Tui Motu

InterIslands

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costing not less than everything

Contents

Cover: *Supper at Emmaus* by Caravaggio
See *pp 16-17*

During this most powerful and meaningful season of the church's year it is good simply to allow the scenes and gospel messages to penetrate into our consciousness and impact on the life of our innermost spirit. What we are experiencing in our mind's eye is the journey of a wonderful man, who appears to take on the 'system' of his own time – and lose utterly and tragically. Then, after the darkest of dark nights, comes the Easter dawn.

The poor bewildered disciples suddenly get it. The astonishing revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ becomes manifest. And *all manner of things shall be well*, as said Julian of Norwich.

Sometimes we can miss the point and say to ourselves: 'Well, Jesus was the Son of God. He knew how it would all turn out'. The fact is his sufferings were real, the desertion of his friends and the cruelty of his people actually happened – and they hurt. This was no play acting. He took a stand, and it cost him his life.

And then Peter and John and Mary Magdalen did the same. Down the ages women and men have responded to that inner call striving to create a better world. Easter celebrates this fact. That is why we can cry a triumphant *Alleluia*. We are not just passive spectators at a Passion Play which happens to include the Resurrection.

This issue contains stories of people who have taken such a stand. The life of Dr Paul Farmer – *Mountains Beyond Mountains* – tells of a very gifted human being who could have carved a lucrative career for himself in medicine (*pp 20-21*). Instead he gathers round himself an ever-growing group of like-minded people, who take the benefits of modern medical practice out to the world's poorest people.

We also interview two men (*pp 6-9*) who have taken heed of the challenge of different ways of husbandry and horticulture, in harmony with the earth and not depleting it. There aren't many who follow the organic way – but we celebrate their efforts because they are like a leaven. Theirs is an initiative which deserves to succeed, because ultimately it will be to everyone's benefit. We humans simply have to learn to live sustainably.

The churches have sometimes been reluctant to become involved in secular movements such as environmentalism or the fight to stop global warming. The Catholic Church has wonderful teaching on justice issues going back to the time of Leo XIII. Yet how rarely we hear it preached. Is this one of the tragic consequences of the clericalism which Robert Consedine speaks of in a powerful review (*p 27*)?

Perhaps this year we, people and priests, pope and pew-dweller, should try to experience Easter as a call to live our faith to the full – and not just the bits which don't cost us anything.

M.H.

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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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compassion and the financial crisis

Carrying the debate on the economic crisis a step further

Paul Dalziel

Thirty years ago I heard Archbishop Ferdinandez from New Delhi speak about how economic systems kept people in his diocese trapped in suffering and poverty. The world, he said, needs creative people to devote themselves to finding ways to redirect the planet's resources so that everyone has the opportunity to lead a good life.

I was inspired by the Archbishop's talk in a way that is perhaps only possible when a young adult. I devoted my university studies to economics, and I joined church groups that reflected on and practiced principles found in Catholic Social Teaching. Foundations laid at that time continue to support my faith and work today.

I have known Fr Jim Consedine for many years. He provided pastoral care to my sister-in-law, Nicola, during her final illness when only 34, and helped the family mourn her death in the sad days and months that followed. I have seen his commitment to social justice spring from his deep compassion for people who suffer.

Against this background, I found it very hard to read the article by Alan Rodgers-Smith (*TM March 09*)on faith and the financial crisis. In my view, the article does not genuinely engage with Jim Consedine's earlier writing; nor does it reflect the richness of Catholic Social Teaching since *Rerum Novarum* in 1891.

Jim began by saying there is no easy way to write about the financial crisis. Alan agrees, citing problems he sees in theology and with the Pope's shoes. But those problems were not Jim's point. Jim finds it hard to write about the crisis because "the pain of people is intense and real". It's about compassion.

Compassion motivates Christian volunteers rightly admired by Alan for the social services they perform. Compassion is also at the heart of more than a century of Catholic Social Teaching, consistently inviting people of good will to promote authentic human development by transforming structurally sinful systems.

Everyone agrees that the financial crisis has revealed structural failures in the system. Among economists, the main argument is whether the primary cause was inadequate control by regulators or low professional standards of those who ran the scams. I think both played a part and fed on each other.

Jim invites us to go deeper into the system's structures. He observes that 'the market' never responds to the need for compassion. He condemns increasing personal wealth through non-productive means, which he names as usury. He argues that no system driven by avarice can promote the common good. He urges voluntary poverty.

I am sure that some may find Jim's article hard to read. Catholic Social Teaching recognises that compassionate people engage with these difficult issues in different ways. Nevertheless, each of Jim's points has a solid weight of Catholic theological tradition behind it that deserves respect.

Alan's article is concerned that, recognising all systems to be fallen, we may end up wallowing in melancholy. That is not my experience; nor does it describe Jim's personality! It is no part of Catholic Social Teaching. Engaging with suffering humanity has its hard moments, of course, but compassion brings its own strength and courage. ■

Paul Dalziel is Professor of Economics at Lincoln University

was jesus being violent? (jn 2:15-16)

Another perspective on Mary Betz' piece about the Temple Cleansing

Jim Consedine

The lovely piece by Mary Betz on cleansing temples (*TM March 09*) rightly highlights the centrality of the Temple in the commerce and religious lives of the time.

She covers its context well. But there is another dimension to the story that is important. Was the action by Jesus an act justifying violence in certain circumstances, or an act of civil/religious disobedience similar to that conducted by Gandhi, Martin Luther King and *Ploughshares* activists 2000 years later?

Those who teach the non-violent Jesus inevitably are confronted by others who say: "what about Jesus when he overturned the tables in the Temple and drove the money changers out? Surely this is an act of justifiable violence?"

It's a fair question. The context in the moneychanger's episode is crucial. This is a highly symbolic action, enacted right in the centre of power, the Temple. It was an outrageous place to act, a bit like doing a similar action at Westminster Abbey or the Vatican.

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This was no ordinary building. And Jesus knew it. In the Temple civil and religious power melded into one. Jesus targets a central part of the corruption, disrespect for God and the exploitation of pilgrims. Is it any wonder he got angry and took spontaneous action? What else could he do? Take up a petition? Write a letter to the High Priest complaining? He knew, as we all know, that such action would be futile. Keeping law and order is always a primary goal of institutions.

Did he exercise violence in a way that *Just War* apologists and modern war makers can use to justify their actions? Definitely not. He lived under the Roman Empire, one of the most violent regimes ever, where crucifixion was the norm for dissenters.

Even a cursory reading of the Scriptures shows that Jesus taught a revolutionary, non-violent new way of people relating to each other. His message is the opposite of violence. One has only to read how love and respect sit at the heart of the *Sermon on the Mount* and the ensuing explanatory chapters to understand that violence was anathema to Jesus.

So what can we make of this episode? Was it a violent aberration, never to be repeated? That would make no sense to Gospel writers later seeking to present Jesus as the new Temple and radical teacher: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, walk the extra mile, share your bread with the hungry, forgive 70 times seven. These are the cornerstones of a truly revolutionary, non-violent ethic.

Jesus action is consistent with these teachings. His anger is justified. The poor are exploited and the Temple, God's House, is being abused. Jesus takes direct, symbolic, non-violent action. No one is hurt. Money and property are scattered. The voice of a prophet is heard in the inner sanctum of authority.

We are left with an obvious conclusion. The action of Jesus is a call to non-violence, demanding respect for God, for God's Temple, and for the poor who throng there to worship. This was an action of religious/civil disobedience conducted right at the heart of power. It formed a critical part of his strategy of promoting the new radical ethic he was teaching. ■

celebrating the third rite of reconciliation

A parish priest describes what happens when the Third Rite happens regularly

Thomas Lawn

At the end of 1996 or the beginning of 1997 our parish – St Joseph's, in New Plymouth – was studying the *NZ National Liturgy Commission*'s Programme "Exploring the Liturgy" module Four, entitled *Reconciling and Anointing*. One of the groups asked the question about the Third Rite – why it was not used and when could it be used. We decided to approach our Bishop and he gave us permission to use the Third Rite of Reconciliation.

For a period of 12 years, our parish has celebrated services involving *General Absolution*. It now seems this should not have been happening. Our permission for the Third Rite has been withdrawn. But because our experience during every Advent and Lent over those years has been so positive, we would like to share our experience.

We have always followed the ceremony as it is given to us in the *Book of Rites* of the Catholic Church: gathering song, opening prayer, readings, examination of conscience, *I confess*, *Our Father*, an invitation for people to stand to indicate that they are confessing their sinfulness, the prayer of Absolution particular to the Third Rite, sign of peace, thanksgiving prayer, thanksgiving hymn and final blessing.

For many years we invited people to come forward to have hands laid on their heads as a sign of the forgiveness and the healing they had received through the prayer of Absolution, and most accepted that invitation. For the past couple of years we have ceased using that gesture.

As part of the Catechesis we have usually reminded people that the wisdom of our church is that grave sins need to be confessed, those who are in such a state need to go to First Rite or Second Rite rather than the Third Rite. I personally think that some better thinkers than I need to apply their learning to that wisdom.

One of the benefits of this celebration is the use of an extended *Examination of Conscience*, I believe that this has widened considerably our understanding of what sin is and helps us to know what we need to be sorry for. Another blessing is that it has gathered people from all corners of our Pastoral Area (a cluster of Parishes). The power of God's forgiving and healing love is obviously experienced. The abundance of God's mercy is celebrated and felt. We also see that God has forgiven everybody else (for whatever they have done). This particular way of celebrating the Sacrament is giving Jesus our Lord an opportunity to touch more people's lives. The possibility of abuse is far outweighed by the benefits received, as is the case with all these 'masterpieces of God' that we call Sacraments.

After our experience we cannot understand why this form of the celebration is not more readily allowed, and we have some questions that express our doubt about the Church's current discipline regarding Rite Three.

- In restricting the Sacrament to

the ways specified in Law are we adequately reflecting the lavishness of God's mercy?

• In restricting the Sacrament in the ways specified are we denying the faith experience of good Catholic people who appreciate Rite Three? Is the Holy Spirit, through the faith of the people of North Taranaki, challenging the discipline of the Church?

• In our area people have shown an overwhelming preference for Rite Three. They have access to Rites One and Two. Can this preference be accounted for simply as a way of avoiding individual confession?

• Many more people have experienced the Sacrament through these prayerful and penitential services. Should they be denied access to this Sacrament because individual confession is required for those who have serious sins to confess?

• Are we justified in not making Rite Three available when, from our admittedly limited experience, we know that this is the only contact with the sacrament many will have? As well, it is possibly the path to Rites One and Two. ■

Tom Lawn is parish priest of St Joseph's, New Plymouth

letters to the editor

discord in the vestry

Many thanks to *Tui Motu* for the courageous and perceptive comments of Jim Neilan on Pope Benedict and Humphrey O'Leary on the Maciel case (*Mar '09*).

Add the Brazilian bishop's excommunication of the mother and doctor of the nine-year-old whose incest-conceived twins were aborted. And the 94-year-old Italian Cardinal's conclusion from his computer analysis of sins reported in confession, that the main sin of women is pride. And the 2008 excommunication of Fr Roy Bourgeois, a noted US worker for justice, for publicly supporting the ordination of women.

... and the recent sacking by the Bishop of Madison, Wisconsin, of pastoral worker Ruth Kolpack after 26 years of ministry, because she refused to renounce her seminary Masters' thesis on inclusive language.

And – closer to home – the sacking of Fr Peter Kennedy of St Mary's, Brisbane after 44 years of priesthood, for developing an inclusive, gospel-based parish – cited as "harming ecclesiastical communion".

And that's all in the last four months! Poor Jesus – he must be tearing his hair out! Is it time for lay (and maybe even clerical) church workers to organise themselves into an association to protect their employment rights?

Trish McBride, Wellington

under the mattress

I took John Honoré's advice (*Mar '09*). I sold the Porsche, scrapped the TV, scuppered the Yacht, (though) I swallowed the Truffles.

The proceeds were indeed meagre, but sufficient to subscribe to spectacular *Tui Motu*

G Della-Porta, Edinburgh, Scotland

pope benedict

Let us try to enter imaginatively and sympathetically into the mind of this introverted scholar – so brilliant he was appointed Professor in his early 30s. A few years later he was a *peritus* at the Second Vatican Council. Then he became Archbishop of one of the most significant dioceses in the Catholic world.

After a few years he was called to Rome where he served two Popes for some 30 years as head of the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*. He was Dean of the College of Cardinals when five years ago he was elected Pope at the age of 79.

For nearly 50 years he has been in a position not just of authority but of seniority. When such a man himself becomes Pope, it must be psychologically very hard for him to listen to hierarchies, let alone to individual bishops or the faithful. He has been calling the shots for so long, answerable only to the Pope of the day.

All Popes need our prayers, not least our present Holy Father.

David Myers, Cardiff, Wales

We welcome comment, discussion,argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words.

The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not altering meaning.

Response articles (up to one page) are also welcome, but please – by negotiation

If you really love your *Tui Motu* you might care to remember us in your Will

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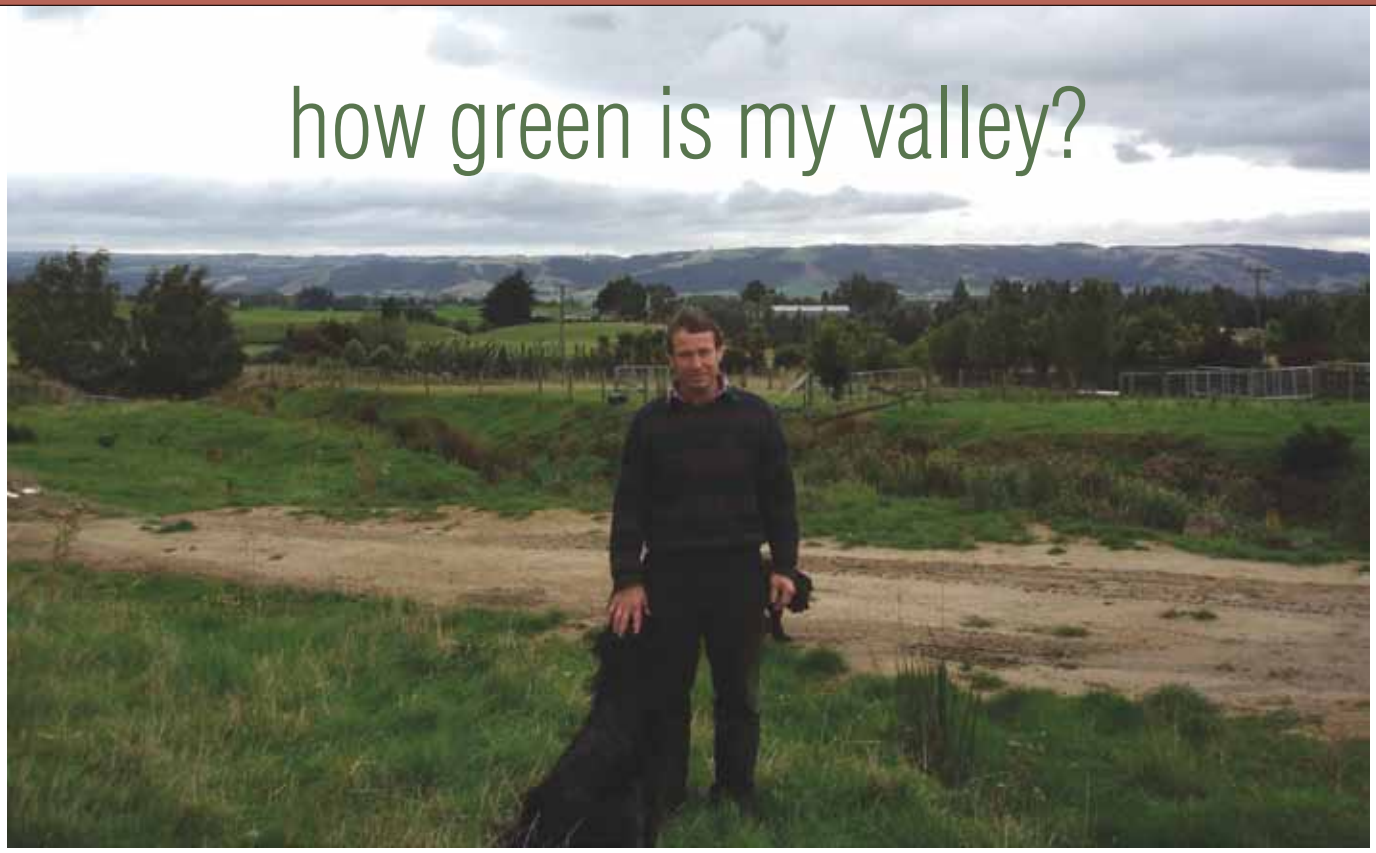
how green is my valley?



Tui Motu *visited two of the organic producers who sell each week at the Dunedin Farmer's Market. John Baker has a sheep and beef farm on the Taieri plains near the city. Stan Randle travels all the way from Earnscleugh, outside Alexandra, where he is an orchardist.*

John Baker used to farm at Clydevale near Balclutha, where he ran four and a half thousand ewes over a big property of 1400 acres, lying below the Blue Mountains. Eight years ago he moved to Allanton, on the Taieri.

"I bought here," says John, "because it's closer to town and schools. It was a property I always admired when I was a boy living in Dunedin, because when we passed along this road I could see these really good, big sheep. It lies to the north, and the land gets all the sun there is.

"There are five hundred acres and at present I carry about five hundred ewes, but I have a lot more cows. The land is richer and the stock fare a lot better here than where I used to farm.

"I had already started in Clydevale cutting out drenches and dips in the management of the sheep. Instead of drenching all the sheep that scoured, I started to cull the ones infested with worms. I believe that the tendency to scour and lose condition is hereditary. Some sheep go that way and others don't. By culling out the poorer stock, you achieve what used to be done by drenching. Also, drenching often makes the stock dependent on it. I think drenches are used far too much.

"I suppose I just drifted into organics, because I experimented with different ways of treating stock. Suddenly one day I thought I might as well go all the way and 'go organic'. Hence my trade name: 'Organicland'.

"I bought in more cattle – now about 60 percent of the stock – and lowered my sheep numbers. By diversifying I'm less vulnerable to the market fluctuations. But the main reason is that sheep and cows go well together. If you have all sheep, they are more prone to infect each other. The two graze differently and they spread different worm parasites. When the pastures have both, the parasite problem is much lower. It's always there, but it ceases to be a major issue.

"The 'wormburns' we suffer from in farming today are a modern day problem because we farm more intensively, so the stock are closer together. Once you get into the hill country you notice that the sheep produce dry dung, because there is no scouring and they aren't so close together. The grass is coarser and drier. On the plains, however, the grass is much more lush.

"Worm infestation causes the stock to lose condition and eventually it kills them. So, by culling the scouring

sheep, I've improved the health of the stock. I haven't drenched now for four years, and my lambs have never been better. And I save on the cost of sprays.

"Also, as an organic farmer I cannot spray for weeds any more or put on superphosphate, because it has been chemically enhanced. I can use natural phosphate. One of the best things you can use is rock dust from the quarries, because it contains all the minerals which ordinary soil is made of. The snag is it isn't easy to work with. It has to be ground fine so it will dissolve, but then the dust blows away.

"The fertiliser companies don't like to compete with natural products. They want to persuade farmers to spray and drench *their* way so that their products are sold and they make a profit.

"I don't find it a lonely process though, because there are other organic people. And in the last 18 months it's noticeable that more comsumers are wanting organic produce. People buy my meat at the market because it's good quality – but some are also influenced by the fact that it's organic.

"My approach has been practical. I tried the organic way. I find it works, and I see the stock improving year by year. I believe that soil is better off without the modern fertilisers. Our aim is to have healthy soil producing healthy stock, in a way that is sustainable. I have no regrets about going organic.

"But my neighbours who are dairying simply won't be able to continue using nitrogen the way they have been doing. They are overstocked, and that doesn't improve their pastures. I think they'll eventually have to change to using the sort of fertilisers I use – a mixture of seaweed and fish guts from the *Sealord* factory in Dunedin. I have to use certified organic fertilisers. I can spray it on from the back of the bike, so it's easy to spread.

"Every year a man comes from *Agquality* to inspect what I do. He looks at my books and discusses any changes in the way I manage things. He will want to see my kill sheets and letters to my neighbours informing them I am organic. He inspects my sheds and looks around the farm. Then he writes a report and certifies me as an organic producer for another year. I was operating as an organic producer for four years before I got certified. It is the certification that consumers want to see.

"I don't think I'm a purist, but I'm a conservationist at heart. I think we are duty bound to hand the countryside on to the next generation intact. Sometimes I get WOOFs here. They are itinerants who 'work on organic farms' not for pay but just for their keep. They are usually dedicated young people. I admire them. I have one here at the moment."

John is happy to admit he supports the Green Party. "I like Jeanette Fitzsimons and voted for her. She says a lot of good things. She believes in sustainability – and so do I."

there must be a better way. . .

Stan Randle was a science teacher in Central Otago for about 30 years. But in 1990 he gave up teaching and started growing fruit

When I first came to this place outside Alexandra it was all gorse. We built this house. I thought I might grow grapes, but the only processing plant was in Nelson which was difficult. So I started growing apples.

"At that time the *Apple and Pear Board* did all the marketing and grading of the apples. All I had to do was grow them. I had 40 hectares, and it was nearly all planted in apples. The *Apple and Pear Board* had a monopoly, and they would sometimes only buy 60 percent of our crop, depending on what the market would take. The rest had to be dumped or juiced, and that brought very little return. That wasn't at all satisfactory.

"Very soon I also began to have doubts about the spraying programme which the Board imposed on us. Every 10 days you had to spray against codling moth or fungal infections like mildew. The importers would not allow any bugs to survive in the apples they bought. They insisted on a completely sterile product.

"The system was to kill everything on the apple that moved. I thought to myself: *there must be a better way than this*. I decided I should make my own decisions on whether or not to spray. So I found a company which specialised in marketing organic fruit. At first *Biogrow* used to audit our product. But now I am with *Agriquality*, which is a government-run organisation.

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▷▷ "When you abandon spraying you run the risk of suffering an infestation, but our experience has been not too bad. The biggest problem is black spot which is a fungal infection. We still use the traditional Bordeaux sprays which are fungicides, but the dose allowed per hectare per season is strictly limited. It may be banned eventually because it contains copper; we also use lime-sulphur which should always be allowed.

"Normally about 80 percent of our produce goes overseas, marketed for us by Global Organics, mostly to Europe. What I sell at the Farmer's Market on a Saturday provides me with pocket money!

"A lot of health problems I am sure are the result of over-medication. Putting chemicals into food is always a risk, and we don't know the possible consequences. I also believe that philosophically speaking everything is entitled to live – even the black spot fungus!

"Most of the sprays used are purely cosmetic – to make the apple look flawless. The black spots on the skin are harmless to the people who eat the apple. One of the sights which delight my eyes is to be pruning up in the orchard on a winter's morning and to see the sun glinting on all the spider webs. The spiders are the best pesticides. All those spiders are doing a good job – and that's the way it should be.

"The other way is to skew the natural way of doing things for purely economic reasons. It's easy to produce a pristine crop of apples which will look attractive in the supermarket. For me, being an organic grower is the right way to go, and I say that even though my scientific training was as a chemist.

"I'm not acting necessarily for religious motives. Plants have natural ways of protecting themselves. What we need to do is research those methods and apply them, instead of using mass destructive sprays. Chilli pepper seeds, for instance, produce a chemical which could be employed for controlling insect pests. It is biological control. Nature will do it for you, because everything is out there to find itself a living.

"Each organism finds its niche in the system where it can flourish. What the horticulturist has to do is to make that niche unavailable to the nasties – or rather the 'less desirables'! I believe that nothing is 'nasty': everything has a purpose, or it wouldn't exist.

"Trace elements also are very important. There are places in New Zealand with serious mineral deficiencies, causing dental caries – or worse. These need to be researched and supplemented for the sake of the stock as well as the people living there.

"We have to provide a balanced environment for our plants to grow. Mass spraying I believe is the wrong remedy. You try to solve one problem – but simply cause another. Take PCBs (polychlorobiphenyls). PCBs are a great example of a chemical used successfully, where you could say: 'this is great stuff'. Then a few years later the residues were found to cause cancer.

"Some of the multinationals have been guilty of putting profit before safety. I think the New Zealand governments by and large have done a good job in protecting the public from dangerous substances being let loose in the environment. You have to err on the side of safety.

"Do I call myself a 'greenie'? Not really. But I think Jeanette Fitzsimons' heart is in the right place. I think the pendulum has swung a bit too far. I don't go along with her views on rail transport. The difficulty always is to balance the ideal solutions with the cost." ■

Both John (*left*) and Stan (*right*) sell their produce at the Otago Farmers' Market each Saturday. By selling direct, they establish a personal relationship with their customers.

Last June Pope Benedict proclaimed a Year of the Apostle Paul. Mike Riddell offers the first of a short series of reflections on Paul's Letters selecting certain themes within the Apostle's teaching

so what *were* those corinthians squabbling about?

Paul is nothing if not a pragmatist. Much of what he writes in the epistles is in response to the frequently petty troubles of Christian congregations. Because of this we have admonitions on such earthly matters as head coverings, circumcision, family dynamics, dietary habits and sexual activity.

It is perhaps possible to underestimate him because of this level of intervention; to see him as a stolid 'grump' somewhat akin to an interfering aunt. We need to remember that his letters are snapshots of real-time activities, rather than carefully crafted spiritual guidelines. They arise from the heat of conflict and the pressures of mission, and are all the more remarkable because of that.

I love the fact that the mundane and unseemly makes its way into our Holy Scripture. The fact that Paul left his cloak behind in Troas is celebrated for all generations. (I recently left my scarf at a restaurant in Dunedin, but I don't expect it to be recorded for history.) Paul's spirituality is not ethereal or unworldly. It reminds us that following Christ is done in this world rather than some other.

Were it not for the famously licentious Corinthians, we may not have those beautifully modulated phrases which institute our Communion, drawing us to both the centrality and significance of what is taking place in the Mass. From the hot coals of conflict and self-indulgence emerges the pure crystal of the eucharistic invitation.

Over the years I have met many sincere people terrified by *1 Corinthians 11*, often assisted by enthusiastic preachers who stress the possibility of taking Communion unworthily. Indeed, some would-be communicants suffer needlessly in the pews, too fearful to partake of the healing meal which is at the centre of our faith.

It is easy to forget that Paul commends us to examine ourselves and then partake. He is not trying to put people off participation in communion, but rather to be involved thoughtfully and responsibly. This reminder to treat the Eucharist seriously is one which needs to be presented from time to time, in all gentleness and humility.

> *those who eat (the bread) and drink (the cup) without discerning the body eat and drink judgment on themselves* **(I Cor 11,29)**

It is worth spending a few moments to reflect on what the central impediment to a right attitude is, in Paul's thought. He describes it as a failure in "discerning the body". He is of course speaking of the body of the church, one which he goes on to describe in some detail in chapter 12. There he describes the catholicity of the community: the essential unity which transcends difference.

It would seem therefore that the major sacrilege against communion is that of division and disunity – the failure to properly recognise the significance of Christ's inclusion of difference. We may do well to recall that at the Last Supper, even Judas participated in the sacramental meal.

If we consider ourselves superior, or denigrate the dignity of others through our actions, then we dishonour the body of Christ which we are called to consume. In this sense it should be our attitude to others we should be examining, rather than interior soul-searching. The Corinthians allowed their own needs and squabbles to take precedence over others, and so Paul names their factions and their inhospitable behaviour as sins against community.

On the personal level it is a useful call back to our mutual belonging, and a reminder of the essentially social context of communion. In the Western climate of aggressive individualism, Eucharist declares an alternative vision of what it means to be human.

Paul's words surely have significance in the ecumenical arena as well. How is it that we continue to celebrate ▷▷

four prophetic women

The prophetic fire of the Holy Spirit exists in all people, men and women. It dwells there waiting to be called forth. Scripture scholar Barbara Reid OP looks at four prophetic women of the Gospels.

mary of nazareth

In *Luke*'s description of the Annunciation, the angel appears to Mary in the midst of her everyday tasks. Like all Old Testament prophets, she is at first terrified. She then protests that what is being put to her is impossible to achieve. Yet she is led along the path of acceptance into the open space of free response.

It is a characteristic of prophets to tell the truth and that makes them vulnerable to oppressors. Living in a small town, Mary's pregnancy would soon be noticed: tongues would wag and she would be treated with suspicion and disapproval. Gabriel has promised her a blessing, but failed to tell her how it would come.

The life of a prophet is hard and lonely. Mary decides to go and visit Elizabeth, her friend in need. Elizabeth was a woman who, along with Zachariah her husband, had "lived justly before God" (*Lk.1,6*). But since she had remained childless, she too would have had the finger pointed at her – *what has she done to deserve being childless?*

So, at the Visitation (*Lk.1,39-59*) these two prophetic women are found mentoring and supporting each other. Prophets need human support. Mary's prophecy takes the form of a wonderful canticle, the *Magnificat.* Her vision is not merely a denunciation of an oppressive world: it proclaims a *new* world, where not only are the lowly uplifted but the powerful let go of their power, so that all can come together as equals.

Mary's song recalls that of Miriam (*Exodus15,20-21*). After the passage of the Red Sea the prophetess sings and dances, which is a feminine way of prophesying (*illustration right*). We find the same reaction to success with Judith and Deborah, who both sang victory songs. Little wonder that Jesus, who might have heard this song at his mother's knee, sang the same subversive song when he too began to proclaim the Good News (*Lk.4,18-19*). It is a 'dance with death' because it will trigger violence and persecution against him.

At Cana (*Jn.2,1-11*) it is Mary who judges it is time for Jesus to begin. She also knows he will need support. Mary 'births' Jesus into his ministry. Finally, she is present when the blood and water flow from his side – the birth of a new People of God (*Jn.19:26-27,34*).

mary magdalen

Mary Magdalen is introduced as one who 'deaconed' Jesus and his disciples (*Lk.8,2-3*). She ministered to him; which means she 'bankrolled' him, providing for his physical needs. Jesus had cast 'seven demons' out of her, meaning he had healed her of serious illness. There is no evidence that she had been an evil woman.

At Calvary, she is a prophetic presence, a silent witness of the Passion and death of Jesus. Silence like this can be a form of protest cf. the Argentinian mothers who stood in silence protesting at the disappearance of their menfolk in Buenos Aires. Mary Magdalen then becomes the announcer of the Resurrection. At the time she was

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Communion when there are "divisions" and "factions" rending the church? Does the Catholic stream of faith sin against catholicity in its exclusion of others from participation? Is this 'fencing of the table' a dishonouring of the body of Christ which it purports to celebrate?

It may be thought that such issues are in the realm of church politics rather than that of devotion. But Paul reminds us time and time again that the way we act carries and forms the shape of our belief. It's in the midst of historical quarrels that we demonstrate faith, or the lack of it.

The call is not to neglect our eating and drinking as a revered Sacrament. Rather the challenge is to do so consciously, in full awareness of all those who surround us in their own broken humanity. It was, after all, the entire creation that Christ called to redemption. ■

ridiculed by the disciples, just as she has been calumniated since by being called a whore and a seductress. In fact she is a prophet urging the Apostles to launch their preaching ministry.

the canaanite woman (*Mt.15,21-28*)

The other two women have to deal with opposition, contradiction and rejection – typical of the fate of the prophet.

Why was Jesus in Tyre, which is outside Galilee? Maybe he and the disciples were lying low after the death of John the Baptist. At any rate he is recognised and the woman approaches him seeking a healing for her daughter. Although she is a pagan, she uses the familiar formula of the early Christian liturgy: *Eleison me, Kyrios!* – Lord, have mercy on me!

Jesus does not respond, and the disciples try to shoo her away. When Jesus does speak, what he says to her is a gross insult, for he calls her a 'dog'. 'Dog' was the common contemptuous term used by Jews of pagans, reminiscent of the taunts once used by Catholic and Protestant children towards each other.

Yet this woman never trades insults. She throws herself at his feet and continues to plead. Jesus recognises and proclaims her 'great' faith, and gives her what she asks for.

This persistent woman never ceases to tell the truth. She perseveres in her pleas and does not reply to an insult with an insult. Instead, she cleverly employs the right word to bring Jesus up short. Prophets – even Jesus, in this instance – can overreach themselves. The woman helps Jesus refocus his prophetic thrust and the universality of his message.

the widow and the judge (*Lk.18,1-8*)

This woman recalls the prophetess Anna who continuously prayed in the Temple (*Lk.2,36-38*). This woman however is enraged because of an injustice she has suffered. She boldly intrudes into a male enclave, persistently demanding that the Judge intervene on her behalf. The Judge treats her imperiously and tries to ignore her pleas. Finally, he gets sick to death of her importunity and yields to her.

It is the persistence of the widow which is the true image of God, since it is she who is disturbed by manifest injustice. It is not a good interpretation to see prayer changing the mind of God, as the judge's conduct is changed. In fact, he never really changes. Prayer should never be seen as badgering a 'vending-machine' God!

Prayer is that movement of the Spirit which constantly cries for justice. The woman is depicted as one with nothing to lose and therefore free to conduct a feisty, indeed an unstoppable advocacy. In her poverty she is depicted as strong.

conclusion

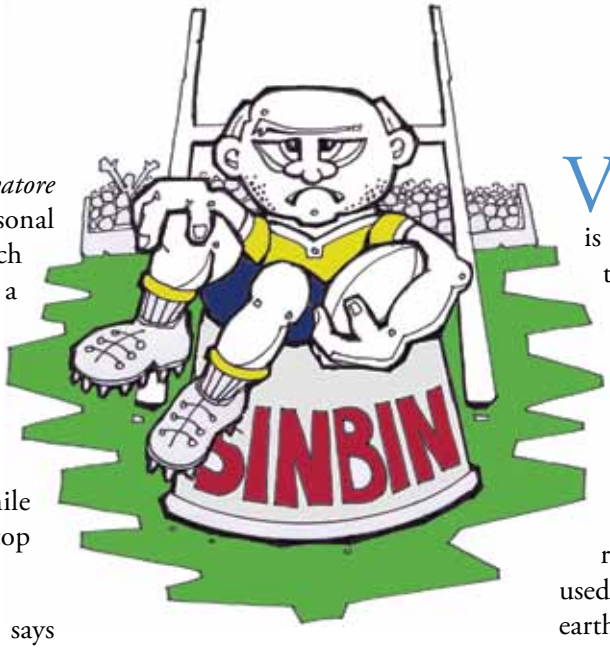
What motivates the true prophet is love, not rage – however justified the 'passion' may seem to be. "When one loves, one is not afraid", said a poor woman in Peru suffering from unjust oppression. Catherine of Siena, who pestered the Pope rather like the poor widow did, said; "Preach the truth with a million violins. It is silence that kills the world."

Long silence – like that of many oppressed women in the world – inhibits the prophetic voice and delays the righting of injustice. That is why Bishop Luiz, of Chiapas in Mexico, encouraged the women of Mexico to find their true voice. Peace is never simply doing nothing. ■

sin and testosterone

Among the leading bankers that have brought the British economy to its knees, there are no women. Could it be that greed – as highlighted recently by the Pope – is primarily a male trait? If so, our assumptions about the sins of men and women are flawed

Tina Beattie



In a recent article in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Pope's personal theologian, Mgr Wojciech Giertych, endorsed a theory by a 95-year-old Jesuit, Fr Roberto Busa, that men and women sin differently. Based on the *Seven Deadly Sins*, the list of men's sins includes lust at the top and greed at the bottom, while women's sins have pride at the top and sloth at the bottom.

As usual when the Vatican says anything mildly controversial about sex, the news was greeted with a flurry of media interest. But in fact, it's not news at all, since feminist theologians have been writing about the gendering of sin for nearly 50 years.

In 1961, Valerie Saiving published an essay in which she appeals for greater awareness of the ways in which concepts of masculinity and femininity shape the ways in which we experience sin. Her article has had a formative influence on much feminist theology, and her theories have been developed and refined by two generations of female scholars.

At first glance, Saiving's theory appears to contradict the Vatican. She writes that sins associated with femininity "have a quality which can never be encompassed by such terms as 'pride' and 'will-to-power'." Rather, women are likely to be guilty of "triviality, distractibility, and diffuseness"; of "inability to respect the boundaries of privacy; sentimentality, gossipy sociability, and mistrust of reason – in short, underdevelopment or negation of the self".

Yet perhaps this is what Mgr Giertych means when he refers to "pride", since he cites as evidence the example of women Religious in convents, who "are often envious of each other over little things, but when the church bell rings, everyone goes to the chapel to sing vespers".

Monks, on the other hand "aren't often interested in each other and, therefore, aren't jealous, but when the church bell rings, few take part in common prayer". Whatever else these anecdotes reveal, the behaviour of those nuns might suggest envy (which is second on the list of women's sins), but they seem far more to do with triviality and "gossipy sociability" than with pride.

Volumes have been written on the nature of women's sin, but there is still a failure among theologians to give focused attention to the nature and consequences of men's sins. Even the sins of the hierarchical Church – an exclusively male institution – have traditionally been referred to in feminised terms, with the imagery of whoredom and rampant female sexuality being used to describe the corruption of the earthly church.

In his reflection on sin, Mgr Giertych describes men's sins as "difficult", while women's are described as "dangerous". Moreover, he points out that, for Thomas Aquinas, pride, not lust, was the greatest danger to humanity. The implication is that women's sins are more dangerous and deadly than men's. If we are to avoid these stereotypes, we need to ask what masculine sin might look like, stripped of the excuse and the disguise of sexual temptation for which women are primarily to blame.

It is hardly surprising that a religious tradition that has viewed female sexuality with suspicion and fear has bred in the male Catholic psyche a profound sense of guilt associated with lust. Jesus said that a man who looks at a woman with lust in his heart has already committed adultery, which might suggest that men would do well to keep women firmly out of sight as well as out of mind, just

in case. But might Jesus have meant that nobody is in a position to judge on these matters, because so many men are in the same predicament?

It is interesting to note in this time of Lent that Jesus' temptation in the wilderness did not include lusting fantasies of naked women. Rather, it involved the temptation to use his power solely in the service of his own desires and ambitions.

In this time of economic crisis, that might be a good place to start to construct a theology of masculine sins. It's not about sex but about the abuse of power, although sexuality is often the most immediate and devastating way in which men seek to exercise such abusive power.

Instead of men kneeling in confessionals admitting to lust, maybe they should be encouraged to regard greed, which was bottom of the male list, as a more devastating and destructive sin. In this respect, it is interesting to note that Pope Benedict has recently suggested that there is a close connection between original sin and the greed that has created the current economic crisis. It is also notable that the credit crunch has been created by a profession that is almost exclusively male. In the line-up of failed bankers, not a single woman's name has appeared.

Male greed has proven to be a murderous sin, destroying the livelihoods of millions, bringing down economies and social institutions and threatening starvation to the most vulnerable people on earth. Recent research at Cambridge University has revealed a connection between men's behaviour on the trading floors and their testosterone levels. Men with high testosterone levels are more willing to take financial risks, and that risk-taking boosts their testosterone levels even higher.

The global economic crisis may be the result of a testosterone tornado sweeping through the banking world. There is also mounting evidence that business productivity and efficiency increase when women are involved in management and decision-making, and it has long been recognised by aid agencies that women invest money more responsibly, implement development projects more effectively and are more likely to yield a return on the investment than men. Many surveys have also shown that women in all societies tend to work longer hours than men, which is perhaps why "sloth" is not high on the list of women's sins.

For undoubtedly complex reasons, male sexual desire seems to be more immediate and spontaneous than female desire – more easily aroused and more easily satisfied. If this is an aspect of male physiology, rather than treating it as sinful we should be asking how men can be helped to understand and express their sexuality without becoming trapped in a vortex of violent and insatiable desire, which wants more and more of everything – more sex, more money, more power, creating more and more helpless victims of rampant testosterone.

the economic crisis may be the result of a testosterone tornado sweeping through the banking world

There is Christian wisdom to be had on these questions if only we were less obsessed with sex and more attentive to the subtle ways in which sin threads itself through our relationships and wreaks havoc with our personal, social and economic systems.

We have a long tradition that cautions against allowing passion to overwhelm reason. From Augustine to Aquinas and beyond, men have dealt with this wise insight by attempting to avoid passion altogether, which has meant avoiding women as far as possible. But in our post-conciliar church, where priests rub knees with women in the confessional and it is no longer possible to disguise homosexual desire under the pretence of universally heterosexual celibacy either, men need to learn to cope differently with desire, passion and the biological effects of testosterone.

The persistent belief that women are victims of their hormones and emotions while men are intrinsically more rational and in control is not true. We all have to juggle with the biological functions of our sex hormones and the desires and emotional effects they produce in us.

The fundamental challenge we face in all this is not directly mentioned in the list of the *Seven Deadly Sins*, but the lust for power and the violence associated with it may be the sin that fuels and drives all the rest. Men, conditioned by their religious culture and upbringing to view lust as their greatest sin, might fail to acknowledge that it is violence, not sex per se, which transforms healthy human desire into a malevolent and destructive lust for power and possession.

A recent study revealed that when men are shown pictures of scantily dressed women the same part of their brain is triggered into action as when they are preparing to use power tools. Rather than blaming the female body for this objectification and impulse to control, we need a different psychology and vocabulary of sin if we are to address these male responses to temptation. That means confronting the problem of violence and recognising its capacity to distort all human relationships, particularly in that most vulnerable and intimate aspect which is associated with sexual desire.

Although the Catholic Church has since the *Second Vatican Council* been pragmatically pacifist in its consistent refusal to endorse war as a solution to conflict, the church is still far more widely known for its moral absolutism ▷▷

his time, not mine

Tui Motu *reader John Masters, of Christchurch, offers this meditation on the experience of being in a hospice. Time suddenly takes on another dimension*

Two months ago I had to look up the dictionary to find the meaning of the words, *palliative*, and *hospice*. I had to research insurance documents to find a definition of *terminal illness*. Now, surrounded by profoundly experienced and deeply caring professionals, I am reduced to handing over to others the physical issues I face.

Two separate and quite disparate thoughts come to me as I lie in comfort on my *KCI Airworks Model SureV2 Low Pressure* state-of-the-art air bed, and stare at the ceiling. The first is an idea for a title to something I had not yet formed as a piece of writing – quite the wrong way to approach composition. The title is "His time, not mine".

The other idea comes from a half-heard commercial as the TV murmured in the background. I have a love of words, especially the names or words with sounds associated with the thing or action to be named. Cuckoo is such a word for a bird and a sound.

Grab is another such a word, but with all the grating sounds and connotations in the negative. I think it is one of the ugliest words in our modern lexicon. The *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* tells me: *Grab* – "*verb*: seize suddenly, take greedily, snatch at, or *slang*: impress".

We hear "Grab a coffee" or "Grab a chair" or "How does that grab ya, eh?" Grab has what I call patched words from the same patched gang like *grasp*, *greed* and *gratification*. They all seem to follow a theme relating to possession. Greedy possession of things, and the need for gratification, leads to corruption.

What a whole lot of negative thoughts – and it gets worse. Corruption and greed are the products of fear, and violence is turned to by people when they are afraid; afraid of others, of the unknown, of losing possessions and fortunes, of death. I am in a hospice. That latter idea, that word, has to be always close by.

▷▷

on sexual issues than for its opposition to violence. That is partly because of distorted media reporting, but it is also because of the frequency with which the hierarchy pronounces on issues of sex and reproduction. Yet as we all know, Catholic social teaching has much more to offer. It offers a rich resource for condemning unjust social and economic structures and creating a more life-giving vision of society.

Aquinas argues that all sin is the consequence of distorted desire. No human being willingly desires evil, but when we fail to understand the nature of desire then we become prey to rampant and destructive obsessions. Only if we understand the primal nature of desire as that which directs our lives towards God, can we order and enjoy our other desires for the good things in life.

But Aquinas also reminds us that we are animals, and we need to understand the nature of our species in order to flourish. Moreover, we are social animals, so our individual flourishing depends on the social environment in which we live. I suspect that, had Aquinas known about hormones, he would not have been surprised to discover that there is a biological connection between our hormones and our desires, so that there are physical as well as spiritual and psychological reasons for our behaviour.

A male hormone, which is essential for sexual and procreative flourishing, has run amok in disordered concepts of masculinity. Projecting the blame for male sin onto the seductions of the female sex, the church has taught men to view sex as a distraction from God and to value celibacy as a higher form of spirituality than marriage, with a corresponding failure to develop the capacity of male sexuality to express joy, love, vulnerability and relationality.

One could argue that the Catholic hierarchy provides a potentially rich alternative to such constructs of masculinity, being a community of men who have sacrificed the physical expression of their sexuality and wealth accumulation in order to dedicate themselves to a life of service and love. There is no doubt that this Catholic concept of masculinity can and does produce men of exceptional sensitivity and tenderness. However, the sex-abuse scandals suggest also that there is a profoundly dysfunctional model of male sexuality operating in much of the Catholic priesthood.

The acknowledgment that sin is gendered is an opening step along a potentially rich path of exploration, scholarship and graced experience. So now, let's hear about it from the women. ■

Tina Beattie lectures in theology at Roehampton University, S England. From the London Tablet, *by kind favour*

I think that you destroy fear by giving up things. When you have no possessions, no things, you fear no thieves, no oppressors. That idea requires courage and has to be kept in balance because, in such an environment as I find myself, it is easy to swing wildly across a spectrum of options, as you lie looking at the ceiling.

Things and possessions in the eyes of, say, a Gandhi included not only things but emotional ties to families and friends. He was even prepared to give his life to the ideal of giving up worldly things to protect the downtrodden from fear, corruption and the 'grab mentality'. I have not the courage to go there nor do I have any spiritual pressure from my wonderfully balanced Anglican faith.

Should I be 'grabbing' at life as the last possession I have? It is just not possible to lie abed in a hospice and not have a degree of anxiety. The competence and caring only seems to heighten in some subliminal way the sense that the whole thing is deadly serious. There is never a vacuum.

Three happenings came to me which will get me reaching with increasing confidence towards my title "His time, not mine".

First, there was this lovely nurse called Sarah. They are all lovely and seem to have all the time in the world to stop and chat even though you spot them racing, not just striding, past your door to the next ward. Sara brought me a paper which she had written called, *Hope in terminal illness; an evolutionary concept analysis*. It has been published in the International Journal of Palliative Nursing.

Here I am in a hospice and I read; "acknowledging that cure is no longer possible does not signify defeat, but demands a change in perspective – a shift from dying from a terminal illness to living with a life-threatening illness. Hope", she writes, "goes beyond expectation of a cure."

I wish I had said that.

Second is a visit from the chaplain, Laurie Ennor. As is the way, we yarn about everything except why I am where I am. We talk about farmers and mountain men we both know. He has that settled calm about him that I believe all men and women of the cloth must work, oh so hard, to achieve within themselves so that they can communicate it to others. When we get closer to 'the subject' he offers *2 Cor. 4: 16-18* and quotes the words verbatim:

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight, momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. Those words sounded to me like a totally original idea and a glorious one.

Finally, a happy memory. Around last Christmas season our Vicar, John Day, preached a lovely sermon which seemed to be addressed directly and personally to me in the third row from the front. He talked about God's timing and that it is always perfect.

God, said John, can bring good out of every circumstance, no matter how bad it seems. God doesn't worry about bad timing. For the first time I heard about the New Testament distinction between ***chronos*** which talks about measured time and duration of events and ***kairos*** which translates from the Greek to 'time of opportunity and fulfilment'.

in trying times
when days can't be the measure,
the light will keep shining

I immediately related *chronos* to chronometers, accurate time-lines, and days, hours and minutes. I was uncomfortable months later in the hospice when time, as I had things planned out, suddenly didn't seem to be on my side.

But John also spoke of *kairos*, or God's time. There are phrases in the Bible that characterise kairos, like "time of temptation"(*Luke 8.13*) and "time of harvest" (*Matt. 13.30*). John said that in trying times when days and hours can't be the measure, darkness will never overcome anything – the light will always keep shining. Light needs darkness so it can exist. God would chuckle uproariously at the insurance industry's definition of terminal Illness with its petty *chronos* limitation: "an advanced progressive disease likely to cause death within 12 months of the date of diagnosis".

Those memories free one from the need to grab; to worry about possessions, things, life. How can you understand freedom if you have never been confined or restricted? I suddenly had an impression of how Mohandas Gandhi gained such immense power and influence among men. He cared not for time and measurements as men measure, but allowed God to work in His own time.

It just seems to me, as I turn comfortably on to one side, away from the hard stare at the ceiling, and feel the softness of my pillow, that I am not in control, and, more importantly, it doesn't really matter. A life-long friend said: "John, you might not walk away from things (he could see I had no intention of doing so), but things might just walk away from you." That no longer seems so frightening a thought.

I fade off into my luxurious, pill-induced rest with the idea that it is His time that is important, not mine. I turn again to the Hospice's *Shorter Oxford* and note that the word which follows *Grab* is ***Grace*** – "*noun*: becomingness, air with which something is done, unconstrained goodwill as ground of concession that cannot be claimed as of right".

With that thought I can get on with the living bit. ■

The ge
Carav

When he was at table with them, he took the bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him...
Luke 24 v30-32.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610), the painter of *Supper at Emmaus* galvanised the art world – no other master painter had so many imitators. His realism and use of light and shadow were revolutionary. His palette ranges from dark shadow through the illuminated faces to the vibrant red of Christ's robe.

This work is a most powerful production with four players. Cleophas, the disciple on the left dramatically pushes back his chair in astonished disbelief as he realises Christ's presence, at the same time revealing to the viewer the risen Christ who, serenely serious, blesses the bread. The memorable figure on the right thought to be either St Peter or St James flings out his astonished arms. The house servant observes but does not understand.

Symbolism enhances: apples represent original sin; grapes for the wine of the Eucharist; pomegranate for the crown of thorns. The out flung arms recall the Crucifixion and foretell the spreading of the Good News while the pilgrim's shell reminds that we are pilgrims on the path to heaven. The house servant represents those who see but ignore or deny Christ. However, his shadow acts as a negative halo for Christ demonstrating that all children of God serve Him. Cleophas on the same plane as viewers stands for people who come to believe.

Caravaggio's realism is attributed to the camera obscura. This made possible dramatic lighting as with Christ's face and hand, the typically dark background and the successful foreshortening of the arms of the apostle and Christ. However, note the apostle's right hand out of proportion. Other artists had struck trouble with the patterns of Persian rugs so Caravaggio covered his with a white cloth.

Over 400 years the excitement of the sudden realisation of the presence of the risen Christ has continued to inspire viewers.

Margaret Ann Howard

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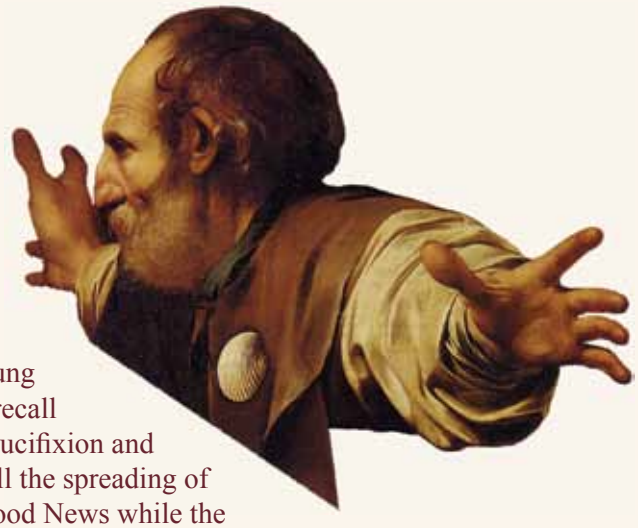


The out-flung arms recall the Crucifixion and foretell the spreading of the Good News while the pilgrim's shell reminds that we are pilgrims on the path to heaven.

apples represent original sin; grapes for the wine of the Eucharist; pomegranate for the crown of thorns

The Taking of Christ

Caravaggio's other masterpiece, relevant to this season also, was lost for hundreds of years until it turned up in a Jesuit house in Dublin in 1990. It now has pride of place in the Renaissance gallery of Ireland's National Gallery.

Comparing the two works, notice that it is the same face of Christ – but in this instance an anguished Christ at the moment of his betrayal. The play of light once again fascinates the viewer.

Note too the figure of the young man fleeing with arms outstretched (like Cleophas in the *Supper at Emmaus*). Some commentators have identified the young man as the evangelist Mark (Mk 14.51), an eyewitness therefore.

user-friendly lent

David Steindl-Rast

Lent is an ancient word for springtime; it designates a season of burgeoning inner and outer life. Too often Lent has been misunderstood as a time of grim repentance, but it is meant to be a time of joy, the joy of a fresh start, the joy that greening meadows and blossoming trees proclaim each spring.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of this special time for sharpening our spiritual focus. Its name comes from an ancient rite in which those who start their Lenten practice are signed with ashes on their foreheads. These ashes come from the burnt palm branches of last year's Palm Sunday celebration.

This year, receiving the ash cross was especially meaningful to me, for I had read Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan's book *The Last Week.* It starts with Palm Sunday. When you read it you will understand that the Palm Sunday procession in which we carry palm branches, as the people did who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem, is a counter-demonstration to the entry of Pontius Pilate into the city from the other side.

Pilate came on horseback surrounded by soldiers; Jesus came riding on a donkey as Prince of Peace. This and his other non-violent demonstrations cost Jesus his life. So, when we are signed with these ashes we are reminded of the "cost of discipleship" (the title of a book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whom the Nazis executed for his faith).

While the priest signs the faithful with ashes he says, "Remember that from dust you came and to dust you will return." (It always reminds me of the little kid who notices a pile of dust under the bed and cries, "Mommy, Mommy, there is someone under my bed, but I can't tell whether he is coming or going.") All forms come and go. The implication of this impermanence is: NOW is the time, and the time is short. But the sentence doesn't ring with the joy of living in the Now of God's presence.

That's why I like the other formula better, the one that is more often used in today's liturgy: "Turn away from sin, and believe the Gospel." Sin stands for everything that cuts us off from our authentic self, from one another, and from the divine ground of our being; Gospel stands for the Good News that the Kingdom of God is at hand. The world order in accord with God's design is only waiting for us to make it a reality here and now.

And how do we make God's design for the world a tangible reality? By overcoming sin in its three dimensions: we become authentic by pulling ourselves together; we celebrate our belonging to the universe by sharing with one another; we ground ourselves in God by letting ourselves down into God's silence to drink from the fountain of life, the very source of our being.

The traditional terminology for pulling ourselves together is *Fasting* (meaning of course a lot more than discipline in eating and drinking). Sharing with others is called *Almsgiving* (meaning more than doling out alms). And for grounding ourselves in Being, the term is *Prayer* (meaning more than saying prayers). Fasting, almsgiving and prayer are the three ways of aligning ourselves and our world with God's design, the three intersecting pathways into the joy of Lent.

The three are inseparably intertwined. How could I become authentic unless I ground myself in God and share? How could I truly share unless I found my authentic Self that is grounded in God? How could I ground myself in God unless I found in God that authentic Self of mine that is one with all and so will joyfully share? These intertwined dimensions help each one of us find our own customized observance of Lent.

What I commit myself to do in order to become more authentically myself (*Fasting*) will spring from alert attention to my personal coaching by God's Spirit within me (i.e. *Prayer*), and what exactly I give to others (*Almsgiving*) will be the unique fruit of this uniquely personal interaction. It may be money I can give to the poor because I save it by depriving myself of the kinds of food or drink that are not good for my body. It may be extra energy for helping someone in need, energy I gain by fasting from media intake that is not healthy for my mind. It may consist in things I can spare and give away because I get rid of clutter that makes authentic living more difficult. Or the fruit of my Lenten practice may be a service to others for which I find time by following a more disciplined schedule. Or – well you get the point. There is this intimately personal aspect to one's Lenten commitment, yet it finds expression in public action; the two are as two sides of one coin.

In the monastery each monk gets a personally selected book to guide us through Lent. The book I mention above is one I'd recommend: Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan: *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Final Days in Jerusalem.* ■

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

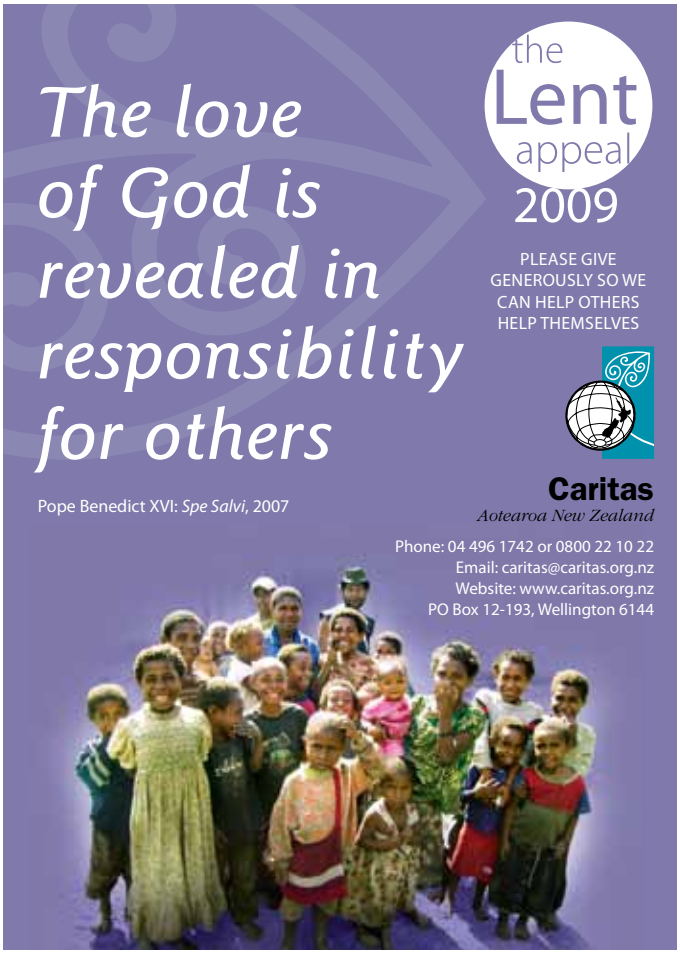
Psalm 24

Who is fit to hold power
and worthy to act in God's place?

Those with a passion for the truth,
who are horrified by injustice,
who act with mercy to the poor
and take up the cause of the helpless,
who have let go of selfish concerns
and see the whole earth as sacred,
refusing to exploit her creatures
or to foul her waters and lands.

Their strength is in their compassion;
God's light shines through their hearts.
Their children's children will bless them,
and the work of their hands will endure.

– from A Book of Psalms, selected and adapted from the Hebrew by Stephen Mitchell, HarperCollins, 1993



mountains beyond mountains

Harvard graduate Paul Farmer could have made a fortune for himself practising as a doctor. Instead he chose to work for the world's poorest people, attracting many others to do the same. He is convinced that the one thing standing between the poor and good health care is poverty.

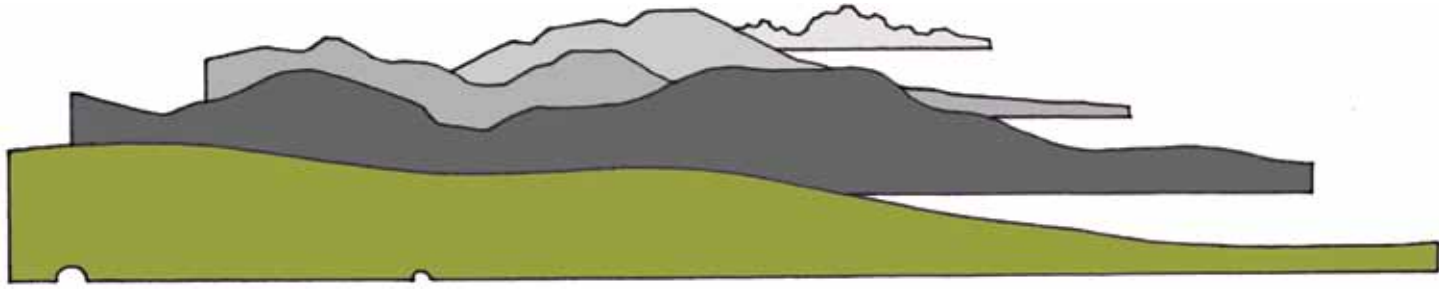
Mountains Beyond Mountains is the title of a best-selling book by American author Tracy Kidder, published in 2003. Paul Farmer is a doctor, graduate of Harvard Medical School, who spends his life setting up healthcare projects in different parts of the world bringing medical assistance to the poorest of the poor. He is founder of *Partners in Health* and has been aptly described as *"a kind of post-modern Albert Schweitzer".*

write in the first person. "I knew that readers of my book would need an everyman, someone a lot less virtuous than Farmer, to interpret him and to make him believable".

Paul Farmer's origins were quite humble – but unusual to say the least. His father brought up his family, first living in an old bus in a camping ground in Florida then on a leaky old 50-foot houseboat. Farmer enjoyed

ranged from fellow doctor Jim Yong Kim and his manager Ophelia Dahl, who have been with him from the start, to Boston construction magnate Tom White, who has poured millions of dollars into Farmer's projects.

White is cofounder of *Partners in Health,* which started in 1987 while Farmer was still a student. Today, more than a thousand people work for the organisation. They include



The title *Mountains Beyond Mountains* comes from a Haitian proverb, usually translated as: "Beyond the mountains, more mountains." Farmer himself says: "The Haitians use it in a zillion different ways – that opportunities are inexhaustible, or that when you surmount one great obstacle you merely gain a clear view of the next one". The author chose this title to express something of the spirit of this extraordinary man.

To write the book Kidder accompanied Farmer for some three whole years. He became Farmer's 'Boswell'. Kidder remarks that his other books have all been about ordinary people, whereas Farmer was the "least ordinary" person he had ever met. So he chose to

this unconventional upbringing. It taught him to be able to eat anything and sleep anywhere.

His idealism developed early. By the age of 11 he had devoured Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and followed it by reading *War and Peace,* Tolstoy's epic tale of the struggle between good and evil. He studied for an MD and then a PhD at Harvard, and graduated near the top of his class after having barely attended classes because he was already spending most of his time in Haiti trying to bring health care to the poorest of the poor.

One of Farmer's most useful gifts is the ability to attract others to join him in his work. His first companions

Haitian peasants who have been trained as community health workers, extremely bright young American epidemiologists, medical students and doctors, enlisted to work in places such as central Haiti, Siberia and the slums of Lima, Peru. Some work for nothing or earn much less than they could elsewhere.

Kidder gives these descriptions of the sort of success which *Partners in Health* can achieve. "I had met him in 1994 and found him intriguing, but I think the decisive moment was when I saw his health centre in Haiti for the first time in 2000.

"You travel from the airport along this horrible road where you mostly notice

the absence of things: electricity, arable land, even trees. And after three hours of witnessing unremitting misery all around you – people without food, without shoes – you come to this verdant citadel that provides high-quality medical services to everyone for miles around, regardless of their ability to pay. I remember feeling that if it was possible for this to be here, then anything was possible.

"Treating multi-drug resistant tuberculosis in poor countries was almost impossible when they started, but now that *Partners In Health* has driven the prices of the drugs down by more than 90 percent and they've developed protocols for how to treat it... I don't know how many countries it is now, maybe 30 or 40, who have adopted those prescriptions. The staff of *Partners In Health* not only told people how to do it, and proved that it could be done, but they also made it possible for much larger numbers of hospitals to try to do it. So things have opened up now somewhat, and the notion that he's some kind of saint whose efforts cannot be replicated – because he puts too much love and personal attention into what he is doing – has proven to be false."

who is paul farmer?

The word often used about him is that he is the supreme altruist. He gains enormous satisfaction in helping to improve the lot of those at the bottom of the heap. Let Tracy Kidder explain: "He isn't very interested in things that interest most people. He doesn't care about not having a car. He likes comfort and a good meal when they occasionally come his way, but he doesn't need or crave them. He doesn't see money as an end in itself, but just as a means to get things done.

"I sometimes wondered if the adoration of the Haitians tempted him to some sort of pride or grandiosity, such as when those he was treating would call him a god. But he's too good an anthropologist to not understand that they've been systematically deprived of modern medicine, and when you come along and give them pills that make them well, that's the way they're going to react".

Kidder's interviewer summed it up: "The appeal of *Mountains Beyond Mountains* is such that secular readers can get into it, impressed by his medical and humanitarian accomplishments; religious progressives like me get knocked out by it; and even religious conservatives can engage with it, saying, 'He's healing the sick, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and visiting the prisoners...'"

"Only", interrupted Kidder, "he is also very, very funny – like the acronyms he's constantly coming up with, such as TBMIs, "transnational bureaucrats managing inequality" to identify the stodgy people who control international health. And then referring to their clever arguments about why things have to stay the same as "well formed stools". He's always at his funniest when he's talking about really serious things.

But you feel you're dealing with a real person, not some goody-goody. It seems to me that the people who have done the most good in the world have not been goody-goody at all, but rather very passionate about what they're doing to the point of being confrontational with defenders of the status quo." ■

Well healed

A young father comforts his son, who is receiving a blood transfusion to treat anaemia at St Luke's Hospital in Uyo, Nigeria. What are the chief barriers to equity in health and well-being? They vary from site to site, of course, but are often strikingly similar if you're a doctor in Haiti, Rwanda, or serving the poor of the United States.

"The chief barriers are not poor individual choices, but rather a lack of access to effective prevention and care. It is really quite simple: poor health outcomes are associated with poverty and inequality, and they can be addressed in small ways and large. We can and must address the lack of basic tools, but we must also tackle broader obstacles to health, such as an absence of clean water, of primary and secondary education, of safe shelter, and simply lack of food. In so doing, we help to alleviate the greatest cause of health disparities – poverty.

"We believe in the right to health, and also in a right to clean water, a right to decent housing and employment, and a right to safe motherhood (500,000 women die each year in childbirth – almost all of them in the poorest parts of the world). In order to provide adequate treatment for and prevention of disease, we have argued that these "social and economic rights" must be at the forefront of health delivery in resource-poor settings around the world.

Citizens of wealthy countries like mine must continue to make and indeed grow our commitment to making poverty, and the diseases of poverty, history. We can and we must." *– Paul Farmer*

The most important conversation I had with him was the one at the end of the book when he talks about 'the long defeat', a phrase he probably picked up from reading *Camus*. But his rendering of its meaning struck me as fundamentally religious.

You do things as confidently as possible, you try to win your victories, but you're making common cause with the losers: the poor, the destitute, the vulnerable. So inevitably some of your efforts are going to fail, or maybe most of them, or maybe all of them. But you don't quit because of that; you don't change sides because of that. So it points back to why you do what you do in the first place, and the answer has got to have something to do with faith and justice.

I think we're living in the most meretricious age ever – I mean ever. And *Mountains Beyond Mountains* is about a man whose values differ radically from those that currently prevail. *–Tracy Kidder*

exorcising cynicism

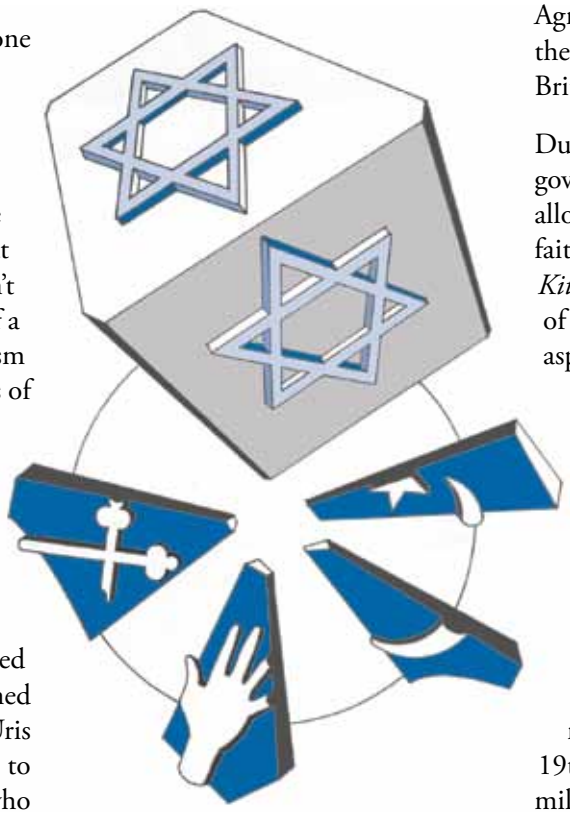
Glynn Cardy

There was a type of cynicism that came with my New Zealand High School education. We would stand back from certain issues, laugh at the greed and lust for power that undergirded much foreign policy, and shake our heads in self-righteous dismay at the persistent violence and corruption in our world.

The Israel/Palestine conflict was one such issue. Time and again the 'eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth' approach of both sides resulted in mutual blindness and bloodied mouths. We, with our teenage insight and arrogance, knew that this violent interchange wouldn't produce peace and nothing short of a miracle would. Such teenage cynicism often transmutes into adult feelings of despondency and impotency.

In those High School years I was also exposed to a form of Christianity that extolled the wonders of the birth of Israel and how it was allegedly part of God's master plan. This was blended with lashings of fiction, imagined to be fact, by the likes of Leon Uris and other authors. It was easy to empathise with the hardy Jews who survived the Nazis and by sheer grit and determination fashioned a future in the 'desolate wasteland' of what was once ancient Israel.

Of course that 'desolate wasteland' was someone else's home. Canaanite, Hittite and Philistine peoples (Palestine being a derivative of Philistia) once dwelt there. The independent entity called the Kingdom of Israel, founded by Saul, lasted for less than 100 years as a united kingdom (c.1050-920BC) before splitting into two, Judah and Israel. Two hundred years later (722-740BC) 'Israeli' independence was ended by the Assyrians and the population dispersed and exiled. Judah suffered a similar fate under the Babylonians two centuries later again with the conquest of Jerusalem in 586BC. Even when Cyrus, the Persian King, allowed Jews to return



to Jerusalem in 537BC, only a few, such as Nehemiah and Ezra, chose to return to a land which had been laid waste and whose cities had been pulled down.

Following the exile, the 'promised land' was occupied by successive foreign powers – Babylonia, Achamenid Persia, the Seleucids, Rome, the Byzantines, the Arabs and then successive Islamic kingdoms down to the Turkish Ottomans. With the exception of just under two centuries of European Christian rule, under the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099-1291) from 638CE until 1919 the region today called the State of Israel was ruled by successive Muslim rulers and kingdoms. During the First World War Palestine was occupied by British forces and became part of the Mandate under the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 which carved up the Near East between the French and British.

During the period of Muslim governance, Jews and Christians were allowed freedom to practice their faith as 'People of the Book' (*Ahl al-Kitab*). During this period the notion of a Jewish homeland or state was an aspirational vision amongst exiled Jews, linked to the coming of the Messiah.

A Jewish state, however, was not something which was part of Christian European policy. Jews in Europe were heavily discriminated against, far more than in Muslim states. Christian views on a Jewish homeland only rose to prominence during the early 19th century under the influence of a millenarian movement led by Dutch and British Evangelicals, who believed that prior to Christ's physical return to earth, all Jews had to become Christians. As part of this process, they also had to have their own state with Jerusalem as its capital.

In political terms, the notion of a homeland for (European) Jews was only formally recognised by a major European power in 1917 with the British Balfour Declaration. Even so, this declaration stated that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of

existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine".

The origin of the present conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is rooted not so much in Palestinian demands for a State but in the dispossession of Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian, from their land. Prior to 1948 Palestinians were the lawful owners and occupiers of lands within the agreed frontiers of the State of Israel as defined by the United Nations' 1947 declaration. These Palestinians held land tenure documents issued by the Ottomans and many of them had owned these lands for many generations.

In spite of this many Palestinians were forcibly driven from their lands and houses. Radical Jewish groups such as the Stern Gang and Irgun forcibly extended Jewish frontiers in violation of the United Nations agreement and dispossessed Palestinians of their lands and goods. Later, some Zionists propagated the myth that all these Palestinians voluntarily abandoned their lands. Today, the process of dispossession of Palestinian lands continues in violation of many UN agreements. The erection and extension of Jewish settlements on Palestinian land on the West Bank and the construction of the so-called "security fence" are but two examples.

As a 20-year-old I went and lived in Israel. I stayed and worked at a kibbutz on the Israel-Lebanon border. It was in the months before an invasion of Lebanon. Even then, there were rockets being fired into Israel on a number of evenings, though most fell wide of their targets. A couple of times we retreated to the bunkers where a bar was set up. There was no loss of life from these rockets in the time I was there. And, as in the present situation in Gaza, the next morning Israeli F15 fighters, supplied by the Americans, flew over the border and bombed Lebanese villages where the 'terrorists' were said to reside. There were many fatalities, mostly civilian.

Yet my abiding memory of that time wasn't the rockets, but the attitudes of the kibbutzniks among whom I worked. On the one hand they were the backbone of the army. On the other hand they were solidly Labour voters and saw the wisdom in trading land for peace. However it was the pervasive and blatant racism that shocked me the most. I remember once, for example, returning from the fields at lunchtime having heard that a young child had drowned at the nearby beach and sharing the mutual concern of this small community for the child's family. A community leader however stood up and announced in the dining room that no one should worry for it was "only an Arab".

The other thing I discovered while in Israel was the strength of the local peace movement. There are many Israelis, let alone other Jews around the world, who were opposed to the strategies and goals of militant Zionism. Organisations like *Jews for Justice for Palestinians*, *European Jews for a Just Peace*, and *Aotearoa Jews for Justice* are part of this movement. When Gaza was invaded earlier this year some 10,000 people marched in opposition in the streets of Tel Aviv – an event that the world media significantly failed to cover. Each of those marchers has been or will be scrutinised by the Israeli Secret Service.

In a southern New Zealand café last January two women, one an Israeli immigrant and one her visiting sister, were refused service by the owner, a Turkish Muslim. While New Zealand has a strong ethic of treating people equally regardless of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, and the owner will be reprimanded, there was also considerable sympathy expressed by those who wished to make some protest against the brutal bombing of Gaza. The actions of the café owner however assumed that all Israelis are supportive of militant Zionism. In fact a number of Jews have come here to escape it.

When Gaza was invaded, commentators wrote deploring the situation, citing the UN resolutions and international laws that Israel flaunts, and pointing out that like the Lebanon invasion this was firstly about internal Israeli politics and, secondly, would in the long-term be a victory for the more radical Palestinian groups with many more people joining their ranks. A number of governments and religious organisations voiced their disapproval by requesting both sides to desist from violence. Yet while it sounds a fine sentiment it also supports bullying behaviour: asking both sides to desist from violence fails to appreciate the imbalance of power.

I'm reminded of an incident in a New Zealand school playground many years ago. A 10-year-old and a 6-year-old boy were taken before the headmaster. The 10-year-old had thumped the 6-year-old. The 6-year-old had sworn at the 10-year-old. The headmaster's solution was to get the boys to apologise to each other, for ▷▷

▷▷ they had both exhibited behaviour unacceptable to the school. The power differential that comes with age and the use of physical compared with verbal violence did not enter into the headmaster's logic. The effect of the headmaster's actions was that the 10-year-old bully knew that he could continue bullying and the 6-year-old knew that he needed to grow bigger, or get bigger friends, if he wanted to be safe.

When a greater power, like the Israeli-American coalition, continues to beat down upon a much lesser power – Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, it will entrench the bitterness of the injustice and radicalise the response.

Indeed, as the history of Israel has shown since 1948, the 'problem' of the Palestinian dispossession and resistance cannot be solved by force. Despite the deployment of the overwhelming fire power of the Israeli military machine in southern Lebanon and now Gaza, the rockets still continue to be fired into Israeli territory. Each new military incursion merely provides a new generation of militants as people seek some retribution for the death of family members and the devastation of their homes and livelihoods.

Those who have the greater power have the greater responsibility to desist from warfare and initiate peace. It is only when the most powerful are prepared to make themselves vulnerable can peace, and its offspring security, have a chance. Peace requires one to invest in the well-being of one's enemy. In the end, the only solution is a negotiated peace which will have to include recognition of Palestinian dispossession, territorial concessions by Israel, and Palestinian recognition of Israel's existence. The sooner this reality takes hold on both sides, the better it will be for both Israelis and Palestinians.

As I've grown older, I realise that one of the spiritual disciplines needed in our time is the ability to counter cynicism. It is easy to be despondent and feel impotent about events that happen far away, that murder innocents and seem impossible to solve. This cynicism can reach almost epidemic proportions in a country like New Zealand far, far away at the bottom of the world. To stand up and express our opposition, and to believe that peace might one day be possible in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, is to align ourselves with people of wisdom and courage whose only counter to cynicism is faith, hope and action. ■

Glynn Cardy is Vicar of St-Matthew-in-the-City and Archdeacon of the Anglican diocese of Auckland

Where the Light of Easter Day

Where the light of Easter Day
shines through our life, then faith can say,
Christ is living,
Christ is moving,
Christ is changing all the world.
Here is God's good kingdom!

Where the yeast of love will rise,
bubbling with God's new enterprise,
Christ is living,
Christ is moving,
Christ is working through the world.
Here is God's good kingdom!

Where a child can grow in trust,
where there is joy that powers are just,
Christ is living,
Christ is moving,
Christ will color all the world.
Here is God's good kingdom!

Where the harvests ripen in peace,
where all the sounds of gunfire cease,
Christ is living,
Christ is moving,
Christ is healing in the world.
Here is God's good kingdom!

Where the Spirit's flame burns bright,
where there is health and truth and light,
Christ is living,
Christ is moving,
Christ will resurrect the world.
Here is God's good kingdom!

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from *Touch the Earth Lightly*
Hope, 2008

Patricia Ann Matheson (1911-2009)

Pat was the third of 11 children born to Nellie and Eddy Wall of Christchurch. She always had a passion for justice issues particularly in relation to the role of women and children. As a small child I remember being told of the suffragettes chaining themselves to the rails of Parliament as they battled to gain the right for women to vote, and alongside these stories was a clear sense of responsibility to continue this work.

When she left school Pat's, formal tertiary education was sacrificed to support the education of her brothers. She was adamant that this was not to happen with her children. Her daughters received the same educational opportunities as her sons.

All her life she was also an avid reader and devoured the works of Teillhard de Chardin, Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day. In the 1930s she was a leader in a group of strong, well-read Catholic women. With the support and encouragement from Bishop Brodie they established the *Catholic Library*, and developed a culture of reading and discussion amongst young Catholics in the city. This was a bold venture at the time when Catholic lay people were expected to rely on the clergy for all their religious information and interpretation, and were actively discouraged from reading any religious literature, even the Bible.

In 1938 Bishop Brodie sent Pat to Sydney to explore the ideas being promoted by the newly started *Grail* movement. When she returned to New Zealand she was instrumental in founding a *Grail* group in Christchurch. The *Grail* was a exceedingly important group to Mum and for her 80th birthday she went back to Sydney to visit them again. The *Grail* was her jumping off point for all her social justice activities.

After her husband died she worked for *Justice, Peace and Development* groups first in Wellington, then was part of the strong group in Christchurch headed by Father John Curnow. Among her many initiatives were:

- as chair of the *National Council of Women* in Waimate she fought to have good clean public toilets for women in the town;
- pushing for the humanising of the church's marriage annulment process;
- working to make the church's language inclusive of women as well as men;
- standing at the US Antarctic base with *Ploughshares* on their Good Friday protests;
- marching in support of racial equality in South Africa during the 1981 Springbok tour;
- sitting as a 90-year-old in Barrington Mall with a group of Cashmere High school pupils gathering signatures for *Amnesty International*.

Pat was also a foundation member and enthusiastic supporter of *Catholic Women knowing our Place*, which studies the role of women in the church and seeks to find ways of praying that are inclusive of women.

Her campaigns regarding the unfulfilled place of women in the church resulting in me getting a call from the *Security Intelligence Services* wanting to know where she was going to be at the time of the Pope's visit to Christchurch! Although she was very outspoken in her views, she was also totally loyal to the institution of the church. The Pope may have been at risk from her tongue but there was absolutely no risk to his person.

Two weeks before she died I heard her discussing with one of her many visitors the dwindling number of priests, her response was as always: "When are they going to recognise the gifts of the women?"

She was a daily Massgoer till her final stroke ten days before she died. She was inspired by the church's social justice teaching and she had a dream of how it could grow closer to the vision of Christ.

May she rest in peace.

(Excerpts from the eulogy given at her funeral by her daughter, Mary Woods)

The New Zealand Hymnbook Trust
announces a Major National Conference
Labour Weekend 2009 October 23 to 26
Palmerston North, New Zealand

Hope is our Song

Peace – Justice – Creation

with New Zealand hymnwriters and church music leaders, also with
Clive Pearson, Uniting Church in Australia, as keynote presenter
Put this date in your Diary/further details to come
Register your interest now: email NZHBT: info@hymns.org.nz

meeting the blessed trinity in everyday life

The Shack
William Paul Young
Los Angeles: Windblown Media,
2007. 248 pp.
Review: Susan Smith

Contemporary conversations about declining church attendance often include comments such as "people are interested in spirituality, but not in the church or institutional religion". This suggests that an institutional church, with its emphasis on laws, doctrines, hierarchical structures and time-honoured ritual comes between the believer and God. In *The Shack*, Canadian author, William Paul Young, explores in parabolic form our need for a religious faith that draws us into a warm and immediate relationship with God, a faith not distracted by laws, doctrines or rituals.

The Shack tells the story of Mack, whose youngest daughter, Missy, was abducted and murdered while Mack and his three children were camping in the summer holidays. Unsurprisingly, Mack is depressed by the tragedy, and the book's title, *The Shack*, refers not only to the hut where his daughter's body was found, but also serves as a metaphor for the emotional shelter he creates to protect himself from pain. Young is convinced – and almost convincing – in his insistence that institutional religion's inability to help people overcome sadness and depression is because it prioritises ritual, doctrine and hierarchical structures over one's personal relationship with God.

The Shack operates on at least three levels. Firstly, it is a story of one man's journey toward spiritual wholeness and emotional well-being. Secondly, *The Shack* demonstrates that an experience of God active, involved and loving in the life of the believer offers a way beyond the impasse to which depression can lead. Finally, the novel represents Young's attempt to write about the Trinity by moving beyond Greek philosophical language to a more colloquial and homely discourse that speaks of God three-in-one.

Integral to Mack's quest for emotional and spiritual wholeness is his return to the place where his daughter was abducted and murdered, and there in the abandoned shack he finds three people. The book revolves around Mack's conversations with the 'Trinity' whom he meets: an Afro-American woman called Papa, a Jewish carpenter dressed in jeans and checked shirt, Jesus, and an Asian woman, Saraya. Mack's conversations with these three cover many topics but primarily deal with Mack's relationships with his wife and children, his friends, and with his dead – but still very present – alcoholic and abusive father. The reader is invited into Mack's theological world as he engages with – and is engaged by – Papa, Jesus and Saraya.

Though Papa, Jesus and Saraya emerge as distinct persons, Young avoids the danger of tritheism, an early heresy which emphasised the distinctions between the three persons to such an extent that there seemed to be three gods rather than one. He directs the reader's attention to extraordinary transparency of communication among the three, their shared knowledge and the oneness of their goal of enabling Mack to move beyond depression.

Young's contribution to contemporary Trinitarian conversations situates him in the Cappadocian tradition. In the Eastern Roman Empire, the Cappadocian fathers – Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus – took as their starting point in Trinitarian theology the three Persons as they involved themselves in salvation history. From there they moved backwards to confirm the essential oneness that is the Godhead. Young follows a similar methodology in his book although his language is concrete and contemporary rather than abstract and philosophical.

Does Young succeed in contextualising traditional Trinitarian belief to make it more readily accessible? The fact that his book has figured on best seller lists suggests he has. Young is an Evangelical Christian who does not appear to profess allegiance to any particular church, Evangelical or otherwise. Rather, what counts is the believer's personal relationship with God – Papa, Jesus and Saraya. Such an emphasis in an age when the institutional church can seemingly come between the believer and God has much to commend it.

Interestingly for Catholics, appreciating the relational nature of the Trinity has been well researched in a more academic way by feminist theologians, Elizabeth Johnson and Catherine La Cugna, both of whom suggest that a better appreciation of the equality and mutuality of the relationships between the three persons of the Trinity offers a privileged model for understanding how people could relate to one another in the church.

God as imminent in the life of the believer is there on virtually every page after Mack makes his way back to the hut. At the end of the day, everything about God seems capable of explanation. What is not captured is the sense of God as transcendent of which Paul writes in a famous passage in *Romans* (*11:33-36*).

I like to think of God as imminent in the kitchen while I am preparing a meal but I also like to think of God as mystery, as transcendent, as totally other when I walk along the beach in awe at the beauty and wonder of the ocean, of the waves breaking gently on the sand, or roaring and rushing up the beach in times of storm. I wonder if *The Shack* captures this sense of God as transcendent. ■

a deadly virus within catholicism

Clericalism: The Death of Priesthood
George B Wilson SJ
Liturgical Press, Minnesota 2008
price US: $19-95 158 pp
Review: Robert Consedine

Priests and nuns have been an integral part of my entire life. I grew up in an Irish Catholic parish in a supportive and rich Catholic environment on the edge of Protestant Christchurch. I have had the privilege of knowing and being mentored by some wonderful priests, many now deceased. Others, in dwindling numbers, continue to spread the gospel and serve the people.

Some of the splendid and influential relationships in my life have been with nuns. Dedication, hard work, self-effacement, simplicity of lifestyle and a courageous faith have been the hallmarks of those who have sustained the schools and communities on my journey.

As my awareness of the patriarchal structure of the Catholic Church grew, particularly after Vatican II, the notion of clericalism came under the spotlight. I remember asking one of my religious Sister mentors to define clericalism. I will always remember her reply. "It is hard to define but you know when you encounter it." I realised I had been encountering it all my life.

In my own wider networks I have always been astonished at the complete lack of accountability and ongoing training of priests, outside religious orders. Beyond the seminary there is no further training requirement. The outcome, as this book points out, "is that a pastor can blithely preach blatant nonsense for years with no one to call him to account."

Jesuit priest George Wilson has written an outstanding book tackling what he calls the *evil* of clericalism. If this book had been written by an ex-priest it would be dismissed. However, Wilson is a practising priest who clearly loves the church – even in its sinfulness.

The author is well qualified and pulls no punches. He has been a priest for more than 40 years, a Jesuit for more than 50 and, in his own words, spent over 70 years of trying to live up to his baptism. He has a doctoral degree from the Gregorian University in Rome.

Wilson goes straight for the jugular. He believes the clerical culture is destroying the church. The events that have occurred in the last 40 years – sexual abuse in various forms, departure of large numbers of priests and nuns, widespread disillusionment of religious and laity – are not a series of unrelated tragedies. They form part of a single coherent drama.

He starts with a description of the broader functioning of all cultures which shape concrete patterns of behaviour, ways of thinking and viewing the world. Clerical culture, the main target of his analysis, could not survive without the collusion of everyone affected by it or implicated in its continuance. While there is an enormous challenge here for priests, he does not exclude the role of women religious and laity in the maintenance of clericalism.

His approach to defining clericalism is to take a series of what he calls 'unexamined attitudes' and analyse them. He argues that all these attitudes carry great power in directing behaviour precisely because they are not acknowledged. He applies his critique to other professional bodies, including doctors and lawyers. All such closed groupings are about power.

Some familiar examples with the lay response include:

"Because I belong to the clergy I am automatically credible. I don't have to earn my credibility by my performance." (*There's a diploma on the wall so I can put my trust in him.*)

"People use a special title in addressing me, so I must be something special." (*He's got a title. I'd better shape up.*)

"The laity accepts these manifestations of privilege so they must be deserved." (*It's showing respect for the cloth.*)

"If you criticise our profession you are criticising us as persons." (*We lack the credentials for judging them.*)

"Protecting our image is more important than confronting the situation." (*People shouldn't say things that undermine the profession.*)

"Our calling and training makes us superior to the laity" and "we don't have to be accountable to the laity, we are their shepherds." (*Their profession makes them better than us. What would we do without our priests?*)

Wilson concludes with a raft of challenges which include examining the clericalism in ourselves – priest, religious and laity.

The subtitle of this book, *The death of priesthood,* is very apt. As we move into the 21st Century the culture of clericalism with its lack of accountability, still familiar to many Mass-going Catholics, will assign this form of priesthood to irrelevance – where, in its current form, it belongs.

This is a challenging and timely book. It is well written without rancour by a church 'insider', is easy to read and contains a hope-filled message for those who have 'ears to hear'. ■

a really friendly gospel commentary

The Gospel of Mark
Mary Healy.
Baker Academic Press, 2008
Price: $45.00 approx. pbk.
Review: Kathleen Rushton RSM

The Gospel of Mark is one of two books (the other is *First and Second Timothy and Titus*, 2008) published so far in a new, 17 volume *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture* series which seeks to provide accessible yet substantive commentary on each book of the New Testament. Although written from the perspective of the Catholic faith, the writers draw on authors from across the Christian traditions.

The layout is user friendly. Each volume has the biblical text of the *New American Bible*, the translation used in the liturgy in the United States. The most important differences between it and other translations (RSV, NRSV, JB, NJB and NIV) are often explained.

The Biblical text is divided into biteable units. Lists of references to other Scripture passages, when it is used in the *Lectionary*, and to the *Catechism* are given. Then follow clear, engaging explanations of the text in its original historical context and its continuing meaning for Christians. Reflection and application sections help readers to respond to the questions which the text raises by applying Scripture to the Christian life today. Interpretations are offered for use in catechesis, preaching and other forms of pastoral ministry.

Throughout the commentary, Biblical background sidebars provide historical, literary or theological information. Living tradition sidebars from the post-Biblical tradition draw on Church documents, the saints and the Church Fathers. There are photographs, maps and a glossary.

Mary Healy's focus is the meaning of the text for faith and life. I used her book to prepare and pray with the Sunday and weekday lectionary readings from *Mark* and found it immensely helpful – sound scholarship illumined by faith. Skilfully and insightfully, Healy moves her readers to fathom the spiritual depths of this gospel. For example, her 'Reflection and Application' section on the afflicted bleeding woman as a model for approaching Jesus lingers in the memory: crowds were bumping into Jesus. The woman *touched* him. Do we merely bump up against Jesus in the Eucharist or in the preoccupations of the day – or do we come determined to *touch* him?

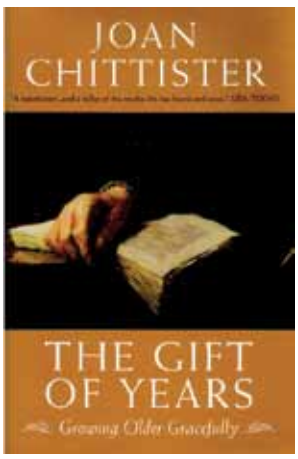
Attention given to how particular words thread through the Gospel yet are lost in translation, uncovers real treasures. For example, at the end of *Mark* we are used to speaking about Jesus being raised (*egeiro*), yet the same Greek word is applied to others such as the mother-in-law of Peter, the paralytic let down through the roof and the man with the withered hand. It is lost in translation as "helped her up" or "stand up." These characters evoke the Resurrection of Jesus as we must in our lives.

Healy brings the women characters to visibility, thus underscoring their discipleship. This is refreshing and enriching for usually general gospel commentaries are silent in this regard.

Healy writes with ease. The disciples are 'snacking' as they walk through the wheat fields. The man degraded by evil spirits declares: "See my scars? I was the guy who cut myself and howled at night. I don't do it any more!"

No commentary is perfect. At times the author collapses distinctions between what the text says and what the unfolding tradition develops.

People seeking to build a basic collection of books on the Gospels often ask me to recommend a commentary on each gospel. From now on for *that book* on Mark, I will recommend warmly Mary Healy's fine volume, and I look forward to forthcoming ones in this series. ■



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what is happening to the world's water?

Blue Covenant: the global water crisis and the coming battle for the right to water
Maude Barlow
Black Inc
Review: Ron Sharp

It started with ozone depletion, went on to climate change, increasing desertification, glacier recession, ice-cap meltdown, rising ocean levels and now its polluted water. Maude Barlow has all the facts at her fingertips and it doesn't look good. Earth is running out of fresh water.

Where has it all gone?

"Imagine a world in 20 years" she writes, "in which no substantive progress has been made to provide basic water services in the Third World; or laws to protect source water and force industry and industrial agriculture to stop polluting water systems; or to curb the mass movement of water by pipeline, tanker and other diversions, which will have created huge new swathes of desert.

"Desalination plants will ring the world's oceans, many of them run by nuclear power; corporate-controlled nanotechnology will clean up sewerage water and sell it back to private utilities, which will in turn sell it back to us at a huge profit; the rich will drink only bottled water found in the few remaining uncontaminated parts of the world, or sucked from the clouds by corporate-controlled machines, while the poor will die in increasing numbers from a lack of water."

The author offers page after page of frenzied efforts by corporate giants to get hold of the rights to water in every country of the world. She also documents the fight-back by the people at grassroots, in north China, parts of Asia and Africa, the Middle East, Australia, the Midwestern USA and sections of South America and Mexico.

Barlow presents us with a Blue Covenant of an alternative future for water, through "water conservation", "water justice" and "water democracy". This book is an important prophetic call to all of us who care about our planet. ■

modern india – fantasy or nightmare?

Slumdog Millionaire
Film Review: Paul Sorrell

After soaking up the hype surrounding this film for months before its New Zealand release – having cleaned up the Baftas and Golden Globes, it went on to pick up eight Oscars, including the coveted gong for best picture – I came to *Slumdog Millionaire* with high expectations. What unfolded before me on the screen was a taut, complex, high-octane drama, almost a thriller, poised between a despair born of abject poverty and a rags-to-riches fairytale romance.

Based on the novel Q&A by Vikas Swarup, Danny Boyle's film has a strikingly original storyline. *Slumdog Millionaire* opens with its hero, Jamal Malik, who has just won the jackpot on the Indian version of the television game show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*?, being brutally interrogated by police who accuse him of cheating. The action then turns to a series of flashbacks as Jamal – a slum boy turned 'char wallah' for a telephone marketing company – explains how every one of the questions he faced in front of the cameras is vitally linked to a key event in his tumultuous young life.

As "slumdogs" from the teeming squalor of Mumbai, Jamal, his brother Salim and their friend Latika seem to have no chance of a decent life. The children are constant prey to a stream of vicious predators, and the film relentlessly assaults our senses with unbearable images of violence, deprivation, corruption and a level of poverty unknown in the West. Yet despite these appalling circumstances, the vitality of the slums is reflected in fast-moving, vibrant scenes where the camera follows the children as they race through the ghetto pursued by police, Hindu extremists or gangsters alike.

The real subject of this complex film is the bewildering contradictions of modern India. The television game shows, call centres and concrete high-rises that figure in it exemplify the vast changes India has experienced over recent years as it undergoes a Western-style economic 'miracle'. This has created a wealthy middle class while leaving the impoverished masses virtually untouched. The film explores – and perhaps exploits – the cruel fantasy that, given the right breaks, the poorest of the poor can be catapaulted into unimaginable wealth and happiness.

This fairytale pattern may explain why *Slumdog Millionaire* has been so lionised by Hollywood – the American Dream exported to Mumbai. At the same time, the dark underside of this seductive myth – greed, corruption, betrayal, violence and despair – is inescapably etched into every frame of this stunning movie. Maybe, some day, this vicious nightmare world really will be transformed into a dream-come-true? But not yet. ■

business as usual for the U.S. pro-israel lobby

Crosscurrents
John Honoré

The devastation wrought upon Gaza has created problems for the State of Israel, with more and more international calls for an investigation into war crimes and how 22 days of unrelenting bombardment of a civilian population can be justified as self-defence. Having no legal foundation nor just cause for the brutal retaliation against the Palestinians, the reputation of the Israeli Defence Force, as in Lebanon in 2006, has sunk to a new low.

Israel must be held to account, but it seems that nothing has changed in its relations with the United States, its main supporter, that could point therefore to a resolution of the Israel/Palestinian conflict. Boycotts, divestments and sanctions are being discussed world-wide. Public opinion, predictably called anti-semitism by Zionists, is now against Israel.

The US is going through the motions of seeking peace. In March Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, paid a visit to the region but did not meet with Hamas and indeed warned Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas against forming a coalition with Hamas. The $900 million, pledged by the US for the rebuilding of Gaza, will never be paid unless Hamas renounces violence – the very thing that Israel is now being accused of. There is no mention nor any demand that Israel should return stolen land, cease illegal settlements in the West Bank, or free Gaza from the inhumane occupation and control of all the borders of this benighted territory. The two-state solution is as far away as ever.

The power of the Zionist lobby in Washington is extraordinary. Charles Freeman, a veteran diplomat with wide experience in Middle Eastern affairs, was chosen to head the influential National Intelligence Council, a body responsible for bringing together policy for intelligence agencies. However the same man had been responsible for strong criticism of Israel. Pressure increased against him to the point that he withdrew his name, declaring he had fallen victim to the "Israel lobby" that had "plumbed the depths of dishonour and indecency" against him and his family.

It is business as usual for Israel in Washington. A new president has not resulted in a new approach to the Israel/Palestine problem. As against South Africa, boycotts may be the only way.

drift to the right

After six months in office, John Key's new government has been frantically busy honouring its campaign promises, but the movement to the right of the political spectrum is becoming more pronounced. The talk is now of cost-saving and more involvement of government organisations with private enterprise. As if to confirm the trend, the Prime Minister attended the Act Party's annual conference and addressed members. Is the die cast?

The pressure is on the ACC to account for overrunning its budget, the Corrections Department for not enough accountability, and all Crown SOE's are being studied "line by line" for cost savings. More profit for the government is being demanded and the implication is that private enterprise might do it better. All this is under the heading of having to make cost savings in all departments in order to face the current monetary crisis.

Doubts have been raised about Dr Cullen's superannuation fund and whether to continue the investment, in view of the fact that it has lost billions in value. A born-again Sir Roger Douglas seems to be appearing.

The government is leaning even further right with suggestions of boot camps for young offenders and now, in a further undermining of the Corrections Department, the privatisation of prisons. This is viewed as a good example of how to reduce costs for the government and weaken the unions' demands for higher wages. The argument is that the private sector can do it cheaper and more efficiently.

However, in America this has been discredited. For free-market forces to profit from criminality is both morally and practically unacceptable. An interesting question would be to ask where exactly does the Maori Party stand in all of this, in the light of its support for National.

from sir with love

In view of the fact that the Prime Minister has reintroduced the conferring of knighthoods, my agent advises me that I should do some scenario planning for future negotiations with *Tui Motu*. My name has been put forward for services to rugby. Being modest (and intelligent) I will have to decide whether to be called 'Sir John'. The title would confer status and enhance the ability to negotiate even higher rates of reimbursement from *you know who*.

So, I informed the editor and his charming assistant that I could no longer hide my light under a bushel. I suggested that the magazine run a poll for readers to decide on the matter. Raucous laughter ensued. When I demanded that the two of them pull themselves together, I was told to "get another bushel to squat under".

Then the truth emerged. My spies have informed me that the editor has been offered the title of 'Monsignor', there being no other contenders in Dunedin. This is to create a balance with Christchurch where there are plenty. That sounds fair – but is not rugby more important? I shall confidently leave it to readers to decide. ■

the holy father admits his mistake

No one in authority likes to admit that they have been wrong. This is especially true of those who exercise authority in the church. Therefore, very unusual – one could say unprecedented – is the recent letter of Pope Benedict XVI to the bishops of the Catholic Church. This deals, its heading states, with the remission of the excommunication of the four Bishops consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre. In it the Pope acknowledges mistakes he made and apologises for them.

One can understand the decision of Pope Benedict to lift the excommunications. The leaders of the *Society of St Pius X* had long declared that they would not even initiate discussions as to the terms on which they might return to unity with the rest of the church unless two things were first done. There must be wide authorisation of the celebration in Latin of the rite of 1962 and the excommunications must be lifted. The first of these conditions had been fulfilled several years ago. Action was taken last January as to the second.

The mistake, however, the Pope made which he admits to and for which he expresses deep regret, was "the fact that the extent and limits of the provision of 21 January 2009 were not clearly and adequately explained at the moment of its publication". What was merely the beginning of a process of negotiation for the return of the Traditionalists (as they would term themselves) to unity with the church was widely taken as the virtual conclusion of such a process. Is it any wonder that there was an uproar on all sides?

Matters were compounded by the fact that at the same time as the lifting of the excommunications, one of the bishops involved, Richard Williamson, was loudly denying the Holocaust ever took place. The lifting from him of the excommunication was widely understood by Jews as an endorsement by the church of Williamson's position. It took vigorous efforts by the Vatican over succeeding weeks to make it clear that this was no way the case.

In his letter the Pope took personal responsibility for lax research prior to promulgating his decision. "I have been told that consulting the information available on the internet would have made it possible to perceive the (Williamson) problem early on. I have learned the lesson that in the future we in the Holy See will have to pay greater attention to that source of news." Nice to have the Pope joining folk like ourselves in benefiting from recourse to *Wikipedia* and *Google*.

There is a further significant benefit from the whole matter. The Pope has decided that the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* – the body which has been competent since 1988 for those communities and persons who, coming from the Society of St Pius X or from similar groups, wish to return to full communion with the Pope – is to be joined to the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*. This Commission has been headed by Cardinal Dario Castillon Hoyos. In his enthusiastic quest to return these groups to Catholic unity, he has been, many would believe, far too lenient and quite unrealistic in the requirements he has put before them as sufficient to achieve unity. This era is hopefully at an end.

The letter deals with many matters which there is not space here to discuss. Has the Pope lost standing through this affair? Maybe. But my own belief is that through making a moving admission of regret and a sincere apology, our Bavarian Pope has gained rather than lost stature in people's eyes. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

Humphrey O'Leary is a canon lawyer and Rector of the Redemptorist community in Auckland

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A Mothers Journal . . .

Kaaren Mathias

As I sit with baby Jalori, the cold white moon floats above the apple tree. Its fullness tells Easter is just a month away. Jalori is sleeping until 5am most nights now, granting me reprieve from broken nights. Being rested is like a long drink of cold water, the brightening of colours and a surge of energy that lifts and drops me in the foaming surf. It's a cool March morning, I have a baby, sated and beautiful at my breast and the rest of my family is yet to wake. Picking up a book I read James K Baxter's *Song to the Lord God.* The very first stanza sears me with truth:

Lord God, you are above and beyond all things,
Your nature is to love
You put us in the furnace of the world
To learn to love you and love one another.

The 'furnace' of life surprises me with its heat, intensity and urgency. The furnace of being in a marriage and part of a family for decades on end, is harder still. Learning what love is and how to love demands all of me. Baxter has given me an image I can connect with – a life that is hot and continuously testing and the hope that in the ashes I might find silver or even gold.

More than anything else I have ever done, I love being a mother – and being married to a wonderful man. At the same time, more than anything I have ever done, it is hard, unrelenting, and requires me to put aside my needs and wants often. I had imagined a lot less work in the whole business of being a mother and wife. The daily furnace requires me to be present to the chatter about playground tussles as we walk to school, and to say "Sorry" when I haven't sat and helped with piano practice as I'd promised. The furnace option means I sometimes choose to sit and wittingly take notice of times I have talked badly of a friend, and make amends. When I am serious about learning this loving thing, I spend time with my spouse talking about my impatience, and how easily I criticise – and I think through how I can become more grace-filled. It is uncomfortable, often.

Our family jointly faces another test, as we prepare for life in India again. We plan to return to the state of Himachal Pradesh in mid-May, for some years, maybe. Finding a place to be that will suit all six of us isn't going to be easy. We hope to use our skills in community health and development and be somewhere that suits the children for schooling – and we all hope we can find friends and a community where we can belong for a season. It's daunting but we are glad to return to the clinic and work we were involved in during 2006 and 2007 for the first few months as we scope out future directions. It's another adventure – and we remind each other that it's the journey rather than destination which calls us. This process of uncertainly exploring possibilities, considering what we each need, letting go of what we just want, trusting that God shares our unmapped journey… It's as if we have opened a door to the blast of hot air.

Rising at dawn, learning to love, listening to chatter, moving continents... Life is a continuous invitation to leave the predictable and secure air-conditioning and to walk out into the hot sun. ■