even on matters about which all Protestants agreed, Calvin's theological summary brought out novel emphases. This is the case with his most distinctive doctrine of double predestination. While Luther and Zwingli had placed human salvation firmly in the hands of God, Calvin followed their theologies to the logical conclusion that God chooses some people for salvation and others for damnation. Remarkably,

John Calvin. (Painted by French School.)

for Calvin, this doctrine was meant to instil hope in divine providence rather than fatalism: if God had foreordained his elect, surely God would provide for them in this life.

Though some see this doctrine as the notion of a lawyer striving to impose human order upon divine gift, it is also the teaching of an exile, and a pastor to exiles, affirming God's ultimate control.

Even for ecumenically-minded Catholics, Calvin's theology presents considerable problems. However, his irrepressible efforts to bring about God's kingdom and his desire to serve his fellow believers are to be admired by all Christians.

On his deathbed, Calvin persisted in working. When his friend and later biographer, Theodore Beza, asked if he should take it easy, he famously replied: "Would you have God find me idle?" ■

Jonathan Reimer recently completed a PhD in History on the English Reformation. He lives in Cambridge, UK, with his wife, Thea.

An Ecological Reading of Matthew's Gospel

ELAINE WAINWRIGHT provides a fresh approach to understanding the Beatitudes in her interpretation of Matthew 5:1–12.

When I first turned my ecological lens to the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:1–12, I imagined that they would be an almost impossible challenge — we have read them from an exclusively human-centred perspective for so long. How surprised I was to find new wisdom opening up in front of me.

Notice the Time

The text of Mt 5:1–12 opens at the precise moment when Jesus sees the crowd. The gospel writer draws attention to a point in time: it is a particular day which may seem like any other day and any other time. But on this day, crowds are gathering and Jesus goes up the hillside, sits down on the ground and teaches. Our encounters in the gospels with Jesus *Emmanu-el* are always grounded in time, and this invites us to be attentive to the particularity of days and moments.

Notice the Place

As well as alerting us to the specificity of time, the opening verse of Mt 5:1–12 draws particular attention to place: Jesus went up the *hillside*. Place, like time, is something we can overlook in our gospel story. However, the evangelist makes it significant by mentioning it early and up front. There is an interrelationship of time and place — the day, the crowds, Jesus, the hillside and the final words of the opening verse — which grounds what follows: "and he taught them from there" (Mt 5:2). There are no teachings of Jesus which stand apart from time and place.

Blessed Are the Truly Humble

Jesus, the preacher of beatitudes from a place on the mountain, names first as blessed or happy those who are poor in spirit, the truly humble ones, those associated with the humus, the earth. They know the experience of self-emptying as did the God who identifies with humanity (the *Emmanu-el*/the with-us God). Being poor in spirit as an ecological virtue invites identification with the human community and with the more-than-human Earth

community. In this way, God's new vision for Earth and for the universe can be realised. That vision is imaged in first-century language of the *basileia* or empire. It is not of Rome or the human community, however, but of the heavens/of the skies. As contemporary readers, our knowledge of "the skies" allows us to hear the image evoking a new understanding of the universe of which the human community is such a small part.

Mourning Broken Relationships

The second beatitude proclaims blessed those who mourn. The extraordinary discovery in an ecological reading of this beatitude is that in the biblical tradition it is not only the human community which mourns but the land also mourns in response to broken relationships in human and other-than-human communities (see Hos 4:3). In particular, we might hear in this beatitude the plight of those Earth creatures who mourn the loss of companions from a species or habitat as a result of destruction by wanton human power. Who, indeed, brings them comfort?

Attending to Earth as Gift

The meek who will inherit the earth evokes Psalm 37 and especially Ps 37:11 which Mt 5:5 cites directly. In that psalm, those who do good or right are those who wait for God (Ps 37:9); those who are blessed by God (Ps 37:22); the righteous (Ps 37:29); and the one who is exhorted to wait for God and keep God's ways. Each of these phrases could describe the meek whom the psalm says "inherit the earth". This claim echoes through the third beatitude.

For the ecological reader, however, the language of inheriting the earth needs a prophetic critique because the dominant understanding of land in Israel was that it belonged to God and was given to Israel for its rightful use not its ownership or possession. The ecological reader will attend to and engage with land in its materiality and sociality. It is not simply dirt or ground. It is rich with diversity and relationality and it is a gift.

Living in Right Relationships

The thread that links the third and fourth beatitudes is that of "righteousness" or "the righteous". In Ps 37:29, it is the "righteous" rather than the "meek" who inherit the land. In the fourth beatitude, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are called blessed and the righteousness envisaged is the right ordering of all things. For the ecological reader, those who hunger and thirst for this right ordering live in accord with the entire Earth and all its constituents and with divinity. This is the pinnacle of the first four beatitudes and turns readers toward the second group.

There are so many arenas in the Earth community where right order has been broken down and relationships destroyed. Each of the Beatitudes holds out invitations or even imperatives for the new vision. No longer can we hear this right ordering intended just for the human community.

Loving Compassionately

The merciful are those named blessed in the fifth beatitude. They embody mercy; one of the key characteristics of God in the Hebrew Scriptures. There mercy is identified as *rachamim* (womb compassion) and *hesed* (steadfast love). The merciful whom Jesus proclaims honoured in Mt 5:8 can be understood, therefore, as those who are moved corporeally with womb compassion as God is said to be so moved for the ones who suffer. For today's ecological reader, suffering is not confined to the human community. Earth itself and all its constituents suffer the ravages of industrialization, over-farming, dumping of toxic waste, disregard for animals and other devastations. It calls forth the corporeal womb compassion that in its turn can create communities of compassion. It is here that the merciful one is mercied as the beatitude claims.

Openness in Encounters

The honouring of the "pure in heart", who are promised that they will see God, continues to emphasise the corporeality of the ethics of the Beatitudes. It is with the heart and the eyes that see us as an Earth creature in relation to the divine, as well in relation to Earth and all its constituents. This beatitude seems to call for openness: to God, to one's own corporeality and to other Earth beings. It is in these encounters that one sees God as God with-us, the Earth community.

Peacemaking

The *shalom* or the peace of God permeates Israel's sacred story but there is just one use of the term "peacemaker" (Proverbs 10:10). The peacemaker *par excellence* in Israel's sacred story is the ideal king of Psalm 72 who brings together *dikaiosynē* (righteousness) and peace (Ps 72:3, 7). Jesus proclaims such a one blessed in the final two beatitudes (Mt 5:9,10). The final beatitude then echoes the fourth and adds a recognition that hungering and thirsting and working for right order and righteousness in the entire Earth community can bring persecution.

There are so many arenas in the Earth community where right order has been broken down and relationships destroyed. Each of the Beatitudes gives an invitation or even an imperative for the new vision that frames the Beatitudes (the *basileia* of the skies — Mt 5:3, 10) while right ordering infuses them through Mt 5:6, 10 (the fourth and eighth beatitude). No longer can we hear this right ordering intended just for the human community. Rather it extends into all relationships in the Earth community. It is this that we hear in the words of the prophet Jesus who sits on the earth of the hillside and teaches. ■

Painting: *The Beatitudes Sermon* by James Tissot. © Brooklyn Museum.

Elaine Wainwright RSM is a biblical scholar and the Executive Director of Mission and Ministry for the Mercy Sisters in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Opening of Eyes

KATHLEEN RUSHTON interprets John 9:1-41 showing how the man born blind came to believe in Jesus.

The sixth century *Rossano Codex* and other early illuminations of John 9 depict the "opening of the eyes" of the man born blind in two moments of this intriguing story (see image opposite). Jesus' anointing of the man's eyes with clay sits alongside the blind man's washing in the waters of the Pool of Siloam. The focus on clay and water, the detail that the man is blind from birth and the repetition of "to open eyes" (Jn 9:10,14,17,21,30,32 and also Jn 10:21; 11:37) are found only in John even though the three other gospels tell of five healing the blind stories.

Creation

We read that the man was blind from birth. Therefore this is not a restoration of sight story as the man never had the gift of sight (Jn 9:2). Sight is a gift of creation. This is suggested by the clay (Jn 9:6) which evokes "the dust of the ground" in Genesis 2:7 from which God creates Adam. Creation is evoked in the gospel's very first words: "In the beginning...". Creation motifs, such as light and darkness, continue. Jesus as Wisdom-*Sophia* is with God in the beginning. Through him "all things came into being" (Jn 1:3). Jesus was buried and rose in a garden. In his post-resurrection appearance to his disciples, Jesus breathes on them as the Spirit of God breathed over the primal waters. A cosmic struggle continues between light and darkness.

The physical need of the man to see and his healing take place within the material world. Jesus is revealed in the flesh which is shared with all living creatures. Clay and water are elements of Earth through which body healing and the healing power of God are shown. Jesus speaks of doing the works of God while it is still day because when night comes no one can work. Here the natural rhythm of night and day indicate times for labour and rest.

All scenes of the story take place during the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles. Jesus' words and actions evoke its symbols of light and water. In our modern lit-up world, darkness is avoided through electric lights, enabling people inside and out to work and play sport into the night under flood lights. But then darkness at night was usual so Jesus's claim: "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12), is set against the striking light of four huge candlesticks of the seven nights of the festival which were visible all over Jerusalem. But for John's community the festival lights were only a memory as the Temple had been destroyed in 70 CE. For them, Jesus is present as light to the world (Jn 9:5).

Kathleen Rushton RSM is the Residential Scholar at Vaughan Park Centre, Auckland and is continuing her research and writing on John's Gospel.

Marginalised by Religious Prejudice

The man born blind lived among the majority of the people marginalised by their supposed ignorance of religion, as shown in Jn 7:48–49 and acted out in narrative form in John 9. When the Temple police sent to arrest Jesus return to the chief priests and Pharisees empty-handed, they are accused of being deceived: "Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law — they are accursed."

These words occur where "the crowd" has been used previously in Jn 7:40, 43. They are among 20 similar uses of "the crowd" throughout John which represent the struggle of those who are open to believing but cannot quite get there. As well, the crowd represents those who are held in low esteem and marginalised by the religious leaders. In short, the leaders are saying two things to the crowd: "Look at us, we know God's Torah" and "We do not believe in Jesus." They think the crowd cannot be trusted in their belief in Jesus because they are ignorant of God's revelation in the law. But they are the world God loves (Jn 3:16).

Old Testament and early Jewish writings tell of religious leaders who felt superior to the common people and looked down on them as "people of the land" *(am haartz)*. A distinction existed between the leaders and the common people. A further distinction was made between those who knew and observed the law, and those who did not.

Marginalised Physically

The remarkable story of this plucky man acted out brilliantly in seven scenes (see *Tui Motu* March 2012) inspired Elgar to compose *The Light of Life, Opus 29*. The man whom Jesus and

The Man Born Blind, Rossano Codex .

his disciples meet in the streets of Jerusalem was a beggar "who used to sit and beg" (Jn 9:8). Maybe he was waiting near the Temple for alms from those who worshipped there. The man's marginalisation has another layer — that of being physically incapacitated. This man's physical weakness is that he is blind from birth. His considerable incapacitation has reduced him to begging. Along with the chronically ill man (Jn 5:1-15), he was on the margins of the centres of society and religion (Lev 21:17-23).

Eyes Opened to Jesus

The irony is that this outcast has his eyes opened to believe in Jesus. He moves from "the man called Jesus" (Jn 9:11), to "He is a prophet" (Jn 9:17), to "If this man was not from God, he could do nothing" (Jn 9:33), to "Lord, I believe" (Jn 9:38). And the learned ones regress from Jesus may be sinner or be from God (Jn 9:16), to "we know this man is a sinner" (Jn 9:24), to "we know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from" (Jn 9:29).

The two journeys go in opposite directions. Whereas supposed ignorance of the Law (Jn 7:49; 9:34) leads to Jesus, presumed knowledge of the Law blocks recognition of Jesus (Jn 7:48; 9:34; 9:40–41; 3:10). The man's coming to understanding happens in the process of confession, rebuke and stubbornly continued confession. His character is brought out not through his interactions with Jesus but in his firm stand against the Pharisees. Like the woman of Samaria, he could be said to be Jesus' co-worker.

The Struggle of John's Community

Jesus' absence for most of this story (27 of the 41 verses) probably reflects the situation of John's community when, in the 90s, the gospel's first readers/hearers faced three difficult choices because of their belief in Jesus. They could remain in their local synagogue as members of a religious group that had official recognition in the empire and avoid the scrutiny of its officials. They could stay with the synagogue, while at the same time also worshipping secretly as Christians, as did Nicodemus. The man's parents, whom the illumination depicts at the pool, may be in one of these two situations. Or John's people could worship openly as Christians and risk the consequences. In his physical absence, Jesus is present in the experience and witness of this poor, marginalised man who has grown in faith, become a disciple of Jesus openly and has been "put out of the synagogue" (Jn 9:22; also Jn 12:42; 16:2). ■

4th Sunday of Lent 26th March

MORE THAN A **SINGLE** ISSUE

It's hard to believe that the world changed so abruptly in the space of a few days. Millions around the world watched the inauguration of Donald Trump as 45th President of the United States with bated breath. Those pro- and anti-Trump are alike in wondering what the future holds — his supporters triumphant and his opponents in a state of devastation and disbelief.

Seldom does an event in global politics cause such an outcry and at the same time spark such engagement. Everybody has an opinion of Trump and whether these opinions are in support or in vehement opposition, there is no denying that world-changing decisions are being made at an unprecedented rate. In the first week of his presidency, my heart sank with every "breaking news" notification that popped up on my phone.

We woke to the reinstatement of the Global Gag Rule — a devastating blow to women's reproductive rights. The Global Gag Rule was formerly known as the Mexico City Policy and initially came into effect in 1973. It has been a political football over the last several decades, being repeatedly rescinded by Democratic governments and reinstated by Republicans. The purpose of the Global Gag Rule is to block US federal funding for both national and international NGOs that provide abortion counselling or referrals, advocate to decriminalise abortion, or expand abortion services. The practical effects of the policy severely limit family planning services, including access to contraception. Under the Trump administration, the Global Gag Rule presents a new danger. If abortion is mentioned, it is not only family planning services that will be defunded, but also any other programmes an NGO may be running. Initiatives addressing TB, malaria and HIV will also lose funding. It is difficult to comprehend the effect this will have on people living in developing nations.

The topic of abortion is a polarising moral argument and it is not my intention in this article to delve into pro-life/pro-choice positions. But considering the issue from a human rights perspective, removing access to abortion services only serves to prevent safe abortions from taking place — it does not stop abortions from happening. According to the World Health Organisation, every year 68,000 women die because of complications caused by abortions performed in unsanitary conditions or by unskilled practitioners. This is one of the leading causes of maternal death in the developing world.

I recently listened to a speech by Jon O'Brien, president of Catholics for Choice (CFC) in the USA. The organisation advocates for a Catholicism that reflects the lived realities of Catholics everywhere and gives people the autonomy to make moral decisions based on their own lives, as opposed to what is prescribed by the Vatican. Specifically, CFC is working to remove the ban on using artificial contraception in places with the devastating HIV/AIDS epidemic, and to provide access to reliable contraception. The organisation wishes to shape a view on reproductive health that reflects concern for women's wellbeing and advocates for true religious freedom and an environment in which state decisions are not solely informed by a particular religious or pressure group. Furthermore, CFC sees sexual and reproductive health as a key part of social justice. They see how it is the poorest of the world who will suffer most with the implementation of policies such as the Global Gag Rule.

As we watch more and more of Trump's decisions rolling out, it is of upmost importance to consider how these policies affect the most vulnerable, both in the United States and elsewhere. It is easy to feel powerless in global politics but there is plenty that we can do to put pressure on the Trump administration. We can sign petitions, attend protests and call on our government to take a stance on measures that will have a negative impact on vulnerable people. While our individual actions may seem small, when we unite our actions can have tremendous impact. ■

Louise Carr-Neil, an Auckland native living in Hamilton, is passionate about gender equality and human rights. In her spare time she enjoys running and vegetarian cooking.

WE ARE CAPABLE OF MORE THAN DIVISIVENESS AND FEAR

Within a week of moving into the White House, President Donald Trump passed an immigration ban by executive order preventing travellers from seven different Muslim nations from entering the United States. Additionally, all refugee applications were frozen for 120 days and Syrians were banned from entering the country indefinitely.

It goes without saying that a uniform ban on over 134 million people is a heavy-handed response to terrorism fears. For a country that was founded on immigration and has since written itself a cultural narrative and identity as the land of opportunity, it is unsettling at best.

That is not to say that Trump is alone in his fight against outsiders. Australia's politicians boast of our multiculturalism and diversity in the same breath as they denounce refugees and sentence them to indefinite detention on small islands far from the public eye.

The Obama administration, when faced with tens of thousands of Central American migrants in 2014, chose to spend millions on the "Southern Border Program". This amounted to a deterrence campaign to detain Central Americans in Mexico before they could cause domestic political damage at the USA border.

It seems deterrence has quickly become the weapon of choice for most politicians. One of Trump's most touted policy proposals was to build a physical wall along the US border if the embattled refugees make it that far. As if desperation could be contained so easily! The Hungarian Prime Minister, Victor Orban, lauded Trump for the idea, having just built a chain-link fence around his own country.

I have previously written about such programmes in this magazine. I witnessed first-hand the effects of the "Southern Border Program" when I lived in Mexico. Did it deter Central American migrants from making the deadly journey undocumented through Mexico? Not an iota. It did, however, mean that they were detained in a cell somewhere along their trek, usually after they had walked and suffered for many hundreds of kilometres first.

Now, I am not advocating that that journey be allowed. It is rife with danger and suffering for those who risk it. But I am not so misguided, as many politicians appear to be, as to think that those escaping severe poverty and horrific violence can be deterred by mere bricks and mortar. After all, the threat of abuse and death in Mexico at the hands of gangs and cartels was not enough to stop them beginning their journey in the first place.

Having spoken to some of these refugees and researched the migration epidemic thoroughly I know we need more deft solutions. It doesn't makes any sense to ban people by their passport or their faith. In fact to do so is the worst mistake we can make. To scorn people who wish to come to a "better" country and contribute, to turn them away, to call them terrorists is the way to spread fear.

To tar over 134 million people with the one brush is a simplistic solution to a complex problem. To take them from a part of the world plagued with misfortune, war and instability — often caused and stirred up by powerful countries' meddling — and turn them back is beyond horrendous. I imagine such attitudes and actions create terrorism and grow groups of people who wish us harm.

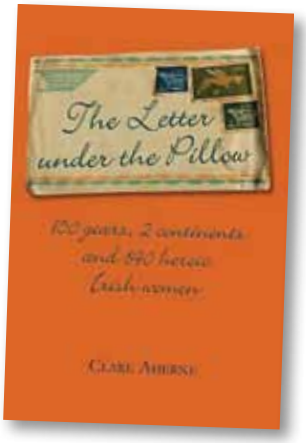
I have chronicled previously how I saw local groups spring up in Mexico to feed and shelter their impoverished Central American neighbours on the journey. A few weeks ago we saw large groups at US airports protesting the ban, and legal groups offering their services *pro bono* to those who needed them. This kind of compassion demonstrates that we are capable of more than divisiveness and fear, and it is this kind of empathy that is needed now more than ever. ■

Jack Derwin is a journalist, freelance writer and pending graduate plotting his return to Latin America.

The Letter Under the Pillow:

150 Years, 2 Continents and 840 Heroic Irish Women

By Clare Aherne
Published by Carrowmore Publishing 2016
Reviewed by Susie Logan OP



The Letter Under the Pillow recounts the stories of hundreds of energetic, pioneering, young Irish women who joined the fledgling Josephite Institute founded by Mother Mary MacKillop and Father Julian Tenison Woods. They sailed to Australia to work there and later in New Zealand. When they left Ireland most were aged from mid-teens to mid-thirties.

This book of gripping stories has three separate parts: the foundation years; recruitment and missionary years; the reconnecting years. The second part deals with the manner in which young women were recruited and their subsequent ministry as Josephite Sisters. The third part recounts the post-Vatican II years when Sisters for the first time could make a return visit to their native land. What emotions are recalled! Eventually a Josephite branch was established in Ireland with Irish Sisters facing different challenges from those met by their early forebears.

At the end of each chapter the author has devised a unique paragraph where a mythical "Spirit of Erin" affirms the storyteller and fills out the details of her life. The "Spirit of Erin" serves to connect one chapter with the following.

I was intrigued by the first section. I often wished for a map to take me to the places where the young women lived with their Australian companions. They were in small groups setting up a school, a convent and community within the wider social structure in which they lived. There they received young women who desired to join their way of life. The setting could be barren, desolate, treeless goldfields or arid, windy acres stretching to the horizon. The climate provided them with temperatures they had never dreamed of. Often they lived in houses that kept out neither heat nor cold. Then, before numbers were secure, if a request came from a bishop or priest, off some of the community would go to begin again in another area.

Frankness is a key theme in the book. The storytellers tell about the normal but difficult frictions that arise within any community. But time and again the greatest strain and tension in their community life and to their ministry and security came from working with clergy who wanted to interfere in the internal running of the Institute. Many Sisters shared Mary MacKillop's dream for central government with papal approval, which she was granted. Many shared Father Woods's view that ministry was well-served by diocesan institutes. While the Sisters came to terms with the two differing models, questions and disputes came from outside the Institute, inside the Church. The story of Mary's excommunication is well known. What is not so well known is the stress and challenge to loyalty many communities suffered from clergy and bishops. This was certainly stuff for the steadfast.

This well-researched book will appeal to many readers, in particular those taught by Irish Sisters. It will appeal to those interested in St Mary MacKillop. The book has a strong historical value, recounting as it does the spiritual, educational and cultural contribution these heroic Irish women made to the enrichment of their adopted countries. ■

The Country Doctor

Directed by Thomas Lilti
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

This unpretentious but thoughtful French film celebrates the values of humanity and civility — qualities which are often taken for granted, but which need to be continually reaffirmed in a world obsessed with power, status and money. Focused on the relationship between two doctors thrown together in a country town, the film deals with the permanent struggle to overcome pain and distress, doing one's duty and what it takes to live well in a small community.

The characters who inhabit *The Country Doctor* could not be more different from the privileged, self-entitled inhabitants of *La La Land* (reviewed in *TM* Feb 2017), so beloved of the Hollywood establishment they represent.

When Dr Jean-Pierre Werner (Francois Cluzet) is diagnosed with an inoperable tumour, young Dr Nathalie Delezia (Marianne Denicourt), a city girl through and through, comes to join him on his rounds. At first he is resentful of her presence and doesn't

make life easy for Nathalie as she seeks to learn the ropes of a country practice. But behind his brusque exterior, Jean-Pierre is training her in the realities of her new role. Like him, Nathalie will learn that a doctor in a rural community needs to be physician, social worker and priest rolled into one.

The village does not offer us a tourist postcard view of rural France; rather, we travel with the two doctors as they negotiate squalid gypsy camps, rundown farmhouses and muddy tracks. The most we see of village culture is the annual country music festival, organised by the hyperactive local mayor, complete with cowboy hats and line dancing. This is about as far as one can get from the fake "feel-good" movies that are so popular at the moment.

Despite the tensions and disputes, the audience is inevitably waiting for the moment when the protagonists' relationship will blossom into romance. But there is nothing conventional or predictable about this wee gem of a film, which offers viewers a masterclass in how to be a more rounded human being, learning to accept and serve others in all their complexities, fallibility and unattractiveness. It's well worth having to put up with subtitles to savour this gentle, wise and often humorous tribute to what makes us truly human. ■

There is a Time For …
A Family Companion for Every Season

Edited by James B Lyons
Published by FitzBeck Publishing, 2016
Reviewed by John Meredith

In *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)*, Pope Francis urges families to cultivate the joy of love and to bring prayer into every aspect of life. In response James Lyons complied *There is a Time For…* The memorable words of *Ecclesiastes* set the book's overall theme. Lyons writes in the introduction: "Prayer does not have to be a lot of words or any words at all; it is primarily a movement of the heart responding to a need of the moment."

Jo Ayers develops the idea of prayer relating to life in the section *Prayer Matters* saying: "Prayer is not an imposition. It is attention to the fact that God is with us." She offers some practical hints for bringing prayer to life and suggests that colour, music, action, singing, silence, smell, movement, meditation, reflection, light and dark, may all assist prayerful experiences.

Building on excerpts from *Amoris Laetitia* and calling to mind the words of *Ecclesiastes*, the book focuses on prayer using 12 headings, topics or themes. They are: Beginning, Ending, Growing, Hurting, Caring, Seeking, Celebrating, Enjoying, Loving, Forgiving, Thanksgiving and Blessing.

The introductory page of each theme has a different colour and calls the reader to reflect on particular times and seasons of human experience. The prayers have been contributed by many people, including children. For example, under *Beginning* there are prayers for the beginning of a new day, a child beginning school and beginning life in a new home. Reflecting on *Growing*, Anika in Year 3 prays: "When I grow I get smarter." Under *Hurting* there are prayers for a dead dog and for strength to stand up to a bully. Under *Caring*, Joy Campbell prays: "Let us be your embrace." Acknowledging God in the midst of life, Joy Cowley addresses "God of washing, unmade beds, dented saucepans and worn out brooms" whose "presence often takes me by surprise."

This home-grown book is beautifully designed and illustrated with colour photographs of New Zealand families and landscapes. It points readers to look beyond prayer as a discrete religious activity and to see it as embracing daily life where God may take us by surprise.

I recommend it for all families. It would also be a valuable resource for groups such as Diocesan Offices, the Catholic Women's League, School Boards of Trustees and Catholic school staffs. ■

CROSSCURRENTS

Jim Elliston

Ditherer or Guide?

Pope Paul VI brought Vatican II to a successful end but then had to ensure the church didn't repeat history and split into schism. He was fiercely criticised because he seldom gave definitive answers to demands from various quarters for specific actions. Instead he tolerated debate between factions. The ensuing arguments allowed for a gradual development in understanding. Even with the deeply unpopular encyclical, *Humanae Vitae (HV)*, which outlawed artificial birth control within marriage, he left room for debate.

From Paul VI's time, press conferences were held to introduce important papal documents, led by someone involved in their preparation. Archbishop Pietro Palazzini was chosen for *HV*. Paul told him to mention that *HV*, although a very serious teaching, was not intended to be an infallible pronouncement. Moreover in *HV:20* he explained that to conform to the teaching "would not be practicable without the help of God".

Although some Bishops' Conferences issued pastoral guidelines for priests regarding *HV*, one Conference allowed no room for conscience and sought Rome's backing. Cardinal Delargey recounted in a private conversation that as Bishop of Auckland he had published in *Zealandia* (May, 1973) an official clarification from Rome on conscience. It stated: "Particular circumstances surrounding an objectively evil human act, while they cannot make it objectively virtuous, can make it inculpable, diminished in guilt or subjectively defensible."

Heretical Pope?

Pope Francis has been under virulent attack because of a footnote to his pastoral Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia (Joy of Love)*. When discussing the stresses contemporary marriages suffer he refers to divorced Catholics who are civilly remarried and wish to receive Communion. While upholding traditional Catholic teaching, in the footnote Francis outlines the doctrine on conscience described in the previous item.

A number of senior clerics who stridently accuse Francis of misleading the faithful appear to want him to rescind the traditional teaching that "the role of conscience is a practical dictate, not a teacher of doctrine."

Softly, Softly

In 1975 Jonathan Hunt indicated he was prepared to sponsor a bill to legalise homosexual acts between consenting adults from aged 20. Gay activists refused to cooperate on the grounds that the age in the legislation should be the same as for heterosexuals. The result was that nothing happened until 10 years later when Fran Wilde brought forward a bill to legalise acts for those 16 and over. The intransigent attitude delayed what could have been a gradual process commensurate with public sensitivities.

Youth Synod

One of the many small steps Paul VI took to implement Vatican II was to restore the Synod of Bishops to advise the Pope. The Curia saw this as usurping their role. Until the changes made by Benedict XVI, Synod meetings tended to instruct bishops on what they should think and do. Francis has now introduced further changes as part of his drive to foster the free expression of opinion.

The 2018 Synod promises to be most fruitful. The impressive preparatory document, although focused on Youth (ages 16–29), could serve as a guide for any pastoral programme if judiciously edited. It details forces affecting youth today, then describes the processes involved in nourishing faith, discernment and vocation.

These elements lead naturally to the section on pastoral activity, stressing the importance of accompaniment — walking with — which leads to the voluntary, active involvement with the pastoral leaders. ■

TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

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

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

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We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters, while keeping the meaning.

We do not publish anonymous letters except in exceptional circumstances.

READING ZACCHEUS STORY WITH NEW EYES

I loved the article on Zaccheus (Kathleen Rushton, *TM* Oct 2016). It is an interpretation that I have long favoured. While I was working with Prison Fellowship, I took part in several Sycamore Tree visits to the Manawatu and Whanganui Prisons and tried to introduce the idea that the story was being misinterpreted. The facilitators didn't know what to make of my "radical" intervention. They preferred to see Zaccheus as a spontaneously converted sinner who had been guilty of gouging and cheating taxpayers. They then asked participants how they might explain this "conversion". The not too subtle suggestion to prisoners and others was that accepting Jesus is the way!

Paul Green, Wellington

PRACTISING SOCIAL JUSTICE

I have always admired the Catholic Social Justice teachings so identify strongly with *TM* February articles. I also have empathy for the beginnings of the Reformed Tradition Tim Cooper described.

Before leaving the Catholic fold 20 years ago, I struggled with the contradiction between the preaching of those social justice principles — "God's preferential option for the poor and marginalised" — and the blatant non-practise of them internally. So many human beings of supposed equal dignity are still marginalised by the Church — women, remarried divorcees and the GLBTIQ communities are obvious examples. Beverley Smith's experience sounded familiar. In 1999 I was accredited as an Associate in Christian Ministry by the Association of NZ Theological Schools on the basis of study and ministry done from my Catholic foundation. I now belong to a Progressive Presbyterian parish where I lead occasional Sunday services and preach. Last November a Sunday service was held in support of the transgender community and a trans-woman gave the reflection. I see Gospel and social justice modelled internally there, not preached then only practised elsewhere. I still care very deeply about whether the Catholic institutional church offers Divine love and acceptance to those who most need it.

Trish McBride, Wellington

WORDS AND IMAGE COMBINE

This is just a note to thank you for publishing that little poem — but perhaps even more for the wonderful photo (*TM* Feb). In fact, the poem comes across as a modest little reflection that could have been going through the head of any one of those riders in that beautiful environment at that marvellous time of the day. And, congratulations on another splendid issue of *Tui Motu*.

Peter J Cullinane, Palmerston Nth

Looking **OUT** *and* **IN**

Lament *— verb (used without object) 1. to feel, show, or express grief, sorrow, or regret ... a formal expression of sorrow or mourning, especially in verse or song; an elegy or dirge.*

During January I travelled with Jeph and our four children 2,000 kilometres to southern India, the return journey taking five days and nights. Train travel is a low carbon way to shift seasons from winter to summer and helps us achieve a yearly visit to the beach from the landlocked north of India. By train I can also spend time hanging out with family, reading, playing games and looking out the window.

This year, in the undulation of land and life out the window, I noticed women carrying bundles of wood on their heads as the train threaded through sparse and thinning forests.

Station platforms clanged with the cries of chai vendors dispensing their masala, ginger or cardamom brews in plastic "disposable" cups. Nowhere did I see the biodegradable clay mugs of my childhood.

I saw rafts of discarded plastic, chip packets and bottles washed up on the edges of towns, floating in waterways and scattered along seawalls and fields.

Several huge river beds had only stones — all the water had been extracted for irrigation.

In the early mornings I observed men and children defecating on wasteland at the edges of towns.

In the big cities of Delhi, Nagpur and Hyderabad there was the thick brown smog.

Relentless damage and destruction to the environment was a desperate thread through it all. River. Land. Air. Ocean.

Living in India, human-caused environmental damage is so much more in-my-face than when I am in New Zealand. A flight from Auckland to Melbourne for a conference can seem rather clean and civilised. The heaving seas claiming the land and homes of people on the margins won't cross my visual axis. The polite and virtuous suburban recycling bins keep my consumption and waste out of sight.

Evidence of environmental damage intrudes less often on an Aotearoa summer at the beach — although it's there too if we care to notice. We all consume and contribute to environmental damage but in New Zealand we feel the impacts less.

I felt overwhelmed and deeply sad. We arrived at our online-hired beach house, but the sadness was not cleansed by soft surf or warm breezes. This lament nests within me, an ugly reminder of what my consumption costs.

Lord have mercy on the rivers, soils, air and seas.

Lord have mercy on us. ■

Kaaren Mathias is a mother of four young people, is married to Jeph and has spent the last 11 years living and working in India.

With minds sifting for truth
Ears sensitive to grief
Eyes focused on dignifying
Consciences tuned to justice
Hearts steeped in the gospel
Mouths speaking with kindness
A community breathing in reverence
Bless us, Living God.

From the Tui Motu team