

# TUI MOTU InterIslands

Independent Catholic Magazine

CELEBRATING 23 YEARS 1997–2020

Issue 248 May 2020 Free



## Choosing Life

NEIL DARRAGH discusses conscience

ZAIN ALI and JOHN KLEINSMAN on ethical choices

GREG MARCAR, ELIZABETH MACKIE,  
BRUCE DRYSDALE and PETER MATHESON  
on living in the time of Covid-19

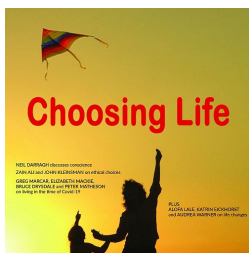
PLUS

ALOFA LALE, KATRIN EICKHORST  
and AUDREA WARNER on life changes

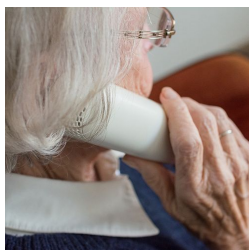




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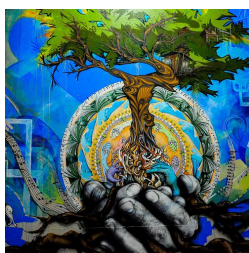
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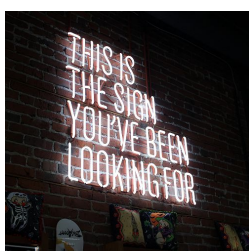
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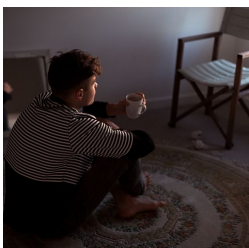
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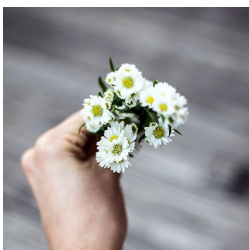
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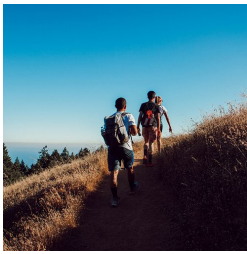
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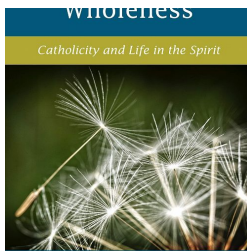
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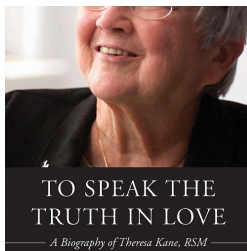
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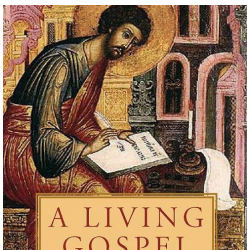
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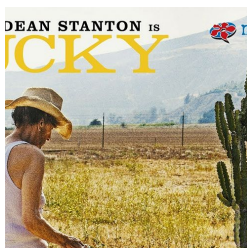
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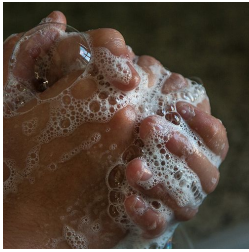
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## **BLESSING for this Time of Covid-19** *by Tui Motu Team*

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Cover: Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020

Photo by Shlomaster from Pixabay

## EDITORIAL: Life After Lockdown

Ann Gilroy — May 2nd, 2020

Lockdown has been amazing — a resurrection experience. Even while COVID-19 spread death around the world, new life paradoxically emerged before our eyes. Our world suddenly tipped. We housed the homeless. We received public money for basic necessities and wages. We went home and stayed home — obediently. We listened to problems — hungry families, citizens trapped overseas — and endeavoured to address them immediately. We heard informative updates in language we could understand and act on. We took responsibility for everyone else in the country. We behaved with kindness, caring and creativity in our bubbles. We tried out new things. We relieved some of the burden on Earth and reduced air pollution in our cities. We prayed, contemplated and celebrated church and national feast days in new ways. We starved COVID-19's spree of illness and death in our country — for now.

We did this together. Good leadership convinced us and we encouraged one another to accept the restrictions. Our solidarity has been impressive and infectious. We kept to the rules because we wanted to safeguard those most vulnerable to the virus in our communities. Although we were strictly in bubbles, we felt together.

We enlivened the symbols of Holy Week. Our frequent hand washing expressed service — our loving ministry to one another to prevent the virus spreading. Cooking and breadmaking symbolised eucharist — our loving gratitude shared with whānau and family. Zoom connections with family and friends — our walking the way of the cross with others in isolation. Receiving the news of infection rates and death — our participation in the reality of suffering and death and solidarity with those who mourn.

But we can't stay in our bubbles because we fear the future. Soon education will move from home back to school. All the work that keeps the country going and connected in the world will resume. We'll travel around the country again and our borders will reopen to visitors from other places. We'll have to deal with the lockdown effects on people and the economy. And we will start up again knowing that we can be threatened with COVID-19 again.

Despite our fears, we trust in Pentecost — our hope in the strengthening, enlivening Spirit among us. We'll call on the gifts of care and good sense, of wisdom to devise plans of action. We'll call on advice and counsel from many sources to increase our understanding. We'll call on contemplative thoughtfulness and patience. And we'll remind ourselves that we live in the presence of a loving, creative Divine. These gifts belong in the community rather than to us individually, so together — with our government, our scientific and medical professionals, our leaders — we will discern the best ways forward.

Our experience of lockdown has highlighted what we value most. As we move into Pentecost we'll need to embed our common values into our ways forward. This is our new chance.

We thank all our contributors to this 248th issue — our first digital production. Their combined gifts of writing, research, art and craft offer thoughtful discussion and reflection on making choices at this time — and much more.

You are welcome to share this issue with others you think might enjoy it. We need as many subscribers as possible going forward.

We expect to be able to print the June issue of *Tui Motu* magazine and post it out to you — but these are uncertain times. We live in hope.

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

*Tui Motu* Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020





## COLUMN: Live This Time with Decency

Jack Derwin — April 30th, 2020

As people around the world are contained to their homes, the appearance of choice and personal freedoms seems increasingly scarce.

Gathering with friends and family has become a thing of the past. Sitting down in cafes and restaurants is an image tinged with nostalgia.

Going shopping for anything other than groceries has largely been relegated to online territory along with much of our lives. It seems likely that more video calls have been made in the past month than in the past decade.

While isolation can at times be incredibly disheartening, it could be a lot worse. Though there is a police presence enforcing the lockdown rules, we are still permitted to go out daily for exercise. In some places, like Spain, even a casual stroll or a morning jog was off limits.

For the elderly and those with compromised immune systems, living in a country with a well-equipped healthcare system is little consolation. The sight and proximity of others, not to mention the nightly news, would be anxiety-inducing at best. Even as restrictions are gently relaxed, many will still need to remain inside and ever vigilant.

But while the pandemic is frightening and isolation is hard, we should not despair. Certainly if we're fortunate enough to be of good health and good sense, we have plenty with which to steady ourselves.

Ultimately, while restricted in almost every physical sense there are still plenty of choices available to us as to how we live throughout this unique time.

We can, as at least one world leader has chosen to do, quibble and lash out and complain about the set of cards we've been dealt, many of which aren't nearly as bad as those of others seated at the same table.

Or we can find the resolve and the fortitude to get through this period. There are opportunities that arise in each situation — the virus acts as a kind of circuit breaker. An absence of physical socialising makes us conscious of those we value, and social distancing has no doubt led many of us to rekindle relationships we've been otherwise too busy to maintain.

A sudden dependence on technology has in a sense made us appreciate the moments when we don't need or use it. Whether it's embracing those we're bunkered down with or indulging in the pursuits still available, it's a pause from the hustle and bustle of a modern life.

I have spent part of my isolation revisiting a favourite book, Albert Camus's *The Plague*, with new eyes. The book tells the tale of an Algerian town locked down in order to control the pestilence that has visited upon it.

Camus's characters must grapple with their own individual challenges as they face a collective kind of chaos. But in each challenge, the individual is presented with a choice.

"This whole thing is not about heroism," the protagonist Dr Rieux says. "It may seem a ridiculous idea, but the only way to fight the plague is with decency." Another character asks what decency is. "Doing my job," the good doctor replies.

And so must we embrace decency over panic and fulfil whatever roles we are left with at this juncture, whether it be calling a friend in need of a conversation, delivering groceries to someone who can't venture out themselves, or simply not indulging in panic. It may not seem like much, but decency is a job in demand — now more than ever.

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

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## Gallery

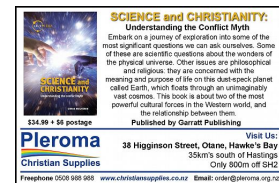
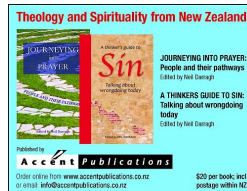
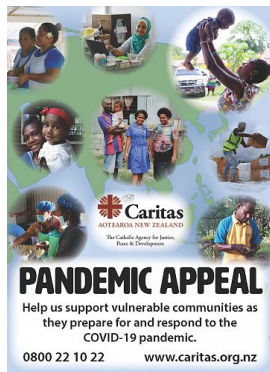




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## COLUMN: Looking Out and In

Kaaren Mathias — May 1st, 2020

Long ago, mid-way through Lent this year, the COVID-19 pandemic thrust forward and pushed us all into a new world that was never part of our plan. Many things have changed since the last *Tui Motu* magazine was published and the shape of how we live in months ahead is still unknown. Our priorities and plans have changed; prayer feels essential and then irrelevant. We find ourselves either too busy or too quiet or not sure what we feel at all.

After India went into COVID-19 lockdown for 21 days, many migrant worker families were thrown into a status of daily food insecurity. I have sat in the homes of many such families — five or eight people living in a square room, with just a jar of rice and plastic bags of kidney beans as food stores. With the lockdown, suddenly, many thousands couldn't go to work to get cash for tomorrow's roti and vegetables.

I felt so angry with the poor planning of this lockdown, and the devastating impact on the poor. Yet a disaster, whether natural or human-made is an opportunity for us to reach deep and look for signs of hope. Last week a teammate rang to tell me about some inspiring action from colleagues responding to this need.

Rajni, a lively Hindu 19-year old, lives in a house with plastic tarpaulin for a roof in Brahmanwala, an informal urban community in Dehradun. Rajni already knew Azma and Pinky, young Muslim community health promoters, after they had all followed a youth resilience curriculum together last year. So Azma, Rajni and Pinky discussed how they could help their nearby neighbours who were already running out of food after the start of the lockdown. They allocated responsibilities and started knocking on doors and talking to others in the local neighbourhood. Within three days, they had arranged a daily system of collecting donations of onions, rice and pulses from neighbours. The local *gurudwara* (Sikh temple) had a large kitchen set up to cook for large groups (the world over, Sikhs are amazing at feeding large crowds) and they were happy to let Azma, Rajni and Pinky, joined by others, to cook there. Together they were able to distribute a cooked meal to 80 people daily. They did this for nearly a week, until Government measures to provide support to migrant workers in slums were put in place.

During a global pandemic where people could instinctively pull apart, especially in an era with growing violence and exclusion towards Muslim community members, this account of collaboration by Hindu, Muslim and Sikh young people gave me great hope in my belly.

In 1999 I was part of a team responding acutely to an earthquake that killed more than 1,000 people in Armenia, Colombia. The people most advantaged by the *status quo* (ie, neoliberal capitalism) were those most concerned about how to protect themselves from possible looting, rather than sharing



food and blankets with people who had lost everything.

Whether we live in New Zealand or India, we all have days when we believe we are doing right for ourselves and our loved ones by saving money for the future, by building fences, by installing security systems or, perhaps, by sending our children to private schools. But this COVID-19 pandemic is strengthening the message we've already been sent by global climate change, a message which is becoming harder and harder to ignore: we can't wall ourselves away from each other. We are always connected, utterly interdependent.

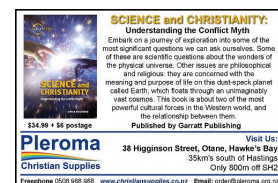
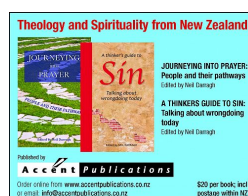
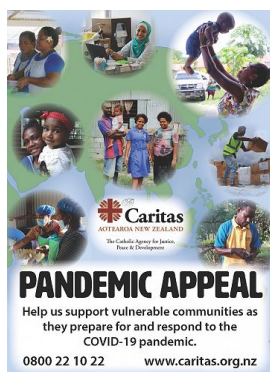
Rebecca Solnit in her "long read" in [The Guardian](#) in early April stated: "When a storm subsides, the air is washed clean of particulate matter that has been obscuring the view, and you can see farther and more sharply than at any other time." She suggests that this pandemic could be an opportunity to recognise there is enough food clothing, shelter, healthcare and education for all, if we share, and that the case for universal health care and a basic income for all is more compelling than ever. Although I don't know how to make plans for August, let alone 2021, it is not too soon to start looking for chances to shape a new future.

I am inspired by Rajni, Azma and Pinky who saw and responded to a need without seeking permission or deciding that there were others more qualified. We are somehow and strangely, in a quiet time, although the storm of Covid is raging yet. While we wait and watch, the best way forward seems to be to hold tight to hope and step out the door in whatever metaphorical or real way possible, to knock down fences, give away money now, work collaboratively, look out for each other and make resources, ideas and information open source to enhance the lives and survival of all.

*Kaaren Mathias is in Christchurch during the pandemic but usually lives on the outskirts of a busy bazaar on steep forested hills about the Gangetic plains of North India. She is a parent, adventurer, public health doctor and follower of Jesus of Galilee.*

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## Gallery





Anzac Day 2020 commemorative shrine in Motueka.

Photo by Anne Webber/Shutterstock.com

## COLUMN: Cross Currents

Susan Smith — April 30th, 2020

### Whither Religious Life?

CLANZ, the Congregational Leaders of Women's and Men's Religious Congregations in New Zealand, met in February. The theme of their meeting was "Emerging Futures", which focused on the various issues facing Catholic sisters, brothers and religious priests at a time of diminishing numbers and rising median age throughout the Western world — as once flourishing communities face an uncertain future.

The Marist priests and brothers arrived in New Zealand from France in 1838, followed soon after by Mercy sisters from Ireland, the Mission sisters from France and the Dominican sisters and Christian brothers from Ireland. Other congregations arrived in the 20th century. Almost all of these women and men were involved in the education of Catholic Pākehā children. In 1877, when the government decreed that education was to be free, secular and compulsory, the burgeoning Catholic school system relied on Religious as teachers. They were not paid much and Catholic parents raised funds for the building and maintenance of the schools.

### Vatican II Call for Renewal

Two events changed that. First, Vatican II called Religious to a new understanding of Religious Life, one that was to respond more effectively to the needs of the modern world. Sisters, and to a lesser extent brothers and priests, responded with enthusiasm and generosity to this new direction, but to their surprise, the rejuvenation of Religious Life did not result in more young people seeking to join. In fact, the reverse happened.

### Integration Act and Catholic Education

The second event was the 1975 Integration Act when the government began paying teachers' salaries and other costs incurred by Catholic schools, although not capital costs. This development led to many sisters, brothers and priests moving out of the Catholic school system and lay people moving in.

We cannot underestimate the work of so many dedicated Religious from the mid-19th century through to latter decades of the 20th century. As one former teacher said: "The great contribution of priests and brothers was to take the Irish [boys] from the bogs to the boardroom."

Religious Congregations were founded to provide education to those who might otherwise have missed out. Now our governments are providing education and assuming responsibility for other social services that formerly were the responsibility of church groups. Religious today are searching for relevance in the world.

### Faith Works in Culture

The American theologian H Richard Niebuhr's 1951 publication *Christ and Culture* can provide some insights not only for Religious Life but also for wider Church community where a similar decline is occurring. Monastic culture, with its emphasis on escape from the world, deeply influenced 19th-century founders of religious congregations. The injunction "Do not love the world or anything in the world" (1 John 2:15), was taken seriously. Vatican II was to change all that. The important biblical text was "God so loved the world" (John 3:16). Faith against culture was out, and faith and culture was in.

More conservative and traditionalist Catholics can often feel deeply affronted by what they perceive as the close relationship between faith and contemporary culture, and attribute all problems facing today's Church to that closeness. Thus, Joseph Ratzinger blames the sexual revolution of the 1960s for sexual abuse crimes in the Church. What conservatives in the Church today, religious or lay, seem to want, is a return to the Church of the 1950s, when priests reigned supreme, when women knew their place, when a dead language (Latin) was the language of the universal Church and when culture was virtually ignored. There was no such word as inculturation.

But Vatican II requires all of us to recognise that the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of humankind in this time of uncertainty are to be "the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1). We cannot try and escape from our contemporary cultural reality, and if we are to meet its challenges it will not be by returning mindlessly to the Catholicism of the 1950s. Francis is something of a light in the darkness for us all as he urges us to bring about justice for the poor, show mercy towards the sinner and to care for the environment.

*Susan Smith is a Sister of Our Lady of the Missions living near Onerahi north of Whangarei. She is a theologian, author, gardener and environmentalist.*

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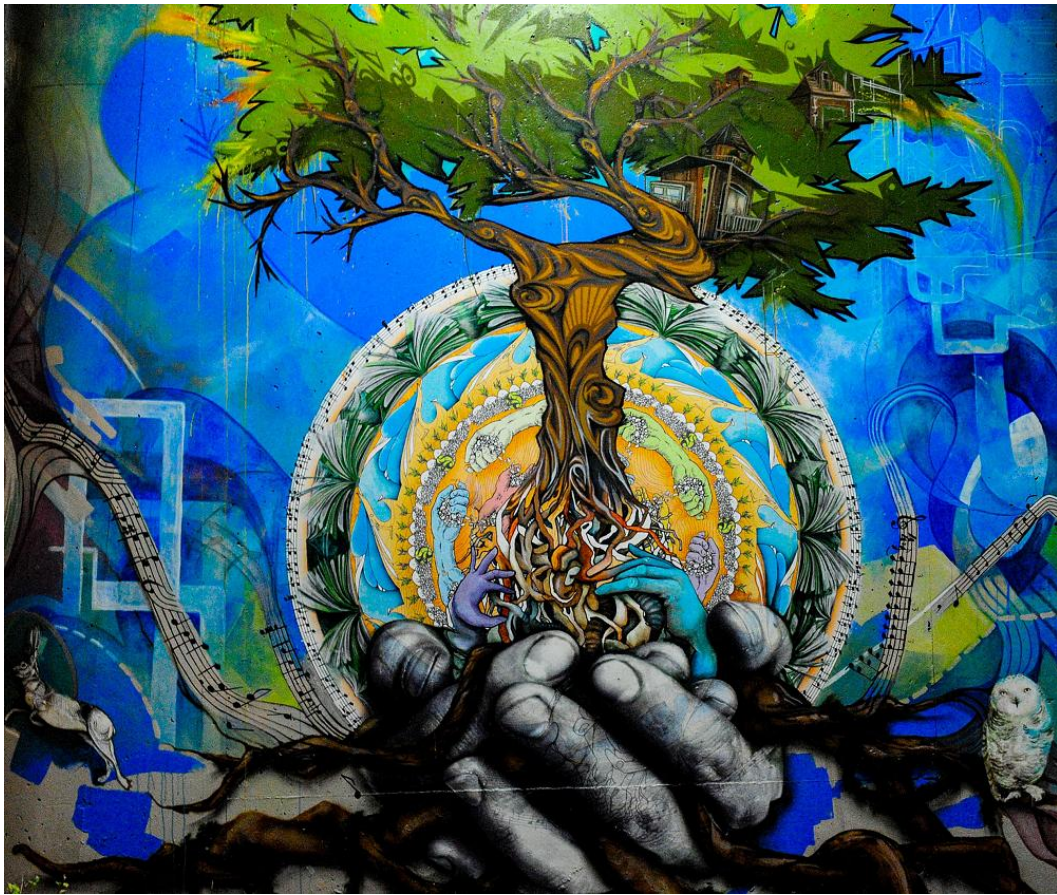


Photo by Toni Reed on Unsplash

## ARTICLE: Developing Our Conscience

Neil Darragh — April 30th, 2020

Neil Darragh discusses the need to develop our conscience in order to make informed personal and collective moral decisions.

I have known a few people who seemed to be motivated by self-interest with little sense of moral responsibility towards others. I've only once met someone who I'm pretty sure had no conscience. This was a man coming to the end of a prison sentence for violent sexual offences. He told me that once he had finished his sentence he would have "paid his debt to society", that his slate would be clean and that he fully intended to offend again. This time, though, he would have to make sure that he didn't get caught. He had no concern for past or future victims of his violence and no sense of any internal moral obligation. Meeting someone with no conscience is a scary experience.

The opposite of this is the person who suffers from scruples. Many of what the rest of us would consider normal behaviours, or well within the range of excusable human frailty, seem to the scrupulous person to be sinful and punishable by an all-seeing Judge or relentless condemnatory force. Here is an overactive and deranged conscience that brands many normal human actions or mild indiscretions as bad and deserving punishment.

### Our Moral Responsibility

For most of us that niggling guilt for something we have done wrong or an internal call to something good we should do is probably our most immediate experience of our own conscience operating. One key to understanding it is that it is not just some objective "insight" or "knowledge" but it includes a sense of moral responsibility. It is the beginning of being a human being who tries to do right, to be good, or to act fairly towards others even if it entails some cost to ourselves. It is different then from self-will or self-interest.

### Developing Our Conscience

A second key to understanding conscience is that we develop it throughout our lives. Conscience is an internal personal process which becomes, hopefully, more astute and more accurate as it is formed by our own experience, by moral reasoning (our deliberate investigations into the rights and

wrongs of things), by our families and friends, by our communities and by mass media. In this process we would hope to develop what moral theologians call an “informed” conscience.

Simply put, our conscience is our judgement of the moral quality of our actions.

Unfortunately, our conscience can also be wrong. It can be “deformed”. The 2019 killing and wounding of people in the Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre in Christchurch is a recent horrible example of a conscience gone wrong.

In Christian tradition, understandings of “conscience” have ranged from the “voice of God” (and therefore absolutely to be obeyed above all other voices) to more down-to-earth (and much less absolute) applications in the here and now of Church teachings or civic duties. Yet the force of conscience has always been a central theme in Christian morality. It cannot be ignored by Christians if only because of the example of Jesus Christ’s conscientious objection to both the imperial and religious authorities of his time.

In modern times, many Christians, and Catholics in particular, can find an anchor point for understanding conscience in the second Vatican Council’s *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et Spes*:

“Deep within their consciences men and women discover a law which they have not laid upon themselves and which they must obey. Its voice, ever calling them to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, tells them inwardly at the right moment: do this, shun that. For they have in their hearts a law inscribed by God. Their dignity rests in observing this law, and by it they will be judged. Their conscience is people’s most secret core, and their sanctuary” (GS: par 16).

One of the implications of all this is the need to develop and “form” our consciences so that we are increasingly sensitive to living out this interior sense of moral responsibility. We cannot do this on our own. In a complex modern world we rely on the people we trust, the cultures we identify with, the wealth of knowledge and experience in the communities we belong to and the Church and civic leadership that has gained our respect.

In the matter of leadership, I was impressed by moral theologian Klaus Demmer when asked recently whether bishops should take public stances on moral issues. Demmer replied that the primary task of Church leaders is to remind all Christians that they each have a conscience to be followed. Their second task is to remind Christians that, realising they have to follow their consciences, they need to form their consciences by becoming better people, more competent at living and doing the truth.

### **First Crunch Point**

Most of the time, most of us can happily follow our consciences in our daily lives with some degree of excitement, without too much contradiction and without high levels of stress. There are at least two “crunch points” though, where conscience often does go under stress. One of these crunch points occurs when there is a contradiction between my conscience and the teachings of my Church or the laws of my country. On this matter at least there is concerted agreement among moral theologians and Church authorities: the first priority is to follow our conscience. Yet we need to be sure that we do this with an “informed” conscience and we do it with love and respect for others.

### **Second Crunch Point**

A second crunch point is the issue of *freedom of conscience* in both Church and society. Respect for freedom of conscience is a basic requirement for Church authorities. It derives from the Christian belief in the dignity of every human person and the belief that Christian faith cannot be forced. Historically, Church authorities have not always done this especially during the period of “Christendom” when Church and state were closely aligned. Enthusiastic Christian missionaries and over-zealous “defenders of the faith” have sometimes forgotten it. Yet it still remains a fundamental principle of Christian life and a binding principle on Church leadership.

### **Freedom of Conscience in Society**

Respect for freedom of conscience is also a basic requirement of democratic societies. Imperial and tyrannical societies are characterised by their disregard for the consciences of their subjects. In democratic societies, the right to freedom of conscience protects minority groups as well as individuals from being defeated by majority decisions. “Everyone has the right to freedom of

thought, conscience and religion” is part of the *UN Declaration of Human Rights* (art 18). This means that legislators and courts have to devise protocols for “conscientious accommodation” which allows laws to operate with flexibility and exceptions for genuine conscientious objection to them.

## Collective Conscience

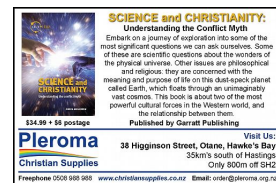
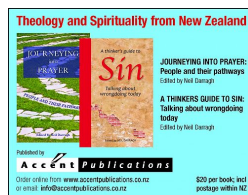
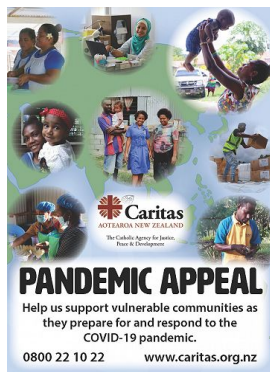
Most discussion about conscience relates to the conscience of the individual person. It is only a small expansion of the discussion, however, to consider a “collective conscience”. Christian communities function well when they develop such a collective conscience within the Church so that there is a common vision and common mission.

Christians are also citizens and can contribute to a common moral sense, a collective conscience, of what their nation is about and what it hopes to achieve. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought home to us this need to act with a collective conscience. We have been reminded of the importance of cooperation in keeping ourselves and others safe and the value of kindness. And, now in an election year, we hope we have enough of a collective conscience to choose members of parliament who can bring together a consensus for the well-being of everyone and prevent the divisiveness of single issue voting or voting purely for self-benefit.

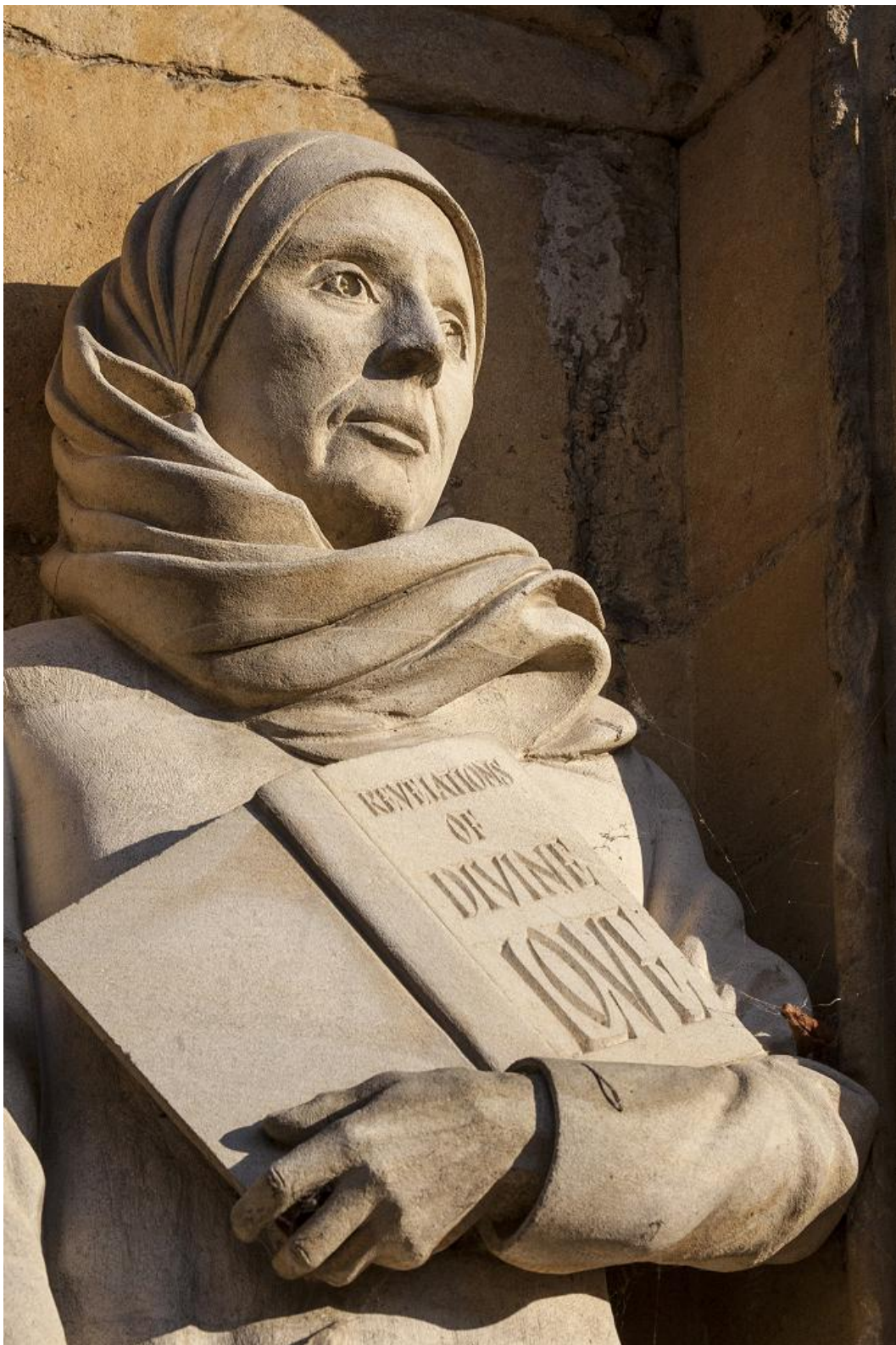
*Neil Darragh is a priest, theologian and author in the Auckland Diocese.*

Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020

## Gallery







Sculpture of Julian of Norwich on exterior West Porch of Norwich Cathedral.

Photo by Ann Gilroy

## ARTICLE: All Manner of Things Will Be Well

Greg Marcar — April 30th, 2020

Greg Marcar offers us encouragement to notice new theological insights evolving during this time of pandemic.

Samuel Johnson once famously quipped that “when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.” The current global crisis of COVID-19 provides a similar sharp reminder of our inherent vulnerability and mortality as human beings. I want to explore briefly the

different ways in which previous pandemics have shaped our theological imagination and conscience, with the hope of better illuminating — and perhaps even concentrating our minds on — the paths which now lie before us as a Church.

### **Contagious Fear of the Black Death**

One of the most studied and well-known global pandemics is the Black Death. Currently the deadliest pandemic in human history, the Black Death claimed the lives of between 75–100 million people in Europe from 1347–53. Both during its reign of terror and for centuries afterwards, this plague exercised a profound influence on the social and religious thought of Europeans.

The contagion of infectious disease fuelled a contagion of fear and mistrust, leading to many groups being scapegoated as the cause of others' misfortune. Chief among these groups were religious heretics, Jews and witches. Indeed, historians have drawn a causal link between the devastation wrought by the Black Death and the notorious "witch trials" which took place in Europe during the 16th–17th century, when around 50,000 people were put to death following allegations of witchcraft.

As the work of social anthropologist and Catholic thinker René Girard has shown, when events occur which sow fear and insecurity, we too often reveal ourselves to have a propensity for seeking security and solidarity through group identities built over-and-against the "other". While the present COVID-19 crisis continues to escalate, we would do well to recall this propensity and guard against the temptation to turn against the social or religious other.

### **Insights about God from the Black Death**

This reaction, however, is only one side of the coin. The same historical pressures which drove some to send their neighbours to the stake may also have been responsible for some of the most profound affirmations of divine love and hope, even in the midst of suffering.

A favourite example of mine is Julian of Norwich (b 1342), an anchorite who not only lived through the collective trauma of the Black Death, but was also struck by a life-threatening illness aged 30. While on her sickbed, Julian received several visions which she later recorded in her *Revelations of Divine Love*. At one point in these revelations, Julian envisages the entirety of creation as a single contingent hazelnut, held in existence and preserved from perishing by the hand of an eternally loving God. In God, Julian perceives no wrath, but only the desire to rescue humanity from the consequences of its sin, such that in the end "all manner of things shall be well".

Julian's writings may be considered alongside other Catholic mystical theologians who also lived through the Black Death, such as Jan van Ruusbroec (1293-1381) and Johannes Tauler (ca 1300-61), as providing an enduring vision of God's unconditional love and the Christian hope that in the end, all may be saved in Christ.

### **Contemplation Deepens Love**

Another aspect of this late medieval post-plague theology was the view that solitude and silence need not separate ourselves from God or others but, paradoxically, can deepen our sense of love and connection.

The Augustinian Jan van Ruusbroec wrote some of his powerful works while alone in the forest. Like Julian — who, as an anchorite, would have spent most of her time confined to a small and solitary cell — Ruusbroec was expert in silence and self-isolation. What matters according to Ruusbroec, however, is not aloneness itself, but the person's state of mind. Ruusbroec identifies true solitude with "solitude of heart", in which a person can find equanimity regardless of whether they happen to be in a marketplace, a church or their own small room. God, for Ruusbroec, is akin to a boundless ocean which endlessly gives and receives in selfless love. Wherever individuals are, they can find God within their own soul and thus be in relation to the source of all being.

Paradoxically, we might say, it is through this form of solitude that we can be *more* connected in love with God and creation. As we continue our present predicament of being *de facto* Kiwi hermits, such a message might help us to find a renewed sense of connectivity and relationality with others.

### **Our Response at this Time**

Crises such as COVID-19 thus present us with a stark choice which captures both the best and worst elements of human nature. On the one hand, fear from these events can drive us towards the desire to scapegoat others for our circumstances. Such a course is often accompanied by the vision of a

punitive God, as one who is conveniently aligned with our own social or religious prejudices and fully agrees about the existential danger which sinful others pose to our salvation.

On the other hand, we can draw upon our shared condition of human vulnerability — which crises such as this surely lay bare — in order to realise our inherent relationality and interdependence on one another, and from this seek new forms of universal hope.

For the Catholic mystical writers who lived through the horrors of the Black Death, God's love is not confined by our preconceptions; indeed, it not only transcends, but subverts the worst of our instincts and passions towards fellow creatures. If we follow this path, perhaps we might even dare to believe with Julian of Norwich that, in the end, "all manner of things shall be well".

*Greg Marcar is a research affiliate in the Centre for Theology and Public Issues in the University of Otago. He has been involved in several non-profit organisations, including the Red Cross, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, International Bridges to Justice, Liberty, and the Innocence Project New Zealand.*

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## Gallery

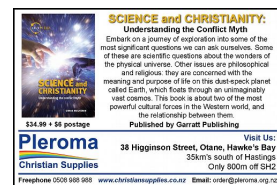
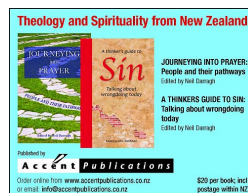
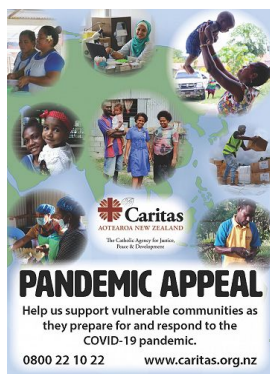






Photo by Austin Chan on Unsplash

## ARTICLE: Not the Same Again

Elizabeth Mackie — April 30th, 2020

Elizabeth Mackie encourages us to think about the world we'd like to live in post COVID-19.

"Life will never be the same again. This changes everything." How often through this strange time of social isolation have we heard words similar to these? We are all struggling in various ways to do things differently, to improvise, to create. And it cannot be an "accident" that we are called to live in such different ways through the season of profound transformation, when the movement from death to life is being celebrated around the world in this season of Resurrection. So what might living differently in a changed world look like? What can we learn from our common experience? How might transformation take root in us, in society, in Church and on the planet?

We are all seeing and hearing heartening stories of how people are adapting to lockdown and restrictions. We know also of other stories: reports of family violence, fear, loss, the suffering of those already poor or homeless, anxieties about job loss, business failure, reduced income. But, overall, it seems people are appreciating the new space in their lives. We have more time to be with one another, either within our households or virtually. The reflective, contemplative opportunities of being at home are pure gift to many. And clearly the creativity of young and old is flourishing and is celebrated in the media. Working parents are released from long commutes in gridlocked traffic, giving them more time with their children. Many have found that working from home has been productive.

It is true that the more intentional we are about living differently into the future, the deeper our transformation may be.

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*"Something dies but something new is born — which is why the chaos of our times is, in a strange way, a sign of hope; something new is being born within. Out of chaos, a star is born. Breakdown can be breakthrough if we recognise a new pattern of life struggling to emerge."* — Ilia Delio

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The pandemic and efforts to slow its spread have changed the world profoundly. We are living with stronger global connectedness. When other countries suffered the ravages of epidemics like Ebola, AIDS, malaria and measles, we were scarcely affected. Their over-burdened and under-resourced

health systems often failed to cope and thousands of people died. Now that Covid-19 has reached into our homes, perhaps we will be able to show a deeper compassion and practical support to poorer nations and affected groups.

The world has also been brought together more closely as nations cooperate with one another — helping citizens abroad to get home, easing trade restrictions, sharing information and medical expertise and providing medical technology to countries in need of it.

Cuba sent medical help to Italy and Taiwan sent it to the Vatican. A New Zealand nurse from Invercargill helped to care for the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Saudi Arabia recently announced a unilateral ceasefire in the war in Yemen to start immediately — a move that could pave the way for ending the brutal five-year-old conflict. This move was motivated by the fear that the coronavirus might take hold in Yemen, the poorest country in the Arab world. Boundaries are shifting in many different ways.

For Christians Holy Week and the Easter season are gifted times. While churches have been closed, laity and clergy have worked together – with technology – to create meaningful and sometimes extraordinarily creative liturgies. The theology and creativity which shaped these events may bring significant changes into future practice. I've experienced many highlights: a wonderful homily given by a married couple; the tenderness of handwashing between people in their bubbles on Holy Thursday — so meaningful at this time when handwashing is essential for health; beautiful images to enhance Scripture readings, and the joyous intimacy of an Easter morning liturgy offered from within a local presbytery.

It will be important to carry some of these insights into our post-lockdown Church. They are too precious to lose as we go forward. And despite lockdown rules, Churches and individual parishes have still found ways to support those who need many kinds of assistance. We have much to ponder in our hearts.

Significantly, there are many reports of purer oceans, cleaner beaches and reduced air pollution around the world (72 per cent clearer in Aotearoa) because of people being at home. We've heard of Chinese cities in which stars can be seen for the first time in years. At home we see empty motorways and pristine beachfronts.

Earth is responding to us stopping our ceaseless travel. We can see the evidence. Do we want to continue allowing the planet to breathe? Greenpeace is showing the way by campaigning for the transformation of the ways we live, work and interact with our planet. Instead of an agenda of “shovel-ready” roading projects, the movement is calling for clean energy, regenerative farming practices, electric vehicles and the overall “greening” of our economy.

The pandemic is ongoing. We are still restricted. The future is unknown. But it is not too soon for us to consider and discuss the kind of future we hope for and to start applying the lessons these difficult days are teaching us.

*Dominican Elizabeth Mackie is a former assistant editor of Tui Motu Magazine, a former Congregational Leader and lives in Dunedin.*

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020.*

## Gallery

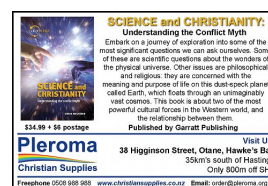
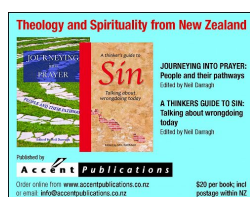
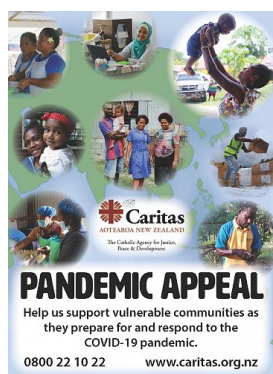




Photo by Bruce  
Drysedale

## ARTICLE: Tree Planting for Life

Bruce Drysdale — April 30th, 2020

Bruce Drysdale describes his street's participation in tree planting.

My neighbour responded to the Waitakere City Council's offer (pre-Supercity days) to provide trees for streetside berms, if the residents were prepared to do the planting. She called a curbside meeting, invited a representative from the Council and waited in hope. Very few people turned up — just her immediate neighbours, the Council rep and one or two others.

Undaunted, we discussed the proposal and decided to go ahead, hoping to rally more support along the way. We chose the types of trees — mostly tōtara with flowering cherries to accent the street corners — and set a date for the working bee a couple of weekends later.

We met to do the planting. After leafleting mailboxes and erecting a notice at the street entrance, we'd attracted a few more helpers but were still a very small workforce faced with 84 fairly large trees to plant — 84 holes to dig in the clay, many more stakes and burlap ties to put in place, etc.

There had been heavy rain just before we started and more was threatening. As we made planting progress down the street people saw what was happening and came out to help — with kids, dogs, et al in tow.

### Inviting to Participate

It is probably a bit of a leap to make comparisons here with Matthew 10:5-13 where Jesus sends out the disciples — after a relatively short preparation time — to go and spread the word and be an example among the towns and villages. But there seems to be a similarity in the underlying expectation of success— despite the odds — if you just get going. The disciples probably understood very little about the reign of God idea and yet they are told to go and shout it from the rooftops while directly engaging in the works of God (curing the sick, healing lepers, casting out devils, even raising the dead!) and relying completely on the locals for resources. They had been instructed not to take supplies such as two tunics or extra money, and, rather than being a problem, this lack of resources actually helped their success. Their poverty became a catalyst for enlisting the help of others. Plus, their success would be all the greater because the locals were drawn into the task.

### Calling on Support

We, the streetside tōtara tree planters, also had a bit of a catalyst in our local community task. A little while before our environmental venture, the electoral boundaries in our area changed and we could no longer vote for our current, popular MP in the coming elections.



The new candidate saw our working bee as an opportunity to drum up support and was soon driving up and down our street, loud speakers atop her car, calling out encouragement. Initially our response was: “Talk’s cheap — how about getting out and planting some bloody trees!” And she did!

Shortly she returned in gumboots and got stuck in. She didn’t stay very long but her loud speaker had brought more people out of their houses and, when they saw what the campaigning candidate and the rest of us were doing, many of them joined in the tree planting. Sometimes those who are not against us are for us!

With all these factors working together we finished the job quite quickly, we forged new local relationships and, within a few short hours, we were all enjoying a celebratory BBQ — a bonus in our community building.

### **Influencing One Another**

Much of this would suggest: if you give people choices, and some actively engage in the life-giving choice, most others will be drawn into a similar course of action.

But what if they don’t?

As I write we are in the middle of the COVID-19 lockdown. This unprecedented event has also caused us to think about the importance of choices — both having them and making them. The pandemic is a crisis that has forced governments to make drastic changes but even in this dire situation they were presented with choices. Some leaders (like our own Jacinda) chose the health and well-being of their people over the immediate health and protection of the economy, and moved into lockdown early. They reasoned that, long-term, a healthier population would enable a faster return to economic viability.

Other leaders waited as long as possible, reasoning there would be less economic impact if they kept the wheels of business turning longer and imposed less stringent lockdown restrictions. Time will tell which was truly the choice for life — both human and economic.

### **Choices for a Healthy Planet**

During this pandemic, scientists and others have been quick to notice the beneficial effects COVID-19 (and the measures taken to control it) have had on the planet. While so many of the world’s human inhabitants have been in lockdown, the natural environment has been recovering from the effects of human plunder, overuse and waste.

“Clear skies over Beijing” was a very early headline to appear in world news — a marvellous result of the halt in industrial activity. Air pollution levels around motorways are at an all time low because there are so few cars on the road. We see it in our country. Lincoln Road in Henderson, normally a very busy road 24/7 and a mere carbon monoxide waft away from where our trusty tōtara continue to carry out the air-cleansing task, showed a 65—75 per cent drop in pollutants caused by vehicle emissions.

Similarly, we can only imagine the good that is being done by the massive reduction in airline flights and the pause in businesses that rely on Earth-plundering processes such as mining and deforestation.

Scientists and eco-prophets have been putting healthy planet choices before us for decades and while many at the grassroots have made the “green choice” (pun intended) big business, the fossil fuels industry and most governments have largely failed to take action for the life of the planet. Now it is as though Papatūānuku has said: “You have failed to make good choices so I am taking things into my own hands.”

The words of Deuteronomy 30:15-20 are apt: “See, today I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster. If you obey the commandments of your God, if you love and follow God’s ways, keeping the commandments, laws and customs, you will live and increase. And your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to make your own. But, if your heart strays and you refuse to listen and are drawn into worshipping other gods — I tell you today you will not live long in the land ...

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. **Choose life** then, so that you and your descendants may live in the love of your God.”

All but one of our tōtara survived and are flourishing today. I wonder whether a post COVID-19 planet will fare so well? If our choices for life continue, we can live in hope.



Photo by Natureworks from  
Pixabay

## ARTICLE: Choose Well as Life is Sacred

Zain Ali — April 30th, 2020

Zain Ali discusses how to weigh questions when making a moral decision about life in the Islamic tradition.

### Dilemma

Imagine for a moment you're on a ship with 300 passengers. The ship has sprung a leak and is slowly sinking. To your dismay you discover it does not have lifeboats or lifejackets. The captain gathers everyone and advises that the ship will be able to limp to shore safely, however, 10 people will need to be off-loaded — thrown overboard to help reduce the ship's weight. Everything else possible, including all luggage, has already been thrown into the sea. Would you comply with the captain's advice? Would it be okay to throw 10 passengers overboard to save the other 290? Would this choice ever be morally acceptable?

When I've given my students this thought experiment, the majority agree that to do so would be wrong. There are troubling questions. How would you choose the 10? Would everyone draw straws?

At this point, I remind my students that the situation is urgent: we are on a sinking ship. Perhaps we can come up with a criterion: those with a criminal record should be first in line, followed by those who are old — after all, they've already lived life.

Flouting concerns for political correctness, one student suggested those who are “heavy” should also be first in the queue. Interestingly, a majority of students felt that a way through this conundrum would be to ask for volunteers — 10 volunteers who would choose to give up their lives to save 290 others. Most students, though, said they would not want to volunteer.

Someone proposed that everyone who believed in God should either volunteer or be thrown overboard anyway. Why pick on religious folk? The reasoning was that religious folk believe in God and an afterlife, so they shouldn't have any problem sacrificing themselves; they have another life to look forward to. Those who were not religious believe this is the only life they have, so we should let them live it. A win-win solution for everyone!

### Making Moral Decisions

The sinking ship thought experiment is said to have been formulated by Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, an 11th-century Muslim intellectual in Baghdad — which at the time was a cultural and intellectual hub within the Muslim world. He probably used the thought experiment to help his students and fellow intellectuals come to grips with moral thinking within the tradition of Islam.

Al-Ghazali appeals to the right to life in order to provide an answer to the sinking ship dilemma. He contends that it would be wrong to throw 10 people overboard. Throwing people overboard could lead to even more killings (especially if the ship encounters more trouble at sea), and while the survivors would benefit, that solution relies on using other people purely as a means to an end. And most importantly, the benefit to the survivors does not outweigh the need to respect every person's right to life.

### **Principle of Right to Life**

The right to life, or the preservation of life, is a fundamental principle within Muslim tradition. Its roots are found in Chapter 17 verse 33 of the Qur'an: "Do not take life, which God made sacred, other than in the course of justice."

This verse is thought provoking and raises challenging questions. What do we mean by life — does this verse refer to human life only? Could it apply to animal life, and perhaps, all forms of life? Do we have to believe in God in order to view life as being sacred?

A student inclined towards atheism said it was possible to view life as being sacred even if you didn't believe in God — because if we have only one life then it is utterly invaluable.

Even if we do believe in God, what do we mean when we say life is "sacred"? Perhaps it is sacred in the sense that life is a gift, an extraordinary gift, from God.

The last phrase of the verse is intriguing — it seems to suggest that there can be exceptions, that there can be good reasons, or a just cause to take life. What would be a just cause to take a life?

A case in point is abortion: a number of Muslim scholars allow for abortion in cases where a pregnancy jeopardises a mother's life.

Another case is murder, when the person guilty of murder is liable for the death penalty although this decision rests in the hands of the victim's family, who have the option to forgive. There is also the case of self-defence, where an aggressor, who is intent on murder, is killed.

Would being in agonising pain and having a terminal illness be a good reason to allow someone to end their life? For many Muslim thinkers the mere fact that life is sacred provides very little room for there being any cause to wilfully end life. And suffering itself can have meaning and purpose. There is also the view that death is something that should be left in God's hands — we may have free will and autonomy, but we should be patient and wait until God is ready to bring our souls to rest.

I am aware of Muslim medical opinion, which holds that doctors aim to maintain the process of living and not the process of dying — the terminally ill patient should be allowed to die without unnecessary procedures. This view may allow in certain cases for life support machines to be turned off and nature be allowed to take its course.

### **Life is Sacred**

Despite all our scientific advancements, we are faced with hard moral questions. When a person is no longer cognisant of who they are and has no control of their bodily functions, in what sense do they have life?

A Muslim student noted that while he did not support euthanasia, he did not mind it being legal since he recognised that others did not share the same commitments as he did. Some would admire that student's inclusiveness: others would worry about the spectre of rampant permissiveness.

We should perhaps take a moment to reflect on the advice of Dame Cicely Saunders, nurse, physician, writer and founder of the modern hospice movement:

"You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die."

Whatever our views, may we agree that life is sacred, that pain and suffering can be managed to a certain degree, and that the process of dying can be infused with dignity.

*Dr Zain Ali is a Professional Teaching Fellow in Theology & Religious Studies of the University of Auckland.*





Photo by Ali Mahmoodi on Unsplash

## ARTICLE: Being Ready to Go

Alofa Lale — April 30th, 2020

Alofa Lale reflects on her parents' last months and their deaths.

Over the years I have conducted over 100 funerals. But no matter how many funerals you lead or attend, nothing prepares you for the death of your own parents.

My Mum, Galumalemana Vaotupuosamoa Ta'ase (née Fuataga), was a teacher. She arrived in New Zealand from Samoa in 1959 at just 21 years old. Mum believed she was coming to the land of milk and honey, the land of opportunity. She married Dad when she was 23 years old. Mum worked a variety of jobs and was a stay-at home mum to four kids. After doing a one-year Teacher Training refresher course Mum began teaching in 1977. Straight after retiring from teaching in 2000, Mum was diagnosed with stage 4 ovarian cancer. After treatment — a radical hysterectomy followed by radiotherapy — her cancer remained in remission until early February 2013 when it had come back.

Mum stayed in her home until the pain became too great to bear and she needed further intervention. A litany of professionals came in and out of her hospital room: nurses, oncologists, physiotherapists, social workers. I remember the oncologist telling Mum that a sizeable cancerous mass was pressing on her spinal cord. They hoped that chemotherapy would shrink the mass, which would relieve the pressure and the pain.

The oncologist said that the chemotherapy would have side effects and he began listing them. Mum asked: "Will this save my life?" He explained that the treatment would not save her life — only prolong it. My mum then held the doctor's hand and said: "No thank you. I am ready to go. I want to spend the time I have left with my family."

It was on the tip of my tongue to argue with Mum, to say: "No, you're having chemo." I desperately wanted her to stay with us for as long as possible. But when I looked at Mum's face she was so calm and peaceful. So instead of protesting we all just cried. We were told that Mum had just weeks to live.

On the 29 May 2013 Mum took her last breath. The weeks before she died our whole family spent precious time with her singing and laughing. She was still growling us kids and we were still running around doing her jobs. The grandkids spent time with her; family from Samoa came over to visit. Our Church family came to say prayers and sing and laugh with her. We had time for reconciliation, forgiveness and weeping. There were times when Mum was struggling before her death. Even in life

Mum had many struggles — so why would we expect this time to be any different? But though Mum struggled she did not suffer. She had no pain. She was at peace. Mum's death with loved ones around her was a final breath of life, a release, a letting go to let God take over.

My Dad Letoa Levine Ta'ase took his first breath on the 4 September 1929 and on the 10 August 2017 he took his last. Dad wanted to live to 100 and many of those who knew him expected that he would. He never took life for granted. To him life was a gift to be lived — every single day was a gift from God.

When Dad had a mini stroke we all assumed he would get better. But as time went on the little, spritely man, who used to be up with the birds and shuffling past my room in the mornings to make his cup of tea, grew weak and frail. He struggled to swallow so was only drinking. He kept on reading his Bible and singing and playing the ukulele. We all tried to stay positive and upbeat. Dad talked about his 88th birthday coming up and that there was no reason why he couldn't make it to 90.

But the doctors were now saying that Dad was not making progress and that we ought to start thinking of where he could go after the hospital. We had always thought he would be coming home. A month after Dad went into hospital we were taking him to a rest home facility that would provide him with the care he needed for the rest of his life. Three days later Dad died.

A couple of weeks earlier I had been with him at the hospital late in the evening. It was pitch black outside and we had turned off the lights. Only the corridor lights lit the room. Dad said in Samoan: *"Ua ou fia malolo"* (I want to rest). I said: "Of course Dad, you rest. I will sleep here." Then Dad said again: *"Ua ou fia malolo."* Then I knew he meant he was ready to go.

A week later I was with him again late in the evening, in a darkened room, and Dad said: *"Ua ou faalogo i upu"* (I have heard the words). I asked: "What words, Dad?" Dad said: *"Le auauna lelei ia, ulufale mai ia i le fiafia o lou alii"* (Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord.) And when Dad said this I wept, because I knew that though he was ready, I wasn't.

It was 7 August when my dad went into the rest home. The staff were doing their best to get him up, fed, dressed and sitting up in a chair. All Dad wanted was to lie in bed and go to sleep but best practice for his care meant that he should be pushed to get up and be alert. On 9 August I told the staff that my Dad was ready to go — he was dying and that we needed to let him go.

One of the staff came to me and said with tears in her eyes: "I'm sorry. How would you like us to care for your dad?" I replied: "Just how you would care for your own Dad." Dad had made peace with his Lord, he had his family around him and he knew where he was going. He was ready.

The night before Dad died we were singing hymns in Samoan and he was in full voice. The next morning our minister arrived and Dad smiled. We prayed, the kids sang and we surrounded him with love. Dad's last breath was giving up his life, a release, a letting go to let God take over.

Rest in peace Mum and Dad. Rest in peace.

*Alofa Lale is a Presbyterian Minister and the Mission Coordinator at Mercy Hospital in Dunedin.*

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*

## Gallery

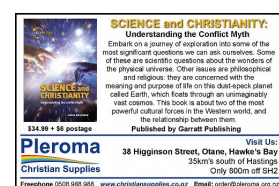
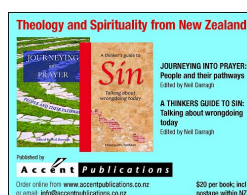
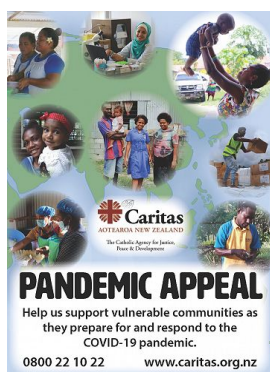




Photo by Engin Akyurt on  
Unsplash

## ARTICLE: Learning from COVID-19 the Value of Every Life

John Kleinsman — April 30th, 2020

John Kleinsman writes how our experience of lockdown to prevent COVID-19-causing illness and death could inform our decision-making around euthanasia.

Every day during lockdown we collectively held our breath waiting for the Director General of Health to update us on the latest numbers of COVID-19 infection and deaths. And our news was full of stories of essential workers caring for us all. Every life and every death matters to us.

The lockdown restrictions show that even the most *insignificant* of choices we make can have a significant impact on the well-being of others. Because of this, we were prepared to accept limitations to our freedom and to the finances of our families, businesses and the country as a whole.

I was heartened by the way our government and fellow New Zealanders prioritised care for the most vulnerable over our individual freedom and economic prosperity. It reminds us that care comes at a cost — not just in dollars but also in limitations to what we might want to do.

### Self-Referential and Other-Referential Choices

As a moral philosopher and bioethicist, I often emphasise the importance of recognising the limitations of individual choice for the sake of preserving other important human values. In our society, a starting point for analysing difficult moral issues, such as euthanasia and abortion, can be to defend our personal freedom of choice: “My body, my choice”.

Our community response to COVID-19 restrictions in this country, however, highlights another *starting point* for such debates. It re-focuses us on the importance of “care” — non-discriminating and non-judgemental care — as a more humane starting point for responding to the moral and ethical issues that matter.

The appeal and power of the choice argument is apparent when we consider a typical case presented in favour of euthanasia. It is demonstrated in the name — “End of Life Choice Act”. Euthanasia protagonists assume that the *significant* choice of an individual to prematurely end their life will not impact on the well-being of others around them or society as a whole.

### Using the Catholic Test



This approach fails the "catholic test". The catholic test begins by asking questions to determine the impact of a particular law or policy on others. The starting point of the catholic test is "other-referential" — meaning that we are primarily attuned to, and concerned with, the consequences for others — rather than just "self-referential".

A critical question to ask of the End of Life Choice Act is: "What impact will it have on the fundamental societal attitudes which shape the way we look at, think about and act towards our fellow sisters and brothers, in particular those who are most vulnerable to the suggestion that they would be better off dead — the elderly, disabled and others with high-care needs?"

All of our individual actions have the potential to impact others significantly. There is much more at stake in the euthanasia referendum question than whether or not to allow this or that individual to be able to choose to let a doctor end their life. More significantly, we are being asked to choose between two different narratives of care.

Under the current law in which euthanasia and assisted suicide are illegal, there is no such discrimination because every life is considered equally valuable (which, importantly, is not the same as saying that we have to do all we can to extend life in any circumstances). This means that were the euthanasia laws to change, we would be introducing a degree of "calculation" about the worthiness of human life.

### **COVID-19 Highlighted Complexities**

The present COVID-19 context, and specifically the intense ethical debate that has arisen about the potential need to ration healthcare such as ventilators in some countries, is enlightening. As one palliative care physician said: "Even at the best of times, the notion of anyone – doctors included – holding your life in their hands is deeply uncomfortable." Another said: "In the COVID-19 context we are fighting for every life and in these circumstances I would regard any situation in which I had to choose one life over another as a tragedy." That is exactly what we will be asking doctors to do should the End of Life Choice Act become law.

The disturbing rationale we have heard from a few COVID-19 commentators – that most of the people being killed by the coronavirus are already sick or elderly and would have died soon anyway – would become an accepted part of healthcare policy. Should the End of Life Choice Act pass, then what is regarded as a "tragedy" now — having to choose one life over another — will become a fundament of "good" healthcare – *some lives matter more than others and some deaths matter less than others*. That would be a shift of huge proportions legally, ethically, medically and humanly speaking.

We have two narratives. The first is characterised by care and a willingness to regard every life as equally valuable and the other is characterised by and requiring a degree of "calculation" as to who deserves to live.

When we think of it in this way, the choice for euthanasia is far more complex and sinister than we may currently appreciate.

Amid the undeniable tragedy that the coronavirus is bringing, we have a unique opportunity to reflect on the limitations of the emphasis on individual choice while recommitting ourselves to care generously and selflessly without judgement and without calculation.

That is the real choice we face in the euthanasia referendum vote.

*John Kleinsman is the director of The Nathaniel Centre, the New Zealand Catholic Bioethics Centre in Wellington.*

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*



## ARTICLE: Choosing Life After Loss

Katrin Eickhorst — April 30th, 2020

Katrin Eickhorst shares how she became involved with *Seasons for Growth*, an educational programme to assist in recovering from loss and grief.

Recognising that change is the one constant in our lives is fundamental to the educational programme *Seasons for Growth*. It assists children and adults to cope with life-changing events.

*Seasons* is based on the research of psychologist J William Worden. He found that people are empowered and given a sense of hope when they take an active role in understanding the circumstances of affliction in their lives. Participants in *Seasons* discover that grief in the face of loss in their lives is normal and to be expected. Through the programme they begin to recognise their own coping mechanisms and understand their support systems. They learn to set their goals accordingly and make appropriate selections. And when faced with new challenges, they can refer back to their *Seasons for Growth* learning.

The programme is developed for children from six years old to adult. It has been used in schools, youth programmes, social work agencies and chaplaincies, particularly in prisons.

### Grief Has Many Guises

Grief has many shapes and guises. We associate it with death and bereavement but it comes with many other situations and events — financial problems, redundancy and job change, separation, divorce and family break up, relocation, diminished independence and illness. People experiencing these losses may feel ashamed, guilty, unworthy, or numb and paralysed and be unable to make decisions or take choices.

It is so easy to find ourselves in such a crisis. Nothing protects us from loss and distress. Some people seem to manage well and find opportunities in their changed circumstances. Others appear to be stuck in their grief and bewilderment. The effects of misfortune and grief can tear our lives apart and send us into despondency and isolation. Those times feel like the darkness and loneliness of an ever-lasting winter. How do people come to terms with events of trauma and desolation and integrate the experience in their lives?

### A Personal Journey

I know from first-hand experience and my journey took six years. My world collapsed when my husband of 24 years left our marriage to foster a new relationship and marry a woman much younger than me. My life, dreams, hopes and memories were shattered — like shards of winter ice.

Our broken marriage also broke our family. Our children went through fluctuating episodes in response to their shock and our relatives were crushed.

One of my most difficult challenges was to be a good mother while my heart was breaking. It required conscious discernment to maintain the dignity of everyone involved, at the same time as bracing myself against my inner impulses, anger and sorrow. Although I know family breakups are common, it gave me no comfort or ease from the pain knowing that “I was not the only one”. I thought I’d never recover.

Soon after the breakup I realised that my musical career would not give me enough income to be self-supporting and I had to weigh up other options. I enrolled at university to qualify as a secondary school teacher. I also had to negotiate our financial separation and search for a new home and employment.

Then I had a further loss and two bereavements. This is when I heard about and became a participant in a *Seasons for Growth* programme for adults. It gave me a way to process my damage and heartache and establish strategies for coping with future challenges. By participating I learned to integrate the painful experiences into the mosaic of my life. And as I awakened to my personal journey, I discovered new resources, talents and gifts — like courage, confidence and networking skills.

Most surprisingly, by choosing to share with others the benefits that *Seasons* had given me, I unwittingly created a new employment path. First I trained as a facilitator called a “companion”, then I became a coordinator and now I am a trainer of companions. I moved from winter into a new spring.

### **Understanding Our Grief**

People have different styles of grieving and we need to direct them ourselves. When we are suffering sorrow and deprivation we may feel abandoned. Even while our friends may be keen to draw us out of our pain, they are often at a loss to know how. In fact, in spite of their good intentions, they can alienate us further with their eagerness. Well-meaning people said to me “time will heal” — it’s not true. I was told “it’s time to move on” — that doesn’t work. Some said: “I know how you feel” – no, you don’t. Family members who said: “You’re better off without him” just didn’t get it.

Grief cannot be packaged. There are no instructions for dealing with it. It is as individual as each situation and each person experiencing it. But it can be transformed into a treasure through conscious selection and change. *Seasons for Growth* is designed to accompany people towards that understanding.

My personal decisions led me to change career and vocation. For others it may not be as radical. I know adults who simply decided to participate in a small group, where they felt safe to explore how self-determination could empower them. Their taking responsibility for forgiveness and grasping the value of life after loss became for them an opportunity for release and setting free. They learned to take care of themselves and identify their own resources and their support networks. A participant in one group said: “It didn’t just help me with the past. It is helping me with the future as well ... I developed tools that have helped my recovery.” Another said: “It was such a relief to know I wasn’t going mad. I was grieving and that that is normal.”

We all experience crises in our lives and our responses to them will differ. We can benefit from paying attention to how we’re living our lives and *Seasons for Growth* can help us with that. As one nine-year-old girl said in her final evaluation of the programme: “I think everyone should do it”.

*Katrin Eickhorst is a Trainer and Coordinator for Seasons for Growth for Catholic Social Services in the Archdiocese of Wellington.*

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*





Sculpture of St Mary MacKillop at Melbourne General Cemetery

Photo by Ann Gilroy

## ARTICLE: Prayer and Living Fully

Audrea Warner — April 30th, 2020

Audrea Warner shares her journey with illness and the influence healing has had on her life.

I had a major relapse with Crohn's disease in August 2014. Crohn's is a chronic inflammatory bowel disease that affects the lining of the digestive tract. It can cause abdominal pain, diarrhoea, weight loss, anaemia and fatigue. Some people may be symptom-free most of their lives, while others, like me, have severe chronic symptoms. I'd had Crohn's for 15 years.

There is no cure for Crohn's disease. Over the years I've had multiple medications, such as steroids and immunosuppressants, to slow the progression of the disease. Initially most of the drugs worked well, but eventually my body rejected them. At the time of the relapse I had exhausted my options for medication and in April 2015 I went with my husband to meet with a colorectal surgeon at the Auckland Colorectal Centre.

I was at the lowest point in my life. I was bleeding from my intestines and in constant pain. I had lost my appetite and even feared drinking water. I suffered diarrhoea every time I ate — diarrhoea so bad that I had started wearing adult nappies.

I was a young woman in an old woman's body. Around me my peers were fulfilling their dreams, while I felt stuck. Emotionally, physically and spiritually I was lost without hope. I felt I was merely breathing, not living.

Nearly half of those with Crohn's disease end up having some form of surgery. I spoke with a surgeon who described a procedure but it meant that I would have a colostomy, a permanent bag, for the rest of my life. He was offering me a solution, but I walked out of the building and sat crying in the car. I felt inconsolable. I had relied on a medical intervention but it held no comfort.

At that time my parents and my sister visited Mary MacKillop Place in Sydney and prayed at the tomb of Saint Mary MacKillop, Australia's first saint. They encouraged me to ask her to pray for me. I was sceptical as I had already prayed for healing from many saints and my prayers had been unanswered

But something about Mary MacKillop began to draw me to her. She had had a hard life: I could see the parallels with my own life. She was an educator, something I aspired to be in the tertiary sector. Her words, to help anyone in need, resonated with me and I made a solemn promise to her that if she helped stabilise my Crohn's (which at this point saw me running to the toilet 20 times a day) and make me well, I would never see a need without trying to remedy that need.

The following year, 2016, I could see a change in my health and mindset. My body began to heal. I graduated from eating a few spoonfuls of cooked rice, boiled chicken or fish with boiled kumara to being able to digest fruit and vegetables — the first time for a decade. My fear of eating faded and mealtimes became enjoyable. And I started to make plans for the future.

My illness had affected my family. My husband and two daughters had experienced the ups and downs of my disease in their lives. But in 2018 we planned a family holiday to the USA for six weeks. It was the trip of a lifetime that took us all over the country.

During this time my illness was completely under control. I was pain free and able to eat without having to be on the lookout for the nearest toilet to rush to. In earlier years I had looked at travel destinations in magazines and had resigned myself to never being able to travel to even a few of the places before I died. So, as I stood in the wonders of Yosemite and Zion National Park, I felt real gratitude. Every fibre of my being thanked God for helping and healing me. My life felt worthwhile.

I wanted to write about my experience to inspire others going through hardship and pain to know that there is light at the end. It may not come when we want or ask for it. I waited a long time but in that time I was blessed with some truly amazing friends who stood by me and were my strength when I was weak. My Mum is my rock. She has a deep faith and she hoped and prayed even when I could not. I thank her for bringing Mary MacKillop into my life.

Last year I visited Mary MacKillop Place with my family and prayed at Mary's tomb. It was an emotional journey but my tears were of joy. Mary had answered my prayer and given me new life. Now I am dedicating myself to doing the things she would be doing if she was alive today.

*Audrea Warner is a wife, mum and a Professional Teaching Fellow at the University of Auckland, where she helps shape the business leaders of tomorrow.*

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## Gallery

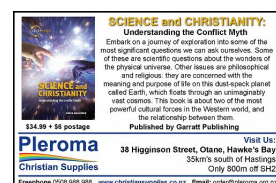
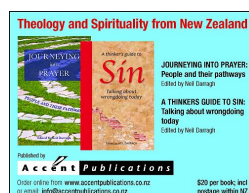
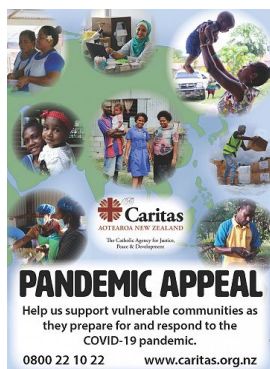




Photo by Sharon Christina Rorvik on Unsplash

## COMMENT: Lockdown Is Like a Retreat

Wendy Ward — April 30th, 2020

Wendy Ward compares the opportunities of lockdown and those of a retreat.

I think that lockdown has many of the characteristics of a retreat.

Being on retreat usually means we go away a period of time to a monastery or quiet place to focus on our spiritual health. The underlying purpose is to reset how we are living and working. A retreat offers time out from our usual preoccupations of life. It is a chance to open our mind and heart to those things we often ignore or suppress because there are too many demands on our time to pay attention to them.

We choose to go on retreat, but lockdown was forced upon us — to keep our communities safe from COVID-19. But the lockdown and retreat have much in common. In both we have stepped into a world we thought we could control but discovered we could not. We could slow down, pause, reflect and ask questions of ourselves, our communities and our country. “Do I want to continue in the same way as before COVID-19?” Change is hard. Could lockdown be an opportunity to embrace some changes?

Although lockdown was an imposition, it is also an opportunity. Despite the undeniable awfulness of the pandemic, lockdown was an opportunity to step off our daily treadmill and ask what we think is truly, fundamentally important for our lives, our families, our communities, our country, our world.

There is no doubt that many of us were busy in our bubbles with children to home school and working from home. But when all was settled in the house and before we went to sleep, we may have relaxed and let our minds wander back over the day. We could be thankful for even the little things. We would have noticed the difficult events or interactions, forgiven ourselves and let them slide into peace. We could have faced the nagging worry, decided on a simple action to follow through the next day, then let it go too. We could let the evening sounds companion us.

Lockdown and retreat times dispense with our usual routine. In lockdown some of us may have worried because – unlike a retreat – we did not know when the lockdown would end, and others of us would have taken it one day at a time. We may have found that we grew more attuned to our senses. Although I’m familiar with the “more-pork, more-pork” call of the ruru, one night I heard an unfamiliar screech and discovered that “our” morepork/ruru has three calls, one of them a loud shriek indicating that it is awake and going hunting. I hadn’t noticed that call before – I know the morepork a little better now.



And that's how it is at the end of a retreat: we know ourselves a little better. Something will have shifted and changed in our inner landscape. Just being away from certain problems may have changed our perspective and offered alternatives for action. Or being in a different environment may have given us the strength to make decisions that seemed impossible before.

It will be tempting after this experience of lockdown to try to return to “normal” life — exactly as it was before lockdown. But we've learned in lockdown that we can't go back because some changes — personal, family and global — are too important to ignore. We may need reminders – maybe notes of things we discovered about ourselves and our lives. Our new resolutions can dissipate when the lockdown intensity is relieved, so we will need alliances with others to keep us motivated, informed and committed. We will certainly need to keep discussing the changes with our partners and families.

Whatever the myriad concerns in the aftermath of lockdown, being convinced of the opportunity and need for change can keep us focused on participating in creating a more just and sustainable future.

*Wendy Ward is a retired clinical psychologist and retreat leader. She writes children's books, poetry and a book about ecospirituality.*

Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020

## Gallery

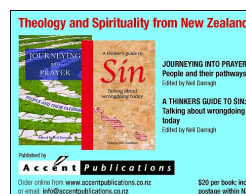
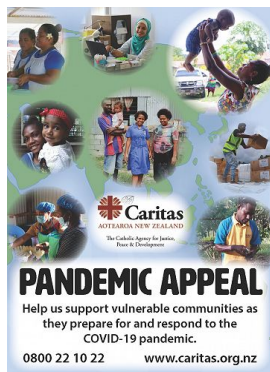




Photo by Christopher Ross

## POEM: Courage

Aleisha Keating — May 1st, 2020

It started small  
Like a tiny ripple on a glassy lake  
Like a slender petal soon to unfurl into a vibrant blossom  
Like the first whisper of cool air announcing winter's coming embrace  
Like an amber arrow of light paving the sunrise's way.

And then it grew  
Like a smile spreading into a chuckle before erupting into laughter  
Like a wave graciously building to a tremendous crescendo before tumbling into a  
frothy mass of bubbles  
Like the innumerable grains of sand that are gradually swept into a wondrous dune  
Like a deluge of rain miraculously transforming fields from crispy golden to a verdant  
green.

It was called courage  
And it always remained.

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*



Photo by Ann Gilroy

## POEM: Tell How it Happened

Christine Kelly — May 1st, 2020

John 20:10-18

Tell how it happened.  
You  
who so  
surely had business  
with the dead.

Tell how it happened  
and be  
unembellished in your telling.  
For like you  
our grief is blinding  
and loss of hope  
weighs heavily.

Tell how it happened  
so we  
like you  
learn to hear our names -  
the voice of the beloved familiar  
in the least familiar place  
and can  
share our story  
with joy.

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*



Photo by Shutterstock

## POEM: The Question

Mike Fitzsimons — May 1st, 2020

Love's hypnotic question  
asks that you be penitent,  
or joyous or trembling

asks that you step out  
day after day into  
a recurring beauty

asks

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

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*





Photo by Steve Buissonne

## COMMENT: Living in Lockdown

Shanti Mathias & Shar Mathias — April 30th, 2020

Shanti and Shar Mathias each reflect on living in lockdown with its challenges and ordinariness.

**Shanti writes from Wellington:** “I hate the word ‘rhythm,’” one of my flatmates tells me. “I think we use it too much.” She is probably talking about me. I have been trying to figure out “rhythms of life”, “rhythms for university” and “rhythms of prayer” ever since the lockdown was announced — and probably even before.

I think rhythm is important. It means that I have something regular in my life. I’ve lost the normal patterns of life: when I go out, see people and attend classes in lecture theatres. Were my rhythms always that external? Almost everything feels as if it’s been destabilised by COVID-19.

So I hold on to what I can. I go running each morning. I go to sleep every night. I eat lunch between 12:30 and 1:00pm. Prayer helps too. With my flatmates we have morning, midday and evening prayer — a routine of turning to God whenever possible. A small stability in our day.

But I’m not sure that the rhythms help much. I still feel stretched thin, a little bit tender, totally inadequate. I change my parameters for gladness and learn my place more and more. I know where the sunlight falls at 3pm. I know which of my flatmates to tease and who will tease me. I know that holding things makes me feel better. I fill my hands with paper and my fingers with bread dough and the humming wood of my viola. I try to pay attention to every scrap of grace for it is sustenance.

**Shar writes from Dunedin:** The world I know of — international travel, economic stability, restaurants, commuter traffic on my walk to uni, of labs, Church and sleepovers with my friends — has evaporated. It felt instantaneous, though we saw it coming in media headlines, levels of isolation and government announcements.

But I’ve found a more constant world. It’s the smell of lemonwood leaves, blackberries ripening and toadstools sprouting under pines as the weather changes to autumn. There’s dew in the morning, twittering birds outside my window, pīwakawaka congregating around flax bushes. In the hills of North India I know monkeys will be grooming each other in the trees. Then there are the mountains, pushed up by tectonic plates, on which the snow falls. And the wind blows where it will and stirs the sea into choppy waves.

Beneath, above, around and among our visible world is the invisible world of God's spirit sustaining life and beauty. We are created beings, able to recognise God's face in the messiness of fear, the strangeness of airborne illness and imposed restrictions.

God is a constant and we hold to the truths that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. The meaning of this is written into Christian history and into our lives today.

I am comforted by this mystery as I do assignments, watch lectures from home and miss being in the library. On my runs I recognise what is unchanged. I find new ways of being community with my flatmates and learn to knit in my life's new stillness. I hold on to God's presence in all of it.

*Shanti Mathias is studying at Victoria University in Wellington.*

*Shar Mathias is studying at Otago University in Otago.*

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*



Photo by Gerhard Gellinger

## COMMENT: Grace and Peace Can Transform our Fear

Peter Matheson — April 30th, 2020

These days, as COVID-19 is robbing people of their livelihoods, threatening to crowd out everything else in our minds and imaginations, and facing even our closest friends with the direst consequences, I am brought back with a start to the basics. Who are we? Where do we stand? What do we stand for?

We humans were not born yesterday, after all. We can reach for a CD and be transported into the Russian Orthodox world, be swept along by Bach's surging *hilaritas* and enjoy the quiet cadences of Arvo Pärt. And that's just music! I've been dipping again into a marvellous compendium of Scottish religious poetry. What incredible resources we have at our fingertips these days. It's called our heritage. We need to wriggle out of our *presentism*, our obsession with the latest news, and remember what manner of beings we are.

An old friend, Professor Joan Taylor, sent me her reflections on the healing work of Jesus in the light of the pandemic. What do we really know about immune systems, she asks, or about the relationship between human touch and healing? She notes Jesus's intimate closeness to the natural world, the sparrows, the lilies in the field and his impatience with greed. Pope Francis draws similar connections between our abuse of creation and COVID-19.

No, we humans were not born yesterday. It's even possible that we're learning something about the limits to our imagined omniscience, our control over everything. In the 14th century the Black Death, *mors nigra*, tore through Europe. As with the Witch Craze the mortality it caused is sometimes ridiculously inflated, but in many cities half the population died and whole villages were wiped out.

The awful statistics we read about today's fatalities in China, Italy, Spain, the UK and the USA are as nothing compared with the dimensions of disaster in the Black Death. Multiply our figures a hundredfold and we will get the picture. We are rightly appalled by today's mass graves in New York. But they are as nothing compared to the disposal of mountains of corpses outside the city walls during the Black Death. Even at that time there was some awareness of the need to limit infection by isolating the sick and the dying and keeping the dead at a safe distance. We can shudder at what that meant in practice.

At that time people knew nothing about bacteria. Attempts were made to dispel the *miasma* of foul air, which was thought to spread the infection, by lighting fires and smoking it out. Strange conjunctions of the planets were blamed for the disaster. Contemporary paintings feature fiery arrows descending from heaven. It was reported (fake news!) that crosses fell from the skies and

that if they caught in people's clothes — that was it. Fever broke out in those affected, their flesh went black and their bodies were covered with terrible boils and pustules. Death, and the fear of death, was all pervasive. Terror gripped whole territories.

As today, the poor, crowded into alleys (like today's shanty towns) suffered most. The rich could flee the city. Chroniclers would sometimes report: "No great dying except for the poor." All this raised urgent moral and religious questions. Was flight permissible? Yes, was the usual answer — except for priests and pastors. And civic leaders were expected to sit it out, sweat it out. "Indeed, our leaders must lovingly face the danger for the sake of the common good." Often they risked their lives for the sake of others, like today's nurses and doctors. Riding out the fear.

People asked how God was involved in the plague. Was the plague — like the other apocalyptic riders, famine, war and death — sent by God as a punishment for their sins? And armies of flagellants crisscrossed the land, slashing their backs with whips to placate their angry God.

We hear isolated voices today making similar cries, blaming gays or ethnic minorities for the virus, reminiscent of the pogroms against the Jews in the wake of the Black Death. Was God the author of the tragedy?

Joan Taylor reminded me that Jesus understood illness as the work of Satan not of God. Jesus did not blame natural catastrophes on God. The Kingdom of God was one of healing and peace. Fear and blame had no place in it.

COVID-19 can overwhelm us. I often feel that way. Unless we're wilfully blind we can't ignore the demented leaders, the febrility of democracy and the tidal wave of suffering. So my hunch is that we need to stay close to the basics, to the human, to the world around us. Nothing cheers me up as much as the tiny, rose-breasted swallows which effortlessly soar around my fourth-floor flat.

Touching personal letters from the past, like this mother writing to her little daughter Apollonia who had lain sick with the plague in a distant town for many months, remind us that we need to transcend the politics.

"Grace and peace be with you, my dear daughter, I am delighted that your illness has taken a turn for the better, as I hope to God. For Hans Karl told me that your infection has disappeared and the spots and pustules have vanished."

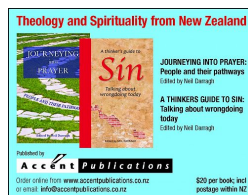
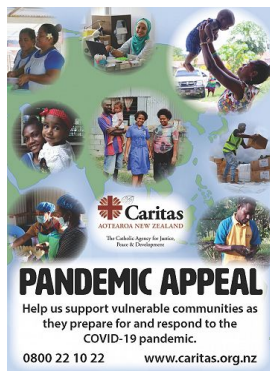
It is hard to imagine what lies behind such agonised letters.

We're in it for the long haul, it seems. The plague kept flaring up again and again in Europe for centuries. So we need to take a long, long breath, what the Germans call: *den langen Atem*. And let's pray, hoping against hope, that out of this calamity a new gentleness to our neighbour, to refugees and to our fragile world may emerge among us.

*Peter Matheson is a Church Historian and Emeritus Professor, Knox College in Dunedin.*

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*

## Gallery







Te Tuarangi

Photo by Peter Healy

## COMMENT: Time to Make All Things New

Peter Healy — May 1st, 2020

Recently we named and blessed three kōhatu mauri or life-force stones in keeping with a traditional Māori practice for helping people focus and ground their intentions.

Our three kōhatu mauri, Te Whenua, Ngā Wai and Te Tuarangi, represent the land, waters and the universe and heavens. They embody the concerns and hopes of our community.

We tasked kōhatu Whenua with holding coronavirus within the context of the larger issues facing the Earth community — inequality of income, and the crises of climate, biodiversity, over-consumption and waste, race and hate, refugee and wars and housing.

We gave kōhatu Wai the task of holding coronavirus within the context of the issues facing the waters of the world. Into this stone we placed our concerns for the world's oceans, in particular their warming and acidification. And, as well, we included the world's lakes, rivers, streams, springs and

seasonal rains.

We tasked kōhatu Tuarangi with embodying all that is sacred and the mysterious immensity of the heavens. We acknowledged the human community and all of Creation unfolding in the journey of evolution.

We honoured the shape and weight of the stones and all they represent for us and commended them into the goodness and grace of God, in the hope of their guidance as we journey into uncertain territory.

COVID-19, like everything and everyone in our world, exists in a context. The ultimate context is that everything is connected — a gift and promise of our Creator. The kōhatu mauri remind us of the wider ecosystems of life in which everything has its place. The coronavirus is with us in the steadily warming world where winters are getting shorter and milder. Warmer conditions and shorter winters create the optimal conditions for certain creatures to thrive. And warmer conditions everywhere means that wilderness areas, especially ice packs, glacial zones and tundra regions, are becoming unbalanced and breaking up. In cooler times these places had greater integrity and their ecosystems were more balanced and checked. These imbalances mean less stability and the greater likelihood of disease outbreaks.

Many affluent people are now global citizens regularly travelling seas and borders and landmasses and show the truth of a biologist's comment that not only are human beings full of microbial life and dependent on it, the microbes invented us in order to get around. In our densely populated, urbanised and polluted world, microbes have all the ingredients and conditions to flourish.

In this pandemic the human community is hunkering down wherever possible to survive and see out the virus — a wise move given the illness and death it causes. But when the immediate threat has passed many people will want to return to business-as-usual lifestyles. They will forget the ingredients and conditions that enabled the crisis to develop. Such an attitude would mean that the opportunities opened during lockdown will be passed up.

Our experience of level 4 lockdown was a radical response and care of the community. We altered our lives willingly. We need a similar responsiveness by society to address the climate crisis and its underlying causes and calls.

This is an important moment of choice — an opportunity to pause, reflect and reset. The more our world sinks into uncertainty and fear, the greater the opportunities to be compassionate and present — the great task of reimagining our civilisation. It's the possibility of genuine reconnection to the Source of all life. We will find among us the resourcefulness to make the changes to support a genuinely life-sustaining society.

### **Prayer for an Emerging Future**

Wellspring of compassion, container of all life,  
join us as we lean into a future coming to be through our humble efforts.  
Lead us into your emerging future.  
Empower us as we draw down our harms.  
Transfigure our despairs.  
May they become the fertile fields of a world made new.  
We invoke your Good Spirit to enfold everything in a bounty of blessing.  
Open to us the life force of all that lives,  
encourage us,  
teach us the art of co-creation in your world.  
Whaea nui o te Taiao katoa, inoi mō mātou.  
Mother of the New Creation, pray for us.

*Peter Healy is a Marist priest, environmentalist, artist and teacher.*

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2010*



Photo by Ornella Binni on Unsplash

## COMMENT: Kindness Is Practising Love

Jacqui Ryan — April 30th, 2020

We've been in lockdown, Level 4 of our government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It's been an extraordinary time. While some may remember the austerities of the Great Depression and the ravages of two World Wars, this is my first experience of nationwide restrictions. No doubt we will hear and read about this experience from many sources in the coming months.

Lockdown means we're at home in our "bubble". Some of us may have to leave our bubbles because we work in essential services. I've found kindness to be supportive, insightful and challenging. Certainly, kindness oils most situations.

I'm an essential worker and drive the Auckland motorway network on virtually empty roads. I've been surprised by the message "Be kind. Stay calm" on the huge electronic boards which usually advise motorists of incidents or road closures. It was stunning — I cannot recall an occasion when such a human message has been displayed before. Perhaps this was influenced by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's often-used reminder "Be Kind" when signing off her daily COVID-19 reports.

Love motivates kindness. We remember the mosque attacks in Christchurch and the Whakaari/White Island tragedy last year and the outpouring of kindness across the country and around the world towards the families of those killed and injured, and the front line emergency responders. Kindness is the opposite to and does not countenance violence or hatred. And, as we witness, kindness is a universal form of communication.

We find in all spiritual traditions that the practice of kindness is essential, not only for our personal wellbeing but also for the ongoing survival of humankind.

In the Bible we read: "What does God require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

In the Talmud of Judaism: "The highest form of wisdom is kindness."

The prophet Mohommad reminded Islam: "Every act of kindness is (considered as) *Sadaqah*' (charity)."

The Buddha said: "When words are both true and kind, they can change the world."

And a Hindu proverb says: "Help your neighbour's boat across, and lo, your own has reached the shore."

We can all be kind through simple acts – buying a colleague coffee; phoning someone who needs a listening ear; leaving an unexpected gift at the door. There are millions of ways in which we can show kindness. I was buoyed by many acts of kindness recently when I was recovering from surgery — cards, emails, phone calls, visits. They were encouraging and lifted my spirits.

At times, kindness calls for courage and strength but some think that being kind can have connotations of weakness. During lockdown and after when we are in our bubbles biting our tongue, avoiding rolling our eyes or giving the “for-goodness-sake” look to others, we have faced the challenge of being and staying kind. How many of us would gladly take back a word or action which, on reflection, lacked true kindness?

We’ve been appalled by those individuals who have physically and verbally been abusive to the supermarket staff who have laboured to meet our demands for food and other necessary items. They need our kindness. The lengthy restrictions in our bubbles have meant that people have suffered anxiety and stress for a wide variety of reasons, but we can’t let that overflow as offensive behaviour. Let’s offer these workers an extra kind word when we’re shopping. And let’s not forget all the other front line essential service workers who have earned our appreciation and deserve our kindness and gratitude. We can be kind in our bubbles at home, and in the world.

*Dominican Sister Jacqui Ryan is the Spiritual Carer/Chaplain at Harbour Hospice, North Shore, Auckland.*

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*



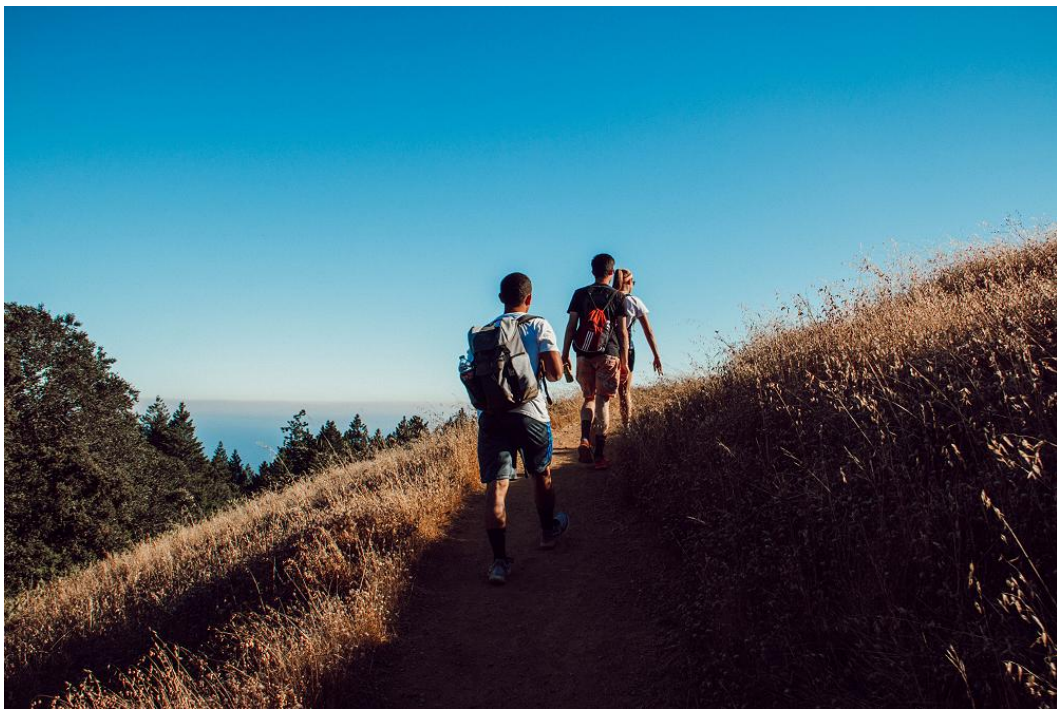


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## SCRIPTURE: I Am with You on the Way

Kathleen Rushton — April 30th, 2020

Kathleen Rushton reflects on Jesus's farewell address in John 14: 1-21 in light of our challenges in this time of COVID-19.

John's Gospel has two concerns — telling the story of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus and the implications of that story for the "now" of the reader. It is worth reflecting on a part of Jesus's farewell address to the disciples to encourage us in this time of COVID-19.

### Farewell Discourse

At the time of Jesus (ca 30 CE) and later when John's Gospel was written (ca 90 CE) people recognised the talk of Jesus in John 13–17 as a "farewell address". It was a genre when a well-known leader or teacher gave instructions before death. In the address the leader expressed deep concern for the well-being of the group and for individuals after his death. He announced the imminence of his death, reviewed his life to set the record straight, stressed that relationships were to continue and talked about the good things as well as the hard times ahead. He encouraged his followers to practise virtues, to avoid vices, named a successor, gave a legacy and usually finished with a prayer.

In John 14 we have Jesus's farewell address. The Evangelist gives a sense of all that has happened — taking us back to "before the festival of the Passover" on the 14th day of Nisan (Jn 13:1) and forward to the end of Jesus's life on Earth. We hear about the situation of the disciples. Jesus talks of "going away" and "coming to you." He will depart when he dies and will "return" to the disciples in three days. The other time is when the disciples face Jesus's departure from this Earth.

The "now" in the Gospel is when the Evangelist wrote the Gospel in the 90s CE with communities, probably in Ephesus, a prosperous city in the Roman Empire. The "now" for us is May 2020 when people of Earth are in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Concern for the Disciples

Jesus's words can touch our hearts now. He is deeply concerned about our feelings and responses. He begins and ends saying: "Let not your hearts be troubled" (Jn 14:1). The word translated as "troubled" means literally "stirred up". We find this word in other places in the Gospel — the movement of the water at the Bethesda pool (Jn 5:7), Jesus's agitation and emotional distress at Lazarus's death (Jn 11:33) and the prospects of his suffering and death (Jn 12:27; 13:21). The emphasis on our "hearts" continues as Jesus implores: "Believe *into* God, believe *into* me" (Jn 14:1).

### Setting the Record Straight

Jesus assures the disciples: "You know the way to where I am going". But Thomas objects: "We do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (Jn 14:5) His question may be our question, too, when our usual "way" has been turned upside down. Jesus sets the record straight: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). Jesus makes this claim at a time of crisis — he is "going away" and the disciples will face uncertainty and impending persecution.

How can we hear Jesus's claim anew in our time of crisis? We can ponder being on "the way" at this time. It implies being earthed, embodied and finding our way with Jesus. We can hear biblical resonances — Isaiah's words "Make straight the way of the Lord", later quoted by John the Baptist (Jn 1:23). When Jesus adds "the way" to his "I am" sayings, he is revealing himself in relationship to disciples. His "I am" sayings are about what Jesus brings uniquely to the world, how he benefits the world, rather than being just about himself (Jn 6:35,41,48,51; 8:12; 10:7,9; 15:1,5).

Jesus is "the way" because he reveals who God is ("truth") and when people come to believe into him, they share in eternal "life" in the present. Jesus is taking to himself Wisdom who is named as "the way" (Prov 23:19; Wis 10:17).

In the troubled times when Jewish people were adjusting to having no temple, many believed Wisdom was found in the Torah (Ps 119). Controversially, Jesus claims to be "the way" of Wisdom. The early Christian movement becomes known as "the Way" (Acts 9:2). "Life" is a persistent thread in this Gospel. At the heart of Jesus's ministry finishing the works of God is the sharing of eternal life in the present (Jn 1:4; 3:16).

### **Relationships Continue**

When Jesus is absent, he is present through the Holy Spirit. Being with Jesus is about lasting relationships of "abiding" (translated as "stay", "dwell" or "remain" Jn 14:10; 15:4–10). Jesus says the Holy Spirit "abides with you and will be in you" (Jn 14:17). The evangelist does not describe Jesus's return in the future or of the heavens opening or Jesus coming on the cloud of heaven in judgement as in other Gospels. Instead, the language centres on a person, on a relationship and on finding Jesus in "the now" — "I ... will take you to *myself*" (Jn 14:3).

### **The Way**

The two Sundays when John 14 is read will take us into *Laudato Si'* Week (16–24 May) which marks five years since Pope Francis gave his encyclical *Laudato Si': On the Care of Our Common Home* to the world. One of the many outcomes has been the establishment of the Global Catholic Climate Movement.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen the global community come together in unprecedented ways for the common good. We've recognised Earth as our common home and experienced how closely the Earth community is interconnected.

We can use *Laudato Si'* Week as "the way" to encourage us to care for Earth as part of the whole common good. We can "cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents" (LS par 14).

We have seen how, with a pandemic before us, the global human community acted radically and decisively to save people's lives — we all participated. Fundamental changes to the way we live could be made quickly, effectively and with little resistance. We can put the same effort into saving Earth — and with the same willingness to participate. We will all have a part to play, work to do. Jesus speaks of God doing works through him and says "the one who believes *into* me will do the works that I do and, in fact, greater works than I do".

This work of saving Earth from ourselves will stretch us because the human community has hurt and mistreated our common home over the last 200 years. Now is a new beginning. Let us take up the challenge to awaken a new reverence for life, a firm resolve to achieve sustainability, a quickening of the struggle for justice and peace and the joyful celebration of all life in our world.

*Kathleen Rushton is a Scripture scholar and Mercy Sister in Canterbury.*

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*

The Gospel readings for 5th and 6th Sundays of Easter: 10 and 17 May 2020



Photo by Silviarita from Pixabay

## SCRIPTURE: I Am Sending You

Elaine Wainwright — April 30th, 2020

Elaine Wainwright suggests how the readings for Pentecost Sunday can encourage us to work together for Earth in this COVID-19 world.

We are an Earth community threatened by a global pandemic. The word “unprecedented” — seldom heard before the outbreak of COVID-19 — is now on many lips. It is used descriptively, informatively and as a warning that the changes sweeping our planet can be addressed only by a new form of global collaboration.

We see signs of change emerging as political leaders collaborate across physical and ideological barriers and members of the numerous grassroots communities take care of one another. Medical professionals are working tirelessly to care for the sick and dying and to find an antibody for the disease.

And it is “unprecedented” that all Christian churches were empty through Holy Week and Easter, and will remain so during the pandemic.

This is the unprecedented context in which we dialogue with the biblical passages for Pentecost Sunday. We can interpret them from an ecological perspective informed by our current global context of this deadly pandemic, COVID-19.

### **Psalm 104**

In Psalm 104:30 we read: “When you send forth your spirit they are created and you renew the face of the ground.” The community response is: “O God, send out your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.” What we need and pray for earnestly is the Spirit of God renewing the planet. Earth’s suffering is caused by the human community which, in turn, is suffering sickness and death caused by a virus. The psalmist who knows the depth of human suffering and the depth of God, acknowledges God’s presence and care for the community in critical suffering: “If you take back your Spirit they die... [but if] you send forth your Spirit you renew the face of the earth.” Earth and all those for whom it is home await this renewal in hope.

### **Acts 2:1-11**

In Acts 2:1-11 Luke tells of the coming of God's Spirit as promised by Jesus when he was with his disciples. The coming is told in material terms. The apostles are gathered at a *time* — the Jewish time of Pentecost — and in a *place* — a room. The Spirit is present and at work at this time, in this place and through the people who will manifest the Spirit, speaking in their own tongue and being heard by each listener in their own language. The outpouring of the Spirit is a communal event and it creates community.

We have different spirits at work globally at this time of universal threat and we hear many voices. We're experiencing a tsunami of information and struggle to hear in our own tongue what is happening, as did those present at the first Pentecost experience. Hearing in our own language breaches boundaries of language, ethnicity and country of origin. The writer of Acts says that the Spirit is the source of the extraordinary happenings. We need the same Spirit now so that our communities and nations can hear the truth about a way forward in our own language.

## I Corinthians 12: 3-13

Paul proclaims the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:3-7; 12-13. The Spirit is the source of the many different ministries in the Corinthian Church, "working in all sorts of different ways in different people". And the collaboration of people in ministries is like the collaboration of the various parts of the human body: "Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit, so it is with Christ". We know that the unity and diversity that Paul saw as manifesting the Spirit, is alive and active in our unprecedented time.

Around the world front line health workers are focused on saving lives. We recognise all the essential workers who keep our towns and cities functioning. And we encourage our governments to respond to the crisis collaboratively for the sake of all people. We can share Paul's insight that "the particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose" and is being used for such good purposes in our time. Some of us have contributed by working in hospitals, supermarkets and pharmacies — others have done their part just by staying at home.

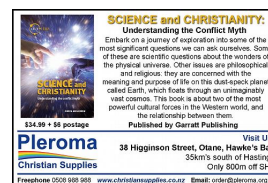
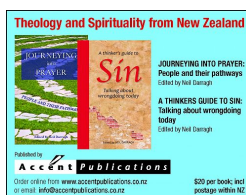
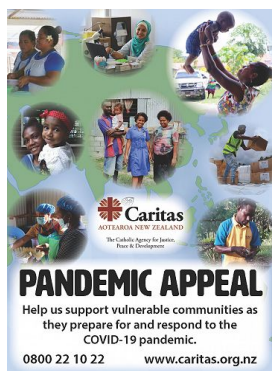
As for the Acts reading, time (evening on the first day of the week) and place (the room where the disciples were) *ground* the post-resurrection story in John 20:19-23. The evangelist tells how Jesus, who had been crucified and buried one week earlier, comes and stands among his disciples gathered in a closed room and shows them his hands and side. The wounds confirm Jesus's identity for the disciples and for readers they emphasise the presence of the Risen One — the disciples can see and hear it is Him.

The risen Jesus missions the gathered disciples: "As I have been sent, so now I am sending you." And he empowers them by breathing forth the Spirit — the Spirit named as "holy". This is both restoration and proclamation. The relationship between Jesus and the disciples is restored by the breathing forth of the Spirit and they are commissioned to continue the work of Jesus. Breath and breathing, spirit and holy permeate this account of post-resurrection. And, now, we are invited into the experience it is creating in our time.

*Tui Motu Magazine*. Issue 248 May 2020

Readings for Pentecost Sunday 31 May 2020.

## Gallery





# Breathed into Wholeness

*Catholicity and Life in the Spirit*



Mary Frohlich

Foreword by Ilia Delio

Cover: Breathed into Wholeness

Photo by Orbis Books

## **BOOK REVIEW: Breathed into Wholeness: Catholicity and Life in the Spirit**

Regina Daly — April 30th, 2020

By Mary Frohlich. Published by Orbis Books, 2019. Reviewed by Regina Daly

This impressive book is one of a series on “Catholicity in an Evolving Universe” pioneered by Franciscan theologian Ilia Delio. There are three parts to the book: “Exploring Catholicity from Within”, “In Search of Catholic Personhood” and “Living in the Catholicising Rhythm of the Spirit”.

Frohlich explores the theological foundations of the concept of catholicity and shares an analysis of a variety of experiences that people name as “spiritual”. Spiritual experience is the experiential face of catholicity. As Ilia Delio says: “To be Catholic is to be aware of belonging to a whole and to act according to the whole.” The Spirit is forever breathing new life in us and we are invited to breathe in and out into a deeper consciousness of the gift of life.

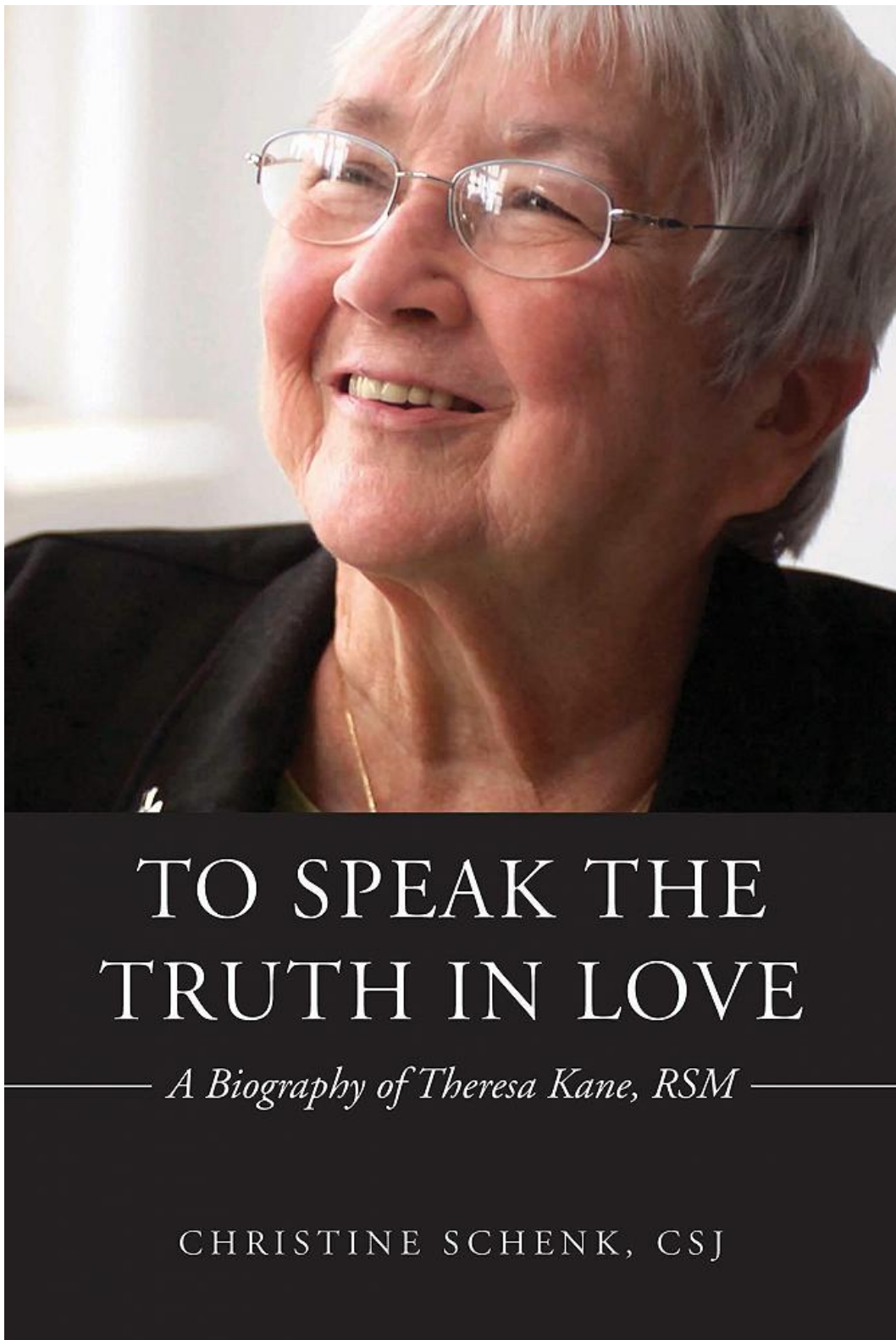
The book invites us to consider how we construct our sense of self. It was enlightening to note how the concepts of quantum physics offer new perspectives on what it means to be a spiritual being as “quantum reality has an intrinsic quality of mystery”.

Frohlich uses the lives and work of thinkers through the ages to illustrate her ideas. In one section she focuses on the Spirit’s “breathing in” which is experienced in human life as being drawn radically beyond oneself into communion. She uses John of the Cross, Meister Eckhart and Jan Ruusbroec’s work to build the model of human personhood developed in the book.

She also describes the movement of self-emptying and receiving oneself back ready for mission. She illustrates the concept by reflecting on Augustine, Julian of Norwich and Ignatius of Loyola. I was especially inspired by the lives of Etty Hillesum, Howard Thurman and Pope Francis whom Frohlich uses to exemplify the catholicising rhythms of the Spirit.

I recommend this book to all those wanting to explore their spirituality and seeking to deepen their awareness of the unfolding creation. It would be an excellent resource for a group embracing the new potential of creating a better world after COVID-19.

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*



Cover: To Speak the Truth in  
Love

Photo by Orbis Books

## **BOOK REVIEW: To Speak the Truth in Love: A Biography of Theresa Kane, RSM**

Elizabeth Julian — April 30th, 2020

By Christine Schenk. Published by Orbis Books, 2019. Reviewed by Elizabeth Julian

I had been professed for one year when Mercy Sister Theresa Kane stood publicly before Pope John Paul II asking for women's equality in the Church — that was in Washington DC in 1979. Now, 40 years on, the Epilogue notes: "Full equality will not happen until the structures of Catholicism

themselves are transformed ... because in the end it really is about what God wants 'on earth as in heaven'. With meticulous care Christine Schenk's biography details Theresa's courageous determination to speak the truth in love over many years, leaving the reader with a portrait of an extraordinary faith-filled leader. Sustained by a deep prayer life, Theresa survived persecution from members of the US hierarchy as she pursued her vision of justice and equality for women in the Church and society, particularly in healthcare.

Although the book is highly detailed, requiring a background understanding of Religious Life and the renewal called for by Vatican II, as well as an appreciation of the difference between US Church climate and that of New Zealand, where bishops and Congregational Leaders engage openly, respectfully and fruitfully, Schenk's story-telling is such that the reader's hand is forced to turn the page to see what happens next! A great read for lockdown days.

*Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020*





Cover: A Maze of Grace

Photo by Cuba Press Limited

## **BOOK REVIEW: A Maze of Grace**

Emma Melville Riddell — April 30th, 2020

By Natalie Yule Yeoman. Published by Cuba Press Limited, 2019. Reviewed by Emma Melville Riddell

What a pleasant surprise! When a dear aunt gave me this book, which is the story of the author's response to receiving a breast cancer diagnosis, I was a bit reluctant to read it. I'm a breast cancer survivor myself and I do get weary of the cancer being such a prime topic for discussion: How is my

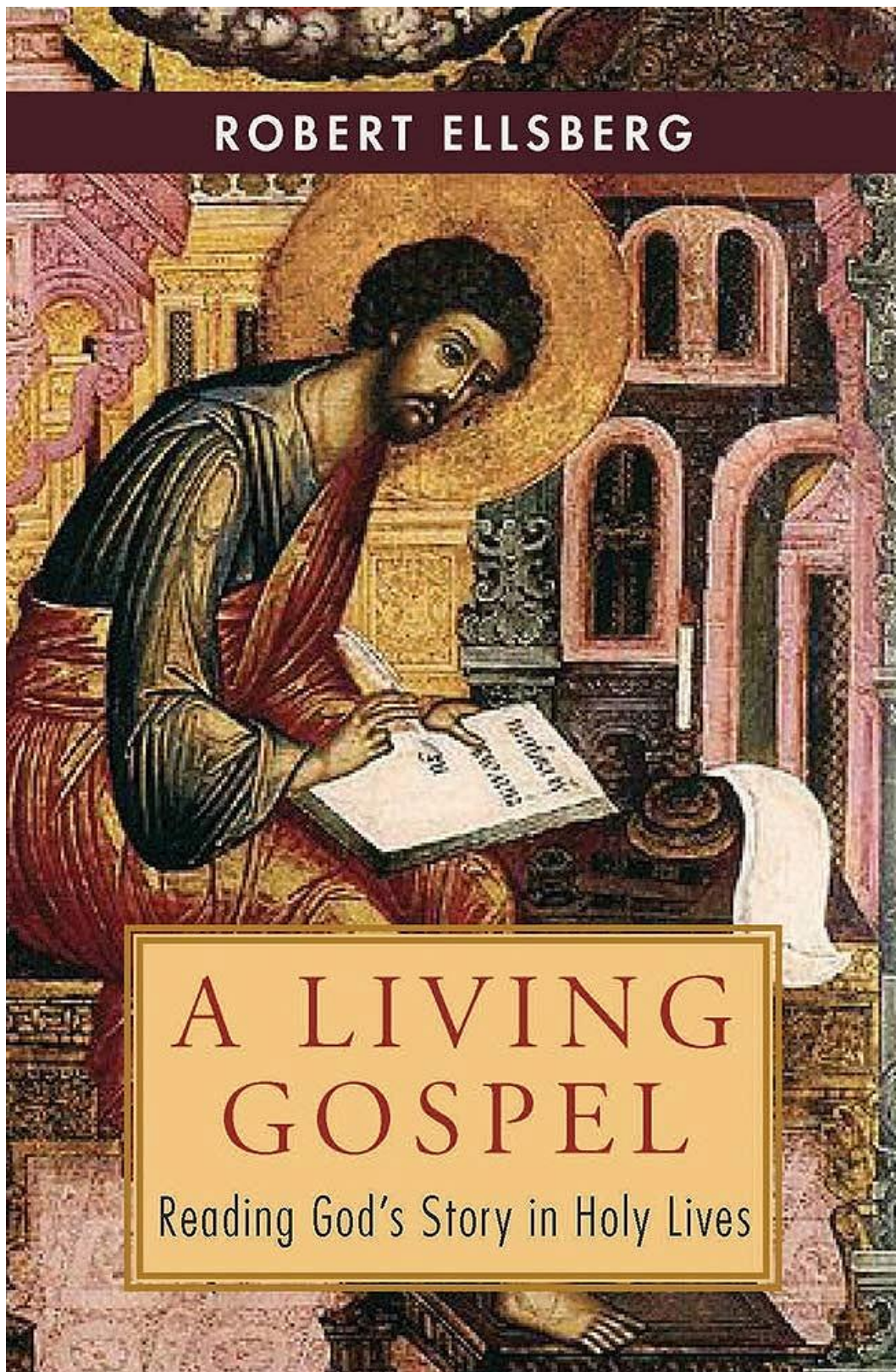
health now? And do I worry it might come back? Sometimes it seems it's what people find most interesting about me.

But I don't define myself by having had cancer. Yes, it has been part of my life's journey but not the sole focus. I wondered if *A Maze of Grace* would be like other "cancer books" I'd read — a bit maudlin or tainted with self-pity. Fortunately, not! Natalie writes with a beautiful sense of reality touched with gentle honesty. I so related to her reflections about faith, her determination to remain the same person and to treat everyone with kindness and respect. By page 80 I had to cyberstalk her, just to make sure she is still OK. I couldn't stand not knowing. The fact that the system let her down deeply saddens me, but her strength and resolve astound and humble me.

This book is a must for anyone caught up in the maelstrom that comes with a cancer diagnosis — but not only for breast cancer, and not only for the person diagnosed. Natalie's insights give much needed hope, the ability to rise above a crap hand dealt and shitty circumstances. She epitomises the best of us, suffering the worst circumstances. I take my hat off to her!

*Tui Motu Magazine*. Issue 248 May 2020





Cover: A Living Gospel

Photo by Orbis Books

## BOOK REVIEW: A Living Gospel: Reading God's Story in Holy Lives

Teresa McNamara — April 30th, 2020

By Robert Ellsberg. Published by Orbis Books, 2019. Reviewed by Teresa McNamara

In his letter *Gaudete et Exsultate* Pope Francis calls us all to holiness. Often our response is: "Surely not me!" or "How can I be holy?", but in this book Robert Ellsberg encourages us to "learn to read our own story with new eyes", leading us towards holiness.

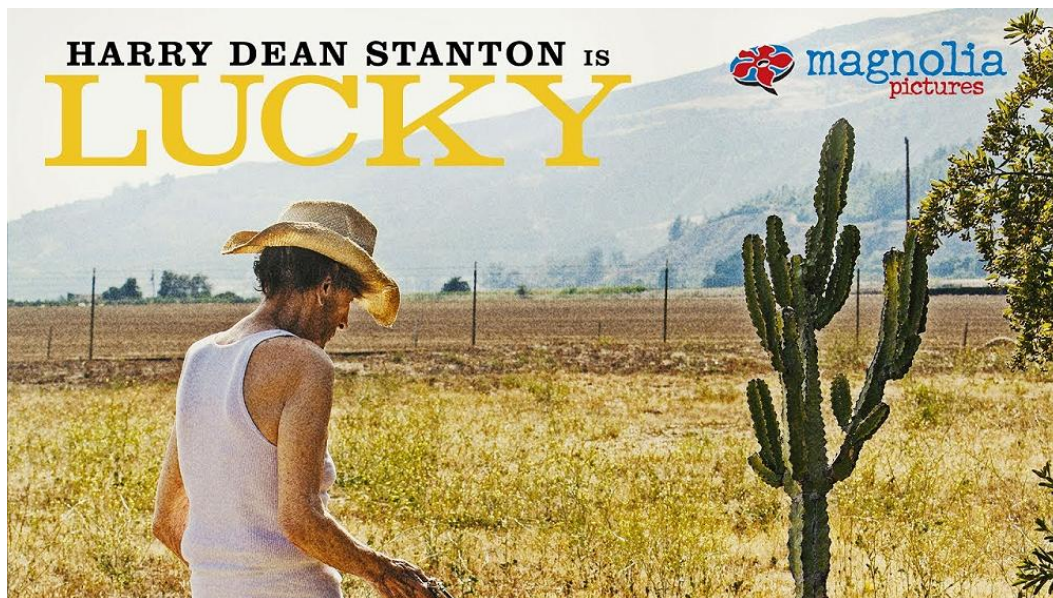
Through nine chapters, “saint watcher” Robert Ellsberg explores stories of the lives of Catholic greats such as Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton and Henri Nouwen alongside those who may be less known to us. They are saints immersed in life and responding to the realities of their day. We are invited to journey with them through the highs and the lows of their lives. Ellsberg skilfully weaves together his experience, and often his personal interactions, with these holy people — an approach that makes them seem so humane and real.

*A Living Gospel* not only drew me into the lives of a range of saints as human beings, it also gave me the opportunity to reflect on my own life and how I can respond to the needs of today.

This book will have wide appeal as it connects the lives of holy people with our own reality, encouraging us towards spiritual growth and holiness.

*Tui Motu Magazine*. Issue 248 May 2020





Lucky - Official Trailer

Video by Magnolia Pictures & Magnet  
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## FILM REVIEW: Lucky

Paul Sorrell — April 30th, 2020

Directed by John Carroll Lynch. Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

With the cinemas closed, I wondered what I should review this month. I missed *Lucky* when it screened on Maori TV a few weeks ago, but then I learned that, during the lockdown, the Dunedin Public Library was offering a free movie streaming service to members. Problem solved.

Played flawlessly by veteran actor Harry Dean Stanton at age 91, at first *Lucky* seems like a typical retiree living in a small town in Southern California. Setting off each day from his bungalow, where he labours over crosswords and watches game shows on TV, clad in his underwear and with a cigarette permanently in his mouth, he does the daily rounds of the café, the corner store and a sociable local bar.

But *Lucky* is not your average superannuitant. Thin, gaunt and a little frail he may be, but his step is sure and his mind razor sharp. A relentlessly honest thinker, he is unwilling to accept the conventional pieties. His crossword habit has taught him that “reality” is not just a seven-letter word, but “a thing” — a thing to be accepted and engaged with on a daily basis. For *Lucky*, reality is an existential void that he skirts daily.

*Lucky*'s unrelenting honesty shapes not only his philosophy – an attitude to life rather than a worked-out set of beliefs — but also his relations with other people. He's not polite, he's devastatingly direct. He can smell fakery a mile off and gives it no quarter. Seeing his friend Howard being courted by a smooth insurance agent, he lashes out, fists up. Howard is especially vulnerable because his beloved companion, a 100-year-old tortoise called Roosevelt, has wandered off into the desert. Like *Lucky*, Roosevelt is a relic of another world, steering his own way through life, not to be “owned” by anyone.

How does one act in face of the Void? *Lucky*'s answer is “smile”. The film ends with him standing on the edge of the desert as the light fades, gazing up in wonder at a stand of cacti, ancient and gnarled, their huge arms thrust into the evening sky.

*Lucky*'s beliefs and convictions may differ from those held by many readers of *Tui Motu* magazine. But, I hope, not his underlying values. Apart from his searing honesty, I admired his personal vulnerability, sensitivity to others, refusal to compromise, non-judgemental attitude and his capacity to love and show empathy without wearing his heart on his sleeve.

A remarkable film and an astonishing performance. See it if you can find it ...

*Tui Motu* Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020



Photo by Jacqueline Macou

## **BLESSING for this Time of Covid-19**

Tui Motu Team — May 1st, 2020

Whenever we wash our hands  
infuse us with a sense of service  
to those in our bubbles  
in our country  
and around the world.  
Strengthen us  
to keep to the restrictions of this time  
with hope for the good of all  
Spirit of healing and community.

Tui Motu Magazine. Issue 248 May 2020

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Photo by Ann Gilroy

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Tui Motu Magazine — November 27th, 2019

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