Tui Motu

InterIslands

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How will they hear when the poet is scorned?

Contents

Cover: *Jerusalem, Jerusalem* (*see pp 5-7*)
Photo: Reg Graham

Apology. The Editor apologises for some 'senior moments' in the *October* issue. Margaret Austin was a Labour MP, not National, as stated on p 24.

In Des Casey's article (pp 5-6): the year of Allende's overthrow was not '71 but1973. Nor was the author in Santiago on the day of the coup, as implied, but 'a few weeks later'. A sentence on p 6 (*left col.*) should read: *"The West was reluctant to hear what was taking place, but gradually the voices won through: friends and associates of Pablo Neruda, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature; Joan Jara, wife of Chile's legendary singer, Victor Jara, tortured and murdered in the stadium; Sheila Cassidy, an English nurse; Isabel Allende, the President's daughter."*

We apologise to the author, Des Casey, for any embarrassment caused him.

Remembering the Dying

November is a traditional time for remembering the dead. For Americans who lost loved ones in the Twin Towers and for Australians in shock over the Bali terrorist bomb, remembrance will come readily. Three thousand dead in New York and two hundred slaughtered in Bali are statistics of horror. Yet even these shocking figures need to be put in perspective.

According to recent figures from the UN, there are currently 20,000 children dying every day – ***every day*** – from malnutrition. We may point a finger of blame at evil governments or we may cite the AIDS pandemic. But, even in New Zealand according to nutritionist Winsome Parnell (see interview pp 14-15), malnutrition usually arises because people cannot afford an adequate diet. It is poverty which causes malnutrition and premature death.

On the opposite page is an image brought us by environmentalist Sean McDonagh, whose extraordinarily powerful message we printed last month. The champagne glass silhouette is precisely the shape of the world poverty graph. We in the Western world are cradled in the prosperous bowl at the top. Our average income, our consumption of the world's resources, may be 50 or 60 times that of a household in sub-Saharan Africa or in Bangladesh. Champagne represents abundance, an extravagance of lifestyle which most of the world's people can scarcely imagine – and will never enjoy.

Could there be a connection between the slaughter of the innocents in Bali and this glaring disparity of wealth? Are we witnessing the symptoms of a global backlash against the unheeding and profligate West? Is it time we challenged our leaders on their platforms which advocate ever-increasing consumption and economic growth? And is it time we did something ourselves – each one of us – to redress this imbalance?

James K Baxter

Last month we remembered the 30th anniversary of the death of one of New Zealand's leading poets. Baxter was more than just an outstanding literary figure. He was in every sense a prophet for his times. In Dunedin, the anniversary was celebrated by a remarkable play, ***Jerusalem Jerusalem***, written by Mike Riddell. The play is fully reported in this issue and Baxter's prophetic character explored (pp 5-9).

Prophets are passionate people. They are effective because their manner of expression is often larger than life, calculated to shock as well as inspire.

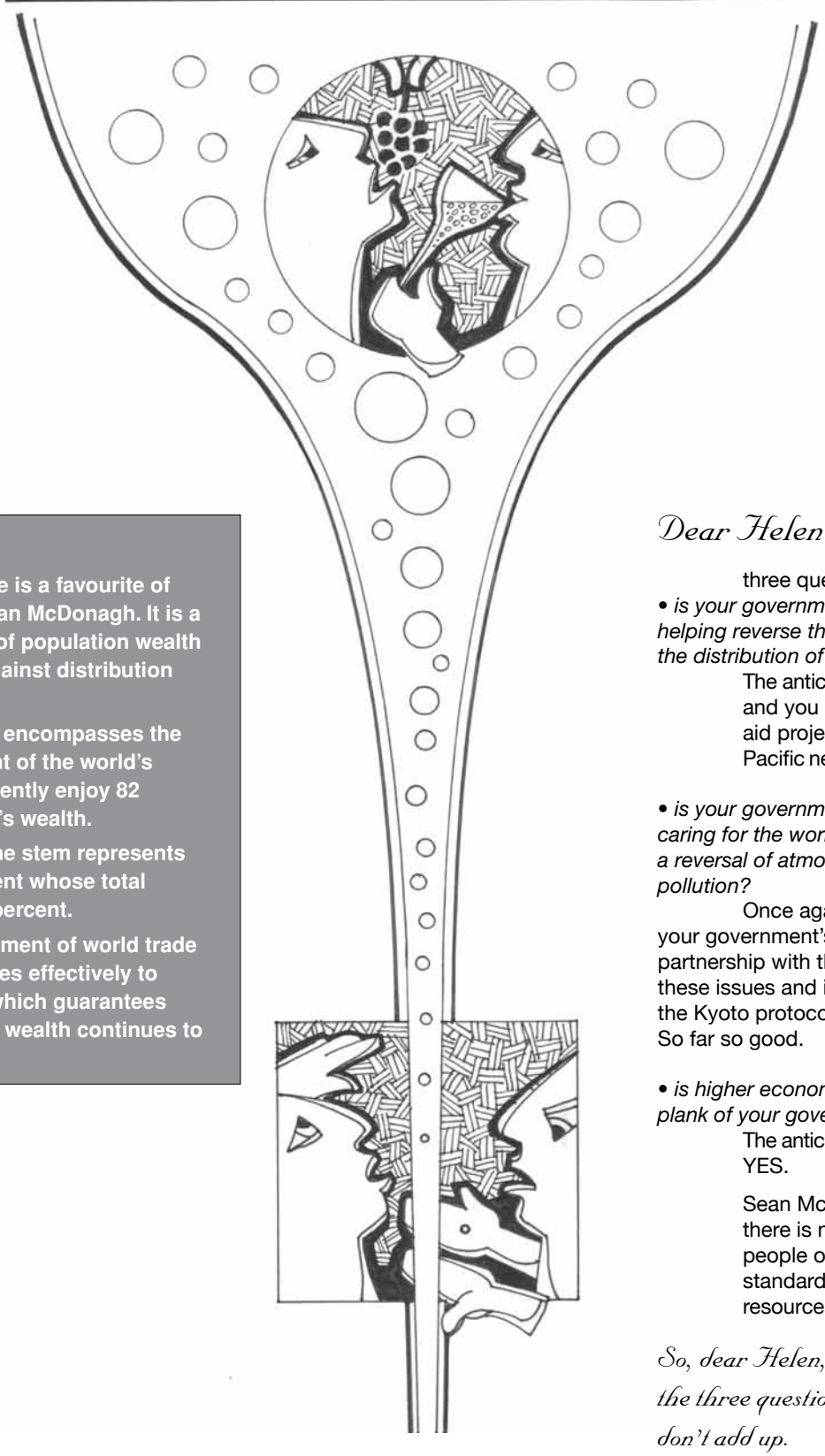
They rouse opposition both from those whose beliefs are being challenged as well as the rest of us whose cocoon of complacency is threatened. Prophets make us uneasy. James K Baxter was no exception, especially since his faults, arising from a passionate and exuberant temperament, were manifest for all to see.

The fascinating question, which the play brings out, is how God speaks to – and speaks through – people like Baxter. Is the word of God heard more urgently speaking through the profane lips of this gaunt, shabby figure of our recent past than, say, in the pious sermons we may hear or the pretty hymns we might chant? In a similar vein Rob Allen asks if it is in confusion rather than in harmony that he may discover divine wisdom (pp 24-25).

The world silences its prophets. Often it locks them up or puts them to death. The First Act of ***Jerusalem Jerusalem*** closes with this poignant couplet:

If they don't hear when the prophet calls,

M.H.



This evocative image is a favourite of environmentalist Sean McDonagh. It is a profile of the graph of population wealth (horizontal scale) against distribution (vertical).

The bulge at the top encompasses the wealthiest 20 percent of the world's population who currently enjoy 82 percent of the world's wealth.

The lowest part of the stem represents the poorest 20 percent whose total wealth is about 1.4 percent.

The present arrangement of world trade causes poor countries effectively to subsidise the rich, which guarantees that this disparity of wealth continues to increase.

Dear Helen

three questions for you:

• *is your government committed to helping reverse the gross disparity in the distribution of the world's wealth?*

The anticipated answer is YES, and you can point to various aid projects, support for our Pacific neighbours, E Timor etc.

• *is your government committed to caring for the world's resources, and a reversal of atmospheric and aquatic pollution?*

Once again you can point to your government's ongoing partnership with the Greens on these issues and its signing of the Kyoto protocol.
So far so good.

• *is higher economic growth a basic plank of your government's policy?*

The anticipated answer again is YES.

Sean McDonagh asserts that there is no way the mass of people on earth can have the standard of living and use of resources which we enjoy now.

So, dear Helen, three **YES***es to the three questions above, simply don't add up.*

Tui Motu-InterIslands

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

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Leaving the church – 1

In my experience, while some people have valid reasons for leaving a particular church or denomination (*Trish McBride: Ministering to church leavers – TM Aug 02*) others opt out when they are bored, or the going becomes tough, or they don't get things the way they want them. Some movement in and out of various denominations, or even faiths, is I believe a normal, natural process that has no doubt taken place from the beginning of organised systems of worship. People's needs and aspirations often change over time.

Marina Pavlovsky, *Wellington*

Leaving the church – 2

When I read Trish McBride's story I was struck by the lack of a logical approach to the subject of faith. It all seemed so emotional. For me, coming from the days when we studied Apologetics, there has always been a clear line from (a) the acceptance of a Creator who is timeless. Then (b) the historical Jesus who said: "I am the Son of God"; and backed his claim with the ultimate miracle i.e. rising from the grave. The public nature of his death had ensured that history would target this single dramatic event as crucial to the future of his church.

Then (c) for all his followers he gave a very special promise that to eat his flesh and to drink his blood would merit an eternal continuity with him; and then (d) his church has ensured that the opportunity to do this has been perpetuated through his priesthood.

Some found this a hard saying and walked no more with him. Indeed, choice, like time, is something we human beings alone have among the beings of God's creation.

Mauri McGreal, *Auckland*

Speed limit

letters ✍

What stirs the memory? Your suggestion of a new capital sin – ***speed*** – took me back over 50 years. I was sitting at a bus stop in Dublin, deciding if I would head to see relations in the North or the South.

I talked to an old gentleman who sat beside me, to expand my wisdom. Eventually I said: "Sorry but I will have to move on."

He replied: "stay where you are, me boy. Man made time, but God made eternity". So I'm always open to a chat.

Francis Robertson, *Waimate* ***(abridged)***

Angel Tree

With the Christmas season rapidly approaching, many Christians are already thinking of ways to celebrate with their children. I'm writing to ask your readers to remember a group of children who are often forgotten during this time, the children whose parents are in prison. While it's often difficult to feel sorry for people who have broken the law and face the consequences, their children are victims who've done nothing wrong but nonetheless suffer.

Prison Fellowship New Zealand is sponsoring a programme called Angel Tree, which will provide Christmas gifts for prisoners' children who might otherwise have none. These gifts are accompanied by a note from the imprisoned parent.

The true value of Angel Tree is the link it establishes between parent and child. Prison is often a time where families fall apart. We at Prison Fellowship New Zealand are asking for your help on this project. If you would like to make a donation toward a child's present, or if you can volunteer time to help prepare or deliver the packages, please contact me at phone: ***(04) 570 1252,***

Fax: ***(04) 570 1253,***

or at ***P O Box 45 065, Lower Hutt***

Kim Workman, *Prison Fellowship NZ*

Desert Psalm

I will take an old proverb, man,
And make a song to it –
'The strong back gets many burdens' –
Perhaps my back is strong;

'A strong back and a weak head' –
That's more like it!
The rain falls down outside my cottage
And my head is full of sleep;

My back is broad to carry my own sins,
A boulder lifted out of the creek –
Who can find for sure the will of God
Even in his own regard?

I sing – 'Mighty is He,
The Lord, the Maker of Zion!
Look on his watchtowers, look on the great walls,
And every stone of it a living man!'

If I should live in folly and die rewardless
Nevertheless our King is great;
He has pulled back the bowstring
And sent his arrows flying through the world –

Arrows of love! Wherever one of them strikes
That man is set on fire with love for Him;
My sins do not hinder the axe of his mercy
Even in my own regard.

I will eat soup tonight and raw cabbage
In honour of his mercy;
The poorest of a myriad of servants
I live and die praising that mercy!

James K Baxter 1970

(*Collected Poems p 488*)

Baxter (Patrick Davies) alone in the church at Jerusalem by night.

The chorus (left to right) Clare Adams, Treenamarie Nathan and Keri Hunter

The 30th anniversary of James K Baxter's death has been celebrated in his native city, Dunedin, by the inaugural presentation of a remarkable play, written by Mike Riddell and produced by his wife, Rosemary.

It played to full houses during the October Dunedin Fringe Festival.

It is hoped to take the play further afield – to Christchurch, to Wellington, and possibly to the Edinburgh Festival in 2003.
The review is by Lawrence Jones

Jerusalem, Jerusalem

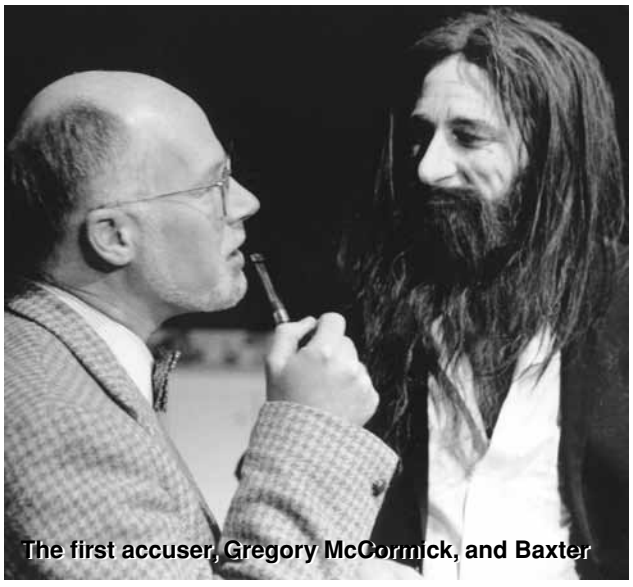
Mike Riddell's *Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, in the *Globe* Theatre's production, is notable especially for two things – the dramatic use it makes of the model of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, and the sense of James K. Baxter that merges from that dramatic use.

It was an audacious idea explicitly to take Eliot's play about the death of Becket as a model for a play about the death of Baxter. Dramatically, this 'imitation' of Eliot's play works well. *Murder in the Cathedral* has the reputation of being a play that reads better than it performs, but *Jerusalem, Jerusalem,* as actualised by the excellent cast and crew and directed by Rosemary Riddell, gave two hours of very effective theatre.

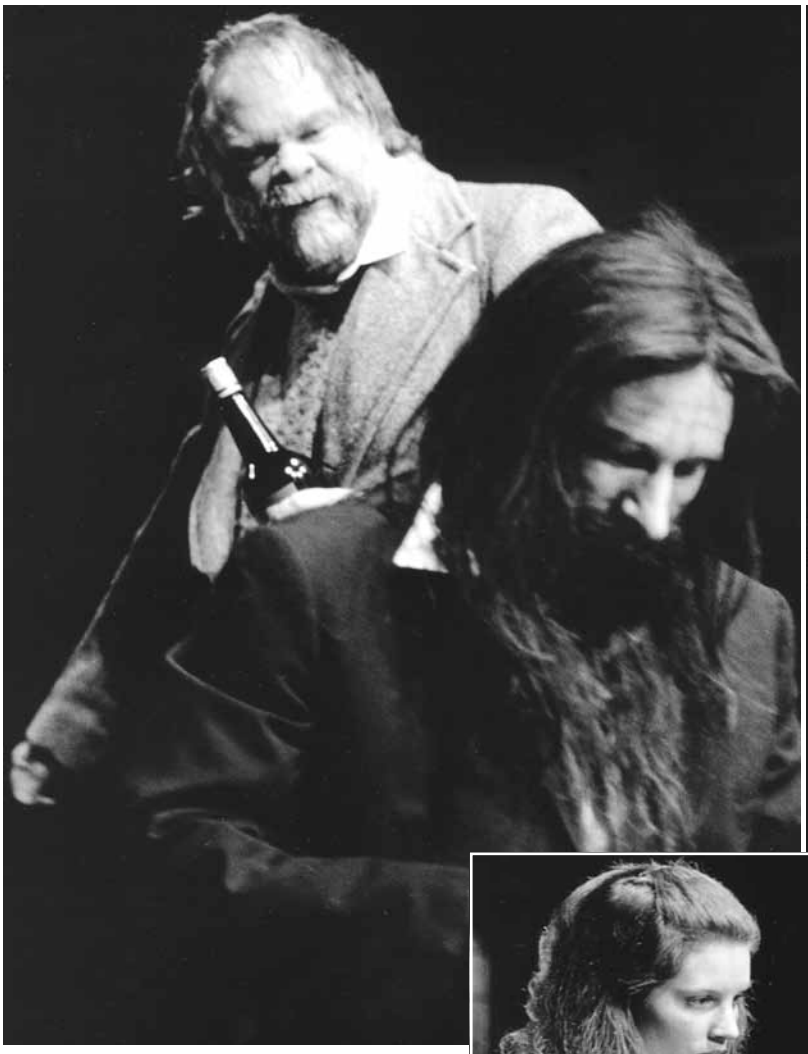
In the first act, the church at Jerusalem in April 1972 replaced Eliot's Archbishops' Hall in Canterbury in 1170, and a chorus of three Maori women of Jerusalem replaced Eliot's chorus of the women of Canterbury. Four accusers from Baxter's life replaced the four tempters of Becket.

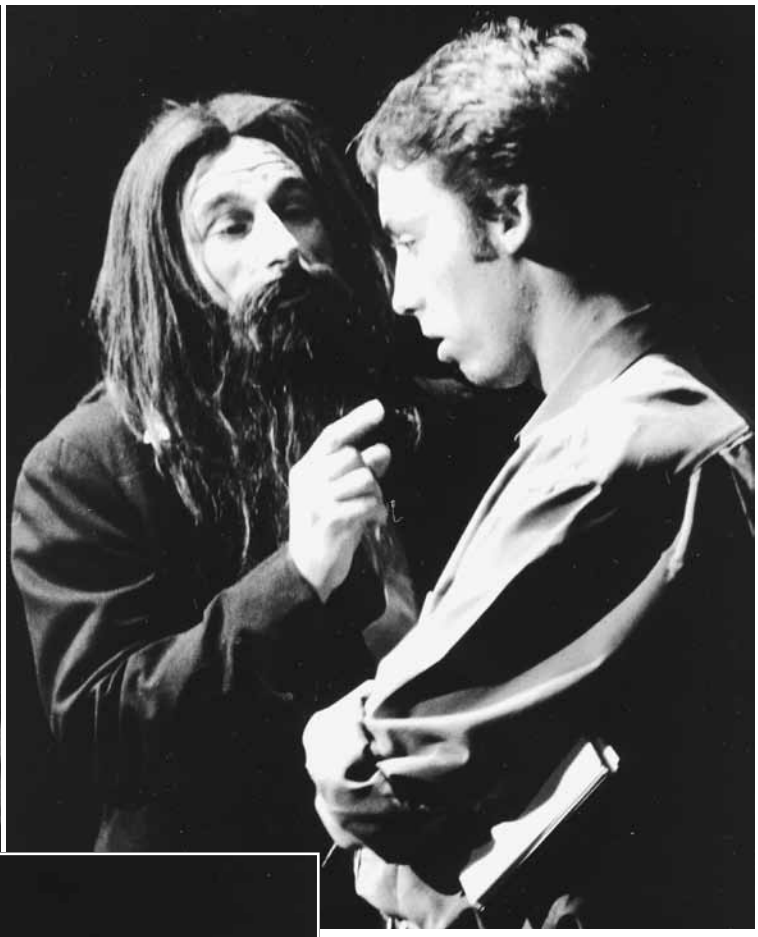
The first (see *right*) was a literary academic who accused Baxter of wasting his mind and of mocking the university while at the same time making sure he got a degree. The second was a *Truth* reporter accusing Baxter of using religion to take sexual advantage of young women, while the third was one of the young women accusing him of claiming to love the cosmos while failing to love his own child, and of promising a community at Jerusalem and failing to sustain it. The fourth was, surprisingly, the ghost of Bob Lowry, the legendary editor-printer-bon vivant, one of Baxter's drinking companions and the subject of one of his elegies, who accuses him of losing the life and spontaneity of his drinking days and trying to replace it with religious phoniness. The varied accusations and Baxter's lively (and often scatological) responses make for theatre that is verbally stimulating despite the relative lack of action (*pictures overleaf*).

▷▷



The first accuser, Gregory McCormick, and Baxter





Baxter's other 'Accusers', in order of appearance:
Andrew Morrison (*above right*),
Emily Duncan (*below left*),
Brian Kilkelly (*above left*)

▷▷ Eliot's 'Interlude' between the two parts of his play is Becket's brief Christmas sermon in Canterbury Cathedral. Very cleverly Riddell transformed this into Baxter's 'sermon' at *Impulse 72* in the Dunedin Town Hall 30 July 1972, a chance to unleash some of Baxter's more formal rhetoric. Eliot's Part II has Becket, accompanied by his priests, faced down and then murdered by four knights who then justify their actions to the audience.

Cleverly, Riddell modifies this to show Baxter confessing to Father Eugene O'Sullivan in his Auckland presbytery, interrupted by four puritan accusers who symbolically 'kill' him with their charges and then justify themselves. The aborted confession brings out Baxter's inner doubts, his spiritual pride, his despair over the failure of Jerusalem, his anger. After the chorus' horror, curses, and sad acceptance, the entire cast, one by one, enters singing the hymn of Blake's 'Jerusalem', a theatrically effective close.

Riddell, then, makes effective theatre by adapting Eliot's Becket to Baxter. But what of the picture of Baxter that emerges? Certainly the surface Baxter is caught. Patrick Davies seems to have studied Baxter videotapes and recordings. He captures the movements and gestures of the exhausted Baxter of the later years. (I remember encountering him at the UBS just before he left Dunedin for the North Island, and his exhausted look and gesture together with his lament that he was only in his 40s but that his body was that of an old man, worn out with stress and abuse.) Davies also captures that wonderful Baxter voice. (I remember during his Burns Fellow years when a student production of Jarry's *Ubu Roi* began with the protagonist slowly emerging through a giant toilet seat on the stage, and when the actor – Brent Southgate if I remember accurately – began to speak, it was in an exact imitation of the well-known voice, which the entire audience picked up immediately.)

If Davies' acting captures the Baxterian presence, Riddell's writing captures the Baxterian language. The scatology reminded me of *The Band Rotunda*, seen and heard at the same *Globe* all those years ago. Half-remembered quotations and paraphrases from Baxter texts kept popping up, but it

was impossible as listener to distinguish between Baxter's own words and those that the playwright gave him, a sure indication of the effectiveness of the writing. Baxter the non-stop monologuist is there in all his slightly suspect rhetorical brilliance. (I remember Margaret Dalziel saying to me in the Burns Fellow days, 'When Jim comes into the common room for a cup of coffee and puts his foot on the rung of a chair and starts to speak, I know it's time to leave if I want to get any work done'.)

But what about the deeper Baxter, the flawed prophet, the would-be martyr and saint? The play ultimately endorses the prophetic message, if not all aspects of the prophet, in the final singing of 'Jerusalem', and it implies that he was a martyr of sorts in showing him as destroyed by the righteous and unattractive puritans. And there is some truth in this. Vonney Allen's account of Baxter's death in her home shows how even when he was dead some policemen would not stop attacking him, and I well remember hearing a Wellington police-officer bitterly attacking Baxter as if he were the source of all youth drug abuse, as if unintelligent laws and law-enforcement,

vicious drug sellers, negligent parents, economic and spiritual poverty, and racism had nothing to do with it.

On the other side, the play, especially in the first act, does give some of Baxter's accusers some effective points, as when he begins pontificating about the evils of society and the young woman who bore his child tells him to stop speechmaking. Certainly Baxter the prophet, as much as Baxter the poet, could get carried away with his own rhetoric and lose touch with everyday reality, and the play does show this. And it shows (as Eliot does with Becket) that maybe the most serious spiritual problem for the would-be martyr-saint is the desire for sainthood.

But I would have liked to have seen a bit more about the self-mythologising, which afflicted the prophet as well as the poet, and I would have liked to see more questioning of the Jerusalem ideal as an escape from the difficult mundane responsibilities of the family man. Prophets can step right over the people around them in their desire to save the world (as Gandhi's wife could have told us) and can project their own weaknesses and temptations on the targets of their criticism (as Thoreau told us). But this is probably just to line up with the accusers, and as the best of the poetry carries a sincerity and passion that transcends the rhetorical gesturing and the echoes of other poets, so the words of the prophet can transcend rhetoric and projection and truly challenge us to look again at ourselves and our world.

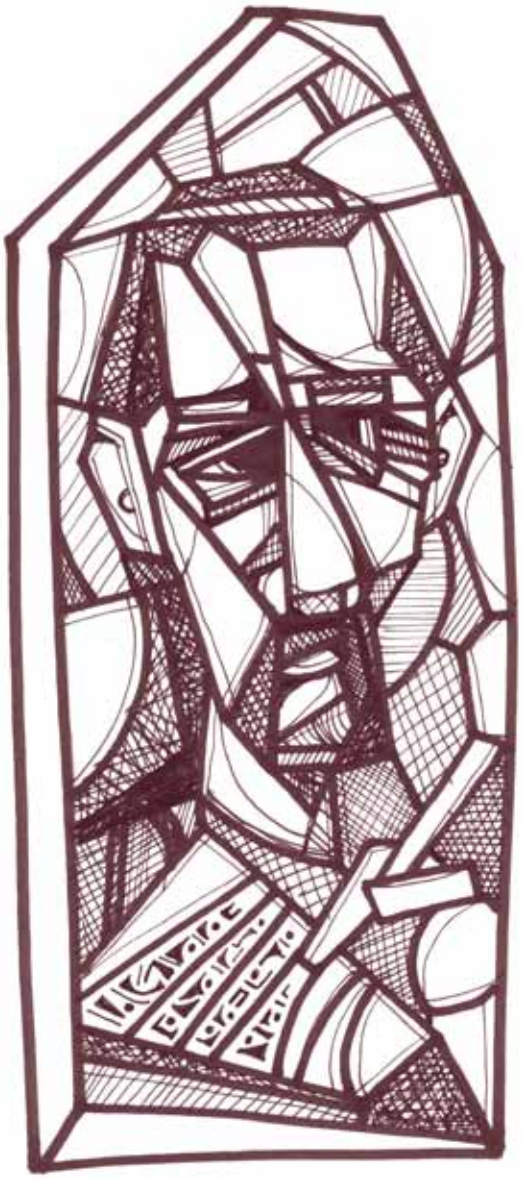
And if we look around at our secular world of globalized consumerism and self-indulgence (in which most of us take part), of environmental destruction and irresponsibility, of corporate greed, of international power politics and terrorism, who of us can honestly say, 'Baxter, you pious old fraud, you got it all wrong'?

Thanks to Mike Riddell and to those involved in the *Globe* production for an evening of challenging theatre, one that for this viewer aroused both memories of the Baxter of 30 years ago and fears for my grandchildren growing up in a world that has ignored his message. ■

Act 2: *Left*: Baxter's confession to priest (Michael Hill) interrupted by the first Puritan (Lewis Ablett-Kerr)

Below: Closing in for the 'kill' – the four Puritans: (*l to r*) Anna Riddell, Lewis Ablett-Kerr, Matt Halliday and Sarah Stewart

The reviewer, Lawrence Jones, is retired Professor of English at Otago University. Photographs by Reg Graham



Baxter the Prophet

Outrageous charlatan –
or one 'grasped by the love of God'?

Gregory McCormick OP attempts to put New Zealand poet James K Baxter into the long and intriguing tradition of prophets and Christian mystics

In the eyes of many of his contemporaries James K. Baxter appeared to be the very antithesis of the typical Christian. Baxter's words and actions offended and scandalized – but also intrigued – ordinary church-going New Zealanders who, under-standably, found it difficult to reconcile this unkempt, scatological, self-fashioned iconoclast, of suspect morals, with the ideal of the pious, chaste, obedient and humble Christian recommended from the pulpit and reinforced by the demands and expectations of mid-20th century, Catholic, middle-class New Zealand.

From one point of view, Baxter's critics were right: he certainly did not conform in any unambiguous way to the ideals of holiness embodied in the spirituality inherited from 19th century France and Ireland. What was perhaps not sufficiently appreciated, however, was the fact that Baxter's own vision and practice of the love of God reached back much further into the tradition, drawing – consciously or otherwise – from the prophets of the Old Testament and the fools, saints and mystics whose lives had been grasped by the love of God in Christ and thereafter driven by an urgency of desire that knew no end but the fullness of life in God. This spirituality was risky in its enterprise and excessive in its various expressions, and therefore deeply unsettling to those who felt, rightly, that their own faith and commitment was placed in the scales.

But, for those taken captive by the love of God the experience was no less disturbing; by their own admission they were robbed of the satisfactions, contentments and certainties offered by the world and left with nothing but a naked faith, self-dispossession and the prospect of failure. But sanctity, in its true sense, is born not of success but failure; Baxter's acceptance of this hard truth, shared in common with Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Catherine of Genoa, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Edith Stein, Etty Hilsum and countless other men and women, was undoubtedly a difficult lesson for him personally. It was also a much needed reminder to his fellow New Zealanders.

Old Testament Prophets

The Old Testament prophets were captivated by the word of God; so pressing was the call that they left behind them their families, land and possessions. In extravagant and violent language the prophets summoned Israel to obedience to the Covenant and to the obligations contained within the Law: the care for the stranger, the widow, the orphan. In this the prophets proclaimed a truth which contradicts the wisdom of the world; unsurprisingly they could only have been regarded as fools who, inspired by God, put their lives at risk by preaching a message few wanted to hear.

The paradigm of sin for the prophets was deafness to the summons of God. Whether their words were discomforting in times of economic prosperity, or encouraging during periods of captivity, the prophets represented a disturbing and provocative presence in Israel's midst. Many drew attention to themselves through their bizarre behaviour; in their excessive gestures, restless itinerancy and physical nakedness the prophets made themselves a spectacle, objects of mockery and disapproval.

Isaiah, the epitome of Hebrew morality, was scorned for going naked for three years; Ezekiel, the scrupulous priest who had previously never defiled himself, scandalised his fellow Jews by eating food cooked on dried human excrement. These transgressions both deliberately evoked the chaos awaiting Israel when she failed to respect the Covenant, and parodied the wisdom of those who lived according to the demands of self-interest and political opportunism. In bearing a yoke, Jeremiah symbolised the weight of the prophetic word that weighed him down; Hosea married a prostitute and had children by her. These outrageous and shocking paradoxes witness to an

unconditional obedience to the will and the word of the transcendent God of the Covenant.

Prophets of the New Covenant

If the structure of desire for the Old Testament prophets was defined in terms of a captivation by the word of God, desire for the followers of Jesus was modelled on the image of the Christ who, out of love for humankind and in obedience to the will of his Father, suffered the death of a despised and unclean criminal. The crucified Christ is, for the Christian, the most perfect embodiment of both God's love for humankind and the human desire for the love of God.

According to St. Paul, those who desire to follow Christ unto death will inevitably become foolish out of love for Him, and in doing so they will be unique living testimonies to the foolishness of the cross:

For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honour, but we in disrepute.

To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, and we grow weary from the work of our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly. We have become, and are now, like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things.
(1 Cor. 4: 9-13).

It is, in part, the intense desire for union with Christ through imitating him in his life and death that accounts for the extraordinary explosion of Christian ascetic spiritualities in the first few centuries of the Church's life. Once the persecution of Christians ceased and martyrdom was no longer the path by which believers could experience the most complete union with the crucified Jesus, new ways were sought to express the willingness of Christians to identify themselves as unconditionally as possible with the image of Christ. Asceticism was one form this desire for self-sacrifice took.

And just as the Old Testament prophets went to the extreme in witnessing to the power and demands of the word of God, so the behaviour of Christian ascetics was strange, shocking and bizarre to their contemporaries. It was not uncommon for the ascetics to compete with each other in fasting, for example: ascetics who claimed that they were able to exist on a diet of six olives a day were accused by others of the sin of pride, while those who needed eight olives to get by on were charged with the sin of greed. The Egyptian St. Macarius the Younger, who unthinkingly killed a mosquito which had stung him, punished himself for dealing so casually with one of God's creatures by standing naked six months in a swamp infested by mosquitos and wasps whose stings – so the story goes – were so strong they could penetrate the hide of a rhino. Even more spectacular forms of asceticism abounded.

Holiness – or madness?

These examples give rise to a few obvious questions: were the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles and martyrs of the New Testament, the ascetics and mystics of the Church and those who have followed in their wake ever since, not obsessed by a morbid desire for suffering and death? Was their spirituality not ultimately life-denying? Is it true that the Christian life is really meant to be taken to such extremes?

According to this strand of the Christian tradition, our final fate depends ultimately not on the balance of good and evil acts in our lives, but on whether we have within us the power of divine love at our death. Beyond the God of conventional morality lies the God of love; the whole of our lives is, in this sense, a preparation for death because it is only from death that eternal life arises. Death is critical because Christians are called to make their deaths an act of love, a sacrificial offering, and this can only happen through the power of divine love within.

Each Christian is asked to die through love of God, as the prophets did in their way, and as Jesus did on the cross. Christians are called to make the same journey as Christ; if they are to live the new life in Christ, they are to die as he did. In this light the primary value of ascetical spirituality lies in the fact that these practices are ways of freely uniting ourselves with the suffering Christ; it is because they are voluntary anticipations of death as an expression of love that they have their value.

If asceticism becomes an end in itself, if it is not practised out of love for God and our brothers and sisters, then it degenerates into masochism and narcissicism. Neither the prophets, nor Jesus, nor those who have followed him chose the path of suffering and death because they wanted to escape from life; their act of sacrifice, made possible only through the love of God, was an expression of their desire to offer the most valuable thing they possessed for the sake of love, and it is only because of the value of life that its sacrifice is meaningful.

And each of us does ultimately reach this point, everyone actually has to give up everything, for this is what happens when we die; what is required of us is that we make this abandonment our own act, an act of sacrifice in union with the act of Christ on the cross. And the resurrection?

O out of this rock tomb

Of labyrinthine grief, I start and cry

Towards this real day: the undestroyed

Fantastic Eden of a waking dream.

(James K Baxter, *Virginia Lake* in *Collected Poems, p. 74.*)

Dr Gregory McCormick lectures in Theology & Religious Studies at Otago University

Eucharist links us with the central story of our faith – and the most crucial event in that story. Eucharist will have meaning for us if the ritual speaks to our ordinary living, if it helps make sense of our world and of its problems.

Bread Broken and Shared

Michael Hill IC

A group of unkempt fisherfolk by the lakeside; a bearded figure grilling fish on a charcoal brazier; a quiet almost embarrassed interchange of pleasantries in the early morning sunlight. What has a scene like that (as described in *John 21*) to do with a Papal Mass in the Basilica of St Peter's in Rome – clouds of incense, a hundred candles or office lights, prelates dressed in purple and lace, a polyphonic choir, the incessant click of camera shutters, the splendid surrounds of mosaic and statuary? One answer is in the ancient Greek word *Eucharist*, which literally means 'thanksgiving' although 2000 years of the Christian story has made its meaning so much more.

Some, however, might suspect that 2000 years of church regulation and theology has distorted the meaning of Eucharist beyond recognition. You don't have to be a cynic to be 'underwhelmed' by the experience of attending the elaborate ceremonies of a Papal Mass. Yet, the very next day when in the early morning you accompany a group of pilgrims into the bowels of the earth to a Roman catacomb and celebrate Mass around a rough stone altar slab, how different the experience becomes!

When by flickering candlelight you see the eager faces of the faithful listening to the ancient readings, distracted occasionally by faded frescoes of biblical scenes – poignant reminders of a persecuted faith community of long ago – the bread broken and shared; the cup passed around; no one excluded. At that catacomb celebration you are in no doubt that the simple ritual binds you together into the family of Christ. You are back again across the centuries at that scene by the lakeside with the broken remnants of Jesus' band of followers, repentant of their cowardice and being healed and fed once more by the merciful hands of God.

a simple ritual binding you into the family of Christ

Eucharist started its history as the breaking of bread, the sharing of food. It was always a ritual because Jesus from the start linked it to the Seder, the traditional Jewish Passover feast which commemorated forever the liberation of their ancestors from the slavery of Pharoah in Egypt.

It was a ritual – but it wasn't exactly the same Jewish ritual. For a start it harked back also to all those meals where Jesus delighted to teach and to heal – or simply just to be with his friends. They were the true seedgrounds of his Kingdom. A feature of those meals which we find right through the four Gospels is the frequent presence of the sort of people who one wouldn't expect to find at a respectable table – then or now.

"Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?", the Pharisees ask. And Jesus gives them a straight answer: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."(*Mt 9, 12-13*) He could have said a lot more. The new Covenant cuts through all the distinctions of race and creed which had grown up round the Jewish covenant over the generations.

And even more. The invitation ***Come to the wedding feast*** was especially aimed at those whom the Pharisees would deem least worthy – the riff-raff who didn't keep the Law, the tax gatherers who were often the dishonest collaborators of the hated Romans, people like Zacchaeus, or the woman off the streets who poured precious ointment all over his feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee (*Lk. 7,36-50*).

In a study of the Eucharist in the New Testament published in 1990 (*A Body Broken for a Broken People*) Fr Frank Moloney, the Australian Scripture

scholar, points out that this preference of Jesus to sit down at table with the broken seems to have been his regular practice. It happened so often. Therefore it must mean something. Moloney deliberately links it with the basic meaning of Eucharist. If Jesus was broken for us on the Cross, then it is for broken people that the great memorial of the Cross is primarily due.

The early practice of the church echoes it. The little Christian communities met to break bread and to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. They met weekly on the Lord's Day. But they also set up communities who shared more than bread. They shared all their goods. They looked after the little ones. They formed what we would nowadays refer to as 'caring communities'. The ***koinonia*** ('communion') was as much the essence of the early Christian church as the Eucharist was its ritual. The two flowed into each other in their basic meaning.

It is only later on that questions started to be asked as to who did or did not belong to this community, who had a right to be present at the Lord's Table. One group whose status sadly came to be challenged was the Jewish Orthodox. If the Pharisees came to exclude the Christians from the synagogue after 70 A.D., then it was not long before the 'Jews' came to be excluded by the Christians – and this is reflected especially in the later Gospels (*Matthew* and *John*).

Paul too takes up the question of exclusion. He instructs the Corinthians to expel from their midst a man who had taken up with his father's wife. Incest was a ground for exclusion. But when it came to the way the Corinthian Christians celebrate Eucharist he attacks them, not because they excluded the 'unworthy' but because their practice had become so divisive and ridden with what we would call class-distinction that it hardly merited for him the name of Eucharist. They were 'eating and drinking a judgment on themselves' (*1 Cor 11,30*) because they failed to recognise the presence of Christ in the poor people they were excluding.

Fr Moloney's scholarly work on the origins of Eucharist in the Gospels and the early church raise huge questions about the way Christians have come habitually to exclude people from their Eucharist. Those whose beliefs differ from ours; those whose conduct has been reprehensible; those who have got themselves into anomalous marriage relationships.

One of this writer's most powerful experiences of celebrating Eucharist was with prisoners in a maximum security gaol. There was an overwhelming sense that these broken men were par excellence the people most fit to be present at and participate fully in the Mass.

The Symbols of Eucharist

American theologian Monika Hellwig's short monograph *The Eucharist and the Hunger of the World* dates from the 1970s, yet its message is still totally contemporary. She takes a series of eucharistic symbols and links them together so as to yield an argument which is compelling.

• First, Eucharist is the ***sharing of food.*** It is enacted always against the background of world hunger. Since a quarter of the world's population is underfed, we hardly need to be reminded of the relevance of this.

When we go to Mass we share bread and we pass round the cup. We do what Jesus and the disciples did at the Last Supper. No amount of theologising should ever obscure this central fact. Therefore the symbols need always to be manifest. As much as possible the bread should look and taste like bread. And the cup should be shared.

Yet it wasn't always thus. Only a generation ago in the Catholic church the cup was denied to the laity, and even now many communicants never drink from the chalice. A hundred years ago regular, weekly, let alone daily commun-ion was rare. Even now, in some Protestant churches communion is still only occasional. *Do this in memory of me* has often been honoured in the breach rather than the observance.

It is interesting that a return to the practice of frequent communion has coincided with a far greater awareness and sensitivity on the part of Christians generally to the problems of world hunger and the unequal sharing of the world's resources. I am reminded of the reply of the late Cardinal Heenan of Westminster to the TV interviewer David Frost. Frost said to him: "It must be sad for you to see as you grew older, such a huge decline in interest and in religious practice."

"On the contrary," said the Cardinal (who was a Londoner), "when I was young no one in the West End of London knew or cared whether there were people starving in the East End. Now, not only do they know, but many of them care." Social conscience has grown, and a reformed theology of Eucharist has aided this.

• ***Hunger makes us needy. We go to Eucharist to be fed.***

The spirit of our age in the West is to be self-sufficient. Yet when we go to Mass we go to be nourished by word and sacrament. We go up to the altar and stretch out our hands like a poor person to be fed. We acknowledge in that very gesture our dependence on the largesse of God. We are like the crowds who flocked to Christ to hear, to be healed – and to be fed!

• ***Eucharist is a shared meal. We receive – but we also give.***

In a good liturgy this is portrayed by the evident sharing of ministries. Different people read, comment and act as ministers. I go forward and one of my fellow-parishioners looks into my eyes and says to me: "*The Blood of Christ*". It is no longer the priest doing everything, watched by 'God's frozen people'. In a good liturgy!

Monika Hellwig reminds us that one interpretation of the story of the multiplication of the loaves reinforces ▷▷

this. Many commentators, mostly of the Protestant tradition, suggest that in spite of the rather negative reaction of the disciples to Jesus' suggestion to share what they have brought – 'what is that among so many' – people were prompted to share what they had. Then it was discovered that there was enough for all. More than enough: there was lots left over.

We might think that this diminishes the grandeur of the miracle. But does it? The true miracle is that in a time of scarcity the people were prompted by Jesus to be generous, and it worked. *Give – and to you it will be given.* Or rather, in eucharistic terms: *receive – and become a giver.* At the Last Supper this aspect of Eucharist was reinforced when Jesus washed the disciples' feet. And encouraged them to do the same to each other.

• *Eucharist is sacrifice*

Hellwig arrives at this notion as the climax of her argument. When we truly experience Eucharist as self-giving for others, then we are 'in union' with Jesus in his self-giving at Calvary. And this giving will be continued in our lives as we 'take Eucharist' to the needy of the world.

What the Vatican Council did to the Mass

For me as a priest a very striking feature of the changes brought about by Vatican II (not necessarily the most important but the change which impacted most at the time) was turning the altar around. Previously the sacred ritual of the Mass was whispered by the priest with his back to the congregation in a tongue unknown to most of them. What were they doing?

A priest of the pre-Vatican II era wrote a rather good little book for young people called *The Mass in Slow Motion.* In it he suggested that one reason the priest appeared to be dressed up like a gigantic pin-cushion was so that the faithful might 'stick the pins' of their intentional prayers into him. His job was to mediate this volley of 'prayer pins' to the Father. A humorous and fanciful idea! The writer made the best of it.

But physically turning round and changing the language into English was like a Copernican revolution. The whole liturgy was turned on its head – or perhaps more accurately, it was turned back on its feet. It was no longer one person, the mediator, performing the mysteries while the faithful watched. The congregation were gathered round the table with the priest, sharing word and sacrament. The priest presides, but all must be involved. And none excluded. We return to the first point.

What has happened is a social revolution. The Mass had become a private act of devotion. I recall as a young man arriving on my bicycle at a great Franciscan church in the south-west of Ireland. I went in and found a number of Friars celebrating their Masses at altars side by side. Since they all seemed to be at different points in the liturgy you could hook on where you liked to whom you liked. There was, for sure, a community of prayer. But there was no communication. In that sense it was a parody of community. It bore little resemblance to the Last Supper.

To sum up, the church has endeavoured to reform its central liturgy of Eucharist to make it a celebration of community, one that looks out to the world outside and its needs. Are we as the faithful appreciative of what Eucharist really means? Is it for us, in the words of Vatican II, ***the source and summit of the Christian life***?*(LG 11*). And then, each week, do we go out and strive to live it? ■

The Other Sea

There is something about a sun setting
over a rim of ocean, the day dying
through a range of colours from orange
to deep purple with a touch of green
at the horizon. The hush-hush of waves
was backbeat to our conversation
about the weekend, family together
for the first time in three years,
then Steve arrived with fish and chips
and the talk turned to food.

With newspaper packets in our laps
like hot water bottles, we pulled out chips
and wondered who had come up with
the name
of lemon fish for plain old shark.
I think it was Jo who said out of the blue,
"We could call this a Galilee meal."
I don't know what she meant by that,
but it made us move into a silence
all together, yet each of us alone
in a fullness of thought.

The quiet didn't last. Someone laughed
and said shark was a much neglected fish.
Didn't we know that grilled shark steak
cost the earth in Hawaiian restaurants?
Talk went on about local eating habits,
but in those few silent moments,
our boats had been out in deep water
and we had all been fishing.

Joy Cowley

A Body Broken for a Broken People – Eucharist in the New Testament is published by Collins Dove, Australia. Fr Frank Moloney is a Salesian priest, a member of the International Theological Commission and has held a number of Scriptural teaching posts in Australia. *The Eucharist and the Hunger of the World* was published in 1976 by Paulist Press, New Jersey. Monika Hellwig has taught theology in Washington, DC. Both have lectured in New Zealand

A little bit of what you fancy does you good

Tui Motu *interviews nutritionist Winsome Parnell. It is not only food habits which are changing, she observes, but the way people socialise around a meal*

In 1997 Otago University nutritionist Winsome Parnell was involved in a survey of adult nutrition in New Zealand. This year her research is focused on a survey of the eating habits of children. Nutrition habits in New Zealand, she observes, have changed even over the last decade or so.

The children's survey is of 5-14-year-olds and is being done through schools. There are interviewers throughout the country. There are three groups of schools: Maori, Pacific Islanders and NZ European. The 3000 children being surveyed include approximately 1000 Maori and 1000 from the Pacific Islands. Government policy is to try to raise the health and educational standards of Maori and Pacific Islanders: hence the number bias in favour of Polynesian children.

The adult data was analysed using an 'index of deprivation' according to where people lived. The factors included income, whether people have a car or telephone, where they live. The population was then divided into quartiles. Not surprisingly, nutrition was poorest in quartile four, the poorest socio-economic block. Research has shown that simply knowing what is good for you is insufficient to guarantee good nutrition if you cannot afford to buy good food. The bottom line is income.

On the other hand fatty foods were found to be distributed evenly. The well-off ate chocolate, quiches and camembert cheese; the poor had fish and chips! But the overall fat intake was much the same. However, those in the lowest quartile would have the lowest intake of fruit and vegetables. The reason is probably because these are perishable items. People on a low budget will go for things which will keep. They will prefer high energy foods, rather than, say, tomatoes which go rotten in a few days. They will also go for the sort of bread you can keep in a freezer.

Classic diseases of malnutrition like rickets are rare in New Zealand. However, paediatricians in Auckland have found rickets among immigrant families who find the New Zealand climate cold and therefore stay indoors a lot. The children's survey is screening for iron deficiency. If it is found, the information is fed straight back to the parents. Iron deficiency may be a result of infections – but it may transpire to be a result of dietary deficiency.

Nutritional defects

Rates of obesity among adults in NZ have gone up. It will be interesting to see how children's obesity compares across the ethnic groups. One consequence of obesity is diabetes, and we know this is more prevalent among Polynesian people. The cause of obesity appears to be both poor dietary habits and lack of suitable exercise. Where and when children get their exercise is something the survey is looking into. What sport do they play? Do they walk or bicycle to school?

As regards change of diet or exercise habit, the survey will look towards strategies simple enough to have a chance of success and which can be sustained. For instance, children who regularly walk to school get into a habit of walking which may last them into adult life.

The whole food and eating environment has changed over the last decade or two. Winsome Parnell does not think we can ever put the clock back. As a generation we have handed over responsibility for the preparation of the food we eat to someone else. That is true both of 'fast food' eating and going regularly to cafés. If you prepare what you eat yourself, you have control over what goes into your diet.

But we are losing this discretionary aspect of food preparation. We don't know how much salt is put in or which fats have been used. The adult survey discovered this factor to vary across ▷▷

▷▷ the age-group. Older people tend to butter their own bread more! Perhaps we have to change our educational slogans. Instead of saying: "spread the butter thinner", we now have to say: "choose the lower fat option in the sandwich you buy". Food prepared in cafés is rarely labelled with this information. We are being challenged to find smarter ways of controlling what food is being prepared for us and enabling people to make healthier choices.

eating habits changed because of the change in the role of women

It is doubtful whether the current craze for cooking programmes on TV and recipe pages in magazines has much positive impact. Winsome Parnell sees them as primarily entertainment. Antonio Carlucci is watched in the same way people might watch a travelogue on Italy, not as a way of learning to cook pasta better.

The change in eating habits has happened more than anything else because of the change in the role of women. To go back would mean taking women out of the workforce and putting them back into the kitchen. And that isn't going to happen.

Working people have less time nowadays to prepare their main meal. Life style has changed. In the past someone in every family had to be able to cook the family meal. Now people can buy food ready prepared, so more people are disinclined to bother. Even medical students, who will often be the ones who will dictate how people might control their diet, may themselves never prepare their own food, may not even know how to cook properly and may have no intention of learning!

The ritual of eating together.

The pace of life and the fast food habits also impacts on social habits. The table is a place where people make community. Nowadays it has become acceptable to eat on the run in a way which a generation ago was regarded as anti-social. People will move around the workplace with a sandwich in the hand. Families with teenage children have to struggle to maintain the family evening meal where everyone sits down together. Where the home is headed by a single parent, the disruptive impact of leisure activities on any family ritual is all the greater.

Polynesians and Maori give food and its preparation a special place. They will customarily offer food as part of hospitality. And the tradition of having a family meal together on Sunday has been preserved among their cultures. Both nutritionally and as regards the well-being of the family, this is a healthy tradition. People learn to communicate freely round the table, and habits of communication stay with you as you grow older. Larger families will tend to put more importance on this social cohesion.

To feast on occasion is part of healthy living. Icecream and pavlova is fine for celebration – but should not be a daily diet. Small children are usually given treats. But treats are for occasions, not everyday.

This co-operative aspect of living has been lost by Generation X which prides itself on looking after oneself. Caring and the ability to communicate is sacrificed for autonomy and a spurious 'freedom'. Many of the simple courtesies of hospitality have often been sacrificed. We are living in a self-service culture. This, suggests Winsome Parnell, is pure loss, both for families and communities.

It is not easy to say whether this change of lifestyle is impacting negatively on health. Sole parent families where social disruption is greatest will often show indications of poor nutrition.

TV can have an impact in the sense that eating in front of TV means that people cease to communicate with each other or take much notice of what they are eating. If you don't notice what you eat, you may miss the fact you are overconsuming, or you may become desensitised to choice. Children will often snack while watching TV or playing computer games. Addictions, such as to alcohol, tend to be compounded for people who drink on their own. Problem drinking is far less likely to happen in a social setting or at a meal. Social isolation tends to bring its own problems.

people learn to communicate freely round the table

Caffeinated soft drinks have recently become very popular among teenagers: they are sweet drinks with hefty doses of caffeine which are sold as dietary supplements, but can be readily bought by young people. Too much sugar contributes to overweight and tooth decay. There is now a compulsion for young people to have constant access to poptop bottles. There seems to be a new dependence on clutching a drink bottle and constant sipping.

In our age food technologists have produced some wonderful new products – but, like the motorcar, we need to use them wisely. Perhaps what we need to encourage is 'defensive' or 'preventive eating'. The maxim is: eat in a way which will not lead to ill effects down the line ■

Winsome Parnell lectures in nutrition at Otago University

The Holy Land – a country under seige

Jim Neilan

My daughter was killed by a suicide bomber. I don't forget. I don't forgive. But if you think from the head and not from the gut, and you look at what made people do what they do – people that don't have hope, people who are desperate enough to commit suicide – you have to ask yourself: 'have you contributed in any way to this despair, to this craziness?' It hasn't come out of the blue."

The voice of Rami Elhanan, an Israeli father and former soldier. His own father had survived Auschwitz, but his grandparents, six aunts and uncles perished in the Holocaust. On 4 September 1997, his 14-year-old daughter, Smadar, was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber while out shopping with two friends.

He made this plea during an interview with foreign correspondent John Pilger in the TV documentary, *Palestine is Still the Issue*, broadcast by TV One on 21 October. The words of this grieving father sum up the heartbreaks, frustrations and complexity of the Israel/Palestine problem.

The same impression comes through in an interview *Tui Motu* did a week previously with Wellington priest, Fr Gerry Burns, who recently spent six days in the area as part of a Caritas International 'exposure' trip. The Palestinians are being "strangled by the Israeli armed presence, the checkpoints and the curfews."

Like Pilger, Fr Burns spoke to representatives of the Israeli peace camp. These are the brave people who stand out against the general hardline policy and advocate a withdrawal from the Occupied Territories so that an independent state of Palestine can be established. They admit that the Israelis have largely brought this crisis upon themselves. These statements from Jews can't be simply dismissed as 'anti-Semitic'.

But the hardliners are in control in Israel. John Pilger questioned a senior advisor to the Israeli Prime Minister, Dori Gold, about the killing of civilians, using the example of an Israeli sniper who shot, in front of a lot of the world's press, an old lady trying to get into the hospital for her chemotherapy treatment. Gold simply replied, "No. I can tell you that did not happen, and our soldiers take aim only at those involved in terrorism."

On his visit Gerry Burns actually met Yasser Arafat and found him, although old and sick, remarkably lively, astute and humorous. He did not appear to be the demon he is often painted. But Fr Burns was made aware that there are many Palestinians who would like a change of leadership. They accuse Arafat of being weak and inefficient and unable to control the extremists.

Fr Gerry Burns says: "The Israeli control over the Palestinians prevents a proper political process developing. What sort of state can be formed when the people are controlled and surrounded by Israel; how can they function as a self-governing state?"

The TV programme graphically presents an appalling mosaic of images in the occupied territories – people living in a maze of controls, roadblocks and checkpoints. The people are angry, humiliated and in constant danger. There are graphic pictures of the wrecked Palestinian Ministry of Culture building: all files and equipment smashed and vandalised, cultural exhibitions and displays of children's art smeared with excrement.

Curfews stop everything. Ambulances are denied access to the sick and wounded. Children are prevented from going to school. "This is necessary for our security", the Israelis claim.

One of the phrases used is: "If we don't protect ourselves, they will push us into the sea". But, as Rami Elhanan said, "Who would push us into the sea? A mosquito? It's a laugh!" Israel is the fourth strongest military power in the world. It receives billions of dollars from America along with the latest weapons, aircraft, bombs, and missiles. And it has nuclear weapons!

Israeli historian Ilan Paape said to Pilger: "When Israel took over almost 80 per cent of Palestine in 1948, it did so through settlement and ethnic cleansing. Now, the country has a Prime Minister who wants to determine by force the future of the remaining 20 per cent."

Is there a solution? Gerry Burns says, "My instinct is that people on both sides living under such constant pressure will soon say: 'there must be another way.'" On the other hand, Arafat told him that he fears a war in Iraq may give the Israelis the opportunity of pushing the Palestinians out altogether – into Jordan, or even up into northern Iraq.

Pilger is clear in his mind: the UN must be allowed to act as an honest broker in a constructive role, ensuring a future with two countries, Israel and Palestine, neither dominating nor menacing the other. ■

Najwa's Song

I am in a holy place.
I am still with solitude.
I hold the bowl empty
of stars and justice.
I wait.

Beyond the wall I hear soldiers
zealous with gunfire
shots repeat history.

My mother said justice
Is a fruit left on a tree.
No one has a taste for it.
My mother is the blue of wisdom.
My grandmother is
the kiss of tattooed lips.

I remain in a holy place.
I hold the bowl empty of stars
and justice
and I wait.

A n n e

On the roa

Timothy Radcliffe OP, s
of European politicians and lawyers, gives his int
The Samaritan's journey was an occasion
a lesson no less shocking to us

But he, wishing to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?'

You must love your neighbour as yourself. It is simple. But the lawyer is not satisfied. He wants a clear, and probably a complex, answer. Lawyers would have nothing to do if the answers were too simple. He wants to know exactly what are his obligations.

The Jews reflected much upon who was a neighbour. The word literally means 'someone who is close to me'. The closer they are, the more obligations I have to them. Some people are so remote from me that they are not neighbours at all and so I owe them nothing. This was above all true of the heretics, the Samaritans.

Like the lawyer we want clear answers. We wish to know what we must do. But Jesus does not give a clear answer. He tells a story: *'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho..."*

What is a parable?

Parables are not illustrations of a point. They are powerful events that change us. They turn our lives upside down. Jesus' parables should catch us up and carry us away. We find ourselves inside the parables and they transform us. Jesus' parables usually did this by shocking people.

The trouble is that we know them so well that they do not often surprise us. It is like listening to a joke when you know the punch line. We have to rediscover the sense of surprise. The parable of the Good Samaritan was scandalous for those who first heard it. We need to rediscover the shock.

During the revolution in Nicaragua, an American Dominican helped a young group of Nicaraguans to enact the parable of the Good Samaritan during Mass. They showed how a young Nicaraguan was beaten up and left half dead by the road. A Dominican friar went by and ignored him.

And then one of the enemy, a *Contra*, came by wearing a military uniform. He stopped, put a rosary around the neck of the Nicaraguan, gave him water and carried him to the next village. At this point, half of the congregation began to shout and protest. It was unacceptable that a *Contra* could do this. 'They are terrible people. We have nothing to do with them.' The Mass broke up in chaos.

Then the people began to discuss what the parable meant. Because they had been shocked, they came to understand it more deeply. They agreed in the future not to refer to the others as *'los Contras'* but 'our cousins in Honduras', or 'our mistaken cousins'. They repeated the initial rite of confession of sins, gave each other the kiss of peace, and continued the celebration of the Eucharist. That is the shock that this story should produce in us.

Obviously the first shock is that it is this impure man, this heretic, the Samaritan, who offers the help and not the holy priest or the Levite. I wish to suggest that the parable offers a much deeper challenge. It challenges our very ideas of what it means for us to be human, and of who is God.

The lawyer asks *Who is my neighbour?* At the end Jesus poses a different question: *Which of these three proved neighbour to the man who fell among robbers?* The lawyer's question puts himself at the centre. Who is his neighbour? But the parable transforms the question: it is the wounded man who is the centre now.

d to Jericho

peaking to an audience
erpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan.
for teaching us who are our neighbours –
than to the story's first listeners

The Good Samaritan by He Qi

Who was neighbour to him?

Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbour to the man who fell mong the robbers?

Radical journey

For every one of us the biggest challenge of our lives is to cease to be the centre of the world. This is the most radical journey that every human being has to make, the liberation from egoism. This is a truth that I know intellectually, but which is so difficult to achieve. I think that it is especially difficult in contemporary society. Modernity has consecrated the image of the human being as essentially solitary, detached from other people, free from obligation, disengaged. This is the ego of the consumerist society. Everywhere in the global village we can see signs of the triumph of the 'Me generation', the tyranny of the ego. How can we learn to let go and give others the centre?

A Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he (the wounded man) was and when he saw him he had compassion.

The word translated 'to have compassion' is one of the most important in the New Testament. It means to be touched in the centre of one's being, in one's very bowels. It is the shock of the awareness of another.

For most human beings this utter awareness of the other occurs most dramatically when we fall in love. When we fall in love, we cease, at least from time to time, to be the centre of the universe, and let another take that place.

But this does not really answer our question. We cannot fall in love with everyone! And the Good Samaritan did not fall in love with the wounded man! So the question is this: How can we let ourselves be touched by the other people whom we hardly know? The Samaritan is touched because he sees the wounded man. The first challenge is to open one's eyes to see.

Every society makes some people visible and others disappear. In our society politicians and film stars, singers and footballers are all visible. They appear in public spaces and on the billboards and the television screens. But we make the poor invisible. They disappear from the electoral lists. They have neither a voice nor a face.

And the Samaritan went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. and the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back."

Taking the risk

Being touched is not enough. The compassion of the Samaritan upsets his plans. He had prepared himself for his journey, with food, drink and money. Now these are used for a purpose that he had not imagined. Two denarii was a lot of money, enough to pay for more than three weeks' board and lodging. He takes the risk of a promise that is open, without predetermined limits. His response leads him into unknown territory. He cannot know how much the innkeeper will ask from him.

When the lawyer asks, *Who is my neighbour?* he wishes to define his obligations. He wishes to know in advance what he must do and what he need not do. But true compassion ▷▷

upsets our plans, and leads us in unexpected directions. If we dare to see the poor, the wounded, the strangers in our midst, then who knows what will be the consequences for us?

'Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbour to the man who fell among thieves?' He said, 'The one who showed mercy on him.' And *Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'*

We have already seen that the lawyer asks a question that makes himself the centre, and Jesus replies with a question which makes the other person the centre. But there is another change. The lawyer asks who *is* his neighbour. But Jesus replies by asking who *became* a neighbour to the wounded man. The Samaritan *makes* himself a neighbour to that man. He creates a relationship that did not exist before.

Go and do likewise. These words are an invitation to construct a society that does not yet exist. Within every society, there is fear of those who are different, who have different religions, different colours of skin, who dress differently, speak different languages. The invitation of the parable is to make them neighbours.

Each of us

Ultimately, this means losing the small identities that separate us from each other. The parable tells of our journey that transforms the identities of the participants. The man who is attacked by robbers is each of us, every human being. When Jesus asks who became the neighbour to the wounded man, then the lawyer does not reply, *The Samaritan*. He just says, *The one who showed him mercy.* The Samaritan too has been liberated from that small identity as a heretic.

The story begins as a story of Jews and Samaritans and becomes the story of two human beings. The ones who retain their original identity are those who just walk by, the priest and the Levite. They miss the opportunity to discover a new way of being human. They walk by but they are stuck in their old identity.

You must love your neighbour as yourself. This means much more than loving your neighbour *as much* as yourself. We are invited to love our neighbour as part of ourselves. We love the members of our family as ourselves, because they are part of who we are. We are one flesh and blood. To love the stranger as myself is to discover a new identity, which transforms me.

The Samaritan exercises what we call ***charity***, but in the older sense of the word. Until the 17th century, at least in English, 'charity' meant the bonds that link us to each other as members of the Body of Christ. After the 17th century, with a vast transformation in how we understand our humanity, it came above all to mean the money that we give to the poor. It ceased to express the love of our sisters and brothers, and came to mean the aid offered to strangers.

So, loving my neighbour as myself is taking to the road. The road leads not just from Jerusalem to Jericho but to the Kingdom, in which I shall discover fully who I am. It is a journey that liberates me from all small self-definitions, and conforms me to Christ.

How can we dare to make that perilous journey to the Kingdom? How can we dare to set off from Jerusalem to Jericho? We may be set upon by robbers and left half dead. We may come across a wounded man, and the encounter will change our lives. Is it not safer to stay at home? Ultimately we may dare to go on 'the way' because God has gone before us. It is God who has moved from Jerusalem to Jericho and we can follow safely.

Changing our notion of God

The parable tells of the transformation of human identity. But deeper inside, there is another story, the trans-formation of God's identity too.

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho

Jerusalem is the holy city, the place where God dwells in the Temple. But the journey carries us away from the Temple, away from the holiest place on earth.

The priest is also going to Jericho. And when he sees the body of the wounded man, he passes by. Why? It is not necessarily because he is heartless. The wounded man is described as 'half dead'.

It is usually agreed that the priest could not have touched the body of this half-dead person because it would have made him impure. The God of life has nothing to do with death, and so the priests of the Temple were completely forbidden to touch corpses. He does not see a man in need of help but a threat to his holiness. And the Levite, who served in the Temple too, would have passed by for the same reason.

The Samaritan was utterly remote from the holiness of the temple. He was a heretic and a schismatic. But here you have the true place of sacrifice in which God dwells. The whole text is haunted by the text of *Hosea 6:6*, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice'.

And the Samaritan carries the man to an inn. In Greek he uses a suggestive word which means 'all welcoming'. Corpses are not a threat to true holiness. Indeed the God of life can embrace the dead and give them life. The cross is the true Temple in which God's glory is seen.

Who is my neighbour? asked the lawyer. This is a question that haunts today's world. What obligations do we have to others? There are many hard questions that we must struggle to answer. Jesus does not offer us a simple answer. What the parable does is to change how we ask those questions.

How can I become a neighbour to the wounded man?
How can I discover myself with him and for him?
How can I discover God there?

For in the end, it is God who lies by the roadside, stripped and beaten, waiting for me. ■

Praying the prayer of simplicity

Philippa Chambers

In early spring at Trelinoe Park Gardens about 40 minutes drive north of Napier, way out in the 'wop wops', the *Green Dragon* meditation labyrinth has been blessed and opened to the public.

Margaret Gwynn, a spiritual director from Napier, was chief visionary for this project. She chose Trelinoe because of its situation and beauty. It is an oasis place in dramatic surroundings and she with a group of four others and a little help from husbands and friends physically sculptured and created this simple classic-design labyrinth. They prayed about it, dug it, spread truck loads of limestone sand in its paths, planted it, weeded it and watched over it. They expected between 10 and 20 people to come for the ceremony and were delighted by the turn out of well over 50 people, women, men, children and one dog.

The blessing was a simple ritual using the elements of earth, fire, wind and water with prayer. The guests took part from an enclosing circle around the labyrinth. Then they were invited in, if they wished, and in their own time.

The suggested way was "to pause before entering – Do you have a question to ask, an issue to resolve? Is there someone or some situation you want to hold in mind? On entering, let go of those things and think only of the path you are on with an open mind and an open heart. On reaching the centre wait, listen, receive what is there for you. When you are ready begin the journey out. Think over what you have learned. Let it sink in."

As I moved in I was aware of the noise of children and the chatter of the many groups of people scattered around the outside, a drummer seemed to impose her rhythm over mine, then Maori chanting began. The beauty all around also competed for my attention; but soon the drumbeat was helping to keep my walking steady, the chanting became symbolic of the sacredness of this place for the people of the land, the other background noises reminded me that life goes on no matter what. As for the beauty of the landscape – how blessed we are to live in this land!

And did I gain anything when I reached the centre? Yes I believe I did. 'Simplicity' was the word I heard, and now, looking back I believe I have found a place I can take those who reject institutional religion but are seeking answers, friends in times of need, family who are still believers but no longer church-goers. Regular church goers too. Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, atheists, agnostics, angry people, sad people, happy people – all are welcome.

I am left wondering if our mainstream church services are too complex for today's busy world. Could simplicity be part of the answer? Do we try to do too much in a short time? Do we try to give answers where we could be helping people to find their own? ■

The *Green Dragon* Labyrinth at Trelinoe Park Gardens on the road between Napier and Taupo is encircled, blessed and named.

The design is taken from the Classical or Cretan seven-ring design of labyrinth. Although the origins of this design are lost in time it is known that this style of labyrinth has been found in almost every religious tradition over the past 4000 years. Ancient rock carvings of it have been found in Egypt, India, Italy and Sardinia. There are over 500 classical stone labyrinths in Scandinavia. Rome adapted the design for mosaic floors throughout the Roman Empire. In about 860AD a more complex Christian medieval design was developed and that design was laid down in the floor of Chartrs Cathedral, but has only recently been rediscovered as it had been covered over for many years.

Meeting the deadline

Pauline O'Regan

We wish to thank Sr Pauline for allowing us to publish these introductory lines of her new book in Tui Motu

I turned 30 last week. What am I saying? Something odd happened there. The third finger of my left hand hit the 3 before the third finger of my right could hit the 8. My touch-typing must be going downhill as well. Or was it, more likely, my subconscious making one of its more subtle interventions? Either way, I'm 80.

I've always been fairly philosophical about the passing of the years, but it still comes as something of a shock to reach a milestone in your life and see 80 written on it. I go back to the record for verification and sure enough, there it is: 1922 to 2002. I'd better look sharp. They put that kind of thing in Death Notices.

Speaking of Death – here's Someone who quietly asks to join the company at this stage of your life. You find yourself thinking of Death in a way you never did before. In fact, you scarcely thought She knew you existed. But not now. The thought of Death takes up a position at the back of your mind and exerts a new and subtle influence on your consciousness. It's not a cloud, not even a shadow, just another dimension that was not there before. I'll give an example, not a good one, it doesn't lend itself to examples: before I reached this age, I used to read the Death Notices in the paper each day with a kind of detached interest. There just might be someone there that I know, someone whose name I might read with a mixture of regret and sympathy, someone whom Oscar Wilde might have suggested had been careless enough to die.

That's not how I read them now. For one thing, they've become a sort of lotto game. I scan the numbers. I note how many people checked out in their 70s, how many in their 80s and with a momentary flash of optimism, how many in their 90s. If 83 seems the most popular exit number (and it's amazing how often it does) that gives me three more years. There's nothing morbid about all this and certainly nothing melancholy, but I suspect it could become an unsettling exercise if I ever begin to believe that I'm actually going to die.

Billy Collins, the poet who more than anyone these days, seems to speak my thoughts – and no doubt, the multi-layered thoughts of all his readers – has this matter of Death summed up for me in his poem, *My Number*. Billy Collins, just like the rest of us, is going to try to talk Death out of it when the time comes. All of which brings me to another aspect of being 80. It has so many good aspects that I'm loathe to single one out, but this one's important: if I hadn't lived to be 80, if I'd bowed out at 70, for instance, I would have missed out on the immeasurable pleasure of Billy Collins' poetry.

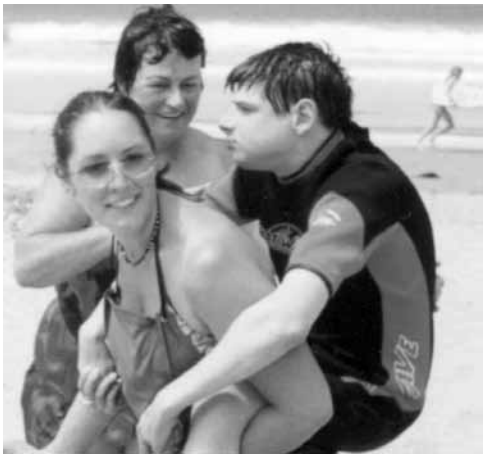
Old age is not the most romantic subject to write about, that's for sure. Still,

I'm finding the experience sufficiently interesting to want to do so. It's an intriguing phase of the human journey. There are so many things about it that are unexpected, so many parts to the equation that I had no idea were there, so many unknowns that no one told me about. Or was it that I wasn't listening? Or was it just never considered worth the telling if no one wanted to hear.

Whatever the reason, there are many things that come as a surprise. For one thing, I had no idea of the sense of urgency that old age brings, the sense of hidden danger that comes with living near the edge. After all, it might be tomorrow, or the day after. You feel you can no longer afford the self-indulgent detours you took earlier on the track. You simply haven't got the time. It takes time to indulge boredom, for instance, or apathy, or indifference, or bitterness. When we squandered time so freely on these things in youth and middle-age, we did so with the unconscious certainty that we'd come out of them in time. Boredom could be dissipated by some anticipated excitement, apathy could be shaken off if the interest were sufficiently aroused, indifference could be redeemed by a surge of feeling, bitterness could be healed by reconciliation. It had happened before. There was plenty of time.

They were all games we played one way or another, putting human relationships at risk along the way. We gave them space in our lives because we had space to burn – and time unlimited. That's the nub of it. Where time was concerned, we were utterly reckless. But, with old age, time is suddenly at a premium. It's not there to be wasted. There simply isn't enough of it. It's a pity we have to wait until old age to put a value on time. Yet, in some strange way, it can't be properly valued before then.

All things being equal, however, old age makes time a very precious commodity. You can't really complain about a condition that does that for you. ■



Clare and Patricia take Victor for a swim

Why must you leave?

Volunteer helpers in l'Arche communities come and go. But Rod Milne S.M. finds a purpose and a mission in this

L'Arche community assistants live with people with intellectual disabilities, as in a family. As the Charter of l'Arche expresses it: "Home life is at the heart of a l'Arche community. The different members of a community are called to be one body. They live, work, pray and celebrate together, sharing their joys and their suffering and forgiving each other, as in a family. They have a simple life-style, which gives priority to relationships."

So, it was on behalf of the parents and those with intellectual disabilities "who belong at the very heart of their communities and who call others to share their lives", that Thelus put this question to Jean Vanier in October 1990 at the *Daybreak* community in Canada: "Why do assistants in l'Arche have to leave?"

It is a question that comes deep from the hearts of the core members of l'Arche, from many of their parents, and from others, as they experience wonderful assistants who come to live in l'Arche, stay for a year, perhaps two or more, then return to their homes, their homelands or perhaps another community of l'Arche. I was present at *Daybreak* as an assistant when Thelus asked the question. It moved me to write about it in an article in the *Marist Messenger* in 1992.

And in the five years we have experienced in the new community of l'Arche in Paraparaumu, the question has come home even more. In 1998 – 2000, Dana, from Poland, lived with Todd who is profoundly disabled. Since then, Melissa, from USA and Tomek from Poland spent a year with him, as has Sylvya from Poland this year. Dana is now back in Poland, Melissa is in a l'Arche community in Washington. Tomek in a l'Arche community in Ireland and Sylvya is to return to her professional studies in Poland.

In another house is Victor, aged 21, also with profound disabilities. Patricia, a New Zealander, has welcomed him from his beginning with l'Arche in 1999. Recently she spent six months in l'Arche, Calgary, Canada, to gain further experience of l'Arche. Victor has also come to know Toby and Jutta from Germany each of whom returned to their homeland after a year. Many others have come to know Todd and Victor and other core members of our community. They have 'lived, worked, prayed and celebrated together', lived the simple life-style of the homes, and developed close relationships within the homes. Why did they have to leave?

Of course, being young people, they had careers and had lives ahead of them to be concerned about, although in some l'Arche communities, there are long-term assistants who commit themselves longer, even for life. Jean Vanier provided a deeper answer to the question. An answer that goes deeper than the experience of l'Arche. "We are all called to be mission-ary", he explained, "including the core members". Each of us has gifts that are special and unique. As the Charter of l'Arche expresses, the core members, the Todds and the Victors, "possess qualities of welcome, wonderment, spontaneity and directness. They are able to touch hearts and to call others to unity through their simplicity and vulnerability. In this way they are a living reminder to the wider world of the essential values without which knowledge, power and action lose their meaning and purpose".

Todd with Tom, an English volunteer

When the Danas, the Melissas and Tomeks, the Patricias, Juttas and Tobys come to live in our homes at Paraparaumu, they bring with them their unique gifts and talents – and their disabilities! They share them with the others in the homes, and in return, receive the gifts and disabilities of those already there. After a year or so (we wish they would stay longer!)

On Godparenting

Glynn Cardy

- Be there. Whenever you're invited, and sometimes when you're not.
- Are you prepared to be known by a child and grow with that child?
- Be clear about which hat you are wearing – Mum's friend, aunt, neighbour, or godparent. You need to be distinguishable.
- Find out how others wear the hat. Talk to people who have had good experiences of godparents. Imagine what you would have wanted as a child and as an adult.
- Work out early on how to have one-to-one time with your godchild, then put it in the diary, and do it.
- Children are different from teenagers. The quality of friendship with the child will determine the level of trust when they become a teenager. Be aware you might be the only adult the teenager will confide in.
- Godparenting is for life. The length of yours and the quality of theirs.
- 'Saving their soul' is not where it's at. 'Saving' is God's business. Our business is listening, wherever God may be found.
- Oftentimes kids hear God better than we do. Godparenting is about sharing what we're hearing, and how that fits with the rest of the world.
- There are three key values: courage, compassion, and humility. Together explore their sources and their expressions. Lovingly provoke each other to live those values.
- Being a godparent is not for everyone. Please say 'No'. However, it also isn't, and was never meant to be, the preserve of the pious. It may be the greatest thing you ever do, or, as a parent, the greatest gift you can ever offer another person.

they return to their homelands as different people, because they take with them what they have received from Victor and Todd. Victor and Todd have enabled them to be missionary – they enable Victor and Todd to be missionary, as they carry with them their experience and their giftedness. Everyone benefits! Through the experience of l'Arche, Victor and Todd are not only known in places around the world – but their lives continue to have an influence.

At an International Assembly of l'Arche in England in May, the core members were acknowledged as being at the centre of the gathering, even though few were physically present. In a Covenant retreat in Australia, last month, attended by some members of the Australian and New Zealand communities, it was the slides of the 'Victors' and 'Todds' that brought us together in prayer. It reminds me of St Thérèse of Lisieux, who never left her convent, but who became the model and patroness of missionaries. She was called to be 'at the heart' – a core person. ■

Fr Rod Milne is a Marist priest stationed at Otaki, who has a special association with l'Arche communities

The maths lesson

Rob Allen

Autumn in the park, and the Asian woman was kneeling amongst the fallen leaves, not caring that most were sodden and rotting, a basket beside her. She filled it with the dried and fragile and recently fallen ones. It was a sacrament. She picked them up gently, one at a time, held them reverently in the palm of her hand, looked at each leaf singularly, studied it as if it contained the answers to all the great questions, and then placed each carefully and softly in the basket. I knew she was meditating, practising mindfulness, the Eastern art of living each moment fully, paying close attention to each and every single act. The woman was serene and beautiful.

The woman was a deep pool. I wanted what she had... peace. So, as I watched her I began to think about where I was going as a person.

I knew I could never kneel in a park amongst wet leaves, not caring who saw me or what they thought of me. I was reading a lot around this time, hoping for insight. There was only one problem. I couldn't find any lasting sense of tranquillity. There were too many days my mind was like a washing machine. I had everything a man could want and need, except none of it kept me happy for long. The big hole inside always returned to taunt and haunt me. It felt like defeat and was.

Thus the reading of the spiritual books. They spoke of remarkably simple concepts, and whether Christian or Zen, New Age or ancient, there were common principles, spiritual concepts, not too hard to understand, that all the differing creeds shared.

Intellectually, at least, I had begun to grasp what I needed to do to become self-actualised, individuated, enlightened, saved, redeemed, elevated and immortalised. Fairly soon I'd be able to levitate. Unfortunately, the truth was I was more chaotic than ever, and I couldn't stay out of arguments. My days were often ruined by my bad temper.

As I watched the woman, she finished her task and standing slowly and with real attention, she gathered her basket and headed off home. I went to work thinking that I would try, just for that day, to pay attention to every single moment of time, stay calm and be relaxed. It had to be better than allowing the stress of the day to build up and damage me.

That resolution lasted exactly ten minutes after arriving at work. It was then that I had a blazing – no holds barred – screaming match down the phone with the contractor who was supposed to be cleaning the school, but, more often than not, didn't show up. I wasn't very Zen that day, using language that would strip wallpaper.

I knew Jack had a few answers. Many years earlier, about the time I was born, Jack had been locked up. The only bars I lived behind were self-constructed ones, yet I was as much a prisoner as Jack had been. A prisoner of self. After slamming the phone down on the contractor I rang him.

"I'm doing all this work and I can't seem to get anywhere", I bleated and told him about the row with the cleaning contractor.

"What work?" Jack asked.

"Reading, study, trying to meditate", I replied.

"What for?" he asked.

"Answers. To get answers to the biggies. You know... who am I and who or what

is God? I'm so up and down – and I want to stay calm... well, like you I guess", and I told him about the woman in the park, my resolution, and how I had blown it big time.

"Feeling a failure?" he asked.

"Yeah. I'm worse off than before. More confused and all mixed up. Getting angry, losing my cool. I hate it. Got any suggestions?"

"None, except to say you've got it wrong about me being calm all the time. Cripes, I can get as bloody mad as the next bloke. But, you know, you don't want to worry. Confusion used to drive me crazy too", he said.

"Must be nice to have it all figured out like you. An advantage of growing old, mate?" I asked.

"Shit, who said I had anything figured out? I said confusion used to drive me mad. I didn't say I still don't get confused. I just don't let it worry me any more", he laughed.

"How come?"

"Clarity starts from the point of confusion. No confusion, no search. No search, no new answers. Confusion motivates me to find new answers. Isn't that what's happening to you? Aren't you searching for a new truth, and won't that search continue until you are satisfied with what you find?"

"I suppose so. How long will it take?"

"Don't ask me", laughed Jack. "I'll tell you what, when I've found all the answers I need, I'll ring you and let you know. I do know this however, confusion is my friend, not my enemy. What does it say in the Bible? 'Seek and you will find'? Maybe if I found things out too soon I'd stop looking and then I'd never search again and I'd have no need to learn anything new, and I'd be a saint. Soon I'd have delusions of grandeur, and the next thing they'd be locking me up again. A lot of mentally ill people are pretty certain about what they know. Hitler thought he had a few answers. Stalin too."

"Why bother looking, then?" I asked.

"Why indeed?" asked Jack. "For me the joy is in the journey, not the destination. It's the seeking, not the finding that's fun. You see, that's why I've never stopped searching. I enjoy it."

"So I'll keep reading then", I sighed resigned. I had expected something wise from Jack, and now he was telling me he was confused too, and worse, he thought that being confused was a good thing.

"I know a good book to start with", said Jack down the phone.

"What?"

"The gospel", he said.

"I've read them".

"Not the one I'm thinking of."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah. Read the gospel of the world. Plenty of good material there. I started by studying the patterns of my own life and where they had led me. The things that had worked for me, the things that hadn't. The things that seemed to work for a while and then stopped working. I wrote it all down and looked at it.

"You know the greatest textbook in the world are the relationships you form. Want to know about yourself? Then study your friends, their values and attitudes and how you relate to them. Do it systematically. Look at your attitudes, and you'll be amazed at what you find out about yourself", he said.

"What to learn from the argument with the cleaning contractor?" I asked him.

"Well, I don't give advice so I'll give you a maths lesson instead."

"A maths lesson?" I laughed.

"Yeah, you're a school teacher so we'll do it this way. How many hours in a day?"

"Twenty four."

"How long did the shouting match with the cleaning contractor last?"

"Five minutes. So?"

"So when you rang you said you were having a bad day, when in actual fact you had a bad five minutes. Maths lesson. How was the rest of the last 23 hours and 55 minutes?"

"Fine", I laughed.

"See, Rob. The gospel of the world. You let one bloody argument, one failure, upset your whole day. Your choice. Lesson one.. it's not what happens to us that drives us mad. It's how we respond. You choose to let the row with that guy spoil your whole day. You could have chosen different. Like the woman in the park. Each minute, like each leaf, is a new one."

Jack was right and I have been studying the gospel of the world ever since, and like Jack I'm pleased that the study has led to more questions than certain answers. Why, for instance, did I have this stupid, yet totally human ability, to let one thing stuff up a whole day, and how could I undo this pattern, adjusting my thinking to ensure I stayed as happy and content as Jack was?

How many hours in a day? It didn't matter. If I could learn to live each experience fully, paying attention to the gospel of the world, then one bad moment would mean nothing. The gospel of the world? God might not be found in the confusion but He could be sought there. The paradox? In the finding, in the certain knowledge of His being, I would have no further need to seek His presence. Then I would be lost forever.

For a while after this I made a point of watching the woman in the park every day. Sometimes she collected leaves. Sometimes she did Tai Chi. Other times she just sat on a mat and meditated. Whatever she did... it was beautiful. ■

Rob Allen is Principal of St Mary's School, Avondale

The quality of the relationship

Jack Dominian

In the traditional understanding of sexual intercourse as being intimately linked with procreation, the morality of sex was focused on having sexual intercourse in such a way that semen was discharged into the vagina. Consequently oral and anal intercourse were wrong. Masturbation was also wrong, because the seed was not deposited in the vagina. Intercourse was only valid within marriage which provided for the care and education of the procreated child. Thus the morality of sexual intercourse was largely based on the natural law of the biology of the act and of procreation.

This morality was the main springboard for looking at sexual sins for hundreds of years. In the absence of an understanding of the personal and interpersonal world of sexual intercourse in terms of love, crude biology prevailed. Clearly an understanding of the link between sex and love, as outlined in the Second Vatican Council and in Christian Churches in general, shifts the moral emphasis from biology to the quality of the relationship. What we are concerned with now are the characteristics that safeguard the expression of sexual intercourse as a personal act of love. What needs to be primarily preserved is not biology but the psychology of relationship.

Our first understanding of the psychology of relationship is in childhood. There the young child needs to be protected and nurtured for a period of nearly two decades. The baby is helpless and needs feeding, cleaning, warmth, delicate handling, accurate response to its needs and gentleness. The childhood interpersonal relationship between parents and children requires commitment.

Commitment

Commitment to another person is learnt in the care of children. There parents must remain continuously present, ever ready to respond, aware of the child at the expense of themselves, constant in the presence of fluctuating moods and continuously focused on the child. Commitment is also the first criteria of the inner world of sexual intercourse. There commitment is a characteristic of love of the relationship. Successful sexual intercourse needs the committed devotion of two people.

Commitment extends beyond personal care of the relationship, and is also devoted to the mutual satisfaction of pleasuring each other. Christianity has to learn that pleasure is not dangerous but is to be enjoyed and appreciated as a channel for communicating personal meaning. Thus commitment is a human characteristic that endows the relationship with permanency and, within that permanency, generates a concern to pleasure each other to the full.

Enduring Relationship

Commitment is one overall characteristic that safeguards sexual intercourse. Another is that it must be placed within an enduring relationship thus allowing the couple to learn more about each other and so place their lovemaking within the context of an ever-deepening understanding of each other. Sexual intercourse may appear to be the same each time, but this is not true. It is happening within a framework of an ever-changing mood for the act and also within the context of an ever-altering personality of the couple.

Exclusiveness

Beyond commitment and an enduring continuity, sexual intercourse needs exclusiveness. Why? Because there is something private in having sex with another person. We expose our nakedness, our helplessness, our vulnerability and we do not find this easy. Sexual intercourse renders us helpless, helpless physically and emotionally. There is nothing more personal to offer to a partner. It is a situation that needs the maximum of safety. We want to be sure that we are not going to be attacked physically or emotionally.

This means making love with someone we feel safe with, someone whose commitment we have tested and who has a continuing meaning for us. It means that our partner becomes an exclusive person to whom we can entrust our nakedness, our bodies, our vulnerability, our ecstasy. Sexual intercourse is such a delicate, mysterious act that it needs the maximum safeguard from threat and attack to make it feel safe.

There is another factor which exclusiveness contains. Falling in love is an

Inside this Church

There are empty times inside this church
Times I sit and when we reach to share the peace
I want instead to swing my fist into the altar
and break the sacred holy cows
with which this faith has fashioned out its prison
and within which no peace can reach to salve the wounds.

There are times I sit inside this church
and when the priest stands full before me
I feel the tears in rivers on my face
and weep for women hidden in the shadows
held waiting in this church's spiritual graveyard.

There are times I sit inside this church
and spend my time in prayer
protecting those around me
from words that fall like blunted knives
from thoughtless homilies
teachings that distort and trap the soul
to bring forth whispered tears from silent angels.

Yet
there are also times I sit inside this church
and feel the spirit fire and shift throughout my soul
to raise my mind within my heart
to feel Her hold my pain within Her joy.

Times I've stood before gentle eyes
taken bread from open hands
Been given love in blessed water
poured upon my feet and sealed with priestly kiss

Jacquie Lambert

▷▷ experience that combines sexual attraction and personal compatibility in the setting of an affective bond or attachment. This attachment is based on an exclusive encounter through vision, touch, sound and smell. The exclusivity of the attachment lays down parameters within which we are not only physically safe but within which affectivity can function.

Faithfulness

To commitment, permanency and exclusivity, we must add finally faithfulness. A man or a woman feels recognised, wanted and appreciated through sexual intercourse. When their partner has coitus with somebody else, there is a personal threat to their significance. Their trust feels let down and they feel unwanted and rejected. Faithfulness is a means of showing the personal meaning of acceptance of another person.

We have now seen that, instead of sexual intercourse primarily safeguarding procreation, it is the quality of relationship that guards the characteristics of love and sexual intercourse. The principles of morality for sexual intercourse are those that safeguard its relational integrity.

What I am saying is that the needs of the integrity of sexual intercourse coincide with what we have understood traditionally by marriage. It is not a long step for Christianity to move from understanding marriage as a place of procreation and the nurturing of children, to a relationship where the integrity of sexual intercourse is safeguarded. ■

A critical view of NZ's economic direction

At the Crossroads
by Jane Kelsey.
Bridget Williams Books, 2002.
197 pp. $Price: $34.95
Review: Jim Elliston

New Zealand is like a traveller in a hostile desert. Which economic road should we take to survive in an environment over which we have no control? The first of three essays by Auckland University Law Professor, Jane Kelsey, analyses in depth the 'desert' of globalisation. The second brands as a failure the road taken by the 1999 Labour-led government because the underlying cause of the problems – the market-led economy – has not been not addressed, only the symptoms.

The final essay examines three main thrusts of Government policy: inclusive economy, sustainable economic development and a knowledge-driven society. She finds all of them wanting because of a flawed vision of Social Capital. The book then looks at an alternative vision and offers some ways of achieving it.

Economic globalisation is fundamentally about power. Globalisation undermines the position of the nation state. But there is in the world no natural tendency towards the globalisation of politics and political organisations. The subordination of social, cultural, environmental and political priorities to the primacy of the market, – all the result of globalisation – is presently fomenting a backlash.

There are at least four elements acting to destabilise the growth of a market-led global economy:

❖ the self-destructive capacity of unregulated free markets;

❖ the unstable alliances and rivalries between the major powers and transnational corporations competing for dominance;

Book Reviews

❖ the intensification of inequality between, and within, the countries of the South and North;

❖ the upsurge in popular resistance to the subordination of self-determination, national identity and democracy in the interests of international capital.

Kelsey examines critically different reform initiatives undertaken by the Labour-led government and the steps taken to develop a coherent philo-sophical underpinning of its strategy. Her quote from economist J.K.Galbraith is apposite: "The Third Way is purely a political concept. The increase in numbers and the power of the middle-income groups means that governments must choose to meet their needs first. The Third Way is the justification of that necessity."

A previous dichotomy of 'evil state versus virtuous market' is now replaced by another dictum: 'the state has a role in addressing market imperfections through appropriate regulation, industrial policy, and social welfare'. Contrasting 'Social Capital' with capital as a purely economic phenomenon creates another false dichotomy, because all capital is profoundly social and historical.

The basic focus for many key Government advisers has been individualised and market driven. Notions of community, association, civil society and trust are deprived of any social context, even though they have no meaning outside such a context. Sustainability results from the decisions that people, firms and communities make within markets and the policy frameworks that are set by local government. Thus, "structural inequality gets reconstituted as a contingent risk, which people should be given the opportunity to avoid or mitigate.

"If policy makers and politicians began," insists Kelsey, "with an image of New Zealand that was built around communities, hapu and families, towns, cities and farms, instead of markets, human capital and 'low well-being neighbourhoods', the project of nation building and ideas of inclusions, well-being and partnership would look very different."

I commend Jane Kelsey's essays to all, especially those in charge of the ongoing formation of clergy, and of teachers in Catholic secondary schools. I have problems with some of her conclusions, but the analyses are clear, logical and generally sound.

Some comments:

That both Karl Marx and Pope John Paul II would agree with some of Professor Kelsey's judgments is an indication of the problem the church faces.

In *Laborem Exercens* John Paul pointed out that in the process of creating capital whereby we transform the natural resources placed at our disposal, there is a sense in which we humanise it. It is a false view to separate capital from labour and set them in opposition, viewing human labour solely according to its economic purpose. The critiques – of Marx and of the Popes – come from radically differing perspectives, offering very different solutions, but to a superficial glance they appear identical. The *Wall Street Journal* described Pope Paul VI's social teaching as "warmed-over Marxism".

This, in part, explains the problem described by Ivan Snook in his

commendable overview of the current ineffectiveness of the church (see *Tui Motu* September issue). In the response of school-teacher Simon Roughton three points are noteworthy:

❖ firstly, his school is helping form in its students a fundamental attitude of compassion, an integral part of formation for mission.

❖ secondly, "the glasses we wear," he says, "affect our perception". True conversion requires a change of world-view. Erich Fromm explained the psychological mechanism by which the spirit of capitalism has infiltrated Western society. People no longer engage in economic activity to maintain an appropriate, traditional livelihood; acquiring possessions and savings as such become ethical norms. Any challenge to that world-view is instinctively seen as wrong by a significant portion of Western society imbued with that spirit.

❖ Thirdly, Roughton omits mention of any intellectual formation, commensurate with the students' level of maturity, in the principles of social justice, of the methods of social analysis which it requires, and of major social philosophies like Marxism or neo-liberal capitalism. ■

Helpful counsel for the grieving

Coming to Grief
Pam Heaney
Longacre Press, Dunedin, NZ
Price: $29.95
Review: A.L. Davies

No one would want to go through life without challenges. We face them eagerly. The gains are obvious. Losses often pass unnoticed. Yet years later a severe emotional disturbance may take us by surprise and leave us confused. Recognising this as grief eases the pain and begins the cure. *Coming to Grief* rather than running from it is the way forward.

It is commonly thought *You only grieve when someone dies*. That is the heading of chapter I. How false that is soon becomes clear. Other myths head the following chapters:

Just focus on the positives and you'll be right
Grief is only sadness
Everyone should grieve the same way
Time will heal
You should be over it by now
You never really get over it
I should be able to do this on my own
I must not wallow in self-pity
Best leave them alone to get over it

These headings show that this is a book that can be read and enjoyed by everyone. The Introduction introduces us to the author as well as the book. The friendly, personal style of a down-to-earth Kiwi is maintained throughout, making the book ideal for use as a self-help book. Yet it is packed with up-to-date scholarship as we would expect from a grief counsellor of long-standing who has been employed by several hospitals throughout the country for staff training. The style is not scholarly, the content is. An ideal combination. It is the first book by this author. ■

Dame Silvia's right and proper role

Crosscurrents
John Honoré

The Governor-General of New Zealand, Dame Silvia Cartwright, has recently criticised the racist policies of Winston Peters who immediately retorted that the Head of State should not be meddling in politics. She was commenting on the stereotyping of immigrants and thus she was perceived to be questioning the very platform from which Peters won 10 percent of the votes at the last election. In view of the racial prejudices, real or imagined, in Peters' success at the polls, is it advisable that the Governor-General comment on matters which draw such large support?

The Prime Minister defended the Governor-General and cited her own belief (and her desire) that New Zealand was moving inexorably towards becoming a republic and that it was entirely proper that the Head of State should gradually assume a more prominent role. I agree. The role of Governor-General, if the position is to survive, must evolve towards a more meaningful participation in New Zealand's public life. The allegiance to the British royal family is an anachronism which is fast disappearing and in its wake must come the demise of the position of Governor-General in its present form.

Dame Silvia has the credentials and the courage to forge a new image of the Governor-General which would be supported by the majority of New Zealanders. Her implied criticism of Winston Peters makes us all realise just what his politics are all about and how divisive and dangerous they are to the fabric of our multi-cultural society.

Winston Peters was again incensed when Dame Silvia agreed to become Patron of a newly-formed Asian association. Peters labelled this new body a political pressure group so, by definition, she was again intervening in politics. Rightly, Government House had only to point out that the Governor General was already patron of many similar organisations, the only difference being that this one involved Asians instead of Maori or Pakeha. Game, set and match to Dame Silvia Cartwright.

Carnage in Bali

The appalling carnage in Bali on October 12 focused the world's attention once more on terrorism and US involvement in its self-appointed role as policeman to the world. Sadly the two seem inextricably linked. Indonesia is not unfamiliar with terrorism because Indonesian politics has been riddled with violence for many years. In 1957 Sukarno set up martial law with the military and the Communists in a dubious relationship which ended in the 1965 coup that eliminated all the generals except one.

The survivor, Suharto, came to power and destroyed the infrastructure of Indonesia by arming young Muslim youth who killed an estimated one million people. In 1966, thousands of Communists were slaughtered in Bali with the support of the CIA. Under Suharto, riots against the Chinese population turned into a conflict between Christians and Muslims. The military got everyone involved in the killings. As New Zealanders know, East Timor did not escape the terror. 11th September was the beginning of Megawati Sukarnoputri's career as President. This political background brings into focus the events of October 12.

A possible explanation for the devastation of the tourist night-club in Bali is that it was a domestic terrorist attack by the militant Jemaah Islamiyah group (with links to al-Qaida) in order to destabilise the economic and political framework of President Megawati's government. Another explanation is that it was an attack against US and its allies for US support of Israel which is viewed as an insult to Islam and responsible for the unending suffering of the Palestinians.

The reaction of world leaders was predictable. George W. Bush immediately blamed al-Qaida. Tony Blair and John Howard followed suit. Bush then reiterated his intention of declaring war against Iraq and vowed that America would now wage war on two fronts – Iraq and terrorism. Cheney and Rumsfeld coined a new slogan "the terrorist state" to confirm the intention of the US of making a preemptive strike against any such country.

Bush seems obsessed with war and any American who opposes him is labelled unpatriotic. The House and Senate have given him the power to attack Iraq with or without UN consent. The outrage in Bali is given scant notice and seems only another tool in the rhetoric to justify war against Iraq. In the UN, France and Russia point out that there is still no proven connection between Iraq and al-Qaida, so US diplomatic pressure is arraigned against them.

The true horror of Bali is that the reasons for terrorism – poverty, hopelessness and an unwillingness to understand 'other' cultures – are ignored. Terence O'Brien writes that to dismiss the perpetrators simply as fiendishly irrational, obscures the vital need to try to understand both the symptoms and the causes of modern international terrorism. Unless the major powers, in particular the US, make this effort, there will be more terrorist attacks against vulnerable targets such as innocent tourists in holiday resorts. ■

Gregorian calender

Getting in first with a good idea is not always the way to win acceptance.

Take what happened with the calendar which we now employ. Julius Caesar introduced two thousand years ago a calendar basically the same as we have it today. But impressive as its provisions were, the Julian calender did not get things perfectly right. After sixteen hundred years it was more than a week out of kilter with the earth's rotation. Fine-tuning was called for.

Following a call given him by the Council of Trent, Pope Gregory XIII undertook this task just over four hundred years ago. Like any good administrator dealing with an issue that was not one of his own particular specialities, he asked advice from a number of universities and learned bodies. The problem was that they came back with conflicting suggestions.

So Gregory had to bite the bullet and choose which line of advice he would follow, ignoring the others. He chose wisely, drawing on the Jesuit astronomer Christopher Clavius, S.J. and on a suggestion regarding leap years made by the Vatican librarian, Aloysius Giglio. The problem with the Julian calender was that a leap year every four years made the calender cycle just too long. It was suggested to cut out the leap year every one hundred years, in 1600, in 1700, in 1800 and so on. But that would make the cycle just too short.

The solution was to retain the leap year in those century years that were divisible by four. That is why two years ago 2000 was a leap year and we had a February lasting 29 days. Whereas 2100, not that we will be around to notice it, will not be a leap year and February will have only 28 days. The system is so accurate that it will be several thousand years before the calender is out by as much as one day.

The pontiff secured the adoption of the revised calender by the Catholic church and in Catholic countries. He thought his sensible proposal would be readily adopted by all Christian believers. Instead a storm of protest came from all of those who were not Catholic. None of them wanted to adopt a system proposed by the Pope of Rome. The polemics against the proposal make strange reading today. It was 200 years before England adopted the Gregorian calendar, 350 years before Russia did so. The Orthodox Churches to this day employ the unreformed Julian calendar.

This reaction was not a Protestant failing but a manifestation of the temper of the times. The Protestant churches were introducing translations of the scriptures based on the original Hebrew and Greek texts, now available to scholars for the first time. The Catholic church would have none of this. The Vulgate, the Latin translation made in the fourth century, was to be the text used in the Mass and forming the basis for any translations that were made into contemporary languages. None of that rubbish about going back to the original languages. It was only in the last hundred years that this policy was reversed.

Hopefully such attitudes are a thing of the past. At least it is an intriguing quirk of history that the calendar used so extensively today across the world is the work of a pagan Roman emperor, refined by a sixteenth century Pope. ■

Fr Humphrey O'Leary is superior of the Redemptorist community, Auckland

Seeking the transcendent...

In this fragmented world, perhaps more people are sustaining their spirituality through art than through religion. Not that the two need be set in opposition to each other; both rely for their effectiveness on exposing the deeper universal currents which are present in everyday life. Religion which does not intersect with the ordinary is escapist, and art which does not explore the universal is shallow.

What is the Mass if not drama? It is an acting out of the central verities of the faith, with a setting and script which makes it rich in resonance and symbolic action. But it is no mere performance which the audience is uninvolved in. One by one the participants line up and stumble to the front, becoming a vital part of the event. It is this area of crossover between divine and human, between sacred and mundane, which accounts for the power of it all.

Art comes at the same process from a different starting point. It arises in the ruptures of common life, and moves to reveal the depth of existence which is exposed when the surface fabric is torn. Great art relies for its force on hooking into the subterranean currents of the heart. Only when the archetypes are summoned, when the dark unnamed shapes lurking in the imagination are addressed; only then does something transformative happen.

Artists, like priests, rely on something more profound than their own creative powers. It is not the erudition or deft movement of the celebrant which draws the faithful to Mass. And neither, I suggest, is it simply the ability of the painter to draw a perfect circle which art pundits are seeking. Both are shapers of a mystery which always lies beyond them, and can only be effective if they respect that which they are handling.

We should not expect our art to lead anyone to faith. It is a means of exposing that which is hidden – what anyone makes of what they encounter is up to them. But neither should we underestimate the genuine spiritual meeting ground which art is able to provide. When human life has its endless depths plumbed, we should not be surprised that both the divine and demonic are potentially active.

The church has little to fear from art; unfortunately history teaches that art sometimes needs to be wary of the church. This age which we inhabit may be one which calls for a new synthesis of the very best of faith and art.

Mike Riddell

*(Mike Riddell is author of the play **Jerusalem Jerusalem**, reviewed on pp 5-7)*