Tui Motu
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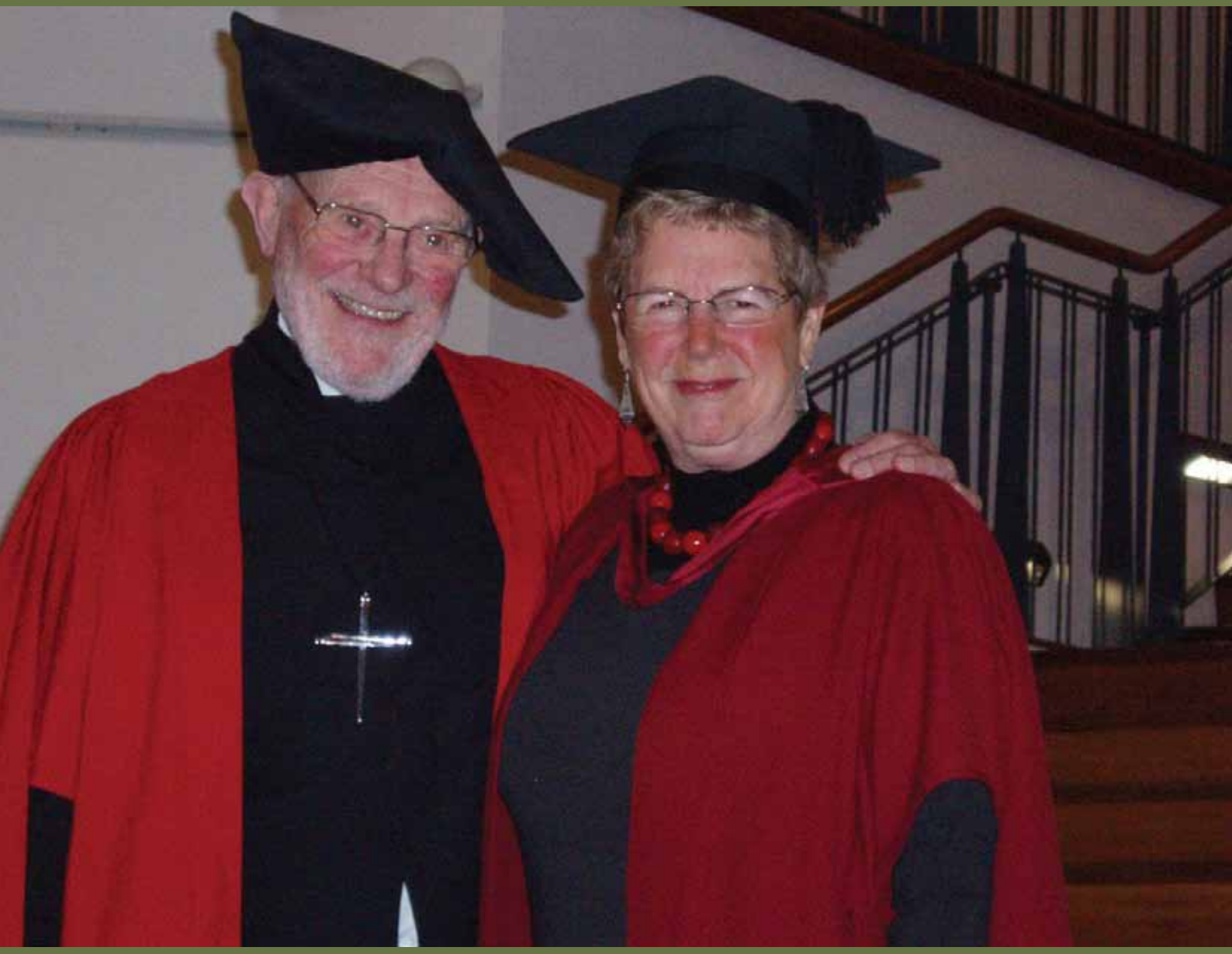

apostle of peace

Contents

apostle of peace

It is the season of University graduations and the awarding of honorary degrees. Opposite, Jim Neilan reports on and summarises President Obama's Address at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. Obama ranged far and wide, encouraging the students to ponder wisely on the future of their world and to dialogue with those whose views differ widely from theirs. It was an eloquent *tour de force*.

Nearer home, we celebrate the awarding of an honorary doctorate to a remarkable New Zealander, Anglican Canon Paul Oestreicher. In his graduation address (*pp 6-7*), Oestreicher focuses on what has been the *leitmotiv* of his life, the call for world peace. He goes to the very core of Jesus' teaching, and demonstrates that peace and non-violence are the logical consequence of Jesus' call to "all-embracing love, for friend and foe alike." As with Obama, those who heard the Canon speak in Dunedin will not forget such an inspirational lesson for life.

The Oestreicher family came to New Zealand as refugees from Nazi Germany. As a youngster, Paul received this counsel from his father: "When you grow up, I want you to be like Adolph Hitler, but the exact opposite. Hitler changed the world for the worse and I want you to change it for the better." What an awesome prospect for a 12-year-old! But Paul has zealously lived up to it, being a lifelong campaigner for peace and nuclear disarmament. He threw out a like challenge to the graduates of today.

The following morning Canon Paul preached in the Anglican Cathedral. He quoted the Dean of Coventry, who in 1941 spoke amid the ruins of the old Cathedral destroyed by German bombers a few weeks earlier. The Dean shocked the citizens by preaching forgiveness and reconciliation rather than revenge.

Four years later, in Nagasaki, Japan, the saintly Dr Takashi Nagai, himself ravaged by radiation sickness, spoke by the shattered Catholic Cathedral and described the atom bomb as a necessary 'hansai' (or holocaust) ending the 'evil and horrible conflict' and 'atoning for for the sins of all the nations'. He too was heard in shocked silence.

Voices that can rise above the aggressive and querulous babble of most international leaders and plead instead for dialogue and peace, are rare. Canon Paul is one such voice. He richly deserves the signal honour which his old University has bestowed on him.

rest in peace

During May Mavora, wife of our regular columnist John Honoré, died after a long illness. John has lost a beloved life companion and his most faithful critic and 'editor'. We offer him and his family our heartfelt sympathy and prayers.

M.H.

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

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Obama speaks at Notre Dame

Eight US presidents have received honorary degrees from America's leading Catholic University, Notre Dame. But, when Barack Obama was invited to receive this honour, over 60 bishops joined hundreds of 'pro life' protesters condemning the University for inviting this 'pro choice' president. Nevertheless, Obama accepted the invitation and, at the end of his address, the large crowd gave him a standing ovation.

It was a challenging address, and the main points are quoted here. The President told graduates they were part of "a generation that must decide how we respond to a global economy that left millions behind even before this crisis hit – an economy where greed and short-term thinking were too often rewarded at the expense of fairness, and diligence, and an honest day's work".

He summarised "the major threats we face in the 21st century, whether it's global recession or violent extremism the spread of nuclear weapons or pandemic disease – they do not discriminate. They do not recognise borders. They do not see colour.

"Moreover, no one person, or religion, or nation can meet these challenges alone. Our very survival has never required greater co-operation and understanding among all people from all places than at this moment in history".

In words that would not have been out of place in a Sunday homily, he reminded the graduates that "part of the problem in finding common ground lies in the imperfections of man – our selfishness, our pride, our stubbornness, our acquisitiveness, our insecurities, our egos; all the cruelties large and small that those of us in the Christian tradition understand to be rooted in Original Sin. We too often seek advantage over others.

"We cling to outworn prejudice and fear those who are unfamiliar. Too many of us view life only through the lens of immediate self-interest and crass materialism. The strong too often dominate the weak, and too many of those with wealth and with power find all manner of justification for their own privilege in the face of poverty and injustice. And so, for all our technology and scientific advances, we see around the globe violence and want and strife that would seem sadly familiar to those in ancient times."

Obama told the audience he was aware that his visit had caused bitter controversy. He used this to speak about the common values we share, especially through our faith. In issues such as abortion, he asked: "How does each of us remain firm in our principles, and fight for what we consider right, without demonising those with just as strongly held convictions on the other side? Maybe we won't agree on abortion, but we can still agree that this is a heart-wrenching decision for any woman to make, with both moral and spiritual dimensions.

"So let's work together to reduce the number of women seeking abortions by reducing unintended pregnancies, and making adoption more available, and providing care and support for women who do carry their child to term. Let's honour the conscience of those who disagree with abortion, and draft a sensible conscience clause, and make sure that all of our health care policies are grounded in clear ethics and sound science, as well as respect for the equality of women."

The new graduates must have been inspired by the words of their President as he spoke of their challenging future: "You will be exposed to more opinions and ideas broadcast through more means of communications than have ever existed before. You will read blogs that claim definitive knowledge, and watch politicians pretend to know what they're talking about. Occasionally, you may also have the great fortune of seeing important issues debated by well-intentioned, brilliant minds.

"In this world of competing claims about what is right and what is true, have confidence in the values with which you've been raised and educated. Be unafraid to speak your mind when those values are at stake. Hold firm to your faith and allow it to guide you on your journey. But remember too that the ultimate irony of faith is that it necessarily admits doubt. It is beyond our capacity as human beings to know with certainty what God has planned for us or what He asks of us, and those of us who believe must trust that His wisdom is greater than our own."

One has to wonder what the protesting bishops thought of these words and of the President's final thought for the graduates: "Remember that each of us, endowed with the dignity possessed by all children of God, has the grace to recognise ourselves in one another; to understand that we all seek the same love of family and the same fulfilment of a life well-lived."

Jim Neilan

See also page 28 The full speech is available on various websites – "Obama at Notre Dame"

return of the scribes & pharisees

I was born a Catholic and brought up to believe our one purpose in life was to get to heaven at all costs – and to hell with everyone else.

Then came Vatican II. Once the dust had settled I can well remember the excitement I felt within me as I welcomed the changes... urging me to use my talents wherever possible for the new post-Vatican II church I have come to love.

Sad to say, over the last 20 or so years the Scribes and Pharisees, still alive and well not only in Rome but in all parts of the world including little old New Zealand, are gradually making a mockery of all the world's bishops worked so hard to achieve.

Whenever I hear someone quote this rule or that, I think to myself "what would Jesus say?" Maybe I will hear the answer soon.

Brian Kelly, Levin

was Jesus being violent?

Although we are wedded to the concept of Jesus as the ultimate peacemaker (see Jim Consedine *April TM*), there are reasons to questions this.

Firstly, his instruction to his disciples that they arm themselves with swords (*Lk.22, 36-38*), forbidden by Roman law to anyone at Passover.

It is true Jesus is represented as condemning violence when he was arrested: "Those who live by the sword will perish by the sword" (*Mt 26,52*). It needs to be recalled, however, that all the Gospels were written after the great rebellion that saw the annihilation of the Jewish state, and there was clearly a need to downplay any hint of Jesus condoning violence.

We may remain emotionally addicted to the "gentle Jesus meek and mild" we grew up with, but the historical reality may well have been different.

Norman MacLean, Gisborne

st mary's, south brisbane

Alan Austin's interesting article on St Mary's parish, South Brisbane, (*May TM*) neglects to tell us that Fr Kennedy, whatever his social abilities may be, has stated publicly that he no longer believes in the Virgin Birth, which is explicitly taught in the Gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke*.

How can he possibly expect to function as a Catholic priest in good standing when publicly holding heretical beliefs? Even the three 16th Century reformers, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, spoke of 'Mary ever Virgin' and 'Mother of God'.

Derek Blackburn, Pakuranga

letters to the editor ✍

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

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

Response articles (up to one page) are also welcome – but please, by negotiation

global warming 1

Global warming has become a major topic of the media. The sceptics are given disproportionate attention, just as the cost of our Kyoto commitments dominates the news without due attention to the price we pay for perpetual procrastination.

This policy reflects the thinking of the Ministry for the Environment which summarised its view on the cover of *EnvironNZ*: "*Pursuing a balance between meeting our environmental responsibilities and addressing the social, economic and cultural well-being of New Zealanders is essential*". If not naïve, this statement is utterly cynical.

"Addressing a balance" implies conflicting goals. Does the Ministry realise that New Zealand's ultimate well-being, our survival in fact, is determined by how we meet our environmental responsibilities? So where is the conflict? Harmful delays of urgently needed action are caused by a fear of short term economic setbacks. It is these that stimulate Kiwi ingenuity into inventing new technologies and developing sustainable power generation with a potential for millions of export dollars.

Our earth is on fire and urgent action must not be delayed. If the Minister woke up to find his house on fire, would he calculate the price of water before picking up the fire hose?

The *April* issue gave voice to two Dunedin growers, John Baker and Stan Randle, who speak of 'going organic' from purely pragmatic considerations without undue emphasis on ideology. The two Dunedin farmers are part of an increasing vanguard of progressive growers who have chosen to work in harmony with nature and are enjoying her gifts of healthy produce in response.

Frank Hoffmann, Papakura

global warming 2

In the *May* issue, Humphrey O'Leary says. "The truth is that in the climate change crisis, we ourselves are as much to blame as anyone else". What can we do? What can ***I*** do?

What piece of equipment in your house uses the most electricity? The answer is the heated towel rail in the bathroom. Does it need to burn 24 hours a day? If every householder in the country, at the end of the day, would walk over to the TV and switch off the little red light, we could shut down a power station. Add your computer, printer, fax and all the other bits of equipment: what a difference that would make to global warming.

Do I really care, or am I too lazy?

Paddy McCann, Paraparaumu

alleluia tui motu

My compliments to the authors of two articles in the *May Tui Motu*. The first, on Charles Darwin, was concise, lucid and balanced and it was a pleasure to read.

The second by Michael Noonan on "the hunger for spiritually", is beautifully written from a tender, caring heart. I found it profoundly moving. My admiration for the *L'Arche* movement is unbounded. May they continue and grow in their wonderful work.

John Vincent, Dunedin

betwixt and between

romans 8

A good story is worthy of repetition. It is told that when God created humanity, an invisible string stretched between each person and their Creator. But each time that person sinned, the string was cut. God, saddened by the severed cord, got into the habit of tying knots to restore the connection. Of course every knot shortened the string. Which goes some way to explaining why sinners are so close to their Maker.

There are those who suggest that following Christ is easy; that somehow we are lifted out of the realm of moral compromise and shabby behaviour by virtue of our faith. The reality is much more complicated than that, as any one who has been on the path for a decent length of time knows. We may have seen the light, but most of us continue to stumble with our feet in darkness.

We're caught between the majesty of what we are called to be and the darker reality of our souls which self-knowledge reveals. Many of us find ourselves acting out of grace in one moment and unadulterated self-interest the next. It's as if we are incapable of becoming who we desire to be, our inner life a battlefield between conflicting interests. The honest among us know ourselves to be inveterate sinners.

Who will rescue me? That is the question asked by Paul as he articulates the pain of this human situation in *Romans 7*. It is the precursor that sets up one of the most magnificent and life-giving chapters in all of Scripture: *Romans 8*. From its ringing declaration in the opening verse that "there is no condemnation" to the healing close assuring us that nothing can "separate us from the love of God", we find a manifesto to cherish.

Whenever Paul is touted as a misery-merchant, it is a tragic misinterpretation of his message. Here is a man who understands the human condition – that painful experience of being caught between tawdriness and glory – and consciously shares it. His response to it is neither the shallow Pollyanna approach of the Holiness movement, nor the morbid self-flagellation of some brands of Catholicism.

Those who believe themselves already perfect are pitiful souls and much to be feared. Those who feel themselves so unworthy as to be beyond redemption are tragically blighted. In my experience there are more people in the second category than the first. They live in fear and self-loathing, frequently reinforced by bad theology and clerical remonstration. People who have already condemned themselves need no further chastisement.

It is into this existential mess that Paul speaks his nugget of gospel. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Note the absence of qualification, the dearth of sub-clauses or exemptions. This is total and universal exoneration, not on the basis of who we are, but what God has done in Christ. It is a unilateral acquittal at the court of self-loathing.

Stuck between the way we are and the way we would like to be, Paul calls us away from the spiral of negativity and into the freedom of the Spirit – a way of life that Augustine encapsulated as "to love God and do what you like". What we have not yet experienced, our full life as children of God, is not yet known to us in experience. But the nudging of the Spirit assures us that it is the truth that is being born within us.

And yet... and yet. We find ourselves caught between two realms, two realities, two eras. We are in that uncomfortable position of announcing something to the world that we find ourselves incapable of demonstrating. Who needs the healing of the gospel more than we ourselves? And so we groan. We ache, we lament, we suffer – caught in the agony of longing for what has not yet arrived.

Paul teaches us that this is the longing of God: that we are caught up in the divine force field of love and hope that cradles not only humanity but the whole of creation. There is no birth without pain, no consummation without desire, no transformation without despair. In this beautiful chapter of Scripture, Paul sets our own tensions within the context of the self-becoming of the universe.

And his assurance? That in the midst of all that pains us, there is no force anywhere that can separate us from the love of God. You must read *Romans 8:38,39* for yourself and allow the words to steep your weary soul, in order to appreciate their power. This one chapter distils all that Paul has to teach us, and would suffice if he had written nothing else. He, as one of us, understands how much we need to be loved in order to love.

Mike Riddell

"double doctorate": Canon Paul Oestreicher with his wife Barbara who also holds a doctorate from Otago University

On May 23 2009 in Dunedin veteran peace campaigner Canon Paul Oestreicher was given an honorary doctorate by his old university. He also delivered the graduation address. Here it is. . .

live adventurously – but live at peace

Congratulations on reaching this important stage on the journey to... who knows where? Life is an adventure. Nothing will be handed to you on a golden platter. It's a tough world, but this is a good place from which to take off. When you're faced with hard choices, don't always take the easy option. Live adventurously.

You have reached this point with the loving support of families, partners, and children. Only you know how much you owe them. Cherish them. You have earned today's degree. Take delight in it, and remember that Otago University is yours – for life. The Alumni, which you now join, are part of the university's life blood.

Whatever your discipline (that's an unpopular, but nevertheless a good word), keep an open mind. No scientific theory, no medical textbook, no manual of law, no philosophy, no Bible, no Qu'ran, no Pope, has the last word in wisdom. Always be open to new truths. Every form of fundamentalism – and the religious ones are often the worst – is a threat to the glorious liberty of intellectual and spiritual exploration and discovery.

And if there is a God, we are all God's children. So, let God be God. It is enough to know that all we need is to love, and to be loved. There is wisdom, for the rest, in being a humble agnostic, enjoying the mystery and wonder of life – in my case, a Christian agnostic.

However, being a liberal, having an open mind, doesn't mean that anything goes. We do need rules – and good laws – in order to live creatively with each other. That is why I studied Politics, the art of how to live together in community as well as is humanly possible. For myself, I remain an unrepentant socialist. Anarchy, simply doing your own thing, is a dangerous form of self-indulgence. The Vice-Chancellor was wise to reach for the rule book when a bunch of students made the good citizens of Dunedin run for cover. That story even made the papers in Britain.

archibald baxter

Having said that, there is wisdom too that knows when to challenge authority and convention by creative and costly disobedience. That is why I have chosen to dedicate these reflections to the memory of a visionary and courageous Otago farmhand, Archibald Baxter, who, with a handful of others, had the audacity to say ***'no'*** to the senseless slaughter of the First World War.

New Zealand's leaders, egged on by public opinion, crucified him, both metaphorically and literally. They dragged him to the trenches in France, threatened to kill him, and almost did.

They failed to break his spirit. He appealed to no Bible, belonged to no sect, but his humanity told him:

I would rather be killed than to kill my fellow human beings. His autobiography *We Will Not Cease* is now a New Zealand classic. It should be a school text book, alongside the story of Gallipoli. It represents the kind of principled non-violence that – if the human family learns it in time – might yet, in a nuclear age, save us from ourselves.

Now let me be more personal. Once upon a time, a seven-year-old little boy who didn't speak a word of English arrived in Dunedin with his parents, refugees from Hitler's Germany. That little boy had two Jewish grandparents. This made him an outcast, an enemy in his homeland. His family were forced to join the many many thousands looking for asylum somewhere, anywhere that would take them. Some survived, many more perished in gas chambers. His grandmother, rather than face that fate, took her own life.

I was that little boy. The world did not want Jewish refugees. New Zealand did not want them either. "We don't think you will assimilate in our country", said the government reply to would-be applicants. "If you insist on applying, you must expect a refusal".

My stubborn father insisted, and was one of only 1,000 refugees who managed to take the high hurdles and gain entry to this country. He came with a doctorate in paediatrics, but the BMA in New Zealand was a closed shop. Without a British degree, along with 16 other refugee doctors he had to go back to Medical School and retake the three years of clinical study, in his mid-40s, and in a foreign language. It was a hard slog. But nevertheless, he was grateful.

But not everyone treated us as enemies. Here in Dunedin, unlike the mainline churches, the *Religious Society of Friends*, commonly known as the Quakers, made a point of befriending enemy aliens. We were never friendless. It is not surprising that my parents chose to become Quakers, the Christian community that from the time of the Reformation refused to carry a sword, refused to lift their hats to the gentry, declared women to be the equals of men, and went to prison rather than worship in the established church.

They were doing no more than trying to follow the radical young Jewish rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, who challenged both the religious and the secular authorities, the Temple and the Roman governor, and paid for it with his life. Alone among the great religious teachers, Jesus lived and taught an all-embracing love, for friend and foe alike. He made the hated enemy – the Samaritan – the hero of his most famous parable. And he prayed for his own executioners. He lived – and loved – in a way that the Christian churches, established in his name, have significantly failed to follow.

Jesus lived and taught an all-embracing love, for friend and foe alike

pacifism

But there have always been the few who have rejected the prevailing doctrine, the doctrine that injustice must in the last resort be opposed with violence. These dissidents – down through history – have by no means all been Christians. They still languish in the world's prisons today. Just a month ago, in Israel, 18-year-old Neta Mishli was sent to prison, because she refuses to treat Palestinians as her enemies, and will not become part of an unjust occupation force.

To return to my chosen example of Archibald Baxter: he and his wife Millicent were among the people of Dunedin who were good friends to my parents. James, their son, just a few years ahead of me at King's High School, and with his brother the only boys who refused to participate in the school military cadets, became New Zealand's most eminent poet. In a poem entitled *To My Father*, James K. wrote:

I have loved you
more than my own good,
because you stand for country pride
and gentleness,
engraved in forehead lines,
veins swollen on the hand.
Also behind slow speech and quiet eye
the rock of passionate integrity.

Militarism, in its many forms, remains deeply embedded in our culture. It will not easily be eradicated. We have made it a crime – the most serious crime there is – for a person to kill another, and rightly so. Yet governments continue to exploit young men and women, by teaching them to kill those held to be a threat, rather than to find non-violent ways of overcoming conflict. In fact collective killing is glorified, often in the name of God.

When my father went to war for Germany in the First World War, his belt buckle carried the motto: *Gott mit uns - God is on our side.* His British opponents were so convinced of that same fact they had no need to write it on their uniforms. So, we have a long, long way to go, and can do no better than to pursue the goal of non-violent conflict resolution with the same passionate integrity that James K Baxter saw in his father.

This university, in taking *Peace and Conflict Studies* into its academic remit, has lived up to the university's motto: *Sapere Aude - Dare to Be Wise*. That gives me great pleasure – and cause for hope. Together with my wife Professor Barbara Einhorn, who is a 'real' Doctor of this university, we will do all we can to support Professor Clements and his students in this exciting new venture. For now, however, I have nothing better to do than to accept this Honorary Doctorate of Divinity with gratitude and great pleasure. ■

Canon Paul Oestreicher lives in Brighton, England, and is Quaker chaplain at the University of Sussex

poverty and power

McCully zones in on NZAID

Tony Eyre

"*The poor are always with us.*" This oft-quoted Biblical phrase was quite likely on the mind of Murray McCully, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who recently announced his government's plans to reintegrate NZAID back into the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade* (MFAT).

NZAID is the NZ Government's overseas aid and development agency, previously a semi-autonomous body within MFAT. It is responsible for delivering New Zealand's Official Development Assistance (ODA). It was set up in 2002 and has poverty elimination through development as its primary mission. Its main focus has been in the Pacific Region, but it also supports projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Minister McCully stated that he regards NZAID's mandate of poverty alleviation as a "nebulous concept" and one he does not favour; rather, he has announced that "aid is a key component of the Foreign Affairs portfolio and thus needs to align, as much as possible, with our wider foreign policy interests."

McCully's recently quoted throw-away comment, "You could ride around in a helicopter pushing $100 bills out the door and call that poverty elimination," raised the hackles of his opponents. His lack of interest in engaging with or seeking the views of stakeholders in this issue led to a campaign of organised opposition against his plans to scrap the semi-independence of NZAID.

United Future leader Peter Dunne, has criticised the lack of public debate and consultation: "It's an unwise and unhealthy way to come to policy positions on issues as significant as New Zealand's aid contribution without any substantive consultation with the sector that does the work".

So who are the stakeholders? The key players are the NGO's or non-governmental organisations, such as *Oxfam*, *World Vision*, *Christian World Service* and *Caritas Aotearoa* NZ who play a major partnership role in channelling NZAID funding into their emergency aid and development programmes overseas. It goes without saying that their altruistic values are not compatible with what they see as the politics of economic self-interest espoused by McCully.

Response from the aid agencies has been largely negative. *Oxfam*'s Executive Director Barry Coates said, "Losing a separate aid agency is something that worries us because it means there isn't enough accountability for what aid is meant to do – address poverty reduction."

Michael Smith, of *Caritas Aotearoa* has also criticised the proposed new mandate: "A reliance on economic growth and measuring the effectiveness of aid using trade and tourism figures, as espoused by Mr McCully, has echoes of failed economic development models from the 1950s and 1960s".

Another interested but rather docile party in this debate is the New Zealand public, taxpayers who willingly or unwillingly fund the public purse out of which NZAID's annual $480m budget is financed. A 2007 survey showed that 76 percent of New Zealanders approve of government aid to poorer countries. However, it is unlikely that McCully's announcement to put the knife into NZAID will be a topic of concern around the family dinner table.

Probably the forgotten voices in this whole debate are the poor themselves. The constituency of NZAID is predominantly the peoples of the Pacific and South-East Asia – the subsistence farmer and fisherman; poorly educated and unemployed youth; malnourished infants with low life expectancy and victims of HIV/AIDS; villages threatened by limited access to clean water and sanitation; whole communities facing extinction from rising sea-levels through global warming.

McCully's failure to call stakeholders into consultation has certainly removed any slim chance that the voice of the poor and powerless may have been listened to over this issue.

So are there any merits in McCully's unilateral decision? The overwhelming evidence is that this will be a backward step. A 2001 ministerial review of New Zealand's *ODA* programme concluded that ODA and Foreign Affairs have distinctly different missions and that any muddying of their goals would ultimately result in lack of transparency and increased inefficiency.

Foreign Affairs requires different skills from ODA which has become an increasingly complex area of work, requiring a high degree of specialist know-how. Also, MFAT's rotational staffing structure is not suitable for

community development benefiting the poorest

One of the programmes benefiting from New Zealand government funding of NGOs through NZAID is *Caritas Tonga*'s Community Development Programme, supported by *Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand* for the last three years. The programme targets low income families and unemployed youth, addressing their needs by fostering cultural traditions.

It currently supports more than 300 families through small-scale enterprises such as tree-planting, cloth-making, pig and chicken rearing, gardening and fishing. Tree-planting grew out of a direct response to a declining cultural tradition – tapa cloth making. Tapa is widely used in Tonga, at weddings and funerals: for clothing, blankets, and dancing costumes, and to decorate homes. However, people were becoming alarmed at the demise of tapa culture, as the raw material – the paper mulberry tree – was not being replanted.

The *Caritas Tonga* programme has encouraged planting of both mulberry for tapa cloth and pandanus for making mats. Mat weaving is an important skill that Tongan women pass on from generation to generation, and the programme is helping preserve this aspect of Tongan culture, strengthening the role of women.

Another aspect involves activities such as catering, planting yams and taro, baking utensils and kava grinding. These together with construction of pigsties and chicken pens enable the communities to have a clean and healthy environment in the villages while at the same time providing income.

The *Caritas Tonga* programme is currently being evaluated for its impact on the wider community. The evaluation team involves the communities, *Caritas* staff from both New Zealand and Tonga, and an external evaluator. Tara D'Sousa, from *Caritas Aotearoa NZ*, says the team will be considering "how the project has changed the day-to-day lives of members of the community. We'll be looking at how the most vulnerable are affected, and the criteria by which people participate." If the team finds the poorest are not being considered, then the next phase of the project would change.

photo: Leo Duce/Caritas

Painting tapa through the Caritas Tonga programme.

NZAID's supplementary funding of *Caritas Tonga*'s programme represents about 5 percent of the government's overseas aid spending. The government subsidises qualifying development projects by four to one. The scheme recognises that NGOs have grass roots contacts and expertise, can work in ways that governments cannot, and foster self-reliance by working in long-term partnership with communities.

Martin de Jong

Martin de Jong is Communications & International Advocacy Coordinator for Caritas Aotearoa NZ

a development assistance agency. It would "lead to poor accountability, weak institutional memory, frustration among stakeholders and an inadequate knowledge base".

Dropping the poverty elimination focus of NZAID will put New Zealand entirely out of step with current international thinking on effective aid delivery. Even the *International Monetary Fund* has very recently handed down a ringing endorsement of donor policies that focus on poverty elimination in low-income countries. In fact, New Zealand's current foreign aid programmes and strategies have been highly praised around the world by an OECD peer review group for aid donors.

But NZAID's high standing internationally seems to carry little weight with Mr McCully. The minister's rhetoric has been derogatory towards the agency and its supporters. Labels like "so-called development experts", "undemocratic" and NGO "bureaucrats" have peppered his press releases.

If New Zealand is to retain its place as a good global citizen, sensitive to the needs and aspirations of its less well off neighbours and committed to a world free of poverty, then it can't afford to return to aid and development policies that put political self-interest first.

In answering his critics, Foreign Minister McCully says that he is "confident that in coming years, New Zealand's reputation as an innovative and constructive aid donor will be enhanced not diminished". If NZAID is to be the go-between in this new face-off between poverty and power, then New Zealand's reputation will only be enhanced if it can demonstrate its commitment to *hear the cry of the poor.* ■

Tony Eyre is a Dunedin Chartered Accountant, from Holy Name Parish

the spirit of paradox:

challenge for the church in australia

This unaugural John Wallis Memorial Lecture was delivered in Hobart, Tasmania on 18 February 2009. Theologian and spiritual writer David Ranson explores the experience of paradox for Australians in general and Catholics in particular.

I wish to explore with you tonight the character and potential of paradox as the very *milieu* in which we might discover more fully, and appreciate more wholly, the way in which the Spirit searches for us within the Australian context. The notion of ***intersection*** is critical to the Australian spiritual endeavour, particularly for those of us who have come to these shores since the end of the 18th century.

The experience of intersection, most often an experience of paradox, is the Australian cathedral in which we might truly learn how to pray; which suggests itself full of genuine invitation for us, as the people who live in this great South Land of the Holy Spirit as it was intuited by our forbears.

Paradox marks the wider Australian experience through and through. Standing before the gargantuan mine of Mount Isa in north-west Queensland last July, the Australian experience of contrast was unmistakable for me. Mount Isa presents the intersection of two zones of immensity: spiritual on the one hand, and mechanical on the other. Beyond the cacophony of the mine, the silence of the surrounding landscape is deafening. The same experience of contrast is unmistakable on the other side of the continent in the Pilbara, arguably the oldest earth form on the planet. On the one hand, there is the wealth of the nation, evidenced in the relentless gorging of the land for its minerals; and on other hand is its poverty suffered in those aboriginal communities lost in the fog of displacement.

In the Australian experience the Old World meets with the New. Further, the increasing experience of multiculturalism itself is profoundly an experience of intersection. I think of the observations of Tanveer Ahmed, a young Australian psychiatry registrar, when he wrote recently: *My inner struggle to balance an Islamic background while living in the modern West, and an ancient Bengali identity with the secular, frontier attitude of modern Australia, mirrors the wider struggles within India and the world.*

Today the negotiation between the two great traditions of Islam and the West, in which Australia is drawn ineluctably – even though it might seem to be on the edge of the crucible – is to enter the intersection, in Ahmed's words, of "pre-modern ideas about social norms with a modern sense of globalism that taps into the longing for belonging... (all of) which makes the world much more flammable."

the australian experience

Geographically, the overwhelming majority of Australians live in a place of intersection. Between Ingham and Invermay, it is a land of fire and water. It is a land that knows the sheer brutality of natural destruction as recently experienced in the Victorian fires of 7 February and yet opens itself, at exactly the same time, to the poignant beauty of community forged in the face of such devastation. We are caught between the incomprehensible randomness of bush fire and the unquenchable selflessness of the thousands of volunteers.

Between our love and fear of the landscape's power, we live along a thin band of coastline, with the vastness of the outback behind us and the desert of ocean stretching out before us. We live in the war of mystery on two fronts, as the novelist Tim Winton once dared to suggest.

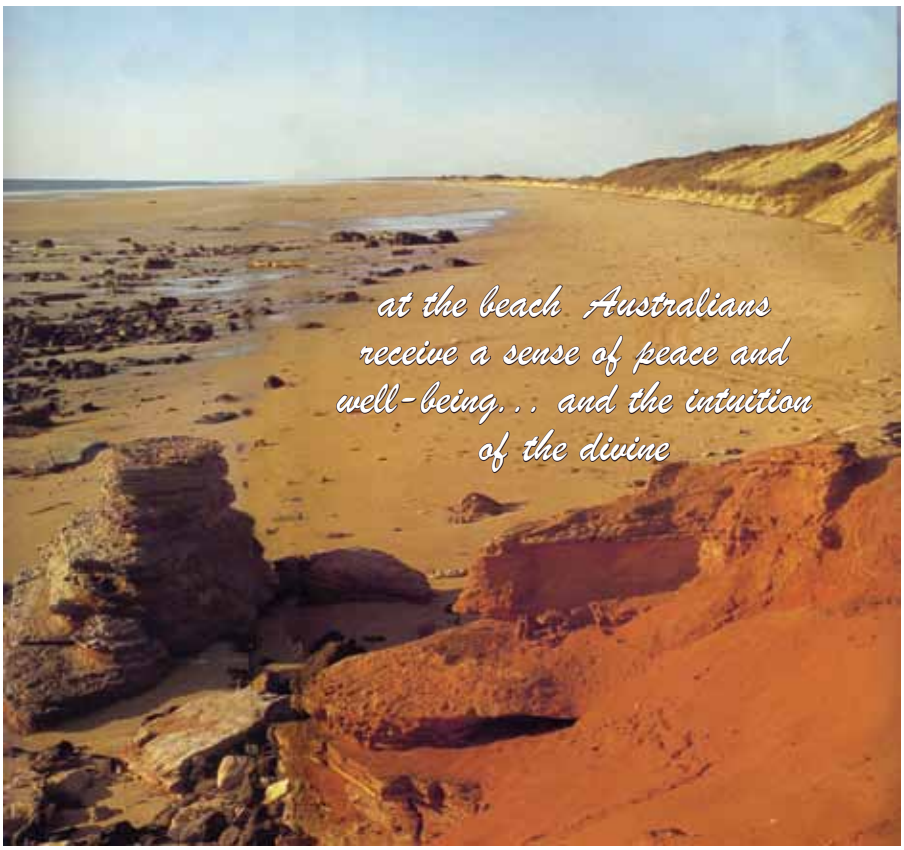
Precisely as people of geographic intersection, Australians enjoy a special relationship with the beach, which is simply not known elsewhere. It is at the beach that most Australians receive a sense of peace and well-being, and receive the intuition of the divine. It is the place of premier pilgrimage for us, the place to which we go to ponder the most important things in life. It is in a location of intersection that we feel most ourselves as Australians.

Given the pervasive experience of intersection within the Australian cultural context, should we be surprised at the Australian fascination with the house-verandah on which Australians love to gather – that

architectural *in between* place, neither inside nor outside, the place in which we feel naturally comfortable and love to idle away the hours, even if only in our daydreaming about retirement?

Australian writers have given articulation to this specifically Australian instinct for the spiritual potential in intersection – for the divine in the ordinary, for the infinite in the finite, for victory in failure. Australians honour such experiences by refusing to clothe them with many words, preferring a spiritual sensibility that is quiet and unobtrusive.

It is a spiritual form which underlines, I believe, the Australian preference for what the poet, Les Murray, calls the ***common dish***: "...that vessel of common human sufferings, joys, disappointments, tragedies and bare sufficiencies from which most people have to eat in this world, and from which some choose to eat in order to keep faith with them... It is the fountainhead of much of the conformity so often deplored in our society, and most of the art of living in Australia consists in judging, continually and if possible gracefully, just what distance we may wander from the common table and how often to come back".



the gospel of paradox

Though the experience of paradox is embedded within our particular national experience, there is a tendency in us not to cope well with paradox. In our own Hellenist-inspired penchant for clarity and all things linear, we find it difficult to enter into paradox and celebrate its potential. We instinctively try and do away with contradictions in our desire that things be one-sided and clear. With this mindset, the experience of paradox becomes regarded as a temporary annoyance to be eliminated as quickly as possible.

Yet the entire Gospel message accepts and works in the belly of paradox. It looks for the place of blindness in order to bring vision, it seeks out the place of deafness to shout out a new message, it seeks out that place of paralysis to offer new movement, it seeks out that place of death to dawn new life.

In the parable of the wheat and the darnel (*Mt.13:24-43*) the two are allowed to grow together, a reminder by Jesus himself that life is full of paradox. Authentic spiritual experience does not resile from the apparent contradictions of both the personal and the social, the mystical and the political, limitation and transcendence, emplacement and displacement.

Henri Nouwen writes: "*(There is) a time for mourning, a time for dancing.* (*Eccles. 3:4*). But mourning and dancing are never fully separated. Their times do not necessarily follow each other. In fact, their times may become one time. Mourning may turn into dancing and dancing into mourning without showing a clear point where one ends and the other starts".

We lose a beloved friend, and in the midst of our tears we discover an unknown joy. We celebrate a success, and in the midst of the party we feel deep sadness. Mourning and dancing, grief and laughter, sadness and gladness. Let's trust that the beauty of our lives becomes visible where mourning and dancing touch each other.

This presentation of paradox as the ground from which the fresh stirrings of the Spirit move in our midst is given diagrammatic form in the ancient concept of the ***mandorla.*** The mandorla is the almond shape created by the overlap of two circles and represents the experience of unity between two apparent opposites. Often we see it in ancient Christian art. Usually we do not see the circles themselves in that art but only the almond shape, the mandorla, itself. In the middle of the mandorla is the figure of Christ, the mandorla between God and humanity, depicted in such a way that neither circle is denied nor a third circle created.

The mandorla teaches us that the art is not to eradicate tensions, but to hold tensions in such a way that we live in the experience of their unity. It teaches us that if we try to live as if only one circle existed, then it is only

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a matter of time before the rejected circle reaches out in explosive fashion to reassert its presence to us.

Truth is experienced only in the midst of paradox and not apart from it. Thus if we want to discover what is true there is no other way than risking the conversation between two apparent opposites. It is a conversation between polarities that opens up the future.

There is a price to such a conversation, however. To quote one author, we are "stretched out amid the opposites in life, between hanging on and letting go, between involvement and surrender, between deep engagement and gentle detachment." In such a crucifixion, paradox becomes the tomb out of which rises the possibility of transformation.

the future of our world

We now live in a time of intersection, the intersection of the failure of the two competing ideologies of the 20th century, Communism and Capitalism; between the over-regulation of the market and the under-regulation of the same. Never before have we been so connected to one another through the innovation of technology, yet never before have we been so isolated from one another, lacking bonds that are truly satisfying.

Never before have we experienced such abundance of the world's resources, yet never before have we faced such a prospect of ecological desolation. Never before has the world enjoyed such a globalised consciousness with all its possibility, yet never before has the stridency of ethnicity presented as such a threat to political stability. Such paradoxes present either as the seeds of a new civilisation, a new order within the world, or as signals of a tension that is entirely destructive.

If apparent contradiction is to give way to genuine paradox with transformative capacity, what then are the challenges for us, particularly as church? Firstly, we must not be afraid to proclaim an ethic that addresses the intersection in which people live, that respects the ambiguity inherent in the many paradoxes that characterise our lives. "God bless our contradictions," prays the Australian artist, Michael Leunig, "those parts of us which seem out of character. Let us be boldly and gladly out of character. Let us be creatures of paradox and variety: creatures of contrast, of light and shade: creatures of faith. God be our constant. Let us step out of character into the unknown, to struggle and love and do what we will. Amen."

let us be creatures of paradox and variety: creatures of contrast, of light and shade – creatures of faith. God be our constant

Subsequently, when we speak as a church, faithful to both our tradition and the lived experience of people, prepared to fully engage the conversation of such mutually rigorous fidelity, then new springs of water might begin to transform aridity into verdancy.

Two images stand out in our memory of *World Youth Day*, July 2008. Firstly, there was the memory of the great sea of flags at Barangaroo on the shore of Sydney Harbour – a wonderful spectacle that brought home the universality of the church, and the precious gift to belong to such a community of peoples, sharing a common bond across so many cultures and languages.

Then, there was the second memory from the week: the renewed focus on the experience of sexual abuse that has occurred in our church. Throughout the week this focus was never far from the surface, either in particular accounts of abuse that had occurred or in the public expectation of a papal apology. In the midst of the celebratory tone of the week, we could not but fail to recognise the damage that is suffered when systems of power enter into our sexuality, and, in other ways render us incapable of truly being with others in their pain.

At the end of *World Youth Day* here in Australia we thus had two very different experiences. Their juxtaposition is critical for us. It is the juxtaposition of celebration on the one hand, and pain on the other. It could be all too easy to use the celebration of the week to simply drown out the collective memory of the pain of abuse within our community.

"There is nothing so beautiful, nor so ugly as the Catholic Church", as Bishop Robinson once remarked. We must be honest about this and not be fearful of neither its starkness nor its implications. It is the truth of this paradox, and our full engagement of it, that offers us a future. The beauty does not negate the ugliness; the ugliness does not negate the beauty. Both exist, and both must be engaged.

If there is to be a new springtime in the church in Australia, such a flowering of new life will only occur to the extent that we stand truthful and honest before the full weight of the paradox. Holding two very different memories of that most significant week, we are called to be grateful for both, and in the paradox work towards a genuine outpouring of new life.

conclusion

We should not fear being lost in the conversations, or being torn apart by the paradoxes from which they originate. In entering all the risk and possibility of the conversations that await us, we do so in full acknowledgment of the One who meets us along the way, and in the midst of our conversation – the Risen Christ present in the Emmaus story (*Luke 24*), transforms fear into possibility and doubt into courage. ■

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an alternative view of the Fiji situation

Kevin Barr

Many believe coup leader Voreqe Bainimarama's intentions are good. Some think he is power-hungry;others say that he needs time to set in place a new non-racial vision for Fiji

background

In 2000 the democratically elected People's Coalition Government of Mahendra Chaudhry was ousted by George Speight in a coup involving civilians and some elements of the army. Political hostages were taken, parliament was trashed and orgies held for almost a month. Finally Commodore Frank Bainimarama (newly appointed head of the army) tricked Speight and put down the rebellion.

He took over the reins of government temporarily until he was able to appoint a civilian interim government led by Laisenia Qarase (a banker). Qarase and his interim government were not to seek election but be a caretaker government until elections were held. However, Qarase and his team used their position to fight the election.

They won and proceeded to introduce very racist or pro-Fijian legislation. They even took back into their government a number of people associated with the 2000 coup. Bainimarama objected and by 2006 friction between Qarase and Bainimarama was high; Bainimarama threatened to take over the reins of government if Qarase did not back down on his pro-Fijian legislation. Qarase was very stubborn and refused. Finally on 6 December 2009 Bainimarama took over in a bloodless coup.

Bainimarama in charge

Unlike the 1987 and 2000 coups, which were carried out in the name of "indigenous Fijian rights", this coup was in the name of multiculturalism. It aimed to address corruption and economic mismanagement.

Bainimarama tried to unite people by inviting everyone to come together and draw up a *People's Charter* – a way forward for Fiji. The Catholic Archbishop (who had firmly stated his opposition to the coup) agreed to be co-chair of the People's Charter Committee with Bainimarama. Unfortunately the SDL Party and the Methodist Church refused to be part of the Charter and stood in opposition.

the people's charter is a very good document and tries to address Fiji's problems

After 6–8 months of work, the *People's Charter* was promulgated by the President. It is a very good document and tries to address Fiji's problems and show a way forward.

Since December 2006 life in Fiji has been very calm and relatively peaceful. Australia, New Zealand and the countries of the Pacific Forum have been pushing to return Fiji to democratic rule. Bainimarama does not want to have elections until some of the big problems underlying previous coups have been addressed. These are ethno-nationalism (often mixed with religious fundamentalism), the position and authority of the Great Council of Chiefs, economic mismanagement, and most of all the biased electoral process enshrined in the Constitution.

conclusion

Many believe that Bainimarama's intentions are good and are in opposition to the aims of previous coups. Some think he is power-hungry, but others say that he needs time to carry out the necessary reforms and set in place a new non-racial vision for Fiji. .

There has been some religious mirth surrounding the coup. Some called it a "Catholic coup" because many of the army officers involved were Marist Brothers Old Boys. Some called it a "Muslim coup" because a number of Muslims took up positions of authority under the Interim government. Again, others called it a "Hindu coup" because it received support from a number of Hindu organizations.

Very recently, New Zealand seems to have taken a different stance towards Fiji. The Foreign Minister says perhaps they should not criticise Fiji and harp on about elections. Perhaps they need to leave Fiji decide what is best for itself. Because of the strong opposition from Australia and New Zealand, Fiji has been turning for help to India and China. This "look north" policy may in effect be a good balance to the previous strong influence of Australia and New Zealand. ■

Excerpts from a report for the Pacific Media Centre by Fr Kevin Barr, economic and social justice coordinator of the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy *(ECREA). He is an outspoken advocate on the issue of poverty and squatters in Fiji*

the artist at work

It is unusual for one artist to work on the restoration of two cathedral churches in quick succession. This happened to Michael Pervan, of Auckland. Here he talks about his art and how it has been brought to life in Hamilton

MH: ***How did you first become an artist?***
MP: My career has been a spiritual journey. I've been involved with art all my life. I've always been an illustrator although, in fact, I received no formal training.

I also spent some time as a priest. After leaving the priesthood I cut my teeth as a graphic artist, and moved on to becoming a sign writer. It was sign writing that taught me to 'think big'. Everything is big and bold and 'to be told'. I have learnt to proclaim the Lord in that way – not so much on billboards but through icons.

Another thing I learnt was that you don't use marketing principles to make the Lord known. I'm not in business to make a profit. I'm here to make a living – and be guided to do whatever God wants me do. I have learnt that if you give yourself, then the Lord is a great provider.

MH: ***When did you first start painting icons?***
MP: I opened my studio in 2004. My parish priest, Fr John Bland, encouraged me and asked me to paint an icon for St Thomas More's church, Glenfield. That was my first major commission.
It took me about six months practice at home to learn the art. I read a lot about it. Then one day I met a lady who was a professional gilder. She invited me to attend a course, and I got a lot out of that. For instance, I learnt how to use egg tempera.

Egg yolk produces the perfect acrylic paint, but then you must add things to prevent it going off. You then mix in the pigments and plenty of water. To apply it you have to add it translucently over many layers and that way you build your colours up. This is the way the icon painters of the East could produce 'living colour'. They learnt to use egg tempera from about ad. 900, after the Iconoclast period.

Painting icons is a very time consuming occupation, so I have to charge adequately for my time. I came to see that you need to paint on a large scale to proclaim the gospel in a church. So in the course of time my icons got bigger. Then I received the commission to work in the restoration of St Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland.

MH: ***Tell us first about your work at St Patrick's.***
MP: First they wanted a design for a new altar and invited me to produce a drawing. So I drew one and they accepted it. I discovered that a sculptor has to think and work in three dimensions. You hack away at the block until you reach 'the line', which may be only a fingertip. This is called reductive carving, which means taking the material away to reveal the form. Once you have found 'the line' the rest follows.

MH: ***I went to St Patrick's, and I find the restoration gives an overwhelming sense of proportion. Everything – the icons, the furnishings, the glass, the altar – fits with everything else. Can you comment?***

MP: That was because one artist did the job. As artist I worked always with the architect, and I think we achieved a harmony. It's a gift of the Holy Spirit. We were striving to make St Patrick's into a house of prayer. The icons are in the right place. The crucifix is back in the centre – so the Lord is presiding over His house.

MH. ***Would you like to say something about your own personal spirituality as an artist.***
MP. An icon is not just a piece of art. It is all about the gospel – a mystical encounter with the Lord. In the West we have put great emphasis on the word. At the Reformation there was a rejection of imagery in favour of the word – whereas in the East people continue to use icons for their worship, but in the West we have lost that to some degree. I have had to rediscover this for myself.

Icons have introduced me to contemplation at a more profound level. It becomes a way of living. Painting icons is more than a hobby: it's a service of God – a ministry. In a way my priesthood, and then my sign writing, have prepared me for it. I have no regrets about my spiritual journey.

At our studio of St John the Baptist we are truly 'gospel mongers'. I said to Bishop Pat when I was working away in his Cathedral in Auckland: "One day you will be lying dead in the crypt there, and I will still be preaching the Gospel to the people." He laughed. The subject matter

of any painting gives it its dignity. You cannot have an image with greater dignity than an icon.

MH. ***What do you think drove the iconoclasts or people like Oliver Cromwell, who went around smashing stained glass and defacing statues in churches.***

MP. I can tell you. The theology of the icon is that of the Incarnation. God cannot be depicted, being pure spirit. But humanity can. Jesus is man and is depictable. Yet when you depict Jesus you are depicting God – because of the Incarnation: there is a unity between Christ as God and Jesus as man. If you lose faith in the Incarnation, you will reject the images of Christ.

I think, therefore, that the iconoclasts flowed out of Arianism which denied the divinity of Christ. Whereas the Eastern Orthodox tradition of icon-painting was deeply incarnational. It is the image you venerate, not the material: that would be idolatry.

The one closest to the Incarnation is the Mother of the Redeemer. She was integral to the Incarnation. Next to Christ, therefore, the icon of Mary the Christ-bearer is the most sacred. Hence there are so many icons of Mary in the East. The Cromwellians smashed the images, especially images of Mary, because they had lost their faith.

You see what I mean when I say making icons is a way of faith

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MH: ***Finally, would you please describe for us the Hamilton project which kept you busy in 2008.***

MP: Hamilton Cathedral too, in my opinion, has a wonderful harmony. The Hamilton people have been very supportive right through the project. I originally designed new windows with rounded arches, but the architect said "No, they would not fit the architecture". I had to respect that and fit in with the existing style, and that helped to achieve harmony.

A new Lady Chapel has been set up (***above right***). The original statue of Mary has been restored and remounted,

the lady chapel in the restored cathedral in Hamilton: the statue of Mary in flanked by 20 icons of mysteries of the Rosary

and there are 20 icons of the mysteries of the Rosary which flank the statue. The windows have sandblasted images of St Peter Chanel and St Joseph. They are big windows and let a lot of light in. I think the Lady Chapel has a truly mystical aura.

When you first go into the foyer, there you are faced by an icon of Mary's Annunciation (***see overleaf***). The Cathedral is dedicated to her. It's a big icon, flanked on either side by the figures of the Archangels Gabriel and Michael which are sandblasted into flanking glass walls. These images in the glass appear to float in air.

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mysteries of the rosary – from a set of 20 in the lady chapel, at Hamilton:

the Visitation (*left*); marriage feast at Cana (*right*)

a cathedr
worthy of the twe

"Absolutely splendid", says Mgr Frank Eggleton about the reconstruction of the cathedral church of Our Lady in Hamilton. Fr Frank is the Administrator and parish priest. "The view as you enter is quite uplifting", he adds, referring primarily to the work of artist Michael Pervan, creator of the new baptistry which greets worshippers as they go in.

"There is a wonderful sense of spaciousness". This has been created by moving the side walls outwards and replacing stained glass windows by clear glass, decorated by sandblasted images of St Peter Chanel and St Joseph. The interior is bathed in light. The ceiling over and behind the altar has been reconstructed and elevated so that the eye is drawn to the dominant image of the Crucifix on the back wall, hanging above the resited Bishop's Chair.

The reconstruction has been radical and includes a completely new roof. The church's seating capacity has been nearly doubled. This has solved the problem of people regularly having to stand during Sunday Mass. On special occasions the whole space can be opened up to accomodate 1200 people. Mgr. Eggleton took the opportunity of thanking donors who had responded magnificently to the Rebuilding Appeal. He singled out for special mention an anonymous donor family who put up dollar for dollar, effectively doubling the general Appeal. "Without the extraordinary generosity of this family it would have been impossible to achieve what we did."

Bishop Denis Browne has been totally behind the rebuilding. The bishop asked for three things all of which have been achieved:

- placing the Bishop's Chair (or 'cathedra') in its correct liturgical place at the very back of the sanctuary;
- expanding the sanctuary to accommodate a large gathering of clergy for special liturgies;

icon of the Annunciation of Mary facing the main entrance; with flanking etched images of the angels Gabriel and Michael

the font, carved in Portuguese marb

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(*continued from page 15*) I thought it would be good for people to walk past these angelic figures 'guarding' the icon of Mary as they went into church. The glass walls enable you to see right through to the crucifix on the back wall, so they give a great sense of depth. Immediately inside you are confronted by the Baptistry. If you look back at it from inside you see the two angels again, but this time they are flanking the font. Behind it is another icon of the Baptism of Christ (***see right***) and the Cathedral oils are kept there. To me, the font is like an icon in stone.

For the font (***see left***) I chose Portuguese limestone which is the whitest and purest stone I could find. The bowl is shallow like a lily and has a purity of form, again recalling Mary the patron. It 'floats' – in fact it rests on a bronze cross which acts also as the top step. People can stand on it.

The water spills over from the bowl and then filters between carved bronze grape

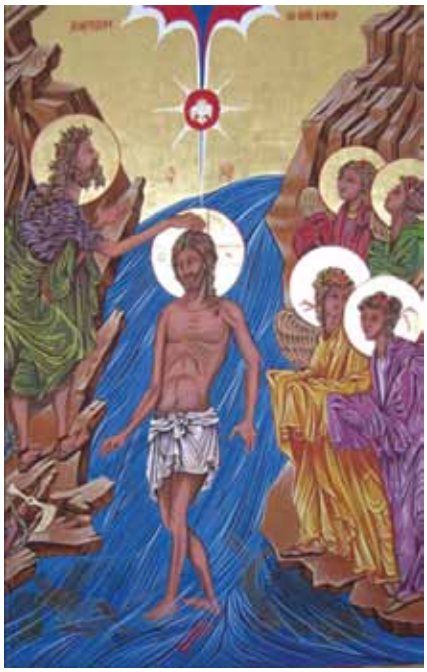
al church
enty-first century

• and, most important, that the faithful should enter the church through the baptistry to remind them of the beginnings of their own journey of faith.

The plan to rebuild the Cathedral was launched by Mgr Eggleton in 2005, and it was completed in time for a solemn reopening and blessing by Bishop Denis on 7 November 2008. From the start the Project Director has been Peter Egan, who paid tribute to the amazing spirit of co-operation by all involved: architects, craftsmen, the Rebuilding Committee, the builders themselves – above all, by the people from all over the diocese who supported the Appeal so generously. As a result, says Peter, they were able to proceed without stinting for anything and give the diocese a building worthy of the 21st Century.

Peter emphasises that it is a Cathedral for the whole diocese: every parish and school contributed; businesses and Trusts were most supportive. Features which especially please him about the completed Cathedral are the sense of space and light; and the fact that the original artwork has all been reused. For instance the old stained glass windows were simply repositioned. A statue of the Sacred Heart which had been vandalised outside, was restored and replaced inside. The new windows are all double glazed, which helps insulation and protects the artwork.

le, with constantly flowing water



icon of St John the Baptist

There is a completely new sound system and air conditioning throughout; there are even hidden cameras which enable liturgies to be recorded without intrusion of photographic gear. Individual donors were found for a new organ and piano and for much of the new artwork.

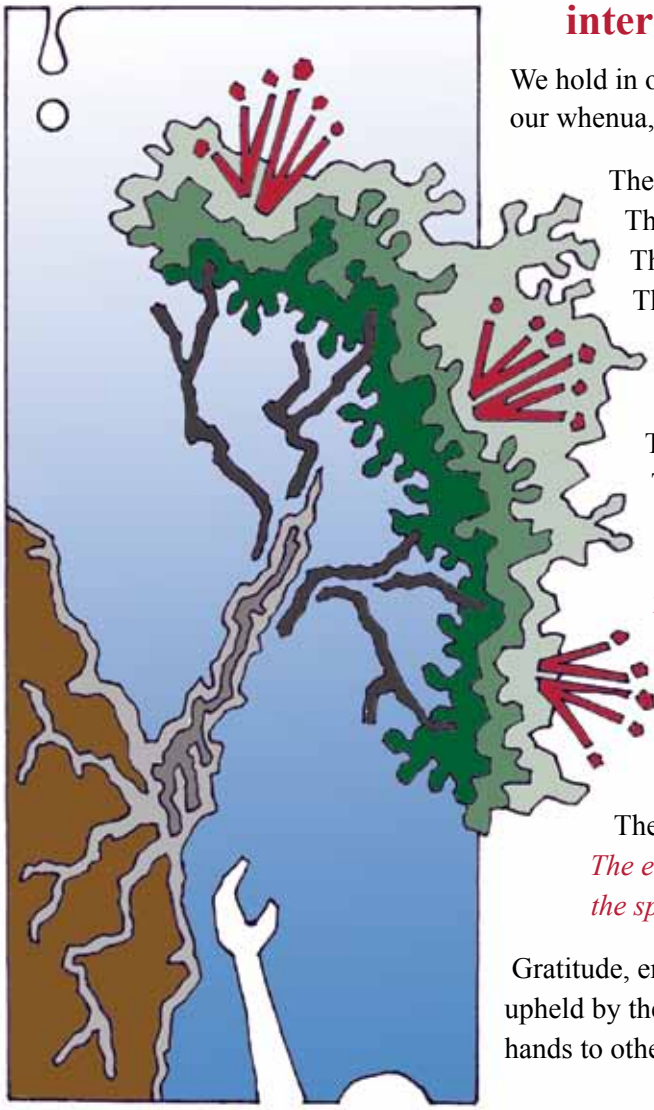
Peter was gratified by the generous response of donors to the general fund, as a result of which there was no need for short cuts or false economies. He felt that the hand of Providence had guided them through the entire project.

Many visitors – non-Catholics especially – have commented that the restored Cathedral feels "just right". And it does, says Peter. ■

leaves below and disappears. Then it is filtered and recirculated. It gives the impression of living water. The bowl is big enough for an adult to stand in or kneel for baptism. A baby is simply held over the bowl and the water is poured.

The altar is made of Coromandel granite and is the original. It remains untouched. The crucifix (***see right***), however, has been totally restored, mounted on a new kauri cross and erected on the stone back wall. It dominates the whole interior of the Cathedral. The sanctuary furniture is retained from the old church. There are two new coats of arms on the sanctuary walls: one for Mary, the other the Bishop's.

MH. ***So what has pleased you most about that whole venture.***
MP. I think the Baptistry area has been very successful. With the light pouring in on it from above, it is a fine combination of architecture and artwork. The Baptistry is in its own place. ■



intercessory prayer

We hold in our common heart and mind:
our whenua, our communities, our whanau...

The giggles of children...
The sighs of animals...
The smells of kitchens...
The flicker of a smile...
The incense of our gratitude perfumes
the air like frangipani at dawn

The cries of the little ones...
The fear of the beaten ones...
The grief of the wounded ones...
The brutality of the powerful...
The tears of our empathy water the
pohutukawas of our resistance

The beauty of holy space...
The prayers of the pious...
The transcendence of music...
The passion of the committed...
The embers of our courage are blown by
the spirit of outrage to ignite hope

Gratitude, empathy, and courage... may we uphold and be upheld by these... and hold out our open, wounded, and weary hands to others. Amen.

Glynn Cardy

The Seven Words and the Chattering Classes

Standing beneath the Cross
The chattering classes gathered cosily
Their words obliterating
The presence of the Stranger above

'Forgive them' said the economist
Eyeing the fund managers
From afar
'They know not what they do'

'Tonight you will be with me
In paradise' said the professor
To the blonde post-grad
Student by his side

'Behold your mother'
Said the thrice-divorced CEO
To his grown-up son
Glimpsing an ex through the throng

'Why have you forsaken me?'
Said the art-dealer
To the bejewelled woman
With the perfumed poodle

'I thirst' said the consultant
Seizing another glass of wine
Her throat dry from a day
Of pandering to her clients' wishes

'It is finished' said the bureaucrat
To the committee chairman
Pointing to the fudged report
In his briefcase

'Into your hands I commend my spirit'
Said the well-fed kaumatua
To the Minister of Overseas Blessings
Professionally fingering his pendant

They all agreed that as crucifixions went
It seemed nothing out of the ordinary
And chattered on knowingly
About more important things

Marralomeda. . .
the best place on earth

In a quiet suburb of North Christchurch lies a little cluster of houses, which is home for 20 intellectually disabled people. It is also the home of Roger and Anne-Marie Pike, who have looked after the community since the beginning.

It all started in our home in 1989", says Anne Marie. "From there we acquired four adjoining properties plus our house. Our name, *Marralomeda*, is Australian aboriginal and it means the 'best place on earth'. It's a title that challenges us to make it the best place for our people. We founded the community for the intellectually disabled based on the ideal of living the Gospel. That means hospitality and the empowerment of our people; each is unique and each has a gift to offer us. We believe we *all* have disabilities.

"Now in our 20th year of existence the theme that has come to us is the call to be a *community of love*. Marralomeda has to be a place where people feel valued. Love stands out as the value we cherish most of all. One testimony is the fact that our staff come to work and mostly stay with us – some since the very beginning!

"We have added an Activities Centre, built in 1994 and extended in 2001. And now we also have a small administration block. The Activities Centre is primarily for the members not catered for in the various workshops round the city. Some of these are getting quite elderly and frail and can't go out, so they spend a lot of their day in the Activities Centre. There are others who come who live at home with their families. We have over 20 other people who help in various ways including organising the transport of community members round the city.

"In recent years, since 2004, we have been faced with a Ministry of Health audit so that we can stay open and meet standards. It has been a challenge for us meeting these demands without

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Pat and Trish stonecarving

Judith Bowers, Patricia Rickerby, Petrina Hoskin, Sr Mary Byrne, Jill Price, Joan Donaldson wearing the hats they decorated for Cup Day

1. *Veneration of the Cross* (Good Friday). 2. *Washing of the feet*: Pat Gray and Helen Wallace (Maundy Thursday). 3. *At the foot of the Cross*: Petrina Hoskin, Judith Bowers, Susan Cliff and Nigel Greenlees. 4. *Wiping the face of Jesus:* Nigel Greenlees and Jane Howard.

compromising our philosophy as a Christian community. However, our audit reports have always been good, but it has has been quite burdensome. On the other hand it has sharpened us up and made us more professional.

"We are dependent completely on the state for residential funding. Only the Activity Centre is not funded by the state, and for it we rely on grants from bodies such as the Lotteries Board or on fund-raising. Our Board looks after that; we have what we call our *Loaves and Fishes* Bank account which always seems to provide for our needs. Thus, we have been able to put in double glazing and modernise our kitchens. There is something of the mystery of God in this: what we need is provided.

the philosophy of marralomeda

"We state we are a *Christian community* and we take our values from the Gospel. But we are not fundamentalists and we don't quote the Bible every moment of the day. People who come here to work are not necessarily 'religious', but they have to be comfortable with what we stand for. If our numbers grew any bigger we would start to lose touch and the 'community' aspect would suffer.

"The assistants live in on a 'four days on, four days off' basis. There are eight of them for the four houses. These are the 'hosts'. Others will come in after work to help. In the early days we could not find people who would live in all the time, as in a *L'Arche* community. Our assistants live their own lives, and we fit in with their needs. We have had to learn as we go along. So Roger and I live on the spot, but most of our staff come and go.

prayer and liturgies

"Each of the houses has a time for evening prayer together. Every fourth Wednesday we have our 'staff education day'. The whole staff comes together, and the first 45 minutes is a spiritual (or philosophical) reflective period. Then we have our staff meeting and any educational work for ourselves.

"At Easter we always have the liturgy of washing of the feet on Holy Thursday. Then we make the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. And we have a 'Resurrection party' on Easter Sunday night. This year Sr Raylene invited us to present the Stations during Lent in the Papanui parish. Our custom has been to use the Monica Brown tableaux. So we presented four of the Stations that way. The members had to hold their positions in the tableau while we had a prayer, a reading and a song. The parishioners who attended were very touched.

"Both we and our staff members are continually affected by the giftedness of the community members. Recently, Helen who was an epileptic and was due to become a resident member of the community, died suddenly after a seizure. We had a photograph of her with all the comments of appreciation the staff had made about her. We were able to give this to her family as a memorial to her.

coping with death

"The community members often handle death better than we do. They live their lives at a 'heart' level, while often we live too often in the head. They will get upset when someone dies of course and they will grieve. But they are used to accepting life on life's terms. They will be sad of course. We talk to them about the person who has died. They accept it and then they move on.

"Pat Glover has been with us since 1990. When her mother was dying I used to visit with her. She would say to me: 'She's going to get better, isn't she?' I said: 'I hope so, but sometimes people get very sick and then God takes them to heaven.' One day we got to the hospital and found that Pat's mother had just died. So we sat with her for an hour.

"On the way home I said to her that she would feel very sad and want to cry – and that was okay. Next day I came upon her having a little cry. She looked up at me and said: 'I'm just letting some of the sad out.' I thought how wise she was.

"Sometimes when one of the members dies, we bring the body back to the Activity Centre, and everyone gathers round to pray for the dead person. They are very reverential. I remember when Mary died, Sally couldn't come near at first – but bit by bit she was able to approach. They need to experience death and see the body laid out.

"They are lovely with young people also. My daughter, Colleen, was only 17 months old when we started, so she 'grew up' with them. They helped to mother her, to hold her and bath her. It has been very good for Colleen too, I think, because growing up with this extended family has taught her many life skills. She has really learnt compassion.

"We have also learned to deal with having to say good-bye to members. We thought rather naively that all our members would be here for life. But some of our older ones have developed Alzheimer's, and they get beyond our care. Fortunately we have developed a wonderful relationship with one of the Rest Homes which takes dementia patients and whose philosophy is close to ours.

"You see, we are like parents to these people, and you can't just say *Bye Bye* and abandon them. Therefore, we continue to visit them. There are three who have moved out like this. I am actually the legal guardian for two of them. We really struggled with this break, but I think God provided for us when we linked up with this other place.

"Perhaps we find we cannot meet their needs in other ways, so they have to go elsewhere. When someone new comes there is always a trial period until we see whether they belong with us. If we are told that a person exhibits 'challenging behaviour' I want to know what that means. We may simply not be able to cope with that person. I have had to learn that Marralomeda is not for everyone. We live in a place where there are no fences, and we have to think of the people living next door. Fortunately we have always had very good relations with people roundabout.

20th anniversary – preparing for change

"We have now run Marralomeda for 20 years and the time has come to move on, in the sense of our handing over the responsibility to someone else. Moira, who will be taking over, has been in charge of of the Activities Centre and has been with us for 15 years. The plan is for her to take on the role of overall Co-ordinator. She will be assisted by Emma who has also been with us since 1993.

"Afterwards I would like to 're-enter' in a pastoral role. Roger and I will continue to live here because this house is our home. But the decision-making will be someone else's worry. My aim will be to build up again the spirituality and pastoral care of the members. But we will first have a break for a couple of months.

"We look back on these 20 years and thank God for it. It has given us so much fulfilment and joy and so much richness in our life. People sometimes look at us and say 'how marvellous you are' to look after these disabled people. But the marvellous people are standing alongside us gifting us. What we have received has been so much more than anything we have been able to give." ■

Power of the real presence

It happened to the apostles at Pentecost. It can also happen to all and every one of us, but not through church mandate or spiritual exegesis. It is the inner authority we gain when through daily often painful honesty we recognise our own true soul and our own essence

Daniel O'Leary

Dusk was falling as we sprinkled holy water on the brown coffin in the dark grave. It was a very long day, the day of my mother's funeral. I was at the end of my strength – everything bottled up since morning. I felt a hand on my back. My friend had arrived. The healing tears began to flow. It was the touch that did it.

We notice those who are graced with a profound presence – it is in the way some teachers teach, some check-out assistants wait for you, some priests say Mass. We notice it from time to time when parents listen and talk to their children, when someone takes control in a crisis. We feel safe, and known, by such people. The blind holy man could tell the state of soul of his visitors by the sound of their approaching footsteps. It is hard to stay closed in the aura of sensitive presence.

The poet e.e. cummings wrote:

… you open always petal by petal
myself as Spring opens

(touching skilfully, mysteriously)
her first rose…

…nobody, not even the rain has
such small hands.

People with presence ground grace. It is what human beings are created to do. Nor should this be a surprising revelation for Christians. Christianity is the protector and champion of humanity's greatest boast – its unique claim to be designed and inhabited by God. It was in the human form that God chose to reveal the real presence of salvation. And Jesus explained to St Teresa how our redeemed senses hold and carry the divine compassion that saves the world.

So when, for instance, we live in our true presence, then we look, without filters, at people, and the grace in our eyes carries a mysterious love straight to their hearts. When we speak with people from our blessed essence, our words of pure truth open for them casements on to fields of hope. We listen to them in the stillness of our being, and the fierceness of our faith begins to vibrate in their bodies too. We touch them, and in the integrity of our surrendered selves, our hands become, for them, the hands of Christ. Our best spiritual directors and writers know this well.

We believe that this is so because it was in the physical earthiness of the utterly human Jesus that the truest way of God's closeness to Creation, to each person, began. "In the beginning was the Presence."

There was an attractiveness about the reality of Jesus' company, about the way he looked and listened to people, that they simply fell in love with. So utterly present was he to himself, and to his heavenly father, that his very physical being was suffused with vibrant energy. It leaped out, without his bidding, when he was touched by another. It was the tangible presence of the

wounded Risen Christ that unblocked the troubled heart of Thomas.

To be solidly grounded in, centred on, and shining with divine power is the way we are meant to be. Thomas Merton wrote: "We all exist solely for this – to be the human place God has chosen for his presence, his manifestation, his epiphany." Given that this is so, our senses are truly thresholds of the soul, sensory sacramentals of healing presence. In our truest humanity, we are walking sacraments of the Being from whom we've come, but to whom we are always returning.

It is an exciting rediscovery of our essential identity. "My deepest me is God," repeated St Catherine of Genoa. "We are God's words," Merton wrote. "We echo him, we signify and contain him." This is to be utterly ourselves.

"Awaken to the mystery of being here, and enter the quiet immensity of your own presence," wrote John O'Donohue. "May all that is unforgiven in you be released. May all that is unlived in you blossom into a future graced with love." And when we are utterly ourselves we are utterly divine.

There is a raw and wretched kind of purification that we have to suffer if we are ever to live, move and have our being within this incarnate integrity. The inauthentic self, with its ego-masks, is a false presence. We must recognise first, after daily, painful, inner honesty, the shape of our own naked soul. We are continually deceived by the insubstantial mirage that confused our First Parents. But every time we eat the bread at the table of truth, when God's own essence intimately informs and transforms our ever-drifting selves, that real presence is again realigned and consecrated.

Maybe only children and saints want to be nobody else. To enter that grounded place of transparency, where our every breath is a true inspiration, where every word is an Incarnate one, where presence itself becomes an unbidden absolution, we must, like Jesus did, die many deaths. We must substitute a personal Calvary for institutional conformity. It is how souls are saved. This I found to be equally true in recent visitations with the still and silent monks on Caldey Island and with the urgent, active missionaries in Ecuador.

Real presence and inner authority go together. Inner authority is the outcome of a graced and grounded experience of a fleshed God. It comes from a desire to be nothing but the dwelling place of our tremendous lover. That is the essential me. To be nobody else.

In recent times our spiritual storytellers remind us that we will never overhear a kingfisher saying it wants to be an eagle, a daisy wanting to be a rose, an ant wanting to be a lizard. Only homo sapiens wants to be someone else.

Everything in nature is utterly present. That is why its praise is perfect. "Stop shouting at me," St Francis said to the rose. Because Francis was being true to his naked nature, and the rose to hers, they were both lighting the place up. The rose, Richard Rohr explains, does not need to prove itself, or convert you to its side. It knows full well that it is a rose. Its inner authority is complete.

If our inner authority were complete too, even if silent, the world would say to us also: "I hear you. Stop shouting." That is the power of real presence. It happened to the apostles at Pentecost. When the world meets people whose centre of gravity is within their authentic selves, it draws close to them like moths to a flame, like metal to a magnet. The inner authority we need must be straight from the Trinity that is the soul of our solid flesh. It can no longer come from church mandate alone, or scriptural exegesis. Only those with inner authority have the soul-force and presence to transform violence and fear, to restore peace. They alone create vital new space for transforming presence.

The rest of us re-arrange the furniture in the Upper Room.

Daniel O'Leary, is a priest of the Leeds Diocese, West Yorkshire

On the hillside overlooking the complex is a larger-than-life bronze statue of Jean-Marie Tjibaou. Decorated with brightly coloured pieces of cloth, tributes from visitors in the Kanak way.

a man of his people

Jean Marie Tjibaou 1937-1989

Trish McBride

Twenty years ago on 4 May, 1989, in New Caledonia, a priest-turned-politician was assassinated. Jean Marie Tjibaou was a man who spoke the soul of his Kanak people. His family had already personally felt the full weight of French colonial oppression. In 1917 during a crackdown on the indigenous people, his grandmother was shot dead by government troops as she carried her four-year-old son. The child, who rolled through ferns and was picked up by an older sister, became Jean-Marie's father.

Kanak land had been systematically taken since the French claimed the island in 1853, and it was not until 1947 that 'the natives' were given the right to vote. In a recently published biography (*Dec 2008*), Eric Waddell describes Tjibaou as "arguably the most important post-World War II Oceanic leader. His intellectual abilities, acute understanding of both Melanesian and European civilisations, stature as a statesman, commitment to non-violence and vision for Melanesia's potential contribution to the global community, have all contributed to the creation of a remarkable and enduring legacy." Others have described him as having the stature of Gandhi or Mandela.

Jean-Marie Tjibaou was the leader in the move towards indigenous (Kanak) self-awareness and political initiatives. He was born in 1937 in the mountains of northern New Caledonia, and received his first schooling from the Catholic missionaries. At 13 he entered the Marist 'little seminary' at Paita, followed by their seminary on the Isle of Pines. He was ordained to the Catholic priesthood in Hienghène in 1965.

In 1968 he went to France, and undertook a PhD thesis in ethnology at the Sorbonne in Paris, researching the Kanak cultural identity. He returned to New Caledonia in 1970 for the death of his father, left the priesthood and asked for laicisation, which was granted in 1972. He married Adi and they had four sons and a daughter.

In 1974-5, very passionate about cultural questions and aware of the political potential, he dreamed up and organised the *Melanesia 2000 Festival* of 1975, where Kanak identity became visible for the first time. In 1977 he was elected mayor of Hienghène. In 1982, he was elected vice-president of the New Caledonian Governing Council. In November1984, he became head of the new *Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste* (FLNKS), and soon became president of the non-legal Provisional Kanaky Government. He was president of the Northern Region of the country in 1985-86.

On 5 December 1984, while he was overseas, two of his brothers were killed in an ambush by white settlers along with eight other Kanak. His response was, after negotiations, to order the dismantling of the barricades and no retaliation, based on his belief in non-violence. NZ writer James McNeish recounts in *A Man from Nowhere* (*Godwit, 1990*) the story of his 15-year friendship with Tjibaou and the news of the subsequent court proceedings in 1986. The seven settlers, who had blocked the road with a tree and killed ten unarmed men with their automatic weapons, were initially told there was no case for them to answer. McNeish and others challenged this. The case was consequently reopened in 1987, but unsurprisingly the seven were all then acquitted.

In June 1988 Tjibaou participated in negotiations in Paris in order to put an end to the further violence of the 'colonial tragedy' which had already cost a number of Kanak militants their lives. These involved meetings at the highest level, with the French Prime Minister Michel Rocard and

the Caledonian leader Jacques Lafleur. After the many years of unrest, the signing of the *Matignon Agreement* restored peace and promised a referendum on independence in 1998. It gave greater local autonomy and redressed some of the deep differences between the lives of the indigenous people and the French colonists. But because the Kanak people are only 42.5 percent of the population, achieving independence from France still seemed unlikely. Twenty years on, New Caledonia/Kanaky is still a colony.

Fr Paul Kiley SM of Wellington remembers meeting Tjibaou briefly in Bourail in 1988: "He had a remarkable presence, quiet, with a hidden strength. And in the Melanesian way, seemed in accord with nature and himself".

Those are the external events of Tjibaou's life. His heart and soul are contained in his writings:

Kanak means 'man'; it is a Polynesian word. In the myth of Téin Kanaké, Kanaké is the first-born son of the ancestors, he is Man coming into the world.

The Kanak must speak, his talk must say who we are, and the way the country is organised must be built on the gut words which spring from our soil and the traditional institutions.

Our land is not for sale, our stolen land,
sold land, sold over and over again,
is still not for sale, it is our people's unity,
it is the universe we share with our gods,
it is the spatial element in our alliance
with other related clans,
it is part of our very existence,
the vitality we inherit from our ancestors
comes to us from the depths of the Earth…

The Pacific, with its ocean and islands is the gift of the gods to the people of the Pacific, old and new. The ocean, the islands, the air, the light, the fish, the birds, the plants and Man are the life which is our supreme heritage... We are all responsible in our own way for its fulfilment.

Kanaké who goes to the Catholic Mass or Protestant services to worship the God of Jesus Christ, has not completely given up his ancestral beliefs. Deep inside himself, he seems to have kept a safe passage to the ancestors.The women of New Caledonia, like all the mothers of the world, give birth and keep on giving it at every hour of the day. Maybe that is why, bound to want happiness, they have felt how keenly the problems of the people of their race reach into the very depths of their being.

I am transient, but I must do my utmost so that the country I will bequeath unto my sons be the most beautiful, one where there is richness, richness of thought, of wisdom, of flowers, of food.

Jean-Marie Tjibaou was assassinated on 4 May, 1989, tragically by a Kanak member of a splinter political group who mistakenly thought he had 'sold out' in his negotiations with the French and colonial administrations. His deputy Yeiwéné Yeiwéné was also killed. Twenty thousand people walked behind the caskets to the cathedral. The white Catholic Archbishop of Noumea knelt and blessed the casket covered with its Kanak flag. Prime Minister Rocard came from France and wept as he paid tribute to Tjibaou.

In the bushy outskirts of Noumea, on rue des accords du Matignon, stands a most extraordinary building (the *Tjibaou Cultural Centre*), a fitting memorial to this extraordinary man. ■

The ***Tjibaou Cultural Centre***, designed by Italian Architect Renzo Piano. Ten shell-like structures representing Kanak village ceremonial houses. They soar up to 28 metres. It holds Kanak art work, an extensive library and three theatres.

Thanks to the Tjibaou Cultural Centre for permission to use quotations and photos from Jean-Marie Tjibaou, Cibaou Cibaou, Kamo pa Kavaac, Agence de développement de la culture Kanak, 1998, Noumea, New Caledonia. And to James McNeish for permission to quote from The Man from Nowhere and other prose, *Godwit Press, Auckland, 1991*

Trish McBride is a Wellington spiritual director and thealogian with a special interest in women's faith journeys

the gospel of mark

Kath Rushton rsm

In the Catholic Lectionary, 2009 is the *Year of Mark*. Shortly, we take up again these readings and follow them through until the Feast of Christ the King at the end of November (excepting for five Sundays, the 17th to the 21st, when we read the sixth chapter of *John*).

the portrait of Jesus

Each of the four Gospels presents Jesus to us in a different way.

In the Gospel of *Mark*, Jesus is constantly on the move, going from one healing incident or gathering to the next. Often each passage describing a separate event is separated from the next by a simple conjunction – such as 'and'. This gives the whole text a sense of URGENCY. The Son of Man is busily engaged on his ministry, so that he did not even have time to eat. We might describe him in human terms as being 'driven'.

Indeed it is a very human Jesus that is being portrayed. He exhibits many common human traits – he is weary, he is angry, he shows sorrow and even exasperation. What distresses him more than anything else is the hostility and unbelief of the Jewish leaders – but also the constant failure of his closest companions to understand.

Typical is the outburst when he is in the boat with some of the disciples. He warns them to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees"; they think he is reprimanding them for not bringing any bread with them. He cries out to them:

Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread?

Do you not perceive or understand?

Are your hearts hardened?

Having eyes, do you not see; and having ears, do you not hear?

And do you not remember?

When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?...

Do you not yet understand? *(Mk.8,14-21)*

The very next incident reported is the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida (*Mk 8,22-26*). The slow healing of the blind man – in three distinct stages – parallels the slow enlightenment of the disciples. Two chapters follow (*8,22-10,52*) when he is on the road to Jerusalem and his Passion and death. He warns the disciples of his fate, but they are largely unheeding. This section closes with another healing of a blind man, Bartimaeus, outside the town of Jericho. Bartimaeus is cured instantly and follows Jesus as a disciple. This healing points ahead to the restored faith of the disciples after the Resurrection.

The climax comes with the Passion narrative when Jesus is alone and abandoned – more alone than in any of the other accounts. In the Garden of Gethsemane his prayer is especially anguished. Finally, as he is dying he cries out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (*15,35*)

During the whole of this Gospel none of the disciples acclaims him as *Son of God*. Only the demons recognise him – and finally the centurion on Calvary after he has died. Yet we, the readers, know it from the first because the Gospel is announced as "the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (*Mk 1,1*).

how we should see the text

When we read and pray Scripture there are three distinct 'worlds' which are being opened up. The first is that behind the text – the context of the passage, the society and customs in which the events are placed, the whole civilisation of the ancient world.

The second world is that within or of the text. In *Mark* we read of the ever-failing faith of the disciples

in contrast with the never-failing faithfulness of Jesus to his God-given mission. We may conclude that this contrast also reflects the world of *Mark*'s community, and influences the evangelist to write in this way. Raymond Brown comments:

"*Mark*'s addressees must include Christians who have suffered and failed – a community to whom this Gospel offers hope since it points out that Jesus himself did not want to drink the cup and even his most intimate disciples failed... this is a Passion narrative that will have special meaning for those who have sought to follow Christ but find insupportable the cross they are asked to bear in life; i.e. those who at some time have been reduced to asking from the bottom of their hearts: 'My God, my God, for what reason have you forsaken me?'" (*Death of the Messiah*: vol.1, p 28)

Finally there is the world in front of the text, the world that opens up for us when we read the text. This is our world, the world of the reader, who immerses herself in the text and comes to meet Christ through the inspired writings of *Mark*.

some concepts of mark

Mark, in the Greek text, will sometimes repeat the same word in different contexts, giving it a particular theological meaning. A good example was *egeiro* – be raised up! (This was comprehensively dealt with by Dr Rushton in *Tui Motu May pp 26-27* -Ed).

Another is *oikos* – the household. (There is also a word *oikia*, which means simply residence.) 'Household' – oikos – means a lot more than just house. It refers to an assembly of people who gather for a purpose.

Today, we might think of the nuclear family. But in the ancient world it would be at least the extended family, the *whanau*. For *Mark*, writing in Rome 40 years after the death of Jesus, he could well be thinking even more widely – of the households where the early Christians gathered for Eucharist and for mutual support.

What this *oikos* represents, therefore, is the *new household of faith*, which is contained in Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God. It is significant how often the events of *Mark*'s gospel take place in a house. The new household of faith embraces the poor, the lepers, the prostitutes, the tax-gatherers and the gentiles. It is an inclusive assembly. It is an inclusive household. It offers a distinctive form of hospitality.

The development of the household in *Mark* represents a waxing and a waning. The Gospel begins in the wilderness, the place of homelessness (*Mk 1,2-13*). In the early chapters the household of faith develops until it becomes a missionary body. But after the central section (*Mk.8,22-26*) the household fails, until in his Passion and on the Cross Jesus himself becomes the homeless one. In the final verses the women at the tomb are bidden by the angel to return to the disciples maybe gathered in the 'house' and tell them that the risen Jesus will meet the disciples in Galilee. But the women run away in awe and tell no-one. ■

relating to god in the natural world

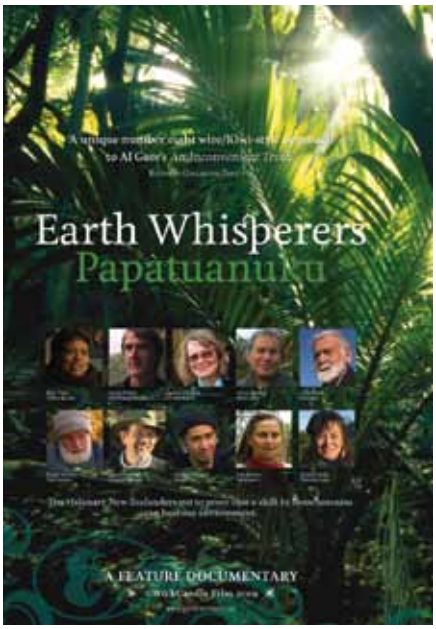
Earth Whisperers/Papatuanuku
Director: Kathleen Gallagher
Review: Mary Woods

You bury your heart
and it goes deeper
into the land
you can only follow
it's a painful love
loving a land
it takes time
a long time

This quote from Colin McCahon begins Kathleen Gallagher's latest film *Earth Whisperers/Papatuanuku*. She presents ten New Zealanders who each in their own local way demonstrate listening to our Earth – Papatuanuku.

Rita Tupe and Isla Burgess gather healing herbs, but take care to ensure this inheritance is still there for our descendants. Rita Tupe begins and ends her time in the bush with Karakia and spreads earth over trees to give them nourishment. Isla Burgess chooses to use common plants rather than rare or endangered species.

Craig Potton's and Alan Mark's protests succeeded in protecting endangered forests. But they warned us that



protest was a last resort tool not to be used lightly. Kay Baxter chose a hikoi to get people to listen to her message about the importance of looking after our seed supplies.

Gerry Findlay and Hugh Wilson set aside tracts of land to allow native forest to regenerate. Organic farmer, Jim O'Gorman, demonstrates how to rebuild the structure of soil using green waste. I envied his lettuces. Charles Royal, chef, took us for a walk through the bush to gather food. Makere Ruka talked of a sustainable community of peace-loving people in the shadow of Whahariki.

These ten people demonstrate reverence for the land. They are no ordinary Kiwis – but they have carved paths that ordinary Kiwis can follow – the slow paths of listening to the earth.

But this film is much more than the sum of its parts. Alun Bollinger's and Mike Single's photography took us through forests up and down the country pausing to watch a tui on a kowhai, or the light on lichen hanging from a tree. From its first haunting strain, the mood is set by the music of Aroha Yates-Smith, Bob Bickerton and Richard Nunns. The photography and the music enhance the stories and take them into the realm of spirit, awe and art.

As I left the theatre, I heard someone comment: "isn't it good to see something positive about the environment that we can relate to". Kathleen Gallagher has given us an inspirational film. ■

Showing in cinemas now. DVD available from www.wickcandle.co.nz $29.95 at completion of cinema release.

going fishing

In his speech at Notre Dame, President Obama spoke of an event which had particular significance for the University and for former president Fr Ted Hesburgh, who was present.

He was commenting on the long struggle for civil rights in America: "A civil rights commission was set up by President Eisenhower. It was the 12 resolutions recommended by this Commission that would ultimately become law in the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964.

"There were six members of the Commission. It included five whites and one African-American; Democrats and Republicans; two Southern governors, the dean of a Southern law school, a Midwestern university president, and your own Father Ted Hesburgh, President of Notre Dame. They worked for two years, and at times, President Eisenhower had to intervene personally since no hotel or restaurant in the South would serve the black and white members of the Commission together.

"Finally, when they reached an impasse in Louisiana, Father Ted flew them all to Notre Dame's retreat in Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin, where they eventually overcame their differences and hammered out a final deal.

"Years later, President Eisenhower asked Father Ted how on earth he was able to broker an agreement between men of such different backgrounds and beliefs. And Father Ted simply said that during their first dinner in Wisconsin, they discovered that they were all fishermen. And so he quickly readied a boat for a twilight trip out on the lake. They fished, and they talked, and they changed the course of history."

(from President Obama's address at Notre Dame University, May 2009)

faith and cinema – praise the good, don't just damn the bad

Through a Screen Darkly
by Jeffrey Overstreet
published Regal 2007
Price: (Amazon.com $US12.23)

Behind the Screen: Hollywood Insiders on faith, film and culture
edited by Spencer Lewerenz and Barbara Nicolosi
Published by BakerBooks 2005
Price: (Amazon.com US$16.20)
Reviews: Mike Crowl

Overstreet is well-known as a Christian film reviewer, but unlike some Christian reviewers, he doesn't look for the nasty and naughty in order to warn us off them (*see page 231* of the paperback edition, for an example). He primarily looks for beauty and truth.

This isn't to say he doesn't warn us off a few movies – a very few, mind you, and then more because they undervalue beauty and truth, and sometimes evil, rather than because they focus on the sinful. For the most part, he celebrates what is wonderful about moviemaking, specifically the way in which film can show a host of things at once, and let you discover which of them are important. Or can focus on something without explaining its meaning, or draw your attention to the absolute beauty in this world.

Overstreet is no snob. He mentions a number of movies here that wouldn't pass muster amongst more famous reviewers, and mentions them with enthusiasm, because he's unfailingly enthusiastic about filmmaking. (He even gives one of Adam Sandler's movies a thumbs up.) However, for the most part he focuses on films that he believes count for something, films such as *Unforgiven, Wings of Desire, The New World,* and *Ikiru.*

Having said all that, I found some of the book disappointing. While he does go into detail on a number of films, making you want to find a copy to see what he's on about, he spends a good deal of time discussing such matters as a Christian point of view of movies, on how certain directors see the world, on violence and its role in storytelling, on his own journey of discovery, on being a critic – to name just a few. All these are relevant to the art, but somehow they come across as less interesting than his discussions of movies. Perhaps he feels the need to educate. Perhaps I thought I knew what he was saying already. (Which might make me the snob!)

The second book has 18 authors, including producers, writers, directors and other people with 'executive' in front of their title. (Executives-somethings are an increasing breed in the film and television industry: just check out any recent movie or tv series.) There are a couple of less interesting chapters here, but for the most part this is something of an eye-opener.

Firstly it introduces the reader to a group called *Act One* (all the book's authors belong to it). *Act One* was begun in 1999 with the intention of uniting Christian workers in Hollywood and encouraging them not only to support each other but to mentor up-and-coming Christians in the industry. Their desire is to transform Hollywood from the inside out, not to 'take it over.' Consequently you'll find, probably to your surprise, that many of these people are working on films and shows that not only have no obvious Christian content, but may even seem to be at odds with a Christian worldview.

The members of *Act One* aim first and foremost to bring excellence and integrity to their work. They're not primarily evangelists trying to convert the cast and crew of whatever production they're working on (though that may occasionally happen). Their intent is to be the best at what they do, because Hollywood recognises real talent and skill above all else, whether you believe it or not. Furthermore, as the chapter by Thom Parham shows, non-Christians often make far better movies about Christian characters, or on Christian themes, than Christians do. (The list of movies made by Christians in recent years is an embarrassment.)

This isn't to say that they're unconcerned about Hollywood's influence. But, as they point out, Hollywood is more encouraged to make good movies when it receives accolades for them than when a great fuss is made about movies that upset Christians. Stop boycotting the latter and praise the former. Hollywood does pay attention.

Incidentally, if you have a spare $10 billion to invest, Charles Slocum tells you how you can put it to good use in Hollywood. ■

Pope Benedict pleads for a just and lasting solution in Israel

Pope Benedict's visit to the Holy Land, the birthplace of the three monotheistic religions of the world, brought to light once again the complexity of the Middle East situation. The attempt to legitimise the state of Israel, officially recognised by the Vatican in 1993, and establish an independent Palestine homeland at the same time looks hopeless. Benedict acknowledged the need for a "just and lasting solution", offered his "sorrow for the hardship and suffering" of the Palestinian people and called the $2 billion wall of separation "tragic".

The Pope's pleas were drowned in politics but showed that Israel's domination of the Middle East has weakened. King Abdullah of Jordan warned that Israel would be at war again "in the next 12 to 18 months" if a peace initiative being sought by President Obama was not pursued.

After 60 years of strife and war, a large number of Israelis have moved abroad, with nearly a million now living permanently outside the country. There are currently 500,000 resident Israelis holding American passports and 100,000 with European passports who would depart immediately should Israel be threatened. The Jewish and Arab populations in Israel and the territories are predicted to be equal in number by 2016 – anathema to believers in a Jewish homeland. The decline of the Christian population and its influence in the region was sadly acknowledged by Benedict. Having lost hope of a two-state solution, emigration is the first option.

Israel can no longer rely on the unqualified financial and political support of America – the 'what is good for Israel is good for America' policy that was the bedrock politics of the neoconservatives and buttressed by the formidable Israel lobby. Sixty percent of Americans have said the US should withhold aid to Israel if it does not reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians. President Obama has told Congress to expect a clash with Israel. It is arguable that the US is in trouble in the Middle East and has a terrorism problem in that region because of its unconditional support for Israel's wars and its abuse of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Israel is losing favour.

Then there is the Wall, Israel's vast concrete and steel barrier stretching more than 500 kilometres across the West Bank consisting of electronic fences, checkpoints, watchtowers and razor coil that has confiscated thousands of hectares of Palestinian land. It has reduced the threat of suicide bombers killing Israelis, but what use is such a monstrosity in the age of asymmetric warfare? Rockets will eventually replace bombers. Professor Sari Nusseibeh of Al-Quds University puts it bluntly: "the wall is the perfect crime because it creates the violence it was ostensibly built to prevent". In Bethlehem, Benedict lamented: "it is tragic to see walls still being erected". It stops the bombers but also encloses the Israelis themselves in a cocoon of false security against mounting world opprobrium.

Crosscurrents
John Honoré

Key falters

After six months in power, Prime Minister John Key seems to be losing his touch. A series of gaffes have weakened his credibility and exposed his lack of political experience.

His endorsement of Christine Rankin as head of the *Families Commission* was beyond the pale and attracted fierce opposition. Peter Dunne must be fuming. Then Key virtually conceded defeat in the forthcoming Mt Albert by-election by selecting Melissa Lee as the National candidate. She has been a disaster, with neither the talent nor the support of all the National Party. Her ultimate stupidity was the assertion that building a motorway through the electorate would reduce crime.

The Maori Party must be having second thoughts about its coalition support for National. With the Prime Minister's tacit support, Act Party Local Government Minister, Rodney Hide, is running the show for the Auckland super-city and has rejected the possibility of having Maori seats on the board. Despite National's earlier promises of a "better deal" for Maori, Key has fallen out with several of his own cabinet over Hide's role. Welfare Minister Paula Bennett had the audacity to be concerned with small community welfare financing for the future Auckland mega-council. This is not the right-wing politics of Act or National and she was reprimanded by John Key who is floundering to maintain his leadership.

Does he listen to his advisors or does he think that the tourism portfolio alone will maintain his popularity? Cabinet ministers seem to be in no hurry to support him publicly. Often in TV interviews, right behind the incumbent Prime Minister is the inscrutable face of Bill English, staring straight ahead – waiting.

Rest in peace

I mourn the death of my beloved. A void has been suddenly created in spaces which previously were always filled with the joyful presence of another human being. The force of life, gone. The miracle of emotion, gone. Nothing.

I somehow expect that void to be miraculously filled again. The pain is that I know that space will never be filled. Two days after her death I visited her for the last time. Mavora was serene, composed, at peace and beautiful. On that day, with pride and acceptance, my daughter and I bade her *farewell*. ■

Condoms are on again

The cramped cabin of an airliner in flight is not the best environment for making theological distinctions. No wonder the words of Pope Benedict regarding condoms, uttered during an on-board press conference when flying south for his first visit to Africa, caused an international furore.

HIV/Aids was, he argued, "a tragedy that cannot be overcome by money alone, that cannot be overcome through the distribution of condoms, which can even aggravate the problem". The solution lay, he said, in a "spiritual and human awakening" and "friendship for those who suffer".

While the rest of those words were widely acceptable, the notion that the distribution of condoms aggravated the problem seemed extreme. The Vatican public relations folk adverted to that. Despite the fact that the words "aggravate the problem" were clearly there in tape recordings of the press conference, the Vatican web-site published an edited text, reporting that the Pope had said that the use of condoms "risks aggravating" the problem.

Better still, maybe, had they amended the Pope's words to read: "the use of condoms 'complicates' the problem". Why 'complicates'? Because there are good reasons for saying that in some instances the use of condoms is demanded by the norms of Christian morality.

Such norms involve at times the invocation of the principle of double effect. This moral principle means that an action having foreseen harmful effects practically inseparable from the good effect, is justifiable if:

- the nature of the act is itself good, or at least morally neutral;
- the agent intends the good effect and not the bad, either as a means to the good or as an end in itself;
- the good effect outweighs the bad effect in circumstances sufficiently grave to justify causing the bad effect, and the agent exercises due diligence to minimise the harm.

An example of the legitimate application of this principle is to heavily sedate a terminally ill patient who is suffering severe pain. The medication relieves the pain – a good effect. It also brings forward the time of death – a bad effect.

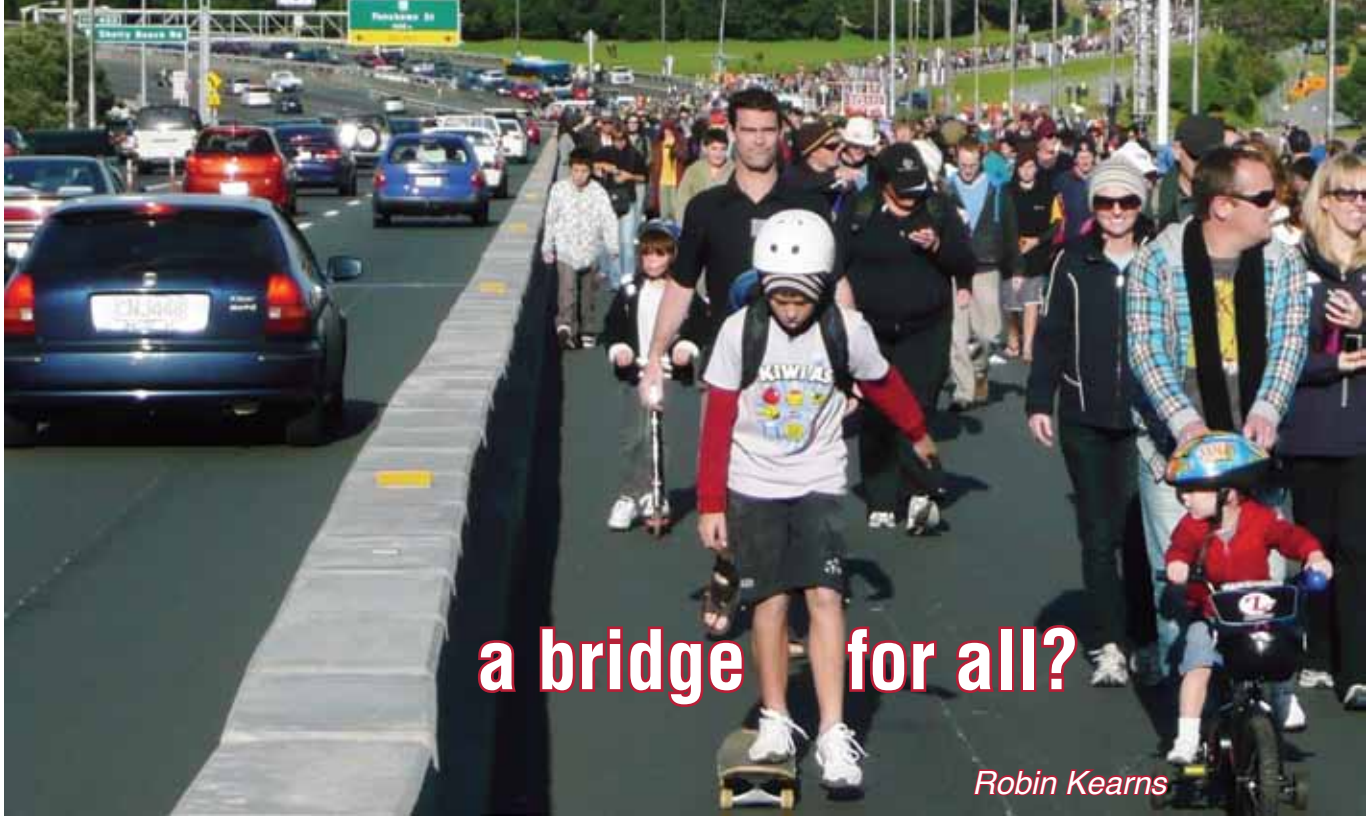
The principle of double effect applies in the case of condom use by a married couple when the husband is HIV positive. Latex condoms block the passage both of semen and of HIV. Whatever the morality of the use of such condoms as a contraceptive preventing the passage of semen, their use to ensure that the husband does not pass HIV infection to his wife is morally justified, even demanded. The need of a married couple to express and cement their union by the sexual act calls on their having relations but in a fashion that does not involve passing on the disease to the wife.

My Redemptorist confrere, Bishop Kevin Dowling of Rustenberg, South Africa, would argue for a even wider use of condoms. Some day I must present to you the full range of his arguments. Here I limit myself to the case of a wife and her HIV infected husband. No pope should object to condom use here. While Pope Benedict is surely right in saying that condoms are not to be presented as the key weapon in the fight against AIDS, there are instances where the use of condoms is not to be ruled out.

Poor Pope. Imagine being in an aircraft cabin somewhere above the Sahara Desert and trying to put the above to a group of journalists, not all of whom would have the acumen of John L. Allen. No wonder he spoke in general terms, and no wonder further explanations seemed – and still seem – necessary. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

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



a bridge for all?

Robin Kearns

It's Ascension Sunday. With the sound of church bells in the distance, we gather at Pt Erin at the city-side of Auckland's iconic harbour bridge. It's sunny and a full tide. In 1959, when the bridge opened, 100,000 people walked across. Today, it's the 50th birthday of the bridge, and *Transport Agency* officials insist no one will walk.

Unlike other big-city bridges our bridge makes no concessions to non-motorists. In Sydney, there is a walkway, a cycleway and two rail lines as well as the traffic. In Auckland, these were all part of the original plans, but were dropped due to cost.

As the crowd grows, my thoughts return to Portland Oregon, where a week ago I walked a bridge crossing the Williamette River (*see right*), sharing the space with other walkers as well as cyclists and cars. This was the same city where I boarded light rail outside the airport terminal and for two dollars was conveyed to within metres of my downtown hotel.

While in Portland I heard of the decision that the State Highway 20 extension in Auckland will be above-ground, cutting a path through hundreds of houses and slicing through the edge of the Oakley Creek reserve. How could Auckland get it so wrong, in an age menaced by the spectre of 'peak oil'? How could we serve walkers and cyclists so poorly compared to other cities of our size, like Portland? This corner of America had got it right!

So where did Auckland's auto-dominance come from? It's a conundrum, for we are also a nation of runners and trampers! But decisions have repeatedly been made in favour of the car. We ripped up tram tracks 40 years before Portland put them in.

The results are many: congested streets, burgeoning obesity and the withering of non-motorised mobility. Somehow we've allowed walking and cycling to be viewed as inconvenient and slow – something to be undertaken for recreation, not for serious travel.

Back at the base of the harbour bridge, the cars speed by as the crowd grows larger. With speeches over, we walk to the on-ramp. The *Transit Agency* boss is asked for permission to cross. ***'No'*** is the expected answer and ***'no'*** is what the crowd gets. Then suddenly the security line is breached and a few daring souls are joined by the masses. Police give up the chase and appear to wave thousands of peddlers and pedestrians onto the northbound lanes.

It's an atmosphere of elation. Strangers are in conversation. I talk with a man who, at the age of two was carried over the bridge at its opening. Drivers honk. There are children, grandparents, regional councillors, work-mates – ordinary people wanting ordinary things: to walk, to bike, to have a more liveable city. Not just today but everyday. ■

Robin Kearns is a passionate walker and Tui Motu Director, whose 'day job' involves researching what makes cities more livable.