



Tui Motu

InterIslands

March 2010 Price \$6

contents

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 2-3 | editorial ... from the chair <i>Katie O'Connor</i> |
| 4-5 | letters |
| 6-7 | Lent for a Season <i>Mike Riddell</i> |
| 8-9 | You don't need possessions... interview with <i>Br Richard Walsh</i> |
| 10 | Don't tell me you need more time <i>Christina Ora</i> |
| 11 | Lenten Carbon Fast |
| 12 | John Calvin and Ecology <i>Professor Zachmann</i> |
| 13 | walking and busing for the planet <i>Greg Hughson</i> |
| 14-15 | Towards a humbler church <i>Timothy Radcliffe</i> |
| 16-17 | A land of birds – the Orokonui ecosanctuary |
| 18-19 | Pray, move, jump <i>Glynn Carley</i> |
| 20-21 | Edward Schillebeekx : theologian for all seasons – 1 <i>John Dunn</i> |
| 21 | Suffer little children <i>Shay Cullen</i> |
| 22 | Charter for Compassion |
| 23 | Visitation <i>Denis McBride</i> |
| 24-25 | Alive when I die <i>Paul Andrews</i> |
| 25 | Is the Paschal Mystery like an onion? <i>Jim Consedine</i> |
| 26 | Jesus washes the disciples' feet <i>Kath Rushton</i> |
| 27 | The Day of 9/11 <i>Mary Horn</i> |
| 28-29 | Books <i>Charles Cooper</i> <i>Michael Hill</i> |
| 30 | Crosscurrents <i>Jim Elliston</i> |
| 31 | Why Catholic Schools? <i>Robert Consedine</i> |
| 32 | A Mother's Journal <i>Kaaren Mathias</i> |
| poetry | <i>Robin Kearns, Joy Cowley</i> |

Cover

This month's cover was designed by our illustrator, Donald Moorhead

This month's cover cries out to me, "Are we crucifying our world?" I was raised in the "give-up-lollies-and-sweets" regime as my appropriate child (and adolescent) response to the Lenten call to prayer fasting and almsgiving. Moving on to another and, I hope, more mature response is never easy. It is clear that our collective inability to see the need to take in the crucified world as the palette against which we focus our Lenten fast and conversion needs a push, a repaint, new colour.

undevelop

May Lent be the time to reflect deeply on what our country and we personally need to develop in our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving so as to "undevelop", a new tetchy word used by Brother Dick Walsh in our interview with him. I am sure he does not mean us to jettison those technological achievements our Western world has created in the last 100 years. That would be an impossibility. Quite the contrary, it is

to use them with an eye to seeing again how our sisters and brothers in the so-called "third world" may be helped to live better, to attain a standard of living acceptable to them, while we Westerners struggle to find out how to live more simply on the face of the earth. Having the determination and guts to reach this balance, this "undevelopment" in the West and an appropriately better life for all in the third world, is the path for people of all faiths in the 21st century. All of us are required to adapt, physically and spiritually, to meet the ongoing world situation. It is a deep moral challenge for society and church.

ecology

This Lenten ecological focus on our hurting world is the not-so-hidden theme of a range of articles that take up the first half of the magazine. Mike Riddell's finely honed antipodean sense of the crucified flavour of Lent lends itself to Dick Walsh's rethinking of Ash Wednesday and his response

from the Chair

Dear Friends,

I often think how terribly unfortunate it is that we don't tell those we work with and are close to how great they are and what a difference they make in our lives. Too often those stories are told at a eulogy. This little message of farewell comes tinged with sadness. I've known Michael since I was 17 years old and in recent years, in some strange twist of fate, I have had the privilege of having been his 'boss' – which as I say it makes me want to laugh! He has been my mentor and my friend, and in this issue I get 250 words to say good-bye.

How do I possibly pay tribute to Michael on behalf of so many who have been hugely grateful for the monthly nourishment that TM has provided during his fine stewardship over the past 12 years? Awesome Michael, well done you! You've always had the courage to

challenge and facilitate debate on those important questions of faith that so many of us ask.

And I need to truck out that old cliché: behind every good man is a good woman! Francie has been the organizer, the one with the creative flair and the keeper of knowledge. The two of you have been the consummate team with the vision to make Tui Motu a prophetic voice in the church today. Michael, there is no such word as retirement, my friend.

*May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always be at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face
The rain fall soft upon your fields
Until we meet again may God hold you
in the palm of her hand.*

Blessings

Katie O'Connor

crucifying our world?

to, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return." The anguished cry of Christina Ora from Copenhagen concerning the 350 campaign and the effects of climate change on her vast, marine-based country of the Solomon Islands is reflected in the more contemplative article by the *Tui Motu* team on the Orokonui Ecosanctuary.

The Lenten Carbon Fast chart may help us to focus our attention in these 40 days of Lent on something practical ecologically – something practical is true *metanoia*, change. The thought of taking out one light bulb in our house for 40 days and then replacing it with an eco-friendly one around Easter tickled my funny bone. New life, new light!

journey

There is a second theme underlying this issue for Lent: that of journey. Mike Riddell sees this metaphor as a journey of life and spirit with others.

To share our fears and falterings in the company of "friends and fellow travellers" is to help encourage one another in moving forward on the spiritual journey. A shared meal may become a sacramental occasion. Glynn Cardy sees the journey as an "art and a prayer" to have the courage to jump in faith and not to give into fear. To feel the fear, to walk through it, is to refuse to "batten down the hatches" and withdraw back into a safe cocoon of unreality.

I find real power in both Glynn and Mike's writing. For me, it is crucial that we use our spiritual journeying radar to empower us, step by slow step, to focus on the murky fog of reality, to lock onto the place where God lies deep within us. This seems to be the meaning of Paul's dictum: "... it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me..." (*Gal 2:20b*) Then, in community or alone, we will be better equipped to "journey on" - in faith and love.

thanks

In the May issue there will be an opportunity to thank Fr. Michael for his pioneering work at *Tui Motu*. I wish, as well, to acknowledge Mrs Francie Skelton, who has worked in tandem with Fr. Michael for 16 years. Her sub-editorial and technical skills have been a rock for him, are now for me, and have been a delight for us all. Thank you, Francie.

more thanks

I have sharpened my pencil to compose these first editorial words of *Tui Motu* Number 137. Little did I think when the magazine took sail in 1997, I might sit in this chair. In fact, there was nothing further from my mind till last September, when a concerted nudge from friends pushed me into the process of discernment leading to this editorial. Thank you, friends, and thanks also to the many who have sent messages of good wishes. I appreciate your support deeply and hope to honour that.

K.T.

Tui Motu goes on pilgrimage



In February the TM team paid a visit to the **Orokonui Ecosanctuary**, 20 km north of Dunedin (see pp 16-17).

The **Visitor and Education Centre** (see left) was designed by Dunedin architect, Tim Heath. Shaped like a boat, it is constructed from shipping containers linked by a glass atrium.

"It is our cathedral," said Dr Allen, chairman of the Otago Natural History Trust. The Centre certainly complements the 'sacred' nature of the Ecosanctuary

itself, with its profusion of native birds and flora. The building follows strict environmental guidelines, with double glazing, concrete slab for thermal mass, solar hot water, natural ventilation and its own rainwater and wastewater treatment system.

Macrocarpa timber displays, tabletops and benches were made from wood felled from ecosanctuary land, and the soaring ceiling was made from untreated wood. No tropical hardwood was used. ■



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women in the Catholic church

I was moved, after reading the article Does the Catholic Church oppress women? to reread the report *Made in God's Image – researching sexism in the Catholic Church Aotearoa New Zealand*, published in 1990. It is not surprising that very little has changed over the past 20 years. One fundamental mistake the Vatican makes (with its filter-down effect on local churches) is to speak about women as if they were homogenous and treat them as such. There are as many differences among women as there are between women and men, and no doubt some responses to this article will illustrate my point.

I would agree with a number of writers in the February issue of *Tui Motu* who identify clericalism as a basic problem in the Catholic Church – clericalism which clings to power mandates a hierarchically structured church and endeavours to repress anything vaguely discerned as being 'liberal'.

Had the Vatican been willing to allow/encourage genuine collegiality among bishops we might have had a church at least beginning to favour empowering over being in charge. We might have had a church less concerned with the 'right words' being used in worship, less concerned with investigating religious women in the western world, less concerned with maintaining the status quo, and more concerned with the challenges raised by Jesus' prophetic stance, as portrayed in the gospels.

Diane Strevens Auckland

lost in translation

"The church" is very good at ignoring or shutting down a questioning voice whether it be male or female. The road I have walked is strewn with good priests who dared ask the questions that needed to be asked. I have often spoken the last sentence of Veronica Casey's response. Somewhere there has been a "Lost in Translation". Jesus' message was/is one of release and freedom and unconditional love.

letters to the editor

We welcome comment
discussion, argument, debate.
But please keep letters
under 200 words.

The editor reserves the right
to abridge, while not changing
the meaning.

Response articles (up to a page)
are welcome – but please,
by negotiation.

Events in recent times have shown what happens when power, authority and privilege are used to "cover up". Oppressing women is one thing, corrupting the message of Jesus is something else.

Gwen Wills, New Plymouth

loss of power

In the February issue I see two situations described on different pages which I suspect are the result of the same symptom, namely the threat of the loss of power.

It is the nature of the male that when he feels his power is under threat he will react in one of several ways to restore the situation to normal. A gorilla may stand up, beat his breast, utter meaningful cries and chase the offenders off. If he had sabres he would probably rattle them. In the human family situation a similar situation can emerge between husband and wife, sadly often inflamed by alcohol.

In an undemocratic society, such as the Roman Catholic Church, when the leaders feel their power is being threatened the reaction appears to have shown up in two ways, oppression of women in a parish situation, and the 'clawing back of Tridentine Orthodoxy' in the wider scheme of things. The women who wrote of their experiences should not feel distressed by it.

On the contrary, they are to be congratulated. Obviously their work was so successful it had to be stopped before their power became too great. As to the question of Tridentine Orthodoxy, it drove me out of the church once but

not again. Nothing will persuade me to return to those days.

Jane Lys, Auckland

latin and tradition

When I read in AD 2000 (Jan 09) that the Vatican had approved the revised English translation for the Order of the Mass (agreed on by the Bishops' Conference of the US in 2006) with its insistence on deifying translation from Latin to give us in the Creed "for us men and our salvation" and describe it as "the generic inclusive term" I have to wonder what lies ahead for us in New Zealand.

In 1988-89 I spent two years studying with the Benedictines in the USA. It was the time when the bishops were preparing a document on "Women in the Church". A young bishop spoke to us of his experience, delegated for the Bishops' Conference to travel across the country speaking with groups of women. His words remain with me: "What can I say to a grandmother who says that her granddaughter has left the church because she finds it the last place that discriminates against her? I had to go through this journey to find that the church has lost a whole generation of intelligent, articulate young women."

With more than 20 years of tertiary experience I know that inclusive language is required in both theological and university settings. How can we continue to hide behind Latin and tradition as an excuse for the structural sin of patriarchy?

Church leaders have often felt powerless in the face of its bureaucracy, but this is a pastoral issue that involves something God is doing in our day either with us, without us, or against us. Liturgy is the life of the Church and the language it uses is expressive of our belief. Our leaders (cardinals and bishops) have the responsibility of saying that language that discriminates against the women of the church is unacceptable to both its women and men. We cannot continue to hide behind the excuse that this is a radical feminist issue.

The alternative to keeping silent is to allow to continue something offensive to God and humanity.

Br Kieran Fenn FMS, Wellington

equality of women and men

I felt really proud of the *Tui Motu* team, in their courage in tackling the sensitive and controversial topic of women in the Catholic Church in the February issue.

I have personally known, back home, two beautiful, intelligent, wise and holy women who have suffered through their own bouts of depression because they felt a strong call to priesthood that could never be actualised. Imagine being told by the church you love so much that you can never be fully whom you believe God is calling you to be.

However, I am encouraged by courageous Catholics who are not afraid to speak out their beliefs on this issue. Hearing others voicing their conviction that women are the equal of men, and should be thus recognised by the Catholic Church, gives me hope.

My own father was asked to be a deacon of his parish back in the United States. Although he would make a marvellous deacon, he said no because he knows that women are not allowed to hold this position. I felt very proud of him for his strength and sacrifice in this decision.

As I watch the church in the US respond to what we call 'the shortage of priests' (I personally don't believe there is a shortage at all – I see priestly lay people all around me every day building up God's Kingdom) by calling men to the diaconate, I feel saddened that they are maintaining this culture of male hierarchy, just under (not so) different auspices.

I also know courageous priests who have sacrificed a higher position in the church for speaking honestly from the heart that they believe women are their equal and should be allowed to be priests. Again, I feel admiration, love and hope.

I am a Catholic married lay woman. I love my church: her liturgy, her traditions, her sacraments. But I am saddened by the hurt that has been caused and the potential that has been stifled by the patriarchal hierarchy that is maintained as the institutional status quo.

I once heard John Fuellenbach, SVD say, "Jesus came to bring us the Kingdom and we got the church." It will be a beautiful day when the church recognises what is already happening – men and women bringing about God's Kingdom on earth, and acknowledges this at every level.

Amy Armstrong, Dunedin

all are one

Does the Catholic church oppress women? Well, of course, and has done throughout the ages, as valiantly testified in Susan E Smith's recent book 'Women in Mission.' The answer, however, is not just to bring women in the present system. We need to get back to the vision of Jesus, reinforced by Vatican II – the People of God. If Jesus had wanted anything like the hierarchical system we have at present, it was all set up for him, in his own day. All he had to do was change the focus.

It is a big ask for us self-seeking mortals to work in true love with all others, allowing each one's gifts to flourish, so that God's Kingdom may be established. We need to change our emphasis from the present focus of church as pope, bishops, priests, deacons... oh, yes, and the great unwashed in the pews.

An American theologian contrasted two visions of the church, both based on America's mythical Wild West. In one, the church sees itself safe in a strong fort. Shooting at possible intruders. And making occasional forays outside. It's an organised army image. In the other, the church is on a journey, into unknown territory. We are not too sure of the terrain or of the way ahead. But we confidently trust in our leader, who is Jesus. The priests, he added, are the cooks; and when we

laughed, he told us not to knock being a cook – it's a very important role.

Paul tells us that in Jesus there is neither male nor female, but all are one, united in offering different gifts to build up the Body of Christ.

Jill Heenan, Whangarei

can it be?

I believe that we are about to have inflicted on us a new translation of the Common of the Mass. Is this true?

Who was consulted? Does the local church have any say? What has happened to the principle of inculturation? If Maori and Polynesian congregations are entitled to have their own translations, shouldn't long-suffering Kiwis?

The examples that have so far percolated through indicate clarity of meaning has gone out the window in favour of literal translation. May we look forward to the restoration of words of luminous clarity such as "consubstantial", "supersubstantial" and – my favourite – "vouchsafe"?

Can *Tui Motu* please enlighten us about this?

R Bedggood, Hastings

Watch this space. Ed

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lent for a season

Mike Riddell

I love the seasons of the year. Each of them has its gifts and challenges. They affect mood and lifestyle, and continuously reinforce the cycle of life and death. It seems that the entire created order bears witness to the passing of time and the hope of renewal. Each of the seasons provides a fresh opportunity for celebration and insight.

The church also has its seasons, and we participate in an ancient wisdom designed to lead us along the path of reflection and growth. Our great misfortune in the southern hemisphere is that our church seasons are out of sync with those in the natural world. The migration of faith has not always been aware of its need to be reworked in new environments. I believe we who follow the Way in Aotearoa New Zealand have yet to find our feet in this part of the world.

The word 'Lent' has its origins in the old English reference to the lengthening of days, and is clearly associated with the season of spring. It is of course a preparation for Easter – in itself a spring festival, just as Advent and Christmas are winter festivals. The fact that we celebrate them out of season could be a quaint aberration, but I suspect it has more serious effects.

My wife recently moved a painting to make room for a new one. The previous location was against a rather bland grey wall. In its new home, the work was set against a rather dramatic shade of green. The transformation was astonishing. Suddenly there were lights and colours previously unseen. It seemed almost a new piece of art. In reality the only thing that had changed was its context.

Easter has inevitably become for us a meditation on death, rather than its intended celebration of resurrection. Funerals, baptisms and weddings are all ceremonies, but its important not to confuse them. We begin Lent at the tail end of our summer, and by the time of Easter we are beginning to see the dying of the natural world as it heads into black winter.

I've always found the drama of our Good Friday celebrations to be more convincing than those of Easter Sunday – as if we know what to do with a crucifixion but not a resurrection. It may go some way to explaining the dark imaginations that shape both film and literature in this land. The death of Christ is central and rich in symbolism, but without the surprise of resurrection becomes nothing but another depressing dead end.

Lent is a time of preparation, but preparation for what? "Were we led all that way for Birth or Death?" as TS Eliot has it. There is a difference in preparation for endings and beginnings. Jesus tells us that we should not fast when the bridegroom is with us, but only when he has been taken away. So the question is whether the bridegroom is present or departed. Easter in this place suggests the latter; in other continents it is the former.

In northern traditions, Lent is associated with 40 days of Jesus in the desert, wherein he suffers temptation and is purified. It marks the preparation for the beginning of his ministry. And so the journey of Lent becomes a focused paring away in readiness for a new start – in concert with the explosive onset of spring. A friend recently referred me to the words of Sr. Joan Chittister, who

provides one of the best expressions of this:

"Lent is the time for trimming the soul and scraping the sludge off a life turned slipshod. Lent is about taking stock of time, even religious time. Lent is about exercising the control that enables us to say no to ourselves so that when life turns hard of its own accord we have the stamina to say *yes* to its twists and turns with faith and hope... Lent is the time to make new efforts to be what we say we want to be."

This is a perfect expression of a preparation for a new beginning. However, it's my belief that we should recognise and accept that our seasons are different. One way to give expression to this (apart from the logical but unlikely one of shifting Easter and Christmas) may be to choose a different Biblical referent on which to base our Lenten journey.

My pick would be the journey of Jesus toward the cross, and I don't mean by that the last days in Jerusalem. Rather, we might reflect on the choices involved following on from Jesus' decision to "set his face toward Jerusalem" (*Lk. 9, 51*). That, it seems to me, is a conscious journey toward a looming and chosen death. There is a certain resonance here with the shortening of days and gathering gloom which autumn brings.

What difference would it make to our observation of Lent? I suggest here a number of markers.

Decision

Jesus makes an active choice to head toward Jerusalem. He knows what awaits him there, and chooses his path in that direction. No doubt he

might have retired to Galilee and lived to an old age among a small group of followers. Or, as portrayed in Scorsese's *Last Temptation of Christ*, have settled down with a wife and enjoyed domesticity. But he knows who he is and what his vocation is, difficult though it must be.

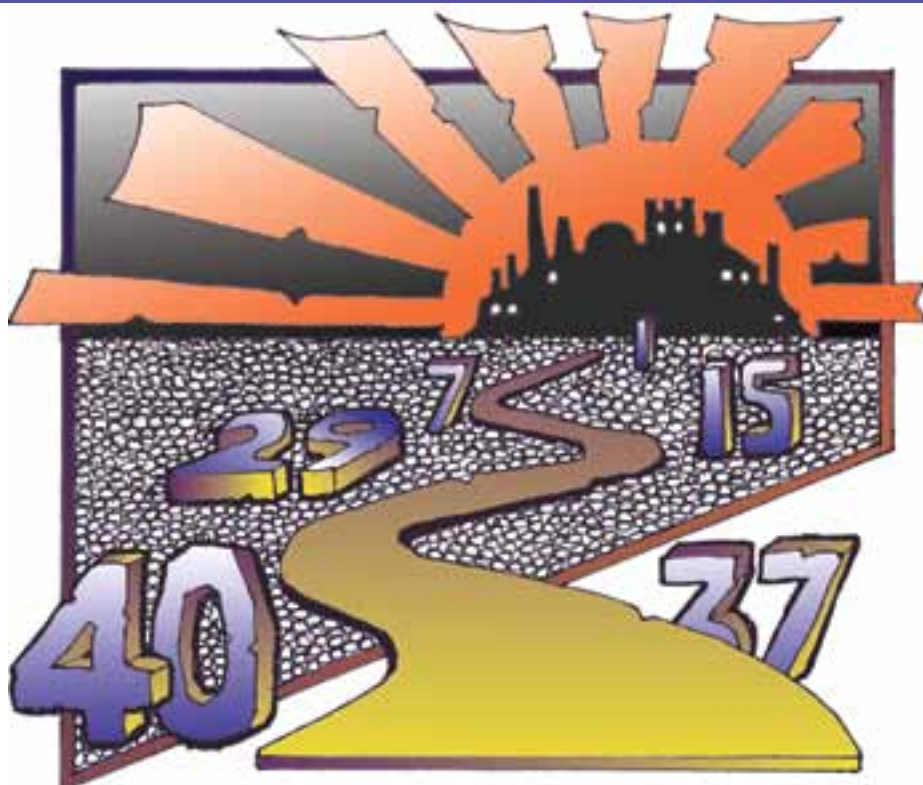
This may be a time to consider for ourselves questions of identity and purpose. Beyond all the roles we are called on to fulfil, beyond the clamour of voices that want to make us conform; *who are we really?* What is the unique image of God stamped in my soul? Can I come to love the person that I am? And given my identity, what is it that I have to offer the world in celebration of it? Let us recover the tradition of vocation – the sense that each of us has something significant to bring into being.

A life may be borrowed – shaped by external forces and moulded into an unremarkable shape. Or, it may be chosen. Even in the most difficult of circumstances, there are choices to be made that either enable or defeat us on the path of authenticity.

Resistance

In his journey toward crucifixion, Jesus intentionally confronts those groups and systems that he perceives to be life-denying. Not only in the obvious encounters such as with the moneychangers in the Temple, but in his derision of the Pharisees and bending of the rules surrounding Sabbath. He speaks the truth without fear of the consequences; so much so that there is a certain inevitability about his execution.

Lent has become very passive and privatised in our inherited tradition. We have the opportunity to make it a reflection on the revolutionary nature of the faith we follow. There are continually changing social and political issues that illuminate the difference between the path we are called to follow and 'the way of the world'. They provide occasions in which we can decide to resist or to



conform. To find clarity in that choice demands wisdom and understanding.

But above all it demands courage. The path of Jesus is a public one, in which he engages confrontationally with the social, political and religious systems as they impinge on humanity. Lent might be a season marked less by self-denial, and more by the courage to choose conflict on behalf of others. It reminds us that the cross is a political as well as a religious event.

Journey

The Gospels are records of a journey, which leads toward Jerusalem and then beyond. It is both a geographic and a spiritual journey. Those who tag along with Jesus move from place to place, but they also move in their understanding of who he is and what he represents. Reluctant disciples who want to remain where they are receive a rather harsh treatment from Jesus.

There is no faith without movement. We belong to a dynamic tradition that is continuously unsettled and reconstructed. In the simplest terms we must leave that which has become familiar and strike out for new and unfamiliar territory. It is never comfortable. The temptation is strong to want to rest and reside; to take

comfort in what is familiar rather than adapting to the unknown.

Were we to do it on our own it might be almost too much to bear. Fortunately, like Jesus, we do it in the company of friends and fellow travellers. Lent can become a time of gratitude for the people who accompany us in our restless journey. Together we can encourage each other to be brave about moving on and moving forward. A meal in which people of faith discuss their current journeys might become a sacramental occasion.

These are simple suggestions for reconfiguring Lent, and hopefully to bring it to life. While the rejection of chocolate or coffee may be a genuine attempt at self-purification, it can also become a trivialising and privatising of the gospel journey. If Easter is not to become muffled among buns and eggs, then Lent needs to reclaim its value as a preparation for Golgotha.

We are blessed to live where we do. This land and its peoples have much to teach us, if we will accept them and allow them to intermingle with our sacred tradition. Soon the leaves will begin to turn. The days will draw in. We are beginning a journey into darkness, but not one without hope. ■

Mike Riddell, of Cambridge Waikato, writes on theology and spirituality, when not engaged in film production



you don't need possessions to be happy

*Tui Motu interviewed Bro Dick Walsh
while he was in New Zealand for a well-earned holiday.
His insights into the nature of an African spirituality
are timely for us as we try to find out how we,
further east of Africa, can live out
a renewed, simpler and eco-friendly spirituality*

"All things are to be seen as con-natural, connected, together." These words tripped passionately from Bro Dick's lips when asked what is his vision now for our world, after ten years experience of life in Africa. He proceeded to explain.

our mission

"We are immersing ourselves in the world of the church of the poor, taking seriously people's actual living standards, working alongside them and empowering them to take charge of their lives. As opposed to other options, we are not wanting to tell them what they need, nor to breed paternalism, thereby creating a dependence. We want to of help, and to be pointed along in the right direction. It's not an easy call for any of us."

The words used on Ash Wednesday at the distribution of the ashes: "Remember that you are dust and unto dust you will return" have taken on a new meaning for him since going to Africa in 2001. He has become to appreciate the deep nature of African people's spiritual journey. "They have such an awareness of God and really an appreciation of the gift of life, because they are aware of its fragility, particularly in countries where there is HIV and Aids."

"They are surrounded by death and illness the whole time. Therefore they appreciate life because they know it can be gone in an instant. In Africa death is what happens to young people and it happens at home; whereas in countries like ours, death happens to old people and often in hospital. Kids

here can grow up and never see a dead person."

This has been an important learning for him, and because of it, he has a renewed appreciation of the focus of Ash Wednesday. He did not feel this was being overdramatic or depressing, just a real appreciation of the true meaning of human life.

simplicity

Another learning has been crucial for Brother Dick concerns simplicity. He said, "I have learned how little we actually need for life." We know that there are poor people in Africa. Often, he says, it is not their poverty, but their simplicity, which is important. "They grow a little food, live in a very simple house and have enough clothing." And they would say, "We're not poor. We've got land and enough food." They don't know about world cruises!

He hopes that they will not be sucked into the consumerist, materialist mentality. But this is happening already somewhat. Where a country's economy is developing there is a growing middle class, who are learning to keep more than their fair share. "I would hate to think they would start to see meaning in having the latest clothes, because the beauty and the gift of Africa at the moment is that

Brother Dick Walsh cfc is a New Zealander who is working presently from Lusaka in Zambia. Since 2005, he has been the first Provincial of the new province of the Christian Brothers set up for the whole of Africa. It was created to face the new situation of the Brothers by combining four older "districts" which were related to home provinces in Europe, America or elsewhere.

The Province now covers ten countries: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Sudan, Kenya, Gambia, Zambia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa, with 180 professed brothers of whom more than half are African. The others are older men coming from Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America, and Canada. This year the novitiate in Lusaka will have 20 young African men from all over the continent.

they can show that you don't really need these things, and still be happy.

relationships

"They are big into relationships. You wouldn't dream of failing to greet someone and in fact more than once a day. I'm not talking about walking down the main street of a large city, but you don't pass people without acknowledging them, without some kind of a greeting. And if it is somebody you know then you greet them and ask how's the family, and you must do that every day. And it is accompanied by a handshake normally. If you meet them later in the day you still acknowledge them, you just don't walk past. They would think there was something very strange about you if you did that."

This is an important level of family, arising from life in close-knit village communities. This good relating they have brought to the cities. However, the ravages of HIV Aids and people moving to the cities mean this family feeling is breaking down. "In the cities the support structure of the extended family is collapsing. And even more so when people get desperately sick with Aids. And that's a real pity."

orange farm

The brothers are involved in HIV Aids ministry. Recently they have formed a community in Orange Farm, a satellite city of Johannesburg where more than two million people live without infrastructure. There four young African brothers are involved in a Catholic church outreach, dealing with HIV feeding programmes. This involves visitation, teaching people the use of antiretroviral drugs (ARV's), good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle.

The ARV's are miraculous, and have made an extraordinary difference, provided they are used with good nutrition practices. People have come back from the verge of death to live quite productive lives. But, there are difficulties. Some people live in denial and don't want to be tested for Aids. They would rather live in denial than admit they have got the virus. And

there is lots of stigma still. People are not inclined to say that they are HIV positive. They might say somebody is sick with pneumonia or TB or has died of an illness. But all of these are due to HIV.

ARVs are becoming increasingly available and cheaper. The problem is to keep taking ARVs regularly. This is routine, and involves a real discipline. And if those with the disease are not keeping up good nutrition ARVs can do more harm than good. However, they are extraordinarily effective.

hopes

For the young brothers in Africa, Brother Dick says the older brothers are learning with the younger men to appreciate an authentic African spirituality, one that is connatural with African ways of living, and that gives meaning and hope while sustaining genuine family life.

Tied in with this, Brother Dick wishes to teach the brothers, young and old, to see everything from the perspective of the Universe Story, which fits so neatly with African spirituality. By this

*we are all part
of the universe –
the whole world is
connected*

he means that although our Universe started with the Big Bang, we are all part of the universe as it has grown and developed; the whole world is all connected: trees animals, everything, not just humans. And that the more we realize that we are a part of each other and not set apart from each other and what is in our world, the more we will understand our spiritual and human growth.

for the people of africa

Brother Dick ties this look at the reality of Africa with a strong set of hopes. They go back to his passionate

statement about connectedness. For Africa, his hope would be that the people have a reasonable standard of living, in which they are able to make good decisions for themselves about their own lives and to capitalize on that spirituality "which is just in the air in Africa." That is a simple but fond hope accompanied by a fear that they not be sucked into the illusions of Western life.

for us

For us in Australia and New Zealand, we have to "undevelop." By that, Brother Dick means that we have to learn to use less. The ordinary person has to become aware of the finite resources of the planet and that our lifestyle is not sustainable.

We need to develop an awareness that trying to find meaning in life does not consist in having and possessing more and more. On the contrary we have to develop the sense we are more closely associated with the whole planet, in terms of resources and the use of material things. "We cannot be out of sync with each other. We've to be connatural, connected and together" – for the future survival and good of the planet.

This will require a new approach to reality: nothing is separate, all is together – the whole planet is interconnected. The way of interconnectedness is the way forward. Then the words of Ash Wednesday make sense: we are all stardust of the universe, and dust together. ■

Readers who might wish to help the *Christian Brothers' African Mission* financially should do so by cheque to *The Trustees of the Christian Brothers*, c/- Br John O'Shea, 24B Wharanui Road, Christchurch 8041. A tax receipt will be issued. Donors may specify a particular objective for their donation.

Don't tell me you need more time

Christina Ora

I am 17 years old. My future is in front of me. In the year that I was born, amid an atmosphere of hope, the world formed the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, to solve the climate crisis.

our predicament

What is this crisis? In the Solomon Islands, my homeland, communities on low-lying atolls are already being displaced by rising sea levels. Communities have lived on these atolls for generations. Moving from one province to another in the Solomon Islands is not just like moving house. Your land is your identity. It is part of your culture. It is who you are.

I am scared and so are the people from these atolls about what this means for our culture, our communities and our identity. Solomon Islands, as a small island nation, is one of the smallest emitters of greenhouse gases in the world, and yet we are being hit hardest and fastest by climate change.

Because of climate change, I am uncertain about what is to come. How can I feel that my future is safe? How can I be sure that my home village won't disappear in 10 years' time? How can I be sure that my community won't have to find a new home? How can I be sure that I can raise my children in the same place that my mother and father raised me? I am not sure. I am scared and worried.

copenhagen

At the global negotiations many nations, including Australia, have focused on avoiding two degrees of global warming. While this may not sound like much, it will threaten the survival of many small island nations. Sea-level rise and unprecedented storm surges caused by climate change are already affecting communities across the Pacific and are expected to get significantly worse if climate change is not sufficiently and adequately tackled. Consequently, governments like my own are asking the global community to prevent global warming above 1.5

degrees. This means a global emission stabilisation target of below 350 parts per million of CO₂ equivalent in the atmosphere.

I believe that there must be urgent action to protect my future. I am here with *Project Survival Pacific*, an initiative of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition and working with a team of young Australians and ten other Pacific Island countries to raise the concerns of people from the vulnerable island nations. Since arriving in Copenhagen I have also been working with young people from all over the world, and this has given me hope that together we can build a better future.

there is no more time

This conference has the power to transform the way the world responds to climate change, but only if all countries realise the true urgency of the problem and commit to an ambitious, fair and legally binding agreement now.

For my entire life, world leaders have been negotiating a climate agreement. They cannot tell me they need more time. There *is* no more time. I hope the world leaders realise this week that my generation's future is in the palm of their hands.

Light up the cave

To stand
at the mouth of the cave
is to darken
the space within

so enter deeply —
light up the cave
walk to the centre
and be still.

As your eyes
grow wide,
light candles.
Stand. Speak softly. Sing.

Be warm
in the sanctuary's
damp embrace.
Give voice to the breath of God.

Robin Kearns
Whatipu 10/08

Christine Ora comes from the Shortland Islands in the North Western Solomons. She is a member of the Alu people, who live on low-lying islands. The article is an abridged version of an article which appeared in The Age, Melbourne, on Friday, 11 December 2009. It is gratefully reprinted with permission of the Age.

"The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations, and towards humanity as a whole." Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*

Lenten Carbon Fast 2010

Lent is traditionally a time of preparation for Easter; a time of letting go in order to prepare for new life. We have a responsibility to care for God's creation, and each of us must decide how we can improve the way we do that, now and for future generations. We offer you a calendar containing 40 carbon fasting actions. Each of these actions will reduce our production of climate change pollution and help to preserve God's gift of Creation.

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| <p>"Remember that you are earth and unto earth you will return."</p> <p>Ash Wednesday reminds us to be faithful in action even when no one is paying attention. If we are all living in harmony with the rest of God's creation, our households, our society and our planet will be transformed.</p> <p>Remove one light bulb from your home and live without its light for the next 40 days. This will decrease your energy use, and act as a reminder of your Lenten Carbon Fast.</p> | | | | <p>18 Give the dryer a rest. Dry your clothes on a rack or clothesline.</p> | <p>19 Go without meat today. Choosing meat-free meals is one of the most powerful things you can do reduce your carbon footprint.</p> | <p>20 Make one of your journeys more environmentally friendly today e.g. carpool, rather than driving solo, bike, walk, or take public transport.</p> |
| <p>21 <i>1st Sunday of Lent</i> Remember your Baptism and the power of water. Collect and recycle water from your kitchen, laundry, and shower.</p> | <p>22 Run your washing machine only with full loads. Wash in cold water. This gets them just as clean as washing in hot water, and uses half the energy</p> | <p>23 If you're not using an appliance for over an hour, turn it off as you leave the room.</p> | <p>24 Be aware of your hot water use today. Take a shower instead of a bath, and try to take a shower that lasts half as long as usual.</p> | <p>25 Let your dishwasher breathe. Use only with a full load.</p> | <p>26 Aim to buy locally made and grown food. Plan to visit a farmer's market this weekend, or join a group that delivers local produce.</p> | <p>27 Take your reusable bags with you when you go shopping. Purchase or reuse biodegradable plastic bags.</p> |
| <p>28 <i>2nd Sunday of Lent</i> "Look up to the heavens and count the stars." Gen 15,5</p> | <p>1 Sign a petition advocating action on climate change.</p> | <p>2 Turn off lights as you leave a room, and any others that you are not using,</p> | <p>3 Be aware of how much food you throw out this week. Plan how to avoid wasting food.</p> | <p>4 Compost your food waste. Put the nutrients from food waste back into soil, not into landfill. Learn more about composting option for indoors and outdoors.</p> | <p>5 Pick up at least one piece of litter on the ground when you are out walking and dispose of it properly</p> | <p>6 If making travel plans, consider getting there without flying. If you have to fly, balance out the carbon impact by buying carbon offsets.</p> |
| <p>7 <i>3rd Sunday of Lent</i> Take off your shoes and walk on the grass. This is holy ground.</p> | <p>8 Many electronic devices draw power even when off. Unplug these appliances today.</p> | <p>9 Put up a No Junk Mail sign on your mailbox.</p> | <p>10 Check the tyre pressure of your car today. Cars with low tyre pressure give better mileage.</p> | <p>11 Save paper today: print double-sided, wrap your next present in colour pages or a reusable gift bag.</p> | <p>12 Minimise disposables today. Bring your own coffee mug. Use cloth serviettes instead of paper ones.</p> | <p>13 Plan to grow some organic food, either in the garden, or in pots.</p> |
| <p>14 <i>4th Sunday of Lent</i> The world's poor will be hardest hit by climate change. Contribute to Project Compassion.</p> | <p>15 Find a green organisation today, and sign up for their newsletter.</p> | <p>16 Are you recycling everything you can? Refresh your memory on what items you can recycle.</p> | <p>17 Consider purchasing Green Power from your energy supplier.</p> | <p>18 When heating water on the stove, use a pot with a lid to conserve energy.</p> | <p>19 Celebrate Autumn. Be aware that day and night are of almost equal length.</p> | <p>20 It's hard to open ourselves up to the realities of climate change. Today, learn something new about climate change.</p> |
| <p>21 <i>5th Sunday of Lent</i> Embrace the Sabbath with silence. Turn off everything, and unplug it if you can-No TV, radio or phones.</p> | <p>22 Purchase more mindfully today. Avoid excess packaging.</p> | <p>23 Find out if your organisation is investing ethically.</p> | <p>24 Research how climate change is affecting our Pacific neighbours.</p> | <p>25 Buy recycled toilet paper.</p> | <p>26 Learn about the negative impact of new coal mines in Qld.</p> | <p>27 Help your kitchen fridge function efficiently by checking seals. Turn off any fridges that are underutilised.</p> |
| <p>28 <i>Palm Sunday</i> Find out what is happening in your parish about care for creation.</p> | <p>29 Show reverence for life and for the earth today by being mindful of the speed limit when driving.</p> | <p>30 Book a consultation with the Qld Government Climate Smart Home Service.</p> | <p>31 Review the last 40 days and repeat one action.</p> | <p>1 <i>Holy Thursday</i> Replace the light bulb you removed at the beginning of Lent with an energy-saving light bulb.</p> | <p>2 <i>Good Friday</i> 'The brutal consumption of Creation begins where God is not...' Pope Benedict XVI</p> | <p>3 <i>Holy Saturday</i> It can be difficult to contemplate our own end. Think today about greening you funeral arrangements.</p> |

Easter "At a time of world food shortage, of financial turmoil, of old and new forms of poverty, of disturbing climate change ... of growing fears over the future, it is urgent to rediscover grounds for hope. Let no one draw back from this peaceful battle that has been launched by Christ's Resurrection ... Christ is looking for men and women who will help him to affirm his victory using ... justice and truth, mercy, forgiveness and love."

Pope Benedict XVI, *Urbi et Orbi*, Easter 2009
Make a pledge to pursue a more sustainable way of life.

Due acknowledgment to Mercy Queensland

john calvin and ecology

Professor Zachmann, of Notre Dame University USA, gave this talk at Otago University as part of the celebrations for the 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth.



No one at the time of Calvin could have foreseen the drastic degradation of the environment caused three centuries later by the industrial revolution. Nevertheless, it comes as an agreeable surprise to discover that John Calvin, whom we tend to think of as a somewhat grim figure was surprisingly 'green' in his thought and theology.

Calvin justified his interest in the organic world by stating that although after Adam and Eve the only thing that really matters for us is our salvation in Christ, our faith will lead us via Christ to God the Creator – and therefore to God's creation. It is through Scripture that we acquire a clearer, more valid view of creation. Sacred Scripture is the lens through which we behold nature. We see it as God's gift; then, guided by the Holy Spirit, we begin to understand what we see.

Calvin used many metaphors to explain himself. For him, the created world is the "mirror of divinity," the 'theatre of divine glory.' The universe is the "living image of God." God is "veiled" by created things. Creation is like a "garment." "The heavens proclaim the glory of God" (Ps 19): he interprets this psalm as the visible world preaching afresh about God.

beauty

For Calvin, the universe and its creatures are supremely beautiful. The nature of God is portrayed in the powers of God working in creation. These powers are good and are there for us to enjoy. In our enjoyment of them we instinctively see their origin, which is God. When we contemplate heaven and earth we are ravished and made speechless in admiration at the wonder of it!

sabbath

Calvin saw this contemplation of God in created things as a daily exercise. The Sabbath, however, is a day given exclusively to reflecting on God's works. If God rested on the seventh day in delight at what had been created, so should we too. (Calvin's Catechism)

god in creation

Calvin proposed a correct and orderly way of contemplating God in creation.

First, the cosmos: the stars, the planets, the sun and moon (Pss 8, 19). God moves these objects of creation, relates to them directly and is revealed to us through them. Calvin delighted in the study of the astronomy of his time.

He asserts that the more we learn about the movement of heavenly bodies, the more we commune with their Creator and come to love God's work. The orderly movement of the planets and the sun and moon spoke to him of the providence of God. He was simply astonished by their beauty and harmony.

"There is no concussion," he observed. He would not have understood the collision of stars or galaxies! Calvin's orderly mind saw a progression from the majestic cosmos in the skies down to the minutiae of daily life.

The second stage is the atmosphere. He is intrigued by the suddenness of atmospheric change, by thunder and lightning. How, he asks, can rain produce light? He thought the wind was a sort of exhalation of the earth.

Thirdly Calvin examines the world of living creatures. In comparison with the majesty of the cosmos and the grandeur of the world and its flux,

we creatures pale into insignificance. Nevertheless, we are God's creatures.

Fourthly, the landscape of the earth. The *Book of Job* fascinated him. He contrasted the beauty of mountains and lakes (living as he did by Geneva, right in their midst) with the barrenness of the great deserts.

Fifthly, he notes how God cares for living creatures – "...not one sparrow will fall to the ground without your Father's will...fear not! You are of more value than many sparrows." (Mt 6:29-31) Indeed, God cares for creatures directly and intimately. Calvin uses two graphic metaphors: God nurses (at the breast) and nourishes with food. Even the ravens (a species Calvin despised) are cared for by God. God gives shelter to the animals and even contrives to get water to the tops of mountains. Birdsong is nature's way of praising God. Calvin, like many people living far inland, was terrified of the sea. Yet he observes how God puts life in deep water. Life is teeming everywhere, in abundance.

Finally Calvin arrives at humans. Calvin observes the interrelationship of all created things, and he sees in this the providence of God.

From this survey of Calvin's thought Professor Zachmann summed up: * this attractive aspect of Calvin's thinking quickly disappears from the Calvinist tradition.

* today we can go a step further than Calvin and assert that we would not be here unless the stars had exploded!

* one very good reason why we are here is that we should leave this world a better place than we find it ■

keep on walking, cycling and busing for the planet

Greg Hughson, an Otago University chaplain, gives us another Walk for the Planet way of maintaining momentum for climate change.

Research shows that the most effective way of reducing our carbon footprint is to change our transport footprint. In New Zealand, 44 percent of carbon dioxide emissions are transport based. Road transport contributes 40 percent of these, and one-third of all our trips in motorcars are journeys of less than two kms.

theology

Climate justice is about loving our neighbour who is on the front line of climate change. The impact of climate change is often disproportionate, and those who are least responsible for carbon emissions are the ones who suffer the most, those in so-called “third world countries.” Choosing a softer form of transport, cycling or walking, becomes a way of giving meaning to “do justice, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God”.

challenge

Greg Hughson has chimed in with a Christchurch initiative that hopes to reduce the use of cars by at least 41,000 kms per year – the distance of the circumference of the earth. Forty-one (41) people, congregations or parishes will pledge themselves to reductions of 1000 kms each in their car use from Easter Day 2010. The hope is that many will join this initiative. Some people may be past cycling; others know that some urban and rural areas are dangerous for cycling or walking. To be more inclusive and encourage greater participation, here is a range of options:

1. An individual may choose walking, cycling and public transport in every day transport movements to achieve the target of 1,000 kms reduction in motor vehicle usage.
2. Choose car-pooling for going to church on Sunday or regular meetings.
3. Practise the “staying-put” principle – a form of fast or abstinence. Plan better our trips to supermarkets for instance. Instead of three or four trips for ‘treats’ or urgent items, plan to go once per week or as few times as possible. Another way would be instead of driving to the bank to switch to electronic or telebanking.
4. Plan a one-off decision to make a long-distance journey by bus or rail instead of car. Someone in Hamilton making a return rail trip to Wellington would save 1064 kms car mileage.

Perhaps we can mix and match a selection of the four options outlined, or develop new ones. To take part in this 1000km challenge, we need:

- To think carefully about our transport options.
- To plan our car, walking, cycling, bus, rail movements daily.
- To adopt self sacrifice and discipline
- To make a life-style change
- To work collectively, if car-pooling,
- To maintain self-assessment and honesty in that.
- To be countercultural. ■



Doctor Shirley Murray

During December, hymn writer Shirley Erena Murray was awarded an Honorary Doctorate at the University of Otago Graduation Ceremony.

About the same time a new publication by the NZ Hymnbook Trust, *Hope is Our Song*, was launched in Otago/Southland in Knox Church. The first printing of the book was sold out and it has since been reprinted.

The hymnbook contains many compositions by Shirley. It is reviewed on page 28.

towards a humble church

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin asked Timothy Radcliffe, former Master of the Dominicans, to give his Dublin priests a day of recollection last December to console them at a time when they were reeling from the revelations of the Murphy Report.

Here, fr. Timothy focuses on the power of the institutional church, how dangerous it can be, and how to live church life as a mystery of loving equality

Friendship with Jesus – intimacy – means learning to be gentle and lowly of heart; then we shall find rest for our souls. But if one thinks of the Catholic Church, the first word that springs to mind might not be “humble”.

I have given retreats for dioceses in 15 countries since I finished my term as Master of the Dominican Order in 2001. The vast majority of priests and bishops whom I have met are simple and unpretentious people who just wish to serve the people of God. But this personal humility has to be sustained in the teeth of a clerical culture, common to all Christian denominations, which stresses rank and power.

This terrible crisis of sexual abuse is deeply linked to the way that power can corrupt human relationships, which is why it touches all the churches, even if the Catholic Church happens to have been more in the spotlight recently. Celibacy is not, I believe, the source of the crisis, otherwise it would be the case that Catholic priests have a higher rate of offence – which, it seems, we do not. We shall only really address this crisis if we learn from Jesus who is “gentle and lowly of heart”, and find ways of embodying authority which honour the equal dignity of all the baptised and cherish the weak and vulnerable.

institutional power

Careful vetting of candidates for the priesthood and child-safety procedures are necessary, but they will not get to the root of the problem. Every institution always seeks to preserve and augment its power; however, the philosopher Charles Taylor, in *A Secular Age*, has traced the genesis of “a culture of control” from the 17th century onwards. Society is seen as a mechanism rather than an organism, which needs to be adjusted and manipulated. Monarchs claimed absolute power even over the church. Imperial powers took possession of the world; millions of people were enslaved and treated as commodities.

Once society has ceased to believe in God’s gentle providential government of the world, then the state must take his place and impose its will. This culture of power is perhaps one reason for the widespread abuse of children in our society. The church, alas, has often been infected by this same culture of control. This happened partly because the church has for centuries struggled to defend itself against the powers of this world who want to take it over.

From the Roman Empire at the time of its birth until the Communist empires of the 20th century, the church has fought to keep hold of its own life, and often ended up by mirroring what it opposed. We will not have a church

which is safe for the young until we learn from Christ and become again a humble church, in which we are all equal children of the one Father, and authority is never oppressive.

At the end of the Middle Ages, the priesthood was in crisis. It was unable to respond to the challenges of a new world of widespread literacy. The parish clergy were poorly educated, sometimes barely able to celebrate the Mass, often living with concubines. The response to this crisis led to an extraordinary renewal of the priesthood, with a new spirituality, new seminaries, a more profound theological formation, a new and stricter discipline. Without this, the Catholic Church would have found it hard to survive the rise of Protestantism.

a crisis becomes a source of hope

But this Tridentine understanding of priesthood is in its turn showing signs of crisis, of which the sexual abuse scandal is just a symptom. Its stiff clericalism and authoritarianism, unsurprising perhaps in the context of our past battles, do not help the church now to thrive and be a sign of God’s friendship for humanity. And so we need a new culture of authority, from the Vatican to the parish council, which lifts people up into the mystery of loving equality, which is the life of the Trinity.

Crises are not to be feared. It is through repeated crises that God drew closer to his people. Israel's worst crisis was the destruction of the Temple and the monarchy, and exile to Babylon... Israel lost everything that gave her identity: her worship, her nationhood. Then she discovered God closer to her than ever before. God was present in the law, in their mouths and hearts, wherever they were, however far from Jerusalem. They lost God only to receive him more closely than they could have imagined.

Then that difficult cross-grained man, Jesus, turned up, breaking the beloved law, eating on the Sabbath, touching the unclean, hanging out with prostitutes. He seemed to smash all that they loved, the very way that God was present in their lives. But that was only because God wished to be present even more intimately, as one of us, with a human face. And at every Eucharist, we remember how we had to lose him on the Cross, but again only to receive him more closely, not as a man among us but as our very life.

In the *Office of Readings* for the first week of Advent, we hear: "For the Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up and high; against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan; against all the high mountains, and against all the lofty hills, against every high tower, and against every fortified wall" (*Isaiah 2:12-15*). But this was so that God could dwell again in the midst of his humbled people.

the hyperactive priest

Painfully, the Lord is demolishing our high towers and our clerical pretensions to glory and grandeur so that the church may be a place in which we may encounter God and each other more intimately. Jesus promises rest for our souls. Often, we priests are consumed by a destructive activism in our service of the people. Indeed, this crisis of sexual abuse may aggravate the

H.G.Wells tells a short story about the Last Judgment. That terrible sinner, King Ahab (*1 Kings 18-22*), is placed in the palm of God's right hand for judgment. He squeals and tries to escape as the Recording Angel reads out all his sins, until finally he flees up God's sleeve and finds refuge.

Then a saintly prophet appears, probably Elijah. He too sits in the palm of God's hand, and listens complacently as his good deeds are read out. Then the Recording Angel gets to some unsavoury stuff. Within ten seconds the prophet is rushing to and fro over the great palm of God. At last he, too, shrieks beneath that pitiless and cynical exposition. He flees – even as the wicked man had fled – into the shadow of God's sleeve.

The two sat side by side, stark of all delusion, in the shadow of the robe of God's charity, like brothers. And thither, concluded Wells, also I fled in my turn.



temptation to show that we at least are wonderful priests incessantly devoted to our work, always available on our mobile phones. That is salvation by works and not by grace.

Thomas Merton believed that this hyperactivism is a collusion with the violence of our society: "The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. More than that, it is co-operation in violence."

If we let this implicit violence infect our lives, then it will come out somehow. It may overflow into

violent words. We may do violence to ourselves through drink. We may fall into sexual violence, and be caught in the horror of abuse of the vulnerable.

But if we face this terrible crisis of sexual abuse with courage and faith, then it may precipitate a profound renewal of the church. We can discover Jesus' commandments, not as a heavy burden which crushes people but as the invitation to his friendship. We can be liberated from harmful ways of using power in the church, which are ultimately rooted in secularism, and become more like the Christ who was lowly and humble of heart – and we shall find rest for our souls. ■

This article appeared in the London Tablet, January 2, 2010, and is reprinted with kind permission.



Starting out. Our group assembles by the fence at the main entrance – a double gate secure as in a prison entrance. All bags are carefully searched for unsuspected ‘passengers’. The key to the ecosanctuary concept is the predator-proof fence, 10km long, surrounding the whole complex. Learning from the experience of Karori, the fence mesh is narrow enough to exclude small mice. No animal can climb it, burrow under it or jump over it.

the sanctuary

“Ecosanctuary” is a good title to use of the new protected park which has come to birth some 20 km north of Dunedin city. It is truly a sanctuary, because to go there is a spiritual experience. Its natural beauty, its birdsong, the interaction with an ever-growing number of rare and endangered species takes you back in imagination to something akin to a ‘Garden of Eden’.

Orokonui is now open for guided tours – and within a few months people will be able to visit as individuals and range freely. Ben Smith, our enthusiastic young guide, introduced us to it by saying we were about to spend a couple of hours in Aotearoa as it had once been – before the Europeans arrived with their rabbits and possums and stoats, before the Maori came.



“New Zealand was,” said Ben, “a land of birds”. There were no mammals. The land mass had been isolated for 60 million years. The birds fed on insects, seeds and fruit, which were present in abundance. The flightless birds roamed freely, and the native flora adapted.

One of the two caged kakas, who provide a nucleus of the introduced kaka community



a land

“Take away humans beings, and substitute them with moas”, said Ben. Then you begin to understand why native species like lancewood are often bare near the ground, but with abundant foliage high up – out of reach of the browsing moa! And you see the inquisitive little native birds like korimako, fluttering around at your feet to catch the insects your passage is disturbing, just as their ancestors did at the feet of the roaming moas centuries ago.

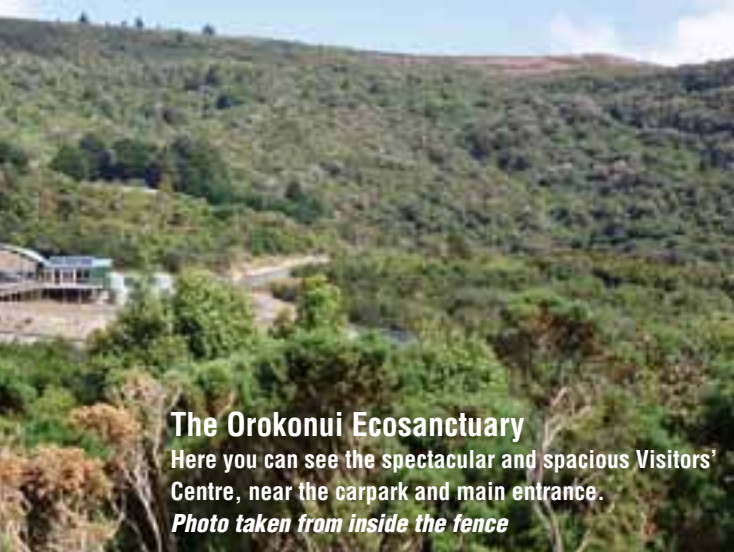
Orokonui is less than 30 minutes drive from the city centre – yet here on the hilltop of Moponui, above the pine and Eucalypt plantations of the European settlers – is the remains of a podocarp forest 600 years old, fit to become the heart of the ecosanctuary. When you enter from the Visitors’ Centre, you commence a journey through time: first through regenerating native bush, scarcely 10 years old, mostly kanuka. You descend through secondary bush which is 50-60 years old until you reach the area of the mature rimu and totara. And – the older the forest, the more abundant the birdlife.



the forest

Already there is a profusion of kerero (the native pigeon), bellbirds and tuis, which are common enough in the Dunedin hill suburbs. Here they can nest and breed in absolute safety. But there are also plenty of smaller, rarer species; like the tiny riflemen, tailless miniatures weighing only a few grams each, occupying the niche of mice in a mammalian environment. So – get rid of the mice, enter the riflemen.

d of birds



The Orokonui Ecosanctuary

Here you can see the spectacular and spacious Visitors' Centre, near the carpark and main entrance.

Photo taken from inside the fence

As you climb up into the old forest, the sight and song of the birds increases, because they find a greater abundance of food and good nesting habitats among the mature podocarps. It is not as lush as the bush of the West Coast because the rainfall is nowhere near as great. Nevertheless the moist northeasterlies which are the prevailing winds, hit Mokonui and form clouds and fog, and the mild moist conditions create something like a subtropical microclimate



where the punga can grow, the ferns can flourish and the whole tree canopy become drooped with vines and epiphytes (*above right*).

What the staff are busy doing, says Ben, is eliminating the undesirables and introducing new inhabitants. The possums, the greatest destroyers of forest gorging through a large bagful of vegetation a day, are gone. The final rat and hedgehog have died. Ben showed us some simple black boxes, or 'trackers', where the predators will enter lured by peanut butter bait and kindly

leave their spoor on the cardboard exit as they depart. As long as these undesirables leave their calling cards, the traps and poisons will be set – until all are gone. But the detection process must continue, because there is always a possibility of predators getting back in.

Bringing in the new involves a programme of planting and creating new habitats. A family of jewelled geckoes have been brought over from the Otago peninsula and given an ideal environment. To see them requires patience and a keen eye.



There are now six kakas (native parrots) in residence. Two older birds are still in captivity, having been brought here from the aviary in the Dunedin Botanic Gardens. Since kakas are very sociable, the call of the older birds attracts the free ones to stay around and make their nests nearby. Plans are advanced eventually to introduce takahe and kiwis and other species.

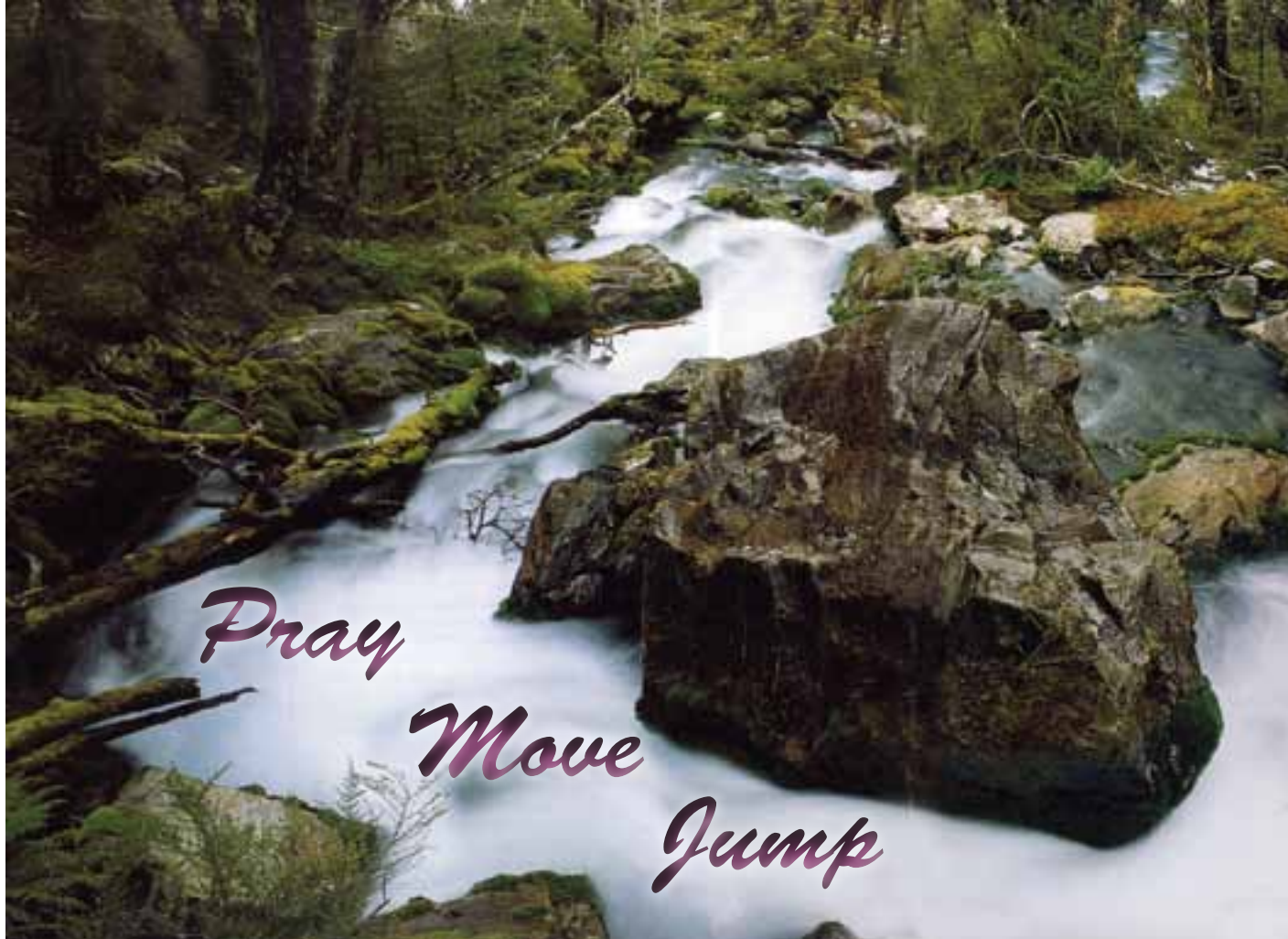
education

The local schools are beginning to make regular use of Orokonui. Ben Smith believes that if young people get used to the beauty and fascination of the ecosanctuary, they will appreciate the need to keep New Zealand clean and green, and learn the importance of preserving the variety of native species, and even be attracted by a simpler lifestyle, one less destructive of our environment.

However, it is not only the young who come to learn. Most of our party were mature adults, a few from overseas. It is difficult to imagine a more beautiful and peaceful place to escape to, for reflection and prayer – finding God. And, like the Karori sanctuary in Wellington, Orokonui is right here on one's doorstep. If it is like this already, what will Orokonui be like in 20, 30 years' time? If you come visiting the Edinburgh of the South, don't miss it. ■

These koru sculptures along the track are carved in memory of Diane Campbell-Hunt, Director of the Project, visionary and prime mover, who was killed tragically in a tramping accident in 2008





Glynn Cardy

I was asked in an interview last week what was the job of a priest; I gave a two-word answer: “To pray”. However it is not only the job of a priest, it is the vocation of anyone who calls her or himself Christian. To pray is not primarily a bow-the-head, bend-the-knee, direct-requests-to-the-heavens exercise, but an opening of one’s heart and mind to the music of divinity within, around, and beyond us.

Each year I go on a journey to one of our New Zealand beauty spots. There I listen for a different melody, without the ongoing cacophony of telephones, emails, and people. It feeds my soul. Yet souls are complex things, and in the midst of the city there are also many sustaining and inspiring songs. God is not restricted to quiet places off the beaten track.

The metaphor of journey is commonly used in relation to spirituality. We are often guided in our formative years

by parents, peers, or Church, learning one travelling tradition, and then finding it unsatisfactory and leaving it, maybe never to journey again. But many people do travel the way of faith again. Some will travel with companions down a well-known road. Some will travel on a less-known path. Others will leave the known altogether and head out across the fields or over the seas. The paths of faith are many, and not restricted to the maps of the Church.

On the journey beliefs are like cairns: a mound of rocks, marking the path others have followed, bringing travellers to this point. We need to remember the beliefs, the cairns, of the past and learn from them. They are stories that often hold deep truths.

Some people camp around cairns, building churches or theological colleges on the spot. After a while however, especially when the

discussions seem to be about who’s got the biggest cairn or how to make the camp more attractive, many move on. Beliefs are not an end point.

This is how I understand the text “Seek ye first the realm of God.” It is encouraging us to go on a journey and not be distracted by our physical and emotional needs, or the dogmas and decisions of the past. Don’t worry about what others will think of you, whether you believe the right things, or have the right friends, but seek first after the music, that symphony of the Spirit, called God... come what may.

Faith is not belief, or having beliefs. Faith is that urge to move on. Faith is about taking the risk of leaving the familiar to journey into the unfamiliar. Faith, though, is not irrational in the sense that it is unreasonable or folly, though to some it will seem so. Rather faith comes after carefully weighing up the options, the known versus the

unknown, and then taking a step. Those who never step out, never find out.

The journey of prayer has no end point. You don't find God at the end; or heaven; or even self-fulfilment or contentment. Some say that you find these things along the way. I'm not so sure. They can be quite elusive. There are few guarantees in the spiritual life.

The person that is comfortably camped with a fixed set of beliefs, enjoying the security of certainty, is not to be pitied. When new events or knowledge shake their world they will try hard to incorporate those things within their camp. I envy them in some ways.

I know for myself, and a number of others, that we have no option but to take leave of the familiar camps and travel on. Not for any reward. Not for any peace of mind. Not for any higher calling. We travel simply because our soul is so drawn to the zephyrs of God that we have no other choice.

Prayer is therefore often characterised by hard and costly work. It is the work of listening, questioning, reading, and delving. It is the work and discipline of self-examination. It is the work of practising, refining, and adjusting – always trying your best. It is the work of being with people when you want to be alone, and being alone when you want to be with people. It's an uncomfortable vocation.

Back in the days when I was a young priest I was shocked to hear that my vicar had refused to pray for a lady. She had come to him to ask for a prayer, and he'd said no. It felt like he'd breeched the bedrock of pastoral care. The lady certainly thought so.

Sometimes what people ask for is not what we should give them. My vicar had prayed with this woman many times in the past. He became convinced that this prayer was actually a barrier to her spiritual growth, and he now refused to collude. It wasn't an easy decision for him.

One of the primary tasks of a priest is to help people find their own way into the expanse of God. The priest is simply a fellow traveller, who, like others, is pointing out things of beauty, interest, and challenge along the way. The priest also has the job of encouraging people to get off their posteriors and keep moving.

As Christians we need to be the change we wish to see in the world. We need to acknowledge our privileges and power, and then use both to guide and to lead. It takes courage to work for change. If we never offend people we've forgotten our exemplar, that man from Nazareth. We need to listen, to build trust, and to be open to change within ourselves. Change is a journey, and helping change come about is both an art and a prayer.

There is an episode in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* where Huck is deeply uncertain if he should tell Miss Watson where her runaway slave Jim is located. His uncertainty is magically overcome when he realizes that the 'plain hand of God' requires that he turn Jim in. Everything he has learned in Sunday School, everything his mother drummed into him, points in that direction. He writes the letter of betrayal to Miss Watson, feels all clean and pure, and is able to pray. But then he thinks some more, thinks of his love for Jim and the laughter they have had together. He finally tears up the letter, says no to God, and declares, "All right, then, I'll go to hell."

Sometimes in life you come to a chasm. Behind you is all you have known, including God, 'mother', and morality. Ahead of you is the unknown seemingly Godless, motherless, and immoral. Then breathing deeply, saying no to fear and yes to courage, you jump...

My favourite definition of faith is 'the courage to jump'. The opposite of which is not unbelief but fear. Fear is a reaction to apparently insurmountable challenges. We fear failure. We fear the cost of failure. We

fear that too much is being asked of us. The chasm before us is too wide to jump.

Fear is also a natural reaction to circumstances beyond our control. Most of us spend considerable energy stabilizing our lives, rationing our time and resources, and keeping alert to impending crises. Fear can come when a crisis looms larger than our ability to cope. We fear that we are not in control, and usually we are right. It is in the moment of crisis when we will decide to give in to fear or to give voice to faith.

Giving in to fear involves a closing down. The hatches are battened and the individual withdraws into what is safe. The so-called 'security wall' that the Israeli Government has built to fence itself off from possible Palestinian attacks is a good case in point. The wall pretends to offer security. In fact it does no such thing. It serves merely as an affront, another obstacle on the difficult road to peace.

There is a time to feel fear, to feel its power. There is a time to feel what it is like, to wrestle with it, and understand a little of how it captivates and imprisons so many. But there is also a time to pray, move, and jump. Indeed fear will not be overcome unless someone jumps.

Today I set before you prayer and journey, faith and beliefs, courage, change, and fear. Do not give in to fear. If nothing is ventured, nothing is gained.

Fear is corrosive for Christians, both individually and institutionally. Rather, like St Paul who often wrote from prison cells, open your heart and mind to the expanse of God, feel the freedom of it, and then jump into it. ■

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St-Matthew-in-the-City and Archdeacon
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theologian for all seasons

Edward Schillebeeckx, who died recently, contributed greatly to modern theology and spirituality. John Dunn summarises his achievements in the first of two articles.



the theology of Edward Schillebeeckx

Edward Schillebeeckx is one of the most remarkable Catholic theologians of the 20th century. A Dominican, he followed in the best spirit of their tradition, with their motto of 'Veritas' (Truth) and their desire to continue to expound and make relevant the teachings of Thomas Aquinas. It was this spirit of Aquinas and his love of truth that led the young Edward to study Aquinas under the guidance of another great theologian, Marie-Dominique Chenu, and thence to engage with the modern world and its suffering, and seek to set forth the mystery of the Christian faith in contemporary terms.

engagement with the present day

At the University of Paris he engaged with the major philosophical movements of the day: existentialism and personalism. They were focused on themes such as human freedom, personal authenticity and the need to choose your own form of becoming a person despite any outside influences, be they from religion or society.

Already at a young age Schillebeeckx had founded a journal of spirituality for lay people *Tijdschrift voor geestelijk leven* (*Journal for the Spiritual Life*), and in a steady stream of articles he wrote his reflections on why Christian humanism was superior to atheistic humanism. This was, he thought,

because belief in God introduced a different dynamism into one's thought and emotional processes which led to different – and more meaningful – understandings of the world than the philosophers of his day could offer.

mysticism

Schillebeeckx's theology is marked by a lifelong search for God. He was deeply influenced by the 14th century Dutch mystic, Johann van Ruysbroeck. For Schillebeeckx, one knew God intimately in prayer and contemplation, but one also needed to know that God was so great and beyond our comprehension that any form of human representation could never do justice to God.

Schillebeeckx was impatient with those who thought they could define God and tie God down to human concepts. For him, such concepts taught us two things: where not to look for God, and that such concepts pointed us in the right direction for prayer and mysticism, to contemplate in deeply human and personal terms the wonder of the unknowable God.

St Thomas Aquinas

Pope Leo XIII in 1879 had called upon Catholics to embrace the teachings of Aquinas to meet the challenges of the modern world of his day. This was the climate in which the young Schillebeeckx began his theological studies, and he undertook to bring

Aquinas into engagement with thinkers of the present day. The result was a reinterpretation of Thomas' idea of sacraments, which applied them to persons as well as divine actions. The result was a brilliant thesis in 1954 which later emerged in English as a book with the title: *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*.

This book presents a personalist understanding of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not simply God; he is also a human person who engages in a lifelong personal engagement with God. In Jesus Christ, the unknowable God becomes sacramentally and personally seeable, hearable, touchable, and draws us into a similar dialogue with the infinite God.

God remains absolute mystery, but in the idea of personal sacrament, God became through Christ truly human and sacramentally available to us all. Sacraments are not 'things' but 'events' in which we are caught up in the whole of our personal life. In his risen life Jesus Christ remains with the church, such that the church in its turn is a sacrament of Christ, and the sacraments in their turn are personal acts of the risen Christ.

suffer little children...

Fr Shay Cullen is a campaigner against child trafficking for sex in the Philippines. This excerpt is taken from a recent report

It is no easy task to rescue the child victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation in the Philippines. The authorities deny it even exists. “The problem has been solved”, they say, “It does not exist now”. Journalists and human rights workers are not welcome in the offices of mayors who host sex industries in their communities, lest the evidence is found that they are trying so hard to hide.

My experience, and the evidence gathered on video and sound, proves beyond a doubt that children as young as 14 can be purchased by private arrangement. Sex clubs proudly advertise their mayor’s permit and licence to operate. The girls are guaranteed to be clean of sexually transmitted diseases. A club female operator proudly told me that the government-paid health workers come to the clubs to do the tests to be sure the girls do not infect the customers.

There seems to be no concern about the youngsters being exploited and abused, and their young lives wasted and destroyed. It’s an outrage, since the government could stop it with an executive order or a strong city ordinance but lacks the political will or moral courage to close them.

abuse in the home

The tolerance of the authorities has sent a wrong and immoral message to would-be child abusers that this is not a serious crime. So, sexual abuse of children in the home has risen dramatically. More and more abused children are being brought to shelters for therapy and treatment, but there are hardly any convictions.

In one horrific case, a four-year-old was brought for help suffering from a sexually transmitted disease. The suspect, the child’s father, must have picked up the infection in a sex

bar. The prosecutor has delayed many months and made no decision to prosecute, despite the strong evidence, the shocking nature of the case and the urgency to bring the abuser to justice. He still walks free to abuse more little children.

This and many other cases have been sent to the Department of Justice. Finally, prosecutors are starting to file the cases in court, some after two years of inaction. The great difficulty we have is the slowness of the justice system. The abusers are usually fathers, live-in partners or grandfathers, relatives and family friends, all of whom have ready access to the child.

damage to the children

Children have been psychologically damaged in the sex business and in night club life. A girl is brainwashed to believe that the club is her new home; she is told she will meet a foreigner and marry him, and then will have a happy life abroad. It is all an empty fantasy but the children believe it.

It is the difficult task for child workers to build up the children’s self esteem, which is very low. They show a lot of hostility to the outside world and no trust in adults since their life experience has been abuse, rejection and hardship.

However, there is some success despite all the difficulties, and it is encouraging to see children responding to affirmation and emotional release therapy. But why should it ever be allowed to happen?. We are challenged to express our opinion, to speak out and take action whenever we can, to bring this filthy trade to an end. ■

Shay Cullen

▷▷ This view of Christ helped ordinary Catholics of the 1960s to form, sometimes for the first time, a spirituality where they could enjoy a personal relationship with Christ without fear, and came to understand the church and its sacraments as precious, if limited vehicles for one’s personal spiritual journey into God.

back to sacraments

In his final years of life, Schillebeeckx came to the conclusion that in the secular world of Europe, the loss of the sense of the sacred – the symbolic dimension of life – was the

major concern for Christians. This conviction took him back to exploring the sacraments, where he had begun.

This time he saw the nature of symbols and symbol systems and their interaction with the suffering and lives of human beings as the way for the church to re-discover its relevance and its solidarity in mission with all human beings. He never finished this, his final project.

in the end, God

In the end, Schillebeeckx was a faithful Dominican. He was a contemplative, a

humble believer, a fearless theologian, a passionate lover of his church and of Jesus Christ. I hope that these qualities may inspire new generations of theologians and bishops to exercise these same qualities in their search for God and in their attempts to set forth Jesus Christ as the bringer of light and hope to our contemporary world.

May he rest in peace.

John Dunn is Principal of the Catholic Institute of Theology, Auckland, and Parish Priest, St Heliers Bay

charter for compassion

The Charter for Compassion was unveiled to the world on November 12, 2009. It is a co-operative effort to restore not only compassionate thinking but, more importantly, compassionate action to the centre of religious, moral and political life. One of the most urgent tasks of our generation is to build a global community where men and women of all races, nations and ideologies can live together in peace. In our globalised world, everybody has become our neighbour, and the Golden Rule has become an urgent necessity.

The Charter was crafted by people all over the world and drafted by a multi-faith, multinational council of thinkers and leaders. It is, however, the brainchild of Karen Armstrong, one of the most provocative and original thinkers on the role of religion in the modern world. Armstrong is a former Roman Catholic nun who left her convent to pursue a degree in modern literature at Oxford. She has written more than 20 books around the ideas of what Islam, Judaism and Christianity have in common. Her latest book is *The Case for God*.

Her meditations on personal faith and religion (she calls herself a freelance monotheist) spark discussion - especially her take on fundamentalism, which she sees in a historical context, as an outgrowth of modern culture. Her initiative has been assisted by the Fetzer Institute which, although not a religious organisation, honours and learns from a variety of spiritual traditions.

Charter for Compassion (abridged)

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathetically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others – even our enemies – is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

We therefore call upon all men and women to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion...

Shirley Erena Murray has composed this hymn and offers it as suitable for the Lenten season. It has been set to music by Colin Gibson.

Where does Compassion Start

a response to the Charter for Compassion

Where does compassion start?
How does compassion grow?
Her seed is at the heart
of every faith we know:

*compassion honours others' place,
dethroning self with willing grace.*

How does compassion thrive
in worlds of greed and grief?
Her goodness stays alive
through those of strong belief:

*compassion, luminous and clear,
outshining wastes of war and fear.*

Where is compassion's role
in cultures, or in creeds?
At centre, with the soul
who feels another's needs:

*compassion brings the touch of friend,
a bandage that will bind and mend.*

Dynamic is the power
that heals, restores and gives,
connecting at the core
with everyone who lives,

*transcending culture, colour, race,
compassion builds the house of peace.*

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To find more information on the Charter go to
www.charterforcompassion.org

the visitation

The Gospel narratives describing the birth of Jesus owe much to the Old Testament. Denis McBride CSsR describes how the Visitation in Luke's Gospel is a meeting of Old and New

The Gospel of *Luke* contains the story of Martha and Mary, Jesus' particular friends. There are two disciples in *Luke* who are 'perfect', in the sense that their devotion to Jesus is total and unconditional – and they are both named 'Mary'. Mary Magdalen and Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Luke, in common with *Matthew*, gives a detailed narrative of the birth and infancy of Jesus. However, they are utterly different. The Virgin Birth and birth in Bethlehem rather than in Jesus' home town of Nazareth are the only events in common.

In *Matthew*, Joseph is the central character. Mary never speaks. In *Luke*, it is quite different. Here Mary has the centre stage and Joseph has only a walk-on part. He never speaks.

The first Chapter of *Luke* is a beautifully constructed diptych. The birth and infancy of Jesus and John the Baptist mirror each other. These stories portray a seamless connection of the New Testament and the Old. John is the last of the prophets and his parents and the manner of his birth recall Abraham and Sarah, the 'first parents' of Judaism.

John and Jesus first meet in the account of the Visitation. But the focus is less on the infants than on the two mothers-to-be. Mary comes fresh from the Annunciation – or double annunciation, as McBride describes it. God via Gabriel announces to Mary the coming of the Messiah Jesus.

Then – while heaven waits – Mary responds by saying YES to the invitation to become the mother of God.

McBride comments that it is Mary therefore who, for the very first time, makes the 'Real Presence' possible. She is due to present the Messiah to the world. It is Mary who, so to speak, says THIS IS MY BODY. Mary is the first Christian tabernacle.



fresco at Mua Mission, Kampala

She hurries from Nazareth into Judea to share the great news with Elizabeth and to share Elizabeth's joy too. The scene starts with the mother of the final prophet of the OT greeting the birth of the New – the coming of the reign of God. She does so with joy. Mary is "the most favoured one" and "the mother of my Lord". In Elizabeth, the Old Testament voices a profound acceptance of the New. John the Baptist 'dances' for joy in the womb of Elizabeth. Mary responds with the most beautiful of all Marian hymns, the Magnificat.

This absolute prominence of the two women and the pre-eminence of Mary right through *Luke's* infancy narrative, caused some clerics at one time to seek to suppress these two chapters and remove them from *Luke's* Gospel. Obviously the early Church had no problem with them and accepted them into the Canon. In the Second Century we find Mary called 'the new Eve' and at Ephesus, in the 4th Century she is declared 'Mother of God'. ■

Taken from the CD series: Where does the Jesus story begin, by Denis McBride

Magnificat

My soul sings in gratitude.
I'm dancing in the mystery of God.
The light of the Holy One is within me
and I am blessed, so truly blessed.

This goes deeper than human thinking.
I am filled with awe
at Love whose only condition
is to be received.

The gift is not for the proud,
for they have no room for it.
The strong and self-sufficient ones
don't have this awareness.
But those who know their emptiness
can rejoice in Love's fullness.

It's the Love that we are made for,
the reason for our being.

It fills our inmost heart space
and brings to birth in us, the Holy One.

Joy Cowley

alive when I die

Paul Andrews

I have known Eileen longer than any other living person, and our ways of thinking have much in common. So when she started to wonder aloud about what happens after death, it set me thinking too. We are both of an age when the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse throws his shadow across our path. Though we are, for octogenarians (Eileen is a couple of years older than me), in reasonable health, it is only reasonable for us to consider that death may strike us in the next few years. I think that both of us can remain peaceful at the prospect (I was going to write “possibility”, but of course like taxes, death is not just possible or probable, but certain).

The uncertainties concern not the reality of death, but what comes before it, and what follows it. What comes before it can still be daunting. I can think of two episodes which prepared me for it. One was in a hospital. A radiologist was x-raying me to discover the cause of diarrhoea which had lasted for months. He splayed me on a huge machine and snapped away, assisted by a nurse who changed the plates. At one stage he seemed to be particularly active, moving in repeatedly on one area of my stomach. I asked him had he seen something. “Yes,” he said, “I think I see a growth there.” To me “growth” implied cancer, and cancer implied a fight for survival. In the event, what he saw was not cancerous, but I remember well the impact of his words on me. I was almost relieved that at last there was something we could tackle.

Death is always a possibility every time we sit in a car or cross the road, so it was no shock to hear him name the enemy. It convinced me that if I do contract some serious illness, I would want to name it, know its profile, and

map the battlefield in my body with a clear sense of who’s winning the battle, and the point at which, as they say, “it’s only a matter of time”.

The second episode was not in a hospital, but on the road, in the saddle of a two-week-old motorbike, a beautiful Kawasaki 550. It was a bright afternoon, but an approaching motorist, clean out of petrol, was so worried by his blinking red light that he failed to see the approaching motorbike. He saw a petrol station on my side of the road and swung across my path. As I collided and flew through the air, I felt my helmet hit the ground twice before I came to rest, quite conscious.

Those who ride motorbikes must always be aware of the particular risks they run, with no airbags or panels to lessen the impact of a crash. I remember my first thought: *I’m alive, hurt but alive, and my head has not suffered*. I was able to give bystanders three phone numbers to ring, before the pain of a shattered hip and pelvis swallowed me up.

One overriding desire emerges from those two episodes. It is, in the prayer of Dr Winnicott: *May I be alive when I die*. The alternative is visible in so many old people’s homes, and in my memory of my mother’s last years: the spectre of dementia, the gradual loss of the mind, which robs our loved ones of their ability to remember, to recognise, to love and to converse. It is a slow death for the patient, a lingering goodbye for those who love them.

It has often been said that dementia hits the families harder than the patient. I wonder. Even when well cared for, bright old people must suffer acutely from seeing their memory lose

its grip and their faculties disintegrate. So – blessings on the scientists who are seriously searching for a cure, and Lord, in your kindness save me from that slow death. May I be alive when I die.

Preparing for death used to be clear-cut, getting things off one’s chest, clearing one’s conscience, using the help of a priest. As a priest, I remember lovely encounters of this sort. An old Irish docker in New York, who had drifted away from his roots and from the church, was overjoyed to see a priest as he faced the end, and found that he still knew the words of the *Hail Mary*. The anonymous but familiar figure of a priest makes it easier to talk about the death you face – easier than when talking to family, who may feel it their duty to deny the approach of the end.

It should not be this way. Of the many ways to die alone, the most comfortless and solitary is when family and friends conspire to deny the approach of death. They may feel: *I couldn’t take away her hope*. But without acceptance of the truth, they remove the possibility of spiritual companionship at the end.

Dr Nuland, in his extraordinary book *How we die*, remembers with regret how the family conspired to avoid the truth when his beloved Aunt Rose was dying. “We knew – she knew – we knew she knew – she knew we knew – and none of us would talk about it when we were all together. We kept up the charade to the end. Aunt Rose was deprived, and so were we, of the coming together that should have been, when we might finally tell her what her life had given us. In this sense, my Aunt Rose died alone.”

Is the Paschal Mystery like an Onion?

Jim Consedine

I believe encountering the Paschal Mystery – the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus – is a similar process to the peeling of the onion. There is something about an onion that gives insight to this most central of Christian beliefs.

An onion is a very ordinary simple vegetable, common and accessible to all. It is simple in its structure. It has no flashy flowers like the showy geranium, no beguiling scent like the rose, no cluster of fruit like the potato. It is available to even the most humble person.

We commence preparation by clearing off its rough plain skin. As we begin to peel from the outside to access the inner core, our eyes become somewhat stung by the aroma. Indeed we can be quickly reduced to tears. Our whole being becomes affected as our emotions are brought into play to combat this effect. As we further peel back the layers, more and more of the juices attack our eyes. More and more we suffer by our action. However, we are motivated by the rewards for persistence which will come later with cooking and eating.

Finally, we access the very core of the onion where the most powerful aroma lies. From here, the maximum juice is sprayed around our faces. We are engaged completely for the moment in our encounter with it. Now the process is complete. With the onion spread out in parts before us, it is ready for its primary purposes: to provide food for our sustenance, to marinate our taste buds and to give us life-giving energy.

When we initially encounter the Paschal Mystery in our journey to Christ at its centre, we commence by peeling back some things which hinder our progress. We need to clear away the debris surrounding our lives. Inevitably, peeling back the layers of our own lives can sting us – one way or another. Reconciliation is the special sacramental rite available for such clearance.

As we peel back layer upon layer and enter more deeply into the Paschal Mystery, we can suffer in ways similar to

Christ on his journey to Calvary and the Resurrection. It is a major paradox of Christian life that the more we engage with the Paschal Mystery and seek Christ, the greater the suffering can be.

After further peeling back things that impair our faith journey, we start getting near the centre of the Mystery where Christ is the epicentre around which all else circumnavigates. And just like getting to the centre of the onion, we can now engage the very core of the Paschal Mystery and experience the rich presence of Christ.

Here the aroma is rich and bountiful, even though it can still contain a sting. Being there is not all joy and light. Often the closer we get, the greater the suffering. How do we explain this? It reflects the fact that the Crucified Christ is still with us in our world and suffers in our needy neighbour. It is part of the Paschal Mystery to understand this dimension. Christ is still among us and still suffers 2,000 years after Calvary. We still find Christ in refugee and squatter camps, in a million lonely flats in inner cities including our own, in thousands of hospitals and prisons. Wherever human beings suffer, Christ suffers.

The deeper we engage to ease that suffering, the more inextricably we are drawn into the Paschal Mystery. And the greater our own suffering can be. But it is not all struggle and hard work. There are other fruits to experience. There can be great joy at the heart of the Paschal Mystery, great inner peace and a sense of fulfillment. Indeed, all the fruits of the Spirit are available there in abundance. The Risen Christ rejoices wherever his Kingdom of love, justice and peace is lived in our time. And we can rejoice too.

Whenever people choose to live the Gospel seriously, to love their neighbor radically, to seek justice and reach out to the needy, there the Paschal Mystery is lived in our time in its fullest.

Yet even with the help of an onion, it still remains a mystery. ■

▷ What happens after that is the undiscovered country. But those who have gone to the frontier, glimpsed the other side, and then returned, remind us not to be afraid. My friend Kate, who almost crossed the frontier, remembers how she knew she was dying, and seemed to be free of her body. She was moving at incredible

speed towards God, and felt herself bathed in his love like an avalanche of warm light. In that brightness she realised that nothing else mattered, not sins or misfortunes or words or pains or her body. She was surprised by joy, could hardly stand it. At the moment of death, God takes over. Our resistance fades away. In the joy

of being loved by him, everything else becomes irrelevant. All the human constructs surrounding death, the medical attentions and the prayers, drop into unimportance as we release that for which we were born. ■

Paul Andrews is a Jesuit priest from Dublin, presently investigating the fish population of the Mataura river

jesus washes the disciples' feet - john 13:1-15

Imagine setting out to read all Gospels for the first time in this order: Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. Three gospels down. The end of the task is in view. A pattern has emerged. The reader approaches the end of John with expectation of a pattern: supper, institution of the Eucharist, arrest, passion and resurrection. Has something been missed? Read again. In John's account of the Passion, there is no "This is my Body" "This is my Blood" here. Instead, Jesus removes his outer garment, takes a towel and washes of the feet of his disciples.



ceremonies were part of some initiation rites of Baptism and in rites whereby Christians washed each other's feet (Mandatum Fratrum) and those of guests and the poor (Mandatum Pauperum).

Application

This coming Holy Thursday offers an opportunity to look anew at Jesus' astonishing action, his example and his

commandment to do as he did. Footwashing may be understood in three ways. One way places one person in a situation of inequality, for example, as in the case of a master and a servant. Another way of seeing it is as an action a person can do freely. Even then, the server remains superior as in the example of a mother and a child. In the light of the many references to friendship in John, Jesus' action can be seen as action of friendship based on equality.

What light does this interpretation shed on Peter's refusal to allow Jesus to wash his feet? Jesus asked after washing the disciples' feet: "Do you know what I have done to you?" (13:12). Then he explained: "... you ought to wash each other's feet. For I have set you an example that you also should do as I have done to you" (vv.14-15). The new commandment is about mutual love (vv.34-35) which Jesus repeats (15:12) and links to the ultimate love of his dying for friends (v.13).

It is highly likely that Peter understood all too well that to let Jesus wash his feet would mean that he would have to change his way of viewing the world, a conversion he was not yet willing to undergo. In other words, it was like Peter's rejecting the death of Jesus as understood as laying down his life for his friends. This was about a whole new order of human relationships and self-giving. So, the meaning of the foot washing for us today is not about self-humiliation but about participating in Jesus' work of transforming ways of relating to each other. It is also about transformation in church and society. ■

Kathleen Rushton is a Sister of Mercy, scripture scholar and spiritual director, living in Christchurch

What does the footwashing mean?

The evangelist gives two interpretations. The first is found in the conversation between Jesus and Peter (13.6-11). When Peter protested "You will never wash my feet," Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me". To which Peter replied, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Then Jesus replied, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean." Peter at first does not recognise the deeper meaning of Jesus' words. The footwashing indicates that it is possible to have eternal life with Jesus. It is a symbol of his life-giving death and the humiliation he will experience.

The second interpretation sees Jesus' action as an example which the disciples are to imitate. A love commandment in action is found in the words Jesus spoke after he had washed the disciples' feet: "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example that you also should do as I have done to you" (13:12-15). The action of Jesus then is an example or paradigm of love. The disciples are to carry out this love commandment even to the point of laying down their lives for others as Jesus does (v.15).

Thus, foot washing symbolises participation in the death of Jesus. It also is an act of humility and an example that the disciples were to imitate. These three strands are found in the church's earliest liturgical traditions. Footwashing

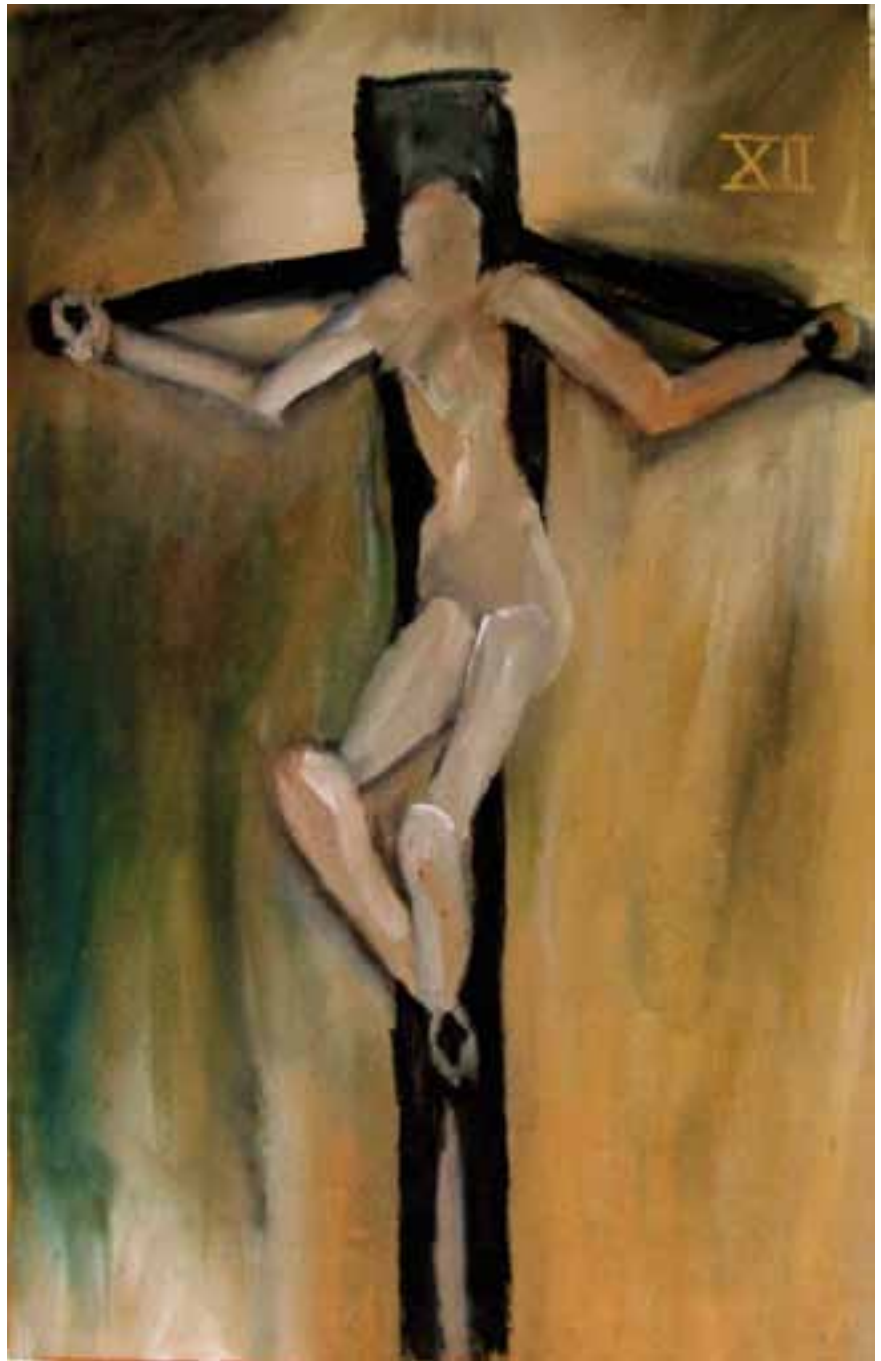
The day of 9/11

if Christ came again
could he share with us
the shame of our condition?

that day when the
brooding horizon
reached the step of our doorway
all were tainted
brushed with horror
for our human lot became
too much to bear

can we load on Christ
what causes us to stumble
every step of the way
actions beyond comprehension
etched into our psyche
that entered our very habitation
seeped through the cracks
we hoped were hidden
we stand exposed

where is hope now?
can we even comprehend
the possibility of redemption
for with this darkness
all are crucified
the burden is laid on us



death will you set us free
from this
worse than death
the moment of our shame
stripped of our humanity

Mary Horn

The painting is one of a series of 14 Stations painted by Dominican artist, Mary Horn. The poem was written the day she completed the series

new zealand hymns of the very highest standard

Hope is our Song – New hymns and songs from Aotearoa, New Zealand
The New Zealand Hymnbook Trust, 2009

Price: \$35

Review: Charles Cooper

Three cheers for the *New Zealand Hymnbook Trust*! Within the last 18 years, its editors have produced four collections of hymns, carols and sacred song: Alleluia Aotearoa, Carol our Christmas, Faith Forever Singing and this latest, *Hope is our Song*.

Once again, we are offered a wide selection of words and music which is 'contemporary' in both language and imagery, and 'indigenous', reflecting the setting and culture of our own land and peoples, while responding to the challenges of our own time. In the main, they are eminently singable and this collection can be mined for a wide variety of needs – the liturgical worship of a Sunday congregation, gatherings of children, teenagers or young adults, informal meetings and family occasions. It is to be regretted, perhaps, that in spite of searching, the editorial board has been offered few works in Maori and none from the Pacific Island communities.

The collection is of a very high standard. New Zealand is blessed to have poets and composers of high calibre and international reputation. Shirley Murray, Joy Cowley, Colin Gibson, Marnie Barrell, Jillian Bray and Barry Brinson are well-represented in this collection, as well as Witi Ihimaera, Chris Skinner, Helen Fisher, Cecily Sheehy and Jenny McLeod.

Inevitably, judgement is subjective to some extent, but I have gone through the whole book playing through each of the 158 hymns, songs and poems. Over 100 I've noted as *brilliant*, *a delight*, *excellent* or *very good*. Many of them are, clearly, the fruit of deep prayer and profound thought. Another

25 I've marked as *acceptable and worth using*. Only about 20 I'd class as *also ran* as well as about 10 where the words are very good but the tunes are not. This leads me to one regret: that while the book is in alphabetical order and superbly indexed, especially according to themes, worship and sacramental services and the liturgical year, there is no metrical indexing to give ready use of those 10.

Perhaps because the *Hymnbook Trust's* books don't include settings for the sung parts of the Mass, Catholics have tended to overlook these collections and depend upon imports from England, Ireland and North America. But with many of the texts giving expression to Catholic Social Justice principles, this has been to our loss. I would hope Catholic schools and colleges, church musicians and clergy will seriously consider the bounty these books offer.

In *Hope is our Song*, "Honour the Dead" is a hymn by Shirley Murray for Anzac Day. When it was shown to Helen Clark, herself a competent musician, she expressed the hope that this hymn would make "a significant contribution to the expression of our nation's identity on Anzac Day" and be sung in memorial

services both in New Zealand and overseas.

As I write this, Lent is almost upon us, when every parish will be preparing for Services of Reconciliation with the Second Rite. They could do no better than include, from *Hope is our Song*, these three verses of Marnie Barrell's hymn:

*God, come now to explore my heart,
to lead me deep within.
Help me to descend the quiet path,
and let me there begin
to build my trust and face my dread
of having all revealed:
the needs ignored, the faults denied,
the guilt and grief concealed.*

*God, enter now the hidden place
with gently searching light;
I freely give you keys to doors
kept far from others' sight.
Come, mend the broken, heal the hurt,
speak peace to ease my shame,
restore the good you see in me
and call me by my name.*

*God, show the unsuspected gifts
you placed there from the start.
Your love now makes me bold to find
the treasures in my heart,
the missing parts of your design
entrusted to my care;
then lead me back to love and serve
with all I have to share.*

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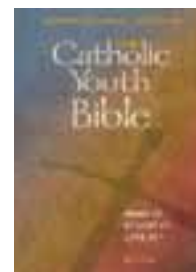
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why the israelis and palestinians are at each other's throats

Balfour and Weizmann: The Zionist, the Zealot and the Emergence of Israel

Geoffrey Lewis

Continuum UK 2009. 203 pp

Price: \$64 hdbk

Review: Michael Hill, IC

If you were to read the history of the actions of the British War Cabinet under David Lloyd George during 1917, at the height of World War One, you might think that it would be wholly preoccupied with the devastating and bloody military campaign in Flanders, costing hundreds of thousands of young lives. Yet much of its time and energy was taken up with an entirely different topic – the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine after the war ended. Why this preoccupation? This book tells the story of the Zionist movement and the conversion of leading British politicians to its cause, leading up to the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

Anyone wishing to learn more about the origins of the present woeful impasse between Israelis and Palestinians will discover it all here. The story is spelt out through the lives of two utterly contrasting people: Arthur Balfour – English aristocrat, Prime Minister from 1903 to 1905, Foreign Secretary under Lloyd George and architect of the agreement establishing the Jewish 'home'. The other was Chaim Weizmann – Russian Jew, immigrant into Britain, for much of his life the prophetic leader of the Zionist movement.

Lewis describes Weizmann thus: "... the most potent advocate Zionism ever had. He was adroit, sure-footed and resourceful with an instinctive gift for diplomacy that was uncanny... his charm of manner captivated those whom he wished to seduce, especially British statesmen...

He possessed the power to fire the imagination of his listeners with a sort of mystical belief in the destiny of his people and the significance of its survival."

The book is filled with limpid passages like this one. Lewis catalogues the unfolding of events at great pace, and draws the key characters with wit and clarity – perhaps sometimes rather too glibly. He traces this history with critical precision: the pogroms in Eastern Europe in the late 19th century which precipitated Zionism, anti-Semitism in Europe, the rise of pro-Zionist sentiment in liberal, democratic Britain round the turn of the century, the heyday of British Imperialism and the arrogance of the great powers in parcelling up the Middle East according to their desires even before the war was over, with callous disregard of the indigenous peoples.

The book relates many details of European history which are less well known. The terrible pogroms in Eastern Europe where most of the world's Jewish population resided were the trigger for mass emigration. During the final decades of the 19th century over two million Jews fled to the West – to the United States, to Britain and Western Europe, a few even to Palestine itself.

The arrival of so many penniless victims in Britain aroused a wave of humanitarian sympathy. A home must be found for these rootless people. One place suggested was Uganda. However, for one so profoundly conscious of the destiny of Jewry as Weizmann, only the holy land of Israel would do. This ideal – the return to Mount Zion – was pursued with a burning passion, and it was the zeal of the Zionist leaders which persuaded and converted British leaders like Balfour and David Lloyd George.

Yet neither the Zionist leaders nor the leading British politicians seemed to spare a thought for the Arabs living in Palestine. The Ottoman Empire in decay had misgoverned and neglected the whole of what is called the Fertile Crescent: Palestine in particular was poor and neglected. Nevertheless, it was home for 600,000 people whose ancestors had been there for generations.

In the first drafts of the Balfour Declaration the Arab inhabitants received no mention. Eventually, however, a rider was added "that nothing shall be done to prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine..." This safeguard was soon forgotten.

After the war Palestine became a British Mandate from the League of Nations. The settlement of Jewish immigrants proceeded apace. Arab protests were largely ignored, and the seeds of the present conflict were well and truly sown.

Geoffrey Lewis presents us with an absorbing account. But history is read not just to inform and entertain. I feel that his book lacks a final chapter of evaluation. The religious dimensions of Zionism are not dealt with. The injustice inflicted on the indigenous Arabs is passed over lightly. If we do not study and name these injustices of the past, then nothing is more certain than that they will eventually happen again. ■

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can we catch up with australia?

The PM says it's a realistic goal; the Reserve Bank Governor says it's not; the Finance Minister says it's 'aspirational'. It would be realistic to acknowledge that the NZ economy is in a mess and that NZ is now the eighth most unequal society amongst the 50 most affluent – an improvement from sixth thanks to 'Working for Families' (which also has anomalies). Our statistics for mental and physical health, violence, imprisonment and teenage births and crime generally are roughly in the same range. The task is to find a sensible way to develop an economic system that generates positive outcomes for all instead of breeding grounds for ill health, poor education and crime.

A 'NZ Herald' report on a recent paper by Professor Philip McCann sets out his argument that our relatively poor productivity is explained by economic geography and history. Over the past 20 years economic growth and globalization have favoured larger urban centres in most countries. This leads to a widening gap between these 'hubs' (like Sydney) and their peripheries (like us).

Fortunately we have a lot going for us, and although some of the findings of a series of task forces set up by both the current and previous governments make disturbing reading, they at least point to ways in which rational improvements can be made.

respected parliamentarians

Sue Bradford and Jeanette Fitzsimons have both recently resigned from Parliament. It was interesting to see the tributes from political friend and foe alike regarding their integrity, legislative effectiveness and refusal to indulge in the less salubrious practices of the 'bear pit'. There have been many hard-working parliamentarians over the years who have neither starred in the debating chamber nor indulged in personal

Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

denigration; they may not have achieved much in the way of legislation but nonetheless ably looked after the interests of their constituents.

edging towards corruption

'Social Capital' takes a long time to build but can be lost within a generation or two. Pope Benedict defined it as: "The network of relationships of trust, dependability and respect for rules, all of which are indispensable for any form of civil coexistence".

There has been a weakening of social capital in NZ in recent years. One significant factor has been the influence of 'the market knows best' economic theory and practice which, in effect, uncoupled economics from human values. Its adherents claim the market operates most efficiently if allowed to be independent. It will magically regulate itself.

The effect in NZ has been devastating. Tens of thousands have been deprived of their savings through the corrupt practices of those Mark Weldon, CEO of the Stock Exchange, describes as 'scoundrels lurking in the caves of unlisted public companies'. This, in turn, has reinforced the lack of trust engendered by the 1987 crash. People are afraid to risk investing in sound business ventures that can result in employment and export opportunities.

Weldon is one of many calling for meaningful regulations to help restore trust.

new role for bankers

It appears that MI6 is recruiting former City of London bankers who recently lost their jobs. People who are intellectual high-flyers, are

well travelled, well read and have a broad understanding of other cultures are sought to replenish the ranks of spies. But they have to take a pay cut.

US Law and NZ

The US Supreme Court recently declared that, in relation to freedom of speech (read 'political advertising'), business corporations must be treated like human beings, or other associations of people. Arms manufacturers, oil companies etc are not noted for their benign attitude when profits are at stake. Political positions taken by businesses are dictated by their competitive needs in the market – not by the views of their shareholders, officers, or directors. These latter are required by law to attempt to maximize shareholder profit – even if they believe such actions will harm their workers and the common good.

Why should we worry? Although the Lower House is representative, the Upper House is not. Its members (Senators) are elected in equal numbers from each state – two – irrespective of the population base. Thus one State with less than two percent of the population of another has the same number. If a Party has forty-one percent of Senators it can effectively stymie the ability of the majority to pass legislation.

This, taken in conjunction with the ability of big business to dominate election advertising, constitutes a threat in that big business could well have an even greater influence on future US government and thus on US foreign policy.

there's no escape!

I spent most of my working life trying to avoid the tyranny of the telephone. Now I read some sadist has made a cell-phone that makes a noise if you forget to take it with you! ■

why catholic schools?

The arrival of the summer edition of Bedean News from my alma mater St Bedes, prompted me to think again about the purpose of Catholic schools. I have always felt a sense of disconnection from this white, middle-class, rugby obsessed, status conscious culture of individual success, reflected in this 84 page, picture laden, up-market magazine. Apart from a photo of my old and revered teacher Barney Ryan and three or four other priests and a passing reference to the Gospel, this magazine could have come from any state school.

Absent was any reflection on matters of social justice, the preferential option for the poor, the 200,000 children growing up in poverty in New Zealand, our failure to honour the Treaty relationship, the obscenity of our involvement in the occupation of Afghanistan. The sociological evidence tells us that social values of those who claim to be Christian/Catholic in New Zealand are no different from those who are not. As the product of a Catholic education I have always found this quite troubling! It reflects my daily struggle

as I contemplate my own comfortable middle-class lifestyle.

There is one possible explanation here. In reviewing books on Catholics who joined the Nazi Party before and during the Second World War and those 'practising' Catholics who participated in the Rwanda genocide in 1994 I came across a phrase which sits with me. They had been "baptised, but not evangelized". They went through the rituals of being Catholic but their actual faith was quite abstract. I wonder how many of us Catholics and church leaders including bishops, model this paradox.

During my eight-year period working for CORSO in the 1970s I rediscovered the immense goodness in people regardless of religious knowledge, belief or practice. This remarkable organisation, which captured the good-will of nearly 70 New Zealand national organisations, attracted a wide range of religious believers. It was also strongly supported by those with no religious belief – atheists, humanists and Quakers, all of whom were generous, hard-working

volunteers. Again, there appears to be no difference in behaviour between the practising Christians and non-Christians.

As I get older I have become convinced, as many others before me, that the love reflected in the life of Jesus is the only hope for the world. It is our willingness on a daily basis to see the humanity in every single human being. If we took this seriously we would stop shooting our enemies and feed the poor. The price could be high. Helder Camara, the famous Archbishop of Recife in Brazil, used to say "if I help the poor, they call me a saint. If I ask why are they poor, they call me a communist." Jesus, in his time was seen by the Roman authorities as a troublemaker and a threat to an oppressive state. The love promoted and practised by Jesus is dangerous and finally got him nailed to a cross.

I wonder if the risky, uncomfortable message of Jesus and the Gospel, coupled with a hard-headed social analysis of New Zealand society, will ever be talked about at past-pupil gatherings of our Catholic schools? ■

Robert Consedine

Robert Consedine is a Christchurch Catholic layman, with special interest in matters regarding the Treaty of Waitangi

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A Mothers Journal...

Spicy and sour – tamarind, yoghurt, chickpeas and spices. I wonder why I have taken so long to make this chole that I've seen street vendors sell every day for the last two months. Even seven year old Rohan, wary of anything with potential plant content, likes it. It adds tang to my day, a new successful recipe.

Confitemini Domine, quoniam bonus. I trust in you O God, for you are good.

Teacup parked on the window sill. Swirls of steam blur with a smoggy pink dawn. This cup of Lady Grey sends prayer whorls up for me as I sit steep stairs spiraling to our tiny flat, unable to find my own words of prayer.

Confitemini Domine, quoniam bonus. I trust in you O God for you are good.

Ash Wednesday. Lent – disciplines of Scripture reading, fasting and doing without – are a continuous state of being for many of our neighbours in this grimy, crowded slum. Except they aren't choosing to live with less – in fact they don't have many choices at all. I feel frustrated that I can't make things better. And aware that my clumsy attempts to respond to need may perpetuate a prevalent image of white people as rich, powerful patrons. I can only be here beside our neighbours.

Confitemini Domine, quoniam bonus. I trust in you O God for you are good.



Toddler Jalori and I go off to get the milk early. On the way home we stop at the park. The grimy benches are washed surprisingly clean by last night's thunderstorm. Hindu men sit with eyes closed in yoga meditation. Others with long beards use rosaries to pray long Urdu prayers to Allah as they walk slow circuits. I sing a Taizé chant to Jalori as she circles the puddles. I swing her onto my back and we head back home.

Confitemini Domine, quoniam bonus. I trust in you O God for you are good.

Kaaren Mathias

Kaaren Mathias is mother of four and married to Jeph. The six of them are living in a small flat in Delhi, India, over the winter.

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