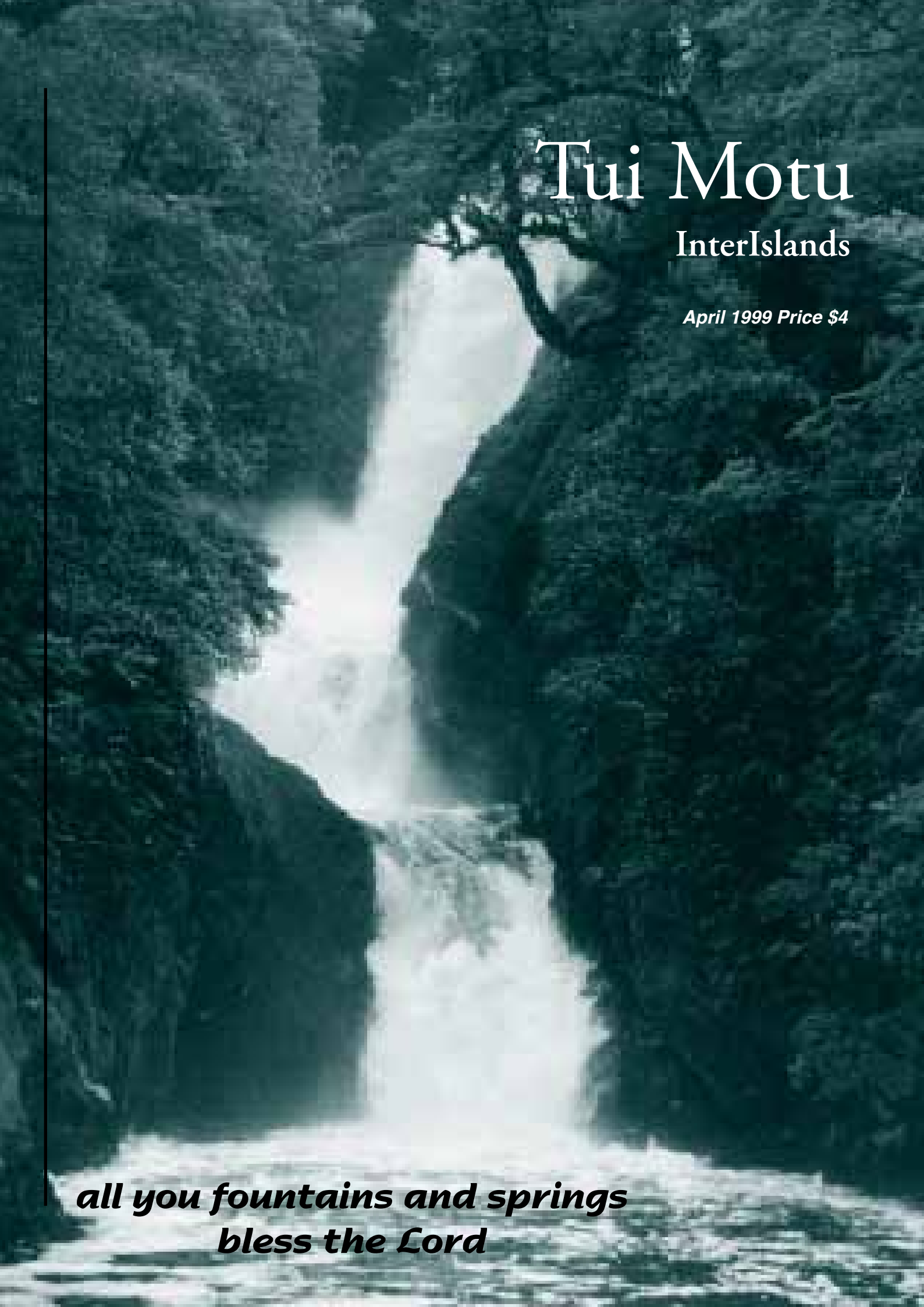

Tui Motu

InterIslands

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all you fountains and springs
bless the Lord

Contents

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Pandora's Box

Two themes of nature come strongly through this Easter issue of *Tui Motu*. One is the autumnal sequence of dying as a presage of new life. Nature seems to be signing off – but with a golden splendour which already carries the promise of burgeoning life soon to return. The other theme is water. Easter is the time when we celebrate ritually the moment of our rebirth as Christians. Water is a sign of abundant life and abundant grace, flowing from an abundantly loving God. This theme has special meaning when the rains do not come. The sudden breaking of drought with the first autumn rains has an almost magical greening effect: we are reminded how much our lives depend on the basic elements and their regular supply.

It is the last Easter of the Second Millennium. While many people are already preparing for a New Year's Eve party to end all parties, there is also an ominous sense of looming crises. While the Y2K bug is a worry, it pales into insignificance beside the issue of Genetically Modified food. The complexities of this are beyond most of us; but there are at least three points raising serious ethical questions:

• It is possible now to take a gene for resistance to a particular herbicide and introduce it into a food crop. When the crop is sprayed with weed-killer, all the weeds are killed but the crop remains unaffected. Better yields, cheaper food, and higher profits for agrobusiness. Why not? Unfortunately things are not that simple, because the pollen of the genetically modified species can spread anywhere – into the crops of the organic farmer next door or, more ominously, into the wild. And what about the biodiversity of species which depend for their food on the variety of plant species decimated by those chemical sprays?

• Another development is so-called 'terminator' technology, enabling seed companies to sell a product which germinates once only, so that the growers are forced to go back to the seed companies each year. Good for the profits of the companies and their share-holders. Not so good for the growers.

• Most dangerous of all is what one might call the Thalidomide factor. The new bio-technology enables the research biochemist to tamper with the genetic code itself. Agriculturalists for thousands of years have experimented with selctive breeding of animals and crops to produce the amazing variety of productive species now available. But their methods were simply an accelerated 'selection' process, mimicking what nature has been doing quite successfully for millions of years. The new technology, however, interferes with the integrity of the gene pool itself, with little heed of possibly disastrous consequences to the world's ecosystem. Have we so soon forgotten Thalidomide – or Mad Cow disease? When one pauses to contemplate the infinitely delicate biochemical balance which enables life processes to work, then the new technology is like using a sledgehammer to tune a Concert Grand Piano!

Sr Miriam MacGillis (see pages 5-7) calls upon New Zealand to declare itself a Genetically Modified Free zone, showing again the sort of moral ▷▷

Tui Motu welcomes discussion of spiritual, theological and social issues, in the light of gospel values and in the interest of a more peaceful and just society. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

A 'Commotion Event'

It has become fashionable to knock the churches, either as dinosaurs headed for extinction or as just plain irrelevant. Newspaper journalists reminded me of this when I was seeking to get some information about the recent Harare Assembly of the World Council of Churches into the Wellington dailies. I was told by one that his paper was not interested in the churches unless there was some controversy or sensation afoot.

Fortunately not everyone sees it that way. South African President Nelson Mandela cancelled engagements to attend a session of the WCC assembly. He acknowledged the role of the churches in educating black youth of his generation and the forthrightness of the WCC in standing in solidarity with the black liberation movements of Southern Africa, through grants from its Programme to Combat Racism fund.

He also requested the churches to identify with the struggle for democracy and human rights in Africa and to assist in confronting the issues of growth and development on the continent. Mandela saw the churches as vital and relevant in their identification with the cause of justice and well-being for the people of Africa. His plea was warm and personal: "But for the churches," he said, "I would not be standing before you here today".

Yet much of institutional Christianity may have had its day. While there are many who would cling to the creeds, orthodoxy and forms of the past, there are also many seeking a more relevant understanding of their faith. Frustrated by the churches' reluctance to change, they have left the institution in significant numbers. Some have joined a host of alternative groups where there is greater freedom and safety to explore matters of theology, spirituality and values.

We need to remember that Jesus never set out to establish a church. Rather, he was passionately devoted to a cause (reign or kingdom of God). In his lifetime it gave rise to just a small movement of committed people which he never sought to institutionalise. Because his cause challenged the ecclesiastical and political power holders of the day, they attempted to write him out of history by putting him to death.

Easter reminds us that his cause triumphs and is as relevant and as challenging as ever. Celebrating Jesus' resurrection must be about celebrating the victory of his cause. It is one that will not go away, that still holds promise of the fullness of life with a challenge to all the forces of 'death' at work in our world today.

Following the Easter event the movement associated with Jesus's cause became known as *the Way*. It had a loose, fluid and relatively unstructured existence. When it was institutionalised and became church, the maintenance of the institution rather than the furtherance of the cause became the focus of attention and absorbed people's energy.

At the WCC Assembly Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama reminded us of the significance of the cause. He spoke of the compassionate God who seeks to turn the world upside down by running from the centre to the periphery. Jesus modelled this in his ministry by spending most of his time with those at the periphery, and challenging those at the centre who held the power. The gospel, Koyama said, is the *commotion event* ushered in by Jesus Christ. The invitation to be part of the Jesus commotion, to be at the periphery, challenging the centre and seeking to turn things upside down, comes once again to us this Easter.

Because it is fashionable to dismiss the significance of the churches, its members may be forgiven for thinking they are of little significance. But Easter – with its reminder that the Jesus cause cannot be written off – is a powerful reminder that when we identify with that cause we are doing something significant. The institutional forms of the churches may be increasingly irrelevant, but the Jesus cause is as valid as ever.

John Roberts

Rev John Roberts is a Wellington Minister working in the enabling ministry team at Ta Taha Maori Methodist Church.
He attended the WCC Assembly in Harare last November. His account of the Assembly was printed in the March issue of Tui Motu.

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leadership that was demonstrated in the campaign against Nuclear weaponry. Unfortunately, under our present leadership any such decisions will be follow strict economic and political expediency, not ethics. Will it interfere with profits – will it garner more votes? But Sr Miriam also offers us an Easter hope. Science itself opens our minds to the great sweep of our cosmic past and enables this generation, for the first time, to see ourselves in proper context. To become educated and enlightened to a new world-view, to see Creation as one wonderful masterpiece of an Ever-loving Creator: that is the first and necessary step towards a humbler and a saner evaluation of our world, preserving the earth uncontaminated for future generations. *M.H.*

Vatican News

Vatican champions Pinochet

General Augusto Pinochet came to power in Chile in September 1973, overthrowing the left-wing, democratically elected President Allende. Immediately there were gross human rights violations including massacres and the use of torture. Over 2000 Chileans lost their lives and many disappeared. After seven years Pinochet was forced to hand over the presidency into civilian hands, but he retained command over the army. Before his eventual retirement he helped set in place a constitution giving senators (like himself) immunity under Chilean law.

During the reign of terror the leader of the opposition had been Chile's own Cardinal Raul Silva. But not all church authorities backed him; some, including bishops, backed the Pinochet regime in the name of anti-Marxism. A key figure before, during and after the Pinochet coup was Archbishop (now Cardinal) Angelo Sodano, who was Papal Nuncio from 1977-78. He cultivated strong relations with right-wing politicians and with Pinochet himself.

It is this same Cardinal Sodano, now Vatican Secretary of State, who has petitioned the British government not to allow the General to be extradited to Spain for trial. This petition, which would have needed the approval of Pope John Paul, raises serious questions. Many ask how the Pope who has campaigned so strongly against human rights violations can now appear to be supporting a man who is guilty of just such violations. Is the Vatican slipping back into a policy of endorsing crimes perpetrated by the state in South America? Cardinal Sodano argues that it's necessary for Pinochet to return to Chile in order to speed up the process of reconciliation in a strife-torn country. But local bishops say his presence would have precisely the opposite effect, since under the immunity clause he cannot be made to stand trial.

The Vatican is also promoting the humanitarian argument. The General is now 83 years of age. But hardly anyone is asking for his imprisonment; simply that he should come to trial so that questions may be answered and Pinochet made publicly responsible for what he did. Should the Vatican have made such an intervention?

Catholics number over one billion

In the latest edition of the Vatican Directory, the *Annuario Pontificio,* Catholics in the world for the first time are quoted as exceeding one billion. The statistics show they number 17.9 percent of the world's total population: 62.9 percent in the Americas; 41.4 percent of Europeans; 14.9 percent of Africans; 3 percent only of the people in Asia; and 27.5 percent in Oceania. While there is no noticeable change in the number of priests, the overall number of religious is declining world wide.

Pope John Paul receives FAO medal

Before Christmas Pope John Paul wa awarded the *Agricola* Medal by FAC the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. The award was made in recognition of the Pope's "continuous struggle against hunger and malnutrition and his demonstrated concern for the plight of humanity's poor, and for the peace of the world".

The medals have been awarded since 1977 to people who have played a prominent role in increasing world food production, at the same time expressing their solidarity with millions of people who suffer from hunger.

Mary McAleese agreeably surprised

A recent visitor to Pope John Paul was President Mary McAleese of Ireland. But instead of the "tired, weak and feeble old man" she had expected she was agreeably surprised to find him "ferociously alive intellectually – he wanted to talk". Their conversation concentrated on peace negotiations in Northern Ireland.

While in Rome, President McAleese also met the Archbishop of Canterbury for the first time. Both he and the Pope praised her role in Ireland's process of reconciliation. ■

A world under Threat

"You need to declare New Zealand a Genetically Modified Free Zone – *before the whole world," said Miriam MacGillis OP to audiences up and down the country over recent weeks*

By declaring itself a nuclear free zone and 'thumbing its nose' at the great powers, New Zealand once sent a powerful message of hope to the peoples of the world. And it is just such a gesture that is needed today, for – or so Miriam maintains – the ecological crisis is the supreme issue of our age.

Sister Miriam is a gentle, homespun woman; a Dominican who preaches not through rhetoric but by her sincerity; an unobtrusive person who communicates her message with simplicity and a quiet passion. She has dedicated her whole life to this cause, although she modestly attributes the content of her message primarily to the Passionist priest and world renowned ecological spokesperson, Thomas Berry.

According to Berry humanity is facing a gigantic schism in world views. Do we, he asks, see the human species as integrated into the natural world – or do we see humankind as separate and above the world of matter and life? This present age appears to be the end-times of the Cenozoic period. The last 65 million years have seen the flowering of an unprecedented abundance of species across the face of the planet, and of these myriads of species *homo sapiens* is simply the most recent and the most lethal. During the long history of life on earth the greatest cataclysms have occasioned the mass extinction of species. And this is precisely what human activity is causing at this present time: the mass extinction of species. Our children and our grandchildren will simply not know many of the plants and animals which are commonplace to us. We – our generation – will have wiped them out.

In previous cataclysms species have been wiped out, but DNA, the staff of life itself, has remained intact. What humanity is presently engaged in is the wilful 'modification' of DNA itself, alongside a progressive destruction of the oxygen membrane which surrounds the earth providing the breath of life for its creatures. In recent times some 70,000 new chemicals have been created, some of which impair or destroy the endocrine balance within the bodies of humans and other species. These facts, says Sr Miriam, demand a "monumental call to arms" to bring to a halt this wanton process of mass destruction, which is nothing less than a lemming-like stampede to irreversible disaster.

A false cosmology

Yet why, asks Berry, do the powers-that-be take no notice? Because the Western world is steeped in a false cosmology. Every world-view is an attempt by humans to answer the same perennial questions: why the seasons? why birth and death? why pain and pestilence? why the destructive force of tempest and earthquake and tsunami? Why nature 'red in tooth and claw'?

The Western world-view coming down to us from classical times is profoundly dualistic. The divine is seen as perfect, transcendent, other-worldly. Whereas this 'lower' world of change is imperfect, transient: containing the relics of a golden age in the past, perhaps to be restored at the Parousia to come. In this scenario Christ returns at the end of this age to "make all things new". The imperfections of our present existence are seen as abnormal, temporary, 'sin-full'.

Indigenous peoples, whether the Polynesians of the Pacific or the American Indians, have a totally different sense of the earth: of the

divine and the human. Their world is **one**. The divine is immanent. The world is inhabited by a Great Spirit, and the beasts are its children. The cycle of life and death is all part of a continuous process. It is 'the way things are' – neither perfect or imperfect.

The Western way is to refashion the landscape to suit a passing human need – whereas indigenous peoples strive to live in harmony with the earth as they experience it; for that is to live in harmony with God. They therefore see Western destruction of their world as an obscenity. For them the emphasis must always be on inner transformation, not a violent manipulation of the environment. For example, in North America the coming of the European has entailed a 95 percent destruction of the native forests.

Four institutions underpinning this cosmology

• *the global economy*: which exists to transform material things into commodities for human use

• *governments*: which exist to protect people and their property. Only persons have rights. Not nature, not the earth

• *the education system*: which more and more exists to train people simply to be more efficient producers and consumers

• *Western religions* which are redemption-centred and tend to read history as a discontinuous process.

Berry regards these institutions of the West as ill-equipped to face up to the ecological crisis because they see a radical discontinuity at the root of the world as they experience it. The other-than-human has no voice. They have become fixed in a dualistic mindset.

The way out

Berry, however, is not pessimistic. What science has provided us with, especially in recent decades, is the data to enable us to retell our own story. We can begin to begin to know and understand the earth and the universe in a way our parents never could. It is not enough for us to find scapegoats, to blame the scientists or the industrialists or the economists. **We** are all responsible. So we must make the change ourselves. He thinks this will only come about from the grassroots, from the bottom up.

indigenous peoples see the Western destruction of their world as an obscenity

Once upon a time the Creation myths and the story of the Fall were the best hypotheses available. Now we know so much more. We know the material universe had a beginning. There has always been Spirit and Mind indwelling. What we need to learn and to teach our young is that there is a story of **evolution** lasting more than 14 billion years in which our world has been shaped. Our children are being born into a time of grace for they are the first generation who can learn the story from its very beginning. Evolution must no longer be taught in the mechanistic, purposeless fashion of the old cosmology.

The universe as one

Thomas Berry and his scientist collaborator, Brian Swimme, maintain that '*uni-verse*' means what it says: one expression, one revelation. The universe is *closed* enough that its substance coheres together and does not fall apart. Each atom retains an identity so that the 'selfness' of Carbon is not the selfness of Nitrogen. Yet it is *open* enough that each part can relate to every other part, and this relationship enables change to occur. It is this *open-closed* character which permeates all things.

From this foundation three observable principles ensue:

• there is a constant movement of *differentiation*. All the elements of matter have evolved out of the original

Re-inhabiting the Earth

Sister Miriam MacGillis attributes her 'conversion' to her present beliefs to two chance encounters. The first was meeting a 17-year-old girl during the time of the Vietnam war, whose passion for the peace process kindled the same fervour in her. "Before that time," she says, "I was asleep".

The second encounter was in 1977 when she first heard Thomas Berry speak. Her Order had encouraged her to work in Peace Education, but she was becoming aware of the failure of the so-called 'green revolution'. In the Philippines the poor people were still starving, because they could not afford to buy the petrochemical products needed for the radical increase in productivity of the land. Berry persuaded her that it was a new world-view that was needed, not just tinkering with the old technologies.

About this time her Order was left a piece of land, some 170 acres, in rural New Jersey. The property became Genesis Farm. Initially Miriam concentrated on encouraging the locals to change their dietary and cooking habits, and substitute a more wholesome diet for the 'junk food' which dominates popular American cuisine.

Then they started to grow organic vegetables on the property, but found they could not compete with all the hidden subsidies which the American economy gives to supermarket produce. However, progressively they have gone into partnership with local families – 190 of them – who now are partners in the farm, sharing its abundance as well as its risk.

Now, Genesis Farm is also an education centre, where people come to learn together how to build a better world and a more just society, using principles of ecology, biodiversity and reverence for the earth. ■

M.H.

hydrogen.

• all things exhibit an *interiority*. Within themselves all beings contain the mystery of their origin. Each element, each atom is unique and irreplaceable.

• there is a *communion* which holds all the parts together. So the story of the Universe is the creation of a Community of Being. And all this was in place before human beings came along. Then the human emerged with the power of *self-reflection*. But we are dependent beings. We depend on the whole planet, materially and spiritually. Each animal or plant species we destroy destroys us.

Just as hydrogen and oxygen combine to form a new substance, water; so human beings and groups need to come together in just such combinations of opposites. The Christians and the Muslims come together. The breakdown of difference and antipathy leads to a breakthrough towards unity. This is all part of the law of nature.

Exploitation of any kind is evil because it contradicts this fundamental law of unity. Yet the universe, because it is changing, entails the presence of chaos, of death, of pain and disease. These are not *evil*. They are conditions of inevitable change and they prompt new creativity. Even certain forms of violence are simply 'the way things are'. When the lamb is eaten by the lion, it does not 'die out'; it 'dies in'!

Thomas Berry asserts that this change of thinking must include the Christian church. Salvation history, whether for Jew or Christian, leaves the Cosmos behind. Only in Wisdom literature is the Cosmos still honoured. What we all need to do is to come back down to earth and, as T.S.Eliot said, to "see the place for the first time".

Some consequences and hopes

The work of the earth is a work of self-emergence. The whole living community from microbes to elephants exists as one, interrelated, constantly evolving whole. Human work needs to relate and reflect the work of the earth. It is part of the process, not opposed to it.

So – how does *my* work impact on the earth's work? Are they mutually enhancing? It is simply unbearable, says Thomas Berry, to destroy a forest in order to make disposable chopsticks! Why cannot we rely on the sun for energy like the rest of the earth's organisms? The squandering of fossil fuels destroys an irreplaceable resource as well as polluting the atmosphere. Monocultures stultify and destroy the interdependence of ecosystems. They are contrary to nature. Whereas diversification of species produces abundance of life and allows for self-healing. Meanwhile multinationals like Monsanto are manipulating and endangering the gene pool itself.

In New Zealand we have the conditions where sustainability is possible if only we educate our people to do it. But we are tied into a money system which enslaves us. We as humans have the power and the privilege to celebrate and reverence the great beauty of living creation. Each place on earth should reflect its own special flavour; each country its peculiar genius. The Macdonald's culture is an affront to all that is wonderful in the individuality of peoples. The way back for a threatened species is to re-invent the human experience. ■

did you know..?

The weight of heavy tractors can reduce soil fertility. Recent research in Germany has shown that when a tractor exerting a weight of five tonnes per wheel passes six times over one piece of ground, the density of small invertebrates in the soil beneath is reduced up to 80 percent. This has devastating effects on soil fertility, and the damage is made even worse by ploughing the ground.

A New Dawn in East Timor

Tui Motu speaks to two East Timorese doctors, who are hopeful that their country will soon be free

Rui Araujo (left) and John Martins, postgraduate students in Public Health at Otago

Rui Araujo and John Martins know what it is to go through hell. They both lived through the trauma of the Indonesian annexation of their country before going to Bali to study to become doctors, and both have been in general practice under the Indonesian regime.

John and Rui spoke warmly of the contribution and leadership which Bishop Belo has shown towards the cause of East Timorese independence. The Indonesian regime has been extremely autocratic, and the bishop has spoken out fearlessly against its injustices. He is a brave man, and is well respected throughout the country.

"We expect our bishops to speak the truth," said John, "and to attack what is unfair. We look to them to be a voice for those who are unable to speak for themselves. We hope for such a stance pastorally – but we are surprised and encouraged by it politically".

Both are old enough to remember the old Portuguese days – "benign but backward. There was no oppression", says John, "and there was a legal system which was just. Then came the invasion and it brought turmoil and disorder. It was our first experience of war, and it was terrible. Previously about a third of the people were Catholics, but with the troubles the people experienced the Catholic Church as a refuge. And they saw Bishop Belo as their defender. Another factor is that the Indonesian regime, being Muslim, demands that all the people have a religion, and that perhaps persuaded some to embrace Catholicism which stood for them, as opposed to Islam which was the faith of the oppressors. Catholics now form the majority of the population."

How badly did they suffer? "Terribly", says John. Thousands lost their lives, both through the direct action of the military, like his uncle and aunt who were taken away by the military and shot. Others died from starvation, disease and deprivation. It was worse in the country areas than in the city.

Rui and his family had to flee their home and live in the bush with the Fretelin guerillas for three years. "I was 11", says Rui, "I was traumatised by the experience. I witnessed many killings, especially when we were shelled from the sea and bombed from the air. The Indonesians used American 'Bronco' aircraft from the war in Vietnam. They dropped napalm on us. I saw one family of six all killed by a shell when they lit a fire to cook by.

"The Indonesian soldiers burnt the crops so as to drive the guerillas further into the bush. Eventually we had no place to run, so we were advised to give ourselves up to the military. Several members of my family were arrested under suspicion of having collaborated with the guerillas.

"We learned to cope with the oppression and the suspicion – but we could never accept it. Later, when I was GP in Dili, I used to receive anonymous letters from the so-called *People for Integration* – East Timorese who collaborated with the regime".

Both John and Rui were accused of collaborating with the Fretelin, by giving medical treatment to the guerillas. The Dili Massacre took place in 1991 while they were studying out of the country, but Rui described how his patients in Dili were traumatised by the experience. One woman had lost her youngest child and was reduced to a state of acute paranoia.

What about the present situation? They both have considerable hopes for the future. The political movement towards independence has moved too far and is irreversible. The problem lies with the military who ruled the roost in East Timor for so long and do not want to

lose face. They are arming the 'militia' against the independence movement: these are a minority of East Timorese who collaborated with the Indonesian regime. They do not want to lose their privileged status and they fear a backlash against them.

Rui felt that if the East Timorese are allowed a free vote there could be a peaceful transition towards independence, because the Catholic Church is sufficiently powerful to ensure it. The key figure is Xanana Gusmao, who was the Fretelin guerilla leader and is now under house arrest. He is not a ruthless man, say the two doctors. He is a good Catholic and indeed was a seminarian. Like Mandela he was once involved in the armed struggle. Nevertheless even the Indonesian leaders recognise that he is a moderate man.

The country is poor economically and technologically – but, they say, it is rich in human potential. In spite of the oppression there are plenty of educated people who can lead a new country. But, they insist, aid from countries such as Australia and New Zealand will be vital during the early stages. They see no point in harbouring resentment against Western governments who could have done so much more to help their struggle. So there is considerable hope for the future.

The Catholic Church is going to have an important role to play, and John and Rui look forward to taking a responsible part in shaping a healthy future for their country. ■

Reconciliation essential, says Bishop Belo

Bringing peace to the troubled land of East Timor will come about in large part through a process of reconciliation, said Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo, to New Zealand audiences during his visit in March. The bishop was in New Zealand at the invitation of the NZ bishops and the Catholic Agency for Justice, Peace and Development, *Caritas Aotearoa*. Reconciliation, he said, is crucial if societies which are split apart by politics and terror are to regenerate and become places where human dignity is respected.

"Reconciliation is not simply made by shaking hands and speaking some fine words. It certainly does not mean forgetting the past and marching on regardless. Reconciliation means much more than that. It is not an easy process: it is strenuous and difficult."

Nevertheless the bishop insisted he had not come to New Zealand to talk about crimes that had been committed in East Timor. "Although enough can never be said on that subject to satisfy the many victims, I want to concentrate on the future and perhaps to suggest some ideas about working for a true and just peace through the processes of reconciliation."

Bishop Belo noted that often the word *reconciliation* was linked to the word *truth*. He instanced the *Peace and Reconciliation Commission* in South Africa as an example. "That is an extremely important conjunction of meanings," he said, "for it is only through establishing and agreeing on the truth that we can achieve reconciliation."

The bishop related a story told by Rev. Mpambami to the South African Commission: "Peter and John are friends. It happened that Peter stole a bicycle from John, and then after three weeks Peter came to John and said, 'John, let's talk about reconciliation'.

"And then John said, 'I don't think we need talk about reconciliation at the present moment until you bring back my bicycle. Where is my bicycle?'

"And Peter said, 'No, let's forget about the bicycle; let us talk about reconciliation.'

"And then John said, 'We cannot talk about reconciliation until my bicycle is back.'"

Relating this to East Timor Bishop Belo said reconciliation would not come about until the people who were victimised sat down around a table and first talked about what had happened. "The bicycle may be replaceable but the dead are not. We cannot go to a shop and buy back those people who are dead.

"Nelson Mandela said: 'To make peace with your enemy one must work with that enemy, and that enemy becomes your partner.'

"So, what does he mean by that? Simply that in order to make a new start to lives fractured by violence and fear, we must talk with our persecutor," said Bishop Belo. "Recognition must be made by the perpetrators of crimes as to the facts of what happened, and victims need to be prepared for the recognition that crimes in which they have suffered need to be put to rest, and only then can the burden of shame, fear and anger be relieved. This needs to happen in a mutual process based on equality and dignity for all concerned."

Bishop Belo told his audiences in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch that living in fear, faced every day with violence, creates victims who are paralysed and captives to the past. "Our concern must be to break the cycle of violence. There are many parts of the world where violence continues for many years after the initial events. Think of the Middle East and Northern Ireland. Our concern must be to create new living conditions where victims can become survivors.

"To do that," the bishop concluded, "requires true reconciliation – both individual and social ".

Peter MacDonell, Wellington

A Beautiful Dying

Easter in the context of a New Zealand autumn, as seen by writer and theologian,
Mike Riddell

Easter is, for us, a journey into darkness. The hem of the day is drawn in as the shroud of night lengthens. It has always seemed appropriate to me that sometime during lent, I find my morning prayer swathed in darkness. The journey we travel with Jesus is, after all, one of abandonment and shadow. It seems almost as if the elements concur, as we stand on the cusp of a season of stripping and dying.

Let us not imagine that our experience of Easter is not markedly different from those who celebrate it in the Northern hemisphere, where the emphasis (amidst the early signs of Spring) is on resurrection and new life. We may be following the same events in the life of the same Lord, but our perspective on them is richly coloured by our location at the bottom of the world. To understand this is to recognise that the essence of our Christian life in New Zealand is subtly different in important ways.

Our work of faith, it seems to me, is not to try to recreate the experience of our European forbears, for whom Easter eggs and bunnies may have some peripheral connection with the rebirth they are observing. Rather it is to drive to the depths of what it means to remember the passion and resurrection of Christ in a land where life is draining back into the soil under the gentle brush of autumn. What is the special significance of Easter for us as the people we are, in the whenua where we (Pakeha) are only beginning to find our roots?

An obvious point of reference is that of darkness and dying. For us at Easter, crucifixion will always be a deeper and more resonant aspect of remembrance than that of resurrection. This is because we enter into it not only with our minds but with all our senses. For us, this death is embodied, incarnate, sacramental. The symbolic encounter with the falling shadows of Jerusalem is coloured in our imaginations by the musty smell of the air, and the drawing in of our lives as we prepare for the looming embrace of winter. We are moving away from our source of light and heat, on a journey into barren desolation.

What sense can we make of the death of Jesus for ourselves, at the other end of the globe and some two millennia on from the original events? The tradition we have received from our forbears in the faith is not merely about death as such. It contains elements of abandonment, of redemptive suffering and of atonement. And finally, of course, more nebulous for us to take hold of, it speaks of hope and renewal. So much is given to us by our heritage of belief. But again, let us ask what special significance we can make of these themes in our own context.

At the heart of Pakeha culture, there is a darkness

At the heart of Pakeha culture, there is a darkness often remarked upon by our artists and social commentators. Sam Neill, in his documentary review of New Zealand film, wondered about the gloom and savagery which seems to feature so prominently and often.

James K. Baxter, our prophet and poetic theologian, had this to say: "Those peaceful New Zealand towns, centred upon a Post Office, a grocer's store, a petrol station and a War Memorial, are strange places to sleep in if you stretch out on a bench in your oilskin, before the dawn shows itself above the scrub hills like a terrible unhealed wound. Nowhere have I felt more strongly the atmosphere of the graveyard.

Suffering can be creative if it finds a voice. But our innocence denies us the privilege of religious suffering. The sterile plastic flower on the tombstone slab signifies an anguish blocked off from self-understanding." And in the works of Colin McCahon, we discover an omnipresent darkness which constantly threatens to overwhelm the landscape and its inhabitants.

What is the source of this pervasive gloom? Outsiders have marvelled at how a nation seemingly so untroubled can produce such dark and pessimistic motifs. Probing below the sun-washed, friendly and uncomplicated life of our Antipodean culture is a troubling and surprising voyage. It reveals an angst-ridden, raging and slightly paranoid society, desperate to avoid underlying desolation by maintaining concentration firmly on the surface of existence.

Identifying the roots of such blocked and private suffering is a difficult process. However, I suspect that there is some organic connection between the darkness at the heart of national identity, and the rape of the land by European settlers. There is little point in allocating blame for this. The new immigrants were overwhelmed by the opportunity represented by vast tracts of 'virgin' land. Their vigorous and casual clearing of the land was in keeping with

the common view that it was a resource to be used and made 'productive'.

But to view some of the photographs of bush clearance from the early days of settlement is to be reminded of images of post-holocaust Hiroshima; a smoking and barren wasteland. In retrospect, it was naive to imagine that such desecration of the environment could be carried out without wounding our national soul. This is something that Maori have always understood, and Pakeha are only beginning to know.

Keri Hulme in *The Bone People* has Joe listening as a kaumatua explains what has happened to the mauri of the land: "Maybe we have gone too far down other paths for the old alliance to be reformed, and this will remain a land where the spirit has withdrawn. Where the spirit is still with the land, but no longer active. No longer loving the land." He laughs harshly. "I can't imagine it loving the mess the Pakeha have made, can you?'

"Joe thought of the forests burned and cut down; the gouges and scars that dams and roadworks and development schemes had made; the peculiar barren paddocks where alien animals, one kind of crop, grazed imported grasses; the erosion, the overfertilisation, pollution.."

Compounding this psychic laceration is the subsequent his-torical experience of Europeans in their new home. Feeling isolated at the end of the world, they maintained a strong sense of identity in their links with a Britain which was still regarded as 'home'. This connection was maintained with a tenacity born of desperation which saw many settlers regard themselves as the keepers of 'England's farm', and generated enthusiasm for participation in European wars.

It thus came as a violent shock when New Zealanders found themselves abandoned by 'Mother England'. The crucible of such desertion was the Anzac experience of Gallipoli. It was more than a heroic defence of an impossible piece of territory; those who went through it knew that they had been casually used by British officers and as carelessly left to their fate. The betrayal was deep and abiding.

Those who fought had put their lives on the line for the defence of high ideals, and for the protection of their communities. In return, they had been forsaken and defeated. It is of some interest that the remembrance of Anzac Day has reached new levels of significance in contemporary New Zealand life. It is perhaps the only national ritual we have with sacral overtones. The words on many memorials have the legend *Greater love has no man than he gave up his life for his friends*, forever associating the event with the symbolism of Christ's passion.

And why not? It is, like the passion of Christ, redemptive suffering. It contains the elements of abandonment and pain experienced on behalf of others which have been features of the traditional Christian understanding of the crucifixion. It is not, of course, of the same order. But is there not something of the grief and holiness of Good Friday carried over into those eerie dawn parades at which we remember our own dead?

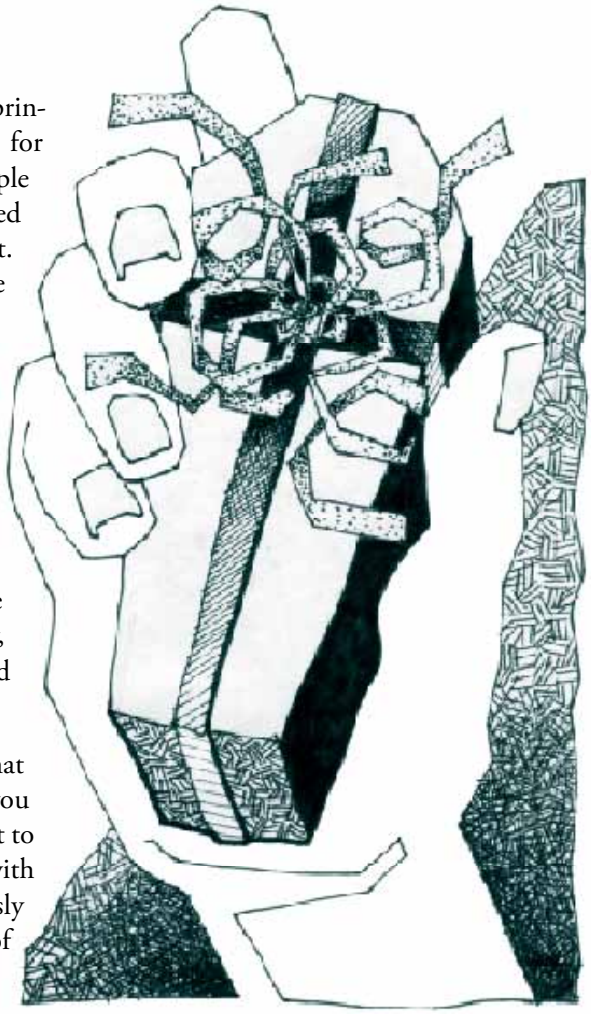
And perhaps it is not stretching things too far to suggest that through the tragic isolation and death of our Anzac soldiers, nationhood was born. Some years ago, an exhibition at the Auckland Museum of New Zealanders at war was suggestively entitled 'Scars on the Heart'. That is what we are talking about; the scars on the national heart which are touched upon whenever we symbolically re-enter the depths of Easter in the New Zealand context.

But what of the hope? How, in the midst of autumnal dying, do we laid hold of rebirth and resurrection? In Otago, this is not difficult. Here, the ebb and decay of the season is glorious and resplendent; it is a beautiful death. The journey into darkness is not one to be afraid of, but rather to be savoured and appreciated. The heavy mulch of fallen leaves will in time produce regeneration.

And here in a young land, as we come to embrace the wounds of our national spirit rather than suppressing pain or rendering it into violence, perhaps even here there is the chance for the Easter spirit to grant us a fresh vision for life in partnership with the land. ■

Abundant Giving

a prayer of the heart



We call you Jesus – but your name is Abundant Giving. As I see it, abundance is the truest description of the divine that we have. God is Abundant Giving, and you, dear Jesus, are the human face of Abundant Giving.

You came to show us the Way. I used to think that you had a choice in this. Now I realise that it is in the nature of the Giver to give and choices don't come into it. I'm also aware that divine gifts are not earned, they are simply needed, and you are the answer to the need, the pouring out of God on a troubled people.

It is my belief that your *maranatha* has no limits, that you have come at all times, to all cultures, bearing different human identities. We know you as a man called Jesus Christ, but you did not ask us to worship a name, only to try to understand the Abundance from whence you came and to recognise it in ourselves. *The kingdom is within you*, you told us.

Your Way may have been what we needed, but it was not what we wanted. It seemed to go against our instinct for survival on this earth. *Sell all you have and give it to the poor*, you said. *Take up your cross*, you said. *Do not be like the Pharisees. Those who love their lives will lose them. Don't care about tomorrow.* Your strange utterances sounded doom and gloom in our ears and had us stepping backwards.

divine gifts are not earned, they are simply needed

Moreover, you didn't just teach principles, you lived them. We asked for status and your answer was a simple birth in an animal shelter. We prayed for comfort: you lived the lack of it. We wanted protection: you gave yourself away. What kind of teacher were you? We became angry, believed you mad, and threw words back at you like stones. We did not understand then, that the great gifts from God are the ones we don't want to unwrap. It took a long period of discipleship for us to discover that all the things we had wanted added up to poverty, and that your life did indeed hold the secret of true freedom.

In those early days the only thing that kept us with you was – well – you know, the love. There! I didn't want to say that word lest it be confused with our lesser kind. You see, previously we'd had love in different types of containers, some fine, some a bit small or difficult to access. Love had always been a commodity traded in the market place. People bargained for those little containers, and we each guarded our hoard of love, afraid of being cheated.

Then, suddenly, there you were with love that had neither container nor condition, a huge sea of love that swept us away and drowned what we had been. I think that marked the beginning of our understanding. Just the beginning, mind you. But we did realise that love was the nature of the Abundant Giver.

So, one step at a time, we tried to walk on your Way of the present moment, forgiving ourselves and others for past failure, and letting the Abundant Giver take care of the future. It was not an easy journey. You did not label the gifts of life "good" or "bad", but understood all as abundance. We saw you unwrap difficult gifts and, as we did the same, we discovered that with each unwrapping our small hearts grew larger. We feasted with you – food for body and food for soul. We walked miles with you over rough territory, and saw how you remained unmoved by praise or blame. We watched as you gave all your energy to others, and then filled up again with prayer. We listened. And, day by day, we understood more.

Your ideas of goodness were not ours. You gathered food on the Sabbath, did not always respect religious leaders, and you embraced those people that others called sinners. You showed us that it was all right to show weakness, to weep, to

be angry, to laugh like a child, to have doubts and to cry out with pain. You took us through everything we could expect from life, and showed us how to celebrate the freedom of truth. Then it was time for the last and the most difficult lesson, the one we all dreaded. The Abundant Giving of God would take on the darkest fear of our minds. He would walk into the worst possible dying process, and come out on the other side, to show us the reality of being.

Of course, there had been all kinds of little crucifixions and resurrections before. We had experienced those with you, the disappointments that steered us in the right direction, the aches and illness that taught us we were not our physical bodies, the insults that helped us see the pain in others. Every difficult gift, it seemed, had hollowed us out and enlarged our capacity for love. Now we were at the stage where we sought teaching from God in almost everything that happened to us. But what of death? What of the last life experience for which we were all born? What did that mean?

Your Way was the unwrapping of the total gift and included the fear of death. As you entered the pain of your last and greatest crucifixion, you spread your arms to embrace us and impress on us the importance of the dying process. You did not resist death. You did not curse the hurt you suffered, but forgave those who had inflicted it. And, at the last moment, you walked free of the burden of any resentment, through the doorway of darkness and

we meet you along the way and our hearts burn within us

into the light where you belonged. Then you turned and came back to us to show us what a small thing death was, just a ripple in the endless sea of love.

Today we meet you along the way and our hearts burn within us. Oh see, we are on fire with the love that knows no fear! We want to sing and dance, shout, embrace, but we are not big enough to give appropriate expression to this meeting, and we feel a certain helplessness beside you.

You understand. Your laughter says to us: "See? Now you have witnessed what you already knew in your heart. Every pain is celebration unborn, and every death is just another beginning. That is growth. That is the Way."

For a moment we do see. It is all suddenly so simple that we wonder how there ever could have been a time when we did not see it. Then, the Eastering moment is over, and we go back to our daily routines and more of those difficult gifts. But behind all our days, we have the shining laughter of the Abundant Giver and the knowledge that there is nothing outside God's Love. ■

Joy Cowley

Tin Fence

Rusting tin fence corroding and worn,
cowering visibly in the rising sun,
as the poignant rays uncover its gaping holes,
like the toothless gaps in an aged mouth.

Bared of frills, it wears shame
to cloak its exposed frame;
its depravity brings arched-looks
from passers-by in their designer clothes.

This fence of the north-south boundary
has been there half a century, demanding little,
emptied of desires, but challenging
with its deliberate bareness.

Tin fence stands in mute starkness
staring at the imperatives of modernity,
with its displays and special effects
of boistrous superfluous flimsiness.

Here is a drama of contrast,
of bare essentials pitched against
extraneous clutter of life today,
purposeful emptiness against reckless wastage!

Laetitia Puthenpadath

Photo: Patricia Williams

So what did happen on Easter morning?

Christ, my hope, has risen: he goes before you into Galilee
(Sequence, Easter Sunday Liturgy)

Theologian and pastor John Dunn examines what scholars say about the Resurrection. How, he asks, does it affect our Christian faith?

The resurrection of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth is central to my faith. I believe in him. As a pastor, I know that many people have a beautiful, simple faith in Christ risen. Yet like many with a critical, questioning consciousness, I struggle to grasp the dimensions of the mystery. All our Christian faith depends in some way on this 'something' called the resurrection. Paul and some of the Corinthians struggled with it too (*1 Cor 15*). Some people describe it as a *trans-historical* event, in that it happened in history and yet transcends space and time.

Where do we get our information about resurrection from? None of the Gospels describes Christ actually rising. Only the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* attempts to do this. It portrays the guards seeing two men descend into the tomb, and re-ascend supporting a third man. A cross follows them. Paul and the four gospels are our major sources for empty tomb stories and for subsequent appearances of the risen Jesus. Further, the accounts are made up of earlier sources which have been re-worked by the Gospel writers. Paul's account is the earliest, and already shows that he is consciously handing on a tradition:
For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: ***that*** *Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,* ***that*** *he was buried,* ***and that*** *he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures,* ***and that*** *he appeared to Cephas,* ***then*** *to the twelve.* ***Then*** *he appeared to more than 500 brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.* ***Then*** *he appeared to James,* ***then*** *to all the apostles.* ***Last of all,*** *as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.*

The four repeated *that*s show hints of an early confession of faith which Paul has handed on. And Paul's list of who received the appearances and in what order, notably misses out the witness of the four Gospels that women were the first to hear of or experience the resurrection. Paul's account is historically the earliest, and thus demonstrates an established resurrection faith tradition by about 52 AD.

The Gospel writers also make responses to early polemics against the resurrection. One such seems to be: "he did not rise: someone stole the body." So Matthew says guards were placed at the tomb (*28:11-15*) – yet no other writer alludes to this – who were bribed to keep quiet about a claimed theft of Jesus' body. In Matthew's account it is the Chief Priests and elders who are guilty of this cover-up. Samuel Reimarus (d.1768) used the same argument by accusing the disciples of hiding the body in order to claim (falsely) that Jesus had been raised.

Thus the biblical sources present a variety of witnesses to the resurrection. The fact that different weight can be given to different parts or 'layers' presents a series of possible interpretations of the resurrection. This challenges and engages our faith but does not destroy it. We need to have a faith robust enough to look at the truth at all times. One thing the sources do show is the change in the disciples: within a short time after Jesus' death, they had reassembled, overcome their fear, and were preaching that Jesus had been raised – something we continue to do today.

A second issue in our resurrection faith is the role of the women in the accounts. We have seen already that Paul omitted to place women first in his list of primary witnesses. maybe his source knew nothing about them. But the Gospels all place women first at the empty tomb. They do not see Jesus, but in *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*, they receive the resurrection message from heavenly sources; *He has risen; he is not here!*

Mary Magdalene is named in all four Gospels. In *John*, Mary Magdalene first discovers the empty tomb. Then, Jesus comes to her, unrecognisable until she hears his word – her own name, *Mary*! The import of all this is that the Catholic tradition that Jesus appeared first to Peter needs to be revised, and the witness of women, legally unacceptable as it was at that time, needs to be honoured as the first ground of our faith in the resurrection.

A third issue is the question: *what does an empty tomb prove?* The absence of Jesus' body from the tomb can never be, by itself, the basis of resurrection faith. The witness of the women and Peter and the other disciples provides that. On the one hand, some writers have held that the Jewish world-view of the time would

have rendered belief in the resurrection incredible if Jesus' body were to be still in the tomb. On the other hand, some Protestant theologians of this century have made the counter-claim that Jesus' resurrection does not necessarily have to be limited to bodily resurrection. In that case, they would still believe in him and his resurrection were his body to be uncovered today.

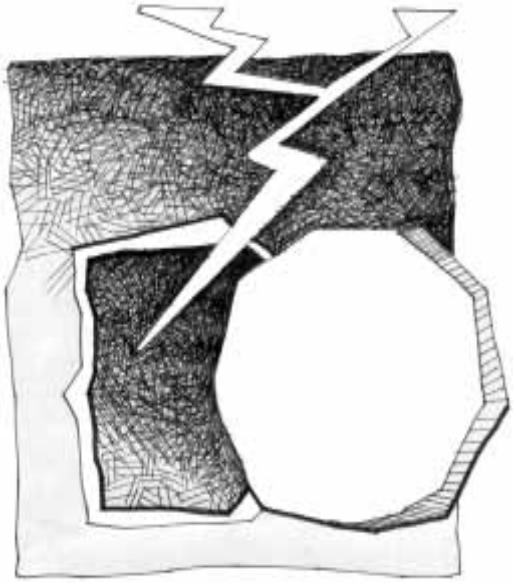
This ties in closely with the fourth issue. What do we mean by 'appearances'? The verb *ophthe* – "he appeared, he made himself to be seen by"– lies beneath most translations. The 'appearances' involve an experience that joins the risen Jesus and his disciples, such that they know he has come to them after his death. But then the problems start. At one end of the spectrum are those who hold that it was an *objective* experience, where the disciples saw Jesus in the same way that a witness sees and identifies a robber. And just as the court believes the witness, so the Church believes the first disciples. They themselves in this view did not have faith, because they *saw* Jesus. Seeing and believing are separated.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who say that the disciples had an experience provoked and founded by the risen Jesus, but that it involved not an empirical *seeing*, but rather a subjective *coming-to-faith* that Jesus was risen and with them. *Believing* replaces *seeing*. In between the extremes lies the usual Catholic position, which holds that the appearances did involve an objective appearing of the risen Christ to the disciples, which involved visual elements but which also aroused faith. The German bishop Walter Kasper perhaps expresses the middle ground when he speaks of a *seeing believing*.

A further recent contribution has been the insight that the experience of Christ risen was a social experience. Thus the risen Christ 'appeared' to his disciples, but something also happened to the disciples. In this view, just as God raised Jesus from death, so God also acted upon the disciples that they too were changed and came to faith in the risen Jesus. The Church is born here, when Jesus and the Church become "one complex reality which coalesces from a divine and a human element" (Vat II *Lumen Gentium 8*).

Resurrection in its fullest sense involves more profound meanings: Jesus is God's Final Word to the universe; his resurrection has final meaning for the stardust from whence we came and the future to which we tend. Furthermore, Jesus' resurrection is about ultimate reconciliation among ourselves, with God, and our universe, in which we become God's sons and daughters. It has a theological meaning, confirming Jesus' identity and mission and revealing him as the ultimate human face of a trinitarian God who is love, a God who says *No* to sin and suffering and *Yes* to the human race of all times.

Finally, what does the resurrection of the crucified Jesus mean for us in Aotearoa New Zealand?



Unlike our brothers and sisters of the northern hemisphere, we celebrate Easter in the autumn. The mighty Pacific Ocean surrounds us, and separates our land and our self-awareness from the rest of the world. Above us, the Southern skies invite us to ponder the mystery of the universe from where we stand.

And our cultures – Maori, Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, Tokelauan, Rarotongan, English, West Indian, Scottish, Irish, Dutch, Iraqi, Filipino in my parish alone – and the particular way they mix, remind us that we come to recognise Christ risen in our own communities and places. The metaphor of *Galilee* united the first disciples' faith in the Reign of God and in Jesus Risen in a way that tied them deeply to their land and local consciousness: *he goes before you to Galilee: you will see him there!* Where is **our** Galilee where he goes before us and awaits us, this Easter? May we too "see him there". ■

Fr John Dunn is parish priest of Beachhaven and lectures at C.I.T., Auckland

God speaks to the untouchables

They are the lowest of the low, the untouchables. They are the people who scrounge and survive on the main rubbish dump of Africa's largest city, Cairo. Even there, however, the Word of God reaches people, touches their hearts and transforms their lives.

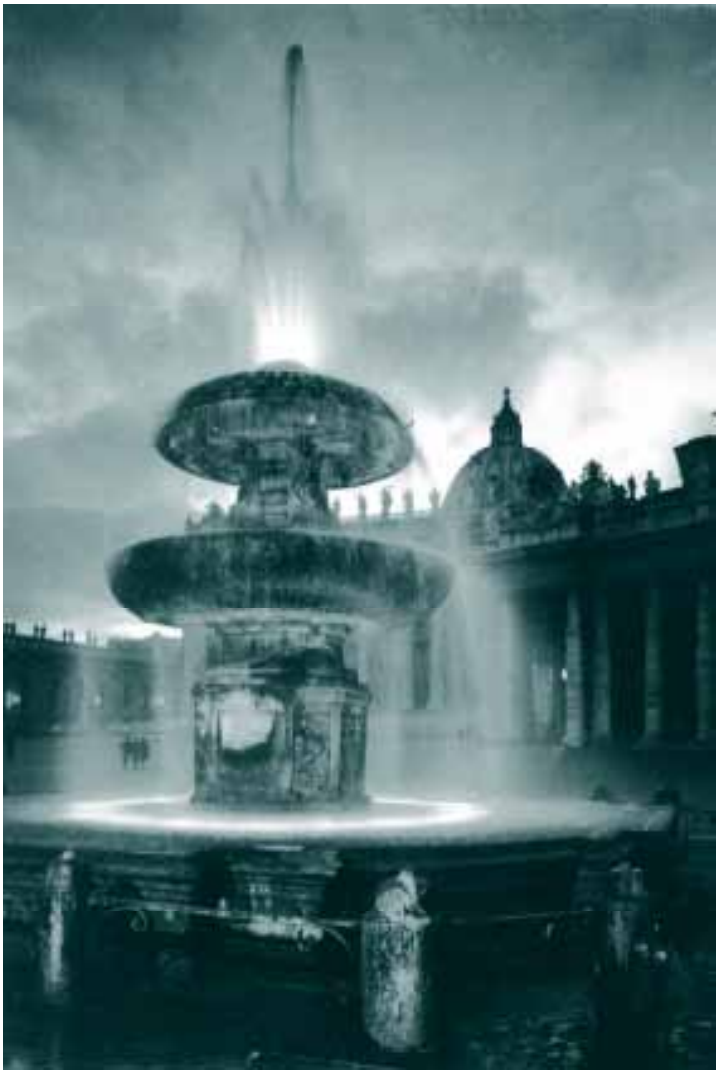
Safwat Fakhry is one such person whose life has been changed. He works the garbage dump from 5 o'clock in the morning. Safwat sees no shame in his job. "I'm happy to be a garbage collector in this place. After all, Jesus was born in a humble place beside the animals!"

Safwat attends Samaan El-Kharaz, the church in the cave adjacent to the dump. "I'll serve in this church until the last day of my life," he says. "I'm happy while I'm serving God and showing love to other people".

The Bible Society in Egypt in co-operation with the Coptic church regularly supplies Scriptures to these 'untouchable' people. As well as the cave church, there are skills training workshops, a school and a hospital, all initiated by the Coptic church. It is a church rooted in the Word of God.

(Bible Society)

The Waters of Rome



Clean, fresh water – a basic necessity of life. And an abundant water supply is a key amenity in successful town planning. With none of the advantages of modern technology, classical Rome achieved this – and following the squalor of the Middle Ages the Renaissance Popes restored the old system, providing the people of the city with constantly flowing pure water to drink as well as the music and beauty of hundreds of fountains.

Judith Graham *tells the story of the waters of Rome and explores a few of those fountains.*

An old wall fountain in the Via Flaminia, built by Pope Julius III about 1550

As I write this, it is raining and there is no sweeter music in the wasteland of our drought. These fierce days of summer have brought home to many of us the meaning of the phrase *aqua vitae* – the water of life. We take water so much for granted that when councils talk of rationing it or metering it or privatising it, we are shocked. Isn't water a basic requirement for life – a right we all have – to use freely? The drought makes us realise yet again that the resources of the Earth and the Sea and the Air cannot be wasted, that water is a gift from the Creator.

Earlier civilisations regarded this resource with somewhat more respect than we do. Nomadic camps sought oases in the desert; the ancient Greeks saw springs as sacred, as places where mortals could be in touch with the deities, as sources of *healing* of the soul and body, as places where oracles assured mortals somewhat obliquely of their future, as places of cleansing, both physically and spiritually, and finally as sources of beauty.

It is not surprising then that the practical Romans copied the designs of the post-Alexandrine Greeks in ensuring that their

great Capitol, built in a hot valley surrounded by seven hills, had sources of water that supplied the populace's needs, but were also objects of beauty.

For the first four and a half centuries of their existence, the Romans depended on springs, wells and the Tiber for their water. Now more water was needed and it was to be valued. I am not referring here specifically to the 11 splendid aqueducts stretching for miles across the hills of Rome down to its centre. They served purely to carry water from the springs in the hills to the streets of Rome. But here they surfaced in a *castellum* or fountain often of monumental proportions. At the time of Constantine the Great there were 1,212 fountains in Rome. Visitors to the city marvelled: "Water is brought into the city in such quantity that veritable rivers flow through the city and its sewers; and almost every house has cisterns and service pipes and copious fountains", wrote Strabo, a Greek historian in about 74BC. Another Greek, a doctor, Galen, wrote in AD 164: "The beauty and number of Rome's fountains is wonderful".

Il Facchino – the Porter – a 15th Century wall fountain in the Via Lata, Central Rome. Attributed to Michelangelo the carved face has suffered the ravages of time, possibly because its features resembled those of Martin Luther

The Goths destroyed the aqueducts and most of the dehydrated fountains were destroyed in the sack of Rome AD 537. Modern historians would have known nothing about the construction of the ancient water systems of early Rome had not a manuscript written in AD97, *De Aquis Urbis Romae* by a certain Sextus Frontinus, been discovered in the monastery of Monte Cassino in 1429. Frontinus was a conscientious public administrator, a Roman Commissioner of the waterways, and he records the construction and upkeep of the 11 aqueducts in Rome. He was meticulous in tracking down the illicit watercourses "diverted by private citizens" he wrote, "just to water their gardens". He was so good at keeping the waters flowing to the fountains,

The Trevi Fountain: only a short walk from the centre of modern Rome, the Piazza Venezia. This splendid and extravagant fountain is the main outfall for the Acqua Vergine Antiqua. The present version of this *castellum* was completed in 1762, and the legend is that if a visitor to Rome tosses a coin into its basin, then he or she will surely come back sometime

the popular baths, the public buildings and the ground floors of private houses and then on to flush the sewers and eventually discharge into the Tiber, that he was able to write: "The appearance of the city is clean and altered; the air is purer; and the causes of the unwholesome atmosphere which gave the air of the city so bad a name with the ancients, are now removed".

In his delightful tribute to *The Waters of Rome* (1966) H.V. Morton lists only about six ancient fountains which can still be identified.

It was left to the Renaissance engineers and sculptors to the Popes Sixtus V and Paul V to repair the aqueducts and reintroduce the terminal fountains based on the ancient castellum. These are still the glories of Rome today. They are not just limited to the Trevi fountain of *Three Coins (in a Fountain)* fame (pictured p17). There is the fountain in front of the Pantheon, the Barcaccia (old Boat), the Baboon, the Porter. There are fountains of lions, dolphins, horses, a masked face, a pine cone and the Forge of Vulcan. There are fountains of the two river gods, the Nile and the Tiber. The Vatican Gardens has a splendid scale model of a 17th century three-masted warship (see picture below). These fountains were especially built by the Popes from the 16th and 17th centuries on, to "distribute aerated water to the population and, at the same time, gladden their hearts". (H.V.Morton)

Morton's favourite is the quite enchanting fountain of the *Tortoises* in the Piazza Mattei (see illustration right). It was sculpted by Landini and completed in 1584 to carry water from the Trevi to the Piazza Giudea, but the Mattei family somehow had the water diverted to supply their adjacent palace: "Four life-sized bronze youths... lean against the stem of the fountain and with uplifted arms, push four bronze tortoises over the rim of the marble bowl above them" . (H.V.Morton)

The Galleon fountain, built by Paul V in 1612 when he first brought aqueduct water supply to the Vatican (Acqua Paola)

The fountain of the Tortoises in a Roman backstreet, dates from 1584. Four bronze youths surround the basin, originally holding up four dolphins. But 70 years after Landini built the original basin the group was winsomely completed – by four tortoises

The tortoises are seen bent on getting into the water; the muscled arms and legs of the young men and the purposeful intent of their stretching fingers in helping the tortoises over the fountain's rim, hold the visitor's eye. The tortoises were added in 1659. They were originally meant to be dolphins and why the sculpture was not completed by Landini is a mystery. But the tortoises are an inspired piece of whimsy.

When *The Waters of Rome* was published in 1966, the municipality of Rome was considering a change to the unique water systems of Rome. Unique, because the present six aqueducts still provide continuous streams of water that flow in and out of Rome without being stored in reservoirs. The waters of the six supplies are not mixed and some are more desirable than others. It pays to sell a house that has water from Acqua Peschiera or Acqua Felice. The Acqua Paola is not for drinking, though it plays in the Vatican fountains. Some kitchens have a special tap of it for washing up. The Acqua Vergine water is reputed to be the best for boiling vegetables.

It was T.S.Eliot who spoke of the significance of the sound of moving water in *The Waste Land*:

"If there were the sound of water only
not the cicada
and dry grass singing
but sound of water over a rock
where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop"

Living, moving water – this is the gift the classical Romans and the medieval Popes left to their city. Tourists may not hear it because of the noise of traffic. It is the sound drought-stricken people long to hear in our country. It is the living water Christ spoke of beside a well in Samaria. Little wonder that Christians from the earliest times adopted flowing water as the sacrament of rebirth. ■

A wall fountain in the Via Cisterna. The old Roman title SPQR ("for the Senate and the Roman People") is still written on all manhole covers in modern Rome

Fonts, bathhouses and the waters of rebirth

Two aspects of Roman architecture associated with an abundant supply of fresh water, were the great public baths and the early Christian baptisteries. The largest surviving ruins in Rome are these Baths. In a hot climate part of civilised living was the cult of the bath.

Consciously or subconsciously the bathhouse mentality influenced the way the early Christians celebrated adult baptism. This first and climactic event in a new convert's life was celebrated with great solemnity on the most important night of the Christian year: the Easter Vigil. And the baptisteries were almost as big as the basilicas, created on a grand scale once Christianity became the official religion of the Empire from the time of Constantine. In Rome the baptistery at St John Lateran survives from the 4th Century, and in its massive porphyry basin Constantine himself is supposed to have been baptised.

The shape of the early fonts drew in other symbols: a sarcophagus (stone coffin) to signify death and rebirth; or a cruciform basin shaped like Christ's cross. Both suggested that the baptised person plunged into Jesus's pattern of dying and rising.

The illustration shows a fifth-century font in Tunisia. Adults were baptised individually, descending into the water and passing through it as if through the birth canal, emerging as 'new-born' Christians. The font is womb-shaped, and is decorated with the cross of Christ, also the tree of life – Paradise regained.

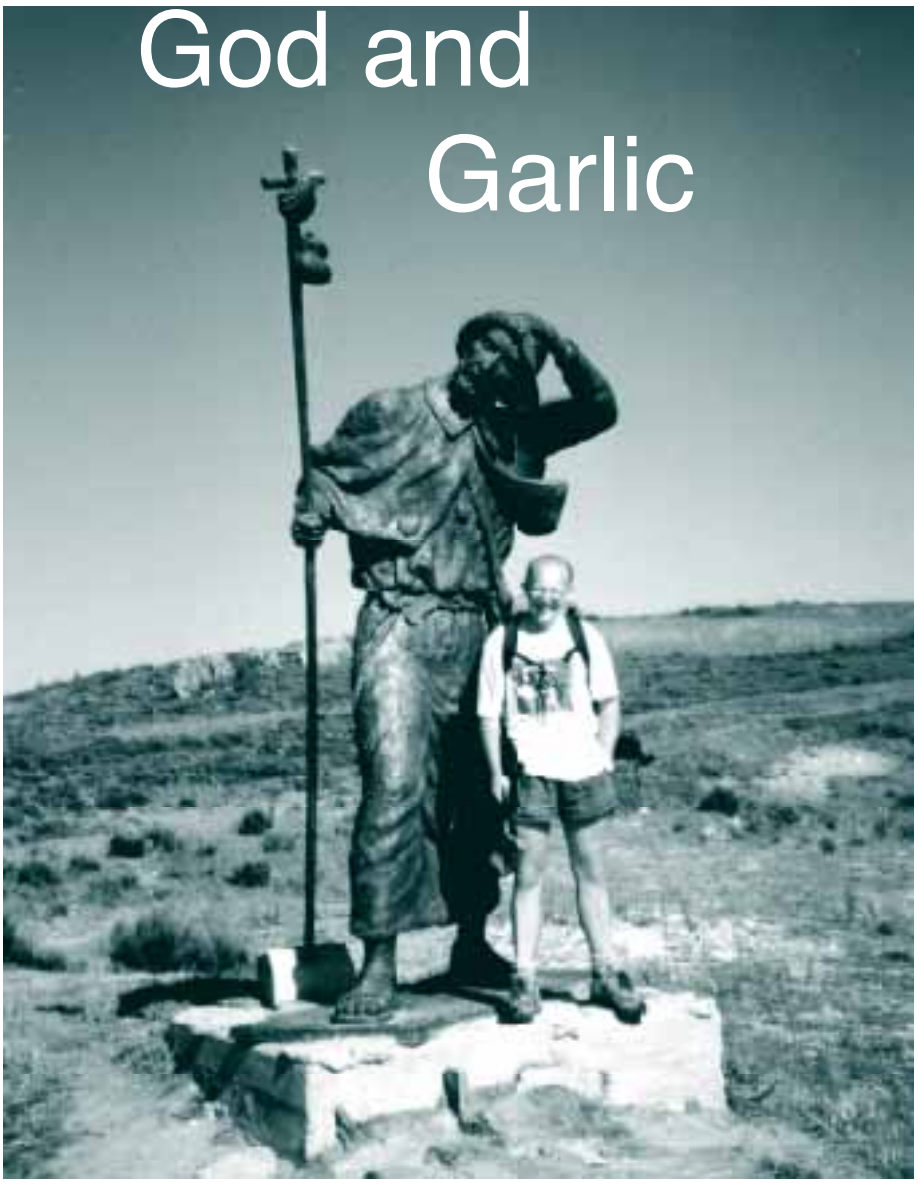
Fr Aidan Kavanagh observes: "Early baptisteries were gloriously womb-like – filled with fertility, vines, sunlight, water and a humid atmosphere. From them issued a new people, whose purpose in life was to beget others by the Church, Christ's bride...

"The Church focused its most important time of the year upon the catechumens, viewing them almost as living 'sacraments' of conversion... The Lenten readings were thus directed not only at the catechumen but at the whole church, as both prepared to relive Christ's passage from death to life".

The picture and discussion on early Christian fonts is taken from an excellent little monograph *Ancient Fonts, Modern Lessons* by T. Jerome Overbeck SJ (Liturgy Training Publications), Price $18. The author also talks about Baptism and church layout, and includes useful liturgical directives and Blessing texts.

M.H.

God and Garlic



Nick Thompson beneath a statue of a pilgrim at Alto de San Rogue, Galicia

Why do people go on pilgrimage? For fun, for a change, to seek God. Kiwi Nick Thompson found all these things on the road to Compostella in Spain – but like St Theresa, he found God mostly "among the stewpots"

...the pilgrim way to Compostella

I don't think Luther would have approved. He had his suspicions about those clerics, nuns, and devout lay-folk gadding about on pilgrimages to *Santiago de Compostella.* Delicacy prevents one from being more specific, but the modern equivalent might involve a couple called Mr and Mrs Smith and a motel room well off the beaten track. As far as the Protestant reformers were concerned, the medieval predilection for pilgrimage sprang from a kind of spiritual escapism: a flight from the circumstances of every-day life through which the baptised make the genuine pilgrimage of faith.

At the moment I am living in Glasgow where I am doing research in Reformation theology. As a consequence such thoughts niggled at the back of my mind as I made preparations to walk a 735km section of the *Camino Santiago* – the ancient pilgrimage route to *Santiago de Compostella* in northwestern Spain. However I persuaded myself that this was not a pilgrimage as such. Rather than seeking any particular spiritual benefit, I was taking a much needed holiday. I've done a fair bit of tramping in New Zealand, but never for more than a week at a stretch, and I was curious to know what it would be like to walk for five weeks through settled countryside rather than the wilderness of the South Island national parks.

Besides, it seemed not a bad walk for an aspiring Church historian. Since the IX century pilgrims have made their way to Santiago from every corner of Europe. The roots of Christianity in Spain reach back well beyond that, and it is difficult to walk the *Camino* for more than an hour without meeting some reminder of this legacy; whether in the buildings, in the landscape or in the life of the people along the way.

But what is at Santiago that attracts the pilgrims? What made it medieval Europe's most frequented holy-place after Rome and Jerusalem? The legend has it that the Apostle James, brother of John, preached the Gospel in Spain for a number of years after the Ascension. He apparently did not meet with much success, and returned to Jerusalem where (as you know from *Acts* 12.2) Herod had him executed. After this, two of James's disciples are said to have taken his body to Jaffa. There they boarded a miraculous stone boat (sic) which carried them to the Atlantic coast of Spain in modern Galicia. In the nearby hill country they buried James. Early in the IX century a hermit, Pelagius, reported to the local bishop that he had been led by a star to the burial site of the Apostle and it was over this spot that the present shrine of *Santiago de Compostella* ("Saint James in the field of the Star") was built.

It's a wild tale, and the Cathedral authorities at Santiago are disarmingly sceptical about its truth. Their printed guides speak of Pelagius' 'discovery' in inverted quotation marks. Yet whether or not it is James who lies in the silver casket beneath the high altar, the geography of the pilgrimage had (and perhaps still has) a tremendous symbolic importance. For medieval pilgrims, the end of their journey was not the shrine itself, but the beach at Cape Finisterre, (*finis terrae:* the end of the earth) a further 100km from Santiago. There the pilgrims would take a cockle shell and fasten it to their clothing as a token of their journey. The Lord had sent the Apostles out from Jerusalem, and here by the great ocean one stood at the farthest reach of the Gospel, 'the ends of the earth'. To walk to Santiago was, as one writer has put it, to 'beat the bounds' of Christendom.

Of course it is no coincidence either that the *Camino's* rise in popularity occurred at about the time that the Arab rulers of the Holy Land decided to discourage Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem. At this time too the Arab emirates of southern Spain were pressing up into the small Christian kingdoms to the north. In many of the churches along the *Camino* one can see images and statues of the Apostle in what I found one of his less winsome incarnations: *Santiago Matamoros*, 'slayer of the Moors', rears up on a white charger, sword flashing in his hand, as Arab soldiers writhe in defeat below. In this guise, James is said to have led the Christian armies to victory at the battle of Clajivo in 844.

He remains the patron of Spain and the eve of July 25th, his *fiesta*, is marked with joyful celebrations in the streets of Santiago. These are followed the next day with a solemn Mass at which a member of the Spanish royal family is always in attendance.

I set out from the town of St Jean in the French *Pays-Basque*. My aim was to arrive in Santiago for the *fiesta*. On the day I left, the clouds hung low over the Pyrenees and I decided to avoid the ancient alpine path and take the road into Spain. In general the *Camino* follows narrow tracks, country lanes and rights-of-way, but the painted yellow arrows which mark it are also found on city pavements and on the verges of highways. The first day's walking took me across the Spanish border, and I stopped at the pilgrim hostel attached to the collegiate church at Roncesvalles.

At Roncesvalles pilgrims are issued with a *credencial* of passport which entitles them to stay in the *Refugios* or hostels established by religious bodies, local authorities and various other institutions along the way. The *credencial* is presented and stamped at each stop. Provided that you can show that you have completed at least 150km of the journey on foot (or 200km on a bike) you will be issued with your *Compostella,* or certificate of pilgrimage at the end of the walk.

On the evening of the first day the pilgrims gathered at Roncesvalles were invited to a Mass celebrated by the Augustinian Canons who keep the hostel. Most of the pilgrims were

Pilgrim replenishing water bottle at fountain in Espinosa-del-Camino, Castilla-y-León

Spanish, but there were also French, a few Belgians and Dutch, a South African, and, of course, one New Zealander. As an English-speaker I found myself one of a small minority. My Spanish wasn't up to much more than a bit of fairly limited small-talk. Whenever I was asked about my nationality, the response was almost always a blank stare, a spark of recognition and then: *Ah Eres Hollandes!* No, I would have to explain, it was not Zeeland but New Zealand, the small group of islands near Australia. This usually elicited an uncomprehending non-sequitur to the effect that there were a lot of Dutch pilgrims on the *Camino.* However, on the odd occasion I managed to make myself understood. I then lost count of how many times I had to listen to the hilarious one about how everyone in *las Antipodes* has to walk upside down.

On the second morning I was woken by heavy rain falling outside the shutters of the spartan dormitory. This (and the consequent mud and wretchedness) followed us for another few days until we emerged onto the plain of Castille. For the next few weeks the sun beat down upon us until we entered into the Atlantic mists and moderate temperatures of Galicia.

From Roncesvalles until four days short of Santiago I walked with Olivier, a student from Tours in France. He had just finished his military service and was on pilgrimage in order to decide what he would do next. Along the way we were joined by two friends of his – Thierry, a seminarian, and Alain, a computer technician. I was glad of the company, and while conversation in French was sometimes tiring, it was a good deal less effort than anything I could manage in Spanish. Olivier and Thierry exulted in a nostalgic and often rather severe variety of Catholicism. We would set out early each morning in order to get in as much walking as we could before the sun got hot. As we set out Olivier and Thierry would chant a few decades of the rosary. Each of these was announced with the virtue (eg. *obeissance, humilité)* on which we were to meditate. Later in the morning, Thierry would stride out ahead of us reciting the office from two generously proportioned volumes of breviary. In his modest pack he also carried a soutane – indispensable for attending Mass in the evening. It was a wonder that he had room for his toothbrush and underpants.

pilgrims from all corners of the world would sit down in the evening to eat

I was generally happy to enjoy all of this as a colourful expression of the church catholic. However, after a long hot day the company of God's elect could become trying. One baking afternoon we came across a group of dejected and footsore pilgrims sitting on the roadside waiting for a bus to the next town. Thierry cast them an austere glance over the top of his clerical *lunettes.* "Can they be *real* pilgrims?" he asked, as he marched vigorously by. It was all I could do not to give him a slap across the back of his sunburnt calves with my walking stick.

Nevertheless we would all of us sit down to eat in the evening, pilgrims from all corners of the world: Catholics and Calvinists, believers and non-believers, Christians, Buddhists and New Age Travellers. Around those hostel tables we talked long into the warm evenings on every subject from Basque nationalism to Gnosticism. Most of these exchanges switched from one language to another depending on who was speaking. For the first (and probably the last time) in my life I chatted in clumsy Latin with a

professor from Madrid about the job prospects for lay theology students!

While we had all bought our own food, there was inevitably a grand pooling of resources at each meal: half a litre of wine looking for a drinker, a spare end of bread, an unfinished tin of sardines. At the end of one day in the tiny mountain settlement of San Juan d' Ortega the priest arrived, dusty and weather-beaten, in an equally dusty and weather-beaten car. He invited us all to Mass in the local church. After Mass we were ushered into the parish kitchen. On the wall in large red plastic letters were the words of Theresa of Avila: *tambien entre los pucheros se encuentre dios* (God is also found among the stewpots). There the priest and some of the local men served us an evening meal of garlic soup and bread. As we ate the priest walked around the room telling us about the history of the parish. The next morning he was up at 6.30 with a big aluminium pot of milky coffee on the boil and more bread rolls for us to eat before setting off.

I lost contact with Olivier, Alain and Thierry in the Galician village of Triacastella. I was struck low with diarrhoea and spent the best part of 18 hours sleeping in a paddock under an oak tree. Earlier in the week I had met a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church who had walked all the way from Le Puy in France. He told me that while the physical pain of walking day after day never eased up I would find that there came a time at which it would finally stop getting worse. I am not sure that I ever reached this plateau, but by the time I reached Santiago I was finding the levels of debilitation quite sufficient. On the eve of the *fiesta* I limped beneath the city gates at Santiago to the wild pealing of the Cathedral bells and the thunder of fireworks unseen against the midday sky. They were practising for the celebrations that evening.

I spent those celebrations in a daze. I felt that I should feel elated. Instead I found myself exasperated and overwhelmed by the crowds. After a sleep on the floor of a classroom opened up for pilgrims in the minor Seminary, I hobbled to the Pilgrim Office to collect my *Compostella.* I was impressed to notice that on the desk of each of the officials there was a bulging computer print-out of names in the Latin accusative case. So I have it certified: *Dominum Nicolaum Thompson hoc templum pietatis causa visitasse.*

On the 25th of July, the feast of Saint James, I walked to the solemn Mass in the Cathedral. Inside dishevelled pilgrims, city dignitaries and the Spanish nobility all jostled sweatily about the sanctuary. It was a remarkably egalitarian throng. At 11 am the organ rumbled into life and a long procession of ecclesiastical potentates, grandees and satraps drew nigh unto the altar of the Lord. At their head glided my walking-companion Thierry, acolyte extraordinaire, resplendent in a white alb and hands clasped reverently in front of him. As I leant for support on a pillar it dawned on me why he had squeezed a soutane into that small pack of his. It was a ticket to a front-row, velvet-padded seat at the show of the year.

in the glorious diversity... I think I caught a glimpse of heaven

And a show it was. At the end of the service the *botafumeiro,* a metre-high censer was carried to the front of the altar by six men in crimson robes. The Archbishop of Santiago ladled a generous helping of incense onto the burning coals inside the censer, and then it was attached to a rope slung over a pulley high above the altar. With a series of jerks at the other end of the rope the six men managed to set the censer swinging back and forward across the transept. Higher and higher it swung in a mad, flailing parabola. As it plunged from the roof of either side of the transept, flames and smoke belched from within. The congregation gasped and a thousand cameras flashed. Thus

Cathedral at Santiago de Campostella where the alleged remains of St James are held

were the pilgrims solemnly blessed. After Mass I met a young Swiss pilgrim, and he asked sourly whether I thought the congregation had come to meet God or to see the *botafumeiro.* I suppose, in fact, that God enjoyed the party as much as anyone else.

Along the Way I met a multitude of souls all anxiously in search of God and the 'spiritual'. They recited rosaries, they kissed statues, they practised yogic chanting, and talked avidly *(inter alia)* about Celtic spirituality, reincarnation and the Knights Templar. I hope that they found what they were looking for. I set out with no expectations, but in the glorious diversity of the pilgrims, the long conversations, the shared meals, and in the parish priest with the pot of garlic soup in San Juan d'Ortega, I think I caught a glimpse of heaven nevertheless.

Saint Theresa was horrified by the activities of those she called *los Luteranos.* I don't imagine that Luther would have much cared for her brand of piety either. But I suspect that he might have brought himself to agree with her that, "God is also found among the stew-pots". I hope that they are both sitting down to a bowl of garlic soup right now. ■

It's another story now

Unlike the others who fled
fearing for their lives
she remained at the foot of the cross.

On the third day she rose
again bearing the spices
of anointing
into the garden of the dead

but the sepulchre stands open
Revelation removed
and who can anoint a loved one
or mourn His loss
in its absence?

Even the advocacy of angels
falls on ears
unready for resurrection
until the Lord calls
her to a new anointing
as apostle

to the apostles,
who doubted
so much of the Easter story
could rely on the witness of one
Woman
when the first Eve proved
subject to temptation

a primary protagonist
in the fall
absorbing the ancient imagery
of sin and sex
into an allegory
of the people's unfaithfulness to Yahweh,
beyond redemption:
it's what they feared most.

Did you hear the story of Genesis
where death stunted the tree of life
and the serpent betrayed
a woman's innocence
and man's humanity?
Are you the new Eve
first mistaking the Lord for a gardener
then recognizing the source of life
rising anew in the Easter garden?

Did you know the story?

Insufficient grounds
for heaping you with the burdens
of the original Eve
for no suggestion of sin
marked your healing
when the seven devils departed
for the broadways of hell
and Mary of Magdala became a disciple.

Did you hear your story
when a myth was born
and you became the woman
fallen at Christ's feet
in the house of Simon the Pharisee
when you, leper by another
name, replaced absent hospitality
with an act of love?

Whose story was it
when Mary of Bethany
poured a pound of spikenard
in acknowledgment of the rising of Lazarus
from the dead,
a sign of Christ's healing priesthood,
yet not much thanksgiving for a
brother's life?

Who told a story
when another woman taken in adultery
faced the full force of the law alone
for in seduction the male is absent
without cause for faced with the burden

of guilt one by one they went away
beginning with eldest
releasing the woman
from the judgment of the fallen?

Who told the story
or does the scarlet woman of myth
create around her
elements of infamy
the shifting reflections of an elusive truth?
From apostle to the apostles
to fallen woman
you became
easier to construct I suppose
as a narrative of the female body
affirming celibacy
above truth
a conflation of all women
from the male view.

Jenny Collins

In the Light of the Resurrection: Revealing Women

Matthew's Easter Narrative

by Mary Betz

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from Heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.

But the angel said to the women: "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you."

So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said: "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them; "Do not be afraid: go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Pre-Easter

Historical experience, mystery, new creation, self-revelation and communication of God, fulfilment of human life, transformation by the Spirit – resurrection is all these. But on that first Easter, Jesus' followers had no developed resurrection theology, nor even a clear idea of Jesus' identity or significance. All they had was the memory of their relationship with him, and of the events of his life in which they shared.

In Matthew's Easter story, as in his account of Jesus' death and burial, we find the narration of events, unlike anywhere else in the gospel, totally dependent on the presence and witness of women disciples. The narrations also make it belatedly clear that these and many other women had followed Jesus throughout his ministry. Through Matthew and the women disciples we see the events of the first Easter, and over time, our sight sharpens into insight. The man whom they have journeyed with – the man of compassion and wisdom – will be slowly understood through his life, death and resurrection to be the self-revelation of God.

It was in the hour between darkness and light on that early Sunday morning that the women walked to the tomb. It was there they had sat two days before as Joseph had wrapped Jesus' body and lain it to rest for the last time. They headed there now, out of grief, loneliness, intuition, hope?

They hardly knew what to expect, or what more could be done, any more than they comprehended the happenings of the past few days. They were still in shock, heavy with grief, struggling to make sense of both the miracle Jesus' life had been for them and the horror of his death.

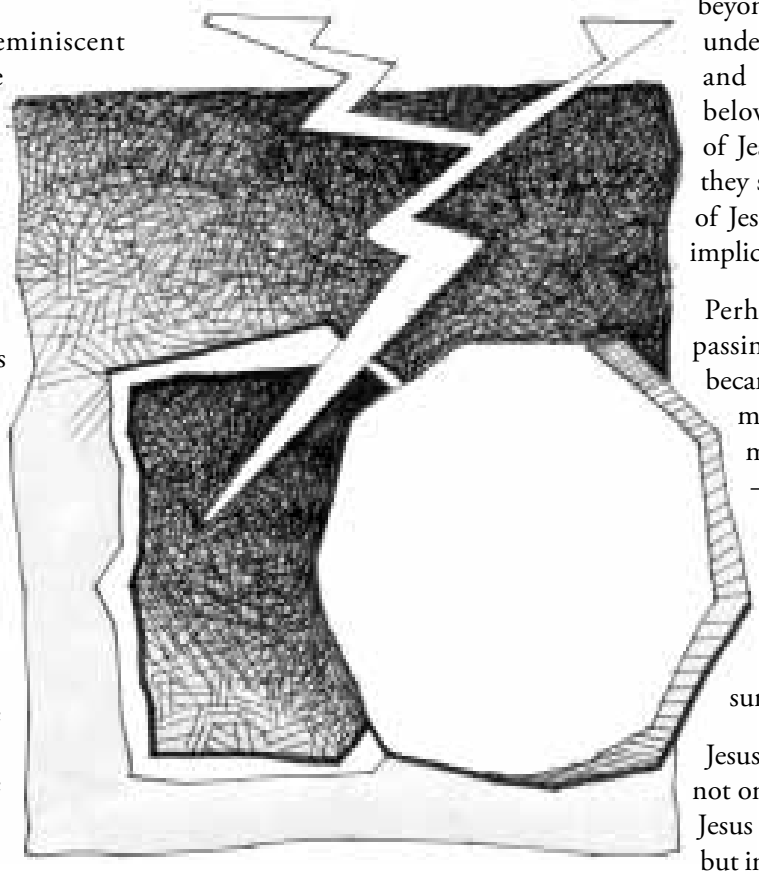
They had known Jesus throughout his ministry in Galilee, and with many other women had followed him and provided for him. They had continued to accompany Jesus as journey and ministry took them beyond Galilee into Judea, and finally to Jerusalem itself. Jesus' compassion and healing had not faltered, his incisive teaching had not wavered, and in fact had taken on a stronger intensity. Though Jesus had spoken of his coming suffering and death, nothing could have fully prepared them for what had happened since the Passover – his arrest, condemnation and crucifixion. The men disciples had fled in fear from Gethsemane, and the news came to the women of Jesus' arrest. Friday afternoon the women found themselves helplessly looking on as he who had been teacher and friend hung dying on a cross.

They hoped Jesus knew he was not totally abandoned. They hoped he knew that they kept vigil with him, offering their presence in silent solidarity with his suffering. They hoped he knew that fear and anguish did not threaten, but rather strengthened their fidelity to him. Two of the Marys had sat opposite the tomb as Jesus was buried, and now after the Sabbath, they returned to wait in the semi-darkness.

Post-Easter

What did the women see when they went to the tomb that first Easter morning? According to Matthew, they (and in part, the guards) were the only witnesses of the "Easter events'.

Matthew records signs reminiscent of the theophanies of the Hebrew Scriptures: the earthquake, the angel, lightning, white clothing, and the human reaction of fear. The description of the angel's luminous appearance before the women and guards also evokes Matthew's account of Peter, James and John's vision of Jesus' transfiguration. As in the transfiguration, a message about Jesus is given in word as well as in signs. Unlike after the trans-figuration, the witnesses at the tomb (the women disciples) are not bound to silence, but are given a direct commission to speak about what they have seen and heard.



The rolled back stone and the empty tomb were physical evidence that something had happened to Jesus' body, but were no proof of a resurrection. Women were not considered legal witnesses in that time and place. Yet nonetheless it was women to whom the message of Jesus' rising was given, women who were sent to relay the message to the absent disciples.

The missing disciples – those who had followed Jesus but betrayed him, fallen asleep rather than prayed with him, denied knowing him, deserted him at his arrest, and were nowhere to be seen during his trial, condemnation, crucifixion, death and burial – to these, God (via the angel) sends the women. In contrast to the male disciples, the women epitomise courage in discipleship and faithfulness in friendship. They are signs of God's own fidelity and presence to one they love.

Sent as apostles of the resurrection, the women hasten with both fear and joy to bring the angel's invitation of reconciliation to their companions. But Jesus himself intervenes, undertaking to dispel their fear and leave them with the sheer joy of his presence, and the confirmation of seeing with their own eyes the truth of the angel's message.

with the passing of time their sight became insight

Like the angel, Jesus urges the women to proclaim his living presence to the missing disciples, more specifically, his brothers. In Galilee, the women's apostleship will bear its first fruits: reconciled to the risen Jesus, their brother disciples are commissioned for the further proclamation of the good news.

On that first Easter, did the women see beyond the empty tomb, or really understand the angelic messages and the return to life of their beloved? Did they make sense of Jesus' life and suffering? Did they see God's hand in the rising of Jesus, and beyond that to the implications for their own futures?

Perhaps it was only with the passing of time that their sight became insight, that the paschal mystery became one with the mystery of their own lives – the times and cycles of pregnant waiting, of pain and suffering, of new life emerging from the darkness of the womb, of letting go and being open to God's surprising new directions.

Jesus risen would come to mean not only seeing the face of God in Jesus who walked among them, but in the Spirit of Jesus who now dwelt in them, and among them in one another, and in all who suffer, thirst, hunger for justice, search for peace and truth, participate in the cycles of the paschal mystery in their own lives.

Matthew's account of Jesus' death, burial and rising reveals women to be critical witnesses of those events linking Jesus' ministry with the proclamation of Easter. And women's revealing/sharing the resurrection news enabled not only the reconciliation and apostleship of their brother disciples, but the illumination of our own experiences of death and life with the light of Christ risen. ■

Mary Betz is Catholic chaplain at the University of Palmerston North. She is a Graduate in Theology with a special interest in Sacred Scripture

Intruders in the Home: the small screen

Priest-psychotherapist, **Paul Andrews**, *calls on parents to be selective in moderating their children's TV watching*

Most thoughtful parents have at some stage considered throwing out their TV set, as the only way to cure children's addiction. What bothers them is not just the programmes, but what it does to the family to have the set always as a competitor to conversation. Is there anything to be said for it?

The way you use TV is every bit as important as the school you choose. The question is not "What does TV do to us?" but "What do we do with TV?" Can anything be said for TV? In some families it is like asking "Can anything be said for food?" It is the staple way of filling the idle hours, it is on day and night, and life would be unthinkable without it.

In one way it is like bed. When people are depressed and their life is empty, they often retreat to bed. I notice the same about television with both children and adults. If they are bored with life, or depressed, or in a down phase, then they will slump in front of the set almost uncaring about what is on, but anxious to keep control of the programme buttons. If they are interested in the people around them, and in living, then they may pick out the odd TV programme they want to watch, but otherwise they have too many active things to occupy them, and they cannot afford the time spent in front of the box.

Like bed it is addictive. Even in the middle of sparkling company or lovely scenery, eyes can be drawn to the flickering screen, no matter what is on it, in the hope of titillation. If we allow it, it does things to us. It startlingly reduces conversation between children and parents.

An English speech therapist has shown the link between speech problems and unselective watching of TV in young children. The years from two to six are so rich in possibilities. The mind is developing and learning faster than at any other time of our life, moving from silence to the capacity for speech, which gives us access to reading and all other human learning. You cannot read until you can understand speech, and you learn to understand and use speech through conversation, above all with parents.

They can make sense of the first utterance of the toddler, and gradually build up their vocabulary and confidence in talking. Why cannot TV do this? After all it is a talking medium. But it is not a listening medium. Little Mary cannot answer, she just sits dumb, and if she were to mutter back there is no sign that she is heard, which is the only incentive to go on talking.

While those who play computer games are active and involved, children who view TV are passive. If they turn on the set without questions or curiosity, view unselectively and switch programmes frequently, they remember practically nothing, any more than they remember the individual drops after standing under a shower. Children are often hosed with TV in an unselective, passive way that leaves them soused, unthinking, but heavily dependent.

The children at risk are easy to recognise: they watch more than ten hours a week, go straight to the set when they come home, demand from parents the sort of instant gratification that they experience in channel-control, a variety of delights at the press of a button. They relate more feelingly to TV characters than to their own family and friends; and they gradually lose the capacity to express themselves.

If this happens in a family, then communication between parents and children drops sharply. Children lose the capacity to entertain themselves, and the ability to express ideas logically. What about the emotions? There is much sentiment in TV drama but the effect is a stereotyping of emotions. Children live through the predictable and shallowly-drawn feelings of the familiar characters on the screen, and lose touch with the range of feelings they experience themselves – delight, loneliness, anger and tender love. Unselective viewing is paid for by damage to communication, to thinking and feeling. Pupils' schoolwork can suffer if their viewing is unplanned and unselective, so that they become passively dependent on spoon-fed, over-simplified mush, and lose the ability to think, write, create or feel for themselves.

Some parents feel helpless against TV, and they *are* helpless until they decide to *use* it instead of being used by it. The key to using it lies in being *selective,* choosing programmes in advance, picking programmes that can be watched by parents and family, showing one generation how the other thinks and feels. When that happens, children have been found to view TV through the filter of their parents' values. With father or mother beside them, they can cope with stories that might otherwise bewilder or upset them. The box is no more powerful than you allow it to be. ■

A superb observer of human character

Death in Summer
by William Trevor
Viking, 1998
Price: $49.95 hb
Review: Kathleen Doherty

In an interview in *The New Yorker* a few years ago, William Trevor voiced the belief which is at the heart of his writing: "The thing I hate most of all is the pigeonholing of people... I don't believe in the black-and-white; I believe in the gray shadows, the murkiness, the not-quite knowing...".

His latest novel *Death in Summer* is a superb example of the murkiness in the lives of two sets of people who, but for tragic circumstances, would never have met, and whose meeting leads to even more tragedy. It is William Trevor at his most observant, writing with a compassion that leaves one with a glimmer of hope in this bleakest of stories of the collision of two disparate worlds.

In one world are Thaddeus and his mother-in-law, restrained, respectable, pale beige; in the other Pettie and Albert, runaways from the Morning Star children's home, formed by neglect and abuse.

The meeting is the result of the death of gentle, contented Letitia, wife of Thaddeus, mother of Georgina, knocked from her bicycle on a country lane while bringing home a boxful of pullets. It is a situation lodged firmly in a genteel rural setting, which is far from the experience of Pettie, just into her twenties, love-starved and street-wise who comes to be interviewed for the post of nanny to the baby. She sees Thaddeus, the widowed middle-aged husband, as the answer to her dreams of security and respectability, and when she is rejected for the job of nanny her warped judgement and obsession, which Albert is powerless to deflect, lead to a terrible revenge and a tragedy which is chillingly inevitable.

However potentially sensational the story, William Trevor's writing is never sensational. Rather he quietly infiltrates the world of his characters, observing, never judgemental, until one has the feeling of being right in the middle of events as they unfurl. The characters grow quietly and steadily until they become part of a world in which the past and the present are delicately woven together and which is as well-known as ones own. It may be because of this that the atmosphere of a William Trevor novel can become all-pervading and affecting long after the reading is over.

This master of language is, as has been observed by more than one critic, incapable of writing a less than graceful sentence... Parts of *Death in Summer* are written in the present tense, which adds to the feeling of immediacy but which presents technical difficulties which only a master craftsman can handle.

It comes as no surprise that William Trevor handles it supremely well. At 70, the Irish-born author, who now lives in England, has an impressive body of work to his credit: some 13 novels which have picked up major literary prizes, several novellas, stage, radio and television plays, and – perhaps most precious – a collection of short stories equal to the best ever written. His short stories still appear regularly in *The New Yorker* and the best, to 1992, have been collected in an edition that makes one long for a deep chair, a good light, and no visitors for a month.

In William Trevor's world no-one is irrelevant, no-one's life can be dismissed as of little value. Everyone brings to the present situation a lifetime of experience and experiences, and one gets the feeling that even the minor characters in a novel would have a splendid story to tell if only Trevor put the spotlight on them and not on his chosen main characters.

So it is that in *Death in Summer* we meet the live-in servants, Maidment and Mrs Maidment, who have a propensity for listening at doors, reading the odd bit of mail not meant for their eyes, quietly assessing the action, and we meet the wonderfully blowsy widow Mrs Ferry, an embarrassing secret from Thaddeus's past, appearing all the more incongruous when set in his tasteful and well-ordered present. These three play little part in the development of the story, yet they round out the world so skilfully created in which life-changing events happen to ordinary people, and the world is never the same again.

It is Albert, refugee with Pettie from the children's home, who brings some sort of resolution and reconciliation in this tragedy. Albert, with his fascination with aircraft spotting and Salvation Army bands, his garrulous need to explain all, and his all-encompassing artless love of humanity, breaks through the stoicism which isolates Thaddeus and his mother-in-law from each other and from the world. Pity, even understanding, for a girl who knew neither while she lived, defeats the barriers. This present time will soon become a past with influence on a new present. There is hope in the darkness. ■

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A readable book with an explosive message

Beyond Violence – In the Spirit of the Non-Violent Christ
by Gerard A. Vanderhaar
Twenty-Third Publications, Mystic, CT.1998, 162pp
Price: $27.50 approx.
Review: Jim Consedine

This is one of those beautiful little books through which I wish every Christian would just take a quiet and meditative stroll.

Gerard A. Vanderhaar is a name unknown in New Zealand. He is Professor Emeritus of Religion and Peace Studies at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee, where he taught for 28 years. I mention these things because it reveals his age and disposes one to understand the wisdom he has in matters related to Catholicism and the central truths relating to justice and peace issues.

He writes of the devastation caused by the structural violence of unrestrained capitalism, of the war machine that so dominates the American economy and thereby the economies of half the world, of the violence of poverty caused by human-instituted structures and maintained by them, of the violence within families and communities who do not know how to act otherwise. He deals with the sin of usury which keeps the world poor and the crass materialism which creates violence through maldistribution, among other things.

He presents the non-violent face of Christ as a power for transformation of individuals and society. He draws on the richness of the non-violent Catholic tradition of the early Church and the experiences and teachings of modern Catholic leaders – the Berrigan brothers, Eileen Egan and *Pax Christi*, Dorothy Day and the *Catholic Worker*, the 'ploughshares' movement. He reflects on the message and life of Ghandi and wonders why so few espouse his teachings today. He writes of non-violent time (stress free), non-violent money (exploitation free), of pro-life meaning all life, of non-violence as a basis for true justice in our local communities and world wide.

And he writes simply. He doesn't overstate the case nor wow us with a million statistics. He presents a very readable book, with questions for discussion at the end of each chapter. It is a good book, nicely presented, with an explosive transforming message. If only we Christians took it seriously! ■

My dear people, I still recall…

A World of Stories for Preachers and Teachers
by William J Bausch
Twenty-Third Publications
Price: approx. $75
Review: John Stone

William J Bausch is well known for his books on parish life, and recently for his *The Church of the Next Millennium.* Although he writes about the American Church, much of what he says is relevant and perhaps ahead of what is happening in New Zealand. But this book is quite different. It is no more than a collection of stories, some of them very old and therefore very fundamental to human experience.

The reason I was asked to review the book is because I am still active in preaching, and faced weekly with the need to say something timely, instructive, inspirational and interesting, all within the self-imposed boundary of seven minutes. The old adage about preaching says, "If you don't strike oil in the first few minutes then stop boring!"

While I enjoyed the stories, and the unique power stories have to illustrate the human situation, I did not feel that they would set me going along a line that would help me on a weekly basis. The good preacher, so they say, should be prayerful and reflective, but also a wide reader, so that he constructs a store of memories and attitudes that are on tap, so to speak.

There is no doubt that when you have the weekly imperative to produce a sermon – and that year after year – you do develop an eye for setting aside stories and incidents which you know may well convert to a good illustration, making your words come alive.

Often however, the preacher has to battle the temptation of having found a good story, and then almost at all costs, of working it into his sermon. This can work well enough, but there is a temptation to squeeze the needs of the sermon in order to fit the story. Without any rancour I would describe the book as one to please readers of the *Readers Digest*. Not everyone is into that.

Nevertheless there is an astonishing amount of detail and a good variety of stories. It's more like an anthology, in the sense that you dip into it rather than read it progressively from cover to cover. A friend of mine who was a great hoarder used to remark disparagingly that such and such an article could prove very handy 'if you had a need for!'

All in all it will appeal to certain people, but it is not, I believe, God's gift to preachers. ■

Looking behind the 'good, keen man'

The recent television documentary on the life of Barry Crump held up a mirror to the New Zealand which responded so enthusiastically to *A Good Keen Man* and to the books which followed on the same theme. The public image of Crump was that he represented a disappearing breed – the hard drinking, hard living bushman; the tough guy who could bring a wild pig out on his back, defying all the logistics of distance, terrain and human vulnerability. That was the image and that is what sold the books in record numbers.

The first book appeared when New Zealand was still searching for its post-war identity. The cities were growing fast and fewer and fewer New Zealanders had the opportunity of getting into the bush and living off the land by hunting and shooting. To want to fulfil a primitive urge to be a hunter and food-gatherer is a basic desire firmly embedded in the male psyche, an urge which is closer to the surface in this country because of the nearness of our colonial past. All the physical qualities of the hunter and gatherer were needed in those early days of settlement, in addition to inventiveness, resourcefulness and a strong sense of one's own worth.

As the male role changed, eroded by depression and two world wars, the Kiwi stereotype looked back on those earlier frontier days with a kind of wistful nostalgia. But he was looking back on an image of the time just as Crump projected an image of himself as *the good keen man.* This image of himself covered up a terrible childhood, years of beating and ill treatment, denigration as a 'no-hoper' and being labelled as a dummy.

For, according to the evidence presented in the documentary, Barry Crump's father was the other side of the coin in the image of the good keen man. He was cruel, mean, sadistic and intolerant, instilling fear in those who were unfortunate enough to be his family. He behaved to his son as if he considered him to be sub-human. It is not surprising that no-one got close to Barry Crump and why he went through life without emotional commitment to any of his wives, partners or children. His emotional life as a child had been suffocated, battered and bruised to the extent that he was fearful of showing emotion to anyone close to him. His public life of shooting, hunting and braggadocio was a cover for a deep inadequacy, a spiritual vacuum which he had never been able to fill.

In this sad account of a one-time New Zealand icon, we were left with the image of a man who drove himself hard to conceal the non-existence of *the good keen man.* Publicity photographs, television appearances, interviews and his famous Toyota commercials projected his chosen image, filling his days so that he need not face himself and try to come to terms with his past. The account of

Crump's image covered up a terrible childhood... denigrated as a no-hoper

his childhood which was brought to viewers in the documentary presented a classic example of the person who is starved of love, starved of praise and who is denied affection, encouragement and attention.

It was possible to see the effects of his upbringing in Crump's desperate search for love. As with most of such cases, he confused sex with love and spent his life looking for a relationship which would bring him love. He was, in turn, incapable of giving love to his family because he had not experienced it as a child.

And it is here, at the heart of this documentary, we were reminded of the most important basic fact in bringing up a family, in educating children and in administering society. Crump damaged those around him because he felt worthless and in spite of his literary successes, had no respect for himself and therefore none for humanity or for the world around him. His sense of worthlessness developed into a moral cancer which eroded and finally destroyed his quality of life.

"..and throw away the key"

It is difficult to escape the excesses of election year and one of the recurring promises from all sides of the political spectrum is that we need more prisons, harsher prison sentences and tougher penalties for crimes of violence. The 'home invasions' which have become a feature of our society have produced this official response in an attempt to persuade a nervous public that something is actually going to be done about it. It is difficult to understand the politicians' stance.

The Prime Minister speaks in capital letters, pledging a crack-down on crime with all the authority of a great battleship ploughing through heavy seas. But many of her listeners may well have a strong suspicion that there is nothing left in the magazine to fire at the enemy. Phil Goff keeps up a steady fusillade of fire at the government but continues to be strangely lacking in specific policy details should Labour become the government.

Cynical New Zealanders may well wonder if the government is capable of assessing the cost of its policies. It has steadily eroded the support bases for

the long term unemployed, the badly housed, the mentally ill and the socially needy. It has allowed an under-class to develop of people who feel worthless because they are unemployed, uneducated and often illiterate. We have a raft of people in society whose self-respect has drained away and in whom ambition, curiosity and pride in oneself have faded. Schools continue to fail the children born to people who have lost everything but the ability to reproduce. They need much greater resources to encourage the reluctant learner, to persuade the truant that school has something to offer and to help the inadequate parent to improve his or her parenting skills. The Children and Young Persons' Service has to deal with the most extreme cases where more staff, better resources and a more progressive attitude stop them returning children to abusive parents or caregivers.

The "Strengthening Families Project" is an excellent concept but it has not been implemented throughout the country, often failing because of community jealousies or local body in-fighting. A politician with vision would explore schemes which would halt the social erosion at its source and divert the money intended for prisons into something more productive. ■

Cutting parliament down to size

Margaret Robertson, organiser of the petition to reduce the number of MPs, reminds me of that ancient and disreputable Greek bandit, Procrustes. His only claim to fame is that he had the habit of measuring his victims against a certain bed. If they were too tall he would lop off part of their legs, and if too short, he would stretch them to fit. When he was finally caught he was given the same treatment, but that wasn't much comfort for his victims.

Mrs Robertson has managed to convince herself and a good many others that the present number of MPs is too many, and arbitrarily suggests Parliament should contain only 99. The remedy? Lop 21 off the total by cutting down the number of list members. That such a crude amputation would inevitably skew the proportionality of parties, and reduce the number of women, Maori and other groups doesn't seem to move her at all.

Her proposal would also rob Parliament of some of its most useful members, while leaving various drones and non-performers snugly in place. None of this appears to disturb her. In effect she has said: "Don't worry about the careful recommendations of the Commission which devised MMP, and don't give the system time to settle down. Apply the scalpel and the hacksaw right now!" Save us from such quack surgery!

That word

No one doubts the 'success' of the Toyota commercial on television. It raised a laugh and became a talking point throughout the country. No doubt it also sold a number of Utes.

I wouldn't want to start a moral crusade, but amidst the national guffaws, one might note that this particular commercial legitimised and promoted one of the most unpleasant words in the language and got away with it. From now on, every school kid can incorporate "bugger" into his conversation with the sanction and encouragement of that wise, all-knowing authority and example, Television, behind him. I suppose that should earn warm applause for some bright ideas man in the advertising agency.

Selwyn Dawson

The Dying God

The approach of the new millennium year 2000 gives added relevance to the meaning of Easter – a dying and a new beginning endlessly repeating itself. The mythical narratives and fertility rites of many peoples have as their base the search for something to cure what is missing in society. Christianity is an updating of the ancient myths, the master narratives which seek transcendence of the human spirit. To be redeemed from death, you need a sacrificial victim.

The implications of the death and resurrection of Christ are deep in the psyche of humankind. The need to understand this sacrifice, place it in a spiritual context and acknowledge the need of redemption, is reflected in some of the greatest poetry in the English language. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* engages the reader in the quest for transcendence. He insists that human beings can only be seen against a framework which is larger than themselves. The theme of the poem is the Grail legend in which the sick king can only be cured through the passion and death of the greatest of the sacrificial kings – Christ.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Christ, suffering the loneliness of the mythic sacrificial victim, offers his human life for the redemption of humankind. For the minds and hearts of humans not to be moved by this supreme gesture of love must point to an indifference beyond belief. Yet belief and faith are what is necessary, indeed essential. The *Agony in the Garden* is one of the saddest moments in the whole of the New Testament. It is the knowledge of the coming betrayal and crucifixion, together with the abandonment by his sleeping disciples, which render this moment in the life of Christ as almost beyond hope.

We will all suffer death – we need to be redeemed. The risen Christ, the triumph of Easter, is the promise of redemption. The Lenten period, the reminder not to get trapped in the life of the flesh, gives way to one of joy and hope. In the human spirit, hope dispels all notions of despair and doom, for with hope there is meaning to life. It makes the risen Christ a reality, and it is the fulfilment of the promise made to humankind from the Cross.

This Easter at the close of the old millennium has a special poignancy, but the same age-old story of a God dying for love of his people in order that they may live is echoed by Eliot who hoped for "the peace which passes under-standing". Salvation can only come through sacrifice. The sacrificial death of Christ is life-giving, which is the overall paradox of Easter.

John Honoré