Tui Motu
InterIslands

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Wanting a peaceful life

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Editorial

This July issue commemorates a few special days and occasions. First, this year Caritas is emphasising World Refugee Day (8 July). Lisa Beech and Tim Chiswell have given us two pieces which may help us understand the plight of many refugees and prompt us to support them and pray for them.

Secondly, Bible Sunday (15July): in addition to our regular excellent commentaries by Sr Susan Smith, we invited Kathleen Doherty to interview Scripture scholar Damian Wynn-Williams on how to interpret Gospel passages (in the year of Luke) and apply them to everyday life. The Word of God is the basis not only of our liturgy but of our whole Christian faith. We are also commemorating the visit of the World Youth Day Cross to our shores by linking it to Parihaka, as did a group of secondary pupils in Dunedin last month (see pp 14-17). Jim Consedine retells the Parihaka story with depth and great sensitivity.

Our main theme however is look again at the place of the laity in the modern church. At Vatican II the church's great statement about itself, *Lumen Gentium,* simply identifies the church with the people – all its people, not just the clergy – and not primarily the clergy. What the Council is saying in a nutshell is that there is historical continuity between the chosen people of the First Testament – from Moses to the time of Christ – and the baptised believers of this present day. If the church is to be the light of the world, as the Council urged, it will be achieved by Christians living out their baptismal vocation. We, laity as well as clergy, by virtue of our baptism are the 'priests, prophets and kings' of the modern world.

John Kleinsman (p3) reminds us what an unfortunate and demeaning word 'lay' is. There is an immediate implication of being 'second-class', of lacking expertise. He analyses the essence of the true lay vocation; well illustrated by the descriptions by two Catholics who have faithfully served the church in responsible positions as a laywomen (pp 6-8).

One person who saw the paramount importance of the lay vocation was John Henry Newman. For him the church is in essence a communion, including all its members even the least – for "it is to the poor that the Gospel is preached". He notes what he calls "a great evangelical lesson that, not the wise and powerful, but the obscure, the unlearned and the weak constitute her real strength" (On consulting the Faithful on matters of Doctrine).

In fact Newman, speaking of the early centuries, went so far as to claim that "the divine tradition committed to the infallible church was proclaimed and maintained far more by the faithful than by the episcopate". After becoming a Catholic in 1845 Newman did not change his tune. What he did say regarding the faithful was this: "I want an intelligent, well-instructed laity, not disputatious but knowing their religion and entering into it". (Lectures on the present position of Catholics in England). Newman devoted most of his later life promoting the education of Catholic lay people in schools and universities.

So where does this leave the clergy – and not only in the Catholic communion? The churches have been much humbled in recent times by the appalling scandals of abuse by priests and teachers. If church leaders learn from this crisis, we may well look back and see it as a blessing in disguise. A church humbled and purified is a better witness to a crucified Christ. In August we shall focus on leadership in the church – and specifically on priesthood. *M.H.*

Getting to Know the Lay of the Land

The term "lay" is one I am used to. I am a lay Catholic man. I am also officially regarded as being a "lay" representative in my capacity as a member of a health-research ethics committee. I sit on that committee with a number of other "lay" persons and an equal number of health professionals. And, as a full time employee of the church who teaches theology and researches bioethics, I am often referred to as a "lay theologian".

It strikes me that it is hard to escape the fact that the term "lay" has pejorative overtones; he or she is "just" a lay person. Consider also the following dictionary definitions: A lay-by is a portion of road widened to permit a vehicle to stop without interfering with the main flow of traffic; a lay shaft is a secondary shaft of a machine not forming part of the main system of power-transmission; a lay figure is "a jointed wooden figure for arranging drapery on etc; unimportant person, nonentity; unreal character in novel etc". The same dictionary then defines a lay person as:

a. Non-clerical, not in orders; of, done by, lay man; non-professional, not expert.

Thinking about it, I would prefer NOT to be defined by what I am not. I bring particular knowledge and experience to the ethics committee that complements – but is not overshadowed by – the specialised medical training of the health professionals. Equally, my role as a teacher of theology and researcher in bioethics reflects particular gifts and qualifications I have been able to develop. I am a professional and an expert.

In the very early Church no clear distinction was made between clergy and laity. The emphasis was on all the faithful using their diverse gifts in the different ways needed to build up the faith community and the Reign of God. The distinction we are only too familiar with developed later. It was then exacerbated when education became the exclusive privilege of a small minority; the rich and powerful and those with ecclesiastical training – the clergy. The distinction between clergy and laity created an emphasis on the former as if they alone were the real church.

The documents of the Second Vatican Council provide lay people with a mandate to define themselves in a much more positive way. We are the faithful who are fully incorporated into the church by baptism, called to take on a wide responsibility in the life of the church and the world. But how convinced are we that this is the case? To what extent are we still suffering from what might be described as a pre-Vatican II ecclesiological hangover? Perhaps our continued use of the terms 'lay' and 'ordained' maintains a boundary that is preventing us from grasping the new ecclesiological vision, stifling the work of the Holy Spirit?

I sometimes wonder what it would be like if we were to come up with a new term to describe the call that comes with baptism; a term that helped us to think about the vocation to be a lay person as a positive choice rather than as a "lay-by"? Chances are, were we to truly change the way we think about ourselves as lay persons, we would also find ourselves acting differently. Perhaps, then, the church would find itself closer to the beautiful vision that Pope Paul VI had at the end of his ministry – a place where the only boundaries are those created by grace. Would we not then be freer to live out our call to discipleship in a way that reflects the full flowering of our baptismal vocation?

If tomorrow there was a sudden upsurge in the number of ordained priests in New Zealand, would we want to abandon the many programmes we have for training and forming lay people as pastoral leaders and chaplains? I for one would hope not! To the extent that anyone might be inclined to answer 'YES' to that question, then I fear that he or she might still be infected with the old mindset that sees being lay as a place to be Catholic that is away from "the main flow of traffic".

At the same time, to acknowledge the greater responsibility being taken by lay people in the New Zealand church does not mean we don't regret there are fewer ordained ministers or that we value their wonderful contribution any less.

We who are "lay" have to stop thinking of ourselves as non-expert second-rate Christians. We also have to stop thinking of lay chaplains, lay ministers and lay pastoral workers as a backstop option brought about by an absence of priests.

Times are a-changing. We are being challenged anew to live out the Vatican II perspective on the lay of the land.

John Kleinsman

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Tui Motu-InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed. The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.
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letters to the editor

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not altering meaning.

Response articles (up to a page) are also welcome, but need to be by negotiation

Bread... or Stone?

Dear Bishop Peter,

Thank you for taking the time and care to reply to my 'open letter'. I appreciate both your insight and gentleness in responding to a difficult matter. Please excuse my ignorance in misreading the church's teaching on communion. I particularly value your comments about the historic value of the Eucharist as a mark of identity and belonging in the early church. It seems to me that this function remains as necessary as ever; that we must be constantly reconverted to our identity in Christ, and that the Mass sustains us in this way. There is little doubt that in a culture of such individualism and diversity, the reinforcement of our common nature in Christ is essential.

I also value the compassion demonstrated in your sanctioning of the dispensing of communion in 'exceptional circumstances'; indeed, the suggestion that Catholic moral obligation demands erring on the side of generosity in such situations. I hope that this comes as a permission-giving and liberating explanation to such priests as may be in doubt on the matter. I know that as a layman, it gives me great heart.

Forgive me then if I explore a little more deeply the intention and motivation behind the church's teaching on Holy Communion. It is intended to clarify and understand, rather than to resist such teaching – or at least I hope so. It is difficult to accurately assess one's own motivations.

You speak of 'being faithful to the meaning of Eucharist as *communio*'. This, it seems to me, is indeed at the heart of the Mass. While our celebration is indeed *communio* with one another, and therefore a reinforcement of our communal identity, it is such primarily because it is essentially *communio* with Christ. It is his real presence which confers our identity as the 'body of Christ'.

One of the searching questions, and perhaps the most revealing theologically, is *Who is this Christ?* I think this is what you are commending in your call for consistency between expressed beliefs and sacramental faith. As such the essence of belief must, as you say, be faithful to the gospel.

The Catechism says of the Eucharistic Liturgy, "Is this not the same movement as the Pascal meal of the risen Jesus with his disciples? Walking with them he explained the Scriptures to them; sitting with them at table 'he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.'" I dare to suggest that it should be not only consistent with the ministry of the risen Jesus, but also with the ministry of Jesus before his death. I know you will understand the importance theologically of continuity between the earthly Jesus and the risen Christ.

Then of course we must confront the disturbing fact that Jesus frequently caused scandal by welcoming 'outsiders' and sinners to his table. We find reference to this in *Mark 2:15-17* ("many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus"), and even in the familiar story of Zaccheus (*Luke 19:1-10*). It seems that his crossing of religious boundaries was one of the chief reasons for the offence he caused which ultimately led to his crucifixion.

The question then arises whether agreement in belief or even practice becomes a prerequisite for inclusion at the table of Jesus. Perhaps a sign of authentic belief in the way of Christ would be the presence of those regarded as 'outsiders'? If so, then we risk a fundamental misrepresentation of our Lord by the teaching that some people are not welcome to participate.

The other matter which I think is raised by your perceptive response is the correct relationship between faith and belief. You refer to the practice of the early church in guarding the orthodoxy of those they were 'in communion' with. I am sure you are correct, and I understand the impetus to such an approach. But should correct belief precede faith, or does the practice of faith shape true belief?

Probably the truth is that there is a cross-fertilisation between sacramental faith and belief, and the two cannot be wholly separated from each other. Nevertheless, I find in the Catechism the teaching that "Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ" to be an indication that oftentimes communion is more of a catalyst to unity than the result of it. Would the open-table you refer to be a transgression of *communio* or a sign of it?

So, even though I be in error on some points, I wish simply to express to you as a representative of our bishops, my deep grief on behalf of the many who feel excluded by the practice of our Catholic faith. There are many stumbling blocks on the path to salvation; it is a delicate task of discernment to distinguish those that are inherent to faith and those which are accidental impediments.

Arohanui,

Mike Rioddell

(Bishop Peter, in receiving this letter, indicated he was content that the correspondence might conclude here.)

The dialogue between Mike Riddell and Bishop Cullinane has drawn many comments: Here are a few of them:

I refer to Mike Riddell's plea for a greater spirit of openness regarding the reception of Holy Communion and Bishop Cullinane's response.

It seems to me that trying to separate the sacrament from faith, if that was indeed what the Bishop's letter was saying, is pretty pointless. The two are inseparable. It is only by the gift of faith that we are able to accept the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ. When the priest prays : "Let it (our offering of bread and wine) become *for us* the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ your only Son, Our Lord" (*Eucharistic Prayer 1*), the two words "for us" designate those whose faith enables them to accept that Real Presence.

However, Christ also said "wherever two or three are gathered together in My name there I am in the midst of them". So we can only say the Eucharistic Presence is a special kind of presence as Jesus Himself instituted it at the Last Supper.

Now, this great mystery is so far beyond our understanding that it is pointless trying to define exactly what we mean by the word 'special'. All we can say with any degree of certainty, based on reason not faith, is that Jesus welcomes *anybody* who comes to Him in good faith whatever their personal interpretation of His presence, and that *nobody* has the right to deprive Jesus or them of that welcome.

Brian Connolly, Helensville

I have read, reread, discussed and analysed the question: *Bread... or Stone?*

The Bishop's erudite reply does not answer the question at grassroots level. At grassroots level, 83 percent of those born in the '50s and '60s have now no formal church connection. (*Marist Messenger* Sept '01)

So there are less and less '*in communio*'. If this is true of once-were-Catholics, therefore throughout the world, especially the Western world, only a minority are '*in communio*'.

What then did Jesus mean by *one bread and one cup*? I do not believe he meant exclusiveness. Perhaps that is why his physical life was brutalised. Yet we continue to do so.

Denis F Power, Christchurch

Many Catholics and many 'non-Catholic' Catholic Christians are grateful for the forum that gives us Mike Riddell and Bishop Cullinane participating so well on a sensitive issue raised by Mike's *Bread or Stone?* article (*TM May and June*).

The Bishop has clearly worked hard to meet Mike's concern for a more generous approach on the part of the Catholic Church. Mike asks here for assistance, not from Canon Law, but from his need "to hear the affirming whisper of the Spirit". I do not feel the Bishop has, in this sense, been able to meet Mike's entreaty.

(1) The Bishop writes "the celebration of Eucharist is about profound union with Christ and each other in Christ." True. But the difficulty lies with his conclusion that: "You would not expect the Church to endorse any practise that is not consistent with that communion."

But all of us fall short of the profundity of that union. In the final blessed Communion of the Saints it will be otherwise.

(2) Bishop Peter contrasts the individual's beliefs rather than the community they belong to, and concludes : "From this perspective it is a short step to advocating an open-table policy of Holy Communion for any Christian on the basis of their sincerity."

I do not imagine Mike is advocating openness on the basis only of the 'sincerity'. We may come to the Lord's Table solely by the grace of a much forgiving and generous God. *Sola gratia* is what matters.

(3) Mike refers to a 15,000 ecumenical gathering of young Christians in the UK which he attended and the priest explaining why only Catholics could receive communion. The Bishop concludes it would be better to avoid such hurt by not celebrating the Eucharist at all.

I am guessing one of the things that drew Mike to Roman Catholicism is its splendid witness to the centrality of eucharistic worship, so he may well feel that to avoid the issue is not to solve it, and may simply be to escape facing it.

Is there not 'a better way' within the historic Catholic tradition that honours our blessed Lord's assurance that 'where two or three are gathered in his name he is in there among them'?

Denzil Brown, Wellington (*abridged*)
The Rev Denzil Brown is a retired Presbyterian minister

Mike Riddell's article (*May '07*) made interesting (and understandable) reading. Without wishing to be bad-mannered, I must admit that despite three readings of Bishop Cullinane's reply, I really could not understand the message he was communicating.

Canon Law 912 states "any baptised person who is not forbidden by law may *and must be* admitted to Holy Communion". There are bound to be provisions somewhere in Canon Law describing "forbidden by law".

But I would wager my life on this statement, "Jesus would never say to anyone: YOU ARE FORBIDDEN BY LAW TO APPROACH ME".

Lance Bardwell, Dunedin

Thank you for publishing my prayer and whoever did the illustrations and layout for making it extra special. They will be talking about this in the *Hundred Acre Woods* for a long time. I'm putting the June issue in a very safe place – next to my honey pot.

Pooh Bear and my friends

The challenge of being a lay pastoral co-ordinator

Seven years ago Margaret Harding applied for the position of Lay Pastoral co-ordinator at Sacred Heart parish Hastings, where she had lived and worked in various capacities for some 25 years, being involved in CCD, liturgy preparation and sacramental programmes. She had completed Walk By Faith in the early '90s and attended various available courses, although not the sort of training now available. Margaret has completed the Palmerston North Diocese Leadership Training Course (2years) and is currently studying for a Diploma in Pastoral Ministry. Margaret has four children, and one was still living at home at that time.

Initially when the Hastings Pastoral Area was formed, the priest lived at St Peter Chanel, the neighbouring parish. The position of Lay Pastoral Co-ordinator at Sacred Heart parish was advertised. Margaret applied and was appointed. "It was quite daunting at first, but there was overwhelming support from the parishioners. One reason was I was so well known. It was my home parish, otherwise I would probably not have applied for the job."

After two and a half years Margaret was moved to St Peter Chanel, while the priest moderator of the pastoral area, Fr John Dykes, now resides at Sacred Heart. So Margaret acts as Lay Pastoral Coordinator at St Peter Chanel.

"When I first came to St Peter Chanel it took me a while to settle in – I was more of an outsider. All parishes have their own identity and it just took me longer to get to know the parishioners here.

"I see my role as a vocation (secondary to my marriage). I thought I might be able to make a difference; not so much as a 'manager' but through the areas I feel I have a talent for, basically through the liturgy and sacramental programmes. But you can easily become weighed down by administration.

"As regards pastoral concerns: for instance I help families prepare their order of service for funerals working with the local undertakers. But we have a bereavement team who will visit people after the death of a loved one. My job is to help organise the funeral without trespassing on those areas which someone else can do better.

"Part of my role is to find and encourage parishioners to become active in all these areas of ministry. Particularly with the sacramental programmes I look to recruit people to help with these, perhaps do the *Walk By Faith* course as a preparation. The difficulty is that people are so busy nowadays!

"Some people still see sacramental preparation as a school programme. We are steadily changing this so that people accept that it is primarily a parish responsibility. Many of these parents now are on the fringes of the church, so my aim is to make certain that the little contact they do have with the church might lead to a greater understanding of God working in their lives (PN Diocesan Directory). is a good experience for them. It has to be memorable. They need to feel welcome.

"We also prepare parents presenting children for baptism. Again we have a team who are active. I try to recruit such helper teams, because if I do it others are prevented from taking on ministries. The confirmation team is for the whole Pastoral area covering the three parishes. A married couple have been the leaders for a number of years. I was the leader initially, but am gradually handing over to them. I see it as their ministry.

"I chair the regular Pastoral area Parish Council and Liturgy meetings. I work with the St Peter Chanel parish council rather than leading it. I also organise support teams coming into the pastoral area. We have Mark Richards coming to us shortly for sacramental preparation. And the Dominican team are coming down from Auckland to do a renewal programme for us.

"In my work I am directly responsible to Fr Dykes, and ultimately to the Bishop. It is a paid position. There is a disadvantage there in that people will

sometimes expect the paid worker to do everything. However, that has not been my experience generally.

"When I was interviewed first for this work I made it clear that my family came first. I still had a daughter at home at that time. That was accepted. But sometimes I have not struck a good balance between home and work. At first I allowed the work to get on top – I worked long hours and used to get overtired. But now I have learned to strike a better balance.

"Now I have no children at home there is still a temptation to stay on at work, and that is when you start to overdo it. However, as time has gone by I have become more relaxed about what I do, and I take time off when I am entitled to it. Also I have a pastoral supervisor. I resisted this at first, but now I accept its value. I probably waited too long, and I would certainly advise other lay people in my position always to have a supervisor. My husband has been extremely supportive, likewise I have received great support from Fr Dykes. I find it valuable to keep physically fit.

"Overall the priests have been very supportive, and generally the people in the whole pastoral area have accepted me. And if there are those who sometimes don't, I have learned to be a bit more relaxed about it. I am loyal to my position, to the people I serve and to the church." ■

The joys of team ministry

Elisabeth Nicholson describes working as a lay member of the team at a Christchurch Retreat Centre

Let each do well what each knows best,
Nothing refuse and nothing shirk,
Since none is master of the rest,
But all are servants of the work.
Dorothy L. Sayers

This is the story of one woman's experience of working in and for the Church. It is also the story, admittedly incomplete and from a personal viewpoint, of a retreat house, a house of prayer.

Rosary House in Christchurch came into being through the shared vision of the Mercy Sisters and the Rosminian Fathers. The Sisters already owned the building, once a private house, then a student's hostel, but no longer required for that purpose. Being close to the centre of Christchurch just across the road from Hagley Park, the situation was ideal and the house very suitable (though in the early days a winter retreat in Rosary House would have been good training for a sojourn in the Antarctic!)

Rosary House Spiritual Life Centre opened its doors in 1982, staffed by Sisters of Mercy and a Rosminian priest. A programme of retreats, weekends, days of prayer and individual spiritual guidance was offered. Five years later, fortunately after another Rosminian priest had arrived to share in the work, the founding priest died suddenly, a great loss not only to Rosary House but to all the Church in Christchurch.

Whether this had been part of the vision from the beginning I don't know, but following the tragedy another laywoman and myself were invited to join the team responsible for running the programmes. Both my companion and I had worked for the Church in various capacities, and each of us had assisted in running a weekend at Rosary House, but it still seems to me an extraordinarily brave step in faith for the existing team to have taken. Mind you, it was quite a step for us too, and for our husbands who would have to put up with frequently absent and very busy wives.

A quote from a job description written at that time gives some idea of what we were getting ourselves into *'participation in retreats, prayer days, weekends, day and evening programmes. Preparing and presenting talks, liturgies, and reflections; planning and leading sessions; individual guidance; attending and chairing meetings. Love of God and people, a listening ear and a personal commitment to ongoing spiritual growth are essential'.*
Even now I wonder how I dared.

Even more I wonder at the patience, willingness and openness of the other team members. There is no doubt having lay people on the team did present difficulties as we simply could not be as available as the others, since the needs of home and family had to be slotted in. But never, for one moment did they allow us to feel a nuisance or lesser partners in the work.

Since the two of us had no formal training, and since it was clearly impossible for us to travel in order to get some, it was decided to run a year-long 'in house' course in spiritual direction.

A Rosminian priest from England, and another Sister of Mercy joined us on the course and we worked as we learnt.

In my early years at Rosary House the working team consisted of four Sisters, two of whom worked separately managing the house, two priests and two lay people, a true microcosm of the Church. Each retreat, prayer day or weekend was prayed about and individually planned. Those who would be responsible for the event then met, prayed some more, and worked out the details. We worked as equals, everyone's ideas were welcomed, discussed, refined, and accepted or rejected by common consent. Every job that possibly could be was shared and done by all in turn.

Working in this way entailed meetings – lots of meetings. We cursed them, laughed about them at the time, but in retrospect they were both necessary and good. We learned one another's strengths and weaknesses, ideas grew, changed, were replaced, and all in the context of prayerful attention to the leadings of the Spirit. Always there was a sense of privilege at being involved in this work, allowed into the deep places in people's lives and invited to accompany them on their spiritual journey.

everyone's ideas were welcomed, discussed, refined...by common consent

I believe that the combination of laity, religious and priests working prayerfully together in this way provided an extra dimension which people sensed and appreciated.

During my time at Rosary House we had, inevitably, changes in team membership, (at one time we had *three* priests on the team – unimaginable now!) but the work continued. As time passed things became more difficult. Bishops changed, priorities changed. In 1992 the Rosminians left Christchurch.

Our much-loved Diocesan priest, the only one left on the team, was forced to retire due to age. My lay companion had to leave for health reasons. She was replaced, but at the end of 1994 her replacement and I were forced by our home circumstances to resign. Since then, due to the shortage of priests, there have been none available to join the team, and sadly there have been no more laity. The Sisters of Mercy faithfully continue the work, though on a reduced scale. Rosary House continues to offer day programmes but can no longer operate on a residential basis.

My years at Rosary House have left me with many happy memories of people and events.

I learnt a great deal, which I trust has not been wasted, but above all I had an experience of truly shared ministry in the Church. I know it can work, I know what it entails, I know what the rewards are, and I pray such ministry may become the norm in the Church of the future. ■

Placement First Floor

"Placement first floor", the basement prison Warden said into his walkie-talkie. I waited on the first floor for someone to come to unlock the steel-barred doors to let me out into the free world.

For a long time no one came as I waited alone and I panicked slightly. The thought of being incarcerated in this cold, bleak, concrete place made me shudder. I called down the concrete narrow stairway to the Basement Warden that no one had come to let me out. "Right with you" he said. Much later he came himself to unlock five steel doors and I was a free man. Relieved, I enjoyed the fresh breeze on my face as I strode briskly away from the fortress-like prison.

As a *St Vincent de Paul* visitor I had been to visit the remands to offer assistance to them but, more particularly, to their wives/partners and children on the outside who were finding the going financially and mentally tough.

Placement first floor rang in my ears as I strode along. It meant that I was in the freedom loop. How precious freedom felt. We fought two world wars for it. But certain of my brothers lost their freedom through losing their own personal wars.

In humility I prayed my thanks to God for winning my personal wars for without His help, I would not have been the recipient of that freedom call from the warden: *placement first floor.*

John N Vincent

A Mother's Journal . . .

Kaaren Mathias

Neetu Devi came to our clinic only a few weeks ago – but she's filled my mind day and night ever since. Weighing only 3.1kg at the age of 9 months – she is tiny, malnourished and as I write she is teetering between here and eternity. A fifth daughter – only one of her older sisters is alive. Her mother is longing for a son. She's a failure as a wife and daughter-in-law until she produces one. When yet another girl was born Neetu was handed over to her maternal grandparents to care for.

There is a long sad story and I've only understood scraps of it. Neetu's grandmother's Hindi is perhaps worse even than mine – and I don't understand much of her local Pahari language. Nani (maternal grandmother) has been sitting rocking Neetu many times. Often when I've gone to sit with them in the ward downstairs she has tears rolling down her cheeks.

I am out of my depth clinically – New Zealand medical school never taught us about severe malnutrition and how to manage it. I read up management of pneumonia and babies with marasmus from documents from WHO on the internet. I ring a paediatrician in South India. I ring a friend and cry at the sadness of it all.

My children come downstairs too and play with floppy, skinny Neetu. One daughter makes a mobile for her. My 5-year-old holds out bright pieces of *Lego* and sings her silly rhymes. Neetu watches but doesn't reach out – she's too tired and weak. One morning we read about how Jesus cried when he found his mate Lazarus was dead.

"Its OK to feel sad about how sick Neetu is, aye Mum?"

We pray for Neetu in our Goodnight Prayers.

Our child health *mela* (fair) happened last week too. Village drama, vision and dental checks, immunizations, height and weight measured and a toothbrush as a take-home prize. As I analyse the mela height and weight data I cry again. The village girls are more significantly more malnourished than the boys. They have lower height and weight for their age and the boys aren't exactly plump either. The lower caste village children too are worse off too than their upper caste counterparts. It is so unjust. I feel so helpless. I want to start a Women's Liberation movement though activism by a Westerner with average-to-bad Hindi isn't exactly a model of self determination.

Two days ago Neetu's grandfather tells us he is taking her home for a couple of days. They'll come back after the barley harvest. I splutter. I try to forbid it. I plead for her to get more of a chance. I explain she's still in heart failure. I say she could die. He nods. He says he's seen four children die. He says they're like flowers out in the hot sun, and they fold up, soft and floppy, and then they die. I realize I haven't even seen four children die. How wrong for one grandfather to see so many children die. And I wonder about child welfare, neglect, custody, legal battles for withdrawal from therapy against medical advice, and lawyers and… quietly they left.

And I'm hoping they come back tomorrow as they promised. Neetu wrapped in her blanket watchful and hungry and ready to give surviving a go. We all need her to lead the Himachali Women's march to food rights, freedom and respect.

Kaaren works and plays with her three children, and husband Jeph in the hills of Himachal Pradesh, North India. She also works with Himachali people in community health. See www.manalihospital.com under the section on Jibhi clinic for details.

Heno and Mya with Teng Syu

Voices of Young Refugees

"Voices of Young Refugees" is the theme of World Refugee Day in 2007. To celebrate the Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants, Caritas offers two stories of young refugees

Wanting a peaceful life

By Tim Chiswell (with interpreter *Saw Thay Su)*

It was a two and a half hour drive along stream beds, over a couple of high ridgelines, and then across a large river five or six times before we reached the refugee camp called Site 2. Here 3500 people live on Thai forestry department land. They are refugees who have fled from the conflict in Burma/Myanmar, either Karenni or Karen peoples. Many have been there since the camp opened in 1993.

It is a well set up community now, with much of what might be expected in any small town; schools for 1200 plus pupils, a small health centre, a community administration and women's weaving group. But there are other things perhaps not expected; no one is allowed to leave to find work outside the camp, all food has to be provided by international aid, and no one can be sure of their future as they remain guests of the Thai government. They are in limbo.

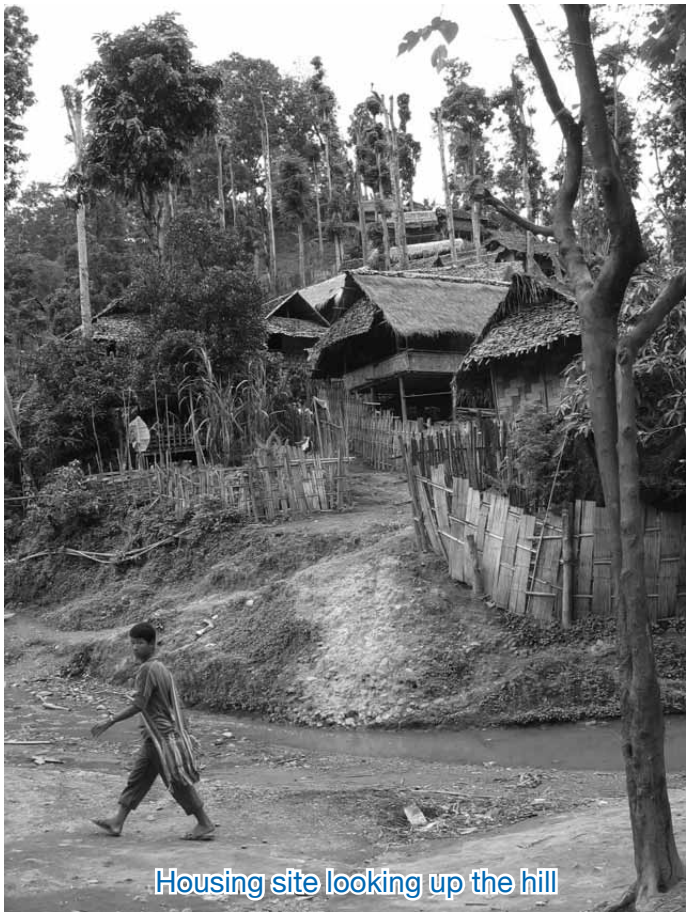
Here we were able to meet two young people. Heno Htoo, a lovely nine-year-old girl with a huge smile, and Mya Lwe Mu, a quiet 11-year-old boy. Site 2 is their home.

Heno is in Grade Four at the local primary school supported by Jesuit Refugee Services. She is studying maths, languages – such as Thai, Karen and English – and health. In 'health', she is learning about the importance of hygiene – washing, clean teeth and all those things girls and boys don't enjoy doing that much of. Heno said there were two favourite things she loved to do at school. There is a 'blocking' game, like a mix of tag and bull-rush. Then there is the small school library where she loves stories of heroes, kings and princesses. Heno loves to draw.

Mya has only been in the camp for about four years. When he was seven his parents told him that it was safer in Thailand and he would be able to go to school. So began a month-long journey through the jungle and trying to avoid the Burmese army on the roads. Mya's parents said they would join him soon, but today he is still with his aunt and four of his older sisters. Two days ago another of his sisters arrived and this made him happy. There was a message from his parents as well. Part of it was the same "they will join him soon".

Like Heno, Mya goes to school in one of the camp primary schools, and does many of the same things at school. Football is what he loves to play and his favourite footballer is Ronaldo like many young fans worldwide. He helps out at home with collecting firewood and water, and feeding the three pigs they have. It takes him an hour of walking to get the firewood. In thinking about the future; Heno wants to be an artist, while Mya wants to be a teacher. He wants a peaceful life. He doesn't want to go back; he doesn't want to have to flee the army again.

Tim Chiswell is Caritas International Programmes Manager. Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand supports the Thai Burma Border Consortium. This organisation provides for all the food and shelter needs in 13 camps (over 160,000 people) along the border as well as assistance in income generation and agriculture.



Housing site looking up the hill

Democracy a mixed blessing in Fiji

The recent coup could be the lesser of two evils, suggests Kevin Barr writing from Fiji. 'One man one vote' doesn't always mean government by consent of the governed

The military take-over in Fiji on 5th December 2006 has given rise to a number of questions about the nature and meaning of democracy. Following the military take-over there were calls both locally and from overseas governments – especially Australia, New Zealand, the US and the Commonwealth, for Fiji to be returned to a democratically elected government.

In our modern world democracy is rated highly as a system of government. It has been famously described as "government of the people, by the people, for the people" and holds out for us the ideal that a democratic government will work for the benefit of all its citizens and bring about justice for all. Democracy denotes the freedom of the people to elect their representatives to parliament and the determination of that parliament to rule for the good of the people so as to bring about a just society for all.

Democracy was introduced in Fiji at the time of independence in 1970 after 96 years of British colonial rule. Traditionally, Fiji had a chiefly system of government. There was a hierarchical order of chiefs who alone possessed *mana* – a God-given aura of power. They made the decisions and the people obeyed without question because the chief's duty was to care for his people and, in return, the people served their chiefs with loyalty and respect.

Professor Asesela Ravuvu has this to say about the introduction of democracy: "Britain never practised democracy in Fiji and only recommended others to practice it after Britain left. But the one thing the Fijian is convinced of is that his Fijian system of organising and doing things is more democratic than all the political manipulation and lobbying he has come to experience during the so-called democratic process of election to parliament of later years, in which money, advertising, demagoguery and media manipulation play such a part."

It has been said that currently "Fijians live in a democracy with a mentality that belongs to the chiefly system." This often means that, at election time, many Fijians – especially those in rural areas – are culturally influenced to vote for the candidate selected for them by their chief, their provincial council or

Being a Kiwi

By Lisa Beech

Farhiya* at work is unrecognisable from Farhiya at home. In fact the first time I saw her behind the fast food counter, I couldn't even place her ethnicity, having just an overall impression of familiarity. Later, while eating my chips and trying to place the short-skirted, baseball-capped teenager, I suddenly realised with a shock that I had only ever seen her before at home in a traditional full length robe and headscarf.

She isn't keen to discuss the differences. "Dad likes me to dress like that at home. People like me to dress like this at school. That's just how it is." Her community has accepted with difficulty that if the boys are to integrate into New Zealand society through soccer, the girls must also be allowed to join a basketball team, and they can't do that in long skirts.

Farhiya has no memories of the land of her birth and few of the refugee camps where her family lived for many years. "I don't like to remember that time. I am Kiwi now." She says her parents spend too much time remembering the bad days. "All they can think about, all they can talk about, is the people left behind. We have to help them, but we live here now."

But she shares her family priority for reunification. "Once there were hundreds of us. Now there is my Dad's family, my aunt's family, my uncle's family. That's less than 30 people. That's all that's left. We can never go back, so we have to live here." Her father has committed most of the past decade to working to reunite his family.

Farhiya recognises that she carries many more household responsibilities than her classmates. Her mother carries both physical and mental injuries. "Sometimes she hurts. Sometimes she cries." When her mother is incapacitated, Farhiya picks up the pieces. "I do the cooking, the washing, the cleaning."

At the moment she doesn't have a vision for the future, or at least one that she wants to share, but is proud of being the first in her family to get a fast food job. "I don't want to work in a supermarket, or go fruit picking. I like to meet my friends from school." She leaves me with a tantalising glimpse of different lives – a waft of spices and headscarves on one side, and of fries and baseball caps on the other – but shrugs off any further questions about how she reconciles the different parts of her life.

"That's just how it is. That's being Kiwi." ■

**Farhiya's name has been changed at her request. Her family allowed her story to be told so long as her family details, including ethnicity, did not allow her to be identified.*

Lisa Beech is a Caritas Aotearoa research and advocacy officer.

their church minister. Consequently one must have serious reservations as to whether democracy as practised in Fiji today is the same kind of democracy to be found in the US, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

A long historical journey

Although democracy is now the commonly accepted form of government in Europe and many other countries of the world, this was not always the case. As recently as 100 years ago many countries of Europe were struggling to unite and leave behind traditional forms of government in favour of greater democracy. Then, of course, women were allowed to vote only a hundred years ago. Thus modern democracy has in fact evolved over a long period of time in Western countries.

After the second World War most of the great colonial powers of Europe granted independence to their former colonies. In doing so they bequeathed to them their recently acquired form of democracy. Events were to prove that, in most cases, there was no easy transition to democracy. In the newly independent countries of Africa in particular there were uprisings, wars, assassinations, dictators and military coups. Progress towards the acceptance of modern democracy was slow and some countries of Africa are still struggling to accommodate to it.

It is no wonder then that some of the countries of the Pacific are currently undergoing internal turmoil as they try to gain stability and adjust to the expectations of the dominant world powers. The Solomons, Tonga, Fiji and Bougainville have all had their problems in recent years. They are not necessarily "rogue states' or "failed states" as some would have us believe. Rather than being scolded and shunned and having unrealistic demands foisted upon them by Australia, New Zealand and others, these countries need understanding, patience, assistance and encouragement.

Every upset, every uprising and every coup is, in reality, exposing a deep problem. Often the problem has been caused either by the policies of a former colonial power or by the present-day demands of powerful economic forces sweeping over us in the name of globalisation. It is therefore most unrealistic for overseas countries to demand an immediate return to democracy. I have heard overseas experts saying "there was no acceptable reason for Fiji's recent coup and they must return to democracy without delay". Maybe in their eyes there was no acceptable reason but, in the eyes of many people in Fiji perhaps there was.

Fijians live in a democracy with a mentality that belongs to the chiefly system.

The idea that democracy (in the sense of holding elections) is going to solve everything could very well be far from the truth. Are the series of coups something to be scoffed at, or are they telling us that Fiji has some deep underlying problems that are yet unresolved, and that every quick 'return to democracy' so far has not yet got to the root causes of those problems.

Foisting ready-made solutions may not always be in the best interests of the developing country. What took Europe and the United States years of struggle to achieve is expected to be accepted overnight by new nations. History shows that there is no easy transition to democracy.

Democracy in Fiji

Fiji has not been an ideal democracy. In fact, under the government of Qarase, democracy was being seriously undermined. It was being manipulated in the interests of a group of extreme nationalists and rich elites. It was not working in the interests of all Fiji's citizens. There was little concern for the poor, the ordinary workers, and for Indo-Fijians. There was serious mismanagement and some evidence of corruption. The Qarase government was not a democracy that worked in the interests of all the people and sought to bring about justice for all. Even the multiparty cabinet seemed to be used as an instrument to split the Labour party rather than an instrument for real multicultural reconciliation.

What democracy would refuse to have a commission of enquiry into the events of a coup (2000)? What democracy would appoint ministers and senators from the ranks of those who were tainted by their involvement with the treachery of a coup? What democracy colludes with a particular group of churches to give religious justification to its policies and to achieve religious support at the time of elections?

The aim of democracy is surely to build a just society – the ordering of society to bring about justice for all. If this does not happen, does that democracy deserve to stay in power? Yet how can it be removed, particularly when it has a history of manipulating the race card and possibly tampering with the electoral process?

In the absence of any serious action from its neighbours – Australia and New Zealand – one way for the military is to sound a warning to the democratically elected government that it will stage a take-over unless the government works towards justice for all. If this fails, then the military temporarily postpones the election of a democratically elected government until corruption and mismanagement have been cleaned up and a proper process set in place for a fair and truly representative election to be held. This is what we are currently experiencing in Fiji. It may be regrettable but, as Professor Nandan said recently, it may be "the lesser of two evils". ■

Kevin Barr, an Australian priest, has worked in the Archdiocese of Suva for the past 27 years

GODZONE ?

Dennis Horton reviews the state of faith in the light of recent events and statements in New Zealand. He is both reassured and concerned

There was a hollow ring to Destiny Church leader, Brian Tamaki, insisting that ours is a Christian nation, as the family of Folole Muliaga laid her to rest, following her death after power was cut from her Mangere Bridge home.

Whether or not an inquest shows a link between her death and the oxygen supply that helped her breathing, the event has exposed a side of New Zealand in which no church or political leader can take much pride. The true measure of a nation's compassion is how well it cares for its most vulnerable citizens. Mrs Muliaga's death has been a sharp reminder that there are families in New Zealand who live enmeshed below the poverty line and that when essential services are withheld, for whatever reason, tragedy in one guise or another is never far from engulfing them.

Bishop Tamaki's claims of a special place for Christianity came in the context of his church's opposition to the recently formulated National Statement on Religious Diversity, identifying New Zealand as a country with no official or established religion but one in which the right to believe or not is upheld for all. While the statement acknowledges the part Christianity has long played in shaping this country's identity and values, it also recognises that other faith communities are now well established here, and that religious diversity is a growing feature of our national life.

New Zealand's Anglican and Catholic bishops have joined to endorse the statement as "both forward thinking and mindful of past foundations". At a time in our history when cultural diversity is increasing, they uphold the right to religious freedom which all New Zealanders enjoy. They also affirm the right of faith communities to challenge the State on ethical and justice issues, since civil authorities "are also accountable to God". And they are wise to note that as a gift freely given, faith of any sort flourishes best in a climate of freedom.

Where New Zealand Christians are entitled to place themselves today in the pecking order of religious adherence is an open question. It's true that Christian missionaries came with the European colonisers and helped to draft at least one version of the Treaty of Waitangi. But as an expert on mission has famously observed, "God was here before we arrived". Our insights into how culture and revelation are interwoven would allow only the most arrogant to claim that New Zealand's first people had to wait for 19th-century preachers to announce God's presence. More recently, increasing numbers from the other faith traditions of the world – in particular Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and Sikh – point to a need for dialogue and mutual understanding as the key to peace for New Zealand, as they are for Asia and the Pacific as a whole.

As to how Christian our country really is, the criteria must be those which Jesus himself names in the judgment scene of Matthew's gospel. If the hungry are being fed, and strangers welcomed, if the naked are being clothed, the sick visited and those in prison befriended, then church people may be helping the kingdom to come. From a gospel perspective, all indications are that in Godzone right now we still have a long way to go. Closer ties with some of our new migrants and refugees who have come here in search of a fuller life may show just how far, in this land of plenty, God's bountiful love has yet to reach.

He inoi: Prayer

Matariki: Light for our time

HAERE MAI, te tau hou e Matariki,
welcome to another year unfolding,
as Matariki lights our winter sky,
revealing to us a God
who keeps breaking into our world
with the promise to make all things new.

As once a star led sages from the East,
searching for a deeper truth,
to find God embodied
in a newborn child,
born into a displaced family,
so may the stars in our southern skies
open us to new insights for our time.

May the faith we have inherited be open
to the wisdom of tangata whenua,
held sacred long before pakeha arrived.
May we learn from the insights and
cultures of those who come here
seeking a new life for themselves
and a future for their families.

For there can be no peace among nations
without peace among religions,
and no peace among people of faith
without dialogue between them.

Ma te wheturangi o Matariki,
e tiaki, e manaaki mai i a matou,
mo te tau e taka mai ana.

May the bright light of Matariki
surround and guide us
this whole year through.

Dennis Horton

Te Whiti o Rongomai

Parihaka

Te Whiti and Tohu

Jim Consedine recounts the story of Parihaka – a black stain on British colonial history, yet a wonderful story of a Maori campaign for peace and justice

Though the lions rage, still I am for peace… Though I be killed, I yet shall live; though dead, I shall live in peace which will be the accomplishment of my aim.
Te Whiti o Rongomai (*5 November 1881*)

If one were to ask any group of New Zealanders to name iconic figures in their history, certain names might readily spring to mind: Edmund Hillary, Janet Frame, Ernest Rutherford, Michael Joseph Savage, Whina Cooper. Perhaps also James K. Baxter, Colin Meads, Jean Batten. Peter Snell, or Kiri Te Kanawa. How many, I wonder, would name Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi?

Yet at one time, the names of Te Whiti and his compatriot Tohu were as well known in New Zealand as are the names of Jonah Lomu and Helen Clark today. For in the late 1800s, Te Whiti and Tohu co-ordinated a series of daring non-violent campaigns to halt land confiscation, catching the imagination not just of the nation but becoming widely known throughout the British Empire.

Along with the creation of our welfare state and nuclear free laws, knowledge of these remarkable men and their leadership at Parihaka should form part of the spiritual DNA of every person born in this country. Their movement of non-violent resistance to state tyranny deserves to be placed alongside the movements a century later in India and the US led by Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jnr. Indeed, there is evidence Gandhi knew of and was inspired by the resistance at Parihaka.

The context

In the 1860s, Te Whiti and Tohu had emerged as natural leaders of their people, grounded in the spiritual traditions of Maori as well as the Christian Scriptures. "Te Whiti and Tohu... were Christian pacifists and promoters of spiritual and economic growth."

By 1860, the number of European settlers matched the number of Maori and the government felt obliged to supply land to new settlers. They made it clear they were willing to use force to colonise the North Island if other means failed. The New Zealand Settlers Act (1863) made it possible to confiscate land if Maori refused to co-operate in its purchase. They were deemed to be in rebellion. Although warned by the judiciary that such confiscations were illegal, the government confiscated three million acres (1.2 million hectares), much of it in Taranaki where Te Whiti and Tohu lived with their people at Parihaka.

With a further inflow of settlers in the 1870s, the government set its sights on acquiring further large land blocks including Parihaka. Te Whiti had observed at close quarters the land wars in the 1860s in Waitara and elsewhere, where Maori had taken up arms to defend their land and lost both their lives and the land. He saw violence as counterproductive.

The campaign

By early 1879, it was clear that government greed for land knew no bounds. A new strategy was required by Maori. On 26 May 1879 a campaign led by Te Whiti and Tohu was launched whereby across Taranaki a disciplined corps of ploughmen started to plough settler's land using either horse or oxen-drawn ploughs. Te Whiti's instructions were clear:

Go, put your hands to the plough. Look not back. If any come with guns and swords, be not afraid. If they smite you, smite not in return. If they rend you, be not discouraged. Another will take up the good work.

If evil thoughts fill the minds of the settlers and they flee from their farms to the town, as in the war of old, enter not… into their houses, touch not their goods nor their cattle. My eye is over all. I will detect the thief, and the punishment will be like that which fell upon Ananias.

The first modern planned campaign of non-violent resistance to state tyranny was under way. As the inevitable arrests occurred and ploughmen were imprisoned, others took their place. The plough protests started at Oakura, spread to Pukearehu and then to Hawera. It was a province-wide campaign. Te Whiti maintained that that he was not

remembered

- Prophets of Non-violence

Tohu Kakahi

targeting the settlers "but ploughing the belly of the government".

The government's response was drastic. By August 1879, about 200 had been taken into custody. In all, about 420 were to be imprisoned. Of these, only 40 were ever sent for trial. These were eventually held for 12 months in prison in New Plymouth. The remaining ploughmen were imprisoned without trial and sent to prisons in Dunedin, Hokitika, Lyttelton and Ripapa Island. In effect, the rule of law had been suspended.

The government then expanded its push for land. A force of 600 armed constabulary started to build roads right through some of the most fertile land in Taranaki. Without consultation, the constabulary pulled down cultivation fences around gardens to allow for roadways. Properly fenced gardens were essential to Maori health and economic well-being. They had huge acreage planted and stock to feed the several thousand who lived there. By June 1880, the new roads had reached the outskirts of Parihaka.

The resisters changed tack. As soon as the fences were pulled down, Maori rebuilt them. Inevitably the surveyors' pegs were removed. Again the government moved to arrest the 'fencers' as they came to be called. In all, 216 were taken into custody. None ever appeared in court. They were simply shipped to prisons in the South Island. This was illegal.

News of these imprisonments was widely reported in England, and pressure was brought to bear on the government to act more justly. Ignoring recommendations from the West Coast Commission, a pro-government tribunal set up to investigate ways of dealing with the land issue, the government decided to take all the remaining land it wanted including the Parihaka block which the Commission had set aside as a reserve. New legislation pushed through in parliament allowed for imprisonment without trial with up to two years hard labour. The scene was set for the final confrontation.

On 5 November 1881, an armed military force of 1589 armed constabulary and volunteer militia invaded and occupied the unprotected Parihaka. Native Affairs Minister John Bryce himself, mounted on a white charger, with sabre and in military uniform, led the assault. On the marae, 2500 unarmed adults sat waiting with Te Whiti and Tohu in their midst. The soldiers were made to walk past rows of children playing with tops and dancing and singing, past rows of women to where the men waited. The two leaders along with several others were arrested and led away. They did not resist.

In the days that followed, 1600 people were forcibly dispersed, while 600 were allowed to remain. Houses and crops were destroyed, animals slaughtered. After Parihaka was destroyed, the constabulary fanned out over the countryside to wreak more extensive damage. Still there was no violent resistance. Not one shot was fired, not one life lost. The spirit of non-violence prevailed.

Te Whiti and Tohu were charged with sedition. Te Whiti told the judge: "It is not my wish that evil should come to the two races, My wish is for the whole of us to live peaceably and happily on the land." Both were sent to Addington Prison in the South Island where they served 16 months. Upon release, both returned to Parihaka, which in the mid-1880s rejuvenated but to nothing like its previous status. Te Whiti continued to preach non-violence and promote harmony with the settlers and was imprisoned twice more over land issues. Both Te Whiti and Tohu died in 1907. Remarkably, only two weeks separated their deaths.

Conclusion

The ongoing spiritual legacy of Parihaka is one of living in harmony with the land and humanity. It is also a legacy of non-violent resistance and a belief in the peaceful and respectful coexistence of Maori and Pakeha. Given the impact of these two men on historic events and given the almost universal disquiet at levels of violence in contemporary society, one wonders why neither Te Whiti nor Tohu have gained the status of iconic New Zealanders along with Ed Hillary and the rest. Surely they are role models for what most want our society to become – just, fair, peace-loving, non-violent.

Why isn't their story and the story of Parihaka as well known as the Gallipoli story? Why isn't the Christian-led non-violent Parihaka resistance a compulsory part of Religious Education programmes in our schools? And finally, why is 5th November still known as Guy Fawkes Day when it could be Parihaka Day? ■

Parihaka c

. . . by students from Chri

In a gesture of solidarity and peace, students from the four Christian secondary schools of Dunedin gathered around the World Youth Day Cross to commemorate and acknowledge the suffering of the people of Parihaka. On the initiative of DRS Colin McLeod and chaplain Fr Gerard Aynsley, students from Kavanagh College invited their fellow students to a joint procession and ceremony based on the Emmaus story *and the* Feeding of the 5000. *The invitation was enthusiastically accepted by the other three schools.*

In an historic occasion on 11 June, the four Christian schools of Dunedin came together around the World Youth Day Cross to remember the atrocity wrought upon the people of Parihaka, and the Parihaka prisoners brought to Dunedin. St Hilda's Collegiate School, Kavanagh College, John McGlashan College and Columba College gathered at the Andersons Bay inlet to learn more about the cross. From here the group processed across to *Rongo*, the monument dedicated to those who lost their lives imprisoned in Dunedin between 1881 and 1898, and those who supported them.

After a mihi to acknowledge the people and the events, the students sung *Purea Nei a Waiata* to clear and free those things that bind and restrict us. This was followed by prayers read by students of each of the four schools. After a final waiata we returned to the inlet to read the Gospel and to share food before returning to our respective schools.

The World Youth Day cross has been carried by young people around the world including Ground Zero in New York, Rwanda, Kosovo, the border between North and South Korea, and many other places of human suffering including Aramoana, near Dunedin, site of NZ's worst mass murder which took place in 1990.

The cross is a reminder to us of the call to peace and that Christ chose to stand with those who were outcast, thought less of, and had no rights in their society.

Many students reported a sense of peace and a sense of purpose in the public acknowledgment of both the service and the procession of the cross. It was particularly powerful to witness the young people sharing the carrying of the cross and sharing food together.

Fr Gerard Aynsley, Katrina Kerr-Bell and Colin MacLeod played significant

Photos: Marelda Gallaher

celebrated

istian schools in Dunedin

roles in making this possible, with Colin enabling a powerful yet simple statement of faith and unity to happen. The Chaplains of St Hilda's, John McGlashan, and Columba all appreciated the invitation shown by the young people of the schools, participating enthusiastically to this very different call. In many ways it symbolised that as Christians we have more in common than we might appreciate.

In the mihi we heard the words imprinted on Te Whiti's tomb: *He honore he kororia ki te Atua, he maungarongo ki te whenua, he whakaaro pai ki nga tangata katoa* – that is, "Honour and glory to God, peace upon the land, and good will to all people". Those who perished unjustly rose to the challenge of their leaders by acting in peace and in a spirit of love. Te Whiti and Tohu taught from the wisdom of their ancestors, and their understanding of Christian teaching. They would have supported the symbol of hope and the unity of different faiths acknowledging their sacrifice and the love that motivated them. It was a contrast perhaps to their experience of some who claimed to be Christians and instead caused them to suffer.

Te Whiti O Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi built the Pa at Parihaka as a place to support those forced from their homes and land. The Pa gathered the dispossessed from all areas of Aotearoa-New Zealand creating a community of peace, to resist more loss of ancestral land, and to maintain their identity. Many of the non-violent methods used by Te Whiti and Tohu were known and used by both Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

The Parihaka leaders died in 1907.

Richard Kerr-Bell

Seven deadly sins – A Gandhi series

Although Mohandas Gandhi is justly celebrated as the founder of modern India and as a passionate advocate – and practitioner – of non-violent pacifism, he should be also remembered for more than just his politics. Gandhi was a redoubtable contender in many justice issues in the modern world. His political and social stances were set in the widest possible context – an impassioned belief in the natural law.

We might call him 'christian' in his attiudes – because he believed it was his duty to devote his life to the common good and the service of people. That was the way people should be. Yet he is not simply 'Christian' in the religious sense: his belief system has a universal appeal. It is based on a passion for peace – but it extends much further. Peace is simply his starting point.

He stated: "A person cannot do right in one department whilst attempting to do wrong in another department. Life is one indivisible whole." In particular he named seven areas of human conduct where human beings tend to be swayed in their conduct by selfishness and greed. In naming these seven contemporary 'sins', he identifies each in the context of its opposite. In other words he is not simply indulging in a jeremiad, denouncing the world's woes. He constantly implies that there is a better way which people should be persuaded to support and follow.

These are the seven 'deadly sins' of modern society, as Gandhi saw them:

Wealth without Work
Pleasure without Conscience
Knowledge without Character
Commerce without Morality
Science without Humanity
Religion without Sacrifice
Politics without Principle

Next January will be the 60th anniversary of his assassination, which took place just as India and Pakistan were about to gain their independence of Britain. To celebrate this anniversary we have invited some of our regular authors to write in successive issues on the seven themes listed above.

In this July issue the Green politician Sue Bradford launches the series.

Mahatma Gandhi believed that politics without principle was one of the seven most spiritually dangerous threats to humanity. I entirely agree with him.

One of the main reasons it took me as a politically aware person so long to move from street activism to an electoral political party was the lack of a consistent core value system in our major parties of the '80s and '90s. For me, it was only when the *Green Party* left the confusion of the *Alliance* in 1997 I began to hope that at last we had a party whose mission was genuinely values-based and whose core goals were firmly rooted in clear principles of ecological wisdom, social responsibility, appropriate decision-making and non-violence. These attributes I am sure would have found resonance with Mohandas Gandhi.

However, this is not intended as a *Green Party* promotion. Rather, I simply seek to reflect for a moment on where politics without principle can lead in the Aotearoa New Zealand context; on what politics with principle means; as well as highlighting a fundamental contradiction within the concept.

Some examples

Some of the most blatant examples of politics without principle in my generation include:

- Sir Robert Muldoon's support for the 1981 Springbok Tour as a tool of returning his party to power;
- the Labour Party's complete sell-out of its history and principles in the free market reforms of the 1980s;
- the privatisation and corporatisation of public goods which have lead, for example, to the sell-off and near destruction of our national rail system, and the recent case of a woman dying after *Mercury Energy* cut her power off;
- the ongoing apparent acceptance by both major parties of endemic child and adult poverty, and the refusal to take the actions needed to redistribute wealth and services to bring this to an end.

Politics without principle leads to action (or inaction) without ethics. Politics without principle deliberately undermines the health and well-being of humans and/or the physical world on which we rely for survival; it deliberately creates and sustains conflict simply for political gain; and lusts for staying in or gaining power at any cost.

Politics with principle

So what does politics *with* principle look like?

I find this much more interesting. I think nurturing opportunities for dialogue on this topic across traditional religious and political boundaries is one of the most useful things we could be doing in Aotearoa just now, as we brace ourselves for the impact of a future that doesn't look particularly hopeful for either people or planet.

We need to be discussing what politics with principle is – as individuals and organisations.

For starters, I would offer:

- having a clear, coherent values base that is publicly known.
- remaining committed to these beliefs and goals even in the face of hostility, contempt and/or the potential loss of power or position.
- being willing to acknowledge and work with erstwhile opponents when common cause is found, and being open always to the politics of the heart, without losing sight of the realities of power and privilege in which our lives are played out.

People and organisations can be acting in a manner based on values and principles while still holding different beliefs and representing very different interests – this after all is the very nature of politics. The recent debate over my Bill to amend Section 59 of the *Crimes Act* is a prime example.

The key protagonists would both claim to come from a principled values base – myself from the core Green values of non-violence and social responsibility, especially in regard to the vulnerable and powerless; my leading opponents, like Bob McCroskie, Gordon Copeland and Larry Baldock, from an equally heartfelt belief in a Biblical mandate to beat children for disciplinary purposes. In this case, as in many others, the Bible interpreted literally was of limited use as a reference point when the arguments were as deeply theological as they were political, cultural and psychological.

However, what I draw from this, having just emerged from the heat of this particular struggle, is the importance of sticking to one's own 'true north' and of maintaining respectful relationships with principled opponents no matter how intense the controversy.

No matter where we operate on the political and religious spectrum I believe we will all benefit if we encourage politics with principle, both inside and outside Parliament. Such a future would, I think, look quite different from what we now currently experience. ■

Some questions

How much is the way you operate as a politician, political activist or political organisation as important as the principles for which you stand?

What are some examples of principled and unprincipled action?

What spiritual dangers might there be for a politician who operates without a principled base without principles?

Should political parties accept donations from large companies that have a dubious track record in terms of environmental and labour practices in developing countries, even when the party itself has a principled position on such matters in New Zealand?

Consider the Lilies

Margaret Schrader describes some incidents in the life of a l'Arche community

The setting, a living room in Pararaparumu; the occasion, Holy Week; the people, 15 of us all with disabilities of some sort, eight with intellectual disabilities. We had met as a community of *L'Arche Kapiti* to wash each other's feet. I sat between Emmett and Victor. Rod explained what we were to do, and then the bowl was passed between us.

Emmett, a wonderful young man, said to me: "I don't want my feet washed, I just had a shower". Sounded quite Biblical to me. I tried to explain what this was about, but said it was fine if he did not want to do it. When he had watched the others he chose to have his feet washed, and then to wash mine. Oh so gently. He put his hands firmly on my head and prayed: "Good woman God, Good woman God". I wasn't sure whether it was a prayer of thanksgiving or of intercession, but I felt blessed.

Then it was my turn to wash Victor's feet. Victor, who gifts us with amazing love and a wonderful laugh, lives with multiple handicaps and spends his day in his wheelchair, being fed and cared for by our gifted assistants, old and young. I gently washed his feet and prayed for him, and the bowl went on. When I thought we had finished Laura, one of the house leaders, said: "Victor, you haven't washed anyone's feet yet!" Then: " Father Rod, you need your feet washed!" Rod walked past me and with a grin said: "This the third time tonight!"

We placed the bowl on Victor's lap and Rod on a chair in front of him, and then we lifted Rod's legs up into the bowl – first Laura, then each of us taking one of Victor's hands and assisting him in washing Rod's feet.

His mother recently told me that when he was a little fellow at Mass he would scream with delight when the Host was raised. He continues to do this to this day – to the delight of the parish. A gentle reminder of so many of Jesus' words about the importance of the anawim, the little ones.

Because of the ecumenical nature of *L'Arche*, foot washing is the central symbol.

A second story about our *L'Arche* community. It was a week before Christmas in the parish hall. After a wonderful pageant with Akiko, our Japanese assistant, playing Mary and all the core members taking part, we sang *Silent Night* in eight languages, representing all the nationalities present. I was overwhelmed as I stood and sang the first verse in Japanese, and watched Akiko's face glowing with joy; then the next as I watched Monika, while we tried our best with Czeckoslavakian. These young adults come from all over the world to live amongst our people. Most are Christian, but some feed deeply from the well of their own faiths. What an amazingly rich group!

Our Identity and Mission Statement excites me: *We are people with and without learning difficulties, sharing life in communities of faith. Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our life together. We seek to build a world that recognises the unique value of every person and our need of one another.*

The challenge given to us as a community last year was to become a prophetic, eucharistic community for all our churches. I was struck as if by a thunderbolt at the profundity of that call. What does it mean? How do we live that out? What a ragtag bunch of followers we are, and what a huge call.

As I worked on what it meant for the community and me, I had visions of popes and cardinals and bishops in my head. I thought of the years of talking that have already been done around the question of shared eucharist and the many gut-wrenching tears I have shed when faced with the divisions of Christ's church, but soon came to the conclusion with the help of my spiritual director that perhaps this is about

Winter Time

As the leaves continue to fall, denuding the trees, may the pressing demands of our lives likewise drop to the ground and be blown away. These demands can absorb so much of our life and light, fooling us into thinking they are so important.

Winter time is a season for the soul. It is time to draw on the inner life, on the reserves within, rather than on our bright personalities, skills, or relationships. Foliage without does not compensate for strength within. It is time to sit down, mull over wine, and breathe slowly. There is a season to speak, and there is a season to be in the silent company of one. There is a season to write for others, and a season to write for your self. There is a time to feed the world, and a time to feed your soul.

It is strange how nature has us stand naked in winter shivering from the lack of protective foliage. All those bright accessories have fallen away. Our life has diminished. Our space has withered. Our growth has slowed. We feel vulnerable. We wish the winter would move on. When will the new possibilities, fresh vision, and dynamic relationships spring forth? Can't nature hurry up? After all there is a world to save and timetables to meet.

Prayer goes at its own pace. We think we are in control, but this prayer has a mind of its own. It takes its time and disregards mine. It giggles when I'm trying to be serious, and is sombre when I'm trying to be sociable. It is as elusive as the morning mist, and often as silent.

The leaves have all fallen now. The cold has come among the trees. The mist descends most mornings. There is aloneness, nakedness, and longing. Yet hidden away, beneath the bark, life continues.

I stand still in the park, leaving the dog to her antics. I try to breathe with the trees, inhaling their wisdom, gleaning a little. Winter is soul time. ■

Glynn Cardy

being a community which shares its thankfulness and its brokenness each day as we gather around our meal table.

Two months later, when asked by our community leader, Michele Ness, and Father Roderick Milne if I would be willing to take on the task of pastoral minister for six months, I said "Yes, I guess that will mean I will preside at Mass". We all laughed! It's sometimes easier than crying.

I believe we are a prophetic community, which is why so many good people continue to come not only to offer their gifts but also to join in the fun, to learn about real life from our core members and to know more of Jesus who seems so actively present in our midst. ■

Marg Schrader is pastoral minister of L'Arche Kapiti, a spiritual director, gardener, golfer grandmother and former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church

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Consider the lilies...

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The infinity of now

At 84 Samuel Beckett was asked about the possibility of his retirement. "What!" he exclaimed, "Me? Retire? Never – not with the fire in me now!" Not all of us are that lucky. In my travels I meet teachers and priests for whom the original vision of their vocation has all but disappeared. There seems to be a universal kind of ennui, a deep-seated sense of pressure, that is driving people to retire as soon as possible. Equally worrying, whether it has to do with increasing bureaucracy, target-setting or appraisals, the very soul seems to have dropped out of the world of work for many.

How do we restore a new energy to our lives by finding a lost balance and poise? Is there a way of building into our days a ground, a centre, and a reminder of what is at the heart of all our endeavours, something that would provide a context and a balance against which to measure and nurture our energies? An extraordinary thing is that it isn't really the amount of work we do that wears us out. Burn-out has more to do with the absence of enthusiasm and dedication. When we work with a passion, everything changes. When our heart is in our work, the work itself becomes a kind of extension of our hearts. Taking pride in what we do transforms the weariness.

Empty Monday faces behind wet wind-screens
inching their grim way along the A64 into Leeds.
The work that awaited, was already destroying them.
And then I saw him, as I see him almost every day.
On the verge of the soulless carriageway,
his face is beautiful with attention.
He is holding the details of his day against an infinite horizon.
Like a mother to her baby or a cellist to her instrument,
like a painter to his canvas or a priest to his altar,
the litter picker, with meticulous dedication,
stoops carefully to renew the face of the earth.

When I go back to Ireland I'm always struck by the Angelus broadcast on television. It is a valiant effort to recover a kind of timing and fine-tuning of the way we are present to whatever we are doing at that moment. At twelve and at six, the bells are tolled. During the pealing, workers from a variety of professions are depicted as lifting their heads and pausing for the length of a few breaths. You sense they have shifted their awareness to another place. They have moved, for a moment, inside themselves, drawn to a horizon deep within their own soul. It does not seem to be so much a distraction as a way of living more fully in the present moment, of being more present and devoted to the immediate work of their hands and eyes.

I had a similar awareness when I joined the Benedictine monks at Pluscarden near Aberdeen for six weeks some years ago. The regularity of the relentless bells calling them from working to praying, and back again, was such a grounding habit. It felt as though both exercises were being connected; that their sources, in the deep centre of each monk's being, were now revealed as equal aspects of the same transcending presence. Thus graced and graceful, this 'physical mindfulness' would dissolve the edges between their work and their meditation, as they repeatedly recovered the rhythm and the seasons of their days and nights, their bodies and souls.

There is a story that I love which illustrates the grace of this awareness. Two men were building a wall – long and high, one at each end. When asked what he was doing, the first brickie replied that, for a start, he had no interest whatever in his work. A wall is a wall is a wall. He was bored and listless. Brick after brick, day after day, month after month. He longed for Fridays; he hated Mondays. With no interest or involvement, his work was slowly killing him.

"I'm creating a cathedral", murmured the other man. "This is the South Wall of it. I've seen the plans. It will be such a beautiful building. I can't believe I'm part of it. When I watch the young children playing around here, I can see them and their own children, worshipping in this holy and lovely place for the decades of their lives."

When talking to parents, teachers and priests, I often tell this story. It transforms the way we see things. It is what the Incarnation has revealed. It is what the Sacraments are for. It is why God created the world – so that we would one day tumble to the amazing reality that lies beneath what we too often term as 'ordinary'. That is why the story about the two workmen is called "The Infinite Horizon". There is an infinite horizon to every single, routine, menial task we perform. The heavens reverberate to the least of our whispers or acts of love.

The men in the monasteries lay down their tools and obediently and beautifully walk away from their fields, desks and benches, only so as to return to them filled with more reverence and wonder. St Benedict, for instance, kept reminding his cellarer to hold his pots and pans in the kitchen with the same respect and reverence as the chalices and ciboria are held at the altar.

The Angelus rings out over the countryside of Ireland, not to distract the people from their daily labour into a more heavenly reality. It rings out only so that the forgetful eyes of their souls can be reminded of the treasures of grace at their fingertips. As the Prophet said, beyond the boredom and pain, work has a divine dignity around it. It is love made visible. This is what the Eucharist accomplishes for us each Sunday. It parts the veils and reveals to

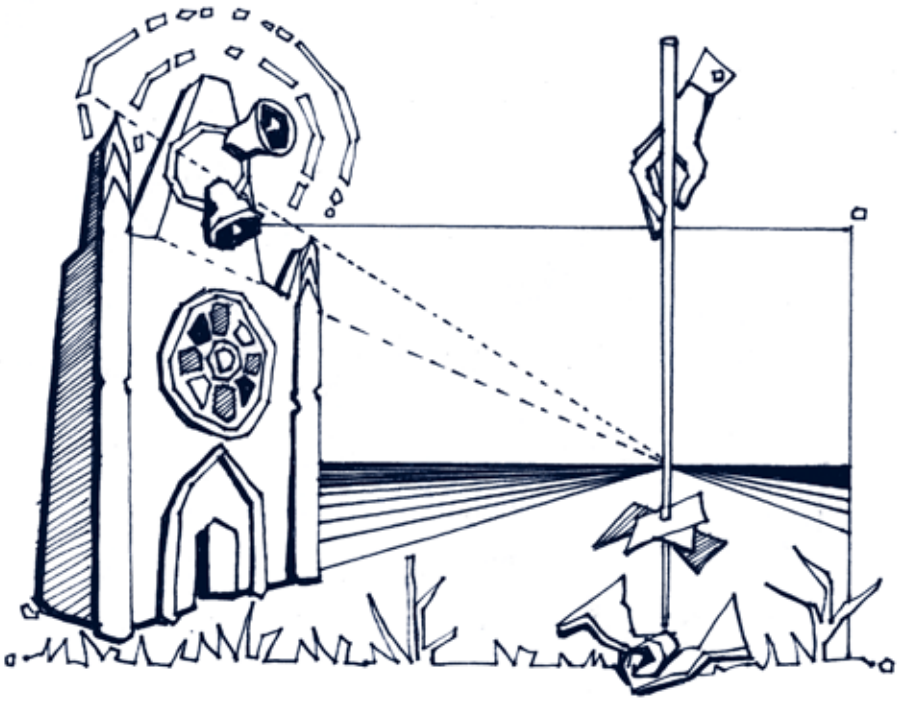
There is a divine horizon behind even the most ordinary, menial tasks – if only we can allow ourselves to see it. Then work becomes a sacrament

us that the liturgy of the Church serves only the liturgy of Life, that all work is holy work; that the sacred place we search for is the very ground on which we stand. That every bush is a burning bush.

In his book *Crossing the Unknown Sea,* David Whyte suggests that what opened the heart of Moses was not hearing God's voice from the bush saying "You are standing on holy ground", but the moment he looked down and realised not only that he stood in God's presence, but that he had been standing in that presence all his life. Every step of his life had been on holy ground.

It is Moses in the desert, fallen to his knees before the lit bush.
It is the man throwing away his shoes, as if to enter heaven and finding himself astonished, opened at last, fallen in love with solid ground.

Whyte goes on to observe that the antidote to exhaustion is not necessarily rest. The antidote, he claims, is wholeheartedness. We often get so tired because of the gap between our true powers and the work we do, between the possibilities we sense and the opportunities we have. In other words we are not really present to what we are doing. "You are only half here", he writes, "and half here will kill you after a while." He offers a delightful metaphor when he comments on a Rilke poem about the awkward way a swan walks until it is transformed once it sinks down into its element, allowing the flowing water to reveal the true harmony it always carried.



The Living Word of the Gospel of Luke

Kathleen Doheerty

Listening to the Gospel readings Sunday after Sunday in this year of *Luke* has been an experience much enriched for many in the Dunedin Diocese who attended the workshops presented by Fr Damian Wynn-Williams earlier this year. Fr Damian's *Introduction to the Gospel of Luke* illustrated how studying the text and its context reveals layers of meaning, and gives an insight into the way Scripture scholars go about revealing the richness of the Gospel.

"None of the Biblical texts came into being in a vacuum," says Fr Damian. "All had some historical context, all were influenced by the social and religious world in which they were written. The Gospels were written for different communities, with different issues, and so all have a different emphasis. Of the three synoptic Gospels, *Mark*, whom ancient tradition associates with the Apostle Peter, emphasises the cost of following Jesus – understandable in the context of being written not long after the brutal persecutions by Nero. *Matthew* shows Jesus as a teacher, the new Moses revealing to his disciples a new law on a new mountain("You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times… but I say to you…").

So what about the Gospel of Luke?

"The noted scripture scholar Raymond Brown quotes Dante's description of Luke as 'the scribe of the gentleness of Christ' and comments that 'more than any other evangelist *Luke* has given the world a Jesus to love.'

"Some of the best-loved parables are found only in *Luke*: the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Woman and the Lost Coin. *Luke* alone tells of the healing of the ten lepers, the Widow of Nain, Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus who climbed into a tree the better to see him, and only in *Luke* do we find the detail at the crucifixion of the 'good thief' and the words of Jesus 'today you will be with me in paradise', which have given consolation to Christians ever since.

"The Jesus portrayed by *Luke* is compassionate and loving, full of forgiveness, with a particular concern for the poor and the marginalised."

What does Luke's gospel tell us about the evangelist himself?

"Luke implies right at the start of his account that he was not an eyewitness to the events he writes of," says Fr Damian. "It is generally accepted that the author of the third Gospel was also the author of *Acts* in which the missionary activity of Paul is prominent. An early and credible tradition identifies the author with Paul's travelling companion 'Luke, the beloved physician. (*Col 4:14*).

"There are signs that Luke was not overly familiar with Palestine, being inaccurate in some geographical details. One small but telling indication of this is his account of the lowering of the paralysed man through the roof so that Jesus can heal him. According to *Mark* the friends dug through the roof (*Mk 2:4*) which implies a wattle and daub roof typical of Palestine. *Luke* envisages a type of roof more common in the Mediterranean world and speaks of the stretcher being passed down through the tiles (*Lk 5:19*).

If the evangelists were writing for communities with different needs, how did this influence their accounts?

"One way we can see this is by comparing how the evangelists present the same event or saying. For example, the Parable of the Lost Sheep is related by both Matthew and Luke, but in different contexts.

"In *Matthew* (*Mt18:12-14*) the story is told as part of a series of ethical instructions concerning life within the church community. Here there should be a special respect for the 'little ones', those without status or influence. Every effort must be made to avoid creating stumbling blocks which might cause them to fall away. It is in this context that Jesus tells the story of the shepherd searching for the lost sheep. For *Matthew,* the lost sheep is a metaphor for members of the church who have gone astray and who must be won back and reconciled. As the ensuing instruction implies, it is the responsibility of the rest of the community to act as shepherd ('If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault…'). The outcome of the shepherd's search is not certain ('If he finds it…'), and so it remains a possibility that reconciliation might not occur ('if the offender refuses to listen…' 18:17).

"In *Luke,* however, (*Lk 15:3-7*) the story is recounted as Jesus' response to the Pharisees and scribes who criticise him for welcoming 'tax collectors and sinners'. But a wider audience is also implied, namely the recipients of the good news who stand outside the religious establishment. In this version of the story the shepherd searches for the lost sheep until he finds it (here there is no doubt that the lost will be found) and places it on his shoulders. The story is followed immediately by two further illustrations of loss and recovery (the Lost Coin and the

Reflecting on John

The quality of mercy is not strained, it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
(John 7:53-8:11)

Susan Smith

There is much discussion as to whether or not the story of the woman caught in adultery belongs in the Johannine narrative. Most Johannine scholars believe it is a later addition, given its distinctly non-Johannine style. But thematically we can argue that it belongs here at the end of Chapter 7 which has seen Jesus engaged in fierce disputation with the Pharisees over their interpretation of the law. The story that follows in *John 8* is a further chapter in that conflict.

In his *Tractate* on the Gospel of John, Augustine argues that this story highlights the tension between ensuring that the law is kept and the practice of mercy. The Pharisees provide an example of legalism at work, while Jesus demonstrates the importance of mercy and clemency.

As I write this, the country is caught up in the awfulness of the story of the Muliaga family where a mother and wife, Folole, died when *Mercury Energy* disconnected the household power supply. Until 1 June, *Mercury Energy* was intent on proving that they had done nothing wrong. As talkback shows and *Campbell Live* distressingly revealed, a small minority of New Zealanders felt that the family got little more than they deserved.

However, most New Zealanders knew intuitively that *Mercury Energy,* whose profits in the last financial year were in excess of $75,000,000, may well have behaved legally but certainly not mercifully. What Helen Clark described as *Mercury Energy*'s "hard-nosed commercial attitude" was legally protected by procedures the SOE had in place to ensure its profits rose. One does not need to be a biblical scholar to know what Jesus' response would have been to the situation. As our text shows, Jesus did not hide behind legalism.

This story of Jesus and the woman has always captured the imagination of readers. On the one hand, Jesus' words: "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" are often spoken today in many contexts, usually as a check on moral-self-righteousness. On the other hand, the story can be interpreted as demonstrating Jesus' supposedly more liberal attitude about sexual morality. But such interpretations diminish the christological significance of the story.

When Jesus writes on the ground, he signals his unwillingness to allow the Pharisees' insistence on obedience to the law to dominate the debate. Jesus offers both the Pharisees and the woman a chance to break with old ways. The woman is invited to begin life anew; the Pharisees are invited to move beyond a self-serving legalism. This story is about Jesus' challenge to entrenched religious authority, and the possibilities of new life that arise from his challenge. ■

Prodigal Son) and in all three there is a remarkable emphasis on rejoicing.

"Whereas *Matthew* gives the parable an ethical and ecclesial dimension, in *Luke* the parable epitomises a major *motif* of the whole Gospel, namely, the prodigal graciousness and mercy of God. The lost sheep is a metaphor not just for members of the church who have strayed, but for all those on the margins, those considered beyond the pale. In proclaiming 'good news to the poor' (*Lk 4:18*) Jesus himself is the shepherd par excellence.

"The parables are not simply stories or illustrations. They provoke and challenge, and are typically open-ended: 'the whole point of the story is…' does not apply to parables. Each listener takes away what applies to him or her. They are living words." ■

Father Damian Wynn-Williams, parish priest of three of the four parishes in the Dunedin South pastoral area, studied in Durham, Rome and Melbourne after his pre-ordination study at Holy Cross College, Mosgiel. He has the degree of Doctor of Theology from the Melbourne College of Divinity, and has lectured in Old Testament at Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, and Good Shepherd College, Auckland.

The Rattle of Chains

Luke 8:26-39

Glynn Cardy

A friend will not eat pork. He grew up in an Islamic culture where pork was considered unclean. Though he no longer practises the religion of his childhood, he still does not eat pork. He knows about the history of food taboos and that millions of people eat pork with no harmful effects. Still, for him, for reasons he cannot articulate, pork is unclean.

In heart-attacked New Zealand the taboos of his childhood are worth reconsidering. Concerns about trichinella have given way to concerns about cholesterol. Maybe the old myths were wise myths? However, in our sane, demythologized society, matters of the heart are matters best ignored. We seem to value being free from ideas that restrict us in order to be enslaved by things that consume us.

The problem is bigger than past practices and pigs. It is not so much about what we consume but consumption itself. Western society has made appetite an art form, extolling voracity and indulgence. We have a cake that we believe we have made, and therefore we rightfully deserve to eat. Often we share the odd slice or two. We feel sorry for those who miss out. We get fat; others starve. And our heart suffers.

In the presence of such a collective ravenous appetite it is not surprising that some are labelled insane. Those who criticise the consumption, those who refuse to join, and those who embrace counter-values are suspect. Like *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* we need to daringly ask who are the insane. Not surprisingly Jesus' family thought him insane. Being told you are insane in a mind-eating, control-fixated, rapacious world is no insult. But it's no accolade either.

In *Luke 8:26* Jesus is in the territory around Gerasa. There he meets a dishevelled individual with a bad case of demons. The man shouted impolitely at Jesus. Jesus told the nasties to get lost (*Exorcism 101*). But the nasties debated the point. They wanted to go and torment some poor swine. Jesus agreed, the demons possessed the pigs, which then did the lemming thing into the lake.

Here's a riddle: ***What do demons, pigs, and Romans have in common?***

There are deliberate puns in this story that link the three together. It was Roman soldiers, the foreign army, who brutally controlled and consumed Palestine. At Gerasa the Romans had killed a thousand young men, plundered and burned the town. The location of our story is no accident. Neither is the name of the demons, *Legion.* Legion had only one meaning in the first century: a division of Roman soldiers. Indeed the whole story is filled with military imagery. The term used for 'herd' – inappropriate for pigs that don't travel in herds – was used to refer to a band of military recruits. The phrase 'he gave them permission' connotes a military command, and the word for the pigs 'rushing' into the lake suggests troops rushing into battle. Enemy soldiers being consumed by waters of course brings to mind the saga of Israel's liberation from Egypt and the demise of Pharaoh's army.

The story also has an inescapable theme of impurity. In Jewish culture graveyards were places of defilement. Among the tombs was a fitting place for a demoniac. Likewise the absence of clothes was not a lifestyle choice. Those who had been deprived of their liberty, for example prisoners, lost the right to wear clothes. Nakedness was also a sign of being ritually unclean. Romans, as non-Jews, were considered unclean and impure. And, of course, the pigs, always suckers for bad press, were part of this impure package.

I feel for the pigs. Those little swine got a bad deal. They weren't even consulted. Pigs, even today, are continually being put down – and not just by the creators of *Kermit*. Pigs are stigmatised as unclean, and having disgusting trough manners and personal hygiene. Their name is used as a derogatory label. It's not only that inconsiderate driver who gets called a pig or swine, but also police officers and military personnel – particularly when working in a hostile environment. Even in Jesus' Palestine pigs were used to symbolize Roman religion and Roman rule.

So, the riddle: ***What do demons, pigs, and Romans have in common?*** Well, they are impure in a Jewish sense. In another sense some would call them all swine. But more than that, they all consume. Pigs are good at eating. As *Miss Piggy* says, "Never eat anything you can't lift". Demons – psychological dislocation – also consume. In our story they have consumed the man. Romans of the 1st century oppressor variety also consumed. They stole from the peasantry, dispossessing them of their land and dislocating them from their community. They ate at the heart, the self-esteem and self-belief, of the people. In our story the consumption is total: physically, mentally, and spiritually the community was in chains. So was God.

The saga of the Gerasene demoniac is far removed from the quick-fix, individualised *Benny Hinn* miracle cure that enables the supposedly insane to re-enter the ranks of supposedly sane society. Instead this is a symbolic story about being consumed, being colonised, not only in your land but also in your mind and theology. The demoniac is symbolically both a prisoner and mentally ill, externally and internally fettered. The exorcism, the duel with demons so beloved of

Hollywood scriptwriters, is about a struggle for the heartland.

Take *Butch* and *Sundance*, my heroes. Not from Hollywood but from the heartlands of England. Two pigs who sparked a nationwide hunt in 1998 when they escaped from the abattoir at the last possible moment. They ducked under a fence, swam across a river, and dashed across a field in their bid for freedom. For several days they inspired a nation with their zeal and ingenuity. We all long to be free from that which restricts and oppresses us, be it an invading army, mental illness, or an abattoir's end. Retired now at a friendly farm, *Butch* and *Sundance* have been forever immortalized in stone on the exterior of Hereford Cathedral.

The message of hope is that healing happens when the individual, community, and God are liberated from the shackles of consumption. Jesus was confronting the powers, creating physical and spiritual space, so that life, healing, and hope were possible. Freedom is both external and internal, likewise salvation.

The appetite of our Western world is pervasive and invasive. We are the Romans of the 21st century controlling and consuming the world's resources. Our appetite not only enslaves others, it enslaves us, and it fetters God. More and more we seem to be consumed by ourselves as a culture and what we require. We believe that we have earned our economic power and this is in the best interests of all. We believe that countries in poverty are being mismanaged, or are not as bright or as able as us. Yet despite these corporate dogmas our hearts tell us differently. We aren't wholly convinced. In our supposed freedom why do we still hear the rattle of chains? We know there is a societal sickness, a dementia, and we look, even to pigs, for inspiration. ■

Let us pray

Appetite is a matter of the heart. It attacks the heart, physically and spiritually. True prayer, being committed to revolution, strengthens the heart. May we learn to drown the demons of a colonized mind, a colonizing economic and foreign policy, and a colonized God. Amen.

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One German's Lonely Path to Redemption

The Lives of Others
Film review: Paul Sorrell

Largely set in the Orwellian year of 1984, this compelling German film traces the torturous path to redemption of an operative in the much-feared Stasi (East German security police) in the dying years of the postwar communist regime in Eastern Europe.

It reminded me strongly of another German film I was privileged to see last year, but with the lead roles totally reversed. *Sophie Scholl – The Final Days* likewise takes us on a journey with an individual on the lonely pilgrim road to salvation and, like *The Lives of Others*, the action is dominated by scenes of surveillance and interrogation set in a totalitarian regime. But, whereas Stasi Captain Gerd Wiesler must become 'a good man' by making a series of choices that allow him to cast off his identity as an oppressor, student Sophie Scholl undertakes a deepening journey of faith and commitment as she follows the Way of the Cross.

A member of the clandestine White Rose organisation, Sophie and her brother were arrested by the Gestapo after distributing anti-Nazi leaflets on the Munich University campus at the height of the Second World War. As her interrogation proceeds, we learn about her strong Lutheran faith and the Christian principles she grew up with in a close-knit family setting. We follow her as she suffers with Christ in the Gethsemane of a bleak prison cell, stands with him in the dock before a fanatical Nazi judge and finally accompanies him to Calvary.

The Lives of Others shows us a Germany under the thumb of a similar regime, a place of fear, betrayal, arbitrary power and constant surveillance by the state. The bleak urban setting is dominated by grey apartment blocks and lines of graceless Trabant cars. The only splash of colour that relieves this general gloom is East Berlin's vibrant artistic life, particularly the theatre scene which by its very existence threatens the regime's monopoly on power.

The film shows us the corrosive influence of power in a regime where there are no effective counterweights to it. Acting on the orders of a corrupt government minister, Wiesler and his team bug the house of a prominent playwright, Georg Dreyman, who is suspected of being a dissident. The minister has a different agenda, as he wants Christa-Maria Sieland, Dreyman's beautiful actress girlfiend, for his mistress. His Stasi underlings are only too willing to comply, keen to advance their own positions and avoid any suspicion of disloyalty.

Suffocating in this claustrophic atmosphere of fear, deceit and betrayal, Wiesler throws off his Stasi bonds through a thousand small acts of subversion, each contributing to his final remoulding as a decent human being. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 illustrates the transience of power and the fragility of an all-encompassing system that had seemed so confident a few short years before. Wiesler's wall had already come down, leaving him to step forward on the path to a different kind of freedom.

Perfect Hostage: A life of Aung San Suu Kyi
by Justin Wintle
Hutchinson London 450 pp
Price: $37.99
Review: Tom Cloher

This is a substantial biography about a very significant person. More than that, as Suu Kyi's parents were also remarkable, large sections are devoted to them. Her mother was Burma's ambassador to India for six years from 1960 and her father was a legendary figure in both military and political circles. Burma itself was a culturally and geographically complex. The biographer faced a challenging task.

The result is four sections with 36 chapters, each introduced by an engaging quotation. Illustrations, a map, and a thorough index are very serviceable additions. It makes a summary narrative of Suu Kyi's experience feasible, and the review should benefit accordingly.

Suu Kyi had just turned two when her father Aung San was assassinated on 19th July 1947 along with five other members of the first freely elected government of Burma. He was 32 years old. He had survived the tensions of British colonialism and the Japanese invasion (1942-45) only to die at the hands of a band of local thugs, organised by an insanely jealous senior colleague who believed that Aung San had usurped the role duly his – first premier of Burma's democratic government. U Saw was later executed along with the assassins but the damage was done.

When 13 years later his widow, Khin Kyi, took up the offer to become her country's ambassador to India, she decided to bring her now 15-year-old daughter with her, little knowing that Suu would not return to Burma for 28 years. Fortuitously, the British High Commissioner in New Delhi, Paul Gore-Booth, had previously been the British ambassador to Burma, and a respected relationship with him and his family was renewed and extended. Such a bond developed that this traditional Burmese mother decided to accept an offer from the Gore-Booths to act as 'guardians' for Suu Kyi for the sake of her further academic advancement in England as she was returning to Burma after six years of service. This decision had an aura of destiny about it.

It was an ideal arrangement. Suu Kyi gained a place at St Hugh's College, Oxford, to read Politics, Philosophy, and Economics and out of term-time she was the welcome guest of the Gore-Booths in Chelsea, London. An upper storey self-contained flat was placed at her disposal there both between terms and after she had finished her degree at St Hugh's.

It was within this household that the 'unthinkable' happened: this traditional and somewhat reserved young lady from Burma fell in love, not with one of the Gore-Booth twin boys but with one of their friends, also a twin, Michael Aris. They were both preparing for their finals; he was reading Modern History at Durham. It was four years before they were able to marry but there was never the slightest deviation from their intent to do so. The news was not taken kindly in Rangoon. Her mother actually refused to come to the wedding (though later was most accepting of her son-in-law). That Suu Kyi could make such a serious, life-changing decision in another country at age 26 was a signal of how she could make many difficult decisions later without backing away.

Sixteen years of married life proceeded with Suu Kyi being devoted mother of two boys and supportive wife of a professional academic. Michael pursued specialist studies in Bhutan, successfully completing a pertinent doctoral thesis. Links with Burma were intermittent but a shared understanding prevailed that if she were needed there she would return

In March 1988 Suu Kyi received a phone call informing her that her mother had suffered a severe stroke. She put the phone down and immediately began to pack. Her husband's recorded reaction proved to be prophetic indeed. "I had a premonition that our lives would change forever." In the event she was never to return to England in his lifetime.

Suu Kyi did not arrive back with political ambitions but her name was enough to stir political hopes. Burma (now Mynamar) had suffered 16 years of dictatorship under the notorious general turned dictator, Ne Win, so the yearning for change was deep and strong.

At first she tried to act as mediator, someone who could encourage dialogue between the army and the people. Almost reluctantly she became spokesperson for the democratic ideal. The more effectively she presented the case for national unity and democracy the more she was resented by the regime. Threats, intimidation, humiliations, near assassination (at Danubyu), home detention, every pressure contrivable to drive her out of the country failed in the face of this slightly built indomitable patriot, for she knew if she left she would never be allowed to return. Leaving Burma she rated as form of desertion, and to his everlasting credit, her husband Michael agreed. Her basic weapons were an iron will, a policy of non-violence and a flair for political analysis that was inclusive and incisive; almost inevitably she gravitated to being the leader of the National Democratic League. Her capacity to project the cause of the

NLD internationally further infuriated her opponents.

In May 1990 the regime made a fatal tactical error. Convinced that NLD support had been thoroughly suppressed by all and every means, mostly violent, it decided to proceed with a free and fair election. The results would look good to Myanmar's critics. Subsequently, a 72.6 percent voter turnout gave the NLD 80 percent support, winning the party 392 of the 447 seats contested. Appalled, the regime reverted to what it knew best – procrastination, promising something, conceding nothing. Its 'credentials' in this regard cannot be questioned, as in the year 2007 it is still doing it.

In 1999 its most disgraceful abuse of human rights occurred when it refused a visa for Michael Aris when he was in imminent danger of death on the pretext that it did not have the health services to care for him. Nor did an assurance from the British Foreign Office that a medical plane with appropriate staff could be supplied, manage to elicit cooperation. He died within three months from prostate cancer and associated growths. It was an abject conclusion to 27 years of marriage and an awful experience for the couple's teenage sons. The British ambassador to Indonesia, Robin Christopher, a contemporary at Oxford and life-long friend of both Suu and Michael, flew to Rangoon to offer her what solace he could. His words record the poignancy of her situation. "Suu said it was an agonising decision for her not to go to be with him. She had discussed it with him by telephone and he was insistent that she should stay in Burma. It was a joint decision."

This year marks the 21st year of Suu Kyi's quasi-imprisonment, at one time her house arrest lasted over 2000 days. Yet she often regretted that she "did not share the experience of her colleagues in prison who lay in bleak cells on thin mats while she had a good mattress and a mosquito net". At the core of her being her Buddhist religion must take credit for her steadfastness. In early years her affiliation was traditional but as the years unfolded an unending series of trials and disappointments, she embraced its tenets with constant fidelity.

This book is a thoroughly worthwhile read but not an easy one. The biographer has assembled an impressive array of material – personal, social, and cultural. It is multidimensional: so much has preceded Suu Kyi. She is surrounded by some very arresting people in their own right, not least her parents. She has lived in four continents, in New Delhi, New York, London, Tokyo, and of course, Rangoon. So the focus frequently shifts, sometimes at length, to include historical background or provide personal profiles. This tends to halt the momentum of the story and one gets a little impatient to get back to the central character.

This biography deserves to be a success. It treats its subject with respect but is never myopic. Towards the end the author records the critics. Suu Kyi is too absolutist, adamantine. What has she achieved for these decades of 'heroics'? It is difficult to bargain about integrity, however. What does democracy have in common with totalitarianism? Suu Kyi's resistance has an elemental consistency about it. It has been total and enduring, and in the process she has unwittingly become a world citizen as significant in her own way as Nelson Mandela.

At the award ceremony in Oslo in 1991, the occasion of her being given the *Nobel Peace* prize, the chairman, Professor Francis Sejersted, referred to her "extraordinary combination of sober realism and visionary idealism" ...and she "brings out something of the best in us. We feel we need this kind of person in order to retain our faith in the future. That is what gives her such power as a symbol, and that is why any ill-treatment of her feels like a violation of what we have most at heart". ■

The world's biggest open-air prison

Crosscurrents
John Honoré

According to the media, the Gaza Strip is now wracked with civil war and under Hamas control. More truthfully, the situation could be described as riots in the biggest open-air prison in the world.

Palestinians have lost all hope and Gaza has become another breeding ground for terrorists. Israel justifies the uprooting, occupation and containment of the Palestinian people as the 'global war on terror'. The US gives more than $7 million per day to the Israeli government which allows Israel to act without fear of condemnation and to ignore over sixty-five UN resolutions tabled against it for genocide, apartheid and crimes against humanity. The academic paper, *The Israel Lobby*, exposed the power of Zionist support for a recalcitrant Israel, as did President Jimmy Carter's book. Now the University & College Union congress in the UK has passed a motion that Israel is an oppressive state and should be boycotted. For how much longer can Israel ignore the rest of the world?

Democratically, Hamas won elections last year and wanted to form a coalition government. The idea was rejected by the US who then supported the Israeli decision to freeze Palestinian tax revenues.

The UN was pressured by the US and its Zionist supporters to place an international boycott on the Palestinian government. That was the final blow which reduced Gaza to chaos, prompting the outgoing UN Middle East envoy, Alvaro de Soto, to comment, "I wonder if the Israeli authorities realise that, season after season, they are reaping what they sow. The violence/repression cycle is self-propelling".

Consider some statistics which show why Palestinians have lost hope:
Over 4000 Palestinians, including 1000 children, have been killed since September 2000. Nearly 11.000 Palestinians are currently imprisoned by Israel and over 4000 Palestinian homes have been demolished. This is not to mention the uprooted olive groves, the obscenity of the wall of separation and the total Israeli control of all Palestinian amenities. Israel has 223 illegal Jewish-only settlements and outposts built on confiscated Palestinian land.

There seems no end to the tragedy, Palestinians continue to die and be dispossessed. When will justice prevail?

Media obscenity

The media's saturation coverage of Paris Hilton, in and out of gaol crying "Mommy! Mommy! it's not fair", encapsulates the malign influence of the current mass media. The search for news and its dissemination have become an obsession whose only purpose is to create a commodity for sale and distribution in order to generate large profits.

The going rate for news depends on demand and therefore must interest a large section of the public. News is now governed by market forces and what media moguls can sell. What does that say about our society when they know that the banality of Paris Hilton's life will sell more papers and create more revenue for TV than starvation in the Sudan? When the Murdoch papers splash items on George W. Bush being rapturously welcomed in Albania but not those items explaining his failure to address poverty in Africa at the G8 Summit in Germany?

Today, TV has become the new source of information, two minute sound bites whose inclusion depends on the ability to attract advertisers. What advertiser wants to have his ad following pictures of starving babies in Africa? Paris Hilton, the vacuous, rich and shallow creation of the media, sells clothes, cosmetics and dreams. The society column has become the front page, the embodiment of what America gives its citizenry and exports to the world.

Marshall McLuhan claimed that the media, not the information, becomes the message. We are in a global village saturated with sensational headlines, gossip and vapid movie personalities. The media moguls push their own agenda in order to sell a commodity based on triviality, an invidious form of telegenic pornography. This is not the real world, this is merely the tragedy of Paris Hilton.

Double standard

Unfortunately, Prime Minister Helen Clark's appeal to New Zealanders to use their political and moral judgement before going on holiday to Fiji came at the same time as she was exercising her own questionable moral standards by refusing to meet with the Dalai Lama.

This charismatic figure does not meet the Prime Minister's financial criteria. She prefers China, an important trading partner which also happens to be the most repressive of the world's great powers and responsible for the death of thousands of Tibetans and the annexation of their country.

The Dalai Lama is the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people, a winner of the *Nobel Peace* prize, who has met with world leaders of all denominations. They have all honoured this most humane of leaders. He was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by the US government and is an honorary citizen of Canada but shunned by our government.

The Prime Minister is in no position to lecture us on political and moral judgements when her own seem ethically wrong. No doubt China applied diplomatic pressure and the Prime Minister, with questionable political and moral judgement, capitulated. These double standards graphically illustrate the price she is willing to pay for servitude to China. It is a political and humanitarian embarrassment for us all. ■

A Sign of the Times

During his visit to Brazil, Pope Benedict drew attention to the fact that in that country there is quite widespread departure from the discipline of priestly celibacy. He called for a rectification of the matters, for a change of behaviour on the part of the clergy concerned. Did the Pope misread the church scene? With all due respect, did he fail to recognise that such non-observance of priestly celibacy may truly be a sign of the times? Is Benedict right in sticking to his long held view that clerical celibacy should be retained in the Latin church?
Cardinal Hummes, the archbishop of Sao Paolo, Brazil's largest city, was recently summoned to Rome to head the Congregation entrusted with the affairs of the clergy worldwide. The appointment of this courageous and effective pastor to such a role bodes well for the church. But there are shadows about aspects of the appointment.

Just before leaving Sao Paolo, Cardinal Hummes reminded journalists clerical celibacy was not a dogma and that its usefulness could be put up for discussion. Brazil has a paucity of priests. Non-Catholic pastors have made great inroads into the ranks of the Catholic faithful. More Catholics have converted to Protestantism in Latin America in recent years than did so in Europe over the entire period of the Reformation. The unavailability of Catholic priestly ministry has been a major reason for this haemorrhage.

On arrival by air in Rome, a press statement was issued in the Cardinal's name that endorsed the discipline of priestly celibacy. Shortly after, an article appeared over his name in a church publication giving various theological and historical reasons why the discipline of clerical celibacy should be maintained. Since then, when asked if the matter of the ordination of married men was being pursued in Rome, he replied with a wry smile that it was not on the agenda. Obviously the new leader for the clergy had his instructions from his boss.

Of course there are theological and historical reasons in favour of clerical celibacy. There are such reasons in favour of any major prescription of canon law. But there may be stronger reasons why the prescription should be changed. For centuries, Catholics could receive Communion only if they were fasting from midnight. Legitimate arguments were put forward in support of this usage. But would any of us regret that ultimately such arguments were put aside and the present much greater access to the sacrament brought in?

Is the failure of some Latin American clergy to observe celibacy a sign of the times that should be noted by the Holy Father? Most of these men are, it would seem, ministering effectively. As clergy, they are good priests. No doubt they were told in the seminary that if they had a vocation to be priests, they had a vocation to be celibate. Their track record has proved that they had a vocation to be priests. But their life experience has lead them to realise that they need the support and companionship of a woman in the exercise of their responsibilities.

Canon law does not bind the Lord. It is his divine prerogative to give or not to give the charism of celibacy to those whom he calls to be priests. The situation in Brazil, as elsewhere, raises the question whether the Lord is, in the West, giving this charism only to some of those he is calling to be priests. Church leadership must always be alert to any message the Lord gives through the way divine gifts are dispensed. At the time of Vatican II, folk spoke of signs of the times. Maybe we have here a further sign of the times crying out to be recognised and acted on. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

Fr Humphrey O'Leary is rector of the Redemptorist community in Glendowie, Auckland

Supporting people at risk

Anna has an intellectual disability. She was living in a flat, and she had support but recently her support was stopped because of a funding problem. Some time after this, she took too many sleeping tablets and ended up in hospital. While she was there, she threw a major wobbly. The police were called in, and she was charged with wilful damage. This resulted in a court hearing, and she was placed in compulsory care. She now lives in a 'secure care' facility.

However, that is precisely where she is *not* safe! Anna has a problem using words to express her desires and feelings. Instead, she expresses herself in behaviour. One day at the new facility she threw another 'wobbly', and the staff restrained her. Five staff members were used instead of the usual two, and Anna ended up with a broken shoulder and carpet burns to her face. Another client witnessing this told them to stop it or he would tell his advocate. He did so, but because he had been speaking out, he was put in isolation.

Anna and people like her are already vulnerable. In a situation such as that described above, they can become even more vulnerable – especially if they have no family or friends to visit them regularly. They need people around them to safeguard their dignity, their physical care and their rights to be treated as valuable human beings.

Church teaching states: "Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church's very heart. Today, this proclamation is especially pressing because of the extraordinary increase and gravity of threats to the life of individuals and peoples, especially where life is weak and defenceless." (JP2: *Evangelium Vitae*, 1995)

This is where the *Justice Action Group* comes in. It is a group of people who looks out for individuals who are 'weak and defenceless'. They visit, become their friends, and are advocates for people with an intellectual disability.

Some of the group's objectives are: (1) to act as advocates for people with an intellectual disability when confronted by the Justice System; (2) to advocate for just law to meet the special needs of people with I.D.; (3)to advocate for appropriate preventative intervention. The group forms a circle of support around these vulnerable people.

It could do with more volunteers. Would you like to be one? ■

Marta Cullen

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