Tui Motu
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Blessed are those
who hunger and thirst for justice

Contents

Cover: Aung San Suu Kyi meets UN envoy to Burma, Mr Gambari

Photo: Reuters

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice

Aung San Suu Kyi is a symbol of all those held in thrall by oppressive regimes who deny elementary justice to their citizens. The recent visit to Burma of the UN delegate, Mr Gambari, pictured on our cover with Suu Kyi, gives grounds for hope. Nevertheless, as Tom Cloher pleads opposite, it is incumbent on people of goodwill everywhere to act in support of Suu Kyi and the Burmese people.

Justice lies at the heart of the Christian message, as it did in the voices of Prophet and Psalmist: it is Yahweh who "rebuked the nations... destroyed the wicked... blotted out their name forever;... who judges the world with righteousness, the peoples with equity" (*Ps. 8: 5,7*). This theme song of justice recurs constantly in the words of Popes and Councils.

Pope John XXIII spelt it out in detail in his great Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963). Divine justice is the foundation of all human rights: "the right to life and a worthy manner of living; the right to respect for one's person regardless of sex, race, religion, or natural origin; the right to freedom in the pursuit of truth... the right to a basic education; the right to worship God freely..." etc. (See McBrien: *Catholicism p 982*).

At the annual Peace lecture at the University of Otago Professor Said echoed these ideals when he described the Islamic tradition of inclusivity (*p.6*): "To have an inclusive faith means to be open to people of other faiths, because all believers are equal before God and therefore no particular tradition 'owns' God".

Religious intolerance has been a root cause of war, violence and oppression – and not only in the remote past. If not religious intolerance, then it has been racism – or an exaggerated nationalism. Bernard Sabella (*p.7*) and Christina Gibb (*pp. 8-9*) describe in some detail the plight of the Palestinians at this very moment.

Christians, sadly, have often been the oppressors – or at very least, have been inattentive in recognising when the rights of others are being flouted. Cushla Low (*p.5*) reminds us how, here in New Zealand, appeal to the Treaty of Waitangi has enabled many long-standing Maori grievances to be addressed. But it is incumbent on the churches also to beware of infringing Maori rights when buying and selling land.

Human nature shies away from the admission of guilt. Yet there can never be true justice either for the victim – or indeed for the oppressor – until the guilt is acknowledged and, where possible, the debt or injustice is put right. Otherwise it will continue to be a festering sore.

This principle of just redress is fundamental in resolving moral transgressions. It is also a vital part of the peace process between groups, races and nations. Archbishop Desmond Tutu's *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in South Africa was an object lesson in practical Christianity, opening up a path towards healing worthy of emulation elsewhere.

A final observation. This month, the Rosminians rejoice in the beatification of their founder, Antonio Rosmini (*p.22*). This event could never have happened if the present Pope had not formally acknowledged and reversed the iniquitous condemnation of Rosmini's teachings and the slighting of his reputation by two previous popes.

When bishops or political leaders admit where they or their predecessors have failed, people take notice. The case of Rosmini is one victory for justice we can happily applaud.

M.H.

What price democracy?

Tom Cloher

"We have no freedom. People always live in fear. We are prisoners in our own country. We urgently need democracy."

This well-authenticated cry of anguish amidst the current crisis in Burma (Myanmar) expresses both yearning and frustration.

In May 1990 the military regime made a major tactical error. Convinced that the 1988 uprising had been thoroughly suppressed by all and every violent means it decided to hold a "free and fair election". The results, they anticipated, would silence Burma's critics. In the event the *National League for Democracy* (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi won 80 percent of the vote and 392 of the 447 seats contested.

The regime immediately resorted to what it knew best – procrastination and persecution. The regime came up with a *Seven Point Plan* to install democracy. This has been calculated to achieve its goal by 2091! The rebellion of 1988 was a closely run thing. Led by students and supported by the monks it had limited international support. The country was virtually sealed off.

Nineteen years later, resistance has been instigated by the monks and broadcast world-wide by internet and cell phone – citizenship journalism. The link between 1988 and 2007 is Suu Kyi who spent the intervening years under house arrest without even telephone communication. On the very first day of the recent protest a picture of her praying with the monks was beamed around the world.

Together Suu Kyi and the Buddhist monks present a formidable threat to the military regime. Suu Kyi could be locked away, but 300,000 monks is another matter.

In Burma the role of Buddhist monks extends beyond their spiritual service to roles in education and social welfare bringing them very close to the people. The junta has tried to convey its respect for them to gain some credit with the people. It did not hesitate to repress the Christian and Muslim minorities, but Buddhism, the national religion of 80 percent of its 47 million people, was exempt – until now.

Buddhist opposition was well planned. Monks refused to accept gifts from families of the military while, of 350 monks recently invited to an official function, only 50 turned up. But it was their public marching that the regime could not tolerate. The sight of monasteries being invaded and monks being beaten, even in the streets, will long be remembered and resented.

An unusual French aphorism declares ***He who eats the Pope, dies***, the inference being that attempts to crush the spiritual are futile and counter-productive. The regime may be closer to its death throes than it realises.

Some gains have been spectacular: the visit from the United Nations of the envoy, Mr. Gambari, an official photograph of him taken with Aung San Suu Kyi (*see Tui Motu cover*), critical support from ASEAN, a promise that Gambari will be received back for further discussions.

Ominous reports still surface nonetheless. The economic life of the country is perilous as resources are dedicated to military power and control. Environmental degradation is rampant as forests and rivers are plundered to supply raw materials and oil for China and Thailand in return for sophisticated weaponry. The junta continues to lie about the systematic maltreatment of protesters. One prominent NLD leader has died during interrogation, while the faces of those who applauded the marchers have been scanned. Those identified are collected at night to be beaten.

What price democracy? A very high one indeed to the people of Burma: for many, the supreme sacrifice of life itself. It is now critical that those who live in democracies maintain relentless pressure on the junta by all and every means.

Veteran activist for international justice, Maire Leadbetter, has pointed out (*NZ Herald 16/10*) that the New Zealand Super Fund has invested 18 million dollars in TOTAL, the fourth largest oil company in the world and, in the opinion of Suu Kyi, the key financial mainstay of the regime. Economic penalties undermined apartheid, she points out, and could eventually trigger the demise of the junta. Placing this investment somewhere else would be a modest but significant symbol of New Zealand's intentions. ■

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

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Evangelisation in the parish

Jim Consedine's observations (Does Faith or Ideology rule our lives? *TM Sept. p5*) speaks of the marginal difference in fundamental values between Catholics and the general populace. Recently Pope Benedict told the Irish bishops that while it's easy to become consumed in the problems of day-to-day church management "none of that matters if it's not in service to the deeper challenge of evangelising the culture."

Why is it so many people still assume evangelisation simply means an aggressive form of recruiting new church members? A pastoral plan that does not make specific the connection between evangelisation and social justice is deficient. Too often adult religious education is restricted to 'learning about', rather than equipping people with tools to become aware of – and address – the various forces which have helped determine our attitudes and value systems. A case in point might be the viruses, highlighted by Zella Horrell (*TM Oct.*), of consumerism and of institutional paternalism (wielded also by females).

Some parts of the church in New Zealand are still locked into 'maintenance mode', regarding the call to evangelisation as an add-on to the traditional way of doing things. One cannot blame ordinary parishioners for not understanding these points if their parish is concerned only with its internal affairs, offering no vision, let alone support, to assist them to participate in some way in evangelising our culture.

As the Ethiopian retorted when the Apostle Philip asked if he understood the passage he was reading from Isaiah, "How can I, unless some man show me?". And whose responsibility is that?

Jim Elliston, Orewa

letters to the editor

The forbidden ones

A certain Catholic priest found after many years that he could not continue in the celibate state, so he left and got married. He did not seek dispensation from his priesthood vows. The wedding ceremony, which I attended, was in a Christian church. The man and his wife conferred on each other the sacrament of matrimony.

Later a Catholic priest visited the newly weds at home. The visit was cordial since they had been friends, but before leaving they were told by the priest that they could no longer continue to receive communion in church. This directive gutted the couple, and wife was in tears and stress for some time.

I happened to be at Mass one Sunday when a visiting priest was celebrant. As the celebrant approached the altar I saw it was the same priest who had forbidden the couple to receive communion. Looking behind me I could see the 'forbidden' couple, and my heart went out to them. I got up and moved back to sit beside them and told them I too would not be receiving communion.

By communion time I can say it was the saddest Mass I had attended, but I felt that for the 'forbidden' couple it would be much sadder than for me. During communion someone poked me in the back, and looking to the left I saw a woman's open hand. In her palm was a broken host. She said "take", and then she passed another portion of the host to the 'forbidden' priest (his wife had left the church before communion time; her emotional stress could be imagined).

To me and my 'forbidden' friend the coming of Jesus to us in this fashion was an extremely moving experience. Tears flowed. The woman had seen the situation, and Jesus had used her to overcome the obstacle of 'forbiddenness'.

There must be many thousands of 'forbidden' people who attend Mass. We need to be aware of their intense isolation. We need to be aware too of the complete unworthiness of any of us to receive Jesus in communion. We need to tell our priests that we – and Jesus – strongly disapprove of forbidding anyone.

(name and address supplied)

Acting justly

Cushla Low asks a crucial question regarding sale of church land

It has often struck me as strange, how seemingly unrelated events can weave together threads of recognition. The stories of one community's grief when identity is lost, when that which was treasured is taken away, when memory and experience are no longer considered significant enough to inform the decision-making of those in positions of power. Such stories often find parallels in the stories of others.

For me, such an event occurred recently within the *North Taranaki Pastoral Area* to which my church community belongs. Due to constraints of human and other resources, one of our satellite parishes became integrated into the larger parish setting. The church building and the land that had once been a gathering point for that community came into the public arena for sale.

As I listened to the voices from that community speak of their sense of grief and loss, as I listened to their remembering of what it meant to gather as community to celebrate and console, and how they struggled to stitch back together the fabric of their identity in the absence of sacred space, I heard other voices entering the conversation. These voices spoke softly at first, but with increasing insistence, they demanded to be heard.

I hear the voices of Maori resistance down through the generations, looking for justice from a series of successive governments that at best were indifferent and at worst openly hostile to Maori desire for autonomy and self-determination. I hear the voices of Titokowaru, Wiremu Kingi, Te Whiti and Tohu, voices of protest and hope. I hear the groan of the ploughmen as they lean into the plough, the sound of plough cleaving the earth in silent protest to the feeding frenzy of settler greed. Surely, nothing epitomises human grief more, nothing speaks so profoundly to the ache of goodbye as the turning over of soft dark earth.

And so I find myself compelled by voices still waiting to be heard over a century after their day, sitting in the *Taranaki Research Centre* on a bleak winter's day turning the pages of our history. It is a litany of suffering. I was ill-prepared for the level of dishonesty, aggression and treachery that was demonstrated by the Crown in its desire to acquire Maori land. What could not be coerced, bullied or taken by force was taken by legislation. It could be argued that in Taranaki in particular, the betrayal of the Treaty principles by the Crown evokes the memory of Judas and his 30 pieces of silver.

You may be wondering at this point where the connection lies between the sale of 'church' land and the grief of that community, and 160 years of expropriation of Maori land and the grief that people endure both historically and currently in the face of Pakeha reluctance to address issues of injustice.

Colonisation and Christianity are two sides of the same coin. As both Catholic community and partners of the Treaty, we have an obligation not just under that Treaty but under the Gospel imperative to act justly.

Our ancestors in faith held the mythic memory of a wilderness God, who delivered them from captivity and wandered with them through the desert. This was the free God who resists taming in temple and church. This God stands firmly on the side of the alienated and dispossessed. This free God knows intimately the interior of the prison cells where Te Whiti, Tohu, the ploughmen and hundreds of others were incarcerated without trial at the pleasure of the Governor. This free God bore witness as military expeditions traversed the length of Taranaki, destroying all homes and cultivations of a people who refused to submit. This free God breaks his back into the plough of peaceful resistance, the land under this mountain is furrowed with His grief.

The face of our church is changing. It is possible that with these changes more and more 'church' land may come into the public arena for sale. Surely it is time to factor both our sacred and our secular history into our decision-making processes.

We need to begin open and honest dialogue, both amongst ourselves and with our brothers and sisters who are *tangata whenua*. We already have a framework for interpretation and right relationship. It is the Gospel. That Gospel is relentless and uncompromising in its call for justice. Within this Gospel framework, is it not possible to develop structures that ensure that how we acquire land, how we use it and how we pass it on is consistent with both the principles of the Treaty and the spirit of restorative justice?

I am not talking here about Pakeha structures, Pakeha ideas and interpretations, and Pakeha solutions, lest we become guilty yet again of more meaningless Catholic rhetoric and token gestures. I am talking here about structures, interpretations and solutions that are of Maori, borne out of Maori experience, out of Maori suffering. Just for once, could we not be faithful to our tradition? Could we not give voice to those who have been waiting to be heard for 160 years, could we not give back choice where choice has been taken away?

Our God wills our community to be a vehicle of justice and healing. Let mana be restored, let tapu be reverenced. Let the conversation begin. ■

A more inclusive view of the religious 'other'

Abdullah Said

Islam commands a world following of 1.2 billion people. 20 percent of the world's population. Islam comprises many schools of thought, and this affects how Muslims view people of other faiths.

Some Muslims are 'inclusive'. To have an inclusive faith means to be open to people of other faiths, because all believers are equal before God and therefore no particular tradition 'owns' God. If we are humble before God, that will put in context any feelings of superiority we might have.

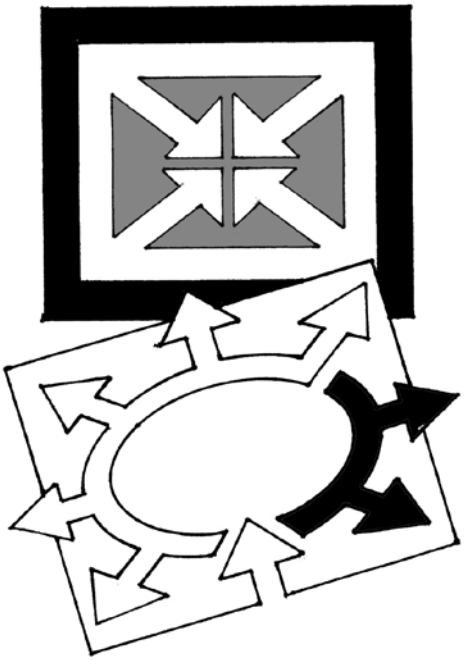
Exclusivism, on the other hand, is lacking in openness and any sense of respect for others. This imbues adherents with a strong sense of superiority towards people of other faiths.

For Muslims, the Qu'ran and the traditions of the Prophet are the basic religious documents and they contain many inclusive texts. Although there are many movements today in favour of a coming together with others, this is nothing new in Muslim tradition. Sufis in particular have a long tradition of inclusivism.

So what can we say about the exclusivist propaganda and the violent outpourings of, say, Osama Bin Laden? Only that this is merely one strand in contemporary Islam: one that sadly we hear too much of. In the multicultural societies which exist today inclusivism has become a paramount need. Otherwise there can be no peace.

First phase – origins

All humanity has come from a common origin. 'Adam and Eve' are our common parents. But although we have a common origin it is not God's will that every human should be



a carbon copy of every other. But to follow God's will is the common lot of all communities. The commandment to *live justly* is for all.

In the 7th Century Muhammad believed that he was one of many prophets in the line of Moses, Jesus and others. He taught that everyone who follows God is a Muslim and that God calls all people to live a moral life.

The Qu'ran teaches that God has sent out many prophets. It acclaims Jesus as Messiah is the messenger of Allah. The Gospels are recognised as coming from God. However Muhammad only 'included' the Abrahamic faiths.

Second phase – exclusivism

In the course of time, however, Islam moved into a more exclusivist outlook. Islam was now seen as superior. It taught the uniqueness of God's law and demanded universal obedience. This exclusivism reflected what was going on in the world at large. The Muslim empire had expanded across North Africa and penetrated Spain. Its expansionism provoked hostility and opposition from Christian Europe.

As a result of these conquests Muslim minorities found themselves ruling over a majority of others. Islam was becoming a more formalised religion. This led to exclusivity. It was asserted that Muslims must never be ruled over by non-Muslims. They would be humiliated and their faith would be restricted. They would be contaminated by Christian ideas. Thus Islam was beginning to seriously compete with Christianity. The stage was being set for the Crusades.

Modern times

The modern era is the age of nation states. In this context more freedom is allowed even though common values are sought. People move around more easily and the electronic media enables there to be a much freer communication of ideas. All this tends to challenge the exclusivist tradition.

Islamic fundamentalism is much in the news and this tends to mask the emergence of other groups. For instance, the *Progressive Ijtihadis*. These people are more influential as philosophers than as purely religious teachers. They are rationalists. They assert that change must happen within Islam. The Qu'ran must be updated. There needs to be stronger emphasis on social justice. With movements like this it is clear that inclusivism is back. There is now an emphasis on what Muslims have in common with 'the other', not what is particular.

Where society is multicultural, then religious pluralism becomes the norm. People of different faiths co-operate to enhance human dignity. Inevitably this leads to a more peaceful way. ■

On 5 September, Professor Abdullah Said, of the University of Melbourne, gave the annual Peace Lecture at the University of Otago

Mourning and the Morning After

Bernard Sabella

Transitions that accompany separation have a built-in mourning process. Experts say that the period of mourning depends on the nature of separation, personal and group characteristics, attachments and values.

Yesterday, I visited with a group of Fateh legislators in the Palestinian Legislative Council the towns of Qalqilya, Jayyus, Azzun and smaller villages in the vicinity. These beautiful towns, close to the Green Line of 1948 that separates the West Bank from Israel, are experiencing a variety of mourning processes.

One separation that stands out and that recalls the mourning process is the forceful detachment of the people of these towns, mostly farmers, from their lands. Standing on the roof of the local municipal council at Jayyus one can see how the Israeli-built separation wall, a fence in this case, forcibly stops Palestinian farmers from attending to their land.

The Israeli military authorities have introduced a permit system but it is highly selective and does not allow able-bodied farmers to access their fields. Besides, the opening hours of the two gates in the separation fence are so restricted (7 to 8 in the morning; 12 to 1 pm and 6 to 7 pm) that if one farmer misses one day, his agricultural produce would be irreparably damaged.

One old man in Jayyus told me that all is finished. "The Israelis have taken our land away and restricted us from working on it." He was speaking so despondently that I was reminded of the mourning people experience on the passing of a dear one. One of the foreign accompaniers in a *World Council of Churches* accompaniment program, stationed in Jayyus, told me that the accompaniers go to the two fences every morning at 6 am before they open. They monitor what is happening and they do reports that they share with the outside world. According to this accompanier, one of the biggest problems for the Jayyus farmers is the very limited number of permits issued by the Israeli authorities to enable them to access their lands. The presence of the accompaniers is recognised and praised by community leaders.

Qalqilya is experiencing its own mourning process. Entry to the town is possible through only one Israeli military checkpoint. The town itself, with a population of over 35,000 is encircled by the Separation Wall. The best description of the Wall surrounding Qalqilya is that of a bulgy bottle with the bottleneck controlled by the Israeli checkpoint.

Mingling in the local market one can see that business is at a standstill. Shop owners complain that the Israeli military does not allow for Arab Israelis, with yellow Israeli car plates, to access the town as they used to in the past. Accordingly, business is suffering and the once thriving town is now experiencing an economic depression. The fact that many of the town's agricultural lands are also beyond the Separation Wall makes it difficult to compete in the marketing of produce as accessing these lands render costs too prohibitive for export.

A Qalqilya elder told me, as he pointed out with his hand the route of the Separation Wall and a number of Israeli illegal settlements in the surroundings, that the Israelis have taken away most of Qalqilya's agricultural lands and plan to take what is left. He too had tears in his eyes. His whole essence of living, personal and collective narrative with the land of Qalqilya, is being taken away from him.

There were other sad stories heard of smaller communities threatened to be totally displaced by the Israeli authorities in order for their prized land to become part of Israel and specifically part of expanding Israeli illegal settlements.

I left Qalqilya around nine in the evening with a heavy heart. The visit has confirmed that the problems of occupation are not simply political issues of how Palestinians and Israelis can overcome their historic enmity. There are also concrete problems that result from a power relationship that is heartless and oblivious to individual and collective histories and narratives and to attachments of Palestinians to land and to its meaning.

Some would argue that lifting of the checkpoints in the West Bank would give a boost to peace efforts. But the lifting of these Israeli military checkpoints, if done without willingness to change the structure of domination and land grabbing and annexation, would mean nothing in the long run.

The 'morning after', in the Palestinian Territories, will not come as long as Israel fails to take up its ethical and moral responsibility of ending its occupation of Palestinian Lands and redressing the wounds that Palestinians have suffered as a result. All of us look for the morning after but for some its dawning can be difficult. From what I saw and heard in Qalqilya and Jayyus and their surrounding village and rural communities I doubt that the morning after will come in the near future. ■

Dr Bernard Sabella is Professor of Sociology at Bethlehem University and director of services for refugees for the Middle East council of churches

'On the spot' in Palestine

Christina Gibb lives in Dunedin and is a member of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). Here she describes their work for the Palestinians. *A* Tui Motu *interview*

I have had a llifelong commitment to peace and justice. My father was in the British navy. As a young person I had no difficulty in accepting war against Nazi Germany. The Nazis had to be stopped. So, to move from that position to becoming a pacifist and accepting the New Zealand antinuclear stance took years of evolution.

I had read John Hersey's book *Hiroshima* when I was 16. I was shattered by the thought that this deed had been carried out by 'our side'. Then I heard a Catholic layman from Hawaii called Jim Albertini who came to New Zealand in the late '70s. He told us about a huge nuclear base on Hawaii. He belonged to a group committed to investigating the base. His experience challenged me to think about our situation here.

We were being defended in ANZUS by forces deploying nuclear weapons, and there was no way I personally wanted to be defended by such obscene objects. Nuclear deterrence was 'not in my name'. So I joined the *Anglican Pacifist Fellowship*, becoming an active member when I came to live in Dunedin. For me, it was very exciting when 'antinuclear' became official government policy.

First trip to Palestine

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) have existed for over 20 years. The movement was founded by three Christian groups – Quakers, Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren, originally based in the United States. It is now very ecumenical attracting adherents from all Christian denominations. When Sue Rhodes, an English Quaker and a full-time member of CPT, visited our Quaker meeting in Dunedin, I asked if I would be able to join with her.

I applied to go on a two week 'delegation' with CPT to experience the conditions in Palestine. On the delegation I went to Palestine, mostly staying in Jerusalem but I also visiting Hebron. There were half a dozen in my group. I was the only New Zealander.

We have a saying in CPT: "If a way opens, that is a sign". Well the 'way' has continued to open for me. I did a month's training in Chicago, then went straight back to Hebron for another three months, which is the term of a visitor's visa. I joined as a part-timer and my commitment is three months each year. A full-timer would spend up to nine months in the country.

Going to Hebron

In 2006 I spent four months in Hebron, the main city at the southern end of the West Bank, about 40 km south of Jerusalem and due west of the Dead Sea. It is surrounded by desert. The team was originally invited by the Hebron Municipality after 29 Palestinians were massacred by Baruch Goldstein.

CPT have three apartments in one building in the Old City, and there can be as many as ten team members there at any one time. Hebron is the city of Abraham. In *Genesis,* you will read that Abraham continually returned there. Traditionally it was the burial place of the Patriarchs: Sarah, Jacob and Rebecca, Leah and Isaac. It is a place where pious Jews especially have always wished to settle.

Now Hebron is divided into two zones. There is a large mosque covering the site where Abraham is said to have buried his wife, Sarah, in 1800 BCE. Herod the Great built a huge enclosure. In succession there have been on the site a Byzantine church, a mosque, a Crusader church, finally the present mosque built by Saladin. There are also four settlements of Israeli extremists in the city.

After the Goldstein massacre, the Israelis split the mosque in two. So now it is part mosque, part synagogue. There had been a Jewish community also in that neighbourhood who originally came from Spain after the expulsion of the Moors. They had lived peacefully alongside their Arab neighbours. Each tolerated the other's faith.

In 1929, however, there was a Muslim massacre of Jews in reaction to the increased immigration of Zionists at that time. Although 69 Jews were killed, over 400 Jews were saved by the Arab families who lived alongside them. The Palestinians are still proud of having done this. After the 1929 massacre the British expelled the Jews from Hebron so it became a completely Muslim city. There has been no significant Christian presence there since Crusader times.

After independence in 1947, Jews were resettled in Hebron – and again also after the 1967 war. The United

Nations regard these as illegal settlements. There are now some 60,000 inhabitants. There was a special agreement at the time of the Oslo Treaty, dividing Hebron into two zones. The Old City and the Mosque came under Israeli military authority; the rest under the Palestinians. The whole city is not much bigger than Dunedin. It would take about 20 minutes to cross by vehicle.

In the Old City the ground floor of each building tends to be shops, with people living above. Our CPT apartment is in the Chicken Market, once a very lively area of town. Our street – Martyrs St – has become a dead zone because the Israelis have put a barrier across it. On the other side of the street the area is 'sterilised', which means that all Palestinians have been cleared out.

At the time of the Oslo Accord the street was refurbished by US aid so as to be a showpiece of harmony between the Israelis and the Palestinians. But this was quickly repudiated by the Israelis. We cannot get out of it without passing through a checkpoint. Even to go to the mosque you have to pass through the electronically controlled turnstiles. The soldiers control who goes through.

Our task as CPT is to monitor the streets and keep watch over the checkpoints. If we see people being humiliated or attacked, we watch and perhaps speak to the soldiers. We document what we see. We also take part in direct action. For instance, there have been non-violent protests against the building of the infamous Wall. We join protests organised by he Palestinians. However, we have to be discreet and not make things worse for them. Israeli Peace Groups also take part in these protests.

-One sign of hope is the way this Israeli Peace movement, the mostly Muslim Palestinians and ourselves – who are largely Christian – can work together seeking peace with justice for everybody. The Israeli army can make things very hard especially for the Jewish Peace groups.

Palestinians locked out of their Mosque by Israeli soldiers in the Old City, Hebron, Palestine

Israeli harassment

It is difficult to achieve anything because the Israelis continue to be so ruthless. Our task is to try to accompany the Palestinians: we go with the schoolchildren, enabling them to pass through the checkpoints to get to school without harassment. We are there on the streets between 7 am and 8 am every morning.

Patrols of some six Israeli soldiers constantly range through the Old City, invading houses and arbitrarily arresting young people without any formal warrants. We try to report what we see of these incidents, and there is no problem getting the reports out by email. Publicity is an essential part of our work, raising public awareness of the plight of the Palestinians. Meanwhile the Palestinians are striving to live as normal a life as possible in what has really become an impossible situation.

As members of the Peacemaker teams we can move around relatively easily. We usually go by minibus. We will be stopped at checkpoints, but by and large the Israelis are wary of creating an incident with internationals.

Recently we were phoned at 10 o'clock at night to be told the army was out in force. So five of us went. We found that the army was rounding up all the young people. We went to the Mosque gate and found many of them sitting on the ground guarded by soldiers. They were being photographed and fingerprinted.

After a while the officer pushed us away although we were not arrested. The army had dogs and night vision glasses. One of the group with a photographer was able to stalk the soldiers and counted about 90 detainees.

In fact all of the young people were eventually released. We were able to observe this because we were in the Old City where this sort of incident happens frequently. It is important for CPT to be on the spot. It is part of an ongoing effort by Christians to mediate and seek justice for the oppressed Palestinians. ■

Tui Motu *is grateful to Christina Gibb for giving us this interview ...and to* Christian Peacemaker Teams *for permission to reproduce the photograph*

The long and winding road to Suai

Writing from East Timor Tara D'Sousa *describes the work of restoring a Timorese hospital, aided by Caritas Aotearoa*

The convent of the St Paul de Chartres Sisters in Kuluhun, Dili, is a haven of refuge in Timor Leste's capital city, recovering from yet another bout of violence. Srs Carmen, Alma, Anna and Clara offered me their spare room, when I visited them in September. With it came their cheerful company, many stories of their years of work in Timor Leste, a steady stream of visitors including refugees and strangers off the street; also the opportunity to visit the St Paul's Hospital in Suai, in the southwest of the country.

We set off in the utility van early one morning, Sr Alma up front, acknowledging cries of *Madre!* with a wave and smile. She turns 71 in a few weeks, but her step and spirit are light. We move slowly along behind a convoy of Timor Leste Army trucks carrying relief supplies to the thousands of people displaced by the recent violence in Baucau and Viqueque to the east.

Then the road forks and we turn west and up towards the hills of beautiful Aileu. Leaving the dusty Dili streets, the blackened and vandalised buildings and camps for the displaced soon give way to a softer, greener landscape. The air is cooler, clearer. Coffee plantations emerge round the bends, with pepper vines and clove bushes interspersed in the thick forest.

It is a seven hour journey. We sit back and listen to Manuel's stories as he drives along. We pass through little hamlets called *aldeias*. It is the time of year when thatch roofs are replenished and bamboo walls renovated. These activities are communal. I watch groups of villagers engaged in working bees, collectively repairing or building a house at a time. Manuel points out the landmarks – here the destroyed home of a militia; there a stretch of 'trans' homes, dwellings of migrants from Bali resettled here by Indonesia 30 years ago and now well-integrated with the local Timorese.

We slow down by a large sculpture of the crucified Christ (*see below*). Manuel says this marks a place nicknamed *Jakarta the Second* where a 1975 purging of so-called 'communists' in Indonesia prompted a parallel massacre in Timor, then under Indonesian control. Hundreds of people were pulled out of their houses and slaughtered with machetes. The cross was erected by local communities as a signal that there should be no more violence.

By strange coincidence, a caravan of cars bearing singing, guitar-strumming youth accompanied by a few nuns pulls over to rest at the cross. One of the vehicles is an open truck (*see above*) bearing a beautifully dressed Madonna, Our Lady of Sorrows, the patron of the Canossa Sisters. It has arrived from Rome and is being taken on a pilgrimage of peace through the 13 districts of Timor Leste. The event also marks the many years of service of the Canossian Congregation in E Timor.

We pass through Maubisse with its Portuguese-style church, then the many small towns of Ainaro high up in the mountains. It is the dry season which makes it possible to

drive across the rivers. In the wet, Suai is relatively cut-off because most of the bridges have been destroyed. As the sun dips into a salmon-streaked horizon, we turn into the gates of the hospital.

Here, eight years ago after the 30 August referendum that gave Timor Leste its independence, rampaging mobs tore out X-ray machines and medical equipment, ransacked the stores, vandalised the buildings and brought down the roof.

The New Zealand Army then moved in, restoring the roof and using the buildings as their headquarters while they maintained peace as part of the international force supporting United Nations Interim Mission of East Timor (UNIMISET). When the Army departed in 2004, the Sisters were handed back their hospital. Once a fully functioning facility, it was now so decrepit it needed major structural repair.

Outside the hospital at Suai, E Timor. (l to r): Sr Bibiana, Nurse Nanda and Sr Alma

With support from *Caritas Aotearoa* and funding from NZAID, reconstruction commenced and was completed in 2005. By then Timor Leste had its own government, and the independent state was poised to develop its own health system. (Prior to this, many facilities were run by the Catholic Church.) However, the wheels of bureaucracy can be slow to turn in Timor Leste, where lack of political will and poor capacity seriously impact on decision-making.

Through donations of cash and kind from many overseas and local non-government agencies, the hospital was fitted as a 26-bed facility with a maternity ward, isolation wing and surgical rooms including anaesthetic equipment. It was inspected by the Ministry of Health, but two years later it is still not registered!

The situation has frustrated Sr Annette, hospital administrator, and Sr Bibiana, a trained nurse. But rather than let the grass grow under their feet, they have had an outpatient clinic every morning and a weekly mobile clinic in four locations. On average they see 65-80 patients a week. Tuberculosis, diarrhoea, malaria and complications arising from home-births are common ailments. A volunteer paediatrician worked with them for four months, and trained local nursing staff form part of the team. The recent arrival of a doctor-volunteer from the Philippines has brought general practitioner skills to the operation.

The mood at St Paul's is now quite upbeat. A week before my visit, a team of health officials, including a World Health Organisation advisor, inspected the hospital once again. They were very impressed with the facilities, especially the self-contained isolation ward and maternity care facilities. At a meeting between the Sisters of St Paul de Chartres and the Ministry of Health, registration was provisionally granted.

So St Paul's will now run as a Community Health Facility, providing maternity and infant care, immunisations, rehabilitation of TB patients etc. Funding is expected to become available so that adequate staff can be employed, supplies of medicines bought, and two-year-old equipment checked and made functional. The formal opening is expected to take place on 8 December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

In the soft velvet night of Suai, the Sisters share their dream of being able to once more facilitate primary health care for the communities. We have dinner by candlelight, as there are only six hours of electricity daily and the generator is being preserved for use in the hospital. Water is drawn by wind power; gardens are carefully tended to produce vegetables and fruit, as well as ornamental shrubs in the hospital's central courtyard. While all are quiet and prepare to retire, I imagine how busy life will become once the hospital opens.

The Sisters and the Suai community can hardly wait! ■

Tara d'Souza is International Programmes Manager for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand (she is also the photographer)

Growing old gracefully

Lionel Blue describes his mother's attitude to growing old – and has a few wise comments to add himself

My mother was a modern woman with only a limited interest in religion. When the sun set and the fast of the *Day of Atonement* ended, she shot from the synagogue like a rocket from Cape Canaveral to dance the Charleston and 'Black Bottom' the whole night through at the La Bohème dancing rooms "where the elite used to meet" in East London.

That is why she was so upset when I rang her from Oxford to tell her I was going to study for the rabbinate. But after I told her that otherwise I would be going off to the Himalayas and would return as a guru and sit outside Golders Green station with a begging bowl while her friends and foes passed by, she became more reasonable. She could accept the rabbi business, she said, provided I did not sport a black beard and look like a clerical crow. I introduced her to my rabbinical teacher who was shaven and blond. She took to him immediately and graciously gave way.

As she got older she began to dabble in religion. In her late 80s she decided to light candles for her dead mother, brother, sister and great-aunt. She also began to dabble in theology. *Why was there so much suffering in the world?*, she wondered. *Why did some female octopuses eat their husbands alive after making babies?* – she saw this on TV and it had been troubling her. *Why did aged people suffer so?* The classical answers I gave her didn't convince, and the one which did was her own work.

"God was a 'He'", she said; "the prayer book said so and 'He' meant male." Now she had known many males – and they had their uses as partners in the La Bohème dancing rooms – "but", she added confidentially, "you couldn't rely on them." For responsibility only a 'She' would do. That was why the world was the way it was. I thought it was a jolly good try for an untaught amateur in theology and I told her so, which cheered her up.

But really she didn't need much cheer. She enjoyed old age and because of her I've begun to enjoy parts of it too. Now there are some things, of course, you can't enjoy. So far I've had it good and am crumbling nicely.

But you don't know what your body is going to do to you next. It could be dancing all night in Benidorm propped up by a Zimmer or inhabiting the eerie world of Alzheimer's. Also old friends die on you and they're irreplaceable. Also, you become dependent.

But good things come too. And I'm not just referring to riding the buses. To my surprise my 70s are nicer than my 60s and my 60s than my 50s, and I wouldn't wish my teens and 20s on my worst enemies. Now this isn't what I expected.

I remember watching my youthful hair fall out of my head before a hotel mirror. I was horrified and decided to do away with myself before I lost the lot. But then Yul Brynner appeared on the films and in the fashion magazines all shorn and chic, so I delayed my demise and lived to be a correspondent for *The Tablet*.

In my life there are pluses that only come with age. I'm outside the rat race and no longer worship the bitch goddess Success. At business parties I can concentrate on the finger food and not bother about networking. It's more fun to watch without joining in. Also, on the way to work good-hearted young girls sometimes offer me their seats, which I accept and bless them in return, a transaction satisfying to all concerned.

Being outside the clerical rugger scrum, I also begin to see my own religion and culture more objectively and my role in it. I begin to understand what the aged Rabbi Leo Baeck, who had gone through concentration camp, meant when he said, "Lionel, Judaism is your religious home; it's not your religious prison". Chosenness and nationalism together have made us Jews become too self-absorbed, so that we prefer fences to bridges, which is part of our present tragedy.

I used to bewail my patchy life. But not now. I am not a camera but a small window which lets in some light and fresh air, so that the outside world is perceived as something more than just a Jewish problem. That is where I fit in and where I'm needed. I am pleased now that I have lived in a gay as well as a religious ghetto, although it hasn't been very comfortable. Taken together, their limitations cancel each other out, and I have seen the world more kindly and more honestly.

A Mother's Journal...

Against the dark shadow of the bank, insects whirr and haze over the apple tree leaves. The leaves are old and frayed now, some age-spotted and wrinkled too. Each morning we now carry our breakfast bowls to the room on the east side to sit in the puddles of golden sunlight. As we walk down the road to school there are corn cobs drying on slate roofs, a golden flag of autumn and harvest time.

Early this morning I finished Khaled Housseini's wonderful new book *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. It tells of the incredible strength and patience of two Afghani women, Laila and Mariam, in the face of war, hunger, violence, discrimination and illness. Fortititude. Keeping on keeping on. Choosing not to complain.

The sun slips behind the hill at 3pm leaving us in a twilight sort of shade. But the forest is peppered with yellow and red leaves which splash colour into our shadow-valley. I wonder whether I should start on cutting vegetables for dinner but my watch says its only 4pm. I try not to think about this being only mid-October and that there are 11 more weeks until the sun reaches its lowest.

The seasons here are stark and beautiful. They permeate every sphere. We've just re-scheduled our community nutrition worker training course for further into winter. The word in the villages is that they'll be busy grass cutting until mid November. Only one disabled child came to yesterday's therapy session – parents were all too busy harvesting.

Seasons insist on dictating the daily rhythm of life – and of our health programmes.

Winter is also very cold, very shadowed, icy and rather difficult. I try to quell the rising – seething at why our clinic and home is built in the bottom of a deep valley, where we get no sun for three months. It is cold and dark. It was land donated by the community but no-one wants to live here in the cold months. Last winter I spent much of the early winter sitting in a self-imposed shadow of anger at our cold, dark house. I've already caught myself whining about the shadow and the dark this week.

I think of Mariam and Laila in Husseini's book. Of their strength through the events of modern Afghanistan – so much darker and grimmer than Jibhi in winter. Of their choosing to look for the colour and not the shadow. I think of lights under bushels or up on hills. I think of the opportunities for long afternoons and evenings inside with our children – for craft, for movies, for music and even prayer.

This deep valley with scant winter sun offers me an invitation. An invitation to not complain. An invitation to see the colour and light which is on every side. The invitation to believe in spring and a thousand splendid suns.

Kaaren Mathias

Kaaren works and plays with her three children and husband Jeph in the hills of Himachal Pradesh, North India. She also works with Himachali people in community health. See www.manalihospital.com under the section on Jibhi clinic, for details

I am also pleased that I fell into a Quaker meeting and then strayed into Catholic contemplative retreats and introduced my students and friends into priories. I have been moved by the kindness I have received in theatres, squats and bars. The secular world is more spiritual than it thinks, just as the ecclesiastical world is more materialist than it cares to acknowledge.

When I was young I was very uptight, ideological and exclusive. But the experience of God in other people has made me more amused, gentler and inclusive. An aged rabbi, crazed with liberalism, once said to me, "We Jews, Lionel, are just ordinary human beings". And then he added, "Only a bit more so!" ■

Reproduced with permission from the London Tablet.
Rabbi Lionel Blue wrote regularly for the Tablet *for many years*

Getting tough on crime

The Sensible Sentencing Trust wants us to pursue failed American policies for crime deterrence. But in New Zealand, says Tom Cavanagh, we should be following the restorative path

The *Sensible Sentencing Trust* of New Zealand is promoting a get-tough-on-crime scheme for addressing crime in New Zealand. This scheme is based on American hard-line models that include using chain gangs and housing prisoners in tents. People in the Trust are asking New Zealanders to adopt a failed legal model based on the idea that getting tough is a deterrent to crime.

There are two questions we need to ask:

• ***How do we keep justice as the primary value in our legal system?***

• ***How can we ensure our public policy responds to wrongdoing and conflict in a fair and just way?***

The American experience

The many forms of punishment for those who are convicted of crime in the United States vary, ranging from fines and probation to boot camps and chain gangs, to incarceration in jails and prisons, and finally to the death penalty. In 1998, the imprisonment rate in America was 668 per 100,000 offenders. This is six to 12 times higher than the rate of other Western countries. This astounding rate of incarceration is due to policies such as 'three strikes and you're out' and 'zero-tolerance' for drug offenders.

As incarceration rates have increased, so have other punitive measures. Mandatory minimum sentences are much more common as is the willingness to use isolation units. As of 1997, 36 states as well as the Federal Government have constructed 'supermax' prisons. These facilities isolate prisoners considered most dangerous and confine them to small cells by themselves for 22 to 24 hours each day.

The death penalty is being used with increasing frequency. In Texas and Virginia alone, nearly 300 executions have taken place since 1976, many of them within the last three years. And in California well over 500 people are on death row. These statistics and policies reflect legislative action at the federal and state levels adopted by legislators seeking to appear 'tough on crime'.

The United States spends more than $35 billion annually on corrections. In many states, education, health and human services as well as public transportation budgets remain stagnant or decline while more and more prisons are built. Also suffering from a diversion of public dollars to prison construction are the very critical programmes of probation and parole, halfway houses, community treatment options and other post-release programmes.

in prisons there are too many belonging to minority groups – the addicted, mentally ill and poor

For some small towns facing losses in agriculture, mining or manufacturing, the economic benefits from building a prison and offering related services are seen as economic development creating vital new jobs. Rural communities may not have the social or physical infrastructure to handle either the facility itself, the needs of the inmate's family or the needs of the staff. But public debate rarely encourages serious dialogue about the costs of incarceration versus less costly alternatives, such as prevention, education, community efforts and drug treatment.

Even though crime rates are falling in America, fear among American people continues to rise. Americans spend more and more money on prisons. This policy discriminates against people who are minorities, addicted, mentally ill and poor.

Why does fear among people continue to rise while crime rates fall? The current system of laws does not help Americans to repair relationships broken by crime and create new relationships to help people recover from the harm of crime. American people do not feel safe, even in their own homes.

At a time of extreme budget crunches Americans continue to pour more and more money into prisons, based on a process of 'trail 'em, nail 'em, and jail 'em.' Research from the *American Bureau of Prison Statistics* shows that imprisoning people is not working. Sixty percent of the people who are in prison will leave prison, commit crimes again and go back to prison.

What other segment of government would continue to fund a policy which fails 60 percent of the time?

And who is in American prisons? Not people like me – white, affluent, well educated. Prisons have an overrepresentation of people belonging to minority groups and who are addicted, mentally ill and poor. Prison is not suitable treatment for the mentally ill and addicted. Americans – and likewise, New Zealanders – deserve a fair legal system, not one that discriminates against the poor and minorities.

Restorative Justice

In contrast to this picture, restorative justice offers a fair and just approach to how we respond to wrongdoing and conflict in our society. This approach focuses on public safety: that is, creating a culture where there is freedom from harm and the threat of harm. The *Sensible Sentencing Trust* attacks restorative justice as failing to work, particularly prior to sentencing, and wants the process to be applied to post sentence response. The same rationale is used by Christian fundamentalists in America to justify their work in prisons, while failing to address the deep-seated problems in the American legal system.

• Secondly, the Trust believes the use of family group conferences for offending youth is a disaster. It recommends that the age of criminal responsibility be lowered and that children be treated more harshly, as if they were adults.

• Thirdly, the Trust holds on to the myth that a punitive and retributive response to crime has a deterrent effect.

The restorative idea is not new. Internationally recognised experts like Howard Zehr look to New Zealand for leadership in how to institutionalise restorative practices.

Restorative justice is defined as a process of responding to wrongdoing and conflict in a way that focuses on healing the harm (particularly the harm to relationships resulting from harmful behaviour.) It involves all the persons affected by the event or events, particularly the person harmed, the person causing the harm and the affected community.

Restorative justice focuses first on the victim and the community harmed by the crime, rather than on the dominant state-against-the-perpetrator model. This shift in focus affirms the hurt and loss of the victim as well as the harm and fear of the community, and insists that offenders come to grips with the consequences of their actions. These approaches are not 'soft on crime' because they specifically call the offender to face victims and the communities.

This experience offers victims a much greater sense of peace and accountability. Offenders who are willing to face the human consequences of their actions are more ready to accept responsibility, make reparations and rebuild their lives. Restorative justice also reflects our values and tradition. Our faith calls us to hold people accountable, to forgive and to heal. Focusing primarily on the legal infraction without a recognition of the human damage does not advance our values.

Conclusion

We in New Zealand should abandon the pursuit of a failed American policy of getting tough on crime and adopt a policy of responding to wrongdoing and conflict based on restorative justice principles. Such a shift in policy will have the following results:

1. Those persons harmed by wrongdoing and conflict, whom we traditionally call victims, will be given a voice in the process and outcome. They will no longer be pawns in an adversarial system that either leaves them out or makes them feel guilty.

2. Communities will be empowered by building their capacity to respond in the process and giving them a voice in the outcome. They will no longer be forced to sit and watch judges and lawyers as they engage in the formalities of the courtroom using unfamiliar language.

3. Our response to the problems resulting from wrongdoing and conflict will be more holistic and culturally sensitive. Spiritual and emotional values will be as important as mere facts. The system will no longer be dominated by retribution and will be replaced by a philosophy of restoration.

4. We will move from procedural to substantive justice. We will recognise that justice is not only about following the rules traditionally imposed by courts, but also requires us to produce results that are fair and meet the needs of society as a whole.

Let us therefore ensure that true justice is at the centre of our legal system. Let us fund education, housing and healthcare rather than spending more and more money on imprisoning our young people. Let us make certain that New Zealand is a safe place to live, where people know their neighbours and care about them. ■

Tom Cavanagh is Senior Research Fellow, Te Kotahitanga School of Education, Hamilton

Bible Scy

The family that pra

As I sit up here in silent morn reflecting on the past,
There are memories returning that I know will always last.
Rising up in early morning the tomatoes to attend;
Summer travel, going swimming, playing tennis with a friend.
But the memory that stands out strong and fills me with delight
Is the saying of the rosary in the family home each night.

When the evening meal had finished in the sitting room we met,
And woe betide that person who that special time forget.
For himself would call out loudly: 'come back here its time to pray;
Get your beads and take your knees its time the rosary to say.'
And we all would gather quickly for himself in temper short
Was not easily forgiving if his plan we tried to thwart.

So we took the floor together in this room with memories filled
Long before TV and family life and conversation killed.
On every wall a holy picture nothing here profane:
The Holy Family, Blessed Virgin, sacred icons reign.
And over in the corner was a chair himself had claimed;
Authority was ratified with papal blessing framed.

And so the rosary begins, himself recites
Salvation here outlined for all in thought
Tonight the joyful mysteries – each of us
In an orchestrated litany hearts and minc
And t'was not a happy moment if somec
There were whispers round the circle: 'F

And slowly on the rosary ends and peop
And painfully begin to rise then take aga
Himself reminds us all that there's a goo
Those special prayers for this and that –
And everything that matters here in prop
Will have its day of glory yet as trimmin

There's prayers for every relative for all
And prayers for parish youth that they w
A special prayer for Grandma – fading n
God willing she will know us when we v
There's prayers for all the sick that they'
A special one for Martin Walsh who's liv

A Sympathetic Ear

Jesus as guest in the home of Martha and Mary... Martha preparing a meal and Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to him. I wonder what he was saying? It's so obvious to *Luke* that he doesn't bother to tell us. The universal interpretation is that of Master teaching a disciple.

But that's turning the laws of hospitality upside down, making Jesus the giver and Mary the receiver. Jesus would never be guilty of such an abuse of the sacred trust of hospitality. Mary is still the giver, and Jesus the receiver. That rules out any teaching or preaching by Jesus.

So what was he talking about? Would it be his many troubles in keeping a protracted mission on the road and the constant opposition of his multiple enemies? To all of which Mary was giving a sympathetic ear.

Jesus was fully human with all the physical and spiritual needs of every human. Martha was ministering to the physical needs of Jesus; Mary was ministering to the spiritual needs of Jesus. Mary's ministry was the one thing necessary. Now that's an earful for one day.

Max Palmer

ays together . . .

s the creed:
t and word and deed.
s would take the lead,
ds and souls to feed.
one missed his cue;
Robbie take your turn its you'.

le do unfreeze
ain their knees.
d deal more to pray:
the 'trimmins' yet to say.
per Catholic way
s now hold sway.

our kith and kin,
ill all stay clear of sin.
nemory retain;
visit her again.
'll recover and be blest;
ver's not the best.

A heartfelt plea for Aunty Liz – depression is her bane;
Let's pray that she'll get manic and start baking cakes again.
There's lots of very private prayers that no one speaks out loud
But we all know a family priest would make Dad very proud.
There's prayers for all who've passed away: they're in eternal rest.
They're reaping now their just reward; they've passed the final test.

The rosary and trimmins grind on slowly to a halt.
We rise and stretch and move on out – there's no thought of revolt.
For we all know down deep inside down where we really live
That this time with the family will some special blessing give.
Himself believes with faith so strong and all his mighty heart
That if we pray together, we will never ever part.

And as I look back now from over fifty years away,
We have all stayed together in some very special way.
We've been there for each other when both pain and joy are strong;
We've been there through the troubles and when good times come along,
And maybe t'was himself who knew that when the day is done
We create eternal bonds together when we pray as one.

Mike Consedine

The City Musicians of Bremen

How our hearts warm to those old stories from our childhood! When I passed through the northern German city of Bremen, what caught my eye were the four animals from the fairy tale about the 'would-be city musicians' of Bremen. Marcks' impressive sculpture of them stands near the Town Hall.

The story tells of four creatures who were homeless, having passed their 'use-by' date. But they became firm friends as they journeyed to the city where they were hoping to sing with the town band. The donkey brayed; the dog barked; the cat miaowed; and the rooster crowed. Together they sang as they walked along.
They came across a house being ransacked by thieves, whom they scared off by the power of their combined voices. They never made it to Bremen, but together they lived happily in the house together.

Their triumph lay in co-operating as friends on their journey. A striking lesson from the animal world – here depicted memorably by the 20th Century sculptor, Gerhard Marcks.

Albert Moore

Seven deadly sins – a Gandhi series

Ivan Snook

Education without Character

Society is impoverished when education lacks a soul. Those who set up the national system of education in New Zealand in the late 19th century had many motives, not least of which was the formation of willing servants for the economic order and docile citizens who would respect their 'betters'.

Many believed that the absence of religion from the schools meant that it was education without character. But the fact was that controversy between the Christian churches ensured that no agreed religion programme could be implemented. While the Catholic bishops railed against "godless education", they were very active in keeping religious instruction out of the state schools.

Also missing from the education system was any genuine attempt to portray the founding principles of the new society. Generations have grown up with little understanding of our history – and in particular of the *Treaty of Waitangi* and the constant violations of it by the government and pakeha settlers. Indeed, the early texts used in schools were explicitly racist.

NZ Education in the 20th Century

As the 20th century wore on, both the secularity and the racism were modified. The *Nelson System* exposed primary students to a form of basic Christianity and secondary schools normally had assemblies at which the Bible would be read and a hymn sung. More attention was given to New Zealand history though students still had little exposure to work on the *Treaty* and acquired little 'feel' for its place in national life.

In the 1930s the new Labour government gave special attention to education. The now famous statement by Peter Fraser, Minister of Education, written for him by Clarence Beeby, soon to be Director of Education, put it this way: "The Government's objective, broadly expressed, is that all persons, whatever their level of academic ability, whether they be rich or poor, whether they live in town or country, have a right as citizens to a free education of the kind for which they are best fitted and to the fullest extent of their powers. So far is this from being a pious platitude that the full acceptance of this principle will involve the reorientation of the whole education system."

As part of the reorientation, the Proficiency examination was abolished and gradually every child had access to secondary school. In order to devise a curriculum for the increasing numbers entering the secondary schools, the government set up the *Thomas Committee* which reported in 1942: "We have set out to ensure, as far as possible, that all post-primary pupils, irrespective of their varying abilities and their varying occupational ambitions, receive a generous and well-balanced education."

Such an education "would aim at the full development of the adolescent as a person; and secondly at preparing him (sic) for an active place in our New Zealand society as worker, neighbour, homemaker, and citizen." (*Thomas Report, 1942).*

The aim of fostering the development of the adolescent "as a person", the emphasis on preparation for life in the broad sense and a concern for equity remained a feature of education in New

Zealand for more than 40 years. As a consequence, the OECD examiners wrote in 1982: "To an extent greater than in some other OECD countries the parents, citizens, employers and workers of New Zealand appear to be reasonably happy with what is done for them in schools, colleges and universities."

Commenting on this report at the time, the Minister of Education, Hon. Merv Wellington, said: "Our education system is very much determined by the size of the community, by the importance of the prevailing philosophy of egalitarianism and by an approach that stresses incremental improvement rather than radical convulsion."

Tomorrow's schools

But 'radical convulsion' was what we got. Perceptive overseas commentators stated that: "In 1989 New Zealand embarked on what is arguably the most thorough and dramatic transformation of a state system of education ever undertaken by an industrialised country." (Fiske and Ladd, *When Schools Compete*.) To put it more starkly, the Labour government, followed in 1990 by the National government, ripped the heart out of the education system leaving it without character.

As a result of this revolution:
1. The stress on individual fulfilment and broad social aims has been replaced by an emphasis on *economic objectives*. It is assumed that the major role of the school is to produce people ready for the workforce and the major role of a person is as a worker not, as the *Thomas Report* said, as also "neighbour, homemaker, and citizen."

2. ***Choice replaced Equity*** as the major slogan. Previously education had stressed the wider social good. Now, the focus was on the individual and her/his choice. It was believed (or at least asserted) that choice leads to improvement. In fact it has led to polarisation: there are now wide variations in the income and reputation of schools. By a cynical twist, decile ratings, designed to help schools by providing money on need, are now viewed as assessments of quality.

3. In schools and tertiary institutions, education has been replaced with vocational training. Under the baseless slogan of ***a skills shortage***, schools were encouraged to concentrate on narrow objectives and to neglect the humanising power of knowledge. It has been forgotten that the best thing that schools can do both for social and economic ends is to give each child an appropriate academic education.

The vacuum left in the schools is being filled by the world of business. It sees the school as a fertile place to market goods to the young and, more importantly, foster people who are uncritical and do not see that major business interests are undermining a decent society. There have been some ten years of insidious campaigning by major business interests including the beer firm Lion Nathan, the *Business Enterprise Trust* and now *Business New Zealand.* Programmes of business indoctrination are provided for both primary and secondary schools, and universities are abandoning their role as "critic and conscience of society" and becoming vast business schools serving the economic order.

Consistent with all this, the new draft syllabus for schools stresses the role of the school in producing *entrepreneurs*. An entrepreneur is defined in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* as "one who undertakes or controls a business or enterprise and bears the risk of profits and losses". Thus the new curriculum is to be driven by business interests. If adopted, it will transform our schools into agents for the indoctrination of one particular set of values. Instead of producing informed and critical citizens who can relate with sympathy to each other, schools are to aim for passive consumers on one hand and go-getters who will exploit their fellow human beings on the other.

This has been well pointed out by the Catholic bishops in their submission on the draft curriculum: "The problem (of consumerism) will be compounded if schools lose their independence to teach the skills of critiquing business practices whenever those practices are not conducive to creating a just and compassionate society. The risk of losing this independence is the reason why we have strong reservations about special partnerships between business enterprises and schools. As it stands, the curriculum could create a perceived need for such partnerships."

It is a source of deep concern, therefore, that Catholic schools are as much involved with business programmes as are state schools. One can only wonder how such schools can conscientiously teach the church's social justice tradition which, among other things, stresses the importance of the rights of workers and the need for a just distribution of goods. The rights of workers and the just distribution of goods do not in any way figure in business programmes.

Can New Zealand education recover its soul?

I hope so and there are some encouraging signs.

After a decade or more of training teachers in narrow skills, some teacher education programmes are introducing students to fundamental critiques of society and education; some schools are looking into programmes of "democratic education", "character education" and "restorative justice". They may even begin again to foster critical thinking!

Finally, many teachers continue to value personal development and to balance 'business' talk with discussion of the role of unions and the rights of consumers. It may not be too late to rescue schools from the ideology of the market.

Ivan Snook is emeritus Professor of Education, Massey University and national vice-chair of the Quality Public Education Coalition. *He is also a member of the Social Justice group in St Patrick's parish, Palmerston North.*

Gazing at the Communion of Saints

Kevin Toomey describes an experience in a great American Cathedral which taught him a lot about the Communion of Saints

My father used to say: "I would love a dollar for every time I have darkened the door of a church." This witticism bespoke a rich love of the church that grew slowly but surely over time. During one northern summer study break, I worked at St Agnes Cathedral, in Long Island, New York: a towering, neo-Gothic church built in 1935. There I had a powerful experience of church as the Body of Christ and the focus of the Communion of Saints. It was as if scales fell away from my eyes and I saw afresh what this communion of saints might mean.

Jesus

There is a fine passage in the Letter to the Ephesians: *You are part of God's household. You are part of a building that has the apostles and prophets for its foundations, and Christ Jesus for its main cornerstone. As every structure is aligned on him, all grow into one holy temple in the Lord; and you too, in him, are being built into a house where God lives, in the Spirit* (*2:19-22*).

The architect who designed St Agnes Cathedral was well aware of the need to give visible witness to these seminal ideas of church as a household for people. Everywhere in the Cathedral are signs of Christ as the foundation of our faith: the simple stone altar, the lectern for the reading of the Scriptures, the bishop's and celebrant's chairs.

But what captured my eye were the striking stained glass windows. Rarely have I seen such beautiful windows. In their range and depth of colour and the beauty of their design, they depict Christ's Incarnation in our world. In fact, the three largest windows reproduce the 15 mysteries of the Rosary, each with one dominant panel and four smaller panels arranged around the central theme. The two that tower over the sanctuary, on either side, represent the Joyful and Glorious Mysteries with, respectively, Jesus' birth and resurrection highlighted. And the soaring window at the back of the Cathedral dominating the choir loft reproduces the Sorrowful mysteries with the Crucifixion outlined in wonderful detail.

Mary

In the principal stained glass window of the Sorrowful Mysteries the depiction of Jesus crucified echoes the scene of the Gospel (*John 19:12*) where Mary is at one side and John the Apostle on the other as Jesus dies. Remember Jesus' words: *Son, behold your mother. Mother, behold your son.* It is from this gospel story that we honour Mary as Mother of the Church.

Apostles

If these windows show Jesus as the cornerstone of the church, the apostles are its foundations. The Cathedral has six highly decorated wooden rib beams that completely overarch the body of the church. Near the top of each vertical, just as the beam begins to arch across the roof, is a motto of one of the apostles. These 12 'rib' figures seem to uphold the Cathedral, and within the reredos attached to the back wall over the bishop's chair are 12 statuettes, one for each apostle with an identifying symbol. Peter, of course, has the two crossed 'keys of the kingdom' while his brother, Andrew, has an upside-down cross to show the way he was martyred.

Evangelists and Doctors of the Church

This fine reredos is flanked high in the walls by four small stained glass windows of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Their testimony to the life and death of Jesus is crucial to our faith, isn't it? It's a pity that Paul, the other missionary giant of the early church, is missing from this line-up. But close by on either side, are windows of Ss Augustine, Gregory the Great, Basil and John Chrysostom. These men

were highly influential in the history of the faith for the ways they were able to interpret, and reinterpret for succeeding times, what it meant to be part of a fledgling church as it changed and became the official religion of the Roman Empire. It is staggering to recall how much Augustine, for example, still influences the way we think about many things, especially what sin means.

The Saints

Finally, on either side of the body of the Cathedral are 20 stained glass windows, ten on each side, portraying saints important to the life of the church over the centuries. Who chose them and why, I could not find out. I can only speculate. There is a smattering of founders of great religious Orders – Francis, Dominic and Francis de Sales. They would be in anyone's galaxy.

And then there are some great women saints: Rose of Lima, the Dominican lay woman who I presume is there since she is revered all over the United States as the first canonised saint of the Americas. Then there is Catherine of Sienna, the principal patroness of Dominican sisters, who served many secondary schools in the diocese. And most beloved of all, St Bridget of Ireland who is a favourite for the thousands of Irish immigrants who streamed into New York. We can forgive those who built the Cathedral that there are not more signs of the place of women in this Cathedral church. There would be if it were built now.

"For us and our salvation"

You may say that all this is old hat, to be seen in many a fine church. So where's the revelation? It was this. For the first time, I made the link with the culture of our Maori people and the central importance of the meeting house (*whare whanau*). Maori sacred space is a place for so much that is meaningful: for prayer, to farewell people when they die, a place to resolve disputes, and to celebrate occasions that warrant joy and conviviality as well as sorrow.

Symbolically, this space is seen as a human body, the poles that hold up the walls being its 'ribs'. Their rich carving and decoration gives the history and religious symbols of this rightly proud people. And these highly treasured carvings are 'read' from generation to generation to tell their magnificent story and give them identity as a people.

My learning was to see that we Christians have this same community-based existence in the Body of Christ. This is the stuff of the Communion of Saints. And our churches tell us so much about our faith, its history and traditions as God's people; and that these are captured by beautiful art and fine architecture. This should have struck me years ago. But it came home to me through looking up at the Cathedral's windows and realising the richness of God reflected here.

Ss Peter, Pudenziana and Zeno

This richness was stunningly reflected in the lives of the people celebrating the ordinary moments of the Eucharist, or those high points of life in baptism, marriage and funerals. Each time that we came to the altar to celebrate the deepest mystery of our faith in the Eucharist and that I lifted up the host and chalice at the consecration, I was aware of the crucified body of Christ gazing at me from the window at the back of the Cathedral.

Knowing the stories of some of the people in the church, I knew that *we* were that crucified and resurrected body, and that these people's lives received stimulus and courage from this action to continue a way of life that often seemed difficult. Thirty-five of those who had died in the 9/11 Twin Towers disaster had been buried from this sacred space. This included two families where two members (a father and son, and two brothers) had died on the same day. These people and their grieving families were vividly present to me always as I celebrated Eucharist there.

All the saints enshrined around us in stained glass, stone and wood told the same story. We are proud heirs of a spiritual tradition spanning the centuries. Their witness can help us when we feel low and don't quite know whether we are measuring up to the call that Jesus gives each of us. But we keep on trying, coming back for more. Our longing to seek God and to live as God's people never dies. It can't. We are born with that within us. So, just to gaze occasionally on the beauty of a church and to reflect on the mysteries that it contains and of the many people on whose shoulders we stand, can boost our pride in being today's communion of saints. It is here that we 'saint-sinners' are each week blessed to go out and be a blessing for others.

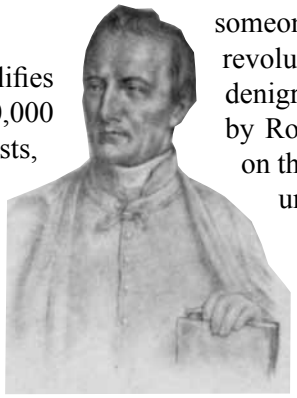
St Agnes Cathedral breathed the foresight and generosity of its founders and builders. What for? To paraphrase the verses from *Ephesians* given above, only that we may be built into a living and holy people, a communion of saints, where God lives, in the Spirit. *Amen* to that. ■

Dominican Kevin Toomey is at present serving the people of God in the hill parishes, Dunedin

Antonio Rosmini (1797-1855)

On 18 November the Italian philosopher, patriot and priest, Antonio Rosmini, will be beatified by the church. The cynically minded might be forgiven for saying "So what?". Just one more religious Founder honoured by the church – no doubt paid for out of the Order's coffers! What did he really do to deserve it? And why now? What is so special about this obscure Italian who died 150 years ago? The short answer is he achieved a lot and has much to teach us today.

A lot of what? In my sitting room there is the remains of a scholastic library. The bottom shelf is taken up completely with Rosmini's writings. The national edition of his works, in Italian, comprises more than 60 volumes. One, on moral conscience, is over 400 pages. His literary output was staggering.



Even if that sort of productivity hardly qualifies a person to be a saint, there are also some 10,000 letters – many to men and women, priests, bishops and lay people throughout Europe who approached him for spiritual guidance. In his native Italy especially he has long been celebrated for his spirituality and personal holiness.

Who was Rosmini?

Well, clearly, he was a very bright character.
It is said he was found at the age of 12 poring over the writings of St Thomas Aquinas. He probably got his ears boxed for being so precocious, but it didn't put him off. At the age of 21 while at University he spent the equivalent of $40,000 buying a monastic library! Today's students appear to spend a fortune on beer. Rosmini spent it on books!

The Europe Rosmini was born into was a world dominated by the so-called ***Enlightenment***, which secularised European philosophical thinking. Rosmini from his early 20s resolved to devote his life to putting God back again at the centre of human thinking. For instance, in an early published work, the *New Essay on the Origin of Ideas* (1830), Rosmini asserts that although we acquire all particular ideas via the senses, the idea of being itself is innate. It is God who infuses the human mind with this primal idea, which is the light of reason. Indeed, we can infer the reality of God from the very fact that we are rational beings. The 'light of reason' has to come from somewhere.

Likewise, in his moral writings Rosmini is insistent that at the heart of moral conscience is the voice of God. Human behaviour must be founded on the law of God, writ large on the human heart.

Even as a young adult Rosmini sought to surround himself with like-minded people who would devote themselves to the reform of human society. At the very time that the Utilitarians in England were placing self-interest as the mainspring of human society, Rosmini and his friends were asserting that nothing less than universal charity and the love of God must lie at the heart of every human endeavour.

The Rosminian question

Rosmini's ideas were much admired, but they also aroused fierce and prolonged opposition in Italy. It is difficult for us in the Anglo-Saxon world to comprehend the malice of what is often called *odium theologicum*, the vicious attacks and calumnies heaped upon someone who dares to offer original and sometimes revolutionary ideas. In particular, a campaign of denigration led to Rosmini's books being examined by Rome. Two of his political works were placed on the Index of prohibited books (and stayed there until the 1950s!).

Eventually, Pope Pius IX ordered a comprehensive examination of his religious works, which in 1854 completely exonerated Rosmini from any formal error. Unfortunately, out of deference to Rosmini's opponents, the Pope refrained from publishing this Decree .

Perhaps nothing better underlines the true humility of this remarkable man than the way he submitted to these injustices. His only concern was that the works of the two Congregations he had founded might suffer – which they did. Now at last, the church has repudiated this condemnation (*see TM July 2004*) thus vindicating Rosmini and clearing the way for his beatification.

His relevance today

There are thousands of saints, mostly unsung. So why canonise this or that particular person? In a recent book *Why the Catholic Church Makes Saints,* the authors noted that often the church canonises people who speak to a particular age – 'horses for courses'!

Nothing is more characteristic of our modern age than to divorce faith from life, to consign God to the attic. Yet for Rosmini, to leave God out of philosophy, ethics or any branch of human knowledge is to destroy the whole basis of human life. He consistently taught the centrality of God. And by placing charity as the central plank of his spirituality, he lived what he taught.
Rosmini has plenty to say to today's world. ■

M.H.

Carbra with his wife, Kathleen, and Columba (age 9) – 1919

Dear St Anthony. . .

Does praying to St Anthony for lost articles really work?

Trish McBride thinks it does – and what's more, she has an amazing tale to prove it!

My mother-in-law Columba loved the Saints – in particular Francis he got it right!, Thérèse of Lisieux sends a rose to answer questions, Joseph good at finding homes; did that for his Family and of course, Anthony with his traditional ministry of finding lost stuff. They weren't really part of my package – I preferred unmediated prayer, and why not? But I've had to have another look…

This part of the story starts in February with my pilgrimage to Hiruharama with a group of spiritual directors. When I got home I realised I had Columba's copy of James K Baxter's *Jerusalem Day Book* on my shelf, unread. Read it, loved it deeply, talked about it, lent it to someone who expressed interest. Said it was precious, a short-term loan. Asked for its return a few weeks later. It couldn't be found. A few more weeks of searching – ditto. Desperate, and with my tongue somewhat in my cheek, I said that Columba would have prayed to St Anthony, and perhaps we could try that. Three days later it turned up, we rejoiced – and I did say 'thank you' to the heavenly helper.

A month down the track, I returned from a week away to a series of excited telephone messages from the rest-home where Columba had lived, and where she died in 1997. 'We've found that book!' Now 'that book' was no ordinary book, in fact it is unique. It is an album, hand-illuminated and gold high-lighted in Celtic style, made for Columba's father Carbra McGann to mark his retirement in 1923 from his position as Senior Science Inspector for all Ireland. Each of its dozen pages is a wonderful work of art, with ornate capitals and entwined patterns, some strangely reminiscent of Maori art. And it is signed by a bevy of bishops, superioresses(!) and rectors of all the schools he'd visited nation-wide, as this was before the Partition of Ireland.

He was a remarkable man, born in 1867 as the eldest of nine, in a two-room cottage in Dunmanway, South Cork. He got his first pair of shoes aged 9 – a gift from the local nuns, who couldn't bear seeing his bleeding chilblains when he served their early morning masses. On leaving school at 12, he became an apprentice teacher, continued his education alongside his work, married at 47, and was by then sufficiently prosperous to take his much younger bride to Switzerland for their honeymoon. I still have their souvenir goat-bell, and the amethyst rosary beads she was given by the bishop who married them. He also installed memorial windows to his parents Anne and Patrick McGann in the choir loft of the parish church in Dunmanway.

He was obviously much respected to have been given such a wonderful gift on his retirement, accompanied, it says, by some 'silver plate'. There is no artist's signature to be found, so I suspect it was a monk who was the scribe, someone wonderfully skilled in the traditional arts that go back to the Book of Kells and beyond.

This book had been lost before Columba died, despite efforts of the home staff to find it and we grieved its loss. Another search after her death, including a newspaper article and visits to second-hand bookshops, was equally fruitless. It was gone. And more or less let go, though I wondered from time to time what had happened to it.

And now, startlingly, it is back! What a celebration as the story unfolded! Columba had lent it to a friend down the hall. They had both forgotten that, as old ladies can do. Her friend died aged 100, in 2001. The relations boxed up her belongings and put them in the spare room. And only this month unpacked them, and realising the book was precious and 'not hers', contacted the home. Wonderfully a staff member was still there who remembered the saga and search of over ten years ago. A few phone calls, a courier, and now it is home!

Is it too fanciful to connect this return of another of Columba's missing books with my un-faith-filled words to St A? Was he proving a point? Did these two women get together and jog his celestial elbow? Not just one, but two missing books returned! Whatever – it's given me cause to ponder! I am grateful and overjoyed, astonished and humble. Perhaps I can make a little more room for him, for those other saints in my life. Perhaps they can be more acknowledged as members of my faith whanau. The kaleidoscope has rotated once more! ■

Rogan McIndoes ad

The Golden Calf

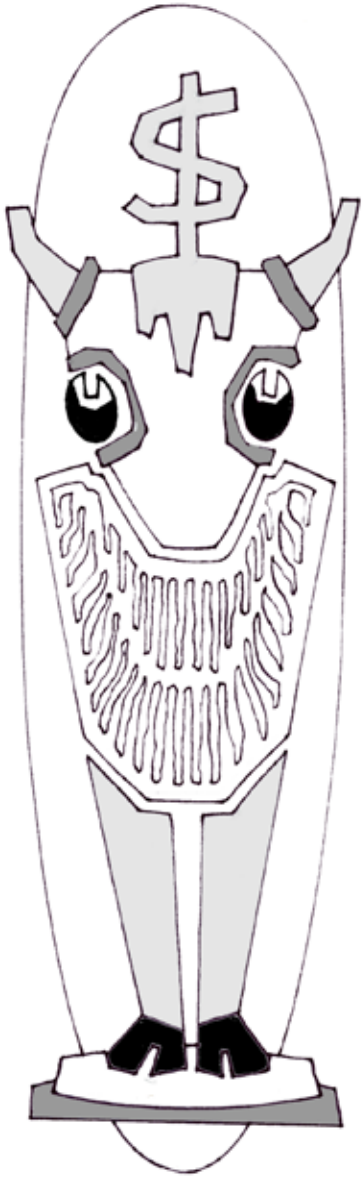
Wendy Ward

How can ancient Biblical texts inform our modern lives? The author Gerard Hughes (*God of Surprises, DLT 1999*) suggests that when we pray with Scripture, we imagine God speaking to us personally and continuing God's story in us. I had reason to ponder the ancient story of the making of the Golden Calf recently (*Exodus 32:1-35*). Ironically, it was both real calves and gold that caused me to reflect on this story.

Newborn creatures cavorting around their mothers are a familiar sign of spring. However, dairy cow calves are removed a few hours after their birth to be reared in sheds or slaughtered as four-day-old 'bobby calves'. The demand for milk overrides good animal husbandry practice.

So what about gold? The new gold is white and flows out of a cow's udder. The production of milk is a great economic success, benefiting the nation generally and dairy farmers in particular. *Fonterra* is our most successful global business.

It is not fanciful to suggest that there is a new gold rush in New Zealand. The land is again being plundered, not for minerals but for grass. Approximately a hundred farms in Southland will be going out of sheep between January and May 2008. There is disquiet about polluted waterways, rivers and lakes. Prices of feed and fertilizer are rocketing as dairy farms soak them up. Dairy farming will soon be the province of the very wealthy, as share milkers and young farmers struggle to pay the millions required to buy a farm. Then there are questions about the effects of over-use of superphosphate on animals, people and the land.



How can the original golden calf story contribute to this debate? Here is a brief summary of the story.

The Israelites, having escaped from Egypt, are wandering in the desert wilderness. God, having taken pity on the people, desires to show them how to live in right relationship with God and all creation. As their leader, Moses has gone up a mountain to listen to God and return with God's Law. The people become impatient and persuade the second-in-command, Aaron, to build them an object to worship. Thus, the Golden Calf is made from the melted down gold of the people.

When this pagan idol is discovered, Moses and God are furious. Moses intercedes for the people, and God relents to an extent. However, many of the unfaithful are killed and later a plague comes upon them. The remainder renew their allegiance to God and the relationship is restored.

The Israelites, unable to wait for Moses' return, lowered their sights, wanting gods made out of their gold. Good leadership was essential for them and no less for us. When there is a vacuum, people can turn to wrong leaders. The Calf was a pagan idol that had no value except to bewitch the people for a short time. As we have seen, the idol cost them far more than the gold trinkets used in its making.

The white gold rush appears to be good news for New Zealand, but it is blinkered and hides issues that we don't want to acknowledge. Profit before good practice never succeeds, as British farmers can confirm. Here, in the King Country, we wonder why *Landcorp* is selling all its farms around Lake Taupo. Excessive use of fertilizer endangers both the soil and animal welfare. The international farming community has put pressure on *Fonterra* regarding dairy cow welfare in New Zealand.

The story of the Golden Calf leads us to ask, "Is current dairy farm development and animal welfare practice in right relationship with the life of this nation?" Or are we so dazzled by dollars we cannot see the new idol being fashioned under our noses? ■

Gardening and our spiritual life

(John 12:24)

Susan Smith

I suspect that many *Tui Motu* readers spend more time in the garden than they do in their local church, and I daresay may find the former more life-giving. Nature is indeed the first revelation of God, and it does not need to be interpreted for us by a Magisterium.

As I write this (late September), spring has officially started and so there is still a coldness about the mornings and evenings here in Northland but also the promise of summer. We have been busy clearing the garden of the remains of winter vegetables, shifting compost, feeding the trees, and finding that the grass is now growing more quickly.

When I garden, different scriptural texts surface and one of my favourites is from John. Jesus tells us that "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth, and dies, it remains a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit." Many of us have had the experience of planting potatoes, and then when we dig them we find the original potato shrivelled and rotting but many wonderful new potatoes, or we plant the small pumpkin seed which disappears and is replaced by a huge spreading plant with large pumpkins, or we plant rocket seed and before too long it surely has rocketed away.

This very short Johannine parable teaches us that death is a means of gaining life, a message that is hard to accept in our contemporary consumer society where having more is the privileged means of gaining life. And yet it is such a powerful message with its insistence that growth flows from death. If we stop and think about it, and gardening allows us time to think, there is a real truth in this. It is often enough the process of relinquishing something that is important to us, of dying, or of death that galvanizes us to action.

For example, let's think about environmental issues. How seriously do we engage at a personal level in dying to some practice that makes life more comfortable for us, and at the same contributes in a significant way to carbon emissions, and so to non-life for others? Or again, let's think about political issues or conflicts such as that wracking Myanmar at present. At this point in time, many innocent people have been killed including one Japanese journalist trying to alert us to the awfulness of life under the Burmese junta. Are such deaths more than loss for the families and friends of the bereaved? I believe they are because they can stir others to action for the sake of the Burmese people. In this way the words of Jesus are fulfilled, and death is not the end, but the prelude to life. ■

Susan Smith is a Sister of Our Lady of the Missions and teaches in her congregation's Asian provinces

The Paths of Prayer

There are mines where silver is dug.
There are places where gold is refined.' *Job 28 v. 1*

Blessed are those who know their prayer life is a hit and miss affair,
their gift will increase.

Blessed are those who pray for family and friends' preservation,
their confidence will astound them.

Blessed are those who can only whisper to God,
their voices will call and sing.

Blessed are those who pray for known enemies,
their love will expand.

Blessed are those who pray for anyone who cannot pray for themselves,
their prayers are recorded and acted on.

Blessed are those who, after all this, can pray for themselves,
their prayers are gold.

Naomi Lange

Two Ulster Boys against the World

Mickybo and Me
Film Review: Paul Sorrell

Made in 2005, but set in the Belfast of the 1970s, rigidly divided along sectarian lines, *Mickybo and Me* presents a boys'-eye view of The Troubles in Northern Ireland, that is by turns harsh, tender and downright hilarious.

A foul-mouthed young scallywag from the Catholic side of town, 'Mickybo' is hungry for adventure and dives from one scrape to another, an impish grin permanently etched onto his face. 'JonJo', from a more prosperous Protestant suburb, has neatly combed hair and clean shoes, but is still up for any mischief going and shares Mickybo's wide-eyed wonder at the world.

These two scamps meet by chance when Mickybo strays across the bridge that divides the city literally and symbolically, and the boys become inseparable pals, bent on adventure. After seeing Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid at their local cinema, the pair adopt the two Hollywood gunslingers as their alter egos and embark on a Western-style escapade of their own that involves shoot-outs, a bank robbery and a side-splitting 'horseback' chase in an otherwise quiet seaside town that brings their great adventure to a final halt.

While on one level the film is a gleeful childhood romp – it certainly stimulated some long-buried memories for me – it also deftly sketches in the background to a troubled era that Northern Ireland is only now beginning to leave behind. We see bombed-out houses and streetside searches by the British army, but also Mickybo's warm family life – a struggling but kind-hearted Ma and charming, barfly Da, and four sisters including identical twins who speak in synchrony. JonJo's life is materially more comfortable but emotionally embattled, and his adventures take place amid his parents' break-up, his mother no longer able to tolerate her husband's philandering ways. Out on the street life is never easy, as the boys dodge not only the police but a couple of knife-wielding toughs their own age.

Just when the film might have been in danger of slipping into feel-good fantasy, a couple of unexpected twists rehone its sharp edge and place it firmly in the contemporary world. In sum, *Mickybo and Me* is a thoroughly enjoyable 'period piece', superbly acted (with special accolades for the two boys, John Joe McNeill and Niall Wright), and comes highly recommended. ■

North-South divide in Catholicism of the future

The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity
Oxford University Press, 2002
The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South
Oxford University Press, 2006
By Philip Jenkins
Review: Susan Smith

American Episcopalian and Professor of History and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University, Philip Jenkins, has written widely on topical issues such as *Paedophiles and Priests: Anatomy of a Contemporary Crisis* (2001) and *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (2004). Two of his recent publications, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity,* (Oxford University Press, 2002), and *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South,* (Oxford University Press, 2006), struck me as particularly helpful for the contemporary Catholic as there is much in his analysis and conclusions that resonates with our own experiences as Catholics in an increasingly multi-cultural Aotearoa New Zealand, and in a worldwide church in which peoples from Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America are fast outnumbering churches of the western world.

In *The Next Christendom*, Jenkins' thesis is that the contemporary Catholic Church is confronted by a situation analogous to that of the 16th century on the eve of the Protestant Reformation. He claims that liberal Catholics – and probably this is a suitable identity tag for many *Tui Motu* readers – like the first Protestant reformers, are less than enthusiastic about being part of a vast, hierarchical, institutionalised community which often seems to prioritise institutional well-being over individual rights, or over changes that could diminish the authority of the institution's decision-makers.

According to Jenkins' thesis, Catholics of a liberal persuasion are likely to be prominent among those agitating for married priests, for women priests, for more involvement of lay people in decision-making processes. They are likely to be dismissive of the miraculous, and of supernaturalism. Religious practice may be a horizontal rather than a vertical matter in which orthopraxis assumes more importance than orthodoxy. Just as the discovery of printing in the late 15th century led to the printing of the Bible in the vernacular and therefore hastened the pace of religious change in Europe, so too is the use of electronic media now one of the factors behind the call for change in the church. Jenkins believes that this kind of Catholic is most likely part of the well- educated, affluent Western world.

However, this agitation for reform is matched by another revolution taking place in the church of the south. Here the vertical is accented, there is an emphasis on neo-orthodoxy and supernaturalism. The religious rift between Northern Europe and Southern Europe in the 16th century is now in a way being paralleled by a split between the North and South worlds. Indeed this already seems to be characteristic of the Anglican Church as the present controversy over the ordination and/or marriage of gays makes clear.

For Jenkins, the liberal reformation of Western Catholics is being confronted by the equivalent of a Counter Reformation on the part of Southern Catholics who believe in authority, in the teaching church, in supernaturalism, and it is this church that is growing stronger, while the church of the liberal Catholics almost appears in a state of terminal decline. Baptisms in the Third World account for more than 75 percent of all Catholic baptisms. As Jenkins writes: "The denominations that are

triumphing across the global South – radical Protestant sects, either evangelical or Pentecostal, and Roman Catholicism of an orthodox kind – are stalwartly traditional or even reactionary by the standards of the economically advanced nations. The Catholic faith that is rising rapidly in Africa and Asia looks very much like a pre-Vatican II faith, being more traditional in its respect for the power of bishops and priests and in its preference for older devotions." In New Zealand his comments may well describe some of the migrant Catholic communities now found in our bigger urban centres.

In his 2006 publication, *The New Faces of Christianity*, Jenkins examines the different ways in which Southern Catholics and liberal Catholics read and interpret the Bible. The former are little interested in the nuances that flow from historical, literary or rhetorical-critical methodologies. In particular, Southern Catholics along with Christians of other denominations take healing stories in the New Testament very seriously. Jesus' healing events were real events that cured people of appalling physical disabilities. Given the often poor health standards and services in many countries of the South, it is not surprising that people look to God for healing that governments do not provide.

In the Gospel texts, people see that the power of Jesus is primarily expressed through his confrontation with Satan whom he vanquishes: "The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (*Matt 11:4-5*). Because all this happened 2000 years ago then surely it will happen again today. Liberal Christians may believe that such approaches to the Bible are simplistic, but they ignore them at their peril.

Jenkins points out that an enthusiasm for supernaturalism is not only characteristic of less developed and rural areas only. As our contemporary world becomes more urbanized, and as more village people migrate to cities, they often experience a sense of estrangement. In these situations, religious communities are important for their provision of health, welfare and education, a reality that has pastoral and theological significance for us in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Statistics New Zealand states that in 2001, 240,000 people were Asian, 526,281 were Maori, and 231,801 were Pacific Islands, while the count of European people had declined from 83 percent to 80 percent (Government Statistician, *Census Snapshot: Cultural Diversity*, 2001). Obviously the ethnic composition of the Catholic Church is changing, and today over 50 percent of all Sunday Mass-goers in the greater Auckland urban area are Pacific Islanders, while there are also increasing numbers of Indian, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese and Chinese Catholics. Catholics whose ancestry is not European are assuming a numerical significance that we need to acknowledge. Often they are committed to theological and cultural positions that may differ from those of Pakeha Catholics. For example, I recall getting petrol recently, and the Indian service station attendant, a Catholic from Mumbai, asked me if I was going to the big healing Mass. I replied that I did not know there was one on, and so he updated me on a visiting Indian priest who was healing 'hundreds' of people. Such events point to the differing cultural and theological positions that exist within our church throughout the world and in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Because the Church is a global church, it seems unlikely that Rome will respond positively to the concerns of Western liberal Catholics. Not only does Rome think globally, it also acts globally, and Jenkins argues that a Third World Catholic Church is going to react traditionally to issues that concern liberal Catholics – sexual ethics, gender issues, issues of authority, theological controversies. Furthermore, liberal Catholics who ask for a Third Vatican Council may in fact end up with a new Council of Trent. Jenkins' two books warrant careful reading by Catholics seeking to make sense of what is going on in their church today. ■

Philip Jenkinsis a contemporary commentator on church life

Hillary Clinton – the sadly inconvenient truth

Crosscurrents

John Honoré

At the end of Sr Joan Chittister's seminar in Christchurch, when commenting on things American, Sr Joan was asked whether Hillary Clinton, as the first woman president of America, would have the strength "to press the button". Her reply was one of Christian hope: "Would she have the strength *not* to press the button?".

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, the likely Democratic nomination for the Presidency of the United States, voted in favour of authorising George W. Bush to use force in Iraq. She voted in favour of labelling Iran's *Revolutionary Guard* a terrorist organization, thus authorising the Bush Administration to impose sanctions and military strikes in order to stop Iran's nuclear ambitions.

It is, of course, political expediency at this stage of her campaign not to polarise Democratic voters, but it could also be to show herself as the manliest and most forceful of the candidates. After all, the Democrats will inherit the disaster of Iraq, whatever Cheney and the neocons achieve with their sabre-rattling in Iran. Speaking at Princeton University, her sentiments are clear; "A nuclear Iran is a danger to Israel. We cannot and must not permit Iran to build or acquire nuclear weapons".

Her allegiance to Israel (as with all the candidates) is the price paid for the huge financial support given to Hillary Clinton from members of the *American Israel Public Affairs Committee* (AIPAC) before she even started her campaign. As Mearsheimer and Walt predict, the United States with Clinton as President (if elected) will remain firmly committed to defending Israel's interests under any and all circumstances. If she were to waver from this AIPAC stipulation, her political career would be over.

Congress always votes to protect and/or enhance Israel's security from potentially hostile neighbours. That hostility has been defined by Clinton as "a neighbourhood overshadowed by the wrongs of radicalism, extremism, despotism and terrorism". Sadly, Sr Chittister's hope seems unfounded. As a woman, Clinton cannot run for President without affirming that she would press the button.

What about Gore?

On today's evidence, the only candidate on the American political scene who would have the courage not to press the button is Al Gore. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to a man who once would be President in 2000 and who argued strongly against the possibility of war in Iraq, has placed Gore at the crossroads between politics and statesmanship. Which road will he take?

Gore's Oscar-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth,* awakened the world to the perils of climate change and revitalised interest in the *Kyoto Protocol* – now opposed only by the Neanderthals, George W. Bush and his sheriff, John Howard. Since then, Gore has toured the world with his message of a 'planetary emergency'. The Nobel Peace Prize makes him the most powerful advocate for action against global warming and puts him on a level that transcends partisan politics. It makes him an advocate for the preservation of the human race, no less.

Gore's latest book, *The Assault on Reason,* excoriates the Republicans and in particular President George W. Bush for an unimaginative and destructive seven years in office which have brought America to a new low, both in the self-esteem of its citizens and in the eyes of the world. Gore continues to attack the fundamental principles of the neo-conservatives, their disdain for environmental issues and their pre-emptive strike doctrine against terrorism which has resulted in the Iraqi quagmire. For the Democrats, he appears to be the dream candidate – *Good-bye Hillary Clinton* – and could lead them to a landslide victory in 2008.

All this assumes that Gore wants to be President. That is far from certain. A re-entry to the political stage would seem a step backwards for a man who has given all his power, influence and time to a movement for change that is above the petty intrigues of politics. After the award Gore said, "I will be doing everything I can to try and understand how I can best use the honour". That seems like statesmanship.

Pitbull resurrected

Exactly three years ago this column commented on the defeat of John Banks in the Auckland mayoralty race, aptly titled as the *Demise of a Pitbull*. At the time, he did not repeat Arnold Schwarznegger's ominous words "I'll be back" – but he is, so be afraid!

One day after being elected, Banks vowed to renege on promises made by Dick Hubbard to pledge $30 million towards hosting the *Rugby World Cup* in 2011. This has thrown other mayors in the Auckland area into a tizzy, and confirms Bob Harvey's opinion that Auckland under Banks will be a shambles. His confrontational style of politics guarantees a further tense relationship between Auckland's district mayors.

Bank's comeback is attributable to the lack of progress on Auckland's unending problems of road transport and infrastructure (and a wobbly harbour bridge?), which have not been addressed with any success by the previous Labour-orientated council. In these areas life is hell in Auckland, but what about the rest of us? Now there is a possibility of the *Rugby World Cup* being held in Christchurch. I am very afraid! ■

New broom at the Vatican

Progress of a kind has been announced regarding the new English translation of the Roman Missal. It is now expected to be ready by the end of 2009. Interestingly, Roman approval was recently given for use in Canada of a lectionary that uses the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible and which, among other things, employs inclusive language. Published in 1994, the lectionary came under Roman criticism. The matter has now been cleared up. As the Canadian lectionary is widely used in New Zealand, this approval is for us a positive.

The third module of our own *Worship Under Southern Skies* programme has been deferred until after Easter next year. It is hoped that by then Roman approval will have been given for a New Zealand version of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* as submitted by our bishops. Any ritual changes involved in the new translation could then be addressed in the next WUSS module.

The quality of the English translation being prepared remains highly debatable. No less a person than Archbishop Donald Trautman, President of the American bishops' liturgical commission, has publicly expressed doubts. Just one of the many shortcomings to which he draws attention is the preference given in the translation to such terms as "unfeigned", "sullied" and "thwart" rather than the equivalents in common parlance. Voices are heard saying that ultimately all will be well with the new translation. This however may be no more than a matter of encouraging us to make the most of what we are given and stifle our regrets at not having the much better text that could have been produced.

There is however a greater peril on the liturgical horizon than simply that of a second-class translation. It is that of an overall rollback of the liturgical advances made following Vatican II. An interview was published earlier this year that was truly terrifying. It was given by Archbishop Malcolm Ranjith of Sri Lanka, then recently-appointed Secretary, that is, second-in-charge, of the Congregation for Divine Worship. He expressed the conviction that the liturgical changes made after the Council were, to a considerable degree, alien to the Church's tradition: they have been ill thought out and indeed quite disastrous.

"The post-conciliar reform of the liturgy", he said, "has not been able to achieve the expected goals of spiritual and missionary renewal in the Church. Undoubtedly there have been positive results too; but the negative effects seem to have been greater. The churches have become empty, liturgical freewheeling has become the order of the day.'"

What are examples of the liturgical freewheeling that the Archbishop sees as widespread? One is Sunday Mass being replaced by ecumenical liturgies, during which Catholic lay leaders and Protestant ministers celebrate together. As to priestly liturgical leadership, he deplores as widespread the notion that one can be "a priest who dreams in his sleep about what he will do at the Mass the following day, walks up to the altar and starts celebrating with all kinds of novel self-created rubrics and actions."

That at times not all goes well in the celebration of the liturgy is true. But if the Archbishop thinks that the conduct he deplores is widespread throughout the Church, then he is living on another planet.

Difficult days may be ahead for the liturgy in New Zealand. Our *Worship Under Southern Skies* programme is endeavouring to foster a painless and profitable entry into a new era in liturgy. But with a prelate with views of this kind in a central position of power in Rome, we may have to look forward to a stormy future. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

Humphrey O'Leary is a canon lawyer and Rector of the Redemptorist community in Auckland

A conversation with Matilda

How come you're so old Matilda?
– older than me, and I was old
when you were born!

But you don't know you're old.
You don't care you're old.
'What's old?' you'd say, if words mattered.
You still chase, occasionally, a bit of moving string,
or rush madly around
as if some urgent command had been uttered,
and you had to examine all crevices,
tear across open spaces at fearful speed
(ignoring your limping arthritic aged condition)!

How come you're so old Matilda,
– older than me, and I was old
when you were born!

And I'm quite old – 69 – VERY old from a young person's point of view,
quite young if you are 87 or so.
Well, what's old then, Matilda?
Am I old? Are you old (reader)?
Or is it our bodies that do the advancing years' thing?
Land-locked in skin and fur...
our beings know nothing of 'young, and old'.
What should any one or any cat worry about?
Who are we? That is the priceless question.

How come you....are ageless Matilda? Mmmmmmm-meow!

Cecily Sheehy

Skyline Harvest

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