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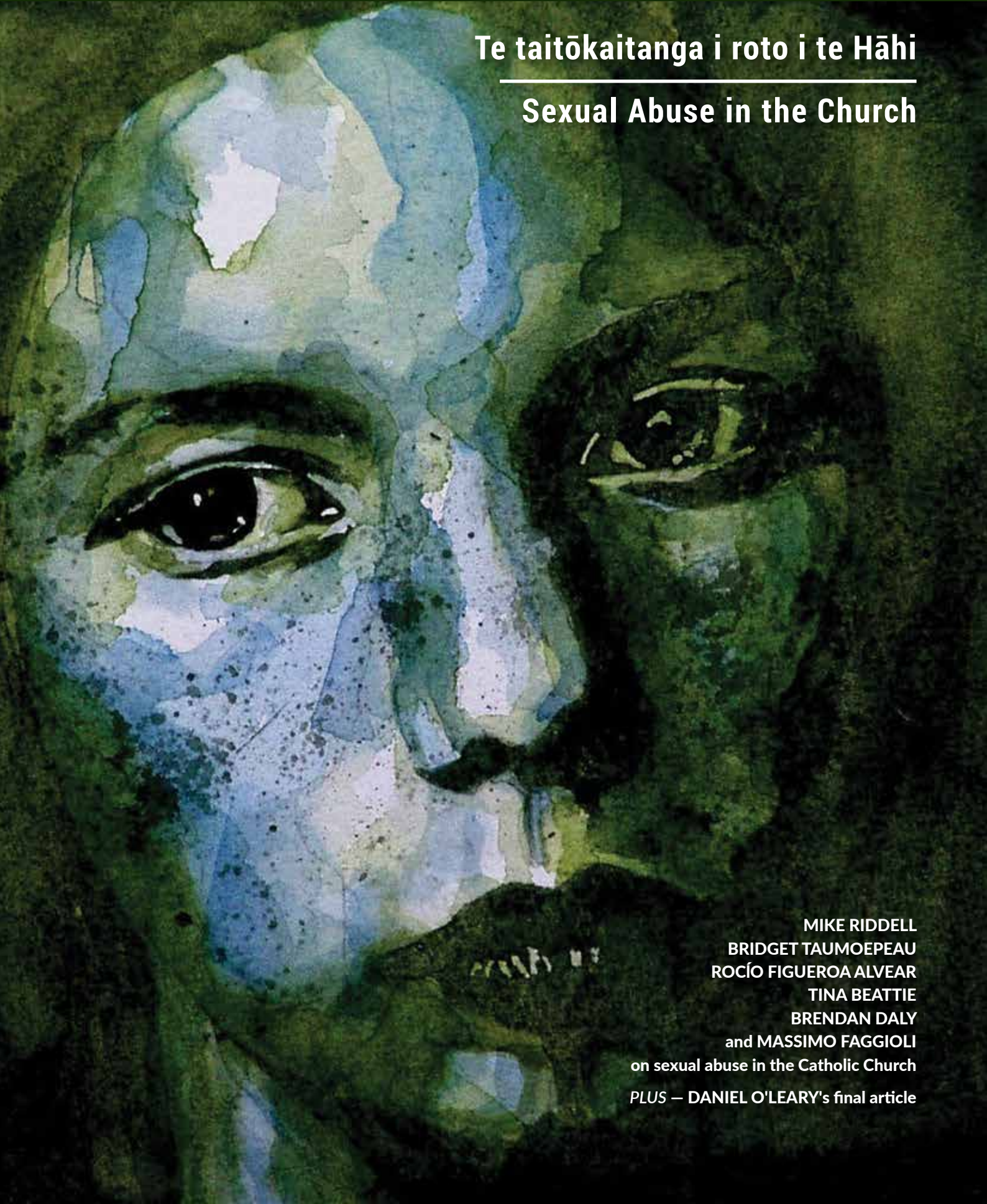
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Te taitōkaitanga i roto i te Hāhi

**Sexual Abuse in the Church**



MIKE RIDDELL

BRIDGET TAUMOEPEAU

ROCÍO FIGUEROA ALVEAR

TINA BEATTIE

BRENDAN DALY

and MASSIMO FAGGIOLI

on sexual abuse in the Catholic Church

PLUS — DANIEL O'LEARY's final article



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## EDITORIAL

### Facing the Truth of Abuse

Lent will give us time to reflect on what has gone wrong in the Church to allow the world-wide clerical sexual abuse of children and women and its cover-up. Its legacy is of inestimable damage in the lives of those preyed on, their families and society.

The press and government investigations, such as the Australian Royal Commission, have been instrumental in bringing this matter to the light and turning the tide of credibility in favour of the victims. Among the many apologies issued by the Church in recent years was a joint apology by the Leaders of women's and men's Religious Congregations. The religious acknowledged that apologies alone will not change the culture in which sexual abuse thrives: "We still need conversion and we want to change. We want to act with humility. We want to see our blind spots. We want to name any abuse of power."

In February, Pope Francis held a summit on sexual abuse in Rome. Survivors, including from New Zealand and Australia, arrived to be seen by the bishops of the world. The summit involved the heads of all the bishops' conferences, 10 leaders from men's religious congregations and 12 from women's religious congregations. The English version of Francis's opening address began: "Dear Brothers." Had the women not arrived? Was it another exclusive English translation from the Vatican? Is it another sign of clericalism embedded in Church culture?

Pope Francis speaks about the scourge of clericalism but he also needs to show positive signs that Church culture is changing. For example, in a meeting as important as the summit deliberating on the protection of children, it would have been a breakthrough for a significant number of mothers and fathers to take part with the bishops.

And when the bishops return to their dioceses, will they have an equal number of women in the group that decides about protection, responsibility, accountability and care for all those – directly and indirectly – affected by abuse?

We thank all whose reflection, writing, art and craft have given us food for thought during Lent. And as is our custom our last word is of encouragement and blessing.

If you or someone you know has been abused by a Catholic priest or member of a religious congregation, we urge you to seek counselling and healing. You do not have to report the abuse to the Church, but if you do the Church will take your story seriously – even if you prefer to remain anonymous, and even if the abuse happened many years ago. Your call will be taken with sensitivity and confidentiality. If you'd like to make a complaint please contact our National Office of Professional Standards: 0800 114 622 or [prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz)

Criminal sexual or physical abuse is a matter for the police to investigate. If the victim or survivor chooses to report the abuse to Police, the Church will cooperate with the civil law processes and will provide the known facts to the authorities. The Church encourages the victim or survivor to report criminal allegations to Police and will support them in doing so.

# Coming Home Too Soon

A few weeks before he died, DANIEL O'LEARY, much-loved priest and spiritual writer, spoke of his struggle to make his peace with the cancer that was killing him.

**D**ear reader, it was June 2018 and I was in fine fettle. Fit as a trout, I was booked for retreats into 2020. One day I passed some blood, bought a pack of suppositories, and carried on. "Nothing serious," the doctor said, but check it out sometime, just in case. I did. And now I'm writing about the last few months of my life.

I am 82, and the recipient of a cancer diagnosis. I'm falling into an abyss of uncertainty. On the surface, and well below it, my life is profoundly changed – and sometimes it's a terrible hell of darkness. How do I survive? Do I pray? I have not asked God for a miracle, or to cure me, or to shrink my tumour. Only to open my heart as wide as it will go.

I know many of you are storming heaven on my behalf; you are having Masses said for me, completing novenas, going on pilgrimages, praying for my healing, for the shrinkage of my growing tumour. The prayers are sometimes couched in military terms – they speak of Daniel O'Leary's "battle with cancer". But all I have ever wanted is the grace of acceptance, of surrender, of trust in God's will. Even though the grinning face of death becomes embossed on every new page of these last mornings of my days, that is the face I must embrace gratefully, befriend with my whole self.

I am, of course, dear reader, deeply appreciative of your concern for my health and well-being. It is your love that matters. And yes, of course, I reach out for every alleviation, every lifting of the darkness, every blockage



of those relentless demons of doom that currently torment my nights.

*So, dear Tumour, I thank you. I thank you with all my heart and soul. You are a true child of the universe, of the mystery of Creation, yes, even of incarnate Love itself. Love did not send you. Love never could. You, my Tumour exactly like the cross of wood for Jesus, are the tumour of flesh that I must "freely accept". You are the cup that, also like the unwilling but obedient Jesus, I must continually bring to my lips. I resist you with all my strength; but I embrace you with a more fierce intensity than ever. Because to reject you is to reject God.*



A few images may help readers to understand the shock of the "bad" news. I felt I was living my life to the full, heading as faithfully and accurately as I could in the direction of God's True North for me. It was what my life was about; what I had trained myself to do through study and reflection; the ministry I believed God wished for me. And I felt I was doing a good job; I was booked out; I had plans for another two books; my health was great.

*continued on page 18 . . .*

**Daniel (Donal) O'Leary** was born on 5 January 1937 at Rathmore in County Kerry, Ireland. He studied for the priesthood at All Hallows' College, Dublin and was ordained there for the Leeds Diocese in 1960. Between 1972 and 1991 he taught theology and religious studies at St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, becoming chair of the Religious Studies Department, before returning to the Leeds Diocese. In recent years he had lived at Blundellsands near Liverpool.



# THE **LEGACY** OF ABUSE

**In the face of the clerical sexual abuse scandal** MIKE RIDDELL offers five changes that may help to redeem the Church.

**T**he conviction of Cardinal George Pell by a jury of his peers for sexual abuse of multiple minors in Australia marks a watershed for the Church. While the verdict is subject to appeal, it is a damning indictment of Catholicism. Pell was not any old Cardinal, but a senior member of the Vatican's leadership, as Prefect of the Secretariat of the Economy.

Historically, it seems he used his ecclesial authority to shift paedophile priests between parishes as part of the routine sheltering of them within the Church. Now he has been convicted of abusing children himself. This appears to confirm the suspicion that such behaviour is embedded in the entire hierarchy of Catholicism.

In some ways this is another nail in the self-constructed

casket of the Church. It comes as no surprise, so familiar have we become to sexual and clerical abuse on the part of our supposed leaders. Let me put my cards on the table before responding to the current crisis. I consider the sexual violation of children by a priest as one of the very worst abuses conceivable. It involves the natural innocence of a child being destroyed by someone purporting to act in the name of God.

My own daughter was abused (not by a priest) at the age of 11, and in that one incident her life was destroyed. Later she would become a drug addict, work on the street, survive overdoses and struggle to inhabit the childlike freshness that had once been her birthright. Now she is dead at the age of 40, buried along the road from us. So my opinions are understandably influenced by such events.

How will the Church recover from the lifting of the blanket, which has exposed the evil that has lurked there? My frank view is that it will never recover. The form of the Church will survive, certainly. It has faced deep crises in the past and continued to exist. But now, in the eyes of the public, the words Catholicism and paedophilia are almost synonymous. When the curtain has been drawn aside,



there is no way to ignore what lies behind it. A reputation so deeply blighted is not easily restored.

But that is to speak of the institutional Church, rather than the community of faith it has emerged from. What about we, the people; we, the good priests (and the majority of priests are good)? How do we carry on reciting the Mass with this deep shame lurking in our hearts? When a crime is committed, both victim and perpetrator are despoiled.

We face a crisis that calls for reform of the deepest kind. Not that this will quickly heal the wounds that have been inflicted. But what else can the faithful do, other than abandon ship completely? Let me suggest a few changes that might enable us to stop short of jumping overboard. At first glance they may seem preposterous, but they are less so than that an ordained man should rape a child.

## Ownership

The first step of recovery, as the 12 step programme teaches, is admitting the fault. Let us not hide our faces from this abomination, nor pretend it might go away if we ignore it. Insofar as we are Catholics, we are participants in the scandal. We are not the audience, but facilitators. We are all enablers of a skewed system that has brought shame on us all. It is our evil to address, as much as it is the Pope's.

I attend Mass, therefore I am a part of that which I would prefer to turn away from. The beginning of repentance is confession — the admitting of my own complicity. If we are to wish the future to be more enlightened than the past, it is time to take on board the scandalous nature of that which has been done in our name. We cannot pretend that we don't know what has unfolded before us.

## Acceptance of Female Sexuality

I venture that there is a direct connection between the male domination of the Church and the abuse of children. Women have been sidelined, not only in terms of positions of power, but through suppression of their sexuality and spirituality. A solely male hierarchy will always be flawed, no matter what the theological justification for it may be.

The authoritative face of the Church is male, and the driving force of the institution is pure *animus*, the masculine energy that runs amok when not engaged with the complementary *anima* — the sexuality/spirituality of women. If we believe we have been created in the image of God, then both aspects are vital to being fully human.

## Voluntary Celibacy

I don't believe the easy prejudice that paedophilia is the direct consequence of celibacy. The celibacy of the clergy can be a great and expansive gift that is offered in the service of the rest of us. However, it was a late introduction in the history of the Church, and the insistence upon it for the ordained has led to many distortions.

Celibacy is a gift rather than a requirement, and we can see all too painfully that not all priests possess that gift. Those who do not have it struggle to live up to their calling, using willpower to suppress their inner urges. This makes such men brittle, angry and frustrated. These are

candidates for the breaching of the dam and subsequent inflicting of their suppressed desires on innocent children.

## End to Clericalism

The single most influential factor in the spread of sexual abuse within the Church has been clericalism. Power has been concentrated in the hands of a cabal that consider themselves above reproach and beyond any restraint. Through ecclesial sophistry, these leaders have behaved as if above the laws that govern society, and tried to draw a veil of secrecy over serial abuse.

The same ordained hierarchy have conspired to deny the assaults ever happened, conceal the perpetrators by moving them between parishes so that they can continue offending, and limit any financial damage to the Church when cases are uncovered. Through doing so they have preferred their own power ahead of children violated under the guise of religion. There can be no reform without an end to clericalism.

*The single most influential factor in the spread of sexual abuse within the Church has been clericalism. Through ecclesial sophistry, these leaders have behaved as if above the laws that govern society, and tried to draw a veil of secrecy over serial abuse.*

## Lighting the Darkness

We all ache for some form of healing because we are all damaged. But there can be no healing, either for the victims or perpetrators or laity, without serious changes in the structure of the Church. Making payments to those whose life has been destroyed will not heal them, even though that may be part of the process.

Instead, we need to allow them a voice, and bear the anguish of listening to their stories. Some sort of Truth and Reconciliation process that involves all parties would be a beginning, and perhaps allow light into the considerable darkness at the heart of the Church. We've been brought face to face with the shadow side of faith. Now is the time to confront it with luminosity.

There is no quick way to escape our shame, and any rushed attempts to do so will fail. This is a crisis centuries in the making, and will outlive a number of Popes. We are flawed, broken, and marred by our participation in a great evil. All we can do is become active bearers of the Christ-light and willing agents of change. The Church is ours to redeem. ☸

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

I am writing this during the Vatican summit on the “Protection of Minors in the Church”. At the bidding of Pope Francis, 114 presidents of bishops’ conferences from around the world are attending, as well as religious superiors, Vatican officials and invited guests. Of a total of 190 participants, 12 are women. The focus on minors means that there is no intention to address the abuse of vulnerable adults or seminarians. It also means that the increasing number of women committed to speaking out about abuse will not have a hearing.

Some people might see signs of hope in this extraordinary gathering — though Francis has tried to dampen what he sees as unrealistic expectations of what might result from it. Many are encouraged that he is at last taking firm action to deal with the sex abuse crisis. I wish I could see this summit as a positive sign of change and a firm purpose of amendment, but I am sceptical for a number of reasons.

### Thirty Years of Collusion and Cover-up

Of those bishops gathered in Rome, a few will themselves be abusers, and the action taken against now-defrocked Cardinal Theodore McCarrick is likely to have caused flutters of panic in not a few episcopal breasts. Many others — maybe even the majority of others — will have to some extent colluded in the culture of denial and cover-ups, which is why their expressions of sadness, concern and regret ring hollow for me. The public exposé of the sex abuse crisis began in the mid 1980s. The bishops have had more than 30 years to put their house in order. Why should we trust them now, when they have already failed so spectacularly?

As an example of just how effective the culture of collusion and denial has been, we might consider the case of Cardinal Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI and Marcial Maciel, founder of the Legionaries of Christ and a serial abuser of young men, women and children. Francis has confirmed reports that as Head of the CDF Ratzinger gathered substantial evidence against Maciel and tried to have him brought to



## LOOKING FOR HOPE

Pointing to the cover-up and dysfunction of Church leadership around sexual abuse, TINA BEATTIE writes that real hope for the Church lies elsewhere.

justice, but he was overruled. Francis praised Benedict XVI for his bravery in pursuing the case until he was forced to drop it, but such praise is misguided and shows just how much remains to be done before sex abuse

is treated with the seriousness it demands. To drop the case against a proven sex abuser because of pressure from other members of the hierarchy is to collude in the abuse. So that is one reason why I have little

confidence that those men gathering in Rome have the insight, the self-awareness, or the courage they need to resolve this crisis.

### Dysfunction in Leadership

Second, there is abundant evidence that many of the men still occupying leadership positions in the Church are themselves dysfunctional potentates, whose obsequious loyalty to John Paul II and Benedict XVI is in marked contrast to their virulent attacks on Francis. We should remember that the culture of abuse, clericalism and misogyny which now prevails across much of the Catholic hierarchy flourished under the previous two popes. Francis might not be doing enough to tackle it, but he has done far more than either of his predecessors — and his enemies will stop at nothing to obstruct and discredit him.

The poisoning of the soul of the Church finds virulent expression not only in the hostility towards Francis, but also in the alliance of some wealthy and prominent Catholics with emergent white supremacist and Islamophobic regimes across Europe and America. An obsessive preoccupation with homosexuality, abortion, contraception and gender theory has been allowed to drive the hierarchy into an unholy alliance with the most fundamentalist and bigoted evangelicals. If we join the dots — Brexit Britain being assiduously promoted by wealthy right-wing Catholic Jacob Rees-Mogg, Catholic support for Trump, Steve Bannon and Cardinal Burke's Catholic alliance — we see that once again, as so often in history, when politics teeters towards fascism the institutional Church tends to lean in the same direction.

### Missed Putting Vision into Practice

Pope Francis could have used the gathering this week to destroy the foundations of this ideology. I find myself going back again and again to his papal manifesto, his 2015 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, with its robust condemnation of clericalism and its affirmation of a messy, risk-taking

Church in which the parish and not the Vatican is the centre of gravity: "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security . . . More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: 'Give them something to eat' (Mk 6:37)" (EG par 49).

*Look for signs of hope in the lives of millions of ordinary Catholics who recognise the fragility and woundedness of Christ in our midst, to see that he too is a victim of abuse and humiliation.*

No wonder those corpulent cardinals in their crimson vestments hate him.

Yet this summit is a missed opportunity to put that vision of the Church into practice. It is already an event in which Francis is bending the rules to hold his fellow bishops accountable, but I wish he had just broken the rules altogether. Tell those bishops to come to Rome in sackcloth and ashes, and to keep a penitent silence as they listen to the voices of the laity: theologians and teachers, women religious, chaplains and social workers, mothers and fathers, survivors of abuse, gay and transgender people, all those who must be included as full participants in the life of the Church if the culture of clericalism, predicated upon male privilege and a distorted theology, of priesthood is to be challenged.

### Look beyond Rome for Hope

For me, this summit is too little too late. There is an ethical deficit at the heart of the institutional Church, and for many Catholics around the

world the hierarchy has squandered the last vestiges of its authority. If we look for signs of hope, we should not look to Rome but to the lives of millions of ordinary Catholics who see beyond the posturings and politics of the hierarchy to recognise the fragility and woundedness of Christ in our midst, to see that he too is a victim of abuse and humiliation. Mary identifies with all the mothers of children tortured and abused by men of religious and political power. She stands in solidarity with women through the ages who have kept faith alive, even on Holy Saturday outside the tomb, when the men are cowering in fear and fighting among themselves.

These are not just silent vigils, for women are speaking out as never before in the Church. "Catholic Women Speak" founded by me in 2014, is a worldwide network of women committed to creating spaces for women's voices to be heard in the Church and society. "Voices of Faith" is another organisation campaigning for women's leadership and for breaking the culture of silence surrounding women who have experienced sexual abuse by priests and bishops. The magazine *Donne Chiesa Mondo*, published in Italian and English by *L'Osservatore Romano* under the editorship of Lucetta Scaraffia, is becoming increasingly outspoken on women's issues. An Italian forum of women, "Donne per la Chiesa", has recently joined the ranks of women committed to staying in and speaking out.

That's what gives me hope. As for those men in Rome, I would say they have become an irrelevance, except for the harm that they might yet do if they fail to take dramatic and radical action as a result of this week's summit. 🌀

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**Tina Beattie**, married with four children, is Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Roehampton, London, a writer and a broadcaster.



Childhood sexual abuse can have devastating physical effects. Most of us are also aware of its detrimental psychological and emotional effects, but what we may not know is how enduring these can be; how many people other than the primary victim may be affected; and the effect on society.

Apart from the terror, pain or confusion at the time(s) of the abuse, the victim may develop ongoing psychological symptoms. Children tend

# Enduring Damage of Childhood Sexual Abuse

BRIDGET TAUMOEPEAU describes the serious and pervasive long-term effects of sexual abuse on children, their families and society.



to blame themselves for bad things that happen. Children usually know their abusers; it is often someone they love, respect, or even fear — someone they find it difficult to blame.

The sense of shame is reinforced by the fact that many children have not been believed, or blame themselves for the break-up of the family group when an abuser is removed. Sometimes children suffer in silence due to fear instilled by the abuser, or fear of the hurt that may occur if they disclose the abuse. They may see the abuser being admired or liked by people around him, which is especially likely if the person is in a position of power or prestige.

All this is confusing for a child who has suffered at the hands of that person, and it feeds their sense of

self-blame; everyone seems to like the abuser.

## Blaming Themselves

Children blame themselves, second-guess themselves, worry over being believed and the consequences of speaking of the abuse. If the abuser is their mother's partner — "How will Mum cope? Who will she choose to support — me or him? Will she blame me?" The local youth group leader who has offered great opportunities to disadvantaged kids, and is also Dad's friend — "Who would believe me? They will think I am saying this because I wasn't chosen for a special camp." The parish priest whom Grandma loves so much and keeps inviting over for dinner — "I know she will say that as a man of

God it is impossible for him to sin like this. She may even go and apologise to him for what I have said." The elderly neighbour down the road, who has been so generous in letting us use his beach house free of charge — "Dad will give me a hiding for saying such things."

Abused children react to their distress in a variety of ways. These include secrecy due to fear, or helplessness, because trying to protect themselves against an adult may be useless. One extreme form of helplessness is dissociation — where the mind escapes to a safe place to avoid the pain of the abuse. This may then become a maladaptive response to any stress in later life.

Many abused young people self-harm, describing that self-inflicted



pain as releasing them from their emotional suffering. Children are also known to retract their accusations, as the enormity of the consequences overwhelms them, preferring to stay with the family to which they have such loyalty, despite the abuse.

### Low Self Esteem

Such feelings of shame and guilt lead on to the strong possibility of low self-esteem, which in turn may result in the victim making bad decisions or



choices. If you have low self-esteem it is easy to be swayed by someone else's decisions, which may not be the best for you. Being assertive is difficult and victims may not read social cues well, placing themselves in further abusive and dangerous situations.

Obviously intimacy and relationships in later life are affected. Trust is difficult. There may be an unhealthy power differential in the relationship. Flashbacks of the previous abuse may occur. The victim may have certain behaviours, related to the anxiety the abuse created, that are difficult for their partner to understand. For example: needing to have the light on to sleep; not wanting to be alone in the house; being frightened of car trips to remote places. All these

things put a strain on relationships, the relationship may not then survive, and this in turn leads the victim to blame themselves further. If the victim has children of their own their parenting may be affected — they may become overprotective, fearing their children's friendships with people, as well as having re-lived distress when their own children reach the age that they themselves were abused.

### Effects on Parents

Parents of the victim may suffer particularly. Relationships within the family of origin may be fractured with members believing different sides of the story, especially if the abuse occurs within the family. Some of the emotions that may be experienced by family members include rage, grief, shame, disbelief, as well as a distancing of themselves from the whole situation as it is too overwhelming to deal with. A mother may simply be unable to believe that her partner abused her child and will not give evidence; an older sibling, who was also abused, feels guilty that she did not reveal the abuse, a course which might have protected her younger sister; an older brother launches a social media campaign against an alleged abuser and, in turn, is interviewed by the police because of threats he has made.

### Effects on Family and Friends

We can't forget the effect on the family, colleagues and friends of the abuser. Imagine the shock and horror of discovering that our beloved brother is accused of child abuse. How do we reconcile the love of our brother with the abhorrence of his crime? How can we understand this? Do we also feel some sort of shame and responsibility towards the victim and their family? If the abuser was in a professional position, we may feel anger that processes and policies did not pick up this tendency to offend, or did not intervene appropriately when offending was suspected.

### Effects on Society

There are also effects on society. As well as the obvious economic costs of investigations, health services

and compensation, there are also lost wages and productivity. There is a reduced quality of life for many people and a general effect on society's attitude of trust. Instead of gladly encouraging children to take part in activities, we may over-emphasise safety and checking. This may engender in children a sense of fear and lack of trust in the adults around them.

*Abused children react to their distress in a variety of ways. These include secrecy due to fear, or helplessness, because trying to protect themselves against an adult may be useless.*

So society is affected at all levels — victims, their families, their future relationships and their level of functioning. The abuser, by their offences has jeopardised their ability to contribute to society. Their families may also feel destroyed. Institutions and organisations may be seriously damaged in terms of credibility, denying society their potential for good. Attitudes towards relationships between adults and children, or between those in authority over others, may be thought of as suspect. The understanding that older members of society provide mentoring and wisdom to the younger members may be rejected, thus depriving the young ones of the joy of learning in a trusting and caring environment.


The effects of sexual abuse in childhood are serious, legion, pervasive and enduring, affecting the lives of many children, adults and society in general. For all these reasons we as a society need to commit to the healing of individuals, families and communities. 

Image: *Street Art at Teufelsberg, Berlin*  
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**Bridget Taumoepeau** is a retired psychiatrist, who now works voluntarily for vulnerable children and their families.





# They Stripped Me

ROCÍO FIGUEROA ALVEAR shares her research into the damage of abuse on a person's spirituality.

**T**he crisis of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church has left many of the faithful confused and discouraged. Our community in New Zealand is suffering from the revelation of historical cases of abuse and the lack of appropriate response that in the past, and sometimes in the present, we have made toward complainants. How do we acknowledge as a community the severity of what has happened?

## Trying to Minimise Abuse

One common way to minimise the scale of the problem is to affirm that sexual abuse is not a reality for all institutions — not just the Church. This approach is defensive and limited and does not recognise what is special to life in the Church and therefore particularly damaging about clerical sexual abuse. When *spiritual* power is used to seduce a minor there are

profound spiritual consequences of the abuse for the victim.

## Spiritual Damage to Victims

I researched the spiritual consequences of sexual abuse within the Church. I interviewed victims and wrote a report with David Tombs at Otago University. We found many studies of the physical and psychological consequences of sexual abuse within the Church but few focussing on the spiritual consequences for survivors. Any sexual abuse has huge psychological consequences, but in the case of sexual abuse within the Church we need to add the spiritual dimension — the effect of the abuse perpetrator being the priest, the representative for the victim of the love of God. Many victims have questioned God's benevolence and have lost the faith that was a component of their

identity. For them, the Church has become a desecrated place: they will never again go there because they no longer trust Church people.

In clerical sexual abuse we have a combination of sexual abuse with the abuse of spiritual power. When Pope Francis identifies clericalism as the cause of the crisis, he is not just talking about governance power but also about the spiritual power that has been misused by perpetrators — the priests who seduce minors and their families.

I maintain that one of the obligations of the Catholic community is to rethink our understanding of priesthood. Pope Francis encourages us to eliminate the idea of a separated, exalted and elitist priesthood at its very roots. We need to think differently of priesthood and form priests to understand themselves as servants dedicated to the people of



God. We cannot think of ordination as a sacrament with magical effects. The clergy are neither saints nor super-heroes: they are not automatically made holy on the day of ordination.

### Another Way to Minimise Abuse

Another way to minimise the crisis is to think: "Although it is a horrible thing, the sexual abuse crisis is a failure only committed by few individuals that do not represent the totality of the clergy". We do not doubt that there are very good and very committed priests, but the gravity of the problem is not just about the number of perpetrators and their crimes; it is principally about the harm done to the victims and the failure of the Church hierarchy to deal with criminal acts perpetrated by members of that hierarchy.

Because the hierarchy considered sexual abuse as a sin and an offence against God rather than a crime, the actual harm to child victims and the enforcement of the law were not taken enough into account. Frequently their response to an abuser was "forgiveness". They moved priests from one parish to another because they had already been "forgiven by God". Considering abuse as sin in this way focussed attention on the abusers and their relationship with God — the default response to it was seen as being merciful.

But considering abuse as a crime requires consideration of the victims and the default response is for the criminal law processes to be applied, both church law and civil law. As a community, we need to be centred on care of the survivors — not on care for the perpetrators.

How could the systems and structures of our Church have allowed bishops and priests to cover up or ignore abuse after complaints had been made? How, in a Church that praises itself for protecting the vulnerable, has there been so little care of them? Why has sexual abuse been not only an aberration *within* the system but also an aberration *enabled* by the system? The answer is that clericalism and Church structures built around protection of hierarchy and reputation are to blame.

The crisis of sexual abuse is not just about perpetrators and victims. As part of the Catholic community we need to feel responsible and contribute to the process of renewal and healing. In this regard, the crisis compels us to address and rethink many topics within Christology and pastoral theology.

*How, in a Church that praises itself for protecting the vulnerable, has there been so little care of them? Why has sexual abuse been not only an aberration within the system but also an aberration enabled by the system?*

### Sexual Humiliation of Jesus

David Tombs and I wanted to uncover the response of survivors to the naming of Jesus as a victim of sexual abuse. This central idea is that the torture and crucifixion of Jesus involved sexual humiliation. David developed the academic discussion of Jesus as a victim of sexual abuse in 1999. In the ancient world, crucifixion as a practice imposed on prisoners was meant not just to kill the victim but also intended to dehumanise them and reduce them in the eyes of society. The victims were crucified naked as a form of sexual humiliation.

The Gospels tell that Jesus was first stripped naked to be flogged. He was dressed again for his journey through the city then undressed once more and exhibited naked on the cross until he died before a mocking crowd.

For both the Romans and the Jews, nakedness during execution was a sign of humiliation and absolute powerlessness. Historically, the sexual component of Jesus's torture has been minimised, for example, in the artistic representations of the crucifixion that depict him wearing a loincloth. But we can read the passion narratives of

Jesus as the story of someone who was sexually humiliated.

David and I wanted to know how survivors felt about this idea: did they think conceiving of Jesus as a victim of abuse could help victims and the wider Church? The responses have been fascinating. No one we spoke to doubted the reality and historicity of Jesus's sexual humiliation. But responses were mixed as to whether this concept could help survivors. The general view was that while survivors who had remained Christian may find consolation and solidarity in this changed image of Christ, it would have little impact for those who had already left the Church.

Interestingly, all participants agreed, without hesitation, that addressing Jesus as a victim of sexual abuse would have a positive impact on the wider Church. All felt that priests and faithful are the ones who must embrace this topic as a means of achieving solidarity with victims and a more realistic and historic vision of Jesus.

The idea of Jesus as a victim of sexual humiliation could be an opportunity for renewal and purification. At a practical level, some basic principles should stay at the centre:

- Put justice and healing of victim-survivors at the centre;
- Ensure that the vulnerable are protected;
- Rebuild institutional integrity through accountability and transparency;
- And reform the clerical culture so that abuse and its cover-up cannot happen again.

It is clear that the Church has struggled to identify with the victims rather than the perpetrators of clerical sexual abuse. It may be that the image of a sexually humiliated Jesus could be a turning point, and the Church may shift its focus from forgiveness of abusers to care for victims. ☸



Peruvian Rocío Figueroa Alvear is a theologian at Good Shepherd College, Auckland. She was the head of the Women's section in the Pontifical Council for the Laity in the Vatican.

# Sexual Abuse AND CANON LAW

BRENDAN DALY outlines the changes needed to canon law which have been highlighted by the contemporary sexual abuse crisis.

In country after country bishops and religious superiors have failed to prevent and deal adequately with crimes of sexual abuse by clergy, religious and lay employees. Church leaders have not learnt from the abuse scandals in other places. Those in authority have made the same mistakes repeatedly, and the shortcomings in canon law are plain to see. Changes in canon law are needed to restore justice and to make bishops and religious superiors more accountable and proactive.

Canon law is the name for the law of the Catholic Church. The core of canon law is in the *Code of Canon Law* which was most recently published in 1983 for the Latin Church. This *Code* contains law for its authority, sacraments, discipline, structures and procedures. There are seven books in the *Code*. Book VI from canons 1311-1399 concerns penal law. Pope Francis is expected to promulgate the revised penal law very soon.

## Historical Precedents

Until recent times the Church has punished perpetrators of the sexual abuse of minors most severely. Priests have been immediately dismissed from the clerical state for sexual misconduct.

The Church has always been aware of the sexual abuse of children. Sexual abuse of girls or boys was always seen by Christians as being contrary to the sixth commandment. Polycarp (c 69-155), the second bishop of Smyrna, wrote to the Philippians: "The younger men must be blameless in all things, caring of purity before everything and curbing themselves from every evil ... whether whoremongers nor effeminate persons nor defilers of themselves with men and



boys shall inherit the Kingdom of God."

Sexual abuse by a priest was considered to be especially evil. Canon 71 of the Council of Elvira in Spain (305-306), condemned those who rape little boys: "People who sexually abuse boys shall not be given communion even at the end." Refusing communion to a dying perpetrator of sexual abuse demonstrates how evil the council judged sexual abuse.

The Council of Nicea (325), in canon 9, ordered that unchaste priests before or after ordination could not exercise ministry.

The Third Lateran Council of 1179 taught that if clerics were sexually active with men or boys they were to be dismissed from the clerical state.

The Council of Trent, in session 13, forbade priests to be sexually active and required bishops to deprive offenders of office and to punish them.

## Changes Needed Now

The contemporary sexual abuse crisis has highlighted shortcomings in the current penal law and so a draft of changes to Book VI of the 1983 *Code* was published in 2012.

Several key canons — 1395 concerning crimes of sexual abuse; 1362 concerning prescription; 1311,

1389 and 1341 concerning the need to impose penalties for sexual abuse crimes; and 1041 and 1044 concerning irregularities — urgently need to be changed. New law is needed in the areas of secrecy and excommunication for sexual abuse of minors.

The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse demonstrated that within the Catholic Church perpetrators of sexual abuse were 37 per cent non-ordained religious (32 per cent were religious brothers and 5 per cent were religious sisters); 30 per cent were priests; 29 per cent were lay people.

Since a significant proportion of offenders are lay people, there needs to be a fifth paragraph added to canon 1395: "Canon 1395 §5. A person who sexually abuses a child or who uses child pornography incurs an automatic excommunication."

There needs to be another paragraph concerning the use of child pornography: "Canon 1395 §6. A person who abuses a person under age 18 or who acquires or holds or distributes pornographic images of minors below the age of 18 years is to be punished with automatic excommunication and the penalties mentioned in §2 in whatever way or by whatever instrument the shameful act





has been committed.”

Revisions to penal law in 2010 included the canonical delict of acquisition, possession or distribution of pedopornography. Clearly those who buy and distribute pornography are accomplices in the crime of the

Impediments are based on factual circumstances and prevent ordination temporarily, for as long as those circumstances exist. Irregularities, though, are permanent impediments which are the result of crimes or other non-criminal things that can be

demonstrated that, on average, victims abused as children wait 30 years to lay a complaint and report the crime.

I believe the Church needs to revert to the former law whereby there was no prescription for cases reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of



original sexual abuse with filming or photographs of the acts.

There have been many examples of clergy abuse of vulnerable adults around the world. I believe a sixth paragraph needs to be added to canon 1395: “Canon 1395 §7. A person who enjoys imperfect use of reason or is a vulnerable person is equiparated with a minor in this paragraph.” This is necessary to deal with perpetrators taking advantage of people with disabilities.

### Irregularities

The Church has a long history of having irregularities or perpetual impediments to ordination to prevent unsuitable people being ordained. Saint Paul forbade the ordination of anyone who had been married twice. He told Timothy that “deacons be the husband of one wife”, while “a bishop must be...the husband of one wife”, and instituted the equivalent of an impediment because a bishop must “not be a recent convert (neophyte)”.

The word “irregularity” was first used by Saint Augustine (354-430). Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) outlined circumstances that barred a person from being ordained and irregularities that prevented a priest from functioning.

physical or psychological.

Even if the man to be ordained is unaware that he has an irregularity, he is still bound by the irregularity when he learns he has become subject to it. If, for instance, a candidate for ordination has previously agreed to his girlfriend having an abortion, then he is irregular for ordination and ministry. Therefore, if the sexual abuse of a minor including the use of child pornography was made an irregularity, this would help prevent paedophiles being ordained or continuing to exercise ministry.

There is confusion about laws requiring secrecy during canonical processes. We need explicit statements encouraging victims to report offences to civil authorities.

Religious brothers and sisters can be dismissed from their religious institutes by a simple administrative process. It is becoming more common for clergy to be dismissed by administrative process rather than via a canonical trial.

Prescription is similar to a statute of limitation. At present a person has until age 38 years to complain about sexual abuse by a cleric that occurred when they were under the age of 18. The Australian Royal Commission

the Faith. It also needs to be explicitly stated in canon 695 or canon 1362 that there is no prescription for the offences of canon 1395 committed by members of religious institutes. There are different processes for the dismissal of ordained clergy and religious brothers and sisters. Because there are different processes, there are anomalies concerning the length of time within which victims can report an offence.

Though imperfect and begging for refinement and revision, canon law can be an effective tool for dealing with sexual abuse. Importantly, it is pre-existing, needing to be invoked but not invented. As I have identified, there is historical precedent for dealing with the kind of abuse we are experiencing today. ✿

Artwork: *The Children* by Trina McKillen  
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**Brendan Daly** lectures in canon law at Good Shepherd College. He has a doctorate in canon law and is Judicial Vicar of the Tribunal for New Zealand.



# Time to GET OUT from Trent's Long Shadow

MASSIMO FAGGIOLI writes that the sexual abuse crisis in the Church has been aided by three Tridentine structures which have not responded to the reforms of Vatican Council II.

**W**e've been shocked by the reports and convictions of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church around the world. Many believe it is the most serious crisis in the Church since the Protestant Reformation. If this is so,

then the analysis of this systemic failure of the institutional Church needs to take the long view. We need to compare this period in the Church's history to others in order to discover where exactly things went wrong.

Some think of the current period in the Church's history as a "settlement" established by the post-Vatican II pontificates, characterised by changes in the Catholic approach to sexual morality and by the huge social and cultural transformations of the 1960s. This way of understanding the Church's recent history is popular with those who link clerical sexual abuse with the reforms of the Vatican II period, and who are, not coincidentally, suspicious of Pope Francis's approach to issues connected to marriage, family and sex, especially homosexuality.

That approach, starting with Vatican II, tends to ignore the long history of institutions that presided over the Church's failure to deal with clerical sex abuse. To understand their role in the current crisis, we must look at three key elements that made possible the "Catholic reform" that began with the Council of Trent (1545–1563). These are elements that Vatican II did not change as much as we tend to think: the formation of priests at seminaries, the diocesan structure based on parish priest and bishop and the role of the laity.

## Seminary Formation

The basic model of the curriculum at seminaries designed by the Tridentine Church has not changed. The Tridentine diocesan seminary was built for the formation of priests recruited from areas whose Catholic culture provided the primary formation to a much larger pool of potential applicants. This is no longer the case, which is one reason for the proliferation of other kinds of seminaries for the formation of priests belonging to a particular ecclesial movement. Setting aside the very different theological and ideological orientations of these different movements (for example, the Legion of Christ on one side of the spectrum and Sant' Egidio on the other), they do provide some basic human formation and are able to screen candidates for the priesthood in a way local parishes no longer can.

In recent years, many diocesan seminaries have had to merge into interdiocesan, regional or national seminaries, where 19-year old students live and study together with much older men. Moreover, the phenomenon of



seminarians *vagantes* — men dismissed from one seminary only to be admitted into another that is looking for any minimally viable candidate — reveals that some bishops are so anxious to keep their seminaries open, and so desperate for vocations, that they will turn a blind eye to the problems that led another seminary to dismiss a man.

The Tridentine seminary model still reflects the premodern idea that the faithful have no rights before the hierarchy: seminarians depend totally on their superiors for their future. According to canon law, seminarians have many fewer rights in the Church than priests and other clerics do. This means that, from a seminarian's perspective, the seminary can easily become an institution exercising a kind of totalitarian power over their lives. Their quasi-monastic isolation from the rest of society and the mediocrity of many formation programmes are a problem today. The anachronistic and unhealthy culture of seminaries has made them a place where vocations often go to die.

### Diocesan Structure

The parish became the basic structure of the local church in Europe around the 13th century. In the early modern and modern period, Catholicism went through a so-called “parishisation” — diocesan parish ministry became the model of ordained ministry, to the diminishment of other forms of ministry. This was part of the Council of Trent's effort to put all elements of the Church under hierarchical control of the bishops, an effort that sprang from a territorial understanding of the Church.

It was largely bishops who cleaned up the Church in the 16th and 17th centuries — men like Charles Borromeo in Milan — by implementing the top-down reforms of the Council of Trent. Now, in the 21st century, it remains to be seen if this post-Trent and post-Vatican II episcopal approach to Church reform is still possible in a Church reeling from the sexual-abuse crisis — a crisis aggravated by episcopal negligence and malfeasance.

The other main protagonists of Catholic reform — Catholic rulers and the religious orders — are no longer in a position to help the bishops.

As for the papacy, which the Council of Trent regarded as the principal agent and guarantor of reform, its own credibility has been undermined by the failure of bishops in a way that it would not have been before Trent. That's because, in the centuries between Trent and Vatican II, the papacy was successful in exacting from the local churches and from political authorities almost unlimited control over the appointment of bishops — something new in Church history.

Now, when a bishop goes bad, it reflects badly on the judgment of the popes who appointed or promoted him. Until the 18th century at least, the appointment of bishops had been a joint effort of the papacy, kings and princes and local elites. This made powers other than the papacy partly responsible for Church reform, but also for the Church's corruption. Now this is something the papacy appears to own entirely, whether or not this perception is fair.

*The are three elements that Vatican II did not change as much as we tend to think: the formation of priests at seminaries, the diocesan structure based on parish priest and bishop and the role of the laity.*

### Catholic Laity

Historically, when the Church had to correct abuses and corruption within its own ranks, the hierarchy could call upon the help of the laity. But then, “the laity” meant the Catholic elites and Catholic princes: that's not what it means today.

The laity of today is different from the laity of the post-Trent period and also from the idea of the laity that obtained right up until Vatican II. Lay participation in the governance of the Church was simply inconceivable. Lay people had a right to be governed; they had no right to govern.

Today's increased scrutiny of the Church's clerical leadership by media, and the increasing disaffiliation of Catholics from the institutional Church, is completely out of keeping

with the way the Church understood the laity between Trent and Vatican II.


This clerical sex-abuse crisis is more a crisis of the Tridentine Church than of the Vatican II Church, because the Church in which that abuse took place is, in terms of its institutional structure, still essentially Tridentine.

The effort to reform the Church in light of what we now know about sexual abuse and abuses of power must look back further than the Second Vatican Council: which did not so much open a new era as begin to close down an old one whose remnants are still with us.

From an institutional point of view, the Church of Vatican II, a Church committed to the priesthood of all believers, is still at a very early stage of construction. Some of the institutional innovations of Vatican II — pastoral councils at the parish and diocesan level — are still not popular among either the clergy or the laity.

Too many Catholics are still content to let Father take care of everything, or they have simply given up on the hope of a Church co-governed by the laity. Even going back to the letter of the Council of Trent could help make the Church more accountable. For example, Trent proposed institutional innovations — such as the frequent celebration of diocesan synods and provincial councils — that were soon mothballed as the Counter-Reformation Church became increasingly centralised.

Tackling the failures that made the sex-abuse crisis possible will involve many changes — changes to the Church's relationship with civil authorities and criminal justice, cultural and spiritual changes, but also changes in the structure of the institution itself.

It is finally time to revisit the basic models of ecclesial organisation that the Council of Trent imposed on the Catholic Church. 

Artwork: *Cardinal Sin* by Banksy  
[www.mymodernmet.com](http://www.mymodernmet.com)

[ED: Squint to see what Banksy's done.]



**Massimo Faggioli** is a Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University, USA and the author of *Catholicism and Citizenship: Political Cultures of the Church in the Twenty-First Century*.







## ON SEEING THE RIPENED WHEAT

On seeing the ripened wheat  
cut and shredded  
I felt bereft.  
Had it been left longer  
I could enjoy the wave and wind ripple  
The mauve tint before dark  
The stealthy moon darting among the stalks.

On seeing the ripened wheat  
lying crestfallen  
I remembered each seed planted  
each split of germination  
each thrust through earth's dark  
towards light.

On seeing the ripened wheat  
await its fate  
I stood mourning  
while all day the farmer circled and drew lines  
of grain beneath the sun.

It's night.  
I hear him still.  
The harvester, the harsh light  
the wheat readying to be bread.

by Anne Powell. From: *The Edge of Things*.  
Cuba Press, 2018, p12





## Coming Home Too Soon

DANIEL O'LEARY

... continued from page 3

My barns were full. And, after all, my mother, whom, everyone said, I “took after”, lived to be 97. Hers was a fierce faith. That is the stock I come from. On our bare knees on a cold floor in front of the picture of the Sacred Heart illuminated by a red electric light, we rattled through the Rosary and litanies — and we never missed a single night.

How impossible it is to say, “Yes Lord, I gladly accept this big cross from you. I surrender to it. I do know you neither will nor desire it for me. It pains you to see me suffer so. You cannot prevent it. But you can help me grow through it. Give me grace to accept this cancer which is devouring my life away.”

Nor is there any relief in repeating these words. The darkness does not shift; there is no light now in most of my days. Last week, reflecting on this stark reality, it suddenly occurred to me, *This is it!* I am at the lowest point of my life. I am in a place I've never been in before. It's the moment we all fear most. Jesus too wept in that deadly experience of despair.

Yet the *cantus firmus*, the enduring melody of my life, my one unshaken belief, penetrates and dissipates my deepest fears. When I equate God with life itself, a transformation takes place in the way I understand our Catholic Christianity. Once I remove everything that separates divinity and humanity, Heaven and Earth, grace and nature, I begin to live and move in another milieu. Once I use the same name for the gracious mysterious Mother of all becoming that I call God, and the primal energy of Creation, my faith can never be the same again. And once I commit to identifying God's intimate presence in my evolving perception of the world's most beautiful artistry and creativity, in my darkness and in my invincible light, and in my very breath, then I am living the incarnation of God in Jesus in my life — and living it now with a passion “at the hour of my death”.

This is not spiritual vagueness. It is a kind of heart-wisdom that touches the most substantial parts of me this very day. When the tumult seems unending, it brings a kind of peace. In the silence of these starless nights, it brings a warmth, a comfort and an intimacy to my breaking heart, and it will allow me to turn over in my bed tonight, to close my eyes in thanks, and to forget, for a few hours, the demons waiting for me at dawn.

As my tumour grows and my hope diminishes, I continue to reach out of this life-less place for a stronger glimpse of the astonishing love and meaning revealed in this way of thinking. It is utterly personal; it is deeply cosmic. It may happen tonight. When everything we see, touch, hear and smell is perceived as the warm embrace of the divine arms, when the spring song of birth and the winter lamentations of death are enjoyed and endured as the evolving seasons of God's Creation, when the twinning of the new story of the universe told by evolution and the old Christian narrative captures our hearts, when the courage and hope of oppressed people on a mutilated Earth are experienced as the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, when from the jaws of a rampant cancer someone draws a pencil line of light into the darkness, then, and only then, are we living and dying the Gospel of Christian Incarnation.

In quiet moments I place my left hand, nearest the heart, over the bag that covers the red and raw stoma and I try to channel my love into it. I hold it close, pouring my deepest self into it, seeing this bleeding lump as the sign, shape and substance of divine love incarnate. No sunsets or spring flowers here. The leaks, the soiled sheets, the adult nappies, the waiting shadow of the relentless chemo and its cruel and intense side effects — I try to welcome them all with love. This work, fierce and uncompromising, will, I fear, demand eternal vigilance — a vigilance at the moment that truly terrifies me, and that is totally beyond me. Yesterday I received Holy Communion and was meditating on the wonder of the bread and wine becoming flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood. And then poo of our poo. You know I'm not trying to shock — it's only my desperate need to understand deep Incarnation, and then to be healed by that understanding of Love.



These final days of my deeply wearisome waiting force me into places I would rather not go. One of the fears I carry in the event of these thoughts and ruminations becoming public is that they will be seen as the whimpering of an old fool, a cowardly wimp unable to take his beating like a man. In a weird kind of way I feel I'm trying to exorcise out of me before I go, all that's



deeply flawed and hidden in my make-up, all that is inauthentic and false; to smash the wall of false appearance and pretence that lies at the sick heart of my inherited clericalism, spawned by a very sick institution. Maybe now, at this very last minute, if, like the thieves, I take it, is the chance to say with Jesus, "It is consummated."

I do not want to be remembered as a coward. I've always prayed for courage, and prized it as the queen of graces. When discussing the core of spirituality, of true self-possession, of tracing the contours of the Christ-child's face within me, the presence of fragility, failure, falling, inner confusion is always emphasised.

Without this poverty of spirit, we miss the whole point of salvation — the suffering, the cross, the death of the ego, the weakness mentioned so often by St Paul, and, for me, just now — a hungry tumour. This is the dark and deadly night of my soul that I will embrace, that I *must* embrace; it is God's greatest incarnate gift of self that lights up, so surely, my way home.

Forgive me for jumping from one thing to another. I touch on these thoughts and fears in this, my last meditation on my life, only because they have been central to my decisions, my terrible pain of loss, my efforts to live the life I should have lived from the beginning. My thoughts hurtle, fast and furious, in my heart, or they smoulder, slow and sluggish, in my soul. The constant source of hope that fills me is the flawed humanity of Jesus. His weakness and vulnerability comfort me in my own despair.

When I cannot think straight or find peace, cannot sit down, lie down, or stop crying, when I wonder if I can manage another 24 hours, then I find some consolation in the broken face of Jesus as the perfect face of God. When I despair at how little of real worth I have achieved, when I remember how even these accomplishments have been ruined by self-interest and a well-disguised ego, I find a mercy, a lambent light, in the weakness of Jesus. "Because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted . . . For we do not have a high priest who is unable to

sympathise with our weaknesses, but who in every respect has been tempted as we are..." (Hebrews 4:15). My tumour is to me what his beloved and terrible Calvary was to Jesus, no more no less.



Into the restless, relentless distress of these, my last January nights, there is a final all-embracing vision, a conviction that sustains my courage in mornings and evenings of fear. It is a kind of gradually forming vision, a perspective, a radical paradigm shift. It is very like the way spring delicately steps into our fields, allotments and cities, or is glimpsed now here, now there, until one day we know it will stay. The day will come when, like rain falling on parched land, like light shading in through utter darkness, like life slowly returning to a stricken land, you will find a wonderful awareness warming your soul.

It is the moment when you know for sure that the birth and death of everything, the sustaining and empowering of all that works towards good, the source of all beauty, the precious energy that creates, heals and quickens our souls and our tumours, the invisible, unimaginable, universal energy of the cosmos — is Love. The realisation invades me, as I write, like the breaking of the dawn. It brings the deepest sigh. Once sensed, the precipice of despair will always remain out of reach.

All of this goes back a long way, I know; we've imbibed it with our mother's milk. And one day, sooner or later, it will come and stay forever at the kitchen table of our hearts. And as I sit at that small altar with a few friends, and sip the wine and bite the bread, with my last breath, my deepest desire will be to diminish, decay and to die, with this blessed tumour, into that human-eternal Love.



Soon I'll be next at the waiting-room exit door. I'm anxious to be in my best bib and tucker for the occasion. This, as you know, has long been my desire — to be free of fear and bitterness, and full of love and desire, as I step up for the final inspection. So I must be very careful in what I write next. I now believe, with all my heart, that compulsory celibacy is a kind of

sin, an assault against God's will and nature. Let me avoid the minefield that this could drag us into! I'm just pointing out that one of the fall-outs of mandatory celibate life is the violence it does to a priest's humanity, and the wounds that it leaves on his ministry. Again, I can hear the voices calling me a traitor to the cause. But, please remember, I'm only recalling the memories, convictions and awakenings that are filling my soul during these ever-so-strange final days and nights.

Some priests hang on to their authentic, essential selves; many of us do not. The enemy, we were warned, back in the 1950s, was a failure in prayer; falling in love was the cancer; suppression, sublimation and confession were the cure. Emotion was the threat; detachment was the safeguard; becoming too human was the risk; the subtle carapace of clericalism was the precaution. Clericalism is a collective malaise which keeps vibrant, abundant life at bay; it quarantines us for life from the personal and communal expression of healing relationships, and the lovely grace of the tenderness which Pope Francis is trying to restore to the hearts of all God's people.



How long have I left on this beautiful blue planet? Gradually, everything somehow is becoming more simple — and just fading away. We grow, and we die, by subtraction. Is that all there is?

These words were scribbled here in my flat on 31 December. Yet that very night I was back in bed 6 of bay 3 in Aintree Hospital, as the New Year's bells rang out in the distance, suffering from unforeseen complications — as if I needed any more evidence for the unpredictable vicissitudes of my life . . .

**Daniel died peacefully in the early hours of Monday 21 January 2019.**

From: *The Tablet: The International Catholic News Weekly*. Reproduced with permission of the Publisher. <http://www.thetablet.co.uk>

**JENNIFER WESTACOTT**  
says that by adopting  
ethical sourcing  
practices and building  
social capability in  
the communities of  
countries supplying  
goods, business can help  
eradicate modern slavery.

**T**he enslavement of people, be it in an economic or a sexual sense, is one of the most undignifying things we can do to another human being. In whatever form it takes, we must eradicate it.

Today modern slavery is a crime and an economic issue, which is why business is best placed to take the lead on ending this odious practice.

Slavery effectively means one person owns another person — a person is indentured to another. It involves the serious and gut-wrenching crimes of child sex slavery, trafficking humans, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage and debt bondage. It involves people being exploited, unable to refuse or leave work because of threats, being subject to violence, coercion, abuse of power or deception.

Stamping out modern slavery isn't a feel-good exercise. How do we stamp out crimes? — follow the money. And this is why the involvement of business is absolutely essential.

The slave trade today is global in nature so we need global action. And businesses can influence the global supply chains. True, global trading has lifted millions out of poverty and delivered higher standards of living in countries like ours, but it has also increased the risk that supply chains are tainted by the use of forced labour.

Large businesses, with the might of their purchasing power, have the means to uncover modern slavery in their supply chains and the economic firepower to cut it off at the source.

Take, for example, the Walk Free Foundation — a global organisation tasked with ending modern slavery in our generation. In partnership with



community, religious and business leaders, the Foundation led the campaign for a Modern Slavery Act passed as law in Australia last year. Australia is only the second jurisdiction in the world, after the United Kingdom, to introduce national legislation to address the risk of modern slavery in tainted supply chains.

### **Prevalence of Slavery**

So how widespread is the problem of modern slavery? *The Global Estimates of Modern Slavery*, produced by Walk Free and the International Labour Organization in partnership with the International Organization for Migration, estimates there are 40.3 million people in the world subject to conditions of modern slavery. This includes an estimated 25 million in forced labour and 15 million people — predominantly women and girls — in forced marriage.

Walk Free's Global Slavery Index estimates that 62 per cent of all people who are enslaved are in the Asia-Pacific Region, right on our doorstep. And it estimates 15,000 people are enslaved in Australia.

### **Ethical Sourcing of Goods**

Because of our close ties to Asia-Pacific, the Walk Free Foundation believes Australian businesses and

consumers are most likely benefiting from modern slavery in the food and clothes we purchase, the suppliers we choose and the businesses we invest in. So Australian businesses have to — and are — taking the lead on this issue.

For example, Target and Kmart from Wesfarmers are buying partners of the International Labour Organisation and International Finance Corporation's Better Work programme. This involves ethical sourcing teams from Kmart and Target working in partnership with the Better Work programme on long-term improvement plans for factories in the garment industry.

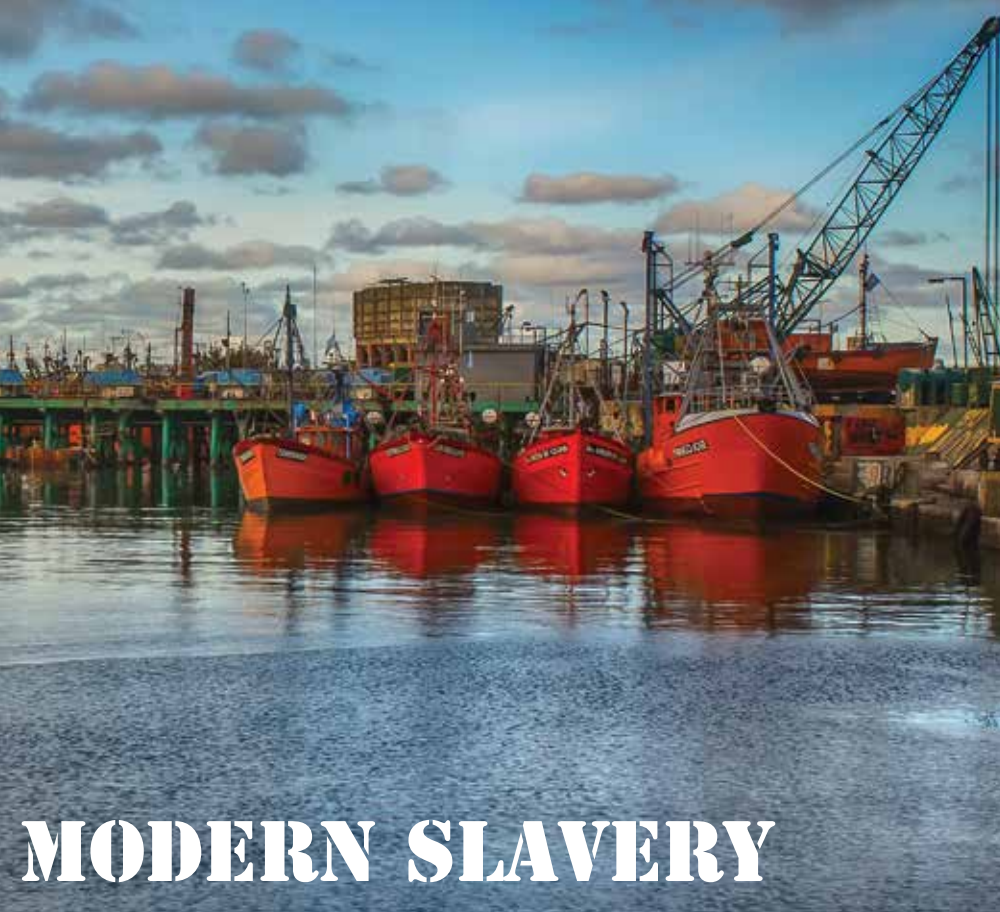
Wesfarmers directly sources products from 10,000 suppliers in Australia, China, Bangladesh, New Zealand, India, Thailand, Vietnam and other countries. The supply chains are complex but the company's aim is to ensure human rights are understood, respected and upheld.

I'm a member of the audit committee of the Wesfarmers board and we regularly go through detailed reports of every serious breach of ethical sourcing. We take this incredibly seriously.

### **Modern Slavery Act Introduced**

The business community welcomes the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act. The legislation requires





# MODERN SLAVERY

all larger businesses in Australia to forensically examine their operations and those of their suppliers — both here and overseas — for the risk of modern slavery.

It requires them to address those risks and publicly report every 12 months on their activities to stamp out any exploitation occurring on their watch.

And, finally, it is legislation that will give Australians confidence that the goods they buy in their country have not been tainted by the misery and degradation of modern slavery.

## Encouraging Willingness

Australia's new reporting regime needs a careful start — we want it to be successful. First of all, organisations have to be willing to discover whether a problem exists. If the law is too burdensome, it will deter companies from digging deeper — particularly in remote supply chains. We have to inspire a culture of discovery.

We have to want to know whether there are practices in our supply chains that involve the shocking exploitation of people in order to stop it.

And, we have to accept that in some countries where we are going to source products there are real risks of these practices occurring.

Many will say we should just

avoid sourcing products from these locations. But those in business know that's not how the world of mass consumer markets works. And it would be unfair to the workers in those countries.

***Surely, the essence of humanity is dignity. Slavery diminishes everyone — our dignity is diminished when we allow others to be robbed of theirs.***

The challenge is to source products ethically from developing countries, while ensuring the scourge of modern slavery is eradicated. But as a community we ought to be doing more.

## Business Needs To...

Which brings me to my checklist of what business should do.

First of all, we must discover what is in our supply chains because discovery and disclosure are the pathways to ending this.

We must make sure that discovery takes place on the ground, both here and overseas, and that we resource teams on the ground properly.

But we have to do more than just check.

We have to build the social capability in the communities of the countries where we source products or operate.

It is our generation's responsibility to end this criminal abuse of human rights.

Here is an area where Church and business can collaborate. We need to be absolute allies and absolute partners because non-government organisations are on the ground in a way that the business community is not.


Many of these countries are religiously connected, particularly to the Catholic Church. Together, we can use our religious power and our economic power to stop these abuses.

In order to understand a complex human problem, we have to imagine ourselves in the shoes of those who are affected. Imagine what it must be like to get up every day of your life and have absolutely no control over what you do, how you work — to be exploited and vulnerable.

We need to put ourselves in the position of the young girl who is taken from her family and is sexually assaulted every day for hours.

Put ourselves in the position of someone who does not choose to get up to go to work, but is forced to work.

Put ourselves in the position of someone who is working in a factory in stifling heat in a shockingly unsafe environment with absolutely no control or power to do anything about it. Put ourselves in that person's shoes to understand the pure indignity of that type of existence.

Surely, the essence of humanity is dignity. So, we must do all we can to eradicate the appalling exploitation of vulnerable people who are forced into the indignity of working as slaves. Slavery diminishes everyone — our dignity is diminished when we allow others to be robbed of theirs. 

Extract from Jennifer Westacott's speech to the St Josephine Bakhita Seminar and Expo in Sydney, 8 February 2019.



**Jennifer Westacott** is the Chief Executive of the Business Council of Australia. Among her roles she is Chair of the Mental Health Council of Australia.



# TRANSFORMED *in the* STRUGGLE

**KATHLEEN RUSHTON'S reading of Luke 9:28-36 highlights the commitment that Jesus, and all disciples, give to understanding God's mission in the world.**

**M**ark and Matthew tell us Jesus “was transfigured before them”. Luke describes this event differently – Jesus prays, his conversation with Moses and Elijah is revealed and the disciples “were heavy with sleep” (Lk 9:28-33). I will explore the possibility that the disciples are being offered both an example of Jesus praying at a time of difficulty and insights into his intimate relationship with God.

This incident happened as the Galilean ministry of Jesus came to a climax around questions about his identity and the direction in which God's mission was taking him. Disciples had asked: “Who is this ...?” (Lk 8:25) after he calmed the storm. King Herod had asked: “Who is this ...?” (Lk 9:9). The focus moves to the disciples. A new phrase in their formation has begun. They are to learn what following Jesus and his mission really meant.

### Context of Mission

Jesus called the twelve to commission them on God's mission to do what they had seen him doing – healing, exorcisms and preaching (Lk 9:1-2). He instructed them: “Take nothing for the way, neither staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money, nor have two tunics ...” (Lk 9:3). Scripture scholar Michael Trainor links this instruction

to a “disposition towards creation and a resistance to the temptation to power, status and privilege” with which Jesus was tempted by the devil at the beginning of his ministry. The twelve's focus is to be on God's mission. They are to take no bag of possessions, to rely on God's providence for bread, to carry only one tunic and to have no money to purchase Earth's goods or satisfy their needs.

The disciples return from mission and tell Jesus all about it. Then, taking them with him, Jesus “withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida” (Lk 9:10). Crowds followed. Jesus welcomed them. Later, the disciples wanted Jesus to send the crowds away to get lodging and food. He challenged them to respond to the situation: “You give them something to eat.” With the hospitality of the superabundance of God, Jesus fed the crowds (Lk 9:12-17).

### The Big Question

As often happens in Luke, significant developments begin with Jesus at prayer by himself “with only the disciples near him” (Lk 9:18). Then he asked the big question: “Who do the crowds say I am?” Then of the disciples: “But who do you say I am?” Peter's answer is spot on: “You are the Christ (the Anointed).” When Jesus talked for the first time about his coming suffering, death and resurrection, neither Peter, nor any disciples, disputed with him (contrast with Mk 8:32-33; Mat 16:22-23) when he explained that his being the Messiah would mean suffering. Suffering would be, also, the lot of the disciples (Luke 9:23-27). His followers are to deny themselves and “take up their cross *daily* and follow me”. “Daily” is Luke's addition. Jesus was talking about a spirituality for the long haul.

That events of Luke's account are found between this first (Lk 9:22) and the second mention of suffering, death

**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.



**RL Lk 9:28-36 - 17 March 2nd Sunday of Lent**  
**RCL Lk 9:28-36 (37-43a) - 5 March Transfiguration Sunday and 17 March 2nd Sunday of Lent (alternative)**



and resurrection (Lk 9:44; third, 18:31-33) which seem to be designed to help the disciples with the difficult instruction Jesus gives them.

## Jesus Prays

About eight days later, with “Peter, James and John, Jesus goes up the mountain to pray”. The mountain, a place rich in biblical symbolism, is where Jesus communicates with God. A pattern of Jesus’s intimacy with God in solitude on a mountain is developed: before he selected the twelve (Lk 6:12) and just before his passion and death (Lk 22:39-46). Jesus is presented as praying in Luke, more than in the other Gospels.

Now, the focus is on the experience of Jesus. He prayed about the problem of where God’s mission was taking him. His direction was set when in his hometown synagogue and in the tradition of the prophets, he proclaimed: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor ... sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Lk 4:16-19).

*In doubt and bewilderment, Jesus prayed. Things came together. His glory, which the disciples saw, was the radiant joy that came with resolution of a horrendously troubling situation. Now divine power transformed him completely. He saw things from a different perspective.*

But opposition abounded. His townsfolk tried to “hurl (Jesus) off a cliff” (Lk 4:28-30). Demons rebuked him. Scribes and Pharisees questioned him, accused him of blasphemy, of breaking the sabbath and were “filled with fury and discussed ... what they might do to Jesus” (Lk 5:21; 6:11). We can use the language of Catholic Social Teaching to describe Jesus’s sermon of the plain as an “option for the poor”. Blessed are the poor, the hungry, those who weep, the reviled, excluded, defamed. Jesus declared, “Woe to you rich ... who are full ... happy now ... when people speak well of you” (Lk 6:20-26).

## Why Suffering and Death?

From a historical point of view, Jesus suffered and died because he stayed faithful to his role in God’s mission with a courage that did not quit. He gave hope and good news to poor, marginalised people. This was dangerous to do in first century Palestine which was occupied and dominated by imperial Rome in collusion with local elites — Herod, scribes and religious leaders.

Was Jesus unaware of what was going on? Did he want to die? Of course not. He had a deep-seated commitment to his calling of who he was and what he was called to do. Yet Jesus was human. He struggled. He saw the writing on the wall. We can think of contemporary women and men who stayed faithful despite danger and the risk of death. For example, Dorothy Stang in the Amazon rainforest; Oscar Romeo and Jean Donovan in El Salvador; Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Nazi Germany; Martin Luther King in the United States of America; and Doctors without Borders in Syria.

## My Chosen

In doubt and bewilderment, Jesus prayed. Things came together. His face lit up — “the appearance of his face changed”. His glory, which the disciples saw, was the radiant joy that came with resolution of a horrendously troubling situation. Divine power flowed through the person of Jesus in the mighty wonders of God’s mission. Now divine power transformed him completely. His clothing became “dazzling white”. He saw things from a different perspective.

Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus about his departure (*exodus*) which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. He had to verify and work out the implications that his impending death, his *exodus*, could be a saving event which paralleled the Exodus and stressed the unity of God’s action in history. The glory of God’s presence, often named as the Shekinah, is depicted as a cloud (Exodus 13:21) and indicated the nearness or presence of the unseen God. The voice from the cloud recalled the voice from heaven at his baptism (Luke 3:22) which spoke directly to Jesus and was heard by him alone: “You are my Son, the Beloved.” Now, the disciples heard from the cloud which overshadowed them, a voice speaking in the third person: “This is my son, my Chosen; listen to him” (Lk 9:35). Earlier in the story, the twelve were *chosen* by Jesus (Lk 6:13).

As disciples we might reflect on our participation in God’s mission. What sustains us in tough times? How do we keep our commitment to mission fresh? How do we learn about new directions in God’s mission? ☪



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**Luke 15:** 1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying: “ This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3 So Jesus told them this parable: 11 “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father: ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout the country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came to himself he said: ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him: ‘Father I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’

20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him: ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 But the father said to his slaves: ‘Quickly, bring out a robe — the best one — and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

25 “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied: ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father: ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who had devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ 31 Then the father said to him: ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

**Elaine Wainwright** is a biblical scholar specialising in eco-feminist interpretation and is currently writing a Wisdom Commentary on Matthew’s Gospel.



## LOSS AND RESTORATION

**ELAINE WAINWRIGHT** gives an ecological reading of the parable of the Lost Son in Luke 15:11-32.

**W**e are so very familiar with the parable we call *The Prodigal Son* that it is challenging to read it with fresh eyes. When we read it ecologically we bring new perspectives, new reading lenses to the narrative so that we look at Earth, the material, the other-than-human as these intersect with the human.

The three opening verses set the scene for Jesus’s preaching through three parables. First is the shepherd and his lost sheep (Lk 15:4-7), next, the widow and her lost





coin (Lk 15:8-10) and then the father who loses a son, or perhaps two (Luke 15:11-32). The context is significant. Tax collectors and sinners are seeking Jesus to hear what he has to say while Pharisees and scribes are complaining that he not only teaches but welcomes sinners and eats with them. Our attention is drawn to the human characters and their interrelationships. And in this context the parable begins: “A man had two sons . . .”

The parable focuses the reader on “the younger” son who requests the “share of the estate” that would come to him, his material inheritance which preempts the death of his father. The material and the social are intimately interconnected in the negotiations but

we do not hear of the implications for the father and his older son. We hear only that the younger one gathers together all his material possessions and leaves for a distant country. He has fractured the family — its material and social fabric — and he is left with only “his share of the estate”.

That fracture finds expression in his going to a “distant country” and his squandering of his inheritance in what the parable calls “dissolute living”. He is without both a “right place” and right relationships with the material realities necessary for survival and for living with the human community. All have broken down, the material as well as the social. An ecological reading invites us to consider both as integrally related to our wellbeing, integrally related in the son who is totally abandoned — “no one offered him anything”.

This young man has, however, a memory of his previous life in his father’s house where both material and social resources abounded. There was an abundance of food for the household — “no one was in want”. It must also have been a place of acceptance and love so that he is able to decide to return to his father and to confess that he has sinned “against heaven and against you”. With our tendency to focus on the human community, it is easy for us to miss the reference to sinning against heaven. The son’s actions have torn not only the social fabric but also the ecological — both will need to be restored.

As the parable unfolds, that social and ecological restoration becomes apparent. The son is a long way off from his father’s household when he is seen. Material distance does not, however, equate with emotional distance. The father is moved with compassion, moved in the depth of his being at the approach of his son. When father and son are reunited, the father “clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly”. The material, the bodily manifestation of the father’s welcoming love is so overwhelming that he does not attend to the son’s protestation of guilt. Instead, he “clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly”. Again the material, the bodily, manifests

the emotional: “This son of mine was dead and has come back to life, he was lost and is found”. And the words find expression in actions and we are drawn into a material and social world: that of the best robe, a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. It is a time of celebration and the material contributes to such a celebration.

But another note is struck, however, and another material and social world evoked. It is that of the elder brother who is “out in the fields” — indicating a work context which contributes to the household economy. As the son makes his way home, he hears the music and dancing, the sounds of celebration, and when he enquires he discovers that his long lost brother has returned and his father has ordered a household feast. The material and the social continue to intersect — and in amongst this stands the angry elder brother. He challenges his father speaking of his faithful contribution to the household over “many years”. And in loving response his father indicates the material and social worlds that he shares with his father: all the material elements of the estate are his.

Jesus does not “complete” the story. Indeed it is a parable that evokes our engagement with the unfolding threads. We are not told if the elder son joins the feast to celebrate his brother’s return. Does he feast and dance with the rest of the household and rejoice? We do not know. What we have seen, however, is that a parable is drawn from the experience of the human community: a father, his two sons and his household. The material world of estates, food and food production (or lack of such as in famine) engages us as readers. Parables are full of material details — it is through these details that we are able to develop an ecological awareness. This awareness will enable us to read both old and new life situations ecologically. ☉

Painting: *The Return of the Prodigal*  
by Grace Carol Bomer © Used with  
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# MARRIED AND WOMEN PRIESTS?

In an interview with German newspaper *Die Zeit* in 2017, Pope Francis acknowledged the severe shortage of priests in parts of the world was “an enormous problem”. Australia and New Zealand, for example, have in recent years depended heavily on immigrating priests to bolster their domestic stock. In regional areas foreign priests can sometimes be the only option.

Moving numbers around is, of course, a simple solution. As the number of men taking to seminaries at home continues to wane, it's overseas in countries like Africa and Vietnam that more and more men are being ordained. But this is not the only fix proposed. Pope Francis appears open to the idea of allowing older married men to become priests, as *virī probati*, or “proven men”.

It demonstrates the Church's acute pain and the crossroads at which it finds itself. Revelations of sexual abuse have not helped matters, and no doubt these scandals are partly behind the dwindling numbers of men jumping at the chance to become priests. The sexual abuse scandal and the priest shortage confront the Church as enormous challenges, but they can also be great opportunities. For that reason, I will discuss them together.

Consider for a moment Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It was assisted by Des Cahill, a former priest who resigned in the 1970s and made a formal review of what had transpired on Australian shores. I had the good fortune

of interviewing Des a couple of years ago. His comprehensive study documented abuse cases around the world and his diagnosis of the causes was clear.

The factors behind the abuse are certainly varied and many. However, Des told me then that while not the cause, the celibacy of priests was a principal risk factor in the abuse of children. Through this lens, Pope Francis's idea of allowing older married men to become priests is not a bad idea.

However, that does not appear sufficient on its own. Ordaining older men is more akin to a stopgap measure. Let us go one step further then and consider allowing all priests to marry. This would allow priests to develop sexually in a healthy and accepted manner and would greatly reduce the risk of future abuse. It would, no doubt, also have the added benefit of attracting more men to the vocation.

Cahill's report also identified as problematic the male-only environments that form the foundation, much of the culture of the Church. Many priests attend male-only schools and male-only seminaries, before entering male-only schools and living in male-only communities. “The lack of the feminine and the denigration of women within Church structures is one key underlying risk factor in the abuse,” Cahill concluded.

I think we need to pause for thought, then, when Pope Francis talks about allowing older married men to be ordained. Why not also consider the introduction of women priests? I think that elevating the influence and position of women in the Church can only have a positive effect and would certainly go some way to solving two of the largest existential threats facing it. By welcoming women into ordination, we show we are ready to move into the current era. Opening ordination

to women — several millions of the baptised — might also increase the numbers attending Mass.

The problems of abuse and diminishing clergy are plain for all to see. After all, they gave impetus for the importation of priests as well as the proposed ordination of married men. Both are modern solutions to complex problems. Certainly the latter could be considered a reform.

Conservative Catholics would no doubt be quick to disagree with my two proposals of having married priests and women priests. I accept that my ideas run counter to their interpretation of the principle of *in persona Christi*, or clergy representing Christ. But so, too, does the appalling tragedy of sexual abuse that claimed victims around the globe — crimes and their cover-up that took decades to see the light of day. It's a tragedy that formal principles alone, even ones articulated in Latin, have failed to prevent.

There is a case for setting aside tradition on this particular issue to embrace holistically what the Church should stand for: justice, humanity, inclusion and compassion. Not clericalism, discrimination against women and children, hypocrisy and denial.

If the Church does not reform in a significant way now, it will be forced to when its congregations and clergy numbers constrict to the point of death — a process that's emerging in many countries including our own.

While reforms are painful, they are wholly necessary. By clinging to dogma we risk blindness to all else. Those who wish to see the Church thrive in the modern era are presented with an almost unprecedented opportunity to make needed changes now. Regardless of their personal stances, the hierarchy must consider all options. I'm offering just two. 🌀

Jack Derwin is an Australian journalist currently working for Channel Nine in Sydney.







I watched the film *Spotlight* on a plane. It's a meticulous and bleak portrayal of the *Boston Globe's* investigation into the cover-up of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in Massachusetts, USA.

As much as I enjoyed the film's portrayal of investigative journalism, I was most moved when at the end of the movie a list of names scrolled down the screen — places where the Church's sexual abuse had been revealed, usually by local journalists. It was an incomplete list considering what we know now, but it featured places from Ngong, Kenya to Feilding, New Zealand.

I've heard often that local journalism is becoming extinct. There is truth to this. In the last few months, hundreds of jobs have been lost in journalism across the world, at places like *Gannet* (a local news conglomerate in the US), *Stuff's* community reporting roles in Auckland, and in digital outlets like *BuzzFeed*, *HuffPost* and *Vice New Zealand*.

In small places like Feilding, as well as in many other dots on the map whose names have never appeared in the credits of movies, the services the local newspaper once offered — announcements, classifieds — have been replaced, if at all, with neighbourhood Facebook pages or online retail sites. The business conglomerates that own the papers decide it is easier and more "economic" to focus on global and national

news which is broadly of interest to everyone, than on local news, which can make such a difference to smaller groups of people.

For all the talk of a globalised world, the specific place where we live is still important. Our day-to-day interactions with others in our communities affect our lives more than distant, even frightening, political machinations at a large scale. And for all the flaws of the media industry, what it does best — investigation for the truth and (thoughtful) interrogation — are needed to hold those in power to account.

It's not just sexual abuse, of course. Local journalists can call local politicians to account. For every Watergate or Dirty Politics, there are many cases of misappropriated council funds and small-scale extortion schemes uncovered and reported on.

It seems that the media landscape is shifting rapidly and that's alarming. I don't know how to fix it. It doesn't feel like there is much that I can do. I just read journalism (somewhat voraciously), and, to be honest, I probably follow international and national news much more closely than local news. Perhaps this is because I feel slightly unmoored at this stage of my life, more attached to a large world than to a specific corner, washed between continents.

Journalism can help orient me in

this enormous world. Church can do that, too. It may be a massive and problematic institution snarled now in layers of scandal, but at its heart is the Gospel. Each week it invites me to be anchored to a particular corner, a particular community.

I think God demands, in many ways, that we pay attention to the world — to places and spaces of staggering beauty and also of tragedy and poverty — at the global scale and at the local. Acknowledging the whole spectrum better motivates us to act in the world. And at its best the Church supports and equips us — to end injustice, to respect and protect all people, to be a voice for the poor, to care for Earth. Journalism, by informing, laying out the truth, describing situations, can do the same.

It is right to mourn the current devaluing of journalism and for the Church ravaged by sexual abuse. It reminds me not to get mired, to pay attention to the large picture and also to the small and local. I accept the invitation to be attached, and receive bountiful new understandings. ☉



**Shanti Mathias** is at Victoria University, Wellington, enjoying using long words and immersing herself in the intricacies of media, politics, and literature.

## Medieval Children

by Nicholas Orme

Published by Yale

University Press, 2003

Reviewed by Sandy Robertson

BOOK

This weighty book is filled with fascinating facts and insights into the lives and significance of children in medieval England. Orme, a British historian specialising in the Middle Ages and Tudor period, has written many books which are about education and childhood. *Medieval Children* explores all aspects of the lives of children including birth, family life, death, rhymes and songs, play, Church, reading and growing up. He looks in detail at each aspect of life and draws on a multitude of examples from literature, records and art, demonstrating his depth of knowledge

in this area. The 125 illustrations add another perspective and aesthetic sense of the period as the reader moves through the book.

I was intrigued by *Medieval Children*. I learned a lot about the medieval period in general, but also fascinating details about the history of, for instance, baptism: the various laws about when a child must be baptised, fines that were imposed if they were not, the significance of godparents.

In each section Orme considers the differences that existed between the social classes that had substantial impact on the lives of children, and also, the differences for boys and girls.

In some aspects of life there was scant evidence and Orme has made deductions from a single piece of evidence or example. In other aspects there is clearly a lot of evidence and perhaps he uses too many examples.

I read with interest about the Church and the child, wondering if there would be similar issues of abuse in the medieval period as we have seen brought to light in the past couple of decades. Orme refers briefly to this in the chapter on "Danger and Death", but skirted over it a little too lightly, I felt.

I definitely recommend this book to anyone who is interested in history and/or children. It is a fascinating read. However, it is quite dense – there is just too much information to read it "in one go". I suggest taking it in small bites and it won't become too overwhelming. 🌀



## Norman Thomas Gilroy: An Obedient Life

by John Luttrell

Published by St Pauls

Publications, 2017

Reviewed by Paul Gilroy

BOOK

I was drawn to this biography as Cardinal Gilroy, though no blood relative, was a presence in my early years and we share a family name.

John Luttrell offers an intriguing insight into the life of the first Australian to be named a cardinal – Norman Thomas Gilroy.

*An Obedient Life* begins with a description of the celebration of the April 1953 National Eucharistic Congress in Sydney, described as the Cardinal's "finest hour". Luttrell then traces the life and challenges of Gilroy who was from working class stock and had aspirations to be a parish priest working with people. However, his life took a different course. He was ordained at a time when Rome was seeking to change

the "mission" status of the Australian Church and to "promote" locally-born clerics to leadership instead of those "imported" from places like Ireland (along with many of their prejudices).

During his seminary formation and early priesthood, Gilroy exhibited many of the qualities Rome was seeking in an Australian-born leader. He readily accepted the authority of the Pope and bishops in the Church. And despite personal misgivings of his ability and his dream of his priestly vocation, he accepted his appointments with obedience to Rome.

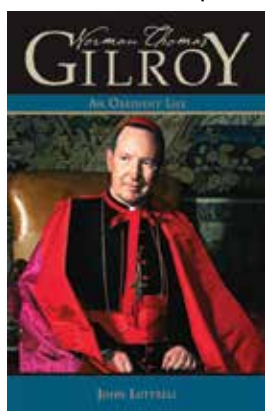
Gilroy was 39 when he was ordained the bishop of the diocese of Port Augusta, South Australia. Later he was appointed Archbishop of Sydney (1940-71). His episcopate covered three decades: the Great Depression, World War II, the post-war immigration population explosion, the Cold War and the changes of Vatican II.

His handling of the many difficulties associated with each of these events and his championing

of the Catholic place in society are described in the later chapters of the book.

This book is an excellent read. The stories come to life and will even be a trip down memory lane for some readers. I recommend it to anyone with an interest in biography, the challenges of Church and society pre- and post-Vatican II and the history of the Church in Australia. 🌀

Book reviews continue on page 31...



  
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## Wajib: The Wedding Invitation

Directed by Annemarie Jacir  
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

FILM

**W**ith *Wajib* (Arabic for “duty”), Palestinian director Annemarie Jacir has created a rich and complex exploration of ideas of belonging—to home, family, faith, culture and land. The film portrays the cultural splintering of the modern world, challenging audiences to consider whether this is an irreversible process and what community means in the 21st century.

Shadi, a cosmopolitan Palestinian youth, has returned from Italy to his home town of Nazareth to help with preparations for his sister’s wedding—specifically, driving around the town in his father’s beat-up car delivering invitations, in line with local custom. This narrative device puts the focus firmly on the relationship between father and son, and also allows us to meet a host of the family’s friends and relations, ranging from elderly spinsters to a young woman bent on seducing her attractive cousin. As the family are Christians and it is nearing Christmas, lavish Nativity scenes take pride of place in numerous front rooms.

With the protagonists confined in the front seat of Abu Shadi’s car for much of the action, the tensions

between father and son soon come to the fore. Nazareth disappoints Shadi (played by Saleh Bakri) in many ways. An architect, he is dismayed by the tackiness of the urban landscape, deploring the buildings festooned with satellite dishes and draped with plastic tarpaulins.

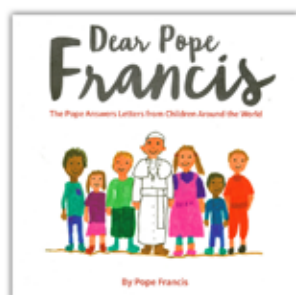
On a personal level, he is appalled by his father’s apparent acquiescence in the Israeli occupation; this comes to a head when he discovers that an Israeli whom he suspects of working for the security apparatus is on the guest list. A schoolteacher, Abu Shadi (Mohammad Bakri) is hoping for promotion to headmaster and feels that he must court the favour of the occupiers—or at least not rock the

boat. It’s a classic standoff—angry young radical versus the older “realist”.

Additional layers of tension are provided by the revelation that Shadi’s girlfriend back in Italy, a Palestinian woman who can never return home, is the daughter of a PLO official. And we learn that Abu Shadi’s ex-wife, also living abroad, is unlikely to make it to the wedding as the result of a family crisis.

Acted with an authenticity that lends it the air of a superior documentary, *Wajib* is a multi-layered film that deftly reveals the intricacies of family relationships. And while pulling the covers off the elephant in the room—The Occupation—Jacir leaves it to the audience to adopt a political stance. 🌀

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# CROSS CURRENTS



by Susan Smith

## Care of the Young

These last three or so months have provided us with many opportunities in Whangarei to see parental love in action. An adult tui carefully balancing on the flax flower to feed her fledglings nectar or native bees for protein. Blackbirds, rosellas and sparrows pre-occupied with feeding their young — even though the young often look larger and stronger than their caring parents. Pukeko check on their chicks hoping to avert hawk attacks — but all too often the hawks swoop like fighter jets looking for live kill for their babies. We first see pukeko parents with perhaps three or four chicks, then there is angry squawking followed by silence, and the next day parents are followed by just one chick. Pheasants, too, have their chicks taken to feed baby hawks. Cows and ewes are preoccupied in ensuring we do not get too close to their young as we walk past their paddocks.

There is no doubting the strong parental instinct in animals to nourish and care for their offspring. But while this is being vividly demonstrated in the animal world, it is not always the case in human society. Too often we read of a child being rushed to hospital with non-accidental injuries. Why does this happen? Is there a connection between child abuse and low socio-economic status? Is child abuse more likely to happen when children are living in caravans or emergency housing? Is family dysfunctionality caused by our colonial history? Can service organisations such as the Plunket Society be more generously funded to ensure better services for those families most at risk?

## Not More For the Rich

I had returned from Mass where I heard the gospel story of the wedding feast at Cana. I read in the paper about another wedding — a well-known All Black was married at a venue hired for \$50,000. Travel, accommodation, food and drink were additional costs. As expected, other All Black players attended. I remembered that last year Steve Hansen suggested to Jacinda Ardern that the All Blacks should be subsidised by taxpayers. (Top players reportedly earn more than \$1 million annually.) I have no problem with a couple having a wonderful wedding with family and friends. But I find it problematic when the All Black coach seriously suggests that the team's income should include taxpayer subsidies.

## Turning Backwards

The Brexit and Trump sagas continue.

It is alarming to read that high profile, but antediluvian, Catholic figures such as Conservative politician Jacob Rees-Mogg in England and former Trump favourite Steve Bannon, are actively encouraging nativist, right-wing and xenophobic ideologies — showing no sign of principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Backed by conservative American Cardinal Raymond Bourke, Bannon reportedly is designing a curriculum to encourage conservative thinking in the Church, for a right-wing Catholic Institute in Italy. Poor Pope Francis!

## Learning from the Beach

The beach is a favourite place for many Kiwis during the summer. I think of it as having an important equalising function around the country. Beach apparel, brand named or not, all looks much the same — and doesn't hide our shape or age. At the beach equality and a certain egalitarianism seem to reign. As waves crash down, we smile and call out to complete strangers without embarrassment. Whether rich or poor, female or male, Māori or Pākehā or Pasifika, all share the waves and sand together.

Maybe beaches are our sign of hope for a future where we work to overcome the growing oppression of inequality in Aotearoa together, and prioritise our values of fairness and egalitarianism. ☼



**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.

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### Address:

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

Phone: (03) 477 1449

Email: editor@tuimotu.org

Email for subscriptions: admin@tuimotu.org

Editor: Ann L Gilroy RSJ

Assistant Editor: Ann Hassan

Design & layout: Greg Hings

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

Board Directors: Neil Darragh (chair), Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey, Cathrine Harrison, Agnes Hermans, Judith McGinley OP, Chris Loughnan OP.

### Honorary Directors:

Pauline O'Regan RSM, Elizabeth Mackie OP,

Bank: BNZ 02-0929-0277471-00





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.

## ROMERO AND HELDER CAMARA – VOICES FOR THE POOR

Like Dennis Veal (Letter, *TM* Feb 2019) I see martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero as an example for many areas of Church life. However, I think Dennis misattributes the book *The Church and Colonialism* (1969) to Romero. It was written by another fine Latin American bishop – Dom Helder Camara of Recife, Brazil.

The book fits with reflection going on in the Church in the 1960s around development and colonialism. It sits alongside the work of Barbara Ward and E F Schumacher, *Populorum Progressio* (1967) and the Medellin conference (1968). These fed into Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) advocating a non-colonialist evangelisation via inculturation.

Romero's conversion to a Church of and for the poor certainly led him to challenge the neo-colonialist situation of El Salvador in the 1970s although I'm not sure if he ever named it in this way. The Vatican II documents, Medellin documents

## Poeta: Selected and New Poems

by Cilla McQueen  
Published by Otago University Press, 2018  
Reviewed by Meryn Gates

BOOK

Cilla McQueen's *Poeta* is an absolutely beautiful book, from the front cover image to the poems, which are carefully punctuated by delicate sketches.

*Poeta* is a gathering of gems of McQueen's life's work. McQueen has chosen to order the poems by theme rather than chronology – so 1988 sits easily beside 2010.

My favourites are the poems set in a place, whether on a balcony in Berlin imagining the collapse of a neighbouring long-dead building from World War II, or on a verandah in New Zealand watching darkness falling on the harbour. McQueen summons up such a strong sense of place that I can feel myself there too.

I confess to losing concentration when reading long poems. This has

nothing to do with McQueen; it is a personal failing. I find poems so intense, so much the concentrated essence of life, that I can take only a morsel at a time.

However, I was carried along by the poems "1971" and "1982", both written in 2016 as a personal reflection on McQueen's life and the people who have influenced

her. The poems reminded me that McQueen is part of a community of writers and artists (including Hone Tuwhare and Ralph Hotere) and of the importance of collaboration.

Thank you Cilla McQueen for sifting through and teasing out for us such a well-crafted collection, giving us fresh insight to decades of seeing the world through your poet's eyes.



and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* influenced Romero's preaching deeply. He had great affection for Paul VI. In turn Paul VI warmly supported Romero's pastoral approach in San Salvador. In that sense there was an appropriateness in the two being canonised on the same day.

*Gerard Burns, Wellington*

## LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Congratulations on the excellent articles regarding clericalism in *TM* February 2019. The Church needs people of vision, hope and stamina. Thank you. In last year's priests' meeting (Sept 2018) there seemed to be a sense of urgency for

change. At last there was a growing awareness that the Church was in crisis. However, if there was a sense of urgency it was short lived and steam has run out of that engine. In our parishes where is the awareness that anything needs to change? This is to be expected because the Church has operated within a clerical culture for centuries. Canon Law and not the Gospel has been the supreme criteria. Christ continues to be crucified and they know not what they do. With this in mind change can only come about if present leadership both communicates and acts to implement change.

*Jim Vercoe Austing*

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## Looking OUT and IN

In many ways, cows epitomise a *jugaad* approach to life. When there is no grass around, which is more often than not, they go walking through the bazaar with their dark eyes scanning left and right. Without the slightest encouragement, they may lean over at a *subzi* shop to chomp on a juicy capsicum or cucumber. Knowing, as they seem to, that they are sacred, they take all sorts of liberties without being chastised unduly by the shopkeepers.

Still, often enough there are days that demand even greater adaptability to the urban Indian ecological niche. On those days where the *subzi* shops have put up more stout protection of their produce, a cow then will stroll disconsolately through the town, chewing on an old piece of the *Times of India* in lieu of the green grass they dream of. Or sometimes they decide to just sit it out. They will find a spot in the middle of a road with the right mix of shade and sun, and balefully look around. Then, unchallenged, they defiantly close their long dark eyelashes and sleep in perfect cow-peace while motorcycles, carts and buses careen left and right around this large, entitled boulder with thin stick-legs.

*Jugaad* is core vocabulary in India. As a verb it conveys the ideas of adapting, adjusting, innovating and, if none of the above efforts yield results, making a fist of it. It is a useful life

concept even outside the sub-continent, given all the curve balls that come at living beings, whether cow or Kiwi.

*Jugaad* means that when you get a hole in your radiator you remember that you have a packet of *haldi* (turmeric) in your shopping bag, and you tip it in, and shortly the powder bungs things up enough so that you can re-fill the radiator and drive on.

*Jugaad* means deciding that when you are woken at 5am by the train passenger sleeping on the bunk above you, who is chatting chirpily on her phone as perhaps she can't sleep anymore, you roll over and blur her voice out of your sleep-fluffed brain, rather than bawl her out for inconsiderate behaviour.

*Jugaad* means that when it snows, and you have no electricity and, therefore, you also have no internet and you have an important skype call scheduled with someone, that you go to that spot half a kilometre away where you noticed that your phone showed a solid 4G signal. And they call you, and you stamp around in the snow in your puffer jacket and talk to those potential funding people in Mumbai. And it just could be that they may give your project funding as you proved to be a resourceful and reliable person.

I guess back in olden-day Palestine, that picnic for a vast crowd that ended up happening after Jesus prayed over a small number of bread and fish was a bit of a prayer and *jugaad* combination. Everyone ate the bread and fish with great good spirits, even though it seems that there was no salt, no lemon juice and no butter.

People who are poor have to *jugaad* a hundred times a day. No water in the tap. The baby has diarrhoea again. Old, hard *roti* for breakfast. Not enough warm clothes in this wintry weather, so the kids need to stay under the blankets and miss school today. It is unrelenting and living life in a *jugaad* way can be exhausting.

It's so much easier when things go as anticipated.

But there is no doubt that life in a place with poorer infrastructure and more chaos than New Zealand provides frequent opportunities to practice skills of persevering, being tolerant and thinking in an agile way. I haven't tried eating newspaper yet, but I'm getting better at *jugaad*. This is good for me. ☸



**Kaaren Mathias** lives with her husband, children, a cat and a dog, in a small town in North India and works in mental health.



May we participate in your mission –  
Listen to the hard stories  
Acknowledge the truth  
Speak up for justice and compassion  
with tenderness and understanding.  
May we discern the way to a new time for the Church  
walking humbly with you,  
Communion of Love.

From the *Tui Motu* team