



# Tui Motu

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Castro farewells  
Pope John Paul II  
in Cuba

*Photo: Reuters*

- focus on truancy
- collaborative ministry: is Rome pulling the plug?
- Jubilee and Justice — preparing for 2000 with Luke
- Trust One Another, says Bishop Penny Jamieson

# Good News — and Bad

As these words are being written Pope John Paul is engaged in the thing he does best. His visit to Cuba has arrested the attention of the world. Inevitably his very presence will enhance the prospect of religious freedom there, and may help provoke political change in the way that his celebrated journeys to his native Poland did in the 70s and 80s.

However, the significant thing is that he is there at the express invitation of Fidel Castro, nearly as old and politically street-wise as John Paul himself. Castro appreciates the fact that Rome under the present Pope has not hesitated to criticise the vicious embargos Washington places on nations who do not kowtow to the Western alliance. John Paul has spoken out against the American embargo on Cuban trade and the serious effects this has on the standard of living of ordinary people. As regards option for the poor and opposition to liberal economics the two leaders speak almost with one voice. And the Pope is one of the few world figures whose

words are influential enough that even Uncle Sam is forced to pay heed.

Nevertheless it is a frail, tired figure whom the world watches as he salutes the crowds and addresses the mighty and the lowly. The magnetic rapport of the born actor has faded; the voice has lost much of its vigour. The image he portrays over the TV screens is of an elderly Pontiff overdue to take well-earned retirement. Is this the image which the Catholic Church — especially through its clerical leaders — too often gives to the world it is pledged to evangelise?

In the pages of this month's *Tui Motu* we have given space to the Vatican's recent *Instruction* on Lay Collaboration. We have quoted the document at length and invited responses. The tone of these is sad, angry, challenging, in one case even cynical. They represent what many bishops, priests and lay people throughout the world feel. The head of the German bishops' conference, Bishop Karl Lehmann of Mainz, deplored the atmosphere of distrust which this

document has created towards the laity.

Perhaps the saddest aspect is that it shows these Vatican officials are out of touch. They seem utterly unaware of the perfectly legitimate and healthy developments that have taken place in liturgical renewal throughout the Catholic world since Vatican II. They seem equally oblivious of the devastating effects on the sacramental lives of people caused by the ever-increasing shortage of priests.

Last year I visited five European countries and attended or celebrated Mass in many places. I was impressed by the vitality and relative uniformity of the Sunday liturgies: often excellent singing, good lay involvement, presiding priests who engaged with the people and preached well. Interestingly, probably the most vibrant was in a suburban parish in Rome, where the lay readers, commentators and eucharistic ministers were all busily engaged in spite of the presence (in perspex confessional boxes!) of additional priests.

Only in one parish — not in Italy — was I really disappointed. There, even lay readers were unusual; no eucharistic ministers; no prayers of the faithful; all the singing was performed by a small squad of hidden cantors. God's "frozen" people! And that, it seems, is what the Vatican wants us to go back to — heaven forbid!

M.H.

## Promoter's Corner

Do you have some space and time in your life to share with me efforts to promote *Tui Motu*? Directors of secular newspapers would scarcely dare ask such a question, but ours focuses on the spiritual — prayer, liturgy, sacred Scripture, social justice, challenges to Christian faith and practice. Being a reader is not a passive role but an interactive one. It's rather like belonging to a parish. You do whatever you can to make it flourish.

*Tui Motu* is a venture and an adventure. As a venture it must pay its bills. To do this it must achieve a certain level of income. Our principal and almost exclusive source of income is readership subscriptions. We need to double our current level to 2400 to get a grip on the venture side of the equation.

If that sounds disconcerting it is helpful to remember that this Catholic monthly magazine is also an adventure — in faith. We believe that it is needed, and that it will set up very helpful conversations within our Catholic community, with other faiths, and with fellow citizens who may have no religious affiliation at all.

Sharing a copy and recommending friends to consider becoming a subscriber has been an extension tactic some readers have already used to good effect. There must be other ways. If you think of any, please write to me (26 Hopkins Crescent, Kohimarama, Auckland 5). I will report the results in the April issue.

Tom Cloher. Chairperson  
Promotions committee

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd  
P O Box 6404, Dunedin North  
Phone: 03 477 1449

Editor: Michael Hill, IC  
Assistant Editor: Frances Skelton  
Illustrator: Don Moorhead  
Directors:

Tom Cloher  
Annie Gray  
Elizabeth Mackie, OP  
Judith McGinley, OP  
Paul Rankin, OP  
Patricia Stevenson, RSJ

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# Trust one another



*Penny Jamieson, Anglican Bishop of Dunedin, has earned wide respect for her passionate interest in promoting Christian values in the civic community. We reproduce her Christmas guest editorial by courtesy of the Otago Daily Times*

**H**uman relations can be fickle; but without doubt, of those that work, whether in the public arena or the intimacy of our private lives, an essential ingredient is *trust*. Where trust is missing or where it is abused relationships crack.

We are going through a time when there is little evident trust in our public life. Over the last few months, in this city and in this country, we have become appallingly aware of the human destruction that comes from a neglect of our mental health. There have been a number of highly publicised murder trials of people who had been, at least partially, under the care of our mental

health system. We have seen, all too obviously, the grief and frustration of their family members who, in a number of cases, had been aware that their sick relative and/or friend was a disaster waiting to happen but who had been unable to get the help they needed to prevent it from happening.

And there is much uncertainty about our mental health services; and little trust. And lack of trust leads to stress and consequently to behaviours that are self-protective; these in turn contribute to the further diminishment of trust. So it is a vicious circle. During a recent Vigil for Health at St Paul's Cathedral in Dunedin, we became aware, as many

of us have been for some time, that not only were patients and their families under stress but so are those who work in the health services, at every level. And this stress leads to the inevitable cycle of blame, violence, retaliation, more stress and so on.

We have seen this failure of trust in this city; the uncertainties about our place in the national sun are leading to us turning against each other. We have seen a distasteful and personally directed public debate on the leadership of the city. And, too, we have seen this abuse of trust at the highest level of our political life, as when the former Prime Minister returned from the Commonwealth Pms' conference to be confronted with a takeover, whose cleanliness appalled. And the fact that there is no blood, but only a cold, adamant politeness should not fool us. This was coercion, violence, an improper use of trust by those who had worked closely with Mr Bolger.

And yes, there is also lack of trust in our families – the recently released figures on child abuse and the continuing incidence of domestic violence, are quite

horrifying. It is clear that for many of our children, their home is not a safe place. Our family relationships are of the greatest human intimacy and the place where trust is most significant.

Trust is very simply established and maintained. It basically works through *kindness*. This is not a flimsy throwing out of our principles and our goals, it is a willingness to work through every issue no matter how hard it might be, with respect for others, a willingness to engage in robust and honest debate in a considerate manner. It is an awareness that *how* we do things is as important as what we achieve. When we experience kindness, we act with kindness; and when we risk kindness in difficult situations, we make way for kindness. It sometimes seems that we have lost the basic human virtue of kindness, and when we do that we go mad.

We used to call our mental hospitals Bedlam. It is worth noting that "Bedlam" derives from Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, the birthplace of kindness. God, from sheer unmotivated kindness, joined the human race, in our vulnerability, riskiness and also in our violence. And the experience of God's kindness both urges and inspires us. Our God is kind, God treats us with respect, does not compel us into belief or worship, though for many of us the experience is both irresistible

and compelling. And the kindness of God helps to stop the seemingly endless tangles of abuse of trust that we experience at so many places in our society.

God always sees the best in us, is not cynical, does not judge and is tolerant of our failings, and does not disregard our fragilities. God has a loving preference for the weakest among us. Can we not see the best in each other, avoid the negativity of cynicism, withhold judgment from each other, be careful of each other's fragilities and be tolerant of each other's failings? Can we not show a loving preference for the weakest among us? Quite simply, God is with us, no matter what, and is with us as loving presence. Can we not simply be with each other?

If it seems impossible, then Christmas is about the impossible. Aristotle said: "That which is probably and impossible is better than that which is possible and improbable". God among us is the best example of the "probably impossible" that I know.

God trusts us; let us trust one another.

*Penny Jamieson*

## Letters to the Editor

### The Lay Vocation

The article by Margaret Hebblethwaite in the November edition of *Tui Motu* saddened me. "Not a cleric, not a religious" has nothing positive about it. Why "through death we are born to eternal life etc" should prove otherwise I cannot imagine. Surely there are better definitions of the lay state.

"Without having special powers and privileges, without ambition for supposedly higher states." Does this imply that priests and religious have special powers and privileges and have an ambition for a supposedly higher state? Priests have powers of the sacraments, but as for religious or anyone else having ambitions for a supposedly higher state is just not true. The article smacks of very Low Church evangelism. Yet rightly the author recognises the value of the sacraments, many of which cannot be had without priests.

In a time when religious and priestly vocations are declining, I think it inappropriate to talk of the lay state in terms that seem to deprecate the vocation to the priesthood and religious life. All Christians receive the sacrament of baptism. Lay people are not the "No Frills" version of baptised people. Each Christian is called by the sacrament of baptism to serve the community according to their gifts and their state of life whatever that might be.

"No further vows need to be added to the baptismal commitment..." Again the commitment of both the religious and the priesthood is deprecated.

Later in the magazine under "What future.." it is stated that Bishop Peter Cullinane's diocese is committed to a more collaborative style of ministry. In fact it goes on to say that Bishop

Cullinane prefers the word "complementarity" which really sums up how the priests, religious and lay people should work together. I feel that Margaret Hebblethwaite's article does more to divide the work of priest, religious and lay person which is the very thing that the Church is trying to get away from with collaborative ministry.

*John Bland, IC Takapuna*

### The Full Monty

On a lecture tour of New Zealand I happened by chance to see the film *The Full Monty* and ten minutes afterwards read a review of it in your column (*Tui Motu* November).

With great respect, I feel your reviewer missed out on its most important lesson: one emphasised by the opening with the authoritarian BBC voice extolling the prospects of unlimited prosperity and a bright new future for Sheffield in the early seventies and the reality of a collapsed industrial infrastructure and mass unemployment in the nineties.

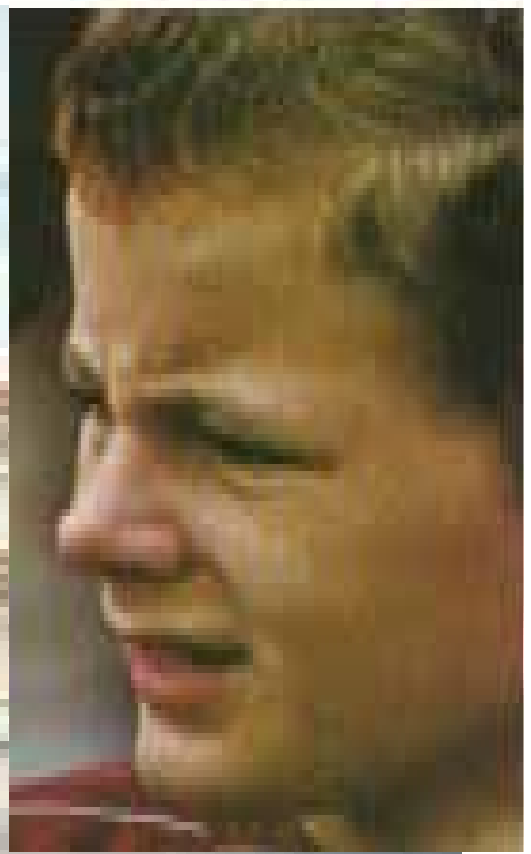
I expect few people today are shocked by the picture of half-a-dozen men's bare bottoms. The lesson seemed to me to centre on the powerlessness of people in the grip of giant economic forces they are unable to control; and how, if they are to resolve their ensuing problems, they must act to improve things themselves. It is a lesson applicable to the entire spectrum of modern life and which, because it presses it home so successfully, gives the film an importance it might otherwise lack.

*Rev John Papworth, Australia*



# School...

## *I hate it!*



*Mrs Pat Harrison has spent her life teaching and caring for adolescents. For 19 years she was Principal of Queen's High School, in Dunedin. On her retirement in 1994 she soon became involved in a work for young people at risk, which has blossomed into the Otago Youth Wellness Trust.*

The Dunedin project puts the spotlight on adolescents who play truant from school. Truancy has two major consequences. The obvious one is that young people miss out on skills which would equip them for a steady job. In the 'information age' this becomes far more serious than, say, 25 years ago. The other disadvantage is missing out on the experience of school as a socialising agency. The young people who habitually 'wag' school set themselves on the road to becoming misfits in society.

Focussing on the truant group also uncovers a host of attendant problems both in the clients and in their families: criminality, substance abuse, poverty, mental health — and so on. Pat soon

realised that such a complex situation demands an integrated solution, combining the efforts of many social agencies: health care, schools, social welfare, the police, youth aid together with the overarching support of the community. Often there tends to be a fragmentation of services, and victims fall between the cracks. In the meantime by strengthening its family policies the government is also playing a positive role: its new strategy for enhancing family welfare is a national counterpart of local initiatives such as this one started in Dunedin.

The first question you must ask, says Pat, is: *why is this young person not learning effectively?* This may uncover a series of barriers to effective living and learning in the young person's life. A

twofold strategy has been adopted. In the first place there must be thorough case management. Goals have to be set for the young person to achieve. Then, to help him or her achieve these goals a mentor has to be provided who will work with the individual client at a one-to-one level over a considerable period of time. The mentor will need to get to know the client thoroughly and also quite a bit about the family circumstances.

Pat Harrison's personal belief is that all families without exception desire to better themselves and their children. What is needed is to build up in such a way as to make a dysfunctional situation better. For this reason there has to be a very careful selection of staff to work in this delicate area. It is imperative that the agencies work through one person who can help with budgeting advice, dietary improvement as well as educational problems. This person has to build up a bond so that the dysfunctional cycle which may have built up over a long period may be broken. By intervening when problems first arise at school the



*For retired School Principal, Pat Harrison (pictured left), helping young people at risk is a matter of faith*

field worker may be able to avert a much more serious crisis later. Close liaison with the police is helpful.

#### **So how did it all start?**

In 1994 the Dunedin Police became seriously concerned about juvenile crime in the city — and particularly the high incidence of recidivism. Meanwhile the local Council of Social Services held a public forum on youth issues. What came out of this was that young people were finding it difficult to get help when they were in trouble, and one reason was the fragmentation of services. A working party was set up and Pat was asked to develop a model for appropriate intervention. Young people were themselves involved in the search for solutions: indeed the working party became committed to involving youth at every level of their investigation.

All this costs a lot of money: funding was forthcoming first from the Education Department, but subsequently from Social Welfare, the Police, the RHA and Youth Lottery. While various public bodies have co-operated in setting the scheme up, a vital factor has been the support of the community at large and the willingness of people to give time and energy voluntarily. Public funding has provided the services of a professional youth worker and all the necessary infrastructures. The mentors

however are all volunteers. Indeed, for Pat, the greatest personal satisfaction has been precisely giving her own time and energy freely for the welfare of the young alongside a great team of people most of whom also give their services voluntarily.

The mentor's task is to work alongside the young people, gaining their confidence, assisting them in setting and achieving goals, helping with homework, encouraging them not to miss school, to keep appointments — and so on. The mentor is a catalyst to help a non-achiever to become an achiever. A child with poor communication skills is nearly powerless to help himself or

herself; someone born into a family fixed on dole dependency is at a massive disadvantage. The problems have to be identified and solutions found. The mentors have easy access to professional help and have a highly qualified team as back-up. For Pat it is all a question of faith: you have to be absolutely confident that these young people on the brink of trouble can be helped to put their lives back on a more successful track.

Success is measured primarily in terms of how the young person sees it himself/herself. They will say, "I now have someone I can really talk to." As their self-esteem increases, they begin to taste

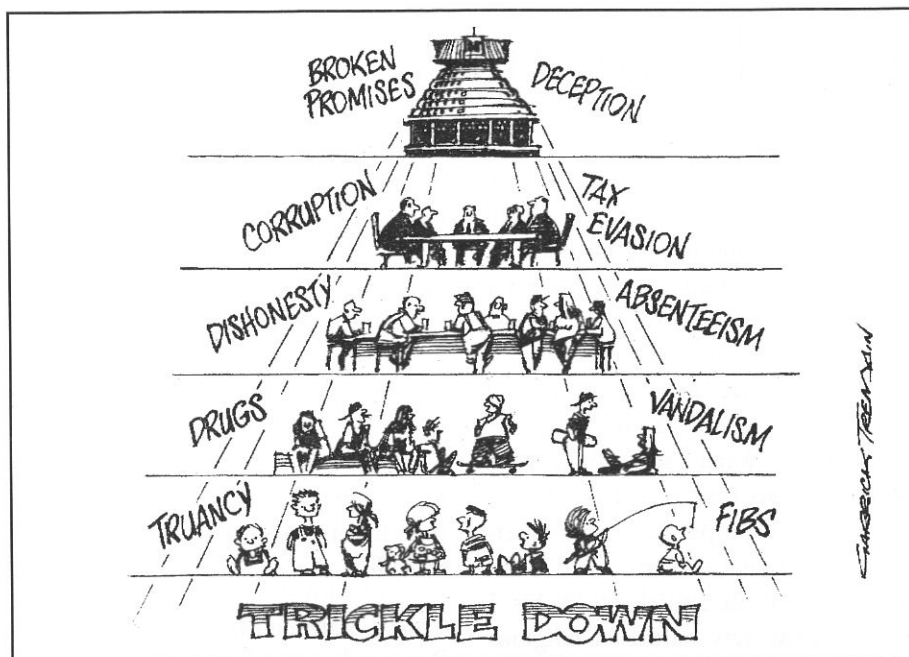
#### **Some of the Team at work at the Otago Youth Wellness Centre**



*Phiona Winter, Nurse Co-ordinator; Maria Noonan, Project Leader; Tracy Hurley, Link Worker; Carmen Peterson, Social Worker*

some success in their lives. Last year 169 young people in the city were helped. Some of these will need no further help this year. Others have less need of support now than, say, a year ago. Of the cases randomly selected for careful evaluation they all said they had been helped: one to be able to get his driving licence; one or two were able to sit School Certificate.

A more careful evaluation is being undertaken by Dr Ritchie Poulton of the multi-disciplinary Health and Development Unit. Meanwhile the team is starting 1998, its third year of operation, with a confidence born of some really successful outcomes. ■



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### Some cases

**Jane** is a 15-year-old who persistently refused to attend school. She's a bright girl but with a very irregular lifestyle: partying, high alcohol use, and associates with gang members. She looks older than her age and likes to think herself more mature than she really is. She is 'boy-crazy': her moods tend to go up and down like a yoyo — according to the temperature of her latest romance. Jane thinks school is "stupid", and she is out of sync with her peer group at school. She did find some satisfaction, however, in the Special Needs group who used to meet with the School Counsellor after school.

Investigation of Jane's background revealed that her father had had a major illness which resulted in major family difficulties, reduced income — a classic case of loss of authority in the home. The mentor often sees Jane several times a week and is encouraging her to take responsibility for her decisions, who to go to, what to do, how to go about it. Last year she was missing about 75 percent of school. However, she has now enrolled herself at a new school. She gets along well with her mentor, and puts up with the necessary 'nagging' to get her to stick to her resolutions. There is now a lot of hope in a case where her family had practically given up on her.

**Simon** is also a 15-year-old who was in trouble with the police and floating on the fringe of the gang scene. He had become extremely anti-school and very difficult at home. His mentor persuaded him to return to school — by actually accompanying him to the gate! But it didn't last: there was an almighty family row — back to square one.

Several months later Simon has left school and with the help of his male mentor he has taken on a course which challenges him both mentally and physically. He has even decided off his own bat to return to an academic course which includes boning up on some of the things he missed out on at school. He no longer feels a failure, he has stuck to his course — and, significantly, he's getting on much better at home.

**Philip** also had been involved with the police, was into drugs and alcohol abuse. He was for a time a high suicide risk. He had moved into the drug culture in a vain attempt to solve his own deep personal unhappiness. His mentor eventually managed to persuade him to get back to school and lead a more stable lifestyle. Meanwhile counselling uncovered deep-seated personal problems: once he had faced up to these, the process of real healing started.

**Nick** is a thoroughly obnoxious lad, antisocial and a 'pain' to have to deal with. He had a friend in trouble who was given a mentor, so he thought he would like one too. He was told he wouldn't be given one until he pulled his socks up and got back to school regularly. Eventually he agreed to do this; he got his mentor — and things have started to improve.

**Lucy** witnessed very severe family violence when she was very small: mother beaten up in her presence plus severe alcohol abuse. The family broke up; by the age of six Lucy refused to settle at school because she was too insecure to let her mother out of her sight.

Only very early intervention could give Lucy a hope of a permanent cure. The focus was to provide the sort of secure social environment at school that deep down she craved for, including a male figure she can relate to. At seven Lucy now goes to school happily and is beginning to behave like a normal child and to learn effectively.

The mentors are all volunteers and are carefully matched to the clients. A very high proportion of the mentors are under 30 years of age. ■

*(names and details altered)*

# The Indignity of Roman Table Manners

Several years ago, when home on leave, I went to morning Mass in an Auckland parish. I was a little surprised to see that some people sat through the whole of Mass, except where it was appropriate to stand. They were not elderly and they were all women. I later found out that they were Mercy sisters. What I saw left me with more questions than criticisms. I have come to see the prophetic nature of their action, and that I too am called to be 'at the edge of the church' since this, I believe, is the very nature of religious life, the 'dangerous memory' of the church.

Some of us are slow learners. It has really taken me some years of cross-cultural and intercultural experience in Pacific and Australian churches to wake up to the nature of my call to prophetic living in community today. To be prophetic, it seems to me, entails a certain daring and matching words with action. I am convinced that being prophetic has to do with asking questions, like the annoying student at the back of the class. Generally, they are the sorts of questions the establishment does not want to hear.

With this in mind, let us return to the Mass. My context is Kiribati and my experience of the Church there. However, what follows can be asked in other Churches in the Pacific as well as Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

One of the central features of life in Kiribati is the *maneaba*. It is similar in significance to the marae. One of the notable features of the *maneaba* today is how it unifies a village or how all those in a gathering are made one. Everyone has their place and there is a master of ceremonies to make sure that whatever happens goes along smoothly. It is the usual practice that people eat first, and then comes the time for talk, for song and sometimes dance, depending on the occasion. The hosts are first to make sure that

everyone eats, the guests first and then others. Today women are beginning to be included, whereas previously and still so on some islands, they eat what is left over. However, the hosts usually eat after things have finished. Many if not most I-Kiribati would regard the *maneaba* and all the customs and protocol associated with it, as central to their life. From it they draw sustenance and life.

Comes Catholicism, however, with its Roman flavour, and we see such a difference. So effective is the 'ism' of being Catholic that we are convinced so much of what we have inherited over four or five generations of being Catholic is the way it has always been. Any departure in thinking or devotional practice or spirituality from that received is almost seen to be not quite Catholic. To return to the example I began with: when there

*To be prophetic, it seems to me, entails a certain daring and matching words with action*

is Mass in the *maneaba* everything Kiribati is left outside — except the singing perhaps which, in its three and four part harmony, is always striking to the ear.

The very eucharistic arrangement of the Kiribati gathering is left aside for what has been inherited from Roman Europe. Instead of a circle that recognises the baptismal dignity of each and every one gathered, people sit one behind the other. We are busy standing, kneeling or sitting like the beginning of some aerobics exercise in a culture where kneeling simply isn't part of the upbringing, apart from what has been inherited from Catholic Europe. As Mass proceeds and we approach the time for communion, who receives first and drinks the only drink — and then goes to the cupboard (if Mass is

celebrated in a European style church) for the left-overs to give to the people who have come? I am being purposely facetious. The Eucharist is the love and hinge point of my life, but not the sloppy way we tend to celebrate it, nor the at times exaggerated attention we give to the Blessed Sacrament reserved. Our liturgical practice makes nonsense of the dignity that Jesus of Nazareth, who had no status, position or reputation to worry about, accorded to his followers — a dignity taken from them by the rules and legalism of official religion. Such practices seem the antithesis of all that is noble and created good within the culture of Kiribati (and I can add my own cultural heritage here as well).

I speak in the context of the culture I have come to appreciate and love for the past ten years or so; there is no way I blame the bishop or those in the ordained ministry. The questions I raise can be asked of all the Churches of the area that Rome refers to as Oceania. I am asking questions of what has become sloppy liturgical practice (although of course, there are refreshing exceptions), perhaps by osmosis, or by what takes the least trouble. It is said that the way we pray gives a fairly good indication of the kind of community we are.

Let me return to those daring women and express my gratitude to them for pointing out the indignity of Roman table manners in a Church which is supposed to be a fellowship of equals. I am called, like them, to live the 'dangerous memory' of the Christian community in whom all the baptised are called to priesthood, prophecy and the friendship of equals. ■

*Kevin Dobbryn fms*



# Laurie O'Reilly, RIP

**T**he death in Christchurch in January of Laurie O'Reilly, Lawyer and Commissioner for children brings to mind the words of the eucharistic Prayer in the Mass of Requiem: *"for those who are faithful to God, life is changed – not ended"*.

Laurie O'Reilly was a faithful man. Faithful to God, to his family, to his profession and latterly to the children and young people of New Zealand.

I first met Laurie several decades ago when I sought him out as a Catholic lawyer who might assist a very young woman in prison who was suffering from mental illness. Laurie listened, investigated and later advocated strongly on her behalf – his reward, the knowledge of a just outcome for his client.

Later Laurie encouraged me as an older law student. Later again I encountered him in action in the family Court jurisdiction, a specialist jurisdiction the policies of which Laurie had helped develop in the early 1980's.

As opposing counsel on a case Laurie was formidable, even intimidating. He would march into court with several legal tomes which he would place dramatically on his desk. Hardly needed I often thought as Laurie was a contributor to the Ludbrook's Family Law Service. His manner and stance were formidable. Laurie knew his law and when litigation was called for he leapt to the challenge.

But Laurie was not a mere law practitioner. He had a practical passion for justice. In the late 1970's and early 1980's he co-founded with another remarkable person, Katrine Brown, 6A a drop-in centre for street kids and the disadvantaged. In that role he battled bureaucracy, called forth compassion in others, challenged Church leaders and

helped scrub out a condemned building as a temporary place of refuge. He empathised, he encouraged and he lent laughter to many a sticky situation.

All these qualities were summed up for me in two major events after Laurie knew the terminal nature of his illness.

**O**n 17 July 1997 Laurie as Commissioner for Children, addressed a Family Courts Association meeting in Christchurch. The room was unusually quiet as he began to speak. Many present had only recently heard of Laurie's illness and it seemed hard to realise that this large, ebullient man was suddenly so vulnerable. And then Laurie, with exquisite empathy for his audience, spoke of his illness and set his listeners free to express their own sorrow and love. He revealed some of his own shock at the severity of his diagnosis, given that medical opinions confirmed to him that he could not hold out any hope of *"making a run for it down the blind side or kicking for touch"*. The hope he revealed was in the spiritual solace he sought in quiet moments of prayer and eucharist.

Laurie then moved into an address on behalf of the children and young people of New Zealand that was magnificent in its research, stinging in its criticism of lack of resourcing for many of New Zealand's children and challenging of his legal confreres to advocate to their utmost on behalf of their child clients.

It was rare in the profession to witness the standing ovation that Laurie received, the spontaneous tributes that were paid to him and the warmth of the embrace that Laurie received from numerous Judges and colleagues.

Later on 7 October 1997 Laurie's friends honoured him in a dinner to

benefit the Neil Williamson Memorial Charitable Trust. Laurie clearly enjoyed the impressive array of speakers who reflected his interests in work, sport and church. He again found strength to advocate for the fatherless and to speak of his illness as an affliction not to be feared in the face of the spiritual hope that he held.

Virtually until the day he died Laurie advocated publicly to ensure the wellbeing of New Zealand's children and young people. He also turned his whole dying into a testament before the nation to his faith and spiritual hope.

**W**hat a gift that Laurie chose to prepare for his death so publicly and to take virtually the whole of New Zealand to his death bed of faith in resurrection and fullness of life. ■ *Ann Malloch*

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# Caring for the carer

## ...avoiding the pitfalls

*In her final piece, Stephanie Kitching rsm, looks at situations where professional relationships go wrong: who suffers and what to do about it?*

**B**oundaries are limits set in place for the protection of the vulnerable. When boundaries are respected, a relationship is potentially a blessed opportunity for the individuals concerned to discover and affirm God's goodness in themselves and in each other. When boundaries are not respected, the reverse occurs and the potential for evil is seen.

Professional misconduct is not to be equated with sexual abuse of children, which is a violent act against the vulnerable and is unlawful. Professional boundary violations occur when a minister does not respect the limits of the professional relationship: they are not necessarily unlawful acts.

In the first article in this series, the concept of overlapping and dual relationships was addressed. This type carries a stronger risk of boundary violation than uncomplicated professional relationships. However, even the latter can falter when the minister, who is in the position of power, does not use that power solely for the benefit of the client. When the minister takes heed more of self needs than client needs, then what occurs is ambiguous even if on the surface it seems beneficial to the parishioner.

*"As you are such a talented journalist but are unable to work professionally, how about you come and write a history of the parish in exchange for these sessions we are having together?"*, suggests the priest.

Just how is the parishioner going to perceive this situation? Is the minister being 'nice' and patronising them? Does the parishioner feel obliged to fall in with the minister's suggestion to recompense for the hours of support and counselling since redundancy? What if the parishioner wants to say No but fears rejection? What if the parishioner says Yes, then later gets a job offer or wants to withdraw?

In circumstances like this, the parishioner may begin to feel unsafe, or at least uncertain. Often they do not block the change which brings about the boundary violation because of the complicated interplay of need and vulnerability. The pain or betrayal felt by such infringements of the boundaries is frequently delayed until much later, sometimes even years later when they become aware of what was occurring. Whether the client agrees to the changed boundary, or apparently likes it, makes no difference to the fact that a boundary violation has occurred. The changed limits mean the minister's power is not

being used solely in the client's interests. To say "Well, the person wanted it, even asked for it" is not a defence for relaxing healthy boundaries.

### Danger Signals

Appointments with a particular individual beginning to run over time; cancelling other appointments in order to be free in case a particular individual wants to see him or her; meeting with a particular individual at unusual times or places; the minister and client always have a hug every time pastoral contact is made; failing to make appropriate referrals; the minister talking more than intended about him/herself.

Boundary violations show four characteristics:

- there is always an element of role reversal, often unconscious, with the client meeting the minister's needs and being elevated to a special status to do this. This status, however, lasts only as long as the minister's needs are being fulfilled. Even though the client is the one meeting the minister's needs, the control of how and when these are to be met remains with the minister.
- it is almost always a secret. Sometimes



a third party is involved but is asked to keep the secret for the benefit of the minister. In such a secret situation the professional uses the secret to get from the client what is wanted without disclosing the true agenda which often only emerges after damage has been done.

- there is an element of 'double bind'. The parishioner feels that no matter what they do – as in the case quoted earlier – they cannot resolve the situation without compromising their ability to get what they need from the professional. It is the parishioner, not the minister, who feels guilty about what is occurring.

- there is abuse of professional privilege when the minister has access to privileged information and status and abuses it. In boundary violations, there is always a 'fit' between the vulnerability of the client and the needs of the minister, with the indulgence of professional

privilege often showing itself in such statements as: *I know what is good for you*".

### Consequences

When a violation happens more persons than just the parishioner and the minister are involved. Of course, the first concern is for the client whose safety limits have been broken. This person may experience deep emotional, spiritual and physical hurt. It may take them a long time to deal with such outcomes.

The minister (and family or community) is also affected, even if the boundary violation is not evident to all. The minister suffers from a fear of being 'found out' with the consequent loss of credibility. As well, the minister who breaks a professional boundary sets up a scenario where violation becomes progressively easier in subsequent relationships. They have compromised their integrity and professionalism and have

to live with the guilt and shame of this. If supervision is being well used, then fuzzy boundaries can be addressed at an early stage so the minister does not have to reach this level of personal distress. Of course, another common response on the part of the minister is to deny there has been a boundary violation, but this only leads to repetition and increasing harm to those the minister serves, and eventually to a deep inner loneliness in the minister.

For the local Christian community and the Church at large there are ramifications too. When it becomes known that a boundary violation has occurred, there is likely to be anger, disillusionment and a diminishment of trust by parishioners and by others. Sometimes there is an inability to forgive, with questions around where to take grievances.

The Church loses its credibility as its integrity has been damaged by a professional who is the face of the Church. Initially, there needs to be an acknowledgment of the violation and an accountability for what has occurred. There needs to be some means offered for reconciliation and healing in the community.

### Conclusion

A few key recommendations for keeping professional relationships in ministry healthy:

Know the limits of your competence. Recognise the signals when your own needs are beginning to take over. Avoid dual relationships.

Take good care of your own needs, especially for intimacy, and make sure your needs are met in a healthy manner *outside* the work situation. And beware of isolation and its consequences, e.g. alcoholism. Above all, seek professional supervision on a regular basis.

There is a clear need, especially in the Church, to re-examine the way our ministers are trained and supported. ■

*Richard M Gula(1996) Ethics in Pastoral Ministry (Paulist Press) offers a chapter on "A Proposed Code of Ethics". This is well worth consideration by all those in pastoral ministry .*





# Jubilee and Justice

## The Spirit in Luke's Gospel

*1998 is the Year of Luke in the cycle of Lectionary readings. It is also the second of three years of preparation for Jubilee 2000. MARY BETZ, University Chaplain from Palmerston North, weaves these strands together but also draws out the justice theme which underpins the Gospel of Luke*

Throughout scripture, the Spirit is the very breath, life and mind of God: the Spirit both stirred the waters and was breathed into the human soul at creation (Gen 1:2, 2:7). The Spirit continued to call humanity to fuller freedom and life – singularly through the prophets, those rare but brilliant beacons of hope lighting the way to the justice and fullness of life that God desires (Is 61,1-2, Ez 36,26-27, Mic 3,8).

Luke's gospel heightens the tradition of understanding the Spirit as the divine life force toward justice and wholeness among people. The presence of the Spirit is manifested in fearless proclamation of God's reign in word and in deed. In *Luke* the work of the Spirit is seen primarily through the person of Jesus, as well as through family members and mentors. (*Acts*, which is Luke's second volume, records the spread of the Spirit to all Christians.)

*Footnote: Mary Betz acknowledges the idea of "bending the ear" to God's voice is taken from God Calls us all to Holiness by Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB*

The precondition for the gift of the Spirit is obedience – literally "bending the ear" or "listening intently" – to God's voice, finding favour with God. Those who listen hear the Spirit bringing them a clear recognition of God's love and power; an understanding of God's desires; courage, strength and hope; wisdom, direction and mission; and sustenance for their lives as they proclaim justice.

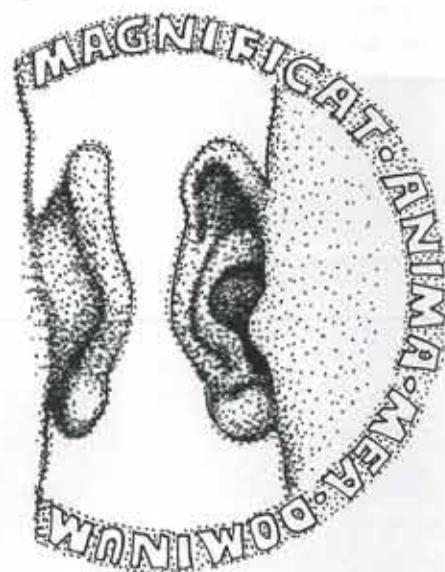
*..prophets having ears bent towards God..*

### The Spirit in Jesus' Family and its Mentors

John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit (1,15-17) even before his birth. His parents' righteous (obedient, listening) stature before God filled the precondition for the Spirit's presence in him (despite his father's temporary lack of faith). As in Mal 3,1-4, and with the same spirit and power that drove Elijah, John's role was to prepare God's way, to guide the non-listening (disobedient) toward the wisdom of the Spirit. John's

ministry (3,1-2) was marked by his preaching of repentance, i.e., *metanoia*, a profound turning toward God, and the practice of justice by all. From the time of John's naming, his father Zechariah (1,59-79) was also filled with the Spirit. In him it was manifest in the poetic proclamation of God's compassion and power, and the recognition of his son's role in preparing for the One who would bring light and peace.

Upon Mary's greeting, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit (1,39-45), causing her to recognise Mary's obedience, trust, and role – and the identity of Jesus. Elizabeth blesses Mary in the tradition of earlier prophets [Deborah (Judg 5,24), Moses (Deut 28,1-4), for her listening to God's voice.



Mary discovered she had found favour with God through the angel Gabriel (1,26-38), and with Mary's agreement, the Holy Spirit came upon her and the power of God "overshadowed" her at Jesus' conception. Mary's "overshadowing" (*episkiazein*) hearkens back to the settling of the sheltering presence of God in the cloud over the Israelites in the desert (Ex 40,35). Luke shows the Spirit at work in Mary through her *Magnificat* (1,46-55), a canticle of re-



versals, in which a compassionate and revolutionary God sets right injustices, fills the hungry and frees the oppressed. It echoes the song of Hannah (1 Sam 2,1-10) and Miriam's victory hymn (Ex 15,1-18), and anticipates the work of the Spirit in Jesus' life.

In the temple after Jesus' birth, his family encountered Simeon and Anna (2,25-38). Like Elizabeth and Zechariah, these two holy prophets had spent their lives with "ears bent" toward God. The Holy Spirit rested on Simeon, revealing Jesus' destiny and future opposition. Anna too was Spirit-filled: Luke identifies her as a prophet; she listened to God; and she received and passed on to others knowledge linking Jesus with the redemption of Israel.

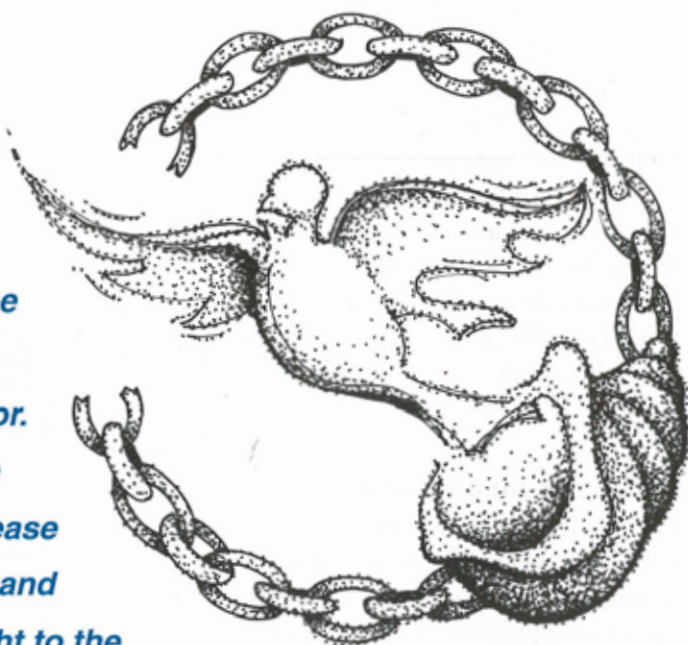
### **The Spirit in Jesus' Ministry, Justice and the Jubilee Tradition**

At the relatively advanced age of thirty, Jesus went to his cousin John for baptism (3,21-22), sealing his commitment to a life of listening to God's voice. Luke tells us that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove, while God's voice (as with Mary through Gabriel) affirmed Jesus in God's favour. The significance of the dove is multifaceted in relation to the working of the Spirit: its gentleness; its moaning cry bringing to mind birth pangs; its symbolism of hope for the renewal of life; and its transcendence of distance between heaven and earth.

Returning from the Jordan, Jesus was tempted to stray from his intended purpose, but the Spirit led him through and beyond that difficult time. In Nazareth, Jesus took his turn reading and proclaiming the scriptures in the synagogue (4,16-30). In this single action, Jesus set out the mission which clearly has its source in God's life-giving and justice-seeking Spirit: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.*

Drawing from *Isaiah* (61,1-2, 58:6), Luke's Jesus identified himself not only with a long line of prophets who pro-

***"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."***



claim God's compassion and justice (Is 51,4, Jer 22,13, Amos 5,24, Mic 6,8), but inaugurated an eschatological age (Joel 3,15) in which the Spirit would be poured out on all. From this time, Jesus lived as an instrument of the Spirit's work in re-creating the world toward God's intent of justice for those economically, physically and socially oppressed. Like the Spirit-filled Elizabeth, Jesus followed the blessing tradition: he blessed the poor and hungry (6,20-22), those who listened to and obeyed God's word (11,28), and those who did justice (14,14). As a Spirit-filled Mary had proclaimed in word, Jesus proclaimed God's desires in deed as he fed the hungry (9,16), restored the sick and the outcast to their rightful places (13,12, 17,14), and urged his disciples on to justice (16,19-31; 18,18-25).

God's desires for justice and compassion had been kept alive by the Spirit in the mind of Israel for 1000 years through their incorporation in Mosaic and Deuteronomic law and their proclamation by the prophets. Seeing the cycles of greed, poverty, slavery and other injustices, a once-in-seven-years sabbatical for the land and the poor (Ex 23,10-11, Lev 25,1-7, Deut 15,1-18) and a

once-in-fifty-years Jubilee (Lev 25,8-19) were mandated. Because in an agricultural society, wealth and the benefits that stem from it (health, freedom and peace) derive from the possession of land, the Jubilee year called for a universal re-enfranchisement of every person: their freedom if they had become destitute and enslaved, the return to them of any lands they had lost, all debts forgiven, and the earth itself to have a rest from cultivation.

*the Jubilee called for freedom, the reform of law, the forgiving of debt*

Although the Sabbatical fallow field requirements are known to have been observed (1 Macc 6,49-53) there is little evidence that the fiftieth year trumpet (*yobel*, from which jubilee is derived) was ever sounded. Luke's Jesus leaves no doubt that the Spirit calls him to make his ministry the re-proclamation of Jubilee: even among the words he read from *Isaiah*, "release" and "free" (*aphesis*) are in the early proclamations of Jubilee (Lev, Deut above).

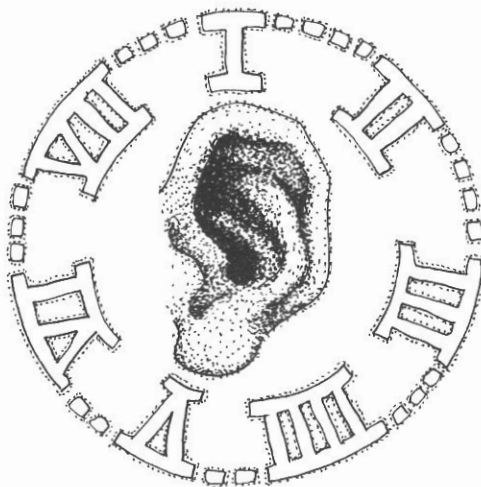
As if turning the social and economic world of his listeners upside down was not enough, Jesus also serves them notice (4,25-30) that the work of God's Spirit must be not only for Israel, but is universal: political and religious relationships must also change. It was at that point that the synagogue worshippers drove Jesus out of town and intended to kill him even before he could act on his words.

### Justice and Jubilee Today

The reaction to Jesus' first proclamation, and eventually to his ministry (centred on the restoration of God's justice and compassion) is well understood by those, who 2000 years later, have "bent their ears" and heard the Spirit's call in the same way. What is good news to the poor is usually not at all good news to the rich and powerful, or even the moderately well-off.

What, after all, would be good news to today's poor? The redistribution of wealth, adequate food and housing, means to good education and care for

children. What do today's captives need release from? The same unfair burden of debt as in Jesus' time (today with focus on poor nations). What will bring



us as near as possible to "recovery of the sight for the blind"? Good health care for all, adequate social assistance. What do the oppressed need freeing from? Slavery of many kinds: abuse, addiction, social stigma and prejudice. What else would the year of the Lord's favour (Jubilee) bring? Justice in land settlements, wisdom in resource use.

Catholic Christians are asked this year to reflect on the meaning of hope and the gift of the Holy Spirit in preparation for the Jubilee year of 2000. How might the seeds of hope planted in the 3000 year old vision of Jubilee be brought closer to fruition today? We might begin by recalling that Jesus, his family and the prophets before them were Spirit-filled proclaimers of justice because they took the time to "bend the ear" to God.

*What is good news to the poor is not at all good news to the rich*

Notwithstanding the added distractions of contemporary life, "bending our ears" is still the precondition for a life in which the Spirit moves us in God's desires toward justice: it is our only hope, and the way in which God invites us, as he did Jesus, to transcend the distance between heaven and earth. ■

## Bible Translation Software


A new software package to help those involved in Bible translation has been recently launched. *Paratext 4.0* was released by the United Bible Societies following their triennial translation workshop held in Mexico.

*Paratext* enables the user to consult and analyse source texts — Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek — to do searches in these texts and in a number of other translations. The software is designed to help Bible translators, reviewers, exegetes etc working in more than 680 Scripture translation projects the world over.

*Paratext* can present up to five different texts on screen, scrolling simultaneously. It can produce word lists with full references. It also provides an interface with *The Translator's Workplace*, an electronic library published by the Summer Institute of Linguistics in co-operation with UBS.

The new package is available for all people directly involved in Scripture translation projects through the Canadian Bible Society's translation office.

(Bible Society)



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# *It is God who does it...*

*This fair and lovely word mother is so sweet and so kind that it cannot be said of anyone or to anyone except of God and to God, who is the true mother of life and of all things.*

*To the property of motherhood belong nature, love, wisdom and knowledge — and this is God.*

*For though it may be that our bodily bringing to birth is only little, humble and simple in comparison with our spiritual bringing to birth, still it is God who does it...*

(Julian of Norwich —  
Revelations)

## **Song to the Holy Spirit**

Lord Holy Spirit,  
You blow like the wind in a thousand  
paddocks,  
Inside and outside the fences,  
You blow where you wish to blow.

Lord Holy Spirit,  
You are the sun who shines on the little plant,  
You warm him gently, you give him life,  
You raise him up to become a tree with  
many leaves.

Lord Holy Spirit,  
You are the kind fire who does not cease to  
burn,  
Consuming us with flames of love and  
peace,  
Heaven is with us when you are with us.  
You are singing your song in the hearts of  
the poor.  
Guide us, wound us, heal us. Bring us to the  
Father.

(James K Baxter 1972. Excerpts)

## **Prayer of Pope John Paul**

Lord Jesus  
who are fullness of time and Lord of history  
prepare our minds to celebrate with faith the  
Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

..convert our hearts,  
so that abandoning the ways of error  
we may walk in your footsteps on the path which  
leads to life;  
..renew missionary zeal in the Church  
that all people may come to know you  
true Son of God and true son of woman;  
..give fresh impulse to the ecumenical movement  
that all your disciples may become one  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(excerpts from Pope John  
Paul's Jubilee prayer)

## **The Indwelling Spirit**

*Christ's work of mercy has two chief parts:*  
*what he did for all, what he does for each;*  
*what he did once for all, what he does for one*  
*by one continually;*  
*what he did externally to us, what he does*  
*within us;*  
*what he did on earth, what he does in heaven;*  
*what he did in his own person, what he does by*  
*his Spirit.*

*Christ atones in his own person, he justifies*  
*through his Spirit.*

(John Henry Newman: Lectures on Justification)

## Raumati Romance

These have I loved at the beach:  
Birds, especially pert wax-eyes,  
impertinent sparrows  
and iridescent blackbirds with  
saffron beaks.  
Fantails, flirtatious, flaunting;  
curiously close.

Monarch butterflies like ephemeral  
sunbeams  
lilting, looping,  
drifting, drooping.

Frisky dogs, surf bounding,  
vigorously loyal,  
their owners, more tardy,  
tossing sticks to be retrieved.

Mysterious clouds, formless,  
indeterminate, vaporous,  
veiling the distant south.

The sun shimmering, blood-red;  
plunging ostentatiously into a fiery sea.  
The sombre silhouette of Kapiti  
at dawn.

A thistle seed, wafting dreamily,  
aimlessly not a thought in its  
gossamer head.

The magic of twilight  
a bewitching interlude between  
sunset-dusk-dark  
the drama enhanced by its brevity.

The brazen touch of the sun  
and the wind.  
The sand-papery of my feet  
as I tread the beach.  
Laziness oozing, restoring my  
frazzled frame.

The taste of fresh-caught fish,  
pan cooked with a touch of salt  
and ground black pepper  
a good squeeze of lemon  
and grainy brown bread.

The caressing sound of the sea  
ceaselessly purging. Somnolent.

The heady fragrance of summer  
honeysuckle  
Beguiling. Sensuous.

You ask me how I know he lives:  
He lives within my heart, my senses.

Allan Devlin

## Listen

*Like birds  
that call  
across the forest  
silvery voices  
call*

*They call  
out of the mists of time  
and into the present day  
from the TOP of the mighty Kauri  
to the tiny Koru on the forest  
floor  
from rivers that tumble over  
rocky beds into the sea  
to the majestic peaks of Ruapehu  
Tongariro Ngauruhoe*

*Voices of the People  
My People Your People  
Our People*

*Not just dead voices of long ago  
relics of a past that has no  
relevance for today  
voices that are lost and not heard  
drowned out and silenced  
by division arrogance and greed*

*But living voices  
woven through the years  
with strands of  
living and of dying  
threads of  
laughter and of tears*

*Listen to these voices!  
Feel them echoing within  
let our voices join together  
for it's time for all our voices  
to be heard.*

Judy McCormack

## Worship

*We ask for the gift of worship.  
for the recklessness of it.  
the unquestioned giving  
that causes us to throw  
our hearts out like hats  
to be caught and filled  
by the nameless All  
we call God.*

*for the rightness of it,  
and the way it takes us  
out of the meaningless desert  
and into the blossoming way  
where we discover love  
moving in everything  
like fragrance in the breath of  
a flower.*

*for the richness of it  
and the way we are filled,  
in spite of ourselves,  
with wisdom beyond mind,  
seeing beyond vision,  
rejoicing beyond words  
and the knowledge that now  
is the eternity of love  
we were waiting for.*

Joy Cowley



*Bloodless bleakness blankets the city.  
Bodies are pierced with more than studs –  
rife desires, troubles, worries, confusion, loss!  
The clangour of heavy metal and rattle of rap  
hound the hearing  
and, hoarse with exhaust, wretchedness is  
forced to cry, "Somebody come!"*

## Spirit of the Song

*And She comes, under the thrum of some gig's guitars  
with unheard whirr of wings, a dove, to the love-lost city,  
alighting on a high wire, near the tower of Fable,  
an electric cable and then on the ledge windowing.  
She's the Spirit of Singing, the Spirit of Song –  
only a symbol, yet cymbal-like strikes new-knowing in my child within,  
who suddenly sees and hears her croon,  
"Kei te kamakama te tikanga".  
It is right to be joyful,  
Rejoice and Sing!*

*Can feathers so fluffed and voice so muffled  
as that dove's, symbolise Spirit and symbolise Song?  
Ah, this is the First fond tone tongue to and from  
the child spirit summoning her Mother,  
"Look Mummy, Look Mummy. Look, look, look!"  
For the chant on the tips of the lips of the child  
who silken milky was nurtured at nipples  
reminds the worn mother first of loving and then of joy –  
A feather of blessed remembrance and so I sigh  
Sacred Spirit of lullaby bring release to the struggling,  
suspension of tension in healing sleep  
and peace in the dawning of musical morning in Song City  
where downstage Sarah Brightman rehearses  
in bird costume for a new opera "The Final Element".*



*May her pure artistry touch the hearts of millions,  
the orchestra sound the god of Godde-in-thrall.  
Spirit of Song echo in souls, the Holy Element.  
Spirit of Song sing in the man slowly dying of cancer  
that he may see the greenness of grass in his last long looking,  
the amber leap in his cup of tea  
and dream limber lights skip over the sea,  
meet estranged daughters in golden greeting  
and hold a heaven of harmony.*

Maria J Park  
January 1998

# Syllabus of Errors

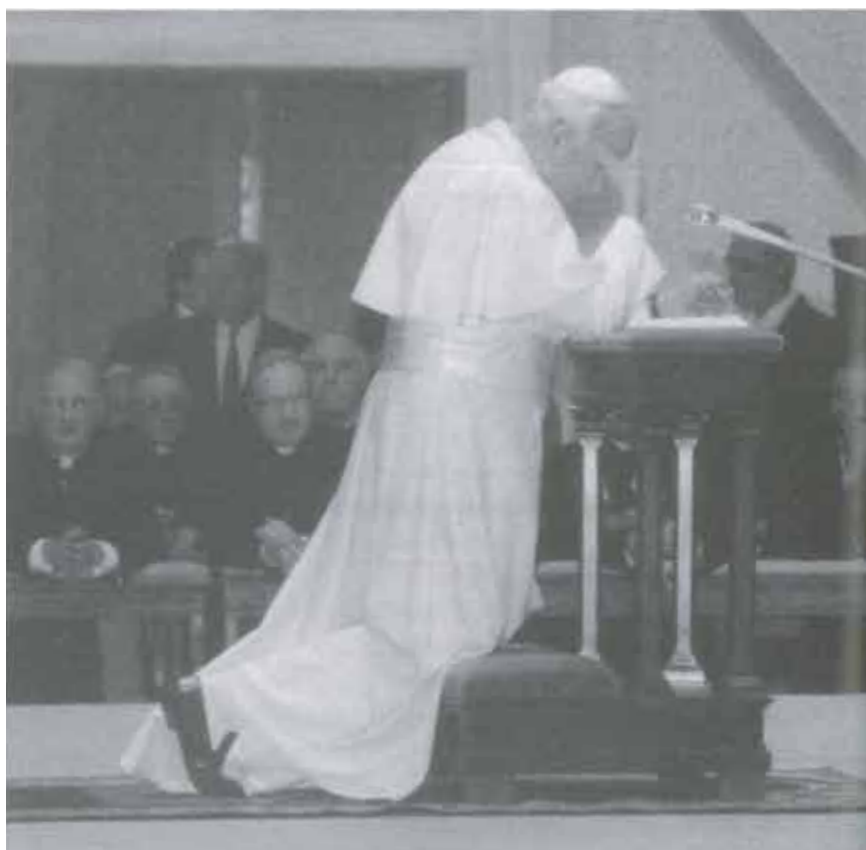
*The Instruction On Certain Questions regarding the Collaboration of the Non-ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of the Priest was issued on 15 August last year with the explicit endorsement of Pope John Paul, signed by the Heads of eight Vatican congregations.*

Excerpts below are of necessity brief and subjective. However they are offered to enable readers to have some access to the actual text of this controversial document, but also in the knowledge that the whole Instruction is readily available in most common languages on the Internet.

The Introduction quotes the 1987 Synod: "The Holy Spirit continues to renew the youthfulness of the Church and has inspired new aspirations towards holiness and the participation of so many lay faithful. This is witnessed in the new manner of active collaboration among priests, religious and the lay faithful; by active participation in the Liturgy; in the proclamation of the Word of God and catechesis; in the multiplicity of services and tasks entrusted to the lay faithful and fulfilled by them; by the flourishing of groups, associations and spiritual movements as well as by lay commitment to the life of the Church and in the fuller and more meaningful participation of women in the development of society".

The Instruction states that its aim is to "provide a clear, authoritative response to the many pressing requests which have come from Bishops, Priests and Laity seeking clarification in the light of specific cases of new forms of pastoral activity of the non-ordained... certain practices have often been developed which have had very serious negative consequences and have caused the correct understanding of true ecclesial communion to be damaged".

The Instruction is in two parts: Theological Principles and Practical Provisions. The Instruction makes a clear distinction



between the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood, seeing the distinction as part of the diversity of gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit. "The ministerial priesthood differs in essence from the common priesthood of the faithful because it confers a sacred power for the service of the faithful." The ordained ministry is God-given, is indispensable and "absolutely irreplaceable".

Nevertheless the Pastors of the Church "according to established norms of universal law, can entrust to the lay faithful certain offices and roles that are connected to their

pastoral ministry but do not require the character of Orders".

The **Practical Provisions** fall under several headings:

- **Terminology:** The Instruction warns against the misuse of the term *ministry*. "The non-ordained faithful may be generically designated 'extraordinary ministers' when deputed by competent authority to discharge (certain) offices... temporary deputation does not confer any special or permanent title..".

"It is unlawful for the non-ordained faithful to assume titles such as 'pastor', 'chaplain',

‘coordinator’, ‘moderator’ or other such similar titles which can confuse their role and that of the Pastor, who is always a Bishop or Priest”.

• **Ministry of the Word:** “The faithful... can be invited to collaborate, in lawful ways, in the ministry of the Word.” With regard to preaching in church or oratory, “it would be useful to make clear the exceptional nature of such cases...”; “a shortage of sacred ministers would recommend the admission of the non-ordained faithful to preaching... but preaching “can be permitted only as a supply for sacred ministers and for those particular reasons foreseen by the universal law of the Church or by Conferences of Bishops. It cannot be regarded as an ordinary occurrence...”.

• **The homily:** “during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, must be reserved to the sacred minister... to the exclusion of the non-ordained faithful”. However, “a form of instruction designed to promote a greater understanding of the liturgy... is lawful. Nonetheless these testimonies or explanations may not be such so as to assume a character which could be confused with the homily”.

The “celebrant minister may make prudent use of ‘dialogue’ in the homily...” “Homilies in non-eucharistic liturgies may be preached by the non-ordained faithful only when expressly permitted by law...”

• **Pastoral collaboration:** “The non-ordained faithful, as happens in many worthy cases, may collaborate effectively in the pastoral ministry of clerics in parishes (etc)...”, but “this is (a participation in the exercise of pastoral care) and not directing, co-ordinating, moderating or governing the Parish; these are the competencies of a priest alone”. “In view of the right of every cleric to exercise the ministry proper to him, and in the absence of any grave health of disciplinary reasons, it should be noted that having reached the age of 75 does not constitute a binding reason for the diocesan Bishop to accept a Parish Priest’s resignation.”

• **Structures of Collaboration:** “Diocesan and parochial Pastoral Councils and Parochial Finance Councils of which the non-ordained faithful are members, enjoy a consultative vote only and cannot in any way become deliberative structure.” “It is for the Parish Priest to preside at parochial

councils. They are to be considered invalid, and hence null and void, any deliberations entered into (or decisions taken), by a parochial council which has not been presided over by the Parish Priest or which has assembled contrary to his wishes.”

• **Liturgical Celebrations:** “In eucharistic celebrations deacons and non-ordained members of the faithful may not pronounce prayers, eg especially the eucharistic prayer, with its concluding doxology – or any other parts of the liturgy reserved to the celebrant priest... It is a grave abuse for any member of the non-ordained faithful to ‘quasi-preside’ at the Mass while leaving only that minimal participation to the priest which is necessary to secure validity. In the same way the use of sacred vestments which are reserved to priests or deacons (stoles, chasubles or dalmatics) at liturgical ceremonies by non-ordained members of the faithful is clearly unlawful. Every effort must be made to avoid even the appearance of confusion which can spring from anomalous liturgical practices.”

• **Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest:** “A special mandate of the Bishop is necessary for the non-ordained members of the faithful to lead such celebrations. ...such celebrations are temporary solutions and the text used at them must be approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority. The practice of inserting into such celebrations elements proper to the Holy Mass is prohibited.”

• **The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion:** “Extraordinary ministers may distribute Holy Communion at eucharistic celebrations only when there are no ordained ministers present or when those ordained ministers... are truly unable to distribute Holy Communion. They may also exercise this function at eucharistic celebrations where there are particularly large numbers of the faithful and which would be excessively prolonged because of an insufficient number of ordained ministers to distribute Holy Communion. This function is supplementary and extraordinary.

“...practices to be avoided: – extraordinary ministers receiving Holy Communion apart from the other faithful as though concelebrants...; the habitual use of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at Mass...”.

• **Apostolate of the Sick:** “In no instance may the non-ordained perform anoint-

ings either with the Oil of the Sick or any other oil”.

• **Assistance at Marriages:** “The possibility of delegating the non-ordained faithful to assist at marriages may prove necessary in special circumstances where there is a grave shortage of sacred ministers.”

• **The Minister of Baptism:** “That absence or the impediment of a sacred minister which renders licit the deputation of the lay faithful to act as an extraordinary minister of Baptism, cannot be defined in terms of the ordinary minister’s excessive workload, or his non-residence in the territory of the parish, nor his non-availability on the day on which the parents wish the Baptism to take place. Such reasons are insufficient...”.

• **Leading the Celebration at Funerals:** “It is desirable that Priests and Deacons, even at some sacrifice to themselves, should preside personally at funeral rites in accordance with local custom... The non-ordained faithful may lead the funeral obsequies provided there is a true absence of sacred ministers...”.

• **Necessary Selection and Adequate Formation:** (no comment).

The Instruction concludes by recommending the document to the pastoral zeal of Diocesan Bishops. “While on the one hand the numerical shortage of priests may be particularly felt in certain areas, it must be remembered that in other areas there is currently a flowering of vocations which augurs well for the future. Solutions addressing the shortage of ordained ministers cannot be other than transitory.” ■

### The Syllabus of Errors

The original *Syllabus of Errors* was issued in 1864 by Pope Pius IX. In it many aspects of contemporary life were condemned, specifically “liberalism”. The Syllabus caused a furore at the time: the Church seemed to be setting itself against modern civilisation.

Pius IX was the youngest Pope of the 19th Century when elected in 1846 and in his early years was the toast of European liberals for his apparently enlightened views. But by 1864 his attitudes had markedly changed, although to be fair to the Pope the principal target of the Syllabus was the anti-clerical government of Italy at that time.



# Two lay responses

*Ron Sharp of Motueka writes:*

**T**he world as we know it isn't working well. Bonds of family and community are fraying; politics are mostly without principle, wealth without work, commerce without morality, pleasure without conscience, education without character, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice. Basic virtues of civility, responsibility, justice and integrity seem to be collapsing. We appear to be losing the ethics derived from personal commitment, social purpose and spiritual meaning. Market forces are hailed as the saviour. Twenty percent of the world's population consume 80 percent of its assets. Top executives receive more remuneration in a week than millions of people get in a year. Fifty of the world's 100 largest economies are multinational corporations — answerable to whom? Meantime humanity grapples with the issues of cloning and genetic engineering.

Into this fractured world comes Jesus Christ — God among us. He teaches the poor about the coming of the Kingdom of God in simple words and stories. He is not an accepted or trained theologian, not a moralist or a legalist. He fits no formula. He is faithful to the law — yet acts contrary to it in particular cases. He is not a fan for correct ritual, only for purity of heart. He stands for love which permits a person to be devout and reasonable, but which is vali-

dated by the fact that it excludes no-one, not even opponents, and is prepared to go to the point of ultimate commitment and renunciation; and so to transform society by radically changing each individual. Jesus lived in this world as a lay person; it is in his death that he becomes a priest. He scandalises the devout by identifying himself with outsiders. He brings them God's good news: grace, freedom, hope and love.

The People of God are the presence of Jesus in our struggling world. In total trust God gives us the vocation to fashion both this world and ourselves in the image of divine love. We are filled with God's Spirit so as to be enabled to build the Kingdom here on earth. This honour and responsibility accorded to human beings is often underlined in the latest *Instruction* from the Vatican regarding the Non-ordained Faithful. But the message in detail rips the spirit of beauty out of the honour.

It appears that bishops in some parts of the world — where? — have become frightened that lay people are threatening their future, and so have reported so-called 'abuses' in lay activity to the Congregation of the Clergy. Eight of the Vatican 'big guns' have signed the Document along with the Pope, to emphasise the seriousness of this situation.

Strict conditions are now to apply to

the non-ordained when reading the Word, distributing Holy Communion, preaching, serving in hospitals, — and a multitude of such services. Members of pastoral councils can only exercise a consultative role, and their decisions are invalidated if the Parish Priest does not preside. Doubt is cast on the use of the terms 'minister' or 'chaplain' for the non-ordained faithful.

Yet lay people all over the world are voluntarily giving their time and energy to serve people in a most generous way, only to receive this most ungenerous response. In the spirit of Christ lay people jumped at the opportunities that Vatican II gave them to become involved and be of service to their Lord in his people and world, after centuries of being merely passive onlookers.

Are the non-ordained faithful now to be excluded from the injunction of Christ to "go forth into the whole world and preach the gospel"? How, for example, can the bishop and clergy of Auckland be expected to cope with the 14 different cultural groupings in that diocese? Are Church authorities obsessed with the notion that lay people must be controlled? Can't lay people be trusted? If there are no shepherds, must we be fenced in? The wolves are already loose in our world, and we are in desperate need of shepherds who, like Pope John XXIII, will inspire us to help transform our failing age, who will give us good news and hope of the Kingdom, who will be Jesus Christ in our times, who will give us bread and not stones.

*No, Minister!, says Peter Brett, of Sumner*

**A**s soon as I saw the front page headline in the *NZ Catholic* I knew they were onto me. No matter that my transgressions took place 20 years ago, those Vatican lads are relentless in their pursuit of error and disorder. "Abuses seen in lay ministry", it proclaimed. And there they were, in a list as long as a

bishop's cincture, my particular acts of 'abuse'. It's all true! I've done it in churches and cathedrals, in the presence of priests — even bishops — and of course pewsfull of the 'non-ordained faithful'. I, one of those very non-ordained faithful, have mounted pulpits and preached homilies.

These were no little booster shots just before the final blessing. I fronted the congregations right after the Gospel reading, smack in the homily slot. And, no doubt about it, I preached. I spoke theology, interpreted scripture, quoted Popes and Councils, shared beliefs and understandings, probably pissed off



many in the pews, doubtless sent others to sleep. They were sermons all right. To the Holy Father and the eight heads of the Roman Congregations who issue the Instruction I solemnly confess to being *Guilty!*

Clearly the arrival of the Instruction is not before time. Maybe just in time if the woolly-headed thinking that surfaced during the diocesan naval-gazing exercise *Looking to Our Future* is anything to go by. The non-ordained, at least where I come from, believe they have some God-given right to Mass and the sacraments whenever they please, notwithstanding the declining number of the ordained. They have a touching attachment to the 'unique culture' each parish community has evolved. They are concerned as to how the centrality of the Eucharist and the culture of each community is to survive and flourish in the era of parish amalgamations and the 'Flying Fathers'.

These people hold this strange notion that lay collaboration in pastoral ministry is a right and a duty that comes with baptism; not a less-than-ideal situation arising from 'necessity and expediency'. Just because a couple of recent Popes (Pius XII and Paul VI) were unguarded enough to proclaim that "the laity are the Church", some think it appropriate to act as if they believed it; others get carried away by notions of the priesthood of all believers.

One may judge the *Instruction* as erring on the side of liberality by allowing the non-ordained even a consultative role in pastoral affairs. For with admirable clarity the Instruction spells out that any pastoral decisions taken without the presiding authority of the parish priest are "to be considered invalid, and hence null and void". There is nothing like an attack of the 'null and voids' to make parish workers feel seriously compromised. So be it.

In spite of the regular flow of authoritative statements issued by the Vatican there were some non-ordained who were rash enough in *Looking to Our*

*Future* as to welcome the possibility of the parish clergy including married men and — dare one whisper it? — women.

Is there a shortage of priests in New Zealand? We don't know how lucky we are. Take Brazil — Catholic for nearly 500 years, yet still needing to use missionary priests from New Zealand. One of these recently spoke of the 90 church communities in his parish, all impoverished and fortunate to have Mass twice a year. Little wonder there is a significant leakage there to evangelical sects who may feel that if prayers, hymns and bible readings are what it's all about they might as well trot along to the happy clappy pastor and his family down the road. It is rumoured that bishops in these areas have wondered aloud about ordaining catechists. But Rome is not to be swayed from the paths of orthodoxy, and confirms that, in the Latin Rite at least, no Eucharist at all is preferable to Eucharist celebrated by a married person.

*Many are concerned  
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of each community is to  
survive..*

Fortunately there is hope. The Instruction notes there can be no solution to the shortage of ordained clergy other than the promotion of vocations to the (presumably celibate, certainly male) priesthood. While some countries labour under a shortage of priests, in others there is "a flowering of vocations that augurs well for the future". A bit of reverse colonialism along with its cultural freightage will put paid to all this nonsense about local Christian communities and their special character.

The Vatican can draw some crumbs of comfort from the loyal welcome accorded to the Instruction by the Bishops of New Zealand. Cardinal Williams is reported as saying (*NZ Catholic* 7 December): "We need these guide-

lines . . . (which) will ensure that lay ministry in the Church in this country will be responsible and effective." He suggests that criticism of the Instruction can only come from a failure to appreciate the beauty of the theology on which it is based. "Reading the guidelines without understanding the theology.. is like trying to assemble a jigsaw without first seeing the whole picture." Judging by the reactions of some European bishops one must conclude that a Vatican clerk omitted to include the "overall picture" when mailing them their puzzle boxes.

*empty pews may well  
be occurring ahead of  
empty pulpits*

Ron Laird of Wanganui sighed to the editor of the *NZ Catholic*: "At last we read the voice of authority in your paper.." Elsewhere the debate continues. Fr Owen Hardwicke wrote in the *London Tablet*: "What is really worrying the authors of the Instruction is that the idea of a common priesthood of all the faithful 'can encourage a reduction in vocations'. In stark terms the Instruction goes on to say: 'Were a community to lack a priest, it would be deprived of the exercise and sacramental actions of Christ, the Head and Pastor, which are essential for the very life of the ecclesial community'". Exactly!

Alarm at the decline in priestly vocations was clearly the main motivation for the recent New Zealand-wide consultations similar to *Looking to Our Future*. During these discussions some lay voices were insensitive enough to point out that the decline in Mass attendance of the non-ordained faithful was even greater than the decline in priestly numbers. Empty pews may well be occurring ahead of empty pulpits. Be that as it may, no good can ever come of disobeying holy orders: there will be consolation in the knowledge that at least the Instruction is being honoured and that doctrine has remained pure. ■



# A Canon Lawyer Comments:

**A** rebuff to the Catholic laity was the headline used by *The Tablet* for its editorial on the recent Instruction from the Roman Curia, "On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests".

Such an evaluation was not confined to the laity. Members of the hierarchy across the world thought the same. Bishop Januario Torgal Ferreira, secretary to the Portuguese bishops' conference, considered the document to be "punitive", and "capable of discouraging the laity from a more participatory role". The Archbishop of Braga, also from Portugal, denounced the document as "exaggeratedly cautious", exhibiting a "centralising attitude on the part of Rome". On the eve of his retirement from office, Bishop Reinhold Stecher of Innsbruck in the Austrian Tyrol used the document as a springboard for a call to halt in the Church "the oft-repeated tendency to subordinate Jesus' teaching to administrative practices and the exercise of human authority" (see page 24).

## *The word chaplain has taken on a different meaning*

Following a statement of theological principles, the instruction devotes most of its length to practical provisions. Many of these are simply what even a critic like Bishop Stecher has termed "reminders of things that are necessary and important". The practical provisions make no changes to the previously existing canonical situation. Canon law states, "the regulations of an instruction do not derogate from the law, and if there are any which cannot be reconciled with the provisions of the law, they have no force" (can.34, par.2). It is the role of an instruction like this to assist in the smooth functioning of the existing authorised situation and to call for

the curbing of excesses and removal of abuses.

A number of individual provisions at first inspection do seem disruptive of present pastoral practice in this country. But closer analysis of at least some of these reveals that they are not as restrictive as they might at first appear.

## *...the Instruction .. was produced by deskbound officials rather than those with current experience in ministry*

The instruction says that it is unlawful for the non-ordained faithful to assume such titles as "chaplain". What then of the usage by which religious and lay people working on the mandate of the Church in such public institutions as prisons are called such? Several considerations would justify the continuance of our usage. The text makes it plain that the prohibition refers only to those exercising "a directive role of leadership", not the more limited role of a lay chaplain who is always dependent on a priest acting in a supervisory role and providing the celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments.

It could be properly put forward that in recent years, the word "chaplain" has in English undergone the kind of sea change that has overtaken the word "man". Until the last decade "man" was widely taken to cover both men and women. It is now widely seen as referring only to males. A change in the opposite direction can be affirmed regarding "chaplain". Once it referred only to "ordained men", whereas now the popular meaning is broader. The word, in the predominantly non-Catholic society in which we live, has taken on a meaning different to that of the past. Whatever authority the officials of the Roman

Curia may exercise within the Church, they do not have power to decide for the English language and for a multi-faith society such as ours that "chaplain" means in English today exactly the same as "cappellanus" means in Latin.

The Instruction speaks of eliminating "the habitual use of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at Mass". But what is to be done regarding Communion under both kinds in one-priest parishes, now the norm in New Zealand and in many other parts of the world? Patently there is no solution other than to employ extraordinary ministers on a regular basis. How the chalice could be administered in a one-priest parish was obviously not an issue that the framers of the Instruction realised had to be addressed. This is one of several instances in which the Instruction suggests that it was produced by deskbound officials rather than those with current experience in ministry.

## *...the overall tone of the provisions is re- strictive rather than empowering*

Given that the Instruction introduces no changes, why has it received in many quarters such a negative evaluation? For one thing the overall tone of the provisions is restrictive rather than empowering. There is more concern about what the laity may *not* do than about what they could do.

Asserted aberrations on the part of the laity are condemned. But the shortcomings of priests and hierarchy are ignored. No word of condemnation is uttered regarding the conduct of a priest who on being appointed to a parish that has an effectively functioning parish council, promptly disbands the council and exercises his ministry

(continued on page 24)



*Communion under both kinds at Sunday Mass in an Auckland church. The new Instruction appears to take no account of this normal part of Sunday and weekday liturgy in many parishes throughout New Zealand and worldwide*

*( Photo: Paul Freedman)*



# A Cry from the Heart—an Austrian Bishop has his Say

*Bishop Reinhold Stecher, retired Bishop of Innsbruck, Austria, wrote the following letter in November 1997(while still in office) originally with the intention of private distribution only. However, the letter became public just before Christmas. It has received widespread support both inside and outside Austria. It is printed in full.*

Since I have resolved to criticise the Church, where criticism is needed, while still in office, rather than leaving it till I was retired, I feel compelled to express my thoughts about the recent Roman decree on lay ministers before I hand on the pastoral staff to my successor. I am not much concerned about the details in the document. Many are reminders of things that are necessary and important.

In speaking about the difference between priests and laity, however, we should not throw everything into the same pile. Defending the priestly power to celebrate the Eucharist need not mean that only priests may preach. When an elderly priest is brought in

from outside at the last moment to celebrate the Eucharist, it is difficult to see why a theologically educated and dedicated lay minister should be forbidden to preach at such a Mass.

Certainly anyone who preaches at the liturgy must be authorised by the Church to do so. But to omit the homily at Mass because it must be given by an ordained priest is quite another matter. No one in our communities can understand such a ban when the alternative is to go without having a homily at all.

This brings me to my real difficulty with this restrictive decree, which treats extraordinary ministers of communion, and lay ministers generally, as at best

stand-ins for a few functions if there is no other way at all. My real concern is the refusal to recognise the actual pastoral situation in so many countries the world over and the refusal to recognise the theological importance of the Eucharist for the Christian community and for the Church.

A recent local crisis in health care may illuminate the dilemma. There are no longer enough fully trained hospital nurses to give insulin injections to diabetics at home or in nursing homes. Understandably the nurses' professional organisation defended the sole right of their members to give these injections. Confronted, however, with a genuine crisis in public health, the nurses agreed

*(continued from page 22)*

without such collaboration. While there is mention of the need for adequate formation of the laity engaged in a variety of functions, there is no call to re-assess the distribution of diocesan and parochial finances to ensure that this takes place. Still less is there a call to see that the provision of appropriate financial support for the clergy does not take undue priority over the requirement in justice to ensure the adequate support of others who work full-time for the parish.

The Instruction is issued in the name of no less than eight curial congregations and councils. This is a well-nigh

unique procedure. It certainly indicates the importance that these various administrative organs of the Church attach to it. Does it also imply that it is a document that has to be upheld by external authority rather than convincing by its inherent logic and by its overall faithfulness to the Gospel?

Early in his pontificate Pope John XXIII issued a letter *Veterum Sapientiae* requiring that Latin be used as the vehicle of instruction in seminaries. This caused much heartburn in these institutions. Their staffs tried loyally to implement the decree despite their conviction that it was an unwise decision. Within a few

short years the Second Vatican Council was under way, the path was opened for vernacular liturgy, and *Veterum Sapientiae* sank without a trace. Or rather with the sole trace of having been a reminder that not all Roman documents are from the Lord.

Just now no one can see on the horizon any developments that would lead to a new and more nuanced statement on the collaboration of priests and laity. But then in the late 50s no one was foreseeing the Vatican Council. The Holy Spirit could have more surprises in store than anyone anticipates. ■

*Humphrey O'Leary CSSR*





*Parish Pastoral Councils have become commonplace throughout the Catholic Church since Vatican II. They are an essential feature of collaborative ministry at the local level. But where does the Vatican Instruction leave them?*

that nurses' aides could give injections. The children of this world are indeed wiser than the children of light.

The Church too is concerned with health – not just for this life but for eternity. Our fully qualified ministers of health (priests) are getting fewer – and older. Moreover, it is clear that as long as we continue to insist on willingness to live a life of consecrated celibacy the number of priests will continue to decline. Priestly celibacy requires that those who undertake it do so in a positive and healthy manner, not merely doing without sexual and human intimacy but dedicating all their powers – spiritual, pastoral, social, intellectual – to creative ministry. This remains the responsibility of “those who can accept it”. And there is not the slightest suggestion in the words of Jesus himself that the number of those so gifted will be sufficient for the pastoral and theological needs of a vital Church.

**P**roblems inevitably arise when we ignore God's desire for universal salvation, and the most profound theological and sacramental reality, in order to treat human regulations as though they were absolute.

The decree on lay ministers is concerned entirely with defending the rights of the ordained. It shows no concern for the

health of the community. For some time now we have been offering people, tacitly but in reality, a non-sacramental way of salvation. Those familiar with scholastic theology can only shake their heads in disbelief. For that theology strongly emphasises the necessity for salvation of the Eucharist, penance, and anointing of the sick.

*for some time we have  
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sacramental way of  
salvation*

The difficulty arises because instead of making provision for the Eucharist based on the spiritual health of the Christian community we concentrate on purely human laws about who is authorised to do what – laws which ignore God's will that all should be saved as well as the essentially eucharistic structure of the community. Everything is sacrificed to a definition of Church office for which there is no basis in revelation.

Not long ago a bishop renowned for his conservatism said to me with a smile: “In our diocese every priest has three parishes – and things run splendidly.” That most reverend gentleman has

never had responsibility for even one parish – let alone for three. If he had, he could hardly have made such a lighthearted remark. In France I have met wornout, exhausted priests who have to attend to seven or even ten parishes. Even if such priests have the best theological qualifications, their voices will never be heard in the Church's higher councils. Such priests are not made bishops. Few bishops know what these priests face – with the result that their experiences and frustrations are never represented at the Church's highest level. The best we bishops can do is to sigh sympathetically about the difficulties our priests face and utter moving complaints about the shortage of Christian families capable of producing celibate vocations. At a higher level still all energies are devoted to defending the existing rules – as in this latest decree. The Church's real needs are never considered.

I say all this not because I am opposed to celibacy or because I imagine that all our difficulties would be solved if we were to ordain married men as priests. That would inevitably bring fresh difficulties. Nor do I question the value of celibacy for the sake of the kingdom. That is beyond dispute. What distresses me most – painful as this is to confess – are the theological and pastoral

*(continued overleaf)*



deficiencies of the Church's present leadership. In the biblical view Church office-holders are not sacred functionaries existing for themselves. They are ministers of salvation. They cannot be simply indifferent when millions upon millions are unable to receive the sacraments of salvation; and when the Eucharist, which in Scripture and dogma is at the centre of life in the Christian community, can no longer be experienced in a properly human manner. As we say in the creed, "For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven". He did not come down from heaven "for our authority and for the strict preservation of our ecclesiastical structures".

The tendency to place human laws and traditions above our divine commission is the most shocking aspect of many Church decisions at the end of this millennium. It seems, for instance, to disturb no one at the highest level of the Church that literally hundreds of millions of Catholics are unable to come to the sacraments of forgiveness, which are morally necessary for salvation – and because they now cannot come, in a generation they will not want to come.

At a time when health care is directing greater attention to the whole person, there is a wonderful opportunity for the anointing of the sick. Millions are unable to encounter Christ the good physician in this sacrament, however, because we insist that it can be administered only by a celibate priest. The Church's central authority remains completely undisturbed when the widespread amalgamation of parishes makes compassionate sacramental ministry to the sick impossible. And what is at stake is not only people's physical health but their eternal salvation.

**T**he most disturbing example, for me, of neglecting divine commands is our treatment of priests who have married. In my own experience, requests for laicisation forwarded with the bishop's urgent endorsement, for pastoral and human reasons, lie unread for 10 years and even more. The most recent decree brings

only marginal improvement. Consider that what is being requested is simply reconciliation with God and the Church, the possibility of having a Christian marriage and, in some cases, being admitted to non-priestly ministries. Here too all we hear is a merciless "no". What did Jesus say? Did he not make the duty of forgiveness and reconciliation the highest duty in all his words, parables, and deeds right up to his final prayers on the cross? Didn't he impose the strictest sanctions on this duty of forgiveness? Didn't he say "Whoever does not forgive will not be forgiven"? Didn't he tell Peter that he must forgive not seven times a day but

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70 times seven? This text never appears in Roman decrees, however; only "Thou art Peter" of Matthew 16:18.

How many Catholics today emphasise their love of the Pope and want to be praised for their loyalty to him. Should they not tremble before the judge of all the world when a Pope dies with thousands of petitions and requests unanswered? What do we do when someone who is dying refuses reconciliation? Don't we do everything in our power to soften the person's attitude, since a soul's eternal salvation is at stake? What would we say about a priest who told a penitent in the confessional, "With a sin like yours, come back in 10 years – maybe then I'll feel inclined to grant you forgiveness"?

Doesn't our theology tell us clearly that the refusal of forgiveness and reconciliation is a far worse sin than the violation of celibacy? The latter violates a human law and is a sin of weakness; the former violates God's law and is a sin of hard-heartedness. Or do we suppose that the Church's juridical decisions are

exempt from Jesus' commands? Do we suppose that on the day of judgement those with desk jobs will get off more lightly than those who have sinned in various details? Here too we see the oft-repeated tendency to subordinate Jesus' teaching to administrative practices and the exercise of human authority.

This is the real reason for the decline in papal authority. This authority, which is vitally necessary for the Church, derives its force from agreement with Christ – as we see in the case of papal infallibility. History shows, however, that in practice even the Church's highest office-holder can stray from Christ. The current treatment of individual sinners contradicts the spirit of Jesus quite as much as past interdicts and bans imposed on whole cities and nations.

And I know that many priests and lay people who take their faith seriously suffer under these contradictions and long for a Pope for our times who will embody kindness before all else. As things now stand, Rome has lost the image of mercy and assumed the image of harsh authority. Such an image will win the Church no tricks in the third millennium – despite all the pompous celebrations and many beautiful words devoted to the millennium's celebration. We need fundamental changes of emphasis in crucial aspects of our pastoral practice, both with regard to Jesus' command to bring the gospel to all, and our treatment of the individual sinner. We cannot have a Church in which those in the highest positions worry about every speck in the eyes of people in the local communities but not at all about the plank in their own.

I have spoken openly about the defects of those who lead the Church today, comparing them with the Pharisees whom Jesus condemned. I have undiminished hope, however, in the Spirit's power and the future of Jesus' Gospel. But we must become more sensitive to the Gospel's real demands. Their neglect has brought grave consequences in the past. The millennium summons us to ponder these things and achieve fresh insight. ■



## Trenchant comment on our times

*Into the Fire – Writings on women, politics and New Zealand in the era of the New Right*

By Sandra Coney

Tandem Press

Price: \$24.95

Review: Mary Honore Brett

First there was *Out of the Frying Pan*, now *Into the Fire*. Sandra Coney has written a column for the Sunday Star Times for the past 11 years. Some of these commentaries are contained in this book – as they pertain to the subjects – politics and values, gender and health. Reproducing used material in a new format is always somewhat questionable but Ms Coney has introduced each section with a comprehensive essay which examines the topics in the present New Right agenda.

The essays themselves make for impressive reading. Serious, trenchant writing about vital issues. Real head down, feet on the floor stuff. The columns offer a little relief. No levity but sometimes brilliant, often barbed, consistently informed comments. On occasions caustically witty, totally fearless and irreverent. Anna Crichton's cover illustration offers fair warning of the deceptive lightness of Ms Coney's step, the fire in her belly and the might of her pen. There are extensive notes which quote source material and opportunity for particular research.

*Into the Fire* presents an alternative view of the changes that have been made over the past 13 years, the so-called 'restructuring'. Ms Coney "disputes the contention that these were inevitable or necessary, and documents the damage they have caused. While a small group of privileged people have benefited, for most people life has become more insecure and more of a struggle. For all New Zealanders the fallout from growing social distress threatens everything that has made this country unique."

The first section "Politics and Values" looks at our political scene, the move away from state socialism to privatisation. The politics of free markets – and the subsequent social division. The impact of market rentals where previously low cost state housing was available. The creation of a permanent underclass. "Gender Politics" examines the situation in which women find themselves in the free market and the impact this has had on feminism. Once more, the divisions are obvious and varied. Freedom for some has meant virtual slavery for others. Choice for a few has meant dependency for many. The final section on health reform laments the death of a health-care system that was the envy of the world and the messy birth of privatisation and market-driven health services. Doctors, nurses and patients, whose concern is with health and health care, are being fobbed off by management consultants, economists and administrators whose concern is with financial success.

The juxtaposition of the essay with the columns makes possible the benefit of hindsight, a sort of 20/20 vision. Be that as it may, as I write this review, the Christchurch Press sits on my desk. It provides immediacy to so many of the issues touched upon by Ms Coney – though with none of her acerbic wisdom. We learn:

- that in the year ending June, 1997, 6128 children or young people were assessed as having been abused;
- that the Methodist Mission is about to launch an appeal striving to help more people as poverty impacts on working people as well as unemployed, some low-income families paying up to 75% of their incomes in rent.
- that a group of Christchurch medical specialists are opening a private clinic for gynaecology and obstetrics, bowel and digestive disorders – based on the Mayo clinic in the United States.

Compare these news items from naturally rich, under-populated New Zealand with the New Zealand of 25 years ago. In areas of health and education, New Zealand once led the world. We all drew family benefit, we were all eligible to receive free medical and education services. For the poor the government was central to their well-being. We believed in the concept of a "shared fate against common troubles...an idea that people share a common experience, a common fate and common values."

Now, "as the gap between the well-to-do and poor has widened, there has also been less contact between the two groups. People on low incomes are forced to migrate to urban ghettos and squalid rural communities in an attempt to make ends meet. Geographically the two groups inhabit different territory. There is little intermingling across the line. Many middle-class people are deeply shocked when they stray into areas such as Otara and see the crisis of poverty etched on the streets. This is so different from the ordered, prosperous communities they come from."

What gives validity to Ms Coney's analysis of all that has happened under the auspices of the New Right – free market theories and private enterprise – is her over-riding concern for people. She maintains that such policies are grossly inadequate when applied to human behaviour, human relationships and social institutions. They deny social interdependence, which is the great and ennobling feature of human societies". Thankfully, she still believes "there are many signs that a strong sense of community and egalitarianism has survived".

No one is going to agree with Ms Coney in every stand she makes. Many will be offended. Readers of this journal will take exception to her strong views on abortion. Men, young men in particular, will cringe when they learn how much they cost the country in courts, prisons, borstals, police and hospital services, road accidents, violence on the rugby

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field, in pub car parks and in the home. Pity the yachties! Professional, successful women might not relish seeing themselves as oppressors. Maoris might consider Pakehas have been let off too lightly and Pakehas that they have been maligned. Politicians, ministers of the Crown, community leaders must wonder about their dented credibility, but nobody could question Ms Coney's integrity, her ability to research, dig, sift, shake, elucidate, challenge, even inspire.

I should mention Ms Coney's view of the Church: "Christianity has always seemed to me to be so fundamentally patriarchal, so irredeemably constructed on the power and authority of men". We can't argue with that though we are working on it. But, "Mary, Christianity's number one woman, didn't even have a choice about getting pregnant", we won't buy. We have the 'fiat' and the glorious Magnificat to disprove that assertion. Further, "Religions of any kind have always struck me as a prop, adherents displaying a neurotic reluctance to grapple with the real world", is hardly fair. Most churches are committed to social justice and peace issues. When government policies fail people it is very often church-based agencies that pick up the pieces. I could agree we have not thus far exerted the political clout of a Nelson Mandela – though many of us suffered on his account long before it was fashionable. She is harsh, I think, in her condemnation of the "Healthy Homes" scheme. Seeking to monitor babies at risk seems a positive step in child welfare – irrespective of the colour of the parties concerned. Ms Coney confirms what we all know. No one has a monopoly on truth or goodness – or service of others. Still, I should like to arrange a meeting for her with Ruth Smithies or maybe Pauline O'Regan.

A "rebellious, dangerous" woman might well be the way in which some perceive Ms Coney. Nevertheless, hers is a prophetic voice used on behalf of the poor and the marginalised. We should do well to listen. ■

## A splendid and useful resource

*Church in the World: Statements on social issues 1979-1997 by New Zealand's Catholic bishops*

Compiled by Chris Orsman & Peter Zwart

Published by the Catholic Office for Social Justice 1997

Price: \$29.95

Review: Tom Cloher

These pages contain 58 statements on social issues made by 17 bishops over an 18 year period. The sweep and pertinence of the issues dealt with is impressive. So is their style: clear and courteous. The reader will at all times feel respected, whether committed to the views expressed or not. For this reason the publication should hopefully become a reference for people and organisations other than Catholic.

The art piece on the cover (Gregory O'Brien's "Flight into Egypt") captures the focus and spirit of the statements: concern for any threat to life from birth to death: concern for the individual, the family, communities, nations, but especially concern for those most vulnerable – refugees, immigrants, indigenous peoples, the homeless, the unemployed, prisoners, drug habitues, or a world community threatened by nuclear weaponry or land mines. The precious thread of life linking people to the Creator informs the entire publication.

Lack of an index is largely compensated for by the way the contents are structured. Particular topics are clearly identified under principal section headings i.e. social structure, the ethic of life, the rights of peoples, and militarisation and peace. It is an accessible book well organised and presented, a credit to its compilers.

Why do we need such uni-

versal themes expressed in a New Zealand context? At least two reasons come to mind. The first is the virtue of having them confirmed and applied by fellow citizens; bishops are made not born, so most readers will know at least one or more not as bishops but as neighbours, schoolmates or working colleagues; they are authentic people and well able to join in the conversations of their fellow citizens.

The second reason is derived from this: as fellow citizens they know that there are some issues that we simply must face if we are to maintain our integrity as a nation, the most obvious being Te Tiriti O Waitangi. As much as any this thoroughly honest, clear and challenging three pages underscores how topical and relevant this publication is.

Most contemporary issues are thoroughly faced but a statement on the morality of driving would be welcome as would perhaps one upon environmental responsibilities. Both carry very contemporary messages for Christians.

One can only hope that this volume becomes what it is probably intended to be: a resource to be used by those who do not mind their principles being continuously tested and challenged by a society that frequently thinks otherwise but is not sure. ■

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# Faith and practice in the Australian Church

*Redefining the Church – Vision & Practice*

Edited by Richard Lennan

Published by E J Dwyer

Price \$29

Review: Anna Holmes

This book is the twenty-fifth book in the Faith and Culture series from the Catholic Institute of Sydney. It "seeks to identify the contribution which all members can make to the well-being of the Church: in its liturgical life; in its lived faith, particularly in the context of Christian morality; and most particularly in building a supportive and nurturing community of faith which empowers all its members to live their vocation of revealing Christ to the world." (page 12) It does this in the light of the teachings of the second Vatican Council. It recognises the 'three churches' of traditional, unquestioning Catholics, grown to adulthood before the Council; those who have taken seriously the Council teachings and long for a Church of involved equals; and the baptised young who are committed to prayer, moral values and social justice, but do not attach themselves to the institutional Church.

Each chapter is written by a different author and the styles and language vary from densely theological to the almost chatty. The central theme of the first chapters is that all are called by baptism to evangelisation and that a Church without this involvement is deprived of a richness and breadth of

vision. This runs counter to the traditional practice of the Church of hierarchical clerical control and a lack of consultation, let alone dialogue. "The pastor must be and be seen to be, not the sole minister in the parish, but the leader of the community drawing out, drawing upon and drawing together the gifts, talents and leadership qualities of others in the service of God's reign." (page 62)

There is reflection on the seductiveness of power in the Church and the rise of a 'professional laity' who are in some way distanced from the grass roots. Two chapters examine the use of the word *ministry* and reflect that it can be enabling or restricting. There is a plea for diocesan pastoral workers to be prophetic rather than academic and an interesting reflection that they of all Church workers share the charism of the bishop. The last two chapters look at conscience and Christian morality – firstly from a traditional natural law view and then from the idea that morality is a developing communal responsibility so that the Church is more than the Magisterium.

I think this book has some solid theological reflection on the teachings of the second Vatican Council. It seems to tiptoe round more contentious issues like the position of women in the Church, or the question of divorced and remarried people. The variation in styles gives it an unevenness – but this probably reflects the reality of the Church today. ■

## *Whatever happened to the vision of Vatican II?*



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# Gospel through lateral thinking

*The Insatiable Moon*

by Mike Riddell

Flamingo paperback, 1997

Price: \$24.95

Review: Mike Crowl

A few years back, Mike Riddell produced a book called *Godzone*, a seemingly-freewheeling piece about the reality of God in the midst of the everyday. It was out of print before it really took off, but fortunately Lion Publishers in the UK have now reprinted it. It reads better than ever. Some Christians struggled with it, however, because even though it was about the Christian life, they missed the point that it was aimed towards people who hadn't yet found Christ.

Mr Riddell's novel, *The Insatiable Moon*, has a similar aim. It makes no pretence to be a 'Christian' novel in the usual sense of showing optimistic Christian characters struggling against themselves or the evils of this world. It is directed towards people who only dimly understand that life is something more than materialism, sexual matters, careers, and living in the right sort of house. Christians who read this book may well be offended by the obscene language, the crude behaviour of some of the characters and, perhaps most of all, by a 17-page sex scene at the centre. (Riddell is a much more stylish and witty writer than many top-selling novelists, and his skill in moving in and out of the minds of the characters is topnotch.) Some non-believing readers may miss the point entirely, just as they miss the point of why they exist. But anyone with a degree of perception will see that he has written a novel that is more than the sum of its parts.

The book is about Arthur, a large Maori psych patient who claims he's the Second Son of God (that is, he knows he isn't Jesus). Is Arthur mad, or does he really hear God's voice and have a much

greater insight into his part in God's plan than most of the people around him realise? Wherever Arthur goes strange things happen, and people's lives change, more often for the better than the worse.

Mr Riddell himself says that the sex scene in chapter six is the fulcrum of the novel. In it the clash of cultures between Arthur and the woman he claims is to be his 'Queen of Heaven' comes to a head in a most intimate way. This chapter is the high incarnational point of a book that is about Incarnation.

Mr Riddell uses sexuality as the closest analogy we have for incarnation, and the aim of the detail in this chapter is

to allow the majesty and significance of the event to emerge for the reader. This climax is a creational explosion drawing on elements of the Maori creation myth (and perhaps a little Walt Whitman?)

It would be a pity, however, if these factors sidetracked the reader from appreciating what Mr Riddell has done very well: written a book that pre-evangelises. *Insatiable Moon* aims to open non-spiritual minds up to the supernatural in the hope that they will be led to Christ. It may seem an unconventional kind of evangelism, but in a country where more people profess a lack of faith than ever before, lateral-thinking approaches to evangelism are essential. ■

## Skeletons and accolades

*Saints & Sinners – A History of the Popes*

By Eamon Duffy

Yale University Press

Price: \$70 approx hardback

Review: John Buckner, IC

This very handsomely produced book has been published in conjunction with a six-part television programme due to appear soon in Britain.

Would that all history books were such a fascinating read. Eamon Duffy, who is Reader in Church History and a Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, writes well and kept my interest to the end. The author stays with his brief and avoids chasing after what could be some interesting red herrings, theological or historical. It is a history of the popes and not a history of the Church as such, so some matters are mentioned but not explored. An example is the question of Chinese rites. It is referred to as a problem but left at that; there is no reference to Matteo Ricci or the devastating effects of the condemnation of his work.

The title is well chosen. There were some saints among the popes but certainly some scoundrels as well. It is amazing that the Church survived some of them. The reason for some of the sinfulness becomes evident as the story of the papacy evolved. But despite the explanations, I think it is difficult for us living at a very different point in history to understand how the question of temporal sovereignty could have loomed so large in the policies of so many even good popes. It seems so obvious now that it is of little import, but for all too many centuries, right up in fact to the beginning of this century, it almost dominated papal politics.

The popes from Pius IX in the middle of the last century to the present day – and this book finishes in 1997 – provide a lot of food for thought and wondering, 'what if...?'

Read it, I do not think you will be disappointed. It is beautifully illustrated and there is an ample bibliography. For those of you on the web, I notice *Amazon* is giving a good discount. ■



## Overseas news

### Climate change conference

How successful was the international conference in Kyoto held last December? It depends who you ask. Delegates from the rich industrial countries and from multi-national companies are saying that great progress was made. Little echo of that, however, from those facing the devastating effects of global warming: drought, flood, cyclone and rising sea levels which threaten to swamp so many atolls in the South Pacific.

The United States, the world's leading polluter, came to the Conference with fine words but little substantial action to reduce their own pollution levels. When the EU criticised the US, Vice President Al Gore softened the US approach and agreed to a seven percent reduction in greenhouse emissions over 15 years.

European analysts point out, however, that America will be able to avoid even that minimal cut by "trading off" pollution rights with poorer countries. For example, pollution in Russia and the Ukraine has dropped since the fall of communism because of the collapse of their heavy industries. Therefore their pollution levels appear better than that required by the Conference. The rich nations can buy these "credit points" so to lower their own percentage reductions.

In one sense Kyoto can be seen as a step forward. For the first time the industrialised nations have promised *in principle* to reduce their greenhouse emissions.

### Archbishop Haas

In 1988 the Vatican appointed Wolfgang Haas to the diocese of Chur in Switzerland. Haas' period as bishop has been a time of continuing discontent. He sacked professors from the local seminary; his auxiliary bishops sometimes learned of his decisions through the press; his Diocesan Pastoral Council resigned when they were forbidden to discuss pastoral matters. The Council of Priests repeatedly pressed for the bishop

to resign, and they were supported by the Swiss Bishops' Conference.

Rome found a solution to the problem by creating a new archdiocese of Vaduz, in the tiny principality of Liechtenstein, formerly part of the diocese of Chur. Haas was installed as its first Archbishop on 21 December 1997.

There was consternation in Liechtenstein. The Parliament voted 24 votes to one, complaining that the appointment had been made without the consent of local authorities, and saying a new Archdiocese was "not wanted". At a news conference the head of the government stated that repeated attempts to contact the Vatican through normal diplomatic channels had failed.

### Beatification of Frank Duff

The petition to introduce the cause for beatification of Frank Duff, founder of the Legion of Mary, has been accepted by the Archbishop of Dublin. The next step in a usually lengthy process will be to set up a tribunal to assemble evidence from witnesses about his life and work. The Legion of Mary was founded by Duff in Dublin in 1921 and now has two and a quarter million members in 163 countries.

### Excommunication lifted

Word has come through that the excommunication ban imposed on Fr Tisa Balasuriya in January 1997 has been lifted. The Sri Lankan priest is the only theologian since 1953 to have been excommunicated for alleged heresy. Balasuriya refused to sign a special profession of faith containing a phrase specifically added by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: "I firmly accept and hold that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women." The Sri Lankan priest stated that he was perfectly willing to subscribe to Pope Paul VI *Credo*. The condemnation process was criticised because sentence had been passed without the defendant having a reasonable chance of defending himself.

He learned of his excommunication through a BBC news report. For over a year Fr Balasuriya has been excluded from participation in the Eucharist, even as a layman. ■

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# Religion on the Box: adult fare needed

Keith Harrison

Television programmes are so arranged and presented that New Zealanders may be forgiven for thinking that religion is of no importance, that it has ceased to matter. This is of course a superficial view of a medium in which the deeper values of life are rarely explored or admitted. Scratch the surface of new Zealand society and one becomes aware of an astonishing network of people who are dedicated to the service of others, many of whom are allied to a church or to a particular faith.

It has been pleasing to see Rob Harley, a well known investigative journalist and dedicated Christian, fronting a second series of *Extreme Close Up*. The aim of the series is to present a picture of faith in action, of Christianity at work in unexpected places and to look at the role such a faith plays in the lives of our fellow New Zealanders.

The first and second of the series could not have been more different. In "A House Called Balgownie", viewers were shown the work being done by a Lower Hutt couple to care for some of the area's homeless and alienated youth. Nel and Linnie Guild are obviously succeeding in the task of helping to re-build people's lives and of rescuing youngsters from the streets. Their unconventional methods and their simplistic fundamentalism I could accept on the understanding that it worked for them. But I found it to be of some concern that no explanation of their funding systems was attempted nor was there any analysis of the long-term success rate of the project offered to viewers. This programme needed more than pious platitudes and god-bothering sentimentality.

The second and different item was a moving and powerful account of the work of a New Zealand *World Vision* crisis team organiser. "Leaving Rwanda" brought us film of Heather McLeod's last three days in her job after a three-year posting to Rwanda in which she

has co-ordinated programmes to help children orphaned or separated from their families in the genocidal war that left an estimated million people dead. Heather McLeod did not say much about her faith – she didn't have to. She radiated faith as she dealt with the sickness, death and aftermath of the depravity which surrounded her. Back home, speaking among the trappings of Western society, she selected a doll in a toy shop, noting that the \$50 price tag would have paid for a term of secondary education for a Rwandan child. This was an inspiring programme about a woman whose religion gave her a serenity which shone from her in a strength and power enabling her to deal with the effects of genocide. As she dealt with these young people, she admitted that her hope for Rwanda was that one of them might be another Nelson Mandela capable of leading their country to peace and prosperity.

A regular religious programme is "Praise Be" each Sunday morning at 9.00am from TV1. Travelling around New Zealand the production team has brought us film of Christian congregations, often coming together in inter-denominational groups, singing their favourite hymns. While it is obviously on a tight budget and restricted in the range of work it can offer, it has at least succeeded in staying in there and avoiding the TVNZ pruning knife. Graham Thomson has done an excellent job of presenting and deserves greater resources than are presently available to him. It would be a real advantage to have the flexibility of going into a community, filming some of its singing and interviewing Church people at their work and in their homes – perhaps something along the lines of *Country Calendar*.

Television is still adolescent enough to present religion as a meaningless ritual indulged in by the whacky and the uncool. *The Vicar of Dibley* is a particularly

silly attempt at extracting humour from the plight of a congregation having a female vicar foisted on them while the TV programmers appear to assume viewer prurience in running a repeat of *Convent Girls*.

One cannot help wondering why there is no public forum on our screens where invited citizens discuss the issues of the day. *BBC World*, for example, offers viewers a chance to hear questions of morality, politics and religion openly debated, challenging viewers to think beyond themselves and to explore issues which nurture their humanity. This question of humanity, of respect for one another, underpins all our actions. I am reminded of a visit to Boston schools some years ago and being given a copy of a letter which a Headmistress sent to new staff at the beginning of each school year. As a child she had been interred in a concentration camp and wanted new teachers to understand her philosophy for her school.

"Dear Teacher," she wrote, "I am the victim of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no one should witness: gas chambers built by learned engineers; children poisoned by learned physicians; infants killed by trained nurses; women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates. So I am suspicious of education. My request is: help our students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing and mathematics are important only if they serve to make our children more human."

It is my hope that the secular brutality of market-driven television in this country may occasionally be tempered by programmes which are tender, thoughtful and morally challenging, reminding us of our humanity. ■