



# TUI MOTU

InterIslands

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## Mahi me te Pai Whanui Work and the Common Good

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RACHEL MACKINTOSH & PAUL BARBER discuss gains for workers and improvements needed

PETER MATHESON & ZAIN ALI share faith perspectives on work

MICHELIA MILES, PETER O'NEILL & RANISHA CHAND outline what we can do about slavery

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## EDITORIAL

### Principles at Work

I recently read parts of Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, *On Capital and Labour* (1891). In it, he lays out the duties of workers and employers in the industrialised, capitalist Western world. It's one of the first Church documents to support the rights of workers. Later popes endorsed and developed the teaching on the encyclical's various anniversaries. Now, over 200 years later, we can see how the principles Leo outlined still challenge us to seek justice for workers and employers and fair conditions for work.

Leo was responding to seismic shifts in the landscape of work: the "working classes" migrating from agriculture to industry; from the countryside to towns and cities. The Pope recognised the social situation of workers whose agency over their working lives had eroded into profit-making for the bosses. These were the "poor" – without the protection of guilds, or the like, to mediate for better working conditions. To counter the situation the Pope supported the formation of trade unions and the introduction of collective bargaining for workers: tools for negotiating with employers as a community.

The Pope pointed out that the Church must advocate for workers because God has compassion for the poor and upholds the dignity of each person. This teaching developed into the social justice principle of the preferential option for the poor. Leo said that the role of the State was to provide for the common good, meaning that because all people have equal dignity regardless of their social class, good government must protect the rights of everyone in its jurisdiction.

The global pandemic has created an upheaval in the working landscape for workers and employers. Some work opportunities have collapsed, leaving a trail of unemployment. Other initiatives have developed and in some employment sectors there are not enough workers. We recognise the need for revisioning new work possibilities at this time. The question arises as to how the principles of social justice can help us – workers, employers, contractors and government – to rebuild the work landscape for a better future.

This question forms part of the discussion in this May issue. Answers won't be simple: work problems are a tangle of economic, social, educational, political and environmental complexities. But as the writers suggest, we need to address them for the common good of all in our country and world. We can't allow the poor to be kept poor by our refusal to address the social deformities of inequality, dispossession and disrespect.

We thank all the contributors to this issue – researchers, writers, artists, designers and reviewers – who in sharing their expertise have given us a thought-provoking magazine.

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

# FATHERS STEP UP

For millennia, the responsibility of child-rearing has fallen to women. As the world comes to see these norms as rusting in the harsh light of the pandemic, it may be time to drop the belief that mothers need to do it all.

We have an entrenched view that it is women who bring babies into the world and then clothe, feed, change and care for children throughout their lives. Encouraged by arguments about biological imperatives, we hold this view as if it is gospel truth.

I'm not suggesting fathers are equipped biologically to fulfil all the needs of a newborn. But it is apparent that the burden has fallen all too heavily on women alone and for far longer than it should have.

Now as the pandemic dawns a new era and casts old realities in a new light, there is no better time to reevaluate the relationships between mothers and fathers, parents and children.

Just as flexible work arrangements were theoretical until they became a practical solution during the pandemic, there are plenty of ideas for which the time is now ripe. The workplace, consuming a third of our lives, is predictably where many of these changes need to be made.

A drastic reform of paternity leave is one of these ideas, and it has potential to reshape both our personal and professional lives. In recent months a number of countries have looked to harness it — some for the first time.

Last September the French government doubled publicly-paid paternity leave to four weeks. Recognising how hard it is to shift cultural norms — one-third of French dads don't take the leave available to them — the government went one step further. It made one week of leave mandatory immediately after a child is born.

Dragging itself into the new era, Switzerland took steps in the right direction for the first time. Two in three Swiss voters supported a referendum last year to introduce paid parental leave for fathers.

Both examples are hardly revolutionary, but they demonstrate just how stuck these cultural norms have become. France and Switzerland are wealthy, progressive countries that are advanced on many fronts but have failed to realise the lot they have dealt women.

Closer to home, the inequality may be less stark but the issue no less important. Australia is currently considering reforms, among them increasing paid parental leave from 18 to 26 weeks and rewarding those parents who take equal responsibility. The more evenly the parents divide their leave, the more weeks off work they receive.

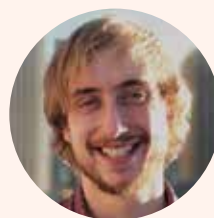
This "use it or lose it" feature correctly readjusts the incentives offered to couples. The policy perhaps

takes the lead from a slightly different policy in Sweden, where both mothers and fathers can dip into an impressive 16 months of paid leave. Of that time, two months are restricted to men — time that evaporates if the men choose not to take it.

Across the ditch, New Zealand has increased paid parental leave to 26 weeks, allowing parents to split the time as they see fit. In more recent times, Jacinda Ardern's government has broadened bereavement leave to cover miscarriages and stillbirths. Importantly, it did so for both parents, recognising that no one parent should bear it all.

Offering men and women relatively equal opportunities to raise their children is in many respects an uncontroversial solution. If we don't wish to force women into certain roles, and out of the paid workforce for long periods, we shouldn't. If we want men to pull their weight with their children, we should encourage them to do so from the start of their children's lives.

Paid parental leave is by no means a silver bullet, but it is a start. As policies change so behaviours will normalise. Mothers need not do it all. It's hardly a revelation, but there's an opportunity right now to rebuild our societies to a better standard. And for fathers to be involved with mothers in the care of their families. We need to heed that call. 📖



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







# All Workers Need Respect

PETER MATHESON discusses why in this time of crisis we need to rethink how we regard work.

**W**e need to rethink how we as a society regard work. Take the stigma the unemployed have to thole (a fine, old Scottish word for “put up with”), or the unrecognised work of women and other carers, or the insidious creep of workaholic patterns into our whole value system. We expect our politicians, for example, to work ridiculous, inhuman hours. Recently I was at a hui following up the Royal Commission report on the mosque massacre. The Minister responsible, Andrew Little, was at his 16th hui on the issue, and immediately after our afternoon meeting in Dunedin travelled to Invercargill by car for an evening meeting! He was patient and a good listener, but clearly exhausted. On the other hand we take for granted colossal salary

packages for CEOs, assuming only astronomical monetary rewards will lure them into a leading role. There is no sense that it’s a privilege, after all, to serve the community.

So we need to rethink all this. We spend much of our active lives at work, yet as Churches we offer virtually no contribution to reflection about its nature and significance. Perhaps our emptying churches are testimony to this neglect of such a crucial issue.

## Work is Sharing in God’s Creating

The Hebrew Scriptures have no hesitation about seeing God at work, in creation, in the whole life of the world. When we work we share in that. The fierce rejection of slavery in Exodus, and the prophetic denunciation of those who grind

down the faces of the day labourer and the widow, reflect the profound conviction that in our work we are co-creators with God. God’s covenant with Israel embraces the dignity of all — those who till the soil and those who bake the bread, and those who bear the burden of leadership.

## Balancing Work with Other Commitments

The Gospels, too, are full of references to work, though Jesus’s calling of the disciples away from their fishing reminds us that work commitments cannot be absolutised. So how do we reinterpret Jesus’s insights in a way that makes sense in our complex post-industrial environment? David Fleming’s *Surviving the Future*, with its critique of capitalism and celebration of

carnival, may be part of the answer. Work need not exclude delight and enchantment.

## Work Hierarchy Developed in Church

It's impossible, certainly, to miss the unresolved tension in early and medieval Christian attitudes to work. We recall the wonderful Benedictine balance of work and prayer, and Thomas a Kempis's celebration of domesticity. But the ascetic, celibate ideal, on the other hand, so often devalued the daily round, the secular concerns of the laity. This otherworldly mentality, which identifies spiritual life as an aloof detachment from material things and from the networks of trade and business, still haunts us.

## Challenge to Work Hierarchy

All the more reason, therefore, to treasure the down-to-earth ethos of the Brethren of Common Life, so influential for the Christian humanism of Erasmus, and the way in which the medieval guilds wove together a natural piety with a respect for the skills of the "tradies" of the time (from the candlemakers up!). Here was a spirituality which celebrated work's contribution to communal life. The "common good" made civic life itself sacred. How do we recover that insight today?

## Work Valued but Not Workers

These days Catholics and Protestants alike welcome the insights of Martin Luther into "worldly holiness". The freedom of the Christian was to be one for others, hammered out in the apparent ordinariness of their lives as peasants, miners, artisans, teachers, academics. (Luther was never so sure about lawyers!) Clerics were to be in the literal sense of that word — ministers, servants of their people, working hard at the task of exegeting Scripture and pastoring.

Yet Luther never broke free from his hierarchical assumptions about society. Women were there to bear children. Peasants were there to obey their masters. It was to take centuries for the most unwelcome challenge of radicals such as the Anabaptists

to break through the hierarchical assumptions of the Shakespearean world, the ugly arrogance of rulers like Henry VIII, and indeed of the whole *ancien régime*. For centuries the Churches went to bed with this exaltation of privilege, though of course there were always heroic exceptions, not least from the Jesuits and the Calvinists.

## Working Class Not Supported

Few historians still subscribe to the idea of the Protestant work ethic as the engine of capitalism, yet it harbours a grain of truth. Much of Protestantism was captured by the secondary values of middle class morality, while 19th-century popes thundered against socialism and other manifestations of secularising modernism.

In a post-COVID world it may be imperative, as never before, to reflect on the dignity and the sacredness of work.

Here in New Zealand, as elsewhere, trade unions often got short shrift from the Churches. Rhineland Catholicism was different. It got close to the working class and its concerns, as did Rutherford Waddell in little Dunedin. But dig an inch below the surface and the old contempt for trade unions is still with us, justifying the appalling short-term contracts so many have to endure.

WWI and WWII put chaplains in touch with working class men as never before. What they found shocked many of them to the core. Today we talk of racism. But in the early 20th-century, suburban churches, especially Protestant ones, were shot through with classism and its related snobbery. If people were unemployed it was because they drank, gambled or lounged around soccer grounds. What an appalling caricature!

## Efforts to Break Hierarchy and Classism

George MacLeod, founder of the Iona Community in Scotland, was

a brilliant preacher and a highly decorated officer in WWI. He was the darling of the middle classes in Edinburgh. Horrified, though, by the Great Depression and the yawning gulf between the unemployed and the Churches, he left his prosperous congregation and began an experimental community where young clergy were to be trained alongside stonemasons in the rebuilding of Iona Abbey.

For years I was a member of this radical community, committed to prayer and to politics, to peace and to reuniting the Christian Churches. We sweated together and dreamt of a more just world. *One Way Left* (meaning of course socialism) was the title of MacLeod's most famous book. Pilgrims from around the world, many of them young people, were and are drawn to Iona. Its music is now sung in every church in Christendom.

We can name many other communities — Catholic Workers, Taizé, Corrymeela — but the insights are much the same. When we work together, eat together and live together, worship takes on another dimension.

## Opportunity to Rethink Work

Work is a core dimension of being human. "Workers of the world unite", urged the Communist Manifesto. George MacLeod loved to tell the story of a boy who chucked a stone through the stained glass window of his kirk. With the "e" from "highest" obliterated by the stone, the window now proudly proclaimed: "Glory to God in the High st"!

We are to seek God at work in the world, in the High Street. Work and worship are soul-sisters. In a post-COVID world it may be imperative, as never before, to reflect on the dignity and the sacredness of work. 🙏

Painting: *Farm Workers, Fruit and Vegetable Pickers. Essential Worker Portrait #6* by Carolyn Olson © Used with permission [www.carolynolson.net](http://www.carolynolson.net)



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# REBUILD *EMPLOYMENT* FAIRLY

RACHEL MACKINTOSH argues that we can end inequalities among workers by acting for the health and well-being of our working people.

**T**he pandemic is a great rupture. Those who seek hastily to sew up the rupture and return to pre-pandemic normal are seeking to preserve a world where wealth is funnelled to the already wealthy at alarming rates, while millions upon millions pay.

We can do better. We can rebuild a world where we prioritise community health and well-being, where rising wages lead the recovery, where we keep and create decent jobs, where working people, through our unions, are involved in all decisions, and where we end inequality.

The pandemic showed us what is essential, what is not, and how we have been valuing billionaires over the people who keep our world going. With permission, I share this story:

My name is Rose Kavapalu. I am an essential worker, who has been cleaning for 15 years at police stations on the minimum wage.

I work 13 and a half hours per day – five and a half hours at Otahuhu Police Station and eight hours at St

Cuthbert's College: a total of 67 and a half hours per week.

During the first Lockdown I was really scared for my life, the lives of my elderly parents, and my husband who's got underlying health conditions. I wanted to stop working but I couldn't because I am an essential worker. All of a sudden, the public realised how important my job is to them.

I was worried whether my PPE gear was enough to protect me and my family. I couldn't sleep at night.

The sacrifices that we essential workers have to make for the minimum wage are not worth it.

At the point of Lockdown, Rose's story – already a story of struggle – paints a sharp picture of the divisions in our society. Rose couldn't stay in a bubble. While the higher paid in our country were able to work from home and have groceries delivered, Rose and her whānau, like all the low-paid essential workers, put themselves in harm's way every day.

There is more to Rose's story. There is a reason that

she works two jobs. She explains the history of her police station cleaning, where she has worked for a series of employers who are contracted to the New Zealand Police:

I have gone through three cleaning contractors and every time the contract changes they reduce my hours. My hours used to be 12 hours a day and every time the contract changed it dropped. Now I have only five and a half hours a day.

### DRIVING CONTRACTS AND WORKERS DOWN

Rose's story shows us how work is structured in this country. We consider that some work, while it needs to be done, doesn't need to be paid enough for someone to live with dignity. We arrange work so that, where an organisation needs a service – cleaning, security, catering, deliveries – the people who run that organisation can contract out the work to the lowest bidder. The people doing the work, like Rose, get whatever is the lowest cost the contractor can get away with. The lowest limit is not the minimum wage for 40 hours per week, it is the number of hours one person can physically work, it is the number of families that can squeeze into a house, or a garage, or a car. It is dangerous, precarious work in which people get killed.

Even working together in a union, the people doing the work have limited bargaining power to push this lower limit up. We have to negotiate with the employer, not the funder. And because there are no limits on who can set up as a contractor, there are dozens, if not hundreds, of employers across the country. Unions can ask employers to bargain together, so we can establish standards across an industry, but employers are not obliged to conclude an agreement under this bargaining arrangement, and seldom do.

### NEW VISION FOR WORK

Our country doesn't have to arrange work this way. We could do it differently.

Unions are the largest democratic organisations in the country and in the world, and are the only organisations that exist to further the interests of working people. We have a vision and a plan.

### PRIORITISE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Our vision is of a world where we prioritise true health and well-being. A world where working people have adequate personal protective equipment and access to COVID vaccination. And where working people have a collective say in our well-being, and so are safe, come home alive at the end of the day, and are free from all forms of violence and harassment. In the long term, our vision covers the whole of society, with an adequate welfare system, healthy housing available to everyone and accessible healthcare for all.

### WORKERS BARGAIN FOR LIVING INCOMES

Our vision is of a world where working people bargain for living incomes that can lift the material circumstances. Our vision is for decent work, work that we have collectively decided is useful, work that is performed in good conditions, that is healthy, safe and well paid.

Our vision is for all working people to have a collective say in what is healthy and safe work, in what the wages are, in what accessible education, training and development is necessary, in what conditions we work and in how best to do our work.

Our vision is for an end to inequality.

### ENDING INEQUALITIES

Our plan has many parts, including supporting Māori community development and good jobs in Māori enterprises. In sectors like primary health and disability, this means funding increases for Māori and iwi providers to ensure decent wages.

In other sectors, it means regulations for collective and/or cooperative ownership of land and a model of investing in the economy that meets Māori aspirations.

### FAIR PAY AGREEMENTS

The part of our plan that is upon us right now is proposed legislation to give unions the ability to negotiate fair industry standards through what are called Fair Pay Agreements.

These collective agreements go beyond a single employer or multiple employers, to a whole industry.

Working people will be able to negotiate collectively for one agreement – one set of minimum industry-wide pay and conditions.

Employers will not have the option to undercut one another, as they will all be covered.

These agreements will underpin but not replace existing collective bargaining arrangements. And if industry employers and unions cannot reach agreement on these minimums, there will be an independent arbitration body that will make a final and binding decision.

Every part of our vision can be on the table in a Fair Pay Agreement negotiation. We can negotiate for safety and well-being, for education and development, for how our work should be performed, including hours, and we can negotiate for decent wages.

### IT IS POSSIBLE

Under a Fair Pay Agreement, Rose Kavapalu can hope to have just one job, with sufficient income to work a standard full-time week, with safe and healthy conditions and a voice in her employment. And she can hope for priceless time with her husband, elderly parents and wider whānau. 🗑️

Painting: *Grocery Store Cashier and Bagger. Essential Worker Portrait #1* by Carolyn Olson © Used with permission [www.carolynolson.net](http://www.carolynolson.net)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:  
[www.union.org.nz](http://www.union.org.nz)



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Painting: *Self Portrait in a Mask* by Paul Hutchinson of Punihō, Taranaki © Used with permission www.paulhutchinson.co.nz and Showcase section of Virtual Tart www.tart.co.nz

# We're Not There Yet

PAUL BARBER discusses the findings on employment and income published in the State of the Nation 2021 report.

**T**he co-founder of The Salvation Army Catherine Booth once said: "There is no improving the future, without disturbing the present, and the difficulty is to get people to be willing to be disturbed." Over the past year the pandemic has brought a time of massive change — our present has been well and truly disturbed! As the disruption continues, the better future that can emerge depends on the decisions we, as individuals, communities and nations, are making now and in the near future. That is the theme of the State of the Nation 2021 report *Disturbed Present, Better Future? Whakararu o ināianei, e pai ake kia, anga whakamua* released by The Salvation Army Te Ope Whakaora in February 2021.

Our Christian faith knows God is present in the midst

of crisis and that in the breaking down of the old, new life can emerge shaped by God's Spirit of love, compassion and justice. The sustaining love of God has been present all through the pain of this crisis in so many ways, some of which are even reflected in the statistics and analysis of the State of the Nation 2021 report.

The hungry were fed — the 113,000 food parcels distributed by The Salvation Army is almost twice the number from 2019. The homeless were housed — with almost 1,500 finding shelter through the Housing First initiative and over 3,500 in transitional housing. Those who are struggling with debt found help — with 3,500 new clients in Salvation Army budgeting services. Prisoners were made free — the number of people in prison continues to decline. Fewer young people are offending and ending up in the youth justice system. Thousands of Salvation Army people have been among the many others across our nation who have shared in this work of God's love.



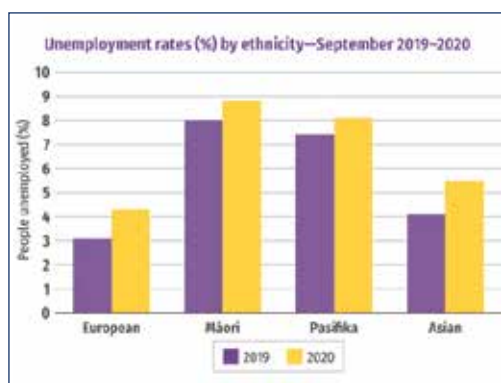
But the State of the Nation report shows that at the start of 2021 the scale of the problems may overwhelm the signs of progress for transformation and change. The impacts are also very unequally shared – higher unemployment and the corresponding increase in the number of people relying on government income support means increasing poverty and inequality seem likely without further changes. Changes made to income support and welfare policy to date do not seem sufficient to protect those losing employment from poverty, or shift inequalities existing before the COVID-19 pandemic.

It will take further bold action by government with the support of communities to carry us through the coming years and bring a better future for everyone. In this article the focus is on what has happened to people's employment and incomes, and the implications this has for the hope of a better future.

## Disrupted Employment Market

The COVID-19 Lockdowns and border restrictions have had dramatic impacts on the labour market in this country that has relied heavily on imported skilled workers, professionals and particularly labour in lower-paid sectors such as horticulture and hospitality. Unemployment increased rapidly between March and September 2020 before levelling out towards the end of 2020 and early 2021. By December 2020 there were 25,000 more people officially unemployed, 22 per cent more than 2019. Bold action to support employment through the Wage Subsidy Scheme helped keep many people in work and limit the rise in unemployment. Without further action to focus on those most affected by unemployment, the burden of hardship will be deepened.

The impact of rising unemployment compounds existing inequalities. Young people, Māori, Pasifika, women and those living with a disability are most affected. Women experience higher unemployment rates but also higher rates of underutilisation (such as seeking more hours). Pasifika and Māori workers already faced unemployment rates more than twice those of European ethnicity and their unemployment rates have increased further in 2020 as shown in Figure 1 below.



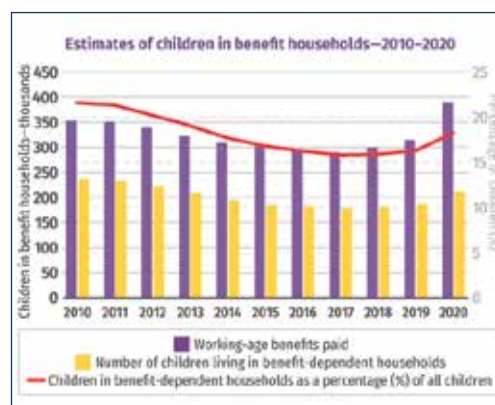
Youth unemployment and those not in education, employment or training (NEET) increased this year and is now at the highest number since 2012. We are only at the beginning of the journey to look for a better future

for young people seeking employment. This will involve balancing the need for migrants' skills in our health sector and other higher-skilled sectors with the need to train and upskill more people in this country.

Hopeful signs are to be found in the midst of the disruption. The decision by government to continue to increase the minimum wage to \$20 per hour from April 2020 is helping increase incomes for the lowest paid workers. Average hourly wages for females increased faster than for males, with women's hourly earnings increasing to just over 90 per cent of the male average in 2020. The gap between male and female average hourly wages has continued to fall over the past three years, but women's earnings are still well behind men's. Government policy will need to be focused on employment policies that will reduce such inequalities in the labour market.

## Rapid Increase in Need for Welfare Support

During 2020 the number of people needing government income support rose by 75,000, peaking in early January 2021. Since then, the number has declined slightly but at the end of March 2021 there were just under 370,000 people receiving welfare support – see the purple bars in Figure 2 below. There were fewer children living in poverty before the COVID-19 crisis began yet by the end of 2020 there were 23,000 (shown by yellow bars in Fig 2) more children in households relying on government welfare income support, a total of 211,000 children, nearly one in five (18.3 per cent) of all children in this country (red line in Fig 2). These children are most at risk of poverty because our welfare system does not provide an adequate income for families.



Government responses to the pandemic crisis included enormous increases in spending on welfare compared to the previous year. The increased spending was focused mostly on the short-term response of the Wage Subsidy Scheme and COVID-19 Income Relief Payment, as well as a one-off increase to core benefit rates and one-off doubling of the Winter Energy Payment hardship assistance. These responses greatly helped to moderate the impacts of the crisis on people's incomes and employment, but they were mostly temporary measures and most have now ended, yet the need for additional income support is likely to remain for the coming years.

*Continued on page 10*

Despite these important positive steps, the promised “overhaul” of the welfare system seems to be stuck in the workshop. More than two years ago in February 2019, the recommendations of the report of the Government’s Welfare Expert Advisory Group set out a comprehensive programme of reform that included significant increases in core welfare benefits. By the end of 2020 only a handful of the recommendations had been implemented. The annual indexing of core benefits to average wages and increases in abatement thresholds from April 2020 followed by a further large increase in those thresholds from April 2021 are two key recommendations that have been progressed. But at the start of 2021 the social security system remains fundamentally the same as the one that the Labour government inherited in 2017. A better future for the more than 600,000 people relying on the welfare system will require the government to move faster on implementing these recommendations.

### Food Hardship Deepens

There was an enormous increase in food parcels distributed by The Salvation Army in 2020, more than 113,000 food parcels—nearly twice the level of 2019. Over 37,000 of those were distributed in the eight weeks of the Levels 3 and 4 national Lockdowns, which highlights the fact that many households are only just managing to get by. Increases in government food hardship grants from Work and Income followed a broadly similar trend, rising sharply during the Lockdowns before declining in the second part of 2020 to levels still significantly higher than 2019.

A hopeful sign for a better future is that the government responded to this increased need with a new investment of more than \$200 million to provide free school lunches for more than 200,000 school students. New funding is also allocated for collaborative networks to work on structural issues of food security in communities around the country.

### Re-weaving the Social Security Net

Ka pū te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi.

The old net is cast aside whilst the new net goes fishing.

As the whakatauki suggests, a new net needs to be crafted. The safety net of our social security, housing and health systems needs to be re-woven. It is important that all those concerned for fairness and justice in this country continue to press for courageous and significant changes in government policy that address social and economic challenges, such as unemployment and low incomes. Policies that help people to find the housing they need and can afford, lift the lowest incomes to a level that ensure that people and their families can live with dignity, and health and social services that are free, easy to access and that understand the mental, physical and cultural needs of the people they serve. 🗣️

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

State of the Nation 2021 Report <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/article/disturbed-present-better-future>

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**C** OVID-19, alongside Lockdown, brought me more time than ever before.

During such unprecedented times I couldn’t help being so worried for family overseas, video-chatting with them more times in two months than in the past two years. Before, spending time with family and exercise seemed to be a chore. However, soon it became part of the routine. A routine I came to enjoy.

Family board games and walks became the usual

**I** was volunteering at a children’s camp when the news of New Zealand’s first coronavirus case arrived. We were 50 immunocompromised children who passed through Auckland Airport mere hours after that case. I was terrified. I was surrounded by so many people in the same situation as me, yet I felt alone.

This feeling of vulnerability stuck.

I did not return to normal life. I spent every day in my bedroom, struggling to keep up with online school,

**I**’m a homebody. A two-week Lockdown seemed like the perfect excuse for the opportunity to live in the comfort of pyjama pants and conceal myself behind the frames of my house. For the Lockdown was directed by the government; it was the law.

As I am someone who struggles with change, the same routine each day would appear a blessing. But now this was the problem — every day was the same. I grew to hate the bedroom walls which inched smaller each morning. To the extent that

**C** oronavirus blighted our world, an oil spill seeping into every aspect of our lives.

The world around me changed, but surprisingly the routine carried on much as normal. Dad worked from home but hidden away in the spare bedroom; Mum, a neonatal nurse, still went to work as normal; and my brother and I went to school — virtually.

Though life continued I felt the shift. My family grew closer together, edging on too close. We



# LOCKDOWN *AND* AFTER

Year 13 students from Sacred Heart Girls' College in New Plymouth share their reflections.

Painting: *The Journey to Zero* by Trevor Knowsley © Used with permission  
In exhibition: Reflections, the Art of Lockdown [www.percythomsongallery.org.nz](http://www.percythomsongallery.org.nz)

evening activities in our household. We would all gather in the lounge every night for *The Chase*, making it our own personal competition against each other. The oven was always on in the kitchen, with suddenly everyone in the family becoming the upcoming winner of *The Great Kiwi Bake-Off*. While the rest of the world was in panic mode, being in our own safety bubbles in New Zealand gave me time to learn.

praying for a return to normality, longing for some company other than my bed. I hated it. A constant nagging thought followed me everywhere, "What if you get sick?"

Gradually, with the constant support of my family, I fell into the rhythm of Lockdown life. Routine calmed my worries, though it was disconcerting to see those I loved in pixilated form on my laptop screen, and it made me feel even further

upon waking one morning, I decided no more green. I peeled back the wallpaper, until I had a cream canvas. Something new.

Never did I consider a pandemic happening to me. A pandemic was a passing struggle, a frame on the news. That wasn't my life though. It wasn't until I had my freedom gifted back to me, that I could notice the good within Lockdown. Beyond the failed attempts at banana bread, I discovered the relief of running

went for walks, played card games, spent time with one another. Time that before Lockdown was so often misplaced in the busyness of our individual lives.

I also noticed that even as we were now closed off from the world, we were closer as a community than we had ever been before. At 6am we stumbled outside in our pyjamas and stood at the end of the driveway for the ANZAC dawn service, alongside all our

I learnt to be grateful and to find peace. I learnt to be patient and have strength, not only with my family (having to be with them all the time) but myself. I learnt how truly lucky I am. Psalm 29:11 says: "The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace." Lockdown and COVID-19 has helped shift my thoughts from the impending

from them — disjointed and alone.

Leaving the house to walk the dog felt like a hazardous trek — in my mask I was a self-sacrificing hero, risking my life, all for the well-being of my pooch. Even with my PPE, I felt exposed.

I missed normal life. I missed my friends. I missed feeling safe.

Now we've returned to normal — an unfamiliar "normal". I am happier

and a liking for learning at home, with fewer distractions. Gladly, I am not an only child and could unite with my brothers.

For the first time we had gotten to know our neighbours. We did this in a way I had considered ancient — by writing letters. Bored like all of us, the elderly couple would leave notes in our mailbox, asking if we had any jigsaw puzzles for them to complete.

neighbours. One family played the "Last Post" through their car speakers and we all listened in silence.

This was a special moment that we never would have experienced had we not been in Lockdown. Together we remembered not only those who had fallen in war, but those lost and affected by the pandemic. I remembered what it

future and what I am to do with my life, to finding peace with the present and the known.



**Ann-Mariya Tomy** is Deputy Head Girl Student Council. She loves spending time with family, reading and hates cooking.

and I feel less vulnerable, but I'm still looking forward to receiving a vaccine and feeling completely secure.



**Eve Hagenson** is Deputy Head Girl Special Character. She enjoys reading, music and walking her dog, Guinness.

I realised that, even while shut in at home, I had the ability to help others. The love in our house wasn't just for us but for our neighbours, too.



**Niamh McCarthy** is the Vianney House Leader and is at her happiest when she's in the sunshine.

means to be selfless and what it is to be united whether that be as a family or as a nation.



**Sophie Koning** loves to immerse herself in all things creative and "artsy".



and serving food for other members of the household (some of whom were in paid work in the household), cleaning up, doing dishes; cleaning the household interior; sorting, washing, drying or ironing laundry; doing household, grounds and garden maintenance; breastfeeding; caring for dependent children and adults; administration, logistics, secretarial and worry work for dependents; household budgeting, accounting and banking work; transporting members of the household or their goods; or shopping for other members of the household. Teams of volunteers throughout the country providing urgent services made extraordinary efforts. Economics labels all this work “unproductive” and we are “economically inactive” when we are doing it.

The two days of 23-25 March at Level 3 before total Level 4 Lockdown saw a rush on garden centres and building supplies merchants, preparing for an increased burst in this unpaid work. Unless these activities added substantially to the capital value of the home (a new deck, a new garage, for example), those hours spent on repairs and landscape work were just unpaid household work.

### “Productive” Work and Workers

However, if you spent some Lockdown time chopping wood for winter fuel or collecting pine cones and firewood; went fishing off your property à la Winston Peters; spent time preserving fruit, home brewing, dressmaking, or making pottery, all unpaid — congratulations! You were economically active and that work counted (or should if anyone obeyed the crazy rules on the boundary of production).

### Economic Rules of UNSNA

These demarcations appear in the rules of the 2008 United Nations System of National Accounts

# ECONOMICS during Lockdown

MARILYN WARING outlines how an economic bias was magnified during the pandemic Lockdown when women carried the country.

**T**his is what we learned about economics from the 2020 COVID-19 Lockdown in Aotearoa New Zealand. One of the most entrenched existing biases in economic practice was highlighted and magnified.

### “Unproductive” Work and Workers

For 50 days of Alert Levels 4 and 3, the economy may have stopped generating production, but we did not stop working. We were preparing



(SNA). The explanations for these rules have included “convenience” and practicality. Well before the COVID experience, there was a growing blurring of “work” and “home” life when people carry out both kinds of activities in the same place, and frequently at the same time.

The following demonstrate the extraordinary confusion in the SNA: “As the vast majority of household services are not produced for the market, there are typically no suitable market prices that can be used to value such services.”

A few pages later the rules read: “Although paid domestic staff produce many of the services excluded from the production boundary of the SNA when undertaken by household members, paying a person who comes to the house to wash, cook or look after children ... is as much a market activity as taking clothes to a laundry, eating at a restaurant or paying a nursery to care for children.”

Obviously internal consistency in the rules governing the largest sector of the economy is a major problem for people who don’t work in it.

### Women Do Bulk of “Unproductive” Work

On 17 June 2020, *The Guardian* reported research showing men doing more domestic work during the pandemic. A Utah study showed equally shared housework climbing from 26 per cent to 41 per cent. In Germany, the situation forced women with children under 14 to spend less time on their paid work activities with their increases in household work. In Belgium, diaries showed it was women who had to organise the changes to household and domestic life, as “productive work” moved to the unproductive environment.

Aotearoa has no data. When Lockdown arrived, men were denied the two areas of unpaid work in which they spend the most time: transporting members of the household or their goods, or shopping for members of the household. (My non-scientific observation of the queue at my local supermarket each morning suggested that many men had become the household

designated shopper). Media stories showed men spoke genuinely of getting to know their partner or their children better – which is another way of saying: “I leave all that to my partner when I am ‘working’”.

### Production Boundaries Shifted

Household assets of everyday use invisibly crossed the boundary of production as they became imperative in keeping paid workers productive and healthy. Using the fridge,

**For 50 days women carried the country, but the work they spent the most time doing, the work that kept Aotearoa going when the “economy” contracted, all the adjustments households are having to make, won’t be part of the equation in the “economic recovery”.**



microwave, oven, stove, toaster, coffee machine, kettle, dining table and chairs (a work space and breaks for paid work morning tea, lunch) telephones, IT hardware, radio, television became indispensable in maintaining “production”. Maintenance costs and overheads shifted across the boundary – increases in costs of internet, energy and water resources, as well as wear and tear.

### Unpaid Work Increased

The single largest sector of the nation’s economy, the unpaid sector, increased exponentially and carried the whole country for the 50 days of Levels 3 and 4. For those already full time in the unpaid economy the workload grew. Those who normally employed casual workers to help in their homes had to replace this “economic activity” with their unpaid work, and balance this with any paid work that had to continue from home. A significant amount of the unpaid work in households replaced full time work in the economy – teaching, childcare, care of other dependents, specialist educators, IT technicians, for example – where salary payments of COVID-related benefits continued, completely masking this significant work burden lifted by those adults at home. For 50 days in Aotearoa unpaid work replaced the market in an unrehearsed revolution in how to do this.

Was there any acknowledgement of this, and of who did most of that work? Nothing but silence.

The UNSNA is not fit for purpose, but the Government will rely on it to measure “recovery”. A well-being framework based on Eurocentric “capitals” is just more of the same paradigm.

For 50 days women carried the country, but the work they spent the most time doing, the work that kept Aotearoa going when the “economy” contracted, all the adjustments households are having to make, won’t be part of the equation in the “economic recovery”. Those who do the most work should benefit in the investments of resources now. 🗑️

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**Marilyn Waring** is a public policy scholar, international development consultant, former politician, environmentalist, feminist and a principal founder of feminist economics.

# WE NEED A MODERN SLAVERY ACT

There are many global situations that are distressing to read about. The rising incidence of modern slavery is one of these. Data from 2016 puts these statistics at 40 million people globally being in conditions of modern slavery — that is, one in every 200 people.

The opposite of feeling powerless in these situations is being able to take action that makes a meaningful difference. The current campaign *Sign For Freedom*, being run by Trade Aid and World Vision, gives you the chance to use your voice, or rather the power of the pen, to create real change by signing a petition.

The *Sign For Freedom* campaign links the rising incidence of modern slavery to production. In fact, the figure of 25 million people out of the total 40 million, relates to those in conditions of forced labour — providing services or goods for little or no gain to the producers. This is where we, as New Zealanders, are connected to the plight of those being seriously exploited, and this is where we can exert our pressure as consumers and as citizens in a democracy.

The *Sign For Freedom* petition urges the New Zealand government to draft a Modern Slavery Act. Legislation already exists in six countries around the world and 12 more are in the process. New Zealand, which is still considering whether legislation is necessary, is lagging seriously behind in what is the most serious labour rights issue of our time.

## Why Legislation Is Necessary

Currently New Zealand businesses could be importing and selling goods whose production involves modern slavery. Without legislation, there is no obligation for our businesses to



understand where their products are coming from. Without legislation our increasingly complex global supply chains will remain opaque, with no visibility as to who is making the products and in what conditions. If you were a chocolate manufacturer and you were purchasing from Ghana in West Africa, where we know the latest statistics tell us 1.5 million children have been enslaved to produce the cacao crop, you would want to know they weren't picking your cocoa, wouldn't you?

Many New Zealand businesses want to know that their demand for products is not enslaving children, men and women, and that their supply chains are becoming increasingly transparent. However, without legislation this remains an uneven playing field and those doing

their best to create good business are competing with other businesses based on low-cost models, where the fewer questions they ask the better.

The 18 countries which are drafting or have drafted legislation are beginning to change the way many of our largest New Zealand businesses operate. These businesses are currently doing the work required to fulfil their obligations under a Modern Slavery Act, because they export to countries like Australia, the UK, or to Europe where a variety of supply chain transparency legislation exists.

Nearly 100 businesses signed an open letter that was presented to Minister Wood on March 16 this year requesting that the government pursue the work required for a Modern Slavery Act. It's not often that we hear businesses urging the



MICHELIA MILES outlines why we need legislation in New Zealand that will help abolish modern slavery in our world.



**A well-drafted Modern Slavery Act would bring systemic change to the way businesses purchase, putting human rights at the centre of business decisions.**

government for additional legislation, but in this case, it is because they recognise that transparency in supply chains is the future of business.

### **Changes a Modern Slavery Act Would Bring**

The world is small and interconnected. Every time we purchase a product there is a chain reaction felt around the world. At Trade Aid we seek to make that impact a positive one, but not all

businesses have this goal at the forefront.

A well-drafted Modern Slavery Act would bring systemic change to the way businesses purchase, putting human rights at the centre of business decisions. The legislation in Australia requires a report on the level of risk of modern slavery within all supply chains of a company, being signed off at Board level.

Putting together a Modern Slavery Statement for a business requires investigating where goods are from and the conditions they are made in. As surprising as it may seem to some of us, this may be the first time a business has been required to consider these aspects.

If products are coming from regions identified as having a problem with labour rights, the level of risk for the company is high and a plan for addressing this risk must be created and reported on.

Transparency is the first step to identifying problems. Without knowledge of a problem, it cannot be addressed, and this has been the issue with global trade until now. Companies have seen their responsibilities ending at their own borders. A Modern Slavery Statement changes the focus at a board level to recognising that a business is accountable for their entire supply chain, and that their demand for a

product makes them accountable for the conditions in which that product is made.

### **We Can Do Something**

At its heart it's about recognising that just because trade is global it shouldn't be any different from if the same product was being made in the neighbouring town. We wouldn't tolerate slave labour conditions being part of our production if we could see it under our noses; so why should it be any different when the workshop is in another country?

Forty million people globally are in modern slavery. They are making our clothing, producing our sugar and mining materials for our electronics. It's time to make slavery in our products history.


We urge you to sign the petition to ask our government to pass a Modern Slavery Act. 

Photo by globalnewsart/Shutterstock.com



**Michelia Miles** is the Development Manager for Trade Aid.

**TAKE ACTION  
AGAINST  
MODERN  
SLAVERY.**

signforfreedom.nz  
#ModernSlaveryActNZ



**Website address:**  
**[www.signforfreedom.nz](http://www.signforfreedom.nz)**

 trade aid  World Vision



## GOD'S GRANDEUR

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

by Gerard Manley Hopkins







# Income to Be Shared

ZAIN ALI explains the teachings of the Qur'an related to work and highlights how wealth is to be shared not accumulated by a few.

According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad was employed by a woman known as Khadijah. He worked for her prior to his religious experience at the age of 40, the experience out of which the religion of Islam would emerge. Khadijah was a widow with some wealth, and she employed Muhammad to engage in trade on her behalf. We don't know the nature of this trade, but we do know that Mecca was part of a trade route that involved places like Syria. Frankincense was an item in demand, at the time, for religious and health reasons — this is why it was one of the precious gifts of the Magi who visit Mary soon after the birth of Jesus. Muhammad may have been part of this trade.

Muslim tradition notes that Muhammad was successful in his commercial dealings and returned a profit to Khadijah. She was impressed with his business acumen, and endeared by his character. Khadijah eventually proposed to him, and Muhammad accepted — he married his boss.

As he approached the age of 40, his interest shifted from commerce to more spiritual matters. He spent more time meditating in the mountains surrounding Mecca. Curiously, his turn from commerce led him into direct

conflict with the commercial interests of Mecca.

Following his religious experience, he began to preach to his community about the God of Abraham. Although his audience were polytheists, they were aware of the idea of monotheism. They acknowledged a genealogical connection with Abraham, the father of monotheism, but did not fully embrace the idea of there being only one God.

## Polytheism, Trade and Mecca

Polytheism, at the time of Muhammad, was good for business. The holy sanctuary at Mecca served as a gathering point for the various tribes in Arabia. There was a yearly festival where each tribe would bring their respective deities to Mecca for a grand festival of worship. Mecca became a commercial hub, to which each tribe brought their gods and their goods.

Muhammad's message of Abrahamic monotheism did not sit well with the ruling elite. With only one God, would people really gather at Mecca? Would trade decline? Monotheism, the elites thought, was a recipe for poverty.

## Monotheism, Trade and Mecca

Muhammad succeeded — his people returned to Abrahamic monotheism and, rather surprisingly, trade flourished. The reputation of the holy sanctuary at Mecca spread well beyond the borders of space and time.



As it happens, just before COVID-19 made its appearance, the Saudi embassy initiated a tourist visa scheme for those wanting to visit. Religion and history seem to be good for business.

### **Qur'an Recognises God's Providing**

The Qur'an, the holy text for Muslims, encourages people to go in search of God's bounties. There are verses that mention travelling by sea in this search:

*Your Lord is He that makes the Ship go smoothly for you through the sea, in order that ye may seek of his Bounty (Q 17:66).*

There are also bounties to be found in the sea: *It is He Who has made the sea subject, that you may eat from it flesh that is fresh and tender, and that you may extract from it ornaments to wear; and you see ships that plough the waves, that you may seek of the bounty of God and that you may be grateful (Q 16:14).*

Bounties are also to be found on land: *And when the Prayer is finished, then may you disperse through the land, and seek of the Bounty of God and celebrate the Praises of God often (and without stint): that you may prosper (Q. 62:10).*

Men and women are encouraged to seek God's bounties: *... God has given His gifts more freely on some of you than on others: To men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn: But ask God of His bounty (Q. 4:32).*

### **Gratitude for Bounties**

The idea of seeking God's bounties (or *Ne'ma* in Arabic) is broad. It could be in search of new business opportunities, discovering new places, enjoying different kinds of cuisine, finding and creating new types of jewellery, and meeting new people.

Yet, within these verses, there is the reminder to show gratitude and to remain conscious of God.

### **Care of Those in Need**

There are also many Qur'anic verses that emphasise the importance of taking care of those in need:

*They ask you, on what they should spend. Say, "It is good to spend on parents, relatives, orphans, the needy and the traveller" (Q 2.215).*

There is no harm in seeking to prosper as long as we remember to share our wealth. Our wealth is not necessarily ours, it is from God. It is as though God gives and expects us to give as well.

We may wonder to what extent these ideals are reflected in everyday life. There are a number of *hadith* or anecdotes, attributed to Muhammad, in which he is asked about signs — signs that suggest that the end times are close. For example, he says: *...when you see barefoot, naked, destitute shepherds competing in constructing tall buildings.*

*The Final Hour will not come until people compete with one another in the height of their buildings.*

As with many of these anecdotes, he doesn't say whether the desire to be bigger, better and taller is good or bad.

When we gaze upon wondrous structures such as Dubai's Burj Khalifa, currently the world's tallest tower, we are amazed at the engineering involved in creating it, and we understand that such buildings serve an important economic purpose.

But do such structures allow room for spirituality? Would the Magi visit such a place and if so, would they bring gifts?

The *hadith* has proven to be correct; the shepherds are no longer destitute, things have changed. Our world is always changing, there is incredible wealth, yet there is also crushing poverty.



### **Ancient and Modern Slavery**

I recently watched a programme of an elaborate ceremony where the bodies of a number of Egyptian Pharaohs and their Queens were being transported to a new museum. It made for great viewing and, no doubt, was an alluring advertisement for tourism in Egypt.

But when I spoke about it to an Egyptian friend he was lukewarm on all things pharaonic. He spoke of the suffering that lies behind such ancient wonders — slave labour was used to build structures like the pyramids.

This gave me cause to pause. How much of our modern world rests on the labour of the less fortunate? Slavery is

not confined to ancient monuments but today is involved in the production of our clothes, shoes, electronic devices, food and buildings.

### **Rise of the Working Poor**

I also reflect on my own family history — the history of a shift from indentured labourers to freedom-loving Kiwis. But that freedom is under threat from ever-increasing house prices and rental costs. We're working harder just to get by, and there is a name for this: the working poor.

Given our current context, the God of Abraham may once again be a subversive idea. Our wealth is a gift from God, but it is not really ours at all. Perhaps we should be like the Magi — travelling, seeking and sharing our gifts. 🕯️

Painting left: *Pilgrims Going to Mecca* (1861) by Léon Belly. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Photo by Bader/Shutterstock.com



**Zain Ali** is a scholar of Islamic studies and an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Auckland. He lives in Auckland.

# SLAVERY in the FISHING INDUSTRY

"I was terrified that my dead body would be thrown overboard into the sea just like what happened to my friend!" These words spoken by Ascuri, an Indonesian fisherman, still haunt me years later.

I first met Ascuri when he came to the Hsinchu Catholic Diocese Migrants and Immigrants Service Centre (HMISC) Taiwan, where I previously worked as the Centre's director and supervised its shelter for abused male migrant workers and trafficked peoples. Columban priests and lay missionaries have worked at the Centre for the last 20 years.

Ascuri's fear revealed the physical and psychological trauma of labour trafficking. Like thousands of other poor Indonesian migrant workers, Ascuri left behind his wife and children in the hope of securing employment on an offshore long-haul fishing vessel. His employment agency in Indonesia arranged for him to fly to Hong Kong where he lived on a "floating hotel" in the harbour for three months while waiting to be picked up by an employer. Eventually he gained employment on a Taiwan flagged long-haul fishing vessel. Little did he know of the horror that was awaiting him.

Working up to 20 hours a day in the open sea casting out the nets, hauling in the catch, cleaning and storing the fish below deck and mending the nets was exhausting. Often the huge waves came crashing over the boat and he feared for his life. Ascuri and the other Indonesian fishermen on board were physically and verbally abused by their Taiwanese captain. The little food they were given was barely enough to keep up their physical strength for the arduous work.

Ascuri knew his body was ailing. Physically weak, he used all the mental energy he had to stay alive. His friend could no longer endure the untold exploitation — one day he collapsed on deck and died. The captain instructed a couple of the crew to throw the body overboard where it was devoured by the hungry sharks below. This horrific image remained etched in Ascuri's psyche.

After one year at sea, the fishing vessel finally docked in a Taiwan port. When Ascuri rang his wife, he found out she hadn't received any of his salary. Upon confronting his employer, he was told his salary was given to his employment agency to pay for the costs of finding him a job and to cover the expenses of food and board on the fishing vessel. When night fell, Ascuri grabbed the opportunity to flee to the nearest police station for help. Thankfully he came across a trusting police officer who believed his story and recognised him as a possible victim

of human trafficking. The government referred Ascuri to HMISC for safe shelter.


The Centre's staff provided Ascuri with counselling and legal aid, as well as helping him to secure employment in a nearby glass factory and arranging a lawyer to assist him with his court case against his trafficker. Since Taiwan labour law does not cover international fishermen working on Taiwan flagged long-haul fishing vessels, the Centre was not able to use the labour law to help Ascuri recover his stolen wages. Due to so-called "lack of evidence", Ascuri's employer was found not guilty of human trafficking and was let free to continue entrapping other migrant fishermen into slavery.

In a recent survey conducted by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) of former Indonesian fishers who had worked on 62 Taiwanese fishing vessels, crew from 24 per cent of the vessels reported physical abuse and 92 per cent reported having their wages withheld, creating conditions that can lead to debt bondage. 82 per cent worked excessive overtime, with many fishers reporting that they had to work up to 20 hours per day.

The 2020 *Trafficking in Persons* report released by the US State Department raised serious concerns of abuse on Taiwan-flagged fishing vessels. "Migrant fishermen have reported senior crew members employing such coercive tactics as threats of physical violence, beatings, withholding of food and water, retention of identity documents and wage deductions to retain their labour." The report also found that "insufficient staffing and inspection protocols continued to impede efforts to combat forced labour on Taiwan-flagged fishing vessels."

In Australia the *Be Slavery Free Seafood Campaign* is focusing on the human trafficking, forced labour and slavery in the seafood industry, particularly in Taiwan. The campaign encourages consumers to choose "slavery-free" seafood and asks the Australian Government to sign the Working in Fishing Convention of the International Labour Organisation (C188) which addresses standards in commercial fishing operations.

Pope Francis says: "Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge on the Body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity." Each time we go shopping, we are invited to remember Ascuri's story so that we make the moral choice to buy slavery-free seafood and play our role in eradicating human trafficking.

New Zealanders can check for recommendations for buying slavery free seafood on the website [www.justkai.org.nz/blog/2020-11-03-new-slave-free-seafood-recommendations](http://www.justkai.org.nz/blog/2020-11-03-new-slave-free-seafood-recommendations) 

Peter O'Neill worked in Taiwan for 26 years advocating for migrants, immigrants and trafficked peoples. He is the Columban Leader in Australia and the Columban Peace, Ecology & Justice Coordinator.







# Enabling CHOICE

RANISHA CHAND shares how she came to be a youth advocate in the Shakti Community Council.

**S**hakti Community Council is a non-profit organisation that serves Asian, African and Middle Eastern migrant and refugee women. Shakti, which means "strength", works to create a world where women and children are empowered to live dignified lives free of fear and violence, and where they can exercise their rights, choices, and responsibilities.

Migrating to New Zealand has been a roller coaster. When I left the Islands, I thought I left behind issues like discrimination and violence. However, I couldn't have been more wrong. During my second year of high school I was bullied for being brown and because I was smart in class. The discrimination left me in a very dark place with lots of negative emotions. Finding a space where I could talk about my trauma was the most challenging part.

Fortunately for me, that is when I came across Shakti Youth. They supported me in my journey of discovering feminism and becoming an intersectional one. I felt I was empowered and listened to. I felt like my voice mattered. Through Shakti, I was able to learn more about the systematic oppression of migrant communities, the importance of intersectionality (understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege), discrimination, bullying, sexual violence, and domestic abuse — just to name a few. Shakti empowered me to take practical steps against these pervasive issues, with the end goal of empowering women and young people.

One of the steps was taken in 2017 when I suggested a rally during one of our Shakti meetings. We organised a protest and march against bullying and discrimination. The march was to show the people who constantly bully us how much hurt it causes. The trauma takes years to heal. The march was successful on so many levels.

The following year we did another protest — this time against forced marriage and rape culture after we were made aware of the forced marriages happening in New Zealand. It is horrifying to see so many young girls ending up in a marriage without consent. The girls' right to an education is revoked, and they are forced into marriages where they are raped and abused. If the young girls try to protest they are shamed and blamed for dishonouring their

family reputation.

Because forced marriage is embedded culturally it makes the cases very complex for the majority of the people to understand. This issue had raised so many concerns for Shakti that as a collective, we gathered signatures to draw a petition for a change in the Marriage (Court Consent to Marriage of Minors) Amendment Bill. The amendment ensured that permission from a family court, rather than the girl's parents, must be obtained for an underage marriage to occur. This is a life-changing alteration for many young women, as many cases of underage forced marriages are initiated by the parents.

I have to acknowledge the efforts of so many women to make this change. However, we still have a lot of work to do to empower these young girls. There are religious-based forced marriages happening without any protection for the young women. Also, we find that women, who were over the legal age, are blackmailed and emotionally abused until they agree to a forced marriage.

Our newly-launched youth unit in Dunedin is delivering workshops to young people to allow them to reflect on any of their personal opinions which might work to disadvantage others. We ask very simple questions like: What is the line between funny and offensive? How might we further social cohesion of our majority and minority communities? Organising workshops, protests and panel discussions not only allows us to connect with many ethnic women and youth but also provides a space for sharing and coexisting. It gives survivors like me a place to learn from and relate to the experiences of my community members. It fuels our passion to continue advocating against issues that oppress us.

It has been five years since I was bullied and I am still healing. The most important thing that keeps me going is that I do not want what happened to me to be someone else's experience. 🙋



**Ranisha Chand** is a vibrant, young, articulate advocate who passionately champions issues that impact migrant and refugee communities.

# The Cultural Disarmament *of* Progressive Catholic Bishops

MASSIMO FAGGIOLI writes that conservative bishops and their allies continue to overshadow their more progressive confreres in putting forward a vision for the Church.

Charles Chaput, who retired as bishop of Philadelphia a little more than a year ago, has just published his latest book. The 76-year-old Capuchin is one of the leading American bishops driving "culture war" Catholicism in the United States. *Things Worth Dying For* is the provocative title of the archbishop's new work. And like his earlier books — and high-profile lectures — it is part of his ecclesial leadership style and effort to put forward a very particular vision for the Church and society. Archbishop Chaput and many of his views need to be challenged. But most liberal and progressive Catholics are just ignoring him. They do so at their own peril.

Today it is rare to find a bishop who is publishing books that are more than a mere collection of his homilies. In addition to Chaput, there is also Cardinal Robert Sarah in Rome, former prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments. He has written a number of books in the past several years and the one he published on the priesthood in early 2020 caused much controversy. There are other conservative authors in the United States — among both the clergy and the laity — that continue to offer their combative and bellicose view of Catholicism. George Weigel, of course, is among the best known.

## Vatican II Church Vision Missing

Where are the progressive Catholic voices?

The question is why, on the other side of the Catholic spectrum, there are no bishops who publish books that offer a vision of the Church and of society that is different and alternative to the one offered by Archbishop Chaput, Cardinal Sarah and Mr Weigel.

The phenomenon is not particular to the Church in the United States, by the way. And there are many possible reasons why it exists.

## Bishops Not as Concerned with Intellectual Theology

The first has to do with the changes in the intellectual profile of those who are appointed bishops, which can vary from one country to another.

Nearly 40 years ago sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Monique de Saint Martin looked at the situation among the bishops in France. They noted there was a shift from appointing bishops who were from "*les héritiers*", the Catholic intellectual "aristocracy", to those who were part of "*les oblats*", "zealots" and administrators. This newer type of French bishop was a man whose concern and identity was to preserve the institutional Church, since he lacked a



deep intellectual and non-clerical formation.

## Changes in Bishop's Role

A second reason for the phenomenon is linked to the massive changes in the actual job of being a bishop (sex abuse scandal, downsizing of Church structures, collapse in the social role of the clergy, etc.), which leave no time or energy to write books.

This change in the job description is one of the reasons more and more candidates to become bishops refuse. We see an inability to articulate a vision, and a loss of moral authority.

## Lack of Consensus on Real Issues

A third reason is that the bishops today are overwhelmed by the ideological insanity that infests their episcopal conferences. Look, for example, at the moral judgements the US Conference of Catholic Bishops so often makes on LGBTQ and "pelvic issues" while remaining totally silent on the new version of Jim Crow racism that targets the voting rights of Americans (many of them, Catholics) in certain states.

## Difficult to Articulate Vision of Existence of Church

A fourth possible reason is that the bishops who are different from Chaput cannot articulate their vision of the Church and Catholicism. It is something that can be seen in Catholic academia as well, where it has become



more difficult, from the liberal standpoint, to make an effective argument for what I would call "ecclesiody" — a reasonable defense of the existence of the institutional Church and the possibility of reforming it.

### Lack of Moral Authority

A fifth reason could be that progressive bishops believe they lack the moral authority to articulate a vision of the Church. The ongoing abuse scandal seems to have silenced their



voices more than their conservative confreres' voices. This is despite the fact that the moral and theological burden of the scandal is part of the legacy of John Paul II and Benedict XVI (even before he was elected pope) and of the generation of bishops these two men appointed and promoted.

**The conservative side invests in culture, while the progressive side invests in other kinds of endeavors that reflect the kind of Christianity they believe in such as work for the poor and marginalised.**

### Unsure of Interest in Vision

A sixth reason — progressive bishops don't know who would be interested in such a vision. Both the young clergy and professional Catholic theologians seem to be more detached than ever before from the bishops, for different reasons. The young conservative clergy because their heroes are the Chaputs and the Sarahs; progressive theologians because Catholic academia has moved towards a vision that is post-institutional and post-ecclesial — if not in theory, certainly in practice.

### Promotional Network Missing

A seventh reason is that progressive bishops lack the ecclesiastical-industrial complex that supports authors

on the Catholic right: the media system, conservative Catholic think tanks, schools and universities, magazines, associations and organizations. While conservative media eagerly gives support to cultural warrior bishops, non-conservative Catholic media and progressive bishops mutually maintain a careful distance.

### Market for Reactionary Writing

An eighth and, perhaps, final reason for this phenomenon is that there is a market for reactionary non-fiction and Church politics that is much stronger among conservatives than the liberal-progressives. The so-called "Francis bishops" remain silent.

The conservative side invests in culture, while the progressive side invests in other kinds of endeavors that reflect the kind of Christianity they believe in (such as work for the poor and marginalised). In doing so, the progressive side fails to reach a large audience in the institutional Church and those who still hold the keys to structural change.

Conservatives have a very clear playbook — the culture wars. Progressives are trying to withdraw from those wars that have caused huge damage to the Church, both intellectually and spiritually. Raimon Panikkar, a Catholic philosopher and theologian whose Spanish mother was a Catholic and Indian father was Hindu, famously said that "cultural disarmament" is an effective way to peace.

But cultural disarmament must be explained and articulated, otherwise it looks like unconditional surrender.

### Need for Progressive Catholic Writing

Finally, Francis's pontificate seems to be pretty much focused on Pope Francis, thanks to the Vatican's communications department and the pope's unofficial spokespersons and interpreters. The so-called "Francis bishops", those most supportive of the pontificate's aims and vision, seem capable only of repeating or imitating what is coming.

It would be easy to compile a bibliography of books written by bishops and Catholic intellectuals that are openly critical of Francis. And it's not difficult to make a list of the books and treatises authored by the pope himself.

But it would be much more difficult to put together a catalogue of books written by bishops and Catholic intellectuals that try to articulate Francis's vision for the Church and society. And this is not something that can be blamed on the pope or his opponents. 🙏

Bronze sculpture: *Homeless Jesus* by Timothy Schmalz  
Photo by Pierre Olivier/Shutterstock.com



**Massimo Faggioli** is a Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University, USA and the author of *Catholicism and Citizenship*.



# JESUS PRAYS *for* ALL DISCIPLES

KATHLEEN RUSHTON discusses how John 17:6-19 can challenge and support our commitment to justice in the world.

## Contexts of John 17:6-19

First, we place the prayer of Jesus for disciples (John 17:6-19) within the context of the Gospel. At the last supper (Jn 13:1-30) Jesus gives a farewell discourse (Jn 13:31 - 16:33) which leads into prayer. He prays for himself (Jn 17:1-5), for disciples (Jn 17:6-19) and for future believers (Jn 17:20-26).

A second context is literary. A first-century people would recognise that the prayer was part of a formal farewell address. A well-known person approaching death, like Jesus, expressed concern for the well-being of followers, gave a review of their life and asserted that their relationships were to continue. The address included helpful information about what was to happen and predictions about hard times ahead. The speaker would pray for those they were leaving.

A third context is historical. The Roman Empire was built on slavery

— about one slave to every five free adults. In Rome, the ratio was higher, one to three. Because Jesus's words and actions critiqued that status quo, he endured death by crucifixion, a brutal form of execution reserved for slaves and non-Roman citizens. It included torture and sexual abuse. John's gospel probably came from Ephesus which, because of its slave market, was the "hub" of Roman slavery.

In the Gospel Jesus is imaged as the master (*kyrios*) who washed the feet of his slaves (*douloi*, Jn 13:4-6) whom he called his friends (Jn 15:14-15). "During supper Jesus ... got up from table." Assuming the role of a slave he "took off his outer robe", wrapped a towel around his waist and washed his disciples' feet. Nowhere else in ancient literature does a master behave like this. So Jesus's actions interrupted the existing order. And those actions would have challenged future believers, those in the Christian community who owned slaves.

## Modern Slavery

Slavery is not a thing of the past. There are approximately 40 million people enslaved worldwide, an estimated 3,000 in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Two-thirds of all people in modern slavery live in Asia Pacific — the area ANZ trades with extensively. Our country does not have accountability legislation in place, such as Britain's Modern Slavery Act (2015) or Australia's Modern Slavery Act (2018), that addresses the transparency of exploitation and slavery in the supply chains of our imports. ANZ companies could unknowingly be importing goods and services made by people who are exploited and enslaved. We are implicated in a consumerist lifestyle which drives slavery. Every time we purchase a product there is a chain reaction.

John's prayer of Jesus can challenge us to become aware of slavery, and to eradicate it.

## Prayer for Disciples Today

Jesus prays in John. He does not talk about prayer or teach his disciples to pray. He prays for his disciples whom God gave him and not for "the world" (Jn 17:9). We need to distinguish between the three ways the world is used in John. The first is the natural universe that God loves and where the revelation of God unfolds in creation and in history. The second suggests a creation that is able to respond — to recognise or not recognise God as creator. And the third is the choice we make

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





about how we live — to be for God or against God, to be for the Evil One or against the Evil One.

Jesus does not request that disciples be taken out of the world (Jn 17:15). We as Church, therefore, are to be in the world but not to compromise with or to escape from it. Slavery is the result of the moral choices of individuals and groups entrenched in political, economic, social, cultural and religious structures which construct a world that is the polar opposite of the works of God. The “world” with which we are concerned, according to Sandra Schneiders, is the good world to which God missions us, the evil world which we confront (slavery and exploitation), and the alternative world we are called into with Jesus in the ongoing creation of finishing the works of God.

Following the departure of Jesus the disciples are in a new situation, so keeping them together is crucial. Jesus’s prayer asks to “protect” them (Jn 17:11, 12, 15) evoking Jesus as the Good Shepherd — to keep the disciples united and free from attack.

Jesus also asks God to “sanctify [consecrate]” the disciples “in the truth” (Jn 17:17–19). Sanctifying evokes being set apart for sacred works (Ex 28:41) as Jesus is set apart and sent to finish the works of God. Jesus celebrates in prayer that “for their sakes I sanctify [consecrate] myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth”. Truth, a key word in John, means “faithfulness” or “loyalty”. It means to be faithful to obligations and commitments. Truth is illustrated by God’s faithful, saving action. And we are to remain in our world bearing witness to the truth.

Alan Culpepper says John 17:6–19 is a summary of three aspects of the believing community’s reflection. Jesus’s identity and work (often called Christology), the nature of the believing community (often called ecclesiology) and the mission of the Church in the world (often called missiology) are unified in the death-resurrection of Jesus. As the Christian community participating in mission today we continue to be transformed in faith to act on our “consecration in truth”.

## Christian Community Resists Modern Slavery

One area of truth is to identify and act to abolish slavery. We can support actions already in the pipeline such as the government’s Plan of Action against Forced Labour, People Trafficking and Slavery 2020-2025.

We can support the *Sign for Freedom* campaign. This is the initiative of Trade Aid and World Vision together with 80 local businesses. They hope to present to the government a petition with at least 500,000 signatures requesting comprehensive legislation that addresses modern slavery, forced labour, human trafficking and worker exploitation in our country.

We can act locally by buying fair trade goods. And we can befriend migrant workers, a group who are particularly at risk of exploitation. It is notable that the first human slavery conviction in this country came about because a woman noticed that another woman at church was upset, and listened to her story. And we can read about the links between slavery and the degradation of Earth in books such as Kevin Bales’s *Blood and Earth: Modern Slavery, Ecocide, and the Secret to Saving the World*.

Jesus’s prayer in John is not for the world but rather for us in the world to be protected and sanctified in truth as we participate in the works of God.

As a Christian community, we need to confront modern human slavery and worker exploitation in our world — and eradicate it. 🗑️

Painting: *Hiding in Plain Sight* by Sara Shamma  
© Used with permission [www.sarashamma.art](http://www.sarashamma.art)  
“Sara Shamma: Modern Slavery” exhibition  
curated by Kathleen Soriano, London 2019;  
Chester Cathedral 2020.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Plan of Action: [www.mbie.govt.nz/have-your-say/plan-of-action-against-forced-labo2ur-people-trafficking-and-slavery/](http://www.mbie.govt.nz/have-your-say/plan-of-action-against-forced-labo2ur-people-trafficking-and-slavery/)

SIGN FOR FREEDOM petition before 17 May: [www.signforfreedom.nz](http://www.signforfreedom.nz)

16 May: 7th Sunday of Easter  
RL John 17:11b-19;  
RCL John 17:6-19

## Beyond These Shores: Aotearoa and the World

Edited by Nina Hall

Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2020

Reviewed by Susan Smith

**B**eyond these shores is moana, that vast ocean which has brought and continues to bring so many people to Aotearoa. What has the arrival of these people meant for us, and what does it suggest for our future? Eight essays including a wonderfully comprehensive Introduction by editor Nina Hall, offer alternative possibilities to those unvaryingly provided by politicians, senior government officials and prominent entrepreneurs. How can the often-unacknowledged voices of Māori, of Pasifika people, of the politically and economically disenfranchised and of the whenua and moana, inform decision-making around Aotearoa’s relationship with the wider world?

Some of the authors are members of New Zealand Alternative, which wants New Zealand to opt for a more progressive foreign policy that is less involved with its Five Eyes intelligence partners and more involved with Scandinavian countries. Other suggestions include seeing our Pasifika neighbours as equals rather than as possibly errant children. Some critique Aotearoa’s peace-keeping operations abroad as being focused on helping the host government build up its defence and police capabilities. More than one author asks when will we see our present government implementing truly transformational policies at home and abroad. Currently Jacinda Ardern has immense goodwill. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if she could build on this so that her government could transform our relationships with the international community? 🗑️



# Not All Work Appeals

**M**y eyes started to glaze over as I looked at the budget, the projected shortfall, the explanations from the treasurer. It was the church AGM and I felt like a curtain was being drawn back. Behind the curtain was the fact that everyone needs accountants. I wondered: Has something like this been happening in every church I've attended all of my life?

"After every war," the poet Wisława Szymborska writes, "someone has to clean up. / ... Someone has to push the rubble / to the side of the road, / ... Someone has to drag in a girder / to prop up a wall, / Someone has to glaze a window, / rehang a door. / Photogenic it's not." My experience is certainly not rebuilding after war, it is just the church AGM. But I am learning about structures in life and within organisations — the unphotogenic work. This structure of accountability is also part of faithful service.

Where is God when I am answering emails, deciding what ingredients I need to cook tonight, filling out healthcare forms, topping up my phone balance? The novels I read tell stories efficiently, and the characters don't describe the admin involved in borrowing a car to go to the beach or looking for the lid to the container. The Bible has plenty of boring bits (I understand that

genealogies have a *point* but they have not yet had a point for me), but its people don't spend much time checking budgets or organising transport. And yet this admin-type work is also part and parcel of my ordinary life lived in God.

I've been thinking a lot about work lately (being in your supposedly final year of university does that to you), and as much as I try to listen to God about where I could work, most jobs that I can imagine involve more organisation and administration than I want. That is not my preferred work.

I know that the contribution of accountants, cloud engineers and supply chain managers can be as beneficial to society as the kinds of employment I'm hoping for with an arts degree.

There are ways to think about admin type work as being faithful — I'm still figuring them out. Prayer is one way: I had a moment of revelation last year when a flatmate prayed over

our flat meeting: "... because God is in the administration, too." I can see that work is an important contribution to the community whether it involves the church accounts, grocery retrieval, calling the plumber, preaching from the pulpit or working in the offices of Christian NGOs. I can ask God to bless people in all their work.

Even with my slightly gritted-teeth frustration at admin, I realise that God is working for good in all work, not just the work that is fun for me. All kinds of work is needed and valued in God's kingdom, *because* it contributes to building God's reign. Having to follow up with the physio is not all of my life: there are other bigger, beautiful things happening, and I am just a small part of them — there is so much to learn and appreciate in the unphotogenic tasks. And part of serving God means I sometimes need to answer emails. 📧

Photo by Stock-Asso/Shutterstock

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



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## Somewhere a Cleaner

Edited by Adrienne Jansen, Te Rongomai  
Tipene-Matua, Joan Begg, Wesley Hollis,  
Nicky Subono  
Published by Landing Press, 2020  
Reviewed by Pat Lythe

**W**hat a delightful little book! The editors have focused on the hidden voices behind the essential services during COVID-19. They asked cleaners to submit poems on their experiences and have assembled this amazing collection of songs, rhymes, poems and moving stories.

The cleaners range from students working to save for fees, new immigrants unable to use their qualifications, Pacific families working to provide food and education for their families, to those for whom cleaning is a chosen way

of life. The venues cleaned also are diverse — hospitals, offices, homes, cars, schools, dishes, marae, boats, clocks and even sneakers.

Each contribution is mostly one page long, with a brief biography of the author added at the bottom.

The writers express feelings of invisibility, lack of acknowledgement, working late at night and work destinations.

They also talk of the pleasure of seeing shiny, clean surfaces, of being a listening ear to patients and the elderly, of pride in jobs well done, of advocating for better wages: all honestly expressed in remarkable clarity.

It's a book to be read right through at once and also to be dipped into regularly. You will never ignore cleaners again! 🗑️



## Passion Relics and the Medieval Imagination: Art, Architecture and Society

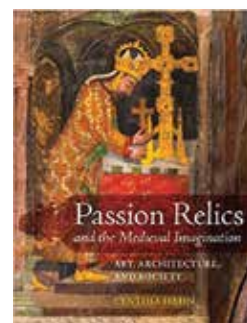
By Cynthia Hahn  
Published by University of California Press, 2020  
Reviewed by Ann Gilroy

**P**assion Relics, a beautifully produced and illustrated book, provides guidance for unlocking the meaning of religious relics collected and displayed in the middle ages. The idea of treasuring pieces of Jesus's cross or drops of his blood may seem macabre today, but the book reveals why they were more than museum artefacts and invites the reader to appreciate the imagination that created them and sustained the faith of generations.

The relics were not just things. They were experiences of God. Christians of the time could read every aspect of colour, design, material and aroma of the artworks as today we might become absorbed in a film.

The book is in two parts: the first focusing on Jesus's cross as the primary relic of that time and the second on the instruments of the passion — the nails, crown of thorns, etc. associated with Jesus's suffering and death. Hahn describes how the relics were obtained and contained, where they were housed and to whom they belonged, and what they represented to the faithful of the time. She illustrates her explanations with gorgeous photos.

Anyone interested in art, history, or the formation of religious devotion will find this book fascinating. 🗑️



## Sprigs

By Brannavan Gnanalingam  
Published by Lawrence & Gibson, 2020  
Reviewed by Meryn Gates

**S**prigs is a compelling and confronting read despite the violent gang rape of a comatose, young woman by members of a school rugby team. I could not put this book down.

*Sprigs*, set in 2021 Hutt Valley/Wellington, is divided into four parts. The first part requires some perseverance as it recounts the final game of the rugby season between the First XVs of competing schools — St Luke's and Grammar. It is difficult to avoid comparing the schools used by Gnanalingam with Wellington schools, but the toxic culture allowed to fester within these institutions will exist across New Zealand.

The second and third parts recount the consequences for the perpetrators, their families and the school communities, until we come to part four. In the preceding three parts the many voices are shared. Sometimes characters are not introduced and I found myself irritated, having to flick to the case list at the front of the book, to identify the person and their contribution to the narrative.

But in part four we hear from Priya. Uninterrupted, undiluted, sometimes stream of consciousness. Powerfully written, Gnanalingam gives us a window into the world of someone who has survived unspeakable violence.

I encourage you to read *Sprigs*; do not look away. We must think about how we can better equip our young people to deal with the multiple issues of racism, sexism, technology and that eternal need to fit in. 🗑️





# THE FATHER

Directed by Florian Zeller  
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

**T**owards the end of *The Father*, when the elderly protagonist has been moved into an aged-care home, the courtyard is dominated by a sculpture of an enormous head, fallen and broken, like a prop from Shelley's poem "Ozymandias" — a suprisingly overt piece of symbolism in an otherwise subtle film about dementia and the toll it takes on families.

We are constantly unsettled and wrong-footed as the action unfolds. At the centre of the film is Anthony (played superlatively by Anthony Hopkins). The other main character is his daughter Anne (Olivia Colman). She may have a husband, possibly called Paul. She is (almost certainly) arranging for her father to be assisted during the day by a home help, whose name may or may not be Laura. Most of the action takes place in Anne's flat, although Anthony is adamant that it is his own. However, we cannot be certain about anything here, as the same scenes are reprised with different characters and alternative outcomes.

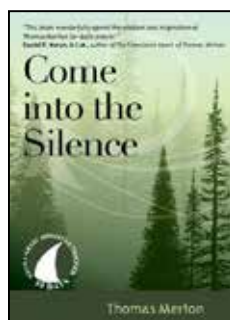
In front of this procession of unexpected visitors to "his" flat, Anthony is by turns charming, irascible and sometimes threatening.

He teases Laura that he was a professional tapdancer in a former life, and does a snappy little routine to prove it. But he also accuses people — often his carers — of stealing his watch, which he has simply mislaid. Anthony lives in an unchanging world where morning and evening are indistinguishable and where both joy and sadness coalesce around the figure of an absent younger daughter (who seems really to have existed).

*The Father* is based on the 2012 play by French writer Florian Zeller, who also co-wrote the screenplay and directed the film. This is more than a film about dementia; we experience its unsettling and sometimes frightening effects through Anthony's constant

disorientation. Just when we think we have a clear grasp of events and people, they dissolve before our eyes, morphing into new scenes and characters.

Zeller's (and Hopkins') portrayal of a debilitating illness from within is masterly. One of the triumphs of this film is the deeply credible and complex character that Hopkins has created — sometimes engaging, often exasperating, occasionally infuriating. Zeller's powerful screenplay, coupled with outstanding acting (Hopkins, 83, is surely at the height of his powers) make this challenging film essential viewing — not least because dementia will almost certainly touch someone close to us, if it hasn't already intruded on our lives. 📺



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# CROSS CURRENTS



BY MARY BETZ

## Same-sex Unions: to Bless or Not to Bless

The film *Francesco* highlights the efforts of Pope Francis to work for peace and justice in many spheres. As had been revealed last year (and affirmed by Auckland bishop Pat Dunn), Francis encouraged civil unions for same-sex couples. This positive move was upended in February when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) issued a *Responsum* saying the Church cannot bless same-sex unions because God "cannot bless sin". Earlier pronouncements that homosexual unions were "objectively disordered" were not repeated, but the CDF still named them "a way of life that cannot be recognised as objectively ordered".

Reactions to the *Responsum* included a Belgian bishop's "intellectual and moral incomprehension", and *La Croix's* Robert Mickens' observation that Church teaching on sexuality is undergirded by "deeply flawed philosophy and anthropology", and "bad science and a physicalist interpretation of so-called 'natural law'". Thousands of German and Austrian bishops (including Cardinal Schönborn, a CDF member), theologians and priests support or have indicated they will continue blessing same-sex unions. Pope Francis gave his assent to the CDF document, but tried to soften it in subsequent homilies, encouraging moral theologians to "look at life from [God's people's] perspective" and noting on the feast of St Joseph that "an attentive guardian ... is ready to change as situations require, always understanding the needs of his flock."

In contrast to Catholic see-sawing, the *Global Interfaith Declaration*

of December 2020 affirmed the equality and dignity of all human beings, asked forgiveness for the ways in which religious teachings had damaged the lives of many LGBT+ people, called for nations and Churches to change, and for love and compassion to be the basis of all faith. What is stopping our hierarchy from putting such compassion into clear words and actions?

## Royal Commission into Abuse in Care

At a Commission hearing in April our cardinal John Dew read a belated but heartfelt apology to abuse victims and survivors, and committed the Catholic Church "to listening, to learning, to acting on what we hear from you, and to doing all we can to address the harm that has been done". Some Anglican bishops would prefer that

each Church continue to handle its own complaints and redress. John said: "We understand and appreciate the proposals from individuals and groups who are calling for an independent body to provide redress." Let us support survivors in this call.

## Our Vexed Housing Problems

On 20 May, the government will deliver the 2021 budget. Some budget provisions are always drip-fed in the month or so before the budget date, but this year the housing crisis (Kiwibank estimates we have a shortage of 80,000 homes) forced a major early announcement with overdue policy changes.

Some changes (eliminating the investor tax deduction for mortgage interest, extending the length of investor ownership time before sale (excluding new builds)) favour home-occupier purchase and should encourage investors toward new builds to increase housing supply in the medium term. The increased borrowing allowance for Kāinga Ora is good, and it is expected to deliver 18,000 new public and transitional homes by 2024. Recent structural timber shortages are, hopefully, a short blip. But will the government find a way to pick up the pace of construction for both public and private housing? 🙏



**TUI MOTU InterIslands**  
*The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited*

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

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

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## Living Among the Northland Māori: Diary of Father Antoine Garin 1844-1846

Translated and edited by Peter Tremewan  
and Giselle Larcombe

Published by Canterbury University Press, 2019

Reviewed by Peter Maguire

BOOK

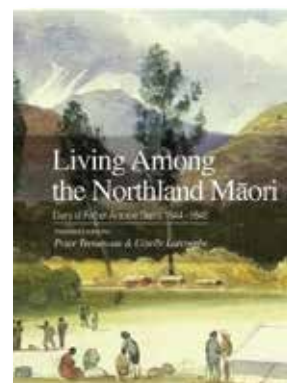
**Y**oung, French, Marist priest Antoine Garin kept a detailed diary of his encounters with Māori during his four-year stay in the Mangakahia River, upper Kaipara. Garin regularly made epic journeys across Northland. He debated theology in te reo publicly with Wesleyan missionary James Buller. He mediated disputes between diverse groups and was a zealous baptiser. His choice to live with local hapū in their kainga earned him the respect of Māori.

There are many political, intercultural and theological themes a reader can follow in his entries — my personal favourite: handshakes and their qualities!

As a missionary Garin encountered pushback from Māori when he rejected practices such as tapu and new facial moko for his converts and when he tried to introduce abstaining from work on Sundays and the practice of baptism — Māori saw heaven and hell as unattractive alternatives to being with their tūpuna. Garin's writing brings many Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Whātua characters and European settlers to life. It is fascinating to read how his respect for Māori customs, beliefs and practices increased as he engaged more deeply with them.

*Living Among the Northland Māori* is an intimate and readable account but it is not short. It has 600 beautifully-produced pages, including a lengthy introduction, photos and reproductions, and appendices.

I would have found a map of the area helpful as place names have changed from Garin's time. I recommend this book to anyone interested in a different perspective from the Church Missionary Society and more familiar British settler narratives of this period. 📖



## CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE THE TREASURES OF THE HEWITSON LIBRARY

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## Looking OUT and IN

**W**e celebrated Easter Sunday on the West Coast although we had no Mass, no clergy, no Easter eggs and no chocolate. This lack of chocolate wasn't the plan. The Easter eggs were left on the bench at home. But instead, we sat around a table and listened to our mate talking about how God had stuck beside him although he had given up on Church. We talked about the End of Life Choice Act and of people we have known who died and how they navigated their life-ending health troubles. We took turns reading through the story of that surprising and mysterious Easter Sunday morning two millennia ago in a modern Kiwi version (Chris Grantham's *The Kiwi Bible*) as well as the version in Matthew's Gospel.

Later in the morning we paddled bright yellow and orange kayaks across the still, dark waters of Lake Poerua. The water was like a good brew of black billy tea. Brown and clear. In our primary-coloured plastic boats we were floating above the 3-D puzzle of the tangled, ghostly limbs of long-dead podocarps. No resurrection for them, but fringing the lake were the irrepressible greens of moss and ferns, *rātā* and *kāmahi*. Could they, too, be shouting: "He is risen indeed" in their cacophony of lime, olive, pounamu and pistachio?

The message of Christ rising infuses these autumn days of feijoas, falling leaves and fading light. Resurrection is a universal phenomenon. It offers new life to all of creation: to the sandflies as well as hoihō penguins, to the faithful people who get through a season in jail as well as the faithful people who join rosters for morning tea at their local parish. Resurrection reminds us that things that look

glum now, will not always be so.

Like the "force that through the green fuse drives the flower" (thank you, Dylan Thomas), resurrection can permeate our days in so many ways. Maybe it looks like writing a card to say thank you or sorry and then finding time to get to the PostShop to buy a stamp and send it (getting to the PostShop is where my good intentions founder). Maybe it looks like reading a poem at 7am to wake a sleeping 12-year-old and our own numb spirits. Maybe it looks like visiting our local MP to talk about humane jails in Aotearoa. Maybe it looks like speaking out when we hear a comment that negatively judges someone who is Asian, even though we risk doing this clumsily. Maybe it looks like scrolling through a Vacancies column and writing a job application even though the last three didn't work out. Maybe resurrection hope looks like choosing to talk and think well of others even when they turn out to be flimsy (like me).

In these days of May which are increasingly dark and cold, Easter Sunday and the resurrection already feel distant, but I'll keep hanging onto the hopeful daily practice of photosynthesis by moss and leaves around the edges of the quiet and dark Lake Poerua. 🌱



**Kaaren Mathias** based in Christchurch writes, parents, promotes health, prays and is learning ukulele.



As the new season emerges  
bless us Creating God  
with energy for our work  
with the hours we need from one job  
with fair pay  
with appreciation, respect and accountability  
among workers and employers  
and with conditions  
that nurture the well-being of all.

From the *Tui Motu* team