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Tui Motu

InterIslands

Fasting to Give to Others

NICHOLAS THOMPSON, PAUL BARBER, BEN SOKIMI

Everyone Needs Enough

WATTIE WATSON, HELEN ROBINSON

Characters of the Church

KIM VON LANTHEN, RUTH MATHER

and New Columnist

BRUCE DRYSDALE

MARCH 2023

Fasting for Justice
Nohopuku mo te Tika

INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC MAGAZINE

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COVER PHOTO

Autumn Harvest to Share
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Editorial

Dig Deep this Lent

If Lent is the season to act for others we're well positioned in Aotearoa this year. The fruit of climate change has dumped violently on us, devastating lives, land and communities in the North and along the East Coast. In the immediate aftermath we saw the scale of the destruction matched by stories of selflessness and bravery of individuals and groups. Now that the survival phase has passed, we're looking into the long cleanup and rebuilding stages. And the scale of these tasks threatens to throw us into despondency, paralysis or self-centredness — a moodshift we need to fight. So Lent may make more sense this year than in other years.

This is because Lent is the season to refocus our lives towards the common good. The three lenten themes of prayer, fasting and almsgiving can integrate our lives. We can think of prayer as focusing on God's mission — like blinking to clarify our vision — and seeing that by making an option for the poor we ensure that everyone has enough to live well. That by reorienting our living to Earth's systems we can reduce the damage on Earth's communities. It's like seeing that God's dream for all creation is fulfilled.

And prayer is clarified by fasting and giving. I'm moved by farmers who send stockfeed to areas hit by drought or cyclone. It's an effective, generous short-term measure to get climate-struck farms on their feet again. It's a risk for farmers to lower their own stores in order to help out. But that's fasting in a practical sense. It's like the Good Samaritan saying he'll pay for his injured neighbour's medical expenses.

It's not the same at foodbanks. As you'll read in Helen Robinson's and Paul Barber's articles, a growing number of people are dependent on foodbanks because they don't have sufficient income to support their families. Our loose change and tins of baked beans will feed people for a day but won't get them back on their feet. Lenten fasting calls us to dig deeply into our resources and give enough so that families have the wherewithal to put dinner on the table night after night. Our fasting decisions may mean that we back "unpopular" policies — those that call us to take less for the sake of those who need more. It's called social welfare in politics; it's the common good in Catholic social teaching and Pope Francis describes it as social friendship in *Fratelli Tutti*. It's more than giving charity; it's embodying charity.

In the last few years we've been through a massacre, a pandemic, floods and the cyclone. They've each highlighted the same strengths and challenges — and we made some changes. But it's in the aftermath that we slip back from our resolve. Lent gives us a new opportunity.

We thank all the contributors to this issue. Their reflection, research, writing, art and craft provide lenten reading and much more.

And as is our custom, our last word is of blessing and encouragement.



Waitangi gets under our skin, but there is still a way to go

MY WIFE AND I went to Waitangi this year but early, on 3 February. We were invited to a celebration to mark the 10-year anniversary of Te Hiku o Te Ika Iwi — Crown Social Development and Wellbeing Accord agreed between the Crown and four of the iwi of the Far North. The social accord allowed for the development of services to the whānau of the North that were under their own control. I knew a bit about this process because I had been a Crown negotiator with iwi in the north in four of their settlements.

The celebration was boisterous and very moving. The obvious delight the people showed in being in charge of their own affairs was beautifully illustrated by a series of pou/pillars, each one supported by a community or Crown person prepared to tell the story of the beautiful artwork they had created that articulated for them the meaning of the accord.

Their stories were evocative of a people recovering their mana, their place to stand. There was no sense of “poor me” in any of this. A rather lovely feature of this display was that both Māori and Pākehā engaged in this articulation of a journey that had begun slowly, had taken five years to gain trust and momentum on both sides, and is now flowering. But it is tough to navigate and very person-dependent.

The Crown now has skilled people at chief executive level, capable of understanding and working with the complexities and nuances of matching Māori leadership, but even after 10 years, this cross-cultural leadership competence is not structurally deep. It needs to be, because Māori leadership is flourishing.

That evening we ate with our friends from Ngāti Kuri. They had been at the hui with Ministers of the Crown and iwi leaders. Their aspirations are ambitious and they are working off the backs of settlements that certainly are not full restoration. They have learned to make “enough” of not much.

As Chief Crown negotiator I was challenged during their settlements: “You have taken an arm but returned a fingernail.” They are right. This is not full justice, but it is progress.

It still astonishes me that Māori have so much commitment to the commonweal. They truly have the welfare of the public, the whole civil society, in their sights. That is why they have ultimately settled in the interests of us all. Even when the essential integrity of their position is under virulent attack, they stay in the conversation.

The attack on the Three Waters legislation as giving too much power to Māori is one such attack. The idea that iwi, who have been so generous to the rest of Tangata Tiriti in their settlements, should be out to promote their interests above all others is craven. It is political posturing. It cannot be taken as a serious comment on our historical progress.

Much more authentic is the commentary from journalist Mihingarangi Forbes. In a 7 February “My Story” piece in the *New Zealand Herald*, she described being a Māori woman journalist and the casual dismissal of Māori competence and capability she has experienced. I have never heard a Pākehā describe this same experience in ethnic terms. Gender is still an issue of discrimination but being ethnically Pākehā is not.

I suspect this is why so much systemic and casual racism that is so offensive is just not seen by Pākehā — we don’t see it because most of us never experience it. Mihingarangi straightforwardly lays out the regularity and the viciousness of it all and she simply refuses to capitulate.

She is one of this country’s finest journalists — and she is routinely trolled for being Māori and female. She is a hero of our airwaves and we are lucky to have her bring us the commentary and insight that is her courageous forte. But it should not be this hard.

Waitangi reminds all in Aotearoa of our cultural roots and our path to solidarity as a people. We should treasure the annual opportunity to unflinchingly examine our progress. 💎

Photo: Look Up Look Down Photography on Unsplash

Patrick Snedden works with Odyssey House in drug rehabilitation and with Manaiaikalani in education in Tāmaki Makaurau.





Individual Sacrifice for the Common Good

Nicholas Thompson *discusses Christian perspectives on choice and compulsion for fasting during Lent.*

HALF A LIFETIME AGO, I was roped into *It's Academic*, a TV quiz for New Zealand secondary school students. The Dunedin heats offered a welcome day off school and the sub-Hollywood glamour of life in a TVNZ studio. Among the luxuries showered on us were ham sandwiches served for lunch between recordings. In the 1980s our family ate ham only on special occasions; it was an expensive meat.

As I was tucking into my second ham sandwich, one of my teammates informed us with the solemnity of a funeral director that today was a Friday in Lent. Nowadays, this information would barely slow me down, but in 1981 I was so overcome with devout remorse that I plucked

the ham from between the curling slices of white bread (leaving behind only a slick of margarine and mustard) and consigned it to the bin. I can't remember whether my teammates were equally conscience-stricken, but the disappointment of the jettisoned ham is still lodged in my memory.

Five hundred and one years ago, also on a day in Lent, a group of devout Christians in Zurich sat down for dinner at the house of Christoph Froschauer, the city's printer. According to a later deposition by Froschauer's maid, the group took a cured sausage, cut it up, and ate it. Eating meat in Lent was a civil and canonical offence. The group at Froschauer's meal had deliberately

broken the fasting laws in the name of Christian freedom.

This 1522 "Affair of the Sausages" launched the Protestant Reformation in Switzerland. Huldrych Zwingli, a priest at Zurich's minster, had attended the meal at Froschauer's house (though no morsel of the offending sausage had passed his lips).

Afterwards, Zwingli preached a sermon defending the sausage-eaters and then turned it into a best selling pamphlet. Zwingli recognised that Scripture endorsed fasting and abstinence, but he objected to compulsion: it misled people into thinking that they could please God just by obeying rules set by the clergy. For Zwingli and the sausage-



eaters, this was a fearful, lifeless kind of faith. Serious Christians, informed by a careful reading of Scripture, should be free to decide the terms on which they would eat or not.

Fasting with Freedom or Compulsion?

I haven't told these stories either as cautionary tales, or because I think they're worthy of emulation. I'm ambivalent about both. As I'll suggest later, the right line between compulsion and individual freedom is no more obvious now than in 16th-century Zurich.

Even the New Testament is ambivalent. Matthew's Gospel is critical of showy fasting (Mt 6:16-18). Jesus and his disciples were criticised for fasting less often than the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist (Mt 9:14; Mk 2:18; Lk 5:33). On the other hand, Matthew 6:16 assumes that fasting in the right spirit will please God.

The New Testament is also ambivalent about abstinence from particular foods and drinks. The Church in Jerusalem exempted gentile converts from the Jewish dietary laws, requiring abstinence only from "things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood" (Acts 15:19).

This enigmatic verse probably implies some form of kosher slaughter. Most Christians have subsequently ignored it, and if New Zealand Christians observe it at all, it's thanks to the halal butchers working in our abattoirs. Paul was even ambivalent about the "things polluted by idols". Could conscientious Christians buy or consume meat used in idol worship?

On the one hand, he told his readers, the meat sacrificed to idols was created by God and couldn't hurt them; they were free to eat it.

On the other hand, if there was a risk that others would think they approved of idolatry, then they should abstain from eating (1 Cor 10:23-32).

Freedom and Fasting

Although the Churches of the Reformation embraced this "Gospel freedom", they didn't abandon fasting and abstinence altogether. For example, in times of emergency or solemn commemoration, the nations of the United Kingdom observed days of "fasting and humiliation". On these solemnities, work was forbidden and people were expected, if not required, to attend sermons and public prayers.

These officially mandated holidays survived into the 19th century and were observed even in New Zealand. For example, on 1 September 1854, the Province of Nelson decreed a

If we lose the language and habits of collective and individual self-sacrifice, we'll be poorly equipped to address challenges as they arrive.

day of fasting and mourning for the "Russian War" (ie, the Crimean War). Congregations met to pray and take up collections "in aid of the wives and children of the men engaged in the war."

Fasting Laws in Catholic Church

The Catholic Church, for its part, gradually relaxed the fasting regulations that had burdened the sausage-eaters of Zurich. The pre-Reformation Church required abstinence from meat, fat, eggs and dairy products for the whole of Lent, and it allowed only one meal on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

By 15 February 1923, the *New Zealand Tablet* provided Catholic readers with an exacting but more lenient summary of the regulations for fasting and abstinence. A fast day involved one full meal as well as "two light meals, one of about eight ounces [227g], at which butter, cheese, eggs, or fish may be taken in a small quantity; the other of two or three ounces [57-85g] at which a little butter may be taken."

But the *Tablet* also reminded readers that they could obtain dispensations from these rules in the privacy of the confessional. In the Middle Ages, dispensations had to be purchased from the bishop's chancery.

By the 1970s, the Ash Wednesday and Good Friday fasts survived, but most bishops' conferences placed the specifics of Friday and Lenten abstinence at the disposal of the individual. Abstinence needn't involve food; it might involve some positive act of charity or prayer.

Collective and Individual Sacrifice

As I mentioned earlier, I don't think there are straightforward lessons here. If you want an edifying take-home message, history is rarely the place to look. The sausage-eaters were probably right to think that there's nothing inherently virtuous about collective rituals or mandatory piety.

At the same time, I was struck during the pandemic by how hard it was for New Zealanders to have a sensible discussion about collective and individual sacrifice. Willingly or unwillingly, millions of people did make sacrifices for the common good. But talk of the "team of five million" was constantly and increasingly drowned out by shrill assertions of individual rights and freedoms. Even if time has softened Lent's edges, this collective act at least reminds us that solidarity depends on our willingness to give something up.

Still more crises seem to loom, like clouds at the horizon of our future. It's hard to know how a warming climate, severe ecological degradation, economic inequity and social fragmentation will develop in our lifetimes. But I think that if we lose the language and habits of collective and individual self-sacrifice, we'll be poorly equipped to address these challenges as they arrive. ♦

Artwork: *Lunch in the Country* by Deborah Essés ©
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CARING, TRANSFORMING, REFORMING

Paul Barber outlines some of the areas of injustice and privation in Aotearoa that we can reflect on and help to address during Lent.

A MIXTURE OF BOTH hope and disquiet for the future accompanies our team in the preparation of our annual *State of the Nation* report each year. Where do we see signs of God's spirit of love and justice made real among us? Where do we see warnings of injustice and harm in our land? How much of God's love at work can we understand out of the incomplete information available?

The people I am working with in The Salvation Army represent a wide range of theological thinking, different faith traditions and those who do not align with any faith, but we share the spirit of aroha and love towards the people we seek to serve. We contribute to the threefold mission of caring for people, transforming lives and reforming society. For the people who seek help and hope through our services, some have their lives turned around,

while others, living with huge challenges in life find some support to keep going.

Behind the stories of personal struggle that come through the doors of The Salvation Army services are larger social and economic influences that make it more likely someone will be hungry, homeless, become addicted to alcohol or drugs, or mistreat those around them.

Lent – Time to Attend to Privation

Lent is traditionally a season of fasting, of going without in the weeks leading up to the most important Christian festival of Easter. Fasting is integral to many religious traditions. Historically the Lent season in the northern hemisphere probably involved a lot of involuntary fasting for poorer communities as it fell in the coldest and hardest

part of winter when stored food ran low and people were eking out the last stocks, looking toward the new growth of food crops in spring.

Hunger

There is a lot of involuntary fasting going on in houses in this country every day and in the season of Lent that must be source for deep prayerful reflection. How can we draw on the spiritual energy to “feed the five thousand” in this country and achieve the vision of kore hiakai – zero hunger?

The “Costs... of living Nga Rourou Whakaiti”, the theme for *State of the Nation 2023*, points beyond a narrow focus on the cost of living as impacts of inflation on living costs and looks to the wider social costs. It draws on the whakataukī/saying: “Mā tou rourou, mā taku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi / With your basket and my basket the people will be nourished.” Which is to suggest that when food baskets are empty, we are not doing enough together to support the people.

In the biblical story of the feeding of the five thousand, faced with a seemingly insurmountable challenge to feed thousands of hungry people with almost nothing but some loaves of bread and a few fish, a miracle of sharing occurred that saw no one go hungry. People’s lives are built around relationships of love and care and our task is to nurture these relationships in our families, communities, schools, workplaces.

Stop Language that Implies Violence

It is disturbing to hear economists and commentators suggest that our country might “need” a recession, an economic policy version of “tough love” that says we need to be forced by higher costs to sort out our “excessive spending”. The decisions being made to drive up interest rates to force a slow-down in borrowing, spending and economic activity that is likely to lead to people losing jobs is often described as a “blunt instrument” in economic policy. Such language has shades of abusive behaviour, echoing the “blunt instruments” used against partners and children in family violence.

Surveying the distressing family

violence and sexual offending statistics that record violence towards mainly women and children, or the growing sense of mental distress among young people even as alcohol pop drinks are ever more intensively marketed to them — there is already an excess of trauma from abusive behaviour in our nation. We do not need that trauma to be added to.

Need Political Leaders to Improve Our Lives

We elect our political leaders to work to make our lives better — disasters come fast enough without seeking to create them with economic policy decisions. The last thing people in the communities we are working with need is our political leaders to intentionally steer more people into hardship.

During Lent...

Here are things to reflect upon in Lent that can be seen as the spirit of love at work in our land.

Believe in Our Young People

Consider the trend of more than a decade in reduced youth offending, a trend reflected in other countries as well. That is the wider context for the “spike” in recent months in youth involvement in ram raids that captured social media and wider media attention. We need to continue to believe in our young people and provide more support so every single one can find a future to believe in.

Keep People Employed

Social policy designed to keep people in employment and lift lower wages is helping reduce poverty. But even with our labour market apparently nearing full capacity, over 190,000 people say they want a job but cannot find one. There are nearly 350,000 households including 209,000 children trying to get by on welfare assistance that, despite increases in recent years, is still not enough to ensure people can live with dignity in the face of inflation and higher living costs. We

are partway through a turning around of welfare policy aimed to more than halve child poverty. Whether we complete the journey relies on political will and voters in this year’s election telling elected leaders this is a priority and demanding from them a coherent plan to get there.

Stop Delaying Justice

Backlogs in the court system are leading to a big increase in people sitting in custody on remand — waiting for a trial and/or sentencing. This is unfair to victims and the accused. Four out of every 10 of the 3,300 people in prison on remand will not even receive a jail sentence, but may have spent weeks or months in jail, lost employment, homes and family contact with very little access to support and no access to rehabilitation programmes. The saying “justice delayed is justice denied” could not be truer in this case. There is need for more community-based remand alternatives for people to turn to.

Keep Housing Families

The housing catastrophe seems to finally have reached a turning point, with the number of people waiting for social housing having fallen by more than 4,000 since April 2022 to just over 23,000, at the same time as house prices fall and consents for new builds are granted at record levels. But rents are not falling in many areas where people on lower incomes are renting. Home ownership remains out of reach for most lower income households. There is a long way to go.

When our hearts, souls and minds are gripped by the spirit of love and justice, it turns us around, onto a path that may not always be easy to follow. But if we keep putting one foot in front of the other we will get there. ✦

See: *State of the Nation 2023* Report
www.bit.ly/stateofthenation2023

Artwork: *The Watching* by Jayne Thomas ©
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Paul Barber is the senior social policy analyst of the Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit of the Salvation Army and an author of *State of the Nation 2023*.





Getting the Right Order

Helen Robinson encourages us to think about Lent as a time for prioritising what is most important for the common good so that no one is left hungry.

AS A CHILD GROWING up in the 80s I was taught that Lent is a time for “giving up” things — usually things I enjoyed. So I’d give up things like lollies during Lent. I thought that somehow the (ostensible!) sacrifice I made would be a kind of penitential payment which would make things magically better for me, if not for the rest of the universe.

In early adulthood I had a slightly more subtle understanding of the purpose of Lenten fasting. My focus shifted from “giving up” to “doing more” — or perhaps at least to doing something. Now I see that these ideas were wildly self-centered — it was about me, about what I gave and what I did.

Focus on Ordering

In more recent years I’ve come to another understanding. I’ve focused more on the idea of committing to space and time for some conscious way of being — committing to a time of reflection which enables me to come to some kind of right ordering of things, internally and then externally.

In my decade or so working at the Auckland City Mission, and particularly now when I’m the Manutaki Missioner, this then has been the question at the heart of it all: What is “right order”? Or simply put, what is important? What is most important? And how do I live my life aligned to that truth?

What’s Out of Order?

Every day at the Mission, we respond to poverty and great need in our city, Tāmaki Makaurau. People come to us when they need assistance — often the very basics like food and housing. And they come when their physical and mental health is compromised.

The need is huge: an estimated one in five Aucklanders is living in poverty, and that poverty has both implications and consequence. Compromised health, compromised relationships, educational and work opportunities that don’t or can’t occur, spirits that are weary and weighted, hope that is dim. Everything is not right and certainly not in right order.

From July 2022 to June 2023 we distributed with our partners just under 65,000 food parcels. Each food parcel is designed to feed a family of four, three meals for four days. That's millions of meals.

Mothers Parenting Alone

We know through our work and by listening to the people who come to us, that the most food insecure person in our country is the mother of a family, who is more than often raising her family alone. That mother, who doesn't have enough money for food, will reduce the quality of the food she is eating, then the amount she is eating, and then finally she will forgo particular kinds of food, for example the meat in a meal, or even the meal all together, so her children can eat. That feels very lenient, doesn't it? But this is every day for these women and there is no choice, only necessity and love.

Effects of Hunger

Ministry of Health research (2019) tells us that the health impacts of food insecurity on children is reduced immunity and an increased risk of obesity, asthma and mental illness. Being poor compromises your physical and mental health so you are not actually starting on a level playing field. There is a direct correlation between lack of access to nutritious food and mental illness, and the level of distress that people are suffering. If you are constantly hungry, you are also unwell, distressed and, of course, nutritionally compromised at the same time.

I am immersed in the day-to-day reality of the thousands of New Zealanders who do not have access to enough money for kai, and I understand well the root causes of this dis-ease. Poverty, hunger in our country, is gendered, and it has a colour. It is rooted in racism and the effects of colonisation. Our country struggles to value parenting, and particularly we struggle to support those, usually women, who are parenting alone. The rest of us have enough and we don't share that enoughness. We are scared, and we are afraid.

Why Do We Allow it?

So this is my day at the Mission. A day where I see this stuff, listen deeply to our staff, who receive literally hundreds of families each week who are coming to us for support. A day where I search for the money to feed people, where I work with others, both inside the Mission and beyond, to communicate how this is happening for so many in the city, and I go looking for the money that will feed people who are hungry. And, wherever I can, in whatever way I can, I/we dare to ask the question: Why? Why is this happening? Why are women and children so undervalued in our society, particularly Māori and Pasifika women?



Poverty, hunger in our country, is gendered, and it has a colour... Our country struggles to value parenting, and particularly we struggle to support those, usually women, who are parenting alone.



Let's Imagine Something Better

It is not *that* hard to imagine another reality. Aotearoa makes enough food to feed ourselves, with loads left over. We have more than enough. In fact, in terms of food, we live in a country that is abundant. Just imagine for a moment a reality where each person, each child, each mother, has what they need. Where there is food security for everyone. And then, imagine a reality where there are leftovers. Abundance. Breathe deeply into that reality with me, please. Everyone has enough. Security.

Abundance. For all.

Just imagine *that* Aotearoa. Imagine the energy and the wholeness. Imagine the health and wellbeing. The freedom and the hope. Imagine throwing off shame and embracing joy!

We might think that this alternative is extraordinary — but it should be our ordinary in Aotearoa. Just what would our country be like if everyone had what they needed?

We Glimpse This Right Ordering

All weeks are busy for us at the Mission but some weeks stand out. The recent emergencies have been particularly painful and challenging — at the Mission and indeed for our country. The floods, followed by the cyclone with still more flooding, ravaged the land, towns, infrastructure and our people. Many in Aotearoa are hurting deeply.

Yet amid all that crisis, I cannot begin to count how many individual and collective acts of support, generosity, compassion and even heroism I witnessed personally.

I know I'm not the only one to have seen that outpouring of neighbourly kindness in so many forms. We wanted everyone to have enough to be able to recover well from the disasters.

I firmly believe that this possibility of living as a society, a community with enough for everyone, is within our reach. It *really* is possible. It is possible for all mothers to have enough nourishing food for themselves and their children in Aotearoa.

When we are brave enough to see, and courageous enough to let go and share, right order begins almost of its own accord. There really is a pathway through. 💎

Painting: *Silly Sisters* by Tracy Nzambi ©
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Helen Robinson was appointed Manutaki, CEO, Auckland City Missioner in 2021. Previously she was the City Mission's general manager of social services.





Wages So All Can Eat

LENT IS A TIME OF REFLECTION and fasting is part of our lenten practice. But voluntary fasting is a luxury many in our community cannot afford. For some, going without a meal or any food, is a daily occurrence. For some, sacrificing their meal so others in their family can eat is a reality. The vulnerable need a greater level of care, support and protections. The vulnerable face obstacles to the opportunities the rest of us enjoy.

New Zealand has a suite of legislation that acts as a safety net to protect the most basic of human rights, including employment rights.

Legislation is often enacted as a response to the conditions of the time, to address unfair and unreasonable behaviour and to provide enforcement provisions including penalties for those that do not comply. There is an inherent vulnerability for workers due to the imbalance of power and resources.

Wattie Watson highlights how raising the minimum wage reduces poverty – but the minimum is still not a living wage.

Minimum Wage Legislation

The purpose of minimum wage legislation is to protect workers against unreasonable pay, unfair deductions and to ensure wages are paid with reasonable pay periods.

The safety net of legislation to provide for minimum rates and protections to enforce payment, including fines for non-payment, has been part of the fabric of New Zealand's governance for more than 120 years. The Truck Act of 1891, for instance, required the payment of wages in full "in coin of the realm". The Wages Protection Act 1989 and subsequent amendments protected workers through legislated requirements to pay wages, pay periods, deductions only by consent of the worker and limitations on creditor's rights to attach future earnings.

In 1936 a suite of legislation was enacted that provided basic employment rates and the machinery of industrial

relations and employment processes including the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Act. The Arbitration Court fixed basic rates for adult male and female workers 21 years and over (but not for apprentices or casual workers) covered by awards or industrial agreements.

The Rates of Wages Emergency Regulations 1940 enabled unions or associations of employers to apply for amendments to rates of remuneration in awards and industrial agreements in force at the time. Those regulations were superseded in 1942 with the enactment of the Economic Stabilisation Emergency Regulations which not only provided for wage fixing but also provided the Minister of Industries and Commerce the power to fix the price of commodities and services (including rents). Any increase or decrease in the price index triggered rates of remuneration being increased or decreased by the same amount.

The Minimum Wage Act in 1945 provided the issuing of a general order for minimum wages with the Court now required to take into account the economic and financial conditions affecting trade and industry in New Zealand.

Since then there have been various amendments of the Minimum Wage Act but common throughout is a mechanism to set the basic minimum wage. From 1977 there has been no gender distinction – women and men are awarded the same minimum wage rate.

Minimum Wage from 1 April 2023

The minimum wage rates (before tax) increase on 1 April 2023. They apply to employees aged 16 years or over.

TYPE OF MINIMUM WAGE	PER HOUR	8 HOUR DAY	40 HOUR WEEK	80 HOUR FORTNIGHT
Adult	\$22.70	\$181.60	\$908	\$1,816
Starting-out	\$18.16	\$145.28	\$726.40	\$1,452.80
Training	\$18.16	\$145.28	\$726.40	\$1,452.80

The minimum wage set by Government is a necessary safety net for those who cannot negotiate their terms and conditions of employment. It is also a protection for employers against undercutting and unfair competition.

Unemployment Rates, Inflation and Minimum Wage

The concern that an increase in minimum wage results in an increase in unemployment has not eventuated in recent years.

While the Government has been increasing the minimum wage on an annual basis the unemployment rates have been trending down. Unemployment was reported at 3.4 per cent in December 2022, and over the previous 12 months hit the lowest rates since 1986.

There is also active debate on the impact on inflation. Very recently the Workplace Relations and Safety Minister referred to statistics that showed that when the minimum wage was increased by \$1.20 to \$21.20 per hour (in 2022) the overall estimated impact on inflation was 0.1 per cent.

Minimum Wage Is Not a Living Wage

The current minimum wage is below the median wage and the NZ Living Wage.

- The median hourly earnings in NZ was \$29.66 in June 2022 and the median weekly income was \$1,189.
- The NZ Living Wage calculated by the Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit is \$23.65 an hour. The Living Wage is calculated taking into account basic expenses to ensure workers are paid enough to live with dignity.

Inequalities in the Workplace

The setting and enforcing of minimum wages has provided the necessary safety net and arguably stemmed the race to the bottom. But it is not designed to be a panacea to all inequities in the workplace or community.

A snapshot of the median weekly wages in NZ for the June 2022 quarter shows marked differences that indicate particular groups have advantages in education and employment, that we continue to value specific occupations over others, and indicates that bias (conscious and unconscious) continues in the workplace.

- The median weekly wage for men is \$1,320 compared to \$1,055 for women.
- The median weekly wage for Europeans is \$1,238, Māori is \$1,086, Pacifica is \$1,074 and of Asian ethnicity \$1,151.
- The median weekly wage for managers is \$1,545, technicians and trade workers is \$1,199, labourers \$928 and community and personal service workers is \$876.

Children Growing up in Poverty

The household income on the median weekly wage tells only part of the story. The lowest income in that data set provides a damning indictment of the current economic injustice and inequality in our communities.

In 2021 it was reported that 13.6 per cent of New Zealand children lived in households with less than 50 per cent of the median equivalised disposable income (before housing costs are deducted) of \$50,164. When housing costs were included, 16.3 per cent of children were living in households with less than 50 per cent of the median income. Another 10.3 per cent of children were considered to be living in households that experience material hardship.

There will be many factors including the level of wages, unemployment and the level of government benefits, cost of housing and cost of living and access to education and health providers (to name a few) impacting on the number of children suffering hardship and poverty.

The setting of minimum wages is only one part of the solution but a necessary part. With the setting and enforcement of minimum wages a baseline is achieved to prevent the driving down of wages in a free market free fall.

The setting and enforcing of minimum wages is a necessary protection for the vulnerable and those who would otherwise be vulnerable. 💎

Artwork: *A Family Dinner* by Hilde Goossens ©
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Joanne (Wattie) Watson is the National Secretary of the NZ Professional Firefighters' Union. Her career is an extension of the Catholic values of her family.





Storm Journal 2023

MARY BETZ shares the neighbourhood experience in the recent floods and her lead-up to Lent.

Friday 27 January

It is pouring rain. We watch news of flooding and evacuations all over Auckland, and hope everyone can find safety. At 8:53pm our power goes out. We sleep, fitfully, with the pounding rain and strong winds.

Saturday 28 January

We wake at 7am to our neighbour at the door warning of landslips at both ends of our road. Our reconnaissance down Paturoa Road is breathtaking. A new vista has opened over our little

beach on the Manukau Harbour. A slip has taken out soils, vegetation, the footpath, a seemingly solid 15-year-old retaining wall and half the road. Dangling pipes, cables, handrailing, tarmac and a neighbour's driveway are suspended surreally in mid-air.

We walk back past our house up the road, only to be stopped by an impassable slip with a huge kauri across the road. The liquidy clay and understory vegetation in the debris are ignominiously crowned by an unfortunate neighbour's deck,

heating unit and hot tub which had slid down the hillside leaving the cliff bare to its underlying mudstone. It hits home: about 20 households have no road out.

Neither do we have power, water, internet or landline. Peter sets up a solar battery to keep our cell phones charged and a couple of lights on. He had installed a rainwater tank a few years ago to water the garden — now it is repurposed for drinking, washing, cooking and toilet-flushing. (The garden, of course, has more than enough.)

We have brand new neighbours on both sides. One family intended to do a major grocery shop that day, so has little food. As it happened, we had planned lunch for 30 Auckland family members that day — now cancelled. Our party food finds relieved and happy recipients. Other neighbours need water, so our rainwater tank and buckets get good use.

Peter accompanies a long-time resident checking on elderly neighbours. In fact, the whole neighbourhood is out exchanging information. Climate change is on everyone's lips. No one has seen this much rain, ever, and unless we change, there will only be more.

Sunday 29 January

As news of the Auckland disaster spreads, we receive dozens of texts and emails asking if we are all right. I spend a few hours answering them: it becomes a spiritual practice as I reflect on being forced to live more simply. With a camp stove, there are no elaborate meals. Without a dishwasher, we use fewer dishes to save water and time. Interacting with neighbours replaces inaccessible Sunday worship.

We cancel part of a month-long road trip, including the Interislander, explaining we can't get our car more than 100 metres up or down our road. Peter e-bikes through the remaining sliver of road up to Titirangi village. The ice he brings home keeps a chilly bin of necessities cold: I hope the freezer retains its chill.

Monday 30 January

It's only been three days, yet it feels like a month of deprivation. I chide myself, remembering the thousands of people who have been flooded. I watch interviews with some who have lost their homes and wonder what it would be like to lose everything. I realise with surprise that I could let most of it go — except some photos, books and family mementos.

Nonetheless — with no shower; filling buckets to flush the toilet; a growing pile of laundry; boiling water on the camp stove for washing vegetables, ourselves and drinking; unaccustomed isolation from friends; uncertainty — there is stress. We keep hearing helicopters overhead, but does anyone out there realise we are totally cut off?

With newly restored internet, I report power and water outages to Vector and Watercare. Before I get onto road issues, I cave. I text friends to ask if they would meet us Tuesday beyond the road slip to take us out for a shower and laundry.

Tuesday 30 January

Peter cycles back from the village with ice and the *New Zealand Herald*: the Paturua Road slip is on the front page, along with news of another impending storm.

I open the freezer to pack its contents for our friends,

but it has defrosted into mush, and much goes wasted into the rubbish. I look at all the similarly spoiled condiments in the warm fridge and think: "Did I really need all that?" When our friends meet us, the weight of the past few days hits me — from the underlying shock and latent stress to the relief of being temporarily rescued. Caring friends, showers, lunch and laundry rejuvenate us.

I receive a mobile call from a *Stuff* news reporter. He has looked up names on the Paturua Road electoral roll, then found my number online. Would I be able to tell him what things are like on Paturua Road? I talk about storm damage and stress, but also the kindness of neighbours and friends.

We return home to find diggers and chainsaws at work clearing the slip on the upper road, and later that evening, half of the road is passable. Freedom! That evening, Vector sends in a generator for local homes: the cable is too difficult to repair anytime soon. Water, if a bit murky, comes on again as well.

We laugh with relief at being able to function somewhat normally again. Simple things like water from the tap, TV and a washing machine become matters of wonder and thankfulness.

Wednesday 1 February

In the morning, neighbours tell us we can no longer walk to the beach. The overnight storm has caused a new slip which renders even the remaining sliver of road impassable, and overnight has sent a neighbour's parked car over the cliff.

Fire Service personnel come door to door to ensure our home is safe. Search and Rescue volunteers check to see if we are OK. Council representatives

"white sticker" our house to show it can be lived in. Other neighbours aren't so lucky. Homes atop several fallen-away cliff tops are red-stickered and their owners evacuated.

A conversation with a visitor from another neighbourhood is confronting. He thinks that our road should not be rebuilt because it will cost too much, and that people should not live in the hills. I (somewhat defensively) counter that millions (actually two-thirds) of Kiwis live in flat, flood-prone areas: where are we all to live in times of climate change?

Thursday 2 February

Lent approaches, and I decide the recent deluges have given me more than enough to reflect on for 40 days. A simple (!) existential question will do: How might I live in more life-giving ways for others, Earth and myself?💎

Artwork: *Keep On Keeping On* by Ray Kelsey ©
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Mary Betz is a grandmother, and a spiritual companion with a background in ecology, theology, justice and peace.



LOVE IN ACTION



Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand grew out of Catholic concern in the 1950s and 1960s for justice and a fairer distribution of the world's resources; as well as the Second Vatican Council's greater promotion of the Church's concern for social issues and the role of the laity.

Following reviews of the Church's overseas aid and mission in the late 1960s, the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference set up three national entities to support overseas aid, promote justice and peace and provide for lay volunteers to serve overseas. All these works of service to promote a fair share for all locally and globally, are now found within Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand — the Catholic Agency for Justice Peace and Development. We adopted the name Caritas in 1992. Our mission is to be known as “love in action”.

CARITAS'S WORK

We are an agency of New Zealand's Catholic Bishops, supporting them in “reading the signs of the times” — meaning how the Church listens to, learns from and responds to the needs in our region of the world. We are an integral member of the Caritas Internationalis Confederation of more than 160 Catholic aid, development and social justice agencies around the globe. It's because that network of agencies know their local communities and cultures that we are able to respond quickly and effectively in emergencies, in almost any place they happen.

However, to address poverty and injustice, and help poor and vulnerable people be more resilient and prepared for challenges, we also need long-term development. We promote what the Church calls “integral human development” — development of the whole person and communities: economically, socially, culturally and spiritually.

Our primary work in this area currently is “He Oranga Taurikura — A Thriving Life” — a five-year development programme with local communities in seven countries across the Pacific and Southeast Asia. The programme, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, aims to build thriving lives through activities such as improved drinking water, nutrition and healthcare, farm management, skills training and disaster risk reduction. It has a special focus on reducing the impact of poverty on girls and women and on Indigenous peoples.

In line with the Church's “preferential option for the poor”, the programme has targeted locations where the Human Development Index (a global indicator of poverty

measured by life expectancy, education and per capita income) is less than 0.65.

Our mission also includes education and formation of the Catholic community in Catholic social justice and providing opportunities to act justly in the face of injustice at home and abroad. We aim to unite with communities, especially in the parishes, colleges, marae, religious orders and schools of Aotearoa New Zealand and Oceania to overcome poverty, protect lives and relieve suffering.

Working with partners around the globe, and supported by thousands of New Zealanders, Caritas:

- Promotes people-focused development in Oceania, Asia, and the Middle East
- Provides emergency support after major disasters
- Advocates to change structures that cause poverty around the world, including in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Educates and informs our next generation of leaders, in our schools, on the causes of poverty and injustice
- Promotes action for real change.

During emergencies, we respond to the needs and requests of our development partners on the ground, and through the Caritas Internationalis confederation. Wherever a disaster occurs, one of our partners will be there, coordinating local people and supplies to provide an effective and efficient response. This confederation allows us to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of the most vulnerable.

LENTEN DONATIONS

Our work in Aotearoa and across the Pacific is possible because of the generous support of Catholic communities particularly. The theme for this year's Lent Appeal is “I Am the Light of the World”. It reminds us that Christ brings light into the areas of our region darkened by poverty, disasters and underdevelopment and that our challenge is to contribute to that light.

Our goal at Caritas is to be practical in enabling people to live in dignity and hope and doing so to highlight Christ's light and love for all. 💡

Photo: Supplied by Caritas

Ben Sokimi (21) is a Fundraising Communications Assistant at Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand. He is studying towards a Bachelor of Commerce and went to Aquinas College Tauranga.





Flavours

of Church

**KIM VON LANTHEN GIVES
SNAPSHOTS OF PEOPLE WHO
REPRESENT FLAVOURS OF THE
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.**

MISS YATES

Miss Yates was a young and very staunch teacher. She was particularly vigilant on how we 11-year-olds referred to God. So much so that it was better to avoid mention altogether than risk using “His name” in vain. Maybe we did whisper a few profanities behind her back.

Riding the bus into town recently, full of college students on their way to school, I wondered how Miss Yates would have coped. The chatter was punctuated with so many “Oh my God” and “OMG” outbursts, I think she would have had a fit.

But, listen carefully and you will hear the beginnings of a revolution. OMG is being used to express delight, to show surprise at something significant, to exclaim the important. It is becoming ingrained into everyday culture as a natural expression of wonder.

Back in the day not only was reference to God best avoided, when a young person did mention God it was to impart their wisdom that “of course

God doesn't really exist”.

Are we hearing a transition not only in language but in belief? Have we passed a time of common disdain for God to a time of acknowledging that we are not alone and each of us does in fact have a personal link to the divine? I would like to think so for if this is the case the new, emerging generation which will be our future Church is expressing themselves in a different way, a more God-centred way.

MONSIGNOR CARDE

Monsignor John Carde came to our parish talking a language I am not sure we fully understood at first. A friendly and engaging guy that was ready for everybody and everything, with a broad smile and listening ear, he was ready to take anything in his stride. He would often talk about our beautiful, blue planet in his homilies. In the middle of baptisms he would get excited about how the baby being baptised would grow up hearing the call of the tūi. He would

challenge us to keep the rumour of God alive and to let it slowly marinate within us.

Reading *Tui Motu* in contrast to its predecessor the *New Zealand Tablet* it is now easy to see what Monsignor Carde was preparing us for. Several decades ago we would read of appointments, jubilees and politics. You may be old enough to remember the Muldoon years and being told who best to vote for. What a change is reflected in what we now read. Today we are presented with personal opportunities for improving justice and finding spiritual growth.

As a prophet, Monsignor Carde was helping us to understand that the times were changing, that we were on a journey from religion to spirituality. If what we are now reading each month is confirming to us that we have arrived at a new destination, can we stand up high on this vantage point and look out into the future? Are we now on a path laid straight?

Continued on page 18

My People, This Is the Fast I Choose

Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the ropes of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;

When you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn —
and your healing shall spring up quickly;

saving justice shall go before you,
the glory of the Living God shall come behind you

Then you shall call, and the Living God will answer;
you shall cry for help, and God will say:
“Here I am.”

Isaiah 58:6-9





Flavours of Church



MICHAEL FITZSIMONS

Michael Fitzsimons makes interesting observations and asks searching questions. Above all he is a poet. He notices details and can abstract to the big picture. Catching up one day I was surprised that he had a question mark over whether the Church will survive given its role in child abuse.

That an instrument of God can speak of its love and compassion but allow some of its leaders to act in an opposite way is hard to understand. What is it that was in minds bent on achieving power and domination over some of the most innocent among those they were leading?

The hardest element to understand was why the victims were too often set aside rather than being better understood and central to our responses.

How hard it must have been for victims to voice what had happened and find not only a listening ear but someone who could help them make sense of what had happened, to heal and find ways of moving forward.

Given how public and searching the investigation into the abuse has been we should be getting close to a time when we make up for our wrongs and repent. Repenting can be a time of deep reflection and recalibration.

Maybe the change we will see is that as an instrument of God we need to move away from power

and domination.

Maybe the good to come out of such tragedy is a different style of leadership that is closer to the humble, service orientation of Christ.



WARREN STEVENS

Warren Stevens is one of the great leaders of our Church. He has reached his senior years and recently went into a rest home in order to make things easier for both him and his family. He goes home at weekends so he can still get to Eucharist.

For more years than I can remember he stood at the door of the church each Sunday. He was not imposing, simply pleased to be there

and welcoming to everyone arriving. He'd say hello and hand out a copy of the newsletter.

It is not unusual to struggle with what God puts in front of us. It is not unusual to get to the end of the week frustrated and tired. It is not unusual to question whether in our weariness crossing the threshold into the church is one step too far.

For those with no experience of what a church contains, the threshold is scary. The step into the unknown and somewhat unknowable, given common conventions, might suggest adventure, but fills the adventurer with trepidation and a feeling of great vulnerability.

For many decades Warren stood at that threshold, generously welcoming all comers and leading them gently across it into the church.

How many people felt their burdens lift as they stepped into a place they had forgotten could be so healing? How many others

were able to overcome their fears and step into a place of wonder beyond the everyday world, full of intrigue and possibility?

SISTER STEPHANIE KITCHING

Sister Stephanie Kitching is a priest. She leads her flock and helps them to God.

As a Sister of Mercy, Stephanie started her vocation in a large community with certainty in its works and associated routines.

But, her community was challenged to live in other ways. Facing a transition from established ways of living to free-form living could have been a recipe for free fall. Ultimately, it was an opportunity to know God more intimately.

Through a wiggly path of community houses, Lions Club and school governance, delivering food to people in need and helping kids who needed glasses their parents could ill afford, she earned her priesthood. She has led those around her and been a sign that God is at work and all will be well, all will be exceedingly well.

So typical was the time at the end of the Mayan calendar when many were predicting the end of the world as we know it. Stephanie's easy response was that we live under a loving God and life will go on.

More recently through both persistence and the generosity of all concerned she has been preaching at Sunday Eucharist, sharing stories of people and God.

In time it is hoped that she will move to the final element of her priesthood, breaking the bread and sharing the cup of Christ whom she has so faithfully served. In doing so she will be able to offer full communion to all she has worked with and for.

FR MICHAEL

I'm not sure of Fr Michael's surname as I saw him for just under an hour and I didn't get to talk with him. He is a priest at St Dominic's church in San Francisco. It's a pretty average looking church except for the striking feature of a large car park.

Slightly lost after a long flight, the idea of going to Eucharist for some timeout before sorting my travel plans seemed sensible. I was not prepared for what came next. The large car park should have been a warning.

On entering the church well before start time there seemed to be so many people. They were lining up for blessings from an old guy at the front. Some appeared to be sick but others simply brought their families or some item important to them.

Many were praying with a monstrance in front of them in a side



How many people felt their burdens lift as they stepped into a place they had forgotten could be so healing?

altar. Others were buying candles. In time the church was full and there was an air of anticipation.

In the Eucharist that followed Fr Michael used the familiar words but the emphasis was unlike any I'd experienced before. In the welcome he wanted to us to know that he understood the celebrations and trials we had been through during the week and he was with us.

Throughout the hour he was celebrating who we are, our hopes and fears. At communion he insisted that everyone come up whether for the Eucharist or a blessing, and as we left he not only blessed us but told us he would be praying for us in the week ahead. I positively skipped out of the church. 💎

Photos: [Andy Holmes](#) on Unsplash, [Nick Fewings](#) on Unsplash

Kim von Lanthén co-ordinates technology to transform New Zealand's forestry and agricultural waste streams into marine biodegradable resin to replace oil-based plastics.





Words from the Wise

Ruth Mather imagines the four women Doctors of the Church advising us how to face evil and heal divisions in our society.

MARCH IS THE ANNIVERSARY of the terrorist shootings in Christchurch. That event exposed the racism, xenophobia, violence and hatred among us. Trumpism and three years of the pandemic have further bolstered polarisation and vitriol. How do we combat this reality within ourselves and within our communities? Sometimes we look to those who have gone before us for wisdom in difficult situations.

Of the 37 recognised Doctors of the Church, four are women. These women lived in Europe, in seemingly monocultural societies. Yet they each encountered division and discrimination. Their theology is deeply practical. I imagine the 14th-century Italian Catherine of Siena, the 19th-century French Thérèse of Lisieux, the 16th-century Spanish Teresa of Ávila and the 12th-century German Hildegard of Bingen reaching out to us in our time.

Letter from Catherine

Cari amici,
I'm Catherine, servant of the servants of God, and encourage you in the life-giving blood of Christ crucified. I know innocent blood was poured out by our Muslim sisters

and brothers in your country. "How indescribably moving it was to see God's goodness" in the response of so many. As God welcomed those 51 martyrs so, too, I have seen "the gentleness and love" with which God and the people of Aotearoa welcomed those souls.



I survived three waves of the Bubonic Plague. I witnessed social division — from feuding families in Siena to the English-French war and two competing popes. I experienced fear and judgement. My Muslim brothers and sisters, I once believed you to be heathens. "Pardon my ignorance, forgive me." I tell you, my dear ones, I now know that ALL people are created out of love, are

part of God's boundless love.

How are we to love? As God told me, we must walk with the two feet; love of God and love of neighbour. "Everything we have been given in this life has been given to us on loan for our use." Everything must be shared "on behalf of Christ crucified" — material wealth, relationships with people and creation. Cease belittling and hateful speech. Never seek vengeance for your neighbour hurting you. This is no time for self-aggrandisement or for fear. "May God set you on fire with love."

Arrivederci,

Catherine of Siena

Letter from Thérèse

Bonjour mes amis,
This is Thérèse. My heart breaks at the divisions in Aotearoa. White supremacist thinking is not unfamiliar to me — it's similar to my own 19th-century bourgeois Catholic upbringing in France. We believed the world was corrupted by the philosophical and political practice of our time and we felt like exiles in our land.

I write to my brothers and sisters

who may also feel alienated from society. Maybe you believe that Islam is dangerous, violent and will destroy western culture. Maybe you even sympathise with the killer's actions on March 2019. You are not other from me. Know that there is a way past this. Freedom is not found in status, power or wealth. It is in "littleness" that we will come to love.

Let me tell you about this way of Love. It's expressed in simple acts. Love "consists in bearing with the faults of others, in being edified by the smallest acts of virtue we see others practising." Forgo domination and judgement. Share a meal with those who think differently from you and learn from them. In these "little" and homely acts of love God is revealed. I know you are capable of this! The little way is absolute trust in God. Don't give up — think of life containing "thorns mingled with the flowers".

Au revoir mes amis,



Thérèse of Lisieux

Letter from Teresa

Buenos días,

I'm Teresa. In the 1940s the family secret of my Jewish heritage was uncovered. We are Jewish through my grandfather. It was kept hidden because being Jewish was dangerous in "united" Spain, lauded as being founded on "pure" Christian blood. Jews and Muslims, as well as anyone challenging the Church, were persecuted. There was no place for them in Spanish Christian society and women had no voice.

I've found that through

contemplation — entering the inner mansion of the interior life — our suffering will be transformed. It's in vulnerability that we can discover who we truly are as companions of Jesus. So sit before the cross and contemplate. Then live as friends together. We can only be sure of our love of God through our loving others.



"The Lord doesn't look so much at the greatness of our works as at the love with which they are done."

When we are in a maelstrom of judgement or hate, it takes courage to speak with love and compassion. I cannot tell you how to live Love. We each must uncover that in our inner mansion. Remember this: there are many names for God, including Allah, and the greatest name is Love. So "do that which best stirs you to love."

Adiós,

Teresa of Avila

Letter from Hildegard

Guten Morgen meine Freunde,

Let me tell you about my vision — I'm Hildegard. I saw people sailing across the Pacific Ocean and landing on a green land becoming the people of the land, tangata whenua. As time went by, people sailed from Europe and they then claimed the land as their own. Later still, others migrated from many lands, cultures, languages, faiths. I saw fighting over the land.

And there was dryness, *ariditas*. I saw the tangata whenua broken and bleeding. I saw white people ruling with arrogance. I saw brown people rising like the dawn — "sparks from the radiance of God's brilliance." I saw white people fearful, grasping for what they thought they owned. I saw people bowed low in prayer unaware of the white man who was coming to shoot them. An evil act by a broken man.

But then I saw people of all colours and faiths standing together — weeping, hugging, sharing, listening, watching, waiting. Then slowly and tenderly a koru unfurled from among them. As it opened it gathered the people into it and became the greening life force of God, *viriditas*. It's known by other names: mauri, life-force, source of all — "as a mother gives milk to her children."

I hear Aotearoa is called "Godzone". "You're lucky to have this divine legacy." Do not be lackadaisical and presume on this for there's also bigotry in your land. "Listen. Notice that your heart withers when you do evil, but grows lush and green when you do good." "Don't forget that whatever God made, radiates." Your redemption lies in being part of the unfolding koru. The way to counter evil acts is with endless, hopeful acts of love. May the Holy Spirit "make you blaze like the sun".

Auf Wiedersehen,

Hildegard of Bingen



Ruth Mather is a psychotherapist, part of Anashim Community, at Mangere Bridge. She enjoys living between the harbour and the mountain.





Clearer Guidance Needed

David More discusses New Zealand and Church law on abortion.

OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS abortion has been to the forefront of the news on a number of occasions and for a number of reasons.

Legislation in New Zealand and USA

In New Zealand on 24 March 2020, Parliament changed the law by removing abortion from the Crimes Act because the Minister said it was a health issue. Presumably he meant the mother's health, as every abortion is terminal for the health of the unborn child. As originally drafted, abortion would be available virtually up to the moment of birth.

By the time the Act was finally passed some limited recognition was given to the fact that the foetus is

human life separate from its mother.

In the United States on 24 June 2022, the Supreme Court took a diametrically opposite view to the New Zealand Parliament. In *Dobbs v Jackson*, it overruled its previous judgment in *Roe v Wade* that women had a constitutional right to abortion and held it was a matter for each State. As a number of States have laws prohibiting abortion, many American women were immediately deprived of access to legal abortions.

Again, in the United States on 8 November 2022, the expected Republican wave in House and Senate midterm election results did not materialise. Voters, mainly young, expressed their displeasure at the

Supreme Court decision blaming it on Republican Trump for his appointment of conservative judges to the Court, and voted Democrat.

Church Omits Father's Responsibility

I confess to some reluctance in writing on the subject of abortion. Being a male I can never experience the joy of carrying a wanted child, the pain of childbirth, nor the love accompanying suckling. By the same token I cannot experience the despair and even terror of carrying an unwanted child, particularly one conceived in anger or violence.

I am conscious that for Catholics the Church's laws around abortion have been made by men, all celibate,

many old and some misogynistic. Every human conception requires the active participation of a male. An abortion brings about the immediate excommunication of the mother regardless of the circumstances of her pregnancy. The Church says nothing about the responsibility of the father, who in many cases is promoting an abortion, including using violence, physical or psychological threats towards the mother.

Definitions in New Zealand Law

A foetus is human life but in New Zealand it is not a human being. Section 159 of the Crimes Act 1961 says that: "A child becomes a human being within the meaning of this Act, when it has completely proceeded in a living state from the body of its mother, whether it has breathed or not, whether it has an independent circulation or not, and whether the navel string is severed or not".

It follows that abortion is not a homicide because in terms of Section 158 of the Crimes Act: "Homicide is the killing of a human being by another, directly or indirectly, by any means whatsoever." It is therefore clearly wrong to say that abortion is murder.

A foetus clearly has the right to life, but it cannot have a greater right than its mother. The mother has the right to defend herself against danger to her health caused by her pregnancy and the development of the foetus.

The obvious example is an ectopic pregnancy. Its continuation would inevitably result in the death of both mother and unborn child. Self-defence is defined in Section 48 of the Crimes Act as: "Everyone is justified in using in the defence of himself or herself or another, such force as, in the circumstances as he or she believes them to be, it is reasonable to use." The emphasis is on the reasonable belief of the person being attacked. The intent and understanding of the attacker are irrelevant.

For an ectopic pregnancy, under New Zealand law, abortion is clearly justified on grounds of self-defence.

Definitions in Church Law

The Catholic Church does not accept

that self-defence is available to a mother who has an ectopic pregnancy. The Church holds that the foetus cannot be an unjust aggressor. I have two difficulties with this.

The first is that the stage of development of the foetus, and the fact that it cannot form an intent to harm its mother, are totally irrelevant to the mother's reasonable belief that the continuation of her pregnancy will result in her death.

The second is that the use of the expression "unjust aggressor" in this context is contrary to the Church's own teaching on self-defence. The *Modern Catholic Dictionary* defines an unjust aggressor as: "An assailant who attacks an innocent person actually and unjustly. Actual aggression is an imminent or practically present assault that cannot be evaded."

Unjust aggression is experienced when the assault is at least materially unwarranted ie, when the assailant is not morally responsible for the attack. In all cases of unjust aggression it is permitted to use such force as may be necessary to ensure self-protection."

An abortion brings about the immediate excommunication of the mother ... The Church says nothing about the responsibility of the father.

In an ectopic pregnancy the foetus is clearly not morally responsible for the effect of its existence on the life of its mother. Therefore, on the Church's own teaching it is an unjust aggressor. Self-defence is available to the mother.

The Church permits abortion in an ectopic pregnancy in accordance with the principle of double effect. This derives from the *Summa Theologica* of St Thomas Aquinas, who argued that an act of self-defence is justifiable even when the attacker is killed, if the intention of

the act is to save oneself and not kill the attacker. Where an action has two effects, one good and the other bad, the action is permitted if the intent is to achieve the good effect.

However, the bad effect must not be the means by which the good effect is achieved. Removal of the fallopian tubes is considered the good effect to save the mother's life, even though it brings about the death of the foetus, the bad effect.

I have difficulties with this principle also. There is now a drug available to bring about a miscarriage. The Church permits the termination of an ectopic pregnancy by removal of the fallopian tubes. However, on the principle of double effect, it would not allow the mother to take a drug to cause a miscarriage. The reason being, the intention in taking the drug is to terminate the pregnancy, which is using a bad effect to bring about the good effect.

While the principle of double effect has relevance in a number of ethical considerations, in a situation when the mother would otherwise die, self-defence must be paramount.

I have chosen ectopic pregnancy as the example because whatever principle is applied, an abortion is permitted.

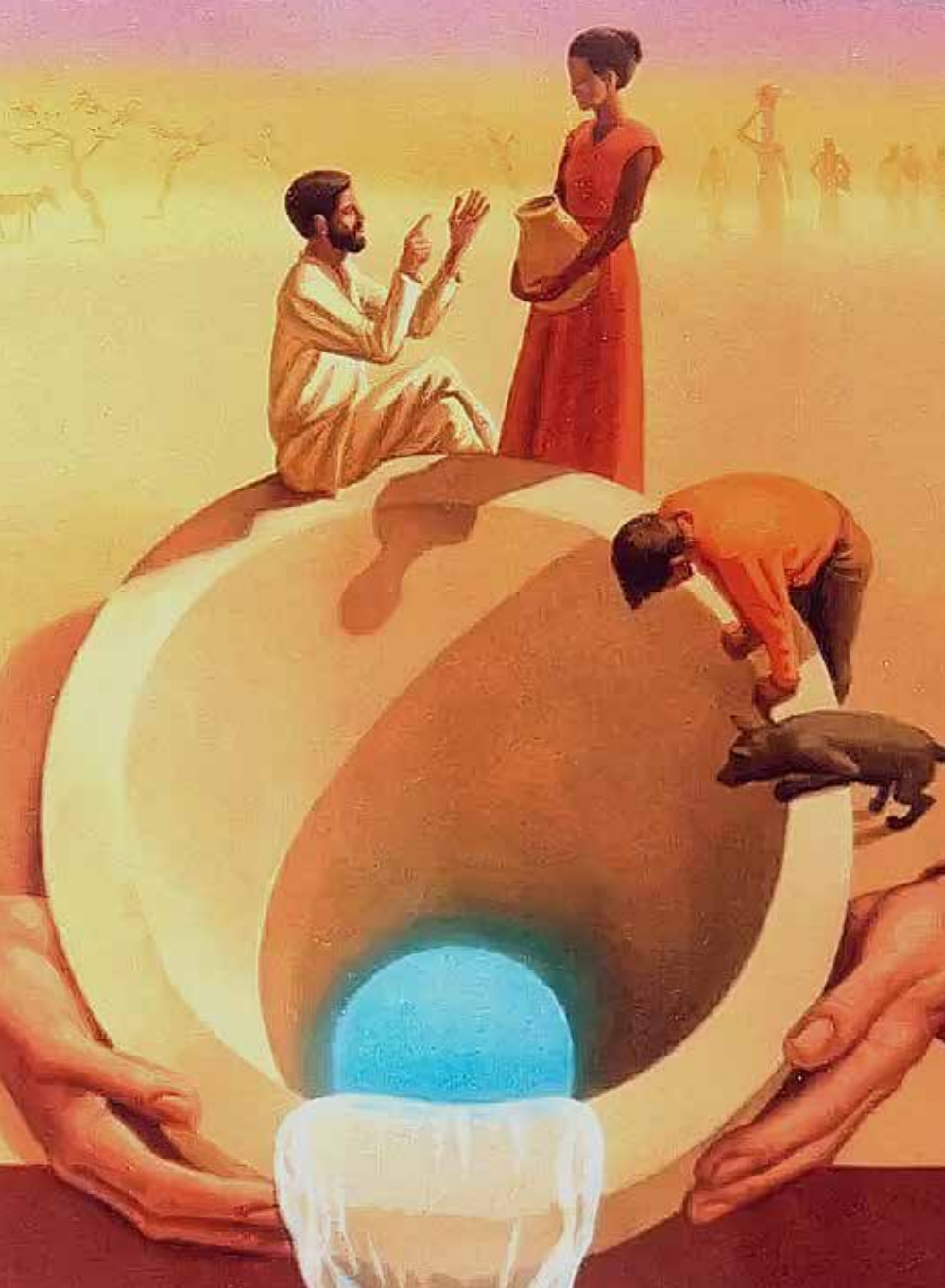
There are other situations that can occur during a pregnancy which may endanger the mother's life. The Church provides no guidance to the mother as to whether it is reasonable for her to believe she needs to terminate her pregnancy in self-defence. The Church simply says abortion is not permitted.

I suggest it would be timely for the Church to provide up-to-date guidance on when an abortion is permissible, accurately applying both the civil and canon laws, and with input from women. 💡

Painting: *Line Dance* by Alexis Lavine, NWS ©
Used with permission www.alexislavineartist.com
(Painting is available for sale)

David More has practised law for 53 years, the last 26 as a barrister. He is married to Susan and they attend St Francis Xavier Church, Ōtepoti/Dunedin





INVITATION AT THE WELL

Kathleen Rushton discusses the story in John 4:4-45 of the Samaritan woman meeting Jesus at the well.

THE SCENE OF the Samaritan woman meeting Jesus at the well in John 4:4-45 is found often in early Christian art. This woman, whom I shall call Photini as she is known in the Eastern Church, became a symbol for baptism and the “living water”, the new life which Jesus promises. In a third-century fresco in the Catacomb of St Callistus, Photini is pictured bucketing water from an overflowing well. I shall focus on three aspects of the story: the water, the woman and Jesus’s invitation.

WATER

A three-tiered cosmology underpins water imagery in the Scriptures: the waters of the heavens — rain and snow; the land (earth) surrounded by water — rivers and seas; and the waters below

earth. This understanding is evident in the story of Noah: “On that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens opened. The rain fell on the earth...” (Gen 7:11-12). The waters bring life to people and all creation.

In John 4, there is a distinction between “still water” (*phrear* 4:11-12) and “living water” (*pēgē* 4: 6,14). In 407 CE, Augustine explained: “Water issuing from a spring is what is commonly called living water. Water collected from rain in pools and cisterns is not called living water ... if it collects in some place and is left to stand without any connection to its source. Water is designated as ‘living’ when it is taken as it flows.”

The significance of living and still water is found throughout the Scriptures: “My people ... have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water” (Jer 2:13).

Living water is life-giving: God “made springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal” (Ps 104:10); God’s people will be “like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail” (Is 58:11). God is the “fountain of living water” (Jer 17:13).

Jesus promises Photini this living water: “The water I will give [to those who ask for it] will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14).

John 4:4-25 is proclaimed during the liturgical season of Lent as catechumens prepare for the waters of Baptism at Easter. All the baptised will be invited to renew their baptismal promises as the catechumens are baptised at the Easter Vigil.

THE WOMAN

This story is one of several in John 1-11 in which Jesus is presented as engaging in a barrier-crossing ministry to bring about social reconciliation between groups, in conflict with each other, by calling them into God’s new inclusive community. Jews and Samaritans had been in conflict for over 700 years. On his way back to

Galilee, Jesus “had to go through Samaria” where while resting at Jacob’s Well, he met Photini. They represent their two peoples, Jews and Samaritans. Photini speaks of “our ancestors” and in their conversation with each other, “you” is in the plural.

The well is named for Jacob, the ancestor of both peoples. Traditions abounded about this well which, as pictured in the fresco, was understood to be overflowing.

Another tradition tells that when Jacob left his father Isaac’s house, the well went with him. The well had so much water that it flowed into the wilderness to keep the people and their animals alive on their nomadic journeys.

That Photini came to the well to collect her own daily supply of water (Jn 4:7, 11, 15, 28) and carried it over a great distance (4:8) indicates that she was poor.

Augustine wrote: “She longed ... to be spared her hard labour, because she was coming to that fountain day after day, burdened with that heavy load on her shoulders ... Her poverty obliged her to work beyond what her strength could handle.” At that time, water-carrying from wells in villages and towns was women’s work in poor households and in others the work of servants and slaves.

This encounter evokes other biblical meetings at wells. Rebekah was approached at the well to marry Isaac (Gen 24) and Jacob met his future wife Rachel at the well at midday (Gen 29:7).

Jesus’s encounter with Photini suggests not just a change of life for her as an individual but for her whole people.

The “five husbands” recall the five nations that had colonised Samaria (2 Kgs 17:24). The sixth husband (“the one you have now”) refers to the current Roman occupation. Whereas the colonisers subjected the Samaritans to their will, Jesus is promising new life.

THE INVITATION OF JESUS

Through the waters of Baptism, Jesus invites the People of God to

participate with him: “to do the will of God who sent me and to finish God’s work” (Jn 4:34).

This invitation is found throughout John’s Gospel where in the prologue, Jesus is inserted into the sacred cosmic story of God’s unfinished universe to enable the People of God to participate with him in finishing the works of God by hearing “both the cry of Earth and the cry of the poor” (*Laudato Si’* par 49).



in countries with high and critical levels of water stress. United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6 is to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Caritas is partnering with groups in the Pacific to protect their water reserves from contamination due to rising sea levels. Our donations during Lent contribute to their access to “living water”.

The northern regions of Aotearoa have recently been ravaged by unprecedented rainfall, a cyclone and flooding, with vast damage to land and property. Some people lost their lives, many lost everything they had. Alongside the enormous damage we witnessed the good works of so many to protect and support people – and now their help to clean up after the floods.

Maybe we saw the promise of

Jesus’s encounter with Photini suggests not just a change of life for her as an individual but for her whole people.

In the ancient world, “good works” were a precise term referring to helping those in need in their particular context.

The “works of God” are not just “good works,” they are the work of a Messiah who ministers to the marginalised.

There is work for Christians to do today to ensure access to clean water for everyone. According to the United Nations, over 733 million people live

a life-giving community become a reality in that time of crisis and beyond – love in action participating in “finishing the works of God” fed from the “fount of living water”.

Lectionary Reading 12 March: John 4:4-45

Painting: *Christ at the Well* by Peter Koenig from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN www.pwkoenig.co.uk

Wall art: *Jesus and the Woman of Samaria* Catacomb of St Callistus, Rome (First half of 3rd century)

Kathleen Rushton RSM is a Scripture scholar and author of *The Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor: Hearing Justice in John’s Gospel* (2020).





BEING OPEN TO INSPIRATION

small, self-centred world to consider how I can become more involved in what is important in the community: challenging injustice, questioning inequality, feeding the hungry — the metaphorical and literal calls to action in God's upside-down kingdom.

My sense that being inspired didn't change my life was mostly about my ego. I can't say that I have individually done anything amazing as a follower of God. But I can see how important a group can be. The Catholic Worker Movement began with a group of people, not just Dorothy. As a group they talked about the needs in their neighbourhood during the 1930s Depression, and were able to recognise lots of ways to make a difference together. Dorothy had the leadership skills to harness their energy for good.

Being open to inspiration is the point. It's not to settle for the comfortable but to be a person of action as well. I know I need challenging conversations with others, books and thoughts, because they help shape me as a person of action in my following of God. Choosing to be inspired by a book was not such a waste of my time after all. ♦

RECENTLY, MY SISTER and I were discussing what inspires us and how we respond. I told her that while there are countless times I have read, heard or experienced something that makes me think more about the way I want to live my life, I feel as if I fail to respond to any meaningful degree. I just continue to live in my comfortable, unremarkable way. Essentially, I thought I shouldn't bother being inspired since it doesn't seem to change me. "Sometimes choosing to be inspired is the point," my sister replied.

My lack of motivation was highlighted a few weeks later when I was given D L Mayfield's biography of Dorothy Day, *Unruly Saint*. I took it begrudgingly. "I already know she started the Catholic Worker," I thought. "This book will probably be super boring." It was the middle of summer and I was so low on reading material that I picked up the book anyway. I wondered if reading about an inspiring activist would just make me feel guilty for my own lack of action in any area of importance.

Instead of guilt, though, I discovered that reading about Dorothy Day's life was encouraging and delightful. One of the major things that stood out for me was that Dorothy was not born a perfect, completely selfless servant of God. Her roots were in ideas of socialism and novels that were questioning the social inequalities of her time. She talked long into the night with a variety of characters from New York's activist scene, wrote articles about social issues for the press, campaigned for women's suffrage, tried several careers and suffered heartbreak and

many struggles of a life that goes against the grain of society. Then she became fascinated by Christianity, particularly the Catholic Church, and its approach to these issues. She was in her 30s when she and Peter Maurin founded the Catholic Worker Movement to address the practical needs in the neighbourhood — like housing, food, jobs and community. She inspired thousands of people to become involved in social justice.

Reading about Dorothy I could see that, even before founding the Catholic Worker, she was not satisfied with the status quo but looked for inspiration that challenged her ways of thinking and beliefs and formed her sense of calling. Her story helped me to rethink my jaded opinion on the pointlessness of challenging my own ideas. Novels, Scripture, conversations and community are not just nice but useless ideas. Rather, they help me to continually shift my focus from my

Shar Mathias writes, explores the mountains and enjoys cooking. She is an ecologist and lives in Dunedin.



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Reviews

Towards a Grammar of Race in Aotearoa New Zealand

Edited by Arcia Tecun, Lana Lopesi and Anisha Sankar
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2022. (NZD 40)

Reviewed by Adrienne Dunlop

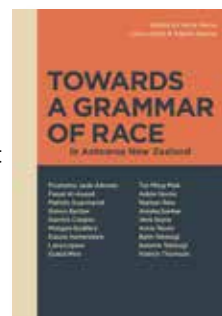
THESE ESSAYS ARE not holiday or bedtime reading! The contributors are all academics who have experienced racial discrimination. They are of Māori, Pasifika, African, Asian, Iraqi, American and mixed Pākehā-and-“other” descent. They’re lecturers, post-graduate students, researchers, writers — all living and working in Aotearoa.

As the title indicates, the book focuses on our country but also examines the global concept and reality of race, especially white supremacy: its history, universality and its ingrained social and linguistic structures.

It is challenging and disturbing — “Go back to where you came from n****r” to a six-year-old African refugee — but also hopeful, with increasing interconnectedness among the different ethnic groups now settling in Aotearoa. Māori, as indigenous people, share their manaakitanga in a special way with Pasifika, Asian, Black and other minority groups.

I was struck by the power of traditional songs, chants and dances have to draw together different peoples — their way of expressing profound joy, grief, anger and hope — as they navigate the way ahead.

As a Pākehā picking up this book, I thought I understood racism. But I found the process of reading it deeply challenging, and I recommend it to anyone who takes the reality of racial prejudice seriously. ★



Dearest Sister Wendy: A Surprising Story of Faith and Friendship

By Sister Wendy Beckett and Robert Ellsberg
Published by Orbis Books, 2022. (USD 25)

Reviewed by Jenny Dawson

A SLIGHTLY UNORTHODOX aspect of my theology of resurrection is that I believe we can get to know people after their death through the insights of those who love them. This book fits with that for me. I had not watched Sister Wendy on TV and wasn’t sure that I would be interested in a contemplative nun who became a star of the small screen. I was drawn to Robert Ellsberg and his “circle of friends” — many who feature in Ellsberg’s series *Modern Spiritual Masters*, which was part of Sister Wendy’s first acquaintance with him. The nun and

publisher’s almost daily transatlantic communication continued for three years up to her death in 2018. Sister Wendy replied to all who wrote to her, usually briefly and encouragingly. But these letters are different — warm, frank and intelligent. This collection of letters shows two very different people who discovered “a surprising story of faith and friendship”. I warmed to both of them and to what they found together.

Balancing contemplation and social activism is challenging for many Christians. Wendy and Robert speak to us through their vulnerability in the language of our time but in conversation with our wider faith story. I am very grateful to have “met” them both. ★



More Zeros and Ones

Edited by Anna Pendergrast & Kelly Pendergrast
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2022. (NZD 18)

Reviewed by Peter Hassan

MORE ZEROS AND ONES follows *Shouting Zeros and Ones*. The authors focus on the social and legal implications of digital technologies. They discuss “participatory design”, which encourages end-users to have a say in the design process. For example, field workers are consulted in the design of robots for the fruit industry. (How much easier to use might microwaves and remotes be if designers took heed!)

“Data sovereignty” is discussed with reference to data collection within Māori communities. For example, the data collected from in-home moisture and temperature sensors remains the property of the whānau or grouping

who had it installed.

The values and principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi are presented as one foundational framework for such regulation.

A chapter on facial recognition software discusses how the European Union Draft Regulations could provide a starting point for developing New Zealand law.

The chapter on “Right to Repair” was refreshing, presenting a summary of new regulatory trends that plot a more sustainable alternative to planned obsolescence.

This collection offers valuable insight for politicians, environmental lawyers, technologists and anyone interested in finding better ways to develop products and legal frameworks that serve the common good in Aotearoa, and protect the health of our planet. ★



Reviews



Directed by Sebastián Lelio

Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

THIS BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED film focuses on the person of an 11-year-old girl to illustrate the collision of science, traditional Catholicism and a much older worldview in mid-19th-century Ireland. Encompassing the spectrum from biting cynicism to fervent faith, *The Wonder* asks us to consider deep questions of belief, freedom and identity. Based on the novel of the same name by Emma Donoghue, this production was commissioned for Netflix.

The year is 1862. Living with her family in a cottage outside a village in the Irish Midlands, Anna O'Donnell has apparently not eaten for four months but appears none the worse for it. Anna is a pious girl and her prolonged fast is drawing a stream of admirers. While some see her as a “miracle child”, to others she is a clever actress, reactivating traumatic memories of the Famine. To find out the truth, a committee of local worthies hires an English nurse, Mrs Elizabeth Wright, to keep a watch over Anna, sharing shifts with a religious sister.

As we learn more about Anna's fast, which is part of a penitential ritual connected with her dead brother, we increasingly fear for her safety, as does nurse Elizabeth (played by Florence Pugh), whose perceptions and life story gradually take centre stage. Having lost a baby of her own, she is determined not to sit back and see Anna (or Nan, as she calls her — a name that will become key to the story) die. Along with a former resident of the village, now a journalist who has travelled from London to cover the story, she hatches a daring — perhaps unthinkable — plan to save her.

The film is enhanced by the painterly cinematography, evident in both outdoor scenes, where the cottage stands alone against a wild moorland landscape, and indoors, where the characters and sets are dramatically lit, reminding me of Pre-Raphaelite paintings of the period and their way of portraying moments of moral crisis.

But what struck me most forcibly, despite running below the surface, were the film's connections with ancient Irish (and more broadly European) folklore, especially belief in changelings: infants who failed to thrive were sometimes regarded as imposters left by the fairy folk, who may be exchanged for the kidnapped child through exposure to the elements or trial by fire.

Whatever the influence of fairy beliefs, *The Wonder* offers viewers a great deal to admire and ponder, and I am determined to learn more by reading the book! ★

A History of St Joseph's Māori Girls' College

By Malcolm Mulholland

Published by Aotearoa Books, 2022.
(NZD 45)

Reviewed by Makareta Tawaroa

LAST YEAR, ST JOSEPH'S Māori Girls' College in Napier celebrated 150 years of Catholic education of Māori Girls in Aotearoa New Zealand. It's the only school with this distinction and is a jewel in the crown of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions.

Māori Marist missionary Euloge Reignier began St Joseph's Providence on Napier Hill before giving it into the care of the Sisters in 1867 who turned it into the College. Their founder Euphrasie Barbier wanted her Sisters to devote themselves to teaching women and children in non-Christian countries.

St Joseph's holds a special place in the hearts of many Māori families across the country. Five generations of a family from Ranana have been through the College. Many of my own cousins attended St Joseph's. Some former students joined the Sisters of the Missions — Mary Katarina, Mary Joseph and Marie Chanel. Principal Dame Georgina Kingi and staff continue to ensure the College and their students achieve well.

This is a wonderful book, jam-packed with photographs, memories and stories. It would have particular interest to those in Māori education and those looking for the best education for their daughters. ★





Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins

AS THE COUNTRY reaches out to help those hit by the devastation wrought by the Auckland floods and Cyclone Gabrielle, important questions about our response to climate change are being raised. "What does leadership look like in this era of weather extremes?" "How are our built environments being designed to cope and adapt?" "Who is included in these conversations?"

The increasing frequency of extreme weather events means that the work of local councils, once almost invisible to most of us, has become central to our disaster planning and response and to the ways we mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The question of involving people in designing our towns and cities for resilience and wellbeing is a challenging one for councils. It starts with local body elections. Currently these are based on hopelessly outdated voting methods leading to lamentable voter turnout. Our councils are elected by a minority of voters.

And yet, there's so much leadership and local knowledge in our communities that could be of value

to our towns and cities. We see it as people step up in times of crisis to help the most vulnerable. We see it in young people with enormous energy and passion to build a just transition to net zero emissions. We see it in existing co-governance relationships that honour the partnership of Te Tiriti and draw on the long-standing knowledge of the natural environment held by mana whenua.

The challenge is to integrate local knowledge, passion and wisdom with expertise in land use design to make our towns and cities not only liveable but pleasant to live in.

Consider the sponge city: built environments working with nature through parks, gardens, trees, streams, creeks and wetlands to help soak up heavy rainfall and mitigate flood risk. It's sobering to note that only last year Tāmaki Makaurau was rated internationally as one of the top sponge cities in the world. Some areas of the city performed well during the January floods because of this, but the fact that a weather system could wreak the damage it did on a city that is already "spongy" is a worrying sign of how far we have to go in modifying our towns and cities

to cope with the changing climate.

This redesign can be wonderful: "daylighting" buried waterways leads to natural habitat restoration and flood mitigation through the creation of corridors that become havens for biodiversity, and for people walking and cycling. Think of it as the liberation of waterways.

We are going to have to cope with water going where it wants to go, either as rainfall or as sea level rise. For many in the North Island this is now a lived reality, as it has been for our Pacific neighbours for some time. In their Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration 2022 sent to the COP27 meeting last year, civil society organisations from many Pacific countries voiced their experience of the loss of burial grounds, ancestral land, shorelines, fishing grounds and culture to the rising sea. They are weary of their stories being used to illustrate the climate emergency without resulting in genuine change. They have called for urgent action. As a Pacific nation now experiencing the rapid onset of climate change ourselves, let's act in solidarity with them.



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Tui Motu magazine provides Catholic as well as ecumenical and inter-faith perspectives and discussion on current issues in church and society. It focuses particularly on issues affecting Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific. Its intent is to promote the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, engaging faith and the world through informed, thoughtful comment and discussion for a general readership. The magazine publishes 11 issues per year in print and regular digital postings on social media.

The magazine invites contributions from writers of Catholic and other Christian traditions or faith backgrounds, who can offer our readers insights which resonate with the Gospel as it affects us today. We value diversity and seek contributions which are representative of our church and our society: Māori, Pākehā, Pasifika, other cultures, a range of ages and genders, lay and ordained. We offer feature articles, interviews, reviews, poetry, comment and opinion on theology, spirituality and history, as well as on social justice and ecology.

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Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words.

The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters while keeping the meaning.

Opinions in letters are not necessarily those of the Magazine.

SERVICE OF THE WORD WITH COMMUNION?

I have found it rare to attend Mass in a parish church where everyone

receiving Communion is given bread consecrated at that Eucharist. This is bad liturgy. We deserve better.

At the Last Supper Jesus said: "Do this in memory of me." When we attend Mass are we doing what Jesus was asking us to do? Are we taking part in the Mass as fully as we are called to? No!

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy says: "Hearty endorsement is given to that closer form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest's communion, receive the Lord's body under elements consecrated at that very sacrifice" (par 55).

This is reiterated in the *Roman Missal*: "It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord's Body

from hosts consecrated at the same Mass ... so that even by means of the signs Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated" (par 85, p32).

For me, the practice of distributing Communion from the tabernacle to communicants, and then tipping hosts consecrated at that Mass into a ciborium to be returned to the tabernacle, is a flagrant disregard of the part that we, the faithful, have in the Mass.

Are we present to participate fully in the Mass by receiving Communion consecrated as part of that Mass?

Or, are we taking part in a glorified service of the Word with Communion led by a priest?

Anne Hurley, Manurewa

Reviews

Te Motunui Epa

By Rachel Buchanan

Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2022. (NZD 50)

Reviewed by Mary Southee

TE MOTUNUI EPA tells how five significant epa — carved wooden panels of a pātaka (raised storehouse for food and precious possessions of Māori communities) — were stolen from the Motunui area near Waitara in Northern Taranaki and retrieved two centuries later. The story spans that journey: the creation of the panels in the late 1700s, to 1820 when the epa were hidden in swampland for safe keeping while the Taranaki iwi was under attack from northern invaders, to their appearance in an art auction in London in 1978, to 2014 when the New Zealand

Government sent a delegation to Geneva to repatriate the epa, and then, finally, to their installation in the Puke Ariki Museum, New Plymouth. Home at last.

Southee personifies the epa, allowing the ancestors they represent to narrate their adventures through the theft, kidnapping and law suits. Central to the story are the questions: Who owns/owned these taonga? Who should pay to bring them home? Prime Ministers from Robert Muldoon to John Key considered the implications of repatriating these significant epa.

Readers interested in art heists, and/or relationships between the Crown and Māori will enjoy this book and its handsome illustrations. ★



Awakenings: Prophetic Reflections

By Joan Chittister

Edited by Mary Lou Kownacki, Mary Hembrow Snyder

Published by Orbis Books, 2022. (USD 22)

Reviewed by Kaaren Mathias

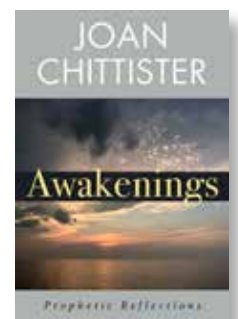
THIS COLLECTION OF ESSAYS presents two major themes — the role of women in the Church and the practice of an authentic spirituality.

Part one engages with the statement: "The major question facing Christians today is: What does discipleship mean in a Church that does not accept women as full followers of Christ?" Chittister treats this as fundamentally a justice issue, addressing it from multiple angles. I particularly enjoyed the chapter describing the contributions of Hildegard of Bingen as a great, wise and creative woman.

Part Two points to the possibilities of a new spirituality for all Christ-followers using an eclectic mix of topics that include the human thirst for beauty, the importance of non-violence and the economic structures that have impoverished Latin America. Chittister describes how faith, contemplation, justice and action must intersect for an authentic spirituality.

Chittister further develops spirituality in the third part by considering monasticism in the 21st century, with a focus on the Benedictines.

Awakenings shares important ideas; however I felt it was a little eclectic and lacking in cohesion. I would recommend it as a taster for those who are new to Chittister. ★



For What It's Worth



greater or lesser extent? Those who are in the “greater” category (when it comes to carbon footprint and the like) do not necessarily suffer the effects of climate change more than those in the “lesser” category. I’m sure my unfortunate neighbours, affected by the flooding so much more than me, are no less conscientious about recycling, etc. than am I.

In fact, when it comes to the human involvement in climate change, cause and effect do not seem to be in balance at all. Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si’*, points out that the cry of Earth is no different from the cry of the poor. This tragic connection is reinforced when we see the degree of suffering global warming causes in small island nations (that have a tiny carbon footprint) compared to that suffered by large, wealthy, carbon-

creating nations.

In the immediate aftermath of the Auckland floods “the cry of the poor” was not quite as we might expect. Rather than rushing into the “blame game” many individuals and groups rapidly organised relief, shelter, food and care for their neighbours in need (sometimes even while facing overwhelming clean-ups in their own back yards) — and it is not too much of a stretch to suggest that the poorer the community the more immediate, generous and compassionate was its response. The cry of the poor, while justifiably desperate and tearful, can sometimes be selfless and hopeful.

Any “act of God” in all this flooding might be more clearly seen in the Sunday Gospel of that very wet weekend which told us: “Happy are the poor in spirit.”

RECENTLY I FOUND myself anxiously driving home on the motorway during what turned out to be Auckland’s heaviest downpour to date. My journey became even more disturbing as I reached my own neighbourhood and drove through streets awash with muddy water, passing drowning houses and floating cars. As my own section is slightly elevated, I didn’t expect it to be under water. But I’d had the plumbers on my house roof fixing leaks just 48 hours beforehand and the torrent coming down was surely testing their handiwork. I gingerly opened the door and was relieved to find a dry living room.

One week on and over 1,500 houses have been “stickered” — meaning the rain event has rendered them either temporarily or permanently uninhabitable. The occupants of many more homes have lost furniture, clothing, food, toys and family taonga. I am very grateful to have escaped such tragedy.

Even before the first houses were inspected the blame game had begun: the forecasters should have issued proper warnings; civic leaders should have acted sooner; developers should not have built houses in flood plains, etc. Much of this is true, of course, but the need to blame seems to be hardwired into some people and it is rarely helpful to those caught up in the tragedy — at least in the immediate instance. Even God does not escape the blame. It confuses (and to some extent amuses) me that, in a largely agnostic society, agencies such as those dealing with insurance are quick to use “act of God” as a legal definition of a “natural” event. Is God to blame? Really?!!

Auckland’s extraordinary rain event was clearly a result of global warming and aren’t we all to blame for that to a

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Our last word

May our fasting
and sharing
relieve the want
of those without enough
Living God

From the Tui Motu Team

