TUI MOTU InterIslands

CELEBRATING 21 YEARS 1997–2018

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FREE THE WORLD OF HUNGER — WETEKIA TE AO I TE HEMOKAI

- Gillian Southey and Khadiyjah Jordan on establishing reliable food production
- Nicholas Thompson and Zain Ali on food and faith
- PLUS Jane Maisey and Anna Burrowes on discernment
- AND Little Practices of Prayer

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TuiMotuInterIslands Tuimotumag

EDITORIAL

Food for All

My first-time home-grown tomatoes are ripening and taste as exquisite as rubies look. Their reward for my boutique horticultural effort is out of proportion — provident bounty of Earth — and I'm in love with those plants. Yet if my crop failed I would turn to the supermarket. This signals the gulf between food-rich countries and places where food availability is unreliable and the people are hungry.

We live in privilege, selecting from organically grown, cosmetically attractive, hand-raised, grass-fed, low-fat produce to suit our preference, health, or wants. And we might choose locally produced over imported food for the sake of the planet. We have so much food we've created the problem of toxic food waste in our landfills even while we have families who are hungry. And we may have lost the sense of our dependence on Earth for our food.

Growing, cooking and eating food is fundamental to human survival. It is not surprising that we read of Jesus frequently sharing meals during his ministry and leaving his legacy in the form of a meal, the Eucharist. The occasion of these meals often held tension around the control of and access to food — such as the disciples plucking wheat on the Sabbath and Jesus eating with sinners — indicating how challenging we have always found it to share for the common good.

In the Lenten season of fasting for justice, reflection and discussion of the global goal of zero hunger in the world by 2030 has a context. We know that ridding the world of hunger is a multifaceted and Herculean task. Yet contributors, like Gillian Southey and Khadiyjah Jordan, attest to the hope that this is not beyond us. They tell of research and projects that are supporting communities in marginal places to grow reliable and nutritious food. They outline efforts made to reestablish crops and animals in places where conflict has undermined years of work. We learn how our Caritas donations are ploughed into horticultural and fishery improvements. And also about the advocacy for food justice in the world at home, in our region and across our world.

We thank all who have contributed to this 224th issue. Their reflection and research, writing and faith, art and craft have provided a thoughtful read.

From 3 April to 1 May we will be offering a post-Easter daily email, *Inspiration from Tui Motu*. The email contains a "thought" from the treasury of back issues of *Tui Motu* magazine accompanied by an image. Sign up on our website (www.tuimotu.org) to receive this series or send an email to: editor@tuimotu.org. Any person is welcome to sign up whether or not they are *Tui Motu* subscribers.

As is our custom our last word is a blessing.

DEADLY TWINS
CONFLICT AND HUNGER

There are now more than 65 million displaced people in the world, more than at any other time on record. This is a startling figure, even more so because it does not include those who are "displaced" at home — pushed out of taking their share of local resources. Dwindling food security around the world, most acutely in conflict zones, means 800 million people go hungry each day, a number projected to reach two billion by 2050.

Take the prolonged crisis in Syria, for example, which has left around six million Syrians displaced, but where the UN World Food Programme considers almost twice as many are in need of food assistance. Indeed, Syria had been in a precarious position long before its civil war. It has been ravaged by drought since around 2006. Scientists say it is the worst drought in at least 500 years.

Drought combined with cancelled subsidies to struggling farmers from the nation's agricultural north forced as many as 1.5 million rural Syrians to flee to the cities of Aleppo, Damascus and Hama adding to its growing powder keg. Access to food, water and employment for many in this mass was unreliable at best. Political dissent simmered as resources became scarcer and food prices soared. Before the first shots had even been fired in Syria's bloody civil war, three quarters of Syrian farms had failed and 85 per cent of its livestock lay dead.

While drought and a lack of food may not have caused the civil war, it did inflame tensions, stoking growing dissent and undermining the country's stability. On this count, Syria is far from alone. In Latin America, thousands if not millions of hungry Venezuelans have fled the country. Many went to neighbouring Colombia, which was already struggling with its own internal refugees. While, according to the Global Peace Index, Colombia ranks as the most unsettled nation in the Americas, at least Venezuelans have something to eat there.

Conflict and hunger often fuel each other. Just as a food crisis can worsen a security situation, so too can conflict undermine a country's ability to feed itself. When rural areas are often where the roots of insurgency are sown, how do farmers in countries like Niger and Chad persist with their crops when they must also navigate Boko Haram militia? It's no surprise to find that the hungriest countries are also often home to some of the world's worst conflicts.

What's worse is that as climate change progresses, pressure on world food chains builds, and it will be the world's weakest and most at risk that will suffer first. According to Cornell University research, the number of refugees created as a direct result of climate change and food exhaustion is set to dwarf the refugee crisis of today, and will only further intensify conflict over dwindling resources.

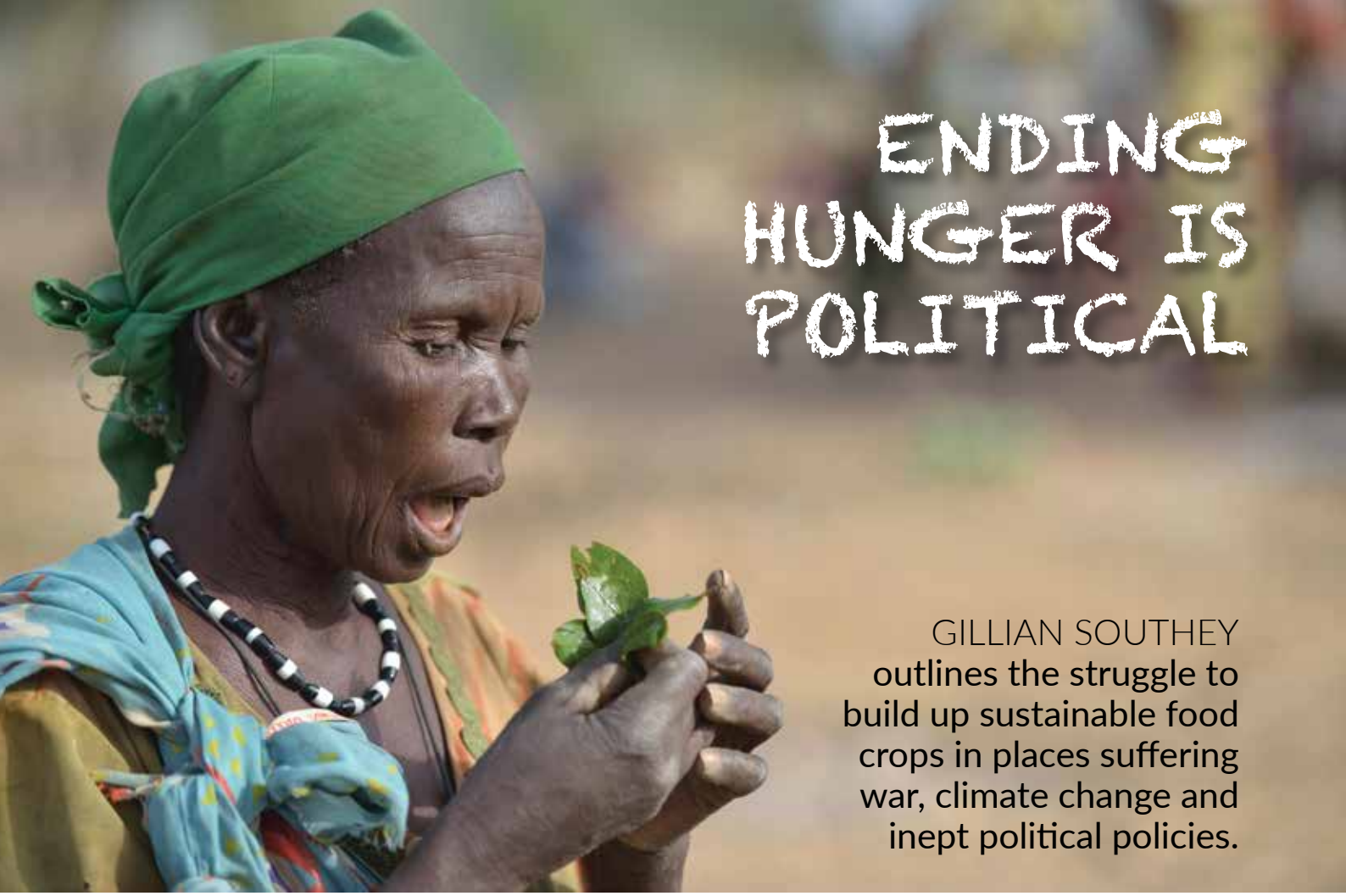
Many politicians in developed countries speak of the need to "secure their borders" and close the doors to refugees, but few are discussing what can be done to strengthen international food security. Perhaps their best move would be to focus on securing sustainable food production instead.

This issue highlights the question of what the fighters will do when their guns fall silent. How can Syrian refugees, for example, ever be expected to return to a home where they may not be able even to feed themselves?

While the prevailing surge in refugees is often seen as a product of conflict, it's a multi-faceted situation brought about, enflamed, amplified and ultimately prolonged by the issue of food insecurity. We cannot address the former without recognising the latter.

Photo: Agenzia Sintesi — Almay stock photo

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



ENDING HUNGER IS POLITICAL

GILLIAN SOUTHEY outlines the struggle to build up sustainable food crops in places suffering war, climate change and inept political policies.

Lola's garden is beautiful. With traditional foods like taro and others like cabbage and lettuce she has healthy food for her family and enough to contribute to community feasts. Thanks to new gardening skills she learned on the demonstration plot set up by Christian World Service's (CWS) partner *Ama Takiloa*, Lola's garden is flourishing. On their advice she is growing *pele*, a nutrient-rich Tongan green staple with the reliability of silverbeet. Drought and cyclone may come, but Lola is confident she has done everything she can to create a secure food supply.

The garden is like money in the bank to Lola — something she can draw on to feed her family. Even if she loses one crop, it can be replaced. She has achieved food security which means her family has access to safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life at all times. By using organic methods to grow her food she spends effort and not cash, which is harder to come by on Lifuka, Tonga.

Lola can share or exchange goods bypassing the global food system which has locked many more people into malnutrition, hunger and obesity. She knows what is in her food — there are no mystery ingredients. Her traditional diet free of sugar and salt is healthy and protects against diabetes and other disease.

This is a familiar story. Many of CWS's partners are helping rural families to improve livelihoods by growing better gardens. Compost, mulching, organic pest control, water management, saving seeds and multi-cropping are common features of an agro-ecological approach that combines traditional practices with scientific knowledge.

Such assistance is giving people the resources to stay on their land, improve family nutrition and offering indebted farmers a way out of destitution and sometimes even suicide. The new techniques can be lifesaving, but alone they are not enough to end the hunger that claims thousands of lives across the world.

No Technical Solution to Hunger

CWS has learnt many lessons over the years of working to reduce hunger. A major lesson is that there is no technical solution to hunger. No amount of green revolutions, golden rice or fancy machinery will solve a global problem that has deep social and political roots. For every innovation in mainstream agriculture, there have been harmful side-effects. Indian farmers have rightly pointed out that the genetic modification of rice to add the vitamin A missing in their diet does not alter the fact that they cannot afford to grow rice, and ignores that they might prefer to have land on which to plant rice and traditional foods that already contain vitamin A.

Small Farmers Ignored

Although small farmers produce the majority of food people eat, their interests have been neglected for decades. Governments and global markets have benefited the big and the powerful. Free trade agreements have made it difficult for developing countries to protect the livelihoods of small farmers growing staple foods. For example, in Haiti the influx of cheap subsidised rice meant that local rice farmers lost their living. They turned to producing charcoal as a means to survive. This meant

that they chopped down the trees which were needed to keep top soil from washing down on informal settlements on the edges of the cities.

Political Causes of Hunger

Those who seek technical solutions tend to ignore the political causes of hunger. Rural people cannot grow food if they have no access to land and water. Yet in the name of efficiency, the World Bank is pushing governments to consolidate landholdings. And with shrinking resources in their home countries, corporations are involved in land-grabbing — buying land and the associated water rights.

At the same time, the global food economy has consolidated power. Food corporations have reached deeper into the food chain to control the process from seed to consumption. No longer able to grow food, families become dependent on what they earn. And exploitative working conditions, high unemployment and low wages have made livelihoods more precarious.

Other Threats

The threats are increasing. Climate change is making farming more unpredictable. Fish stocks are dwindling. Development is impacting. An example is the case of South Indian fishers where their access to waterways has been blocked by a wave of coastal development: shrimp farms, tourism, power plants, ship breaking and other industries.

Reform Steps

In Sri Lanka the Movement for Land and Agricultural Reform (Monlar) advocates for "regenerative" agriculture, combining traditional farming and new research to restore its land and people. They want people to have control over how food is produced and distributed. They know hunger is political.

Monlar has challenged World Bank policies that threaten the existence of small farmers and rely on an industrial farming model dependent on harmful chemicals like glyphosate, a leading cause of kidney cancer. Thanks to Monlar's efforts this chemical has been outlawed by the government. Monlar has won, also, a commitment from the Department of Agriculture to research and develop greater support for small farmers and protection of their land.

Hunger robs people of their health, dignity and full participation in life. To achieve zero hunger by 2030 will require a world-wide concerted effort to change unjust systems that produce hunger.

War and Hunger

After more than a decade of the decline in instances of hunger around the world, the UN reported the number of hungry people reached 815 million in 2016, up from 777 million in 2015. The majority of these hungry people live in countries suffering from intense levels of conflict.

Hunger is always close for Akuch, a subsistence farmer from northern South Sudan. Drought claimed much of her produce and then she had to flee when the armed forces came close. She was in no doubt that they would rape the women, kill people and commandeer their food. Akuch's community headed towards Sudan but heard on their journey that the border was closed. So the group of over 5,000 quietly and in fear set up camp in the bush, collecting water from a dirty pond and surviving on wild leaves. They contacted Action by Churches Together Alliance through a local Church. ACT Alliance was able to deliver sorghum, beans and cooking oil and drilled them a well. In South Sudan, the world's newest country, arms are more plentiful than food. More than two million people have fled the country and around half of the population — 6 million people — need food assistance.

The combination of conflict and climate change has been lethal. According to local priest Father Paul Ariah: "There is too much hunger and people are dying. The rain doesn't fall easily like it did before. As the rivers dried up, the people slowly sold off their cows and goats in order to survive." Resolving some of the world's most bitter conflicts could end hunger in many places.

Hunger robs people of their health, dignity and full participation in life. Ending hunger is a matter of justice. To achieve zero hunger by 2030 the second UN Sustainable Development Goal, will require a worldwide concerted effort to change unjust systems that produce hunger. For Christians it is our participation in justice that gives "daily bread" into the hands of all people in the world.

Title photo: *Akuch eating the wild foods.* ACT Alliance/ Paul Jeffrey ©

Photo above: *Lola in her garden.* CWS/Trish Murray ©

Gillian Southey is the Communications Coordinator for Christian World Service.

Securing Our Daily Bread

KHADIYJAH JORDAN writes of Caritas partnerships that support communities to grow food and protect their resources year by year.

As the Bishop's Agency for Justice, Peace and Development, Caritas has long stood in opposition to injustices affecting those in Aotearoa New Zealand, across the Pacific Ocean (Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa) and around the world. Since 2014, we have engaged in the process of *talatalanoa* (the telling of many, many stories) to record the state of the environment in our home region, Oceania. These stories have informed our annual State of the Environment for Oceania Report. Through work such as the Report, we help amplify the voices of local communities across the Pacific as they speak truth to power.

Most importantly this process of listening to our partners has helped us to understand the needs of our friends, family and neighbours and develop effective ways to support one another. We have learned about climate change and as well about a complex tapestry of local life connected to culture, resources and infrastructure, education and so much more.

This process has informed our development and aid programmes around the world.

Global Goals

In 2015, the United Nations ratified the landmark Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which set out 17 goals with 169 targets to be achieved in 15 years — by 2030. Learning from the experience of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the SDGs address economic, social and environmental issues. Their approach is to be more holistic in nature so that no one is left behind. It means that to achieve one goal, all the goals must be addressed.

New Zealand has committed to achieving the SDGs with a particular focus on several global areas: the elimination of fishery subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; the elimination of fossil-fuel subsidies; promotion of an open, rules-based trading system under the World Trade Organisation; advocating for small island developing states; promoting the Global Research Alliance; and maintaining special focus on oceans issues.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT) has stated a commitment to foreign aid investment as a means to achieving the goals.

And MFAT is very conscious that it cannot achieve the goals alone. It needs the engagement of other government departments, other governments, the private sector, organisations and individuals in meaningful partnerships.

Changing Environments

King tides, inconsistent weather patterns, eroding coastlines and droughts are affecting people across Oceania. We have stories of homes being lost, food sources being limited and places of history and culture destroyed.

The SDG 13, Climate Action, calls us to act urgently to combat climate change and its impacts. This affects SDGs 1, 2, 14 and 15 — No Poverty, Zero Hunger, the Oceans, and Life on Land respectively — reflecting the ways in which the SDGs are

interconnected just as our ecosystems are. Understanding, adapting to and mitigating the risks of climate change will be important in achieving zero hunger across Oceania.

Fishing Environments

Environmental changes are not just due to climate change. For example, unsustainable practices like the use of dynamite and chemicals in fisheries are also significantly affecting life in the sea and on land.

"When people want to sell a lot of fish in the market, they use dynamite because they can kill a lot of fish that way," says Angela Tofe from Lanfalanga Laoon in Solomon Islands. Such violent and invasive practices disturb other ocean life and damage reefs and ecosystems.

Fijian Leo Nainoka from Caritas partner Social Empowerment Education Programme (SEEP) spoke of the hazards of using chemicals: "If we continue like this then it will be more and more disastrous for our oceans and their living species — that will not be good for communities. Already certain types of fishes that never used to be poisonous are now poisonous. Earlier this year (2017) four people died in the island of Gau from fish poisoning. The fish there never used to be poisonous before."

Using invasive fishing practices in order to be more competitive in the marketplace is tampering with our oceans. It has a long-lasting impact on life on land and is contributing to hunger in the longer term.

George Alabeni in the Solomon Islands from Airahu Rural Training Centre on Maliata said: "The sea is very hot sometimes ... and it is not pleasant. The world is changing, everything is changing." He spoke about the coastal homes of seabirds being destroyed and dead fish washing up.

Land Environments

Changing ecosystems affecting the production and collection of food are not exclusive to the sea. For example, we have evidence from Papua New Guinea that palm oil plantations, oil and gas production, logging and mining are damaging local food sources.

Committing to Change

Hunger brought about by climate change and as the direct result of human actions does not need to continue. We can adapt our food and agricultural processes so that we will be able to nourish the 795 million hungry people in our world now and also be able to feed the additional 2 billion people expected to experience hunger by 2050. We can focus particularly in our region.

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Caritas Response

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is already working with Pacific communities by telling their stories, helping them invest in sustainable practices and connecting them with our Catholic Volunteers Overseas (CVO) programme.

With cyclone Gita rampaging across parts of Fiji and Tonga recently, Caritas was able to send up emergency supplies. Caritas Director Julianne Hickey said: "Every year, the generosity of the Catholic community through our Lenten Appeals has enabled us to respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers in the Pacific. This includes being able to preposition stock such as tarpaulins for shelter and hygiene kits. These are much needed supplies for when disaster strikes."

However, it is the ongoing projects that make the production of nourishing food sustainable. In East New Britain, Papua New Guinea, the Church has taken up the cause of the people of Pomio to protect their food and water sources. These landowners were pressured to sublease land for oil palm plantations to a local subsidiary of a transnational forestry company. This has caused the landowners to lose subsistence gardening sites and access to water supplies.

"I am concerned about hunger in the world because I see it as the refusal and inability of governments to distribute food the world produces. Hungry people enable others to become rich, manipulating the price according to need. It happens wherever people have the opportunity to exploit their neighbour."

Tom Gibson, Stratford

Archbishop Francesco Panfilo of Rabaul with volunteer Doug Tennent have sought legal mediation for a fairer deal for local landowners. They recognise that without legal title to their land, the people have no turangawawae — place to stand. The Church is asking the multinational company to install one new permanent water supply each year for villages in the project area.

Caritas has been involved with Caritas USA, working with 30 communities in Bamiyan Province, Afghanistan where the focus is on improving agricultural productivity and food security as well as preventing environmental degradation. The villages are able to count on a new sense of wellbeing and are able to share with one another their new techniques for improving food production in their climate.

In Cambodia, Caritas in partnership with Development and Partnership in Action (DPA) is assisting farmers to improve the quality and quantity of their crops, ensuring a steady supply of rice and vegetables for family consumption or sale. By organising themselves into cooperatives the farmers have been able to invest in rice milling machines which allow them to add value to their raw produce. Members of one cooperative estimated that this alone had saved them more than $13,000 over a year.

By entering into partnerships to promote food production that suits the local environment, supporting micro-enterprises and socio-economic development Caritas is supporting resilience in communities in an age of climate and environment change.

Painting: *Rice Fields* by Susan Kuznitsky © www.susankuznitsky.com

Khadiyjah Jordan joined Caritas Aotearoa in 2017 after working on human trafficking, migration and sustainable development at Caritas Internationalis.

Sharing Our Baskets

CHRIS FARRELLY reflects on the hope of the City Mission to realise the Maori proverb:

Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.
With your food basket and my food basket, the people will be well.

For the three weeks leading up to Christmas, hundreds of people queued for food parcels every day outside the Auckland City Mission. Some slept on the footpath overnight, waiting up to nine hours in all weathers — in the glare of the public and the media — on one of Auckland's busiest streets. They were days of shame, questioning, generosity, gratitude and pain. In those three weeks the Mission gave out 4,677 food parcels — 64,000 individual meals.

Each individual in the queue was part of a greater family unit. There were always children involved somewhere. Usually they were waiting at home with another family member, but sometimes — desperately — they stood in line with their mothers.

Overwhelming Pain

Feelings of pain, shame and frequent despair were experienced not only by those who came for food but also by the staff and volunteers of the City Mission. At that time I saw more tears from our own staff than I did from the guests we welcomed. We struggled with the harshness and injustice of inequity and poverty in our country and the reality that many of our people are hungry. Staff members spoke of feeling as if they were in a refugee camp, and their distress at the number of young children appearing this year. We were face-to-face with the uncomfortable reality that most of the families seeking assistance were Māori and Pasifika and that only one block away the Casino was packed, the bars overflowing and the stores crowded with Christmas shoppers.

At Christmastide, when these stories feature in the media, the general public glimpses a problem that for us at the Mission is a reality every day of the year.

Food Insecurity

Next to the Salvation Army (nationwide), the Auckland City Mission is the second largest charitable distributor of food in New Zealand. Through our assessments and research last year, we learned that for families receiving our food assistance on average each family member had just $21.94 per week available for grocery items, including toiletries, cleaners and other items. That is $3.13 per day.

This is food insecurity and food poverty and it is widespread. The University of Otago 2016 Food Survey estimates basic weekly food costs are $64 per week for a man, $55 for a woman, $67 for an adolescent boy, $40 for a five-year-old and $27 for a one-year-old.

Food insecurity is the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food on a day-to-day

basis, and an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways, for example, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, begging or stealing as other coping strategies.

Food Aid Masks Hunger Problem

Currently there is no comprehensive measure of the level of food insecurity in our country, which is out of line with most other "developed" nations. However, experience and research show that food insecurity is widespread and growing, but is often made less visible by the work of the many food banks and food charities.

While food aid partially meets the essential needs of many families and individuals in crisis, it is important that we view it as a short-term emergency response to the injustice of food poverty. Food charity is currently plugging a hole in the social safety net and should not become a substitute for an effective welfare system and a living wage.

Governments' Responsibility

Oliver De Schutter, the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, recently pointed to increases in the number of food banks in developed countries as an indicator that governments are in danger of failing in their duty "to project" under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (IESCR), which states that all citizens should have access to an adequate diet without having to compromise other basic needs.

In our country Te Tiriti o Waitangi offers an added dimension of protection for Māori and protection of their treasures — of which food is one of the greatest. We cannot focus on food insecurity without addressing the terrible reality that those suffering most are Māori, and as such Te Tiriti is being violated. And the problem has deep-seated roots; in his book *Whaiora* Professor Sir Mason Durie has linked food insecurity for Māori to early colonial policies.

Food Connects Us

The New Zealand discussion of food insecurity must include a broadening of our understanding of food, or kai. Food is not just about hunger and material well-being — it is how we connect as families, individuals and with our wider communities.

Lack of food is not simply about going hungry. Like the weaving of the food basket — made up of individual strands which together are strong — there is an inter-relationship between food and economics, and culture and health and educational achievement and mental wellbeing, and relationships and violence, and weight and happiness, and social exclusion.

Food is not just about hunger and material well-being, it is how we connect as families, individuals and with our wider communities. Lack of food is not simply about going hungry.

For a child, social exclusion prohibits the simplest childhood activities such as being able to invite a friend over or celebrate a birthday.

For an adult, embarrassment, judgement and stereotyping can lead to clinical depression and an inability to participate in community and social activities.

At the City Mission we hear highly critical comments about the weight of the people queuing up for food assistance. It is so counter-intuitive for us in New Zealand to understand that obesity is often a symptom of poverty, and that poverty can keep people obese.

Food Nourishes Us Wholly

For Māori, lack of kai contributes not only to a hunger of the body but a hunger of the spirit. In preparing for this article I consulted with kuia and kaumatua who spoke of kai in the context of the "Whare Tapa Whā" — the four dimensions of well-being developed by Mason Durie: te taha hinengaro (psychological health), kai, feeding te taha wairua (spiritual health), te taha tinana (physical health) and te taha whanau (family health). If one of these perspectives, or walls, is removed, the whole whare will fall down.

"I am concerned about world hunger when I think about the shocking fact that every 3.6 seconds a child dies of hunger. The lives of 17 children a minute are cut short simply because they do not have enough to eat! Solving world hunger is an act of justice for which we, as human beings and Christians, all have an individual and collective responsibility. "When I was hungry you gave me to eat." What will be my response?"

Elizabeth Horgan, Otahuhu

Sharing Baskets

Here lies both a truth and a warning for those of us who work in food aid. If we fail to address all aspects of "good kai" and provide with generosity only our food basket, while the other's food basket remains empty, the people will remain unwell.

Charity with the best of intentions can disempower and even do harm. How do we enable the other to come to the table with their food basket as well? To come proudly, bringing their food, their gifts, their history, their values, their spirit, their memories, their aspirations?

Environmentalist and activist Winona LaDuke, the first Native American woman to receive an electoral vote for Vice President of the United States, said: "The recovery of the people is tied to the recovery of food, since food is medicine not only for the body but for the soul, is the spiritual connection to history, ancestors and the land."

As we address the unjust issue of food insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand, we must ask what gifts are we bringing in our food basket and how can we enable others to contribute in a way that restores voice, dignity and mana.

Painting: *Kete Bags on the Beach* by Anita Madhav © www.anitamadhavartist.co.nz

Chris Farrelly is CEO of the Auckland City Mission. He has participated in the Columban Mission in Korea and worked in health for 25 years in Northland.

Famine and Feasting

NICHOLAS THOMPSON shows how the Cathedral window depicts the connection between the widow's risk in sharing her food and the Eucharist.

At the east end of the medieval cathedral of Bourges in France there's a stunning collection of 13th-century stained glass windows. Each window illustrates the complex way in which medieval people read the Bible. One, the "Passion Window", sets the events of Good Friday in the middle of Old Testament stories that medieval biblical commentators read as "types" of Jesus's passion and death. "Typology" was a way of combing the Old Testament for events and symbols that foreshadowed Jesus. It had precedent in the Bible itself. For example, in Matthew 12:40 Jesus speaks about Jonah's three nights in the belly of a sea monster as a "sign" of his three days in the tomb. The earliest Christian readers of the Bible took examples like this as an encouragement to look for other "types" of Jesus in the Old Testament — and they found them everywhere. Early Christian typology is often surprising, and sometimes implausible to modern readers whose assumptions are unconsciously shaped by the biblical literalism of post-Reformation Christianity. But exuberant typology made sense to the earliest Christians, and to their medieval successors, because they read the Bible — and, in fact, the whole universe — in a mystical or sacramental way, usually assuming that the richest truth was to be found by taking soundings beneath the surface of the literal meaning.

Some of the typology in the Passion window at Bourges will be familiar to anyone who's been to the services for Holy Week. For example, around a panel showing Jesus carrying his cross to Calvary, the children of Israel smear their lintels with the blood of the Passover Lamb (top right) and Abraham takes Isaac up the mountain before raising the sacrificial knife over him (bottom left and right).

Widow and Prophet

But the top left panel makes a less familiar connection with the Passion. It shows a woman holding two sticks, and she's talking with a holy man. This panel illustrates the story of the prophet Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-24). During the reign of the idolatrous Ahab and Jezebel, God punished the land with a drought. Drought led to famine, and Elijah survived for a while at the Wadi Cherith (or "brook of Cherith"). There he had water to drink, and

"I am deeply concerned about hunger as about 800 million people go hungry each day in our world today despite there being enough food on this planet but not everyone has access to it. In fact one in seven people are hungry and one third of food produced is wasted. Only by zero hunger can we secure our future on this planet."

Margaret O'Neill, Matata

God sent him ravens with meat and bread two times a day. But after a while, the water dried up and Elijah was sent to Zarephath, where God had commanded a widow to feed him. At Zarephath Elijah found the widow gathering sticks. When he asked her for food, she told him that she had only a little flour and oil left to eat. She was gathering wood to bake one last meal for herself and her son, and then she expected they would die. Elijah promised her that if she fed him, God would make the flour and oil last until the end of the drought. And this is what happened: "She, as well as her household, ate for many days. The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah" (1 Kgs 17:15).

Widow's Two Sticks

The chapter then describes Elijah raising the widow's son from the dead in a separate episode, but here I just want to focus on the miracle of the flour and the oil, and its connection with the Passion. The earliest Latin translation of the Old Testament specified that the widow was gathering "two sticks" (*duo ligna*). Saint Jerome's (d. 420) improved Latin translation of the Bible (the *Vulgate*) kept these two sticks. Some modern translations specify two sticks, and others just "sticks". While it may seem a bit of a leap, the two sticks led Augustine and later medieval commentators to see a connection with the Passion: in their minds the two sticks were a type of the cross. As you can see, this is how the Bourges Passion Window shows the widow holding the *duo ligna*.

Huge Sacrifice

Despite its poetry, I'm too much a product of my times to see this typology as anything other than fanciful. But Augustine argued that the two sticks pointed to something more basic: that Christian discipleship — taking up your cross and following Jesus — involves a willingness to die, not just figuratively, but literally. Even though the widow knew that she and her son were about to starve to death, she was prepared to feed Elijah in obedience to the command and promise of God. She had no way of knowing that a miracle was coming her way. There's a sense in which the widow's faith surpasses that of Abraham depicted further down the window. He was asked to give up the life of his only son. She was asked to give up her only son's life and her own. It's true that she expected to die anyway; she and her son only had one meal left. Even so, her sacrifice was considerable. Like a later widow offering her two coins, the widow of Zarephath made a far greater sacrifice in sharing her meal with a stranger than someone who, say, makes a big charitable donation, but isn't in any imminent risk of starvation.

Risk Worth Taking

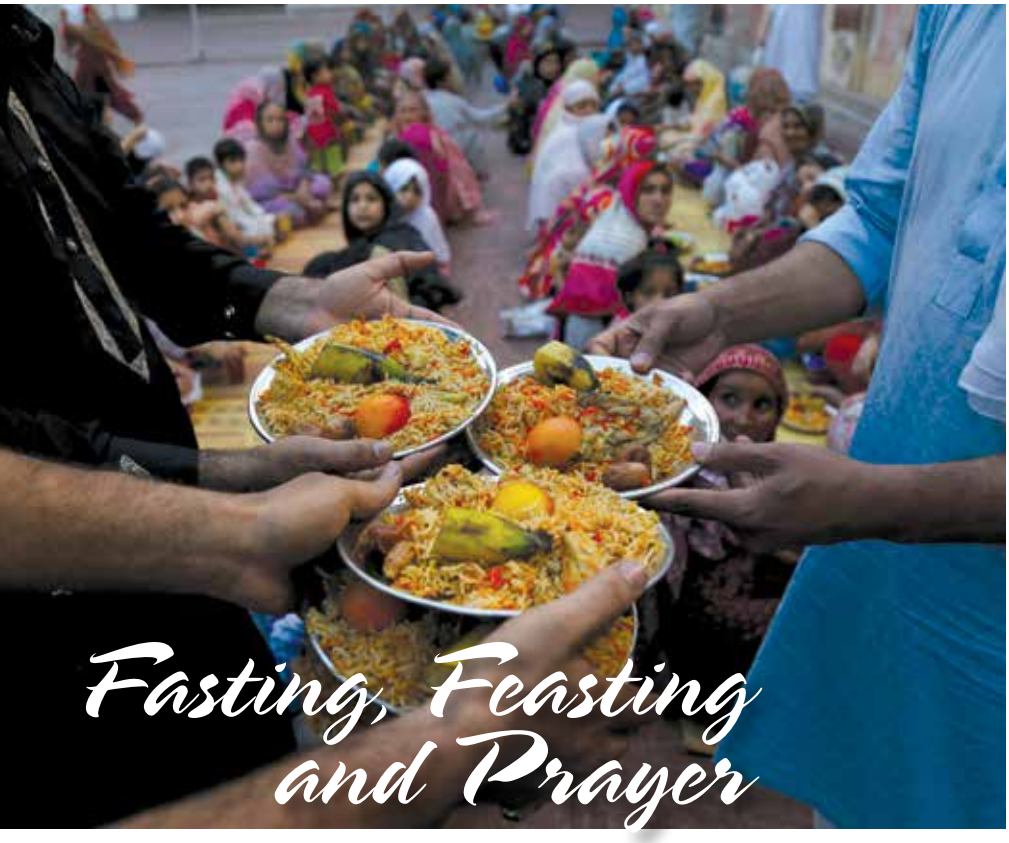
This recognition led Augustine, and medieval commentators afterwards, to see the widow's sacrifice not just as a type of the cross, but of the Eucharist as well. After pointing out the resemblance between the cross and the widow's sticks, Augustine wrote: "Anyone who wants to receive Christ's body worthily needs to die to the past and live for the future."

What he means in this slightly cryptic remark is that, whatever else the Eucharistic stands for, it stands for the risk of death, voluntarily embraced. For most of us food is plentiful, so it's easy to forget how precarious the supply has been for most of human history. To share food in circumstances of scarcity is literally to say: "This is my body given for you." In other words, if this food is going to nourish your body, then it's not going to nourish mine. Your increase is my diminution. Every act of love involves a small diminishment, a greater or lesser death to oneself. The greatest love involves death quite literally (John 15:13), and this seems to be the logic that connects the offer of food with Jesus's offering of his own life.

Like many comfortable Westerners, I invest a great deal of energy in insulating myself against risks infinitely smaller than the one that faced the widow of Zarephath. However, both the Eucharist and the drama of Holy Week promise that those risks are worth taking: the death symbolised in the sharing of food "becomes for us the bread of life". Like the widow, none of us really knows how this risk is going to pan out, but we "live for the future" because we have an intuition that the risk is worth taking, even in the face of death.

Photos by Nicholas Thompson ©

Nicholas Thompson is Senior Lecturer in Theological and Religious Studies at the University of Auckland.



Fasting, Feasting and Prayer

ZAIN ALI reflects on the month of Ramadan with its rhythm of fasting, community and prayer.

Each year I teach an introductory paper on Islam at the University of Auckland. There are many ways to think about Islam and I try to engage with my students by reflecting on history, philosophy, theology, politics, feminism and art. What I find interesting is that, despite all the different topics we cover, they almost always gravitate toward the five pillars of Islam. It's probably because the five pillars are easy to remember, especially when writing an essay come exam time.

Pillars of Islam

The five pillars are relatively straight forward, they are: (1) the *shahada* or declaration of faith, that there is no deity worthy of worship except God, and that Muhammad is the messenger of God, (2) *salat* or the five daily prayers, (3) *zakat* understood as charity, (4) *sawm* which is fasting during the month of Ramadan and (5) *Hajj* the pilgrimage to Mecca.

A number of Muslim scholars note that when you reflect on the five pillars, four of the five involve actions. Islam is then seen as a lived tradition — belief is important but faith is deeply connected to how we live. Given that we are in the run-up to the Lenten season, I will reflect on *sawm* or fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Fasting

Fasting, Ramadan-style, involves abstaining from food and water during daylight hours. As is tradition, we wake before sunrise and have a meal (*suhur*) and then go about our daily lives until sunset, when it is feast time (*iftar*). As it happens, each year Ramadan occurs ten days earlier than the previous every year. The result is that over a 20-30 year period here in New Zealand at least, Ramadan will shift through the seasons.

This year, Ramadan occurs during winter, so the days are short and the fasts are relatively easy. During summer it's a different story. I recall having to wake at four in the morning and having to fast till nine in the evening.

Breaking the Fast

Ramadan is also a time for family, especially when it is time to break fast. As I reflect on my childhood, *iftar* was a highlight. Mum would always put on a spread — cool juice, dates, fruits, fresh samosas, meatballs and Nestle's chocolate almonds (a must-have for a truly Kiwi *iftar*). Now that I am a parent I do the same for my children. It's often the case that grocery bills can increase during Ramadan. This may seem odd, but it's due to custom, where people invite family and friends home for the *iftar* feast. If you have Muslim neighbours, Ramadan may be good time to say hello (*or salaam*).

As an adult, it's often the little things that I notice, like the taste of water after a day of fasting. A sip of water tastes almost as sweet as honey.

Prayer

After breaking fast and a quick dinner, many will head to their local mosque for *tarawih* prayers. These prayers last between one and two hours — the prayers will be held every night of Ramadan, which can be 29 or 30 nights.

The prayers are very focused; each night the *Imam* or person leading the prayer will recite a portion of the Qur'an from memory. If you attend all the *tarawih* prayers, you will have heard the whole Qur'an recited from memory. The Qur'an has between 6,000-7,000 verses and if the *Imam* is a skilled reciter, it is like listening to a beautifully moving hymn — much like listening to Luciano Pavarotti singing *Ave Maria*.

Reflection

A number of years ago I attended all of the *tarawih* prayers which for believers is a moving experience. There are a number of Qur'anic passages that give me pause for thought. A case in point is the verses relating to the passion of the Christ. Commenting on the crucifixion, the Qur'an (4:158) says: "And their saying, we did kill the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of God; whereas they killed him not nor crucified him, but it was made to appear so."

This passage has given rise to three broad interpretations among Muslim thinkers: (a) the crucifixion was akin to a mirage. The event never really took place. God made it appear that Jesus was crucified; (b) that someone else who was made to look like Jesus was crucified, perhaps Judas or another disciple; and (c) that Jesus was actually

crucified, and the Qur'anic denial serves to rebut those who boasted about crucifying Jesus. That is to say, that those who boast do not have control over life or death. It is God who is in control and the crucifixion was part of God's plan, so "they", the ones who boast, were not the ones who took his life.

Given these diverse readings, I am happy to go with the third interpretation which is in accord with our knowledge of the historical Jesus.

Similarly, when I reflect on the Bible there are many verses that give me pause for thought. For example, Psalms 56:8: "You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not recorded in Your book?" It's reassuring to think of God as someone who cares deeply about our welfare, as someone who collects our tears, as it were.

As an adult, it's often the little things that I notice, like the taste of water after a day of fasting. A sip of water tastes almost as sweet as honey.

Another set of thought-provoking verses relates to the temptations faced by Jesus during his 40-day fast in the desert. It strikes me as a spiritual truth that "man does not live by bread alone" — that meaning and value transcend the material.

I believe the Ramadan fast helps us realise something similar, that we could very easily have a drink or a sandwich without anyone knowing, but we don't — we transcend material desires and impulses and turn toward God. The fast is a turning away from the material and a move toward the spiritual.

The other striking feature of the temptation narrative is the role of the devil. He is the tempter and the puzzle, for me anyway, is why he chooses to tempt Christ. Does he seriously think he can cause Christ to slip, or is this just his perverse idea of a fun day out? To meet Christ in person would have been to meet someone who emanated the divine light and yet the devil thumbs his nose at him — this may explain his fallenness. It's a fallenness that we are also prone to when we become blind to the good in others, and are blind to the darkness within ourselves.

According to Muslim tradition, during Ramadan the devil is locked away. This has two implications: first, it is encouragement to seek the truth, beauty and goodness of God's light, through prayer, charity and contemplation during the fasting month; second, it is a warning. If the tempter supreme is locked up we cannot really blame another for the darkness within.

May God guide us toward truth, beauty and goodness as we head toward the Lenten season and the month of Ramadan.

Title photo: Muslims gather at Wazir Khan Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan to break their fast with Iftar on the fifth day of Ramadan on June 1, 2017. CrowdSpark/Alamy stock photo

Dr Zain Ali is Head of the Islamic Studies Research Unit at the University of Auckland. He also teaches an introductory course on Islam.

Mary MacKillop 1873: One Year of an Extraordinary Life

Edited by Sheila McCreanor
Published by AFT Press, 2016
Reviewed by Patricia Stevenson

BOOK

Mary Helen MacKillop is revealed in her own words in this book. In 1873 Mary, an Australian, was 30 years old and the co-founder of a very young religious congregation, the Sisters of St Joseph. She was a letter writer and it is through the medium of these letters that we learn a little about this extraordinary woman.

Through her letters to priests, bishops, her own Sisters, family and friends we learn not only of her personal struggles but also something about the difficulties of travelling abroad alone. She adopted the name of Mrs MacDonald to provide security and privacy.

Prior to 1873 Mary and the Sisters suffered the poverty of the poor they lived among and the misunderstanding of the church leaders of Adelaide which resulted in her excommunication. They had been criticised for their mode of living, their teaching practice and the acceptance into the Sisters of untrained teachers. Mary believed in on-the-job training and she spent much time with the Sisters preparing lesson plans for beginners and instruction in classroom management. Her legacy to us was encouragement of life-long learning.

By 1893 Mary was advised by her Jesuit friend and mentor Fr Tappeiner to travel to Rome and ask Pope Pius IX to recognise the congregation officially and approve the Rule.

The bulk of the letters in the book concern her journey to Rome and visit to England and Scotland. When appropriate and to provide context and meaning some important replies are included. The list of letters in the Table of Contents arranges the list of letters according to month and date and includes approximately 65 letters interspersed with extracts from Mary's iary. The book concludes with a short Afterword entitled: "What happened next?"

The volume of letters presents a problem for a reviewer who is providing a brief picture of the book and its contents. This book is a portion of an interesting life. It will engage diverse readers and be of interest to readers of biography, those interested in the life of Australia's first saint and readers of social history.

Mary MacKillop obtained the approbation she needed and she went forward with hope into the future. The Church's faith in her was further confirmed when in 2010 Pope Benedict XVI declared her Saint.

LENTEN JOURNEY WITH DAD

MARY BETZ tells of her unexpected Lenten journey accompanying her father with Alzheimer's to his new home.

28 Feb I am thinking about what to "do" for Lent, when my brother phones me from Chicago: "Dad's had a bad fall. The doctors say he needs fulltime care. Can you come?" Lenten pondering ends and the "doing" begins.

1 Mar **(Ash Wednesday)** I wing my way across the Pacific and wonder how Dad will be. He gives me a wide smile when I come in the door but doesn't get up from his chair. When I hug him I feel how thin he is, see the wounds on his head and the bruises on his arms.

2 Mar Dad's boarder is not happy, but must move out since I need to move in to care for Dad. There is also an issue with the water heater — it's heavily rusted at the bottom and is sitting in a big pool of water. This afternoon I tell Dad I'll be taking him for a scan to make sure he doesn't have a concussion from his fall, and he says: "What fall? I didn't fall!" Later I give him some New Zealand chocolates and he eats almost the whole bag. When I realise he is not going to stop, I swoop away the bag and say: "Let's save some for tomorrow."

4 Mar I rent a rug shampooer and Dad's room gets a going-over: it looks and smells only marginally better. I cook, clean floors, do six loads of laundry and two bed changes, and help Dad with showering and dressing. He asks me to give him a shave — a first for me. I find no power of attorney document in Dad's files. Dad can't sign one now because of his mental impairment — my brother has to apply to the court for guardianship. A social worker arrives to investigate possible elder abuse because of Dad's injuries.

6 Mar I calm the neighbours who think the boarder is stealing stuff as he moves his things out. He uses the F-word and yells to Dad: "I'm homeless now because of her. She's going to take all your money and put you in a home." Dad's deafness means he doesn't hear the gibe. His double incontinence is worse — the bed, carpet, floors, two pairs of his shoes and Dad himself must be cleaned. I get nauseous and lose my appetite. I am so not cut out for caregiving. I put out Dad's medications and ask him if he wants to fill his weekly box. He looks at them and goes back to bed: he has forgotten what they are.

7 Mar I tell Dad that the communion minister is here and he corrects me: "He's not a communion minister, he's a *Eucharistic* minister." Vatican II lives! Guillermina, Dad's part-time caregiver, is back from holiday. She happily chats with her "Mr William" while I begin a bewildering round of lawyer

and bank appointments, shop for old-age needs and begin to contact care facilities. Later, Dad's GP listens respectfully while Dad tells him he never falls, is occasionally incontinent, is a bit forgetful but can manage fine on his own. Dad is told gently but firmly that he needs 24/7 care.

8 Mar Dad wanders around the house peering at photos as if wondering who everyone is. I bring him his Ninetieth Birthday Book about his life. He tells me stories about high school shenanigans and navy buddies.

9 Mar The vacuum cleaner packs it in, but I clean its ancient filters and revive it. I sift the mail so Dad doesn't bin the financial statements. Taxes are due soon and I groan at the years of junk mail mixed with possibly important stuff covering his closet floor and stacked on every surface in his study. With an old flash of elegance, Dad asks: "Shall we have dinner in the dining room tonight?" So I set the table there instead of in the kitchen. When I call him into the dining room for dinner, he says: "Oh, are we having company?"

14 Mar Dad's medic alarm goes off eight times in the night. I finally realise the phone is out and look outside to check the weather: gently-falling snow is transforming the street, houses and gardens into a fairyland.

15 Mar At midnight I hear a clatter in the kitchen. Dad is in his undies, bent over my newly-baked blueberry pie scooping big spoonfuls into his mouth. "That must be good," I say, and he grins like a kid. This morning I shovel snow. Dad's reclusive Muslim neighbour comes over to say: "Don't catch cold" and gently pulls my coat hood onto my head.

29 Mar After visiting six assisted care facilities, I find one designed and run especially for residents with dementia. I notice the forsythia and hyacinths are blooming. When I wake Dad for dinner, he asks if it is breakfast. But he always says "Thank you".

31 Mar Dad likes the nurse who assesses him for assisted care. She is African-American like the district nurse who comes each week. She makes both of us laugh and smile. I am glad because I am so caught up in chores that it is hard to remember to smile. I remind Dad that I will only be there until shortly after Easter and he laughs. "What's so funny?" I ask. Says he: "Then you won't be here to tell me what to do!"

> "I am concerned about hunger because without regular and appropriate nutrition human potential and purpose, especially for good, can never be realised: and the inevitable consequence of that is on-going strife and conflict. Mother Nature provides sufficient for all: so change the paradigm and feed the hungry first and above all else; then strife and conflict cannot prevail."
>
> *Peter Slocum, Royal Oak*

5 Apr Dad swears when I explain about going into care. "Those places just want your money. I'm not going anywhere. Do you want me to commit suicide?" I feel like getting on the next plane home. I finally realise that Dad associates care with fear — his mum was neglected in a nursing home 45 years ago. One of the care managers reminds me that Dad can't operate on a rational level. "Just tell him he is coming for physiotherapy and we will take things from there." His moving date is Good Friday. It has been a long Lent.

13 Apr My daughter has been here from Canada for a week — such a blessing with her concern for her Grandpa. She cooks while I attend to Dad. She and Guillermina set up Dad's new room with furniture, clothing, linens and toiletries.

14 Apr **(Good Friday)** We wake in the early hours to the thump of Dad falling and it takes both of us to get him back into bed. With my brother, we drive Dad to his "physio appointment", where he is told he will have "live-in" physiotherapy for some time. He is angry and demands that I take him home, but I say quietly: "No, Dad, you need to be here."

21 Apr **(Easter Week)** Dad finally laughs and smiles again — he seems to have forgotten my role in bringing him to his new home. Husband Peter is here now and gets Dad to talk about his many engineering jobs and building projects. The Eucharistic minister arrives and gives us all Eucharist.

3 May I kiss Dad goodbye, promising another visit before too many months go by and leave for the airport. Having picked up on Dad's sweet tooth, the kitchen staff quickly slip him an extra dessert.

Mary Betz is a writer and spiritual companion with a background in ecology, theology, justice and peace, and spirituality.

TEN COMMANDME

1 **Give thanks for the food we eat.**

2 **Eat food grown as close as possible to where we live.**

3 **Strive for all people to have knowledge about and access to affordable, nutritious food.**

4 **Eat mindfully and in moderation.**

5 **Do not waste food.**

ENTS OF FOOD

6 **Be grateful to those who grow and prepare food for our tables.**

7 **Support fair wages for farmworkers, farmers and food workers.**

8 **Reduce the environmental damage of land, water and air from food production and the food system.**

9 **Protect the biodiversity of seeds, soils, ecosystems and the cultures of food producers.**

10 **Rejoice and share the sacred gift of food with all.**

— The World Council of Churches

Paintings: *Kai moana 1* and *Kai moana 2* by Richard Smith © www.richardsmithartist.co.nz

Little Practices of

PRAYER AT HOME

A few years ago we visited Nanna and Grandad, sharing a meal with them, our cousins and their parents, and discovered a new (to us) way of praying or saying grace. Our three girls really enjoyed it and we decided to borrow the idea and bring it into our own home.

This was how we first learned it: the youngest person sitting at the dinner table gets to speak first, then chooses the next person to have a turn. The speaker reflects on their day and chooses the thing they are most grateful for. It can be anything, from the meal we are about to eat, to our friends, pets; absolutely anything that makes that person feel good, fortunate and happy, even it is being thankful for the day to end! Children often want to choose lots of things, which is fine — but it can mean the dinner goes cold!

ENHANCING EVERYDAY MOMENTS

When we think of prayer we often think of formal prayer times, at dinner or at bedtime. But Jesus did not set up tables with candles and bibles and reflective items; Jesus prayed in his words and in his actions. With this in mind, I think of prayer and spirituality as an attitude of heart, a way to live in love and interact with others, ourselves and our environment. It's not something to tick off and achieve!

As a mum I try to encourage the kids to respond to God's invitation of love in our everyday moments. We talk about how our choices affect more than just ourselves, how it is more important to come to an understanding rather than to win an argument, how creation is a gift and how we should think of "others" as part of our family. Around the dinner table each night, we take turns sharing what we are grateful for. This reminds us that everything is gift and not ours to own. We also take this time to talk about our challenges and failures and how we've handled them. This isn't just for the children: my husband and I share honestly, too, and it's surprising how much we learn. To get the kids to see what a prayerful life might be, I ask: "Do you think that is how Jesus would have acted? What do you think Jesus would do if he was in that situation?" And I

GIVING THANKS WITH A PRESCHOOLER

When Rosalie was a toddler she liked to attend contemplative and discussion worship service at our church with her parents and grandparents. She learned to sit still and move about quietly. One evening, in the pause at the end of a prayer, she said the "Amen" by herself and loudly enough to be heard. After that she took on the role of proclaiming the "Amen" at the end of the grace her family says before meals. She had learned at playgroup that eating together begins with waiting until everyone has gathered, holding hands and giving thanks for food, wellbeing and togetherness. A few weeks later, after all the "Hallelujahs" at church on Easter Sunday, she extended the blessing's ending to the joyful flourish of "Amen. Alleluia!" that we still now use.

As Rosalie moved on from playgroup to kindy, she learned other graces and these we have also learnt at home. She now has four to choose from, including one in Māori and its English translation. There is also room for us to add thanks for Aunty arriving safely from Auckland for a visit, or to pray

Prayer

We share this practice often, but it's not mandatory every day nor is it mandatory to participate every time. But we all love it and usually we are all happy to share.

We have found that through mindfully acknowledging something that is good in our lives we strive to look for wonder more often through our days. And at the end of a hard day, when it's been a challenge to see anything positive, this practice makes us search to find the wonder that is present in all days, even the tough ones.

Andrea Holland Castañeda grew up in Guatemala and now lives in Oxford with her husband and three daughters whom she homeschools.

urge them to remember that Jesus himself spent time in prayer asking God for guidance so if we're not sure about the right action we can try praying and talking to God about it.

To encourage my kids in their relationship with God I try to stretch their idea of who God really is. One morning walking to school we were admiring the patterns made by frost and we talked about how amazing God the artist is. On holiday looking at the rocks we talked about God the sculptor. Opportunities like these are endless and can really help the kids see where God is in the everyday: God creator, mother, challenger, carer, protector, encourager, God in all, God of mercy, God of joy.

Learning to pray is learning to live as fully as possible in the present moment. Allowing ourselves to be found and touched and loved by God — what a great gift to offer our kids.

Jo Bell lives in Dunedin with her husband, three children and her dog. She is a member of Mercy Parish and a human being!

for others in need. It is nice to sit (or stand) together, stop for a moment, focus, hold hands and give thanks to our generous God for the people gathered and the food. Mostly Rosalie lets the adults decide which grace to use, but sometimes she talks us into saying all four.

Rosalie is now a big four-an-a-half-year-old. Recently at dinner the freshly picked peas disappeared quickly until there were just two left. Her grandfather took one, leaving the bigger one. Rosalie raised her hands and eyes heavenwards and exclaimed: "Thank you, Lord, that Morfar took the small pea!" Amen, Alleluia, indeed.

Tui Bevin is a retired health researcher who enjoys her grandchildren and writing. She attends Opoho Presbyterian Church in Dunedin.

Listening to the Depths

JANE MAISEY reflects on her journey in discernment leading to profession as a Sister of St Joseph.

When talking with a young friend recently the word "discernment" came up. He looked at me with confusion and said: "What does that mean?" As my forehead assumed the "hmmm . . . extract explanation from brain" pose I found myself explaining discernment as more about listening than thinking. Yes: it is making a decision, but listening and contemplative prayer are at the core of the decision-making.

When I first felt the allurement to religious life there was a sense of newness and life. I started to listen to what was happening in my body and to what was shifting within my spirit. When I thought about it I felt alive; this joy and life was stronger than anything else I had experienced before. Even though none of this made any sense to my thinking brain, my heart was starting to sing a new melody. Over time I started to understand that discernment is a feeling, not something you can think. A sense of home with God is in the heart, not in the head.

As the months and years passed I started to journey with a spiritual director and I found myself questioning God in prayer. "Why me? I don't fit the typical 'nun' stereotype. Will it be life giving? What will the future be like? Will I be the last one standing? How will I help others? Where will I go? What will this be like for family and friends?"

As my plethora of questions grew, so did my relationship with God. I became aware of my fears and my joys and how these are woven into faith and spirituality. I had many moments of confusion with an array of "really, seriously God?!!!" moments. And with naivety I figured: "No no, this religious life thing will just go away, I'll just go make some inquiries…." I have a sneaking suspicion that God may have just been laughing at me at this point!

A Jesuit priest once said to me that discernment is like listening to the waters. When you are trying to make a decision and you pray about it, listen to how your spirit feels. Is it more like a ship sailing on calm peaceful waters? Or, are the waters rough with your boat being tossed around like a beach ball? Don't get me wrong; this journey has not all been smooth sailing. But for the most part as I have journeyed I have continued to feel a sense of deepening calmness, of peace and of home.

And discernment is ongoing. It never stops. Thinking I had all the answers would be like saying to God: "Yea I've got this. I don't need you any more." Clearly this is not the case. I openly ask God every day in prayer to reveal to me the path to life (John 10:10) believing that when I feel most alive I am doing the thing or living the way that I am called to, honouring the light within.

As Augustine said to God: "Our heart is restless until it rests in you." It seems that to think is to control and to listen is to surrender and rest in love. On my life's journey sometimes the waters have been changeable, but by listening in prayer I find peace, light and I am filled with gratitude. I am alive by sailing into the light of God's melody. I hope this melody will ring out strong for you too.

Dear God
On this earth, I am a finite candle
You hold the infinite match
Thank you for my light
With you I shine
Let us shine
Let us shine
Let us shine
Alleluia. Amen.

(Prayer written for First Profession)

Jane Maisey RSJ (a Kiwi) is a graphic designer, loves the outdoors, youth empowerment and learning and is ministering in a secondary school in Sydney. [designjane.com & gozobonkers.]

Journeying Within

ANNA BURROWES **shares her discernment leading to her commitment for life as a Sister of Mercy.**

My journey towards a life commitment with the Sisters of Mercy began in late 2004. I felt a nudge, a prompting to discern further what God was asking of me. But my journey of enquiry towards religious life had begun earlier. I had been interested in different expressions of religious life and through this I came to know the Sisters of Mercy.

I stepped out in faith and spoke to a Mercy Sister in the parish, asking if I could learn about the Mercy charism and if this was where God was calling me. I learnt that discernment means listening deeply, analysing my own thinking and feelings and asking if this inspiration is coming from God. I was able to do this with my first formator — our name for the guide who journeys with me through different stages of religious life. This Sister showed me how to discern and to listen to the movements of the Holy Spirit in me. For the first year or so, I met with my formator monthly, and spent time with a Mercy community learning about community life. After this initial period — what we call the enquiry stage — I wrote to the congregational leader and asked if I could continue to the next phase. This meant living and praying with the Mercy community while I continued working. At the end of what we call the "come and see" phase, I wrote to the congregational leader and asked if I could enter novitiate — the beginning of the formal formation process.

Formation is an inward journey with self, others and God. Novitiate is a stage where I spent two years away from fulltime ministry and learnt more deeply about the vows, charism and working on my own personal development. I continued to discern that I was in the right place by "checking in with God" during my prayer. The next phase was preparing for first vows. The journey included self-development and gaining more skills and qualifications for future ministries. Experiencing living with different ages and stages of religious is also another aspect to this life. It has its own challenges and rewards but at the root of this calling is being grounded in our faith and prayer life.

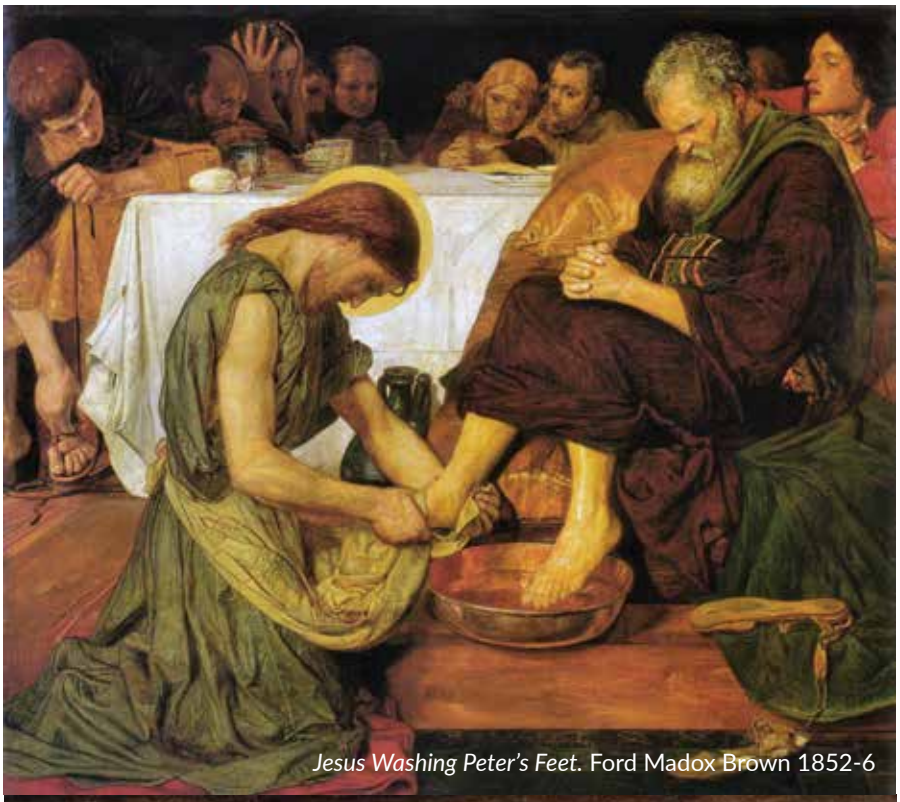
At each stage I had to discern that this was what God was asking of me. Then, the congregational leadership and I decided I was ready to make my final profession or life commitment as a Sister of Mercy.

My life commitment to be a Sister of Mercy began over 14 years ago and the journey has continued to mould and reshape me. My formation did not end when I made my final profession but continues for the rest of my life as I change and grow. I'm happy to be a Sister of Mercy and to live out the charism of our congregation. The motto I took, and that I have engraved on my ring, is: "Mercy and compassion." This motto is a kind of compressed version of my favourite quote by our founder, Catherine McAuley — a quote that has been part of my journey since I began: "There are things that the poor prize more highly than gold, though they cost the donor nothing; among these are the kind word, the gentle, compassionate look and the patient hearing of their sorrows."

Anna Burrowes RSM lives in Ōtepoti Dunedin, where she is in pastoral ministry at Holy Name Parish and is a trainee psychotherapist.

Jesus Washed **Feet**

KATHLEEN RUSHTON interprets Jesus's action in John 13:1-17 as introducing a new ordering of relationships.



Jesus Washing Peter's Feet. Ford Madox Brown 1852-6

Jesus Washing Peter's Feet. (watercolur) Ford Madox Brown 1876

In his painting, "Jesus Washing Peter's Feet" (1852–6) the English artist Ford Madox Brown captures the Fourth Evangelist's characteristic way of telling the story of Jesus through vivid, concrete images that embody the Word made flesh (Jn 1:14). Jesus does not talk about serving. He washes feet.

There is a back story to this remarkable painting. Brown's original version caused outrage. Critics were offended by his coarse depiction of Jesus nude to the waist and with his leg exposed. The painting remained unsold for several years until Brown retouched it several times and clothed the figure of Jesus in green robes. (He painted the scene again in watercolours in 1876.) Brown's original inspiration, however, peeled away layers which obscured the ancient context (world behind the text), the radical Jesus of the Fourth Gospel story (world of the text) and the transformation we are called to today (world in front of the text). Holy Thursday/Maundy Thursday offers an opportunity to look anew at Jesus's astonishing action and his example to do as he did.

The Slave Does Not Have a Permanent Place

The Fourth Gospel was written in the 90s, somewhere in the Roman Empire, which was then undergirded by the system of slavery. If written in Ephesus, it came from the "hub" of Roman slavery. Slaves were brought from Asia Minor (modern Turkey) and Syria to the *statarion*, the slave market of Ephesus where they were auctioned and transported to places of demand, especially Rome. The focus of the auction process was a raised wooden platform. At the direction of the auctioneer, the naked or almost naked slave — sometimes wearing a placard describing his or her notable features — stepped up onto the platform to be scrutinised by potential buyers. Spouses could be sold to different buyers. Children could be sold separately from their parents.

All slaves (*douloi*) were the

property of their "lords" (*kyrios*) who bought them. They had no rights. Children born of slave or owner-slave unions became the property of the owner and like all slaves were included in inheritances to the next of kin. At the order of their owners, slaves could be beaten, chained, imprisoned and even crucified. Any task could be assigned to them including the lowly task of washing soiled feet. At the master's whim and with but a moment's notice, slaves could be sold. The words of Jesus highlight the precariousness of a slave's position in a household in contrast to that of a son (Jn 8:35).

We have a new perspective of slavery when Jesus is portrayed as the Lord (*kyrios*) who washes the feet of his slaves (*douloi*, Jn 13:4-6) to whom he gives the status of friends (*philos*, Jn 15:12-14)

Context of the Supper

The Evangelist tells us that choices had to be made about what to include in this gospel story (Jn 20:30-31; 21:25). This implies a process of selection: how to tell the story and how to order the story. The foot washing is clearly central to the supper (Jn 13:4; 13:23-26). Things are going on here at many levels.

Usually, foot-washing was done on arrival; yet we are told that "during supper Jesus ... got up from table" (Jn 13:2-4). Assuming the appearance of a slave, he "took off his outer garment" (*ta himatia*), stripping down to his waist cloth, wrapped a towel around his waist and began to wash and dry his disciples' feet. Jesus's freely disrobing himself links foot washing with his forced disrobing at his crucifixion when Roman soldiers "took his clothes" (*ta himatia* Jn 19:23). Crucifixion was considered a fitting death for a slave.

An Act of Friendship

Jesus's commandment to love one another as I have loved you (the *mandatum* Jn 15:12-13), is expressed in his example of foot washing (Jn 13:15), an act motivated by love. We find this no where else in ancient literature. Jesus is not called "friend" explicitly in this Gospel. His life, however, is the incarnation of the ancient ideal of friendship concerning love and death (Jn 15:13; 10:11). This ideal is described by Plato and Aristotle as the love which leads one to lay down one's life for friends. According to Plato: "Only those who love wish to die for others." The disciples are to imitate Jesus, wash one another's feet and to carry out his love commandment — even to the point of laying down their lives for others as Jesus does (Jn 15.13).

Roman Lectionary: Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper — John 13:1-15

Revised Common Lectionary: Maundy Thursday — John 13:1-17, 31b-35

> *We have a new perspective of slavery when Jesus is portrayed as the Lord who washes the feet of his slaves to whom he gives the status of friends.*

The washing of the feet may be understood in three ways. First, one person is subordinate as in a master-slave relationship. This imbalance lingered in the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday. The 1956 Roman reform turned the washing of the feet into a clericalised, hierarchical, male-centred sacred drama — something it had never been. Earlier Christians had washed one another's feet (*Mandatum Fraterum*), those of guests, and the feet of the poor (*Mandatum Pauperum*). Further, uncritical appropriation has led to sincere church-talk about so called "servant leadership", which theologises away and obscures ancient slavery, a practice which was intrinsically oppressive and maintained only for the benefit of the privileged slave owners.

Second, foot-washing can be understood as freely done, as in a mother-child relationship. One person remains superior. In the idealised image of Mother-Church and her children-members the latter are regarded as eternal infants. Unlike real mothers and real children, Mother-Church's children are often not encouraged or expected to grow up.

Third, foot-washing may be an action of friendship based on equality. It seems Peter knew all too well that accepting Jesus's footwashing would mean a whole new way of transformative relating and he was unwilling. Jesus uses the word *doulos* (slaves Jn 13:16) and does so again in the farewell discourse with a different nuance (Jn 15:15). In this Gospel, Jesus never uses the term "disciples" (*mathētai*) for his followers. Only in Jn 15:15 does he address them by the term "slaves" which he transforms to "friends". Translations which in Jn 15.15 and Jn 13:16 have *doulos* as "servant/s" — the translations on which the servant leadership motif is based — sanitise and obscure the master-slave relationship which is inherent in the foot-washing and the slavery of the text.

I Have Set You an Example

Brown captures so well the shock and dismay of Peter and the disciples. How would the Christians of Ephesus and the Empire have heard this story? Were some slaves? Others slave owners? They knew the reality of slavery and the cultural value of friendship — both expressed in the flesh of Jesus. What is my response to the example of Jesus? I am implicated in a global lifestyle which demands cheap clothing, goods, services and food produced by millions of persons of all ages held in human slavery, including an estimated 800 in Aotearoa New Zealand. Jesus's example makes flesh/incarnates a whole new order of human relationships and self-giving. How is his foot washing calling me today as friend to participate in Jesus's work of transforming relationships, whakawhanaungatanga/making right relationship with God, the Earth and people in Church and the world God so loves (Jn 3:16)?

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.

New Way of Being with Earth

ELAINE WAINWRIGHT says that listening to the prophet Jeremiah 31:31-34 during Lent can bring us to a new relationship with Earth.

We hear the prophet Jeremiah in the reading for the Fifth Sunday of Lent — the Sunday just prior to Palm Sunday and entry into what we call Holy Week. It is intended to speak to the heart of our journey of conversion through the Lenten period into Easter.

An initial reading of Jeremiah's text (Jer 31:31-34) draws readers into the intimate relationship between God and the human community. This is a relationship that has been broken in the past — broken by members of that community, individually and collectively. God, however, promises a restoration, a new covenant. The text breathes intimacy and right relations and our reading of it is familiar.

Listen to the New Voice

It would be easy for us, therefore, this Lent and Easter to rest in the familiar and to let words like "new covenant" invite us into minor changes in our lifestyle. But there is another voice that echoes through the words of Jeremiah at this time. It is that of Pope Francis who is calling for "a fresh analysis of our present situation" in the opening chapter of his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'* (par 17). Such an analysis uncovers a list of challenges: pollution and climate change; the issue of water; loss of biodiversity; decline in the quality of human life and the breakdown of society; global inequality; weak responses; and a variety of opinions (par 20-61). These form a new perspective from which and through which to read the biblical text (par 62-100).

This new perspective needs to be both global and local and our Jeremiah text suggests that it is characterised by urgency: the days are coming, says our God, when I will make a new covenant. The Lenten period is a time for examining our attitudes, our priorities, our way of seeing and being in our world.

Look at Where We Live

We are challenged to expand our perspectives so that we are not confined within a worldview that focuses only on the human and the holy. *Laudato Si'* invites us to include habitat within not only our worldview but our way of being and acting on this planet Earth that we and all other earthlings/earth beings call home. Living into such a new understanding and lifestyle can be seen as the "new covenant" which God wants to make not just with the human community but also the other-than-human. How might such a shift in perspective shape our reading of the Jeremiah text?

A new covenant is called for. It will engage us in our local, regional and global communities who are seeking to attend to the challenges to Earth and our covenant with Earth.

Urgency Is with Us

We have already drawn attention to the note of urgency in the voice of God that echoes through Jer 31: 31. It finds expression in the phrase "the days are *surely* coming". For the ecological reader this phrase captures the urgency with which ecological issues confront us. Water and waste are perhaps the most urgent globally. They call for individual responses

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but also what might be called a "covenanting" with others locally, regionally or globally to bring about a new response to the challenges that face us in relation to water and waste. *Surely the days are coming when we make a new covenant between people and nations.*

It will not be like the covenant of old. Indeed, no. We are in a new time and the issues facing us are monumental. They extend far beyond the confines of a God in relationship with a select segment of the human community.

Jeremiah 31:31 The days are surely coming, says our God, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says our God. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says our God: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other: "Know your God" for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says our God; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Time for a New Covenant

A new covenant is called for. Each of us is invited into this moment, this new moment, in the unfolding of the interrelationships within the habitat-human-holy web. It will require very careful analysis of and attention to the ways in which relationships have broken down (how we, the human community, have broken the covenant, in the words of Jeremiah).

It will take us to the heart of our daily lives: how we use or abuse water, food, power and other Earth resources. It will also engage us in our local, regional and global communities who are seeking to attend to the challenges to Earth and our covenant with Earth.

For our new challenges, we need a new covenant. As far as we as a human community know, the planet has never before been so severely under threat. For those on the Lenten journey accompanied by texts such as that of Jeremiah 31:31-34, this does not have to lead us to despair. Rather the prophet can be heard providing assurance of a new future: "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

The "new law" that is needed at this time can be heard in the call of Pope Francis to "ecological conversion" (par 217). It is a call to be "protectors of God's handiwork", not as an optional extra but as essential to a "life of virtue" (par 217). It will entail "gratitude and graciousness, a recognition that the world is God's loving gift". It is also characterised by a "loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures but joined in a splendid universal communication" (par 220).

We, the human community, "are not disconnected ... but joined in a splendid universal communication". Bringing to our biblical text the lens not only of the human and the holy but also of habitat, invites and challenges us to conversion during Lent — to a new way of being on this planet Earth.

AUTUMN PASSION

Bright autumn Christ,
The silver birch,
The bell-bird's call,
The vibrant light,
The glory through
The pain.

Sharp autumn Christ
The fallen leaves,
The slanting sun,
The hint of frost,
Toll for the life
That's gone.

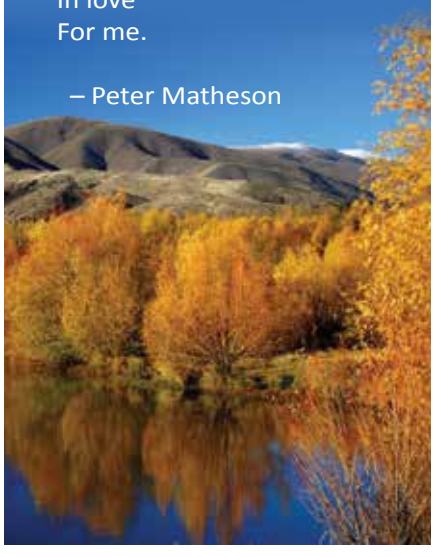
Dark autumn Christ
The broken branch,
The weeping tree,
The whole sad
Earth gasps
Piteously.

High autumn Christ
The teacher gagged,
The friend betrayed,
The healer hung,
The saviour
Torn.

Rich autumn Christ
The hill is climbed,
The hate disarmed,
The fear is gone,
The battle
Won.

Sweet autumn Christ,
The rose-red blood,
The rowan tree,
God's heaven aflame
In love
For me.

– Peter Matheson



CHANGE NOW

A new year feels full of potential: we've spent time reflecting, making resolutions and plans for the year ahead. We've signed up for the gym deal in our new-found enthusiasm for healthy living. We're buoyed by the new government and the hopeful Waitangi Day celebrations.

Three months in and I still feel the groundswell of belief that change is possible. I hope particularly that some of the benefits to be reaped will be seen in the justice system. As a young lawyer, my day-to-day mahi is in the courts: making bail applications, negotiating with prosecutors, defending my clients in trials, and advocating for a fair outcome in the sentencing process.

With this work comes a daily reminder of some of the issues that are reflective of the deeper problems in our society. Many of those before the courts suffer from mental health and/or drug and alcohol issues which would be better treated in a health setting without the sitgma and damage the criminal justice process can inflict. Our prisons are overflowing (with Māori disproportionately represented) despite the growing consensus that prisons come at a great social cost to the person imprisoned, their whānau, victims and the broader community, and fail to reduce recidivism.

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

The new government has a stated objective to reduce imprisonment by 30 per cent and they have plans to repeal at least one of the more egregious pieces of recent legislation – the so-called "three strikes regime". But the real power lies with us: we can embolden political leaders to really change the criminal justice system. If New Zealanders across the country supported moves to reduce imprisonment and implement changes that would reduce harm by recognising that being "tough on criminals" and waging a "war on drugs" has failed, politicians would be empowered to make changes without fear of being seen as weak on law and order.

As a young woman working in the law, I often find myself coming up against barriers that feel old and immovable. I advocate to achieve the best outcome I can in the circumstances. Sometimes the circumstances are difficult. And in those moments, I draw on my involvement with JustSpeak to remind me that the barriers may be old but they are not immovable.

JustSpeak is an organisation of young (and young at heart) people speaking out and speaking up for changes in the criminal justice system based on evidence and lived experience. It began in 2011, set up by a small group of graduate lawyers, youth workers, high school students and criminology students under the guidance of Dr Kim Workman of Rethinking Crime and Punishment.

I had emerged from law school at Victoria University of Wellington, with a poorly defined but strongly held passion for justice. I had particular interest in issues that affect Māori and was learning more about my own Ngāti Hikairo whakapapa. While my first job as a judge's clerk was interesting, I found myself thinking: "When do I get to start changing the world?" JustSpeak was born out of that urgency — of seeing the problems and wanting to get on and change things. Since then, JustSpeak volunteers have released several reports, held camps for young people to workshop alternatives, met MPs and Ministers, made submissions to Select Committees, held many public forums and debates, led a successful campaign to change the age of the youth court jurisdiction, presented at numerous conferences, workshops, schools and appeared in the media. JustSpeak draws on volunteers: students, lawyers, youth workers and ex-prisoners. We are powered by a belief that young people bring fresh, creative ideas, a sense of impatience to agitate for change and a positive conviction that in spite of the many obstacles, change can be achieved.

While summer is a time of hope and change, I want us to hold on to our current feeling of optimism for a better future. And if you find you're not using your gym membership when autumn arrives, consider donating to or volunteering for an organisation committed to making the changes you want to see in the world.

Learn more about the work of JustSpeak and find out how to support the kaupapa — visit www.justspeak.org.nz.

PRIDE AND THE CHURCH

The Pride Festival has just wrapped up — a week set aside to celebrate and bring awareness to the LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer, Intersex, Asexual) community. Historically, pride is about celebration and protest. About raising the awareness of oppression faced by those who don't conform to heteronormativity or gender binaries, and a chance to celebrate people living their lives out in public. While many steps have been made for greater acceptance, by individuals and by governments, there is still work to be done. The Pride Festival is a good chance to reflect on how the institutions we're a part of can contribute to this.

Historically, the Church has been an impediment to the progress for equal rights of the LGBTQIA community. Instead of serving at the forefront of this issue they've fostered a culture of intolerance. They've campaigned against progressive government legislation and caused damage to individuals through their hurtful rhetoric and refusal to be accepting.

Growing up, raised in a Catholic family, my awareness of this made my relationship with the Church impossible to maintain. How could I be a part of an institution that condemned my friends to hell and ranked their love and relationships as less than comparative heterosexual ones? How could I proclaim to be a person who cared about justice while participating in an oppressive institution? The moral compass, which I'm sure the Church intends to provide for its congregation, seemed to me to be egregiously off course. I can't look to the Church for guidance, or seek divine relationship with God, through an institution I see as fundamentally flawed.

I'm sure I'm not alone in this sentiment. It's not only the individuals themselves who've lost something by leaving the Church, but the Church itself, whose community is far less rich for it.

Growing up, the argument I would often have with my parents was that if you don't like an opinion within the Church, stay in it and fight to change it. Unfortunately, I did not feel the loyalty and connection to the Church that made this feasible, but I acknowledge there are people every day doing exactly this and I admire their integrity and perseverance. There are LGBTQIA people practising their faith and living openly and there are congregations supporting them. But all too often, people being authentically who they are is not encouraged, but merely tolerated.

Change at the top of the Church will be incremental and it will follow, not lead. But that doesn't prevent individuals choosing to make their community, inside or outside of the Church, one that actively supports LGBTQIA people. The Pride Festival is as good a time as any to reflect on whether we're doing enough.

While New Zealand has same sex marriage, there are still plenty of laws that continue to oppress LGBTQIA people and, in some cases, actively endanger them. Transwomen are still being incarcerated in male prisons. This not only rejects the identity of these women, but puts them in harm's way. Gay men who've had sex within the last 12 months cannot give blood, even if they are using protection and even if they are in a monogamous relationship. It's a law that stems from decades-old HIV stigma and it reinforces old stereotypes about homosexual promiscuity. Finally, gay couples cannot adopt a child together. This law actively discriminates and puts in place a bigoted hierarchy about what relationships we value.

Legislative change is bred by community change. It starts small and becomes the norm. I would, therefore, encourage any Church community to investigate their own practice and see where they may be failing. Pride is an opportunity for reflection about what you're doing to support the LGBTQIA community. There is still plenty of work to be done in New Zealand and it can only be achieved if there is awareness and progress within all of our institutions.

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

The Keys and the Kingdom: The British and the Papacy from John Paul II to Francis

by Catherine Pepinster
Published by T&T Clark
Reviewed by Tony Eyre

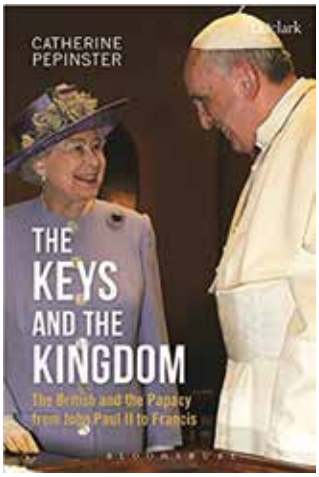
BOOK

Nearly 500 years have passed since England's brutal schism with Rome, triggered by Henry VIII's spat with Pope Clement VII's refusal to allow the annulment of the king's marriage to Catherine of Aragon. This break with Roman Catholicism still reverberates today in what author, Catherine Pepinster, describes as "one of the deepest wounds the papacy ever suffered in Europe".

However, the focus of this book is the modern era where the author meticulously chronicles the changing relationship between the British and the papacy during the 30-year period of the John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis pontificates.

Catherine Pepinster is eminently qualified to write such an account. She was editor of the Catholic weekly *The Tablet* for 13 years and is an experienced journalist, broadcaster and researcher specialising in religious affairs.

For followers of the Vaticanologists, the late Peter Hebblethwaite and the more contemporary John Allen, this book will prove to be a compelling read as it takes you on an insider's guided tour of the intricacies of high-level Vatican diplomacy behind the closed doors of British political and ecclesiastical power.



The preparations and negotiations behind the papal visits to Britain of John Paul II in 1982 and Benedict XVI in 2010 are extensively covered in *The Keys and the Kingdom*.

No pope had set foot on English soil for over 400 years since the country's rejection of Catholicism. John Paul's first visit was to be an historic moment not without controversy. Recent tensions between the Catholic Church and Thatcher's British government over violence in Northern Ireland and the Maze Prison hunger strikes were all elements in the delicate diplomatic negotiations over the visit.

But those complications took a back seat when the British went to war with Argentina over the disputed Falkland Islands — putting John Paul's visit in serious doubt. The author skilfully takes you behind the scenes to the players involved in the rescue mission to ensure the historic 1982 visit took place.

Similar examples of treading the delicate diplomatic path are scattered throughout the book: like the deep historical significance of Benedict XVI's 2010 address in Westminster Hall where Thomas More had been tried for treason in 1535.

Catherine Pepinster rounds off with her insight into what makes for the "x" factor in the making of the pope as a modern leader. Here she draws on the charisms of the three popes in her 30-year spotlight and examines how the papacy and the Catholic Church has played its part at both governmental and national levels of society. A relevant and well-researched read which has certainly renewed my interest in the papacy on the world stage.

WE APOLOGISE for the incorrect title of the book edited by Mary Eastham and reviewed by Michael Hill in *Tui Motu*, Issue 223 February 2018: 28. The title is: *The Life and Work of Scott Thomas Eastham: An Anthology.*

Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri

Directed by Martin McDonagh
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

FILM

The film opens with an event that might have been pulled from today's headlines. In a small town in rural America, a girl has been raped and murdered, and her vengeful mother, Mildred Hayes (Frances McDormand), is out to find the killer. Frustrated by the apparent inactivity of the local police department, Mildred pastes up posters on three billboards outside the town, naming Chief of Police Bill Willoughby (Woody Harrelson).

Keeping the other cops in line like the head of an unruly family, Willoughby is a respected figure in town. When he dies under tragic circumstances, things begin to turn nasty for Mildred, but she refuses to back down.

Before he died, Willoughby had written letters to his family, to Mildred and also to Jason Dixon (Sam Rockwell), a vicious redneck cop who boasts of "torturing people of colour" and who has recently been sacked from the force for throwing the local signage contractor (and owner of the billboards in question) out of his office window.

Dixon is one of a procession of grotesques that populate the movie including a sadistic dentist, a slow-witted priest and a genial dwarf. The film constantly teeters on a knife-edge between tragedy and comedy, skin-crawling horror and sly humour, occasionally lurching to one extreme or the other and making us either uncomfortable or incredulous. "Black comedy" is probably the closest we can come to putting a name on it.

The surreal action is reinforced by the props: as in the comics that Dixon spends much of his time reading, space is compressed so that the police station is conveniently sited directly opposite the signage company offices where much of the drama unfolds. And the scene where Mildred calmly tosses Molotov cocktails into the police HQ is like something out of a graphic novel.

Yet, as in McDonagh's *In Bruges*, this bizarre mix of slapstick humour and pure nastiness is leavened by a moral consciousness. If *Three Billboards* shows us evidence of the corrosive power of anger, hatred, guilt, violence and revenge, it also suggests, ever so tentatively, what redemption might look like. After reading Chief Willoughby's posthumous letter suggesting that he search for the hero inside the repugnant exterior, Dixon begins to reform himself and teams up with Mildred, as the unlikely pair embark on a quest to find themselves rather than destroy others.

Although I am still struggling to understand and appreciate this film, while watching it I was enthralled, appalled and amused by turns, but never bored. Perhaps that's the point. See it and make up your own mind.

CROSS CURRENTS

by Susan Smith

"And I have felt A presence that disturbs"

William Wordsworth
Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey

Wordsworth's words resonate with many New Zealanders. All of us who have walked or tramped through bush, climbed mountains, swam at beaches, or gazed at sunsets have experienced "a presence that disturbs . . . with the joy of elevated thoughts". If we are Christians, we may find ourselves naming this disturbing presence as the Holy Spirit. If Māori, then Ranginui, Papatūānuku, Tāne Mahuta, or Tangaroa may be that presence that disturbs and calls us beyond ourselves. Because of our close proximity to God's gift of creation, and our ingrained habits of turning to nature for rest and recreation, this is perhaps easier for us in Aotearoa than for those destined to live in multi-storey apartments in the world's great metropolises.

We are lucky, because as Elizabeth Johnson demonstrates so powerfully in *She Who Is*: "the natural world mediates the presence and absence of the Spirit." I realised afresh what she meant when I visited the Bridal Veils Falls near Raglan recently. The Falls cascade spectacularly over some 55 metres through native bush. We stood and wondered at the power of the water, the beauty of the bush, other people's awe as they stood there. This was truly a Spirit-filled moment in which we felt a "a presence that disturbs". Or as the author of Wisdom tells us, we intuited that "the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world" (Wis 1:7).

But Johnson also tells us that ecological degradation and environmental disasters point to the absence of the Spirit. As I looked across the valley beyond Bridal Veil Falls to the deforested hills on the other side, there was evidence of environmental damage, of erosion of top soil from steep hillsides. As we ponder how best to respond to contemporary environmental degradation in Aotearoa — which began with 19th-century settler farming practices — I wondered what might have happened if the Christians who began settling in New Zealand two centuries ago had enjoyed a richer theology of the Holy Spirit.

Until quite recently our Catholic tradition concentrated on the particularity of the Spirit's presence. The Spirit, always masculine since the Council of Trent, was present above all in the teaching Church, pope and bishops, and if one happened to be a religious, then in the voice of the superior.

More recently, magisterial teachings, contemporary Catholic theologians and biblical scholars are inviting us to reflect more deeply on the universality of the Spirit's immanent presence in creation, and in other cultures and traditions. Vatican II's *Ad Gentes* makes it clear that the Holy Spirit "was at work in the world before Christ was glorifed" (*AG* par 4), an understanding of the Spirit's presence in creation echoed by John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio*: "Nevertheless, [the Spirit's] presence and activity are universal, limited neither by space nor time" (*RM* par 28). And Francis writes: "The Spirit, infinite bond of love, is intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways" (*Laudato Si'* par 238).

If all those who profess to be Christian, whether greenies, farmers, urban dwellers or politicians, could grow in their understanding of the Spirit immanent in all creation — sometimes very real and present to us, sometimes absent if human exploitation of creation has led to environmental degradation — then perhaps we could be more hopeful about the future of Papatūānuku.

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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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.

LUTHER'S LEGACY

If Catholics knew something of Luther's personal life they might think a little more kindly of him.

Luther's wife, Katharina, a former Cistercian nun had two prominent suitors before she said "yes" to Luther. Their marriage was blest with six healthy children — three boys and three girls and they also reared four orphan children. The family lived in a former monastery — a wedding gift from the Elector of Saxony. Luther ran a boarding school for his student followers. Katharina provided the financial support for the school by managing their vast property, raising and selling cattle, running a brewery and operating a hospital on the property. While teaching, Luther was also writing — churning out 55 volumes of lectures, sermons, commentaries, hymns and chants.

Luther's last years were a dark night when he descended to abusive tirades, notably against the Jews. This ruined an otherwise good and noble life.

Max Palmer, Southern Star Abbey, Takapau

OZANAM AND WORKERS' RIGHTS

I enjoyed Jim Consedine's article about Frederic Ozanam in *TM* February, in which he showed how the founder of the St Vincent de Paul Society anticipated Leo XIII's encyclical on workers' rights, *Rerun Novarum*.

This has helped me understand a story I came across when I was (with a colleague) writing a history of the Labour Party which was published in 2016.

The late 1880s saw a wave of union organisation by workers in many trades. In the *Christchurch Star* for 29 May 1890 p4 we read of bakery tradesmen — who worked very long hours and wanted improved wages and conditions — calling a public meeting which was attended by 500 people. The Marist priest, Theophilus Le Menant des Chesnais, who had ministered in Christchurch for some years, spoke and among other things said: "Labour produced capital, and when capital was not properly divided it caused misery." He went on to criticise land monopoly and to say that the problems which the workers faced "could only be cured by Trades Unions".

It had always intrigued me that this was said before *Rerum Novarum*. I think Jim has explained it; I am sure now that Fr Le Menant des Chesnais was drawing on Ozanam.

Jim McAloon, Pukerua Pay

ADDRESSING SOCIAL JUSTICE

Jim Consedine's reflection on the vision of Frederic Ozanam and for the Society to refocus on social justice is welcome and timely (*TM* Issue 223, Feb 2018).

It is true that social justice issues have been seen by the Board of the National Council of the Society as the province of Caritas Aotearoa with Vincentians content to support the work of Caritas and to work unseen, unheralded, below the radar and in a non-political manner assisting those in need. Many still support that approach.

At the 2015 AGM the Social Justice Committee of the Society presented four resolutions in support of: warrants of fitness for rental accommodation and boarding houses; an increased quota for refugees and the establishment of refugee and approved asylum seeker resettlement as a "special work" both at the National and Area Council level to facilitate, assist and help fund refugee resettlement and family reunification; the prohibition of "zero-hours contracts"; the Living Wage. All four resolutions were adopted by the meeting.

The Government has moved on the first three resolutions. Support for the Living Wage is included in the Society's Strategic Plan 2017-2020, as is support for those experiencing homelessness, those in prisons, and support for refugees and new migrants with integration into their new communities. St Vincent de Paul in Nelson, along with others, has been chosen as approved sponsors for the pilot of the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category.

In addition the Young Vinnies at our Catholic Colleges and our Young Adults are particularly active in support of social justice issues.

The Social Justice Committee of St Vincent de Paul has been re-established and is currently considering how best to unlock the "Church's best kept secret, the papal social encyclicals" as suggested by Jim.

With Pope Francis we urge all Vincentians and those contemplating joining to "Be active members! Go on the offensive! Play down the field, build a better world, a world of brothers and sisters, a world of justice, of peace, of fraternity, of solidarity."

Tony Finnigan,
Convenor of Social Justice Committee,
Society of St Vincent de Paul
(Letter published in full on the Tui Motu *website.)*

LEARNING AT WAITANGI

The interdenominational service on Waitangi Day 2017 was interrupted by a crowd from Te Tii Marae proclaiming their dissatisfaction with the venue arrangements. The bishop faced them and said: "We understand." The protest group disbanded. Afterwards I saw Mere Mangu sitting with Tai Tokerau bishop, Te Kitohi Pikaahu and the police chief for the northern region. The trio was in kōrero with one of the leaders of the protest. "Now they're praying". And so they were — senior policeman, bishop, elder and protester, knees to knees, heads bowed in prayer. For me it was a perfect example of the virtues of loving forgiveness and reconciliation, done in the Māori way.

Judith Williams, Puhoi *(abridged)*

Looking **OUT** *and* **IN**

The lectionary reading from January that has been circling in my head is the account of Jesus calling strangers to follow behind and become his disciples. The apparent alacrity with which these men seemingly leapt to their feet to follow Jesus, leaving their incomes and tax collecting or fishing careers with just the simple invitation: "Follow me", seems implausible to me.

Have Mark and other gospel authors only given us a Reader's-Digest-condensed-version of what happened? Was there was a little more dialogue about what they would be doing, a job description, any perks? Or was the presence and mana of Jesus so compelling and authentic that such discussion wasn't needed?

I also wonder whether in today's complex world we are able to respond so wholeheartedly and spontaneously. Few of us seem to be able to drop what we're doing (parenting, volunteering, teaching, engineering, getting well, whatever) and leave our incomes to walk off behind Jesus. In this very different universe from first-century Palestine, how do I actually go about following Jesus and (given that Jesus is not around physically these days) how do I even know if I am following his Way?

Yet perhaps we're not as far from being committed and responsive disciples as it seems at first glance.

In the past weeks I have felt really encouraged to notice a number of our friends and relatives deeply engaged in their weekday roles, and have recognised their work as part of their journey in following Christ.

Hannah works as a speech language therapist among young people who are profoundly disabled. She tells me how people with sensory or intellectual disabilities can communicate their ideas and preferences but often need those communicating with them to give more time and space to do so. Hannah spends hours each day working with young people to help them find ways to convey their thoughts, and also supports family members and others around them to communicate more effectively.

Her eyes light up as she explains to me her role, the communication boards and technology supports, and the progress that these young people with disabilities have made in communication when they are given time and attention. In Hannah's skill, attention and knowledge around communicating, she takes up the invitation to "Follow me".

A new friend in Christchurch, Fleur, does paid work part-time, but also puts lots of energy and time into supporting her three young children, making her home a restful respite and in welcoming new parents and children living nearby. I know, because this month we moved back to Christchurch, where we lived nine years ago, to start at a new school and neighbourhood for six months. On the hot nor'wester day in late January that school started, Fleur and a couple of other mothers arranged a "welcome back to school" morning tea for other parents. It was a great way for me to meet others and feel like I could connect to this new place. On her second day at her new school, our nine-year old Jalori was invited to come and play with Fleur's daughter. It seems to me that Fleur is following Jesus whole-heartedly in the place where she lives.

It may not be as obvious or dramatic as the fishing nets left tangled on the beach, but I am convinced that there are millions of us who take up the invitation from Jesus to follow him. Like the early disciples we are enthusiastic, hopeful, faithful, faltering and distracted, too, at times — but we are following, nonetheless.

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

Fill our bowls
with daily bread
Our hearts
with gratitude for our food
Our energy
with resolve that all will have enough
Our commitment
with love for all life of the world
Bread of Life.

From the *Tui Motu* team