Tui Motu

InterIslands

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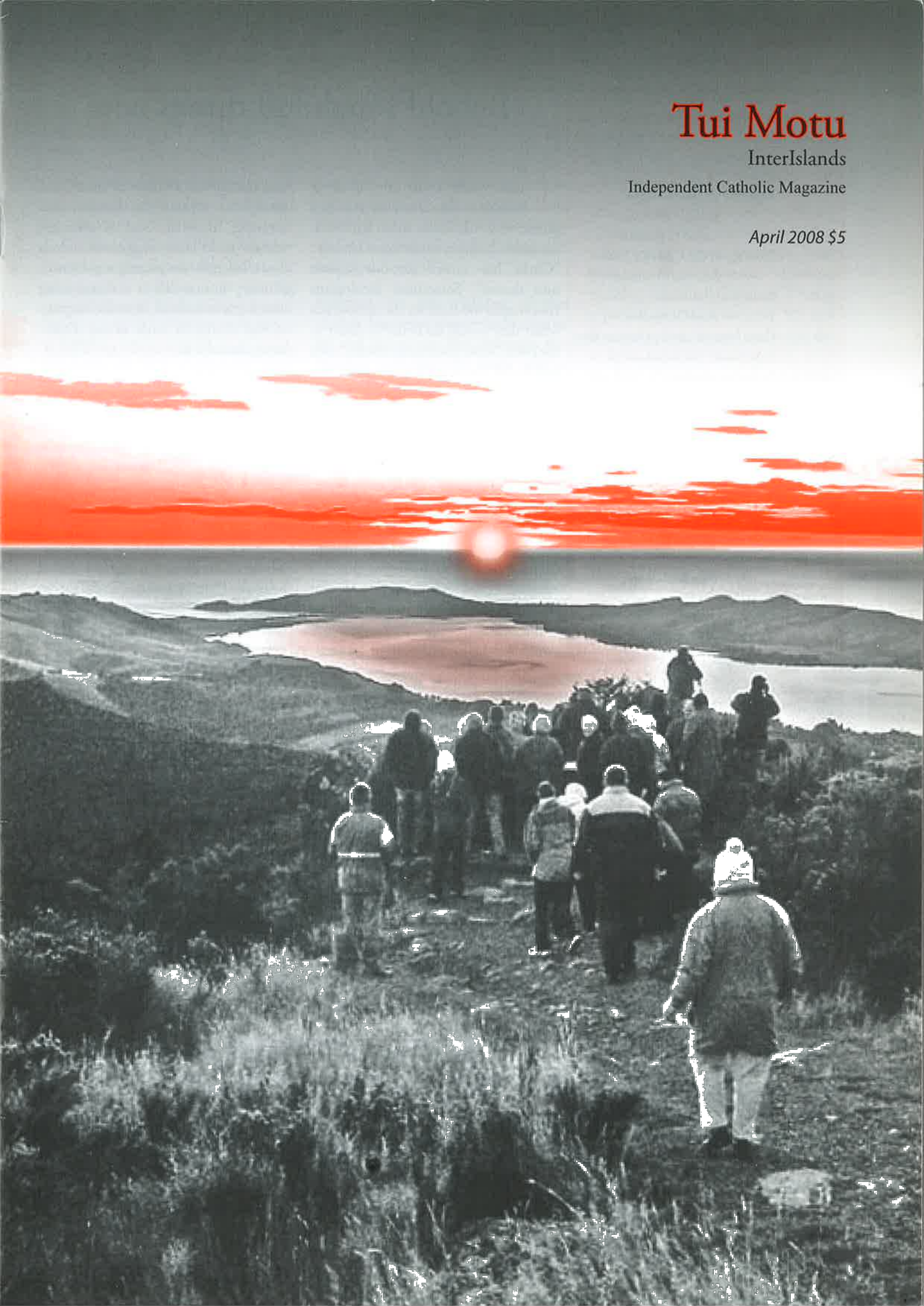

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Cover photo: *Jim Neilan*

Behold I make all things new

These words from the *Book of Revelation* (*Rev. 21,5*) sum up in a phrase what Christians mean by Easter. An early Christian writer put it lyrically: "Christ has turned all our sunsets into dawns". Sometimes theologians concentrate too hard on the apologetics when they would do better to listen to the poets. Some readers may recall a book which did the rounds a few years ago called: *Who Moved the Stone?* It treated the mystery of Christ's Resurrection like a sort of celestial whodunnit.

This month we have several Easter pieces, and our writers tend to concentrate on the essential meaning. Glynn Cardy asks why Jesus died. It was, he suggests, because Jesus' precept of love proved so inclusive that his enemies could see no alternative but to eliminate him. It is the absolute and startling newness of universal love which set the first Christians on fire.

The Easter gospels at once confront us with this novelty. The preceding chapters are largely about the man Jesus and his disciples – all male. Suddenly the main characters are women – and principally, in all four gospels, Mary Magdalen. She becomes the herald of Easter, the first preacher of Christ Risen. This is such an arrestingly new concept that even the Catholic Church 20 centuries later still fails to grasp its implications. How can women be treated as second class citizens in the church of Christ after that?

Both Ron Sharp (*p.16*) and Daniel O'Leary (*pp. 18-19*) look to nature to and the natural rhythm of death and rebirth to express the fundamental meaning of what God is effecting within us. O'Leary suggest that deep down beneath the passing experiences of every human life is a theme song which transcends all. It is the imprint of the divine in each of us. Easter brings it to birth.

Our cover portrays Easter dawn on Mount Cargill, the highest point on the hills surrounding Otago Harbour. Every year there is an ecumenical sunrise service on the summit – and in the photograph the worshippers from all Christian churches are shown hurrying the final few yards. Afterwards they will gather in one of the church halls for a shared breakfast. It may not be 'Eucharist' in the doctrinal sense – yet it clearly fulfils the command to be 'one in me'.

The flip side of our cover (*p. 32*) is a parallel photograph taken during Easter week on Flagstaff Hill, another summit overlooking the city of Dunedin. 200 people gathered to celebrate *Summits for Ed*, in memory of Sir Edmund Hillary.

These hill climbs around the country are being led by High School boys and girls. It was just such an experience 70 years ago which touched the young Hillary's soul, and launched him on a lifetime of service to people. Who would say that for these youngsters it might not also be an experience of what we mean by Easter?

M.H.

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

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd, P O Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9059
Phone: 03 477 1449: Fax: 03 477 8149: email: tuimotu@earthlight.co.nz: website: www.tuimotu.org
Editor: Michael Hill IC; Assistant Editor: Frances Skelton; Illustrator: Don Moorhead
Directors: Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey, Tom Cloher, Robin Kearns, Chris Loughnan OP,
Elizabeth Mackie OP, Katie O'Connor (Chair), Kathleen Rushton RSM

The prophetic voice

Ten years of life is a very good reason for the editors and Board of *Tui Motu* to take stock. The issue before them is far wider than whether *Tui Motu* is financially viable or whether its circulation is gaining ground, though both are important. The key question is whether *Tui Motu* is fulfilling adequately the task it was originally set. Is it a prophetic voice for the New Zealand church?

The choice of the word *prophetic* is deliberate. It has a long and honourable religious history. A sizeable chunk of the Bible consists of 'prophetic' writings. Prophets were regarded as the mouthpieces of God. That would be an almost blasphemous claim to make of any religious journal. Nevertheless there are aspects of Biblical prophecy which provide some useful criteria for judging editorial style.

From the very beginnings of prophetic literature prophets were political commentators. Their pronouncements applied to specific, contemporary events or problems. They were particularly active during times of crisis. They were not afraid to confront authorities. They were invariably single voices, although they often attracted disciples. Their task was not to predict the future – that's a misconception – although they often issued dire warnings. They usually drew upon themselves persecution. Jesus himself was often called a prophet.

So, becoming a prophet is not an easy vocation. To claim to be the mouthpiece of God is not one many editors would make, although some have; or at least, they have acted as if they were the voice, if not of God, then of the Magisterium. Megalomania is an abiding temptation for those with power, even the power of the pen.

Editors therefore must be answerable for their pronouncements. That is usually provided by the readers themselves and by a Board, whose job it is to monitor what the editor is saying and doing. But where does that leave 'editorial freedom'?

Freedom, in the tradition of the church, has never meant the licence to do and say as you like. It means the freedom to pursue the truth and to disseminate it. Paul VI said as much in 1971 in the document *Communio et Progressio*, which supported responsible editorial freedom and condemned the publication of biased views or suppression of the truth. The religious editor, therefore, has a responsible role in the church, one that can be lonely and burdensome.

Here are some reflective thoughts from the pen of the 1995 editor of the *Bombay Examiner*, India's leading Catholic weekly. A Catholic paper's job, he says, is:

- to *inform* its readers, so that the Catholic community can help better find its identity;
- to *interpret* the contemporary world, using a 'holistic perception'. "This is the place for the ethical and the spiritual – not in the narrow moralistic or religiously communal, but as *interpreting human values in their most integral sense*" (our italics). Clearly here is where the prophetic function comes in.
- to *reflect* the opinions of its readership. "To be Catholic by definition means to be universal, pluralistic, non-sectarian. It means accommodating a variety of political opinions, cultural expressions and theological arguments".

When I first read that in 1995 I thought the writer's interpretation of what was needed in India, corresponded closely with the situation here in New Zealand. I still do. *Tui Motu* describes itself as an independent Catholic magazine. That means that it places itself squarely within the Catholic tradition, yet happily offers the hospitality of its pages to a variety of different voices, usually but not invariably from other Christian churches.

This is based on a firm belief that Christian wisdom is always growing. Like John Henry Newman, we maintain that Christian doctrinal teaching continually develops. Change is part of growth in holiness. We seek the truth, but we acknowledge this to be a painful process which often involves abandoning long cherished positions and beliefs.

An essential part of this process is the critical voice. The editor, as Michael Fitzsimons said in an address in Auckland last September to the *Australasian Catholic Press Association* (*pp 6-7*), needs to be distanced from church professionals, from the sources of power. This will enable the Catholic press to become 'a countercultural voice, a Gospel voice – full of surprises and instinctively on the side of the underdog'.

We are pleased to include Michael's paper. He speaks with the voice of experience since he too sat in the editorial chair. We also sought the views of his predecessor at *Zealandia*, Dennis Horton. His views on editorial freedom are printed on page 13. They should be read in conjunction with the Fitzsimons article. We are grateful to both for their considered opinions.

Being a prophetic voice is clearly a demanding role to play whether in the secular world or in the church. It is an essential ingredient of any just society, whose peace and stability depend on a balance of power between legislature, executive and judiciary. To these should be added the so-called 'fourth estate', the press – that independent critical voice which affirms the good and exposes the evil in the processes of both church and state.

It is up to you, our readers, to judge whether *Tui Motu* fulfils this function. and whether it deserves another ten years of life.

M.H.

John O'Donohue

It was devastating to read in March *Tui Motu* of the death of the charismatic John O'Donohue. Those to whom this splendid poet, academic, author of *Anam Cara,* philosopher and gifted priest is dear, will appreciate John Hunt's insightful and caring *In Memoriam.*

Only the inspirational Lord of the Gospels – not of the Curia – and such as Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila, Teilhard de Chardin *et al* keep me loyal (in my fashion) to a highly institutional church, in which any resemblance to its lovely, gentle, magnificent Founder is purely coincidental.

Phyllis Burland, Havelock

Inclusive or exclusive?

I believe there are several causes for a loss of a sense of identity among Catholics since Vatican II: affluence; the culture of individualism; the popularity of Pentecostalism; scandals and cover-ups.

Affluence often connotes self-sufficiency and an intense desire to maintain and improve it to the exclusion of concern for the welfare of others or even for one's own soul. *Individualism* in economic terms so often entails unbridled capitalism, which has a similar effect of the exclusion of any consideration beyond the making of money.

The *popularity of Pentecostalism* is interesting. Is it the upbeat music? Is it overly simplistic, emotional and therefore likely to be ephemeral? Is it genuinely inspired by the Holy Spirit? It is certainly vibrant and very inclusive. There seems to be little formality about becoming a member – no catechumenate or scrutinies. Adult baptism only is necessary. I wonder if we might have something to learn from its style of teaching, evangelism, worship and leadership.

I do believe that we Catholics also have a marvellous fund of wisdom accumulated over 2000 years. In particular, we have the gift of Eucharist – mystery though it is, Reconciliation, devotion to Our Lady, and so on. However, to re-establish a Catholic identity could result in contradiction.

The very word 'catholic' implies 'universal', yet we are considered by many to be exclusive. Exclusion of women from the priesthood, exclusion of divorced Catholics from Holy Communion, the exclusion of marriage from priesthood and even from diaconate all contribute to this perception. Admitting married clergy from another denomination to Catholic priesthood is viewed with not a little cynicism.

I look forward to the day when the Catholic Church is seen to be unmistakably inclusive!!

Brian Connolly, Helensville

letters to the editor

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

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

Humanae Vitae

Your review of the Pontificate of Paul VI (*Feb TM*) comes down heavily on him as the Pope who 'banned the Pill'. You suggest that *Humanae Vitae* was an error of judgment and, by implication, that the whole of church teaching on contraception is wrong.

I too read *Humanae Vitae* as badly out of balance. It is addressed only to married Catholics, ignoring completely the rest of humankind which is a target market for the creators of (contraceptive) products... Put simply, *Humanae Vitae* envisages nothing wrong with the commercialisation of human reproduction or its prevention, but that it should not apply to married Catholics.

Such segregation is impractical and unacceptable and makes the document irrelevant. But that does not mean contraception is morally good.

Donald Lamont, Gore

Paul VI chose to issue an absolute ban on artificial contraception against the advice of his own Commission and almost unilaterally. This way of dealing with a crucial issue was quite at odds with his usual manner of listening and consulting. Hence, I think, the tragic outcome of that Encyclical: **ed**

No lasting city

I found the letter from Ian David Beattie (*TM Feb*) a sad commentary. Christ gave us a direct message, to love God and our neighbour (*Mt 22: 37-39*). To do this we have to make three decisions: to believe in God; to hope in God; and to love God. We reconfirm these decisions frequently.

Galatians 5:22-23 tells us that God is loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, generous, faithful, gentle and self-controlled. This is so attractive we want to spend frequent time with God, talking to and listening. We call this prayer.

Love is the decision we make to put the interests of the beloved ahead of our own. When we first fall in love nothing is too good for the beloved. Fall in love with God! Have a passionate affair with Him! 'His yoke is easy and His burden light' (*Mt 11:10*).

Believe in God – and there is no need for rootlessness while looking for the city of God because we already live there. It is a city to enjoy as we sing God's praises.

Phil Wilkinson, Wanganui

The Benedict Report

Jim Neilan's gloomy article (*March '08*) on the pontificate of Pope Benedict is a tad simplistic in describing the present ecumenical situation. Cardinal Kasper's last report to the *Pontifical Council for Christian Unity* in 2007 highlighted the whole range of ecumenical activities throughout the church especially the excellent relations with the ancient churches of the East.

I was in Rome in January at the Wednesday Papal audience. Before it began, I was talking to a Greek Catholic priest from the USA who was part of an Ecumenical delegation of various churches. He described the excellent reception they had received in Rome from all the Dicasteries they visited and how the other 22 members, including a Lutheran woman bishop, had been impressed at the Roman welcome. When the Papal address finished, the first group to be greeted individually and especially by Pope Benedict was this Ecumenical group, including this woman bishop in purple and skull cap and all!

Regarding *Dominus Jesus*. The present ecumenical situation requires a different manner of proceeding to the initial honeymoon stage that Jim Neilan seems to be harking back to. A humble change of heart does not preclude telling the truth in love to our separated sisters and brothers, and vice versa. In fact true charity requires it. Two fog banks cannot dialogue.

Perhaps you should hesitate before calling another Ecumenical Council. The decrees from Vatican III voted by the many present orthodox bishops (mostly from Africa, Latin America and Asia to whom middle-class, Western, liberal concerns are irrelevant) may not be to your liking.

Carl Telford sm, Christchurch

The 'Golden Calf' and the 'Sacred Cow'

further responses

following from articles on dairy farming in TM (Nov '07 and Feb '08)

. . . *from* Jeanette Fitzsimons MP, *Green Party Co-Leader*

Your article ***The Sacred Cow*** claims that the Green Party wants "farmers alone to pay for the effects of climate change". This is a very long way from the truth.

Farmers produce half New Zealand's greenhouse emissions as methane from ruminant animal digestion and nitrous oxide mainly from animal manure and fertiliser. New Zealand has to purchase and retire credits to cover any emissions in the 2008-12 period that are above what they were in 1990.

Under the Government's Emissions Trading Scheme, transport and energy users will have to cover the cost of their emissions, which will encourage the use of technologies to reduce emissions. Farmers alone are exempt from this obligation until 2013, and even then pay only a part. This amounts to a huge subsidy to farming from taxpayers who are already paying for the cost of the emissions they themselves create.

The Green Party certainly is not asking farmers to pay for emissions they do not create. We are even proposing that they are exempt for the quantity of emissions they produced in 1990, as at present New Zealand does not have to pay for those. In our document ***Kicking the Carbon Habit*** released a year ago we proposed that the farming industry, through its processors, pay only for its surplus emissions above 1990 levels. This would see sheep farmers paying nothing, as their emissions as an industry have not risen since then. If they rise in future, they should come into the scheme at that point.

Dairy emissions have increased a great deal since 1990 – about a third – and so we propose that the dairy industry, via Fonterra and other processors, should pay for this. It is actually a very generous policy towards farmers, as transport and energy users will be obliged to cover the cost of all their emissions, not just the surplus above 1990 levels.

New Zealand farmers love to claim to their markets that they are not subsidised. Actually, they are. For the sake of our marketing and our 'clean green' brand, it is vital that farmers play their part in the effort to slow and eventually stop global warming. After all, farmers will be worst hit by the effects of climate change as they depend on a stable, benign climate for their business. ■

. . . *from* Frank Hoffmann, *environmentalist and retired farmer*

While details in Wendy Ward's analogy are justifiably questioned in the Peppers' response they do not discredit her conclusion. All social comment is by its nature generalising so that any negative statement will hurt individuals who are the exception. I know farmers who, like myself and the Peppers, maintained a caring relationship with land and animals under their control.

But the present trend of putting large numbers of cows through automated milking sheds is reducing them to mere cogs in a mechanised system and removing them one more step from the human touch which used to replace the cow-calf relationship. More than just relieving pressure, letting down milk is a sensual experience, even for an animal. Some of us made fencing of waterways a priority but many farmers are still reluctant and complain about the pressure put on them to do it.

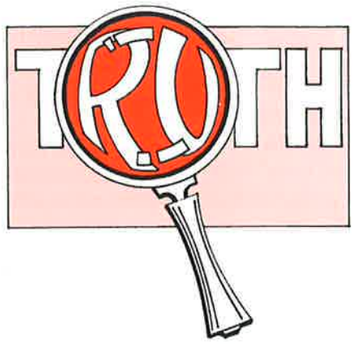
I fear with Wendy Ward that the boom in farming and dairy farming in particular is going to end in some kind of disaster. Australian agriculture refused to take notice of warning signs and is now paying the price. Will our farmers learn from the British experience that trying to push animals beyond natural limits of productivity makes them susceptible to disease and epidemics? Feeding British dairy and beef herds on concentrates and imported meat products has brought them BSE and a ban on their beef sales. Many British farmers, now searching for ways in harmony with nature, will discover that healthy animals on healthy soil will prove to be truly sustainable and less risky.

The high energy input into farming will soon be unaffordable and make us question our traditional methods. Ripping up growing forests and replacing them with pasture is not sustainable, neither is excessive irrigation.

I find the frequent reference to the economic benefits of dairying irrelevant to this discussion. *Tui Motu* readers are surely not caught up in the contemporary preoccupation with the dollar as final arbiter. ■

To comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable: *the role of the Catholic press*

Excerpts from a paper Michael Fitzsimons delivered at the Australasian Catholic Press Association conference in Auckland, in October 2007.



In the simplest terms, I believe the role of the Catholic Press is to tell the truth and to inspire! A blend of both is important. By telling the truth and seeking to inspire, you will be comforting the disturbed and disturbing the comfortable.

Journalism's first obligation is to tell the truth, without fear or favour. It is what sets it apart from other forms of communications. Not spin, not PR, not the Diocesan Centre's comms machine, but the press – exploring what matters most, critic and conscience of how our actions live up to our ideals – in the church and in society. Of course the overall context for the Catholic press is to build up the Catholic Church, to see it thrive. That is a given. But how best to do that? I believe it's by being critic and conscience of both church and society.

This involves some kind of sifting of evidence, of verifying. It does not just mean reporting what we are told. It means identifying what is important and what is not, what is progress and what is not, what is in line with the Gospel and what is not. It means exercising independent editorial judgment.

How are we doing in the church? Are we the salt? Are we the leaven? Or is it just words? Answering this question requires some distancing from our masters and those running the show, as any journalism does.

There are many uncomfortable issues – the growing wealth gap in our society with all its consequences, the appalling health and education disparities that we continue to tolerate, our carbon footprint, abortion numbers, affluent lifestyles. And closer to home – the role of women in the church, sex abuse activities and of course the occasional radical theologian on tour.

We are called to be servants of the Gospel, and I believe the way we can best serve the church is by being seekers of the truth. Our first loyalty is to the readers, to citizens. We serve the church and most fundamentally the church is the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers.

At times this may feel uncomfortable, if memory serves me correctly! But in my view it is the essence of good journalism.

Have you ever read the book ***Tuesdays with Morrie***, the record of a series of bedside meetings between a professor and his former student? Morrie, the professor, is dying and the student comes to visit him each Tuesday to absorb his wisdom about living and ageing. Always believe the words of a dying man.

Morrie has this to say: "*The culture we have does not make people feel good about themselves. So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep, even when they are doing things they think are important. This is because they are choosing wrong things.*

The mantra goes: more is good, more is good. More things. More property. More of everything. We've got a form of brainwashing going on. People are so hungry for love, they are accepting substitutes. They are embracing material things and expecting a sort of hug back. But it never works. The average person is so fogged up by all this.

And what is Morrie's answer? *You've got to build your own little subculture. Obey the little things e.g. stop at the traffic lights and it's a good idea not to go round naked. But the big things – what we value, how we think – those you must choose yourself. You can't let anyone, or any society, determine those things for you.*

Don't believe what the culture tells you – that money matters, that power triumphs. You have to work at creating your own culture. Invest in the human family. Invest in people. ■

Comforting the disturbed

How do we comfort the disturbed? By telling the truth: the truth of the good news about God's grace and compassion and what astounding things are possible when we are weak and vulnerable and have nothing left but God.

We show this through our news selection and our feature stories, through our reflections and comment pieces, through our interviews with the true heroes among us; by giving voice to the weak and the vulnerable; by telling their stories. This gives the paper coherence and authenticity. It makes it Catholic.

We comfort the disturbed by not buying into a dream, by not genuflecting before power and prestige, by being a countercultural voice, a Gospel voice – full of surprises and instinctively on the side of the underdog.

I expect to get a countercultural version of reality in the Catholic press. A vision of reality shaped by the Beatitudes, where the attributes of the soul matter most, where kindness is more important than cleverness, an antidote to the deadening materiality of things. "In the evening of life", says St John of the Cross, "we shall be judged on love alone."

What greater comfort than the promise that 'all things come together unto good for those that love God'; than the promise of the Beatitudes and God's commitment to lift up the lowly and cast aside the proud of heart. "Pain is never permanent", says St Teresa of Avila. "Let nothing disturb thee, let nothing dismay thee, all things pass. God never changes."

Thinking boldly

I think this is one of the great missions of the Catholic press: to comfort and encourage with big bold thoughts. And we do it by practising our craft in a Catholic context with all that theology of the cross behind us. This is a message that so many people need to hear.

Robert Bly, America writer and sage, says the major emotions in the competitive workplace are "anxiety, tension, loneliness, rivalry and fear." Another American writer Studs Terkel has this to say: "I think that most of us are looking for a calling, not a job. Most of us have jobs that are too small for our spirit. Jobs are not big enough for people."

Big bold thoughts tell us that there is more to life than getting ahead, about how our highest destiny is to serve rather than to rule, (that was Einstein and he was a smart guy!) about how the best things in life are free. These are crazy thoughts in our culture.

I don't think however that the role of the Catholic press should be just a matter of spiritual consolation. I get worried when I read a Catholic paper and it is full of church activities and official happenings, with little or no reference to the church's mission or the social realities that are diminishing people: substandard housing, poor health, inadequate wages, underachievement in education, repressive immigration practices.

Comforting the disturbed also means taking up the cudgels on these issues wherever it may lead us, being willing to risk and explore. I don't think we always have to be right. We are not there to make *ex cathedra* statements. Many issues are very complex, and we write under deadline pressures with incomplete information. But it is our duty to be part of the public debate.

Disturbing the comfortable

Telling the truth will at times mean disturbing the comfortable. Who are the comfortable? Our political masters, policy makers, people of power and influence in society, people of wealth and opinion, church administrators, middle-class congregations, ourselves.

None of you can be my disciples unless you give up all your possessions (Lk. 14,33)
The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried. (GK Chesterton)

We need to be shocked out of our complacency by putting the Christian ideal before ourselves and our readers again and again. The terrible temptation is to turn Christianity into a comfortable middle-class club, full of well-intentioned people who enjoy each other's company. But the Gospel of Jesus is demanding, particularly for those in authority – civic and church. It is a demanding, difficult road so why should we not be disturbed by it?

A duty to inspire!

It is inspiration more than anything else that will sustain us. What we crave, especially as we get older, is spiritual and emotional regeneration.

Enter the poet, the artist, the prophet, the thinker, the holy men and women. This is a great opportunity for the Catholic press. So many treasures to share – yet who knows about them, who knows about the mystics and saints and the rich theology that is our inheritance?

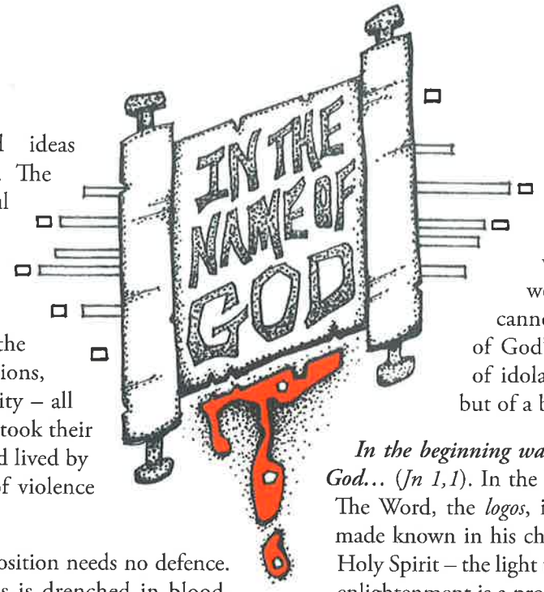
One role for the Catholic press then is to cultivate the inner life, to help cultivate wonder and gratitude. Catholic devotional life has changed an awful lot since yesteryear. We urgently need to address the fact that today in the church there are generations of Catholics who are lost spiritually, who do not know how to pray nor where to go to find out.

Spiritual reflections are not some soft, feel-good extra. They go to the heart of the matter of what it means to live a Christian life. Christianity is about the love of God in our lives, lavished on us. It's about God pitching his tent among us and never moving it. Our faith is this big vivid thing we share: a gift and a struggle, a crown and a cross, a journey and a destination. What an exciting field for journalistic practice! ■

Michael is a former editor of Zealandia *newspaper and* New Zealandia *magazine.*

Beware of the book

Paul Oestreicher



There are two related ideas currently in circulation. The first is that religion is harmful because it has throughout history been the cause of a great deal of violence. That is true. The second is that if only the adherents of the three great monotheistic religions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity – all three 'religions of the book' – took their sacred texts more seriously and lived by them, then these outbreaks of violence would stop. That is untrue.

Let me explain. The first proposition needs no defence. The history of all three faiths is drenched in blood, blood ostensibly shed in the name of God. What then of the assumption that they all three are 'religions of the book'? There is no dispute that without sacred texts they would not have survived. However the phrase 'of the book' needs to be unpacked.

I am no expert in comparative religion. I can only claim to have inside knowledge of Christianity. Some things are not complicated. Islam insists on the fact that the Koran was dictated by God. A degree of such infallible sanctity is attached to it that to insult the book in any way, physically, verbally or in any other, is a capital offence. It is a direct insult to God. The Koran is divine. In principle, it interprets itself. In practice, that is not obvious.

The Hebrew Scriptures, what Christians call the Old Testament, are not quite of that nature. They are indeed constitutive of Judaism, but they do need to be interpreted. There is a huge literature doing just that. It is the task of rabbinic scholarship. No part may be rejected, but great wisdom is called for to know the mind of God through it. The process of interpretation has divided Jewry. Orthodox Jewry rejects all liberal variants, but the sacredness of the *Torah* itself – the first five books, or 'the Law' – is not in question. It is literally enshrined.

The Christian Bible, Old and New Testaments, is, I contend, fundamentally different. It is an essential reference book of the faith. It is part mythology, part history, part poetry, part moral guidance and that does not exhaust what it is. It is a handbook to be treasured. It was not handed down from on high. The church had to decide which texts were in and which were not. Taken together, they cannot simply be called 'the Word of God'. Bibliolatry is another form of idolatry, the worship not of God but of a book.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God… (*Jn 1,1*). In the beginning there was no Bible. The Word, the *logos*, is the living Christ constantly made known in his church and in our hearts by the Holy Spirit – the light that enlightens the world. That enlightenment is a process that goes on until the end of time.

The paradox is that the New Testament texts themselves attest to the fact that they are *not* the last word. The Spirit is the contemporary judge over all that has been written. Jesus said, and the Spirit goes on telling us: ***You have heard it said… but I say unto you.*** (*Mt.5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43*). Yesterday's wisdom is not tomorrow's.

To the disciples Jesus said: ***there are many things you do not understand, but the Spirit will lead you to the truth.*** He did not say: "study the texts, it is all there". Significantly, Jesus did not write any texts at all. Quite rightly we may therefore say: "The writings of *Paul* have a view of the role of women that we now recognise to be less than Christian", to take a simple example.

Once that is conceded there is no longer any need for theologians to sweat blood ironing out the many contradictions in the Bible. Given the world as it is, those contradictions make the Bible more, not less credible. They leave us with essential existential choices that give meaning to the "glorious liberty of the children of God" (*Rom.8,21*). We are slaves to no text and not a religion of any book.

How then does this connect with the violent face of religion? The Bible is full of violence in God's name from the God-sent Flood drowning everybody except Noah's family (what's wrong with an atom bomb then in a good cause?), drowning the Egyptian army to let God's people get away (why not wipe out Gaza, then?), ethnically cleansing the Canaanites (why not another little Holocaust?) Not to speak of smashing children's skulls and inflicting eternal punishment on all the enemies of God's chosen people. And I haven't mentioned the Apocalypse. What a horror film to outdo all horror films! (Director's note: *God has written the best scripts!*) All this, and much more, human beings have projected onto God.

God in Christ really has made all things new. That has proved to be too threatening to the churches. The ethic of loving enemies is what the Christian revolution is all about, loving our enemies and God's. Jesus asked for them to be forgiven as they drove the nails into his hands and feet. When he preached in the synagogue of his home town and told the people of Yahweh's preferential love for despised foreigners rather than for them, they tried to lynch him.

This radical countercultural ethic is, I believe, unique to Christianity. It is the one thing Gandhi gratefully took from the Gospel, while the theologians argued away the challenge of the Sermon on the Mount: "Love those who persecute you." This was not for the real world in which Christian soldiers who put down mutineers were assured of a crown of glory, with no shortage of accompanying Biblical texts. The British Empire's monuments are witness enough. So is the sword, as a sign of the Cross on every British war cemetery.

I hear the protest: "Didn't Jesus himself violently drive the profiteers out of the Temple?" Quite the opposite. This was the righteous indignation of one man overturning the tables of many with no weapon that could kill. The only person in that drama whose life was at risk was Jesus. Today that's called 'non-violent direct action', like damaging a nuclear submarine. It wasn't long before the authorities caught up with Jesus. Even then he did not return in triumph to humiliate the High Priests and Pilate. Secretly, mysteriously, he came back to give hope to those who loved him.

If the churches of the world embraced that ethic, that enthronement of God's peaceful kingdom of which the prophets of Israel dreamed, they would be renouncing major parts of their history. It is called repentance. It would mean that at least one of the three great religions would cease to be a contributor to the violence that could destroy us all.

So, late in life, I have come to see that I can only with great difficulty, after the liturgical reading of Scripture, automatically go on saying: *This is the Word of the Lord.* In many cases it will be. In many others, specially if taken out of its context, it will give the opposite message and be a licence for much that is a denial of what the Spirit is saying to the churches. ■

Paul Oestreicher is a Canon Emeritus of Coventry Cathedral and a Counsellor of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.

Chez Nous – a concept for our times

Tui Motu *interviews Fr Denis Labartette, who describes the work of* Chez Nous: *a place where people gather to refresh their spirit away from the madding crowd*

Marthe Robin (1902-1981) is a modern day French mystic, a lay person who was bedridden and paralysed for most of her life. Marthe offered her illness to God and in the course of time she became a stigmatic, with special devotion to the Passion of Christ.

That may seem like a mediaeval tale. However, Marthe had a vision of a new church – with the emphasis on the role and spirituality of lay people. The ingredients of her vision were the need of lay people for space in their busy lives – for prayer, for community and the charism of mutual service.

Foyers de Charité

A certain Père Finet came from Lyons to visit her one day and together they founded a 5-day-retreat programme for lay people. The movement was called *Foyers de Charité*. The small town of Chateauneuf, in the middle of nowhere, became their base. Marthe Robin had the inspiration; Père Finet carried it out.

The *Foyers de Charité* regime consists of prayer, silence and teaching. Retreatants receive three hours of instruction each day. Each foyer is independent, run by a priest and supported by a lay community. Each has its own special character and often supports an outside work, like a school.

One person strongly influenced by Marthe Robin is Denis Labartette, a French Rosminian whose religious life has been spent in England. At a certain point in his life as a priest on the parish he felt a need to seek a deeper spirituality and that brought him to the *Foyer de Charité* and to Marthe. He went to Chateauneuf and describes his experience.

"There are periods of adoration and Mass. You are invited to see the Director (perhaps for reconciliation) but there is no formal spiritual direction. On the Friday there is a fast day followed by adoration all night. At the end, the participants have a meal together and share their experience of the retreat. The participants consist of some priests and religious, mostly lay people from a variety of backgrounds. One who was with me had been a Communist for 30 years, but he was then converted through Marthe Robin."

Chez Nous

What Denis started in England was different, and yet the inspiration, he believes, came from Marthe Robin. People have an even more urgent need these days for time out. They need support and a place which welcomes them. This vision led Denis to found *Chez Nous* – which simply means '*our home*'.

Denis describes his journey to *Chez Nous* like this. "I had an experience on my first parish of a Healing Mass which had been happening regularly in the parish. It came to my turn to celebrate the Healing Mass. I found that nothing happened. I thought perhaps I didn't have that gift.

"So I went to see Sr Brige McKenna, an Irish Sister who has a ministry to help renew priestly ministry. She told me she saw me with Jesus on the top of a mountain with people around me, people who were tired, burdened and harassed!

"'You had this basket full of bread. You did not know how to connect the basket and the people. Jesus is tapping you on the shoulder and telling you to bless the basket.' Then she told me to read and pray Chapter 6 in the Gospel of *John*.

"I read it. It is all about Eucharist. The verse that struck me was where Jesus says: 'I am the Bread of Life'. It was then I realised I did not have the gift of healing. Jesus is the healer, not me. But I have the gift of priesthood to help feed people. What people need is space and time for prayer and adoration.

"So I changed the format of the Healing Mass. People still came, but they started to seek spiritual healing, not physical. They would come to talk with me afterwards. I realised that the great disease of our age is *lack of time*. There is no time to listen, and there is no one there to 'be with'. I began to recognise this was the real gift God had given me.

"On the parish it is very difficult to have that sort of time: you are busy doing parish things, following a routine of maintenance. But that is not my vocation. So I spent some time with the Little Brothers of Charles de Foucaulx near Assisi in Italy. I also read a book by Carlo Carretto called *I Sought and I Found*. There is a chapter on *A Saving Community*. He was concerned about the haemorrhage of people leaving the church for other faith communities, and he saw the problem was a lack in the church itself, which was not providing true community.

Marthe Robin (1902-81), mystic and founder of *Foyers de Charité*. "My bed is not a bed – it is an altar, it is the Cross"

"The particular vision I received was one of hospitality. I returned to Sr Brige who asked me: 'So how is your house of hospitality and prayer?' It was her words which prompted me to found *Chez Nous*. In 1997 I was given permission by my Order to look for a house and make a start.

"Then I went home to France and did the 5-day retreat at Chateauneuf. The priest said to me that I should not just pray for a house; I should pray for the impossible! He said 'Go to Marthe'. So I went there and prayed for nine days.

"On the Feast of Christ the King my Novena finished. It was on that day I received a letter from the Bishop of Birmingham offering me a house! There was a chapel attached, an offshoot of the parish of Redditch, 12 miles away. A family Trust founded 100 years ago had requested that Mass should continue to be celebrated there.

The house was a lodge on an estate. The house is quite small, but the chapel is quite spacious. This became the focus for the new ministry. It was never necessary to publicise our presence there. It spread by word of mouth.

Life at Chez Nous

"People came from parishes roundabout, individually or in groups. They came for a day; some people came on their own. They liked the homely atmosphere: chickens clucking around outside in the yard and a fire burning in the kitchen hearth. It was God's home – 'God at home'. Families started to come. They were mostly older people. *Chez Nous* is a place of quiet; perhaps not the best scene for youth groups. Some people would come to stay and make a retreat, especially religious.

"Every Wednesday we had a day of adoration. There was a monthly Healing Mass on the First Friday, which attracted 70 or more people. We would start with the Rosary, then Mass, then a period of adoration. It would take about an hour and a half. We coped with as many as 100 people in that tiny kitchen. People made themselves at home and helped each other.

"Eileen was an elderly lady who came regularly. Sr Brige had said to me: 'I see Lazarus'. I thought at the time: 'Perhaps I am going to die!' The house we used for *Chez Nous* had been empty for 15 years and had been derelict. But Eileen said to me: 'Father, this place was dead and has come alive now'. I realised it was *Chez Nous* which was Lazarus! I knew then I was in the right place."

Some of the neighbouring priests were not too welcoming at first. "I was marginalised – just as Jesus was. But they accepted me in time. We would have a regular day of prayer for priests.

"A couple came one day to see me and talked about healing their family tree. At the time I had Fr John Moss (who spent many years in New Zealand) staying. So I called him in to meet them, and John helped them with the healing. They too became good friends of *Chez Nous*.

"The idea behind the house was simply to welcome people: prayer, adoration, Eucharist, the Divine Office – and listening to their stories. We had Mass every day in the 'Upper Room' round a table. Every Thursday a prayer group would come and they would have prayer in intercession for our ministry. And some people would come to make a retreat.

"*Chez Nous* is not just a place. The difference between *Chez Nous* and life on the parish is this. On a parish the priest leads people to prayer. But at *Chez Nous* I pray with the people. I am available. *Chez Nous* is all about praying with people, having time for people, finding God 'at home' – and not only in a church or in an institution. *Chez Nous* is a concept for our times." ■

Prayer and Suffering

Holy Week reminds us of the suffering Christ underwent for us. As a Rest Home visitor this is brought home to me. The residents respond readily to my friendly *hello*. When I stop for a chat I am usually warmly welcomed.

After a few visits the initial shyness wears off and they share their thoughts and experiences. From my side I do the same. They are poor – not in the financial sense, for some of them are wealthy – but rather that in many cases they are lonely and in ill health. Yet they show great patience and courage in adversity, which I find uplifting.

We all abhor suffering and medical science works unstintingly to eliminate it. However, suffering provides us with an opportunity to show compassion. To do so helps the patients and brings us blessings, engendering peace in the hearts of humankind. This compassion is a form of prayer which brings more good than this world dreams of.

John Vincent

Be compassionate (*Lk.6,36*)

Recently the well known American spiritual guide Joyce Rupp visited New Zealand and conducted retreat days on ***compassion*** *as being at the heart of the Gospel.*

Here is a summary of what she said at Mosgiel in March

Compassion is a central principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The basis of Christian faith is found in the three short words in *1 John 4*: "God is Love". Compassion is the energy of love. It gives a direction to love. We may not always feel it – but as Christians, we must do it.

We can easily become distracted from our principal purpose. Sometimes people, even religious people, can become preoccupied with *truth* – who has it and who hasn't? Even those engaged in healthcare can become distracted from the need for compassion by *economics*, even by a compulsion to make more money.

Yet what the world desperately needs is *compassion*. The potential is always there within each one of us: it is a flame waiting to be lit. Parents can teach compassion to their children. Our brains can be 'stretched' to become more compassionate. What compassion is all about is *relationship*.

The true meaning of compassion

Compassion comes from two latin words *cum* (with) and *passio* (to suffer or experience). So, literally it means to be with those who are suffering. There are three basic elements:

- first, be aware of those who suffer;
- examine our attitude to them;
- then, decide what to *do* about it.

Compassion becomes an attitude which leads us to instinctive action. There is a story about Gandhi, who was hopping onto a train and lost one of his sandals. Instantly he dropped his other sandal – so that the finder would then have a pair. It was his instinct of unselfishness.

Compassion means *connecting* with that person in some way. What compassion is *not* is just having pity on someone. Pity which doesn't connect us with the sufferer can become condescension: "There", we say smugly, "but for the grace of God go I!" Compassion, therefore, involves receiving as well as giving. There has to be a 'generous listening' as we try to understand the predicament or pain of the other.

Compassion starts with listening, yet it is not merely passive. There is a strength which grows in us as we come to understand the suffering of another. It is not merely an emotion, although it may arouse strong emotions, even anger. There is an Asian goddess of compassion called QUANYIN, who is sometimes represented by a great ear listening to the cries of the world.

The compassion of Jesus in the gospels leads him into the company of people who we might prefer not to be with. There is no sinner so vile or condition so repugnant that Jesus is not drawn to that person. An example would be the total loneliness of paedophiles: whatever they may have done, they are people, not 'objects'.

The gospels teach us about the connectedness of people. We are all one "in Christ". Basic texts are *Paul*, on the body of Christ (*1 Cor 12*) and the Gospel of *John* (*c 15*), where we find the parable of the vine and branches.

Thomas Merton recalls a key spiritual experience in his life as a Cistercian novice. He had gone into the monastery with a sense of disgust for the world he had left behind. However, one day he went into Louisville, the local town and was overwhelmed with a sense of the beauty and goodness of the people he met.

"It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race, though it is a race dedicated to many absurdities and one that has made terrible mistakes: yet, with all that, God Himself gloried in becoming a member of the human race...

"To think that such a commonplace realisation should suddenly seem like the news that one holds a winning ticket in a cosmic sweepstake. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun... If only we could see each other as we really are all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed...." (Monica Furlong; *Merton a biography* p 184).

Living compassionately

We have to be wary of the dictum: *give without counting the cost*. People who don't look after themselves burn out. Jesus himself took time out to be alone, or be with his friends or companions. It is true you can never be *too* compassionate; nevertheless you can try to give yourself too much. If you fail to pay attention to your own needs, you may end up a very angry person.

Dorothy Solle teaches that it is not true to say: *the Father sacrificed His Only Son, Jesus*. Better to say that Jesus did not become truly human until he fully embraced the suffering of people. Even when he is dying on the cross, Jesus is embraced by his Father's love. The lesson of this is that we too need to know what it is like to be poor and powerless.

When we come across something we don't approve of, we have to be wary of becoming judgmental. We may judge the action as evil, but that does not absolve us from *listening*, and asking ourselves: "Where does this violence come from?" We have to look deeply into the roots of violent action. We never really know what is going on inside the person we judge.

Compassion is both *being* and *doing*.

1. Being compassionate is a prayer whereby we connect with the person who is the object of our compassion. Post-Enlightenment rationalism has pushed the mystical element into shadow. Yet everyone has mystical moments, during which we become connected with other people.

The key is to *listen generously* both to others and to oneself. So. . .

- always give yourself time to grieve;
- let go of the tyranny of the inner judge, relentlessly insisting you should be a different person from who you are;
- don't harbour miserable thoughts about yourself;
- forgive yourself;
- believe that even from failure something beneficial will arise;
- be aware of yourself: live in the present moment.

2. Doing compassion. We should be wary of always expecting tangible results. True faith teaches that goodness happens without our seeing it. One person who plugs away motivated by compassion will move mountains.

Compassion can be costly – to health, reputation, even life itself. ■

Joyce Rupp is a Servite Sister from Des Moines, Iowa, USA. She is an author and retreat director; she likes to describe herself as a "spiritual midwife".

Freedom of the Catholic press

Freedom, in the Christian sense, is always more about freedom for than freedom from.

Ideally the freedom of the Catholic editor lies not so much in being free from imposed constraints or forbidden topics as being free to keep the dialogue going – within the community of faith, between the church and the world and – increasingly – between members of different faiths and religious traditions. As Hans Kung has so famously written:

No peace among the nations
without peace among the religions.
No peace among the religions
without dialogue between the religions.

In Paul's ecclesiology, not all are apostles; some are prophets, others are pastors and teachers; all help to build up the body of Christ. In our own church, the magisterium teaches with authority, but to be authentic it needs to hear what the prophets are saying and to read the signs of the times.

A Catholic editor is in a unique position to keep teachers and prophets in touch, to remind all of us of questions that cry for answers, of the elephant in the room which church leaders especially have difficulty in seeing. There is a sense in which a Catholic editor is called to be part of a loyal opposition – helping those at the centre to be aware of those who work with courage to break new ground at the edges. Because it's there that God's transforming love is most likely to be at work. ■

Dennis Horton

Hotel Midnight

and the city pours
inverted waterfalls
of sound
to the twenty-first floor.

Noise of vehicles
cornered squeal
siren, thock-thock of
copter rising from the dock.

This too is nature,
copy of the dragon fly
evolution
of horseless carriage.

And if nature, this
too is the face of God
endless hum, intimation
of shouted words, flick
of fluorescence, pulse
of unsleeping traffic
that in sleep
become a vague figure
shouting urgent, unclear
messages.

Dawn - you rise with me
to the window, noise
of distant thunder, rain
has made of it

an abstract painting.
filled with suffused light
our faces mirrored in
the windowed face, of the city.

Peter Rawnsley

I don't want to be 'saved'

*A chance encounter with an earnest young Christian in an Auckland street causes Glynn Cardy to ask himself what his Easter faith **really** means*

Anachronistic language uplifted straight from the Bible and deposited into 21st Century downtown Auckland does not magically communicate timeless truths or the nature of God. What it does communicate is the fossilisation of Christianity.

An earnest young man stopped me the other night outside a Wellesley Street café. With eyes burning bright he told me that God had sent his son Jesus to die for my sins. I told him that I didn't want anyone to die for me. Instead of admonishing me for my lack of gratitude he went on as if I hadn't spoken. God loved me, he said. God wanted me to be saved. I tried to tell him that I already felt loved and didn't want to be 'saved'. He kept on going, telling me about God's plan of salvation and quoting miscellaneous verses of the Bible. Eventually I put on a benign smile and walked away.

I don't think ill of the young man. Indeed probably 30 years ago I wasn't too different, though I hope I would have had the grace to listen. The young man had had an experience of the numinous. It had touched and changed his life. He had felt a power surge through his life.

But the only language he had to express that experience was words penned nearly 2,000 years ago. I wanted to say to him that words change, concepts change, and meanings change. Even 'God' might change.

As the years go by I seem to be increasingly intolerant of certain church dogmas developed when the earth was considered flat. In the Easter season when the old formulas and old hymns are reiterated as if they are self-evident facts, I feel a little like the child criticising the Emperor's wardrobe. What do these old words *really* mean for us today? Do they need to be translated? Or are they just as irrelevant to modern life as the Iliad?

For many Christians Easter is predicated upon the idea that God made human beings, located them in some paradise, and was in harmony with them. Then due to the snake, the woman, the man, or whatever… this unity was shattered. Biblical 'history' then posits that God and humans tried all sorts of ways to restore the harmony, with all of them ultimately being unsuccessful.

I don't believe in a God 'up there'

Then, in the so-called 'fullness of time' God sent his son Jesus. Jesus was in harmony with God and unsoiled by human sinfulness. At the end of his short life the Romans executed him. His followers interpreted his death largely by means of a sacrificial metaphor. Jesus was the unblemished 'lamb' who voluntarily became the scapegoat for humanity.

Although many Christians, particularly in the 20th century, have interpreted this salvation schema in ways to make it more intelligible to the modern mind, it still seems to be founded on a sort of upstairs-downstairs universe.

It believes that God is pure and humanity impure. It believes God is up, we are down, and Jesus is sent down in order to make us able to go up. It believes that behind actual and spurious facts the Bible is a literal record of God's dealings with humanity. Like the horrific tale of Noah's Ark the few believers in this salvation schema can be saved while the rest of humanity drowns in disbelief and sin.

Maybe the earnest young man outside the café thought I was drowning. Maybe he thought an apocalyptic tsunami was coming, and I needed to get into his religious think-right ark. Maybe he had never met someone like me who would prefer to drown with the vast majority than be saved by a God who only chooses a select few.

I don't believe in a God 'up there'. I don't believe there was a literal Garden of Eden. I think we have always had the propensity for both good and evil, and we evolved that way. The first few chapters of Genesis are an interesting allegorical tale – but as true to history as the god Maui fishing up the North Island of New Zealand.

I don't believe in a male God who has favourite races, cultures, genders, or individuals. There are holy men and women in every race, culture, and religion. I don't believe in a God who does or allows violent acts in order to get people to agree with Him. I don't think God caused Noah's flood, drowned Pharaoh's army, or destroyed the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. I think such 'actions' of God are the result of violent leaders and their sycophants projecting on to and shaping the Divine in their own image.

I don't believe in a God who has to be appeased by innocent blood, and will only relate to us if we trust in that sacrifice. The God known most fully as love can't be placated by death – violent, voluntary, or otherwise – without ceasing to be love. Occasionally, extraordinary people do extraordinary things with extraordinary love. In these people we can see something of God and something of salvation.

I don't think the violent deaths of great people ever have a good purpose. I find the notion of an efficacious blood sacrifice vile. I think Jesus died because he lived and preached uncompromisingly a message of radical, inclusive egalitarianism. The authorities had good reason to kill him.

I believe that God is the power of transformative love. God does not make changes and determine results like some autocratic king. Auschwitz and similar terrors make such an 'omnipotent' God a monster.

God was not created in the image of humans. I don't think God schemes, has favourites, predetermines outcomes, blesses leaders or causes people to die. Rather I think God is like an animating spirit that works through people when love is the conviction, means, and motivation. This spirit of love has a power, but it's not the power of armies, wealth, and empire. It is not the power of control.

I do believe that God is the power of transformative love

It is instead the power of a changed heart, a forgiving spirit and a fearless hospitality. Such a power is creative, redemptive, and sustaining. As a Christian I believe that when I feel this power, and walk in time with it, I am in tune with the ongoing 'life' of Jesus. This is why I can say I have a personal relationship with Jesus.

I confess to having really serious problems with a literal, supernatural resurrection. I don't believe Jesus died and then came back again, appearing to some of his followers and then 40 days later ascending into the clouds. I believe the resurrection is a religiously symbolic way of describing the power of Jesus' life and spirit, which continues to empower his followers after his death. It's a way of talking about individual and corporate transformation. As people today commit to Jesus' vision and allow the love called God to flow through their lives, they experience resurrection.

I think the hardest thing for that earnest young man at the café to understand was that I don't want to be 'saved' in a singular, privileged way. What I *do* want though is to be confronted and gripped by a vision broad and radical enough to challenge the greed, selfishness, misery, hatred, and violence prevalent in our world. I want to commit and recommit to a vision bigger than me, and bigger than my needs for Divine approval and personal happiness. ■

Glynn Cardy is vicar of St Matthew-in-the-City, Auckland, and Archdeacon of the Anglican diocese of Auckland

On the Domed Ceiling

On the domed ceiling God is wondering
do they think I live here?
do these souls believe I need to be enclosed
by walls and silence?

God whispered from the rafters:
walk outside
feel the warmth of sun
breath of wind
and beauty of nature.

look deeply into the eyes of another
and see me there;
know me in the excitement and passion of lovemaking
smiles of babies
touch of children;
hear me in beautiful music
rejoice with me in laughter
and always know me as part of yourself.

I am your essence,
your love, compassion,
and even anger.

See for me,
speak for me.
I need you to BE ME…
here on earth….in every moment.

God knew who received the message
and returned to the domed ceiling, smiling.

Judith Challies

What is Easter?

Ron Sharp

How did the disciples of Jesus' time experience the Resurrection? Was it like the sense of pride we felt as a nation when Big Norm sent a frigate out to show our disgust at the French atomic bomb experiments at Mururoa? Or like the hope that Te Whiti and Tohu brought to the displaced Maori as their land was whisked from under their feet?

Was it like the remaining Jews being liberated from their Holocaust? Was it like the Berlin Wall coming down, or the Filipino people non-violently driving Marcos out of power; or is it like the dream of the Zimbabwean people supporting each other until their President dies? Or the spirit that sweeps through the monks and people of Myanmar and Tibet?

Was it like the power within the hearts of women everywhere marching for equal rights? Was it like the abolition of slavery? Or that sense of strength in each other that the band of 200 antiapartheid protesters felt as they faced the wrath of the Waikato rugby crowds in 1981?

Whatever the experience of the disciples was, words could not express it. It was more than physical, more than feeling, more than intuition, more than art. How then were they to pass on that experience? All they had was story.

Mark put together what to us may seem a very inadequate set of pictures. The disciples decided it was the best they could do by way of expressing their experience. It had to be mixed with lots of Hebrew Bible imagery, some historical facts and lots of fantasy. We don't really know which is what. What we do know is that the stories express the truth of the Resurrection. They express an enduring faith that ends are new beginnings. We don't have to live only to end in death.

All the above experiences, therefore, are 'resurrection' experiences of our times. Resurrection experiences are within us and all around us: in the dying tree shedding its seed to become another giant, the falling leaves of autumn replenishing the soil for the food of the others, the giving away of our individual freedom to live in a new existence with another and be prepared to be consumed by the fruit of love.

The volcano belching its way up through the cold crust of earth or icy lake to form land and a place for others to stand: this too is a sign of resurrection. The warmth of the sun after the ice-age. Any growing comes through the pain of self-discipline.

So, resurrection always happens out of dying. All life is shot through with 'risenness' since the archetype Christ brokered it into our consciousness. It only remains for us Christians together with all our fellow beings to unleash the potential of it seeded in our hearts and spirits, for in Christ God has identified himself with us for always. ■

Who moved the stone?

The religious importance of the Resurrection is demonstrated by the many extant paintings. Raffaellino del Garbo (1470-1525) (*right*) illustrates *Mt.28,3-4*: "His face shone like lightning; his garments were white as snow. At the sight of him the guards shook with fear and lay like the dead."

Christ occupies the apex of the composition. As Son of Man, he died on the cross; as Son of God, he rises triumphant from the dead. Yet the face of Christ is not triumphal but serene, and his raised hand is blessing the world and the terrified or unconscious guards. His flag is the first statement of the Cross as symbol of the church.

The juxtaposition of the newly risen Christ and the crumbling masonry tell of the old order giving way to the new. The lid of the sarcophagus tossed aside is symbolic of the discarded stone. The strong colouring and realistic treatment of the landscape and guards glow with the radiance surrounding Christ. This gives a sense of celebration and renewal. The guards are the only human beings to actually witness the event and Raffaellino fittingly records their experience in sharp detail.

The icon (*left*) moves the drama forward to the holy women carrying myrrh to embalm Christ's body. The picture dates from 1700 and illustrates *Mt. 28,5-6*: "He is not here; for he has risen, as he said."

In the conventions of iconography the Renaissance robustness is replaced by a more representational style. The angel sits on the removed stone which has been rolled away revealing the empty tomb. The huddle of the women emphasises their shared grief and shock at the death of Jesus. Only the observer knows that their grief will soon be turned into joy.

In the icon tradition, white is used for the angel and more earthy colours for the women's dresses. The interior of the red tomb is purple, both divine colours; the white highlights hope of resurrection. Through the opening in the rocks (made perhaps by Joseph of Arimathea) appears the city – it could be the new Jerusalem.

Whatever messages the artist intends, the ultimate experience belongs to the individual viewer. In both these pictures is a strong sense of anticipation – like a sharply indrawn breath. ■

Margaret Ann Howard
Neil Howard

Resurrection and its message

Bernard Sabella

Easter in the folkloric traditions of Palestine is a season for celebration. The community celebrates itself as it goes through the rites and rituals of Holy Week. The blessed land of Palestine celebrates itself as the hills change colour to announce the coming of spring. But springtime in the Holy Land is also a season when occasional sandy storms from the desert remind all of us of the vicissitudes of geography and the problematic cohabitation of arable land and desert.

Mother Nature's celebration at this time of year remains always associated with the message of Resurrection. The heart beats happily at the sights of the greenery of the land and its kaleidoscopic scenery. Yet the heart is pained by the continuing unabated conflict and its many victims. As the desert sandy storms hurt the body and weigh down on the soul, the political situation with its many victims – one victim is too many – equally weighs down on body and soul.

Resurrection is a cyclical process from winter to spring; from death to life; from war to peace. In its simplest message, the process is reassuring that death, entombment and conflict are not the end of all things and that life has meaning over and above individual lives and particular attachments.

That resurrection is both a divine and natural scheme cannot be disputed. One thing, though, remains disputed is whether we mortals can contribute to the process of resurrection, particularly in our case in the long protracted conflict that has sown suffering throughout the land we all refer to as holy.

The celebration of resurrection and its fulfillment necessitates action on our part. In Palestine and Israel, the conflict needs to stop. Those who believe that their interests require a continuation of the present situation of conflict are inviting future disasters and denying all of us the chance to experience the exhilarating challenge of peace. Those who insist that the other side understands only the language of military might are inviting vengeance and revenge that will further plunge all of us in desperation.

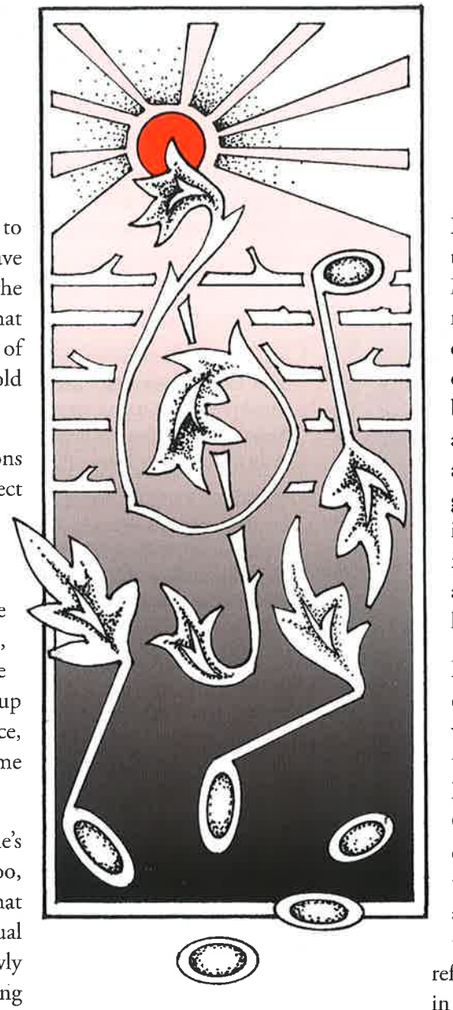
With the Jewish, Muslim and Christian celebrations that coincide with the welcoming signs of spring in the Holy Land, all of us are called upon to turn our ways from war to peace and from death and destruction to life and hope.

We cannot achieve this alone and the whole world, especially those deemed influential and powerful, is called upon to ensure that all of us here will go forward in the ways of Peace and Resurrection.

Autumn song

. . . *the abiding melody of life*

Daniel O'Leary



It is the mellow season, a time to reflect on those things that have grown, flourished and faded during the year, and, more importantly, those that remain with us – the fixed melodies of our life – to carry us through the cold of winter to the promise of spring.

With autumn's perennial intimations of endings, many feel drawn to reflect more profoundly on one or other dimension of the mystery of their lives. This autumn, the aspect that keeps coming back to me concerns the nature of my innermost conviction, my fundamental motivation, the constant *logo* of my soul that sums up my reason for living. What, in essence, is the bare, core focus that sustains me when all else falls away?

I have just finished Michael Mayne's *The Enduring Melody*. This, too, has stimulated my search for what nourishes my soul in times of spiritual famine. The author, who was slowly and painfully dying while writing this rich and recent book, explored what he called the *cantus firmus* that underpinned his life – the fixed song, the plainchant cadence unadorned by harmony or counterpoint. During the time of our lives many notes will weave their way in and out and around the steadfast refrain, but the basic melody endures.

There's always a bit of firm ground that never alters. It is when we find age, autumn or death upon us that we begin to think about what has remained constant throughout the vicissitudes of our lives; what has offered the persistent direction to a 'north' for the compass of our souls.

Is there any musical echo within us about which we can say, with Mayne, "this has been mine, and mine alone: however much I have deviated from it and chosen my own note-lengths, this is its ground bass. There are certain critical truths and experiences that have seized and shaped me, and it is this firm ground that speaks to me of what is authentic, and to which I can return, touching base, as it were, at every stage of my unpredictable human journey"?

Looking at the unswerving conviction in the lives of people we admire may help us to reach that precious place in our own hearts. The persistence of Mahatma Gandhi, for instance, in the pursuit of his vision, was nurtured by his utter conviction of the equality of all people. He never gave up because the *cantus firmus* forever played this refrain in his soul: "God is to be found in the next person you meet, or not at all."

In spite of huge disappointments in her life, my own mother's fierce faith in the ultimate goodness of God was frightening in its certainty. It saw her through many a bleak midwinter. Jesus himself, exhausted from his temptations and despairing during his temporary loss of faith on the Cross, never completely lost the persistent reassurance of his loving intimacy with his Father. That was his *cantus firmus*, the guardian angel of God that sang to his often confused soul.

In light of recent confessions and revelations about the faith (or lack of it) in the life of Mother Teresa, we can only wonder at length about the nature of the 'fixed song' that kept her motivated though she could not hear it. Not long before he died last year, the Kerry mystic and scholar John Moriarty wrote: "Clear days bring the mountains down to my doorstep; calm nights give the rivers their say; the wind puts its hand on my shoulders some evenings, and then I stop thinking. I just leave what I'm doing and I go the soul's way." For many, an extraordinary affinity with nature would be the enduring melody that always brings the solace, the healing, the enthusiasm to continue along 'the soul's way', or maybe even to start the long journey again.

Not long before he was killed by the Nazis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Michael Mayne quotes him: "God requires that we should love him eternally with our whole hearts, yet not so as to compromise or diminish our earthly affections, but as a kind of *cantus firmus* to which the other melodies of life provide the counterpoint… Where the ground bass is firm and clear, there is nothing to stop the counterpoint from being developed to the utmost of limits. Only a polyphony of this kind can give life a wholeness, and assure us that nothing can go wrong so long as the *cantus firmus* is kept going… Put your faith in the *cantus firmus*."

The truth that lived at the heart of Michael Mayne's own life, tempered and polished over the decades, was his rich and colourful understanding of the Incarnation, of God's self-portrait in Jesus. It was because of his sacramental vision that he could be compared to one of 'God's spies', forever picking up clues about his Creator's beauty hidden in the ordinariness of things.

He believed that if we knew how to look, everything we see is touched by wonder. This very looking is, in fact, an act of transforming attention, by which, bit by bit, the world is redeemed. He quotes one of Rilke's *Love Poems to God*: "My looking ripens things and they come towards me, to meet and be met."

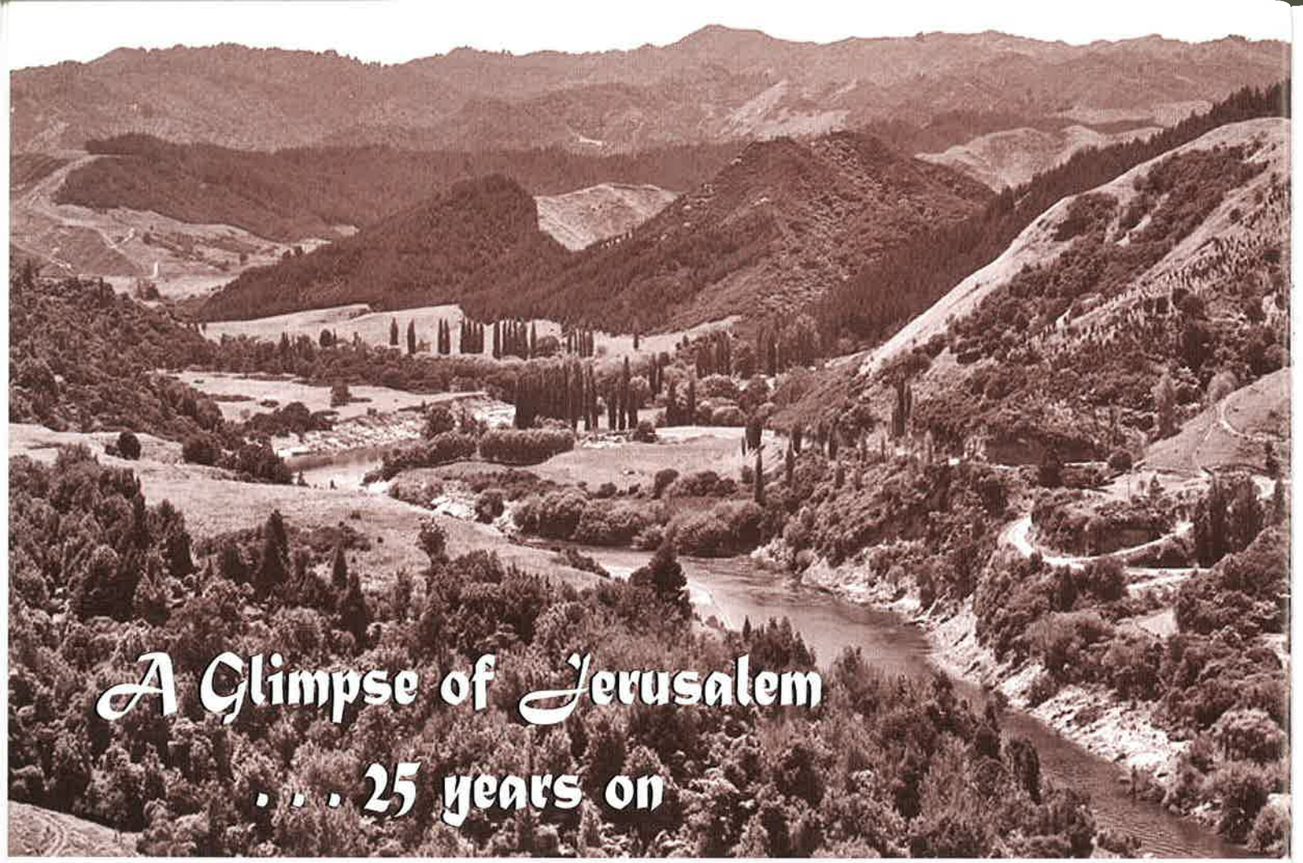
People such as Mayne, whose *cantus firmus* is the song of God as sung by the earth, are always nourishing their capacity for wonder through the work of artists. The poets, the painters, the dancers – these are the midwives of the mystery of the Presence that lives within creation and its peoples. They assure us that the experience of life is the experience of the divine. "Make humanity your goal," wrote St Augustine, "and you will find your way to God."

To take but one artist, Vincent Van Gogh, we do not have to search far to find the basic canvas of his troubled but uniquely gifted life. His most fundamental brushstrokes were drawn from his passionate belief in the inner light that radiates from everything. His *cantus firmus*, too, was based on the sacramental vision arising from the astonishing mystery of Incarnation. He wrote that he wanted to paint things "with that something of the eternal which the halo used to symbolise, but which we now seek to counter through the actual radiance of colour vibration".

"The artistic works of Vincent remain behind like sacraments," writes Benedictine monk Mark Patrick Hederman, "revealing to those who have eyes to see this new sense and symbolism with which he incarnated the mystery of the presence of God in our world. His paintings are liturgies which unfold the mysteries of God's presence in our day-to-day world, more powerfully, perhaps, than any written word can do."

Having said all of this, there are moments, however, when our lifelong lifelines of faith and support seem to let us down. Picked clean of all ambiguity and honed to essential truth, even our most tried and trusted mantras of meaning will lose their power to motivate our stalling spirit. The eternal refrain, the fixed song, the enduring melody have grown silent. These are the times when the only *cantus firmus* left to us to fall back on may well be the most unnoticed, but most fiercely faithful and graced melody of all: the reliable rhythm of our own breathing and the bright beating of our own heart. ■

Daniel O'Leary is a priest of the Leeds diocese



Gillian Dowling

When you leave the city of Wanganui, spelt without an h, and drive towards Raetihi, you travel alongside the Whanganui River which mysteriously acquires the missing letter. This differentiates between it and the Wanganui River in the South Island.

After about 10 kms you reach a crisis point. You have to choose whether to take the right hand lane and sensibly travel to Raetihi via the speedy and well-made road or whether you take the left-hand branch and go by the road less travelled. We parked at the intersection, gazed at the map detailing the stopping places on the road and with memories of a wonderful trip 25 years ago boldly embarked on the river road option.

Up to a point it was great and complacency set in. We felt free, adventurous, gazing down the steep banks into the river far below. The colours appear as though they had been run through with gold and the toitoi fronds shine like ears of corn. There is something Biblical about the scene. Perhaps that is what appealed to James K Baxter and also those who preceded him since they called the settlements on the way up to the river, Athens, Corinth and Jerusalem. There is an air of pilgrimage from the start – expectancy, joy, delight and a hint of difficulties to come.

The difficulties became apparent two-thirds of the way up the road. We could see the edges of the seal. They stopped abruptly at the edge of the road, forming a lip as though molten lava ran through a carefully constructed boxing. Then the seal ran out and we hit the gravel road. Not only was it gravel but it formed mounds of stones which I as the driver contrived to straddle with the width of the car, only on occasions to have the summit of the gravel piles rake along the underside of the car with sickening scraping sounds.

Then I tried moving to the left and avoiding the heaped up stones, but there was very little room. However that was a safer option because of the risk of oncoming traffic. We met half a dozen vehicles on the road. You would certainly not want to risk an accident up there.

The workmen are still working on the road as they were 25 years ago. They have made progress but I couldn't remember where the tar seal ended then so I can't gauge how far the work has progressed. It must be a slow process, perhaps 800 metres a year for 25 years. They should get to Pipiriki by the end of the century.

The first glimpse of Jerusalem is like a painting. For composition, colour and effect, no impressionist painter could have planned it better. The red spire of the church with its cream walls, little houses dotted about and the green hills, light breeze and midday full of crickets' wings filled us with delight.

We had forgotten one thing though. Water. We didn't bring any and there are no shops. We could do without food, but we needed a drink. We spotted a bright newly-painted wooden building. I noticed a car and a man sitting making notes on a bench outside Mother Aubert's Convent. I asked him for a drink of water, very Biblical again, and he responded by saying "Come on in, I'll make you a coffee. My name is Maurice by the way."

Mother Aubert was a French nun who cared for the Maoris in the Wanganui/ Whanganui area, setting up her mission in 1883. Maurice told us he had fallen in love with the place when he first visited about five years before. Now, whenever he travels between Auckland and Wellington, he takes the river road and stays for a few days. There is still a sister from the Sisters of Compassion order who lives in the old convent.

As we sat at the wooden table we were charmed to see how the building has been restored. Pristine paint gleams from the kitchen walls. It has been restored and renewed in the style of the 19th century. Kitchen cupboard door knobs reminded me of those in my grandmother's home in Ponsonby. The kitchen cupboards are of vertical planks and the knobs fiddly little oval-shaped ones such as she had. But there is a stove, fridge and dishwasher.

After we'd finished our coffee, Maurice took us up to the dormitory. There they were, the little beds where the orphans had slept. I don't know if they were the same beds, but they looked like them with their colourful quilts and creamy linen.

We went outside and I asked Maurice about the stars.

"They must be a wonderful sight" I said.

"Last night" he said, "I came out onto this balcony and looked up. They were so close and bright you could hear them, they seemed to be singing."

I was reminded of lines from The Merchant of Venice:

There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim's;

"Would you like to see the church?"

Maurice escorted us to the small building with Tukituki panels and proudly showed us a mural which had lain underneath later painting. Sister Susan, who lives in the convent, suspected something might lie underneath the paint so she and Maurice had scraped away gently until its pattern was revealed. It didn't look like a Maori pattern. We said a prayer and then walked through a small but dense woodland path to emerge at what seemed to be an orchard.

The trees hadn't been pruned and so their branches straggled unevenly into the brilliant blue sky. At their drooping extremities were a few stunted peaches or apples. Remnants of the fruit James K Baxter praised in his Jerusalem Sonnets. Nearby stood a dilapidated house. No restoration here, but bundles of clothes and untidy boxes and shelves, clothes and plates.

James K lies nearby. The shortened form of James, Jimmy, has been formed into Hemi. There is no J sound in Maori. Last time we came here we paid $10 to see his grave. This time it was free. Nobody was home in the former commune, although a few old cars were on the edges of the graveyard, dismal-looking and forgotten, their backs probably broken from the punishing trip beside the river. Baxter's grave is bordered with river stones. So he lies there forever, his anger surrendered to the hills, the stars crackling above him and the river gurgling on its way.

He used to walk from Pipiriki to Raetihi. It must be 30kms. I imagine him trekking along, often at night, under those singing stars. It truly was a pilgrimage, perhaps a self conscious one. I don't know if he planned to imitate prophets of old with his beard and his sandals, staff and poetry. But it must have been an experience close to drunkenness to walk painfully along, alone, experiencing at once fear and exultation.

The issues he dealt with seem to have passed by. Mother Aubert is also long dead and her orphans moved away.

But Jerusalem is full of Biblical reminders and evokes imagery of the Holy Land. You can imagine John being baptised in the Whanganui River; you can see Jesus walking on its water or the possessed swine hurling themselves over the chasm. Surely, the three wise men rode this way guided by one of those eloquent stars. The land is holy there, the very stones sing as the river runs over them. When you leave Jerusalem you have another 20 kms of rough road to traverse before you reach Raetihi. I imagined the apostles walking along, Jesus talking to them, teaching them as they went.

Then on the road between Pipiriki and Raetihi, there is a place where you suddenly come face-to-face with Ruapehu. You don't catch a glimpse of it anywhere until that astonishing revelation. It took my breath away. From the close dark green of the bush and hills, there suddenly appears a clear, bright, light vista. Perhaps that's what James K liked. It is a promise of resurrection and hope.

The land along the Whanganui River is full of hardship, promise and mystery. When you get to Raetihi you are back in the modern world of finding a cafe, getting ready to rejoin civilisation, but for those hours travelling up the river, the values are different, the landscape is different and perhaps you emerge different yourself in some small way. Commercial values take a tumble and hurl with the swine into the Whanganui River. ■

Living the heritage of Mother Aubert

Catherine Hannan DOLC reflects on Suzanne Aubert's inspirational work of 100 years ago and describes how today's Sisters continue her apostolic work

Last year the Centenary of *Our Lady's Home of Compassion* in Island Bay, Wellington, was celebrated. Many men and women who had grown up at the Home, returned from around the country and further afield. Consequently, the evening held at Government House for the Sisters and former 'childen' was for many the highlight of the weekend – meeting again the people with whom one shared the crucial years of childhood, some of whom have remained as lifelong friends. One who came was the nearly 90-year-old Dr Elsie Gibbons, paediatrician at the Home for over 30 years.

Long ago Suzanne Aubert made the journey from Jerusalem on the Whanganui River to Wellington mainly so that the children she and the Sisters were caring for could receive professional medical attention. An increasing number of children being sent to her were malnourished and suffering from childhood ailments. Hence Suzanne Aubert's dream to build a hospital for children in Wellington, which she eventually achieved on the hills of Island Bay in 1907.

It is hard for us today to imagine the plight of a young woman with a child outside marriage in those far off days; if the woman was unable to work she had no other means of support, and few foster homes or institutions were prepared to care for infants. Suzanne was so passionate about their needs she was prepared to journey halfway across the world for them – all the way to Rome in fact! She petitioned the Pope for Papal approbation for the emerging Congregation and the freedom to continue her mission.

Suzanne Aubert was years ahead of her time. The recent contentious repeal of *Section 59* of the Crimes Act would not have troubled Suzanne. Her strict instructions were – her actual words – "the Sisters shall love the children. They are expressly forbidden to hit them or they will think that the aunties have a very bad temper." (They nicknamed Suzanne 'grandma' and the Sisters 'aunty'.) This, however, didn't stop her careering after one lad with a slipper, when he pulled out a row of precious seedlings of trees she had just planted.

The general culture of the Sisters of Compassion has been that any discipline was to be loving. One woman remembered how Suzanne put this into practice. "On being told that I had been naughty, she gently took my best pinny off me and put it on me inside out, and I was heartbroken. I have always remembered her gentle ways, for she would not allow us to receive corporal punishment,"

Residential care for children in Wellington ceased in the 1980s. The facilities were adapted as a first class Childcare Centre for 45 to 50 children led by a board of dedicated parents. These carers continue to be alert to the HOC 'Mission' and allocate subsidised places for families with special needs – for a disabled child, or relief for a parent with a difficult pregnancy.

The hospital part of Island Bay closed in 2002 because of changes in the health sector. The *Home of Compassion* there has became a 'haven of support' where initiatives are encouraged of parents helping parents. A Parents' Centre runs a number of volunteer-run programmes to ensure that birthing and parenting are recognised and valued.

The *Mothers' Network* enables more experienced mothers to help new ones and mothers of pre-schoolers. There is a facility for those in need of a quiet, stress-free break or retreat. The services of the specialist physician is subsidised for children suffering Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

The Sisters continue to run several Homes providing rest home and hospital care for the frail and sick elderly. Others work for pastoral and social needs including prison and hospital chaplaincy. However, the trend now is working more and more in conjunction with other agencies with similar aims and values.

Mothers' Network group in Wellington

For example, Compassion House provides a central Wellington location with a reasonable rental for several groups, such as *Downtown Community Ministry* and the *Wellington People Centre* who work with the homeless, street people and needy families. Podiatry care is provided; there are services for refugees, immigrants, the chronically ill and people requiring mental health care. Pensioner housing in the Hutt Valley guarantees affordable rents and enable nursing and pastoral services for elderly residents who desire it.

The spirit of cooperation is especially evident at the Suzanne Aubert Compassion Centre, commonly known as the *Soup Kitchen*, in inner Wellington, where breakfast and dinner is provided six days a week. It continues a tradition started by the Sisters in 1901. Currently it has the support of 150 volunteers, with donating support from *St Vincent de Paul*, the Masons and City New World as well as innumerable smaller donors. There are families, mostly Sri Lankan, whose custom it is to give an entire meal in memory of a deceased loved one.

Poverty in New Zealand

It has been said recently: "There's no poverty in New Zealand". Here are a few facts. Prominent among today's poor are refugees. The Sisters work closely with the refugee agencies in the establishment and follow-up care of new refugee families. Plunket recently came across a young immigrant woman who was so hungry she had ceased being able to feed her baby. *Caritas* investigated the human rights of the situation while the Sisters attended to the immediate food factor.

A young couple called in with their four-day-old baby wearing the only set of baby clothes they owned. The couple had been homeless, but an official from *Housing NZ* was brilliant in finding a flat and several groups rallied together to settle the family. The *Life Thrust Trust* which supports new life (an initiative of the inimitable Marilyn Pryor) helped with finance.

Similar groups (both statutory and non-government) pulled together in helping a young African woman with a newly born infant and requiring asylum in New Zealand. With no immigrant status she didn't qualify for the usual social housing. The most practical help she received was from a mother of six in the local parish.

These are just a few typical stories. There *is* poverty in New Zealand. And it generally involves families with children. Sometimes the causes are complicated and not easily addressed. There is real value in working collaboratively along with sensitivity and the deep respect for the human dignity of the most impoverished. This is what the Sisters of Compassion strive to do.

Meanwhile the cause for canonisation for Suzanne Aubert moves slowly. Incredibly detailed documentation continues to be assembled here in the HOC Archives with the approval of the Postulator and other authorities in Rome. Hopefully one day the Catholic Church will formally recognise her holiness. But we know already that she is a Saint. ■

Eucharist or *Mass*

Paul Andrews

Something happened to me at a one-day retreat that readers may also have experienced. We had Mass at the end of the morning. But when I looked at the timetable for the day, it was listed as *Liturgy.* That puzzled me. Liturgy means a form of public worship. It might refer to Benediction, Anointing of the Sick, Penance Service, or several other types of service. Like *partner* when applied to unmarried lovers (in what are they partners? - golf, business, love-making?), *Liturgy* is too large and vague to convey meaning.

Like *Catholic, Mass* is a good word that makes some people nervous. Maybe it sounds too Catholic at a time when the faint-hearted do not want to be identified that way. So they reach for other words, like Liturgy, or Eucharist. Or maybe they imagine that *Eucharist* is somehow a more ecumenical term.

The plain people of Ireland spoke and speak of *getting Mass under your belt,* or *getting a quick Mass.* That is the terminology in which many of us grew up. The language, which might appear flippant, masked a deeper seriousness.

The contrast is often made today between the spontaneous joy of charismatic worship and what is described as the grim sense of obligation which drove people to Mass in crowds. The contrast is overstated and crude. It does no justice to something we can all remember. There were and are crowds at weekday Masses across the cities and country parishes of Ireland. They have no obligation to be there, no threat of sin, but just the deep love of this way of worship: less jubilant perhaps than charismatic prayer, but not less deep for that.

At some stage we learned that in order to 'get Mass', you had to be there before the Offertory, even if you missed the Scripture readings. This said something about the moralists' attitude to the Word of God – something dispensable, or at least a venial matter. Our Presbyterian fellow-faithful leaned in the other direction. Hearing the Word of God was a weekly duty, but eucharistic celebration might happen just once in *six* months.

One manifestation of God's Spirit touching the churches in the mid-20th century was that Catholics moved not merely to give more attention to the Word of God in the Mass, but even had homilies on it, possibly every day. And at the same time our separated brethren celebrated the Eucharist ever more frequently without losing any of their reverence for Scripture. There was a happy, spirit-led convergence of Catholic and Protestant churches towards a balanced love both of God's word, and of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood.

I used the theological term *Eucharist,* with its Greek and academic overtones, in reference to some Protestant celebrations. However our old word *Mass* is actually more ecumenical than *Eucharist.*

It is not merely that *Mass* is immediately understandable even outside religious circles (you will hear pub-drinkers speak of *Mass* but never of *Eucharist*). In the more technical ecumenical sense, *Mass* has a more hallowed history. For the last thousand years, composers of every persuasion have used the Mass as a vehicle for their most solemn musical creations. Devout Lutherans like Johann Sebastian Bach, devout Catholics like Bruckner and Gounod, and the whole range between, including Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart, Puccini, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Rossini and Schubert, poured their best talents into what they called a *Missa* or *Mass.*

More startlingly, the same is true of 20th century composers, of varied or minimal religious convictions, such as Vaughan Williams, Leonard Bernstein, Igor Stravinsky, Dave Brubeck: they too composed *Masses,* finding there the ideal vehicle for music that reached for the transcendent. There are few words in religious vocabulary which have a more ecumenical spread, ecumenical not merely between churches, but also between social classes (as in pub-talk) and in the rich range of musical creation.

Eucharist is obviously a hallowed word as well; it is the Greek for thanksgiving, and has a long history in the church. However it smacks of the seminary and the learned world of theologians. It would sound strange on the lips of those whom Jesus would call publicans and sinners. When I see it on the timetable for religious gatherings, I feel we are retreating into the sacristy and away from the living church.

The word *Mass* comes from the old Latin dismissal at the end of Mass: *Ite, missa est,* or as we say now: "The Mass is over. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." It suggests the mission of all Christians, to go out and bring the good news to others by the goodness of their own lives. It links what happens at the altar with what happens when we leave the church.

Meanwhile recall the much-quoted comment of Augustine Birrell, the Anglican Chief Secretary for Ireland, as he left his job in 1916:

▷ *Our children will have to make up their minds what happened at the Reformation. My suggestion is that they will do so in a majority of cases by concentrating their attention upon what will seem to them most important. And especially will they bend their minds upon the Mass. Nobody nowadays, except for a handful of vulgar fanatics, speaks irreverently of the Mass. It is the Mass that matters. It is the Mass that makes the difference.*

Fr Paul Andrews is a Jesuit priest from Dublin who has been helping out in Southland parishes since Christmas

Paul – missionary par excellence

Acts 9, 22 and 26

Susan Smith

Luke has three dramatic accounts of Paul's conversion or more properly, his call to mission. Artists have provided us with many graphic depictions of this event, usually with a horse rearing up, lights beaming down from the sky, people falling to the ground, and a shaken Paul gazing heavenward. Paul himself is more low key and writes: "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me" (*1 Cor 15:8*), and "I want you to know, brothers and sisters that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin" (*Gal 1:11*).

Once again we see Luke offering a much more exciting narrative than Paul. In *Acts 9:3-30* the story of Paul's call to mission to the Gentiles is told in the third person, and immediately afterwards the blind Paul is taken to the home of Ananias, a Hellenistic Jew, and a leader in the Christian community at Damascus.

In *Acts 22*, Paul is in Jerusalem as he speaks of his Damascus experiences to Jewish believers gathered there. Initially they are enthusiastic about his message, but when he tells them that he is to go to the Gentiles, their mood changes and Paul is again arrested, and taken before the chief priests and the council.

Finally in Acts 26, Paul is brought before the Roman governor, Festus, and the Jewish king, Herod Agrippa and his wife Bernice, where he again tells his Damascus story. His hearers are impressed and find no good reason for sending him to Rome as a prisoner. However as Paul earlier has asked to be tried in Rome, he is taken off and beheaded in Rome sometime between 62 and 67.

Why the three accounts of Paul's call to mission? First, the three narratives occur in quite different contexts. In *Acts 9*, Paul is with a community of Hellenistic Jewish believers who accept him while in *Acts 22*, Paul is rejected by the Palestinian Jews gathered in Jerusalem. In the last narrative Paul's message is accepted by both the Roman and Jewish leaders in Palestine. This threefold narrative demonstrates the universal thrust of the good news. Paul is described as preaching the good news to Hellenistic Jews, to Palestinian Jews, to the poor, and to the ruling Roman and Jewish authorities. The good news transcends ethnicity and class.

Second, Luke is intent on teaching that following the way of Jesus means that the disciple will suffer like Jesus. Like Jesus, Paul is rejected by the Jewish religious leaders, like Jesus Paul is tried before the highest Roman and Jewish authorities, and like Jesus he is executed. What is our faith for us – a source of comfort, or a call to follow the way of Jesus with the suffering that will entail?

Susan Smith is a Sister of Our Lady of the Missions and teaches in her congregation's Asian provinces

Saint and Scholar: *Fr Ronald Cox* CM

Ask just about any senior priest in New Zealand who was their most memorable teacher at Holy Cross College – and the most common answer will be "Fr Ronnie Cox." This little man from Wellington in New South Wales was one of the Vincentian Fathers who taught the country's future priests at the national seminary, Holy Cross College, Mosgiel. Fr Cox was one of the first Vincentians to be appointed to Mosgiel, teaching Scripture there through the war years, and through the 50s, even into the early 60s.

When we older priests get together we often reminisce about our teacher and what made him such a force for good in the life of the New Zealand church. Our reminiscences always have a quality of warmth and gratitude about them, because we immediately acknowledge the goodness of this man of God. Among his many gifts was a profound love of the Scriptures and of the Lord they revealed, and added to this was his wonderfully friendly and open humanity. I've often heard priests say that 'Coxie' – as we all called him – brought a much needed humanity to our time of studies.

Thinking back over those years it is amazing to realise that his best teaching and writing were accomplished in the years when he was in poorest health. During that time he wrote five books, one of the first being the best known. It was simply entitled *The Gospel Story* written in response to a request from the *Catholic Youth Movement* who wanted a straightforward, continuous Gospel text on one page, with a simple commentary on the opposite page. Just after World War II the English scholar, Monsignor Ronald Knox completed a new translation of the whole Bible. This newest translation of the Gospels was the text Fr Cox chose to use. And so was born the *Knox-Cox Gospel Story*.

Frequently Fr Cox would come to our daily Scripture lecture, obviously in ill health, so much so that he would have to pause for two or three minutes with his head in his hands until his head cleared enough to begin the lecture. Then, with a playful smile he would look up at the class and repeat the famous words of St Paul: "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." It always struck me as the perfect way to begin a lecture on Scripture, and it summed up his whole teaching method. He wanted us to become so familiar with the Gospels, and so in love with them and the Master, that we would come to have the mind and heart of Christ.

Always he spoke of the life and teaching of Jesus in such a way that he expected it to nourish our prayer life and to help with our future preaching. He would say, "When you read about Peter denying Jesus three times, don't concentrate too much on Peter's repentance. It's good to be aware of Peter's sorrow, but it's much more important to learn how Jesus dealt with Peter; how he still reached out to bring him back and never gave up on the man he had chosen to lead. Keep your eyes on Our Lord."

He would tell us over and over to learn how Jesus acted 'pastorally' with people – with the Samaritan woman, with the man born blind, with Zachaeus, with the widow of Naim or with the centurion whose boy was dying. That way, we could develop the mind and heart of Christ in our prayer, our preaching and the way he wanted us to relate to our parishioners.

In all this there was a simplicity and even lightheartedness. I often felt that it was a reflection of the saint he loved best, St Francis of Assisi; surely it was not by chance that he died on that saint's feast day. He certainly had an engaging and mischievous sense of humour and a unique ability to preach about the Scriptures, to fascinate and inspire those who heard him. As a schoolboy I loved listening to his sermons whenever he came to help out at St Patrick's, South Dunedin. Once I entered the seminary at Mosgiel, that admiration grew and developed as he explained the Scriptures to us in depth.

I remember an amusing incident when he was about to publish his book on St Paul's writings entitled, *It is Paul who writes*. In those days books written by priests had to be approved by ecclesiastical authority and given an *imprimatur*, as it was called. Fr Cox's draft was sent to Archbishop Liston since it was to be published in Auckland. After a couple of weeks the archbishop wrote back saying that he really liked the book, but there was one outstanding error in it, and the *imprimatur* would be granted once this error was rectified. Fr Cox had written that, "Jesus became sin for us." The archbishop pointed out that one cannot say, "Jesus became sin" because He was sinless, as we read in the letter to the Hebrews.

Fr Cox wrote back to the archbishop explaining that he was simply quoting St Paul himself who wrote in his letter to the Corinthians that, "The sinless one became sin in order that we might become the goodness of God." (*2 Cor 5: 21*) A week later Fr Cox announced with an impish smile that the *imprimatur* had been granted – with his text unchanged!

Our beloved Coxie died in Sydney on 4th October 1970, at the age of 59. The Vincentian Fathers told me afterwards that to the very end they felt his wonderful good humour was manifest. With obvious pleasure they told me about their journey to the cemetery. In the dense Sydney traffic the cars towards the end of the funeral procession became separated from the leading cars and the hearse. Those who fell behind didn't know exactly where their colleague was to be buried, so that in the end they found themselves lost in the Jewish quarter. They felt that even in death Ronnie was teasing them, as they searched for him among the people of Jesus' own race.

Stuart Sellar

Fr Cox's publications include *The passion story* (Auckland: CYM Publications, 1951). *The gospel story.* (Auckland: CYM Publications, 1952). *It is Paul who writes.* (London: Burns & Oates 1960). *Waiting for Christ: based on the Old Testament messianic prophecies.* (London: Burns & Oates, 1960). *No other light: praying with Christ.* (Melbourne: ACTS, 1972).

Two men's long walk to freedom

Goodbye Bafana
Review: Paul Sorrell

The name Nelson Mandela is synonymous with courage, endurance, reconciliation and peacemaking on an unparalleled scale. The story of his struggle for human rights in South Africa, the nearly 30 years he spent in prison and his tireless efforts to create a new 'rainbow nation' with freedom and equality for all has become one of the great political and human narratives of our times. Now a distinguished elder statesman in his early 90s, for many he is simply the most outstanding human being on the planet today.

So it is intriguing that, in *Goodbye Bafana*, Mandela plays a secondary role. The leading character in this true story of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy (however flawed) is his former jailer, Sergeant James Gregory, an officer in the prison service who was transferred in 1968 to Robben Island where Mandela and other leading members of the African National Congress were confined.

Because Gregory grew up with Africans on a farm in the Transkei, his knowledge of Xhosa made him ideal for the job of censoring prisoners' mail and monitoring their conversations with visitors – on the very rare occasions visits were permitted.

At the start of his tour of duty on the notorious island prison, Gregory unthinkingly acts as one small cog in the machinery of brutality and dehumanisation that rules Robben Island. Almost everything in his upbringing supports his negative view of 'kaffirs' and the relentless propaganda and daily oppression of the regime confirms this. His wife, Gloria, tells their children that the separation of whites and blacks is part of the divine order: "It's God's way, darling. Just like you don't mix the sparrows with the swallows, the geese with the ducks or a cow with a buck. It's just not natural. And we don't question God".

But it is Gregory's very strength in the eyes of his employers that proves to be the chink in this ironclad world-view – his childhood friendship with a Bantu boy that no amount of indoctrination can erase from his memory. This experience becomes the seed of an inner rebellion that translates into small acts of defiance and a tentative friendship with Mandela that bring severe consequences for him and his family. However, as the international community brings increasing pressure to bear on the apartheid regime and the political climate begins to change within South Africa, Gregory is brought back to help ease Mandela's transition from prison inmate to national leader.

Although the focus is on Sergeant Gregory, convincingly played by Joseph Fiennes – in contrast, Dennis Haysbert's Mandela is rather wooden – there are significant parallels between the two figures. By the end of the film we realize that the warder's journey has been as lengthy, arduous, costly and painful as Mandela's own long walk to freedom. ■

Catholicism since Vatican II

Vatican II Forty Years Later
Edited by William Madges
Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 200
Review: Susan Smith

Recently I was in a parish where lay involvement and lay ministry are seen as priorities. I discussed with the priest whether the emergence of small groups in some parishes might seem to advocate a reversal of many of the advances that Vatican II meant for the church. I lamented this trend but was grateful for his comment.

He replied: "Susan, that is true, but just think, since Vatican II we have had 40 wonderful years and no one can take that from us!" *Vatican II Forty Years Later* allows the contemporary Catholic to see just what the Catholic Church, particularly lay people, gained from the Council. Ably edited and introduced by William Madges, *Vatican II* is divided into three sections, all of which treat of theological areas important for those who wish to appreciate better the changes that have occurred in the Catholic community since 1965.

Part 1, the longest section, covers many of the significant ecclesiological developments since Vatican II. Particularly helpful for understanding the future direction of the church today, is Philip Franco's paper on the ecclesiology of Joseph Ratzinger. Franco argues – successfully, in view of recent Vatican statements – that Ratzinger's ecclesiology is one that emphasises hierarchical structures, centralisation and a uniformity that does not bode well for ecumenism, ecclesial or liturgical reform. As Franco writes, "Joseph Ratzinger's church of the future bears a striking resemblance to the church of the past (*p.22*)."

Peter Phan's paper on the church in Asia flows from an ecclesiology that stands in marked contrast to that of Ratzinger, as Phan envisages an ecclesiology that is grounded in collegiality. If the Vatican were to encourage collegiality, then this would give the different Asian episcopal conferences space to identify ecclesiologies appropriate to their different cultural contexts.

Alice Laffey and Frances Holland offer two important papers on Vatican II's Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum,* and the impact of Scriptural studies on Catholic life. These merit careful consideration given that the next Roman Synod is going to consider the place of the Bible in Catholic life, and already Cardinal Martini for one is expressing his hope that insights of Vatican II continue to be honoured.

Harriet Luckman demonstrates that though many Catholic women still experience life in the church as second-class citizens, some progress has been made in re-envisioning the role of women. The significance of John Courtney Murray's ecclesiology for the development of Catholic Action groups is explored by Christopher Denny. Given the current enthusiasm for the establishment of the permanent diaconate in some dioceses this again is a chapter that warrants careful reading.

In *Part 2*, the engagement of the church with the modern world is examined through a critique of Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *(Gaudium et Spes)*. William French is concerned that *GS* does not specifically address ecological problems which is true; but given that it mandates the church to be engaged with the world, it is difficult to see how this apparent omission allows Catholics to ignore environmental concerns. The two papers on the church-state relations and Catholic teaching on war and peace have a particular relevance for Catholics today.

Finally, the Catholic Church's encounters with other religious is explored. While the content of some of the papers is predictable, (e.g. Paul Knitter's contribution on relations with the great world religions, and Procario-Foley's paper on Catholic/Jewish relations), other papers open up areas that do not usually receive so much attention. Particularly interesting is Elaine MacMillan's insight that Vatican II was part of that wider 20th Century phenomenon which she identifies as 'Conciliarism'. She writes that using "an ecumenical lens, however, we can see that Vatican II was convoked at the tail end of about 100 years of intense conciliar activity in all the mainline churches." Instead of being the first off the block so to speak, Catholics were last!

Reid Locklin invites Catholics to carefully examine the writings of 12th Century French scholastic theologian, Peter Lombard, because he believes these have important insights for those involved in the study of comparative religions. In an interesting article, Sinitiere looks at the possibility of a growing rapprochement between Catholics and evangelicals and points to the high regard in which evangelicals held Pope John Paul II.

Vatican II Forty Years Later is an important examination of some key aspects of Catholic life since Vatican II. Given the current enthusiasm in some church quarters for reversing some of the major Vatican II thrusts, this book provides a useful summary of the great blessings that the Council meant for Catholics. My only reservation is that it reflects an American, liberal Catholic perspective and that there is another story to be told, namely that of Catholics elsewhere, particularly in the 'Two-Thirds world', in the former Soviet bloc, and in other 'One-Third World' countries. ■

Eating locally, living sustainably

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: Our Year of Seasonal Eating
Barbara Kingsolver, Camille Kingsolver and Steven L Hopp
Harper Collins, 2007
Review: Nicola Hoggard Creegan

If you have ever felt that buying carbon credits didn't quite add up, read this book. Barbara Kingsolver, author of *The Poisonwood Bible*, is not trying to help us achieve carbon neutrality; she wants to change our lives. It is a practical book, helping us to begin the journey towards sustainable living, including recipes and scientific facts contributed by her daughter and husband respectively.

In many ways this book is also a conversion story about a family who moved house from Arizona to the Appalachian foothills, so that they could find and grow the food they needed to eat locally. They became what is known as 'locavores' growing much of their food, and sourcing the rest from local markets. The nine-year-old daughter coaxed heirloom turkeys into reproducing and delighted in real natural chickens, their eggs and eventually their meat. The book includes a reasoned defence of eating meat if it is from animals which have been healthy and treated humanely, though the author also describes the reason the family had earlier decided to become vegetarian after driving past the farms that were producing beef in desperately inhumane conditions.

Sustainability and climate change spark a lot of conversations these days. But I think climate change issues can be confusing. On the one hand we have the doubters, and on the other hand there is the breaking news from the IPCC that previous predictions were too low and we are rapidly entering a time of species loss. While we consider these claims and counter-claims, it is easy to grow cynical or despairing. Some Christians doubt that the church should be involved at all. This book is a good antidote to all that. Kingsolver makes the case that this is a better and more joyful way of living anyway. Locavores rediscover the joy of food in season and the tastes of childhood. There is a very strong message that what is good for you will also heal and enhance all other areas of life.

I do believe the climate change warnings, in part because I have lived with them for so long. My parents had Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* on the shelves. She burst upon the environmental scene in the 1960s with claims that the earth was under stress because of human impact. In the 1960s and 70s however, we could not imagine a world that would heat up by 1°C, yet the impact of human action was all too obvious even then.

Having lived in the American South for 12 years I can personally testify that the food there was generally highly processed and of poor quality. Barbara Kingsolver argues that buying locally is not only healthier but it supports local farmers, and encourages sustainable and ethical farming methods. It helps us to reconnect with where our food comes from. Communities often lose skills and knowledge. Ours is in danger of losing the knowledge of how to grow food. Kingsolver tellingly describes a conversation she had with a chef back in Arizona who did not know that potatoes had a green growing part!

Although this book is not written from a faith perspective, it is a very spiritual narrative and fits in easily with a Christian theology of loving dominion over the natural world. Our need for community and hospitality is also enhanced by being locavores, because buying food locally and the pleasure of cooking it are all rediscovered. The whole book is an example of choosing life, and respecting the mystery of life.

Although the Kingsolvers made radical changes in where they lived and quite drastic changes in their work rhythms for a year, it is quite possible to do the 'locavore' thing more gradually. Reading this book has made me more aware of where my food comes from, what I am willing to 'exempt' and what I will go out of my way to buy locally, or even grow. We can support the new local farmers' market and make sure we are buying fresh local vegetables and meat while still buying coffee from overseas. We have also agonised over the cranberry juice we all drink, which comes in bottles from the USA or Australia. Buying locally in New Zealand, however, is much less painful than it was for the Kingsolvers in the USA, where even citrus were exports from far distant states.

I would recommend this book heartily, as a way of pressing forward and finding more satisfaction at the same time. The associated website is: www.animalvegetablemineral.com and all the recipes from the book are on the site. I would also recommend the book, *At Its Best*, by Margaret Brooker, (Tandem, 2004) for ways to cook New Zealand food in season, and even to know what is in season when.

Eating locally is one of many different conversion stories we may discover if we decide to choose life and respect nature. These can be understood to be a better way of living, healthier and more spiritual, whatever we might decide about climate change and peak oil.

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If music be the food of love. . .

Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes.
(Tennyson)

Music appreciation has had a slow beginning for this writer, but the necessity to come to terms with difficult situations has resulted in an increasing solace gained through listening to classical music. Music seems so integral to our nature that we must be born to respond to it. It is almost instinctual. It taps into the deeper regions of the psyche where emotion, memory and one's very being become one. This way of relating to our lives has undeniable power.

How else can one explain the peace that descends on the spirit when a certain passage of a piano concerto seems to transport the listener to another space? Last week, the second movement of Mozart's *piano concerto in D minor* had this effect on me and has remained in the very structure of the brain for days. Perhaps that is why music therapy works as well as it does. Calm descends and life's problems recede.

Music appreciation seems almost synonymous with Steindl-Rast's concept of *gratefulness*. Together they develop the thought that life is a gift and should be cherished. A grateful attitude and the pleasure gained from music make us feel that life is worthwhile. They eliminate worry and allow us to live in the day and accept what we have. A warm, joyous and comfortable feeling comes over the spirit, enhanced through the aural wonder of sound and the appreciation of a life shared with loved ones who may depart but who, like great music, will live on forever.

The price of war

The economic upheavals in America are becoming a cause for concern. The collapse of the house

Crosscurrents

John Honoré

mortgage market has been followed by the failure of banks; the *ad hoc* interventions of the Federal Reserve have not achieved stability. The crisis continues and there is now the prospect of a global recession.

Against this background, *Le Monde* recently published an article arguing that the real cause of America's bankruptcy is 60 years of misallocation of resources to the military. Martin Luther King Jr described this horrific trend four decades ago: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defence than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." Now, the danger is financial ruin as well.

In 2008, defence spending will exceed $US1 trillion for the first time in history. The cost of Bush's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, not part of this official defence budget, equals the combined military budgets of Russia and China. These figures are mind boggling. The Department of Defence has requested $US481.4bn for salaries and equipment in 2008, plus another $US141.7bn to fight Bush's global 'war on terror'. This is to ignore the cost in human lives, the covert 'rendition' of political prisoners and the devastation wrought upon entire nations.

Le Monde bluntly describes such expenditures as not only morally obscene but also fiscally unsustainable. Obviously such military spending is counterproductive to investment and diverts resources from real human needs. The financial costs and Martin Luther King's "spiritual death" will be for future generations to confront.

Almost as a sad footnote, George W. Bush refuses to ban cluster bombs and has vetoed legislation passed by Congress that would have banned the CIA from using torture.

Cell phone curse

How can it be that one is constantly subjected to personal conversations in public, be party to some comic and ridiculous situations, have lunch in one's favourite restaurant interrupted by ring tones of birds, Bach or the Beatles? It's the cell phone.

One is surrounded by people talking on the phone, in the street, in the café and at half-time in the theatre. People talk uninhibitedly about last night's activities or seemingly talk to themselves in hospital waiting rooms and in all manner of public transport. Couldn't it wait to be said in private? Does one really have to be in contact 24 hours of the day as a necessity of business life, or be in touch with children at school lunch time to remind them to eat their apples? Does the general public want to listen to all this?

One such conversation on a bus recently ended with the user calling her daughter a "horrid little girl who would 'get it'" when mother got home. Seemingly, the child had told her mother what to do with the apple. Mother, in a rage, did not get home in time: she missed her stop!

Another mystery with cell phones is the fact that people seem always to have to walk about in circles when taking a call. They can't stand still. They have to separate themselves from their companions by a short distance in the mistaken belief that this gives them privacy (or a sense of importance). This writer has decided to accept invitations to lunch only on condition that cell phones will not interrupt the meal or the conversation. Further, the only acceptable ring tone is what my granddaughter, the family expert on cell phones, arranged for me – a Bach prelude. ■

Prayer for Christian Unity

The *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, instituted just 100 years ago, takes place at different times in different parts of the globe. In the northern hemisphere it runs from 18 January to 25 January, dates set by the feasts of St Peter and of St Paul. Given that our major annual holiday period is then only winding down, that timing does not suit us. So, in this part of the world we celebrate the Week later in the year, from Ascension to Pentecost, (fortunate indeed to have a true 'week' – from Sunday to Sunday).

Despite fears of an ecumenical chill, the Week was celebrated in Rome earlier this year in a fashion that gives encouragement that ecumenism is not dead.

Among what was said by various participants, the remarks of Fr Nicolas Lossky, a Russian Orthodox priest from Paris, struck me as helpful. They give a lead we could follow up with profit in our planning of this year's celebration in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Lossky expressed scepticism about ecumenical prayer services that offer a sort of 'mix and match' blend of elements from different Christian traditions. "For my part", he said, "I think it would be much more edifying to come together in a church and participate in the office of Vespers of that church, whether it's Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Baptist or Pentecostal. In that way, we truly learn the way in which the other prays".

Lossky's words struck a bell with me. There is one notable ecumenical step forward that at least many of my generation have experienced. In a way that we did not in the past, we respect the genuineness of the Christian life that is being lived by those who belong to denominations other than our own. Suspicions as to just how 'Christian' were other members of other churches were widespread in the earliest days of the preaching of the Gospel in our country. Methodist and *Church Missionary Society* clergy, pioneers in the introduction of the Gospel, were scathing in their condemnation of Pompallier and his priests who came here in their footsteps. The Catholic missionaries of the time were just as condemnatory of the Anglicans and the Methodists. These attitudes continued on both sides down until quite recent times.

Nothing has done more to break down in me such misconceptions than the times I have taken part in the worship of other churches. Notwithstanding the inability to share the Eucharist sacramentally, experiencing the depth, not to say the complete orthodoxy, of the prayer life of other churches has been for me the channel to a completely new and an utterly positive evaluation of just how truly Christian are their lives and that of their communities.

This year our *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* will be the first week of May. Many of us will just now be planning how best to celebrate the Week on our local scene. So often in the past we have limited ourselves to services conducted in what Nicolas Lossky has termed "mix and match" fashion. No need to condemn that approach.

But we could with profit add to it occasions during the Week when we share in services that are distinctly in the tradition of one community. Sharing in such services, not as spectators but as participants, will help us towards a just estimation of the genuineness of their Christian lives. They are, after all, the folk we hope will one day be our partners in a visibly reunited Church. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

Humphrey O'Leary is a canon lawyer and Rector of the Redemptorist community in Auckland

Summits for Ed

climbing Flagstaff Hill overlooking Otago Harbour

photos: *Robyn Skelton*

Kaikorai Valley High School pupils Luke Gardener, Holly Melrose, Chayanis Mansamrith, Minh Duong

When Sir Edmund Hillary died in January, there was immediate discussion about a suitable memorial for this eminent New Zealander. It wasn't long before the *Ed Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre*, an organisation founded 35 years ago with Sir Ed as its first patron, came up with a brilliantly simple idea – that a group of people climb to the summit of a local hill together, led by teams of young people from schools in the area.

The "Summits for Ed" tour started at Bluff on 25 March, and after a month of some 39 climbs from the south of the country to the far north, it will conclude at Cape Reinga on 19 April. Participants are invited to select a rock, stone or pebble from a place special to them: these will be collected to form part of a permanent memorial to Hillary at Tongariro, in the central North Island.

The memorial will be close by Mount Ruapehu, which Hillary himself visited on a school trip. He said it was then that he first fell in love with the mountains, and that experience launched him on his amazing career as a mountaineer and explorer. Through Sir Edmund's work at the *Outdoor Pursuits Centre,* thousands of young Kiwis have been inspired to a love of the outdoors. It is perhaps his greatest gift to his own country.

Climbing in the Himalayas also gave Sir Ed a lifelong love of the Sherpa people, and as is well known he dedicated much of his energy to setting up medical and educational facilities for them in the mountains. That work will surely be his international memorial.

Climbing mountains can be seen simply as an adventure, a sport or a challenge. Even Ed Hillary made the comment as he came down from his first successful conquest of Everest: "Well, we knocked the bastard off!" However, who would deny that it can also be a profound spiritual experience? It certainly prompted Hillary to a life of generous service to people, as indeed it has inspired many others. ■

"For me Sir Ed was one of NZ's greatest heroes. . . If there was ever a New Zealander who epitomises what I want to be, it was Sir Edmund Hillary" (*Luke*)

"It was an honour to be part of the walk Summits for Ed*"* (*Holly*)

"We did it to commemorate what Hillary did and to pass it on to the next generation" (*Chayanis*)