

# TUI MOTU

## InterIslands

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS 1997-2017



## Participation

MARY THORNE writes of the fire in our bellies for mission  
MANUEL BEAZLEY explains the importance of roles in a community

PLUS: PETER MATHESON says that Martin Luther's insights still challenge us

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*Pentecost Dance*

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## EDITORIAL

### Renewing Our Participation

I was in the school playground on Tuesday afternoon taking photos of some of the parents when my six-year-old niece ran out of her classroom with her teacher in tow to “show and tell” us to each other. She was knitting different aspects of her world together in her expanding circle of love. Her actions reminded me of Manuel Beazley’s explanation of the importance his *whānau* place on the younger members learning to participate in the functioning of the marae. The *kaumātua* and *kuia* mentor and encourage the young people so that everyone understands their role in making the community. When the testing times of providing for a *hui* or *tangi* arrive, they all get into gear to offer guests the fullness of hospitality.

This 216th issue explores the principle of participation as outlined in Catholic Social Teachings and practised on the ground – how apt to reflect on participation in the season of Pentecost. Pentecost incites us to refire our involvement in our family, Church and neighbourhood communities. Elizabeth Leaning recommends that young people like herself influence one another to discover their role in mission – we hear echoes of the inspired Peter at the first Pentecost. Maria Fouhy shares how her experience of volunteering refreshed her spirit and Rob Pitts tells of his new enthusiasm for life after climbing from the pit of depression.

Participation requires effort, discernment, practice and love. We’re drawn to cast our lot with those who are making our world more inclusive, just and equal. As our general election will be held later in the year, we might want to start making an effort now to understand the policies offered by candidates and parties. This will allow us to weigh up their impact on the well-being of all people in our country and on the environment. We might also advocate for and encourage fair and supportive relationships with other countries, particularly those in our Pacific neighbourhood as Jack Derwin suggests.

Pentecost invites us to participate enthusiastically and to sustain our effort. Mary Thorne gives us the story of Dorothy Day as an example of “radical, fearless participation in the struggle to transform injustice and oppression”. Fired by the gospel and under the weight of Church and society criticism, she drew a community around her and persisted in relieving poverty.

This is just a taste of the June issue. We thank all our contributors whose faith, scholarship, reflection, questions, discussion, art, craft and generosity has combined in this Pentecost edition.

As is our custom, the last words are of blessing. ■



# In Search of the “ULTIMATE” PEACE DEAL



**P**resident Donald Trump last month visited Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory in the West Bank and talked up prospects of an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal. But what was really achieved?

The trip to the Middle East is part of Mr Trump's desire to cement a lasting peace between many rival factions, but his 28-hour visit to Israel and the West Bank was intended specifically to broker a deal between the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas. Though other US presidents have tried, and mostly failed at bringing the two sides together, some analysts thought Mr Trump's direct and unconventional approach might make a difference.

Earlier this year Mr Trump had expressed he was open to ideas about a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. “I’m looking at two-state and one-state and I like the one that both parties like. I’m very happy with the one that both parties like,” he told reporters. Then, just days before he left for the Middle East, his National Security Adviser H R McMaster had spoken of a wish for “Palestinian self-determination” — a term which previous administrations had always used in tandem with statehood.

Right now, an independent state for the West Bank might prove problematic. A key question is who would lead it. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is 82 and deeply unpopular. It would appear that up to two-thirds of the electorate want him gone. Mr Abbas has been putting off presidential elections since his first four-year term ended in 2009, and this has created a leadership succession problem.

Part of the problem is that Hamas are the likely contenders, and have dominated the West Bank's parliament since 2016. Mr Abbas seems reluctant to hold presidential elections to avoid handing over control to what he calls a “terror group”. Abbas has tried to circumvent Hamas by hand-appointing a constitutional council, and this might be another pathway for a successor. He has three possible successors from his Fatah party, but it looks to be a power struggle if and when Abbas dies. It could eventuate in a bloodbath. Because of the uncertainty, many Palestinians want Mr Trump's negotiations to be delayed.

The current Israeli government, on the other hand, seems opposed to a two-state solution. Benjamin

Netanyahu seeks to prevent the US from advancing its policy, which Israel's right wing is opposed to. More than 500,000 Israelis have settled in the West Bank since 1967 and the rate of settlement has steadily increased under Mr Netanyahu's leadership. Israel is also looking to Mr Trump to curb Iran's sponsorship of Hamas.

During President Trump's brief trip to Jerusalem he said a lot of things Mr Netanyahu wanted to hear. He promised to stand behind Israel and praised the way it had defended itself, and had endured and thrived despite enemies like Iran. For this he got a standing ovation.

Yet Mr Trump walked away from meetings with both Israeli and Palestinian leaders with little reference to the big sticking points in any peace negotiations: borders, settlements and terrorism. Nor was the prospect of self-determination raised again. Whatever was discussed appears to have been said privately, so there is no way of telling if Mr Trump's talk is just rhetoric, or underpins some deeper promises made behind closed doors. One Israeli opposition member told the *New York Times* that Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, had told him the administration was set on getting agreement and intended to move quickly to achieve it. Other observers considered it grandstanding. “This is probably the way he did business,” said one former political adviser. “From what I can see, he goes into a meeting, he puts on a show. He's the Liberace of world leaders.”

Such an observation highlights the challenge facing President Trump's quest for an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. While he was largely praised for a mostly blunder-free visit to the Middle East, and emphasising a hopeful message of peace in a war-torn region, Mr Trump's unwillingness or inability to talk openly about the problem of Israeli settlements, in particular, may reflect a basic reluctance to engage with some of the substantive issues standing in the way of what Mr Trump has called the “ultimate” deal. Only time will tell. ■



**Peter Grace** (left) is a Master of Politics student at the University of Otago.

**Professor Robert Patman** teaches International Relations at the University of Otago and is a regular contributor to the national and international media.

# PARTICIPATING *in* MISSION



MARY THORNE reminds us of our calling to participate in God's mission for the liberation of all creation.

Participation is highly valued in Kiwi culture. We urge each other to come along, get involved, "give it a go". We recognise the social nature of our being and we know that it is good for us to be connected and participate in common activities. When we look at this aspect of our culture more deeply in the light of the feast of Pentecost, it is clear that the transformative potential of participation is an important component of the struggle to achieve a more equitable society.

Of all the major Christian feasts, it is Pentecost which impels us to action.

Christmas fills us with awe and wonder. Emmanuel, God is with us, in all the beauty and ugliness of the human story.

Over the great three days of Easter celebration, we experience the weight of human brokenness and fallibility and the hope-filled joy of transformation from enslavement to freedom — from death to life.

## **Pentecost Fires Us**

But it is at Pentecost that we receive the gift of fire in our bellies. The more brightly this fire burns, the more we feel connected to all created reality and the more we become sensitised to the atrocities and tragedies which impact our planet and its people. If we allow the fire to abide within us it emboldens us, gets us off the couch, out of the comfortableness of the familiar. It engages us in the work of bringing about God's reign of justice in this world.

Present day faith communities who gather on Pentecost Sunday are inspired that the crowd of diverse human beings who had gathered in Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago, could *speak and hear* one another because they were filled with *one Spirit*. They experienced unity in the Spirit of the Living God. We who believe in the Risen Christ, are unified by this Spirit into One Body and are given strength and courage to carry on the mission of Jesus of Nazareth in our lives today. This impulse to be actively involved in work for planetary peace derived from justice and right relationship is, in fact, the core principle of *participation* which is a strong thread in the fabric of Catholic Social Teaching.



Participation demands our awareness of and involvement in addressing structural oppression and creating societies based on ecological and social justice.

### Participation in Liberation

In Luke's Gospel Jesus articulates clearly what that mission is, when, at the beginning of his Galilean ministry, he goes on the Sabbath day to the synagogue in Nazareth and reads from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*

*... Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

Soon after this, Jesus is beside the lake inviting the first disciples to join him in becoming a transformative community. The work of healing, restoring and reconciling is never solitary work; it requires the participation of a spirit filled community. The intention to change oneself is the starting place.

### Participation in God's Work

A prayer attributed to Óscar Romero of El Salvador reminds us that we are not the designers of this reign of righteousness, although we work to bring it to fulfilment. We are all required to open our eyes and ears to the reality of pain and abuse in the societies in which we live. We must make our contribution with love, joy and generosity, but it is God's work. God's Spirit animates, informs and energises the community of disciples in our participation in the mission to which we are called.

### Participators Not Do-Gooders

The mindset needed for participation is described by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: "Some of the dominant class join the oppressed in their struggle for liberation. There is a fundamental role and has been so throughout the history of this struggle."

But Freire warns of the cultural

bias that would-be liberators come with: "As they move to the side of the exploited they almost always bring with them the marks of their origin. Their prejudices include a lack of confidence in the people's ability to think, to want and to know. So they run the risk of falling into a type of generosity as harmful as that of the oppressors."



*Participation demands our awareness of and involvement in addressing structural oppression and creating societies based on ecological and social justice.*

He advises that there is the need for critical self-awareness or conscientisation: "Though they truly desire to transform the unjust order, they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. They talk about the people but do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change."

Finally he says that participation is with and led by the other: "A real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favour."

### Models of Participation

Mary of Nazareth, the perfect model of discipleship, demonstrates the active, outward focus of one who participates. Newly touched by the Holy Spirit and full of the presence of God within her, she does not sit quietly to contemplate the holiness of her situation. She makes hurried preparation for the difficult journey to a town in the hill country of Judah where her cousin Elizabeth lives — an older woman, pregnant with her

first baby. Mary's impulse was to be there as help and support during her cousin's time of vulnerability and struggle. On Mary's lips is the Magnificat, a song of praise for God who redresses oppression and lifts up the poor.

The Catholic Church has initiated canonisation procedures to examine Dorothy Day's role as an example of radical, fearless participation in the struggle to transform injustice and oppression. She was a writer and social activist who saw poverty and distress all around her in New York during the Depression years 1929-39. Dorothy Day was a lay woman, in and of the world, who came to believe and live out in her own life the Gospel imperative to care for the poor and oppressed. Together with the visionary French philosopher, Peter Maurin, she began soup kitchens, opened hospitality houses and founded the radical newspaper *The Catholic Worker* which protested strongly against war and economic exploitation. She incurred the criticism of society and Church at the time. Dorothy Day believed capitalism to be flawed structurally — she and Peter Maurin chose voluntary poverty as the foundation stone for their new movement. *The Catholic Worker* movement is still active around the world, including in New Zealand.

If Dorothy Day is canonised she will certainly be a hero and saint for our time. Her life exemplifies participation — that aspect which is so closely woven through all of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

So, for Pentecost 2017 in Aotearoa New Zealand when we pray "Come, Holy Spirit", let our faith in that Spirit be strong and our hearts be open wide so that we can indeed be energised to participate in the work to which we are called. ■

Painting: *Make All Things New*  
by James B. Janknegt. ©  
[www.bcartfarm.com](http://www.bcartfarm.com)



**Mary Thorne** has been a parishioner of St Mary's Catholic parish in Papakura for 36 years. She works with imprisoned women.



# A ROLE FOR EVERYONE

MANUEL BEAZLEY explains that when his *whānau* gather for a *tangi* or *hui* they take on roles which ensure that the *mana* of all is acknowledged and revered.

I was born and grew up in Auckland, but my family ancestry is connected to two small villages (in fact, only a *marae*, a church and a smattering of houses make up the villages) in the Hokianga, Northland. My family almost always refer to our villages of Omanaia and Motukaraka as “home” even though none of us live or have ever lived there.

Every time we go “home” for a *tangi* or a *hui*, it never ceases to amaze me how smoothly these functions are run. We have become

quite good at putting on these gatherings, as have many other *marae* around the country.

Very few of my *whānau* live up home now and those who do are mainly all *kuia* and *kaumātua*. The younger generations have either been born in the cities, or have left home in search of work or higher education. So, it is a small miracle perhaps that the *hui* happen at all considering the limited workforce available.

## Learning Kaiwhakakapi Tangata

Why, then, are we so good at it?

On the *marae*, and in our *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi*, *tikanga* is the principle of *kaiwhakakapi tangata*. On the *marae* there are roles and each role has someone to fulfil it. When I was growing up, my grandfather decided that I would be the one that would become a speaker for my family. I remember having to go with him to all the *hui* and sit beside him absorbing all the *korero*, learning the art of oratory in a Māori way. I also remember countless times being at *hui* looking out the door of the *whareniui* watching all the other kids playing, desiring desperately to join them. Instead, I was stuck with all the elders inside. It felt like prison.

As the years passed, those kids playing outside no longer played. Instead, they took their place in the kitchen, out on the water fishing or up in the block slaughtering the beast. Again, I wished I was there too – anywhere but in the *whareniui*.

## Practising Our Roles

I can remember being at one *hui* when I was 17 years old. I was in my usual place beside my grandfather. I knew our *kawa* very well by then, and so I knew it was his turn to speak soon. The previous speaker had just sat down and so I expected my grandfather to stand. However, this time, out of the blue, he leaned his *tokotoko* to me and said: “Okay boy, your turn now.” He looked into my eyes with pride, gave me a little smile and away I went. Well, I haven’t stopped speaking since!

So I’ve learnt that my role on the *marae* is to speak. My brothers and sisters work in the kitchen. My mum and my aunts give the orders. My cousins, uncles and everyone else have their roles, too. We all know our roles so well that when we have a *hui* we go straight to those roles without even thinking. It is the DNA of the *marae*. And that’s why we are

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so good at hosting *hui*. We know our roles and do them without interfering with the roles of others.

## Why Participation Is Necessary

*Tika*, *pono* and *aroha* are fundamental concepts in the Maori worldview. They are the means by which *mana* is demonstrated, enhanced or restored. When *tika* is present or something is *tika*, there is a correct ordering of relationships; things are being done in a way that is just and correct. In the context of a *hui* on the *marae*, it is *tika* that there is a *pōwhiri* – a welcome offered to the visitors – so that they will be acknowledged and subsequently made to feel at home and relationships built. It is not *tika* that visitors be ignored or not offered hospitality.

***Aroha is at once the source of tika and pono and it is also the fruit of tika and pono. We cannot possibly demonstrate tika or pono without the ability to love.***

When there is *pono*, there is a sense of truth and integrity about the occasion or the interaction. Again, in a *hui* setting, if the purpose of the *hui* is to discuss a serious or contentious matter, all who wish to be involved are given the opportunity to participate. In order to be *pono*, all those who wish to speak may do so, no matter how controversial or offensive their comments might be perceived to be. Nothing is off the table. The free exchange of *korero* is *pono* in the sense that those who speak to the *kaupapa* do so freely and those who wish to affirm or challenge have an opportunity to do so. A process which is *pono* works to ensure that there is spiritual, emotional and physical safety for all the participants. Navigating the way to a successful resolution can be a challenge, but this too is an element of *pono*. To leave a

*kaupapa* without resolving it would not be *pono*. Demonstrating *pono* in this context requires integrity of purpose and process.

*Aroha* essentially means love. When acting in a spirit of *aroha*, our words and actions express not only love but also a myriad of other elements such as compassion, respect and empathy for others and for the environment around us. *Aroha* is at once the source of *tika* and *pono* and it is also the fruit of *tika* and *pono*. We cannot possibly demonstrate *tika* or *pono* without the ability to love. When someone or something is *tika* or *pono* this invariably increases the *aroha* shown or felt towards the person or thing.

## Mana Is Upheld

When the roles necessary for a *marae* to function are carried out with *tika*, *pono* and *aroha*, the *mana* of our *marae* is upheld. Each of us has our tasks to do and we have the freedom and duty to do them. None of these roles is more or less important. Each of them is necessary for the smooth running of our *hui* but also for the life of our *hapū*. Now, when I attend *hui* up home and other places, I look outside through the doors of the *wharehau* and I am completely happy to be inside. This is where I belong. This is my role. ■

## Glossary

<i>aroha</i>	acting with love or compassion
<i>hapū</i>	subtribe (ie, grouping within a tribe)
<i>hui</i>	meeting/gathering
<i>iwi</i>	tribe
<i>kawa</i>	protocol
<i>kaumātua</i>	elder male
<i>kaupapa</i>	topic/theme/ purpose
<i>kuia</i>	elder female
<i>kōrero</i>	speeches/ discussion/stories etc.
<i>mana</i>	dignity, prestige
<i>marae</i>	village complex
<i>pono</i>	acting with integrity
<i>pōwhiri</i>	ritual of welcome onto a marae
<i>whānau</i>	immediate and/or extended family
<i>wharehau</i>	main meeting house on the marae
<i>tangi</i>	funeral/period of mourning
<i>tika</i>	acting justly, or in the right manner
<i>tikanga</i>	customs
<i>tokotoko</i>	stick used in Māori oratory





# I FEEL GOOD!

**F**irst thing — you must get on some meds. You don't have to commit to therapy or answer difficult questions, just go to any medical centre and tell the GP you think you have depression. Straight away the doctor will write you a prescription for anti-depressants because that's the first step in pulling you back from the edge of the cliff.

There are various anti-depressants suited to individual needs. Don't be scared of them; used correctly they are not habit-forming and they are a much better option than where you are at right now.

The GP could ask a few basic questions to get an idea of how desperate your situation is. If the GP acts very concerned about you, please listen as you might be a lot closer to the edge than you know.

## List People You Don't Want to Hurt

The next important step if you are really serious about getting this thing sorted and your life back is to make a list of the people who are going to be badly hurt if you suicide. Thinking about the people who will be left behind makes you realise that your depression is not yours alone. It includes and affects all your people.

So, where does that leave you? You are deep in a black hole and what you thought was a way out just became a big "No! No!" Think of it like this — you don't want your family to remember you this way: "Yes we really feel bad now that we know how you were suffering, but you are an inconsiderate s\*\*t for doing this to us."

It's reality check time. If you are an out-of-control depressive heading for a train crash, then you need to get your train into a siding while you stocktake your life. If the

train won't stop spend more time with your list of people, who will be devastated if you suicide, and get back to your GP to see if the meds are strong enough.

## Start Talking about It

OK. If you are still with me we must have stopped the train and we have some time to make a plan. The big, new saying about depression is: Don't keep it a secret — talk to people about it. Yeah right! It's easy to say but where do you start?

Small steps. Chances are there are one or two people around you who have some idea of what's going on and might have mentioned names or places about where to go for help. Think about that and if you can, go to the contact you are most comfortable with. I was fortunate enough to find someone who is both a friend and a therapist who got me through it.

There are a range of qualified people out there: starting at a user-friendly level where you can get a gentle introduction to what depression is and what you can do about it, then working up to experienced professionals who will help you get sorted.

Don't be put off if you don't have a therapist. You've already done the FIRST STEP. You've stopped the runaway train; you're on the meds and you've made your list of people who will be badly hurt if you suicide.

If you haven't found a therapist go back to the GP who got you the meds and ask for a referral to a therapist, or go to one of the many helplines available.

The main thing is to keep the momentum going. STEP ONE was the hardest — and you did it. Keep going one step at a time, my friend, and you will get progressively better as you start seeing the brighter side of life and you'll get satisfaction from knowing that YOU DID IT!

*It is through the courage of people like John Kirwan, and now Rob Pitts, speaking about their experience of depression that we are learning to recognise it as a serious illness that can happen to anyone. Cabrini Makasiale, a psychotherapist at Catholic Social Services, describes depression as a form of intense sadness which affects*

*our whole self — our brain and body, our cognition, behaviour, immune and nervous systems.*

*It differs from typical mourning because in ordinary sadness, the mourner sees the world as empty and defective. However, in depression the person pinpoints their sense of emptiness and inadequacy in*

*themselves and typically experiences feelings of hopelessness, self-hatred, despair and an inability to enjoy daily life. Depression can be a single episode or recurrent. It isolates a person from their family and the community, enclosing them in an existence in which they have no interest or pleasure in doing things they used to enjoy.*



## Housecleaning

Your life has a lot of stuff in it. You are busy just living, which makes it hard for a person living with depression to find time for the recovery stuff.

Make a list of ALL the stuff in your life. Then make another list of all the stuff you can DEFINITELY do without. And put on this list the stuff that you MIGHT be able to do without. Now what is left is the stuff that you are going to carry on with, starting tomorrow. And it's OK for stuff to come back onto the "necessary" list — you be the judge.

You should now have space in your life for the recovery stuff.

## Life Structure Principles

If you've been conscientious, you may have come this far in three months; if it takes longer — that's OK. It's your journey and the main thing is to keep moving forward. It took me ten years — you may do it better than I did. BUT DO IT PLEASE!

There are lots of good self-help books. Find one that works for you and make it your bible. Mine is *Your Sacred Self* by Wayne W Dyer, which has given me life structure principles to work with. A lot of the best books have been written by people who have been where we are with depression.

Life structure principles are another set of tools to go with your meds, your list of people (you can't hurt) and your therapist.

Depression is a sickness that requires more than meds and vitamins to cure. It needs your whole mind and body to work together in a healthy life structure. I now live by the life structure called SEEDS: S for Social, E for Exercise, E for Education, D for Diet, S for Sleep.

And belief in God? How big a role God plays in your life is up to you.

I add a big A for alcohol. You don't have to get drunk every day for alcohol to be playing a significant role in your mental health. Doctors say alcohol is a depressant not a stimulant. I went cold turkey from seven stubbies a day to zero at age 72 (after 50 years of social drinking). My mind started feeling better after day 30. My recovery had more to do with quitting alcohol than my meds.

## The Future

What of the future? It's hard to describe but you will know it when you feel it — and it feels good.

Coming out of depression is one thing, staying out is another. Sometimes I can begin to feel not so good and in need of solitude and even extra sleep. Right now I feel I need something to tip me back into "IFG" mode. This writing is a feel-good for me, but I need more.

I was just getting my head around what to do when BINGO! the email came in from *Tui Motu* saying they want to publish my story and there I was with a huge lift and a fresh new job to do. ■



**Rob Pitts** was born in England, raised in Australia and now lives in Fiji.



## Meditations from an Unexpected Conversation

*What if God was one of us?*

*Just a slob like one of us . . .*

— Joan Osborne, *One of Us*.

I'm sorry, Jesus, if I let you down at the end; after you spoke with me about people who have hurts in their life and that people don't have time to listen.

I'm sorry if I may have disappointed you. If, after 1½ hours of conversation, you still needed to be listened to more. As you stood in the room of an inquiry into genetic modification, listening to proceedings with a little tape recorder, I mistook you for a rabid, solo environmentalist, with your wiry grey hair and slightly wild, bushy look. But you weren't. You were just an interested member of the public, with time on his hands in retirement, wanting to see how things went.

As you prattled on, my initial 10 minutes of curiosity faded. I began hoping for a gap in your sentences and hid a silent groan that I had ever initiated the conversation with you. Part of me wondered then — and feels sure now — that it was loneliness you felt: You were the one with hurts in your life and others didn't have time to listen.

But I had a training video to watch before getting home by six — as I told my wife. I thought of offering to share afternoon tea with you, but I was afraid there'd be another half-hour delay.

Mother Teresa said the greatest poverty in the West was a poverty of loneliness. I guess I recognised that in you today, and in me. I need someone to listen to my story, too, and I sensed you probably had a story to tell — behind your professed interest in the Gene Inquiry.

Perhaps if I'd given you more time, we would have revealed more of who we were, rather than our views on genetic modification, or whatever else was going on in the world.

Perhaps, next time . . . ■



**Martin de Jong** is Advocacy & Research Advisor for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand and lead researcher/writer of the annual *Caritas State of the Environment in Oceania* report series.



# FOR BEING FIT MISSION

Secondary school student ELIZABETH LEANING responds to Pope Francis's encyclical *The Joy of the Gospel, Evangelii Gaudium*.

**A** mission is a vocation, a calling. It is a universal call that young Catholics can use to define our life's purpose. We all have a responsibility to spread the Good News, but the unique way in which we undertake this task is what makes our part in mission personal to each of us. Every year different things are expected of us young Catholics. In order to be fit for mission we have to understand our mission. And ultimately that comes down to understanding the way in which our commitment to the Catholic Church guides and motivates our part in mission.

The Catholic Church is the largest Church in the largest religion in the world, so it's understandable that

confusions and conflicting views arise. We don't have the advantage of Islam where their sacred text is believed to be dictated. Our Scripture is inspired, creating opportunity for disagreement over what exactly it compels us to do. The Magisterium of the Church helps us to glean the truth, but the Church has changed its stance on multiple issues through history — capital punishment, Just War, even the reputation of Mary Magdalene. Although the Church has authority to establish authentic teachings, it does not make us any better at interpreting divine revelation. It's somewhat ironic that our greatest commandment is "love your neighbour as you love yourself" and yet our teachings have been manipulated in order to start wars and justify bloodshed.

Of course this carnage is the fault of people who either didn't understand or chose to ignore the core beliefs of the Church: of love, mercy

and compassion. And our religion is perceived to be incredibly intolerant. We are all partially to blame for allowing people to misinterpret us. One of the most prevalent examples of this misinterpretation is in today's Catholic youth. In retaliation for the perceived condemnation of their actions, a large majority of today's Catholic youth has become unwilling to devote time to understand our Catholic teachings and beliefs. It's a misguided blunder that makes us unable to be on the same page as other people from our religion, let alone those we are trying to reach out to.

## Taking first Steps in Involvement

We have to learn to act in conjunction with our own religion, as opposed to bombarding the rest of society with our conflicting views and teachings. That sort of solidarity only comes when we all start from the same point and are united in the same truth. So, as Pope Francis said: "Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved." That first step is to understand that we should all be taking the step in the same direction.

Elizabeth Leaning is a 17-year-old student in her last year at Sancta Maria College, studying religion, sciences and languages (and playing netball).





Once we understand our mission we actually have to be prepared to live it. Preaching the gospel is important but living it is essential. St Francis of Assisi said: "It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching". In our time Pope Francis says in *Evangelii Gaudium* that we are a "community of missionary disciples who take the first steps", who "boldly take initiative" and that "such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father's infinite mercy". But mercy is sometimes lacking in our Church today when we behave like a court judging people for their humanity.

**Once we understand the actual source of our beliefs, we can realise what our mission actually is and we can be ready to carry it out.**

Society continues to move forward but the Church does not always keep pace. There is something to be said for respecting and maintaining our traditions, but we must also recognise when these are the traditions of humanity and not the traditions of God. Yes, Pope Francis has encouraged us to use our conscience and rethink our attitudes towards divorced Catholics, gays and lesbians and single mothers, which is modernising us. We cannot compel society to listen if we are too far behind to be heard. Do we sometimes keep shouting and care so much about the volume that we've stopped caring about what we're actually saying? Speaking out about issues that concern our principles, like President Trump's travel ban, is worthwhile. But condemning books like *The Da Vinci Code* or denying climate change, is counterproductive. We can't expect other people to sympathise with our religion if we don't fully understand it.

If we don't want to be seen in this negative light, there's an easy fix — read the Bible, the *Catechism* and Papal documents. Figure out what scripture is actually saying especially taking note of "by this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (Jn 13:35). Once we understand the actual source of our beliefs, we can realise what our mission actually is and we can be ready to carry it out.

Our part in mission is personal to each of us. Like Mother Teresa, it could be to feed the hungry, or to teach, or enter into priesthood. Our part in mission could be as simple as volunteering once a week or adopting every stray dog we come across. What matters is the way in which we prepare ourselves and it should be shared. As Pope Benedict XVI said on the importance of understanding the *Catholic Catechism*: "Study this Catechism with passion and perseverance. Make a sacrifice of your time for it! Study it in the quiet of your room; read it with a friend; form study groups and networks; share with each other on the Internet. By all means continue to talk with each other about your faith". As we do this we will come to recognise what defines a true calling.

Every single one of us has a responsibility to be prepared to act in mission. The challenge that faces us is to not just "wait in joyful hope", but to live in joyful hope witnessing to Jesus Christ. ■

## Laying the Groundwork for Crucial Conversations

JO KRYSA speaks about opportunities for end of life conversations.

*"We're never sure whether we are going to afternoon tea or eternal life." – Anon*

I have found that patients and their families inspire me to explore new ways of doing things.

I recall a patient who came under my care. She underwent two emergency procedures and died soon after the second one. When she passed away, I remember talking to her son who said his mother had told him that she wasn't ready to die. I sometimes wonder, what would she have done if she had been given an opportunity to discuss this further before she died.

The risk of any intervention is variable depending on many factors. If, for example, there is a 90 per cent chance of things going well and 10 per cent chance of dying, we tend to focus on the 90 per cent and believe all will be well. None of us, however, know when our time in this world will end. So perhaps if we took more opportunities to reflect on what we would like to do before we die, whether it is making amends with someone, or talking to a loved one, or praying, we could start today.

The aim of the project is to provide people with an opportunity to pause, reflect and perhaps start that discussion. I have talked to many people in the hospital who believe in the importance of end of life discussions and are keen to be involved. Once again, despite our different roles, a group of those who would like to be part of the project is growing and together we can have the confidence to take it forward. With time I trust this project will encourage all of us to discuss dying more openly and be more at peace when the time comes. ■



**Jo Krysa** her husband James and two children live in Dunedin. Jo is a vascular surgeon at Dunedin Hospital and member of Holy Name Parish.

# TOGETHER MAKING GOLD

After being fascinated by an interactive artwork exhibited in Sydney STEVE TAYLOR reflects on Christian participation as neighbourliness in the local community.

I was captivated, visiting Sydney recently, by a profusion of digital colour. *Flowers and People – Gold* is a digital artwork that shows flowers growing in red, white, blue and orange. It is an animation: petals blossom, bloom and blow across every part of a five metre long screen.

Designed by a Japanese art collective teamLab, and on display at Art Gallery of New South Wales, it is a stunning mix of old and new. The gold background and colourful images reference the decoration and style of traditional folding Japanese screens. The digital medium embodies the cutting edge of Japanese

technology. I found myself transfixed by the vibrant patterns of abundant beauty.

Returning for a second look, I suddenly realised that the bloom of petal blossom was triggered by human participation. The petals swirled in response to real-time movement. Each visitor, every movement, the unique length of stay, resulted in a different expression of flowers and gold. My actions – the sweep of an arm, a step to one side – triggered abundant life. My first viewing differed from my second – this was genuinely participative art with each moment of interaction unique, never to be replicated or reproduced.

## Participation as Creation

Standing in front of *Flowers and People – Gold* I recalled the creation account of Genesis 2. It also connects flowers and people, in abundant, interactive and participative ways. God is imaged in the Creation account as maker, former of people, breather of life and planter of visual pleasure. Into this garden full of flowers, humans are placed. The Hebrew verb in Gen 2:15, historically so poorly translated as dominion, is better understood as a call to care.

The account of Gen 2 offers a wonderful understanding of what it means to be human. We are interactive partners (or gardeners) with God. Our movements, the sweep of our arms, our “work” and “care” (Gen 2:15), trigger patterns of visual pleasure and practical nurture.

## Participation as Church

The New Testament fills out this understanding of participation. The ministry of the Apostle Paul is portrayed as one of work and care in which people flower. Paul gave us the image of Church as a body to be tended with care (1 Cor 12). In describing his “work” and “care” for the Corinthian body in 1 Corinthians, Paul names several individuals and groups: Sosthenes, Crispus, Gaius, Apollos, Barnabas, Timothy, Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus, Chloe and the people in three house churches, Stephanas, Aquila and Priscilla, as well as those in three other groupings of churches.

This is not unique to Corinth. More than half of the 13 letters that claim Pauline authorship in the New Testament are team efforts. Paul and Timothy write 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon. Paul, Silas and Timothy write 1 and 2 Thessalonians, while Paul and Sosthenes write 1 Corinthians. This is a ministry of partnership and participation, in which a connected leader works and cares through multiple alliances and networks.

This is in sharp contrast to superhero models of leadership. In 2016, I completed *Built for Change*, a research project into stories of community change. I studied indigenous reconciliation, young adult discipleship, digital learning, a rural community cafe, an urban community garden and a creative resource. What I found was not gifted individuals riding in on white horses to save struggling communities. Rather I found partnerships of work and care, in which people acted collaboratively,



***What I found was not gifted individuals riding in on white horses to save struggling communities. Rather I found partnerships of work and care, in which people acted collaboratively, forming connections with their environments in interactive partnerships.***

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forming connections with their environments in interactive partnerships.

### Participation in Community

I found gold. I'll share one story of the Glenkirk Café. All you need to innovate in a declining rural mid-Canterbury context is two women, an empty church and a passion to listen over a cup of tea.

Glenkirk, set in the foothills of the Southern Alps, is most commonly experienced as yet another small rural town to drive through on the way to somewhere else. In this area of rural decline, in a town with a population of fewer than 130, what do you do with the church (St Andrews Presbyterian)?

local mayor has paid public tribute, glad of a church that remains. The building has begun to be used on other days of the week, by the community and in community-building.

While the Glenkirk Café is not a full expression of all that is the body of Christ, we can appreciate some of the distinct images of God it offers. God is relating in the hospitality of open doors, the offer of tea and scones and the listening ear. God is sustaining, maintaining Church not as an empty stone building but as an interactive and participative presence. God is redeeming. This is evident in the stories I heard from Barbara, of life change as local people found in the ministry of Glenkirk Café an entry point into a community in which they can serve.

Glenkirk Café is an inspiring innovation. It is a ministry of hospitality in a declining rural community that emerged as two lay women saw one empty church and an opportunity to plant flowers: to work and care by providing a listening ear and an environment of hospitality.

### Called to Participate

Standing in front of *Flowers and People – Gold* in Sydney I found myself slowly beginning to wave my arms. Could this be prayer, I wondered?

I thought of my local community and the challenges of my workplace. My arm movements became larger, more

A common response is to sell the building. Rural New Zealand is dotted with commercial cafés or home renovation projects located in what were church buildings. While the ecclesial history adds a certain charm and the polished wood can be beautiful, for a rural community, these transitions are further evidence of the power of secularism and lack of care from the wider church.

Two Glenkirk locals, Barbara and Violet, had other ideas. They shared a vision of a church open to the community seven days a week. It seems ridiculous for most churches, let alone a church in a small rural community.

Together they decided to open the church, not on Sunday morning for worship, but on Sunday afternoon, to serve cups of tea and home baking. Between noon and 4pm, the doors of St Andrews Presbyterian would be opened, the kettle boiled and home baking made available. While this was consistent with rural hospitality, it represented a radical reshaping of the use of the building. It was an act that was simple yet profound. Could the Church offer care not in worship but in a listening, hospitable presence?

From that single act a rich ministry has grown. A number of locals joined Barbara and Violet, finding in the serving of tea and the clatter of crockery a place to belong and contribute. The wider community has applauded. The

energetic. Each triggered another burst of blossom.

I wanted to dance across the art gallery, to invite every passer-by into bursts of cascading blossom. I suspect that Catholic missiologist, Stephen Bevans, would have joined me, dancing his approval. He writes of mission as a conga line. It begins with the Spirit, who at Pentecost spills out with exuberant joy, calling all of creation to joyous participation. In God's conga line, we find ourselves dancing with the first humans of Genesis 2, along with all those who ministered with the Apostle Paul in partnerships of work and care. We wave our arms and dance, flowering our world with actions of justice and mercy.

Flowers and people, participating together in God's divine dance, is an expression of Pentecost gold. All from contemplating a digital animation in a Sydney art gallery. ■



**Steve Taylor** is Principal of Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, Dunedin and author of books in the area of theology and popular culture.





**TO GIVE WITHOUT SEEKING REWARD**





In April I was offered the opportunity to go to Jakarta, Indonesia as part of Lasallian Volunteers. We were a mixed group of six – a Filipino, a New Zealander and four Australians: four 21-year-olds completing university studies and two mid-30s – a De LaSalle Brother doing a PhD and myself, a teacher at Sancta Maria College in Auckland. We were Catholic and other Christian and a Buddhist embarking on a shared, unknown adventure. I think we were equally apprehensive about the group dynamics considering we didn't know one another and were perhaps not the most natural combination.

We clicked from the first day recognising a similar life philosophy and we spent our two weeks laughing, praying, teaching and travelling from the primary school, Santo Antonius dari Padua, to Mekar Lestari Orphanage.

### Children Led Us in Their World

Our Lasallian job was to participate in the world of our guests and to share our worlds with them. In the primary school we took part in their assemblies, ran a retreat day for the school leaders, judged the costume displays, taught classes, participated in the school play, *The Big Fish*, and created an English language curriculum.

Bella, from Sydney, said of the children: "Their perspective on the world and their wonderfully genuine welcome and acceptance was inspirational. I have never felt so much love in one place and I truly feel blessed to have had the opportunity to have met such loving individuals."

### Children Led Us in Love

At the orphanage we were encouraged to spend time getting to know the children – there were 51, aged from babies to high school students. While we helped children with things like homework, our main focus was interacting with the children and our younger volunteers excelled at it! They bounced, danced, sang, prayed, laughed and loved the children of the orphanage.

Will, translator and third-time volunteer said: "The staff and especially the kids at both Saint

**MARIA FOUHY  
joined a group  
of Lasallian  
volunteers in  
Indonesia and  
discovered that  
in participating  
they gained far  
more from the  
experience than  
they gave.**

Antonius Primary School and Mekar Lestari Orphanage are, for me, the highlight of the trip. Their smiles, laughter and overall joy experienced as a result of the volunteers spending time with them, has really changed my perspective on life."

Brother Mandy, our resident photographer, captured moments and memories of love, and I channelled my love of administration into writing an English teaching curriculum that future volunteers could use with the children from kindergarten to Year 6.

### Contributing as a Group

Each of our group was able to work to our strengths in our shared Lasallian mission. Because of the natural, honest relationship among us, we presented a genuine image of friendship.

Caleb, trip organiser, translator and also a third-time volunteer, said: "The group of volunteers this year was full of individual talents and personalities that surprisingly meshed to form a power group that just clicked. The kids at both Mekar Lestari Orphanage and St Antonius were always the joy in my days with their big smiles and high pitched screams of joy greeting me at every turn. A trip like this can test you in many ways, but it always leaves you wanting to stay longer."

### Reflecting on the Experience

We re-learned how to see with our hearts. Age, race, language, gender, life choices, personal beliefs and individual experiences became enhancements rather than barriers in our Indonesian experience. We experienced "Holy Spirit" moments and delighted in sharing our faith, ourselves and our love for the people we spent our days with.

Bek from Melbourne described it: "This experience has been unforgettable and will be a memory that will be forever cherished. Through the high and lows, I have come to realise that we cannot take things for granted and believe each child of God is called to do something greater. I would sincerely like to thank the teachers at St Antonius, the kids at the Mekar Lestari Orphanage and most of all, the five volunteers that made my trip unforgettable."

### Passing the Fruits On

My parents role-modelled for our family the power of "yes" in being open and willing to try new experiences. For the first time in a long while, I was able to harmonise my parental life lessons, breathe in my "Holy Spirit" moments and recognise the preciousness of life's unexpected gifts.

I came back from this trip feeling renewed, restored, refreshed and re-in-love with and loved by God. My challenge now is to hold those moments in the delicious craziness of my life. And it is to teach my students the importance of being open to their own Spirit moments and to say "yes" to them with courage. I received far more from the volunteering experience than I gave. I found me again – an invaluable gift of volunteering. ■

Photos opposite: Children at St Antonius Primary School; The Lasallian Volunteer group.



**Maria Fouhy**, from a family of teachers, is the Director of Religious Studies at Sancta Maria College in Auckland.

# Aunties are BOSS

In *Puna Wai Kōrero: An Anthology of Māori Poetry in English*, Edited by Reina Whaitiri and Robert Sullivan.

Used with permission of Auckland University Press.

It doesn't matter how many babies you have, how many times you marry  
or divorce, how skinny or fat you become, how many degrees hang on  
your wall, how flash your car or house is or how old you get,  
Aunties are Boss

They always talk to you like you are 14,  
everything they say is a directive, even when it isn't,  
there's a bed over there,  
have a kai and get a cup of tea

They ask you to clean the wharepaku and then they do it properly when  
you've finished,  
they suggest you 'throw your eyeballs around the wharekai' when you  
ask, where's the tea towel?

You then watch as their eyeballs swivel in their head when you ask,  
'where do the dishes go?'

They send you to the shop to get tomato sauce and back again five  
minutes later to get toilet paper,  
they sack you off the computer as soon as they walk in the door,  
they tell you to stop eavesdropping and leave the room when they are  
talking to your mother,

Aunties are Boss

They squeeze lollies into your hand when the other kids aren't looking,  
they tell you, your tāne is not good enough for you  
not directly  
they do this, by ignoring him  
for years,





they tell you, your wahine is not good enough for you  
not directly  
they do this,  
by loving your children,  
Aunties are Boss

They will remind you how precious you are in a Facebook post and message in all the other Aunties,  
when your parents separate, they pay for your music lessons, school  
stationery bill and uniforms,  
they send texts to your mother daily reminding her why she is better off  
without him,  
Aunties are Boss

Aunties will tell you not to talk to Koro, Nanny or your Mother like that  
and to pick that lip off the floor  
and if they ever hear you talk that way to them again  
you'll have them to answer to,  
they will tell you to stop using Koro or Nanny like they're an EFTPOS  
machine,  
they will tell Koro and Nanny to stop acting like an EFTPOS machine,  
Aunties are Boss

Aunties are Dragon slayers  
ready to plunge swords into the hearts of monsters,  
Aunties are Taniwha crouching in the river  
prepared to throw you back to shore should you stray too far,  
Aunties are Patupaiarehe  
silently watching from afar, certain that you will become exactly who  
you are meant to be as has been divined from your parents, your  
parents' parents and your parents' parents' parents  
Aunties  
Aunties are Boss

— Maraeta Rakuraku





# Relieving the Famine in SUDAN

CRISPIN ANDERLINI shares the situation in South Sudan where civil war and drought are taking a terrible toll on the people.

**R**osa Lyo (75) lives in Rajaf, just outside South Sudan's capital, Juba, but even here the drought and conflict is taking a heavy toll. Like many of the 4.9 million people in urgent need, she struggles to find food and is forced to walk an hour and a half each way just to find bitter weeds to eat.

Rosa makes this journey about five times in a week and the weeds she gathers for herself and her husband, a 90-year-old Congolese refugee who is unable to walk, lack nutrition but are their main source of food.

It's not just the distance that takes a toll. The search for food is very dangerous because armed gangs roam the countryside, terrorising local people.

"We have to go because of hunger," Rosa said. "If you get killed, then you have to accept that it's your time."

There are millions like Rosa. In a

country already stricken with internal conflict, beset with marauding bands of unpaid soldiers looking to survive, hunger is spreading. By July this year, 5.5 million people (more than 40 per cent of the population) are expected to be in serious need and the number of people currently experiencing famine (100,000) will have increased dramatically unless aid organisations like Caritas are able to gain access to the most severely affected communities.

## Civil War Adding to Hunger

Although drought caused by a severe El Nino in 2016 has played a role in this major humanitarian catastrophe, this natural calamity has only exacerbated the principal — and human made — cause of the emergency: a civil war between political rivals that has been fought since 2013. And despite the peace agreement which has been in place since August 2015, the political situation continues to escalate, displacing millions of people. The UN estimates that 3.6 million people

have been forced to flee their homes, including 1.7 million who are now refugees in neighbouring countries.

At the heart of the conflict are two men representing two historically-opposed tribes. On one side is President Salva Kiir Mayardit, the first president of the world's newest nation since it was established in 2011 and a member of the Dinka community (pastoralist cattle herders and the largest ethnic group). Standing in opposition is the former Vice President Riek Machar (Nuer ethnic group, sedentary farmers), who was fired in July 2013.

Neither of these leaders — of either government or rebels — seems to have any control over their forces.

The ongoing turmoil, violence and uncertainty has affected food prices: prices have skyrocketed, with many staples like maize and sorghum doubling or tripling in price.

Utilising an extensive Church network, the Caritas confederation is continuing to distribute food, shelter and household items for thousands of displaced people, hygiene kits to help avoid disease spreading, and medicines for local clinics, as well as pursuing efforts at building a lasting peace. Seeds and tools are also being distributed to

**Crispin Anderlini** is Communications, Marketing & Fundraising Advisor for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.





*"In martyred South Sudan, a fratricidal conflict is compounded by a serious food crisis, which has struck the Horn of Africa and condemns millions of people to starve to death."*

— Pope Francis

communities who have retained their land.

"This is to increase food security and self-sufficiency for people in the long term and fill empty markets so those who have been forced to flee their homes are able to afford food," explains Mark Mitchell, Humanitarian Programmes Coordinator for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

### People Live with Constant Threat and Terror

Recently returned from helping Caritas South Sudan coordinate the emergency response, Mark has seen the effects first-hand and has spoken to those people living the grim realities of this disaster.

A church and the chief's house are all that is left standing of Lobonok, a village about two hour's drive from Juba. There were once another 365 homesteads, but they were burned down during tribal violence in February. When the army came to re-establish order, the soldiers went on a looting spree.

"Our house was burned down. When we saw people being killed, we ran to the school. We just grabbed the children and fled," said Mary Joanne Guma, a mother of five.

Lobonok's residents are now living in tents next to their burned-out homes. The Dinka live nearby.

"We're scared of cultivating because of the pastoralists," said Simon Lokuji, the village chief. "Before you could make charcoal to sell or collect wild vegetables but now it is too dangerous. The adults can resist the hunger, but not the children."

Caritas is providing food aid, but resources are scarce and more funds are needed to continue feeding the hungry.

"This is the last meal. Tomorrow we have to eat and we don't know how," said Lily Poli, a local resident, stirring a pot of beans that will feed half a dozen children.

One of the humanitarian officers at Caritas South Sudan, Francis Ojoadi is in a unique position to help families like his own survive these desperate times that have impacted everyone in the country.

*"Caritas will continue to provide essential assistance, and we need to be strong to support those who are less fortunate than us . . . People need to look past their tribal affiliations and see themselves as South Sudanese. Only then can real independence come."*

— Francis Ojoadi, Humanitarian Officer for Caritas South Sudan

At the peak of the fighting last year, Francis had to take his family over the border to Uganda, where they joined the other nearly 720,000 refugees who have fled south since July 2016.

His people, the Madi, were forced off their land after political shifts and realignments led to localised conflict.



Many were killed, properties were looted and crops were destroyed. After appeals for the government to intercede failed, many Madi feel that it is too dangerous to return to their village and so have joined the exodus to refugee camps outside South Sudan and Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) camps in safer parts of the country.

There is food available in the Ugandan refugee camp where Francis' family is staying and they are able to sleep at night without fear of being shot. But Francis wonders what the long-term impact will be on these refugees, his family and the future of his country. ■

Photos: Rosa Lyo prepares the bitter weeds.  
Above: Children in Lobonok village eating sorghum porridge provided by Caritas. [Caritas]



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# MARTIN LUTHER

## *Let the Word Run Free*



PETER MATHESON situates Martin Luther in his historical context and discusses his contribution to the Reformation.

**W**ho was Martin Luther?  
What motivated him?  
How do we account for his massive impact on the world of his time? How has our understanding of him changed since Vatican Council II?

With someone as controversial as the Augustinian friar Martin Luther, it is impossible to be objective. I am an historian by trade and also a Protestant, so I cannot escape my own background and perspectives.

Maybe the key question is: What can we all, Catholic and Protestant, learn from Luther today?

After a lifetime studying this early modern period of history when the very foundations of European society and culture were shaken, I feel less and less confident that there are quick and easy answers to the questions we pose.

The 1500s were a different world from ours. Unlike today, virtually

no one doubted the Christian faith. The sacramental life of the Church, with its priestly and pastoral care, accompanied everyone from birth to death. Worship flowed from churches into the streets in processions, and pilgrimages and festivals gave shape to the year. In older European towns today we can still see images of the saints on every house corner and little chapels dotting the hillsides. In the towns every trade, from



candle makers to goldsmiths, had its brotherhood with sacred obligations to their members, living and dead. Personal piety flourished and this was long before Luther's vernacular Bibles circulated.

### Understanding Luther's Role in His Time

The idea that Luther swept into prominence because the Old Church was dead and decadent is simply nonsense. Instead, we need to understand Luther and his reforms as part of a much wider reform movement, which coursed through the monasteries, lay people and clergy.

Today historians agree that there was considerable continuity between the late medieval period and the Reformation. Luther's theology and reformist ideas are inconceivable without considering his formation in monastic life and scholasticism (the theology of the universities), and the enthusiasm for biblical studies of Catholic scholars, such as Erasmus, Contarini and the French theologian, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples.

### Luther — Monk, Teacher, Scholar, Preacher

Luther was ordained a priest in 1505 and lived conscientiously as an Augustinian monk and teacher. Luther has been described as a curious character, a bundle of contradictions: by turns charitable, priggish, humble and dismissive. His initial popularity lay in his little devotional writings. The fiercely anti-papal Luther who developed later was very different from how he began. Though he later left the monastery, married and had theological differences with Rome, he never lost his profound reverence for the Mass. He remained a life-long lover of the Psalms, of the Hebrew Bible and of the New Testament. He prayed, wrote and studied the Bible and preached and translated the Scriptures from Latin into German. His passion was biblical — to let the Word run free. Although he became a reformer, he never intended to found a new Church. Unlike others, for example Calvin, he did not think systematically about the structures of the Church. Indeed a legitimate criticism of him is that he was a poor planner. If we follow his progress from 1517 when his 95 theses about indulgences appeared, to 1521 when he defied the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, at the Diet, or Imperial Parliament of Worms, it is clear that he did his thinking on the run.

### Necessity of the Reformation

Today we can discuss the tragic necessity of the Reformation. We cannot close our eyes to the damage done by the intransigent response of the Roman Curia to the genuine issues raised by Luther about the true nature of penitence. While the Renaissance Papacy had many virtues, not least its patronage of the arts, under the Borgia and the Medici popes it had become embroiled in politics and lost touch with the Church's pastoral priorities. Therefore, a perfect storm arose when the theological issues raised by Luther melded with lay people's grievances about such matters as absentee priests. These were effectively voiced in the floods of pamphlets, vivid woodcuts and broadsheets issuing from the new printing press.

The unfortunate attempt to silence and intimidate Luther both radicalised him and made him into something of a national hero. For the first time in European history public opinion made its voice heard and the movement for a root and branch reform of the Church became unstoppable.

### Luther's Insights Still Challenge Us

Today we have a remarkable convergence in Catholicism and Lutheranism around Luther's key doctrine of justification by faith. A growing number of Protestants are critical of many aspects of Luther, for example, his rather uncritical acceptance of social hierarchies, his intolerant polemic against the Anabaptists, his anti-Judaic writings. Perhaps, though, we can agree that his greatest contribution to us today is his courageous commitment to the truth of the Gospel as he saw it, and his marvellous skills as a linguist, translator and interpreter of the Bible. It will be exciting if we can move beyond demonising or heroising him to seeing him as a man of his time, yet also as someone whose critical insights transcend his time and are still with us. ■



**Peter Matheson** is a peace activist, a Church Historian and Emeritus Professor of Knox Theological College, Dunedin and author of books.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE NOT A FUSS

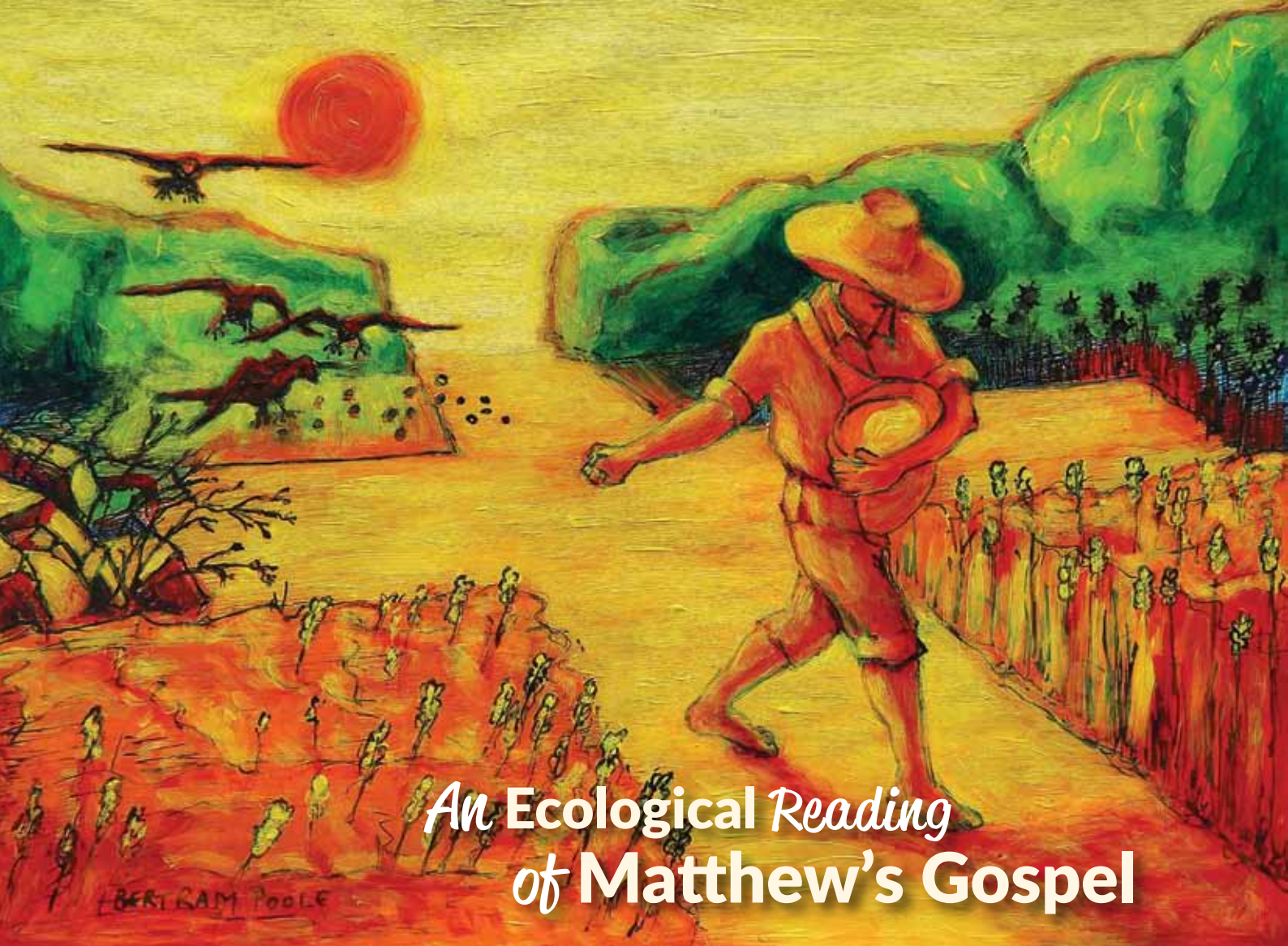
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## An Ecological Reading of Matthew's Gospel

ELAINE WAINWRIGHT takes a close look at the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:1-9 and points to aspects which provide a fuller understanding of our relationships in creation.

**Matthew 13:1-9** That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower

went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. 6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched;

and since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 Let anyone with ears listen!"

**A**s I began this month's ecological reading of Matthew 13:1-9, I found myself looking back over the texts from the Gospel of Matthew we have read already this year. In the May issue (*TM* May 2017) I placed these texts within the unfolding structure of the gospel. Now, I find myself thinking about the different types of text that we have read. Last month (*TM* May) the text was a

commissioning of 12 male disciples by Jesus, the preacher, teacher and healer and we heard words such as "Go nowhere . . . but go . . . as you go . . . cure, raise, cleanse, cast out" (Mt 10:5-8). In April (*TM* April 2017) we read two verses (Mt 8:14-15) telling of the healing/calling of a woman. They invited us to be attentive to bodies, to their materiality and the ways this materiality is evoked in the story. We

also saw how the senses, especially seeing and touching, functioned in healing. Our ecological reading of the Beatitudes in March (*TM* March 2017) brought new questions to a familiar text and new insights emerged. We found this too in February (*TM* February 2017) when we focused on the opening verse of Matthew's gospel and encountered the rich intertextuality (that is, its echoing of other texts, in this instance



Gen 2:4). Reading ecologically uncovers the richness of the gospel text in new and inviting ways.

### Context for Hearing the Parable

In our reading this month we have a different type of text; a parable. However, before we encounter the parable, the gospel narrator provides a context (Mt 13:1–2), telling us the time (“that same day”) and the place (out of the house and beside the sea). Noticing the time and place helps us to read with Earth and its interrelationships. Verse 2 tells us the relationships are complex as human crowds gather about Jesus, he gets into a boat, he sits down in the boat, and the crowds stand on the beach.

The boat and beach are contexts, or the grounding, for the teaching and the hearing of teaching that constitute this section of the Matthean narrative. Indeed, in relation to hearing, this small section concludes with the words of verse 9: “Let anyone with ears listen!” This invites us to learn a new way of hearing.

The first word of Jesus from his place in the boat to the crowds gathered around him on the beach, is the attention claimer *idou* — which can be translated as “look”, “see”, or “listen!” We cannot hear parables without being attentive. However, an ecological reading entails a new, different type of attentiveness, a new seeing and a new hearing. In it we will learn to understand the *basileia*/kin(g)dom of the skies through our senses, through learning from Earth and all its interrelationships. Understanding the *basileia* is the core message of the Matthean Jesus’ preaching, and the beginning of the parables in Mt 13:24; 31; 33; 44; 45; 47.

### Setting of the Parable

The first words of the parable describe a very familiar scene to listeners: “A sower went out to sow”. At the layer of possible first-century meaning-making, the sower might be a slave or tenant farmer on one of the large Herodian or Roman estates, or might be working on their small plot. Whatever the context, the sower belonged to

*It is nothing complex or extraordinary. There is no breaking of expectations or turning the world upside down. The hearer of the parable is simply called to listen to the process of seed being planted and growing, involving the human and other-than-human in right relationships.*

society in a variety of ways and knew the seasonal rhythms for planting and harvesting. Listeners would immediately recognise the context of the parable just as contemporary readers with an ecological consciousness appreciate the rhythm of agriculture or gardening.

### Appreciating the Sowing Process

As the parable unfolds, readers/listeners sense that the seed is being scattered (a familiar method in first-century Galilee). The parable then draws readers, both first- and 21st-century, into the ecosystem or ecocycle of sower and seed. Birds are fed by taking up the seeds on the pathway. Weeds take up their groundspace, leaving in some places insufficient space for the sower’s seed. The sun, the wind and the rain — elements that are not named in the parable — enable the seed to grow. Some plants will wither under the sun if their roots are not deep enough while others will be choked out by other plants. The seed that falls on the ground prepared for it bears fruit abundantly.

There is a complex agricultural process at work which the sower understands. And Jesus calls his audience to listen to the process. And it is to this process that contemporary ecological readers are called to listen. It is nothing complex or extraordinary. There is no breaking of expectations or turning the world upside down. The hearer of the parable is simply called to listen to the process of seed being planted and growing, involving the human and other-than-human in right relationships.

The parable reaches a climax in verse 8 when the seed falls on the good soil that had been prepared for it. Yields vary from 30-, 60- or even 100-fold per plant.

Often scholars and preachers speak of these as extraordinary yields but it may not have been the case. Varro, an ancient writer on agriculture, describes yields of “tenfold in one district, 15 in another, even a 100 to one near Gadara in Syria”. Also, we have a first-century coin of Agrippa 1 (Herodian king) showing three ears of grain springing from one stalk to symbolise the fertility made possible in and by Herod and his participation in the empire. There are two sources of abundance vying within this final verse.



### Hearing the Parable Today

The call to “listen” at the end of the parable and in verse 18 to “hear then the parable of the sower” invites readers to attend to and learn from Earth’s processes. This is what it means to hear the parable. We know Earth’s processes are material and that social and socio-economic realities interweave with them as well.

These two forces swirl through the final verse of the parable of the sower and listening takes on a further dimension calling the ecological reader to discernment: Is the source of life for Earth and us, or the Empire? We might ask how we might evaluate each.

I think Stephanie Nelson, in her study of the agrarian poems of the Greek poet, Virgil, captures what may have been evoked by the parable of the sower: “because farming is inescapably a part of human life . . . it may provide a clue to what is most basically human, and so a clue to our place within the cosmos.” Listen! Hear! ■

Painting: *Christian Art Parable of the Sower* by T Bertram Poole © <https://bertrampoole.com> and [www.ChristianArtNow.BlogSpot.Com](http://www.ChristianArtNow.BlogSpot.Com)



**Elaine Wainwright** RSM is a biblical scholar and the Executive Director of Mission and Ministry for the Mercy Sisters in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

# THE WORLD GOD LOVES

KATHLEEN RUSHTON explains how the meanings of “the world” in John 3:16–18 are related to our involvement in good works.

**T**he Gospel of John distinguishes between those who did not accept the Word (Jn 1:11) and all who receive the Word, believe, and are given power to “become children of God, who were born . . . of God” (Jn 1:12-13). Over what is John making this distinction? In John’s community members understood themselves to be “born of God” and to be “children of God”. Three examples. After telling us to love our enemies, Luke adds we will be “children of the Most High” (Lk 6:35). Matthew says that peacemakers “will be called children of God” (Mt 5:9) and in the First Epistle of John we find “everyone who does justice is born of God” (1 Jn 2:29). When we find these two expressions in other texts, their contexts are about “good works”.

In the milieu of the New Testament “good works” and “evil works” had precise and limited meanings. Walter Grundmann explains: “Good works are actions of mercy on behalf of all those in need of them, and they are works of peace that eliminate discord among people.” Good works became known as the works of mercy, which evolve and encompass “the signs of the times”. Pope Francis extended the seven corporal and spiritual works of mercy to include an eighth work of “care for our common home”. As a spiritual work it means gratefully contemplating God’s world, and as a corporal work, it calls for performing daily gestures that help to build a better world.

“Evil works” are precisely the opposite or when “good works” are not done. In Matthew 25:31-46, the only

description of the last judgement in the New Testament, doing good works or omitting to do them are the only criteria for judgement. We have a tendency today to water down, romanticise or generalise love of neighbour and under the guise of loving everyone to embrace rich and poor equally. However, biblical love of neighbour, like biblical mercy, is action orientated and anything but neutral towards social injustice. Against this background of good works and evil works, I turn now to John 3:16-18 in which “the world” is found four times as well as the well-known verse: “God so loved the world that God gave the only son.”

## World Has Several Meanings

What is known today as “the universe” is named in Scriptures as “the heavens and the earth”. Later, the Greek word *kosmos* (“the world”, from which we derive the word cosmetics and which described order and beauty, as when rowers in a boat sat in order and worked together), became a technical term for the order of the universe. In John we find three meanings of “the world”.

The first is the *natural universe* which is the created reality that God so loved that God gave the Son (Jn 3:16). The expression “comes into the world” highlights the physical universe and is associated with Jesus, the light who has “come into the world” (Jn 3:19). The expression “coming into the world” relates to Jesus the Messiah (Jn 6:14). “To be sent into the world” describes the mission of Jesus

(Jn 3:17) into which disciples are drawn when he prays: “As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (Jn 17:18).

The second meaning of the “world” is *humanity* as created universally and loved by God. Humanity is part of the natural world yet it is created in the image and likeness of God and called to divine/eternal life. This world God so loves is the whole human race in the sense that “God sent the Son . . . that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:17). Humanity is viewed as natural, open to grace by a new birth which is a work of God through which the human being co-operates with God and shares in the divine life.

The third meaning concerns humankind and suggests a construction of created reality that is able to respond. This means individually and collectively human persons respond by continuing the good works of God or by choosing evil works (Jn 7:7). This is the one meaning of “the world” which can have negative overtones. Evil works comprise the aggressive force (“the ruler of this world” Jn 14:30), working in the individual and the collective behaviour of persons in the political, economic, social and religious systems which throughout history organise reality and the resources of the Earth and humankind to cause, support or exploit evil.

## The World Today

What this might mean today is clarified in Catholic Social Teaching when John Paul II wrote about “sin” and “structures of sin” in his encyclical *On Social Concerns*. He names “the collective behaviour of certain social groups, big or small, even whole nations or blocs of nations” where “cases of *social sins* are the result of the accumulation and concentration of many *personal sins*”. These personal sins cause, support or exploit evil. Those in a position to avoid, eliminate or at least limit social evils fail to do so out of laziness, fear, silence, complicity, indifference, or take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the world or sidestep the effort or sacrifice needed. In this way

Trinity Sunday – 11 June





*The Seven Acts of Mercy by Pieter Brueghel II*

individuals comprise and support the structures of sin.

*Laudato Si'* reiterates that everything is interconnected. In this situation: "Each of us has his or her own personal identity and is capable of entering into dialogue with others and with God . . . Our [own] capacity to reason, to develop arguments, to be inventive, to interpret reality and to create art, along with other not yet discovered capacities" (LS par 81). Francis declares bluntly: "The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth" (LS par 21). Because of the part our personal lives, culture and nation play in this shocking situation: "A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal" (LS par 202). Francis warns that "a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (LS par 49).

### Resistance and Witness

John's Gospel is shaped by resistance and witness because Jesus breaks into the lives of people subjected to the Roman Empire and whose religious, social and economic life was lived under imperial domination. The theological concern of the gospel writer is to expose the Empire for what it is — a threat to the works of God in this world —

and to resist its values, just as we must today. The tension between good works and evil works is set against the imagery of light and darkness (Jn 1:4-5). Darkness implies a dynamic evolving situation which requires ongoing resolution through our continuing the work of God. In a wonderful phrase, Pope Francis described the world as God's construction site.

Each person, society and humankind — "the world" — responds by choosing light or darkness, to believe or not to believe the Word. Faith and action are linked. Today in this world, in this time, we — the human persons who make us "the world" — judge ourselves. We are people "who loved darkness rather than light because their works were evil" (Jn 3:19) or people "who do what is true [and] come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their works have been done in God" (Jn 3:21). ■

**Note:** Above, I refer to "the son". English translations insert the pronoun "his" where here, and elsewhere in John, the Greek has "the".



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





## REMOVING BARRIERS TO HEALTHCARE

**T**he idea of access to healthcare as a human right is one to which almost all of us subscribe. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), the right to health is a “fundamental part of our human rights, and our understanding of a life with dignity”. In its constitution developed in the wake of World War II, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” The WHO further affirms that “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.” Despite these bold and aspirational phrases, we know that the right to health is not evenly distributed across the globe, or even in our own country.

One of the determinants of access to health is the state of a nation’s healthcare system — a crucial component in ensuring that

appropriate and quality healthcare is available. In New Zealand, we are lucky to have a well-functioning health system, with many skilled and passionate healthcare workers dedicated to looking after us. By and large, the issue in New Zealand is not a lack of quality services in terms of our health professionals, hospitals, and clinics, but of connecting people in need with these services.

According to recent research published by the Health Funding Authority, the groups with the highest unmet need in terms of access to primary health (GPs, hospitals and after hours clinics) are Māori and Pacific peoples, and those living in areas of economic deprivation. The cost of visiting the doctor or an after-hours clinic is cited as one of the main reasons why people are unable to access healthcare. It is also the reason why many doctors’ prescriptions go unfulfilled — meaning illnesses are left untreated. Recently I read an article by Glenn Colquhoun, a GP and poet working on the Kapiti coast, about the struggles of inequality in New Zealand. He exposed the simple truth that in a region where the median annual income is \$18,500, many people don’t have \$5 for a prescription, let alone \$40 for a doctor’s consultation, or \$60 for an after-hours appointment.

With the amount of research that

has been conducted and the debate that has circled through parliament, health agencies and advocacy groups about these barriers, what solutions have been formulated and how are they faring in closing these critical gaps?

A well-known figure in the health equity field, Dr Lance O’Sullivan, a GP practising in Kaitia, has focused his career on removing barriers for Māori and kickstarting initiatives that work on a community level. One of his key messages is to democratise healthcare by giving the users of health services — the people — access to information and the ability to make decisions about their health in collaboration with health professionals.

An example of one of these initiatives is iMOKO, a digital-based service which gives trained staff in *kohanga reo* (Māori immersion kindergartens) the ability to make health assessments for children. With the support of a telehealth team a management plan is designed specifically for each child, which is then sent directly to parents and caregivers via the imoko app. Prescriptions can even be sent to a nominated pharmacy so they are ready for collection. This digital platform creates incredible new opportunities — parents and caregivers can raise concerns or questions with teachers who they already know and trust and information can be presented in a culturally familiar way. This system also solves the problem of getting to a doctor, particularly in rural areas or for those without transport and also eliminates the cost barrier at the same time.

Another key project that Dr O’Sullivan has initiated is *Kainga Ora* — a place-based initiative which works on the principle that to fix patients, we must also fix their homes. This community-level project attends to the holistic health of the person — one of the weaknesses of traditional medicine is its focus on the health of the physical body, ignoring the importance of emotional, mental, spiritual and environmental wellbeing in the overall health of the individual. ■

**Louise Carr-Neil**, an Auckland native living in Hamilton, is passionate about gender equality and human rights. In her spare time she enjoys running and vegetarian cooking.





# CRITICAL SUPPORT of our PACIFIC NEIGHBOURS



**W**hile our media may be flooded with news from half a world away, it's important we don't forget what is going on in our own neighbourhood and, more importantly, with our own neighbours. Australia and New Zealand are withdrawing their forces from the Solomon Islands this month, so it's an opportune time to reflect on our responsibilities.

The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) has been a 14-year long mission to stabilise a country that had been plagued by ethnic violence and political unrest and at the turn of the century was teetering on the brink of collapse.

## History

RAMSI was formed when the Solomon Islands asked Australia for help in 2003. Civil unrest had been growing in the Solomons since 1998 when militants began an intimidation campaign on the island of Guadalcanal against settlers from the island of Malaita.

By 1999 the escalating violence led to a state of emergency being declared and a political coup soon followed. For the next four years violence and animosity flared between different ethnic groups. Political instability prevailed, breeding widespread corruption, extortion and lawlessness.

A direct appeal to Australia saw RAMSI established with the goal of rescuing the Solomon Islands, restoring law and order and rebuilding the government and public services.

## A Pacific Coalition

RAMSI became a regional effort with New Zealand and 13 other Pacific nations coming on board to offer assistance to the Solomon Islands.

Around 2,000 personnel from Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga and elsewhere arrived — their

first and most urgent objective was disarmament. All civilian and police firearms were collected from around the country and destroyed to help the coalition defuse the highly volatile situation. The necessity of that move was reflected in the overwhelming support of the Solomonese public.

Over the next decade, law and order was restored by the Australian-led coalition of Pacific nations working in conjunction with the local government. The year 2013 marked the beginning of an eventual four-year withdrawal of the program.

## Lessons Learnt

The programme was not without faults. RAMSI had been initiated with no defined end point and without clearly defined goals, so it remained ambiguous in its operation. This is no doubt partly responsible for making the Solomon Islands one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world.

However, while critics may be right to question the efficacy of the programme and the future of the Solomons, proponents of RAMSI can celebrate its immediate achievement of defusing tensions at a crucial moment. History is littered with reasons why intervention shouldn't be the first port of call for stronger nations to address the problems of smaller neighbours, but there are times when involvement is vital for peace. Let the Rwandan genocide serve as a stark reminder of what can happen when ethnic violence is permitted to spiral out of control.

Despite criticism, RAMSI is a landmark programme and remains a credit to the Pacific region and those countries that came to the aid of the Solomon Islands. It is an example of the ability and willingness of Pacific neighbours to help one another out when in need.

## Looking Ahead

While the end of RAMSI may not guarantee an anxiety-free future for the Solomons, its situation is considerably improved from 14 years ago. Only recently arms were reintroduced for the local police force — a vote of confidence that order has been restored and that society is reasonably stable.

Unfortunately, just as stability is being achieved in the Solomons, Australia has announced it will cut its aid budget and instead will funnel more funds into its spy agency ASIO as well as to the Australian Federal Police. The government says the savings from aid cuts will be used to strengthen Australia against threats to its national security. But the motivations of the Government seem confused: surely ensuring the security and stability of Australia's closest neighbours achieves many of the same ends.

The Indo-Pacific region is the recipient of 90 per cent of Australia's aid budget. Cutting aid will, without doubt, undermine Australia's ability to influence peace. With Vanuatu, the Marshall Islands, Nauru and Papua New Guinea all experiencing political upheaval in the last 12 months, there are still needs in the Pacific that could benefit from an Australia devoted to their cause.

RAMSI was by no means a perfect programme but it demonstrated what Australia, New Zealand and our many smaller-nation friends could achieve together. The need to reassert our commitment to our neighbours in the Pacific is as strong now as it has ever been. ■



**Jack Derwin** is the assistant reporter to a foreign correspondent in the Sydney Bureau of the Japanese newspaper *The Asahi Shimbun*.

# A Biography of the Spirit

by John C Haughey  
Published by Orbis Books, 2015  
Reviewed by Helen Bergin

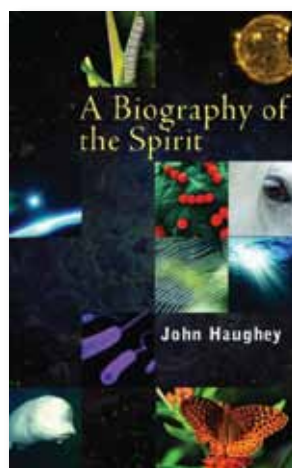
BOOK

I loved this book! If any reader awaits a book which paints many faces of the Holy Spirit, draws one into a story told in short bites and challenges one's complacency, John Haughey's book *A Biography of the Spirit* may be just right! Haughey, a North American theologian and Jesuit priest, attends to the Spirit in dialogue with neuroscience, the natural world, biblical stories and the lives of ordinary people.

Through a succession of diary entries — some short and others more developed, Haughey draws the Spirit out from “under the covers” and notes elements of the Spirit highlighted in Christian tradition and ends up in the

21st century marvelling at “space-time” — the latter, sheer immensity with an estimate of 100,000 million galaxies out there! Moreover, Haughey delights equally in the mysteries of an ever-expanding cosmos and in the painstaking work of humble mice constructing tunnels below the earth.

For Haughey, the Spirit is no mere add-on to the first and second persons of the Trinity, but is given the titles of divine “Completer” and divine “Connector”. One of Haughey's favourite roles for the Spirit is that of “completing or making whole” and this phrase encompasses the wholeness of creation as well as that of human beings in relation to the Earth. He reminds humanity of our groundedness in earth when he says: “We are tethered to the soil from which we come and to which we will return.”



Humanity exists as “complete” only when we recognise our place within a greater whole.

A further role of the Spirit as “Connector” (honoured by Augustine as the “Love” between the First and Second Trinitarian persons) is vividly depicted by Haughey in a witty poem entitled “What does the Trinity do when It Is Off work? It ones — a verb”. For Haughey, the reality of humans striving to become “one” among themselves, among faiths and with the Earth, signals “the oneness that Christ came and died and rose to affect and effect”.

*A Biography of the Spirit* is not only for specialist

theologians or scientists, but a journal wherein Haughey expresses the magnificence of creation with a particular focus on the Spirit. The reader can dip into the book at many different points and experience the links between the Earth and faith. The issues considered are ones which scientists and Christians need boldly to address. I highly recommend it. ■

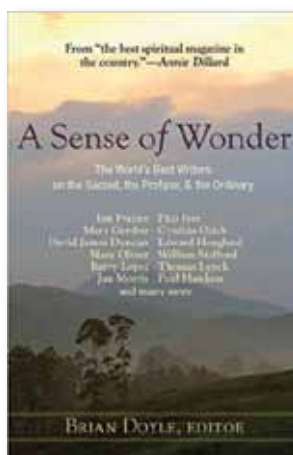
# A Sense of Wonder: The World's Best Writers on the Sacred, the Profane, and the Ordinary

Edited by Brian Doyle  
Published by Orbis Books 2016  
Reviewed by Ken Fahey

BOOK

**A** *Sense of Wonder* is an anthology of stories, essays and reflections by 37 writers around the themes of the sacred, the profane and the ordinary.

Stories from the darker side of human history are of places such as Auschwitz and New York 9/11, of people like Native American Indians who lost so much from European settlement, and of how Osama bin Laden could have used his gifts differently. William Stafford, in *Every War Has Two Losers*, writes of the sanity of non-violence compared to the hopelessness and madness of war. In *The Reality Of Torture*, Australian, Martin Flannagan testifies against the evil of all torture.



Jessie Van Eerden in *This Soul Has Six Wings* says: “The way I see it, a mystic takes a peek at God and then does her best to show the rest of us what she saw.” Paul Myers in *The River* shares his years of struggling after a tragedy when he unsuccessfully tried to save his brother-in-law who slipped and fell into a river on a fishing trip. Some readers will identify with Mary Gordon's *A Burning Soul*, which describes the minute rules, trials and tribulations of making First Communion and Confession in the 1950s pre-Vatican Council II era.

Many of the essays and reflections are about everyday happenings: a noisy neighbourhood; seeing close-up the beauty of nature; visiting a convenience store; the rigid night routine of a six-year-old intellectually disabled son; how children can make despair look stupid; why I am a priest; a powerful graduation address and the basketball referee/bus driver giving hope to a group of troubled young people. Nurse Hob Osterlund in *Bald Places* tells of two seriously ill patients in adjoining rooms whose lives merge in their hospital journeys.

This book is an easy and inspiring read. You can dip in and out of it. I found the stories touching, delightful, human, challenging and insightful. They could be good discussion starters for groups and for parents with their older children. I recommend it to those seeking nourishment and reminders of God's presence in the ordinary as well as more challenging experiences of our lives. ■





**W**e live in politically volatile times. As the chief defence lawyer in *Denial* remarks, crossing swords with British historian and Holocaust denier David Irving was always going to be a risky venture. And so it has proved. Following the film's release, Irving has gained huge numbers of online followers, mainly young people who lack even second-hand memories of the horrors of the Second World War.

In 1996 American Holocaust historian Deborah Lipstadt was sued by Irving for defamation, with the case to be tried at the High Court in London. Unlike American law, where the onus of proof in such cases lies on the accuser, Lipstadt had to prove the truth of what she had alleged in print – that Irving was a Holocaust denier and a liar.

As the courtroom drama unfolds, it seems at first that the defence team has the upper hand. While Irving (Timothy Spall) takes the risky step of defending himself, Lipstadt (Rachel Weisz) has a large team at her disposal, including a Cambridge history professor and his two research assistants. Her core team consists of two top lawyers – the unruffled, smooth-talking Anthony Julius, a consummate strategist, and the avuncular Richard Rampton, a brilliant courtroom tactician. Rampton insists that he does all the talking. To forestall the wily Irving, Lipstadt is not allowed to speak in court or to bring any Holocaust

## Denial

Directed by Mick Jackson  
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

FILM

survivors to the witness box. By denying Irving the chance to display his rhetorical strengths, the defence team are able to “box him in” and win the case.

Proof of Irving's evasiveness and dishonesty rests on details – a diary entry in which he repeats a racist and anti-Semitic nursery rhyme to his baby daughter, or the now-destroyed chimneys that once protruded from the roof of the demolished gas chamber at Auschwitz. Irving picked

Auschwitz to make his case because of its iconic status; other camps would presumably have yielded unequivocal evidence of mass gassing.

Recognising that something more than a forensic drama was needed to bring the film to life, director Jackson has added elements of contrast and conflict within the defence team. Lipstadt's flaming red hair and colourful scarves contrast with the sombre courtroom attire of her British colleagues; they also underline the difference between her emotional investment in the case and the meticulous, rational approach pursued by Julius and Rampton.

Although, in the end, I felt that *Denial* failed to deliver a knockout punch, it comes highly recommended as a tense and absorbing drama that deals with real issues of our time. ■

## Maori Madonna

A beautiful image painted by Sister Mary Lawrence in 1943 when she was a Sister of Mercy in Wellington.

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## Meerkat Desks

Meerkats, as viewed on wildlife programmes, are cute, captivating creatures. One could say they practise solidarity — having strong group connections and working cooperatively. Comic scenes include the gang foraging for insects and other small prey while a member stands guard — ramrod straight.

This inspired an entrepreneur to create and sell the “Meerkat Desk” which enables people to work standing up — better for the body than spending long periods seated and a good way to ward off deep-vein thrombosis.

## Solidarity or Complicity

Although meerkats appear endearing, they have some off-putting habits as part of their survival skills, including harsh enforcement of “sticking together”. The flip side of solidarity is complicity. Supporting companions requires compromise to accommodate different views. But sometimes the compromise demanded exceeds what is legitimate and the pressure to conform can be high. Courage is needed if a person is to maintain integrity. Corruption is an ever-lurking danger in any professional group.

After a disturbing court case, former Prime Minister Helen Clark established a Commission of Enquiry in 2004 to investigate the way NZ Police had dealt with allegations of sexual assault by its members and associates. The findings were released in 2007 by Commissioner Dame Margaret Bazley. The report made 60 recommendations: 47 for Police, 12 for the Independent Police Conduct Authority and one for the Government. It also distinguished five patterns of unprofessional behaviour amongst certain elements within the Police that needed to be addressed.

At the end of April, New Zealand Police published a fresh report, A

*Decade of Change 2007–2017*, in which it said it had revolutionised its culture in the decade.

## Revolution?

Shortly after Vatican II ended in December 1965 I read *Revolution in a City Parish* published in 1943. Its French author, Abbé Michonneau, had been appointed to a working class parish of 60,000. It was surviving financially and had three curates fully occupied running groups for children, youth and adults. Sunday Masses were well attended. However, Michonneau judged the parish a failure because it catered for less than a tenth of its membership.

He worked with his assistants to prepare parishioners to assume leadership roles which freed the clergy to visit the missing 90 per cent. They talked about the Gospel Jesus. Two things occurred: lay leadership became accepted, and the missing slowly began to respond. He made a major discovery that people weren't interested in “being churchified” but in “being Christified”. Step one in conversion.

The “revolution” transformed a self-referential parish into a missionary one, as Pope Francis would express it. People responded positively to Michonneau who hadn't tried to get them to Mass, or teach doctrine. Although he would have been shocked by some of the reforms of Vatican II, his approach anticipated an essential aspect of the Council — an attitude that is still not appreciated in some New Zealand parishes.

## Some Thoughts

“I have three precious things which I hold fast and prize. The first is gentleness; the second is frugality; the third is humility, which keeps me from putting myself before others. Be gentle and you can be bold; be frugal and you can be liberal; avoid putting yourself before others and you can become a leader among men and women.” — Chinese philosopher and writer, Lao Tzu.

“Holiness doesn't mean doing extraordinary things, but doing ordinary things with love and faith.” — Pope Francis ■



**TUI MOTU InterIslands**  
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

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

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

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

We do not publish anonymous letters except in exceptional circumstances.

## WORDS THAT CAPTURE US

I had been trying hard to get my Year 10 English class to appreciate poetry, with mixed success. I was so moved by Brian Bilston's *Refugees* (TM March 2017: 16) that I decided to read it with my class, projected onscreen in order not to reveal the instruction at the bottom. First, I read it to them in the usual way — from top to bottom. The boys were visibly uncomfortable, clearly wondering why their teacher had selected this poem which seemed to go against everything our Catholic school stands for.

When I then read it from the bottom up, there was a moment of silence and then an excited "Wow!" from one class member. The boys were fascinated and nearly all asked if they could have a printed copy to keep: just the response I'd hoped for. I think they finally believed me that poets can do very clever things with words and emotions!

Thank you for an excellent magazine and especially for the always thought-provoking poem in the middle.

**Judith Drabble, Havelock North**

## LET'S LEARN FROM CONTARINI

My heartfelt thanks to Peter Matheson for his *Inspiring Cardinal Gasparo Contarini* (TM May 2017:18-

19). This is the kind of Church history that all Christians, liberal and conservative, should be aware of. It shows the continued need for open minds and hearts. The ecumenical movement among Christians seems to be pursued only by an enlightened few. Christians are the most schismatic of all faith communities and the increasing division into fundamentalist positions can only keep us apart. The fact that Contarini reached an agreement with Lutherans and Calvinists in an era of polemical warfare is remarkable. Yet Matheson makes it clear that "when discussion proceeded to the sacraments and the magisterial authority of the church . . . no agreement proved possible". And 500 years later there is still no tolerance for different views on the sacraments or doctrines held outside the magisterial authority of the Church. Catholics have been voting with their feet for decades and we hold rigidly to the traditional formulas for Mass, the sacramental rites and matters of conscience. Disillusionment is a challenge that causes many to abandon our faith community. Surely we must restore and expand on the freedom of conscience promised in Vatican II or continue to suffer the loss of vocations and the commitment of our children to the community that educated them.

**Paul Green, Wellington (abridged)**

## Catholic Women's Movement

**You are invited to  
CALLED TO HEAL  
The Challenge of  
the Gospel**

**A Retreat Day led by  
Trish O'Donnell**

To be held Saturday  
30 September 2017  
9.30am–4.00pm

At the McFadden's Centre  
64 McFaddens Road  
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(Entry and parking  
off Redwood Place)

Cost \$40 – Lunch, morning  
and afternoon tea provided

**Register by 1 September 2017**

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elizabeth.griffin  
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## Looking OUT and IN

“French toast for dinner? I’m fine with that, I haven’t got anything else ready.”

Our sturdy home-made bread doesn’t work very well as soft French toast so we put on our sandals and walk 15 minutes up the hill to the nearest shop. Saturday evening and the two older girls have gone off to an event at school. Dad’s been in South India with Grandma, so it’s just the three of us at home tonight.

As we walk up the path, 15-year-old Rohan runs and jumps off the wall on one side, climbs and jumps off a small tree and weaves in front and behind like a young dog. “No, I haven’t been watching a Youtube thing about parkour – I just feeling like jumping today.”

We chat to Anil in his shop about the huge hailstorm yesterday, and how far off monsoon might be, then head back down the hill with a loaf of frothy white bread. Eight-year-old Jalori protectively spars with a couple of stray dogs who menacingly growl at our dog on the way, then we re-direct a home-

delivery man who we encounter wandering around disconsonately with a package of tikka paneer.

The evening is a happy one. We eat the big batch of French toast. Honey and lime juice are voted as top topping. We watch some of *Mr Bean Goes on Holiday*; agreeing on a movie we would all like to watch together is a rare and a hard-won achievement but before long Jalori and I decide our books are more alluring. While Rohan finishes watching the movie, I read my Dorothy Day book and Jalori gets ahead on Percy Jackson.

Much later, when Rohan and Jalori are asleep, our big girls get back home and sit with me to flick through some photos of their evening with friends. Golden sunset lights the laughing faces of teenagers.

It is a Saturday night like a hundred others yet in less than a fortnight my twin daughters will be graduating from high-school, and not far ahead, they’ll be university students in far-away New Zealand. We’re doing a few dry-runs at becoming a much smaller household and feeling this next threshold of school-leaving is

every bit as momentous as that first day of school when our five-year olds skipped down busy Barbadoes Street to Christchurch East School. Both Christchurch and our girls have changed and grown unrecognisably in the intervening 13 years.

The coming new shape of family life lends a hidden current of poignancy these days. There are moments of feeling loss and unrest but prevailing is a swirling gratefulness for all we have: behind, now and ahead. We are always family. In times ahead, we will still wrestle through finding a movie we want to watch together. We still go walking and feel bouncy. We will still hold referenda on the best toppings for French toast. We will still need and find grace for each day, as a family and as individuals. ■



**Kaaren Mathias** is a mother of four young people, is married to Jeph and has spent the last 11 years living and working in India.



*Bless us with  
energy  
motivation  
commitment  
companionship  
and enough love  
to take our part  
In the communities around us.*

From the Tui Motu team