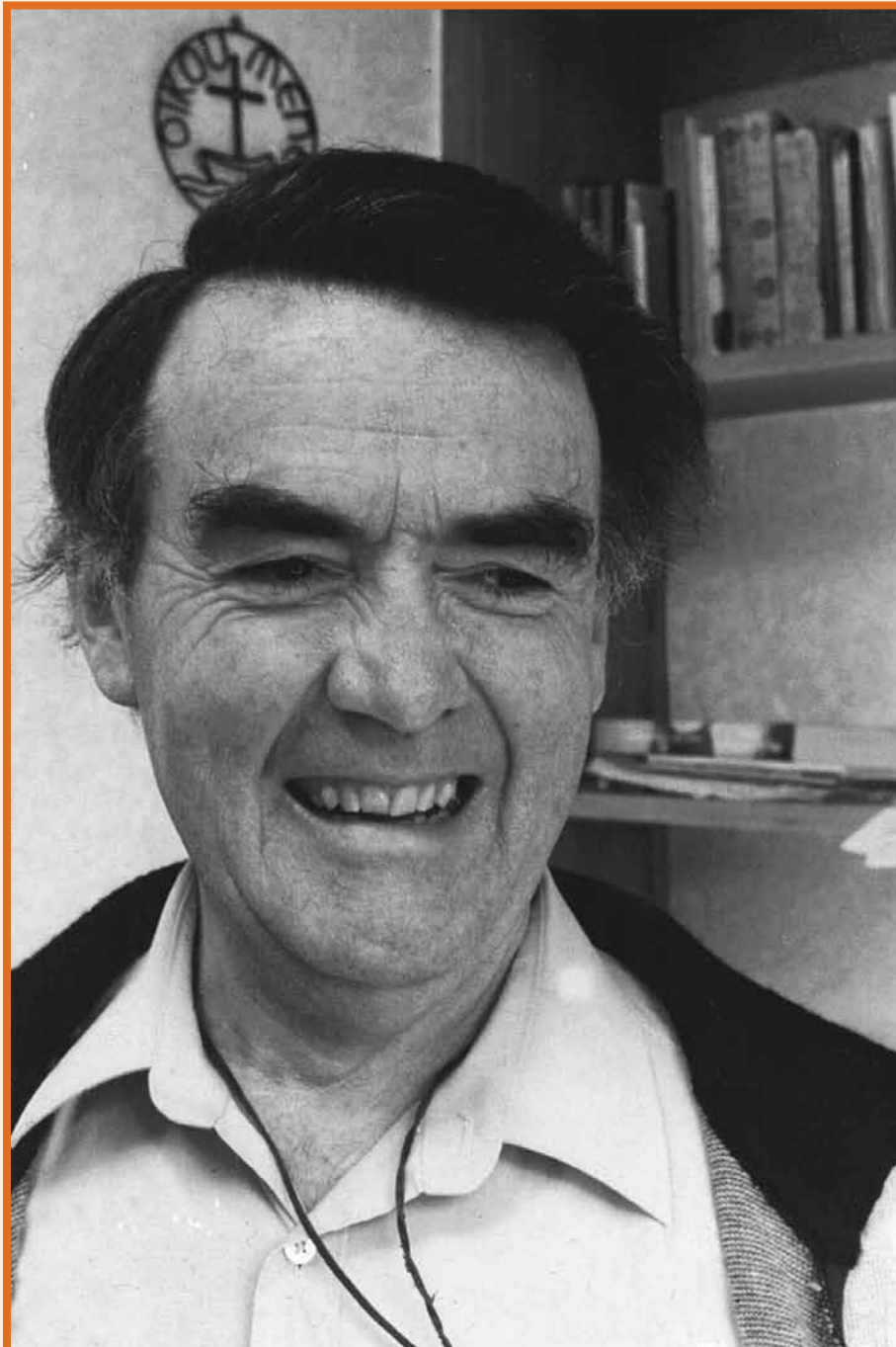


# Tui Motu

InterIslands  
*Independent Catholic Magazine*

July 2008 \$5



*In memory of Eugene*

# A blessed memory

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**Cover:** The late Eugene O'Sullivan OP

From July 1, New Zealand Post require us to put the correct suburb and postal code in your address.

Please check your envelope and tell us if you think we have it wrong.

Vatican II is the most significant event in the history of the Catholic Church over the last century. For bishops who attended and their advisers, the impact was revolutionary. What effect Vatican II had on the laity largely depended on what the bishops did when they returned from Rome and on spokespeople who set about interpreting Council teachings for the people.

At the forefront of this process in New Zealand was the Irish Dominican Eugene O'Sullivan. He is remembered and honoured by his former students, by fellow religious, his friends and all who 'sat at his feet' – especially for his guidance in implementing the

reformed liturgy. Who would forget the final course he ran in Auckland on ministry to the dying when he himself was so frail you felt he was almost sharing firsthand experience?

Eugene is one of the great figures in our recent church history. We have chosen to commemorate the 20th anniversary of his death with special tributes by Dennis Horton and Pauline O'Regan (pp 5-7). Accompanying these (pp 12-15) is an article by Ted Schmidt describing the polarisation of the post-Vatican II church between so-called Kingdom Catholics and Communion Catholics. There can be no doubt in which camp Eugene would have fallen.

## Affluenza

Pre-election fever is beginning to hot up. Elections are always an opportunity to seek out and debate the important political issues. Last month we tabled *Global Warming* as a paramount issue that no responsible leader can afford to ignore. This month we focus on *Poverty*, with a guest editorial (opposite) and a thoughtful piece from the Salvation Army (p8), accompanied on p9 by Glynn Cardy's letter to the rich. Lest you might think that letter doesn't apply to you, in fact it touches everyone caught up on the treadmill of work in today's world.

Recently I read the Australian book *Affluenza* by Clive Hamilton (*Allen & Unwin*). Although we may not be as wealthy or as obese as our transTasman cousins, much in the book applies equally to New Zealand. The mindless pursuit of wealth, status, comfort and 'lifestyle' is a modern contagion: none of us is untouched by it, however detached we like to think we are.

We tend to view the economic downturn with the horror of an

approaching doomsday, when a bit of enforced self-denial is precisely what most of us need! The true tragedy is we have become so selfish that the slightest hiccup to our well-being blinds us to the plight of millions who are infinitely worse off.

And some of these live in our own country. A recent report on *Child Poverty* notes that up to 150,000 New Zealand children are now living in conditions approaching real hardship. A shaming statistic which should rank at the top of every party's agenda!

A final word. David Tutty from the Catholic *Justice and Peace Office* in Auckland comments on Jesus's action expelling the moneychangers in the Temple. He notes: "Like the capitalist free trade agenda today, Israel's (economic) system was about siphoning up, into the hands of only a few, as much wealth as possible". *Siphoning up*. The chief cause of poverty in our world is the greed of the rich. Are we a part of that 'siphoning up'?

M.H.

# Fullness of life

Easter and elections have a great deal in common. They are both 'high days' of respective traditions – the church and the state, and full of similar theatrics. Both occasions are political, because they wield power to affect the way society is ordered. In theory they are both occasions in which power is exercised to give life 'to the full'. Much like the Christian life, experientially elections often fall short of such ideals. Yet Easter, as Catholic theologian Nicholas Lash reminds us, is lived in ordinary, regular, day-to-day life. The significance of both Easter and elections is not in the event itself but in the life to which they give rise.

The spectre of poverty, and the increasing disparity between this country's richest and poorest citizens, is a blight on our nation and its ability to foster 'fullness of life'. We can learn a lot about a society by the way it cares for its last, least and lost. Right now, I think we learn that our political systems have largely run out of steam. They continue to provide old answers to new questions, not because there aren't politicians with the vision for seeing what is needed, but because they suffer the evil glare of myopic conservatism built into institutions.

Things aren't going to return to the way they were. And the 'way they were' is effectively a post-war blip on our social history, the foundations of which are found in the industrial revolution. Ultimately, change has to be led from the grassroots – from the ordinary lives of ordinary people who choose to live differently. Isn't that what churches are supposed to be about?

Many of us delegate responsibility to political parties and then go back to our daily lives. But that's not representation. It's only representation if they reflect or represent something of what you are about. I don't believe we can afford to give our power away so easily. Apart from anything else, it ridicules Easter and turns our life into little more than a parody of the faith we profess. The fact is, politicians need us, even though most of the senior civil servants who surround them at work in Wellington would gag on their latte at the very thought.

Poverty suggests scarcity. But the issue isn't so much scarcity as distribution. Poverty prevails because we continue to buy into economic and political systems which are stuck, which perpetuate it. There seems a real resistance by both main parties to acknowledging the real economic and political transfiguration taking place in our very midst. We seem to be operating out of an old economic rule book which is mistakenly reliant on an economy based on cheap oil. Our economic and environmental conditions have shifted radically.

This budget seems out of step with that reality. Its economic distribution looks forward, but the political vision doesn't.

The age of cheap oil is over. Climate change is a harsh reality. Change is inevitable. Price rises are guaranteed. Our survival requires us to get ahead of the game on this. It also requires us to ensure the poorest in our society are not forgotten about, but are part of this new economy. That kind of politics not only requires vision for radical change but also freedom to carry it out. It's time for us to live more like Easter people, and get real about the 'ordinary'.

Certainly, we need policies bold enough to help us move into a new economic reality, and eradicate the poverty that undermines our nation with despair instead of hope. But the vision for those policies starts with us, and our involvement and participation in an ordinary life transfigured by Easter, just where we are – a reality in which poverty and the things which sustain it are transfigured.

Accountability to God requires us to live as God's faithful representatives; accountability of politicians to electorates works in a similar way. If we let go of our own power for change where we are, we let go of that which makes for the fullness of life, and our Easter vision is lost.

## *A cast-iron programme for communal activity, at Jerusalem, in crash pads, or in people's homes*

Feed the hungry;  
Give drink to the thirsty;  
Give clothes to those who lack them;  
Give hospitality to strangers;  
Look after the sick;  
Bail people out of jail, visit them in jail,  
and look after them when they come out of jail;  
Go to neighbours' funerals;  
Tell other ignorant people what you in your ignorance  
think you know;  
Help the doubtful to clarify their minds  
and make their own decisions;  
Console the sad;  
Reprove sinners, but gently, brother, gently;  
Forgive what seems to be harm done to yourself;  
Put up with difficult people;  
Pray for whatever has life, including the spirits of the dead.  
Where these things are done, *Te Wairua Tapu* comes to  
live in our hearts, and doctrinal differences and difficulties  
begin to vanish like the summer snow.

*James K. Baxter (Jerusalem Daybook)*

*Anthony Dancer*

Anthony Dancer is Social Justice Commissioner of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia: [www.justice.net.nz](http://www.justice.net.nz)



ISSN 1174-8931

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

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd, P O Box 6404, Dunedin North, Dunedin 9059  
Phone: 03 477 1449; Fax: 03 477 8149; email: [tui motu@earthlight.co.nz](mailto:tui motu@earthlight.co.nz); website: [www.tuimotu.org](http://www.tuimotu.org)  
Editor: Michael Hill IC; Assistant Editor: Frances Skelton; Illustrator: Don Moorhead  
Directors: Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey, Tom Cloher, Robin Kearns, Chris Loughnan OP,  
Elizabeth Mackie OP, Katie O'Connor (Chair), Kathleen Rushton RSM

### Priestly vocations

Forget spending thousands of dollars on unproductive campaigns for vocations each year. Simply circulate copies of Fr Paul Andrews' article from your *June* issue to every bishop and parish in the country (and every Vatican congregation in Rome).

It would not have been easy for the Sister and the two priests in Gore to read about themselves, warts and all, but they know Jesus warned there is a price to be paid for being a true disciple. As Fr Paul says, if the church was in hands such as these, the outlook would indeed be bright.

*S McFarlane*

### Mysticism and eucharist

Fr Alan Roberts (*TM June*) quotes a priest as saying: "I'm not so much worried about the shortage of priests, but I am about the shortage of people." He quotes Karl Rahner: "the Christian of the future will be a mystic or not at all." Fr Alan shows that a lot of our religion today is simply ritualism. He says: "when we look for Jesus in the Gospels we find the true mystic." I totally agree. He calls us to "concentrate on developing such devotions instead of Sunday Mass," and "the importance of discovering the Blessed Sacrament within."

That is where I part company with him. There is no Blessed Sacrament within us and we do not "encounter Christ through breaking open the Word... and deeper prayer" in the unique way he is present in the Eucharist.

The words of Jesus: "Do this in

### letters to the editor

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

remembrance of me," in the original Greek means "to bring to life again." Only through the priest can we bring to life again Jesus completely present, "the source and summit of the Christian life." We desperately need priests.

Have another go, Fr Alan, about how to make priests and people all mystics.

*Tom Keyes, Gore*

### Sacrament of reconciliation

In the midst of a compelling article (*TM June*) Alan Roberts declares that a "lack of consciousness... has ruined the Sacrament of Penance". Perhaps he could indicate why this is so. Some believe that the Roman liturgists should take some responsibility for this. Having offered three penitential rites, these were virtually reduced to one when it became apparent that the communal rite was clearly preferred.

There is the added paradox that the kind of mature advancement of the laity that Fr Roberts advocates is demonstrably frustrated by this lack of pastoral generosity.

*Jimmy Franks, Wairarapa*

### Global warming & peak oil

Professor Jonathan Boston's lecture on global warming (*June TM*) is inadequate since it tells only half the

story and its suggestions for Christians are too vague.

The fact of global warming must be seen in conjunction with another, related issue, peak oil. Since the discovery of oil in large quantities in the late 19th century we have become more and more dependent on oil to fuel our industries, our transport – but also our agriculture, our daily living. Most plastics, much of our clothing, aspirins, paints, computers are derived from oil. In recent years there has been a steady decrease in the discovery of new sources of oil. Yet the world's dependence on oil is increasing at a most dramatic rate. The future is bleak.

All the proposed solutions (growing biofuels, wind farms, solar energy, tidal energy, nuclear reactors) have serious drawbacks. One practical answer may well lie in a fairly new initiative called Transition Towns. A community decides to seek some ways of finding local answers to the twin challenges of global warming and peak oil. A group begins to co-ordinate projects designed to transition from high energy to low energy lifestyles. The aim is always to rebuild the local community, making it vibrant, resilient and truly sustainable.

Already in New Zealand some 40 communities are planning ways of helping their communities prepare for the worst effects. This is a practical, life-giving response to the problem raised by Professor Boston.

Readers can find out more at [www.transitiontowns.org.nz](http://www.transitiontowns.org.nz)

*Mike Kelly, Masterton (abridged)*

### Hello Tui Motu Readers

When there's an economic downturn and people start counting their pennies, one thing to go first may be a regular magazine sub. But if your reading provides you with invaluable nourishment of mind and spirit, then surely this is a false economy and not good for your spiritual well-being.

Subscribers to *Tui Motu* constantly testify to the quality of fare they have received – and continue to get.

There are ways you can help us spread the word:

- Take out a subscription for someone who enjoys reading *Tui Motu* but can no longer afford to do so.

- Buy a gift subscription for someone you think might enjoy it.

- Encourage others you pass your copy on to to take out their own subscription.

Or you could promote or sell *Tui Motu* in your parish. If *Tui Motu* isn't sold in your parish, talk to your PP or Parish Council and fix it up with us.

Any help or support you can give *Tui Motu* is greatly appreciated and will bring you rich blessings.

*Katie O'Connor*  
Tui Motu Board Chair



*Dominican Eugene O'Sullivan,  
who died 20 years ago  
this month was a scholar  
who "delighted in the fullness of  
truth", says **Dennis Horton**.*

*And there were many other  
facets to this remarkable man,  
as both he – and Pauline O'Regan  
who follows on – attest*

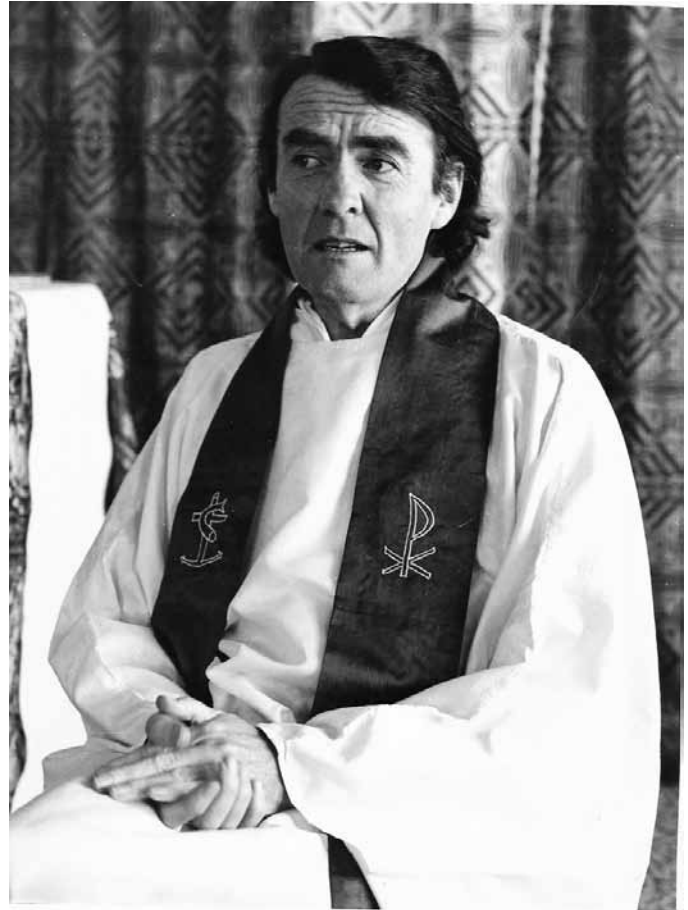


Photo: Mick Smith

# The wounded healer

Eugene O'Sullivan OP

**I**t's fitting that, as friends gather in Auckland next month to mark 20 years since the death of Dominican Fr Eugene O'Sullivan, they will meet at Newman Hall where he served as university chaplain and whose library now bears his name. Books were one of the loves of his life. I recall him once boasting that St Dominic explicitly excluded books from the things his friars were expected to renounce, in order to be poor.

Poverty of ideas was not meant to be one of the charisms of the Order of Preachers; and Eugene was always ready to admit the delight he found in beautiful books, even expensive ones. His lovely edition of the illuminated Book of Kells, for instance; and an equally exquisite volume of Greek and Russian icons.

But mostly, books were for Eugene simply a tool of trade. Solomon's great prayer for wisdom had always shaped his own sense of vocation as a Dominican priest, and books were an essential part of that search for truth.

No one who attended one of Eugene's talks could doubt this. He would come to speak on Scripture or liturgy, moral theology or one of the lively issues of the day, his arms laden with books. They would all be marked and opened, one on top of the other, hopefully in order. More often than not, his lecture would be a synthesis of everything Eugene had been able to uncover on the topic.

Occasionally, the pile of books would topple or someone might accidentally knock the table. And we would catch that look of consternation – half pain and half humour – as he saw his well-ordered world reduced to chaos and waited helplessly for some good friend to come to his rescue again.

Magazines and periodicals were another essential tool, along with a photocopier to extract the latest find. Stored first in manila folders, they would be transferred, when the file got too big, into cardboard boxes stacked under his bookcase or stashed away in wardrobes.

### The wise teacher

These simple recollections point to the way in which Eugene saw wisdom as a tapestry of multiple threads, and truth as a many-sided jewel. One of his great concerns was that one narrow side of a complex theological issue should not be taken for the whole Catholic truth. *Veritas*, the Dominican motto, was for Eugene multifaceted; and he was always provoked to react when truth was oversimplified, to the point of being distorted or caricatured.

He was often irritated by Marist Fr G H Duggan's claim to be the authentic interpreter of St Thomas. He could allow that 'Chalkie' might have the letter, perhaps, but often not the spirit of Aquinas. And he would love to find a quote in the *Summa Theologiae* that gave a fuller, more nuanced perception than the one Fr Duggan was propounding. One of his favourite quotes from Thomas was the saint's insistence that "no one can live without delight."

There was, too, the wonderful occasion when Eugene felt impelled to write to *Craccum*, the student newspaper at Auckland University – at the same time dissociating himself from the Catholic weekly of the day, and suggesting that *Zealandia*'s lay editor was well out of his depth when it came to contemporary moral theology.

They were heady days. Tim Shadbolt was editing *Craccum* and loving every minute of it, calling for condom dispensers in student toilets and publicising a DIY form of abortion that was at once slated as dangerous by the university's Director of Student Health. *Zealandia* meanwhile was tilting swords at *The Little Red Schoolbook*, and taking the city council to task for allowing the stage-show *Hair* to open before Auckland audiences.

It pained Eugene to have to say so publicly, but he wanted students to know that *Zealandia* did not represent on every issue what he would regard as an informed Catholic view. But he faulted both papers, for reducing moral questions to a false dilemma of condoms or chastity-belts, equally indefensible extremes.

One of the most fascinating literary and spiritual friendships of 30 years ago was that between Eugene O'Sullivan and James K Baxter.

One day Eugene heard that the poet was arriving by train, so he set out for Auckland station accompanied by a couple of his students. When the train arrived, Baxter emerged looking even more cadaverous than usual. Eugene asked him if he had eaten. Not since breakfast, Baxter replied.

Eugene hunted in his pockets for money, but his pockets were empty. So he turned to the students. One of them had a ten dollar note. Eugene took it and gave it to Baxter, who accepted it gratefully.

But as they walked along the platform they passed an old drunk squatting on the ground. Baxter paused and then gave the man the ten dollar note. "Your need is greater than mine," he said. The thoughts of the student, for whom \$10 represented a small fortune, are not recorded.

Like the Dominican Lacordaire who had fought strenuously for intellectual freedom in post-Revolution France, Eugene upheld the broadest interpretation of church law, whether it concerned liturgy, pastoral practice or religious life. In liturgy especially, he believed that renewal lay in a careful study of the rites and the fullest use of the options which the reforms of Vatican II allowed.

Eugene will be specially remembered as a homilist. Proclaiming the word, the special charism of his Order, was at the heart of his ministry. Whether for the baptism of a friend's child or the funeral Mass of an archbishop, there was always the same careful preparation: hours spent pondering the Scriptures, long walks while the seed of the Word took root, and then the slow writing, line by line, most often on the back of recycled paper attached to a battered clip-board.

### The wounded healer

Yet 20 years on, it is the image of the wounded healer that remains the strongest. During his time in Auckland, Eugene faced three major illnesses that involved time in hospital and long periods of convalescence, including one when he had to learn to walk again. He came to regard himself as a chronic invalid, depending heavily on others in order to continue his ministry.

It was perhaps in his vulnerability that God's presence shone best. Many of us knew the feeling that if we failed to rally to his help, some gem of inspiration might never see the light of day or a valuable pastoral task would be left undone. But in the process, our own gifts and talents were often revealed.

It was my privilege – or chore, depending on how I choose to recall it – to prepare many of his manuscripts for publication. Lecture notes, drafts of articles he had written especially for *Zealandia*, or more often a homily we both felt might warrant a wider audience. They usually came straight off his clipboard, in a scrawl only the initiated could read, with notes in the margins that could only be guessed at.

He seemed to trust my editing and was always appreciative to have his own judgment endorsed. His legacy to me was not one of his treasured volumes but another file of scrappy notes, on the pastoral care of the sick and dying, waiting to be edited and published. A series of papers presented to a conference of Auckland priests and pastoral workers a year before he died, they were published posthumously as a slim volume called *Dying to New Life*.

# The spiritual guide

Pauline O'Regan

Our community often reflects with a certain degree of awe on the signs of God's loving providence in our community life over the years, but nothing, it seems to us, can match the providential love that sent Eugene O'Sullivan into our lives in the early 1970s.

We were a community of Sisters of Mercy who had taken the step in 1973 of living in a state house in a very poor suburb of Christchurch. We did this in response to the call of Vatican II to Religious, to discern who were the most needy in contemporary society and to try to effectively meet those needs in our suffering sisters and brothers. The greatest question in our lives at that particular time was: *what was a suitable spirituality for such a community, no longer living its life in the safe confines of a convent but fully exposed on the city street?*

There were no New Zealand precedents to help guide us and we were struggling. By a series of events, that the unwise call 'coincidences', we came to hear of this remarkable Irish

Dominican who lived in Auckland. We had never heard of him before, and had no idea that he had recently been close to death and was still striving to recover.

We asked him to come to Christchurch and give us a retreat. And he came. Frail to the point of collapse, on two sticks, hesitant of speech, frighteningly white of face, he was totally unfit, you might say, to be doing anything, let alone giving a retreat. But never was physical weakness and frailty matched by such spiritual strength and passion. And so began a series of annual retreats that stretched over the best part of a decade.

Eugene O'Sullivan directed us with wisdom and wit, confidence and clarity of vision towards the goal we were seeking, namely a spirituality that fitted us as a community and as individuals to an entirely new living of our religious vows. Looking back over the past 20 years, we still marvel at his sureness of touch. Only someone of superb spiritual and intellectual resources could have brought together

the best of the old forms of religious life and the best of contemporary thought.

He loved to unravel papal encyclicals with us, to surprise us and to bring them within our understanding and grasp. None of us could ever forget, for instance, the retreat he based on Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Since that time, it has been the basis of all our understanding of evangelisation in our work.

Of course, as we sat at Eugene's feet, we noted all his marvellous quirks of personality: his impeccable timing, his body language, his shouts of laughter, his spontaneity that was not always as spontaneous as one might think, his fastidiousness and his endearing élitism. For all these things as well as for his holiness and giftedness, he remains, for us, 'unforgettable, unforgotten'.

Eugene O'Sullivan was no ordinary man, and we honour his memory with profound gratitude. ■

Pauline O'Regan is a Christchurch Sister of Mercy living in retirement

►► Among the treasured insights offered in its closing chapter was his awareness in hospital not so much of the skill of nurses and doctors in keeping him alive as "the overwhelming experience of being loved by them – and that somehow in that love, no matter how my mind was clouded with pain, I knew with sureness that God's enduring love enfolds all one's life. At that point, death is no longer a calamity."

In the 20 years since his death, there are signs that his legacy has borne fruit and matured. He would have rejoiced to see a School of Theology at Auckland University, in which Catholics participate as staff and students; he would be glad to see a burgeoning of a New Zealand spirituality, with a strong focus on indigenous and ecological themes; and he would have applauded

local initiatives as diverse as the Nathaniel Centre's championing of palliative care and the social justice resources produced by Caritas Aotearoa.

Eugene enriched us in many ways. He shared his wide knowledge and his love for life. He drew forth unexpected talents by seeming to be so dependent on what we could do for him. Best of all, he gave us confidence as a local church, to believe that Catholics in this country have a religious culture as rich and fertile as the Irish one from which he came.

May he delight in God's loving embrace. ■

Dennis Horton is Director of Mission for the Sisters of Mercy Mission Services, Auckland

# Poverty is a relationship

Alan Johnson

It is difficult talking about poverty in New Zealand because the nature and depth of New Zealand's poverty pales into insignificance in comparison with the poverty of the Third World – particularly Africa. Such comparisons illustrate the need to think and act both locally and globally. We cannot respond to issues of global poverty without having regard also for things at home. Likewise, we cannot focus on poverty in New Zealand and ignore the absolute poverty of the poorest one-third of humanity.

There is a common misconception that poverty is due to insufficiency; that people starve because of a famine for example. Indian economist and Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen (*Poverty and Famines: An Essay in Entitlement and Deprivation*) proved otherwise through his historical analysis of some of history's worst famines. People starve during famines because they are poor and do not have the means to pay for food at the inflated prices which crop failures normally bring. There may still be sufficient food for people to get by on, but some people miss out entirely because of what Sen called their lack of entitlements.

Recent increases in world food prices illustrate the predicament of the poor within the poverty equation. Since early 2006 world food prices in aggregate have nearly doubled and although there are some signs of an easing of price pressure, grain prices are not expected to drop significantly soon. These increases are however not due to crop failure or population growth but to three 'economic' factors:

- increased demand from wealthier countries and middle class consumers for biofuels and for grain-fed animals;
- oil prices have risen and, in

consequence, the cost of fertilisers and transport;

- rapidly rising prices together with declining stocks have caused many grain exporting countries to limit exports in an effort to safeguard their own food security.

There have been food riots and other civil unrest in nearly 40 countries. The World Bank estimates that 100 million people are at risk of severe malnutrition unless there are efforts to supply them with food directly. For these reasons a focus on poverty in New Zealand is as important as such a focus in the Third World.

Essentially poverty is a relationship between the rich and the poor, mediated through markets and entitlement systems. Entitlement systems determine ownership structures, property rights and income relativities amongst other things. Markets simply trade entitlements, so in some respects the entitlements are the source of inequity not markets.

Both markets and entitlement systems are socially determined and not by laws of nature or carved miraculously on tablets of stone. This means that poverty, including starvation, is socially constructed and not some immutable law of nature or of God. Once we understand this quite simple truth, we are called to action as Christians to combat poverty for two reasons: firstly, addressing poverty is an expression of Christian love toward our brothers and sisters. Secondly, inaction will lead to things getting worse and to the poor becoming poorer.

Greed is the underlying cause of poverty. Middle class citizens in the developed world are of course as guilty of this greed as the corporate elites of

New York or London and the corrupt rulers in Africa, though not to the same degree. There is no end to our greed in the West: always another TV to buy, another overseas holiday to take or new clothes to wear.

The fact that poverty is a relationship offers us a clear pathway for combating poverty. We have to build relationships with the poor at both a personal and community level. When we get to know the poor we are less able to ignore their plight and our behaviours.

Here is a personal example. I am involved in a Rugby League club in South Auckland where the sport is the domain of mainly working class Maori and Pacific people. Earlier this year I was busy collecting fees from parents for their children to join up. Our club has an open door policy and keeps fees very low – \$20 per player and \$30 per family. A young Maori woman wanted to sign up her two sons, and when we told her that the fee was \$30 and not the \$20 she had in her hand, she said that she would sign up only her eight-year-old. A Samoan woman sitting next me quietly offered to pay the \$10 so that the six-year-old brother could play as well.

If today we deny children from participating in common social activities for a mere \$10, then the society that we create tomorrow will accept much worse. In five years time we may accept that it is OK for that child to live in a shack, and in ten years time it may be OK that he goes hungry.

Poverty in New Zealand is a slippery slope issue. At the bottom of the slope are the conditions of deprivation and destitution which are completely avoidable both for citizens of New Zealand and citizens of the world. ■

(Alan Johnson is Senior Policy Analyst for the Salvation Army)



## A pastoral letter to the rich

- As any broker will tell you, there is a difference between price and value. That which costs a lot might not have a lot of value. And conversely, what has value might not cost much. When price and value are considered synonymous, we stray into the error of assuming that Porsches are more important than primary teachers or wars than peace.
  - I'm a spiritual broker, and frankly wealth stuffs up the arteries of the spiritual heart. A moderate amount tastes good. The trick is to learn to curb our appetite before it acquires a prominence in our lives that leads to spiritual death. Today such appetite is extolled as the driver to success. The monks of old called it greed.
  - It is no blessing being poor. Those who think otherwise have never been there. Poverty by means of the cocktail of anxiety, violence, and depression can also destroy the spiritual heart. Escaping poverty involves more than having money, though money helps. Critical to escaping is having a friend who believes in you.
  - Don't believe the hype that says you earned your wealth. Give credit where it's due. What your parents, schooling, race, gender and culture gave and give you is very significant in predisposing you to financial success. Luck is not insignificant either. Hard work does not excuse a lack of humility.
  - Don't believe the hype that equates wealth with wisdom. At the nub of wisdom is the ability to be happy irrespective of success, wealth, and relationships. Too many people make their happiness conditional upon their assets.
  - Ask most dying 80-year-olds what they wished they had had more of and they will say 'time with loved ones'. That's the hope of rich and poor alike. Money and success usually won't buy you time; it will buy you more money and success. Poverty doesn't buy you time either; it just brings misery. To get time you need to trade in the money, success and misery.
  - Time is a spiritual concept. The Greeks helpfully distinguished between *chronos*, chronological time and *kairos*, the right moment. We need to create right moments. ...or, as is more often the case, be spiritually tuned so that we are receptive when the right moment comes along. Those who aren't tuned will miss or stall.
  - You can trade in your money to buy *chronos* time. You can get a little beach place, bury your blackberry, and take long barefooted walks. You can keep this going for quite a while catching up on family, novels, and sleep. But eventually the novelty will wear off and you'll be hankering to get back to work. For meaning hinges on work. Next thing you know you are in the suit, in the car, on the cell phone, in a rush. You missed because you weren't spiritually tuned.
  - Such tuning is not easy. There is pain involved. The Greeks had a word for this too: *kenosis*, self-emptying. In the search for meaning we need to re-order our lives, removing things we have become addicted to and trying to live without them. It isn't a case of having a 'balanced life'. Some things are just plain bad.
  - A heart thrives on and generates love. It pumps the oxygen of kindness, tolerance, and compassion through the body and the body politic. As the song says, we are made for love. Yet, as the songs also say, we continually screw up, making choices that destroy friendships and the fidelity love needs. Work, instead of being the expression of love, becomes the expression of our need for success. We have got those big three – love, work, and success – out of sync. Dangerously so.
  - Most businesses talk about work and success. They don't usually talk about love. They don't talk about it because they haven't figured out how it is related to work and success. They've been duped into believing that love is a private thing, a home thing, something that happens after hours. They haven't configured in this key motivational ingredient and spiritual necessity in human happiness.
  - *From those to whom much is given, much will be demanded.* It's an old maxim and not helpful when used to induce guilt. But it is a reminder to those of us who are considered rich to use what we have in knowledge, wealth, and wisdom to make the whole world a better place. We affect each other on this planet. We can't afford to only look after those who are close to us, because the impact of those who aren't can irrevocably destroy the future.
- We're in this together.

Glynn Cardy

Glynn Cardy is Archdeacon of Auckland and Vicar of St Matthew's-in-the-City

# A confident future for the Maori Party

## *interview with Pita Sharples MP*

*“My impression of Pita Sharples is of a wise kaumatua, an authentic person clear about his own values. He has a deep love of his people and of the Land. He is a visionary. He walks comfortably in both the Maori and pakeha world. If this is the sort of leader Maori are producing, then they are worthy of success.*

*“Meeting Pita Sharples is different from the usual encounter in the corporate world. The atmosphere at his office is welcoming, and there is soft ethnic music playing in the background. He greeted me – as I am sure he greets everyone – with warmth, humour and openness.” – Katie O’Connor*

*Pita Sharples says that for the Maori Party the bottom lines are:*

- *repeal of the foreshore and seabed legislation;*
- *retaining the Maori seats;*
- *returning continuously to the electorate to consult the people.*

**“W**e are not looking to see who we might ally with in a new parliament. If parties want us, we will see if they meet our requirements. Our claim as a party is that we are the authentic voice in parliament for Maori. We claim that because there is no big political party sitting on top of us. Any coalition agreement must not limit our freedom to defend our rights.

“In the next election we hope to increase our representation from four seats to seven, and this could put us in a position of real negotiating strength. We have been watching the way Peter Dunne and Winston Peters have operated as ministers outside cabinet, and it seems to have worked.

“In fact we can see the possibility of working with either main party, but only if they concede our ‘bottom line’ positions. I think National might well come to an agreement on both Maori seats and the foreshore legislation, but I cannot see Labour repealing their own law. Nevertheless, most Maori

prefer us to go with Labour than with National.

“The pro-National surge in the opinion polls is more about people wanting a change than National having done anything to deserve this support. In the House the National speakers barely measure up, whereas the Labour Ministers are very experienced at handling contentious debate.

John Key still has a lot to learn about being consistent in what he says. Dr Cullen is very clever at making the National spokespeople appear confused and silly.

“All this does not affect the fact people want a change. Labour have not made many mistakes, but people see the government as too controlling. While most admit Helen Clark has been a good Prime Minister – one of the best – they tend to see her as something of a ‘control freak’.

“Generally speaking, the Maori party will focus on serving the community. We look to support key improvements in health and education. We are not too worried about tax cuts and that sort of thing.”

**K O’C:** *Why are you so opposed to the Foreshore and Seabed legislation? Many pakehas worry that without*

*those safeguards they might lose free access to beaches and coastline.*

“You mean you can trust the pakeha but not the Maori! The reason there was such a strong reaction by Maori was because it was Maori who were the losers under the new legislation. That is why 35,000 of us marched on parliament.

“Maori see a paradox here: the right hand of government is paying compensation for the land originally stolen from Maori – while the left hand is busy stealing the foreshore off us. And we don’t like it. The way the legislation was passed made Maori look the ‘bad guys’. There was a window of opportunity but the government slammed it shut with that law.

“There are many areas of New Zealand where there is no longer public access to the beaches: this is due to sales to overseas interests, farmers blocking off gates, through port authorities and marinas. But nobody jumps up and down about that.

“So why this sudden fear about Maori rights?” Sharples argues vehemently. “We want to retain our land, not sell it. We have a spiritual and cultural relationship with our land. It is part of our identity. We are the *last* people who would want to sell it.”



**K O'C:** *Can we talk a bit about Maori problem areas?*

"Yes – but you must remember Maori are not only 'Maori' – we are men and women, Catholic and Protestants. We are people. It is true that Maori in many respects have underachieved educationally. All sorts of programmes have been put in place to rescue us. Yet after 40 years of 'baby-sitting' there has been virtually no change. The trouble is educators have tried to fit Maori students into externally imposed programmes – instead of making the programme fit the students.

"But let me tell you about two success stories. A new programme launched over recent years begins with pakeha teachers in a school: it takes them onto the marae and helps them begin to really understand the Maori, perhaps for the first time. Then, when they come back into the school they will have someone to mentor the way they deal with the Maori students. This programme was introduced at Rotorua Girls High in 2002. By 2006 the number of Maori girls in Form 7 had tripled.

"Previously, pakeha teachers tended to have low expectations of Maori students – and so the students underachieved. The Maori pupils might say now: 'we like such-and-such a teacher: he pronounces our names correctly.' Or 'when my mother came to the school he was very nice to her'. They notice when they are treated with

respect. This programme encouraged students to aim higher. What was important was this formation in Maori culture was being provided for mature teachers, not simply those at Training College.

"Another programme which has borne fruit is having schools which are structured for Maori and teach through the medium of Maori language. The benefit is that young people are being produced there who are leaders, who are fluent in both languages and are full of good ideas. They have contributed to the success of Maori media, notably Maori TV which is so good."

**K O'C:** *In parliament, how do you, as a party, assess new legislation?*

"Two key principles for us are *rangatiratanga* (sovereignty) and *manaakitanga* (respect). When a new piece of legislation comes up, we examine it to see how it measures up. We ask: is this Bill people-friendly? Will it encourage togetherness? Is anyone going to be hurt by it? Is it friendly to the land, to the environment? Is it selfish? Will it help us all to go together as a nation?

"And these are the principles we shall employ as we approach the 2008 Election. We return always to our basic values: *mana Atua* – our relationship with God; *mana whenua* – our relationship with the earth; *mana iwi* – our relationship with tribes and with people.

"We have no intention of telling people before the election who we are prepared to go with. We must hear their policies before we make up our mind. We will have to make compromises – but we are not prepared to sell our freedom. If we are offered power, we will accept – but on our terms.

"Maori are a minority in New Zealand. We are 16 percent of the population. Yet when we signed the Treaty we were overwhelmingly more numerous. And then we went into partnership. We believe it still should be a partnership,

even though it is us who are now in a minority. We want to be New Zealanders – but we also want to be Maori.

"Waitangi Day has for years been an occasion of conflict. That was because the Treaty of Waitangi had not been honoured. The media have always filmed and publicised the conflict aspect. They don't broadcast that 20,000 people are gathered to celebrate together. That bias is very frustrating.

"But people in New Zealand now understand the Treaty better, partly because we have had to ram it down their throats! You need a battering ram to get people to open doors. But then you must come along and be sweetly reasonable, and people will say: 'What a nice man'. Then they begin to listen!

"Even I didn't like some of the things our protesters did. But I think, when it comes to becoming more mature, it's the pakehas who have had to make the change. And they have started to listen to us, to our real grievances."

**K O'C:** *How religious are the Maori MPs?*

"They're all Christians but they also believe in Maori spiritual values. The two systems do not always fit nicely together. It is the spiritual connectedness which Maori look for, and many religious faiths will provide that. We pray as part of life. It's not just Sundays – it's every day. We pray before and after meals, before journeys. Our traditional spirituality and our Christian beliefs stand side by side. The president of the party, for instance, is high up in the Anglican church."

Pita Sharples insists that Maori maintain their strong spirituality. With the Maori cultural renaissance of the 1980s, many of their spiritual values were renewed. Maori continue to be a religious people. ■

*Katie O'Connor is a journalist and chair of the Tui Motu Board: interview took place in April*



# What sort of community are we?

*Is the church “the kingdom of God”? Or is it a “communion”?*  
*Ted Schmidt examines this distinction, made by Timothy Radcliffe OP*  
*in a recent book and offers a critical analysis.*

Timothy Radcliffe describes two extremes dividing the Catholic Church: he names them **Kingdom Catholics (KC)** and **Communion Catholics (CC)**.

For **KC**, the central doctrine is the Incarnation. In Jesus Christ, God has embraced the whole of humanity. The Christ whom they cherish overthrew the boundaries between human beings, touched lepers, reached out to foreigners and gathers us into the People of God. But for **CC**, the central doctrine is the Cross. We must dare to stand by the scandal of the crucified Lord. At the heart of the church’s life is adoration and praise of God.

Each group conceives itself to be countercultural. **CC** sees itself as resisting the destructive culture of modern libertarianism and relativism to which **KC** seems to succumb. Whereas **KC** think of themselves as resisting the destructive fundamentalism and conformity to the mores of this world, to which they believe **CC** are surrendering. With more imagination each might look at the other and recognise their mirror image.

Radcliffe reminds us of the Last Supper. This celebration of the New Covenant contains a tension between the

gathering into communion of Jesus’ close and intimate friends and a reaching out to all people. The bread is “for you”; the cup is “for you and for all”. That tension is an intrinsic part of the Last Supper and of every Eucharist.

At the heart of Roman Catholicism there lies this same tension: to be *Roman* is to be a particular community. But we are also *Catholic*, which means we reach out to universality. It is the tension between Peter and Paul in the early church.

If today we are just *Roman* we will be a sect, an introverted group with a private language – the Fortress Church, confident of its identity but closed. If we become just *Catholic* we will be in danger of being the ‘Jesus people’, shuffling chaotically in no particular direction.

Radcliffe insists the two wings must dare to speak to one another. Each must seek to understand the truth of the other, to share their experience, to have patient dialogue and, in due time, be reconciled. This reconciliation, he suggests, is like the courtship of pandas: after ages of ignoring, of skirmishing and finally coming together, behold, a little panda is on the way!



*Ted Schmidt writes:*

Only by constant vigilance can the gains of history be safeguarded. The forces of reaction are omnipresent and timidity is always an option. So it is and has been with the history of the Catholic Church. The extraordinary efflorescence of the church with its new birth in the halcyon days of the 1960s has been stalemated at its highest institutional levels.

The pontificate of John Paul II, as time goes by, has proven to be the inevitable historical response to the revolutionary impulses of Vatican II. “The greatest change in thinking in

the history of the church”, said the late Archbishop Denis Hurley, of Durban, South Africa.

It was naive to think that power, no matter what the institution, is ever wilfully ceded. It was naive to believe that a church which redefined itself as the *People of God*, with all its inclusiveness of baptism, would not be resisted by a clerical culture – secretive, exclusive, patriarchal and hierarchical. Nevertheless the global clerical sex scandals, the awareness that all over the Catholic world celibacy was simply not being observed, has ended lay deference and the unearned



status of the clergy. For a creative minority of clergy the change has been welcomed as necessary and salubrious, but to the institution, it has not been without a struggle. The tendency as we saw so clearly in the sex abuse scandals has been to protect the club (the institution) at all costs even to the point of denying core values that the club was mandated to preach – the protection of the *anawim*, the voiceless ones, those with no power.

### The post-Conciliar Church evangelises culture

As the powerful Spirit rolled through the Church in the 1960s and 1970s, lay people flocked to theologates, graduate schools and summer institutes, ready to put into practice the collegial vision of the Council. When one reads the progressive social documents of these decades one is struck by the prophetic attempt of the Roman Church to evangelise the culture, to attempt to purify it of its xenophobic tendencies, its structural addictions to war-making, racism, and economic marginalisation.

This was a time of immense pride and ferment in the church as it moved beyond an individualist paradigm to a socio-cultural critique of society at large. Catholics awoke to the fact that sin was more than individual transgression and was often defined by apathy, silence, and complicity. The liturgy asked forgiveness for not only what we did but what we failed to do. Sin was more often wilful blindness than active malevolence.

As Catholics became more attuned to Scripture and were encouraged to let go of crude fundamental approaches to God's word, it was inevitable that new understandings of Jesus and his world would develop. The Council had liberated the Catholic world to a deeper understanding of literary forms and their use by Biblical authors. It also forced us to get away from abstractions, and, in the challenge of the atheist Albert Camus, "to confront

the bloodstained face of history." The Council Fathers, many of whom had seen first-hand the horrors of World War II, grasped the radical failure of Christianity and its urgent need to become real and existential, a 'God walk' more than a 'God talk'.

During that war 60 million people, of whom 37 million were civilians, were killed in the heart of Christian Europe. Baptised Catholics put children in the ovens of Auschwitz. A Catholic chaplain blessed the dropping of the A-bomb on Japan. Huge numbers of Catholics were duped into supporting anti-Gospel ideologies – like Nazism, fascism, and the mass murder of noncombatants killed by firebombing civilian areas. So Catholics were ready at last to confront social sin.

*Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World) addressed this in many passages. "Sacred Scripture teaches us that love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbour" (#24). No more separating God from humanity: "The new social order must be founded on truth, built by justice and animated by love" (#26). Social justice now became a rallying cry: "The human family now comprises a single world community" (#33). The church was not naive about the price to be paid, already paid by Jesus "who taught us by example that we too must shoulder that cross which the world and the flesh inflict on those who search after peace and justice" (#38).

A decade after the Council, Pope Paul VI wrote, in *Evangelium Nuntiandi* (December 1975): "Christ first proclaims a kingdom, the kingdom of God; and this is so important, by comparison everything else becomes 'the rest,'... Only the kingdom is absolute and it makes everything else relative..." And that includes the Pope, sacraments, the Bible, priesthood and even the church. Only God's reign of peace and justice is ultimate.

Vatican II saw the coming of the new-world church leaving behind the old Eurocentric model. The bishops of



Africa, Latin America and Asia were speaking a new word to a rapidly shrinking world. Philosophical argumentation withered next to the monumental suffering of the poor. A new universalism embracing the whole human family was emerging. Ignorance was no longer an excuse for inaction.

The civil rights movement, the shocking merciless bombing and killing of over a million civilians in Vietnam was right in our face demanding a response. The emergence of 60 new nations was marking the end of imperial and colonial adventurism. Catholics were galvanised by all of this, as the wind and fire of the Spirit summoned us to deeper involvement in the world.

### Pope Paul VI

Pope Paul VI, in insisting on Jesus' central proclamation of God's reign in history, was merely pointing out what was said a decade earlier in *Gaudium et Spes*. "The spiritual agitation and the changing conditions of life are part of a broader and deeper revolution." This wasn't simply the 1960s. This was the Holy One, the Divine Disturber inviting us to "scrutinise the signs of the times... interpreting them in light of the Gospel" (GS4). Pope John XXIII identified the cry of women, of the poor of the earth as a divine summons. ▶▶



The sanctuary needed to embrace the street; the broken bread on the altar needed to be seen in the broken bodies of every society – or else there was no authentic communion.

In a famous address at the Council, Paul VI insisted on this spirituality of the Samaritan where, “behind the face of ‘everyman’... we must recognise the face of Christ and the heavenly Father.” Then “our humanism becomes Christianity.” Within six years of this statement, the bishops of the world reminded all Catholics that social justice was not simply an option for Catholics but “a constitutive dimension of the Gospel.”

Pope Paul went searching for bishops to put the kingdom into practice, and where better than in the United States? He sent an amazing Belgian named Jean Jadot to get the right men who would become authentic Catholic leaders. Robert Kaiser writes, “Jadot took his instructions from Pope Paul VI, who saw an evolving role for his nuncios after Vatican II – not to be the Pope’s eyes and ears, but his heart. Nuncios should travel, the Pope said, not so much as the representatives of Rome to secular governments, or even as legates between Rome and the world’s bishops. They should ‘show the Pope’s concern for the poor, the forgotten, the ignored.’”

It was Jadot who from 1973-1980 appointed ‘kingdom’ men as US bishops, like Milwaukee’s Rembert Weakland, Saginaw’s Ken Untener, Roger Mahony (who marched with Cesar Chavez), and Seattle’s Raymond Hunthausen (who challenged

America’s first strike nuclear policies). The much-loved Joseph Bernadin became a bishop of a major see under Jadot too.

As soon as John Paul II became Pope, Jadot was summoned back to Rome and thereafter ‘Pope’s men’, cautious, conservative, chancery types were imposed on dioceses. These were certainly loyal to the church but had never engaged in the social struggle like those mentioned above.

One such papal appointee was Cardinal Edward Egan (now the Cardinal Archbishop of New York), a Vatican insider with no experience as a parish priest. Egan is notorious for his remark that bishops and the church hierarchy could not be held responsible for pedophilic crimes against minors, because priests were private contractors rather than employees! Egan said of Jadot: “He hurt the Church in the United States by picking the very worst bishops. This is because John Paul II had changed the criteria. It was part of his plan to bring a runaway, post-Conciliar Church back to its senses.”

Notre Dame theologian Richard McBrien wrote in *The New York Times* of the John Paul II bishops: “These bishops tend to be uncritically loyal to the Pope and his curial associates, rigidly authoritarian and solitary in the exercise of pastoral leadership and reliably safe in their theological views... Since 1980, (nearly) every major appointee has been more hard-line than his immediate predecessor.”

John Paul II had a marvellous understanding of the church’s social

mission, and had been active in his native Poland, yet he micromanaged episcopal appointments in a way that hobbled the church. Few of his appointments raised up men with any record of social engagement.

### Kingdom Catholics and Communion Catholics

These new appointments were *communion* Catholics, not *kingdom* Catholics. Under them the church has ceased being a major player in the great Spirit movements of our time, preferring to focus on internal, ‘Catholic’ issues. In particular, their failure to challenge Rome on the female question has done serious damage to church credibility.

As male vocations to priesthood diminished all over the world, the church adamantly refused to consider ordaining women and married men. The reasons given were so embarrassing, so intellectually unworthy of refutation that it has done serious damage to the church’s great intellectual tradition. Suffice it to say, it has virtually nothing to do with God’s reign and everything to do with a genuine fear of change. Baptism inaugurates a kingdom of equals – yet patriarchy, hierarchy and clericalism continue to deform the Body.

The former Master of the Dominican Order, Fr Timothy Radcliffe, attempted to deal with this in a talk he gave in California last May. Radcliffe rightfully expressed sadness at the polarisation in the Church and described the division thus:

There are *Kingdom Catholics* and *Communion Catholics*.

- The *Kingdoms* see themselves as the pilgrim people on the way to the kingdom. Influenced by the great theologians of Vatican II like Rahner, Schillebeeckx and latterly Gutiérrez, they are open to the world and see the Spirit outside the institution working for freedom and justice.

- The *Communions* – who came after the Council – see the need to rebuild

The post-Conciliar Catholic Church was well on its way to becoming a “kingdom” church but then it was hobbled by a failure of nerve. Only an authentic return to a focus on Jesus’ yearning for the kingdom, the reign of peace and justice, can save it.

Jesus’ death on the cross is the consequence of a life in radical service of justice and love, a consequence of his option for the poor and outcast, of a choice for his people suffering under exploitation and oppression.

Edward Schillebeeckx OP

the inner life of the church. They are associated with Hans Urs Von Balthasar and Joseph Ratzinger. They are wary of modernity and stress the Cross.

Radcliffe admits this is a caricature (developed more fully in his book) yet not a bad starting point. Try to see their positions, he asks. Fair enough. Both groups are suffering 'root shock', their identities threatened and undermined. The *Communions* in particular saw their comfortable Catholic world crumbling, sliding into a church with no rules, no discipline and no deep beliefs.

Here Fr Radcliffe fails to convince. One can relate to the disequilibrium felt after the Council. For many it was too new, too fast. Beyond a doubt this is true, but to imply that *Kingdom Catholics* have no fundamental beliefs is a gross distortion verging on a calumny. The issues that exercise them are seldom dogmatic and mainly involve issues of church governance (*parish control, lay leadership*) and discipline (*celibacy, female ordination*) all of which could be changed, as Pope John XXIII said, by a stroke of a pen.

### The Cross

As far as *Communion Catholics* focusing on the Cross, I see no evidence at all of this. The Cross is the price paid for following Jesus, for becoming serious disciples. It is a

It is necessary to immerse oneself with courage and simplicity in tough situations as they present themselves. You do not save those who are drowning in the river of current events by standing on some imaginary 'river bank of eternity' but only by having the courage to swim in the current.

(*Handbook for Pastoral Theology*)

Karl Rahner

freely chosen act to live out the reign of God in a world which inevitably will resist as it did the prophets and Jesus. I see little evidence of this among *Communion Catholics*. There seems to be an obsession with orthodoxy, an unwillingness even to grant that dogmas grow and develop with time.

The attack on the brilliant theologians of the last 30 years, men like Roger Haight, Edward Schillebeeckx, Jacques Dupuis and Charles Curran – with nothing ever proved – has cast a McCarthy-like pall over the authentic role of theologians. But what about *orthopraxy*, the authentic following of Jesus in history?

*Communion Catholics* too often do not "swim in the current with others", but are content "to stand on the river bank of eternity" (*K Rahner*) ready to die for a conclusion but not for a cause. There seems a distinct unwillingness to join those religious nomads, many unbaptised and unchurched, who are challenging the enemies of life.

There seems little understanding that dogmas neither inspire nor animate; real movements and holy martyrs do. It is often said of the Catholic Church: if it is not leading the parade, it's not in it. However, as history shows, the Spirit blows where it wills (*John 3:8*), and there's a howling gale outside too many chancery offices.

How appalling to see some of those well-heeled *Communion* spokesmen cosy up to the Bush regime in Washington, supported by wealthy think tanks and reactionary foundations. Where is the Cross in all of this? By publicly supporting the Bush agenda they are not only making war on the global poor and the environment, but on the domestic poor as well.

Timothy Radcliffe has much of value to say, and it is certainly important to engage in ongoing dialogue with all segments of the church. In my judgment he is off the mark in equating *kingdom* and *communion*. The Cross is the crux, as the *Communions* suggest,

We have come a long way from the fiery prophetic figure of Nazareth who shocked and disturbed the conventions of his day in the name of justice and liberation. Our respectability has taken a terrible toll on the authentic calling of Christian life. We have lost sight of the deeper vision and lost heart for the passion and enthusiasm of God's New Reign. The following of Jesus is not a respectable religion.

Diarmuid O'Murchu

but it is not to be found in church statements or dogmas, important as they are.

Catholic identity as well is important, but there is no identity which bypasses the poorest of the poor, those left behind in a vicious turbo-capitalist world where three billion live on less than two dollars day. There is no identity which does not radically side with God's Body, the earth slowly being rendered uninhabitable. Jesus lived and died for God's dream, not for the power and respectability of the church. A church which refuses to serve the reign is creating an idol to which few will be attracted.

An old church saying goes *ubi ecclesia, ibi Christus* – where the church is, there also is Christ – but if the church is not anchored in the poor and the reign of justice and peace, Christ will be elsewhere.

Which is why we pray: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth". ■

Ted Schmidt is the author of *Journeys to the Heart of Catholicism (Seraphim)*.

He is currently editor of New Catholic Times: Sensus Fidelium ([newcatholictimes.com](http://newcatholictimes.com)).

See also [jtschmidt@rogers.com](mailto:jtschmidt@rogers.com)



# In search of

Jacquie Lambert describes  
of churches and monuments du

Having just returned from four weeks in Italy and Greece it seems timely to write on something that touched me during this time away. These two countries ooze thousands of years of religious history between them and so, for a spiritual director, finding an 'aha' moment to write about is perhaps not as difficult as deciding which one! There were unexpected tears in certain places, wonder and awe in others and a lot of smiles at the many bizarre aspects of our religious past.

As an aside, one of these humorous moments came with our taxi driver in Greece who was bemoaning the Turkish occupiers taking marble from the Acropolis to build their mosques. When I pointed out that the Vatican had done the same, harvesting the Colosseum marble for St Peter's, he replied with a straight face that *that* was different – at least they were Christian!

As anyone who has been to Italy knows, there are a lot of churches/religious buildings to see. *A lot!* And as anyone who has taken teenagers on that same trip knows, you have to keep a lid on the number you ask them to visit. Even so, we graced the doorways of a fair few and it's my response to some of those that I've decided to write about here, especially the ones that surprised me.

## St Peter's, Rome

First up, St Peter's and the Vatican. No Catholic approaches the Vatican as a tourist venue alone, but beyond that we each bring a quite different set of baggage to the encounter. I know mine is a little heavy at times, plastered with *Free the Feminine in the Church* stickers and bound with strong straps of institutional cynicism. But in truth I felt like a giggly girl about to enter Disneyland. I love grandeur, art and all that stuff; I was ready to be transported.

But at the end of our visit I sat in St Peter's Square to reflect on the experience and my bewildering response to it. Far from being transported I felt flat and unmoved. Perhaps I was expecting too much, unrealistic about what it was I was actually going to witness. It is unfair to expect a large, essentially institutional environment to deliver spiritually to everyone who walks through – and yet the feedback from many I had talked to was that it does. So what happened for me?

Without a doubt the museums are mind-boggling with the treasures they hold and are a beautiful piece of art in themselves. The Sistine Chapel is stunning and St Peter's Basilica is equally wondrous both in size and splendour. All in all it was without doubt impressive, so much so that it became one of the highlights of our trip for my husband, who isn't even Catholic or particularly institutionally religious.

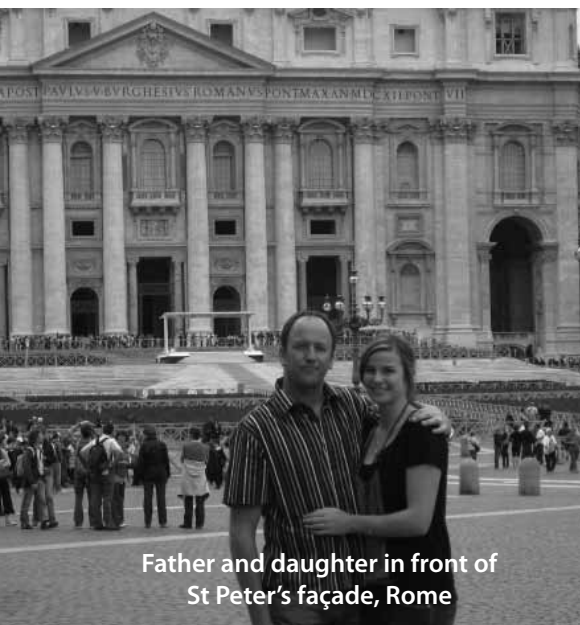
That latter point I believe is important in the difference between my experience and his. As a Catholic and a spiritual director I cannot walk through this geographical heart of the church and divorce myself from



Jacquie and Kerry Lambert, with daughter Holly, sweep of Bernini's arcade and St Peter's Square.

reaching for a spiritual response, not just an intellectual/artistic one. I realise in saying this that it is equally unfair to expect any experience to provide all. Still it is worthy of reflection as the buildings stand as somewhat of an advertisement for our faith and a point of pilgrimage for many.

For all that I appreciated the size, art and splendour of the Vatican and St Peter's, I felt empty as I left. It's the kind of feeling I associate with going to see an action movie with not much of a plot. You leave wowed by the special effects but still hungry for something more. I appreciate that the emptiness is mostly my responsibility. The buildings are simply venues. God enters with the people who worship there and leaves with them. To expect a building to feed you in itself is unfair.



Father and daughter in front of St Peter's façade, Rome



# the transcendent

*s conflicting experiences  
uring a family holiday in Italy*



olly and their tour guide – the great  
re, Rome as background

And yet I have had experiences where precisely that has happened: several monasteries, one or two ancient places of worship both Christian and pagan, a few private homes and so on. Buildings do seem to have the ability to absorb what happens within them and to recycle those emotional experiences, distilling their essence into a kind of aura or impression that hits you the moment you enter.

## **A village church near Amalfi**

The week following our visit to the Vatican, we were in Praiano, a small ancient fishing village just ten minutes down the road from Positano, the undisputed hub of Amalfi Coast tourism. Praiano is a much quieter sister to Positano, only recently drawn into the major tourist league. While there, we walked its tiny alleyways and

admired the views. We came upon a little church, not in any guidebook we'd read, and went in. Within minutes tears were inexplicably running down my face.

Why? It wasn't as if this church building was my 'style' either, very Baroque and formal as many of these old churches often are. So why the tears? Two reasons I think. The first was that the building oozed light, a stark contrast to most of the churches we visited. But it wasn't just natural light. It had been painted in a soft lemon and cream from ceiling to floor, and the original floor itself was fully tiled in the most brilliant yellows and blues, colours that dominated the regional pottery and handcrafts.

It felt alive. Starburst designs, the fruits of oranges and lemons and all manner of things, danced across the floor in outrageous contrasts of colour. The effect was uplifting, joyous, hopeful and resplendent. It felt like it had been born from the people who lived there, fitting the landscape and culture like a well-worn glove. Fishing is a hard life, and I got the sense that this church balanced the trials of that with its own promise of life.

The second reason was the impression or aura the building gave off. It was grounded in the people who worshipped there. I could almost hear the voices of people over the centuries, their tears and laughter, the prayers, the pain, the grief. While sitting there I watched several local people come in, light candles and do some cleaning. It had the sense of a home. It was what I call a 'loved up and prayed up' church.

## **Loved up and prayed up**

Comparing this impression to the one I had in St Peter's answered some of my questions. For all of its grandeur and beauty and through no fault of its own, St Peter's seems to lack that 'loved up, prayed up' community quality. It is the grand expression of a large religious following, glorious indeed but for me, not necessarily deeply spiritual and with a slight sense of the, 'mine's bigger than yours' quality about it, simply indicative of its era. Certainly many ordinary people have worshipped there, but I imagine it's been a more transient congregation with less sense of personal ownership and investment in the place.

Even in the Sistine Chapel and perhaps more so there, this 'loved up, prayed up' quality eluded me. Perhaps because that chapel has seen even less of the common people's joy and tears over the centuries than St Peter's. The art is wondrous, but I cannot view it in a vacuum separate from the purpose of the container.



The delightful Baroque interior of the parish church, Praiano near Amalfi, in S Italy

# Church, mosque – or museum?

Glynn Cardy

**H**agia Sophia, the *Church of Divine Wisdom*, is one of the great gems of the world. It holds a special place in architectural and Christian history. The original church was built by Constantine in the 4th century CE but was destroyed by fire. In the 5th century the second church was built but that too was destroyed.

In 537 under the patronage of Emperor Justinian I the current church was completed. Two geometricians Anthemius and Isidore led a team of 7,500 architects, stonemasons, bricklayers, sculptors and mosaic artists who amazingly finished the building within five years – and drained the Treasury.

Never again would the Byzantines construct such a grand edifice. For nearly the next 1000 years it was the greatest church in the world and the largest domed building in Europe. In 1453, when the Ottomans conquered Istanbul, they converted it to a mosque. In the mid-20th century it was turned into a museum where Christians, Muslims and others can come and admire its past glory.

*(Anglican priest Glynn Cardy, from Auckland, writes from Turkey where he is on holiday)*

For the last 20 years I've wanted to walk inside this building. I've wanted to feel its presence and awe. I've wanted to imagine the great preachers of the past who proclaimed the sovereignty of God and critiqued the political powers of the day. I've wanted to say a prayer inside it, giving thanks, remembering, and hoping for a future that honours our Christian past and improves on it.

So it was with some surprise and unease that the building did not stir my soul. This architectural masterpiece, gem of history and nursery of Christianity did not inspire me. Something was missing.

Maybe I should have paid more attention to the sign outside. It called the building a 'museum' – a place that was about the past, not the present. It felt like visiting a graveyard where tourists come to admire the architecture and beauty of the gravestones, but know or care little about those buried there. The visitors are certainly not related to the dead.

►► **W**hy do I think the common people's touch is important over the clerical in nourishing that 'loved up, prayed up' essence? Because it brings with it large doses of humility, and that was one of the qualities I sensed in Praiano. The core of a humanity that struggles to understand, the essence of that walk of faith with belief on one hand and doubt on the other. I personally sit far more comfortably with that as opposed to the propaganda towards answers and certainty that the powerful image of St Peter's tries to instil on those who visit.

Perhaps none of this should have come as a surprise to me. Unravelling, it all makes common sense. St Peter's is what it is, the geographical heart of the Catholic Church and a monument to its glory and power, though much of that has yet to be realised in its true form. But as to a spiritual hub,

perhaps we must each find that in things closer to home and in places our hearts are touched. For some it may truly be St Peter's, it may be the

little village church in Praiano, and for others it may be the brush of a keen south-easterly on a Taranaki beach at seven in the morning. ■



Praiano: church and piazza, with the Mediterranean as backdrop

It was relationship that was missing. There was no community who cared and prayed in Hagia Sophia. Even in St Peter's, Rome, that glorious tribute to Vatican power, where like Hagia Sophia the tourist trains rumble through by the minute, there is a living community that imbues the building with a sense of religious devotion. Although as a Protestant I am no admirer of much Vatican-think, I do know a holy building when I'm in one.

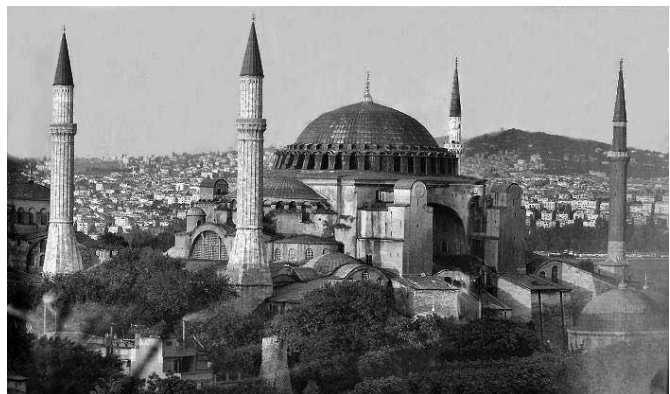
Is a church building without a community of faith no longer a church but a museum, a mausoleum? It felt that way. The two-decades-old scaffolding that cuts the nave virtually in half speaks volumes. No community of faith, Christian or Muslim, would live with that. They would find another way to care for their building. Restoration has to serve the faith community, not vice versa.

I think for the sake of its soul Hagia Sophia should not have left the embrace of either Christianity or Islam. Of course it would have been wonderful if these two great religions could have shared it. But they haven't and look unlikely to. Therefore it would be better if Hagia Sophia reverted to being a mosque rather than continue as it is today. It's better that this great church of Christendom has a praying community than remain a tombstone of past religions.

And who says that the Christian God isn't listening when a Muslim prays? ■



Santa Sophia, Constantinople, built by the Emperor Justinian in 537



Exterior of Santa Sophia, showing the minarets added when it was transformed into a mosque after 1453

**Rogan McIndoe**

**Bible Society**

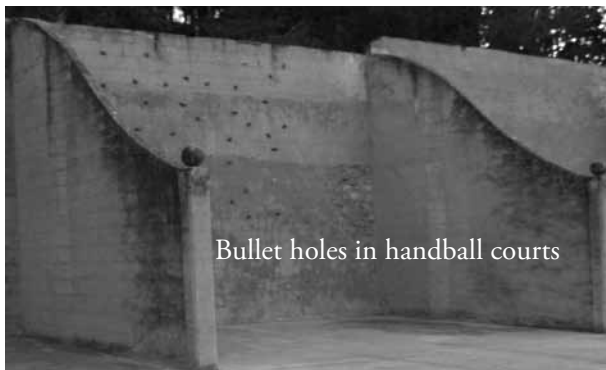


# Young people in the 21st Century

*Kevin Dobbyn went to a conference in Spain and returned with a clearer picture of today's youth culture and some pointers for future ministry to them*

**Y**ou can still see the bullet holes in the handball courts. It is the place where more than 30 were murdered of the 47 brothers killed during the civil war in Spain. They were beatified in October 2007; the oldest was 62 and the youngest 19. I don't know what the political leanings of the various brothers were, though I am led to believe it was simply because they were brothers that they were shot.

Perhaps it was for that reason – that they were brothers faithful till death – that Marist Brothers and two Lay Marists gathered at Les Avellanès, north-east of Barcelona, for a week-long conference on vocation ministry in 'secularised' nations. We represented nations in Europe, the Americas, and Oceania.



Among the presentations during the conference was one by Br Raimon Rubies, in which he shared his research on youth culture today. Given the look of most congregations in our churches, it is not difficult to suppose that most of us are out of touch with youth culture. While Rubies' study was based on research with Spanish youth, I think his findings well apply in this part of the world, too.

## Processes shaping identity

- *youth is no longer a transition stage*, formerly a relatively short period of time generally confined to the teenage years, where shortly after, the young adult was incorporated into the world of work and building a family. With the decrease in marriage, the staying at home and an extended period of study, adolescence can be prolonged to even beyond the age of 30. This is in marked contrast to the maturity and sense of responsibility in the letters of my 22-year-old uncle. He flew in the Battle of Britain and in the Pacific where he was shot down flying a Hurricane. His letters were to his 'cobbler' and 'mate' in the seminary.

- Being young today, therefore, is *less about biology and more about culture* and society. The culture of youth today is very complex, however, and we need to be careful of generalisations, recognising the diversity both between and within the various cohorts.

What is subjective is what shapes identity, rather than objective truth. That means everything is relative and identity is determined by the (immediate) gratification of the ego. Rather than being a tool, technology becomes an atmosphere which determines life and relationships. Consumerism, its temples (malls) and liturgical feasts (Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Boxing Day specials, etc.), is an assumed, unchangeable fact where objects and labels (Nike, Calvin Klein, Apple, Sony, etc.) determine who belong and who don't. The only reality is the present. The past is remembered only if recent and in their experience, while the future is the concern of adults and out of range of youth's horizons.

- *The experiences which help young people to live* are (in order of priority): friendship, sincere love, close relationships, success in my personal life, clubbing with friends, success in studies and exams, conversation, attending a concert, making a lot of money, buying whatever I like, having a beautiful body.

The peer group is especially important and the group of friends can be more important than the family. However, they can hide important conflicts which are not easily solved. Relationships can be narcissistic and gain more importance than concern for the common good. When they first discover the affective and relational world, partnerships form which do not often last, perhaps because of the overvaluing of emotions and the confusion between love and sex.

- While leisure experiences are reflected in a wide range of activities, there are some common threads. Many activities are linked with new technologies. Young people have *little involvement in religious or political activities*, or indeed any group or club type activity. Even while the media might draw attention to risky activities like party pills or other dependence-generating substances, generally young people don't regard these as important.

Perhaps it is the symbolic which expresses best *the culture* – the thinking and behaviour – of many young people.



*Music* includes expression, socialisation and protest. *Night* is party time, fun and refreshment, the place of freedom from parental control or teachers and society, or a time to cross boundaries, breaking down established behaviours. *Television* as a culture of entertainment with its soaps and one-hour, solve-it-all shows and infotainment, allows entry into reality without any commitment to it. *Aesthetics and the body beautiful* determine any meaning or sense of community in terms of who belongs and who doesn't. Work is important only insofar as it provides them with a means to enjoy (or consume) more leisure time for being connected through new technologies.

- In terms of *the search for meaning*, which is the quest of all human beings, young Christians tend to live a

we have mentoring gifts to offer. When today's missionaries venture into other cultures, they go in as guests or visitors ready to learn and inquire, and eventually become incorporated strangers. So it is for us with the culture of young people.

Warm and welcoming faith communities (vowed or otherwise) can offer that necessary affiliation and sense of connection coupled with a spirituality alive to the 21st century while at the same time steeped in the best of our tradition and the mystical – the experience of mystery which is truly awesome.

- We can provide young people with *opportunities of solidarity* experiencing the message of Jesus through works of social justice. These experiences make real their search



'humanitarian and autonomous' Christianity. A person who is honest, self-aware and other-focused is one who is truly spiritual. A religious person is one connected with church but who may not have the qualities of one they would regard as spiritual. As they distance themselves from their parents' generation, they also distance themselves from opportunities for knowing their faith tradition. At the same time, they do give value to prayer and to the experiential encounter with mystery, albeit in their own way with a kind of DIY set of beliefs and practices.

Nevertheless, these ways of being allow for some dialogue between the generations. They are a challenge to a society that has lost the deep desire for the search for meaning. Their attitudes and behaviour can prophesy the need for change: how do we look after our world? Institutions like the church maintain a façade and the structures, and belief systems are devoid of the experience of the transcendent. They ask for welcome, denouncing exclusion and have a deep desire to feel not only recognised, but needed.

### How can we respond to youth today?

First of all, it means offering unreserved welcome, with nothing whatsoever patronising or condescending, even if

for identity and growth in relationships. They test whether or not church for them is only virtual (fake) or what we truly claim to be.

### A metaphor

I offer a metaphor for religious life or for the church for the present century. I travelled from Lyons to Rome on the TGV (*le train de la grande vitesse*). When you sit facing the rear of the train, you see the disappearing landscape. Perhaps, like faded black and white photos, those who face life backwards Toast the Great Vestige of past traditions. But their backs are to the future while the train is moving forward.

When you sit facing the engine, facing the same direction as the train is going, you anticipate the coming landscape, with the occasional look back to see what distance has been covered, all the more clear when turning corners. Perhaps these pilgrims are turned Towards a Greater Vision, even if they have yet to see all the landscape. But the track of the Gospel has already been laid for them.

At the risk of stretching the metaphor, if young people are the very fast train, then perhaps they are inviting us to sit facing forward and anticipate the future with them. ■



Kitty McKinley

# Transforming the young

*In 2002 Katie O'Connor interviewed Kitty McKinley, founder of Challenge 2000, a charity for the service of youth in Wellington. Recently Katie went back to her to see where Challenge is now.*

## **What new initiatives has Challenge developed since 2002?**

We continue our education and mentoring programmes, our retreats and programmes in state and Catholic schools much as before. But we have become more focussed now on youth development and formation. For instance, we are now dealing more with immigrants and refugees, and none of our staff have had much experience there. It's a new challenge for us.

These young immigrants want to know how to become New Zealanders. Their need is for native-born New Zealanders, including Maori and Pacific Islanders, to work alongside them and mentor them. There is also a challenge of racism which these new immigrants experience – the way they are viewed and treated by some local people.

We decided to take some new immigrants with us this year on our Social Justice pilgrimage. There were seven different nationalities among the 27 young people, including two Sudanese. The pilgrimage included a visit to the Hokianga. We learned how Pompallier, a Frenchman, came, learned Maori and sought to understand the culture of the people as well as sharing the Christian gospel with them. He too was a foreigner learning to belong in another culture.

We also 'took with us' – in memory – the Marist seminarian, Jeremy Grey, who had been with us on pastoral placement

during the last two years, but who drowned tragically in Vanuatu trying to save a child. Our young people were quite moved by his death. He has been a great role model for them.

Another new venture has been a multi-system support project in secondary schools. We have to work in partnership with the colleges, especially with their social workers. We try to help those attending the schools who come from the poorest homes and actually live in poverty. Some weeks, we may have as many as nine of these young people referred to us. That number underlines how many 'lost' children there are who are not surviving in the school system and who need special support. Our philosophy is to respond to the needs as they occur and develop our staff and our networks to deal with them.

## **Can you say something about young offenders?**

Lost young people are simply a reflection of 'lost' adults. So many adults fail to recognise and commit themselves to what is really important in life. That applies to all of us. The affluent society has sought to move 'outside' to find satisfaction and security, prestige and power. We have lost our anchors and so the children we give birth to lose their focus.

People are 'bowed down' by the demands of modern living. Adults drink more and take pills to deal with stress. And it rubs off on the children. They too become disorientated.

I am saddened by the adversarial way in which these serious social issues are dealt with in parliament. It becomes an exercise in point scoring, not in finding solutions to real problems. The most vulnerable, who should be demanding our first care and attention, have become weapons to score points in debate. It diminishes the status of the politicians involved.

We give lip service to our care of youth in New Zealand. These politicians and officials should come to a place like *Challenge* and actually talk to the youngsters under threat and to those who care for them. When politicians don't know what to do, they create new policies or set up working parties. What they should be doing is funding the aid agencies who are in the front line. Instead, the bureaucracy multiplies, bombarding us with papers we don't want to read and surveys we don't want to fill in.

As for the 'boot camp' proposal, to take a young offender away from kith and kin is no solution. Most of them are Maori and Pacific Islanders. Is that to say these non-whites are more criminal by nature? I ask myself how free are these young offenders who offend. To take them away to a camp and help them find their dignity is fine – but not to one of John Key's boot camps. That's no solution.

Nor, for that matter, is keeping them longer in school. We are dealing here with children who become alienated from the school system at the age of eleven. The solution offered by politicians is to simply pick out the bodies downstream when they are already drowned. They should look upstream – that's where the solution will be found.

Every New Zealand citizen should be asking themselves what am *I* doing to help families at risk? Trying to *impose* our values on people never works. The young learn best from the role models. Just saying to them *You do this or that!* achieves nothing.

The outpouring of grief over Edmund Hillary's death reflects the fact he was *our* hero, our role model. We need people like Hillary to look up to. But where are the Edmund Hillarys now to inspire young people to ideals of justice and service?

As a society we have lost our values. A school values programme will teach the children nothing unless the teachers are living them as well. Our method in *Challenge* is to sit down with our young people and ask them what it is that motivates them. I say to them: if your idea on a Saturday night is to go out on the town and get 'smashed' or smoke dope, you cannot live here and become role models for the young.

Even the churches today have become motivated more by fear than by hope. Why do we lock up our churches and have video surveillance cameras inside? Are we locking the bad people out – or locking God in?

## What is your philosophy? What drives you?

My starting point 30 years ago was Catholic social justice. I still have a profound sense of God's love which is the source and wellspring of everything. When I come up against barriers in my work I go home and say to God: *it's your problem – solve it!*. All the time our youth leaders must say to themselves: *Either I believe God is here, or I don't. If I believe that God is here, then everything is possible.*

The very first thing Jesus said to us was: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me... (Lk 4:18-19) to proclaim release to the captives, sight for the blind, freedom for the oppressed, to set the downtrodden free and proclaim the Lord's year of favour* – which means love.

And the last thing he said, talking about how people would be judged, was: *did you clothe the naked, feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, visit prisoners...? (Mt 25:35-6)* That was it!

In *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict said: *If you are not living in love, then you are blind.* What he is saying is that church, sacraments, liturgy have no power if there is no love, if there isn't outreach and service.

I started *Challenge* to be a place of transformation, service and justice. I believe everybody needs to belong. They want the opportunity to use their gifts. It is what our young people want too. We set up programmes – but what we really try to do is meet people where they are. We ask them: *what is it you need?* – and then try to meet it. I believe any programme is only as good as the honesty and authenticity of the people running it.

We take our programmes into State schools as well as Catholic. We are not there to proselytise. If you have to push something, it's because your product is no good. But if they see that we live what we speak, they will be drawn to it.

## So how did *Challenge 2000* get started?

I saw a gap. The gap was the need to serve the young. But it was also to provide a place where people who wanted to make a difference could go. We are providing for a genuine community need.

First, there were five or six people who joined me. We had no money. The local priest let us use his kitchen. At the time I was working as a consultant, and so I paid the team members out of my own pocket. But then we received money for our work from the Wellington City Council.

The people we were helping were very needy, and no one cared much about them. What we were doing was to bring the 'rich' and the poor together. That way the poor become less poor, and the 'rich' become less rich because they give – and they also learn to be aware of the other world of the needy. The ones who have been through this process often help us now with cash. They have learnt a sense of social responsibility.



# From man's man to free man

Daniel O'Leary

*A visit to a prison revealed the damage that has been done to so many young men, some serving jail sentences, but most imprisoned in other ways. Yet the painful path to true liberation, through death to life, was also pointed out*

Late-in-the-season snow was tumbling down as I drove through the silent streets of a Yorkshire city on Easter Sunday morning. It was a great privilege to celebrate Mass with a group of men in one of Her Majesty's prisons. The experience affected me deeply. The truth of the Triduum had weakened the walls of my usual professional defences.

The greatest fear of most public figures, some piece of research claims, is the fear of being found out. And so many of us 'on the outside' pretend, pull rank and deny when our misdemeanors and mistakes come under scrutiny. But these men had nowhere to hide. Lined up, dressed down, watched, they seemed anguished, shamed. They sat there as though naked. This struck me particularly as poignant. They were found out, and found guilty, and they just had to spend each long day in their own private Purgatory of pain.

Interspersed among the 50 or so men were four women. They were there as chaplains and their assistants. Their

presence was striking. There was a kind of harmony and acceptance between them all that could be sensed. Full of firmness, respect and compassion before these self-conscious, vulnerable men, they were sensitive companions, restoring some semblance of self-belief to broken psyches. Whatever male and female energy may mean, they seemed to me to be woven together uniquely that special morning. I began to wonder how this prison could be a place of grace for those men. Where to begin?

*In the desert of the heart, let the healing fountain start.* Could the waters of self-forgiveness spring from here? How, I wondered, would the women prepare those men for a death, for a new birth? *Unless the grain of wheat dies...* How would they convince them of the need for a painful planting, a slow gestation through an inner dying. How were these men ever going to bless their deserted partners with a new-found insight, or teach their children the hidden harvest of a damaged life? Even for Jesus, it took a long time for

his wounds to reveal their wisdom.

It is never easy to face your demons, often impulsive and violent. It is more difficult still to share these burning emotions with others. To be vulnerable in this way is against everything that male machismo stands for. Unbidden, an innate sense of competition seems to spring up whenever men gather together. Behind the masks of a confident bravado lies a constant fear of failure.

A key issue for most men is the nature of their relationships with their fathers. The father-son relationship is at the heart of the holistic growing and maturing of the boy, the young man, the middle-aged man. Self-aware men feel the negative effects on their lives of their 'absent fathers'. Jesus knew something about this abandonment, too. These relationships, present and absent, can carry the deepest trauma. Unless this reality is acknowledged and given healing space, it can make a full life impossible.

►► Now we have grown to having a turnover of \$700,000. The Ministry of Education gives us \$75,000 for the school which covers the time the children are at school. I have to make up the difference. We receive \$70,000 from CYPS. About a quarter of what we need comes from Government funding. The rest comes from various foundations, Religious Orders and through fund-raising. We really need now to employ someone to raise funds for us.

When things get desperate I say to God – again – *It's your problem! Sort it out!* And it happens. Joseph Campbell said:

*If you follow your bliss (dream), the world will conspire to help you and support you.*

So those are the ingredients. First make sure there is a gap. Then find people who want fill the gap – as well as other people who want you to fill the gap. Make sure it is more than just your bright idea.

The God that I know is boundless – not a God of *shoulds* and *should nots*. We try to impose limits on God. What we are afraid of is the transforming effect of God's love. ■



As I chatted with a few of the prisoners that morning I sensed in them a tentative searching for a lost self, for a fresh beginning. Some seemed able to accept the hard reality of their situation. It was an infectious kind of common culpability, a moment of innocence almost, that I felt drawn into. How strange that such are the times, and such are the places, all marked by male brokenness and loss, when one is conscious of a deep sense of healing. In the oddest way, among them, I felt forgiven.

There is an increasing need among men for spiritual direction and for what is called 'inner work'. There is a male spirituality that is nurtured and fostered at men's 'rights of passage' sessions. These increasingly popular gatherings encourage a stripping of masks so as to let go of illusions, to feel the pain of humiliation, to discern the truth in a male world so often full of half-lies. This kind of difficult honesty reveals many conditions that keep men stuck in their maturing. Sibling and peer rivalry, subtle fear of inadequacy on a number of fronts, suppressed grief, an overwhelming pressure to 'prove oneself' before father and significant others, are all among the pressing causes of anger, depression, addiction and despair among men, including fellow priests.

Fr Richard Rohr OFM, a master teacher, believes that until men can face their own demons and death, in reality or in ritual, they will continue to be driven by the relentless demands of the ego, stuck and obsessed with the interests and habits of the first decades of life. There must be a difficult transforming death before a new horizon opens for us.

Without a hard-won awareness, a kind of second birth, men will always

*behind the masks of a  
confident bravado lies a  
constant fear of failure*

tend to abuse power and people, to remain trapped in closed and costly competitions and compulsions.

Throughout these sessions, men are helped to mature through an awareness of the mid-life turning point between the ascendant upward thrust of our careers and the more selective and looser tempo of descent in our final decades. Missing this vital turning drives us down many deadly culs-de-sac.

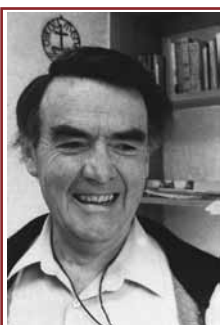
I spent a 'men's week' with Fr Richard and 80 others at Ghost Ranch in the

New Mexico desert. It was a painful and liberating experience, a raw ritual of passage that reached painful places normally untouched by our liturgical celebrations. It was about the death of the false self, the cherishing of the true self. Priests and lay folk wept at their damaged lives, at the unwitting abuses they were suffering in their controlling environments; we were glad at the new freedom we were finding, risking the recovery of our God-given selves, and telling the truth once more.

It was a kind of Passover experience. All our wounds were becoming sacred wounds. We were experiencing, through the grace of grief, a transformation into authenticity. We had a hard time of it finding our souls; there is a heavy cost for such discipleship. We were losing much; we were gaining more. Because we felt held by God we did not need to worry about the details of the future.

Such a pilgrim is walking with his wound. He is giving all else away. He has nothing. And yet, as Fr Richard said to us on the final day, holding high the broken, nourishing bread of a wounded life on a canyon rim of stunning beauty, "he has it all". ■

*Daniel O'Leary is a priest of Leeds Diocese in northern England*



## *Celebration*

*July 30 this year marks the 20th anniversary of the death of Dominican priest Eugene O'Sullivan. Eugene worked in the Auckland Diocese from 1969 until 1987.*

*To honour his good memory and to give thanks for his life a group of friends has organized an afternoon of celebration. This will be held at*

**Newman Hall, 16 Waterloo Quadrant, Auckland  
on Sunday 10 August at 2.p.m**

*The commemoration will include those things that Eugene valued so highly:  
The celebration of the Liturgy, the gathering of friends, the telling of  
stories and the sharing of good food and drink.*

If you would like to be part of this celebration please email

John Cullen on [cullen1@ihug.co.nz](mailto:cullen1@ihug.co.nz)

Or contact Margaret Grigg at the Eugene O'Sullivan Library at  
Newman Hall Phone 09 3796424 ext. 723

## *50th Jubilee*

**St John the Baptist church  
Alexandra, Central Otago**

A celebratory Mass will be held  
at 2.00 pm on

***Sunday 27 July***

This will be followed by  
afternoon tea in the Parish Hall  
for all parishioners,  
past and present

*All welcome*

## In Memoriam

### Miriama Te Ahipuia Kahu (1945 – 2008)

The death of Miriama Te Ahipuia Kahu (nee Solomon) on 2 May 2008 sent shock waves through the Hapu of Ngati Kuri, Ngai Tahu Iwi as well as numerous health and education agencies and the Catholic community. Miriama died suddenly following an accident on the inland route near Mt Lyford not far from her home. She is survived by one sister, one brother, her husband Spencer, seven children and 30 grandchildren.

Miriama lived her life guided by the tikanga and kawa that articulated the norms of her culture. She was committed to whanaungatanga or 'right relationship' with God, with people and the environment. This was not easy in the predominately pakeha community of Kaikoura. It demanded courage, risk and integrity. She led her whanau by example and was so proud to see her children follow her lead and become actively involved in their Hapu.

She was instrumental in setting up Te Kohanga Reo in Kaikoura, the development of Takahanga Marae, she established *Tē Tai o Marokura*

Health and Social Services and was a founding member of the *Ariama* Cultural Retreat Centre together with her niece Aroha Poharama. In 1987 her whanau along with four others mortgaged their homes to raise the money to establish *Whale Watch Kaikoura*. This she hoped would help alleviate Maori unemployment in the area.

Miriama was a visionary and was not afraid to take risks. She gave service on school boards and government agencies and was closely involved with police and other agencies committed to addressing the issues of drug and alcohol abuse. Many young people who came to pay their respects at her tangi stood and thanked Miriama for believing in them despite their behavior. The trust she put in them had enabled them to turn their lives around.

She was proud to be Catholic and relied on prayer and Scripture to inspire her actions. She was committed to justice and worked with Father John Curnow in the late 1980s running social analysis workshops in Aotearoa



and overseas. Miriama established relationships with many religious and priests in Aotearoa, Australia and in the Pacific as a result. She also served her diocese as a delegate to Te Runanga o Te Hahi Katorika ki Aotearoa.

Miriama believed in educating people for life and to this end she led by example. She was a qualified Alcohol and Drug Counsellor; she gained a social work diploma, a degree in Psychology and at the time of her death was studying for a PhD in resource management. She insisted that professional training for health and social services staff was mandatory because she was acutely aware of the level of scrutiny Maori service providers incur from Government agencies and the general population.

During the five days of her tangi hundreds of Maori and pakeha from Iwi, churches, government and local community came to pay their respects. Her extensive networking over many years of commitment to faith, health and justice was apparent in the many people who came to honour this distinguished Taua, this wahine toa, this beloved and prophetic woman.

No reira moe mai e hoa I tou moenga roa.

*Tui Cadigan RSM*

Waitaha, Ngati Mamoe, Poutini  
Ngai Tahu.

## Radical Christian Verse

by John Miller

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## Team ministry

*Acts 13-15*

**A**cts 13 opens with the community commissioning Paul and Barnabas to begin their mission in Asia Minor. The two apostles set off from Antioch in Syria where significant numbers of Jewish Christians are living to avoid harassment from those Jews who sought salvation through a faithful observance of the Law of Moses. Their numbers increased in the 60s as Jews and Jewish Christians moved into Syria in the wake of uprisings against Rome.

The chapter then concludes with Paul and Barnabas being positively greeted by the Gentiles in another Antioch in Turkey, but soon they were driven out by the city's diasporic Jews. The two met with a similar reception in Iconium, just down the road from Antioch where "unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers". Such opposition to their mission did not deter the leaders back in Antioch, and two more apostles, "Judas called Barsabbas and Silas", were sent to join

Paul and Barnabas. Throughout these chapters Paul never emerges as a lone star ranger.

Today there is a lot of talk about team ministry, which suggests that ministry does not belong to one person but rather it belongs to a group of people, all of whom bring their own particular gifts and strengths to ministry. In five of the seven letters we know that Paul wrote he begins by citing that they are from Paul and one or two companions – perhaps Timothy or Silas or Barnabas. In his letter to the Romans he ends by concluding with a reference to Timothy, Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, his co-workers. Paul was part of a team, part of a missionary community.

One of the recurring tensions in the Catholic Church flows from whether we understand church as hierarchy or as community. Most problems at parish, diocesan or universal level have their origins in this tension. Like all tensions it will never disappear

– the challenge lies in creatively working through such tension. Those belonging to the hierarchy – bishops, priests and deacons – need to exercise their authority in a way that does not diminish the role of the laity while the laity should persist in their efforts to pursue a mature relationship with the hierarchy.

Catholic history suggests that the authority of the hierarchy has often drowned out the voice of the laity, but after Vatican II, it seemed as if a window of opportunity had opened for the laity. Increasingly, but fortunately not everywhere, this window is being closed as monologue once again takes priority over dialogue. It seems important that the laity do not allow themselves to be trapped again into restricting their ministry to "paying, praying and obeying."

*Susan Smith*

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

## AUCKLAND DIOCESE CATHOLIC PRISON MINISTRY

Catholic Prison Chaplains and Catholic Family and Community Services  
are having a gathering to support Catholic Prison Ministry on  
Saturday 9 August 2008 from 2.00 PM to 4.00 PM  
at the St Columba Centre, 40 Vermont Street, Ponsonby, Auckland.

*This time will support people already involved with prison visiting or other prison ministry. It will also be an opportunity for people who want to know more about this ministry which is at the heart of the Gospel. Our time together will include times of sharing, of prayer and liturgy. Bishop Robin Leamy will lead a reflection on the place of prison ministry in the Gospel and the life of the Church. We will also have time to mix informally.*

Please telephone Sonja at Catholic Family and Community Services, Telephone 378 9650 for more information or to register for the gathering.



## Living the gospel call in California

*Take This Bread:* The spiritual memoir of a 21st century Christian  
by Sara Miles

Published by Ballantine Books, 2008

Price: \$24.99 at Epworth Bookshop

Review: Mike Crowl

Much of what Sara Miles writes and much of who she is will irritate, annoy, inspire, upset, and in general, make you rethink a good deal of your Christian faith. She manages to tread on toes and hold your hand at the same time.

Miles was the child of atheists who'd each reacted against their own mission-minded and often radical parents. She grew up knowing next-to-nothing about Christianity, became a restaurant cook (along with her brother), then turned to journalism and spent some time in South America reporting on wars and nearly getting herself killed. On returning to California, she gave birth to a child she'd had by a man who not long after left her, and later she 'came out' as a lesbian, living with her female partner in an ongoing relationship.

One day, when she was 46, for no particular reason, she walked into a rather unusual Episcopal church where they were celebrating communion. Somebody "put a piece of fresh, crumbly bread into my hands, saying 'the Body of Christ,' and handing me a goblet of sweet wine, saying, 'the Blood of Christ,' and then something outrageous and terrifying happened. Jesus happened to me."

There was no turning back. Within a year she'd begun a 'pantry', where each week they would give away food to poor people. More than 200 would come regularly. Eventually she began several other pantries around the city, and they continue to this day.

Jesus himself was notorious amongst the 'righteous' for dining with sinners. Miles' book is full of sinners, prostitutes, gays and lesbians, addicts of every sort, crazy people, and the whole world of Californian barminess. Some of these people become volunteers in the pantries, finding that giving away food to others somehow saves them too.

And though Miles continues to go to the church where Jesus found her, she never becomes committed to anything traditional. She gets in people's hair, splits 'nice' congregations, annoys even her own volunteers and family. And still remains someone we know has got hold of an aspect of Christianity most of us miss.

Food is the constant theme throughout the book, whether it's sharing the last meal in a Nicaraguan jungle, cooking until exhausted in a restaurant run by a mobster, or giving it away by the ton to people who aren't necessarily grateful. The communion bread becomes a metaphor for giving out Christ to the world, but so does the free food.

You'll find this book stirring your soul, making you wonder how you can change the world too. Miles is something of an entrepreneurial spirit, but equally she's not doing anything that most of us couldn't do. You may not like her sometimes loose theology, but I guarantee you'll find her a warm and wild companion for the spiritual journey. ■

## Negotiating the passage from childhood to maturity

*Happy-Go-Lucky*

Film Review: Paul Sorrell

As I came out of the theatre, I bumped into an acquaintance who is originally from London. She had not formed any immediate reaction to the film beyond an instant engagement and enjoyment. "I'll need to go away and think about what it all means", she said, "I'll definitely see it again when it comes out on DVD". Mike Leigh's films always strike me like that, too: an immediate effect, sometimes uplifting, sometimes depressing – usually a combination of both, a complexity that mirrors real life and provides ample material for reflection.

And real life is what we find in a film

like *Happy-Go-Lucky*. Leigh's actors don't learn their lines, but workshop their parts, with the result that his films have a wonderful spontaneity and freshness.

The central character, Poppy (Sally Hawkins), is certainly spontaneous, perhaps to a fault. She skips through life with a relentlessly cheerful, upbeat attitude, her speech sprinkled with optimistic catchphrases, that in a shallow person would be merely irritating. But as we get to know her, we see that Poppy is a loving, caring, wholly uncalculating young woman who may just have stumbled on the secret of happiness. She enjoys – because she has created them – wonderfully functional relationships

with her friends, flatmate and work colleagues.

But *Happy-Go-Lucky* is by no means a frothy comedy. Poppy's goodheartedness at times borders on naivety and we fear for her when she approaches a threatening-looking tramp one night on an empty lot, full of kind intentions. She must also deal with her unstable driving instructor (Eddie Marsan), a man of dangerously turbulent moods who represses his emotions in a way that produces bottled-up anger and frustration – everything Poppy is not. As we often see in Leigh's films, the protagonist's character is filled out through contrasts and comparisons with other characters, as in a telling scene at her married

## Challenging the values of middle New Zealand

*Barefeet Peacemakers: Catholic Worker Aotearoa*

Produced by Therese Gallagher-Power,  
Michael Coughlan, Gaylene Barnes,  
Kathleen Gallagher

DVD Review: Clare Bycroft

To be young and live in the city is to have the world bombard you with possibilities. You are encouraged to set your goals high. High salary, high excitement, high power, a high combination of all three. It is all about *you*, the young, street-smart individual with so much potential to learn and to earn. Get yourself in line, the billboards say, and push your way to the front before someone else gets there first.

But Kathleen Gallagher's new film, *Barefeet Peacemakers*, documenting the last seven years of commitment to *Catholic Worker*, offers an alternative goal. A goal of giving to the community that can take many forms, inspired by the example of those she has followed and filmed.

Her approach is simple. The subjects of

the film are pictured and interviewed exactly where this example takes place – their own homes. They take their words from the well of their experience, and it shows in their unselfconscious delivery. These people have something real to say, so the camera doesn't bother them.

Leoni Miller's house has "sometimes three, sometimes ten" people in it at one time. She says this with a delightful laugh, her Filipina face glowing. From the busy, popular pot-luck gathering in Christchurch's *Suzanne Aubert House*, we are taken to the far North, where shoes are unnecessary and the beards grow freely as the forest. It seems another world. Idyllic almost. There, bread is kneaded every morning, and 'going to work' means attending to a glorious crop of corn. The quiet, background hum is made by a stream, and the human voices of contentment.

"We always have enough", says Catherine Land, mother of six. Back in the city we debate the wrongs and rights of the student allowance

scheme, and squeal at the price of cheese. Petrol pokes holes in our pockets, and alcohol helps us forget. But then we wake up remembering and the headache persists. Baking bread is a special weekend activity that gets regularly postponed, and our imagination is confined to the borders of a time-table.

The hum where we live is made by the cars, their drivers' eyes set like a lens on their target. No time for a friendly wave or a joke at the intersection. There is work to be done, deadlines to meet, a stroll in the park must be organised, to fit into the schedule.

If there is one thing a young person can take away from this insightful documentary produced by Kathleen and her team, it is that joy is less about the individual and much more about the community. Living within it and living for it. ■

Available from Wickcandle Film,  
33 Crichton Tce, Christchurch 8002,  
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Price \$20 (includes p/p)

sister's house – a woman who has lost her carefree approach to life under the weight of pregnancy, mortgages and pension funds.

Leigh does not present us with a straightforward view of Poppy. Although we are given a warm and affectionate portrait of this remarkable young woman, *Happy-Go-Lucky* is all about the gains and losses involved in leaving childhood behind and 'growing up' (significantly, she is a primary school teacher and although 30, could pass for 18). Leigh's skill is to encourage us to invest our intellects and emotions in her life so that we really do care about her future choices and, indeed, the Poppy in all of us. ■

### AOTEAROA PSALMS

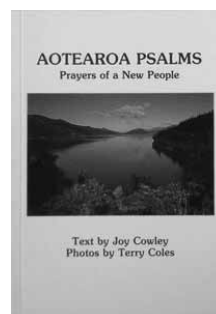
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## Obama – a tonic of hope for the United States

Barack Obama has emerged from a bruising campaign as the Democratic candidate for the presidency of the United States in November. Hillary Clinton finally accepted defeat and declared her unqualified support for him. The world breathed a sigh of relief.

Barack Obama, whose father was Kenyan and his mother from Kansas, has a law degree from Harvard. He is an eloquent and at times inspirational speaker on whom the Democrats are pinning their hopes, not only for the White House, but also for the re-establishment of the fundamentals of their party. Both Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman campaigned for the 'people' and railed against big business and the elite. This was Democratic party ideology.

Obama has become the conscience and the messenger of the new Democrats. "You don't have to be rich to achieve your potential" he says, neatly encapsulating the 'can do' spirit of the American pioneers. He is young and the young are flocking to his side. He argues against the politics of fear and holds out hope for a better society by advocating social security schemes. He speaks of black Americans "binding our particular grievances... to the larger aspirations of all Americans".

After eight disastrous years under George W. Bush, 'The War President', who has reduced the standing of America to that of an imperialist superpower gone mad, the next president will face formidable problems. It is likely that Obama will defeat McCain. Obama will then face a Middle East still in turmoil, an Iraq war which continues to haemorrhage lives and money, a financial system in danger of unravelling and a social inequality that is becoming disturbingly wider between the rich and the poor.

Obama will have to battle 'redneck' Americans who loathe the idea of a

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### Crosscurrents

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John Honoré

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black President. He will face divisions in his own party from women who fought for Hillary Clinton. He will face scepticism from politicians like McCain who have 'experience'. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the world, Obama represents change and the hope of a revitalisation of America both at home and abroad.

#### US fealty to Israel

With the battle lines drawn for a new president of the United States, there remains one obligation to fulfil. All candidates must pledge their support to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the most influential lobby that directs US foreign policy. At the AIPAC annual conference held in Washington last month, McCain, Clinton, Obama and virtually half the US Congress, including House speaker Nancy Pelosi and Condoleezza Rice confirmed their fealty to Israel. Job done.

AIPAC finances those who support their agenda, contributing millions of dollars to campaign managers, political committees and to politicians sympathetic to their unwavering line that what's good for Israel must be good for America. In 2007 Walt and Mearsheimer weakened this myth with their controversial essay *The Israel Lobby* and have not ceased to be attacked for it. Among other criticisms they contend that the Iraq war was "due in large part to the lobby's influence".

In his address to AIPAC Barak Obama toed the line. With money, he pledged Israel \$30 billion in aid over the next ten years and promised to protect an "undivided" Jerusalem (Jews only?) as the capital of Israel. For this, the Zionists gave him standing ovations and no doubt underwrote the cost

of his campaign by another few million. Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian authority, was outraged. There is never any mention of the rights of the Palestinians. This unqualified support for Israel will no doubt encourage AIPAC to force the issue of an attack on Iran or another intrusion into Lebanon. It is a given. The tacit approval of the presidential candidates has been confirmed.

It is to be hoped that Obama, if elected, will consider the damage that has been done by pandering to AIPAC. The Middle East needs a new approach and a new policy that includes the interests of the Palestinians. *Change!* is Obama's catch cry; let us pray that he sticks to it.

#### Financial cowboys

The tsunami of failed finance companies involved in risky ventures has highlighted the naivety or perhaps the self-deception of New Zealand's investing public. Sadly it is the Mums and Dads who have fared the worst and who can ill afford the loss. Beguiled by dubious investment advisors and consultants, in a completely unregulated market, many life savings have evaporated.

The lack of careful assessment of the company prospectus has permitted financial cowboys some of whom should be in prison for fraud, to issue debenture stock, with no sustainable capital base for ventures such as car sales and land development. An economy in recession with retail sales falling, cost of oil rising and house prices in sharp decline have exposed the inherent weakness of the finance companies.

Financial advisors and consultants reimbursed with commissions by firms that they recommend spells conflict of interest. Now we have some commentators pontificating on the crisis, whose own companies have previously collapsed. *Commerce 101* would also teach the investor that when an ex-politician joins the board or an ex-rugby player recommends the stock, it is time to bail out. ■



## The persecution of Bishop Geoffrey Robinson

Australia's Bishop Geoffrey Robinson is back in the news. Even more so than he was 12 months ago at the time of the publication of his book, *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church*.

The normally reliable London publication, *The Tablet*, headlined its lead story on his speaking tour in the United States: "US Cardinal aims to silence rebel Australian bishop". Headlines need to be crisp and attention-getting. But they must also be truthful. Geoffrey Robinson is no rebel. The headline should have spoken of endeavours to silence "an Australian bishop asking awkward questions".

Cardinal Mahoney of Los Angeles heads an archdiocese that faced the payment of 660 million dollars to some 1500 individuals who have suffered sexual abuse. The Cardinal is presumably interested, not so much in the orthodoxy or otherwise of a visiting speaker, as in avoiding an event that might stir up further claims.

The prefect of the Vatican's *Congregation for Bishops*, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, circulated the bishops of the various North American dioceses where Bishop Robinson was scheduled to speak urging that his appearance be prevented. There is irony in this. At one place in his book, he recalled that in the early days of his Australian homeland, if a matter had to be referred to Rome for a ruling, a reply could not be expected for some two years, given the slow pace of water-borne communication at that time. Whereas today, a message can go to Rome and a reply be forthcoming, all within two days. What has happened in his case is an example of this.

In his book, the bishop pointed out that the communication revolution has been employed in the church to strengthen the centralised power of the Holy See but not to promote collegiality. It has not been used to foster the involvement of levels in the church in key decision-making processes.

In 1994 Pope John Paul II declared that the church had no power to ordain women to the priesthood. This ruling was soon declared by Cardinal Ratzinger, in his role as prefect of the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, as having been "set forth infallibly by the ordinary and universal magisterium".

No significant attempt had been made to ascertain what in fact was the view of today's episcopate. Email was in early days in the mid 1990s, but fax and airmail were already well established. Use of these could have secured in a matter of days a response from the vast majority of the bishops. No such attempt was made. So much for using the communications revolution to facilitate collegiality.

In the course of his pages, Bishop Robinson raises innumerable awkward questions. What should be done in the event of the Pope becoming, through physical or mental illness, incapable of carrying out essential duties? Is some of the church's teaching on sex in need of rethinking? How can the top down dominance of the church by the Roman Curia be moderated? Awkward questions, yes. But ones crying out to be addressed.

*The Tablet's* headline denominated Bishop Geoffrey Robinson 'a rebel'. Let me utterly disagree. I have, over the course of more than 40 years, met with him regularly at the annual Australian New Zealand canon law conference. As well as being one of the most competent of those taking part, he was notable for his even temper and the excellent balance of his judgment. If anyone ever had a case against a magazine for libel, he has one against that prestigious London publication. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

*Fr Humphrey O'Leary is rector of the Redemptorist community in Glendowie, Auckland*

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## *A mother's journal*

I'm a long way from becoming a grandmother. But I have had two wonderful women as grandmothers – Ruth and Hazel. Hazel Wood was a mother for an amazing 69 years of her tally of 96 years. And she taught me how to cook a sponge, get stains out of white tablecloths, talk on the phone for an hour or three and to be faithful at praying.

I remember Nana lavishing me with my first ever hokey-pokey ice cream when I was four years old. That same visit to Auckland, I remember her unstintingly applying numerous band-aids to my cuts at a time when one nearly needed to have severed an artery to merit a sticking plaster with our parents. After my father died when I was eleven years old, Nana was very attentive and thoughtful about me as a person. She had time to hear my troubles, to talk about my Dad which I so longed for. And she spoiled us rotten.

During my teens I remember many, many cycle rides over to Bayswater Ave. Despite mildly protesting, I loved her poking me into the shower and passing me lotions and potions and at least two fluffy white towels. My visits with advance notice always merited Nana baking an orange or banana cake just for the two of us for afternoon tea. Although I was a scruffy teenager with cut-off denim shorts and an Eighties tie-dyed T-shirt, she would always get out the beautiful, proper tea cups, make ceremony of the proper leaf tea, and make me feel I was the most special and welcome guest she could have had.

The hospitality of Nana's heart as well as her home is something I will always treasure. She was nearly always at home – ready to share a cuppa. We would sit and talk.

Usually for the first hour it was mostly Nana updating me on *The Herald*, talk-back radio discussions, missionary prayer meetings and news of the Wellington and Perth Wood cousins.

Then, as we started on our third or fourth pieces of cake she would say, "Now Kaaren, that's quite enough from me, tell me how things are going for you!" And she'd love to listen and of course aided and abetted me if I embellished the odd tale of Derring Do. She had set the fine example for years on Telling a Good Tale!

As I was getting ready to go, Nana would get out pen and paper and find out what prayer needs were coming up. She would write down my exam schedules in detail, as well as pray for youth group friends and for hockey conquests for the Northcote Girls First XI!. Although later at Medical school I got myself quite tangled in the theology of a God who gives grandchildren of Hazel Wood extra advantages in exams – Nana of course just kept praying. Widowed with four children in her forties, she never seemed to waver in her unquestioning trust in a God who loves us.

Early in March this year, Nana Wood died. I was sitting with Nana, holding her wrinkled hand as she took her last breaths. Her old, old body was so glad to have a chance to rest. It was a sacred time – she was a gracious and faithful woman and she will always be an important person in my life. I haven't managed to have the simple faith of my Nana Wood. But I do carry with me an image of God as a Doting Grandmother who is always there, who lavishes us with hokey-pokey ice cream and protracted afternoon teas.

*Kaaren Mathias*