

TUI MOTU InterIslands

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OUR NEW TIME



Te Riarati Hou

MARY THORNE, MIKE RIDDELL, JANE HIGGINS, ANN HASSAN, MAKARETA TAWAROA and OTHERS
on what to carry forward

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EDITORIAL

The Time of the Spirit

Welcome to the resurrection of *Tui Motu* magazine, in print again after two months in COVID-19 Lockdown. It signals a triumph over illness and death — triumph brought about through our country's concerted efforts. But that's only a little milestone on the journey. We can't return to life as we knew it before. In other areas of the world people are wracked with the virulence of the coronavirus. "Isolation" is our single tool to stop the virus spreading — isolation from one another, isolation region from region and isolation from other countries. While we seem to be free from the coronavirus, it's still a threat — if someone with the disease crosses our borders we will no longer be safe. So we are living cautiously in a new time aware of its threats, opportunities and promise. In real and faith terms, we are in the "time" of the Spirit.

Even while we live prudently on our islands, we're not self-satisfied and unconcerned for the rest of the world. Real triumph will come only when all the people of the world are free from COVID-19. More than ever this highlights the meaning of the common good — when one is ill, dying, or mourning, potentially we all are. So in this time of the Spirit we join energetically in the mission of God flagged by the signs of this time — the need for healing, comfort, compassion, support, sharing of resources, encouragement and fearless love of Earth and the community of people at home in Earth.

Jane Higgins writes that the world has turned upside down. It's true. The Spirit is vividly clear in many voices and circumstances — encouragement to build relationships of kindness, patience, thoughtfulness among us; a new political approach, not just opposition for the sake of opposition; a call for clarity around restrictions so that we can abide by them; creative ways to support small businesses; a desire to develop an attitude of support not austerity; to keep up our efforts to protect all life not just human life; to ensure that in the tough times ahead no group suffers more; to praise kindness, unselfishness and generosity; and to not scapegoat other countries or groups.

In this time of the Spirit, we are not following Jesus — Jesus has gone we read in John's Gospel — we are uniting with the Cosmic Christ egged on by the Spirit to complete the mission of God. We travel with the question: how are we being most loving in this new time?

The contributors to this 249th issue show that the Spirit is unleashing creativity, imagination and commitment among us. We are grateful for all those who have shared generously their reflection, questions, stories, faith, experience, research, art and craft in this resurrected magazine.

And as is our custom, our last words are of blessing and encouragement. ⌚



EQUALITY FOR ALL

It's been interesting to hear in recent weeks how some of the world's wealthiest people have fled to New Zealand during the current pandemic.

While it's unsurprising to hear they've been drawn to the land of the long white cloud in times of trouble, there's an underlying truth that bears repeating: it's the ultra wealthy making the migration.

As a Queenstown contact was telling me the other day, locals have watched on with curiosity as their airport — usually home to 737s bringing the usual thrill-seeking tourists — has been cluttered instead with a steady stream of private jets.

I imagine the same thing was happening in Auckland, with jets bringing in those looking to hideout in Waiheke, known in some circles as the “Hamptons of New Zealand”, where house prices have soared due to the influx of the well-to-do over the years. Now, those well-to-do are coming to roost.

Tech tycoons like Peter Thiel, the billionaire founder of Paypal, hedge fund managers and Hollywood directors, are among those who have boltholes dotted around the country.

While there's nothing wrong with migration and open borders, there's an unfairness inherent in the ability of the wealthy to escape danger in difficult times. They leave the poor to fend for themselves.

At a time when most people are confined to their modest homes, the rich are not short on space. When travel restrictions keep us within our

suburbs, the super-rich can charter their own jets for whatever far flung destination they choose.

The Australian media mogul Kerry Stokes flew from the elite ski slopes of Aspen, USA — a COVID-19 hotspot in its own right — to Perth. On arriving he headed off to his mansion, circumventing Western Australia's tough restrictions and avoiding the quarantine imposed on everyone else, having sought a special exemption from the police. Coincidentally, he ranks as the state's most influential resident.

Others who normally haunt boardrooms in Silicon Valley have done the same — simply jetted into their multimillion dollar New Zealand boltholes. While the poor and vulnerable have struggled to find and purchase essential items, I imagine this elite cohort have not broken a sweat securing what they desire.

In these worst of times, what we always suspected has been laid bare: money and influence mean the rich simply do not have to follow the rules, restrictions and realities that apply to the rest of us.

It is as if they occupy a different plane of existence. It's not difficult to view this kind of power as a sort of neo-colonialism — powerful, predominately white, men land in a new land and seize what's on offer from the locals.

That's why I was pleasantly surprised to see Jacinda Ardern opposed one policy that would have offered visas to anyone willing to “invest” US\$50 million or more in the

country. While the policy may have had financial merits, I think the Prime Minister put it best when she said: “We don't want people paying for passports.”

Perhaps living in Australia, with its horrific track record on immigration, it's easy to see the injustice in denying refuge to the poor and the desperate and at the same time granting it to the uber-wealthy. It is worse when many of the rich are coming from the United States, a country where the few have accumulated vast wealth while the many are denied even the human right of healthcare.

Recently, a photo emerged of a Las Vegas open air carpark that had been converted for the homeless when the shelters were shut down. The carpark was marked out in large rectangles in spraypaint within which a homeless person or family could sleep while keeping a social distance from others. That's the kind of imagery that sends chills down my spine. Bankruptcy is equivalent to a death sentence in that city in good times; how much worse it is in bad times.

I think that wherever we call home during this pandemic, it's essential that we are in solidarity with our fellow citizens and not lose sight of the reality we're all living in. ⌚

Photo by Alessandro Erbetta on Unsplash



Jack Derwin is a senior reporter at *Business Insider Australia*. His interests include all aspects of social justice particularly in the South Pacific region.



It's Time for Brave Choices

MARY THORNE reminds us of our past and asks if we have the wisdom and commitment now to choose for the long-term common good.

Remember the significance and excitement of the moment when 1999 ticked over into the year 2000? In Aotearoa New Zealand, many stayed awake to watch the sun rise on a new millennium. Then, weary from our celebrations, we spent the first day of 2000 watching television coverage of neighbourhoods, like our own, marking the occasion. We listened to people expressing their dreams for this new millennium. They spoke of peace and justice and a fair go for everyone. It was a moving expression of our nation's shared values, this heartfelt belief of so many ordinary New Zealanders, that in our wonderful country we wanted things to be better.

Nineteen years later, the new millennium a distant memory, those values of peace, love and fairness were shockingly violated by an act of violence against people praying peacefully at the Friday prayer services in two Christchurch mosques. New Zealand people responded with an outpouring of grief and loving support.

Now, as the first anniversary of the Christchurch shooting passes, we are challenged again. This time by a viral sickness that is sweeping around the globe in a devastating way. Our capacity to act in solidarity for one another's wellbeing is being tested. We encourage one another to choose and act kindly and wisely. As our

contacts and activities are drastically curtailed, humans across the face of our planet have unprecedented time and opportunity to reflect deeply. We stand and look at trees, birds and sky.

Communicating a New Vision

Using the technology of our time, we check on each other: "How are you going?" We have a sense that this crisis requires us to make hard, brave choices that will determine whether millennial dreams of transformation and renewal will finally be fulfilled. Commentators have talked of a portal to a different future in which some of humanity's excessive and destructive behaviours will have been left behind.

For dreams and visions to be translated into reality, we must make clear, intentional choices. The struggles and self-discipline we needed to get through Lockdown may be good practice for choosing well in the future.

I am reminded of Elizabeth Strout's

words in the novel *Olive Kitteridge*: “Some skin that had stood between himself and the world seemed to have been ripped away, and everything was close and frightening.”

Perhaps a heightened sense of our vulnerability, interdependence and connection might change our choices and make us brave enough to allow psychological barriers to thin and become permeable, even disappear altogether.

Knowing Our Reality

In order to make good choices, we need to be aware of our own reality and how that reality colours our view of the world. We must also be acutely attuned to a bigger picture – to what is happening on a planetary scale.

The exhortation to “know thyself” is fundamental to choosing wisely. As a mature theology student in the 90s I was excited to learn about contextual theology. I learned that just as a fish has no concept of water that is the milieu in which it swims, my female, Pākehā, middle-aged, financially secure self can be entirely unaware of the biases, prejudices and blindness inherent in my perceptions and thinking. I learned that the factors and processes implicit in my decision-making needed to become explicit if my own aspirations to contribute to a just society could be met.

There is no shame in acknowledging the limitations of my own voice. It ought, however, to demand a certain humility and sharpen my ears to hear other voices more carefully. Firmly grounded in my values, I must look up and out to see the wider view. I must pay attention to the issues that our Earth grapples with and choose to act for justice and a sustainable future.

Our Reality Is This Planet

Behind, beyond and woven through the present COVID-19 pandemic is ecological crisis. This is the issue that must shape our choices if we are to pass through that portal into a new and sustainable way of living on this planet.

Human consumption is out of control and the present experience of a worldwide pandemic may be the catalyst we need to hasten change.

Our only option is to reduce pressure on our finite planet. The experience of rapid action, firm discipline and unified purpose provides us with the knowledge and the perspective we must now apply to an even more grave situation.

Call for Brave Choices

COVID-19 elimination and recovery budgets are, of necessity, very large. As a nation we have a moral and economic duty to direct this stimulative spending towards projects that are in line with the bigger picture of global environmental crisis.

We choose awe before the incomprehensible creative energy and love that is our God. We choose gratitude and love for our wondrous planet and its air and water and soil and vegetation.

The urgency of the need to respond to widespread hardship and loss of livelihoods can tempt us to revert to the *status quo*. We all speak of resuming some sort of normality but we must employ huge courage and wisdom in order to envisage and work towards a better future. Choices about how to create employment, rebuild industries, restore export markets and support our social structures must all be made in a way that serves the long-term view.

Recovery programmes do not have to be “either/or” – either economic benefit or ecological well-being. Proposed projects include energy, housing, transport, forestry, water upgrades.

We can achieve optimal outcomes when economic and environmental ends are combined to achieve the best of both. Job-rich, climate-friendly approaches will lead to healthier futures.

Choosing for the Common Good

The thing about choices, of course, is that to choose anything requires

us to forgo other things. To move at all is to abandon the status quo. There’s the rub! It feels rather scary. It was so easy, on the cusp of a new millennium, to hope and dream of a better future. We have shown ourselves and the world that here in Aotearoa we can be decisive and brave and united. Now is the time to believe strongly that we are a people who can continue to make choices for the common good.

Hopes and dreams are entirely necessary to inspire us and summon us forward, but choices require action.

Later this year, when levels of Lockdown are reduced, our country goes to the polls to elect our government. This is a time when we have a responsibility to think deeply about policies that are in accord with our values and will help to achieve planetary good in the long term. We have to resist the temptation to maximise our own benefit or focus on single ideological issues. We claim our identity as decisive, brave and connected.

Our Values Assist Our Choices

We stand on the values of our faith traditions as we intentionally make and speak of brave choices. Christians are now in the season of Pentecost which joyously asserts that new life springs out of what looks like unmitigated disaster. RENEWAL – and we are part of it.

We choose awe before the incomprehensible creative energy and love that is our God.

We choose gratitude and love for our wondrous planet and its air and water and soil and vegetation.

We choose respect and care for all life in its myriad forms that it may flourish into future millennia.

We choose to relinquish fear and live in hope, simplicity and compassion. ⌚

Photo by Steven Coffey on Unsplash



Mary Thorne and husband Russell live in Papakura and are coming to terms with retirement. They have many projects awaiting the time to begin.



LIVING SIMPLY

MIKE RIDDELL reflects on his move from Cambridge in the North Island to settle in a rural village in the Maniototo.

To move from the Waikato to Central Otago was a gamble. We have a history of doing things impulsively, and this was no different. My somewhat fey wife woke me one morning with her sleepless revelation. I wrote about it later in a poem called "Homecoming":

On that day
the calf slipped the wire
you woke possessed
by a dream

Coming home,
you said
we're coming home
to an unknown land

The mechanics of it were straightforward. We bought a house in a village with fewer than 40 people. It was the proverbial one-horse town in the middle of nowhere. The locals were farmers, truck drivers, retirees, poets and writers. Besides the general store and the pub, there were few signs of commerce in this rural hamlet.

We sold our property in Cambridge and moved to a house half the size. More easily said than done. To live simply comes at a cost. Divesting oneself of a lifetime of accumulation can be painful. And liberating. The worms of consumption are burrowed deep into the soul, and they extract a price for leaving. You need some motivation for such a cleansing of the house.

Being Simply Alive

The desire to live simply requires more than a geographical shift. It demands a spiritual longing to sustain it. Simplicity is essentially the art of focus. The settling of muddy water until it becomes clear. Our lives become cloudy with accumulation. We fill our homes, both physical and psychic, with clutter. Clarity comes at the cost of subtraction, the intentional divesting of possessions that have polluted our hearts.

Without being fully aware of it, we were aching for a different way of being alive. One of the first gifts of our move was a reconnection with the natural world. The air is clear in the Maniototo. Each breath is a tasting of its freshness. We can see far into the distance, both literally and figuratively. At night the stars are a sparkling canopy of dreams; a weight of transcendence.

Settling In

Our village has its own water scheme, installed by locals. It's fed by a natural spring and pumped to holding tanks on the hills above us. There's minimal treatment of it, and it comes out of the tap sweet and pure. The valley is encompassed by rugged ranges with magical names — Blackstone Hill, Mt St Bathans, the Hawkduns, Mt Ida, Rough Ridge. After many years, I've started writing poetry again.

The amphitheatre of the sky is vast and entertaining. We're alert to it in a way that we never were before. Sometimes the sun hauls itself over the eastern hills bringing in train a bloody curtain. At other times the dawn is so clear it cuts the eyes like diamonds. We watch for the portents: the lenticular clouds heralding a nor'west, the brooding cumulonimbus pressing down in advance of a storm, and perhaps snow.

There's the fog that might become a glistening white hoar frost in winter. The bands of rain that can be seen approaching from the far reaches of the landscape. And always in the evening we keep a special watch for the first shifting blushes in the west. We hurry outside, only to find our neighbours also there, marvelling as the sky reveals surreal colours that change by the second. We stand mute, overcome by beauty.

There's soil to be dug, and trees to be planted. One of my early tasks here was to build a big garden box, in which to grow our vegetables. Plants struggle against the elements and pests. There are rabbits, possums, rodents, the frosts, the massive winds, hailstorms and snow. It makes our home-grown produce taste all the sweeter when taken from the garden to the table.

One strolls from home to the store to collect the daily mail. It can take a long time. Neighbours are out walking, or attending to tasks in the front of their properties. Here in the country, people don't pass each other by. They stop and talk, luxuriating in conversation and the swapping of stories. It's the silken thread that binds our small community together.

Each Friday evening we all wash up in the pub, where the hosts provide bar food for everyone present. Sometimes it's too noisy to be able to hear the person opposite. Every second month there's a community meeting in our memorial hall. We discuss such weighty issues as streetlights, toilet rosters, sheep sales, the Brass

Monkey rally, the communal swimming pool, the weather. There's much hilarity and occasionally tension.

Sense of Rebirth

Undergirding our common life is the conviction that we're all in this together. When people fall ill, there's a phone tree to provide baking or other forms of care. Should someone die, they'll be buried in the local cemetery, laid alongside the graves of that host of forbears who have lived and perished here. The stories will be retold, the memories kindled, the bonds reinforced.

When James K Baxter moved to the tiny settlement of Jerusalem, he wrote: "Now I am happy again, a newborn child resting freely at its point of origin, wrapped in His overcoat, as Francis knew — wind, sun, stars, fire, earth, water, and the love for which even love is too weak a name." This sense of rebirth is often the byproduct of living simply in a complicated world.

Our Opportunity

With the advent of coronavirus, it may be that we have all had an imposed taste of the stripping away of what had been taken for granted. Because it hasn't been chosen, some find it painful and exhausting. Others might have discovered a repressed longing in their hearts for a different way of navigating life. I imagine that the stresses of contemporary living may result in a soulful yearning.

To live simply is not unambiguous. I'm typing this on a computer, and grateful for the internet that keeps me connected to the wider world. Currently we have a petrol-driven car. Even after the installation of solar panels, the house needs to be connected to the grid for us to survive. Ultimately the quest to return to Eden is frustrated by the realities of the world we live in.

More Satisfying and Significant Life

When we moved to the deep South, we were facing difficult life issues, so there may have been a little of the desire to escape them fudging our motivations. But, chiefly, I think it was an aspirational move, to be closer to the possibility of simplicity. Geography is not the determining factor. Rather it is the hunger for finding a way of life that is at once more satisfying and more significant.

When my wife and I first married, we had a goal of never owning anything that wouldn't fit in a backpack. It was the idealism of youth, and somehow perished along the way. Now we are content with restraint and living as simply as we can. It's an approximation of that journey we all must make, when we will take nothing with us except ourselves, and the love that has been given us. ⌚

Painting: *The Nevis* by Nigel Wilson © Used with permission www.nigelwilsonart.com



Mike Riddell writes novels, plays, films and apology notes. He cooks when he can and breathes intentionally on a daily basis.

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN



JANE HIGGINS shares insights from her experience of Maundy Thursday liturgy during Lockdown.

During Holy Week, under Lockdown, our household watched the Maundy Thursday liturgy from Durham Cathedral. We had happy memories of visiting that glorious ancient building and knew that its Easter liturgies were beautiful and deeply prayerful.

In keeping with this season of pandemic, the Maundy Thursday liturgy this year was not in the Cathedral itself but in the 13th-century Chapel of the Holy Cross situated under its Deanery. The Dean, the Very Reverend Andrew Tremlett, was the sole celebrant, but participants numbering in their thousands joined through social media from across the planet. It was a very simple liturgy: an altar laid with two candles and a prayerbook, a single celebrant in the robes for Maundy Thursday, and a cross of soft blue light shining in the background.

Jane Higgins is a Christchurch-based community researcher and evaluator who writes fiction in her spare time.



Three aspects of that liturgy struck me as profoundly meaningful for my own experience of Lockdown.

Celebrating Under the Cathedral

The first, as the Dean himself observed, was that this commemoration of the Last Supper would usually be upstairs in the Cathedral, in the upper room as it were, as Jesus and his disciples were themselves in an upper room on that night. But here we were, in the chapel beneath the Deanery, a room that is literally below ground, while the magnificent Cathedral upstairs lay empty. The world, he observed, has been turned upside down.

Recognising and Being Grateful for Service

The second striking aspect of the liturgy was the Dean's sermon: quiet, powerful words, observing that, on the night before he died, Jesus himself was inviting us to invert the usual order of things and of people. The master becomes a servant by washing his disciples' feet. "You call me Teacher and Lord," Jesus says,

"And you are right, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." This is a profoundly meaningful act and Jesus asks us to reflect on it. "Do you know what I have done to you?"

What a powerful time in our lives to reflect on this act by Jesus. In his sermon the Dean asked us to consider who now is washing the feet of the vulnerable. Who now, is doing that precious, Christ-like work of service?

This time of Lockdown has made us acutely aware of what we owe to those who tend to our most basic needs: hospital workers, care home workers, those who stack shelves and staff checkouts in our supermarkets and pharmacies, those who produce our food and transport it across the country to us.

These workers are often unseen and uncelebrated by wider society, often poorly paid and poorly regarded. This pandemic has highlighted how deeply we rely on their acts of service. Though often called "unskilled", in the new lingo these workers are recognised as essential. The world is indeed turned upside down.

The washing of the feet brings home to us, too, how precious physical contact is. In the midst of the Lockdown, we feel deeply for

grandparents who cannot hug their grandchildren, and we long to hug friends that we can only meet by screen. We yearn to express our love through touch – such a basic human need. We grieve that even the gentlest, most caring form of touch has now become risky.

The pandemic and Lockdown have directed our attention to the real basics, as Jesus did on that night. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." And love that night was expressed in a profoundly embodied act. We are not simply souls or spirit beings. We live embodied lives, as the news of the global death toll reminds us daily.

This pandemic has highlighted how deeply we rely on their acts of service. Though often called "unskilled", in the new lingo these workers are recognised as essential. The world is indeed turned upside down.

The desire to express our love and service when we cannot hold each other has set us off on many creative endeavours. The internet is alive with examples of people reaching out in innovative ways to connect with one another. These are often funny, and moving and clever. They show a deep capacity in the human family to reach out to others. But they are not touch. They cannot compensate for holding the hand of a beloved relative as he or she lies dying. They cannot compensate for hugging dear friends who are in pain or who are celebrating good news.

Across the globe, at different times in different countries, we are slowly returning to being able to reach out in person, but to do so too soon risks great harm to many, especially those who are vulnerable among us. And so we are patient.

Solidarity with Those Who Suffer

And this brings me to the third memorable aspect of the experience of that Holy Week liturgy in Durham: the resonance we felt with what comes next in the story. Between the washing of the feet and Jesus's arrest, there is the interval in the garden when Jesus requests his disciples to watch with him and wait. Just as the time in the garden invited the disciples to solidarity with Jesus in his passion and death, so the story of Maundy Thursday invites us to solidarity with those who suffer. And we do this through the simple act of watching and waiting.

At the end of the Maundy Thursday liturgy the Dean stripped the altar, as is customary on that night, and left our line of sight. In our living room at home, we sat in silence for half an hour, watching and praying, as the lighted cross on the wall of the chapel grew fainter and fainter until all was in darkness. ⌚

Painting: *Jars of Clay* by Jana Branca (2019) © Oil on canvas
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Being Okay

Lockdown? National crisis? Global pandemic? Nah. As serious as it was, I've looked at my experience in Lockdown as more of a chance to catch my breath than a two-month sentence to time out.

It was a busy start to the year – beginning my final year of school with all the roles and responsibilities that come with it, the media exploding with rumours of a WWIII, coronavirus, the devastating bushfires in Australia and the death of an NBA legend. It was all a bit overwhelming. So when rumours of schools closing surfaced after the news of COVID-19 entering the country, I started looking forward to things slowing down. And when Lockdown hit things really slowed down.

Without the pressure of a busy school day, I was finding it easier to get up in the morning and my good mate/full time sleepover buddy and I even went for a run most mornings for a good two weeks. We were enjoying the time we had at home to simply relax and take a break from the busyness and all the pressure, stress and anxiety it can bring – which we were both having a little trouble with.

I'm a musician and I really reside in my music in a rather sentimental way, so just sitting out in the morning sun strumming my six-string was a nice break for the old think tank and a good boost for my hauora.

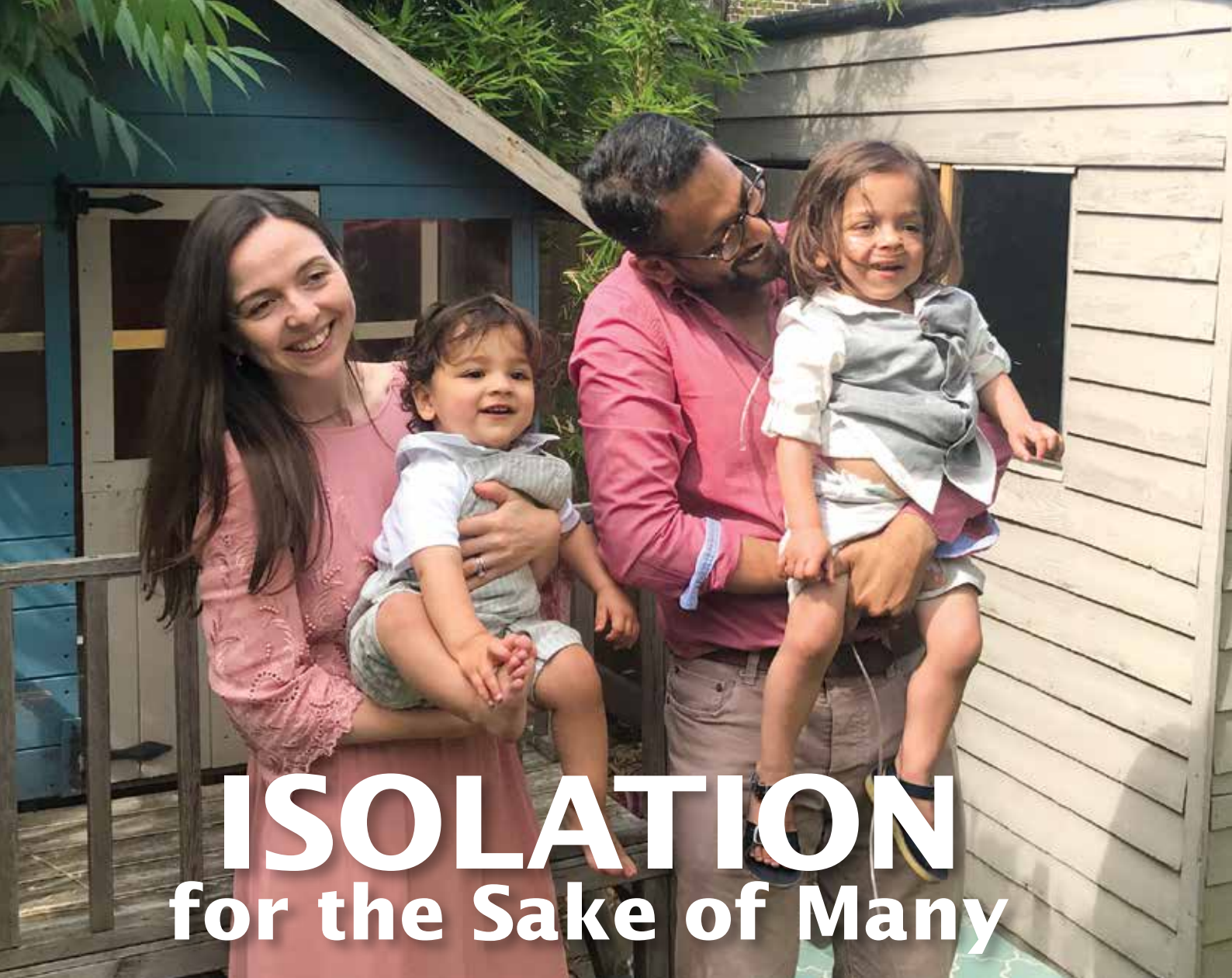
Hauora is something I don't normally take the time to evaluate and revamp during school terms – and maybe only briefly during holidays. I'm confident in saying that I'm a healthy guy and it takes a bit of a push for my mental state to slip into a place I don't want it to be, but before Lockdown I was finding it a bit of a struggle to keep a balance that I was comfortable with and beneficial for me in the long run. In short, I wasn't that okay. But what I've learnt now is that it's okay to not be okay. It's normal to feel overwhelmed when life gets busy, and it's normal to get a little stressed every now and then.

So even though it could get boring at times, during Lockdown we found ourselves turned from isolationism to self reflection and rehabilitation, if you will. I haven't totally pressed the "reset" button. I'm the same person who went into Lockdown. I've just come out of it feeling refreshed and with new perspectives on some things I'd not considered before.

Moving forward I hope to keep this mindset, to pause to re-evaluate when things get busy again – because that's going to be inevitable. So rather than worrying with things of the past or anticipating the future, I'll focus on being present and taking things one day at a time. If there's one thing this pandemic has shown us, it's that we don't know what will happen tomorrow. Let's just be present. Slow things down. Don't worry so much. Have a laugh. Have a cry. Ask somebody how they're doing and, in turn, don't be afraid to tell them how you're feeling. Stay connected. Kia kana, kia māia, kia manawanui. ⌚



Jordan Riddell is a loved family member, friend, musician and artist in Year 13 at Riccarton High School, Christchurch.



ISOLATION for the Sake of Many

CATHERINE SOSKICE-GANDHI faces the pandemic with her vulnerable three-year-old son.

Photo: Catherine, Victor, Vikram, Francis.

As the parent of a child with chronic respiratory disease, the past weeks have been surreal. I have watched my personal paranoias transform into the subject of collective global panic. Since my son Francis was born prematurely three years ago, his lung disease has required countless hospital admissions, many to paediatric intensive care. Even at home, he requires oxygen. Due to his health vulnerabilities, I have always been the parent hovering with the hand sanitiser, who texts before a play date to make sure that no one has a cold. Suddenly, the rest of the world shares my fear of invisible particles which could lead to a devastating respiratory crisis.

Underdeveloped Lungs

Francis was born at 27 weeks. Like most of the other micro preemies in the neonatal intensive care unit, his lungs were too underdeveloped to function, and he was put on a ventilator at birth. As the weeks went by, we watched with a mixture of joy and envy as other babies were successfully extubated – taken off their ventilators – and grew strong enough to go home, while Francis was stuck. When he finally came home, aged six months and with oxygen in tow, doctors made it clear to us that he would likely be admitted to hospital once the winter cold and flu season struck. We were prepared for this, but what no one anticipated was that the common cold virus would

lead to total respiratory failure, and that this would happen repeatedly.

Recurring Severe Respiratory Infections

The reporting about coronavirus patients who become critically ill is horribly familiar to me. Dozens of times we have arrived at hospital with a child who was in respiratory distress – his breathing too fast, his heart-rate soaring from the effort of keeping his body oxygenated, and still his oxygen levels dropping. We would watch with rising panic as doctors tried one intervention after another: more oxygen, nebulisers, oral steroids, then high-flow oxygen, then intravenous steroids – all of which failed to rouse the toddler who would become floppy

and lethargic, his eyelids drooping in spite of the bright lights and strange faces around him. Francis was admitted to intensive care eight times.

Intensive Care

A typical stay in intensive care would last about two weeks, with a further two weeks on the general ward whilst Francis recuperated and weaned off heavy doses of opiates.

Patients on ventilators are heavily sedated with a combination of drugs most of us have heard of, like morphine and fentanyl, and their less well-known cousins, dexmedetomidine and vecuronium. We became fluent in the nurses' argot: "I'm just off on my break. Francis is vecc'd [paralysed with the muscle relaxant vecuronium] and his dexmed is due a change at half five."

We would participate in Francis's care where we could, helping to change nappies, wiping his eyes with sterile gauze and saline, combing his hair. I felt torn between wanting him to know my presence, to feel comfort from my touch, and at the same time wishing for the drugs to provide total oblivion against the pain and distress.

This essential cognitive dissonance allowed me to read Francis book after book in the hope that the words could somehow benefit him, while at the same time convincing myself that when it came to procedures like piercing his side to insert a chest drain, he was a million miles away. I had to believe both.

The Agony of Helplessness

The frequency of Francis's admissions meant that we adjusted to the environment in a weird way, but there were still cruel shocks. On one admission, Francis's blood oxygen levels dipped so low that his heart stopped beating.

A huge crash team materialised within seconds, a kind nurse ushering us out of the room. We watched through the window as one of the doctors performed chest compressions.

Later that day, Francis was baptised by the on-call Catholic chaplain. For several months, that October day retained its title as the worst day of our lives.

In March, it was toppled by a new worst day. Francis had been on a ventilator for over a week, and was very unstable.

On Mother's Day 2018 he deteriorated so drastically that we were told to prepare for the worst. I remember the moment that I truly realised what was happening, because the consultant offered to make me a cup of tea. No one does that. Not nurses, not junior doctors, and certainly not consultants.

I loved it when nurses would tell me that Francis was being "naughty", by having a poor blood test result or by wriggling free of his oxygen monitor. Even though these events had nothing to do with him, the act of ascribing him with agency was for me powerfully encouraging.

She then sat down next to us and told us very clearly and honestly that Francis did not have any hope of surviving through the night. "And if he does somehow make it," she said, "his lungs will be so damaged from the high ventilation pressures that he won't be able to recover." We cried, and she cried, and we thanked her for her honesty. I still thank her. It is miraculous that Francis survived, but she was right to prepare us.

Coping in Intensive Care

Those most extreme times are perhaps what give the name "intensive care" to this field of medicine, but among the hundreds of hours we spent there, there was also levity.

People cope in different ways, but for us, humour was the best medicine. I loved it when nurses would tell me that Francis was being "naughty", by having a poor blood test result or by wriggling free of his oxygen monitor. Even though these events

had nothing to do with him, the act of ascribing him with agency was for me powerfully encouraging.

Among our reading material were Hilaire Belloc's cautionary verses, which describe with wicked glee the sticky ends met by misbehaving children. I explained to the nurses that, although it might seem odd to read to Francis about children eaten by lions or squashed by falling masonry, we just wanted to share a laugh with him.

Francis Is One of the Vulnerable

Francis is in much better health these days. He is still on oxygen, and is still admitted to hospital with every cold he gets — we have already spent two weeks in hospital so far this year — but he no longer plummets to the point of requiring intensive care.

The coronavirus, for all its cruelty, does not seem to have the same devastating impact on children as it can on adults. On some level, this is reassuring to know. But my fear is that the coronavirus wouldn't see Francis as a toddler. It would see him as an elderly lifelong smoker with emphysema, because that is about how good his lungs are. Obviously, this is an unscientific description, and I'm sure it would earn me a friendly eye-roll from his doctors. But I have seen faces cringe when they see Francis's chest CT scans for the first time. "Chaotic" and "abnormal" are the words used to describe his lung tissue.

So although the coronavirus may be kinder to children, like many other vulnerable families we are totally isolating to protect him from COVID-19, and apart from anything else, to prevent ourselves from becoming a further burden on a health system stretched to its absolute limit. ⌚

A full version of this article first appeared in *The Times* of London 21 April 2020.



Catherine Soskice-Gandhi lives in London with her husband, Vikram, and their two sons, Francis and Victor.



There Are Children in My Bubble

ANN HASSAN shares about being at home with her boys over the weeks of bubble life.

Normal life with children is busy — a happy kind of busy usually but it's also a bit relentless. There's something "on" all the time — parent teacher interviews, open evenings, sport, discos, every other thing. It's all positive and valuable, but it has its drawbacks, too: a lot of time communicating in the car, only making eye contact in a rear view mirror — not to mention the prospect of forgetting something vital, that dark peril of delivering your child in uniform on mufti day.

But in Lockdown it all stopped — and stopped abruptly. No soccer.

No birthday parties. No cross country. No swimming. No shunting from pillar to post. One tank of petrol lasted eight weeks. The kids from down the street — no longer permitted to come and go from our place unannounced and as they pleased — were reduced to hollering from the front gate, or yelling from up the cabbage tree in their back yard, or screeching while at peak bounce on their trampoline, which raised their line of sight above the fence. We owe a collective apology to the householders of the property between us.

Learning About the Virus

What a change! In the early days there were many questions about the virus. Where is it? Can you see it? Can cats get it? (Very worrying, this one.) It dawned on me that most of the anxiety grew out of the unknown. The children were (rightly) horrified by overseas news stories of refrigerated trucks full of corpses and parks of freshly dug graves but not, I don't think, unnerved — it was something real that they could grasp.

The unnerving fear came from the threat of an amorphous cloud of death hanging in the air around people, or clinging to railings on playgrounds. The fear was the unknown.

So together we learned about how the virus really works — precious few adults knew much about coronavirus in the early days. It was a big mystery

and we all — children and adults alike — listened keenly to the expert few amongst us who knew anything real. And that realness, though horrifying, was a comfort.

First Days in Our Bubble

In those first few days of Lockdown life was new and different and the focus was very narrow: what was in the cupboard at home and on the shelf at the supermarket? We spotted teddies — all freshly, neatly placed on sills. The weather was, mostly, good; we walked every street of the neighbourhood, then we scooted every street of the neighbourhood. We went through a lot of plasters.

On one of our jaunts we met our neighbour when she was out jogging. She said it was her birthday; her husband, a merchant seaman, was considered essential and off at sea. The kids made her a birthday cake and headed off to leave it at her front door. They couldn't agree on whom should carry it so decided to take one side each — a setup so awkward to manoeuvre that they dropped the cake before they got to the gate. No bother; they made another one — plenty of time to start again.

Home Schooling

After a couple of weeks home schooling kicked in and some of the neighbourhood teddies on display had flopped into unflattering poses. Initially, there was novelty to parents as teachers: setting up the kitchen table as a schoolroom, putting together a rudimentary kit. The pupils, much amused, were biddable.

Then the work started coming in, and with it a sense of frustration. Technical difficulties, a lack of space and expertise. For me, a feeling of not meeting the mark, and being thin on the ground.

We'd all have done well to heed the wise words that came in the initial message from school: "Do your best; don't worry about it."

We watched the School TV programmes — I learned an awful lot about New Zealand history and got puffed doing the phys ed for new entrants.

I watched the segment with

the child development expert and marvelled at such a resource being available on the television, at no charge.

Being Together At Home

Mostly, we didn't go crazy. We enjoyed being together. It was like having toddlers again, when I was at home with them all the time. There's no escape, so you just get on with it: let them dig meaningless Frank Sargeson holes in the garden; let them stop while doing their reading to wax on the moral implications of the Little Red Hen scoffing the bread herself; let them rearrange the living room furniture just for a ceremonial viewing of *LegoMasters*.

Doing nothing, when you just learn to "be" with other people — not just tolerating but accommodating them, understanding them, inviting them to be a part of you — is also valuable.

It wasn't all easy. It's hard — at times impossible — to work and at the same time help children with their schoolwork and jolly them along. When something goes wrong — the kids have a scrap, start screaming; the computer won't behave — you feel you might flip, lose it, burst into tears. But I think that's how I usually feel — it's only that in Lockdown the distress wasn't interrupted by some outside diversion.

Accepting the Reality

For lucky families like ours, with no one suddenly out of a job or having to face the reality of illness from the virus, Lockdown life was normal life, only with the varnish taken off by some toxic liquid. Without distraction and interruption you're forced to see the grain of things as they really are. Feeling a bit inadequate is a part of life. So be it; we're all the same.

And that's the biggest thing we learned: how much we're like other people and other families. We were all physically at home but we discovered that, psychologically, we're a lot like our peers too.

Early on, when the nation was furiously engaging in DIY projects, we painted a room and shifted bits of furniture around and moved the pictures on the walls.

Then, like everyone else (or so it seems), we stopped caring about home improvements and started eating in earnest.

As Lockdown looked like easing, the panic of ever having a visitor — the state of the place! — had us cleaning and tidying again. When we headed out for daily exercise, we saw every other kid in the neighbourhood out on their scooters too.

Doing Nothing Is Something

We tend to focus on difference — celebrating what's special and unique about our families — but in Lockdown it was clear that we all felt the same, that we all did the same things. One day, about two weeks in, someone had written on a lamppost down the street: "I am quite enjoying this." We were too.

So, like everybody else, we've learned that doing nothing is something. I'm determined to try to remember this even as the pace quickens in the coming weeks. The value of extracurricular activities for kids is obvious: sport keeps them fit and encourages teamwork; swimming can save their lives; music, dance, art show beauty.

But doing nothing, when you just learn to "be" with other people — not just tolerating but accommodating them, understanding them, inviting them to be a part of you — is also valuable. The occasional whiff of boredom is nothing to be frightened of, nor to ward off.

We'll be as pleased as anyone to be reunited with friends and extended family, but I really hope we remember to reunite daily with each other too — a small-scale, routine, domestic reunification. ⌚

Painting: *Band of Boys* by Craig Davison © Used with permission www.wishboneart.co.uk/artist/craigdavison/



Ann Hassan is Assistant Editor and Administrator of *Tui Motu*. She has two young boys and loves reading and op shopping.



Caring for Whānau in Lockdown

MAKARETA TAWAROA gives a glimpse of some of the ways Māori iwi prepared whānau for Lockdown.

Crisis situations are not new to the people of Te Awa Tupa. We live in a flood-prone region and have learned to cope with the consequences. The flood in 2015 was devastating and the one before that in 2004 was even worse. There's always a lockdown period in any major flood. It was a week long during the 2004 flood. When a flood is imminent, whānau are warned to top-up emergency supplies — food, water, batteries, torches, gas bottles, medical kit, games — all the basics. Low-lying marae are increasingly vulnerable to rising waters. Putiki Marae suffered major damage in 2015.

Iwi Crises Response Group

Most marae now have their own civil defence group which works alongside other iwi groups within our region. Te Ranga Tupua is the Iwi Crises Response Group and includes hapu and iwi across South Taranaki, Whanganui, Waimarino, Ruapehu, Taumarunui and Rangitikei — most

of it rural. It acted very quickly during the first week of COVID-19 Lockdown. As Whanganui iwi leader Ken Mair explained: "During times of crises our people are hit the hardest, so as early as Alert Level 1 we started mobilising to reassure our people that they were not alone. We must protect our most vulnerable, particularly our kaumātua."

Mobilising Resources

Pandemics are not new to us. In 2010, Jennifer Tamehana, the CEO of Te Oranganui Iwi Health Authority, sounded the pandemic alert about the H1N1 flu virus, commonly known as swine flu. In the past the people who caught it had had direct contact with pigs. That changed several years later when a new strain emerged and spread among people who hadn't been near pigs.

In 2009 when H1N1 was spreading fast around the world, the World Health Organization called it a pandemic. Since then a vaccine has been found and swine flu is one of

the viruses included in our annual flu shot.

Te Oranganui Iwi Medical Centre responded quickly as soon as they heard about COVID-19. They set up a helpline and made more than 500 phone calls to patients to offer flu injections, particularly to kaumātua, pregnant women and healthcare workers. They prepared care packages, medication kits and food packs.

Other iwi groups delivered firewood and basic essentials to the needy in their community. Kaumātua Whairiri Renata Nikora said: "Knowing we have whānau here for our needs so that we have no need to leave home, is comforting."

And in other areas of the country the response was also swift. Grant Huwyler, CEO for Te Runanga o Ngati Apa, Nga Wairiki explained: "We're dealing with our most vulnerable with high needs. There's poverty in our communities and we're already responding. We were able to kick into action and provide a food bank."

Katarina Hina, the Strategic Leader of whānau programmes at Te Kotuku Hauora o Rangitikei, spoke of meeting other needs: "We found a lot of our kaumātua struggling with cell phones and computers. It's not easy to do online shopping. We spent a lot of time assisting our kaumātua with the new technology."

Nutritional Supplement for Essential Workers

South Taranaki-based "native superfood" company Kaitahi, an award-winning, iwi-owned enterprise of Nga Rauru, distributed 400 cartons of its frozen smoothie drops to local and urban marae in Auckland and across the country. It was Nga Rauri Ki Tahī's gift to "all the essential workers who are supporting their communities. The main objective for us is to show our appreciation." The drops come in 1.2 kg packets and by adding 200ml of water and shaking you have a nourishing smoothie. It's a great energy source for busy workers.

Support for Roadblocks

Māori initiatives are not always appreciated by the wider public but we supported the roadblocks initiative of the Far North and East Coast people to visitors and so preventing the spread of coronavirus in their regions. They know what's best for their people.

We were well into the third week of Lockdown before certain roads in our area were closed to non-residents.

Ken Mair said: "I was pleased that the local council supported our local hapū in closing the Whanganui River Road and Kaiwhaiki Road from non-residents. It is important that iwi are included in decision-making at every level right from the beginning. We need to protect our whakapapa."

Number of Māori Tested Increased

Early in Lockdown the Ministry of Health recommended testing only for those with symptoms. Figures soon showed that Māori were being undertested. So mobile clinics visited high need areas, as well as marae and in community hubs.

No Māori on Government Response Committee

Many of our people have been critical of the Epidemic Response Committee's lack of consultation with Māori.

Debbie Ngarewa Packer, Co-leader of the Māori Party said: "A Māori voice is lacking at this time. This exclusion is deliberate. There is always someone who can fill this role. They know how best to deliver the message. We need our own voice, that's what's important."

Reports on Māori Health Needed

Given that Māori have the worst health statistics in the country, I was disappointed that the daily reports by the Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern and the Director General of Health, Dr Ashley Bloomfield, did not give up-to-date statistical data concerning Māori. Even a general impression of what was happening in certain parts of the country would have been helpful as most of us have whānau all over the country.

"We found a lot of our kaumātua struggling with cell phones and computers. It's not easy to do online shopping. We spent a lot of time assisting our kaumātua with the new technology."

In the first weeks I watched the TV reports with interest, particularly around the numbers — those counted as confirmed, recovered and hospitalised. I was always happy when no one had died. But I soon lost interest as it gave no reports on the Māori community. I would have liked a Māori, or a Pacifica, health expert to have been included in the Prime Minister's communication team on some days.

Tangihanga Restrictions

It was a relief when the restrictions around tangihanga were discussed again in Level 2 and the rules changed to allow 50 people to attend. Having time to mourn is an important part of the healing process and tangihanga is as much about the living as it is about the dead.

Gratitude in the New Normal

We have all made sacrifices over the last weeks. Now as we move through Level 2 we are anxious to start up again. There's nothing like a pandemic to make us appreciate the things that we take for granted. Somehow I don't think things will change very much for Māori. If it's taught us anything, it's that we should be ever-ready for a crisis.

Two weeks ago I had the COVID-19 test. I didn't have any symptoms but I wanted to be sure that I wasn't going to pass coronavirus on to my three adult mokopuna who share my bubble. My test was negative. 🙏

Photo by Dmitry Pichugin/Shutterstock.com



Makareta Tawaroa is a Josephite Sister, a Nanny, enjoys reading local history and is a lover of stray cats.



A FUTURE TO PROTECT MICHAEL FITZSIMONS shares some thoughts after six weeks of seclusion.

We have a new grandson born this week in Syracuse, upstate New York. Eight pounds nine ounces. Born in the chaotic midst of the COVID-19 outbreak, he was in the hospital a matter of hours before being bundled up and taken home. His name, decided long before the outbreak of COVID-19, is Rocco, after the 14th-century French saint who it turns out was specially invoked in times of plague.

Our joy and our worries in Lockdown reach to the other side of the world. At the time of writing more than 20,000 people have died in the State of New York alone. It is the worst-affected state in the United States. Already more people have died in the United States from the virus than in the Vietnam War. We watch the news from America and listen to podcasts from the *New York Times*. It is all deeply disturbing as the country staggers on without unity or a coherent plan. There is no end in sight, only fighting and boasting and mounting casualties.

Here in New Zealand we have been much more fortunate. At the time of writing we have had 1,147 cases and 21 deaths as a result of the virus. In these early weeks we have had impressive leadership, a clear plan of action and a strong sense of purpose. We have managed to achieve a rare thing — concerted action taken in the interests of the whole community. The government will need much more courage as the months roll by and

compassion fatigue sets in. The journey to recovery will be long and difficult, the economic cost enormous.

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Lockdown is a different experience for different people. If you are retired or semi-retired, if you are not one of the thousands who have been made redundant or seen their businesses collapse overnight, if you are unburdened by sickness or the constant demands of small children, it has been a gift.

We have three adults in our bubble at Level 4. We work from home and walk and garden and bake cheese scones. We do impossible jigsaws and read and listen to podcasts and watch the latest TV series.

We live by the sea. The roads have been overtaken by cyclists and walkers, making wide arcs around each other, smiling more than usual. The best autumn in years has been visited upon us. I spent today in the garden, not doing a lot, weeding, turning compost, shaping an olive tree into a perfect orb, lighting a quiet fire. There is a white statue of a little boy in our garden, palms open to the birds and the rain. It is a time of stillness and quiet surrender.

Most nights at six o'clock I watch the news — the immaculately dressed newsreader describes a global catastrophe with slick animations of skyrocketing death.

"What if the cure is worse than the illness," says the American reporter, eager to jump-start the economy no

matter the cost.

"The illness is death," says Governor Cuomo. "What can be worse than death?"

What about pouring some disinfectant down your throat, says the president. "Let's look at that. It could be interesting."

The next item is more hopeful. With humans out of the way, nature is recovering. The birds are back in Wuhan. Himalayan peaks are visible for the first time in decades. There are blue skies over Delhi and Bangkok. In a village in China elephants drink corn wine and pass out in a tea garden.

Nature is reloading.

Can it be true?

I want to sing along, all those dreams.



In the midst of Lockdown I go for a CT scan to see if cancer has made a reappearance. Existential threats abound. In the time of corona, I am not alone. Prayer comes easily in these circumstances. And so does gratitude when the news is good. Everything about our time in this world is a gift. Why can't we remember that?

How can we nurture gratitude? Nearly dying helps.



When we move to Level 3, we join up our bubble with our Wellington family and our three grandchildren. Suddenly our lives are busier. We go scooting, climb the rocks, play hide-and-seek, play cards and eat ice cream. We are re-energised.

In these strange days I have been reading quite a bit – *A Short History of the World* by Austrian historian Ernst Gombrich and *A Short History of Progress* by Canadian historical philosopher Ronald Wright. It seems the right time for some big picture thinking. These books do not inspire confidence in ourselves. Our history on this planet has been brief and violent. It's only 70 generations since we were in the Stone Age and we were stone age people for two to three million years. Old habits die hard. Our Stone Age wiring persists. We have evolved to pay attention to immediate and straightforward threats.

We struggle with complex threats: climate change, global pandemics. We are not natural collaborators. Regular conflict, tribal thinking, and self-regard are hallmarks of our species. For all the wonderful scientific and technological advances we have made, for all our cleverness, we have not shown ourselves to be reliably altruistic or wise.

In a stunningly short period of time (the blink of an eye in planetary terms), we have embraced a way of life that is unsustainable for the planet. We exploit limited resources with abandon. We ignore the overwhelming evidence of climate change because it interferes with lifestyle choices. We seem incapable of working collectively to find solutions, educated to compete rather than cooperate. But as UK writer George Monbiot notes: "Nobody wins the human race."



There is another story of what it is to be human, a Christian story of hope and transformation. It is an action story. In



the words of Pope Francis: "humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

The reckless pursuit of profit and the endless exploitation of the environment is not peripheral to our faith or our future. Right now the pandemic, long predicted, is showing us in the most dramatic terms that we are involved in a life-and-death struggle.

The time is ripe, says the Pope, for a "new imagination" allowing the "breath of the Spirit" to open new horizons. Will we allow the Christian imagination to be our salvation? Can we learn to be guardians of creation rather than masters of the universe? Will we act in time?

We still have the ability to act together for the common good and in our highly interconnected world the stakes couldn't be higher. Tonight, after weeks of Lockdown, I look out at the garden and see again the statue of the boy with open palms, luminous in the moonlight. On the other side of the world I see Rocco and millions like him, their future in our hands. ⌚

Painting: *Boat Ramp in Worser Bay* Oil on canvas by Michael McCormack ©
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Photo of Amos and Rocco by Patrick Fitzsimons



Michael Fitzsimons is a writer and editor living on the slopes of Seatoun overlooking Wellington harbour. He is a parent, grandparent, walker and poetry enthusiast.

Inside the questions

It's not our nuclear moment
or our Gallipoli.
We stand at our gates and letterboxes under the
night black sky.
We listen to the Last Post
of the bare bugle
desolate yet strong in the air
of this so different dawn.
Huddles of neighbours appear fragile in the dark.
Children
old people
and in between.
Here comes the new day
with a blood streaked sky to the east.
The night's last stars
question us.
What if we are the last generations on the planet?
What if we are the first of the new?
What to remember?
What to forget?
What to cherish?
The dawn is a trembling candle lighting answers
inside the questions.
This dawn breaks us open.
We are being human.

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WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF CHURCH



Anne Kennedy

Lockdown began officially at midnight in the fourth week of Lent on March 25, the feast of the Annunciation, the day Mary's life changed forever — we had yet to realise how this day would be life-changing for us this year.

It was not long before the realities of living in isolation led us to explore different options to connect with family and friends including our Church community. For many, technology was seen to be the answer. But for me and my husband Tony, what works well for catching up with our children and grandchildren was far from how we wanted to celebrate Mass.

The isolation highlighted that gathering and celebrating Eucharist is at the core of our lives of faith. It is just not something we watch like Netflix but something sacred and nourishing that we participate in and share together with people of faith in the sacramental presence of Jesus.

It seemed providential that Lockdown included most of Lent, enabling us to capture more fully the penitential season of sacrifice and reflection. The simple Lenten focus in our dining room and the images in the newspaper led us to prayer, as time passed and the

number of cases and deaths increased, we became a Church of two in our bubble.

Holy Week approached and reflecting with the Scriptures we felt that this Good Friday more than any other in our lives we could truly walk the lonely road to the cross with Jesus. As we listened to Kathleen Battle's soulful voice sing "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" we felt, with many others, this year we could answer truthfully: "Yes, we are there."

We wondered what hope Easter Sunday would bring amidst the grief of families and the lonely burials. How could Jesus rise again? Yes, he did — his glorious resurrection can be seen in the millions of acts of love and kindness and the extraordinary, unselfish efforts of people, especially by those working in essential services.

Yes, we miss the Sacraments especially the Eucharist, but it was as if the risen Jesus broke out of his tomb and our churches and was truly present in people in the loving comfort they shared, turning this time of crises into moments of profound grace — God's life and love for everyone. We can hope and pray that it has brought us closer to the Reign of God when God will bring heaven to a new and healthier Earth when all creation will live in peace and harmony as God's original blessing intended. ⌚



Jill and John Meredith

When Alert Level 4 began on 26 March one of our first impressions was how quiet the world was with no motor traffic on the roads. We live near a wetland and if we went outside and paused to listen

we could hear the silence, magnified by the occasional quack of a duck. This silence was a gift that made us more aware of God's presence at the heart of life in an often noisy world.

With all public religious observances suspended our attention was drawn to devotional offerings on the internet. At a glance we found many of these too wordy, apart from the *Tui Motu Lockdown Thoughts* which we read eagerly for 49 days. There was always a thoughtfully chosen picture, a succinct quotation and a prayer that was worded simply and often drew attention to causes for gratitude. Thankfulness has its own healing power. The Lockdown Thoughts also included humour that reminded us not to allow ourselves to become preoccupied with negativity.

On most days throughout Alert Levels 4 and 3 we went for a walk, sometimes exploring new places but still close to home. Greetings were exchanged with friends and strangers along the way; we spotted many teddy bears in windows and lingered in places where the beauty of nature was clothed in autumn colour. On our bicycles we sometimes ventured further afield into the silence of the countryside.

On Sunday mornings we listened to *Praise Be* on television, something we would not normally do. On Anzac Day we displayed a large New Zealand flag, stood outside our door at 6am where we could see other neighbours standing in silence and, later in the day, went walking to admire many handmade red poppies displayed as Anzac tributes.

On Mother's Day we appreciated an Operatunity Happiness Half Hour with a special Mother's Day theme and were pleased to speak with our daughters by telephone.

In the midst of the busyness of life and with no usual pattern of organised worship we have learned to appreciate the value of silence, an inward stillness where encounter with God begins. ⌚



DURING LOCKDOWN?



Peter Cullinane

During Lockdown, my time was enriched by a mixed bag of things: Ivereigh's *The Wounded Healer* clarified my conviction that Francis is our man; Beethoven's *Triple Concerto*, *Violin Concerto* and *Pastoral Symphony* drew me to the Source of all beauty and bestowed deep peace; revisiting diared memories renewed original graces; Al Jazeera's documentaries fuelled both anger and compassion and kindled urgent intercession; at a slower pace even the Psalms became prayer.

The sheer joy and spontaneous smiles that break out on people's faces at Rieu's concerts infected me; another look at *Downton Abbey* repelled and enchanted me; the thought of

people losing their jobs greatly saddens me; liturgies online sparked my hope that dissatisfaction with virtual reality might deepen our desire for actual liturgy and real community, which both presuppose real presence to one another.

Walks around the outskirts of Ashhurst introduced me to others taking time to be friendly; my rice puddings got better at each attempt; and when the going got a bit tough, *Steptoe and Son* and other British comedies cured me. God just seemed to be in everything.

"Doing Church" neither starts nor finishes in the building; that's where we go to intensify the experience. And when we can't, "being Church" continues.

So does being "sent". In fact, Lockdown has increased the desire. A big breath-in increases the need to breathe out. ⌚



Jenny Dawson

In the Anglican Parish of Pauatahanui (which includes the village of Pukerua Bay where I live) there have been no church services since the midweek Eucharist on March 19 because our Diocese closed churches down a week earlier than some denominations. We have a diocesan online non-eucharistic service every Sunday,

and about a dozen of us gather for parish Morning Prayers via Facebook video each weekday, along with the plethora of other online material available from round the world.

Each Sunday I put on church clothes, something slightly dressier than the ancient jeans and sweatshirts that have got tighter over the past weeks. I watch the service away from my desk, which has been the location of countless Zoom meetings as well as the spiritual direction and supervision which is my work.

For myself, I have loved the opportunity to connect into some new activities internationally. About a year ago a friend of mine in Vermont started a Pub Theology group

for people of any faith and none, with topics such as Rites and Rituals, Language, and Coping with Disaster, which of course has had to be done on Zoom over recent weeks so I have been able to join in.

I have also participated in fascinating webinars, including one on the Psalms with the Australian Academy of Liturgy. Organisations I am involved with such as the Living Wage Movement and even the Cistercian Associates of the Southern Star Abbey have had to do their work via Zoom. Each day I have been reading a short story on my own Facebook page which has been getting responses from a whole range of people – but most importantly gives me a sense of a regular date with some lovely writing!

My hope for the future is that having discovered the technological alternatives, we might fly round the country and the world to fewer meetings, while we cherish the rarer opportunities to be *kanohi ki te kanohi*. We might even take more time to be with the neighbours we have discovered in recent weeks. We might take real steps towards building a quieter, healthier world together. ⌚



Meryn Gates

Kia ora, I'm Meryn from Central Baptist Church in Wellington.

Usually we roll along to Church just before the first song finishes, sometimes chaotically with kids eating toast and putting on shoes in the car. So, Church under Lockdown has been completely different.

Instead we click on a link with everyone having pre-recorded their contributions from home. I enjoyed the convenience of being able to begin when I was ready, skip boring bits, and return to others to ponder.

We have had two wonderful Zoom Sundays, where the screen fills with familiar faces. I felt really emotional as I joined

in the singing without the usual swell of voices. Communion was a truly wonderful experience, as each of us provided our own version of the communion meal. Whether it be wine and bread or juice and crackers. And we sat in silence, each in our own homes, and remembered that God is with us.

But, the greatest surprise has been the book group I am part of. We usually meet once a fortnight at someone's home. At the moment we are reading *Sensible Shoes* by Sharon Garlough Brown. We decided we would meet by Zoom every week because, hey, what else are we going to do? We have shared our intimate and real experiences of God in our lives through a screen. Something I would never have thought possible. ⌚



Deborah Brosnahan

Mass online? Seemed a novel and somewhat bizarre suggestion, but I was ready to try it out. The first week, after a bit of faffing to find it on my Smart TV so I didn't have to look at a small screen, I got underway. I stood and sat and made my responses in my lounge feeling slightly silly. But then it came to Communion time and the prayer came on the screen and as I prayed it I was surprised to feel a strong sense of the Spirit fill me. I did feel nourished after all!

As the weeks progressed I did less standing and was more willing to knit through Mass — while participating of course. The technology became a little more sophisticated with a range of lectors used and music and imagery added. For me this was the best bit — I am frequently irritated by

the intrusion of music and hymns at the solemn period of Communion when I want to be in quiet prayer — now I had the MUTE button! Yay! — the opportunity for peaceful prayer and reflection. (There were also times I used the fast-forward or rewind button when participating in my own time!) I quite liked getting a Mass count too. Good to know how many people I am sharing the moment with.

I confess that I am not eager to leave the house. Well done and thank you to everyone who has made online Mass possible. My suggestions for the future? The choice of music was not great. Imagery was also pretty bland. But what an amazing effort to achieve this under the circumstances. Couldn't be more grateful. And it was lovely to be able to discuss a shared experience with my Dad despite not being together. ⌚



Mark Chamberlain

The brilliant autumn colours and the fallen leaves lying around have accompanied this time of letting go. In many ways it has been surreal. We are in our familiar places but there has been an emptiness and silence; the same place, buildings and landscape but such a different mood. Our daily dinner has gathered us all in our bubble life; so amid fear, sickness, addictions, studies, assignments, Zoom and more Zoom, social media, prayer, reflection, the ODT and the daily Covid briefings, we have gathered to chat, listen, encourage and laugh. We celebrated with KFC when we moved down a level. There has been a letting go or maybe a stripping of what usually distracts us from what matters — it has been a time for our inner world as the outer world tenses.

I have appreciated the kindness, friendly smiles and the sensitivity of people on the street or in the supermarket queues. I'm amazed by the compassion of others — families

who received food assistance in the past now offer supermarket vouchers to express their gratitude and desire to support other families. And the sheer generosity of parishioners who insist on remaining nameless.

The fallen leaves have been symbolic of my grief in not being able to gather for Eucharist. But somehow through the online Mass I attend in my office via the cellphone, I have become more aware of the realness of the Body of Christ. Although not physically present we have a connection that reaches all over the globe. I can say that it is one thing to read about the Body of Christ but it is so much more satisfying to experience this truth.

Often when I'm walking back from the hospital after being called in as Chaplain, I marvel at our hospital staff's care and effort to offer the best of care. When I ask them how they are it is easy to recognise the cost of this time to them. Maybe one of the gifts of this time is to value once again our inner world and the slower pace that can nourish us. God is so present within and among us. ⌚



Catherine Birt

Just before the Lockdown we had formed a small coordination team to manage our part of the parish. We felt we needed to have people available to handle the tasks that needed doing at our Church base which is situated away from the main parish church and office. As a result of the Lockdown the coordination team immediately began work on making contact with about 500 people on our database. Many of them are older and while they were confined to home they liked having contact with a friendly person. After the first week of doing this we came together on Zoom to discuss how things were going. We felt the lack of celebrating together so decided to meet on Sunday mornings to pray as a group.

After a couple of weeks of doing this other people were asking to join in and we were happy for this to happen. Our parish priest also joined us, not as the organiser but as one of the participants.

The chance to run our own liturgies was much appreciated. We have loved being able to take turns in giving the homily; being able to share thoughts about the readings we have heard; being able to pray our own prayers. None of these things were possible in our Sunday Masses. Some people have preferred to watch Masses online or on television but for our group full active participation has been what we have loved.

Initially it fell to a few people to organise it each week but now we have more people willing to be part of running it. This type of liturgy has not been experienced by many before this, but hopefully it will provide a blueprint for the future. We anticipate that we will have to run some liturgies ourselves to cope with the Sunday numbers if only 100 are allowed in the church at one time.

Pope Francis described how the time is ripe for "new imagination" allowing the "breath of the Spirit" to open new horizons. We hope that it will certainly continue to happen in our parish. ⌚



Christine Crowe

On one of the last days of Level 3 my husband, Phill, and I went for a slightly longer than usual bike ride. We had been having glorious weather and it was a joy to be out. As we moved alongside the partially hidden coastline a feeling of "this is great" came over me and I was quite surprised how I had missed being out in the open, summery vibes and having fun.

My feeling of "Church" in the Lockdown, has been something similar. I have been quite content to go to

Mass alone (in my room) — in fact that has been my usual practice for most of my life. I think when we eventually do get together in person I will realise how much I have missed joining with others and also singing together. I have felt very connected with my own parish via a weekly newsletter; with the wider community via *Tui Motu* daily emails and with the global community via the Centre for Action emails from Richard Rohr. Although still in Level 2 our parish is getting together a small group to participate in a global Mexican wave of prayer on Sunday for *Laudato Si'* Week. That will give us a great feeling of "Church". ☸



Frances Carter

It wasn't planned but we ended up in our caravan at a motor camp in South Otago, beside the Clutha River.

The kindness started with the Lockdown. We were welcomed by the camp owner Christine, who was our guardian angel.

Gale force winds and car problems made it easy for us to decide to stay put in the

campground instead of returning home to Auckland.

For six weeks, nature and our new bubble family were our world. We connected first on our designated camp village green, all of us keeping two metres apart. This became a regular turnout for fitness sessions, telling life stories, exchanging philosophical ideas, yoga and meditation — often followed by a cuppa.

Our bubble family included two essential workers, a cleaner and a truck driver, a young travelling Japanese couple living in a van who had just finished cherry picking, a young German traveller living in his car, Christine the camp owner and us, a third-aged travelling Kiwi couple.

Ageism didn't exist. We enjoyed one another's company. The spirit of our diverse group was of acceptance

and sharing. To me this was "Church".

The daily walks beside the mighty Clutha River became an essential part of our routine and contemplation.

We were able to forage for apples, thyme, watercress and even rosehips to make syrup. Kind neighbours across the road and our truck driver who was delivering apples to Dunedin, often dropped off fruit and vegetables to our separate bubbles.

Experiencing the vibrant seasonal colours of poplars and willows through an Otago autumn was stunning. Footsteps crunching fallen leaves made for a magical sound. We breathed in the fresh air fully, especially when the hills on our doorstep were coated with snow after some bracing southerlies.

Waking up to a one degree temperature in the morning was something to embrace! Simplicity became the new norm for us. This was a time to take stock, take a breath and look to the future.

I am optimistic that the future will be more kind, considerate and inclusive, that diversity and difference will be celebrated, that our planet will be given our humble and restorative attention and "Church" will be within us. ☸



Fran Cahill

"Zoom? Whatever is Zoom? I've never heard of it. How can we possibly have a gathering for a Sunday liturgy using that?" And a little later . . . We can't see you! You're still on mute!" Or a longish pause as our host endeavours to pull together PowerPoint graphics, the dictates of a running sheet and a minister

whose voice is trapped on mute.

But now we've mastered this new medium! We've met every Sunday of this Easter period and with each meeting we've improved. What began as an effort to continue to celebrate as Rongopai Catholic Community has become a wonderful celebration of faith shared far and wide as people emailed the Zoom entry link to friends.

There are plenty of pluses too. No travelling — just click in and click out! Chat rooms provide opportunity to meet and greet old friend and visitors. Breakout groups following the reflection on the Gospel offer opportunity to reflect

aloud on the meaning of the Scriptures of the day for our own lives. Mid-week mini Zoom meetings of ministry teams called to plan and prepare the liturgies build community, reveal hidden talents, encourage creativity, participation and shared ownership of the depth, quality and delivery of the different elements of the Liturgy of the Word.

But beautiful as our online Easter liturgies were and are, I very much miss what COVID-19 has deprived us of: not being able to share Eucharist together and in our "Amen" recommit to live what this shared meal proclaims of Christ's presence in our lives, our world and here in Aotearoa NZ.

As a nation we will soon return to a new and different "normal". I hope, too, that when we as communities eventually return to our prior places of gathering for Eucharist we'll be able to take with us the challenge of openness to try new things, the enthusiasm, energy and joy enkindled by having to work with one another to create new, life-filled and life-giving liturgies that have shaken off some of the dust of routine. ☸



**Jonathan
Melville**

In Rangiora, North Canterbury, going into Lockdown was a strangely familiar experience. We'd done it before. The earthquakes forced us to reconsider the shape of Church when buildings, familiar spaces and traditions were either under threat or suddenly unavailable. Earthquakes, tsunami evacuations, active shooter lockdowns and now COVID-19, have all challenged us in their own ways.

Keeping our Church community connected when we are not allowed to congregate is a real challenge! Since the earthquakes we have prioritised keeping our contact information updated and accurate for making regular contact with people. During Lockdown this has served us really, really well. Our pastoral care team and small group leaders have provided excellent coverage and adapted well. Video conferences have become the new normal. YouTube and Zoom have become our virtual services, buildings and

offices for now.

Personally not being able to do "church" as I was accustomed to was a significant adjustment. I miss corporate prayer. I miss worship services. I miss being present with friends who share my faith in Christ. For the most part we have found ways that we can connect on these levels. However, what I miss the most, and even the best technology has failed to provide a solution, is the humble cuppa tea. Or to use a gospel image — a meal of fish on the beach.

For me Lockdown has reinforced the value of our Baptist spiritual heritage — decentralised and organic. The Gospels show that Jesus was less often in the Temple and more often on the dusty roads of everyday life. Lockdown has convinced me that our faith must be lived on the dusty road with Jesus. When it is, we can survive being decentralised rather well. Our buildings, traditions, habits and structures are all helpful — but the real treasure of the Church is the community of people who follow Jesus. ⌚



Jo Ayres

We've come together on Zoom every Sunday evening since Palm Sunday. It has been a delight and a huge benefit to our community of about 40 people at Rongopai St Paul's Community in Auckland. We use the breakout room facility in Zoom twice during our liturgy. First, to touch base and check in with a group of four or five and later after the reading and homily to reflect together on Scripture. We've been able to see and hear one another, swap news and catch up as usual.

After Palm Sunday we tackled the three days of Easter, planning to highlight the major symbols of each feast. As there were no rubrics to follow, we were free to construct the prayer time. This freedom released our creativity and the courage to experiment. While we held to tradition, we also reordered and replaced parts of the Liturgy of the Word.

Zoom allowed us to invite people beyond the local area to join us. Very soon we were praying with friends around New Zealand, Australia and Ireland. Some nights we had over 100 people taking part. And friends and colleagues from afar joined in the planning of the prayer. Wonderful!

Our prayer has been enhanced by beautiful imagery to illustrate the readings, meditation during silence and shared prayer. Our ace musicians and internet searchers found hymns and songs that worked well with Zoom.

But we hunger for the Eucharist. Zoom allows wonderful sight, sound and silence but not physicality. Eucharist is about bodies — touching and sharing, eating and drinking. Even when churches reopen I want to keep Zooming to maintain contact with those like-minds open to the creativity of the Spirit. I hope that we will take this creativity and freedom back to "church". ⌚



**Peter
Murnane**

A woman who had been a political prisoner told in a powerful interview how she had survived many solitary years locked in a small cell: she went travelling! She pictured the long road from her home town to another city and set out each day to imagine walking 10 km of it, pacing her cell while recalling the sights, sounds and smells of her day's "journey".

Recalling her story of overcoming solitude removes any slight burdens I feel at being confined by COVID-19. Compared to that prisoner, I have no problems at all! I can walk in lovely autumn streets; greet people from a safe distance and dogs from close-up. There are many books to read and I can listen to music.

The physical boundaries of my room remind me that there are obvious limits to my bodily strength, my

intelligence, memory, patience and life-span. In normal times we seldom think of these limits, but it's futile — and destructive — to try to hide from them.

Being alone, apart from community meals and prayers, I have more opportunity to discover more deeply — for I'm a slow learner! — what actually is this person who sits here typing. An infinite mystery, of course, but I can ask: 'Where will I be in 250 years'? It's a good question.

Alone or in the company of friends — even remotely — I can rejoice to reflect that science and faith combine to give me the enormous privilege of knowing that, mind-blowing as it is, the universe and our selves are the work of a Being that is conscious and personal. The wisest thinkers, saints and scriptures show us that this Being is also infinitely loving. If extra quiet and solitude helps me to appreciate this more deeply, bring it on! ⌚

Gardening DURING LOCKDOWN



To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven ... a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted.

There are times when I think of life as an artist's colour palette – I look at life and see patterns where different colours have blended together after different experiences. At the times when things are going well, I might see the bright colours of the rainbow. At times of contentment I may see muted yet vibrant colours – the colours of sunrises and sunsets – lavender and sapphire, cucumber and mint. At other times I may be troubled to note that the colours are sombre – dark blues, browns and blacks – the colours of despair. I have learnt through experiences in my life that no palette can be complete without the dark as well as the bright colours.

Over the past year the colours of my life have seemed to be a murky mess of greyness. The experience of two major events among the ordinary days of life, coloured the palette. The bright was the completion of my mid-life development as I qualified as an educational psychologist after more than 20 years as a secondary school teacher. The dark was the demise of my relationship and marriage of 30 years. The mixing of these led to the greyness. I coped with the latter by being extremely busy taking part in many activities as well as completing the internship. It was a frenetic lifestyle where life's colours blended into blurriness.

At 11:59pm on 25 March with Level 4 Lockdown my busy lifestyle stopped. There were tyre tracks in my grey palette as the brakes to life pressed and everything came to a halt. My 19-year old son joined me for Lockdown. He was good at designing challenges to pass the time – orange ping-pong balls and glasses of water featured strongly. Then he decided to use the ride-on mower to create a golf course. He mowed fairways and greens and sunk four (very short) holes. He enlisted me as the caddy to keep an eye on the ball as we have a lot of dense foliage in the garden.

I started noticing the vibrant greens of the conifers, the dull green of the manuka with delicate pink flowers, the bright orange and blue of the strelitzia, the dark green of the lemons together with the yellow of the ripe fruit. Then as the dark clouds clung selfishly to their drought-breaking rain drops I noticed a curious thing – the grey-green weeds in the garden were as tall as humans.

Actually, everything was overgrown, tangled in a confusing mess. How on earth had this happened? It dawned on me – slowly, insidiously over the year while I was dealing with my greyness the garden had kept growing. It was a symbol – if I don't deal with life's challenges when they are manageable, they will become more difficult and time-consuming to sort out later.

Over the next four weeks between work and other tasks, I set about tidying the garden. Initially I attacked the plants haphazardly hacking indiscriminately at coprosma and agapanthus and anything that was covering the steps or taking over a plant bed. But then I realised it would be more effective to identify where the problems began and to trim it at that point. It became a lot easier.

Gardening gave me time for reflection, which meant that my life colour palette became hazy. I reflected that the gardening process was a bit like sorting life's problems; it is necessary to identify the source, as well as dealing with the visible manifestations, if I was to achieve successful outcomes.

Eventually after three trailer-loads of vegetation were taken to the dump in Level 3 – with the help of the 22-year-old who could happily join our expanded bubble – the garden was looking fresher. I decided to take a photo of the freshness. As I sat on the newly mown lawn and lifted the camera to take a photo of the re-exposed steps I saw a beautiful blue patch of sky. And into the silence came a tui call from the flax and the mooing of cows. I felt the moisture from the damp grass seeping through my sandals; I smelt the fresh, clean air and I tasted the joy of the crisp, identifiable pastel colours of life.

Through God's grace I had come to appreciate that at this time, in the season of Lockdown, the garden and the gardener were perfectly imperfect – and that is enough. ⌚



Vernice Young is Mum to wonderful boys, Richard and Malcolm and belongs to the St Francis Xavier Catholic Parish in Whangarei.



Bread of Life for the World

ELAINE WAINWRIGHT offers an ecological reading of two extracts from John's Gospel — John 3:16-18 and John 6:51-58.

Reading the biblical text ecologically is an engaging task. Our current context for this engagement is a world in crisis as the global pandemic coronavirus brings death to the human community. And in this context we can be isolated from our faith communities and the usual proclamation of the Scriptures in liturgies in church.

The context is changed radically from a few weeks earlier. Now Earth itself, together with its human and other-than-human population, is groaning. That can be understood as groaning in pain and loss. But it may also be what Paul describes as

a “great act of giving birth” (Romans 8:22-23) — birth into a new way of being for the cosmos and all that inhabit it.

John 3:16 “Yes, God so loved the world as to give the Only Begotten One, that whoever believes may not die but have eternal life. 17 God sent the Only Begotten into the world, not to condemn the world, but that through the Only Begotten the world might be saved. 18 Whoever believes in the Only Begotten avoids judgement, but whoever doesn't believe is judged already for not believing in the name of the Only Begotten of God.”

John 3:16-18 is the reading for Trinity Sunday (7 June). It comes in the story of the encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus. The focus of their conversation is “being born anew”, not just with water as in baptism, but of water and the spirit. Jesus acclaimed to Nicodemus: “God so *loved* the world”. We can hear that acclamation today in the present: “God so *loves* the world”.

The “world” is not just the human community but the entire Earth community, all that live on this planet. God loves Earth and all of planetary life. It is a challenge to believe this in these uncertain times. This is the nature of faith that traverses both good times and bad.

As the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus continues, Jesus speaks of God sending one



in you. 54 Those who do eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is food and my blood is real drink. 56 Everyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I live in them. 57 Just as the living Abba God sent me and I have life because of Abba God, so they who feed on me will have life because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. It's not the kind of bread your ancestors ate, for they died; whoever eats this kind of bread will live forever."

When we remember and celebrate the Feast of Body and Blood of Christ (11 June), we will read John 6:51-58. These verses are within the chapter that begins with Jesus feeding a crowd of 5,000 (Jn 6:1-14). Materiality characterises this feeding. Jesus asks what food there is among the crowd and finds they have only five barley loaves and two fish.

The supplies seem insufficient, but Jesus takes the loaves and fish and feeds the crowd with them. And after, as Jesus asks them to do, they collect the leftover fragments – enough to fill 12 baskets.

In the *Earth Bible* commentary on the Gospel of John, Margaret Daly-Denton gives two ecological readings of the gathering of the fragments. The first is the restoration of the site that provided the space or place for the 5,000 to listen to Jesus and to be fed the bread and fish.

Her second explanation is that Jesus did not want any food to be wasted. The challenge not to waste food is significant. And so is the challenge to restore places and spaces which we have vandalised, particularly through the production and consumption of food.

The global pandemic affecting millions can alert us to the interrelationship between Earth and the human community and the ways our practices might be impacting Earth at this crucial time.

The language in Jn 6:51-58 gives an insight into the developing theology of the Johannine community. For example, in Jn 6:35 we read: "I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever

believes in me will never be thirsty." Then in Jn 6:41: "I am the bread that came down from heaven." In Jn 6:48: "I am the Bread of Life" and in Jn 6:51: "I am the Living Bread."

The theological shift is subtle between the first three texts and the fourth. It demonstrates how theology was developing along with the emergence of Christianity. It is the same for us today when we read our sacred texts in the ecological context of the global pandemic.

As we grow in ecological consciousness, we can understand that "sin" is also our failure as a human community to live in right relations with every earth-being and Earth itself.

Jesus proclaims: "I am the living bread." He follows this with the claim that he is giving his flesh for the life of the world and further extends the metaphor to include eating flesh and drinking blood. These metaphors are powerful and confronting. We glimpse this in Jn 6:52 when the audience starts to argue with one another. But their reaction does not affect Jesus who continues teaching: "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life".

This is a challenging text for us as we seek to expand our consciousness of the intimate relationship between divinity and humanity that Jesus not only articulates but demonstrates in his being and teaching.

We receive this and engage with it now as we search for the wisdom and spirituality that will enable us to renew the face of the Earth. ☸



Elaine Wainwright is a biblical scholar specialising in eco-feminist interpretation and is currently writing a Wisdom Commentary on Matthew's Gospel.

who will save the human community. We think of "saving" as a liberation from "sin" – understood in moral terms. But as we grow in ecological consciousness, we can understand that "sin" is also our failure as a human community to live in right relations with every earth-being and Earth itself. This invites us to read our Scriptures with ecological eyes.

John 6:51 "I myself am the living bread come down from heaven. If any eat this bread, they will live forever; the bread I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

52 The Temple authorities then began to argue with one another. "How can he give us his flesh to eat?" 53 Jesus replied: "The truth of the matter is, if you don't eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Chosen One, you won't have life

To Be in Relationship with Christ

KATHLEEN RUSHTON
interprets Matthew 10:26-42 in
light of our call to relationship
at this time.

American writer D L Mayfield was overwhelmed by her work with refugees until she discovered the books of Dorothy Day. She said in her introduction to *The Reckless Way of Love: Notes on Following Jesus* that she was impatient with Dorothy's writings. Where was Dorothy's work, her interaction with the poor, her countercultural lifestyle, her life at the frontline? What did Mayfield find? A woman bound to daily service in community and deeply committed to rhythms of prayer, reflection and solitude. Dorothy wanted to live for Christ by growing in awareness and understanding of the love of Jesus. Her "work" was her relationship with Jesus.

Mayfield still longs to be like Dorothy Day but not to be radical anymore. She desires "to carve out space in my life for Christ above all else . . . to be sustainable, to remain steadfast." Matthew 10 is about the same basic truth. The "work" of disciples is their relationship with Jesus.

We may be asking new questions about our relationship with Jesus in response to our COVID-19 journey. I will discuss Matthew 10 within its Gospel context and within the context of the 80s to show that our "work" in our time is our relationship with Christ.

God's Mission of Mercy

In Mt 10 Jesus speaks of mission as an expression of mercy which is at the heart of his alternative community, the new people of God. Before the twelve are named, Jesus gives them authority over unclean spirits and to heal every sickness (Mt 10:1-5). They are apprentices who learn from Jesus to lead others to embody God's mercy. They are not just static pillars on which to build the Church. They are to move into God's liberating mission.

"As you go, proclaim the good news" is an all-embracing mission, a way of life. Jesus prepares the disciples to take little with them and to respond whether they are accepted or rejected (Mt 10:7-15). And there is another side to mission. There are stay-at-home disciples like us who are on God's mission of hospitality and support. The community of Jesus is not to be naïve (Mt 10:16-23). God's mission of mercy to the poor and downtrodden disturbs the powerful, those set in their ways and the religious leaders.



Don't Be Afraid

God's protection surrounds each person in the hardships of mission (Mt 10:24-33). We have all been in Lockdown to prevent the coronavirus spreading and to protect the elderly and the vulnerable. We were literally standing apart from the crowd. Society's prevailing values focused on caring for one another rather than on self-interest. As life returns to "normal" we can be encouraged to continue to show kindness and compassion. Three times Jesus assures us not to be afraid because God is with us when we make choices to stand apart from the crowd (Mt 10:26, 28, 31).

The Bottom Line

The early Christians experienced family divisions and betrayals because they chose to follow Jesus wholeheartedly (Mt 10:34-42). This pathway of faith is required of us, too, in our call to family life. Jesus speaks of being "worthy" of him which in biblical terms is a willingness to receive God's mercy. It leads us to "take up the cross and follow" Jesus.



We often use the expression of “taking up a cross” to describe putting up with life’s usual burdens – a long wait in a supermarket queue, a difficult boss, sickness. However, this was a political image of shame, pain, social rejection, marginalisation, condemnation and death for first-century disciples. Crucifixion, as practised by the Roman Empire (*basileia*), was the cruel form of execution imposed on marginal people – foreigners, criminals and slaves.

Jesus’s call to “take up the cross” means choosing a way of life of marginalisation – to identify with nobodies and those who resisted Rome’s version of reality. The Gospel tells of Rome being thwarted. God raises Jesus from the dead and he returns to establish God’s *basileia* over all, including the *basileia* of Rome.

Signs of the Times

Jesus talks to the religious leaders about discerning “the signs of the times” (Mt 16:3). Vatican II reminds us that the Church has the duty of scrutinising the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. We are to work at interpreting the *authentic signs of God’s*

presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires of our time. The Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* insists that the mystery of the human person and of human history is disclosed in our relationship with the crucified and resurrected Jesus. In this time of the pandemic we may need to free God from “lockdown” as we live out the “work” of our relationship with Jesus.

Presence

During Lockdown we had no gathering, sacraments or Sunday Eucharist in the familiar way. The “virtual” experience of Church in online Masses and worship deprived us of presence. We are an incarnational Church where presence is expressed through our body – by touch, gesture and communal togetherness. Perhaps, in new ways, we’re including Monday to Saturday in the “work” of our relationship with Jesus. The insight of theologian Karl Rahner that the “Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all” flourishes among us.

Society’s prevailing values focused on caring for one another rather than on self-interest. As life returns to “normal” we can be encouraged to continue to show kindness and compassion.

We find God is in the mundane, in presence, in choices we make to stay connected to our reality and what is going on in our world. We’re encountering God “lockdowned” in the sacred space of our homes and Earth our common home – in family life, in our bubble, in the aloneness of living alone, in Scripture, in silence, in beauty, in creativity and in walking or biking.

Home

We can learn from Jewish practice. Jesuit David Neuhaus, born of Jewish parents, explains that when the Easter liturgies were being livestreamed with priests celebrating alone, the Passover was being held in Jewish homes around a family table where a parent was celebrant and with the full participation of children. Home is a sacred place – a place of worship as well as the church. The ANZAC Day celebration this year, centred on home rather than the public space. ⌚

21 June: Matthew 10:26-33 RL 12th Sunday Ordinary Time
Matthew 10:24-39 RCL 3rd Sunday After Pentecost

28 June: Matthew 10:37-42 RL 13th Sunday Ordinary Time
Matthew 10:40-42 RCL 4th Sunday After Pentecost



Kathleen Rushton RSM is the author of recently published *The Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor: Hearing Justice in John’s Gospel* (SCM Press 2020).



livestream his Mass? He ended up looking like a mafioso with dark glasses and black hat — such a crackup!

I have been able to do some work from home but my usual work in the music ministry of the cathedral was of course curtailed. I keenly felt the loss of the special liturgies in Holy Week culminating in the Triduum. Never before have we been absent from our churches during this great feast. On Palm Sunday, I made a large punga cross, tucked in some fronds of greenery and placed it at the front of my house. I left it there for several weeks, changing the draped cloth from purple to white to mark Easter. Just yesterday an elderly gentleman stopped to say how much it had meant to him to see that sign in his neighbourhood.

It has been a serious challenge to us all to find authentic ways of being Church when we're not in church on Sundays. Some groups have developed their use of technology as the weeks go by so they can meaningfully share the Scriptures, music and prayers.

Gifts of Lockdown

I love the early morning — throwing open the curtains and getting that first glimpse of the day's beginning. The arterial road up the back has been almost silent but the birds are in full voice — they give an avian karanga for the rising sun! I sit in the garden with a first coffee, content to be held in the beauty and life around me. People have been talking about all the positive changes they want to continue with after Lockdown — this is my Number One — to start each day with a light heart, deeply aware of my unique place in God's creation and rejoicing in it. Allowing this time will mean less of other things to avoid the mad dash, jangled nerves, the pressure to keep up and do more and more.

Real conversation will be another treasure to hang on to: keeping track of near and far, letting people know they are valued and important, talking to dear ones about the important stuff of life, not the mundane. Folk who hadn't experienced it before have discovered the joy of Zoom and Messenger in their hunger to be connected and see loved faces. The children took to it like ducklings — my mokos introduced me to filters so we could all wear bunny ears or funny hats and faces. Did anyone else see the old Italian priest who accidentally put filters on while trying to

It's limiting and it's not like the "in person" experience we usually have but this determination and drive is a wonderful sign to the world of the Spirit alive in the Church. I'm hoping we can continue this creativity, that we don't become complacent and passive in the pews and forget the hunger we've felt during Lockdown.

Most people I've spoken to have put their "extra" time towards a project of some kind.

I decided to pick up the thread of sorting my parents' photos and memoirs and eventually settled to transcribing Mum's handwritten notes of her early years. Born to a mining family in North Yorkshire in 1921, she lived through the lingering effects of the Great Depression, her father's early death and enlisted in the Auxiliary Territorial Service of the British Army at the tender age of 17. She was very smart and took on a great variety of jobs over the four years of her service. At times when the men were required elsewhere, the women had to operate the searchlights during the raids — seriously dangerous work if a bomber was diving down the beam of light with guns blazing! In 1945 she was posted to a new Repatriation Centre for New Zealand prisoners of war.

I came to the last paragraph where she had written — "On VE Day 8th May 1945 I, along with 12 other girls marched with the New Zealand contingent in the parade through Margate. We were very proud to wear the New Zealand Silver Fern on our sleeves." A few months after that she met my Kiwi Dad and they married in January 1946.

This past weekend the United Kingdom celebrated the 75th Anniversary of VE Day and here in New Zealand we celebrated Mothers' Day. Here's to you, Mum, on both counts! ☘

Julie Randall is a proud mum and grandma enjoying family life in Palmerston North where it's so flat she's taken up biking again.





Grappling with Patience

Coronavirus has made me hyperaware of how I think about time. Everything is simultaneously too fast and too slow: I have to wait for decisions to be made by the government — an abstract entity far from myself.

I try to make my time meaningful with regular routines. Every Sunday, I watch a musical with my flatmates. Every Wednesday I go to a university chapel service on Zoom. Every morning, I write in my journal, with more consistency than before the pandemic because like every moment

that has come before it, this is history, and I'm suddenly aware that I want to keep a record of this exact moment as an historical duty for others.

My life is not the stuff of history books, though. Mostly, time is like elastic bouncing: long and thin then suddenly snapping back to an extreme now, where there is nothing but the present and things I haven't managed to be yet.

I'm talking to someone who is not a believer about God, and he asks me if I think God is in time or beyond it. I know that this is a weighty theological

issue, and I am so glad that people more thoughtful than I have answers and explanations for both options. One day, I want to know more about these strands of theological thought. For today, though, I'm thinking about how God is Lord of time.

I feel like this Lockdown is interminable: what is it like for the divine spirit who dwells with me? Does God, too, find that things are too fast and not fast enough? I have occasional glimpses of time as something so much bigger than me. Like the long genealogies in the Old Testament, I am the daughter of daughters and sons, generations upon generations. I am a crumb, too, of a world to come.

In the forced stillness of Lockdown, in the long days and short minutes, in the intangibility of this digital life now, I'm trying to find hope in the knowledge that people have lived through many kinds of waiting, and found God among them, patient and faithful. Noah and his family spent 40 days on rising waters, and 40 days waiting for the waters to recede. The Israelites waited thousands of years for a Saviour. Even now, we wait for the kingdom of heaven, for patience to be rewarded.

If anything, Lockdown has made me more aware of my impatience. I like making things happen. I want everything to happen all at once — now. Instead, I'm living in a season of stillness, making meaning with routines which are somehow not enough, my minutes floating, my heart beating, empty and whole in the wrong places. Next to me walks a God who knows time in a way that I do not: a God who can wait, and keep waiting.

So I try to remember that I am a daughter of so many daughters and sons, all of whom waited and yearned, and only some of those hopes were fulfilled. Time is not what I want it to be: but I am learning, still, to be patient. ⌚

Photo by Greg Ward/Shutterstock.com



Shanti Mathias is at Victoria University, Wellington, enjoying using long words and immersing herself in the intricacies of media, politics and literature.

Dear Life: A Doctor's Story of Love and Loss

by Rachel Clarke
Published by Little, Brown, 2020
Reviewed by Dennis Veal

BOOK

Dear Life is an autobiography focusing on the quality of patients' end of life experience. Rachel Clarke's first career was as a journalist making documentaries for the BBC so she knows how to write in a readable style. She then changed professions following in her father's footsteps to become a doctor.

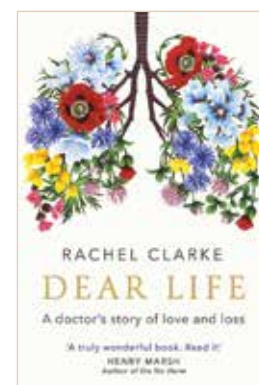
After her training she began work in the Accident and Emergency department of a London hospital. Her account gives insight into the overstretched National Health Service and the pressure on doctors and nurses. Despite the constraints she becomes a competent and caring doctor.

These qualities make her aware of and concerned for the treatment of the terminally ill. She tells a story of working all night to stabilise a terminally ill patient, then being instructed by her supervisor to send the person off to "the palliative dustbin"!

Not surprisingly, Rachel eventually begins work in a hospice, an environment which allows her to empathise with patients and their loved ones. Her compassion and sensitivity shine through. The dying receive treatment with dignity and humour and tears abound.

This becomes personal for Rachel when her father is diagnosed with cancer.

Rachel epitomises "love your neighbour" yet she is an agnostic. The world needs all the Rachel Clarkes it can get. I encourage everyone to read this inspiring book. ⌚



Glenstal Abbey Through the Seasons

by Valerie O'Sullivan
Published by Columba Books, 2019
Reviewed by Jenny Dawson

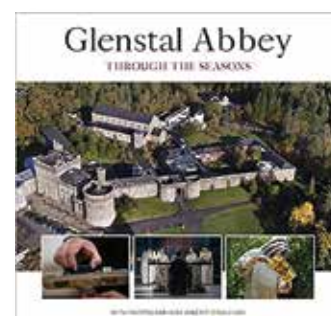
BOOK

This is a beautiful book. It tells the story in images of a year at Glenstal Abbey, a Benedictine abbey in County Limerick, Ireland. From the opening foreword by the Abbot, through four seasons of photographs, the reader looks in awe at the ancient castle, smells the woods and flowers, tastes the food, hears the life of the school and soaks up the life of the monastic community – especially the seasonal cycle of prayer along with the rites of monastic life itself.

While I read, I was frequently called back to Abbot Brendan's words: "The primary purpose of a monastery is the praise and worship of God and the sanctification of its

members." He wrote: "Human life in all its phases is to be found here" – and this is expressed in a series of Monk's Tales showing the various monastery roles – the Archivist, the Woodsman, the Poulterer, the Beekeeper, the Centenarian and many others. Valerie O'Sullivan's photographs show the diversity of life involving monks, lay people and school students in the huge complex that is Glenstal.

As a Lockdown reader, I found my heart was tugged by the section focusing on the preparation, enactment and glory of Holy Week and Easter Day. What we have missed out on this year! But reading on I was reminded that spring will come again, Easter will come again, the seasons will continue to give shape and meaning to the life of faith, wherever we are. This gorgeous coffee-table book would make a lovely gift. ⌚



See Judge Act: Training Catholic Activists in New Zealand, 1937-1983

by Rod Orange
Published by Steele Roberts Aotearoa, 2019
Reviewed by Peter Slocum

BOOK

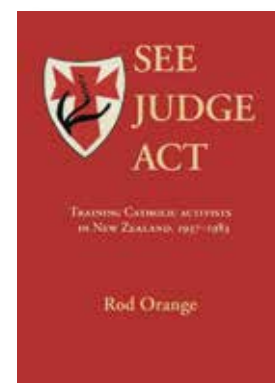
This scholarly book is a strange journey in the sense that for the most part the book presents a catalogue of emerging merit-worthy endeavours by well-intentioned people – endeavours that seemingly end in fizzled failure. But that's not the whole story.

Orange records (albeit in too much detail at times) the story of the emergence and development of the spirituality and activism of Catholic/Christian laity from the ghetto of a centralised and over-institutionalised Church.

"See, Judge, Act" was the catch-cry and method formulated by Belgian priest Joseph Cardijn in the 1930s to equip young people, especially, to bring about the Christian transformation of society – the mission Jesus left in our hands.

Level 4 Lockdown has demonstrated that effective change comes about by individuals "seeing, judging and acting" but most importantly by us all working together. Life goes on without overbearing institutions.

I found parts of this book heavy going, but the closing chapters are resplendent with hope and encouragement that the Christian transformation of society is awaiting and is possible. ⌚





Dark Waters

Directed by Todd Haynes

Reviewed by Patricia Stevenson

FILM

Usually when I go to the movies I look through the options, check out the directors, cast and maybe a précis. But because the cinemas had just reopened and the time was convenient, I took Hobson's choice – and I am so pleased I did.

Dark Waters, a docudrama, is based on a New York Times article by Nathaniel Rich, "The Lawyer Who Became DuPont's Worst Nightmare". The story describes how a lawyer fought the might of the powerful DuPont chemical manufacturing company. It is a David and Goliath story.

Robert Billot (Mark Ruffalo) is a young lawyer in a prestigious New York law firm specialising in corporate law. His client Wilbur Tennant (Bill Camp) is a West Virginian farmer. Billot is reluctant to take on the case, but Tennant's trump card was a recommendation from Billot's grandmother.

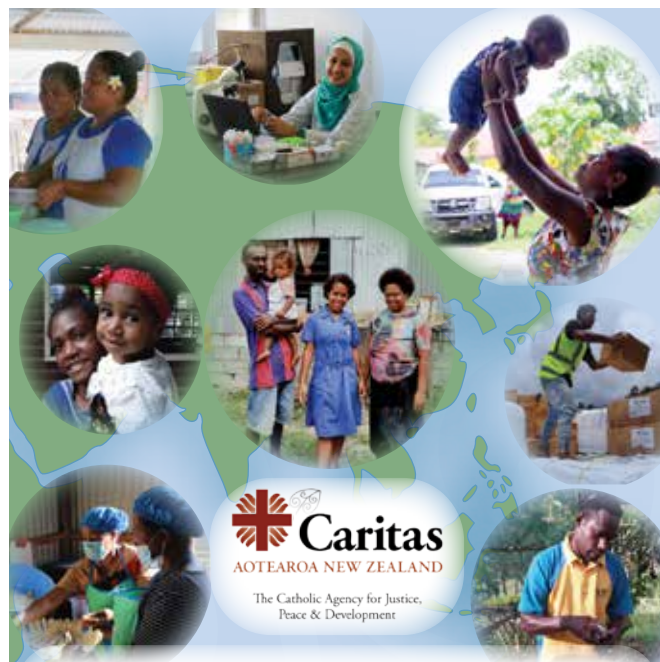
Law firm head Tom Terp (Tim Robbins) explained the pitfalls and dangers of the undertaking but finally agreed to the case. So began the marathon of a difficult, protracted case. Tennant had video evidence of the degradation of the soil and water on his farm where his cattle were dying. He knew the toxicity was caused by DuPont using neighbouring land for their waste disposal.

Of course Billot was not greeted kindly by DuPont, protected by a battery of lawyers. Billot asked for the paperwork associated with dumping the waste and a moving company deluged his office with boxes of papers completely unorganised. It took many weeks to sift through.

Billot's wife Sarah (Anne Hathaway) began to question

the project and especially the impact it had on their young family. The tension builds on all fronts as the struggle for justice continues.

Dark Waters is a compelling story – thought provoking, gripping, a real thriller. And soon after the fifth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, this film is timely. ⌚



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CROSS CURRENTS



by Susan Smith

A Sister in Bangladesh told about their situation. It's bad, especially in Dhaka, where many do not appreciate how dangerous coronavirus is. She wrote: "Our wet markets are crowded. Those who are contaminated want to die with their families, and so they run away from hospitals. At the moment in Dhaka there are some 15 million people, 1 million of whom live in the Kamlapur railway station slum, while there are 1.1 million Rohingyas in refugee camps." Bangladesh has a population of 165 million in a country just over half the size of New Zealand. Our population is just under 5 million.

The pandemic crisis has demonstrated that the mantra of right-wing political parties — smaller government, minimal income tax — is no answer when real emergencies face the country. We need a strong and compassionate central government. I remember the TV reporter excitedly telling us that Jacinda, with her salary of \$500,000, was going to take a 20 per cent pay cut. The implication seemed to be that we should be amazed she was earning so much. Most New Zealanders are in awe at how much she is doing. I wonder if TV reporters could initiate conversations that explain why the CEOs of our major banks are still earning seven or eight times as much as the Prime Minister? ⌚

Is there any significance for disciples of Jesus that the Lockdown coincided with the end of Lent and Easter Sunday with its promise of new and transformed life? Will our Lockdown, analogous to burial, be the prelude to a transformed way of life? Will there be a lasting impact for good on the environment? Scientific evidence, local and overseas, suggests that Lockdowns are good for creation. At the same time, most commentators say that when the Lockdown finishes, the priority will be to kick-start the economy again. How can we ensure a creative tension between the economic and environmental imperatives facing us?

Lockdown Clerical Liturgy

What are we to make of televised liturgies, of electronic Eucharists? For some people, "online church" has been immensely comforting, providing some certainty and security in a rapidly changing world. I watched an online liturgy on Good Friday morning and it confirmed what many Catholic women already experience, namely that the Church basically belongs to bishops, priests and aspiring priests. Likewise, I found it quite off-putting to see Pope Francis with a handful of assistant priestly celebrants wandering around in the confines of an empty St Peter's in Rome. What was always thrilling for me about being part of a significant liturgical celebration at St Peter's was the sense of being part of the Church universal, and being with thousands of women and men from every tribe and nation.

For a significant number of New Zealanders Lockdown was an inconvenience but manageable. In other parts of the world it has been

exacerbated by other problems. Emails from the Sisters of the Mission in Kenya tell about swarms of locusts. The year had begun with an infestation by desert locusts. These travelled in swarms of many millions, consuming almost every leaf of green vegetation in their path. They move with the wind and can migrate up to 150 km a day. Experts estimate they have so far destroyed at least 30 per cent of pastureland and food resources.

Farmers, including the Sisters in communities in Meru and Matuu, tried to save their farms by banging metal pans, whistling, shouting and throwing stones to drive the locusts away. But mostly people watched in frustration, and because of Lockdown, they were barred from gathering outside their homes. It is frightening to think about the implications of this locust infestation for an embattled people.



TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

Tui Motu magazine provides Catholic as well as ecumenical and inter-faith perspectives and discussion on current issues in church and society. It focuses particularly on issues affecting Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific. Its intent is to promote the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, engaging faith and the world through informed, thoughtful comment and discussion for a general readership. The magazine publishes 11 issues per year in print and regular digital postings on social media.

The magazine invites contributions from writers of Catholic and other Christian traditions or faith backgrounds, who can offer our readers insights which resonate with the Gospel as it affects us today. We value diversity and seek contributions which are representative of our church and our society: Maori, Pakeha, Pasifika, other cultures, a range of ages and genders, lay and ordained. We offer feature articles, interviews, reviews, poetry, comment and opinion on theology, spirituality and history, as well as on social justice and ecology.

Address:

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd,
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PO Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9059

Phone: (03) 477 1449

Email: editor@tuimotu.org

Email for subscriptions: admin@tuimotu.org

Editor: Ann L Gilroy RSJ

Assistant Editor: Ann Hassan

Proofreader: Christine Crowe

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Board Directors: Neil Darragh (chair),
Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey, Cathrine
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We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters while keeping the meaning.

WHY DOESN'T THE CHURCH ORDAIN WOMEN?

In August 2016 Pope Francis put together a commission to look into the subject of women deacons in the Early Church. The commission's report was delivered in January 2019. However, Pope Francis judged it to be "inconclusive" and a second group, in April 2020, was empaneled to study the question again. A question I would like someone to answer is: "Is there anything about the mental, physical or spiritual makeup of women that prevents our Church from allowing them to be ordained?" In your reply I offer a word of warning. You would not want to upset Mary, mother of Our Lord Jesus, would you?

Barry Smyth, Whangarei

TASTE OF THE FEEDBACK FROM LOCKDOWN THOUGHTS

Thank you so much for the *Lockdown Thoughts* you so faithfully forward to us each day during these months. I am missing them now but want to say a special thank you to you for sending them to us each day. The prayer we used as part of our "grace" before our main meal and this helped us both to share something special about it or to chat about some of the laughs which were included. All this helped us through the Lockdown days and I am grateful to you for your thoughtfulness in preparing the Thoughts and sending them through.

Rita Cusack, Brisbane

Thank you so much for the emails that have been sent out each day. I have

looked forward to them each morning and enjoyed them immensely. The thoughts and prayers each day have been fantastic and I congratulate all those who have been involved in writing and collating them. The funnies have provided light relief and I have enjoyed being reacquainted with Pam Ayers, Yes Minister and Dave Allen. Thanks again for the time, effort and creativity you have shared during this time. I pray everyone remains safe as you go into Level 2. Blessings of love and peace.

Sandy Leaitua, Sydney

Every morning I have woken up to your messages and the hilarious, touching, clever clips. It has made a great difference. And like a lot of things, as we go to Level 2 and then back to hopefully a better future, I will miss it. But thank you and God bless you.

Judy Ringland-Stewart, Port Chalmers

Thank you so very much for this daily series which has been a bright spot in my day (which is always a different day from yours). Thank you for the verse, the comedy and the window for those of us living under the sociopathic leadership of Donald Trump to a wiser, less

politically motivated way to respond to the pandemic. I am grateful for this electronic companionship.

Maren Tirabassi, New Hampshire USA

Receiving my last *Lockdown Thought* this morning I felt rather saddened. I've so appreciated all 49 (what a marathon effort) of them and they helped me get started on my day. The thought, prayer and not forgetting the "light hearted" part for each day was just fabulous. I'm not going to suggest that we go back into Level 4 or 3 just so I can continue to enjoy your great work!

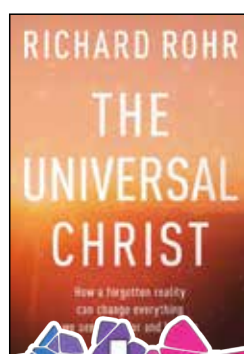
Tess Gilfedder, Dunedin

I've just watched *The Danger of a Single Story* — so beautiful and a tiny eye-opener into Nigeria. Wow! Why do I ever complain when I look at the odds of so many millions of human beings?! This story offers me great food for thought — as we come to the end of your beautiful *Lockdown Thoughts*.

Helen Bergin, Auckland

Thank you for your *Tui Motu Lockdown Thoughts*. They became a part of our morning routine and I must admit we both missed the thoughts and funnies yesterday. Blessing to you all.

Elizabeth and Peter Moroney, Dunedin



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Our boots tread on the spilt confetti of damp, burnt muesli found on every beech forest floor, as we head up the hill. A korimako sparkles out her song, sequins of sound sliding into the quince syrup of an autumn evening. In response a spangle of surrounding bellbirds cast in their songs, a spray of golden coins into a mountain tarn. Overly fanciful, you may be thinking. But no, korimako unapologetically sing their vocal fancywork daily, a chorus to bless all who trouble to walk among them. It is their work to do. God speaks in birdsong.

Stepping further up the trail, there is the dead beech tree with elegant armour, a chainmail of bracket fungi. This arboreal aardvark stands watch while at our feet, there are so many fungi. Clusters of yellow buttons, a gossiping bevy, while other pixie mushrooms go solo – brown, amber, and white-white varieties. My favourite fungi of autumn, though, were the field mushrooms we foraged on the rustic golf course and paddocks around us, whizzed into a thick-grey soup, meat of the autumn earth. Yielding field mushrooms is the highest calling of a golf course.

We walk on past beech trunks, spongy and black with the sooty mould fungus. We notice the eager green beech leaves beaded like necklaces around the fine veins of black beech twigs. I ask Jalori how we could describe their lacy beauty and she suggests it is like charred filigree. She's okay, my 11-year-old.

The black-sooty beech trees thin out and tea towels of blue sky show through the branches. I am always glad to be through the bush and onto the open tops. The tussock is autumnal too, a flaxen blond-gold, fluffing up before winter. In this wide-armed landscape, the blue-blue sky arches above and around us. Solace in the shifting sands of pandemic, to find mountains, tussock, beech, korimako getting on unblinking with pre-winter rituals.

In these strange days, I think of *saudade*, that

untranslatable Portuguese word conveying a sense of longing, melancholy, nostalgia perhaps, and desire for things that have passed or that maybe never even existed. For our family, a cascade of events triggered by the Covid crisis meant we left our home in India with 12 hours' notice, and now we are somehow back in Aotearoa. We find ourselves here but uprooted and bewildered. We are unsure where we will be living, studying or working and everything is misty beyond the next few months. On the day New Zealand moved from Level 4 to Level 3 I felt salty pricks of tears in my eyes as tradies and building labourers resumed jovial work with a rowdy FM station, while they roofed the house opposite us. Perhaps I also felt twinges of envy, wishing to know what ordinary life will be for us. I am joined by millions of people across Planet Earth feeling *saudade* for ordinary life. Bring back January. Things will eventually coagulate into new patterns, and we will find our feet – but not anytime soon, I guess. Prayer, breakfast, walking, dishes and books at least can be counted on.

Another day, eggplant-dark clouds slide across from the north-west, unwavering and humourless. Behind this infantry advance are whoops and gusts of wind, strong enough to push me off my cycle as I ride the Hogsback Ridge, and then push at my back as I ride home. West of us, over the Main Divide, this nor'wester is a ragged and raging bronchitis of a storm, but here skiffs of rain just sneeze on me. Yet this storm will pass and looking east from under the ceiling of dark boots above me, I see tentative blue skies. ⌚



Kaaren Mathias is living in Christchurch temporarily because of COVID-19 but is usually in North India. She is a parent, adventurer, public health doctor and follower of Jesus of Galilee.



**Spirit of God
Bless us with wisdom and commitment
to keep informed and safe
prudent and caring
in solidarity and love
for the sake of the world.**

From the Tui Motu team