Tui Motu

InterIslands

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Lent: being grateful

beginning 2015 together

Happy New Year from us all at *Tui Motu*! This issue is a combined effort of the old and the new editorships. I'm being mentored into the role by Kevin, our retiring editor. Thankfully Elizabeth is continuing as Assistant Editor and right-hand-woman and others on our team are continuing competently. Visitors trickling to our offices at Union St — including Michael Hill, founding editor — and the arrival of many messages have alerted me to the sense of ownership and appreciation our readers have for *Tui Motu*. So it's with gratitude, anticipation and a frisson of trepidation that I take up the editorship challenge.

Although 2015 is still new our first issue has a Lenten theme as we're celebrating Easter early in the year. Our ways of understanding Lent have evolved from a childhood pride in a sackcloth and ashes approach of "giving-up", to a social justice commitment of "giving to" so others would be better off. These were coupled with a call to "conversion" which also had a number of meanings — such as enduring six weeks without sugar in our tea, saying more prayers, or mowing an aged neighbour's lawns.

The articles in this issue invite us to expand our imaginations and hearts and integrate an environmental or cosmological understanding into our personal and social justice practices during Lent. In particular three attitudes — love, gratitude and hospitality — get a new Lenten twist. In claiming 2015 the "year of love" Ilia Delio reminds us of "being among". She's not speaking of Valentine day's love. Rather she's challenging our capacity to immerse ourselves in the communion of the universe. So that it will be with love that we face suffering — the horror of massacres, spread of deadly illnesses, destruction of floods, disappointment with governments and the extinction of species. Such minor and major events affect us and infiltrate the whole universe.

Neil Darragh places gratitude at the heart of our Lenten conversion. It is our thankfulness which will increase our capacity to change personally, in our communities and our environment.

Adrienne Thompson's story images the power of hospitality in expanding our horizons; open attentiveness to others brings us into a deeper communion.

These and other articles offer a different vision for Lent. They suggest that our grateful, loving, forgiving and informed participation is an invaluable contribution to our world.

We're introducing a new serial feature this year. Month by month Elaine Wainwright will engage us in an interpretation of the gospel of Mark from an ecological perspective. Usually when we read or hear scripture we concentrate on the human and divine characters in the story. Elaine will focus us on how the environment also plays a part in the meaning of the story. Coupled with Kath Rushton's regular reflection on the Sunday readings we hope that in this Year of Mark the gospel will unfold afresh for us.

It's with gratitude to all our contributors that we give you our first issue of 2015. Dip in and enjoy reading it. ■

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Cover illustration: *Chrysalis* by Donald Moorhead

2015: the year of love

Sr Ilia Delio OFM

I would like to declare 2015 the Year of Love. I do not mean love as sentiment or emotion but love as the highest good, the deep relationality of being itself.

Love is the energy of union, the space between hearts where forgiveness, compassion, joy, thanksgiving and peace flourish in the birthing of oneness. I want to proclaim 2015 as the Year of Love because we are inwardly bone dry and it is time to return to the deepest energy of life itself, namely, love. "Love," Teilhard de Chardin wrote, "is the physical structure of the universe." Love is present, he said, from the Big Bang onward: "Even among the molecules, love is the building power that works against entropy, and under its attraction the elements feel their way towards union."

For so long we have kept love outside the limits of nature, as if it is a peculiarly human emotion that we develop. Hard core scientists and ivory tower intellectuals are easily annoyed by love-talk, as if their precious time is being wasted with sentimental silliness. Yet, apart from love we are not at home in the cosmos — literally. Theologian Philip Hefner asks, "can we entertain the hypothesis that love is rooted in the fundamental nature of reality, including the reality we call nature?"

In his poem *The Eternal Feminine* Teilhard wrote of love in the voice of wisdom: "I am embedded in the force field that is driving the cosmos towards greater novelty, towards greater integrity, and eventually towards greater consciousness . . . I am the principle of union, the soul of the world. I am the magnetic and unitive force that brings the disparate matter together and urges each newly created form to multiply, to beautify, and to bear fruit. . . . Each step towards union moves my creation towards greater spontaneity and freedom."

While modernity has reduced love to sentiment and emotion, supplanting love with knowledge and the will to power, postmodernity has relativized love to feeling, making it as facile as a Facebook page of "like" or "dislike". We no longer hold love as the goal of knowledge or true power or the core of happiness. Yet, love is embedded in the fabric of the universe. It undergirds the deep connectivity that marks cosmic life, from quantum reality to the galaxies and conscious human life.

Physicists tell us that everything in the universe today is, in a sense, "genetically" related; interconnectedness lies at the core of all that exists. The universe is bound together in a communion, each thing with all the rest. "If there was no internal propensity to unite, even at a rudimentary level — indeed in the molecule itself," Teilhard said, "it would be physically impossible for love to appear higher up, in a hominized form."

The poet Wallace Stevens wrote, "Nothing is itself taken alone. Things are because of interrelations or interactions." When one lives from a deep consciousness of love as the bond of interconnectedness, one lives in God because God is love, a communion of persons intertwined in the flow of love. To live in God is to live in deep communion, to know oneself as part of a whole.

Recently, I was reading the diary

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Tui Motu InterIslands

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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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Bless us
energise us
open us
expand us
deepen us
love us
today and tomorrow
gracious God

promoting wellbeing

One of the things I love about promoting *Tui Motu* is its wide appeal — well beyond Catholic or Christian readership.

My work brings me in contact with many people working for environmental, social and economic justice. *Tui Motu* is a valued resource for our Trust's efforts to promote community wellbeing.

Helen Dew, Living Economies Educational Trust, *Carterton*

☞ letters to the editor

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

2015: the year of love

. . . continued from page 3

of Etty Hillesum, the young Jewish woman who died in a WWII Nazi concentration camp in 1943. Etty describes herself as a person who loved life. During her period of confinement, she recorded her inner life and struggles, revealing a young woman on the cusp of a literary career cut short by the war and in the midst of the most horrible of circumstances.

Confined in the grim barracks of a concentration camp, she started to pray — almost spontaneously — and began to focus her mind on God in a way that expanded her inner space. As her mind became centred on love and divine presence, she came to new insights on her own sense of personhood and realised her deep connectivity to others. "Each of us moves things along in the direction of war," she said, "every time we fail in love."

"All disasters stem from us. Why is there war? Perhaps because now and then I might be inclined to snap at my neighbour. Because I and my neighbour and everyone else do not have enough love . . . Yet there is love bound up inside us, and if we could release it into the world, a little each day, we would be fighting war and everything that comes with it."

Etty's deep insights resonate with what scientists have discovered: local changes can have global effects because we are deeply connected by fields of energy. Our thoughts as well as our actions impact one another, even if we are spatially separated because in our cosmic roots we are deeply entwined.

Etty had to confront the chaos in her own undisciplined mind in order to confront directly the forces in human consciousness that had given rise to Nazism in the first place. She realised that absolute love does not save us from suffering but empowers us to create life, even in the midst of suffering. Her mindful attunement to God meant living in the flow between immense suffering and daily moments of beauty. One moment she would tend to a dying mother lying on the cold, concrete prison floor with her children standing nearby, and in the next moment she would marvel at a small buttercup pressing through the cracks of the same prison floor. Instead of trying to push out suffering, she opened to it lovingly, leaning into it, because she realized that sadness too was part of her being.

Through a mindful vigilance of God's nearness and a resistance to the negative emotions of suffering and death, Etty consciously rooted herself in Omega love, tending to the needs of her suffering family and friends without succumbing to despair. Carol Flinders writes: "Because she learned how to let go of the merely personal, she could fully receive the sorrows of others without holding on to them — she knew in effect how to lift the gate and let the grief flow on out of her. Everything could circulate through her. Joy, grief, anger, despair and of course love above all must be able to circulate through ourselves and one another and all of life."

The life of Etty Hillesum shows us what is possible and what we are capable of, even in the midst of suffering and violence. We have the capacity to love in a way that kindles unity, truth, goodness and beauty. We are created for love and until we return to love as the root source of life, we will continue to unravel. If we want a different world, we must become a different people. Perhaps that is why Jesus left us the law of love, that we may live from a deeper centre, a new mind and heart; to become a new people, to co-create a new world of justice and peace.

If it is love that moves the sun and the other stars, as Dante once wrote, then love must move us as well if we are to be at home with one another in this cosmos.

May 2015 be the Year of Love. ■

Ilia Delio OFM is Haub Director of Catholic Studies and Visiting Professor at Georgetown University, USA.

integrity of government

Mark Henaghan

Children ignore what their parents say, but closely observe and mimic what their parents do. The same principle can be applied to the relationship between citizens and governments. All the political noise that we hear on the radio and on the television and read in the newspaper comes to nothing if politicians act in ways that betray what they say. If we are to be a society based on integrity, which means being honest and doing what one says one will, then the Government should take the lead in this.

Nicky Hager's book *Dirty Politics* primarily illustrates that politicians plot and scheme behind the scenes to undermine one another. The energy expended by those kind of negative activities would be much better employed working towards creating a more equal and inclusive New Zealand society. When a society is inclusive, with all members of that society having a voice and feeling heard, that society is stronger and more prosperous. Inclusiveness that encompasses a range of diverse people and voices leads to better and fairer decision-making. Fairer decision-making leads to a more equal society, which is also more productive and economically prosperous for all members of that society. The society is more productive because everyone is given a chance to reach their potential and contribute their skills. Recent governments say that is what they want, but when they act in ways that are not transparent and not inclusive they undermine the integrity of the government as a whole.

Sadly, New Zealand has been moving away from an equal society since the mid 1980s. Many of our vital services and institutions have become competitive, user pay, adversarial organisations. For example, public schools within our education system have to compete continually for funding, government departments must compete for resources, and public hospitals are so under-resourced and understaffed that surgeons feel unable to do their jobs safely.

Once competition becomes the norm within and between public institutions, then trust and collaboration go out the window. To compete means intentionally to try to beat the opposition. The opposition becomes the enemy in an unhealthy and inherently negative "them" or "us" dichotomy. They are no longer fellow colleagues working towards a common good for our society.

In a competitive environment, governments do not want to hear the truth or hear from all sectors of our society. They want to hear only what they think will give them a competitive advantage. I recently went through a select committee process to speak out against the Family Court reforms, whereby access to legal advice on family matters was to be cut. During this process I realised that the Government was not going to listen, despite the fact that leaving parties who are going through the most difficult period of their lives with very little support is extremely detrimental to them and their children. The Government did not even listen to the New Zealand Family Court Judges, who were totally opposed to the changes, even though they have a great deal of collective wisdom about how families cope with family breakdowns. The goal was not to bring in a law that benefited the common good, but to cut costs to pay for tax cuts in order to win an election.

If we continue down this path of competition and inequality not only will we become a more violent and segregated society, but we will also become an economically poorer society. As those who are knocked out by the competitive nature of our society fall by the wayside, they lose their potential to contribute to our society.

Professor Mark Henaghan
[Photo courtesy *Otago Daily Times*]

The New Zealand Government contributes significantly to the shape of our society. Politicians have the direct ability to change things. They can choose to put integrity, equality, and the common good at the centre of all that they do. If they slip up, we as voters have the power to hold them accountable, because politicians can represent us only if we elect them.

We all need to spread the word about the society that we want, one that will be full of productive people who respect each other and work together for the common good of all. As is said in *Matthew 25:40*: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." With 270,000 children living in poverty in this country we clearly still have a long way to go. ■

Professor Mark Henaghan is Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Otago.

live simply that others may simply live

Lent is a stocktaking time when we live gratefully allowing change to emerge personally, socially, in the church community and in our environment.

Neil Darragh

The 40 days of Jesus in the wilderness is the founding story for our practice of Lent. For 40 days Jesus reduces to a minimum the supports and enjoyments of normal social life and prepares for his mission. Living in wilderness, he clarifies the focus of his mission to bring about the reign of God in the world.

In our region of the Earth, Lent comes in autumn. It is a natural season of shedding and trimming, of mature growth reduced so that new growth can emerge. It is a rhythm of time that doesn't take much account of progress or achievement. It is a rhythm of conversion and thanksgiving. Lenten conversion leads to Easter thanksgiving; and Easter thanksgiving drives our new Lenten conversion.

Lent as a liturgical season has grown out of the earlier traditions of preparation for either Baptism or Reconciliation. Traditionally it was, and still is, a time when those preparing for Christian Baptism sought to change from their old ways of living into a new Christian way. As traditional preparation for Reconciliation, it was a time of penance, of re-conversion, when those Christians whose life-styles had separated them from the Christian community sought to be reconciled.

More recently, social justice has been a focus of Lenten practices and it is from this more recent tradition that comes the slogan "live simply that others may simply live." In this case, Lent is focused not just on our own personal lives but also on the state of the world around us.

The change that we seek in Lent does not need to begin from admissions of sin or failure. It begins best from a sense of thanksgiving. It is the sense of the energy of God in and around us that is the starting point for renewal. When his public mission begins, Jesus calls his disciples to conversion out of a sense of the gracious energy of God's reign already emerging around them. Knowing what we need to change emerges from knowing for what we are thankful. It is the open heart that counts more than the bowed head.

> Lent is about our ability to be thankful and out of this to see the things we need to change.

Christian life is lived out in the four dimensions of our human nature: personal, ecclesial, social, and environmental. We are individuals (personal), but our lives are enmeshed in social relationships with other people (social) including other members of the Christian community (ecclesial); including too our relationships with the natural world around us (environmental). All of these four dimensions constitute us as human beings. We lose something of ourselves if we pay attention to only one or two of them.

We can best treat Lent then as a season of thanksgiving and change in four dimensions of our lives: personal, ecclesial, social, and environmental.

personal dimension

In the personal dimension, looking into ourselves, we begin by paying attention to the gifts for which we are thankful, our personal qualities and talents, gifts of God, acts of grace and graciousness that others have done for us or we to them. Emerging from between and constricting these gifts are the things we know we need to change. A modern way of dealing with this is to look at addictions (vices essentially), where legitimate desires and hopes have become inordinate and self-destructive. Probably most of us have several of these but some are more self-destructive than others: addictions to drugs, alcohol, nicotine, sex, food, work, accumulation, new experiences, or (more subtlely) an attitude of dependency, a desire for honour, or a compulsion to control others. Generally these are about an overdose of self-indulgence, self-promotion, or self-interest. The tradition of 'giving up something for Lent' has been an attempt to deal with these in the form of increased self-control.

ecclesial dimension

The ecclesial dimension is about how we relate to other people within the Christian community.

Firstly, what do we have to be thankful for in this community? A community in which there is trust and common belief perhaps. A supportive network of people? The generous, dedicated, or compassionate people that we cannot help but admire and wish we could imitate? Leadership that builds community and communicates a common vision? In each of our church communities there will be reasons for thankfulness, and we may find the Holy Spirit in unexpected places. But growing out of that thankfulness will also be invitations to change. This is a community that often fails. It will be easy to pick instances of failure and defect — forms of abuse or bullying, financial impropriety, prejudice, cynicism, or simply incompetence. Authority in the church can be a problem. Does it fail to empower others or to function collaboratively and look more like attempts at control? A failure of vision is another self-defeating defect where "business as usual" reigns and the church community is focused on looking after itself in ways it has always done. We may ourselves be part of those failures, or we may be complicit, however regretfully, in the failures of others.

social dimension

The social dimension is our involvement in the wider society around us, beyond the Christian community. We can be thankful that we live in a largely peaceful society, that we live in a democracy not based on a principle that some people exist simply to serve others, i.e. that does not accept rule by kings, dictators, or some privileged elite as most societies have done in the past and many still do today. We have many generous people and organisations who work for the good of others and for a better society. This is not just a hedonistic, self-serving society. Yet the defects in our society are also evident. The gap between wealthy and poor with the suffering it causes is now obvious and documented. Our attitudes and our politics allow this to continue. The issues of social injustice immediately close to hand in our society, and even more desperately overseas, call us to a change in attitude and action.

environmental dimension

The environmental dimension of our lives is our inter-dependence with the other beings, especially the living beings, which make up the planet Earth. We can be thankful today for the "green" movements that have become part of our politics. A few decades ago these were fringe movements, but have now become mainstream. We can be thankful for the information that the environmental sciences have now made available. From this come calls to change our relationship to our environment. Climate change is perhaps the biggest public item at the present time. Many elements go into the human causes of climate change. Many of these we can do something about, but not without a change of lifestyle and public support for more environmentally friendly corporations and public policy.

Lent is about our ability to be thankful and out of this to see the things we need to change. It invites us to find solutions by the time we get to Easter. It is not just about personal changes. It is about those several dimensions of our lives that make us fully living persons within the church, in society, and as participants in God's wider creation. "Live simply that others may simply live." ■

Neil Darragh is a priest and theologian in the Auckland Diocese.

consumption's effects in our lives

In this article the author suggests that Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect on and rein in our habits of over-consumption

Zella Downing

Consumer societies can be alluring and empowering but the materialism that emerges within them offers a litany to false gods that could rival those of Mount Olympus. Coca-Cola is marketed as the god of youthfulness and vitality. Rolex and Mercedes are the gods of wealth and prosperity. North Face is the god of exploration and innovation.

As New Zealand society is driven more and more by economic forces, our moral and spiritual authority is often left doubting itself. An iconic bumper sticker reads: "The one who dies with the most toys wins." It's meant to elicit a chuckle which it does by cleverly exposing our desire for material things as childlike and innocent. A popular phrase now found on everything from tea towels to coffee mugs reads: "Keep Calm and Carry on Shopping". We laugh at our weakness in succumbing to temptation — again.

rogernomics takes over

The concept that ever-expanding consumption is advantageous to the economy took hold in America during the 1960s. It could be argued that it took hold in Aotearoa 20 years later with the onslaught of Rogernomics. Since the introduction of that ideology New Zealand politicians spend more time and money courting public opinion on their handling of the economy than on their service to, or shaping of, society. As consumers and voters, we can lend our support, tolerance, and agreement to plans and policies that guarantee the economy will grow at all cost, or we can decide for ourselves if consumption is an advantage or a disadvantage.

Growing the economy is the ideology that spurs people to keep buying stuff. Consumption creates jobs. When retailers and small business owners feel twinges of optimism they hire more staff. Job creation addresses unemployment. Low unemployment gives investors more confidence to invest and somehow all this morphs into a possible lowering of the national debt. But an overemphasis on consumption has many disadvantages. In their study Howell & Hill found: "There is considerable evidence that materialism is associated with less happiness and life satisfaction, poorer interpersonal relationships, and higher levels of anxiety and depression." While we are searching for and gathering 'things' we are missing out on life. Looking for the next bargain stops us from seeing the current beauty, the actual need and the living community.

experiences – not stuff

A study on the hidden cost of value-seeking found that people consider experiences rather than things are a better use of money. Experiences create a sense of well-being. Habitual consuming reduces wealth; it doesn't create it. Constant spending inhibits investment in wealth-producing ventures as a hole in a bucket stops the bucket from holding water.

Real wealth comes from having money in the bank, having money to support your retirement, having money to get yourself out of a jam. The money spent on an impulse buy may have been put toward the utility bill, or school camp, or an unexpected trip to the dentist. Those items may not provide much glamour but they are the events of life. Being prepared for them establishes a feeling of security. Studies show that when people attempt to maximize economic value instead of

their happiness they are more likely to consume material items. Defining "value" in solely monetary terms leads people toward consuming. When shopping becomes "the experience" individuals end up with a lot of stuff but they are not guaranteed wealth or happiness.

shopping distracts

Retail therapy has appeal but its benefits are short lived. Retail therapy offers no healing of a bruised relationship; nor does it remove the stress from our jobs or calm the anxiety of our minds. Shopping is a distraction. A lifestyle as a consumer dulls human spirituality. A fulfilling life requires a relationship with our spirit. When our deepest desire is to grow towards God we are more fortunate than if our greatest desire is to own a Lexus RX350. Getting a buzz from a $5 cup of coffee isn't as beneficial as getting a buzz from laughing with a neighbour.

Advertisers have become very clever at bringing us into their fold. They promise happiness, beauty, popularity, love and youth. They encourage lasting relationships, (termed "brand loyalty"), and they follow us wherever we go. We are constantly being told that we need more. Our grocery trolleys are now equipped with beverage holders that tease us into savouring the shopping experience. It wasn't so long ago that we sat down to drink a cup of tea as a minor rest period in the day. And it wasn't uncommon to drink our tea while chatting with a friend or colleague. It's a subtle change in lifestyle but a substantial change in social behaviour.

being more mindful

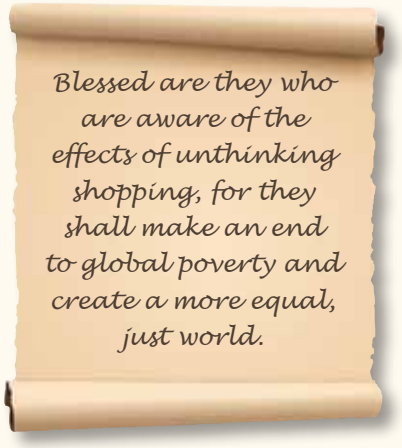
A possible Lenten reflection could concern our habits of consumption. Being more mindful about what and how we consume would be a rewarding and revealing practice. But there are also other gestures we could make. We could monitor the money saved by not making a purchase and either add it to savings or surrender it to a worthy cause. And we could find out if natural resources and human dignity are respected in the manufacturing and marketing of the products we are thinking of purchasing.

Websites can provide information. For example www.Better World Shopper claims to be "dedicated to providing people with a comprehensive, up-to-date, reliable account of the social and environmental responsibility of every company on the planet." To reduce, re-use and recycle has become a common phrase and a responsible mindset and www.Freegan.info helps educate on ways that we can also research, resist, recognize, repair, redistribute, reclaim and read.

www.Living Economies Forum is an organization dedicated to "framing ideas that light the path to a New Economy grounded in positive living system principles that recognise life's extraordinary capacity for cooperative self-organization." Although not a Christian organisation its principles are akin to the teachings of Christ — simple, unique and innovative. We can extend humility, charity and compassion into our economics. We must because so much about the way we exist in our world today is based on the products we buy or don't buy. Companies produce and market products from their ideological roots. We don't just buy soap — we purchase a product that "awakens us" or makes us feel "pure".

We can awaken ourselves this Lenten season. We do not have to consume with the complacency of grazing animals. We can purify our intent and clarify our definitions of wealth. ■

Zella Downing is an organiser of CANA (Coal Action Network Aotearoa). She recently spent the Christmas season in the USA visiting family.



if *we* can dialogue, everyone can

This is the story of bereaved parents from two diametrically opposed groups who have come together for reconciliation and to promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians. It says simply: revenge is not our destiny.

Pat McCarthy

From far-off New Zealand, prospects for reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians may seem remote, but there is a glimmer of hope — not from political leaders but from parents on both sides who share a burden of pain.

In a basement meeting room in a Jerusalem hotel, members of our most recent pilgrimage group heard from two of these parents.

One pilgrim described the encounter with Rami Elhanan (an Israeli Jew) and Bassam Aramin (a Palestinian Muslim) as "an evening that will remain with me forever".

Mr Elhanan and Mr Aramin are members of a grassroots organisation called Parents' Circle — Families Forum (PCFF), made up of more than 600 Palestinian and Israeli families who have lost immediate family members in the conflict.

two tragic stories

Mr Elhanan, a graphic designer who fought for Israel in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, is the son of a Holocaust survivor.

In 1997, on the first day of the new school year, his 14-year-old daughter Smadar went with girlfriends to the Ben Yehuda shopping precinct in Jerusalem to buy school books. She and five others died when two Palestinian suicide bombers detonated their bombs.

Mr Aramin joined the Palestinian struggle as a boy and spent seven years in an Israeli prison for attacking an Israeli military jeep.

In 2007, his 10-year-old daughter Abir was walking home from school in a West Bank village when she was shot in the head with a rubber bullet by an Israeli border policeman. She died later in hospital. An Israeli court called the killing "totally unjustifiable".

Each of the men told the pilgrims — most of them parents themselves — how they had reacted to the killing of their children.

"When someone murders your 14-year-old little daughter, the one and only thing you have in your head is unlimited anger and an urge for revenge that is stronger than death," said Mr Elhanan. "This is a natural feeling, it's only human."

Then — when "the first madness of anger" passed — he began to ask himself penetrating questions.

"If I kill someone in revenge, will that bring my baby back to me? And if I cause someone pain, will that ease my own pain? And the answer is absolutely 'No'."

facing change

The slow and difficult process of change took almost a year, the Jewish man said.

One day he met Yitzchak Frankenthal, who founded the PCFF group of bereaved parents (http://www.theparentscircle.com) in 1994 after his son Arik was kidnapped and murdered by Hamas militants.

Mr Elhanan remembered Mr Frankenthal as a visitor at his home during the mourning period for his

Above: PCFF members light candles for peace in Jewish menorahs

Left: PCFF members promote reconciliation with a footpath display

daughter. “I was really cross with him. I asked: How could you? How dare you enter the home of people who have just lost a child and talk to them about peace?”

In response, Mr Elhanan found himself invited “to attend one of the meetings of this group of crazy people and see for myself”. He agreed, partly because he was “a bit curious”.

Arriving at the meeting cynical and reluctant, he saw a spectacle that was both new to him and amazing. Along with Israeli members, he saw Arabs getting off the bus — “bereaved Palestinian families, men, women and children, coming towards me, greeting me for peace, hugging me and crying with me.”

a way ahead

From that day on, he said: “I got a reason to get out of bed in the morning. Since that day on I have dedicated my life to one thing only: To go from ear to ear and from person to person and to shout in a loud voice, to all who are prepared to listen, and also to those whose ears are blocked: This is not our destiny!

“It is not a decree of fate that cannot be changed! Nowhere is it written that we must continue dying and sacrificing our children forever and forever in this difficult horrible holy land.

“We can — and once and for all must — stop this crazy, vicious circle of violence, murder and retaliation, revenge and punishment — this never-ending cycle, with no purpose.”

Mr Aramin’s story was different. While in the Israeli prison he had begun to question the value of armed resistance. In 2005 — two years before his daughter was killed — he had co-founded Combatants for Peace, a movement of Palestinian and Israeli ex-combatants, who work to promote peace with non-violent means.

When Abir was killed the Palestinian father was adamant he did not want retribution.

"The answer is not to seek revenge, because we will never meet our beloved ones, but will instead create additional victims. Peace is the answer. Our blood is the same and our enemy is the same: Occupation, oppression, hatred, and fear."

“We can — and once and for all must – stop this crazy, vicious circle of violence, murder and retaliation, revenge and punishment – this never-ending cycle, with no purpose.”

celebrating uniqueness

In October 2014, a 20th anniversary article in Israel’s oldest daily newspaper, the liberal *Ha’aretz,* described the PCFF as unique among the country’s peace organisations.

“Its members hold a kind of joker card, which, when pulled, trumps all other cards. It's bereavement. Bereavement is a major element in the collective national identity of both Israelis and Palestinians. Usually it's a springboard to an aggressive approach. Yet for the past 20 years, the forum has invoked the sacred experience of loss and bereavement to achieve the opposite goal.”

In present-day Israel, the article added, the PCFF is “nothing less than subversive. By virtue of the very fact that Israelis and Palestinians recognise the bereavement of the other side, too, the forum subverts the generally hegemonic nature of the region's narratives.”

Subversive, certainly. But the PCFF is also imaginative and courageous in its many actions and projects.

- During Israel’s bombardment of Gaza in July-August 2014, it set up a 'dialogue tent' in the plaza outside a cinema complex in Tel Aviv to facilitate conversations between Israelis and Palestinians on the principle that “It won’t stop until we talk”.
- In an International Peace Day observance, Israelis and Palestinians donated blood under the slogan “Could you hurt someone who has your blood running through their veins?”
- In 2002 the PCFF established a toll-free phone line on which an Israeli could talk to a Palestinian, and vice versa. The “Hello Shalom” phone line received more than a million calls.
- Then the PCFF launched the *Crack in the Wall* Facebook page, using social media to humanise the daily affairs of the conflict by increasing connections between Israelis and Palestinians.
- Besides classroom presentations in schools, an adult education programme explores the narrative of the "other" among Israeli and Palestinian change agents, such as journalists, social workers and educators.
- In 2001 the PCFF sent a delegation of bereaved parents to New York where they placed more than 1000 coffins wrapped in Israeli and Palestinian flags in front of the United Nations building.
- The PCFF is currently working with academics from both sides, and with international experts, to create a "reconciliation paper" to be integrated into any future political peace agreements.

Bonded by bereavement, Mr Elhanan and Mr Aramin came as "brothers in pain" to speak to our pilgrimage group.

To quote Mr Elhanan: “We, the bereaved families, together from the depth of our mutual pain, are saying to you today: Our blood is the same red colour, our suffering is identical, and all of us have the exact same bitter tears. So, if we, who have paid the highest price possible, can carry on a dialogue, then everyone can!” ■

Pat McCarthy, the founding editor of NZ Catholic, *now directs the pilgrimage website* www.seetheholyland.net.

stemming the rising tide

Island peoples, neighbours to New Zealand and Australia, are especially vulnerable to rising sea levels eroding their lands and contaminating their sea water. For some their homelands are now uninhabitable. The author puts faces to these people, highlighting the urgency of the challenge for action.

Martin de Jong

Sulieti Sisitoutai's home once stood about 50 metres from the sea on the island of Lifuka in Tonga. Now, water laps around the house each high tide and the lounge wall has completely caved in.

Sulieti, her husband and four children abandoned the home in 2010 because of the danger from the sea and regular evacuations for king tides (exceptionally high) and storms. In a land swap with the government they received a site further inland where they now live in a corrugated iron shack.

different struggles

Sulieti's struggle is a far cry from Geneva, Switzerland, which this month hosts the first of the 2015 preparatory meetings building up to the United Nations climate conference in Paris in November, but it is a struggle that needs to be heard by decision-makers at the conference.

Late last year, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand released *Small yet strong: Voices from Oceania on the environment*, a report documenting what Pacific people are experiencing and particularly in coastal edges of the region. In places such as Tonga, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, it found widespread coastal erosion and inundation of low-lying land. Pacific islanders were battling to stem the sea-level rise with makeshift, do-it-yourself sea walls and coastal plantings.

In Kiribati, Rabaere Rikare says people living along the shore find that seawater is rising, breaking sea walls, and eating away the land. Rabaere is Chair of the St Vincent de Paul Society at Bikenibeu on south Tarawa. He worked with the community of Rurete to build up their sea wall but found it was still not high enough to stop the king tides last March.

Another village, on the islet of Nabeina, was badly damaged during that event. Parts of the village were cut off from the rest. The *maneaba*, (meeting house for villagers), had its concrete floor broken. The villagers had to rebuild the *maneaba* and other buildings on the main part of the island.

Rabaere said: "They just moved their things at low tide, just to take away from that area, to rebuild their places. They hope that there won't be any more houses [that need to be moved], but if that tide is higher, then some of the others might be affected."

further pressures

The rising seas around Kiribati are adding pressure to the demand on the small lenses of freshwater that lie under the coral atolls of this widely dispersed nation.

Boore Moua, Caritas youth group leader from Tarawa, says one village on Nonouti Island had to regroup some of their houses more centrally on the island to remain closer to fresh water. Another village on the island drinks salinated water.

Boore said: "There is only one well that they as a community rely on and assume that it gives them fresher water than the other well but it is still salinated. We are still trying to look for ways to help them."

Salinated groundwater coupled with more frequent king tides and storm surges are also affecting food supplies. Last year's king tides badly affected the village, Buota, killing off breadfruit and coconut trees.

It's a similar story elsewhere in the Pacific. Wryne Bennett, Education Secretary for Gizo Diocese, Solomon Islands, said coconut trees in place for years in some areas have been uprooted by the shoreline erosion. On Lifuka the parish priest Fr Taniela 'Enosi said

Sulieti Sisitoutai's present and former home on Lifuka,

every time he visits the southern tip of the island more coconut trees have fallen as the shore is constantly eroding.

According to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), global sea levels are rising at about 3.2 millimetres per year. It projects sea level increases of 35–70 centimetres by the year 2100, compared to 1986–2005 levels. This is based on the world's carbon emissions being stabilised by about 2100. If emissions continue to rise — as they are now — the IPCC projection increases to 45-82 centimetres.

sea level rises vary

However, sea level rise isn't uniform around the globe. For example, the tropical Western Pacific has seen rates of up to 12mm per year from 1993 to 2009 — four times the global average. While this may reflect cyclic climate phenomena such as the El Niño weather pattern, the frequency of El Niño seems also to be increasing due to climate change.

The IPCC said the projected rise in sea level, coupled with extreme events such as swell waves, storm surges, and variations in the El Niño weather pattern will pose greater sea flood and erosion risks for low-lying coastal areas and atoll islands. The seawater wave over-wash is also highly likely to degrade fresh groundwater resources, while sea surface temperature rises will increase coral bleaching and reef degradation. Given that island communities rely on coral reefs for coastal protection, fisheries and tourism, their livelihood will be badly affected.

A Tongan government report on climate change and disaster risk said that coral bleaching has already become common around Tonga due to increasing sea temperature.

Rising seas and sea temperatures are just some of the impacts of climate change, which is why Caritas Tonga has introduced an innovative climate change adaptation programme for Ha'apai. It includes a range of measures, such as improved rainwater collection systems, organic farming of crops tolerant to both drought and flood, and planting of coastal protection plants.

relocating communities

However, coastal plantings and sea walls will go only so far against rising tides. The Carteret Islanders in northeast Papua New Guinea are among the first in the world to act for the future. They decided to relocate entire island communities.

The Carterets, a series of small atoll islands spread across 30 kilometres of ocean, have a total land area of 0.6 square kilometres and maximum height of 1.5 metres. The 1700 inhabitants were facing unsustainable coastal erosion, flooding, loss of food sources and land disputes.

Through their organisation *Tulele Peisa* — "Sailing in the wind on our own" — and with the leadership of Ursula Rakova, they negotiated for land, including Tinputz on nearby Bougainville — an autonomous area of Papua New Guinea.

These mainland families grow cocoa and coconut crops to earn income for the community. They also grow vegetables and food crops for themselves and exchange them for fish caught by those who remain on the islands.

Ursula said: "It is just a kind of reciprocal giving where families in Tinputz continue to supply their families on the island with food crops to sustain the very simple diet of fish they have every day."

Relocations, such as by the Carteret Islanders, are a last resort. None want to leave their homes. But more communities are facing these decisions. Last year Kiribati — whose far-sighted President Anote Tong has been a leading advocate for climate action — bought 20 square kilometres of land in Fiji as a refuge, should its residents need to leave their atolls. The Marshall Islands is considering similar action.

The Caritas Pacific environment report highlights the urgency to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels by lifestyle changes and increased investment in sustainable, renewable energy. And it signals the need for climate adaptation funds to reach those most vulnerable. These people must be able to participate in climate change decisions affecting them — including those to be debated and discussed in preparation for the United Nations Climate Conference in Paris.

Our challenge is to reduce our carbon emissions and ensure that our planet can provide a safe, sustainable home for all its peoples and life into future generations. ■

Ha'apai, Tonga. [Martin de Jong/Caritas]

Martin de Jong lives in Wellington and is the Advocacy and Research Advisor for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

"this changes everything"

A small group of people including members of the Catholic Worker Community in Ōtaki are reflecting on a new book by Naomi Klein, which seeks to alert readers to some important messages about the future of the planet. Some challenges are outlined here.

Peter Healey and Alistair McKee

One September Sunday a group gathered at Haruatai Park in Ōtaki in solidarity with those in the New York City climate march. We were a small and fervent group on that sunny day. We carried placards from the New York City march and planted a tree. We were mindful of all that climate change is and the hundred-thousand walkers on the other side of the planet.

Previously, over a shared meal hosted by a Catholic Worker family, we had reflected on the United Nations climate change meeting in New York. Catholic Worker folk in America were going to walk in the march. We prayed a litany of solidarity for action on climate change. We increased our awareness about climate change and anchored our commitment to sustainable living.

new group commitment

Since that gathering we have committed to a once-a-month focus on climate change and our response to it. Naomi Klein's latest book, *This Changes Everything,* is an important resource. Klein says: "If there has ever been a moment to advance a plan to heal the planet that also heals our broken economies and our shattered communities, this is it. This is the hardest book I have ever written because climate change puts us on such a tight and unforgiving deadline."

Klein suggests now is a "climate moment" of challenges and opportunities. She says: "We have to stop looking away. We fear letting in the full reality of a crisis that changes everything. If we are to curb emissions in the next decade we need a mobilisation larger than any in history." She agrees with Bolivian, Navarro Llamos, that it is time for a Marshall Plan for Earth.

We face the question: "What is wrong with us? What is really preventing us from putting out the fire that's threatening to burn down our collective house?"

> "Fossil fuels are the black ink in which the story of modern capitalism is written."

systems in conflict

We find that market fundamentalism has sabotaged collective responses. Our economic system and ecological life-support systems are in conflict. We are faced with the choice: "Either allow climate change to disrupt everything about our world or we change pretty much everything about our world to avoid that fate." Maybe we need to reinvent the project of civilisation for these changes to be possible.

Klein says our "climate moment" is compounded by a "fossil fuel frenzy" happening in increasingly sensitive locations around the planet. Aotearoa New Zealand is involved in this unconventional oil rush. Recently our group prepared and presented a submission to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) in Wellington. The Austrian oil company OMV has applied to extend the reserves of their Maari oil field with long drilling and high pressures. This is the first decision of the EPA administering the new Exclusive Economic Zone Act. On day six of the hearing we joined individuals and groups, including tangata whenua, presenting submissions in defence of ocean ecology, Blue Whales, and the critically endangered Maui's Dolphin. It was a moving experience to be "in solidarity with Earth and her defenders". It was our local interpretation of Klein's book.

reading locally

Back in Ōtaki one Catholic Worker was struck by Klein's words: "We have become a society of grave robbers. We need to become a society of life amplifiers, deriving our energy directly from elements that sustain life. It's time to let the dead rest."

A slogan from the New York City climate march was: "To Change Everything We Need Everybody". The door to non-disruptive economic contraction to two degrees warming in 2050 will close by 2017. We are in the midst of a civilisational wake-up-call centred around deforestation and fossil fuel use. This call is coming to us in the language of fires, floods, droughts and extinctions. We are being called to evolve. A crisis this big changes everything.

Wealthy nations need to start cutting emissions by 8-10 percent per year now. The per capita "throughput" of modern society needs to contract to pre-1970s levels. Low consumption communal activites like gardening, cooking and shared meals are enjoyable places to start. Our group has begun sharing gardening stories and meanings. There is talk of bread-making workshops. We have had a community savings pool

Above: Otaki Climate Change March with Mako and Shelley Leason.

Below: Adi Leason and his son Davey.

workshop. These discussions and activites help us think differently about our economy and the banking sector.

Klein describes "extractivism" as a relationship of addictive use and ecological abuse of Earth's gifts. She notes that global capitalism and the fossil fuel economy emerged about the same time. She claims: "Fossil fuels are the black ink in which the story of modern capitalism is written."

Refuting the intoxicating narrative that technology will save us, Klein reminds us there are no messiahs. Such is a magical form of thinking when faced with the complexity of the climate system. Commenting on a geo-engineering conference she attended with "a remarkably small world of inventors and scientists and funders", Klein said they presented high risk, impossible to test "techno-fixes" with dangerous social outcomes.

indigenous peoples lead us

Klein describes how indigenous peoples have played a key role in a "Blockadia movement" asking the question: "How come that a big distant company can come to my land and put me and my kids at risk and never ask my permission?" They know a sense of place and duties towards the web of life provide inter-generational perspectives and a language of beauty. Their land rights can be a gift of "earth jurisprudence" to the revival of the commons. Bolivia and Ecuador have now put the "Rights of Mother Earth" into their national statutes. Indigenous peoples identify with the land while corporations of the fossil fuel industry have extreme rootlessness.

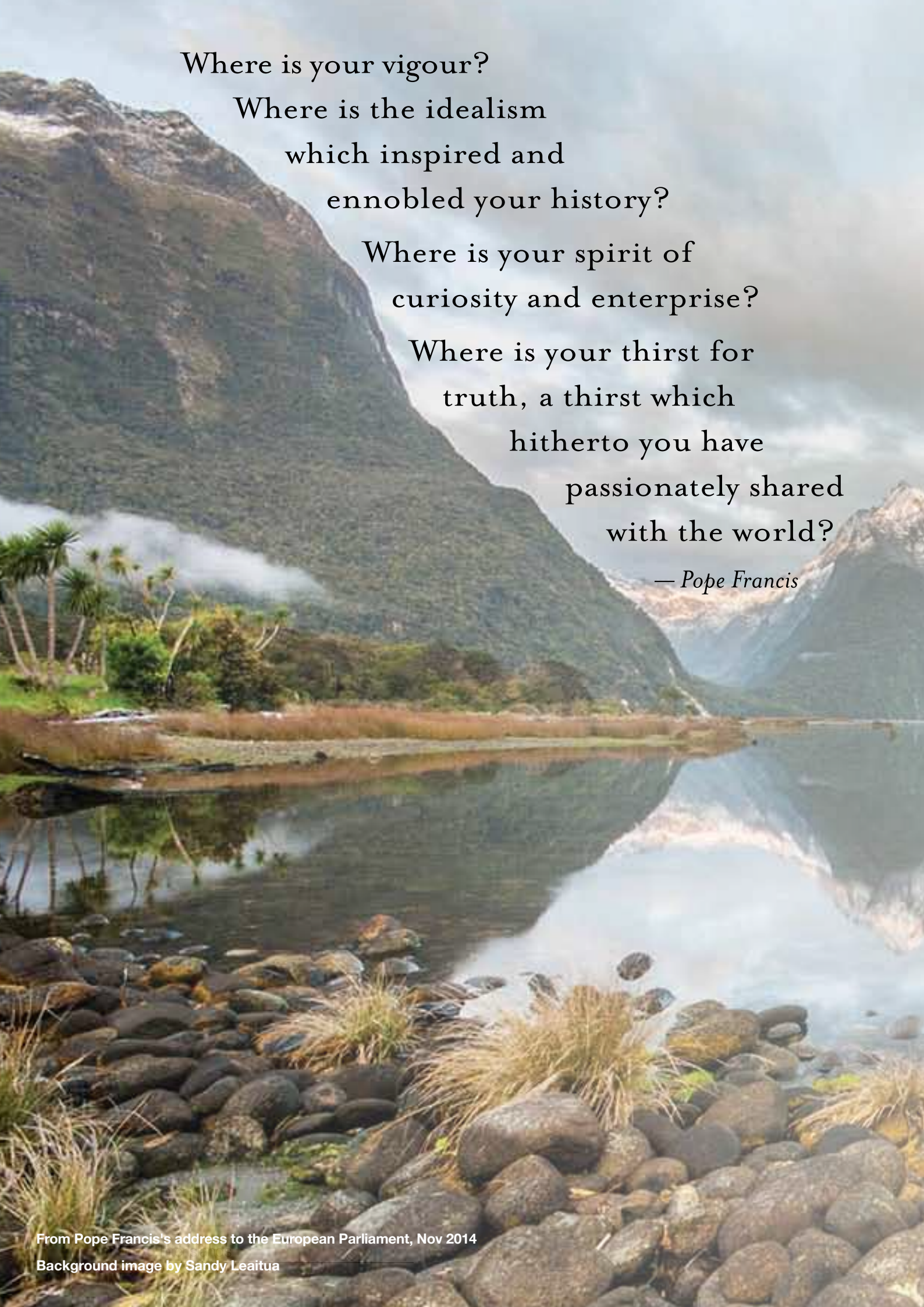
While writing her book Klein and her partner were also trying to have a child. Klein gives poignant descriptions realising that Earth is also facing fertility challenges. Fertility is one of the first functions to erode when animals are under stress. Many species are against "infertility walls" finding it hard to reproduce.

The challenge for the climate movement hinges on capturing everyone's imaginations to pull off a profound and radical economic transformation. We are aware of the scale of the global effort required in this long emergency. In our climate moment, divisions such as "activists" and "regular people" are meaningless. Quite simply we all need to be activists.

We found Naomi Klein's book a timely contribution to our efforts in creating "the sustainable good life". We encourage others to read her book outlining how capitalism and the energy system affect our world. We suggest that you ask your local library to get copies so that the message spreads. Look out too for the documentary film that Klein's partner made to accompany the book.

Know that we have the "climate moment" to act now. We can join the planetary movement from "Empire" thinking into "Earth Community" living. ■

Peter Healy is a Marist priest living and working in Ōtaki and Alistair McKee is a local climate/energy researcher.



From Pope Francis's address to the European Parliament, Nov 2014

Background image by Sandy Leaitua


PARIHAKA PA
SOCIAL
is for Vote
ZEALAND
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new windows open to the faith

Increasing numbers of prophetic voices within the Church see evidence of God's creative dynamism in the process of evolution. As this approach grips the Catholic imagination, it opens up vibrant new possibilities for evangelisation.

Daniel O'Leary

What have Copernicus, Galileo and Darwin in common? All three scientists suffered some bruising encounters with the church authorities of their time. Each of them experienced extreme difficulties in having their scientific discoveries accepted.

In 1988, conscious of this past "failure in dialogue", St John Paul II asked the participants of a conference in Rome this question: "Does an evolutionary perspective bring any light to bear upon theology, the meaning of the human person as the *Imago Dei*, and upon the development of doctrine itself?" As touched upon in last month's article ("Divine evolution", *The Tablet,* 23 August 2014, also *Tui Motu,* Nov 2014), current scientific discoveries are opening up new windows to the incarnate presence of God. Our universe is not static or anthropocentric; neither is our incarnate and dynamic God.

The Incarnation is not a one-off event in history; it holds the key to the true reality of all time and space, of all life as it evolves and grows towards final fulfilment. It is, in fact, a long love story drawing us to cherish and transform our true cosmic home.

Palaeontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ saw the evolutionary process of Creation in the light of faith. To be Christian is to be in evolution; and to be in evolution is, in the words of scientist Sr Ilia Delio, "to live from the centre of the heart and to reach out to the world with faith, hope and trust in God's incarnate presence … The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the living Word of God that continues to be spoken as the word of evolution …" God creates, you could say, through evolution.

All creatures are woven into one community by the common thread of God's life, participating equally in the dynamism of divine being. "Love is the very nature and shape of being," writes Richard Rohr, OFM. "It is the essential energy of the entire universe from orbiting protons and neutrons to the orbiting of planets and stars."

> "the beauty of the world is Christ's tender smile for us coming through matter"

It is the story of Incarnation. Pope Francis quotes St Thomas Aquinas: "God cannot express himself fully in any one creature … for goodness, which in God is single and undifferentiated, in creatures is refracted into a myriad hues of being." The world is sacramental because the divine Word of God is revealed in all dimensions of evolution. Philosopher Simone Weil said that "the beauty of the world is Christ's tender smile for us coming through matter."

Real religion is about making us aware of that mystery. The Roman Catholic Magisterium needs to recover its wonderful, mystical but forgotten insight into the sacramentality of the world and of all Creation.

A renewed evolutionary understanding of Baptism and Eucharist will transform the community of hearts who still come, in hope, to our churches. Our young people will delight in the "New Universe Story". "We do not teach it now," said Delio. "We do not practise it; we do not ritualise it."

A radical revision of the almost incomprehensible doctrine of original sin will open up the sacred space for developing a theology of evolution, carrying immense implications for bringing Catholicism into the cosmic framework of the new cosmology. Already there is an emerging paradigm shift from a closed religious system to an open sense of the immensity of incarnate mystery.

Something beautiful within us is touched and catches fire when we realise that in terms of energy and genetics, we each are the core of the evolving universe. We are older, nobler and more essential to God's plans than we ever suspected.

Yet our souls must die to many familiar and faded dualistic refrains if they are ever to divine the deep harmonies of God's love at the centre of the world. We must train ourselves to see truly the shimmering of divinity in the process of unfolding evolution.

"What we seek is not the appearance of God in the world but the shining of God through Creation, 'a diaphany' of God radiating through a world that becomes transparent," writes Delio.

This radical perceptual shift in our understanding of Incarnation demands the wholehearted attention of our teaching Church. This vision is the key to a new world of peace, compassion and urgent environmental awareness.

"A flourishing humanity on a thriving planet rich in species in an evolving universe, all together filled with the glory of God: such is the vision that must guide us at this critical time of earth's distress," writes theologian Elizabeth Johnson.

The miracle of evolution is

happening within and around us. Cosmologist Brian Swimme wrote that "the earth was once molten rock — and now sings operas." Without hearts on fire with a sacramental imagination, this great voyage of wonder, empowering as it is extraordinary, will flounder in the shallows.

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood, and don't assign them tasks, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea," wrote Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

St John Paul II acknowledges the task facing those who try to "integrate the worlds of science and religion in their own intellectual and spiritual lives." This task will lead to an exciting and challenging breakthrough for Roman Catholics today. Our imagination and faith are stretched with every new scientific discovery. Are there planets, for instance, with intelligent life out there? And if there are, a recent writer to *The Tablet* asked, do they all have their own incarnations? How big and beautiful a God do we believe in?

In her *Christ in the Universe*, British poet Alice Meynell imagines an extraterrestrial gathering of the civilisations of countless constellations telling stories about their incarnations and eternities. And about the shocking uniqueness of ours!

But in the eternities,
Doubtless we shall compare
together, hear
A million alien Gospels, in what
guise
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre,
the Bear.

O, be prepared, my soul!
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The myriad forms of God those
stars unroll
When, in our turn, we show them
a Man. ■

Fr Daniel O'Leary's website is www.djoleary.com
This article is republished courtesy of The Tablet. www.thetablet.co.uk

On seeing the ripened wheat

On seeing the ripened wheat
cut and shredded
I felt bereft.
Had it been left longer
I'd enjoy the wave and wind ripple
the mauve tint before dark
the stealthy moon darting among the stalks.

On seeing the ripened wheat
lying crestfallen
I remembered each seed planted
each split of germination
each thrust through earth's dark
towards light.

On seeing the ripened wheat
await its fate,
I stood mourning
while all day the farmer circled and drew lines
of wheat beneath the sun.

It's night.
I hear him still.
The harvester, the harsh light
the wheat readying to be bread.

— *Anne Powell* RC

an ecological reading of the gospel of mark

We begin a year's journey of eleven articles reflecting with Elaine Wainwright on the gospel of Mark from an ecological perspective. As preparation for the series, read the gospel as a story - in one sitting if possible – to familiarise yourself with it again.

Elaine Wainwright

When you read Mark's gospel did you find your attention drawn to Jesus and the other human characters with whom Jesus interacts? And were you also attentive to God and the Divine presence functioning as a background character in the story? Most of us read and reflect on the gospels like that — attending to the human/divine presences.

However many voices in our world today are making us aware that our almost exclusive focus on the human community and its needs and desires is placing the material world, or 'creation', in jeopardy. Indeed quite recently Pope Francis voiced the cry: "If we destroy Creation, Creation will destroy us!" Not only the Pope but our planet and its other-than-human community is calling us to a change of mindset.

new story of the universe

At the same time, a new story of the universe emerging from the work of cosmologists and other scientists, draws our attention to the more than 13–14 billion years of the universe's evolving. This awareness, in turn, challenges our anthropocentric or human-centred perspectives. In like manner ecological crises such as climate change, destruction of species, the violent fracking of Earth itself and many other events, are calling for a shift in both perspective and ethic.

This first article offers a springboard expanding our reading to include more than the human and divine characters and voices in the gospel.

This is the context in our world today that is inviting us to read our world and to read our sacred story ecologically. Such an invitation is a call similar to that in the opening verses of the Markan gospel: repent (Mark 1:15). This is a call to metanoia, a call to change one's perspective, one's way of seeing. In relation to our reading of the gospel story, it is an invitation to read not only for the human and the holy but also for habitat. It invites us to be attentive to the complex web of the other-than-human which is interwoven with the human and the holy: place, space, together with all elements of the natural and the built environments. To read in this way could be called reading intertextually and contextually.

read the whole text anew

In this monthly column I will read in some detail selected texts threaded through the Markan narrative. This will be an invitation to you to read other surrounding texts from a similar perspective. The texts are chosen not because they lend themselves to an ecological reading. Rather they represent different types of stories (healing stories, parables, and others) as I would contend that we need to learn to read our entire sacred story with this new lens, to read/hear the entire text anew. The focus of this month's reading is the opening verses of the gospel, Mk 1:1-11. This is to hear the call to repent.

The story begins with this phrase: the beginning of the good news *(euangelion)* of Jesus Christ. We receive the gospel today generally in written form. Its early recipients would have heard it, heard proclamation. This was a new proclamation *(euangelion)*, not that of the emperor but rather of Jesus *Christos*: Jesus, the anointed one. The gospel begins as sound, inviting us to hear, to draw our often neglected senses into the receiving, the hearing of the gospel. And these senses recognize Jesus as *Christos*, as the one named holy with the pouring out of oil, that rich material element.

evoking our hearing

In verse 2, the evangelist continues to evoke our sense of hearing, to hear what is written in the scroll of the

The river Jordan and the surrounding wilderness

prophet Isaiah, to imagine the voice of the prophet speaking the call. It is a call to engage with the material elements, the desert, the pathway. The way of the anointed one is prepared for through evoking the sacred story of the Jewish people that includes the materiality of place. It invites readers into a world that includes the other-than-human.

Echoing this is the appearance of John in the wilderness. This wilderness evokes a geographic space with a unique habitat of animal and plant around the Sea of Salt. The desert also functions metaphorically in Israel's sacred story of its interrelationship with the holy One. It is a place of divine encounter in which discipline, purification and/or transformation take place (e.g. Deut 8:1-10 and Deut 30). The title given to John, namely the Baptizer, evokes water, the water of the Jordan River that flows through the wilderness as well as water that purifies.

John's location is the marginal place between wilderness and waterfront. He is in place, in the complexity of relationships within Earth and its constituents. His clothes are of camel's hair, the belt around his waist is of hide or skin and his food is locusts and wild honey. The description of John in his habitat evokes the "gift exchange" process. The giving up of life in the Earth cycles — animals' skins for clothing, locust bodies for human food — allows a new habitat to emerge for John. These can be seen as "gift" as their "giving" provides John with a new place for his proclamation. As readers attending with respect to the processes of gift exchange we are tuning into the call to ecological *metanoia* (v. 4).

key element: water

Like the multitudes of people (v. 5), Jesus, introduced in 1:1, comes to John for baptism. This ritual process is enacted with one of the key material elements necessary for life, namely water. Water is central in Earth's genealogy and its ongoing maintenance, as well as to the survival of so many species including the human. The presence of the divine in this scene is also evoked in material terms: the skies are torn asunder and a spirit named to be of God is imaged as a dove alighting on Jesus (v. 10). Habitat, the human, and the holy intersect in this unique moment of encounter.

The gospel reader is invited to see what takes place on the Earth and in the skies and then to hear the heavenly voice. As at the beginning of this section, the listener's/reader's senses are evoked by what is encountered materially in the narrative. Jesus is then named as "son" and "beloved" by the affirming heavenly voice.

Habitat, the human and the holy are intimately interconnected as the Markan *euangelion* begins. I invite you to spend time with the short introduction to the Gospel of Mark (1:1-11) attentive to the complex relationships of habitat, the human, and the holy woven into the text and inviting our participation. ■

Elaine Wainwright, a Sister of Mercy and scripture scholar, recently retired as the foundation Professor of Theology at the University of Auckland. She continues to research and write.

annie and the beggars

A single question leads to profound change for each character in this story.

Adrienne Thompson

Once upon a time a woman lived happily in a comfortable house with a pretty garden. It was a peaceful and happy home and she loved living there but she had a problem.

Almost every day, sometimes several times a day, the door handle would rattle and a voice would call her name. On the porch would stand a beggar — tall and gaunt or hunched and round, sometimes a man, sometimes a woman, sometimes a child.

"Please," the beggar would say. "Please, Annie."

With a sigh — sometimes of compassion, sometimes of annoyance — Annie would hand over a few dollars, or some bread, or vegetables from the garden, and the beggars would leave. Annie would go back into her pretty house and forget about them — until the next call.

Some of the beggars came so regularly that Annie got to know them. There was Mortimer, tall and shambling, with anxious eyes. Mortimer always seemed to carry half a dozen bags around his person, all of them bulging with old newspapers, paper bags, old bottles and bundles of clothes.

Then there was Hattie, a very overweight young woman with a discontented face. She wore a shapeless dark grey dress. Her hair was unkempt and her fingernails were dirty.

Annie was secretly scared of Maria. The woman's sickly sweet smile hid an iron will. Her whining voice at the door was the one Annie dreaded the most because Maria would never leave without complaining about how unfairly life had treated her.

And there was the small shy child with big eyes and wispy hair. She never spoke, just looked beseechingly at Annie before scuttling off with whatever small prize she was given. Annie had never learned her name.

There came a time when Annie grew extremely upset by the constant stream of visitors. They interrupted her work. They spoiled her leisure time. She even started to see them in her dreams. But one thing she was determined on. She would keep her lovely, peaceful home as a safe haven. Nothing and nobody could be allowed to spoil it.

One sunny spring day Annie was talking on the phone to her friend Linda. Linda was a witch, and the wisest person Annie knew. Annie often wished that Linda would give her some helpful advice, but this Linda would never do. She did, however, listen lovingly to Annie's tale of woe. Then she said,

"I wonder what they want."

"Who?" asked Annie, taken aback.

"The beggars. I wonder what they want."

"Isn't that obvious?" said Annie, irritably. "They want money and food."

"Do they?" said Linda.

Annie hung up the phone. She felt unsettled. Just then there was a rattle at the door. Oh no! There was Maria again, a sweet smile on her lips and a steely gleam in her eyes.

Annie opened the door. "Hello," she said. Maria looked surprised. Usually Annie just shoved money at her. "Hello," she said, uncertainly.

"Can I ask you," said Annie, "could I just ask you — what would you like me to do for you?"

Maria's hard eyes filled with tears. "Oh!" she said. "I am so, so tired! I'm always, always having to look after my grandchildren and they're never, never grateful. Oh, if only I could have a real rest."

Annie thought about her best spare room. It had a big, comfortable bed covered with a soft warm quilt. "Come in!" she said. "Come and have a sleep."

When Maria was tucked up in bed Annie went and made herself a pot of tea. She had just poured a second cup when the door rattled again. It was Hattie standing there, sulky, dishevelled Hattie. Anna was about to give her a cup of tea and a muffin when she remembered. "Hello," she said. "Is there something I can do for you?"

Hattie looked stunned. "Actually, I was wondering, would you, perhaps, by any chance, be able to give me a different dress? I HATE this grey one so much!"

As Annie ushered Hattie into her second spare room she noticed a tall wardrobe in the corner. She had never seen it before. She pulled open the doors and blinked at a rainbow array of clothes — frocks, scarves, jackets, shirts … "Hattie!" said Annie, amazed, "I believe these have always been here for you. I didn't know you wanted them. I certainly didn't know I had them!"

Hattie was grinning from ear to ear as she pulled garments out of the wardrobe. Annie was smiling too as she left her to try them on. She had the impression that Hattie was going to bring a whole lot of fun into her life from now on.

As she glanced out of the window Annie saw Mortimer shambling up the front path. As usual he was burdened with many bags and he looked stooped and anxious.

"Hello," said Annie gently, opening the door before Mortimer even had time to rattle it. She smiled at him. "What do you need, Mortimer?"

Mortimer's hands trembled. He shifted from foot to foot. He whispered. "Please — please if you could just let me have some space to unpack my bags. I've got so much stuff, and people say it's rubbish, and yes I suppose some of it is rubbish, but not all of it, some of it is precious, and I need to sort it out but I can't sort it unless I spread it out and look at it and I just need some space …" his voice trailed away.

Annie took a deep breath. The last thing she wanted was Mortimer's rubbish cluttering up her tidy, peaceful house! But then she remembered the garden shed with its broad, empty bench. Perfect! She showed Mortimer the way to the shed. Tactfully, she brought a large rubbish bin and tucked it handily under the bench. As Mortimer started to unpack the first of his bags she was surprised to see that he was right — there were indeed some beautiful and useful objects in among the old newspapers and bundles of rags.

Annie went back into her front room and looked around. Three people had come into her space but amazingly it didn't feel crowded. In fact — there was even room for more!

Just then there was another rattle at the door. Annie opened it wide. "Hello!" she said to the shy little girl. "Do come in!"

The child shook her head and spoke for the first time. "No thank you," she said politely, "I don't want to."

Now Annie was surprised. "What do you want then?" she asked.

"Nothing."

"Really? Nothing at all?"

"I just came to ask you — what do you want?"

Annie had to sit down. She thought for a long time and then said slowly, "Do you know I have no idea. I haven't asked myself that question in years. There hasn't been time! I haven't had the energy, with all these people banging on the door!"

She looked at the child. "Have you got any suggestions?" she asked.

The child's face split in a smile. "I saw an eel in the stream down under the bridge," she said eagerly. "And some birds — I don't know what kind they are, but maybe you do. We could make some stepping stones. Or have a water fight!"

Annie took off her apron. She kicked off her fluffy slippers. She listened for a moment. Upstairs Maria was snoring gently. Hattie was singing loudly as she splashed in the spa-pool. From the shed came a contented mumble and bustle as Mortimer sorted his treasures. Her guests would be safe and happy, and when she came back she would cook dinner for them all. Or maybe one of them would cook for her!

Annie stepped outside into the afternoon sunshine. The grass felt clean and alive under her bare feet. The child took her hand and they walked together towards the stream.

"What's your name?" asked Annie.

The little girl smiled at her. "My name is Annie too." ■

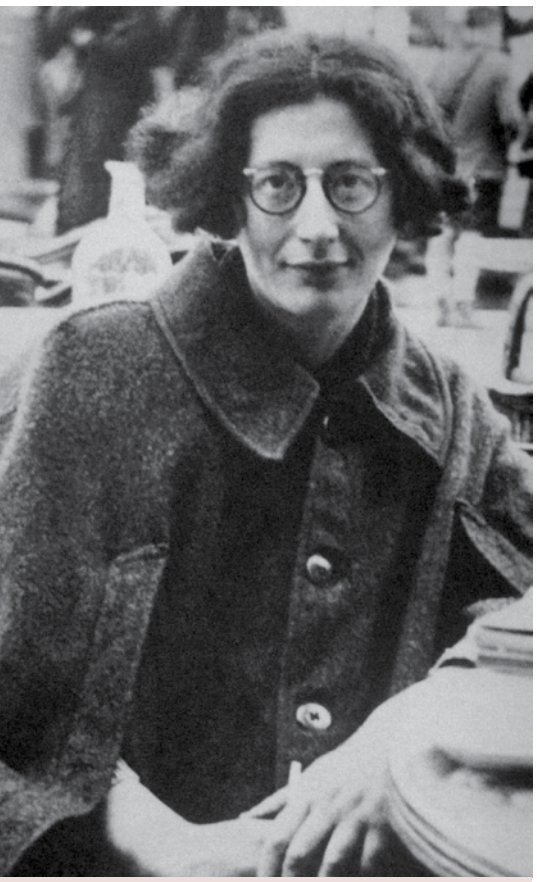
Adrienne Thompson grew up in India, and lived in Bangladesh for 20 years. She now lives in Wellington where she is a spiritual director and occasional writer.

simone weil

The spiritual attraction and calling of this unusual young French woman is outlined for us by the Editor emeritus of Tui Motu. Her intense passion for truth stopped her from becoming a Catholic, though she lived the Christian faith to the fullest extent possible within her framework of absolute integrity to her experience.

Michael Hill

Simone Weil, the French mystic, was born of Jewish parents in Alsace in 1909. She had a happy childhood; her parents were agnostic and her schooling was largely secular. She was a brilliant student, excelling especially in philosophy and languages. She qualified as a teacher in 1931, but her teaching career was frequently interrupted by other assignments. In 1942 she escaped with her parents to the United States after the Germans invaded Vichy France. But she soon returned to London, where she volunteered to work for the Free French.



Simone Weil

After an intense religious experience in Belgium shortly before the war she studied Catholicism, embarking on a life of mystical prayer reflected in her writings. Her final days in London were brief. She contracted tuberculosis and died relatively unknown in August 1943. Only a handful of people attended her funeral. Fortunately her spiritual director had kept a lot of her writings. When these were published after the war they attracted a lot of attention. She became something of a cult figure. Her philosophy also became very influential. But today she is relatively unknown.

She was an intense and immensely thoughtful young woman. For her, the fundamental laws of life are to love and to adhere to the truth. She believed that no authority had the right to restrict any person's aspiration to truth, however unorthodox. She thought the human mind should be allowed to operate with unlimited freedom and complete impartiality. For this reason she had grave misgivings about the Catholic Church as an institution. Those were the days before the Second Vatican Council.

The other trait to her character was a passionate empathy for oppressed and poor people. Even as a student she joined in workers' demonstrations for better conditions of work. She also worked on the land even though physically the work was too much for her frail physique. She interrupted her teaching career to work in factories, including for a time the Renault Works in Paris. She wrote: "When I worked in a factory, the affliction of others entered my heart and my soul. There I received forever the mark of a slave … since then I have always regarded myself as a slave."

[Simone] believed that no authority had the right to restrict any person's aspiration to truth, however unorthodox.

simone the mystic

Her attraction to Catholicism came about first through observing the extraordinary devotion of peasant women in Portugal. Later, she went to Assisi where in the church of St Mary of the Angels she was overwhelmed by profound religious feelings. Then she attended the Holy Week services in the monastery of Solesmes. The liturgy enchanted her, especially Gregorian chant. She wrote: "In the course of these services the thought of the Passion of Christ entered my being once and for all."

She started to visit Catholic churches and became familiar with the ritual and with Catholic teaching.

But she made no move to be received. She spent hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, but her dissatisfaction with the institution prevented her seeking Baptism. She felt that by remaining outside the institution she stayed in solidarity with all those alienated from the Church or doctrinally at odds with Catholicism.

It was during this time that she started having mystical experiences. She records that once while reciting George Herbert's famous poem *Love bade me welcome*, she received a direct experience of Christ. "Christ himself came down and took possession of me," she writes, "… neither my senses nor my imagination played any part: I only felt in the midst of my suffering the presence of a love like that which one can read in the smile of a beloved face."

attention

Her most important contribution to Christian ascetical teaching is that attitude of mind she calls "attention". Prayer in its essence is attention. This does not demand strong physical effort. It proceeds rather from the relaxation of tensions in the body and mind and simply laying oneself open to the truth. It means to wait with expectancy, to listen carefully, to lay aside distractions, longing to penetrate reality as it really is and not how we may imagine it to be. This "attention" is close to the concept of passivity practised by many in the tradition of St Francis de Sales and Père de Caussade. It is a prayer of quiet.

Attention also became a guiding principle in her relationships with others. To understand another we have to attend fully to their personality laying aside all preconceptions. She reckons that most people fail to exercise this form of attention, preferring instead to love in the same way they eat: they feed on other people!

A fine example of this is how we behave visiting the sick. "The love of our neighbour in all its fullness simply means being able to say to them: 'What are you going through?' This way of looking at a sick person is first of all attentive. The soul empties itself of all its contents in order to receive that person just as he or she is, in all their truth. Only one who is capable of attention can do this."

She cites the Gospels which speak of this attentive waiting (Mt 24:45-51), recommending the attitude of one who waits patiently for the return of the master. This is the "slave" she strives to emulate. It is the slave's "watching, waiting, attention" that merit the master's reward.

Many Catholics are put off Simone because of her refusal to seek Baptism. However, there is some evidence that she may have been formally received on her deathbed. However, she embraced the liturgy, the prayer life, the devotions and beliefs of the Church. Yet she remained an unpredictable loner to her last breath. Simone has much to teach us, especially her integrity of spirit. ■

Rosminian Father Michael Hill, the founding editor of Tui Motu, *has just published* The Persecuted Prophet, *the first modern English biography of Blessed Antonio Rosmini.*

Love bade me welcome

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lack'd anything.

'A guest,' I answer'd, 'worthy to be here:'
Love said, 'You shall be he.'
'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on Thee.'
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
'Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord; but I have marr'd them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.'
'And know you not,' says Love, 'Who bore the blame?'
'My dear, then I will serve.'
'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'
So I did sit and eat.

— George Herbert 1593-1632

expand the mind: jesus and the landscape

1st Sunday of Lent: Mark 1:12-15

Kathleen Rushton

It is one of those warm post-Christmas Canterbury days. Usually I am not in the sale-ridden city because I am in the wilderness tramping but not this year — foot problems! The voice of the Earth is obscured in the city. I am aware of the contrast: the grandeur of mountain, valley and star-lit nights, the smallness of the human person in the immensity of the Cosmos. The aloneness and the away-ness. I become aware of the voice of the Earth in the gospel text.

Jesus is earthed. He is in the wilderness. Mark tells of this in two sentences, so it is best to set aside Matthew and Luke's details and look closely at Mk 1:12-13. Jesus comes from Nazareth in Galilee (1:9) and reappears again into Galilee (1:14). In between much happens in time, movement and place: River Jordan baptism, wilderness testing and an unspecified time until the arrest of John the Baptist. Most likely, Jesus was somewhere in the Judean desert in the region of Perea. According to Josephus, the Jordan meanders through much desert on its way from the Lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea. This first century Jewish historian tells of John's imprisonment in Machaerus, a fortress about 24 kilometres east of the Dead Sea.

jesus' inherited tradition

Recent interest in the world of Jesus has focused on economic and social factors rather than considering human connectivity with the eco- and bio-spheres which would have been his inherited tradition. Old

The Whanganui river

Testament ecological images centre on the nature of the land, its diverse landscapes, varied flora and fauna. Those strands saw the natural world as God's creation and had implications for human interaction. What is Jesus' response to his change of environment and the ecology of these sub-regions and how do people adapt to these?

In the Judean desert, human life was sustainable for nomads and for settlements. Two Hebrew terms, one for the desert in a strict sense and one for a wilderness where there is little or no human habitation, are translated in the Greek Bible by one word *(eremos)*. Either landscape invokes Israel's story. God was close in the wilderness. There Israel had put God to the test. The wilderness was a place which enabled deeper encounter with the self, and discovery of new purpose when one was freed from what filled life lived in "the real world." Jewish dissidents went there as part of their protest at the religious establishment. There Jesus is portrayed as at prayer.

The contrast between wilderness and Galilee landscapes may be why Jesus took on a different ministry from the Baptist. The Nazareth range and the valleys of the Shephelah are of a type of rock which produces soil-cover and has springs. Unlike other craggy ranges in lower Galilee, the Nazareth ridge had villages near the summit because the fertile land was cultivated. Jesus' shift in the natural environment recalls the contrast expressed in the book of Deuteronomy. Perhaps in an Exodus-like experience, he moved from an arid landscape to one "with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in hills and

valleys, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees". (Dt 8:6–10). His inherited belief in the gift of the land is the backdrop to his role in God's call. In his experience of contrast, suggests Sean Frayne, the potential blessedness of life in the land so moved Jesus to see the present as a graced moment which influenced the direction of his ministry.

three dimensions of place

In understanding Jesus' attitude, and indeed our own in our particular environment, it is important not to be romantic about land and place. Place is not a static space. It is fluid, negotiated constantly and redrawn as different groups struggle for control of structures that define a particular space which is unfixed, contested and multiple. Halvor Moxnes highlights the importance of three dimensions of place for the mission of Jesus and the changing face of Galilee: the experience of place which means how it is managed and controlled; the legitimation of place, that is, the ideological underpinning of the dominant controlling view; and imagination of place or the way in which an alternative vision of place can be developed and strategies to implement the new vision.

What was the experience of place during Roman rule? Recent excavations suggest Nazareth was a farming settlement with watch-towers, terraces, grape presses and field irrigation. This would be typical of nearby villages where small-scale peasant landowners worked the land intensively producing wheat, maize, olives, figs and grapes. Life was precarious depending on the weather and factors such as demands from passing armies and absent rulers. In the legitimation of place native elites, such as the ruler Herod Antipas, and Rome required taxes to be paid. The rebuilding of nearby prosperous Sepphoris, where possibly the carpenters Joseph and Jesus worked, exerted pressure on peasant life. A sophisticated water system comprising aqueducts and a huge underground reservoir have been uncovered. This example of human manipulation of the environment by elites was undertaken presumably without consideration of the impact on the water supply of nearby villages.

The third dimension of imagined place raises biblical ideals. As lived in the land in the present, the original vision was distorted. Jesus raised awareness of an alternative. He had heard: "A voice of one crying out in the wilderness" (1:3) and carried wilderness values into his ministry. His own lifestyle and action were a challenge. Jesus had heard, too, John's call to "a baptism of repentance" (1:4). The Greek word *metanoia*, (repentance, conversion) is composed of: *meta* (expand, go beyond) and *noia* (mind) meaning "go beyond" or "expand the mind." Jesus was baptized (v.9). Later he said: "Go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (16:15). His parables of everyday life about sowers and seeds (4:1–20), landlords, tenants and big estates (12:1–12) show an imagination grounded deeply in the natural world and the human struggle with it.

Lent offers a space to go to a wilderness place to enable deeper encounter with self and discovery of new purpose, to "expand the mind" by exploring the natural environment and through the imagination of place to be part of developing an alternative vision of human interaction. There are creative examples as explained by Dame Anne Salmond in her recent Rutherford Lecture (www.radionz.co.nz). She regards the deed of settlement signed on 5 August 2014 between the Whanganui River *iwi* and the Government as a revolutionary document. This agreement recognises Te Awa Tupua as a legal person with its own rights, and places it in a new relationship to humankind. A history of conflict over river access and use is overturned. The River is seen as a living whole running from the mountains to the sea. Its inextricable links to its people are expressed in the saying *Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au* (I am the River, the River is me). Two people are chosen by the Crown and the *iwi* as Te Pou Tupua, the human face of the river, acting in its interests and on its behalf. ■

Kathleen Rushton RSM is a scripture scholar working in adult education in the Diocese of Christchurch.

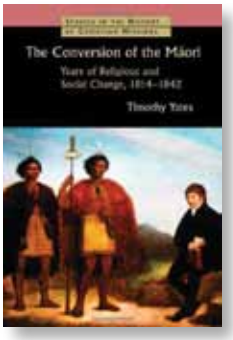
nz christian beginnings

The Conversion of the Māori: Years of Religious and Social Change, 1814-1842

By Timothy Yates

Grand Rapids/Cambridge: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2013.

Reviewer: Susan Smith RNDM



On Christmas Day, 1814, CMS missionary and Anglican priest, Samuel Marsden, presided over a service at Rangihoua in New Zealand. Marsden led the large Māori congregation in singing Psalm 100 and then preached from Luke 2:1–10, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy." This was the earliest known preaching of the good news in New Zealand and in 2014 the bicentennial of the arrival of Christianity in New Zealand is being celebrated by the Anglican Church.

Almost 200 years later, in *The Conversion of the Māori,* Anglican scholar, Timothy Yates, tells the story of mission among the Māori people of New Zealand from 1814 through to 1842, exciting years which cover the arrival of the Anglican CMS missionaries, the Methodists who arrived some five years later, and the French Catholic missionaries who reached New Zealand in 1838. In 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between Māori chiefs and the British Crown represented by Governor William Hobson, and missionaries played a key role in persuading Māori to sign the Treaty.

The Conversion of the Māori fills an important gap in our understanding of the work of the first missionaries. Yates informs the reader that his work may appear as "traditional in approach, being narrative history based on close attention to sources in archives" (p xi). But this approach is not a drawback as it allows the reader to appreciate the chronological developments that initially saw Māori enthusiastically respond to the message of the first missionaries, then further down the track, apparently embracing it for ulterior motives. Finally when the Colonial Office in London decided that New Zealand would become a British colony, Yates argues that despite the ambiguities surrounding the signing of the Treaty, missionaries were positively aware of Māori concerns in the advice they gave to the chiefs who met at Waitangi.

Yates provides a thoughtful critique of missionary motivation behind the proclamation of the good news, and an equally thoughtful critique as to why Māori accepted it. Nor does he avoid a critical examination of Samuel Marsden, his earlier role as a magistrate in Sydney and his antipathy towards Australian Aboriginals, convicts and Catholics, particularly Irish. In a similar fashion he offers a succinct critique of the Catholic French bishop Pompallier whose failure both as an administrator and as a pastor of his priests did not always advance Catholic missionary efforts.

The Conversion of the Māori is essential reading for all those who wish to appreciate more the role of early missionaries — Anglican, Methodist and Catholic — in New Zealand's history. Yates examines important issues that lie behind subsequent developments in New Zealand history. These issues include the acquisition of lands for the missionaries and their families, the sale of muskets to the Māori in the North, and what should be prioritised by missionaries in their first meetings with indigenous peoples — "civilisation" or "evangelisation". Such questions merit on-going examination and critique and hopefully Yates' publication will prompt Catholic historians to do just that. ■

the place of t

With You – The Mary Potter Hospice Story

by Bee Dawson

The Wairau Press, North Shore, Auckland (Available at Mary Potter Hospice and Hospice Shops for $35.00)

Reviewer: Judith McGinley OP

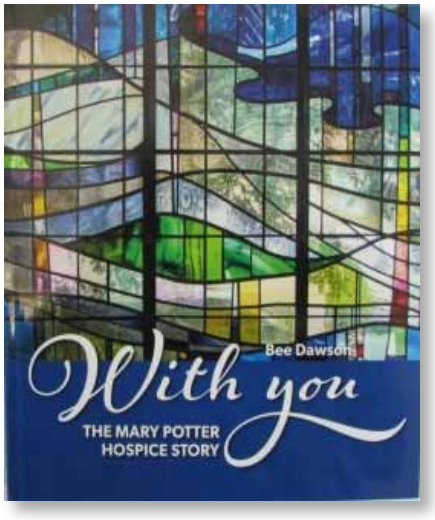
With You is a treasure and a treasury, written to celebrate 100 years of the Little Company of Mary in Aotearoa and 35 years of Mary Potter Hospice. Four golden threads hold together this variety of stories: the openness and courage, immense generosity and fidelity of the sisters of the Little Company of Mary; the willingness of people from many walks of life to recognise and respond to the "signs of the times"; the creative energy of Wellingtonians; and the power of "community": the new life that is generated when people of like mind dare to share a vision and commit to making it a reality — for the good of all.

With You is a series of stories. It is like listening to members of an extended family telling and re-telling the story of a longed for pregnancy, miraculous birth and the coming of age of a favourite child — LCM Sisters, medical specialists, financial advisers, people in high positions, people on the street, all had their own part to play. It is a multi-layered book, filled with memories and impressions of ordinary/extraordinary New Zealanders, who have given enormous amounts of time, professional expertise, commitment and love to Mary Potter Hospice. Some stories are in-depth analyses which provide the framework for the whole; while others are light brush strokes. Each has its place and is told with care. Volunteer drivers, gardeners, spiritual carers, fundraisers and networkers

he hospice

walk easily alongside highly skilled care-givers and professional medical and administration staff.

Mary Potter Hospice is not a place or a building. It is a living, growing, compassionate entity which provides care for individuals and families who are walking the last part of life's journey — themselves or alongside a loved one. Another important layer records the parallel developments of Hospice New Zealand and the



gradual recognition of palliative care as a branch of medicine in its own right. Mary Potter Hospice has played a key leadership, educative and research role in both developments.

Author Bee Dawson invites readers to engage with the whole Mary Potter Hospice enterprise and the individuals who give it life. Superb photographs by Chris Coad enhance the text.

In content and appearance *With You* is an inspiring and very beautiful book. ■

rough-hewn genius

Mr Turner

Director: Mike Leigh

Reviewer: Paul Sorrell

A new film by Mike Leigh, starring Timothy Spall deals with one of Britain's most fascinating and innovative painters, J M W Turner. What's not to like? Indeed, I wasn't disappointed. One of the UK's leading filmmakers, Leigh treats the audience like grown-ups and solicits our active attention throughout a demanding performance delivered by a first-rate cast. However, at two-and-a-half hours, it is a little too long.

Mr Turner lacks a conventional linear story line; instead, the narrative is developed in "blocs", returning again and again to scenes and situations in which Turner's later life was played out, whether on the domestic or artistic front. We see Turner busy with his life and work, calling on aristocratic patrons, mixing with colleagues at the Royal Academy, sketching boats on Margate Sands or visiting a photographer's studio (despite the perceived threat of the new medium to his art).

Rough-mannered and unkempt, equipped with an alarming repertoire of animalistic grunts and groans, Leigh's Turner is far from the refined and sensitive figure we might associate with this early-nineteenth-century master of light and colour. From the former common-law wife and two daughters whom he virtually ignores, to his witless housekeeper who is the occasional object of his rough sexual attentions, his relationships with women are problematic. Only the good-hearted Mrs Booth, his Margate landlady, is able to tame him, and his final years are spent in domestic harmony. The warm relationship he enjoys with his father is beautifully depicted at the start of the film and his generosity to the self-pitying Benjamin Haydon, an impecunious and wheedling fellow artist, shows the measure of the man.

What we fail to get — despite the procession of luminous paintings that pass before our eyes — is the measure of his art. Apart from a scene exploring the properties of a prism, and a sampling of an excruciating lecture given by Turner on his own practice, the aesthetic and spiritual impulses that drove this English precursor of impressionism remain unexplored. Disinclined to discuss his own work, in another scene Turner punctures the pretentious critiques of the young John Ruskin, who is presented as a pompous prig.

While we see the painter blowing pigment across the canvas and attacking it with his brushes, his inner life remains a blank. Perhaps this is the aspect of his illustrious subject that Leigh wants his audience to fill in for themselves. We are certainly given a wealth of material to work on. ■

Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

unintended consequences

Pope Francis has repeatedly warned against two traps that good people can fall into; clergy turning mutual support into clericalism through arrogance, and allowing zeal for truth to become an ideology. One consequence of the changes brought about by Vatican II was the growth of a split in the Church in the USA.

Vatican II called the whole Church to an examination of conscience regarding its call to "preach the Gospel". Women religious orders were leaders in this matter, examining the original aims of their founders and rewriting their constitutions so as to serve both the materially and spiritually poor. This meant moving out into all forms of contemporary society.

Disorientation resulted for many laity, priests and bishops, who lamented the disappearance of old behavioural certainties. In 1971, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, (LCWR) rewrote its statutes. Although the Vatican approved them, some Orders broke away and continued on as before. At the same time a divergence was growing among the US bishops.

In 1973 the US Supreme Court liberalized abortion (Roe v. Wade); in response the Bishops split their commission on Social Justice by establishing a separate group concerned with combating abortion. After his election in 1978 Pope John Paul II changed Pope Paul VI's policy of appointing pastorally-minded bishops in favour of men more inclined to exercise authority and demand obedience — a reflection of his Polish background of resisting communist dictatorship.

One result was an intensification of emphasis on combating abortion through law change to such a degree that two camps developed: you worked for law change, or you worked for social justice. Another was overt support for the Republican Party by some bishops — even to the extent of denying Communion to supporters of President Obama. This was akin to ideology rather than faith.

At a press conference in 2008 Cardinal Franc Rodé, John Paul's appointee as prefect of the Congregation for Religious, announced an investigation of the LCWR. He was concerned about "feminist spirit" and "irregularities or omissions in American religious life." He clearly expected to find lots of problems and failings among the Sisters, having heard about them especially from "an important representative of the US church." This was met with total shock, confusion and anger.

When Rodé's term expired shortly after, Pope Benedict appointed to the top two positions men with a significantly more open attitude (much to the dismay of a group of US bishops). The report of the investigation was released in December 2014. In it the Sisters were praised for their valuable apostolic ministry. An unexpected outcome of the Apostolic Visitation was that it became a transformative experience. Women Religious came through it with a new-found solidarity, greater strength, a renewed commitment to living the gospel and a sharper focus on their identity.

Two of the Sisters' leaders wrote: "Faith and trust in God who accompanies were clearly the prevailing virtues accessed throughout the process … seemingly the biggest unintended and unexpected consequence of the collective experience of women religious in the US was enduring hope."

workplace worship

In December a *NZ Herald* article said census figures show Christians make up 49 percent non-believers 42 percent and other religions 9 percent of the population; adherents of Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam are increasing. The *NZ Herald* also quoted Auckland University of Technology's resident Professor of Diversity, Edwina Pio's *Work and Worship,* which described how the needs of our workforce are affected, particularly the role of minority religions.

This diversity "presents the privileges and obligations of working with a diverse workforce which organizations worldwide as well as in NZ have to contend with," she says. "All these religious groups share a commitment to NZ, and to live and work in a manner that respects the country. At the same time they want to adhere to their personal faith."

The Equal Employment Opportunity Trust researches the state of NZ's workplace diversity efforts, and makes a yearly presentation to those who have excelled in this area. In one example over half of the employees of the business concerned are born overseas. Workplace training is conducted in their native language. They acknowledge cultural holidays and traditions, and they have set up a prayer room for the Muslim employees. The firm has a high retention level.

public order is important

Three people were arrested for committing one of the corporal works of mercy in public, where everyone, including children, could see them. An *America* columnist wrote: "Seems the wise Fort Lauderdale town fathers had recently passed an ordinance aimed at curtailing the unsavoury public feeding of the poor as a hazard to civic sensibilities." He quoted a local newspaper report that police arrested homeless advocate 90-year-old Arnold Abbot and ministers Dwayne Black and Mark Sims on Sunday as they handed out food to homeless people in a local park. "One of the police officers said, 'Drop that plate right now,' as if I were carrying a weapon." Abbott complained that this was inhumanity towards others. ■

the christian doctrine of discovery

Robert Consedine

In 1840 the British proclaimed sovereignty over New Zealand based on a partially signed Treaty (of Waitangi) and the "Doctrine of Discovery". Britain had previously acknowledged and promised to protect the sovereignty of some Māori tribes in 1835. This was re-affirmed in the Māori text of the Treaty, signed by most Māori in 1840. Despite this, the "right of discovery" was asserted and has permeated New Zealand political, economic and legal structures ever since.

The use of the Doctrine of Discovery was not new in British colonial history. The proclamation of sovereignty over Australia in 1788 evolved from an earlier doctrine of *Terra Nullius* — an assumption that Australia belonged to no-one.

This Doctrine of Discovery was pure fiction. The belief that the British discovered Australia in 1788 and New Zealand in 1840 was a very sophisticated self-serving lie. Both countries had highly developed indigenous cultures which pre-dated colonisation by hundreds and thousands of years.

Before colonisation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were self-governing peoples exercising sovereignty over their lands and waters. In Aotearoa, Māori had a highly developed way of life with over 40 distinct *iwi* (tribes) and hundreds of *hapu* 'each deriving their identity from the mountains, rivers and lakes'.

The Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples described the concepts of *terra nullius* and the Doctrine of Discovery as legally and morally wrong.

Who invented these doctrines?

Jesuit Michael Stogre explains: "The Doctrine of Discovery was rooted in natural and Roman law and gave the discovering power the first right of occupation if there were no previous inhabitants. If there were inhabitants the discovering power had the first right to trade with the indigenous peoples on issues of trade, allegiance, sovereignty and land sharing."

Fundamentally the right of sovereignty was assumed by a discovering power if the new lands were not ruled by a Christian king or prince.

Terra nullius was conveniently re-interpreted to mean "lands that were uncultivated according to European standards."

The evolution of this authority was the papal bulls of donation of Pope Alexander VI in 1493. The most ruthless was called *Inter Caetera* which authorised the invasion of the Americas by Spain and gave "full and free permission to invade, search out capture and subjugate . . . unbelievers and enemies of Christ wherever they may be . . . and reduce their persons to slavery." This became known as the Doctrine of Discovery.

This is the key to our understanding of the origins of today's legal doctrines in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United States.

Despite the fact that in 1537 Paul III affirmed some rights to indigenous peoples, sovereignty was reserved to the colonising Christian powers. The fact that this papal bull was called *Sublimus Deus* meaning "from God on high" tells us something about the power of the papacy at the time.

With these papal bulls the Catholic Church gave its moral authority to the slavery and slaughter of indigenous peoples. They are still a source of enormous pain in the indigenous world.

Global resistance amongst indigenous peoples to this papal Doctrine of Discovery has continued over the last 500 years.

Recently the largest leadership organisation for US women religious, with 51,600 members, has called on Pope Francis to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery to lead us "formally to repudiate the period in Christian history that used religion to justify personal and political violence against indigenous nations and peoples and their cultural, religious and territorial identities."

The nation state of New Zealand is underpinned by this Doctrine despite the fact that the Māori signatories to Te Tiriti did not cede sovereignty to the Crown. The Treaty relationship cannot be honoured within the current parliamentary structure. ■

Robert Consedine
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a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

January 1st 2015 was a foggy, cold morning and Jeph and all the children were sleeping late after bad nights on trains. We were in a small town near a favourite bird sanctuary, accompanied by our friends from Auckland — a Mum, Dad and four children. I was delighted to have a quiet room, a cup of tea, and time for thinking about the year just gone by. I felt thankful for my curious, mindful and chirpy children, for the mid-year summer hiking holiday among muscular mountains, for healthy grandmothers, for donations to our community mental health project, for my ukulele and lots of singing, for all I am learning …

I also thought about the hard bits of 2014: my broken leg and subsequent reduced options to go jogging, our friends with marriage troubles, friends with cancer, months apart from two daughters, some difficult work relationships . . . I wondered how we got through 2014 at all.Standing on the brink of 2015 I feel slightly daunted about what lies ahead. How will I manage the urgent things I have to do, want to do, or even don't want to do? . . . It'll be busy, big, bustling and there will be difficult diversions as well as joy, good surprises and fun. My reverie was cut off by eight children/teens urgently wanting breakfast . . . and then we bundled ourselves off for a day at Keoladeo Bird Sqanctuary.We got to the park too late to hire bicycles. Living with a billion people we often find that the early bird gets the worm (or the bicycle). That meant we had to walk the flat straight 10km return trip to the lakes.

Twelve year-old son Rohan, upset by this, scowled along for half an hour until we found a young python sleepily draped across the top of a tall bush. We've visited Keoladeo several times — seeing a python is quite lucky. Instantly Rohan forgot about bicycle power … and then we spotted some deer wading across a shallow pond … and a rickshaw driver pointed us to cousins of the *kotuku* elegantly picking their way through some reeds.

"Look at that blur of blue! It's a white throated kingfisher!"

Lunch was cobbled together from nearby shops, eggs boiled in the travel kettle, stale white bread, some bruised bananas and peanut butter. We were too hungry to moan much.

Off again to the watch tower, I was disappointed to find that due to a poor monsoon, there weren't many fish and therefore almost no painted storks to show our friends. Instead, there were just a few small ducks bobbing around. We stood around a little disconsolately when 15 year-old Shar noticed beautiful weaver bird-nests dangling coyly from a palm tree. We ran over, as we hadn't seen these here before. Their intricate weaving would put most doily makers to shame. What a wonderful world!

The walk back took a while. We saw more new birds, a turtle and gave a few piggy back rides … a Bharatpur teenager lent us his bike so we could shuttle a few kids on the carrier. Miraculously someone found a bathroom when some Delhi belly hit. We got back to the hotel, had cups of tea and the last skerricks of Christmas cake.

It had been a pretty good day. It hadn't gone as expected, with surprises and disappointments. But we made it through together.

I went back to my journaling for 2015. The day's little analogy gave me courage to step gladly into this New Year. There will be beautiful bonus surprises. There will be disappointments and difficult times. We'll have to make do sometimes. We'll get through together with the companionship of friends. There will be grace enough for each day. ■

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