Tui Motu

InterIslands

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The Insatiable Moon

contents

cover photo: Volaine Barrois
Arthur (Rawiri Paratene) from the film
The Insatiable Moon
(see ps. 16-17): Volaine Barrois

to live is to change

By the time some of you receive this edition of *Tui Motu*, Pope Benedict XVI will have already declared Cardinal Newman blessed. As a current theologian reflecting on the life of a brother theologian, Benedict will have highlighted his lasting effect on the life both of the Anglican Church and the Catholic Church.

Much of what we admire now in Newman, his searching of the scriptures and early church theologians, are gifts he brought with him from his days in the Tractarian Movement in Oxford. In these things, he seems very contemporary.

Indeed, Pope Paul VI referred to the second Vatican Council as "Newman's Council". Further, the Rev Stephen Dessain, the archivist who looked after Newman's manuscripts, in a paper written shortly before he died, gave details of this idea: over and against the clericalism, over-centralization, creeping infallibility, an unhistorical neo-scholastic theology and exaggerated mariology then current, the new ideas Newman stood for were brought forward – freedom, the supremacy of conscience, the Church as a communion, a return to Scripture and the fathers, the rightful place of the laity, work for unity, and for the Church to take its rightful place in the modern world.

Churches everywhere still struggle with these questions. Presently there is a move in the Catholic Church to turn our backs on some of the good things that Newman advocated. Church life, however, is a continual seesaw – from one extreme to the other over longer periods of time. Having opened itself to the gifts of the Spirit in the Council, 50 years later the Catholic Church seems to be returning to the idea that nothing of note took place between 1962-65. However, the Spirit blows where it will. Two of the articles in this edition explore the implications of this seesaw effect on liturgy and ministry. Neil Darragh is looking at the new Roman Missal due for implementation in New Zealand on the first Sunday of Advent and some of the difficulties he sees in its implementation. Joy Cowley writes about another model of ministry as a way forward, dealing with the mystery of what she calls "empowering love".

The short article from Bishop Dowling (p.5) is helpful. It highlights the paralysis pertaining now in the life of the Catholic Church. Subsidiarity is often not being applied in working out practical details of Church life and worship. The oversight of liturgy in many different countries and cultures raises questions that need local answers, ones that the Vatican cannot devise because it lacks officials qualified and capable of giving those nuanced responses. For instance, in Aotearoa New Zealand, it requires trust in the many qualified people here, especially our bishops and their advisors, to know what will best suit the liturgical climate that prevails here. Had they been given this mandate, the New Zealand Bishops would have developed a splendid liturgical renewal suited to the life of this country.

In his long life, Newman also struggled with many questions. His wisdom about change is helpful to us now, as we keep looking at such questions as these: "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often." Our challenge is to keep raising the questions, and searching for answers that seem more appropriate and helpful in the life of the Church.

On a lighter note, I hope that you enjoy our centre-spread this month. We give space and honour to Rosemary and Mike Riddell. Mike has for many years been contributing articles on scripture and spirituality to *Tui Motu*. Producing the film *The Insatiable Moon* has been an uphill battle. However, they have given us a no-cringe Aotearoan film of impeccable quality. If you didn't see the film during the recent NZ Film Festival, make sure you do when it is released for general exhibition in October.

Good reading – and film going!

KT

why did new zealand abstain ?

On 28 July 2010, the Third Commission of the 64th General Assembly of the United Nations made history by adopting overwhelmingly the draft resolution proclaiming the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation. Presented by Bolivia and 34 other States, the resolution received 122 votes in favour with no votes against and 41 abstentions. New Zealand abstained along with USA, Canada, UK and Australia.

I learnt that the vote was to happen through the weekly e-news of Deidre Mullan RSM of Mercy Global Concern through which the Sisters of Mercy have nongovernment status at the UN. The only media coverage of this ground-breaking vote and New Zealand's abstention that I am aware of was briefly the next day on Radio NZ National.

As a Cantabrian, I find this lack of coverage astonishing as the right to water is a great concern here: the depletion of the region's exceptionally pure water; the Hurunui River Dam; the Plains Water Scheme; dairying and irrigation; government sacking of Ecan and the installing of unelected commissioners. For months water issues have been debated daily in the Christchurch Press.

The resolution "declares the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights." It also "calls upon States and international organisations to provide Financial resources, capacity building and technology transfer, through international assistance and co-operation, in particular to developing countries, in order to scale up efforts to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all."

A resolution has no binding mechanisms linked to it like a convention or protocol does. Nevertheless, it carries political weight to advance negotiations between states and assist key issues on the international agenda and national endorsements.

Abstention is better than a vote against for sure. Nevertheless, New Zealanders deserve to know about the vote and why their Government did not support a UN draft resolution which affirms the human rights of an estimated billion people whose water supplies currently are not safe to drink.

If everyone is entitled as of right to water, would this restrict profiteering by global corporations taking control of our water under the government's privatization agenda and free trade deals? Where do the huge profits from bottled water fit in here? Has the decision been influenced by the privatization agenda for water that is becoming apparent in New Zealand? What are the values New Zealand is following here?

In my Scripture reflection in last month's *Tui Motu*, I wrote of the concern of the author of the Book of Revelation that ordinary people would succumb to the values of the Empire of Rome – in our case those of profit, the market place, apathy – rather than the values of God's reign. We, the people of God, are called to "consistent resistance", the active quality of standing up to evil. This is one of the works of the faithful. In this matter of the human right to water and sanitation, it is a work of the faithful to ask questions as to why our Government abstained from this historic resolution and to insist it votes for this resolution in future. The UN estimates that nearly 900 million people live without clean water and 2.6 billion without proper sanitation. At least 4,000 children die each day from water-related diseases.

Water cannot be treated as just another commodity. The Compendium for the Social Doctrine of the Church reminds us that "The right to water, as all human rights, finds its basis in human dignity and not in any kind of merely quantitative assessment that considers water as a merely economic good. Without water, life is threatened. Therefore, the right to safe drinking water is a universal and inalienable right." (no 485)

Kath Rushton rsm

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Tui Motu-InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed. The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.
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a reponse to bishop peter cullinane

'Mr Truman was jubilant,' headlined Dorothy Day in *The Catholic Worker,* shortly after the first atomic bomb killed nearly 200,000 Japanese on that horrible day, 6 August 1945. It was the day the world changed forever and became a more dangerous place. On that feast day of the Transfiguration of Christ, 65 years ago, the powers of the world cast their own strike for God-like control. A new golden calf was born.

Six decades on there are not one but 18 nations now with nuclear bomb capability. The wedding of the human spirit to war appears to be almost a universal. Even when peace broke out between the two main protagonists in 1990, the warrior spirit found new places to exercise. Nations bowed to the golden calf. The arms race escalated. Money flowed in; death flowed out.

Where has the Church been in the face of all this? Generally its response has been timid and weak. As if it had no power. There have been plenty of intentional statements, but little else. I mention all this in response to the article my friend, Bishop Peter Cullinane, wrote in Tui Motu, (July 2010), defending the NZ bishops' lack of positive response to the action at Waihopai. They missed a great opportunity. Just imagine what a wonderful lift our battered Church could have received if the bishops had stood in solidarity with the peacemakers!

Bishop Peter's response is logical, useful in as far as it goes. What I think it lacks are two additional major premises upon which the action was based. The first is an adequate analysis of the impact of global domination sought by the US war machine during our lifetime. Professor Robert Elias states that "from 1945 to 2000, the USA attemp He estimates the resulting deaths to be more than 12 million. Iraq and Afghanistan are simply their two latest adventures.

The second is the prophetic charism, given at baptism, exercised by the three men. Since prophetic actions invariably upset the status quo, they are often condemned by people in authority. Yet the effect of this Waihopai action has been to have the whole nation debating our role in US wars and the role spy bases play. It was sparked by these three prophetic voices. None acted lightly. All struggled with their consciences.

The three initially asked themselves a basic question in the light of New Zealand's involvement in the war in Afghanistan – what can we do of significance to help slow the war effort facilitated through this base at Waihopai? Twenty years of organized lawful protest there had produced nothing.

Faced with a corporate media culture of lies, propaganda and active warmongering, the three Christian peacemakers drew on the tradition of the prophets of yesteryear. Prophets are the circuit breakers. It is the prophets who break the cycle of violence, not state or Church leaders. They are the ones who put their bodies on the line and pay the price of condemnation and punishment.

Since 1980, more than 120 Ploughshares actions have occurred at military installations around the world, all of them inspired by the Scriptures and the Church's moral teachings. All of them were carried out by faith filled Christian peacemakers following the injunction of Jesus to be peacemakers and 'lay down your sword.' All of them prepared for their witness with lengthy prayer and reflection. Many of the actions have succeeded through what can only be described as miraculous interventions of the Holy Spirit. Practically every Ploughshares action contains an element or more of miraculous guidance – guards looking the other way when activists slipped inside nuclear silos, crews at morning tea when nuclear ships were boarded, security asleep as bombers are disarmed. Anyone attending the Wellington trial would have come to see the Spirit's presence at Waihopai in those pre-dawn hours. You can't cut through electric fences without it!

In concentrating on the court case, I wonder whether Bishop Peter has missed the point of their action. The courtroom was merely the location imposed by the state to help examine their action. The ground rules were set by the state. The defendants were constricted in what they could say. Critically, the real role Waihoipai plays and its effect on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was ruled inadmissible. An expert witness was present throughout the trial but was unable to give evidence. The state held nearly all the cards. The one key card they didn't have was the voices of these three honest, informed, courageous men. And that is what the jury heard over nine days. And acted on.

All over the world deeply committed Christian peacemakers follow the spirit of the non-violent Jesus, and take actions which break lesser laws in order to preserve greater ones. The laws promoting life and liberty supersede the laws governing electric fences and spy domes. Dirty hands are often the difference between the activist and the academic. But property laws are not sacrosanct as the Church rightly teaches and as Jesus himself taught. There are times when there are greater issues at stake. Disarming Waihopai was one such occasion.

Jim Consedine

letters to the editor

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

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

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

too safe a system

far from local church communities being able to adapt locally, the Vatican is assuming more and more of a role in the conduct of the faithful

One of the truly significant contributions of the church to the building up of a world in which people and communities can live in peace and dignity with a quality of life that befits those made in God's image, has been Catholic Social Teaching. Let us take one social teaching principle, vitally important for ensuring participative democracy in the socio-political domain, and that is subsidiarity.

Applied to the Church, subsidiarity requires its leadership actively to promote and encourage participation, personal responsibility and effective engagement by everyone in terms of their particular calling and ministry in the Church and world according to their opportunities and gifts.

However, today we have a leadership in the Church that actually undermines the very notion of subsidiarity; where the minutiae of Church life and praxis "at the lower level" are subject to examination and authentication being given by the "higher level" – in fact, the highest level. One example of this is the approval of liturgical language and texts, where one of the key Vatican II principles, collegiality in decision-making, is virtually non-existent.

Writing in The Tablet in 1999 – almost 35 years after Vatican II – the eminent emeritus Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Franz König, said: "In fact, however, de facto and not de jure, intentionally or unintentionally, the curial authorities working in conjunction with the Pope have appropriated the tasks of the episcopal college. It is they who now carry out almost all of them."

What compounds this, for me, is the mystique that has surrounded the person of the Pope in the last 30 years, such that any hint of critique or questioning of his policies or his exercise of authority is equated with disloyalty. There is more than a perception, because of this mystique, that unquestioning obedience by the faithful to the Pope is required and is a sign of the ethos and fidelity of a true Catholic.

When the Pope's authority is then intentionally extended to the Vatican Curia, there exists a possibility that unquestioning obedience to very human decisions about a whole range of issues by the curial departments and cardinals also becomes a mark of one's fidelity as a Catholic, and anything less is interpreted as being disloyal to the Pope who is charged with steering the barque of Peter.

It has become more difficult over the past years, therefore, for the College of Bishops as a whole, or in a particular territory, to exercise their theologically based servant leadership to discern appropriate responses to their particular socio-economic, cultural, liturgical, spiritual and other pastoral realities and needs; much less to disagree with or seek alternatives to policies and decisions taken in Rome.

What appears to be, more and more, the policy of appointing "safe", unquestionably orthodox and even very conservative bishops to fill vacant dioceses during the past 30 years, only makes it less and less likely that the College of Bishops – even in powerful conferences such as that of the United States – will question what comes out of Rome, and certainly not publicly. Instead, there will be every effort to try and find an accommodation with those in power, which means that the Roman position will prevail in the end.

Taking this further, when an individual bishop takes issue with something, especially in public, the impression or judgement will be that he is "breaking ranks" with the other bishops and will only cause confusion to the lay faithful – so it is said – because it will appear that the bishops are not united in their teaching and leadership role. The pressure, therefore, is to conform.

What we should have, in my view, is a church where the leadership recognises and empowers decision-making at the appropriate levels in the local Church; where local leadership listens to and discerns with the people of God of that area what "the Spirit is saying to the Church" and then articulates that as a consensus of the believing, praying, serving community.

Is there a way forward? Somewhere we must find an attitude of respect and reverence for difference and diversity as we search for a living unity in the Church. People should be allowed, indeed enabled, to find or create the type of community that is expressive of their faith and aspirations concerning their Christian and Catholic lives and engagement in Church and world and which strives to hold in legitimate and constructive tension the uncertainties that all this will bring, trusting in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

At the heart of this is the question of conscience. As Catholics, we need to be trusted enough to make informed decisions on the basis of a developed conscience.

I close with the formulation or understanding given by none other than the theologian Fr Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope, when he was a *peritus*, or expert, at Vatican II: "Over the Pope as expression of the binding claim of ecclesiastical authority, there stands one's own conscience, which must be obeyed before all else, even if necessary against the requirement of ecclesiastical authority. This emphasis on the individual, whose conscience confronts him with a supreme and ultimate tribunal, and one which in the last resort is beyond the claim of external social groups, even the official Church, also establishes a principle in opposition to increasing totalitarianism." ■

edited extract of a talk from Bishop Kevin Dowling of Rustenburg, South Africa. Permission: The London Tablet. Full text: www.thetablet.co.uk

the new roman missal

The new Roman Missal is due to come into use on the first Sunday of Advent this year. In the first of two articles a NZ theologian look at some aspects of the new missal and suggests a way forward

Neil Darragh

Most Catholics know by now that the New Zealand Bishops Conference hopes to introduce the new English and Maori translations of the Roman Missal in Advent this year. A programme that prepares people for the new texts is already underway in most parishes. This is mainly a change of some of the language used at Mass. It won't affect the rest of the Mass very much.

The English of the current Mass could surely be improved. It is often old fashioned, a kind of stilted 'churchy' language. Most of the time the phrasing doesn't 'flow'. There is a good deal of sexist language. There are some beautiful prayers but most of it is dull rather than inspiring or deeply prayerful. Both the English and Maori languages can be creative, captivating and inspiring. These languages are capable of expressing deep beliefs with clarity and nobility as we know from our experience of literature, film, songs, plays and speeches. I don't think anyone has ever said this of the English of the Roman Missal we have been using since 1973. So, yes, a new translation is well overdue.

The new translation is not really meant to be 'better' in the sense that most of us would understand it. We would probably say it was 'better' if it was more beautifully crafted or

easily understood, if it could lead us to understand deep religious beliefs without the obstructions of archaic language, and if the language helped us to participate better in the liturgy. We might also regard it as better if its language was completely gender-inclusive (it does eliminate some of the sexist language) or less clerical, or if it showed appreciation of God's creation around us. The new translation however has a different, more ecclesiastical agenda.

The primary requirement is that it be a very close, almost literal, translation of the 2002 official Latin text in its words and its forms of expression. Once that requirement is met, the translators can then do their best to make it intelligible and attractive to us, but the possibilities of doing so are quite limited. So, no, on the whole the new translation is not better than the old one unless we put a high value on Latin as the primary language for religious expression.

do the written texts have to be translations from the latin?

The texts of the Mass are translations from the Latin because this is a requirement of the Roman Congregation for Divine Worship. It is hard to understand the reasons for this requirement. It seems that some people don't want to lose treasured forms of traditional prayer and prefer that the contemporary Mass be a kind of living archive of ancient Latin prayers. More likely though is that this requirement is about centralized control of liturgy.

After the 16th century Council of Trent, the Roman Missal in Latin was made obligatory for all Masses of the Roman Rite. After the 20th century Second Vatican Council, Masses in the local languages (in New Zealand that means Maori and English) had to be translations of the new Latin text. We don't seem to have moved beyond that. The translation requirement does not in any case seem to have anything much to do with deepening prayerfulness, increasing understanding, or enhancing active participation in liturgy for most of us in this part of the world.

So the answer to this question is that there is a legal requirement for Mass texts to be translations of the official Latin text, but the justification for this is probably more political than it is liturgical.

Most people will find that the changes to the Mass are irritating rather than enormous. A few of these are significant even if small (like the response "And with your spirit"; and word changes here and there in common prayers like the 'I confess', the 'Gloria' and the profession of faith), but most of the changes and additions occur in what the priest says and probably won't be noticed by most of the congregation.

While the effects may be fairly small, the production of a new Missal is an enormous task. It requires a great deal of time and a great number of "experts". Publishing and printing is another huge task. It is a juggernaut that will be difficult to stop. The people in power who campaigned for this change against a good deal of opposition won't give up easily. So, yes, this is a 'done deal'.

It is this aspect of the situationl above all that is seriously upsetting many faithful Catholics. After several decades of talk about participation both in the liturgy and in ministry, this promulgation of the new Missal appears as the act of a centralized and authoritarian church hierarchy, following an agenda that is difficult for us to understand, and hitting at the heart of people's sense of belonging – in Sunday Mass. It is unfortunate too that this promulgation should take place just at a time when the hierarchy's moral authority is at its lowest because of cases of sexual abuse.

range of reactions

Reactions to the new Missal range from the radical ("this is the last straw from a church hierarchy that treats people with disrespect"), through protest ("we should voice our opposition to this new Missal"), to obedience ("church authorities must have their reasons so let's just get on with it").

Is there a way forward?

I will offer a way forward in the second article next issue. ■

Neil Darragh is a priest of the Auckland Diocese and a well known theologian and teacher

the other priesthood

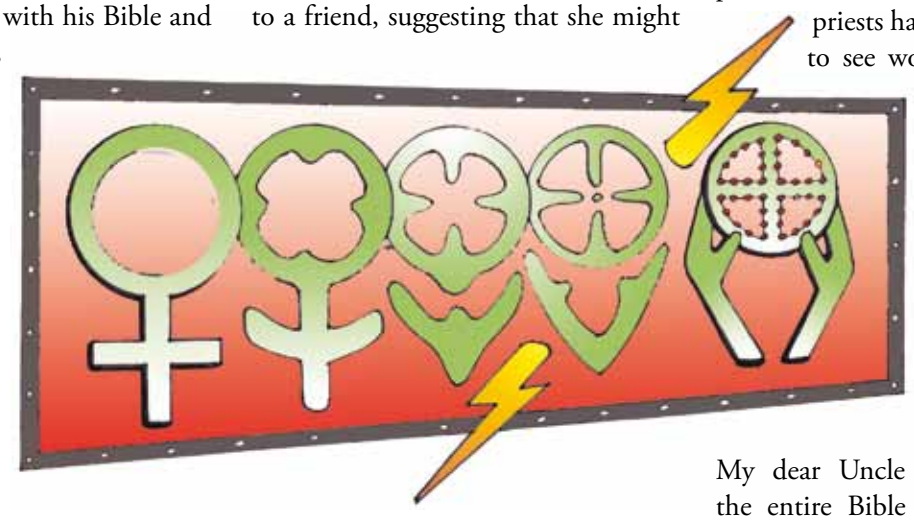
Joy Cowley reflects on Jesus' model of relationship with women and another model of leadership for women within the catholic church

For years my Uncle Lloyd was an Anglican priest in England. He left when women were ordained, moved from place to place, eventually ran out of room and became a Roman Catholic. Now, in his eighties, he sits with his Bible and a deep sense of loss, sincerely believing that the ordination of women is a crime against God.

Uncle Lloyd was a good father and husband who nursed his dying wife with tender devotion. He respects women and does not diminish female leadership in the Church. He told me, "Women have always been leaders. Look at Teresa of Avila. She had cardinals quaking in their slippers." But his understanding of the male priesthood goes way back to Moses and he has chapter and verse to show the continuity of that male tradition.Priests are keepers of the Covenant. They teach God's law and protect the structures. Women have other roles.

We no longer talk about this. There is a deep love and respect between us and I find myself between two areas of loss, his, and the pain of Catholic women friends who have a calling to the priesthood. No, I am not sitting on a fence – because there is no fence. The arguments are so far apart, that they have no common boundary. I can only recognize both as valid.

I've never had a calling to the priesthood and a subjective reaction is – why would any woman want to go there? The priestly role does not appear to have much room for the giftedness of women. I mentioned this to a friend, suggesting that she might not feel comfortable with legalistic structures. She replied, "Oh, we would change all that."My heart sank and I heard alarm bells ringing all the way back to Rome.



Catholics who enjoy tracing the history of Covenant through the Hebrew Bible, will recognize elements of the Catholic priesthood in early Jewish history. Some of the traditions are much older than Christianity, and I think they need to be respected.

My friends argue: "But the Jews and Anglicans have moved on. Why not Rome?"

It is true that Anglicans and Jewish liberals have accommodated women in priestly roles: some, like Barbara Brown Taylor and Rabbi Ruth, have become spiritual leaders, much in demand and often compared with the Dalai Lama. But historically, male Anglican priests and rabbis have been married; and working in a life partnership with a woman has been a part of vocation. Celibate Catholic priests have been conditioned to see women as temptation and to be feared. I believe that until this rule of celibacy changes, the ordination of woman in the Catholic Church will not even appear on the distant horizon.

My dear Uncle Lloyd draws from the entire Bible to support a male priesthood, but when he comes to the Gospels his evidence is selective and it loses weight. The natural likeness argument, priests must be men because Jesus was a man, is incomplete. Jesus received his natural likeness from a woman without male intervention.

Thus the physical mystery becomes metaphysical truth: Jesus was a man who held both male and female in balance.

Then there is the male disciples argument, 12 to represent the 12 tribes of Israel. But Jesus also called women, giving personal instruction to women like Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala. Neil Douglas-Klotz, scholar of ancient Aramaic, says that the 'seven demons' cast out of Mary of Magdala did not relate to sins or to illness. Seven was the spiritual number and

the casting out of seven demons was a common phrase describing seven stages of purification and formation in discipleship.

In fact, in the Gospels, we could probably find as many arguments for women priests as for men. Jesus never rebuked a woman for lack of faith, and women never betrayed him. On the contrary, as a Jesuit priest pointed out to me, every time Jesus encountered a woman, he moved to a new place in his ministry. You might like to go through the Gospels and check this. It is true.

For me, Jesus' relationship with women disciples is the model of leadership for women and an indication of the other priesthood that Paul talks about. All of us, male and female, are called to a holy priesthood, one family in Christ. I believe that the Catholic Church is moving, albeit slowly, in the direction of this 'other' priesthood, keeping separate the traditions of ordination but at the same time recognizing and fostering lay leadership.

Pope John Paul II made an obvious but important statement when he said that men and women are equal but different. The equality and the difference need to be recognized by both sexes. One side should not presume to dictate to the other. Instead, the two should work together in partnership, each offering what is lacking in the other, to achieve wholeness. Some institutions do this well: the native American Dakota people have a law that only a man can be the nation's leader, and only a council of older women can elect him. If he betrays his position, the women may replace him with someone else. I don't think this would work for the Vatican but it is an example of partnership that engages equality and difference.

So what is the way forward for Catholic women who have a call to ordination?I wish I could offer some kind of positive support, but I can't. I can only point out that in any situation we can waste a lot of time hammering on a closed door when there are open doors around us. We can also get caught up in a web of political stuff that prevents us from going deep into the mystery of empowering love that is at the heart of our faith.

I must admit that I love our dear Church without reservation. Both its human frailty and its divine beauty, give me a sense of belonging. The Catholic Church is like an old ship, slowed by two thousand years of barnacles, but still on course in a sea of light, with the same Captain at the helm. As for the crew, most of us are still taking orders from the first woman of the Church who insists: 'Do whatever He tells you.' ■

secrets from the first sunrise

Before time began
this earth stood still
no waves
no wind

no waterfalls
the silence was deathly
but beautiful
haunting yet real.

out of this darkness
imagination was born –
life's colours and scents
burst forth upon all shores.

the first sunrise
instructed all souls
on how the earth should be –
plants, animals and
all living things
nodded with respect and care

creation obeyed nature's law,
living to the strict rhythms
of practicality and wonder.

then, from nowhere
they came and plundered,
ruthlessly destroying
systems and cultures
that had evolved
since time immemorial

a million years of knowledge and wisdom
evaporates into the mournful sky,
as the dominant culture
seeks to eradicate
this land's history

these europeans
they will never win
because even though
they continue to instigate
new systems of oppression,
this land is tied to the
blood of my people
and our destiny outshines
the brightest neon light.

our destiny is greater
than the tallest city skyscraper.
our destiny stretches further
than the longest stretch of road.
our people saw the first sunrise,
we know the law of the land.

it is imperitive we communicate
what these invaders don't
want to understand

Jonathan Hill
Australia

a principal's faith

Tui Motu interviewed Paul Ferris at the end of his years as principal of Kavanagh College

Paul Ferris has been one of New Zealand's longest serving principals with some 34 years at the helm of a school at primary, intermediate and secondary levels. He retired at the end of June after 19 years as principal of Kavanagh College, the only Catholic secondary school in Dunedin. Paul gave leadership not just on a local level but at national level as chair of the NZ Secondary Principals' Association, where he interacted with government ministers (especially Trevor Mallard) in dealing with crucial educational policy issues. When Paul left Kavanagh College, he took with him the thanks of generations of staff and students over Otago and Southland.

What has been the undergirding of this eventful life? In his address at last year's prize-giving, Paul summed up his own faith experience by using the life of St Dominic as his model. Dominic's lived faith-practice was based on a compass and not on a map: "Often, we don't really know what we have to do, but we have a direction we have to go in, and we have got to keep following that, to keep finding that." In a nutshell it has been for him a 'continuing revelation', having a faith dream and continually searching to find ways of putting that into practice. He says that young people are not as attracted to the practice of the faith as when he was young, nor are they attracted to rules. However, they are absolutely compelled by the great quest for spirituality, but it has to be a two way thing. They have to see it lived, shared and believed in by the person who is preaching it. It is not a set of absolutes. It has as many questions for the preacher as it does for the believer. And it is this type of lived loving-kindness that the young are looking for, rather than just the practice and the ritual they often feel they are compelled to perform.

Most recently, then, reflecting on his own experience and a homily he heard from an Australian Jesuit in 2008, he sums up this dream as being: "Until the Catholic school has the gift of forgiveness, it does not have the face of God in it." The Jesuit priest had been reflecting on what a school would look like if it had the face of God in it.

Paul gave an example of one of a number of pupils who exemplified this approach. One young student had stolen a quantity of school equipment during school holidays. The police found him, and all the equipment was returned to the school. They wanted to charge him, but the school chose not to. "We said that there was more hope in the kid than we thought, and that he was coming right. I had had a lot to do with this boy in all sorts of little ways. We just wanted him to know that he had hurt us." He listened to what was said and then wrote a phenomenal letter. "I will make you proud of me one day." I wrote back and said, "We are already proud of you. What it is you don't know we already know. It is just that you don't believe this yet." This was the turning point, the face of God. If we had pulled the Shylock and wanted his blood we would never have won this kid over. In another part of his letter the boy said, "You've always given us chances, and believed in us." And that's what God is like: always giving to us, and believing in us.

In his years at Kavanagh, Paul has striven to set up excellent parameters around academic subjects, the cultural side of the school, and sport as well. All of this has been built into an integrated school culture. But the heart of the school is really what happens within that culture. And a Catholic school shows itself to be different when it can celebrate the weakest member of the school community who feels that they can come back. "The spirituality of youth is no different from yours or mine, except ours was born out of a sense of giving this much and that's enough. Today's kids are looking for people who will give limitlessly and without question. And society isn't showing too many models of that unfortunately."

Paul can see the golden threads of people who were models in his own life and upbringing, and without whom he would not be in the place he finds himself today. He talked passionately of his own children, and the successes and failures he has had in nurturing them. It takes a lifetime to discern these things, and he's still learning. But he is grateful to a number of people who were fundamental formative figures in his

a new thing

June Macmillan

It was the year 2010 and a ripple of excitement gripped the world. The Dalai Lama was to celebrate his 75th birthday. Everywhere people found themselves smiling. This much loved man spread his universal message wherever he went. Love. He was a leader, not a ruler.

Deeply spiritual according to the way of the tradition he had been called to serve within, he loved the human family, no matter the colour, shape, or size. And so a ripple of love, worthy of the man who spread such spiritual largesse to any open to receive what he had to offer, ran the full circumference of the world. Join us in sending a message of love and good wishes to the Dalai Lama, the email encouraged. Let us fill up the walls of the sanctuary with tributes of our appreciation of the love he has in his heart for us. The beaming face of this man so loved, shone out from the accompanying picture. Send this message on, the email urged.

It was a message worthy of note. He is a Buddhist, the one reading it a Catholic, a woman at that. She sat and she reflected, her brow furrowed. It was the face, the deeply spiritual, tranquilly smiling face, that held her gaze and caused her to pause.

What is it? What is God calling us to see in this day and age of travail? Can we in the Christian church claim to have such love for our leader, for others? Is God doing a new thing?

Our tradition is a masculine one, essential for the formation of structure, of theological concepts and of well managed communities, but is that enough?I wonder if the new thing God is doing is about the ascending feminine in our churches today, the woman mused. Not male, not female as such, but the feminine, that spiritual quality which flows out from this man whom the world wishes to honour for his 75th birthday.

Is that what the disturbance within clerical circles is calling us to become aware of? Is the masculine in the descendent? Is it time for that new thing Isaiah (*43:19)* told us to look all around for, so that we might discover what God is doing, opening up paths in the wilderness and forming rivers in the wilds? Have our spiritual eyes clouded over because it is safer and more comfortable to settle for what has been, rather than to embrace what could become if we were to have our inner spiritual eyes wiped free of the density that dims them?

Then perhaps our faces, too, would shine with love because we have not been afraid to open ourselves to the love God has to offer us in our day. Love is for sharing. Love begets love.

There is no dishonour for those who have so faithfully served in the way that had unfolded for them in days gone by. That is but a normal part of the process of history. Salvation history or otherwise, the emergence of the new thing is a part of normal progress. All that is required is that it be recognized. Is the separated church calling to us to offer it a love similar to what this beloved leader, the Dalai Lama, has to offer those who follow him, the love that Jesus had to offer his followers, no less? What would happen if we were to fill our hearts with spiritual love which parallels the theological knowledge our heads overflow with? The beaming spiritual face of the Dalai Lama could well become a metaphor, a front page cover for the Christian Church, calling us to witness to the existence of a spiritual depth in the barren world in which we live. Like Jesus he has nowhere to lay his head. Like Jesus he too calls us to love. ■

▷▷ life. The first would be his mother and father, especially his father. Living in the country he was educated at a State secondary school. This gave him an great opportunity to know people of protestant religious backgrounds and be open to their more scripture-based understanding, at a time when this was an uncommon fact of life.

Father Paul Jackson at Aquinas Hall over the four year period that Paul stayed there attracted him because of his warts-and-all approach to faith. His loyal but open approach to the church around the time of Vatican II was an eye-opener. It allowed Paul to break out of a church mould that seemed interested in narrow ideas, and to find something deeper. This foundation was built on when he went to teach at St Teresa's in North Invercargill. He is grateful that Sister Judith Ann O'Sullivan nudged him in the direction of the Walk by Faith programme, where there was discussion of all manner of questions. The participants, other lay people, religious and priests were very open in expressing their faith and doubts. It was a faith-nurturing environment.

Paul is a realist, but a person still full of dreams: for Catholic schools; for forgiveness; for passing on the best of the Christian faith in a way that young people understand and live – Christ for others. He has always seen this as being done best in a shared community of faith – it is not something he ever did by himself, nor wanted to. He quoted a Maori proverb: " You need all the feathers of a bird to help it fly." n

hope for the neediest

Tui Motu interviewed an 'ambassador' for the Gazan people. His prophetic plea is for friendship and neighbourliness

"I am a person who seeks to bring hope here and at home" – Constantine Dabbagh has been in New Zealand and Australia to highlight the situation of people in the Gaza strip and to ask our help in seeking to change the unjust and longstanding situation of the Gazan people.

As the executive director of the Near Eastern Council of Church's Committee for Refugee Work, his work is to help provide people who are permanent refugees from their Palestinian homeland with opportunities for health, education and vocational programmes. The Committee itself has, since 1952, been working with people who were forced from their homes, separated from their families and who needed help to rebuild their lives and create a future for themselves. It is for them, their children and grandchildren that he works.

Constantine, himself born in Jerusalem, was seven when partition took place in 1948. He has been a permanent refugee in Gaza for more than 60 years. And as a Greek Orthodox Christian, he is one of only 8,000 Christians who live in Gaza. The remainder are of Muslim faith.

There are 1.5 million people living in Gaza, a strip of land 1.5 kms long and an average of 7 kms wide. (Imagine this is relation to your own place of living!) This tiny enclave has one of the highest population densities in the world, and is completely isolated from the rest of the world, cordoned off by the Israeli army. Only a tiny minority are able to get in or out of Gaza for any purpose, let alone work. Previously 50-60,000 people were able to cross the borders daily to work in Israel and support their families. Constantine says you can now call Gaza a "big prison. It is like we live on another planet".

Two thirds of the population of Gaza are refugees and about half of these are still living in the refugee aid camps that have been in place since 1952. To add to this, 80-82 percent of the people are under the poverty line. Often electricity is unavailable for most of the day, and piped water is restricted and sometimes contaminated. All the people live on welfare provided not by the Israeli government but by international bodies such as UNRRA, the World Food Programme, and humanitarian agencies like Christian World Service. The unemployment level is 60 percent, an unprecedented level mainly because of the blockade on the importation of raw materials since the siege began four years ago.

It seems that one of the results of the recent Aid Flotilla which attempted to break this blockade is that more raw materials are entering now. Constantine believes that this is good news, as a number of factories may revive and provide a number of the unemployed with some income. He predicted if restrictions on tourists entering Gaza were lifted, the hotel, restaurant, and transport business would also provide many more jobs.

Constantine says that it is difficult to keep on giving hope. However, this is the major part of his larger role. One of his grandchildren, a boy of 16, comes to watch TV at Constantine's house. There he sees people travelling and enjoying themselves and young people on the move, and asks "Why are we not like these people? Why are we different?"

And this is where the services of Constantine's organization are invaluable – the staff give practical help and hope to the 16,000 registered families who come to their health clinics. Constantine quotes a woman as saying, "I have trusted the staff from the first. When I gave birth, they were among the first to congratulate me and to give help." It is the same with the Committee for Refugee Work's education and vocational training programmes. These are not just to train school leavers as skilled and professional people but to give hope that the young can be self-reliant and that they can be productive in their own society. It is a crucial way of keeping hope alive for a young generation frustrated and disappointed by being coralled in Gaza.

Constantine sees great scope in New Zealand for its parliamentary leaders and the churches to highlight the plight of the Gaza people, especially in the United Nations and among other international bodies. This was the reason for his visit. He did not come for fundraising, but to raise awareness of the terrible conditions under which Gazan people live, and to tell people in Australia and New Zealand that the Gaza people are a peaceful people, who aspire to a brokered peace with Israel, who want to live together with Israel as friends and neighbours, and who long to have their own land and homeland again. He challenges the

international community to do its part in promoting a just peace between Israel and the Palestinians, and to ask Israel to comply with the Geneva Conventions and international law. Then the young would have a real hope that Palestinians would regain their homeland and develop the State of Palestine.

Constantine is not anti – any side, especially not anti-Israel, and has a firm desire to see Israel secure, "but you cannot secure yourself without securing your neighbour... If you only look after yourself, this is selfishness... We hope for a two state solution based on UN resolutions. This is in the long term interest of Israel now." And the more we New Zealanders speak of and work for peace, the less likelihood there is that extremists on either side may win. It is for this reason that Constantine asks for the involvement of governments and peoples at all levels to bring about peace.

Constantine has a fond memory of a time in Haifa as a child, where his family lived with Jewish and Moslem families. He remembers that they all lived together in peace, played together and even prayed together. After partition he was able to return to Haifa once, at his family's behest. This return is indelibly fixed in his mind. When their Jewish neighbour's door in Haifa was opened, he was greeted with hugging and kissing, like a prodigal's return. It is this for which Constantine longs: "that our children play with theirs; that we be good neighbours to them, and they to us." It's a prophet's call. As he repeated, "I am a person who seeks to bring peace here and at home". May we hear and act on the words of this wise man, an extraordinary peace and hope maker. ■

Constantine Dabbagh is the Executive Director of the Gazan section of the Near Eastern Council of Churches Committee for Refugee Work
email: necc@neccgaza.org

The other day

The other day

I met my Jewish neighbour just across the street
and his face looked just exactly like my face
I saw him play with his children
just exactly as I would play with my children
I heard him speak tenderly to his wife
just exactly as I would speak tenderly to my wife
I witnessed as he opened with reverence his Holy Book
just exactly as I would open my Holy Book
I noticed how he takes care of his home
just exactly as I would take care of my home
I observed as he communicated warmly with his neighbours
as I would with mine

And yet

My Jewish neighbour does not see me nor does he think
That I play with my children the way he does with his
That I speak tenderly to my wife as he does
That I open my Holy Book with reverence as he does his Holy Book
That I care about my home the way he does about his
That I communicate warmly with my neighbours as he does with his

And more

My Jewish neighbour does not know my pain
When I am denied entry to my city
through checkpoints and Separation Wall
When the identity cards of my children
are taken away from them
When I cannot be with my wife
because she is from the West Bank and I am from Jerusalem
When my home is demolished
because I cannot get a building permit
When my neighbours are evicted from their homes
and they have no place to go

My Jewish neighbour and I live so close to each other yet worlds apart
His world is one with a semblance of normalcy
Mine is one with threatening transition from one status to another
He feels filled with the dreams of his forefathers
I feel inspired by the dreams of my forefathers
He won't let go
I won't let go

My Jewish neighbour and I share the geographic space

Can we be like each other in our hopes and dreams?
Can he recognize my face which is exactly like his face?
Can he touch my pain?
Can we share the future with the dignity of people whose faces are so much like each other?

Bernard Sabella

putting voices of beneficiaries on the table

In early July, the Alternative Welfare Working Group was set up to ensure that beneficiaries and community groups are part of the debate on government welfare policy proposals

Lisa Beech

Amid all the talk of benefit dependency and hints of the 'cushy' lifestyles of television-watching, instant noodle-eating beneficiaries, benefit advocates at the Wellington Peoples Centre remind us that life on a benefit is frustrating, difficult and above all, stressful.

Peoples Centre manager Kay Brereton is one of the Commissioning group for Welfare Justice – the Alternative Welfare Working Group set up by the Catholic agency Caritas, the Anglican Social Justice Commission and the Beneficiary Advocacy Federation of NZ. She meets beneficiaries who have not even admitted to family and friends that they are out of work. "They don't even tell their mates. They know the attitudes they have about beneficiaries."

Listening to the Minister of Social Development and reading the material of her Ministerial Welfare Working Party, those without first hand knowledge of the benefit system might be forgiven for thinking a tsunami of benefit dependency was about to sweep away all we love and cherish.

Brightly coloured graphs showing ascending lines of sickness and invalid beneficiaries, sole parents and unemployed seem designed to panic "hard-working" New Zealanders into a sense that change to our benefit system is not only inevitable, but desirable.

However, the steepest benefit rise of all is barely considered, and determinedly excluded from the terms of reference of the government Welfare Working Party – the actual and projected rise in numbers receiving superannuation dwarfs all other benefit statistics. The "dependency" of most New Zealanders on old-age pensions barely receives a mention, while at present the target of reform is the community of people with illnesses and disabilities.

Not acknowledged in the Welfare Working Group issues paper is the range of government decisions which has led to an increase in people with disabilities attempting to live independent lives in the community – not the least of which has been the deinstitutionalisation of those with psychiatric, intellectual and physical disabilities.

Also barely acknowledged is the unsurprising fact that New Zealand's unemployment rates fell to the lowest in the OECD with the relative economic prosperity of the mid 2000s, but have increased sharply in the wake of the economic recession in the wake of the United States credit crunch. Many similar countries to New Zealand have turned to active job-growth strategies. We have a planned bicycle track, and proposals to restructure the welfare system.

Not that Churches, community organisations and benefit advocates are necessarily defenders of the status

quo. The existence of benefit advocacy services in itself is an acknowledgement that the benefit bureaucracy does not deliver social wellbeing, or even legal benefit entitlements, very well.

Kay Brereton says groups such as the Benefit Rights advocacy service of the Wellington Peoples Centre only exist because a lot of people aren't able to get information from Work and Income about their entitlements. "Many find the system a very frightening and challenging place to be – where an individual tries to deal with a bureaucracy without knowing its rules."

Kay says people applying for benefits are frequently coming from unexpected and stressful situations which have brought them to this point in their lives – losing a job, having a relationship end or break-down, being diagnosed with a serious or terminal illness. "They already have a high level of stress and frustration, and then the system puts further barriers in their way."

For Kay, the satisfaction of assisting people through the complexities of the benefit system is found when people have what they need to survive – for the moment. "When we see people who can go home and feed their children, at a very basic level of getting people what they need for today, it becomes a success story." More significantly, when people are assisted to get onto a benefit, they are often then able to focus on what they need to do to get off a benefit.

Fellow benefit advocate Stephen Ruth says the current ideology of "work first" means that Work and Income often loses sight of what was once understood to be its purpose of ensuring that people's basic needs are met.

However, he says there is also the luck of the draw. "Work and Income has four and a half thousand staff. They are a cross section of New Zealand, and like any cross section of society, there are people who are nice and there are people you would cross the street to avoid." He said people may strike a case manager who is both helpful and knowledgeable, or one who is unhelpful and hostile, or one who is nice but ignorant of benefit entitlements.

Darren Kemp is both beneficiary and benefit advocate, and says being a beneficiary is "literally depressing. People are expected to live on the smell of an oily rag, while everything is done to demean you and make you feel as weak and vulnerable as possible." He said it makes a significant difference to be able to help people to go away with everything they are entitled to.

Kay, Stephen and Darren would like to see reforms and improvements in the social welfare system, but fear it is unlikely to come with the current process of reform. Kay sees it as likely to create extra rules in the system that will put an extra layer of stress and pressure on vulnerable people, while Darren refers to both the proposed reforms and the intentions behind them as "mean-spirited". Stephen fears that the focus of benefit advocates may have to move from ensuring people receive their legal entitlements, to having to lobby for legal entitlements.

As supporters of the Alternative Welfare Working Group, they will be putting forward suggestions for alternatives and improvements, and also trying to hold onto what works in the current system, especially for the most vulnerable.

As a partner in the Welfare Justice – Alternative Welfare Working Group project, Caritas is also seeking both a process and an outcome which has the potential to improve the lives of New Zealand's poorest citizens. Caritas noted that the government appointed Welfare Working Group is noticeably lacking in members with experience from the beneficiary side of the counter.

The Alternative group has a membership that includes long time benefit advocate Sue Bradford and disability campaigner Wendi Wicks, as well as academics Mike O'Brien (Associate professor of social work and social policy at Massey University), Paul Dalziel (Lincoln University's professor of economics) and Māmari Stephens (lecturer in welfare law at Victoria University's Law school) alongside Anglican Bishop Muru Bennett. Benefit advocates such as Kay, Stephen and Darren are hoping for a report which better reflects the voices of beneficiaries and those who are striving to ensure that beneficiaries have food on the table tonight. ■

Lisa Beech is the Caritas Aotearoa research and advocacy coordinator.

For more information about the Alternative Welfare Working Group, please see http://welfarejustice.org.nz Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is a member of the Commissioning Group of Welfare Justice – the Alternative Welfare Working Group

The photo is of Kay Brereton, welfare advocate, and MIke O'Brien, assocoate professor of social work and social policy at Massey University during the launch of the Alternative Welfare Working Group.

The rising c

The Insatiable Moon
Review: Paul Sorrell

It is hard to know where to begin a review of a film whose creators are personal friends and whose progress you have followed for a decade or so, reading the blog, sharing the heartbreak of funding denied, and then basking in the triumph of its final appearance in the New Zealand international film festival last month. Based on the novel of the same name by Mike Riddell, who acted as co-producer and also wrote the screenplay, the film is directed by his wife Rosemary Riddell – a family court judge in her other life.

To say this is a film with heart – to use a tired Hollywood cliché – would not do it justice. Rather, it is a film that excites, entertains and challenges us, cutting right to the heart of the Gospel. The production values are first-rate, the casting inspired, the acting flawless and the cinematography wonderfully inventive. But the truly original contribution of *The Insatiable Moon* is to lay bare the pathologies at the heart of our endlessly aquisitive society and suggest – in the most imaginative ways you are ever likely to see on-screen – a Christian remedy.

The film opens with Arthur, a Maori ex-psychiatric patient living in a halfway house in Ponsonby, using his special magic to make the sun rise. As the self-proclaimed Second Son of God, Arthur's powers enable him to perform all manner of miracles, but his greatest challenge is to save the house he shares with a number of other men from closure. For this is the early 1990s and Ponsonby is ripe for gentrification, a process that leaves little room for the poor and the marginalised.

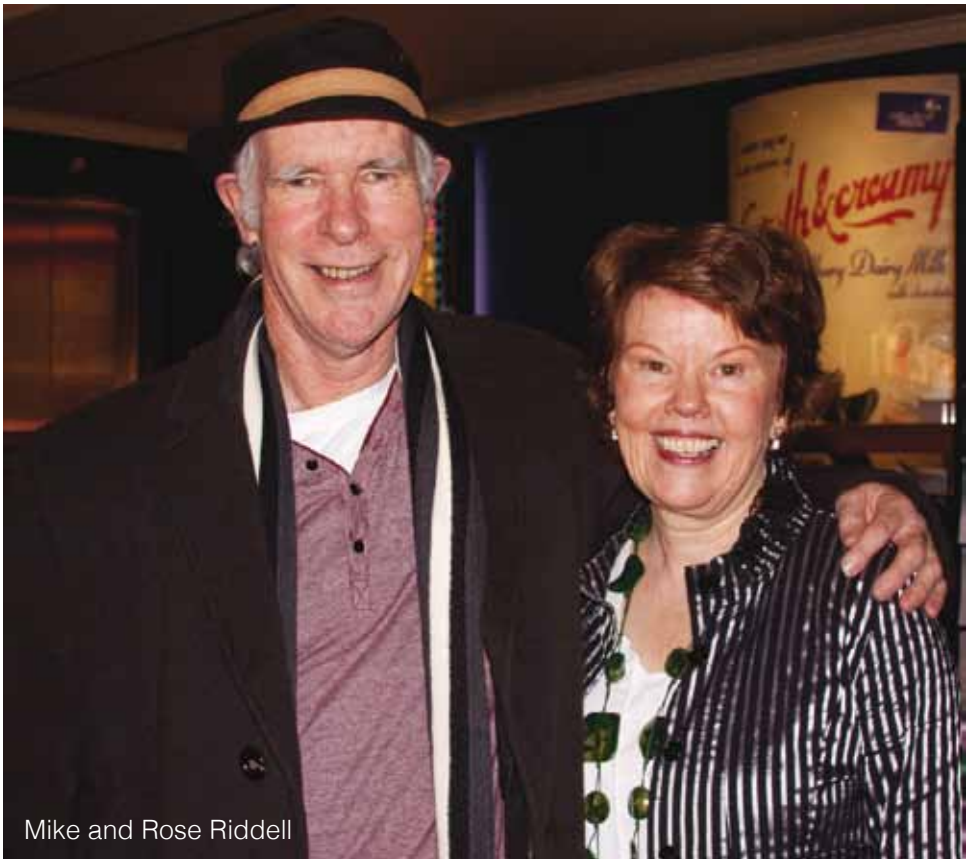
Arthur, played to perfection by Rawiri Paratene, is the heart of this remarkable film, despite being surrounded by a large cast of eye-catching characters played by the likes of Ian Mune, Sara Wiseman and Greg Johnson. In Arthur's words and actions we see an extraordinary interplay between the madman and the visionary, the derelict and the prophet. Battling with a mental illness, his heart is full of love and his words sharp with truth. Watching the stream of rush-hour traffic crawling over the harbour bridge, he says: "Look at all those people hurrying to get where they don't want to be".

Speaking after one of the festival screenings in Dunedin, Mike mentioned that his original novel had made use of magical realism. This technique uses fantasy, vision and dream to change the harsh reality of the world – the endemic greed, self-interest and materialism that undermine society and corrode the hearts of individuals – and, if only for a moment, to make our dreams of peace and justice real.

If you only get out to one movie this year, don't miss this richly imaginative and complex film when it goes on general release at *Rialto* cinemas in October. ■

f the moon

I see my vocation as that of a storyteller. It's a tradition as old as humanity. Telling tales is a means of engaging the human imagination in such a way as to stir the heart. It really is that simple.



Mike and Rose Riddell

photo: Paul Sorrell

For me, to see the story at the heart of *The Insatiable Moon* played out on screen is a constant delight. I know it well – for many a year it has lived and spoken within me. But to watch it spring to life in such a visual and accessible way is a wonder that continues to enthral me.

Writing a book is to pass on a story in a kind of whisper – from the solitude of the writer to the quiet engagement of the reader. Making a film is a communal experience. It draws on the gifts and creativity of scores of people, becoming so much more through their talents. And it finds its truth among an audience.

So to sit with a group of people who are responding viscerally to the story they are drawn into is a living and deeply satisfying event. Many years ago, a gentle Maori man named Arthur asked me to share his story with the world. The film marks the closing of a circle.

There was a time when being true to my vocation led to castigation from others on The Way. My journey into Catholicism has provided the healing of that rupture – reconnecting body, spirit, and creativity so that they can live together as intended. I'm particularly indebted to Fr Mark Chamberlain and Fr Michael Hill for this unifying grace.

A story has a life of its own. It is born, nurtured, and set free to find its way in the world. *The Insatiable Moon* is a very small story indeed. But for me, and for our wonderful director Rosemary, it has already begun a stirring. We wait in hope to see where it will end up. ■

Mike Riddell

blessed harrowing hour

Serious physical suffering causes not only despair but a crisis of self-doubt – a questioning search for the true self before it is too late. Yet amid the turmoil of the here and now there emerges a deep consciousness of God

It is 2 a.m. I think I'm going to die. Because I cannot breeathe. Who will I ring? Have I the breath to speak? It is said to be the ultimate panic – when breath and death compete? It was a long night. I will never, ever forget it. It happened to me about three months ago.

A brush with death, real or imaginary, can cut through our pretensions and penetrate our defences. We begin to realise how deep our darkness is, how lightly our demons sleep, how thinly our virtues go. It is the time you look for a hand to hold, a time to reach desperately for the raw comfort of faith. As I fought for breath, and waited for the dawn, many recollections disturbed me fleetingly but deeply.

How authentic is my life? How much pretence is there in my presence to others and to God? Is my driving force for the Reign of God or for the kingdom of Daniel? Have all my spoken and written words come from my clerical ego rather than from my graced human essence? Have I contributed more to the current troubles of the Catholic institution rather than to making more accessible the lovely light of God's abundant life?

There will be a blessed, harrowing hour in many people's lives when sudden shadows play havoc with the neat certainties that drive our decisions. And now, my hour had come. How sure am I of anything anymore? How can I preach and teach with passion from an uncertain heart? Have I kept relentlessly busy so as to avoid facing the doubt and meaninglessness of my clerical life?

How do I get to know my true self before it's too late – that complicated, flawed self that is still a blurred face of our incarnate God? How do I let go of everything shallow that I cling to as a false validation of my life, to make God alone the wind beneath my wings? How long does it take to be truly authentic? Have I ever utterly and completely forgiven or loved anyone during the decades of my life?

There is a deeper truth without which life would be just too hard to survive. It is the truth that there is a deeper power at work

On that night of panic, my dry, rasping cough matched my fierce inner distress. Something ultimate was pressing in. As it was with Jesus, I vaguely saw that without my demons, the angels could not come to comfort me. Could it be, I wondered, that this neglected desert of my soul was also my deepest, most real me, where God lives? Maybe this bleak and hurting place is where incarnation continues to happen.

That is why, for many of us, our inner shadowland is a fearsome place to go because for decades we have defined our goodness and truth by other criteria – our petty successes, our religious performances, our roles and titles, our public persona – all those utterly false indications of our real worth before God.

On the day that followed my dark night, I felt very vulnerable – both in the strangling in my chest and the struggling in my mind. My security, my sanity, suddenly seemed so fragile. I fretted about the complexities and contradictions of my life, its restlessness, its incompleteness, its hidden loneliness, its unrequited desire. And then, as I had to turn in to the core of my being, I wondered whether these shadows and tensions are normal enough. Maybe the very condition of our humanity has to contain within it a pathological frustration with our finitude, a daily dissatisfaction with our limitedness, a hunger for more.

Perhaps we can ever only glimpse a horizon that we can never really reach this side of eternity. It is a hard lesson to learn that this is the natural way of things; that we must find our joy within these frustrating parameters. Theologian Karl Rahner wrote: "In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable we finally learn that here in this life all symphonies must remain unfinished."

And yet, while true, this cannot be

the last word. There is a deeper truth without which life would be just too hard to survive. It is the truth that there is a deeper power at work below our surface uncertainties.

The secret we keep forgetting, when the empty winds of despair blow across the winter wastes of our souls, is that it is always and only within those barren places that we can ever find the transforming comfort of a divine summer. Only then are we aware of God's astonishing bounty. We think we are impoverished in our small torments of insufficiency; but in fact, so often unknowingly, it is then we are on the brink of another breakthrough.

These sudden meltdown moments of unsolicited depth-reflections are usually forced upon us. They come from another place, unbidden. Yet they invite us into a deeper consciousness of God's paradoxical ways, where past brokenness, where our temptations to inner despair, are tenderly held and healed.

St Augustine described such experiences as 'bright darkness'. John of the Cross saw his dark night of the soul as 'a night of love'. Those moments urged the saints, and they urge us, to radical transformation. They are lessons about truth that prepare us for a happy death. Without such catharsis there can be no redemption, no new beginnings, no transformation in how we perceive things, in how we are present to each other on this fragile earth.

After a near-death experience, Viktor Frankl wrote: "One very striking aspect of post-mortem life is that everything gets precious, gets piercingly important. You get stabbed by the beauty of things, by flowers and babies, just by the very act of living, of walking, of breathing and of talking to friends... one gets the much-intensified sense of miracles."

It gives me a particular joy to share these personal reflections with you this weekend as I celebrate 50 years of priesthood. Steroids, meditation and friends, twice a day, are now mending my recent distress – the physical and the spiritual – but not, I hope, before their green graces are sown in the soil of my soul. These summer blessings will carry, I know, new songs of what is possible, stars of courage for stalled hearts, and a tidal pull towards the golden shores of further adventures. In *The Swan*, the poet Mary Oliver wonders at that mysterious moment when reality shifts, when recognition transforms:

Did you too see it, drifting,
all night, on the black river?...

Did you hear it,
fluting and whistling
A shrill dark music – like the rain
pelting the trees – like a waterfall
Knifing down the black ledges?

And did you see it, finally, just
under the clouds –
A white cross streaming
across the sky,
its feet like black leaves,
its wings like the stretching light
of the river?

And did you feel it,
in your heart,
how it pertained to everything?

And have you too finally
figured out what
beauty is for?

And have you changed
your life?

Daniel O'Leary is a priest of the Leeds Diocese based at Our Lady of Grace Presbytery, West Yorkshire

Growth

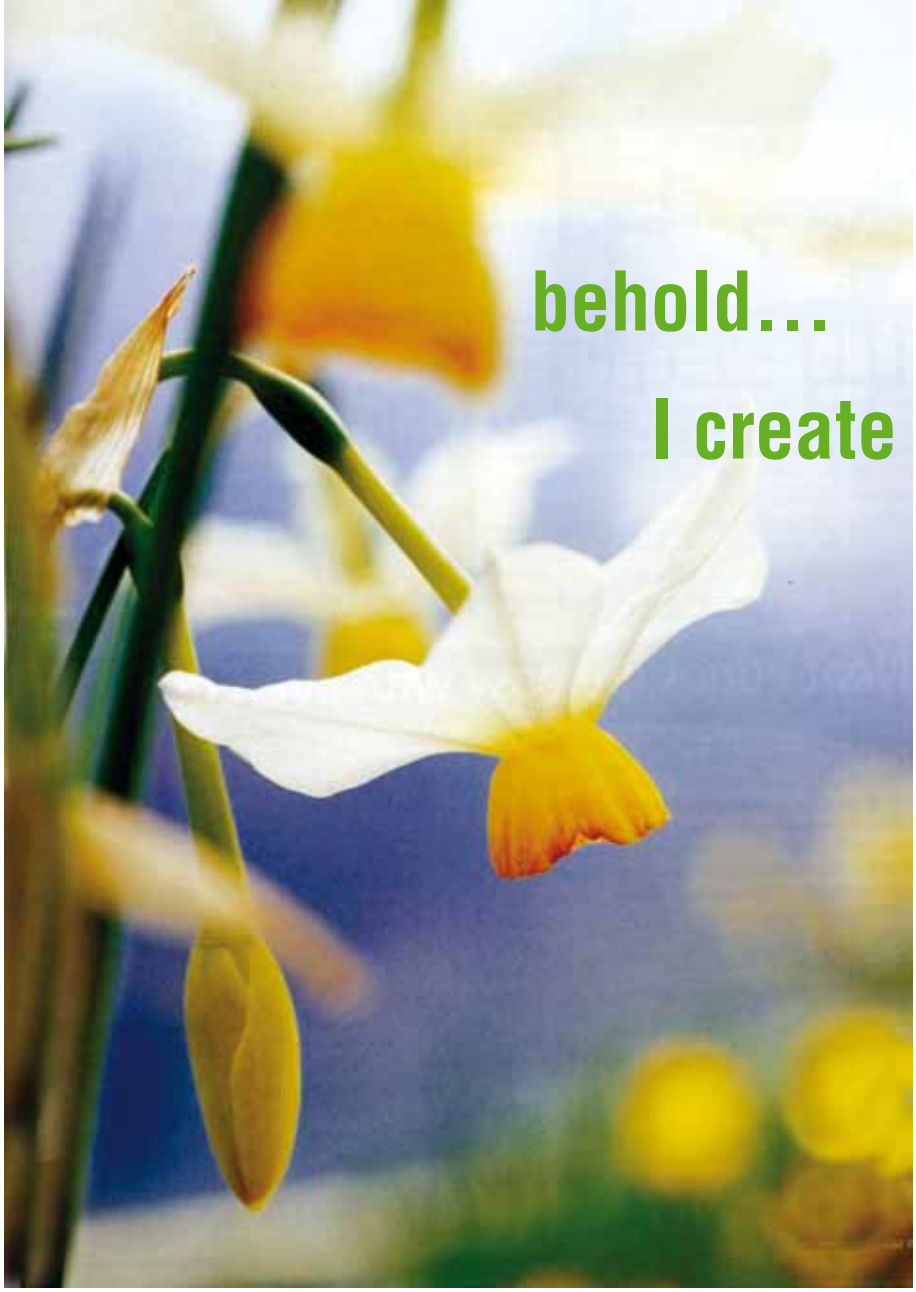
This is how it works, my friend:
winter is the beginning of summer;
the shadow indicates light
and loss is preparation for gain.

How long it took me to learn this!
My eyes, trained to division,
failed to see the cycle of growth
until one long night of loss,
while waiting for the sun to rise,
I discovered amazing light
in my darkness.

It was then I learned the secret
of a loving universe.
Darkness always serves the light.

Joy Cowley

Photo: *Terry Coles*



behold…
I create all things new

Diane Pendola

Who is the 'I' that makes all things new? Raimon Panikkar calls it the 'Thou' of my 'I'. The ground of my being, he says, *"is not an 'other', a non-I, but a Thou, an immanent transcendence in me – which I discover as the I (and therefore as my I)*. This 'I' is a radical relationship with all that is.

In this 'I' the divine is not placed outside of us but right at the centre of reality – a reality that is informed and embodied in the cosmic celebration so magnificently in view as we approach the burgeoning abundance of spring; a reality that is witnessed, effected and transformed by our human consciousness and participation; a reality whose every thread is shot through with mystery, depth and infinity. *"The reality I/Thou is a relation that constitutes reality itself"*, Panikkar says.

This is the *I* that creates all things new. This is the *I* that includes me and you. We participate in making all things new if we are willing to step into the fullness to which we are called by the *Thou* that constitutes our deepest Self, our deepest identity.

Thomas Berry tells us that the fixed and unchanging universe that shaped our conception of a God who was also fixed and unchanging is undergoing a transformational moment. In the 21st century, our emerging understanding of the universe is one of cosmogenesis – not a cyclic repetition of unchanging patterns but a series of new and unrepeatable events. *"In cosmogenesis each fundamental breakthrough evokes a multiplicity of possibilities. In each new era, creativity explodes…"* From the first elementary particles, to the creation of galaxies to the great star that sacrificed itself in a supernova explosion to create our planet earth, one could say that there is an 'I' at work that creates all things new.

Through our incredibly sophisticated scientific instruments and mathematical calculations we are now aware that the universe is expanding. If we make our way back to the beginning of the universe (the so-called 'Big-Bang') the universe converges into an infinitely creative centre from which our cosmic journey begins.

God is a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere

Today we look from the inside of a universe that is expanding in all directions, with no edges, expanding into an infinity and from every place we look – whether from earth or Mars or our own human hearts – we are at the centre!

I'm reminded of the words of the Greek pre-socratic philosopher, Empedocles who said, *"God is a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere."* What the ancients knew through wisdom and intuition we are now learning through our modern science.

I am that centre. You are that centre. To repeat Panikkar, *"The reality I/Thou is a relation that constitutes reality itself."* This is the 'I' that creates the whole world new. Out of this creative centre arises the not-yet, the possible out of the impossible, the actual out of the imagined.

The monotheistic God we used to believe in as fixed and unchanging is a God of a former cosmology. Many of us can no longer believe in this God and because of the gap we experience during this transitional time between competing world views, many have dropped God altogether.

The word itself has been so maligned that we search desperately for what can meaningfully serve in its place: *Source*, *Mystery*, *Ground of Being*, *Divine Mother/Father/Spirit*? No matter the name, there seems to be a universal human yearning towards this depth dimension at the centre of our being, a longing to know our true Self, our true identity.

Again I find guidance in Raimon Panikkar: *"In order to know the identity of a person, love is required."* The path to self knowledge is love. The path to knowledge of another is love. We are reminded of the two great commandments of Jesus *"to love God with your whole heart, mind and soul"* (and, he said, the other is like it, related to it), *"to love your neighbor as your self"*.

Perhaps Jesus really did mean that our deepest identity, our deepest Self, is constituted in this radical relationship with all that is, a relationship that is cosmic, human and divine, that does not place God and neighbour, or human and earth, at odds but embraces the whole of reality as 'I', my deepest identity. *"A current of love circulates throughout all three worlds. Love to be sure is no mere feeling, it is, rather the dynamism itself of the real, the force that moves the universe."*

and this is the wonder
that's keeping the
stars apart
i carry your heart
(i carry it in my heart)
ee cummings

I have been musing on these things: *"What does it mean to create all things new? What does it mean to love the other as my Self? What does it mean that reality is relational, cosmotheandric? What does it mean to be human?"*

At this point in my life I know the answer is as simple as love – and as difficult. The 'I' which is our true identity comes from Love and returns to Love. But with my (your, our) loving, love itself changes, expands, becomes more of what it already is. I give form to the formless, song to the wind. I am a new face of love, a new voice and new imprint in the unfolding journey of the world soul. I am a new creativity in an expanding universe.

Who I am and what I do ***counts.*** Wherever I take love, whether into loveless prisons or loveless corporations, transformation happens because love is now there. As the mystical poet St John of the Cross said nearly 500 years ago: *"Where there is no love, put love and you will find love."*

I write these *Earthlines* to awaken my own sleepy self! I write them because I think our theology is important; how we understand ourselves and our place in the world is important; how we think is important!

Do we see ourselves as creators and participants in this great cosmic adventure? Do we know our deepest identity? If the cosmos is evolving and the human heart is evolving I suggest that God is evolving, too. And if, at the centre of this dynamic creativity is the urge to 'create all things new', then truly ours is a time of great hope as we tap the hidden depths of mystery to bring forth the love that can move mountains. ■

Leave behind a world that values doing over being
and enter a contemplative way of life.
Walk along the creek.
Sit in the woods.
Spend time with a loved one.
Return to Earth.
Return to True Natue.
BE a center for healing and
transformation for our world.

Permission Diane Pendola, Skyline EcoContemplative Center

the silence of sounds

Thomas Moore

Noise contributes to the anxiety of our age. I'm the shopper in our family, and I enjoy this role. But there is one thing that disturbs my weekly grocery trip: the grating sound of metal baskets and trolleys.

In my early childhood I discovered that I have a modest talent for music, and all my life I have been sensitive to sound. In my undergraduate days, working on a degree in music composition, I took a course in 'ear training', which only made my problem with the soundscapes of daily life worse. The course that really 'ruined' my ears was the study of orchestration, when I learned to make fine distinctions in the sonorities of the various instruments of the orchestra. It has been both a blessing and a curse to be so acutely aware of the sounds around me.

Before university, I lived for 13 years in a monastery, where an atmosphere of quiet was part of the rule. We observed silence strictly from late evening to early morning. I still try to keep the monk alive in me, and no doubt the love of stillness goes back to those days of monastic calm.

The word 'silence' apparently derives from a word that means 'to sit down'. Silence is a way of enjoying

a pause in an otherwise busy and noisy life. It's a positive thing. I remember going on week-long retreats in my monastery days, when the undisturbed quiet allowed me to notice more the sounds of the wind, the bees and birds, and, if it was a truly effective retreat, the flutter of butterflies.

I learned in the monastery, too, that you can evoke silence with architecture, furnishings, and colour. My family and friends know my taste for muted greys and browns. Neatness and cleanliness help quiet the world, and a serene photograph or painting makes its contribution, too.

The room in my house where I work tends to be cluttered. Books and papers arrive in great number every day, and though I try occasionally to keep up with the torrent, I rarely manage a clean desk and a well-ordered bookshelf. But, in those rare moments when the devastation has been conquered, I sense the silence in the place. I feel inspired, and for a few minutes, before the post arrives, I know what it's like to be spatially quiet.

People speak of noise pollution, but in society at large I see no indication that it is a real concern. Yet noise contributes to the anxiety of our age. If the quiet sounds of a dancing brook and the soothing music of the sea calm and quiet a person, imagine what the roar of jets and the constant drum of traffic do. Sounds are as much a part of the environment as beautiful parks and unsettling trash. They colour the spaces in which we live, and they have an impact on us, even if we are unaware of their presence.

The subtle power of sound is like that of aromatherapy. If slight tinctures can so powerfully affect your mood and thoughts, what do the ordinary smells of car exhaust and refineries do to us? If Mozart and Bach can raise the spirits, what do the noises of factories and traffic congestion do? A study in Sweden suggests that people living near an airport have more problems with high blood pressure than other citizens in the city. Where do you work? What is the level and shape of sound there?

I play the piano for silence. The sounds coming out of my finger action scatter the activities and concerns that are the 'noise' of daily life. Sometimes I find more silence at the piano than in a quiet room reading or studying. The absence of sound doesn't always create silence because, like everything else, silence is not a literal thing. The most quieting sound I know is the tumble of water over the stones of a mountain stream. One day I took my recorder to a nearby stream and now, when I crave some silence, I listen to that brook and get away from the noisy thoughts of my soundless work of writing.

silence is a taste of the eternal, which is a natural part of us

I don't want to moralise and romanticise in my rant against noise. Silence is important, but so are loud signs of vitality and music that wake your innards. But we seem well skilled at making noise and unconscious about the beauty of silence. It seems that we assume that there is nothing to do about sounds; that there is no art of silence and no practical purpose for it anyway.

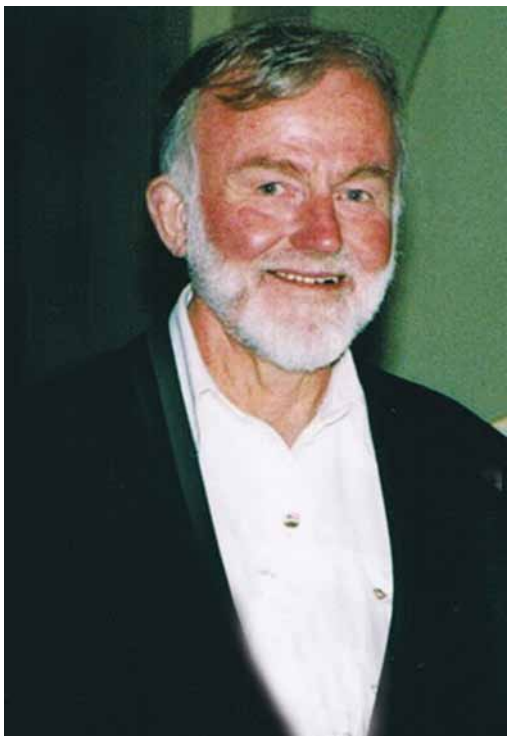
But silence is a taste of the eternal, which is a natural part of us. If we are noisy and active all the time, we will never know the invisible world that is interior to us and to everything. It's no accident that a church or temple might be a place where you can discover the forceful strength and healing power of quiet and stillness. The place is full of spirits, which move invisibly and make their soundless noises, which are sometimes captured in chant and polyphony and in the motionless drone of a harmonium and the otherworldly twang of a sitar.

Silence is a way of listening to the subtle sounds that keep the world on course. Pythagoras said he could hear the music of the planets making their rounds. Some adepts know well the cosmic sound of *Om*. I feel that different kinds of music take me to various places in the geography of the soul and spirit.

Individually we may need to cultivate the active art of silence. Culturally, too, we might rediscover our interiority and the subtle qualities of the world through quiet. We might calm ourselves sufficiently to stop reacting so quickly and thoughtlessly to events. International politics might take a giant step forward if the politicians stopped talking for a while and listened to all the information and wisdom floating in the quiet air.

Silence is precious, not because it is literally empty but because it is a kind of fullness. In silence we hear our thoughts and take in the world. We become receivers rather than just doers. We are less active but more alive. When we speak from silence, our voices contain the whispers of a muse, a passing spirit, and an angel. Our words resonate. They are worth listening to, because in them the otherwise silent world finds its voice. ■

Thomas Moore is author of *Care of the Soul, The Re-enchantment of everyday life and The Soul of Sex* (Permission Resurgence)



celebration of a life still being lived

The place is full, maybe 300 strong. From all over the place. Hard to pick the common elements though there are some groups that look familiar. Famous faces even, seen them on TV. Something to do with protest, police vans, lots of noise. But there's lots of older folk as well. As the crowd settles one particular older man is sought out. Sitting five rows back from the front, three in from the aisle. "You're supposed to be at the front. Come on up says the speaker, you are after all the guest of honour." As he approaches the centre of the group people clap, spontaneously, full of encouragement.

The MC takes up the task. Relax people he says, this will take time. Don't look to endure this. We are here to enjoy it. The 'it' is the celebration of a life still being lived. Fifty years of service, gold watch material, the honouring of a kaumatua, the rituals of talk and performance followed by food and conviviality.

First the family members talk, old reminiscences of times in Waihi, of the growing up in the depression when resources were slim and the community was parochial but dependable. Being Catholic, so distinctive, like wearing the uniform of the outsider. Not much subtlety then about who was in or out, right or wrong, survival of the fittest. But generosity in those old church schools is recalled, getting the basics right and wearing the badge of difference. An old cousin rises to speak, talks of the small things, the domestic details of family life that supported survival, like the illegal delivery of cream. Sounds nonsensical to the 21st century listeners except the nodding going on in the front row of five women past 70 tell you this was their life too.

So the guest of honour sits as wave upon wave of recollection washes the gathering. Some of it starts to bite. The illegal protesting that results in arrest and confrontation. The stubborn pig-headedness, calm analysis and evident courage is recounted in the middle of the field at Waikato. Some people were baying for blood as the plane flies overhead and the police call off the game. The South Africans are astonished, befuddled by the intensity of the response to their presence.

Today there is admiration – at the time anything but. The local bishop banned his presence in the diocese. How ludicrous it now seemed, how demeaning it was at the time. The very aspect of identity inherited so intuitively from those Waihi days that kept us strong being cleaved apart, because the message to confront the moral reality was too raw to digest. So resort to flying the flag of power, send him to Coventry (or anywhere other than Hamilton) and he'll get the picture, reform his ways. Fat chance. This was just rehearsal for further arrests at Bastion Point in the second occupation. "Who will rid me of this recalcitrant Priest?" The stories continue.

Songs break the talking. The group from the Great Barrier, remote and isolated, sing in rhyming couplets of the fidelity of service they have received from their friend for more than a decade. He's the Bishop of Great Barrier to them and they won't have it any other way. He has baptised, married them and buried them, mediated their disputes, told them off and apologised for his inadequacies. They love him dearly and he is warmed by their affection and embarrassed by their testimony.

Out of the gathering springs a young man, made old by over half his years in prison, a body disfigured from the ravages of a chemical life. His mate is with him, a companion from the inside, nervy and edgy in the company of people talking of love, values, courage and conviction of a different kind. The young man has written down what he wants to say, too unsure to leave what he has to extempore chance. It's about respect for his matua, his father who has housed him on the outside and visited him on the inside, never abandoning the sense of hope. This is ten short lines of text and a textbook full of experience. He is followed by a staff member from the

local prison who speaks also of the fidelity of service she has witnessed. She too is economical in delivery but powerfully on point. This person we are honouring is far from ordinary.

So on it goes. It has been an hour and a half of talk and song and poetry crafted for the occasion and yet signs of fatigue are few. The enjoyment, laughter, poignancy and insight carry the moment without awkwardness. This life we are celebrating is exposed in all its dignity; idiosyncrasy finding easy company with authenticity, stubbornness with courage, elegant expression with irritated invective, kindness with impatience. Speakers in turn are celebratory but enough truth is exposed to see the essential humanness. This man is deeply loved because of his complexity, not in spite of it.

A right of reply. Even the accused gets this. A last word, but not yet. His companions are not yet finished with him. At the invitation of the MC the whole gathering rises and claps long and boisterously. It is a profound moment, the symbolism redolent. At 77 years old, after 50 years of service, his friends and family are saying without caveat they love and appreciate him as a great human being. He is shaken by the evident resolve of those who know him best to provide total amnesty for his deficiencies and evince unbridled admiration for who he is and what he stands for. This is not the tangi. It is the rehearsal for the tangi. Forgiveness abounds.

So now he gets to explain himself. True to self he is thankful for his life, fully in the round. He explains how he made the choice to do the things he has done. He talks about his journey narrative, one in which he is still examining and testing propositions. He is frank about exploring the limits of loyalty to his institution whilst holding to the essential integrity of moral inquiry and praxis that follows such reflection. We hear about how much we thought he was so certain about were matters that continually perplexed him. He admits the courage that seemed so much a defining aspect of his temperament often deserted him. It is a fluent discourse of a life that is well lived and thoughtfully surveyed. We could not ask for more.

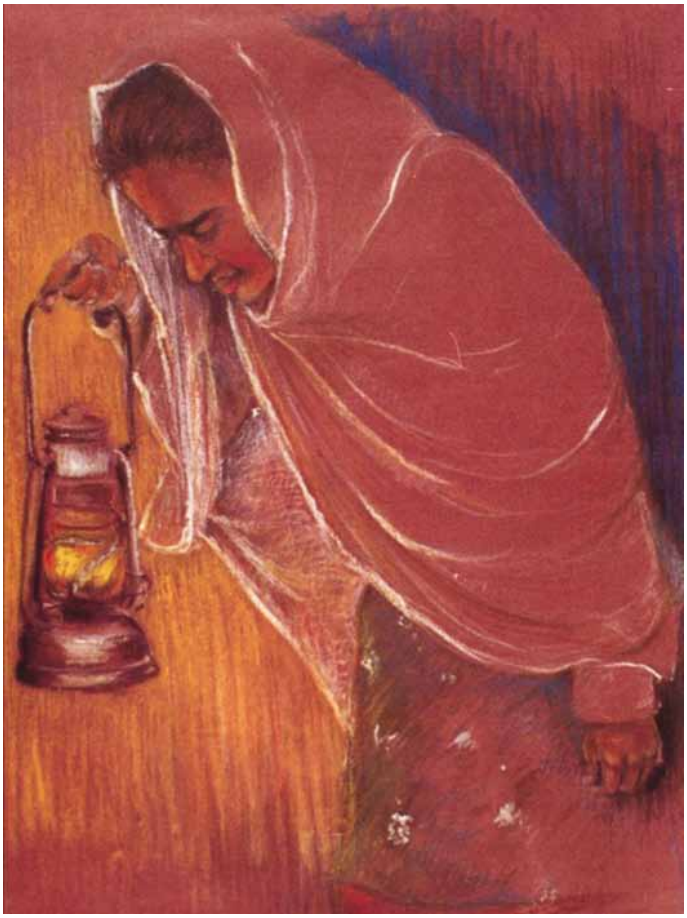
And then it ends with a surprise. He introduces the local super city mayoral candidate, endorses his run for office and invites him to explain himself, a gesture so quintessentially his motif. There is still fight in the dog yet. We end with whakariomai.

He is just an ordinary man. His name is Terry Dibble and he has been a priest for 50 years. ■

Pat Snedden

Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost

(Luke 15:9)



Kathleen Rushton

Three parables grouped together in *Luke 15* are Jesus' response to the Pharisees and scribes who were 'grumbling' because "this fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." These parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the father with two difficult sons image God as welcoming and rejoicing because what was lost is found.

We are invited into the image of the parable for in the reality of its hard world we glimpse images of God. These parables refer explicitly (*15:4, 8*) and implicitly (*15:11*) to the world of experience of those addressed. The social circumstances are different. From the poverty of the woman, to a maybe not-so-poor shepherd's life, to life on a farm which compared to the other two seems prosperous.

Ancient sources tell us that the economic survival of families then, as today, depended on the additional paid labour of women. As a rule the income earned by women and girls working in rural tasks and, most often, in textile production matched only what they had to spend on food. Then, as often today, women were paid half as much as men. The woman is searching for a drachma which takes her twice as long to earn.

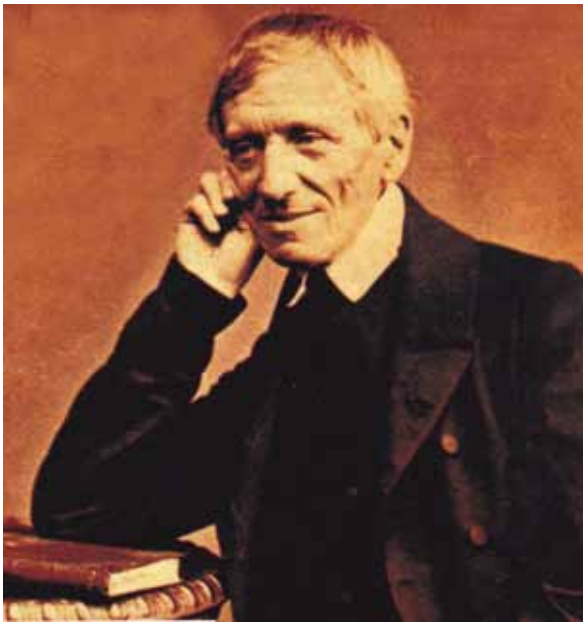
The parable of the day-labourers in the vineyard may well be the counterpart to the parable of the lost coin. The woman is searching for a lost drachma, a coin of the same value as a denarius which was the usual daily wage of the vineyard labourers *(Matthew 20:9)*. A drachma represents one two-hundredth of the annual amount required for one to subsist at the poverty level. One drachma paid barely for two days of provisions and other needs. Like a denarius, a drachma symbolises the money for the daily bread.

This parable is often interpreted with an image of women who do not have to earn money. When they spend it they use that of their husbands. This is connected to a perception that women's 'role' is in the home. This myth, as the parable shows us, does not match reality then, as it does not match reality today. That she is searching for the housekeeping money her husband has earned is not found in the text.

Some interpret this parable in terms of the woman searching for a coin lost from her dowry headdress. As we have seen one drachma is no treasure. Support for this view is taken from the custom of Bedouin women who wear coin ornaments on their headdresses. This is a recent custom not an ancient one. This reading of the coin as part of a headdress connects women with jewellery rather than with the means of survival and the pressure this puts on them.

This is indeed a parable for our times. Of the world's one billion poorest people three-fifths are women and girls. Seventy per cent of the world's 1.3 billion people living on less that $1 a day are women or girls. Of the 960 million adults in the world who cannot read, two-thirds are women. Women everywhere typically earn less than men. (*Figures from the United Nations, 2009*)

the reluctant saint



Newman's Unquiet Grave: the Reluctant Saint
John Cornwell
Continuum. 271 pp
Review: Michael Hill ic

A new biography of John Henry Newman is to be expected and welcomed in view of his September beatification by Pope Benedict. This biography will not disappoint anyone wanting to know who Newman really was and what he has to say to people today.

In my experience John Cornwell has always provided a fascinating read – even if sometimes controversial. He pulls no punches. Those who have read his study of Pius XII, *Hitler's Pope,* might be apprehensive as to what to expect from this book, especially in view of its challenging title.

The circumstances of Newman's burial provide a launching pad, but it is a minor aspect of the book. The fact that Newman insisted he should be buried in the same grave as his lifelong friend and companion Oratorian, Fr Ambrose St John, has aroused some speculation as to whether their friendship might have been homosexual. The author considers this carefully, and by and large dismisses it as idle speculation.

All his life Newman enjoyed very close friendships with men and women. He was a very attractive man and people loved him. He reciprocated this, but usually in an undemonstrative way.

He once preached a famous sermon on the subject on the feast of St John (December 27), where he identifies the 'disciple whom Jesus loved' with John the Apostle. His analysis of this loving relationship between Jesus and the Beloved Disciple is for Newman the foundation of brotherly and sisterly love and the true basis of the commandment to *love one's neighbour*.

Newman does not come through, however, as universally benevolent: he had sharp disagreements with quite a number of prominent churchmen. Cardinal Manning, his great contemporary, referred to him as a 'great hater'. Strong words, but it reflected the scant regard Newman had for most of the Ultramontane party – those who in his view made extravagant claims for the powers of the Pope and the Roman Curia, of whom Manning was a leader.

Cornwell provides a fine analysis of this aspect of Newman's character. If he trusted someone, then he loved them. But if his trust was betrayed, he could never bring himself to enter again into a close relationship with that individual. Even eminent churchmen could

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▷▷ All three parables end with a joyous feast that evokes the feast of God's joy when all the people of God have found the way to life. These joyous experiences in the midst of a hard daily grind evoke God's comprehensive forgiveness and healing. Who in the time of Jesus, and who now, could dare to imagine this vision of God's searching out and healing of humanity? This great vision of God's abundance is imaged here in the face of the hard world of human experience yet also in the small or great joys found in the midst of life's hardships. The great messianic feast of God's joy is grounded in the small party of the woman and her neighbours which is a foretaste, an assurance and a promise of immense healing.

Do I rejoice and celebrate God's joy or am I 'grumbling' like those to whom Jesus first told these parables which image God beyond our imagining? Prayerfully reflect on the parable of the lost coin and gaze on Joseph Scott of Pakistan's *The Lost Coin* above. When have I experienced God imaged as a poor woman determinedly searching for me when I was/am lost? When have I experienced God's rejoicing grounded in the love and celebration of neighbours celebrating that I am found?

(Gospel Reading for 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time Luke 15:1-32)

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

▷▷ become obsessed with power and personal prestige, and Newman as a Catholic discovered this to be the case with some bishops and most Ultramontanes.

If one were to declare a single underlying theme for this biography, it would be that Newman's holiness and eminence as a Christian is deeply integrated into what he taught and wrote. His words reflected his inner being. From early childhood he enjoyed a deep sense of God's personal presence. The unseen world of the spirit was intensely real to him. People quickly discovered this aura which he possessed, and were often in awe of it.

It is for this reason that he reacted so fiercely and strongly to author Charles Kingsley's slander that the Catholic clergy were notorious liars: "Truth, for its own sake, has never been a virtue of the Roman clergy," Kingsley wrote. "Fr Newman informs us that it need not, and on the whole ought not to be…" Newman was outraged and within weeks his most famous book, the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, was pouring from his pen in serial form.

At this time (1864) Newman had been a Catholic for 20 years, but many Catholics still regarded him with suspicion and Protestants saw him as a turncoat. The *Apologia* changed all that. Its publication finally established his reputation, and many Anglicans understood for the first time why Newman and many others had gone over to Rome. Many who had little sympathy with the church were profoundly moved. The novelist George Eliot stated, "it breathed much life into me".

Cornwell has not given us a biography in the conventional sense. Elements in Newman's life are sometimes skimmed over (like his family background). What we find is a profound analytical study, focusing on the major moments: his most important writings, his controversies, his relationships particularly with fellow Oratorians, his place in the great events of his lifetime such as the definition in 1870 of Papal Infallibility.

The topics particularly well covered are his time in Dublin, the foundation of the Catholic University there and his classic text: *The Idea of a University.* Similarly his teaching on the role of the laity in the Church is fully described, and it is easy to see why Paul VI described Vatican II as "Newman's Council".

One of his most difficult books is *The Grammar of Assent.* Cornwell provides a fine summary of its argument, showing that one comes to faith not via logical arguments as if following a scientific proof, but by a complex chain of events, experiences, through people, by prayer and personal illumination.

So… was Newman a saint? According to the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, St Thérese of Lisieux knew she was a saint and even provided during her last illness for the preservation of relics, like her hair. Newman was precisely the opposite. He never thought he was a saint, so he decreed that his body should be buried in mulch to guarantee it would rapidly corrupt and leave no relics. When the grave was opened in 2008, no trace of his body was found or that of Ambrose St John.

Here we have two contrasting approaches to sainthood. One who knew her destiny, her 'little way', and rested confident in God's call to her. And one who knew his faults and avoided like the plague becoming the object of a cult. It takes all sorts to make a saint. Take your pick! ■

a journey with Indigenous 'in-laws'

Listening to Country
Ros Moriarty
Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin
Review: Myrna Tonkinson

The author offers her readers a window into the lives of some women of Borroloola in the Northern Territory as they travel to a desert location to conduct a women's ceremony.

Ros Moriarty gained access to these experiences through her husband, John, who was born at Borroloola, but was removed from his mother when he was four years old. Like many of the Stolen Generations, John had a white father and an Aboriginal mother; in the eyes of the authorities, this was enough to justify his removal from his young mother. John's story is very much at the core of his wife's account.

Nine of the book's ten chapters begin with a diary entry from Ros' journey with John's classificatory mother and other Yanyuwa women from Borroloola to a ceremonial ground in the Tanami Desert. These entries convey a sense of the excitement and the logistical and other practical aspects as the women travel from their remote community to an equally remote place to gather with others from several other far-flung communities. The women assemble to sing, dance, tell stories; thus the elders induct younger women, including the author, into some of the religious knowledge and rituals that are shared across a wide area.

However, the bulk of the book is about the author's life and that of her husband, her love and admiration for whom comes through in every chapter. She writes about his Irish father as well as his mother and the Borroloola family. She devotes attention to their children, and to her own background. She provides detail about the vicissitudes of setting up a business, Balarinji design company, and its success in Australia and abroad.

The diary entries, written in the present tense and chronologically, tell the women's bush story, while there is a more wide-ranging account, in past tense, of the Moriartys' lives, including Ros' introduction to John's family and many subsequent trips to Borroloola. These parts of the book seem like random musings, switching back and forth over her life and more than 20 years' connection to Borroloola; there is a fair amount of repetition.

For readers unfamiliar with Aboriginal people and with outback communities, the book provides a gentle introduction. Moriarty paints vivid word pictures of the landscape, the people and their situation. In economical language and with a personal touch, she conveys information about living conditions, poverty, health and other problems that are often the subject of detached statistical accounts.

She offers insights into the stoicism, patience, affection and humour of this extended family. The contrast between their lives and the life she and her own nuclear family have attained, despite her husband's scars from his early removal from family and unstable institutional existence, is stark.

The Moriartys' success is countered by the many tribulations of their Aboriginal relatives; the author makes the contrast plain and conveys her frustration and anger about this from time to time, but in muted tones, leaving readers to draw their own conclusions. The trajectory of John's life shows the value of education, the importance of serendipity, the power of kindness, the human capacity for change and resilience.

There is much to applaud also in the lives of the Borroloola family who have endured much hardship and yet come across as positive, forgiving and generous. The voices of the Aboriginal women appear in several chapters in transcriptions of their accounts of history, beliefs, family relationships and so on.

One of these accounts is Yuwani Annie's origin story, which blends a Yanyuwa version with the biblical Adam and Eve story. There are also poignant accounts of separation and loss — of country and family — and of fears for the future in conditions of rapid change, so much of which is imposed rather than chosen.

Readers with experience of unstructured time among Aboriginal people on their own lands in remote settings, and who are familiar with the history and anthropology on which the book touches, may be less satisfied than less-informed readers. The author invokes clichés and tends to romanticise the past.

Phrases like 'the last of their line' have been used by observers for many decades now; 'songs handed down for thousands of generations' and 'the world's oldest culture' invoke a changeless culture from before colonisation. And some accounts of mystical experiences are presented in a just-so fashion that begs for analysis.

These quibbles aside, this book is well-written and offers a personal and family journey that is predominantly positive. It will be appreciated by many as an example of Australian small business success, as well as for the story that is given more prominence in the book's title and blurb. ■

Dr Myrna Tonkinson is an honourary research fellow in anthropology in the School of Social and Cultural Studies at the University of Western Australia. She has done research among Aboriginal people in the Western Desert of WA since 1974.

a prophet bows out

Desmond Tutu, former Anglican Archbishop of Capetown, has announced that at age 79 his priority is to spend time with his wife and family. A man of deep faith, integrity and joyful simplicity, a worker for reconciliation, his goodness shone forth like a beacon. When I read the news I thought of another prophetic cleric who is not so well known today, the white Beyers Naudé, who succeeded Tutu as secretary of the South African Council of Churches.

Naudé was a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, and a member of the Broederbond – the close-knit group which fuelled the apartheid regime. However, he began to doubt apartheid's religious justification after attending interracial church services in the 1950s, and meditation on the Bible.

In response to the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 the WCC sent a delegation to Johannesburg and met with local church representatives. The consultation's resolutions rejected race as the basis of exclusion from churches. Naudé alone among his church's delegates steadfastly continued to reject any theological basis for apartheid after Prime Minister Verwoerd forced the Dutch Reformed Church delegation to repudiate the consultation.

"It was," Beyers Naudé said, "a choice between obedience in faith and subjection to the authority of the church." Choosing to obey God rather than man he walked out, a reluctant rebel, 48 years old. He and his family were ostracised by the close-knit community in which they had grown up, and for eight years the South African government 'banned' him – a form of house arrest with severe restrictions on his movements and interactions. Subsequent political changes brought him public respect.

Crosscurrents
Jim Elliston

welfare problems

It is undeniable that NZ has an enormous financial problem in the health and welfare sector. The government-appointed working group on welfare dependence has suggested that, since employers have a vested interest in the health of their workers, they should be more involved in managing their workers' health issues. This would take pressure off the government. This seems logical, but for two problems.

One is our mediocre standard of management. According to a report commissioned by the Ministry of Economic Development we perform poorly in three basic categories: Operations Management (10th out of 17); Performance Management (9th); People Management (14th).

The second problem is more fundamental, namely, is a person first a worker or a citizen? While a solution implementing the principle of subsidiarity – never do at a higher level what can be done at a lower one – is to be commended, the 'solution' will be a failure if it ignores basic principles. This is a discussion that needs to take place: it has implications for a wide variety of issues currently being studied by the government.

cleaning out the stables

The religious order Legionnaires of Christ, favoured by Pope John-Paul II and his right-hand man Cardinal Sodano along with several other influential Vatican personnel, was founded by Mexican priest Marcial Maciel Degollado. He was long suspected of sexual abuse and dubious financial probity, but his influential patrons protected him. Cardinal Ratzinger was not one of them, and one of his first actions as Pope was to remove him from office.

Benedict XVI recently appointed Italian Archbishop De Paolis (with four assistants) to oversee the reform of the Order, giving him extremely broad powers to clean up the mess "for as long as it takes to carry out the path of renewal and lead it to the celebration of an extraordinary general chapter, whose main purpose will be to bring completion to the revision of the constitutions."

The Order's current leaders are to remain in their positions "unless it becomes necessary to provide otherwise." It seems the top echelon of leaders were either complicit in the goings-on, or were incompetent, but in the short term they should be able to keep the Order running because of their practical knowledge. (By dismissing Iraqi public servants appointed under Saddam Hussein, the Americans caused administrative chaos.)

corrections minister 'explains'

TVI's Guyon Espiner to Judith Collins: "Why does NZ have such a high prison population?" Minister: "Maori make up 17 percent of NZ's population, but 51 percent of those imprisoned. Other countries have similar figures regarding imprisonment of minorities." That is a fact, not an explanation. Research indicates that social problems correlate directly with income disparity. Our average income seems high, but about three-quarters of workers earn below the average.

food for thought

Eugene Cullen Kennedy is emeritus professor of psychology at Loyola University, Chicago. In a column describing the frustration engendered by authority figures acting with a pre-Vatican II mentality, he gave the following advice: "Vatican II Catholics may well follow the advice my psychiatrist wife and I give to healthy people when they are put upon by the unhealthy: Repeat at least twice a day, "I am not the one who is crazy here." ■

the revolutionary vision of vatican II

Early after the end of the Second Vatican Council nearly every Catholic Church altar in New Zealand was turned around. For the first time in 1000 years the priest celebrated Mass in the local language facing the congregation. This was the first and most obvious sign that big change in the Church, flowing from Vatican II, was underway.

What happened at St Peters in Rome, when 3000 Bishops and experts gathered over four sessions covering three years under two Popes, cannot be fully explained sociologically, historically or even intellectually. The radical outcome can be explained only as the work of the Holy Spirit. The proposed changes were momentous.

At the time the bishops went to the Council they were leading a centralized, immutable church with a sin-obsessed heritage. They arrived in Rome and the Spirit hit them. They immediately scrapped the preparatory documents prepared by the Curia and proposed that the Council Fathers shape the documents. Pope John XXIII agreed. They set a big agenda. Very few Catholics realized what had happened. The bishops had revolted against the Curia. One writer calls this the equivalent of the storming of the Bastille.

Some of what the Council proposed included an emphasis on the People of God as the primary model of church, more important than, but complementary to, the traditional hierarchical model. There was an evaluation of the modern world, the updating and reform of the institutional structures, and the granting of greater responsibility to local churches. We were to read the 'signs of the times' and respond.

In the style of the early church the emphasis would be invitational. The words dialogue, collaboration and collegiality have been used often to describe the spirit that prevailed. There was to be a new recognition of women's equality. The challenge for all of us, including the hierarchy, was to trust the Holy Spirit.

Vatican II was the most important religious gathering since the Reformation. At its conclusion, it was hailed as the end of the counter-reformation, the end of the Constantinian era and it heralded a New Pentecost. 'The beginning of a beginning' proclaimed Karl Rahner, arguably the greatest theologian of the century.

As I continue to read books, articles and commentaries on Vatican II all these years later, I still cannot contain my excitement at the possibilities and the vision. One of the most important ideas is that Vatican II has set in place a theology to deal with the current global crisis in the Catholic Church.

The 'people of God' would each have equal responsibility for implementing the Council and bringing the radical message of the non-violent Jesus to a hungry, chaotic world. The gifts and wisdom of all people would be mobilized. All roles and functions in the Church would be open to everyone. Mutual accountability and training would be paramount. The best wisdom the world had to offer would be brought into the structures.

All this is possible because Vatican II changed the way the church understood itself as its primary identity went from being a hierarchical authority to a church conceived of as 'the people of God.' It enabled a theology to develop and became involved in major public debates over such matters as war and peace, capitalism, inequality, racism, sexism and poverty. It brought divine insight to bear on the condition of humankind.

There was to be a respectful listening, a new ecclesiastical style. The church was to be serving rather than controlling, including rather than excluding. A new sense emerged that all authority must be accountable to be legitimate.

The Holy Spirit was clearly thinking ahead! ■

Robert Consedine

Robert Consedine is part of the priesthood of the laity in Christchurch, a Treaty of Waitangi educator, author and writer

A Mother's Journal...

Kaaren Mathias

Monsoon swathes us, a damp, woollen blanket of mist scarfed around the green forested hills. Thunderstorms wake me from sleep and zag across my eyes until I sit up and watch the rain driving against the window. Green lace doilies of ferns and mosses climb the steps. The earthy perfume of moist forest floor follows us as we try out a new path. We are found by leeches, a mosquito and nettles. And bewitched by the purple cobra-headed orchids.

We've moved to a new town in the hills of Uttarakhand, North India, where our children can go to school and Jeph and I can start new jobs working at a more regional level. These Himalayan foothills are the front-line against the monsoons' full frontal assault. So far we're enchanted if somewhat confounded. My seasonal devotion book only has summer, autumn, winter and spring. Monsoon is her own season, pulling me along a sodden and overgrown path to The Creator.

We take umbrellas everywhere, even to visit our closest neighbours. Damp clothes are draped around the house, needing days to dry but there are no cloth nappies! Nearly two-year-old Jalori miraculously became toilet-trained days before we moved to this land of moss, monkeys, mould and mist. All our normal routines are out of kilter.

Moving was exhausting and we are sad to farewell Lahaul, sheltering in a trench, and sunny now in the rain shadow of the Himalayas. It has been a long time of soul searching to find a place to live, for work and school that we hope can suit us for some time. Moving to a new town is tiring and lonely at first – carefully testing the waters to find new friends and sussing out the shops and the phone and internet, and carrying the hope that we can find a place of belonging for this season in our lives.

So the fog swirls outside, and I think of how the monsoon makes herself fully at home here for these 8-9 weeks. We have to make friends with this seasonal visitor with her damp grey shawl and grumbling cough. She stomps inside, muddy boots and all, sprawls out and tells cheerful and loud tales over a second and then a third steaming chai. Then in mid-September she will gather up her billowing skirts, and with not even a farewell "Namaste!" flounce back to the Indian Ocean. What a woman!

"The summer monsoon flora is very rich throughout July and August in the Western Himalaya, but cannot be seen without getting wet."

Flowers of the Himalaya – Polunin and Stainton

Kaaren and Jeph, with their four children, live and work in health and community development in North India