Tui Motu

InterIslands

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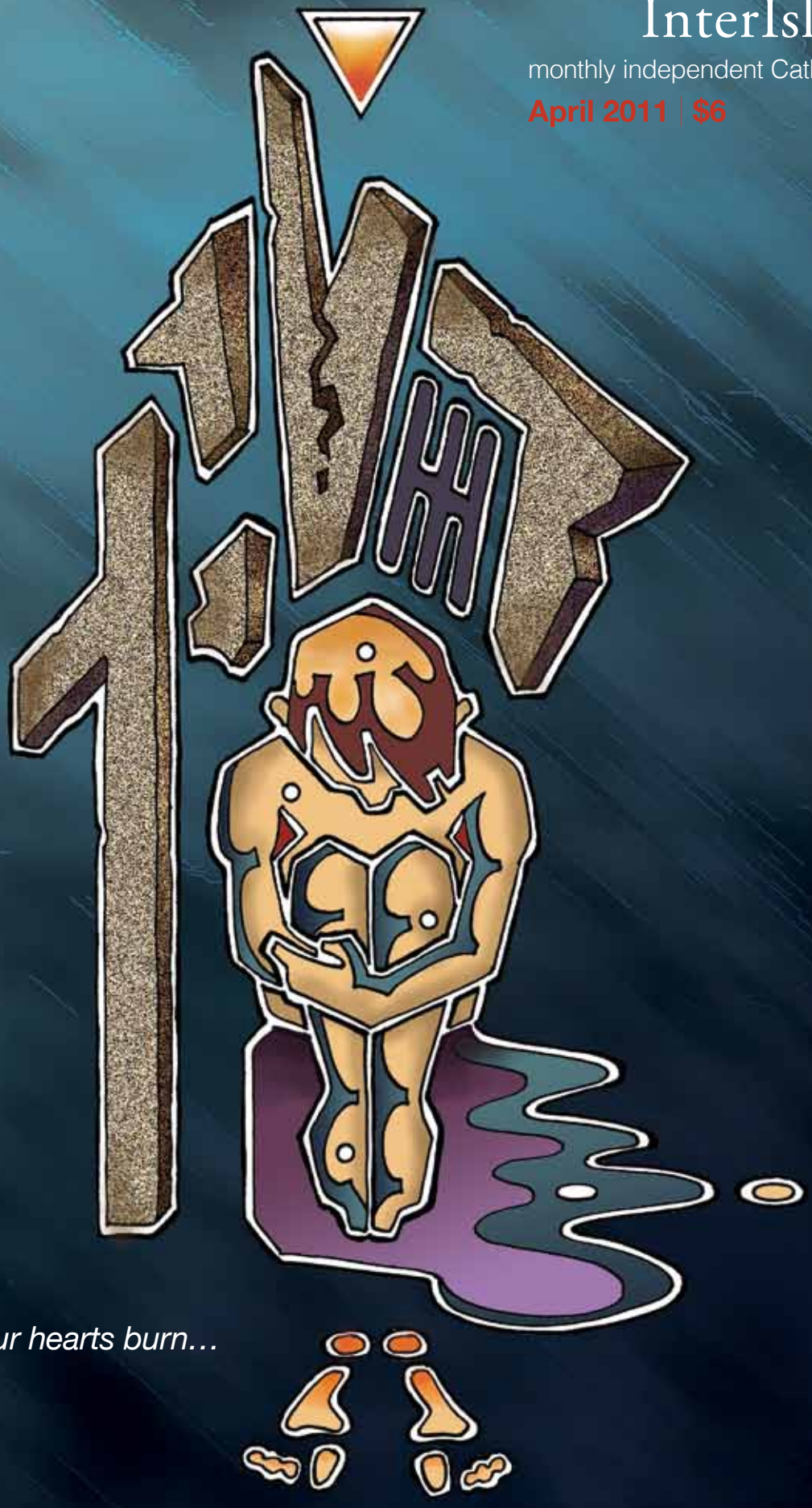

Did not our hearts burn…

‘light flickering on the horizon’

It is always good to bask in the warm autumn light of Christ’s resurrection. Only this year, however, have I felt the link between Jesus’ death and resurrection so limpidly.

Matthew’s gospel sees these events inextricably tied together, through earthquakes, as apocalpytic signs of a new age. The earth quakes, rocks are split and the veil of the temple is torn in two, as Jesus dies. And a violent earthquake accompanies the angel’s rolling away of the stone from the tomb, as a sign of Jesus’ resurrection.

The terrible physical signs of the earth’s sudden natural movement, the tsunamis, flattened towns, mounds of rubble and above all the untold dead that result, have filled our minds and hearts to bursting point. TV images have bombarded us with the horrors of disaster over these last weeks. At the same time, stories of courage in the rescue efforts, great charity and overwhelming compassion have helped to lift some of the numbness we feel when faced with such unthinkable destruction and death.

Joy Cowley, Ron Sharp and Martin de Jong infuse these last days of Lent with Easter hope, linking them to clearance of homes and buildings, rethinking life and place, and proposing tentative answers leading to hope of permanent rebuilding.

Robert Consedine and Adrian McCloy give heart to the solidarity and community-building that is going on in Christchurch — and by extension to Japan and, in an on-going way, in Haiti.

I have been privileged, since 11 March, to receive the daily bulletin (“chronique”) which my French-Canadian Dominican brother, Raymond Latour, has sent from Kita-Sendai — the city near the centre of the Japanese quakes. Like Robert Consedine, he sees many creative ways people gather together to support one another; and along with this go hesitant but potent signs of ecumenical and interfaith co-operation such as have not been seen before. What seemed unlikely or impossible is beginning to take shape in the minds of those drawn together by common need and desire. Relief efforts draw people together across boundaries because there is no other way. Some of these at least may be more lasting.

For instance, how will churches be rebuilt? Will there be churches where various congregations join in a single building? This may be through need now, no doubt. Yet through becoming closely and unconsciously accustomed to the goodness of each other’s differing faith traditions, the yearning for a closer union may result.

Terrible loss forges great hope. This is the power of Christ’s death and resurrection. May the light of the risen Christ fill the hearts and minds of us all this Easter, and especially those of us in darkness, searching (to use Bernadette Hall’s words) for the “light flickering on the horizon”. ■ KT

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front cover illustration by **Donald Moorhead**
“Walking the way — on the road to Emmaus”

letter from london

Adrian McCloy

On 22 February 2011 an earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter Scale tore the heart out of Christchurch and marked what has become 'New Zealand's darkest day'. The shockwaves were felt throughout New Zealand, but the impact reached much further than that.

On 3 March, I walked out of Victoria Station in London and headed towards Westminster Cathedral. It was a bitterly cold evening where the wind went straight through you, the kind of night that would make even the hardest Southerner put a Swandri on over his singlet. My sister and I arrived at the Cathedral and were greeted by the kind of crowd that you would expect only at an All Blacks match at Twickenham. But instead of being there to celebrate, we were all there to remember. To remember the victims of this great tragedy, both those who we knew and loved and those who we never knew. That freezing London night, 2500 New Zealanders gathered inside Westminster Cathedral, joined by an equal number outside listening on the public address system. We were there to offer our support, both financial and spiritual, to the people of Christchurch. But we were also there to offer our support to each other.

We all know that New Zealand is on the other side of the world from London, but at times like this it felt like another planet. It is at times like this that we want to be holding our loved ones, making sure that our neighbours are safe, and to help rebuild shattered communities. Distance made that impossible, so we gathered to share our grief. To be standing in that great hall with my countrymen and women was a humbling experience. To be part of a gathering that demonstrates the essence of what it means to be a New Zealander. To show solidarity in times of adversity and to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds.

We could not be there in body, but we were there in spirit. I was not the only one to have a tear in my eye while we listened to stories and reflections from the aftermath of the quake. Surely living without power and water does not happen in New Zealand, it is the sort of thing that happens to other countries? But this is New Zealand and it is now. This was the reality that our friends and family were facing. Listening to the melody and words of 'God Defend New Zealand' float across the eaves and arches reminded me that this is New Zealand and it is now. It also reminded me that cities are not only made of bricks and mortar, but of heart and soul.

I may have been to too many Southland Ranfurly Shield defeats in Christchurch but it is time to do what makes New Zealanders who we are. The Kiwi community in London is feeling a long way from home right now and it is times like these that we are one nation united in grief. *Kia kaha* Christchurch, stand proud. The kiwis in London are standing right with you. ■

CHRISTCHURCH

God's eye view of those
All praying together
In saffron robes
Colour coded reverends
Skull caps and shawls
Hearts and minds together
Remembering those gone or
Still lying in the remains of the
Earthquake destroyed City.
Music played and sung
Carried on a wave of love
As far as the eye could see!

June Swain

Friday 18th March, 2011 (Day of National Memorial Service)

Tui Motu InterIslands

Tui Motu-InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed.

The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

address: Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd, P O Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9059
phone: (03) 477 1449
fax: (03) 477 8149
email: tuimotu@earthlight.co.nz
website: www.tuimotu.org
editor: Kevin Toomey OP
assistant editor: Michael Fitzsimons (pro tem)
illustrator: Don Moorhead
directors: Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey, Tom Cloher, Neil Darragh, Paul Ferris, Robin Kearns, Elizabeth Mackie OP (interim chair), Peter Murnane OP
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the new mass

For three months, as a priest leading parish liturgies, I have endeavoured to introduce the new translation as faithfully as possible. I felt it right to 'give it a go', dispassionately. These are my findings:

• The new translation is clumsy and stilted. It requires constant effort to proclaim the words properly: they do not flow naturally. For instance, the use of subordinate clauses interrupting the flow of the spoken text is not good English practice.

• Many choices of words are archaic eg **O** Lord for *Domine*. '**Behold** the Lamb of God'. Many others.

• A close following of the Latin 'word for word' is bad practice in written English — even worse in spoken English. In recent years we have preferred idiomatic versions of the Scriptures for reading out in church. We now have the ludicrous situation of using idiomatic and poetic translations for Readings and this new literal translation for the Common. Such inconsistency is bad liturgical practice.

• The versions now given us for the Creed and Gloria are a disaster. For example, returning to 'I believe' instead of 'We believe' is a step backwards. Are we not a community expressing our common belief? The Gloria is a song, intended to be chanted. The new translation of it is anything but poetic — and impossible to put to music.

Those are some personal reactions. As regards the people, I have yet to meet anyone who has expressed the slightest enthusiasm for the new translation. Some follow dutifully especially when it is displayed on an OHP. There is a lot of passive resistance. I find that the more loyal and devout the people are, the less they like it — even to the point of refusing to say it.

Many have said to me that they see it as a complete waste of (their) money — and the last thing for us to be putting our energies into when the church is in such a parlous state.

I hope the Bishops review the success (?) of this new translation when they next meet. If they find general dissatisfaction, I hope they ditch it.

J.M.Hill IC, acting PP, Queenstown

response to John Murray

I wish to address my remarks to my fellow minister, John Murray.

John, in your response to David Tonks (TM Feb 11) you call voluntary euthanasia death with 'dignity'. The word 'kill' you dismiss as 'emotive' and 'deceptive'. According to the Oxford Dictionary, 'to kill' means 'to deprive of life', which is exactly what you propose. 'Dignity' is merely a perfumed word designed to hide a brutal reality.

As a teenager I was heavily asthmatic. I spent many hours fighting for breath. Sometimes I longed for death. Would you have obliged?

For many people, the breakdown of a relationship is good reason for suicide. Do you agree? If not, how can you deny them the right to choose that you allow to a dying patient?

And how free would a sick or unhappy person's choice be? I suspect that you, like me, have witnessed relatives ransacking a stroke victim's house as the ambulance carried her away, still alive, to the hospital.

I worked for several years with the Samaritan organisation in the UK. Many who wished to kill themselves actually had a lot to live for. Their wish to die was often vindictive: "They'll be sorry when I'm gone." The people who really were in desperate circumstances had a strong and irrational (in secular terms) will to carry on living.

A British humanist who shares your views has already declared that hospices are unnecessary because sensible people should prefer to die voluntarily rather than clutter up the health system.

Doctors tell me I'm likely to die of cancer in the not too distant future. I want to enjoy the company of friends and relations for as long as possible.

Perhaps I'm being emotive, John, but it frightens me that somebody, inspired by your well-intentioned but muddled views, might wish to push me into a premature, if 'dignified', death.

Edmund Little, Takaka

☞ letters to the editor

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

dark clouds

Jim Neilan in his article (TM Feb 11) has surely given our church a format for the exposition, and fixing, of all types of 'Dark Clouds' that have hung, or still do hang, over our church.

Why? Because he has fully researched the problem, and recorded the material with enough comment to clarify the story. Next he has suggested a church action that explains how the problem came about and what the church might do to fix it, eg an honest investigation by the Pope into the hierarchal and clerical structure of his own church that produced a, b, c, d, e, f...

This should lead to transparency and accountability in such areas as sexual abuse, mandatory celibacy, birth control, homosexuality, the ordination of women, the election of bishops by the priests and people in a Diocese, the use of condoms as a precaution against AIDS, and the non-use of collegiality in our church.

Tony Ferrier-Kerr, Hamilton

papal teaching?

Who was the Pope, several hundred years ago I think, who reputedly said, "Thou shalt not strive officiously to keep alive", or is this just part of the school-boy quotations I still recall?

Maurice McGreal, Glenfield

letter from the quake zone

Robert Consedine

Beach Road reminds me of the ploughed paddocks of my childhood in Addington. Dodging the holes, drains, mounds of liquefaction and unpredictable ruts requires the instinct of a jet pilot and the skill of a rally driver. I'm en-route to a functional toilet and shower down near the beach. This very basic need preoccupies my mind temporarily and focuses my attention to the exclusion of all other aspects of this nightmare.

My attention is sidetracked by a number of barbeques spewing smoke and smell at the side of the road. A port-a-loo stands at the ready under a nearby tree. About 30 people in various states of dress are randomly positioned eating out of paper plates while children, standing on the corner roundabout, hold homemade placards above their heads announcing free breakfasts. I feel a flush of emotion as the people waved. I saw Jesus in that crowd.

Having realized that you have survived and are not in imminent danger from the roof over your head, the hourly preoccupation becomes clean water and sewerage. With sewerage flushing around the outside of the house the atmosphere is toxic. Friends ring with offers of fresh water — must be boiled!

Officials arrive in pairs at various times — Civil Defence, Red Cross, Environment Canterbury, Emergency Response Team and the Christchurch City Council. All are extraordinarily empathetic and sympathetic. We are high, urgent and top priority. Crucial recommendations are forwarded to the various bureaucracies. Nothing happens. Could be a week — might be months. They are all doing their best in an extraordinary environment. The landscape is overwhelming.

Political rhetoric and posturing from the mayor and other political officials feels meaningless. Response to the Eastern suburbs was slow. This is a class-divided city. The heritage buildings appear to receive more attention than the homeless in the poorer suburbs. Because of the inner-city deaths the response was understandably initially on the CBD. This includes the media. The personal suffering of many families is profound as they face their trauma.

Some rich Englishman has offered four million pounds to help restore the Anglican Cathedral in a city where 10,000 people are losing their homes!

Christchurch has been showered with breathtaking generosity from around the world. The professionals who arrived from throughout New Zealand and twelve countries to engage in dangerous rescue work have left an indelible mark on the hearts of the people. There are heroes everywhere.

Friends and colleagues contact us from the other side of town, throughout Aotearoa and overseas with generous offers of water, food, washing, housing and beds. Emails, text offers with no time to respond. I feel overwhelmed and yet have never felt the presence of God as strongly as I do now.

Decisions have to be made day-to-day, sometimes hour-by-hour. Sewerage from the road has made the house uninhabitable. We are told that up to 90% of the pipes are broken. The air is toxic. Living at home is no longer an option. We start to say good bye to our home of 41 years.

The Anglican City Mission has moved from the city to St Chads in Linwood. Along with many other Churches and community organisations, they are doing excellent relief work. In a wonderful model of ecumenical cooperation five leading workers at the Centre were all raised Catholic.

We are constantly reminded that Christchurch is an Anglican city. Anglican Church leaders are in the media daily. The public profile of the Catholic Church in Christchurch is almost invisible. The denuding of the structures of the Diocese over the last fifteen years has left the Church with almost no visible presence in this crisis.

However, we need to remember that nothing like this has happened in the history of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The tragic deaths expected to be over 200 and the destruction of a significant section of the city is beyond mere words. People from all walks of life are walking around the city in a daze. A combination of shock, grief and uncertainty has given many 'quake brain.' Temporary loss of memory, high anxiety, anger, fear and unusual physical reactions mean we need to be extremely careful in our personal behaviour.

Many Churches across the religious spectrum have lost their buildings. This is an unprecedented moment in history for radical interfaith cooperation. The future envisioned by Pope John XXIII and the Bishops at Vatican II has the potential to become reality. This is where necessity could truly be the mother of invention. Many suburbs could share Church buildings and learn to work together in a new way.

In the meantime Christchurch Parishes directly affected by the quake could link with Parishes throughout the country where formal relationships could be established. Anything could emerge. Some might consider offering holidays, liturgical, pastoral and financial resources.

This is a time to gather with the people of God of all faiths, share worship and prayerfully listen to the Holy Spirit.

I feel a real sense of hope as I remember those people on Beach Road. ■

the way of the cross

Joy Cowley

A beautiful creation myth from the Judaic Hassid tradition goes something like this: God fashioned a large clay vessel and then breathed the fire of love into it. God's breath was so strong that the clay vessel burst into trillions of pieces, each fragment containing a spark of God, and thus the universe was born. Each of us is a shard of clay containing that original God spark, and our challenge in life is to fan that spark into a flame.

This story connects with our Christian awareness and we carry it readily into our own traditions, recognizing that our history is full of saints in whom the God spark has been clearly recognizable. Some have become great leaders, lighting the way for us with the flame of God's love, and we are stilled with wonder when we learn that none of these people had easy lives. If they were born to ease, they tended, like St Francis, to walk away from it, choosing to follow the great fire of God's love in Christ Jesus, who came to show us the way of the Cross.

The way of the Cross is the way of growth, and crucifixions are never separate from resurrections. Jesus, our great God fire, went through everything we might suffer to show us that what is resurrected is always greater than what has died. We call this growth process transcendence, and the only thing that can block it is the bitterness and self-pity that sometimes keeps us stuck in the tomb.

There is another story that describes the way of the Cross. It is the parable of the dandelion. A dandelion said to the amino acids in the soil, "How would you like to be a dandelion? With your permission, I will draw you up through my roots and stem and you will bloom in the light."

The way of the Cross is the way of growth, and crucifixions are never separate from resurrections.

The amino acids gave their consent and they became the dandelion. But then, along came a rabbit. The rabbit said to the dandelion, "As a plant you are stuck in the same place but if I eat you, you'll be free to hop across fields and hills. So how would you like to be a rabbit? The dandelion thought about this, and it allowed itself to be eaten by the rabbit. Some time later, a hunter came along. The hunter said to the rabbit, "How would you like to be a man? Your life here is quite limited. If you were a man you could drive a car, sail a ship, fly a plane, travel to distant countries. I admit that being killed will not be pleasant, but then I shall cook you and eat you and you will be a part of me." The rabbit did not want to die but he bravely agreed and he became part of the hunter. Then along came God, and God said to the man, "How would you like to be…?"

That story too, connects with the mystics' awareness that we come from God and return to God, our growth formed by a lifetime of little deaths to the smallness of self and resurrections into a larger place.

But what happens when an entire country is forced to walk the way of the Cross?

This year In Aotearoa we have gone into Lent with a national sense of loss that is still achingly new. The West Coast and Christchurch belong to each one of us, as our Calvary. Destruction leaves us numb and empty, and for some, the blackness of grief is an enveloping tomb. Where is the resurrection? We don't know but for those of us who have lived long enough to accept the process as infallible, there is a sense that the tomb is opening. A new life is stirring, a greater awareness of nationhood. Compassion swells into a love that connects us so that the entire country seems to be beating with the one great human heart.

Pain is pain and loss is loss. In ongoing grief we continue to comfort each other. But already, we know that we have changed. As a nation we have come to a larger place. ■

Come, come, whoever you are,

wanderer, worshipper,

lover of leaving — it doesn't matter.

Ours is not a caravan of despair.

Come, even if you have broken your vows

a hundred times, a thousand times.

Come, come again, come.

Rumi

easter in the antipodes

Rosalie Sugrue

In
the cathedral of the park
autumn trees stand tall and stark
leaves in crimson gold and browns
are transformed by Easter gowns
dancing flakes of fractured light
delight in brief unfettered flight
reflect deflect and genuflect
as they bound and mound
making stained-glass
patterns on the
ground

The
autumn leaves
wear golden brown
or gowns of russet red
free at last to see the town
they hustle bustle down
where they keep on
dancing prancing
even though
they are
dead

Aye
aye
the
summer dies and
winds roam leaden skies
once green leaves are dead
earth-bound now in heaps of red
all are fading some quite brown
fibre crumbles and seeps down
composting to enrich the earth
from dark humus comes rebirth
new seeds germinate and grow
nurtured well from soil below
death and life together bind
forming strange connection
when touched by God we
also find surprising
resurrection

God
is
if
we
but look and see
and open hearts to reality
colour and vigour mark our Lent
recalling Christ His life well spent
with freezers full the harvest is ours
God flings fruit on top of flowers
feel the Spirit rushing free
see God in leaves blown
from painted tree
think on God
and be

easter 2011

Ron Sharp

The author takes the images of the desert and water applying them to the perennial Easter question: "Where do I experience Christ's risen life?"

the first week of lent (jesus in the wilderness)

We enter life on Planet Earth facing the question of "How am I going to live it?" There is, of course, a long journey of unknowing from birth to about 25. The early Jewish history and gospel stories call this period "The Desert" — a time of wandering, uncertainty and experimentation — sometimes aimless. There are many dangers and temptations along with voices singing their messages and heroes striving for all sorts of excellence. "Where do I want to be?" Sooner or later, in some form or another, we come to the Water! We have to make our way across, even if we can't see the other side. "Shall we get a boat or plunge in risking sinking?" There are, of course, many desert journeys that we have to face throughout our lives.

Many don't even make it to the water. They prefer to stay on dry land from the beginning. They prefer the comfortable life, building worlds of their own that no one else can share — becoming rocks and islands. They try to hide from the pain of growing.

Many see the tide coming in and keep stepping back. It's too hard to decide. It's a pretty cold world in the water. "I don't think I will take the risk."

Many do plunge into the water all fired up with enthusiasm. They throw themselves with great spirit into frenzied activity, but weariness sets in and even burn-out. Shocks occur like devastating earthquakes and tsunamis, marriage failures, sudden deaths and even seeming threats to human survival. Disillusionment eventually prevails. Anyone, even God, or anything becomes the scapegoat for failure and human greed and selfishness.

During our desert journey, with its seemingly endless walking, sand storms and thirst for water, this question "How am I going to live my life?" keeps hounding and challenging us. "Shall I just go through the motions of being born, getting an education, working, retiring and dying or shall I face the quest for something greater?" "Some see things as they are and ask 'Why?' others see things as they could be and ask 'Why not?'"

Jesus went through all this in his growing up and left no doubt about where he stood and how he lived. That is why he kept asking people along his way, "Do you believe?" He disregarded the righteous, who thought they knew all the answers. He spent all his time with the poor seeking a better life. These were open to belief in a world where God would reign through justice, faith, hope and love. Their leaders only wanted to exercise control over them. This man gave them a new vision that would lift up their hearts.

the second week of lent (jesus transfigured)

The early Christians rejoiced, because they came to see that even through Jesus' dreadful demeaning death he had brought hope and meaning to their lives. He had given them something to dream about; something to hope, live and work for. He called it a Kingdom. It would be in their hearts and also be a coming to dream about and look forward to. They had witnessed the destruction of their beloved city by the Romans, but they could rise above all that and believe and hope for a new Jerusalem, a new Christchurch. We cannot say how the risen Christ appeared to them, except that it would not be physical, otherwise it would a human presence. But we can say that it was a new discovery of his presence in them. They awoke to the realisation that they were now challenged to respond to his spirit in them and continue to live this life of co-creating a new creation, a new world. They had been through the desert after losing him in crucifixion. They now had to plunge into their own water-crossing and boldly set about offering this transformation to everyone. Humanity could rise out of its meaningless absorption of material satisfactions that left it clamouring for more. They could discover the new possibility of full personhood. "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full!" (Jn 10:10)

During our desert journey, with its seemingly endless walking, sand storms and thirst for water, this question "How am I going to live my life?" keeps hounding and challenging us.

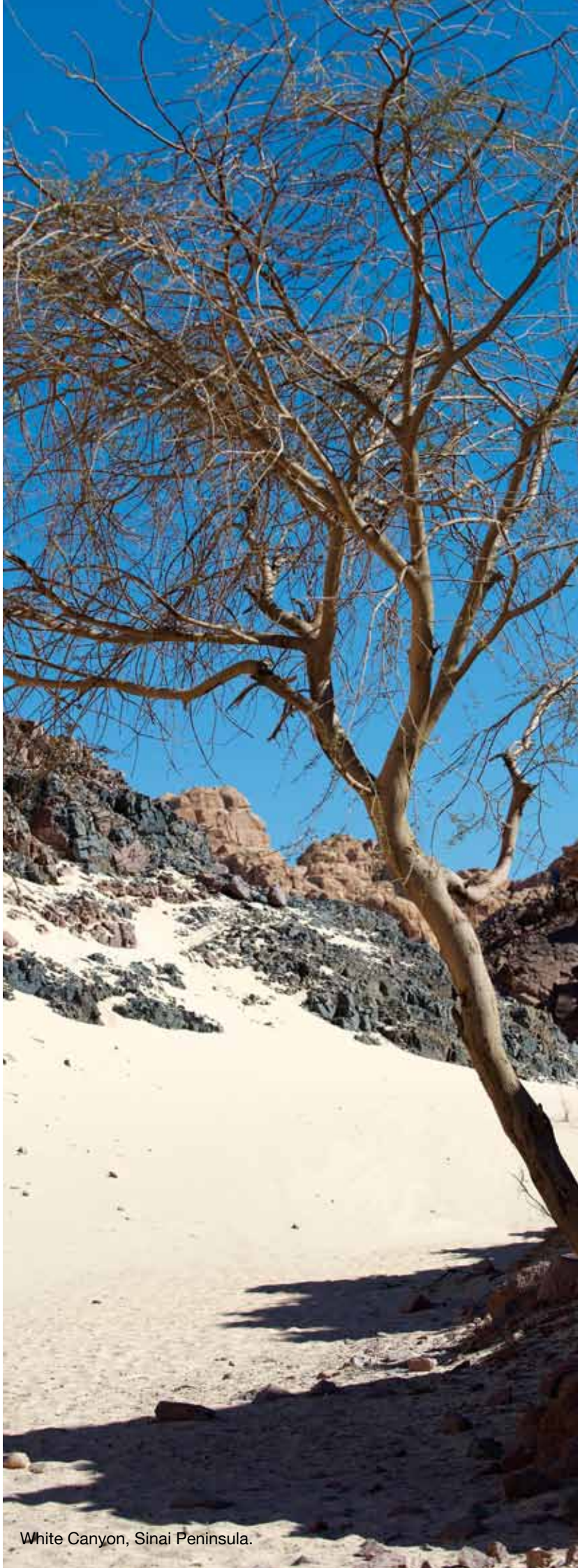
passion week (jesus risen)

Where do I experience this risen life? In the rising of the sun each day, chasing away the darkness and fear of the night; in the total devotion of my wife; in the enthusiasm and spirit of adventure of our son and daughter; in the stranger, whom I passed in the post office recently, who greeted me with "How's your day

been, mate?" Half an hour later we were embracing each other, as if we were long-lost friends; in the birth of a child; in the rising of the populace trying to unshackle themselves from their corrupt dictators; in the rescuers pulling people out of earthquake rubble; in the smile that lights up a face when I greet and look at them; in the struggle of our elderly neighbours with dementia; in the strength of the young sole parent, down the road, who keeps trying to love and provide for her child; in all the sad faces of refugees from earthquakes and disasters still determined to build new lives; in the news of the thousands of dollars given to the people who have lost homes and family members; in the openness of every seed, insect, embryo and atom to die and be transformed; in all the abundance of mother earth, yielding up her all at the whim of us humans and all those who battle to make us aware of the interdependence of all species of life on our planet and to warn us of the dangers of abusing our only home.

Christ is rising everywhere in the modern paradigm shift first clearly visible in the 60s, when we began to recognize that the colonial consciousness of the Western world had imposed a uniform, mechanical and static value on all humankind. That closed system had outlived its usefulness; it was no longer appropriate and millions of people around the planet reacted to its oppressive and stifling influence. This dominance had also expressed itself in the way we dealt with our planet as we raped her of all her resources. The new outlook, rapidly overtaking us, is that the Earth is alive, producing all sorts of life-forms and we have to work out ways of working with her not against her. Albert Einstein said, "Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion, to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in all its beauty". True Resurrection or transformation can only be experienced in a life of faith, hope and love. ■

Ron Sharp is a Motueka organic farmer with a fine interest in theology



White Canyon, Sinai Peninsula.

mourning with those who weep

Martin de Jong reflects on the Lazarus story, Jn 11:17–44, as a way of hope for the people of Haiti, Chrsitchurch and Japan

- *Enu Zizi had hurt her hip and was badly dehydrated when a Caritas search and rescue team found her in the rubble of a Cathedral a week after the 12 January 2010 Haiti earthquake. It took two hours to get her out. She sighed when she could see the sky.*
- *The sun broke through the clouds just as Ann Bodkin emerged from the remains of Christchurch's Pyne Gould building on the afternoon of 23 February 2011. Hopes rose that others would follow, but Ms Bodkin was the last person pulled alive from the Christchurch quake.*
- *After the Japanese tsunami of 11 March 2011, Hiromitsu Shinkawa drifted for two days at sea on the remains of his house, before being spotted by the navy.*

These miraculous stories of survival obviously parallel Lazarus being brought back from the dead. But Lazarus is a story of hope not just that miracles may happen or as a forerunner to our own resurrection, but as a call to hope when others have given up or are in despair.

Pope Benedict says in Message for Lent 2011, 'For the Christian community, [the Lazarus story] is the moment to place with sincerity — together with Martha — all of our hopes in Jesus of Nazareth.'

'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died, …' (vv 21, 32)

Jesus didn't raise everyone from the dead. Not everyone was pulled from the rubble in Haiti, Christchurch or Japan. For each Lazarus pulled into the light, many more did not make it, leaving loved ones to pick up the pieces as they grieve and have unanswered questions: 'Why, What if…? What do I do?' They may remonstrate with God, themselves or others.

Martha and Mary, both the do-er and the pray-er, are there at the tomb, helpless. All that is asked of them is a statement of faith. Both of them express confidence that Jesus could have healed Lazarus, if only he'd arrived earlier. Martha, pressed by Jesus, adds: 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.'

But our faith and hope in the resurrection doesn't mean we don't grieve now for lost loved ones, or mourn the loss of a job, a way of life, a city we once knew. Before we can find words of faith and hope, our first response — whether suffering ourselves, or supporting someone who is — may be to stand helpless and uncertain.

[Jesus] was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved (v 33)

Jesus is moved by compassion and weeps with others before being compelled to act. Twice in the story he is 'greatly disturbed'. But he must enter the suffering and feel it with the people before he acts.

So do we in the face of suffering not directly our own. We see the pain, and feel compelled to 'do something'. Our response depends on circumstances and ability.

Some are at the scene, scrambling through rubble to rescue; others heal — on site, or later at hospitals, medical centres and counselling rooms. Some are called to pray, or

Enu Zizi is pulled from ruins of a Port-au-Prince cathedral by Caritas teams from Mexico and South Africa. Photo: Katie Orlinsky/Caritas.

stand in silent support, watching and hoping. Others donate money or goods, recognising in the suffering of others — even at great distance — our common humanity; and perhaps a thought that, one day, it could be them. Others appear later to help in the long-term work of rebuilding homes, workplaces and lives, or encouraging and supporting people as their lives take a new path.

'Take away the stone' (v 39)

These words are reminiscent of removing the rubble — sometimes a stone at a time — in the careful work of looking for survivors. But it also applies to the stones, the hindrances that weigh people and communities down, the blocks that stifle their ability to recover and find new life.

In Haiti, many obstacles had — and still have — to be overcome, to provide people with proper shelter and dignity. Not just rubble to be cleared, but land titles to resolve, construction sites to be planned, and permits to obtain.

The task of physically rebuilding remains a top priority for the Caritas network in Haiti. Over a million people still live in camps. Shelter makes up a third of Caritas' rehabilitation budget.

'Lazarus, come out!' (v 43)

Jesus commands Lazarus to come out. With the obstacle removed, the 'victim' is able to step out and emerge from the darkness. The call to Lazarus as he lies within the tomb, is the call to all of us to hope, even in the darkest of days, even when there seems to be no hope, no reason to try.

Francis Tifabe lost his home and injured his leg in the Haiti quake. Fortunately his wife and five children all survived. After living for months in a camp, with snakes and wet ground, the authorities cleared the camp, and the family was homeless again. However, Mr Tifabe's family were chosen to benefit from one of 10,000 temporary homes. His family has helped clear a plot of land, and the house is being built.

Rubble outside the Blesssed Sacrament Cathedral, Christchurch. Photo: Thomas Saywell.

Other Caritas shelter projects are also involving the people themselves in the rebuilding task.

Unbind him, let him go free (v 44)

Jesus restores Lazarus to his family, and the community in which he lives. But their help is needed to fully restore him to 'normality'. So it is after natural or human disaster. Those who are injured need treatment and support. Some will have severe, possibly life-long injury: lost limbs, or a brain injury requiring years of rehabilitation and special care. They may not be 'the person they once were'.

Will they find the support they need from family, from friends, from an accident compensation or welfare system that is under attack and focused on 'getting people back to work', from a society that values people only for what they can 'produce'?

As an international Catholic relief and development agency, Caritas is witness to the resurrection, rebuilding and recovery of lives, families and communities shattered by natural and human disasters.

We in New Zealand are seeing through the eyes of Christchurch that it takes a long time to rebuild and recover — often to a completely different way of life.

Caritas expects to be involved in earthquake recovery in Haiti for five years. Fifteen years is the early estimate to completely rebuild Christchurch.

For both Christchurch and Haiti, let us remember the words of Bishop Pierre Dumas, the President of Caritas Haiti: '[Rebuilding] doesn't mean rebuilding things as they were before; instead we have a chance to build a better Haiti in which people are at the heart of everything.' In our watching and waiting, our hoping and praying as we anticipate resurrection, let us keep those words in mind. ■

Martin de Jong, is the Communications Coordinator for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

Caritas is currently running its Lent Appeal, 25 percent of which will go to Christchurch earthquake relief (see advert on p 27). It is continuing to fund rehabilitation in Haiti, and responds to emergencies as needed around the world.

shoulder to shoulder

Michael Fitzsimons

In January I arrived in southern Thailand with my wife Rose to visit our longtime friend and fellow Kiwi, Fr John Larsen SM. We had just spent two weeks in Cambodia, mesmerised by the wonders of Angkor and the terrors of the Killing Fields among many other things.

We flew into Ranong, situated across a river from the southernmost tip of Burma, courtesy of Happy Air. Five years ago John walked the bustling, rather ugly streets of Ranong, trying to figure out what he could do to help the oppressed Burmese community. Ranong has an estimated 40,000 Thai citizens and 100, 000 Burmese, a permanent underclass of migrant workers.

It is amazing to see what five years of commitment to the Burmese community can achieve. We go for a tour around the projects set up by the Marist Mission Ranong (MMR), beginning with a community centre which includes a well-equipped computer room staffed by two Burmese computer teachers. We visit families who are part of the community-based HIV/ AIDS project, which focuses on those who are critically ill. Currently there are 70 patients on the programme. Some of them will not survive but many will with the help of antiretroviral treatment.

The people from this community live in desperate poverty. We arrive outside a dilapidated warehouse which stands by the river, and has been converted in the most primitive way to house a large number of Burmese people. Choe Aye is two months pregnant with her second child. Both she and her husband have AIDS. Her first child died in infancy, most likely of AIDS. She has a framed picture of her little girl which she takes from a locked cabinet of her precious items to show us. We are sitting in a little room where the family lives on the top storey of the warehouse, alongside other families, in unbearable cramped conditions. The hallway is dark and dingy. A small cooker stands outside each room.

L to R: Father John Larsen, Rose Fitzsimons, Michael Fitzsimons

An old lady is stationed near the entrance, ready to sound the warning if there is a police raid. When there is, people dash under the floorboards down at river level, where the police won't follow. Many of the people have no legal status and their future in Ranong is precarious to say the least. Two kids play with fish in a bowl. Washing is strung up in the one little patch of sunlight that reaches the inside of this ad hoc dwelling. People sit around talking, waiting, watching. Beside the warehouse, the polluted river rolls on by.

Fr John is an inspirational figure in this forsaken world, a flame in the darkness. He speaks Burmese fluently, buoying the people up, immersed in the dreadful circumstances of their lives. His genuine and practical care for them is a stunning gift that surprises and delights them. It gives them hope, the most precious of commodities.

HIV/AIDS is rife in this community. Project workers identify people with AIDS, get them to the hospital, support them — some in their dying, others in getting back to something like a normal life.

"They don't come any needier than impoverished migrants, without rights, often without families and support, dying of AIDS in a foreign country," says John.

We move on to the education initiatives which MMR has established. There's a nursery and kindergarten, a programme for secondary students and, remarkably, a new distance programme linked to the Australian Catholic

University. There's also a child protection programme. In all, about 130 children are benefitting from MMR's education mission.

The emphasis is on quality, says John. "Our goal is to give an education that is worthy of the name to as many Burmese children as possible — an education that gets them to think creatively and that will open doors in the future."

The transformation is already stunning. The children are immaculately dressed in their uniforms and eager to learn. They ask us lots of questions, bright-eyed and curious about everything. It is hard to credit the dire home scenes they have come from.

Behind these initiatives lies a team of about 30 people and at the heart of this team is the MMR community. The core community is made up of two Marist priests, seminarians and lay missionaries, and families on mission. Volunteers have come and gone over the five years, at God's bidding. It is a new model of Religious life, mixing lay and religious commitment — demanding in the extreme, based on prayer, committed to acting to achieve justice for the most vulnerable.

"Without an intensive prayer life, we would be lost, " says John. "It is the source of everything. What we have achieved has been through the power of the MMR community and a reliance on God to provide in every sense.

"It is our attempt to live the Gospel. And the truth is that a commitment to the poor and the fight for justice is at the heart of the Gospel."

On our flight out of Ranong, from somewhere unbidden, comes the phrase 'shoulder to shoulder' which our Prime Minister John Key used in the context of the Pike River mining disaster which claimed 29 lives. On our behalf he said New Zealand stood shoulder to shoulder with the West Coast community in their grief and their need.

I wonder. I have just experienced what 'shoulder to shoulder' actually means and it's something very different. The Pike River mine has been closed down, jobs lost. The media has moved on, the politicians are busy elsewhere. Funds to support the community have slowed to a trickle. In contrast to the MMR workers in Ranong, we don't seem able to sustain our compassion.

Our faith tells us that only the Spirit of God turns hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. In the words of the writer, Jean Vanier: "We are simply human beings, enfolded in weakness and hope, called together to change our world, one heart at a time." That's a challenge for all of us, not just for the inspirational MMR workers in Ranong. ■

Michael Fitzsimons is associate editor of Tui Motu and director of FitzBeck Communications, based in Wellington.

losing a brother through mental illness:

Mary Betz

A Journey through Holy Week and Easter

My brother Greg died unexpectedly last Holy Week. At 53, a heart attack took him, but only as the cumulative toll of mental illness. Extremely bright and talented, Greg once excelled at debate, organised an international student conference, did volunteer work with mentally disabled children, and read science, philosophy and theology. But after an unsettled time not coping with university, he was diagnosed in his early twenties with schizophrenia.

Thousands of kilometres away, Greg's early dark reality had touched me only fleetingly through occasional phone calls and letters. During my infrequent visits to Chicago, Greg was usually able to make an effort to be clean, sober and on his medication — and he delighted in being an uncle to my two daughters. In recent times with his illness outwardly under control with medication, Greg phoned frequently to talk about family and life's challenges.

On Holy Thursday as I flew across the Pacific, I found myself encountering Greg's struggle in a way I hadn't during his life. How does one make sense of a gradual descent of a loved one into a twilight world of paranoia and voices, sleeping by day and venturing out by night, smashing windows and mirrors. I remembered my mother's despair — watching her gentle gifted son change beyond recognition — and her depression at her powerlessness (and seemingly, God's) to help him. And what of the impoverished, soul-sapping 20 years of Greg's life fraught with psychiatrists, medications, cheap flats with lobbies smelling of urine,

Mary and Greg basking in the sun on the steps of the Art Institute, Chicago.

eviction after a suspicious fire, Greg as a victim of street beatings and worse abuse, disability allowance cancellation, government red tape, alcohol, police interventions, hospitalisations…

Somehow during those years, he held jobs, at least for a few weeks or months at a time. For a while he was a cashier at the Loyola University bookshop. Ironically this job was cut short not by his illness or going off his medication, but by an inner conviction of justice. Deciding to boycott Nestlé in solidarity with third world mothers and children,

Greg faced a dilemma when customers tried to purchase Nestlé's chocolate bars. He would explain about the boycott and ask them to buy something else. Sometimes they did, and sometimes they didn't. Complaints were made. After a few warnings, he was let go.

On Good Friday I accompanied my elderly shattered father to Greg's flat. Unlike previous flats, it was safe and secure, bought by Dad after Greg's last hospitalization 13 years earlier had almost miraculously put him on the road to a medicated stability. Medication came with a price, however. Greg was now able to discern socially acceptable behaviour, and he felt inadequate, ashamed and angry to have fallen short of his and others' expectations of higher education and a good job. At the same time his medications rendered him unable to concentrate or use his natural abilities.

He diarised his questions to counselors: 'why am I so angry,' 'how can I get rid of this anger?' He lived in constant internal fear that his anger would explode again, that he would destroy his apartment and be homeless again. His addictions to coffee, tobacco and alcohol became entrenched, his attempts to dull the fears and rage. His repeated notes to himself were alternately 'I don't deserve this place to live, I am not good enough', and 'I am a good person, I am worthy'. Only with difficulty would he allow family to take him to lunch or on an occasional trip to the zoo or Art Institute.

Neighbours and staff at his apartment building invariably spoke of Greg's ever-present gentleness, helpfulness and politeness. His counselor and case manager said he was a kind and caring man. Yet his multiple diaries obsessively chronicled each day — whether he was sober or had seven vodkas; if he shaved or showered; his intake of pizza and hamburgers, coffee and cigarettes; his feelings of loneliness and emptiness. The tables and dressers in his flat were covered elbow-deep with years of receipts, statements, accounts and newsletters – he could no longer determine whether to file them in the bin or the file cabinet that stood empty nearby.

In Easter week we celebrated Greg's Requiem, buried him next to my mum, and continued to look through the papers he left behind. As well as struggle, they revealed Greg's tremendous efforts to stay connected: daily phone calls to a friend in Texas; chats with his neighbours; notations of calls and visits from family members and friends; regular payments to a friend with a mental illness; and years of diary entries — his own musings and things said by counselors, friends and family that he wanted to remember. I recalled how delighted he was during family visits, and how somehow he always used to send just the right cards for birthdays. He would summon a smile or even a laugh despite the many inner demons still plaguing his soul, and was able to touch the lives of people around him with his goodness and gentleness.

I recalled how delighted Greg was during family visits, and how somehow he always used to send just the right cards for birthdays

Greg is now blessedly free from the suffering life brought him. I still grieve (as he did in life) that we understand so little about mental illness. I grieve for the life he had to struggle with, as well as his death. I think of the Fra Angelico painting in which a sorrowful and searching Mary looks deeply into Jesus' empty tomb. I stand with her, searching for understanding, still waiting for Easter to make its way into my heart. ■

Mary Betz is on the Pastoral Team and the Justice & Peace Commission of the Auckland diocese.

the paschal mystery

We celebrate the Easter mystery of Christ's death and resurrection through the beauty of works of art made for the Christchurch Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, which now lies in partial ruins

I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the myrtle and the olive tree.
Isaiah 41:19

The women rest their chins
on the hillside of his cold body.

He is the canoe that must be launched,
the precious manuscript that must be studied,
te whakahuia, the carved treasure chest

His hair hangs down like a braided river

They lay him gently in the crowded dark
where root and stem and bud and flower
begin, light flickering on the horizon.

Bernadette Hall

FOURTEENTH STATION Llew Summers

TABERNACLE DOORS Ria Bancroft

Francis Petre designed the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch. George Bernard Shaw described Petre as 'a New Zealand Brunelleschi.' Known as one of the finest church buildings in Australasia, it now lies in partial ruins. There is a strong hope that it will be rebuilt, along with other iconic Christchurch buildings.

Here we present two of the finest of the works of art contained in the cathedral: one of Llew Summers' 'Stations of the Cross', together with the poem by Bernadette Hall which it inspired; and Ria Bancroft's tabernacle doors, against their background of the Ida Lough tapestry.

They represent the death and resurrection of Christ which we know as the paschal mystery.

We are grateful to Bernadette Hall and Mons Charles Drennan (Cathedral Administrator), for permission to draw on material from "*The way of the Cross, sculptures Llew Summers, poems Bernadette Hall, celebrating the centenary of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Christchurch, New Zealand 2005*"

holy time with a friend

Jeph Mathias

"Yamunotri," I say, "the source of the Yamuna".

"Isn't it a Hindu pilgrimage site?" says Graham.

"Yeah, in summer… It's mid-winter, heart of the Himalayas, high as. Won't be anybody. Just us and BIG mountains. Choice!"

A week later we were in a high vaulted valley stuccoed with fluted snow. On the walls, translucent frozen waterfalls were as lustrous as stained glass and from up high the eerie resonance of an organ pipe wind. It's been too long since I felt so close to myself and to God in such a mountain cathedral. Now we were there with all our accoutrements: rope, harnesses, crampons, ice axes, tent plus a fine forecast and piles of instant noodles. Days of mindless ecstasy beckoned.

We'd camped on a scrap of flat land three hundred metres from the temple at the Yamuna's source.

"How'dya feel?"

"Knackered!"

First day tiredness: heavy packs full of food and metal ware, continuous uphill, soft snow, lungs and muscles unacclimatized. It was good to be at camp. We'd eaten and were tucked in, discussing tomorrow's plan — up the route we reccied to a 5000m pass and a long ridge curving seductively between great peaks. It was laid back and easy, on the map at least. Looking forward to finding out for real.

Tomorrow. First we had to let our bodies absorb all the salt and starch of those noodles and 900 gms of down soak up today's aches.

"Night, Graham. See'ya at dawn".

"Yeah man".

"*Utho! Utho!*" (Get yourselves up!)

Loud voices, rustic Hindi and snow crunching roughly under boots outside.

"Open your tent, come out. Confess who you are".

"I speak Hindi, Graham," I whisper. "This one is mine".

I unzip into a pool of torchlight, rippling sporadically. Vagrant beams glancing around all swing on to me, bore into my eyes. All I can see is indistinct silhouettes, boots moving, sticks rising and falling as wildly as their voices.

"*Araam–se*," I say. "Hey cool it, let's not fight."

I tried to parry their staccato questions, fired in volleys, with slow explanations.

"Where are you from, who are you, what is your job, where do you work?"

"We live in Musoorie — I'm a doctor".

"Doctor in a tent? Nah!"

"We work all over India".

"Doing what? Why are you here? Where's your ID? Do you have police permission?"

"We are here to climb, the policeman was not at his post".

"That is your problem. No one even treks in winter. You cannot climb, you need equipment, a local guide".

"We are experienced in climbing, we have maps and all the equipment we need…"

"You'll be eaten by bears, you'll die of cold, the weather is good now but if it turns bad you will die, you are too close to the Chinese border, there are snow leopards around here, you have not seen the avalanches — just the wind would rip you apart"

"I know, but we have all the warm gear we need, the forecast is fine, the Chinese border is 50 km away over massive mountains, we know about climbing and avalanches … let us take our chances with the bears…"

I was still explaining 20 minutes later and their shouted conclusion was still

"Utho, Utho. Chalo". (Get up, get packed, let's go)

"Sorry Graham…Gotta go."

Ripped out of our warm bags and delivered into a freezing night we threw everything into our packs and trudged behind them to the temple.

The temple priests showed us a little room with two kapok-matressed beds.

"We're *pujaris*. Welcome to Yamunotri. Sleep here. there are no bears, no avalanches, and it's warmer than a tent. Good enough for a doctor even".

They closed the door quietly, leaving us with warmth in our hands and sweetness in our mouths from the chai they'd magically conjured.

"Climbing, but not as we know it. See ya in the morning, Graham".

Next morning, woken by the baby Yamuna singing outside we went to the temple. Last night's disembodied shouts had acquired gentle faces and polite grammar.

"Let us show you around," said one.

"Please".

He showed us the thermal pool and invited us to bathe. When he prostrated himself before the goddess Yamuna (for us a geothermal fissure's steam vent), I touched my head to my hands. Then he showed us the abode of the Gods (a shrine built around a rock).

"Closed for winter," he explained. "God is away but we still venerate his home".

I joined him in seven holy perambulations around it.

"Now come to the temple, share our prayers".

It was an instruction, not a request.

And so we were cross-legged in front of images of Ram and Sita and terrifying Kali while an 80 year-old priest flicked resin onto a fire. Eight men, ages ranging from 25 to 80, prayed, chanted and beat wonderfully-worked brass gongs with an easy cadence honed by time and familiarity. I understood some of it: exhortations to various gods and goddesses, virtues they would like to develop, the holiness of this divine mountain home…

Suddenly through the fragrant smoke I saw the unthinking rapture I once perceived in a Trappist monastery. Here, again, was a small group of men in an austere environment seeking God through ritual, incense, voice and longing. Here, too, amidst gongs and smoke, a palpable but indefinable holiness. I could feel it but it slipped away grain by grain when my mind closed in trying to grasp it.

I realised, too, that their holy place, their worship, was not so unlike our own. Graham and I had also chosen this austere, pure place. Instead of heavy yellow gongs and drums we'd brought crampons ice axes and rope. Our metronomic gait under heavy packs echoed their cadenced chanting and at the end of a long day our MSR stove conjured flames from kerosene vapour, and the aroma of Maggi. Our sacred accoutrements. To get close to God. I breathed deeply and sang my own prayers to their Sanskrit songs. I felt good. Sita smiled, Kali might have winked. The *pujari* passed us a handful of *prasaad*. Amen.

After prayers, hot *chai* again.

"Try this. If you like it we'll bring more," said a priest, graciously placing two *roti* on the stainless steel plate in front of us. They were sweet and delicious. He sat and sipped *chai* with us, his young face belying his voice's velvety wisdom.

Slowly he opened his life story: growing up in Darjeeling, son of a devout Buddhist, being sent to an elite Catholic boarding school to get the best education, finally traveling around India to really learn. Something happened in holy Haridwar, where the ice blue Ganges charges out of the Himalayas.

"I found myself, God found me. I understood Hinduism as my way… Twenty three years ago. Ah yes," he said, wistfully remembering. "I left my family, came here…. stayed. I'm acclimatized now, almost. Winter's best. Freezing cold, avalanches, wind… sometimes bears. But no pilgrims, just us eight and God's mountains…. and today you two," (reflective pause) "I know Christianity from St Joseph's school. Our gods — yours and mine — aren't enemies".

"Can't be," I said. "There's no yours and mine. There is only one God. We are all God's children, so God just loves us all".

He nodded, "Yes" and smiled slowly. "You're broad minded enough to be Hindu. Now have another *roti*, then go down, or we'll get trouble with the police".

So we packed and, escorted by a pujari, walked out to the road end.

"Whaddya make of all that?" asked Graham. "Get freaked by their idols?"

"Nah. I just prayed my own way. God's there in Yamunotri".

Hours later, almost home. An idea — embryonic, vapoury — rises off unexplored inland waters within me.

"Hey Graham, d'ya think it's kinda primitive worshipping a steam vent?"

"Yeah, kinda."

"Yeah! They see Gods everywhere, worship steam vents and mountains and rivers. Not us. We've dispensed with such primitive practices. Rational, economic man knows. No magic, no mystery. God is dead. *Finito. Kattm. Hallus.* We don't bow to hills and forests. No! Modern man runs world summits on "Climate Change".

Our axes were never unhitched nor did our crampons taste ice. The rope never uncoiled itself from its bag. A disappointing trip climbing-wise… yet also an exploratory trip, a surprising trip. Via other accoutrements I'd been decluttered. I'd shared holy time with a friend. God broke in. Somehow revealed shreds of her purpose. Again. ■

Pujari- temple priest.
Roti- flatbread.
Prasaad- Food offerings used in ceremonies, then given by pujaris to worshippers afterwards.

is this church building a work of art?

Ron O'Grady

The writer challenges our readers to answer his questions of place, artist and subject of this remarkable work of art-Church building. Who can give us the answers?

Is it possible for a church building to be itself a work of art? The answer to that question is an absolute "yes". Anyone who has seen images of the spectacular new basilica in Barcelona designed by Gaudi cannot fail to be overwhelmed by the beauty of a building which is in itself a unique work of art.

Large cathedrals do this to us. The beauty and religious devotion that inspired the building are evident in its construction. In the aftermath of the terrible earthquake in Christchurch there has been constant reference to the ruins of the Christchurch Cathedral, the Catholic Basilica and numerous other churches destroyed or badly damaged. Even in our secular society we still value the symbolism of church buildings.

Churches are usually expensive buildings to construct. Can a small penniless congregation also create a work of art? Somewhere around 1972 I was driving across the central North Island when I passed a most extraordinary church. I stopped the car and took a photograph of the building which may or may not have been a consecrated church although the little sign indicated that it was a place of Catholic worship. Enquiries at the time failed to uncover more information. Soon after I went overseas for some years and was unable to follow up on this remarkable "church".

The courage and imagination of those who painted this small church and turned it into a bold work of art has to be admired. Who were the artists? What are they trying to convey? What is the theme? Is it Adam and Eve? Is it Mary and Joseph? And in the end did the authorities demand that the painting be removed? Over the years I have often recalled the experience and maybe there are some readers of Tui Motu who can explain what took place in this isolated spot.

Forty years ago in this little corner of nowhere, some dedicated Christians made a bold statement to the passing world. Today we should salute their courage and recognise their art. ■

Ron O'Grady is a minister in a Union Parish in Auckland. He is a former associate General Secretary of the Chrsitian Conference of Asia, and author if books on art and human rights

orthodoxy

Glynn Cardy

How does one use words to express the inexpressible? Glynn Cardy used a 50th birthday party as an opportunity to wrestle with this classical conundrum

I don't believe in the personal supreme being that many call God. My understanding of God is bigger than that metaphor, and too restricted by it. However my understanding may not be right, it is merely a reflection of the thinking and experiences I have been exposed to.

There's an old story ascribed to Augustine, the 5th century bishop of Hippo: a young boy has dug a hole in the sand and with his bucket is repeatedly and futilely trying to fill it with seawater. The story likens the sea to God and the boy's efforts to religion's attempts to contain God within the bounds of our language and concepts.

Debates among religious people about who is right or orthodox are tiresome after a while. Recently a conservative newspaper commentator and a fundamentalist pastor threw accusations and verses at each other both claiming they were orthodox when it came to belief in the physical resurrection of Christ. Interestingly there were no letters to the newspapers on this exchange. Maybe I'm not the only one who finds religious 'I'm right, you're wrong' arguments wearying.

Given my public record you may wonder whether I'm being hypocritical. Time and again I've enunciated a progressive view on many key doctrines of the Church. Yet my motive has been not to convince others that they are wrong and I'm right, but merely to articulate a different way of understanding the Bible, faith, and God. For I think what one believes pales into insignificant compared to how one lives.

At a party last Saturday night I found myself in conversation with a man schooled in Christian fundamentalist beliefs. "Ah," he exclaimed after introductions, "Public Enemy No.1!" Although somewhat taken aback I smiled. We then talked for some time. I tried to assure him that what mattered to me was not his beliefs but how he cared for his family, friends, and strangers, how he used the power he had, and how he related to those who were most vulnerable. We parted on amicable terms.

God is a mysterious vastness and our buckets, holes, and orthodoxy are always too small.

The truth of the resurrection of Christ is not found in literally believing in some Bible verses. Nor is it found in believing that a murdered man can come back to life. Nor is it found in a subservient acceptance of traditional Church doctrine. Rather what I would call the resurrection — namely the ongoing power known in Jesus' ministry — is true only to the extent that Christians live it. And that power is compassion.

The party was a 50th birthday and most of us present were of that decade. Most too had been thoroughly immersed in evangelical religion as teenagers and had kept some form of commitment into adulthood. Yet everyone I spoke to over the course of that evening and the next morning had broadened considerably from his or her earlier days. Dogmatic surety had mellowed with age. Life experiences had tempered moral precision. Wisdom and integrity could be found outside their normative Christian experience.

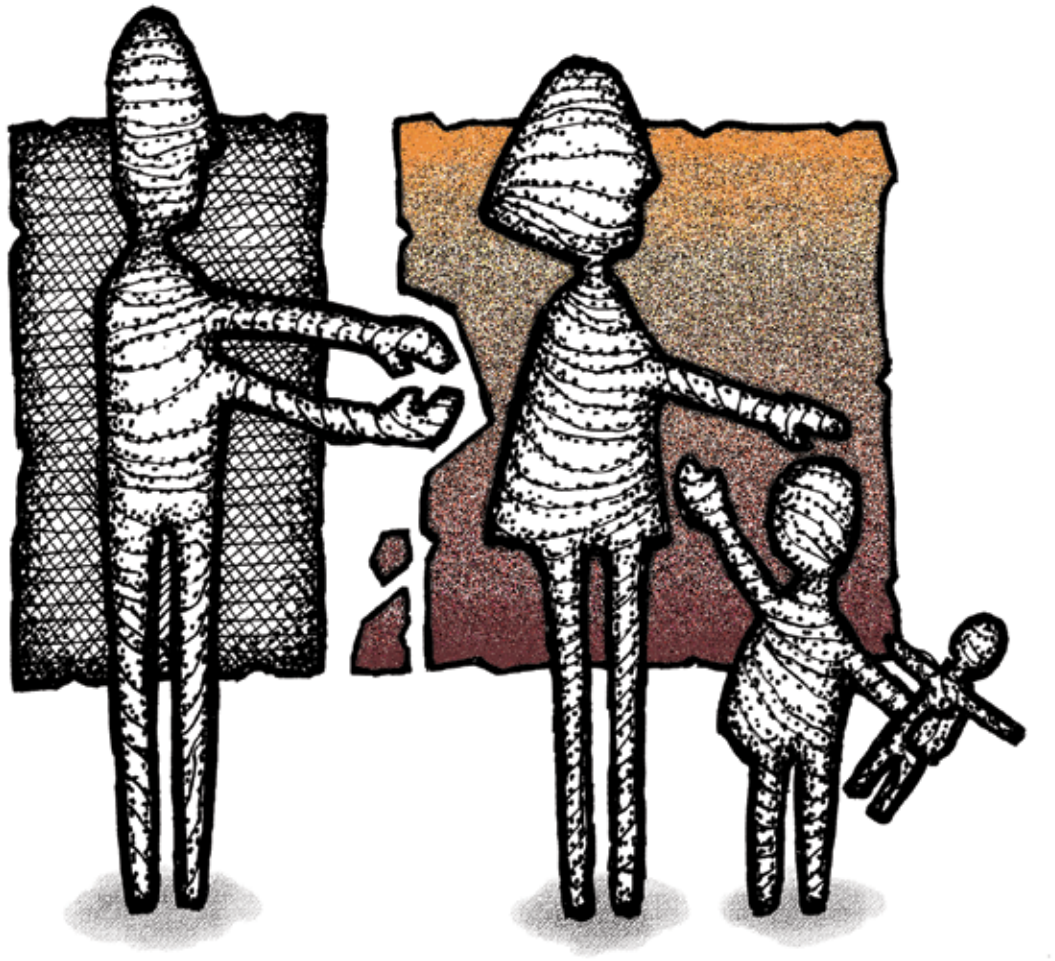
Maybe these changes though weren't the result of being older than 50, for every partygoer I spoke to was engaged in a helping profession where in theory compassion predominates. And just maybe compassion has become the plumb line for their faith, the measure against which doctrines and practices are judged, sometimes found wanting, and are then remoulded or discarded. Who knows?

In case you're wondering, because I don't believe in a personal God it doesn't follow that I believe in an impersonal one. Marcus Borg helpfully uses the word transpersonal, i.e. God is more than the personal. God is a mysterious vastness and our buckets, holes, and orthodoxy are always too small. ■

Glynn Cardy is minister at St. Matthews-in-the-City Auckland, and a frequent writer of spiritual ideas

the church and excluded fathers

Darryl Ward



One area of pastoral concern that the Church has largely overlooked is the plight of excluded fathers: fathers who are no longer actively involved in the lives of their children. Their number is substantial: calculations made in the 1990s using family court statistics suggested that 20,000 New Zealand children lost all contact with their fathers every year. In comparison, only 3,000 New Zealand children lost their fathers to the Second World War.

However, it has been difficult for excluded fathers to even be acknowledged, let alone get any sympathy. Along with western society in general, Aotearoa New Zealand has tended to take a very dim view of fathers who don't live with their children. Too often they have been accused of having walked out on their families; being violent or abusive; or being "deadbeats" who deliberately avoid making financial contributions to their children's upbringing.

Yet the facts paint a very different picture.

Firstly, statistics show most divorces are initiated by women, not by men, and one care facilitator I know reports that, of the cases he sees, 70% of divorces are female initiated. (It would be very wrong to simply blame women for this situation. There are a number of factors at play, with perhaps the most significant being that there are often more incentives for couples to separate than to stay together).

Secondly, men are just as likely as women to be victims of domestic violence, but while we quite rightly condemn domestic violence against women, domestic violence against men, which is equally widespread, is generally ignored, or at best heavily trivialised.

Thirdly, despite sensationalist headlines that would suggest the contrary, the overwhelming majority of fathers who do not live with their children do pay

their child support and do pay it on time; while the much touted astronomical child support debts so routinely reported by the media mostly consist of penalties.

Excluded fathers receive little public sympathy, and this situation is worsened by the fact that popular culture regularly portrays men as being irresponsible, selfish and violent; an image reinforced so regularly that many blindly accept it without thinking. Even the Church is guilty of buying into such stereotypes. I personally know several men who had been actively involved with the Church, but had their ministries terminated for no other reason than because their marriages had failed: if they could not hold their families together, how could they be trusted to hold leadership roles in the Church?

However, it is not just the Church that has failed excluded fathers. Society as a whole has failed them, and in doing so it has also failed their children. It therefore should be no surprise that many excluded fathers seek relief through alcohol or other drugs, and even suicide.

With these factors in mind, along with my experience of working in this mission field, I researched and wrote, *In the name of the Father: Pastoral care for excluded fathers.* This paper is a set of guidelines for the Church, providing pastoral care for excluded fathers. It must be stressed that this in no way should be seen as competing with or detracting from issues faced by — and the pastoral needs of — mothers and other women. It is about ensuring that the pastoral needs of all who need help are addressed by the Church, irrespective of their gender.

In the name of the Father is based on the '12 steps', which were first formulated by AA and are now used by many recovery organisations and form a sound theological basis for most pastoral situations. The '12 steps' can be concisely summarised by the principles of surrender, restoration and sharing. However, *In the name of the Father* does not propose one course of action for all excluded fathers, as each pastoral situation is unique, but it does advocate a consistent use of these principles.

This paper has now been distributed to most major denominations of the Church in New Zealand (as well as a number of smaller ones). A copy may be downloaded from my website: www.theword.tk ■

Darryl Ward is a licensed lay minister (preacher, evangelist and worship leader) in the Anglican Parish of Kapiti and a Councillor of the Wellington Institute of Theology.

Barry's story

Barry (not his real name) thought life could not get worse after he had separated from his partner and child, but nothing had prepared him for the trauma that lay ahead. Overnight he went from being a father who was actively involved in his daughter's daily life to being an uncle-like figure who got to see his daughter every other weekend.

Those alternate weekends were the highlights of his life, but his efforts to remain involved with major decisions about his daughter's upbringing led to him being abruptly excluded from her life, and Barry felt he had no alternative but to resort to the Family Court.

"It was horrible," he recalls with a shudder. "I felt ignored and intimidated and that I was in a criminal court instead, where I was the defendant".

After being bellowed at by a judge for pleading to be allowed to see his daughter, Barry gave up on the Family Court and tried to fill the gap in his life with alcohol and drugs. Before long, his life was spiralling out of control.

Eventually, Barry sought help, and was introduced to the principles of surrender, restoration and sharing. He acknowledged his powerlessness and accepted the situation was outside of his control. By finally surrendering his futile attempts to manage the situation, he took the first steps towards being able to manage his life again. With the new found clarity that came from acceptance of his situation, he was able to make amends with his ex partner and others involved. He began to build bridges where there had once been walls.

Barry and his ex-partner are now on civil terms once more; and he and his daughter again fulfil their vital roles in each others' lives. ■

reflections on the state of the pakeha nation

Mitzi Nairn

This abridged essay remembers the Rev. Joan Cook, an Australian who loved Aotearoa New Zealand enough to educate us about the truth of our history, race relations, and the Treaty of Waitangi, for several decades.

I describe myself as a Pakeha New Zealander of British descent. I was born in London and arrived in New Zealand when I was four years old. So I have a sense of belonging only in this land — I don't fit anywhere else and I don't feel at home anywhere else.

I love this land, for its own sake. I love its landscapes and seascapes, its biodiversity of plants, birds, insects and sea creatures. I grieve for its endangered species, and its polluted waters. I also celebrate its horticultural and agricultural excellence, the productivity of its farmers, fishers, industrial workers — the creativity of its people. So I see beauty in its modified landscape also — fields and crops, roads and bridges.

If this seems contradictory, it is because the balance between natural and modified is seriously out of whack. This stems from a lack of collective and individual responsibility. What gives with a person who loves the bush and the birdsong and builds a house there, taking a cat, a dog and a ginger plant?

Project Waitangi Whangarei instituted an annual essay as part of their Waitangi Day activities in recognition of the enormous role Joan Cook had played in Tiriti work and education. An Anglican priest, Joan, who died in 2008, was widely known in ecumenical circles for her wisdom and skills in helping groups to face necessary changes and work together creatively.

Historically there have been cultural assumptions rooted in capitalism. We have thousands of stories and pictures of even the poorest people attacking the land to clear it, with a ferocious kind of hatred that will not rest until not a tree, not a stump, remains. I suppose that from there it was a short step towards hatred of the people who were to be identified with the enemy — land. Certainly there was numerical dominance, invasive warfare, followed by governmental/parliamentary attack on the ways and resources of the tangata whenua, the land people — the people who are the land. Separation replaced contact.

We inherit a colonial mess, where suspicion, hostility and ignorance still dominate the patterns of thought and experience of the population of European descent. Notice I haven't called them 'Pakeha'. That is because I am feeling towards using the word to designate a newer, modern group within the people of European descent. For those who are happy to accept the gift of a Maori designation, and are seeking an appropriate way to live under *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

I am happy to identify myself as Pakeha because it is part of my belonging in this land. A word from the first language and people of this place. I regard it as something of a gift. In terms of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* I partly try to discern and model myself on the 1840 Pakeha of Maori hope and expectation. When Maori set out to make formal provision for the new arrivals, what was in their hearts? Surely there were the cultural obligations of care and protection, but there must also have been respect. Although they already knew the excesses of whalers, sealers, ex-convicts and speculators, they also had formed some of their ideas from contact with missionaries, naval officers, explorers and naturalists. It was this group with whom they sought formal agreements.

So while they made provision for the Queen's people to be self-governing (like every *hapu)*, to live in safety and according to laws, I think that Maori believed that Pakeha would share their respect for the lands, forests and fisheries, even if the guardians might not be named as *Papatuanuku, Tane* or *Tangaroa*.

We know that to the Maori leaders of the time, conversation, knowledge, and ideas were of paramount interest and importance. By 1840 they had adopted reading and writing with enthusiasm. They were taking on board aspects of the new European debate about humanism and human rights — illustrated by their freeing of slaves. Their experts were taking on scientific and technological ideas like ships with hulls and sails, ploughing, dairying and horticulture with new crops like peaches, potatoes and wheat, and the mills and bakeries to process it.

So, in effect, they were negotiating with the positive side

of those they called Pakeha. Honourable, thoughtful, people, who loved and respected the natural world and brought knowledge and resources to improve human life. These seemed to be people with a willingness to live according to proper laws and customs, to converse and debate modern ways, and to negotiate the way ahead for the two peoples in co-operation and respect.

So why can't that still be us? Most of that description sits comfortably on me and on many of the Pakeha people I know. Many of us struggle to live responsibly in a world threatened by global warming and an avalanche of waste. At the individual level we support green causes and don't drop plastic bottles. We may have a worm farm, re-use, recycle and so forth.

There are many things I feel proud about. This country has led the world in many social developments. Votes for women, labour relations such as the forty-hour week, no fault accident compensation, dairy co-operatives, a communication system covering the whole country based around the Post Office, and of course, Social Security, which was supported by the Maori members. Social Security was a far different concept than Social Welfare, an Old World set of practices and ideas that has returned to replace it.

Taxation was somewhat thought of as the way people clubbed together to have things that only the richest few could buy for themselves — roads, bridges, X-ray machines, hospitals with staff, an accessible education system and so on.

I was very encouraged to read an article in the *NZ Herald* (Monday January 10, 2011) headed "Ethical business necessary to win back trust" by Phil O'Reilly, chief executive of Business NZ. Writing about the need for investment to enable the economy to grow, O'Reilly calls for a Regulatory Responsibility Act, which would require lawmakers to adhere to a set of principles of good practice. This would give various regulatory bodies power to enforce better dealing and socially and environmentally responsible behaviour by companies and businesses.

So there is hope for Pakeha like me, that this country could be a place to be proud of, for its social policies, its inclusiveness, its biodiversity and conservation, its research and development, and its thriving economy, all under *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*.

The population of European descent would have some work to do. We need to turn around our ignorance of Maori values (*tikanga*), both traditional ones and modern expressions which come as a response to current changes and developments; and we need to repair our ignorance of colonial history.

Then maybe we could get our heads around the minimal restoration being provided to Maori in various settlements. For example, we could understand that Maori are getting back what is theirs. We are not giving away something to them that is "ours".

We could take on board that Maori are getting back in settlements less than 10% of the resources which were alienated without consent and illegally.

As we begin to see improvements for some Maori groups in health and education under kaupapa Maori (Maori agendas, input and control) at local hapu level, why not move faster towards restorative justice? Why not seriously prioritise employment for youth, with better, agreed strategies rather than mumbling the words?

Further, we need to put forward some of our best national treasures — people resources — into considering constitutional questions. How does that Rangatiratanga sovereignty come to expression today? How can governance work for us all?

We need something far more wide-ranging than the minimal nuts and bolts inquiry that National and the Maori Party have come up with. It will need time to get people from different perspectives and persuasions involved, from the newest immigrants to the oldest identities. Such a review will need to come up with a shared vision of how we could be as a nation, inclusive, life-loving and taking care of the natural world of which we are part. ■

Mitzi Nairn was the Director of the Combined Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand's Programme on Racism and has been actively involved in anti-racism initiatives since the 1960s.

the empty tomb: go and witness to the risen one

Kathleen Rushton

In the Gospel reading for Easter Sunday, we hear that while it was still dark Mary Magdalene went to the tomb (John 20:1-9). The stone had been rolled away. She ran to tell the disciples. Peter and "the other disciple" who ran to the tomb, entered it and found the burial linen. We are told that "the other disciple… saw and believed."

The second Sunday of Easter's gospel tells of two appearances of Jesus (20:19-31). That evening Jesus came among the fearful disciples saying, "Peace be with you." He breathed on them saying: "Receive the Holy Spirit …" Later Thomas who was absent declared that he will not believe unless he sees and places his hand on Jesus' wounds. At the second appearance eight days later, at Jesus' invitation Thomas placed his hand into his side. Thomas responded, "My Lord and my God."

Mary of Magdala by Lucy D'Souza
© MVG Medienproduktion, 1990.

Do you notice that eight verses have been left out? V.10 tells us: "The two disciples returned to their homes." Then, vv.11-18 (the gospel for Easter Tuesday) tell of one who stayed at the tomb and who here, and in the other three gospels, is the first witness of the resurrection. John's account is told in a way that reveals what is now possible in the relationship between God and disciples.

Let's deal though with two aspects which often obscure Mary's significance. Much is made of comparing the words of Jesus to her about not touching him (v.17) and of his invitation to Thomas to touch him (v.27). This prohibition and encouragement are overplayed because in each case there are different Greek words for "touch" or "place." Therefore, attempts to link these words — both often rendered "touch" in English — are misplaced.

Second, generations of artists depict Jesus with hands raised toward Mary in a stop-do-not-come-near-me gesture. Their paintings are often entitled "*Noli me tangere!*" ("Don't touch me!"). Attention has thus been drawn to the first half of v.17. The commission of Jesus to Mary in the second half has been obscured: "But go to my brothers and sisters and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Likewise, v.18 is also overshadowed: "Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord", and she told them that he had said these things to her.'"

Mary was commissioned by Jesus to announce his resurrection and a change now happens. To this point, Jesus has spoken of the Father as "my Father" or "the Father" but never as "your Father," that is, the disciples' Father. In John's gospel we are never instructed to say "Our Father." The same applies to Jesus' use of the word "God."

After his death and resurrection, Jesus' words imply that now disciples are born as children of God as promised (1:12) in a way that God becomes in the words of Jesus, "your Father" and "your God." Mary is entrusted with this climatic announcement. Now

with Thomas we too may exclaim, "My Lord and my God." A distinction is still made between the unique relationship Jesus has with God and that which is now possible for disciples.

The early church recognised the significance of Jesus' commission to Mary by calling her *apostola apostolorum* (apostle of the apostles). Medieval art depicts Mary in this role. Indian artist Lucy D'Souza's 1990 painting from a Misereor Lenten Hunger Cloth stands in this tradition. Interestingly, for the early centuries of the church the symbol of the resurrection was the empty tomb depicted with Mary and the women pointing to it. In later art, their role as the first witnesses to the resurrection gives way to depictions of them in the traditional role of women in mourning customs — they carry anointing spices to the tomb.

Mary came to the tomb in darkness, in the night of suffering, grief and loss. At this time the pain and suffering of our world seems overwhelming.

Our nation still stands at the tomb of earthquake-ravaged Lyttelton and Christchurch, changed forever on 22 February. For all too many there is the emptiness of no tomb in which to honour their beloved dead.

Here for days as I listened to the BBC World Service news, this natural disaster was juxtaposed with horrendous accounts and the voices of the courageous Libyan people's struggle against Gadhafi which happened at the same time and continues. Then the assassination in Pakistan of our courageous brother in faith Shahbaz Bhatti and the earlier one of the governor Salman Taseer who both opposed the blasphemy law became very close.

The cell phone of a Muslim Pakistani resident here rings as we cook a meal. The anxiously longed for call is from a family member, a human rights lawyer who had returned to Lahore to work on a project connected to this struggle for which both men died.

"In the beginning …" is the first line of John as in Genesis. Only this gospel states that Jesus was buried and rose in a garden thus linking the graciousness of God in creation with our recreation in the death and resurrection of Jesus in whose flesh is seen God. Mary, like us, at first does not recognise Jesus, her light in the darkness.

So he asks, "Who are you looking for?" (v.15).

The verb "to look for …" echoes throughout this gospel beginning with when Jesus asked Andrew and another disciple: "Who are you looking for?" (1:38) as he does us.

Do we hear his question echo in our lives? Do we come in the darkness and do we stay at the tomb, the place of grief and suffering as Mary did? When have I "turned around and saw Jesus there" recognising eventually light in darkness? (v.14). How do I respond to the Risen One? ■

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

a western with a twist

True Grit

Reviewer: Paul Sorrell

This latest offering by American directors Joel and Ethan Cohen does not explore any deep and meaningful themes, but is rather an affectionate homage to that most well-known of all American movie genres, the western. Although based on the novel that also inspired the 1969 film of the same name starring the king of the western, John Wayne, it is not a remake. The plot is simplicity itself — the classic western storyline of the posse in pursuit of the bad guys — meaning that the focus falls on the development of character and motive.

Of the film's three protagonists, we first meet Mattie Ross (skillfully played by newcomer Hailee Steinfeld), a sassy girl whose determination, shrewdness and practical intelligence belie her 14 years. Mattie is determined to bring her father's killer, hired hand Tom Chaney, to justice and hires US Marshal 'Rooster' Cogburn (Jeff Bridges) to assist her in tracking him down. Unkempt, boastful, irascible, a hard drinker and a crack shot, Cogburn is seemingly the polar opposite of the quick-witted youngster. His rumpled clothing and incoherent drawl contrasts with her lively facility with language and tightly coiled plaits. The third character thrown into the mix is Texas Ranger LaBoeuf (Matt Damon), who has his own reasons for bringing Chaney to justice. While LaBoeuf's main role is to facilitate the plot, he provides a clever foil to both Mattie and Rooster.

Mattie's precocity — her powers of persuasion and ability to bargain successfully with hardened merchants — are amply illustrated in the opening scenes, which also give us an insight into Rooster's character as he deftly turns a court hearing to his advantage. We also gain some impression, later confirmed in adundance, of his skill with a six-gun. Apart from the three main characters, the film is populated with a rich array of frontier grotesques, like the eccentric trader-cum-bush medic enveloped in his bearskin, or the outlaw who delights in imitating a chicken.

The previous Coen brothers film I'd seen, *No Country for Old Men*, was liberally laced with violence and horror, and I was anticipating more of the same. However, while *True Grit* does contain a few touches of the macabre, the emphasis is very much on character and relationships, particulary the one that develops, ever so subtly, between Mattie and Rooster. Which of the two displays the truer grit becomes a pertinent question. This is a beautifully executed homage to a popular cinematic genre that is well worth an outing to your local theatre. ■

a moral compass for a new economy

Rediscovering Values

Jim Wallis

Orbis, 2010

Reviewer: Nickl Chapman

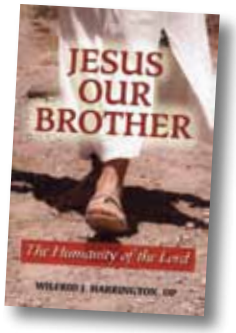
Jim Wallis is a highly influential American Christian who spoke to an appreciative audience last year in Dunedin *(Tui Motu*, November 2010). He and his Sojourners movement are admired world-wide (and vilified by some on the American Right) for their focus on the Christian commandment to love the poor. His life has embodied active concern and powerful preaching.

In this 2010 book, Wallis focuses on the suffering of those in the US since the 'Great Recession' began in 2008. He sees this crisis as an opportunity to repent, and to change. We should not be asking when it will end but 'How will this crisis change us?' The answer is found in the full title of the book: *Rediscovering values in the city, our towns and in our community. A moral compass for the new economy.*

Like the prophets he quotes, Wallis proclaims the harm of our false worship. Consumerist values are destroying our personal and national economies, our sense of self-worth, and the planet. His book simply and convincingly analyses how this has happened. Short-term profits have been valued, not the long-term good of all. 'To believe in a market that ... is wholly capable of regulating itself, is to believe in essence, in a market that is not subject to human fallibility, folly, and, yes, sin ... a tempting belief but an idolatrous one, and it projects a quality that only belongs to God onto a tower made by humankind.'

As well as the larger structural problems, Wallis also discusses our personal idolatry, the ways we have allowed ourselves to be defined as consumers. He calls us to re-align behaviour with Christian values, for example by looking at how we spend money ('a budget is a moral document') and time ('a calendar is a moral document'). His call to a return to deeper spiritual values mentions those of many faiths, for example how Moslem frequent prayer practices provide personal integrity during stress, how Halal principles

small, vibrant, balanced



Jesus our brother: the humanity of the Lord.

Wilfrid Harrington OP

Paulist Press, 128 pp.

Reviewer: Fr Mark Chamberlain

This is a wonderful book to read! Fr Wilfrid Harrington is currently professor of Scripture at the Dominican House of Studies, Dublin. He has spent his life writing books, articles and giving lectures. This has required of him a daily discipline of time and research. All of this was made possible because of his lively awareness of his own relationship with Jesus. So in this book one brother writes about his brother Jesus, a friendship honed over many years. I am sure this is why it is such an interesting and good read.

In the past thirty years there has been much published work on Jesus the Christ. I am an avid reader of Christology, both in order to understand where we are as Church, and in order to discern how to be a priest for today. A stunning number of books on Jesus have been written in pursuit of the historical Jesus, but only some of these remain helpful spiritually.

The Jesus Seminar movement has attempted to understand who Jesus was. Some writers prefer to emphasize the humanity of Jesus, while others put an emphasis on his divinity. To emphasize one to the exclusion of the other disrupts the easy balance, which exists so gracefully in Jesus. Fr Harrington's book is refreshingly free of this unbalanced pursuit. In it we sense Jesus, and his instinct and his essence reach into our hearts as we read. I kept having to pause often as I reflected on the written word. Given the fact that this is a small book I was tempted to read it all in one sitting. However, Fr Harrington's writing on Jesus is so vibrant that I needed to take time to digest and consider it bit by bit. I suspect you will too.

Fr Harrington has devoted a section to the traits of Jesus. Faith, prayer, testing, compassion, forgiveness, humour and a number of other character topics, are succinctly developed. This portion of his book helped me experience the unique person of Jesus. I have noticed myself continuing to re-read and stay especially with this part. The humanity of Jesus is his focus, and Jesus as your brother and mine is his topic.

This Dominican has truly written from the fruits of his contemplation. I recommend this little book wholeheartedly. We ought all to have a personal copy. ■

ensure fair loans, and how Pope Benedict has pointed out that we lack the morality, not the resources, to ensure the hungry are fed.

He also writes of the literally green shoots of hope from creative responses to this crisis, such as Detroit's green industries and the hundreds of community and family gardens in its vacant lots. He invites readers to overcome a sense of helplessness through a list of 'twenty moral exercises' that would make an excellent set of Lenten reflections and actions (the new paperback edition does have Lenten exercises — see www.sojo.net).

Wallis is writing here primarily for an American audience, and perhaps he touches too lightly, for some, on the global damage caused by that country's huge oil addiction. He could also have mentioned the huge personal suffering also caused by a free market approach to health, where creating and treating disease are industries, preventing it is not.

However, the book's approachability, especially for American readers, is its greatest strength. If it helps the ordinary Christians in the US to acknowledge the dangers of its consumerist dis-society, their politicians, and ours, may have the strength to become the leaders we all need them to be. ■

Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

that's reassuring

Prostitution, from 1 April 2011, is illegal in the Vatican, along with training anyone for terrorist acts, or providing them with chemical or bacteriological weapons, or polluting soil, water or atmosphere.

Benedict ordered the creation of a financial 'watchdog' to make Vatican Bank operations conform to EU standards of transparency; part of his sorting out of inherited problems.

food for thought

In February World Bank data showed higher food prices have pushed 44 million more people in developing countries into extreme poverty since June 2010. Rice represents almost 50% of food expenses in poorest countries, according to the International Rice Research Institute. Floods and droughts have hurt the world's leading agriculture-producing countries. Across Asia, and in parts of Latin America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, costlier food is pushing up inflationary pressures. Planting in US, the world's third biggest exporter, may drop 25% this year because growers can earn more from soybeans and corn. As an American rice farmer commented, "Farming is a business, and you've got to look at economics".

On a different note, a growing body of food scientists believe insects are a potential way out of this mess. Even though up to a third of the world still eats insects, they remain a largely untapped food source with an estimated 40 tonnes of insects for every person on the planet. So far more than 1400 insects have been documented as edible. What makes insects particularly attractive is how energy efficient they are. Scientists at the Netherlands' Wageningen University found that 10 kg of feed produces 9 kg of locusts, compared to just 1kg of beef, 3 kg of pork and .5 kg of chicken. Many insects meanwhile have similar protein levels to red meat, but contain more vitamins and less fat. Ugh!

false leadership

What is the connection between James Watt, Pope John XXIII and Hosni Mubarak? Watt is credited with perfecting ways of harnessing the pressure generated by steam — and of controlling its destructiveness through appropriate outlets. Forty-eight years ago this month, in an encyclical (*Peace on Earth*) addressed to 'all people of goodwill' John enumerated three characteristics of the age: the movements towards political emancipation, the emancipation of women, and the abolition of racial discrimination. He wrote: "Thus, in our day, in very many human beings the inferiority complex which endured for hundreds and thousands of years is disappearing, while in others there is an attenuation and gradual fading of the corresponding superiority complex which had its roots in socio-economic privileges, sex or political standing." The pressure generated by Mubarak's repression of those movements in Egypt finally exploded.

true leadership

The great Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, taught that history shows revolutions generally substitute one dictator for another. His approach was to educate people by helping them to understand why things are the way they are, and so become motivated to seek ways to bring about change in an evolutionary manner.

"The sectarian, whether rightist or leftist, sets himself up as the proprietor of history, as its sole creator, and the one entitled to set the pace of its movement. Rightist and leftist sectarians do differ in that the one desires to stop history, the other to anticipate it. On the other hand, they are similar by imposing their own convictions on the people, whom they thereby reduce to mere masses. For the sectarian, the people matter only as a support for his own goals."

In the absence of meaningful paths to change, people are left with three options — revolt, acquiescence or flight. Revolutionaries often impose their will on the people in the name of 'the common good', unconsciously imitating the overthrown regime. Acquiescence breeds resentment, together with either infantilism or active cooperation. Flight often takes the form of disengagement and drifting away. Acceptance of truly human aspirations is essential for positive change.

church leadership

Similar forces are at play in the Church. Nearly forty years ago Cardinal Delargey was wont to say that the Holy Spirit was telling us something through the impending shortage of priests, namely, the laity were being called to assume their responsibilities, as restated by Vatican II. There appear to be two different reactions in the Church in NZ. In some parts there are programmes to train lay pastoral leaders, coupled with diocesan restructuring aimed at engendering lay-clerical collaboration; in other parts men are being trained as deacons. The Risen Christ's command is 'to make disciples of all peoples'. Which approach is more likely to fulfil the command?

balancing the budget

Some 'Tea Party' Republicans in New Hampshire State have proposed a law in the name of 'personal freedom and responsibility' that would give parents a $4,500 tax break for taking their children out of school. It is hoped (the law doesn't require it) they would 'home school' them. One has to wonder… ■

the holy spirit speaks …

Robert Consedine

In the early 1970s New Zealand hosted a visit from an extraordinary priest Ivan Illich. I remember him as tall, lean, intense and intellectually brilliant. He was the author of a raft of books which challenged the institutions of the Western world. Illich believed that institutions produced exactly the opposite result from their stated purpose. Schools produce illiteracy and create failure, hospitals produce new illnesses, democratic institutions produce less democracy, justice systems produce less justice, more roads and motorways produce less human contact. All institutions exclude the poor and create myths which conceal their own contradictions.

Illich, Austrian and Jewish, infuriated experts. He spoke eleven languages. He died in 2002 aged 76.

The most dramatic Illich idea is that the Catholic Church is, like all institutions, structured to defeat the purpose of its stated aim — to spread the Gospel of Jesus. The current demise of the Church would come as no surprise to him. It maintains power by claiming to be the sole gateway to salvation giving a male celibate clergy legal jurisdiction over souls, and making the faithful dependant on clerical services.

Illich believed that all institutions should empower. Instead they do exactly the opposite. He divided the Catholic Church into two parts — 'the kingdom of God — the people' and the other — a self-serving institution.

Illich believed that to do good the Church should relinquish institutional power.

It is clear that the Catholic Church will not solve the current problems from the top. Until the Church trusts and empowers the people of God on the ground it will continue to decline.

The People of God in my local parish recently gathered to reflect on and respond to, a document from the Diocese which proposed to re-structure the parishes in response to the shortage of ordained priests.

The atmosphere was exciting, inspiring, theologically literate, respectful, compassionate and, in the midst of doubt and uncertainty, full of faith in the message of Jesus. For two hours I sat and listened to the wisdom emanating from this gathering as each submission was recorded. When we finished there were seventeen pages of knowledge, wisdom and lived experience on the wall.

As I observed these beautiful people articulating their fears and hopes I was saddened in the knowledge that their Bishop and Pope Benedict were not able to share this experience! If they had the wisdom to stop talking and simply listen to the people of God, their fears may begin to dissipate. The submissions were creative, realistic and visionary.

The people of God want long-term thinking which would retain and develop the parish community with a strong unique identity similar to the special character fostered in each Catholic school.

They want the right to trial and interview priests and allow both to separate if incompatible.

They believe that the celibate priest shortage in the Western world cannot be saved by robbing the third world of its priests.

The people challenge the Bishops everywhere to have the courage and spirit they collectively displayed at Vatican II. They want to study the documents and re-capture the vision.

They want to re-examine the notion of priesthood — particularly the priesthood of the laity and the untouched potential which this theology allows.

- They intend to study the early Church prior to Constantine. How did Christians survive and develop in the first 300 years without priests?
- They will expand, train and supervise people in all ministries including liturgies of the word with Holy Communion.
- They want to study scripture and be humble and prophetic.

The Holy Spirit is speaking to the People of God. Ivan Illich is smiling! ■

One month after the Parish meeting which inspired this comment, the 100-year-old St Marys Parish Church was farewelled in a moving outdoor liturgy. Beacause of the earthquake, the church had to be urgently demolished before the school and the hall could be safely used.

a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

Spring in the Himalayas and rhododendrons are flaring. Deep red popcorn scattered across the dark forest of cedars and Himalayan oaks. As I lower my gaze to ground level, two year old Jalori pounces on delicate purple bylees (violets) studding the forest floor. Why do these spring flowers make me so happy?

A week ago while in Delhi for work, it was already getting hot. For millions across the Gangetic plains, the spectre of summers heat looms quickly.

We're not even living anywhere near NZ, Japan or Libya and yet even we feel battered by the last fortnight of Big Events. As Cantabrians living Far Away we almost feel we're letting the side down by being in India just now. I find my mind walking down Manchester Street and along Armagh and thinking of buildings we know so well that are no more.

Ash Wednesday. Five year old Asha and her Mum painted a cross of oil, water and ashes onto each of our foreheads as we join with neighbours at the start of Lent. I am feeling wimpy. With lots of stressful events in our larger family as well as illness at home, I can't muster energy for a major Lenten undertaking. A silent meal each week will be completely pointless, says our eight year old. Oh well. It won't hurt us. We should be able to manage it at least. Maybe we'll be able to visit some friends who permanently live under tarpaulin and play cricket with their children too.

So it may be a slightly pathetic Lent for us and many others I guess. I hope the resurrection rhododendrons can be our beacons in the coming six weeks. ■

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