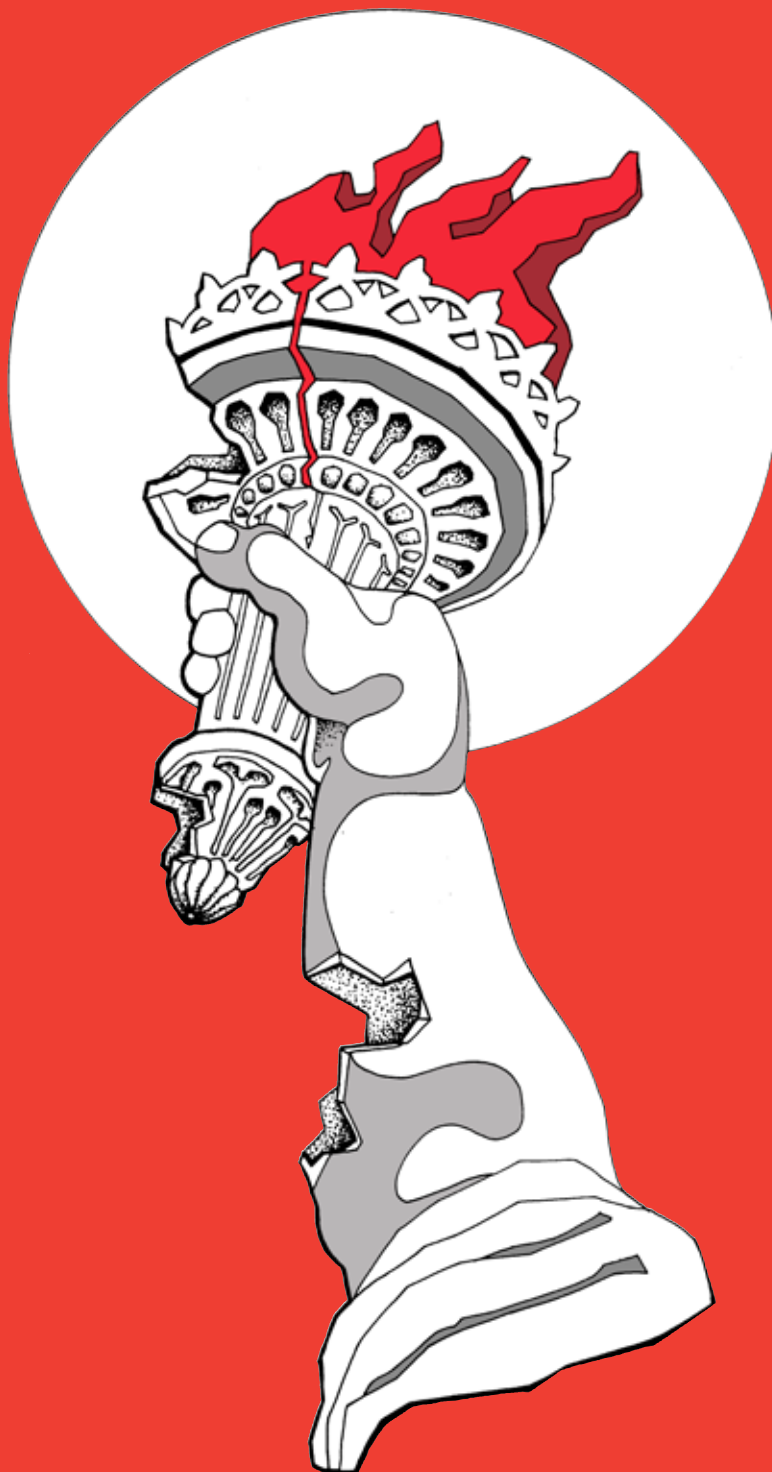


# Tui Motu

InterIslands

*October 2001 Price \$4*



***a dream shattered***

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### *Christ for all people*

We acknowledge kind permission to reproduce art works for the review, *Christ for all people*, pages 16-18. Specifically, M. Woelfel: *Annunciation* (Galleria D'Arte Contemporanea, Pro Civitate Christiana, Assisi, Italy – photo Mauro Scarpelloni); Fernando Arizti SJ: *Incarnation*; Michael Tuffery: *Tianigi*

# A dream shattered

On Tuesday 11 September the world changed. Or, at least, the world of the United States – the Land of the Free – altered for good. An illusion was shattered and the people of America joined the human race. “Our charmed life,” said the *Washington Post*, “has gone for ever”.

For a generation too who never knew at first hand the horrors of war, of the Blitz, of Dresden, of the Holocaust, of Vietnam it has been a rude and shattering awak-ening. Opposite we publish the graphic moment-by-moment reactions of a young New Zealander describing how her world too was changed.

There is no justification for the mass slaughter of innocent people. What happened in Manhattan that Tuesday was a fiendish crime against humanity. The grief and anger of the American people and their many friends are totally justified. To declare war on terrorism as a principle of worldwide political action is entirely right.

Once upon a time nations used piracy as a weapon for gaining advantage over other states. But a time came when the concourse of nations came to the realisation that piracy had to be outlawed once and for all. Piracy, slavery, terrorism: there is no place for them in a civilised world – and no tolerance for states which employ such diabolic means to advance their political causes.

In outlawing terrorism the rulers of the West need to step back and see also how that affects their own decision-making. Some years ago the IRA bombed Canary Wharf in the heart of London's business district. The IRA was and is financed largely by American cash. Israel continues to occupy the West Bank in defiance of United Nations resolutions. When Israel invaded Lebanon some years ago, far more innocent people were put to the sword by Sharon than died in Manhattan. All aided and abetted by the USA. And while George Bush and Tony Blair are mounting their white chargers,

they might pause and ask themselves what they have been doing for the last ten years bombing Iraq – a sustained campaign of naked terrorism.

A New Zealand Sister, in New York on September 11, went to church that evening and heard the priest say: “We as a nation need to listen... we need to try to understand why so many people around the world hate America.” Brave and honest words. It was a pity that George W Bush was not also sitting in the congregation.

On the Statue of Liberty within sight of the smouldering ruins of the World Trade Centre are written these words, intended for the poor immigrants whose first sight of America it was:

*Give me your tired, your poor;  
your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
the wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me;  
I lift my lamp besides the golden door.*

When America and its allies, including ourselves, return to that sense of care for the poor of the world, then we will have begun to understand the true meaning of liberty. Not freedom to waste the world's resources, to ride roughshod over the poorer nations, to enjoy the highest standard of living the world has ever known while much of the world starves; but the freedom God gives us as humans to love and to receive love.

America has consistently proclaimed freedom as one of its founding values. But freedom demands the exercise of responsibility. It cannot be exercised, as Robert Kaiser said (also in the *Washington Post*), as “the power and the right to act alone, to pursue national interests regardless of the wishes of others”.

Liberty is a precious gift, one we hope the United States of America and its peoples will continue to enjoy – but in the sense emblazoned on their most celebrated icon. If America were to lead the world in that sense, then it would indeed be a great nation. ■ **M.H.**

# Where were you . . ?

Nic McCloy

**I**t was a normal Tuesday afternoon and I was mailing out a bunch of letters for the financial newspaper I am working for here in London. A rattle went around the office that something was going on in New York, that a plane had crashed in the city. To start with I thought it was a hoax – an elaborate and not very funny joke.

Then I did what people all over the world did that afternoon. I logged onto the internet and shuttled between CNN and MSNBC as the drama of Sep-tember 11 unfolded. In many ways this access to news as it happens is some-thing which has set this tragedy apart from mass atrocities that have taken place in the past. Suddenly the sights and sounds of the world in crisis are available to millions *as they happen* rather than taking some time to filter through TV networks, radio news stations and print journalists.

With the crisis unfolding on our computers, the entire office was in a state of high drama – the same questions being asked the globe over:

*Who could do this? How could they get away with it? And most frighteningly, Are we the next target?*

I spent most of the afternoon wishing that I was just waking up in Auckland and switching on the radio to hear the news. An odd reaction – but at times like this I really appreciate the luxury of knowing that home is not the next likely target. When word reached us

here in the heart of the financial zone that buildings on Canary Wharf were being evacuated I admit to wondering whether we would be hit. But then came the sickening realisation that one of my oldest friends is living in Manhattan!

By the time I left the office, four planes had crashed, thousands were dead and none of it had sunk in at all. The tube trip to the suburbs was a sedate one with most commuters shocked into silence.

When I got home I flicked on the TV and couldn't watch the horrific coverage being beamed into my living room and even now, a week later, I can't bear to see the pictures which take TV voyeurism to new levels, and hear those desperate last messages that should have been personal final goodbyes instead of being used to preface calls for revenge.

Like most Kiwis in London my phone ran hot. I called my parents, talked to my brother and texted my best friend in Melbourne. Even though none of us were directly at risk it seemed the right thing to let the people closest to me know I was thinking of them. The one phone call I was really waiting for came from another close friend in Germany to say that the good old Kiwi bush telegraph was working better than international phone networks, my Manhattan friend was alive and as well as could be expected. The relief I felt was tinged with the knowledge that not everyone in this city, or many others around the world, would be that lucky.

The rest of the week flew past in a daze. Flags across the city flew at half-mast and the usual noise and bustle was hushed. Never more so than during the three minutes silence marked across Europe at 11am on Friday. I went and sat on the Thames Embankment. There were small knots of people along the river banks and on the roofs and balconies of surrounding buildings.

On the stroke of eleven, the entire city stopped. No trains, buses, taxis, building site drills, nothing. It was incredibly eerie and extremely moving. The river, much like life, continued to roll on while everyone and everything else stopped. After the commemoration was over, I saw several English businessmen walking along the riverbank quietly crying.

On Friday lunchtime I, along with hundreds of others, spent my lunchtime at a service of remembrance at Southwark Cathedral. The church was absolutely packed. As I was on my own, the people sitting down the pew from me adopted me, offered me their tissues, and shared their song sheets. Even acknowledging a stranger is a rare thing in this city, so it was nice that at such a time people were prepared to reach out to others a little.

As the city slowly crawls back to some semblance of normality, my hope is that amidst all the talk of revenge and the warmongering, people will stop and think of those who now mourn, and realise that killing more people is not going to provide any kind of solution. ■

*Nicola McCloy, our occasional film reviewer, now works in London for the Financial Times*



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*Tui Motu-InterIslands* is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed. The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

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## Seeking the new dawn

Mike Riddell's article (in May *Tui Motu*) compels this belated response which is applause only.

Riddell deftly brings his focus onto the largely ignored spiritual life of New Zealanders who never darken the door of a church. It seems obvious that they must constitute the bulk of that 80 percent who, according to surveys, profess a religious belief of some kind. Orthodox Christianity, locked in a struggle between the forces of both tradition and liberalism, has certainly become largely irrelevant. If the mainstream denominations survive beyond the next 20 years, it will only be because they implement ways and means of drawing those unaffiliated seekers of spirituality back in.

A start might be made by avoidance of theological pussy-footing around core religious concepts which so fascinate those outside the church, but have often been reduced to mere symbols for church-goers. I think here of the Holy Spirit; the human soul; life after death; the apparently miraculous; the ministry of angels among a few.

Paradoxically, one finds intelligent discussion of these things outside of churches and among people who have long since abandoned Christian doctrine.

Sadly, fundamentalist Christianity flourishes because it offers the mystical in non-reasoning doses. At the other extreme, that minority of thinking Christians who have embraced contemporary faith consisting of liberation theology, the social Gospel and a rejection of what they term superstition, offer nothing to those on the outside who suspect that Spirit might be more than a vaguely useful term.

When did you last hear a liberal priest or vicar talking logically and freely about the possibility – nothing too intellectually daring here – of a reality beyond the material? Of evidence for the soul, life after death, the literal truth of a divinity latent in all people?

The withered stem of New Zealand Christianity is not the fault of indifferent secular forces but an astonishing

timidity of thought in theo-logians who fail to address the very issues espoused by seekers of spirituality everywhere – except in the pews of mainstream churches.

*Norman Maclean, Gisborne*

## letters

Pressure of space prevented us including letters in the September issue. So many have been carried over.

*Tui Motu* welcomes letters to the Editor. Please be brief (150 words maximum): otherwise the Editor claims the right to abridge. Care is taken always to be faithful to the intent of the writer

## AIDS and condoms

The August issue of *Tui Motu* must surely be the best for variety and depth of articles. But I must take issue with Jim Neilan (*The Vatican and AIDS prevention* p 31).

Marking the rush to buy shares in condom manufacturing in New Zealand a few years ago, the *Southland Times* carried the headline: *Cashing in on AIDS*.

Condoms and contraceptives are made to create a profit for big business from human weakness and irresponsible sexual indulgence. If scaring some people into using them by shouting 'AIDS!' helps profits, then that is a typical commercial ploy.

Jim Neilan's theory seems to be that if condoms are handed out to persons demoralised by sexual self-indulgence they will suddenly turn into loving, caring, responsible citizens – but of course the opposite happens and there is no evidence that AIDS or any other sexually transmitted disease will be contained by their use.

The church must preach and expect self-discipline and heroic virtue from humans, and the fact that all of us fall short is not a reason for it not persisting in doing so.

*Donald Lamont, Gore*

## The orthodoxy of Fr Brown

I was amused to read in a recent issue (*May 2001*) the description of Ray Brown as "the doyen of English-speaking Scripture scholars". This reputation rests on American ballyhoo rather than an objective assessment of his writings.

He could not read, for he held that one cannot derive with certainty from the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke that the conception of Jesus was virginal. George Kelly in his book *The New Biblical Theorists* lists 17 of Brown's statements that hardly represent the Catholic centre.

*G.H.Duggan SM, Silverstream*

(..and a welcome to Fr Duggan to the pages of *Tui Motu*. Sadly Raymond Brown is no longer alive and able to defend himself. It is pertinent to note, however, that Brown was for many years a member of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, so someone in Rome seems to have thought well of his scholarship.

De mortuis nihil nisi bonum. *Editor.*)

## Church moribund

The recent TV clip showing the embalmed body of John XXIII being wheeled past the present, ageing Pope was an apt metaphor of the present state of the Church. What a commentary! Thanks for a ray of hope in Alan Robert's article (*Where have all the shepherds gone?* June 2001). At least here is one cleric aware of the documents of Vatican II. Roll on Vatican III.

*Gavan Michie, Sandringham*

## A repentant America?

If President George Bush who, when Governor of Texas had a battered woman executed, could be persuaded to embrace the true faith and seek God's forgiveness – and as a result offer mercy and forgiveness – a truly repentant USA would not attract the terrorism that has just been experienced.

Could the President not hear: *Woe to those at ease in Zion (USA?) and care nothing for the affliction of Jacob (Palestine)?*

*John Miller, Christchurch* ▷▷



Receiving awards:  
Tom Cloher and  
Frances Skelton;  
(right) Michael Hill.

## Press Awards in Christchurch

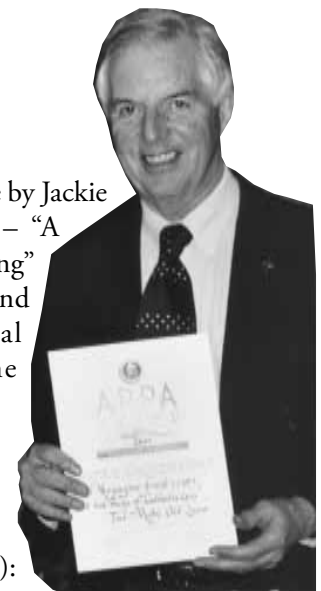
New Zealand publications did well in the awards. The *New Zealand Catholic* won seven award (5 ACPA and 2 ARPA) including the best newspaper layout and design, as well as a 'highly commended' for the best front page. *EV2000* won two highly commended awards (ACPA) and *Marist Messenger* was highly commended for a devotional article applying faith to everyday life.

In the ARPA awards *The Anglican* was highly commended for most improved magazine.

*Tui Motu* also received seven awards:  
• (ACPA 4 awards) - best cover (*February 2000*). Highly commended for best magazine layout and design; and for two

articles – a feature by Jackie Brown-Haysom – “A tale of homecoming” (*March 2000*); and best ‘educational coverage’ – “The Genetic Time Bomb” (*December 2000*)

• (ARPA 3 awards): best Social Justice story – Mike Riddell’s “The Gate of Life” (*November 2000*). Highly commended for magazine cover (*Oct 2000*); and for magazine layout.



In September the Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) and its Catholic counterpart (ACPA) held their annual conferences at Rydges hotel in Christchurch. The editors and the chairperson of *Tui Motu* Board, Tom Cloher, attended.

### Party time for Tui Motu

We don't have an option; it's party time for *Tui Motu*. I mean what else can the parents and grandparents do when the pre-schooler (just four years of age) comes home with seven prizes!

At the official function itself, after the editors had collected 3 prizes each on behalf of little *Tui Motu*, I was obliged to volunteer for the seventh myself to preserve them from over-exposure.

Publishing is more than collecting prizes though. Subsequent rejoicing should look back with gratitude but forward with new energy. What we really need to do is collect more readers. In this regard *Tui Motu*

is under-exposed. Its circulation is still not enough to pay our way.

The good news expressed on this page is an ideal starting point for a renewed approach to potential subscribers. As a committed TM person (or why else would you be reading this column!) could you undertake to contact **two people** to tell them about TM and its quality, maybe send each a back copy, and call them later to ask what they think of it.

We would really have something to celebrate if, in addition to our seven prizes, we could add another 700 subscribers. Party time then it would truly be!

Tom Cloher

### ▷▷ Divine child abuse

I should like to comment on the article *Divine Child Abuse* which appeared in August 2001. Rev Ian Render quotes text and ideas from a book, *Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse*, by two radical feminists. It looks at the extensive “chunks” of *Leviticus* dealing with the sacrificial cult and its rejection by *Hosea* as being inadequate..., at Our Lord's quotation of *Hosea* (6:6) against the Pharisees “What I desire is mercy, not

sacrifice” (*Mt 9:13, 12:7*).

It totally ignores the teaching of *Hebrews 9-10* that the atoning blood of the New Testament is the blood of Jesus – a covenant cannot be ratified without blood; there is no forgiveness without the shedding of sacrificial blood, and the inadequate sacrifices of the old law did not bring true deliverance from sin, as *Hosea* taught.

The article calls Our Lord's sacrifice “a human sacrifice”, meaning it was

imperfect, whereas it was in fact the perfect sacrifice of the God-Man who, as priest, offered his life to God and as victim, gave it. The statement “liturgical encouragement to suffering and our language about God willing the death of *his child* on our behalf” simply ignores the Trinitarian teaching that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are co-equal and co-eternal.

Derek Blackburn, Pakuranga

# The Prophetic Voice

*At a recent meeting of the Australasian Catholic Press Association in Christchurch, Fr Jim Consedine threw down a challenge to Catholic editors to live up to their God-given vocation*

**H**ow serious is the Catholic Church about teaching and living justice?

Ask any congregation in Australia or New Zealand what the Church teaches about the economic order, about land rights, about the Treaty of Waitangi, about the place of prisons in our society, about ecological concerns and, I suggest, we would get much the same answers as from a similar sample of the general population: opinions are largely not formed by Church teaching, but by the general media and wider culture.

Probably just about the same proportion of Catholics support *One Nation* in Australia and *ACT* in New Zealand as is found in the general population. Yet many of their goals are in direct opposition to Catholic teaching. On the issue of the death penalty in the United States and on issues of law and order in many countries where I have spoken, the general Catholic opinion does not vary much from that of the wider community.

One reason for this level of ignorance is that few dioceses have made any real attempt to educate their people about the social teachings of the Church. In fact, the opposite often appears to be the case. There appears to be a wide-spread notion abroad that the Church should not be controversial in any way. What a joke! This – in the body representing the views and teachings of the one crucified by the Roman Empire for his teachings and controversy he aroused.

## *The Role of the Prophets*

The nature of social justice means that prophetic people inevitably are its originators. These people, it would seem, should be among the most welcomed

within the Christian community. Indeed St Paul gives them second place amidst the list of charisms needed to build up the Body of Christ – behind apostles, but in front of evangelists, pastors and teachers (*Ephesians 4:11-12*). Forward thinkers and visionaries are needed so that the Body of Christ doesn't get bogged down and apathetic. Pastors, teachers and evangelists then can digest the prophetic word, reflect on it and help the faithful come to an understanding of it.

There are some interesting things about prophetic people and movements. They have a divine vocation. Yet they are universally not welcomed because of the job they perform. They have a specific charism to shake up the general body with either new ideas or a reminder of past promises. In secular society they inevitably pay a harsh price. The Church response is harsher still. How is it that we can be so concerned about the teachings of Christ and the presence of the Divine in so many ways, yet treat the prophetic voices of God within the Church so harshly?

From Joan Chittister and Daniel Berrigan to Archbishops Oscar Romero, Hilda Camara and Raymond Hunthausen, the treatment has been the same. All these prophets in the Church have been marginalised, and often abused and punished. Yet these are high profile religious leaders. It can be much worse for less prominent people.

What we also know about prophets is that they are usually most reluctant in their role. I have never met or read of any truly prophetic figure who relished the role he or she played. The Church has been reading *Jeremiah* in the Divine

Office these past few weeks. If ever there was a reluctant starter, he was it. Death of course was the fate of John the Baptist, the greatest of the early prophets, killed by the power of empire. He was just the first of many.

A second area of importance is the perception by a growing portion of the Church that the institutional model of Catholicism is itself unjust in its dealings with women. I don't plan to canvas the arguments about the pros and cons of the role of women in the Church. A colleague, upon hearing news that the Dunedin Club, a bastion of male occupancy for 140 years, had finally admitted women to full membership, observed that only the Iranians and the Taleban in Afghanistan and the Roman Catholic Church were now left hanging on to a patriarchal model of operation.

All the major decisions affecting the Universal Church are made by males. And celibate males to boot. Yet more than one half of its members are female. There just has to be something fundamentally flawed in arguments that say this makes any sense or is any longer best practice.

It is very hard for those who care about justice issues from the perspective of Christ, who are formed by the insights of the Gospel and faith and encouraged at one level by Church teachings, to keep witnessing to Christian justice in the world when there is so much injustice practised within the Church itself. Most of my friends with whom I have sat on committees and commissions over decades have walked away from the institutional Church because of the injustices they have suffered at the hands of the Church they love.

I believe that somewhere in pastoral practice flowing from the Constitution on the Church from the Second Vatican Council lies the answer to this dilemma. At the Council, there was a huge debate about the nature of the Church. Eventually after much discussion, it was decided that the primary model of Church was that of the *People of God*. That became chapter 2 of the Constitution. The secondary model was the hierarchical structure, which formed chapter 3.

The Council Fathers were keen to have the two models operate in harmony: seen as both/and models, not either/or. They voted by 2200 to 50 that both models be incorporated into the *Constitution on the Church*, with the *People of God* model taking precedence. We have yet to understand and implement the vision of the Council in relation to this radical teaching. We need both models, and that is why they have been given to us.

Regrettably, what seems to have happened after the Council was that the Curia made a grab for power again. Since then things have become more centralised than ever. Such a bureaucratised model of Church lends itself to all sorts of power imbalances and dysfunctional behavioural practices. This model holds to a 'trickle down' model of authority that is generally ignored. No wonder there is so much dissension among the People of God when they see the Church they love being so stifled by ineptitude and the inability to harness and use all its gifts and people.

### ***The Catholic Press and Social Justice***

Where do you stand on these issues as editors of the Catholic media? I appreciate that some of you already give issues of justice fair space. My question is: *what part does your media outlet play in promoting the Church's social teachings?* If the leading articles and letters to the editor columns are anything to go by in the papers I've seen in recent times in Australia and New Zealand,

it seems that most diocesan papers are dominated by conservative agendas. Considering what he had to say to the scribes and Pharisees, I wonder what Jesus thinks of that!

The exception relates to matters concerning human reproduction. The latter is an area of emerging importance and one in which the Church can play an important educative, indeed prophetic, role in its interaction with the wider community. This is to be welcomed. But sadly we have never created the infrastructure to engage at the same level on issues relating to other extremely pressing matters which, in terms of life and death, are also vitally important.



The issue of the indebtedness, poverty and preventable disease in Third World nations which is killing tens of thousands by the day is the most pressing of these. Intimately linked to that is the sheer level of devastation being perpetuated by the World Bank and IMF in structural adjustment programmes. The growing ecological crises caused by human abuse is an issue affecting every man, woman and child on God's earth. The growing numbers of the poor in prison, now more than eight million worldwide, supporting a profit-making industry second only in size to the military-industrial complex, cry out to God for redress.

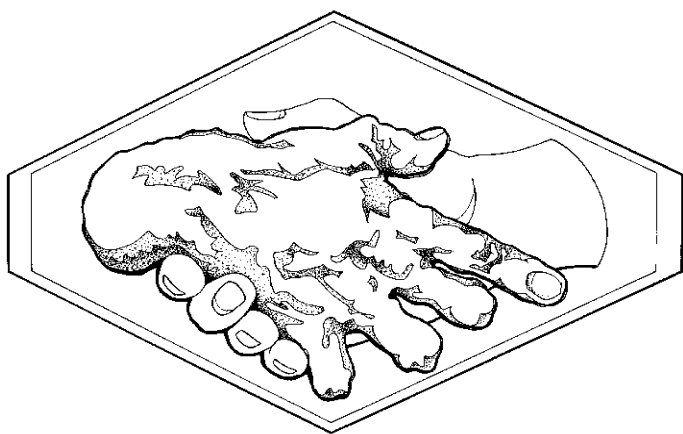
These are issues of 'structured sin' that require a clear Church voice of protest and education. Every diocese should have experts in ecological, social and economic issues employed to advise and educate the Church and the wider community. If we can employ hundreds of school teachers, why can't we employ a few such experts? The short answer is that we don't take these matters really seriously. The bottom line is that the Church has a problem with faith. If we believed, we'd do it.

These issues and many others are all linked to global capital and the further abuse of additional millions of God's children every year. The people most disadvantaged by such policies sit in the centre of the Incarnation and the Redemption. They sit at the heart of our sense of solidarity as brothers and sisters in Christ. Yet they die in their millions while well-fed Christians in the West remain generally ignorant as to their plight and of our responsibilities to expose such sinfulness and alleviate it.

The Church has an enormous obligation to send out a message of hope about the living God in the person of the Resurrected Christ who cares about these people and these issues. Where does your paper stand in being a voice to speak on behalf of these powerless ones? What does your paper do to the prophets who call for an end to injustice in the community and within the Church?

Do you take your responsibility seriously as perhaps the only voice they and the ones they speak for have? Do you seek to investigate in the time-honoured tradition of authentic journalism? Or do you toe the party line, fearful of upsetting a bishop or some readers?

With the world in the state it is, the Catholic Press should be filled with the voices of prophets and the social teachings of the Church. It rarely is. My final question of you is: *why not?* ■



*How does our society care  
for the terminally ill?*

*Tui Motu put this question to a medical  
practitioner, a hospice chaplain, and  
a husband and wife team who set up a  
voluntary agency.  
Here are their responses*

## Who do people say that I am?

*People on the final lap of life's journey deserve the very best care  
society can give. Nothing less, says Dr Anna Holmes*

Probably the most important thing that people who are dying want is to be acknowledged as themselves. One day I was visiting a dying patient in her home and she showed me a triptych she had just painted. I asked her what it was called. Looking at me straight in the eyes she replied: "Who do people say that I am?"

It really struck me that that's the question the dying ask. They want to be affirmed as the person they are because their bodies change and their view of life suddenly becomes very limited. They will say to you: "I'm not *me* any more!"

In fact the essential person is showing through in a way perhaps that it can't when they're healthy and busy. It is extraordinary how 'transparent' some people who are dying are: their essential self seems to shine through. It doesn't always happen. Not everyone dies peacefully, but I'm certain that that question 'who am I?' is the one they usually are asking.

Throughout life we are constantly changing, so as a physician I try to respond by saying: "Well your body's changed a lot, but it hasn't changed the essential *you*. Do you believe that

your body stops at the skin?" It's a good question to ask if it makes them think of themselves in the context of the whole person, not just of a body which is crumbling and dying. And I think in the modern context it is important to use language that is not overtly religious but which acknowledges the spirituality of the person.

*How about their close loved ones? How do they let go of them?*

I think it's important both for the dying person and their family to acknowledge together the grief they feel about it. Grieving goes on all through life. Caring for the dying is a finite sort of grieving. Allowing the grieving to take place is very important: the families who won't let it happen are the hardest to deal with. They react either in a very Polyanna-ish way or they simply refuse to talk about it. It's a form of denial. They are trying to cope by pretending to stay in control and that is not a healthy way of grieving.

The other thing that happens is that people get very angry. Old family conflicts can suddenly re-emerge, and this complicates the process. What is happening is that the anger which is always a part of grief is not being acknowledged and so it emerges in a different area – like in an old, unhealed

battle and that can be really damaging to a family.

When it's the dying person who becomes angry, that is hard for the families. Often the anger is projected onto the doctor or the nurses. Somehow you have to encourage them to let go of the anger, because angry people don't die peacefully.

If it involves someone else in the family, then it needs to come out in the open and be worked through. Otherwise it will agitate and unsettle the dying person. And children will become very sensitive to this aspect. When it's a small community, you can end up with the whole small community grieving.

*How available is satisfactory health care for the dying?*

The government has recently introduced a new palliative care strategy, increasing the amount of money available. In many rural areas where the population may be very scattered, there is no palliative care facility in easy reach.

At present there are 42 hospices in New Zealand. Some only look after patients in the community; others have in-patient facilities. These are usually in the main centres. In rural areas it depends on the local medical practice and on local nurses.

There is not yet a 'level playing field' as regards availability of such care. Some rest homes offer palliative care but there is no universal standard of such care, so there are no ways of assessing how well it's being done.

Unfortunately the present regulations provide for only a minimal amount of nursing care, whereas palliative nursing demands a lot. A standard of palliative care needs to be established and maintained – which means that in some way it needs to be monitored.

People who work in palliative care are there because they want to be, not just because it's a job. That gives this style of nursing a unique atmosphere. But care for the dying also happens out in the community by GPs and in rest homes and hospitals, and it's here that there are no standards laid down. I believe this needs to happen. For instance I think that anyone who is going to do palliative care should have mandatory training of some kind.

#### *What sort of training... ?*

A lot of it is common sense – but some aspects aren't. Knowing what to look for and when to ask for help are probably the most important areas. Nursing people who are dying is very specialised, and the more I see nurses who do this work, the more I admire their many skills. You have to watch for patients developing pressure sores or lying in wet beds. It's a very intensive kind of nursing.

To do it well you have to be very gentle. Only today I had a patient who complained that he had been moved in hospital very roughly, and it had distressed him for the rest of the day. I'm sure the nurses who moved him didn't intend to hurt him. They simply were not aware that this was a person in need of palliative care.

Good care – whether nursing or medical – is about reverencing the whole person: being gentle, not noisy; listening carefully. The expensive part of palliative care is for the nurse to have time for the needs of each individual. Whereas

in a hospital ward you may have three trained staff, for palliative care the ratio needs to be one nurse per two patients.

So often people in pain don't complain, simply because they don't want to cause trouble and think they ought to be able to put up with it. The treatment of pain is much easier if you can pre-empt it rather than allowing it to become well established. Part of the skill is learning to read the body language of the patient: you need time for that.

Recently I visited a hospital and observed five patients who were in pain. But nobody had noticed because they were all too busy. Three recent studies from different parts of the world show that as many as 80 percent of patients in hospital are in some sort of distress and were not receiving treatment for it. This seems an astonishing indictment of the systems presently in place.

#### *What about attitudes to death and dying among health professionals?*

When I went through medical school I suspect the consultants who taught me were the last generation of doctors who received a broad education including the humanities. From the '60s onwards the focus in medicine has been so scientific that we didn't have time for anything else from high school onwards.

Those consultants of an earlier era had a more reflective view of life, I think – and of death as part of life. The huge scientific advances of the '60s onwards gave us the illusion that we would conquer death. Death was now seen no longer as a natural event but as a failure. Students today are taught by those who were reared in this illusory world view. Hospital doctors find it very difficult to allow patients the dignity of dying when

it's clear they are not going to survive or that they don't want prolonged treatment.

Families will often request that the patient be transferred to a hospice because they don't want any more interventions or the patient no longer wants it either. In the hospice any treatment is aimed at the comfort of the patient, not necessarily at prolonging life. If it does prolong life, that's fine. But basically, treatment is for the comfort of the patient.



There are not the kind of high-tech interventions that you would get in hospital. Of course the patient has a choice, but in hospital the pressure is to 'get things done', so that if you are not actually *doing* something, what's the patient doing taking up a bed? The public at large, I find, are often more accepting of the fact that no more interventions can be done.

Another fear that is beginning to creep into medical attitudes is the possibility of being sued if you don't intervene. If you have a rather mechanistic view of life, if you claim to 'have power' over life, then you will be pressured always to intervene.

The flip side of this is the push to have assisted suicide or euthanasia. That too reflects a lack of reverence for human life. It sees life as a possession, not a gift,





# Beacon of Hope



*On safari in the UK, the editor came upon Beacon of Hope, an outstanding voluntary service for the terminally ill*

Grace is a sufferer from Motor Neurone Disease. Her husband, Fred, has been trying to care for her but after two years he's at the end of his tether. Some home care is available but the carers who come in are literally "not allowed to touch her"; which means that Fred has to do all the washing and nursing himself. In effect the carers are being paid by the state *not* to do an adequate job.

The challenge, therefore, is to find adequate care for Grace – but, most important, to get funds to allow some respite for Fred. This is where *Beacon of Hope* comes in. Two United Kingdom charities were approached and between them they provided enough money to get Fred proper respite every two months. By getting a week off every now and then, he now finds he can cope with looking after Grace for the rest of the time.

This is typical of the challenge which arrives on the doorstep of *Beacon of Hope*, a central Wales charity based on Aberystwyth and founded by Elizabeth and Roger

Murphy. Elizabeth had been responsible for setting up *Age Concern* in central Wales. During the course of her work she became increasingly aware that there was a huge local problem with the terminally ill. Central Wales (Ceredigion) is a largely rural area, and there is simply not the population to fund a residential hospice.

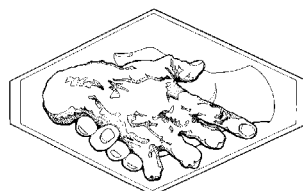
Elizabeth set about meeting this challenge herself. Her husband, Roger, a retired secondary school principal, became professional fund-raiser and scourge of officialdom. Elizabeth discovers the problem and proposes a solution; Roger writes the letters and fires off the e-mails. They are a powerful combination.

Basically what Elizabeth discovered was that in the Cardigan and Aberystwyth area there was not only no hospice, but there was no local agency which could give specific advice to the terminally ill or their carers or the various voluntary organisations which support them. The most acute problems occurred for sufferers for the less

▷▷ so it can be dispensed with if it's inconvenient or painful. It brings about a mindset which says: *if I so choose, I can end it. If I choose that my doctor should end it, then my doctor is obliged to end it.*

Another factor. In the United States there are enormous pressures on people not to persist with treatment because of the cost. I know of instances where patients have refused treatment because they feared it would cost their families too much. I can see this becoming an increasing pressure on the elderly of my own generation.

Personally I never have any problem when a person freely chooses not to accept treatment. What concerns me is the subtle – or not so subtle – pressure being put on them not to accept treatment because of the cost either by society at large or by their family or by the insurance company.



Behind it is the idea that some lives are less valuable than others. The 'Doctor's Dilemma' is always going to be somewhat intractable. There is no simple answer. It's like treading a tightrope! I think of patients who cannot swallow and therefore cannot be fed normally. There are two ways of treating this: you can put a tube down the throat or put a tube directly into the stomach. The food used is expensive. In hospital the tendency would be to continue such feeding.

But I have known a number of patients who, on being moved to the hospice, have requested that all tubes be removed. They just want to be kept comfortable. They no longer want to put up with

this intrusion into their sense of self. You have to talk this through with the family as well as the patient to make sure there is a consensus on what action to take. Then, extra-ordinary means can be suspended if that is what they wish.

Hospital decisions to stop treatment are always hard. The new technologies have created dilemmas which used not to exist. We have to find human solutions to such dilemmas and certainly not to have rules imposed whereby certain groups will not be treated! It's not actually a new dilemma. I remember when renal dialysis was a new treatment, a man in his late 70s pleading not to be dialysed and saying: *I just would like to be left to die.* In those days much more than now, the doctors in charge made the decisions rather than the patient. Even so, for medical staff, life and death decisions will always be hard. ■

common chronic complaints such as Motor Neurone or Raynard's disease.

The Murphys started by visiting day hospices in the UK to see how they operated. They became part of the hospice partnership headed by *St Christopher's* in London, who specialise in work for the terminally ill.

So *Beacon of Hope* was born. They set themselves up as a registered charity in January 2000 and started raising funds. Basically they saw two distinct areas of need. One was to become a one-stop shop for the hundreds of local people who were struggling to nurture a long-term patient with an incurable illness. The second was to set up a "hospice at home" service, which meant employing palliative care nurses who would operate out of their centre but provide the palliative nursing in the home of the sufferer.

Jane is another typical example of someone in need of their service. Jane suffers from rheumatoid arthritis: once again, it is her husband who is her long-term carer. They are short of money, and he too is under considerable stress. Social services can do so much, but in these specialised cases of need what they provide is not adequate. What Jane and her husband want is someone to come into the home regularly and especially to relieve Jane's husband at night. *Beacon of Hope* enables this to happen.

The first challenge of *Beacon of Hope* was to find suitable premises and set themselves up. They sought and found funds to rent and furnish an office in Aberystwyth. Now, people in the area have somewhere to come where they can get the advice and help they need: an advice and information centre. A phone service needs to be constantly manned, and the hospice nurses will need a centre for their operations. Various local and national organisations were approached and together are providing the funds.

Nevertheless, most of the operation depends on volunteers. When the Beveridge Report set up the National Health Service in Britain in the 1940s it was noted from the beginning that only via voluntary organisations is it possible to establish a cost-efficient welfare community. In other words, the demands for health care always outstrip the public financial resources available.

After a year of operation *Beacon of Hope* is now well established. The next phase is:

- establish a night time 'sitting' service. These are non-medical volunteers who can go to the homes and give the carers a night's respite. A coordinator has to be found – a

paid position – to recruit, train and oversee the volunteers. Even the volunteers can receive some small financial compensation;

- employ home palliative care nurses. The immediate aim is to employ two full-time or four part-time nurses. They would have to make five or six calls per day on average. These will also need a medical subcommittee to supervise their work. In the Cardigan area they discovered 338 people during one year needing this service. Of these 240 were eventually to die at home. Only about a hundred were hospitalised.

To provide a residential hospice would cost about £2 million (NZ\$6 million) with another million per year to run it. The home hospice scheme would cost less than half this amount. It is also true that in a rural situation people

prefer to be at home in their own locality.

Recently Gwyneth came into the office in great distress. Her husband Dewi has Raynard's disease. This attacks the immune system and appears to be an irre-versible condition. Gwyneth has to care for Dewi as well as for two young children. After three

years his condition has grown steadily worse so that Gwyneth can no longer go out to work.

Simply being able to share her predicament is a relief for Gwyneth. "I can't tell you how much better I feel!", she says. First, she has someone to turn to for help and sympathy. Second, they have been able to get the council to alter her house to enable Dewi to shower properly and to set up a play area for the children. Gwyneth now has a regular night sitting service to give her relief and she has help in looking after her children. What *Beacon of Hope* does is to match the voluntary assistance to her particular needs.

So what is their philosophy? Elizabeth asserts that all humans have the right to die with dignity within the moral law. The aim is to help make life worthwhile for as long as life lasts. Where possible the choice of how they live their final days should be the patients'.

Though the founders and most of the present volunteers are active Christians, the *Beacon* is a secular organisation, demonstrating that hope is the most effective and perhaps necessary universal trigger for charity in action. ■

We try to respond to what people say they want rather than what we – or anybody else – think they need. That is the principle of subsidiarity in action.

"Only by voluntary organisations are you able to touch the bottomless wells of kindness, humanity and self-sacrifice." That was what Labour politician Aneurin Bevan, said 50 years ago. The fact is, statutory services in the UK today could never survive without the help of voluntary organisations.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has." (Margaret Mead)

## Compassion beyond restraint

*Fr Michael McCabe, director of the Nathaniel Centre,  
describes an experience with a dying patient in the Hospice.  
Reproduced with permission from the Nathaniel Report*

One of the themes frequently heard from hospice team members and from those who work in aged-care facilities concerns the constraints placed upon their work of compassion.

It takes great skill to be present totally, no matter what the constraint. It also takes great skill and compassion to rise above the institutional, patient, and family dynamics in order to provide compassionate care.

During the 1980s I was a member of the Mary Potter Hospice chaplaincy team. During that time I recall meeting Kathleen. I well remember the day she died. That day had been a little quieter at the hospital and hospice, leaving time to catch one's breath ... with a short visit to the patients, and the celebration of evening Mass for the Sisters, the day would be free.

I always had a feeling of getting nowhere with Kathleen – she was more than a little sad and neither my brashness nor charm seemed able to pierce the all-pervading cloud of disappointment that she lived in.

"How are you feeling tonight, Kathleen?"

Nothing. I moved closer to the bed. "Have you had a good day?"

"I'm dying!"

Her reply so stunned me that my reply was both inelegant and clumsy: "Does that worry you, Kathleen ... I mean, are you feeling peaceful about it?"

Again the response came from the depths of her soul. "It is what I deserve!"

Desperately trying to reassure her, I half-shouted back at her: "No, Kathleen! No one deserves to die!"

She would not be put off. "But I do! I have been married twice, divorced twice. I just lived with my last partner – couldn't face trying again. We drank our lives, our money, our families away – and now I'm dying – it is what I deserve!"

I wanted to hug all the pain out of her. How sad to come to the end of three score and ten years and view death as a punishment for the twists and turns taken in the road.

"We need to talk about this, Kathleen, and we will, but right now I have Mass to celebrate. I will offer it for you, and with you, and then I will pop back and we can talk ..."

"Well, if you like, but I don't know if I'll be there – can you hear my confession?"

"Sure ..."

*do not be afraid,  
for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you  
by name, you are mine*

I was a little late for Mass, but upon returning to Kathleen's room I had no regrets. She had already begun to lose consciousness, but was still very agitated – not in physical pain, but greatly distressed and very afraid. There was no time for talking now – Kathleen was beginning her final walk towards God. I knew that the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing had brought her peace with God, but I felt powerless in the face of her distress.

All I could think of was to dampen a face cloth with cold water in order to relieve her fever. As I was soothing her

brow, I began to reflect on the position of trust I was in. The nurses were busy with the evening drug round and were happy someone was with Kathleen. The appalling and frightening thought flashed through my mind that it would be so easy to smother her, to put an end to her distress, and an end to my feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. After all, who would know?

Only me – I would know! I began to think of her story – her wanderings, her search for love, acceptance, and security ... I wasn't sure where her story ended and mine began. Perhaps I was guilty of projection that night, but it seemed to me that what she needed, what she had been searching for on the road, was someone to say, I understand, I accept you as you are, and I gently invite you to grow, to make the journey within, to discover God's presence, to discover your story belongs in the God story, to realise that your story, as it is, as it has been, can be the pathway to discovering mercy, forgiveness, compassion, hope, love ...

As I wiped her brow, I began to recite phrases from *Isaiah*: "Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine. Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you ... you are precious in my eyes ... and I love you ... Do not be afraid, for I am with you ... When your hair is grey I shall still support you ..." In between I prayed: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death ..."

In the reciting of the Word with Kathleen, I witnessed peace descend into the very recesses of her heart. She became transfigured into peace and serenity, and when she died a couple of hours later I knew she was meeting

God in a wholly new way – in such a profound way that I could not even begin to comprehend. Death became for her the moment of complete relaxation, integration and healing – a moment in which she and I understood that death is not what we deserve, but the very gateway into God and into eternal life.

The experience of being with Kathleen that night, and so many like her during my three years in chaplaincy at Wellington Hospital and the Mary

to face ... and it is too difficult for me to accompany you on ...” What I learnt that night from Kathleen was that although her journey was undoubtedly difficult, both of us could find healing from the completed journey.

The virtuous care of the dying and the elderly provides a counter-cultural model to the false compassion of physician-assisted suicide. Such virtuous care is the antithesis of abandoning the patient who suffers. Euthanasia is a false compassion

*relationship of each of us must be towards our suffering neighbour. We are not allowed to ‘pass by on the other side’ indifferently; we must ‘stop’ beside him. Everyone who stops beside the suffering of another person, whatever form it may take, is a Good Samaritan. This stopping does not mean curiosity, but availability. It is like the opening of a certain interior disposition of the heart, which also has an emotional expression of its own ...”*



Photo: Jim Neilan

Potter Hospice, left a profound effect upon me. I saw so powerfully the hand of God at work in people’s lives – from birth right up to, and including, the moment of death. It was also the first time I understood, in a thoroughly grounded way, the perspective of those who favour euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide.

The realisation that the case for physician-assisted suicide was so complex was a very sobering feeling indeed for me. It meant I had to confront many of the issues that such a case raised. I had once naively thought that my Christian faith would protect me from such issues!

To accept physician-assisted suicide as an option is to place a constraint upon our compassion. It is to say, in effect: “Your journey is too difficult for you

because it uses the complexities and difficulties of the dying process as reasons for withdrawing a healing presence from the one who suffers.

Compassion does not yield to constraints. It puts them into a larger picture by creating a sacred space despite them. In doing this, compassion goes beyond constraint to a place of virtue where myriad stories and the twists and turns of the journey can all belong. That is the irony of compassion. It brings healing to the one in need, but also strengthens the one who is compassionate. Equally, acts of compassion strengthen the community.

In his Apostolic Letter on Human Suffering, *Salvifici Doloris*, Pope John Paul II writes: “*The parable of the Good Samaritan belongs to the Gospel of suffering. For it indicates what the*

An essential ingredient of compassion is availability. Physical presence is a part of our availability, but of even greater importance is our interior availability. Most constraints on compassion are, in fact, from within ourselves. For example, in tending to the patient’s physical needs, we may be closed to the deeper concerns of the patient. Our bright and cheery manner could be another way of preventing the deeper discussion.

Then again, we may not have the interior resources to be available for this particular time and person. That is why teamwork is essential. A coherent team enhances the virtue of compassion in action while nurturing the caregiver at the same time. Teamwork allows particular team members to have interior space when it is required.

Hospices and aged-care facilities have always faced constraints – constraints from within and constraints from further afield. Nevertheless, many have become icons of compassion in New Zealand because they have tried to meet patients and their families and carers at their point of need. Good facilities for the aged or dying embody a moral community of care – one that is specifically shaped by a compassionate paradigm of caring over curing. Such a paradigm neither hastens death when a person’s condition has become onerous, nor does it prolong dying in order to preserve life at all costs.

Often our compassion becomes the only means for people at the end of life to discover the very face of God. If not us – then who? ■

# Don't just go to church: become the church

*At a recent retreat for Presbyterian ministers one participant,  
Jason Eberhart-Phillips, threw out this challenge:  
how biblical are our accepted values?*

**T**he Church in the Bible is one where there is a profound sharing of God-given gifts. In such a Church individual members become radically dependent upon Jesus *and* upon each other in loving human relationships.

In the Church God-loving people come together and pour themselves out in love for one another. They learn to love and depend upon God and on one another so much that they are transformed into a corporate whole – into the very Body of Christ. Speaking the truth in love, they grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. Together they attain the full stature of Christ.

This is not an easy lesson for people in our times. This is because our culture has lost the sense of the corporate. That loss puts us at a real disadvantage in transforming the Church into the holy household, the temple-family, the loving, interdependent body that reveals God to the powers and principalities.

It's not our fault – we don't have any say about the culture we are born into, or what the prevailing values are at the time we live. But we must face the fact that we live in a culture destructive of community building, detrimental to body forming, and unsupportive of self-sacrificing love.

Having been soaked in the values of the prevailing culture, we inevitably bring 21st century, individualistic glasses to the Bible, to our faith, and to our concept of Church. We tend to see in the Bible only what our culture trains us to look for.

Most Sunday worshippers today would be surprised to learn that Paul and the

other writers aren't primarily concerned with the private relationships of believers with their God. Instead, the letters are dealing with how churches are to live their lives corporately, growing up together in Christ.

The singular word for '*you*' doesn't appear anywhere in Paul's letters to the churches. Instructions, like those in Paul's letters, are not primarily to guide individual Christians in their dealings with the world. They are about living with those to whom we are joined in the local church, bearing one another in love, growing together into the full stature of Christ.

**W**ithout the horizontal and corporate love among the sisters and brothers in the Church, there is no vertical and personal relationship with Jesus. Our confusion about such things grows out of deep cultural distortions that affect us all. In his book, John Alexander has summed up these distortions in the acronym of

*our culture  
in the west has  
lost its sense of  
the corporate*

FIRE – freedom, individualism, rights and equality. These are core values in Western cultures today. They are so pervasive, so universally accepted, that it is hard for us to imagine anything else.

So, let's define our terms:

## 1. Freedom

The freedom to choose one's future, to choose one's religion, to choose one's brand of laundry detergent, to choose

one's electricity supply company – faith in one's personal freedom is a fundamental tenet throughout the Western world.

Because I'm free to do what's best for me, so what if I get bored with one church and switch to another? So what if I get a job in another town and change churches again? Where freedom is paramount, commitment is odd and unusual. So churches don't even require it. Eventually Christians sitting together in church have so few roots, so few connections, that it becomes impossible to speak the truth, let alone in love.

## 2. Individualism

We sometimes poke fun at the self-sufficient Kiwi bloke who can fix any problem with a piece of No. 8 wire, who never needs anyone's help – even asking someone for directions. Our culture has instilled in us the overriding value of being in control of one's life, of being the master of one's destiny. How do we reach independent free-thinkers pursuing their own self-fulfilment, with Jesus' instruction to 'deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me'?

## 3. Rights

There is no word for *rights* in Hebrew, Greek or Latin. This is a relatively new concept, more or less invented by Enlightenment philosophers, and put into practice by John Locke and the Founding Fathers of the American Revolution.

Rights are self-proclaimed entitlements – entitlements we bitterly resent giving up. Rights denied create victims, joyless people who dwell on past injustices real or imagined. The assertion of rights creates anxiety, sets up competition, and destroys community. Talk of rights

has no place in the Church, but it is everywhere in our culture.

#### 4. Equality

No doubt, God loves everyone equally. And I would far rather live in a country where laws are applied equally to all people than where some are exempt. But equality doesn't mean we all have the same gifts any more than it means we all have the same height. Some people are smarter than others, some are wiser, some are blessed with abilities to lead in certain ways.

But in a culture like ours that takes equality too far, we don't want leaders we can follow. When they stick up their heads like tall poppies, we knock them down. We say, "I'm as good as you are – why should I listen to you?" There is no chance in such a climate for those given the gifts to lead the Church to use their gifts, to devote their lives to the body and grow together with others into the full stature of Christ.

#### The values of today's world

These basic values are everywhere. In a globalising world, there are fewer and fewer places where FIRE values haven't gained an insidious hold. Certainly not Russia any more, and people in China are making it clear to their government that they want more FIRE, not less. Presidents and prime ministers are elected by promising more FIRE. Even dictators these days must at least pay lip service to FIRE.

Indigenous peoples have been remarkably susceptible to the FIRE virus. Their agendas today sometimes read straight from the pages of John Locke or Thomas Jefferson. Perhaps only the Muslim fundamentalists are still holding out, refusing to adopt a FIRE lifestyle – and doesn't it make us furious!

No, FIRE is the cultural paradigm that virtually everyone agrees on today. Young and old, liberal or conservative, socialist or capitalist, everyone concurs with FIRE without a second thought. FIRE is so widely accepted that it has

become invisible to us, like water is to fish.

Take any issue with moral or ethical implications and see FIRE at work. We post-modern Westerners may not agree on the acceptability of sex outside of marriage. Liberals and conservatives may take very different positions. But nearly everyone agrees that adults must be *free* to decide on this for themselves. It is an *individual's* choice. After all, dictating the sexual behaviour of adults violates their *rights*. Who am I to tell you how to behave? Aren't we *equals*?

*the problem is –  
our values are bad.  
They aren't biblical*

Or take religious education in schools. The left opposes it because it violates the rights of children who come from non-religious homes. The right supports it to protect the rights of those who want to learn about questions of faith. Right and left can't see eye to eye on religious education, but they wholeheartedly agree on the centrality of FIRE.

The politics of HIV/AIDS in Western countries like ours is all about FIRE. The abortion debate too is constructed in terms of FIRE – for one side the issue is about the rights of the woman. For the other side it is the rights of the unborn child. The whole argument is hopelessly selfish – it's all about freedom, personal fulfilment, getting what's mine, building walls of hostility instead of breaking them down. It's about creating victims, stirring up resentments – putting self before the good of others.

Some people say that we live at a time with no agreed-upon values. I think they're wrong. We have a thoroughly developed and almost universally accepted value system based on freedom, individualism, rights and equality. The problem isn't that we don't have values. The problem is that our values are bad. They aren't biblical values. They aren't

values that build community or create churches whose members speak the truth in love.

#### The biblical response

FIRE is a big lie. Nothing in the Bible teaches us FIRE. Biblical values are the antithesis of FIRE. As horrendous as it may sound to Western ears, the New Testament teaches death to self, submission, forgiveness, turning the other cheek, unity, humility and, most of all, love. It teaches that suffering is righteousness, that taking on the pain and suffering of sin will bring redemption.

In the New Testament it's not the world's kind of freedom that matters. It is being a joyful slave to Christ and knowing true freedom that counts. It is not being me, the rugged individual, that matters. It is saying, *'It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me'* that counts. It is not exerting rights that matters. It is submitting to one another in love out of reverence for Christ that counts. It is not demanding equality that matters. It is meekness that counts, accepting that in Christ's kingdom those who are the least are the greatest.

What then can we learn from Scripture to become the Church in a world consumed by FIRE? There are probably hints on every page, but I'll conclude with just a few verses from Paul's *Letter to the Colossians*:

*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

*And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful (3:12-15). ■*

*The writer, Jason Phillips, insists he owes these ideas to American author, the late John Alexander*

*Albert Moore reviews a beautiful new book on  
Christian Art which concentrates on contemporary  
works from all round the world*



*Christ For All People: Celebrating a world of Christian art*  
edited by Ron O'Grady  
Pace publishing, Auckland, 2001 and Asian Christian  
Art association  
Price: \$49.95NZ (159pp illustrated)  
Review: Albert Moore

# Christ for

This is a lovely book with an inviting title. The invitation continues through the wealth of colour illustrations; these come from 60 countries and do indeed celebrate a world of Christian art in a truly ecumenical way for our age.

The editor, Ron O'Grady, is able to draw on his long ecumenical experience of ministry and social and cultural concern in New Zealand, Australia and Asia. Among his earlier writings are his provocative meditations in *The Song of Jesus* (1984) and *The Bible Through Asian Eyes* (1991), an art book in association with Masao Takenaka and the Asian Christian Art Association in which he has been active since 1978. The present book which he edits is the product of many contacts with artists and writers and includes comments on the art works from 32 other writers – a truly ecumenical collaboration. In addition to the New Zealand publisher, it is published by *World Council of Churches, Geneva*, and *Orbis Books* of Maryknoll, U.S.A.

This distinctive approach stands out by comparison with another recent book of Christian art which is also excellent in its own way. I refer to *The Image of Christ*, the catalogue of the exhibition *Seeing Salvation* based on the National Gallery, London, 2000. Its focus on key themes of Jesus as both 'God and Man' provides many insights into the theology and iconography of Christian art – on sign and symbol, on the 'true image' of Christ, on his sufferings and abiding presence. But it is a very Western selection and lacks any contemporary non-Western art and ecumenical vision such as the offerings in this book, *Christ for All People*.

Our book opens with a useful sample from the European tradition of art from the Roman catacombs to Michelangelo and Rembrandt, (occupying the first tenth of the book).

Then it launches into "Christ our Contemporary" with a four-page introduction by Michael J. Farrell, former editor of the *National Catholic Reporter* (U.S.A.). This is essential reading as it outlines vividly the 20th century decline in producing new and vital Christian art and the answer he discovered by sponsoring a *Jesus 2000* project in the form of an art competition. Out of 1678 entries from 19 countries, the winner was chosen by the well-known British writer on art, Sr Wendy Beckett. The work *Jesus of the People* (by Janet McKenzie, 1999) is reproduced in the book and followed by a full face *Portrait of Jesus* by Uttarananda, a Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka influenced





# all people

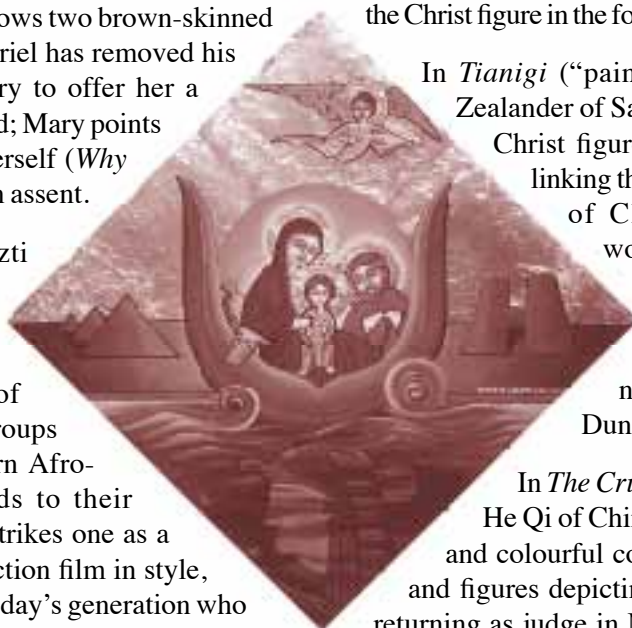
by Christianity (*see above centre*). There is an intriguing ambiguity between the Buddhist sense of ‘the enlightened One’ with half-closed eyes and the Christian sense of the Risen Lord in saffron-coloured glory.

**T**he remainder of the book follows out the pattern of the gospels’ accounts of Christ from the Annunciation to the Cross and Resurrection. From a wealth of art works, some striking examples can be mentioned.

A striking *Annunciation* (*opposite page, bottom right*) from Paul Woelfel of Nigeria shows two brown-skinned Nigerian figures; the angel Gabriel has removed his sandals and kneels before Mary to offer her a holy letter of invitation from God; Mary points with her right-hand finger to herself (*Why me?*) – but raises her left hand in assent.

In *Incarnation* Fernando Arizti (Mexico/USA, 1989) shows a black Christ descending (*see page 18 top*) from the radiance of the great hand of God, Emmanuel, to earthly groups of Africans, slaves and modern Afro-Americans who look upwards to their incarnate Liberator. At first it strikes one as a kitsch melodrama or a space-fiction film in style, but it is a reminder of many in today’s generation who visualise in these forms.

A complete contrast comes in the charming modern (2001) Coptic icon by Hany Sameer of Egypt with his *Holy Family on the River Nile* with pyramids in the background (*this is reproduced inset above*).



In *Christ and the Fisherman* (1998) the Indonesian artist and dancer Bagong Kussudiardja shows Christ as a casual figure on the beach with rough black hair and beard wearing a singlet and shorts – and sunglasses! (*reproduced above*) In this informal way he identifies with the fishermen to whom he is speaking and who will become his disciples.

In the *Last Supper* (1993) Margaret Ackland of Australia does not confine the disciples to men but includes women and children gathered round the table celebration. The variety of faces show a powerful range of emotions as they turn towards the Christ figure in the foreground with his back towards us.

In *Tianigi* (“painful”) Michael Tuffery, a New Zealander of Samoan descent, shows a crucified Christ figure with a full body tattoo (*pe’a*) linking the painful process to the sufferings of Christ. This impressive large woodcut print (*reproduced at the end of the article, page 18*) was made by the youthful Tuffery in 1988 and a copy is placed near the entrance to the chapel in Dunedin Public Hospital.

In *The Crucifixion* (“Last Judgment”) 1999, He Qi of China achieves a strikingly powerful and colourful combination of the crucified Lord and figures depicting the words of the Son of Man returning as judge in Matthew 25. Gathered round the Cross are parents bringing their sick and hungry children, a naked woman seeking clothing, a man behind bars in prison: *Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me. (Mt 25:40)*. He Qi’s work was illustrated in the December 2000 *Tui Motu*.





In his *Incarnation* Fernando Arizti (Mexico/USA, 1989) shows a black Christ descending from the radiance of the great hand of God

In this endless variety and plurality of representations of Jesus as the Christ, in different settings and cultures, we find this universal Risen Christ – not only in visual images but in words and interpretations which challenge us to new insights and new ventures of action in life. So this book can be experienced not merely as a collection of art works but as a witness to the continuing creative discovery of the Risen Lord in our changing world.

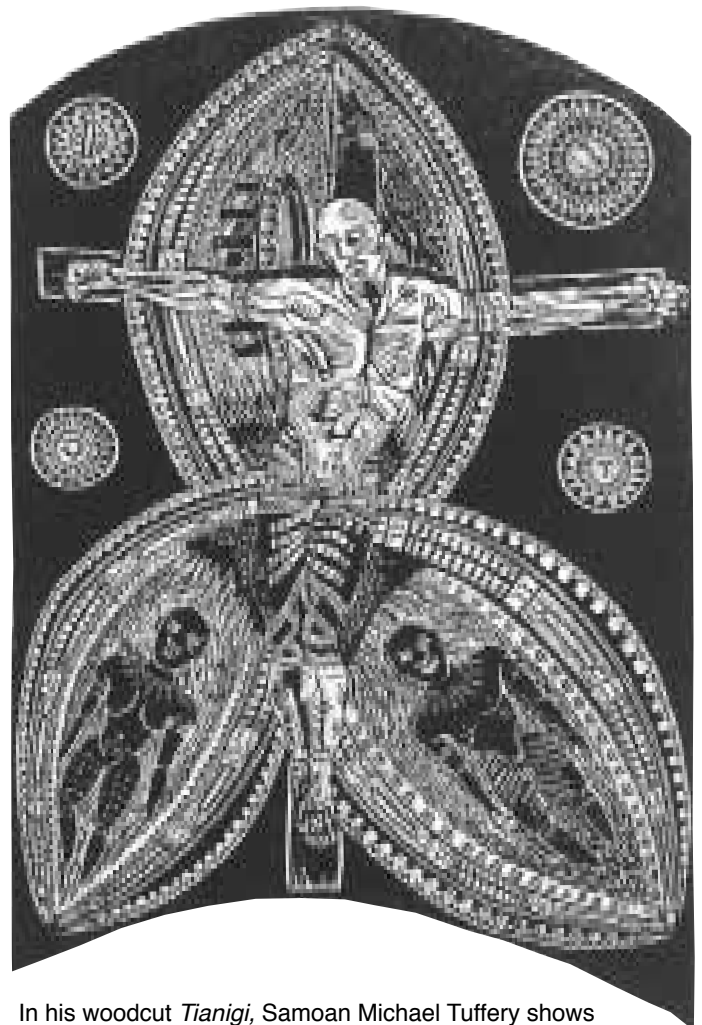
This leads on to the value of this book as a resource for discovering new insights and possibilities through these pictures. It is a book to enjoy, to savour and to ponder. One can return to the book and find new things to learn and to value. For this reason, as well as for its comprehensive interest, it is a book to keep.

It is good value and would make a worthwhile gift – consider it for your Christmas list! And welcome the next year of the 21st century, not with anxieties about conflicts tearing the world apart, but with a vision of a world linked by faith, hope and love. ■

▷▷ The message of the painting thus relates the suffering Christ to the needs of people in today's world under the dove of the Holy Spirit. The emphasis is positively on the meeting of these urgent needs, not on judgment as separation of the sheep from the goats. This picture has an original and probing thrust.

These samples indicate that the book offers, not a definitive selection, but a stimulus to look and listen to a rich variety of voices from the range of world Christianity and from artists (not all Christian in commitment) who are open to religious themes. It will lead on to further selections and interpretations in the future. In his concluding comments Ron O'Grady reinforces the purpose of the book: "We discover that Christ wears many garments and speaks a variety of different languages". Our journey reaffirms "that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ for all people".

We do well to follow this up by asking how this Jesus of Nazareth can also become a black Incarnate Christ or a Samoan or Chinese figure in the Crucifixion. I have come to see these representations as the Risen Lord. For the Resurrection is not to be regarded as another event in the life story of Jesus which needs a happy ending after his crucifixion and death; it is of a different order, a re-visioning of the earthly Jesus who is now released from a limited time and place to be free for all the world, for all peoples.



In his woodcut *Tianigi*, Samoan Michael Tuffery shows a crucified Christ figure with full body tattoo, linking the painful process to the sufferings of Christ

# Chalice in Cathedral Square

Photos: David Gee



The people of Christchurch have adorned the base of the Chalice sculpture with their response to the New York terrorist attack



The Chalice sculpture in Cathedral Square, Christchurch

Dawson had in mind the Cathedral as the principal structure of the Square. His chalice reflects the Cathedral spire, inverted. It also forms a trinity, and a sort of symmetry, with Gilbert Scott's Cathedral and Trethewey's very fine cenotaph on its northern side.

The chalice seems to spout from the ground in a conscious reference to the living spring of which Jesus spoke to the woman at the well. It is a tribute as much to Christchurch's Anglican Church origins as to the artesian water supply with which the city is blessed. Many of the angles in the sculpture reflect and complement the lines of windows and arches in its stone gothic neighbour. The scale is such that neither structure overshadows the other.

The leaves are representative of a complete forest ecosystem that lies lost beneath Cathedral Square. This pre-historic forest was buried under thousands of tonnes of river gravels when the Waimakariri River coursed through it in the melting of the last Ice Age.

It is ironic that an embattled city council once proclaimed loudly that no rate-payers' money went into *The Chalice*, which was funded by the Community Trust and the Lottery Grants Board. Given the rapturous reception the sculpture has received since completion, councillors facing elections now clamour to be associated with the project. ■

*Michael Crean*

When the enormity of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre began to sink in, many Christchurch people felt compelled to lay floral tributes in Cathedral Square. Surprisingly, they did not place them at the Cathedral entrance, or at the base of the war memorial cenotaph. They laid them, instead, around the circular granite base of *The Chalice*.

Considerable controversy surrounded *The Chalice* project over the last two years. The arguments that raged back and forth have been pushed aside by the silent voice of Christchurch residents who have said it with flowers. Internationally known sculptor Neil Dawson, who lives and works in the Christchurch suburb of Linwood, chose a religious theme for his commissioned work to mark the new millennium and the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Canterbury.

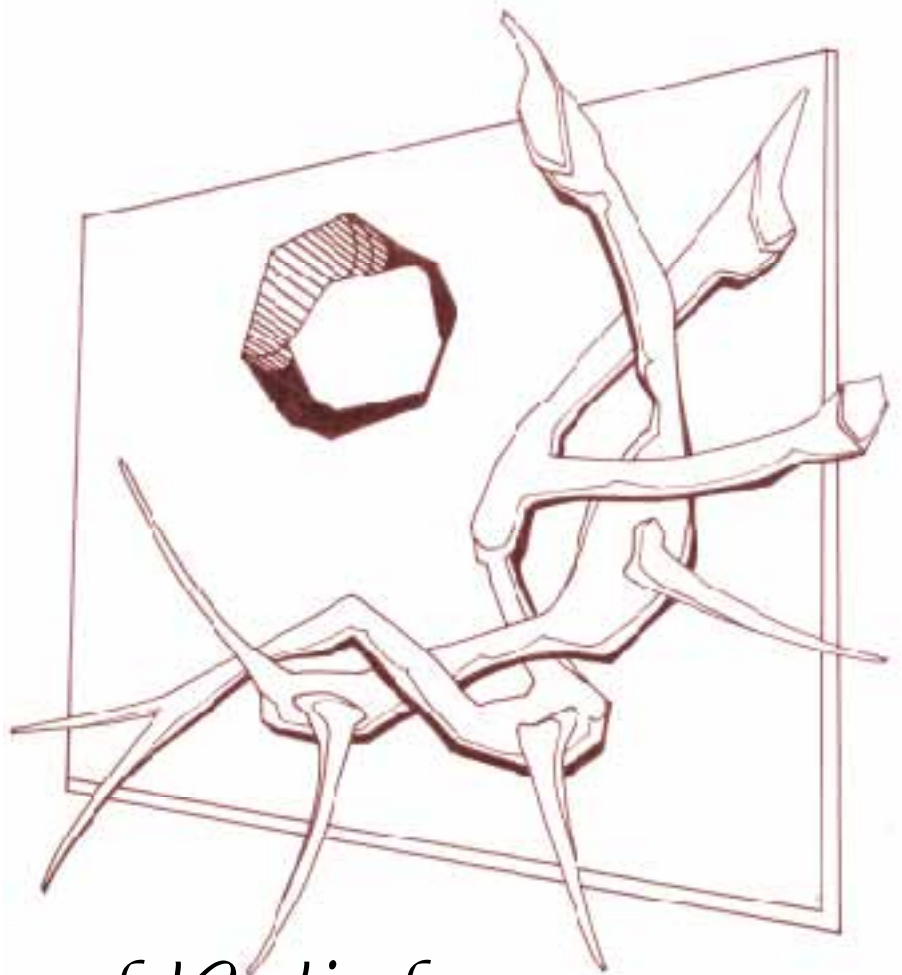
*Turning Point 2000*, the body set up by the Christchurch City Council to

coordinate millennium projects, asked Dawson to provide a presentation of an idea for a modern, outdoor sculpture in abstract style to stand in Cathedral Square. The artistic committee of *Turning Point 2000* was aware that Dawson's works adorned Paris, Kuala Lumpur, and Sydney, but not his home town.

Dawson's concept stunned the committee. It has gone on stunning people, first during the building stage and now as it stands in its completed glory. *The Chalice* is an 18-metre-tall steel object of conical shape, a few metres south of the Cathedral. The bottom section is solid but, above the reach of vandals, the main part soars into a lacy work of huge but finely detailed leaves of native trees.

It is hollow and looks its best at night when illuminated by up-lighting from within the base. The light brings out the beautiful colour contrast of interior blueness seen through the exterior silver filigree of steel leaf shapes.

Pauline O'Regan and  
her community continue  
their journey through the  
Creed, linking the great  
Credal statements into our  
everyday living



## *In Search of Belief*

*I believe ... Jesus ... suffered*



**T**he ancient Church explained the suffering of Jesus as payment to God for our sins. This theory of Atonement had its origins in feudal times when it was held that an offence to a Lord, for instance, could only be satisfied by a person of the same rank – by another Lord. So it followed that if God were offended, they believed that only a God could appease God's anger. If, in 2001, we accept this feudal understanding of God as angry and demanding to be appeased, we have to reject the God revealed by Jesus, who forgives sinners over and over, counts the hairs of our head and lovingly notes the death of a sparrow. No! Jesus did not suffer because God wanted it, but because humans wanted it. Jesus did not come to appease God, but to show us The Way to God. Still, the fact is that he was made to suffer and his suffering

is one of the greatest proofs of his humanity. The Creed does not glorify the suffering of Jesus; it simply records it so that we who come after might never forget the glory of humanity pushed to the very wire, for the sake of the realm of God.

### *... under Pontius Pilate ...*

Pontius Pilate leaps from the Creed, unexpected, unlikely. Why is he there? One likely reason could be for the sake of credibility. The writers of the Creed knew that Pilate places Jesus firmly in secular history. Pontius Pilate *was* the Roman governor of Palestine at that time and he *did* condemn the Nazarene, Jesus, to death. This has been recorded by two ancient historians: Tacitus, the Roman historian, and Josephus, the Jewish one. The Creed is saying

to sceptics that history confirms that these events actually did take place. But perhaps the Creed-writers had another motive, one much more disturbing for us. Pilate lives on. Every time we know that wrong is being done and do not act, whether for fear of rocking the boat, or because of our position, or for the sake of the law, Pilate lives in us. The Creed is saying sadly that Jesus is not yet safe with me.

### *I believe... Jesus was crucified...*

How did this terrible thing come about? The easy (and equally terrible) answer is, because God willed it. God did not put Jesus on the Cross. Sin put Jesus there. If we believe that God demanded that Jesus die as a 'payment' for our sins, we generate a negative, life-denying spirituality which Joan Chittister's

professor used to describe as ‘dancing is bad, drinking is bad, haemorrhoids are good!’ Our community made a resolution never again to sing the verse of *How Great Thou Art* that proclaims that God ‘sent him to die’. One remnant of the Atonement theory that persists to our day is our tendency to con-centrate on the Cross alone as the source of our redemption, and to ignore the redemptive value of the life that preceded it. All of Jesus’ life was as important in the work of our redemption as was his death – it was his ‘life, death and resurrection’ that gained for us eternal life. Indeed, it was the sheer goodness of his life – healing (Sabbath or not), treating women with respect, forgiving adulterers, cleansing the Temple – that made the religious leaders hate him and lead inexorably to their killing him.

Nothing has changed. If we stand up against contemporary injustices as he did, we too will suffer, and if we transcend our suffering as he did, it will become our greatest glory as it was his.

### *I believe...Jesus died, was buried ... and descended into hell...*

When it says that Jesus died, the Creed once again takes a stand for the humanity of Jesus. Jesus *did* die, it proclaims, in the same way as every other human being dies. If Jesus died, who are we to escape death? And if Jesus did not escape death, what need have we to fear it? Why, we might ask, did God choose death for this last Rite of Passage? Why not an Assumption or some other form of transition?

The answer could lie in the very fearfulness that death inspires in us. It is the thought of death, more than anything else, that can stop us in our tracks, that helps us pause and take stock of our lives. Most often it is a funeral that prompts us to assess the direction and values of our life. It is thanks to Death that we survive the lethal disease of invincibility. Death can give life to life.

### *... descended into hell ...*

These words did not appear in the Creed of the Universal Church until the Middle Ages. For all those centuries, the Church remained silent about where Jesus went immediately after his death, opting to live with the mystery of not-knowing.

### *On the third day he rose again from the dead ...*

The tomb was empty, Jesus was alive. He appeared to women first, then to the disciples, then to the people on the road. But none of them recognised him at first. That was strange. All the people to whom he appeared knew him well. Why then? This was Jesus all right, they knew he was real, but he was different. Jesus was transformed. He did not live with them now, he simply ‘came’.

Clearly Jesus had not left them, but he had become what he was meant to be. Jesus had transcended Death for himself and for every one of us as well. Because of him, we too will know this glorious transformation. The Resurrection of Jesus is not about the revivification of an old life. It is the experience of a new life entirely. Resurrection testifies to the metamorphosis of the Jesus of history to the Christ of faith. The Jesus of history, born in Bethlehem, walked the earth for 33 years. The Christ of faith was born in the Resurrection and lives on in us to the end of time from one generation to another in the hearts of Christians.

Christ now has no hands but ours to serve the world, no lips but ours to speak words of forgiveness, compassion, affirmation to the people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We share his life as the branches share the life of the vine. That is the glorious miracle of the Resurrection.

### *I believe ... he ascended into heaven ...*

Only one evangelist, Luke, speaks of the Ascension. He is introducing us to the Christian paradox of being fully immersed in this world without ever

losing sight of the next. We all know people who, in the humdrum of their daily lives, are never far from heaven in their heart. Even though we are worldly ourselves, we can discern the mystical dimension in another’s life. When we do that, we are recognising that the words ‘cloister’ and ‘contemplation’ are not synonymous.

The cloister is only *one* road to contemplation. Jesus had no cloister, he was totally immersed in his world, but his inner eye was fixed on God. To speak of ‘the contemplative life’ as if there were only one is to ignore the contemplative dimension of all life – the mother who experiences the presence of God while bathing her baby, the priest as he absolves the sinner, the nurse who touches God in a dying patient.

The disciples returned to Jerusalem ‘with great joy’ after the Ascension. They remembered the Jesus of history, but they were now immersed in the Christ of faith. They began their ‘contemplative life’ knowing that God is to be found everywhere, that all life is holy, that the entire world is sacramental, that everything speaks of God.

### *... he shall come again ...*

We say these words so glibly, yet no part of the Gospel has inspired more passion, more fantasy, more wild speculation, than the Second Coming of Christ. When we pause to think, *he will come again*, we have to wrestle with hope and come to terms with guilt. Which Christ will come? Will it be an avenging Christ seeking perfection who strikes fear in the heart? Or will it be the Christ who forgave everyone – adulterous women, possessed men, traitorous followers, the enemies who killed him?

These words of the Creed are not there to strike fear, but to inspire hope. The judge who is coming has the heart of the Jesus we trust. ■

## Violence and hope in Indonesia

The highways of Yogyakarta vibrate with the sound of an endless procession of the army's assault and patrol tanks, followed by ten or so fire brigade and ambulance units. Today is the day of Magawati's election to the presidency of Indonesia. The army appears to be saying: "Nothing here happens without us". At midday, the Sultan of Yogya, wearing a special T-shirt, addresses a meeting organised by the Inter-Faith Committees, anxious to respond to the 'religious' violence of previous years.

As special foreign guests from *Pax Christi* we are requested to take our seats on the podium. There are about 20,000 people in attendance. Balloons and doves are released. The crowd chants "Yogia damai!" (Yogia is peace!).

I want to recall Martin Luther King. He had a dream. I have a dream too! May our Yogya propagate a spirit of peace throughout Indonesia! The Catholic priest says a prayer, followed by the Kyai (a Muslim religious), a clergyman, a Buddhist monk, a Hindu priest and a woman who prays according to the

Javanese tradition. Incense is burned. The crowd applauds enthusiastically.

In this huge country, which is politically complex, the foreigner who puts forward his own opinions and balanced views runs a heavy risk. What is beyond doubt is that the call to peace makes an impact. A few days ago, we attended a planning meeting to organise a series of peace initiatives under the aegis of the prince of Solo. A political observer from the Dutch embassy is convinced that these interreligious groups have their roots in the process of transformation which has become an integral part of their identity and should not be underestimated within this very religious country. Budi Susanto, a young enthusiastic Jesuit, says it is essential not only to work among the poor but also to ensure that the Indonesian elite is better trained. He organises seminars. He considers that religious differences are highlighted by fanatics and for political ends.

It is not easy for a Western observer to assess the true importance of a theological debate between Muslims and Christians in bringing about the

peaceful development of Indonesia. Faith in one God is proclaimed in Article 1 of the Indonesian state-philosophy. The Director of *Interfidei* uses it to underpin his assertion that it is a crime to affirm that followers of other religions are 'infidels'.

In Djakarta we race to the parish church of St Anna by taxi. On the previous Sunday a bomb went off there during the morning mass attended by 800 people. It made a huge hole in the pavement. The smell of the fire is omnipresent, there are traces of blood everywhere, the roof has been destroyed, and the furniture is all mangled. It is a miracle that no one was killed and that the statue of Jesus, close to the explosion remained intact.

There were however dozens of people wounded including a young girl of 14 and a young man who lost a leg. We sign a memorial book and talk to the parishioners who hide their grief behind their ever-present Javanese smile. We promise to go and visit the victims the next day to wish them the peace of Christ. For most this peace signifies hope and solidarity for all those of good will.

*Gied ten Berge*  
*Pax Christi co-operator*

## 'POPE' in India

Small loans at low cost enable women farmers to purchase livestock – cows, buffaloes, goats or poultry, which in turn provide waste material to boost their organically grown crops. Others have bought seeds and fertilisers with their loans, while still others have benefited by means of emergency medical expenditure. All made possible through the activities of the People's Organisation for People's Education (POPE) Trust, a Christian World Service partner in Southern India.

These poor people avoid the need to go to the money lenders, who charge exorbitant interest. One woman, Mrs P Rani, took a loan in order to repay a

money lender. She repays 5 rupees per month to POPE instead of 70 rupees to the money lender.

Tremendous changes are taking place which impact on the lifestyle of the people. The introduction of technology-based farming threatens their subsistence agriculture as well as local crafts and forest-based production, thus reducing employment. The women are encouraged to take constructive action to protect their livelihood, and to participate in community bodies which decide on the use of resources and in actions to protect the environment.

(*Christian World Service*)



# Sunday Mass the world over

*It is the same Eucharist – yet different churches overseas each have their own flavour of celebration. On a recent trip Tom Cloher notes both the liturgy and the ambience. Do they reflect the health of the local Christian community?*

## **17 June 2001: a Basilica in central Buenos Aires: 11 a.m.**

A rather wind-swept 10-degree-Celsius morning as people gather for what is apparently a children's Mass as at least 40 children are eager to lead the singing at the front of the altar. The singing is melodious and enthusiastic. The basilica is crowded. The priest – about 36 years of age – coordinates the liturgy with flair, absorbing his young congregation (and their parents and grand-parents!) by consistently involving the children, aided by a flawless sound system.

Witness the homily which obviously centres upon the preparation of bread for the offering and the Eucharist: a fully 'uniformed' baker complete with tall white hat appears to demonstrate how the bread is prepared for baking while the priest keeps checking with the children what they think, and whether they have any questions.

The dialogue with the children is transparently successful, and as Mass proceeds this ensures the rapt attention of the adults present also. The children's remarks are obviously apt as well as entertaining. (*Do we maximise the potential of children in the Sunday Mass setting, we wondered?*)

Of course, this Mass could have been a rare event, but it did not seem so, as the confidence of the children indicated the experience was not exceptional. Noteworthy too was the presence of two girls, about 11, who accompanied the priest throughout the Mass even to being either side of him at the altar at the consecration. At Communion time we notice people approach the altar from the back of the church in serried order, clearly different from the contrary tradition we observe. Does it represent an application of the gospel ideal: 'the last shall be first'?



After Mass I notice a couple with two children; the father, though obviously Argentinean, wears an Irish international football jersey. He satisfies my curiosity by explaining that there is a substantial Irish community in Buenos Aires. Then his 11-year-old boy pipes up to ask which Super 12 rugby team did I support? Have we really left New Zealand?

PS. Yes, we did stop briefly in Rio de Janeiro and the superlative statue of Christ overlooking the city is just as striking as the innumerable photo shots portray. As we left Rio the guide exclaimed to our group: "You will always be welcome here. We will embrace you as the Christ embraces our city".

## **24 June: Chester, England: 5.30 p.m.**

Another land, another clime, midsummer in fact, as about 180 gather for the vigil Mass. The priest is not short, but he is preceded by an altar boy in a red cassock who is easily over 6 ft. There is no singing and only one reader who also leads the prayers of the faithful, an arrangement that proves to be customary in many British churches.

The homily reveals a keen sense of history as the priest links midsummer festivities with the feast of St John the Baptist, the church's patron. He points out that as far back as the 16th century bonfires were lit on the hills surrounding Chester to celebrate both midsummer and the feast of the Baptist.

Our hostess had dropped us off for Mass before proceeding home to prepare an evening meal. A thoughtful appeal by the priest for someone to deliver us home again evokes a very generous response, four cars no less.



Ely Cathedral

### **1 July: Redditch**

A Benedictine foundation (1834), the parish is now staffed with three diocesan priests and associated ministers. This Saturday evening Mass gathers about 200, including a noticeable proportion of young people: the woman reader is a 16-year-old. There is plentiful and effective singing without organ accompaniment. The congregation seems to expect the parish priest to say something interesting and humorous – and he doesn't disappoint them. For example, he refers to St Ignatius Loyola as a spiritual bungee jumper!

One of the curates tells us later that he is designing a parish website. This inspires me to recommend one from a parish in Auckland, which he promptly calls up and seems duly impressed.

### **9 July: The Oratory, Birmingham**

Our hosts generously convey us many kilometres to reach the famous Oratory where the illustrious Cardinal Newman spent much of his productive life and where his mortal remains are interred. The Oratory is a splendid church, as elegant as the Basilica in Buenos Aires. It is about two-thirds filled for this 10 a.m. Mass. The altar does not face the people, nor is there any singing. Additional priests emerge to assist the

celebrant distribute communion. The vernacular is used and an invitation to exchange the kiss of peace extended, but the overall experience is one of revisiting the past.

### **14 July: Ely Cathedral**

Wherever you go in the fen country you only have to look up to see it there, riding the sky like a great ship. It's easy to visit Cambridge without going to Ely, so we remain grateful to those who urged us not to let this happen. It's very accessible, only 30 minutes by train. (*I realise this visit is a 'deviation' from the Mass-going schedule, but Ely is an act of worship in itself*).

The cathedral site dates back 1238 years when Queen Etheldreda, a convert to Christianity, was given the island of Ely as a wedding present from her husband, Eggfrith, king of Northumbria. At age 42 she gathered a community of monks and nuns, and for seven years as abbess her wisdom and piety were legend.

The cathedral was built by the Normans about 1109. It is simply superb: from outside arresting enough, but its interior even more so with soaring pillars, wonderful light spilling everywhere, and all things in balance. Somehow its sheer size is inviting rather than overpowering. Magnificent acoustics too, well tested during our visit by the Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra in full rehearsal playing Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony*. Fortunately, this great cathedral has been splendidly preserved and enhanced, its maintenance and administration being a credit to its Anglican custodians.

### **14 July: Our Lady and the English Martyrs (OLEM), Cambridge**

In a city with its fair share of spires, OLEM is no blushing violet. Situated on a busy intersection it could accommodate 800. This vigil Mass gathered at least 300 including a notable proportion of younger people, maybe attributable to its surrounding student population.

Two parishioners welcome folk in the porch, equipping us with Mass and hymn books. (The three hymns we sing prove to be very traditional). Two young women process to the altar with the celebrant and remain with him throughout the Mass. The homily was read from behind the altar which exaggerated the already considerable distance between priest and people.

### **Westend: Berlin**

We walk to the *Church of the Holy Spirit* to join about 120 people for 10 a.m. Mass. There are some children but very few young people. The church is very effectively redesigned to respond to contemporary worship. The sanctuary spread the entire width of the church and is only a couple of steps above congregational level. We encounter the language barrier, but the priest obviously engages his audience during a seven minute homily. The liturgy is well prepared, aided by a good reader and commentator and a very competent organist who succeeds, despite a powerful pipe organ, in not drowning out the singing. No kiss of peace is invited and after 45 minutes

Mass concludes with the celebrant exiting by a side door and nowhere to be seen afterwards.

### ***St Hedwig's, Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Berlin***

St Hedwig's from outside seems rather squat as its green dome embraces the entire cathedral. Inside, its simplicity is riveting. The seating is semi-circular and places people quite close to the sanctuary, which is only marginally higher than the congregation would be. Furnishings and the stone and glasswork are of the very highest order but never ostentatious; even the pipe organ blends in rather than assert its presence. Overall, the interior projects a combination of modesty and majesty, creating a place that could as easily house the requiem of a Chancellor or a Mass for youth on Saturday afternoon.

### ***Bodenmais, Bavaria. Church of Our Lady of the Assumption***

We are in traditional Catholic Germany. The parish church is in the midst of the town, has a spire visible from afar and a clock with four faces to keep the townspeople on time. Catholic presence is traceable to AD 1000 and this church from 1705.

The celebrant seems a genial character, probably in his 50s. His homily also lasts 7 minutes (is there an edict about length of sermons?). The singing is melodious and energetic, aided by an excellent pipe organ and organist. Once again the altar is very successfully adapted for modern liturgical expectations with a pulpit which puts the priest in touch with his congregation. Five altar girls assist the celebrant in a variety of ways including the taking up the collections. The reader is a woman and so is the Eucharistic minister. Is this saying something about the future of women and ministry, occurring as it does in the conservative heart of Catholic Germany? Once again the priest seems to disappear without a trace after Mass.

As we leave I take a rather striking looking brochure from the exit table: a 32-page booklet outlining the programmes of the Catholic and Lutheran parishes for the year in Bodenmais. The history of each community is outlined and details of worship for each month of the year provided. The mutuality of the publication says something for the state of ecumenism in the area.

### ***4 August: Alt-Otting***

Ecumenism has another day out as our friends, Mary-Rose and Brian, (possessed of sound Anglican and Presbyterian credentials) lead us unerringly to the Marian shrine of Alt-Otting. Their Bavarian friend Franz is our special guide. He declares it "the heart of Bavaria" and has an uncle, a Capuchin monk buried there. He declares that it ranks third amongst the great Marian shrines of Europe. It is a complex of churches gathered around a Lady Chapel which is virtually draped, outside and in, with testimonies of gratitude for favours wrought by Our Lady, and pictures illustrating many of the incidents. A large parish church on one side is busy with

some 60 youth engaged in a seminar. Another large church honours St Conrad. Close by, the basilica is alive with at least a thousand people singing Benediction; and finally a considerable Jesuit Church completes the circuit of worshipful spaces; it too is alive with visitors.

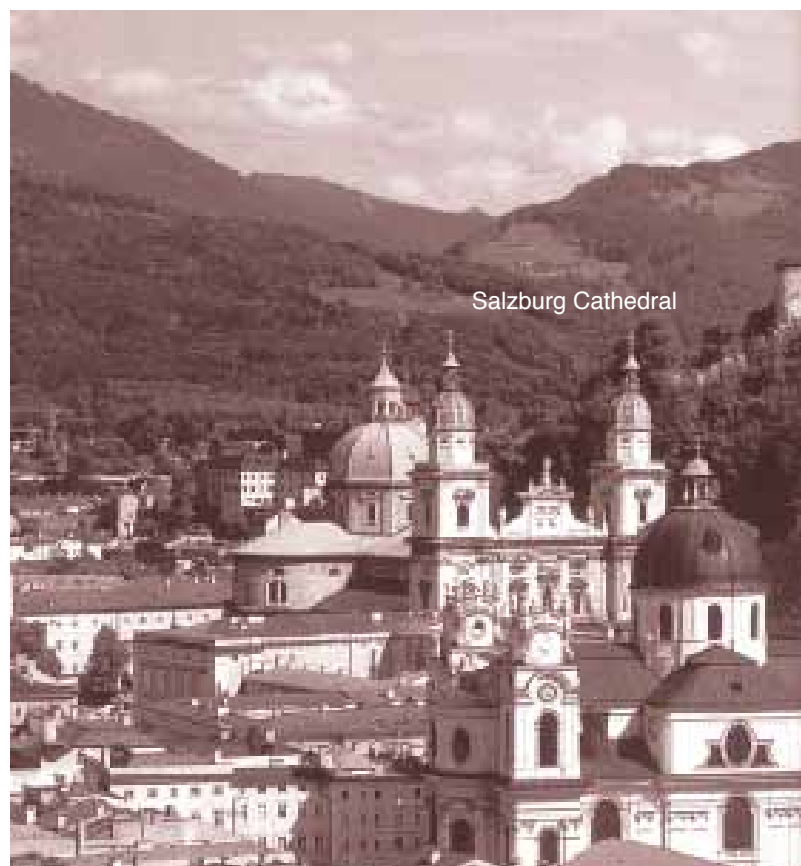
The usual stalls of second-rate religious art often associated with places of pilgrimage are there in abundance, but the spirit of prayer pervading Alt-Otting is tangible. It probably inspires us to inquire where we could go to Sunday Mass (tomorrow) so Franz says "Let's go to Salzburg" – just like that.

### ***Salzburg Cathedral***

So at a reasonably early hour we start for Austria, arriving in Salzburg just before 10 a.m. Hundreds are streaming out of the cathedral and hundreds more are streaming in, which prompts Brian to exclaim "this is Mass production"! Indeed it is, perhaps augmented by the fact that the High Mass to-day is Mozart's *Missa Brevis in D Major*, presented with full choir and orchestra. Much of Mozart's music made its debut in this cathedral and his father was choirmaster here for many years.

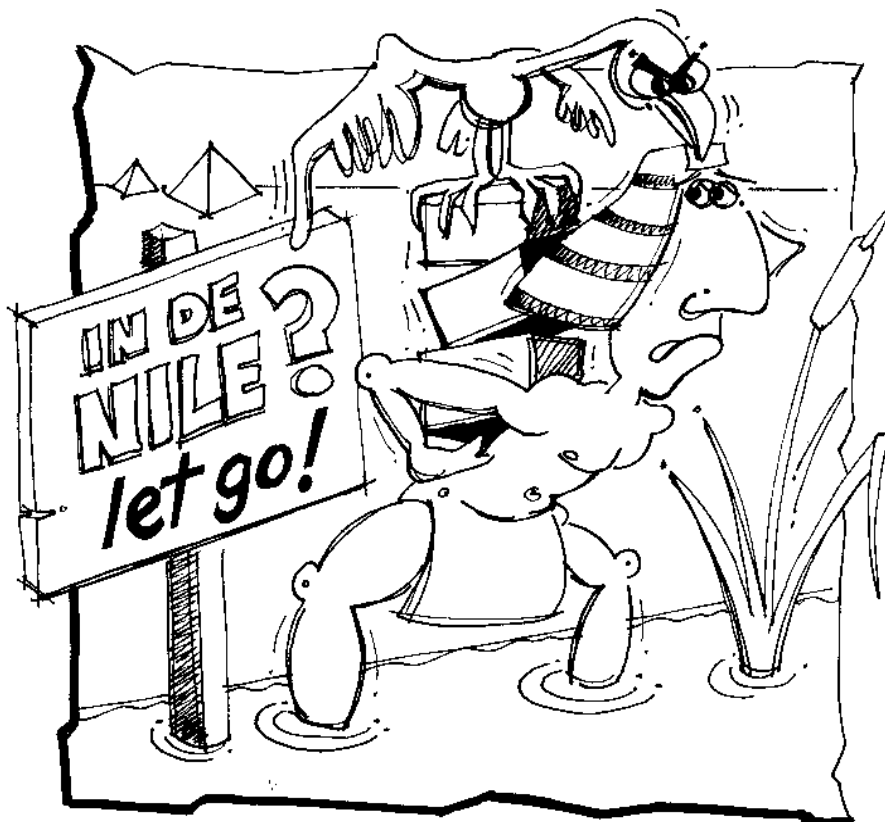
It is a truly magnificent cathedral with abundant light and space and cupola of quite astonishing beauty; yet when a woman about 27 stepped forward to introduce the Mass, (speaking in both English and German) there is no feeling of being dwarfed. Several accessible hymns are included to involve the general congregation, but the Mozart Mass is the dominant contribution and not one of about 1800 Mass-goers want it any other way.

Leaving a cathedral so superbly presented and maintained it is hard to grasp that it had been severely damaged by bombing in October 1944. It took nearly 20 years to rehabilitate it, a triumph surely of faith and skill. ■



# EVEN GOD CANNOT CHANGE THE PAST

Paul Andrews



*Denial is not just the name of a river in Egypt, punned my friend. He was back from a transatlantic course in counselling, where they gave him a long chapter on the way people are in denial. That is not surprising, since part of a counsellor's stock-in-trade is*

uncovering areas of our life that we do not want to think about. *Being in denial* is a phrase of pop psychology that has become a cliché of journalism.

Examples are legion. Youngsters who drink themselves silly every weekend can still persuade themselves that they have no problem with alcohol. Women can blot out from their minds the fear that their husband may be unfaithful. Businessmen can refuse to take a hard look at their accounts in case they discover how hopeless is their financial state. A boy who has been told that his mother is terminally ill, insists to his friends that she is improving all the time.

When the taboo issue is raised, people *in denial* are angry, full of reasons to justify their denial. They remain upset

because they cannot really convince themselves. They cannot succeed in burying unpleasant truths.

My friend Jane was different. She could not keep herself from digging up unpleasant truths long after she should have dealt with them. What began her trouble was a row with her son's school. He was suspended for smoking hash, and she, in a fury at both him and the school, pulled him out, eventually found another school for him, but could not leave the incident behind.

It is difficult for all concerned to come through such a crisis without making some mistakes. The school could have handled the matter more sensitively. Jane could have responded to the Principal as a partner rather than an ogre. And of course the boy had caused

the whole upset by taking drugs.

Once the dust settled, the incident could have taught lessons to all concerned. The boy was able to leave the past behind. So was the school. Jane could not let go. She wrote letter after letter, looking for apologies and changes in the

system. She appealed, in vain, to higher authority. She talked to her friends, and rehearsed the matter incessantly with her son. She was torturing not just herself but everyone in sight, and to no purpose. As the old Greek proverb has it: *Even God cannot change the past.*

There are good and bad ways of dealing with the past. There is suffering that heals, and suffering that keeps wounds open. During twenty years of a sound marriage to Niall, Lara had given him three healthy children. Last summer a new neighbour visited them and fell for Niall. She made no bones about it. Lara could hardly believe her eyes; this stranger was throwing herself at her husband. Worse, he was bemused by her: not unfaithful to Lara, but not rejecting this unscrupulous flirt.

When Lara vented her fury on him, he admitted he had been flattered by this attention to a middle-aged man, but promised it was over, a bit of nonsense. And so it was. The flirt stopped coming, and he stopped seeing her.

The children breathed a sigh of relief. But Lara could not drop it. Night after night she reproached him for being able to look at another woman. *How can you still love me if you do that sort of thing?* In Lara this was not the voice of love, but of wounded pride. Niall was and had been a faithful husband; he did love his wife. But her continued reproaches, and inability to let the past lie, put a strain on the marriage. They had both to draw a line under the episode and leave it behind them. It took many weeks for Lara to realise how badly she was hooked into her destructive resentment. To bury it was not denial, but forgiveness, making a fresh start possible.

Around the same time last summer a woman came to confession in tears, with a single message: *I betrayed my husband*. As she wept, and circled round the story of her unfaithfulness, I could feel her healing in the way that Magdalene must have felt at the feet of Jesus. There was no denial here; nor was there the obsessional hanging on to the

past that tormented Lara. This nameless woman was saying to the Lord: *I have sinned, and I am deeply sorry*. Far from denying the past, she was putting words on what she had done; but she was able to walk away from it with a purpose of amendment. Her remorse was no less painful than Lara's vexation, but it was therapeutic, looking to the future, not the past.

There is a way of hanging on to the past which is worse than any nostalgia. We have too many loaded memories in Ireland. Think of the names that conjure up some of the worst atrocities: Lundy (for the Apprentice Boys), Bloody Sunday, the Omagh Bomb. From memories they become shibboleths, where even uttering the name can be an incitement to hatred.

There is a good way of leaving them behind. We do not deny them, but admit: *That was wicked, a shameful day for Ireland. But it is in the past*. It takes the poison out of them, so that we can move forward. When Jesus found the woman taken in adultery, she was surrounded by stone-throwing zealots in love with their own hatred. When he left her, they had disappeared, unable to throw the first stone. Jesus gave her a fresh start: *Go now, and sin no more* ■

## Letter to America

these dyings  
Hiroshima  
Nagasaki  
New York  
Washington D.C  
cry out for peace  
cry out for warmongering to cease  
so that everyone everywhere  
will put down their guns their planes  
their bombs their missiles  
their shiny weapons of war

so the people of America will rise up  
as the people of Japan did in 1945  
sickened by the carnage  
sickened by the blood on their hands  
and make a stand in the world for peace  
they will cease warmongering and  
become peacemakers  
they will throw their guns on huge  
bonfires  
they will link arms together across their  
great curving continent

they will say with the women  
the children the men the old people of  
Japan  
we want an end to war  
we have seen too much death  
now, with the dead  
in the East  
in the West  
in the South  
in the North  
in all the hemispheres  
we stand only for peace

Kathleen Gallagher

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# The 'family' of God and human community

*Kath Rushton interviews theologian Patricia Fox about her recent book (opposite)*

## *What led you to research the Trinity?*

It was a very specific pastoral situation that led me to it. In the five years between 1986 and 1991 I was working as part of a leadership team within the Archdiocese of Adelaide established by Archbishop Leonard Faulkner. The team consisted of the vicar general, a lay woman, a member of a religious order and the Archbishop. There was a commitment to work as a leadership team in a collaborative and inclusive way that would model the vision of the archdiocese as a *Community for the World*.

One of the initiatives during those years was the sponsoring of a two-year part-time programme designed for women and men who were leaders within the wider life of the city and state. A key element of the programme was that the participants would commit themselves to meet in small stable regional groups in between the classes to assist each other make connections between their lives as leaders and the input and reading they were receiving within this programme.

I remember very vividly three very different groups doing a course on some of the key dogmas of the faith. They had just had a class on God as Trinity and were amazed how stimulating it had been. They were exploring what this doctrine might have to do with their lives. In each group the conversation became very animated. There was a sense of discovery as they recognised connections between the challenge to relate to and to know God as three Persons, whose loving relationship was one of equality and mutuality and the challenge to grow into being like that themselves.

Some recognised that being part of a local church inviting its members into a partnership of mutuality and equality, opened them to be able to grasp something vital about this Trinitarian God. I glimpsed how powerful this ancient doctrine might be if it could be truly accessible to the people of God. So I decided to use my study leave to pursue studies on the Trinity. I had no idea where that would lead.

In my studies I came to understand that the revelation of God by Jesus was indeed a "teaching that is new" (*Mark 1:27*). Former categories for understanding divinity were exploded. The symbol of the Trinity communicates the 'otherness' of God shattering the idolatrous boundaries of our limited constructs about who God is.

Today Christians inherit new understandings about the nature of 'relation' and 'person' as well as a thrilling and still unfolding story of the origins of the universe. Dialogue with these new insights enables the triune symbol to function in fresh ways revealing the truth about God. My research led me to conclude that the ancient symbol of the Trinity can enable the mystery of Godself to be 'received' by believers more fully than ever before.

## *Why did you choose to research two such seemingly different theologians as Zizioulas and Johnson?*

They are different aren't they – a Greek Orthodox Metropolitan

(Archbishop) and a Roman Catholic feminist! However, they have some very key things in common.

The work of both goes back to the origins of the formulation of the dogma of the Trinity. They both have a great passion for God and are convinced of the very practical and powerful impact that the God that people worship (whether consciously or not) has on their daily lives as well as political and social realities facing our world.

The Trinitarian theologies of both John Zizioulas and Elizabeth Johnson contribute to the retrieval of this central doctrine of God. But when they are brought into dialogue with each other something new emerges. Their perspectives are so different – female and male, initiated into the different traditions of West and East. John Paul II keeps reminding us that the Church needs to breathe with both of its lungs (the living traditions of East and West). My work seeks to approach this from a feminist methodology!

Feminist theology draws both from the Christian tradition and from the neglected experience of women. Our whole tradition, East and West, is even more seriously impoverished because for almost all of our 2000 years of history women's articulation and interpretation of the tradition has not been heard. Until this imbalance is addressed, both God and humanity and the whole of creation are sold short.

I interpret feminist theology to be a critical theology of liberation, a form of faith seeking understanding grounded in women's experience, having the goal of transforming inequities. It is profoundly communitarian in emphasis and is concerned with promoting relationships of equality, mutuality and communion. You see, this theological method is fundamentally linked to my understanding of the Trinitarian God – *God as Communion*.

## *So what about this concept of God as 'communion'?*

It's so rich in our tradition it needed a whole book to explore it. Communion or *koinonia* is how God is in Godself – persons in a relationship of love that is mutual and equal and within which difference flourishes. We are invited into this dynamic life and to grow into being as God is. Radical stuff! It really needs to be prayed into and ritualised, as the Eastern churches know so well.

Recently Pope John Paul II spoke very strongly about the need to develop a spirituality of communion grounded in the life of the Trinitarian God. He even specifies that bodies within the Church, including the Roman Curia, need to be reformed to become 'instruments of communion'. Imagine that!

What would the Church look like if it truly became imaged in the likeness of God as communion? My book explores some of this and I hope it opens up possibilities for people in their lives in the Church and in the world. The Trinity is a doctrine that has such practical possibilities. ■

*Patricia Fox RSM, Ph.D. is president of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and a teacher and theologian from Adelaide.*

### *God as Communion*

Patricia A. Fox (265 pages)

The Liturgical Press 2001

Price: Aust \$60

**Review: Kath Rushton RSM**

**W**ith eager anticipation I read this work which combines ancient and new meanings of the symbol of God as Trinity. I am interested in the Fourth Gospel's God imagery and the late First Century context of the father-son language before the influence of the later theological layers of the Fourth Century councils.

Formulated by the end of the Fourth Century, the Christian creeds confessed that the God revealed by Jesus the Christ is one God, of three co-equal, co-eternal persons. Not long after this doctrine was formulated, theological discourse began to separate the triune God of salvation history from the Trinity of persons within God. By medieval times, both Latin and Byzantine theologies understood the doctrine of the Trinity to refer to the inner life of God with little reference to God's deeds in history.

However, popular devotion and the discourse of the Christian churches have been shaped by a powerful monotheistic image of God as an omniscient, omnipotent, male monarch. The formulation of these doctrines and reflection on them in all fields of the wider life and culture of the Church, is almost exclusively the work of men. Theologians, such as Fox, are part of a movement to retrieve the Holy Mystery of the triune God foreshadowed in the Scriptures and confessed in Christian doctrine and in public worship throughout the ages.

Fox claims that "one of the strengths of feminist theology is that it can demonstrate what can happen when hitherto impermeable boundaries are crossed and entities that are other are brought into creative communion". Her book testifies to this. It is in three parts.

Part One examines the Trinitarian theology of John Zizioulas, a leading contemporary theologian, ecumenist

and spokesperson for the Eastern Orthodox Church, formerly professor of systematic theology at the University of Glasgow. Trinitarian theology is the centre point into which all the other major strands of his theological work are woven including his lifelong work for 'the sacred cause of the restoration of church unity', and his more recent embracing of the ecological crisis.

At the heart of Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology 'from above', is an ontology that understands being as communion. God, for Zizioulas, is essentially persons-in-communion. He draws from the patristic period to address the roots of the concept of 'person' as it developed in the original formulation of Trinitarian doctrine, and stresses the distinctiveness of persons in communion rather than the usual emphasis on unity.

**P**art Two examines the mystery of God in the feminist theology of Elizabeth Johnson C.S.J., Professor of Theology at Fordham University, New York City. Fox describes Johnson as "a lucid and creative" First World theologian who includes in her theology the voices of the poor women, the most oppressed of the oppressed. This leads her to confront the Trinitarian God and suffering humanity and the ecological crisis.

In her theology 'from below' Johnson's central concern is 'the right way to speak about God'. Fox identifies three important strands found in Johnson's work: her constructive efforts toward a renaming of the Trinity; her exploration of God's being and the significance of relationality and suffering for the symbol of the Trinitarian God; and her reclaiming of the Spirit within Trinitarian theology.

**I**n Part Three, after a clear synthesis of factors which these two theologians have in common, Fox brings their Trinitarian visions into a 'mutually critical correlation' focusing on the Spirit (pneumatology), Jesus (christology), the foundations of Trinitarian theology, and practice of Trinitarian theology – issues of suffering and the ecological crisis.

She distinguishes two theologies of the Holy Spirit which coexist in the Scriptures but are adopted as *mission* by the West and *communion* by the East. She notes that the West has preserved a theology of creation, lost to the East, which resonates with indigenous creation theologies. The book concludes with a succinct statement of six strands which the author identifies for the reweaving of the symbol of the Triune God, having profound implications for the life and practice of the Church.

Fox's Trinitarian vision shows feminist theology at its finest. The author asserts that there are still firm boundaries "that impede the full creative potential that can be released when the theologies of female as well as male, and of East as well as West, are brought in dynamic communion".

This recalls the observation of the great Catholic theologian Yves Congar that the Western tradition without the East is like trying to breathe with only one lung. His metaphor needs be extended to both traditions in their almost total exclusion of women. Fox's work also leads me, a student of the Scriptures, to look again at the Fourth Gospel through the lens of God as 'persons in communion'.

*Kath Rushton RSM (Christchurch) holds a Ph.D. in language and imagery of human generation in the Fourth Gospel.*

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# Manhattan nightmare. But who are the real terrorists?

The 11th of September 2001 will figure critically in the history of America, and the events of that day will impose themselves forever on the rest of the world. It is a changed world that has to come to terms with two new concepts. Firstly, asymmetric warfare has altered forever the amassing of conventional weapons of war. Secondly, the much vaunted benefits of globalisation must now take into account the plight of the dying and impoverished peoples around the world. Is George W. Bush, as leader of the most powerful nation on earth, capable of finding solutions?

The US spends \$344 billion on defence, yet was powerless to stop a horrendous terrorist attack which shook the foundations of the nation. The twin towers of New York, representing global materialism, and the Pentagon, the headquarters of the U.S. military, were dealt mortal blows by a handful of fanatics. The greatest military collection of war machines and soldiers on earth was useless.

There are now alternative ways of warfare which do not comply with any rules. Terrorists avoid conventional forces and have no regard for civilian populations. Defence systems are vulnerable to attack at any time and from any place. It is no longer a massing of troops facing each other on a field of war and rattling sabres.

Neither is warfare a primitive Star Wars Missile defence system looking for a "rogue state" on which to rain down destruction well away from American cities. But, Bush says he will "beef up" defence spending.

All countries have terrorist organisations or the potential for them. Apart from the Islamic Fundamentalists, there are the Algerian Muslim extremists, the Chechen guerrillas, the IRA, the Tamil Tigers and America has its Timothy McVeighs. In every ghetto and every

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## Crosscurrents

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by John Honoré

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refugee camp in the Middle East there is another Osama bin Laden who lives for the promise of a martyrdom which God will reward.

Asymmetric warfare's weaponry consists of a perceived wrong, finance, logistical support, infiltration techniques and desperate people willing to die for a cause. Bush said he will "smoke them out of their holes" (after he himself spent the first 24 hours in various under-ground bunkers).

*The cloud-capp'd towers,  
the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples...shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial  
pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind  
— The Tempest*

Globalisation, driven by the World Bank, WTO and IMF with their roots in American big business, is seen as favouring the rich nations. Lowering trade barriers and opening up markets has enriched giant corporations but impoverished countries from Africa to Haiti. Globalisation has not generated wealth for everybody. The disparities between a subsidised cereal farmer in the US Midwest and a peasant in the Sahel is an obvious example.

Globalisation should now mean taking responsibility for over a billion people who live in abject poverty. It should mean cancelling Third World debt and realising that the gap between the rich and poor is untenable. There should be a moral responsibility in the 'new' globalisation to halt the sale of lethal weapons, to stop the pharmaceutical conglomerates from blocking the manufacture of antibiotics in poorer countries and to realise that the Twin Towers of New York could, to many people, have represented the biblical

Golden Calf. Bush's phrase, "what is good for business is good for America", is no longer a catchphrase which rings true in a post-September 2001 world. Bush's immediate response to the attack was understandable: "now that war has been declared on us, we will lead the world to victory". But this was an attack on America, not the world. To date, there has been no attempt to understand why the attack took place on American soil. There has been no mention of the fact that bin Laden was trained by the CIA. It is ironic that, since inception, the Bush administration has pursued a unilateralist policy steeped in triumphalism – rejection of the Kyoto Protocol and the creation of a Missile Defence policy being two examples.

He was prepared to go it alone and only participate in world affairs if it suited him. Now, he speaks of "allies" and "our friends" whose support he seeks to "root out evil". There is no mention of the fact that the USA owes its "friends" in the United Nations \$1.5 billion.

The Middle East, where it seems the attack had its genesis, views America as the cause of evil. This is because America is seen as the accomplice of Israel, as responsible for the Gulf War and a million civilian deaths in Iraq since then. John Pilger writes, "far from being the terrorists of the world, the Islamic peoples have been its victims, victims of US fundamentalism, whose power, in all its forms, military, strategic and economic, is the greatest source of terrorism on earth."

Bush's new-found reliance on the need for cooperation has forced him to recognise that not even the US can stand alone. Many countries, including Russia, France and Egypt are counselling caution and the establishment of proof before launching a full-scale attack against shadowy enemies. Bush's words were that he wants bin Laden "dead or alive". Is Bush's language that of a leader who will find a solution to terrorism? ■

## A Church in need of reshaping

A few days before the terrorist attacks in the US, Cardinal Basil Hume's successor, Cormac Murphy-O'Connor hit the front pages of the British press. *Is the Church on the Rock?*, *Candid Cardinal* were typical of the headlines. He had given an hour-long speech to the National Council of Priests, but it was an unscripted, off-the-cuff observation that was seized on by the press: "It seems in our countries today that Christianity, as a sort of backdrop to people's lives and moral decisions, has almost been vanquished."

Many commentators praised the Cardinal's honesty in facing up to a reality which exists, not only in Britain, but in most Western countries: more and more people feel that mainstream Christian churches are irrelevant in today's world, that Christianity's influence on modern culture and intellectual life is non-existent.

The Cardinal listed what he saw as causes for the present situation. He sees Westerners as being obsessed with money and being morally adrift, living

in a "demoralised society, where the only good is what I want". He sees people trying to get fulfilment in their lives through shopping, pop music, sex, drink and drugs.

In place of the Church, many are putting together their own patchwork of beliefs and practices in an effort to experience the transcendent. (Here in Dunedin last weekend, our small local give-away paper contained 24 advertisements for various *New Age* groups.) This 'do-it-yourself' spirituality is aimed at meeting one's own individual needs and, in this, it differs fundamentally from the Christian Gospel.

Perhaps the attention given to the Cardinal's remarks by the secular press indicates a public unease about whether a society such as ours, which is ceasing to be Christian, will be able to uphold the values which are still held dear. Religious practice may be unfashionable, but people fear that if the influence of Christianity continues to wane there could be a complete breakdown in the moral

fabric of our society. The number of non-churchgoing parents who try to get their children enrolled in church schools would seem to be evidence of this.

What then does Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor see as the Church's role in the future? He expressed hope that "together, bishops, priests and people can change the culture of Catholicism to get away from the idea of looking after our own, and venture out in association with other Christian churches to discover where it is that people itch."

This reshaping of the Church, he said, will entail reawakening its liturgies, building up parish communities and becoming a 'voice for the voiceless'.

But there is a lot of ground to be made up. "We have not worked out fully what the Catholic mission is to the world; we have the tools, calibre, teaching and tradition – but how do we use them?" He concluded by admitting that he himself did not know the answer! ■

*Jim Neilan*

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## Varsity life an experience of true community

University friends become life friends because students reach out to others at a time in their life when they are most vulnerable. A supportive collegiate environment makes it safe to do this. St Paul told the Corinthians that *love is patient and kind - it rejoices in the right - it believes all things*. This characterises College life where students are wonderfully patient, kind, and supportive of one another.

In the Church, the word 'community' can often mean a theological head-trip, as people often lack a common purpose and lack cooperation. In College, people are part of intentional community and actually do things for one another. Collegiate students come together for a common academic purpose and depend on one another for support in achieving this. I am reminded of the words of Confucius: "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand."

Students in Colleges do communitarian things and understand community much better than most of us, who

just hear it as preaching. With caring welfare staff members on every floor, with supportive returning residents, with learning support and with good physical facilities, a University College provides the environment within which a community grows.

**"Your capacity for love and friendship should be so formed by what you have done, seen and experienced at this University that you will give yourself to the service of others."**

(from the University of Otago graduation address given by Fr Peter Norris on Saturday 25 August)

The University itself is the wider context in which this happens, but it is only the sum of what happens in its Colleges, departments and flats.

Studying alone can be a selfish occupation but it rarely happens. University study takes place within groups of students who learn from and support one another. These habits of learning and of taking care of one another help prepare people for a life of service to others. University training today is as much about character formation as seminary training used to be. It is through caring for each other that students develop their innate capacity to love and serve others.

The current philosophy which big business follows is one of economic Darwinism. I believe that most of our University Colleges have a Christian philosophy where it is good to care for others when they are sick, lonely, or depressed. I hope that at some stage in their future life when students are in the midst of big business they will remember that for a time another philosophy and way of life was lived. ■

*(Fr Peter Norris is Warden of St Margaret's College, University of Otago.)*

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