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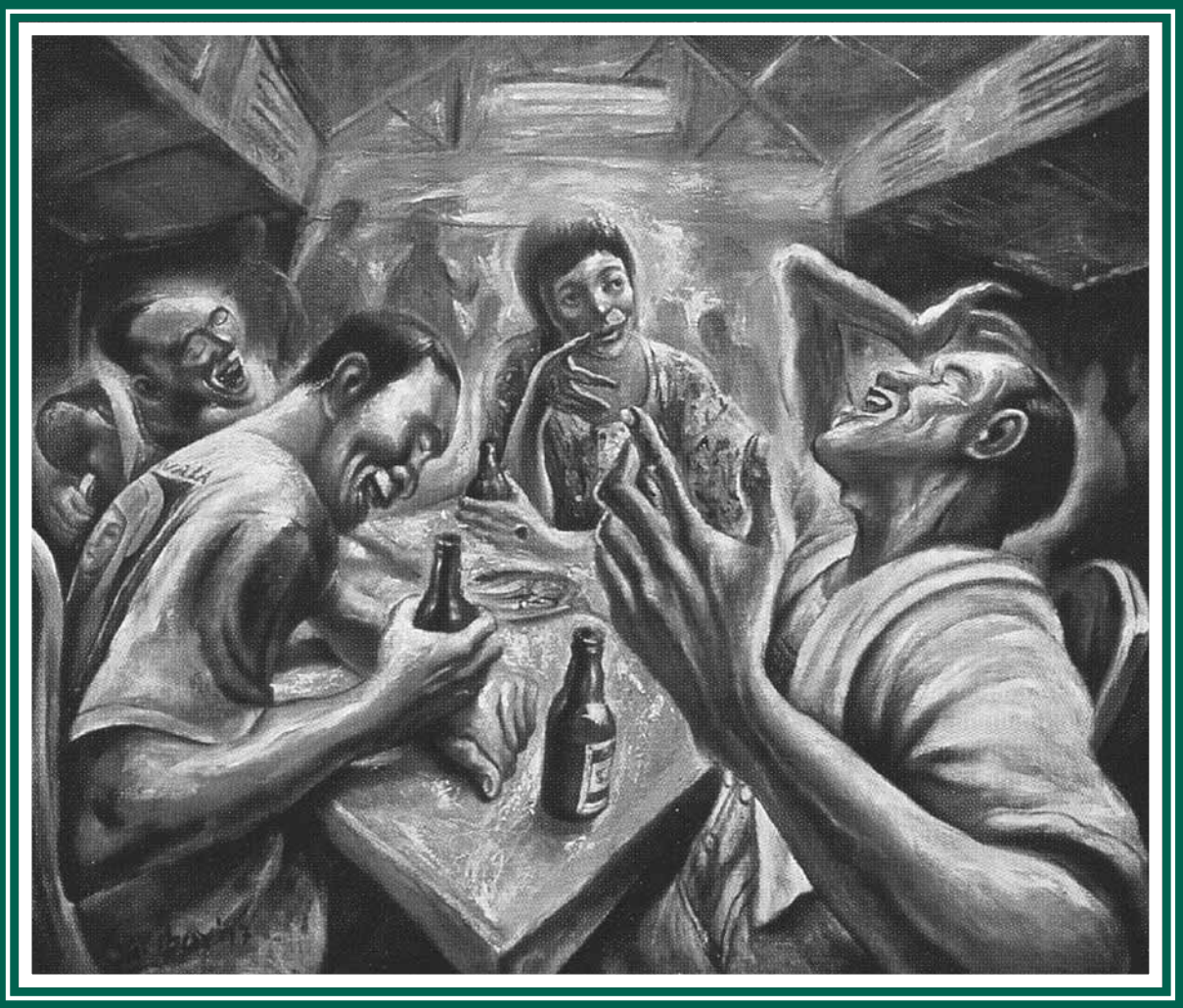

did not our hearts burn within us

(Luke 24:32)

Caravaggio: *The Supper at Emmaus* (1600)

Contents

The breaking of bread

Christ at Emmaus is nearly everybody's favourite Easter story. The disciples "recognised Jesus in the breaking of bread", and as Richard Dowden notes in his article on Eucharist, the phrase 'breaking of bread' became the early Christian shorthand for the ceremony of Eucharist. That phrase reminds us how closely the first believers associated their eucharistic gatherings with faith in Christ Risen. Easter had changed their lives for ever: it changed the likes of Peter and John from craven cowards into courageous leaders. Their 'little faith' was transformed into rocklike confidence.

Few artists in the church's long tradition represent this better than Caravaggio whose ***Supper at Emmaus*** (*above left*) captures the moment of astonishment and shock when the disciples suddenly realise that the Jesus they mourned is alive, really present, and bringing them back to life too. The contemporary Filipino artist, Emmanuel Garibay, carries this artistic portrayal a stage further in our remarkable and wonderful cover picture. The disciples are not just astonished and shocked: they are transformed into a wild paroxysm of delight.

Art critic Rod Pattenden says of his work: "In ***Emmaus***, Garibay explains the disciples' difficulty in recognising Jesus after his resurrection through the physical answer of a female form. The disciples think it is simply hilarious! The viewer is quickly moved into more perilous places where the role of women in religion emerges as an issue... Garibay is sensitive to the colonial realities in the Philippines of both a Spanish heritage and the current American economic dependence."

Pattenden adds: "Garibay's works are filled with... the holy presence of the ordinary men and women of his own country. Using parody, irony and deep human compassion he brings alive a world of dangerous imagination."

We rarely think of Eucharist as the way of profound transformation for our own lives; yet in the Easter context that is what it must be. What matters is not so much what happens to the bread as the change taking place in ***me***. In this Easter issue we have a trio of articles on Eucharist – coming from a local Physics Professor, an American Benedictine Sister and an Irish Jesuit, all of whom seem to capture that sense of the extraordinary and the transformative, which needs to underpin our eucharistic faith. ■

Ecological crisis

We have been fortunate in this issue to reproduce two articles on the environment. The first, from the London *Tablet*, by Michael McCarthy, is perhaps the most important article ever published in this magazine. It records the shock and consternation suffered by a hard-boiled London journalist at what was revealed at a world climate conference in February.

Why has this news not dominated the headlines of the world's press? Are we so obsessed with Michael Jackson or the 2005 Oscar awards or the Super 12 that there is no room – or no desire – to report the imminent destruction of the world as we know it.

Alongside it is a lengthy excerpt from an article by the Prince of Wales (from *Resurgence*). The Prince recently paid a visit here, and while, once again, the world's press is obsessed with his marriage, they continue to pour scorn on what is the abiding passion of his life – his "instinct" to defend and preserve Nature the way it is and his belief in its "sacred" worth. The one article fittingly complements the other.

M.H.

Are we tired of hearing 'the cry of the poor'?

Michael Smith

We see the pictures on our TV screens, read the stories in our newspapers and news websites and hear them on the radio – there is huge poverty in the world. Every year millions die as a direct result of poverty. The question is: are we as a nation doing enough to change this? In my view, far from it! We can and we must do more.

New Zealand is a wealthy country, and we have experienced an economic boom for the last 5 years. With tax revenue likely to exceed government expenditure by over $7 billion this year, there are no excuses. The New Zealand Government must do more to address poverty at home and overseas.

All developed countries have a responsibility to do their fair share for those in need. Most people would agree that every person has a right to life and to those things required for human decency, starting with food, shelter and clothing, employment, healthcare and education.

To me this is common sense, but we can also draw on the major themes from Catholic Social Teaching, and one of these is the preferential option for the poor. Catholic tradition instructs us that we must put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. After all, we are all one human family, and we should be responsible for each other regardless of national, racial, economic and ideological differences.

The New Zealand Government has promised to do more. In fact, back in September 2000, New Zealand along with 189 other members of the United Nations signed up to the ***Millennium Declaration***. The declaration led to the creation of eight *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) that would combat hunger and poverty and improve education, health, the status of women, and the environment by the year 2015. Currently more than 1.2 billion people survive on less than US$1 per day. These MDGs include halving the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day by 2015.

In signing up to the ***Millennium Declaration***, the New Zealand Government and other developed countries agreed to the spending of 0.7 percent of their Gross National Income (GNI) on overseas aid by the year 2015. In the current year, including the recent provision made for the tsunami relief activities, the Government is spending approximately $400 million or 0.27 percent of GNI.

If we look at the top 22 OECD countries, in 2003 New Zealand was ranked 16th in terms of percentage of GNI. Ireland a country similar in size to New Zealand is ranked eighth and contributes 0.41 percent and plans to reach 0.7 percent in 2007. New Zealand, Australia and Japan are the only countries that have not set any timeframes for achieving either the 0.7 percent or some increased level of overseas aid.

If we had already reached the 0.7 percent target, we would be spending about $945 million on overseas aid this year. This may sound a lot, but is less than the $1.2 billion New Zealanders spend each year on sweets, biscuits, cakes and soft drinks!

The *World Bank* has estimated that meeting the MDGs will require another US$50 billion per year in aid to developing countries. Donor countries, therefore, need to almost double their aid contributions. To put this in perspective, the world's military budget totalled US$800 billion in 2002, and rich countries currently spend more than US$300 billion on agricultural subsidies. What should our priorities be?

New Zealand's overseas aid is effective – but there needs to be more of it. The Government must increase aid levels while maintaining the quality of our aid programme.

Caritas, the Catholic Agency for Justice, Peace and Development, along with many other New Zealand development agencies, is supporting the "Point Seven" campaign. This is calling on the Government to commit to a timetable for achieving the internationally agreed target of spending 0.7 percent of Gross National Income on overseas aid by 2015. You can support this campaign by signing the Point Seven campaign petition. The petition has been circulated to parishes throughout the country and more information is available on the Council for International Development website:

www.cid.org.nz/advocacy/point-seven.html

You can also do more by writing to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to your local MP and by publicising this campaign to family, friends and work colleagues.

Jesus Christ calls each of one of us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. ■

Michael Smith is Director of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand

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Tui Motu-InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed. The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.
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Küng and the Jews 1

Chris Sullivan (*Tui Motu February)* takes an apologetic stance on the involvement of Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust. He goes as far as accusing Prof. Hans Küng of historical distortions.

However, the question on how the high-profile head of such an important institution as the Catholic Church could 'keep quiet' in the face of immense human suffering is debated and criticised by many commentators. How could Catholic bishops and priests in Germany support Fascim? How could Catholics participate in the Holocaust or denounce their neighbours of Jewish faith in droves?

These are the questions that have probably caused the biggest crisis in the German Catholic Church.

Hiltrud Gruger, Mt Albert

Küng and the Jews 2

Chris Sullivan disagrees with Hans Küng on the church's role in the sad plight of the Jews. I, too, tried to find excuses for Pope Pius XII when Hochhuth's play first appeared. But I know now that pragmatism must not get in the way of a church leader's duty to proclaim the truth, especially when the lives of millions are threatened.

Chris Sullivan sticks out his neck again by taking on an eminent theologian over the question of fundamentals of the faith and 'truth'. Küng's teaching, solidly founded on Scripture is not, and has never been, contrary to the fundamentals of the Catholic Church. These need to be constantly interpreted and reinterpreted in the light of contemporary understanding. The Church in her wisdom has been doing this for centuries and again recently at Vatican II and, as a consequence, needed to revise her teaching – often quite radically. It is the job of our theologians to keep our faith alive and vibrant by a constant check of our beliefs against the truth of Christ whom we meet in the Gospels.

Küng rightly claims that *John*'s passion narrative repeatedly refers to the responsibility of the "Jews" in Jesus' passion and death. The literal acceptance of this passage by the church for centuries has contributed to, if not initiated, anti-Semitism. It was Küng's influence that brought about the radical reform of the church's attitude to the Jews at Vatican II, with the dropping of the term 'perfidis Judaeis' from the Good Friday prayers.

And that change came about only 40 years ago!

Frank Hoffmann, Papakura

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

Eucharistic gatherings

We are a group of women religious who gather periodically to share our spirituality and friendship. We were encouraged and affirmed by the words and themes which participants remembered of Fr Timothy Radcliffe's input at the recent Wellington Conference (*see Tui Motu February*) – words of challenge, of being open to surprises, of speaking out, of being a pilgrim, open-minded, of the exhortation given to think!

We thought about the way that we gather, the way we share the 'scripture' of our lives, the way we share a meal together, and the way in which we bless our going forth to our various ministries. Other groups do the same thing in small numbers – groups which include all who come to participate, no matter what 'church' background.

Are not these gatherings a *communion*? Are they not eucharistic? And when we gather in acknowledgement of God/de's presence in and with us, are we not doing what Jesus called us to – to 'do this in memory of him'? Are we not following the Way that Jesus came to show us – rather different from the Institution that has grown up over the centuries?

Is it time to return to the source – the Way that Jesus lived out in his land of Palestine 2,000 years ago? Can we in humility and trust accept the place of the Spirit of God/de in each other and continue to seek and find that Holy One in the midst of our lives?

As Fr Timothy exhorted, are we thinking deeply? Is this the challenge that is before us at this time?

Anne Burke RSJ (at al), Wanganui
(abridged)

What is charity?

I was surprised at the *Catholic Caring Foundation* advert on p 32 of the February *Tui Motu*. Heading the organisations funded was: "Catholic diocese of Auckland $50,000."

I understood that the foundation was set up to help the poor – so why are our donations being used to fund the Auckland diocese? Surely it gets enough from weekly such collections?

I would like the Catholic Caring Foundation to explain its criteria for funding.

Bill Murray, Glenfield

The General Manager of the *Catholic Caring Foundation* writes:

"The Auckland Diocese undertakes significant pastoral and charitable activity within the diocese. This includes services that help people who are experiencing genuine need.

"Such services include the GIFT porgramme for intellectually disabled; De Paul House and Monte Cecilia who offer emergency housing for families in need; Lifeline; and shortfalls for organisations such as Catholic Family and Community Services including Prison Chaplaincy.

"Those involved in running these services would no doubt speak to the very real need that their clients experience and the challenges they experience in finding the funds to run the service"

A spokesperson acknowledged that Mr Murray had a point in being critical of the blanket term 'Auckland diocese' which the ad used to cover all these services.

Prophets in our time

a hope-filled thought for Easter

They released Jackie Hudson from prison the other day. ***Who on earth is Jackie Hudson?***, I hear you say. Jackie Hudson is a prophet, an elderly Dominican sister, an American, who has just finished serving prison time in the federal prison in Victorville, California, for a non-violent *Ploughshares* act of disarmament in October 2002 against the violence of the US war in Iraq and the sinfulness of US nuclear weapons of mass destruction.

She had been jailed for two and a half years for this disarmament action. It involved her joining two other Dominican sisters, Ardeth Platt and Carol Gilbert, in cutting two gate chains, walking onto a US missile site northeast of Greeley and drawing crosses with their blood on a 110-ton Minuteman 3 missile silo lid. They then prayed and sang hymns until they were arrested.

Jackie, along with fellow prophets, Sr Ardeth Platt and Sr Carol Gilbert, was convicted on charges of destroying federal property and obstructing national defence. Sr Ardeth received a 41-month sentence, which doesn't finish until December 2005. Sr Carol received 33 months, which will see her released in May. All will serve a further three years of probation, are not allowed to return to their communities and have been ordered to pay restitution. The 10th US Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Denver, is still considering appeals against their convictions.

The issue of restitution is a major sticking point. The Sisters are refusing to pay the $US3,080 ordered by the court from each. As Jackie says, "We have refused to pay to this morally bereft government which presently spends over one billion dollars a day to slaughter or in planning the slaughter of innocent persons. I am complicit enough by claiming citizenship of this country". Strong words indeed. But surely stating only the obvious.

It's a move supported by her friends. As one says, "To ask her to pay this money to the US Air Force, some of which they will probably use in some way to support the weapons she protested, would be cruel and unusual punishment." But it also continues a basic *Ploughshares* peacemaking position of refusing to pay money into the federal tax coffers because of their use by the Pentagon. Instead, the Sisters have come up with a creative option which they plan to place before the court. Friends and supporters have donated more than $112,000 in time and money to various social causes in what the Sisters call 'a replacement' for the monies owed.

I am humbled at the actions of these women. Jackie is 70, Ardeth her senior by three years and Carol approaching 60 years of age. They are people who take seriously the injunction of *Isaiah 2* envisaging the peaceable kingdom of God, that "***you shall beat your swords into ploughs, your spears into pruning hooks, and there shall be no more training for war***". Ardeth has engaged in six such actions since 1992 at a variety of missile and nuclear weapon sites. She's a repeat offender! She keeps getting convicted for standing non-violently for peace and justice in the face of the violence of the US war machine.

These women are only three of a huge number of people in the US who continue to stand against the genocidal war policies of successive US Administrations and go to prison. Not that you read about them in the corporate media. Their 'news' is dominated by tales of Michael Jackson and Martha Stewart. It is very easy for the mainstream media to miss 'significant others' and the vital contributions they make to building a better world.

Have these nuns received much support for their actions? Prophets are usually not popular in their time. In the church, prophets are rarely identified or supported in their calls for justice. Such has been the case with these three sisters. While the Dominican Order generally has been affirming of them and they have found considerable support among other peace and justice advocates, they have not been acknowledged by the US bishops and the mainstream church in general. And that is a great pity because the church is incomplete unless its prophets are acknowledged and supported.

Twice in the New Testament the list of charisms given by God to a Christian community is spelt out. In each instance, prophets are seen as second only to apostles in the order of importance – before teachers, healers, administrators and the rest. The reason is obvious. It is the prophets who light up the way. As the Psalmist says so wisely, "Without a vision the people perish." For these three prophets, the pathway has led to imprisonment. Like Jesus and the early church leaders, these women suffer in prison for the sake of the Kingdom. They should be household names, pinned on every fridge door.

These sisters are deeply immersed in the Paschal Mystery in our time. In our world, the suffering Christ can be seen everywhere. War and its pernicious effects is possibly the greatest preventable cause of such suffering. The promise of the Empty Tomb is that from the courageous struggles of these prophetic sisters and others like them, new shoots of resurrected life will grow. Indeed are already growing. What a hope-filled thought for Easter.

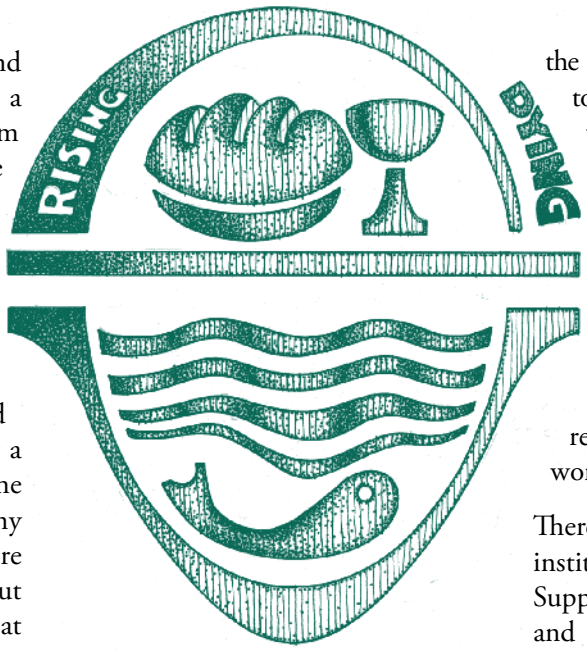
Christopher Carey

The Eucharist… according to John

*The former Professor of Physics at Otago offers a layperson's perspective of what Jesus being **really** present means*

Richard Dowden

A few years ago my family and I were invited to dinner by a devout Jewish family whom we knew very well. The head of the family began the meal with a short ceremony. He read aloud from a book in Hebrew, broke a small loaf of bread like a bun and passed it around for each to take a piece. Then he poured wine into a small wine cup and passed that around for each to take a sip. As it was not a special day in the Jewish calendar or the Sabbath evening, I took this ceremony to be the equivalent of Grace before meals and normally said by devout Jewish families gathered together at their main meal of the day.



This was a new experience for me and gave me much food for thought. Most of us see the Eucharist as originating at the Last Supper, but the beginnings were earlier as described in the sixth chapter of the *Gospel of John*. I can't quote it all here, but basically it goes like this. Jesus was at the height of his popularity. He had just fed "as many as five thousand men" – and presumably, a few thousand women and children as well – with five barley loaves and two fish, yet this was more than they could eat.

On the next day, this crowd found Jesus at Capernaum, not far from where the miracle of the loaves and fishes had taken place. Jesus suggests to them that they sought him out, not because of the "signs" (the miracle), but because they had all the bread they could eat yesterday. He has much better to offer: the bread of life.

Eventually he says: "the bread I shall give is my flesh …" The Jews were shocked! Did Jesus back down? No, he said they must eat his flesh and drink his blood for eternal life. He insisted that he really meant it – it was not an allegory. At this, even his followers couldn't take it and left him, leaving the Twelve to whom Jesus said: " …do you want to go away too?" Peter, like the rest was puzzled but replied: "Lord, who shall we go to?" Was Peter the only one of over 5,000 prepared to believe Jesus even if he could not understand it?

The apostles believed but remained puzzled until the Last Supper when Jesus said, in the ceremony of the bread and wine, "***this*** is my body…" and "***this*** is my blood…". I have emphasized "this" to indicate the moment of revelation of the meaning of his words at Capernaum.

There are two parts to this story: the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper as related by *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*, but not by *John*, and the preface or prelude as related in *John* 6, but not in the other gospels. If it wasn't for *John*, how would we know that Jesus meant "this is my body" literally, but "I am the vine" allegorically?

If it was not for the command of Jesus related by *John*: " … if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you," how would we know that when Jesus said: "do this in memory of me" he meant any more than an annual remembrance – *lest we forget* – as we make on ANZAC Day?

Although the Last Supper was the formal Passover Feast, the ceremony of the bread and wine which is only apart of the Passover ceremony appears to have been, and still is, a normal part of a Jewish meal. On the "very same day" of the Resurrection, as *Luke* says, Jesus caught up with two of his disciples who persuaded him to stop at Emmaus. Only at the evening meal, on what was an ordinary day for Jews, did they recognize Jesus in "the breaking of the bread". This phrase became the

'***Eucharist***' comes from the Greek word 'eukharistia', meaning thanksgiving; just as 'grace' comes from the Latin word 'gratia', meaning the same thing. In Seventh Century Ireland, saying grace before meals was called 'saying the gratias'. The response in English when given something is 'thanks'. It is 'gratias' in Spanish and 'grazie' in Italian.

The similarity in meaning of 'eucharist' and 'grace' in this context suggests that the Eucharist took the place of Grace in the celebration of (what was later called) the Mass in the very early church.

technical name for the Eucharist and, I assume, was meant to replace the Jewish equivalent of grace before meals every day.

However, by the Middle Ages, even pious Christians attending daily Mass felt unworthy to receive the Eucharist more often than monthly. Exposition and adoration of Christ under the appearance of a circular wafer behind glass became common until a few decades ago. There has been a return, however, to the ancient practice. It has now become the norm to receive Communion at every Mass, increasingly under the form of wine as well as bread.

Of the two, receiving the Blood of Christ in the form of wine, the ordinary and normal drink with meals at the time of Jesus, seems to have been regarded – how may I put it – as almost "unnecessary" in the Western church. Yet blood was regarded as life by the Jews and even by us now. We still speak of "blood lines" to describe descendants of a common ancestor and of "bloodshed" for loss of life.

The Old Testament, the books of the Bible prior to Jesus, was the contract or *covenant* between God and his people, a word coming from the Latin *testamentum*, a 'will'. In those days, blood was an essential part of even civil contracts, so it was in this Testament described in gory detail in *Exodus 24:5-9*. At the Last Supper, Jesus said the words, repeated in every Mass: "this is my blood of the New Testament…" (*Latin Vulgate Bible*. The Jerusalem Bible uses the word *covenant*).

What is all this leading up to? I have stressed the words of Jesus the Christ as related by *John 6:56:* "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him". Eating his flesh and drinking his blood ***is*** the Most Blessed Sacrament, and the real presence of Christ is in those who do this. But even the term 'real presence' becomes inadequate if it is understood only in a static sense. When we go up to receive communion we are making a commitment.

We are not merely passive spectators, visitors to a ritual that hardly involves us. We take Christ's presence with us and in us here and now, and we are committed to taking Christ out to others. The sacramental change is in us. I feel ***this*** is the concept which Jesus was trying to convey to us at Capernaum. It is one where you take Him with you and do not leave Him locked away in the tabernacle to be exhibited on special occasions.

When I lived in Tasmania some 40 years ago, Gil Young, the Catholic bishop of Tasmania, and so my bishop at that time, told his congregation that Christ is just as much present in the poor as he is in the Eucharist. Was he wrong?

Now here in New Zealand I am subject to the Catholic bishops of New Zealand and so not in a position to criticize their *Pastoral Letter on the Year of the Eucharist*. All I will say is that I am disappointed that it was conservative: it dwelt on devotions which are less attended than in the past. For a special year like this (which is already half gone), a renewal based on what Jesus expounded in *John*'s Gospel is what we need. ■

Transubstantiation. During the Middle Ages the church coined a word '*transubstantiation*' to explain the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. But this word, I think, is an inadequate replacement of *John 6*.

Maybe we feel comfortable with a term like '*transubstantiation*' because it doesn't affect us too much. Or maybe it focuses our attention on the mechanism of change in the bread and wine rather than the necessary and salutary change in us.

Keeping the eucharistic community eucharistic

a breath of fresh air from Australia

Joan Chittister, OSB

According to Vatican statistics, there are over a billion Catholics in the world. There are at the same time about 450,000 greying, ordained ministers, most of them priests, assigned to minister to the other 99.5 percent of the church. That's one ordained minister for every 2,444 people. Forget home visits, forget parish activities, forget the last sacraments, forget all that ecclesiastical talk about the priest as facilitator of the Christian community. This is circuit-rider sacramentality time. And it is everywhere.

The priest shortage is universal now. Nor is the answer to it as simple as it was when missionary priests poured out of Western seminaries to serve the rest of the world. There are simply not enough priests to minister to the Roman Catholic community anywhere anymore. In all parts of the world, growing congregations outstrip the number of available priests. As a result, in the United States alone, parishes are merging or closing every day. In other parts of the world, Catholic communities haven't seen a priest more than once or twice a year for decades.

With the fading of the priesthood, however, goes the fading of the eucharistic theology of the church, as well. No use, for instance, telling people who see a priest once a year that daily Mass is the crown of the Christian life. SS

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So what to do? This constant repeating of the situation is itself getting to be boring, after all.

Hang on, the fresh air is coming. In the midst of this continuing trend, married priests from other denominations who convert to Catholicism have, for long years now, been accepted as priests of the Roman Catholic church. Their marriages stay intact. Their priestly ministry goes on. All they have to do is to be accepted by the local bishop, go through a brief theological study programme meant to assure their 'Catholicity' and get on with being both married and a priest. No women have been abandoned in the process; no marriages have been required to accept celibacy.

Meanwhile, lifelong Catholics who desire both to marry and to become priests are denied the same right. So the situation is clear: be a Roman Catholic all your life and you will be required to be celibate if you want to be ordained. Be Anglican all your life, on the other hand, get ordained and married in the Anglican church, and you can later become a married Roman Catholic priest without being required to be celibate. See the problem? Priesthood doesn't depend on celibacy. It depends on where you start from in order to avoid it.

The situation has been a conundrum for years. . .
In the first place, it seems relatively clear that once you have even one married priest on the list, practicing as a priest anywhere, you no longer have a celibate priesthood. In a diocese of 400 men, for example, one married priest means that you have a married priesthood with one married man and 399 unmarried ones. The only question is: *why the imbalance*?

In the second place, of the other 20 rites of the Catholic church, only Rome, the Latin Rite, imposes mandatory celibacy. So why is celibacy exacted of some but not of all? And why, I have always wondered, are priests themselves not asking the question?

But now, it seems, they are. And that's where the fresh air begins to flow through the system. The *National Priests Council of Australia* is not only questioning the situation: they are asking their bishops and three cardinals to question it, too. In Rome. At the next *Synod of Bishops* in October 2005. This one dedicated specifically to ***The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church***.

They are asking the Synod to face the situation honestly – which, of course, can't be done as long as bishops accept the notion that this is an undiscussable subject – or that any subject is undiscussable, in fact. Instead of solutions and encouragement, the priests point out, they are getting "more rubrics or detailed instructions," designed, apparently, to rule out abuses in the saying of the Mass. "We are concerned," the priests go on, "about the increasing number of communities being deprived of weekly Eucharist. …We are scandalized when the gnat of abuse is so carefully strained out while the camel of dying communities is being swallowed."

These reflections by a national association of priests is important for its honesty – and for its courage. It does a very priestly thing: it speaks for the community it serves. It challenges us all in its willingness to speak out on behalf of the rest of the church. It is a rich theological document.

In stark, clear terms, these priests call the bishops of the world to demonstrate the theology they talk about, not simply in "pious but obscure words" but by calling the church to be Christ for the "poor, wounded and marginalised."

Finally, the Australian priests ask that five recommendations be inserted into the Lineamenta for the Synod and "earnestly discussed" if a eucharistic church is to remain eucharistic.

- the enculturation of eucharistic practice.
- the extension of ordination "to single men of good character" who would preside at the Eucharist within their own communities" so that the opportunity to celebrate "is reasonably available."
- the extension of ordination of married ministers from other Christian traditions "to other married men" – clearly Roman Catholic ones.
- that the Synod Fathers "examine honestly the appropriateness of insisting upon a priesthood that is, with very few exceptions, obliged to be celibate. Priesthood is a gift," they say. "Celibacy is a gift: They are not the same gift."
- the "re-instatement of priests who married with the Church's permission and are willing to resume ministry as priests."

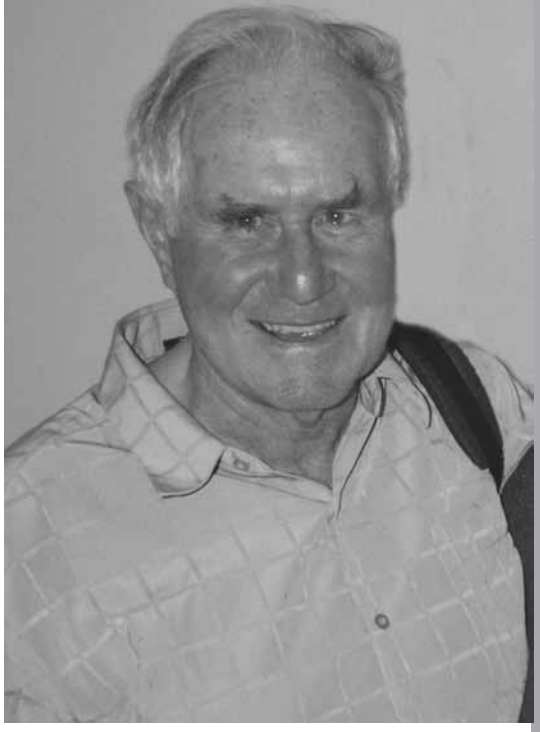
And they call for all of this publicly. On a Web site. For the world to see. As Jesus put it: "Israelites in whom there is no guile."

No, they don't say a thing about the ordination of women or about the fact that faced with a choice between Eucharist and maleness, the church is choosing for maleness. Pity. Either their own theology is also lacking or they are better politicians than we think. But such as these seem educable. There is hope that next time they will do better.

In the meantime, from where I stand, these priests themselves and their call for open discussion of real church issues confront us with the best gust of fresh air we have felt in the church for a long, long time. Pray to reap the whirlwind. ■

Joan Chittester OSB writes regularly for the National Catholic Reporter, who allowed us to reprint this recent essay

Eucharist in Green Island



Irish Jesuit priest, Paul Andrews, recently spent four months in New Zealand, partly on holiday. He describes a grace-filled moment at Mass

It is the end of Holy Communion at Sunday Mass. I have just handed the ciborium to Sr Pauline who is my fellow eucharistic Minister. She is putting the hosts together from two ciboria before putting them in the tabernacle.

As I walk to my chair I hear Philip roaring from the back of the church. He is a huge Downs Syndrome man who loves Sunday Mass, embraces everyone he meets, and has a habit of leaving the church as soon as he has received his Lord. As I cross the altar I hear him shouting *Goodbye Pauline,* and he walks up the centre aisle to take his farewell.

Some ministers might have felt: 'I'm looking after the Blessed Eucharist. Please show some reverence and wait to the end of Mass'. As Pauline told me afterwards, she thought in a flash: *Well, the eucharistic Lord is on the altar, but Jesus is walking up the aisle behind me.* So she left her business with the ciboria and turned to welcome Philip's bear-hug and say goodbye. A parishioner said to me after Mass: *It was worth a dozen sermons.*

Philip had a birthday a couple of weeks ago, and for days beforehand he reminded everyone he met: *Sunday is my birthday. Give me a hug.* At Sunday Mass after he had received Communion and was making for the door as usual, Fr Mark called out: *Before Philip goes, let's wish him a happy birthday.* The congregation burst into ***Happy birthday to you.*** Philip responded by triumphantly waving his clasped hands above his big head. His day was made.

What happens at Mass is sometimes referred to as liturgy. In its origins the word means ***the work of the people.*** It is one of the changes that have blessed us in the last 50 years that the people – in some churches – are entering into that work which has been seen in the past as the job of the priest.

In many parts of the world, where there is no priest available, the local community shapes its liturgy in a service which includes the reading of the Scriptures and the distribution of Holy Communion.

In Dunedin where this is being written, Fr Mark is not only chaplain to a large university, but the single-handed pastor of two city parishes. They are glad to have what they can get of his services, and in between they organise their own liturgical gatherings, and look after the sick and needy in the parish community, as well as its finances.

people – in some churches – are entering into that work which has been seen as the job of the priest

This did not happen overnight or without effort. It is the fruit of a long process in which Mark selected and trained helpers, then handed over responsibilities. One result is that the parishioners are using their imagination in designing their liturgies. They are making their parish their own.

Liturgy is always a delicate balance between control and spontaneity. Seminarians were taught to suppress every thought or action of their own, and conform to the prescribed rites in every detail of gesture and voice. In the past there was no spontaneity. Rule-makers in Rome prescribed the form of the liturgy right down to the priest's bows and tone of voice, leaving no room for his contributions or for the people's. This made for uniformity though not necessarily for reverence. Since the words were Latin, emotion did not come into it, even though parts of the Mass's text are full of feeling.

What we are seeing happening now is a tension between the people wanting to celebrate in their own words and music and the rule-makers laying down what is allowed if the Mass or other liturgy is to be reverent. If there are too many rules, people feel nervous of anything spontaneous. They no longer feel that the church is their place, where they can meet the Lord as a community.

Liturgy should not be entirely scripted. It should be a happening. Jesus pictured somebody remembering an unresolved quarrel as they approached the altar, leaving their gift there and going off to be reconciled before offering to God. Thomas Aquinas had an experience of God at Mass that persuaded him to give up writing theology – *after what I learned at Mass, all I have written is so much straw.*

Pauline's unscripted response to Philip's unscripted intervention was another such happening; and the Lord was there. ■

Apocalypse *now*!

In February the British Government convened an international conference on climate.

The latest findings on the effects of global warning are so alarming that nothing but concerted and drastic international action can avert an unprecedented world environmental crisis

Michael McCarthy

Scare stories are meat and drink to environmentalists; the modern environmental movement was started by one, when Rachel Carson's dramatic account of what agricultural pesticides were doing to songbirds was revealed in her groundbreaking 1962 book, *Silent Spring*. Since then the damage humankind is wreaking on the planet has been exposed time and time again in a series of reports, ranging from the destruction of the rain forests to the overfishing of the seas.

Many of these frightening warnings become accepted both by the public and the scientific establishment because they turn out to be self-evidently true. Go to large areas of the Amazon and you will find the forest has simply gone; look at the last 30 years'-worth of statistics for catches of cod in the North Sea, and you will find the numbers have tumbled, despite the increasingly strenuous efforts of fishermen to bring back more fish.

Such alarums have a political as well as a scientific thrust. They have constituted the lifeblood of the Green movement. They are what has brought widespread support for groups such as *Friends of the Earth* and *Greenpeace*, and put the environment high on the public and political agendas, and, at last, the churches' agendas.

Such interest is to be expected. If you are a young mother and you hear that a brand of apples may contain pesticide residues, do you want your young children eating them? Would you not support campaigners for clean apples? Sport their badges? Display their car stickers? Fill in their direct-debit mandates?

Yet although the term 'scare story' can perfectly well be applied to something frightening but also verifiable, it is not a neutral one. It has a definite pejorative ring, strongly implying that the scare may well be a good story, but that its basis is exaggerated or even untrue. The charge has in recent years been laid at Green campaigners that they do indeed exaggerate, believing they need above all to keep up the momentum of public concern lest their support should ebb away.

some environmental scares have not been completely borne out by the evidence

I have reported on the environment for national newspapers since 1989, and my experience has been that, unfortunately, exaggerations have indeed sometimes occurred. There have been some environmental scares over the past 20 years which have caused a sensation and filled the headlines, but not been completely borne out by the evidence.

Let me offer two examples from purely personal observation. In 1984, British scientists discovered that over Antarctic a gigantic hole had developed in the layer of naturally occurring ozone gas in the stratosphere, because of the destructive action of a group of industrial chemicals, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), widely used in refrigeration, air conditioning and aerosols.

The ozone layer protects us from the most harmful of the sun's rays, ultraviolet B radiation (UVB), and it was widely asserted that because of the ozone hole, many living organisms, from the plankton of the Southern Ocean to the shepherds of Patagonia, now faced potentially catastrophic injury.

The ozone hole is still there (although mending because of the successful phase-out of CFCs), and such a disruption of the earth's atmospheric chemistry must of course be of very great concern, but I personally know of no well-attested example of any living organisms being damaged by excess UVB from ozone depletion, anywhere.

Another example: dioxins, the Green movement's 'bogey' chemical, a range of substances formed by high temperature burning and so used as a key plank against rubbish incinerators. Apart from the special case of the Saveso chemical factory in Italy in 1976, when people living near the blast suffered skin complaints after close exposure to gigantic amounts of the chemical,

I know of no incidence anywhere of dioxins at naturally occurring levels actually causing any harm, to anything.

I offer these examples of my reaction to environmental scare stories over the years because I suppose I am about to put forward one of my own.

In February the British Government held an international conference, in Exeter in SW England, on climate change. It was called personally by Tony Blair, who is making the problem of global warming one of the central policies of his simultaneous leadership in 2005 of both the G8 group of rich nations and of the European Union. The purpose of the conference was to update policy-makers everywhere on climate change science, which is rapidly moving.

The latest report by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is that the earth's average surface temperature is likely to warm by between 1.4 and 5.8 degrees Celsius between now and the year 2100, depending on how human societies controlled their emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2), the waste gas from industry and transport which is retaining more and more of the sun's heat in the atmosphere.

These are enormous rises (even at the lower end) and they are expected to have similarly enormous impacts, ranging from the widespread failure of agriculture and many more extreme weather events from droughts to flooding, to sea-level rise around the world. This Exeter conference was in the nature of a mid-term report about where the science had got to before the next IPCC report in 2007.

The opening day brought disclosure of two major new threats to the world.

• The first concerned ***the Antarctica ice sheet***, with a warning from the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) – the body whose scientists discovered the ozone hole – that, perhaps because of rising temperatures, the vast ice sheet covering the western side of the continent may be starting to break up. Were it to collapse into the sea, the West Antarctic Ice Sheet would raise global sea levels by more than 16 feet.

Goodbye London; goodbye Bangladesh. Only four years ago the IPCC said it was safe for probably a thousand years, certainly until the end of this century; last week Professor Chris Rapley, the BAS director, said that judgment would now have to be revised.

the forests of Queensland, the rivers of the Rockies, the alpine flowers of New Zealand – one after another they will all go

• The second alert concerned an issue many of the scientists present were only dimly aware of: ***the acidification of the oceans***. The billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide human society is producing are not only causing the climate to change. When they dissolve in sea water they are combining with it, in a simple chemical reaction, to produce carbonic acid. But the world's seas are alkaline, and have been for many millions of years, and it is in this environment that thousands of species of small marine organisms at the bottom of the food web, from plankton to shellfish, have evolved. They will not be able to live in an acid sea.

The point about these two disclosures is that they were not based on predictions of future events by supercomputer models of the global climate, which is the origin of most scare stories – to use the term neutrally – about global warming. They were based on actual observation, in the real world, of things that are happening now.

But there were plenty of predictions as well at the conference, and they were grimmer than ever. For example, there was the most pessimistic assessment yet of global warming, causing ***collapse of the Gulf Stream,*** which perversely would bring a new ice age to Europe. A group of American scientists calculated that in the absence of major action to control emissions, the chance of this happening was now greater than 50 per cent.

And there was an assessment that the ***Greenland ice sheet*** may start to melt – which would cause global sea levels to rise by 20 feet – caused by a temperature rise of only 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. We are already 0.7°C above pre-industrial levels. We are well on the way.

Perhaps the most vivid of a plethora of pessimistic papers was a review of studies on which ecosystems and species would be hit by which temperature rises. It was a long, dire litany of disappearances likely as the mercury moves up the world's thermometer:

• Queensland's highland tropical forests very soon;

• at a one degree rise, South Africa's unique fynbos flora and the rest of the Arctic sea ice;

• between one and two degrees the trout in the rivers of the Rockies;

• between two and three degrees the alpine flowers of Europe, Australia and New Zealand, the broad-leaved forests of China, and the rain forests of the Amazon. One after another they will go, the special places of the earth, the glories of creation.

The overwhelming impression given by the conference, a meeting of entirely sober scientists was that these things *will* happen. Firstly, there was a strong sense that climate change was proceeding much more quickly than had been anticipated. Compared with four years ago, *"there is greater clarity and reduced uncertainty about the impacts of climate change across a wide range of systems, sectors and societies. In many cases the risks are more serious than previously thought."* SS

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Secondly, big temperature rises are already 'built into the system', as Margaret Beckett, the UK Environment Secretary, acknowledged, because there is a time lag between the CO_2 going into the atmosphere and the subsequent rise in temperatures. Even if all emissions were stopped dead tomorrow all over the world, enough CO_2 is up there to cause a further rise.

But – and this is the third point – the emissions are by no means going to stop tomorrow. Under the Kyoto Protocol, abandoned by the United States, the world's biggest CO_2 emitter, the industrialised countries are struggling to cut their emissions back to merely five per cent below 1990 levels; controlling climate change would require a cut of perhaps 60 per cent.

Yet, as the conference chairman, Dennis Tirpak, head of the climate change programme of the OECD, reminded delegates, the 2004 World Energy Outlook of the *International Energy Agency* calculates that in the next 25 years global emissions of CO2 are likely to increase by 62 per cent, mainly from the developing world, as the Chinese and the Indians rush to build coal-fired power stations to service their exploding economies. The necessary cuts are a fantasy.

whatever efforts humankind makes to stop it, the great ice sheets will melt, the seas will turn acid, and the land will burn

When it was all over a colleague, Paul Brown, and I travelled back from Exeter to London by train, working out what it meant, working towards the unmistakable conclusion. I have written at such length to try to put that conclusion into some sort of context. It was the inevitability of what was going to happen, I think, that for the first time struck us with real force; that whatever flapping, floundering efforts humankind makes to eventually stop it all, the great ice sheets will melt, the seas will turn acid, and the land will burn.

By the time we reached London we knew what the conclusion was. I said: "The earth is finished". Paul said: "It is, yes". We both shook our heads and gave that half-laugh that is sparked by incredulity. So many environmental scare stories, over the years; I never dreamed of such a one as this. And what will our children make of our generation, who let this planet, so lovingly created, go to waste? ■

Michael McCarthy is environment editor of The Independent *newspaper. Printed with permission* The Tablet, http://www.thetablet.co.uk

Lighting the Fires Women's Study Project

There is money available for women within Aotearoa New Zealand who are wanting to undertake a research study or project that fits within the following guidelines:

* empowering women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their country and their church;
* affirming women, through shared leadership and decision-making, theology and spirituality, in their decisive contributions to communities and church;
* giving visibility to women's perspectives and actions in the struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation;
* enabling churches to free themselves from racism, sexism, and classism, from teachings and practices that discriminate against women;
* enabling the churches to take actions in solidarity with women.

Applicants need to provide:

* evidence of appropriate reserch skills and background experience
* a 500-word description of the research study or project
* names and contact information of tw referees
* a proposed budget and timeline

To apply, or for further information, write to:

'Lighting the Fires' Women's Project
PO Box 173 OTEPOTI/DUNEDIN

In March, Prince Charles visited the Albatross colony at Tairoa Head, on Otago Harbour.

Afterwards he made an impassioned plea for the preservation of endangered species such as the Royal Albatross

photo: *Otago Daily Times*

A Time to Heal

In search of balance and harmony

This excerpt from an article by ***HRH The Prince of Wales*** *is reproduced courtesy of Resurgence magazine*

I find I am often accused of living in the past, or of wanting to return to the kind of past that can only be met in the imagination. I have been branded as a traditionalist, as if tradition was some kind of disease that had to be sprayed at airports. I am told that I wish to go backwards into the 21st century – anchored in the mud bank of superstition and irrelevant spirituality.

Why am I accused of such backwardness? Because ever since I witnessed, as a teenager in the 1960s, the ever more frenzied dismemberment of what was left of the traditional framework of our existence – even to the excited pronouncement that *God is dead* – I have dedicated my life to finding ways of trying to bring back the 'baby' that was inevitably thrown out with the 'bathwater' during the orgy of overzealous destruction.

I believe that Man has a dual nature – his feet on the ground and his head in the clouds – and that, in a sense, he is a microcosm of what lies at the heart of the Universe. I also believe that the existence we find ourselves in consists of a giant paradox. Hence everything in life has another side to it – good and evil, light and dark and so on and so forth.

We are therefore confronted continually by opposites and it would seem that, by reading history, the wisest of our ancient forebears understood in a rather profound way that one of the secrets of a civilised existence was invariably the reconciliation of opposites, or the search for balance and harmony.

It is only too clear that humankind has made enormous strides in progress through the application of rational thought and experimentation, particularly during the 20th century, but it has been at a price, in my view. And that price has been the loss of balance and harmony and the introduction of a harsh, brutalised, mechanistic view of the world and of humankind where everything is reduced to the sum of its parts and we find ourselves, increasingly, as guinea pigs in a series of very uncertain experiments conducted in the laboratory of Nature.

The fact that people are beginning to ask questions and to display anxiety about this loss of balance reveals that, deep down in each one of us, there is some distant voice that comes to us from another dimension, crying out for recognition once again.

Nowhere is the war with Nature more visible than in the world of agriculture. We are told that only ever more sophisticated technology and fewer and fewer people on the land are required to 'feed the world'.

Nature must be subdued and humbled, put in Her place and, through deliberate ignorance, abused without ever stopping to consider that experience of this world tells us that you can never actually have something for nothing and that if you push beyond the natural balance, Nature herself invariably rebels in some unexpected way. The world is full of clever people who believe they can find the final solution to the challenges and problems that confront us – hence the belief that genetic engineering will usher in a world free from disease and hunger.

Modern agriculture may have produced an overabundance of cheap food, but it has proved to be at an enormous price SS

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in terms of landscape, wildlife, natural resources and biological diversity. Agricultural science lacks the essential balance engendered by 'irrational' elements like common sense and the Precautionary Principle.

Instead of working with Nature to the best of our ability, which requires infinite study and the appropriate development of our intuitive powers, agricultural science seeks to impose entirely industrial processes upon an unwilling natural environment. These industrialised processes rely entirely on the maintenance of an alien system of ***monoculture*** which treats a naturally complex ecosystem as if it was a factory floor.

At each turn of the industrial crank Nature rebels. In order to crush each rebellion a new and more powerful 'weapon' has to be invented in order to maintain the whole unsustainable edifice of monoculturism.

And now, with the gleam of triumph in these armies' eyes, we are told that the final victory is just around the corner when Nature can be subdued to Man's insatiable will through the manipulation of Her vital ingredients – ***genes***. It is now even possible to cross the boundaries between species to create entirely unnatural, transgenic organisms. We are furthermore assured that this great example of Man's ingenious skill at innovation is completely safe, for ever, and can never possibly cause the slightest ripple in what is to be left of the 'natural world'.

Do you *really* think this is likely to be the case? Deep down in the recesses of your heart is there not a faint memory of distant harmony that rustles like a breeze through the leaves? Call it a forgotten instinct; call it, perhaps, a sense of the Sacred; call it an inner awareness at a greater depth than the mere intellect. Whatever you call it, it probably makes you a little uneasy, although you may not dare say so in case others think you are an anti-progressive reactionary.

In the field of medicine and health care there are now a few local insurrections that are growing in size. I recall a speech I made to the British Medical Association in the early 1980s when I gently pleaded with them to adopt a more holistic, balanced and less mechanistic approach to the healing of the sick; to reintroduce elements of ancient wisdom and traditional therapies that had been thrown enthusiastically onto the scrap-heap of medical history and, once again, to rediscover the essential trinity of mind, body and spirit.

To my, not entirely total, astonishment, the full weight of the industrialised medical Establishment descended upon me. Nothing daunted, I have continued ever since to work at ways of establishing an integrated approach to healthcare whereby the best of orthodox, clinical medicine can be harnessed in tandem with the best of traditional, 'irrational' therapies.

my entire life has been motivated by a desire to heal – to heal the dismembered landscape and the poisoned soil

Modern, industrialised medicine tends to treat people as if they were a mechanical process. Traditional medicine treats each patient as an individual and recognises those deeper, invisible elements in our humanity which also need treating.

I firmly believe that an imaginative integration of these two approaches, subject to necessary safeguards, would be greatly beneficial to the patient and would be more likely to awaken a long-suppressed awareness of that hidden, mysterious dimension we call the Spirit.

No amount of tampering with the foundations of our religions to make them more 'accessible' will restore that lost spiritual awareness: another victim of the overriding cynicism, even nihilism, of the educational establishment ever since the 1960s.

It never ceases to amaze me how powerful is the rearguard action fought by those who seem to have developed a hatred for anything that cannot be explained, or 'proved' by science – even if, in the case of what has come to be known as complementary medicine, it can be demonstrated on many occasions to be beneficial to the recipient. Such is the fury of this rearguard action that it is virtually impossible to attract any funding from official bodies, or even charitable trusts, for the purposes of carrying out proper research into the efficacy of such complementary therapies.

I remember, for instance, when three Government research bodies were carrying out a three-year research project into the organic farming system at my home, Highgrove, that there was a complete refusal of my request to include the homoeopathic treatment of our livestock in the research programme. Despite approaching other relevant organisations to carry out the research instead, not one of them would agree to do so.

As I have grown older I have gradually come to realise that my entire life so far has been motivated by a ***desire to heal*** – to heal the dismembered landscape and the poisoned soil; the cruelly shattered townscape, where harmony has been replaced by cacophony; to heal the divisions between intuitive and rational thought, between mind, body and soul, so that the temple of our humanity can once again be lit by a sacred flame.

To level the monstrous artificial barrier erected between Tradition and Modernity and, above all, to heal the mortally wounded soul that, alone, can give us warning of the folly of playing God and of believing that knowledge on its own is a substitute for wisdom. ■

Sitting on the wharf

Glynn Cardy

Sitting on the wharf. Watching the sprats. Being idle. As you do.

I was hooked into a conversation with a fisherman. It progressed past fish, to philosophy, and on to Jesus. While re-casting his line he asked, "Tell me about Jesus."

Where do you start? Do you answer with a question? Do you regale him with a personal creed? Do you offer some history, deep-fried in doctrine, and sprinkled with contemporary meaning? Being a fisherman, I thought a couple of tales would be a good start. I began with the Prodigal Son.

The story has three characters. There is a younger brother who wants his inheritance, and insults his father to get it. He goes off, squanders it, and then, after much soul-searching, decides to go home and say 'sorry'. There is a father who, when insulted, doesn't let his emotions get the better of him, and gives the inheritance. He then waits and is delighted to see the wandering son return. The embrace precedes the apology. The son is welcomed home.

The third character is the older brother who likewise insults his father. He does it by refusing to dine with him. Again the father's love goes out to welcome and include the offending son. There is one overarching moral lesson from this tale: the grace, or embrace, of God is not restricted to whom we think is deserving of it.

The second tale was of the Good Samaritan. A lawyer asks Jesus how one attains eternal life. Jesus answers with a question: "What's in the Law?" He answers "Love the Lord your God will all your heart, soul, strength and mind; and your neighbour as yourself." "Yep," says Jesus, "that's right." The lawyer then asks, "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus answers with a story:

A fellow gets beaten up on a country road. A priest comes by, and passes by; likewise a Levite. Two holy, godly men, no doubt with good excuses, come by and pass by. Then a Samaritan comes by, and stops. To a Jew a Samaritan was something like what Christians today think of Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses. They're foreign. You don't trust them. They believe funny things.

Well the funny thing is that it's the Samaritan who is 'the neighbour' to the beaten man. He cares for him, tends his wounds, takes him to a hotel and pays for his continuing care. It is this Samaritan who is the one faithfully following the commandment to look after his neighbour.

It is the Samaritan therefore who is attaining eternal life. The overarching moral lesson of this story is that kindness has no borders, and nor does God's favour.

Both tales point to the expansiveness and generosity of God. This is what Jesus lived – writ large in his scandalous practice of dining with 'tax-collectors and sinners', with poor and rich, prostitutes, Pharisees, and publicans.

The tide kept coming in. The fisherman paused, and thought. He'd liked the tales. Reminded him of one that he then told me – not that it's repeatable. He re-baited, cast, and together we stared at the sea.

"Well then," he says, "so what?"

"Three points", says I. "Firstly, don't presume God thinks like we do." It's too easy to project on to God our pet likes and dislikes. We all do it, mind you. But it's very important to talk, debate, and criticise each other's notions of God and humanity. Indeed that's what Jesus was doing when he told those tales.

"Secondly," I continue, "don't presume truth is more important than being kind." Being right in these tales takes second place to being kind. The prodigal's dad would have been right to roundly criticize both his boys. Mightn't have got him the relationship he wanted with them, but he would have been right. The priest and the Levite were probably right to prioritise their church services; after all, they weren't paramedics. They were church leaders, not City Mission front desk.

The third point never arrived. A fish took the bait, and our attention was pulled away. Later the conversation moved on to politics and got snagged on the foreshore and seabed.

It was pleasant sitting there. Watching. Talking. As you do.

Glynn Cardy is an Anglican priest, presently Vicar of St Matthew's-in-the-City, Auckland

Global identity

Discovering one's global identity

Looking back at my own childhood in the 1930s I recall writing on an envelope:

Master Albert Moore.
211 the Parade.
Island Bay. Wellington.
New Zealand. Pacific Ocean.
British Empire. The World. The Universe.

Here without a doubt was a growing awareness of global identity. What child has not addressed himself or herself in this way?

During my last year at High School I read H.G.Wells' *Outline of World History* which, written from a liberal humanist view in 1920, traced the evolution of life and human civilisations, including Asian cultures and religions and their chronologies. This gave me a useful systematic overview for university study of history and reading books on religion.

Another way I found of exploring global identity was my discovery of jazz. Here was music originating among blacks of New Orleans and the Deep South of the USA in the late 19th Century, which had captured the white American audience for popular music in the following years and by the end of the 20th Century would come to influence world music of global range.

Another discovery of global significance for me in the 1940s was the ecumenical movement, which brought together people of different Christian church traditions over all the continents, sparked originally through the co-operation of their overseas missions. The World Council of Churches had its opening Assembly at Amsterdam in 1948, arousing high hopes. In the Roman Catholic Church tradition, the Ecumenical Council of the mid-1960s, known as Vatican II, also roused high hopes of global significance.

In 1965 I was able to participate in a winter-term seminar at the University of Chicago led jointly by the Rumanian historian of religions and mythology, Mircea Eliade, and by the German philosopher-theologian, Paul Tillich, in the last year of his life. The following year I had the opportunity of teaching courses in a new Religion programme at Indiana University, Bloomington.

The mid-1960s were years of ferment in the USA with surging student numbers, civil rights, student marches and the hippie culture. On our way back to New Zealand we (my wife and I) spent several weeks in Japan, visiting new religious movements and staying in a Zen Buddhist monastery.

For those two years away I must express gratitude to America as a place of diverse resources, opportunity and generosity. I returned to Otago to teach courses in the History and Phenomenology of Religion. I had to cover the whole field of major religions as well as primal religions. A growing Religious Studies department led to greater specialisation and a focus on more advanced research.

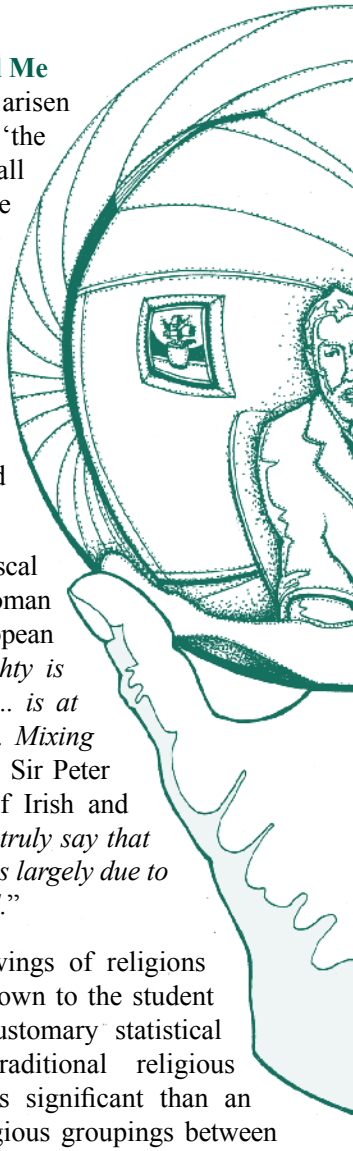
Yet along with the academic gains goes a loss in breadth of communication: specialists may excuse themselves by modestly saying a subject is "not in their field". A useful compromise might be to require each specialist to have a further topic relating to a wide field of the world's religions (e.g. ecology, mysticism, militarism). In my own case I found that visual symbolism and iconography of religions achieved this.

Religious identity and the Global Me

In the last two decades there has arisen a much stronger awareness of 'the global' and 'globalisation'. Marshall McLuhan had popularised the phrase "global village' to describe the modern world linked by mass media communications. Major developments in electronics – computers, e-mail, the Internet, the dominance of the USA as a world superpower – have heightened the pitch of both expectation and anxiety for a global future.

Meanwhile an author like Pascal Zachary, son of an Italian Roman Catholic father and an East European Jewish mother, could write: "*Mighty is the mongrel. The mixing of races... is at a record level. The hybrid is hip... Mixing is the new norm.*" Decades earlier, Sir Peter Buck in New Zealand, a child of Irish and Maori parents, had written: "*I can truly say that any success I might have achieved is largely due to my good fortune in being a mongrel.*"

Today the movement and borrowings of religions across the globe are facts well known to the student of religions. In the USA the customary statistical classifications, according to traditional religious denominations, have become less significant than an across-the-board spectrum of religious groupings between



The artist and re

The well-known Dutch graphics artist M.C.Escher made a lithograph in 1935 called ***Hand with reflecting sphere***.

This depicts what he saw in his room as he gazed at a shiny reflecting globe (about ten inches in diameter) which he held with his hand before his eyes. The convex curved surface reflects a more comprehensive view of the room than direct observation by his gaze would convey: it catches the four walls, floor and ceiling. But at the same time it gives a compressed and distorted view.

and globalisation

Albert Moore

the extreme poles of traditionalist fundamentalists at one end to the "anti-religious" at the other. In between are the main groupings of 'born-again' believers, mainstream church attenders and spiritual searchers. Diversity and pluralism characterise the modern American religious scene.

Religion and Globalisation

For some, 'globalisation' represents a threat to traditional culture and religion. Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and Rousseau seemed just such a threat in 18th Century Europe. Yet it was a period which produced great advances in science and medicine, world exploration, historical knowledge, freedom of speech and human rights. Our world needs to stand by such advances if its civilisations and religions are to live together and survive.

The 'global' 18th Century needs to continue into the 21st. Cnetury. Cambridge historian C.A.Bayly asserts: "*all local, national or regional histories must, therefore, be global histories. It is no longer possible to write 'European' or 'American' history in the narrow sense.*" (The Birth of the Modern World p2).

Yet 'globalisation' has become a contentious term as it has been narrowed down into the area of economic growth. *Think globally; act locally!* was at first an encouraging adage; but it turned sour for those whose livelihood was threatened by the encroachment of great transnational corporations. With their dominant power base in Europe and America, yet not confined within national boundaries, these corporations became targets of protest against the World Trade Organisation, against the exploitation of ecological resources, against genetic engineering.

flecting sphere

Furthermore, the artist's head is in the middle of the reflection. The price of seeing it at all is that he, as the viewer, is part of the picture. Whichever way he turns he remains at the centre. In other words, the artist must bring his own ego and identity into the experience of seeing the globe.

In this I see a suggestive analogy to the complex problems of finding our identity in the global dimension of cultures and religions.

Religious protests have also been directed against secular gain and injustice at the expense of the poorer nations. There is much to heed in these warnings. Nevertheless, there remain positive benefits to the world through globalisation. What the world needs is a more chastened and responsible globalisation.

Globalisation today

Globalisation at present is well reviewed by the book *Many Globalisations* (2002, ed. Peter Berger and Samuel Huntington). They point out the tensions between global and indigenous loyalties: even the anti-globalisers have to become global in organising protests of world range.

The final two chapters I find very revealing. They describe the world of American globalisers who see themselves at the vanguard of globalising new technology and unstoppable economic progress – through economics and the free market – meeting what they see as universal human needs. As executives travelling the world's airways they share a familiar lifestyle of hotels and meetings. They see themselves as 'global citizens'. They are sophisticated, urbane and universalistic cosmopolitans.

But, "*...for all their worldliness they never really leave home.*" (p 356). Why does this get me? Because I too can be included in this critique. I too can talk about our global identity – the Global Me – and feel cosmopolitan because I read books and engage in discussions about the globalisation process. I can empathise with Michael Palin exploring the Himalayas and visiting Bhutan or with Tim Shadbolt staggering up a mountain in Borneo. But I do so in the comfort of the living room with books and TV. I never really leave home. I remain parochial, insular.

Or, to return to the image of the artist looking at his reflecting globe, my old self is still in the centre of the globe's reflection. Maybe I still don't leave home. Some critics could say: 'This talk of global identity is only an idealistic cover-up for enlarging one's own interests and ego-centred comfort'. Other critics who see only one brand of religion (their own) as valid – and therefore superior – could say that theirs is the only true global identity: therefore it is not to be mixed with others or become the subject of academic 'Comparative Religion'. And at the other end, others who distrust all religions as sources of conflict and superstition, would see the quest for global vision in religion as wasted effort, a diversion from humanity's real potential on earth.

The jetsetters circulating the globe imposing their own brand of global uniformity are, in fact, cocooned in a self-serving monoculture. The true citizen of the global community must somehow allow his or her identity to be touched and subtly moulded by the myriad cultures which flourish across the face of the world. It is here that the great world religions have much to teach us. They have survived and flourished for many centuries because in each human tribe they encounter, they recognise and identify the face of God. They are truly universal. They are the real globalisers. ■

In the second article of the Tui Motu *series on the false gods of our age, Sr Pauline O'Regan takes an honest look inside her own soul and acknowledges how much she has sold out to the secular god. She speaks for us all.*

Yet there is a ray of hope. The burgeoning spirituality of our times speaks of a hunger within human hearts that only the true God can satisfy. Is the church paying heed?

Secularism

I have chosen *secularism* as a false idol of our age for more than one reason. One is because I believe that most of us have been seduced into paying undue homage to this god, not only in our institutions, but in our personal lives as well. We are careful to show considerable respect for the secular quality of the society we live in: we seldom, if ever, introduce a religious topic into even our most wide-ranging conversations. People can work with me for years without ever knowing that I am a Catholic. My religion is often my most carefully guarded secret. I keep it strictly for Sundays and if I discuss it at all, it is with like-minded people.

As for my spiritual life, I guard it even more carefully and keep it hidden deep in my heart. It would be unseemly to start talking about it in company, no matter how tentative my approach might be. I feel that to talk about religion or spirituality, let alone about God, would impinge on the secular ambiance in which I live. The result is that, by the strangest contemporary paradox, secularism has acquired something of the status of the sacred in modern society.

At the beginning of the modern age, the concept of a secular society seemed to be full of promise for humanity. If religion had bred conflict, ignorance and superstition in the world, if it repressed independence of thought and put obstacles in the path of human progress, then the tools of the modern State would set humanity free. So it was argued. And it was argued very successfully.

Human beings, hungry for freedom and justice, now placed their hopes in science, logic and reason. These would succeed where the old religious beliefs had failed them. Politics would liberate the people and economics would give them a better world. Science and reason would triumph over ignorance and superstition. Utopia, it seemed, was at hand. These were heady promises and at first, the secularism they engendered gave every sign it would deliver on those promises. For much of the 19th and 20th centuries we trusted in the secular solution. Now, in the 21st century, even as we have to admit its failures, we still cling to it, if not as a god then certainly as a sacred cow!

the spiritual desert created by secularism has left the human spirit so devoid of food that it can no longer abide its hunger

It is within the span of my lifetime that the dream has faded. It's not just that I saw democracy turn into fascism and communism, both of which, far from giving people the liberation they sought, took them into a Dark Age of oppression and suffering. It is more than that: even in democratic countries like our own, faith in the political system has given way to disillusionment and cynicism. We have lost our trust in politics and it makes us suspicious of our politicians.

Even when they do good, we suspect their motives – this is merely a vote-seeking device, we say. Their only motive is to stay in power. When I was young, I saw people turning out to vote in huge numbers in the 1930s. Now, 70 years later, I am aghast at the low voter turn-out. I hear people asking, "What's the point?" It's hard for someone of my generation to believe that they are talking with such contempt about democracy.

Economic liberalism has done no better. Huge corporations have grown into global dinosaurs devouring all before them. Profit for the few has become the paramount motive, leaving social exploitation, human suffering, rampant consumerism and desecration of the environment in its wake. The Utopia that our forebears had such hopes for, is in ruins. Secularism is running on empty.

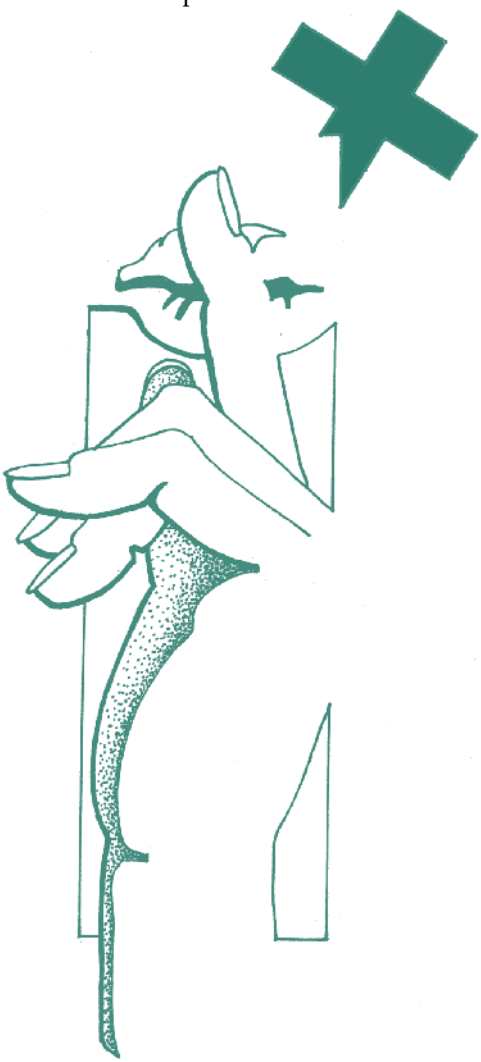
But I had another reason for choosing to write about this particular false god. Something extraordinary is happening in modern society and, in God's wonderful providence, it is born of that very god of secularism. More than that, by one of those divine paradoxes that only God can devise, it is undermining it so that, in our time, this particular false god is under threat.

It has always been one of the basic principles of secular society that it distance itself from a sense of the sacred. As a result, our political and educational institutions have proved sadly inadequate in nurturing and developing the spiritual impulses in human lives. They have acted as though being human had no spiritual dimension. If there were a spiritual need, the main-line churches, nicely side-lined, were there to house it.

But by and large, religion has failed in this matter. We can only view with dismay the number of people in our country and in other countries of the West, who have ceased to seek their spiritual home in our churches. We have become almost immune to the shock of hearing the extent to which church membership is dropping, year after year. As for our youth, what was once anecdotal evidence of the way they were leaving the church, is now being backed by statistics. A survey done in the year 2000 of Australian students who had attended Catholic schools, showed that a staggering 97 percent had abandoned public worship in the first 18 months of leaving secondary school. It would appear that their spiritual needs are no longer being met by religion.

So, does this mean, if religion is dying, that spirituality is dying with it? The answer has to be a resounding ***No***. What appears to have happened is that the spiritual desert created by secularism, its aridity and dryness, has left the human spirit so devoid of food that it can no longer abide its hunger. The result is that we are seeing humanity turning to spirituality with a need so great, it has become a tidal wave. In my lifetime I have seen nothing like it.

If religion is in trouble, spirituality is in the ascendancy, and the church seems to have no idea what to do about it. It has so long been forced into a defensive and self-protective position by the entrenchment of secularism in society, that it cannot adjust to this wave of interest in the spiritual life.



It seems unable to cope with the fact that this spiritual revolution is coming, not from within itself, but from within the world whose ungodliness it has always deplored.

Over time, the church has drawn in on itself to such an extent that it has ceased to dialogue with the world and has lost touch with it. Now, in confusion, its reaction to this explosion of interest in spiritual matters is one of suspicion and distrust. It has no authority over such a movement and it cannot control it with constraints and laws. Far from celebrating this wonderful phenomenon, it fears and suspects it. As one cleric said of this enormous growth of interest in spirituality: "Of what use is it, if it's not putting bums on seats in our churches?"

It is a sad reality that the old religious traditions often fail to recognise new expressions of the spiritual instinct and have little idea how to deal with its potential. The old does not understand the new, not only because it challenges its authority, but because the old religion thinks of itself as complete and as having all the answers. This is what the theologian, Paul Tillich, called 'the sin of religion'. It does not take into account that God is alive in the world and God will always be revealed as mysterious, unknowable and creative. In so far as the church fails to accept this, it will try to capture and contain the God who cannot be contained. The living God cannot be pinned down by a multitude of laws, or by systematic theology or authoritative statements or by any other means.

What we are seeing at this time is deeply ironic: our secular society, having given birth to a sense of the sacred, finds that its sacred institutions seem unable to find a place for it. Once again, the old wineskins are proving incapable of holding the new wine. If only religion could provide this new wine of spirituality with a welcoming place where it could, in time, evolve and mature to give nourishment and healing to humanity in the 21st century. Let us pray it be so. ■

Pauline O'Regan is a Sister of Mercy living in Christchurch. She is a prominent author and her latest book on getting old, Miles to Go, *was published last year.*

Listening to the voice of a son of Muhammad

Najib Lafraie (right) escaped from the turmoil of his country, Afghanistan, and found a home for his family in New Zealand.

In this Tui Motu *interview he talks about his Muslim faith, the violence that has afflicted his country, and his own aspirations to work for peace and understanding between the great world faiths*

Can you please first tell us something about yourself?

My family originally comes from North-Western Afghanistan. I was born, bred and educated in Kabul and went to University there. I obtained a degree in political science, and then went on to Hawaii to get a Masters and a PhD (1986). While I was there, the communists took over Afghanistan and then the Soviet Union invaded the country; so I returned and joined the resistance movement in Peshawar, Pakistan. I became part of the interim government in Pakistan as Minister of Information in 1989. I was able to return to Kabul when the communist regime was overthrown in 1992 and became Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. In September 1996 the Taliban captured Kabul, and the internationally recognized government withdrew to the north of the country. But I chose to stay in Kabul and gave up politics in the hope of returning to an academic career.

In fact I had to go into hiding for about a year. For seven months we were trapped in one room: my wife, my three daughters, one son – and me. My brother, who had been a worker for the Red Crescent and was not at all political, was arrested in my place and spent about two years in prison, part of the time being held in shackles. He died of cancer a year after his release, and I think his death may have been hastened by what he suffered – on my behalf.

Eventually I escaped back to Pakistan, and in 2000 came to New Zealand with my family. We did not know much about New Zealand, but the opportunity was offered through the UN High Commission for Refugees. We believe it has been a blessing to come here. We came to Christchurch first, and then I was fortunate to be offered a post at the University of Otago. I have been here for three years and hope to stay on.

Can you say something about the Taliban? Are they a typical fundamentalist group?

We do not like to call extremists such as the Taliban 'fundamentalists'. It is a term we Muslims are wary of. It came originally out of the United States, referring to certain Christian groups and has a negative connotation. If 'fundamentalism' means going to the foundations of a religion, then all good practicing Muslims are fundamentalists. But the Taliban certainly did not follow the fundamental teachings of Islam. They moved outside the tradition while claiming to act 'in the name of religion', giving the impression that their interpretation was what Sharia means. That is simply not the case.

For instance, the famous statues of Buddha which they destroyed had been in Afghanistan for 2000 years. For 1200 of those years the country has been predominantly Muslim. But it was the Taliban who destroyed those famous statues, as if they were the only true Muslims and no one else. They insisted on implementation of what they considered the Islamic penal code: stoning for adultery, cutting off thieves' hands. The Koran says nothing about stoning for adultery and that is why some Muslim scholars are against it.

Even extreme punishments specified in the Koran were traditionally subject to conditions. For instance, the Caliph Omar asked a thief why he had stolen, and the man said because he and his family were hungry. So Omar told his captors to feed the man and his family, and only if he still stole should they punish him.

This means that you must remove the causes of crime in the society first. The Koran also insists that any accusation against a person needs to be proven beyond doubt. The burden of proof is on the accusers. If an accused person does not confess, then there must be four witnesses for serious crimes, two for less so. The witnesses must declare they saw the crime with their own eyes. That is the religious requirement. The Taliban did not follow it: they convicted and punished people on circumstantial evidence. Their way of ruling by fear was completely foreign to Afghan traditions and to the teachings of the religion.

What is Islam's view of terrorism?

Osama bin Laden finds it very difficult to justify his terrorist acts in terms of Islamic tradition. The Koran allows the use of violence only in self-defence, for defending those who are oppressed, and for the defence of religion. Sometimes the only way to overcome evil is by force.

The Holy Koran and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad make it clear that force should be directed solely at the combatant, never against those who are innocent. Bin Laden tries to justify his targeting of innocent civilians by quoting the example of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, and demanding: 'what about our innocent victims?'. In a recent statement he says he decided on attacking America after the Israelis invaded Lebanon in 1982 and committed enormous atrocities with the complicity of the United States. That was long before the 1991 Iraqi conflict, which has been regarded as the cause of his militancy.

Bin Laden extends the concept of guilt by association to include those who elected a person like President Bush. Yet the Koran can never be used to justify the sort of violence he advocates. Unfortunately the way the 'war on terrorism' is conducted has made bin Laden much more popular among the Muslim youth. There is huge resentment among Muslims all over the world against the American arrogance and oppression – especially what is happening in Iraq and Palestine.

Why is there so much violence in Afghanistan?

Afghans are not violent people by nature. Our land has been at the crossroads of Asia, invaded by larger, expanding powers ever since the time of Alexander the Great. So Afghans have jealously fought for their freedom.

When I was growing up, the country was peaceful and peace-loving, and most people had a relatively comfortable life. There was not a great division between rich and poor (such as I later observed in India). The problems started when the Soviet Union tried to bring the country under its control first through its communist puppet regime and then through its direct invasion. Pakistani interference in the 1990s and their support of the Taliban contributed to the problem.

Will you say something about Islam and its customs.

The very meaning of the word *Islam* is to surrender oneself to God. It also means peace and is from the same root as *Salaam* in Arabic – or *Shalom* in Hebrew. Islam acknowledges the truth in other religions and this allows for peaceful co-existence. In my own country, Afghanistan, where more than 99 percent of the population is Muslim, Jews lived and traded peacefully for centuries. There are also some Hindus and Sikhs still living and working in Afghanistan.

Muslims pray five times a day, fast for a month in a year, pay *Zakat* or 'community wealth tax', and go on pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime if they can afford to. These are part of what is called the five pillars of Islam. We believe these acts of worship are for our own benefit. We need God and we need our religion. God doesn't need us. All these acts of worship have multiple spiritual, moral, psychological, social, economic and physical significance, but we don't have time to discuss all that.

Is interfaith marriage allowed in Islam?

The Holy Koran allows Muslim men to marry women of other faiths, but according to most scholars it is forbidden for a Muslim woman to marry one of another faith. I don't think this is a question of inequality between the sexes. The reason behind this view is that the family is the cornerstone of Islamic society. Within the family decisions should be made by consultation because, according to the Koran, Muslims should carry out their affairs on the basis of mutual consultation.

We believe this process of agreement by consent applies to all levels: the group/organisation, the city, the country and internationally, as much as within the family. Nevertheless, for maintaining order within the family, according to Islamic tradition the man is the head of the family. He cannot do whatever he likes, but he is ultimately responsible for the welfare of family members. The children will first follow the faith of their father.

In the case of a mixed marriage, the Islamic faith will be safeguarded if the man is a Muslim. If the husband is non-Muslim and the wife Muslim, however, the result would be either confusion for the children or they would grow up as non-Muslims.

You are involved in the Dunedin inter-faith group. Tell me about that.

A number of Christians, Muslims and Jews in Dunedin came together after 9/11 and formed the Inter-faith group. I became a member last year. There were concerns that world events would generate anti-Muslim feeling among ordinary people. Fortunately it has happened less here in New Zealand than in the United States and Australia, but still it was a cause of concern. As believers and followers of Abrahamic faiths we have so much in common, and we can strive together to SS

The next Pope. . ?

Jim Neilan looks forward to the next Conclave to elect a successor to Pope John Paul – and picks a likely candidate

Cardinal Walter Caspar, head of the Council for Promoting Christian Unity

All diocesan bishops in the Catholic Church are required to submit their resignation when they reach the age of 75. The 84-year-old bishop of Rome, Pope John Paul, despite serious illness, which makes it impossible to carry out most of the active ministries of priest or bishop, clings to office with an almost messianic sense of his own indispensability.

When elected 27 years ago, few could have predicted what a paradox Karol Wojtyla would prove to be as Pope. He has been named "Man of the Year" and "The Most Influential Political Figure in the World" by the international press. He played a big part in ending Soviet totalitarianism, has been a fearless champion of social justice, human rights and dignity, and a passionate advocate for the sacredness of all human life – a man of peace, steeped in prayer and the certainty of his personal faith.

And yet, during his pontificate, despite his remarkable talents and successes, millions of Catholics have 'left the Church', feeling excluded and demoralised. Theologians and pastors have been suppressed, dismissed and disciplined. Discussion on topics such as birth control, homosexuality, celibacy, married clergy, divorce and the ordination of women has been shut down. There are now bitterly divided rival factions within the church, each claiming to speak in the name of true Catholicism.

Any papacy of our times must be judged in the light of how well it has encouraged and implemented the spirit of the Second Vatican Council – by far the most important source of church teaching in the 20th century. The Council Fathers (the largest ever gathering of bishops) signalled a new understanding of the church; a transition from a triumphalistic, authoritarian establishment, to a pilgrim people of God, "sharing in the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age" (opening words of "The Church in the Modern World").

The first Vatican Council dealt with the authority of the Pope, but in 1870 the meeting was abruptly halted before the participants could go on to discuss the role of bishops. So this was one of the far-reaching topics taken up by the Council Fathers of Vatican II, 90 years later. They dealt with the central question about distribution of authority in the Church. They committed the Church to collegiality – a sharing of authority between Pope and bishops, while acknowledging the Pope's ultimate authority as teacher and judge. This followed the wishes of the two Popes of the Council, John XXIII and Paul VI, to reform the Roman Curia whose power had gradually been supplanting the inalienable rights and responsibilities of local bishops. The Council made it clear that bishops, in their dioceses, are not delegates of Rome – they are empowered directly by their sacramental ordination. Collegiality comes from Christ.

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find answers to world problems and to right injustices.

We are still at the stage of getting together and learning from each other and resolving misunderstandings. We have developed a programme of going to schools together to show the students that different faiths can co-operate. We meet monthly and discuss various issues.

For instance, on the occasion of the Norwegian Prime Minister's visit, Helen Clarke proposed a regional inter-faith conference. This was an item of agenda in this month's meeting and we decided to strongly support this initiative. New Zealand is an ideal place for launching such interfaith dialogues. Not only Christians and Muslims but Hindus and Buddhists could also be invited because of their presence here.

The Interfaith group also organised David Lange's lecture at the University last year, and there are plans to do something similar this year. These initiatives are aimed at promoting understanding and peace, which is something we all cherish. ■

Notice

Levin Catholic Women's League are celebrating their Golden Jubilee on the 21st and 22nd May. For information please ring Marie 06 3686147

However, since the end of the Council in 1965,Vatican authorities, especially the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* under the leadership of Cardinal Ratzinger, have once again undermined the effectiveness of collegiality by consistently failing to consult with local bishops before promulgating edicts which affected them and their people and by a reluctance to respond to the regional concerns of bishops.

Intentionally or not, John Paul has contributed to this state of affairs. Through his wide-ranging travels and his expertise in using the media, he has promoted himself as the sole, dominant, authoritarian figure in the Catholic Church. Local bishops have been left in his shadow, and as a result their legitimate authority has been diluted. As Archbishop Bernadin of Chicago once said in frustration, "He treats us like altar boys."

So, what qualities are needed in the person who will step into the Shoes of the Fisherman as the next Pope? Needless to say, it won't be a married Jewish Palestinian fisherman like the first Pope! And with all the media speculation about *'Papabile'* (those in the running), there is no mention of *'Mamabile'*!

There is one influential Vatican prelate who has spent his priestly life trying to reconcile the many apparent contradictions between the Church's theology and its practice. "I have my faith, not from encyclicals or pastoral letters, but from my mother and father", says Walter Kasper. And if the 72-year-old German cardinal who is head of the *Council for Promoting Christian Unity* were elected at the next conclave, many would regard it as a great blessing for the worldwide church.

Known as 'The Friendly Cardinal' (a reference to the cartoon character, *Casper the Friendly Ghost*) he has the balanced background of 30 years as a university professor as well as 12 years as a diocesan bishop, so he knows the sense of frustration when the Vatican's efforts to enforce some teachings run up against the realities of the local Church.

Writing in a German Jesuit publication, Kasper accused the Vatican of pushing centralisation contrary to the intention of Vatican II. "Local realities sometimes dictate flexibility", he wrote, and as an example he joined other German bishops in issuing a pastoral letter encouraging divorced and civilly remarried Catholics to return to the sacraments.

In a departure from the usual 'behind closed doors' policy of the Vatican, he publicly disagreed with Cardinal Ratzinger's insistence that the papacy is in charge of the church and that local bishops need Rome's permission for what they do. Kasper wrote that the local church (or diocese) is not simply an administrative subdivision of the world Church but is "the church in one particular place", and that bishops "must not take the easy way out and abdicate their responsibility by hiding behind Roman decisions".

The concentration of authority in Rome is unquestionably an obstacle to unity with other religions and faiths – a matter which deeply concerns Cardinal Kasper who heads the Church's *Pontifical Council for Christian Unity*. He was openly critical of the recent Vatican document *Dominus Jesus*, describing it as "unnecessarily sharp and harsh" in its tone, and damaging the Vatican Council's spirit of ecumenism.

This central debate about the distribution of authority in the Church may well influence the choosing of the next Pope. It is not a theoretical question but one that affects every Catholic. We know from reports that our own New Zealand bishops have spoken out on their official visits to Rome. They went with genuine questions, concerns and requests from loyal Catholics of their dioceses but the subsequent Vatican document of response appears to brush our people's views aside and the patronising 'Rome knows what's best' attitude continues unheedingly.

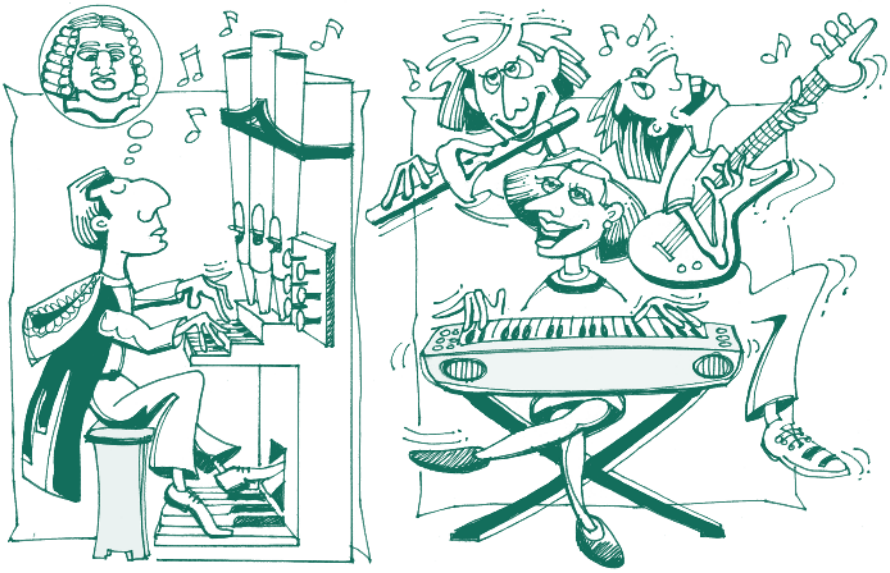
And while parishes close or amalgamate and communities are deprived of the opportunity to regularly celebrate their own Eucharist, an honest debate about the whole theology of the priesthood is stifled. There have been many suggestions put forward by well-respected theologians, historians and Scripture scholars which make good discussion points for potential solutions to the dearth of priests in our own times, but Rome insists on maintaining a centuries-old model of priesthood which itself is far removed from the priesthood of the early church.

Who would want to be at the head of a church facing so many problems? Walter Kasper is a relative latecomer to Rome. "I am a stranger here", he said two years ago, but there was no hint of regret in his voice. His lively intelligence, genuine kindness and candour have won him many supporters. He laughs off any suggestions that he could be the next Pope. "I think someone who desires this job and believes he's able to carry it out is not *papabile*". But no other cardinal, so far, has been as clear about changes needed in the exercise of authority in our 21st Century Church.

Who knows? "The Holy Spirit is always good for a surprise!", Kasper says with a grin. ■

What shall we sing this Sunday?

Mike Marshall



For those who live within the distribution area of the Christchurch Press, there has been a lovely little series of articles, comments and letters popping up in January and February. All about church music! In a letter to the editor, Jane Gregg of Christchurch, wrote: "We are lucky to live in a city where the metaphysics of church music figures on your radar screen." Indeed.

Initially, in an article on the centenary celebrations of Christchurch Catholic Cathedral, the organist and music director Don Whelan raised a few hackles when he made a stand for maintaining the standards of music in a Catholic community which, apparently, would not care if music ceased to exist, and then "shudders to think that, when he is gone, guitars may replace the organ".

This brought support from the Press arts columnist Christopher Moore, who, in the main, seemed to tie lack of quality to the use of "warm fuzzy theological" inclusive language: "Gone are words and music that put sinew and muscle into our religious observations. The great tradition of church music is increasingly abandoned for the second best and inclusive."

Enter minister and hymn-writer Bill Wallace: "The challenge to the church in this pluralistic society is whether it can produce a wide range of resources which enable people to celebrate the sacredness of life. The use of literal expressions and fundamentalist affirmations can only serve to deepen the divisions in society."

Back to Jane Gregg: "Personally I prefer to cling to rituals and fight for rites" inferring that ritual, tradition, and intellectual rigour enables spiritual profundity. Oh, yes, and…. "there are many places where it's possible to get to grips with the type of sacred music of which Kumbaya could be said to be the stand out."

In the November 2003 issue of this magazine, I reported on the *Worshipping Under Southern Skies* Conference in Christchurch. Keynote speaker Marty Haughen said: "In Minneapolis every Sunday they'll have a Mass with altar boys in white gloves and they'll do an orchestra. It sounds beautiful, but no one in the congregation sings, no one participates. There's another church that uses a rock-and-roll band and the congregation claps and sways, but they don't sing and the music has nothing to do with the liturgy. So, in both cases you might say they are stuck. One is stuck to a vision of church that says beautiful music is all you need and the other one is stuck in a church that says energy is all you need, and in neither case are they looking at the liturgy as the work of the people and the prayer of the people."

So what does the church expect of its liturgical music?

This is the crux of the matter, which those promoting the "spiritual cultural drive" seem to have either missed or relegated. Marty in his keynote address, (3 Oct 2003) noted that a cornerstone of Vatican II is the active participation of all the faithful – to empower the congregation to sing prayer. The difference between the congregation listening and singing is huge. The Spirit is present in the congregation when they respond. Sing the liturgy, don't just sing at the liturgy.

The 1996 New Zealand *Catholic Liturgy Formation Programme* states: "A cantor, an organist, other instrumentalists, a choir and a director of music help the assembly find a voice to sing the hymns, responses and acclamations that are assigned to them as their participation in the liturgy."

This does not dismiss the role of a choir or instrumentalists, in providing

"works that add beauty and solemnity to the liturgy. Yet the function of music is ministerial; it must serve and never dominate." (American Bishops' *Music in Catholic Worship*)

sing the liturgy ...don't just sing at the liturgy

What music, then, meets the prayer needs of the faithful?

Marty summed it up thus: Christian worship, on any given day, within a liturgical religious tradition, in a particular community or culture, at a unique moment in history, will always exhibit a tension between the voices of the ancestors and God speaking in today's world.

To paraphrase the American Bishops, they recommend that we apply three judgements when we select Sunday music:

- ***Musical:*** Is the music technically, aesthetically and expressively good?
- ***Liturgical:*** the music is determined according to the nature of the liturgy, considering the settings of the Mass, the readings, the role of the congregation, choir, minister, cantor and musicians.
- ***Pastoral***: Does the music enable the people to express their faith in this place, age and culture?

Given the above criteria – and as Christopher Moore remarks – there should still be a balance between the traditional and the contemporary.

How does all of this work in practice?

The importance of lay participation following Vatican II mean the role of the parishioners in the pews was recognised as being much more than 'father's helpers' and that the community had the responsibility to seek out and develop ministerial skills from within its own numbers.

Having basically only experienced one parish in the last 25 years, I can say that we did not have a huge resource of virtuoso singers or musicians to draw on; nonetheless many of us, with support and encouragement, took on the ministry of leading the parish music at the principal Sunday Mass. Certainly my skills as a guitarist could at best have been described as average, but, with the affirmation of the community, practice and stimulating music, have developed over that time.

We now have a number of small groups who take responsibility for leading the music on a rotational basis, some with keyboard players, some with guitarists. At major feasts, the whole choir can produce challenging and satisfying three part harmonies, while always being aware of our limitations. We have discarded the old four-hymn Mass and now focus on singing to complement the major parts of the Mass; the Gospel, The Eucharist and Communion. This is supplemented by welcoming and sending-out hymns.

I do know that we have moved way beyond 'Kumbaya'. In the early post-Vatican II years, there was certainly a surfeit of warm-fuzzy, guitar-based three-chord songs, found in such collections as *Tenei Matou* and *Sing Sing Sing*. Since then we have explored *Scripture in Song*, Taizé, *Celebration* and *As One Voice*. We currently draw much of our psalmody, Eucharistic and hymnal music from *Gather*.

This does not mean that we have entirely abandoned everything that has gone before, as we also endeavour to include some Latin music as well as the occasional pre-Vatican II hymn. But now one of the musical criteria is that our lyrics are 'yoked to scripture'. And guitar-wise, they are certainly more challenging than 'Kumbaya.'

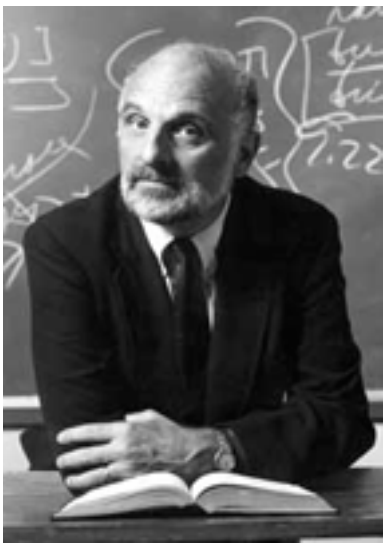
I suppose subconsciously I have worked to overcome the feeling that a guitar is a second-class instrument for church music, and while chord playing cannot adequately support those singers who need a melody line, the *Worshipping Under Southern Skies* conference did much to validate any instrument that can lead the congregational singing.

I do not know how much congregational participation there is to Don Whelan's music at the Cathedral. The Press article says that in his 35 years, Don had embarked on an ambitious programme that had become a feature of Christchurch's classical music scene. So the question is, is this singing prayer or performance?

Don Whelan is to be commended for endeavouring to maintain the best of the traditional, but it has to be acknowledged that the Cathedral may be one of the few places that have the resources to implement it. At the W.u.S.S. conference, when Don led a workshop on the rich Latin and Greek tradition of music for 3 to 5 voices, those from our parish who attended commented that it would be very difficult for parish musicians and singers – but great in the Cathedral. Chris Archer's *Millennium Mass*, also celebrated by Jane Gregg in her letter, drew this comment from our parish music director – a person of no mean musical ability: "This was billed as a Mass for congregation and choir, so I hoped to learn something that was a bit outside our comfort zone. Unfortunately it was two or three steps above our musical ability, not one."

The point here is that much of this music described as part of the 'spiritual cultural drive' might simply be inaccessible to many parishes. What resources are other parishes able to draw on, and how much have they explored the fine new music being developed for the new millennium? Has the tradition and value of Maori and Pacific Island music been considered as part of the spiritual cultural drive?

The Christchurch media debate seems to have been superseded by the new Stations of the Cross controversy, and on that topic, another letter writer sideswiped the music issue with this: " …there are other churches not striving to become monuments of art, music halls, tourist attractions…" I just hope this won't be the last word on the issue. ■



The Prophetic Dimension of our Faith

World renowned Scripture scholar Walter Brueggemann recently spoke in Auckland. Elaine Wainwright summarises his lecture

Beside people in pain and also *near to the heart of the God* who anguishes with those in such pain is the place where Walter Brueggemann would locate the prophet. This was the kernel of the message proclaimed by this prophetic scholar of the Hebrew Bible when he addressed a gathering of over 200 at St Kentigern's College, Auckland, on Wednesday 26 January. He entitled his lecture, "The Prophetic Dimensions of our Faith" and after setting out what he sees as the key dimensions of prophetic ministry, he explored why it is that we have lost faith in such ministry and how we might recover it.

Most of us would agree with Brueggemann's analysis that our global society is in deep trouble, as were the societies of the prophets of ancient Israel including Jesus. He identified the most common response to this trouble as denial, massive denial. In such a context, the prophet who stands beside people in pain needs to analyse society to uncover the political, economic, social and symbolic dynamics. What is really going on under the veneer of the public reading of reality by those in power, will be the question of the prophet and the prophetic community.

Being near to the heart of God as well as deeply immersed in the lives of those in pain, the prophet can offer a sub-version of reality filled with images and metaphors which tease the imagination to the point of realization that the commonly accepted description of reality is not true. The language of the prophet breaks open a society's ingrained practice of denial, and through the creative use of images and metaphors can take them beyond despair to hope. 'There is room for hope, God is doing a new thing' – is the message of the prophet.

Brueggemann suggested to the assembled audience in Auckland, however, that the present believing community has lost its nerve, has lost faith in its sacred story, in its language and its imagery. We are no longer prepared to speak, he suggested, in the public arena in the language of faith, in the language of those challenging metaphors and images which speak through the falsely constructed discourse of those in power.

Like the skilful prophet who uncovers the blindness and breaks through the denial, Brueggemann did not leave his audience without hope. Indeed, he suggested that it was possible to recover the prophetic dimension of our faith. An initial way is to intentionally gather around our sacred story regularly and to develop facility with its language and metaphors, so that new and appropriate language and images for today's world might emerge. This is to challenge us to re-think the ways we celebrate the liturgy of the word when we gather for Eucharist.

A second way to recover prophetic ministry is to create neighbourhoods or communities alongside those of the state or the market, because such communities can be ways of challenging the status quo. Such communities as prophetic communities need a dialogical and not an authoritarian God, Brueggemann suggests. This God is in the fray as the community, the prophet and the divine enter into conversation about social reality, recognizing that there is an alternative to the current shaping of reality. That alternative is visible to the prophet and the prophetic community who stand beside the person in pain and who listen to the anguish in the heart of God over such pain. They speak a new vision and enact a new praxis. ■

Elaine Wainwright is inaugural professor of theology in the University of Auckland's School of Theology. She is a biblical scholar specializing in the study of the gospels, particularly the Gospel of Matthew.

Celebrating with a party

Susan Smith

Throughout *Matthew's* gospel there are frequent references to meals and eating. In *Matt 9:9-13*, we see Jesus eating in the home of Matthew, the tax-collector. Other meal and food stories include Peter's mother-in-law serving Jesus after he has healed her; the disciples breaking the Sabbath law by eating ears of grain and Jesus defending their actions against the criticism of the Pharisees; Jesus miraculously feeding two crowds in the desert; Jesus teaching about the Kingdom through parables about banquets; Jesus eating in the house of Simon leper; and Jesus sharing a last meal with his disciples.

Biblical scholars have long recognised that these meals have Eucharistic overtones with the exception of one. That is the meal that Herod organises for his birthday, where we learn that Herodias' daughter asks for the head of the Baptist on a platter. *Mark* gives more detail than *Matthew* and we learn that Herod had a banquet for "his courtiers and officers and leaders of Galilee", in other words for a small and select group. In both *Mark* and *Matthew*, Herod's meal occurs immediately prior to the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. What a contrast this juxtaposition suggests – the small, exclusive meal for the elite which is death-dealing and the inclusive, compassionate outreach of Jesus to the poor and the sick, a life-giving occasion.

The inclusive nature of the meals Jesus hosts is evident too in the story of Matthew, the tax collector. Tax collectors were despised because they collected the Roman tax, the *publicum,* for the imperial master, Rome. The Pharisees, the guardians of Jewish religious law, criticised Jesus for eating with "tax collectors and sinners." This story allows Jesus to proclaim the purpose of his mission, (and, by extension, ours today): he is called to be 'physician' for the sick, not for those who are well.

The call of Matthew is located in the wider context of Jesus' healing miracles in chapters 8-9. Here we see Jesus healing those who are physically ill, those who are possessed by demons, the paralytic, and blind and the dumb. In this manner he fulfils the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. However, the call of Matthew makes it clear that Jesus is involved in more than physical healing. His ministry is about social healing, what American New Testament scholar Donald Senior calls "a profound spiritual transformation" whereby those, such as tax collectors and sinners, who have been isolated or excluded are now drawn into the community.

Remember that the call of Matthew, the tax collector climaxes in a celebratory meal, and that meals have Eucharistic overtones in the Gospel narratives. Think about our Eucharistic celebrations today. Are they about exclusion, about the law and order people deciding who and how people can participate in Eucharistic celebrations? Or are they about inclusion, about witnessing to the healing and transformative love of Jesus? ■

Dr Susan Smith is a Mission Sister who teaches Biblical Studies at the School of Theology, University of Auckland

A drama of character and compassion

Vera Drake
Review: Paul Sorrell

The chance to see a new film by Mike Leigh – the acclaimed British director of *Naked*, *Secrets and Lies, All or Nothing* and many others – filled me with anticipation. I wasn't disappointed. Master of the gritty urban drama, Leigh is sometimes criticized for having too bleak a vision. While the raw suffering and emotion his characters undergo often verges on the unbearable, his films always contain an element of redemption. Here, it is Leigh's compassion for his down-trodden heroine that releases the film from what might have been little more than a grinding domestic tragedy.

A summary of the plot makes the title character look like the epitome of evil – the sordid story of a woman who performs abortions on the mean streets of North London with no apparent regard for the legal, ethical or medical consequences of her actions. Yet, although frighteningly naïve – she just wants to "help the poor girls out" – Vera is a gem: the warm heart of a close-knit working-class home, an untiring and cheerful worker, a roper-in of waifs and strays, a visitor to the sick and the elderly, and the maker of endless comforting cups of tea. Vera's happy family life unravels for ever when she receives a visit from the police in the midst of a family celebration.

The film is set very precisely in Islington in 1950, and the period detail is superb. However, period fidelity is not sought for its own sake, and Leigh contrasts the small, dim and shabby quarters of the urban poor with the light and spacious houses of the rich to which Vera has entrée in her role as a domestic. This use of parallels and contrasts extends to character as well as setting: Vera is set against both her selfish, upwardly mobile sister-in-law and the flint-hearted, greedy 'friend' who finds the desperate women for her and profits greatly from it. There are also wonderful character vignettes such as Vera's gormless daughter Ethel and her lacklustre fiancé Reg.

Yet, through what might have been a sordid and sorry tale, gleams of Vera's golden heart shine through. There is a wonderful complexity in the film as the simplest and most unprepossessing characters reveal flashes of bedrock humanity, of the redemptive potential in human nature.

Vera Drake comes very highly recommended. It is simply one of the finest films you are likely to see for a long time. ■

Paul Sorrell is a freelance writer and editor in Dunedin

It's not just a boxing movie

Million Dollar Baby
Review: Fr Peter Malone NSC

Clint Eastwood plays Frank, a grizzled trainer with guilt memories of abandoning his daughter and being responsible for fighters' injuries. In his old age, he is trying to be protective, especially of his champions. He also goes to Mass every morning and spars with the priest over personal spirituality and theological and moral issues. His best friend and sometime confidant is Scrap (Morgan Freeman), former fighter and general manager and cleaner-upper of the gym.

The gym attracts some good fighters and some oddballs as well, all tolerated by Frank – except for Margaret Fitzgerald (Hilary Swank) who is from a white trash background but who has a knockout gift for fighting. He says she is not tough enough – girlie! Naturally, she wears him down and mellows a lot of his sourness.

The first two acts of the film focus on Frank, Scrap and Margaret's training. The second act is Margaret's success in the ring. Not knowing what was to come, the scene of Margaret's knockout at the hands of a vicious fighter was more than a shock. It was disbelief. This means the third act is not what we might have been expecting.

Margaret is a quadriplegic, entirely dependent on nursing and machines. She is abandoned by her greedy hillbilly family, but Frank is absolutely devoted. Then she asks him to turn off the machines.

He discusses the issue with the priest who is rather cold yet supportively challenging. The resolution of the film is based on emotional response to the situation, the morality of using extraordinary means to keep a person alive, the request for assisted suicide.

It leaves the audience who has gone to see a boxing movie going out of the cinema needing to give more thought to the moral issues, at an intellectual principle level and at an emotional level, to ask whether compassion is the final criterion – and what are the immediate and long-term consequences. ■

Permission Catholic Voice, *Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn*

Discovering the seeds of faith in Maori culture

Nga Kakano o te Kupu – Seeds of the Word
Philip Cody sm
Steele Roberts, Aotearoa New Zealand 2004
Review: Tui Cadigan RSM
Waitaha-Ngati Mamoe-Poutini Ngai Tahu

This book in its 114 pages will generate interest, raise questions, spark debate from Pakeha and Maori alike and provide another resource in a relatively small body of work that exists on the subject. The style at the beginning of the work reflects the traditional process of encounter used by Maori. It begins with prayer, acknowledging those who have died especially those ancestors in the faith who first engaged with Maori, turning to the living and those who contributed to the work in any way. Finally the words that situate the author in this place.

A tribute in the form of a dedication to a French Missionary names him as "a model for inculturation". Father Francois Delachienne's gift was being able to "accept the best cultural values of another people and allow the leaven of the Gospel to meet them without destroying them". Maori spirituality may be a key contributor in developing a process of inculturation.

The author adopts a methodology to discern what seeds of the Word God has planted within Maori culture. A series of themes including Te Ao Marama – the world of light, Te Rakau – the tree, whakapapa – genealogy and Hawaikii – place of origins/ancestral homeland form part of the discussion. The writer explores each theme by drawing on personal knowledge and experience as well as engaging Maori opinion to explain ways in which seeds of the Word exist in Maori culture.

There is no pressure to make the Maori understanding or the Christian knowledge 'fit' with each other. Some aspects do not appear suitable for inculturation. It is fair to say that no compatible model to the role of Jesus Christ emerged in the research. The great value of this work I think is that it has the potential to encourage Maori within the church to deepen their faith through the cultural uniqueness that is theirs. It also provides some information on Maori religious thought to other cultures. Pakeha and all represented ethnicities in our society can enrich the church here through a process of inculturation. This book gives Maori some ideas to reflect on.

I admire the author tackling this subject matter – this work will have critics from the Maori community, critics from the Pakeha community and critics from the Christian community, who will claim a sort of cultural neutrality! The book is a potential resource for tertiary study, teachers, clergy and religious. Those who feel called to mission to Maori in particular, as well as Christians of goodwill will benefit from reflecting on this book. ■

Waning influence of Syria in the Lebanon

Crosscurrents
John Honoré

The political unrest in the Middle East continues. The February assassination of the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafik Hariri, brings to the surface old injustices suffered under the colonial rule of France (strongly supported by the Vatican) which was mandated to the French by the League of Nations in 1922. The artificial border between Syria and Lebanon has remained a problem area even after 1947, when both nations became free and independent.

Lebanon's multiethnic society, based on French ideas of democracy, has made it the freest state in the Arab East where diverse opinions are everywhere. With the extending territorial hegemony of Israel, supported by the USA, divisions appeared in Lebanon over sympathy for the Palestinians, who sought support for attacks against Israel. There are over 200,000 Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon. This has led to rifts in Lebanon about its identity as an Arab nation in support of the Arab Palestinian cause. Since the 1975 civil war, Lebanon has been the battleground for Arab-Israeli confrontation. This culminated in 1982 with the Israeli invasion, ordered by Ariel Sharon, and the massacre of women and children living in the refugee camps of Shatilla and Sabre.

Syrian troops who were invited to Lebanon by the Lebanese Christians in 1976 to stop the brewing civil war, aligned themselves with the Shiite and Hezbullah parties. This has made Syria the main power broker in Lebanese politics and an unwanted influence. Today, UN Resolution 1559, which calls for the withdrawal of Syrian troops, remains contentious and depends on whether the Lebanese view themselves as Arab or Christian, as anti-Israel or pro-Western idealists.

Most Lebanese prefer the withdrawal of Syrian troops, but are not willing to have their independence dominated by interference from Washington and Israel. This would only increase the power of Hezbullah. Bush's attempt to capitalise on the unrest in the Levant, by declaring that "freedom will prevail in Lebanon", is not helpful: in no sense can recent events in the Lebanon be seen as a consequence of Bush's 'war of liberation' in Iraq. Lebanon's future should rest with its people. It should remain free of Western interference which, since the time of French colonialism, has exacerbated the political situation in the Levant.

Demise of minor parties

This is election year so the minor parties, on the edges of the political spectrum, take on a greater significance and should be acting as a moderating influence on the major players, Labour and National. Unfortunately for the MMP system, the minor parties seem to be self-destructing.

After the retirement of Richard Prebble, the ACT Party's leadership was assumed by Rodney Hide, after much bitter debate within party ranks. He has been unsuccessful both in rallying the party and gaining support in the polls, which is currently languishing around two percent. Gerry Brownlee put paid to any alliance with ACT by stating that "ACT did not deserve to be re-elected". This could spell political oblivion for the Centre-Right party.

Two Christchurch members of ACT have departed, believing that the hierarchy was ignoring ordinary voters. Both major parties have taken over the centre ground which leaves the ACT Party with nowhere to go. It remains for Rodney Hide to pursue his 'perks buster' role which will attract attention but not support. The coup de graçe for ACT is the suggestion that John Banks, still with delusions of grandeur despite being annihilated in the Auckland mayoralty race, will contest Tamaki with the hope of beating National. The ACT party appears dead.

New Zealand First has only Winston Peters as a draw card and it seems that he has overplayed his hand. His latest attack on an American book seller in Auckland, under parliamentary privilege, looks outrageous and has endangered the use of the privilege of parliament. Winston Peters is a one - man band (who has even heard of the other members?) polling around five percent and falling. It seems that only Tauranga understands Peters, as no other party is seeking his support as a coalition partner. His undeniable mana and unerring ability to attract attention might not be enough this year to secure survival.

Loose canon fired at the UN

The US nomination of John Bolton as UN ambassador sends another signal to the Middle East that Washington intends to maintain its aggressive policy of 'democratic' interference, this time towards Syria and Iran. Bolton has been a harsh critic of the UN and joins the cabal of hard line neo-conservatives which runs US foreign policy. He will seek to emasculate the Security Council and what he has termed as "Kofi Annan's UN power grab". Consider his record. He scuttled the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the UN Conference on the illicit trade in small arms. He was behind the renunciation of the US signature on the 1998 Rome statute creating the International Criminal Court.

The appointment reinforces the US intention of dominating the UN and sends a signal to the Middle East that American political and military intervention will continue. The UN will be officially under US control and its independence and assistance will no longer be considered as multinational. John R. Bolton is on record as saying "there's no such thing as the United Nations". ■

Flying priests not the answer

I came away from a recent visit to a country parish just south of Auckland feeling angry. The parish has a fine church built ten years ago. It is laid out in a semicircle, just right for the Sunday congregation of 300. Entry is through an ample vestibule that serves well for parish get-togethers after Mass. Since the wall between vestibule and church proper is in glass, the vestibule serves as an overflow area for Christmas, Easter and other large gatherings. Mass at 9.30 each Sunday brings together the entire parish community.

Aware that this weekly gathering of faithful with their resident priest was about to come to an end, I was angry that this was due to the intransigence of those in the higher echelons of power in the government of the Church. Soon the parish will have no resident pastor. Mass will be provided by a flying priest living elsewhere, responsible for Sunday Mass in at least three parish churches and in several out-churches. The possibility of close links between pastor and flock will be greatly diminished.

This will be no way the fault of the Bishop. The number of priests available to minister in parishes is shrinking and will continue to do so dramatically. There is in place a Diocesan Plan, about which there has been widespread and protracted consultation. The Bishop and those working with him are doing what they can with the resources available to them. For the impending deprivation to be suffered by many parish communities, they are in no way to blame.

There is of course a flip side benefit to such developments. Lay people are moving into roles of contribution and leadership in the Church that were denied to their parents. Fine. But there is no point in moving from one extreme to another. To turn the ordained priest into a sacrament machine, rushing from place to place to pour baptismal water, confect the Real Presence, or anoint dying folk he has hardly known, is to the detriment of the key role he should be playing through the Eucharist in the building up of Christian community. In my academic retirement I live with a parish priest who amazes me with the knowledge and concern he has for the various members of the parish community. Few flying priests would be able to make such a contribution.

How differently our brethren of the Eastern Churches would tackle the problem. They would look around the community and single out a man who had proven himself as parishioner, citizen, spouse and parent. He would be presented to the bishop for ordination as their priest and pastor.

Given today's general high level of education and the wide availability of pastoral, Biblical and theological education, whether by attendance at courses or by distance or Internet learning, the candidate could readily acquire the required knowledge and expertise. This could if necessary be through a period of in-service education. Securing a competent parish priest "from the ranks" rather than from the seminary would be doing what our brethren of the Eastern Churches have been doing for a thousand years.

One would not like to think that the fervent words that Holy Father has written about the importance of Sunday Mass and its relationship to community were insincere words. But at least in the era of his successor, it would be hollow bleating to continue such statements and not look hard at possible avenues for providing an adequate supply of Eucharistic ministers, of which the ordination of married men may well not be the only approach. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

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

Prisoners of conscience

Jacqueline Wood

Have you heard of Peter Benenson? Perhaps not. Well, nearly two million people in 150 countries round the world have, for he is the founder of the organisation to which they belong, *Amnesty International*. In 1961 Peter Benenson read a report of two students in a café in Portugal raising their glasses 'To freedom'. This simple act resulted in their arrest and sentence to seven years' imprisonment.

Peter Benenson abandoned his normal practice of writing a letter of protest and delivering it to the relevant embassy. Instead he went into a church to pray. There, the idea of *Amnesty International* took shape. He wrote an article and took it to the editor of the London Sunday newspaper *The Observer*.

In his article he called on readers to respond, to band together to work for the millions of prisoners around the world who had committed no crime but were executed, tortured or incarcerated simply for who they were, or for what they believed or espoused. He called them 'prisoners of conscience'. In a month, 1,000 Observer readers had replied and in six months an international organisation was established.

How does it work? How do you get a government to respect its citizens' human rights? At the higher level by diplomats meeting with government ministers, by observing trials, by writing reports and publishing facts. So how does the ordinary person fit in?

Some years ago an *Amnesty* group in Dunedin was assigned a Uruguayan prisoner, Diego Nigro, a 26-year-old carpenter imprisoned without trial for trade union activities. He was held in a notoriously harsh prison in Montevideo. For two years the group wrote frequently to the authorities, and to his wife, Susana. Clearly it was unsafe for Susana to reply, but one day the long awaited letter came to say "my husband was set at liberty on 15 December". Later, from Diego himself: "but the only important thing is the friendship and love of you. That is what I have learned to value more than anything else".

So what keeps Amnesty going? For most it is a continuing sense of outrage at injustice and the knowledge that ordinary people can make a difference. For me it is often tremendous admiration for the courage of the people we work for. Recently a father was worried about his son, a human rights defender. His life was on the line, literally, every day. "Are you really prepared to die?" asked the father. "Oh yes, replied the son, "this is indeed a cause I would die for".

Jacqui Wood is a Dunedin member of Amnesty International

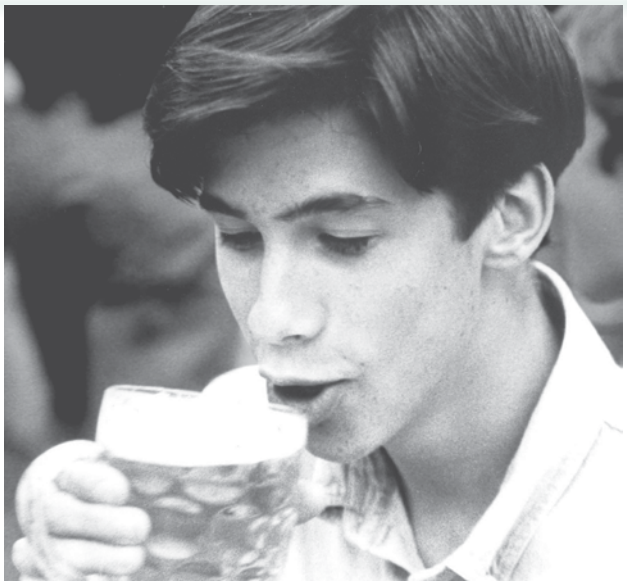
Disturbing use of alcohol by the young

A disturbing trend in the use of alcohol by the very young has been revealed in statistics produced by the Injury Prevention Centre. The figures show that alcohol-related hospital admissions for children aged 10-14 have gone up 87% since 1999 when the legal drinking age was reduced to 18.

This has prompted calls from organisations such as Alcohol Health Watch and the Salvation Army to raise the legal age back to 20 years. "The alarming rise in young children with alcohol-related problems is confirmed by the experience of The Salvation Army's front line staff across the country," says Major Campbell Roberts, Director of The Salvation Army's Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit.

"In a recent study amongst our staff, nearly everyone interviewed raised concerns about children and younger teenagers drinking. We've had cases of children as young as 10 years old being regularly drunk."

The Salvation Army is a major provider of alcohol and drug addiction services and sees the consequences of alcohol abuse first hand. Major Roberts says the Army's addiction services are set up to deal with adults but, "we have increasing numbers of parents calling for help about a teenager whose drinking is out of control," he says.



After originally expressing serious concern that reducing the legal drinking age to 18 would also reduce the de facto drinking age, Major Roberts says the Salvation Army is now facing up to the fact that all its worst claims are turning out to be true.