

# Tui Motu

InterIslands

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*Good news!*

*Glad tidings!*

*Christ is risen!*

# 'and a greater than the temple is here . . .'

Memories of Christchurch and the courageous announcement by Bishop Victoria Matthews concerning the partial deconstruction of the Anglican Cathedral linger, as we hear strong reactions to this from distressed locals. They see this building as the symbolic 'heart' of their city. Overtones of the temple in Jerusalem, of sanctuary and sacred space, so deeply embedded in our human psyche, come to the fore.

There is almost a natural link, then, to the gospel of the cleansing in the temple which was read in our liturgies for the third Sunday of Lent. This pushes us to think of temple, sanctuary and sacred space as we reach forward to the great feast of Easter.

From the very beginning of his Gospel, John is asking us to focus deeply on the meaning of a Jesus who

overturns and reinvents accepted ideas. What more daring than Jesus' suggestion, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up' (Jn 2:19). The deliberate Johannine misunderstanding is hinting strongly at the deeper meaning of what being 'raised up' may be. Resurrection remains a revolutionary idea 2000 years onwards.

St John portrays Jesus as the one who is in himself the temple of the Lord. In the light of Easter, we know that the privileged place of meeting between God and us fragile human beings is the person of Jesus as the risen Lord.

The three articles which we publish to celebrate the feast of Easter remind me that the resurrection of Jesus makes no sense unless we see it in tandem with all that precedes, especially his death. Death and

resurrection are inextricably intertwined, in a way that reflects our life and living, and gives hope of new life. Joy Cowley (*pp 6-7*) talks of a 'Life School' in which we find all our failures wrapped up in God's Love; and that Christ has been down all our negative paths 'so that he could be with us every step of the Way'. Jenny Dawson (*pp 8-9*) writes powerfully, "Resurrections follow deaths, they do not follow fainting spells." For her "sadness and sorrow are not opposites to joy but are rather the broken ground from which joy can grow." And we see this in the moving story of Jimmy Tadao in Muntinlupa prison. Glynn Cardy (*pp 10-11*) sees Easter as a puzzle about God, that God is bigger than our reflections that fit everything together neatly – there is infinitely more, and because of the resurrection.

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## Front Cover Photograph: SIMON DEVITT

The photo is of the exterior of the Aubert chapel, St Joseph's Church, Mt Victoria, Wellington (see pp 14-17)

## SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

The wonder of the foundational pattern of the death and resurrection can be seen in the architecture of St. Joseph's Church on Mt Victoria (*Mike Fitzsimons articles, pp 14-17*). Here it is the symbols of the *koru* and the cross that are interwoven in a building. The *koru* has the power of the symbol of growth, of life, of opening out to the world, while the cruciform axis of the church is the solid foundation around which the rest is built. It would be hard to find a church anywhere that expresses so well in its structure the highly expressive pattern of death and resurrection so much at the heart of who we are as Christians.

Daniel O'Leary and Tony Eyre take us into the power of story — narrative has an intrinsic power to strike the heart with its truth. And the stories of humanity in its messiness which we meet here express once more that sense that 'only what is fallen can be raised'.

This common thread of the fallen and the resurrected weaves its way through much of this Easter edition of *Tui Motu*. May the power of the resurrection find its depth within you, and in the life of our fragile world. ***Christus surrexit vere!***  
Christ is truly risen! **KT**

The stations of the cross  
should number seventeen  
not two times seven; three extra  
added onto the Resurrection scene  
would lend courage to generations  
of grieving mothers. The story  
should not end with Jesus  
coming back to Life from Death  
only to be taken again – stolen  
by angels right before  
his Mother's eyes.

What of Mary  
after the Ascension?

Mary should be shown  
pacing stone floors with rage  
and longing, walking desert dunes  
on bare, blistered feet, twisting  
silk into countless useless knots,  
embroidering her loss  
into the spines of chairs.

Yes, Mary should be seen,  
lying awake at night, wondering  
about God and Gabriel,  
not praying but waiting,  
waiting for the simplicity  
of sleep, for her wordless  
sorrow to rise.

– Claire Beynon



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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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## communities

Kathleen Rushton in her article 'raised by Jesus, healed and sent' (TM, Feb 12) writes of households. These households of Jesus' time might better be described as communities. Christian communities invoke Jesus' promise 'where two or more are gathered in my name I am there among them.' (Mt 18:20)

In the same issue, Michael Scanlan writes of other communities who celebrate festivals. It is proper to celebrate festivals because in this way we teach, learn about and celebrate our traditions and pass those traditions to the next generation. Diwali, Ramadan, Yom Kippur, Christmas and Easter are each about renewal and new creation. In these festivals of the Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Christian communities we can see another of Jesus' promises 'I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate (the Holy Spirit) to be with you forever.' (Jn 14:26)

**Brian Fitzpatrick, Pakuranga**

## our father who art in heaven!

Greetings Reverend Fathers,

I prithee, whence cometh this latest version of our revered prayer, the 'Our Father'.

In days of yore when I was just a callow lad, this style of the 'Our Father' was common and had been for some centuries (William Shakespeare would have certainly approved).

The second Vatican Council called for a revision of the Catholic Liturgy and an increased use of the vernacular. Where in modern English vernacular is the use of art, thou, thy and thine to be found? While having a long history and being familiar to many Christians throughout the world, this latest version does not sound like a good translation.

Whither goeth our Church when it wrought such an archaic form of the 'Our Father'?

I hast nary an inkling of why would we even suggest that the Father would 'lead us into temptation'.

Is this form of the 'Our Father'

really going to lead the Church into the modern world or is it, durst I say it, a further attempt to close the door on Vatican II?

Your sometimes obedient servant,

**Barry Smyth, Whangarei**

## of t-shirts and other things

T-shirts are for advertising, raising issues, making the observer react. They can be provocative, stupid or soul-searching.

That's what caught my attention in the article by Elspeth McLean (TM, Feb 12) in which she tells her very moving story of loss and grief at the early death of her husband.

The writer then goes on to refer to a T-shirt which was worn by some at the trial of Professor Sean Davison, originally charged with the attempted murder of his mother. Unfortunately for the reader, she omitted to quote the words on it, which caused her to call it 'simple, stupid'. The T-shirt carried these words EVERY MUM NEEDS A SEAN.

This T-shirt was inspired by another sad story of the death of a dearly loved elderly Dunedin woman, Dr Patricia Davison. It is a story of prolonged suffering and agony of body and soul which drove her loving son to help her out of her misery at her request. For this he was convicted as a criminal for admitting that he helped care for his mother *in extremis*.

I totally agree with Mrs McLean that the issue and debate on end-of-life choice should focus on 'care', the best care for 'the dying patient and care for the people looking after them'.

Those of us who promote medically assisted dying (aka voluntary euthanasia) and those who oppose, are at one in this matter of care. That's why whoever designed the provocative T-shirt, the message was just that — how can a loving son care for his dying mother when our law forced her to endure an self-imposed hunger fast for 33 long and painful days? How then did the law show 'care' in this case? Was her prolonged

## 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.

suffering an act of justice? What about mercy?

Your writer goes on to ridicule the care-full choice of death as 'popping their clogs a bit early'. Does that not make fun of this mutual act of care, mother and son?

It seems a pity that your writer then rehearses the old and snide comment about family pressure forcing them 'into believing they [the dying patient] are surplus to requirements'. Following which, she raises the 'fear' argument that euthanasia — always omitting the essential word 'voluntary' — will threaten 'oldies and people with disabilities'.

What people who support 'end-of-life' choice want — and they are about 70 percent of the polls surveyed over the past 20 years — is a new law that protects the sick-unto-death person from any such abuse and also protects their right to choose the time and place of their own death, while all the time being cared for by their loved ones and assisted in dying with the best medical professional care.

This should be the basis of our serious and pressing debate and I challenge *Tui Motu* to open this dialogue. There is much more for us to reason together. Maybe one day soon we will all, whatever our faith and life experience, wear the same T-shirt saying 'Caring in life and in death'.

**John Murray (Very Rev), Wellington**

# how truly diverse are we?

*The Editor reports and comments on a recent lecture.*

**A**s a 1960s Beatle generation teenager, I well remember that Dunedin sported one authentic restaurant only — a fine Italian restaurant called La Scala. Can you believe that? Now walking down the northern part of George Street, I am continually surprised by the choice of good food available in an array of ethnic restaurants, and I rejoice in that. These restaurants are a sign that we have become a more ethnically diverse nation, and because of that more cosmopolitan. What are some of the deeper implications of this?

Recently, I was privileged to be at the 9th National Interfaith Conference held in Hamilton. Over two tightly packed days, many interesting keynote addresses and talks were given. But one caught my eye especially. It was entitled: “How diverse are we, really? Quantifying religious diversity in New Zealand.” The speaker was Todd Nachowitz, a writer and researcher in population and migration issues. As a professional census number cruncher, he had some fascinating statistics to share, and conclusions to draw.

**a. Ethnicity:** In 1906 the population of New Zealand was 93.7% European, and 5% Maori. By 1956, 92.7% of our population were European, and 6.3% Maori — virtually the same. But by 2006, the change is remarkable: Europeans accounted for only 67.6%, Maori 14.6%, Asians 9.2% and Pacific Islanders 6.9%. And a major proportion of the change in that 50 year period had occurred only since the 1990s.

**b. Religious affiliation:** In 1906, Christians made up 95.3% of New Zealand’s population. By 1956, 87.4% of New Zealanders were Christian. By 2006, there is again a marked turnaround. Christians now show up as 56.0% of the population.

Todd estimates that at some unknown time within the next couple of years, New Zealand will move from being a predominantly (and nominally) Christian society to one where fewer than 50% will proclaim themselves as Christian. Please note my Christian bias!

**c. ‘No religion’:** Just as fascinating, however, is the fact that in 2006 34.6% of the respondents to the census had ‘no religion’. At 1.3 million people, this number is double that recorded in the 1991 census, and the largest category after ‘Christianity’. This statistic seems a clear sign that there is growing secularization going on in New Zealand society. Todd nuances this:

“Within an emerging multi-religious context, it is especially important to view these respondents as having a belief system that is as equally valid as those that choose adherence to more traditional faith-based beliefs. The absence of religious belief may simply indicate the conscious choice of an individual or group to pursue the principles of an alternate belief system. This might imply a deep conviction in the principles of science, awe of the natural world or adherence to atheism, agnosticism, humanism, rationalism, or any one of many such moral and/or ethical philosophical ideals.”

**d.** Perhaps most important of all is to relate those statistics outlining **increased ethnic diversity with an important and growing religious diversity** of New Zealand. The increase in non-Christian religions has been brought about mainly through immigration from Asia. The 2006 figure, of 9.2% of New Zealand’s population coming from Asia, means that we now have 52,362 Buddhists, 64,392 Hindus, 36,072 Muslims, 6858 Jews, 9507 Sikhs, and 1,071 Zoroastrians living

amongst us. And as the numbers of migrants are likely to increase, so will our religious diversity.

New Zealand is still relatively new to this status of being a multicultural and multi-faith nation. This is one of the biggest challenges facing us today. Like most western nations, we are essentially a religiously illiterate nation. We know about our own beliefs, but few of us understand the beliefs and practices of other faiths. This calls for us to gain a better appreciation of another faith through some personal study, and not being afraid to ask our friend or neighbour who belongs to a different faith to take us along to their place of worship. Or when a single faith community reaches out and says ‘Come and join us on our open day’ (e.g. during Islam Awareness week), other faith communities, especially Christian ones, could take up this offer, organizing members to attend. Many other possibilities abound!

So far we have largely avoided the ethnic tension, discrimination, racism and violence faced by many countries with inward migration. This gives us no reason for complacency. We must counter these possibilities by fostering public policies designed to strengthen and improve social cohesion within New Zealand society, policies that will move us from mere tolerance of difference into the sphere of active engagement between cultures and faiths.

Todd concludes that a robust and culturally diverse population where freedom of belief is fostered is a strong indicator of a nation’s life and internal security. ■

*Todd Nachowitz is a PhD student in the Department of Political Studies at the University of the Waikato.*

# rethinking: a personal journey

*The writer reaches the place of Easter in her personal journey through reflecting on the love of God poured out in the Incarnation. This process of 'rethinking' is seen very clearly through the lens of going deeper.*

Joy Cowley

**W**e begin the Lenten journey of rethinking, with Ash Wednesday. Rethinking is what repentance means. Let us forget about guilt. Guilt is a sin, an indulgence of the ego that will block growth. What we bring to Ash Wednesday is our smallness and the need that comes through persistent failure. There will be some shame too, regret, a weariness of spirit, for Life School is difficult and we haven't done well in many of the exams. For most of us, it's been another year of the same old stuff, almost a repetition of Ash Wednesday last year. We cry out to the Beloved, 'Lord, have mercy!'

He says, 'It's all right. I know how it is. Go deeper.'

## discover the blessing

We go deeper and discover the blessing, all our failure wrapped in his love. No matter how many times we fall, Love will pick us up, give strength to our weariness and set us back on the path. We realise that our lives are not measured by our own definitions of success or failure, but by our willingness to engage in the struggle. He helps us understand that all growth comes through tension. That is a natural law. It is our effort that has his blessing, our failure that attracts his love. If we were perfect we would be complete and without growth. We would also be without our need for him. So we raise our emptiness to him and say, 'Okay Lord, but sometimes it gets too hard. How do we cope?'

And he says to us, 'I am with you. Go deeper.'

## find self-acceptance

Going deeper, we find self-acceptance. We are who we are meant to be, frail, shadowed people, growing towards the light because our roots are firmly in the mud. In some mysterious way, the darkness serves the light, and we are able to see the seed of new growth in our shadows. We know that if we try to reject the darkness within us, we will end up in a battle of self against self and become Life School drop-outs. The Beloved's way is the way of transcendence, journeying through the darkness towards his light. But this will bring us to questions of accountability and responsibility, so we say, 'Lord, what about sin?'

He says, 'It will happen, but it is also your teacher. Learn from it and go deeper.'

## own who we are

So we go deeper and discover the importance of owning who we are. If we place blame elsewhere, or try to reject our sin without learning from it, we fail an exam. We refuse to grow. Because sin against others is in a social context, the sacrament of reconciliation is important. That is our responsibility. But it is not enough to brush accountability away with a prayer of contrition and a few Hail Marys in an empty church. In the words of an old TV advertisement, it is the putting right that counts.

Habits of sin are like the current in a river making a sandbank that will eventually block its flow. To remove the blockage the current must be reversed. It is simple, but not easy:

a phone call to ask for forgiveness; a kindness to make up for a judgmental thought; an act of generosity to compensate for meanness; truth to replace a lie. Putting a wrong right is bruising for the ego and so good for the soul. We are reminded of Mother Teresa's response to the journalist who wanted to know why she chose to work with the dying. She said, 'I do it to combat the Hitler within me.'

We know what she meant. On our Lenten journey we say to the Beloved, 'Lord, this rethinking has come to a very deep place.'

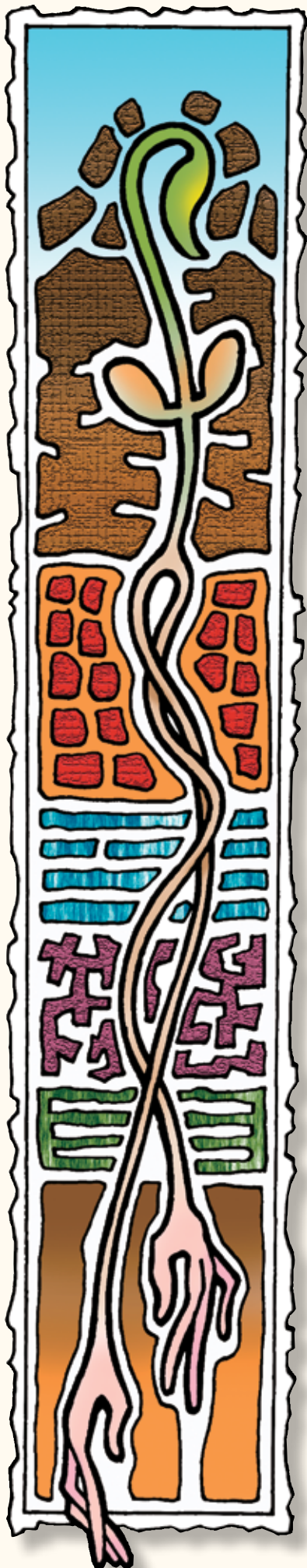
And he says, 'Good, but it's not deep enough. Go deeper.'

## the place of sacrifice

He is talking about Lenten sacrifice. There are so many levels to it. All sacrifice is good if it comes from the generosity of the heart rather than a sense of duty. At a deep level we try to give up any distraction that gets in the way of our awareness of God's presence in ourselves and each other; we sacrifice blindness; we sacrifice noise; we replace the 'me first' instinct with a larger goal for the greater good. We come eagerly to Holy Thursday and the *mandatum*, knowing that foot-washing brings us to Love so great that God kneels before us wearing an apron of service. This is the kind of service we want to do. We pray, 'Lord, we want to follow your example. We long to be like you. Make us humble. Make us foot-washers of your people.'

The Beloved says to us, 'If you would do that, you will have to go deeper still.'





### the place of crucifixion

We know what he means when the crucifixion comes. Oh, there have been little crucifixions and resurrections before. We've learned that this is the way of growth, the grain of wheat parable played out in our lives yet again. But sooner or later comes the big crucifixion. It is huge and it seems so unfair. Loss creates a great hole of despair and we lose sight of God. We cry into emptiness, 'How could you let this happen to me?' but there is no answer, nothing but darkness. For a while we seal our tombs with a heavy stone of bitterness and anger.

### easter day comes

Then, in its own time, comes Easter Sunday and the stone is rolled away. We come out slowly, still weak but different. The great emptiness created by loss, is now filled with light. We are transformed and the world is transformed. It's as though we are reborn. We see God shining at the heart of everyone and everything.

Then the Beloved says our name in the way he has said it since the beginning of time. He is with us, closer than breath. His light is our light. Now we know where he was in our despair. He was with us on our cross, with us in the tomb. The love of God poured into incarnation, did it all before us so that he could be with us every step of the Way.

The truth is now too deep to be expressed in words, but in this place of resurrection we understand just a little about the mystery of Lent and his words, 'I am with you always, even to the end of the world.' ■

*Joy Cowley is a well-known children's author whose latest children's book, **The Easter Story**, was launched recently and is reviewed in this issue.*

## Easter Hymn

Christ ascends to God! Behold him  
here, where earth and heaven meet.  
Unimagined powers enfold him,  
mortals worship at his feet.

Alleluia, Alleluia!  
all his mission now complete.

God receives him into mystery-  
clouds of glory veil the sight;  
no more bound to human history,  
strong as love and free as light.

Alleluia, Alleluia!  
now to reign in his own right.

He is with us. Do not seek him  
throned in splendour far above:  
Meet him here where truth and freedom  
now reveal his work of love.

Alleluia, Alleluia!  
countless signs his presence prove.

Universal Lord, now reigning  
deep in nature's smallest part,  
all things live by your sustaining,  
time and space your work of art.

Alleluia, Alleluia!  
praise to Christ, creation's heart.

© Marnie Barrell

*from 'Hope is our Song'*  
New Zealand Hymnbook Trust  
2009

# paschal joy — alleluia!

*The writer reminds us from personal experience that the joy of Easter may come only after the broken ground of sorrow and sadness has been plumbed.*

*At the same time, this joy may affect whole communities as their situation is transformed politically.*

Jenny Dawson

I have to confess that I can't remember the last time I had a conversation about paschal — or resurrection — joy. That was until I finished the phone call asking me to write this article. When I told the friend who had been having coffee with me about the topic she immediately said "I know about that. I've been resurrected. From feeling wicked and knotted up with guilt, I now have a sense of wonder and even of joy. The teaching I heard from the church of my childhood had taken that away from me but now Christian people, especially through therapy and friendships, have given me resurrection. Before, I knew love only in my head. Now it touches my heart. I have learned that traumatic memory can almost be dislodged from the brain so the positive thoughts become the focus. Then once you know this, you learn new skills to live again."

## place of personal experience

Indeed, if paschal joy is about hope and new life, her story reminds me that indeed Christ is risen and she is a witness to resurrection. Her personal experience means something that words or doctrine cannot. As we talked, I remembered a low time when my first marriage was very difficult. It seemed that the relationship could only get worse. I could not see any healthy way ahead for us together, and I wrote in my journal 'Resurrections follow deaths, they do not follow fainting spells.' As it turned out, acknowledgement of the

death of that marriage was what eventually led both my ex-husband and me to a depth of joy that we hadn't expected. I discovered a simplicity of hope and grace and gratitude that for me was not negated by the loneliness and uncertainty of being single again. Gradually I began to see that sadness and sorrow are not opposites to joy but are rather the broken ground from which joy can grow.

Yet that joy is sometimes far from sight. I am writing this Easter article before Lent begins because I have learned in the past that the Lent experience focusses me so much on the journey into suffering that the joy, while still present, sits deep below the surface, sometimes able to be plumbed only very deliberately and perhaps only in listening to the words of others.

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**The paschal joy of Easter is deeply personal and intimate . . . Yet it is also political and transformative . . .**

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## living easter intentionally

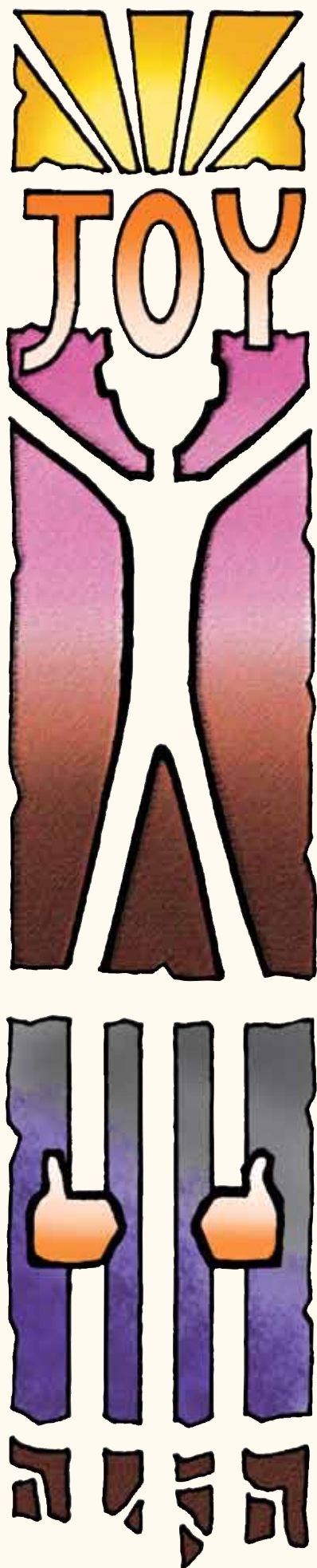
If we are truly an Easter people, as Bill Wallace's celebration hymn reminds us, then I want to talk more often than I have about that joy and also to live it intentionally: "We are an Easter people, ours is an Easter faith. Our tears are freed to flow and heal our shattered hopes and hearts . . . Christ is risen in our lives!"

It is sometimes said that we are an Easter people, living in a Good Friday world of pain and suffering. The writer of the letter to the Colossians declares that we have already died, and our life is hidden in Christ. Death is real, with all its painful potentiality, but the victory of Jesus Christ is more real yet. Hidden in Christ, we might dare to live in defiance of what death may yet do to us. Our small experiences of new life out of apparent hopelessness gradually teach us that death is not the end; instead, the end is the beginning with the one who bears the marks of his death on his risen, living body.

## muntinlupa prison

I had an experience of real Easter life in 1990 when an ecumenical group of us visited Muntinlupa Prison outside Manila. We were there to see Jimmy Tadao, the unjustly imprisoned leader of the farmers' union, and while we could speak with him, our Christian group was not allowed to share eucharist with any of the prisoners. Yet they told us clearly they wanted that celebration to happen, where they could see it. Despite the ugly context, they needed to be reminded of the life of the risen Christ, in the world, in us and in themselves. We visitors shared bread and wine in the blazing heat of the stark prison courtyard while the prisoners watched us intensely through the bars of their cells. Somehow there was a setting-free that day.





### divine reversal

Our faith story reminds us often that in God's time, old wrongs can be set right; destroyed cities can be rebuilt, oppressed peoples can be set free and the poor will be filled with good things. People who have faced imminent attack have sometimes said that when one has been set free by God in Jesus Christ from the fear of death, then there is nothing that any tyrant can threaten that will undo the hope that Easter brings. In a Good Friday world, Easter people proclaim the truth: claimed by the Crucified One, our life begins in the grave.

### no playing at 'pollyanna'

The hope and trust that make it possible to live this with authenticity come from celebration of Easter joy in our ordinary lives. It is not about being a Pollyanna, playing the 'glad game' in the face of pain. Nor is it about developing some scientific understanding of life after death. I don't have any energy for trying to understand or explain resurrection but I am deeply heartened when I hear suffering people express such a strong resurrection vision that they can find hope to sustain them.

### annual easter message

For instance, in 2011 at Eastertime, 13 heads of churches in the Holy Land issued their annual message including these words. "We find sadness competes with the joy of Easter as we witness the violence which has erupted in the face of peaceful demonstrations by people throughout the Arab world these past months." They described crucifixion as an ongoing reality for many, in the face of ever-present violence against innocent people. "In [Christ's] resurrection we experience his victory over violence and death and we embrace a vision of the future in which all people live together in harmony."

Yet they concluded their statement: "This vision gives us hope to renew our faith in the face of despair,"

the leaders said. "The cross is ever before us day by day and the cross is empty. New life has come. Christ is risen. We are risen. Alleluia."

### a vision for full life

The paschal joy of Easter is deeply personal and intimate, springing sometimes from the broken ground of almost unspeakable pain in the lives of individuals. Yet it is also political and transformative as whole communities find in it a vision that calls them to continue to walk into and work for a just and peaceful future.

In the darkness of barely-discernible dawning light, the cry continues to ring out: "Christ is risen. He is risen indeed, alleluia!" May we be agents of this risen life to one another. ■

*Jenny Dawson is an Anglican priest who is currently Bishop's Chaplain for Hawkes Bay in the Anglican Diocese of Waiapu.*

### The Word

Te aroha  
a word that breathes  
as the sea in its tide  
draws on gravel  
breaking between waves  
and receding again

Te aroha  
a word that cries  
and laughs and sings  
in the gathered  
whanau and falls  
into silence again

Te aroha  
a word that sighs  
in the leaves as the  
wind rises and dies  
in the trees again

Te aroha  
- author unknown

# bits and pieces, holes and holiness

*There are pieces of life we call the Easter puzzle. They take a whole lifetime to put together.*

*Post Easter, how do we relate to one another?*

*How do we walk with suffering?*

*How do we touch our Earth?*

Glynn Cardy

What I like about Easter is how it doesn't all piece together. It's like a jigsaw puzzle but with extra bits and missing bits, and where the two don't merge to provide a clear-cut result. There are superfluous pieces, and there are gaping holes. It's a puzzle unlike any other I know.

## the goddess eostre

It's what you get when you take a bunch of ancient fertility rites marking the start of spring. That's where the goddess Eostre comes in. You merge those rites with the execution of a political-religious rebel and its aftermath. Then you transplant the whole thing way down here to these Southern Isles. Lastly, you mark the occasion with cards, choirs, chocolate, crosses, and church-going. Oh, and almost forgot, bunnies.

## a unique puzzle

It's an intriguing complicated puzzle. If you presume to know what the Easter riddle is all about, then prepare to be surprised. There are awkward bits that don't fit. There are holes, like that tomb, which defy ready explanation. There are traditions, like the bunny, that ridicule the sombre and serious.

It's a puzzle that touches people in a variety of ways. There is the uncomfortable suffering and death stuff. Well, at least it should be uncomfortable. There is the celebratory life is for living, new beginnings stuff. Like flowers, cards, and eggs. Then there is the spirituality of chocolate. Yeah, right! Like I said there are Easter bits that don't fit anywhere.



I met a musician at a party once. He had a day job and everyone called him by the title that this gave him. But in his heart he was first and always a musician.

"At Easter," he said, "I need to sing. So I look for a church where I can join the choir and sing." That was the alpha and omega of his Easter theology and his church-going for the year. There wasn't anything more to be said. Words can get in the way of faith.

Biblical scholars often make the mistake of thinking that the puzzle of Easter is about something that happened around 33 CE. Did the dead Jesus come back to life? And if so what was that 'life'? Easter for them is making sense of an 'historical' event.

Sermons, including many of my own, ponder on these pieces called death, life, and their meaning.

Although some think the puzzle is as simple as copying the cover of the jigsaw box, I don't think the Bible has all the answers. Indeed Easter doesn't give answers, it invites questions.

## enlarging faith space

So while debunking literalist beliefs and the assumptions behind them is important in enlarging the faith space so that doubters and seekers have the intellectual and spiritual room to doubt and seek, such debunking doesn't explain Easter. It just says, "This is a really big puzzle!"

Too often discussions about Easter are on this binary level of 'do you believe Jesus physically rose supernaturally from the dead?' Some say yes, while I and others say no. But this yes/no, right/wrong approach doesn't really take us anywhere.

Rather I think Easter is multi-dimensional. I think it touches on

how we relate to one another. I think it touches on how we walk with suffering and seek to transform it, in ourselves and in our communities. I think it touches on our relationship with the earth — the deteriorating macro-context of our lives into which we are wedded. I think it touches with sacred mystical experience beyond the power of words and exactitude and dogma.

### earthitecture found

One Easter I was standing on an English tump — read: mound. This tump is Neolithic — a very old piece of earthitecture. We were awaiting the dawn. It was freezing. Literally. It was also very beautiful.

The local parish had this tradition of traipsing across a field, climbing the tump in the dark, celebrating the first Mass of Easter, then going to a parishioner's home for a ripper of a breakfast. They'll be doing it again this year.

The local witches also joined in, as did a number of curious heathens, and I imagine some of the four-legged and furry kinds. The pivotal part of the liturgy was not the raising of the host, the chanting, or the readings.

It was the dawn. The dawn trumped everything. The dawn swept us all up into her embrace: priests, parishioners, liturgy, witches, and wonderers.

### things ancient and modern

It felt like we were part of something that was before but embraced Jesus, that was ancient but current, that was simple and yet profound. Kind of like God.

The Easter puzzle is about God. That's why there are holes and bits that don't fit. Of course some people's God all neatly fits together and there's no place for extras. That God passed into irrelevance for me many years ago. Yet it's discomfiting, this God with holes and extra bits.

I live with the discomfit of the relationship between death and life, between what is passing away and what is coming into being, between letting go and holding on. This puzzle unfortunately doesn't come closer to being understood let alone solved by talking about it. Maybe it's better to be walked about instead.

### find a labyrinth

That's why you'll find a candle-lit

labyrinth decked out in St Matthew's during Holy Week. We walk Easter. We journey into the contradictions, the heartaches, the uncertainties and insecurities. We name death. The journey doesn't stop though at the labyrinth's centre, although it's tempting. We journey out into the possibilities, the relationships, and the little joys and loves. We name life. Easter is a pilgrimage.

But again it is all sounding too cerebral. It's best to leave one's logical brain on a coat peg and walk and feel. Like with music, to rationalize it you risk losing it. Like with the dawn, you can't explain its sacredness. Similarly with love. Similarly I suspect with God. Maybe we lost something of God when the first theological treatise was written?

For isn't faith really seven words: Feel, love, relate, include, be, listen, do? The puzzle made simple. Of course, the holes and the extras still remain. There's plenty of room in God for all the misfits, mislaid ideas, and mad notions not yet thought. ■

*Glynn Cardy is an Anglican priest who is Vicar of St Matthew's-in-the-City, Auckland.*



## The heart jumps up in fear to see the mouths

Church of 'Santa Maria degli Angeli', Rome

There are Polish sculptures on the bronze doors, two young men, their heads bandaged, their mouths also covered with cloth. Inside, there's the huge Carrara marble head of John the Baptist, his mouth with tapes across it. The heart jumps up in fear to see the mouths bandaged up like this, the cloth tied so tightly.

The angel flies out of the wall. She bends before him. She marvels at the mechanical contraption of his wings. Maybe she goes down on one knee. The curve of her back is like the sweet curve of a hill, a hill with water running steady through its deep roots, a hill that's holy in its green silence.

What does it take to cut out the tongue of another?  
What does it take to stitch up your own mouth? To not say as some of them refuse to say? And then it's left up to those others to make the body do the talking. What does it take to do nothing?

She will do something. And we will be left to pray,  
just as we prayed for the horses at Borodino.

– Bernadette Hall



# 'how can I lose hope?'

*Caritas Jerusalem Secretary General Claudette Habesch knows all about oppression. On her recent visit to New Zealand, she talked to Michael Fitzsimons about her desperate hopes for a lasting solution in the Middle East, a day when justice will be served and the States of Israel and Palestine can co-exist.*

Claudette Habesch has had a busy day visiting colleagues and talking to groups in Wellington, including the girls at St Mary's College. They were amazing, she says.

"One girl came up and hugged me after she heard my story."

Her story, the Palestinian story, is one that the world seems to have tired of hearing. Perhaps that's why she has so much energy to tell it to me one more time at the end of the day and so grateful for my simply being there to listen.

Our interview starts with a lengthy silence and I am not sure if she is carefully choosing her words or praying. Her face is full of character and warmth. Her very deep sense of identity as a Palestinian woman is the source of everything she is about to say. Her message comes straight from the heart.

## her story

"My name is Claudette Habesch and I'm a Palestinian Christian Arab from Jerusalem. I thank God I'm still able to live in Jerusalem, but I live under an Israeli occupation. I'm not a free person in my city. It has lasted too long — 45 years — and I don't understand why the world that calls itself civilised and developed allows this to continue."

At the age of 7, Claudette was expelled from her family house in Jerusalem during the War of Independence in 1948. Israelis moved into the lovely stone houses and well-to-do area where she lived, evicting all Palestinian residents. Claudette's family was in Jericho at the time, waiting for

the troubles to pass. They could never return home again and never received any compensation for the loss of their home.

"The state of Israel was not established in the desert," says Claudette. "You often hear: 'a people without a land were given a land without a people', but this isn't true. They were given my land, my homeland, my home."

## israel established in 1948

"When Israel was established in 1948, we joined 750,000 other Palestinians as dispossessed refugees dispersed around the world — in camps in the West Bank, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. My father moved to Jordan because he lost all his property. He had been well off. He lost access to the banks, access to his office, and to his work. He had to take care of five children. I remember he brought a typewriter and started looking for work in Jordan. We moved to Jordan and were brought up there, and we still have family there. I married someone who lives in East Jerusalem."

"In 1948 Israel was established on 78 percent of historic Palestine. But the 22 percent left, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, became part of Jordan. Up to today I carry a Jordanian passport. Gaza was put under Egyptian administration. After the famous Six Day War of 1967, Israel occupied the rest of Palestine and took the remaining 22 percent. Today they occupy all Palestine and all Jerusalem. In July 1967 they annexed East Jerusalem to West Jerusalem, against international law. Israel ratified the Fourth

Geneva Convention, but this doesn't matter; they violate international law every day. I am worried about the deafening silence of the international community."

Claudette believes the silence that has preserved the unjust status quo has its origins in guilt over what happened to the Jews during the Second World War.

"Israel was helped to exist in my homeland, in my home, in my bed (I always thought: who deserved to hug my own doll more than I did?) by Europe's guilty conscience. The Palestinians were not the actors in the horrible events of the twentieth century, but they have paid the price."

## place of un resolutions

There have been so many United Nations resolutions that have failed to be implemented, says Claudette.

"The war of 1948 brought resolution 191: right to return or right to compensation. Palestinians insist on this resolution but it has been ignored. There have been many other resolutions too, and none have been implemented. Why can't the UN implement them? UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon spoke at the conference on democracy in the Arab World in Beirut and said that the Israeli occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories and violence against civilians must end. Nobody can be clearer but who is listening?"

After all this time and decades of dispossession, Palestinians have made a huge concession, says Claudette. They accept a two-party solution, based on the 1967 borders, a Palestinian State living next to Israel



Claudette Habesch: "Today I'm a refugee, an eternally displaced person, in my own city."

on 22 percent of historic Palestine.

"I've accepted that and it is a huge concession. But I accept it. Today I'm a refugee, an eternally displaced person, in my own city. But I want peace for both people, for my grandchildren and Israeli grandchildren."

This position, however, is far from acceptable to Israel. Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem mean that "what remains is less than half the 22%. With those settlements you have no possibility to make a contiguous Palestine. It splits us up. Extremist Israeli inhabitants of the West Bank are protected by the Israeli army. They steal the cattle, burn the trees and take the produce of the Palestinians.

### **security for all?**

"Israel talks about security all the time — who takes care of my security? Who takes care of the security of 1.5 million Palestinians who carry Israeli citizenship — these are the Palestinians who remained in Palestine after 1948. They've had difficulties; they are not treated as first class citizens. In the West Bank and Gaza there are 4.2 million Palestinians, with 1.5 million in the Gaza Strip."

Despite the decades of division and oppression, Claudette keeps her hope alive, underpinned by a Catholic faith that believes in resurrection.

"Yes. I'm a believer. I come from the Church of Jerusalem, the Church of Calvary, of the Sepulchre, the Church of the Empty Tomb, of the Resurrection, of the Victory of Life Over Death! How can I lose hope? This is why I talk about peace for both peoples. I don't believe in peace only for Palestinians, this is what I tell the international community. We have to learn to share this land, and not to divide the land."

Why, asks Claudette, should this situation be such an insoluble problem? The idea of the international community walking away from the conflict outrages her.

"Why is it insoluble? Is the international community so weak? They don't dare speak or act against, or implement, United Nations resolutions. When the Palestinian people applied to be recognised as a member of the United Nations, we needed nine votes in the Security Council, but got only eight. New Zealand had a campaign in favour of our recognition, which we appreciated very much. We

need people who have courage, and I think New Zealand had courage. We need to stop the bloodshed."

Claudette has worked at Caritas Jerusalem since 1978, one of a staff of 92 who are responsible for programmes in Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem. Her enthusiasm for the role has never waned, nor her gratitude for supporters of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand's programmes.

"New Zealand is a partner in many of these programmes, and has always responded to emergency appeals. We have health clinics in the West Bank and Gaza, reaching out to women and children in schools. Being friends with Palestine doesn't mean you are the enemy of Israel. On the contrary, it is an aid to peace.

"I get most satisfaction when a mother comes into our social services department with a crying baby in her hands, and leaves smiling. What is better than this? We are able to provide quality medical services, give children access to higher education and make a difference in their lives. With access to our income-generating programmes, people often no longer need our help." ■

# more than a building

*There's more to building a new church than creating a fine-looking building.*

*Michael Fitzsimons looks at how St Joseph's Church in Mount Victoria, Wellington, reflects the character and aspirations of a parish community.*

These days St Joseph's parish in Wellington presents a very modern face to the world. With its striking contemporary architecture, the new St Joseph's — a bright, bold statement of a church — overlooks a ceaseless flow of traffic heading to the Mt Vic tunnel and beyond that the serene green of the Basin Reserve.

The parish itself began in the 19th century on the other side of the Basin Reserve next to the original St Patrick's College built in 1885. The octagonal church that was built there lasted until 1945 when it was demolished and the parish moved into a renovated hall next to the Sisters of Mercy school in Patterson St to await construction of their new church. There, in cramped quarters, the parish survived and flourished with dreams for a brand new church, perhaps even a grand cathedral.

"Twice there had been designs for a new cathedral, and both times they were on the verge of construction when the plans were abandoned," says Mark Richards, former parishioner of St Joseph's and head of the building committee that oversaw the development of the new church.

"Parishioner Bill Pierce headed a building committee for 35 years but they could never get a building permit, because of the proposed motorway. By the late 1990s the community had grown to 50-60 families. Change was essential but the questions were, 'Can we do anything with this? Do we take the congregation to St Mary's? Or move to Kilbirnie? Where is our future?' We had a series of discussions with the parish community and took the challenge to the Cardinal (Thomas Williams). Do we close the parish or do we do something with it? We can't stand still."

## breakthrough

The breakthrough came with a deal with Transit New Zealand whereby the parish gave Transit NZ access to the tunnel in exchange for land that the parish could use for a car park. This gave the parish an established boundary, which it had never had, which allowed building to proceed. With the approval of the church authorities and the way cleared with Transit New Zealand, St Joseph's could at long last get on with building a new church.

By this time, says Mark, St Joseph's parish had evolved into a progressive, experimenting parish on the edge of change.

"We were liberal and wanted to remain so. But it was always a mixture — the Catholic Labour Party meets the social justice upper middle class. That's how I would describe it. St Joseph's is faithful and orthodox but every place it can, it pushes boundaries and tries something different. Every fortnight one of a team of five or six preach well-prepared reflections on the gospel. They give stunning sermons.

"It was, and still is I'm sure, a parish that takes lay leadership seriously — all formation, education, community development, everything happens within the parish."

## build community first

A new Church has to reflect the nature of the community and the process of designing and building needs to be genuinely consultative and inclusive, says Mark. His advice to any parish planning a new church is to build the community first.

"A building doesn't make a community, it reflects the community. Spending two and a half years at

Wellington College [while the building was underway] made us realise the strength of our community. We debated our future, we were very clear that the Church was asking for a community to be quite consciously formed — in education, prayer, liturgy and outreach to the poor. We thought this through and knew the community's aspirations needed to be expressed in the building itself.

"Our new church was built on the foundation of a living community of 15-20 years. The front seat was designed for the oldies, there are gaps for their wheelchairs. All the pews are dedicated to the people who sat in them, prayed there, and their families. The legacy is there.

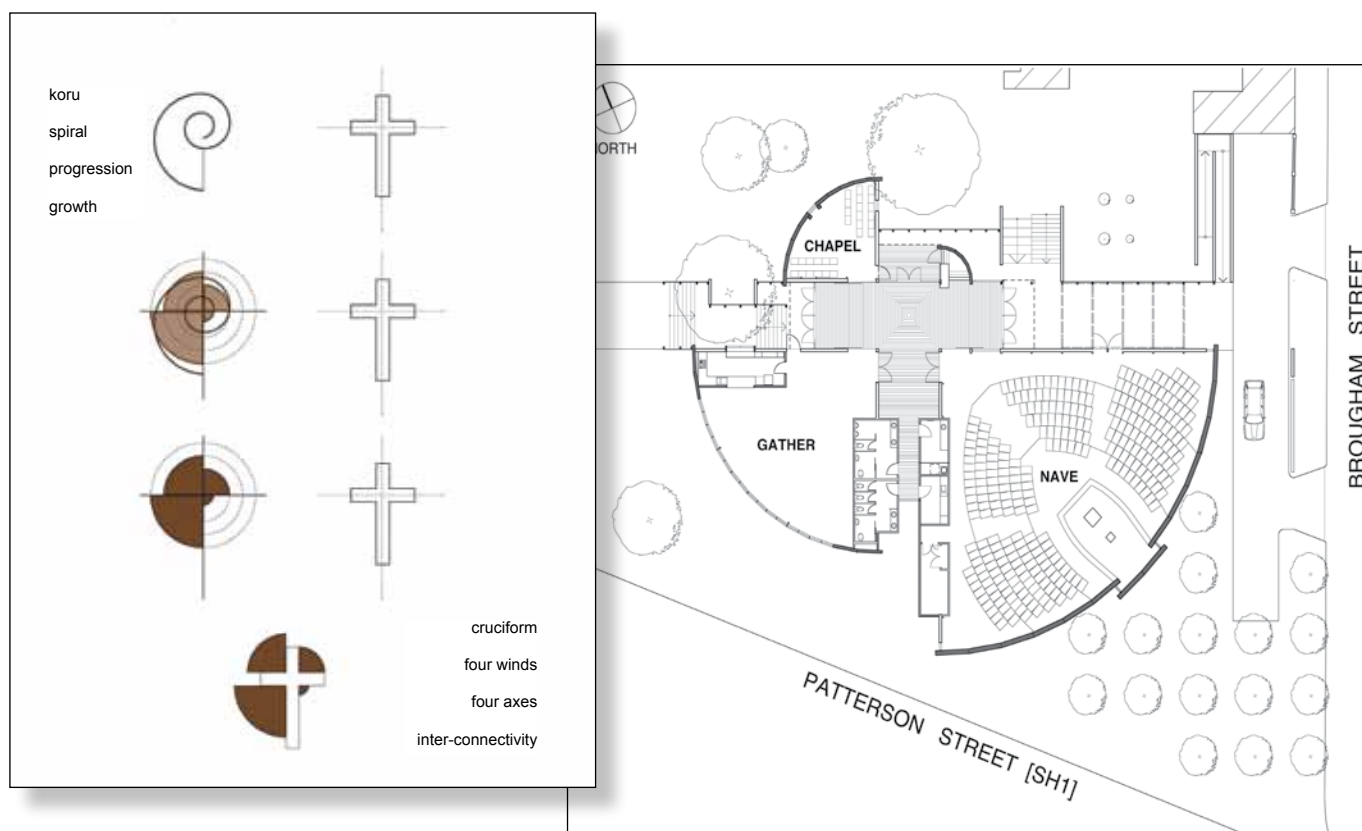
"When the time came to move into the new church, parishioners were each given a small piece of wood from the old church which they coloured and sculpted and left their mark on in various ways. These offerings were made into a piece of art which now stands close to the main doors of the Church."

## working with architects

The parish's clear thinking about its future was the key to a very successful partnership between the team of architects working on the project and the parish community. The parish rebuilding community did "an extraordinary job in communicating the needs of the parish to us," says Studio Pacific architect Marc Woodbury who was responsible for the design of the building along with Stephen McDougall and Michael Davis.

"There was the usual list of specs and functional brief, but much more significantly there was an aspirational brief, a dream statement," says Marc. "It really appealed to us





and challenged us. For example, the design needed to reflect an inclusive and welcoming community, a parish on the edge of change, a parish with a commitment to biculturalism.

### dream statement

“The dream statement, expressed on one page, provided us with an opportunity to do something really special. We try and find the poetics in any project and make it as joyful as we can but it can be difficult. When someone comes to you with a dream statement, that’s fantastic, it pushes you a lot harder.”

The team from Studio Pacific Architects opened up the project to ideas from the whole studio and went on to present more than 30 3-D models for the parish to consider. There was concern that traditional Church designs can appear somewhat excluding. There was great debate and animated discussion around the options as the parish worked its way towards a final plan.

The chosen option revolved around the two key symbols of the *koru* intertwined with the cross.

Says Marc: “The traditional cruciform church plan has its place

in the new church, but instead of typically solid walls it is treated as a transparent entry and lobby — welcoming to all points of the compass. Around this the four main functional spaces are wrapped — the baptistery, chapel, gathering space and nave, each expressed as a quarter circle.

“In the same way that an unfurling *koru* shows natural growth, so the transition from baptistery to nave shows spiritual growth — a powerful metaphor for the church’s dream.”

Budget constraints influenced the choice of materials used but did not stifle creativity, says Marc. They provided an added challenge.

“Laminated timber — an appropriate symbolic choice for St Joseph the carpenter — was chosen as the major structural element and concrete was chosen for the outer shells. The concrete was imprinted with an abstract fish pattern, one of the oldest Christian symbols. A simple stainless steel cross projects from the nave. Like the famous billboards that used to grace the corner site, so this wall is a metaphorical billboard for the church.”

### dream come true

Longtime parishioner Moyra Pearce

was on the building committee and is delighted with the end result.

“It’s a very lovely, inclusive space. Given the limited budget, what has been achieved is fantastic.”

Moyra reflects that the decision to rebuild took a long time and wasn’t an automatic step. “There were concerns about whether we should be rebuilding and some of the criticism was quite valid. Given the large number of parishes already, there were questions about whether the money could be used in better ways but funds had been donated over a long time for a new church. In the end the reality was the community did not want to be dispersed.”

Other considerations were the fact that St Joseph’s is a very historic parish with strong links with the early Religious Orders and it sits on one of the gateways into Wellington, says Moyra.

“It was also important to us to build a church that could be used by the wider community. The different spaces in the church and the garden have brought a lot of the wider community into a Catholic space.” ■

# art for a living com



St Joseph's is an historic parish situated on the slopes of Mt Victoria overlooking the Basin Reserve. When a new church was built and opened in 2005, the striking stained glass windows ensured its past was remembered and celebrated.

## Bahout Window

In 2007, the parish dedicated the Bahout Window in the Suzanne Aubert Chapel. It was designed by leading New Zealand artist Shane Cotton and funded by a bequest from the estate of Nanette Bahout and her brother Anthony. The photo (left) depicts a lower section of the window which stretches from ground level to a very high ceiling. Themes represented relate to the Blessed Trinity together with biculturalism, the influence of Suzanne Aubert and the evolutionary faith journey to Aotearoa-New Zealand.

## Stained glass windows

A number of stained glass windows from the previous St Joseph's churches, including a striking Rose Window of the Madonna, were restored for the new church. Three windows (on page right) — the Crucifix, Madonna, and Madonna and Child — were made by Harry Clarke Studios in Dublin for the Catholic Pavilion at New Zealand's Centennial Exhibition in Wellington in 1939. After the exhibition finished, two of the windows were relocated at St Joseph's parish. The third window, the Madonna and Child, was installed in the Catholic Maritime Club in





# munity

Michael Fitzsimons

Vivian St and when that was demolished, given to St Joseph's parish. It lay in pieces with old seating and accumulated junk at the back of the hall for years and was only rediscovered in 2002. The three windows were restored to feature in the new St Joseph's.

The historic St Joseph window (photo at left), which was installed in the original church in Buckle Street probably dates from the 1890s. It was re-installed in the intimate Suzanne Aubert chapel.

## The old and the new

When the time came to move into the new church, parishioners were each given a small piece of wood from the old church that they were invited to leave their creative mark on in various ways. These offerings were made into a cross which is situated near the main gathering space of the Church. ■





# darkest meanest mud and muck of things

*While Easter, with its beautiful liturgy, is a joyous feast, that same liturgy without sacrifice is false worship. The Triduum is rooted in human suffering, and to encounter it is to encounter Christ.*

Daniel O'Leary

Easter is painfully recognised and experienced mainly in broken places and broken people. It is with the flawed image, the damaged beauty, that God does great things. Only what is fallen can be raised. Here are three stories from friends about meeting the Risen Christ in deep disguise.

Gerry Straub is a famous American film-maker and author. In recent years he has visited Haiti many times, and often wept at what he saw. "On my desk", he recently wrote, "I have a mud pie I brought home from Haiti. I could never imagine being so hungry and broke that I had to resort to eating something made from mud and contaminated water, something so vile it could make me very sick or even kill me. Mud pies are baked in ovens of anguish and hopelessness.

"I will never forget the devastation of Cité Soleil, the tin shacks, the rotting trash, the spewing sewage, a little girl defecating in the garbage, naked kids with bloated bellies running barefoot through pig-infested mud. And then there was the fetid and nauseating stench that was intensified by the blistering heat.

"And then, all of a sudden and totally unexpectedly, something dancing caught my eye and filled me with hope. It was a makeshift kite fashioned out of a plastic garbage bag. It seemed to laugh and

dance in the Caribbean breeze. It showed me how the imagination, endurance and innocence of children could lift the human spirit out of the muck of sadness and despair. And so, mud pies and kites came to symbolise the death and resurrection that is a daily event in Haiti."

Tom O'Connor, a Kiltegan Father, works in São Paulo. "It was Holy Saturday night," he wrote, "and the crowd was unusually small. It was raining as we tried to light the paschal fire. I had no torch so it was difficult to read the prayers in Portuguese. Nothing was going right. At the high point of the Church's liturgy, we were completely out of step with the incredible mystery we were so inadequately trying to celebrate. There was no converging of life and grace. Nothing was rhyming.

"With more faith than finesse I began the Exultet. Suddenly there were raised voices. Oh no! Not at this vital moment. My spirits sank. Up the aisle walked a stranger with two howling children hanging on to him. I felt distracted and quite irritated. Then the small congregation turned towards them. One of the children had taken ill. For the rest of the Mass there was constant and distracting movement at the back of the church.

"As I was quickly taking off the vestments to rush off to another

church I noticed the stranger waiting for me. O God, just what I needed! More trouble and delay. Impatiently I turned to him. 'Father,' he said, 'I need to talk to you. Life has changed for me since my wife, the love of my life, recently died. I am now alone, trying to bring up these two boys without her. It is so hard.

"Tonight we were sitting at home and the older lad said, 'Daddy, can we go to Holy God's house now?' It then dawned on me that it was Holy Saturday night. I used to be a catechist. I'm so sorry about the noise. But I do want to start again. The little sick one is getting better. They are both so happy that I brought them to Holy God's house.

"I was left speechless and ashamed in the presence of this man of faith. Tears welled up in my eyes. I will never forget that Holy Saturday night — the night I experienced in the depths of my being the very graces of the Easter liturgy I had just celebrated."

Gillian Coxhead grounds grace in her experiences as a mother of four sons, as a nurse in the accident and emergency department of a children's hospital, as a volunteer with her local L'Arche home, and in her association with a Carmelite community. She finds Easter love living at unexpected addresses in the streets of an ordinary town.

"It is [found]," she writes, "in

the moment of the group of teenage boys caring for their intoxicated friend — one holding the vomit bowl, another rubbing his back; in the moment of the elderly mother caring for her alcoholic daughter; in the moment of the elderly frail husband who wakes many times every night to turn his wife as she is unable to move for herself; it is the moment of the next-door neighbour who pops in several times a day to check on a sick acquaintance, and to stay a while even though there is nothing he can really do to help.”

Three stories about the earthy reality of the heavenly life. Three raw and disturbing reflections that strip the covers from routine ceremonies, that reveal the human mess that must forever lie at the heart of real liturgy.

Theologian Karl Rahner insisted that until they are incarnated into the empty tombs of terrible nights — such as those in Haiti — into the bleeding wounds of humanity — like those touched by Thomas and Fr Tom in their doubts and even despair, into the compassionate Emmaus encounters with strangers along the risky roads of our lives, then all the paschal liturgies in the world are worthless. Liturgy without sacrifice is false worship.

The focus on the extreme pain of the Good Friday killing will forever keep before us that the Easter life is truly experienced in “the darkest, meanest mud and muck of things” as the poet Emerson put it; that the Risen Life is something we painfully flesh into the routine and often shocking experiences of our precarious but ever-graced lives. This indeed is hard to take in. It threatens our comfort.

But there is no dualistic escaping the challenge of the Triduum. There are no half measures in our following of a totally and fiercely committed Saviour. We, too, are

called to incarnate in our lives the liturgy of Easter, and, like he did before us, to actually become sacrificial resurrection for others.

The poet Harindranath Chattopadhyay was once aware of the power of his work to move, inspire and “win the hearts” of his followers. He rejoiced in this fine accomplishment. One day he realised this was not enough. Not long later he wrote:

But now, through new-got  
knowledge  
Which I hadn't had so long,  
I have ceased to be the poet  
And have learned to be the song. ■

*Daniel O'Leary is a priest of the Leeds Diocese, England. Fr. Daniel's website is [www.djoleary.com](http://www.djoleary.com)*

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## A QUESTION ON THE ROAD TO MEN OF CYRENE

*for Joel*

What is it, Rufus, that you see  
as you look into your father's eyes?  
The teary gaze of melancholy  
or a moment remembered so vivid that defies  
any language to carry such a burden of joy?

And you, Alexander, is tenderness the theme  
of the story you tell of a once young man  
reluctantly pushed to bear the beam  
of a brow-beaten stranger whose Way began  
before you or I, even he was born?

Is the tenderness of God a father's gift  
to his sons and daughter? Does forgetting mean  
losing that embrace still firm but adrift  
in the disconnect of the unforeseen  
where 'each to his own' dismembers the memory?

Tell me, Rufus and speak Alexander:  
what is it that holds you so fast to love?  
And to peace, to truth, that in complete candour  
you tell the story that connects you above  
and grounds you in the NOW of the REAL re-membered?

It's the gleam of old Simon by which we know  
as he knows and sees in that way without words.  
Neither law, nor belief, nor dogma, nor show  
come anywhere near the look no words  
can suffice or supply for that Look of Love.

*[Mark 15:21, Holy Week 2011]*

*Kev Dobbryn*

# ephphatha – be opened!

*Lorna Johnson interviews David Loving-Molloy, the chaplain to the deaf community in the Palmerston North and Wellington Dioceses. David talks of his life, what has influenced him, the reality of his faith, the nature and use of language, and how he sees his ministry to the deaf community.*

**B**e opened, Jesus commanded the deaf man in St Mark's Gospel. Remember that lovely passage: "And looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, he said to him 'Ephphatha' that is 'be opened'". (Mk 7: 34) So it was when I met with David Loving-Molloy, the Chaplain for the Deaf community in the Palmerston North and Wellington Dioceses. However, I was the one who was opened, to a new and different understanding of the language of worship, to the faith journey of a fellow traveller and to the culture of the deaf.

David, himself hearing impaired since the age of 18 months, has been chaplain since 1994. He moved from the Catholic Deaf Ministry in Melbourne where he had spent two years as part of a team serving a large deaf community. In Palmerston North, 'I am my own team,' he jokes, although adding more seriously that he hopes one day it would be feasible to have a team approach to the ministry of the deaf community in New Zealand.

By the time he finished at St Bede's College in Christchurch, David's hearing loss had deteriorated to the point of being in the severe/profound loss category. He approached the Marist fathers with the idea of becoming a teaching brother, but they encouraged him to train as a priest. He attended seminary at Greenmeadows in the Hawkes Bay, where he credits the local deaf community with pulling him through, along with his parents. He acknowledges he needed a lot of help, and although he had top quality hearing aids, he relied on lip reading.

## the human journey

During his ten years with the Marists, the idea of working for the deaf



David Loving-Molloy

community and the Church consolidated itself. David was ordained in 1989 and served as a priest for ten years, before leaving the priesthood. He is grateful that Bishop Peter Cullinane allowed him to continue his ministry as a lay person. Once he was no longer serving as a priest, he began to develop a lay perspective on things, although with hindsight he feels his faith was changing even while he was a priest. He characterises the time of pre-priesthood–training–priesthood as a time of moving from more certainty in his faith to more doubt. He found he had more questions than answers at that stage, although now he is trying to be comfortable with this. "We must ask questions of every aspect of our faith, and examine our doubts to come to our own reasonable response to that. I do believe that faith is a reasonable thing."

A defining moment in David's journey was the 2009 International Conference organised by the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers in Rome, entitled 'Ephphatha! The Deaf Person in the life of the Church'. David attended, along with over five hundred others

from all over the world, half of whom were deaf. A number of recommendations emerged from the conference, including the need for each diocese to have a priest with the skills to minister to the deaf. One of those skills was the ability to sign. This was an important recognition by the Church that sign language is a real language used by the deaf to communicate. Part of David's work is to see this recommendation is carried out.

## status and value of sign language

There can sometimes be a perception in the wider hearing community that sign language is simply a tool used by the deaf to overcome their disability. A contrasting view held by David and other, although not all, members of the deaf community is that to be deaf is to be a member of a socio-linguistic cultural minority. Like other cultures, the deaf have their own protocols, values and philosophies that form their unique identity, as well as their own language. Despite NZ sign language having legal status as an official language in NZ, it is not well recognised and only narrowly protected in law. The debate is one of 'disability access' versus 'cultural identity'. David feels that instead of the Church seeking to integrate deaf people into Church culture, he would like to see the Church enculturated into deaf culture. "Language is the key to open the door to explore the world of another culture."

Since the new English version of the Mass was introduced, David has been working on a translation into NZ sign language. He is part of a team of people working on the project, which significantly, is led by



deaf people, a key change in approach since the 2009 conference which was led by the hearing. It is a challenging undertaking. His work on the translation has highlighted some other issues for David from a faith point of view. He explains that sign language is accurate and clear in its expression of a concept, whereas English words can have meanings on many levels.

### conveying deeper meaning

When translating into sign language it is important to know which meaning is to be conveyed. For this, David goes back to the Latin, which gives a richer description and meaning than the English. An example is the word 'Father'. The sign for father implies a 'human man'. The Latin word *pater* comes from a root word, *pa* meaning 'to nourish and protect'. Depending on the context, father could be interpreted in sign language as 'the protector', or 'the nourisher' or 'the supreme authority', all of which are distinct from the 'human man' sign. David says this struck him deeply. "Why does the Church persist with this sexist language when God is neither a man nor a woman? To me, the way the Church treats women is the elephant in the room. We don't talk about it. Justice and peace groups focus on the environment and social inequality. Do they talk about women in the Church? I sometimes wonder if this issue will be addressed in my lifetime. Plenty of women and men play both parental roles as sole parents, so it is not a gender thing, but the way it is expressed in Church documents is that one gender is more significant than the other."

He goes on to explain further. "I think the debate needs to open up a bit. In my own faith I now try to get beyond the terms we use. We need to be up front about that. People are more important than the local issues we sometimes get distracted with. Some people are open. For example, an Australian bishop spoke out about women priests, which was brave. I'd like to see that. Anthony de Mello

said, 'The important question is not who is Jesus, but who are you?' We need to encourage people to think on a deeper level, not the worship-focussed, hierarchical and sexist language of the Church." In this way, David feels, his faith has changed.

He feels now he is able to get outside the worship side of things and look at real life. 'God amongst us' is

how he describes it, rather than 'God as Other'. "It is more important to live something we believe in than go to church on Sunday. I've changed my view on that. Faith isn't static. We need to enrich our vision and change our faith. It's like the difference between ice and flowing water. Keep the treasures and deep appreciations and let the rest flow on." ■

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# 'money is not wealth'

*Finding creative and alternative ways to take care not just of our environment but also of our future means of production and power generation are at the heart of the writer's plea for another 'industrial revolution'.*

Frank Hoffman

I welcome Stewart Lansley's plea for a fair distribution of wealth (TM, Feb 12). If his conclusions were put into practice, the less well off would catch up and satisfy their basic needs. But is the unqualified growth of consumption which he advocates a desirable goal? If economists would raise their eyes above computer models and look at the real world, they may then come face to face with the overriding importance of a different kind of economy, the economy of the world's resources. We have ignored it for too long. Yet it is the final arbiter in assessing our wealth and a useful guide to true prosperity.

The developed world's blind race for maximum consumption as a panacea for economic stagnation will end with the discovery that infinite economic growth is impossible on our finite planet. The wealth generated by last century's spectacular industrial development has come about through the profligate exploitation of our children's rightful inheritance — near exhaustion of fossil fuels; loss of rainforests supporting an immeasurable diversity of species; the pollution of aquifers and marine life;

global warming. All this will be on our conscience if we do not turn our backs on the preoccupation with making money. To our shame an Indian guru tells us the obvious:

*Money is not wealth.*

*Real wealth is good land*

*Pristine forests, clean rivers*

*Healthy animals, vibrant communities,*

*Nourishing food and human creativity.*

## 'money is not wealth'

As a layman I can tell only how it appears to me and I stand to be corrected.

Money was invented as a means of exchange but has gradually been turned into a commodity capable of being traded for profit. *Resurgence* magazine has lamented recently: "What was once a means to an end has become the end itself, and what was once a measure of wealth has become wealth itself."

Money is used today to create wealth without producing a single useful article or service; no more than figures in a ledger, or digital symbols on a computer disc. It is like a house of cards at risk to collapse when, like the devil in Faust, the inevitable crash claims its dues.

In the 1980s, a Labour Government betrayed its socialist principles and hurt many small businesses through 'restructuring'. Allowing the transfer of money in and out of the country has thankfully freed the average Kiwi from the bother of applying for funds when going overseas, or purchasing an article not available here. Its downside was that it created opportunities for which speculators with ready cash had been waiting.

Banks encouraged investment in a burgeoning share market by offering cheap loans to supplement the funds of speculators. Some survived the inevitable crash. Others paid dearly for giving way to temptation. But laid-off workers and the small businessman were innocent victims of these unproductive money games.

Equally, every million gained by a speculator through taking advantage of a favourable exchange rate has been siphoned out of the community in which he operates. The media, proudly adding him to the rich list, do not mention that this is the million which the exporter of agricultural or manufactured goods has



to go without. A recent *NZ Herald* letter headlined across the whole page marked these people rightly as 'the bludgers of today'.

Economic growth can and should be achieved through developing sustainable means of production and alternative power generation.

### **our 'pristine forests'**

Harvesting timber from our native forests requires great care and restraint to ensure their regeneration. However the demands of our lopsided economy put caution aside and the insatiable chainsaw often wins the day. It is the sad destruction of a resource whose value many only begin to appreciate after we lose it. This beautiful environment, blessed with natural fertility, is the home of countless colourful birds and provides nectar and berries for their sustenance. Unforgettable is the enchantment of a Tui or Bellbird accompanying us on our walk by hopping from branch to branch while challenging us effortlessly to respond to their melodious call.

Lost from excessive felling is the spongy forest floor which is the cradle of regenerating species. It is home to ground breeding birds that feed on the myriad of insects and other small creatures which populate it. Some of them are threatened with extinction and so are the birds which have lost the protection of their customary shelter.

Lost is the forest floor's capacity to soak up heavy downpours and regulate surface run-off. We have become so conditioned to taking periodic flooding and erosion for granted that we concentrate on remedial action, spending millions on building stop banks and cleaning up the mess without giving a thought to its cause.

Loggers need work and society has a duty to find them alternative employment. Maintenance, pest control, planting readily come to mind.

### **'good land'**

Our farms are complex ecosystems with millions of species interacting in mutual support. The farmer himself

is an indispensable link in this biotic community. He knows the remotest corner of his land and cares for it as he does for the welfare of his animals. Grazing animals, birds devouring damaging insects, earthworms and millions of micro-organisms inhabiting the soil all help produce our nutritious food.

Corporate farm ownership with its sole aim of making money for its stakeholders has changed all this. Farming has been industrialised and fertile soils that used to be teeming with life have become sterile factory floors. They require a steady input of chemicals derived from fossil products. Precious water taken from already depleted aquifers must be constantly applied to soils which have lost their capacity to hold it. Monoculture has taken over from a healthy diversity of life. Now shareholders' interests rank above the health of the land. With the bees and earthworms, the farmer has joined the list of endangered species threatened with extinction. While the industry celebrates stakeholders' wealth creation, it turns a blind eye to the deterioration of its most precious resource.

Opinion is mounting in favour of organic farming to restore our land to its natural fertility. If we do not voluntarily make this change it will be forced on us by the escalating cost of energy. Trials in Ethiopia have shown that equal quantities of food can be produced by this method and even more under drought conditions. Given encouragement, our scientists might draw on ancient wisdom and develop it in the light of modern science.

### **'clean rivers'**

Our country is blessed with an abundance of crystal clear springs, small and large in both islands. This water keeps our lakes filled and is home to fish and water-fowl. Streams running through farm-land are now being better protected from contamination with stock-proof fences. Much care goes into effluent disposal and the intelligent use of fertilisers by farmers increasingly aware of the value of clean water. But

vigilance will always be needed.

Pollution from secondary industry is still a problem but Kiwi ingenuity has succeeded in turning industrial waste into marketable by-products. Disposal of sewage will remain a problem but local authorities are working constantly to restore rivers, lakes and the sea-shore to their pristine condition.

### **human creativity can show a way forward**

Society has become increasingly aware that we have only one planet that we cannot afford to damage without dire consequences. Volunteers have been at work for years, giving their time and spare cash to preserve what we still have and restore what is lost. Scientists and engineers are developing energy saving methods and sustainable electricity generation. An input of Government funds to promote development could bring rich rewards, especially the creation of new jobs.

Harnessing the abundant energy from the sun will remove the need for digging up filthy fossil fuel or destroying precious marine life in the endless quest for oil. Human creativity will end the mindless destruction of our own habitat. A new spirit will enter our work force when its goals are lifted from merely earning a wage to making a positive contribution to the welfare of humankind. It will be a great day when the same spirit becomes predominant in politics.

Equally the production of food will take on a new form when scientists rediscover and develop the benefits of a system which dispenses with the need for high energy input. The resultant liberation of our productive soils from the slavery of chemical input stands to benefit the health of people, soil and environment. Another industrial revolution

*Frank Hoffman is a retired farmer and agriculturalist. At the age of 90, his desire for a sustainable and just future for the planet and all of us is undimmed.*



# tale of an unquiet mind

*The writer tells the story of a tiny act of kindness by a 'madwoman' and reflects on the tough conditions found in psychiatric institutions in New Zealand's recent past.*

Tony Eyre

Her name was Mary. The old woman lived a few doors away from us in Ash Street in the west Auckland suburb of Avondale. They said she was mad. As little children we weren't entirely sure what it meant to be mad but when we heard her swearing or saw her shouting at passers-by, we thought that had something to do with it.

The year was 1958. As a five-year-old boy whose parents didn't own a motorcar, my world was that long stretch of Ash Street, miles from any shops and bordered by the racecourse at one end and the mangroved tidal estuary of the Whau River at the other. With the freedom to explore within the boundaries of this little backwater, I knew all the names of my immediate neighbours — a mainly adult world that, with the odd exception, displayed a benign tolerance towards me and my three brothers and sister.

Mary's little bungalow needed to be negotiated with care whenever I marched off in the direction of the Whau River mudbanks. Her unpredictable behaviour at times added to the aura of her reputation as a madwoman. She had a pony and gig and had once given me a short ride up the street under the watchful eye of my mother. But apart from that brief personal encounter, I was wary of her and preferred to creep past her open gate whenever I passed that way.

One day Mary took me by surprise. As I plodded home with wet hair, caught unawares by a sudden downpour, Mary met me at her front gate and before I could run away, took me into her home. After vigorously drying my blonde hair with a large towel she proceeded to make

me a chunky Marmite sandwich. This seemed to take forever. I watched the slow motion of her gnarled knuckles as they guided the bone-handled breadsaw through the loaf of white bread. Then home . . . safely.

I was never frightened of Mary after that. But later, an encounter that involved her did 'scare the living daylight out of me'. One day, as my four-year-old sister Maggie and I pulled our homemade trolley along the Ash Street footpath, a black police car pulled up outside Mary's place. Soon after, two officers firmly escorted her from her home — she struggled and wailed in protest — and they drove her away. We were carrying a large kerosene tin on our trolley and its vibration sounded like the frenetic beat of a kettledrum. As Maggie and I scuttled home, I promptly removed the large tin can, fearing that its loud racket would attract the attention of the police who might take us away too.

I never did see Mary again. In all probability she would have been committed to what was known at the time as the Auckland Mental Hospital, just over four kilometres from her home in Avondale. Built in the 1860's, this large Victorian brick building and its surrounding villas and farm served as a mental hospital under various names such as the Whau Lunatic Asylum, Avondale Hospital, Oakley Mental Hospital and more recently, Carrington Psychiatric Hospital.

In respect of psychiatric care, the word 'asylum' — meaning a place of protection and sanctuary — has long gone out of fashion. In fact, in modern times the word has taken on more sinister connotations whenever the history of mental health care has

come under the spotlight. Much has been revealed about the brutality of psychiatric institutions of the past that stripped patients of their human dignity through overcrowded, cold and unsanitary conditions; that practised inhumane 'treatments' such as electro convulsive therapy, insulin coma therapy and leucotomy surgery; and used solitary confinement and other punishments to control and humiliate patients.

In the early 1970's I became a regular visitor to Oakley Mental Hospital. Armed with sweets and cigarettes, a couple of friends and I would visit the patients of M3 — a male security ward for the dangerously violent or 'criminally insane' — to provide some sort of variation to the monotony of their dayroom routine. After getting over our initial anxiety of being locked in with the patients, we soon adjusted to being surrounded each time we entered.

Some men in that M3 dayroom left enduring images on my memory. One called Ferg was naked except for a loin cloth — he reminded me of the crucified Christ. He was very tall, sunken-eyed and dribbled constantly; a withered arm lay across his chest as he would limp towards me, eager for the offer of a cigarette. Others would invite an inward chuckle. One patient, holding an open book close to his face, would turn its pages rapidly, repeating to himself, "Rice pudding, rice pudding." Another would each week share his good news with me, "Going home today, going home today."

There was always a sense of gratitude when, at the end of an hour or so, the attendants would unlock the double doors to allow us to leave



Oakley Hospital [Photo: Laura Eyre]

behind the smells of disinfectant and body odour and step into the fresh air of the hospital grounds. There was also a sense of freedom in walking or cycling through the wooded lanes of Oakley Hospital. With our long hair, typical of the 1970's, my male friends and I would blend into the surroundings, no longer easily distinguishable between patient and visitor. I remember my father telling me of the time he dropped into the grounds of Oakley Hospital and rested a while under one of the many established trees on the property. Mistaken for a patient, he was asked, "How long have you been here?" "About ten minutes," he replied.

On a couple of occasions we visited the female ward F7. It was to this ward that one of New Zealand's greatest writers, Janet Frame, was committed for a short time in 1951. She described F7 as "an oasis with its park and willowtree" in contrast to her time in the Park House ward, "where human beings became or were quickly transformed into living as animals." Frame's 1961 fictional novel, *Faces in the Water*, about life in mental institutions draws heavily on her stay at Oakley which at the time was known as Auckland Mental Hospital.

Janet Frame was not the only literary figure associated with Oakley as a patient. Robin Hyde, author of *The Godwits Fly* and *Passport to Hell* was admitted there as a voluntary patient in the early 1930's. Also, Maurice Duggan, one of New Zealand's best known short-story writers, was committed there for a time in 1973 when his struggle with 'drinking' caused him to be detained under the Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Act. On his return to the hospital after an earlier release, he was escorted by police to M3, the ward my friends and I regularly visited. According to his biography, *To Bed at Noon*, Duggan was left secluded for twenty-four hours, "in a small cell, empty except for a mattress and a chamberpot."

Today, the imposing Victorian brick building with its spacious grounds is no longer a psychiatric hospital. It is now the home of Unitec Institute of Technology where students of all ages seek to realise their creative potential. Rumours of ghost sightings in the main building of the original asylum — attributed to the many deaths of patients over the 130 years of its history — are part of student folklore. What stories and secrets lie within those

brick walls? Which makes me think again of Mary, the 'mad' woman of my childhood. What of her creative potential? What brought her to the point of 'madness' that saw her wrenched from her Avondale home and disappear into obscurity? We can only wonder. But for me, she is remembered for her little act of kindness to a five-year-old boy over 50 years ago.

### Postscript:

A recently obtained copy of Mary's death certificate has confirmed that she was in fact committed to Oakley Mental Hospital and died there four years later in 1962. By today's standards, she was not old — Mary was aged 64 at date of death. While pneumonia and degenerative heart disease were given for the causes of death, her death certificate lists the delusional disorder *paraphrenia* — a diagnostic term rarely used today — which gives a clue to the reasons for her committal. ■

*Tony Eyre is a parishioner of Holy Name Parish Dunedin, and a member of the Board of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.*



# ‘... he is going ahead of you to galilee; there you will see him’

Mark 16:1-8 – Resurrection of Jesus Easter Vigil (7 April)

Kathleen Rushton

“**Y**ou won’t need a map. Trust the way. The way is well marked.” So spoke the wise ones at the Confraternity of St James in their London office. I was alarmed then and in the weeks before my pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella. I had over 30 years’ tramping experience in the South Island foothills armed with topographical maps. They were, of course, absolutely right, for the Camino — the Way — is marked at its every turn with yellow arrows and markers. Someone had gone ahead.

## he is going ahead of you

A young man dressed in a white robe alarmed Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome, the same women who watched Jesus’ death, when they entered the empty tomb seeking Jesus. He told them: “... he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” They were to tell the disciples and Peter who unlike these faithful women were conspicuous by their absence both at the cross (15:40) and at the tomb. The crucified One was not there. The tomb was empty. “He has been raised.”

This passive form of the verb indicates God had raised him. This is God’s answer to the One who agonised: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” The misunderstanding, fear, failure and flight of the disciples and even the shortcoming of Peter are ever present. According to the biblical scholar Raymond Brown, those for whom Mark wrote included Christians who had suffered and failed. There is hope, for even Jesus did not want to drink the cup of suffering and his closest disciples failed. Those who seek Jesus but find the cross too heavy to bear may cry out with him: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

## he has been raised

“The sun had risen” is the first glimpse that the darkness which was present at the death of Jesus (15:33) is finally overcome. It is the first day of the week, the day when God created light (Gen1:3-5). It is the beginning of the new creation. The women come to the tomb. Their main concern is the heavy stone. Their being unable to roll it back is symbolic of the utter powerlessness of humanity before death. Then they ‘look up’ — a biblical image for recognising God’s action. They see the stone is rolled back. God has entered the story.

The women learn that Jesus “has been raised (*egeiro*).” This verb, which describes God’s answer to Jesus’ suffering, is a keyword in Mark. It is used of Jesus when he healed and ‘raised up’ the mother-in-law of Peter, the man with paralysis, the man with the withered hand, the daughter of the synagogue official and Bartimaeus who was blind. The sufferings of these characters give us hope that Jesus will raise us too.



“The Fifteenth Station: The Resurrection,” Fr Rory Geoghegan SJ.



## apostles to the apostles

The women saw the empty tomb. It was a sign received in faith that Jesus had been raised. They are given a solemn commission to go forth (the Greek verb has a stronger sense than merely 'go') to tell the disciples. Women were not permitted to serve as witnesses because they were considered to be unworthy. However, these women are the first witnesses to the resurrection and are commissioned as apostles to the apostles.

*The Jerusalem Bible* in the Sunday Lectionary tells us the women "ran away from the tomb because they were frightened out of their wits" (16:8). Some bibles have 'bewilderment' or 'astonishment' or 'terrified' or 'amazement'. Such translations are misleading. These words translate *ekstasis* which even someone who does not know Greek can see is where we get our English word 'ecstasy' which means literally 'out of a normal state of being'.

In the Septuagint — the evangelist's Bible — *ekstasis* is used when God put Adam into a deep sleep or trance and created both man and woman (Gen 2:21). Again when God made the covenant with Abraham, God casts him into a deep sleep or trance (15:12). In these cases, this word carries the sense that the action of God is creating something new.

The word translated as 'afraid' to describe the women is used also of the disciples' response to the stilling of the storm (4:41) and to the transfiguration of Jesus (9:6). It has the sense of awe. The Wisdom writings tell us that 'fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.' The women are overwhelmed with reverence before divine mystery. Their silence is more than words.

During Holy Week and Easter last year, I was on retreat at St. Beuno's, Wales. As I walked the Stations of the Cross through spring-filled woodlands, hope and new life enveloped me. Gerard Manley Hopkins had lived there and maybe that spot had inspired:

*Nothing is so beautiful as Spring*

*When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;*

Ahead in the sunlight, Fr Rory Geoghegan SJ's sculpture, 'The Fifteenth Station: The Resurrection' was truly blinding. The golden figure of the Risen One and the white binding cloth dazzled me. This Easter, it is autumn and I am a world away in earthquake-shattered Christchurch. Like the three women, may I see the empty tomb as a sign received in faith that Jesus "has been raised . . . he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." ■

*Kathleen Rushton RSM is a religious educator  
working in the Diocese of Christchurch.*

## Easter Hymn

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

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

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

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

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

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from Hope is our Song  
New Zealand Hymnbook Trust 2009  
No. 153

# a kiwi take on the killing fields

## Brother Number One

Director: Annie Goldson

Reviewer: Paul Sorrell

In August 1978 young New Zealander Kerry Hamill was captured by Khmer Rouge forces when his yacht *Foxy Lady* strayed into Cambodian waters. Kerry and an English companion were taken to a notorious prison in Phnom Penh where they were interrogated, tortured and finally executed. It is impossible to watch this documentary, which depicts the attempt to retrace Kerry's final days by his brother, ace rower and Olympian Rob Hamill, with any sense of detachment. We are left in no doubt of the toll that these harrowing events have taken on Hamill and his family. While the raw immediacy of the telling drew me into the film, I was emotionally exhausted by the time the lights came up.

Yet, while this story is well known to a local audience, it adds up to much more than the record of one man's unbearable loss. By threading a series of visits and interviews through the drawn-out trial of Kang Kek Iew, or Comrade Duch, head of the notorious Tuol Sleng torture and execution centre where around 13,000 people were put to death, the film revisits the genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge regime — a bloodbath in which Kerry Hamill was but one small statistic.

Duch becomes the third protagonist of the film, after the Hamills, and his 2009 trial before the Extraordinary Chambers of the Court of Cambodia (ECCC), at which Rob Hamill spoke, not just for his brother, but for all the innocent dead of the killing fields, adds tension and unity to the film. While Duch cannot deny his involvement



in the atrocities he oversaw, he claims to have been acting under orders he could not refuse. His late conversion to Christianity — he was working for aid agency World Vision when arrested in 1999 — does little to mitigate the impact of his self-serving testimony in the dock.

Skilfully woven from extended visits to the sites of Kerry's capture and imprisonment, and interviews with victims and perpetrators (they are often difficult to separate), family and friends, jurists and journalists,

as well as documents painstakingly unearthed by Hamill, the film shows us a man at the limits of his emotional endurance — perhaps at the point of obsession (Rob is intending to testify again at the upcoming trial of four Khmer Rouge leaders).

In a film that chronicles one family's involvement in one of the twentieth century's greatest atrocities, reconciliation, forgiveness and redemption are sounded as muted notes. A movie for stout hearts and strong stomachs. ■

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# easter and evolving christianity

## Christianity in Evolution: An Exploration.

By Jack Mahoney SJ

Georgetown University Press, 2011, 208pp, pbk. ISBN: 9781589017696 (1589017692)

Reviewer: Jim Elliston

God's first self-revelation is through Creation. Humanity's perception of this has been a slow, see-sawing process, culminating in a massive rush of scientific discovery over the past two centuries. For a relatively privileged few there are the sacred scriptures, themselves subject to the limitations of human understanding of reality, but providing meaning, purpose and hope. The focal point, of course, was the coming of Christ, 'the image of the unseen God, the firstborn of all Creation' (Col 1:15). The followers of Jesus are tasked with bringing his message to all human beings in a manner that makes sense to the

whole person — on the intellectual level as well as that of feeling.

In 1998 a conference on the relationships between evolution and religion was held in Rome. Pope John Paul II put the following questions to the participants: "Does an evolutionary perspective bring any light to bear upon theological anthropology, the meaning of the human person as the 'image of God', the problem of Christology — and even upon the development of doctrine itself?" That is an extremely serious challenge with serious consequences. Jack Mahoney SJ is University of London's Emeritus Professor of Moral and Social Theology. This book is his attempt to address those questions.

He gives an historical overview of many central tenets of Catholicism and then re-interprets them in the light of scientific evolution. For example, the origin of death and the consequences for original sin and redemption, God's purpose in creation (the Incarnation is not 'plan B'), sacraments, human sinfulness, and

the foundations of Christian morality. Some of his starting points are, at first sight, disturbing, but his development of each theme is measured, rational and ultimately consonant with our basic beliefs. Moreover, he is able to show how in earlier centuries many reputable theologians argued for some similar conclusions. There is no doubt that some major adjustments need to be made in official Church teachings. This, in turn, has pastoral implications insofar as many people have an excessively black and white appreciation of the Faith.

Mahoney writes: "I have come that they may have life' (Jn 10:10) can be recognised within an evolutionary context to possess a degree of richness that could not have been hitherto appreciated in identifying the ultimate aim of Jesus' coming to earth in the incarnation as being to defeat death and to lead humanity to an enhanced new stage of living within the divine Trinity."

This is an important, very stimulating book. ■

## The Easter Story

by Joy Cowley

Pleroma Press, 2012

Reviewer: Anne Kennedy

*The Easter Story* is another wonderful children's picture book by Joy Cowley. The first line of the book tells us "the Easter story is about God's love for us" which is the first belief and understanding we want children to have about God. The story that follows provides simple but profound explanations of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, his humanity, his mission and how people are called to follow him in loving kindness.

God's love is described as a spark of God within each of us that grows into a bright God light when we live in loving kindness. Jesus is the great fire of God because he had much more than a spark of God's loving kindness.

I read the book with a group of seven-to-ten-year-olds at St Joseph's School in Port Chalmers. The story engaged the children's interest and they noted that the text was a different version from the bible but was easier to understand. They were interested in the idea of people as a spark of God within them and thought this was a new way of talking about how they are connected to God. One child described it as "like a special gift or talent that God has given them to use." They liked the way the book dealt with only a few key events and

that there was not too much text because this made it easier for them to focus their attention on the meaning.

There were many positive comments about the 'wobbly' water colour illustrations by Donald Morrison. The children's two favourite images were Jesus as the fire of God and Jesus' death and resurrection symbolised in the images of trees. The children recommended this book for parents and teachers to use with children of their age and they thought it could 'inspire them'. I too would highly recommend the book for adults to share with children especially during the season of Easter. Allow lots of time to do this as it opens up many questions and ideas that children want to talk about. The children said to say thank you, Joy and Donald. ■



# Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

## fission or fusion?

In the Old Testament the inspired writers commented on how nature reflects the glory of the Creator. Furthermore, the human race was viewed as somehow participating as a partner: *The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it.* (Gen 2:15)

Made in the image of the creator God (Gen 1:26), humans have striven to impose order, passing from the worship of nature to controlling it. First copying (by damming rivers) then improving nature (by selective breeding of plants and animals), we now are attempting to imitate evolutionary processes. Our Christian faith makes us aware that our responsibility for this world expands just as our knowledge and technology do.

It seems certain that the physical universe evolved via a set of fundamental particles. In giant nuclear reactors like the Sun, simpler elements are combined to form more complex ones (atomic fusion). Huge amounts of heat are needed for fusion, some kinds of which also result in matter being transformed into energy. Sometimes newly formed material is unstable and breaks down into simpler elements (fission) producing energy as a by-product. We have replicated atomic fission as a means of generating electricity. But its negative environmental effects far outweigh the benefits.

An enormous long-term international project is underway in France. Going under the acronym of Iter, it is aimed at capturing the energy released from the fusion of hydrogen into helium — a harmless by-product. If successful the venture could prove highly beneficial to humanity.

As well as political and financial problems the science and engineering demands are mind-boggling.

For example, success will require a heavier form of hydrogen to be heated to about 150 million degrees, turning it into a 'fourth state' of matter, known as plasma. This is the first of three major steps. Unlike conventional nuclear energy plants the reactor cannot melt down because the reaction stops when it is no longer controlled. The theory is that the energy generated will sustain the process, with the surplus becoming available for generation of conventional power.

## evolution and healing

In the second creation story in Genesis humans, although situated in paradise, had to work and care for the habitat. Amidst an abundance of available fruits, one is banned — that giving knowledge of good and evil. Apart from explaining for their audience the sinfulness of humanity as understood by the inspired writers, it seems to be a warning that we cannot set ourselves up in place of the Creator. Cooperation implies limits. We must respect the environment and its inhabitants.

Our knowledge of biological evolution shows that all living creatures are formed from various combinations of common elements. One of the great breakthroughs in modern times is the discovery of the existence and role of stem cells. Original experimentation concentrated on those of foetuses, treating them as a means to an end — consequently devaluing the human person. Now it is realized that stem cells formed from adults are more flexible than originally suspected.

Stem cells can be grown from a piece of patient's skin and directed to develop into brain tissue. These brain cells can then be studied to reveal the neurological secrets of the patient's condition. This is

preferable to studying the brain tissue of donors after their death, for the tissue can be affected by long term use of drugs taken for the illness, or some other disease that may have caused the death.

The main objects of the proposed studies are schizophrenia, bipolar depression and multiple sclerosis.

## ownership versus caring

A recurring problem is that of environmental pollution. In a sense it relates to the notion of ownership. The idea that natural resources essential for sustaining life — air, water, land — can be 'up for grabs' because nobody 'owns' them, is fairly common. But they are owned by everybody and must be shared equitably. For example, the NZ Land and Water Forum's report underlines the need for a collaborative approach among our widely diverging interest groups.

Who owns rivers? Some years back the then Turkish President, Demirel, said "Water is like oil; whoever lives at its source has an indisputable right to it." With the 'Berlin Agreement' in 2004, international guidelines were established mandating reasonable consideration of such factors as past customary use and balancing the needs and demands of all bordering nations.

The bishops of South India recently told their people that deliberate environmental pollution was sinful and a matter for Confession.

## easter

At this time we celebrate the Risen Christ, "the image of the unseen God and the firstborn of all creation, for in him were created all things . . . the first to be born from the dead." (Col.1:15ff). It is through the lens of faith that we look upon God's handiwork and see a different reality, albeit "as through a glass, darkly". ■

# sic transit gloria mundi

Peter Norris

I wrote a few months ago about visiting a former student whose family were active in helping disadvantaged people. Their presence stays with me and is inspirational.

However, shortly after staying with them I visited a friend in London. He was a priest who rescued me from fairly bad living conditions while I was finishing my PhD. I was chatting to a pleasant woman on a bus and during the conversation it turned out that she was Catholic and I told her that I was a Catholic priest. We chatted away and unknown to me she contacted a friend of hers who had just been appointed as parish priest of a little parish. Her friend came and visited me, shook my hand, then suggested I get my suitcase. My journey from the smell of urine and toe jam began. Over the next six months we became firm friends and I did what I could to help him in the parish.

Since very few people were involved in the parish we decided that Easter could be a new beginning for the parish and called a parish meeting. Because I was going back to the USA to finish my study I fronted most of the bad news talks because I could

easily be disowned afterward if things turned to custard. The thing is nothing turned to custard and I was able to watch the parish develop and the liturgies became prayerful and life giving for priests as well as the congregation. I was a little arrogant at the time but my friend was a moderating influence and we worked well together. I was so proud of the parish and proud of the parish priest.

We holidayed together in France but I was the only one who got food poisoning at Lisieux. He visited Rome when I went to do some research and our combined contacts helped us see more than most. Through his contacts I saw the Royal Automobile Club and was even able to use it later for Saint Margaret's College Alumni reunions. Students from this College were always welcome in the small formal parish dining room.

It was great for me to stay with him again during my recent trip as I knew a lot of his life history. I knew about difficulties he had as an assistant priest, how he had worked in some riot areas, how he had dealt with murders in a parish youth club, how he immersed himself in the Focolare movement for his own support and in order to help others.

When I visited him this last trip he said: "Let us go to Paris for a few days." We got the train over and walked ourselves silly for two days. I was fourteen years younger than him and I seemed to be more tired than he was. My only consolation was hearing from a mutual friend that he was exhausted.

One of the highlights for him was his retirement scheduled for his birthday, the week after Easter. The parish was hopping and everyone was getting ready for the celebrations as Dick had been there since 1981. He was loved by people and everyone was happy that his retirement house was in the parish. Just before I left London Dick showed me his house and we discussed furniture and information technology for it. I was assured of a welcome in the new spare room.

The day after Ash Wednesday Dick had a game of golf, did not feel well so had an early night. He did not wake up and we were devastated. We are all called to death but none of us expected him to go so quickly. I guess it will happen to me and to everyone who reads this. I hope our lives are as fulfilling. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* ■

*Fr Peter Norris is master of  
St. Margaret's College,  
University of Otago.*



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# a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

**"S**o I told that policeman in Kuwait, 'Even the dogs in Nepal have a better life than I do here! We might be poor but us women aren't locked up inside and dressed up so only our fingertips show.' I told him that truly. And then I said, 'Just send me home! I don't care about losing money!'"

Putili laughed aloud, slapped her thigh and continued, spurred on by my incredulous gasps. "So next, he picks up his long stick to hit me with. Then I told him, 'You go ahead and beat me! Beat me to death if you like! But I just ask you one thing, don't leave my body to rot in this too god-awful country. Put me on a flight to Nepal. My land of mountains, rivers and freedom.'"

I hadn't heard such a good story in a long time. And all the more surprising from this new friend, an illiterate solo Nepali mother living just a few houses away. Putili carried on: "So finally they didn't know what to do with me. I refused to go back to the house where I had been a maid. That following week I got to stay in their Kuwaiti jail. It was great. The food was so good I really truly thought I'd be quite happy there for at least a year. They gave me as much chicken as I wanted, sometimes twice in a day. I could have long showers, coming right out of the wall. I had my own room with a bed and white white sheets and air con too. But then they asked me again what they should do with me. And next day I was sitting in an aeroplane back to Kathmandu. I didn't really care that I was coming back with no money. I was free."



I looked around Putili's tiny over-heated room. There were small square nappies drying in front of the blower heater and a vague urine smell. Little baby Prabhu lay beside us wrapped up to the eyeballs, watching incuriously. Five year old Kantha lay on her belly in front of the television, her five year old continuous motion dissipated in boredom.

The reality back in this room felt much greyer and smaller than a distant Kuwaiti world of bright sun, lush food and bravado. I realised I needed to head back up the hill to our house. Our big kids would be home from school and it was time to get dinner cooking. Putili too suddenly seemed to feel the drabness of being back in the here and now. Quietly she picked up the bundled little Prabhu, and put him to her breast.

Briefly, we had both shared a journey to somewhere else. Maybe in a year or three this here and now will also be a story that we tell and make sense of. For now, life with small children in this small town of Mussoorie isn't so much of a story. It's just where we live and what we do. ■

*Kaaren and Jeph, with their four children, live in North India and work in health and community development.*

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