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IN GOD'S MISSION

Mahi pai ki te Atua

RACHEL MARR, REGINA DALY, GERARD AYNSELY,
PETER COSTELLO, MELANIA LUKA-LUI & OTHERS
on being involved in God's mission

MICHELE CONNOLLY on the
Year of St Joseph

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EDITORIAL

Joining in Healing the World



Coronavirus restrictions may have upset our familiar lives, but they are proving to be effective. Our obedience is increasing the possibility of the world's recovery from the pandemic. Individually and collectively, by seemingly insignificant acts such as of mask-wearing, keeping a safe distance, swiping QR codes, working in essential services, checking on neighbours and getting vaccinated, we are participating in restoring health and life to the people of the world. We are doing our part.

In faith terms we can think of our actions as participating in God's presence and work in our world. God is mission: continually loving the universe into life. This makes mission the context of our lives — right now with the pandemic at its height — and the context of all creation. There is one mission and that is coming from God. We are joining God in loving the world to healing and wholeness.

Jesus did not have a mission of his own. Jesus lived and died at a particular time in Earth history, showing us what God's mission is like, giving us practical information about God's dream for the universe and for all life in Earth.

Then from the reflection on Jesus's life, death and resurrection through the inspiration of the Spirit, the Church developed as a tool in God's mission. We do not claim that the Church has a mission. Rather, God's mission has a Church. Like Jesus, the Church participates in God's mission and it gives us a community to strive with.

But God's mission is more than the Church. Every aspect of goodness, justice, joy and kindness is a sign of God presence in creation, of God's mission, of God's dream of a healthy world. Just as our obedience in the pandemic is a contribution to the life of the world, so our acts of love and service are engaging in God's mission.

With this understanding in mind we asked the contributors to the March issue to share a flavour of their love and service — an aspect of how they live in God's mission. What influences, beliefs, experiences or values have formed them to participate in making life better for others? As you'll read, the responses are familiar and profound. They suggest energy, compassion and effort. They remind us that what appears to be ordinary life is in fact a context of creativity, love and goodness.

We thank all our contributors for their thoughtful, generous contributions. In reflection, research, writing, art and craft they have provided a little feast to sustain us through Lent. We are grateful.

And as is our custom, our last words are of encouragement and blessing.



Facebook decided in February to remove all news from its Australian platform. So Australia has unwittingly become a test case in the power struggle between governments and big tech companies. The unfolding situation will be closely watched around the world, and there will be lessons and wide-ranging consequences for all of us.

After years of inquiry into the unprecedented power and market share held by both Facebook and Google, Australian policymakers had sought to level the playing field when it came to the media. The idea was to compensate media companies – which have been losing out on a share of digital advertising dollars – by charging for Australian news on the online platforms. But Facebook had tired of this pressure to pay publishers and instead removed all of them from its site, preventing any news from being shared or seen by Australian users.

The principle – of strengthening struggling media outlets and financing local journalism – was sound. As a member of that media landscape, I certainly wasn't protesting, despite some issues with the plan.

There was the hypocrisy, for a start. The policy came from a federal government that has for the better part of a decade slashed funding for local broadcasters the ABC and SBS.

And the proposals also highlight a greater failing of governance. If Facebook and Google are making billion dollar profits while local publishers decline, then an argument might exist to simply tax the uber-wealthy multinationals and use the money to finance local journalism.

Easier said than done. While countries have fretted over the problem for years, all are still figuring out how to compel digital businesses to pay tax where they make their sales, rather than the tax havens of their choosing.

Similarly, if enormous market power is a concern, then we will need measures to curtail the size of these trillion dollar tech companies. There's an increasing appetite for such limitations in the US, where these corporations originate, now that a handful of Big Tech companies have amassed what just a few decades ago would have been unthinkable monopolies.

The triumvirate that is Amazon, Google and Facebook basically provide every service we use everyday, from emails and social media to data storage and directions. Convenient? Absolutely. Problematic in the long-term? Completely. Increasingly difficult to manage? You bet.

Facebook's decision to turn its back on news in Australia is the perfect example. Rather than negotiate with a federal government it has simply made good on a threat it has been making for months.

As a private company, Facebook can do this – but it highlights a lack of goodwill towards its consumers and, more importantly, a neglect of its responsibilities.

Australians can still buy the newspaper, visit a homepage, listen to the radio, or watch the television to get their news. But the hard data tells us many individuals simply won't.

More than half of all Australians read news on social media, and all Australians spend more time on Facebook than any other social media site. While some will certainly go elsewhere to find out what's going on in their street, their parliament and their world, others aren't going to seek out a reliable news outlet.

The reality, that a majority of Australians suddenly lost their major source of information, should trouble us all. If an informed public is the cornerstone of a democracy, then this can only be a step in the wrong direction.

What's more, it is the news organisations that desired financing that are prevented from posting on the platform. The move doesn't affect any other organisation long-term.

It allows anyone to fill that void provided they are not a legitimate source of news. In a time when fake news has become ubiquitous, this is undoubtedly a dangerous move.

Fringe theories can now be pushed, alternative facts can be published, and all manner of informational garbage can flood the platform completely unchallenged. None of it will be vetted by journalists, and none of it contextualised. Ethical and editorial standards be damned.

This is the new status quo, produced by a multinational flexing its might while governments struggle to find new solutions to very real problems. ✱



Jack Derwin is a senior reporter at *Business Insider Australia*. His interests include all aspects of social justice particularly in the South Pacific region.



HEARING IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE

RACHEL MARR has called on her gifts in developing her pastoral role with the Deaf community in Auckland.

It was almost five years ago when I sensed God calling me into service for the Catholic Deaf Community. A vacancy for a pastoral worker for the Catholic Deaf Community came up and I felt encouraged to apply for it. I'd become aware of a huge gap in ministry to the deaf community. Members needed support to grow in faith and to understand the Gospel teaching to be loving and kind.

I am blessed with a gift of advocacy which I employ daily for the Deaf community to advocate for accessibility for their many needs. One of my initiatives has been to introduce the Daily Gospel Reading in New Zealand Sign language (NZSL), our first language. Now we post videos in NZSL daily on our Facebook page.

Rachel Marr: I am Deaf, the mother of two boys and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) is my first language. My passion to helping people with love and kindness.



The feedback from viewers has been overwhelming. People have said their lives and hearts were deeply touched. Many for the first time had access and were able to understand the Gospel in their language. From engaging with the daily readings in their heart language some said how they were for the first-time building relationships with God. A Deaf woman said she watched one of the Gospel videos and afterwards, upon reflection, felt convicted to change her judgemental attitudes towards other people.

The daily signing of the Gospel reading is an ongoing project and we continue to see our online community grow. Deaf people as far away as Ireland have been accessing the videos and now America has started producing daily Gospel readings in American Sign Language for their communities.

During Lockdown, my first thought was how to encourage the Deaf Catholic community in their faith journey. Through that seven-week

period, for the first time ever we had weekly Sunday Mass videoed with an NZSL interpreter. Most of the people viewing the Mass were isolated and had never experienced the kind of access an interpreter gave. Some said: "It was my first time ever to understand what the priest was saying during the Mass because of the interpreter."

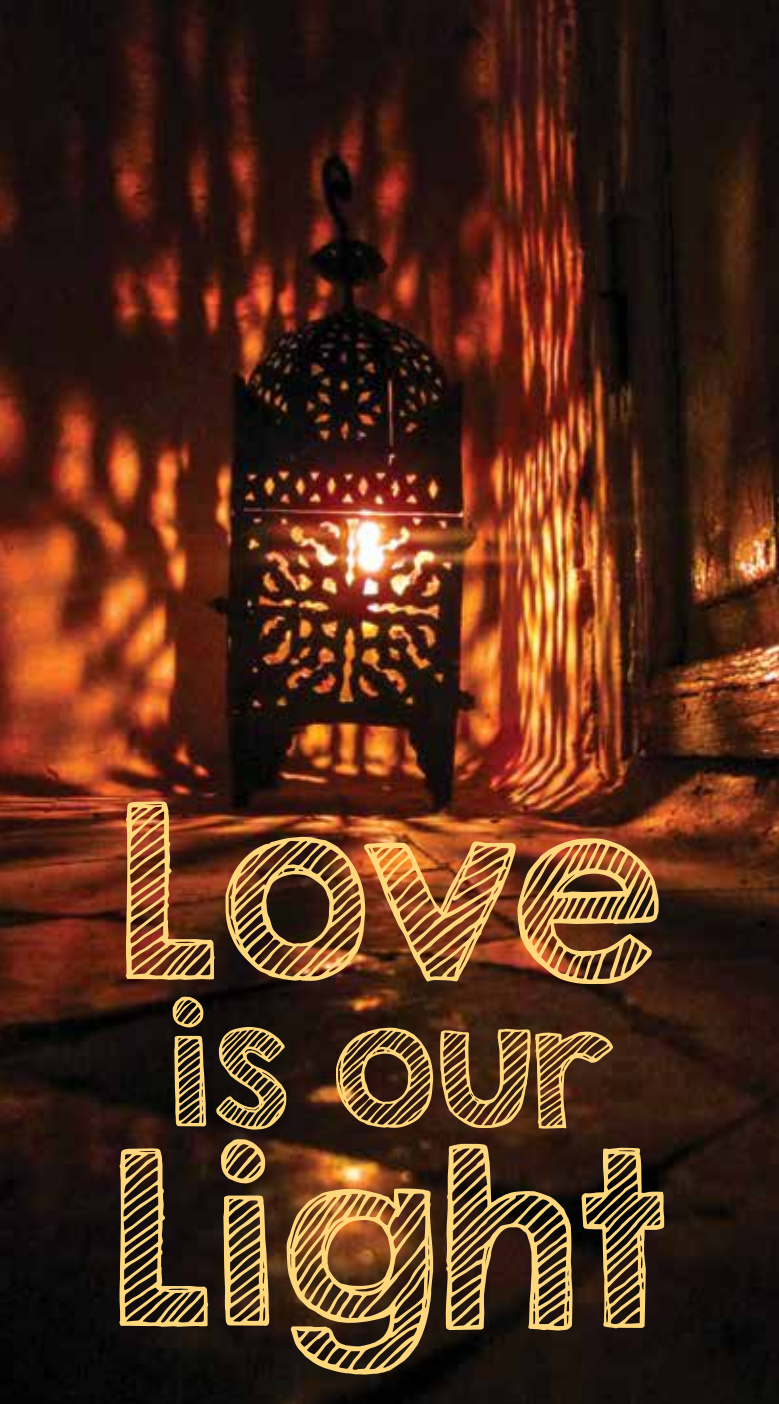
So many of their stories touched my heart and encouraged me. The success of the Signed Eucharist online led me to start doing Zoom sessions with the Catholic Deaf Community. We read and unpack the Gospel together and learn about one saint each session. As a community we support each other to gain a deeper understanding of our faith so we may be strong and established in our faith, like a tree with deep roots. I find those who participate are hungry to learn and build strong relationships with God.

Additionally, we are so fortunate to have Michael Depcik OSFS, a Deaf priest from Detroit, USA, offering us the amazing opportunity to ask him questions and learn about our Catholic faith in monthly Zoom meetings. Fr Michael knows Auslan (Australian Sign Language) which is similar to New Zealand Sign Language.

I have one last story to share. As part of my ministry, I give communion to Deaf members who are sick. I visited an elderly Deaf woman, who was very ill and unable to go Mass, to give her communion. We prayed the prayers, Gospel and the Our Father together and received communion. She said it was the first time ever she had felt so connected with God because receiving the communion in her heart language resonated deeply with her. She felt there were no barriers to God. In the past she had received communion regularly in her local parish, but she had not understood it. She just accepted it and took communion.

This story illustrates the importance of language in our relationship with others and with God. Our relationship with our Heavenly Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit has new significance through the heart of our language. ✱

Painting: *Understanding Deaf Culture* by Nancy Rourke. © Used with permission www.nancyrourke.com



REGINA DALY notes how the image of light in the darkness has given her courage.

It was a dark and frightening time in Cork in 1775. The streets were forbidding and deserted. People were dying of sickness and hunger caused by the austerities of the Penal Laws. Severe penalties prohibited any kind of freedom. This was the world of 50-year-old Nano Nagle. Undeterred by the threat and carrying a lamp giving meagre light she searched the lanes and alleys for those needing help.

I think of Nano as we face the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic in our time. We, too, are confronted with the same question as Nano — What are we called to do? I think of Presentation sister Raphael Consedine's poem: "Take down your lantern from its niche and go out / And Love shall be your lantern-flame." Our call was to stay home to keep everyone safe from the virus and to reach across the distance through technology and other means to connect us all with the lantern flame of kindness.

Nano Nagle became known as the Lady of the Lantern in Cork City during the difficult time of the Penal Laws. But the Great Spirit flowed in Nano and she drew strength from that ocean of Divine light and energy. I am inspired today by her generosity of spirit, her determination and courage. Her example fills my heart with the desire to shine a light on God's presence with us in all the situations of our lives.

The desire to share the light of Divine love drew me to join the Presentation Sisters, the Congregation Nano founded, as a way of participating in God's mission. The image of the lantern lighting just the next step of the journey, not the road ahead, has always given me strength and courage. My move to Aotearoa from Ireland 11 years ago was challenging and the lamp image gave me courage and hope. My sense of the light is continuing to expand as I experience the richness of Māori culture and the deep resonances between Māori and Celtic spirituality. Adjusting to living in a new country drew me more deeply into an inner journey and the call to the ministry of spiritual direction unfolded for me, here, in Aotearoa.

I'm aware of following in the footsteps of the first five Irish Presentation Sisters who arrived in Taita, Wellington, 70 years ago to begin ministry in this country. They, too, stepped into the unknown with faith and trust in the Divine light drawing them and found support among the people here.

I have felt that encouragement lighting my life in so many ways. There is a spark of Divine love and light in every heart. Helping one another to explore the light of Divine love in our own hearts and celebrating and nurturing that light, wherever we come across it, provides sustenance and encouragement for our journey.

My 90-year-old mother lights a candle in her house for her loved ones and for those in need, showing her concern for the future of the next generation. Like Nano, she found strength in her faith during difficult and challenging times. Her simple practice of lighting a candle recognises her interconnection to those experiencing good times or difficulties and binds her to them with the energy of love. I particularly value how she embodies the idea that we can all be bearers of light and that "love is our lantern-flame".

As the poet Amanda Gorman said at President Biden's inauguration: "There is always light / if only we're brave enough to see it / if only we're brave enough to be it."

Gorman speaks of the bravery involved. Nano braved the repressive authorities to "be the light" and to ignite dignity and worth again in so many whose hearts and lives had been purposely impoverished. Today I am challenged to engage with the Mystery of light and love, and to honour each person as a bearer of light. He waka eke noa —we're all in this together, shedding light for one another. ✨



Regina Daly lives in Stokes Valley. She delights in the wonder of nature and the little miracles of everyday life.



HOSPITALITY

at the Heart of Community

GERARD ANYSLEY shares how his parents' example of hospitality has developed an understanding and appreciation in him of the way this giving and receiving works in community making.

Growing up on a farm in Waimumu (just out of Gore) there was rarely a time that our family mealtimes were not shared with other people. There were the farm workers who lived with us, the boy who came out from Gore each weekend for many years, and a steady stream of people who just happened to be there on a particular day – some simply looking for acceptance and friendship. It was also not unusual for my Dad to announce 30 minutes before dinner that he had invited the team who were unloading the hay, or the people helping with the drafting, or someone else he'd run into, to join us. Despite a brief moment of annoyance, Mum would quickly make a few additions to accommodate for anything – up to 8-10 extras. The hospitality was very ordinary and without fuss, yet I've come to appreciate that acts of hospitality reveal of something quite remarkable.

Something profound occurs when we welcome and are welcomed. We find hospitality is a central theme

in the Scriptures. Jesus's ministry is often in an environment of hospitality – at meals, in homes, among crowds – and he notices who is welcome and who is being excluded.

I think, too, of the Māori term, *manaakitanga*, and how it helps illuminate hospitality as a multi-layered reality. As Hinemoa Elder in her book *Aroha: Māori Wisdom for a Contented Life in Harmony with Our Planet* says, *manaaki* "expresses the very essence of respectful caring and protection of others. *Manaaki* upholds generosity and providing hospitality."

The word, *manaakitanga*, suggests that hospitality is an act of honouring a person's *mana*, a way of saying that this person matters, is of value and worthy of our time.

My parents helped create an environment where we enjoyed the company of a wide range of people. My father held the shearers in great esteem. He appreciated how hard they worked, and they were a source of fascination to us children. They were big men, heavily tattooed with names like "Boss" and we would stare at them, imagining lives that were so different from our own. We learnt to respect each person for who they were by observing how our parents interacted with those who joined us

at our table. They made people feel comfortable among us.

Hospitality can be demanding and challenging. It resists the inclination toward assimilation and sameness but honours the differences of the other, even when those differences can be a source of discomfort. Hospitality entails our alertness to those who may be disregarded or exploited and a willingness to be drawn into solidarity with them.

Nowadays I more often receive hospitality from others than provide meals at my place, but the dynamic of welcome, generosity and gratitude is the same for meals, for liturgy, for community making.

Hospitality is not only about giving; it always involves receiving. It is a responsiveness that enlarges our lives. To give and receive, serve and be served, welcome and be welcomed is the dynamic that makes us human.

I am privileged to be a part of the many sacred acts of hospitality daily in our parish and wider community. I am grateful that my parents formed an appreciation of this within me and I am grateful for those who enrich our community by their attentiveness, openness and generous welcome. ✱

Photo by Drazen Zigic / Shutterstock.com

Gerard Aynsley is a priest of the Diocese of Dunedin and is currently the Parish Priest of Mercy Parish in South Dunedin and Sacred Heart Parish in Ranfurly.



Truth SETS US Free

SANDE RAMAGE writes of how spiritual guidance has helped her know herself and review her pastoral care practice.

“Going the extra mile” was mandatory when I was an over-helper. It made me feel good. No longer. Years in pastoral care have trained me to do less rather than more. To encourage people to be experts in their own lives, to identify and harness their own sources of power.

But being still is counterintuitive when someone is in trouble. Hard to stick to when it makes you look lazy or callous. So, thinking again about what going the extra mile means to me is useful.

Jesus of Nazareth is responsible for the original pithy saying. He reckoned that if a Roman soldier expected you to carry their pack for one mile then you ought to offer to carry it for two. Perhaps appealing from a self-sacrificial perspective but I'm not buying that literal reading. After all, Jesus is master of the undercut — comments that slice through superficial dross to lay bare shy truth.

Maybe Jesus was being subversive. For there is a view that Roman soldiers could be punished if they got someone to go further than the required mile. The delicate balance between controlling a population while waiting for their forced submission to turn into willing co-operation. So, with charm and guile the responsibility is pushed back to the enemy invader.

From that perspective “going the extra mile” can be a polite but definite act of resistance to the over-culture of the day. This is how it is for me.

A dream was the start of a significant change for me. I dreamt that it was night and I was being kidnapped from my home, led to a car and forced to sit in the driver's seat. I was blindfolded and expected to drive across America with my kidnappers in the back. I was terrified. As day began to dawn, I plucked up the courage to stop. With great trepidation, I removed the blindfold and turned to face my captors. There was no-one there.

This is the first dream that I took to analysis with John P Dourley (1936-2018), Catholic priest, emeritus professor of religion and Jungian analyst. Every Friday morning, I would phone John in Canada. We would talk about my dreams

and much more. What it meant to be complicit in capture by external forces, organisations, cultures, ideologies and religions. Shades of the biblical narrative.

In this weekly ritual and the many hours preparation for it, I became acutely aware of how separated I'd become from my instinctual life. How that vivid dream was a call from my unconscious to go the extra mile, to explore and push back at what was keeping me captive. To be courageous enough to imagine and write my next chapters forward.

As we worked, I began to be less concerned about

external demands. Not so absorbed with outputs or outcomes and remarkably disinterested in saving the world. More resistant, in a polite but firm way, to the distractions and contradictions of the over-culture. All of them designed to distract and reel me in to blind captivity.

The Jungian reading I'd done for 20 years began to mix and mingle with theology, faith, family, culture, the biblical text and the stories of Narnia, all powerful influences in my life. The focus was centred on nurturing my psyche, my soul. Creativity and the inner source of authority, the divine within if you will, began to matter most.

When John suddenly died, I was destabilised. In part, because his giftedness with theology, religion and depth psychology had helped

me integrate these major themes in my life. I wanted to maintain and grow that. Eventually, I re-established my regular practice, with two analysts. One whose focus is dreamwork and the other who helps me find and develop the healing author within.

None of this is straightforward. Clarity tends to be short lived before fog descends again. But somewhere within this ritual practise, or as a result of it, is an increasing sense of the truth setting me free. Healing arrives when I step into that freedom and write, accompanied by my Soul Dog and Spiritual Teacher, Kali the Labrador. “Watch her,” said John, “she instinctually knows what to do.” He was right. ✱



Sande Ramage is a spirituality wordsmith, restorative justice facilitator, chaplain, past priest, mum, companion to Kali the Labrador, intrepid questioner, gently curious about everything.

“We all have gifts”, says my friend, “and you have the gift of the gab.” This was my friend’s encouragement after I had been a lay minister in our Parish for some time.

So true. I can only admire her flair and her capabilities for organisation.

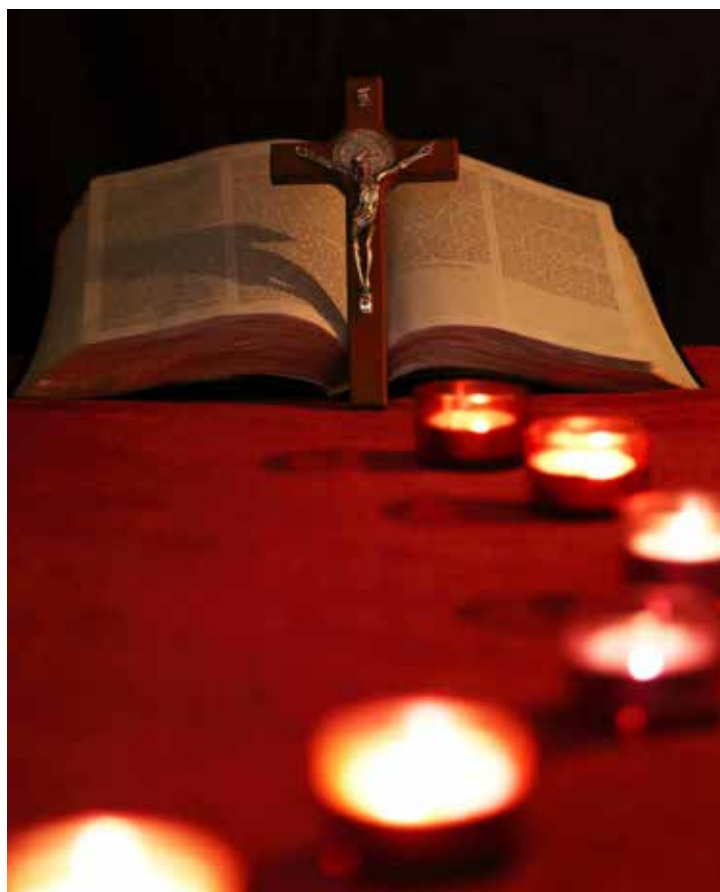
For me, accepting the invitation to lay ministry came out of my belief that all the baptised are the people of God, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation. We are all sent as disciples to bring the message of Christ’s love to the world. So when I was asked to become a lay minister, I accepted the call.

I see it as a two-pronged mission: to develop our own relationship with Christ, and to extend this love to those around us, whoever and wherever they may be.

In all the dioceses in New Zealand the number of local priests is diminishing, mostly through age. When we ask Paul’s question: “How shall people hear the Word of God unless there is a messenger?” there is one overlooked answer – that is the development of lay ministry.

Our parish has grappled with the question and moved into lay ministry. Our Northland region is growing. It has a developing city with increasing Indian and Filipino communities, and an extensive rural area with Māori communities, farms, villages and seaside resorts.

The parish has three priests, all versed in tikanga Māori and tikanga Pākehā. And to help maintain



Invited to Serve in Ministry

JILL HEENAN describes her parish's decision to use the gifts of parishioners in lay ministry.

outreach to the people, we now have a team of lay presiders, women and men commissioned to bring the Word of God and Holy Communion to wherever the need is.

These include Māori katekita (catechists), who work through the various marae, as well as in our main parish church.

And other women and men who minister in the main church, usually on weekdays, and in the churches of the outlying rural areas on Sundays. In these centres the pattern is Eucharist one week alternating with a lay-led liturgy the next.

The parish discerned who would be invited to become lay ministers. It wasn’t a role we could volunteer for. As one of the ministers, I know we felt some trepidation about the

magnitude of the task. But now that we have been doing this for some years, it has become accepted by the people, especially when we work as a team in each community.

Recently we held a meeting to evaluate the dynamics of what we do. We realise that we have more flexibility for our services focusing on the Scriptural readings of the day and the distribution of Holy Communion, than a priest in the set Eucharistic liturgy.

We find that praying before, during and after our participation is vital. We are fortunate with modern technology to have a range of helpful resources available, but for all of us the Spirit of God is the essence.

We have developed a way to use our gifts to serve our community. Our parish has made a start in lay ministry but we are conscious of the need to keep developing our people in preparation for others to take up the roles.

Our discussions include how we will encourage other parishioners into the ministries. What will be the criteria, and how will we go about the preparation and training for the roles? We recognise the need for a love of and a good education in Scripture, a personal prayerful life and practical skills for communication and the preparation of liturgies.

And we recognise the need to move from discussion and hope into action for the future – that is our next step.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in us the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created, and you will renew the face of Earth. *

Jill Heenan lives in Whangarei, loves family, friends, tramping, languages – and is committed to following Jesus, wherever that path may lead.



Painting: *Place of Prayer* by Portia Zvavanera © Used with permission

Living in God's Love

We are all worthy of God's love writes PETER COSTELLO and loving ourselves is a way of spreading love in the world.

I believe in loving myself and thinking of myself as loveable by God. Our Church and our culture are not good at reinforcing the truth of God's infinite, unconditional love for each of us.

The prayers of Eucharist can give the message that we are not good enough and that we shouldn't love ourselves. We say: "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you under my roof", or "Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault", or "I have seriously sinned". The suggestion is that we are sinners and unworthy of God's love, but this is far removed from the truth of God's love for us.

The parable of the Loving Father (often misnamed as the parable of the Prodigal Son) gives the opposite message. It promotes the idea that we are so worthy of God's love that God loves us unconditionally and infinitely. And if God loves me for who I am, my existence, then saying I'm unworthy or not loving myself is an impediment to being in relationship with God.

When the son asks his father for his inheritance he is breaking the rules of the Jewish culture, as does the father in giving his son the money. The father allows the son to ostracise himself from his family and culture. This isn't what the father wants, but the son's choice to reject his family and culture is the result of a great gift given to each of us: the freedom to

make our own decisions, whether they are good or bad. The son is effectively saying: "I don't want to be part of this family any more. I hate you, Dad."

When the son finally realises that his youthful decisions are killing him physically and spiritually, he decides to return to his family. He risks being stoned to death if he is first seen by the villagers. Fortunately his father has gone out to the village edge every day hoping his son would return – which would save his son's life. The father runs to the son (a Jewish man did not run usually run, to avoid showing his flesh) and "hugged and kissed him". The father shows the other villagers that his son is accepted and loved in spite of the pain his behaviour has caused them.

The parable asks us to think about God "with us". God invites us into good relationships. We have to get rid of the image of God sitting on a distant throne judging our lives and we, in turn, judging ourselves as not worthy of God's love. As Richard Rohr says in *The Divine Dance*: "The angry, wrathful, unforgiving, holding back God is theologically impossible. Nothing can stop the flow of divine love." By saying we are unworthy we are saying that God has got it wrong, that we know more about ourselves than God does. Unfortunately this wrong idea is reinforced in some of the language of our liturgies and theology.

When a baby is born into our family, we can't help but be drawn to it. We can think of ourselves as being loved by God in the way that we love that baby – embraced by the infinitely loving gaze of God. It is why Jesus taught us to call God, *Abba*. He's suggesting an intimacy in our relationship with God – we are family. Like us with the new baby, God cannot keep God's eyes off us. There is no implication of unworthiness.

Our task is to learn to love ourselves with all our goodness and our faults. We can't let our sinning excuse us from responding to God's love. We need to work at changing our unhealthy habit of labelling ourselves as unworthy sinners and recognise that we are *imago Dei* – God-like. This can be challenging because we have listened to the messages of unworthiness for far too long. But it is a challenge worth taking up because it reminds us that loving and being loved is our first principle, and that nothing we do can stop the flow of God's love. ✱



Peter Costello is a husband, father, koro and Spiritual Companion who loves gardening, craft beer, jigsaws and stamp collecting.



See a Need & Think Big Together

MARY-ANN GREANEY shares how she has been influenced by a comment that has resonated in her for nearly 30 years.

“It takes just as much energy to think big as it does to think small – why think small?”

I heard this in 1995 when visiting Myles Cavanagh CP and Mary Turley PBVM, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. These two people founded the Flax Trust, a charity which has achieved reconciliation in an area of sectarian unrest through economic development. The Trust is now recognised as a major contributor to the ongoing socio-economic transformation of North Belfast.

“Thinking Big” resonated strongly with me. Projects may start small, but I often look back at initiatives I have been a part of with surprise at how big they have become. I feel relaxed when I make a start and allow a project to unfold based on what is needed – I listen carefully to those around me; we share wisdom and moderate one another. With this approach, a lack of money has never

seemed a barrier – we just start small, one person at a time, and grow.

As the years go by it is increasingly obvious that missionary impulse is a gift and brings with it all that is needed. One of the most significant gifts is recognising that I do not hold all the gifts myself and I need others with whom to collaborate.

As my involvement in any new project grows, I have a checklist running through my head. Who else may benefit or would like to be involved? What opportunities are there for greater ethnic diversity? Are there people whose gifts are being overlooked? Do I need to think about succession planning? How can I remove barriers that prevent participation? How can we make this better?

In 1998 I was part of a small group who discerned a need in our local community where young mums, some as young as 12, had to leave school to care for their babies. A group of six at-risk teen mothers gathered one afternoon a week with a teacher. This was funded by a \$15,000 grant from the police Crime Prevention Unit that paid for the teacher. We entered into a partnership with the teacher

and started thinking big. To become sustainable, we needed to establish a full-time school with a minimum of 20 students. And we needed an attached early childcare education centre to keep the mums connected to their babies, model best practice, and offer support to the young women.

Through political lobbying, we were able to get laws changed to enable us to build a childcare facility beside the school. The government paid for everything and all ongoing running costs. By forming a relationship with Work and Income New Zealand and others, we were able to ensure there was no financial cost to the women and they had the best possible education.

We found that individuals and service groups were attracted to what we were doing. Money and volunteers flooded in. We started with nothing and grew by attending to the needs of one young mother at a time.

There has been much to celebrate. Many of the young women moved out of abusive and dependent relationships and thrived. The women got a fresh start and their babies became the incentive they needed to embrace their future. A number of them, who had a record of academic failure, turned their lives around and went on to study at tertiary level.

Our group no longer has governance of this initiative but it continues to flourish. I am unbelievably grateful to have been instrumental in launching the school and childcare centre. Sometimes I am greeted in the street by ex-students who catch me up on how they and their children are doing – and I am filled with joy.

I have never forgotten the “Think Big” philosophy of the Flax Trust. I have carried it into my own life – in what I do, I start small and I foresee big change. I imagine what’s possible, not what’s impossible.

When missionary outreach meets real need the money and resources follow and when it is time to withdraw from something I have been passionate about, it is surprisingly easy because I know it is God’s mission, not mine. ✱

Photo by Tanya Little / Shutterstock.com

Mary-Ann Greaney’s life is steeped in ministry. It’s a driving motivation from youth, calling her to stretch beyond the known to wherever God calls.



LIVING A LEGACY OF FAITH

MELANIA LUKA-LUI reflects on the influences on her Catholic life.

My father Su'emalo Luka Lui was from the villages of Leauva'a, Afega and Falealupo. My mother Malia Tuisea is from the villages of Mulivai-Safata and Amalie-Aleipata. My father was a son of catechists Lafaele and Melania FKS. My mother a daughter of Tuisea and Senauefa Luamanu who were plantation farmers. Both my parents were the eldest children in their families with strong Catholic ties. My father's ancestors were the first to welcome Catholic missionaries in Samoa. My mother's ancestors led the MAU movement for independence. They came from villages that allowed one church as they were of the Catholic faith.

My parents both came to New Zealand to work and support their parents and families in Samoa. My mother worked at St Patrick's Silverstream whilst my father was a car parts assembler and welder for Todd Mitsubishi Motors in Porirua. They met in Silverstream, married at Sacred Heart in Petone and came to Wellington to live.

My father is a quiet, reserved and humble man. My mother loves to socialise, dance and make people feel welcome. As members of St Anne's parish Samoan Community for over 40 years their weekends and weekday evenings were filled with the Legion of Mary and prayer devotions, choir practices, cleaning the church, mowing the presbytery lawns, visitation of the sick, youth ministries and much more.

I was very blessed to have been taught by them. "Use your talent, your time, work and love to show others Christ, not for your glory, but praise God who blesses you to do so. Help others in need, speak up against injustice, never doubt God's love. Life is a gift from God, use it to share Christ's message. Be kind and respectful to others as they are God's people, too. Let people hear about Christ through your words and see Christ through your actions. It is never too late to say 'forgive me, I am sorry'. See Christ in whomever you meet — regardless. God is love — believe in it."

My identity is important to me. My

Melania Luka-Lui is the Pasifika Engagement Liaison for Te Kupenga and secretary of the Samoan community (*aulotu*) of Catholic Parish of Wellington South.



Samoa culture and Catholic faith are depictions of the Gospel in action. The motto on the Samoan coat of arms states: "*Faavae I le Atua Samoa – God be the foundation of Samoa.*" Faith in God is the strength of the nation. In Samoa and Aotearoa we try to be a people of pride in who we are, and have love, humility and compassion — *loto maualalo ma le loto alofa* — as our characteristics.

During Lent I think of the beatitude in Matthew: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." In Samoa, and sometimes in Aotearoa, the ceremony of *ifoga*, or ritual of forgiveness, is done in front of the victim's family. The perpetrator or perpetrators — who may have committed a serious offence — kneels on the ground in public under a fine mat. The offender or family matai remains under the mat until the victim's family is ready to forgive. The removal of the fine mat is the sign of acceptance. This shows the community dimension of wrongdoing by acknowledging responsibility for the broken relationships in the community. It provides a way of saying sorry and then going on to heal the relationships.

I was brought up the fa'a Samoa way and taught that it is a sign of humility, a grace of God, to give or to ask for forgiveness. The Scriptures were the background of our lives. We know that Jesus Christ was innocent, yet was killed. He accepted his death with humility to bring justice. During Lent we hear again the story of the passion of Jesus suffering humiliation, torture and abuse as he dragged the cross through the streets. While dying on the Cross, he still cried out: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

From my parents' example I have always been involved in the Church. I travelled as a youth member to World Youth Day in Greece. Sitting in the chapel of St Anne in the holy cave of St John the Evangelist on the island of Patmos, I experienced a revelation of God's love and all of its abundance as forgiveness. I suddenly felt peaceful. I know Christ walks with us, holding us as we embark on our journey to heal, to allow love into our lives and to grow. This love makes us embrace the message of peace and compassion, to break down the barriers of pride, ignorance, racism, cultural and social injustice. I think this love is hungry for action to do good and put things right in our communities and the world. This is how I think about being part of God's mission. ✱





Encouraged to PERSEVERE

AMOS and HAYLEY JOHNSON share how the perseverance they see around them encourages them in challenging times.

Lately, our family challenge has been in perseverance. We find ourselves appreciating the encouragement and support from each other and from friends and family that helps us keep going. Perseverance is the act of persistence in doing something despite the difficulties or delays in achieving success. It's different from obsession or preoccupation because although perseverance has a goal, it includes keeping healthy relationships with each other, our family and the community.

We sold our house in 2019. It was our first house and although we were proud of it, we were ready to move on. We needed more space for our growing family. Eighteen months later we are still looking. We've made 13 offers. We've been to hundreds of open homes and we've spent countless hours trawling Trade Me Property.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant housing crisis has had a significant impact on our house search. However, we're just one family among many, turning up at open days hoping to be able to buy a home.

With every house we like, we go through all the emotions. There's excitement when we begin hoping that this house this could be ours. Then the reasoning – can we afford this place? Is it the right fit for us? Followed by fear – is our offer high enough? And finally disappointment and anguish when the latest house we've offered on gets sold to someone else. Sometimes, we feel disbelief when we hear the final price!

Despite the setbacks, we keep searching and remain hopeful that soon

we will feel the emotion of success and be able to move into our new home. In the meantime, we are among the many families still searching.

This house hunt is just one example of perseverance in our family unit. Our children also demonstrate persistence in reaching their many developmental milestones. Our nine-month-old is attempting to walk. She spends all day coasting along the couch, coffee table and various chairs. She often slips, misses and falls in her attempts to be mobile. However, she gets up and tries again and one day soon, she will succeed in walking and we will delight in her success.

Likewise, our four-year-old son is learning to ride a pedal bike. Steering and pedalling at the same time seem to be the biggest obstacle for him to overcome. But he's keen and continues to practise, roping us in to help him. He's not letting skinned knees and falls deter him. Due to his persistence he will soon master this new skill and be racing along the road.

Both of us work as physiotherapists. We are inspired by our patients' resilience and determination. Their goals can vary from learning to walk again following a stroke, or returning to sport after injury or surgery. Successful rehabilitation requires mental, physical and emotional persistence often through pain, exhaustion and the feeling that there is no end in sight. We feel privileged in being able to support our patients through the challenges they face and also gratitude in being able to share in the joy of their progress and achievements with them

and their whānau.

On a global scale, people are persevering with the difficulties of the pandemic. Health professionals at the front line are managing severely ill COVID-19 patients in health systems that are almost to capacity. Families are separated by borders and bubbles.

Children are disconnected from their social networks when play centres and schools are closed.

Parents are trying to support their children's online learning at the same time as they are working fulltime from home.

Businesses are endeavouring to stay buoyant despite changing restrictions on their operations.

Many people have been made unemployed due to the collapse of industries and sectors. They are searching for work.

In the face of these challenges people everywhere are persevering with humour, hope and kindness.

Perhaps this is our opportunity to reflect on the importance of persisting – to learn not to give up because of mistakes, to appreciate the gains we make along the way, to encourage one another when we need hard work to achieve our goals and to be inspired by those in our communities whose perseverance we admire. ✨

Ed: Good news: The family has now bought a house – 13th offer!

Photo by Somsak Nitimongkolchai / Shutterstock.com



Hayley and Amos Johnson are the tired parents of two energetic and exuberant children. They love foraging along the local tracks around their home.



Being Catholic in Political Life

CHRIS FINLAYSON writes of how Catholicism has affected his work.

I was one of a number of Catholics who served as a Minister in the National-led government from 2008-2017. Others were Bill English, Gerry Brownlee and David Carter. I have been a Catholic my whole life. Because Catholicism has underscored daily life for me since I was young, it can be difficult to stand back and put into words how it affected my work as a Cabinet Minister.

Nonetheless, for me, the Catholic tradition is underscored by four main points, which is why I joined the National Party at the age of 17:

First, the individual is made in the image of God. Accordingly, everyone has equal worth.

Secondly, we should respect individual effort and creativity, a key idea, particularly following the Reformation and the Enlightenment. In medieval times, and even in some corners of Christianity today, independence of thought is not cherished.

Thirdly, a successful society is one governed by laws, not men and women — that we are all subject to the rule of law no matter how powerful or how rich.

Finally, above all, the Christian message is a very optimistic one. It is a story of reconciliation and forgiveness.

It is not always easy to have faith as a public figure in an increasingly secular country. My generally non-

religious ministerial staff thought my Catholicism was some sort of relic. A general intolerance has arisen in New Zealand towards views that go against the ever-evolving mainstream.

When I voted against the marriage equality legislation (which I did on the grounds that the state should not be involved in any kind of marriage, rather than because of the views of the Church), that was seen by some as a retrograde and backwards step. But there was never any real chance to argue the point. There is little room for nuanced argument in New Zealand public life.

Thankfully, we have not yet seen in this country the situation in the United States where smorgasbord Catholics like Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi get a special exemption from the Church for their views on various issues. It was the same for the Kennedys thanks to Cardinal Law. We are lucky the Catholic Church in this country is not dominated by, or gives favours to, a political elite.

I did worry, and still worry, about the Church confusing its role in New Zealand life with that of politicians. I think the Church would be more influential if it concentrated on spreading the word of God instead of engaging in politics.

Too often these days the language of “Catholic social justice” is used as a cover for left-wing, redistributionist views that many of us see as out of touch with what is really required to improve life in New Zealand.

The late Margaret Thatcher — a devout Methodist — once said that

“No one would remember the Good Samaritan if he’d only had good intentions; he had money as well.”

The fact many in the Church would recoil in horror at that comment today illustrates to me the narrowing in the political world view of the Church in New Zealand, one which I often felt I was battling against as a Minister.

There is a role for the Church in public life — a significant role — but it plays a risky game when its clergy pronounce on secular matters outside their competence. The institutional opposition of the Church to the Trans Pacific Partnership led by then-Bishop Charles Drennan was particularly difficult to understand. The now CPTPP will lead to an increase in wealth and living standards in New Zealand — something the Church often likes to talk about, at least as a high-level aspiration.

While my public life has been strongly influenced by the Church’s teachings on faith and morals, I diverge from the mainstream view of the Church hierarchy on many matters outside those areas, most notably economics. The preponderance of views on economics within the Church, while well-intentioned, are fundamentally flawed in many respects. I thought that as a Cabinet Minister and still think that now. ✱

Photo by Karl Fredrickson on Unsplash



Chris Finlayson is a Wellingtonian educated by the Brigidine nuns and Marist priests. He was Attorney General and Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations 2008 to 2017.



Experiencing Our Connections

ANNA HOLMES suggests contemplating our belonging to the complex network of creation.

I am becoming more aware of being connected in all kinds of ways. When we are truly present to others, our Earth and ourselves we can experience a deep sense of connection. It is a holy moment and is often recognised as a religious experience. After such an experience we often doubt that it was real. Doubt is not, as many of us were taught, a sin. Instead it is part of our human journey. Doubt sends us to seek something more. It is a normal response to living in a world that is continually evolving. On the other hand, sin is a refusal to participate meaningfully in that complex community of life.

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis says: "The divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God's creation". Francis is promoting a model of Church which is primarily about connecting within creation. He warns of the dangers of clericalism and thoughtless human control.

Our desire for connection is innate. The reason babies are swaddled or tightly wrapped is to imitate their prebirth experience of

being held tight. Distressed babies often settle when they are held close to the heartbeat of their carer. They stare in wonder at the sky, the stars, the leaves blowing in the wind. All these connect them with creation, assuring them they are not alone. Once they start moving around, they spend hours contemplating their surroundings, their hands, feeling the texture of their contact — floors, mud, sand and water. They listen to the sounds around them and know the voices of their family. At this crucial time, human contact is essential and cannot be replaced by screens or technology.

At school children are instructed in other ways — learning facts and limiting their experiences by analysing them. They are taught that science and technology are able to control the natural world and the thought of their environment being managed and controlled makes them feel safe.

There is no doubt that the most alarming aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the discovery that science is not in control of Earth or the virus. The illusion of human control has been exposed in a way that has not happened before.

For the past 40 years I have been concerned at the way science, technology and economics have been employed to control the world. It is not that such behaviour is bad in

itself but when it presumes to replace human connection, it damages the natural world, promotes inequity, and becomes destructive of relationships and of Earth itself.

COVID-19 has both disrupted and increased our sense of connection. Living in countries in Lockdown many have a sense of being shut in, shut out, isolated, out of touch, unheard, uncared for, alone and lonely. Others talk of the wonder of hearing birds, the wind and the sea when the noise of traffic was stilled.

I do not want to be misunderstood. Technology has been helpful to us in Lockdown. Seeing the face and hearing the voice of someone dear to us via technology is better than no contact at all. Nevertheless, connecting by social media is not the same as holding a beloved person. It provides a sense of the other but not the presence of the other.

As we age we tend to see and hear less well. Maybe at this time in our lives, when the most obvious modes of communication begin to be difficult, we can contemplate our part in the complex and subtle network of creation. Humans, animals, plants, bacteria, viruses and the physical world relate and communicate in far more complex ways than we previously realised. This "seamless garment" of relationships needs our care and protection. ✱

Anna Holmes, married to John for 50 years, now has a great-grandchild. She tutors medical students, passing on her experience of 46 years as a GP.



WOMEN'S VOICES NECESSARY *for* GENUINE DISCERNMENT *at* SYNODS

The good news: Pope Francis named Xaverian Sr Nathalie Becquart as undersecretary to the Vatican's office of the Synod of Bishops, possibly with voting rights. The other news: the second undersecretary named, Augustinian Fr Luis Marín de San Martín, will become a bishop.

The more things change.

Still, it is important to have a woman's voice near the top, and the fact that Sr Becquart will likely have a vote makes an important statement about the role of the non-ordained.

Trusting the pandemic will end by then, Pope Francis is calling a synod for October 2022 to discuss synodality.

Synodality means moving along together. The concept revolves around the way the Church has — or seems to have — made decisions over the centuries. So, while no one knows exactly who will be called to Rome, we can be assured it will be bishops. Judging from the experience of the most recent synod — an extraordinary synod that considered the Church in the Pan-Amazon Region — women may be called as well. Whether they will have a vote remains to be seen.

The theme for October 2022 is "For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission." The synod members' task, be they male or female, religious or secular, clerical or lay is to enter into a serious discernment about how the Church (communion) — that would be the whole Church (participation) — can move along (mission) in the light of the Spirit. The key word here is discernment.

So, a synod on synodality is not so much to make decisions as to take decisions about how the Church can make decisions and eventually take decisions. This is confusing — but then Church is a messy business, and if it were not of divine origin it would have

gone the way of hundreds of bankrupt corporations throughout the ages.

The key word is discernment.

Francis often speaks about the genuine need for discernment as the Church continues to move, grow and develop. When the International Theological Commission published its long exegesis on discernment in March 2018, it buried the lede in its Paragraph 114:

"Discernment must be carried out in a space of prayer, meditation, reflection and study, which we need to hear the voice of the Spirit; by means of sincere, serene and objective dialogue with our brothers and sisters; by paying attention to the real experiences and challenges of every community and every situation; in the exchange of gifts and in the convergence of all energies in view of building up the Body of Christ and proclaiming the Gospel; in the melting-pot of feelings and thoughts that enable us to understand the Lord's will; by searching to be set free by the Gospel from any obstacle that might weaken our openness to the Spirit."

So, discernment is the key, not law. Discernment is the process, not parliamentary procedure. Discernment is the means, not power trades. Coupled with a genuine understanding of discernment, the interrelated words in the coming synod's theme — communion, participation and mission — present an exciting possibility for the post-Vatican II Church led by Francis. They also present attractive targets for the Church's hardliners.

Without doubt, the ecclesial alt-right is often directly tethered to the political alt-right, and not only in the US. Watch the infighting in Germany. See the ecclesial-political scramble in Poland. Compare the weak US bishops' conference response to the 6 January

Capitol insurrection with their outright attack on President Joe Biden.

Add to the mix the Church's growing lunatic fringe — the priest-bloggers, amateur exorcists and nasty "Catholic" media in the USA and elsewhere — and the prospect of synodality seems dim indeed.

Genuine discernment requires attention to all voices, even those of cacophony.

Catholicism has always had a very big tent. The history of synods and councils is really one of trying to get everyone to get along, to come to the table with genuine interest in discussion and, yes, discernment.

The difference now is that women are allowed inside the tent and at the table. Voting or not voting the last time around, their voices were heard even if all their issues and requests were not put forward. Yet.

The Amazon synod requested women installed as lectors and acolytes, and the canon restricting that lay ministry to men has been changed. It asked for women deacons — or at least for women deacons to be considered — and the request has gone to (yet another) commission. It asked for married priests, but there has been no real movement.

The point is that a representative body of the Church participated in a discussion about how the Church's mission in the Amazon could be accomplished in communion with the whole Church. They discerned.

On some points, the pope decided. On some points. ✱

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Phyllis Zagano is an author and senior research associate-in-residence at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York.

The Question

Love's hypnotic question,
asks you to be penitent,

or joyous or trembling,
asks you to step out

day after day
into a recurring beauty,

asks you to put your hands in the air
like any surrendering creature,

asks you straight,
hand on heart,

hey you with the piwakawaka
darting around your head,

what more can you do right now
with what you've got?

by Michael Fitzsimons



Photo by Mohamed Nohassi on Unsplash

Act Justly Decide Courageously Live Compassionately



Pope Francis has called 2021 the year of St Joseph. MICHELE CONNOLLY examines what we might learn from Joseph in the few mentions of him in the Gospel of Luke.

"Luke 2:22 When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord."

Luke 2:22 shows that Joseph and Mary saw to it that in every possible way, Jesus's birth and early life were conducted according to the will of God. The

Gospel of Luke focuses more strongly on Mary, the mother of Jesus, than on her betrothed husband, Joseph. Nevertheless, by the time we hear this verse, early in the Gospel, we have learned some important facts about Joseph.

Significance of David's Line

First, Joseph, who was betrothed to

Mary, a virgin, was of the house and family of David (see Lk 1:27; 2:4). This means that Joseph traced his family tree back to the divinely chosen, anointed king of Israel, David. As an anointed king, David was, in the Hebrew language, a "messiah". Any son of Joseph would be counted not only as a descendant of David, but potentially a messiah.

However, six centuries before the time of Jesus, David's messianic line had been wiped out. Since that time the people of Israel had been waiting for God to provide them with another messiah who would bring a new time of great peace (see Is 11:1-18). For this reason, Luke (and Mark, Matthew and John) work very hard to show that Jesus is a legitimate son of David and thus the long-awaited Messiah.

Takes on Parenting

Second, Luke does not explain, as Matthew does (see Mt 1:18-25), why Joseph decides to stay with Mary who is pregnant before they are formally married. He simply states that Joseph went to Bethlehem to be registered in a census, going "with Mary to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child" (Lk 2:5).

A few verses later (Lk 2:16) we are told that the shepherds found Joseph with Mary following the birth of Jesus. Culturally, a child was honorable when it was recognised and named by the father. Joseph, who Luke says was thought to be the baby's father (see Luke 3:23) allows the child to be named "Jesus" (Lk 2:21) as the angel who appeared to Mary had instructed (Lk 1:31).

All these actions by Joseph show that he is a man of his word, who has remained with the woman to whom he is engaged, despite a pregnancy for which he is not responsible. More than that, he has accompanied that woman through childbirth in hard circumstances and has given her and her son a respectable identity in the world.

Cooperating in God's Mission

Joseph, then, is a man with a distinct role in God's desire to restore the world to right relationship with Godself. Joseph's descent from King David, the anointed one, makes it possible for Jesus, despite his humble birth, to be truly the long-awaited Messiah of the Jewish people.

Joseph doesn't know what the future will hold, but by choosing generously and courageously to accept Mary as his betrothed in difficult circumstances, he enables God's will to be fulfilled.

Attending to Word of God

Luke 2:22 indicates that Joseph is a devout Jewish man who intentionally lives by God's word. The verse states that Joseph and Mary deliberately made an arduous journey to Jerusalem to complete the requirements of the law of Moses for a new-born son.

To understand this verse we need to do two things. First, we need to read it in context, as part of a long sentence that goes to the end of Lk 2:24. Second, to receive the rich meaning of these verses we need to be aware of First Testament texts, the word of God, that are referred to in Luke 2:22-24.

In his decision to stay faithful to Mary and her child, Joseph is portrayed in the Gospel of Luke as a man who cooperates courageously with God's will, by discerning it in the events occurring around him, about which he has to make real-life decisions.

Although verses 22-24 begin and end talking about the religious purification of a mother after giving birth as required by Jewish law (see Lev 12:6), their principal statement of the sentence is that Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. They did this in obedience to a specific law of the Lord (Ex 13:2, 12, 13), which is quoted.

There are also other First Testament texts that may be echoed in this presentation of Jesus to the Lord, especially the story of Hannah presenting her son Samuel to the Lord in 1 Sam 1:24-28 (but see also Ex 22:29; Neh 10:35-36).

Thus, Joseph and Mary perform two religious acts when they take Jesus to Jerusalem: they present Jesus to the Lord and they also offer a sacrifice for the purification of the mother of Jesus.

Both of these acts are based in the word of God. In fact, in the course of Lk 22-24, Luke refers three times to God's word, calling it "the law of Moses", and twice "the law of the Lord". Joseph is presented as

responding most attentively to the word of God as expressed in the Scriptures.

The most important result of Mary and Joseph's actions is that from his very birth and introduction into the world, Jesus is fully righteous according to God's word and is shown to be potentially, the Messiah.

Joseph, our point of interest, is presented as responding most attentively to the word of God as stated in the Scriptures.

Moreover, in his decision to stay faithful to Mary and her child, Joseph is portrayed for us in the Gospel of Luke as a man who cooperates courageously with God's will, by

discerning it in the events occurring around him, about which he has to make real-life decisions.

Model for Our Responses Today

Joseph is a wonderful model for Christians as we live in the world. The Word of God spoken in the Scriptures guides us but it is our task to apply that word in everyday situations in life.

We must see the reality around us, decide what response would accord with the will of God and then act courageously, justly and with compassion.

Joseph shows us how to be persons of the word of God, whether it is written in books or in the face of God's creation, unfolding in history. ✱

Painting: *Joseph and Son* by Jane Maisey ©
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Michele Connolly is a Sister of St Joseph of Lochinvar, NSW. An author, researcher and presenter, she teaches New Testament at the Catholic Institute of Sydney.



Lay Preachers at Eucharist

THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN recommends that the Church revise the Law pertaining to who can preach at Eucharist.

It is time to look at the question of preaching in the eucharistic assembly. The current position is set out in Canon 767 and is explicit that the most important kind of preaching is the liturgical homily and it “is reserved to a bishop/priest or a deacon” (*et sacerdoti aut diacono reservatur*). It must be a cleric — not a woman or a non-ordained man.

This whole position is in urgent need of being re-examined, re-imagined and reformed. We need this change for both theological and practical reasons.

Church Theology of Canon Law

The image of preaching used in the Code is of an organisational pyramid for the diffusion of an officially sanctioned communiqué. It is a neat, cut-and-dried world that begins at the top.

The office of preaching to the whole Church has been committed principally to the Roman Pontiff and to the College of Bishops (cf. Canon 756,1). Then next in the mind of the creator of the code, the bishops individually are charged with preaching in their dioceses, and in turn, to parish priests in their

parishes, and then to other priests (756,2). Lastly, “the laity may be allowed to preach” “if necessary” and “if advantageous in particular circumstances” and “if the local bishops’ conference allows it”. Then comes a crucial but — “but not at the Eucharist”. This effectively rules out lay preaching because it is only at the Eucharist that the majority of Catholics hear preaching.

This vision of who can preach — clergy preach, laity listen — is based on the pre-Vatican II notion of the Church as a society of two parts:

the higher and the lower, the givers of teaching and the receivers, the havers of revelation and those without.

It is shaped by the idea of “the teaching Church” (*ecclesia docens*) and “the learning Church” (*ecclesia discens*) – two un-equal parts of clergy and laity. It does not harmonise with the notion of one People of God, the community of the baptised, where everyone should minister to one another using their distinctive gifts. Nor does it take notice of the Spirit speaking in every heart and calling on each of the baptised to give an account of the hope that is within.

The image of preachers in one place in the Church and listeners in another ignores the reality of the Spirit in the community of the People of God. Although the Code of Canon Law was published nearly 20 years after Vatican II (1962-65), its ecclesiology comes from the early part of the 20th century.

It needs to be looked at with critical eyes in the light of the Vatican II documents *Dei Verbum* and *Lumen Gentium*.

Practicalities of Preaching

The Code of Canon Law recognises that lay women and men have something to offer – but only in special circumstances and then never at the Eucharist – so, in effect: good idea, but no use in practice.

No One Person Is Enough

The most important reason to have several other people apart from the priest preach is that no one person can give witness to the presence of God in the hearts of the assembly. I may be able to “tune in” to some, you to others, and someone else to yet others. I preach authentically – as distinct from just giving a class – when I bear witness to the Christ in my understanding. But that means a community needs to hear a mosaic of voices and experiences to bear witness to the whole Christ which we are as a community.

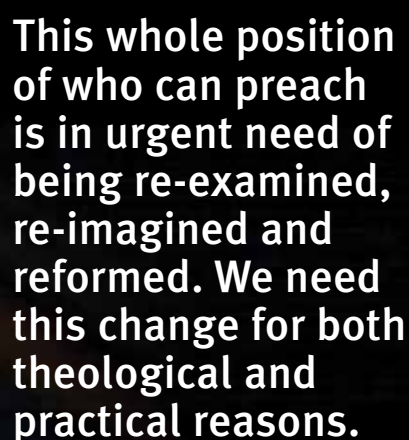
Preaching is much more than reciting the catechism or giving basic intros to the scriptures.

Preachers Need Skills

The second reason is that while many people know the presence of God in their lives, only a few have the reflective ability, indeed the grace, to actually speak well about this.

Moreover, if a person can speak, the person also needs the communication skills so that the preaching is a living part of the liturgy – and not (as so often happens) the boring bit where one tries to pass the time.

Many priests do not believe that they need to work at their communications skill-set.



This whole position of who can preach is in urgent need of being re-examined, re-imagined and reformed. We need this change for both theological and practical reasons.

Preachers Need to Connect

The third reason is that preaching involves a sharing of my Christian life on the assumption that it finds an echo in the lives of the other celebrants – and everyone in the assembly is a celebrant. This assumes a sympathy humanly, culturally and spiritually within the homily community. If any group has a few people with that sympathy – and it is just arrogance to assume that the priest has it automatically or more eminently than others – then that is a community rich in the gifts of the Spirit.

Preachers Need Theological Education

Lastly, it used to be that the priest was the only one with theological education in the parish. But that has changed. We can find with fewer candidates for the priesthood and, de

facto, falling standards in seminaries, that there are lay people in the community with more technical skill in theology than the priest. Not to use such skilled people in the service of their sisters and brothers, is to fall into the trap of the lazy and wicked servant in the Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14-30). He buried his talent. He would not make even minimal use of it, and so it was taken from him and he was cast into outer darkness.

We Need to Revise Law

Right now, there is a focus on permitting women to exercise a ministry of giving the homily. This is an urgent need. We need to hear all the Christian voices that can enrich the assembly. We need to value the gift of speaking in the assembly, whether that is a gift exercised by a woman or a man. Gifts have to be developed into skills. This calls for investment and training. We have a long and challenging path before us.

And, we should be realistic: no group, such as clergy, which has set itself up as unique and special, has ever given up easily what it sees as making it special.

When I see and hear a tired priest not in sympathy with his sisters and brothers as they assemble at the Lord's Table, and I watch the eyes wandering in boredom and hear feet shuffling with impatience, I wonder how many people, both sisters and brothers, in this assembly have been empowered by the Spirit to bear witness to the truth (cf. Jn 18:37). But then I recall: Oops! The answer must be zero – otherwise the Code of Canon Law would need changing.

We cannot too often re-read Paul's advice on ministries to the assembly in Corinth: “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit ... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” ✱

Photo by Inked Pixels / Shutterstock.com



Thomas O'Loughlin is Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Nottingham and author of several books.



HOUSING AND THE COMMON GOOD

ANTON SPELMAN shares his thoughts about solving the housing shortage by focusing on the common good rather than market values.

Housing is a complex issue. Our house is more than just where we sleep, a roof over our heads. It is where we feel at home, where we belong, where we are safe. For some it is a financial investment and a source of income.

For others it is connected with legal ownership. For increasing numbers of us having a house now symbolises our connection with particular land and its history.

We have a housing crisis in Aotearoa. The attitudes to housing

that I've just described are all connected — if one shifts, the others are affected.

While COVID-19 has been tough, it has also given us a glimpse of God's mission for a more caring society. Galatians 5:16, 22, describes this society in terms of the gifts of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These gifts take us beyond siloed living and into the world of relationships. The individual defers to the group; competition gives way to collaboration; connectedness is more valued than independence; we work cooperatively with others and we distance ourselves from the all-pervasive "man alone" culture, described by John Mulgan in his 1939 novel of that name.

If more collective approaches become normative, our views on accountability will also change. Accountability to the collective enables more diverse groups to remain within the tent rather than disappear from view.

By being less focused on competitive advantage, we open up to a more inclusive approach to wealth creation. We can then use capital to achieve community benefits. This would enable whole groups to move forward together. If this was how we approached planning at the community and national level, it would automatically reveal opportunities for a wider sharing of talent across communities. Working in this way would ensure a robust sense of the common good for whole communities — something that the disciplines of the market do not deliver.

By practising a collective mutuality, we might also become more respectful towards the environment. It would encourage us to recognise the many voices in nature, something we understand as Christians in relation to the many faces of Christ.

Housing Crisis

The housing crisis is, in my opinion, a call to action. The situation — garages as permanent accommodation,

widespread overcrowding — is so dire that we must make change. The commodification of land and property, protected by law for those who own both, ruins our sense of respect for the spiritual nature of the environment. It also gives permission for the pursuit of profit from escalating house prices.

We Need Action

A key first step is to shift the values base that underpins current housing policy and practice. This work needs community support. It cannot be imposed by central or local government.

We need to discuss it widely — in the pub, in cafés, parents' groups, sports clubs, on talkback radio, in social media and at hui.

Initially we could discuss the current values which underpin the management of our common life together. We could evaluate if they are working for us. We could identify who in our communities is missing out and how we could change our values to ensure wider inclusion.

The Tiriti o Waitangi relationships framework could assist with the appropriate inclusion of a Māori worldview and enable us to develop capacity to work with worldview difference generally.

At the conclusion of these community discussions, the agreed results would be collated so that the movement required from our current values position to the proposed future values position could be identified. We would ask our central and local governments to put them into action.

I think that a shift in the values that could come out of community conversations might include the following.

Being Accountable to Wider Group

We could move from dominant values being individualistic where the primary accountability about how we live is to ourselves and our immediate whānau, to our primary accountability being to the group — whānau, family, hapu and iwi, community and the environment.

Wealth Creation for Communities

We could move from seeing wealth creation as a reward for individual effort and measured in monetary terms, to wealth creation being for communities first and then for individuals and groups.


Common Good the Focus

We could move from a market approach to the operation of capital and the management of the common good, to using the common good as the focus for the way capital operates.

non-Māori expressed a desire for the look and feel of a marae-based approach and for this to become the norm rather than the exception. This is shifting the values and it is being discussed in other organisations in the community, their services and operations.

Creating Change Together

In relation to the housing crisis, our challenge is to shift our values to be based primarily on the common good. This would allow communities to examine each element of the current



The housing crisis is a call to action. The situation — garages as permanent accommodation, widespread overcrowding — is so dire that we must make change. The commodification of land and property, protected by law for those who own both, ruins our sense of respect for the spiritual nature of the environment.

Mutuality Not Domination

We could shift from humans exercising control over the environment at the expense of all other parties in nature, to humanity acting as one of many voices in nature when mutuality replaces domination.

We are already experiencing some of these shifts. In recent times, there have been a variety of community-wide emergencies in different parts of the country that have seen marae-based responses that are significantly different from those that usually come from mainstream agencies.

Marae Responses to Housing Shortage

Marae responses have typically been organised collectively; support is focussed primarily on the person who is seen as part of at least one whānau; the "service" is delivered relationally, rather than transactionally, and success is usually measured in terms of the restoration of those relationships that have been fractured or broken.

In recent years, the reaction of the non-Māori community in Auckland to marae-based responses to homelessness has been positive and encouraging. At the time, many

housing crisis — land, materials, construction, ownership, value, security of tenure, environment — and to manage change with courage and commitment.

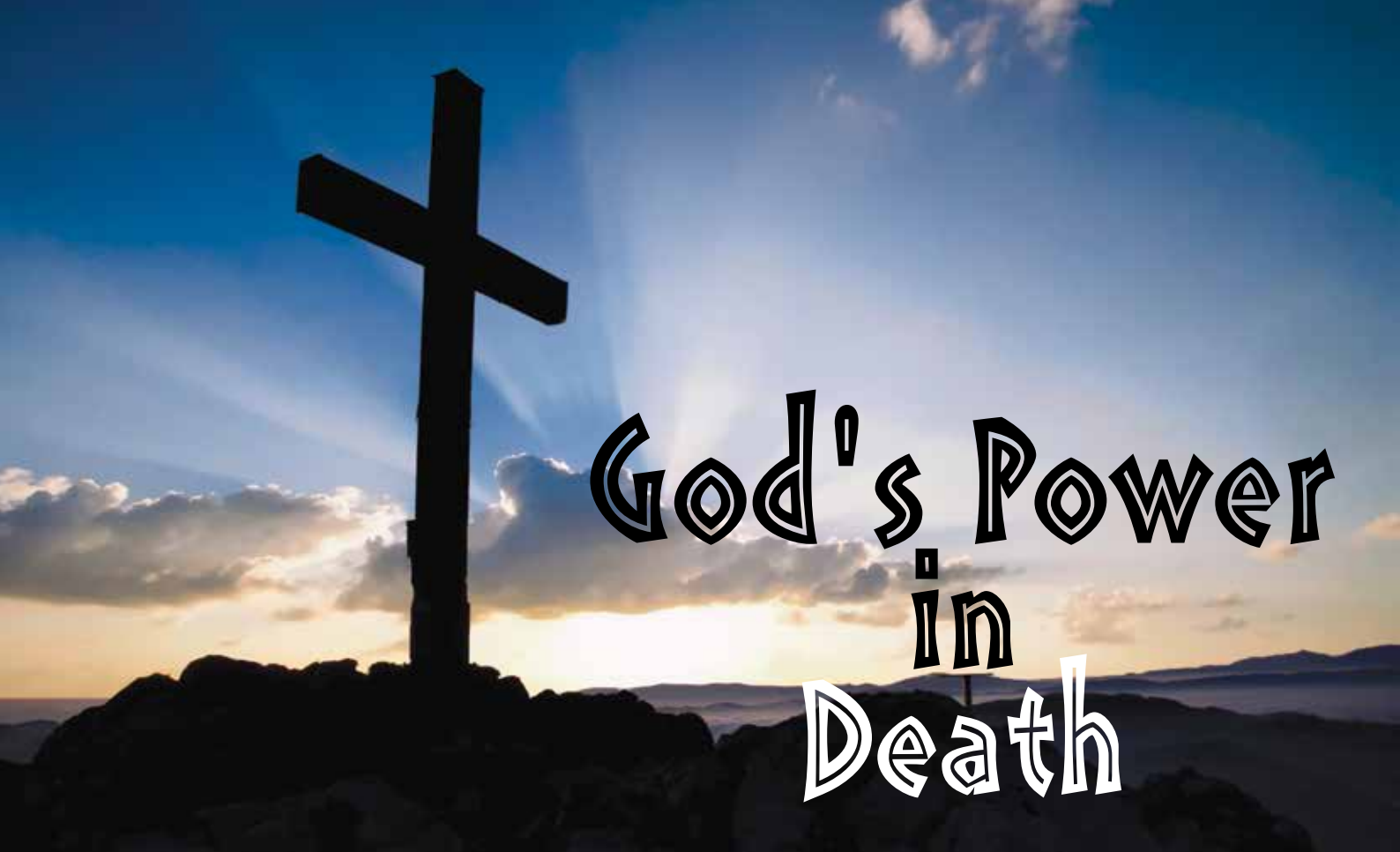
For example, we could take up the suggestion that land have no monetary or bankable value and that homes are constructed to protect the environment. Together we will be able to create many other opportunities.

As Christians, this proposed change process is part of our journey through life. In participating in this forward-looking social movement, we do so full of hope and always seeking the mind of Christ. The more we create change together, within the human community, the more we find ourselves face to face with the ultimate ground of our being. This is where our mission most strongly connects with the mission of God. ✱

Painting: *Village Square* by Caroline Peacocke ©
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Anton Hikairo Spelman lives in Tāmaki Makaurau and belongs to Ngāti Hikairo ki Kāwhia. He works with organisations trying to operate in more Māori ways.



God's Power in Death

KATHLEEN RUSHTON notes that the prophets spoke out against injustice and offered alternative visions of life for their communities. She describes this prophetic imagination in the crucifixion of Jesus in Mark 14:1 – 15:47.

I found scripture scholar Walter Brueggemann's *The Prophetic Imagination* inspiring when I first read it. He wrote that the prophetic task is "to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us". As Christians, we are called to be faithful to our alternative vocation which can be co-opted and domesticated by that dominant culture. Brueggemann explains how the prophets, and later Jesus, lived this alternative vocation in two interlinked steps: first, their words and actions offer *criticism* of the dominant culture, and second, in ways that provoke amazement which *energises* people to make changes to bring about God's alternative world in their context.

Prophetic Imagination

We are called to read biblical texts as acts of imagination which offer us God's alternative ways of seeing and understanding our world. They can raise our consciousness to the workings of our society which oppress, dispossess or privilege particular groups. Brueggemann says that a culture which is entrenched in and demanding of conformity and allows no alternative is one of "totalism".

Moses's story is of a prophet critiquing Pharaoh's totalistic culture which enslaved the Hebrews. Moses offered an alternative — a culture of covenant with God governed by politics of justice and compassion. He laid out God's new call to the people to be an alternative social reality and community. Their walk through the Red Sea is an image of their break from oppression to freedom.

Jesus's Imagination of God's Reign

The prophetic tradition culminates

in the new call of God made flesh in Jesus. Jesus's ministry energises and leads to radical new beginnings. He criticises distortions and acts in new ways that upset the established order of doing things (Mk 3:22). We read how those around Jesus "were all amazed" at this "new teaching" (Mk 1:27; 4:41; 6:2) and are "astonished" (Mk 6:51; 7:37).

Jesus's coming interrupted life. He announced the reign of God (Mk 1:15) and forgave sin (Mk 2:1-11) and evoked amazement (Mk 2:12). He healed on the Sabbath (Mk 3:1-6); ate with outcasts (Mk 2:15-17); reached out to the "unclean" (Mk 7:24-30) and to sinners (Mk 2:1-12). His actions challenged the political hegemony. Those living in Roman controlled land understood the political significance of Jesus exorcising the Gerasene's demons called "legion" (Mk 5:1-13). He was critical of the Temple's governance and spoke openly about its destruction (Mk 11:15-19). He was compassionate towards those pushed to the margins of society by those in power (Mk 6:34). He named the oppressors. And the people were amazed and also energised by the new possibilities for life he showed them.

Kathleen Rushton RSM is author of *The Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor: Hearing Justice in John's Gospel* (SCM Press 2020).



Crucifixion of Jesus

The crucifixion of Jesus can be understood as an extreme rejection of totalism. Jesus died because he lived according to the ways of God's alternative world. As Brueggemann says Jesus's death on the cross announces that "the power of God takes the form of death".

We can discern the radical criticism embodied in the crucifixion in the passion announcements: Jesus will suffer, be rejected because of his insistence on God's way, die and rise again (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). The power of God takes the form of death, and true well-being and victory only appear through death. Every form of self-serving power upon which totalism is based is undermined by Jesus's realisation that the "Son of Humanity must suffer" to bring about the reign of God.

This new insight is so extraordinary that it bewilders the disciples. Peter rejects it as too radical and Jesus rebukes him (Mk 8:32-33). The other disciples do not understand but are afraid to ask Jesus to explain (Mk 9:32). Their misunderstanding leads to them disputing who among them has greater authority and power (Mk 10:35-37).

The Words from the Cross

The words of Jesus on the cross are the voice of an alternative consciousness, one in which death is powerful. But Jesus suffers: in Mark 15:34, we hear Jesus's cry of despair – an announcement of abandonment. Old assurances are all gone. In and with Jesus, God suffers and mourns in solidarity with those who suffer.

Prophetic Imagination Today

The prophetic imagination is about proclaiming God's alternative world by imagining a better, more just future. A rejection of totalism – the great hegemonic force that works to maintain the status quo no matter what – requires us not only to deconstruct dominant culture but to rebuild our society to be more just. Like the biblical prophets, all Christians are to uncover injustice, then act justly themselves, and work to promote ways that ensure justice for all members of society.

The celebration of Waitangi Day imaged for us in Aotearoa relationships between Māori, Pakeha and other groups that promote truth, justice, equality, responsibility and love. Systemic racism is being changed by the influence of prophetic women and men who have raised our consciousness of the injustices embedded in our country and offered new ways of thinking and acting.

In and with Jesus, God suffers and mourns in solidarity with all those who suffer ... The prophetic imagination is about ... imagining a better, more just future.

We know society is working together for the good of all. During Lockdowns we collaborated – state and people – to save lives and work for the common good. But in other times, we need prophetic voices to warn us away from a dangerous path.

Nine powerful countries still have nuclear weapons at the vanguard of their security arrangements. Prophetic voices within New Zealand – Larry Ross, David Lange, Harold Evans, Kate Dewes and many others – have imagined a nuclear free future and have been working to bring it about. New Zealand passed the Nuclear Free Act in 1987. Nuclear weapons which have always been immoral are now illegal under international law because on 22 January 2021 the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, signed by 50 countries, has come into

effect. Signatories agree to prohibit nuclear weapons and work towards their total elimination.

Our challenge is to be always alert to the need to bring justice to all parts of our society, and to be prepared for this to sometimes take radical forms: there may be life in death. And we will need to maintain our hope in the face of what may feel like abandonment. The task is twofold: on the one hand, we

will need to maintain a consciousness sufficiently separate from the "dominant culture" as to cast a critical eye on it; and on the other hand, we will need to be energised and accept our responsibility as a part of culture in order to bring about justice in it.

We hope that we will, together, imagine a new and better future, and that we all play a part in this. We can and must respond creatively to the "summons to profound interior conversion ... and ecological conversion" (*Laudato Si'* par 217) – ready to consider new, alternative ways of doing things. Individually and together, living according to our alternative vocation, we can make a difference. ✱

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In the Darkness

I'm a sucker for a beautiful evening. I find myself walking home in the gloaming, heat of the day leaking into pink and blue skies, arms bare, texting my friends "go outside RIGHT NOW there is a waxing moon and it is very nice!!"

Soft summer darkness, and the world is quiet enough; my pupils slowly expand to see better, two small miracles beholding trees talking to twilight. My phone goes back in my bag and I take the long way home, mind unmoving, trying simply to pay attention. There's a patch of forest near my house and I feel my feet pad against the leaves, a low call like a 12-year-old learning to whistle. There's an owl there, less light now, so I shield my phone torch with my fingers and creep the light upwards, just enough to see dark feathers, a swivelling head—and it's gone. I wish I knew enough about

owls to know if it was a ruru or a European owl. There are creatures nearby who love the darkness better than I do.

In her book *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, Barbara Brown Taylor shares her discovery of a spirituality of darkness. She urges us to remember that darkness is not the same as evil, and to embrace a God present in the dark too. She goes to a cave and sits, preparing for the darkness with lamps, bags and equipment, but then turns everything off to feel the darkness on her skin, to listen and feel and not to see. I've

always been afraid of caves — probably scarred by a David Attenborough documentary with hideous cave diving, narrow wet darkness and no escape — but I crave Barbara's practice of attention.

I know how to fill my time — how to turn the uncertainty of the future into a list of tasks, and how my lists can give the illusion that my life is under control. I believe that God loves work, loves us to make sense of the world by moving our hands and bodies and minds. But God does not ask me to be moving all the time. I was reminded in a sermon recently that sometimes the best thing I can do is let go of the tasks and fall into the stillness.

I wonder about how to create stillness when I am not in the dark, or when the ideas or chores or promises to keep

scatter through my still darkness like light pollution. Some of this is practical. Stay out of the kitchen, which reminds me of things to whakarite: floors to sweep, dishes to put away. Stay away from the internet, where I can fall into an endless diversion where I don't know who I am or what I'm being diverted from. Some kinds of stillness are less tangible. To breathe through a centring prayer. To relinquish the desire to get things done. To remember that I am made by God and not by proof of achievements.

Stillness and darkness seem to be entwined for me: a time to cease doing, to be fully attentive, to lose the discomfort of a waiting mind, to try, when I can, to pray. Perhaps that starts with taking the long way home on lovely evenings without listening to podcasts that stir up my opinions. Ruru wait in the darkness; so does the God of all life. ❀

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



Coming Home: An Ignatian Journey

by Joy Cowley

Published by Copy Press, 2020

Reviewed by Agnes Hermans

BOOK

In *Coming Home*, Joy Cowley shares her experience of 30-day retreats and draws on her formation as an Ignatian spiritual director.

In this slim 80-page volume, Joy explores the six movements of the Ignatian Exercises, one per chapter, each accompanied by a sensitively selected full page colour photograph. She weaves together descriptions of the spiritual journey, personal stories, prayers, wisdom from diverse faith traditions and gospel parables, to invite the reader into a deeper engagement with Jesus in the New Testament.

The practices of the Examen and Lectio Divina are described, and, in Ignatian style, the reader is encouraged into an imaginative reading of Scripture.

Joy acknowledges that almost everything written about Ignatius of Loyola and his spiritual exercises has come from a masculine understanding, and she succeeds in sharing the treasures of the Ignatian Exercises from a feminine viewpoint. As always, her tone is warm and inviting and her language is accessible.

I loved this comment offered by one of Joy's retreat directors: "Every time Jesus encountered a woman, his ministry moved to a larger place."

I recommend this book to anyone curious about the Exercises and looking for a resource to take a personal journey with them. *



Te Hāhi Mihinare: The Māori Anglican Church

by Hirini Kaa

Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2020

Reviewed by Danny Karatea-Goddard

BOOK

These Christmas holidays my whānau returned to the Tairāwhiti (East Coast) to my wife's paternal side, the heartland of Ngāti Porou. We visited the grave of Wellington Teachers' Training College lecturer and long life mentor, Kōkā Kēri Kaa. Her whānau section of the Rangitukia urupā (grave site) is fondly called the "Kaa Park". It's not only full of actors, business entrepreneurs, tribal leaders and educators, but it is the resting place of the pioneers of the Māori Anglican Church, Te Hāhi Mihinare. The Rev Hone Kaa, father of the author of this book, Hirini Kaa, is buried there.

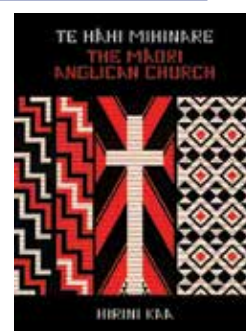
The book outlines the Māori whakapapa, the birth and journey of Te Hāhi Mihinare, through a Ngāti Porou lens. It

shows Māori Anglicans' struggle to realise their rightful place, face and space as an indigenous colonised people in a faith-based organisation where the norm and the cultural power base was often set and determined by Pākehā men.

It discusses the politics around racism and power, the ecclesial and theological challenges, the deeping into Māori spirituality and indigeneity. Chapter headings include Founding a Tribal Church, Raising up a Bishop, the Autonomous Church and Shaping the Māori Liturgy.

Many taniwha played a role in this journey: Rev Apirana Ngata, Rev Wi Huata, Bishop Frederick Bennett, Mira Szász, Whatarangi Winiata and Whaia McClutchie to name a few. Our own Dr Manuka Henare accompanied the kaupapa to establish a Māori Anglican Church.

I recommend *Te Hāhi Mihinare* as a must-read for all who have an interest in Māori spirituality, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, biculturalism and models of partnership and social justice. *



This Pākehā Life: An Unsettled Memoir

by Alison Jones

Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2020

Reviewed by Julie Randall

BOOK

Alison Jones, Professor in Te Puna Wānanga, the School of Māori and Indigenous Education at Auckland University, has spent her lifetime's research on New Zealand education. She was honoured with being made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2019.

It was clear from the first half of this book that Alison's imagination and curiosity would lead her to more than a "settled" existence. Her memories of early life, growing up in the 50s, 60s and turbulent 70s in Auckland, will strike

familiar notes with other Kiwis who have travelled through the same era.

In the second half of the book, she recounts distinct moments that move her towards a more comprehensive understanding of te ao Māori and the complexities of the relationship between Māori and Pākehā. During a year-long immersion in te reo Māori at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa she began to appreciate how "language carries culture" and how "the language reflects profound relationality". It is through her close friendships that Alison deeply appreciates being Pākehā in a uniquely relational sense.

Everyone in Aotearoa will find Alison's story compelling. In Alison's words: "I have written this book for Pākehā — and other New Zealanders — curious about their sense of identity and about the ambivalence we Pākehā often experience in our relationships with Māori". *





Promising Young Woman

Directed by Emerald Fennell
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

FILM

I found it difficult to set about reviewing this film as, while it has all the trappings of a Hollywood psychological thriller, including the requisite twists and turns of the plot, it also deals with the serious and troubling theme of rape.

The crime that underlines the action occurred on a medical school campus where Nina, best friend of protagonist Cassie (played by British actress Carey Mulligan), is raped at a party by a college jock while his drunken friends watch on. (The film emphasises that alcohol is a major factor in sexual assault, especially among young people.) In what follows, several of her former student peers, and even the college dean (a middle-aged woman), are drawn into Cassie's elaborate scheme to take revenge for Nina.

As the movie begins, we watch an apparently drunken Cassie in a downtown bar, alone and vulnerable. A well-dressed young man, professing concern for her, literally picks her up, takes her to his apartment and begins seducing her. However, he is in for a big surprise. Cassie repeats this exercise, aimed at showing that "nice

guys" can so easily switch to being sexual predators, many times, as her notebook of "conquests" attests.

Nina's fate changed Cassie's life in so many ways. She dropped out of med school, works in a coffee shop and lives at home with her parents, who are baffled by her lack of interest in partners and career. When she starts going out with Ryan, a former student colleague and now a successful pediatrician, their hopes rise – and so do ours, as this relationship seems to be spontaneous and genuine.

But things turn increasingly sour and menacing as a vengeful Cassie homes in on her real target, Al Monroe,

Nina's rapist. What happens next, and then after that, is totally unexpected and shocking, and nothing would induce me to reveal it here!

An accusation of rape can spell the end of a man's career, or the beginning of an ongoing, lifelong agony for a woman. Both these positions are canvassed here, although the emphasis is placed vehemently on the suffering of the female victim.

So, is *Promising Young Woman* a feminist tract or a Hollywood entertainment – a standard thriller with an overlay of black comedy and even a dash of romcom? See it and decide for yourself. ✱



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Fr James Mallon

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CROSS CURRENTS



BY MARY BETZ

Ecumenism of the Heart

The World Council of Churches (WCC) recently released a discussion document oriented toward its 2022 meeting in Germany. The text notes that it is the first time that “love” is specifically part of the theme of their assembly. It seems a welcome, if long overdue, innovation! Love does go by other names, of course, and as in other WCC work, justice is to the fore, including reflections on COVID-19, climate change and global economic inequalities.

The recognition that love and relationships must be at the heart of our striving for unity, however, is a necessary corrective to any of us who may be more focused on intellectual and institutional unity. “Love”, says the WCC, “more than ideas and ideals, gathers, inspires, and creates unity”.

In everyday life, we share meals with friends as a part of our love, but such meal-sharing still stops at the church door for most Catholics. As theologian Thomas O’Loughlin, author Thomas Rees SJ, and Pope Francis himself have asked, is Eucharist only for those who have the “right” Church and the “right” theology, or is it a meal of love and nourishment to be shared as food for the journey?

Government and the Common Good

In light of the inauguration of Joe Biden as the second Catholic president of the USA, Franciscan Daniel Horan reflected on the purpose of government according to Catholic teaching — a reflection equally relevant for us in Aotearoa.

Horan reiterates the teaching of *Gaudium et Spes* that “political authority ... must always be ... directed toward the common good”. The common good is not limited to people or individual countries, but “involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race”.

Pope Francis continually exhorts us toward the common good. *Fratelli Tutti* re-emphasises that “all” are our neighbours, no matter how different, or where they live. *Laudato Si’* calls us to recognise all of creation as our brothers and sisters. Our government, then, has wide responsibility to ensure that its policies promote the common good for both Kiwis and global citizens — and for our Earth as well as its people.

Matariki and History

It was exciting news that Matariki will be a public holiday from 2022. It will give us an opportunity to learn from Māori how to welcome in each New Year, to celebrate and be thankful for people and our environment. Although iwi in different parts of Aotearoa have their own traditions, a basic understanding of the meaning of the nine stars of Matariki includes recognition of the gifts of our freshwaters, oceans, “sky waters”, edible plants, forests and wildlife, winds, those who have gone before us, our hopes and dreams, and all people gathered on this land.

Likewise, next year will usher in the long overdue teaching of New Zealand history in our school system, including Māori history as “the foundational and continuous history of Aotearoa”; the history of colonisation and its influences; and how the ideologies and beliefs of many individuals and groups have shaped our country for better or for worse. Te Tiriti o Waitangi/ The Treaty of Waitangi and its principles will at last be required learning. The Ministry of Education’s draft curriculum is open for public consultation until 31 May 2021. ✱



TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

Tui Motu magazine provides Catholic as well as ecumenical and inter-faith perspectives and discussion on current issues in church and society. It focuses particularly on issues affecting Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific. Its intent is to promote the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, engaging faith and the world through informed, thoughtful comment and discussion for a general readership. The magazine publishes 11 issues per year in print and regular digital postings on social media.

The magazine invites contributions from writers of Catholic and other Christian traditions or faith backgrounds, who can offer our readers insights which resonate with the Gospel as it affects us today. We value diversity and seek contributions which are representative of our church and our society: Maori, Pakeha, Pasifika, other cultures, a range of ages and genders, lay and ordained. We offer feature articles, interviews, reviews, poetry, comment and opinion on theology, spirituality and history, as well as on social justice and ecology.

Address:

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd,
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Jenny Beck

LAW

Barristers & Solicitors

P: 03 479 0340
E: enquiries@jennybecklaw.co.nz
www.jennybecklaw.co.nz
Level 3, Bracken Court
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The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters while keeping the meaning.

RESPONSES TO FRATELLI TUTTI

It was good to participate in the conversation in response to Pope Francis's 2020 encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship* in TM Feb 2020. Each perspective offered points to reflect on deeply. The encyclical has much to offer. I am grateful that Tui Motu provides us with a forum for such conversations.

I have continued to think about Francis's call for a new culture of encounter in which we cultivate a widespread and passionate curiosity to engage with and listen to other voices and in which open, respectful discussion and debate lead to mutual growth in understanding and bridge building. Surely every adult human being knows that for any relationship to exist, every now and again someone has to say "Let's talk".

I'm reminded of the heroic initiative of Nelson Mandela in post-apartheid South Africa, to establish Truth and Reconciliation Tribunals which seemed to contribute much towards peaceful transition.

Francis's own passion for this is clear: "Let us arm our children with the weapons of dialogue! Let us teach them to fight the good fight of the culture of encounter!" And may our dining tables and our letters to the Editor pulse with vibrant conversations!

Mary Thorne, Auckland

Thank you for the insightful reflections on *Fratelli Tutti* and the US election in TM Feb 2021. It was a great edition.

In my view, Pope Francis is the most courageous and important leader our Church has had in the past 200 years. I will be ever grateful that in my older age that I have been privileged to be taught by him.

Fratelli Tutti has very compelling messages about how humanity can survive and grow into the future — through people living in solidarity with one another, practising kindness, living more justly, witnessing to compassion, enhancing creation. But oh for a good editor!

How much longer will the Vatican keep publishing letters and encyclicals which, through their language that is largely gender-deaf, blur the message and continue to offend (and indeed insult) women who form the heart of the worshipping Church? Pope Francis seems to have a blind spot here that needs urgent attention.

Upon publication of *Laudato Si'* in 2015, our parish gave away or sold 156 copies, such was the brilliance and timeliness of his ecological message. Unfortunately, not so with this one. It is too wordy, the language too sexist.

Jim Consedine, Christchurch

The TM Feb 2021 issue is more than excellent. I found it so relevant, informative, interesting and challenging. I want to thank all the contributors. I always read the back page first. Thank you Kaaren for your generous sharing. I love your holding prayers. I could comment on each article but not this time. I will read it all again.

I am particularly grateful for the articles on *Fratelli Tutti*. I have been putting off reading it but not any more.

Mary Engelbrecht, Perth

REAL INCLUSION

We welcome the proposed change to the racist legislation that currently makes Māori representation in local government subject to the tyranny of the majority.

The individual franchise of our democracy excludes customary

Māori political processes. The recent Waitangi Tribunal finding that in signing Te Tiriti, Ngāpuhi did not cede sovereignty, makes this change ever more imperative.

Historically customs, values, needs and interests of the Pākehā majority prevailed and local bodies were ignorant, disinterested or hostile to hapū interests. The results were painfully highlighted at the 2014 Whangārei hearings as local hapū outlined their historic and current abuse by, amongst others, the Whangārei District Council and its forerunners.

The implementation of Māori Wards would be a small step to honouring Te Tiriti, and developing a better democracy and more inclusive society where all people have their needs and interests represented reliably and effectively for better decision making.

Peter Maguire and Agnes Hermans, Whangārei

LENT IN COVID TIMES

It is Ash Wednesday, and in Auckland with Level three Lockdown there will be no signs of the cross marked on our foreheads this year.

Yet, maybe this unusual year makes our Lenten preparation for the celebration of Easter more meaningful than ever. Perhaps this Lent, with its call to prayer, fasting (in the broad sense) and justice-based almsgiving, will invite us to discover ever new meanings to our Paschal feast.

I'm a great fan of the Holy Spirit and, as Lent begins in 2021, how life-giving it might be to take up the challenge of listening openly to the invitations of the Spirit throughout the coming days.

It could also be that, with the Spirit encouraging us, we might also "look out" for the local people who every night steer their trolleys full of everything they own to bed themselves down in some secure spot. Or, perhaps the Spirit is inviting us to "go to [our] private room" (Mt 6:3) where, in prayer, we can join millions of Christians globally who will also enter this special season of God's love for all.

Helen Bergin, Auckland



Photo by Michael on Unsplash



Looking OUT and IN

This month I have listened to some important and inspiring stories. On a blustery afternoon near Akaroa I sat with a group of others from Ōtautahi/Christchurch on the ground of Tākapūneke. The beautiful bay there is marred by ugly sewage treatment works for Akaroa sprawled on one side. A young woman who is manawhenua for this area (from the hapū (sub-tribe) of Kai Tārewa and Kāti Īrakehu who belong to Ōnuku marae around the corner) stood in front of the gnarled macrocarpa tree, a little way back from the beach, and told us how much pain she feels looking out at Tākapūneke. This was the site of a traditional settlement of her ancestors, but even more importantly this bay is wahi tapu (a sacred place) for her because it was the site of the massacre of some of her ancestors including tribal chief, Te Maiharanui. He was captured and killed here by North Island Ngāti Toa chief Te Rauparaha.

The wind and sun continued to buffet us as we sat listening, hearing how the bones and ashes of ancestors had been scattered across this site, and the people of Ōnuku Rūnanga had continuously spoken about the importance of this place for them. Yet in 1960 the Akaroa local council built a sewage treatment plant, and then in 1979 built a rubbish dump/landfill site at Tākapūneke. In a quiet but deeply engaged way this young woman explained the grievance for her hapū after repeated insult and injury by an inattentive and dismissive local council.

Since 2002 there have been some gestures of reparation. The site is recognised by Heritage New Zealand. The rubbish dump has been closed. The discharge consent for the existing sewage plant expires in October 2020 and the proposed plant does not yet have a discharge consent.

Sitting at the bay, we listened to the story of how the Ōnuku Rūnanga has consulted their members about redevelopment of the area. They have drawn up hopeful and generous plans for restoration, working together with the council and others. There are plans for educating the public about the significance of the area, and developing walkways to improve access. I felt hot tears prick my eyes hearing of these plans for restoring, forgiving, renewing and remembering. It surely can't come too soon that the sewage works is closed

and this land is returned to the Ōnuku Runanga.

A few days later while driving to Central Otago, I listened to my mother Beulah Wood tell the story of 19th-century Quaker woman Elizabeth Fry. Betsy Fry was a mother of 11 children and an advocate for prison reform in the UK. She campaigned for prisons to be kinder, cleaner and less crowded. Mum explained how Betsy particularly focused on the needs of women in prisons by encouraging other women to make prison visits and teach income-generating skills like knitting or patchwork. Even in her 70s and 80s Betsy continued working for social justice and set up a night shelter for the homeless, advocated for abolition of the slave trade and opened a nursing school. In the midst of these good works, her husband went bankrupt, she regularly used laudanum (an addictive form of opium) and flaunted high fashion clothes when visiting people with very little. As we sped our way across the Mackenzie Country, Mum and I wondered about how Betsy managed all this and her 11 children, and we pondered how God uses people to bring justice and peace in spite of our complex human fallibilities.

I love stories. They capture my imagination and hope and give me much more space to think than a lesson or self-help book. Maybe this is why they are a favoured form of communication in the Gospels. The two stories I heard last week called me to think about how I live my own life. How can I be braver and more persistent in advocating for justice like Betsy Fry? How do I make sure I tell my children important stories like the story of Tākapūneke? How can I make reparation when I hurt others? What are the ways I can forgive hurts I have experienced? How can I hold a hopeful vision for the future despite multiple grievances like the hapū of Kai Tārewa and Kāti Īrakehu? I am thankful for the stories I heard this week and for all the stories I can hear. As Jesus said: "For those who have ears, let them hear." ✿



Kaaren Mathias is living in Christchurch with her family. She sings, cycles, writes and sews wizard capes and promotes community mental health in New Zealand and India.



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