Tui Motu

InterIslands

monthly independent Catholic magazine
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The Plight of the Refugee

"Whatever you did unto one of the least, you did unto me."

(Matt 25: 45)

you are welcome here

In mid-July, the New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, was questioned about a boatload of Sri Lankan asylum seekers whose banners expressed a hope to come to New Zealand. He responded by saying, "They are not welcome here." This statement has been welcomed by some, and not by others. *Tui Motu* decided that it would be helpful to hear a little more about the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in Australia and New Zealand.

The 2009 UNHCR report tells us that, world-wide, 42 million people are uprooted by conflict and persecution. Of these, 16 million are refugees and 26 million internally displaced persons. Moreover, 80% of the world's refugees are being hosted in developing nations, as are the bulk of the internally displaced persons. Many of these people have been uprooted for years with no end to their displacement in sight.

The stories of Clotilde Kayunzuguru and Jean Pierre Karabadogombo, of Ahmed and Leila Zaoui and of Habiba Shire are those of people who have come to New Zealand as refugees and asylum seekers. With difficulties they have made clear options here for the education of their own family and have become useful citizens. They have settled, and are settled. However, simply by their presence these women and men are extending the range of our experience of life.

While most of us are descendants of immigrants, few of us understand what it is to flee for one's life. Would we cope? It is here that the call of Jesus hits in: he was a refugee, according to Luke's gospel — and he was able to return home to Israel. This experience, conscious or unconscious, has to be a part of the way in which Jesus experienced his adult life and preached the good news; and consequently it is a part of how we live our Christian life now. Brendan Bryne SJ entitles his recent commentary on the Gospel of Luke *The Hospitality of God*. How comfortable are we with those different from us? Can we be hospitable to them? Do we treasure our place and space in New Zealand sufficiently to want to share that with those who seek asylum or refugee status? In a world where the differences between the poor and the rich are becoming ever more starkly delineated, and gospel imperatives need to kick in, the place of a wide and welcoming experience is crucial to our ability to receive others.

It is interesting to note from these three refugee stories that all are concerned in one way or another with family reunification programmes. Leila and their four sons joined Ahmed; Jean Pierre and their four sons joined Clotilde. The presence of family seems crucial in providing refugees a stable environment by which they may live well. Habiba, on the other hand, finds it stressful living without close family. She seeks to

contents

front cover illustration: Fra Angelico's *Flight into Egypt*

bring her brother here, but cannot do so without a job offer for him — something difficult to find in this economic climate. A call for a more generous set of conditions to allow refugee family reunification needs to be highlighted as we face into an election. It is part of the practical call of the gospel.

Jim Elliston in *Crosscurrents* and Mike Noonan's article focus from different angles on questions of how the global economy is working under great stress. Where are the break points? Is credit-driven capitalism in its early death-throes? What will happen to the banking systems in the USA and in Europe? Where are the real links between rich and poor? Strong attempts to find alternative and more compassionate answers are needed as the developing stresses and strains on our economies dig in. The concepts of the common good and of seeking the dignity of each human being on the planet must underpin the technical attempts to change the present impasse. It often seems that it is only through suffering a complete disaster that human beings can be brought to change.

Finally, I would like to point you in the direction of Damian Wynn-Williams' review of Bishop Peter Cullinane's book. The theological focus of these short letters is firmly set in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. I hope you may share their wisdom. ■ **KT**

Getting Ready for Christmas

As the country recovers from the emotional highs and lows injected into patriotic hearts by the vagaries of that bouncing ball and as we all turn our minds to the much more serious social, ethical and economic choices facing us at the ballot boxes next month, *Tui Motu* has started to look beyond rugby and elections to the season of Advent and Christmas. Once again we draw your attention to the usefulness of *Tui Motu* as an ideal Christmas gift to fall back on when other options seem not to 'fit the bill'. Many readers have in the past found the magazine a great gift to provide for Kiwis in the diaspora! What better than the gift that keeps on coming — for a year — to enrich loved ones and friends who are living in other lands. This year we shall again offer Christmas discounts for new subscriptions you may like to send as gifts. Within New Zealand they will cost $50 for a full year or $25 for five issues. And we shall reduce the overseas subscriptions also: $65 for Australia and $70 for the rest of the world. In the November issue we shall include a gift subscription form for you to use. This is simply advance notice for those of you who plan Christmas early. In the meantime, survive the rugby and the elections and know that Advent is coming. ■

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

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

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the heroes of the fairy story

Since you published my Fairy Story (*Tui Motu*, Sept 11), people have been asking me who King Allan was and I feel it is important to acknowledge the heroes. I was only the story teller!

The story is based on a presentation given at the Volunteering NZ Conference in May this year in Wellington. The people concerned were Allan Wilson, Civil Defence Emergency Manager from the Grey District Council, who was seconded to the Civil Defence team in Christchurch; and student leader, Sam Johnson.

Is it possible for you to include this information in the next issue of *Tui Motu*?

Mary Woods, *Christchurch*

another layer of clericalism?

Peter Norris makes observation of leadership and mismanagement in the Church (*Tui Motu*, Sept 11) and reflects on the state of liturgy and laments abuse.

While the 'silly' changes to the liturgy are causing much consternation and conversation, another area of (mis)management has been little reflected on.

Another layer of clericalism is being slowly and step-by-step implemented in certain dioceses of the Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, and is no doubt intended for a wider change to 'local practice.'

When deacons were appointed, as recorded in Acts 6, their ministry was one of service and hospitality, especially among widows and orphans. Paul mentions Phoebe and Junia in his letter to the Romans – women deacons in the early Church.

The role that is now emerging in New Zealand seems to be liturgical and one of management of affairs that could easily be, and has been in the recent past, done by the 'lay' faithful.

Where are the parish pastoral workers? Is the fact that they need to be justly paid, and deacons will not be, the issue?

Where are women in pastoral leadership in community and parish life?

Many laity are better qualified in liturgy and theology than some presbyters and just as capable of breaking open the scriptures. So one wonders why another clerical layer is established to calcify the liturgy and the Church. The ministry of deacons is biblical and offers a model of service, that would be rightly open to both men and women, but it seems to be structured as another layer of men lording it over the faithful.

Philip Hadley, *Pukekohe*

☞ letters to the editor

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not changing the meaning. Response articles (up to a page) are welcome — but please, by negotiation.

This poem comes to *Tui Motu* as a response to articles (ps 8-9, 10-11) in the July edition on the spirituality of ageing

Retrieval

No soul stirred the summer
I walked the black sand of Back Beach
to retrieve my childhood
among the white-winged birds.

I walked Grandma's street
gained the memory of my father
home from war.
In this small, quiet street of trees and stream
he was displaced chaos of desert and khaki.

I know the place.
Alzheimer's has my aunty.
Does she know the place?
I grow peaceful without a camera.
I am the memory.

Anne Powell

what has 9/11 taught us?

Peter Murnane OP

Ten years have passed since 9/11 when almost 3000 people were tragically killed at the World Trade Centre. Those sad events profoundly changed many lives and still have an impact on us all.

One profound lesson we can learn from this calamity is that even such horror can bring positive outcomes: heroism among the fire personnel, police and chaplains who helped survivors; generous mutual help among the bereaved. Should this surprise us? Like the psalmist we glimpse God as the wider context that surrounds evil: "...darkness is as light to You". (Ps 139:12)

Even while we asked: 'How could anyone deliberately cause such suffering?' we saw USA and British leaders attacking Afghanistan and Iraq; decisions that would ruin the lives of millions of ordinary people.

We learned that the military-industrial complex launches wars for its own gain, making the US economy a war economy with its major export armaments. It profits even from a 10-year war that has cost the nation $4 trillion. Others profit from oil and 'rebuilding'. So we learned how greed uses power for its own ends. These obvious lessons are essential. Are we learning?

We also learned further to distrust governments and the media, which mislead us hugely. They claimed that 'terrorists' alone were responsible for 9/11. But were they? Planes did fly into buildings, but 1500 engineers and architects, after viewing the evidence, are demanding answers about explosions that many witnesses heard before the three buildings came down and about the molten steel which lay in the basements for days afterwards (see AE911truth.org). Since burning jet-fuel cannot melt steel and fire has never caused a high-rise building to collapse, these engineers suggest that only thermite, a military incendiary compound, could have melted the steel and turned thousands of tonnes of concrete into hot dust. Traces of thermite were found in the ruins.

We may learn only slowly the full truth behind the sufferings that shocked us on 9/11, but the consequences followed with deadly speed. The US executive quickly launched its fictitious 'War on Terror'. Watching on television the bombing of populous Baghdad, we wondered how different was 'Shock and Awe' from the terrorist acts in New York.

We saw the irony when the USA legalized and 'outsourced' torture in order to fight against 'terror'. Muslims too shudder at the names Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, Baghram and the Black Sites. Can this governmental terrorism ever stop minorities from resorting to terrorism when their land, culture or religion has been violated? Doesn't it just inspire more opposition, like the bomb attacks in London, Madrid and Bali?

To convince the USA to go to war, leaders demonized the Muslim 'enemy' to 'justify' vengeance. In the USA a surge of violence against Muslims followed. Further from 'ground zero', Aotearoa New Zealand responded better. Helen Clarke refused to join the war, although our military, with increased budgets, contrived to join 'other people's wars'.

Governments seized more control through the USA 'Patriot Act' and 'No Fly Lists', which robbed ordinary people of fundamental rights. New Zealand partly copied these. Our GCSB, SIS, and police received more funding and began imagining 'terrorist plots', spying on harmless activists and Maori communities. They detained the Algerian refugee Ahmed Zaoui for five years on 'top secret' evidence which our justice system wisely challenged: Zaoui was freed. Here Muslim women can wear traditional dress in public; universities and hospitals accommodate Islamic religious and cultural needs, and around the country the different cultures and faiths meet harmoniously in small, creative groups like the the Dunedin Abrahamic Interfaith Group and the Auckland Council of Christians and Muslims.

Jesus' challenge to love our enemies is made more difficult when leaders, talk-back radio and blogs clamour for vengeance and mock compassion as 'unpatriotic'. They do not see that humanity is one family. It takes courage to stand against this tsunami of bigotry and racism.

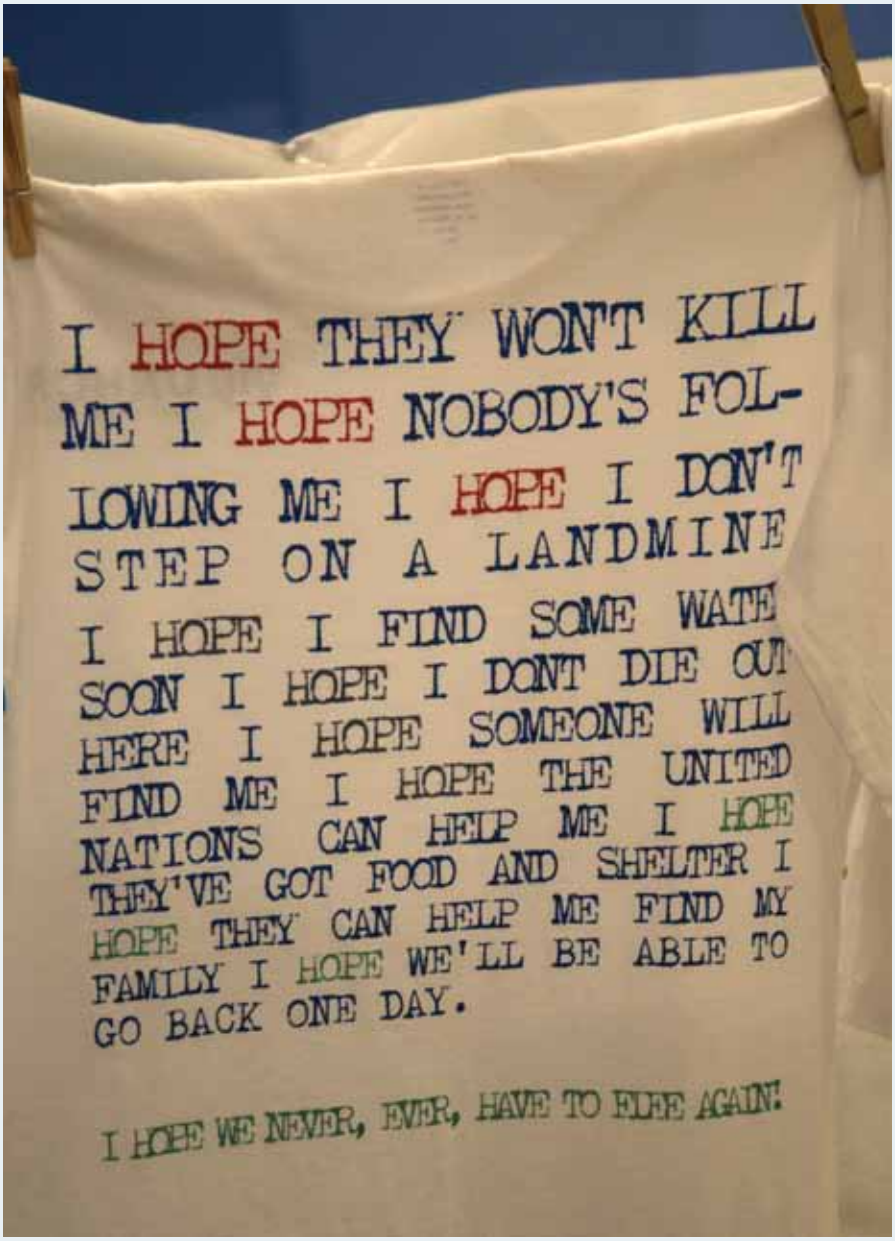
We do not yet know what sick minds planned to destroy the World Trade Centre. Was it young Saudi Arabians, or others who used them in an unspeakable scheme to drag us towards barbarism? Their crimes not only killed the 3000 unfortunates on that day; they diminished truth and tolerance. But because "all things work together for good for those who love God" (Rm 8:28) can we each use this anniversary to learn from the crimes and their consequences, and locally build up trust and friendship between peoples? ■

the baby and the bathwater

Mary Britt

There is a seismic shift in the way asylum seekers can be treated after a recent High Court of Australia decision. The writer outlines what has happened before this, and possibilities for the future.

Recently a *Sydney Morning Herald* cartoonist used this heading "the baby and the bathwater" to sum up Australia's current refugee policy: Australia's humanitarian reputation being thrown out in the Government's 'Malaysian Solution'. For many of us, that baby was thrown out at least ten years ago when Captain Arne Rinnan, Master of the *Tampa*, was asked to rescue people from the sinking *Palapa* and then forbidden to put them ashore on Australian soil. The shame of that drama and its human aftermath, the anger at what was done in our name can still rise to the surface as we meet asylum seekers from Africa, China, Sri Lanka or the Middle East at Villawood in western Sydney. This is one of several Immigration Detention Centres around Australia where asylum seekers await the often lengthy determinations of their claims.



policy with a human face

It's in these detention centres we meet the human face of our refugee policy. Vividly remembered is the story of one Congolese man who had dared to speak against the violence devastating his country. One Thursday he was with us at the Eucharist, leading the singing with gusto. Next Thursday he was gone, without warning. Returned to the Congo with his life in danger, he fled again. In 2004 I interviewed him in South Africa where he is still, with no rights at all and no hope of rejoining his wife and family. Now we are meeting men from Sri Lanka who have been granted refugee status but are waiting many months later for the result of security checks. As we hope and pray with them, we share their anxiety. Why this delay? Will they, too, be deported to danger as some before them have been?

loaded dice

The politics of fear and the politics of popularity still load the dice against people arriving from the sea to seek asylum. For ten years, policy has been bolstered by the 'border protection' slogan, as though fragile boats approaching our shores carried an invading army. A new Government slogan, 'stop the people smugglers', focuses attention on 'criminals' who profit from asylum seekers' need, a new bid to attract public support. The Opposition meanwhile plies the politics of fear with its own slogan, 'stop the boats'.

policy based on self-interest

Despite the abolition of the so-called Pacific Solution and the Temporary Protection Visas, policy is still based on political self-interest, not on the fundamental human rights of asylum seekers and our obligations to them as a signatory to the international treaties which establish their rights. Mandatory detention still discriminates against 'boat people'; the ill effects on physical and mental health remain the same; the fear of anti-refugee feeling in the electorate is still paralysing political leadership. Currents of protest generated by a shelf full of books, two Senate Inquiries, two 'Deported to Danger' reports, a stream of criticism from lawyers, doctors, counsellors, journalists, film-makers, persistent advocates and satiric artists have not turned the political tide.

the malaysian solution

Witness the Malaysian Solution, a new attempt to sidestep Australia's responsibilities to the world's refugees. As soon as it was announced, this 'deal', to hand over 800 people seeking asylum in Australia to be processed entirely in Malaysia, was challenged by human rights advocates. How could we 'share responsibilities' with a nation which has not signed the Refugee Convention and does not have the word 'refugee' in its official vocabulary? How could we rely on an 'assurance', not binding in law, to guarantee that the rights of those people would be fully respected and protected? Willingness to take such risks with the lives of vulnerable people suggests a lamentable absence of principled debate in the negotiations. Once more we would be paying others to do our international duty.

the high court decision

Now the High Court has endorsed all the protests, declaring the Malaysian plan invalid and setting three conditions to be met by any country to which asylum seekers might be sent to have their claims for protection assessed. Malaysia is ruled out. Papua New Guinea and Nauru are considered unlikely to meet the Court's criteria. The Government is mired in a morass partly inherited, partly of its own making.

Fr Frank Brennan summed up the new state of affairs: "Asylum seekers arriving by boat now need to be processed fairly, promptly, on our terms and on our turf. And that's the way it should have been all along." We are cautiously hopeful. According to an opinion poll taken shortly before the Court's decision, 53% of Australians now agree with him. The High Court has in fact offered the Government a golden opportunity to do what justice demands: proceed immediately to clear the protection claims of the 5000 plus people currently in demoralising detention on the mainland or Christmas Island and make ready, with our ample resources, to welcome and deal humanely with those who may seek asylum in future.

'human rights bible'

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (*1948) proclaimed the freedom, dignity and equal fundamental rights of every person born into the human family. After the horrors of two world wars it became, as it were, the 'human rights bible'. By signing and ratifying the Refugee Convention we have bound our nation to uphold those rights for asylum seekers. Until that obligation is incorporated into our national law we can find ways to evade it.

christian bible

For a Christian, however, human rights also fall under a Divine imperative: you must love your neighbour as yourself. Again and again the Hebrew prophets called their people to care for the most vulnerable among them, typified by their widows and orphans. Micah summed up the message: *What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God* ? (Micah 6:8)

On a memorable day in the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus made his own Isaiah's cry for an end to the oppression and destitution spawned by greed (Luke 4:16-22). In the Gospel's most familiar parable, the robbed and wounded man on the roadside is Everyman, a paradigm of suffering humanity; the Samaritan, a paradigm of the Christian disciple. Suffering humanity is on our doorstep in every person seeking asylum with us. Robbed of their rights at home, they come bearing in body and spirit the wounds injustice inflicts.

Faced with the challenge to love them as ourselves, those of us who claim the Christian name do well to recall the most compelling claim of that Divine imperative: *As often as you do it to the least of my brothers or sisters, you do it to me* (Matthew 25:40). ■

Mary Britt is a Dominican Sister and former prioress of her congregation. For years she has been part of a volunteer support group visiting detainees at Villawood each week.

picking up the pieces

Mike Fitzsimons

Accepting refugees into New Zealand is one part of the picture. Doing what's required to help them settle is another thing altogether.

New Zealand has provided a safe haven for a quota of refugees ever since it accepted 753 Polish children and 105 accompanying adults at the end of the Second World War. These days, under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) quota scheme, we put our hand up to accept 750 refugees annually — a respectable number internationally but a modest contribution given the global scale of the problem.

The UNHCR estimates that there are 10-12 million refugees worldwide and a massive 40 million displaced persons. A refugee is defined by UNHCR as "a person who flees his/her home country due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

"Internationally we are ranked highly on the basis of our acceptance of refugees," says Amanda Calder, refugee advocate and the driving force behind the Refugee Family Reunification Trust, a Wellington-based charity dedicated to reuniting refugees with their families.

"New Zealand does its fair share but there's always room for improvement. I'd always be for increasing the number of refugees that New Zealand takes but before we do that we should be looking after the ones that we have already accepted, and their families. In my opinion, our UNHCR Refugee Quota Programme should cater better for family reunification."

There are three ways that a refugee may be accepted for permanent residence in New Zealand. They may be part of the 750 quota which New Zealand accepts as part of the UNHCR Refugee Quota Programme. The majority of these refugees in the 1990s and early 2000s were from East African countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan, and more recently from countries in the Asia Pacific region such as Cambodia and Myanmar.

Refugee Mohammad Amiri (centre) reunites with his family at Wellington airport, January 2011. Reuniting families has a huge impact on how well refugees settle here.

A second group of refugees who may be eligible for residency are asylum-seekers, often referred to as 'spontaneous refugees'.

> "It's a long and frustrating wait and time is running out. If a job is not found soon, the case will be declined."

"The arrival of asylum seekers in New Zealand is happening less and less due to advance passenger screening by airlines," says Amanda. "It's a different story if you are bordering other countries but we are so far away. We have fewer asylum seekers than most countries, much fewer than Australia is facing. For those that do make it to New Zealand, there are laws and protections."

The third way that refugees can come to New Zealand is via general immigration visa categories, including the Refugee Family Support Category, or family-sponsored categories. This group is not considered by the New Zealand government to be official 'refugees', even though they may have been living as refugees. They do not undergo orientation and they or their sponsors have to pay the costs associated with their travel and arrival – a tall order when the families supporting them are themselves refugees.

A total of 300 places are available through the Refugee Family Support Category programme. However New Zealand policy narrowly defines 'family', restricting it to the immediate family of the principal applicant. This definition ignores the reality of kinship ties which characterise refugee family networks.

Says Amanda: "There should be a family reunification component within the UNHCR Refugee Quota Programme that allows for refugees to bring in their families. Currrently we have 750 people arrive here each year, and within a matter of weeks

they typically need help to reunite with an elderly mother or a child left behind. It's a big job to pick up the pieces."

Reuniting with their families is the major concern for former refugees living in New Zealand. It is the key to refugees successfully making a new life in New Zealand – without the support of family members, refugees coming from traumatised backgrounds often struggle to integrate into New Zealand society.

"When you have a split family, they are going to struggle to resettle and be happy," says Amanda. "It's very hard for them to focus on employment and education and contributing to the community when they are unhappy. *Wellington Refugees as Survivors*, a mental health service for refugees, finds that more than 80% of their clients can be discharged as soon as their families arrive.

"Reuniting families has a hugely positive impact on mental health. It would be cheaper in the long run to have families together than not. There are still refugees who have been here for many years who have children or other significant family members left behind."

The critical importance of family reunification to successful refugee settlement led to the establishment of the *Refugee Family Reunification Trust,* a Wellington-based charity which has successfully reunited more than 300 refugees with their families. Every cent of funds raised is passed on to refugees and their families for airfares, medical reports and application fees charged by Immigration New Zealand.

"A similar Trust is being set up in Auckland, and the Hamilton Catholic Diocese is also looking at setting up one," says Amanda. Christchurch has a similar Trust but is struggling to fundraise in the earthquake-hit region.

"There are also plenty of people and organisations in the community who are getting involved in helping refugees settle successfully," says Amanda.

"A lot of communities are doing great work behind the scenes – St Vincent de Paul for example, Rotary and service clubs, colleges and church communities. St Joseph's parish where I go has been fantastic. My message to people is that if anyone reaches out to a refugee and makes an effort either to be friendly or to help them, their own life will also be greatly enriched by it. "

A qualified lawyer, Amanda has been working in the field for 17 years and was recently awarded a QSM for services to the community. In addition to founding and running the *Refugee Family Reunification Trust*, she is a volunteer at the *Wellington Community Law Centre*, and was instrumental in setting up the *Refugee Immigration Legal Advice Service*.

"It's very satisfying work, though sometimes there is too much of it! There's nothing better than going to the airport and seeing a family getting back together again." ■

THE LONG WAIT

The heartbreak and frustration of trying to re-unite a refugee family are typified by the case of Habiba Shire.

Habiba came to New Zealand with her husband's niece in 2001 to join her husband who had settled here four years earlier. For the last decade this threesome — living in Newtown, Wellington — has been the family unit, a world away from a mother, three brothers and a sister living in Kenya and Somalia.

"It's very stressful living without family. I'm the only one here from my own family. It's very lonely," says Habiba. "Every day you hear bad news from back home which adds to the stress."

Habiba applied to bring her brother Ibrahim, who is currently in the Hagardhere refugee camp in Kenya, to New Zealand on the basis of an immigration policy that required him to have an offer of fulltime employment. "Life in the camp is getting more desperate by the day, with more and more refugees fleeing famine and drought in Somalia," says Habiba.

"It's so hard to get a job offer for someone who is not here," she says. "Employers have waiting lists full of people who are here now. But we tried and tried, and thanks to the help of the Somali social worker we finally managed to get him the offer of a position at a local supermarket."

The offer from the employer was held open for several years while Ibrahim's case was in a queue at Immigration New Zealand. The job offer however has now lapsed due to a change of ownership and so the search has started again for a new job offer.

Without that job offer, Immigration New Zealand requirements mean there is no other option for Ibrahim and his family to come to New Zealand. It's a long and frustrating wait and time is running out. If a job is not found soon, the case will be declined.

Finding a job is perhaps the hardest thing about settling in New Zealand as a refugee, says Habiba. She herself has faced many challenges.

"I wear a headscarf for religious reasons and many employers insist on us not wearing a headscarf, so I have to walk away. I have worked as a cleaner at motels and hotels, where I can wear a scarf and a uniform. I now provide childcare for local children here in my home."

Despite the great cultural contrasts with life back home, a decade of living in New Zealand has brought a sense of belonging, she says.

"I couldn't cope with the weather at first. I used to sit by the heater all the time. But now I'm getting used to the weather, I'm getting used to everything. I'm a Kiwi now. All I'm missing is my family." ■

"we belong to two countries now"

Jean Pierre Karabadogombo and Clotilde Kayunzuguru and their family of four boys have been in New Zealand since 2000. They came as refugees. **Tui Motu** *interviewed them at their home in West Auckland.*

Hospitality is Clotilde and Jean Pierre's first thought when I arrive at their home in Massey, West Auckland. I am pressed to eat and drink and made to feel at home with them. They have just returned from their first visit in 17 years to Burundi, their country of origin. They had fled from there as refugees ("then we were young!")

Clotilde and Jean Pierre in their Massey garden

burundi revisited

"Going back to Burundi after 17 years was an exciting time." Trying to discern from New Zealand, they were not sure whether it was safe enough for them to go back. "However, weighing the ups and downs, we decided to give it a go. The main objective was to see parents and relatives. You can imagine how exciting it was to hug each other after such a long time… Each day was a feasting day!" They spent time with Jean Pierre's 80 year old frail mother, still living in her own home near his brother. Her husband was killed in the civil war and other relatives on Clotilde's side of the family have also been killed. These memories remain difficult and close.

"Burundians have recovered their freedom of movement for the moment. You can go anywhere without fear of being arrested and killed because of your ethnic look." Clotilde and Jean Pierre had gone to Rwanda for work and lived there happily for many years. All four of their children were born there. They returned to Burundi in 1993 when the first democratically based elections were held: to take part in the hope generated by this. "This period of hope was short-lived. The brutal assassination of the first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, sparked a long-lasting civil war. Fleeing was a matter of life or death." In fact, the civil war continued from then until 2008, when Nelson Mandela brokered a lasting peace.

thoughts of return?

Asked if they had thoughts of returning to Burundi permanently, Jean Pierre said, "Yes, we are open to give our contribution to the healing of our birth country if the peace process lasts." They could return to Burundi. He would have the opportunity to do many things, as he has useful business and managerial skills. He says that the majority of the Burundian people who have jobs are employed by the government. Burundi desperately needs people who have the know-how to undertake private enterprise. This would be one positive way to advance the possibilities of local people to obtain new and worthwhile work. ("Unless they do this, they will not make their way in the international world of business.") He smiled as he recalled how he had told the story of his life since fleeing to a good friend while in Burundi. His friend's immediate

response was, "You won't do that again, will you? It's just too hard." Jean Pierre admits to being pulled two ways. To return permanently to Burundi is constantly on his mind. However, he says, "I think we belong now to two countries. New Zealand is our new home. We have built a strong relationship here. We are New Zealand citizens. At the same time we have family and friends in Burundi… The ideal situation would be to open avenues for cooperation between the two countries to the benefit of both societies. The world has become a small village."

becoming a refugee

The family's story of coming to New Zealand reflects the great political upheaval that took place in and around Rwanda and Burundi. In late 1993 the whole family fled back to Rwanda. Soon after, virtually all of Rwanda was forced to flee to the Congo. "If you don't feel safe, you have to go somewhere else," said Clotilde. Both acknowledged that while becoming a refugee was not a matter of choice, it still required both courage and trust to leave everything behind, especially their close-knit family. They were forced to flee country borders three times: from Burundi, Rwanda and the Congo. "It is a tough decision but once it is a matter of life and death you have to go, especially for the lives of the children." Clotilde and the two younger boys, Jules and Justin, were able to fly to Nairobi. Later on, the older boys, Yves and Didier, came to Nairobi via Bukavu in the Congo.

the gift of a passport

The family was among those who were fortunate enough to have passports. "We moved around a lot to get away from the fighting as the political situation changed." Jean Pierre was unable to come to Kenya, as it was accepting only Burundian women and children as refugees. Finally he was able to get to Douala in the Cameroun where he worked as an accountant in a development agency until Clotilde called him to come to New Zealand, through our family resettlement programme.

> "I think we belong now to two countries. New Zealand is our new home. We have built a strong relationship here. We are New Zealand citizens."

patient care

In Nairobi, Clotilde was lucky enough to work as a schoolteacher for French-speaking refugee children. She found scholarships for the boys to study, and the Jesuit Refugee Service helped monetarily each month. All the while, Clotilde searched for a country willing to accept them. It required all of Clotilde's patience and perseverance to keep on going to the UNHCR and asking for help. Finally, New Zealand, through the UNHCR, accepted Clotilde and the four boys. But they had to wait two years – a time of terrible uncertainty, compounded by the fact that Somali refugees had higher priority at that time. They arrived in New Zealand in February 2000. Jean Pierre's resettlement acceptance came quickly, and he landed here in October the same year.

in new zealand

Since arriving in New Zealand, two of the boys have completed university degrees and married. And now there are two grandchildren. The other two young men are still studying and doing student jobs. Clotilde is rightly proud of the fact that, while supervising the family's resettlement here, she has also been able to qualify in nursing care. Another such moment for the family was the day in 2008 that father and son graduated from Auckland University of Technology together: Jules with a bachelor's degree in information technology; and Jean Pierre with a Master's degree in business studies. This degree is proudly displayed on the walls of their living room.

Jean Pierre was able to find voluntary work as an accountant for the Auckland City Mission. Then the Christian Blind Mission International (Cbmi), which helps people all over the world suffering disability, offered him full time employment. More recently he has become their Business Manager. And Clotilde works as a nurse-aide for people with disabilities.

adapting to a new home

Both Clotilde and Jean Pierre are profoundly grateful for being here in New Zealand. "It is our home." Adapting to New Zealand culture, however, has had its difficulties. The boys adapted more quickly through their schooling mainly. Jean Pierre and Clotilde miss the more inclusive society of Burundi, where everybody knows you, and everybody talks easily with neighbours. After seven years living in the same house in West Massey, there is little communication. They say, "It is hard for us not to have easy communication with our neighbours."

This is undoubtedly a refugee success story. Behind all that has happened lie the courage, the trust, the persistence and resilience of both parents and children. Moreover, it is clear Clotilde's strength and determination got the family to New Zealand. Many times Clotilde says that she was tempted to give up. "Prayer and the thought of the children's future kept me going." They still do. ■

from sheik to chef

Lorna Johnson

Lorna Johnson interviewed Ahmed Zaoui for Tui Motu.
His journey from asylum seeker to citizen is one of many twists and turns.
He is New Zealand's best-known asylum seeker.

Ahmed Zaoui and his youngest son, Yousef, at their home in Palmerston North.

The former Islamic scholar turned Kiwi kebab business owner chuckles as he tells me how he described his change of circumstances to a friend over the telephone. 'From sheikh* to chef' is how he succinctly encapsulates the twenty years of upheaval, persecution and flight which eventually led him to his new career, selling kebabs from his aptly named 'Desert Rose' caravan in the square of Palmerston North.

his story

Ahmed's story is well known: following his election as an MP for the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria, the outgoing government overturned the result and persecuted their opponents. Ahmed and his family were forced to flee, and there followed many years of moving from country to country looking for a safe place to stay. He arrived in New Zealand in 2002 and requested asylum. He was immediately arrested.

For someone who spent his first two years in New Zealand imprisoned as a suspected terrorist, and a further three arguing in the courts with the help of his lawyer, Deborah Manning, for the removal of the security risk certificate issued against him, Ahmed Zaoui is remarkably positive about his experiences here. "I felt sad to be accused of being a terrorist, but I knew I was innocent and I believed in the system of justice in New Zealand". He admits, however, that he didn't expect it would take five years before he would be cleared of the accusations of terrorism and granted residency on the basis of his refugee status. The arrival, in 2007, of his wife Leila and four sons from Malaysia was 'the best thing that has happened to me' since he has been in New Zealand.

his place now

These days he enjoys the peace and tranquillity of Palmerston North, where he leads a quiet life compared to his time in Algeria when he was an Associate Professor of Theology at the University of Algiers. "People were always coming to me for advice there." If the change in role has been difficult for him, he does not mention it. He still closely follows events in Algeria, where his father, brothers and sisters live, but is no longer active politically. Although he would love to return to his country of birth, he is still considered an opponent of the government and so would not be safe. It makes him sad to think he cannot return and he continues to be concerned about the safety of his relatives there, as well as the future of Algeria.

On becoming a New Zealand citizen (he will be eligible to apply next year), he plans to travel to meet his family in a third country, since he hasn't seen them for 20 years and "they have played a big role in

*Sheikh is an Arabic word for an Islamic scholar.

my life, especially my Dad." He is still hopeful of peaceful democratic change for Algeria so that "my people can be free" and fears seeing the sort of turmoil and loss of life that has characterised recent political change in Tunisia and Libya.

reluctant celebrity

New Zealand's most famous asylum seeker is clearly a reluctant celebrity, but when pressed tells how 'over a hundred' people have come to shake his hand since he opened the Desert Rose in May last year. A particularly touching example he recalls is that of an older lady who travelled from Auckland with a card decorated with a flower and containing a poem for him. Others have come from Wellington and Whanganui and the response from the public has generally been a positive one. He enjoys the social interaction that comes with his customer focussed role and is often seen in conversation with his customers.

On a recent visit to Auckland he noticed three police officers paying him particular attention whilst he was driving and he immediately checked his seatbelt, worrying that he had committed some offence, but as they passed him they simply waved and said "Hi Ahmed." He is still surprised by the friendly manner of our police service, which contrasts markedly with what he was accustomed to in Algeria. Both he and his wife are still afraid of police as a result of their previous experiences.

Inevitably not everyone has been welcoming and I ask him how he felt about some of the negative comments posted on his *Trade Me* auction for the first kebab from the Desert Rose. "It was interesting to see the image some people had of me" he replies tactfully, explaining that he enjoyed the opportunity to engage people in debate.

his values

In prison he turned to poetry, which along with his faith, and the optimistic spirit he has inherited from his father, sustained him through the ordeal.

"The first night in prison, I had no paper so I started writing my first poem on the bed sheets", he explains. He wrote a series of 24 poems during his imprisonment, the first ten months of which was spent in solitary confinement. They were published in a book called *Migrant Birds* and one, *He will come back, the one I'm waiting for*, was subsequently declared the most important New Zealand poem of 2005. (My personal favourite, detailing the amusing questions he was asked by other prisoners in Paremoremo Prison, is "What is the Algerian for 'rugby'?"). He says he meditated often on the prophets and how they had all suffered during their lives, and he tried to use the time to cleanse himself spiritually.

rest and support

In some respects, he says, his time in prison gave him some much needed rest. His wife prayed to God to send him people to support him, and it seems those prayers were answered. The many letters he received from ordinary New Zealanders provided moral support and he reminded himself that there were other people worse off than him.

On his release from prison he was in the care of the Dominican Friars at Newton in Auckland, a period he looks back on fondly. When I show him a copy of *Tui Motu* he smiles, "Ah yes, there were a lot of these there!" He has always enjoyed cooking and practised his culinary skills on the friars.

ways of serving

Interestingly, it was an invitation to a football tournament that first brought him to Palmerston North. He still plays regularly, mostly as a midfielder, in a social side with his sons. A keen Arsenal supporter, he talks knowledgably about his team's prospects for next year. Although he will take an interest in the Rugby World Cup, it is clear that soccer is his main sporting enthusiasm. Leila says how much she likes living in Palmerston North and we chat about schools, and Ahmed's need to keep busy as she pours us mint tea.

Ahmed would like to return to study and is particularly interested in developing skills in conflict resolution, but the pressing need to provide for his family has meant those plans have to be put on hold for the moment. So what would he be doing if his life hadn't taken such an unexpected turn 20 years ago?

"I would be a teacher," he replies, "but I am still serving people as a chef." ■

THE SECRET OF MY RESISTANCE

The biggest sin is to be pessimistic

Today is your day, so live it as a better day

The biggest obstacle is to indulge your spirit[1]

The best refreshment in life is having a clear conscience

The worst bankruptcy in life is to lose compassion

The biggest need in life is the ability to adjust to each other

The worst feeling — worse even than rejoicing in the suffering of others — is being indifferent

The best gift in life is companionship

The greatest moment in life is isolation… because it permits rediscovery of oneself

The deepest knowledge in life is faith, because in this you will be free and unique.

Ahmed Zaoui

[1]indulgence of self, vanity or self-conceit.

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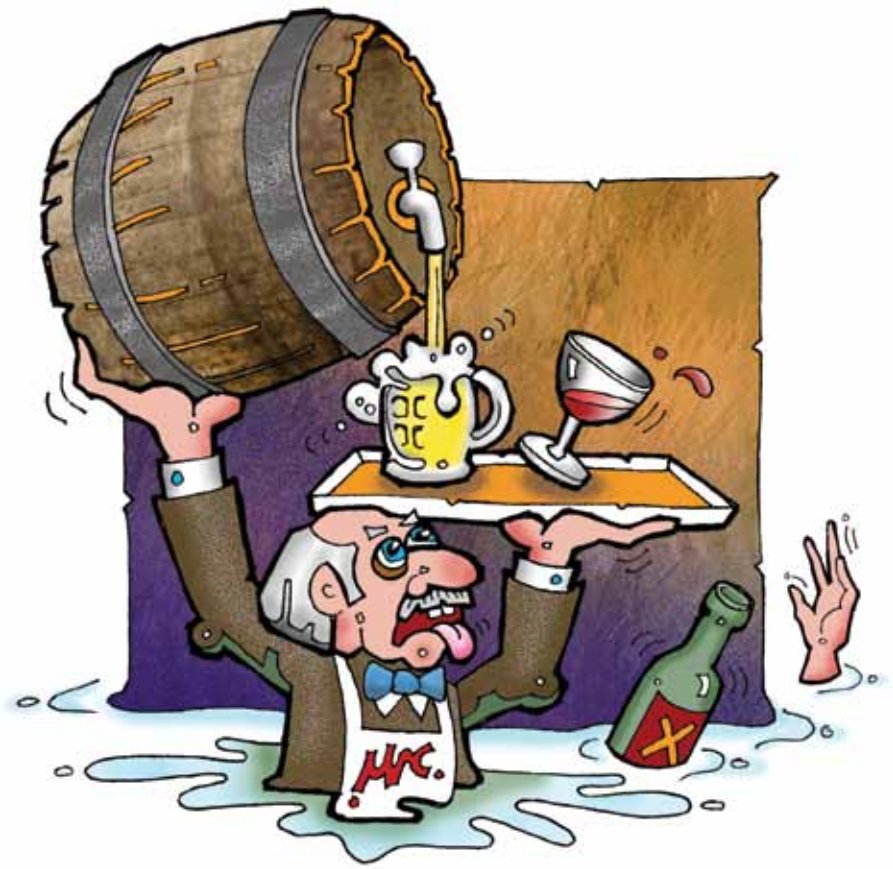
"whadda ya know?"

The question of how to look at the problems with the consumption of alcohol in New Zealand using scientific evidence is the day-to-day work of Professor Doug Sellman, Director of the National Addiction Centre in Christchurch. Dr. Sellman is a psychiatrist who has been working in the field of addiction treatment in New Zealand for the past 26 years. Tui Motu *asked him about his specialist field.*



Tell us about your alcohol advocacy work

I see it as informing New Zealanders about the best scientific information available in relation to alcohol and how to get better control of it. It began with a group of colleagues in the addiction treatment field, which is undergoing 'a renaissance' in terms of public health issues associated with addiction. I am now one of the medical spokespeople for Alcohol Action NZ, an organization set up at the same time as the Law Commission's review of the alcohol laws, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to review our nation's use of alcohol.

It appears that NZ has a larger problem with alcohol than lots of other western countries. Do you agree, and what might be the causes of this?

New Zealand is up there in terms of alcohol-related harm. When you pour a potentially dangerous drug into a society the amount of resulting harm will depend on both the amount of alcohol that's poured, as well as the strength of the society its being poured into. New Zealand has a high per capita consumption and has become one of the most unequal societies in the developed world over the past 20-30 years. Along with this, New Zealand has a highly unregulated alcohol market in which alcohol businesses can flourish. This excessive commercialisation of alcohol leads to a perfect recipe for a heavy drinking culture — low prices, highly accessible to young people, highly accessible to the whole population and normalised as a routine grocery item, over $300,000 a day of alcohol marketing and legal drunk driving for adults.

The combination of these three main factors (lots of alcohol, weakening society, 'unbridled' commercialisation) underlie the national alcohol crisis — New Zealand's heavy drinking culture.

What do you mean by "legal drunk driving"?

By "legal drunk driving" I mean we have the system whereby people over the limit of the medical definition of intoxication (0.05) are able to drive legally. At 0.08, New Zealand has one of the highest drink driving limits for adults in the developed world. Australia, like many other Western countries, has a drink driving limit of 0.05; and many are contemplating lowering it even further.

It seems that binge drinking is the in-thing for young adults. Would you like to comment on this, and the effects of binge drinking on our young adults?

A fairly standard definition of binge drinking is drinking six or more standard drinks in a session. Many young adults however drink two to three times that amount and therefore are getting close to consuming a lethal dose, which is 20-30 standard drinks.

The reasons why binge drinking is fashionable are complex but one thing

we know for sure — the alcohol industry just loves young adults drinking as much as they do because more than half of their astronomical profit comes from heavy drinking. They carefully stoke the binge drinking fire with very clever brain-washing advertising.

They have begun to put comments such as 'drink responsibly' on some beverage containers to try and look respectable, but this is just a smoke screen. They know they are in the drug business and they know the damage that individuals and communities suffer from their product, but they refuse to put a suggested dose on the container. Low risk drinking is drinking fewer than14 standard drinks per week and no more than four drinks on any one occasion. That level of drinking gives the consumer a 1% chance of dying of an alcohol related cause over their lifetime. There is no 'safe' use of alcohol except drinking no alcohol.

Alcohol is a drug that can be one of life's small pleasures and comforts when taken in a low risk manner. However, when used in excess, alcohol causes depression, aggression, brain damage and cancer for starters. Over 60 different medical conditions are linked with heavy alcohol use. There are over 1000 alcohol-related deaths per year (20 every week), and over 70,000 alcohol-related physical and sexual assaults per year (200 every day).

What values are being undermined in our society by general misuse of alcohol?

Does our society have an agreed set of values? If so, please let me know what they are.

Drug use is a short cut, pseudo-solution to life's challenges and problems. Habitually drinking alcohol, instead of working on these problems, will lead to a stalled, dysfunctional life.

This is not a moral crusade though. We are simply doing our jobs and promoting evidence-based solutions to New Zealand's damaging heavy drinking culture.

There are complex issues that underlie alcohol addiction. Would you comment on that?

Alcohol addiction is described medically as a 'complex disorder' which means that it is caused by multiple environmental factors interacting with multiple genetic influences. Best estimates at the current time are that the genetic influence could involve 300-400 interacting genes. So the environmental influences which twenty years ago seemed so bewilderingly varied and complex now seem much simpler in comparison. At the heart of environmental influences for every addiction is an industry scheming to make us and our children their customers for life. Addiction to alcohol, like every other addiction, involves an 'apprenticeship' in which consumption of the addictive product is practised until it becomes compulsively second-nature. The industry's strategic plan is to get as many New Zealanders undertaking this practice, drinking heavily and frequently, and hoping that many will become habitual heavy drinkers.

Are there ways that society can be tapped to help overcome alcohol abuse?

There is a strong body of international research that outlines how a society can reduce its alcohol-related problems. This body of research was assembled in the 2003 World Health Organisation sponsored publication "Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity" (second edition, 2010). Its main findings are summarized in the 5+ Solution of Alcohol Action NZ (which you'll notice is the opposite of the perfect recipe above):

1. Raise alcohol prices
2. Raise the purchase age
3. Reduce alcohol accessibility
4. Reduce alcohol marketing (advertising and sponsorship)
5. Increase drink-driving counter measures PLUS increase treatment opportunities for heavy drinkers.

Crucially, education programmes have been shown to be of very little use in reducing alcohol-related harm.

The Law Commission's review of the liquor laws reflects this solution very well, but it now needs a government to lead effective alcohol law reform.

There's little problem getting smoking effectively banned. Why is this not also possible for alcohol?

You are understating the enormous struggle that has occurred in New Zealand over the last 50 years regarding the smoking culture! The result of that struggle is now being realised, and yes, you're right, the thought of no smoking at all in New Zealand is not a scary thought now. We are at the beginning of a similar struggle with alcohol, where we were with smoking perhaps in the 1960s. However, the end game for alcohol is likely to be different because a lot more of the population are able to drink alcohol in a low risk manner compared with the numbers who are able (or want) to smoke in a low risk manner. Low risk smoking is smoking fewer than 5 cigarettes a week.

So the equivalent of Smokefree is Heavydrinkingfree, not Alcoholfree.

Are there bi-partisan ways of making effective government policy against alcohol abuse?

We will need political champions across the spectrum to bring about change — as has occurred with tobacco. At the current time, alcohol is not an election issue because Labour is not putting up alcohol policy that is significantly different from National's. But let's wait and see. ■

Dr Doug Sellman, a psychiatrist and addiction medicine specialist, has been Director of the National Addiction Centre (NAC), University of Otago, Christchurch, since 1996. In recent years, he has become actively involved in evidence-based national advocacy for alcohol law reform, and is one of the medical spokespeople for Alcohol Action NZ. (www.alcohol action.co.nz)

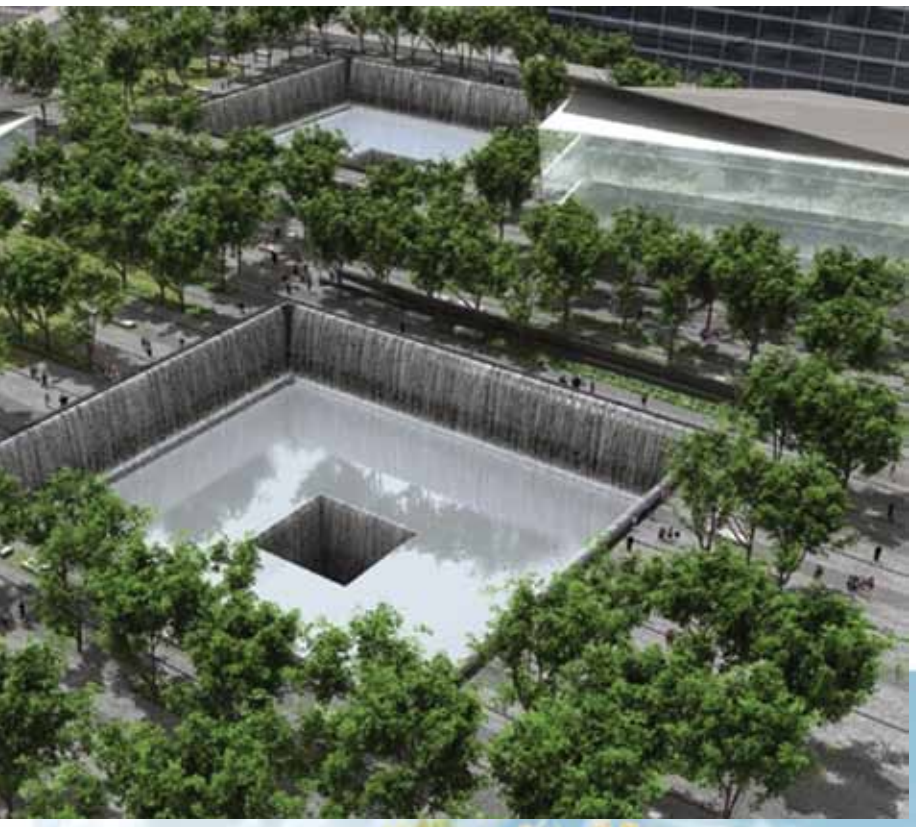
Memory and hope: New Y

Ten years after 9/11, the memorial at the World Trade Centre site has been opened in the presence of Presidents Obama and Bush jnr. The twin reflecting pools (symbolizing the feet of the twin towers) and the garden of white oak trees are a tribute to memory and hope. This memorial is based on ideas of Daniel Libeskind, who won the competition to become the master plan architect for the reconstruction of the WTC site. He regards architecture as 'the most spiritual' of arts. When first thinking about a memorial, he knew that he had to combine the tragedy of terrible deaths with looking to the future with hope – a tough call: memory and hope. Going down into the foundations he saw the great slurry wall as the surviving element of the attacks. It is an engineering wonder: bedrock foundations, holding back the Hudson River. This he saw was the link to the future upon which all would be rebuilt. It is at this level that the memorial museum and the memorial with its garden and waterfalls are situated, a quiet meditative spiritual space going down 30 feet below the slurry wall. As Libeskind said, "Gardens are a constant affirmation of life." This metaphor speaks volumes.

Christchurch is a garden city. It has hope built into its foundations. Beyond the terror of the shaking and the tragic loss of life, it is wonderful to see the plans for its rebuilding. This sense of rebirth, of creating anew a hope-filled place, is at the heart of the plans as drawn up. Yes, there will be a memory here, too, of the horror of the shaking and destruction; at the same time, through careful architectural planning, some healing of quaking and brokenness will take place.

Thanks to the Christchurch City Council for permission to reprint this indicative image of the Avon River/ Ōtakaro.

ork and Christchurch



Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away... the angel showed me the river of the water of life... On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. (Rev 21-1;22:1-3)

take away the carapace

Daniel O'Leary

For many people their greatest fear is of public humiliation and disgrace. But Jesus' own example teaches that such a stripping away of reputation is a necessary purification and a way to grace.

As he wrote out the prescription, the doctor said: "Camouflage cream should do it." The pink vitiligo patches on my friend's face would never be healed, he said, but they could, at least, be covered up. As we left the surgery, we spoke about our preoccupation with hiding all kinds of things in all kinds of ways at many levels of our lives.

The recent focus on the provision of super-injunctions for the protection of the privileged, on the denials of our politicians regarding their hidden expenses claims, and on the current hacking scandals involving police, government and media, carries a profound threat to the fragile grace of trust without which any society cannot remain healthy and safe for long.

Albert Einstein's astute observation that "the last thing to collapse is the surface" remains shockingly relevant today. When the infrastructure of an institution is rotten there is nothing to bolster up the structure. When confidence goes the crash comes. The erosion of trust in Church and State in Ireland has brought the country to its knees. And it all looked so good for so long — but only on the surface.

Whether it has to do with our appearance, our popularity or the integrity of our organisations, we have a congenital desire to deny all flaws and imperfections. We tell lies, we scapegoat others, we sell our souls to save our face. Our deepest fear, it is often said, is the fear of being found out.

Like many others, I suppose I, too, carry a fear of public disgrace. At a time when so many of my brother priests are in the news for the wrong reasons, I wonder how I would respond to the charge of some crime. While the Sunday papers are blazing the details of it, would I turn up for Mass, as usual, to face the congregation? Or would I run and hide? There are thousands of us who silently worry about these things.

I remember a time when I experienced a small version of public shame. Even though it was in the context of a holistic and healing week, and even though everyone else there was battling with their own demons, it was still a shock to my system. My carefully crafted covers, masks and shells were ruthlessly removed, to reveal a very wounded, unfinished and unprotected inner creature. It was a classic moment of humiliation.

Our spiritual guides tell us that along the way of the soul, if it is to be truly transforming, an encounter with some kind of public shame is necessary. In their search for enlightenment, the Sufis call this the moment of malamat – when discredit and humiliation happen. There is no purification without humiliation. There is, they would say, a grace in disgrace.

"I tell holy people who come to me to pray for one good humiliation every day," writes Richard Rohr. "And then I tell them to keep careful watch over their reaction to those humiliations. That is the only way you can avoid religious grandiosity, and know that you are seeking God and not yourself."

> We grow into our true selves, not by adding more to them, but by stripping and emptying them of our addictions to power, prestige and popularity.

When reputations are suddenly destroyed, for one reason or another, some people just cannot hold their lives together any more. Their souls are crushed forever. There is nothing left for another beginning. But others, for whom the final dependence on human respect is broken, gradually begin to blossom in a new way. Something has been liberated inside them — a new and beautiful possibility.

The late Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago was a great and humble prophet of love. He had two deadly fears in his life — the fear of disgrace and the fear of cancer. After mid-life, they both struck. He spent 12 months of pure pain when he was falsely accused of criminal behaviour before he was finally acquitted. His cancer was then discovered and he soon died. But during his final few months, having faced the two great fears of his life, he walked tall, his friends said, elegant and graceful, a free man.

My own brush with public humiliation carried its slow graces — eventually I felt it was a breakthrough

into a deeper self-knowledge and authenticity. What took a beating was my ego. The ego prefers anything, just about anything, to falling, failing, being shown up. Usually it is a garrulous and devious tyrant, a confusing and ensnaring charlatan-self that usurps the reality of the true self, the God-Self.

"As long as we haven't unmasked the ego, it continues to hoodwink us, like a sleazy politician endlessly parading bogus promises, or a lawyer constantly inventing ingenious lies and defences," wrote Sogyal Rinpoche in his *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying.* "Again and again we give in to its demands."

As long as Jesus is the one we follow, then there is no avoiding the necessary humiliation in the painful stripping away of our vanity, our pretentious carapace, our titles, our reliance on a false and privileged exemption from the pursuit of inner authenticity. The outer shell must be pierced, the masks removed. Before it's too late, and if we are lucky, we may slowly and painfully discover our long deceit.

It was the hypocrisy of the priests of his time that got Jesus so mad. He just could not stomach their religious pretence. It enraged him. He had no problem with the outcasts, the disgraced public sinners, the utter failures and misfits of his society. Unlike us, he welcomed and healed them. But he could get nowhere with the whited sepulchres.

The Persian mystic Rumi's advice reminds us of the practice of the ancient Celtic public penances. Only such humiliating suffering, and our deepest reflection on it, will ever reveal to each one of us the *unum necessarium*, the one thing we were created for — the possession and celebration of our truest self.

Put what salve you have on yourself.
Point out to everyone the disease you are.
That's part of getting well.
When you lance yourself that way,
You become more merciful and wiser.

We grow into our true selves, not by adding more to them, but by stripping and emptying them of our addictions to power, prestige and popularity. What a dying it was for Jesus, and is for us, when our good name lies in smithereens around us. What is left in us when all is taken away? When our cover is blown, when the image is shattered, how do we look naked, ridiculed, crucified? It is not easy to look good on wood.

In the end, it all makes you wonder whether those shattering moments of public humiliation are necessary for the total purification of the human soul. They were for Jesus. Maybe such disgrace is the final grace – the last block to be removed, the last crutch to be kicked away, before we place our trust completely in the jealous heart of our human-God. ■

Fr Daniel O'Leary is a priest of the Leeds Diocese, UK. His website is www.djoleary.com

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we remember

Jenny Dawson

How do we want to value our past and how will we incorporate that into our ongoing secular and religious stories? The writer explores ways of doing this, ways to help honour our past present and future

"Sing with pride
Sing with joy
Sing today
Sing tomorrow
Sing them down
Sing them down
Brave comrades
We remember!"

These are lines from a song called "We Remember — Sing their names!" by Ewan MacColl. Listening to MacColl and Peggy Seegar singing them, on the LP *Naming of Names*, reminds me again of the transformative power of remembering. The names of Karen Silkwood, Nelson Mandela, James Connolly and others are chanted, to inspire and uplift, through the act of remembrance. There is a profound significance in the naming of individuals and the recalling of their lives, many of which ended unjustly and tragically. Incorporating their stories into our own gives a strength that at times overwhelms us with new commitment.

Our faith communities do something like this every time we break bread and drink the wine of eucharist, activating memory and hope. Remembering in this way is not only about the past but about joining with those who are named in order to glimpse, even to find the impetus to move towards, a fuller future in Christ.

place of the secular world

The secular world seems to look to the church to assist it to remember and commemorate. Certainly in this country there has in the past often been little confidence that communities can do these things well in the ways that have integrity for us in our day in this part of the world. Christians know about the language of metaphor and the use of symbols, and at times the tools of the church serve community functions well. Many clergy like me participate in local Anzac Day commemorations with very mixed feelings, especially as civic events on April 25 appear to grow more popular each year, yet raise huge issues about what we think we are commemorating.

> Often light peeps hopefully through the cracks as memories are cherished and nurtured into new life.

important days

We seem to be remembering many events at this time, both those that were warm and positive and those which were unwelcome and disturbing. Of course there was 9/11 (the event in the USA ten years ago but many of us also remembered the other 9/11, in Chile), the beginning of the Christchurch earthquakes, All Saints and All Souls days in November, and there are always personal and family commemorations being quietly kept.

seasonal changes

Often it is the season and changes of the natural world that remind me of an event. As the autumn days are beginning to colour our lives, so it must be my mother's anniversary. As the sun rises on an early summer morning, I will recall what I was doing long ago when I heard, "We have an unconfirmed report that President Kennedy is dead." So I find myself wondering, "What in the human psyche calls us to remember?" It seems to be of benefit to us to note the passing years and to reflect on not only the event but what since has happened in our relationships and our world. We create rituals with words and music and symbols not only to recall but to process and at best to help us integrate. Sometimes we build edifices. At our best we consider carefully, "What are helpful criteria for good remembering and ritualising?" For example, does what we are doing year after year allow people to move on to new life or become more stuck in rehearsing what happened? Does this build connections between people or polarise between 'them' and 'us'? Does this engage the past with the present and look to the future?

faith community patterns

Commemorations and remembrances must be more than rehearsing past pain or reviving past wrongs, if we as human beings are to be enriched and inspired by the remembering. In our faith communities the pattern of belong-behave-believe has replaced the traditional believe-behave-belong. Belonging comes through participating and simply being there, as happens at many commemorative events. Behaviour involves action, and lifestyle, that identifies with the event. Belief may then become shaped by the shared experience of being incorporated. So many people find themselves engaging with events

The Christchurch Earthquake Memorial Service in Hagley Park. Photo: Pastor Robert Erickson

by gathering, leaving flowers, seeing themselves as part of the usually loose community that has formed around whatever happened. In times of tragedy, flowers are laid on pavements, on roadsides, in parks and at gates, as people participate wordlessly but in a very visible and accessible way. The Christchurch earthquake commemoration in Hagley Park provided a community event for thousands who would not otherwise have had that experience of belonging or the opportunity to honour (by their behaviours) the emergency services and rescue workers, in a way that perhaps contributed to a new belief that there would be/could be a future for Christchurch.

Clearly the old community groups and familiar points of identification (eg family or village) have broken down. Society today has been described as an assortment of people "shipwrecked out at sea [needing to] put out their oar and row" (*The Hospitality of God,* Mary Gray Reeves and Peter Pelham). Remembrances and commemoration may provide — temporarily at least — a solid shore, a place to belong, a *turangawaewae* — or perhaps simply an oar with which to row.

relationships of value

Grief work today at best looks beyond the simplistic language of 'closure' and 'letting go', so beloved of journalists investigating tragedies, towards rather incorporating the loss in ongoing life and acknowledging that any relationship of value is simply not going to be allowed to slip away. Including our dead in ongoing life, to the extent of continuing conversations and accepting their role in shaping current experience, may be more healthy than forcing doors to close. Often light peeps hopefully through the cracks as memories are cherished and nurtured into new life.

Grief transforms our notions of temporality as we discover the past just will not stay in the past. Nor should it. For Christians, we do not say that Christ rose but we proclaim joyfully "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!" As Tipene O'Regan has said, "The Treaty always speaks," and maybe this applies also to other happenings that some would confine to history books. If the past is to be vibrant and relevant for us perhaps that requires the past event to be in continuing conversation with present and thus for the remembering to change how we live into the future.

remembering empowers

The process of "We remember — sing their names!" empowers and makes present but more importantly keeps the people of our story living in our reality today. We may need to be intentional in our decision-making about how we want to value the past and in what ways we want to incorporate in our ongoing story.

Ewan McColl, writer of "We remember" said, "My function is not to reassure people. I want to make them uncomfortable. To send them out of the place arguing and talking". Perhaps commemoration at best will always do this. A Christian approach to remembering and commemorating calls us to be dynamic, open to change, and not simply rehearsing the past. ■

Jenny Dawson is currently Anglican Vicar of Pauatahanui in the Wellington Diocese and soon to move to Waiapu Diocese as Bishop's Chaplain for the Hawkes Bay Region.

did the 'first cab of the rank' go into top gear?

Colin Campbell

In Britain, the new translation of the Order of Mass has started being introduced into parishes, while in pioneering New Zealand it has been in use since Advent last year. Here, one of its bishops explains what happened when he asked the faithful for their response.

As a bishop, I have been concerned about the proposed new changes in liturgical language in the Mass. As has become evident, there are big question marks over what is proposed and the process by which it came about. We need to remember that generally priests, religious and lay people were never consulted about these changes. One has to acknowledge, as would be the experience of English-speaking bishops' conferences, that what they finally voted for will not be the end product. What the International Commission on English in the Liturgy submitted was taken over by *Vox Clara,* which made further substantial changes. Since New Zealand was the 'first cab off the rank' (apart from South Africa which apparently 'jumped the gun'), I took the opportunity to consult our faithful in the diocese for their reaction to the changes. Indeed, in the Vatican II document *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, clergy are exhorted to "listen to the laity willingly, consider their wishes in a fraternal spirit and recognise their experience and competence in the different areas of human activity, so that together with them they will be able to read the signs of the times." Here in New Zealand this first stage — much of it the people's responses in the Mass — was introduced in Advent 2010.

Without being too scientific, I asked the people to consider three points: what they liked about the changes, what reservations they had about them, and what their thoughts were on the musical offerings. My intention is to collate the responses and include them in my diocesan *ad limina* report for Rome later this year.

While some parishes provided a group reply with a number adding their name to the submission, there were altogether about 180 replies. The answers were revealing. A small number gave a pass mark with such comments as: "We have to get used to change" and "It will be OK when we can memorise it." Only two were very happy about the changes, with one of them saying they were "thrilled". Of all the comments, 17 per cent were positive and 83 per cent were negative. While the minority gave reasons such as "it deepens the meaning of the Mass" and that it "is a more reverent translation," opponents declared that it was "unnecessary," "confusing and meaningless," that the "rationale was unclear" and that it was a "backward step and pre-Vatican II in language style."

The musical offerings that have been put forward for the Proper of the Mass also took a battering, with a combined percentage of over 70 per cent complaining that the music was "hard to sing," "too complicated and slow," "difficult to learn" and "more suited to choirs than congregations." Admittedly, this problem of music will be alleviated in time when new compositions come on stream.

Words and phrases most opposed to in the new translation were "with your spirit," "come under my roof, "consubstantial" and the "I confess" (the Confiteor). The biggest complaint, though, was reserved for the use of the word "men" in the Nicene Creed. One of our New Zealand bishops' conference submissions to Rome on the text was for inclusiveness (not only in the Nicene Creed but also in the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer). This was not permitted by the Congregation for Divine Worship. Let us be clear about this. Christ died for all — not some, not many, but all. It is an embarrassment to our Catholic Church and its claim to inclusiveness. To persist with only saying 'men' in the Creed is offensive and disparaging to our womenfolk who make up the majority of our faith family. There is also a blatant inconsistency when homines used in the Gloria is translated as 'people' whereas the same word in the Nicene

Creed is translated as 'men.' This is a no-brainer. I hope that most of us will continue to pray in the Creed "for us and our salvation." Other reasoning given by the faithful surveyed in opposing the new translation is that "the sentence structure is convoluted"; "stilted and lacks syntactical flow"; many words are "archaic and never used in colloquial English." There was opposition to this literal translation that was considered an inferior choice to dynamic equivalence, and the move from communal to personal profession of faith was seen as another backward step.

I detected behind many of the comments in the survey that a number were seeking a deeper theological dimension. This was the understanding of how God was being presented and perceived. There was a feeling of a loss of God's closeness to us, that God was aloof or distant, almost a sense of deism. Of course we need to stress the transcendence of God but not at the cost of losing that sense of intimacy that our faith celebrates, that of an incarnational God; that it is Abba Father who draws us to himself by and with and in Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Some people mentioned a loss of the "spirit in the Liturgy" and I think this is what they meant. The liturgist Raymond G. Helmick made the same point in his telling article (*The Tablet*, 6 November 2010) that a God who is perceived as distant becomes irrelevant and unreal. Any thought that our spirit-filled liturgy celebrating God's unconditional and life-giving love for us becomes remote and distant should seriously give us all pause to think.

We need to take heed of what Pope Benedict has been saying. It is encouraging to see him quoting with approval the principles for translation proposed by the Pontifical Biblical Commission in *Verbum Domini*: "A translation, of course, is always more than a simple transcription of the original texts. The passage from one language to another necessarily involves a change of cultural context: concepts are not identical and symbols have a different meaning, for they come up against other traditions of thought and other ways of life."

Before we go any further with implementing this translation in the English-speaking world, it is imperative that we consult with the people of God and hear them. Then, I pray, that all of us together may hear "what the Spirit is saying to the churches" (Revelation 2:29).

Colin Campbell is Bishop of Dunedin, New Zealand.

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Margaret Silf in New Zealand
November 2011

Margaret Silf is a wife and mother and a skilled international retreat director and spiritual director in the Ignatian tradition. Margaret describes herself as "an ecumenical Christian committed to working across and beyond the denominational boundaries." She is an author and regular columnist for *America* magazine, and a contributor to the *New Daylight* series and BBC local radio. Born in 1945, Margaret currently lives in Cheshire, England. Margaret's approach to spirituality is experiential, drawing connections between the Christian vision and the moment-by-moment events and choices of everyday living.

CHRISTCHURCH

Friday Evening 4 November, 7pm – 9pm. Mary Potter Community Centre. *'Finding a true course in a changing world'* Cost $15. Registration not necessary.

Saturday 5 November, 10am – 4pm. Mary Potter Community Centre. *'God's Unfinished Story'*. Hosted by Adult Education Trust. Cost $50. Registration essential.

Friday 11 November, 9.30am – 12 November, 3.30pm. Teaching seminar, Mary Potter Community Centre. *'Discerning the movements of God in our hearts and our lives'*. Cost $80. Registration essential.

Sunday 13 November 10.30am – 17 Nov 3.30pm. Five day silent residential teaching retreat. *'Living God's Dream'*. Bishop Julius Hall of Residence, 90 Waimairi Rd, Upper Riccarton. Cost $530. Limited places. For an application form, email sr.eveleen@xtra.co.nz or phone 03 326 6897 (leave message). Registration essential.

WELLINGTON

Saturday 19 November 9.30am – 4.30pm. *'Finding a true course in a changing world'*

Sunday 20 November 11.30am – 5.30pm. *'The Growing Edge'*.

Both events held at St Joseph's Church, Ellice Street, Mt Victoria (opposite Basin Reserve). Registration for each $20.00 waged, $15 unwaged. Email marcellinrsm@xtra.co.nz or ph (04) 383 7271 (evenings only).

AUCKLAND

Wednesday 23 November. *'The Growing Edge'*. Mercy Spirituality Centre (mercycentreauckland@xtra.co.nz).

TAUPO

Friday 25 November. *'Landscapes of prayer'*. St Andrew's Anglican Church, Titiraupenga Street, Taupo. Registration suepickering@xtra.co.nz, or ph or txt 02 145 0760.

FOR MORE DETAILS OF THESE EVENTS DOWNLOAD A PDF FROM **www.sistereveleen.co.nz**

the end of history?

Mike Noonan

The global economy as never before is being exposed in its power and vultnerability. Are we seeing the early death throes of credit driven capitalism? What's happening to othe so-called 'free market'? Do we, rich and poor, belong to one another?

In liberal democracies, many of our fundamental systems (of law and politics) are based on disagreement and opposition. The belief is that the strongest and most persuasive argument should win the day. But all too often, the person who represents 'other' becomes the enemy, and when oppositional politics is being played by people who do not recognise how, or on what basis, we must belong to one another, truth is sacrificed to the desire to dominate, and justice is sacrificed to egocentricity.

recent events in america

Some amazing and hopeful insights have been emerging from the least promising events of recent times. Many column inches, in print and online, reported the loss of moral nerve that was witnessed in the USA, when the Democrats and Republicans did their last minute deal, raising their country's debt ceiling, hoping to avert greater financial catastrophe. For some, the loss of moral nerve was not cutting the Administration's projected spending deeply enough to balance the budget. For others, it was the refusal to raise any taxes from the wealthy. Less reported has been billionaire Warren Buffet's article in the *New York Times*, in which he demands that the "billionaire-friendly Congress" stop "molly-coddling" him and his friends and require that they pay more taxes. "It's time for the government to get serious about shared sacrifice" said Buffet.

the thatcher legacy

It would indeed seem to be time,

and not just in America. In Britain, widespread riots, reminiscent of the Thatcher era, have left many re-appraising what binds a society and indeed what binds our world together. Thatcher's influential 'hand-bagist' approach to economics held that a national economy is like a family economy — you can't spend what you haven't got, and that it is always wise to save something for a rainy day. But her approach also held that the richer the rich became, the better off the poor would be, as benefits would automatically trickle down towards them. Famously, she lectured the Scottish Kirk on the parable of the Good Samaritan, remarking that the said Samaritan could not have helped the man wounded by robbers if he hadn't got the wherewithal. Thus justified, she set the stage for many world leaders since to cut taxes to ensure incentives existed for the rich and to cut social security measures to ensure that the poor learned independence.

a broken british society?

Much has been said about the emergence of feral kids, in the inner cities of the UK and also here in New Zealand. The riots which raged through British cities appeared to provide evidence of this, and a YouTube video of Asyraf Haziq, a Malaysian student, robbed as looters came forward under the guise of assisting him, provoked moral outrage. It has led the British Prime Minister to declare that his society is broken after a long slow moral decline. This has also prompted him to insist that the full force of the law should be meted out upon the thugs who indulged in looting and setting fire to properties.

law for whom?

Thug and beneficiary bashing has been set in a new light, however. Not long ago, just as here in New Zealand, British politicians, of every hue, were discovered helping themselves to public money, every bit as inappropriately as the looters had been helping themselves to merchandise in the stores which they were looting. One UK rioter was sentenced to six months in prison for stealing £3.50 worth of water. On that basis, had the 'full force' of David Cameron's law there — or Garth McVicar's here — been applied to the political classes, I imagine that a number of parliamentary representatives in both countries would be serving life! In the UK, the scandal of MP's spurious expense claims, then the *News International* hacking scandal, followed closely by the riots, have pointed up new ironies, when apparently self righteous MP's in league with the mass media, bluster about greed, moral decline, and about thugs receiving benefits.

at the fall of berlin wall

Fukuyama's essay, *The End of History*, written after the fall of the Berlin Wall, spoke of the emergence of a universal homogenous state based on technologically driven liberal capitalism. In those heady days when pope and capitalist alike rejoiced, it appeared that the mighty communists were being cast from their thrones. But what prevented the hope which Mary expressed in her Magnificat from becoming a reality, was that the rich were not being sent away empty. Indeed the rich have retained their thrones, and, AAA downgrades notwithstanding, have been becoming more and more bloated ever since. The banking industry provided an example — bailed out around the world, by governments using taxpayers' money, and then, later, having the effrontery to award themselves large bonuses.

and now?

Today's reality is very different from Fukuyama's. We are beginning to glimpse both the power and the vulnerability that flow from being in a truly global economy. There is a fundamental question about taxation systems worldwide and how much, if any, wealth generated should be directed towards the common good and indeed whether our tax commitments to the common good stretch beyond national boundaries.

the feral rich

Surprisingly, some commentators on the right of the political spectrum are now identifying what they refer to as the 'feral rich.' An analysis is emerging in which the free market is no longer seen as a self regulating miracle offering equality of opportunity for all, but as a corporatist racket — 'free' only in the sense that it accords to its highly mobile, super-rich, beneficiaries the freedom to move huge sums of capital at will to maximise their profits, regardless of the social and economic costs to anyone else.

The social contracts, between national governments and their peoples — some forged over time through history, others violently and opportunistically imposed — are being exposed as inadequate for our day and it is social networking, as opposed to mass media or the ballot box, that is accelerating and enhancing people's ability to broadcast their dissatisfaction with them.

We are witnessing the so called 'Arab Spring' uprising against the feral rich dictators, whose grip on petrochemical dollars has, until now, guaranteed their power and position. We are seeing the convulsions (early death throes?) of the US credit-driven capitalism.

China's fate, so strongly linked to America's, by virtue of owning so much of the American debt, is looking increasingly shaky, as its high export economy fuelled by an undervalued currency is undermined by persistent unemployment in the countries it hopes to export to. If China is not to disappoint its people dramatically, it must get rich quick, so that when the income earning part of the one-child-per-family pyramid is reversed, one wage earner can subsidise two dependents.

In each of these countries, the political discourse is growing more frenetic and polarised because the social contract between government and people is strained. Reactions vary, from hard-line suppression and censorship (China), to the lighter, but ominous, threat to remove social networking in situations of public unrest (UK). Even the international co-operative models are showing increasing faultlines. The European community has a model of shared currency which has linked the fate of many countries together. Tax payers in the wealthier countries of Europe are questioning what have they to do with the poor of Greece, Italy, Ireland and Portugal.

shaping a new reality?

I believe the question of how we belong together in our world is fast becoming the most important question of our age. Tired political and economic answers no longer suffice, and Christians, by virtue of the familial relationship given us by God, have much to contribute towards shaping the new emerging reality. Or is it more simple? In a world where the rich have little respect for the poor, why would we imagine that the poor will have any respect for the rich? ■

Mike Noonan is an international envoy for L'Arche *living in Dunedin*

is my light still burning?

The Parable of the Ten Young Women – Mt 25: 1–13 (6 November, 32nd Sunday Ordinary Time)

Kathleen Rushton

As the liturgical year draws to a close, the gospel readings for its last Sundays are taken from the 'Eschatological Discourse.' Other names for these passages from Matthew 24-25, Mark 13 and Luke 21 are 'The Apocalyptic Discourse'or 'The Little Apocalypse' or 'The Synoptic Apocalypse.' These should not be confused with the Apocalypse, which is another name for the Book of Revelation, the last book of the New Testament. In its wider and original sense, eschatology (Greek 'last') is concerned with 'what we hope for.' Biblical apocalypses (Greek 'unveiling') are concerned with 'unveiling' God within present and particular historical situations.

context

The parable of the ten young women is integrated into the theological concerns of a wider discourse. Matthew 24-25 tells of the destruction of the Temple, raising questions as to when this will happen. It tells also of signs of the end times, coming persecutions, and warns about false messiahs and false prophets and the coming of the Son of Man. The reader is summoned to be watchful through the example of the flood and a series of parables: the fig tree, good and wicked slaves, the ten young women, the talents, and the sheep and goats. Matthew 24-25 is a vision of the future and a testament as the end of Jesus' public ministry comes in Mt 26 when he speaks of being "handed over to be crucified."

palestinian custom

Our parable is based on the Palestinian custom of the bridegroom fetching his bride from the home of her parents to his. As told by Jesus it would have fitted into the familiar lives of his listeners and their customs, yet, there are at least five 'peculiarities' that would arouse attention. What is he saying? What is he getting at? First, there is a lack of clarity about where the ten young women are as they wait. Do they fall asleep on the street? Second, why is the wedding feast beginning so late? Third, the oil sellers are open after midnight. This is not a period of shops open twenty-four seven! Fourth, there is a surprising harshness about the 'wise' towards the others in sending them off when they knew that the bridegroom was about to arrive. Fifth, there is no mention of a bride.

lamps or torches?

The actual meaning of the word for lamps *(lampades)* is uncertain. Were they small lamps for use inside the house? Were they lanterns for lighting outside the house rather like torches? (cf Jn 18:3). Such were long sticks or rods. At the end of each was a large rag that had been soaked previously in oil before being lit. Bridesmaids carried torches in solemn procession to the house where the marriage feast was being celebrated. This would explain the large quantity of oil. Yet we are told about the lamps being trimmed (v 7) and going out (v 8).

'wise' and 'foolish'

The traditional translations of 'foolish' and 'wise' are better translations than 'stupid' and 'clever', because the Greek adjectives *moros* and *phronimos* have little to do with intellectual ability. They refer to being open or otherwise to the right moral-religious attitude.

The word for 'wise' (*phronimos*) suggests the wisdom required for self-preservation and for fulfilling one's appointed role. It is found only in parables and related sayings. Matthew tells of the wise builder (7:24), the wise slave (24:45) and of the disciples who are to be as wise as serpents and doves (10:16). This word has a different sense from another word for 'wisdom,' *sophia* which concerns the quest for truth and is fundamentally a relational term which critiques phronimos wisdom.

The Greek word *parthenoi* used for the ten who are 'foolish' or 'wise' has no biological nuance. To translate it as 'bridesmaids' has very specific cultural associations for the contemporary reader which do not correspond to those of ancient Palestine. The sense is probably best translated by young women or maidens.

what represents the kingdom?

It is too literal a translation to say that 'Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens …' It is the feast itself which represents the kingdom. The behaviour of those excluded is a warning against an attitude that would lead to banishment from the kingdom. The 'then' of Mt 25:1 is related to the 'then' of Mt 25:31 "then he [Jesus] will sit on his glorious throne…" Then it will be with Christians, with us, the way it was for the coming of the bridegroom. Awaiting the coming of Jesus entails certain dangers. This parable suggests the need to be prepared and vigilant.

Each of us received a lit lamp to nourish with oil, trim and keep burning. The liturgy of Baptism ends with the celebrant lighting the baptismal candle from the Easter candle and giving it to the newly baptised (or to the parents on behalf of a child). There is a clear reference to this parable for the celebrant exhorts the newly baptised: "*Accipe laepadem ardentem …*" In English, we hear:

"Parents and godparents, this light [of the child's candle/the light of the parable] is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. He/She is to walk always as a child of light, may he/she keep the flame of faith alive in the heart. When the Lord comes, may he/she go out to meet with him with the saints in the heavenly kingdom. Amen."

Is my light still burning? Has it grown dim? Does it need trimming? Do I have a sufficient supply of oil? Or has my lamp gone out? Is the oil I am using 'impure' in that essential components are missing – prayer, retreat-time, rest, study of my Faith, the works of mercy, the works of justice, care for the environment, wonder at the unfolding of the universe …? ■

Kathleen Rushton RSM of Christchurch is currently at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium.

REDWOODS, ROTORUA

I am a mite in a bed of nails.
You are a barcode
before the horizon.

What enemy of gravity
possesses your trunks
so convincingly?

Your archetype fells
even David's cedars,
is sire to the table of Camelot.

My mother remarried here.
In union, you are
finer than any cathedral.

Grand as you are,
you never look down on me.
It is me, looking up through you.

When I'm in your midst,
you make wigwams
to show me the sky's alternative.

Your emphatic direction
assures me, inspires me
to reach something higher.

Then again,
you are Rangi's passion
for the earth.

Your roots know underworlds,
which your cross-sections
map and contour.

There is a white ball of cloud
in your scrum. Or is it a pebble
at the bottom of your dreaming?

Hayden Williams

pastoral letters for all

Openings to Renewal

Peter J Cullinane

Publisher: ATF Press, Adelaide, 2011 (available from Pleroma Books, $34.99)

Reviewer: Damian Wynn-Williams.

Because renewal entails a conversion of heart and union with God to which every Christian is called, Pope John XXIII's vision for the Church is still a work in progress. The Second Vatican Council ended almost half a century ago, but it still has to be fully received and implemented. In this book Peter Cullinane offers a series of reflections on renewal within the Church in the light of his 31 years as the bishop of Palmerston North.

Presented as 'letters' to diverse individuals and groups, the 23 chapters cover a wide variety of topics ranging from the experience of God in silence, to specific pastoral issues like the care of those who are separated or remarried, interfaith marriages, and the age for Confirmation. Most letters are quite short, the longest being 12 pages.

Throughout there is a firm, confident vision of the universal Church, of the mystery of God's grace at work in the world. It is this sense of grace which allows us to take seriously the experience of the local church. To a bishop about to attend a General Synod in Rome, the author writes, "Your contribution to the universal Church will depend on you trusting your experience of the faith of the people you serve in your diocese and country." (37) Local churches have a vital part to play in the renewal of the universal Church.

Bishop Cullinane cites instances where this two-way relationship has not been observed. Bishops should not be regarded as branch managers acting for a head office! The Council's teaching on episcopal collegiality has yet to be fully realised. The need for take seriously the experience of faith in the local church is especially apparent in issues of inculturation – witness Rome's disquiet at the Maori custom of a karanga of welcome at the Consecration (44). For many readers, given the imminent introduction of the new translation of the Roman Missal, the account (in letter 9) of how work preparing liturgical translations entrusted to Bishops' Conferences by the Council and Canon Law was peremptorily overturned in 2002 will be of particular interest.

In several letters Bishop Cullinane provides helpful, nuanced guidance on the interpretation of liturgical laws and subsequent 'Instructions' intended to apply them. We are reminded that the revised Mass promulgated by Pope Paul VI is still the 'ordinary' form of the Roman rite, and that the pre-conciliar 1962 Missal is 'extraordinary,' allowed as a pastoral concession. "The two Missals can never be on an equal footing because that would mean the Church has one Missal based on the Council's teaching that reform was necessary, and another based on the supposition that reform was not necessary!" (75). Similarly the laws concerning individual confession and absolution should not be extended so as to quash all use of the third Rite of Reconciliation (131).

This little book contains a wealth of material for reflection and encouragement. As Cardinal Williams remarks in his Forward, "There is no one responsible for pastoral care in parish or chaplaincy who could not profit from the analyses, explanations and insights contained in each 'opening to renewal' discussed by Bishop Cullinane. It would not be out of place for some of these letters to be issued as pastoral letters intended for every parishioner, and for some to be addressed to Synods of Bishops." ■

zaccheus with us

Patience with God: the story of Zaccheus continuing in us

Tomáš Halík

Publisher: Da Capo Press, 2009

Reviewer: Mike Crowl

Halik's theme is summarised in an early statement: "Patience is what I consider to be the main difference between faith and atheism. What atheism, religious fundamentalism, and the enthusiasm of a too-facile faith have in common is how quickly they can ride roughshod over the mystery we call God — and that is why I find all three approaches equally unacceptable. One must never consider mystery 'over and done with.' Mystery, unlike a mere dilemma, cannot be overcome; one must wait patiently at its threshold and persevere in it — must carry it in one's heart."

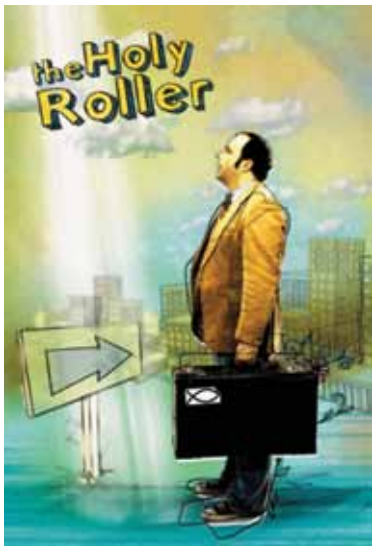
The book uses the story of Zaccheus, the little man Jesus found hiding in the fig tree, as a springboard for Halik's reflections. He also speculates on where Zaccheus might have gone after he vanishes from the Gospel, and adds St Thérèse of Lisieux, Nietzsche and Dulcinea del Toboso (Don Quixote's lady) to his mix of contributors. His overarching concern is that we don't dismiss those who aren't 'within' the church and write them off as people not seeking after God. In this way Nietzsche becomes a more sympathetic

climb aboard the holy rollercoaster

The Holy Roller

Director: Patrick Gillies

Reviewer: Paul Sorrell



Seeing this film at its Dunedin premiere, I was reminded in many ways of Mike and Rosemary Riddell's film *The Insatiable Moon*, reviewed in this column last year. (apparently, both films were made around the same time.) Aside from the strong religious themes setting wealth and materialism against poverty and marginalisation, both these recent Kiwi films share a diverse and quirky cast of characters, a mix of established and upcoming actors, strong production values, luscious cinematography and an appealing soundtrack. And, perhaps inevitably given their subject-matter, both failed to gain mainstream funding and were made on shoestring budgets.

Fundamentally, *The Holy Roller* is a retelling of the old story of the innocent abroad. Pastor Luke, played to comic perfection by Angus Benfield, arrives in the big city (here pre-earthquake Christchurch) to find his vocation. Excruciatingly shy and bumbling, he nevertheless radiates a naïve kind of holiness. To cut a long story short, Luke founds a church in a nightclub (the Temple), gets drawn into the young owner's struggle with local underworld bosses, and falls in hapless, hopeless love with his radiant sister and talented songstress, Kate (whose 'purity' is a fine match for Luke's unworldliness). Around these central figures swirls a lively cast of street people, creepy crime dons, smooth-tongued televangelists and sharp-suited PR types.

In a Q&A session after the screening, producer/director/writer Patrick Gillies spoke about the origins of the movie. The film was the brainchild of Benfield, who not only plays the main role, but is a Christian pastor in real life. The film is substantially based on the script he wrote reflecting his disillusionment with the shallow, materialist values of the Sydney megachurch he had served, and especially its failure to attend to the needs of the urban poor. Wary that Benfield's script might lack broad audience appeal, Gillies added story elements drawn from urban Latin America, where crime bosses have sought to 'reclaim' their patch from zealous Christian social workers and evangelists. Finally, he threw in the love story.

The risk attached to having both 'religious' and 'secular' storylines (to use Gillies' own terms) in the one film is that they might fail to gell. In *The Insatiable Moon*, the Riddells started out with a strong, unified Christian theme based around a prominent narrative premise, and there was never any doubt as to the 'message' intended. In *The Holy Roller*, there is so much going on, with characterization and storylines veering between realism and caricature, the serious and the comic — and, especially towards the end, incorporating strong elements of fairy tale — that we are in danger of losing our sense of direction. Perhaps the best approach is to strap yourself firmly into your seat and simply surrender yourself to this Holy Rollercoaster of a movie. ■

figure than you might expect: while he railed against Christianity in his books, there's also an underlying cry for what God offers in Christianity.

By contrast, St Thérèse turns out to be nothing at all like the plaster saint she was made into for so many decades after her death. Halik writes that initially Thérèse didn't believe any atheists existed; they were people who 'contradicted their own convictions.' But as she struggled with an apparent loss of faith herself, she came to see them as her 'brothers.'

Like Thérèse, Halik doesn't see atheists as a threat and he doesn't dismiss them as foolish. He writes "It would be a reprehensible neglect if Christianity failed to use for its own benefit the fact that, during the modern era, it was subject, more than any other religion, to the purgative flames of atheist criticism; it would be just as unfortunate to lack the courage to enter that smelting furnace as to renounce, in the midst of the flames, the faith and hope that are intended to be tested and refined."

Halik is a writer with an immense sympathy for those who 'keep their distance,' who can't find their way home into a church, or even into a 'churchless' Christianity. For him he sees it as possible that large numbers of them will be counted amongst the faithful in due course, because they sought after truth throughout their lives.

He is also at pains to make sure we don't claim to understand the mystery of God. However much the Gospels and the Epistles teach us, they never give us a dogmatic manual that says everything is clear or neat or tidy.

Apart from this book, I don't think Halik's work is well-known in English. It deserves to be, if this example is anything to go by. This is an immensely readable and reflective book. ■

Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

symptoms versus causes

If the cause of my headache is cancer of the brain, analgesics won't suffice. In NZ we are experiencing a continuing growth in economic disparity; we are OECD leaders in unemployment of female youth and child abuse. The Church in NZ is haemorrhaging.

The frustration and hopelessness experienced by large numbers of people in the UK form the backdrop to the legitimate protest hijacked by destructive elements. The unusually harsh sentences imposed on perpetrators address symptoms, leaving the underlying cancer untouched. The cancer? Margaret Thatcher imposed the economic system of von Hayek, who wrote: "The market operates on the principle of a combined game of skill and chance" and explained that although unfair outcomes resulted, the principle of individual liberty was paramount, and casualties could be assisted by society "outside the market." That is, treat the effects, not the cause. A person is valued solely in relation to the market. 'Rogernomics' followed that system.

The PM's announcement at the National Party Conference of the introduction of strict monitoring of the unemployment benefit for youth brought 'cheers and clapping'. Worthy? Perhaps. A palliative? Definitely.

the church's earthquake

Christchurch had many things going for it. The earthquakes resulted in deaths, and damage and destruction to buildings and infrastructure vital for ordinary functioning. That has brought about weariness, depression and a desire to escape.

During the pontificate of John Paul II the Catholic Church enjoyed much prestige. JP2 was rightly the object of admiration, inspiring many, and achieving an enormous amount of good. Under Benedict XVI the Church's public stocks have fallen greatly: an enormous exodus is occurring at an ever increasing pace, while deservedly harsh judgements have been made by outsiders.

In July the Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny stated that yet another report on sexual abuse cover-ups "excavates the dysfunction, disconnection, elitism … the narcissism that dominate the culture of the Vatican to this day." His specific criticism (a 1997 Vatican directive) was mistaken, but his general criticism was not. Archbishop Diarmuid Martin commented: "What do you do when you've got systems in place and somebody ignores them? What do you do when groups, either in the Vatican or in Ireland ... try to undermine what is being done and simply refuse to understand what is being done?"

Early last year the pastoral concern of a German Jesuit, Klaus Mertes, led to the uncovering of what Vienna's Cardinal Schönborn called "a tsunami of clerical abuse." Mertes recently said he has received masses of hate mail accusing him of disloyalty and splitting the church, and that a Vatican cardinal said that he ought to be thrown out. He expressed gratitude for Berlin's Cardinal Sterzinsky's backing.

Also of great concern are the handling of the new Mass translations, and a diminishing and ageing clergy, many of whom cannot cope with contemporary needs.

But these cancers were already developing in JP2's reign.

growth problems

Initially a small group of enthusiasts works for a new cause. Later, they have to begin diverting some workers into planning and support roles. Finally, the need arises for much greater specialization in management, planning and support to enable the 'operating core' to carry out the work originally intended. Sometimes problems arise — senior managers lose touch with the workers, or put maintenance of the organization above the needs of the clients, or even lose sight of the organization's reason for existing.

The area producing most problems is that of 'middle management' – whether in business, voluntary agencies or the Church (e.g. parish priests). They have the greatest influence on the organization's 'culture' among the front-line troops (the laity). Oversight and accountability are essential at all levels; inadequate selection criteria invite disaster.

These conditions apply also to the Church as a whole. Bishops are not middle managers with the Pope as general manager, although they must stay within certain parameters. Papal attitudes do have great influence, but failure by Vatican personnel to stay on message is counterproductive.

signs of spring

Bishops have a major responsibility to maintain unity between disparate factions within their jurisdiction; likewise the Pope. But both must show positive leadership, not just placate dissenters.

Benedict, while not a revolutionary, is emerging as a radical reformer. He moved to prevent further Vatican financial scandals by imposing the transparent system enjoined upon EU members, headed by a respected lay professional. He moved quickly to sort out the scandalous situation of the religious order 'Legionaries of Christ.' Regarding clerical paedophilia, he persuaded JP2 to transfer jurisdiction to him because the cardinal with responsibility was in denial. On election three years later he began a series of reforms that are having effect, but hindered by the cancer of clericalism that still persists in parts of the establishment. The newly appointed leadership of the Department for Religious Orders has apologised for the heavy-handed way US sisters have been treated.

Summer, however, is still a long way off. ■

a broken church?

Robert Considine

The army jeep slowly crawled up the hill as soldiers, carrying rifles, emerged from foxholes, trenches, pup-tents and latrines making their way through the tussock to a plateau overlooking Lees Valley in Oxford. In the midst of a major army exercise we were gathering for worship led by the chaplain on the tail-board of the jeep.

As the people of God gathered in the midst of divine creation the environment was transcendental. There was no church, no hierarchy and no rank. Colonel Jim Ardagh, later to lead a medical team to the Vietnam war, was kneeling beside me in the wet tussock.

This was the Mass celebrated wherever the people of God gather with a celebrant.

I have witnessed this celebration in Mother Theresa's 'home for the dying' in the slums of Calcutta, in the catacombs under Rome, in the great Cathedrals of Europe and the Americas and in my local parish.

My ancestors gathered for Mass illegally around the Mass rocks in 17th century Ireland during penal times.

Variations of these sacred moments can be multiplied a million times.

The experience of the Mass is a meeting with Christ and one another. At its essence it is the same throughout the world.

Christ is present when the people of God gather in God's name.

As Christchurch faces losing many Christian Churches, including the two Cathedrals, a divine moment has emerged in our history. This is a unique global experience. The Churches in New Zealand have never had such a concentrated level of physical disruption.

This could be a moment for followers of Jesus to: re-think mission radically, listen to the spirit expressed through the people of God, and to engage in a process of discernment. During this time of reflection all the functioning Churches, empty most of the week, could serve the worship needs of the people on a seven day a week basis.

Out of this winter of natural destruction could come the springtime which Pope John XXIII spoke of at the opening of Vatican II. New sources of thinking, energy and vision emerged enabling us to face the future with renewed hope.

This could be a moment for something new.

The structure of the major Churches including the two beautiful Cathedrals, reflects another age and an outdated theology. The energy and resource which is expended in maintaining these structures needs to be re-focussed on the mission of the Church. I believe they should not be re-built.

All Christians know that they have more in common with one another than what separates them. This is a moment to connect at a deeper level.

In the 21st century fewer people are going to Church. All Christian Churches have lost their influence as society becomes more secular.

The question for all Christians is: how best can we follow the teachings of Jesus, proclaim the good news, work to overcome oppression and create the reign of peace and justice in the world?

My hope in this moment of crisis is that a series of gospel based seminars, retreats, days of reflection and contemplation could be offered to us all. Parish communities, local, national and global could collaborate, supported by competent domestic and overseas contributions.

The Mass will remain central for Catholics. Lay led Eucharistic liturgies in local neighbourhoods could be nurtured as we remember that wherever the people of God gather in the name of Jesus, they are the Church. ■

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Alighting on the shoulders of saints...

Pat Neuwelt

As a child in Canada, I could never fathom the idea of the 'communion of saints,' nor of praying for those who had died. How did the communion of saints relate to the communion I consumed at mass? Who gets to be called 'saints'? And do they have to be dead to be part of The Communion — like some exclusive saints' club in which only the holiest have membership? And if they are holy saints, why would they need 'my' prayers?!

Now, at 50 in Aotearoa, parentless but surrounded in my life by a rich tapestry of relationships and deeply inspired by the wisdom of many elders (kuia and kaumatua of all ethnicities) who have touched my life, I am only just beginning to understand. Let me explain.

Within the last twelve months, I have lost four elders from my life, each in her/his 8th decade or beyond. In fact, if I consider the past three years, it feels as though I have lost almost all of the significant elders in my life — every one of them. And so, with deep love and respect for the way they offered me unconditional love and wise counsel — each in her or his own way — I name the four who have died in the past year: Madonna (Donna) Ronayne Neuwelt, my mother who, together with my father, breathed faith into me while opening our home unconditionally to those in need; Kathleen (Kitty) McKewen, a dear friend who nurtured me in my faith and in my family life while my own mother was across the globe; Fr Terence (Terry) Dibble, who loved and supported me in my discontent with the Church and with wider society; Sr Clare Timpany OP, who touched me deeply with her joyful living out of the gospel on Waiheke Island.

These individuals taught me that the value of one's life is measured more by the love one shows for one's family, one's neighbours, and for strangers, than it is by worldly 'success'. They taught me that God is alive and well in the midst of chaotic family life and troubled relationships, more than She/He is alive in institutions of power. They taught me that, while it is godly to stand up for what is right, offering *aroha* and forgiveness to perpetrators of injustice is the most radical call of the gospel message. They taught me that growing older can be a time of richness, as well as loss — a time to heal past hurts, to become freer of the bondage of others' expectations, to spend more time listening (to snails, to pigeons, to the waves, to others, to God...) than doing.

So what have I learned about the communion of saints? It is made up of my elders now! The communion of saints is my *whakapapa* — those who have laid the path for my life, and whose efforts and suffering, therefore, have not been in vain. Despite 'slowing down' to one degree or another, these elders never stopped doing. Even in their final year of life, each of these people was actively giving to others on a daily basis, despite serious physical ailments. In fact, they're still at it, I suppose, if I'm writing this piece! They live on through me, and many others; which means we must also be part of the communion of saints — Now — while we're alive and kicking!

My elders have grown me into an elder... if I'm now part of that communion of saints, my task in turn is to "grow others into elders."

That surely is the greatest legacy we can leave in this life. Offering our shoulders for others to alight upon... ■

Kaaren Mathias is still on holiday.