Tui Motu

InterIslands

February 2011 | $6

there's a time to be born,
and a time to die.

do moral norms matter?

Happy New Year to all.

While happy, it seems good to acknowledge the recent natural disasters which are afflicting our world: especially the Christchurch earthquake, the Pike River mine disaster, and most recently, the flooding which has inundated many parts of the world, most closely our Australian neighbours.

Many of our readers are Australian. We want to offer you our prayers and support for the ongoing effort of facing this disaster and rebuilding your lives. Flooding is a work of days – rebuilding that of years. Kiwis have always known Australia as the 'lucky country'. At the same time, you face again the rather fragile nature of your continent 'of the Holy Spirit'. In 1972, I remember a well-known Monash agronomist, Professor Colin Clark, saying in a public lecture that the eastern seaboard of Australia could easily be home to 900 million people. I was sceptical then. Now it seems just a baffling academic statistic. However, are there climate change factors in play here and world-wide?

Less baffling but just as real is the question of voluntary euthanasia raised by Rev John Murray's letter (p.5). No-one asks to be born into this world.

Blessed with the gift of life, we know only one thing: death is inevitable. This brings us immediately to the mysterious nature of each living thing – where questions of justice, rights and morality are all interconnected.

How does morality affect the public arena? Do moral norms matter – in this case of euthanasia and other cases like surrogacy, stem cell research, same- sex marriage? Should I have the right to choose the time of my own death? Is this something the State should recognize? Is it, as John's letter says, a question of changing an 'ancient law', or are there other important factors to be weighed? Does a person who is dying of a painful terminal illness have the right not to accept the palliative care offered?

In this issue we offer two articles which look at some of these questions. Dr John Kleinsman argues for keeping the present law. To change it would favour only a particular type of choice, one that a 'Western' person can make. The choice to accept euthanasia is not a choice freely open to Pacific and Maori people, let alone our Asian and African sisters and brothers, because of their strong cultural, religious and social ties. Changing the law might affect other groups of people who might feel less valued in our society and then feel at risk as well. Dr Brian Ensor, in a wide ranging interview, looks at a different range of ideas. Above all here I sense the gentle connectedness of the care of patients and their suffering, together with quality care of family – taken on by the hospice movement and our hospitals.

Finding readable material on questions of morality in the public square is not easy. I was referred to the 2009 Reith Lectures given by the American Jewish political philosopher, Professor Michael Sandel (http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kt7rg). You may be as interested to read or listen to these four lectures as I was, and the fascinating debate they aroused. They forced me to struggle with meaning and value, and not just our dominant economic system.

Happy reading!

K.T.

contents

front cover illustration by **Donald Moorhead**

god is with us, waiting

Mary Woods, a Christchurch resident, reflects four months after the earthquake

At 4.35 a.m. on 4 September last 448,000 people in and around Christchurch experienced a powerful, terrifying earthquake. It arrived with a loud roaring and banging as it shook and shook and shook us. We leapt out of bed, clutched the door jamb and shook and shivered in the dark. When the shaking stopped, torchlight showed us rooms littered with broken glass. Aftershocks came thick and fast.Two long hours later dawn broke and we could see the extent of the damage. We had no power, water or sewerage. We checked neighbours and family. All were traumatized, but it was clear that we were much better off than people who had lost their houses. The miracle was that nobody was killed. The sun shone and daffodils and hyacinths kept blooming as though nothing had happened.

Three weeks later you asked yourself, where was God?

I struggled to find God in the earthquake. In the moments of sheer terror God did not appear to be around. As we came to terms with the fact that an earthquake is not a one off event but rather an ongoing agitation of aftershocks, God seemed a long way away. But I am reminded of the story in 1 Kings when Elijah went to the Mountain of Horeb to seek Yahweh.

"*There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountains and shattered the rocks before Yahweh. But Yahweh was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But Yahweh was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But Yahweh was not in the fire. And after the fire there came the sound of the gentle breeze. And when Elijah heard this he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave."*
(1 Kings 19: 11-14)

As I look back I did see God.

At 5.30 a.m. a torch shone down our drive – a neighbour coming to see we were alright. That was God. When family and neighbours gathered to share food and experiences and prop each other up, God was among us. God was the friend who texted "Are you OK?" All over the city God was out with people, feeding and sheltering those whose homes were gone. God was a student shoveling polluted piles of silt. God shared water, blankets and her washing machine. God popped up in emails of concern from friends around the world who woke to views of shattered Christchurch. Some looked for a vengeful god in the terrible power of nature but the God I eventually found was gentle.

It's now nearly five months since that terrible morning. We are learning to live with the ambivalence of desperately wanting to return to normality and knowing we have to prepare for more shaking. After more than 4000 aftershocks we know that the earthquake has come but not gone. "Did you feel that one?" is still a frequently asked question in Christchurch. Aftershocks are mostly decreasing in frequency and size, but still unpredictable and sometimes scarily violent. Lectures and the internet have taught us to understand the movement of the plates in the earth beneath us and knowledge helps reduce fear.

So where is God now? In the first moments of terror we turned to those living near us. One old man, living alone and not renowned for his good humour, was delighted at the number of people who visited him to check he was OK. Relationships got closer as we helped each other make our houses safe, resulting in more strongly connected neighbourhoods.

The *District Council of Social Services*, well known in this city for its social justice action, is gathering community groups together to talk about supporting community recovery. I see the hand of God in activities that bring people closer together. We are called to love our neighbour. Those whose houses are still standing are relearning to trust them to shelter us. Shattered nerves are recovering and our state of continual alertness is settling down. But for many whose land erupted and whose houses are being demolished, the trauma carries on and anxiety is wearing them down. The God I know walks with them in their pain, anxiety and uncertainty.

God is with us, waiting. ■

Tui Motu InterIslands

ISSM 1174-8931
Issue number 146

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.

address: Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd, P O Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9059
phone: (03) 477 1449
fax: (03) 477 8149
email: tuimotu@earthlight.co.nz
website: www.tuimotu.org
editor: Kevin Toomey OP
assistant editor: Michael Fitzsimons (pro tem)
illustrator: Don Moorhead
directors: Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey, Tom Cloher, Robin Kearns, Elizabeth Mackie OP (interim chair), Peter Murnane OP, Mark Richards, Kathleen Rushton RSM
typesetting: Alex Gilks
printers: Southern Colour Print, 1 Turakina Road, Dunedin South, 9012

at what cost?

Fifty-two years ago I became a convert to the Catholic faith. For over 40 years I have been associated with groups and organisations that help the struggling and disadvantaged in our New Zealand society.

Settling refugees and migrants, 40 years with the Society of St Vincent de Paul, visiting the sick and house bound, and trustee of a board that helps young catholic college students to attend college – all expenses met.

I relate the above because it brings me face to face with unfortunate people whom we can help to bring some relief to their daily lives.

When I think of the amount of expenditure that has gone into the exercise of changing a number of words in the new liturgy I am concerned. I wonder where the welfare of the poor is on the list of priorities that the upper levels of the church's hierarchy consult.

To change some of the wording of Mass to deepen our spirituality, at the age of 81 (still very active in my community) I really question the reasoning. My life experience has been that it is the putting into everyday practice the deeds and actions that Jesus laid down for us. "Love your neighbour as I have loved you", has been my guiding spiritual path.

Let's keep our beloved Mass simple in language and intention. Pre-Vatican II is history.

Dennis Cheetham, Lower Hutt

the new liturgy

I am writing in reply to Fr Darragh's views on the new Roman Missal (*Tui Motu*, October 2010).

Uniformity in liturgy: Liturgy of its very nature demands uniformity in celebration. "Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church, which is the 'sacrament of unity', namely a holy people united under their bishop" (Sacrosanctum Concilium – Vatican II, #26). Brief introductory explanations may at times be needed, but the texts of the prayers and the readings belong not to the presider or reader but to the Church.

Priestly integrity: Will a presider best maintain his integrity by simple obedience in keeping to the texts? No. Although obedience, even to human authority, is no mean thing – Christ won our redemption through it – what the Church wants, surely, is informed obedience, based on a proper understanding of what liturgy is. Concelebrating priests and congregations also have a right to respect for their integrity. They should be able to expect the Mass to be celebrated according to the mind of the Church, not that of the presider.

Brian Quinn SM, Upper Hutt

another view of parihaka

As Father Tom Lawn did, I grew up in St Martin's Parish but at the Pungarehu end. At the Pungarehu end we certainly knew about Parihaka and honoured and respected the story. We were proud of the fact that Parihaka was in our community.

My childhood recollections go back to when the beautiful Te Whiti meeting house with its wonderful woven mats was still standing. It was burnt down when I was about seven years old.

My mother, born in 1907, remembered being taken to Parihaka as a child by her parents from another part of coastal Taranaki. They had all been amazed at the scale and beauty of the self sufficient model village established at Parihaka after Te Whiti's and Tohu's return from the South Island.

And my father, born in Pungarehu in 1889, had always been involved with the people of Parihaka. I quote from a family history written by aunts long dead about their father and one of their uncles who had come from Hawkes Bay to take up land on the Cape Road in 1881: "They built a shack and began the difficult task of clearing and cultivating their sections. They found themselves in the midst of the Te Whiti troubles. The first fences they erected were pulled down by the Maori who later became their very good and firm friends."

I know that the people of Parihaka suffered a great injustice. I know that they have had great pain and their story has to be told. I know my family benefitted from taking up land in the area. I have been involved in presenting the story of Parihaka as part of the Justice and Peace group in my parish and the school of St Joseph's in Upper Hutt. I have taken my husband and daughter to Parihaka to see the place, learn the story and to meet up with former class mates from Pungarehu school.

But as I read accounts of Parihaka sometimes by people who have never been there I feel there is just one little part that does not ring true. Did it take us Pakeha all this time – three generations or so to have some feeling for the people of the land and the problems they faced?

In the last year of my Dad's life, while I was visiting, someone from the Maori community came wanting my Dad. "He's not very well," I said. "Can I get someone else?" "No," he said. "It's the old man I want."

And that really is the point I am making. In the old days Maori and Pakeha did interact, they did help one one another, they did feel for one another. They were interested in one another and they wanted one another to flourish.

Parihaka has had different phases, families have different phases – there are none of my immediate family living in Pungarehu. But we who lived in Pungarehu knew we had been enriched and honoured by Parihaka and its people.

Elaine Vandervorst, Upper Hutt (abridged)

letters to the editor

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not changing the meaning. Response articles (up to a page) are welcome –but please, by negotiation.

dying with dignity and in peace

In October (p.15), we printed a short article from Father David Tonks who reflected on his mother's final months before her death. For David, "Dying with dignity and in peace" means that deaths which take time should be surrounded by appropriate palliative care and "spiritual" accompaniment.

We received the following "open letter" to David from the Very Rev John Murray, who has been an elected Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, and who is widely known and respected for his pastoral experience over a period of more than 50 years. John uses the same words, "dying with dignity and in peace" to articulate his belief that there should be a legal right to choose the proper way a person may die.

The articles printed in the following pages explore some of the complex questions surrounding the question of euthanasia – by any standard, a topic arousing much debate.

To the Editor
TUI MOTU

I write to agree with my brother in Christ, David Tonks, that it is our hope that we shall die with dignity and in peace.

In whatever way we understand the word "spiritual", death is a moment of truth for each of us, that moment when we hope to be held in the love of our loved ones and meet with thankfulness for the gift of life.

I believe therefore that each person has the right to request, when they face the approaching moment, to be assisted to die with dignity and in peace. I say this out of my lifelong faith in God through Jesus and as a Christian minister. I am, David, religious and Christian both formally and spiritually.

I honour the story of your mother and her dying and repeat the ancient words – "requiescat in pace". But I ask you to allow other people, not bound by faith or dogma or fear, to choose for themselves their proper way to die.

The law as it is at present must be changed to allow this choice to be our human right. Our present law makes criminals, "murderers" of those who would in good faith carry out the person's request to assist them in dying.

There is another story of another mother's death – in our own country and within the past year – in which this woman, all her life a doctor and now suffering terminal cancer, pleaded to die. But because of the law, she was forced to starve herself to death. It was neither painless nor quick. For 30 days and more she lingered and longed for peace and dignity, until her son, Sean, caring for her and unable to watch her suffering, eased her through death. He has now been charged by the police. The law calls this "murder". What would you call it, David?

Yes, there are many details to be careful of, to prevent abuse, elder or otherwise, which must be incorporated into good law. But on what grounds would you deny the right of that mother to die and for the right of her son, in love, to assist her?

I would ask you, as you write about this issue, always to add the word "voluntary" to euthanasia. It is about the will, the wish of the person. And please to reconsider the emotive – and deceptive – word "killing".

What has killing to do with mercy?

What we who "advocate [voluntary] euthanasia" ask, both in the light of our secular – but not necessarily unspiritual – society, and indeed in the light of the changing face of Christianity today, is that we look again together at how best to honour the dying of each person within the arms of compassion, and not according to ancient law.

Is our God not the God of mercy and not of killing?

So I would question the "Catholic moral teaching" which you uphold as the law for our society and wish to talk further with you about this, literally life-and-death, issue.

Peace, my brother.

John Murray, Wellington

The Very Rev John Murray is an ordained minister for more than 50 years. He was the minister of St Andrew's on The Terrace, Wellington. He has been a regular subscriber to Tui Motu *for many years and an occasional writer.*

John Kleinsman

going dutch

Euthanasia and the beautiful game

My accent is Kiwi but the name gives it away. I'm a first generation New Zealander of Dutch descent and it is something I'm proud of. I'm also a football fan – I love watching 'the beautiful game' and once enjoyed playing it!

the beautiful game

The Dutch are known for many things including the quality and technique of their football. It was the Dutch who, in the 1970s, invented what is now known as 'total football', a tactical style in which players' positions are interchangeable as part of a general method of attack – difficult to defend against. It's very much a team oriented approach and around the world football coaches have learnt much from this Dutch innovation. Unfortunately their national team has earned the tag of being the best team never to win the World Cup: three finals and three defeats!

Ironically, while they have over the years continued to produce players of exquisite talent and ability who perform exceptionally as individuals, the Dutch football teams have also gathered a reputation for self-destructing at the highest level of competition. Commentators agree that this is largely the result of internal divisions brought on by the inability of their talented and strong (some would say stubborn) individuals to create a team culture; total football on the field is not compatible with an individualistic approach off it.

The Dutch are also well known for being the first country in the world to legalise euthanasia. It has occurred to me that there is a commonality between this fact and their struggles on the football pitch. It is also the case that the rest of the world has much to learn from developments in Dutch law surrounding euthanasia; a law that has evolved from turning a blind eye to euthanasia to openly tolerating its practice and eventually to legalising it in 2002.

individual's right

I have always been intrigued by the fact that the debate about euthanasia (and physician-assisted suicide) is

prominent only in certain societies, namely affluent white western societies. Why is that? It's a question that is rarely explored.

My own hunch is that it is a feature of those largely secular societies where certain assumptions prevail; where the dominant notion of personhood is individualistic and the dominant 'virtue' is the individual's right to make his or her own choices. This emphasis on autonomy and rights shapes us to see the world as belonging to those who are independent, strong and productive. In the words now immortalised by Nike: "Just do it." It also shapes us to see moral issues and dilemmas in a certain and very narrow way.

The liberal case in favour of euthanasia is not without its own logic. The argument is made by proponents of change that legalising euthanasia will not adversely affect the freedom of those who do not want to die in this way. On the other hand, the ongoing prohibition of euthanasia unfairly prevents some (albeit a very small minority) from exercising their freedom of choice; the personal beliefs of one group are then effectively being forced onto others, or so the argument goes. In this way, those in favour of euthanasia frame the issue in terms of the protection of rights; specifically the right to choose to be killed by another person. [1]

The current law in New Zealand is seen as bad law because it unfairly prevents people from making their own end-of-life decisions. Good law, it is stated, upholds individual choice above all.

At this point in the debate I suddenly find myself agreeing with those proposing a change in the euthanasia laws. And I say to them: *You are right. This debate is about choice!* They look surprised and quizzical while I continue: *What you don't realise is that it is the legalisation of euthanasia that will ultimately take away people's choice.*

If the law in New Zealand allowed for people in certain circumstances to dispose of themselves (physician-assisted suicide) or be legally 'disposed of' there would exist the temptation for relatives, as well as over-stretched and under-resourced care institutions, to see those who are disabled and sick as a burden to be shed rather than as persons to be cared for. [2] Furthermore, and perhaps even more seriously, legalising euthanasia has the real potential to change the way in which those who are disabled, sick and elderly see themselves. These people are already vulnerable because of disability, sickness or infirmity. In a world in which they feel undervalued and isolated they will more easily come to see themselves as a burden and will want to do the right thing if euthanasia is legalised. The so called 'right to die' all too easily becomes a 'duty to die.' [3]

I have always been intrigued by the fact that the debate about euthanasia (and physician-assisted suicide) is prominent only in certain societies, namely affluent white western societies. Why is that? It's a question that is rarely explored.

hard choices

In other words, the net result of legalising euthanasia would be that those who are most vulnerable will become subject to various forms of physical and psychological coercion. Upholding the choice of a few to be euthanised will effectively take away the choice of large numbers of others to live. In the words of one who knows and for whom the desire to live is at times already tenuous in the face of the burden his chronic illness places on others: "If euthanasia were a legitimate option … then life for the chronically seriously ill would become contingent upon maintaining a desire to continue in the face of being classified as a burden to others … The mere existence of the [euthanasia] option will affect attitudes to our care, and hence our own willingness to continue." [4]

Furthermore, it will be impossible to limit euthanasia only to those who request it as a way of relieving suffering. If euthanasia is permitted as a 'treatment' for pain and suffering then it has to be made accessible to all people and not only those who are competent. No other medical treatments are given or withheld on the basis of a person's competence.

The experiences of the Dutch are particularly instructive in this regard. It is evident from what has happened in their country that euthanasia cannot, in practice, be limited only to those who are at the end of life and who choose it (so called 'voluntary euthanasia'). Most recently a public referendum has been initiated in the Netherlands that would allow those over 70 to access euthanasia for no other reason than that they were 'fed

up' with life. This would include people who felt isolated, who were demoralised or who felt themselves to be of no use and a burden. As one commentator notes: "Euthanasia in the Netherlands has gone from requiring terminal illness to no physical illness at all, from physical suffering to depression only, from conscious patients to unconscious, from those who can consent to those who cannot, and from being a measure of last resort to one of early intervention." [5]

Arguing in favour of voluntary euthanasia is thus tantamount to permitting all forms of euthanasia – voluntary and non-voluntary – and will, in practice, lead to cases where people are euthanised against their explicit wishes (involuntary euthanasia). It is inevitable that choice will be undermined.

To reiterate: the choice to allow euthanasia to remain *illegal* is a choice in *favour* of the rights of people rather than the opposite as proponents claim. However, it is now readily apparent that we are talking about a particular kind of choice. It is a choice that recognises the needs of the most vulnerable. It is a choice for the common good. It is a choice that locates individual decisions within a community perspective. It is a choice to care. It is more of a 'total football' approach to life which recognises that strong minded individuals do not always bring back the winners' medal.

other voices

It is the case that Maori and Pacific Island cultural perspectives have been largely absent from the New Zealand debate on attitudes to dying. It is their voices we need to bring a fresh perspective to our reflections on death and dying and to challenge the individualistic approach that favours the strong and ultimately discounts those who are most vulnerable, those who have most to lose.

'Going Dutch.' In the colloquial sense it's all about individuality; paying one's own way, going it alone, not wanting to be beholden.

'Going Dutch?' No thanks.

I will, of course, keep on barracking for the Dutch football team (and keep on hoping) and I will continue to be just as vociferous in my opposition to euthanasia. Come to think of it I am even grateful to the Dutch for demonstrating so clearly the dangers of euthanasia ... if only they would go back to 'total football'. ■

John Kleinsman is the director of the New Zealand Catholic Bioethics Centre – The Nathaniel Centre.

[1] For further commentary on this see my article in Issue 32 of *The Nathaniel Report* (November 2010): The rationale behind the euthanasia argument: Is there a right to be killed?

[2] See Campbell, R. (2010). "No to euthanasia – yes to genuine care". http://www.catholicleader.com.au/news.php/features/no-to-euthanasia-yes-to-genuine-care_70380, accessed 15 December 2010.

[3] Kleinsman, J. (2010). "Assisted suicide – right to die or duty to die?" *The Nathaniel Report*, November 2010.

[4] TontiFillipini, N. (2010). "Dying Man Writes about the Dangers of Euthanasia". http://mgpcpastor.wordpress.com/2010/11/22/a-dying-man-writes-about-the-dangers-of-euthanasia/, accessed 15 December 2010.

[5] See Dr Brian Pollard. (2000). http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/euthanasia/eu0014.html, accessed 15 December 2010.

end in sight

The preacher of Ecclesiastes couldn't have put it more simply. *There's a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted*. But for modern men and women, identifying just when the time to die is – and the circumstances in which it happens – is becoming increasingly complex. Advances in medicine have extended our lifespan in ways that were unthinkable just a few years ago. And calls for the right to end our lives before the allotted time are growing stronger all the time.

Michael Fitzsimons spoke to **Dr Brian Ensor**, the Director of Palliative Care at Mary Potter Hospice in Wellington, about some of the issues surrounding death and dying in the 21st century Western world.

Do affluent, Western cultures in particular have a problem with death?

I think that an individualistic secular culture must have trouble with the death of the individual. If the individual is prime, then the death of that individual must be a catastrophe and that is the sort of culture that is prevalent.

A culture that emphasises the community and the passing on of life through the community may cope better because the community lives on. That's maybe an easier framework to die in. Faith offers a community, and also a transcendence – that the personal life is not the greatest thing in the universe. There is a continuance not just of the community but of the soul and obviously that is important in facing dying.

In more secular and individualistic societies, there is a stronger call for euthanasia. Europe and the United States are the leading lights along with Australia. As far as I know, it's not coming out of Pacific or Asia. It's culturally dependent as you would expect.

If it's true that the problem is not a technical issue which can be solved by better pain relief, then I think the calls for assisted dying will continue to evolve. If the problem is a spiritual/cultural issue, are we making such progress on those issues? I'm not so sure.

So I think the call for euthanasia is likely to continue. I don't think science and medical/technical advancement is where the answer lies. It would take a big shift in our social and cultural thinking to say periods of dependence are okay, that human form in its weakened and vulnerable state is still good. I'm not sure that is where we are at culturally. Generally speaking, in New Zealand society our aim is not to increase our endurance of suffering. Our aim is to eliminate suffering and the effects of aging. There is no call for greater resilience.

Advocates of euthanasia often cite the terrible suffering of the dying as a reason for "assisted dying". How effective are modern pain management measures?

We have made some real advances in pain management so for almost everyone we can get some sense of control. But the idea that nobody suffers any pain anymore is crazy talk and dying can be hard work. I don't want to romanticise that. For many it can go very well and some people have ideal deaths.

Although pain is often brought out as one of the flags to euthanasia, mostly it's about a sense of control and suffering in a much broader context. If we could promise 100 percent pain control, which nobody can, there would still be a call for euthanasia. I think palliative care is hugely important, and I don't want to underrate that, but I don't think it can fix all problems. It

won't fix everything for everybody and there will still be people who want to have more control over the end of their life. I can't argue against that, any more than I can argue against any other belief system in this pluralistic age we belong to.

It seems to me it's a way of viewing the world, coming from a more humanist root that it is reasonable and dignified for people to choose the time of their own going. That's the philosophy. There are certainly concerns about pain and symptom control, but the concerns are generally much broader than that..

For those who want euthanasia, I can only offer them what is possible, which is second best for them. We can identify sources of suffering and determine whether there is any way we can do to alleviate that suffering whether it is physical, spiritual or emotional. Often there are ways to help by thinking outside the square.

The Hospice movement does recognise the discussion [about assisted dying] and it wants to encourage debate about end-of-life issues. Our concern is to make sure that palliative care and support for dying people continues to improve. Traditionally hospices have been agin euthanasia and I doubt that will ever change. But we don't want to shut down the discussion.

At some stage is New Zealand likely to formulate some legislation that permits euthanasia? Quite possibly. Would hospices see themselves as part of that, most probably not. And institutions like Mary Potter hospice, certainly not.

For a hospice, euthanasia represents a kind of conflict of interest in that if it was an option to me to offer a quick ending, would I try so hard to relieve that person's suffering? It is reasonable that if euthanasia was available, it would be outside my toolbox.

Is it a bleak business working with people who have a terminal illness?

I don't think we could do it if we thought that dying was unacceptably bad. For most people dying is not something to be afraid of. And families who have witnessed somebody die are often surprised that it is as easy and peaceful as it is. But as with any aspect of human life, there is that bell curve and there are some people, a small percentage, who die with difficulty. Most people do not have a difficult death and if that does happen, we feel that personally and we do everything we can to avoid that but unexpected things happen.

Where do you find your sense of hope and fulfillment in this work?

It comes from helping people to feel better than they expected they would. It comes from being with people in tough times who show strength and resilience, witnessing the care that families and friends show for each other. Often help and support comes from unlikely places.

The actual dying process is usually a small subset of our work. People are on a Hospice programme usually for around three months, up to a limit of 12 months. Many of our folk are still at home trying to live normalish lives. They are getting out, traveling overseas, seeing friends, doing all sorts of things that normal people do.

Knowledge of a terminal illness can heighten the experience of living for some, but not for others. One of the worst things is if people lose hope. If they get depressed and need treatment for depression, that's fine. But if they lose hope, it's very hard to help. It's very hard to

For most people dying is not something to be afraid of. And families who have witnessed somebody die are often surprised that it is as easy and peaceful as it is.

help someone who doesn't want to be here, who doesn't want life at all.

From your experience, what is it that finally brings about death?

Most people die because their bodies are simply too tired to keep on going. The single most important symptom that people complain about in the studies is fatigue, exhaustion. They just cannot do what they used to do and that happens for all sorts of diseases, not just cancer. They become too tired to go out, to sit up, to talk – too tired even to open their eyes.

Death itself seems to come as a result of a negotiation between the body, soul and mind. Sometimes the mind really wants to die but the body is not ready and other times the body is ready but the mind and the soul is not. The preparation for dying is to get those three things together.

Is there any such thing as an ideal death?

It very much depends on the person. Hospices come into the market with their idea of a good death, which is all about awareness, communication, preparation, acknowledgement and dying peacefully in an environment that is quiet and affirming.

But people are different. Some people accept they are dying and some don't. Some prefer to stay in active treatment right to the end. People see a good death in different ways. A sudden death on the golf course is a good death for some but for others time to prepare is what matters most.

What matters most for people when they are dying is family and relationships. Physical comfort and care is right there as well but in terms of what gives meaning to their lives, it comes back to relationships.

Should people plan for the last phase of life?

Different people, different cultures have different priorities. You cannot assume the answers. It's a good idea for people to discuss their wishes with families – the healthcare they would want, what might be a good death for them, their priorities around quality of life, where they might die etc. Quite deep discussions. If these discussions happen, then families and health professionals will have an idea how best to treat them so they don't end up in a place they don't want to be, having treatment they would rather not have, and which health professionals would rather not give them. The default is to treat and that may not be what the person would want. That can be a lose-lose situation. Nobody has made a decision so off we go. Some people have these discussions but I don't think it's the majority.

Wellington's **Mary Potter Hospice** is a secular, charitable trust based on the philosophy of its founder, Venerable Mary Potter and the Little Company of Mary.
The Hospice, established in 1979, provides specialist palliative care for people facing a terminal illness. Most of the Hospice's work is in the community but it also runs an 18-bed inpatient unit in Newtown, providing respite care and symptom management.

Mary Potter Hospice believes in a whole-person approach, supporting patients, carers and their families with their emotional, social and spiritual needs. It aims to see the very best care for everyone facing the end of life.

What is the underpinning ethos of Mary Potter Hospice?

We carry the heritage of Mary Potter, coming from the Catholic tradition, and her vision of caring for the dying. That's where we started up at Calvary Hospital before the hospice was gifted to the people of Wellington.

Most hospices in New Zealand follow the legacy that came out of the United Kingdom – a middle-class, volunteering Christian base. A lot of New Zealand hospices come out of a religious base and those that aren't religious come out of a sense of a mission or a cause.

In the past hospices existed somewhat outside mainstream medicine and began because mainstream medicine wasn't really picking up the baton. Over the last 20 years hospices have become more mainstream. We have spawned palliative care which is a much more general specialty that has existed forever in primary care and is now in hospitals. Hospices adopt a holistic approach, based on the patient and the family/whanau. Hospice care is no longer concerned just with cancer patients or the dying; it's concerned with care at any point in the trajectory of someone who is facing a terminal illness. Hospice care has a much broader remit than it started out with. ■

honouring michele

Anne-Marie Pike

One of the founders of the Marralomeda community gives tribute to a community member who died recently.

On 19 July, 2010 we buried Michele.

Michele had died suddenly of a heart attack during the previous week. She had been in poor health for several years and we had watched her slowly get frailer. We had talked about whether she ought to be in some kind of hospital level care, but it never seemed quite the right time to take action. "Couldn't she just quietly slip away here?" some of us asked God –and on that morning God answered our prayer.

Michele was much loved by her family and by the Marralomeda Community where she had lived since 1992. The Marralomeda Community is in Redwood, Christchurch, and is home to 19 people with intellectual disability and those who support them. Michele had Down Syndrome and she was 62 years old. The outpouring of grief at her death and the wonderful stories of what her life had meant to so many, the laughter and tears that were shared at her vigil and Requiem have caused me to reflect much since she died.

You see, in today's world of amniocentesis and prenatal testing Michele's life may have been ended in the womb. When I consider the number of lives she touched, as evidenced by those who gathered to say farewell, our world would have been a poorer place if she had not been born.

Colouring was a favourite activity of Michele's.

I am convinced that if more people stopped and really got to know the Michele's of this world they would discover the secret of unconditional love, spontaneity and celebration. I find that I frown less and smile more when in the company of people with intellectual disability. They have taught me much about the Gospel of Jesus, which they seem to embody without ever reading the words. "Love one another" said Jesus, "Don't worry", "Blessed are the pure in heart, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." They just seem to know something that we struggle to understand.

Our farewell to Michele was very simple – flowers placed, cards written and placed in her coffin, memories shared. We brought her to Marralomeda after time with her family so that we too could spend time with her. Seeing, touching – the concrete reality – is very important for our grieving and our understanding. We could sit and gaze and reflect on the life we had shared.

There is a song by Libby Roderick which we sing at Marralomeda and which is an important part of our farewell liturgies:

How can anyone ever tell you, you are anything less than beautiful

How can anyone ever tell you, you are less than whole

How can anyone fail to notice that your loving is a miracle

How deeply you're connected to my soul.

Various members of the Marralomeda community paid tribute to Michele. She was no saint – feisty, stubborn and with definite ideas about what she did and did not want. There were times when she challenged us past the point of exasperation. But in the challenging she enabled us to experience our limits and to grow as we found our way through and back to the love that we felt for each other.

Michele epitomized the command of Jesus, love God and love one another. Michele loved God – to see her at prayer, hands joined, head bowed, she knew about the sacred. And Michele loved her family with a passion – her family were everything to her and she to them. She also built lovely relationships with people at Marralomeda. She graciously accepted the assistance that she needed as her health deteriorated and was always thankful. Many mentioned the privilege that it had been to assist Michele and of how moved they were by the way she thanked them.

So as we laid Michele to rest with our simple ritual I could not help but wonder at the simple gift that she embodied and which is unappreciated by so many.

In a world that values independence Michele needed support to live her daily life. She was a source of grace as she allowed others to serve her, to obey the command of Jesus to serve each other, to wash each other's feet.

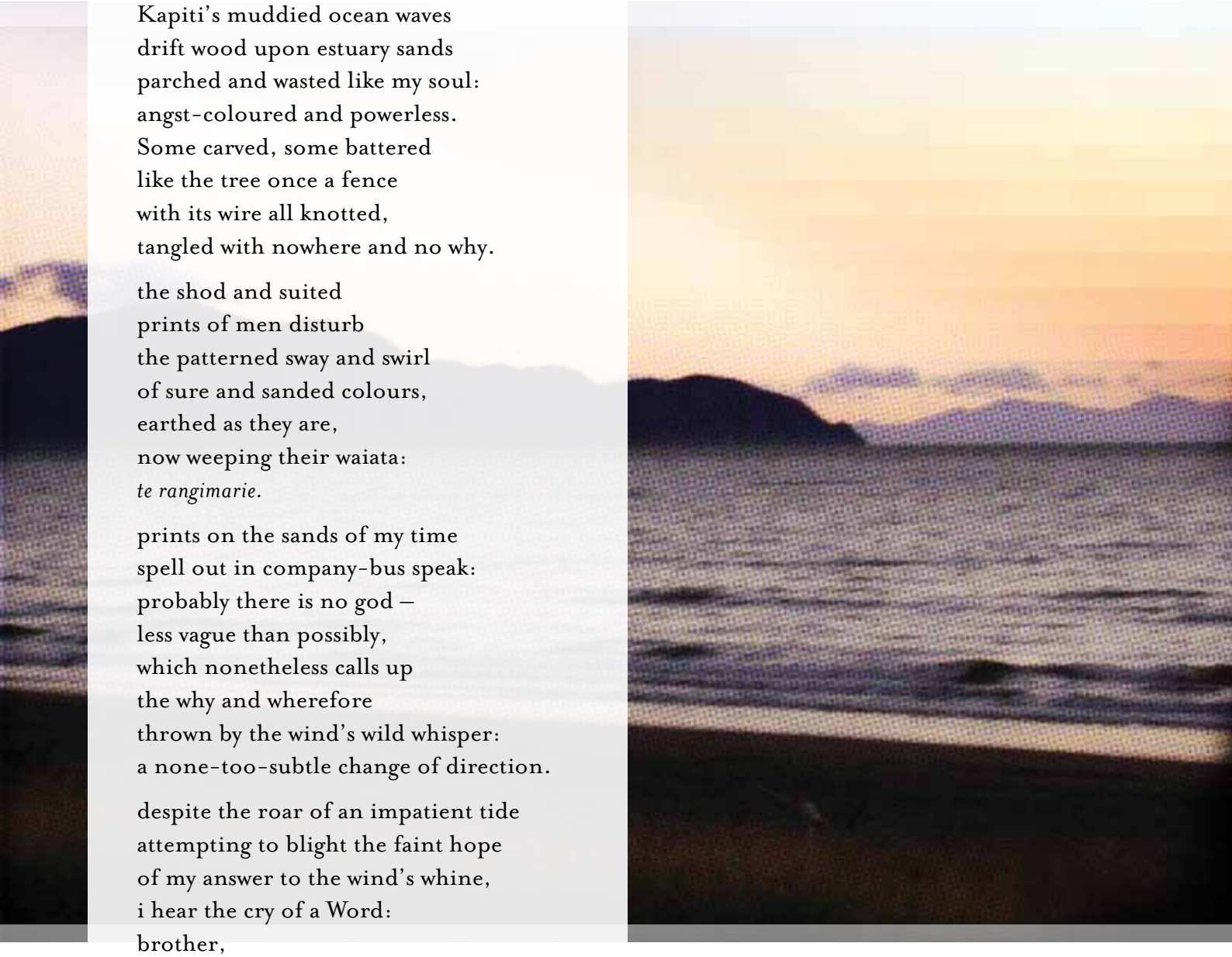
Michele helped me to slow down, smell the roses, take time to "be" and reflect on what really matters, to question myself when I got too carried away with rushing about doing "important" things.

I am so grateful that Michele had her chance at life. ■

Anne-Marie Pike is a part of the Marralomeda Community based in Christchurch. Marralomeda is home for 19 people with intellectual disabilities.

An Otaki Christmas

A POEM FOR THE NEW YEAR



Kapiti's muddied ocean waves
drift wood upon estuary sands
parched and wasted like my soul:
angst-coloured and powerless.
Some carved, some battered
like the tree once a fence
with its wire all knotted,
tangled with nowhere and no why.

the shod and suited
prints of men disturb
the patterned sway and swirl
of sure and sanded colours,
earthed as they are,
now weeping their waiata:
te rangimarie.

prints on the sands of my time
spell out in company-bus speak:
probably there is no god –
less vague than possibly,
which nonetheless calls up
the why and wherefore
thrown by the wind's wild whisper:
a none-too-subtle change of direction.

despite the roar of an impatient tide
attempting to blight the faint hope
of my answer to the wind's whine,
i hear the cry of a Word:
brother,
and i see a gull gliding
skilfully,
showing me the *Rangi*
of divine fragility.

and i am once again earthed,
connected, re-membered
in the name *Marie*
by whom **I AM**

Kevin Dobbyn, 20 December, 2009

is there another way?

We continue the interview with Right Honourable **John Battle**, a Minister in the Blair Government and MP for West Leeds for 23 years till May last year. In this part, he talks of his experiences with prisons, especially his local prison of Armley.

Forthrightly John Battle says that we dump into prisons those we can't cope with in society. What does he mean by that? Is he talking of murderers and rapists? No. But the majority of people in prison are there for petty crime, and many because of their craving to feed alcohol or drug addictions. Eighty percent of those in prison have such addictions; 80 percent have serious mental health problems; 70 percent cannot read or write. (editorial note: the figures for New Zealand are comparable).

And we have failed to deal effectively either with their problems or the continual cycle of reoffending. Is the best way of dealing with an addict locking him up? A fortune is spent to keep an addict imprisoned for a weekly sum which costs more than a week in a five-star hotel like the Hilton. This is a waste of taxpayers' money. On the scale of the recent bankers' abuse and robbery (legalized or otherwise), this is absolutely peanuts.

As an example, in May last year, John recalls waking at 4.00 a.m. hearing the tinkle of glass, getting up and seeing just the backside of a young man as he tried to get into John's car. The young man was looking for money to feed a drug habit. John called the police, then followed the young man's case. Tracking every segment of the case, from initial interview to final release, the cost to the taxpayer was 237,000 pounds (around $700,0000 NZ).

A fortune is spent to keep an addict imprisoned for a week for a weekly sum which costs more than a week in a five-star hotel like the Hilton.

Is this a good use of taxpayer's money, when dealing with the young man's drug problem in a drug clinic would cost a fraction of what it took to prosecute this case?

John has also accompanied young men as they leave prison. He says that of the 50 who are released from remand each day at Armley prison, 25 have someone who will support them and hopefully help them to find work. The other 25 have no one. They have cut off all ties with family or friends and are alone.

John recalls going with one of these men to the Housing Authority to look for a place to live. (Women and children at present have a right to be housed; not so men.) They waited two and a half hours in line without being seen. Then they went across to the local pub for a few drinks. Out of his 46 pound release money, the young man bought a mobile phone and called the number of the last person he had associated with before he went to prison. He dossed down with his 'friend' and ended up back in the court next Monday – charged with breaking and entering to fuel the drug habit which his 'friend' had shared with him. This pattern is frighteningly common.

John has worked in a number of ways to try and break the cycle of reoffending when the men come out of the prison gate. He has worked for the building of clinics where the young can go to help them beat their alcohol and drug problems. Something is often done while in prison, but there is a great need to continue this treatment after. The present British Government seems more sympathetic to this, and the public are

also more sympathetic as they are more conscious of how vulnerable the young are to the pressures which our culture of drugs and alcohol bring. It could be anyone's child that ends up in court, and they know this vulnerability well.

Moreover John has been instrumental in the setting up of half-way houses for those who have nowhere to go. (Now he sees the model of *L'Arche*, who support the intellectually disabled, as being a very compatible way of accompanying offenders after they leave prison.) It is important to reconnect those released to their community back outside the prison.

One effective way of doing this is to have prison chaplains go to preach in mosques, gudwaras and churches. This has been done by the West Yorkshire chaplaincy service. They receive a sympathetic hearing at the same time as informing people of all faiths about what would be helpful: to fund and establish houses for those leaving prison alone. Here they may live and from this stable base they may find a job; and to find more mentors in the community who will accompany the prisoners upon release.

The English media and some people are still calling for the setting up of more prisons, what John calls the 'lock-em-up and throw away the key' syndrome, though less so than before. He is aware of our situation, too. To people who advocate more prisons and what would go with them, he says: look at the figures. Are people "innumerate"? The figures speak for themselves. A drug and alcohol clinic to deal with the problems of addiction for those caught up in the re-offending cycle costs about one third of what imprisonment does. Therefore, are prisons a good use of the taxpayers' money for them? Why are there no proper drug facilities, including overnight facilities? Why are we extending the prison population, instead of dealing with the problem at base?

John suggests seeking the New Zealand Treasury as an ally. Finding alternatives to prison would be a place where the government could save money. Why not break down the tax bill and show the relative cost of prisons for reoffenders and the cost of maintaining effective drug and alcohol clinics? These figures are clear in the British experience and speak for themselves. New Zealand may benefit from a similar persuasive economic exercise.

John's own background as a Labour councillor and MP and his faith have given him great energy and insight into this problem. He sees religion as having a determined place in the public square. It has a practical place as well: in each local neighbourhood, and in simple personal ways, for example, through the use of street parties where people get to know one another and learn not to be afraid of each other. These simpler methods get underneath the often destructive rhetoric of the media. They can have a remarkable effect in changing the ways people engage with each other. Perhaps we need to relearn some of these simple lessons. ■

The Right Honourable John Battle was present in New Zealand to give lectures at the invitation of the University of Otago School of Theology and Religion and St Margaret's College.

the gospel

To step over the threshold of the Studio of St John the Baptist at St Joseph's Centre, Takapuna, is to feel like you have journeyed to the still point of the Church in the Middle Ages.

On this mild, overcast Tuesday morning, sculptor Michael Pervan shaves off tiny pieces of Portugese stone from a commissioned image of the Holy Family. Iconographer Jenny Trolove puts the finishing touches to an icon in an artistic style that dates back to the sixth century. Sacred music plays in the background, completing a picture of monastic devotion.

Situated just a stone's throw from the commercial hub of Takapuna, the studio of St John the Baptist is a very unlikely little business. An old kauri timber classroom, once belonging to the old St Joseph's School, has been converted into a busy workshop and has been generating a stream of sacred art since 1994.

[The icon] is very stylised so as to draw people into the mystery, rather than leave people at the sensual level.

The Studio has survived and prospered on commissions from schools, parishes and private commissions. These include small and large-scale icons, statues, shrines and even a marble altar which is a striking feature of the renovations at St Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland. With New Zealand stone being too coarse to achieve the precision required, stone and marble is sourced from Italy, Portugal and China.

Workshop founder, Michael Pervan, sees the enterprise in stark, spiritual terms. He was once a Marist priest and went on to work in the highly competitive commercial design industry. "In 2004 I cut the ropes and set out into the deep. I could never go back to commercial design. It's a world apart."

The work of the Studio is all about proclaiming Christ visually. The Mission statement sums it up: "We are committed to the image of the unseen God in the icon of Christ and to the sacred mysteries connected with his life, death and resurrection." The role of the sacred artist is the antithesis of the modern artist, which is all about self-expression and individual identity, says Michael.

"Our work is a renunciation of the self on the part of the artist. It's going back to monastic or ascetical

in colour

Michael Fitzsimons

values. You are nothing and God is everything. The power in these images is not because of our artistry but because of the subject, which is the Son of God. That's the power of what we do and it's limitless power, provided we are nothing. We do not sign our work, our personal names do not appear on our work."

Jenny Trolove, a graduate and former staff worker at the Catholic Discipleship College situated nearby, takes up the theme. "It's art in that it is visually received as images and it uses the same material as any art would use, though all natural. But it is more than art because of whom it depicts and what it depicts. In general art, the artist tries to express their ideas and a lot of themselves comes out in the art whereas in iconography the artist's job is to step back and not get in the way of the communication of the mystery to the viewer.

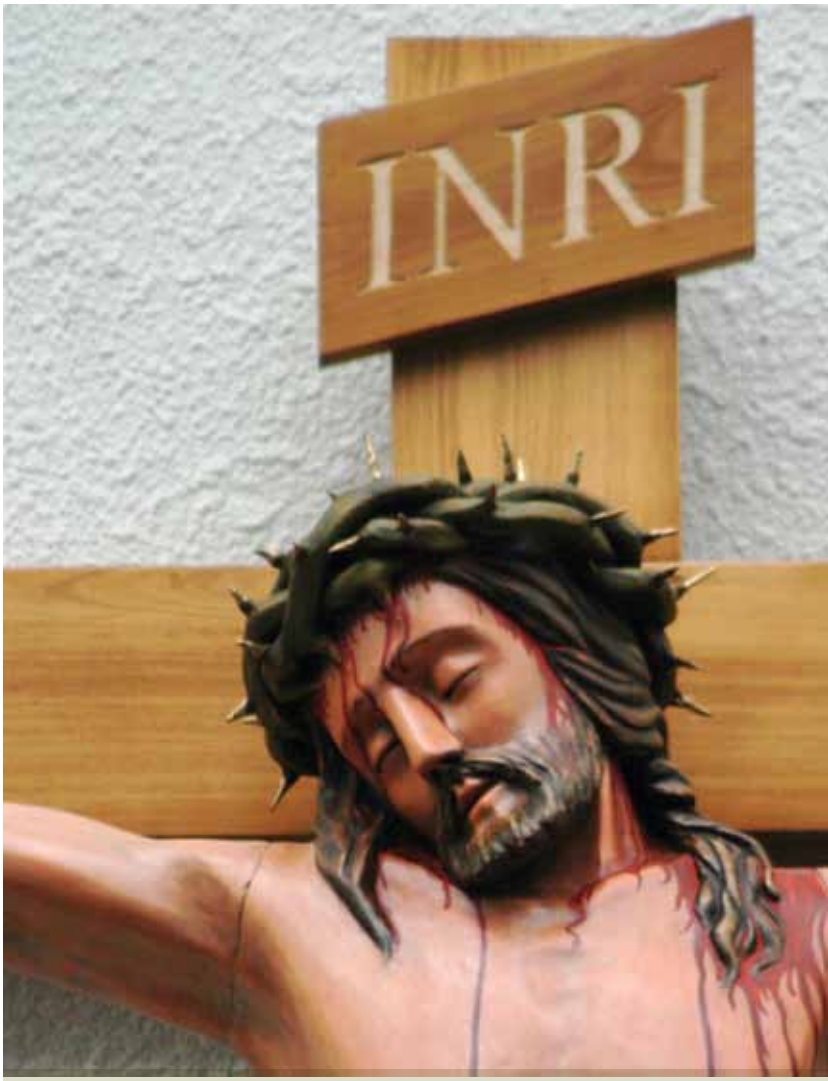
"An icon is said to be written because it is the Gospel in colour and also because, as monks were faithful when they were copying the Scriptures, we are also faithful to the mysteries. We don't twist the Scriptures in any way. We must be faithful to what has gone before us."

Faithfulness to the tradition notwithstanding, icons can still be a challenging art form for the modern viewer?

Jenny agrees. "Initially people can look at icons as dark or ugly or sad and cold and say 'that's not the Mary I know'. Yes it can be difficult. But it's the same with plunging into the Gospels where there's lots you may not understand. They can be bitter to taste but then sweet as honey as well if you spend time with them and rest in them."

Part of the challenge of icons for modern viewers lies in the fact they do not depict scenes or people in naturalistic terms. Says Jenny: "The icon is much more of a disciplined image than the stunningly beautiful, naturalistic images of the renaissance. It's a lot flatter and it doesn't aim to look realistic. It's very stylised so as to draw people into the mystery, rather than leave you at the sensual level." "They portray Mary transcendent in glory," adds Michael. "The icon does not depict anybody on this earth as an earthling."

This timeless, other worldly character of the icon makes Michael and Jenny cautious about blending traditional iconography with New Zealand images and symbols. Recently, however, they have been exploring an image of the Madonna which incorporates Maori symbols and motifs.



Mt Maunganui Crucifix

Opposite page: Detail of *St Peter in the icon of the Transfiguration*, Private Commission, 2010

"Christ and his mother lived in a certain place and time with their own culture," says Jenny. "Mary was a Jewish woman. So I personally, for example, would not portray Mary with a *moku*. However, we could dress her in a Maori cloak and with the feathers of a Maori princess as a mark of dignity and honour. Note, though, that the pose is straight from the sixth century, as traditional as you can get."

"If it eventuates, it would be an icon that doesn't exist anywhere in the whole lexicon of the church's art," adds Michael. "If it happens here, it will happen with prayer and careful reflection."

More recently the West has re-discovered its Eastern brother and I'm finding Western Catholics falling in love with these icons in their droves.

According to Jenny and Michael, there is certainly room for more sacred imagery in modern church life. "Absolutely. It's been a bit barren," says Jenny. "In the very early church the story of the Gospel was written on the walls. It was part of the learning and they had their faith explained to them visually. By the sixth century, the whole lexicon of icons was written, which preceeded any split in the church, east and west.

"Nowadays our churches can be somewhat mundane. When you enter into a space for prayer, it needs to be different and be able to teach you and express your faith. The world is a hard place to be – churches need to be a place of refuge, where you are reminded of your end life, to help you in the struggle of ordinaryness."

The practice of icon-writing, for so long seen as an Eastern tradition, is now having a growing appeal in the West, says Michael. "It's a Catholic art form. Icons became Eastern when the Protestant Reformation obliterated them. Interestingly the West retained an iconographic form with its statues but the icons went east. More recently the West has re-discovered its Eastern brother and I'm finding Western Catholics falling in love with these icons in their droves." ■

Top: Mandylion Holy Face icon, Private Commission, 2010
Below: Michael Pervan, director, and Jenny Trolove, manager of the Studio of John the Baptist
Right: Icon of the Pompallier Madonna
Below right: Jenny Trolove puts the finishing touches to an icon

my personal lesson in hope

Deanna Cattell

We continue our short reflections on the plight of the Palestinian people.

Returning recently from a trip to Israel and Palestine, the most-asked question was "What experience touched you most"? Many touched me, but I returned most often to one particular event.

As part of our pilgrimage we went to the Bethlehem University. It is a Catholic University. Over 70 percent of the students are Muslim, and four our of five are women!

While there, we were shown a short video involving a student from Gaza. It showed her nightmare at a checkpoint where she was handcuffed, blindfolded and searched because her identity papers gave her home as being in Gaza. She was arrested and sent back to Gaza. She finished her degree through distance learning. This remarkable feat illustrates the many difficulties young people face each day in doing their studies.

Despite the frustrations of the Bethlehem-Jerusalem dividing wall, constant check points and living in a war zone, what struck me was the hope, the openness and the beauty shining out of the young.

All students participate in religious studies where they are being educated in a hoped-for-future. Importantly they learn the lesson of respect for each other as people, rather than making assumptions based on personal faith or religion. What came across was a positive attitude and hope.

All the sutdents are bi-lingual: in English and Arabic. They are learning about future self government, and thinking ahead to the time when easy access to Palestine will bring many tourists to experience this country and its people.

Our group had the pleasure of lunching at the University. A student hosted each table and shared lunch with us, answering many questions openly. Our lunch-companion was a

delightful young woman in her final year of study majoring in English literature and translation. Although she had relatives in nearby countries she had never been allowed to cross the border between Palestine and Israel. Her physical space was bounded by the dividing wall.

This young woman did not focus on the negative, nor allow the wall and the restrictions imposed by powerful neighbour Israel to affect and depress her. It was obvious that she looked forward to a time when things would change for the better and she would be free to travel – something she would love to do. I asked why there was a much larger percentage of females to males at the University. She told us that groups of three or more males together are seen by the Israelis as a potentially subversive threat to their State. Therefore families try to send their sons overseas for higher education – away from the constant surveillance and harassment young Palestinian males receive as likely dissidents.

Most people have been affected by the fighting between Israel and Palestine. When the university was closed a few years ago because of this, teachers and students met wherever and whenever they could to continue their study, sometimes in hotel rooms.

When freedom is no longer a right, it becomes even more precious. And when education is threatened, its value becomes even more highly prized.

These young people from the Bethlehem University will be future leaders in their country. I believe what they have learned here will be invaluable – giving them respect for all people and an openness to each other, untainted by bigotry. Their hope will become a living peace if Israel gives them their basic human rights: a home to live in, and a country of our own to govern.

It seems strange that Israel, a country founded by people who suffered the Holocaust and knew what it is to have their rights usurped, now treats its Palestinian neighbours in the same way. Have they learned nothing from history?

My prayers continue for the peoples of the middle East. And in my mind's eye I will continue to see the students at Bethlehem University as shining beacons of HOPE. ■

Deanna Cattell is a member of Pax Christi and lives in Auckland

everywhere and nowhere

Daniel O'Leary

It is communication that absorbs so much time in modern life. Periods of stillness are considered a luxury, yet those times of silent contemplation connect us with the earth and with God.

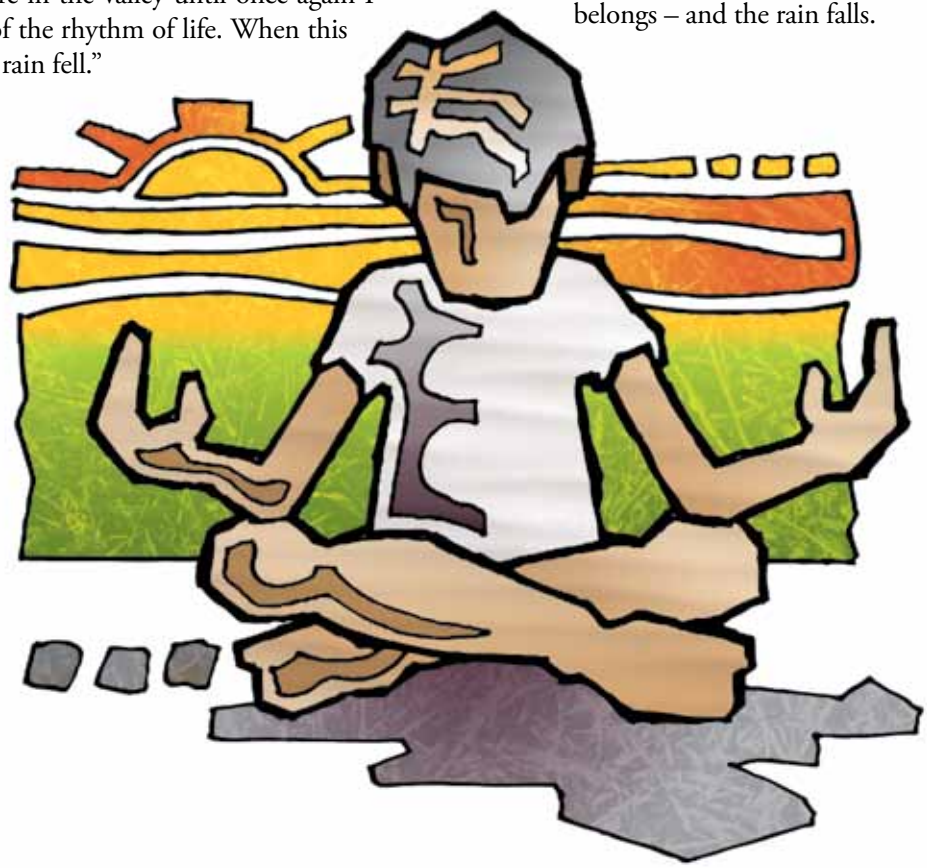
For three years there was a great drought in the village. The adults were emaciated, the babies listless, the animals skeletal, the countryside desiccated. Without a harvest it had become a place of death. Then came the rumour of a Rainmaker. A last chance.

The fittest were sent out to search for him. Blessed by the gods they found him and persuaded him to return to their arid home. He listened carefully to their desperate story and then shuffled away into the local hills. After three days it began to rain. There was transformation all round. The smiles returned as bodies grew stronger, eyes began to shine as people danced to the greening of their fields. To thank the Rainmaker for his achievement, and to learn his secret should the calamity return, they searched for him again.

"No," he said to them, "I did not make the rain fall. Things were out of order in this place. There was no inner peace in the people. Nature was affected. So was I. I waited here in the valley until once again I became part of the rhythm of life. When this happened the rain fell."

Too often we think that our inner spirit and the ways of nature are separate phenomena, that they belong to different life forces. But there is only one source of being. In his commentary on this parable, Carl Jung writes: "When someone tells me that in his surroundings the wrong things always happen, I say, 'It is you who are wrong, you are not in Tao (the path of nature)... When one is in Tao right things happen'." In Christian terms one might refer to the cosmic Christ, to a kind of Christ consciousness, the indwelling divinity that integrates, infuses and redeems the whole of creation, awakening and reconfiguring the human psyche and the ways of the universe into the one flow of grace.

But what did the Rainmaker actually do to find this universal rhythm of being? The story goes he breathed himself into a listening stillness. Breathing and stillness. These are the contemplative spaces, he told them, in which the soul moves to the music of life in the present moment, in which authentic connections happen. It is in those spaces of connectedness that everything belongs – and the rain falls.



Breathing is the very experience of life, of being, of unity – and of God. In his *The Naked Now*, Richard Rohr OFM explains that the name and nature of God can only be breathed. The correct pronunciation of the Hebrew "Yahweh" is an attempt to replicate and imitate the very sound of inhalation and exhalation. Notice what happens when you gently breathe in for "Yah" and out for "weh" a few times. It brings a sense of peace. It is the invisible life force that links all created things.

The one thing we unknowingly do every moment of our lives is therefore to speak the unifying name of God.

This makes it our first and last word as we enter and leave the world. The baby arrives gasping for breath. She is gasping for life. She is gasping for God. The individual umbilical cord is broken only so that a more universal intimacy may begin. Our first breath, and every breath, brings us into deep and vital conversation with all beings and thus with the divine essence.

In our breathing we are part of a common body. We are the human lungs of God. And this experience of the sacred is open to all and sundry. It is the one precious connecting life-line we all share. It is our common bond. There is no Islamic or Jewish way of breathing. There is no religious or secular way of breathing. As far as I know there is no special Roman Catholic way of breathing. The winds that blow across the many playing fields of God are always utterly even.

Breathing and stillness. Into what depths of stillness did the Rainmaker's breathing lead him? He retired to the hard edges of the dying village so as to be still, to be rooted in his deepest self, confident in his own truest being, secure in his own capacity for loving and being loved. For that he needed to be wholly at one with himself, stripping himself of his illusions every morning and evening of those three silent days.

"If we connect with the stillness within, we move beyond our active minds and emotions, and discover great depths of lasting peace and contentment in universal serenity", wrote Eckhart Tolle. The Rainmaker waited so as to become fully conscious and in tune, to reconcile, in himself, like Jesus did, a disintegrating village, a fractured humanity and a splintering universe.

And only then, in his relaxed but intense awareness of his own being, and that of others, and of all Creation – only then did the rains fall. What Buddhists might call "right relations" had been restored. What state must the human soul be in these times, when our world, our climate, our fragile balance between war and peace, is so deeply and universally out of kilter?

For many reasons stillness is a lost grace. According to Ofcom, the media regulator, the average Briton spends more than seven hours each day hooked on gadgetry. And in his just-published *The Shallows*, Nicholas Carr mourns the loss of attention and contemplation in the wake of the mind-altering technology that has come into general use. The ability to sit still, he holds, is a rare gift at a time when texting and surfing are playing havoc with our capacity for deep reflection. "To be everywhere", wrote Seneca, "is to be nowhere."

The ability to sit still is a rare gift at a time when texting and surfing are playing havoc with our capacity for deep reflection.

In *Silence and Stillness in Every Season* John Main reminds us about the silent awareness that gives our spirit room to be free, room to breathe, saying: "In our modern world we easily forget that we have a divine origin, a divine source, and that this unifying incandescent energy of our own spirit emanates from the Spirit of God."

Breathing and stillness. Paradoxically, it is where the dancing happens. It is always reaching out to release a vibrant vitality in all things. "We can make our minds so like still water", wrote W.B. Yeats, "that beings gather about us so that they may see their own images, and so to live for a moment with a clearer, perhaps even with a fiercer life, because of our quiet."

The great task that confronts each one of us is to discover within ourselves our own potential for creativity and unity, for reconciling in ourselves all that is splintered and separated, for allowing the original oneness of God to happen again within and around us. As it was for the Rainmaker, for all great peacemakers, for Jesus and for all of us, the truly human heart is the divine catalyst of everything that has lost its place in God's original dream for the earth. In *Navigating the Abyss to Our True Self*, Thomas Merton reminds us: "What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we are not able to cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves?" ■

Daniel O'Leary, a priest of the Leeds Diocese, is based at Our Lady of Graces Presbytery, Tombridge Crescent, Kinsley, West Yorkshire WF9 5HA.

thank you for seeing me

Ann Willits

In early January, the Dominican Sisters hosted two days of reflection for members of the Dominican Family around "Contemplation and Silence". Sr Ann Willits and Fr Matt Walsh (Dominicans from Chicago) were the speakers. They centred their reflections around "Seeing, Silence and Self ". Here we give part of one of Ann's talks – on the place of seeing in our lives.

Our lives, our busy, unselfish, ministering lives move between doing and being, words and silence. When we open ourselves to the mystery of creation, when we open ourselves to the presence of the Sacred within every happening, we find that working with words, doing things is never enough, and we become silent. We wait for words to give voice to our contemplative experience. We listen and we find ourselves moving into silence where the WORD takes hold of our heart. Slowly, oh so slowly, new words rise to express what we have seen, what we have heard, what we have felt – being alone with God in silence. It is being identified as mystics with nothing but God; and at the same time, being connected with all that is.

In contemplation silence opens us to the transforming, healing, searing presence of God. I say searing because sometimes in the silence of God we experience that God is silent. But it is within the silence of God, the stillness of God, the mildness of God that we know God has offered us a revelation, a resonance. And we hear again the Word already spoken.

Today the word I would like to share with you is the story of Bartimaeus, and his cry, "Master, I want to see". (Read it in full in Mark 10:46–52) Can you imagine what an adjustment Bartimaeus had to make after Jesus gave the ability to see. But I wonder, after he was able to see, did he close his eyes and pretend that he was blind again? Did he not see some things after he was cured of his blindness that he wishes he did not see? Now, given his sight, he could actually see the pettiness, the jealousy, the unkind acts of those around him. Did he sometimes close his eyes, and in what was that old familiar night, see again the kindness of that man, Jesus. And then remembering his fact, his hands, his loving eyes and tender words, Bartimaeus would open his eyes and see what others never seemed to see.

So what have you seen lately? Some people see everything. Other people don't see everything, but they don't miss much – seeing as if nothing that is seen matters.

What matters is what always matters, the dailyness of life. Sometimes we don't think enough about how holy dailyness can be. Wouldn't it be grand if this old church of ours decided we should have Holy Days of Observation? I'm not suggesting we replace or remove Holy Days of Obligation, but how different life would be if every now and then we experience Holy Days of Observation.

Not too long ago I decided I would have a holy day of observation. On the day I chose, I lost a huge filling. Not a little filling, I had a cavern in my mouth. I was only going to be home for a day or two and I know how hard it is to get an appointment with the dentist. You have to schedule your emergencies. I am not above deception. I needed to sound desperate when I called the office for an appointment. Before I made the phone call, I stuffed a couple of Kleenex into my mouth so that I would sound swollen and pathetic. The receptionist was aloof and not the least bit empathetic. "Doctor is very busy," she told me. "Oh please," I whimpered. "Well," she said, "Doctor has a prophylaxis at 10 o'clock and a gold crown at 10.30." And then as if she were granting me a plenary indulgence she said, "I'll put you down as an emergency amalgam replacement at 10.15 a.m." "You can call me anything you like. I am so grateful to get in," I said.

Before you can even see a dentist you are visited and ministered to by an entire squadron of people all dressed in different colours. All of them are named Tammy. The Tammy wearing Cherry does the x-rays. The Tammy in blush does the Novocain, and the Sea Foam Tammy sprays your mouth. Finally after the rainbow girls have finished, in comes the King, dressed all in white gloved, masked and making certain you have mad cow disease.

"Thank you for seeing me, Doctor," I said. He chose not to respond. He went right to work. It took only a few minutes. He stepped back as his minions removed all of the paraphernalia from my mouth. "Thank you

for seeing me," I said again. No response. He turned to leave. As he got to the door he suddenly wheeled around and as if bestowing his final benediction said, "Keep flossing."

That was the morning of my holy day of observation. In the afternoon I headed for the Mall to get a pair of Reeboks. As I got out of my car, I saw her standing outside the shoe store. She was fragile, old and seemed lost. I have my mother's genes. Whenever my mom saw anyone who gave the slightest sign they needed help she was right there. She used to drive up and down the streets of Dubuque looking for anyone waiting for the bus so that she could offer them a ride.

"Could I help you?" I asked her. She drew back. I realized she was blind. "Do you know me?" she asked. "No, but you seem to be lost," I said. She burst into tears. "I think I am lost," she said. "Is this the K-Mart?" She asked. "My daughter told me to meet her outside the K-Mart. She gets so angry with me when I'm not where she tells me to be". "No, I told her, "this is the shoe store," and then I said what was not true, remember I am not above deception, "The K-Mart is where I'm going." I took her arm. I liked her right away. She told me her name was Mag. She told me she liked raisins, mums, and straight back chairs.

By the time we got to the K-Mart we were like old friends laughing and laughing. And then I saw this woman standing in front of K-Mart. She was not laughing. In fact she was glaring at us. I thought to myself, this woman has got to be one of two people, Mag's daughter or the dentist's wife. It was Mag's daughter. She was not a nice person. I was so embarrassed for Mag as her daughter scolded her like a child and told her she was far more bother than she was worth. But Mag was above that. "Thank you for seeing me, Ann," she said. I hugged her. "Thank you, Mag," and right then I knew I was more than an emergency amalgam replacement.

That night I had supper with an old friend. I told her about my holy day of observation and how I kept saying "thank you for seeing me" and how Mag had used that very phrase. We found ourselves talking about Annie Dillard's experience when she looked out her kitchen window one morning and saw the tree in her back yard in a way she had never seen it before. It was ablaze. It was a holy day of observation for her too. We talked about what happens when we really see one another. As we parted, I took her arm. "Thank you for seeing me," I said. And I knew she understood.

Holy Days of Observation, we need more of them Just an observation, when we really see, see with the eyes of the heart, we discover what is most familiar is sacred.

It is important not to give the impression that life is all about us. We must not find ourselves trapped in

In contemplation silence opens us to the transforming, healing, searing presence of God.

the grip of entitlement, the kind of blindness, blurred vision, that means we only see things one way! Living life as though it were all about us, that we are in fact "entitled" imposes its own spiritual burden. It can numb us. It can ground us in our own little world of what we think we need, or what we think we deserve, and we miss the abundance of God's unconditional love. Entitlement dulls our ability to be grateful. The attitude of entitlement creates an attitude of domination. We begin to think we are better than other people. We find ourselves standing in judgment and making one excuse after another not to be inconvenienced by other people's needs. The time has come for us to be humble enough to say to God, "Thank you for seeing me."

What have you seen lately? ■

Sister Ann Willits OP is a member of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, USA, and a well-known retreat giver and preacher of the gospel.

a dark cloud
hanging over the church

Jim Neilan looks at a scandal that has far-reaching effects on the church: the fall from grace of the founder of the Legionaries of Christ, who was also a friend of Pope John Paul II.

Researching material for an article on clerical child abuse is always unpleasant. It becomes more than unpleasant when the abuser is a self-styled model of virtue whose double life of lies, greed, sexual immorality and bribery has affected the lives of countless people and exposed hypocrisy and double standards in the highest levels of the Catholic Church.

Marcial Maciel Degollado was born in Mexico in 1920. As a seminarian and young priest he cultivated wealthy patrons and used his aristocratic family name to gain extraordinary influence and protection in international and ecclesiastical high places. While still in his twenties he founded the Legionaries of Christ and an associated lay group, Regnum Christi, gaining approval for their establishment by ingratiating himself with influential cardinals who promoted his cause.

Legionaries referred to Maciel as *Nuestro Padre* (Our Father) and had to take private vows never to criticise him and to report anyone who did. Pope Benedict revoked these private vows in 2007. The congregational culture was one of blind obedience to the founder.

Today the Legion has 650 priests and 2,500 seminarians and, along with 65,000 members of Regnum Christi, it is represented in over 20 countries. It runs schools, seminaries and universities.

Yet, from its very inception, behind its rigorous orthodoxy and pious practices, the organisation was centred on a founder who was a paedophile. And one of the sad aspects of the saga is that the whole tragedy could have been stopped in the earliest days if authorities hadn't been blinded to the truth by Maciel's obsequiousness – and money.

If an ordinary priest is reported to Rome for questioning policies on subjects such as women's ordination or compulsory clerical celibacy, the allegations are taken seriously by the Vatican. But well-founded accusations against Maciel of abusing young seminarians, dating back to the 1940s, were rejected without investigation. Bishop John McGann of New York sent detailed allegations in 1976, 1978 and 1989; and in 1998 eight ex-Legionaries filed a canon law case to prosecute their founder. Not one of the complainants was interviewed. Pope John Paul II, even though aware of the charges, would hear nothing said against Maciel, referring to him as "an efficacious guide to youth". As head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger knew all the details of the victims' complaints. It would seem that he deferred to Pope John Paul and did nothing – surely a questionable response when so much was at stake?

However, when Pope John Paul II was in his final illness, Ratzinger finally ordered a canonical enquiry and, after becoming Pope, agreed that the Vatican, without giving any judgment on the case, should "invite" Fr Maciel to give up ministry for a life of penitence and prayer.

This soft verdict encouraged the Legion to continue proclaiming Maciel's innocence. They compared him to Christ, refusing to defend himself against false claims and "accepting his cross with tranquillity of conscience". (They overlooked the fact that the accusations against Jesus – that he claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God – were true.)

Maciel died in 2008 and the Vatican, along with the Legion, hoped that the whole affair would quietly fade away and things would carry on as before. But like an unravelling television series, it was reported that two women had appeared at the dying priest's bedside, one his mistress and the other their 23-year- old daughter. It soon became public knowledge that *Nuestro Padre* began fathering children in the early 1980s. He had had two sons to a mistress in Mexico and a daughter in

Spain to a Spanish woman. As children, all three had been abused by their father.

Reluctantly the hierarchy of the Legion had to admit the truth about their founder and grudgingly apologise for the abuse they had heaped on those who had tried to alert authorities about what was going on: "those disgruntled men who instigated a campaign of lies and calumnies against our beloved and innocent founder."

For the Vatican, too, the days of defending Pope John Paul's "efficacious guide to youth" were over. In May 2010 they denounced Maciel for creating a "system that allowed him to abuse young boys for decades, unchecked".

Pope Benedict has set up a commission to advise on what should happen next. Some ex-members of the Legion think the whole movement is so corrupted by the psychological tyranny of its founder that it must be wound up, with its priests and students being assessed and given the option to transfer to a diocese or another religious order. But this seems unlikely to happen. Pope Benedict has already expressed "confidence" that the order will survive and among those chosen to carry out the enquiry are four senior Legionaries who either knew about Maciel's lifestyle or were completely duped by him. A case of the foxes guarding the henhouse?

A full investigation, of course, would extend wider than the Legion and would involve two Popes and a number of cardinals and bishops who appear to put the reputation of the church before the welfare of the victims.

Then too, there are questions about the huge sums of money collected over five decades. Will the Vatican enquiry insist on unconditional access to the Legion's financial records? Will it check out the 'donations' of thousands of dollars to churchmen in high places?

This whole affair is a dark cloud hanging over the church – and especially over those in authority. Pope Benedict is constantly blaming 'secular society' for the breakdown of morality. Who will take him seriously if there is no honest investigation of the hierarchical, clerical structure in his own church that produced a Maciel and that enabled his crimes to be covered up for so long? No doubt such an enquiry would result in much pain and embarrassment but, without it, the festering sore will remain. Let's hope the Holy Spirit is available for some overtime in 2011. ■

Jim Neilan did post-graduate studies in Moral Theology in Rome during the Second Vatican Council. He is a member of the Sacred Heart Parish in Dunedin

the sermon on the mount (matthew 5-7)

Kathleen Rushton

Sunday Gospel Reading: Weeks 4-9 in Ordinary Time

Jesus' preaching and teaching in Matthew's gospel is found in five great discourses. The best known is the first, the Sermon on the Mount, which Jesus spoke on a small mountainside overlooking a plain beyond which is the Sea of Galilee. When reflecting on this, I imagine that "great crowd" in the background *(Mt 4:24; 7:28)* coming from the known Jewish world.

Jesus was reviled for the company he kept: beggars, tax collectors, prostitutes, peasants, lepers, the sick, those with disabilities and the demon-possessed. There, too, would have been small farmers, labourers, widows, women, children and some well-do. All were Jews living under Roman occupation, including the collaboration of a local king and the upper priestly classes. That 'great crowd' were mostly poor, earning their living on land, sea or by trade. In the front are Jesus' disciples *(5:1)*.

All gathered had a collective history of exile and deportation, of being ruled by nations not their own, of working day and night and of paying huge taxes in society from which they did not benefit. They relied on learned rabbis to teach them how to apply the Scriptures to their daily lives. What did it mean for them to be religious people? Zealots called for insurrection against the Romans. Pharisees advocated a staunch return to legal requirements. Ascetics retreated to desert caves. Greek religious thinking was in the region. Jesus understood then, as he does now for us today, that so many were unmoored from faith of their ancestors.

The beatitudes may be seen as a self-description of Jesus. They sum up his message of the reign of God. They provide a precise portrait of Jesus.

So the words Jesus spoke on that mountain side, and to us today, were not entirely new. He gathered them from the prophets, the psalmists, scribes and rabbis who had gone before him. For example, each beatitude begins with word *makarios* ("happy" or "blessed"), the first word of the Book of Psalms in the Greek Scriptures (Septuagint) of Jesus' time.

The reputed place where Jesus preached the beatitudes.

Psalm 1 lays out human "happiness" or 'blessedness' according to the psalms. As the psalms progress, the blessed are those who delight in the law of God and meditate on it day and night. As the psalms progress, the blessed are the *poor*, the *suffering*, the *little ones* who take 'refuge' or 'shelter' in God who is their 'rock' and 'hiding place.' These are the ones who trust in God. They live among 'the scoffers,' or 'the wicked.' In the world of the psalms, these are not wicked in a sense we might understand but those who don't put their trust in God. It fact, the wicked could be we "good people" who do not trust in God.

The sermon is not a step-by-step "how to do it" book or rule manual. Rather it offers pointers, "for examples," visions of identity and the way of life flowing from entering into God's present and future reign.

Beatitudes involve not just personal qualities, not just emotions ("happy are") but first and foremost concern God's favour for certain human situation and actions *(Ps 1:1-2)*. The sermon, and indeed, this whole gospel, then informs and forms the disciples It shapes and confirms their identity as a minority and a marginal community of disciples. The crowds remain, they overhear the sermon and react favourably to it *(7:28-29)*.

This lengthy instruction highlights that disciples are learners. Jesus identifies the traits of disciples. The beatitudes may be seen as a self-description of Jesus. They sum up his message of the reign of God. They provide a precise portrait of Jesus. They are the programme he set himself and the way he acted.

For Benedict XVI, the beatitudes are "the transposition of the Cross and Resurrection into discipleship." They

apply to each disciple because they were first lived by Jesus himself. They are a sort of veiled interior biography of Jesus. Because of their hidden Christological character the beatitudes are a road map for the Church which sees in them the model of what the Church is called to be. These directions for discipleship apply to every individual who responds in different ways according to their calling.

Luke's first beatitude begins "blessed are you poor," and Matthew inserts "blessed are the poor in spirit" *(5:3)*. Arguably Matthew makes this beatitude applicable to all believers - to all who let the Spirit open themselves to Jesus and the reign of God without spiritualising it or denying its primary reference to all who are economically and socially poor. Biblically the latter are the original referent of this beatitude. We may feel an inner resistance to this.

Nevertheless, the Sermon on the Mount poses the question of the fundamental Christian option to the implications of this beatitude; it demands conversion and a U-turn. To be poor in spirit is to so shelter in God. As Fr. Monty Williams SJ reminds us, we as spiritual pilgrims hand our lives over to mystery we call God "not in some abstract way, but here and now, concretely …" in the situation of our lives and immediate communities. He continues that this being poor in spirit "allows us to discover community, which is the kingdom of God in our midst." ■

Kathleen Rushton *RSM of Christchurch is currently Cardinal Hume Visiting Scholar at Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge, UK.*

film review

further tales of narnia

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader

Film review: **Paul Sorrell**

In this the third book in the Narnia series to be filmed, Lucy and Edmund Pevensie and their cousin Eustace Scrubb are whisked away from dreary wartime England and magically transported to Narnia for further adventures. Fast-paced, with plenty of first-rate special effects and with a rich cast of talking beasts, sorcerers, dragons and sea monsters, the film uses the conventions of the fairy tale to retell the old story of the hard-won triumph of good over evil.

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader follows the well-tried fairy tale or fantasy story line of the quest. Young Prince Caspian sets sail in the Dawn Treader for the islands of the 'utter East' to find the seven lost lords exiled by his evil uncle. In a major departure from the book, he must also gather their swords and deposit all seven on the Table of Aslan – the altar-slab on which he was sacrificed in the first story – before the land can be freed from the evil that oppresses it. In addition to these enemies without, Caspian, Edmund and Lucy must deal with the whining, spoiled Eustuce, whose selfish actions constantly threaten to derail the quest.

For Lewis, Tolkien and their 'Inklings' circle at Oxford in the 1930s and '40s, fairy tales were highly regarded for, beneath the conventional narrative trappings of witches, castles and giants, they were vehicles for important moral lessons, for young and old alike. To their credit, the filmmakers give due weight to Lewis's moral concerns.

Lucy, Edmund and Eustace all face important tests, being tempted by the illusory promises of beauty, power and wealth respectively. The young protagonists must find their true selves before they can do battle with the forces of evil: "To defeat the darkness out there, you must defeat the darkness inside yourself."

The closest the film comes to exploring overtly Christian ideas occurs at the end, when the children reach Aslan's island, and the noble lion tells them that they have been brought to meet him so as "to know Aslan better in their own world". This has already worked for Eustace. In the course of the action, he has been transformed into a brave, caring boy who shares some of the courage and dignity of his erstwhile foe, the feisty rodent Reepicheep.

Aslan, Lucy, Edmund and Caspian.

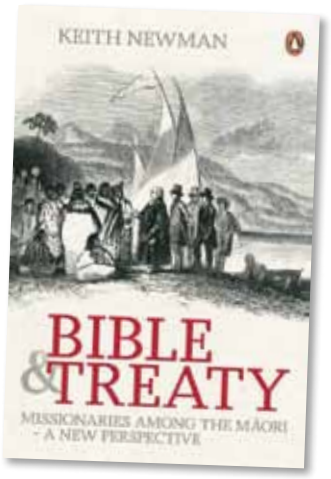
In sum, this is a rollicking good yarn with some breathtaking visual effects – the scene in which the Dawn Treader is attacked by a gigantic water monster is a standout. Does it really matter if some of the details have been invented or embellished by the filmmakers? If this movie leads viewers back to the original book, it will surely have achieved its aim. ■

a new perspective

Bible and Treaty: Missionaries among the Maori – *a new perspective.*

Keith Newman
Penguin Books 2010 pp 367

Reviewer: **Tom Cloher**



Newman is quite specific about the scope of this publication: the 50 years from the first Christmas sermon delivered by Samuel Marsden at Rangiohuia in 1814, to the year 1864 that ushered in the devastating land wars. He limits his missionary focus to Anglicans, Wesleyans and a few Lutherans, and apologises for the omission of Catholics although the index does yield eighteen references to them.

His welcome to readers is generally warm and inclusive but makes it clear that indulging in academic semantics is a fruitless exercise nor is a post modernist view of history much better. One can only wish him well in this regard but going public normally includes freedom to comment, whatever the reader's stance.

The book title is ideal, encompassing as it does two critical relationships. In the Christian dispensation the Bible invites people to a community capable of uniting them in this world and the next, the basis of missionary endeavour. A Treaty is a solemn agreement amongst people to work together to achieve mutually beneficial goals. Big agenda for any people over time; for Maori they were suddenly confronted with both.

The text is liberally provided with sepia photographs of notable missionaries, and a church built by Maori with a capacity for 1000 worshippers. A few maps would have been a welcome addition as some missionary journeys were labyrinthine.

The bibliography is apt and ample although the inclusion of *Hongi Hika: Warrior Chief* (Viking 2003) by Dorothy Urlich Cloher might have helped to fashion a more rounded perception of this remarkable man.

This review attempts to summarise some of the critical incidents of the period and assess their impact upon those who lived through it.

There's little doubt that Marsden was the founding father of mission to Maori. From the outset he rated them as intelligent and industrious and he never deviated from that view. He visited New Zealand seven times, was shipwrecked on one occasion, he hosted many Maori at Port Philip, and it was his advocacy that enabled numerous significant Maori to visit England under CMS (Church Missionary Society) patronage. He also persuaded the CMS to finance the purchase of a ship that rescued Maori from unscrupulous sea captains who overcharged them for every service, and on occasions treated them abominably.

After a stuttering start at Kerikeri the mission took on more shape and purpose with the arrival of the redoubtable Williams brothers, Henry, an ex-naval captain and William, an Oxford graduate. Teaching was to be their primary drive so they appealed to the CMS for a printer.

They were to be doubly blessed with a machine and a qualified person to operate it, a Welshman, William Colenso who was abruptly introduced to the discipline of distance. Essential parts of the machine had been left behind and 18 months were to pass before technology could serve theology. Undeterred, this talented and energetic character made up for lost time. By 1837, 5,000 copies of a Maori New Testament were printed, including 1,000 for the Methodist Mission, indicating a flourishing ecumenical relationship.

The same printer had the distinction of printing the first copies of the Treaty. Its pathway to Waitangi was tortuous. It was a poor season for colonisation. The Duke of York was heard between yawns to observe "we have colonies enough already." The British Resident in Waitangi was starved of support and treated poorly. Everything changed dramatically when that incorrigible entrepeneur, Baron Charles de Thierry, announced that he had purchased thousands of acres in the Hokianga and was proceeding to set up government there. The very hint of French influence inspired Westminster to set in train a drafting process and the upgrading of New Zealand to colonial status.

Governor Hobson was well suited to preside over the Treaty meeting at Waitangi. Pictures of the gathering are arresting but fall far short of conveying the dynamics of the occasion. From the outset it was obvious that the marae culture was to prevail. The first speakers ran up and down shaking their fists and inviting the Governor to go away – he was not needed. Hobson seemed more bemused than affronted. Less strident views gradually prevailed although one chief confronted Henry Williams accusing him of acquiring too much Maori land. Williams confused the issue further by explaining that he had a large family of twelve children and he had to provide for each. This made no sense at all to Maori who had no appreciation of individual ownership.

Colenso, despite his junior status, insisted that the Treaty be thoroughly explained at this time or Maori would be bitterly disillusioned afterwards. Bishop Pompallier arrived in the midst of things, in full regalia, and adroitly proposed that religious freedom be included in the Treaty. This was accepted. All in all, the treaty gathering was an extraordinary event and the author does it justice.

Sadly and ironically, when it seemed that

at last biblical tradition was finally to find expression in New Zealand policy, seeds of dissolution were becoming evident. Just four months after the Treaty was signed Lord John Russell asserted in the House of Lords that "indigenous societies could only claim ownership to land they had cultivated". In New Zealand itself the missionary Octavius Hadfield was dismayed to hear from one end of his diocese to the other the Treaty referred to as "that bit of paper" signed up in the Bay of Islands "to amuse a lot of natives".

The entire Anglican mission would have shared in that dismay as so much of their work had been dedicated to building a Christian society that could be free of violence and betrayal. By and large the missionaries were well-trained and dedicated men prepared to take part in negotiations in the face of tribal disputes, usually with success, which gave them status, from which flowed education programmes of substance. Schools that combined programmes in general education, scripture, and prayer emerged and flourished. Homework engaged the interest of parents. Classes became too big, so teachers were trained and many proved to be splendid catechists. Henry Williams exclaimed "We stood still to see the salvation of God".

Not all was plain sailing within however. The arrival of Bishop Selwyn and his family together with three other ordinands and their families was a considerable entourage. It was their High Church orientation rather than their numbers that the missioners in the field found enigmatic. The Bishop was a talented, dedicated person, an Oxford graduate and an athlete. He took his first congregation by surprise by addressing them in Maori (learnt from a Maori he had encountered in England). His High Church stance was exclusivist. He would brook no collaboration with other churches not even the Methodists with whom working relationships had already been established. His expectations of future ordinands included a working knowledge of classical Greek.

Not surprisingly the first Maori deacon took 11 years to emerge and the first priestly ordination 24 years. Even

Bishop Pompallier arrived in the midst of things, in full regalia, and adroitly proposed that religious freedom be included in the Treaty.

European candidates did not find it easy. Colenso was thirsting for ordination but the Bishop insisted that he be married first. There was very limited choice but eventually Colenso was married to Elizabeth Fairburn. She was a fluent Maori speaker and an effective teacher who had a variety of other skills that the Bishop valued, appearing to delay their departure as long as he could. Their eventual reward was an appointment to oversee the Ahuriri District. Elizabeth's first impression of their new home gives pause for reflection.

"Upon arrival there we found a native built raupo whare without floor, doors, or windows, with a square hole cut in the roof for a chimney and a earthen floor covered in mud from a recent flood. As a gale was coming on, our belongings were piled up under the veranda, and as it was late, we slept among the packages."

It is important to remember that being a Bishop can be a tough assignment too. Bishop Selwyn emerges as a disciplinarian but he never shirked work. He undertook long and often hazardous journeys to visit the missionaries in the field. His pastoral concern embraced both Maori and settlers and he insisted that his clergy do the same. With the outbreak of the Land Wars he even insisted that chaplains be appointed to both Maori and to British forces. He undertook a chaplain's role himself and the sight of him tending British soldiers scandalised Maori. His criticism and lack of support for the King Movement deeply disappointed them too. They perceived it as a betrayal.

In a helpful final summary chapter – "Hope Deferred" – Newman returns to the issue of High Church influence upon the Anglican mission. He perceives a latter day takeover as opinion turned and mission work was deemed to be an heroic affair and New Zealand the base of the most successful mission work in the world. If it is a genuine judgment it would be 'a bridge too far'. Who would be aware of all mission work the world over and have the capacity to make such a judgment?

The particular virtue of books like *Bible and Treaty* is their capacity to confront the reader with issues and events that could be overlooked and forgotten. Over time the memory dims but something survives. That something for me is the response of the exiled chief, Rangiheata, to Governor Grey who sought to buy Waikanae. The Chief flatly refused. "You have had Porirua, Ahuriri, Wairarapa, Wanganui, Rangitikei and the whole of the Middle Island, and you are still not content; we are driven up into a corner, and yet you covet it." No prevarication from the chief: he names what he sees – covetousness, greed, and a lack of integrity. Who is the noble man?

We can only benefit from such reflections if researchers discover what we might otherwise not know and publishers take it to the world. In this case both author and publisher have played their parts well. ■

Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

changing the guard in the usa

There are some disturbing effects from the November mid-term elections, foreshadowing more intransigence, both domestically and externally.

Because Republicans deny there is a climate change problem, dealing with it becomes even harder for Obama.

Tax cuts for the super-rich, due to expire last December, will continue. The lead negotiator for Senate Republicans in the formal tax cut negotiations was at the same time the lead Republican threatening to hold up the New Start arms control treaty with Russia, a top Obama priority. *A Washington Post* article notes "The financial disclosure reports also underscore the extent to which the flow of corporate money will be tied to political goals. Private-equity partners and hedge fund managers, for example, have a substantial stake in several issues before Congress, primarily the taxes they pay on their earnings." (The Supreme Court ruled last year that corporations have the same rights as citizens to fund political parties.) Obama-backed legislation legitimizing the status of 12 million illegal immigrants has been killed. What now – imprison them, herd them out?

The new chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee has been critical of Obama's efforts to engage with some countries, for pushing Israel to make concessions and supports cutting off funding to the Palestinian Authority. She favours stepped up sanctions against Iran and North Korea and greater scrutiny of US-Russia policies.

roll on 2010

Many Kiwis are struggling financially; some because they lost their savings through the fraud or incompetence of others, some because their wages barely cover their basic living expenses, others, because they lived beyond their means on borrowed money. New Zealand as a whole falls into this last category.

Some possible ways to react: sell our remaining assets, severely curtail our consumption or increase our exports. There appear to be many with good ideas for new business ventures that are stalled for lack of investment. Investment comes either from our savings (of which there are insufficient), or from foreign sources. But resulting profits are sent overseas.

The centre of world economic power is shifting. China is creditor to the United States; Brazil, India and Russia are growing rapidly, Europe is in a mess. Provided there are no oil or other commodity price shocks, buyers of our exports going broke, wars etc, New Zealand will emerge from its economic woes. However, Bill English said in December it would be about ten years before New Zealand was robust enough to cope with another disastrous year like 2010.

The temptation will be to save on welfare – the 'unproductive' sector of the economy. The Ministry of Justice reported in December that over 50 percent of crime falls on six percent of the adult population. A young, poor, brown city-dweller is much more likely to be a victim than a rich, white country dweller. So it's a minor problem?

On the other hand, Italian dictator Mussolini eradicated malaria by draining the Pontine Marshes. They were the breeding ground for the malaria-transmitting mosquito. And there is solid evidence that poverty (of all kinds) is the breeding ground for increasing social dysfunction.

welfare matters

The multiple rows of columns around St Peter's square in Rome seem haphazard unless viewed from a particular standpoint. Then their interrelationships become obvious. The various viewpoints of New Zealanders regarding social dysfunction seem just as confusing. Could a common standpoint point be agreed?

Examples of the enormous generosity of individual Kiwis abound; many regard assistance to the less fortunate a state responsibility; free market champions maintain only individual rights and obligations exist, not social justice, although human decency requires some form of 'charity' for the 'deserving' poor (from the state as a last resort); others maintain free choice is the sole reason for social dysfunction – state intervention can be justified to avoid social unrest. Thus there is scant acceptance that inequality (the standpoint) is a major breeding ground for dysfunction's varied causes (the columns), let alone a political consensus for policies to deal with it.

Enduring social change emerges from a widespread consensus which, in turn, hinges on a consciousness of the relevant factors. This requires leadership at the basic level of society so that an understanding of the problem and possible solutions permeate the electorate: otherwise we are simply bailing out a leaky boat without sealing the leak.

In 1971 the Synod of Bishops (Justice in the World §72) said: "The examination of conscience which we have made together regarding the Church's involvement in action for justice will remain ineffective if it is not given flesh in the life of our local churches at all their levels." They commended those who had responded to Vatican II's plea to work to that end with all people of goodwill, whether believers or not. Employing the simple methods of Cardijn or Freire at parish level seems a practical first step towards creating consensus. It would also hearten the many individuals and groups already engaged in this work. ■

can the church reform itself?

I clearly remember in my childhood a regular routine which I loved. As an altar boy, undeterred by wet cold early winter mornings I served Mass sustained in the knowledge that I was doing God's work. I often entered a dark empty Church with a sanctuary lamp flickering, nuns kneeling quietly in front of a statue of Our Lady, a distinctive smell of candles, incense, old carpets – and the ghosts of earlier generations.

Our day at Addington Convent school always started with prayer: we blessed the hour, said the Angelus before lunch and made a visit to Church on the way home. When a parishioner died the job of altar boy became highly sought after as it meant a morning off school. After dinner our family said the rosary and prayed before bed. We knew we had guardian angels with us at.

God's presence was all around me from an early age. My parents, the Church and my primary Catholic education embedded in me a belief in a divine presence which has never left me. I have been in dangerous environments globally and domestically and been traumatized by the tragic death of my eldest daughter Suzanne, and yet this sense of the all-pervasive presence of a creator God remains embedded deep in my psyche. For this I feel a deep sense of gratitude beyond mere words.

The paradox is that I received this formation from a Church which embraced empire from 330 AD and has continued to take official positions contrary to the message of Jesus for centuries – while claiming divine guidance! The Catholic Church at various times has been guilty of anti-Semitism, anti-science, crusades against non-Christians, affirmation of war, Inquisition and torture, financial corruption, support for slavery, colonisation, anti-democracy, anti-human rights, anti-women's rights, abuse of power, covering up pedophilia. Vatican II, which envisioned reform, has been mostly discarded.

Can a system with this history have any chance of reforming itself? The Catholic Church has produced some remarkable individuals who have done an extraordinary amount of good. However the question must be asked: can the same system which produced the current crisis be the system which finds the solution?

Given the state of the Church and the world – 50 percent of the world's people have access to one percent of the world's wealth - has the time come for some revolutionary thinking about the real message of the non-violent Jesus? He challenged the religious leaders of his time. He also confronted the Roman Empire and paid the ultimate price.

Karl Rahner at Vatican II offered us the challenge: "The theological problem today is to find the art of drawing religion out of people, not pumping it into them. The Redemption has happened. The Holy Spirit lives in everyone. The art is to help them become what they really are." For this to happen the Church will need to be lead by people of faith with an ability to trust the movement of the Holy Spirit wherever it emerges.

It would be unwise to look to those who created the current crisis to offer solutions particularly while the evil of clericalism is intensified and the laity are excluded from decision-making by canon law.

Recently the Jesuits captured the prophetic direction: 'A reading of the signs of the times since Vatican 11 shows unmistakably that the church of the next millennium will be the church of the laity.' ■

Robert Consedine
Robert@waitangi.co.nz

a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

"Okay, let's go in alphabetical order of our middle names!" suggests 11-year-old Shar. "So that means you're first today, Grandma Voh."

"Well, I am grateful for having you all around me. You are such energetic grandchildren."

Dad is next. "I really liked it this week that on Friday I could lie in bed and read until 9am, with the nice cup of coffee Mum made me."

Shanti races in with her turn. "I'm glad that my mouth ulcers are getting better and also that I've got lots of good books to read and also that we have new friends we've been playing with this week."

My turn: "Oh I've got a lot of things I'm grateful for. The sunny winter we're having, the Christmas newsletters and emails from lots of our friends, and for the beautiful mountain drenched bike ride Dad and I went on yesterday to celebrate sixteen years since we got married."

"I'm really glad we have a new hamster. And I'm thankful for school holidays," throws in Shar.

Eight year old Rohan adds, "And for me, I am thankful for that snow we got on New Years' Eve. It was so fun throwing snowballs even though it melted so fast."

Toddler Jalori can't quite give words for what she's thankful for but she likes sitting and drawing on a piece of paper as we sit and talk.

It was Sunday evening again and we were sitting down writing updates to our Thankfulness diary. We only started our weekly Thankfulness time a couple of months ago but it's a great thing for our family to do - as individuals and collectively.

More challenging for thankfulness was last week when we'd used a friend's washing machine. It broke down and we received the biggest washing machine bill we'd ever seen. And brazen monkeys had leapt on to the bench and stolen 15 muffins. And the train we were catching was 8 hours late arriving and ran out of food – but still we sat together for our Time of Thankfulness and found there were many things we could be grateful for.

It's great when popular psychology and Christian theology join hands and run in the same direction. There are many reasons to count our blessings, to give thanks in all circumstances, to find the positive in each situation.

So we've added Being Grateful to our New Year's resolutions. Along with speaking better Hindi, using more solar power, being more patient with each other and making space for creativity – it looks like 2011 will be a busy year! ■

Kaaren and Jeph, with their four children, live and work in health and community development in North India. Jeph's mother is presently visiting them.