TUI MOTU

InterIslands

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Hear the Cry of the Poor

Ko te Hunga Rawakore – e hiahia ana ki te Tika

Mary Thorne and Chris Farrelly
ON THE CRY OF THE POOR IN OUR SOCIETY

Tui Motu on Te Rōpū Tautoko Report
ABUSE IN THE NEW ZEALAND CHURCH

Thomas O'Loughlin
WE'RE ALL CELEBRANTS AT EUCHARIST

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EDITORIAL

Listen and Keep Heart

COVID-19 has been infecting the world in waves for two years now. Through most of that time we've been on high alert and taken out-of-the-ordinary measures to stop the virus getting a hold in our country. Now we have a new wave, the Omicron variant, spreading in every region. Our main defences are vaccination and degrees of social isolation.

After living on edge for so long we can feel depleted and be tempted to give up: to stop adhering to the health and safety measures, to bicker and blame and to lose sight of our responsibility to others. But we can't give up — we're people of hope and community. Joan Chittister described the endurance needed for community in the imagery of tending a fire: when some members feel burnt out, others step forward in relays and breathe on the embers to keep the fire of hope burning.

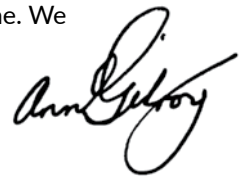
Lent this year gives us opportunities to breathe on the embers and warm one another with new energy and resolve. We can use this energy to increase our awareness of the "poor" in our midst and at the peripheries of our consciousness. It's the biblical challenge to "listen to the cry of the poor". We're accustomed to donating to the Caritas appeal during Lent. That money is mainly used to support development projects in our neighbouring Pacific countries. But when we read about the people involved in the projects our giving can transform into solidarity with them.

The whole point of listening to others is to hear and understand their situations better and to grow in solidarity with them — to grow in the belief that we are a community and what affects one affects us all. The men and women telling their experiences of abuse to the Royal Commission say that not only were they abused, but when they disclosed it to authorities they were stonewalled — disbelieved and discredited. Consequently their suffering was intensified and prolonged. It can be painful for us to hear real stories but that does not excuse us from listening.

During this Lent we might take up the listening challenge. Maybe take an issue such as the living wage, prison reform, social housing, adequacy of social welfare benefits, modern slavery, disparities in health access, racism, clericalism and women in the Church, and listen to people who are affected by it. Not only will listening inform us but it might encourage us to support the people affected in some way — to move over and let them have some warmth.

We thank all the contributors to this March issue. Through sharing their reflections, research, faith, discussion, art and craft they have given us a thoughtful magazine. We welcome Clare Curran the first of our bimonthly page 3 writers.

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



It's about TRUST

I've been thinking a lot about *public good* — a mostly theoretical concept that underpins much of what governs our lives; the rule of law, the justice system. Defence. Health. Education. Libraries. Even access to clean drinking water, trains running on time, clean air standards, street lighting and access to electricity.

Politicians reference the *public good* in speeches in parliament; professors in university lectures. It relates to things and systems we take for granted unless they break down, disappear or there is a terrible incident affecting life. The *public good* is why we pay taxes — to maintain services and systems that benefit everyone and allow society to function.

Accompanying *public good* is another concept — *social licence* — which is essentially public acceptance of an activity, a standard or a law. Social licence is a contract between government and people and, while hard to pin down what makes it work, it can't exist without community approval and trust.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought public good and social licence out of the shadows and into sharp relief. These concepts are no longer theoretical but in our faces every day.

Law changes have mandated mask-wearing and required vaccination in essential services and vaccine passports in certain places. We've had law-enforced lockdowns. Penalties for breaking lockdowns. Many countries passed laws. Others set regulations. Penalties were introduced for breaches.

Measures we would normally consider draconian, extraordinary and encroaching on people's rights were put in place for the good of all of us. The vast majority of people accepted them and adhered to them. Or did they?

Take the United Kingdom. Early on in the pandemic the UK introduced a legal requirement to self-isolate with heavy fines for non-compliance. Despite COVID continuing to kill nearly 2,000 people every week, most provisions ended at the beginning of February this year. Only a few mandatory mask-wearing provisions are in place. And then there were the notorious Downing Street party breaches.

Deaths per million — 2,384. Total deaths (as at 16 February 2022) — 159,388.

In the United States individual states set their own COVID-19 regulations and most had no curfews or restrictions on non-essential businesses. Schools remained open in some states and most allowed small numbers to gather outside throughout the pandemic.

Deaths per million — 2,805. Total deaths — 920,954.

In Australia the borders closed internationally to non-citizens in early 2020 and lockdowns and domestic border closures featured for much of the first 18 months. Now, despite Omicron still raging, Australia has moved from a COVID-zero approach to one where the country is living with the virus.

Deaths per million — 186. Total deaths — 4,726.

New Zealand introduced a COVID-zero approach immediately which it backed with border closure legislation, lockdowns, penalties, mandates for mask-wearing and vaccination in some occupations. Now a phased border opening is planned over coming months.

Deaths per million — 10.78. Total deaths — 53.

All countries introduced new rules relying on trust and confidence in the decision-makers for that crucial social licence. Political scrapping, pressure from business to open borders and relax lockdowns, anti-vaccine movements and breaches by the decision-makers has eroded public confidence and social licence to varying degrees. The cost has been high death rates and misery, not to mention the unsustainable pressure on already overstretched health systems.

The bells were tolling at the National Cathedral in Washington DC in early February as the United States' COVID death toll climbed past 900,000.

Despite fierce public scrutiny, occasional hiccups and breaches, and now an ongoing protest outside Parliament, Aotearoa New Zealand stands out for holding the line and maintaining social licence for the public good. I just hope it continues.

Photo: Ed Goodacre/Shutterstock.com

Clare Curran, former journalist and MP, is a committed advocate and representative on social justice issues.

LISTEN AND RESPOND

MARY THORNE reflects on the challenge we have as community to listen to the cry of the poor and respond.

Deeply embedded in the psyche of most humans is an impulse to care for the hurt and vulnerable of both our own kind and other creatures.

We of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition believe in a God who requires us to prioritise the love and care of the poor in our society. We are taught that we have a serious responsibility to participate in this work because those who suffer or are oppressed are especially cherished in the heart of God.

I feel sure this is also part of the belief of the other faith traditions of the world. I have seen the work done by Muslim, Buddhist and Sikh communities to address needs in my own area.

God Hears the Poor

God hears the cry of the poor. This hearing involves a deep awareness, compassion and action in response.

The "poor" are certainly those who are economically disadvantaged — and the gap between the financially secure and those who struggle to live, week by week, continues to widen. Efforts to achieve a more just society continue to be an integral part of a Christian life.

But also "poor" and beloved by God, are those whose lives are diminished by many sorts of suffering and in 2022 the Earth, herself, is suffering abuse and degradation.

Developing a Genuine Response

In many areas of our lives, familiarity lessens urgency and from early days we are encouraged to develop the practice of giving. Donations are necessary and good to help social need but they can become habitual and perfunctory.

A real danger of superiority can creep into our attitude if we veer towards giving from our secure and comfortable lives to "help" others who are not like us. This sort of charity can do more harm than good.

We help in a more holistic way when we develop strong bonds of connection which enable us to feel that the pain, distress and need in any

part of our community is, in fact, our own pain and distress and our own resources must be shared to assist in the healing.

It's hard to do this. I can identify in my own thinking an almost unlimited capacity to justify my own self-serving behaviours.

But I can also hear an increasing chorus of voices from around the world telling of a critical moment in the story of our planet. The voices speak of our intimate connection with every atom of created matter and with God who created all.

Creation expresses the Creator; it is an outward expression of God's love and grace. Prominent among these voices is theologian, scientist and Franciscan Ilia Delio who draws extensively on the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Pope Francis.

Everything Exists in God

A new picture of the relationship between God and all of God's creation is emerging in my mind.

This picture draws on the "New Maths" that was introduced into Aotearoa's primary school classrooms in the 1970s. Children were helped to develop an understanding of mathematics that more closely related to their experience of the world. Although well past childhood, I can remember learning about the venn diagram.

In my venn diagram of life, our God who is Love, the power and energy that births and drives the universe, is represented by a large circular shape and all created reality is depicted as a sub-set inside that reality.

God is life itself. We exist in God and God is in every atom of matter. God is mystery — utterly bigger and beyond us but we are in God. Yes, God hears the cry of the poor: our pain is God's pain.

Paul's beautiful image of the Church as the Body of Christ is extended to include all created reality as one organism, functioning and evolving. The new scientific story of the universe stretches and enriches our understanding of God and Jesus, as God with us, offering us wondrous, challenging, relevant ways to be people of faith in 2022.

Cry of Poor Is Our Cry

What does this have to do with the challenge to the community posed by the cry of the poor?

The movement of humankind from warring clans and tribes towards cooperating cohabitors of a beautiful, fragile planet is well underway. The connectedness and interdependence of all of creation is becoming better understood.

We are recognising the need to foster unity and deepen belonging in order to protect the well-being of our communities.

We are more inclined to respect difference and share power. We are learning more about the communal, systemic nature of discrimination and oppression.

> We help in a holistic way when we develop strong bonds of connection which enable us to feel that the pain, distress and need in any part of our community is, in fact, our own pain and distress and our own resources must be shared to assist in the healing.

We are beginning to know that the cry of the poor is our own cry. The body, of which we are all part, is experiencing pain. Despite our glorious diversity, there is no more "them and us"; action in response is not an optional extra.

Below the surface of the economic disadvantage of the poor are the historic wrongs of colonisation, capitalism and prejudice. Many individuals lead lives scarred by negativity and we sometimes feel that there is little we can do.

As well as the life-sustaining social support given by very many individuals and groups, there is the potential for the common body to hold tenderly and to speak hope, healing mercy, inclusion, belonging and compassion into pain wherever it occurs. We cannot ignore that which we love.

Participate in Healing

In order to assist the healing of the world we have to remake ourselves. Unlike the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our hearts have long since ceased to burn within us, passionate with love for the Word of God and the matter of God's creation, of which we are part. So many of us feel disconnected and disillusioned with an institution whose beliefs and practices seem stuck in some distant past.

Only the dynamism and fire of a renewed, relevant faith which welcomes scientific discoveries and understands the power of technological advancement will speak to our times.

Engage with One Another

Our consumer culture entices us to add more and more into our lives rather than simplifying and shedding belongings.

It is only by letting go much of what we think we value, including all our self-promotion, negative judgements and compulsive acquisitiveness, that we can begin to experience the abundant life in which we are immersed.

The chorus of new theological voices invites us to engage and explore renewed and deeper ways of being people of faith. It is an evolutionary path towards wholeness on which some thinking has to be relinquished for new understanding to be born.

We are called to reach out across dividing barriers to speak to others. We need one another. We belong together.

Only then will we overcome our suspicions, anxieties and fears.

We will be humble and free to be open and generous and better able to eliminate poverty and restore the hope of the poor.

Detail of Painting: ***Cherish the Land*** by Paul Hooker

www.artbythesea.co.nz/paulhooker.htm

Mary Thorne is retired and derives great delight from exploring the inner reaches of the Manukau Harbour with her tiny granddaughter.

COMPANIONS IN WINTER

CHRIS FARRELLY writes that by being companions in solidarity we share our resources so everyone can survive and thrive.

"Prepare for winter!" This is the message we're hearing as we head into autumn with Omicron widespread. But many people are enduring a "winter" that's lasted since the beginning of COVID — a "winter" of ongoing poverty and hardship.

In preparing for a harsh winter we estimate its duration and plan accordingly. We hope not just to survive, but to thrive. Albert Camus wrote: "In the midst of winter I discovered an invincible summer." In the worst winter experiences of inhumanity and cruelty, suffering and struggle, we frequently glimpse that "invincible summer" when the very best of humankind emerges as courage, generosity, creativity, compassion and solidarity.

This has been my experience over my 40 years of ministry. I saw the strength and goodness of humanity when I was living and working in a South Korean slum, accompanying people dying of AIDS, witnessing the intergenerational impact of colonisation on Māori whānau in Northland and experiencing the shame and travesty of large-scale homelessness and food insecurity in Auckland and throughout our country. Now as I reflect on these diverse experiences, I can see that while the problems and the solutions are many and complex, our strength is in community — our willingness to companion one another in times of hardship.

COMPANIONING IS SHARING

I've recently become a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit. The word "companion" comes from the Latin *com-panis* — together with bread — and came to English via the Old French *compaignon*, one who breaks bread with another. To companion is to share a meal. In this most human of experiences there is a sense of intimacy, reciprocity, vulnerability, gratitude and an overriding sense of presence.

As companions there is a sense that even the most difficult of journeys and challenges can be navigated not alone but as part of a group, who hold one another up, "feed" and sustain one another.

A LANGUAGE OF LIBERATION

A friend tells me that in Portuguese *companheiro*, is used to describe those who are in the *luta* (fight) against poverty — the struggle for justice for all.

I reflect on the power of Liberation Theology as the glue for community building and action in the Church in the later part of last century, particularly vibrant in Central

and South America. It applied the Gospel to the core concerns of marginalised communities in need of social, political or economic equality, and justice and liberation from oppression.

The theologians and church leaders such as Gustavo Gutierrez, Jose Comblin, Leonardo Boff, Ernesto Cardinal, Jon Sobrino, Archbishops Saint Oscar Romero, and Helder Cāmara continue to inspire that struggle today.

Closer to home I think of a number of New Zealanders who, inspired by Liberation Theology, spent significant parts of their lives living among the poor in different parts of South America building Basic Christian Communities and being *companheiro* with the people. These include Josephite Sister Dorothy Stevenson, Mercy Sisters Margaret Milne and Mary Gordon, Columban Missionaries Don Hornsey and Paul Prendergast and Marist Tony O'Connor.

AVOID STEREOTYPES

Liberation Theology tried to address the many inequalities that underpin poverty. The poverty of 1960s Latin America wasn't just an issue of people "not having enough money", but of ancestral injustices embedded at every level of society. Here, in Aotearoa, the situation might be less extreme, but it is equally complex, and we should be wary of stereotyping poverty — offering one explanation and one solution.

We can think to ourselves: "People getting food parcels don't budget properly — they all need to be taught budgeting". But underneath and surrounding each situation are many other stories which need to be uncovered and heard in order to bring about understanding and for reconciliation, healing and transformation. This requires solidarity — not an outsider looking in.

THE ROLE OF TRAUMA

One of the many stories of poverty is that of intergenerational trauma. Now, many health, education, justice and social work services use Trauma-Informed Care (TIC). TIC understands the pervasive nature of trauma and promotes environments of healing and recovery. It also has ongoing assessment so that practices and services do not re-traumatise people inadvertently.

STRENGTH OF HUMAN SPIRIT

We've learned that we cannot stereotype poverty. We've also learned that the strength of the human spirit is common to all people: a spark which cannot be extinguished no matter what the external forces.

What keeps the spark going? I've asked many, many people this question and there's a commonality in their responses: the influence of memories, a dream for the future and the support of community, family or whānau.

REMEMBERING

We need to companion with one another, but we also need to companion with our own pasts — our history. Memories are a powerful energiser. "Ka mua, ka muri. Walking backwards into the future." Memories connect us with people, events and situations in the past so that they give support to endure tough times in the present. Memories are enhanced through story telling, music, art and poetry. These contribute to keeping memories alive, and they inspire purpose and action today.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

And when we're inspired we have hope. Our hopes and dreams not only show a possible future, but also give us the energy needed to participate in the coming of the future. The dream is never perfectly formed from the beginning, impervious to change, turmoil or failure. Frequently it can be a dream strained, shattered and reformed, through circumstances such as loss, adversity, failure, conflict, depression, weakness, and yet it is one of the most significant motivating and energising forces in our life and a central component of "spirituality". The inevitable reshaping and reforming of the dream throughout our life requires an ability and humility to be helped by others.

> In the worst winter experiences of inhumanity and cruelty, suffering and struggle, we frequently glimpse that "invincible summer" when the very best of humankind emerges as courage, generosity, creativity, compassion and solidarity.

COMMUNITY

Ultimately, we're talking about community. We can't stereotype those experiencing this "winter" — they are complex individuals living in complex situations and are experiencing poverty and hardship for complex reasons. There are many solutions to poverty, but at the root of them all is community: companioning one another through a time of hardship. We will need to share our resources — our bread — equitably.

I have an image of walking as a group committed to reaching a destination and assisting, holding, encouraging one another at different times during that journey.

SHARING WINTER

So as we prepare for "winter" let us hold the promise of the "invincible summer" for everyone within and around us.

We can approach this season as a community and put aside our self-interest to become present to one another as neighbours and companions.

"E hara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini. My strength is not as an individual, but as a collective."

Photo by Ollinka/Shutterstock.com

Chris Farrelly recently retired as CEO of the Auckland City Mission. He has spent his adult life in ministries among people disadvantaged in their societies.

The Allure of Moral Outrage

LUCAS KEEFER **discusses how moral outrage may work in developing a moral sense when there is no common spiritual or cultural ground and suggests there are other less toxic ways.**

In a recent legal battle over the possibility of mandating COVID-19 vaccines, those on one side see such requirements as a tyrannical overreach into personal liberty to make medical decisions. On the other side, individuals are incensed that mandates aren't in effect because this effectively hobbles collective efforts to mitigate the spread and continued mutation of the COVID-19 virus.

It's no secret that highly politicised issues like this seem to elicit strong emotional reactions, particularly feelings of intense anger. But not only are these feelings common, individuals seem actively motivated to seek out stories of tragedy, scandal and injustice on a seemingly unending quest to feel moral outrage.

Moral Outrage

Moral outrage is typically defined as anger toward a perceived moral violation.

What distinguishes moral outrage from other forms of anger (eg, annoyance, feeling insulted) is that it involves a specifically moral dimension; there must be both a personal moral standard and a perceived violator of that standard.

Additionally, moral outrage seems to reflect anger in combination with intense feelings of disgust.

While some forms of anger are relatively "pure" (eg, being angry at a rude comment), moral outrage is best described as an emotional cocktail blending two intensely negative emotional experiences.

As a psychologist, I have a long-held interest in outrage because it seems to fly in the face of so many of our everyday intuitions about human nature. After all, wouldn't people rather avoid unpleasant experiences that could reduce their happiness?

Given the choice, people seem to prefer pleasant to unpleasant experiences but moral outrage seems a peculiar exception. Moreover, decades of data clearly demonstrate that societies like America are coming apart at the civic seams, with polarisation rapidly increasing year after year.

Why would individuals actively want to feel such strong negative emotions about their leaders, fellow citizens, and others with whom their own lives are inextricably linked?

Counterintuitively, psychologists have long argued that humans seem particularly calibrated to remember things that make us feel bad and to base our decisions on negative emotions. Outrage, particularly on social media, seems like an extension of this fact.

Studies show that not only do individuals encounter more information about immoral behaviour online, but this exposure also elicits substantially stronger feelings of moral outrage.

Why Moral Outrage

What is the allure of all this moral outrage? Recent research in psychology highlights the valuable role that these experiences of outrage play in satisfying specific psychological needs that ultimately may help individuals cope with the human condition.

First, consider this question: How does one know that they are a good person? After all, everyone has at times done some things that are (morally speaking) good and others that are less than good. Since humans are morally imperfect, we all experience doubts about whether deep down we actually are morally worthy.

My colleague Zach Rothschild and I spent years exploring the possibility that people may be able to affirm their moral value by feeling outraged over perceived injustices.

For example, in one series of studies we found that people who felt guiltier after reading about sweatshop labour later expressed more outrage about corporations who profit from this practice.

More surprisingly, we found that if people were given an opportunity to express outrage over corrupt corporations, they later

felt less guilt about their own actions and even rated themselves to be a more moral person.

In fact, in a final study we found that giving people a chance to enhance their moral worth (by asking them to write about a morally upstanding deed in their past) actually dampened outrage in a follow-up task.

Feeling More Moral Ourselves

Studies like these (and work conducted by others) show that some of the hostile emotions we feel may actually be serving a valuable role in allowing people to feel more confident that they are actually a good person deep down. By feeling angry about clear injustices, people can feel that they are advancing the cause of justice and ultimately that they are a morally good person.

In fact, the benefits of moral outrage for the individual may be even more far-reaching.

In more recent work, we have found that for some individuals, the experience of outrage over a specific moral violation can actually enhance their sense that their life as a whole has meaning.

Specifically, we found that when some individuals were given the chance to express outrage over a scandal, they subsequently showed an enhanced sense of meaning in life compared to a control group.

Moreover, giving individuals the chance to affirm the meaningfulness of their lives also led to a subsequent decrease in expressed outrage relative to a comparison group exposed to the same moral wrongdoing.

Other ongoing work in my lab finds that when individuals are reminded of social groups that make them feel angry, they feel even more confident that they really know who they are.

In a simple series of studies, individuals were asked to reflect on groups in society that make them feel angry (or not) and those who did so subsequently felt more confident that they understood themselves and that their lives were an authentic reflection of their values.

Taken together, these studies show that moral outrage is something of a bitter medicine; one that affords numerous existential benefits for the individual despite its unpleasant aftertaste. That said, the logic of these psychological processes gives us critical insight into why people may seek out opportunities to feel and express moral outrage, despite its unpleasantness and negative social costs.

Others Judge Our Moral Value

Finally, it is worth noting that moral outrage also pays off socially for the individual: other studies we have conducted show that when individuals express outrage on social media, they are often seen as a more moral person by others as well.

We found that a Twitter profile with posts expressing outrage about social issues caused the poster to be seen as more trustworthy and attractive.

In other words, expressions of anger may have other benefits for individuals beyond affirming deep existential motives.

Does this mean that people who are outraged on social media are secretly manipulating others or trying to cope with their own psychological insecurities? Not necessarily; psychologists have only recently begun to ask serious questions about why moral outrage is such an appealing phenomenon.

Of course, it is also simply true that many expressions of outrage may reflect genuine moral concern with no hidden psychological or social aim. In short, like most of human behaviour, individual expressions of outrage are likely too multifaceted to be pinned down to a single cause.

Place of Outrage

What we can take away from this research into moral outrage are broader points about its place in our lives. Though it might seem that all the time people spend feeling angry and upset about moral violations could be detrimental to their happiness and well-being, psychological research shows that there may be much more going on under the surface.

> We may need to find new ways for individuals to secure a sense of their significance, identity and moral goodness without the costs incurred by a culture of outrage.

Enemies and injustices allow us to map our place in the world, to see our value, to communicate that value to others, and perhaps even to cope with fundamental concerns about our personal and collective mortality by feeling that our actions have a meaningful impact that will outlive us.

The universe can be a chaotic and messy place, but the struggles we take on ultimately allow individuals to make some sense of all of it in ways that may actually be an important ingredient in a life well-lived. That is why some theorists have argued that moral outrage, despite its toxicity, is an inevitability in modern materialistic societies where individuals must seek ways of mattering without common spiritual or cultural ground.

The early research on outrage so far suggests that this may be right; that individuals and groups may need moral outrages to feel that there is a moral centre in our modern world.

If so, then those interested in cooling the temperature of political and social discourse may need to find new ways for individuals to secure a sense of their significance, identity and moral goodness without the costs incurred by a culture of outrage.

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Photo by Anthony Ricci/Shutterstock.com

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GRATEFUL TEAM IN GODZONE

SUSAN SMITH encourages us to think of ourselves as a community working together during the pandemic.

I was in Thailand two years ago, a delegate at the Mission Sisters' General Chapter. The local English-language newspaper was already reporting on a new type of flu called Corona-virus which was an issue in China — and so an issue in Thailand, too, because of the many Chinese tourists in the country. We were exhorted to wear masks. Communications reaching us from Aotearoa did not suggest there were any real concerns about the virus back home.

When I left Bangkok on 16 February, everyone at the airport was masked. It was a different story when I arrived in Auckland the next day — no apparent protection requirements. But by 25 March the virus — now renamed COVID-19 — had become an issue here, too, and Aotearoa went into Level 4 lockdown.

Lockdown 2020 Brought Us Together

Lockdown was no great hardship for me. I'm retired; I live rurally; our supermarkets had dedicated shopping lanes for the over 70s. Our rural road was largely vehicle-free, a reality appreciated by the bossy pūkeko. We met so many new neighbours out walking, often younger parents with children who would normally have been out of sight at work or school. Younger neighbours offered to do our shopping, while others dropped off autumn harvest goodies. Relish-making and bottling emerged as important activities. There really did seem to be a team of 5 million, or most certainly of 100 in our neighbourhood.

Community Bonds Being Tested

But that feeling of togetherness facing a common enemy has not survived into 2022. For example, in January *The Spinoff* reported that young Northland mum Lolly was in a vehicle with others chasing Jacinda Ardern's vehicle around Paihia. In her video recording, Lolly shouted out: "There's Jacinda in her bullet-proof van, hiding from the public, we're chasing her round Paihia."

Lolly was concerned about the impact of vaccination requirements: "Ever since everything has come into play, really, it's just divided everybody and everybody looks at each other differently now. Like, I don't know about everywhere else, but in town if you're not vaccinated, you're treated so differently."

She is not the first to prefer emotional outbursts over thoughtful conversation around such matters. We've already had Bishop Brian Tamaki and his followers.

But these people are in a minority, and reliable evidence indicates that the majority of New Zealanders recognise the need for government regulations if we are to escape the appalling conditions we see in many other countries.

Media Making Divisions

We know the protestors are influenced by social media outlets — many extreme and distributing misinformation. But the mainstream media, too, has to be held responsible for some of the social division which confronts us today. Lolly's outburst, or Bishop Brian's sermons, make for more tempting reading or viewing than the sober assessments of the scientific and medical world.

The media now seems more interested in making listeners and viewers angry than in offering information. When we are angry or fearful, we want to know what happens next. And more people tuning in means better ratings for a particular media outlet and more money for media owners and advertisers.

Typical of this style of media was a *Daily Mail* report from New Zealand-based London journalist Dan Wootton. He argued that Boris Johnson's policy of no COVID regulations was better than our government's policy grounded in its "abundance of caution" approach.

In response, House Speaker Trevor Mallard pointed out that in the UK there have been 2,384 COVID-related deaths per 1 million compared to 10 deaths per million in New Zealand.

Former All Black Zinzan Brooke, who, like Donald Trump, proposed Ivermectin — the drench used to prevent parasitic infections in animals — as a cure for COVID-19, supported Dan Wootton's claims about the "unimaginable cruelty" of Jacinda Ardern isolated in her "hermit kingdom".

Broadcaster Mike Hosking has on more than one occasion claimed that Jacinda Ardern could learn from Scott Morrison about how to manage the pandemic. Just consider: last month New South Wales exceeded over 1 million cases and over 1,200 deaths; Victoria neared 1 million cases and 2,000 deaths. In Western Australia, with stricter requirements for social distancing and border controls, there have been 1,454 cases and 9 deaths.

I prefer the measured and well-informed comments of Professor Michael Baker *et al* to those from such media people with little knowledge of things scientific or medical.

I'm also astounded at the blindness to the facts, or mysogyny, or jealousy of these men who seem unable to conceive of, let alone affirm, a woman leader who is excelling in leading our country through the waves of pandemic.

Wants Are Not Needs

I have been reflecting, too, on the risk of turning our wants into needs as we tire of the restrictions of the pandemic.

We know about the needs of the people of Tonga at this time; clean drinking water, non-perishable food supplies, shelter. These are real needs.

How different in Aotearoa when a public outcry from some forced the government to overturn its decision around mask-wearing at weddings because brides and grooms were prevented from kissing after tying the knot. That is a want not a need — the prioritising of individual freedoms over social responsibilities.

COVID Effects in Other Countries

The Mission Sisters are a worldwide congregation and throughout the pandemic we've been hearing from our Sisters about what is happening in other countries.

Peru has the highest death rate per capita in the world.

On 9 February India reported 58,077 cases and 1,241 deaths.

Bangladesh, smaller in area than the South Island but with a population of 165 million people, recently reported 16,000 new cases in one day and 20 deaths. In such a densely populated and poverty-stricken country, social distancing and mask-wearing are virtually impossible. Experts believe that these statistics provide very conservative estimates.

Myanmar is reporting a mere 156 new cases per day but we can safely assume the true number is much higher.

The same is true in Senegal and Kenya, where our Sisters believe the number of cases is much higher than official statistics suggest.

Continue Together with Gratitude

The pandemic is not over yet. In 1890, Thomas Bracken, who wrote the lyrics of our national anthem, described New Zealand as God's Own Country. That morphed into "Godzone" — and when I look at what's happening in our country today I think it's a great name.

We may no longer be "a team of 5 million" but I suspect we are still a team of about 4.8 million who understand and recognise that we are indeed blessed.

We may no longer be "a team of 5 million" in accord — and the protests in Wellington and in other centres are showing this — but I suspect we are still a team of about 4.8 million who understand and recognise that we are indeed blessed. We've had time to prepare for the wave of Omicron now upon us.

This is not solely attributable to government policy — and this Government has made a few unhelpful changes. But, so far, our geographical isolation, our more dispersed way of living and our care for the common good have shielded us from the worst effects of COVID-19. Every day I thank God that I live in Aotearoa.

Painting: *The Sacred Place Taratara* by Patricia Howitt © Used with permission www.patriciahowitt.com

Susan Smith RNDM lives near Onerahi and is the author of several books including *Women in Mission: From the New Testament to Today.*

Facing a New Challenge

BRIDGET CRISP shares her trepidation and excitement as she enters a new season in her life.

Phrases from *Ecclesiastes* are ringing in my mind because I'm making some big changes in my life.

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven . . . a time to break up and a time to build up; a time to weep and a time to laugh . . . a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing . . . a time to love and a time to hate; a time for war and a time for peace" (Eccl 3:1-8).

This is a new season for me — a time to study, a time to reflect, a time to consolidate and a time to refocus. A season to be open to possibility.

Moving House

I have recently moved from Auckand to Dunedin. It's a new city and I've shifted because I have a new focus. I'm re-entering academic life as a student in a postgraduate programme at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Otago University. This opportunity is a challenge and it's also a privilege.

First University Days

It's been a while since my primary focus was university study. I completed an undergraduate degree nearly 30 years ago at Massey University. At that time I studied for a Bachelor of Agriculture which was an unusual choice as there were few women doing it.

University life in the late 80s and early 90s exposed me to new ideas and to passionate people and ideals of peace and justice.

Working at MAF

My first job after university was also in a sector which did not employ many women. I took a job in the quarantine service in Auckland which at the time meant I was working for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), today known as Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI). My work there introduced me to people in a wide variety of different circumstances: refugees, migrants, businesspeople and holiday makers. In the daily work of examining artefacts, food, medicines and clothing I learned about what was valued in different cultures and which items posed a disease risk to Aotearoa.

Joining the Sisters

I didn't stay with the MAF service. I felt my interest in the justice and peace ideals I'd carried from my university days deepen as my relationship with God took me on a journey along a new path to the Sisters of Mercy (Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa). I joined that community of Sisters and took vows in 2000. Since then I've had wonderful new experiences and learned new skills.

Involvement in Ministries

Over the years I've been involved in wetland restoration and contributed to creating a teaching food garden as well as giving gardening and cooking classes at Te Waipuna Puawai — a Mercy Community development programme in Auckland. I've had the opportunity of ongoing academic formation in theology and education interspersed with ministry with the community. I've spent time teaching science, biology and religious studies at Rosehill College and McAuley High School.

My love of the environment has developed into an interest and appreciation of cosmology and creation spirituality. In turn, that has deepened my passion for justice-related issues associated with climate change and water quality. I realise that these are issues that the First Peoples of this world have been warning and teaching us about for generations but we have not taken them seriously or listened to their wisdom.

My involvement in different ministries has also meant that I've had the opportunity to participate in several international gatherings. Most were mind-blowing for me. I attended the COP21 in Paris. I had an internship in New York at the Mercy Global Action desk at the United Nations. I joined with Pax Christi at an Asia-Pacific Pax Christi Conference in the Philippines which was looking at the UN Sustainable Development Goals. I came to understand the severity and complexity of the issues, the commitment and passion of many who were engaged in them and a sense of the grit and hope needed to keep going. I also got an insight into the political bureaucracy that can impede possible resolutions and so stymy ways forward that could have given so many so much benefit.

It's true that working in these areas can grind you down through betrayal and disappointment. But I also saw that so many people worked in hope. The many stories and examples of resilience and creative ingenuity showed that together we can indeed make the world a better place — and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

At a New Threshold

So in this new season I'm drawing on these experiences. I'm a beginner again. I'm privileged to have the opportunity to go to university at this stage of my life. I'll be sorting and building, reading and discussing, gathering and contributing, letting things go and learning new things. I'm sitting with the big question and dreaming: What can I contribute to the collective wisdom of others that builds up and strengthens peace and dismantles and diminishes issues that create conflict in our communities and world?

> I think that vulnerability and possibility is about risking an unknown future and exploring ways to chart a course through its uncertainty.

When I was unpacking and organising my things in my new home in Ōtepoti Dunedin, I came across a booklet that's significant for this season. It relates to the concept and principle of Whānau Mercy: "The strength of whānau is tikanga. Tikanga challenges us with clarity of our Mercy why. It emboldens us to be unconventional, countercultural and creative in meeting the poorest and most vulnerable and fearless in carrying God's mercy to our world. 'Catherine (McAuley) always stood midway between vulnerability and possibility'."

So here I am standing midway between vulnerability and possibility. In 1820s-30s Ireland, our founder Catherine McAuley faced a world that was changing with technological advances and new ideas. She saw the poverty and starvation at her doorstep and was compelled to address it. Likewise we see issues of our own time. I think that vulnerability and possibility is about risking an unknown future and exploring ways to chart a course through its uncertainty.

On the one hand, this new season in my life is part of a lifelong process of learning, and on the other hand it's something completely new — not just a repeat of the familiar. So I stand at this new threshold of vulnerability and possibility — and I'm scared and excited.

Painting: *Out of My Mouth to Heaven* by Henry Jabbour © Used with permission Oil on Linen, 96 x 81 cm www.henryjabbour.com

Bridget Crisp RSM has been working with Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand since 2017. She will continue in a limited way while studying.

We Are ALL Celebrants at Eucharist

THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN explains the need to use precise language when discussing our participation as Church.

We all do it! We use language inaccurately. We use shorthands — for speed or out of laziness. We use words that "work" even when they insult others or falsify the situation.

I grew up in a home where a ballpoint pen was a "Biro" and a vacuum cleaner was a "Hoover". These were technical inaccuracies — our vacuum cleaner wasn't Hoover branded and we only occasionally use pens make by Biro — but no one was hurt by them.

Thomas O'Loughlin is a priest and Professor-Emeritus of Historical Theology. He is author of *Becoming One* (Liturgical Press, 2019).

We did damage, though, when we used language that not only betrayed our biases and prejudices, but which perpetuated and further embedded them. I recall that it was common to refer to "a son" being born, whereas a female infant was "a baby" or merely "a child". One of my uncles had all daughters and I can recall his brothers and sisters (my parents, aunts and uncles) lamenting the fact: "Poor Joe, he has only daughters." When I first overheard this — we children were playing and so it was assumed we did not hear what the adults were talking about — I was not sure why this was such a pity, but I did perceive that it would be much better to have sons rather than children.

Reactionaries dismiss challenging such stereotypes and prejudice as "wokeness". However, if you have ever been on the receiving end of prejudice — for your gender, race, nationality, body shape, disability, or sexual orientation — then you are glad when misuse of language stops.

False Language in Catholicism

We have a long history of sloppy language in our Church. Just take the word "Mass" – it comes from a misunderstanding of the dismissal *(Ite, missa est)*. What we really mean when we say Mass is Eucharist.

And think of the word "Church" — which means the assembly of the people. Now, we use it for a building and then we wonder why we often forget that we are a community! "Church" is first and foremost a word referring to a human group.

The list goes on.

But if we are to listen to one

another in a synodal Church, then we will have to be more careful lest our use of sloppy language leads us astray.

Who Is the Celebrant?

Here is just one example of how we confuse ourselves and so fail to appreciate our doctrine and what we are doing when we celebrate the liturgy.

Many people think that at the Eucharist there is a celebrant (that is, someone in presbyteral orders) and then there are the others — the laity. This is perhaps understandable. There must be at least one presbyter, but whether there are 10 or 20 or 200 others does not seem to matter. If there is one fewer than one presbyter, then there is no celebration. But one fewer non-presbyter, and the celebration goes ahead.

But that fails to express the reality of what we are doing as a Church — a community that forms the Body of Christ.

We ALL gather to celebrate and thank the Father in, with and through the Anointed One.

Each of the baptised is a celebrant. We need to realise that the gathering is not a few actors and then a large audience. We are wholly celebrant.

Each of us celebrates as a member of the holy People of God; the presbyter presides.

Who Is the Principal Celebrant?

When there are several clergy around for a celebration of the Eucharist, one of them still has to preside. In this case we may have heard or asked ourselves: "Who is the principal celebrant?"

Understood within the question is this surface-level assumption: "Who is the principal celebrant among the presbyters assembled here?"

But this question falls into the trap of thinking of the Eucharist as the work of the priest or the priests, rather than seeing the liturgy as belonging (in differing ways) to all God's people.

So to the question: "Who is the principal celebrant?" the only answer that is consistent with *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Vatican II *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, is this: the main, principal celebrant is the whole assembly.

Synod Means "New Relationships"

Many people are wondering what the outcome of the Synod for a Synodal Church process will be. Some seek new structures and others imagine that new structures are the very things we should be avoiding. Some in the Vatican, we are told, believe they should guide the process to avoid all the awkward questions such as the ordination of women or removing obligatory sacerdotal celibacy. We are told that the Bishop of Rome wants the focus to be on evangelisation.

The simple problem is that as soon as you ask people about their hopes and fears, they tell you! If you do not want to have such awkward thoughts brought into discussion, then do not ask to hear people's thoughts!

So what will synodality bring? We do not know. I suspect that it will disappoint many on both sides. Then the challenge will be to avoid schism.

One thing that may help avert such a crisis is to think of this process as establishing new ways of relationship.

In this, nothing could be more urgent than to move beyond the notion that the Eucharist is the presbyter's celebration which people attend.

We are all celebrants. And our community must become wholly celebrant.

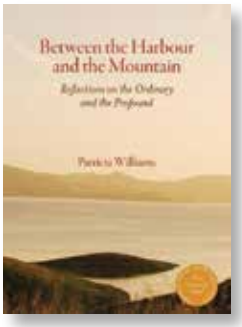
Photo by Aaron of LA Photography/ Shutterstock.com

REVIEW

Between the Harbour and the Mountain

Reflections on the Ordinary and the Profound

by Patricia Williams
Published by Calico Publishing, 2021. (NZD 35)
Reviewed by Lyndall Brown



This book is a gem full of rich encounters. The author's spirit, wisdom and life experiences fill every page as she contemplates and reflects on the unfolding of her journey.

The reader encounters creation and its wonder and beauty seen through the eyes of the author in her neighbourhood and in the Pacific where she once lived.

Patricia's stories give glimpses of the Sacred or Mystery which have touched her life profoundly.

Between the Harbour and the Mountain is filled, too, with depth and insights gleaned from writers such as Teilhard de Chardin, Thomas Merton, Beatrice Bruteau and Thich Nhat Hanh revealing a breath of spirituality and theology. These rich sources are beautifully interwoven into the life experiences that are developed around several themes.

I was inspired to see with contemplative eyes, to appreciate the beauty and wonder of creation and all life and to open my being to the rich resources of other writers that hold the potential to deepen my life.

This is a book for those who want to join in the dance of creation and relish the preciousness of life.

STATIONS IN THE CROSS

Hidden in plain sight
she remembers the factory.
It resembles any other factory.
Hidden in plain sight
he remembers the building site.
It resembles any other building site.
Hidden in plain sight
they remember the mine.
It resembles any other mine.
Hidden in plain sight
she remembers the beauty salon.
It resembles any other beauty salon.
Hidden in plain sight
he remembers the vineyard.
It resembles any other vineyard.
Hidden in plain sight
she remembers the kitchen.
It resembles any other kitchen.
Hidden in plain sight
they remember the boat.
It resembles any other boat.

Yet beneath the ground and grass,
grapes, plates,
waves and nails
is the wounding and dying of Jesus.
His face is imprint on the torn dress and bloodied jeans.
Her arms cross to shield from blows.
Their feet long for home and
their eyes are mines of sorrow.

The canaries have forgotten how to sing.
But a thousand bellbirds tell of all
that's hopeful in the world.

Anne Powell ©

Sculpture: *Let the Oppressed Go Free* by Timothy Schmalz © Used with permission www.sculpturebytps.com

The sculpture shows St Josephine Bakhita freeing those trafficked and enslaved.

ABUSE IN THE NEW ZEALAND CHURCH

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops and Leaders of Religious Congregations publish research on reported cases of abuse in the Church from the 1950s to 2021.

In one country after another around the world the abuse of children and adults by priests, religious and other Church members has been uncovered. Many of these offences and crimes were known to Church authorities but in most cases they were excused and hidden. Church authorities decided to protect the "good name of the Church" rather than the children and adult victims — the members of the Church. That response was widespread. In the recent report on the Archdiocese of Munich-Freising, Germany, Benedict XVI was accused of "misconduct" in his dealing with four complaints from his time as archbishop there in the 1970s and 80s. The challenge now is for Church authorities to act humbly, compassionately and truthfully, showing the integrity the Gospel calls for.

Prodded by survivors of abuse, their families and the media, government interventions such as the Royal Commission into Institutional Reponses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia and the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care in Aotearoa New Zealand have revealed the scale of the abuse and some of the pain of survivors.

We know that by establishing the National Office of Professional Standards the Church has worked hard in recent years to address and take seriously the issue of abuse. But these improvements come too late for many victims and survivors.

The Christian Churches in New Zealand asked to be included in the Royal Commission. In preparation they combed their storage places for reports of abuse over the decades from the 1950s. Now we have a picture of the extent of abuse in the Catholic Church in Aotearoa, although we know that many victims will never have reported their abuse.

PUBLISHED REPORT OF RESEARCH

Last month the New Zealand Catholic Bishops and Leaders of Religious Congregations published the results of their research into reported cases of abuse from the 1950s to 30 June 2021 — preparation requested by the Royal Commission. Te Rōpū Tautoko, the group that coordinates Church engagement with the Royal Commission, acknowledged that although "the Information Gathering

Project (IGP) was a major exercise involving dozens of people over two years, including searching paper files dating back 70 years in hundreds of places" there will still be other unknown, unreported cases.

The IGP used the Commission's definition of abuse which includes physical, sexual and emotional or psychological abuse, and neglect. Failure to act on reports and facilitating abuse were also included in the categorisation of reports of abuse.

The IGP report is bruising reading — but by now, not surprising. As religious congregations representative Sister Margaret Anne Mills said: "Each piece of data represents many people's lives. Much of it represents terrible harm committed by one person on another. We can never forget that."

Cardinal John Dew, president of the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference said the statistics "are horrifying and something we are deeply ashamed of."

NUMBER OF ABUSE REPORTS 1950S–2021

According to the IGP, from the 1950s to 2021, 1,680 reports of abuse were made by 1,122 individuals against clergy, brothers, sisters and other lay people in the Church.

ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

378 reports were made about 182 diocesan clergy — that is 14 per cent of all diocesan clergy serving from the 1950s to 2020.

599 reports were made about 187 brothers and priests belonging to a religious congregation — 8 per cent of all.

258 reports were made about 120 women religious — 3 per cent of all.

And 138 allegations were made against 103 mostly lay staff, volunteers and similar people in the Church.

REPORTS ABOUT CHILDREN

Of the total 1,680 complaints, 1,350 involved children and 164 involved adults. In 167 cases the age of the person was unknown.

Almost half (835) were reports of sexual harm against a child.

Of these, 687 relate to educational facilities such as schools and boarding schools, 425 to residential care such as orphanages, hostels and social service agencies, 228 to parishes and 122 to other locations. For a further 219, the actual location of where the alleged abuse happened is unknown.

The IGP found that in all but 308 reports the alleged abusers were identified. A total of 1,296 reports were against 592 named alleged abusers. Of this group, 393 had one report about them, 143 had two to four reports, 40 had five to nine, 10 had 10 to 14 and six had 15 or more reports. Those six people accounted for more than 10 per cent of all reports of alleged abuse.

ABUSE REPORTS IN DECADES

The reports also show the decade when the abuse started. There were 62 cases before 1950; 204 in the 1950s; 376 in the 1960s; 447 in the 1970s; 202 in the 1980s; 68 in the 1990s; 33 in the 2000s; 56 in the 2010s; 3 in the 2020s. In 229 cases the date was unknown.

PAYMENTS MADE

The IGP also showed the payments made by Church authorities in response to their dealing with the reports. A total of $16.8 million has been paid directly to approximately 470 survivors in pastoral or *ex gratia* payments by dioceses or religious congregations. $8 million has been paid to survivors of the St John of God Brothers and nearly $2 million has been paid by the Sisters of Nazareth.

In addition to the above, dioceses and religious congregations have provided paid counselling and therapeutic and social support, as well as in-kind support such as payment of school fees.

ROYAL COMMISSION IS ONGOING

The IGP found that 236 reports of abuse (14 per cent of all complaints) relate to Marylands School Christchurch, a residential school for boys, many with disabilities, run from the 1950s to 1984 by the Hospitaller Order of St John of God brothers and at the Hebron Trust, a Christchurch facility for at-risk youth operated by one of the brothers.

The three most prolific offenders worked at Marylands, and the most prolific offender went on to establish the Hebron Trust.

A further 239 reports of abuse (also 14 per cent of the total) relate to St Joseph's Orphanage (an institution adjacent to Marylands) and Nazareth House, Christchurch. Half of those reports do not identify an offender.

Last month the Royal Commission investigated the events at Marylands, the Hebron Trust and St Joseph's Orphanage. We heard the witnesses' stories.

EACH PIECE OF DATA REPRESENTS MANY PEOPLE'S LIVES. MUCH OF IT REPRESENTS TERRIBLE HARM COMMITTED BY ONE PERSON ON ANOTHER. WE CAN NEVER FORGET THAT.

How do we deal with this legacy as a Church? Margaret Anne Mills DOLC said: "Being involved in being part of healing that harm, as much as is possible, is, and needs to continue to be, our focus. All Church leaders need to urgently understand and acknowledge our shared history; understand and acknowledge the shocking impact of abuse in church settings on victims and their families; understand what it means for survivors and our faith communities; and act today."

Cardinal Dew said: "As we continue to respond to the Royal Commission into Abuse and we build a safer Church for everyone, I firmly hope that facts like these will help us to face the sad reality. The Church will learn from this and affirm its commitment to the work of safeguarding."

For further information:
Te Rōpū Tautoko website:
www.tautoko.catholic.org.nz
Royal Commission on Abuse in Care:
www.abuseincare.org.nz

To report abuse or concerns:
Email: pro.standards@nzcbc.org.nz
Phone: 0800 114 622

Photo by Mrmohock/Shutterstock.com

Chance for a Revolution

MASSIMO FAGGIOLI discusses the need for a revolution of structural change and spiritual renewal in the Church to move forward from the abuse crisis.

New pieces have been added to the puzzle of the global scandal of clergy sex abuse and the Catholic Church's failures to respond and give justice to the victims. The latest revelations were announced in Germany in January this year when a law firm published the results of an independent investigation into cases of abuse that occurred between 1945-2019 in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising.

The Munich report also provides a lens for evaluating the Vatican's response to the abuse crisis in the past 12 years — because it was only around 2010, with revelations of Church-related abuse coming out of Ireland and Germany, that Rome began to take the issue seriously.

German People Want Change

German Catholics are extremely upset with what the new report has shown. Georg Bier, a canon lawyer based in Freiburg, says this could be a real problem for Pope Francis.

"Francis always says that the Church must prosecute abuse and cover-ups as strictly as possible, but he is prepared to say in individual cases: 'It wasn't that bad, keep going'. With all due respect to the Holy Father, I consider this to be an inappropriate and unwise course of action," Bier wrote on the news and information site of the German Catholic Church.

"Anyone who says he has made mistakes and considers them so serious that he sees himself unable to continue exercising the office of bishop, does not have to be fired with insult and disgrace. But you can still say: Now a new beginning is necessary. You can do that with honour," Bier continued.

"But when it comes to the question of whether someone still feels up to the office, I think it is problematic to leave the decision to the pope," he said.

"If a bishop says he can't do it anymore because he feels that

the faithful no longer trust him, he shouldn't continue either — no matter what the pope thinks.

"Clearly, this is not provided for by canon law. But we are at a point that this matter can no longer be regulated by canon law. I do not think that relying solely on obedience [to the pope] on such a question is a sufficient basis for staying in office."

Bier was implicitly referring to the case of 68-year-old Cardinal Reinhard Marx, who has been archbishop of Munich and Freising since 2007.

Bishops Offering Resignations

Marx, who also holds major posts at the Vatican, offered his resignation to the pope in June 2021, but Francis refused to accept it and wrote Marx a letter, clearly intended for public consumption, to explain his reasons why.

Then there is Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki, who has been archbishop of Cologne since 2014. The Vatican ordered the 65-year-old cardinal to take a "spiritual sabbatical" last September after it was discovered that he had seriously mismanaged abuse cases in the archdiocese.

But it was just a sabbatical. Woelki is scheduled to return to the archdiocese next month at the start of Lent.

Francis also refused to accept the resignation of another German prelate last September. That, too, was for mishandling abuse cases. Instead, he asked Archbishop Stefan Hesse of Hamburg to merely take a "time out". The 55-year-old, like the others, remains in place.

There is no question that Pope Francis is the best chance the Catholic Church has to learn from this crisis and renew itself. He has set a different course from the point of view of law and procedures in cases of clergy accused of abuse or coverup.

But many Catholics in Germany and elsewhere believe that this situation requires a more profound kind of change.

Serious Crisis in Catholicism

How bad is it? "Perhaps the most serious crisis Catholicism has faced since the Reformation." That's the way the late Andrew Greeley, the Chicago priest, sociologist and best-selling author, described the Church sex abuse crisis in the Illinois paperback edition of Jason Berry's book *Lead Us Not into Temptation* (1992).

Berry broke the silence of clergy sex abuse in 1984 with a series of articles in the *National Catholic Reporter* — almost 20 years before the *Boston Globe's* highly-acclaimed "Spotlight" exposé.

I came to the same conclusion as Greeley, but only much later, after the wave of new revelations between 2010 (especially in Germany) and 2017-2018 (especially in Australia, Chile, France and the United States).

People can still debate, even now at the beginning of 2022, whether or not the abuse crisis is really the most serious crisis Catholicism has faced in the last five centuries.

> In order to restore peace after a revolution, a community needs spiritual renewal. But it also needs constitutional change.

But what is not up for debate, I think, is that this is less a revolt than a revolution — to paraphrase the Duke of Liancourt's words when he informed Louis XVI of the storming of the Bastille Prison in July 1789.

"But it's a revolt!" the French king is reported to have said. "No, sire, a revolution," the duke replied.

The story may be apocryphal, but it makes an important distinction.

Revolution in Structures Needed

Francis has taken the abuse crisis more seriously than his predecessors and most other bishops and Church leaders.

But looking especially at the German cases, many perceive that this pontificate puts little emphasis on the value and importance of structures and administration. This combines well with his distance from the Roman Curia and academic theology.

The pope is seen to be applying a double standard. For instance, he has forced bishops in Poland and Chile to resign for mishandling abuse while he has made some German bishops stay in office. This does not help build confidence in the way the Church operates.

Francis is right when he says that the emphasis on structural change (power in the Church, model of ordained ministry) can blind us to the need of spiritual renewal. But this can also happen the other way around.

The question is whether we see the Church's abuse crisis as something akin to a revolt, which is easier to control with ordinary means, or whether we view it as a revolution.

In order to restore peace after a revolution, a community needs spiritual renewal. But it also needs constitutional change. And by "constitutional change" here I do not mean changing the *status Ecclesiae* (what the Church is, in its essence), but some of the *statuta Ecclesiae* (laws of the Church that can and sometimes must be changed to preserve the *status Ecclesiae*).

Structural Change and Spiritual Renewal

20 years on from the *Boston Globe* "Spotlight" revelations, the rift continues between those who think that this crisis can be survived only with a constitutional approach aimed at changing fundamentally some structures of the Church, and those who are still convinced that spiritual and cultural renewal, together with new systems of repression and punishment, will do.

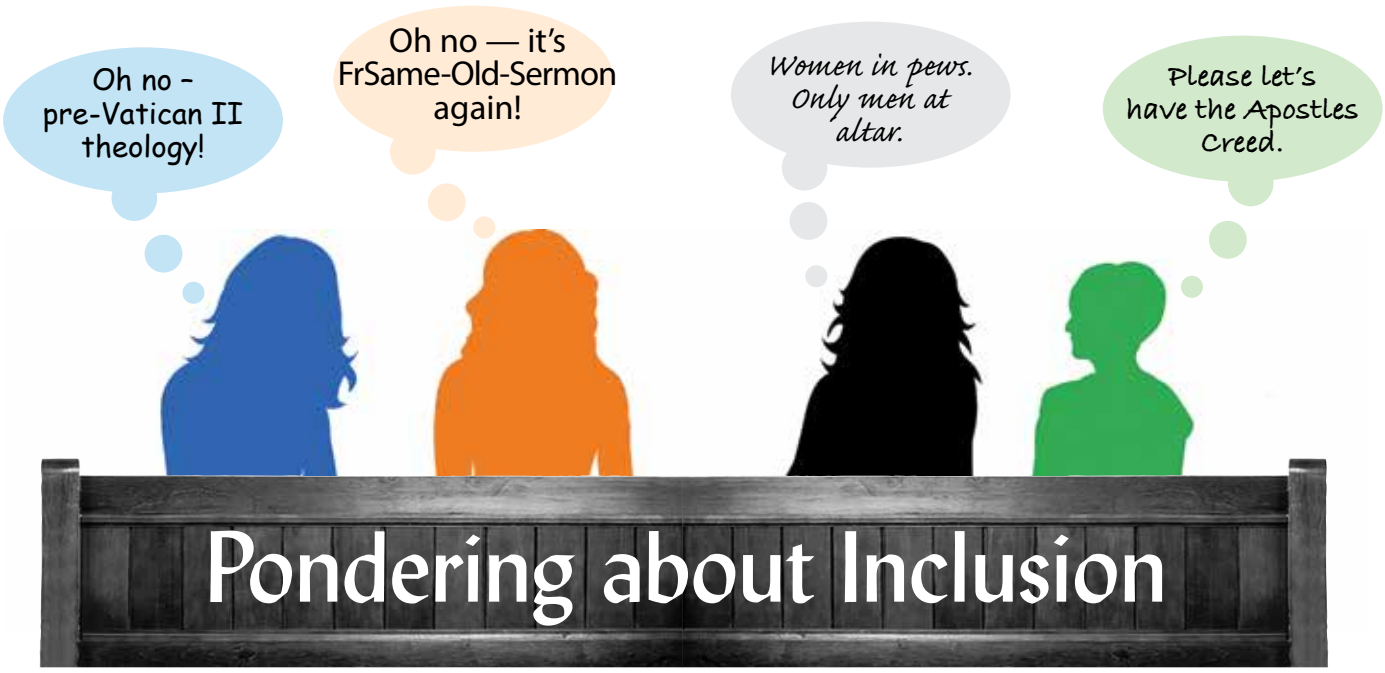
The Church is not a political entity. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is its constitution and the salvation of souls is its supreme law. And without the ecclesial dimension of the faith, there is no Gospel.

The idea that the Gospel can still speak to the world today without structural changes in the Church is just the flipside of the naïve "no to the Church, yes to Jesus" approach.

Read full article at: https://international.la-croix.com/news/signs-of-the-times/a-revolution-not-a-revolt/15572

Painting: ***Wings of Hope*** by Joyce La Baw © Used with permission www.joycelabaw.com

Massimo Faggioli is a Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University, USA.



Pondering about Inclusion

My mother went to Eucharist for communion and for the community. Her theology is closer to the theology of the early Christians of the Acts of the Apostles. I like it.

But I have a recurring disturbing thought at each communion: Why do we still exclude people from communion in our Eucharists? And, by being here, am I complicit in this exclusion? I know the "theological" reasons for excluding some people and I can't agree with it. Exclusion goes against everything the Eucharist is about.

The Eucharist is welcoming and inclusive. We *welcome*, saying "So glad you're all here with us." We share *Good News* with everyone, not just the chosen few. We all share the communion *banquet*. We offer *thanksgiving*, saying: "We're grateful you are with us today." And we *love*, because we want everyone to feel accepted regardless of race, religion, gender orientation, marital status. We can all share this meal.

Barbara Cameron RNDM lives in Hamilton. She has spent years ministering overseas.

Communion and community looks different, depending on where you are and who you're with. When I was living in a mountain village in Latin America, we had no resident priest. This meant no Eucharist was said all year, but we had meaningful liturgies led by lay village catechists and the Sisters who jointly administered the parish.

Now I'm living in a country parish in Aotearoa New Zealand with one priest for three church communities. "Daily" Eucharist is reduced to twice a week apart from Sunday Eucharist.

Are we disadvantaged compared with cities, with their choice of more than one Eucharist a day, or are we in solidarity with the mountain people?

There are other kinds of communion, too, that happen outside a church. Every day I am welcomed into a sacred place by the outstretched arms of the most magnificent giant oak tree when I arrive at the entrance to the river path where I do my thanksgiving walk each morning.

The music is the melody of the dawn chorus, birdsong all around.

The Word of God: "God has written a precious book, whose letters are the multitude of created things written in the universe … In contemplation of creation we see in each thing a teaching from God . . . to hear a message, to listen to a silent voice" (*LS* 85).

The congregation is made up of walkers, joggers and runners, cyclists, mental health patients, dog walkers — people of all genders, races, cultures, ages, along with various four-legged creatures, diverse winged creatures and the fish in the river. It's the river path community, sharing a similar experience, finding nourishment for their souls, health for their bodies and peace of mind in God's creation. We greet one another with a word, a smile — a sign of peace.

The mystery and power of the river and open sky have a transformative effect. My global awareness is raised when in my mind I follow the river flowing on its journey to the ocean. I'm reminded of the importance of water for all my sisters and brothers around the world, those who suffer for lack of water. I'm aware of the work for justice still to be done so that all share in the world's resources. After all, we are all God's children; one family, united under the same sky.

I turn towards home humming "God's peace is flowing like a river / Flowing out through you and me." I whisper: "Make me a channel of your peace this day." And I go into the day with the encouragement: "Go in peace to love and serve our God in the least of our sisters and brothers."

Image: Adapted from Nadzeya Shanchuk/ Shutterstock.com

Ecumenism Matters

I was born in Cromwell, Central Otago in 1935 and baptised in St Andrew's Anglican Church on 4 August that year. Half a century earlier my Catholic great-grandparents Mary and Cornelius Murphy, immigrants from County Clare and County Killarney, were married nearby in the Church of the Irish Martyrs.

In the early 2000s, my wife Lesley and I retired and made our home (until health triggered our move closer to family in Auckland) in a very different Cromwell. Much of the old town had been inundated by the Clyde Dam. The culture was mostly newcomers lacking roots in the older history. Few had picked up the irony of the Catholic Church being named for the Irish martyrs, many of whom died under the oppression wrought by Oliver Cromwell for whom the town is named.

I'm old enough to have been deeply affected by the ecumenical movement that swept through most mainstream Christian denominations in the wake of Vatican II. But I also remember the stifling of the Council's spirit — how its faithfulness of shared listening hearts was usurped by narrow-vision "churchianity" with all its parochialism, hollow tradition, unassailable dogma and plans for structural union. It is lamentable that this opportunity for ministry of the Church to the loved world dwindled, and with it interfaith and interdenominational sharing. How many small, local, Christian faith communities have been disestablished in the last 20 years? How many are inward-facing, in terminal decline, while the universal Incarnation remains everywhere yet is uncelebrated, unwitnessed in those special locales?

Some years ago a friend took us to the Church of St John the Baptist in the English Cotswolds. The church, dating from the 12th century, was the scene of two events that say much about the story of Christianity in England.

The first was in 1521, four years after Martin Luther hung up his theses but long before England was disturbed (Henry VIII was bent on grabbing the Church's wealth and authority but he was no Protestant), 12 local men and nine women were convicted at the Church of St John the Baptist of heresy. Their crime: reading the Bible together without permission (perhaps Coverdale's translations then rolling off the presses as pamphlets in Zurich). All were branded and forced to do public penance on village market days and in the church during High Mass. Some were imprisoned in unsympathetic monasteries. One was charged with the grievous sin of telling a man that instead of going on a costly pilgrimage he should offer his money to God's own image, the poor people, the blind and lame.

The second event was in 1649 when militant Puritan Protestantism was ascendant in the person of Oliver Cromwell whose brutality and intolerance is legend. On 17 May three soldiers were executed on his orders in St John's churchyard. They belonged to a movement popularly known as The Levellers, who believed in civil rights, religious toleration, even suffrage. They were attached to Cromwell's army but revolted against his excessive violence and increasingly dictatorial arrogance.

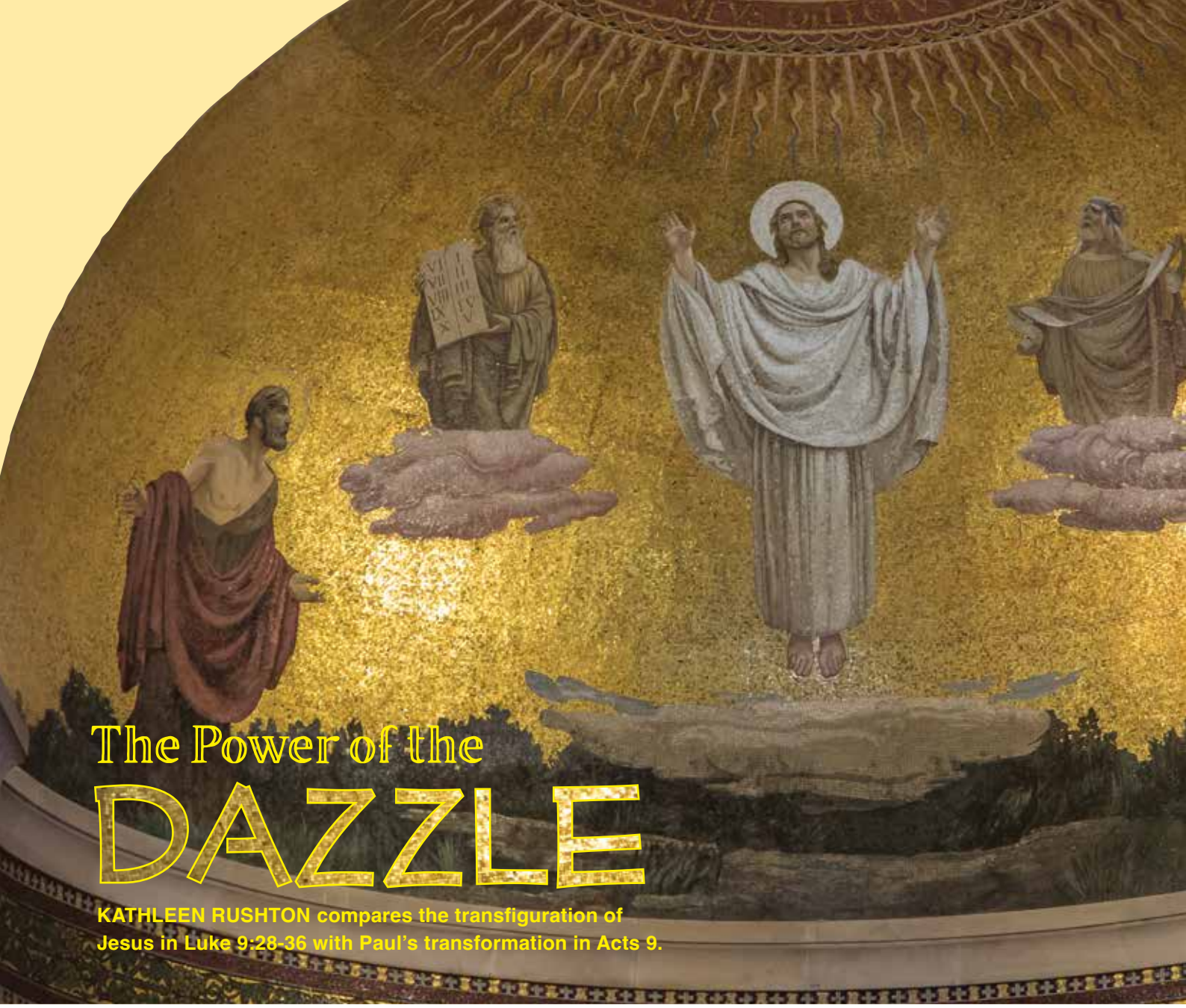
All this was made more poignant when we remember lines from Christopher Fry's work *A Sleep of Prisoners*, commemorating the 300 Levellers locked in St John's church that day:

> Dark and cold we may be, but this
> Is no winter now. The frozen misery
> Of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to move;
> The thunder is the thunder of the floes,
> The thaw, the flood, the upstart Spring.
>
> Thank God our time is now when wrong
> Comes up to face us everywhere,
> Never to leave us till we take
> The longest stride of soul men ever took.
>
> Affairs are now soul size.
> The enterprise is exploration into God.

Maybe there's a prophetic word there for the fragmented Christianity within the emerging history of Aotearoa New Zealand today. Maybe our mistake was to imagine history as more ordered than it is: we anticipated a long summer after the spring of Vatican II. Dark and cold, we can't see that this is not winter, but the beginning of the thaw. The old town of Cromwell was inundated — is now entirely changed — but it remains.

Painting: ***Old Stone Church at Clyde*** by Helen Blair

Boyd Wilson is an old bloke living in Auckland after long service in agricultural journalism and rural Church ministry.



The Power of the DAZZLE

KATHLEEN RUSHTON compares the transfiguration of Jesus in Luke 9:28-36 with Paul's transformation in Acts 9.

Jesus, at prayer in Luke 9:18, signals the beginning of a significant new development in the Gospel. He asks his disciples the big question: "Who do the crowds say that I am?" Because their responses are inadequate Jesus asks: "But who do you say I am?" Peter gets it right: "The Messiah of God."

But saying Jesus is the Messiah is not enough. The disciples need to understand the kind of Messiah he is. And Jesus explains: "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Lk 9:22). Jesus has already wrestled with this paradox during his temptation (Lk 4:1-13). Now it is the disciples' turn to engage with this unexpected promise.

Where Will Following Jesus Lead?

A mysterious scene, which we know as the transfiguration, follows (Lk 9:28-36). In the scene Jesus is praying when "the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white".

The word "dazzling" is the same word used in Acts 9:3 to portray the light that Paul enters on his way to Damascus. Paul is experiencing the reflection of the transfigured Jesus. He, too, is transformed into a disciple.

Paul's Three Attitudes

In *The Gospel According to St Paul* Cardinal Carlo Martini describes the fruits of Paul's transformation as three inner attitudes and two ways of action.

Joy and Peace

The first attitude is Paul's *inner joy and peace*: "I am filled with comfort. With all our affliction, I am overjoyed" (2 Cor 7:4). His joy is real: "[We] have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us" (2 Cor 4:7). He continues: "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed . . . struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (2 Cor 4:8-11). Paul's joy deals with burdens, difficulties and the ups and downs of daily life. He realises that something much stronger is rising in him.

Gratitude

The second inner attitude is Paul's

capacity for gratitude. He urges people to thank God with joy (Col 1:11-12). All his letters begin with a prayer of thanksgiving (except Galatians which is a letter of correction). The First Letter to the Thessalonians, probably the first written document of the New Testament, begins with: "Grace and peace. We give thanks to God always for you" (1 Thes 1:1-2). Even when reproving Paul is not bitter. Through God's gift of transfiguration, he has the ability to see the good first. He affirms what is positive in each community he addresses, before he writes about what needs attention.

Praise

His third inner attitude is *praise*. Paul draws on the Jewish tradition of blessing to embrace everything that concerns the life of the community in Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph 1:3).

Paul's Two Modes of Action

Resilience

Martini says that Paul's transformation shows his *never-ending capacity to bounce back*. He begins preaching in Damascus but then has to flee. Again, he preaches in Jerusalem and is made to leave. This treatment becomes a pattern of his life (eg, Acts 14:19:21). Paul's transfiguration continues through the power of the Risen One who enters into his weakness and lives in him as strength.

Freedom of Spirit

His second way of acting is characterised by a *freedom in the spirit*. Paul acts from his inner freedom unworried by pressure to conform to what is not of the Gospel. Writing to the Galatians about Jewish Christians in Jerusalem demanding that the Gentile Titus be circumcised, Paul says: "We did not submit to them even for a moment, that the truth of the Gospel might always remain with you" (Gal 2:5). He called Peter to account for bowing to the circumcision faction and no longer eating with the Gentile Christians (Gal 2:11-14). Paul's sense of freedom comes from his sense of belonging totally to Christ.

Being Open to Transfiguration

We can lose our capacity for appreciating the extraordinary in our lives and be ground down by life — poverty, burnout, legalism, worry, judging others or unhappiness. Yet we've probably all had experiences or stories of being transfigured by a "dazzling" moment. I remember when my father was dying that I felt completely overcome, as if I could no longer cope. I looked out of the hospital window and saw a rainbow stretching across the sky. It was vivid and beautiful and seemed to gather me into it. As I watched I felt reassured — gently strengthened and transformed. And it remained with me.

We have the capacity to be surprised and transformed by a "dazzling" light — whether it is a rainbow, an insight, an experience, a word or a gesture. The dazzling moment can be a seemingly ordinary occasion: the sleep-deprived mother who inspires us to lend a hand; the lonely person who we see needs visiting; the tense situation that urges us to intervene with kindness rather than the expected censure; the mourning of the bereaved which encourages us to mourn alongside and comfort.

We may have been "dazzled" by the generosity of Aotearoa New Zealand families helping the people of Tonga — and transformed through our own sense of relationship and willingness to contribute increase also.

Sometimes we experience the dazzling light of realising we are part of creation — the thrill of hearing a bird call in the bush; the awe of a landscape, a seascape, the night sky; the exhilaration of catching the perfect wave; a sudden experience of being one with everything.

These are moments, but transformation is ongoing. As with Paul and the disciples, we seek to nurture and grow in awareness these moments and experiences of newfound peace and joy — what we might call our Christ core.

We grow in our capacity for gratitude and show our gratitude by affirming others and acknowledging the influence for good they have on us. We are being transfigured into Christ. By facing our fears, our reality and the truth we can grow in resilience. And by reflecting on the Gospel, by ourselves and with others, and allowing it to percolate into us, we can grow in freedom of spirit. ✠

2nd Sunday of Lent:
RL Luke 9:28-36
RCL Alternative 9:28-36, (37-43)

Photo by DyziO/Shutterstock.com

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

Photo by Elena Rostunova/Shutterstock.com

BecomingaNeighbour

I collect my boxes from where I've stored them over the summer and pile them in my empty room in our new flat. Opening them I find forgotten clothing and books greeting me like old friends. We flatmates stand in the empty living room and make a list of the things we need to sort out: internet, electricity, furniture, enough plates to have friends round and food to fill the pantry. I feel exhausted from all I need to do — the monotony and the decisions to be made. Yet I have family and friends supporting me as I settle into this new flat and in time it will be all set up. Most importantly, I'm excited about the opportunity for community.

Building community is a huge goal of mine. In this new suburb with a different demographic — fewer students and more families — I'm thinking about how I will connect with my neighbours and engage with the challenges and joys of daily life in this place.

Housing is a hot topic in Aotearoa. We have a choked rental market and high bars for entry into property ownership. It is denying too many the human right of shelter. Having a comfortable, affordable place should be accessible to everyone, but it is not. Housing represents stability and community. I'm aware of my privilege and support in being able to access rental housing in the area where I want to live.

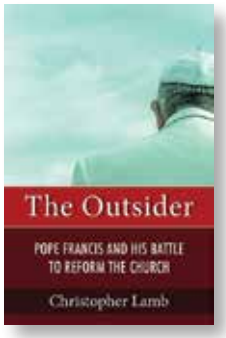
Where we live gives us the opportunity for a basic form of community — of engaging with people in our neighbourhood. This is not a new concept for a Christian. Paul's letters describe the early Church based in local areas and operating out of one another's houses, responding to community needs as the opportunity arose. Jesus, too, ministered in a relatively small area of Galilee. He stayed with people and met groups in their houses; where they were at and with what they needed.

In this new neighbourhood, I'm challenged to make community with the people around me. My Church is discussing "Neighbours Day", a day to meet with our neighbours and celebrate with them. Our flat proposes taking baking to our neighbours as a way of introducing ourselves.

I'm thinking about the privilege of having this rental house to live in and looking forward to participating in the community of my new place. I want to engage with the community around me as Jesus did when he lived in Galilee. I'm reflecting on how to challenge the system which produces an inequality of housing in Aotearoa and which locks some people out of the stability and community that housing can bring. And, of course, I'm looking at the boxes sitting in the corner that still need unpacking.

Shar Mathias reads, writes, explores the mountains and enjoys cooking. She is an ecologist and lives in Dunedin.

REVIEWS



The Outsider

Pope Francis and His Battle to Reform the Church

by Christopher Lamb
Published by Orbis Books, 2020. (USD 24.00)
Reviewed by Ann Hassan

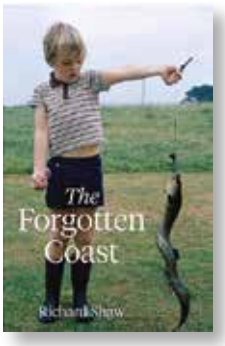
In *The Outsider*, Christopher Lamb (UK journalist and Rome correspondent for *The Tablet*) gives us a vision of Pope Francis's papacy.

We get a sense of the man, an account of his desired reforms and a feel for life at the Holy See — but most of all we receive a detailed account of the oppressive weight of opposition to Francis from within the Church.

Lamb describes Francis's singular position: post-Vatican II, but dealing with a reactionary shift away from the Council's changes; the problematic situation of the "parallel papacy" of Benedict XVI. He describes the complex whirl of Vatican life, but also the political, social and economic forces at play — the heft of figures like Steve Bannon and the web of allegiances behind financial affairs.

At the end of the book Lamb offers a "Timeline of Opposition", detailing the many efforts between 2013-2020 to thwart Francis's efforts at reform. This is probably the most compelling aspect of the book — the sheer volume and regularity of obstructiveness makes convincing Lamb's portrait of an embattled yet persistent Francis.

The Outsider will interest readers of Church history, those keen to know more about Pope Francis himself — and anyone musing on what might happen next.



The Forgotten Coast

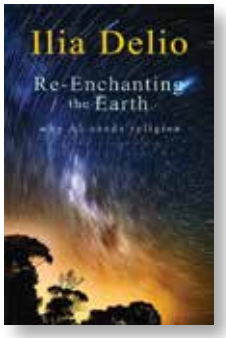
by Richard Shaw
Published by Massey University Press, 2021. (NZD 35.00)
Reviewed by Richard Wild

Until recently, the sacking of Parihaka, and subsequent land confiscation was rarely acknowledged or discussed. Taranaki family histories invariably began with the narrative of first generation settlers breaking in the land. It was a narrative of remembering and forgetting.

Richard Shaw uses his family story as a prism to examine this disturbing history: his ancestors participated in the invasion of Parihaka and his family farmed confiscated land. The Parihaka story still has the power to shock: colonialism, supposedly a means to "civilise" indigenous peoples, in reality meant confiscating Māori land and destroying Māori culture.

Many readers will recognise in *The Forgotten Coast* elements of their own family and regional history. Like Shaw, many Pākehā are now "filling in the silences of the past." The author writes of coming to terms with colonisation, and his family's part in the process — acknowledging the harm caused, rather than living in a state of permanent amnesia.

I recommend this book to any New Zealander who hopes, in Shaw's words, "not go out the way they came in."



Re-Enchanting the Earth

Why AI Needs Religion

by Ilia Delio
Published by Orbis Books, 2020. (USD 26.00)
Reviewed by Mary Betz

Ilia Delio is first and foremost a philosopher in the tradition of Teilhard de Chardin. She has a passionate belief that cosmic evolution, including the physical, mental and spiritual evolution of humanity, is ever-increasing in unity and conscious complexity toward God.

She contends that Artificial Intelligence (AI) — which, for Delio, includes electronic devices, social media, robots, anything with chips, and indeed most technology — is integral to evolution. We humans are already cyborgs, and we will eventually become hyper-conscious "posthumans" united in a divine collective consciousness. Delio's almost messianic belief in AI, however, is moderated in the end by a somewhat unconvincing argument for a new gender-fluid and race-transcending global religion which would track AI users toward deeper connectedness.

Delio navigates readers impressively through the history of science, social anthropology and religion. Her book will be of special interest to lovers of philosophy and de Chardin. She has a proclivity for jargon which can make her arguments difficult to follow, and her sweeping assumptions often lack examples or evidence. Delio takes readers places they may not want to go, favouring humanoid robots and implantable software. But she offers fresh theologies of God and Church — and much to challenge us.

BELFAST

Directed by Kenneth Branagh
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

In this personal tribute to home and family, celebrated actor and filmmaker Kenneth Branagh has produced a powerful and evocative — and often romanticised — account of his boyhood years on the streets of Belfast. Set in 1969, as the city is engulfed by The Troubles, the film juxtaposes an idyllic vision of family life and community solidarity against sinister forces bent on destroying them.

Nine-year-old Buddy (played by Jude Hill) is at the heart of the film, and everything we see on screen is filtered through his wondering and searching eyes. For anyone Buddy's age, life is an unpredictable, exhilarating, unfolding narrative of questioning and discovery and — in the Northern Ireland of this period — growing up very fast.

Belfast opens as the vibrant life of a working-class street is torn apart by a brutal raid by sectarian thugs — a warning that the three Catholic families living there must be ejected from their homes, or worse will follow. Buddy's father, like the rest of the street, refuses to be intimidated, setting the scene for more threats and violence to follow.

The civil war on the streets of Belfast is exacerbated by the internal conflicts caused by the family's growing indebtedness to the IRD and the fact that Buddy's father, working in England, can only see his wife and children once a fortnight. When the offer of a permanent job and home in England arises, it seems like a heaven-sent solution to so many intractable problems.

Buddy is part of a very supportive extended family, and the scenes where he interacts with his granddad (Ciarán Hinds), stricken with lung disease contracted on the coalfields of the English midlands, but a buoyantly happy and loving man, and his equally affectionate but phlegmatic granny (Judi Dench), are moving and memorable.

Shot in silvery black-and-white, the film shifts into full technicolour when Buddy is taken to the movies or the theatre — to see *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* or a theatrical version of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* — reminding us vividly of the professional path taken by the older Branagh.

After the film, I reflected how relevant its political message is today — mirroring a world where communities (in Ireland, Bosnia, Rwanda, and increasingly in apparently stable Western democracies) can be poisoned and divided against themselves by dark forces greedy for power at any cost. A sobering watch, but spliced with moments of wonder, delight and sheer joy.

Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins

The eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano in January devastated livelihoods across Tonga. According to UN estimates, over 80 per cent of the Tongan population has been affected. Three people died. Crops, fisheries and animals have been lost or severely impacted and many homes damaged or destroyed.

Tongatapu, where 70 per cent of Tongans live, is just 65 km south of this volcano. That is terrifyingly close to a massive eruption thought to be a one-in-1,000-year event.

Here in Aotearoa, we scrambled to help. The eruption has been a powerful reminder that we are geographically close to Tonga and close in other ways, too. Aotearoa is also located on that geological rupture, the Pacific Ring of Fire. And we share with Tonga a long history and a rich weaving of relationships. We, too, are a Pacific nation.

When earthquakes struck Ōtautahi Christchurch in 2010-11, the Tongan people donated over $700,000 to the earthquake relief effort. This, from a population less than half the size of Christchurch and with much, much less income.

The Tongan relief effort in 2022 is impacted, of course, by that other great, but slow-moving, disaster, the pandemic. Tonga has been almost entirely COVID-free. Aid workers coming from outside present a health risk and cannot enter the country. But this provides an opportunity to rethink how humanitarian aid is offered in situations of disaster.

Aid needn't stop because aid workers can't go in. On the contrary, we now have a chance to support local Tongan organisations that, if sufficiently resourced, are better equipped than outsiders to understand quickly what is needed where, and how best to provide it.

Two major church aid and development agencies in Aotearoa work in just this way. The Catholic agency, Caritas Aotearoa, works through its partner on the ground, Caritas Tonga. The ecumenical agency, Christian World Service, works through its partner, Ama Takiloa, the Tonga Community Development Trust. Both Caritas Tonga and Ama Takiloa work with a wide range of groups to foster livelihood and development projects throughout Tonga.

In development lingo, this is called localism: it's the idea that local people are experts in their own lives and as such are best placed to design and deliver aid and development. Localism has a counterpart in the Catholic Social Teaching concept of subsidiarity. This is the idea that people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives and that decisions should be made by the people closest to, and most affected by, the issues and concerns of the community.

Rebuilding homes and livelihoods takes time. News of the eruption may have faded from our headlines, but people in Tonga are still working to recover their normal lives. And, of course, what counts as "normal" for Tonga, as for many islands in the Pacific, is changing with the adverse effects of global heating. This is all the more reason to put resources into the hands of local organisations with an understanding of their own situation: aid and development as genuine partnership between Pacific neighbours.

To Make A Donation:

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand — https://caritas.org.nz/donate

Christian World Service Tonga Emergency Appeal — https://cws.org.nz/donate-2-2

TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

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

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

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We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words.

The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters while keeping the meaning.

APPRECIATION OF SYNODAL PROCESS

Thank you so much for the February issue of *TM*. The themes of Our New Normal, Being at Home in Aotearoa and Church for God's Mission have enabled many of us to move with hope and positivity into this New Year, even though there are still many unknowns. David More's proposals of two key issues to be discussed as we prepare for the Synod are presented with clarity and depth. The time has come for us to all look at what is happening in our Church. The ordination of women and married men needs to be addressed. Many of our *TM* readers will be standing with Peter Slocum as he writes about our hopes for a synodal Church needing to take root in our local churches.

Joan Fogarty, Auckland

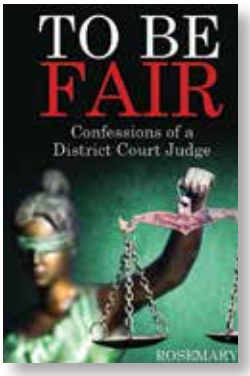
For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission

Pope Francis is asking everyone to reflect and discuss how to make the Church alive with hope and vision. Get a group together to share your dream for a synodal Church.

Information on Diocesan Websites:
Auckland: www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/synod
Hamilton: www.cdh.org.nz/synod21-23
Palmerston North: www.pndiocese.org.nz/synod-2021-2023
Wellington: www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/archdiocesan-synod
Christchurch: chchcatholic.nz/synod-2
Dunedin: www.cdd.org.nz/synod

Send your group and/or personal submissions in by 29 April.

REVIEWS



To Be Fair

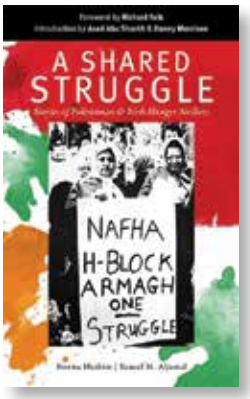
Confessions of a District Court Judge

by Rosemary Riddell
Published by Upstart Press, 2021. (NZD 39.99)
Reviewed by Ann Gilroy

Now-retired Rosemary Riddell writes about her 12 years as a judge and her journey to that profession. She studied law as a new direction in her life while her children were at school and spent years practising law before joining the bench. Her retirement came earlier than expected as she explains.

It's obvious from *To Be Fair* that Rosemary loved her years as a judge. She creates a picture of a judge's role with its responsibilities, independence, knowledge of the law — all in the pursuit of fairness. She writes with humour, humility, empathy, generosity, professionalism and with respect for her colleagues on the bench and in the courts. She shares stories — some poignant, especially when touching on her family or other parents, or those showing the wisdom garnered from experience over the years.

Rosemary's legacy is mentor-like encouragement. In the last chapter she outlines what is needed in order to apply to become a judge nowadays – it's no longer by invitation but the process does take persistence and commitment. I can imagine young people reading *To Be Fair* and seeing themselves in this profession. This book makes a great gift — but make sure you read it first.



A Shared Struggle

Stories of Palestinian & Irish Hunger Strikers

by Norma Haskin and Yousef M Aljamal
Published by An Fhuiseog, 2021. (approx EUR 10.00)
Reviewed by Lois Griffiths

In *A Shared Struggle* 24 Palestinians, including two women, and seven Irish, including one woman, tell their stories of going on hunger strikes for justice. Their decision to take part in a hunger strike was made after careful consideration as they were aware of severe health consequences, even death. It was the last resort of prisoners being held under conditions that defied international law and universal humanitarian norms.

International law expert Richard Falk in the Foreword explains that a hunger strike is the "ultimate form of nonviolence". It gives "power to the powerless". The oppressors were determined to break the strikers — by force-feeding, holding barbecues nearby or by eating in front of the prisoners. Falk points out that "the Irish hunger strikes were given generally sympathetic prominence in mainstream media outlets, with Bobby Sands' name and martyrdom known and respected throughout the world." In contrast, by ignoring Palestinian hunger strikes the media is helping to "reinforce Israeli oppression" and should be "viewed as a kind of transnational complicity". These stories of hunger strikers tell of the efforts of Palestinians today to focus world attention on the prison-like conditions that are everyday life for them under Israeli oppression.

Photo by Ditya Chinchure on Unsplash

"You know Prabhu, that man who uses crutches in Dabadi village? Today he served cups of tea to the whole village!"

It was a summer's evening for me and I was on WhatsApp talking to colleagues in India. To celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December 2021, our team had engaged Prabhu to prepare tea for 100 people. After skits linked to disability exclusion, Prabhu handed out the steaming ginger tea. "First our team members all took cups of tea, and then all the others in the village, even the Pundits [priestly and most advantaged caste] drank his tea. This is the first time we can ever remember this happening."

I knew that Prabhu is identified as Dalit (from the most oppressed caste). And so drinking tea brewed by a person identified as Dalit was a radical, socially inclusive and even political act. This was the first time it had ever happened in known history in this small village in North India.

Caste is a humanly developed system of hierarchy which is more elaborate but equally absurd as apartheid or Palestinian prejudice. In Northern India, caste exclusion is practised most often around religion, marriage and food in social settings. In rural North India advantaged caste groups will typically not take water or food cooked or touched by people from excluded caste groups. At a wedding there will be one table of food for Dalit and other invitees from oppressed caste groups and another table of food for "general" guests. Like racism, caste identity permeates all aspects of life: social networks, access to resources, schooling and employment. Advantaged caste groups have a greater life expectancy, higher years of education and are over-represented as directors of boards. Meanwhile, despite decades of "positive discrimination" policy, people from the Dalit and tribal communities in India die five years sooner than general counterparts, are poorer, less literate and are under-represented in all positions of power.

On a summer's day in Aotearoa, caste hierarchy seems antiquated and distant, but if we care to notice, New Zealand has plenty of shadows and stories of systematic social exclusion too.

I spent last Sunday pumping tyres at the Aranui Bike Fixup with Scarlet Shannon, a member of the 2022 NZ Youth Parliament. Scarlet spoke about the shameful history of exclusion for people with disabilities and she is keen to see more inclusive buildings, websites and schools for everyone with disabilities.

So, circling back to drinking tea as a political act. The example of Jesus including people on the edges inspires me. In first-century Palestine, he made a point of asking a Samaritan woman for a drink of water; he touched people with stigmatised health conditions like leprosy and menstrual bleeding and included socially stigmatised people like tax collectors in his core team. Lent offers me an opportunity for reaching out. For building relationships with people who are on the edges. To try to understand the voiced concerns of people who are typically disadvantaged. To be an ally. And of course, to make sure I drink plenty of cups of tea with people who are not just like me.

Kaaren Mathias lives in Ōtautahi. She cooks naan on a barbeque, forages for free fruit, mentors public health doctor trainees and talks to friends in India.

Photo by Maria Lin Kim on Unsplash

May the food we eat
the stories we hear
and the companionship we share
draw us into communion
celebrating life,
God among us.

From the *Tui Motu* team