

TUI MOTU InterIslands

CELEBRATING 21 YEARS 1997–2018

Issue 226 May 2018 \$7



Promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies

Whakatairangahia te tika me te whakawhaiti tangata, puta atu ki ngā hapori whānui

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Cover Art

by Theresa Niulevaea, aged 12,
Year 8 at St Joseph's School,
Otahuhu, Auckland.



TuiMotuInterIslands



Tuimotumag



EDITORIAL

Encouraged by the Spirit

The winds, kissed with the first hint of snow, are sweeping the South, signalling the change of season, the impetus for us all to take stock. And life is responding before our eyes — we are wrapping up, the trees are going wild with colour, plants are hunkering down or dying back into mulch and other life is preparing for winter. In this Pentecost season of change, our attention to the powerful presence of the Spirit breathing in our universe and our lives, reinvigorates us — and we recognise the disturbing, encouraging and loving breath inspiring us.

We've chosen the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies and strong institutions around the world as our theme for this Pentecost issue. Like all the global goals, it is something we both long for in the world and can feel helpless to bring about. Page by page we offer the experiences of men and women who, in Mike Riddell's words, feel the Spirit as an "outpouring not a bottling up" and are committed to bringing greater understanding, fairness and opportunities to their environment and communities. Susan Connelly tells of the extraordinary courage of the East Timorese people who, supported by the Church, lived for years under cruel oppression without retaliating violently even with great provocation. Kathleen Rushton reminds us this Spirit of courage and love flows "through all creation, an unseen wonder known by what it does, the effect it has and how it feels". We can feel heartened.

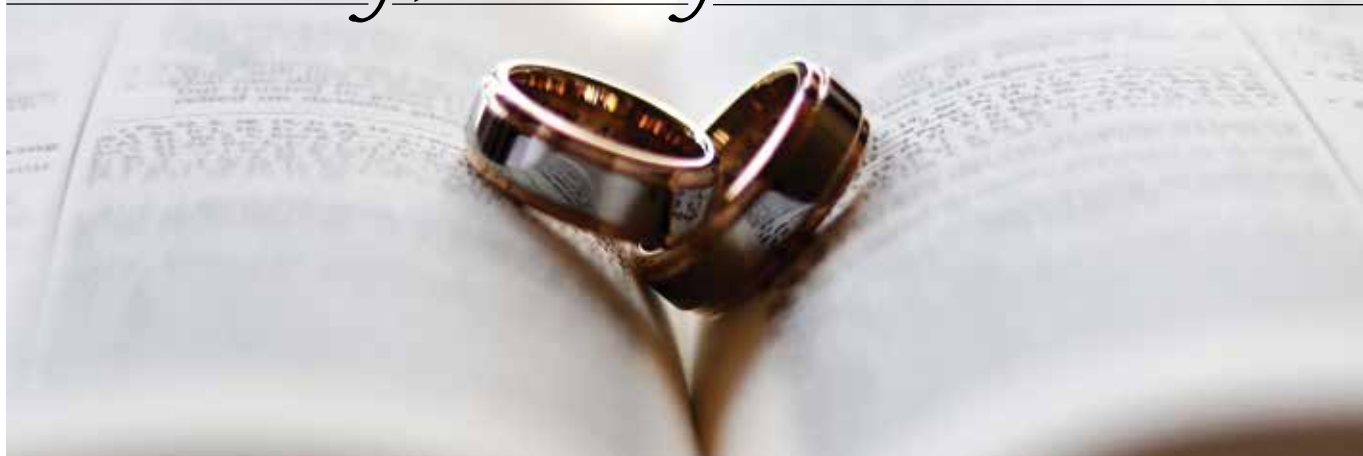
When we asked St Joseph's School, Otahuhu to create art for this Pentecost issue exploring the 16th UN global goal, we were unprepared for the treasures they created. Although their work graces almost every page, we weren't able to publish every image so we've made an exhibition of all the art on our website — www.tuimotu.org

Our gratitude goes to the young girls of St Joseph's and their teachers and to all the contributors to this magazine — that's around 50 people — whose faith, reflection, scholarship, art, craft and creativity have made this 226th issue a spirited read.

Remember that Kaaren Mathias will be speaking at the *Tui Motu* Subscribers' and Friends' evening in Wellington on Friday 11 May. The details are on our website.

And as is our custom our last word is of blessing.

Rings, Readings and Rituals



This month has been one of great excitement as my partner and I got engaged. Naturally enough, I've been reflecting on marriage, weddings and the meaning of two people coming together to make a public and sacred commitment to each other.

As someone who grew up attending Catholic school and weekly Mass, my early ideas of love and marriage were partly shaped by the Church and surrounding community. In my teenage years I moved away from the Church, experiencing many of the same issues described by Alice Snedden in her recent columns, struggling to reconcile my own beliefs in justice and equality with an institution that I experienced as unjust and judgemental. One of my friends had an abortion during our second-to-last year at a Catholic girls' school. Another didn't feel able to come out as gay until he had finished his final year at a Catholic boys' school. There was no sexual education but we were lectured about sin before going out to seek it. While my own parents and their friends were socially progressive, I felt alienated from the Church and drifted away.

For a time, I did not think marriage was for me as I couldn't see a way where I would get married if my gay friends were not able to do so. I've now had the joy of attending several beautiful weddings of same-sex couples and I feel energised by my generation's efforts to redefine and reclaim marriage and what it means to them.

There is something truly joyful about being part of, and witness to, that moment in a wedding where people you love and care about exchange vows and make loving promises to each other and receive the encouragement of their friends and family.

There is a wonder and awe in some of the traditions. For others, the sooner they're declared obsolete and consigned to the history basket the better. From the engagement, which is no longer necessarily the man's prerogative to initiate, to who will keep or change their surname, lots of traditions are up for debate.

It's more common now for both the people to walk down the aisle (rather than just the woman with the man waiting at the altar) and to have both parents (rather than

just the father) do the walking. This is a better expression of the values of partnership and equality in marriage than the former practice where the bride was "given away". Many people opt to get married outside, or in venues other than churches.

What is it about weddings that can bring such hope and happiness? I wonder if part of it is because many of us grew up without, or being disconnected from, a Church community and do not have many opportunities in daily life for ceremony or ritual. There's a certain joy that comes from singing as part of a group without feeling self-conscious, and revelling in being part of a collective that's bigger than yourself. The desire to have a life event full of meaning and ceremony may be part of why we as a modern society continue to invest so heavily in weddings. From the planning, to the emotion, to the finances, weddings are certainly not going out of style despite the divorce rate remaining fairly high.

If our communities were more inclusive and connected and we had more occasions on which to celebrate with ceremony, perhaps weddings wouldn't become such an intense focal point. For me and my fiancé we are now reflecting on how to create a meaningful wedding that reflects these ideals.

In the end, it's not the table centrepiece or the wedding dress that matters. It's that moment when a couple opens up a special and sacred part of themselves to each other and to all who are there as witnesses. When vows are exchanged and two people marry each other, we all share in the joy of an outward and public expression of deeply held love. The ceremony and the ritual comes alive when it is focused on that special moment where love is celebrated as a public commitment in community. 🌀



Julia Spelman, of Ngāti Hikairo descent, is a barrister at Pipitea Chambers in Wellington. She helped to found JustSpeak and is now Chair of the Board.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come

MIKE RIDDELL reflects on Pentecost as an “outpouring not a bottling up” where we are constantly invited to commit to the passion and adventure of loving all.

“Each one heard them speaking in the native language of each” (Acts 2:6).

Pentecost, it is said, marks the birth of the Church — a celebration of a turn outward. A group of frightened and disillusioned followers experienced something that caused observers to believe they might be drunk. Instead these voluble disciples were seized by the Holy Spirit, ecstatic and transformed.

The blessing they received, commonly celebrated as “the gift of tongues”, might more accurately be celebrated as “the gift of ears”. I owe this insight to a friend who examined the account in the book of Acts closely, and noted that the significant part of it is that the surrounding cosmopolitan crowd heard in their own native languages.

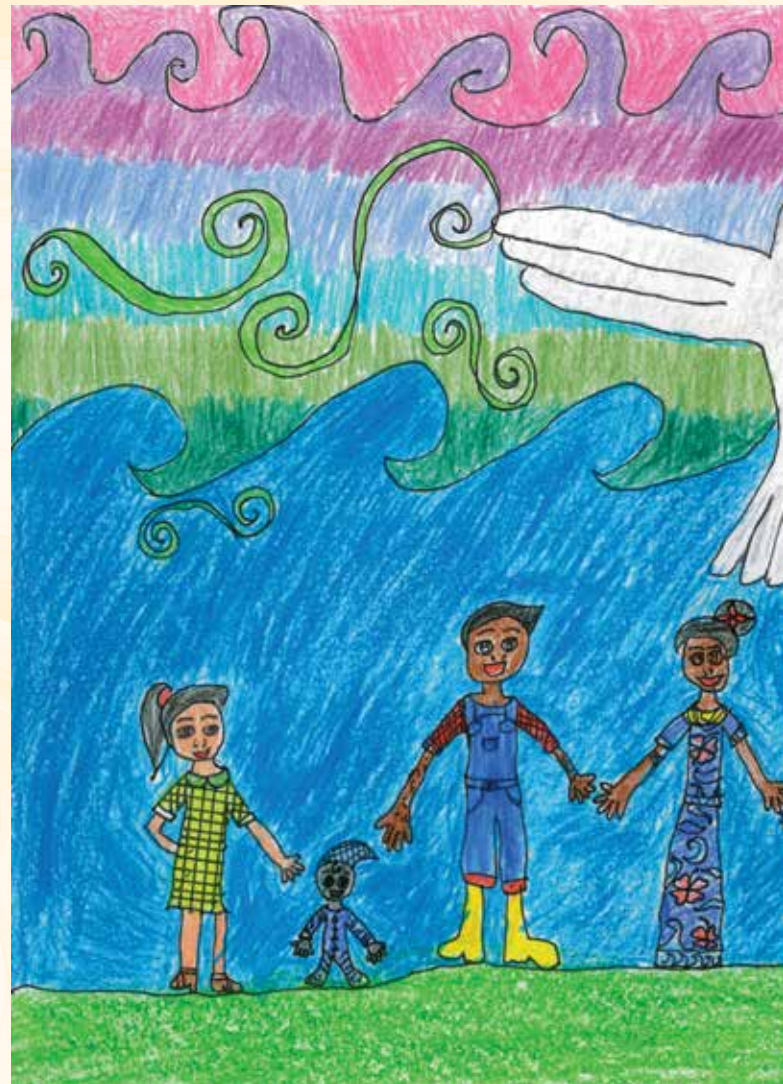
When you’re far from your homeland, it’s arresting to hear your own tongue being spoken. It causes you to listen. How things have changed. Now it is the Church that speaks a foreign language, and there are few listening and even fewer understanding. The expectation is that outsiders must learn the dialect of the religious institution.

I reflected on this recently while reading the banned book *Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of George Pell*. His ministry as Archbishop and later Cardinal seemed to cohere around the idea that the world must conform to the insights of the Church, rather than the Church adapt itself to society. This is not an attractive proposition to those who have witnessed systematic abuse in the halls of religion.

Invited to the Threshold of Becoming

The Holy Spirit, an integral member of the Trinity, is the same Spirit indwelling Jesus, and Jesus is God among us. In theological terms, this is known as the consanguinity of the Trinity. What it means for us is that the Church, to be the Church of Christ, must be consistent with the outward-facing mission of Jesus and the events of Pentecost.

The overarching question is whether we discover God in the past (deposit of faith), or in the future (beckoning from the horizon). My own reading of Scripture, and experience of God, leads me to the conclusion that we are



constantly being invited to join the divine movement that takes place on the threshold of becoming. That’s where the action is.

Receptivity in Brokenness

Some 20 years ago I wrote about an experience in a Ponsonby Bar where a good friend and I had gone to have a quiet drink on a Sunday evening. Unknown to us it was the celebration of the establishment’s first anniversary and a party was in process. As we sat down two blue-sequined transvestites hopped up on the bar and performed a routine to the song “I Will Follow Him”.

More pious folk than I might have been outraged. Instead I experienced the gentle yet palpable presence of the Holy Spirit. Here, among the outcasts and supposedly morally bankrupt, I discovered Christ. In that flash of insight, I realised that this was not an exception to the rule, but an example of where the tender heart of the Trinity is always at work.

I suspect that my openness to this was the result of the deep suffering that I was undergoing at the time. My life

“Pentecost is an outpouring, not a bottling up. In our embracing of it, we follow the one who has captured our hearts and made them his own.”



and my certainties had been cracked open by events, and I was a broken man. Here among fellow broken creatures, I discovered the light and healing joy of Christ, which up until then had bypassed me.

Instead of seeking to “talk” people into my religious framework, I was in a place where I began to understand their language. In this setting, I learned that their argot was suffering. I was one of them — a hearer rather than a speaker — and from that place I understood that God was among us in a way that I had not experienced in Church.

An Edge of New Growth

Many people of faith have suspected that this sort of claim is a sign that my framework is no longer Christian. In fact I suspect it was my point of genuine conversion, even though I had been the leader of a congregation for some years before that. It wasn't that I broke free from the Church. In fact I became a Catholic, and took on the scandal of that institution.

But since that day I understood that as a purported follower of Jesus, I would need to not only *remember* in the

elements of the Eucharist, but to *imagine* the future among the hearers of Pentecost. To do less would be to betray the vision I have encountered in the Gospel. I'm sure I do so anyway, but try not to do so intentionally.

Here among the broken I've discovered that many crave love rather than morality, healing rather than correction, acceptance rather than judgement, belonging rather than membership. I've learned that our sexual identity is unique to us, and never to be despised or shamed. I have heard the cry of the poor and disenfranchised, and in it the invitation of God to be with them.

I love the fact that Jesus wept at Gethsemane; that Paul prayed for his affliction to be removed; that Peter cursed in the courtyard of the High Priest. These are the elements of the humanity we all share. It doesn't diminish us — rather it humbles us to know that we are cracked vessels, through which the light of divinity may well shine.

We're not called to save the world — that has already been done. Instead we are called to fulfill the promise of our own being while remaining authentically human. I have found large parts of the Church to be dehumanising. The clericalism, misogyny, legalism, judgement and homophobia of the institution can be overwhelming. These forces make us less than we might be, not more.

Committing to the Passion and Adventure of Love

The fire of Pentecost will always be for me a blaze of passion and adventure, not a pyre on which to burn dissidents. I try not to waste my time on correcting the Church, but connecting with the world outside it. I acknowledge that I am part of a scandalous institution, but continue to make my lot with the people who will never darken its doors.

In each life, and in each corporate body, there is a choice between preserving what has been, or opening to what might be. I seem to remember some wisdom along the lines of “those who love their lives will lose them”. Pentecost is an outpouring, not a bottling up. In our embracing of it, we follow the one who has captured our hearts and made them his own.

The Church, it has been said, is both the first fruits and the harbinger of the realm of God. None of us are adequate for this invitation, but in our stumbling steps outside the walls we may find that realm in the presence of others. Come, Holy Spirit, come! 🌀

Art by Genesis Tupa'i, aged 9.



Mike Riddell writes novels, plays, films and apology notes. He cooks when he can and breathes intentionally on a daily basis.

BEATING AND BREATHING SPIRIT



HELEN BERGIN writes of the Spirit as the shared loving of God, a presence and power among us, in the world and through the universe.

We dwell within an immense universe with expanding and multiple galaxies.

Some astronomers or pseudo-astronomers (such as self-taught Fraser Cain) maintain that there could be two trillion galaxies beyond planet Earth — most of which we will never see or even begin to understand!

By contrast, we sometimes stop and marvel at the vulnerability of a tiny moth or a brightly-coloured butterfly which is each so fragile and whose time-span is limited.

It seems that God's Holy Spirit has a connection both with the far reaches of the universe and with the lives of the tiniest of creatures.

The Spirit is "livingness" in all its manifestations.

Beloved and Disturbed

When we focus on the Gospels, we note that Jesus of Nazareth was a person committed to and dependent on the Holy Spirit. Each of the four Gospels opens with the story of the Spirit "resting on" or "coming upon" Jesus at his baptism. This image of divine presence suggests Jesus as one chosen and cherished by God. Yet, a very short time later, Jesus is led by the same Spirit into a wilderness where for 40 days he experiences temptations, hunger and the lack of all human company.

We might rhetorically ask: "What had happened to God's cherishing of the beloved Jesus? And, where was God's loving Spirit of intimacy and re-assurance?"

God's Shared Loving

Traditionally, the Holy Spirit has been depicted as the overflowing love emerging from the deep love shared between the first and second divine persons of the Trinity. It was during the fourth and fifth centuries that St Augustine of Hippo described the Spirit as the shared "loving" within God — the love between the Father/*Abba* and the Son. So, the Holy Spirit was (and is), the eternal loving which exists between the first and second persons of the Trinity.

Oil of Gladness

In this post-Easter season, we rejoice with new members of the Christian

community who were received into the Church at Easter. Some of us will have witnessed candidates (or the new members) first receiving Baptism with water and then being gifted with chrism (or holy oil) which was signed in a cross on their foreheads. It is to a brief focus on the holy oil that we now turn.

During the celebration of Baptism, both the bathing or the sprinkling of a person with water and the gifting or anointing with the Holy Spirit are significant elements.

A beautiful description from the fourth century comes from Cyril of Jerusalem who wrote some “instructions to the newly baptised”. Cyril reflects on Jesus’s baptism in which John the Baptist first witnessed Jesus’s descent into the river Jordan and then noted the presence on Jesus’s head of the Holy Spirit appearing in the form of a dove.

Cyril, in his one of his *Lectures* to the newly baptised, states: “You have become ‘Christs’ by receiving the sign of the Holy Spirit . . . Christ was anointed with the spiritual oil of gladness, that is, with the Holy Spirit, who is called the oil of gladness because he is the author of spiritual joy; and you have been anointed with chrism because you have become fellows and sharers of Christ” (*Catechetical Lecture* 21:2).

It is apparent from Cyril’s encouragement that the waters of the Jordan in which Jesus was baptised and the Holy Spirit’s presence at Jesus’s baptism both affirm the freshness and the joy which ought to be the fruits of every Baptism — especially in this post-Easter season.

It might be tempting when reflecting on the Holy Spirit to focus solely on the loving and mutual engagement among the Holy Spirit and the other two divine persons of the Trinity. Yet, the Spirit’s person and mission while sourced in infinite, divine love also encompasses Earth and Earth’s creatures — as well as an ever-expanding universe.

Spirit’s Presence and Power

So, in what situations might we hope to know the presence and power of the Holy Spirit?

Might we not discover God’s Spirit when a wronged person courageously forgives another without holding grudges or recalling previous hurts? Might we not sense the presence of the Spirit when a mother, father or caregiver has the will to keep loving and encouraging a difficult child within the home? Might we not marvel at God’s Spirit who encourages a woman or man to seek for the “99th” time employment worthy of a living wage and, of equal importance, a deeper sense of self and of well-being?



The Spirit is God often kindling embers which may burst into fire — but, the fire of love as opposed to that of blaming others.

The Spirit is God often kindling embers which may burst into fire — but, the fire of love as opposed to that of blaming others; the fire of just rage as opposed to sitting on the fence; the fire of truth-telling rather than choosing to remain silent.

Glimpses of the Spirit

I wish to offer two examples of the Holy Spirit “alive” in our small portion of the universe.

Arriving home recently, I was walking alongside the common hedge shared between a number of residents and the nearby parish

school. I suddenly heard from the other side a group of young school children discussing what song they might sing. One little voice called out “Let’s sing that ‘Allelu’ song. It’s so lovely!” I could not but be impressed by the response of the other children who had also been clearly inspired by their teacher’s musical enthusiasm. Without any adult prompting, the little group began singing “Allelu” in the playground on a late weekday afternoon.

Second, I am regularly impressed by a man (probably in his 30s or 40s) who sits on the church steps in Auckland most weekday mornings. We often exchange greetings. He sometimes tells me where he had been sleeping rough overnight. He is always gracious and pleasant and through our conversations I always sense a spirit/Spirit of perseverance and of hope as he “kills time” before heading to breakfast at the City Mission. Thanks to this man’s positive attitude, I am so often provoked to gratitude for the comfortable home in which I can sleep and be at peace every night.

Whether the presence and divine gift of the Holy Spirit is expressed through the tenacity and giftedness of recently-deceased physicist Stephen Hawking, or in the poetic gift of Edwina Gateley — “We strain to glimpse the Infinite beating and breathing about us” (*Spirit-Power*) — or in Sermon 34 of gifted theologian St Augustine — “Sing with your voices, sing with your hearts, sing with your lips, sing with your lives!” — we can only be exceedingly grateful for the Spirit’s presence and mission in our midst. The often-used description of the Holy Spirit as the “gift of God” was pertinent in Acts 2:1-4 and is equally welcomed today. We are indeed grateful. 🌀

Title art by Edilinenamo Ainea, aged 11.

Art this page by Jacqui Peto, aged 11.



Helen Bergin, a Dominican Sister, lives in Auckland. Having previously taught theology she hopes now to focus on some theological writing.

ENOUGH – It's Time to Act

CHRISTOPHER JOHN interviewed David Raurau of the Solomons and learnt why he led a peaceful protest against Australian companies drilling on his people's land.

Standing up to injustice, seeking dialogue, even risking our life for a good cause are challenges which can come at any time to "ordinary" people. I've listened to many stories of people rising to these challenges and I've met many of these ordinary and inspiring women and men as they sought to build just, peaceful communities. Let me share David's story.

David Raurau in the Solomons

Savo Island is a small volcanic island in the Solomons — a 35km boat ride away from the capital of Honiara. The volcano at its centre is still occasionally active, and people in the coastal villages can enjoy the hot water which flows in its streams. It's also a nesting ground for the megapode.

David Raurau, in his mid-40s, is a member of the Third Order of the Anglican Society of St Francis in the Solomon Islands, an Order equivalent to the Catholic Secular Franciscan Order. In his younger days he'd tested his vocation with the SSF First Order friars, but felt called to return to his family life and his village on Savo Island. There he joined the Third Order to keep alive his Franciscan connection and the values which were formed in him when he lived in community.

Seeing and Judging the Injustice

In 2013 he was touring some of the other villages with the priest and heard that the Speaker of Parliament, along with the then Member for Savo (and paramount chief of the island) and other chiefs had given permission for two Australian companies (Geodynamics and its joint venture partner, Kentor Energy)

to do exploratory drilling at 87 sites around their island. Each site would require a 100 x 100 metre clearance. He asked the local landowners — how do you feel about this? They objected. They had not been consulted and were not convinced that the project would benefit them and other Islanders. And more seriously, they knew of the corrupt financial deals by which such decisions were often made.

Their strategy was not to fight people or promote violence but to be united against injustice and corruption.

Taking Action

David realised someone needed to do something to stop this and decided to pray about it. He asked God: "Who will you send to stop that company?" He became convinced that the answer was: "Me! Now!" He went back to his home and posted a notice on a tree advising the companies that trespassing was not allowed in that area. He heard that the screening had already started at a number of sites in his area and the next morning asked the men in the village: "Who will join me?" Six of them agreed. They spoke to the machine operators and advised them that they were trespassing.

Standing Firm for Justice

Two days later early in the morning a large number of police arrived by fast boat. David heard that they wished to take him and his supporters to court. He told the six men with him not to

quarrel or fight: "We go in peace." A policeman then came and said there would be a round table talk with all the parties concerned. David agreed. They were taken back to Honiara in the police boat but were handcuffed on arrival and taken to the remand cells.

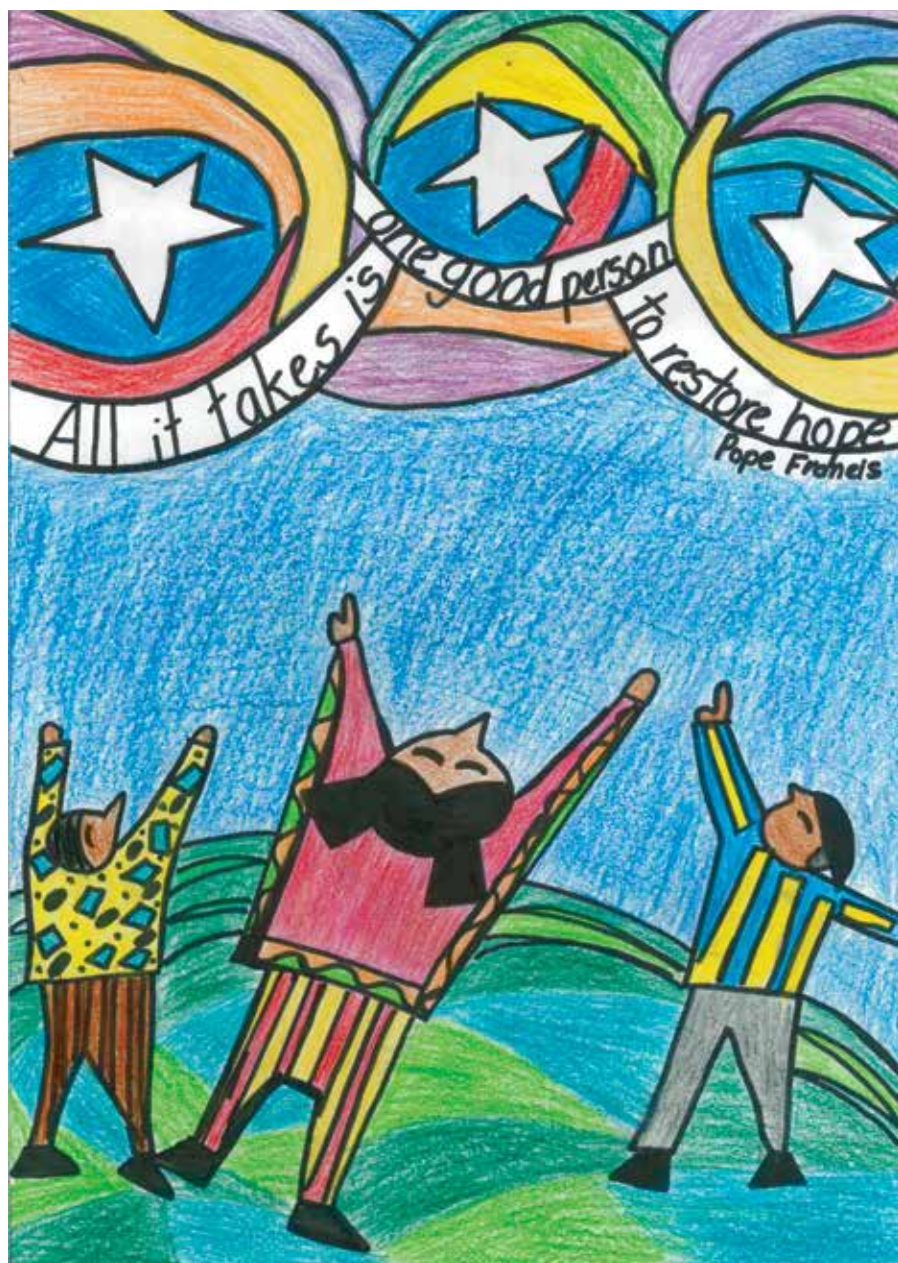
After two days without food or drink David shouted out: "We're not criminals, please give us water!" They were eventually given water and finally David was asked for a statement and then he and his companions were given some food. On the third day they were transferred to prison.

David is convinced that the police were directed "from above" — by the Speaker and members of parliament and chiefs who had made the agreement with the companies. The men were kept in prison for one month, still without charge and not knowing anything about what was happening. Finally, David was charged with making wilful accusations and after a long struggle was able to find a lawyer to represent him and his companions, and to obtain bail. The bail conditions included a weekly court appearance which required him to make a trip of several hours by runabout from Savo to Honiara. If they were delayed by weather, they were fined for non-appearance. But people rallied round in support and the boat driver carried them at no cost.

Eventually the men were released without the matter proceeding to court, and the companies stopped their exploratory drilling.

Toll on the Community

But it hadn't been plain sailing.



knew that if he hadn't taken action then creation on Savo would have suffered. He also knew that it was important to join with St Francis in fighting against injustice. He said working in this way for his people and God "is part of my vocation".

Was he frightened? Yes — he knew the power of big people to destroy little people such as himself, but he felt that God was on their side and supporting them. Now his fellow Islanders recognise that he was doing something very good for them in protecting their land and environment.

Was prayer important? Yes — his intervention began in prayer and was supported all along in prayer. Although it resulted in imprisonment and loss of money, he wasn't worried because he felt that "God sent me for this purpose". Prayer strengthened him during his time in prison. He realised that those keeping him locked up were also his brothers. How could he fight them? He said that they needed to unite in fighting against the corruption of the government and the collusion with big business which would disenfranchise those most affected at the grassroots level. Their strategy was not to fight people or promote violence but to be united against injustice and corruption.

David was and is committed to stand against injustice. He and the group showed courage in action, and unselfishly encouraged and supported others. They refused to be dominated by the power of money.

As David explained: "When you like to be God's follower or Jesus Christ's follower, you must be carrying your cross — and the cross means everything you have must be for people, for serving them. If you have courage, it is for doing things for people. If you have faith in God, then you need education for building up others. Even if people hate you — go with God and serve others first." 🌀

Photo of David Raurau by Br Christopher John.

Art by Rita Timoti-Hohaia, aged 11.



Br Christopher John is a member of the Anglican Franciscan friars. He is the Order's minister general, responsible for its worldwide leadership.

While the men were in court their reputations suffered back home. David was accused of being a bad person for making such trouble. He still accepted those who rubbish him. When he was released people told him how grateful they were. He said: "I told everyone, this is God's dealing, God's will. I'm happy to do it for you. I'm happy to use whatever resources I have to help everyone. If we don't do this, then the company will spoil everyone's lives."

Although the company offered compensation of \$15–20 Solomon dollars (around NZ\$3) per coconut tree or mango tree they would cut down — quick cash which might tempt people to agree — David pointed out that losing their trees

would have a long-term effect, since they would lose their food supply and the regular income they now got from selling their crops. And compared to the small amounts for compensation to landowners, it was alleged \$6 million was gained by the Speaker, parliamentarians and chiefs.

Community Against Injustice and Corruption

In 2014 further attempts by the companies to renew the agreement failed because by then all the local landowners recognised that the exploration was not in their interests. And it transpired, the geothermal company had not been given a proper licence for the project in the first place.

David said that as a Franciscan he

A Forgiving People



SUSAN CONNELLY explains why the people of Timor Leste choose to respond nonviolently to the years of injustice, betrayal and self-serving opportunism by their neighbours and invaders.

René Girard was a historian, an anthropologist, a philosopher, a man who loved literature. But his insights also draw on the bottomless pit of wisdom which theology and scripture offer. They can provide an interpretation of events in the shared history of Australia and East Timor.

A Little History

In December 1941 during World War II, several hundred Australian troops entered "Portuguese Timor" against the wishes of the neutral Portuguese administration. Two months later Japanese troops arrived, but the Timorese sided with the Australians. When the Australians withdrew early in 1943, the Timorese were left with 20,000 Japanese troops who stayed until the end of the War. They were not happy with the Timorese support of the Australians, and their reprisals, coupled

with Allied bombing of Japanese positions, caused an extraordinary loss of Timorese lives. The death toll is conservatively estimated at 40,000 people. The Portuguese then returned to administer the territory.

Upon their withdrawal in 1975 Indonesia invaded East Timor, an action which Australia did not oppose. The journalists known as the "Balibo Five" were murdered at this time. The following 24-year occupation of East Timor decimated the Timorese people. Between 102,000 and 183,000 out of a population of 650,000 died as a result of extra-judicial killings, torture and politically-induced starvation.

Australian dependence on Indonesian favour affected policy regarding East Timor by all successive governments. In 1979 Australia recognised Indonesian sovereignty and

argued for years that East Timor be taken off the UN agenda. Throughout the occupation Australia was implicated with other international actors in providing Indonesia with weapons and military training. Indonesia was never officially challenged.

International dissent and solidarity finally led to policy change. After the UN-sponsored referendum in 1999 through which the Timorese separated from Indonesia, the Australian-led military force INTERFET supported the transition to local rule.

A Girardian Interpretation

Reflection on these sad facts reveals that the Timorese people assumed the position of "judge" as a result of the violence they suffered in their relationship with Australia. They became judge with the innocent victim Christ.

The term “victim” has many unfortunate uses and connotations. Here it is used in the sense in which Girard uses it, that is, as the sacrificed “scapegoat” in situations where social crises impel dominant groups to blame and punish others. To shore up its own protection, the group unites around an unfortunate entity which provides a focus for fear, a handy whipping-boy to take the blame for the crisis. This Girardian use of the word does not share the “Ah, poor me!” overtones of popular usage.

In this sense, the Timorese people were victimised for decades by a fearful Australian nation. As victim the Timorese were sacrificed during events where other nations with expansionist agendas placed Australia in difficult geo-political situations.

Stance of Nonviolence

A crucial aspect of the Timorese population's resistance to the Indonesian regime was its consistent nonviolence. As the situation became better known, the Timorese stance demonstrated their position as innocent victim. One of the proudest claims the people can make is that during the occupation not a single Indonesian civilian was murdered by a Timorese.

After the vote in 1999, Timorese resistance fighters were ordered by their leader Xanana Gusmão to remain in cantonment areas even while they could see the capital Dili burn. Without any means of ascertaining the fate of their loved ones, the soldiers displayed the discipline that allowed the international community to see that the violence was all coming from the Indonesian military and their militias.

Integral to this nonviolence was the influence of Christianity through the Catholic Church, whose unifying rationale went to the heart of the people's experience. This was acknowledged by former East Timor President José Ramos-Horta in his acceptance speech when receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996. He spoke of the personnel and work of the Church as pivotal to the people's ability to live with “the daily threats to their very existence.” He commented: “The people of East Timor owe almost everything to their Church.”

Timorese as Judge

The Timorese people were sacrificed by their neighbouring countries to concerns which were considered of greater importance than their lives and welfare. They were generally ignored except where their geographical placement promised their neighbours some material prospects or strategic advantage. They were treated as pawns in political games of rivalry and the pursuit of security. Their contribution to the welfare of Australian soldiers in World War II remains largely ignored. Their Indonesian murderers were cajoled and fawned upon. The Timorese people suffered the classic treatment meted out to scapegoats, as for decades they “lacked a champion”.

As Jesus of Nazareth stood before Pilate, the judgement meted out to him was a transparent concoction.

“Forgiveness cannot be an immediate response to violence, but the arrival at a decision to forgive signals that the violated one intends not to be controlled by the past.”

Onto him was placed the blame for a mishmash of rivalries and fears. But in essence, it was he who sat in judgement on his accusers and murderers as the case against him collapsed.

In the face of undeserved accusations of being communist and “unviable”, the victimised Timorese also assumed the role of judge. The fearful, self-serving actions of their large neighbours are revealed in stark contrast to Timorese independence, innocence and courage. As theologian James Alison states, it is the very position of the victim as *victim*, which bestows the authority to judge.

Imitating Christ as the Forgiving Victim

But in what does this judgement consist? Alison argues that in Christ, it is the approach of the *forgiving* victim towards the victimiser that is the ultimate judgement. This is so because the quintessential victim, Christ forgave, and he enjoins forgiveness in and with him.

The resurrection introduces the possibility of a complete reversal in

human relationships. The presence of the crucified and risen Lord “permitted a manner of looking upon reality that had previously been impossible.” That manner of looking upon reality entails being able to see from the perspective not only of the victim, but of a victim who forgives. It is this perspective that the Timorese have enacted in regard to their neighbours.

The status of East Timor as a forgiving victim is rare in the world arena. This distinctive response received the commentary of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN's Special Representative during East Timor's transitional administration (1999-2002). António Guterres, now Secretary-General of the UN, stated in 2010 that de Mello “described the Timorese people's capacity to forgive as the most surprising thing he

encountered there, something he had never seen elsewhere, despite having witnessed a wide variety of conflicts.”

Yet this immensely difficult task has serious risks. It can seem useless and can be interpreted as a betrayal of the past and of those who suffered. Forgiveness cannot be an immediate response to violence, but the arrival at a decision to forgive signals that the violated one intends not to be controlled by the past. As Robert Schreier in his book *The Ministry of Reconciliation* notes, “Forgiveness is an act of freedom.”

The Timorese people have done what Girard has advocated in the conclusion to his book *The Scapegoat*: “The time has come for us to forgive one another. If we wait any longer there will not be time enough.”

Art by Mikayla Sieu, aged 10.



Before writing her PhD thesis Susan Connelly RSJ worked in the Mary MacKillop Institute developing a Tetum reading programme for East Timor.

We're HUMANS with RIGHTS



CHRISTOPHER JOHN asked Justin Dagomi in Papua New Guinea about his journey to becoming a human rights activist against an international company operating in the Oro Province of Papua New Guinea.

Justin Dagomi in Oro Province, Papua New Guinea spent a short time in the Franciscan First Order before leaving the friars but his Franciscan calling never left him. Now at 35 he's returned to the friary at Haruro, Popondetta and is living with the brothers as an aspirant and observer. I asked him what happened when he realised an international company was treating its workers like slaves.

Gauging the Injustice

In 2014 Justin started working for Oro Wood, a Malaysian logging company which operated a sawmilling factory near Popondetta to process the logs cut from nearby areas.

He discovered that the company was ignoring the human rights of its workers. "They were not giving fair wages, and there was no concern for health and safety standards. We were overworked. We often started at 7am, some finished at 7pm, others later at 9pm. Sometimes at 9:30." Those who worked 12-hour days were paid only 200 kina (NZ\$85) or less a fortnight.

The mill work was very labour intensive. For example, bark was stripped from the logs by hand chisel — outside and without any shelter from the sun or clean drinking water.

"Safety equipment wasn't provided — only safety boots. But these were not provided when we started work. They would provide them any time they wanted to. A week after I started work I went to the office and asked for a pair of boots. They said: 'Yes, come back after lunch.' But when I went back there was no one there to give any boots." So Justin continued working in sandals for two weeks until, after repeated requests, the operations manager came and threw the boots on the ground at a distance from Justin.

"That's the time that thoughts were beginning to etch into my mind. As citizens of this country I came to understand that they were abusing our rights as citizens. Our Constitution clearly defines our

basic rights and freedoms as well as our obligation to others and the state. One of the rights is to be free from inhuman treatment and enforced labour. This one really rang in my mind — so I decided to start passing the message around because of these things. Unfair wages. Health and safety standards were not upheld." There was a lack of information, too, about schedules and duty rosters. "We were treated like machines." The company also refused to recognise workers' existing qualifications and experience, did not provide in-house training and would not provide workers with references when they left.

Further, it seemed that the company was operating illegally without the proper certification for a foreign owned company in PNG.

Action for Justice

Justin decided to test the interest among his fellow workers in engaging in some form of industrial action for better conditions. He said: "Interest accumulated and people gathered. We decided on the day of action and in the morning we all went to work. It was in the morning we put a stop to everything. The company was silent. The bosses came out and asked: 'What's happening?' But everybody stood in the company yard. The management was confused. And also the workers who stood out there. Only some I had contacted were aware of what was happening. Then I walked out straight. I came out in front of the group. 'We're on strike,' I told the man, 'because of these unfair wages, these working conditions. You are depriving our freedom as citizens. You are mistreating us.' I told them everything. Our aim was to get the wages on a fair ground.

"The security manager came out and pointed a gun at me. I just turned round and saw the gun pointed at me and looked back at the manager. I didn't worry about the gun."

The company argued that the workers were not union members. Justin replied that the company had not created any way for the workers



to become unionised. He further replied that God created humankind and gave human beings natural rights and freedom. These come before unions. Unions are a human creation but what God gives needs to be in first place.

The core group leading the strike was only about 10 people, but the number of workers who went on strike was up to 200.

Justin then beckoned the workers to return to their work and the management called him into the office. They demanded to know who was with him in the planning. He said it was his own responsibility. They insisted but he refused to tell, particularly to protect his fellow workers.

This ended Justin's time with the company, but he kept up his campaign, writing to people including the provincial governor, Minister of Labour and a workers' rights NGO. It resulted in a slight increase in workers' wages and later a government inspection of working conditions. In the face of the pressure the overseas staff started leaving PNG and the company closed down. A second company kept one side of the yard in operation producing sawn timbers.

Faith, Courage and Struggle

I asked Justin how he felt standing in front of the workers and leading

the strike. At first, he said he felt that perhaps he was wrong. But then he suddenly realised that people were being treated as slaves.

"When I looked and saw the senior workers, the mothers, the women, trying to fend for their families, my heart broke for them. So, I just told the management: 'Boss, we're on strike.' Seeing them gave me courage. And for me the turning point was when the manager threw my safety boots on the ground, as if I was an animal, not a human being with rights.

Justin now feels that he has become an activist for human rights. He saw the exploitative use of power, and with others drew on faith to respond with direct action.

"My Christian faith also gave me some courage, because people who know God can treat each other fairly. People who do not know God will not. So, I decided to speak out. My Christian upbringing also gave me the understanding and courage to speak out for the rights of everyone. And those who would come later."

I asked about what happened to the Oro workers. "They had to

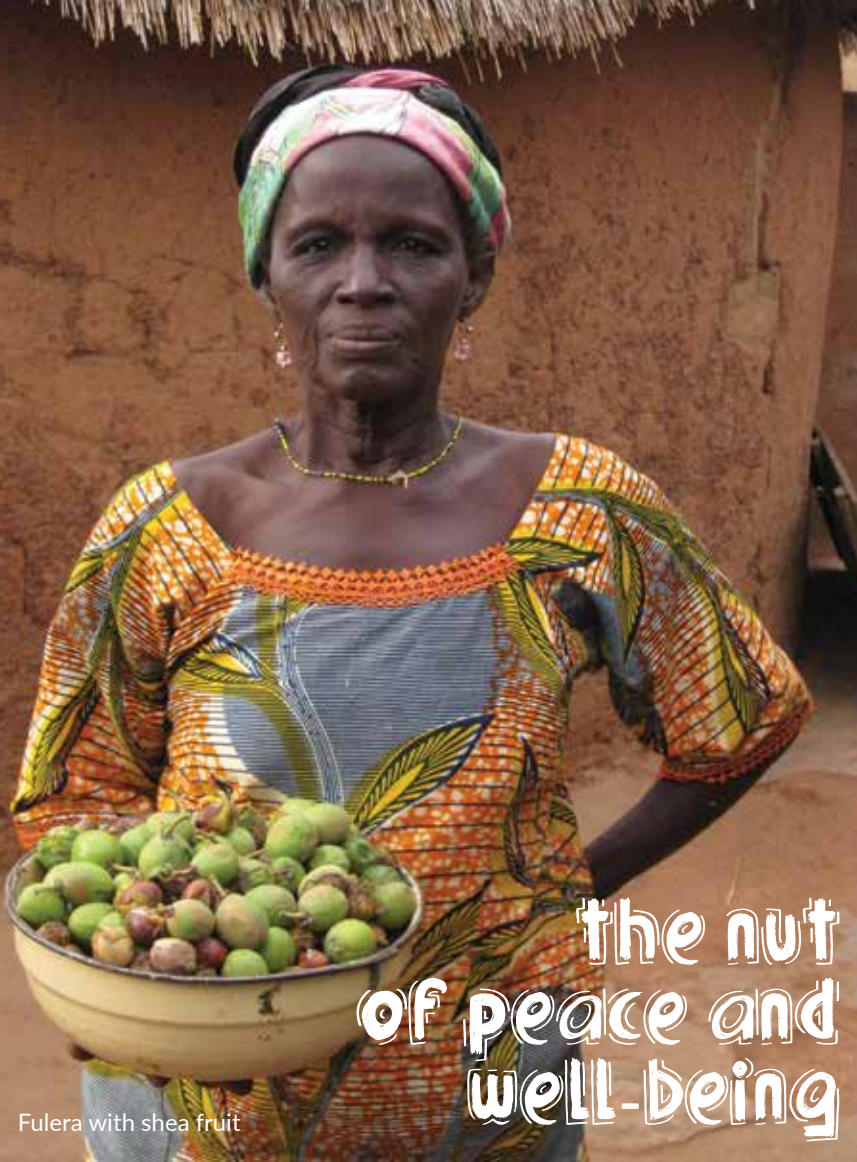
sacrifice a bit because the little money they were earning at Oro Wood came to a stop. They were telling me they are back to planting taro and all this because of what I did. They did have higher wages for a while but that stopped. But now there is a new company coming in that is going to produce cartons. They are promising not to be like Oro Wood but to have proper conditions."

Justin now feels that he has become an activist for human rights. He saw the exploitative use of power, and with others drew on faith to respond with direct action. They recognised, too, the ambiguity of their actions. Certainly they disrupted the workers' "benefits". But they realised the price of the "benefit" was unsustainable and they inspired their community members to sacrifice in the short term so that their future could be built on a more secure foundation, respecting the rights of all. ✿

Photo of Justin Dagomi by Br Christopher John.
Art by Leila Schmidt-Sopoaga, aged 12.



Br Christopher John is a member of the Anglican Franciscan friars. He completed his PhD in the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Otago University.



Fulera with shea fruit

the nut of peace and well-being

ILKA FEDOR tells of meeting Ghanaian women in a shea butter producing collective, an initiative that has given their families access to education, healthcare and a sustainable livelihood.

Women sit in a circle, chatting away amicably. As young children toddle around them, it's easy to see that the phrase "it takes a village to raise a child" applies here. The women had gathered early in the morning and promptly got to work processing shea butter. They are the women of the Pagsung Shea Butter Association, a collective of over 40 shea butter producing groups working in co-operation in the Northern Region of Ghana. Through their participation in Pagsung (which means "good woman") they've moved out of economic hardship, gaining a sustainable livelihood and a better life for their families.

In the West, we know little about shea butter or of the work involved in making it, although it is an ingredient in many of the products we use every day. Shea butter is derived from the kernel of the shea fruit. Traditionally, rural families in Ghana use shea butter in cooking, but it also has many positive properties for the skin and hair. Also known as *butyrospermum parkii*, shea butter is naturally high in vitamins A and E and is found in soaps, moisturising lotions, shampoos, conditioners and sometimes in the base of

pharmaceutical creams. Shea butter processing is a skill predominantly passed down to women in rural regions of sub-Saharan Africa. Since the early 2000s, shea butter has gained popularity in Western societies, with many international companies interested in sourcing good quality shea butter directly from the producers.

Women's Owner-Operated Collective

In 2010 I spent six months working for Africa 2000 Network (A2N) in Tamale in the Northern Region of Ghana, creating an international business plan for Pagsung. A2N partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to promote women's empowerment and increase sustainable sources of livelihoods in rural areas of Ghana. Pagsung, founded in 2008, is only one of many collectives in Ghana, a country fast becoming a global leader in high-quality, unrefined shea butter. Pagsung alone has just over 1,500 members, all of them women, and is unique from other shea butter collectives because it is owned and managed by the producers themselves.

This owner-operator structure is beneficial in that there is no middle-man taking a cut of profits and the women have greater control. But it also poses a challenge: most Pagsung members have no formal education and no English, which makes access to the international market nearly impossible. Therefore, guidance from organisations like A2N and the UNDP is essential to their success. In addition to introducing Pagsung to international buyers, A2N and the UNDP helped the members of the collective by educating them on operations management and quality control so that their shea butter is of an acceptable standard for international sales. The involvement of A2N and the UNDP to Pagsung was key: regular orders came from such businesses as The Body Shop UK and the Japanese skincare company Laurel or Shiro.

Producing Shea Butter

When I first started work with A2N, I shadowed one of the women in the Pagsung collective to better understand their product and their work. By participating in all steps of production, I quickly learned just how laborious and physically demanding the production process is.

The process begins with harvesting the fruit of the shea tree, an indigenous and perennial crop that grows wild in semi-arid regions of Africa but can also be cultivated. In the sub-Saharan climate of Northern Ghana, wild shea trees thrive and produce fruit in abundance. The sweet shea fruit is often eaten and is also sometimes sold.

The butter is a product of the nut kernel.



Shea butter ready to be packaged for export

After separating the fruit from the large nut, the nuts are washed and sun-dried and then crushed to reveal the inner kernel. The kernel is then roasted and ground into a paste that has the consistency of peanut butter.

The next step is the most physically demanding: water is added to the paste which is then hand-kneaded and hand-whipped to emulsify the oil. Hand-kneading the paste takes strength and stamina, so it is usually the most robust women who participate in this step. It takes about two hours to hand-knead and whip one large basin of shea paste into emulsification.

Boiling the paste is the next step. The paste is melted to evaporate the water added during the previous step and leave the oil. After boiling the oil is strained through a fine filter. The filtered oil is then cooled into a solid and is finally ready for packaging and sale. The entire process, from fruit picking to packaging, takes two weeks and involves no chemical processing.

Family and Community Wellbeing

Pagsung has changed these women's lives. Before their involvement in the community, the vast majority were economically disadvantaged, struggling to find a sustainable livelihood. After their first year of participation, the women of Pagsung were interviewed to discover what, if any, benefits they experienced from working in the collective. They reported that their lives had improved dramatically. They said that the income they made through Pagsung gave them access to healthcare which was previously unaffordable. They could also afford to educate their children, a luxury that many of them themselves had been unable to enjoy. Participants also said that membership in Pagsung improved the atmosphere in their marital homes by relieving financial stress: many women previously relied solely on their husband's farming income, so the money made through Pagsung provided financial stability to their families in times of drought and poor weather.

Though the women of Pagsung are predominantly Sunni Muslim, they welcome members of other religions. Ghana is a special country in that regard: a former British colony and the first African nation to gain independence in 1957, Ghana has a high level of religious tolerance. Perhaps due to this tolerance, it is also one of the most peaceful nations in Africa. The women of Pagsung, regardless of their differences in age or religion, have formed a unique and mutually beneficial collective that provides a truly sustainable source of income for previously underprivileged families. I feel fortunate I could experience a brief glimpse into the lives of these incredible women, and to see how their tenacity and spirit has lifted them into a better future for themselves and their children. 🌿

Photos by Ilka Fedor ©



Ilka Fedor originally from Canada, has lived in New Zealand for 10 years and has worked in Japan, Ghana, Australia and the USA.



The Quilt

As they say it does
Just before I died, like a small ocean
my life flattened into a wavy
patchwork quilt

Just before they went glassy, as the say they do
my eyes suddenly saw everything clearly

and at the completion of the last stitch
they understood the whole complex interweaving

My darkest times were now the brightest patches
and the 'sinful' piece held them all together.
The weakest patterns came from my proudest
moments

and my deeds of goodness
were the most threadbare of all



The finest colours, I learned
were mixed at twilight, without permission;
and the shapes of beauty, only now so clear,
were drawn with my left hand —
wild and pagan

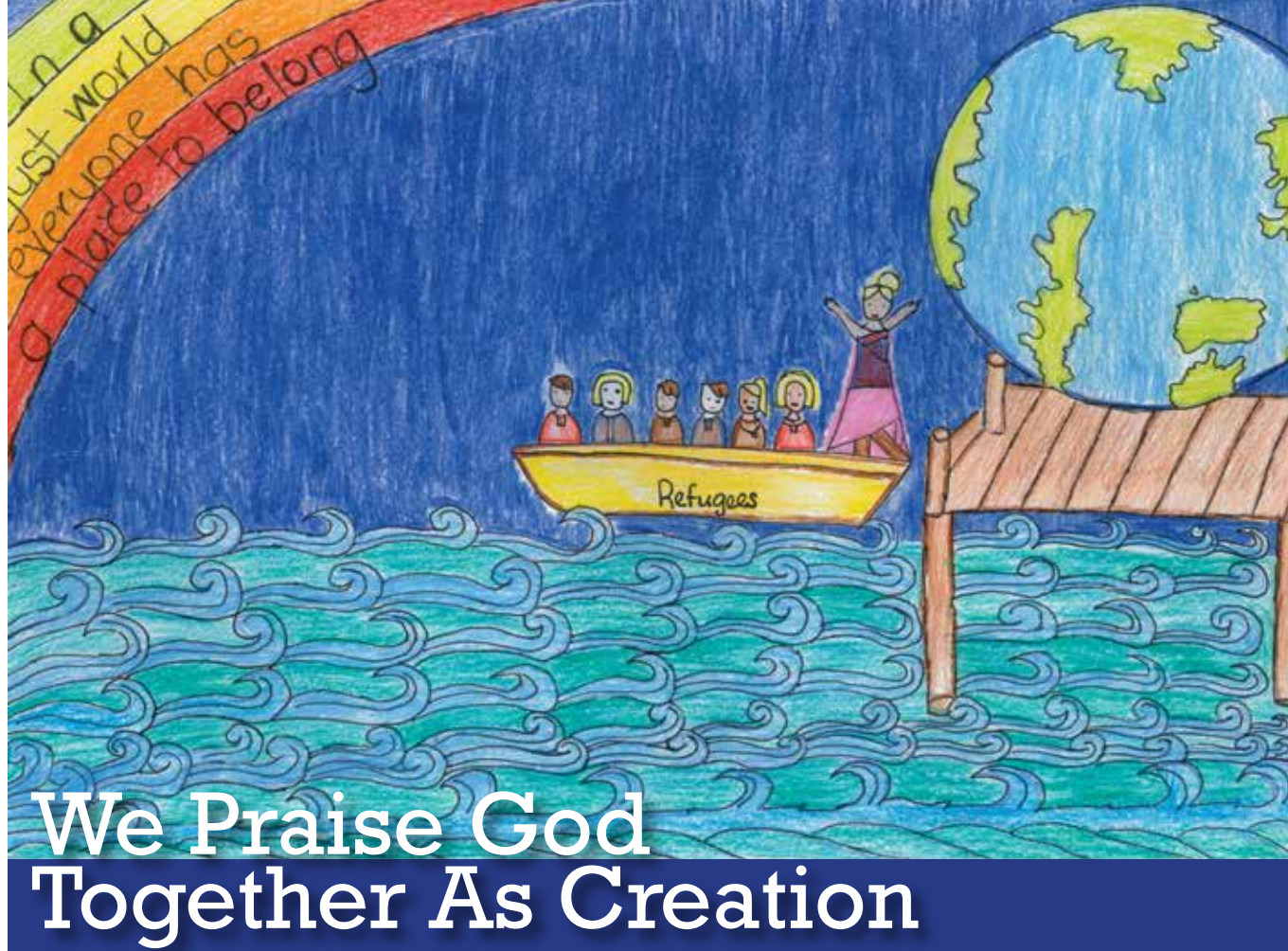
And then I saw a shy and shining thread of gold
(and remembered telling it in confession) —
a moment that was unknowingly divine . . .

And as they say it does, a secret was revealed to me —
The light in the dark of mystery

— Daniel O’Leary

In *The Heavenly Habit*. Columba Press: 2017: 13.

Quilt: *Tenuous Membrane* by Thom Atkins ©
www.thomatkins.com



Art by Frances Moeono Sabine, aged 11.

PHILIP JEFFARES describes how the *Canticle of Brother Sun* gives an understanding of Franciscan spirituality.

St Francis of Assisi is too often portrayed sentimentally — but a little more familiarity with his actual life, deeds and writings shows that he was anything but sentimental. He was compassionate, but also stern and uncompromising in the demands he placed on himself and expected from his followers, especially the friars. For example, in his *Testament*, written close to the end of his life, he urges a dire punishment for the friar who refused to pray the office: “And the custos shall be strictly bound, by obedience, to guard him strongly day and night as a prisoner so that he cannot be snatched from his hands until he shall personally place him in the hands of his minister. And the minister shall be firmly bound by obedience to send him by such brothers as shall watch him day and night like a prisoner until they shall present him to the Lord of Ostia, who is master protector, and corrector of this brotherhood.”

Canticle as Song for Friars

One of the most accessible ways to approach Francis's spirituality is through his *Canticle of Brother Sun* — from which

Philip Jeffares OFM is Guardian of San Damiano friary in Auckland, assists at St Francis Retreat Centre and is a national spiritual assistant for the Lay Franciscan Order.



the title for *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis's encyclical on Care for Our Common Home was drawn.

The *Canticle* expresses the relationship between God and all of creation including humankind. Francis wrote it in several editions during 1225 towards the end of his life. At the time he was suffering from a number of painful illnesses, including an eye disease that made exposure to sunlight unbearable. The *Canticle* emerged from his desire to overcome his feelings of despondency about his declining health and his concern and disappointment at the direction his many followers were taking. He expressed his intentions in this way:

“Therefore for His praise, for our consolation and for the edification of our neighbour, I want to write a new ‘Praise of the Lord for his creatures’, which we use every day, and without which we cannot live. Through them the human race greatly offends the Creator, and every day we are ungrateful for such graces, because we do not praise, as we should, our Creator and the Giver of all good” (*The Assisi Compilation*).

The *Canticle* is directed to God: “All praise be yours Most High through all that you have made.” Very few of Francis's prayers have an “I” or “me” anywhere near the opening lines. The well-known *Peace Prayer of St Francis* — “make me a channel of your peace . . .” — has “I” and “me” recurring through it, but it was composed in the spirit of St Francis after the horrors of World War I and captured his spirituality for successive generations.

Francis understood creation as praising God first and foremost and he addresses all the different elements of creation in kinship terms — as brother and sister. He includes humans at the end of the list, which suggests that other identities in creation are in fact tuakana — older siblings to humans — our elders whom we should appreciate and respect

Canticle of Brother Sun

Most High, all-powerful, all-good Lord, All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour and all blessings.

To you alone, Most High, do they belong, and no mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your Name.

Praised be you my Lord with all your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, who is the day through whom you give us light. and he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour, of you Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in the heavens you have made them bright, precious and fair.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and fair and stormy, all weather's moods, by which you cherish all that you have made.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water, so useful, humble, precious and pure.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth who sustains and governs us, producing varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

Praise be you, my Lord, through those who grant pardon for love of you and bear sickness and trial.

Blessed are those who endure in peace, by you Most High, they will be crowned.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whom no-one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Blessed are they She finds doing your Will.

No second death can do them harm. Praise and bless my Lord and give him thanks, and serve him with great humility.

more. Francis said that we include ourselves with the rest of creation in praising God through peacemaking, reconciliation and by embracing all of life's experiences — even “sister Death”.

Canticle as Song for All


Early biographers of St Francis recorded instances showing his deep understanding and commitment to peacemaking and reconciliation. Francis was informed on his sickbed of a bitter dispute between the Mayor and Bishop of Assisi “who thoroughly hated each other”. In response Francis composed the final *Canticle* verses about peacemaking and reconciliation, together with a stern reminder about dying in a state of sin. The brothers sang the *Canticle* repeatedly to the Mayor and Bishop who were so moved that they were reconciled publicly.

Peace, Reconciliation and Kinship

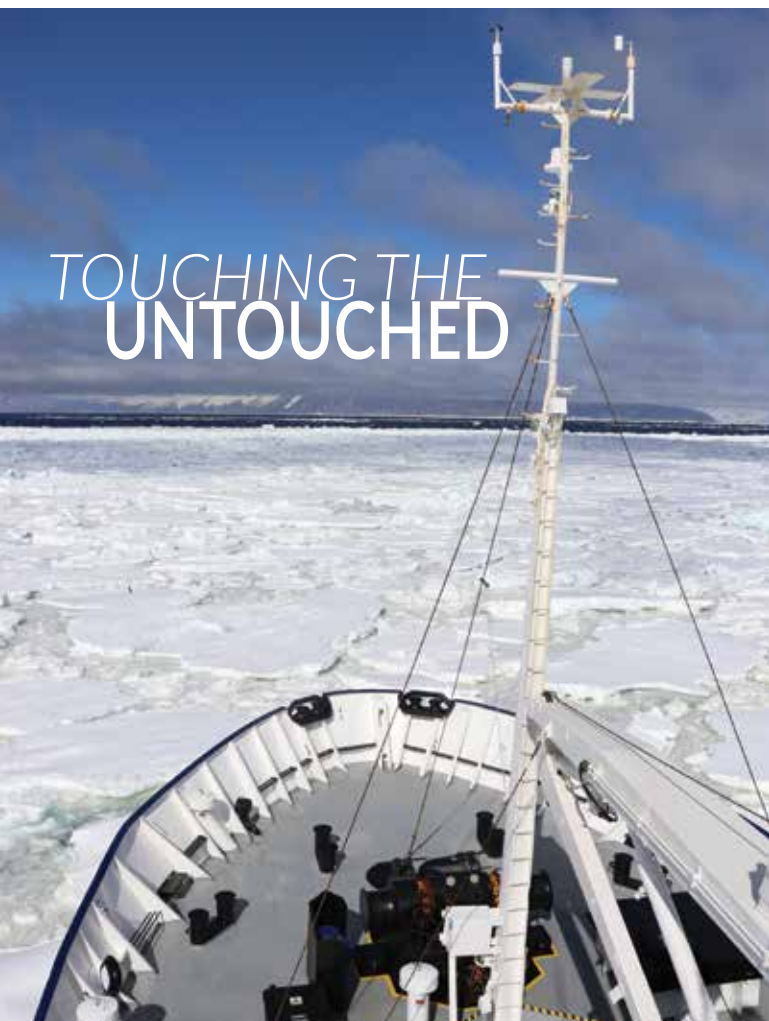
The *Canticle* is a synthesis of Francis's life. In his youth he took part enthusiastically in the disastrous battle of Collestrada between Assisi and Perugia in 1202. His foray into conflict was driven by his aspirations towards the nobility and the values of the merchant class. He was captured and spent a year imprisoned with plenty of time for reflection. After he was released he experienced conversion and his instincts in “following the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ” were that he was in all situations to take the lowest place and treat all — even the despised and the feared — as brother and sister.

He changed his behaviour from just flinging coins at lepers to actually embracing them as a brother or sister. He addressed his followers in familial terms, exemplifying his belief that this was the way of following Jesus Christ. He wrote: “And they shall be children of the heavenly Father whose works they do, and they are the spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are spouses when by the Holy Ghost the faithful soul is united to Jesus Christ. We are His brothers when we do the will of His Father who is in heaven. We are His mothers when we bear Him in our heart and in our body through pure love and a clean conscience and we bring Him forth by holy work which ought to shine as an example to others” (*Letter to All the Faithful*).

The story of Francis taming the fierce wolf of Gubbio recorded in the *Fioretti*, *The Little Flowers of St Francis*, indicates that he thought that finding a way to live in harmony with our fellow creatures, rather than exterminating them, is the preferable path for all people. While our impact on the environment and climate were not burning issues at his time, Francis's praise for “fair and stormy, all weather's moods” suggests that he understood that humans needed a better understanding of how creation works, and so how to live in harmony with it is integral to Christian life. It is not surprising then that when universities emerged in places such as Paris and Oxford in the 13th century, figures such as Roger Bacon were drawn to Franciscan thought and the natural sciences evolved as a field of study.

Francis's encounter during the fifth Crusade with Sultan Malik-el-Kamil also demonstrates how practically and courageously he practised peacemaking and reconciliation. He and Brother Illuminato endured beatings before managing to meet with the Sultan, and while they failed to convert each other, they succeeded in understanding the other better. Although Francis failed to stop the war, his example of dialogue for peace continues to be an alternative practice to waging war today. 

TOUCHING THE UNTOUCHED



MATT HARRISON shares how being in nature opens him to wonder and meaning for his life.

While we all have varying degrees of spiritual awareness, I believe that it is a challenge to make it a priority in our daily lives.

Spirituality is something I have always had some awareness of but haven't always considered deeply. Despite the fact that it seems elusive, it has a feeling of connection which is intangible but undeniable.

For me, this feeling of spiritual connection is most profound during moments of solitude in the natural environment. Sitting on a surfboard waiting for a wave, hearing the call of the ruru as the stars shine brightly, watching the sun burn low as it sets in the west over the Tasman Sea. On such occasions a sense of spirit is ignited within my soul.

This feeling is only surpassed when it is shared with

Matt Harrison, 31, is a geography and social studies teacher at Orewa College. "The outdoors is my place of worship and I love getting out to surf or into the bush."



someone — someone with a kindred spirit. At such times this feeling is amplified as my heart and soul feel full and my spirit burns infinitely bright.

At times it feels that the spirit of the universe conspires to give a sign of clarity, of reassurance or direction. I have always had faith in these signs in my journey through life. They have enabled me to meet good people, make good friends and arrive at awe-inspiring places.

A New Path

Several years ago I made a conscious decision to change my life to pursue a career as a high school geography teacher.

My hope was to lead a more fulfilling life and to create a learning environment in which students could continually seek understanding of the many mysteries of Earth. Equipped with new lenses with which to see the world, they too will become storytellers.

As young storytellers they give voices to the all too often voiceless and become advocates for well-considered decisions in this fast-paced world.

With so much information so readily available, many people still see the world with their eyes wide shut. Therefore, I feel a profound sense of accomplishment even when I have merely promoted an awareness of these mysteries among students. In essence evoking such an awareness is surely a spiritual awakening.

Making this decision led to an extraordinary opportunity. Last summer I was chosen by the Enderby Trust to travel with Heritage Expeditions aboard the *Spirit of Enderby* through the sub-Antarctic and ultimately to Antarctica.

It still surprises me to think that I was one of the fortunate few who had the privilege of visiting the frozen continent and telling stories of the southern sea and ice.

The Journey

We set off from Bluff, sailing through the roaring forties, the furious fifties and the screaming sixties, stopping along the way at some of the majestic sub-Antarctic Islands. An abundance of rich green flora and the enchanting sound of bird calls thrive in splendid isolation. An overwhelming sense of life, vitality and spirit emanates here.

Finally we push through the Antarctic Circle into the silent seventies where icebergs solemnly drift, set on their



course of dissolution to join the ocean from which they had come. On one such iceberg an emperor penguin rides north with the currents until his vessel is gone and he continues his pilgrimage to sea, only to return the following winter.

The approach to the frozen continent is in stark contrast to the islands we have visited. It exists on the horizon as an epic expanse both barren and desolate.

Now the sun does not set. It simply circles the horizon, casting seemingly eternal reflections off the crystal clear, calm water. It is beautiful yet dangerous, the mind is not equipped for this . . . Fortunately we have the luxury of curtains so our routine is maintained, allowing introspective reflection at dusk on the events of the day.

It is difficult to imagine what this would be like through winter when the sun doesn't rise above the horizon and there is only darkness. I have no doubt that this would result in other challenges to mind, body and soul.

Landing

Stepping onto the land, however, all such thoughts are forgotten. There is an energy here — such an ancient and inhospitable environment yet so pristine and pure, so invigorating.

I climb a hill, relatively small in the context of the surroundings, and crouch at its peak, hands on hips, as I struggle for breath and lean into the face of the katabatic winds. I slowly rise and look out over the Ross Ice Shelf. Words escape me. By whose design does such beauty exist? I'm alone and yet I'm not. I take people with me both living and dead; their spirits stand with me — and it's brilliant.

Returning

As we sail back the sun finally begins to set. Southern royal albatross soar effortlessly above the ship escorting our return passage. These birds are surely kaitiaki (guardians) of this place. To behold them in their domain is humbling. As I stare into the sky following their movements a feeling of melancholy settles upon me. They have travelled far and wide, they have spoken to the wind and they know



they are losing, that there are too many threats to their way of life.

I return to Bluff confused. I have had the trip of a life time, I have had a life-changing experience, but what does this mean? How do I act on this? How do I make my life-changing experience, life changing for others?

I don't really like to admit it, but a part of me begins to hold this experience close, not wanting to share it with just anyone. Perhaps to be drawn to the solitude of such vast and uninhabited landscapes is a character trait that rarely coexists with the trait of being the unrelenting town crier.

I wonder whether it is in the best interest of Antarctica to be left out of sight and therefore out of mind of the masses. Promoting it in our capitalist world increases the risk of it being exploited under the guise of development. As one of the few

remaining untouched landscapes this would be devastating.

Unfortunately, Antarctica is well known to those who are in the best position to take advantage of its resources. Therefore, shining the light on what is currently occurring, or could occur, may be the best defence against exploitation. People must be informed so they will no longer be ignorant or deny the impact of human interference.

Knowing

I have been touched by the spirit, wonder and mystery of the southern ocean and Antarctica. I must share my story to enable connection and evoke consciousness in others so that they will choose to become kaitiaki of this sacred place. 🌀

Photos by Matt Harrison ©



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Life-Giving Breath of God

KATHLEEN RUSHTON discusses how the Pentecost gospel readings, John 16:4-15; 20:19-23, highlight the Holy Spirit as breathing life into the universe.

Engrained in me since childhood is the practice of making a sign of reverence when I pass a Catholic Church. Recently as I returned home from my parish Sunday Eucharist, I found myself acknowledging spontaneously the nearby Methodist and Anglican Churches. In a moment of grace, I realised that from their lecterns the same gospel reading of that Sunday of the Liturgical Year, give or take a few verses, was proclaimed as I had heard at Mass.

The three-year lectionary cycle is a shared taonga (treasure) for liturgical and personal prayer. Ecumenical work is essentially a spiritual task because it is participation in the prayer of Jesus "that they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). Learning to understand this prayer of Jesus is a spiritual process, a work and gift of the Holy Spirit. At the heart of ecumenism is spiritual ecumenism which, according to Walter Kasper and Rowan Williams, is about mission and prayer. Personal and communal prayer together, such as that during Prayer for Christian Unity Week (13-20 May), has its

origins in the loving communion of the Trinity. The Spirit can create a space for the exchange of gifts for mission.

Writing in the World Council of Churches publication, *Economy of Life*, Rogate Mshana and Athena Peralta stress: "The mission of the ecumenical movement today is about transforming the world into a place of justice and peace for all God's creation . . . [in a] participatory search for alternatives that are centred on the people and the Earth." Likewise, in *Laudato Si'*, for Pope Francis: "we have to realise that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*" (LS par 49 Francis's italics). We shall explore how on the Feast of Pentecost, gospel

Pentecost Sunday 20 May
Roman Lectionary – John 20:19-23 or John 16:12-15
Revised Common Lectionary – John 16:4-15

readings in both lectionaries are about the Holy Spirit, the Breath of God breathing life into the whole universe.

Long Unending Story

For the earliest Christian communities, the story of the Spirit began a very long time before Pentecost. To their listening to the Fourth Gospel they brought their rich traditions of the Spirit/Wind/Breath of God sweeping over the waters (Gen 1:2) and the Breath of God breathing life into the dust of the Earth so the Earth creature (*adam*) was formed from the Earth (*ha'adam*) – Earthling from the Earth, Groundling from the Ground (Gen 2:7, cf. Wis 15:11). The verb translated “breathed on” was used in the OT to refer directly to creation. The prophet Ezekiel is told to breathe on the dry bones so that the House of Israel may be re-created.

The Spirit was a way of speaking about the powerful presence of the God of Israel. The Spirit expresses the creative, prophetic and renewing presence of God to not only the people of Israel but to the wider world. The Greek word *pneuma* is used throughout the Scriptures as a translation of the Hebrew word *ruah* meaning “wind” or “breath” or “spirit”. These are beautiful images which describe the Spirit as an unseen wonder known by what it does, the effect it has and how it feels. The Spirit flows through all creation bringing life and love.

Human persons will stay alive only if they have the Divine Breath abiding in them (Gen 6:3). This applies to all creatures. God warns the flood will “destroy from under heaven all flesh in which there is the breath of life” (Gen 6:17) and “everything on dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died” (Gen 7:22). The interconnected images of the Breath of God and the Word of God are linked explicitly in creation of the universe: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all their host [sun, moon and stars] by the breath of God’s mouth” (Ps 33:6).

For people today, the coming of the Spirit begins even before the biblical creation story. The Creator Spirit is the dynamic, energising presence who enabled the universe to come into being over 14 billion years ago and is creatively at work enabling the ongoing emergence of the universe and the evolution of all life on earth.

“Breathed on Them”

Against this background let us consider the Risen Jesus. He “breathed on” those present saying: “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:22). This is the Baptism with the Holy Spirit that Jesus brings. John testifies that Jesus is the one on whom he saw the Spirit abiding (Jn 1:32-33) and who gives God’s Spirit “without measure” (Jn 3:34).

Read in the light of the death-resurrection, the Spirit is the life-giver (Jn 6:63). Jesus was led by the Spirit in his preaching, healing, compassion for the marginalised, his passion and death. His death is a leave-taking in which he handed over the Spirit to the women and the beloved disciple at the cross (Jn 19:30). The Spirit is with Jesus at every stage of his life; forever interrelated and in communion with all life.

The Fourth Evangelist sees this same Spirit being given

to his friends as their Advocate or Paraclete (*parakletos*) (Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). This word means “one called alongside of”. This name evokes a rich, all-embracing picture of the Spirit as presence, teacher, comforter, guide, helper, friend, advocate, one who intercedes, consoler, spokesperson, witness, one who goes with, supports and stands beside another.



These are beautiful images — wind and breath — describe the Spirit as an unseen wonder known by what it does, the effect it has and how it feels. The Spirit flows through all creation bringing life and love.

New Pathways

Fruitfulness, beauty and co-operation are part of the long history of life on Earth as are predation, competition, death and extinction. In a finite, limited and bodily world, death is part of the way things are and central to the shape of biological life. In the face of death in the processes of the universe and all life, Christian theology bears witness to the death-resurrection of Jesus. In Jesus, God enters into the pain of the world, suffering with all creation, while at the same time the Spirit transforms death into redeeming love and radical new life.

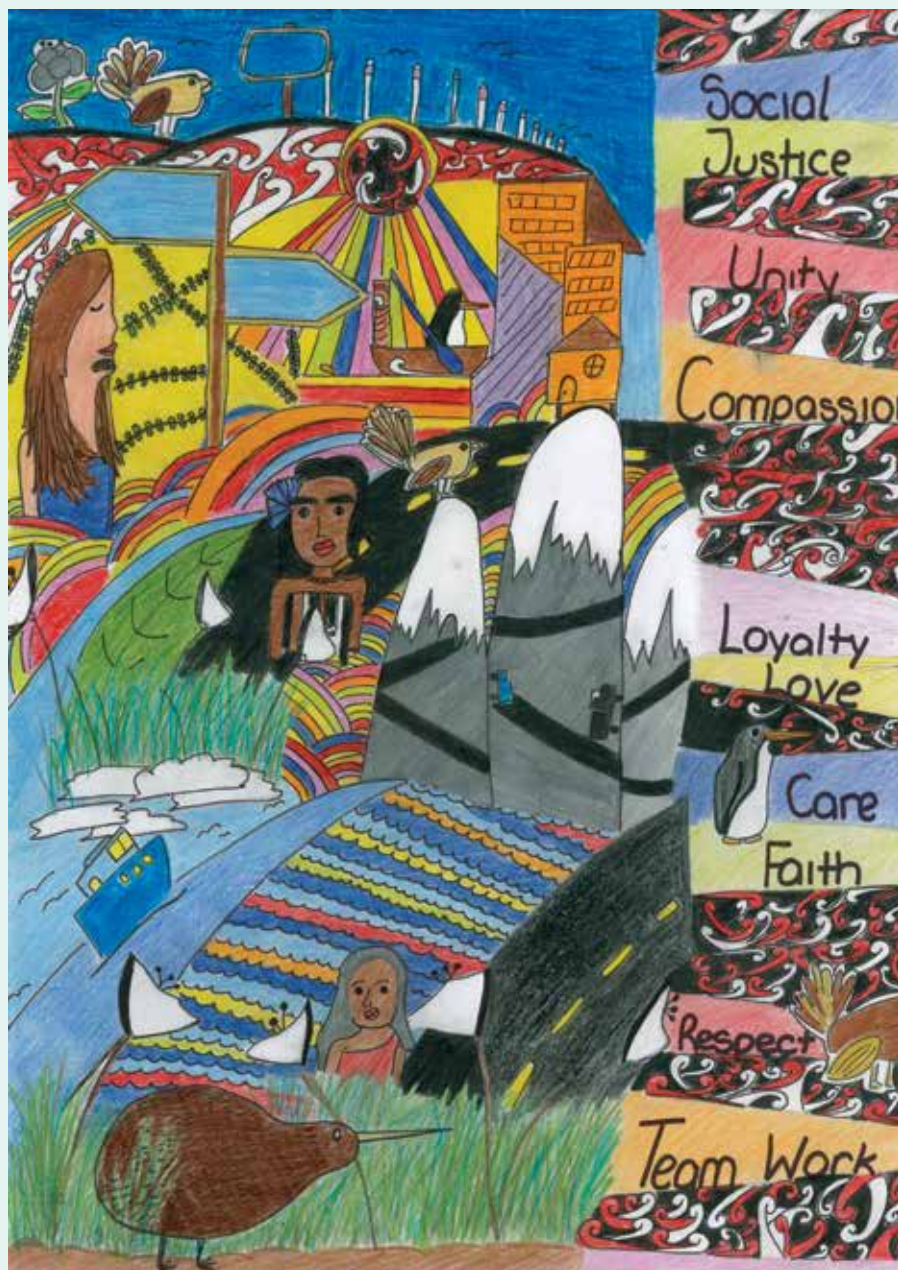
While Jesus is the human face of God made flesh in our midst, the Spirit is revealed mysteriously as the Breath of God through all creation and through our hearts, minds and lives. More often than not the Spirit is described not in human terms (anthropomorphically) but in images taken from the natural world — as breath, wind, water, fire, oil and anointing. These images from nature remind us of “the otherness” of the Spirit. They resist human tendencies to domesticate the Spirit who is experienced in the depths of human relationships and in the wilderness and beauty of the natural world.

For Pope Francis: “The Spirit, infinite bond of love, is intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways” (LS par 238). What new pathway is the Spirit calling us to walk the talk of “hearing both cry of the earth and the cry of poor” in the ecumenical mission of the Church today?

Art by Ayva Tautalanoa, aged 10.



Kathleen Rushton RSM lives in Ōtautahi Christchurch where, in the sight of the Southern Alps and the hills, she continues to delight in learning and writing about Scripture.



Keep the **RULE** to Keep the **EARTH**

ELAINE WAINWRIGHT shows how Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40 challenges us to radical conversion so that we may keep Earth as our home.

My aim each month is to offer an ecological interpretation of an Old Testament reading that we will hear on one Sunday during the month. I discovered that the first Lectionary reading on each

of the Sundays in May this year are taken from the New Testament book Acts of the Apostles, right up to the last Sunday of May when the Church celebrates Trinity Sunday. The first reading for that feast is taken from

the Book of Deuteronomy and it draws us into the world view that the Deuteronomist (the authorial voice) proposes: being faithful to God's commandments leads to life, and infidelity to those commandments leads to death. This paradigm, this pattern, this rule-of-thumb permeates not only the Book of Deuteronomy but also what is known as the Deuteronomistic history — the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings.

Election Calls for Fidelity

Foundational to the Deuteronomist's world view is the theology of Israel being the chosen nation of God: "Has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for that god's self from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by terrifying displays of power, as your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?" (Deut 4:34) Accompanying this theology of choice or election must be a fidelity to the commandments that lead to life, the Deuteronomist insists so emphatically.

What is not emphasised — indeed it is quite hidden — is the fate of the nation from which the chosen nation is freed. For example, the passing reference in Exodus 14:30 to the Egyptians lying dead on the seashore — to which we proclaim "Word of God" after listening to this reading during the Holy Vigil — is but one example. It shows that we need to engage with Deuteronomistic theology critically not only for its impact in the human community but in the other-than-human also.

Deuteronomic Challenge

The Deuteronomist offers us a world view, a way of viewing or conceiving the world and how we should live in it. We are invited to: "Ask now about former ages, long before your own, ever since the day that God created human beings on the earth; ask from one end of heaven to the other." We are invited by the Deuteronomist as we are being invited by Earth system scientists to consider "former ages" as well as our own; to ask the new questions that Earth is addressing to us.

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

³² Moses said to the people: “Ask now about former ages, long before your own, ever since the day that God created human beings on the earth; ask from one end of heaven to the other: has anything so great as this ever happened or has its like ever been heard of? ³³ Has any people ever heard the voice of a god speaking out of a fire, as you have heard, and lived? ³⁴ Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for that god’s self from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by terrifying displays of power, as your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? . . . ³⁹ So acknowledge today and take to heart that our God is in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. ⁴⁰ Keep God’s statutes and commandments, which I am commanding you today for your own well-being and that of your descendants after you, so that you may long remain in the land that your God is giving you for all time.”

Dialogue with Earth System Scientist Clive Hamilton

In this regard, Clive Hamilton in his 2017 book *Defiant Earth: The Fate of Human in the Anthropocene* introduces us to Earth system science. This science proposes that we name the current geological epoch “the Anthropocene” – an age characterised by a rupturing of the Earth system itself. “It is the Earth taken as a whole in a constant stage of movement driven by interconnected cycles and forces... It is a single, dynamic, integrated system, and not a collection of ecosystems.”

In order to explore what this new understanding might yield, I found myself returning to the opening words of the Deuteronomist in our focal text: “Ask now about former ages, long before your own, ever since the day that God created human beings on the earth; ask from one end of heaven to the other.”

We are encouraged to ask about “former ages” – which for us would include the 14 billion years from the Big Bang to the present. And in our “asking” we are returned to the Anthropocene and to the Deuteronomic invocation to “ask from one end of heaven to the other”.

In doing this we encounter Earth system scientists’ discovery of “the new concept of the Earth system” which “encompasses and transcends previous objects of study such as ‘the landscape,’ ‘ecosystems,’ and ‘the environment.’” Naming this current period as Anthropocene, therefore, does not encapsulate just the disturbances of ecosystems but the disruption of the entire Earth system.

The Deuteronomist asks: “Has anything so great as this ever happened or has its like ever been heard?” Addressed to the emergence of the Anthropocene, this question confronts us as contemporary readers/hearers of the Deuteronomic text: “Has anything so great as this ever happened or has its like ever been heard?”

If this question echoes through current Earth system science, the answer that we will hear is an emphatic “NO!” As a result of human activity across the past century, there has been an unprecedented change to Earth’s system, one unlike any other before it. And as a result, our entire way of being as Earth creatures in relation to Earth’s systems must change.

In the final verse of the Deuteronomy text we hear this imperative: “Keep God’s statutes and commandments, which I am commanding you today for your own well-being and that of your descendants after you, so that you may long remain in the land that your God is giving you for all time.”

The “land” that God is giving/has given to the human community is Earth itself and its inhabitant community has an obligation to care for it. Current science has, however, revealed the depth of damage that has been done to Earth over more than a century or two, and asks if it is indeed irreparable.

We may have hope, but for Clive Hamilton the future of Earth is grim. We need to remember that the Deuteronomist’s call to keep the commandments “so that you may long remain in the land” is no blanket guarantee but rather an exchange: we must keep the rule to keep the Earth. What the Deuteronomist calls for is a radical human conversion that allows us to continue to live on this planet – against the odds, against the Earth system science, even – this Earth that is given us “for all time”. 🌱

Art by Lakai Monu, aged 12.



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Hope for Unity with Diversity

Here in Spain hardly a day goes by when I don't see a reference to Catalan independence. Updates on the saga fill newspaper inches, television news minutes, and radio sound bites. Flags, either Spanish or Catalan, fill apartment windows. And the movement's emblematic yellow scarves are spray-painted around Barcelona — sometimes with red Spanish nationalist ones painted over them.

Spain is, at first glance, a country divided. But in many ways this has always been the case. Christians, Muslims, Jews, Romans, Gauls and Visigoths have occupied this land, to name but a few.

Less than a century ago the nation was deeply divided along Republican or Nationalist lines. Each faction was in turn made up of a cocktail of anarchists, communists, fascists, Catholics, monarchists and aristocrats — each with their own ideas of the way Spain ought to be run.

The Civil War that ensued from those ideological differences and its emergent dictatorship cemented partitions in the country that are still not healed. Even after General Francisco Franco's death in 1975 and

the creation of the Constitution three years later when Spain became a unitary state, the sum of 17 diverse and autonomous regions.

To consider this history is to see Catalonia not as a lone non-conformist but rather as conforming to Spain's tradition of factions and outliers. It is one regional identity co-existing in a nation made up of regional identities, some with their own languages, histories, cultures and even police forces. Spain, rather than a federation, is a highly decentralised nation made up of so-called "autonomous communities". But it is the level of autonomy these regions are afforded that has been the root cause of much of its internal conflict.

While it was Catalonia's declaration of independence last year that unleashed these political shockwaves, the issue has been bubbling away for quite some time. Rather than a spontaneous decision by Catalan politicians, it was the climax of terse negotiations that had gone on for years. While it is true that some of these frustrations are historical, Catalans were freshly angered in 2011, when the Constitutional Court restricted their regional powers — powers which had been agreed by Catalan and Spanish lawmakers years before.

Those powers included the ability to keep a greater share of the taxation it collects, as well as increased control

over things such as language, justice and education. They were powers that conservatives including current Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy opposed. While Catalonia continued to campaign for greater powers, its opponents frustrated the process, which ultimately led to the region's call for independence.

It seems to me that while each side has legitimate reasons to be either in favour or opposed to such a move, both sides should share a fear of what would transpire if this political hand grenade is further mishandled.

We need only to look at what came out of Basque Country's push for independence in the second half of the 20th-century. The ETA, a then-armed Basque separatist group, led four decades of violence, marked with the assassination of a Spanish Prime Minister, bombs, kidnappings and hundreds of civilian deaths.

This bloody period demonstrates that the pursuit of independence or greater autonomy by regions is nothing new. Nor, it should be said, is conflict with the Spanish government. During his dictatorship General Franco suppressed different cultural identities in an attempt to assimilate everyone into a uniform Castilian one. Catalan, Basque and Galician languages were banned in public, schools and the media in order to promote this unity. He abolished and banned "non-Spanish" cultural and political institutions right across the country, and imprisoned, tortured and killed masses of people for their political beliefs.

While I'm certainly not comparing the current Spanish government to Franco, the reign of that dictator should serve as a cautionary tale of the potential consequences of heavy handedness. It must have stirred unpleasant memories for older Spaniards as they saw Spanish police manhandling and assaulting Catalans attempting to vote in the independence referendum.

What the last hundred years of Spanish history ought to teach us is that repressions can quickly ignite the patriotism it seeks to crush. While both sides may have arguments for their cause, none has justification for violence. It is a powder keg that demands caution. 🌱

Jack Derwin is a journalist and writer currently living in Córdoba, Spain.



FACE OUR RACISM

Taika Waititi, one of New Zealand's most successful creative exports, was recently interviewed by an artist and friend, Ruban Nielson. When Ruban posited: "I think I've got quite an idealised vision of New Zealand as being like Australia but without the racism and the blokeish sense of humour." Taika replied: "Na, it's racist as f***." This entirely true statement managed very quickly to get under the skin of many New Zealanders, upset at being painted with such broad strokes. To clarify — it got under Pākehā New Zealanders' skin. I noticed that there wasn't a public onslaught of vocal minorities jumping at the chance to correct him. The likely reason for this is that there was nothing to correct. Perhaps Taika's comment was not couched as everyone would articulate it, and it probably makes people uncomfortable to hear it said in such strong terms, but it doesn't in any way deter from the fact that his response was, is and remains, true. The negative reaction was both unfairly dismissive and revealed a deep misunderstanding about how most New Zealanders think that racism is and the forms it takes.

It is inarguable that in New Zealand there is a significant imbalance in the way Māori, Pacific and Asian populations are treated when compared with our Pākehā population. Māori are disproportionately represented in prison and more likely to be arrested for crimes that Pākehā are committing in equal measure. In New Zealand a Māori person is three times as likely to be apprehended and charged for possession of marijuana, even though levels of use among Māori are only marginally higher than among Pākehā. I've been in places where Pākehā have been smoking weed, both in private and in public and have even been spotted by the police. No one ever got in any kind of trouble. The system is built in our favour.

We must acknowledge that we developed a society that actively promotes white people over and above others. We cannot treat the actions of our past as if they exist in a

vacuum that we put behind us. The ongoing effects of the harm caused still exists in the organisation of our society. We've structured all of our major institutions around a European framework, forcing Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, to adapt to us. We did not meet this half way. We assumed cultural superiority. The hubris of that is astounding and the effects of this history cannot be wiped clean from our society today.

Duncan Garner and Mark Richardson did. In doing so they displayed a level of ignorance not suitable for public broadcasting. When they reject, outright, the opinions of Taika, they're doing so from a place of presumed and misplaced superiority. They're giving greater weight to their own experience of the world than to Taika's and they do this with no recognition that their experience of New Zealand would be entirely coloured by their privilege of existing



Racist behaviour exists on a spectrum. Racism is not confined to only bigoted language, segregation, or active subjugation. We have to evolve our understanding of what forms and vehicles racism takes. It's everything from daily micro aggressions to macro structural inequality. I can only imagine how exhausting it is to face this reality day by day. Not to mention how tiring it must be to tell people about your experience only to have them deny it's very existence. When a person of colour says New Zealand is racist, it's not the job of Pākehā to tell them all the ways they're wrong. It's our job to listen and figure out how we can be better.

It's astonishing to me that any white person would ever dare to reject the experience of a minority. It probably shouldn't be surprising that this is exactly what broadcasters

in it as white men. Their response was no doubt defensive and reactionary. They were arguing their case by positioning themselves as not as bad as those who have lived before them. But by being defensive and rejecting the validity of Māori and their experience, they end up repeating the actions of Pākehā in the past. There's a great irony at play: we like to think we're different from our ancestors, who we acknowledge were racist, but by our refusal to look in the mirror at ourselves, we mirror that racist past and reflect it into today. 🌀

Art by Gracci Dag-um, aged 11.



Alice Snedden is a writer and comedian from Auckland who identifies as culturally Catholic and religiously agnostic.

How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilisation

By Thomas E Woods, Jr
Published by Regnery History
Reviewed by Michael Hill

BOOK

In the contemporary English-speaking world the Catholic Church is widely regarded as archaic, reactionary, an enemy of progress. The notion that the Church might have contributed anything of value to modern culture is seen as laughable. Therefore a book like this is timely.

Thomas Woods assembles an impressive array of evidence to refute these calumnies. The chapter headings indicate the wide scope of the book, including monasticism, universities, art and architecture, international law, morality, economics, charities and most notably, the Church and science.

Many people equate the “Middle Ages” with the “Dark Ages”. This prejudiced view takes no account, for instance, of the enormous influence of medieval monasticism in shaping European society, preserving the heritage of the classical age, creating scholasticism, founding the universities and providing havens of peace and refuge from the warring knights and monarchs.

Another signal contribution was the Church's reaction to 16th-century colonialism. The greed and savagery of the Spanish conquistadors in South America aroused a strong reaction among the Dominican Friars who accompanied

them. They brought pressure to bear on the king and what they proposed regarding the dignity and equality of all human beings is the foundation of modern international law.

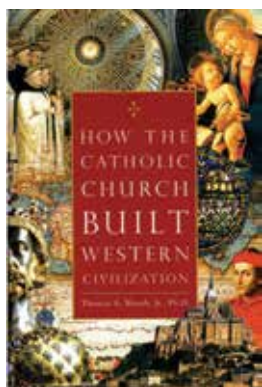
No one can dispute the great impact of Catholic charities throughout the world relieving poverty and battling for the rights of oppressed peoples. This is by no means restricted to Catholic Christians. Anglican and Methodist missionaries have in their turn

contributed to the progress and well-being of indigenous peoples, as our own history testifies.

Woods vigorously defends the Church against the popular indictment that it opposes scientific progress and cites many Catholics who have contributed to scientific discovery.

But he also tends to be a bit one-eyed. A good historian presents a total picture as far as is possible, warts and all. For Woods there are no warts! For instance, the Churches generally opposed Darwin and rejected evolution. And in modern times the Vatican has been very slow to embrace environmentalism. Fortunately, Pope Francis has largely made up for this in his encyclical *Laudato Si*.

A more balanced interpretation would have enhanced Woods's book. Nevertheless, it is very readable and provides a rich historical coverage. 🌀



Caroline Chisholm: An Irresistible Force

By Sarah Goldman
Published by Harper Collins, 2017
Reviewed by Teresa Hanratty

BOOK

On the cover of this biography is the portrait of Caroline Chisholm made for the Australian 5c stamp issued in her honour in 1968. The book portrays Caroline as a coloniser, an extraordinary woman who helped shape the Australian nation.

Caroline was born in Northampton, England in 1808 and lost her father, William Jones, just before her sixth birthday.

As a small child her games foreshadowed the great interest she developed in adult life — she played sending her dolls by boat to friends.

She married Captain Archibald Chisholm and spent her married life in England, India and Australia. In Australia Caroline responded to the haphazard arrangements for new immigrants.

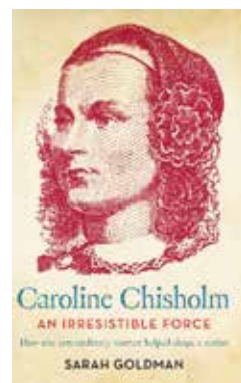
Her goals included reuniting families, especially children who had been left behind when their parents emigrated to Australia; sending more female emigrants from Britain to address the gender imbalance; and assisted passages for poor people so they could have a chance of a better life in the colonies.

She was well educated and appeared to have unwavering self-belief. Her work on behalf of new immigrants and settlers showed determination and confidence in the face of inevitable opposition. She entered predominantly male domains and voiced her concerns in lectures, pamphlets, newspaper articles and meetings with influential people. And she combined clarity of vision with practical abilities. One of her most successful ventures was establishing a shelter in Sydney for vulnerable young women arriving in the colony.

Over 20 years Caroline bore eight children. She largely delegated the care of her children to others: a wet nurse and nannies. Sarah Goldman describes Caroline's struggle for work-life balance — which remains a challenge for many modern women. It appears Caroline gave her advocacy work priority.

The author offers, in italics, personal stories of Caroline at the beginning of each chapter. One tells how Caroline received Charles Dickens into her London home and showed him some letters written by Australian immigrants — with her two young sons creating chaos in the background all the while.

Caroline Chisholm is a well-researched, easy-to-read biography of a remarkable woman. It encompasses issues such as the rights of women and the equality of all no matter their sexual orientation, class origins, race or religion. It will appeal to those who are interested in the history of British colonisation in Australia and to a wider readership of people looking for prophets who foreshadow changes long before they are enshrined in culture or legislation. 🌀





Mary Magdalene

Directed by Garth Davis
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

FILM

The Church has given Mary Magdalene a pretty bad rap. For Pope Gregory the Great, she was the archetypal penitent prostitute, illustrating the madonna/whore dichotomy that has long enabled patriarchal societies to keep woman “in her place”. However, in 2016, acknowledging her importance as the first witness to the Resurrection, Pope Francis announced that “the Apostle to the Apostles” would be given her own feast day. This film gathers up these divergent attitudes to Mary of Magdala and echoes back our new understanding of her role as a leader of the first Christians.

Bringing her to life as a first-century woman, director Garth Davis teases out the relationship between Mary (played by Rooney Mara) and Jesus (Joaquin Phoenix) and charts her deepening understanding of his person and message. While the (male) disciples hope that Jesus will spark a revolution against the Roman occupiers — and later interpret his death as a failure — Mary believes that, following the Resurrection, all believers are now empowered to spread the good news of the Kingdom.


A strong feminist thread runs through the narrative. Mary’s rejection of a local suitor is interpreted as demonic possession, and in one scene a group of washerwomen ask Jesus whether they should obey God or

their menfolk. Although she never grasps at power, Mary is invested with considerable agency. In a crucial scene, Jesus anoints her and charges her with carrying on his mission. And far from retreating into a passive interior world, Mary believes that the peace and justice yearned for by the disciples will be achieved not by violence, but rather through an inner faith inspired by the life and deeds of the Messiah.

On the technical level, the cinematography is impressive, showcasing some stunning outdoor locations. The contrast between the empty expanses of rural Palestine and the claustrophobic atmosphere of Jerusalem is particularly well handled. The familiar stories of Jesus’s miracles and Passion are treated with skill and originality, with a few key scenes standing for the whole. Jesus — an

unkempt figure with a shaggy beard and wrapped in rough linen garments — is convincingly portrayed. A passionate yet vulnerable man, he emerges physically and emotionally exhausted from his acts of healing.

After Jesus’s death, the rift between Mary and the disciples widens, and Peter accuses Mary with the damning words: “You have weakened us.” Here the name Rock suggests obduracy rather than strength and tenacity. While some reviewers have interpreted this scene as a swipe at the established Church, to me it serves as a warning of the perennial temptation to rewrite the Gospel in terms of worldly power — a temptation that the Church has often succumbed to.

Do see this intelligent and finely crafted film and bring your own thoughts and experiences to it. 

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by Susan Smith

Talking about sport . . .

Are Names Important?

The names given to men's rugby and league teams fascinate and horrify me — Lions, Bulldogs, Sharks, Cheetahs, Tigers, Pumas, Crusaders, Chiefs, Hurricanes. If not the names of predatory animals then they are names that conjure up violent images. Even the brand name "All Black" with its emphasis on "black" suggests images of death. The iconic haka is essentially a war dance, the prelude to violence against the other team.

And I wonder if a wimpish nomenclature like the "Blues" explains the Blues' lack of success. A name that can signify depression seems most unsuitable for a sport which allows overt and covert violence.

The violence that the codes of both games tolerate on and off the field is concerning. Violence is not restricted to players only, as each season there are spectator attacks on referees. The All Blacks' occasional visits to Starship Children's Hospital in Auckland do not disguise the fact that players are committed to a violent game, and "physicality" is little more than a code for deliberate violence. Having said that, I am all in favour of sport and wish that more and more New Zealanders, particularly young New Zealanders, played more sport and spent less time with smartphones and iPads.

Sports and Money

Sport at national and international level is now driven by big business. The sums paid to top players — salaries and endorsements — verge on the obscene. How many more advertisements do we need to see of the world's most famous milkman helicoptering here and there, or the world's most famous milkman and

his wife powering along thanks to turmeric supplements? Essentially the recent furore over ball-tampering in cricket matches is about money, because improved player performance means higher player income. And now the New Zealand public is being asked to pay \$212 million so that very wealthy people can enjoy the America's Cup. This generosity on our behalf by the Government and Auckland Council will apparently benefit all New Zealanders.

Mr Obama Visits New Zealand

Remember our excitement when Barack Obama was elected first African-American President of the United States? Stymied by the Republican-controlled Senate and House he achieved little at home and his Obamacare healthcare plan has collapsed thanks to President Trump. On the international scene although fewer Americans were killed in wars America should never have been

fighting, American drones took out hundreds of people in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen. Now, Mr Obama is able to share his experiences and receive \$400,000 for his efforts.

Our media was prepared to bow down before him and offered him unequivocal acclaim. *The New Zealand Herald* indulged in minute-by-minute commentaries on his arrival into Auckland, reporting that he was heard saying to Jacinda Ardern: "I hear you are expecting." Obama, his entourage and former Prime Minister Key stayed at The Landing luxury lodge where the cost per person per night is around \$6000-8000. This in Northland where the median income is \$40,000 per year!

Which brings me to Shane Jones. I do not often agree with Shane Jones, but he is right about Air New Zealand's lack of commitment to good regional services. All too often people from Whangarei have found flights from Auckland to home cancelled due to "mechanical trouble" or "pilot problems" and have had to endure a three-hour bus journey to Whangarei. So why is Air New Zealand prepared to fly out Mr Obama who, like Air New Zealand's regional planes, is probably past his use-by-date? 🌀



TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

Tui Motu - InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual, social and ecological issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-Church and inter-Faith dialogue is welcomed.

The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

ISSN 1174-8931
Issue number 226

Address:

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd,
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Editor: Ann L Gilroy RSJ

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

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We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters, while keeping the meaning.

SUPPORT FOR CHANGE

I write to commend Mary McAleese's article "Now is the Time for Change" in *TM* April 2018. With unerring insights she repeatedly highlights those areas in which the Church is found wanting in its treatment of women. The examples quoted are so blatantly overdue that the time for correction is now. One can only marvel at the prayerful patience of those seeking change. I, too, pray that the Lord will soon respond positively to those who support this just cause.

John N Vincent, Opoho

The Chinese have a proverb: "Change is the only constant in life." Mary McAleese reminds us to be constant – constancy, a Christian virtue from the Latin *constare*, meaning to stand. We need to stand inside the process of change, (change from the Latin, to barter). Mary encourages me to keep exchanging views with the Church as humans and therefore equal. This woman has managed to articulate with thoughtful precision the makings of a treatise. We could all do with openly exploring it. She may have been denied access to the Vatican but she found a door to the world and nailed it there anyway. What more is there to say? Only the Pope's words can seal it and he once had this to say: "We need to ensure that our institutions are truly effective against the relentless process of exclusion." Preach it, Brother!

Clarice Stewart, Palmerston North

THANK YOU

Over the years I have read many

wonderful issues of *Tui Motu* and this April one definitely is one of them. Congratulations on your publishing such great articles that are so relevant today! I found each of the articles to be compassionate, and passionate about their content resulting in my having to sit with them before going on to the next one. Reading Ann Hassan's article concerning Boko Haram, I tried to imagine my own daughter caught up in that dreadful scenario and couldn't as I know such a happening would tear me apart! Thanks for such a clear impassioned article, Ann.

Having spent some time working in a Women's Refuge I am very aware of the impact of any form of violence on women and children and it needs to stop! So once again thanks to all the amazing contributors to this issue – and may it continue!

Pat Hick, Wellington

RAISING EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFFS' PAY

Last week a respected work colleague left his role as teacher assistant at a local school. He expressed sadness at leaving a job which he described as personally rewarding. He has learnt and

contributed much in the role and would have liked to continue. But after two years he is moving to employment that has prospects, pays above minimum hourly rates and offers some degree of stability. He was one of very few men prepared to work with children significantly affected by conditions such as autism and ADHD. He has helped the most challenged children improve their communication skills, manage their (at times) distressing behaviours to make small, meaningful social and academic gains.

This year NZEI will follow the community health support sector in advocating for improved pay and conditions for education support staff on the basis of gender equity. If the claim is successful both men and women will be better placed to use their skills and energy to support children whose inclusion at our schools is dependent upon extra help. My colleague's candour with me makes me freshly aware that "women's rights are human rights". Only good can come of work traditionally done by women being looked at through a justice lens and accorded the dignity it deserves.

Christine Kelly, Wellington

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Looking OUT and IN

Rain and music have plunked their way in and out of my days recently. Somewhere between a stirring snare drum and a mandolin, the cold rains of April beat a chant on the roof of our caravan — a chant that becomes part of the texture of my dreams on these autumn nights. The romance of these pattering songs diminishes a little in the morning when I have to face the cold, wet realities of cycling out onto the hissing and potholed roads of Christchurch.

Our nine-year-old started learning clarinet last month, and Jeph and I are both working on our ukulele skills. Between them our housemates play bass, trombone, French horn, guitar, saxophone and piano. Several mornings a week we played a cacophonous rendition of that great U2 song “Angel of Harlem” — most of which only requires the ability to play “F” and “C”. Other hits we’re working on include “Beds Are Burning”, “Hot Cross Buns” and, of course, “Go Tell

Aunt Rhody”. The living room doesn’t have much spare space with all the instruments slouching on couches, but an instrument out of the case seems to get picked up and played a lot more often than one filed tidily out of sight. We’re dealing with the mess for now.

The thing is, rain and music are more unruly and more unexpected than many other aspects of my days. Emails, reports, proposals and meetings can all be marshalled into fixed times and places. Not rain. Not music. They invite my attention. They invite me to put down my laptop. They invite me to listen.

Thomas Merton, too, heard the rain and listened: “What a thing it is to sit absolutely alone in the forest, at night, cherished by this wonderful, unintelligible perfectly innocent speech, the most comforting speech in the world, the talk that rain makes by itself all over the ridges, and the talk of watercourses everywhere in the hollows. Nobody started it,

nobody is going to stop it. It will talk as long as it wants, this rain. As long as it talks I am going to listen.”

Rain and music are generous, landing on the wet and the dry, the tuneful and the unmusical alike. They remind me of Christ’s response to those who complained about the way he fraternised with tax collectors and sinners. “It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. Go and learn the meaning of the words: mercy is what pleases me, not sacrifice.” The Gospel is really too good to be true. I so easily calculate and critique, but the invitation offered to me over and over is mercy, is grace, is generosity. Like music. Like April rains. 🌀

Art by Anitimoni Aholeilei.



Kaaren Mathias, with her family, is on a sabbatical-sort-of-break away from community mental health work in India, and will be staying in Christchurch until June 2018.



Living Spirit
attune us
to the prophets of our day
so that their message
freshens our hearts
with loving resolve.

From the *Tui Motu* team

Art by Ma’ata Tahaafe, aged 11.