

# Tui Motu

InterIslands

*June 2007 Price \$5*



Peace accord  
after forty years of conflict

## Social justice

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Unless your justice exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees," says Jesus Christ, "you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" (*Mt 5,20*). If we want to know what 'social justice' means we cannot do better than go back to Jesus' words. The whole context of the Sermon on the Mount describes the various 'just' ways in which we are to deal with our neighbour.

Social justice is an underlying theme running through the *June* issue. The great Encyclicals on Social Justice are sometimes called the Catholic Church's best kept secret. From Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) to the late Pope John Paul's *Centesimus Annus* 100 years later, a great and inspiring body of social teaching has been built up. It is to the credit of *Caritas Aotearoa* that the study of this teaching is being encouraged again in Catholic secondary schools. Its impact in one Catholic college is described on pp 8-10.

Next month – and, precisely, on July 7 – we reach the halfway point on the road to achieving the Millennium goals agreed to by leading Western states in 2000. As Mary Betz says (p 10), it is time to take stock, note progress made – but also see how far still there is to go. Perhaps we in New Zealand could divert attention for a moment away from the World Rugby Cup and remind ourselves of our pledge to double overseas aid during this time (2000-2015). And we could start with our Pacific neighbours, so often neglected and exploited. A little known story of this is graphically told by Kevin Toomey (pp 14-15).

Peace is an essential ingredient of creating a just society. And here we have some really good news to rejoice about. The impossible has happened. The IRA and the Ulster Unionists are talking – and co-operating – and (*cover* and *right*) smiling. If it can happen in Belfast, it can happen in Jerusalem, and in Darfur, and in Baghdad.

Br. David Steindl-Rast (also featured p 14) says that peace is "an exceedingly high good... (for which) we should expect to have to pay an exceedingly high price". On a personal level, it means abandoning the self-indulgence of 'us versus them' thinking. He also mentions a town in the South Island where the bells are rung every noon to remind people to pray for peace.

Student debt is another serious justice issue. It is one fruit of the user-pays philosophy of the '80s. A chaplain and a senior student analyse this problem (pp 6-7). They both make a plea for a universal living allowance for students to alleviate this debt, which is creating serious social problems. For instance, it is a major factor in causing young adults to delay marriage and starting a family.

One final thought. The most crucial justice issue of our time is the ravaging of the planet by human greed. The only way to create a sustainable world to hand on to our grandchildren is to cut back on our living standards in the West. So – which of us would be happy to give up the convenience of our cars and use public transport, exclusively?

Who said justice is not an integral part of living the gospel? ■



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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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### Brotherly love at last

The Edinburgh conference which sealed the future of Northern Ireland. After years of bitter conflict, the Unionists and Sinn Fein finally agreed to co-operate with each other and form a government.

Martin McGuinness, one-time leader of the IRA (*left*) with Rev. Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party DUP, who bitterly opposed any compromise with the N Ireland Catholics, are here seen talking and laughing with British Chancellor, Gordon Brown (*right*), in Edinburgh on May 3.



Photo: Reuters

## All smiles in Belfast

The man has had a Pauline conversion", commented one Irish lady – conjuring up a picture of the Rev. Ian Paisley riding his horse up the Falls Rd in Belfast. The transformation seems to have happened after Paisley was seriously ill earlier this year.

To those of us who, since time immemorial, have been listening to those rasping tones growling "No Surrender!", it certainly has seemed a miraculous conversion. Paisley, it is said, has even taken to wearing a black Homburg hat, commonly known in Belfast slang as the 'IRA broad black brimmer'.

Northern Irishman Brian Rea, *Tui Motu* supporter and promoter, came to New Zealand with a young family in 1974. The 'troubles' between the Unionists and the Catholics had erupted into full-scale conflict in 1968. The intervention of British troops had

simply added fuel to the flames. For Brian and for the sake of his young family, it was time to get away from the city and province of his birth.

"I never thought I would ever witness this, the way things were back then," says Brian. "When we left, you could see no hope. I went back on a visit in '84 and if anything it was worse. That was the time of the Mountbatten murder and the slaughter of unarmed IRA agents in Gibraltar by the British.

"But, from the time of the Good Friday agreement I began again to be hopeful." The British and Irish governments presented a united front, with President Clinton's 'honest broker', Senator Mitchell, chairing the negotiations.

"You have to give credit to Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein leader," says Brian. "He was the first to really make concessions." However, it seems that years had to pass until the IRA became

confident enough to lay down their arms; and then the Unionist hardliners began to melt.

Now, at long last, discrimination against Catholics has diminished. The police have been reformed (from the old exclusively Protestant RUC to a new body, the Police Service of Northern Ireland PSNI recruiting from the whole population). Ireland as a whole has become more prosperous and more a part of Europe. People move freely across into the South and vice versa. "It all looks genuine", says Brian.

Does he think there will ever be a united Ireland? "It's a possibility," he says guardedly, "but not in our lifetime. It takes time to put 3000 deaths behind you. The walls have still to come down. The prejudices have to die. But at least, now there is hope."

M.H.

### Tui Motu Board

A vacancy has become available on the *Tui Motu* Board of Directors. We are looking for someone who believes in *Tui Motu* and would like to contribute towards promoting its future. Being a member involves attending two Board meetings each year and active promotion of the magazine.

The Board endeavours to find a good geographic mix in its membership along with a range of skills and

experience to give to it breadth. At the moment we have no one from the mid-North Island (Waikato, Taranaki, Bay of Plenty or Manawatu).

If you are interesting in applying please write to **the Chair, Tui Motu Board, P.O.Box 6404, Dunedin North 9059**, enclosing your CV. If you would like more information please contact me (03 202 5376).

Katie O'Connor, (chair)



## Thank you, Sisters!

I think it is time some of us gave the *Sisters of Mercy* the respect and gratitude they deserve. In conversation I spread the news of the great positive influence they were on me.

I spent only two and a half years at St Philomena's, in Dunedin in the early '50s, but that was enough to leave a lasting impression. I was able to make comparisons having attended state primary and secondary schools.

The teachers were, without exception, patient, intelligent and quiet in manner, so they had few disciplinary issues. Many exhibited a faith and serenity that was very attractive to me. They were of their time in forming a positive, active faith in us and giving us confidence to cope with the difficulties of life.

*Jeanette McAtamney, Waikouaiti*

## The Gospel & moral standards

Glynn Cardy raises concerns for me about the place of the New Testament in Christian life.

In Western Christian society Biblical 'right and wrong' was translated into law. Until now our law was framed in this way. But in our new secular society laws based on Christian sexual morality have been removed or replaced. What was Biblically 'immoral' is now made legal, which means acceptable.

In the Gospels Jesus laid down new standards of behaviour, especially in relationships. These new standards were based on compassion and selflessness, and were detailed more specifically in the New Testament letters. Jesus was certainly compassionate towards wrongdoers, but his compassion did not stop him from insisting they stop their wrongdoing.

Glynn Cardy's *March* article was an eloquent plea for compassion towards homosexuals as people, and – I inferred – acceptance of their lifestyle... The New Testament seems to me to be unequivocal about the wrongness of homosexual intercourse, just as it is about the wrongness of heterosexual intercourse in some circumstances. If the New Testament is not to be taken as a holy text for Christian standards

## letters to the editor

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not altering meaning.

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

of sexual morality, how is the rightness and wrongness of such behaviour to be defined for Christians, and by whom?

*T.A Camp, Kaiapoi (abridged)*

*I think the writer should carefully reread the final paragraph in Glynn Cardy's March article. -ed*

## 2imo2

Driving recently to Panmure up the Mt Wellington Highway, there in front of us was a very flash-looking motor home or caravan. What attracted my attention though was the text statement above the rear window of said vehicle which read '2imo2'. I have been lucky enough to have our 11-year-old neighbour coach me in understanding TXT messages so I was able to translate the above into 'Tui Motu'.

Some possibilities presented themselves:

1. The editor(s) are having a holiday back in Auckland.
2. Some really enterprising promoter is grasping every opportunity to publicise your publication.
3. It's just an amazing coincidence.

Or was it a mirage?

*Mary Martin RNDM, Pukekohe*  
*Alas – not no.1. So will the perpetrator please own up! ...ed*

## Climate change – crying wolf

Your April issue is full on with regard to global warming, supporting in a helpful and timely manner the call of our Prime Minister that we (i.e. taxpayers) must do something about it.

I wonder if your contributors Mary Betz, Fr Sean McDonagh and the Editor are aware of the views of the President of the *World Federation of Scientists*. He challenges the alarmists. To an international congress examining *Climate Change and Development* he said that models used by UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change (IPCC) are "incoherent and invalid from a scientific point of view," and used "the method of 'forcing' to arrive at their conclusions that human activity produces meteorological variations."

Perhaps theologians and priests had best keep their noses out of scientific stuff. Remember Galileo?

*Michael Edgar, Pakuranga*

*The vast majority of scientists now consider evidence for global warming, human induced, to be overwhelming. – ed.*

## 'Dear Bishops'

May *Tui Motu* contained a plea to our Bishops to look at the issue of who should and shouldn't be able to receive Holy Communion. I thought Mike Riddell's article covered everything one could ever ask. To go back to the Liturgy for answers is not realistic. The action needed is to see 'One Baptism' adhered to and all baptised people made welcome as Christ welcomed Judas.

If Jesus were here today, would he be differentiating between Catholic and non-Catholic?

*Dennis Mitchell*

*See Bishop Cullinane's response p 5*

## Scam beware

A friend of mine has just showed me a letter he received from *The Fatima Research Centre*, P O Box Ch-6314, Unterägari, Switzerland.

It says: *you have been chosen to wear for 30 days the precious reproduction of the Cross of Fatima, belonging to Pope Jean-Paul II, free of charge. More than \$1 million has been won during the last four weeks thanks to the Papal Holy Cross of the Virgin of Fatima.* (There are numerous testimonials)... etc.etc

There are seven pages of this stuff, and the last one says that you are willing to send \$65 to help cover the expenses of setting up this project, and if after wearing the Cross for 30 days, you are not satisfied, please send it back and 'we will refund your money'.

Another scam – not from Nigeria, but from Switzerland? *(abridged)*

*Paddy McCann, Paraparaumu*

## Bread . . . or Stone?

*Dear Mike,*

Thank you for raising a difficult question that troubles many, and for expressing it with such empathy for those who can feel excluded. You did not, of course, need to write so over-deferentially.

You said you understood the Church's teaching on this matter. Nevertheless, you went on to give several wrong reasons for it. It is not about "preserving the dignity of the apostolic succession", or about "who is redeemed and who is not", or about sin or the presumption of sin, or about "rejection" or even "exclusion" in the usual sense of that word.

It is ultimately about taking our Christian faith very seriously – which you obviously mean to do. I hope my explanation will reflect the same commitment to Christ and his gospel as is so manifest in your letter.

As you know, the celebration of Eucharist is about profound union with Christ and each other in Christ. You would not expect the Church to endorse any practice that was not consistent with that communion.

But you would be justified in asking how differences of belief negatively affect that communion. I think it would have been easier for our Christian ancestors than it is for us to understand this. What they perceived was an intimate connection between the community's sacramental life and its faith, which includes the truths of faith (what they believed).

And so from antiquity, when differences concerning central Christian beliefs (not only those concerning Eucharist) fractured the communion between Christians, Eucharist was not shared – not for the sake of excluding but for the sake of being faithful to the meaning of Eucharist as *communio*. And when Eucharist was shared with visitors, or dispatched to be shared with some other community, it was precisely as a sign of full communion. From this perspective, the individual represented the community that he or she belonged to. And so it would have seemed unnatural to celebrate *communio* with communities that were not "in communion".

For us, however, the question is harder because we more spontaneously think of the individual's beliefs and goodwill, rather than of the community they belong to. The individual is an island. From this perspective, it is a short step to advocating an open-table policy of

Holy Communion for any Christian on the basis of their sincerity. The trouble is, to justify this we would need to accept a disjunction between the faith as expressed in beliefs and the faith as expressed in sacrament.

From an ecumenical perspective one might ask: why try to resolve the differences between Christians if their union with another is already so complete that it can be celebrated in the sacrament *par excellence* of communion?

But what about exceptions? It is a case of exceptions proving the rule just by being exceptions. For this reason, Holy Communion given in exceptional circumstances does not disregard the connection between the community's sacramental life and its faith.

For the same reason, giving Holy Communion in these circumstances is not at odds with Church law. To suppose otherwise leads to precisely the dualism described in your letter between Magisterium and Church law on the one hand, and grace and compassion on the other. Holy Communion in exceptional circumstances is in accordance with the mind of the Church because it recognises the significance of circumstances.

Those ministers who would not give Holy Communion to a person approaching from the queue, when good faith can be presumed and when refusal could cause so much harm, are the ones who have not understood their own Catholic moral tradition. They need to learn the difference between legal positivism (in which a moral obligation is determined only by what the law prescribes) and the Catholic moral tradition (in which the moral obligation is determined by what the law prescribes and the intention and the circumstances).

As far as the ecumenical occasion involving 15,000 young people is concerned, I query whether that was the time and place to celebrate Eucharist at all. How do you not cause confusion and hurt if you tell such people what they cannot do without helping them to understand why? And how do you provide that kind of catechesis, out of the blue, for a crowd of that size and in the time available?

I think what we all need to become better at is helping people to feel at home with us even when we are not able to share with them the sacrament of full communion.

*Yes, may God have mercy on us all.*

*Peter Cullinane,  
Bishop of Palmerston North*

*In the May 2007 Tui Motu, Mike Riddell wrote to the Bishops about excluding people from receiving communion*



# The first day of the rest of your life

## *Otago students on their graduation day Young people on top of the world – OR NZ citizens racked with heavy debts?*

Student debt in New Zealand has now reached \$9 billion, having risen from \$5 billion in 2002. At the same time the number of tertiary students has doubled since 1994 and is now in excess of half a million. The Government says it simply cannot afford to pay a universal student allowance because of such large numbers; hence the 'user pays' concept of lending money to sustain students through their tertiary studies, on the basis that this money will eventually have to be repaid.

Dr Cullen regards this large student body as an excellent investment for the country because of the skills base it produces. He also claims that the Labour Government has assisted the students by making the government loans interest free. This is like giving every student an extra \$1000 a year without strings.

For graduates however, there is a compulsory deduction from the

income of their first jobs. They are not permitted simply to sit on their debts. The government also funds two thirds of the total cost of tertiary education. Fees account for the rest.

Average student debt is between \$15,000 and \$20,000. But for some of the more expensive courses such as medicine and dentistry the debt level is much higher. It is assumed however that these people will move straight into relatively high paid and secure jobs, so their ability to repay is good. But anyone doing a straight BA or BSc course may come out the end with no certainty even of getting a job. Some of these are forced to go overseas in search of higher remuneration to pay off their debts. They are lost to New Zealand, possibly for good.

Greg Hughson, the ecumenical chaplain at Otago University, thinks that it probably strikes hardest on the middle income range family. Wealthy parents can pay off their

children's debts; students from low income families qualify for a special allowance. The middle range, however, must borrow "in order to live, to pay rent, to eat and turn up to class." Once they are over 25 they all become eligible for a student allowance.

Greg Hughson says most of the students he deals with have to budget very carefully in order to minimise their debts. The *Student Support Office* will give them budgeting advice. Nevertheless, the debt level forces many students to take jobs while they are at Varsity. This helps supplement their income at a time when their energies should be devoted to learning and making the most of student life. It has always been common for students to seek a job during the long holidays. Once, however, it would be unusual for students to work during term.

"I know a number of students who are working late at night for Subway or Macdonalds," says Greg. "Some may

be in jobs consistent with the degree course they are taking. My concern is for those in low-paid, low security jobs which detract from the quality of their study. I think there is a strong case for a universal student allowance to save these young people from having to work those extra hours.

“Many students become stressed over their study and feel quite insecure regarding their future – and also as regards the state of the world. Financial stress is a spiritual and psychological burden for many, but it is really a component of a more generalised anxiety. Money worries are the last straw for some.

“Some students come to the chaplains with worries about not having enough money: many of these are from overseas. Student loan money is paid directly to Halls and the students cannot touch it, but that is not the case for those living in flats. Then, rent has to come out of their pockets.

“I recall talking to some medical and dental students very concerned by

their levels of debt. They are assured they will be able to manage. Our job as chaplains is to pray with them and reassure them that God will provide, even in a less than ideal situation. The fact that so many finish their Varsity time burdened with a large accumulated debt is a real concern. They can't easily get a mortgage to settle down and buy a house, in the way people once automatically did. They see no possibility of being able to afford their own home.

*A prayer  
when under financial stress*

God, your promise to us is peace. I need this peace, here and now. Bring peace within me when I am anxious about my finances.

Fill me with peace because with the wealth of your peace I can achieve whatever I need to achieve.

God, your promise of peace offers me an horizon beyond despair and I know that you are with me.

*Conversations in prayer*

“I think it's highly significant the age of childbearing for women is steadily going up. True, many graduates like to take a break and work overseas for a year or two after graduation. But in general students have to adjust to the idea of running up a large debt as a condition for getting tertiary education.

“Looking back, in the mid '70s we were comparatively well off. It was an age of optimism. We celebrated the Christian life. Charismatic renewal was in full swing. And there was no debt to look forward to. Today things are quite different. Someone has said: 'while wealthy New Zealanders can afford to pay for their children's education, the prospect of decades of debt repayment makes tertiary education a daunting prospect for working class New Zealanders'.

“I would certainly wish to join with the NZ *University Students Association* and others in working towards getting a universal students' allowance not based on parental income. This would be simply the equivalent of universal superannuation for people who are at the other end of their life span.” ■

**R**enée Heal is currently President of the Otago University Students Association. *Tui Motu* interviewed her while she was all aglow with her recent graduation.

“Since I've always wanted to go to University,” Renée says, “I accepted that would mean incurring debt. It means I have to borrow money to live while I'm a student – for food, rent and normal living costs. I am judged to be still dependent on my parents at the age of 23, even though I have lived away from home for the past six years. On average, for those of us who are just graduating, the debt will be \$50,000 and can be as high as \$100,000.

“People leaving University will put off settling down and starting a family. It will take quite a few years to pay the debt off, perhaps five or ten. Most people are quite optimistic however, that they will get the sort of job which will enable them to pay it off.

“Nevertheless it's a worry and a huge proportion of students work part-time to subsidise their living costs. Trying to balance paid work and study adds to the stress of student life. You cannot ignore the debt. It is a fact of life. You have to learn to live with it.

“My flatmate for instance works three jobs and still studies full-time. Her paid work could take her 30 hours

a week. She has to work incredibly hard to achieve this. For my part I spent two years studying part-time so that I could supplement my income. Students learn to be particularly 'savvy' in balancing their study, paid work and leisure activities. It can be done.”

**F**or many years students have asked for a universal student allowance to pay for rent and food, irrespective of parental income. Renée is of the opinion that full-time students should be entitled to this whatever their age or family situation.

Students at the present time are the only adults in society not in paid employment who are forced to borrow in order to live. As a result they inevitably graduate with large debts. She sees this as a fundamental injustice in the present system. ■

[www.inspirationaltv.net](http://www.inspirationaltv.net)

*great for sharing with a friend*





*Every two years Caritas Australia organises  
a Social Justice Conference for senior school students.*

*This January a group from St Peter's College, Gore, went across.  
It had a huge impact on them – not only how they saw the world  
but also how they lived their faith*

## *Working for justice*

Rosalie Connors has been DRS at St Peter's College, Gore, for five years. She has always had an interest in social justice, she says, but having a priest like Fr Pat McGettigan as parish priest and school chaplain was a real bonus and helped develop this for her.

“When I was at school myself, I was inspired by the lives of people who gave themselves for others – quite apart from the example of an heroic character like Gandhi. As an adult student I got to know a woman who was herself strongly involved in *Pax Christi* and she too inspired me.”

Two years ago, Rosalie decided to start a Social Justice Group among the Gore students. There were 10-12 boys and girls at the start, mostly seniors with one or two as young as Year Nine. It has now acquired quite a high profile in the school. They are no longer simply fund-raising but helping to raise awareness of major world issues.

There is a core group of a dozen or so, while others come and go. They meet every three weeks or so. Each year, there is a *Caritas* Diocesan gathering for a day together in Dunedin which the students go to. Catherine Gibbs, from the national office, organises this and she has been very helpful, says Rosalie. This year, however, the College sent some of the seniors to a Conference in Sydney, and that proved to be an amazing experience.

Rosalie explains: “*Caritas Australia* runs a social justice conference every two years, and this is primarily aimed at secondary school students. It deals in issues which appeal to the stage of spirituality these young people are at – something they can readily become active in.

“This year, it was held in Sydney during the Christmas holidays, and there were over 300 students present from all over Australia. All New Zealand Catholic colleges were invited through *Caritas* here. We had heard that three other NZ schools were going, but in the event it was only St Peter's – five students and myself.

“The trip was funded by the school via the PTA and Board. Also the local *Mataura Licensing Trust* and Lions helped – it says something for Gore when service groups are prepared to get behind a religious venture. And the students themselves helped raise money.

The Conference lasted a full weekend starting on the Friday evening, and we stayed on a couple of days afterwards billeted by the Josephite Sisters. It was exciting to hear young people so articulate about the problems of the world, about global issues. There was a desire to learn – and they were being empowered to act and make a difference. It even prompted me to make changes in my own life!

“The speakers were top class. We had Cardinal Rodriguez from Honduras. He was the only non-Australian. There was Julian Burnside QC, a barrister who has been heavily involved with the ‘boat people’. Talia Major is an aboriginal woman – the 2007 Young Australian of the Year – who spoke very eloquently. Then there was a Tasmanian girl – a student herself – who had been a Sudanese immigrant and had spent ten years of her early life in a Sudanese refugee camp.

“The issues we covered were both Australian and international. Our students were a bit frustrated at the heavily Australian bias, but I encouraged them to see the



predicament of our own Maori population from what they heard about the Aboriginal situation over there. They soon learnt to make connections. It must be said the Australians were very welcoming, and made the Southlanders feel very special for having come across the Tasman.

"I did not necessarily expect the five to immediately create something new in the school: it was primarily a time of personal development for themselves. Nevertheless, they have become highly motivated. We plan to do something really special here around July 7, which is the 'midpoint' for the Millennium Goals set in 2000.

"People can feel a bit overwhelmed at the enormity of the world's problems. So they need a particular goal to concentrate on. I hope the whole experience may also influence the students' choice of job or the path they may take after school.

"They were particularly impressed how some high profile speakers found the opportunity to work for social justice within the framework of their jobs. In the workshops we heard people from *Fair Trade*, people who had worked with HIV and AIDS, even about trafficking in human beings, and gender issues. For me it was one of the most moving experiences I have had; even more, to see our students become so enthused.

"Afterwards we spent a couple of days relaxing in Sydney, and we were able to reflect together over what we had experienced at the Convention. When the students went out, they noticed homeless people in the streets; they even thought twice about where and how they shopped! Their eyes had been opened in a way that is impossible ever to achieve in the classroom. Perhaps best of all, they now have something tangible to hang their faith onto. Their Catholicism has become more real to them."

### What the students themselves have to say

Social justice has always been an interest of mine", says Rachel Liddle. "I like the idea of helping people by creating truly equal opportunities. I enjoy the awareness-raising activities we organise within the school.

"For me, social justice means allowing everyone in the world to have a voice they feel comfortable using. It is about creating equal opportunities and enabling sustainable development to occur in a way that is just for everyone.

"While this may seem a little idealistic, the Australian Conference enabled me to see that there are people working hard to make a difference, and it gave me hope that my idea of social justice can be achieved. The example of people like Julian Burnside who specialises in helping refugees and Simon Strauss, an environmentalist, showed that if individuals work in an area they are passionate about, it will be the united effort of everyone that creates a socially just world.

### "Three things I took away from the Australia Conference:

- I was unaware of the extent of the horrific treatment of refugees. Everyone has a right to have a safe home. Unfortunately not all the world shares this view.
- *Fair Trade* is another issue which is very important. Until fair trade exists globally, how can we expect third world countries to ever come out of the poverty cycle?
- Finally, concern for the future well-being of the planet and about global warming.

"The church is a fantastic avenue for making a difference. My faith, my involvement in the church and my awareness of issues of social justice make me see the really important things in life. *Caritas* makes things happen.

"Catholic social justice teaching outlines the basis of a socially just world. Being an active member of the church enables me to become united with others who believe that that kind of world is the best one to live in."

Another Year 13 pupil, Katie Coghlan, says this: "I became interested through the Lenten challenge at school. I realised the messages they were trying to get across mirrored my own thoughts.

"Before going to the Conference in Australia social justice for me was simply about raising awareness in our local



Students from St Peter's College, Gore at the *Caritas Social Justice Conference*, in Sydney in January.

community about the injustices in the world. Now I have come to realise that there is so much more. There are so many physical actions I can take to make my impact and make my message heard.



## Have We Really Dropped the Debt?

Mary Betz

I have just visited a clinic in Kampala, Uganda, run by The AIDS Support Organisation,” writes Jamie Drummond of DATA (*Debt AIDS Trade Africa*). “Five years ago no one at the clinic had access to AIDS treatment. Infection was a death sentence. Last week, 22,000 people were receiving anti-retrovirals, allowing them to work, take care of their children and keep their community together. The drugs are paid for by G8 funds, and across Africa over a million patients are now receiving treatment”.

This is one fruit of the UN aid and debt relief programme. Elsewhere in Uganda, money saved by not paying interest on debts has gone into new classrooms, so primary school attendance has increased from 2.5 million in 1997 to 7 million in 2001. Primary healthcare spending has increased by 270 percent, and immunisation rates have more than doubled.

Nicaragua likewise received total debt relief. Between 1998 and 2005, its net primary school enrolments increased from 74 percent to 92 percent. Maternal mortality (per 100,000

live births) decreased from 250 to 87 between 1995 and 2005.

There is, however, another side to this story. The relief Nicaragua received from multilateral debt made up only 18 percent of the country’s actual debt. The remaining 82 percent is owed to individual countries and other donors. Nicaragua is still paralysed by interest payments that amount to two and a half times what it spends on health and education combined. Forty-six percent of its population still lives in poverty.

The *Jubilee 2000 Campaign* to drop the debt is a distant memory for many of us – sending postcards, perhaps, and letters urging the richest nations to cancel the debts of the poorest ones. In theory, 22 countries now have total multilateral debt relief, eight others have partial debt relief and ten others are potentially eligible. If the process is completed, it will amount to a debt forgiveness of over \$US63 billion.

In practice, it has meant that spending on these antipoverty programmes has increased from US\$4 billion annually in 1999 to US\$11 billion. In order for all



Mother and child, Uganda

countries to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals agreed in 2000 aimed at halving extreme poverty by 2015, bilateral debt relief amounting to US\$500 billion is needed, plus an additional \$50 billion of aid annually to developing countries.

New Zealand’s new budget promises that our overseas aid will be increased to 0.35 percent of our gross national income by 2010 – good news, except that along with 21 other affluent countries, we agreed in 1970 to increase our aid to 0.7 percent, the amount deemed necessary at the time.

July 7 2007 marks halfway in the Millennium campaign to alleviate poverty. It is a good time for us in New Zealand to ask whether we give enough. ■

### “What the Conference did for me was:

- It showed how far behind us Australia is in its treatment of its indigenous people. I was shocked at how backward their thoughts and actions were.
- Refugees – the young Australians at the Conference were a politically aware group, yet they had little knowledge of their country’s treatment of refugees.
- *Fair Trade*: I am determined to learn more about this.
- I would like to become more involved in *Amnesty International*.

“Since the Conference I have become more passionate about my faith. I would like to get more involved in *Caritas*: what they do is so amazing.”

I became interested in social justice issues through the media,” says Luke Hastie. “Also because of a school presentation I saw one day. It made me ask *what can I do to help?* Joining the Social Justice Group seemed a good first

step. It has meant to me working together with people from all parts of the world to bring justice to everyone, especially the unfortunate in Third World countries.

“The Conference in Australia broadened my knowledge of the problems all round the world. It made me want to become more active.

### “From the Conference I learned:

- it doesn’t take much to help one person better their life;
- about *Fair Trade*;
- indigenous poverty. I am personally worried that often the ‘people of the land’ – aboriginals in Australia and some Maori – live in poverty. Many Chinese receive a minimal wage for all the hours they work.

“This exposure at the Conference made me look at the possibility of a change of career choice: maybe to look at voluntary work later on and increase the help I can give to people in need.”

# Thoughts for Trinity Sunday

Jenny Dawson

My invitation to you this the Trinity season is to fasten your seat belts, sit back and enjoy allowing Trinity to be your mentor. We're singing about it, talking about it in our prayers, and now I want to invite some thinking about the Three-in-One, the Most Holy Trinity.

For many New Zealanders their awareness of God is as Creator, as a presence in beautiful places, sunsets or other dramatic natural surroundings. We like having signs of God around. "I belong to no congregation. Yet I look daily towards the little church on the corner... the country today may become unimaginably different, but I like to believe that a steeple will still be at the corner..." (Monty Holcroft, 1974).

Surveys tell us that most New Zealanders, something over 70 percent, believe in God. Yet the last census told us that 43 percent of people in this parish area claim to have no religion. So, is that about avoiding the challenge of the other persons of the Trinity?

God is *Creator*. But God is also *Redeemer* – the Man of Galilee who continues to walk with us today and who transforms even the messiest situations. And God is the Giver of Life, *the Spirit* who blows where she will and who continues to surprise us by pushing the boundaries of what we thought was holy and godly.

But they are not just three separate Gods. The Three-in-One is God in relationship. In God, we know fellowship or *communion* (2 Cor 13), a very deep relationship. Another word used is *perichoresis*, a kind of dancing and weaving together. This relationship is also about mutuality, forgiving and preferring each other's good.

We are a baptising community. When we baptise, we use the words: *I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*. The new Christian is baptised into relationship with God and with all of us. We, as the Body of Christ here have an obligation to build up this relationship with this child. That is how they will experience God in Trinity.

Relationship is what makes Trinity real. Too often we've been told about a model of the Godhead as a three-stranded

cord, an image that can seem too impersonal. The image of DNA, the building block of all life is helpful here. In *Genesis 1: 26-27* we read: *Then God said, Let us make humanity in Our image...according to Our likeness. God created humanity in God's own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

God seems to indicate here two dimensions to the creation of humankind. The first, *in our image*, suggests that we, as humankind, are 'representative of' the Trinity. The second, *after our own likeness*, indicates a more concrete resemblance, shape or model, possibly referring to the character of the Trinity in relationship, which includes the dimensions of masculinity and femininity.

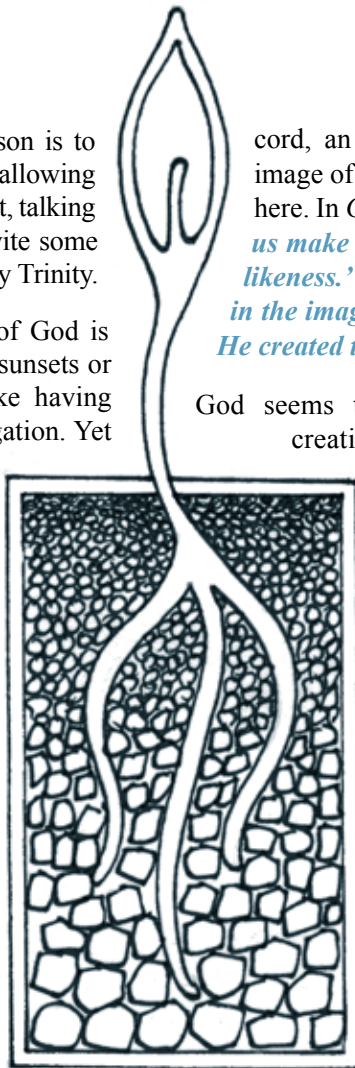
Of course, God is not male or female. God does not have gender; but male and female are both created in, and together make up, God's image. We all have both masculine and feminine characteristics within us.

DNA is a molecular double helix, but there is in fact a third 'strand' – the message that is contained in the code: a matched pair of molecules that, when combined, make a unique whole, conveying the third element,

the code itself. This is strangely Trinitarian one might say. The double/triple helix model might, therefore, help us to get an understanding of Trinitarian life. Trinitarianism seems to be the very cornerstone of life itself.

Science is important. Theology is important. But we begin to comprehend something of the Trinity really only through a relationship with God of awe and adoration – what we call worship. Gandhi said something not long before he died: "The whole world is the garment of the Lord."

I invite you to spend some time in the days ahead contemplating and discovering the vision of our Trinitarian Lord in every part of this world and indeed of life itself. The whole world is truly the garment of the Lord, and everywhere you look you can find Trinitarian life. ■



(Jenny Dawson is Vicar of Pauatabanui, Porirua. This sermon was preached in 2005 at St Andrew and St Mark's, Pauatabanui)



# Religion and politics don't mix

*Keep religion out of politics – a cry often heard.*

*What Muslims demand and what secular liberals presume could not be more contrasting. So where does the correct balance lie, asks John Murray?*

Add religion to politics and what have you got? An explosive mixture! In the Middle East it destroys stability, kills people. Add in the Philippines, Nepal, Eritrea, the Balkans, Sri Lanka – and you add more conflict and brutality. Then add in the great Western nations of USA and UK with their confessed Christian leaders, and you have war.

The interesting thing is that throughout history many different peoples and cultures have been able to live side by side worshipping in different religions. Then politics – or, rather, political leaders – have wanted more, and called on the gods of their religions to justify and bless their guns. Righteous crusades need the gods of righteousness to ensure the loyalty of their believing peoples.

But let's leave the big stuff, the world of last century, in which we and our country were involved in at least four international conflicts apart from peacekeeping exercises. Instead, let's return home, to Aotearoa New Zealand, to find how religion and politics act on one another, with or without strife and violence. Let me ask you some personal questions.

***What did you do in 1981? If you were 18 years old or more, you would have been involved – for or against – in the Springbok Tour of New Zealand. Were our church leaders leading the street protests? Who did you support? What effect did it have on your Sunday worship?***

## **The Treaty of Waitangi – and after**

Religion and Politics are always partners – in some form or another. Think of February 6th 1840. If it hadn't been for the 'good offices' of Henry Williams and the other Church of England and Methodist ministers, not to mention the 'good advices' and directions given by officials of the Colonial Office in London, what might have happened? Decisions were made which resulted in there being no Established Church or religion here. All religions have their proper place among us. All this comes from that first Waitangi Day.

***So – what did you do on Waitangi Day this year? Was there a special focus for you on 6th February? What about the work of the Waitangi Tribunal? Do you think our governments have done enough – or too little, too much?***

One of the greatest partnerships of religion and politics in our country, happened in 1893 – giving the vote to women.

We are proud of this – the first nation in the world to pass this legislation. We know the story of church women, led by Kate Sheppard and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Many of our grandmothers and great-grandmothers signed that petition. All this was about the rights of women in our land. Women – and some men – in the churches influenced the Government to accept new policies which gave a stamp of identity to our country.

The Gospel bids us accept people for who they are. Yet on the grounds of faith in Christ, the churches have spent many of these past years engrossed in arguing issues of women's rights, wanting to control first the state and then themselves in these matters – and, more recently, to control the rights of people of other sexualities, wanting to exclude them from forming legal partnerships – and also from being chosen to fill religious leadership roles in their own church. In this religious and political partnership, sometimes religion can point the way. More often, however, it seems to try to hold back human rights.

## **Religion and politics – conflict or co-operation?**

Both religion and politics are about 'power'. But who gets the power? Perhaps thousands of years ago, it was the priest, who understood all things and communicated them in 'mysteries' to the people. But it was not long before the strongest, smartest man took over, as lord or king. The struggle between priest and king began; the rivalry between church and state has continued.

In our Western Christian history there are three main patterns of partnership between religion and politics:

- Firstly, religion gives in to politics. In Britain, the Queen rules the land, and the established church supports the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister chooses the Archbishop of Canterbury, who then becomes second to the Queen. If the Archbishop criticises the Government, as Robert Runcie criticised Margaret Thatcher over the Falklands War, he is in real trouble. So – surprise, surprise! – the next Archbishop, George Carey, was a very mild, establishment man.

- Second, religion lords it over politics. For example, the authority of the chief Imam of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, tells the President what to say and where he steps out of line. Maybe this is not so different from the conservative religious leaders in the USA guiding their President's thoughts and policies in domestic and international affairs.

• Of course there is a third way for religion and politics to relate – by rejecting each other. Each lives in a different world. We saw this recently in the extraordinary story of the Exclusive Brethren in New Zealand. The Exclusive Brethren hold themselves aloof from joining in public life and in particular from participation in politics and voting. Yet they seek to influence the political process.

Governments generally are paying less and less heed to the voices of the churches. But it is worth noting that at the present time our own Government is aware of the growing importance of religion world-wide and has requested from our many religious communities a draft *National Statement on Religious Diversity*.

This raises the question *how*: how should religion and politics walk shoulder to shoulder? The Reformed tradition says that as people of religious faith, we should not strive for political power by dominating or supporting particular parties. But we should walk side by side with politics, free to support policies for the good of the people and the earth, and equally free to challenge and confront policies we see as bad.

Here is a quotation to ponder, taken from a recent edition of the UK *Guardian Weekly*: *We Christians believe that Jesus invented secularism... Jesus' teachings desecralised the state: no authority, not even Caesar's, was comparable to God's.*

As Nick Spencer writes in *Doing God*, “the secular was Christianity’s gift to the world, denoting a public space in which the authorities should be respected but could be legitimately challenged and could never accord to themselves absolute or ultimate significance. Christianity, far from creating an absolutist State, initiated dissent from State absolutism.”

Religion and Politics are partners, two members of the same family, each with different talents, needed to play their own roles. So what are these roles?

The role of the State is to organise the whole society for the greatest good of all its people, no matter what gender, race, religion. This not only limits the actions of some who would hurt or disable others, but also opens up new freedoms and choices for all to encourage them to fulfil their natural talents and opportunities. *Pro bono publico* – for the good of all people.

As religious people, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists or who you will, we have, of necessity, the responsibility to support the public good because we all belong to the same human family and must learn to live together.

### The prophetic voice

But there is another, a deeper, more insistent reason that we must, as religious people, play a special part in the partnership. The state organises, the spirit guides – and religion as a recognised embodiment of the spirit, has the profound privilege to ‘speak truth to the powers’.

In the best form of religion lie the values, the truths about living well together. This is the prophetic voice in every generation. It proclaims values like sharing wealth among the community; caring for the sick and disabled; making sure that everyone gets a just, affordable ‘fair go’; respecting the diversity of ways of thought and forms of religion; creating peace for all.

The partnership of religion and politics is not so hard to work out if they are seen as two halves of human community, not as opposition forces trying to gain power over the other – religion being the guide to the deepest values of our world, people and creation, and politics the organiser of how these values are made real.

### Peace

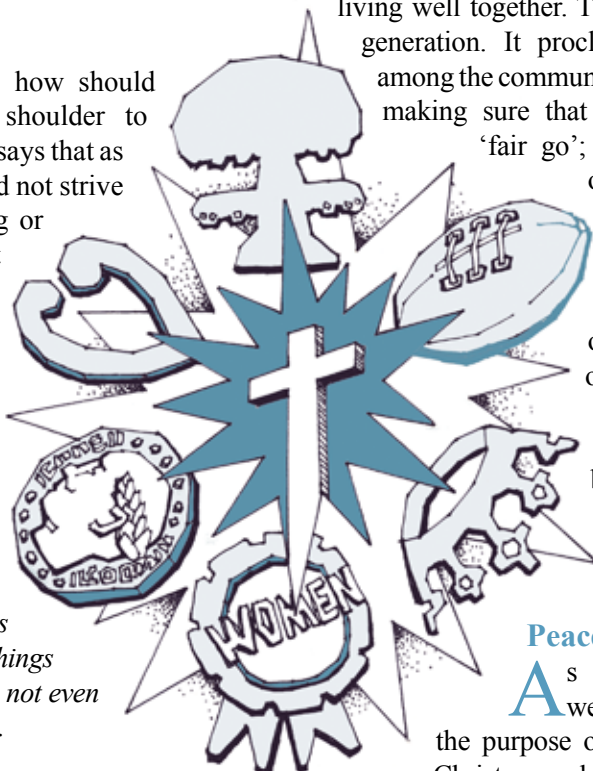
As followers of Jesus of Nazareth, we most of all are committed to the purpose of peace. Peace is the message of Christmas which we share with so many other religious people. No matter how many of our leaders have abused the truth in the past, the best of all politics is when we organise peace and goodwill on earth, among all people.

***So – where were you on August 6th 1945 (Hiroshima Day)? And if you were not born then, have you realised in your own lifetime what happened on that Day?***

Most New Zealanders are now ‘onside’ with our *Nuclear Free* politics – that was a hard struggle! The continuation of conflict, the horrendous arms industry, the belligerent political and religious leadership, and the warrior attitude of so many people which fills our press and our television, both news and entertainment!

***Has your parish made, as its top priority, peacemaking?***

The world depends on it. If all Christians – and all the other people of goodwill – worked together for peace, what an impact it would have! ■





*Fifty years ago  
Britain set off an H-bomb at  
Christmas Island. At the same  
time Gilbertese migrants from  
there were resettled in the  
Solomons. These people were  
among victims of the recent  
April tsunami.*

*Kevin Toomey reflects  
on the lot of immigrants,  
forced and otherwise*

### Being an immigrant

Every person in New Zealand is either an immigrant or a descendant of immigrants. This goes for our Maori population as much as for the pakeha. Some few amongst us also have the distinction of being refugees.

The majority of us give little thought to our ancestry in this way. We take it for granted that we are natives of this fair southern land. Sometimes, among my friends and relatives I hear comments that imply negative thoughts about those who are now coming into our country as recent immigrants. It is as though we are the 'sole proprietors' of this country, and that others are buying their way in or have come in another way that is seen as less than good. They are seen as a 'threat' to our comfortable existence.

It is, in fact, quite the opposite. They provide a freshness of thought and the often boundless energy that may help this country to flourish. I always take time to study the photos that appear regularly in the daily newspaper of those who are receiving certificates of citizenship. The smiles on their faces invariably show a sense of pride in their becoming New Zealanders. But

sometimes I also sense relief that they have been able to leave situations in their homelands which, to put it mildly, are less than healthy.

I reflect that my paternal grandfather and his brothers came to Aotearoa to get away from permanent unemployment. Our family's rented plot of land was too small for all the children to make a living farming in Ireland. Their prospects 'in the colonies' were infinitely superior. I always smile wryly when I reread the copy of the letter we possess from the Parish Priest in Adare, Co Limerick, addressed to Lord Dunraven, the British Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.

This man happened to be the Toomey's absentee landlord at the time they wished to immigrate. The letter asks Lord Dunraven that he might see his way to "shove them forward." Certainly my upwardly socially mobile family in later generations can shove themselves forward! But what about those that can't, those who are involuntary refugees?

### Gilbertese in the Solomons

The recent earthquake/tsunami around the Western Solomons, centred close to Gizo, capital of the

Western Province, brought to mind the situation of the Gilbertese people in the Solomons Islands. There are now around 7,000 of them out of a total population of nearly half a million – roughly one percent of country's citizenship. They are all Solomon Islands citizens, the majority of them having been born there.

But their parents or grandparents were compulsorily resettled in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate from its Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate (now the Republic of Kiribati), especially from the Line Islands. These two colonies were jointly administered by Great Britain under the Western Pacific High Commission.

This story is, for me, one of Britain's lesser known colonial misdeeds. It is usually understood that because of overpopulation and drought in the Line Islands (including Christmas Island), some of these islanders were resettled around Titiana and other places on Gizo and Komalieu in the Shortland Islands in 1962, with the bulk of them settled on the island of Wagina at the tip of the major island of Choiseul during 1963-4. These remote Western Province places were known to have low population density.



However, there may be another reason for their forcible resettlement. It is 50 years this May since the British Government, in its post World War II rush to maintain its status as a world power, exploded its first Hydrogen Bomb on Christmas Island. This island, was a favoured place of Britain first – and the United States later – for H-bomb tests. Around 30 such tests were carried out in the atmosphere between 1957 and 1963.

There is a clear memory among the Solomon's Gilbertese immigrants of the *Great Light*, a reference in their culture to the explosion of the Hydrogen Bomb. It is highly likely that this was the real reason people were resettled, though I have been unable to find any official documentation to verify this.

### *a memory among Gilbertese immigrants of the Great Light – the Hydrogen Bomb*

Later, other migrants from Kiribati to the Solomons came as public servants and students. One such group settled around Red Beach near Honiara. Because the places where the Gilbertese settled had poor quality land with insecure land tenure, prudently many sought an alternative to small scale share cropping by taking up commercial opportunities, mainly through logging and fishing.

The result of this has been that the Gilbertese share in the Honiara population (2.9 percent) is well above its share of the national population, though these figures are over 20 years old. Many believe their share is much higher now.

Good work performance by Gilbertese who came to hold a number of important positions in government and commerce has triggered some resentment among indigenous Solomon Islanders. The immigrants stick at their work, and because they work well they are promoted. Fear or jealousy from

the local population can be expected in a volatile and very competitive job market, especially when they see 'their' jobs being taken by 'foreigners'.

Unfortunately this resentment tends to spill back into those areas away from Honiara where the Gilbertese people have remained. In some guarded moments the more vocal Gilbertese men would comment on this to me. They feel like second class citizens in what is their country too.

And this resentment is borne out in some interesting situations. More papers have to be filled out and more hoops to be jumped by the children of Gilbertese immigrants when they apply for their Solomonese passport. I helped two people negotiate this dilemma.

And when these same children apply for the already very scarce places at Universities in Fiji and Papua New Guinea, no matter how good their marks they rarely make the cut. (It is relevant to know that only one percent of the population ever qualify to enter university). As yet, there is no Gilbertese qualified in law, despite their wish to do so. And it is only those children of wealthy Gilbertese who can afford to send their children overseas who have made it at university.

### **The April tsunami**

The massive earthquake/tsunamis which struck the Western Province early on April 2 killed 54 people. Of these 11 were Gilbertese, the majority children. This is a disproportionately high number compared with the native population. Why?

I-Kiribati settlements in the Western Province are nearly all close to the sea, on poor quality land which the native people had not used. This is the case for Nusabaruku, a small fishing village of some 100 people whose custom houses were perched low on a small bottleneck of land within the harbour of Gizo town. Once the 15-foot tsunami waves were within the harbour, they could not move on because of this bottleneck. This caused a build up of water which

rushed into Nusabaruku. Without protection from mangrove trees, nearly everything was swept away, including the most defenceless, the children.

One grandmother, Columba Temwea, managed to shepherd some children to higher ground behind the village. Then she remembered that her granddaughter was still in their house, which was right on the seafront. With maternal courage this valiant woman ran down to the water and rescued her granddaughter just as a second tsunami, some 20 minutes after the first, hit the village. She and her grandchild were later found drowned, snuggled together in one another's arms. *Greater love has no woman than to lay down her life for her friends.* Nine of the 11 Gilbertese who died came from this village.

### **Conclusion**

Returning to my original thoughts, Rimmigration for some of us has meant that the blessings our ancestors sought for themselves and their descendents have been fulfilled, often well beyond what they could ever have imagined. I know myself to be in this category. I wonder what the Gilbertese, unwillingly taken from their own Line Islands to the Solomons, dreamt of for their children and grandchildren. Certainly it seems that some were taken away from the unpredictable health consequences of living through the *Great Light* Hydrogen Bomb tests.

Even now, however, despite being a tiny proportion of the Solomonese population, they are often seen as a threat within their country of 'adoption'. A tiny proportion of this tiny proportion have made it to a more humane life. For the large majority, the promise of a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, which must have flooded through the minds of many of those forcefully removed from Kiribati as they journeyed by boat to the Western Province, still remains to be fulfilled.

*Fr. Kevin Toomey OP lived in Gizo for nearly four years from 2003-6. Gizo was where the April 2 earthquake/tsunami hit.*

Dear God



As you know I'm a bear with very little brains. Since I'm stuffed with fluff, I'm not sure I know how to pray to you. So I asked my friends for help.

Pooh's

for the Blessing of

Service

**Piglet** was very concerned that I not pray wrong. He wouldn't want me to make you mad. But I told him it was OK.

A God who gave us the Hundred Acre Wood to play in and heaps of bees to make honey had to be very nice.

So I thought to myself we should thank you for the wonderful world you have given us full of so many good things.



Next I asked **Rabbit** to help.

He said he was the very best person to ask to do something so important, but he didn't have time because all of his friends and relations were coming for dinner and he hadn't done the shopping yet.

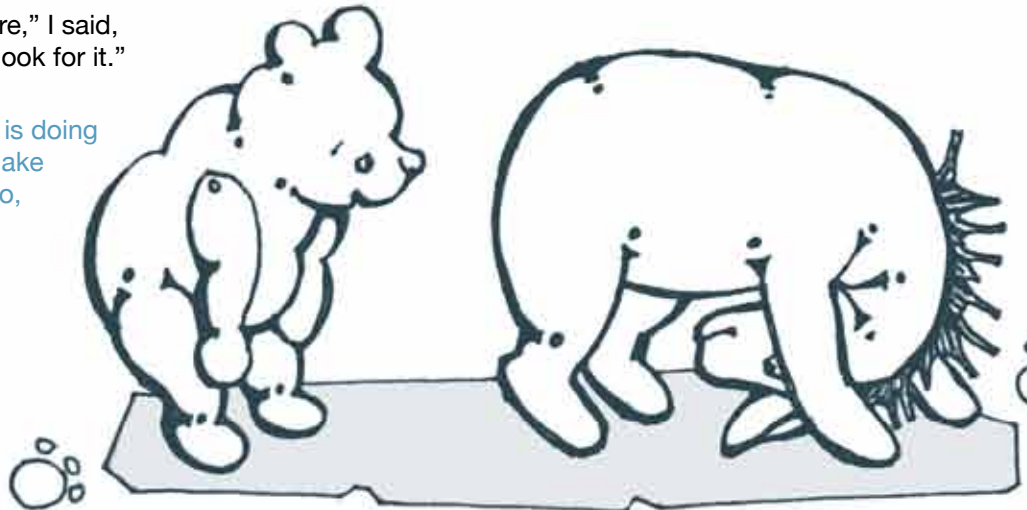
And I thought that maybe caring for those we love is a prayer. So we want to thank you for our family and friends and ask that you help us always to be loving and kind to them.



As I thought about kind things parents, teachers, and friends like Christopher Robin do for us, I bumped into **Eeyore**. I said, "Good morning." He asked, "Is it?" I said, "Yes, I've been asked to write a prayer". "That's nice, I guess," he said. "Can you pray for lost things." I said, "I guess so, what have you lost?" "My tail," he said sadly. "My thistle breakfast doesn't taste very good without it."

"Oh, poor Eeyore," I said, "I will help you look for it."

Perhaps prayer is doing something to make things right. If so, you answered our prayer.





# Prayer

of The Teddy Bears

Service

Clay Nelson



We found it at Owl's house. He was using it for visitors to ring his doorbell.

Since we were there I thought I would ask Owl how to pray. I told him I wasn't very sure if I was praying with the right words because I didn't know any long ones yet. He told me I was right to come to him because prayer is very important. He told me using the right words is difficult and spelling them correctly is even harder, but the best prayers don't use words at all. That answer made my brains hurt.

I wondered if humming a little hum would be a good prayer? He thought, "Maybe." I remembered hums I hummed about going on an explore to find the north pole or looking for heffalumps or pretending to be a cloud. Owl thought humming about being curious, doing new things, and using my imagination sounded like pretty good prayers to him.

If so, maybe I'm a pretty good prayer hummer for a bear with very little brains. God, I'm glad you like hums.



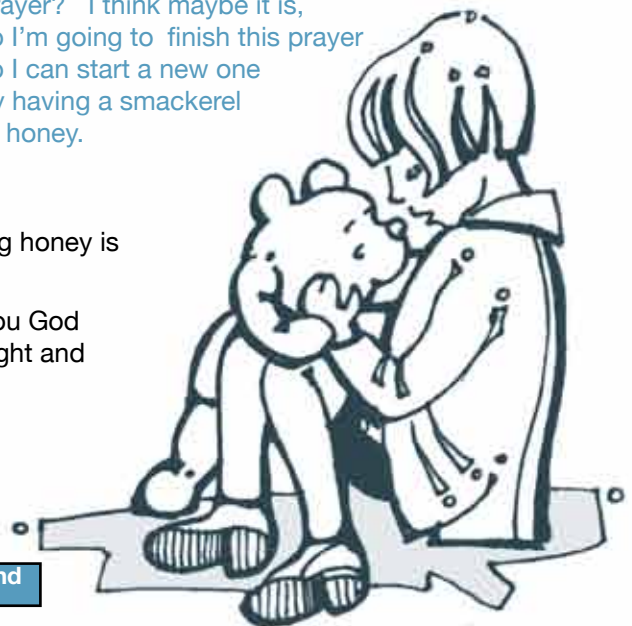
Just as I was wondering how long a prayer should be because I was getting a little hungry, **Tigger** bounced by so I asked him. He just kept bouncing with a big smile on his face. "Oh, bother," I said, but then I just had to laugh at how much fun he was having just being himself.

I thought to myself is loving and being myself a prayer? I think maybe it is, so I'm going to finish this prayer so I can start a new one by having a smackerel of honey.

Praying sure makes my tummy rumble. Eating honey is what I do best and what I enjoy most.

I asked Christopher Robin if it is OK to thank you God that my honey pot is full? He just hugged me tight and said, "Silly old bear."

Amen



From a service for children held at St Matthew-in-the-City, Auckland



# Divinely Human

Daniel O'Leary

*In the humanity of Jesus Christ, each of us, his followers, can see the resolution of their own human predicament and anguish*

A sudden summons from the bishop startles most priests. It certainly startled me some decades ago when, in my first parish, the ominous call came. In the '60s newly ordained priests were required to send in their homily notes for scrutiny by the bishop.

Those endless moments in the waiting room will never leave my mind. Riffing through my hand-written pages, the bishop beckoned me into his office, put on his glasses, smiled grimly and said: *"Sit down, Fr O'Leary. After reading your homily for the First Sunday in Lent, I'm left with no option but to conclude that you really believe that Jesus was actually tempted to sin."*

Much human versus divine water has flowed under the bridges of ecclesiastical debate since those days. It still does. One thing is sure – whichever way the age-old argument goes, there can be no denying the utter radical humanity of Jesus. His absolute humanity is the key to the understanding of the mystery of our redemption. Outside the flesh there is no salvation. Moreover anything that diminishes our belief in the true humanity of Jesus diminishes our belief in the truth of our own humanity. It is impossible to portray Jesus as being too human.

Jesus was so thoroughly human that he scandalised his neighbours more than once. He came eating and drinking, and they called him a glutton and a drunkard. He showed his frustration and his impatience, his profound need for male and female company. He took on the three great sufferings – of physical pain, the loss of his good name, and a sense of ultimate abandonment by his Father. He was courageous only because he was no stranger to fear, and he confronted the evil both around him and in the demons of his own soul. He grew in wisdom and age and grace.

Just as it was the humanity of Jesus that attracted people to him, so it is with us priests. It is our vulnerable humanity as servant-priests that people can identify with – not our clerical strength. And just as Jesus had to enter into the

desert of his own heart, and face his own temptations (and *pace* the bishop, they *were* real!), so too with the clergy.

"The fundamental witness of the priest" said Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, "will always be the authenticity of his own life." This, in the end, is what reveals God's compassion and saves the world. "The challenge" said Bishop Donal Murray "is to humanise the world we live in. People revere that which is closest to the human heart."

Giving retreats to priests is a wonderful and challenging experience. Frequently at a low ebb, they desperately struggle to save their morale, their sanity, their faith, their lives. Only at privileged times and in secure places does the truth of their inner battles of the soul emerge – battles of belief, battles of addiction, battles of personal survival. Invariably our group-sharing leads us to explore the mystery of our humanity.

This is the hub around which everything else revolves. The malaise of priesthood will never be healed by top-down discussions around magisterial directives and institutional roles. It will only be engaged, and transcended, by returning to and nourishing the messy, needy heart of our common humanity.

How else could we live with our secret desires and weaknesses if we did not believe that, through their assumption by Jesus, they are now transformed? Would we ever tell the truth in our preaching, sometimes at significant

personal cost, if Jesus has not overcome his own fear of others, and spoken honestly from his convictions?

How could we cope with the betrayal, deceit and draining disappointment in our lives if we were not convinced that they played an intrinsic part in the life of Jesus, before us, and are therefore redeemed? How would we live with the loneliness, the loss, the quiet desperation that haunt our days and nights if we ever doubted that they were constant visitors during the days and nights of Jesus as well? And how would we ever keep struggling for liberation

where injustice is rampant if we doubted that the divinity of Jesus is most clearly revealed in his own broken and marginalised humanity?

God's explosive power lies in the humanity of Jesus – and therefore of all of us. When that truth goes out of focus, the true vision of God's self-gift is blurred. Something vital for our hope is missing. Very often it is only when unwillingly vulnerable, and hanging on the ropes of our pain, that we as priests begin to understand the necessity of that unalterable and astonishing revelation.

Any mindset that sees the divinity and humanity of Jesus as 'over-against' each other, as competing realities within his person, undermines and even removes the indispensable basis of our salvation. Put another way, whenever the incarnate and intrinsic unity of the human and divine in Jesus is misunderstood or denied, a pervasive dualism will falsely separate God from where God wants to be, and is delighted to be found – that is, in the very imperfection and poverty of our wild, wayward and wonderful lives.

There is little room for manoeuvre in the clear assertion of *Gaudium et Spes*: *[Jesus] worked with human hands, thought with a human mind, acted by human choice, and loved with a human heart. He has truly been made*

*one of us...* For the Christian, the divinity of Christ will ever be inseparable from his humanity. Divinity is, in fact, fully realised humanity.

If Jesus had not somehow taken upon himself the agonies and ecstasies of our lives, the extremes of pride, prejudice and passion, then all would not have been saved. *Quod non assumptus, not redemptus*. ('What is not assumed is not redeemed').

There is a profound and current threat to the developing and spreading of this original and greening vision. A blind and fearful clericalism, still caught in a fatal misunderstanding of the doctrine of the Fall, strikes at the heart of the beautiful revelation of the Incarnation. This mindset is uncomfortable with, and suspicious of, authentic humanity. "Do we replace our humanity" asks Bishop Brian Noble "by an

inhuman clericalism?"

Pope John Paul II has left us a gem of wisdom to ponder on. "What the world needs today" he wrote "are ministers of the Gospel who are experts in humanity, who have a profound awareness of the heart of present-day men and women, participating in their joys and hopes, anguish and sadness, and who are at the same time contemplatives who have fallen in love with God. For this, we need new saints." ■

*Daniel O'Leary is a priest of the Leeds diocese in the North of England*



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by 30 June**



# Prayer and the New Creation

Richard Rohr

*Contemplative prayer is allowing God to be heard  
in our lives – like Mary standing in silence at the foot of the Cross.*

*This article is the third of a series (see Dec 06 and Feb 07) and  
completes Tui Motu's coverage of Richard Rohr's talks  
in Christchurch last October*

**P**rayer, fundamentally, is a conversation. It's a two-way process, and listening is as important as petitioning. True prayer is not a manipulation of God, a sort of exercise in arm-twisting to get one's own way. God takes the initiative. So true prayer must always allow God to be heard.

Humans, suggests Richard Rohr, habitually function with an 'egoic' operating system – and that works well for running a business or a household or driving a car to the shops. But it is useless in the realm of God.

## Prayer and dualism

We in the West habitually use a dualistic yardstick: we either affirm something or deny it. Such a method is unhelpful for understanding 90 percent of the Gospel of Jesus. To commune with God we have to "put on the mind of Christ Jesus", as Paul says. That is the contemplative stance.

A rationalist, dualistic mindset can rarely cope with the demands of the Gospel. For instance, what so-called 'Christian' country has ever come to grips with the imperative *love your enemies*? Our practical instinct as Westerners is always to compromise Gospel teaching and water it down.

The journey of faith is triggered from within. This inner journey brings us

into the presence of God; whereas the use of reason for investigating faith readily leads to argument and schism. So, after 2000 years of Christianity we now have 30,000 Christian denominations, all of whom believe they are right!

Primitive peoples, however, learn to live with paradox. Paradoxes don't always have to be resolved by reason. One of the constant imperatives throughout Scripture is *Fear not!* But since we are often ruled by fear, we insist that every issue must be resolved by 'either-or' rationalisation. What we find difficult to live with is a 'both-and' resolution.

## The New Creation

St Paul speaks of the *New Creation*, but it is not something you can arrive at easily by reason: it must be experienced. The mystic knows by intuition that the Holy Spirit is given to us, not earned by us. Faith is a grace. When the *Church Missionary Society* first arrived in New Zealand they didn't bring the Holy Spirit with them in the boat: the Maori were children of God long before the CMS arrived.

One of the first things the children of Israel learned was *not* to speak the name of God. JAHWEH is never pronounced: it is breathed. The first and most sublime truth is that God

is so humble, all we have to do is to breathe to discover the indwelling Spirit of God. In essence, this opens for us the mystery of the Trinity; which means trying to be like the Jesus we meet in the Gospels: coming to the Father through the Spirit dwelling within us.

Another truth Jesus teaches us is that any religion which separates the pure from the impure is false. Jesus' ministry was entirely among the so-called 'impure' – the poor, the disabled, the lepers, the sinners. He did not minister to priests, Scribes and Pharisees: they were 'the pure'.

The fact is there are no 'pure' people. All of us are sinners.

## How to start

To come into contemplation we have to learn 'centring' prayer. Today this is taught by Benedictine masters such as John Main and Lawrence Freeman. What contemplative prayer is *not* is a jumble of incoherent thoughts accompanied by gushy feelings.

Nevertheless, the common experience is that when we pray, obsessive thoughts may intrude into our mind; what we should do is put them on a boat and let them float away down the river. Jesus spent much of his ministry casting out 'demons'. We can be assailed ed



by such demons. These are obsessive compulsive passions which possess us. When the mind is freed from these, it can return to the formless presence of God into which it was originally born.

So, contemplative prayer consists very much in *letting go* of thoughts and feelings, of fears and resentments. In other words the ego is banished and God takes its place. We become surrounded and rapt in God's love.

In *Genesis 2*, the ultimate sin is depicted as eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By contrast, the New Testament presents us with Mary at the foot of the Cross – just standing; not screaming her resentment or tearing out her hair, but simply being there.

One thing which can prevent us attaining a contemplative stance is 'scapegoating'. We seek to escape the uncomfortable aspects of our shadow selves by projecting them onto other people. In such a situation the ego seeks to stand apart, pass judgment and condemn.

But Jesus bids us *judge not*. He himself ignored the purity code so important to the Jews of his time. He demonstrated its stupidity by deliberately touching lepers and menstruating women; he healed on the Sabbath; he was the least judgmental of men. Little wonder the Jewish leaders sought to do away with him.

### Practicalities

(1) *Meditating while walking* is a good practice, especially for active males. We need to be in the presence of the Blessed Trinity as we walk. When we meet someone we should pass by without judgment. Jesus bids us, not to worship him, but to *follow me*: in other words, to walk with him along the highways and byways.

(2) *Using poetry*. Poetry can bring us easily into contemplation. It moves us from *chronos* (time) to *kairos* (encounter). The poet takes us into the 'now' and shows us reality as it truly is. While dogma prompts us to

think, religious poetry teaches us how to see. Thinking is trying to control things, whereas when we reflect and contemplate, we are taking a long, loving look at the real.

(3) *Beware of fundamentalism*, which invests deeply in a dualist/literalist way of thinking. Perhaps by observing fundamentalism in Islam, Christians may begin to recognise it better in themselves.

(4) *Cultivate a sense of wonder*. Most of us moderns spend life with one foot on the accelerator and one on the brake; whereas wonder is enjoying the IS-ness of things. The ego will tend to avoid this because it feels empty: it feels like NO-thing.

### Some consequences

When you have been thoroughly schooled in contemplation, you can come back to using your mind. The ego has been dethroned. And you will readily return to the contemplative stance whenever you need to. Contemplation is always positive. It gives you the YES before you have to start caring about the NOes.

Saints by and large are the happiest people on earth. As Paul constantly reminds us, the God experience is something connatural. It is part of us. It is a fundamental knowing which allows everything else to be known and appreciated, not judged and rejected. "When we cry *Abba Father!* it is the Spirit which bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (*Rom 8,16*).

In essence, Christianity is a religion full of hope. We believe that the Spirit of God dwells within us. Our tradition is centred on the event of the Incarnation: God becoming human so that we might become divine. We should not see humans as evil beings: rather, we recognise that we are empty. We are waiting for God to fill us. The more we are filled with the Spirit, the more we come to love God. But we don't in any way merit it.

Our spirituality needs to be as simple as possible. We should avoid quick fixes: eg. "all we have to do is go back to the Latin Mass and all will be well". Even our orthodox theology is no more than a container. The reality is within each one of us. Inside ourselves we discover a God who has died for us out of love. And when we are old and look back, we will discover that 98 percent of what we have achieved came from God – very little from our own efforts.

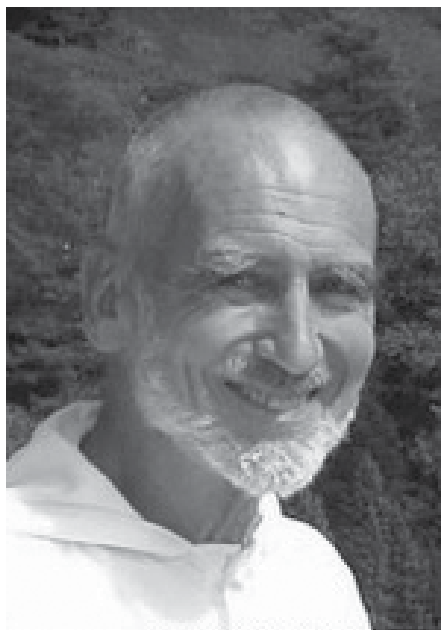
The task of the Christian is **inner transformation** (see *Richard Rohr, in TM December 2006*). The way is by prayer and suffering. By prayer we let go of our ego; suffering, however, does it for us. Who were the hero figures of the Old Testament? Often they were barren women. The chosen race itself is no more than a rabble of Egyptian slaves. And in the New testament we worship a naked, bleeding man upon a cross.

The Body of Christ consists of all people, but it may take a lifetime to recognise our belonging to it, and be able to say: "The Father and I are one". The good teacher does not ram religion down people's throats. Rather, the good teacher witnesses to the presence of God in people and helps to give them a faith container. The contents of faith they must find for themselves.

If you witness to the God within you, you will be a happy, faith-filled teacher or witness. You won't deny the shadows within you. Then, standing back from yourself you show the connections, pointing out all that is good, critiquing all that is bad. The Christian is the eternal optimist. We believe that Christ has risen, and that we shall rise again too. ■

*Richard Rohr is founder and director of the Centre for Action and Contemplation, Albuquerque, New Mexico*

Websites: [www.malespirituality.org](http://www.malespirituality.org)  
[www.caradicalgrace.org](http://www.caradicalgrace.org)



## *Giving Thanks for All the Little (and Big) Things in Life*

David Steindl-Rast

Every surprise is a challenge to trust in life and so to grow.

Have you ever noticed how your eyes open a bit wider when you are surprised? It is as if you had been asleep, merely day-dreaming or sleepwalking through some routine activity, and you hear your favorite tune on the radio, or look up from the puddles on the parking lot and see a rainbow, or the telephone rings and it's the voice of an old friend, and all of a sudden you're awake. Even an unwelcome surprise shakes us out of complacency and makes us come alive. We may not like it at first, but looking back, we can always recognize it as a gift. Humdrum equals deadness; surprise equals life. In fact, my favorite name for the One I worship in wonder – the only name that does not limit God – is *Surprise*.

Right this moment, as I remember spiritual giants I have been privileged to meet – Mother Teresa, Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day, His Holiness the Dalai Lama – I can still feel the life energy they radiated. But how did they come by this vitality? There is no lack of surprises in this world, but such radiant aliveness is rare. What I observed was that these people were

all profoundly grateful, and then I understood the secret.

A surprise does not make us automatically alive. Aliveness is a matter of give-and-take, of response. If we allow surprise to merely baffle us, it will stun us and stunt our growth. Instead, every surprise is a challenge to trust in life and so to grow. Surprise is a seed. Gratefulness sprouts when we rise to the challenge of surprise. The great ones in the realm of Spirit are so intensely alive because they are so deeply grateful.

Gratefulness can be improved by practice. But where shall beginners begin? The obvious starting point is surprise. You will find that you can grow the seeds of gratefulness just by making room. If surprise happens when something unexpected shows up, let's not expect anything at all. Let's follow Alice Walker's advice. "Expect nothing. Live frugally on surprise."

To expect nothing may mean not taking for granted that your car will start when you turn the key. Try this and you will be surprised by a marvel of technology worthy of sincere gratitude. Or you may not be thrilled by your job, but if for a moment you can stop taking it for granted, you will taste the surprise of having a job at all, while millions are unemployed. If this makes you feel a flicker of gratefulness, you'll be a little more joyful all day, a little more alive.

Once we stop taking things for granted our own bodies become some of the most surprising things of all. It never ceases to amaze me that my body both produces and destroys 15 million red blood cells every second. Fifteen million! That's nearly twice the census figure for New York City. I am told that the blood vessels in my body, if lined up end to end, would reach around the world. Yet my heart needs only one minute to pump my blood through this filigree network and back again. It has been doing so minute by minute, day by day, for the past 75 years and still keeps pumping away at 100,000 heartbeats every 24 hours. Obviously this is a matter of life and death for me, yet I have no idea how it works and it seems to work amazingly well in spite of my ignorance.

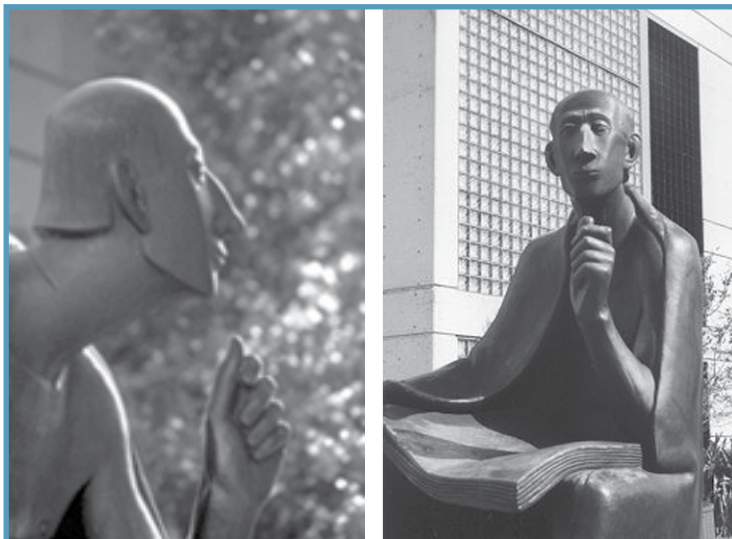
I do not know how my eyes adapt, yet when I chant by candlelight they are 100,000 times more sensitive to light than when I read outdoors on the porch at noon. I wouldn't know how to give instructions to the 35 million digestive glands in my stomach for digesting one single strawberry; fortunately, they know how to do their job without my advice. When I think of this as I sit down to eat, my heart brims with gratefulness.

In those moments, I can identify with the Psalmist who cried out in amazement, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (*Ps.139:14*)

# Albertus Magnus

“Albert the Great” (1206-1280) is renowned as a mediaeval scholar who taught at Cologne (Köln) in north-west Germany and was mentor of St Thomas Aquinas. He himself was canonised as a doctor of the church and named as patron saint of students of the natural sciences. Why is this so?

Not only did he cover the broad scene of knowledge then available to him, relating it to Aristotle, logic, metaphysics and ethics, but he held to the autonomy of human reason in its own sphere and the validity of knowledge gained from sense experience. These emphases speak to our age also.



Gerhard Marcks captures these emphases in his sculpture placed in the modern city of Cologne. The profile photo conveys the feel of a keen and incisive teacher; the frontal view conveys the power of his thought for the modern world amid the buildings and universities of a great modern city. Marcks himself (1889-1981) combined traditional and modern styles in his work; like many other modern artists under the Nazis, he

was forbidden to exhibit or create sculptures but returned to his work with great success after World War II.

Germany has contributed a number of famous Alberts to the world – the painter Albrecht Dürer, the scientist Albert Einstein and the ambivalent architect-cum-Nazi, Albert Speer. Also, Britain welcomed Prince Albert from Germany as the husband of Queen Victoria. He did much to inspire the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. It is also largely due to the respect in memory that was held for him that “Albert” became a popular name from the 19th century on.

To return to Albertus Magnus, I visited a modern church in his honour, the Albertuskirche in Saarbrücken in 1955. It had been designed by a modern Cologne architect, Dominikus Boehm, to symbolise the church with an oval plan as the travelling “Tent of God”. This was a memorable experience of a beautiful small church continuing to express the relevance of thought of Albert the Great. ■

*Albert Moore*

From there it is only a small step to seeing the whole universe and every smallest part of it as surprising. From the humble starting point of daily surprises, the practice of gratefulness leads to these transcendent heights. Thomas Carlyle pointed to these peaks of spiritual awareness when he wrote, “Worship is transcendent wonder” – transcendent surprise. ■

*Br David Steindl-Rast is a Benedictine monk who has criss-crossed the world spreading his message of prayer and gratefulness through writings and workshops. He has been to New Zealand more than once. His website: [www.gratefulness.org](http://www.gratefulness.org) is interactive – share a prayer or light a ‘cyber candle for peace’ which flickers online for 48 hours*

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# Crossing

*The horizon dips, rises.  
Columns of heat shimmer  
above the funnel. A gull  
catches the slipstream.*

*A dot  
Picked out on a hill,  
the old family house  
angles away, vanishes.*

*When you met us at Picton,  
we wanted to be sea-changed  
for you, hugs and like  
the tide, an undertow.*

*Returning to Wellington,  
the ferry set into  
the arrowhead of its wake  
ridges, batches, jetties drift.*

*A few turn away  
from books and conversation  
From the organisation of children  
to lean against a rail.*

*As if they too are not fixed,  
the dark sea and sky  
tilt at each other  
in the flickering of a beacon.*

*As big as a village, it  
is still a ferry over water  
therefore Charon and the  
irrevocable coin paid up.*

*A crossing is always a loss  
and something found  
unspoken in wash of water  
in the deep drumming of Diesels.*

Peter Rawnsley

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Saturday 7th July – Day Event (\$45)  
10am - 4pm: St Margaret's College Chapel  
Enquiries/bookings: [www.aet.net.nz](http://www.aet.net.nz) or  
[adulteducationtrust@xtra.co.nz](mailto:adulteducationtrust@xtra.co.nz)

**Wellington:** Tuesday 10th July – Evening  
Lecture (\$10) 7.30 - 9.00pm:  
St Mary's College Hall  
Wednesday 11th July – Day Event (\$45)  
9.30am - 3.30pm: St Joseph's Church,  
Mt Victoria  
Bookings: [marcellinrsm@xtra.co.nz](mailto:marcellinrsm@xtra.co.nz)

**Auckland:** Saturday 14th July – Day Event  
(\$45) 9.30am - 3.30pm: Cecilia Maher Hall,  
St Mary's College, Ponsonby. Bookings:  
[mercycentre@auckland@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mercycentre@auckland@xtra.co.nz)  
Ph 09 638 6238

15th July – 10.00am St-Matthew-in-the-City

### *In Search of Belief*

A few years ago a community of  
Mercy Sisters met over a few weeks  
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Bible Society

## A Mother's Journal...

Kaaren Mathias

**A**loved and wise aunt recently sent me some spiritual food: Margaret Silf's "Sacred Spaces" – and I've been sneaking small bites before breakfast or after children are in bed. She talks about 'thin places', a term in Celtic spirituality for those points and those moments where spiritual and material, visible and invisible, become one. In these sacred places the intensity of God shines through a hole in the 'ozone layer' into our everyday. The term was new to me but I recognized the concept immediately.

Last weekend we went walking up high on Lambri ridge, 1600m above our village. We had eaten a quick lunch on a grassy perch overlooking the valley, uneasy about Indian ink clouds blotting out the morning's sun. A thunderclap rolled as we were packing up and the first juicy spits of rain had us burrowing into packs for rain coats.

We buttoned up and walked on along the ridge. The sky was purple... a bruised plum. Bowel-shuddering thunder rolled around us. Columns of grey-black rain as solid as tree trunks dropped from the cloud canopy above patches of hill and valley below us. A few small white balls of hail ricocheted around us but lightly dancing and bouncing. My senses were heightened and focused fully on where I was.

In front of me trotted three heroic children in cheerful coloured plastic raincoats luminous against the black sky. Small tongues out to catch the hail. Hands over yellow hoods blocking their ears when the thunder growled



too close. Telling stories about the gods' raucous burping and indigestion. Asking why night is falling when we've only just eaten lunch. Wondering where we'll put up our tent today. Could we get hit by lightning? Why is hail so bouncy? Shall we get some to put in our water bottle? Can I have two pairs of gloves? We were all fully present.

NOW demanded all of our thoughts and our senses. We trudged along, wondering when we'd be pelted, amazed and absorbed by this wild black storm. Eternity, God, grace, wonder and beauty... all were there.

After a long traverse under a peak we reached a saddle and we saw the next hillside – just a few hundred metres away – completely white with hail. Across the valley rain continued pummeling

the green fields. Somehow we'd walked a vibrating tightrope of relative dry and stillness through this tumult of rain, hail, thunder and lightning.

We squat by a rock and eat some nuts. And the clouds lift – colour and light seep back onto the screen. And so does chatter and distraction and mental burble... But I know that on Lambri ridge in a thunderstorm one May day there was no membrane between me, my three children and God. She was there dancing, belly rolling, laughing, and delighting in us and in this world. It was a passage of rarefied intensity, a thin place. I'm glad we were there.

*Kaaren lives and works in a small village, high up in Himachal Pradesh, North India with her husband Jeph and their three children. She also moonlights as a public health doctor*

### Through the eyes of a child

I must tell you of a beautiful incident that happened in my Bible-in-Schools Class in Opotiki, *writes a Mission Sister*.

I had occasion to ask one little boy "How old are you?"

"I'm seven," he replied, "How old are you?"

"I'm 70," I told him (which I was)

He looked at me with great wonder and awe and in a very reverend voice exclaimed: "Wow! You've been round the sun 70 times !!!"

I thought what a wonderful idea of age this child has been given!

### Comment from Belfast

Ian Paisley, in February 1997, said:

I will never sit down with Gerry Adams.

He'd sit down with anyone.

He'd sit down with the devil.

*How things have changed!*

# Reflecting on John

The Samaritan Woman – a quick learner

*John 4:7-42*

Susan Smith

Last month in the story of Nicodemus we looked at a disciple who came to Jesus by night, and whose growth in faith was somewhat slow. In *John 4*, we have a vignette of another disciple, the Samaritan woman, whom Jewish leaders would have despised on three counts – her race, her gender, and her presumed social status. Unlike Nicodemus, she meets with Jesus in the middle of the day, and unlike Nicodemus, her growth in understanding is more rapid. “Many Samaritans from that city believed in Jesus because of the woman’s testimony.”



(*John 8:48*). This is language that dehumanizes and demonizes. It is language that leads to war-making and ethnic cleansing. In our story, Jesus transforms that hatred into salvation and solidarity.

Later, in *John 20:21*, the risen Jesus greets his disciples: “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you.” In our world, where ethnic and gender conflicts claim many innocent lives, the example of peace-making that Jesus demonstrates in the story of the Samaritan woman, and his words to his disciples in *John 20* require us to take seriously our mission to be peace-makers in our world. ■

Enmity between Jews and Samaritans had its origins in the Assyrian occupation of northern Palestine (721 BCE), but tension worsened after 200 BCE, because of on-going disputes as to the correct location of the cultic centre (cf. *John 4:20*). The Samaritans had built a shrine on Mt Gerizim during the Persian period and claimed that this shrine, not the Jerusalem Temple, was the proper place of worship. The shrine had been destroyed by Jewish troops in 128 BCE. In a tit-for-tat reprisal, some Samaritans scattered human bones in the Jerusalem Temple between 6-9 CE, thereby defiling it. It is not surprising that “the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans” (*John 4:9*)

When Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well, he meets someone who stands in marked contrast to all that has so far happened in this Gospel. When Jesus called the first disciples, he called Jewish men, when he spoke with Nicodemus in 3:1-21, he spoke with a named male of the Jewish religious establishment. When he speaks with the Samaritan woman, he speaks with an unnamed female of an enemy people.

As one commentator writes: “Jesus openly challenges and breaks open two boundaries in this text: the boundary between ‘chosen people’ and ‘rejected people’, ‘between male and female’.” In other words, Jesus transgresses the ethnic and gender barriers that historically and contemporaneously so many wish to maintain, particularly at the societal or institutional level.

Later Jesus again argues with the Jews who say “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

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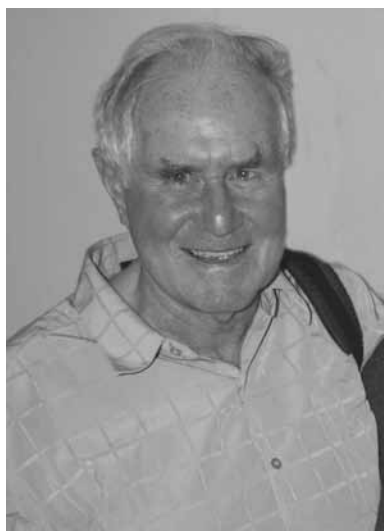
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# Easy Targets

Paul Andrews



In a lovely book called *The places in between*, Rory Stewart, a tough young Scot, has written about his walk through the mountains of Afghanistan. He would spend the night in villages, sitting with the men and watching them. The order in which men enter, sit, greet, drink, wash and eat, defines their status, their manners and their view of their companions. Status depended on age, ancestry, wealth and profession, but also on whether a man was a guest, and other factors. When other senior men from the village entered, we all rose in their honour. But when the servants brought the food, I was the only one to look up. Servants, like women and children, were socially invisible.

It is startling, isn't it? In Ireland we like to talk to those who bring the food to the table – in fact we enjoy a new game of guessing where a waitress comes from. Women here are highly visible, and children, when they come into a room, can cause a nice stir. There are unspoken rules that govern how we listen to people, whether men or women, and decide who gets our attention and who can be interrupted.

We have our own ways of showing respect. I once welcomed Bishop Dominic Tang to a dinner in Dublin. As a Jesuit bishop he had been over twenty years in a Communist prison in China, seven of them in solitary confinement, and he had an extraordinary story to

tell. While we sat chatting, neighbours would enter the room to pay their respects to this remarkable man. Some of them half expected to be kneeling and kissing a bishop's ring. But as each new face appeared, the bishop jumped out of his chair and hurried over to greet them, making them the centre of his attention and regard. The simple, self-effacing gesture impressed me even more than the stories he told of prison.

We call ourselves a multi-cultural society, and think about the ways we need to adapt to other ways of living. The important things are not so much dressing up and tribal dances and folk songs, as the things we take for granted, the attitude to strangers, and servants, and women and children.

Rory Stewart was taken aback by what he called the social invisibility of servants, women and children; in men's company they did not count. Yet he dedicated his book with great warmth to these same people. Among them he found unquestioning hospitality: "I was alone and a stranger, walking in very remote areas. I represented a culture that many of them hated, and I was carrying enough money to save or at least transform their lives. In more than five hundred village houses, I was indulged, fed, nursed and protected by people poorer, hungrier, sicker and more vulnerable than me. Almost every group I met... gave me hospitality without any thought of reward."

Hospitality meant an evening meal, which might be just a piece of bread, and the freedom to spread your mat and sleep on the floor of the room. For a traveller in snowy mountains, that meant the difference between life and death. Hospitality was a sacred, unquestioned duty.

So what are the unquestioned assumptions in Ireland? One way

of exploring them is by asking this question: *Who are the easy targets?* In the various groups I talk with, is there a sense that nobody will object if I bad-mouth a particular person or group?

In Hitler's Germany you could say and publish the worst calumnies about Jews, or Jesuits; for them the law of libel was suspended. Nowadays you could find groups who would see President Bush as an easy target, or the Catholic Church, or Northern Unionists, or Sinn Féin, or politicians as a group, or an unpopular neighbour. Prejudice means forming a judgment without evidence, on the basis of a label or social stereotype.

It is even sadder when good people start to see well-meaning institutions as an easy target, because of some ancient jealousy or rivalry. We joke nowadays about rivalries between the Jesuits and the Dominicans, which roused passions in past centuries. But they were tragic rather than funny at the time, and diverted energy and love away from the service of others.

Jesus startled his disciples when he told them: those who are not against us are with us (*Luke 9,50*). It is so easy to snipe at the easy targets. Any fool can do that. The hard job, the Christian job, is to seek out the ways in which we are like others, to try to see the world from within the skin of those who are different.

When Abraham Lincoln was criticised for being too courteous to his enemies, and reminded that it was his duty to destroy them, he gave a lovely reply: *Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?* ■

*Paul Andrews is a Jesuit priest and psychotherapist semi-retired in Dublin*

## Caring for society's derelicts

*Pitch your tents on distant shores:*

A history of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Australia, Aotearoa-New Zealand and Tahiti

by Catherine Kovesi

Playright Publishing Carringbah, NSW 2006 Price: \$70

**Review: John Broadbent**

This interesting, well-researched and magnificently illustrated book is a history of the *Good Shepherd Sisters* in the South Pacific, Australia, New Zealand and Tahiti. The author is an Australian scholar and historian of note who has woven stories together of the foundation of the Sisters, their splendid work especially among women and children, rejects of society whom no-one else would help.

In the light of much concern and publicity about sexual and physical abuse from priests and religious, it is good to see the heroic record of these committed religious and the many positive things they have attempted and achieved.

The foundress, Euphrasia Pelletier, at an early age felt called to help women thought to be at risk of leading an immoral life. Refuges were quite common in France at the time for those people broken by hardships, to come for a while and rebuild their lives.

St John Eudes had founded an order of women called *The Sisters of Our Lady of Refuge*, especially to shelter women who were illegitimate, had been raped, or who were working as prostitutes, or were homeless for some other reason. The houses were separate entities, linked only through casual non-official connections and numbered only eight when Euphrasia

Pelletier joined them in Tours in 1814.

In 1825 a group of women in the refuge asked Euphrasia if they could become religious sisters. Euphrasia determined that what was needed was a separate community under the overarching protection of her community and she called these committed women "Magdalenes". Biblical scholars today fight over the status of St Mary Magdalen. In Euphrasia's day there was no doubt she was a reformed prostitute. The formative period for these Magdalenes was a long one and the person concerned could leave at any time she wished. They remained a self-sustaining community under the administrative umbrella of the Sisters.

In 1829 Euphrasia was asked to make a foundation in Angers which ultimately became the Mother House of a virtually new congregation, the *Sisters of the Good Shepherd*. In 1833 when Euphrasia asked the other convents for help with personnel, all replied they had none to spare. Euphrasia took it on herself to go it alone. Within the next eight years, 12 new foundations were made from Angers. When Euphrasia died in 1868, there were 110 foundations on six continents, including Australasia. Pope Gregory XVI gave his approval to the new congregation in 1835. St Euphrasia was canonised in 1940.

In time these *Good Shepherd* communities became communities within communities as girls who were cared for by the Sisters wanted to stay on and yet not be Magdalenes became helpers or auxiliaries. Then there were the homeless or at risk young children whom the nuns cared for until they came of age or were in the care of

responsible adults. As well, some of the houses took on reformatory girls who would have been in borstals or prisons.

Each of these communities were kept separate which of course necessitated large buildings and spacious grounds. Great establishments like Abbotsford in Melbourne and Mount Magdala in Christchurch were necessary to house and grow gardens and walks for these various communities living in the same overall community. At times the Sisters' communities housed between 50 and a hundred Sisters as well as hundreds of dependants. These institutions were "in keeping with the 19th century beliefs in the possibility of moral contamination through proximity" (p.71).

Allied with the large institutional character of the *Good Shepherd Sisters* was the rather strict interpretation of human communication. Euphrasia said the women or young people coming in should not speak about their past. "Never allow any of our dear penitents to confide in you in any way... love all of them sincerely in God without familiarity, without rudeness and, above all, without special friendships, otherwise you will be ruined and the penitents will have no respect for you."

Most important of all, the girls were to be kept busy so that they would not have the time or energy to think about their former lives (p42). One can see some wisdom in the cautions, but it could encourage some Sisters to develop very cold and impersonal relationships. Euphrasia was adamant about never striking the girls and women under the Sisters' care, and if somebody wished to leave that person should be free to do so.

The author goes on to take up the main point of the book, the foundation of the South Pacific houses beginning with Melbourne in 1863. It was the big city near the recently discovered gold mines of Victoria. Many men had left Melbourne to seek their fortunes in the gold fields – some never to return. Their women were left behind with few jobs for them. Many children were left orphaned. Young Irish girls had arrived on government-assisted passages. Those who got jobs as low-paid servants were lucky although frequently exploited. Many women took to the streets and prostitution to earn money to live. These women, as well as thieves tramps, alcoholics and the ‘feeble-minded’ became the wards of the Sisters in their first convent and home at Abbotsford, even though the Sisters were almost penniless and dependent on Providence.

The Sisters then spread to New Zealand. Christchurch was another Melbourne because many of the women whose men had left for

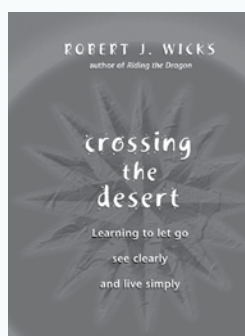
the Otago and West Coast gold fields were in similar straits to their Victorian sisters. Mount Magdala in Christchurch was founded in 1886. In 1890 so many young women from Australia and New Zealand had joined the congregation that Angers made the convents in the South Pacific a province.

In the 1940s a new Superior-General encouraged the Sisters to be trained in social work, to attend psycho-pedagogical courses and study techniques for keeping the women and girls involved in leisure time. Relations between the Sisters and their wards were put on a more humane basis. One Sister records how she was distressed with a 14-year-old girl who kept wandering away from her laundry work and had to be spoken to. If only she had known the girl had been brought to the convent after having had a miscarriage, she would have treated her more gently. In keeping with the rule, no one could speak of the past or know it, even the Sisters (p281).

The author deftly points out how the whole spirituality and theology had slowly to change. The 19th century emphasis on preparing for the moment of death, a good idea while being in a waiting room working and praying hard, had to change to a realisation endorsed by Vatican II that this life is a good one, to be happy in and enjoy it and to use one’s talents.

The change of emphasis is important and began to colour attitudes in the Congregation. Transition houses were started in many places where young women and girls were better fitted for living ‘outside’ and took jobs, returning at night. They left in their own time often to marry. This meant selling the huge Abbotsfords and Mount Magdalas and concentrating on smaller communities.

This book is a magnificent tribute to the hundreds of Sisters, mostly Australian and New Zealanders, who in the last century and a half have helped – and still are helping – tens of thousands of women. ■



Robert J. Wicks

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## A *kairos* moment in Ireland

The sense of Irish history lies in breaking the connection with England. Patrick Pearse, leader of the 1916 Easter Rising, pleaded and died for the Irish cause and believed that "Ireland unfree shall never be at peace".

Pearse's ideal, a Gaelic-speaking Ireland, never looked like becoming a reality, but he would have been amazed to witness representatives from the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin agreeing to share power in Northern Ireland. Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams have agreed to come together in the hope for peace after centuries of conflict and social disruption which have blighted Ireland for so long. Despite the endless posturing of politicians, the art of compromise and the counsel of moderation have, seemingly, succeeded at last.

The British connection in Northern Ireland has been bitterly defended by the majority of the population there, the Protestants. The Catholics, just as adamantly, have fought for a united Ireland free of the yoke and bloody history of a colonising England. It is extraordinary that a compromise has finally been reached.

But in the modern global village, the idea of a complete break with Britain is less attractive than it used to be. The Republican mandate derives from the dead patriot. "But who is there to argue that/Now Pearse is deaf and dumb", writes W.B. Yeats.

The troubles in Northern Ireland stemmed from this legacy of colonialism and sectarian discrimination rather than religion. The aligning of the two factions, personified by Paisley and McGuinness shaking hands together in a coalition government, is a victory for the positive art of politics and the power of mediation. Secretary Peter Hain summed it up, "These are the two most polarised forces in Northern

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### Crosscurrents

John Honoré

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Ireland's politics, they have done the deal."

Miraculously, he could be right.

### Blair's last hurrah!

Tony Blair has finally announced that he will stand down as Prime Minister of Britain on the 27 June. He leaves with his popularity at its lowest ebb, clinging to his undoubted role as mediator for the peace negotiations in Northern Ireland as his legacy, but not resiling from his role in Iraq. "*Hand on heart*," he said, "*I did what I thought was right. I may have been wrong. That's your call.*" So one of the great orators of the contemporary political scene leaves the stage, unapologetic for having dragged his country into a disastrous war and still with delusions of grandeur.

When Blair was elected Prime Minister in 1997, his primary objective was to show how a centre left administration could change things for the better. He also aspired to be a great British leader in the historical mould. Liberal interventionism became the essence of his foreign policy. It must be admitted that he led the way in arresting the genocide in Kosovar. It was his greatest achievement in foreign affairs.

However, his infamous support of George W. Bush is what he will be remembered for, an alliance gone terribly wrong and responsible for the destabilisation of an entire region of the globe. It is impossible to forget his government's 'sexed up' dossiers, Alastair Campbell's spin-doctoring, or the spectre of Saddam Hussein's chemical weapons "ready in 45 minutes". Such incidents point to a total disregard for the truth. Iraq is Bush's war, but, as one pundit put it, Tony Blair was *Il Duce* to Bush's *Fuhrer*.

Tony Blair seems destined to follow Bill Clinton and not quit politics completely. The role of celebrity speaker on the world stage commands big money and big audiences. Where better to defend one's own record, "heal the wounds" of Africa and fight global warming? *That's my call, Mr Blair.*

### France turns right

From the rich Paris suburb of Neuilly comes the new President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, leaving Ségolène Royal, the Socialist Party candidate, well beaten in a massive voter turnout. Despite her undeniable appeal, her inability to articulate a credible socialist platform in the face of infighting within her own ranks destroyed any hope of her 'Sixth Republic'.

Who and what is *Sarko*? Sarkozy is an outsider to the old political ruling class. He has new power, new money and aggressively right wing ideas to give France a new 'national identity'. For Sarkozy that means opportunity, sexual equality, work and an education system to "support the people who deserve it". Business needs a break from taxes and the French people must work harder and produce more. The implication being – *or else!* Is this the beginning or the end of old class wars?

The French have voted for change, literally from left to right, in the political spectrum. The new President is small in stature but madly energetic. A graduate of a non-elite university with a troubled married life (his wife Cécilia Ciganer-Albeniz will not live at the Elysée Palace), he faces a lacklustre economy, high unemployment and suburban decay. He declares that he is equal to the task of restructuring French society and returning to traditional values with the benefit of a tightly controlled economy.

Nicolas Sarkozy's election means change for France, but he has been given the mandate. He is President with a daunting task ahead of him – *point final*. ■

# Bigotry

We recently saw on our TV screens scenes in Northern Ireland that we never believed we would see. Not just Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness sitting peacefully side by side in Stormont Castle, the seat of government, but both saying good things of the other and promising, with every evidence of being sincere, to work together for the good of the Northern Ireland people as a whole. The peace process has no doubt still some distance to go. There will be hiccups, even further crises. But there is good reason to believe that Ulster has entered a new and welcome era.

Multiple are the causes for the antagonism that has existed between Irish Nationalist and Orangeman. Let us look at only one of them. Let us look at bigotry. Our reflection can provide us with lessons for our own New Zealand way of life. A bigot, dictionaries tell us, is a prejudiced person who is intolerant of opinions, lifestyles, or identities differing from their own. Such persons have undoubtedly been found in numbers in Northern Ireland, not just on the Unionist side. Nor in Ireland only.

Forty years ago, Vatican II's decree on Ecumenism (n.9) set out the basic cure for religious bigotry. "We must get to know the outlook of our separated brethren. To achieve this purpose, study is of necessity required. This must be pursued with a sense of realism and good will. Catholics... need to acquire a more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines of our separated brethren, their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and general background." This is a course of action, needless to say, we would recommend also to those whom we consider to be bigoted in their attitude towards Catholics.

Northern Ireland was not well set up to promote such mutual understanding. For one thing there were separate school systems. Having its own schools had its advantages for the Catholic community, but there was the great demerit that Ulster Catholics grew up having little contact with those who were not of their clan.

Things were little better in the adult community. There was not that social intermingling that could promote mutual respect and that would provide a real, if informal, path by which Catholic and Protestant learnt more about the roots of the other's positions.

Christians of both the Catholic and the Protestant variety have over the years quietly beavered away in Ulster to reduce the level of ignorance and to promote mutual respect. This was not done without cost and even peril to life. I remember on a visit to Belfast all of 30 years ago meeting a Catholic woman who ventured once a week into a Protestant area to take part in an inter-church prayer meeting. She said – of her rather ample physical proportions: "They increase the danger. It makes me a better target for the gunman".

Without doubt the traditional forms of interreligious bigotry have decreased in our country over the past half century or more. We Catholics understand much better than in earlier days the position of our Anglican and Protestant fellow believers. They of course have made the same journey.

If Catholics still experience bigotry in this country, it is more likely to be from the secularist camp. Surely the remedy here is the same as that in Northern Ireland. We need to make our critics see us as we truly are, not as they have been misconceiving us to be. But, as has proved to be the case in Northern Ireland, it will be a slow process.

*Humphrey O'Leary*

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# The Fall

No, this is not about Eve and apples. Nor about the magnificent season of exquisite colours just coming to a close in Central Otago. It is an incident which befell me recently: something which happens to all of us occasionally. It is the downside of being bipedal.

It happened like this. I was attending a funeral in a local church, one of several concelebrants standing on the step behind the altar. At communion time the priests started moving around for the distribution of communion. Without thinking I took a step sideways – and fell into thin air. There was no more step!

Time stands still when you fall through space. I had time to hear with some curiosity the sound of 200 people drawing in breath sharply together. I thought: “this could hurt”. I arrived

at *terra firma*. By extraordinary good fortune it wasn't *terra* so very *firma*. It was the lower step constructed of stout planks. I bounced.

I got up with nothing hurt except my dignity. The Bishop said, “do you want to sit down?”, offering me the throne. I said “May I have the Blood of Christ?” I took communion and retired to my place none the worse. After Mass people kindly offered sympathy. The parish priest of Winton said: “You should have been a rodeo rider, falling like that”. He knew. He had been a champion.

My prayer was one of thanks to the architect of that church who had constructed the altar platform, not of concrete or stone but of wooden planks. Wooden planks give. They allow you to bounce.

That set me thinking. I am rapidly reaching the age and stage when falling over becomes a more likely event. Also, I am reaching the age when people like me ‘downsize’. They leave their often

older family homes and move into convenient, warm and snug ‘units’, usually on one level. They are designed for the elderly.

But are they? In fact, almost universally the modern ones are constructed on a concrete raft. When elderly folk fall over in such homes they don't bounce. They often break bones. They come to occupy the orthopaedic wards of our hospitals. I recall it happening to my father. It was the termination of his active life.

No doubt the designers of retirement villages will plead that using concrete foundations is standard practice and is economically indicated. Using old fashioned tongue-and-groove would put up the costs by a significant percentage. And so on. But it would be a great kindness to people like me who prefer to bounce than break bones. And it could be a massive saving on our hard pressed medical services. Just a thought.

M.H.

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