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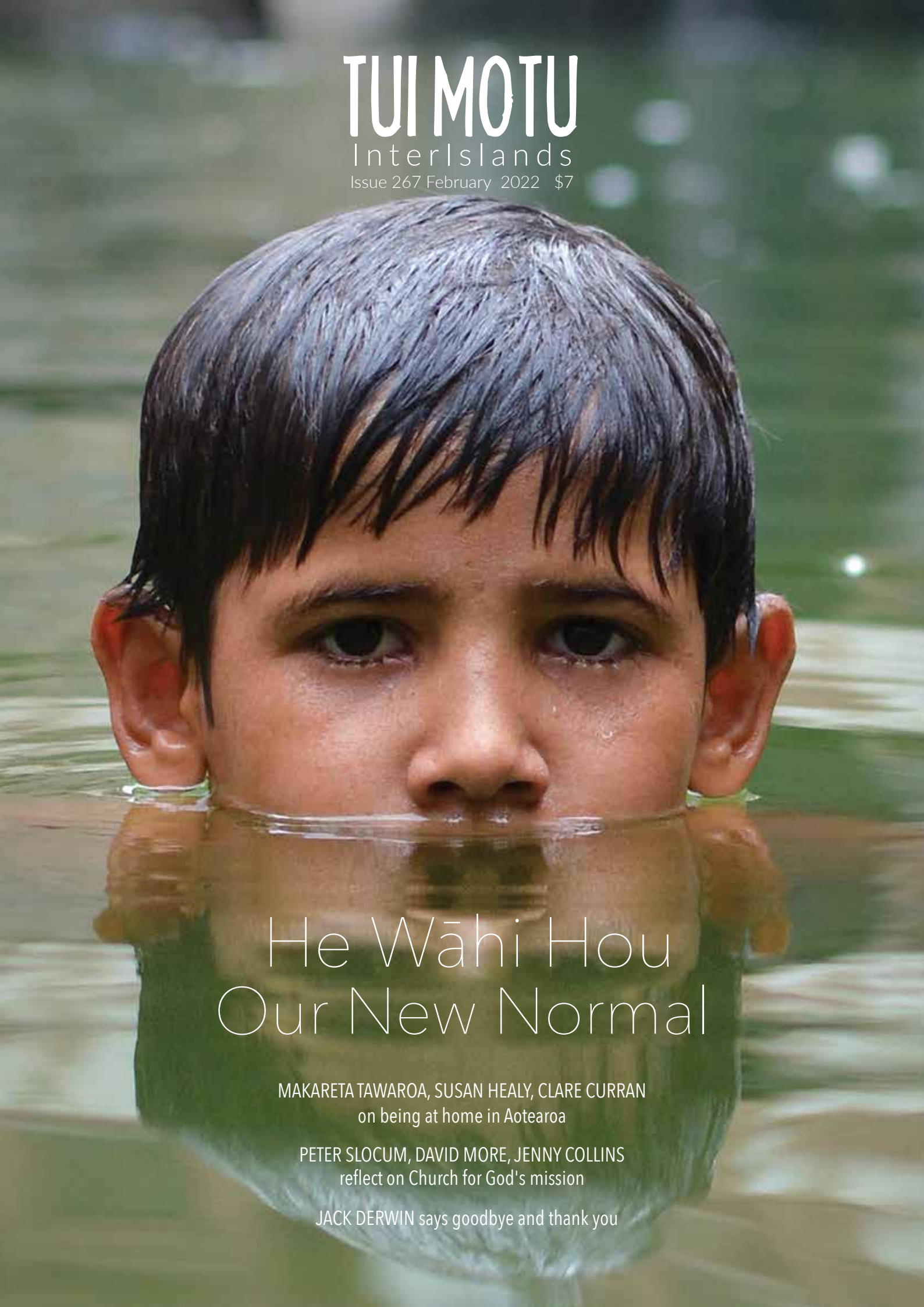

He Wāhi Hou
Our New Normal

MAKARETA TAWAROA, SUSAN HEALY, CLARE CURRAN
on being at home in Aotearoa

PETER SLOCUM, DAVID MORE, JENNY COLLINS
reflect on Church for God's mission

JACK DERWIN says goodbye and thank you

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EDITORIAL

Pilgrims in Our New Normal

2022 has dawned, a new year with a "new normal". We've had to let go of the idea that our normal lives had just been suspended for a time and that we'd be able to pick them up again soon.

That is not going to happen. We've been up close to the evolution of the coronavirus into different, more toxic or infectious variants over the last couple of years. We begin this year not confident that we are in control. We're learning just how interconnected with and reliant we are on others at home and around the world for the best advice, treatments and information at any particular time. It's through these experts, that we are helped to make some sense of our topsy-turvy present.

Our new normal for 2022 is headlined with uncertainty. It doesn't allow us to plan far ahead. We may be given new rules and guidelines to follow at any time. Everyone is affected. We expect disruption, adaptation and revision. We hope for resilience.

We are a pilgrim people journeying through each day, facing the unexpected, listening to our companions, keeping our hearts directed firmly on the common good.

There are some virtues that may help us journey in uncertainty without being swallowed by anxiety and hopelessness.

The first is humility: to hold things lightly, stave off upset, to recognise ourselves as members of the team. We're all learners navigating the new normal. We rely on those with expertise for our information. We can't think that God will protect us from COVID because we have a strong faith. Faith is not magic. Faith will help us go forward with humility.

A second virtue is co-operation: to do our bit, to listen carefully, to participate with others. It's the gospel value of being in solidarity with those most vulnerable so that all may share health and well-being. We're seen the outpouring of donations, time and kindness, to relieve those suddenly impoverished by COVID restrictions. The virtue of co-operation stops us succumbing to "compassion fatigue".

A third virtue is encouragement: to articulate our support, to criticise with kindness, to seek truth and goodness. Encouragement is lifting others up — it's a sign of the Spirit among us. We can encourage one another. We can encourage the government to make the big decisions that will change the landscape of poverty and inequality. We can encourage Church leaders to listen to their members.

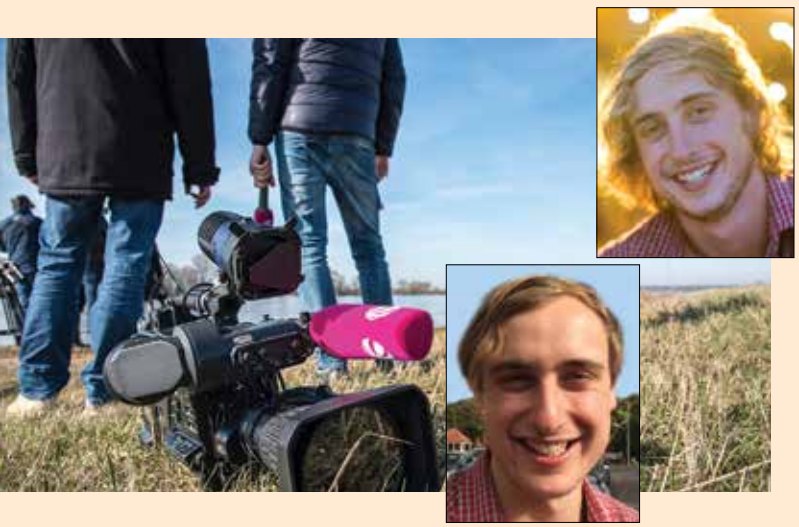
And a fourth virtue is gratitude: to recognise and appreciate, to stoke hope, to notice others' contributions. Gratitude shifts us from self-centredness to community-mindedness. It grounds us in reality.

We thank all our contributors to this issue whose writing, art and craft offer insights about this new normal. We welcome Jane Higgins as the new writer of Cross Currents.

We thank Jack Derwin who has written his last of six years' worth of columns in this issue. We will miss his passion! A collection of Jack's writing is on the *Tui Motu* website.

And as is our custom the last word is of blessing and encouragement.

For Six Years — Thank You



It was late 2015 — what seems a lifetime ago now — when I was first asked to write for *Tui Motu*. I was a scruffy young student living out of a backpack in regional Mexico, sending dispatches halfway across the world to Dunedin with all the confidence of a journalist in the making.

Six years and more than 60 articles later and, although I'm still a little rough around the edges, much has changed. As life takes me in a new direction, and as I finish up writing for this fine publication, I find myself reflecting on the intervening years.

Back then I was finishing a first-hand report on the plight of Central American migrants travelling overland through Mexico to the United States. Their journey, much of it spent hitching atop a freight train known as "The Beast", was full of peril.

I spent some time at a shelter set up by local women, known as Las Patronas, who fed and sheltered many migrants — a vital oasis in dangerous territory. It was a precious day I spent hearing their stories, some desperate, all hopeful.

Those stories became my final major academic project, a powerful experience I look back on fondly, and the first piece I ever shared with this magazine. It was not the last.

More familiar was the profile of my old school friend Nick Abraham shortly after. Growing up together in Orange, a small town four hours from Sydney, we had trodden very different paths since leaving it. A carpenter, he'd been seized by the tragedy of the earthquake that destroyed large parts of Nepal back in 2015.

With an impossible sense of purpose and responsibility, he raised funds and went over to volunteer his skills and rebuild homes. As it happened, the project he initially signed up to was well-intentioned but falling apart at the seams by the time he arrived.

Rather than flying home he stayed and set up a charitable foundation of his own, designing earthquake-resistant bricks and training locals to be self-sustaining. Some may well have scorned the naivete of a 20-year-old at the time but all these years later, Nick is still over there, sustainably rebuilding that small part of Nepal. It has become his life's work.

My own professional life took a different turn. I returned to Australia, finished my university degree, got my first full-time journalism role and then, as is the case with the media, my second.

Reporting for the Sydney bureau of a Japanese newspaper, I travelled around Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Alongside my ever-diligent boss, we investigated ongoing nuclear radiation in the Marshall Islands and the US military legacy there. We covered obesity in Tonga and the new approaches to tackling it. We tailed Jacinda Ardern in her first election campaign and got swept up by her energy and drive.

More often than not, I also contemplated and documented Australia's failings both in my day job and between these pages.:The devastating detention of those refugees who make it to our shores seeking a better life; the historic and contemporary injustices inflicted on Australia's first people; the fraught lack of imagination, accountability, transparency and national ambition in our halls of power.

Having had the privilege to venture far from our part of the world, perhaps I expect more from nations with so much. Whether teaching in Spain or filing stories from overseas, it's impossible for me not to compare and contrast and to hope for more from Australia, a nation which cannot ride its luck forever.

I have always appreciated the many opportunities — sometimes wild — afforded to a scruffy young man who wasn't any more deserving of them than the next person.

As I cast my mind back again, I remember those who did so much with so little. Whether it was Las Patronas, Nick or many others I had the good fortune to meet, I have encountered a true spirit of mission and humanity the world over. People who have proactively strived towards something bigger than themselves no matter what they had. It's an example I hope to live up to in my profession.

Before I sign off one last time, I'd like to thank this audience for spending a little time with me each month, for listening to me think aloud, and for letting me know their opinions whether or not they agreed with mine.

A big thank you also to the entire team who work tirelessly to make this magazine possible. When our editor Ann Gilroy asked me to contribute all those years ago she said she was looking for passion. Having enjoyed the last six years immersed in these stories and the world that inspired them, I can see why that passion, that enthusiasm and that courageous sense of hope, matters so.

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

Painting: ***Aotearoa*** by Astrid Rosemergy © Used with permission FB: @ArtbyAstridRosemergy Instagram: ArtbyAstrid

Leave No One Behind

MAKARETA TAWAROA describes the efforts of Māori communities to care for the health and well-being of iwi when healthcare is unequally accessed in Aotearoa.

It is impossible to fight a pandemic when we are blind to the inequality and inequities in society. Poor people know this. Māori and Pasifika know this. It's because in everyday life poor people have less access to our country's healthcare. So when a pandemic like COVID strikes, Māori and Pasifika people get sick quicker, recover more slowly, die earlier and in greater numbers than do other groups in our country.

My mother remembered the communal graves that were used during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic and described with horror how "our people died like flies".

In this COVID pandemic Māori have called attention to the present inequalities and their consequences on Māori. It's only when Māori have been included in national healthcare planning that we're hopeful that the gap will be bridged.

Journey to Awareness of Inequality

I became aware of the health and well-being disparities between Māori and other groups 40 years ago when I was a part of a small community group of mainly Māori women. We were flaxroots women, brought up on marae in an extended family environment, working at the back in the kitchen, setting tables and making up beds for manuhiri (visitors).

We focused on health because most of us had sick people at home. We had many questions. Why are Māori people dying 10 years earlier than non-Māori? Why are so many of our young Māori males ending up in mental institutions and prison? Why are Māori women smoking themselves to death? Why are young Māori people killing themselves? We began an in-depth study looking for root causes.

Māori health problems are often judged as personal and blameworthy — poor health is the person's poor choices. A change in lifestyle, diet and exercise would fix everything. But this is only partly true. We found that the communication between Māori and health providers was a huge problem. Health professionals were poorly prepared for the real differences in perception of health status and cultural practices.

My own involvement was as a Community Worker and Trainer. My task was to develop fresh ways in which we could exercise our rangatiratanga, to do things on our own

terms. I had a teaching and church background but not much understanding of the complexities of the systems of government and business and how they worked. I gradually developed an analytic edge helped by Father John Curnow's workshops for training in the tools of social and structural analysis.

Initially we set out to win a seat on the local area health board. I was the candidate and won 5,000 votes but not enough to secure a seat. However, we were able to put Māori health on the agenda.

Then we lobbied for funds to employ a Māori Community Health Worker as one had just been appointed in Auckland. We started to build infrastructure — an office, office worker, a car, a bigger building, another worker, a budget, a contract — and then an iwi health authority encompassing three iwi, Te Oranganui Iwi Health Authority. The health pathway involving the local people we have today is due to visionary movers and shakers like Tariana Turia and Linda Thompson.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is about Rangatiratanga

Up until the 1980s, Te Tiriti o Waitangi was a non-issue for most people, including many Māori, with the exception of the Northern tribes.

Thanks to the expertise and persistence of Māori around the motu — Nga Tamatoa, Dame Whina Cooper's hīkoi, the Waitangi Action group, Bob Scott, Mitzi Nairn, Joan Cook, Hone Kaa, Rua Rakena, Rob Cooper, Manuka Henare and many within churches and other groups — our awareness developed into a Māori renaissance and the desire to determine our own place and authority in Aotearoa, rangatiratanga.

The setting up of the Waitangi Tribunal solidified Te Tiriti in our New Zealand consciousness. When Hinewehi Mohi sang the national anthem in te reo at the All Black quarterfinals at Twickenham in 1999, it boosted the campaign to increase te reo Māori. This all watered the roots of rangatiratanga.

Te Pāti Māori Speaks Out

Te Pāti Māori (the Māori Party's) response to the pandemic has been impressive and co-leader Debbie Ngawera Packer has been particularly effective. They articulated what not to do for Māori, that one-size-does-not-fit-all, that equitable opportunities for Māori have been absent when it counted most and that the official government and health authority approach was far too narrow to include Māori.

We lament that an independent statutory Māori pandemic response team was not established when Te Pāti Māori suggested it was needed.

As it is, many Māori initiatives to protect the health of the people have developed successfully.

Rapid Response Team Set Up

In my own region during the first Lockdown we found that there were many gaps in the official delivery of goods and information, so Te Ranga Tupua Iwi Collective's rapid response team was set up.

Their focus now is on protecting everyone through vaccination. They have gone into emergency mode to seek out those who are still "whakama" (embarrassed, shy, ashamed) to help break down barriers and give extra support to those who need it. Their four mobile clinics are going into the least vaccinated areas of our region.

As team leader Elijah Pue said: "We're going to continue our mobile rollout which goes to hard-to-reach communities, rural areas, middle of townships, swimming pools, anywhere where our families go. We will share a cuppa, have a kōrero with our whānau and provide them with the information they need." The teams avoid heavy talk about numbers, mandates and targets so that people feel free to engage without feeling stigmatised.

Celebrations Rethought

Other initiatives have involved culturally respectful and inclusive communication. The annual 25 January celebrations of the birth of Tahupotiki Wiremu Rātana, the founder of the Rātana religious movement, is an example. This is a major hui when Rātana whānau come in pilgrimage in thousands to recharge a-tinana-a-wairua. But this year the health and safety of the people was topmost in the leaders' minds so the event was scaled back. As Kamaka Manuel, head of Paepae, said: "One of the things about our hāhi (church) and our mōrehu (followers) is that many come from very high risk areas." The leaders asked their followers outside of Rātana Pa "to stay home and hold whakamoemiti (praise and thanks) in their own parishes to keep the community safe." As elsewhere for gatherings in Aotearoa, those who attended the celebrations were fully vaccinated.

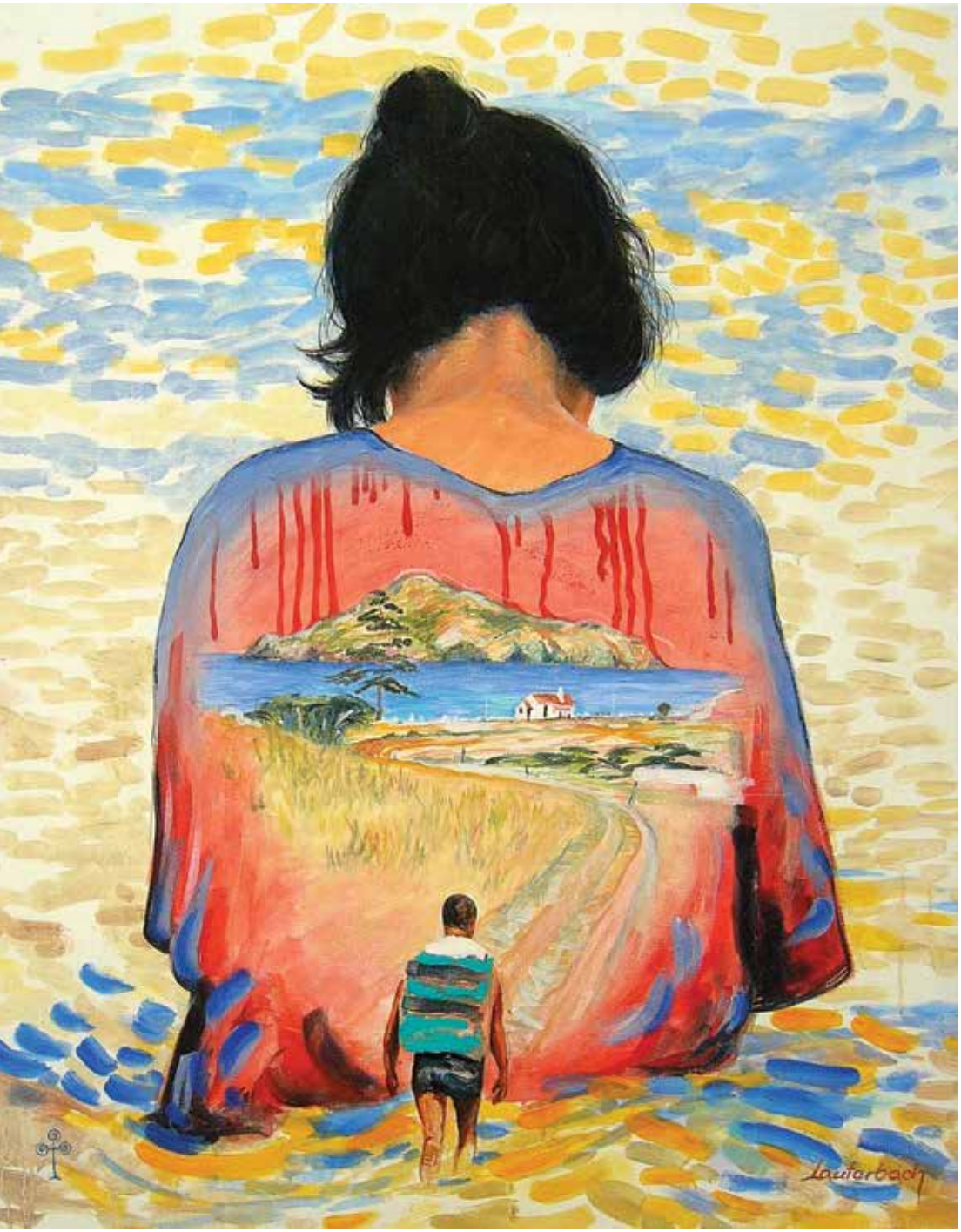
Health Check Dashboard Developed

An ongoing example of addressing the inequalities in health is the development of the Dashboard — a comprehensive picture of the health and wellness status for Ngati Porou Hauora (the only Māori operated hospital in Aotearoa).

The Dashboard is a set of indicators that reveals information about the health status of those living within the rohe of Ngati Porou (East Cape and Gisborne regions), in comparison to the total New Zealand population. These indicators, which include the trend analysis of service coverage, utilisation, social determinants and the health profile of populations at a local level, can help any group to highlight where they are doing well, and where particular focus and additional resources are required.

As well as the pandemic's economic repercussions and disruptions in many areas, not least poignant is the emotional and spiritual pain. All this contributes to the health and well-being of people. Now is the time to address the inequalities in health thoroughly and equitably.

Makareta Tawaroa, Te Awa Tupua, is a Sister of St Joseph, Nanny and Community Worker for Nga Paerangi, Whanganui.



HOME IS FRAMED IN RESPECT

SUSAN HEALY explains how being at home in Aotearoa invites us to live in reciprocally respectful relationships with mana whenua.

"When I think of home, I think of Paeroa," my friend responded when I asked what home meant to her. For others, home evokes thoughts of family or a house imbued with special memories. Home can also mean the country we grew up in. This has come to the fore in the pandemic, with many expats distressed at being unable to "come home to New Zealand".

In recent years, with Māori asserting their place as tangata whenua (the people of the land), some non-Māori have become ambivalent about their place here. Although I had felt some of that ambivalence, I was startled when a young friend told me she was glad that she and her English-born husband were moving to England. "I feel guilty about living here," she said. Her feeling came from learning about colonisation and its effects.

Some of my unease was lifted when I attended the Waitangi Tribunal's 2010–2011 hearing where Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu leaders talked about their tūpuna's intentions in entering into the covenants, He Whakaputanga (the Declaration of Independence, 1835) and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840). It was clear that the Ngāpuhi hapū (nations) envisioned a place for newcomers — but on their terms as mana whenua, those with inherent authority in the land.

Framework of Respect

I have come to see that the traditional Māori world is built on a framework of respect. This respect is evident in the way hapū and iwi think of their relationship, how they accommodate each other on the land and see themselves in relation to the land, and how they provide a place for those from outside.

I know I look at these things as one who "sees through a glass, darkly". I recognise that I rely on the generosity of Māori experts to explain the depths and intricacies. However, I think it is important for those of us who are not Māori to develop an appreciation for the logic and intentions of the tangata whenua in allowing us to live in these motu, the islands we call home.

Respect for Each Aspect

I am in awe at how in the

Māori world each river, mountain and community is approached as having its own integrity. This is expressed in the concept of mauri, which as Cleve Barlow explains "is a special power possessed by Io [God] which makes it possible for everything to move and live in accordance with the conditions and limits of its existence.

Everything has a mauri, including people, fish, animals, birds, forests, land, seas, and rivers, the mauri is that power which permits these living things to exist within their own realm and sphere" *(Tikanga Whakāro: Key Concepts in Māori Culture)*.

People can still seek sustenance from the different elements of creation but they must do so with due regard for the well-being of each.

Te Mamae Tane of the Te Roroa iwi told the Waitangi Tribunal how they would fish for mullet in the Wairoa River. As youngsters, they learned that the mullet must only be caught when going downstream, not when travelling up river to Puke Karuhiruhi (Shag Point) to spawn.

Effects of Disrespect

Te Mamae remembered the time when the fish were plentiful and the water of their beloved river was beautiful and clean. That, he said, was "before they violated it".

He was referring to the actions of the New Zealand Forestry Service which, from the 1940s, had taken quantities of gravel from the river and later built a headquarters' sewerage outlet into it — leading to serious pollution. For him and Te Roroa, who had always treated the Wairoa River with honour, this was a desecration.

Respect Builds Relationships

This respect for the integrity of each being provides a foundation for relationships of mutuality between human and other natural communities, as can be seen in the case of the Waikato-Tainui iwi and the Waikato River.

In a first for New Zealand legislation, the Crown acknowledged in 2010 the Waikato-Tainui Settlement Accord that the Waikato River "has its own mauri, its own spiritual energy and its own powerful identity" and that for Waikato-Tainui, "the River is a tupuna (ancestor)".

The Accord recognises that, "Waikato-Tainui regard their River with reverence and love [and] ... The Waikato River sustains the people physically and spiritually. It brings them peace in times of stress, relief from illness and pain, and cleanses and purifies their bodies and souls from the many problems that surround them."

Respect in Human Relationships

The requirement for a similar reciprocity and regard in human-to-human relationships permeates Māori ethos and law. In observing these relationships in practice, I have learned that the Māori world is built on respect for the ground of each community — with the ground being place, community or organisation.

We can see this when we are welcomed on to a marae. We participate in ceremonies expressing respect for the home people, their land, and meeting house. Aware that we are coming on to someone else's land, we follow the kawa (protocol) of their marae.

In turn, the home people acknowledge the group or groups we represent and our places of origin. The integrity and mana of each party is upheld, and bonds are strengthened.

Respectful Reciprocity

Corresponding principles were at play when the early settlers and missionaries came to this country. In accord with the long-held custom, tuku whenua, a hapū would allocate the new family a place on their land. The tuku presupposed the building of a relationship of reciprocity, with due regard for the mana of each.

The hapū had a duty of care for those on their land. They would help in the provision of their needs and defend them in the case of attack.

Many missionaries and early settlers benefited from such care. They were often poorly equipped when they arrived, and it was local hapū who provided them with food and shelter.

In turn, the families and individuals were expected to respect the mana of the hapū, share their talents and work co-operatively with the hapū in matters of common interest.

Those who stayed on under this arrangement were effectively given a place to call home within the hapū's whenua.

Respectful Relationships Creating Home

In embracing He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi as covenants, the Ngāpuhi and other hapū sought to establish peaceful, productive and lasting relationships with the newcomers, within a framework that respects the integrity of all creation and the mana of each community.

The framework was theirs and it offered a sure shelter for all who respectfully sought a home in their land.

Now, when we who are not Māori are learning to face up to the facts of colonisation, we need to consider the intentions of the tangata whenua in allowing us a place in these motu. And we need to think about how we can contribute to restoring the intended relationships of mutual regard and care.

Families and individuals were expected to respect the mana of the hapū, share their talents and work co-operatively with the hapū in matters of common interest . . . they were given a place to call home within the hapū's whenua.

Painting: ***E Hoki Mai*** by Thomas Lauterbach© Used with permission www.maoriimages.com

Susan Healy is a Pākehā Dominican laywoman and a member of the Auckland diocesan Bicultural Committee. Her doctorate in Māori Studies is from Auckland University.

Of No Fixed Abode

CLARE CURRAN describes the work of the Night Shelter and the stark reality for Dunedin's underclass of the homeless.

The People

NICKY is 19 with an intellectual disability, most likely due to foetal alcohol syndrome. He has lived in care homes all his life but at 18 had to leave and was thrust ill-equipped into the world. While Nicky has a support worker funded by the state (for a few hours a week) he finds it extremely hard to navigate the world. He has few life skills and finds himself bullied and taken advantage of in the boarding houses he's lived in. He arrived at the Night Shelter in a bit of a state, and we did our best to get him feeling safer and tried to find a more stable living environment. The only option was another boarding house, which was a bit safer. After he left the Shelter, we kept an eye on him and provided him with meals for a few nights a week. It was only by luck that we discovered he had botched a couple of rent payments and was in danger of being thrown out yet again. After an intervention with the organisation providing care support to him it was fixed, but in all probability, Nicky will spend the rest of his life in a precarious living situation unless he's provided secure housing with greater support around him

What's heart-breaking is that Nicky wants to be a body builder. His dreams are unlikely to be fulfilled.

WALTER was recently released from prison on a Friday afternoon before a long weekend. He had about $150 in cash, no identification, no bank account. He also has some serious medical conditions. Thankfully he had the support of Out-of-Gate, a prisoner re-integration service provided by CareNZ in the South Island assisting short-serving prisoners in making a successful transition back into the community. Although eligible for a Work and Income benefit, Walter couldn't receive it without a bank account. To get a bank account he first needed ID. Out-of Gate approached the Night Shelter to ensure Walter could be housed while he sourced his birth certificate, set up a bank account and starting receiving his benefit. Usually, the maximum stay at the Night Shelter is five nights, but there is some flexibility if there's a genuine need.

A few months later Walter was back at the Night Shelter as his sickness benefit had been cut off by Work and Income because he hadn't produced a three-monthly medical certificate. As he explained, he didn't have a GP and had found it impossible to get a casual doctor's appointment. He couldn't afford to go to the Urgent Doctors. The Night Shelter rang around medical centres and finally managed to get Walter an appointment. Most Dunedin medical centres, including the low-cost ones are not taking new patients now, and it was only due to a good relationship between the Night Shelter community worker and a medical centre employee that Walter was squeezed in. That afternoon he got his medical certificate and his second Covid vaccination. He stayed at the Shelter a few nights and then moved on, likely to an unsafe boarding housing or backpackers, or living rough.

SARAH was dropped off at the Shelter in the middle of the night by police after a physical altercation with her mother led to police being called. A young woman in her 20s, slight of build and mentally fragile, Sarah couldn't go to Women's Refuge as she was classed as the perpetrator of the violence. She won't be able to return to living with her mother. While at the Shelter she received support from the family harm group, but ultimately, she had nowhere to go, and we had concerns for her mental health. There are a couple of boarding houses in Dunedin where women are relatively safe, but they are hard to get into as people don't move out of them once they've secured a place. While Sarah was at the Night Shelter, her best friend took his own life which heightened her anxiety and depression. The Night Shelter was able to secure her some immediate mental health support, but despite emergency psychiatric services being aware of her situation she is yet to be provided with any ongoing mental health support.

BARRY is what we call a frequent flier. He's been living in a tent for several years now and when it all gets a bit much, he comes to the Night Shelter for some respite. A taciturn man, he doesn't like to talk about his circumstances, though he has historic debt which led to him living off the grid. Like so many of the homeless, Barry distrusts government agencies and anyone he thinks represents "authority". He will take a bed for a few nights, have daily showers, and do his washing. Like almost everyone who comes through the door he has a big appetite as he doesn't usually eat regularly or well. Sometimes he just turns up for dinner and doesn't stay the night. He prefers to sleep rough as he chooses where he puts up his tent. Occasionally his tent is stolen, and Work and Income will provide funds to buy a new one, though it adds to his "debts".

[NB: Names and some details have been changed in these stories to protect people's privacy.]

THERE are countless Nickys, Walters, Sarahs and Barrys who come through the doors of the Dunedin Night Shelter. They are mainly single people who live on the margins of society, each with a distinct story about what led to their being of "no fixed abode". Sometimes they will share that story, but most often they keep wary and quiet.

Night Shelter Community Effort

The Night Shelter has been operating for 18 years funded exclusively by community grants and donations.

It offers a bed for up to five nights with a shower, a hot meal and the opportunity to do washing. There is no charge. Sometimes there is flexibility on the length of stay, but the hard reality is that the Shelter needs to set boundaries or the same people would just live there all the time.

It's a place of respite, to catch your breath, regroup and receive some support for the next steps. A community worker works with each guest, if they are willing, to navigate their health needs, benefit issues and to recommend boarding houses they might contact.

Entering the Shelter

When people arrive at the Shelter, they are asked a range of questions about age, ethnicity, health issues, and next of kin, in case something happens to them at the Shelter. Lately they've been asked their vaccination status for COVID-19. The unvaccinated are not refused entry, instead they are offered a vaccination.

The Shelter has been fortunate to have a vaccination team on site twice a week, but if people choose not to be vaccinated, we will not judge. As a designated essential service, the Night Shelter is literally the end of the line for people without housing options.

There are some circumstances under which people won't be admitted or will be asked to leave. Drinking or taking drugs at the Shelter is prohibited and if someone turns up drunk or under the influence they won't be admitted. Aggression is also not tolerated. The police will often drop people off at night who have been picked up for various reasons and clearly have nowhere to sleep.

> It's great that we have a Night Shelter but imagine if we didn't need it because everyone had a home and access to healthcare.

Reality of Homelessness

On Census night in 2018, one per cent of New Zealand's population were estimated to be severely housing deprived, either living rough, in emergency housing or overcrowded housing. In Dunedin, that's around 1,300 people — an extraordinarily high number in a city of 130,000 people.

We know housing pressure is fierce. Mostly we hear about people unable to afford their first home or the high cost of rentals for families on low incomes. Occasionally we hear about the plight of people living in their cars. We might see a homeless person begging on the streets, but most of us don't see what it's actually like up close.

I was very privileged to have spent the last four months of 2021 as the acting manager of the Dunedin Night Shelter. I joined the Night Shelter Board when I left Parliament at the end of 2020 and filled a temporary gap in staffing while we searched for the right person to be manager.

Despite having spent 12 years as a constituent member of Parliament dealing with all manner of issues, being at the frontline of homelessness was next level.

Housing Options

For people released from prison the options can be grim as some boarding house landlords will google a prospective tenant and then refuse them entry based on their criminal history.

We need more social housing to give people stability and security of housing. But it's slow going.

Government Action Plan for Housing

In 2020 the Government's Aotearoa/New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan 2020-2023 defined homelessness as more than just rough sleeping, including also people who are without shelter, in emergency and temporary accommodation and living temporarily in severely overcrowded accommodation.

The action plan goals are laudable and when announced in 2020 were backed by $300 million in funding. And there's no doubt there's a concerted effort around Aotearoa to increase the number of Kainga Ora houses.

In Dunedin the latest count on the Kainga Ora website was 180 in planning, 20 at the consent level and two under construction — this is progress, but at a glacial pace.

City Council's Plan for Housing

Because families or women with children are a higher priority on the housing lists, the next option for single people trying to get stable lower-rent housing is through the Dunedin City Council's (DCC) social housing programme.

That waiting list is long and priority is given to the over 65s. A single man or woman aged under 55 with →

Photo by Peter Cripps/Shutterstock.com

limited assets, even with diagnosed mental health issues, is likely to wait over a year for placement, if a placement is ever found.

Last year the Council broadened the criteria for access to its housing units to include former refugees living in emergency housing and disabled people living independently. However, this means that single people who aren't former refugees, or classed as disabled, still struggle to find housing.

In 2018 the Dunedin City Council established a Mayor's Taskforce for Housing to advise the Council on how to address the city's urgent accommodation needs. Chaired by now-Mayor Aaron Hawkins, the group reported that at least 650 social and community housing units would be needed just to meet the current demand. By the time the Taskforce published its report, that figure was pared back to 440 because of concerns about proving the level of need.

It is worth noting that, to my knowledge, in the last decade there has been no evidential research done on the extent of homelessness in Dunedin. It's sorely needed.

Working Together Esssential

Now, almost four years since the Taskforce was established, the number of new social and community housing units is no match for the need.

A Dunedin Housing Action Plan has yet to eventuate with a combined local/central government approach to new builds. Kainga Ora's new builds are independent of a local strategy. The DCC and Kainga Ora have fronted various community hui, but we lack a costed strategy with a timeline. The goodwill and energy amongst the community sector remains, but it's increasingly tempered with scepticism and weariness.

Clare Curran is a former Labour MP for Dunedin South. She is a committed advocate and representative on social justice issues. Currently Clare is writing a crime novel.

Accessing Social Housing

Getting on the Kainga Ora or DCC social housing lists is difficult — an exhausting process requiring phone interviews, filling out numerous forms and constant advocacy.

Most homeless people have a mobile phone with limited data, limited access to Wi-Fi, no access to a printer and, in many cases, limited literacy, or language issues (English not being their first language). The barriers are much higher for them unless they have someone to advocate for them.

The people who visit the Night Shelter are highly unlikely to be on a waiting list for social housing. Their fate is to persist on the periphery in substandard, largely unregulated boarding houses — it's as if they don't exist.

Health Issues of Homeless

And then there are the health issues.

Research published in the *NZ Medical Association Journal* in 2021 paints a disturbing picture. A study of 171 people of "no fixed abode" who died between 2008-2019 identified their life expectancy as 30 years less than the housed population. They had a mean age of death of 45.7 years.

Deaths occurred mainly alone in public spaces or in private vehicles. Three quarters of the homeless people died from conditions, including suicide, where timely and effective healthcare interventions could have prevented their deaths.

The study concluded that homeless people experience real challenges when accessing the health system and found an urgent need to implement specific models of care to meet their needs and address major health inequalities. To bring this into relief: if you are a homeless person of "no fixed abode" you are unable to register with a GP as you have no address. That is, unless you're lucky enough to be treated at a low-cost, or no-cost health clinic such as Servants Medical Centre or Te Kaika in Dunedin. Unfortunately, neither of these is taking new patients right now as they are overloaded.

Without GP care, conditions worsen. People of "no fixed abode" often present at Dunedin Hospital's Emergency Department, where they're treated by overworked staff, then released with nowhere to go. Chances of recovery from an operation or chronic condition are greatly reduced when you've no home to recover in.

More than Just Homeless

This means that Dunedin is home to a large and largely unseen population of homeless people, likely more than 1,300 people. The only rental accommodation they can afford is unsafe, insecure boarding houses, or backpackers — or they live rough.

Along with homelessness, they may be enduring serious physical and mental health conditions that, left untreated, may kill them. They are unlikely to qualify for social housing. Most of them have no government supports other than a benefit.

Public Awareness Growing

Thankfully, public awareness of homelessness appears to be growing which may result in more public pressure to address the issues as they become more visible.

The Dunedin Night Shelter ran an online survey late last year to gauge public perception and understanding of homelessness in our city. Results indicated that the majority of respondents understood that homelessness resulted from a range of factors including unaffordable accommodation, mental health issues, family violence and relationship issues, addictions and evictions. 43 per cent agreed homelessness was a big problem in Dunedin and 60 per cent felt that homelessness wasn't someone's own fault.

While the sample size of the survey was small, it's an indication that some people do see the homeless and they do feel compassion.

Donations of food, clothing, bedding and sometimes money to the Dunedin Night Shelter are growing and gratefully received.

It's great that we have a Night Shelter but imagine if we didn't need it because everyone had a home and access to healthcare. Let that sink in!

Listen to Our Hopes

PETER SLOCUM writes that our hopes for a synodal Church need to start taking root in our local Church.

The Tour de France will be held from 1-24 July this year. Since 2018, professional cycling teams invited to participate in the race have eight members. I'm imagining that for 2022 the Catholic Church has been asked to participate, and seven riders — Eugenio Pacelli; Giuseppe Roncalli; Giovanni Montini; Albino Luciani; Karol Wojtyla; Joseph Ratzinger and Jorge Bergoglio — have been pre-selected, indeed mandated.

The eighth rider will be discerned by the Church's Synodal Journey. It commenced in the Vatican in October 2021, and the insights gathered from the global Church are to be included in the *Instrumentum Laboris* (working document) for the Synod of Bishops (in the Vatican) in October 2023.

The Synod of Bishops (which represents only 15 per cent of Catholic Bishops) will make recommendations to the Pope, by which time the 2022 Tour de France will be long finished. But this is the thing — notwithstanding the proclaimed listening, the dialogue, the discernment and the sharing of the synodal process, the eighth member of the team, the next Pope, will most certainly be male, an ordained priest and well into what would normally be retirement age.

At the risk of stating the obvious, the pre-selected and mandated members of the proposed 2022 team are the popes of my lifetime. With the singular exception of Roncalli, who dared to try to prise open the doors and windows of Holy Mother Church to fresh air and the prospect of regeneration, the popes have studiously laboured to ensure that any meaningful change of outlook or practice was supressed.

Roncalli was canonised for his daring to attempt change while Wojtyla was canonised for suppressing the winds of change and essentially preserving the status quo.

Before I read Sue Seconi's article in *Tui Motu* (Sept 2021), I was oblivious to the launch of the 2021–2023 Synodal Journey but my attention was captured by the headline: "Co-responsibility of Laity".

For one who has survived six popes and is enduring a seventh, perhaps I should have been calmly encouraged and energised by the prospect of embracing and exercising increased co-responsibility of the laity in the life of the Church. On the contrary, my typical phlegmatic disposition was being nudged towards outrage and impatience.

I decided to undertake a broad study of the synodal process. I commenced with the various relevant resources on the Auckland Diocesan website, including an especially prepared video of the launch of the Auckland Diocesan Synodal Journey. The faithful are urged, among other things, to "ground ourselves in the experiences of authentic listening and discernment on the path of becoming the Church that God calls us to be."

Frankly, having experienced first-hand the disappointments of non-delivery from Vatican II, I have little confidence the Church's current synodal journey will make a scrap of difference to the entrenched dogmatic and "one-size-fits-all" Church. This is because those who have so much to lose also control the narrative, the agenda and the outcome.

Jesus essentially reached out to and offered forgiveness and freedom to individual human beings in their God-given diversity. The Church, on the other hand, remains deeply rooted in a dated regal/empirical model where the exercise of hierarchical absolute authority deftly suppresses individuality. The Church needs a different paradigm to be more responsive to the people of the 21st century.

Being a lifelong Catholic, there is much that I admire and love about the Church — and, as such, I am not disposed to recklessly throw it all away. Nonetheless, the Church leadership is not listening to the wisdom of the Scriptures and is blind to the signs of the times. It is blind, too, to the sight of the people who are simply walking away: not just from the Church, but possibly from Jesus as well.

And here is a practical example of what I mean. My local parish recently announced that Pope Francis had appointed Steve Lowe as the 12th Bishop of Auckland. I, for one, don't recall being consulted — so what does that say about the Church in the modern world and the universal priesthood?

We want our local Church to listen to the members and implement change to refresh the Church, otherwise the eighth rider may be just spinning the pedals.

Painting: CYC/Shutterstock.com

Peter Slocum, living in Auckland, was raised in the Irish-Catholic Church in Australia. He waits impatiently for the Vatican II *aggiornamento*.

A CHURCH FOR GOD'S MISSION NOW

JENNY COLLINS asks what we need to bring to the Synod for the transformation of the Church for God's mission now.

A small group of us have been gathering, mostly online, to ask ourselves what our dreams are for the Church and how we might renew hope, heal wounds and create deeper relationships.

Many of us were present almost 60 years ago when the Second Vatican Council asked critical questions about our role as a people of God and the Church's place in the world. Then we listened to our priests and religious as the Church changed the way it related to other religions and the way we worshipped. Some tried to block any change. Others, disappointed that the Council did not go far enough, left the Church.

Now we who are present are being asked to reflect on the journey so far as we seek to heal the wounds of division and abuse and reshape mission in today's challenging times.

Early Memories of Parish and School

Recently I have been reflecting on my own life during the Vatican II years. I was the eldest of seven children — five girls and two boys. We grew up in Dunedin and attended Catholic schools.

In the early years we lived in North East Valley. There I met the Dominican Sisters who ran Sacred Heart School. We would often walk through the beautiful Santa Sabina convent grounds on our way home.

Later as our family grew we moved to a bigger house in Wakari. Each day Dad drove to work at the bank and we walked to St Mary's School, coming home at lunchtime to a cooked dinner. Mum, a registered nurse, worked on the weekends at the hospital to help pay for our music lessons and support Dad's passion for flying.

Movie Record of Family Life

In 1961, the year the twins were born, Dad bought a movie camera. A collection of 8mm "silent" films record family milestones, liturgies and school events: Baptisms, first Holy Communions, school break-ups and jubilees.

Watching them now, I see that our lives revolved around parish and school in a Church characterised by Irish cultural traditions and the rightness of the Catholic faith. Latin was the language of liturgy, hymns like "Faith of our Fathers" and "Immaculate Mary" were sung with gusto and the parish priest was a moral authority we turned to in times of crisis.

Our film story begins with the twins' Baptism, an ancient ritual anchored in a biblical story of prophecy, healing and welcome. It is a Sunday afternoon in June 1961. Father Tom Fahey, our well-loved parish priest stands in a white surplice in the winter sunshine outside St Mary's Kaikorai, our small parish church — welcoming our extended family and friends.

Everyone is dressed in their best. In an age when women covered their hair in church Mum wears a green coat with matching hat while we older girls are in berets and warm jackets. Dad — a youthful 40-something with "short back and sides" — wears a dark tie, white shirt and formal suit. He must have asked someone else to film the gathering because this is one of the few movies in which he features.

Afterwards we assemble on the church steps for a group photo followed by food — a spread of orange cordial, lollies and cream buns which we termed a "bun fight". Mum's best friend Elizabeth O'Neill, one of the godparents, offers my six-year-old brother Chris a chance to hold six-week-old Margaret. Martin's godparents, who owned the Catholic shop in Moray Place, proudly hold their charge.

Sisters and School

Our teachers were Dominican Sisters. They wore white habits, black veils and black cloaks that flapped in the wind as they walked to school from the convent next door.

Sister Mannes Lister, who taught me piano, took us for Christian Doctrine, sometimes in the sunny alcove outside the kitchen area of the convent.

Sister Saint Rock Rogers, the lay sister who looked after the teaching sisters, treated us with scones liberally spread with butter and jam. She told us with a twinkle in her eye that she was "the only saint in the convent".

We learned the parts of the Mass in Latin and were offered prizes for the best Pater Noster — which encouraged my competitive side.

At the end of each day we used to clean the school. My favourite job was cleaning the windows with newspaper and vinegar. I remember the principal Sister Clare Timpany, the principal, pinning her veil behind her head and tucking up the layers of her habit with safety pins to do the cleaning. At the end of term we were allowed to wear old socks so that we could skid up and down the corridors to polish the wooden floors.

School the Heart of Parish Life

Our community was small and supportive. The school was at the heart of parish life. Catholic schools were self-funding and school bazaars raised money for books and resources. We were asked to pray for the success of the bazaar and for a sunny day — it seemed to work.

The Dominican Sisters taught piano and speech to put food on the convent table. As my mother put it, they "lived off the smell of an oily rag". In the years before Catholic schools were integrated into the state system Catholic sisters were seen as the teachers who could best pass on the faith. Our focus was on preserving Catholic values but the future beckoned.

Influence of Vatican II

I was 9 years old in 1962. I remember the drama and excitement as our parish community experienced the changes wrought by the Second Vatican Council.

> **Today we hear a radical new call to transform the Church, one that encourages all of us to search for new ways of journeying together with God.**

From 1964 we started to hear the Epistle and Gospel in English. The priest turned to face the people, lay people did the readings and we sang exciting new hymns in English. Women no longer had to cover their hair in church. As Father Fahey explained it, we were part of a new Church that was learning to live in the modern world. It was an exciting time.

But some people found it very worrying. What might the future bring? I remember my grandmother asking the parish priest: "What is the Church coming to?"

Chance to Discuss Renewal

That question is still relevant for us now as we discuss how we might help shape our synodal journey at this critical point in our Church's history.

When I was growing up we lived in an all-encompassing Catholic community and accepted a clerical model of leadership with its hierarchical structures of power and a shadow side of abuse.

Today we hear a radical new call to transform the Church, one that encourages all of us, not just the clergy and religious, to search for new ways of journeying together with God.

In the 1960s we were asked to move out of our comfort zone and engage with the world.

Today we seek to discover what the questions are for us as the people of God in a rapidly changing Church.

For me it's about sharing the blessings of our past, learning to encounter Christ deeply in the present and cherishing life in Earth for our shared future.

Jenny Collins is a wife, mother, grandmother, historian and gardener. She lives in Sandspit, on the Matakana Coast, with her husband John.

LEt©s Talk about Ordination

DAVID MORE proposes that the ordination of women and married men is a major issue to discuss in preparation for the Synod.

The preparation for the upcoming Synod is our opportunity as laity to raise issues that are important for the future of the Church in New Zealand. For me, the most serious are the falling numbers participating in Sunday Eucharist and lack of vocations to the priesthood. The two are related. The Church is out of step with the rest of society in limiting its leaders to celibate males. It is no coincidence that Sunday congregations are in decline as our local priests age. We do not have enough single men discerning a priestly vocation to maintain the number of priests New Zealand needs. And importing immigrant priests is not the answer.

We need to use the opportunity of the synod to argue for married men to be ordained and to discuss the ordination of women. It is important that women are eligible to be ordained. While it is Jesus's message of love and forgiveness that is important, how that message is delivered, and by whom is also important. More and more women are taking leading roles in civil society. It makes no sense to deprive the Church of the benefits that women can offer as priests.

Papal Proclamations against Ordination of Women

Women's ordination had its advocates in the Church, especially in the last 50 years and when other Christian denominations introduced women priests, and they hoped for a change. That hope was punctured by a series of papal pronouncements opposing it.

In 1975 the Archbishop of Canterbury Donald Coggan wrote to Pope Paul VI advising that the consensus in the Anglican Church was that there was no real theological objection to ordaining women to the priesthood. The Pope replied that it was not admissible to admit women to the priesthood for fundamental reasons, including Christ choosing only men as his apostles, and that the Church's "living teaching authority which has consistently held that the exclusion of women from the

priesthood is in accordance with God's plan for his Church."

This correspondence ignited comments for and against the ordination of women. Paul VI instructed the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) to report on the question. In 1976 it issued *Inter Insigniores (On the Question of Admission of Women to the Priesthood)*. The CDF acknowledged that while various Christian communities admitted women to the pastoral office on a par with men, the Catholic Church "in fidelity to the example of the Lord, does not consider herself authorised to admit women to priestly ordination … It is a position which will perhaps cause pain but whose positive value will become apparent in the long run, since it can be of help in deepening understanding of the respective roles of men and of women."

This did not end the debate and in 1994 Pope John Paul II in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* purported to make an infallible pronouncement that the "Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful". Pope Francis confirmed this view in 2016 saying that "the Church's ban on female priests would endure — possibly forever."

Updated last year, "Penal Sanctions in the Church" in the new Code of Canon Law Canon 1379 (3) states: "Both a person who attempts to confer a sacred order on a woman, and the woman who attempts to receive the sacred order, incur a *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See; a cleric, moreover, may be punished by dismissal from the clerical state". By comparison, the penalty provided in Canon 1368, which includes the sexual abuse of a minor (which most laity would consider much more serious), is "deprivation of office, and where the case calls for it, dismissal from the clerical state".

Papal Reasons Against Women's Ordination

The reasons expressed by the Popes against the ordination of women are not pronouncements about faith or morals, so they are not infallible. Moreover, assuming that a pope has the authority to declare what is God's plan for the Church, it can never be forever. Otherwise it is imposing a restriction on God's omnipotence. God's plan is for God to determine, not for humans.

Both the *Inter Insigniores* and the *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* give as the first reason for a male only priesthood the fact that Jesus chose only men for his disciples. It is drawing a long bow to use this as a reason for women never being eligible to be ordained. To follow Jesus's example to the letter, then married men should be able to be ordained as priests, as Jesus chose married men among his apostles. If the Church can choose not to follow Jesus's example, and limit ordination to single men, it can equally choose not to follow his example, and ordain women.

We need to use the opportunity of the synod to argue for married men to be ordained and to discuss the ordination of women. It makes no sense to deprive the Church of the benefits that women can offer as priests.

The second reason in both documents was that Mary was not ordained. However, at the time of Jesus there was no single act of ordination. This did not come until the Gregorian reforms in the 11th century. In the early Church persons were appointed or elected to specific positions by the Church.

Fundamental View of Women as Inferior

The Church's opposition to women's ordination is because the Church has looked on women as inferior to men. This distorted belief has a long tradition which colours discussion and decisions into the modern era.

For example Paul VI shows prejudice and chauvinism in *Inter Insigniores* when he transfers the women's role as witnesses to the resurrection to the apostles: "In his itinerant ministry Jesus was accompanied not only by the Twelve but also by a group of women (Lk 8:2) … it was nevertheless women who were the first to have the privilege of seeing the risen Lord, and it was they who were charged by Jesus to take the first paschal message to the Apostles themselves (Mt 28:7 ; Lk 24:9 ; Jn 20:11), in order to prepare the latter to become the official witnesses to the Resurrection". In fact the Gospels say clearly the women witnessed and proclaimed the Resurrection, not the men they told. We should not ignore the fact that Jesus chose to appear to women first, just as women remained with him at his death and burial, after his apostles fled.

Paul VI's prejudice was probably unconscious, learned from his life in the Church. Following Popes have shared Paul VI views on women and there is little difference in their publications on the ordination of women.

Commission on Women Deacons in Early Church

However in 2016, Pope Francis established a study commission on the diaconate of women in the early Church — the research results were "inconclusive". He then composed a new commission in 2020 after the Synod on the Amazon. Although there are no published results yet, it opens the discussion further for the possibility of including women in the diaconate, if not in the priesthood, in the future.

As we prepare for the Synod on a Synodal Church, we need to urge our bishops to listen to the need for married and women priests. It is true that there are numerous issues facing the Church today which demand our attention, but it is also true that maintaining with scant theological justification a priesthood defined by its exclusion is at the root of many of them.

David More has practised law for 53 years, the last 26 as a barrister. He is married to Susan and they attend St Francis Xavier Church, Dunedin.

In Due Time

In due time a green tree will lie down beside a river
and a bird's wing will bloom against a cloud

and a lemon light will flash across the sky at evening
and the wind will become less highly strung

but just now whenever we try to steal something
God whistles to us from behind a bush

and we may fear that we will be turned into stone
as Lot's wife was once. So don't look back.

But be aware that in spring time when the snow melts
skiers die in the mountains — this may look

like a contradiction, but don't forget that the hand
extended in greeting also waves us goodbye.

Every evening the moon rises simply because it must
and explaining how it happens doesn't affect its rising.

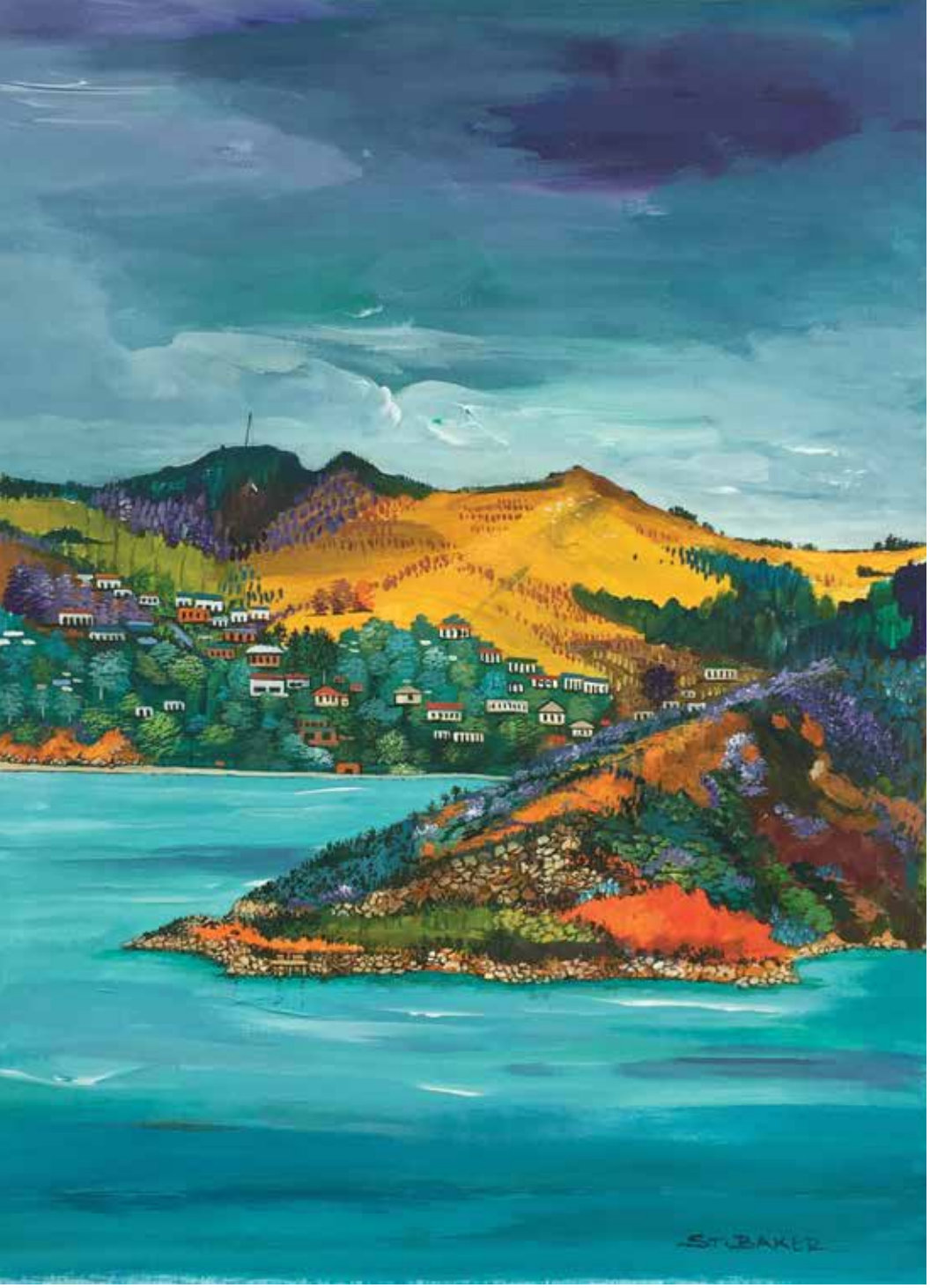
From an old house in a town that doesn't understand
itself I look out on waves breaking upon the shore.

In due time everything will become something else
because things are born not to be but to become.

— John Weir

From: ***Sparks Among the Stubble***, Cold Hub Press, 2021, p86.

Photo by Wirestock Creators/Shutterstock.com



Island Community of Work and Prayer

PETER MATHESON shares the story of the intentional St Martin Community which was based around Quarantine Island in the Otago Harbour.

Over 50 years ago an ecumenical Christian community set up base on Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua in the middle of Otago Harbour. The community was named after the 4th-century French monk St Martin of Tours, venerated for his pacifism and concern for the poor. Like the renowned Iona community in Scotland on whose principles the island community was based, the St Martin community had a small residential presence on the island while most members lived and worked in Dunedin on the mainland.

From the beginning it was a utopian venture. Dunedin in the 1950s was a conservative place hanging on to traditional British values — the UK was "home" — and an Iona-style community was a radical undertaking. Quarantine Island had been grossly neglected — the old quarantine buildings were sagging, the ground was littered with rusting iron and rotting wood and goats roamed, ravaging the remnant native bush. Humans had wrecked this beautiful place. It reminded me of Gerald Manley Hopkins' lament: "Generations have trod, have trod, have trod; / And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil".

Integrating Work and Prayer

In the late 1950s groups of young people, mainly from the Presbyterian Knox Church and Anglican St Paul's Cathedral, began to camp out in the old house and dream. Meanwhile some of the senior members built a boat for transport to and from the island. Fired by a vision to work for peace and social justice, their dream was to live a more holistic lifestyle, to leave behind denominational divisions, to recover the dignity of work and to integrate worship in daily life — "work and worship" was the mantra.

George Macleod, founder of the Iona Community, said: "You can't get out of touch with God every moment that you live, for the simple reason that God is life, not religious life or church life but the whole life we now live in the flesh." The St Martin community sought to embody this belief.

A central concern was to recover the restless dynamism of Columba and the Celtic tradition he incorporated, to get back behind the Reformation and indeed the Middle Ages, where Christianity had become respectable and allied with the status quo. This early note of liberation from convention

and a prophetic critique of capitalism endured.

Restoration and Hospitality

The early work involved clearing the accumulated rubbish of decades, itself a symbolic act. Gradually other dimensions become visible: an ecological concern and providing time out for marginalised young people. Some of Dunedin's leading community figures were involved such as Jack Somerville, Master of Knox College; Walter Hurst, Dean of St Paul's; Jim Matheson, Minister of Knox Church and Pamela Fraser whose service to Women's Refuge is less known but equally valuable.

Building a community and its infrastructure is an uphill battle when people have only so much spare time. The community tackled the gorse and the planting of natives took a huge step forward when a shade house was set up. Architect members like Murray Rae transformed the resident cottage. A little chapel was built facing Aramoana. A herculean task master-minded by Charles Clark, was the rebuilding of the jetty.

Permanent Personnel on the Island

A significant boost came in the 1980s when Dave Wilson began his 10-year stay on the island. He had been chaplain to the unemployed in Dunedin and had been brought up in a farming context. He loved the place and had an endlessly patient ear for those who came with their worries, seeking something different. Sheep became important residents on the island.

Monthly community council meetings were filled with the planning of one ambitious project after another. The main house was steadily improved, bunk beds installed, connections with local schools established and an ethos of hospitality promoted.

On-going Formation of Members

Community weekends were key factors in community development in the 1980s. Each month members would gather on the island to work and worship, to be stimulated by national figures such as politicians Sonja Davies and Michael Cullen and poets Hone Tuwhare and Colin Gibson, and to participate in workshops on topics such as sexuality, feminism and peace education. They discussed current issues such as Rogernomics and the nuclear threat.

So in living and working together the community developed a radical agenda for social change — even seeing themselves as a laboratory for a different Aotearoa.

The community developed core values which underpinned their hospitality: everyone was accepted as they were, residential fees were kept low so that they weren't a deterrent, school and church groups were welcome, money was allocated first to hospitality and if that meant little was available to improve the accommodation, so be it.

In living and working together the community developed a radical agenda for social change — even seeing themselves as a laboratory for a different Aotearoa.

Change and Further Development

As in all voluntary communities there were personal and political tensions at times. The council and the residents didn't always see eye to eye but we tried to work through these.

Dave Wilson's death on the island ushered in a new era under Cathy Morrison with Doug and her family. She brought a new emphasis especially on heritage. She was a dreamer who put her back into her dreams — the rebuilding of the married quarters building, the significant alliance with the Conservation Department and Forest and Bird.

Then the dreadful massacre in nearby Aramoana brought the life of the island closer to the violence on the mainland. A key community member lost a young relative in the shooting. A quiet ceremony in the island chapel reminded us that as a community we are there for the pain of the whole wider community.

Christian Connection Ceases

The intentional Christian focus of the community did not last. Over the last years the community evolved in personnel and vision — a growing awareness of Māoritanga, the work of conservation and resilience, honouring the heritage of the past and fostering an indigenous spirituality. Then a majority of members elected to abandon the Christian basis as they felt it was constrictive.

When this happened the St Martin island community came to an end — and another chapter began.

Community Influence Lives On

However, the recent 50th anniversary celebration of the St Martin Community was telling. While the Mayor, Anglican and Catholic bishops and hosts of family and friends were piped from the new jetty to the house the kōrero, dancing, singing and conversation revealed the fruits of the community. It was a festival of young people who had grown up in the community and were now contributing in new ways in the world.

While we, the founding generation, mourned the passing even as we celebrated the venture, the young showed how the community intergenerational dynamics had become generative of the vision and its values in different ways. The spirit lives on.

Painting: *View from Quarantine Island to Goat Island and Back Beach Port Chalmers* by Jo St Baker ©2020 Used with permission www.stbakerart.com

Peter Matheson is a peace activist, a Church historian, Emeritus Professor of Knox Theological College, Dunedin and author.

Protection of Labour Rights

MARGARET BEDGGOOD discusses labour rights in this country and how Catholic Social Teaching can influence our understanding of them.

In April 2021 the Labour Government announced its intention of introducing Fair Pay Agreements (FPA) (see *TM* May 2021). The proposed FPA are to be applicable between employers and unions across a particular industry upon request by 10 per cent or 1,000 workers and under certain conditions. Strikes, for example, will not be permitted during FPA negotiations.

Such agreements would set minimum standards across industries and (re)entrench unions as key bargaining parties in the negotiation of collective agreements, as, it should be noted, has continued to be the case with some strong unions, particularly in the public service.

If agreement is not reached in negotiations then the Employment Relations Authority will set the terms.

Balancing Power of Workers and Employers

This move goes some way to redress the current imbalance between the power of workers and employers. Such a balance was provided in New Zealand in the 1894 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act where trade unions were legally recognised. This followed a similar trend elsewhere.

From the late 19th century the industrial revolution gave fresh emphasis to the need to address that imbalance between "master and servant" by means of some form of collective organisation and action: hence the establishment of trade unions, recognised in Britain in the Trade Union Act 1871, and similarly in Europe and North America.

The 1894 Act operated a tripartite system (state/employer/employee representatives) and a system of compulsory state arbitration for employment agreements and disputes for those unions which registered under it (it was compulsory for employers). But it also curtailed the right to strike, the last resort of a workers' collective.

Advent of Employment Contracts

Although there were some adjustments, this system remained broadly similar until 1991. Then the National Government, emboldened by the wholesale social changes introduced in the 1980s by the 4th Labour Government and by skilful lobbying by pressure groups such as the Business Roundtable, enacted the Employment Contracts Act (ECA). This Act completely altered our industrial relations framework. It in effect abolished "unions" (they are not even mentioned by name), including their role as key bargaining agents for workers. It prioritised individual contracts and limited any collective bargaining to a single, or a few, employers and entrenched "free-riding".

Although the employment relations system required some re-balancing, for example with regard to the frequent use of strike action and the representational effectiveness of unions themselves, the scale of the changes was extreme as was the ruthlessness and speed with which they were implemented.

Employment Relations Act Introduced

In 2000 the pendulum began to swing back again with some remedial measures in the Labour Coalition Government's Employment Relations Act (ERA), with the re-recognition of unions.

Subsequent Governments made further changes: the abolition of "zero-hours contracts" and increases in the minimum wage.

The proposed FPA is another small step to improve the position of employees in areas where unions have traditionally been weak (or, since the ECA, non-existent) — clerical workers, cleaners and those in the hospitality industries. Those same workers had benefited from the 1894 Act and are now revealed as those most needing better protection in the COVID-19 era.

This modest proposal predictably met with robust, but fairly shallow, criticism, which resurfaced in late 2021.

It is helpful to consider the issue in the wider context of international "labour rights", in both a secular and a Christian context.

International Labour Organisation

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) was formed in 1919. It operates with an unusual tripartite structure and an annual meeting which approves Conventions and Recommendations to its members on an expanding list of concerns: working conditions, minimum wages, equal pay and other discrimination issues, child and forced labour, social security and collective bargaining and freedom of association, with a number of complaints procedures for breaches of these Conventions. (New Zealand has been a member of the ILO since its beginning).

One of its main purposes has been to recognise and encourage collective action at national and international level. Coupled with a right to freedom of association, collective bargaining is a key feature of the ILO's founding Constitution, the 1941 *Declaration of Philadelphia*, ILO Conventions 87 and 98 and the 1998 *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*.

This *Declaration* sets out four key principles and rights and the eight Conventions which enact them: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of forced or compulsory labour, the abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. It is applicable to all people and states, whether or not they are members of the ILO or have ratified these Conventions.

That this list included collective bargaining, at a period when adherence to this principle was weakened in many member states, demonstrates the importance which the ILO attaches to it.

More recently, there have been two further developments: the 2015 *Decent Work Agenda*, which endorses these same four principles; and the *Future of Work Initiative*, endorsed in the ILO's 2019 *Centennial Declaration*. These continue to focus on disadvantaged groups: casual, domestic and rural workers, child labourers, migrants, whose rights are also again impacted by COVID-19.

In the context of international human rights since 1948, the ILO has been the preeminent organisation for the enhancement of labour rights, for example, in its influence in the drafting of Articles 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*.

Contribution of Catholic Social Teaching

In Catholic Social Teaching an emphasis on workers' rights is logical in any preferred option for the poor. And in the formal structures of the Catholic Church "labour rights" (though not so designated) have received strong support.

Since Pope Leo XIII's seminal and still relevant 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* the Church has continued to develop its commitment to such rights. A series of papal encyclicals, from *Mater et Magistra* 1961, through 1981's *Laborem Exercens* to Pope Francis's 2020 *Fratelli Tutti*, has gradually given recognition to the ILO, its contributions and their congruence with the Church's values and finally to the concept of human rights in general.

One instance of long-standing cooperation between the Church and the ILO is not well known. Since 1926 without interruption there has been stationed in the ILO a Jesuit in residence as special ecclesiastical adviser to the Director-General on social and religious matters.

While there are examples of collaboration between religious and secular organisations on, for example, peace or development, and there are organisations which combine foundational values with practical outcomes (such as Franciscans International), here a Christian representative is embedded within the secular organisation itself.

None of this is to suggest that the Holy See and the ILO have always been in accord, much less that Catholic Social Teaching is to be equated with labour rights at the ILO or in international human rights. But it is an intriguing example of cooperation and mutual influence between two such different international organisations, one more weighted to moral principles and the other to delivering their practical implementation, but leading to shared values and objectives.

All of which suggests that there is a wider context, secular and Christian, in which to evaluate developments in "labour rights" in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Margaret Bedggood is a member of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis and a human rights teacher and advocate.

Language of Love

DANIEL O'LEARY writes that just as the messages that lovers exchange on Valentine's Day express the depth of their devotion, we need to use words to describe God's love that also come straight from the heart.

Valentine greetings such as Ogden Nash's verse will criss-cross our planet on the 14 February as lovers compete for new expressions of their love:

"I swear to you by the stars above,
And below, if such there be,
As the High Court loathes
perjurious oathes,
That's how you're loved by me."

Little did the third-century saint realise what he was starting when he signed himself off with "from your Valentine" in a note to a girl he had cured of blindness! When we experience love we reach for a new language. When we sense a transformation within us we search

for new ways of expression. Pope Francis repeatedly refers to the need for "a language of the heart". When we struggle to bring relief to a dear friend we ache for the right words. In "Words for It" Julia Cameron captures this anxious moment:

"I wish I could take language
And heal the words that were the wounds
You have no name for."

In a troubled Church, there are also those who long for more beautiful ways of communicating the mystery of God's love. For too many hurt people even the word "God" brings memories of the hard judge preached by hard men in a hard Church. Well aware of this, the Pope proposes using "the mother tongue", a more feminine, intuitive, more "tender" way of revealing divine love.

"Out from the heart (which knows by experience and by suffering)," writes theologian Karl Rahner, "human words arise, intimate words, words of the heart, words of God that have only one meaning, a meaning that gladdens and blesses . . ." The message of a prophet, a lover, a visionary can never be truly said in prose alone. Rhineland mystic Mechtild of Magdeburg writes:

"God speaks ...
When your Easter comes
I shall be around you,
I shall be through and through you
And I shall steal your body
And give you to your love."

A lost, powerful, poetic and mystical strain running deeply through the Catholic faith is slowly being recovered. A precious awareness is happening in people when they reflect on the abiding meaning of God's unconditional love, and when they experience that divine presence in all their relationships. Their closeness to God becomes more intense, more personal and more universal. They search for new words for a revitalised love story.

A feminist critique of our attempts at restoring a language of love around God sees current usage as oppressive and divisive. The exclusive and distancing language of the "new translation" of the Mass is a case in point. It is high time to turn to the mystics among us. Without listening now to the wisdom and consciousness of women, and to the language and symbols of love that reflect and embody their experiences, the Church will fail to find worthy words to communicate inexpressible mystery.

Writer Joyce Rupp beautifully expresses the word of love in terms of melody. She compares each soul to an empty, silent flute awaiting the lips, fingers and breath of God. And then we become the very music of divine love's language. Rupp writes:

"The small wooden flute and I,
we need the one who breathes,
we await one who makes melody."

How can so sublime a mystery of divine desire be described? God uttered the language of love and Creation emerged. Chronologically later, but first in intention, Jesus was born. God is fleshed into humanity. Humanity, then, is God's language of love. "You are God's love-letters," wrote St Paul, "written not with ink but with the love called the Holy Spirit; not on tablets of stone but across the pages of your human heart."

OUT FROM THE HEART HUMAN WORDS ARISE, INTIMATE WORDS, WORDS OF THE HEART, WORDS OF GOD THAT HAVE ONLY ONE MEANING, A MEANING THAT GLADDENS AND BLESSES.

There are times in the seasons of the soul when the phrase "the Word became flesh" strikes us with new, astonishing, shocking force. We are people of the flesh, not just people of the Book. God's Word is translated into muscle and bone; inscribed in flesh and blood.

That Word, for Christians, is now their own physical presence, the loving way they listen, look, speak, touch, create. We ourselves, in our complicated, ambiguous humanity, are the last, most complete and beautiful utterance of the Word. Most people find this too difficult to believe.

"Fill my whole being so utterly," wrote Blessed John Henry Newman, "that my very life may only be a radiance of you . . . not by words but by example, by the catching influence of who I am . . ."

In passing, one of Newman's "examples" might be a loving invitation back to the family table, by Mother Church, for all those banished from it. In God's eyes they never left it. John Paul II said that "the body makes visible (God's) invisible love". This mystery is experienced and expressed above all in the mutual intimacy and identification of Holy Communion. "We are beyond words here," the saint said. "We are in the realm of the physical, the sensual." A transformed world is revealed.

Maybe this is the kind of "new country" Nobel Prize-winner Rabindranath Tagore wrote about:

"And when old words die out on the tongue,
new melodies break forth from the heart;
and where the old tracks are lost,
new country is revealed with its wonders."

After all, what on earth can Christianity mean — especially when it descends into exclusiveness and worthiness tests — if it is not first about people's loving, saving intimacy with the Gracious Mother from whom they first emerged, and together, towards whom they are always intuitively stumbling?

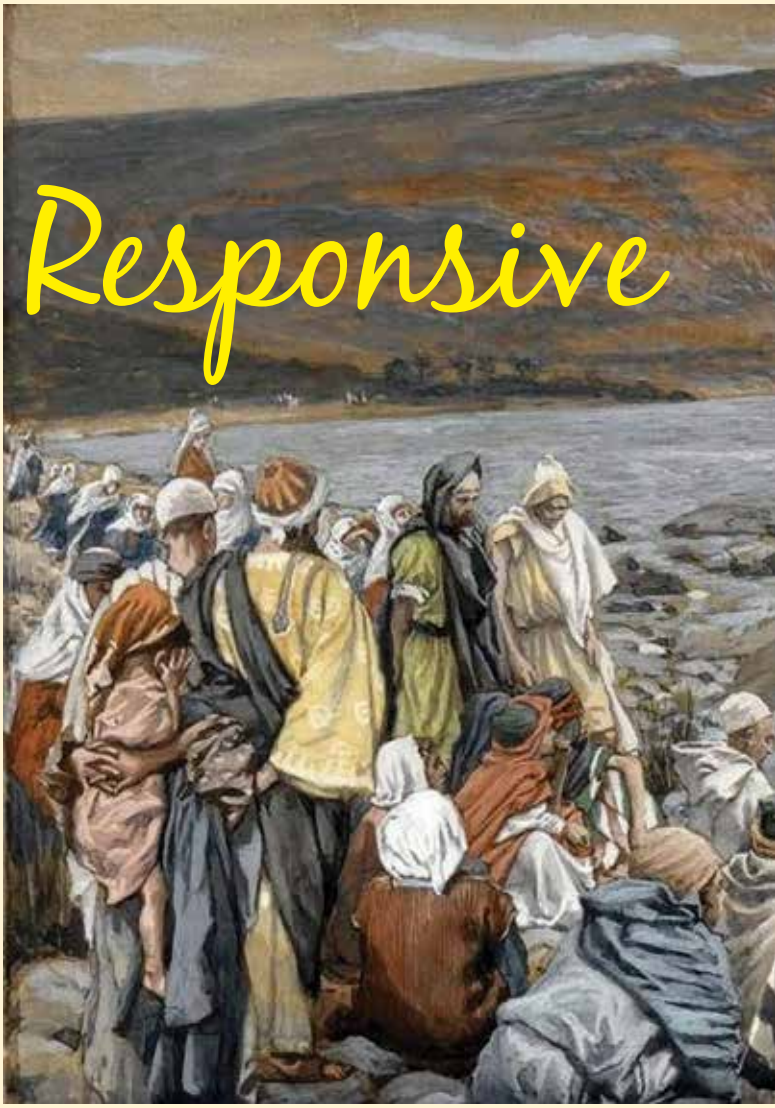
Beyond worn words and routine rites, only the "fully alive" human beings of Irenaeus — the light in their eyes and the love in their hearts — will ever be that "catching influence" for others, those "love letters" to the world, God's ultimate valentine to all of creation: "You are my body, my very blood."

Republished with permission from *The Tablet*, 14 February 2015

Painting: ***Birthday Flowers*** by Jenny Wheatley © Used with permission www.jennywheatley.co.uk [Jenny said that the flowers were left at her door on her birthday during the 2020 Lockdown.]

Daniel O'Leary died 21 January 2019. His book *Horizons of Hope: Unpublished Fragments of Love* was published posthumously in 2021.

Blessed AND Responsive



KATHLEEN RUSHTON highlights some significant aspects of Jesus's Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6:17-26.

Luke's Gospel is preoccupied with the need to engage and dialogue with the world. It is highly likely that Luke's focus on the plight of the poor was intended as a critique of his own congregation. Luke writes about Jesus in Palestine in the 30s for Christians living in the Greco-Roman world in the 80s. And now we are reading Luke's words from the 2020s.

Understanding Limited Goods

Luke does not spiritualise poverty. In ancient Palestine the term "poor" was both a social and economic reality underpinned by the notion of "limited goods". In our modern economies, we assume that goods are, in principle, in unlimited supply. If a shortage occurs, more can be made. But in ancient times, the opposite was assumed — all goods existed in finite, limited supply and were already distributed. This included everything in life — not only material goods but honour, friendship, power, status and security. We can imagine this understanding as being like a pie that is to be shared. If one person takes a large piece, then there is less for everyone else.

So when Luke calls someone "rich" he is making a social, moral and economic statement. And in labelling another "poor" means that the person is powerless and defenceless. It is closer to this understanding to translate "rich" as "greedy", and "poor" as "socially unfortunate".

Gospel Context of the Beatitudes

In Nazareth Jesus announced the programme for his ministry. Recalling Isaiah, he declared the Spirit of God is upon him, anointing him "to bring good news to the poor … to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind … to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of God's favour" (Lk 4:16-19). Since then he has called others to engage in his ministry – Simon and his companions and Levi, the tax collector. In Chapter 5-6 Jesus moves to set up this group of companions on a more formal basis by founding his new community of the *basileia* of God. Then, in a long sermon, he lays out the attitudes and behaviours that are to distinguish his new community.

Before choosing the Twelve, Jesus spends the night in prayer on a mountain. The narrative implies that the Twelve were also there: "He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon." (Lk 5:17). We need to distinguish the categories of people gathered on that level place where Jesus stands with them.

Those closest to Jesus are the twelve apostles, next are the wider group of disciples from whom the Twelve had been singled out, and then the great multitude. They had come to hear Jesus and to initiate their healing by "trying to touch him, for power came out from him". It is vital to understand that Jesus gives his long instruction to his disciples in front of that huge gathering of burdened and afflicted humanity longing for his healing and freeing power. His deeds of healing (Lk 6:17-18) are followed by his words of teaching the Twelve for mission.

Meaning of "Blessed"

Jesus "looked up at his disciples". He addresses them directly in the second person — using "you" and "yours". The sermon contains the central truths he wants to communicate to potential disciples whom he calls "blessed" (Lk 6:21-23) and invites them to ongoing conversion (Lk 6:24-26). In the four pairs of blessings and contrasting woes, the emphasis is on now.

Two words in Luke are translated as "blessed." One *(eulogeō)* is found when a person asks a blessing for an

The “poor” denotes the economically poor. But the “the poor” also describes the faithful of Israel and the multitude seeking Jesus who are waiting with hope for God’s coming among them. They show that at the heart of longing for economic, structural and environmental salvation, is a deep spiritual longing.

individual or persons as when Simeon “blessed” Mary and Joseph or Elizabeth “blessed” Mary.

The other *(makarios)* in the beatitudes and in Mary’s Magnificat, is described by Raymond Brown as “not part of a wish [or] blessing but rather recognising “an existing state of happiness or good fortune.” In this sense, “blessed” affirms a quality of spirituality that is already present. It is about a happy state that already exists and allows one even now to experience a happy life. In the New Testament, this blessed is overwhelmingly about the distinctive joy that a person experiences in being part of the *basileia* of God.

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes are provocative and they hold together clashing ideas. They do not suggest that the poor are to be content and accept their lot passively. Jesus speaks of God acting on behalf of the poor and marginalised rather than the greedy and comfortable. Disciples who throw in their lot with Jesus are called to conversion. The paradox is that at the same time as Luke proclaims “woe to you who are rich” those same rich, entering into the new community of the *basileia*, will be “blessed . . . yours is the kingdom of God . . . you will be filled.”

The “poor” denote the economically poor. These Beatitudes, like Mary’s Magnificat, cannot be spiritualised as if they have no relationship to social justice. But “the poor” also describes the faithful of Israel like Anna and Simeon — and the multitude seeking Jesus — who are waiting with hope for God’s coming among them. They show that at the heart of longing for economic, structural and environmental salvation, is a deep spiritual longing.

Letting the Beatitudes Influence Us

What Jesus *says* and *does* in the Sermon on the Plain is directly relevant to our Christian communities today. The Lucan Jesus invites us to participate with him in God’s *basileia* in several interconnected ways.

First Jesus takes time for prayer — disciples are there. Prayer and action go together.

Second, Jesus stands *with* and he does not minister alone — he calls us together as a community, a moral community that can support and challenge our search for truth and ways forward.

Third, Jesus gives his instruction on the distinguishing attitudes and behaviours of discipleship with the afflicted crowd before him.

Fourth, Jesus speaks directly to us: “You are blessed”, affirming a *quality of spirituality that is already present*, an experience of joy in our longed-for change. We are invited to ongoing conversion and transformation.

And fifth, like Jesus we can draw on the deep tradition of the practical wisdom.

This is what the Churches are for — to nourish an experience of transcendence, a shared praxis and alternative vision to sustain us in an often-hostile environment and to communicate this living tradition to others. With Luke’s community, we face this challenge in our particular situation today — to conserve, live and transmit both their and our experience of Jesus and God’s alternative community of the *basileia*.

Painting: *Jesus Teaches the People by the Sea* by James Tissot.

13 February
RL: 6th Sunday Ordinary Time — Luke 6:17, 20-26
RCL: 6th Sunday after Epiphany — Luke 6:17-26

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

Thoughts about Home

My sister tells me that I don't need to do "goodbye runs" on each of my 10 favourite running routes in Wellington. "It's just excessive," she says, and she's probably right. I'm moving from my flat in Wellington to Auckland and my room is filled with boxes. It's as good a time as any to think about home.

I had the gift of being raised in two very different countries, with a family that was very familiar with the complexity of belonging. When I moved back to Aotearoa from India in 2018, I didn't know — although perhaps I hoped — that four years later I would find it so wrenching to leave a city I'd chosen to live in based on little more than an impression of sunshine and busyness.

I've reflected on how I've learned to be at home in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara. Above all, I think I've learned how to notice God's abundance, and I've written about some of that in this column (which will be continuing this year, have no fear!). God's abundance of attention, tending to small and beautiful details, works in ways that may be invisible to me but nonetheless shapes me profoundly. God's abundance of beauty, the hills to lift my eyes to (and my feet), crooked and crinkly horizons. God's abundance of rest, a peace and wholeness found only in God, a solid grace I can rely on. God's abundance of relationships, the love and sparkle of finding people who will jump with me into the ocean in the middle of winter or support my zany ideas to have themed parties.

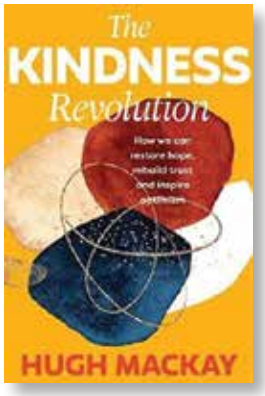
Forgive me here, for a little self-indulgence: the objects in my room are a reminder of how God provides. My wall is papered with postcards sent by friends. I pack books with long inscriptions from friends carefully into cardboard, and tidy mixing bowls that have made biscuits that I've shared. Reminders that in all my untidiness and late nights, prayers have been answered.

And how does this abundance connect to home? In this home, in this place, God has shown me how to exist in the trust that things will be provided when I need them, and that there is much that will surprise me. Maybe that is what it takes to make a home? To know that the goodness of God that has existed in one place does not run out, that it is something I can take with me, and then find anew.

I was rereading old journals recently and found some entries from when I first left home — moved away from my parents and started going on adventures without them. In my memory these are exciting, fun times, but in the journal I'd written about how anxious I'd been to go away, how much I longed to return to the places where I knew I was loved and wanted. I am wildly, profoundly grateful that home is no longer just that one place where I'd felt safe. Time and experience have developed a trust that being at home is not confined to one place which will disappear completely when I pack boxes to leave. Being at home can be created anew in a different place with other people. God is already there and given time and effort, I can belong wholly again.

Shanti Mathias, a twentysomething living in Tāmaki Makaurau, is working as a journalist. She loves dangly earrings, listening to podcasts and is always learning to pray.

REVIEWS



The Kindness Revolution

How We Can Restore Hope, Rebuild Trust and Inspire Optimism

by Hugh Mackay
Published by Allen & Unwin, 2021. (approx NZ$35.23)

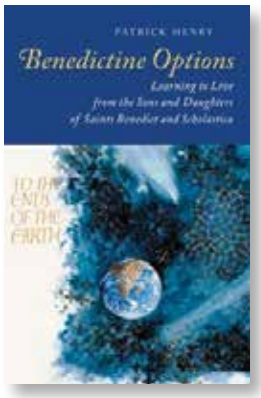
This is an engaging, interesting and very contemporary read — drawing, as it does, on the changes in societal relationships (both helpful and hindering) wrought by COVID-19. Though an easy read, it offers a comprehensive analysis of contemporary society — based mainly in Australia but with relevance elsewhere especially in New Zealand.

Mackay uses many examples and case studies to demonstrate both the presence and absence of kindness and, to some extent, the cause and effect of each in business, political, domestic, social and other situations. His analysis draws on his 60 years of experience as a social psychologist and researcher, and (by his own admission) is influenced as much by his fictional writing as it is by his professional scientific publications.

The subtitle suggests this is a "how to" book, but the reader should not expect a step-by-step guide for changing the world. Rather, Mackay presents a vision of small shifts in attitudes, actions and reactions that can bring about hope, trust and optimism. The most definitive ideas are the practice of *empathic listening and generous forgiveness.*

This book would be useful to negotiators, advocates and counsellors and also to anyone who wishes to be a good citizen bringing about societal change.

— *Reviewed by Bruce Drysdale*



Benedictine Options

Learning to Live from the Sons and Daughters of Saints Benedict and Scholastica

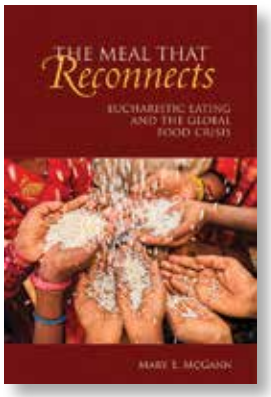
by Patrick Henry
Published by Liturgical Press, 2021. (US$19.95)

I loved this book. As a long-time Lay Cistercian Associate of the Southern Star Abbey at Kopua, I expected to find Benedictine gems in it. I wasn't disappointed. It enlarged my learning of a year ago when the Kopua Associates hosted a meeting with four other lay Benedictine groups: there is no single way to be Benedictine even in a small place like Aotearoa.

Monasticism is popular today — to read about, to visit on retreats or to be inspired — but not as a life-long commitment to the cloister for most of us. Henry talks of the Benedictine charism as being attractive because it is ecumenical, intergenerational, experimental and diverse.

I was fascinated that in this book Henry is responding to Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation.* I had not read Dreher but could pick up the contrasts between his binary approach (one monastery, one way, focusing on restoration) and Henry's "both/and" approach that describes the Benedictine options today in terms of "adventure in a salt-water marsh". With Joan Chittister and Kathleen Norris, I highly recommend this book!

— *Reviewed by Jenny Dawson*



The Meal that Reconnects

Eucharistic Eating and the Global Food Crisis

by Mary E McGann
Published by Liturgical Press, 2020. (US$29.99)

Corporate industrial agriculture has made food more widely available in the world, but the larger impact of the industrial food complex is over consumption, waste and the destruction of Earth's basic life systems. Eucharist, in contrast, holds out another paradigm. It invites communities into an economy of gift and grace, of gratitude and reciprocity. In Eucharist, communities are invited into something larger than themselves, to reposition themselves in relation to others: the Earth community, other persons and especially those who hunger and suffer deprivation. The same person who said "This is my body" also said "I was hungry and you gave me food".

Anyone who hasn't quite worked out yet (but has long suspected) how Eucharist, a sacrament centred on food (fruit of the earth and work of human hands) and food justice (seed, soil, hunger and farm workers) are interconnected, needs to read this book. It is well researched and carefully argued. How can eucharistic practice strengthen relationships of justice, solidarity and reciprocity between human communities and the rest of the web of life?

— *Reviewed by Neil Darragh*

Don't Look UP

Directed by Adam McKay
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

Widely seen as a parable about the world's lack of response to the environmental crisis, with a nudge towards the anti-vax movement and the US far right, *Don't Look Up* (now screening on Netflix) is more a multi-pronged satire on American culture and politics.

The film's premise is both simple and utterly devastating: two scientists at Michigan State University — Dr Randall Mindy (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Kate Dibiaski (Jennifer Lawrence) — discover that a massive comet is due to impact the earth in just over six months, wiping out all life on the planet. The rest of the film charts their utter failure to convince anyone in power to do anything to head off disaster. "No-one listens to scientists until it's too late" could be the film's mantra.

Although Mindy and Dibiaski are whisked off to the White House and are given prime spots on national media, it soon becomes apparent that everyone is too self-absorbed and anxious to impress to take this existential threat seriously. For the President (Meryl Streep), the comet is a convenient distraction from the upcoming mid-term elections and a controversial Supreme Court nominee. To complicate things further, she is enmeshed with an Asperger-ish IT mogul who spouts psychobabble and wants to "capture" the comet to mine its rare minerals for mobile phones.

Our messengers of doom fare no better with the media. Appearing on the trendy TV talk show *The Daily Rip* ("We keep the bad news light"), their message is buried beneath an avalanche of trivia, and they are pushed into second spot by a tacky celebrity breakup.

As the satire is ladled on ever more thickly, even the two protagonists fail to keep on message. The bearded, nerdy Mindy unaccountably becomes an overnight sex symbol and has an affair with the blonde and botoxed female co-host of *The Daily Rip*. Kate is derided as a "crazy woman" when she breaks down on national TV and later forms an unlikely alliance with a young evangelical skateboarder.

Amid this welter of grotesque stereotypes thrown up by a culture dying under the weight of its own excesses, the film's urgent message is effectively buried — and not only in the way intended by the filmmakers. In the end, *Don't Look Up* is little more substantial than any other Hollywood disaster movie. It doesn't even begin to sketch an alternative pathway out of the mess it portrays. Is the film, in the end, as self-indulgent as the crass and corrupt culture it critiques?

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The turning of the year was marked by the death of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. His was a clear voice for justice, for non-violent resistance to the evils of apartheid, and latterly for LGBT rights and the rights of Palestinians. His, too, a voice for the hard work of forgiveness in forging a new politics and a more inclusive society. And, as Bishop of Johannesburg, Archbishop of Cape Town and president of the All Africa Conference of Churches, he spoke with this clear voice from the very heart of the Christian church.

He also spoke as an African. Born of Xhosa and Motswana heritage, he drew strongly on that heritage. From that heritage he taught us the concept of ubuntu — a Nguni Bantu term — which he translated as "I am because we are" and as "the essence of being human: that a person is a person only through other persons, that my humanity is caught up in yours. I am fully me only if you are all you can be."

Ubuntu is about living in right relationships, and restoring relationships that have been damaged. Tutu built the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission on this concept, recognising that South Africa needed the truth of apartheid to be told and reparations to be made. Rebuilding right relationships is not easy, is not cheap, and can be confrontational. But for Tutu it was the only way into the future.

Getting Relationships Right

Perhaps this reaching for right relationships is a genuinely cross-cultural idea, a human idea. Certainly there is a host of such terms in te reo Māori — whanaungatanga is one such. In English, solidarity and the common good go some way towards this.

With or without an equivalent word, we have nevertheless seen solidarity in action in Aotearoa as we have confronted the pandemic.

A huge majority of the population has acted in the common good, undergoing the hardships of lockdown and putting aside our individual freedoms for the well-being of others.

Challenges for 2022

It is tempting to say that we don't know what 2022 will bring, but we do know that the big challenges remain: climate change, poverty and inequality, the plight of refugees and asylum seekers, structural racism — as well as the ongoing pandemic. How will we as Church speak to these challenges?

Part of the answer is that, as people of faith, we can make our voices heard and our actions visible in the struggle for justice. Another part of the answer is that those in authority, those literally with a pulpit, can speak out. Our faith traditions have such strong foundations: in the witness of the biblical prophets, in the Gospels, and in the traditions of our different strands of faith — Catholic Social Teaching, for example, and Methodism's long practice of solidarity with the poor.

There is great tumult when cross-currents meet. There is tumult in the social movements, the politics, the cultural upheavals of our time. But there is also this firm foundation. Desmond Tutu found a way to speak with clarity and conviction from the heart of a rich weave of faith, culture and tradition. Can we?

TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

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

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

Address:
Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd,
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PO Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9059

Phone: (03) 477 1449

Email: editor@tuimotu.org

Email for subscriptions: admin@tuimotu.org

Editor: Ann L Gilroy RSJ

Assistant Editor: Ann Hassan

Design & layout: Greg Hings

Proofreader: Christine Crowe

Printers: Southern Colour Print, Dunedin

Board Directors: Judith McGinley OP (chair), Neil Darragh, Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey, Cathrine Harrison, Agnes Hermans, Shane Gallagher

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WALKING THE MYSTICAL PATH

WALKING THE MYSTICAL PATH is a nine-month "at-home" programme for those wishing to integrate a contemplative dimension into their lives.

Facilitated by **Agnes Hermans**, ACSD, coordinator with the Contemplative Network Aotearoa. Agnes has recently completed studies with the Center for Action and Contemplation.

TWO START DATES in 2022:
MARCH and **JUNE**

Cost: $340 for materials and spiritual companioning sessions.

For further information: email amhermans@xtra.co.nz

We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words.

The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters while keeping the meaning.

YOUNG TO SHARE IDEAS FOR ACTION

Thank you for your feature on our young people and their work on the "Black Lives Matter" campaign (*TM* Nov 2021). Your choice of format, allowing the voices of the students to lead the story was a real strength of the article.

The last part focusing on taking action needs to be liberated from a more transactional problem-solving approach i.e. get the stats, identify the issues and the solutions and then take action. Young people see relationship development differently from the rest of us and work in that modality more often and easily than we do.

How good it would be to hear a young person's perspective on the action stage of "Black Lives Matter" so we can affirm and support their commitment to engage this important issue from a young person's perspective.

Anton Spelman, Taāmaki Makaurau

LOCATION, LOCATION

"Small is beautiful" is exactly where our small, Christian fellowship finds itself as 2021 comes to an end. We're now in "location two" — a cosy suburban church hall with few facilities – the main hall, a loo, kitchenette, altar and COVID precautions. In our previous "location one" we had a large church, well-used church hall, office, two loos, lounge and cheap op shop. We were financially sound(ish) and had our own minister. That is all now gone and we're down to the bare bones of location two.

We have one another and lay people lead and preach — very well. While remaining within our denomination, there's spiritual growth and a sense of freedom as we face the interesting challenges of 2022. A regular, uplifting statement during worship says it all: "The Lord is here. God's Spirit is with us." Location two has it's frustrations and limitations, but it does seem to be working — Alleluia!

David Day, Napier

SYNOD PRAYER

Spirit of God
as we journey together
inspire us to dream about the Church we are called to be,
to make people's hopes flourish,
to stimulate trust,
to bind up wounds,
to weave new and deeper relationships,
to learn from one another,
to build bridges,
to enlighten minds, warm hearts and restore strength to our hands
for the good of all
in our common mission.
We ask this Holy Spirit
as you draw us into the communion of Divine Love,
Amen

REVIEW

Religious Life for Our World

Creating Communities of Hope

by Maria Cimperman
Published by Orbis Books, 2020. (US$28)

Maria Cimperman writes that this is an amazing time in religious life and in our world. She challenges religious congregations to listen to God's call in the ever-evolving world around us and, according to their charism, to respond through vowed living grounded in prayer, community and ministry.

Each chapter is organised into an analytical and reflective framework to encourage conversation on the consecrated life. Content is grounded in contemporary research and comment, thought-provoking questions are raised throughout and numerous ways of responding to the cries around us are explored, many of which require collaboration with others to bring about the reign of God today. Although the examples are mostly North American, I found myself reflecting on religious life in this part of the world.

I enjoyed Cimperman's refreshing approach to living the vows in our context. Her style is engaging and she gives numerous footnotes. I recommend this book to religious, to book clubs or groups for discussion and to anyone serious in responding to Pope Francis's call to "wake up the world".

— Reviewed by Carmel Jones

Looking OUT and IN

I can't ignore sunrise when I sleep in a tent. Light splashes across the thin nylon walls and wakes me. Unzipping the doorway, I clamber out and light the stove for that first morning cup of tea. As the stove purrs I look across the sleepy campsite. Sunlight on glistening tent fabric creates a steam that rises like incense or like plumes of toitoi. It is a blurry, blue summer morning.

I barely sleep on my first night summer camping. I hear everything: the stream chuckling as it finds a fun route downhill; salty waves sucking up and down the sand; wind swashing through high boughs of pine, rimu or beech. Most surprising on a quiet night is the clicking of sandflies as they hurl their small earnest black-gauze selves against tent nylon. I see everything, too: at bedtime I zip into my tiny nylon dome, flecks of white zircon glitter remind me that I am small and that I lie beneath a vastly black sky.

I am closer to the big world when I sleep in a tent. The sun is hotter, the rain is colder, and the winds are breezier, the sounds are louder.

There's little housework. No floor to vacuum, bed to make, door to lock. I can pack up and move to a new place with a better weather forecast at just an hour's notice. A tent reminds me to carry only what I need. Notably, some people take trailer loads of additional dross that simulate all the comforts of home on their camping trips — and then can't be bothered to move.

Tents are mentioned in 79 different verses in the Scriptures. Paul made tents as his primary income so he could be more engaged in spiritual journeys with others. I really love the metaphor of God travelling with the Israelites, living in a tent of congregation (tabernacle) as the portable dwelling place of Yahweh. There are verses that suggest tents allow responsiveness to the place you are in, enable easy moving of the house, provide surprisingly well for hospitality and possibly contribute to long life. Jeremiah says: "You shall not build a house, and you shall not sow seed and you shall not plant a vineyard or own one; but in tents you shall dwell all your days, that you may live many days in the land where you sojourn" (35:7).

I have been pondering ways I could simulate the thin nylon fabric of a tent in my spiritual journey. I wonder how to reduce the insulation, double glazing or sound baffles of my busy working and playing life to reduce barriers between God and me. I wonder what I could do differently so that I am in a "thinner" place which would allow a more permeable and close relationship. Could this be how suffering and loss work? When I recognise the vulnerable, lonely and humble place I have in the world, am I more likely to hear, see, sense God's presence? When plans go awry and things go wrong, is it just my insulation and baffles being pulled away, allowing me to be more aware of God's quiet presence?

I hope the stripping and loss of control in our global climate crisis and pandemic nudges us to notice God is among us. God is beside and even in the tent with us as we deal with all the joys and challenges of our days; whether it is the sun rising too early, the sandflies gathering in clouds or a strong wind pushing at our flimsy tent poles.

Most days **Kaaren Mathias** rides a bicycle, teaches university students, parents her children and goes walking with Tussock the dog.

As 2022 evolves
accompany us into our new normal, Spirit of courage,
easing our fear
supporting our resilience
sustaining our hope
confirming the truth
enlarging our sense of community
at home and around the world.

From the *Tui Motu* team