

Tui Motu

InterIslands

monthly independent Catholic magazine

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*Say to the daughter of Zion:
Look, your King is approaching,
humble and riding on a donkey
and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.*

Zechariah 9:9

persecution, pilgrimage, and popes

Strangely in our wired-in global village the *persecution* of Christians is becoming more, not less, common. Often I hear self-righteous condemnation of the perpetrators. Perhaps their response is completely justified. However, take another look! The Latin Patriarchate bishops' statement, printed on the opposite page, presents another more peaceable way of thinking.

Reflecting on recent earth-shaking Middle Eastern events, the bishops present a different reality. Not just Christians were murdered: Sunni Muslims were pitted against Shiites and vice-versa; secular Muslims were killed by their fanatical religious brothers. Putting too great an emphasis on persecution of Christians alone plays into the hands of extremists. Their propaganda spreads prejudice and hatred, and sets "peoples and religions against one another."

The Bishops' thinking is amazingly direct: in their societies, people must stand together in truth and freedom. The outside world will not

stand up to protect them. Therefore they alone can build a common future together. Their fine dream and prayer is for societies in which Muslims, Jews and Christians are equal citizens.

This short document repays attention for the depth of spirituality that it encapsulates: the beatitudes find a real place here. You hear the voice of Jesus. May we take that voice to heart. Remember, we in the South have voices crying "extremist" and "terrorist". The universal voice of prejudice and hatred will be tamed only by prayer, vision and acting together. It's a startling Pentecost challenge!

Our cover pictures symbolize the *Hikoi* which Bishop Kelvin Wright undertook here in the south — a Lenten *pilgrimage of faith* to honour the 200th anniversary of the first public preaching of Christianity in Aotearoa. The Cross is at Oihi Bay where Marsden first preached; the *Hikoi* prayer guide shows the route that Bishop Kelvin walked over "the land" of his Diocese; and the man on the donkey is, of course, the bishop. Enjoy the interview on ps 14–15.

Thirdly, we present three articles in our election series (don't you love Donald's "tick" icon!). These articles focus on *health* issues under the tab: *Healthy homes lead to healthy lives*. Rev Sheena Dickson (from the *Gospel Manifesto* series) and Drs Anna and John Holmes put sturdy questions to us, along with some very telling statistics. Shaun Davison's interview of the New Zealander of this Year, Dr Lance O'Sullivan, gives a wonderful sense that doctors are not just pill-pushers. They probe the needs of the whole person looking for the underlying causes of illness, and work to change these. Food for election thought here!

Finally, done with panache, four Christian leaders assess the pontificates of *Popes* John XXIII and John Paul II who were canonized on 27 April. Alongside these more serious assessments, Philomena Clare gives us a wholesome and lighter *Hitchhiker's Guide* take on Good Pope John, who "loved people more than power!"

Just some of the delights to be savoured this month. **KT**

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Cover images: L to R: Marsden Cross at Oihi Bay; the cover of the diocesan *Hikoi* booklet; Bishop Kelvin Wright on a donkey [Photo: courtesy Jenny Campbell]. (See interview p 14)

bishops' statement on persecution of christians in the middle east

On 2 April 2014, the Catholic Bishops in the Holy Land and their Justice and Peace Committee issued the following statement about the persecution of Christians in the Middle East:

Persecution. In many parts of the Western world, this word is on people's lips. It is said that Christians are being persecuted in the Middle East today. However, what is really happening? How should we speak in truth and integrity as Christians and as Church about the suffering and violence that are going on in the region?

There is no doubt that the recent upheavals in the Middle East, initially called the Arab Spring, have opened the way for extremist groups and forces that, in the name of a political interpretation of Islam, are wreaking havoc in many countries, particularly in Iraq, Egypt and Syria. There is no doubt that many of these extremists consider Christians as infidels, as enemies, as agents of hostile foreign powers or simply as an easy target for extortion.

However, in the name of truth, we must point out that Christians are not the only victims of this violence and savagery. Secular Muslims, all those defined as "heretic", "schismatic" or simply "non-conformist"

are being attacked and murdered in the prevailing chaos. In areas where Sunni extremists dominate, Shiites are being slaughtered. In areas where Shiite extremists dominate, Sunnis are being killed. Yes, the Christians are at times targeted precisely because they are Christians, having a different set of beliefs and being unprotected. However they fall victim alongside many others who are suffering and dying in these times of death and destruction. They are driven from their homes alongside many others and together they become refugees, in total destitution.

These uprisings began because the peoples of the Middle East dreamed of a new age of dignity, democracy, freedom and social justice. Dictatorial regimes, which had guaranteed "law and order", but at the terrible price of military and police repression, fell. With them, the order they had imposed crumbled. Christians had lived in relative security under these dictatorial regimes. They feared that, if this strong authority disappeared, chaos and extremist groups would take over, seizing power and bringing about violence and persecution. Therefore some Christians tended to defend these regimes. Instead, loyalty to their faith and concern for the good of their country, should perhaps have led them to speak out

much earlier, telling the truth and calling for necessary reforms, in view of more justice and respect of human rights, standing alongside many courageous Christians and Muslims who did speak out.

We fully understand the fears and sufferings of our brothers and sisters in Christ, when by violence they lose members of their families and are driven out of their homes. They have the right to count on our solidarity and prayers. In certain circumstances their only consolation and hope is to be found in Jesus' words: "Happy are those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:10). However, the repetition of the word "persecution" in some circles (usually referring only to what Christians suffer at the hands of criminals claiming to be Muslims) plays into the hands of extremists, at home and abroad, whose aim is to sow prejudice and hatred, setting peoples and religions against one another.

Christians and Muslims need to stand together against the new forces of extremism and destruction. All Christians and many Muslims are threatened by these forces that seek to create a society devoid of Christians and where only very few Muslims

continued on page 4 . . .



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InterIslands

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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.

address: Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd,
52 Union Street, Dunedin North, 9054
P O Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9059

phone: (03) 477 1449

fax: (03) 477 8149

email: tuimotu@earthlight.co.nz

website: www.tuimotu.org



TuiMotuInterIslands

editor: Kevin Toomey OP

assistant editor: Elizabeth Mackie OP

illustrator: Donald Moorhead

directors: Susan Brebner, Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey (chair), Neil Darragh, Paul Ferris, Robin Kearns, Elizabeth Mackie OP

honorary directors: Pauline O'Regan RSM, Frank Hoffmann

typesetting and layout: Greg Hings

printers: Southern Colour Print, 1 Turakina Road, Dunedin South, 9012

a democratic church?

Nina O'Flynn's belief (*TM*, March 14) that the Catholic Church is not a democracy may stem in part from our emphasis on the primacy of the Pope and from the dogma of papal infallibility. It is interesting that no less a person than Cardinal Ratzinger (later Benedict XVI) once commented that the primacy of the Pope is not one of the "primary elements" of our faith.

Of course, the Pope is infallible when he speaks as head of the Church on matters of faith and morals. But the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* affirms that our bishops too are infallible when in union with the bishop of Rome they collectively proclaim Church teachings "definitively and absolutely."

O'Flynn laments that the laity can do little to bring about change. But we can speak up in protest as she has rightly done. In the past we have been conditioned to believe that our supreme virtue was obedience, preferably of the blind and mute variety. Now we need to do a crash course in growing up.

We are our Church. We are responsible for our Church. As Bernard Haring says somewhere, "It takes extraordinary courage to be responsible for ourselves, for each other, for those in need, for the Church."

Throughout *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis is presenting us with precisely that challenge. As he says in para 33, "... be bold and creative; apply these guidelines generously and courageously, without inhibitions or fear. Rely on each other ... under the leadership of the bishops."

I suspect we need to get our skates on if we're going to keep up with this man!

Jim Howley, Auckland

commendation

I would like to commend you for your consistent high standard of production, challenging articles and fine photographs. The March publication outlining restorative justice personally appealed to me as I am an approved visitor to the Christchurch prisons. The way Corrections is run is just diabolical. I consider your issue of July 2013 the best yet.

Tui Motu deserves more subscribers. Perhaps you need a spin-doctor?

Denis Power, Christchurch

no room at the inn

I felt so sad and upset after reading Dan Suerth's story in the April issue of *Tui Motu*. The phrase "no room in the inn" immediately came to mind. Although it is out of season imagery, I feel the Easter season could apply with the great feast

letters to the editor

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not changing the meaning.

We do not publish anonymous letters otherwise than in exceptional circumstances. Response articles (up to a page) are welcome — but please, by negotiation.

of the Resurrection.

Perhaps as Catholics and Christians, we should be inspired to "Rise Up" and do something as a community for those who find themselves sleeping on the street. Our church buildings are often called "The House of the Lord", but along with our halls, they are unoccupied for all but a couple of hours per day. Could they not be used in an emergency during the other 22 for the homeless, those sleeping under bridges or in doorways?

With winter approaching, I am sure Jesus would expect us to invite them inside!

June Swain, Wellington

bishops' statement on persecution of christians in the middle east

... continued from page 3

will be at home. All those who seek dignity, democracy, freedom and prosperity are under attack. We must stand together and speak out in truth and freedom. All of us, Christians and Muslims, must also be aware that the outside world will not make any real move to protect us. International and local political powers seek their own interests. We, alone, can build a common future together. We have to adapt ourselves to our realities, even realities of death, and must learn together how to emerge from persecution and

destruction into a new dignified life in our own countries.

Together, we must seek out all those who dream as we do of a society in which Muslims and Christians and Jews are equal citizens, living side by side, building together a society in which new generations can live and prosper.

Finally, we pray for all, for those who join their efforts to ours, and for those who are harming us now or even killing us. We pray that God may allow them to see the goodness He has put in the heart

of each one. May God transform every human being from the depth of his or her heart, enabling them to love every human being as God does, He who is the Creator and Lover of all. Our only protection is in our Lord and like Him we offer our lives for those who persecute us as well as for those who, with us, stand in defense of love, truth and dignity. ■

The Catholic Bishops of the Latin Patriarchate in the Holy Land and the Justice and Peace Committee.

healthy homes lead to healthy lives

This article is part of the **GOSPEL MANIFESTO 2014**
(see *Tui Motu*, March 2014)

Home is where the heart is, so the old saying goes but the question is, 'Is it a healthy heart?'

Health starts in our families, in our schools and workplaces, in our playgrounds and parks, and in the air we breathe and the water we drink. No wonder then that studying the relationship between housing and health is an ongoing activity worldwide. There are “confounding” factors in conducting research i.e. people in poor housing (and consequently dealing with real challenges at the community level), suffer so many deprivations that assessment of any one risk factor is almost impossible and the direction of cause and effect therefore often unclear. People who already suffer from ill health may tend to live in substandard housing by virtue of low income. Additionally, indices for measuring health and quality of housing are often insensitive and, linked to all the above, result in methodological problems when designing and conducting appropriate research.

However, the following excerpts from the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB) position statement: “Home Heating and air Quality” for healthy homes does not appear to be at all confounded: in fact, it is quite clear:

“The CDHB acknowledges that the direct effects of cold homes on health include excess mortality from cardiovascular and respiratory disease amongst the elderly, increased respiratory problems in children, increased illnesses such as colds, influenza and mental health problems, and the exacerbation of existing conditions such as arthritis.

“The CDHB recognises that home heating (temperature,

humidity and ventilation), energy costs and fuel poverty are key housing issues with implications for health outcomes.”

(See http://www.healthychristchurch.org.nz/media/62538/cdhbposition_statement_homeheatingairquality.pdf)

In my own experience of ministering in a low-socio-economic area, people living in “unhealthy” housing do seem to suffer more aches and pains, nerves, diarrhoea and headache than those who live in modern warm homes. Anyone who works with children living in homes with visible mould will confirm higher symptom rates, vomiting and sore throats afflicting children. Interestingly and confounding, most studies find that smoking is not a factor in children’s health.

Overcrowding increases vulnerability to airborne infections — the majority of respiratory infections, meningococcal disease, tuberculosis and acute rheumatic fever and enteric diseases such as diarrhoea are often more frequent in overcrowded houses. In addition research suggests overcrowding can also be a threat to mental health.

Whoever you decide to vote for in September, I invite you to canvas your prospective MP’s opinion on the following:

- If health begins where we live, learn, work and play, why are some Kiwis’ homes hazardous to their health?
- Too many Kiwis don’t have the same opportunities to be as healthy as others: how will your party’s policies address this?



Sheena Dickson

- All Kiwis should have the opportunity to make the choices that allow them to live a long, healthy life, regardless of their income, education, or ethnic background. Does your party have a plan to address this issue?

Humankind is social by nature, and when the ties that bind begin to unravel, so does our health. Health begins at home in our families, with loving relationships, where kids can expect to be safe, nurtured and protected. Health begins with healthy communities, with safe streets, freedom from violence, and parks where kids can play. Health begins with a good education, where children learn not only how to read, write, and prepare for fulfilling, prosperous life, but how to treat one another with dignity and respect. And health begins with safe jobs and fair wages, where people derive a sense of personal satisfaction from their work and connection to their co-workers. No one institution alone can restore a healthy Aotearoa New Zealand that nurtures families and communities. That will require leadership, and a partnership of business, government, and civic and religious institutions. We can’t eradicate illness, but we can foster good health. And health begins with healthy relationships, healthy communities, and healthy jobs, which protect us from the stress of everyday life. That’s one prescription I’d be prepared to pay for — gladly. ■

*Rev Sheena Dickson is the
Convenor of the Church & Society
Group, Christchurch Presbytery.*

tales of two saintly popes

On Low Sunday, this 27 April, Pope Francis will canonise the two men who are arguably the best known Popes of the twentieth Century, while differing quite radically in their gifts and in their ways of thinking.

To honour this unique occasion, Tui Motu asked four very diverse people, two women and two men; a Catholic Bishop, an Anglican priest, a Presbyterian minister and a Catholic lay woman to give us their assessment of the achievements of these influential saints.



JENNY DAWSON — A NEW ORDER OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

As a twelve year old Anglican, I was blissfully unaware of what was beginning to happen in Rome in March 1963. The girls at the convent down the road might have been able to tell me, if I had asked, but we didn't have that kind of relationship. By the time I was studying at university, enjoying Father Frank Durning SM as history tutor and occasionally slipping into Catholic churches for quiet prayer, I began to realise that Catholicism was no longer the strange triumphalistic, gloriously lace cattered, black habited and bead jangling community that I had thought. Only a decade after the Council, the charismatic renewal brought me into surprising discoveries with Catholic people and their worship. As I studied church history and liturgy I delved into the profound insights of documents like *Lumen Gentium*, *Ut Unum Sint*, and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* noting the theological principle that the universal church "subsists in" rather than "is" that branch of the Christian Church presided over by the Bishop of Rome. His final encyclical *Pacem in Terris* was recently described by Pope Francis as "extremely contemporary and a guide to peace-building for today's world." When I finally visited Rome (not quite doing "The Grand Tour" that Father

Frank had commended to us), I prayed before Good Pope John lying in St Peter's Basilica. His short pontificate had been transformative far beyond the edges of the Roman Catholic Church, and my faith journey, along with that of many Christian communities and individuals, has benefitted hugely from the open windows and doors that his Council brought.

The Polish Pope had a much longer pontificate. In many ways John Paul II was a heroic figure even in his very frail final years. He too brought change, especially in being the first non-Italian Pope in centuries and one from Eastern Europe, and he modelled forgiveness in a way that was noted by the world after the assassination attempt in 1981. John Paul II's greatest achievement is often seen as hastening the downfall of communism. Perhaps he also hampered the progress of the impact of Vatican II, which became a longed-for memory as more conservative bishops were appointed from Rome, the role of women was seemingly ignored (I cherish the friendship I had in Christchurch with the women who formed a supportive group that still meets called *Catholic Women Knowing Our Place*) and ecumenical sharing seemed to be stalled. In a rapidly-changing world he faced

huge challenges and his hard line responses were noted sadly by many: in Latin America, clergy involvement in social justice (even after the martyrdom of Oscar Romero) and especially in the US the damaging evidence of clergy sexual abuse. Yet he travelled extensively with huge impact, initiated World Youth Day touching the lives of many young people, and was one of the most influential leaders of the twentieth century.

So, as an Anglican priest and companion on the journey, when I look at the edges of the Roman Catholic Church today, that owes so much to these two Popes, what do I see? Pope John spoke of the Council bringing about "a new order of human relationships", which has certainly happened. The windows are more open, yes. Ecumenical life is better, to some extent. With inclusiveness, there's a long way to go. May the canonisation in this Easter season call us all to further dreaming and hoping. "Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song" (Pope John Paul II). ■

Jenny Dawson is one of the Bishop's chaplains in the Anglican Diocese of Waiapu, the place in the world in which the sun first blushes.

PETER CULLINANE — LET'S LOOK AT THE MEGA-NARRATIVE

I grew up in the time of Pope Pius XII, whose image seemed to a young boy “holy” in some far-removed way. So the first time I found myself in a room with John XXIII was an experience of mild but smiling shock — he was so homely, affable and human.

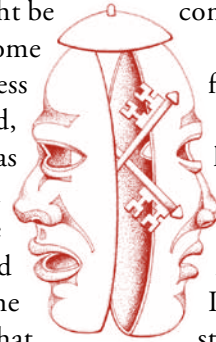
But captive to his environment he was not. From his travels, East and West, he knew that if the Church was to fulfil its mission in the modern world, it would need an overhaul. He had seen the folly of Christians at loggerheads, and knew this was not what Christ wanted. So even at his age, he would seize the brief moment given him (which is all that is asked of any of us). What happened? The Council he convened became a turning point and landmark in the ongoing history of the Church. Heads turned.

Others would carry on what he began, but it is his dream that comes to life when we are faithful to his Council. The little that

belongs to each of us to do contributes to a new creation in which “all the good fruits of our nature and our enterprise we shall find again, transfigured” (Vatican Council II, *Church in Modern World*, n 39).

In John Paul's presence I always felt a bit intimidated; I felt he could read me, and that there might be a few verses missing on some pages. But there was a bigness and manliness I admired, and I loved his flair. It was something much more than what he learned on the stage. It was that rock-solid faith which knows that in the end “all will be well”, so that we can already live with courage. Walls crumbled.

He also knew from having worked in mines and having lived under armies of occupation that agony comes before ecstasy, in the way that suffering continues to be turned inside out, as surely as Easter Sunday followed Good Friday.



When we New Zealand bishops celebrated Mass with him in his private chapel, there were moments when time seemed to stop. One just knew that he and Jesus knew each other very, very well. He was well qualified to tell us to draw all our people into the experience of contemplative prayer.

John Paul will be criticised for not implementing some of the Council's reforms. He himself was painfully aware of how much more there was to do (*On Entering the New Millennium*, n 44). But I will not be throwing the first stone. While John, and now Francis, will be remembered for reforms that renew the Church for its mission, John Paul, and Benedict, will be remembered for their massive contribution to the world of ideas promoting God's reign in the form of the dignity of persons, respect for life, and for marriage, the need for responsible freedom, faith, reason, beauty and truth; solidarity, social economic and environmental justice, and the foundations of peace. That is where the Church's renewal must take flesh.

Both John X XIII and John Paul II were part of a movement much bigger than their own parts in it. It is the movement towards greater personal responsibility and greater participation. It hardly matters that neither of them fully understood every next step. That is what it means to participate in something greater than one's own part. Perhaps their canonisation together is a signal to us to look at the mega-narrative, and to interpret the smaller things in the light of the big picture. ■



Pope John Paul II and Ambrose Loughlan OP. Photo taken at Castelgandolfo during a special audience for members of the General Chapter of the Dominican Friars, Rome, 1983.

Peter Cullinane is the emeritus Bishop of Palmerston North, and a frequent contributor to Tui Motu

PAT LYTHE — IN CAHOOTS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Canonisation — what does it mean to me? It means people who have died are recognised (by the institutional Church) to have lived holy enough lives to be together with God wherever heaven is and are able to be role models for us here still on the earth.

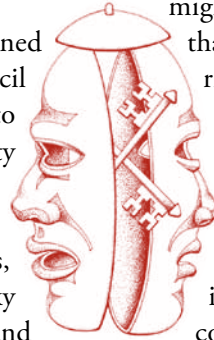
There are other criteria such as two “registered miracles” and ecclesiastical processes to be gone through which seem a little weird these days. Long established saints like Patrick and George, along with mythical stories about snakes and dragons, Joseph, Therese, Catherine of Siena were a source of inspiration to a schoolgirl but in more modern times, people like Oscar Romero, Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, or Josephine Bakhita have more relevance to me. So what about these two Popes? For me John XXIII was and still is one of my heroes — a Pope who in

fewer than 90 days after his election began the process which overturned the rigid, judgemental, monarchical, exclusive body which I would have left if it hadn't been for his changing of the course of the Church.

At the age of 81 he opened the second Vatican Council which turned the Church into a community of the equality of the People of God, open to collaboration with the world, with other Christians, with other faiths. I am lucky enough to live in New Zealand where Bishop Delargey, inspired by Pope John, was able to inspire his clergy and people, and where all our bishops began immediately to put into practice those monumental changes. Travelling overseas much later than those amazing 60s I realised how differently each country embraced John's vision. Will

canonisation make any difference? Not to me, who will still think of him as John XXIII who singlehandedly in cahoots with the Holy Spirit transformed the Church. But it might mean that those younger than me without firsthand experience will discover his story and be inspired.

What about John Paul II? A long term Pope with multiple gifts, able to relate to the young, wielding influence in political terms, contributing in no small way to the ending of the cold war, his near assassination, forgiveness offered to the perpetrator, the Assisi gathering of interfaith leaders, his globetrotting pilgrimages to almost everywhere, his numerous encyclicals, especially the ones on the role of the laity (*Christifideles Laici*) and ecumenism (*Ut Unum Sint*), his



Pope John XXIII on the balcony of the papal apartment, as he gives his special blessing to the assembled crowds.

determination not to let old age and infirmity get him down — all of those things and many more make him a brilliant role model for leaders. It never ceased to amaze me, how he appealed to the young, and loved them in return. But fast tracked canonisation? I guess it's

the *sensus fidelium*, the conviction of the people, which is obviously backed up by the magisterium which has brought that forward.

Yes, these two men richly deserve honouring in the canon of saints, but the church needs a better system of recognising lay people who live heroic

lives, but whose families or those inspired by them lack the resources to go through the canonisation process. They are our unnamed saints. ■

Pat Lythe is the leader of the parish and pastoral services group for the Catholic Diocese of Auckland.

SIMON RAE — TWO VERY DIFFERENT LEADERS

The response of Pope John XXIII to a question from J. Robert Nelson of the Texas Medical Centre about the possibility of cooperation between Catholic and Protestant missions sums up neatly the spirit of the pope who called the Second Vatican Council: *Theologisch ist das unmöglich, praktisch ist es notwendig*: Theologically that is impossible, practically it is necessary. It was his vision and willingness to urge and promote what was necessary in a changed and changing world, without departing from the theology that had undergirded his long and rich ministry, that made John XXIII a pope admired and respected by people of all kinds of backgrounds. He broke the barrier of exclusiveness and the defensive attitude of the church in the face of the modern world, and his own humility encouraged people to consider his very significant social teaching.

John XXIII and Pope Paul VI presided over an ecumenical council which broke down many barriers, and brought hope of reconciliation to many Christians and an openness and acknowledgement to people of other faiths and viewpoints. It was a time of great excitement, of new sharing and of great hope for many who saw Catholic Christianity in a new light, and who benefited from many of the gifts of the Council.

A mark of this new relationship was the unfeigned grief of people

around the world — we were in Singapore at the time — at the sudden death of Pope John Paul I. The long pontificate of Pope John Paul II is too recent to allow responsible analysis, but many saw again a warm spirituality, a human openness, a willingness to travel, and to forge personal ecumenical and interfaith relationships. And there was great respect for this Polish man whose ministry as priest and bishop had shown qualities of courage and resolution.

But it appeared to outsiders that there was also a drawing back into defensive theological positions in an attempt to protect the people of God from the diversity of thought in an emerging postmodern world. But to be fair, this was by no means a feature only of the Catholic Church. Many Christian communities in the face of daunting

challenges “circled the wagons”, retreating into what were seen to be firm positions within their own varied traditions. Pope John’s “separated brethren” felt more separated than before, not only from Catholics but also from one another. A strict theological focus on tradition, on both sides, made some approaches impossible again, and some necessary risk-taking was avoided. The times were not easy, and some hard lines developed, but only the future will make clear how much of the present renewal of hope had its roots in these difficult years and the ministries of these very different leaders. ■

Simon Rae is a retired minister of the Presbyterian Church and former Principal of Knox Theological College. His present main interest is the publication of a book he is translating from Indonesian.

The Easter Story

by Joy Cowley



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With beautiful original colour illustrations by Donald Morrison complementing Joy Cowley's text on the story of Easter and what it means for us. The stress is on love and healing, on growing in prayer through talking to Jesus, leading the reader to gratitude for “the wonderful Easter Story”.

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health essentials for nz

Think about equitable health care for New Zealanders.

What questions would you ask your local member of Parliament?

Two highly experienced medical practitioners give their considered perception of what would help maintain the health of our country.



Anna and John Holmes

What are the health essentials? They are a warm and clean house, adequate safe food and water, a caring community and access to health care. Adequate income is also essential for poverty increases poor health and prevents people from seeking care for sickness.

In 1938 the New Zealand Social Security Act was passed to end poverty in New Zealand. It had three main objects: a system of monetary benefits to which citizens would contribute according to their means and from which they could draw according to their need; to provide a universal superannuation; and to inaugurate a universal system of medical care benefits.

In the intervening 75 years a number of factors have eroded this ideal. The income gap between rich and poor has widened from one of the lowest in the OECD to one of the highest. The changing nature of health care with ever increasing technology and pharmacology has made hospital care very expensive. The focus on cure has taken resources needed to care for people with chronic disease that cannot be cured. The

increasing age of the population makes the burden of such disease much greater.

The ideal of social equity came under pressure in the 1980s in the wake of a political swing to the right. It made benefits both more difficult to get and reduced their value. The economic problems arising from uncontrolled capitalism have made this worse. Even ACC, which prevented NZ from descending into the legal jungle of law suits for medical misadventures, has been under threat. We will consider three issues in health care: the impact of poverty; access and equity in health care; the focus on cure not care in management of health.

impact of poverty

Poorly heated and damp houses produce a great deal of respiratory and other problems. Inadequate diets produce an excess of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Lack of access to education and training also increases poverty and makes access to what is available more difficult. Poor people tend to move often in search of work and are not very efficient at claiming

the reductions in fees due to them, particularly in the current complex system.

Those who have very little spare money find it difficult to begin even to access health care. If they cannot afford a GP they also cannot go to the hospital emergency department. Under new rules they are refused entry by the triage nurse if they do not fit the criteria for a emergencies and are told to go to a GP.

access and equity

Access to general practice care has become increasingly unequal. There has always been a co-payment for this service but the cost of it is now more than those on low incomes can afford. There are 33 Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) in New Zealand. PHOs are groups of health practitioners funded by the government but contracted to district health boards. GPs must belong to a PHO if they wish to receive government funding. Patients must enrol with a practice that is part of a PHO if they wish to claim the benefits for low income. If they go to another GP they pay full rates. All after-hours calls pay 'market rates' between \$55-105. Ambulance calls cost \$88 unless they are covered by ACC or ordered by the hospital.

The cost of consultation is at least \$17-\$42 in most areas though some practices have special funding which means they charge nothing, like the Servants Health Centre in Dunedin. Children are also free in many practices. Some doctors continue to waive charges for patients but many small practices are being taken over by large groups that set charges for the whole group.

Public hospital appointments often involve long waits for initial and follow-up consultations as well as for



Drs Anna and John Holmes

treatment as can be seen below.

A patient was told they would get an appointment in three weeks and did not. When they called to ask about it the response was “That was just a routine letter. You will be lucky if you get an appointment in twelve weeks.” It appears that the District Health Board had set impossible targets in their resources and the staff had to appear to meet them by telling half-truths.

Access to hospital care is through GPs and this is also inequitable. The twenty District Health Boards in New Zealand do not all provide the same levels of services. Boards and hospital departments set a “points system” for seeing and treating patients. This forces doctors and patients into stretching the truth in order to get attention. Admissions for medical conditions vary according to both poverty and ethnicity as can be seen in the accompanying graph.

Equitable access to health care no longer exists in New Zealand. The difference in access to care between least deprived and most deprived is stark. Those who depend on the public system often have a long wait for any access to secondary care. Letters of referral from GPs are returned to them if their patients do not have enough points. This ignores the experience and knowledge of the GP. The letter has to be re-written so that the number of points required for access to treatment is reached.

The 30 percent of the population who can afford medical insurance can access quality health care when they need it. Private health insurance ensures rapid specialist care and treatment. This, of course, lessens the pressure on the government from those who can complain effectively.

focus on cure not care

Patients come to health providers for two main reasons — they want cure and they want healing. Cure may leave patients unhealed and they then return for further treatment. Healing is about the whole person, body, mind, relationships and spirit all of which have to be dealt with.

The vast majority of health funding goes into high-tech hospital treatment concentrating on physical cure. Because

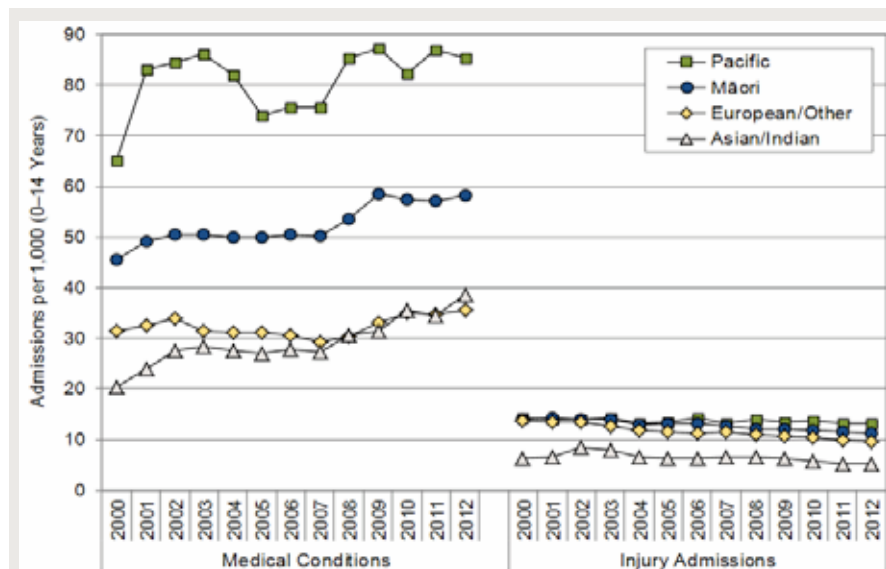


Figure 6. Hospital Admissions for Conditions with a Social Gradient in Children Aged 0–14 Years (Excluding Neonates) by Ethnicity, New Zealand 2000–2012 (2)

ill health may be caused by social, spiritual or emotional problems, addressing it from a purely physical stance is inadequate. Hospital medicine most often focuses on cure not care, keeping stays to a minimum.

In 1971 A L Cochrane introduced randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to test for effective cures. He was convinced this would increase effectiveness and efficiency and reduce the cost of the health service. He also recognised it would reduce clinical and administrative freedom. His ideas were taken up enthusiastically by successive right wing governments and used to justify the removal of clinicians from health service management. Economists and non-clinical managers were able make economic decisions based on “effectiveness” and “efficiency” because they are not involved in caring.

Cochrane wanted to move medical care into the community so that GPs and social services together would be able to offer complete care in the community. He did not believe in the market place for health and thought that effective treatment must be free. These aspects of his thought have been ignored.

The idea that care is as important as cure has almost disappeared as community resources have been cut again and again and access to them minimized to free finances for hospital care. The communities of care in hospitals that existed up to the 70s have almost disappeared under the influence of management

practices that ignore the human connection and consider only the economic one. Yet in order to care well those working have to be cared for. At present both the hospital doctors, who are over-worked and restricted in the number of patients they can see, and the GPs, who cannot access good care for their patients, feel unhappy with the system.

A socially conscious government plays a vital role in maintaining a healthy country. It should constantly review the societal impact of all policies. In an election year politicians should be asked a number of relevant questions:

- What steps will be taken to ensure warm and dry housing for those with low incomes?
- How does the next government intend to control the cost of healthy food?
- How will the government attempt to reduce alcohol consumption?
- What controls are planned for foods with very high sugar or fat contents in order to reduce the obesity epidemic?
- How is the quality of water in New Zealand being ensured?
- What steps is the government going to take to encourage good community?
- How is access to timely medical care and treatment going to be achieved? ■

Anna and John Holmes are retired medical practitioners living in St Leonards, Dunedin.

connecting people for good: interview with lance o'sullivan

Shaun Davison interviewed Doctor Lance O'Sullivan of Kaitia about questions underlying the health of his patients and what measures he took as he learned about essentials to ensure they would be well.



Shaun Davison

Dr Lance O'Sullivan is a much loved and widely respected GP in the Far North. He has received numerous accolades including that of "New Zealander of the Year 2014". What these tributes don't describe is the warmth and personal connection that Lance makes with those whom he meets. I had the privilege of asking him how he became known as the GP who fixes peoples roofs!

"What motivated me to get into the healthy homes project was sitting in my clinic and having person after person come in for nebulisers and I thought, "There is something wrong here. There must be something else driving these people's health problems. I'm just putting a plaster on them. I think the problem might be unhealthy homes that are causing unhealthy families."

"So one day I finished up and I decided to drive around the community. I knocked on a few people's doors and said "Look, I know this sounds really unusual but my name is Lance and I'm one of the local doctors and I'm trying to get an understanding of what is causing some of the illnesses that I see in my clinic. I'm just thinking that some of the health issues that your family has may be because of your home."

"The first thing that struck me was that no one said that I was being nosy or rude or that I was judging them for being poor. Not at all. Everyone just said, "Great, come on in."

"One particular home I walked into was a two-bedroom home but

everyone lived in the lounge. There were four children under the age of seven and a grandmother and then another young family who slept in a sleep-out. They didn't have any heating so they heated up the lounge by turning on the oven and opening the oven door. This home had 50-cent sized holes in the roof — you could see leak stains on the ceiling.

"When I went into the lounge they said, "You think this is bad. You should come and have a look at the rest of the house." The whole house was damp and rotting. The hot water cylinder was overflowing and it was rotting out both the inside and outside walls. So much so that one of the walls was really unstable. Added to this the water overflow meant that they couldn't afford the water bills.

“. . . the whole thing starts by seeing that the role of a doctor is a wide thing . . . we have only just got started.”

"So I said, "Look clearly this is a big problem for your family and you've got young children. I can help as a doctor but let's see if I can help in another way." So we started talking.

"The more I talked about it with people, the more people started helping out. A businessman in Hamilton heard about the work that we were doing. He rang me and said, "I like what you're talking about. What

can I do? I own a roofing company and we are roofing a new school up in Kaitia." I said, "Can you help out with some labour?" and he said, "Yes". So he sent around his team.

"One Saturday we went around to that family's house; a team of builders; two medical students; my son and myself. I was on call at the hospital that day. So I had my phone on my hip while I was on the roof. We all had drills and hammers and we were pulling up old metal and replacing it. We got started on the Saturday and finished on the Sunday. We replaced the hot water cylinder, which made a big difference in terms of water bills. We also replaced the roof — we put a brand new roof on.

"And you know that was a really proud moment because we gave that family a new lease of life. What was needed wasn't another prescription but a change in their physical living space.

"That example was probably a \$10,000-00 exercise that we were lucky to be gifted. But sometimes it's the simple things. Some people have black plastic bags for windows. The window has been broken and the family can't afford to replace it. We were able to use money that people had donated to us to replace those windows.

"Some people have little ability to ventilate their house properly. They have a bathroom or the laundry that holds a lot of moisture because it doesn't have adequate ventilation. It might be for the sake of a \$100.00 ventilation system that can reduce dramatically the moisture in the house. At other times it might be



The O'Sullivan family. L to R: Te Miringa, Tracy (Mum), Wairua, Taikehu, Lance (Dad), Lance jnr (in front), Jahvann, Te Hira.

things like the trees around the home. So the simple measure of pruning the trees can make a difference in drying out and warming the houses.

"Then there are the cost issues involved in the heating of homes. Some families don't have a lot of disposable income so using a lot of their money on heating makes life a struggle. Another thing is the insulation of homes. A lot of people are living in homes with no insulation.

"But the whole thing starts by seeing that the role of a doctor is a wide thing. We have a programme in schools where we have staff going into the local schools and doing some health checks. One of the children came up with a significant and worrying skin infection. So I went with the team around to the house to see the child.

"When I was doing a skin examination I realised how cold the home was. It was quite a young family. They were doing the best that they could. They were renting a house that had a heat pump in it. The house was cold except for the two and a half metres around the heat pump. They were spending \$40 a week to heat that two and a half square area. I said,

"I'm pretty sure this house hasn't got insulation." So we decided to have a look and sure enough there wasn't any. From that we made a referral to the government agency that's doing retrofitting insulation.

"We talk a lot about the fact that when it comes to health you can't just look at one thing. You can't just look at the skin infection and ignore that there is a family living in a cold house with no insulation. We say, "Let's try and get this house warm for this family." We have got to go and look at the whole environment.

"It goes to show that people who are struggling are mostly trying to do

their best but sometimes they aren't getting the best advice or given the best means to get the best outcomes.

"I think that New Zealanders are at heart really good and they want to see fairness and I just want to be a part of achieving that. It's about connecting people. I have been honoured and privileged to be recognised in some pretty special ways but the interesting thing is that we are nowhere near what we can achieve. In a sense we have only got started." ■

Shaun Davison is the Director of Religious Studies at Pompallier College, Whangarei.

Prayer For Aotearoa New Zealand In An Election Year

God give us a vision of our country
As a land of tolerance where all races and creeds can live together in unity,
A land of justice where basic human rights are respected,
A land of compassion where poverty is unknown and oppression is ended,
And a land of peace where order does not depend on force.
God help us to make this vision our reality.
Amen.

A prayer of the recently deceased Ron O'Grady, composed after dialoguing with David Lange 'in the later months of his life'. It encapsulates the spiritual vision instilled in Lange by his mother and Methodism (cf TM, Sept 2006, p 25)

sharing the best for the least

Tui Motu sat down with the Anglican Bishop of Dunedin Kelvin Wright in his office midway through his hikoi of faith around the Diocese. This hikoi Bishop Kelvin called Te Harinui ("Joyful News") in honour of the first Christian preaching at Oihi Bay 200 years ago. He reflects on this and more generally on faith and his Diocese.

How did the idea of walking the diocese on your own as a pilgrimage of faith come about, and what vision did you see it providing?

When I was in the Waikato as a ministry officer, we cycled over 1,000 miles around the Diocese. Then my wife Clemency and I walked the *Camino de Santiago*, and the whole concept of pilgrimage and its value as a spiritual discipline become really apparent to me. There's stuff there that I can't really articulate. But it's something to do with connection to the land. Walking Otago and Southland is so different from Spain, yet having the local connection with the land is important. As well I am aware of the early missionaries, Selwyn and his companions, and of the early Maori missionaries, who walked this area — that was their way, and I wanted to emulate that.

My original thought was I would do this by myself and that this would be a piece of cake — just take a staff and a bag and away you go! An additional thought was to do this pilgrimage within Lent, putting a time frame on it. That's the reason why we biked part of the way and used the Taieri Gorge Railway to shorten the overall time. However, it soon became apparent that a number of our people wanted to walk with me, and the train and biking the Otago Central Rail Trail gave a greater number of people a way to participate, people who couldn't walk or bike very far, but would get on the train — from Dunedin to Middlesbrough and back.

In the larger framework of the Diocese, has this walking had an evangelistic effect?

Yes it has been an evangelistic exercise, in that I have had the opportunity

to speak to a range of people that I have not had the opportunity to speak to before. This is specially so when you are walking. You walk through a small town somewhere, and the local people ask you what you are doing. If you say it's something churchy, you see their faces freeze over, and their eyes glaze. But in this case it hasn't produced that result. I say, "It's 200 years since Samuel Marsden first walked around here, and we are walking because of that". People become really interested, which I think is fascinating.

In terms of what I am trying to do for the Diocese, I was surprised at the level of interest amongst people who are not churchy. I've been surprised at the level of spiritual interest and of spiritual experience amongst the people I met with, although they wouldn't probably describe it that way. Two people have told me of near-death experiences. A man who is on the edge of the church — though he would have been present in the past — came and told me with tears streaming down his face about the time he died and about being up on the ceiling watching the doctors and hearing their conversation, and what that meant.

I think sometimes when we are evangelizing we have a subtext that says: there is a vast vacuum out there and we go out with our little bit of gospel and we deliver this. That's not the way I see it. I think there is a vast sea of highly spiritual people and spiritual experience, but that we are not connecting with them. How do we connect? In the 90s I read a book by Howard Hanchey. I remember his concept of evangelism was introducing people to the God they already know. I think that's been reinforced in me. This is the task we have to do. God is alive and well in Otago and Southland, but

somehow the Church is not making the connections it should make.

How would you see your own people and perhaps your ministry to them developing?

In the moment I am not sure. In fact, the pilgrimage is reshaping how I think we should develop as a church. And this will be a matter of discussion amongst us for some time to come. Maybe it's going to be less about inviting people in and more of our going out to them.

I presume that for you, as in my church, there's a small faithful group, and there are hundreds out there loosely involved and very happy to be known as Anglicans or Catholics but who don't darken the doors.

I think that is quite true. The present church structure is built for a different kind of Church. In terms of attendances we are approximately 20 percent the size we were at our peak in the late 1960s and early 70s. We've lost around 10,000 people per decade since then, who are now by and large nominal Anglicans. The structures, the churches and the parishes — all the organization — don't actually fit the church as we know it presently. And it does raise for us the question of what we do with all of our buildings, how we maintain ministry across areas we can no longer support with local priests.

Today's church needs to be more aligned with the poor. I wonder if you have any thoughts about this? Pope Francis is emphasizing this.

The reaction Pope Francis is getting is that people are hungry for his sort of authenticity. There is a perception



Two groups of walkers meet on the Bluff-to-Invercargill highway and exchange greetings. On the right, members of the Dunedin Anglican Diocese just beginning the *Hiko*i of Joyful News. On the left, a group of walkers from Germany, the UK and Christchurch, looking forward to their last 2 hours of walking to Bluff to complete *Te Ara Roa*, having travelled from Cape Reinga. [Photo: Jenny Campbell]

that this is what the Church should be about and it's not. I think as we are ministering in these sparse areas of Otago and Southland we should be looking at the needs of the poor. And how do you define them? There are social needs throughout Otago and Southland to which the Church seems oblivious. Farmers are the group most highly prone to suicide. It is a terrible problem in Central Otago. Some clergy come across this tragedy at funerals.

Another issue is the huge transformation taking place in Otago and Southland because of dairying. There's the ecological impact which people don't like to address because dairying brings so much money into the area. But it has changed our social fabric as well. Families that have farmed the land for two or three generations are selling up and leaving, for all kinds of reasons. A dairy farmer who buys up these old family farms at huge cost, brings a very different relationship to the land. He's there for a while, and then he's going to move on. His dairy farm is run by share-milkers, often Filipinos who come in, stay briefly, and go again. This is so not just in Otago and Southland but in all of rural New Zealand. In Southland we have Filipinos who are a big enough community to form their own set. They tend not to interact with anybody else. Often they need much help as well because they are a long way from home and lonely. Another problem is with young rural women, who have a share-milker partner or husband and who come into a region where they know nobody and are related to nobody.

They're there for three years, stuck in a small house in a paddock somewhere — and they quietly go barmy.

These are sorts of issues hardly anybody is noticing. It strikes me that the resource we've got is lots of middle-aged and elderly women who are probably just the very group that could give help. But who's providing the way in which we could get these people together?

I'm hearing something simple: making connections, and being for others: going out in a way that many could do.

Yes, it's about making the connections. We have resources that we often look at and don't regard as such. For example, in the sense of focus and spirituality we've a resource too, and it's our history and tradition which can help people to focus that sense of the divine that they've already got and help to explain it to themselves.

I have a suspicion that we often underplay our tradition. Spiritual experiences are fairly common, but often the last place these people talk about them is in the church. People hear what the church has to say, and they say that's not what I know; and their experience is so precious to them that they are not going to have it condemned or denied by anyone. The churches have to allow people to talk, to give them places where they can talk on their own terms, and make the connections between the Christian church and their own ideas of Jesus — between our tradition and their own experience of the divine.

Do you feel hopeful?

I am concerned about the Church because I think we have left it too late. I think there are some areas where the Church is "growable," dare I say. But often it's our own structures and authority and obedience which are stopping that.

I think one of the things that happens is that when a community gets threatened they go into survival mode, and start to look at how they can preserve what they have. We don't really want to cooperate with the Catholics or the Presbyterians because we are fearful that we will lose our identity — the last little thing we cherish will go. We don't really want to face that.

However, above and beyond all that, the gifts we have in common are still there — the gift of Christ, the gift of baptism, and of all the virtues. They're all there. They're common to us all, each one of them. They are what will bring us together eventually.

And we have that common mission that will bring us together, of giving the best for the least. Our people are good; they understand this ultimate gift of altruism.

***You continue to see the benefit of a hiko*i?**

Being facetious, the Bishop gets fit! Though oddly, having walked many hundreds of kilometres, I have put on only one kilogram. Again, being real, the people's hospitality in every way, spiritually and physically, has been extraordinary. A *hiko*i, like this one *Te Harinui*, is excellent Lenten fare for us all! ■

Behold the lamb of god — ‘Ecce agnus

Two years ago a Canadian priest, Fr Paul Nicholson, visited the Studio of John the Baptist whilst in New Zealand. His visit led to the Studio's largest international commission yet — a mosaic for the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of the Basilica of St Joseph in Edmonton, Canada. The brief was to produce a mosaic of the Lamb of God based on the book of Revelation chapters 4 and 5 to hang behind the tabernacle and altar of repose. The Studio's proposal was accepted formally in April 2013 and the work of "writing" began in earnest.

And what was the Studio "writing"? The vision of St John as presented in the Book of Revelation — the victory of life over death, of glory after persecution, of the true worship desired by the Father — the mystery of every truly Christian life. We see the Lamb, slain but standing, blood and water gushing from his side as flowed the stream of life-giving water from the right side of the temple in the vision of Ezekiel (Ez 47). As Christians we see this as the Precious Blood enlivening us in the Eucharist. Having conquered death Christ holds his triumphant victory staff by which he overcame — the Cross of torture that at his touch became the Tree of Life. Jesus is the one worthy

to take the scroll and to open its seals. A slight sea — Our Lady, perfect reflection of the God

24 elders who have prostrated themselves

Israel and the 12 Apostles

will humble themselves

Lord in adoration

Christ who

the glory

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transported to C

The liturgy of blessing

Archbishop Richard Smith, on

years to the day from the founding of St Joseph



dei'

... reflection is seen as that of a crystal
... God's glory. We see the crowns of the
... themselves in worship — the 12 tribes of
... es, representative of all mankind who
... selves with contrite heart before the
... tion. The flaming light streams from
... o is the Light of the World, illumining
... lden cry of the four living creatures
... ured below, "Sanctus ... Holy, Holy,
... oly" (Rev 4:8). "Then I heard all the
... living things in creation — everything
... that lives in the air, and on the
... ground, and under the ground, and
... in the sea, crying, "To the One who
... is sitting on the throne and to the
... Lamb, be all praise, honour, glory
... and power, for ever and ever." And
... the four animals said, "Amen"; and
... the elders prostrated themselves to
... ship" (Rev 5:13-14). The Lamb is
... and central in the upper sphere, in the
... shaped mandorla of glory.

... work was finished in late 2013 and
... Canada for installation and blessing.
... was performed by the local bishop,
... 30 January 2014 — one hundred
... oh's parish!

Michael Pervan



Background image: half-relief on the wall of the atrium of the St. Euphrasius basilica, Poreč, Croatia.

Image at right: Photo of lamb of God mosaic in chapel of St Joseph's Basilica, Edmonton, Canada. (Photo: Michael Pervan)



wrung out by the rosary?

How do we pray the Rosary? What does it mean? The author gives us another way of thinking and reflecting quietly and meditatively on this most ancient of prayers which has its source in the Dominican tradition.

Peter Murnane

For most of my life I have preferred to use the Rosary as a private prayer. I had mixed feelings when we recited it as a family after dinner, but in adolescent years I prayed it a lot during long hours of solitude waiting for and travelling on Melbourne suburban trains. I see now that my thinking was partly selfish: “notch up more prayers, gain more ‘merit’ \with God”. Even so, in the larger picture, I don’t think my ignorant efforts were wasted.

Coming to the Solomon Islands, where communities pray five decades together each day, I have learned to appreciate some of the Rosary’s other dimensions. When we pray it with a community it challenges us to be patient: to go at others’ pace; to put up with their

personal oddities. The rhythmic prayer slows us down and — once we have overcome distractions — gives us plenty of time to ponder twenty different scenes, mostly from the gospel, involving Jesus and Mary.

But lately something pushed me in a different direction. Did I wonder whether it is a bit self-indulgent, sitting down each evening to enjoy a fifteen minute picture-show of gospel wonders? Was I just being perverse? While saying the Our Father and the ten Hail Marys in each decade I began to look at the opposite of the scene given to us to meditate on, Jung might have called this the “shadow side” of the prayer.

I tried it first on the five Mysteries of Light. When the prayer leader announced The Baptism of Christ,

I looked only briefly at the beautiful and emotional scene where Jesus, the man, becomes deeply aware that the Holy One accepts him fully; that his whole existence is not only pleasing to God, but that God calls him “my child”.

What is the shadow side of this? We choose to maintain a system that today condemns more than a billion persons to extreme poverty, many of whom begin to think that they are not worth anything at all. Endless hard labour (or no employment at all) sickness and starvation sap more than our muscles. To see no relief from daily wretchedness can strip away all our confidence — especially when we can’t provide for the people we love, who depend on us. This happens to the millions of people who live in their wretched favelas



or slums. Many others cannot even leave the cell that imprisons them: ten or twenty in a stinking, narrow space; starved, even tortured. For them it is an even harder struggle to keep hold of their dignity.

Jesus had his Baptism experience after allowing himself to be symbolically drowned, emerging to a new state of being. Every day in various “interrogation centres” near-drowning, in the ancient technique called water-boarding, is used to torture people. The highest authorities in the USA have defied natural law by recently approving its use on prisoners. I shuddered to recall Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib. We enjoy watching Jesus’ baptism, but what are we to make of this suffering and injustice?

The prayer leader announced The Marriage Feast at Cana and during the first Hail Mary I relaxed with the people of that Palestinian village, celebrating the wedding of a young local man and woman. Turning to look into the shadows, I thought of the husbands and wives I know whose romantic beginnings have turned sour and left them heartbroken, trying but not always managing to rebuild their lives. As I watched the villagers celebrating, getting a little tipsy, I also saw the countless young people in our affluent countries who binge regularly for no purpose but that their life itself seems to have no point. Does Jesus stand among them? Would he produce for them a few more flacons?

The Preaching of the Kingdom describes the efforts of Jesus and his small handful of disciples to convince people in villages and in Jerusalem that God is not remote; does not want to punish us, as most of us were taught to fear, but is unimaginably close and loves us intimately. Many do get his point and their lives become adventures of love; they live in and extend the Kingdom of love. Many others reject the message and the messenger, in his time and in ours. It hurts when

another rejects our attempts to love and forgive them.

And how can we possibly get near to those remote, powerful people who sit in boardrooms and war offices, deciding to destroy swathes of our planet or whole populations? Close enough to ask them: “Would you like this to happen to your homeland, your house, your child?”

Next we are invited to look at Jesus transfigured. In some quiet mountain-top retreat, the enormous power of love that fills him because he knows that God loves him — there’s that Voice again! — makes his true nature shine out. As our real self could, and will. But even as the lightning-flash fades, and like Peter, astonished, we try to cling to the memory of that glory, there come thoughts of all those whose beauty and dignity has been almost destroyed. It never can be destroyed, but it is sadly distorted and hidden in a young girl who is raped by a family member or by violent strangers; in a child abused by the same clergy who should show it the innate glory that God has given it; in battered wives or in children condemned to a short life of hopeless, crushing labour. How can we show to these the awesome light of that mountain-top that is always within them?

The series ends with Jesus finding a way to give himself to us: the Eucharist. How does one person give of self to another? And why? Because he loved his friends and wanted to show them the Kingdom, Jesus had decided to continue confronting the unjust leaders of religion and government. He let them trap him in Gethsemane, knowing well that their response to his teaching would be to nail him up as a failed, shameful spectacle. Before this happened, he wrapped up this whole story in a simple gesture with bread and wine by which his friends could remember him and keep real contact with him always. His love did this.

How do we respond? Even as we try to repeat what he did that

night, we often keep his simple gesture at arm’s length by turning it into a theatrical performance; or by making it a dull Sunday obligation that if we do not fulfil, God will punish us forever! Or we reduce it to a sacred Thing in a golden box, that can be handled only by men in a man-made holy of holies where women cannot enter.

These are some glimpses into the shadow side of our human saga that I see when praying the Rosary. When I first tried this, I felt wrung out by the experience. Perhaps we have to ration ourselves. But didn’t Jesus come precisely to bring love into these real scenes of devastation? Might we need to gaze on them — for they happen while we sit praying — so as to grow in compassion for our sisters and brothers who suffer? From our peaceful place can we somehow send them the love they badly need right now?

Even if this way of praying does cost us a bit more, it seems to help us to love more deeply, which after all is the main thing Jesus told us to do. ■

Peter Murnane is a Dominican priest, living in the capital of the Solomon Islands, Honiara, and working as postulant and student master for the Dominicans of the Solomons and Papua New Guinea.

Spiritual Direction Formation

Do people approach you to talk about their spiritual life? Would you like to train as a Spiritual Director?

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cardinal pell at the royal commission

The Catholic Church in Australia has been dragged kicking and screaming to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Cardinal Pell, former Archbishop of Sydney, was put through the wringer before the Commission, though nowhere near to the same extent as was John Ellis when the Church decided to unleash the legal-attack-dogs on him in litigation euphemistically described as vigorous and strenuous.

Frank Brennan

Prior to Cardinal Pell's appearance before Justice McClellan at the Child Abuse Royal Commission, I wrote in the Fairfax press: "The spotlight on the Ellis case should lead to better church administration for the good of everyone, especially those abused or wronged by those in authority. Together, Pell and McClellan can provide us with a better-lit path through the thickets of past abuse and maladministration."

It has been an excruciating week or two. But there can be no doubt that the Australian Catholic Church with the forced scrutinies of the State has been assisted in getting back to its mission and basic values, espousing truth, justice, compassion and transparency.

As an institution, it has been dragged kicking and screaming. Pell has been put through the wringer, though admittedly nowhere near to the same extent as was John Ellis when the Church decided to unleash the legal-attack dogs on him in litigation which was euphemistically described as vigorous and strenuous.

In his written statement to the Commission, Pell was upfront in apologising again for the sexual abuse which Ellis had undoubtedly suffered at the hands of a priest. Pell wrote, "I acknowledge and apologise to Mr Ellis for the gross violation and abuse committed by Aidan Duggan, a now deceased priest of the Sydney Archdiocese. I deeply regret the pain, trauma and emotional damage that this abuse caused to Mr Ellis."

Under cross examination on Wednesday, Pell had to admit that he, his advisers and his staff had fallen well short of the standards expected of a model litigant, let alone a Christian organisation. He finally admitted to the vast chasm between Christian decency and the tactics employed in pursuing Ellis in the courts.

Having blamed various members of his staff for earlier errors and omissions, Pell was anxious to exculpate his lawyers who had acted on instructions and perhaps with insufficient supervision.

I am one Catholic and one Australian citizen who is mightily relieved that the Cardinal has been man enough and priest enough to apologise publicly for his failures and the failures of those under his supervision.

He said, "I believe in a legal sense there was nothing done that was improper, and any reservations I might have about particular stands of our lawyers, I would not want to suggest that they did anything improper. But from my point of view, from a Christian point of view, leaving aside the legal dimension, I don't think we did deal fairly (with Ellis)."

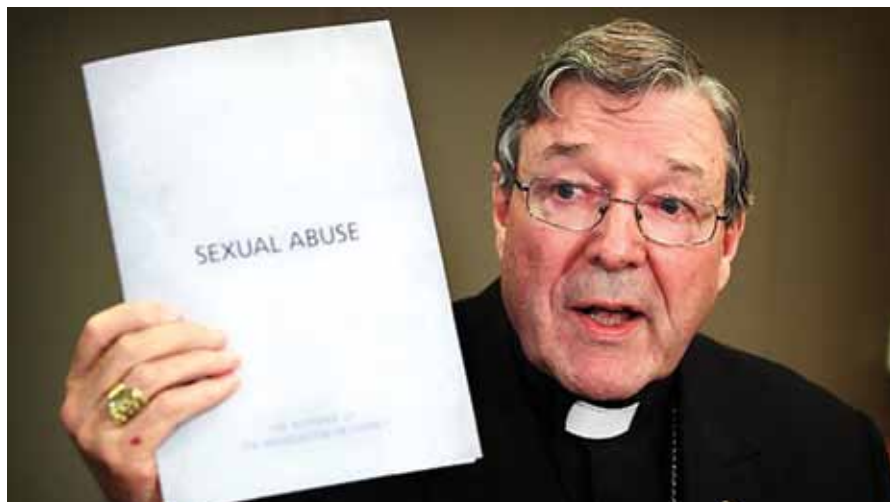
According to the ABC, at the conclusion of this afternoon's hearing, Pell made a long awaited apology to Ellis, not just for the initial and sustained sexual abuse he suffered at the hands of a deviant priest but for the hurt which had been inflicted on him by the Church ever since he had sought compensation and closure. Pell said:

"As former archbishop and speaking personally, I would want to say to Mr Ellis that we failed in many ways, some way inadvertently, in our moral and pastoral responsibilities to him. I want to acknowledge his suffering and the impact of this terrible affair on his life. As the then archbishop, I have to take ultimate responsibility, and this I do.

"At the end of this gruelling appearance for both of us at this Royal Commission, I want publicly to say sorry to him for the hurt caused him by the mistakes made, admitted by me, and some of our archdiocesan personnel during the course of the *Towards Healing* process and litigation."

The Cardinal's long-time critics found fault with his mode of delivery. But I am one Catholic and one Australian citizen who is mightily relieved that the Cardinal has been man enough and priest enough to apologise publicly for his failures and the failures of those under his supervision.

It is now clear that the Church like all right thinking people would view priests and church workers as



Cardinal Pell at the Royal Commission

For the moment, we should all be grateful that Pell apologised to Ellis, ruling a line under hierarchical behaviour that does not pass the sunlight test, to say nothing of the Sermon on the Mount. While Pell heads for Rome, McClellan is only starting to wrestle with the really difficult legal questions. ■

Fr Frank Brennan SJ is professor of law at the Australian Catholic University, and adjunct professor at the College of Law and the National Centre for Indigenous Studies, Australian National University. We are grateful for permission to reprint this article which first appeared in Eureka Street, 28th March 2014.

[Editorial note: This article gives readers beyond Australia a succinct update on important questions dealing with the Church's handling of sexual abuse, which are being dealt with in front of the Royal Commission set up by the then Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, last year. We hope to give further updates from time to time.]

employees of those church leaders who appoint and supervise them.

To date in Australia, the victims of sexual abuse have been unlikely to succeed in court against anyone but the perpetrator or a callously negligent employer or supervisor who had little regard for the signs that there may be a sexual predator in their midst. There have been many hurdles for a victim wanting to sue anyone but the criminal perpetrator. The Royal Commission will need to give detailed consideration to these hurdles, making recommendations to governments about reforms which will impact on all employers and not just churches.

Until now, a victim like Ellis has faced an additional hurdle when suing for abuse by a priest or other church personnel. Often the alleged abuse occurred many years ago and now there is a new supervising bishop or superior. The previous bishop or superior will have long since died. Who is to be sued?

In 2007, the New South Wales Court of Appeal ruled that in the case of the Catholic Church, there was no point in trying to sue the "Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church", the statutory trust corporation that holds title to all the church lands of a diocese. That corporation may hold the assets but it does not supervise, employ or oversee clergy or other church workers.

This week, everyone has come to accept that the Church should not give any appearance of hiding behind the corporate veil. Justice demands that present church leaders agree to satisfy any judgment debt against their predecessors or their deceased predecessors' estates when there is an allegation of past failure to supervise or adequately investigate a sexual predator in their ranks. Any damages should be paid from church assets.

Pope Francis asks for Forgiveness

On 11 April, at a meeting with members of the International Catholic Child Bureau, a French coalition of child-protection organizations, Pope Francis asked forgiveness for the sexual abuse committed by priests and pledged to impose "sanctions" on those who harm children. He said:

"I feel compelled personally to take on all the evil which some priests — quite a few in number, though obviously not compared to the number of all the priests — personally to ask for forgiveness for the damage they have done for having sexually abused children.

"The church is aware of this damage, it is a personal, moral damage carried out by men of the church, and we will not take one step backward with regards to how we will deal with this problem, and the sanctions that must be imposed.

"On the contrary, we have to be even stronger, because you cannot interfere with children."

This is the first time that Pope Francis has taken the step of asking forgiveness. It echoes more broadly the apology that Pope Benedict directed to the Church in Ireland in 2013. ■

“a man went on a search” – for truth

We continue the interview with Father John Weir SM in which he looks at the spiritual and intellectual life of James K Baxter and argues that Baxter has bequeathed to us a strong poetic and prophetic legacy.

TM: Would you like to tell us something about these six previously unpublished sonnet-like poems, and something about their background?

Father John reminded me that these six poems were written at Jerusalem in 1969 while Baxter was staying with the gentle Maori priest, Father Te Awhitu SM, who had suffered much himself from illness, and who was one of Jim's guides.

He went on: “Father Te Awhitu gave Jim many examples of gentleness, kindness and humility. And yet we find that the turmoil that Jim experienced so often in his heart he also found reflected in this quiet, peaceful scene in Jerusalem because in the first of these six poems he talks of these mild, green, hummocked hills as if they are (to quote the poem) “a herd of bulls waiting to tear me to pieces” — the biblical bulls of Bashan. So Jim's internal states are always being projected outwards. The torment is internal. If I were to depict as simply as possible the nature of Jim Baxter's journey in life, I would say that he was always searching. Thus for me one very important poem in the Collected Poems is “A man went on a

search.” I think that it is a parable of his own life, of a search that took place all his life, a search primarily for the love he felt he hadn't experienced when he was growing up and didn't experience later. He then believed that the greatest lack in society was the lack of love, but he defined that first as a lack of love as occurring within himself.

becoming a catholic

“Jim was also very much aware of his own sinfulness and the tormented state or shall we say the searching nature of human beings. And it was his own understanding of his sinfulness that led him to God. He tried different religions and different religious practices looking for an assurance that his sins could be forgiven. And it was only when he spoke to a particular Catholic priest and asked the question, “Can my sins be forgiven?” the priest said, “Yes, we have a sacrament, the sacrament of penance” that Jim said, “I would like to confess them”, and the priest said, “You can't because you are not yet a Catholic.”

So he became a Catholic specifically so that his sins could be forgiven. From then on Jim was famous among the clergy as a man devoted to the sacrament of penance. He went to the sacrament sometimes every day, as often as he could. He attended Mass daily if it were possible, and went to the other sacraments whenever he could. He said up to 15 decades of the Rosary everyday; and meditated and made the Stations of the Cross. He also undertook forms of penance including two, if not three, 30 day fasts. All this was a sign to himself of his own unworthiness and an expression of sorrow for his sins. But he believed that from the sacraments he received grace that came like a

spring of water and gave him hope to continue for another day, another period of time. Moreover this image of the spring arising becomes quite common in his writing. In fact, in that first letter to me he uses that image, “your poem came to me like water from the dry ground.”

the priority of mercy

“Aligned with this Jim knew from experience that attendance at church and the sacraments was not enough to be a Catholic Christian. In a letter that he wrote to a sister, he explained his belief this way. The Catholic church teaches that three elements exist in the following priority order: first comes doctrine which is the teaching and explanation of the word of God; second is the sacraments so that people having been taught doctrine are then prepared to receive the sacraments, attend Mass, receive communion and the sacrament of reconciliation. And thirdly and in that order — this was the point — he said the Catholic church teaches that the works of mercy, feeding the hungry, visiting those in prison and attending the sick and so on are very useful for the Catholic life.

However, Jim wrote that, in the later years of his life, he believed the Church had these elements in the wrong order. He believed that the correct order should be first that we did the works of mercy and that having done them or in the course of doing them, we should then attend the sacraments to receive the strength and nourishment that we needed to perform the works of mercy. Third and last of all should come the explanation of what had already occurred, namely the doctrine. This was the proper sequence. Further he



Father John Weir SM
[Photos: Cathy Harrison]

held that while the Catholic Church taught that it held a priority of truth within itself, the Catholic Church didn't hold the priority of the works of mercy within itself. Very often you had to look to other religious organizations or even non-religious organizations in order to find the mercy, the love and the charity that were not present within the institutional or official Church.

"I felt that was a very convincing statement. Baxter also said, 'it is not the social circus that troubles me most but the lack of significant action.' By that he meant action for social justice and the works of mercy. He himself took a vow of poverty and lived it profoundly, virtually to the point of destitution. He wanted to forestall any attachment to things so that he could become available to the needs of people — especially to the very poor.

Likewise it is wonderful to see that Pope Francis has brought about a renewed emphasis upon the works of mercy. This should serve as a reminder that the only occasion in which the Lord Jesus tells us how we can be saved is in Matthew 25, by performing the works of mercy as expressed there. It is never said in any other way."

TM: I remember Father Eugene O'Sullivan OP telling me that when Jim Baxter first came to him he wanted to know about the major Catholic forms of spirituality, including Dominican spirituality. Eugene gave him The Nine Ways of Prayer of St Dominic. Of those nine ways, Baxter chose to practise the form of prayer that consisted of prostrating oneself on the floor in the form of a cross.

Which led to that wonderful incident in St Patrick's Cathedral Auckland in 1972, the last year of his life. Jim had attended midday Mass. After everyone had left the Cathedral, he lay down on the floor in front of the altar in a cruciform position. The priest came back into the Cathedral to ensure he had put out the candles, saw Jim lying on the floor and called out, "Hey, you can't do that. This is a Catholic church!" And Jim said, "Yes, I thought it was, Father," genuflected and

left. That incident says a great deal about Jim and his relationship with the Church. It's part of that institutional concept of what's proper and right.

There is another story that Fr Frank McKay SM tells in his Baxter biography concerning a wedding in St Mary of the Angels Church, Boulcott St. People started filing in for a very flash society wedding. At the same time Jim came in to do the Stations of the Cross, which he tried to do every day. He finished the first half of the Stations. By this time, the priest was already out on the altar with the bride and the bridegroom standing in front of him. Jim, with unkempt beard and bare feet, crossed over from one side of St Mary of the Angels to the other, and made a very profound genuflection behind the bride and groom at the centre of the wedding ceremony. All eyes were fixed on this man. Then he went to the other side of the church and continued the Stations of the Cross, which involved lying on the floor at the end of each station. Baxter was a showman!

TM: What was Baxter's legacy?

"I think his legacy is twofold. First, I think it is his poetry, his great poetry — a literary legacy. And the second element of his legacy is his prophetic nature. Prophecy, as he defined it, was telling the truth, speaking the truth. It wasn't foretelling the future or anything of that kind. And Jim did his best to speak the truth about himself and about society as he saw it. And that truth as he often said was uncomfortable, but it still had to be spoken, in the same way as Christ spoke the truth and it was uncomfortable for his hearers but it had to be spoken.

I believe what is spoken, if truthful, remains permanently true. And therefore Jim's gift to us goes beyond his own lifetime and reaches into our future. More profoundly his words, in prose and poetry, can communicate with each of us and with people not yet born, and can stimulate us to think in a new way, a simpler way, a more compassionate way, about ourselves, about others and about society. It's searching for truth!" ■



the jovial saint

One of the great figures of the Catholic Church in the last two centuries is Angelo Roncalli, better known as Pope John XXIII — to be declared a saint on April 27th this year. Here's a short take on his eventful life.

Philomena Clare

In 1881 Angelo Roncalli was born in a small rural town called Sotto il Monte near Bergamo in Central Italy, the third son in a family of eight children. His father and uncles were peasant farmers, and remained so all their lives. Like most rural Italians of their time they were very religious, practising Catholics. The future pope was very proud of his family, and later quipped: "Italians come to ruin most generally in three ways: women, gambling, and farming. My family chose the slowest one." Needless to say, their farming survived. Angelo was a clever devout child who early on decided that he wished to be a priest.

Angelo's brightness carried over into his seminary training. When he was ordained the saintly bishop of Bergamo, Mons Giacomo Radini-Tedeschi, took him under his wing as his secretary. Being with Bishop Giacomo was another school of learning for the young Father Roncalli. He held him in reverence all his life. One of young Padre Angelo's gifts was to teach history at the local seminary. The thinking and writing involved in doing this stood him in good stead later. From this discipline he learned to see the bigger picture and the longer vision. Such reflecting helped him avoid the mistakes of the past; and together with his wide-ranging experience both as priest and bishop, prepared him for new things in the future.

Padre Roncalli was appointed director for Italy of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a Vatican-sponsored institution which raised money for the foreign missions. This travelling work willy-nilly brought him into contact with movers and shakers within the Vatican, who saw

The Hitchhiker's Guide to **CHURCH HISTORY** 1800–2000

great potential in this young priest. In 1920 he was chosen to become a church diplomat, something that he didn't want to do as he was happy working in his own diocese. However, he trained and was appointed to help in Turkey and Bulgaria, before being named the Pope's man in France.



It was in Bulgaria that the canny diplomat helped smuggle Jewish people from the clutches of the Nazi regime to safety, by providing counterfeit passports for them. It was in these middle-eastern countries as well that Angelo rubbed shoulders with people of other religious faith, especially Muslims. His experiences of many people who were of different culture and religious belief from him taught him tolerance and sympathy for others, no matter who they were.

His appointment at the end of 1944 to the plum position as Apostolic Nuncio

in Paris — the Pope's man — was a compromise decision among factions within the Vatican. Despite this, his appointment showed the high regard in which the diplomat was held by his superiors. His time as nuncio in France was a period of great turmoil within the post-war Church of the 1950s.

Pope Pius XII instructed the Jesuit and Dominican Provincials to remove from their teaching posts some of the most prominent French theologians of that period, including Fr Henri de Lubac SJ and Fr Yves Marie-Joseph Congar OP, the most prominent exponents of what was called "The New Theology". These men were trying to update Church thinking, by connecting theological thinking with ordinary people's religious experiences, and in innovative ways. The very newness of these men's thought was threatening to a Roman Curia unaccustomed to such creative thinking. To the Curia, such new thinking bordered on heresy, and they were determined to stamp it out. Although Archbishop Roncalli in Paris said nothing publicly about these moves, in his own way he expressed his heartfelt reservations, by absenting himself from the Nunciature in Paris at crucial times when he would have been expected to defend the removal of these theologians from their posts.

Angelo Roncalli's next appointment in 1953 was unusual for a man whose major life work till that time had been as a diplomat. He became a Cardinal and Patriarch of Venice, bishop of a large and prestigious diocese in Italy. It was a place from which previous Popes had come. Peacefully and calmly he set about the business of trying to renew the Diocese. The future pope was talking



Opening of
Vatican II

with a wealthy Venetian Catholic and told him, “You and I have one thing in common: money. You have a lot and I have nothing at all. The difference is I don’t care about it!”

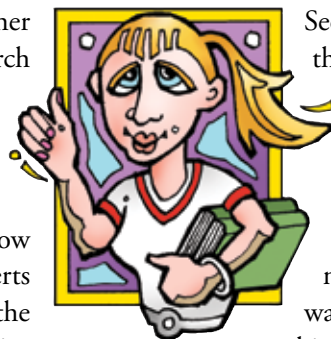
Cardinal Roncalli was Patriarch of Venice for only six years before he was elected Pope in 1958, taking the name of John XXIII. He followed Pope Pius XII who had been pontiff for almost 20 years. His choice as Pope was a compromise. He was elected first because he was 77 and would therefore be Pope for a short time only; and secondly because he was known to be a peaceable man who would be unlikely to rock the boat, a steady hand holding the papal reins while a younger, more suitable man was groomed for the task.

The first assumption proved correct. John was Pope for only five years, dying of cancer in June 1963. The second assumption could not have been further from the truth. Fewer than 90 days after his election, he invited all the bishops of the world to the first general council in 100 years. A nervous Vatican official told him it would be “absolutely impossible” to open this Council before 1963. “Fine,” he answered, “we’ll open it in 1962”, and he did. To quote him, “The council now beginning rises in

the Church like the daybreak, a forerunner of most splendid light.”

This general Council of over 2500 bishops, called Vatican II, ran from December 8 1962 until the same date in 1965. Within that time, there were four sessions where bishops came together and debated the Church questions of the day. Many of those theologians who had been dismissed by Pius XII in the 1950s were now among a bevy of experts (*periti*) who assisted the bishops in constructing answers to the problems besetting the Church, eg, the place of lay people within the Church; to see that every Christian has a mission to evangelize the world; to treat every human being as an equal and to treat people of other religious faith with dignity and honesty; to have meaningful contact with other Christians and people of other religions; to see religious life and the priesthood in a new and updated way; to let the bishops of the world work closely with the Pope in administering the Church in a new way called the Synod of Bishops; and first of all to renew the liturgy of the Mass and

the other six sacraments, especially the sacrament of marriage; finally to see how the Church engaged well and meaningfully with our world and such pressing problems as war, poverty, and racism.



Without doubt the Second Vatican Council was the most important event in the history of the 20th century Church.

Without the insight, forethought and courage of Pope John XXIII it may never have happened. It was the crowning event of his time as Pope, and one for which Christians all over the world and many other people of faith and no faith, give thanks. If everything seems straightforward and plain-sailing in his life, remember that compromise and vision were the two themes around which his life grew and that helped him develop into the mature, jovial human being he was. As fr Yves Congar OP said of the Pope: “This was the secret of his personality: he loved people more than power”. ■

Philomena Clare is assistant Director of Religious Studies at St Dominic's College, Henderson, Auckland.

commissioning of disciples

Matthew 28:16-20: Feast of the Ascension: 1st June 2014

Kathleen Rushton

My mother lived all her long life in the sight of the Southern Alps. The words of the Psalmist echoed in her heart: “I lift up my eyes to the mountains from where shall come my help.” We talked of her love of mountains, just three weeks ago. My sister, her son and I, were tramping the Kepler Track, we climbed up Mt Luxmore and along winding wind-swept ridges delighting in stunning panoramic views of mountains, otherwise hidden valleys, Lake Te Anau, and beyond, and beyond. One sees further and differently up there. One feels small yet part of an ever expanding whole.

My experience of mountains alerts me to the early Church’s practice of reading the Book of Scripture alongside the Book of Nature. There are many mountain settings in the gospel of Matthew. On mountains significant things occur: Jesus was tempted (4:8), taught (5:1; 8:1; 24:3), prayed (14:23), healed the sick and fed the hungry (15:29), was transfigured (17:1, 9) and via the Mount of Olives entered Jerusalem (21:1; 26:30). There are echoes of the Mount Sinai and Mount Zion traditions. When Moses dies on a mountain in sight of the Promised Land, Joshua was commissioned to continue his leadership. Matthew’s scene is not of death but one of commissioning to disciple all nations.

church missioned on a mountain

Over this liturgical year, I have highlighted how the naming of Jesus as Emmanuel — God-with-us (1:23) functions as a framework on which this gospel unfolds. God-with-us assures “where two or three gather in my name I am there in your midst” (18:20). Jesus is present in the least of his brothers and sisters (25:40, 45). The gospel for the Feast of the Ascension contains this assurance in the very last words of Matthew: “I am with you always until the end of the age” (28:20).

This Emmanuel God-with-us framework links with the threefold division of Matthew suggested by the Australian biblical scholar, Brendan Byrne. The first part is a Prologue to Jesus’ Messianic Ministry (1:1-4:11) which tells of his origins, childhood and preparation for ministry. The second part, the Messianic Ministry of Jesus (4:12-28:15), tells of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee, his journey to Jerusalem, his passion, death and resurrection. The third part, the Church on Mission to the Nations, is very short indeed — just the last four verses (28:16-20). Its ethnic span and time span are expansive: all nations and till the end of the age. Here on a mountain, which has theological rather than geographical significance, the Church, the People of God, in all ages, that is, you and I, are commissioned “to disciple all nations.”



Walking the Kepler Track. [Photo: Kathleen Rushton]

learning on and from mountains


Mountains are not places of escape but sacred places of seeing further and anew. On a mountain, in the sight of a great crowd of afflicted humanity, Jesus had invited disciples to be “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (5:1-16). The Church’s role is to be “light of the nations” as was Mount Zion (Isa 42:6). The disciples had been sent out on mission to preach and heal (Matt 10:1) but only here on an unidentified mountain are they commissioned to take up Jesus’ teaching role (28:19). The location is not a mountain near Jerusalem, the centre of power but on one in marginal out-of-the-way Galilee.

There is a very human element for Matthew tells that “the eleven disciples” go to Galilee, to the mountain. One of the twelve is not there anymore. When they saw Jesus “they worshiped him; but some doubted” (28:17). Yet, “the disciples,” referred to 73 times in Matthew, are a larger group than the twelve. For example, “many” Galilean women are described in the discipleship language of “having followed him” and “ministered (*diakonein*) to him” (27:55-56). They watched where Jesus was buried. They came to the tomb. The angel gave them reassurance and a message of joy. First from the angel, and later from the risen Jesus, they heard: “Do not be afraid.” He commissioned them to take the news of his resurrection to the disciples and to tell them that he was going ahead of them to Galilee, to the mountain, where they will meet him. (28:7-10).

Neither on that mountain nor elsewhere is there any mention of a departure or ascension in Matthew. This gospel resists any suggestion that the risen Jesus does not continue to be Emmanuel God-with-us on Earth. Trinitarian presence began Jesus’ public ministry. As he was immersed in the waters, the Spirit came upon him and the voice of God affirmed: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (3:17). The commission to baptise “in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” (28:19) draws sons and daughters into this divine-human communion. The “all authority” which Jesus speaks of is to be understood in the light of the total gospel. This authority was that of the One who came not to be ministered to but to minister to (*diakonein*) (20:28). It is an authority to recognise Jesus in the “least of my brothers and sisters” (25:31-46) who suffer.

To what “mountain” of spiritual and theological significance do I need to go to see Jesus who has gone on the way ahead of me? When I go there and I see him, like some of the disciples, I might worship him or like others I might doubt. Yet he commissions me and assures me “I am with you always.” ■

Kathleen Rushton is a Sister of Mercy working in adult education in the Diocese of Christchurch.








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gospel spirituality

**Book: Heart and Mind:
The Four Gospel Journey
of Radical Transformation.**

**By Alexander John Shaia, with
Michelle L Gaugy.**

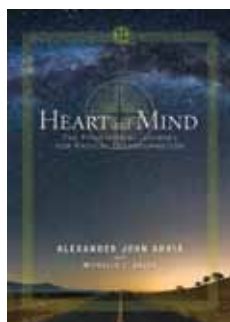
**Published by Mosaic Press, 2013,
\$40.53 (Book Depository price)**

Reviewer: Kevin Gallagher

Alexander Shaia is of Lebanese and Aramaic heritage and presents perspectives on the Gospels in this book from these Semitic roots. This perspective, where poetic story and metaphor meet intellect and life experience, invites the reader into the world of those distinctly different communities to whom the Gospels were written. Shaia, a psychologist and spiritual director writes through a lens he calls *Quadratos* a meta-pattern which offers four strands of the one journey. The Gospels are written for four separate communities asking four questions and presenting spiritual practices applicable to life's journey as we face change, suffer, receive joy and serve one another.

How do we face change? What was the question facing the community of Matthew's Gospel, the Messianic Jews of Antioch, as they struggled and grieved the great temple destruction and slaughter of priests two to five years earlier? Woven through this Gospel are wise insights and practices addressing this question. For Shaia this community would understand well the message relayed to them of the earthquake and the temple curtain torn at the precise moment of Jesus' death. Also the metaphor of the mountain is woven throughout this Gospel. The risen Jesus appearing to the disciples on an "unnamed mount" in Galilee, for example, suggests anywhere, everywhere and within.

How do we move through suffering? This question faced the Messianic Jews in the city of Rome at the time Mark's Gospel is written. Being held responsible by Nero for the great fire, followers of Jesus were taken to the Circus Maximus



and horrifically tortured and murdered. In the text of Mark's Gospel the frequent crossings of stormy seas, where the disciples are terrified and Jesus sleeps, poignantly invite deep faith and trust.

John's gospel, thought to have been written at the end of the first century for the early and very diverse community of "Christians" in Ephesus, asks the question: How do we receive Joy? The writer of John's Gospel attempts to ground a young illuminative mystical faith and cautions followers against the dangers of immaturity. The predominant metaphor in John's Gospel is the garden.

Luke's Gospel is written to diverse communities spread throughout the Mediterranean region. These communities were often filled with the pain, suffering and resentment from being "rent asunder" from their tradition of Judaism. How do we mature in service? This is the question posed in Luke. The metaphor of the road emanates from this Gospel inviting followers to "be" compassion to the oppressor. Jesus' childhood where he "grew in grace and truth" unique in Luke, highlights this invitation to maturity.

Heart and Mind is indeed inspiring and scholarly as the title suggests. After reading this book I hear the Gospels with a new freshness. The lived experience of these early communities and the questions they faced invites me to be attentive in a new way. I hear the four individual texts as one seamless Gospel inviting us today to awaken radically to our oneness and interconnectedness with all things. This excellent book invites prayerful reflection alongside the Gospel text and directs the reader to an abundance of wise spiritual practices applicable to everyday life. ■

climbing the

**Book: Among Secret
Beauties**

by Brian Wilkins.

**Published by Otago University
Press, 2013, glossy paper, 215
pages, index, \$45-00.**

**Reviewer: Michael Mahony SM
(expert mountain climber)**

Brian Wilkins is not widely known in the NZ mountain-climbing community, yet, in his time, the Hillary/Ayres/Bowie era of the 50s and 60s, he was right up there with the best climbers of the day. Much of the material is relatively unknown, but even when he treats of climbs and expeditions that are well known, he brings a fresh point of view and perspective.

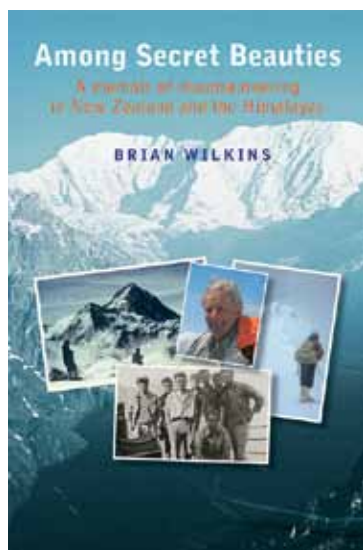
There are many good photos, and they greatly help the text. One can see the regions or climbs that are being discussed, and the photos are right there, on the same page as the text — often not the case in these days of books of few photos.

Brian Wilkins' style is interesting. He has a wry and dry sense of humour, and an agreeable tendency to understate difficulties, while saying enough to leave the reader to imagine the situation.

The book discusses in detail climbs such as the first ascent of the northeast ridge of Mt. Aspiring and the 1954 NZ expedition to the Barun Valley (a Himalayan valley situated at the base of Mt Makalu in the Sankhuwasabha district of Nepal), which included famous people such as Hillary, Evans and Lowe — from the successful British Expedition as well as the New Zealand contingent.

The author's evaluations of people and situations are interesting. The expedition to what is now the Makalu Barun National Park was Ed Hillary's first major trip since climbing Mt Everest. He and George Lowe were

heights



seriously in need of some rest and recreation after months of non-stop Everest presentations. This was the expedition in which Hillary became ill. The precise nature of his sickness has never been fully depthed, though this book puts forward an interesting theory.

These things, among others, led to the abandoning the climb of unclimbed Makalu II, a major Himalayan peak. Wilkins is critical of this decision made without sufficient discussion by all expedition members. In other parts of the book he takes people to task for published inaccuracies.

In summary, this book is different. It is interesting, a good read and delves into the background of people and situations that are known to mountaineers, often illuminating them in an unfamiliar way or throwing a different light on people we thought we knew. Should all be laid bare? The jury is still out. ■

affectionate critique



Film: Wadjda

Director: Haifaa al-Mansour

Reviewer: Paul Sorrell

An assured debut by Haifaa al-Mansour, *Wadjda* is a first in many ways — the first feature film shot entirely in Saudi Arabia and the first to be made by a female Saudi director. Although it was selected as the Saudi entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 2014 Academy Awards, this finely tuned piece of filmmaking will not be seen by theatre audiences in her home country, as Saudi Arabia has no cinemas.

This gently transgressive film follows the attempts of the young heroine, Wadjda (played by Waad Mohammed), to acquire a bicycle so that she can race her young friend Abdullah around the streets of her home town. A charming, cheeky tomboy, 10-year-old Wadjda forms the centre of several overlapping social and family circles that serve to flesh out her character, but also define her place as a female in a conservative Muslim society.

In her quest for the bike — a symbol of independence and personal identity — Wadjda is constantly testing the boundaries of family, cultural and religious codes. If not actually forbidden, riding bicycles is an activity considered inappropriate for girls in this deeply traditional society. Wadjda's situation

is reflected in her (unnamed) mother's plight — she is reliant for transport to her distant workplace on a rickety van driven by a volatile migrant worker, Iqbal. A loving mother to Wadjda, she has her own struggles to deal with as she confronts the reality that her husband, bowing to family pressure to produce a son, is seeking a second wife.

Much of the action takes place at Wadjda's *madrasa* (religious school), where she is part of a small group of girls who engage in small acts of rebellion such as wearing nail polish under their socks or reading comics. A strict disciplinarian, their head teacher, Ms Hussa, nevertheless sports heavy eyeliner and high heels while lecturing the girls on feminine modesty. Her young charges take delight in circulating a rumour that a "thief" reported to have entered her house is actually her lover.

Appearing to turn over a new leaf, Wadjda enters a Koranic recital competition — but only because she wants to use the prize money to buy the shiny new bicycle she is coveting in her neighbourhood toy store.

If Wadjda pushes the boundaries, so of course does director Haifaa al-Mansour. However, her approach to women's issues in her homeland is not confrontational, but gentle, often humorous, and laced with large doses of familial love and affection — the glue that holds society together in a culture that she clearly cares about deeply. ■

Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

the vatican and iran

La Stampa's Iacopo Scaramuzzi reported last November that Iranian Ambassador Mohammed Taher Rabbani met with a group of journalists in Rome to draw attention to the common views the Holy See and Iran have with regard to thorny international issues. These include the Syrian crisis, the importance of ensuring respect for Christians in Iran and praise for the figure of Pope Jorge Mario Bergoglio. The ambassador expressed the hope that "when the circumstances are favourable," the Pope would meet President Rohani.

This may seem surprising given that for some years we have been presented with an interpretation of Iranian internal and external policies as inimical to world peace. Inflammatory language from Iranian leaders has been commonplace.

Foreign powers controlled the area for a considerable time with internal power struggles exacerbating the situation. Economic exploitation naturally followed. In 1921 an army colonel staged a coup, eventually becoming Shah. Initially a reformer, he degenerated into a dictator, with parliament becoming merely a front. Anglo-American oil interests gained lucrative deals during this period. After British and Russian forces invaded Persia in 1941 to protect oil supplies in their struggle against Germany, he abdicated in favour of his son Mohammed Reza.

In 1951 Mohammad Musadiq was elected prime minister. He objected to the exploitation of Persian oil reserves by the western companies, and their intransigence led him to nationalise the industry. His actions were widely approved by the people and religious leaders. He was deposed in 1953 in a coup d'état organised by Anglo-American

oil interests, who proceeded to make Shah Reza Pahlavi their protégé.

The Shah became increasingly autocratic. His secret police were used to crush all forms of political opposition. Religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini was an active critic and publicly denounced the government. Khomeini was arrested and imprisoned for 18 months. After his release in 1964, he publicly criticized the United States government. The Shah sent him into exile. By the mid-1970s, there was growing unrest with the Shah's repressive regime. The Shah was overthrown; Khomeini became the de facto leader and the West in general was seen, understandably, as the enemy.

"We have over 60 years of diplomatic relations, but our relations with the Holy See date back to the 13th century ...", said the ambassador.

Teheran does not just regard the Holy See as the global crossroads of another Abrahamic religion (besides Islam and Judaism), it also sees it as an authoritative and independent geopolitical centre that is different from Washington and European governments, which have difficult relationships with Iran.

'francis effect' – bad?

In March Paul Baumann, editor of *Commonweal*, wrote an analysis of the reaction to the Bishop of Rome. He contends that the fascination aroused by this man has negative connotations.

He writes: "[T]here is something mismatched about this dalliance between the vicar of Christ and the celebrity-obsessed mass media, and one can't help but wonder at the secular fascination with the papacy that it signals. In a world of limitless choices and seemingly un-resolvable conflicts ... is the pope offering merely an escape from the burdens of

modern freedom or a real alternative?

"For many Catholics the question still matters ... In this light, the inordinate attention paid to the papacy, while perhaps good for business, is not good for the church ... it encourages the illusion that what ails the church can be cured by one man, especially by a new man. In truth no pope possesses that kind of power ... The fixation on the papacy trivializes the faith of Catholics, the vast majority of whom throughout history have had little knowledge of, and no contact with, any pope. Traditionally, the papacy was the court of last resort in adjudicating disagreements among the faithful. But in the last century or so it has increasingly become the avenue of first resort, determined to meddle in every theological or ecclesiological dispute."

Baumann describes how Catholic conservatives are acting in a manner similar to the liberals during the time of the last two pontificates, waiting "eager to reassert their 'rightful' place at the head of the Communion line, when the pope they disdain passes from the scene." He writes that the continuation of such divisions makes it imperative for all to address them and learn to live with one another. "Perhaps this is precisely what Pope Francis is trying to tell Catholics in his efforts to shift the focus: away from Rome and back to the poor and afflicted, away from the question of who is living in the papal apartments to who is breaking bread with whom in more modest surroundings."

Baumann suggests a solution lies in the venerable saying: "The law of prayer is the law of faith: The Church believes as she prays. Whatever their ideological disagreements, Catholics will find unity, and a less anachronistic relationship with the papacy, in practicing their faith together — or they will not find unity at all." ■

jesus was not a catholic!

Robert Consedine

Initially I was dazed. After the first lecture I needed a brandy but it was too early in the morning and the Sisters hadn't provided any! We were all having our minds blown!

Theologian, Mercy Sister Ilia Delio from Washington DC, was taking us on an evolutionary journey on the future of the planet and Christianity. This extraordinary woman was opening up an entirely new way of viewing the world and Christianity in the 21st century and beyond. We were at a seminar sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. Their superb hospitality kept us grounded.

I won't mention the language Ilia used — "axial periods, quantum entanglement, artificial intelligence, mind transplants, cosmocentric love, cyborgs, transhumanism, techno sapiens, kismet" — but I like showing off! I left the seminar spiritually on cloud nine — very excited and full of hope. I had just witnessed the future.

Ilia's key message: "The main framework of Christian theology was developed in the 13th century ... today theology still uses medieval language of soul and body, matter and form, even though these ideas are obsolete in the light of modern science."

I took a few notes for reflection and sharing.

Jesus

- "Jesus was not a Catholic. He was a Jew. He did not know Christianity"
- "Jesus is the Christ. Christ is more than Jesus"
- "Christ cannot be limited to one religion"

Evolution

- "Everything in creation is loved into being by God"
- "Evolution is Christ in the making. Christ is the reason for the world"
- "Christianity is the religion of evolution"
- "The whole universe is love"

Education

- "Our present education is for knowledge and power, not for love"
- "We are educated in the modern world to disconnect/fragment. We are overspecialized"
- "Sin is where we live in un-relatedness"

Christianity

- "Catholicity is a dynamic principle of gathering together what is fragmented, divided and broken"
- "Catholic is not what one IS but what one DOES. A way of being"
- "Earth is the place where heaven unfolds"
- "A Christian is one who is connected to the whole of life"
- "Christianity is the religion of the future"

Consequences for the Church

- "The Church is stuck in the 13th century. We are living in the 21st century."
- "Eucharist has become routine!"
- "We need a revolution in liturgy, architecture, structure"

Challenges

- "Humans will be more dependent on technology than on each other"
- "Machines could become our role models"
- "We are more comfortable with machines than with people"
- "We are losing spontaneity of life"
- "We are in information overload"
- "We have a new disorder — OCD — obsessive checking disorder"
- "Isolation and aloneness increases"

Vatican II and the ecumenical movement created the possibility for the people of God to unite with these challenges. As Christians we either engage with the world in all the chaos, or become irrelevant. We don't have to know all the answers — no-one does. The world is moving on. The old certainties are gone. We need to stay connected to the fundamental truth that whole of evolution is driven by love — which is God. It's a dazzling and hope-filled vision.

Robert Consedine
robert@waitangi.co.nz

'Gospel Life in the 21st Century.' This highly recommended 103-minute lecture by Sister Ilia Delio is available on YouTube.

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a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

“Through Lent I’ve been enjoying two Benedictine-type books — Joan Chittister’s *Wisdom distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St Benedict Today* and Rumer Godden’s *In this house of Brede*. Both describe the annual Benedictine ritual of giving account — through each year writing down all one’s individual chattels/goods and submitting these lists to the purview of a committee of the Abbey. Following this, one has to submit to the process of collective decision making where anything considered of greater need for someone else inside or outside of the community is redistributed.

Friends in Christchurch startled a group of us some years ago by holding up to our collective scrutiny and wisdom their annual budget. They explained how much money they had set aside for their children’s tertiary education, and how much for their own retirement and their weekly and annual household expenditure — and suggested that any surplus they earned beyond these would be able to given to people and organisations working for justice and peace. They asked us

as a group of friends to give input and suggestions into their budget and plans, and to share our thoughts on whether their rationale and allocations were reasonable and just — both to their own offspring as well as children of other people, perhaps in much poorer settings. I was staggered by their vulnerability and generosity.

Our friend Mark, who has lived for years in an intentional community with a strong focus on living simply and in mutual accountability, asked



me two days ago, “Do not you have anyone to whom you are accountable for your monthly household expenditure, decisions on how much you give away, how much you spend on family holidays and travel?”

My short answer was, “No, but I think it’s a good idea.”

So this idea of being accountable to others, and choosing to give account — seems to be a converging path for me to think more on — how do I more formally choose to give account for both the ways I use financial and time resources. Are these decisions

credible for someone who claims to be a follower of Christ? Why would I not be prepared to hold up to scrutiny an annual overview of our current resources and decision making about them with a trusted group who have similar values and commitments?

I can imagine this account giving process being a slightly troubling affair in our house — for a start — finding matching pairs for all the pairs of socks the six of us have, and then trying to explain why we need so many socks amongst us; and even threatening when I want to justify my spending on alpine equipment which gets used all too rarely.

I can also immediately think of many excuses not to do this and many sound reasons why this is a bad idea. It could be uncomfortable. If the process wasn’t well managed it would have a high risk of damaging relationships. It would use up precious time. I may disagree with the suggestions of others. Why do it anyway — isn’t it enough to be accountable to God for my life and way of living? It’s antiquated and controlling. I might end up having less stuff.

So no conclusive resolution right now on whether or how we give account more formally. But Mark’s question isn’t fading as fast as I’d like. ■

Kaaren Mathias lives with her husband Jeph and four children in North India, where she works in community health and development. Her email address is: kaarenmathias@gmail.com



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