

# Tui Motu

InterIslands



*... isn't he the carpenter, the son of Mary?*

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# Christmas . . .



*Ecce Ancilla Domini*, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.  
The Annunciation to Mary, painted in 1850

The Pre-Raphaelites were the English art radicals of their time. Their small group began in London in 1848, the year of revolutions throughout Europe. They reacted against the stereotype of art derived from Raphael by the established Royal Academy. They sought a renewed simplicity and realism in earlier pre-Renaissance painters and by painting from live models and outdoor landscapes.

They used brilliant colours. They ventured into social criticism and aroused fierce controversy. They related traditional religious themes and symbolism to modern life. They were at first criticized as offensive; yet their influence grew in the ensuing 50 years, extending to the wider fields of architecture, design and 'arts and crafts', as in the work of William Morris.



*Christ in the house of his parents*, by John Everett Millais;  
painted in 1850



*Christ washing Peter's feet*, by Ford Madox Brown; painted 1851, remodelled '54-56

Occasioned by the exhibition  
of paintings and drawings  
from the Tate Gallery, London:  
*The Pre-Raphaelite dream*  
at the Dunedin  
Public Art Gallery  
Oct 2003 – Feb 15, 2004

The author, Albert Moore, retired  
Professor of Religious Studies at  
Otago University, has had a life-  
long interest in religious art.



## with the Pre-Raphaelites

We now can appreciate their work. But for most of the 20th century it has been neglected or rubbished through anti-Victorian prejudice. The last 30 years have seen a steady reappraisal of Victorian art, reflected in New Zealand by respect for our Victorian heritage of architecture. Also the big Australian exhibition of *Love and Death: Art in the Age of Queen Victoria* proved interesting to the crowds who saw it in Auckland in 2002.

So why the offence? Now that the pendulum has swung the Pre-Raphaelites back into the limelight, we may be surprised to find that they were at first savagely attacked in their day. Why was this? They caused offence because they related art and religion to areas of real life as well as to literature and romance.

They probed forbidden or controversial themes; they put them into human experience of character and moral decision. For the more conventional Victorian viewers this could be too truthful to be comfortable; religious art was supposed to remain in the stained-glass representations of a sacred world apart.

This becomes evident as we examine three notable works from the Pre-Raphaelites of around 1850 dealing with Biblical themes relating to the Christmas message of Incarnation – God in the human life of Jesus. All three paintings caused some offence; yet all convey powerfully a message of deep joy and fulfilment for a Christian way of life.

### 1. Dante Gabriel Rossetti: *The Annunciation*

*Ecce Ancilla Domini – Behold! the handmaiden of the Lord*

What sort of greeting is this? In a mixture of wonder and apprehension, Mary crouches on her bed in a narrow room. The angel is no dramatic winged figure, but simply clad in white bringing a lily in his hand, with a flicker of flames at his feet. The predominance of white conveys the atmosphere of pure spiritual innocent power.

Rossetti modelled the figures on his sister, the poet Christina, and the angel on a friend. Critics derided the picture as a 'perversion of talent' because it ignored the conventions of the Academy and had a 'flat' appearance. Yet it is this spare simplicity which conveys the spiritual depth. The message of the coming of Christ brings wonder into the little room of human life and relations.

### 2. John Everett Millais: *Christ in the house of His parents*

This remarkably original picture shows the child Jesus growing up in the 'Carpenter's shop', in Nazareth. Jesus stands at the centre showing his wounded hand to his kneeling mother. The artist has gone to some trouble to

show the details of a workshop with wood shavings on the floor. Yet critics again had a field-day in labelling this setting as filthy and unhealthy, provoking recoil and disgust.

The most virulent diatribe came from Charles Dickens who saw the central figures as "a hideous wry-necked blubbing red-headed boy in a bed-gown" and his kneeling mother as "horrible in her ugliness". It is now almost incomprehensible to us that the picture should be misread in such language.

The offence taken here is with the Holy Family being depicted realistically in the lowly life of the worker, viewed as something mean, poor and 'primitive'. It threatened the boundaries of the class-structure still firmly embedded in English society. The sympathies of Pre-Raphaelites were more with the Christian Socialists such as F.D. Maurice with his controversial stand for social reform and the dignity of the worker.

In this painting Millais hallows the work of everyday life in which the young Jesus grew. It does not sentimentalise the Christmas babe, but presents the work of the family with loving detail.

### 3. Ford Madox Brown: *Christ washing Peter's feet*

Although this is a scene from the Last Supper at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, it relates to the whole meaning of his work and incarnation. Jesus takes the form of a servant to set an example. Peter resists, but has to learn.

Brown drew his models from fellow members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; the painter Frederic Stephens knelt for the figure of Jesus. When he first painted it, Brown interpreted the text (*John 13:4-15*) of Jesus laying aside his garments to gird himself with a towel, just as a slave would. So Brown painted Jesus as virtually naked to emphasize his emptying himself of all eternal glory. This caused offence; it was regarded as 'scandalous' at the Academy, and nobody bought the masterpiece. So Brown later repainted the figure with the green robe.

But the deeper offence taken was with representing Christ as performing the humble task of the slave – like Peter's own resistance to his lord being a Servant-Messiah. Brown composed the picture from a low standpoint, so that the viewer feels involved as if kneeling beside Christ. For myself, viewing this at the current Exhibition, it was a transfixing experience – the most powerful picture artistically and religiously.

Here I recall reading some 50 years ago of the impact of this picture on H.A. Hodges who taught philosophy at Reading, in Britain. His own religious faith had ebbed to the point where God was at best an abstraction labelled 'the Absolute'. But when by chance he saw an old print of the Footwashing in Blackwell's bookshop, Oxford, he came to a turning-point: "The Absolute was my footman".

In the shape of Christ the Servant, God is with us. ■



## Christmas 2003

*The Board and the team at Tui Motu wish  
all our readers health, happiness and  
good cheer for Christmas.  
And we hope you stay with us for 2004*

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## Christmas – the loving initiative of God

*The Father laughs for joy and the Son is born (Meister Eckhart).*

The Christian mystics often tell us more about the ways of God than theologians or church documents. So, when Eckhart, the 13th Century Dominican, states that Christ is born to us three times, we do well to take note.

The first birth is in eternity when the Word leaps forth from the depths of the Godhead, a majestic overture to the hymn of Creation. The second is when Jesus is born in time: revealing to us in his words and life that God is love – and that that love is focussed upon us. The third is a personal incarnation within the heart of every believer, when that divine spark actual kindles a response of love within you or me.

On Page 9 Joy Cowley and Ronald Rolheiser, each in their own way, develop the theme of the ordinariness, the fleshliness of Jesus' birth. God comes to us – because God desires to be with us, to be part of us. The mystery of incarnation is that it is everyday, matter-of-fact. Rolheiser urges us to imitate, like Mary, the splendid initiative of God's love.

Tui Motu celebrates this truth about God by once again recording stories of various human initiatives, born out of love. Kevin Myers (*opposite*) celebrates Pope John Paul's astonishing record of initiatives for world peace. There are precious insights into the work of missionary Sisters – in this case in Colombia and Venezuela.

There are some quite ordinary, yet inspiring, impulses of grace reported from around the parishes. There is the story of a Scottish lady using her talent for tapestry-work and colour to enrich the liturgy (p 32).

Even the new art gallery in Gore (pp 16-17) falls into this category. The protagonists were not motivated in any way by financial reward or personal prestige. Their splendid work is wholly for the good of a small community. Each time we deliberately step out of our comfort zones and act generously, we give birth to the divine among people.

These are 'good news' stories which we love to relate in this magazine.

*Eckhart again: God laughs and plays in our good deeds.*

*M.H.*

**Apology:** In the report of Marty Haugen's visit to Christchurch (November) 'Let the People Sing' an editorial error made Marty the composer of the hymnals *Gather* and *As One Voice*; Marty is one contributor to these Australian hymn collections. Our apology to writer Mike Marshall.



# The Pope is better off without a Nobel prize

Kevin Myers

**D**oes the Pope care that he did not win the *Nobel Prize for Peace*? One might equally ask whether he goes to lap-dancing clubs or gambles in Las Vegas. He has dedicated his entire life to others; now that his temporal life is coming to an end and he is about to embark on what he considers his true life, is it remotely possible that he is interested in the acclaim of those strange people in darkest Scandinavia who make these awards?

So we should rejoice that the Pope was *not* given the prize; but not the reason. For one can just see all the factors being grubbily weighed up as the politics of prizes once again triumphed: if the Pope got it, feminists wouldn't like it, the US government wouldn't like it, Moslems wouldn't like it, secular liberals wouldn't like it. So why not give it to an Iranian human rights woman lawyer no one has ever heard of?

The Peace Committee's selection of Shirin Abadi over the Pope merely indicts the Nobel system, for he is quite simply the greatest living person in the world. He has become the embodiment of the power of moral suasion in preference to

physical force. Without him, without the steady erosive drip of his passionate loathing of totalitarianism, is it conceivable that communism would have been almost abolished from the face of the earth? He is the man who finally helped bury Stalin's contemptuous enquiry: *how many divisions has the Pope?*

I do not say this as a Catholic, because I am not one, and I strongly disagree with much of what the Pope believes. I consider his restrictive attitude to human sexuality absurd; I don't understand his opposition to women priests; his obsession with creating saints sometimes seems almost demented; and his beatification of Cardinal Stepinac, who publicly consorted with the Serb-murdering Pavelic in Bosnia in the 1940s, is inexcusable.

However, the Pope's virtues vastly outweigh his failings, and it is a measure of the inadequacies of the wretches on the Nobel committee that they cannot see this. But then this should not surprise us: Nobel prizes are often given to the oddest creatures.



A younger and more vital Pope John Paul at the inter-faith World Peace day, Assisi 27 October 1986

**S**ome laureates seem to have been chosen merely because they have ceased killing people: Menachem Begin, Yasser Arafat, Anwar Sadat left bloodied footprints across the lobby floor in Oslo airport. Some – Arafat, Begin – resumed their former happy ways almost the moment they got back home. Le Duc Tho – honest fellow – rejected his award, and continued throughout to toil at his lathe of murder.

Being a murderer was not the only qualification for the peace prize; anodyne blandness helped too. Consider Emily Balch, the president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and John Raleigh Mott, of the YMCA – of all things – who jointly won the peace prize in 1946. Admittedly, looking

▷▷



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

**Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd** P O Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9030

Phone: 03 477 1449 Fax: 03 477 8149 email: tuimotu@earthlight.co.nz

**Editor:** Michael Hill IC, **Assistant Editor:** Frances Skelton, **Illustrator:** Don Moorhead

**Directors:** Rita Cahill RSJ, Tom Cloher (chair), Margaret Darroch, Robin Kearns, Chris Loughnan OP, Elizabeth Mackie OP, Judith McGinley OP, Kathleen Rushton RSM

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▷▷ for someone to give a peace prize to after 50 million people have been killed is probably rather like searching for a McDonald's in a Tibetan monastery: but still, old Mott & Balch...

The peace committee has often opted for the politically prudent and conspicuously 'virtuous': United Nations agencies, or senior UN personnel, have won the peace prize ten times. Religious recipients are unusual, to be sure: Desmond Tutu had the advantage of being black, Mother Teresa of being a woman working with Indians, and the Dalai Lama is, well, the Dalai Lama. All deserved, if thoroughly predictable: and none ever sailed as fearlessly into controversy as Pope John Paul II has repeatedly done.

The laureate problem is not confined to the peace prize, for Nobel committees have gone to some trouble to debase their own currency. What now of Harry Martinson who

won the Nobel prize for Literature in 1974 "for writings that catch the dew-drop and reflect the cosmos"? Or Selma Lagerlof, or Frons Eemil Sillanpaa or Henrik Pontopiddan, or Wladislaw Reymant, or Sigrid Undset, or Halldor Kiljan Laxness? Gone and quite forgotten.

*John Paul has  
defended the integrity  
of the human person  
against tyranny*

But Karol Jozef Wojtyla's place in history is secure. Not merely has he been one of the greatest Popes ever to grace the Vatican, but he has been the most indefatigable promoter of his faith. He has repeatedly travelled the world, and his intellectual energy has been astounding: over 50 papal encyclicals, all of them profound, all of enormous thought and scholarship. Moreover, he has vigorously

promoted the cause of ecumenism throughout the 25 years in which he has been Pontiff.

Of course he is the object of ridicule amongst doctrinaire liberals, for whom the Catholic Church is the arch-enemy; though many of his values are theirs. He has defended the integrity of the human being against tyranny and exploitation. He has vehemently denounced the sexual objectification of women, sought disarmament, defended the human rights of the disabled, and opposed the war in Iraq: yet they detest him still because his passionately held beliefs, to which he given his entire life, do not match their illiberal liberal agenda.

He is better off without their approval. There is only one approval he seeks, and he probably expects to discover whether he has won it any day now. ■

*Kevin Myers is a regular columnist in the Irish Press and for the London Sunday Telegraph, where this article first appeared in October*

## Small miracles

Not for the first time the providential character of *Tui Motu* must be remarked upon. How we survive may one day be recorded as a miracle of modern journalism, albeit befitting a religious publication. Although we are lured into dreaming sometimes of large bequests or dramatic increases in circulation, this is not the way Providence works. Rather, it takes the shape of small miracles.

For example, just as the cash flow is drying up, in comes a rapid response to the annual subscription appeal plus additional donations. These last named – the extra \$10s and \$20s, or more – bring an air of respectability to our finances at just the right moment. More than that, these extra dollars bridge what might otherwise be an embarrassing gap.

Then there is also the quiet miracle of constancy evidenced by the network of volunteers that would be the envy of any community publication: authors who decline to accept fees, readers who act as advocates for TM in their localities, sellers at parishes month by month, those who pass on copies to extend the influence of TM,

and the staunch 'pack and post brigade' in Dunedin who send the product throughout New Zealand and beyond.

Nor can we overlook the generosity of religious life without which TM would not be more than a good idea. It was the Dominicans' bright idea in the first place, and they and the Josephites continue to be caring proprietors.

He always resiles from my saying it but this factor is most manifest in our Rosminian editor, recently returned from overseas duty – not to speak of his assistant who gallantly held the fort. There are important others, both religious and lay people, closely involved in the administrative tasks needed to run an efficient production. This they do with the blessing and support of their congregations or families.

To all I extend enthusiastic thanks and Christmas greetings on behalf of those of us who benefit from a publication that our community needs to have. It comes at a cost – but one freely paid. Let us all be grateful for small miracles. ■

*Tom Cloher*



# The Fisherman's ring

Jim Neilan

**G**iovanni Montini and Michael Ramsey arrived in black limousines with a police escort. I arrived on my Vespa, a lone Kiwi – no police escort. The date was 24 March 1966. The venue was Rome's basilica of St Paul-outside-the-Walls. The occasion was a milestone in ecumenical history, the first shared liturgy between a Pope and an Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury.

I waited for the final blessing (which the Pope asked the Archbishop to share with him) and headed outside with my camera. It seemed ages before the two emerged. It was only this October that the reason for the delay was explained. John Allen, who writes from Rome for the *National Catholic Reporter*, had been speaking recently to an Anglican priest, Fr John Andrew, who at that time was Michael Ramsey's private secretary. He and one assistant to the Pope were the only witnesses to what happened as the two left the basilica.

Pope Paul steered Archbishop Ramsay away to the side of the main aisle to show him some frescoes. He then said: "Take off your ring." Goodness knows what the Archbishop thought, but he obeyed and gave it to his secretary. Paul then took off his papal ring and put it on Michael's finger. When he realised the significance of what had happened, the Archbishop of Canterbury broke down, and the Pope moved to him and embraced him.

The Archbishop wore this ring for the rest of his life. Our present Pope, by giving pectoral crosses to visiting Archbishops of Canterbury, has also shown this same genuine warmth and respect.

What a pity Vatican pronouncements do not reflect the same sentiments. The ring and cross are symbols of a bishop's office and, as John Allen says: "Popes do not simply give them away to laymen dressed up as clerics". They imply recognition that these men are brother bishops of sister churches.



And yet documents such as *Ad Tuendam Fidem* (signed by the Pope in 1998) seriously undermine ecumenical goodwill by insisting that Anglican Orders are invalid. There is a real contradiction here between actions and words – one of many which have marked the papacy of Karol Wojtyla.

But back to the 1966 story of the ring. Fr Andrew, who remembers his confusion at trying to kiss Pope Paul's (now absent) ring as he said goodbye, now lives in New York. He was in Rome, in October this year, and for the first time met the present Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who had come to visit John Paul II. When Andrew recounted the story, Archbishop Williams held up his hand. He was wearing the same ring.

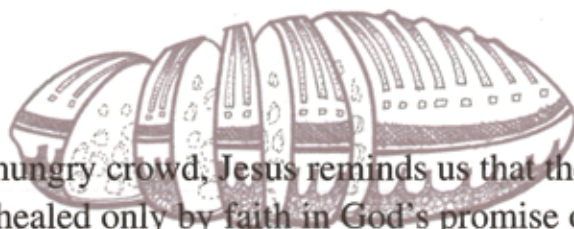
A final postscript. In John Allen's article I read: "It's a pity there were no photographers standing by to record one of the most moving chapters in the modern ecumenical drama". I searched through the photos I had taken that day, 37 years ago, and there it was – *the ring* – clearly visible on the Archbishop of Canterbury's finger as he and the Pope emerged from the basilica.

What a scoop. . .

for the Christmas issue of *Tui Motu*! ■



# Enough is Enough



Walter Brueggemann

In feeding the hungry crowd, Jesus reminds us that the wounds of scarcity can be healed only by faith in God's promise of abundance

**W**e live in a world where the gap between scarcity and abundance grows wider every day. Whether at the level of nations or neighbourhoods, this widening gap is polarizing people, making each camp more and more suspicious and antagonistic toward the other. But the peculiar thing, at least from a Biblical perspective, is that the rich – the ones with the abundance – rely on an ideology of scarcity, while the poor – the ones suffering from scarcity – rely on an ideology of abundance. How can that be?

The issue involves whether there is enough to go around – enough food, water, shelter, space. An ideology of scarcity says: *no*, there's not enough, so hold on to what you have. In fact, don't just hold on to it; hoard it. Put aside more than you need, so that if you do need it, it will be there, even if others must do without.

An affirmation of abundance says just the opposite: appearances notwithstanding, there *is* enough to go around, so long as each of us takes only what we need. In fact, if we are willing to have but not hoard, there will even be more than enough left over.

## The tradition of Israel

The Bible is about abundance. From the first chapters of *Genesis*, God not only initiates abundance – calling forth plants and fish and birds and animals – but promises continued abundance by commanding them to “increase and multiply” (1:22). God's generosity and fidelity reach their climax on the sixth

day, when God proclaims a sufficiency for “everything that has the breath of life” and declares all this “very good” (1:30,31). Having thus set in motion a world of abundance, God rests. The mechanisms are in place, the world will have enough.

Of course, things don't turn out quite that way. Dissatisfied with what they've been given, God's creatures want more. Instead, they get less. The bountiful earth becomes stingy; even bread won't abound without sweat. Scarcity sets in, bubbling under the narrative, breaking through here and there, and finally bursting forth full-blown in Egypt, where abundance gets locked up in Pharaoh's warehouses, to be parceled out for money, then possessions, then slavery. Scarcity reaches a point where the immigrant Israelites, having traded their freedom for food, don't even have straw to make the bricks that slavery demands. Like so many other victims of scarcity, they cry out – whether for help, or just from the hurt, the Bible doesn't say.

God hears their cry, and sends Moses to tell Pharaoh that the God of abundance has come to free the Israelites from this ideology of scarcity. And Yahweh won't accept *no* for an answer. It takes some convincing, but Pharaoh finally agrees – at least long enough for the Israelites to gather their belongings and put a river between themselves and Egypt.

It isn't long before what they have left behind starts to look good compared to what they must face. They left the land

of scarcity, thinking they would bounce into the land of abundance. Instead, they find themselves at risk in a wilderness, a desert with no visible life-support systems, a place of scarcity where even bread seems an impossibility. Having inhaled the continuing reality of scarcity throughout their lives, the Israelites breathe out murmurs, complaints, condemnations, and reveries of Egypt – where at least there was bread.

Then, in this desert wilderness, bread inexplicably appears. A fine, flaky substance comes down, answering Israel's risk with a manifestation of God's faithful generosity. This bread violates all their categories: it overturns their conviction about scarcity and cancels their anxiety about hunger. The gift of bread transforms the wilderness. And from that point on, Israel would entertain the thought that a place of perceived scarcity may turn out to be a place of wondrous abundance.

## The teaching of Jesus Christ

In the New Testament, Jesus knows all about the generosity and fidelity of God. In his very person, the whole of Israel's faith is expressed with a new intensity. Filled with God's generosity, Jesus went around to people suffering from scarcity – of health, of acceptance, of power, of understanding – and replaced it with a gift of abundance.

The eighth chapter of Mark's Gospel contains the second feeding narrative, a story rich in Israel's past. Jesus notices that the people who've been listening to him have run out of food. He's been



here before, back in chapter six where he fed the five thousand. But hunger – scarcity – isn't a one-time experience, and Jesus isn't in the 'symbolic gesture' business. He's in the generosity business, and that means being constantly alert to any mismatch between the generosity of God and the needs of the people.

In this instance, the mismatch moves Jesus to "compassion" – a Greek term that means that his insides are turned over. Jesus has this strange bodily sense of an emergency. He cares about the hungry and knows something must be done.

At first Jesus doesn't say anything about how the people's hunger might be satisfied. He just points out the need: "they have nothing to eat" (8:2). Perhaps he's hoping his disciples will remember the last time this happened, and start looking around for a few loaves and fishes. But their minds are still stuck on scarcity: "How can you feed these people with bread in the desert?" (8:4).

You can sense the resistance in the disciples' question. It's the resistance of pragmatism, of efficiency, of 'the real world.' The words are *how can you?*, but they're really saying: *You can't... It won't work... Get real.* These are not generous words; these are not words that arise from abundance.

But Jesus has abundance on his mind, so he doesn't even answer their question. Instead he moves on, asking a question of his own: "How many loaves do you have?" (8:5). They answer: "Seven." It's enough. He tells the crowd to sit down.

The Gospel of Mark doesn't usually go out of its way to make the disciples look good, but it's not above giving them a few good lines on occasion. In verse four it is the disciples who raise the question of finding "bread in the desert" – an echo of *Exodus*. And in verse five they affirm that there are seven loaves – evoking the number of days God spent

creating the world. The message from *Mark* seems clear: Jesus brings to this concrete moment a rich background from the community of Israel.

Part of that background, I believe, Jesus picked up at home, where he heard his mother Mary sing her *Magnificat* that includes the words "he has filled the hungry with good things" (*Lk*: 1:53).



And the *Magnificat*, it appears, borrows from 1 Samuel 2, where Hannah, the mother of Samuel, sang that "those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry are fat with spoil" (1 Sam. 2:5). So Jesus remembered the songs of mother Mary and mother Hannah – songs of God's generosity toward those in need.

Jesus is well-schooled in the transformative generosity of God. He is also well-schooled in the conviction that if you share your bread with the neighbour, the world will be made new. He knows that generosity isn't something you just think about, it's something you do.

*Mark* uses four words to describe what Jesus did: *took, gave thanks, broke, and gave.* The words are familiar; they are Eucharist words. Out in the desert, Jesus uses seven loaves to conduct a sit-down thanksgiving dinner that matches the needs of the people with the generosity of God. And his actions are transformative.

The bread stays exactly what it is – bread, yet it becomes something it never was before: a carrier of all the hidden, powerful gifts of God. The crowd stays as it is, but it becomes something it never thought it would be: a people

entitled to what they can't provide for themselves. The desert stays as it is, but it becomes something that no one would ever expect: a viable place of existence, the arena for the reign of God. Jesus has put into practice the generosity of the Creator. It is as though *Genesis 1* reappears in *Mark 8*, and the world is again made new.

### Teaching us to become generous

Gifts, when they are blessed and broken and given, have immense potential. How could anyone take seven loaves (plus a few fish) and feed four thousand? But the narrator says that all ate and were full. And Hannah said: "those who were hungry are fat with spoil." And Mary said: "he has filled the hungry with good things." Signs of unlimited generosity are abundant and visible, leaving no room for the mistaken notion of scarcity.

We don't experience the world that way. But *Mark's Gospel* suggests that this is because we, like the disciples, are not



## BIBLE SOCIETY



**'Wishes you the peace,  
love and hope of the  
Christ-child  
this Christmas**



**BIBLE SOCIETY**  
encouraging Bible  
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▷▷ clear about the limitless generosity of God. The disciples were not convinced that seven loaves were more than enough to feed four thousand. Chances are, they were worried that if they started distributing the bread, there wouldn't be enough to go around. They did not grasp generosity and gratitude and abundance.

We see this later in the same chapter, when the disciples are out in a boat with Jesus. *Mark* tells us that they "had forgotten to bring any bread" (8:14). They no longer remembered one critical truth; that Jesus is in the generosity business.

Jesus notices this and says, "Watch out – beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod" (8:15). The Pharisees are the parsimonious ones who want to ration everything. The Herodians are like Pharaoh, they want to monopolise everything and store it up and administer it. And Jesus is warning them: *Watch out for their junk food. If you eat it long enough, you will think and act the way they do.*

Apparently this puzzles the disciples; they keep murmuring about the bread they forgot. Jesus hears their whispering, and he blasts them with rapid-fire questions that are really accusations: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?" (8:17-18). Have you forgotten, Jesus seems to ask, that abundance has vetoed scarcity? Or are you still back with Pharaoh, who never thought he had enough and wound up with a hardened heart?

The questioning continues: "When I fed five thousand with just five loaves, how many were left over?" They answer: "Twelve!" "When I fed four thousand with seven loaves, how many were left over?" "Seven!"

The disciples are really good at concrete, operational, statistical stuff, but they cannot negotiate from the line items to the big picture. So Jesus ends up asking – in one of the most pathos-filled lines of all scripture: "Do you not yet understand?" (8:21). There is no answer. Stuck in the anxiety of the moment, they've already lost sight of the message from the past.

Today, the fundamental human condition continues to be anxiety, fueled by a market ideology that keeps pounding on us to take more, to not think about our neighbour, to be fearful, shortsighted, grudging. Over and over, we're told to be sure we have the resources to continue our affluent lifestyles.

That same market ideology powers the multinational corporations, as they roam the world, seeking the best deal, the greatest return, the cheapest labour and materials. Whether it's global policies or local poverty-wage jobs, those who fear scarcity refuse to acknowledge any abundance that extends beyond their own coffers.

### The Biblical teaching on Sabbath

One glaring example of today's anxiety-driven scarcity is the frenetic activity that so characterizes our society. Corporate executives boast a '24/7' mentality as a bulwark against losing their edge or missing an opportunity. Those of us with less 'prestigious' positions continually wrestle with our bulging appointment books and evergrowing things-to-do lists. Even youngsters have exchanged a carefree childhood for a schedule of structured activities. There's never enough time; there's never a moment's rest.

The Bible offers an antidote to all this activity: the call to *Sabbath*. As shown in the Creation account, Sabbath (God's day of rest) is based on abundance. But how willing are we to practice Sabbath?

A Sabbath spent catching up on chores we were too busy to do during the week is hardly a testimony to abundance. A Sabbath spent encouraging those who want to fill our 'free time' with calls to amass more possessions does nothing to weaken the domain of scarcity. Honouring the Sabbath is a form of witness. It tells the world that 'there is enough.'

Too often, the church has understood God's unconditional grace as solely a theological phenomenon, instead of recognizing that it has to do with the re-ordering of the economy of the world. We cannot separate the two. When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment, he replied with a trick answer: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength* and *you shall love your neighbour as yourself*. You can't have just one; you need to have both. And the link that unites them is God's limitless generosity, acknowledged and enacted.

When we gather as church each Sunday, we should ponder the stories that declare scarcity to be false: an impromptu hillside meal with as much in left-overs as when it began, a barren desert blossoming with manna, an earth fully equipped to meet everyone's needs. And a question should be burning in our hearts: 'What if it's true? What if one of the links between the Creator's generosity and the neighbour's needs is us, this community?'

If that is not true, then scarcity rules and we are in sorry shape. But if it is, and if we believe it is, we can begin life anew as stewards of God's abundance. ■

*Walter Brueggemann is a widely published author, United Church of Christ minister, and professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. First published in The Other Side, Philadelphia, and reprinted with permission.*



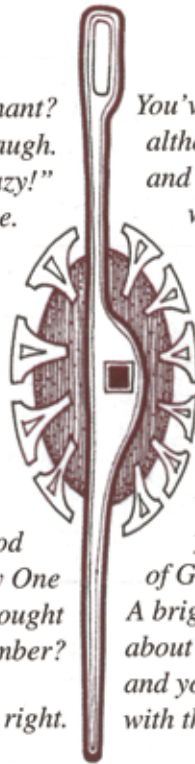


# The Living Christ

**T**ell me, are you pregnant?  
 No, don't laugh.  
 Don't say, "Hey, you're crazy!"  
 Look into your heart and tell me.  
 Is God growing, kicking?

Remember when it happened?  
 The angel appeared, Gabriel leaning  
 on the dead-locked door, and you,  
 confused, said, "How can this be?  
 I've never been the religious type."  
 And the angel said, "What you believe  
 doesn't matter a fig. The breath of God  
 will come upon you. The Holy One  
 will fill you with life." And you thought  
 you were dreaming. Remember?

You're pregnant, all right.



You've got a hunger for spiritual food,  
 although you don't like to call it that,  
 and your heart is expanding  
 with a presence you can't explain.  
 You don't know where all this is leading.  
 You want to sue the makers of dead-locks  
 for the loss of your independence,  
 but at the same time you're happier  
 than you've been in years.

Relax. These are early days.  
 In the fullness of time,  
 you'll understand the mystery  
 of God's growth in your heart.  
 A bright star will speak to you  
 about ongoing birth,  
 and you will rejoice  
 with the love songs of angels.

*Jay Cowley*

## How to Give Birth to God

*Faith would be that God is self-limited utterly by his creation  
 ... that God's works are as good as we make them.  
 That God is helpless, our baby to bear, self-abandoned on the  
 doorstep of time, wondered at by cattle and oxen.*  
 (Annie Dillard, *Holy the Firm*, p 47)

**G**od never dynamites his (or her) way into our world as an overpowering superstar who takes your lives by storm. God still enters the world, in the same way as Christ did, as the result of a special gestation process which produces a baby which must be picked up, nurtured and coaxed into adulthood. Hence the birth and presence of God in our world depend, at least within the dynamics of the incarnation, upon a certain human consent and co-operation. For God to have concrete flesh and power in the world – and for us to have faith in God – a certain pattern must occur. That pattern, modelled by Mary, is the paradigm for God taking on actual flesh in the world.

What is that pattern? When we look at how Mary gave birth to Christ, we see that there were four moments to this process. To meditate on these four is to take a bath in the essence of Advent:

***Impregnation by the Holy Spirit:*** We are told that Mary pondered the word of God until she became pregnant with it. What an extraordinary notion! This not only means that Christ had no human father and that, physically, Mary got pregnant from the Holy Spirit, but also that Mary so immersed herself in the Holy Spirit (in charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long-suffering, faith, mildness, fidelity and chastity) that she became pregnant with them, their seed took root in her.

***Mary gestated them into real flesh:*** In the silent recesses of her heart and body, and not without that particular kind of nausea that is part and parcel of pregnancy, an umbilical cord developed between herself and that seed of charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long-suffering, faith, mildness, fidelity and chastity.

***Mary underwent the pangs of giving birth:*** Through that cord she gave to that seed of her own flesh so that it grew into an actual child which, at a point, pushed to be born into the outside world.

***Mary nurtured an infant to adulthood:*** After a woman has given birth to a child, she has a baby, not an adult. Mary gave birth to a baby, Jesus, but what she ultimately gave to the world was the adult Christ. Like all mothers, after the baby was born, she had to spend years nursing, nurturing, coaxing and loving her child to adulthood.

**O**ur task in looking at all this is not so much admiration as imitation. Mary is not an icon to be revered, but the pattern for how God continues to take flesh in this world. We too must ponder God's word until we become pregnant with the gifts of the Spirit. Then we must gestate them into real flesh and give them concrete birth into the world. Finally, we nurse and coax that helpless God into adulthood.

That is the way incarnation works. God has to be gestated into our world in the same way as Mary did all those years ago at the first Christmas ■

*Ronald Rolheiser*

*Reprinted in abbreviated form from the New Zealand Tablet*



# Encountering the Christ-Child today

*If we are deaf to the voice of God deep within us, our lives become unbalanced.*

*Joy Ryan-Bloore applies the message of the film *Whale Rider* to the human need to allow this inner voice to be heard*

**A**t crucial points in the history of the Church prophetic voices have always called us back to the inner life, and challenged values which would seek to exclude it. Today, the soul is once more an endangered species and the inner life is rarely spoken about. Instead we live in a society where success (at any price), political correctness and economic rationalism are the new 'gods'. There is no room for soul.

Our attitudes and values are increasingly shaped by reason and expediency, with little space for the heart. In psychological terms there is an overemphasis on these masculine values (in both men and women) to the exclusion of feminine values of the soul. If we are to escape spiritual regression and emotional breakdown, this imbalance needs to be addressed and something new needs to come to birth. To do this we need to look inwards to the soul where the conception takes place. Where are the prophets who can assist us with this pregnancy?

Many centuries ago, before inclusive language, the mystic Meister Eckhart made this rather 'shocking' statement: *What good is it to me if Mary is full of grace and if I am not full of grace? What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to his Son if I do not also give birth to him in my own time and my culture.*

## Whale Rider

Much closer to home in this troubled year of 2003, we have had our own prophet, calling us to embrace more fully these same eternal truths which first emerged with the birth of Christ. The film of Witi Ihimaera's book *The Whale Rider* couldn't have graced our screens at a more appropriate moment. The film is a superb parable for our times, especially for this time of Advent and Christmas. It challenges the current predominance of rational, patriarchal values over those of the soul. It locates the spiritual keeper of the culture's myth in the heart and soul of a young girl, Paikea, who survives her twin brother at childbirth.

In so many ways, in so many images, the film shows us that the old ways are gone; they are not able to be resuscitated any further, that out of the 'least of the tribes of Judah' the One who is to come will be born (*Mic. 5:2*). We can no longer look around and create a new 'chief' from what is crumbling because the new 'leader' is already in our midst. She stands among us – unknown to us (*Jn 1:26*).

But where do we meet her? And what current values does she challenge? Greed, ambition, and power for its own sake, finally bring about the loss of mana attached to the old order. It was only when Koro (Paikea's grandfather) lost his emblem of power and authority (the whalebone) to the dark waters of the ocean that the old chief was finally brought to his knees. In their ambitious efforts to pass his final test to determine the new chief, the aspiring young boys fail to recover the whalebone because of their infighting while trying to retrieve it.

Koro then plunges into a depressive withdrawal, the outer sign of his despair and loss of soul. Struck down because of his refusal to see, he suffers until his eyes are opened and he finally acknowledges Paikea, a mere girl, in whom the new mana resides. In the background is Nanny Flowers who, like a modern Elizabeth, recognizes the 'fruit' of her granddaughter's womb – recognizes who the true 'chief' is and what will be the nature of her leadership.

She sees beyond the status quo and, despite the tapu-breaking consequences, recognizes Paikea as the one in whom a new dispensation has been conceived.

Finally, in that most powerful of scenes when the waka is completed, we are given an image of the new way, the new covenant of service and love. Paikea, finally acknowledged as their leader, does not sit in the front of the boat, but in its centre, protected by Koro, symbol of the old dispensation. The feminine, the soul, is finally in her rightful place.

From this place flow her radiating energies of love and her capacity to reconnect all things. She brings into harmony that which was previously fractured and fragmented. With Paikea at its centre, the new vessel is launched, powered and steered by her father and uncle, symbolizing the need for all the tribe's gifts, both masculine and feminine, to be used in the service of all. In this superb and prophetic film Witi Ihimaera has given us a powerful lens through which to view the eternal, archetypal truths of Christmas at a new depth.

## Visitation

Turning now to one aspect of the Advent and Christmas story: this year the final Advent liturgy invites us to reflect on the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. Psychologically, their meeting symbolizes a stage in a process of growth which happens when we dare to entrust our soul to another. It involves great courage and trust. But in this vulnerable place of sharing and receiving, something else happens. What we





*Mary and Elizabeth, fresco in Mua Mission, Malawi*

felt confused or fearful about is recognised by another for what it is – the beginning of new life. (It was to Nanny Flowers that Paikea turned when Koro refused to recognize her.)

Both Elizabeth and Mary were burdened with an unexpected pregnancy. Each needed to meet and be with the other. Elizabeth is a model of the prophetic voice which recognizes and welcomes the divine presence. Mary models the need to hear the affirmation of another person in order to identify more clearly the amazing journey to which she is called. So, when Elizabeth calls Mary the “Mother of my Lord”, she is expressing an eternal truth that is replicated in the psyche or soul of every human person.

*This is the message, the great symbolic teaching – the conscious psyche of each person becomes the divine cradle, the womb, the sacred vase in which the deity itself will be locked in, carried and born. This really is an evangelion (good news). (Carl Jung)*

## Jesus born within each person

Today, many people are called on a similar journey. They struggle to give birth to who they are, and to the place they occupy in an increasingly complex and evolving universe. The old explanations and earlier religious beliefs no longer seem to provide the support, meaning and comfort which they used to.

*We are all of us together carried in the one world-womb; yet each of us is our own little microcosm in which the Incarnation is wrought independently with degrees of intensity and shades that are incommunicable. (Teilhard de Chardin)*

Often, like Koro, we are blind to what is evolving in and around us. We don't recognize the ‘Word made flesh’ in these fearful, pregnant states, but try to work things out rationally. Prior to the Visitation the Angel of the Lord had visited Elizabeth's husband, Zechariah, in the Holy of Holies, and tried to speak to him about his wife's miraculous pregnancy – but he refused to listen. For his disbelief he was struck dumb. The dominant, rational energy in both men and women is often not the means by which we encounter, or understand, a new incarnation of the divine presence. It needs to be ‘struck dumb’ – so that the soul's voice can be heard.

## Restoring balance

But, in our prevailing climate the soul is barely heard. Like Paikea, it is often banished from the marae, and its life-giving qualities are in constant danger of being excluded from leadership at all levels of society, including the Church. Such one-sided blindness has devastating consequences for our spiritual and psychological health, and for the overall well-being of our society. How can we address this?

If we are to evolve out of this current, soul-destroying philosophy, it is crucial for all of us, especially those who are the guardians of the present dispensation, to listen to the still, small voice of the soul in which the seed of the divine is continually being conceived. This involves having a much more balanced attitude towards the rational, logical structures of the mind: questioning the outer values which society currently parades before us; being open to the ‘signs of the times’ and the ways in which the Spirit of God is calling us to recognize a further manifestation of Christ in our time and culture; and daring to share our deepest selves, reaching out and risking our souls.

If we are open, this encounter takes place with those we love and with whom we live – in the many domestic temples, communities, families, parishes and maraes in which we share our lives. In these meeting places the divine presence is recognized and the Spirit bursts forth, calling us to a different level of living and loving.

And once more Christ is born.

*My soul magnifies the Lord*

*My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour (Lk 1:46) ■*

*Joy Ryan-Bloore is a Jungian analyst in private practice in Christchurch*



# O Little Town of Bethlehem . . .

*Fr Alan Roberts is currently participating in a continuing education programme at Tantur, an ecumenical institute located near the border separating Israel and Palestine.*

*These reflections were of his experiences over a two month period*

**M**y first journey into Bethlehem has an eerie feel. All is too quiet. A few of us who arrived last night decide to take a walk. Tantur is surrounded by a security wall, but there is a hole on the Bethlehem side. It is often guarded by Israeli soldiers, but isn't today. One step through the wall – and I'm in what may become the State of Palestine. We avoid the official checkpoint just outside our main gate. No one seems to mind. We see the razor wire, the trench already dug for the wall. Following our map, we find the road to Bethlehem passes Rachael's tomb. It is blocked and we must detour.

We see the workshops bulldozed down: they hinder the line of fire for the Israelis, who have taken over a building, close to Caritas Baby Hospital. But what is this unusual quiet? I think of the Wild West.

There's the Bethlehem Hotel, several stories high, rooms unoccupied. Few will stay there now. Tourists and pilgrims are scarce. Most souvenir shops are shut: those who made a living from the pilgrims have given up. Manger Square is empty.

Bethlehem has been knocked around well and truly before our arrival. It's all at the Gaza now, but the residents know another kind of battering. I talk to young men and women who haven't



Unfinished apartment in Bethlehem used by the Israeli's for sniping

been to Jerusalem in three years. They can't get out.

Those who work in Israel – that means here or just a few miles up the road – must pass through the checkpoint. They may or may not be allowed to pass. It's a source of constant stress, designed for why? There are some who know the answers. Could I live with that frustration day after day – and God knows how many more? The workers might – or might not – be in today. Palestine is occupied land. So this is what it means!

**I**t's Sunday, and some of us go to Mass in Bethlehem. We meet the Bridgetines who invite us back for coffee. They are an international community of

Sisters who only came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the year. After three months they are woken by the sound of guns. The soldiers have broken into the convent and are firing down into their courtyard. Fortunately a priest residing there is fluent in Hebrew and knows the scene.

The Israelis have just come from terrorising a neighbouring Muslim family, suspected of harbouring a terrorist. They are innocent, and come out alive, with only the fridge and television and other stuff smashed about. The mother gives birth some time later, and names the baby Myriam, because Sister had said that Our Lady was looking after them. Muslims address Mary as "Our Lady, the Virgin Mary".

**T**oday, I go to say Mass at Bethlehem University. Brother explains some of their problems. Those studying to be tourist guides must do their exams in Jerusalem, at the sites they will guide people around. But they are not allowed into Jerusalem, so they can't do their exams. Those training for the hospitality industry have few prospects because there are no tourists. Will they come soon? A while away I think.

I meet a student who can take up to three hours to arrive from Ramallah, just north of Jerusalem – the checkpoints don't cater for those in a hurry. They



are deliberately slow. The journey should be about 45 minutes.

At the Lutheran Peace Centre I am introduced to two Muslim women doing a marketing course. They are out experimenting with selling. "You must first engage in a relationship", they are taught! It's a short relationship as one quickly takes the initiative to sell me calendars! I don't have the heart to refuse and buy out of pity. What future do they have when hardly anyone sells anything, when they are imprisoned in their town, in their land? They can be sure of nothing?

I'm invited to dinner at a Palestinian home, a contact of one of my fellow students. These are local people, and the situation fills the evening. They know it well and explain the wall. Too many complications to give hope.

I sense the frustration in the father as he points out the holes in his neigh-

bour's water tank. His wife is from Jerusalem and must live there if she is to see her older children. She works there as well. He needs permission to go and see her and must be home by 7 pm. Did they forget he works during the day? The son attends Bethlehem University. He wants to stay in this town.

Walking home, I see young men sitting idly on the roadside. A few Palestinian Police direct the little bit of traffic that banks up around one of the streets. I go into an optician to see if he can fix my glasses. He sits dejectedly behind his desk. There's never anyone in there when I pass by.

There's sadness, every day in Bethlehem. I love my walks down there now. The people can manage a smile, a cheery wave as I try a little Arabic. The kids love to say "good morning" at any time of day. I haven't grown used to the feel – there's a tension

around all the time, and the sadness follows me around.

What must it be like for those who live there? I sense the tension, anger and frustration of those I've come to know. This isn't about religion; rather, politics – those with responsibility for human welfare abuse this awesome trust.

I return home. There are soldiers at the hole in Tantur's fence. They check my passport and I pass through. A dozen or so men are sitting to one side, in the heat of the sun. They don't have IDs – or they may have. It doesn't matter – they're Palestinian. It'll be an hour or so before they can move on. I think of Christ, humiliated, unjustly treated; of Bethlehem, birthplace of the Prince of Peace, and of the hymns they'll sing at home in a few weeks:

*O Little Town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!*

*Alan Roberts is parish priest at Plimmerton*



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## Valiant for truth – *part 2*

*Last month Katie O'Connor interviewed Don and Margaret Lamont, of Gore, a couple who have striven for justice and for change all their lives.*

*The interview concludes with their present attitudes*

*Tell us about your more recent experiences.*

*(Margaret)* The most significant thing for me as a woman was to go to The Hague in 1992, to a conference of *Associated Country Women of the World*. I went as an observer and Don came as my companion. We met with Europeans and Africans and Singaporeans. What the African women wanted was ownership of their own cattle, so they could trade amongst themselves to get money to educate their children and provide them with water and shelter. That was their basic need, and it still remains the basic need of a lot of women of the world. This took me out of my world. It taught me the difference between our world and the Third World.

The '80s were the years of women's liberation: it really made me think what was I looking for that was worthwhile. What talent had I to use for the betterment of women and myself and my children.

I enjoy writing. You can write letters to MPs and the Prime Minister and anyone else who wants to read your letters about what you care about, like building smelters or the degradation of the native forests. We've written about them all and got replies: perhaps we've made a difference.

*Even though you are now retired you both stay active. . .*

*(Donald)* I've always been conscious that we have to get behind the people at the coalface and support them. My ambition has been to support the people who were doing the jobs, whether it was

saving Lake Manapouri or *Forest and Bird*. You've got to have people not afraid to stand up to bureaucracy. It's as much about the people as about the cause. You need people with vision.

We can never give up as long as the need is there and the needs are getting greater. Now it's the scientists and people with a monetary interest doing terrible things to our world. Someone has to speak for the earth and for the people.

I realise that these things all come back to a person's vision of God. In the end it's church that's important. Yet the church is inadequate. We've got people that lead us who have no idea of the problems in the world. They have no appreciation of Genetic Engineering. They have no real idea, and most of them don't seem to have much gumption!

Genetic modification concerns us greatly. It is meddling in the flow of DNA and the survival of every species as having a value just for being itself. I think it's a great impertinence that scientists should be paid to find how to interfere with genes to produce something just for economic gain. It's disastrous and the more we read the more is our concern.

The bishops are still very powerful, but power is all slipping away from them. They say the church isn't a democracy. Yet it is – because if people can walk away from it, they are expressing their democracy. You may end up with ten bishops but nobody else!

*(Margaret)* I don't agree with Don – we often disagree! I don't look to Rome and

I don't look to the bishops. I look around and I see the Dominican Sisters, who were great models for me. What some of those Sisters didn't know about the Treaty and injustice wasn't worth knowing.

We had some wonderful weekends at Teschemakers – families for Peace, focussing on family, on the earth and caring for one another. It was a place where our intellectually disabled daughters were made most welcome and fussed over, and everybody there acknowledged them as people. That doesn't happen easily in a church.

Another group of people doing wonderful things for the earth and its people are the Columbans. I've been very much influenced by Sean McDonagh and other Columbans working with indigenous people to bring God to the people and the earth. I see great hope, not so much in the politics of the church but in the *greening* of the church. That's the next movement we'd like to be part of and I'd like to live forever!

*What does God mean to you now in your life?*

*(Margaret)* My beliefs have changed over the years. My God is a supreme Creator, who's only demand is that we love and care for one another and all created life. I believe the original sin was the killing of Abel by his brother Cain, and all violence stems from that. We've become a very violent society in thought, word and deed.

I deeply regret that I ever punished my children by smacking them. Children are not our possessions to be treated as



commodities, they are treasures who will carry on our finest dreams into their future.

Terrible things happen to children when their parents are not valued and supported. The kingdom of heaven is here and now within us. Being at peace – that's being with God.

(Donald) If I asked you who's William Shakespeare, you wouldn't be able to tell me much; but if you read his plays and study them you'll get to know something about him in the end. That's as near as you'll get, you'll never know him otherwise.

And it's the same with God. Man creates God in his own image and likeness. As far as the Catholic Church is concerned God is Jesus. God is a man. Right from the beginning God has been created in

man's imagination. It's got nothing to do with the creation of the world, it's what man wants. God is the creator. I'm never going to know God the creator. He's been around forever.

My views are changing and evolving all the time. I've lived long enough to be lucky enough to get to this stage where I can think about things and not have to worry about survival. I'm a very critical reader. I suppose I shouldn't be in the church. I don't believe a lot of what is preached. All we get is what Jesus said to the Jews and their problems 2000 years ago, the dead Jesus. We should be getting what the risen Christ is saying to us about the problems of today. The emphasis is wrong.

My symbol of God is a rainbow. I draw from that symbol. The God of Creation – not the man-made God, Jesus. But

I'm basically an optimist – I'm like Erasmus of Rotterdam: I see the problems – but I'm powerless. Hell is here on earth and I'm going to leave it behind. Heaven is here also and I'm going to leave that behind too. But I've already been resurrected – my immortal genes are already present in my brother and sisters, my nieces and nephews, my children and grandchildren – and it's going to go on and on and on. The resurrection of the dead is about perpetuation of the human species.

The foundation principle is the family: it is the unit of society and society has to accommodate the family. It must work for the common good of the family. Margaret's and my life has been built on hope and love and support for one another: that's what we wanted together and that is what we received. ■

## Women against war

When we think of the people who shape our lives they are often our parents, one or two of our teachers and maybe a few others who have believed in us. For me, Margaret Lamont is one of those people.

This year a few of us in Gore who felt strongly about the Bush-led war on Iraq decided that we would perform a modern version of *Lysistrata* as a protest. On 3 March we joined more than 930 or more thespian groups around the world performing variations of *Lysistrata*. Aristophanes' 2500-year-old play tells the story of how the women from opposing Greek communities band together and decide that they will withhold their sexual favours from their men to bring an end to the Peloponnesian War.

The language in our abbreviated version was ribald and required most of us to step outside our comfort zones. The women dressing in various forms of night attire while the men donned Greek garb. Margaret's belief is that some circumstances call for extraordinary measures, and her firm conviction is that the arts can be an effective form of protest. So she bravely decided that she would dust off her thespian slippers and join the cast. As its most senior member, she led the Female Chorus with dignity and panache (above).

Talk of the play in Gore raised more than one eyebrow but ensured that our one-night-only performance played to a full house. By the end the audience was left in no doubt as to the seriousness of the message when on behalf of the cast Margaret spoke from the heart about her feelings towards war:



Women against war: Margaret Lamont (right) leading the women's chorus in the Gore production of *Lysistrata*

"I am here because all my life I have worked for justice and peace for the earth and its people. I believe George W. Bush has no legal or moral right to attack Iraq. He has no mandate from the Congress, and Iraq does not threaten the homeland of the U.S. I believe that war is an obscenity.

"I remember the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and how it felt being part of the West. I believe in the power of the people in small communities and in the Internet as a voice for peace."

An appreciative audience rose to their feet to give her and the cast a standing ovation for their efforts. Our planet is a better place for the Margaret Lamonts who continue all their lives to step forward with quiet courage to make a difference. ■

Katie O'Connor





Entrance to the old Carnegie Library, Gore: now the Art Gallery main entrance

# Lots of good are com

*Katie O'Connor explores the stereotypes  
and discovers a treasure*

**J**im Geddes is the curator of the Eastern Southland Art Gallery – but he is also entrepreneur of history and culture for the town of Gore. On an overseas study trip in 1989, he happened upon ex-pat psychologist Dr John Money, in Baltimore. There he saw for the first time Money's spectacular art collection, notably the works of Rita Angus and Theo Schoon. Geddes corresponded with Money during the intervening years, as the project for an Eastern Southland Art Gallery germinated.



John Money was born in Morrinsville 82 years ago. He went to Victoria University and lectured for a time at Otago in psychology, leaving New Zealand in 1947 to go to the United States. In 1951 he became Professor of Paediatrics and Psychology at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He had always been inter-

ested in the arts, and in his youth was a friend of Janet Frame and Douglas Lilburn.

John was not an art collector so much as the patron of certain artists such as Rita Angus and Theo Schoon, as well as of a group of Australian Aboriginal artists. He also purchased works by local Baltimore artists and became interested in African art, which was very popular in the US at that time. His collection gradually grew to over 300 works. It is eclectic, yet he always saw a spiritual unity in what he had acquired.

He recognised a cultural link between the African works he purchased and the Oceania of his origins. That was John's reason for wanting the collection to return here, and to be kept intact and not split up between various NZ galleries. The collection includes nine major works by Rita Angus. The Schoon collection is larger, and also includes drawings and photographs.

There would be some 60 West African pieces altogether: ten lifesize sculptures in wood, some over two metres in height. People have argued that these artefacts should be returned to West Africa where they came from. In fact, had they remained in the tropics they would certainly have been destroyed by ants.

"The decision to bring the collection to Gore was made in 1998, and this has been a major project for Jim Geddes. We have had to raise 1.2 million NZ dollars to house and display the collection. Then we had to get it here without any mishaps. We had to achieve this while keeping John happy, because this collection was his life. The collection was his gift to New Zealand, so his wishes had to be respected.

"For the Eastern Southland Gallery it was a huge mind-shift to take on a project of this magnitude. We had to find a site and raise the money. The Gore District Council was busy building sports facilities, so we could hardly expect any money from them. The Southland Community Trust and the Gore Licencing Trust have been major supporters, but we have also tapped national funding agencies.

Two portraits from the John Money collection:  
(above) John Money as a young man, painted by Theo Schoon;  
(right) one of nine Rita Angus paintings: John Money's mother





# things . . . g from Gore

2 of a New Zealand country town –  
art about to be revealed



Jim Geddes, curator of the Gore Gallery, with some of the 50 West African sculptures, part of the magnificent collection donated by John Money

"A lot of individuals have dug deep into their pockets. The town has really got behind us. The service clubs and the schools see its value as a local resource. And it fits well with our other pet project, the Hokonui Heritage Centre, which is just across the road. There is also a wider perspective: it gives us the resources to tell a New Zealand art historical story. And in a sense it also tells a world arts story.

"John's donation has been a catalyst, but now we have acquired the Ralph Hotere collection (51 pieces) for the gallery. And early in 2003 the Muka Lithographic Studio in Auckland gave us its entire plant and assets. This means that we have not only got a magnificent collection but the facility for artists to come here and work in a national arts studio.

"Even things like the local Aviation history at nearby Mandeville and the new Fly Fishing museum join together with the art gallery to offer a very interesting package, remarkable for a town as small as Gore. This will always be a rural service town, but by acquiring these facilities its

nature has changed radically. The sheer quality of what we have here is bound to bring in a lot of visitors in the future. We can certainly capitalise on the quirkiness of the John Money story.

"In the gallery we don't focus on John Money as a collector, so much as let the collection speak for itself. The process has inevitably snowballed, because now major significant artists are wanting to work in the area and show here. Just now, however, we want to get the project finished, and we already can see further opportunities ahead."

## The official opening

The Prime Minister will open the Gallery formally on 12 December and there will be a gathering of notables from the arts world, such as Michael King and Grahame Sydney, as well as major sponsors. It is hoped that John Money himself will be able to come, in spite of his frail health. He will certainly be represented and very much present in spirit. ■



Two rooms from the new Gore Art Gallery. Left – part of Hotere's series on the Cross of Christ





# Round the parishes...

*Tui Motu is not a news magazine, so parish events are rarely reported. However, in our Christmas issue we have gathered together some ideas received from around the country, which others might like to hear about and use*

## Papakura welcomes the Hikoi



*Te Ika o Maui arriving at One Tree Hill in Auckland, on their way south to Wellington*

St Mary's parish, Papakura, had the pleasure of hosting some unexpected but very welcome guests during September. It was the Hikoi of Seed Carriers, *Te Ika o Maui*, en route from Northland to Taupo.

The ultimate aim of the hikoi was to present a petition to government for the protection of seeds, in view of the lifting of the moratorium on GE field trials due at the end of October. Cape Reinga, where the walk commenced, represents the fish's tail – *Te Ika o Maui*. Taupo is the heart of the fish and Wellington its head. At Taupo a message was to be drafted and presented to Parliament in Wellington.

The Hikoi was conceived and led by Kay Baxter and Mike O'Donnel. Kay established the Koanga Garden Trust, in Maungaturoto; for the last 20 years she has accumulated seed from over a thousand plant species. Her aim is to conserve this priceless plant heritage, in

the belief that these seeds embody the collective experience and wisdom of gardeners from the past. Her co-leader, Mike O'Donnel, who was raised on the marae, is an artist and environmentalist who also provided a vital link with the Maori people.

The hikoi was welcomed to Papakura by parishioners Frank Hoffmann and Sr Elisabeth Beeler, on behalf of the St Mary's Environmental Care Group, who offered food to the walkers and organised accommodation for them at the Papakura Marae. The parishioners were able to look after the group for two nights giving the walkers a chance of having a rest day. The marae kitchen soon became a hive of activity as parishioners rallied round.

### *We walk for the seeds!*

For 20 years the old seeds have been coming in, for 20 years I've been growing them and saving them and feeding my family the fruits and vegetables.

For 20 years those seeds have been teaching me their Whakapapa and mine. They have taught me that being nourished is about eating food with wairua/spirit, it is about listening to and honouring the ancestors who selected and saved this seed to nourish us, it is about honouring the land, the water, the wholeness, it is about honouring our own bodies because we are the ancestors for the generations to come and we are the seeds, and the Earth. We are inseparable, we are one.

### *We walk for the seeds!*

**Kay Baxter**

A memorable aspect was the welcoming ceremony onto the marae. Eban, from Coromandel, carried the Hikoi banner and spread it carefully on the floor close to the front wall, on which hung a cross as you may find in the sanctuary of any church. He was followed by Katie, an attractive, tall Englishwoman, who had been carrying the large, well-crafted tray divided into many small compartments which held the treasured heritage seeds.

She placed the tray on the floor under the cross. Her simple, childlike grace seemed to say: 'Here, Lord, we offer these, your precious gifts, back to you to bless and protect.' After a short pause there were prayers and brief speeches of thanksgiving for hospitality received, in English and Maori.

Scientists often dismiss the wisdom that comes intuitively to people who respect nature and live with an ear to the ground, in contrast to the brave, modern scientist who puts all his faith in innovative techniques gained from a myopic preoccupation with test tube and microscope.

I, who often feel close to despair over the meagre success in our struggle to counter environmental damage, felt strangely humbled in the face of the trust exhibited by these people, young and old. ■

**Frank Hoffmann**

*Readers who might want to learn more about the hikoi and the Koanga Garden Trust can look them up on their website: [www.koanga.org.nz](http://www.koanga.org.nz)*



## Prayer for health and healing

During August, Columban Fr Pat McMullen paid a visit to his home parish in Oamaru, and suggested to people that they might join an initiative of prayer and action embarked upon in St Matthew's parish in Hamilton. A group of parishioners there had, in July, launched a petition of protest against the impending lifting of the moratorium on release of GM organisms into the environment.

The group, calling themselves *Corpus Christi*, took issue with current government policy on three grounds:

- to manipulate life by releasing GM organisms is an offence against God;
- the Catholic bishops, among others, had called on New Zealanders to take responsibility for the environment by "protecting the integrity of our ecosystem within which human life exists" (A Consistent Ethic of Life *Tē Kau-O-Te-Ora* 1997);
- the eucharistic species (bread and wine) could themselves become contaminated by use of GM wheat and grapes.

Signatures were invited to an open letter to the Prime Minister requesting that she maintain the moratorium for another five years. And a campaign of prayer was launched.

In response to this invitation, a group was formed at St Patrick's parish, Oamaru. They obtained 1300 signatures to add to the Hamilton open letter. A core group of some nine people continued to meet regularly and pledged themselves to an hour's prayer at the beginning and end of each day for this intention.

During October they joined their support to a hikoi for preserving the heritage of seeds (inspired by the northern hikoi) which set out from Dunedin on Tuesday 21 October. Two seed-bearers called on Nathalie Brown of the Oamaru group, who ceremonially

handed over seeds of organically grown kitchen garden plants. (see inset below).

The Government, of course, has persisted with its intention of lifting the GE moratorium, but the Oamaru group felt motivated to continue and expand their campaign of prayer. This is now being launched as a *Campaign of Health and Healing* for the whole of Aotearoa-New Zealand.

The intention of this prayer campaign is to protect and heal the country from the effects of pollution and despoliation of land and water – and specifically from genetically modified organisms. But in a wider sense it aims also to heal the people of New Zealand from attitudes

of selfish exploitation of the earth and of one another.

The group aims to enrol at least 168 members, each committed to pray for one hour per week (thereby covering the whole week). Some members light a candle in their homes during the day to remind themselves constantly of their prayer intention. They have also extended their campaign to include members of other churches; they have written to MPs and to the bishops. There are people in Australia who have joined this prayer crusade.

The *Corpus Christi* website is: [www.corpuschristi.orcon.net.nz](http://www.corpuschristi.orcon.net.nz) ■

Nathalie Brown

### *Can't sleep at night? Free time during the day?*

You can turn your empty hours into a blessing. Join the *Corpus Christi Prayer cycle* to help protect and heal the land you live in.

For details and to register your hours in the prayer cycle, contact: Gloria Mansfield – 03 4347645, or Nathalie Brown on 03 4342594, email: [La\\_Boheme@callplus.net.nz](mailto:La_Boheme@callplus.net.nz)

### Southern Seed Carriers

A second hikoi set out at the end of October from Dunedin, bearing seeds collected from Gore, Riverton and Invercargill, as well as locally. The seeds were first carried in public procession up George St, supported by about a thousand people, and presented in a specially woven kete to Mayor Sukhi Turner.

Two members of the *Dunedin Coalition for a GE Free Environment*, Ryan Garland and Beckie Bloomer, carried the seeds up the South Island, calling at Oamaru (see above) Timaru, Geraldine, Stavelly, Christchurch and Kaikoura, collecting seeds from local groups en route.

They were formally welcomed by the Mayor at a public ceremony in Blenheim. They then walked to Picton,

boarded the ferry and joined the North Island group for the night in Wellington at the Tapu Ti Ranga marae.

On Thursday 23 October the group, now numbering 50 people, went to the grounds of parliament for a silent vigil and public fast. Then a small group of six went inside to keep an appointment with Minister for the Environment Marian Hobbs while the rest continued their vigil outside.

The seeds collected from all over New Zealand were ceremonially presented to the Minister. She listened attentively to what the group had to say, and pledged her support to their efforts to preserve this natural heritage, represented by the seeds. It remains to be seen how this government carries out her pledge.

Ryan Garland



## Living Waters in Heretaunga

**M**y visit to Our Lady of Grace parish, Heretaunga, ostensibly for the purpose of promoting *Tui Motu*, turned out to be one of those occasions which gives you a definite lift. I came away with a smile inside and out!

First I was surprised at seeing a board in the church foyer advertising a café – the *Living Waters Café*. I'd never come across any other parish which gave patronage to a local café. By the third Mass I'd also picked up a wonderful feeling of 'community' about this place.

The parishioners knew each other, and there appeared to be wonderful support systems operating. The 10.30 Mass was a joy to be present at, a wonderful feeling of togetherness and participation in Eucharist. Then my sister who helped me do the promotion suggested that we go to the *Living Waters Café*. The Scriptural name intrigued me. All was soon to be revealed. The 'café' was actually sited on the church property; it was all the result of hard work, wonderful enthusiasm and persuasion by a group of women parishioners.

As we entered, the buzz of conversation met me. My sweeping glance took in many delightful things: mugs, not any



Maree Mackel and Paula Reid, team members at the *Living Waters 'café'*, Our Lady of Grace, Heretaunga

kind of mugs, brightly painted, modern attractive in design! And cloths on the tables and flowers. Best of all, paintings decorated the walls.

The room itself was comfortably full, people mingling with ease. Some gathered round tables chatting, with their tea or coffee; others stood about in groups. Someone offered me a drink and I was drawn into conversation.

Who owned this place? Who ran it? I noticed plates of cakes, biscuits etc. I'd already met one youngster enjoying a hotdog! I was told this was all free –

people simply leave a donation if they like what they find.

The idea was inspired by a visit to *Life Switch* church in Silverstream. "There was a strong conviction," one of the women told me, "a great excitement of what God wanted for our parish, an urgency if you like. So first things first: an appointment with the parish priest, Fr Brian. How surprised he must have been with our request to open a café."

"We were very clear about the café being done well, with the right setting. Something special: artworks around the walls, candles on the tables, flowers arranged in vases and trendy mugs to create a caring atmosphere. Table cloths were made, mugs were bought, paintings painted and even hung wet! Within a week the *Living Waters Café* was birthed.

"Each of us brings a plate of home-baking every Sunday. We later introduced American hotdogs for the children. When we initially set it up, the parish paid for the new mugs and the initial tea and coffee. It now pays \$10 a week for milk. The rest is entirely funded by the donations, including the hotdogs and juice.

"We see it as another place for fellowship, an outreach and extension of church. It is a community, bridge-building environment, bringing all the groups of the church together. Every now and again we have live entertainment from members of the parish, which adds to the atmosphere. We don't own it. The café belongs to everyone. We love serving in there. It's a pleasure and a privilege to do God's work."

My congratulations to these women whose vision and enthusiasm contribute so much to the building of community in the life of the Heretaunga parish and to the parish priest for having the courage to trust in this group of women and their dream.

**Rita Cahill RSJ**

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*The Programme is directed by the National Centre for Religious Studies on behalf of the NZ Catholic Bishops' Conference*



## Peace voices from Tauranga



Year Four children  
of St Mary's School,  
Tauranga, singing  
their own song:

*Stop the War in Iraq*

The pupils of St Mary's primary school, Tauranga, were told of the plight of many children because of the Iraq war. The Year Four children were shocked by what they heard. With the encouragement of their teacher, Elicia Pirini, they resolved to do something about it so they composed a song *Stop the War in Iraq*.

Said Danielle O'Connor, aged nine: "Our teacher, Mrs Pirini, could teach world leaders a thing or two about diplomacy. Whoever owns the world should get a teacher like her to organise meetings and tell the world leaders what to do!"

They were able to perform their song publicly at an Amnesty International benefit concert, in Tauranga, where the celebrity guest was singer Ray Columbus.

Did he spot any talent there?

*Dolores Edge*

### *Stop the war in Iraq*

*Stop the war in Iraq*  
The world is falling apart  
People are dying  
And children are crying  
And it's breaking our heart  
*Stop the war in Iraq.*

Leaders of the world you cannot sleep  
Leaders of the world you must weep  
Until the children are free to play again  
Who decided it was time to fight?  
Who decided that they had the right?  
But no-one stopped to ask the children  
So now the children sing:

*Stop the war in Iraq* (chorus)

How can the children sing  
When all they hear is the ring  
of the missiles falling around them?  
How can the people live  
How can the people give  
when there's hate and sorrow that  
surrounds them?  
So now the people sing:

*Stop the war in Iraq* (chorus)

How could you go to war?  
How could you close the door?  
We could've sat down and talked over  
more.  
Mothers, cry out for peace  
Fathers, make the fighting cease  
Reach out in the desert for your children.  
So now the children sing:

*Stop the war in Iraq* (chorus)

The New Zealand Hymnbook Trust wishes all carollers a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas – and an opportunity to carol our New Zealand Christmas with "snow-free" summery songs, praising God for the sun and for new birth. This carol is the happy union of words by Shirley Murray and music by Jillian Bray.

Sing a carol for summer,  
sing in Aotearoa  
island waters and mountain snow!  
Feel the kiss of the sun on skin –  
you know that summer's a-coming in,  
everything's getting ready for Christmas,  
everyone's in a holiday mood!

Time for ripening berries,  
time for picking of cherries,  
shearing, mustering, making hay,  
time for camping, for hoisting pack.  
It's time for tramping the bush and track,  
everything's getting ready.....

Time for ending of year, it's  
time for sending good cheer, for  
family gatherings, friends to greet,  
time for swimming and time to laze  
through golden light of the length'ning days,  
everything's getting ready.....

Time for shepherds and kings! It's  
time for angels with wings, it's  
time to practise the Christmas play:  
time to carol the baby's birth  
who came to change everyone on earth –  
Jesus Christ makes the season of Christmas,  
Jesus Christ is the reason to sing!

© Shirley Murray

Please note the new address and contact numbers:  
PO Box 4142, Palmerston North – 06 356 9681/9687



# Venezuela – Paradise under threat

*Two Rosminians, Sr Maria Bruna and Fr David Tobin, went to Venezuela for five weeks at the end of July to give retreats. They found there a paradise on the brink of ruin*

Our first impression of Venezuela was of the beautiful modern city of Maracaibo, situated by a lake under which there are huge reserves of oil. Venezuela is potentially an enormously wealthy country. Practically all the electricity is provided by huge hydro-electric schemes on the Orinoco River, the second river of South America. There is also abundant natural gas. Petrol in Venezuela is extremely cheap, perhaps a tenth the price it is in Europe. The main roads are excellent.

There is a wonderful variety of landscape. Maracaibo is in scrubby desert. Driving south you cross a high range of mountains and come to lush pampas land, called llanos. When we drove up to the foothills of the Andes we found a wonderful climate; quite changeable, never hot because of the height, very sunny.

When you climb up further you pass through beautiful market gardens. The people work hard and their horticulture is well organised. So they are well off. The ground is very steep and a lot of it is terraced. They have tractors, but sometimes they use bullocks.

The road continues to rise up to 4200 metres, higher than Mt Cook. Because of lack of oxygen, at the top you can walk only very slowly. And you feel a bit light-headed! It took us three hours to drive up to the summit where we stopped for breakfast. There are campesinos living and working at that height. You see huge sheds above the road where they grow mushrooms.

Above the treeline you see flowers like edelweiss, although they are yellow. It was very cold because the summit was covered with cloud.

## Fuente Real

Our destination was the Rosminian spirituality centre at Fuente Real, founded 20 years ago by Fr Steve Harney, of the Irish province. He was given 3000 acres in this remote area eight hours drive from Maracaibo. He founded a diocesan congregation, which has grown steadily. They run retreat centres and have a farm with 600 cattle.

The congregation has now spread to five dioceses and has seven houses. Some are in difficult places, very isolated. The religious community, or 'family', consists of men and women and couples.

There are now around 50-60 members, of whom some 20 are fully professed. Their spirituality is quite contemplative. They pray the prayer of the church and spend one or two hours in silent prayer as well. Most of the leaders are women.

## The Sisters' work in Maracaibo

However, our principal aim was giving retreats to the Rosminian Sisters, some of whom work in schools teaching religion. But they are also involved in the barrios, the poor areas surrounding Maracaibo. In spite of the wealth of the country, the people there, mainly immigrants, are very poor. The Sisters try to obtain land for them. We met Louis who had come from Colombia when he was a child, and was abandoned by his

family. He was treated as a non-person because he had no 'documents'. He got married and has six children (*see below*). But his wife left him for a time, returning with another child that she left with Louis before taking off again.



The Sisters found him on his own, abandoned, with no dwelling and with seven children. He is an industrious fellow, so they bought him land and materials for him to build a house. The Sisters are working to get proper documentation for him and for the children. Without documents the children are not even allowed to go to school. The Sisters have done this for numerous poor families, using funds sent out to them by generous laypeople in Italy.

The condition of the families in the barrios is terrible. There is no proper sanitation. Those nearby have access to water, obtained for them by Fr Gaetano, a Rosminian who used to work in Maracaibo. But they can only get



electricity by 'stealing' it from the cables. This particular slum area is also subject to flooding from the lake. As well, there is a lot of violence. Once recently they were holding a religious procession when they were attacked with stones and knives by gangs from a neighbouring barrio.

### **A place 'forgotten by God'**

We also visited the Rosminian Sisters at a mission over the border in Colombia. Tomarozzon, in the Alta Guajira, is a very poor village in the foothills of the mountains. About a thousand people live there and in the surrounding countryside. They are often deprived of electricity, which means ventilators and fridges won't work. There are no roads.

It is a place 'forgotten by God'. They receive no protection from the law, since seven policemen were killed there a year ago. So the state has abandoned them. They are at the mercy of the guerrillas and the paramilitaries. It's a sort of no-man's-land. Yet there is a state secondary school where one of the Sisters teaches religion. The community of four has been there ten years.

They run their own kindergarten. They care for children who are rejected by the state school for one reason or another. These are taught how to read and write. Some four or five children come in from the mountains and stay with the Sisters in order to learn. Some are orphans and the Sisters protect them from being maltreated.

Many of these people are descended from slaves who escaped inland and founded this village. For a time they flourished by growing coca to produce cocaine. But when the Americans clamped down on the drug trade, the government destroyed their plantations and they were reduced to subsistence farming. They went from poverty to wealth, and back again to extreme poverty.

The Sisters have needed a true missionary spirit to survive. Their presence has given the people a sense that someone cares for them, and they receive spiritual values. At first they would come across men killed by the

wayside, and no-one bothered looking after the bodies. That no longer happens. The people would simply pray over them and bury them. The self-respect of the people has been raised.

### **The political situation**

Twenty years ago one US dollar would buy 4 bolivars. Today a dollar will buy 1600 bolivars! There has been huge inflation. When Venezuela first got democratic government, the country prospered because of the oil. There was little poverty apart from among the refugees. But the new wealth attracted big immigration, mostly from Colombia where there has been civil war for about 50 years.

The population mushroomed. President Chavez attempted a military coup ten years ago. He achieved some fame and became a populist candidate, promising to get rid of corruption. He got a lot of support, many priests and Sisters supporting Chavez. So he was voted in: he is now their legitimate ruler.

But he has turned out to be even more corrupt than his predecessors. Violence on the streets has become far worse. He encourages the poor to 'invade' the property of the well-to-do. He also promotes street vendors, which undermines small businesses. He is importing sugar from Cuba, undercutting the price of the home-grown sugar. He is a disciple of Fidel Castro. He claims to be completing the revolution started 150 years ago by Simon Bolivar. There is an element of

Hitler in his character. And the people are being impoverished.

The Catholic Church is divided on whether or not to support his government. There is no Romero in Venezuela. The poor suffer, while opportunists pretend they are poor in order to steal land. There are now thousands of unemployed – in a country that once had a flourishing economy. The oil workers came out on strike to challenge what Chavez was doing – and they were locked out and lost their jobs. They even lost their right for schooling their children. They were replaced by his supporters. Now, in the oil industry the incidence of industrial accidents has soared.

Meantime the Americans remain silent, with someone on their doorstep who is as bad as or worse than Saddam Hussein. The people are terrified to speak out, because they no longer know whom they can trust. We were told there were spies everywhere.

There has been a referendum to confirm Chavez' rule, but when the vote went against him, he declared the voting to be fraudulent. There is no obvious political opposition. He has also changed the judiciary, so that they too will not oppose him. It is simply a Communist dictatorship. The future of this beautiful country, which could be a paradise, is indeed dark and uncertain. ■

*Fr David Tobin was on the staff of Rosary House, Christchurch in the '80s.*

**Rosminian Sister Madelena Rita and children at Tomarozzon, Colombia**





# Iconoclasm: an aid to prayer

Glynn Cardy

**I**conoclasm. It's one of those big words that crosswords addicts delight in. It means the act of breaking images. I can visualize some frustrated anti-alcohol protester lopping the head off Sir John Logan Campbell's statue down the road. Trying to make a point by decapitating the past.

For the religiously-minded the word evokes those beautiful Russian and Greek monastic icons: two-dimensional Orthodox art. Pictures inviting the pilgrim to see through them in order to contemplate the wonder and mystery of God. When the picture begins to resemble a shut door rather than an open window, when the pilgrim begins to worship the image rather than the One beyond any image, then it is time for iconoclasm.

Some of my Protestant forebears took this all literally and had an awfully smashing time. While sympathizing with the notion that God can't be captured in art, it was a pity they didn't realize that God could be glimpsed. Their vandalism robbed so many of the living and the yet-to-be-born of wonderful prayers of paint and stone. I wished they had learnt that iconoclasm is really a discipline of the mind: a discipline of prayer.

I sat with a student the other week. He is learning to be a priest. Before he began his training he had never heard of God seriously addressed as *She*. To merge into the culture of the theological college and to be sensitive to the spirituality of other students, he now occasionally addresses God using feminine pronouns. Like many students before him, when he leaves the theological incubator he will leave those pronoun supplements behind.

I invited him into a journey of prayer. I invited him for a period of two months to put on *She*, like a priest puts on robes before Mass. I invited him into the discomfort, the disorientation, and the feeling of artificiality. When you put on feminine pronouns you become acutely aware of your

dependency on maleness. I invited him to walk a very difficult road, grieving the loss of the male God that he would have previously denied he had. The purpose of this discipline was not to convert him to a female God, but to help him see and then break free of the God Father who dominated his prayers.



The maleness of God is an icon. As an icon it is helpful to many people. It can remind us that God is close, accessible, protecting and nurturing. But for some it has the opposite effect: it reminds them of fathers who were far from God though often thought they were God.

People confuse the image with the reality. Too many people discard Christianity when praying to a 'Father who art in Heaven' seems like nonsense. They mistake the icon, the window itself, for God. They need, at that point in their lives, to break the image that no longer works and to walk over its rubble into the vastness of God.

Of course many Christians, godly people, spend their whole life praying to a male God. They use that one icon all their life. Yet there are many of us not content to stay with one icon, or to stay with any anthropomorphic icon. I hope they can understand my holy discontent as I try to understand their holy content. I hope too they can understand many in our so-called 'secular' culture who want to learn the spiritual paths without subscribing to what seems Sunday School piety.

I prefer to understand iconoclasm to be like a staff one carries on the journey of prayer. An aid to break with what binds and blinds us. Iconoclasm is difficult work, demanding a lot of us. As the years go by there are many icons to break, images of God that are now for us no longer God. Sometime in the future we may meet that image again, minus its god-like status, to helpfully point us forward. Yet whenever that or any other image begins to dominate and restrict our view of the breadth and beauty of God it is time to kiss it goodbye. ■

*Glynn Cardy is Anglican priest at St Andrew's, Epsom, Auckland*



# Luke's Theme of Reversal

Susan Smith begins a monthly series on the Year of Luke by  
looking at the gospel passages for Advent

*God has brought down the powerful  
from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly;  
God has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.  
(Lk. 1:52-53)*

Luke and Matthew begin their gospels with very different accounts of the conception, birth and childhood of Jesus of Nazareth. The two authors have in common the names of the child and his parents, his mysterious conception through the power of the Holy Spirit, his place of birth, Bethlehem, and the references to Nazareth, in Galilee, where the family live. The extraordinary amount of detail peculiar to Luke's account – for example, the story of shepherds coming to worship – is not found in Matthew. The story of Herod's massacre of children is not in Luke.

These differences should cause us to pause and ask what kind of writing do we have here – historical or theological? Of course there is a historical kernel in the two gospels, but basically both authors are concerned to present in story form their theologies of Jesus, through whom God's saving plan for humankind will be realised. In this reflection, I want to show how Luke begins this process in the first two chapters of his gospel, what we call the *Infancy Narrative*.

In writing his gospel, Luke uses the literary device of *the theme of reversal* to challenge the dominant political and religious leadership of 1st century Palestine. A careful reading of chapters 1 and 2 shows how this happens.

## Where does God dwell?

One of the most powerful Palestinian institutions is the Temple where, according to Jewish belief, God dwells among his people. The priestly class,



associated with the Temple, exercises immense control over the ordinary people, whom they heavily tax. These same people are required to go the Temple in order to be purified, and again this is costly.

Even though the first annunciation (1:8-23) occurs within the Temple when an angel of the Lord tells an incredulous Zechariah that he and his aged wife, Elizabeth, are to have a child, the second and more important annunciation (1:26-38), that of Gabriel to Mary, takes place in Nazareth where "nothing good" is ever supposed to happen, in the home of a village carpenter and his betrothed. Gabriel's annunciation suggests that Luke intends to subvert the claim that the Temple is God's special dwelling place. God's presence is not restricted to certain holy locations. God is everywhere.

## Caesar Augustus and Jesus of Nazareth

Chapter 2 offers another striking example of reversal. The chapter begins with the words: "In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered." The Emperor's subjects are required to revere him as 'saviour' and as 'son of God'. He is to be honoured as the one who brings peace to the world, the famed *pax romana*.

However, as the Lukan narrative makes

clear, the qualities attributed to Augustus more appropriately belong to Jesus of Nazareth, the true Son of God. Mary celebrates this prophetically in her song, the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-55) when she proclaims that God will bring down the mighty from their thrones, lift up the lowly, fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Through Jesus, true peace grounded in justice will come into the world.

## Temple Priests and the Shepherds

Luke continues to spell out the theme of reversal in the response of the shepherds to the birth of Jesus. In 1st century Palestine, shepherds were at the bottom of the social ladder and yet these are the people to whom the good news of the birth of the Saviour is announced by the angels. This annunciation of God's presence occurs on a hillside in Galilee, far removed from the Temple in Jerusalem. God's work of salvation is to begin with the birth of a child in a stable, not through the priestly class in the Temple.

## Conclusion

As I write this, we are pondering the elevation/election of Don Brash as Leader of the parliamentary Opposition. Can his elevation/election be interpreted as a move on the part of powerful economic and political élites to confirm their status as kingmakers and powerbrokers in Aotearoa New Zealand?

The Lukan theme of reversal challenges us to critique such commonly accepted 'wisdom' and recognise the need for reversal in our lives and in our country. Reading Luke through the lens of reversal suggests that the more we affirm the centres of power in society, the less inclined will we be to embrace the need for reversal in order to bring about the Reign of God ■

*Dr Susan Smith is a Mission Sister who teaches  
Biblical Studies at the School of Theology,  
University of Auckland*





## Thomas Berry

*...a great man and his great work*

Diane Pendola

How to introduce someone with the breadth of knowledge and depth of vision of Thomas Berry? Nearly 90 years old, until his recent stroke he travelled the world meeting with world leaders to discuss amending their country's constitutions to include, along with the rights of humans, the rights of rivers and mountains, forests and meadows: the equal rights of the natural world.

His life took root in the hill country of the Southern Appalachian Mountains of the North American Continent where he was born in 1914. He is the very embodiment of renowned 'southern hospitality', gracious and kind; yet he lives the utter simplicity of an unassuming monk. Passionately engaged with the world, yet detached from self, he speaks to us of the peril of our time: the impending devastation of the natural world, and by virtue of our utter dependence upon it, of ourselves.

Yet he gives us hope. Perhaps he gives hope because, when we come across such an authentic human being as Thomas Berry, we are awakened to the hope that lives within each of us. We are awakened to the hope inherent in the harmonious dynamism of the universe in which we live and move and have our being.

Thomas is a monk, a scholar, a cultural historian and a writer of great depth and beauty. As a young man he was troubled by the industrialization that he saw

degrading the natural systems of his native North Carolina. He felt he needed time to think deeply on these things and chose to enter a Catholic Passionist Monastery. His search for the roots of our current estrangement from the natural world led him to the study of the history of cultures, eventually learning Chinese and Sanskrit.

His first published books were on Buddhism and the religions of India. He has been referred to as a geologist and an ecotheologian. These designations reveal the area of his primary concern: our need to recognize the natural world as sacred, to realize that the spiritual and physical are two dimensions of one unified whole.

I find in Thomas Berry a voice that expresses the sacred depths of my own experience of the natural world and a spacious mind which invites me into a whole new mode of being. Cosmology is concerned with our understanding of our origins, where we come from and how we got here. Our model of the structure and dynamics of the universe absolutely shapes the way we see our world and ourselves. Every culture and every people has its own cosmogony, its own creation story, out of which its cosmology arises.

In the 20th century our knowledge of the origins and evolution of the universe made a quantum leap. This knowledge is now shared across the globe and presents the possibility of a common cosmology, a shared origin story, for the first time in human history. This *Universe Story* reveals us to each other as kin! We are kin not only to every other human being, but also to the wolf and the whale, the redwood and the

butterfly. Within this expansive cosmology I experience a sense of homecoming. The surfaces of a mechanistic world crack open and the subjective depths of my own nature are now made accessible in communion with my relatives in all creation.

In the beginning pages of his book, *The Dream of the Earth*, Thomas writes: "We are returning to our native place after a long absence, meeting once again with our kin in the earth community. For too long we have been away somewhere, entranced with our industrial world of wires and wheels, concrete and steel, and our unending highways, where we race back and forth in continual frenzy.

"The world of life, of spontaneity, the world of dawn and sunset and glittering stars in the dark night heavens, the world of wind and rain, of meadow flowers and flowing streams, of hickory and oak and maple and spruce and pineland forests, the world of desert sand and prairie grasses, and within all this the eagle and the hawk, the mockingbird and the chickadee, the deer and the wolf and the bear, the coyote, the raccoon, the whale and the seal, and the salmon returning upstream to spawn.

"Presently we are returning to the primordial community of the universe, the earth, and all living beings. Each has its own voice, its role, its power over the whole. But, most important, each has its special symbolism. The excitement of life is in the numinous experience wherein we are given to each other in that larger celebration of existence in which all things attain their highest expression, for the universe, by definition, is a single gorgeous celebratory event." (*Dream of the Earth*, pp1-2)



I see Thomas as a contemporary prophet asking us to see with our eyes and hear with our hearts so that we may turn and be healed as a people and a planet. But Thomas sees himself less as a prophet (speaking a particular message from God) and more as a Shaman (in ongoing relation with the powers present throughout the earth and the universe). His assertion that to wantonly destroy a living species is to silence forever a divine voice (*Dream of the Earth* p.46) has deeply affected my consciousness.

In mid-October of 1999, we had no rain for over six months here in the Sierra Nevada foothills where I live. The forest was tinder dry. The fire that took hold in the early hours before dawn was fanned by high winds. Soon the crowns of my beloved trees were ablaze. Before the fire was over, 13,000 acres had burned. The shock of our forest fire seared into my soul the realization of just how dear the towering fir and pine and cedar trees were, just how essential they were to my knowledge of who I am and what I value, just how much they constituted a part of my body and my being.

The effect has been to awaken me to the preciousness of what remains, not only here in this northern California forest where I live, but in extension, throughout our planet. Suddenly I feel the enormity of the losses we are facing. As Thomas says, "We are losing splendid and intimate modes of divine presence. We are, perhaps, losing ourselves". (*Dream of the Earth*, p.8)

It was just a year after our fire that I had the opportunity to experience Thomas' southern hospitality first-hand. In the closeness of his presence and in the warmth of his friendship I felt a Phoenix rising from the ashes of our fire, giving inspiration, wings and flight from contact with the light burning in the heart, mind and soul of this humble and holy man.

"We should be clear about what happens when we destroy the living forms of this planet. The first consequence is that we destroy modes of divine presence. If we have a wonderful

sense of the divine, it is because we live amid such awesome magnificence. If we have refinement of emotion and sensitivity, it is because of the delicacy, the fragrance, and the indescribable beauty of song and music and rhythmic movement in the world about us. If we grow in our life vigour, it is because the earthly community challenges us, forces us to struggle to survive, but in the end reveals itself a benign providence." (*Dream of the Earth*, p.11)

Thomas, in the book he co-authored with mathematical cosmologist, Brian Swimme, *The Universe Story*, masterfully unfolds this great story of our origins. He awakens our sensitivities to this wondrous adventure, from the original flaring forth, to the creation of supernovas and galaxies, to creation of planets and the emergence of life on this beautiful planet, Earth.

The story reveals to us this benign providence, this creative intelligence at

work in the universe and in our human capacity to reflect in awe upon it. He invites us to enter into this "gorgeous celebratory event" in the awareness that this universe – and this earth – is a community of subjects to be communed with, not a collection of objects to be exploited. This recognition of our communion relationship with the entire web of life is fundamental to his thought and is found throughout his work.

In his book the *The Great Work* he charts a direction for this shift in consciousness to occur. It is to this great work of transformation that Thomas invites us. In turn, I invite you to be touched and transformed by your own personal encounter with this great man and his great work. ■

*Diane Pendola, with Teresa Hahn, is co-founder and co-director of Skyline Harvest, an Eco Contemplative Center in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Northern California.*

#### Books by Thomas Berry:

*The Great Work*, (Bell Tower 1999)

*The Universe Story* with Brian Swimme, (Harper San Francisco, 1992)

*Befriending the Earth* with Thomas Clarke, (Twenty-Third Publications, 1991)

*The Dream of the Earth*, (Sierra Club Books, 1988)

*Religions of India*, (Columbia University Press, 1992)

*Buddhism*, (University of Columbia Press, 1996)

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## Jewels making up the mosaic of human life

**O**verbooked – now there's an oxymoron for you. As well as being the name of an interesting internet site ([www.overbooked.org](http://www.overbooked.org)) it's also the feeling that comes over this reader when the year's books are being sifted through to find a handful to suggest as the pick of the bunch.

The problem (and the joy) is that one book so often suggests another and before you know where you are you are exploring in depth something that you hadn't even thought about a month ago and the pile waiting to be read gets higher and higher – overbooked indeed! It's a delightful problem.

Narratives told from the viewpoint of children can be searingly revealing of the darker side of adult behaviour. One such is *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* (Jonathan Cape) by Mark Haddon which stayed with me long after I finished reading it. Christopher, the narrator, is 15, and autistic. He loves pattern and logic and truth. He hates lies (and consequently metaphors) and spontaneity and being touched and has no concept at all of emotions or of social interaction. When the neighbour's dog is killed he sets out to discover who did it – and on the way discovers a family secret which rocks his world and forces him to make a journey into unknown territory, a terrifying exercise for a young person who dislikes strangers and change.

Christopher's lack of emotion can be chilling. On the day when he is told that his mother has died he records his scrabble score and what he had for dinner but nothing about her; he has earlier voiced a wish to visit her in hospital because he likes hospitals where there are uniforms and machines. He has extraordinary ability when it comes to mathematics and physics, and observes the world with a detached intensity which makes one realise that much of what is taken for granted is in

fact wonderful: what an average person sees when looking at a paddock with a few animals in it, and what Christopher sees are at two levels of experience.

This is a powerfully illuminating book about the world of autism but is not in the least "preachy". It is full of humour (but no jokes, because Christopher does not understand jokes) and sadness and love. And on the way you will learn about prime numbers and black holes and why the stars don't make the night sky as bright as day.

**H**ugo Hamilton has also used a child's voice to narrate his memoir of an Irish childhood in *The Speckled People* (Fourth Estate). He grew up in Dublin in the 1950s and 60s, the son of a fanatically nationalistic Irish father who forbade the speaking of English in the home and a loving German mother "whose hugs could crack your bones". The children literally wore lederhosen and Aran sweaters. "We are the speckled people" observes the father, describing the family's mixed heritage by translating the Irish word *breac* but also afflicting them with the fate of the speckled bird of the book of Jeremiah, to be always victimised.

The Irish children of the neighbourhood, who concentrate on the German side of the family, call them Nazis and conduct mock trials. The father who has taken the Irish version of his name and who punishes the children for even listening to their friends speak English, reduces the family to poverty because he refuses to accept cheques for the goods he imports if they are made out in his English name.

All this is told as it is seen by a child, observing, judging little, leaving the reader wondering how it is that someone who grew up in such a family every managed to survive to be a successfully functioning person at all.

**Q**uite a different picture of Ireland is painted by John McGahern in his novel *That They May Face the Rising Sun* (Faber), a slow-moving account of a year in rural Ireland where nothing much happens, and yet everything happens. The intriguing title comes from the custom, fondly adhered to, of burying the dead with their heads to the west: "He sleeps with his head in the west ... so that when he wakes he may face the rising sun – we look to the resurrection of the dead." It is a belief which for the people of the area is firmly rooted as the right thing to do, more basic and deeply held than their involvement in organised religion.

This novel is a wonderful picture of a community, a long continuous narrative, with no chapters, of lives unfolding season by season in harmony with the rhythm of farming and the cultivation of the land. What little plot there is unfolds slowly in simple elegant prose, drawing the reader into the quiet yet intensely lived lives of a bunch of disparate characters all with their own agendas. McGahern writes with great insight of change and aging and the cycle of life, and of how happiness should be quietly accepted and not worried into being, but "be allowed its own slow pace so that it passes unnoticed, if it ever comes at all".

**P**at Barker, whose *Regeneration* trilogy was one of the high points of fiction a few years ago, has turned to the after-effects of more recent conflict in her latest work *Double Vision* (Hamish Hamilton). The main character is a war correspondent who has returned to the quiet of an English cottage with a justifiable case of post-traumatic stress after witnessing horrors in Rwanda, Bosnia and Afghanistan. His return is not the traditional return of the wounded soldier to a peaceful haven: the English countryside is in the grip of foot-and-mouth disease and it seems that everyone he meets has violent



disruptions to cope with. There is the widow of his photographer colleague, a sculptor struggling with her grief and with the completion of a giant figure of the risen Christ, and there is the young man roped in as her assistant – perhaps the most interesting character because we get only tantalising glimpses of him. He turns out to be the later version of the young killer in Barker's 2001 novel *Border Crossing*, now with a new name and working under the aegis of the local vicar in a "fresh start" programme.

There are so many people and so many threads to keep track of that one can lose sight of the main theme – the morality of writing about and representing atrocity and war. This is nicely captured in a conversation between the two main characters in front of a painting by Goya, perhaps the most war-affected painter of them all.

Pat Barker has a great ability to depict fractured lives in the context of world events. One of the characters observes that on September 11, when the attack on the World Trade Centre changed the world forever, "people fell in love or out of love or down flights of badly lit stairs, got jobs, lost jobs, had heart attacks and babies, stared at the shadow on an X-ray or the second blue line on a pregnancy testing kit". The background may be the huge, but the human element is composed of tiny stitches. ■

**T**he Aussie Bible has sold over 21,000 copies since its release in August. Though not pretending to be a full Bible – it is only 86 pages long – it takes the story of Jesus' life from the New Testament and retells it in chronological order using Aussie idiom. So, 'the Good Samaritan' becomes 'a good bloke' and the feeding of the 5000, 'a gigantic picnic'.

Author Kel Richards says: "Well, stone the crows! It's good news that so many Aussies want to read the good news. Some of them might go even further and join the Jesus fan club. That wouldn't be a bad thing for the land down-under, now would it? Better than a poke in the eye with a burnt stick!"

*The Aussie Bible is published by the Bible Society in NSW and is available in New Zealand.*

## The psalms in everyday language

*Psalms: Songs From A Pierced Heart*

by Patricia Stevenson RSJ

Published by Sisters of St Joseph, 2003

Review: Sandra Winton OP

**R**ecently a friend confided to me that, in view of what she saw of Israel's treatment of Palestinians, she was having difficulty with the psalms. Patricia Stevenson has produced a selection of short paraphrases of sections from the psalms, cleared of military language and references that situate them in a specific, Temple-based, patriarchal, warring Hebrew culture – which can make them difficult.

Her selections are short, often 12-20 lines, and her language is very simple in vocabulary and sentence structure. The print is a good size. Her aim has been, to quote the back cover, 'to make these prayers more accessible to ordinary people'.

To give an example, in the selection from Psalm 130, the familiar 'Out of

the Depths' psalm has a verse that reads in the old breviary translation:

*My soul is waiting for the Lord,*

*I count on his word.*

*My soul is longing for the Lord*

*more than watchman for daybreak.*

*Let the watchman count on daybreak  
and Israel on the Lord.*

This becomes in Patricia Stevenson's version:

*I trust in God, ever faithful*

*knowing, like those on night-shift*

*that dawn will come.*

This is easy language, contemporary, not jarring. For me, I must admit, even despite the male God-language, I am more inspired by the poetry, rhythm and passion of the earlier version which some modern paraphrases, like those of Jim Cotter have managed to preserve.

But Patricia Stevenson's book will provide a helpful and accessible source of prayer for some. ■

*Tussocks Dancing*

Hymns and Songs by Jane Simpson

Review: Babs Aroha Johnson

**T***ussocks Dancing* is the title of a CD of hymns and songs by Jane Simpson. *Poiema Voices*, directed by Chris Graham, are the performers. This ensemble was formed by Jane Simpson in 2001.

This interesting collection of hymns and songs involves the talents of others, like Barry Brinson, Peter Low and Denis Guyan. Jane Simpson's words are at times inspired and imaginative. Listening to this CD is like stepping into the last century. *Poiema Voices* give nice performances. Harmonies are very traditional, and in the future, it would be good to see some more adventurous harmonies, and more of a Maori tangata whenua influence, to go with the creative words. For a little variety, the use of drums, and even clapping, adds a bit more interest. Also, to hear the music of different composers, besides that of Jane Simpson provides a good contrast.

If I were asked to name a highlight of this CD, I would choose *Eternal, Changing God*, which has a lovely, spritely refrain: "So free, so true, so lovely and fair Christ comes, our Song of Songs."

This collaborative effort combines the talents of Jane Simpson, Peter Low and Denis Guyan. We look forward to future recordings from this talented group of people. ■

*Tussocks Dancing* is available from Godzone Hymns, 5 Taramea Place, Addington, Christchurch 8002. bill@godzonehymns.com (see advertisement p33)



## Democracy under threat from the Bush-Blair axis

For the visit of President George W. Bush to London to have any credibility, it must have been scheduled in the early days of the Bush/Blair campaign against Iraq. President Bush's entourage includes 200 members of his security service to shield him from the protesters, who will be completely sidelined. The purpose of the visit is to create sanitised photo opportunities in order to bolster his flagging popularity at home. The whole exercise is an insult to the concept of democracy and is further testimony to the hypocrisy of Blair's messianic statement, "I am confident history will forgive us".

The very freedom on which democracies depend – the freedom of citizens to participate in their government – is being ignored and two nations are being led by the nose to condone an illegal war which has now turned to chaos. Millions of people around the world protested against this invasion and warned of a potential disaster. Their right of dissent and opposition was disregarded. The delusions of power of Bush and Blair continue. For indeed their power is a delusion because the majority of their electors do not and never did want war.

It shows incredible arrogance on the part of Bush to make a state visit to London after invading a country on the basis of demonstrable lies and calling it a bold exercise in spreading democracy. Neither leader is really interested in meaningful democracy in Iraq. They find themselves in the invidious position of being unable to withdraw from a mess that they themselves created and are unable to accept the fact that they did not heed the warnings. Courage in politics means operating by the democratic rules of fair play and listening to citizens. These are the key elements in the constitutional definition of democracy.

Civil society, that is, citizens in harmony but with the right of dissent, promotes

### Crosscurrents

John Honoré

just laws and leaders who adhere to the principles of democracy. Politicians who seek to impose their own misguided agendas, without any regard for the reactions that they may provoke, do democracy a grave disservice. A gulf is developing between elected representatives and their constituents in the Western world for which the Iraqi people are paying the ultimate price. Democracy cannot exist without truth.

### Israel beleaguered

The growing shambles in Iraq is ominous for Israel. Should there be the slightest indication of the US pulling its troops out of Iraq, because of the mounting deaths of US soldiers and the lack of international support for the occupation, then Israel is in grave peril.

The American support of Israel is not only in cash. In the United Nations the US has used its veto against 34 resolutions related to the Arab/Israeli conflict. It has ignored the flouting of international law by Israel. Bush, after all, is doing the same thing. In a recent European poll, Israel was named as the greatest danger to world peace. But in the Arab world which surrounds Israel, the militancy of Israel is synonymous with that of the US. In March of this year, Colin Powell stated that "in war and peace, the United States has stood proudly at Israel's side. So it will always be." America's unwavering support for Israel has enraged the Arab world.

Now, in view of the disintegration of the Iraqi occupation, dissidents, terrorists and Palestinian sympathisers see the moment fast approaching when Israel will be surrounded by hostility,

without the formidable American military presence. The possibility of retaliation against both Israel and the US has never been more imminent as country after country in the so-called "coalition of the willing" pulls out of Iraq. There is no sympathy for Israel, nor America, in the Middle East. What exists there is a long memory of colonisation and decades of economic sanctions. Israel is a tinderbox waiting to explode.

### Scrum collapsed

As an expert armchair critic, who predicted that the final of the rugby world cup would be played between *Les Tricolores* and the All Blacks, I feel qualified to offer some advice on the subject of New Zealand's national game.

- Firstly, always elect an executive which can do battle with the IRB and thereby get a lot of money to employ a coach who doesn't look like a billiard ball heading for a corner pocket.
- Instruct the coach that he has to tell the team what his plan B is (if he has one) when plan A is not working. Do this at the beginning of the game – not the end.
- Turn the forwards around at half-time.
- Tell Carlos Spencer that what he tried last week might not necessarily work again and that the bloke in green called Stirling Mortlock is an Australian. Remind Carlos to wear his bi-focals.
- Tell the team that repeating Arnold Schwarzenegger's phrase "I'll be back", when asked to say a few words, is not good enough.
- Finally remind the team that the women of NZ are world champions at netball, cricket and rugby and that the present All Blacks are just a bunch of (*expletive deleted*). ■



## A liberal Pope?

Is Pope John Paul II liberal or conservative? Is he the Pope who gave away his episcopal ring in a Brazilian shantytown to express the church's solidarity with the poor, or the Pope who broke the back of liberation theology? Is he the Pope who apologized for Galileo and Jan Hus, or the Pope who cracked down on Hans Küng and Charles Curran? Is he the Pope who visited the Rome synagogue and the Western Wall, or the Pope who beatified Pius IX? Is he the Pope who gave the Archbishop of Canterbury a gold pectoral cross, a symbol of episcopal authority, or is he the Pope who approved a document elevating to quasi-infallible status the teaching that Anglican ordinations are invalid?

These were the questions raised by *National Catholic Reporter's* Rome correspondent, John L. Allen, as he reflected on the 25-year pontificate of John Paul II. The truth is, as Allen pointed out, this Pope is all of the above. For women striving for the recognition of their rights in the Church, he is the arch-conservative. Listen to the complaints of the self-styled traditionalists, and you would believe he is a raging liberal.

Allen has suggested that one way to gauge the Pope's position is his annual Christmas address to the members of the Roman Curia. It is the only occasion in which the Pope addresses the entire Curia, and he styles the speech as a look-back over the year. Curial personnel are always on alert on this occasion, because the Pope's choice of highlights is a way of revealing his priorities. If you want to know the mind of John Paul II, which themes out of all his activity stand closest to his heart, studying these texts is a good place to start.

John Paul's address on December 21 last year touched upon seven themes: peace, inter-religious dialogue, human rights, environmentalism, ecumenism, youth, and holiness. Hardly a conservative agenda.

John Paul's act of inter-religious dialogue by joining for the third time at Assisi with representatives of other religions to pray for peace, in no way endeared him to Catholic conservatives, including some in the Roman Curia itself. The other themes also fit better with a liberal outlook than with a reactionary one.

This year, check out for yourself what Pope John Paul II says in his Christmas message to the Curia. You can do this through your Internet link or that of an obliging friend. The Vatican's web site contains a great deal of material and it is not always easy to find what you want. But if the location of last Christmas's message is any guide, here is how to bring up this year's address.

Starting with [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) follow the path of /English/ Archive (this is not the Vatican Secret Archives, but one of the buttons towards the centre of the page, the lower left one. "Archive" will come up when you place the cursor on it)/The Holy Father/John Paul II/Speeches/2003/December. Judging by last year's message, the address will be there with the heading "To the Cardinals and Heads of the Roman Curia for Christmas". It is in fact addressed to all who work in the Curia, including the lay component.

Just what will come up this year, who knows? Rosary, Eucharist and the Pope's silver jubilee are among my bets. But for the rest it could well be a list having the same liberal character as 12 months ago. Whatever events are recalled, they will give an indication of what John Paul feels is especially important in his crowded agenda. ■

*Humphrey O'Leary*

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

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# ... bringing colour into our

Robin Connelly

*"I walked around the church. It was a building remittingly unrevealing of what it held inside, with thick featureless walls pale blue in colour and high narrow windows impossible to look through. A fortress."*

This forbidding memory of a young boy visiting church for the first time, as recounted in Yann Martel's award-winning novel *The Life of Pi*, may strike a chord with some people both inside and outside our churches. Scottish-based artist and teacher Carol Marples feels passionately that this need not be so.

Interviewed recently in Edinburgh, she talked about the journey which has led to the establishment of *Soul Marks*, a trust through which she works with individuals and communities encouraging and enabling them to be creative in the use of all of their senses to understand and express their faith.

"Having studied tapestry at Edinburgh College of Art, I wasn't sure what would follow", she explained. "I wanted to continue with my own work, but alongside this became involved in creating artwork and leading worship at the (Scottish Episcopal) church which I had joined. This gave me a sense of the visual and contemplative aspects of worship, which grew over the next few years, as I trained in spiritual direction and led Art and Prayer courses.

"We have five senses, but often in church we only use one", said Carol. "A huge amount of what we retain is through our sight, smell and touch, yet in church we use so many words. What about the others? Using all our senses can make worship a more powerful and memorable experience".

Over the last ten years Carol's aim of using all the senses creatively in worship has found an outlet in large-scale events. A long-standing involvement with *L'Arche* and *Faith and Light* (communities which walk alongside people with learning difficulties, founded by Jean Vanier) led to her facilitating community tapestries which formed the expression of communal worship at conferences in Scotland, France and Canada. She has also been part of a team creating worship environments for up to a thousand people at the *Gate of the Year* events held in Edinburgh, on New Year's Day. However, the main opportunity to put

her ideas into practice has been as part of a creative team in her own church community, at St James Episcopal Church in the Leith district of Edinburgh.

The building at St James is a fairly ordinary, utilitarian church hall, which has been brought alive in the last few years by a vibrant, imaginative visual liturgy, leading to an increased participation in worship for everyone. The transformation has been gradual. Carol began by using simple swathes of coloured cloth, leading on to the use of colour, light, fabric and natural objects to create complete worship environments which reflect the changing liturgical seasons.

The church calendar of the Catholic and Anglican traditions is particularly suited to the concept of 'living the changes'. Imagine, for example, the impact of moving from the stark, barren colours and textures of Lent to a space bathed in bright yellow for Easter Day, with the huge crown of thorns centrepiece (see right below) which had previously been rough and cruel now transformed by flowers. This focal point remains till Pentecost, at which point it could be replaced by a large white dove, while the sanctuary is dressed in vivid colours of red and orange (see right middle).

Of course, a parish community must be willing to become experimental, and Carol has been delighted by the positive response of the congregation at St James: one lifelong member, now in her 80s commented that she had never seen the church looking so beautiful! The use of colour, symbol and texture alongside words in liturgy has encouraged the congregation towards a simplicity, enjoyment and sense of wonder as they live the changing rhythms of the church year.

Having spoken to Carol at length, and having been part of the life of St James, it seems to me that a relatively small parish community (St James' congregation is around a hundred people) can be enriched by this all-encompassing approach to liturgy. It is inclusive – the children and young people of the church are fully involved in creating work, as are folks who would not think of themselves as having artistic talent.

It is also achievable: for example, a large star which can form a centrepiece for an Advent liturgy can be made simply from willow sticks. The aim is not the creation of perfect artworks for exhibition, but the willingness to think about using colour, texture and symbol alongside our words to enhance our liturgy and hopefully make our churches that bit less fortress-like. ■

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Robin Connelly is a researcher and editor living in Edinburgh



# churches



The dove representing the Holy Spirit. Wind of Pentecost represented by the kite above, made by the children



Harvest festival: abundance expressed by a variety of colours and herbiage. A fruit bowl in front of the altar



Pentecost at St James' church, Edinburgh; the altar now dressed in red and orange for the Holy Spirit



Paper mache bowls representing the four elements: 'Gate of the Year' services, held at St Paul's Church and St Mary's Catholic Cathedral, Edinburgh for New Year



St James' church, Edinburgh, dressed for Easter. Hand printed cloths – by the children – cut in two and hung behind altar. The lenten crown of thorns has flowered. The priests are distracted by a bee inspecting the flowers!

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