



Are women in the Catholic Church getting a raw deal?



the last hurrah!

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cover

This month's cover has been produced for *Tui Motu* by *Fitzbeck Creative*, of Wellington

I 'sharpen my pencil' to compose the final words of *Tui Motu* Number 135: my 135th and last editorial. Although January is not always the easiest month for the editorial team, this issue is full of good things. First, three blockbusters. None is a comfortable read.

There is Pat Maloney's lament for the Irish church in crisis over sexual abuse (pp 14-15). His Irish blood curdles as report after soul-searing report comes out of that woeful situation. His is a poignant cry from the heart.

Closer to home is Ivan Snook's reflection on the Catholic school system, 30 years on since Integration (pp 11-13). Has the blueprint drawn up long ago by Norman Kirk become warped by the passage of time into a means of creating another elite? It should make sobering reading for boards, school principals and decision-makers.

Then there is a beautifully phrased and profound address by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, surely the 'voice of faith' in the contemporary English speaking world (pp.19-21). He looks at the value systems of the post-modern West, and notes how ill-equipped they are to withstand the onslaught of fundamentalism, Islamic or otherwise. Those very values were born out of an age of faith. It is the loss of religious faith that has emasculated our society and rendered it so vulnerable. This is an article to be read and reread.

One area that Sacks suggests needs an urgent injection of religious fervour is the debate over climate change. This brings us to two very special but different pieces sitting side by side in juxtaposition (pp.22-23), both dealing with Copenhagen. Jeph Mathias writes out of a Delhi slum, graphically describing his experience of the congestion and squalor (as indeed does wife Kaaren on p 32). Sharing the

predicament of the world's poorest, Jeph looks to Copenhagen from afar – and finds it wanting.

Opposite is an extraordinary piece by a 16-year-old. Prior to the main Copenhagen meeting, 164 young people from 44 countries met for the *Children's Climate Forum*. The writer Luke Hughes describes what it was like to talk to a girl from Greenland or a boy from the Maldives who are already having their lives irrevocably altered by global warming. Over the years I have lamented how difficult it has been to extract good writing from the young for *Tui Motu*: this piece is a brilliant exception.

Well, what about Copenhagen? Was it simply a waste of time, an outpouring of hot air achieving nothing? Many, like the young people, went there to listen and learn – a necessary prerequisite for making wise decisions. For them it was a success. The political leaders, especially those of the great powers, came with their minds already made up, seeking to impose their self-serving agendas. They made it a failure. It is significant that Mr Key, so reluctant to attend in the first place, has said precisely nothing about it since his return!

Some final thoughts as I lay down my pencil. Firstly, a sincere welcome to my successor Fr Kevin (pp.6-7) – and a hope and prayer that he will carry the magazine to new heights. Then I wish to thank especially our writers. Any success we have is due primarily to the quality and variety of their contributions. Finally, a warm and heartfelt vote of thanks to my able assistant Frances, who has been my most searching critic and most steadfast mainstay for 15 years.

And to you, our readers, for your patience and support and your prayers. Adieu.

M.H.

women in the church

"How widespread and persistent is the 'oppression' of women in the Catholic church? Is 'oppression' too strong a word?"

What an indictment on today's church that *Tui Motu* has to ask these questions. For it cannot be denied that women have been discriminated against for centuries, and modern Western secular society has made greater progress in redressing the imbalance than the church has. Ever since Constantine wooed the church into a relationship with the Empire/State, the patriarchal bride succumbed to the temptation to abuse its great power to dominate her subjects.

This was the very opposite to the work of its Founder, who stood up to oppressive authorities on behalf of the weak and vulnerable. We even created an image of the unknowable God as a human figure in the heavens noting all the 'sinful' acts of every individual, so that we can be punished.

The Second Vatican Council rejected these images of authoritarian control. But, oh, how long it takes for

attitudes to change, especially when we start listening to all the calls to return to Tridentine orthodoxy.

Over recent years I have met many women who speak critically of the church – most no longer 'practising'. When I ask them why, many reply that they are not going to expose themselves to being treated like recalcitrant children, be told what to and how to deal with their bodies and be inhibited in letting the God in them glow. Many are finding fuller lives in Eastern practices.

There are some who love their traditions and endure the exclusive attitudes of some clergy, but mostly of the hierarchical structures of Rome. I know many brave women who see the bigger picture of the kingdom/dream of God and keep calling on the power of the Spirit within themselves and create ways to serve and help the dream take shape on earth – mostly, now, outside the church.

Ron Sharp

an urgent agenda

Questions written at the top of this page have been sent out to a dozen regular contributors to *Tui Motu*, mostly women. It was motivated by a phrase in Sister Pauline O'Regan's article in October '09 when she said: "I would call the church's treatment of women scandalous". If such wise people as the Aranui Sisters of Mercy came to a conclusion as strong as that, it could not be ignored.

Later I was visited by a Dunedin layman, outraged by the actions of a bishop who forbade the use of a Catholic chapel to a group of Catholics, on the grounds that some

supported the ordination of women. What was *Tui Motu* going to do about it? *Tui Motu* has not usually been in a hurry to take up single issues. But the memory of what Sr Pauline had said was revived. Hence this circular to some 12 writers.

The response was electric, and I feel it represents commonly held views. The answers (edited to avoid repetition) are printed on pages 8-10. There is nearly a consensus expressed that the church has lagged disastrously behind the progress of society in removing barriers of custom and prejudice against women over the centuries. This

conservatism is fortified by clericalism, roundly condemned as being at the root of much of the Catholic Church's contemporary troubles. The continued use of exclusive, sexist language especially by priests is just one symptom. Many women have become disillusioned and have left the church as a result.

We have no compunction, therefore, about making this the principal theme of the first issue for 2010. My personal plea is that it should be the topic at the top of the agenda for the first Bishops' Conference meeting of this year.

M.H.



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

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the family of Jesus

The Rev. Glynn Cardy's article *Walls, freedom and God* (TM Dec 09) is thought provoking. His recommendation to "encourage exploration, venturing beyond the fence" is now followed by his controversial billboard outside St. Matthew's, Auckland. It takes a brave man to get minds aworking and tongues awagging about the birth of Jesus – at Christmas time in New Zealand's secular society.

For myself, I have always harboured a query about the family life of Joseph and Mary after the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1, 20). Why should they not have had a normal married life, producing other children?

Doreen Couchman, Wellington

refusal of communion

I have recently read the article (TM Oct. '09) about the NZ Catholic Church and expressing the opinions of the Aranui Mercy community. I agree wholeheartedly. I want to share a recent personal experience. I am a 29-year-old woman and have been actively involved in my

Catholic parish since childhood, including being a minister of both the Word and Communion, a youth leader and a member of the parish council. However, the parish priest has recently advised me that I am no longer welcome to have Communion because of the man I love.

I am committed to and living with a wonderful man, and we have recently had our first child. However, we are not married and cannot be married in the Catholic Church because this man is divorced. I know that this is not the traditional way of things but all involved are happy.

from the Chair

Dear friends,

I always like the first days of January when life has finally wound down enough to allow a chance to think about all the possibilities a new year will bring. For *Tui Motu*, change is in the air, but we'll talk more about that next month.

As you will have read, we've been working hard to explore options to secure TM's future, and as you know it's always been the policy that we have to live within our means. One of the decisions we've made – not lightly – is to increase the cover price from \$5 to \$6. For those mathematicians among you, this barely covers the inflation rate since the last increase five years ago.

I have to say this has not been an easy decision as we're conscious that it is a tough time for many. I decided to do a little 'recce' to the local store to check out the cost of other magazines to see how TM compared, and I was pleased to discover that we're still no more expensive; in fact we'll be at the cheaper end of the vast majority of other weekly, fortnightly and monthly magazines.

Then I had a little debate with myself about the value of *Tui Motu* in my life and rightly of course decided TM was better for me than a Stella Artois, my favourite latte and lemon tart, or a glass of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, all of which cost about the same or more!

Guess what – *Tui Motu* will definitely be staying on my bedside table. I hope it will be on yours.

Blessings for 2010

Katie O'Connor

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.

The God I believe in and was taught is a loving and forgiving God, and I do not believe the action of my parish priest reflects that.

Alicia Murray (email only)

thank you Aranui community

Thank you for the challenges you put before us in the October edition of *Tui Motu*. Thank you for the reminder through your writers that *we are the church* – we are the People of God, the Body of Christ, the Community of Believers. We are not called to 'prop up' the church but to *be* the church.

A special thanks to the Aranui Sisters of Mercy for their insights and courage and inspiration: for the ongoing reminder that the "principal purpose of the church is to take the Good News to everybody".

Mary Wood rsm, Christchurch

to Lance Bardwell, Dunedin.

Thank you, Lance, for your dossier regarding a Catholic group being forbidden the use of a school chapel by the local bishop. Please read pages 8-10 for the response to your concerns.

Editor

new subscription schedule

for *Tui Motu*

New Zealand

annual sub (11 copies)	: \$56
...	was \$48
half-year (5 copies)	: \$28
...	was \$24

Concessionary rates for unwaged

annual sub (11 copies)	: \$48
...	was \$44
half-year (5 copies)	: \$24
...	was \$22

Overseas

annual rate (11 copies)	:
Australia	: \$70
...	was \$65
Rest of world	: \$75
...	was \$70

three strikes a cop-out?

Jim Consedine

The air was electric. Norman Kirk, that marvellous political orator, was in full cry as he launched his 1972 election campaign in front of a capacity crowd at the Christchurch Town Hall. "Let's ban the bikies", he roared. The crowd exploded into a frenzy of applause. It was vintage Kirk, full of colour, playing on the fears of the audience and translating them into a simple slogan. For slogan it was. Kirk had no more intention of banning bikies than of flying to the moon. But it was good election stuff.

Norman Kirk would have been appalled to see his beloved Labour Party later, in government, ratchet up penalties following the 1999 Norm Withers petition on longer penalties. Not to be outdone, the latest effort from the ACT-fuelled National Government, euphemistically called "three strikes", is more than a strike against criminals and their families – it is a strike at the very foundation of a fair and just judicial system. To make more penalties mandatory and further remove discretion from sentencing judges who hear all the facts is to change the way we do criminal justice.

Because the urge to punish forms part of the unredeemed 'shadow' side of human nature, it cannot be appeased. Even if we hang pickpockets again, the tabloids will demand they be drawn and quartered as well! The demand for harsher penalties is insatiable. It can never be met. This is why these latest measures are such a cop-out.

This sop by National to ACT's punitive tendencies is not just bad law. It is expensive bad law, scheduled to cost an additional \$356 million over the next 50 years. Just imagine what could be done productively with that spending! This is all at a time when adult evening classes have been dramatically cut, and social spending slashed including widespread cuts to programmes which can help educate young people and keep them out of crime. These valuable millions are to be spent on more prisons. Such waste is sinful.

Paradoxically, it is presented as "a better deal for victims". Claptrap! It is vengeance pure and simple, not justice. Innocent children of offenders will suffer as much as anyone with a parent locked away for years. The cycle of social deprivation is guaranteed to expand. The Government should be ashamed of itself.

All the evidence is that most of the offenders affected have themselves been victims many times over. They have been deprived of the basic necessities of life, raised in poverty, given poor education, an inadequate home life; they lack skills and are themselves victims of crime. Many see imprisonment as their only pathway in life. Yet these people are children of God, and like us, brothers and sisters of Christ. Is this the best we can do for members of the family?

After 30 years of working in and around politicians and prisons, I reluctantly have come to the view that it is too much to expect politicians to treat law and order issues with the courage they deserve. Most seem to be held captive by media hysteria and deliberately distorted public perception. There is huge research around now to show that by fairly facing up to the causes of criminal offending, crime will be reduced and our communities will become safer. In this country, this is the bullet politicians don't want to bite. They do bite this bullet in many other countries and the imprisonment rates are much lower.

Drug and alcohol addictions, male violence, sexual aberration and addiction to motor cars are just five obvious causes of crime. Facing this fact head-on, coupled with a realistic attack on social conditions which spawn much criminal offending – unemployment (up 13 percent in December), social deprivation, lack of healthcare, educational opportunities and good parental skills – are tough but mature ways of addressing crime before it happens. History shows that if you raise the standard of living and provide employment, crime rates fall. It can be that simple.

Of course these conditions alone aren't totally to blame for offending. Accepting personal responsibility is the bottom line. But they do form parts of the jigsaw. Until each part is effectively faced, there is little hope that things can improve.

As Norman Kirk knew, slogans are for election rallies when the emotion and urgency of vote-seeking precludes dealing with the issues in any real depth. Slogans are not useful for wise governance. It is not too late for National to heed this lesson.

changing the pilot

The new editor of *Tui Motu* (starting February) is Fr Kevin Toomey OP.

The retiring editor here talks to Kevin about his life and vocation, and what it is that has prepared him for his new role

background

My first ministry after ordination was being a University Chaplain for nine years – five years in Dunedin and then four years in Auckland. This house (where *Tui Motu* is published) was bought in 1980 and I was the first Dominican to live in it. We held open house here: I enjoyed being with young people, listening to their stories and ministering to them.

It was a good way of starting out in the priesthood. I soon realised I didn't need to be the Messiah any longer! It taught me to become more relaxed. We often celebrated 'flat Masses' – house Masses in the student flats. We would have anything up to 20 young people sitting round on the floor in the front room of a grotty student flat. It was a different experience of Eucharist – for them and for me.

The chaplaincy office in the University Union always had an open door: you got to know a lot of people there, and they felt free to drop in – especially if they had troubles to share. University

chaplaincy is a very unstructured type of ministry. It is, I think, a most valuable type of priestly formation – and probably my chief formator in those days was my companion, Sr Judith McGinley OP. I learnt that this ministry to the students meant simply coming to befriend people.

The combination of male and female in the chaplaincy was also a positive move: it brought about a more 'whole' dynamic. Bishop John Kavanagh, then bishop of Dunedin, was very encouraging especially about this aspect.

After my chaplaincy time in Auckland, I came back to Dunedin. I lived in a house with students as formator in North East Valley. When Fr Ray George, the Dominican PP there, died, I succeeded him as parish priest and went into parish ministry for a few years. This was an equally valuable time, learning the essence of good ministry. Fr George's policy had been to empower the laity in the parish as much as possible, so he was a fine role model to follow.

the beginnings of tui motu

My sister Maura wrote to me from Dunedin when I was working in Rome, sending me the very last issue of the *New Zealand Tablet* (Easter 1996). She was lamenting what was happening to the paper and to the team that produced it. I sat there and read it, and felt much the same. The Master-General, Fr Timothy Radcliffe, happened to drop in at that moment, so I told him what Maura had written and we talked about it.

I said that this vital work of the church was part of our Dominican vocation as 'preachers'. He said: "... then *you* do something about it". So I wrote to the Dominican Sisters and Brothers in New Zealand there and then, telling them that this was a clear call to us – and it was coming from the top!

The Sisters invited Michael and Frances to become the editorial team... they then proceeded to get a new magazine launched. And here we are.

In 1989 I was called to Australia, to Canberra, to be assistant to the Dominican Provincial. Then, in 1992, I went to Rome to be an assistant to the Master-General of the Order, Timothy Radcliffe. I was on his council as representative of the Asia-Pacific region. I was a bit unhappy about the move at first because it meant leaving behind a justice and peace ministry in Western Sydney (where the poor live).

The job in Rome was firstly administrative: attending to correspondence from all over the world and helping to prepare documents. It was a steep learning curve for me. I had to learn new languages – Italian and some Spanish – and mix with many nationalities.

An important part of the job was visiting the brethren in our Asia-Pacific region (which stretches from Israel in the West to Japan in the East to Australia and New Zealand in the south). Dominican brothers are fairly thinly spread there. Vietnam and the Philippines would be the most populous provinces. Every two years I visited every country in the area where Dominicans worked: sometimes because there were problems to be dealt with, otherwise I was there simply to represent Timothy.

I enjoyed Rome as a place to live. We had a wonderful community at Santa Sabina, men of vast experience. As regards 'ecclesiastical Rome' – the Rome of the Vatican and the Curia – we lived in a sense in parallel worlds. The major Orders were simply getting on with their jobs and the politics of the church scarcely touched us.

I used to go sometimes to the Secretariate of State on business. For instance, before visiting Vietnam I went to see a Monsignor Celli and found him extremely helpful. He would give me a confidential briefing of the situation as the Vatican saw it, but he would ask me to report back to him on return. It became a very fruitful relationship.

Timothy Radcliffe had regular dealings with the CDF (*Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith*), which supervises all the religious congregations. A letter would arrive stating that Br X had said such-and-such and would we correct him. Timothy would go and have a discussion with Cardinal Ratzinger, taking a written answer with him.

There was an article once appeared written by a Dominican in a Dutch newspaper. The CDF claimed it was a promotion of homosexuality – so would we please take action. There was a Flemish speaker in the house, so we had the article translated from Flemish into Italian: it turned out to be a faithful portrayal of the sacrament of marriage. They had got it all wrong. The translation was shown to the CDF – and that was that!

the church today

In the Gospel Jesus often uses pithy one-liners which are useful guides to Gospel thinking. The guiding words which have come into my mind, starting this new career, are *holiness and wholeness for humanity*. I believe there needs to be something for everyone in the work of the church. For instance, regarding the tragedy in Haiti, everyone in the world is affected by it. The 'holiness' aspect means that it is a spiritual mission as well as physical, so the church must be involved.

I believe strongly in the vision of the Second Vatican Council and the way it promoted the Body of Christ as the "People of God". Our focus should be the *whole* church, fully inclusive of laity as well as hierarchy. In my



Retiring editor, Michael Hill, handing over the baton to Kevin Toomey, his successor (right) photo: courtesy of the *Otago Daily Times*

pastoral work I have always striven to find new ways in which lay people can be involved. In my time as a University chaplain I tried to work always in a team: a priest, sisters and lay people. All the time we are seeking to build up community – and the means we use is the art of friendship. Friendship is based on love, and it presupposes faithfulness and hope.

As regards the apparent retreat from Vatican II which seems to be happening in the contemporary church, that doesn't worry me too much. History teaches us that there are ebbs and flows. If the tide goes one way, it will come back. In New Zealand we are privileged to live so far away from the centre. We can afford to take the long view – more so than in Europe or America.

I see *Tui Motu* as being here to 'complement' what goes on in the wider church community. It is a channel of faithfulness and a channel of hope. It exists to bring the Good News to people. As a Dominican I see it as part of my vocation as a 'preacher'. The written word reaches more people than the spoken word. I look forward to that aspect greatly.

Coming to *Tui Motu* will again be a steep learning curve for me, but on

past experiences, steep learning curves are things to be climbed! People are extremely keen to help and support. I have talked to key people in Auckland who were uniformly affirming and supportive of the magazine and of my taking over the editorship. That is consoling. It will be for me a step in faith.

some ambitions for tui motu

- I have already observed the importance of local parish promoters and sellers of the magazine. I hope I will have the opportunity to make an 'editor's tour' and go and visit and encourage these people. The parish priest is a crucial person – either encouraging or discouraging.

- I would also like to be able to widen the scope of readership to include more Polynesian and Asian readers.

- I would wish to broaden the conversation through the magazine with other creeds – with Islam, with Buddhism. My experience in other countries has given me a rich experience of these cultures.

So... to widen the circulation, appeal to a younger group and to keep recruiting new readers to replace those who 'move on'. It's a formidable challenge. ■

does the catholic church oppress women?

Last year Sr Pauline O'Regan wrote:

"I would call the church's treatment of women scandalous".

Tui Motu wrote to several regular contributors, asking: "How widespread and persistent is the 'oppression' of women in the Catholic church? Is 'oppression' too strong a word?" Here are some responses.

Pat Reid (Auckland)

Are the rights of women in the church being infringed? Yes. Is the voice of women being ignored? Yes. Does this reflect a fundamental failure in church structures? I believe so.

Here is one example. A religious Sister was an effective parish worker. She was very popular with the parishioners. With others in her congregation she kept abreast of developments that related to her ministry and tried to implement them. The parish priest was averse to change. The relationship, which had never been great, became worse.

The opportunity came for him to ease her out. He knew this would be unpopular, so went about it very quietly. She was not in a position either to make it public or fight back. Someone who knew what was happening approached a parishioner for help. However, Father was not open to having decisions questioned. The fact the parishioner was a woman didn't help.

After some thought, she approached a close friend (male) of the priest, who was also impressed with the work done by the Sister. He persuaded Father to let her stay. It was a happy outcome for the parish, though the parish worker was still not treated with the courtesy and consideration that one expects of a reasonable employer.

Both these people were working in the parish. Regardless of who was more competent, committed or energetic, the power remained with the priest. The Sister will never have that power (not that she is looking for it). She is a woman...

In the hierarchical system in the church, compliance is a requirement. Those (including priests) who work for change are vulnerable. Unless there is particularly good leadership at all levels people are afraid to challenge decisions they find questionable. It is not a happy situation.

Cathy Harrison (Christchurch)

Is oppression too strong a word? I say, No! According to the Oxford English Dictionary, **oppression** means to crush, to burden with cruel or unjust restraints, to

suppress, or to force (a woman). Regrettably, many of my experiences and observations as a lay woman working in leadership roles in Catholic organisations over the last 30 years in both Australia and New Zealand cause me to concur with this definition. In particular I discovered that accountability, good process and communication were seriously lacking, resulting in injury and hurt to many good people who hoped to serve out their Catholic vocation within the boundaries of church.

I find it alarming that at a time when there has been so much disclosure of abuse within the church that, to divert attention from this, the spotlight has been deliberately shifted in order to destabilise the prophetic role of some lay women and some women's religious orders.

I believe that fidelity to mission is inextricably bound to good process. This adds another dimension which deepens its meaning. The reign of God is diminished rather than expanded when process excludes or limits women and lay men, or is actively harmful to them.

Zella Horrell (Southland)

As a child I thought the nuns were gentle, elegant and holy. I didn't give any thought to the priests as a child, except that they were boring. As an adult, I'm less sure of my way in the church than I ever was as a child, but that's not because I'm a woman or because I feel suppressed by the church.

'My church' (my emotional bond with the institution) has been kept alive by the women. There have been priests who have played key roles along the way, but the cement, the bond that does not allow me to completely turn my back on Catholicism, is held through the women.

The nuns I encounter now are far less mysterious, but they are vibrant, passionate and intelligent. My mind and heart are fed through them. They are smart, adaptable and surely the guiding light which will not dim as our struggles get ever darker. They have kept me anchored in my faith, not because they hold power, but because they don't.

Maybe it is because they don't hold the power that they hold everything else. They hold the love. It is mothers who I

see sitting with their children on Sunday. It is mothers who teach CCD and organise First Communion celebrations. It is women who bring beauty into the churches with flowers and music and intricately stitched linen.

There is a line from *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*: "Men may be the head of the family, but women are the neck". Burning wise women at the stake as witches was scandalous. Not sharing positions of power with them is just short-sighted...

Anna Holmes (Dunedin)

Are women oppressed in the Catholic Church? Yes!

Oppress: unjust exercise of authority or control, keep someone in subservience; cause someone to feel uncomfortable, distressed or anxious.

There is widespread oppression of women in the church. Their voice is not heard. Their concerns about families, culture and the care of the planet are dismissed. Attempts are continually made to silence women who speak out about this oppression. This is at odds with the message of Christ that all are equal and beloved by God. It is also contrary to the Gospel examples of Jesus welcoming women, wondering at their faith and being changed by their message.

inclusive language and clericalism

This lack of equality is clearly heard in many churches in the widespread use of exclusive male language about God and in prayer. If we are all made in the image of God and God has feminine as well as masculine aspects, then to focus only on the masculine is a form of idolatry. The church preaches a powerful message of equality before God but does not practise it. This hypocrisy is an important reason why people leave the church.

It arises as a direct result of the disordered power structure of the church – clericalism. The controlling

power is entirely in the hands of clerics and anything that threatens this is dismissed or suppressed. This is the primary institutional sin of the church. The recent action of a bishop in forbidding the use of a school chapel to a group of Catholics appears to be an example of this. He acted on untrue comments about the group, in other words on calumny. He neither discussed with the group what they did believe nor did he apologise for his oppressive and unjust action. It is this clerical imperviousness to the truth which is most damaging to the fabric of the church...

call to priesthood

In 1971 I first heard a woman in the church express a vocation to the priesthood. She was a Sister running a parish of covering 100 square miles of Tanzania. She was allowed to celebrate baptisms and marriages. She was permitted to have a liturgy each Sunday with pre-consecrated hosts.

Her main concern was the women who could talk to her of the pain and anger they suffered from male abuse in a country where the equality of women was just beginning. They did not feel able to pour out their hearts in the same way to a male priest who came about once a month, so were unable to have the blessing of reconciliation formally, though both they and the Sister concerned realised healing comes in many forms.

I have heard similar stories ever since from other women working at the margins of society and in parish ministry in New Zealand, North America, UK, Ireland, Africa, Bangladesh and Australia. I have listened to the anger and distress of women working in pastoral care being summarily dismissed when a change of clerical leader takes place, or sometimes when they are doing such a good job they threaten the security of men in the church.

response to the broken-hearted

Conversation between unrequited love and the sacrament of encounter –

Choking on the dust of moth ridden symbols
I want to scream at you Mother God.
My eyes vicious, teeth gnarled
and face grimaced, hate filled
Waiting to bite.

Belonging to a church
Governed by whitewashed sepulchres
Offering rule bound ritualised dry wafers
As nourishment,
While we, God's spirit starved peoples
Wait broken hearted,
Crying out for our daily bread.

Yet your Son's embodied love
Breaks open the bread of our lives.
Seeing all, hearing all, receiving all
In His loving embrace.
Transforming the broken fabric of our lives,
Into the breath of salvation.

Maria Noonan



origin of the problem

I do not consider the non-ordination of women to be the primary problem. I think the primary problem is the clerical control of the church...

In 1975 Pope Paul VI said: "the most pressing need at the moment is advancing the cause of women at every level, both in society and the church". And "It is evident that women are meant to form part of the living and working structure of Christianity in so prominent a manner that perhaps not all their potentialities have yet been made clear."

Twenty years later John Paul II said: "In every time and place our conditioning has been an obstacle to the progress of women. Women's dignity has often not been acknowledged, they have often been relegated to the margins of society and even reduced to servitude... If objective blame, especially in particular contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the church, for this I am truly sorry."

dismissal of the woman's voice

Unfortunately he then went on to say that there was to be no more discussion about the possibility of ordaining women. He thought he had the right to silence women – a stark contrast to the Gospel story of Jesus and the Phoenician woman (*Mt. 15, 21-28*) who asks for healing of her daughter, and when rebuffed by Jesus, argues her case so persuasively he agrees.

Jacquie Lambert (New Plymouth)

Though my faith in God was never in question, I was out of the institutional church for 12 years before deciding to return to it 15 years ago. My reasons for leaving were primarily to do with the treatment of women and the enormous question marks that issue raised, questions not restricted to the place of women alone but ones that belong to the whole area of inclusiveness and equality. After all, if as a church we cannot treat as equal over half our own membership, then what hope can we possibly offer to the world beyond.

When I returned to the institutional church it was for all the right reasons: I had matured in my thinking; I felt that you could make more of a difference by working at change from the inside; I had completed post-grad. work in theology and solidified my own beliefs and understanding, and I had been blessed with children and a few grounding spiritual experiences with which to frame those beliefs.

Now I find myself out of the institution yet again... change for women in the church does not appear to be coming, in fact institutional efforts seem to be stymieing it even further, and I wonder if in fact the pressure needs to grow exponentially. I fear that I may have been hindering change in how and where I spoke, rather than

helping. That has seen me withdraw from that role for the time being.

I believe pressure needs to grow within and outside the church. There is a place for voices and committed people within working for change, but there is also a valid role for those who choose to leave. Numbers dropping and demand for change from the inside may be the two-pronged attack we need to 'pressure cook' change because one thing is for sure, change for women will not come without a struggle.

I see the Holy Spirit working in those who leave the institution as much as in those who stay, and a great deal of my spiritual direction practice now revolves around people who have left the institutional church but hold resolutely to their faith and are actively engaging with it. For now I stand more outside than in and try to help them.

Mike Noonan (Dunedin)

The looming crisis for our church is one where our opportunity to receive communion is diminishing, and will continue to diminish because there are not enough priests. I believe that a major factor in the lack of vocations is that we waste the opportunities for communion, unity and respect in the way we live our relationships today.

Whenever women and children experience their full humanity as diminished or denied, communion is broken. In no way can such a breakage be taken as the desire of Christ or of the redemptive community God wants us to be. The fact that so many avowedly celibate men have turned to or colluded with a distortion of human sexuality is clearly indicative of something dysfunctional and 'cut off' in our aspirations and spirituality as a church. This way to the valley of dry bones!

We need to be men and women who know how to celebrate each other and our children in the depths of our beings, whether we are single, celibate or married. Only when women outside the church can see that we are becoming the new humanity Jesus wants to bring about and they begin turning to the church in large numbers, will we know that we are hearing what God wants of us and living in an authentic and Eucharistic way.

Veronica Casey (Milton)

My immediate response is that I am not stopped from doing anything in my life because of gender – apart from in the church. I have long understood that the power in the church belongs to men and the spirituality to women!! One doesn't have to look too far to see that if the women walked away tomorrow there would be very few left... and very little done. ■

Ivan Snook traces the history of Catholic education since the Integration Act of 1975, and voices his misgivings that it has been "a fair and just solution"

background

It is well known that the 1877 Education Act created a primary school system which was to be *free, secular and compulsory*. Many Christians were opposed to the secular clause and campaigned for religion in schools, presenting petitions and organising Bills which went before Parliament. These were consistently opposed by the Catholic bishops who feared that any religious lessons in state schools would be Protestant in nature and hence unsuitable for Catholic pupils and Catholic teachers.

The Catholic Church's response to the secular clause was to set up its own system of schools staffed by members of religious orders. For a hundred years, the church campaigned vigorously for government funding for its schools. Again and again this was rejected. In the early 1960s some minimum assistance was provided (dental care, milk and apples for example: these were seen as "aid to pupils") but no political party would offer funding for the schools themselves.

By that time Catholic schools were in deep financial trouble. After its election in 1972, the Labour government proposed a scheme which came to be called *Conditional Integration*, and

representatives of the bishops and religious orders met over many months with representatives of the state education system. They hammered out a proposal which became law in the final parliamentary session of 1975. The co-operation and support of the state school representatives was pivotal.

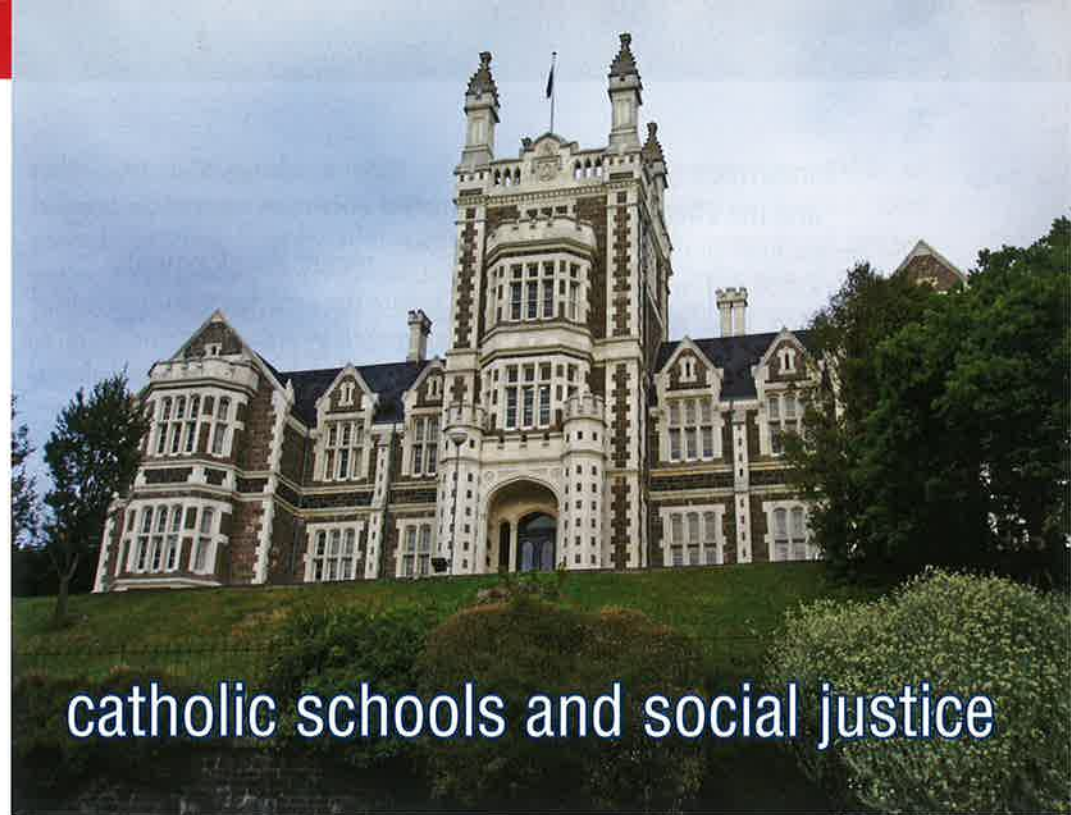
As the 1975 election approached, the Catholic paper *The Tablet* (which had been set up in the 19th century to fight for "justice for our schools") thanked the Labour Government for this long-awaited legislation by advising its readers to vote for the National Party which had strenuously opposed the Bill!

The incoming National government proceeded to implement the legislation which it had previously opposed. In due course, all Catholic schools were integrated and received full state financing (salaries, operation grants, maintenance etc.), apart from capital costs (new buildings) which remained in the hands of the proprietors (mostly the bishops, but for some schools, religious orders and later trusts). The Catholic school system undertook to submit to a degree of state control particularly in the appointment of principals

and teachers; in return they were guaranteed their special character.

Thus to all intents, the Catholic Church entered into a contract with the state whereby it would become a complementary part of the state system. The church representatives originally agreed that education in their schools would be free as in other state schools, and they would rely on the long standing generosity of Catholics to provide for the capital works. As they came to realise that the costs of bringing existing schools up to standard and building new schools would be great, they demanded the right to charge fees ("attendance dues") and this became part of the Integration Act.

The standard account of the negotiations which led to the Integration Act is Rory Sweetman's *A Fair and Just Solution?* At the launch of the book, Cardinal Tom Williams said that the Act was indeed a "fair and just solution". In his reply, Sweetman gently chided the Cardinal emphasising the question mark at the end of the title, and stating that we have yet to see whether the Integration Act was really "fair and just." Increasingly it seems that it is not.



catholic schools and social justice





'Tomorrow's Schools' and the aftermath

The programme entitled *Tomorrow's Schools* (1989) led to two developments which have seriously eroded the contract which the Catholic negotiators (and through them the Bishops) and the state school representatives entered into in good faith. Firstly, it ushered in a system whereby much more control was given to local schools. In the legislation, there was a tension between two ideas: increased fairness or equity on the one hand and increased choice for parents on the other.

After 1990 choice came to the fore, and schools were encouraged to compete against each other for finance and for pupils. Equity, the other value, has been seriously eroded resulting in polarisation of schools: middle class parents have deserted schools in poorer areas; the poor (especially Maori poor) have been left behind. Maori and Pacific Island pupils are *de facto* separated in low decile schools while the higher decile schools (especially decile 10) are the monopoly of the middle classes.

The result is that overall the achievement of students has plummeted: in international tests of reading, for example, New Zealand has, over these years, steadily dropped from 1st to 6th, then to 13th, then to 24th. The gap between the top 10 percent and the bottom 10 percent has become the largest in the developed world. The "the long tail of underachievement" is really "the long tail of poverty".

Secondly, as a result of the 1989 legislation, integration which had been devised to rescue the Catholic school system from bankruptcy, came to be viewed by many wealthy private schools as a cash cow which would enable them to add to their wealth by integrating and receiving all the benefits of the state system for virtually no loss of control. These schools came into the state system with vast assets which they retained, while preserving

the right to charge high fees. Thus further unfairness entered the system.

recent developments

Despite the fact that according to the *Integration Act* capital costs were to be borne by the church, the Labour-led government (1999-2008) gave millions of dollars to the church for new schools. In one case the press release stated that "the payments are part of an agreement the (Catholic Education) board has with the Government to create student places in fast-growing areas."

More enigmatically, Bishop Denis Browne spoke in 2008 of the Labour government's "promise to reimburse Catholic schools for construction costs", and he expressed the hope that the promise will be honoured by the new government – as it surely will. The report of the ministry *Schools 2008* states that "roll pressure at integrated schools is being addressed" by "increases in the schools' maximum rolls", and "if additional classroom provision by the proprietors means that the state does not have to fund increased provision in the local state network, proprietors are funded under the capital assistance policy".

Finally, at least in Christchurch, a network of integrated schools is developing strategies to (among other things) "seek maximum roll increases". All this suggests that the integrated school system is keen to poach students from the local state schools and is ruthless enough to want additional money for doing so.

The ERO report of 2003 reported a 10 percent increase in rolls in Catholic schools compared with the previous 10 years. According to a report in *NZ Catholic* (December 2008), the number of students in Catholic schools increased by 9 percent between 2001 and 2006 while the number of Catholics overall increased by only 4.7 percent – and Mass attendance fell by 1.2 percent.

A more inclusive definition of "prefer-

ential enrolments" may account for some of this increase, but we also have to ask if Catholic schools are expanding to take non-Catholic students? If so, they would be in direct competition with state schools. While the new government may see this as a desirable aspect of competition and choice, the church must see this as a denial of the 'good faith' agreement of 1975.

It is also worthy of note that Catholic schools are under-represented in the low decile areas and over-represented in the mid to high decile areas (except decile 10). While Maori constitute 20 percent of pupils in all schools, they constitute only 12 percent in Catholic schools (Pacific islanders are, on the other hand, over-represented).

private fund raising

According to *NZ Education Review* (Sept 25, 2009) there are 19 secondary schools which privately raised more than \$2 million in 2008, while 190 secondary schools (out of 336) raised less than 1 million. Of course, most of the schools in the 'two million dollar club' are high decile schools, and those struggling to raise a fraction of this are low decile school. More scandalously still, of these 19 schools seven are integrated schools, mostly Catholic.

The front runner (of all schools!) was *Sacred Heart* College in Auckland, which raised more than \$6 million. *Baradene* College in Auckland also raised more than \$3 million. *Sacred Heart* income from fund raising was \$5,227 per student, making a total income around \$14,000 per student. Compare this with the average per student income in low decile schools in 2008 – \$9,247. And, according to the *Education Review*, *Sacred Heart* has three heated swimming pools, modern computer labs and a state-of-the-art technology block.

So there is grave inequity between schools: between high and low decile schools and between many Catholic schools. Rather than lament this gross

inequality, the CEO of the *National Catholic Education Office*, Br Pat Lynch, defended the situation and urged all schools to seek funds "from trusts and philanthropic organisations."

the role of Catholic schools

The church's official statements on Catholic schools make it clear that they should be beacons of social justice, they should work for the poor and they should teach their students that the injustices in society should be opposed.

In 1977 the Vatican's *Sacred College for Catholic Education* affirmed: "First and foremost the Church offers its educational service to the poor, or those who are deprived of family help and affection or those who are far from faith... If the Catholic school were to turn exclusively or predominately to those from wealthier social classes it could be contributing towards maintaining their privileged position and could thereby continue to favour a society which is unjust".

In a subsequent statement in 1988 the *Sacred College* stated: "Since it is motivated by the Christian ideal, the Catholic school is particularly sensitive to the call from every part of the world for a more just society, and it tries to make its own contribution towards it. It does not stop at the courageous teaching of the demands of justice even in the face of local opposition, but tries to put these demands into practice in its own community in the daily life of the school. In some countries, because of local laws and economic conditions, the Catholic school runs the risk of giving counter-witness by admitting a majority of children from wealthier families... This situation is of great concern to those responsible for Catholic education".

This lofty rhetoric has been echoed in New Zealand. In 1992 the Catholic bishops joined the Anglican bishops in saying: "We would expect the education system to do all it can eliminate practices which work

against justice. Sexism and racism are obvious examples, but certain current procedures (e.g. new admissions policies) are tending to reinforce class divisions and to further disadvantage children from working class or minority backgrounds".

According to its press release, the *Catholic Schools Convention* (2000) "signalled its strong commitment to promoting the common good of New Zealanders. The 500 delegates flagged this commitment in a public pledge during which they committed themselves to pursue strategies which will help to bring about greater justice and peace both within New Zealand and globally."

Church spokesmen have also expressed concern about the influence of business in education. In their 1992 statement the Catholic Bishops wrote: "We deplore the tendency for education to be viewed as merely an instrument in the service of industry." In his statement for Catholic Schools Day in 2000, Cardinal Tom Williams wrote: "At a time when education is no longer seen as a process which enriches the lives of individuals and society but rather as a mean of turning out 'products' to meet the market needs of the day, our Catholic schools are doing all possible to withstand the thrust towards consumerism."

In 2007 the Catholic bishops warned of the danger of letting business interests into schools. They wrote: "The problem (of consumerism) will be compounded if schools lose their independence to teach the skills of critiquing business practices whenever those practices are not conducive to creating a just and compassionate society. The risk of losing this independence is the reason why we have strong reservations about special partnerships between business enterprises and schools. As it stands, the curriculum could create a perceived need for such partnerships".

I do not know what goes on within the walls of the more than 300 Catholic schools in this country. It

could be that many are models of fairness and routinely instruct their students on the demands of justice. But I have seen little signs of it in the columns of Catholic papers or in the *Mission Statements* of schools (even that term is a sell-out to the debased language of business). Instead we read about the emphasis on the rather meaningless "gospel values": they sadly seem to be perfectly consistent with individualism, competition and lack of concern for the poor.

the future

It is very likely that the commitment of Catholic schools to social justice will be directly tried very soon. It is clear that the ACT Party is having a strong influence on education policy. A working group on "changes to funding" is likely to propose moving closer to a voucher system under which all schools (state, integrated and private) are funded equally on enrolments. As the jargon has it: "funding follows students." This will advantage enormously the wealthy schools (particularly the private ones) and many of the integrated schools; and it will seriously disadvantage the state schools, particularly those which cater for the poor.

The choice for the Catholic system is stark: will it stand against injustice in education? Or will it support the growing gaps between rich and poor schools, and side with the private sector as it scoops up even more of the available resources? If it is the latter, the answer to Rory Sweetman's question will at last be clear: in its effect the Integration Act will not have been "a fair and just solution." ■

Ivan Snook is Emeritus Professor of Education, Massey University, a deputy chair of The Quality Public Education Coalition and a member of the St Patrick's Social Justice Group in Palmerston North. He is the author of many books on the ethics of education, the most recent being The Ethical Teacher

the irish church scandal

No scandal within the Catholic Church has rocked priests and people alike as much as sexual abuse. In Ireland where the clergy held exceptional power, it has plunged the whole church into crisis. Fr Pat Maloney describes his own ravaged feelings – and suggests possible causes

Two senior Irish bishops recently received a summons to the Vatican. The purpose? To explain, of course, the two now public reports on the abuse of children and young people by priests and religious. The bishops would have had a lot of explaining to do.

Earlier, in 2005 a report of sexual abuse by priests in the diocese of Ferns came out with over a hundred priests implicated, including a Monsignor and former rector of Maynooth seminary. I happened to be in the area at the time and witnessed the shock of local Catholics as the news broke. Then, in late summer 2009 followed the much delayed Ryan report of abuse in institutions run by Religious.

Even more recently, in November 2009, we were faced with a report of clerical abuse within the Archdiocese of Dublin. The response in Ireland and around the world has been predictable. The Irish press which has generally been anti-church and anti-clerical has had a field day. Mind you, they had no need to embellish anything. The reports spoke eloquently enough by themselves.

Little of this came as a bombshell to the Irish public. The 2002 film, *The Magdalene Sisters*, gave images to rumours which had long been circulating in Ireland and beyond of abuse of young men and women in institutions run by Irish religious orders, places intended originally as shelter or places of correction but which often were dens of repression and abuse, frequently of sexual abuse. These were things whispered about, rarely openly discussed. People were gripped by a sense of helplessness or disbelief that things could really be that bad.

Here, on the other side of the world, that sense of dismay clashes head on with my own sense of Irishness. All my grandparents were Irish. The faith which I inherited had a distinct green tinge. Ireland was the land of saints and scholars. Many of the nuns who taught me were Irish as were many of the priests who pastored us. Sure, many of the priests brought a kind of highhandedness in their parish dealings, reflection of the authority status which they enjoyed at home. Overall though, they were zealous, caring pastors who had devoted their lives to the service of the New Zealand Catholic Church.

I vividly remember soon after my ordination arriving in Ireland for the first time. In Rome, priests and students were simply part of the scene, given little more or less respect than anyone else. But in Catholic Dublin, menfolk were forever raising their hats to me with a polite "Good morning, Father". I felt embarrassed to be so set up, set apart.

Though I became aware that there was a strong anti-clerical current in certain higher educated parts of the community, respect and affection for priests was widespread and strong. I simply could not have guessed that even at that time in the early 1960s a vein of corruption and abuse might have been lying there, covered over by a religious exterior.

The perception of Irish bishops was something else. Authority, power and remoteness were epitomised in the person of Archbishop John Charles McQuaid of Dublin (died 1973). The quip about a newly appointed Irish bishop, that he promised to shepherd his people with a rod of iron, seems apt enough for the legendary John Charles, respected but feared by figures both from church and state.

In the Report on the Dublin Archdiocese, McQuaid is accused of refusal to take a stand against offending clerics, routinely moving them to another parish, where they were free to re-offend. His three successors stand indicted of doing the same – all to protect the good name of the church, seemingly indifferent to the fate of the young people who were so violated. How do we begin to understand how all this could have occurred in the island of scholars and saints?

If anything can be said in mitigation of such behaviour it might be that until quite recently relatively little was understood about the nature of paedophilia. There was little understanding that the paedophile would almost inevitably re-offend if placed in similar circumstances again. It was classed alongside various other sexual sins such as fornication and adultery, deserving of a severe reprimand and perhaps a mandatory period spent on retreat, but that was all.

Little was understood or done in regard to the unfortunate victims. This was an ignorance largely shared by the public at large. But even granted this, it is impossible to excuse the attitude that covering up to protect the good name of the church demonstrates a callous and deeply unchristian esteem for power rather than justice.

The offences, it seems, were predominantly committed against males. It is tempting, therefore, to jump to the conclusion that homosexuals are more likely to be sexual molesters. It may be tempting, but it is untrue.

It does appear to be true that an unusually high proportion of priests these days are homosexuals – though not necessarily, and the great majority living chastely. Accurate figures are impossible to come by for the obvious reason that many of those questioned either refuse to respond or reply with ambiguous answers.

Research figures I have seen come predominantly from the USA and do not necessarily equate with the reality in Ireland – or New Zealand for that matter. For obvious reasons it will never be possible to provide accurate figures, but I believe it is safe to say that the proportion of homosexually-oriented priests is higher than in the male population at large.

Fr Dominic Cozzens (*The Changing Face of the Priesthood*) puts the figure at 50 percent. Richard Sipe, a former priest and psychotherapist who has studied this issue for many years and written three books on it, puts the figure at between 25 and 45 percent. Whatever the proportion, I have seen no serious study which makes a clear link between sexual orientation and child molestation. The former is not a mental illness; the latter is.

Bishop Geoff Robinson in his *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church* (2007) raises the question of whether or not compulsory celibacy for priests and religious might be a factor. He writes: "Celibacy can contribute to the unhealthy psychological state (e.g. depression), the unhealthy ideas (e.g. misogyny or

homophobia) and the unhealthy environment (e.g. an unwanted and unassimilated celibacy) out of which abuse arises.

"If it is far from being the sole cause of abuse, it cannot be said that it makes no contribution. If the church is serious about overcoming abuse, then the contribution of celibacy cannot be overlooked (p.18)". I know Geoff Robinson as a man powerful mind and enormous integrity. He should not be dismissed lightly.

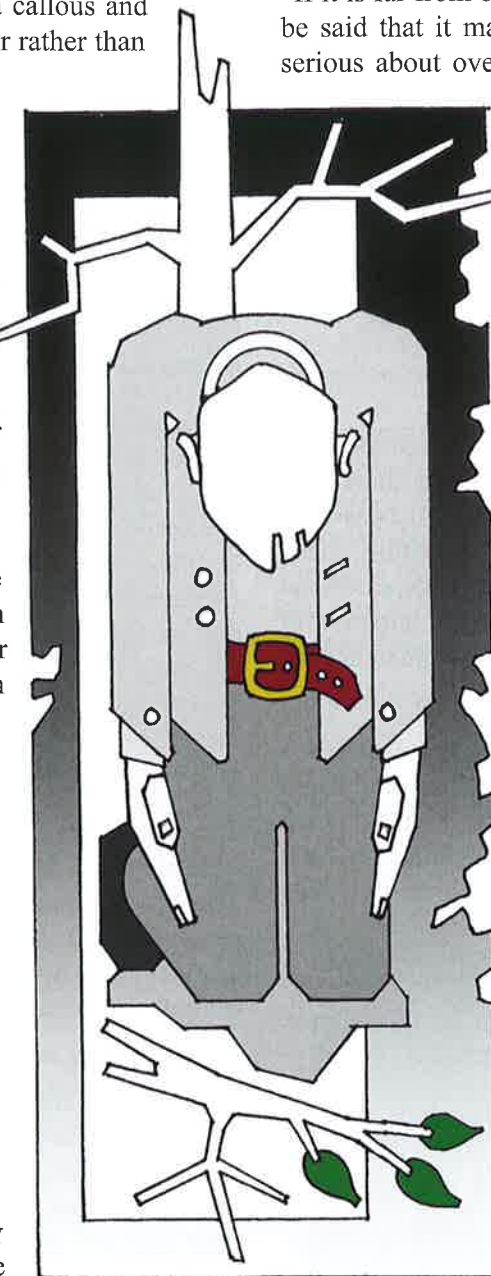
Though I cannot prove this assertion, I believe that the status and power exercised by the church in Ireland for the past century and more, prepared the way for sexual abuse. If there is a common denominator among abusers in general, it is that they use their position of power over the victim to achieve their end. Power over others in whatever setting slips very easily into the abuse of power. Priests and Religious in Ireland, male or female, exercised a dominance over the daily life of Irish Catholics without parallel in the Catholic world. Knowing what we do now about the nature of sexual abuse, it was predictable that such abuse must surely occur.

The stain on the Irish church will only get worse as more of its shameful history reaches the light, but it is precisely in this humiliation that it will find its salvation. Please God, it will return to being the servant church which stood with its people during long years of English persecution. Please God it will

shrug off the legacy of Jansenism which had blighted so much of Irish spirituality for 200 years.

Linked with this, we must surely pray that distorted and repressive attitudes to human sexuality which have been seen to figure in this sad story will be replaced the more wholesome attitudes outlined by Bishop Robinson.

My hope and my prayer is that Ireland's vast reserves of human goodness and holiness will flower again to enrich the Irish church with holy, wise and humble leadership and that Catholic Ireland will once more be sending forth apostles to re-evangelise pagan Europe and the rest of the world. ■



the trading circle

*Takapuna parishioner
Margaret McCloy chances upon a
fascinating shop on her doorstep, and
discovers a tale of liberation and justice
for women in Third World countries*

The Trading Circle is a bright, spacious and colourful shop in Milford on Auckland's North Shore. The eye-catching window displays invite the passerby to come inside, browse and buy the beautifully made children's soft toys and 't' shirts, pottery, bags, cards and homewares. The shop is a 'not for profit' initiative of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd to help women in poor countries trade their way out of poverty.

The Trading Circle supports women's micro-enterprises in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Selling the bright and beautiful items they produce enables women to earn the money they and their families need to survive and live with dignity. All those involved with the fair trade partnership are paid a just and fair price for their work.

The story of some of these women is told alongside this article (see right). They live in Cebu in the Philippines. For them it has been a way out of prostitution.

Ten years ago The Trading Circle was established by the late Sr Carmel Keveney to sell the goods in parishes



Margaret Chiaroni, holding a doll made by an African woman

and rest homes. In 1999, the first shop was opened in Australia; there are now three, in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. The Sisters also operate in the USA, Canada, Great Britain and Europe.

The shop in Milford was opened in April 2008. The shop manager, Margaret Chiaroni, first became involved with the Good Shepherd Sisters when one of them sang at her wedding! Two of the Sisters do voluntary work in the Milford shop and assist with the parish sales.

The day I met them they were preparing for a visit to Taupo to sell their wares there. They also ran a stall at a recent Early Childhood conference, which was very well received; they hope to increase sales to Early Childhood centres in the future.

On sale at the shop were cards and jewellery from Kenya, embroidery from Madagascar, craft from Manila and Mexico, Peru and Paraguay, toys from Thailand and a variety of things from Ethiopia, India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Everything had obviously been made with great care and attention to detail. One of my favourites is a Red Riding Hood doll, actually three dolls in one – Red Riding Hood, her Grandmother and the Wolf! This unique toy is made in Bangkok.

Many women in urban slums and rural villages have very few choices. For example, young women in NE Thailand find work on construction sites, in sweat shops or in the sex trade to support their families. As a result of the work provided by the Good Shepherd centres 500 women in this area have been able to remain in their home towns or villages. Payment for their work is prompt and fair.

Another inspiring example came from Jenta in Nairobi, who writes: "I am 20 years old in a family of eight, being first born. I joined Euphrasia Training Centre as a student, I came back later looking for a job. What I earn



Margaret Chiaroni, the shop manager, (left) showing a complicated toy to a curious customer

through the IGP programme, I help our whole family, educate my brother who is in High School, Form 2, and also provide for our daily bread. I am not able to save because I am the only earning person in our family. I am also the first born and all look to me for assistance. Through the Good Shepherd Sisters I have experienced love and mercy. Being here in ETC has been very helpful to me"

For me, all this was food for thought indeed. What we buy can certainly make a difference, so I would urge anyone who is able to visit the shop in Milford to do so, or visit the web site: <www.thetradingcircle.org.nz>. The shop is at 125 Kitchener Road, Milford, is open on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10 am until 5 pm, and on Saturdays from 10 am until 3 pm.

The outreach of the Good Shepherd Sisters helps these women to escape the poverty trap – or worse, and The Trading Circle enables them to get a just return for their produce. ■

Artwork done by 'Marie' in appreciation of the work of having a job which generates income for her – at the Good Shepherd Welcome House, Cebu City, Philippines

the women of Cebu

The Good Shepherd Welcome House is a drop-in centre for women and girls working in prostitution, opened in 2007 in Cebu City, the second city of the Philippines. The Centre offers respite and care for women who come. It is open to all; those working in brothels are often only free to visit if their 'managers' will allow it. But most who attend and join in the Handmade Justice project are 'freelancers' working on the streets.

This project produces hand beaded conference name tags – or ID badges. Since they are simple to make, it enables the women to begin generating income immediately. They can make about 25 a day, which will earn them 100 pesos. The name tags also are an effective tool in educating those who wear them about the circumstances of women who are victims of acute poverty and human trafficking.

The author of this report asked some of the women to express in artwork what working with the Handmade Justice project had meant to them. Marie's response is displayed below (The names of the women have been changed).





Outside Parliament House in Canberra, the Minister for the Status of Women, Hon Tanya Plibersek, is pictured wearing a handmade justice nametag. Standing with her (l to r) are Sr Margaret Ng SOSJ, Sr Pauline Cole SGS and Christine Carolan – Catholics working against human trafficking

were too old to earn much in prostitution, so they became pimps for other women working in prostitution.

Both of these women have now begun work making the name tags. They have left their work as pimps and at last they have a steady income.

The women stay at the Good Shepherd Welcome House for an average of five weeks, depending on circumstance. They are then given the opportunity to move to the Recovery Centre, located outside the red light district where they can continue with skills development and education. Some choose to learn dress making or cosmetology. The Director, Sr Tonette Mansueto, says: "My dream is to provide many more jobs to women who want to live a new life – that the women will be helped in their livelihood." ■

Shiela



Personal Interpretation

I am Shiela. I was reached out by Sr Tonette and staff in downtown area where I worked as freelance prostituted woman. As regular dropper I benefited in the production of I.D. Badge. I am very grateful to my newfound decent job that is why I draw a rainbow and mountain. It represents me on the top of the mountain considering the rainbow as a ray of hope to me who wanted to get away from the prostitution and influence of drugs. Thank you very much to you all for your kindness.

Two women in Cebu provided the following case study: They both come from a remote rural area. Their families were approached by a 'recruiter' when they were 14 and 18 years old. The young girls were offered a good job in a city restaurant, where they could earn a lot of money. The recruiter left money with the girls' families when she took them away.

When they arrived in Cebu City they were not taken to a restaurant but to a brothel, and were told they needed to work there to repay their debts. They were afraid of the brothel manager and began work. They soon knew they could not go home.

After a while they escaped from the brothel, but they had no money, no family and no one to turn to in Cebu. They had no alternative way of earning a living so they became 'freelancers' in prostitution. In their 30s they found they

religion in twenty-first century

In a recent lecture Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom Jonathan Sacks poses three questions:

1. Why has religion survived?
2. What is its place in the liberal democratic state?
3. What are the opportunities and imperatives for the future?



why has religion survived?

The year is 1830, and a very bright young French diplomat called Alexis de Tocqueville visits America to see for himself this new kind of society, and what he sees astonishes him. He comes from a Europe in which religion is dying, presumed dead – every self-respecting French and indeed Continental intellectual believed that in 1830.

And what he saw when he first went to America was extraordinary. America, he discovered, was a very religious country indeed. This is what he wrote in 1832: *18th century philosophers had a very simple explanation for the gradual weakening of beliefs. Religious zeal, they said, was bound to die down as enlightenment and freedom spread.*

This year, 179 years later, the editor and the Washington correspondent of *The Economist*, John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, published a book entitled *God is Back* – in effect saying exactly the same thing as de Tocqueville had said all those decades earlier.

Everywhere, except in Europe, religion is growing – from the mega-churches of America to China, where the weekly attendance at church services is far more than the membership of the Communist Party.

The survival of religion in the 21st century cuts across some of our most basic intellectual assumptions. After all, how can anyone still need religion, if to explain the universe we have science; to control the universe we have technology; to negotiate power we have politics; to achieve prosperity we have economics.

If you're ill you go to a doctor, not a priest. If you feel guilty, you go to a psychotherapist, not to confession. If you are depressed you take Prozac and not the book of Psalms. And if you seek salvation you go to our new cathedrals namely shopping centres, where you can buy happiness at extremely competitive prices.

So why has religion survived? The answer is that *homo-sapiens* is the meaning-seeking animal. Alone among life forms we ask the big questions: *Who am I? Why am I here? How then shall I live? What is the place of religion in the liberal democratic state?*

Again, the best answer was given by Alexis de Tocqueville. De Tocqueville was absolutely fascinated by what gave religion such power in America in the 1830s. And he describes how this was a puzzle to him and he asked people including, above all, clergy. The

answer they all gave him – this was 1830, don't forget – the answer they all gave him was: "Religion has influence in America because it never gets involved in politics."

He asked them why, and they replied, "Because politics is divisive, and if religion ever got involved in partisan politics, it too would be divisive". And that was true then, and it remains true today.

What then did he see religion doing in the United States? He saw that it sanctified the family, that it created community, that it encouraged philanthropy, that it built schools, that it taught responsibility, that it brought people together for the common good. It created what De Tocqueville called "the art of association" and another beautiful phrase, "habits of the heart," which he described as "the essential apprenticeship in liberty."

He saw religion as the essential counterbalance to what he described – again 180 years ago – as "the greatest danger facing America." It was a new phenomenon in those days and he had to invent a word to describe it, and the word he invented was *individualism*.

He in other words saw that religion was the counterweight to individualism,

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▷▷ and because of that it sustained a free and democratic society. In the terminology of today, we would say that religion sustained the third sector that is not the state, that is not the market, but it is civil society.

Here are two little passages from De Tocqueville. He says: *In the United States, religion exercises but little influence on the laws and upon the details of public opinion, but it directs the customs of the community, and by regulating domestic life, it regulates the state.*

And again: *...religion is the safeguard of morality – the best security of law and the surest pledge of the duration of freedom.*

If De Tocqueville was right, we would expect any society in which religion declines, civil society would decline. Families would become fragile, marriages would decline, communities would atrophy, society would cease to have a shared morality. And by those tests, 100 years later, De Tocqueville got it exactly right.

Europe today is the only region in the world which is experiencing population decline. As you know, zero population growth – a stable population – requires an average of 2.1 children for every woman of child-bearing age in the population. Not one European country has anything like that rate today. Here are the 2004 figures: the United Kingdom 1.74; the Netherlands 1.73; Germany 1.37; Italy 1.33; Spain 1.32 and Greece 1.29.

Wherever you turn today anywhere in the world, and whether you look at the Jewish or Christian or Muslim communities, you will find the more religious the community, the larger, on average, are its families.

Parenthood involves massive sacrifice: of money, attention, time and emotional energy. Where today, in European culture with its consumerism and its instant gratification – *because you're worth it*; in that culture, where

will you find space for the concept of sacrifice for the sake of generations not yet born?

Europe, at least the indigenous population of Europe, is dying, exactly as Polybius said about ancient Greece in the third pre-Christian century. The century that is intellectually the closest to our own – the century of the Sceptics and the Epicureans and the Cynics. Polybius wrote this: *The fact is, that the people of Hellas had entered upon the false path of ostentation, avarice and laziness, and were therefore becoming unwilling to marry, or if they did marry, to bring up the children born to them; the majority were only willing to bring up at most one or two.*

That is why Greece died. That is where Europe is today. We are undergoing the moral equivalent of climate change and no one is talking about it.

moral relativism

You cannot defend a civilisation on the basis of moral relativism. In a head-to-head contest between a moral relativist and a fundamentalist, who wins? The fundamentalist must win because he is sure he's right and you are not sure he's wrong. Or, as they say in America, a liberal is someone who can't even take his own side in an argument.

In 1989, as the Cold War ended, as the Berlin Wall fell, people thought that liberal democracy was about to conquer the world. Twenty years on – after Bosnia, after Kosovo, after Somalia, and Iraq and Iran, and Afghanistan – does anyone believe that any more? Now, after 9/11, many politicians in Britain and in the United States said that the battle against terror is as much a battle of ideas as it is of weapons. Eight years on, ask yourself the following question: "Which ideas? Freedom? Democracy? Autonomy? Rights?"

Will freedom persuade somebody who believes that submission to God is the highest value? Will democracy persuade somebody who believes that the will of God takes precedence over

the will of the people? Will autonomy persuade somebody who believes in obeying God's will, not my own? Will rights persuade somebody who believes that the first of all rights is the right to obey the voice of God?

Not only has the battle of ideas not been won, it hasn't even been fought. Liberty of conscience, that peculiarly modern form of liberalism that we inherit today, was born not in a secular age but in the most religious age of modern times, namely the 17th century. And it was built not on moral relativism but on moral absolutes.

Among them were the non-negotiable dignity of the human person, the sanctity of human life, the imperative of conscience and the consent of the governed. All those things are not moral relativism: they are what has come to be called the *Judeo-Christian heritage*.

The idea that you can lose the moral foundations of freedom without eventually losing freedom itself is simply absurd. So, to repeat – De Tocqueville was right: the place of religion is in civil society where it achieves many things essential to liberal democratic freedom, but two in particular:

- it sanctifies marriage and the family and the obligations of parenthood;

- it safeguards the non-relativist moral principles on which Western freedom is based. That is why De Tocqueville described religion as "the surest pledge for the duration of freedom."

what are the opportunities and imperatives for the future?

What then is the way forward? Does it mean, given all I've said, that we have to march back to the 19th century or the 17th century? Clearly not. Religion is going to grow in strength in the 21st century and a very great deal will depend on what kind of religion it is.

At the moment, the fastest growing religions in the world are those which

take an adversarial stance towards society, religions that challenge liberal democratic freedoms, and that is bad news.

Worse than that, sadly, is that in various parts of the world, political conflicts – conflicts that were once clearly political – have now become religionised. And once that happens they become insoluble because compromise in politics is a virtue and in religion it is a vice. All peace depends on compromise, and that is why peace comes to seem to some religious groups to be a form of betrayal which is why peacemakers get assassinated.

And therefore I believe we have no choice but to articulate an intellectually open and humble and tolerant religiosity as the only strong enough defence for some of the religiosity that is coming our way with the force of a hurricane. I believe the way ahead lies in at least the following three directions.

1. The first is a new dialogue between religion and science. I believe almost everything about recent scientific discoveries – whether it be in cosmology or neuroscience or the mapping of the human genome – is awe-inspiring and has deeply religious implications.

We now know that all life on earth from the simplest bacterium to you and me comes from one single source. I regard this as the fundamental truth about monotheism – the unity up there creates diversity down here.

It's very interesting that while the genome was being mapped everyone was expecting it to come up with this number of 100,000 genes; as we know it turned out – and this was one of the great surprises of the project – that there are only 20-30,000 genes.

That means that genes aren't selfish at all; they're team players. The great miracle is that a whole bunch of selfish genes get together and create selfless people which I think is

fabulous. Biology is right now giving us wonderful new insights into the origins of altruism and the universality of morality.

2. The second is that big global issues – like climate change – are crying out for the unparalleled power of religion. Nothing else has this kind of power to recruit energies on a global scale. To give you the obvious example, the great global programme of 2000 of international debt relief was called *Jubilee 2000* because it began as a religious initiative – I believe it began in the Vatican – based on the Biblical principle of Jubilee in *Leviticus 25*.

More recently, two very distinguished scientists, both atheists proposed an alliance between religion and science to combat global warming.

In general, religions are much more suited to the world of the 21st century than are nation states.

So my second point is not just a dialogue between religion and science, but a major engagement of religion with scientists and with economists on issues such as global poverty, climate change and so on. And that will lead religion in the most constructive direction I can think of.

3. Thirdly, religious groups in the liberal democratic state must be prepared to enter into serious respectful conversations with secular humanists, with charities, with other groups in civil society, about the nature of the common good and the

kind of society we wish to create for our grandchildren not yet born. At the moment we don't fully have this. At the moment in Britain I would say that religious groups tend more to act as pressure groups or lobbying groups than as conversation partners.

Just think of this. What Jonah discovered is still true: it is much easier preaching to non-Jews than to Jews. If you read the book of Jonah, you'll find that Jonah said five words (in the original Hebrew) to the inhabitants of Nineveh, which translates: "In 40 days Nineveh will be destroyed". Five words and the whole population repented! All the other prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah – spent their whole lives preaching to Jews and nobody listened!

Let me be blunt. Either we win or the fundamentalists win; and that is the challenge. If the fundamentalists win I wouldn't hang around too long.

So, let me summarise my argument.

1. Religion is our greatest legacy of meanings.
2. Religion belongs to civil society and not to partisan politics.
3. All of us, believers, atheists, agnostics, are in this together and we must learn to speak to one another and listen to one another. ■

This article is an edited version of the annual Theos Lecture (delivered on 4 November 2009) in London by Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain. The full text of the talk is available on <www.theosthinktank.co.uk>

religion and women's rights

Former US President Jimmy Carter notes that religion is one of the "basic causes of the violation of women's rights."

"Women are prevented from playing a full and equal role in many faiths, creating an environment in which violations against women are justified," he said recently in Australia. "The belief that women are inferior human beings in the eyes of God gives excuses to the brutal husband who beats his wife, the soldier who rapes a woman, the employer who has a lower pay scale for women employees, or parents who decide to abort a female embryo."

Likewise, Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for human rights, stated "... if there's one overarching issue for women it's the way that religion can be manipulated to subjugate women."

incarnation...

your one wild and precious life

Diane Pendola

What is Christmas? Yes, it's a Christian holiday. And in the public arena we've moved from wishing people *Merry Christmas* to *Happy Holidays*. I understand the affirmation of pluralism that goes to the heart of this shift and embrace it. But I think consumerism and the bottom-line goes to its soul, and that I do not hold.

There is what Christians call *the Incarnation*, defined theologically as the embodiment of God in the human form of Jesus. This is what Christians celebrate all over the world as Christmas. And then there is the universal fact that we humans are all incarnate beings, embodied and at the same time more than our bodies. We incarnate something 'more' within our flesh. We personify something through our lives, through our materiality. What is that something?

Personally I think one of the major contributions of Christianity to the rich spiritual repository that has been entrusted to us from all the great spiritual traditions is the Incarnation. Raimon Panikkar says *it liberates us from living in a merely historical and temporal universe and makes us conscious of our divine dignity*. No matter what our spiritual belief or lack thereof, the theological understanding of Incarnation can move each one of us to reflect on the meaning of our own incarnation and the divine dignity that moves us to the something 'more' that is the potentiality and the fullness our humanity.

Those of you who follow EARTHLINES know that the intercultural philosopher and theologian Raimon Panikkar has been my root teacher. He says that the Christian incarnation *is in fact the trinitarian vision of reality. The divine mystery makes itself flesh, makes itself matter... We are not inquiring now whether Christ, the second Adam, assumes nature (in its entirety) or the nature of man as an individual (in his singularity). We do say that the Word's incarnation in Jesus is the revelation of the mystery that has been hidden since the "eternal eons" (Romans 16:25), and that in him we see the fullness of the "last times" (Hebrews 1:2) realised in the head of "creation" (Col 1:15-20). The destiny of the head is one and the same as the destiny of the members, and indeed the whole universe (Romans 8:19-23).*

I would like to inquire with you about Christ assuming not only human form in Jesus, but nature in its entirety as the Universal Christ. The first understanding is the more common, but there is a rich theological tradition that Christ

takes up the whole of creation as Body, as sacred, divinising all of creation along with the human, not exclusive to the human. The great Catholic theologian, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), taught that all creation was a revelation of God shot through with the fire of divinity. Here is a poetic interpretation of Aquinas' teaching beautifully rendered by Daniel Ladinsky:

Capax Universi

*Capax universi, capable of the universe are your arms
when they move with love.*

*And I know it is true that your feet are never
more alive than when they are in
defence of a good
cause.*

*I want to fund your efforts: Stay near beauty, for she will
always strengthen you.*

*She will bring your mouth close to hers and
breathe-inspire you the way
light does the fields.*

*The earth inhales God, why
should we not do
the same?*

*This sacred flame we tend inside needs
the chants of every tongue,
the communion with
all.*

*As capable as God
are we.*

Teilhard de Chardin, Jesuit priest, theologian and scientist is a more contemporary representative of this tradition. In a beautiful book by Ursula King he is quoted as saying: *I believe that the universe is an evolution. I believe that evolution proceeds towards the spirit. I believe that spirit is fully realised in a form of personality. I believe that the supremely personal is the universal Christ.*

At this point I imagine you asking, so what does this mean? What does it have to do with me? If we are conscious of our divine dignity as humans as well as the dignity of the whole manifest creation, then what does this imply, concretely, in the real world of our daily lives and decisions? How do we 'incarnate' this divine energy? Does it matter? How does it matter?

I want to respond that the Incarnation is about us. It's about you and me. It's about how we live our lives. It's about our choices, our consciousness, our capacity for the Universe, our capacity for God and whether or not we choose the 'more' of which we are capable. Do we choose the *good*; choose the *true* rather than the easy; choose to *forgive and be forgiven*; choose to *see* beyond the limits of our bodies to the energy that connects us as one Body? This one Body is what Christians call Christ, but which certainly is beyond any name or concept and therefore has many names and transcends them all. I want to say, *Look, we're all in this together! Look, we are all connected just like Chief Seattle in his famous speech said, like blood that unites one family. We are all connected. What we do to one we do to all.*

As I write, leaders from around the globe are gathering in Copenhagen to address the devastating effects of climate change on our planet. The poor countries, who have done the least to bring on the catastrophic effects of drought and coastal flooding that are the results of the warming of earth's temperatures, are the one's who are suffering the most. They implore the wealthier nations to see that we are all connected on this planet, that what happens to Bangladesh happens to New York City; that what happens to the polar bear happens to the human.

The Incarnation, which Christians are celebrating now as Christmas, is certainly not about consuming more of the

earth in all her vital beauty: her forests, rivers, oceans, creatures, meadows, glens, which is what composes all of our 'stuff' in one shape or form. Nor is it about consolidating power or protecting privilege or supporting a sense of entitlement with new-age jingoism. Nor is it about scapegoating the most wounded and yes, even the most violent, among us by exiling them to the trash-heaps of our prison systems as stand-in retribution for our communal sins of neglect and hard-heartedness.

The Incarnation is about the divine becoming human so that we may rise to the fullness of our humanity and truly incarnate Love in the world. *The fundamental evil that besets us... is our incapacity to see the whole... I sometimes get vague and undefined longings to gather a small group of friends around me and... give the example of a life in which nothing would count but the preoccupation with, and love for, all the earth.* (Teilhard)

Friends, let us be preoccupied with Love for each other and all the earth. This is what we are born for: to incarnate that which saves, divinises, enlightens and heals; to awaken consciousness that sees the whole and embraces each and every being as an icon of the sacred on its way to infinite mystery. The choice is ours. This is our moment, our incarnation. *What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?* This is the question of Christmas, Christian or not. ■

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our world, our future

In December 164 young people from 44 countries gathered in Copenhagen for Unicef's Children's Climate Forum. One of the delegates, Luke Hughes, reports his impressions

Farmers in India are committing suicide. It is estimated that almost 200,000 have done so since 1997 and the rate at which they are doing so is increasing. Often, they take not only their own lives, but those of their families too. This cannot be solely attributed to climate change, but is certainly being exacerbated by it; the human stories are what make the issue of climate change as much a moral issue as a scientific one – it forces us to take a long, hard look at ourselves as consumers in an unstable world.

Yet the implications of this have still to be realised by many, and there is a real danger that young people will increasingly feel disenchanted with and alienated by the ongoing climate debate. The *Children's Climate Forum* gave young climate activists a voice on the international stage and a platform from which we can continue to engage the youth in our own communities. Furthermore, for climate change in particular, it is essential that we as young people are included in the debate: an aspect of climate change which is all too often overlooked is that it is affecting the children of the world today. The *United Nations Children's Fund* (Unicef) oversees the UN's *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (which celebrated its 20th birthday this month) and has taken up this issue as part of its efforts towards inter-generational justice.

The world's youth are bearing the brunt of climate change. When changing weather patterns devastate a family's crop, it is the children who are forced to work the land harder and lose any hope of an education. When rivers run dry, it is young women and girls who

are compelled to walk even further for water. When disaster strikes, the child victims are far too numerous.

The power of the forum stemmed from the relationships that were forged and the experiences that were shared. We in the United Kingdom are lucky in the sense that we are still able to conceive of global warming as a phenomenon of the future – but we are in the minority in this respect. Ivalu, 14, is from Greenland, and used to be able to walk to school over the sea ice that joined her island to the next – sea ice that no longer exists.

Marie, 16, is from Haiti, which was hit by four hurricanes in two months last year, which prevented her and her compatriots from attending school for a month. I heard young people from New Zealand, Switzerland, the United States, Canada, Spain and many other countries discuss the effects that they are already witnessing, and those delegations from developing countries bore powerful testimony to the impacts on their communities.

The effects we are witnessing today, however, are tiny in comparison with those my generation will endure in a few decades' time. I became friends with Axam, 15, a teenager from the Maldives, who is worried about the existential crisis that his country faces as a result of climate change. Indeed, the people of the Maldives, along with those of other low-lying island states, have become the heroes during the last couple of months of climate debate. Their attitude is one of startling maturity and sensitivity compared with that of many other participants in the debate. I spoke to the principal of a

Maldivian school, Abdulla Rasheed, who told me that the Maldives want to see climate change become everyone's concern, where now it seems only to be small island states that are taking the threat seriously enough.

Despite current global warming being mostly exacerbated by the development of industrialised Western nations, he said that we should disregard this, and instead fight climate change together, so that we can all be happy with the changes we make. Such an opinion is one that, if it had been shared by the global community in Kyoto in 1997, could have meant that we would not be facing the problems we are today. This view from the Maldives is backed up by their intention to become carbon-neutral by 2020, in stark contrast to the half-hearted pledges of so many more developed nations.

One of the most powerful things that faith in God gives us is, perhaps, the encouragement to consider ourselves and our actions within a much broader framework of Creation. In prayer we can pause for a moment of reflection on the way in which our deeds have had an impact on those around us. Awareness of the bigger picture is what is missing in the minds of consumers around the world. If every time we buy a pack of meat, switch on a light or fly between continents we consider the way such trivial uses of energy add up to a global addiction to fossil fuels, the world will face a brighter future.

Of course, people have no incentive to think in such a way when climate sceptics use the media to undermine the scientific authenticity of anthropogenic global warming. While in Copenhagen I was blissfully unaware

copenhagen thoughts from another world

By the time I'd finished in our little brick outhouse this morning, the muezzin's "Allah Akbar..." was crackling out from a dull orange sky smouldering under winter smog. With a quarter bucket of water my waste joined a hundred thousand others' sliding into the black creek that slithers through Mamta Colony. This diseased vein, and hundreds like it from Delhi's squatter settlements, feeds the Yamuna which deposits our pollution in Mother Ganga. Drifting down over black water the azaan was as mournful as a requiem, and the minaret radiant in the ashen sky and haloed by wheeling kites was a grieving angel.

Mamta colony's 12 hectares is home to a hundred thousand people. They've come in search of the TV Delhi they saw in their villages: jobs, mobile phones and business women in smart salwaar kameezs stepping out of purring cars. However that Delhi – wide streets, Connaught place, Feroz Shah Kotla cricket stadium and flush toilets – is an uncrossable social divide away. I swipe my Smart Card and enter, but for my neighbours the cool, tiled Metro is a forbidden temple of another religion. Mamta colony, not Central Secretariat, is their stop.

Yesterday was another Mamta colony morning, the sun setting off blazes of human energy below. Each little flame burned intensely and desperately: kids competing for the whippiest top throwing action, buffaloes grudgingly yielding creamy milk, spiraling jellabais sizzling in hot oil and tandoors churning out morning roti. Cross-legged on his charpoy, the neighbourhood mafia boss, nicknamed "Dzorj Bush", was surveying his rickshaw kingdom. When the government demolished public toilets and created Mamta Colony's only patch of bare ground, Bush Bhai started charging parking fees. He's portly and affable, but every rickshaw owner knows that if they don't pay to park on land that is theirs as much as his, their vehicle will be trashed. Livelihood comes before principle for people on a knife edge. Now as I write, Bush Bhai is sipping chai and playing cards with the three lathi wielding policemen who make occasional forays into the colony. Perhaps it's just to let us watch him idly turning the wheels of power.

of the absurd and damaging fallacies and allegations that were being flung around the blogosphere and the national media. It is in the nature of science that there should be debate and argument, but the evidence behind global warming is overwhelming in terms of scientific theory. Meanwhile, the attempt to arouse public distrust of the science is in my view immoral, given the strength of the argument and the enormity of the threat.

In sharp contrast to this pernicious cynicism, the *Children's Climate Forum* exuded unbridled optimism and courage of a kind that is rarely seen on the international stage. The passion and intelligence of the delegates were truly extraordinary, and this through in the final declaration of young people's views: *We commit to personal lifestyle changes that place the common good above our individual desires and current way of life.* The declaration states our

Chaotic and vibrant, Mamta colony is somehow more vital for the clear and present knowledge that its life is short. Nobody knows when, but this ramshackle conglomeration, people and bricks haphazardly heaped into a community, will surely be flattened. One day, in an air-conditioned office on a wide avenue somewhere in South Delhi, our fragment of earth will fall under a planner's pen. He who has power over such things will choose a wider road, a new bus terminal or legal housing scheme as more rational land use. Mamta colony may have no tomorrow, but for today around me a hundred thousand human fuses burn with ingenuity, energy... necessity.

Yesterday I was in the furnace of internal combustion engines that is the other Delhi. While horns ricocheted around like sparks in a foundry, I read about Copenhagen in a magazine. Copenhagen where nations haphazardly thrown together negotiated and re-negotiated, hammering environmental sustainability tomorrow against the anvil of today's economic exigencies. Copenhagen where locked in the real politick of power humanity couldn't quite forge a binding agreement to clean the air we've blackened with our carbon. "Next year", they concluded, "...maybe". Copenhagen which was to be the salvation of humanity.

Today I'm back home amidst open sewers and black water. Mamta colony, where not one car enters, must have a per capita carbon footprint a hundredth of America's. None of those who pollute the Yamuna with me talk of emissions, mitigation or global warming. Allah – not Copenhagen – was on their lips this morning. Now around me they're carrying bricks, sewing label jeans and pulling handcarts – each trying to eke something out of whatever resources he or she has. And were I to stop the man below me hauling two hundred kilos of cement on his cycle rickshaw, what would I say to him about Copenhagen? He already knows that to sustain, for now, this tenuous life we all wash excrement into sacred commons or cede them to power. He'd shrug and pedal on. ■

Jeph Mathias is a New Zealand doctor working in India. He is the husband of Kaaren, who writes the monthly column, A Mother's Journal, for Tui Motu

recommendations and our concerns in a powerful way, and we hope that it shows the world that it is possible to transcend borders, cultures and histories to reach a fair and ambitious consensus on climate change.

May the leaders of the world follow in our footsteps. ■

Luke Hughes is a sixth-form student at the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne. For more information visit <http://climateforum.notlong.com> Reprinted with permission from the London Tablet

going down under

Paul Andrews, S.J.

On the Heathrow tarmac, one engine of the Boeing 777 was vibrating more than it should. The engineers worried, and ran it through three trials, each lasting ninety minutes. But nobody told us, waiting among the milling thousands in the terminal, what was wrong. The flight to Sydney should have taken off at 7.30, but all we heard, as the hours crept up to midnight, was: *Your take-off is delayed.*

At two in the morning the message was finally clear and depressing: *You won't be leaving here till tomorrow afternoon. We'll find you somewhere to sleep.* So buses brought us to a nearby hotel, where we queued in the cold and dark, and found beds in the small hours.

The following afternoon we queued again in the terminal, a human snake of uncountable weary passengers moving snail-like towards the check-in for hour after hour. I leant on a walking stick, pushed my trolley and tried to pray.

I had noticed a dumpy, middle-aged Englishwoman ahead of me – noticed her because of an annoying, obtrusive laugh. How wrong I was. She was the original Good Samaritan. She turned to ask was I OK, then suggested I sit while



and unexpected bounty, an ample private space with a seat that turned into a horizontal bed, a private TV with choice of stations and films. I re-ran an oldie, *Roman Holiday*, with Audrey Hepburn,

which brought me back in time, while the repetition of all the English announcements in Mandarin brought me forward to the day when we will all have to know some Chinese. Splendid stewardesses and stewards, of impeccable courtesy and kindness, hovered over me, looking for any way they could be of service, pouring champagne, recommending vintage wines, undermining all my resolutions about lots of water and no alcohol lest deep vein thrombosis strike me down. How I blessed the scrupulous check-in man, and the perceptive and kind Englishwoman, who had set up this taste of Paradise.

Travelling east, against the sun, I lost track of the days of the week. I still worried about further arrangements, especially about warning the friend who was to meet me in Wellington. Thinking it was Wednesday I rang her from Singapore, only to learn that it was already Thursday, and she had waited for me in vain at the airport. The day's delay in Heathrow had skewed all my connections in New Zealand, and they had to be renegotiated.

she pushed my trolley. She was not taken in by my protests, and finally, unbidden, approached BA personnel to help me. You're a darling, I told her, when I was brought to the check-in ahead of her. God bless her.

The scrupulous check-in clerk worried about everything. I don't think it is the right job for an obsessional – too many things to check. He seemed to be new to the job, consulting his colleagues, looking up papers, and showing all the signs of acute anxiety. But like the Englishwoman, he surpassed all expectations, and suddenly said: "I'm upgrading you to Business class."

Why did he do it? My evident age? The walking stick and wheelchair? A touch of the Holy Spirit? It was certainly grace for me, unearned

In a state of confused exhaustion, I looked for help, and again a Good Samaritan appeared, serving one of the many desks at Sydney Airport. She told me to sit down, took up her phone, and re-arranged the connections in such a way that without extra cost I reached my final destination in the south of New Zealand at the hour I was expected. What she did was way above the call of duty. It was painstaking, clever and extraordinarily kind.

What is it about Good Samaritans? They are unexpected, and often run counter to our expectations. The Jew waylaid by robbers expected help from the priest and Levite who were fellow-Jews, but not from a stranger. In my struggle to cope with queues and airports, I did not expect help from the laughing Englishwoman, or the scrupulous clerk, or the overworked airport lady in Sydney. Good Samaritans are clever and imaginative at seeing what is needed. They are not interested in wordy gestures, but in being of real service.

And we, the oldies with a residue of pride, need to be ready to welcome them, and be indebted to them, accepting that perhaps we cannot really cope. When the young or middle-aged jump up to offer me their place on a bus or tram, I am still inclined to thank them and stay standing. That is not the good Spirit in me. Better to accept gratefully and let the goodness flow.

Ireland is kind to its old: free travel and medical card and a generous pension, not to speak of other bonuses for the over-eighties – I swim in a splendid sports centre for €7 a year! Maybe we are tasting a second childhood, with the happiness of being cared for. In all the crankiness of this winter, it feels like a moment of grace to be able to say: *Yes, thank you.* ■

Importance

Sometimes we fall into easy conversation,
God and I,
Plodding along together through the sand,
Talking about things that are important to
us;

Well...

Important to me...

'But that's okay,' God smiles,
'because you are important to me.'

I have no reply to that...

And then I catch the merriment in God's eye
sparkling on the wet rocks
and together we burst into laughter,
God and I.

Clare Lind

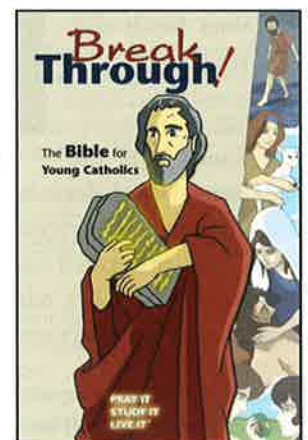
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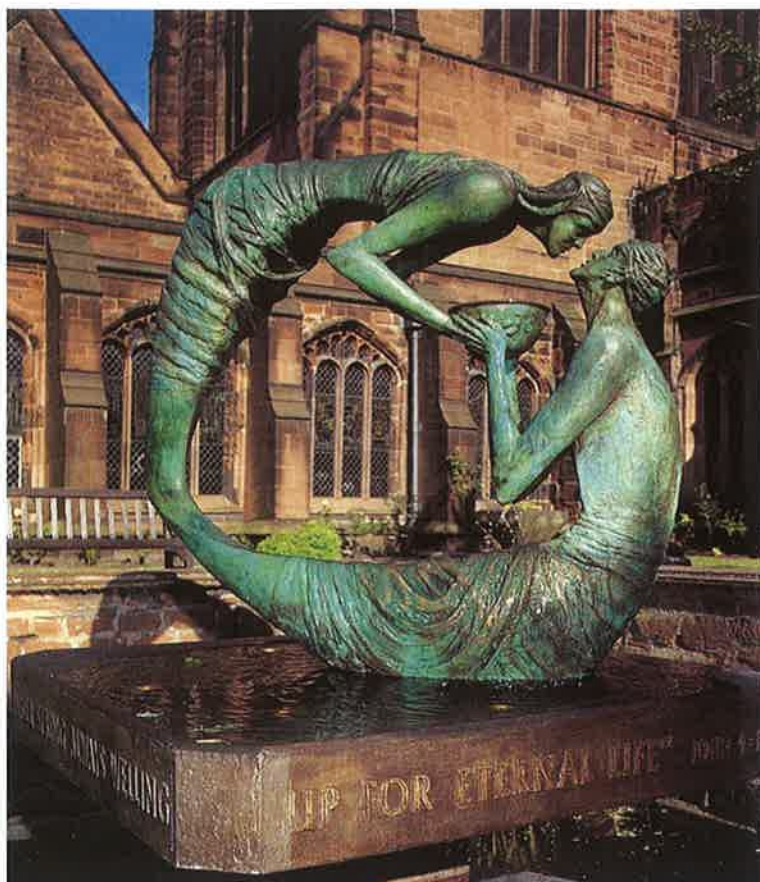
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the waters of life - John 4:1-42

Kathleen Rushton

I invite you to come into the story of the woman at the well, a well known and loved story in *John*, by contemplating *The Water of Life*, Stephen Broadbent's startling 1994 sculpture of her and Jesus in the cloister garden of Chester Cathedral, England. Many portrayals of this woman have her somewhat demurely with Jesus at the well. This one shows her anything but demure. The gaze of the viewer is drawn to the gaze of the woman and Jesus, to the space between their gaze, to their hands that clasp the vessel.



the sculpture

Do her hands hold the vessel of water which Jesus requested? Or is his hand over hers because she is in his hands? Is the moment captured in art when Jesus first asked for a drink of water? Or is it an ongoing moment in her relationship with Jesus drinking "the water welling up to eternal life?"

How does the sculpture evoke the verse engraved on it: "The water I will give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (*Jn 4:14*)? What is the effect of the woman and Jesus holding the vessel of water? Of Jesus resting in the shallow water table which is anchored below in the deep wellspring?

The two figures form a circle which is incomplete until the viewer's eye falls to the vessel of living water. They meet in a gaze of longing and desire. Is it only about her resting in the Other? Or is she an extension of the Other – his desire, his hands, his feet, his voice in her world?

darkness and light

But she was a sinner, they tell us. She went to the well at noon to avoid the other women, they tell us. *John*

tells us actually of light and darkness, of light symbolic of believing and of the darkness symbolic of not yet believing. In the beginning, the Word came to be "the light of all people" and "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." Jesus says: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (*Jn 8:12*). Those of the light understand the purpose of this Gospel: "that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name" (*20:31*).

call to faith

In *John*, Jesus dialogues with individual characters who represent a type of faith-response (or lack of it) to him. Each is representative of groups or types of believers. Previously, in *Jn 3*, the named Jewish man of status, the Pharisee Nicodemus, came to Jesus by night. He was representative of those who believe in secret. They were afraid of what others think. He came to Jesus in the dark.

The unnamed woman was a Samaritan descended from those who, hundreds of years before, intermarried with their Gentile conquerors. From the margins she came at noon, the brightest time of the day. She may be representative of Samaritan Christians whom, because of the long enmity between them, Jewish Christians had to struggle to accept. The seven named male disciples in the Gospel, along with Mary, Martha and Lazarus of Bethany, and all other characters are presumably Jews. This Gospel was embodied in people struggling with religious and political tensions of the late first century, as it is for us today. Are we aware of our power and of the powerlessness of people from the margins?

image of water

The central image of water coming from a deep well is embodied in an arid land where wells meant life. Women drew and carried water from wells to their homes. I read this image, while living in Canterbury with its fine quality drinking water. Yet the abundant waters of our rivers and mountains are contested for energy and irrigation for cropping and dairying.

Globally, poor women struggle for clean water for their families. Sea waters rise and land recedes. We read post-Copenhagen. Is the living water of our physical environment polluted because we are drying up spiritually? Do we drink deeply of "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" to enable transformation and change?

This woman drank from "the water I will give" which became "in her a spring of water welling up to eternal life." She was a called disciple, the only called disciple in *John's* gospel to leave the tools of her trade. She left her water jar behind (*4:27*), as Matthew left his tax table and Peter and others left their boats in the other gospels.

woman of strength

The sculpture shows a woman of strength. This echoes her robust theological dialogue with Jesus. The exchange on husbands formed a central part of their discussion on Samaritan faith and theology. Jesus is seen by the woman within the tradition of the prophets, a tradition which speaks of Israel's relationship to God in terms of spousal imagery. If the woman is representative of her people, the five husbands well may symbolise the worship of the gods of the five foreign tribes (*2 Kings 17:13-34*) and Samaria's departure from the Law. Jesus' declaration that Samaria "has no husband" evokes such as *Hosea 2:2* which is a classic prophetic denunciation.

Interestingly, in encounters with other Biblical women at wells, such as Rachel's midday meeting with Jacob (*Gen 29:7*), there are no references to their immorality. Sexual literalism does not take seriously the symbolic significance of the woman's story woven into the very fabric of this Gospel.

one with a mission

The woman is a fine example of mission. In the style of creating disciples in *John*, people are led to Jesus by another. She leads her own people to Jesus. She tells them of her experience. They, then, come to believe themselves: "we believe, for we have heard for ourselves" (*4:42*). Is this pattern of leading of our people to Jesus in our lives?

Jesus' mission is to "complete the works of God." These words are found within the woman's story (*4:34*). We meet them again in the ministry of Jesus (*5:35*), the prayer of Jesus (*17:4*), on the cross (*19:28*) and in his last words (*19:30*). Are these words in the Gospel of our lives?

Like John the baptiser, the woman preceded the disciples as a witness (*martyria*), a key word in *John*. Later, after the Last Supper, Jesus prays "on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word" (*17:20*). This echoes the words about the missionary activity of the woman in *4:39*: "many Samaritans ... believed in him through the words of the woman bearing witness" (literal translation of the Greek). How do we action Jesus' prayer for us – for those who believe in him through the words of our bearing witness?

The story of Jesus and the woman at the well will be read in many parishes on the Third Sunday of Lent to prepare for waters of baptism. All who ponder this story are invited into the mystery, the intimacy, the mission and transformation of relationship with Jesus so that: "The water I will give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ■

Kathleen Rushton is a Sister of Mercy, scripture scholar and spiritual director, living in Christchurch.

Director

Catholic Family and Community Services

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Catholic family and Community Services is the professional social service Agency of the Catholic Diocese of Auckland. It provides counselling and social work services primarily focused on families and couples, family violence prevention, and supports prison chaplaincy. The present Director is stepping down and the Diocese is seeking applications from suitably experienced professionals.

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(09) 3789 650 for further information.

Applications will close on Wednesday
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environmental issues are firstly ethical

"If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation."

Thus Benedict XVI's message for World Day of Peace 2010. It is a theologically coherent statement linking stewardship of the gifts of God's creation with integral human development, the search for peace and the evangelising role of the church.

Our present crises – be they economic, food-related, environmental or social – are ultimately also moral crises, and all of them are interrelated... The church has a responsibility towards creation, and she considers it her duty to exercise that responsibility in public life, in order to protect earth, water and air as gifts of God the Creator meant for everyone, and above all to save mankind from the danger of self-destruction.

On the Catholic right Benedict has been criticised for falling for anti-capitalist propaganda; on the left, for insisting that human moral behaviour is central to environmental issues.

climate change

Was the conference at 'Brokenhagen' (as one commentator put it) a disaster? What were the benchmarks against which to judge the meeting? The political realities militated against the ideal, but all is not lost.

Change generally comes from the bottom; attitudinal change on environmental issues certainly did, and whether we accept climate change as a real issue, let alone man-made, it is obvious that environmental pollution is bad for us.

It was governments, not individuals and NGOs, that were at the meeting; the strong like China and former denier USA, as well as the weak. China remains (with India) an obstacle, but environmental disasters from its rush to become an economic superpower (a pre-condition for becoming a

military one) are forcing it to modify its behaviour.

One hopes greater progress will occur this year. While doubters remain and the semi-converted are waiting to see what happens, the movement is gathering momentum. There are positive signs. We must play our part.

As Neil Darragh said last September in his Pompallier lecture on the church's mission: "Any church group will have a strategy and priority towards current environmental issues if it does actually believe in a Creator God as it proclaims."

are we not alone?

Last November 30 high-level scientists attended a study week on astrobiology sponsored by the Vatican Observatory and the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. There is ample evidence of the existence of materials necessary for life elsewhere. As well, Jose Funes SJ, head of the Vatican Observatory, said the existence of rock-eating microbes living deep beneath our ocean floor show that different life forms may exist on less hospitable worlds in the universe.

Cardinal Giovanni Lajolo said "truth from research cannot make us afraid; what is to be feared is error. Science opens up the human mind to new knowledge and contributes toward the fulfillment of humankind."

More research into how the Earth and earthly life evolved is helpful in understanding what habitable worlds may look like. Funes said that even though the study week looked exclusively at scientific evidence and theories, it was "very important that the church is involved in this type

of research", looking at life in the cosmos.

a realistic idealist

Prominent American theologian, Thomas Reese SJ recently published his analysis of Barack Obama's Nobel Prize acceptance speech. He called it "a comprehensive overview of the role of the United States in international affairs, a view that is principled and realistic, not ideological or naive." In rebutting criticisms that it was a detailed defence of the Afghan war, he highlighted three central points in the speech:

- the need to develop alternatives to violence that are tough enough to actually change behaviour. "Intransigence must be met with increased pressure – and such pressure exists only when the world stands together as one."

- the need to recognise that "only a just peace based on the inherent rights and dignity of every individual can truly be lasting... Peace is unstable where citizens are denied the right to speak freely or worship as they please, choose their own leaders or assemble without fear." But unlike ideological purists, Reese says, Obama understands that "sanctions without outreach – condemnation without discussion – can carry forward only a crippling status quo. No repressive regime can move down a new path unless it has the choice of an open door."

- "a just peace includes not only civil and political rights – it must encompass economic security and opportunity. For true peace is not just freedom from fear, but freedom from want. The absence of hope can rot a society from within."

it's the bottom line that matters!

Antonio Costa, head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, claimed he has seen evidence that some banks on the brink of collapse last year had laundered the proceeds of organised crime, amounting to over \$300 billion. It was the only liquid capital investment available to them. ■

theologian par excellence

The death of Fr Edward Schillebeeckx OP in December gives us an opportunity to reflect on the importance of theologians in the life of the church. For over 50 years this humble Dominican priest was acknowledged to be one of the greatest theologians of the 20th century.

One sometimes hears the question: What do theologians do? Do we need them? Surely it's the Pope and bishops who spell out the Church's teaching for us. One way of answering is to look at the procedures and pronouncements of the Popes and bishops at the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. An important part of the bishops' pre-Council homework was to familiarise themselves with the latest studies and research on the topics which were to be debated on the Council floor. They turned for advice to those who had dedicated their lives to these studies – theologians. And when the Council began, the bishops brought their finest theologians with them to Rome as experts (periti).

The Dutch bishops brought Edward Schillebeeckx. His clear ideas about the purpose and value of theology fitted in well with Pope John XXIII's vision for this ecumenical council: use all the recent research which brings out the richness of the church's tradition – the Scriptures, the writings of the great saints of the early church, the teachings through the centuries – and present them in a language that is relevant to the practical realities and problems of modern society. In the words of the Council: "theologians are invited to seek continually for more suitable ways of communicating doctrine to the people of our times (because) recent findings of science, history and philosophy are always raising new questions which influence life and demand theological investigations".

Teachings from previous church councils had been mainly negative in tone, full of anathemas and warnings about the

dangers of 'the world'. The bishops and theologians at Vatican II changed this. The church should be involved in the world, they said. The style of the language in the official documents was pastoral, indicating a shift in priorities: "people of God", "priesthood of all believers", "dialogue", "collegiality" – terms never seen before in conciliar vocabulary.

This approach did not meet with universal approval. Many senior figures in the church could see no need for a Council. Some of the theologians who were now officially advising the bishops had been condemned by the Vatican. Tensions ran high, but over four years the documents of the Second Vatican Council were eventually produced with almost unanimous votes. And so we had changes in liturgy, ecumenism, respect for other faiths, encouragement of lay initiatives and the Pope sharing authority with local bishops. Bishops and theologians went back to their own countries and universities with great hopes for the church having a more positive and affirming role in the modern world.

It was not long before these hopes began to crumble. Under Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI the spirit of the Council has gradually been eroded. Once more, theologians whose views are deemed suspect by Rome are censured without any attempt at a fair trial. Father Schillebeeckx has been one of these victims. As an old man he wrote of his concerns that the church is in danger of becoming a ghetto church, reduced to a small 'faithful flock' holding out against the 'evils of the world'. This is so contrary to his efforts in trying to explain the implications of the Incarnation – that Jesus, the Son of God, is now inseparable from our world.

We pray that his courageous and generous heart is now bursting with the fullness of Divine Truth to which he devoted his life. ■

Jim Neilan

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A Mother's Journal...

Kaaren Mathias

Noise, space and prayer are three things that I am learning more about this month. We moved to Delhi for the winter, over a month ago. Our reasons – if I remember correctly – were that it would be good for time with friends, pleasant temperatures (our mountain village in Himachal Pradesh is under snow and locked behind high passes for the next four months) and learning a little about the life of the very poor and what it's like to live in an illegal slum in an Asian megacity.

noise

As I write there are noises of children playing and squabbling, tooting motorcycles, tinkling cycle rickshaw bells and a vendor: "Today only, guavas for 10 rupees per kilo!" Our window opens to face the mosque across the road – with the loudspeakers just 50m away, we too are roused at 5.50am for the first prayers of the day with *Allahu akbar* (Allah is the greatest)... This call to prayer comes five times a day.

space

I am surprised that living in one room (2.5 x 3.5m) is mostly OK for us. We pull out a mat to sit on for meals and hey presto, we have a dining room... then after clearing away the spilt rice grains or crumbs of roti we wash the dishes immediately in the little galley kitchen... (no space to leave things around). We pull out school books to make a classroom... at night the pile of four squabs get spread out to make a bedroom.

We even found we could make a communal guest room. My aunty Lois, usually resident in Auckland, came to stay a couple of nights last week. It was easy enough to find another closed cell foam mat and she dosed down with

the rest of us, marae style, though we giggled to ourselves at how funny it would seem in New Zealand. Such a small space for a Kiwi family we certainly find hard, but we're learning lots from it. We're getting better at being tidy too.

There are some drawbacks. In the mornings, sometimes, the baby wakes before everyone else wants to get up, and I have had to do the odd morning walk around the empty, dark streets between 6 and 7am with Jalori on my back to keep the house quiet a while longer.

prayer

Prayer is easier and harder. The lack of space – of all kinds – can overwhelm me. I have to be deliberate about getting up early and sitting on the roof (which is pretty quiet early in the morning) for some still time. And that doesn't happen as often as I'd like it too. The faithfulness of the five-times-a-day call to prayer around me challenges me. So easily I find excuses to not stop, not reflect, not sit and take the invitation

to hold my heart and thoughts and soul before God.

We are surrounded by many who are desperately poor, by griminess and pollution and colour and chaos. There is much to challenge me. Many things are unclear about direction, place of belonging and work for us just now. And there is plenty for me to learn.

Kaaren Mathias is mother of four, and married to Jeph. The six of them are living in a small flat in Delhi, India over the winter.

