

Tui Motu

InterIslands

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'make affluence history'

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Dives and Lazarus

(Luke 16: 19-31)

When we selected a photograph of a cruise ship for the cover of the February issue and printed an interview to go with it, we had our fingers crossed. Was *Tui Motu* promoting the lifestyle of the well-to-do? As expected, a letter of criticism duly arrived which we print on page 4 – and we are grateful to its writer.

It arrived just in time for Lent, and Lent is the time of the year for taking stock. *Rend your hearts, not your garments*, the Lenten liturgy exhorts us. So this Lenten issue looks at evangelical poverty. We have a series of articles from different parts of New Zealand, as well as one graphic account of the visit of Kathryn Campbell, a Christchurch nurse, to Calcutta (pp 9-10): what is it like for a Kiwi to be totally immersed in a Third World society?

The theme which Kathleen Gallagher (pp 6-7) has chosen to explore is how each person may choose to live more simply. The motive is ascetical: how to slow up, become more grounded in simple tasks, to 'feel' the earth with one's hands and feet, to have time to stand and stare. It is the ideal environment for contemplative prayer. And, of course, it means a deliberate choice to use less of the limited resources of the earth.

Joseph Land – and quite independently, John Cooney – both settle on *affluence* (rather than poverty) as being Public Enemy Number One (pp 7-8). The international campaign *Make Poverty History* gained huge popular support especially among the young during 2005. However, indigent people don't

choose to be poor. They are the victims of a rich and cruel world. International campaigns can relieve their suffering, especially if they promote education and enable sufferers to gain dignity and acquire the ability to help themselves.

But these campaigns do not really touch the fundamental issue. Poverty on the scale which we see today in many parts of the world is largely the creation of affluence. It is Dives who creates Lazarus. It is Dives who ignores Lazarus. It is Dives who claims the right to exploit, to corner the market, to deny fair employment and a just wage to the disempowered: it is Dives who creates the sweatshops of Manila and Calcutta so we can enjoy cheap goods.

Let us take some examples closer to home. A leader of industry this week was decrying the raising of the minimum wage. We are talking here of roughly \$10 an hour – and less for youths. In the meantime the judges have just accepted a salary hike of 10 percent, to well above \$230,000 per annum; the *Higher Salaries Commission* has given MPs and Ministers a similar rise. Business moguls award themselves astronomical salaries up to, sometimes exceeding, seven figures. These are the people who set the benchmarks. Yet they say they cannot 'afford' to pay the ordinary worker a measly \$10 per hour.

Judges and MPs should be well paid. They carry a heavy load of responsibility and their lives can be extremely stressful. There is another more sobering reason for paying them well: they will be less likely to be



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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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Hans Küng comments on the new Encyclical

When Pope Benedict was first elected, Hans Küng said that we should take special note of the first Encyclical “which will mark the way forward” (see TM May 2005 p 3). So we wrote to him and invited his comments. His response is below.

We could do with a second encyclical

Many Catholics are certainly glad that Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical is not a manifesto of cultural pessimism or an ecclesiastical sexual morality which is hostile to the body, but is devoted to a central theological and anthropological topic. Christians will take for granted most of what is said about love in this respectable, solid and carefully worked out document. In a matter-of-fact style Pope Ratzinger offers solid theological fare about *Eros* and *Agape*, *Amor* and *Caritas*, and is careful not to construct false alternatives. That is a good sign, and I welcome it.

But the encyclical has its limitations. I wish that we could have a second encyclical, not about the love of

God and Jesus Christ and about the charitable activity of the church and its organisations, but about structures of justice in the institutional church itself and a loving way of dealing with all the different groups: with the women and men who use contraceptives, with the divorced and remarried, with priests who have left the priesthood because of the issue of celibacy, with the critical voices in the church, with those Protestant and Anglican ministers whose eucharists are said to be invalid.

Joseph Ratzinger would be a great Pope if he drew bold consequences for the structures and legal regulations of the church from his words about love, which are right and important. As well as the Roman *Congregation of Faith* we could do with a Roman *Congregation of Love*, which examined every decree of the Curia to see whether it accorded with Christian love.

Hans Küng, Tübingen

tempted to feather their own nests. Nevertheless it seems to be one of the curses of the capitalist system that income differential constantly widens. The rich get richer. And inevitably the poor get poorer. Cause and effect.

So the problem is not poverty so much as affluence. My affluence causes someone else's poverty. I can do something about my affluence. I can choose to live more simply. The poor very often have no choices. All this is sober reflection for Lent. Yet it is immensely practical. Any one of us can choose, this Ash Wednesday, to practice one of the suggestions in Kathleen Gallagher's article – reflectively and prayerfully.

The church too can look at its public policies and where it places its emphases:

- how often does it speak publicly about social justice?
- what living standards do its leaders enjoy; what sort of cars do they drive; what sort of holidays do they have?
- how justly do they treat their own workers?
- in a word, does it practice the option for the poor that it preaches?

However, before we become too maudlin, we might remember that Jesus himself, while he lived the life of a poor man, was not averse to having a

party! This is where we come back to the cruise boats. There is a time to fast and a time to feast: that is a time-honoured Christian tradition. We should not begrudge anyone a well-earned holiday, even on a cruise ship. They do far less harm to the environment than do the Jumbo Jets.

What we individually and as a church need to work for, because it is a gospel imperative, is to build a world where Lazarus comes to have the choices we enjoy. The inescapable condition is to ‘make affluence history’. But see if you can persuade Don Brash or the Business Round Table – or Helen Clark for that matter – to agree to that.

M.H.

Questionnaire

One problem *Tui Motu* does not have is affluence. As our accountant said: “there is no fat on your budget”.

Our Board of Directors is determined that *Tui Motu* should have a future, and want you to be a part of it. Clipped into this issue you will find a questionnaire. To help us secure this future we need your help and advice. Please pull out the questionnaire, fill it in and post it back to us. Do it this week. Don't delay or it may finish in the heap of jobs you never quite get round to.

Many thanks for taking this trouble. You are not committing yourself to anything – just yet!

South Park

Well, the Catholic church has enjoyed a taste of what it is to be on the receiving end of media insults. Perhaps it had the merit of allowing us to feel a little of the sense of outrage which many Muslims have felt.

As Glynn Cardy notes, tolerance is based on four principles:

- the right of every human being to be treated with respect,
- the right to reasonably question authority,
- the right of all to live their lives to the full without disadvantaging others,
- the right to express oneself without slandering others.

Amen to that.

M.H.

Sexual norms today

Neil Vaney (*TM Dec '05*), with groups of Directors of Religious Studies, found that the most significant reason for young people failing to show a vibrant faith life is that they are under pressure from the youth culture of today to abandon Catholic "sexual norms". I had hoped that he would follow this clear opening thesis with perhaps three kinds of presentation:

1. some testimony from young people who do manage to rejoice in a vibrant Christian experience;
2. evidence from young Catholics about why they find our sexual norms so difficult;
3. most of all, a willingness to open a discussion on what exactly Catholic sexual norms are in today's world of HIV/AIDS on the one hand and, on the other, the deeply disturbing number of scandals concerning priests and the sexual abuse of minors.

But, after a thoughtful diversion into Proportionalism and Epidemiology, he concludes that the sexual revolution since the 1960s has caused a moral pollution and sickness throughout our global society. Sex as individual choice is leading us towards ruinous outcome. It is a disappointing ending, where he lists the world's failings but keeps the church well out of the firing line, except to say "we should have been dialoguing with people of good faith." But has he done so in this article? I think not. It was almost as if he was presenting ethics-in-the-absence-of-real-people; or statistics without reaching into the pain and

struggle of everyday living. He wishes dialogue with people of good faith without calling upon any teenagers to speak for themselves. Are Catholic norms never to be up for reappraisal? Perhaps we are more part of the problem than we are part of the solution.

Laurie Campbell, Newport, Wales

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 meaning. Response articles (up to a page) are also welcome, but need to be by negotiation

Aren't we all "filthy rich"?

Your magazine is splendid and its quality has remained consistently high.

I found the *February* editorial "those lazy, hazy, crazy days..." very interesting. Fr Tony Ives remarks, in response to the question: "So is he ministering to the filthy rich?", that this is not the case; later the editorial says that "cruising has ceased to be the exclusive prerogative of the very wealthy". I totally understand this way of speaking, but I challenge it as thoughtless. Let us recall that United Nations figures tell us that 20,000 children die of starvation every day. Millions in India never get a decent meal. Mothers cannot get enough food for their children. Look at much of Africa and parts of South America.

Even the ordinary New Zealander is rich. It is easy to ignore the abject poverty of so many and have a standard that allows us to make and accept assumptions that 'riches' have to reach gross proportions before we acknowledge them as such. I am a religious who spent many years in India. Here in New Zealand I consider I am personally "filthy rich".

Sr Namrata (no address supplied)

Glory Be to One God

Pauline O'Regan's article (*Feb '06*) brought back a memory of 40 years ago – an earnest discussion with a member of the *Church of the Latter Day Saints*. He was of similar mind to the Moslems that we were referring to three separate identities in the Trinity.

In exasperation I suddenly jumped up and switched on the electric light. I set out to explain that the exterior glass could be God, the internal filament Christ and the unseen power of electricity (or Spirit) gave reality to the whole concept... three in one.

The first two alone were ineffective: the third was essential to get the whole message across – and vice versa. The Creator had to generate the Son Christ to bring reality to the world... Christ in turn through his death has given us the Spirit – the essential ingredient to make it all work.

I really do not know where I got this concept, but it has been with me ever since.

Frank Darroch, Hastings

With tongue in cheek...

...I write to complain that *Tui Motu* and Sr Pauline O'Regan recently interrupted my devotions at an Anglican service of Holy Communion. Sr Pauline commented on the disappearance from the liturgy of "...One God". As we came to the end of our prayer for the whole state of Christ's church I found myself distracted and thinking of that article.

In the form of service based on the 1928 *Prayer Book* that prayer ends: "Grant this O Father for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, One God, world without end. Amen".

When I should have been concentrating on my prayers I found myself composing a letter to Sr Pauline. It has been sent and responded to – but you should take your share of the blame!

Gordon Parry, Dunedin

Promoter's Corner

Talking up Tui Motu

Priests and people have been consistently welcoming to *Tui Motu*. Requests to promote in parishes have met with a 90 percent affirmation. No surprise, since a gospel enterprise (a Catholic publication) fits well within a liturgical context.

Another aspect of growing TM at parish level is not so rosy though. Only one parish in six orders TM for monthly sales at the church door, and even these may not get a living voice reminder of what treasures await prospective readers on a particular month. Those parishes that encourage a parishioner to speak for one minute at the end of Mass make a major contribution to the growth of TM.

Elsewhere in this issue you are invited to express your views about how the future of TM can best be secured. We are looking for fresh ideas, but we also want to freshen up ideas that already work well for us. Would **you** consider approaching your parish priest/parish council to permit you to give a one-minute reference to the monthly edition of TM? Even at one Mass for a start.

Please contact me on 09-5211342 or email: cloher@ihug.co.nz

Tom Cloher

Striking the right balance

*“I’ve got to get out”, says Linda Clarke
after four years fronting National Radio’s **Nine to Noon** programme.
Dunedin psychotherapist Angela Stupples reflects on Linda’s achievement,
her motives for leaving – and on the vexed question of working mothers.*

The long interview/article in the New Zealand *Listener* (28 January 2006), about Linda Clark’s resignation from what is described as *National Radio*’s top job, makes for interesting reading. It describes a familiar scenario made newsworthy by the eminence of her position and the affectionate regard in which she is held by her many listeners. Linda’s resignation will not have surprised the women in her audience who have young children to care for: more likely, the question they would ask is: “how did you manage to take on the job in the first place and stay in it as long as you have?”

She is described as a woman of exceptional energy, which must indeed be the case as her day, which begins at 5.30 am and finishes at 10 pm, is often followed by a night of disturbed sleep (she has pre-school twins). Linda says ‘exhaustion’ is only one of the reasons for her resignation.

She is clear that her dissatisfaction is not just about tiredness but also reflects changes in herself, which include the realisation that her situation has become untenable. By continuing to work and denying this fact, she would be encouraging other women in similar situations to ‘continue trying to do the impossible’.

The ongoing conflict working women feel between career and childcare was made manifest in the sense of outrage she and many of her listeners felt in regard to Helen Clark’s comment, at the end of last year, that the economy needed more women in the workforce, and that better childcare facilities would enable this to happen.

Most women, as Linda says, want a ‘balance’ between work and home life. It is no longer acceptable to suggest that we must choose between raising our own children and having a satisfactory working life: women do want both – and why not? Society will be the beneficiary if this ever becomes the case. Men too are beginning to have the same aspirations. Young

fathers are increasingly involved in child care and committed to supporting their working partners.

What Linda doesn’t say, and I believe needs saying, is that society will have to change its social routines for this to happen, particularly in the workforce. Firstly, women and men have to be really seen as equal partners in work and the home. Secondly, management needs to create the flexibility in working hours to allow this to happen – not one partner working nine to five and the other when they can fit in. There must be more creative negotiation of time at work and home, more use of computer technology to allow some of work’s routine to be done at home, meetings to be run on-line and so on.

And what of her thoughts about journalism? Linda sees it as a young person’s job, when life is full of certainty and conviction about what is right and what is wrong, not tempered by the doubts and uncertainties of the middle years. Perhaps the experience of parenting, especially in the pre-school years when the strength of small children’s feelings are experienced within the close confines of home and generate in turn our own intense responses of loving and loathing – if we are honest enough to allow this acknowledgment: all this helps to ‘rub the edges off’ our certainties and forces a broader view.

Linda’s views on media journalism are as important, it seems to me, as are her views on the position of the working woman. Her belief in the importance of in-depth coverage of issues and her distaste for the brief superficial ‘black or white’ presentation, which is assumed to be what the public wants these days, is a huge part of what we have enjoyed so much about her version of *Nine to Noon*.

Four years is long enough to have stimulated and interested the nation on a week-daily basis, and I for one am grateful and wish Linda the satisfaction she hopes for in her change of role.

We would welcome readers’ views on where the balance lies

Voluntary Poverty and Contemplative Action

*Kathleen Gallagher puts before us a timely challenge for Lent:
'live simply – that others may simply live'*

Voluntary poverty is about shifting the focus to those things that matter utterly:

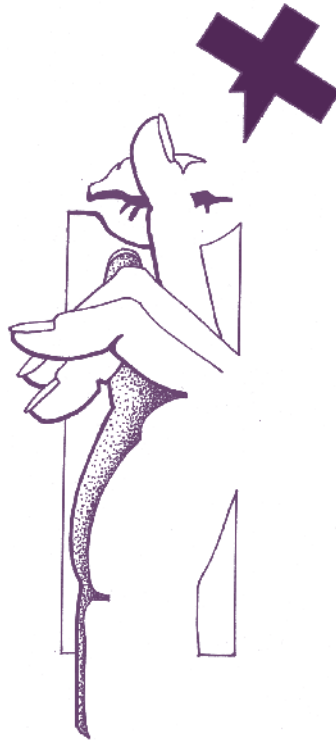
- to live as simply as possible,
- to engage spontaneously and thoughtfully in contemplative manual work,
- to grow, preserve and prepare our own food,
- to take a bike, walk, catch a bus or a boat, instead of a car where possible,
- to 'live lightly on the earth',
- to recycle clothes and books and pass goods on when we have no further use for them,
- not to purchase brand new goods when old ones can be repaired and will do the job just as well (Rod Donald with his old ten speed bike).

Voluntary poverty goes hand in hand with contemplative action and contemplative manual labour. Contemplative action connects physically to the place where I am. It is a quiet, not a noisy, action and it allows me to physically hear the sound of the place where I am – the wind blowing in the leaves, the bird singing in the tree, the sound of the scrubbing brush on the cloth, the sound of a comb passing through my daughter's hair, the sound of the dirt thudding on the earth, the sound of the hedgehog rustling the leaves, the river talking, the *whio* (blue duck) singing, the brushing of the broom on the wood floor.

The more we can let contemplative action into the daily coming and going of our lives, the richer and more

connected we feel to the place where we live and to the earth and to the sky and to the water around us. We come more intimately to know that the earth is our mother and she truly feeds our body, our spirit and our soul.

Contemplative action can be any quiet action that connects us to where we are and enables us to hear with all our senses (*whakarongo*), truly the place where we are, waiting for the bus, handwashing clothes, hanging them on the line, sculpting a piece of clay, sweeping the floor, healing somebody with our hands, planting trees, washing dishes, preserving tomatoes, cracking open walnuts, folding washing, mending a broken bike, weeding carrots, biking to school, baking bread, preparing a meal, planting out potatoes, walking along the beach, fishing, taking out the compost.



The more we allow our time to be filled with contemplative action, the clearer we are able to see. Machine noise disrupts contemplative action so it is harder to be fully present with all of our senses and we tend to become primarily present to the machine – for example we become most present to the car we are driving, as opposed to the place where we are – and we don't get to hear the bee buzzing by or hear the *kotare* (kingfisher) singing in the tree above. In this way we lose our connection to the *mauri* of the earth and the sea and the sky and the beings all around us – we may not even notice a daddy-long-legs in the hole above our head.

Voluntary poverty and contemplative action are about an unhurried peaceful response to the world in which we live. They give us time to appreciate the earth and the sky and the flames of fire and water flowing. Voluntary poverty and contemplative action give us time to be with people who have died, with friends who are ill. They enable us to live quietly and gently on this earth, to be awake to the beauty of all that is around us, and to let peace permeate ourselves and allow time to surround all of our actions. It gifts us when we take action to the world – so our action is not busy or reactive, but is truly contemplative – an action inspired by and imbued with the Holy Spirit. ■

*Reproduced with permission from
The Common Good. Kathleen Gallagher
is a Christchurch based writer*

Make Affluence History

Was there ever so insidious a foe as creeping consumerism? Was there ever an enemy that could kill so many, so effectively, in body and spirit? The vastness of the damage, now threatening the very planet itself, leaves hydrogen bombs looking tame; its self-destructiveness makes suicide bombers look sane.

So, where is the resistance movement? Where are the partisans, the rebel armies? The very nature of consumerism defies counter-attack because we are all implicated in it, and the deeper we are in, the harder it is to find the Way, the Truth and the Life. We decry the injustice of poverty and latch onto catch phrases like Make Poverty History as a sop to our consciences, not daring to realise that affluence is the scourge of our age, not poverty. Ask St Francis about poverty. he says: "Never am I so ashamed than when I find someone more miserably poor than I am, for I've chosen Holy Poverty for my bride, my delight, my spiritual and material treasure".

So I say: Make affluence history. Do we really believe our standard of living has been raised by more and more consumerism? ...that cleverer technology means a better life? What standard is that measured by? Dare we suggest, for example, that good roads are a bad thing! Surely everyone deserves a good road.

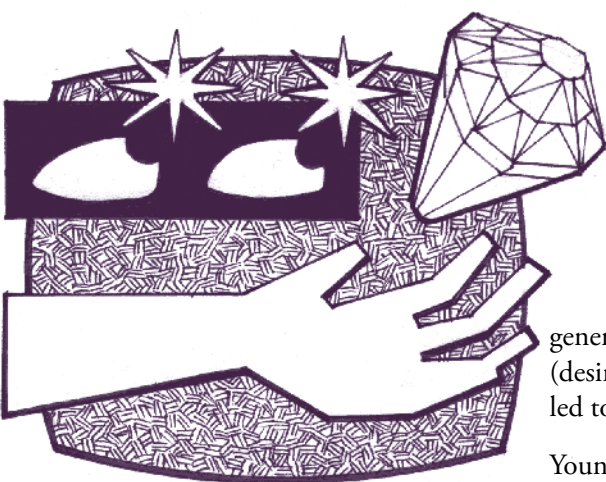
Consider for a moment how roads have facilitated the breakdown of rural communities – the better the road, the quicker and more thorough the breakdown. As mobility and transport have got easier, we have seen more and more services become centralised, abandoning places like here in Hokianga. The immediate consequence is unemployment leading to a lifestyle of consuming but not producing. Add to that the increased time people spend on the road (because it is so quick and easy) to get to those services etc. It is time no longer spent in one's own community.

Next come the moneyed tourists and opportunist businesses spring up to cater for them, creating a very closed economy that benefits only a few. Local councils go to greater lengths to attract them, including even better roads on the 'tourist routes'. Then some of these tourists want holiday homes, the land prices go up, rates go up, locals move out, and we all bemoan the good old days when everyone lived and worked together and helped each other out. Very few like the trend, but even fewer resist it: "That's life". "Got to go with the times." "There's money in it" etc.

To end affluence, like St Francis we must embrace Lady Poverty.

(written on the Feast of St Francis by Joseph Land, of Kaikōhe)

To covet - the fuel of modern consumer society



John Cooney proposes a salutary exercise for Lent: are we all being seduced by covetousness and greed?

Three years running a hostel for 200 teenage boys and girls brought me face to face with the final commandment of the Decalogue: *You shall not covet*. Much of the upset in the hostel came from the inability of young people to distinguish between

generosity (freely giving) and coveting (desiring what others have). This desire led to problems such as theft.

Young people do not always see it as theft, when you borrow someone else's clothes without asking and 'forgetting' to return them; or as stealing, when you take food from a locker because it holds plenty; or as extortion, when a bigger boy 'asks' for food or to borrow a CD player. We had many conversations about coveting and its outworking.

You shall not covet appears in *Exodus* (20:17) and also *Deuteronomy* (5:21): "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, you shall not set your heart on his house, his field, his servant – man or woman – his ox, his donkey or anything that is his." The *Collins Dictionary* defines covet as to "long to possess what belongs to someone else."

Until my hostel experience I never really considered this commandment. It was much clearer that I shouldn't ▷▷

▷▷ kill, steal, tell lies. Given our affluent society where we are richer than at any previous time and we can buy our own ox, car, house or anything else we need, why do we need to covet anything? Yet I believe now that it is wealth that has turned our inclination to covet into an ascending spiral of greed.

Recently I came across a book *Affluenza: When Too Much Is Never Enough* (by Clive Hamilton and Richard Denniss; published *Allen & Unwin*). These Australian economists examine current social problems and trace them back to the consumption addiction of our consumer society. They place much of the cause at the feet of marketers who create a sense of insecurity in consumers so that people desire what others have, in order to reduce this insecurity. It is sometimes known as *keeping up with the Joneses*. But isn't that just another way of saying *to covet*?

The authors state we are the wealthiest generation ever, yet our thirst for possessions and our increasing debt

make us also the most fixated on making more and more money. This despite it being clear that once a certain threshold is met, more wealth does not make us happier.

Among the consequences of this restless ambition to enrich ourselves are: longer hours worked per family; widespread depression (around 30 percent of Australians at any one time rely on mood-altering substances); increasing family breakdown; more adolescent unrest; less time given to community service; and greater alienation.

*we are hooked on
buying things we don't need,
with money we don't have,
to impress people
we don't know*

As a society we are hooked on buying products we don't need, with money we don't have, to impress people we don't really know. Our ever-growing economy keeps raising the bar for a 'normal' standard of living. Access to credit, especially via plastic cards, enables people to buy up closer to their aspirations but often beyond their means.

A person will consider himself or herself poor if they can't buy \$700 Armani sunglasses, spa pools for their home or breast implants for a daughter's 21st birthday. Clever marketing of goods reinforces this overspending by working on our insecurities and our yearning for social acceptance. We are promised what are called *U2* experiences. ("U2 can have a figure like this... U2 can attract girls with *lynx* deodorant".)

Knowing one is being duped will protect us against this confidence trick. We may think we are immune, but marketing works subtly. We are conditioned to covet, and our current economic well-being to some degree relies on this. But this economic wealth has many social,

environmental and spiritual costs that continue to go unattended.

We continue to extend our frontiers as new discoveries and developments improve our standard of living. However, our community has failed to recognise God's hand in this and covets these improvements to the detriment of quality of life, happiness, and important relationships.

You shall covet is the mantra of the modern consumer world. Live by it – and reap the inevitable results of *affluenza*. But none of this is new.

Benjamin Franklin once said: "Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it. There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more a man has, the more he wants. Instead of filling a vacuum, it makes one." We are swept up in the activity around us. We desperately try to keep our heads above water when all we need to do is put our feet down and stand on firm ground watching the flow go past us.

Finally, to covet is a crime against ourselves. It creates a sense of emptiness, a lack of fulfilment that steals our gratitude and joy of life. However, *Tui Motu* readers are already in the habit of standing awhile and working on our spiritual well-being. Hence, we are probably building an immunity to covetousness by learning to swim against the materialist tide.

We can protect ourselves from the immediate harm just by recognising the consequences of our choices. This doesn't mean we are to avoid any consumer goods. Rather, it is to ensure we don't succumb to the false belief that purchasing these goods can provide happiness and allow the accumulation of consumer goods be our focus over our relationships and many other real benefits.

People need to be shown the alternative: a life enjoying the fruits of God's covenant instead of wrestling with the outworking of coveting. The choice is ours. ■

*John Cooney is a schoolteacher
from Alexandra*

Bible society ad



Into the Midst of Poverty

Kathryn Campbell (left), a registered nurse who lives in Christchurch with husband Kevin, recently spent nearly five months working with Mother Teresa's Sisters in India.

Long time friend Fr Alan Roberts reflects on her experiences with her immediately after her return.

Kathryn with a 'street child' whose family she tended

Discussions on poverty are interesting topics for us Westerners, particularly when we haven't a clue what real poverty is! Kathryn Campbell, a registered nurse from Christchurch, recently spent a decent spell living in the midst of India's poverty. Her stories would be material for Monty Python, were there not human beings providing the inspiration for them.

Volunteers who go to India must provide their own accommodation, and for Kathryn it was the *Hotel Crystal*. The very name should say it all. A few rupees a night and set in a darkened street, it provided for her basic needs. Kathryn, I think, might be braver than most, certainly more than me. However, her only brush with death was from her mistake soon after arrival when she put an ice-cube into her drink.



dealing with highly infected wounds...

In the mornings Kathryn worked with the Sisters, and in the afternoons she went out into other areas, to see what she could do. On September 17th she writes by email: "my sickest patient has a fractured femur and head... no operations until all infectious wounds are healed... As the head wounds are full of maggots and worms... you pour ether into each wound and carefully with your tweezers remove them one by one into a solution that will kill them."

The thought of all that is about as far as most of us could go. Kathryn says it's the stench of the whole place that really gets to you. It was her first overwhelming hurdle to deal with. Then the people urinating and defecating in a street close to where meat and fish is being prepared for sale all contributed to the culture shock. Not to mention her first sighting of rats!

I watched Kathryn carefully as she spoke and told story after story. There was a compassion in her words and a genuine love for the people she served. So the question begged: "Kathryn, what did you gain from it all?"

She answered in a way I think I expected, but nevertheless her words moved in such a way that they covered a whole range of parts of her life. She spoke from a professional angle at

first. She was able to give of her skills. There was no doubt about that. The extent of what she was experiencing medically was not something she would come across here. She tells of the story of helping an elderly man who had suffered a stroke, his right side paralysed. He had scarcely moved in six months. A little bit of 'No.8 wire' and help here and there, and soon the old man was experiencing a new lease on life.

Then I saw the real insight Kathryn had gained from going there. It was centred



patient in hospital





Aspirants to the Missionaries of Charity dancing at the ceremony of their first vows, in Calcutta



Calcutta slum family. Kathryn was able to nurse their younger child back from pneumonia



around *hope*. If you can give the people hope, you give them everything. Her story was intensely moving, and I think Kathryn was rightly proud of the transformation her work brought to the old man and his family and those living nearby.

But then Kathryn moved on to how the experience had affected her spiritually. There was no need for her to tell me, for I could see it in her. She was calmer, slower and certainly more centred. Kathryn claimed she had

become a 'Mary', as in the Mary and Martha story. "Kathryn", I said, "you've calmed down about 300 percent!"

Kathryn unhesitatingly accepts Mother Teresa's command to find 'India' in our backyard. "It's not about going over there and ignoring the poor here", she says. Still, I couldn't help thinking that this was a mind-blowing experience for Kathryn, as it would be for all of us. The extras she had taken, clothes etc. were all irrelevant when her time ran out, so she left them there.

She had taken with her one of each piece of a picnic set she and husband Kevin had received as a gift. It had crossed her mind she was breaking the set, and was fond of it for the picnics she and Kevin enjoy from time to time. But these also were given away on departure. On return she found that Kevin had been given a present from the Carmelites in Christchurch. Another picnic set... exactly the same!

Fr Alan Roberts is Parish Priest at Blenheim

Calcutta street scenes (photos: Kathryn Campbell)



left: Hotel Crystal – Kathryn's 'home'

below left: a 'bag lady'

below: Fraid, who lived in the basement of the Hotel Crystal whom Kathryn treated for chest ailments

right: Calcutta streets in the monsoon



Full page advertisement

‘Heroes of a different kind’

New Zealand Jesuits in India



photo: Alastair Murray

Let the people sing!

*Doyenne of New Zealand hymn-writers,
Shirley Murray lives in busy 'retirement'
in Waikane, out of Wellington.*

*'Hymnsmiths', like wordsmiths,
never cease writing. Shirley's latest composition has
earned her international acclaim.*

Shirley, will you tell us first how a hymn of yours came to be chosen for the Assembly of the World Council of Churches?

In May 2004, a broad invitation was sent out through the world churches to write hymns, songs and responses on the theme *God, in your grace transform the world*, for the WCC Ninth Assembly in Brazil. At first I reacted against this, because it seemed to imply a sort of dependence on God transforming the world directly, rather than us transforming ourselves so that God could act through us.

So, in my hymn, I used the title as the refrain, while the verses focused on specific issues like peacemaking, world debt, the environment (*see opposite*). I was astonished when my offering was chosen, and I was delighted when they invited Per Harling, a Swedish Lutheran whom I knew, to write the music. He has the right lyrical touch, and his setting really does reflect the venue of the gathering – Brazil. In Brazil, poverty overrides most of the other issues.

The organisers also asked for short responses. I wrote: "God if your grace does not reside in us, who will change our world?" That was also picked up and has been set to music for use during the Assembly.

How do you set about the actual process of composing a new hymn?

Each hymn I write is different. I have no fixed format. I might see or hear a phrase that triggers me off. For instance, I once saw a poster quoting an aboriginal precept: "touch the earth lightly". This immediately struck me as an issue which needed singing about. So I used it in a new hymn.

What we sing has to be said very concisely. Three or four verses is enough these days. We cannot follow the Victorians who might sing eight or ten! Sometimes the first line of a hymn goes round and round in my head for days and weeks: then I fill in the other verses.

*each hymn I write is different
I see or hear a phrase that triggers me off –
an issue which needs singing about*

What I rush off at the beginning is never the final version. I would rather rewrite to infinity than get it wrong. Hymn

writing is different from writing poetry. People have to repeat what you write over and over again. It has to be a very disciplined form.

Initially I used to set words to familiar tunes. At the time my husband John was the Minister at St Andrew's on the Terrace in Wellington. The congregation there encouraged me, so I began to set words to music they could sing. It was Colin Gibson, the Methodist hymn writer from Dunedin, who said to me: "This won't be good for the theology of hymns. You are marrying something young to something old." Associations with old songs run deep. So I started again – writing in mid-air! Colin helped me greatly. He would pick up my words and set them to music. I have learned a lot from my friend Colin Gibson.

God, in your grace, transform the world!

*God, in your grace,
God in your mercy,
turn us to you
to transform the world!*

Love is your way,
love is your nature,
blessing each creature,
lighting each day;
grace is your sign,
gift of forgiveness,
chalice that changes
water to wine –

God, in your grace...

Pathways we choose,
undeserved freedom,
earth as our kingdom,
still we abuse;
much we have done,
gross human error,
misuse of power
darkens the sun –

God, in your grace...



Terror and tears,
wounds without healing,
hearts without feeling
mirror our fears:
life without trust,
greed and high prices,
conflict and crisis
grind us to dust –

God, in your grace...

Let us stand still,
look at each other,
sister and brother
thwarting your will:
teach us good care,
grace to seek pardon,
reclaim your garden,
riches to share –

*God, in your grace,
God in your mercy,
turn us to you
to transform the world!*

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When your words acquire a tune to carry them it is quite astonishing, especially if different composers write to the same words. They each seem to discern a different ‘take’ on the words you have written. They add colour to my composition in a way I could never have imagined.

Now and again I will alter the words after the music is composed. I did this recently with a hymn for Waitangi Day. The Maori words I had written did not quite fit with the tune. I and the composer had to work our way round the difficulty together. I find that quite a creative way of working. You have to be able to trust your composer.

I often repeat words and phrases to reinforce a theme. It gives a shape to the hymn that the mind can flick back to. I use rhyme and also sometimes play around with the metrical format. This a challenge to the musician, but it can give a fresher result. Recently I wrote a hymn: “In what strange land shall I sing your song, O God, my God” – a reflection on the Waters of Babylon psalm. Nowadays I feel we are in a strange land for reasons other than those the Israelites felt. Colin Gibson succeeded in expressing this by an echo of the Wild West in his setting! His music evokes the strangeness of the wilderness.

Would you like to say something about the theology of your hymns? For instance, you often emphasise inclusivity.

In the broadest sense *inclusivity* seems to me fundamental to the Gospel of Jesus. The move towards inclusivity in gender and orientation has been happening throughout the Western world. Our songs of faith have to reflect this evolution, in both ideas and language.

I once went to a meeting of the WCC and was struck by the fact that two groups of people met separately away from the main body. They were the so-called ‘differently-abled’ people – or disabled; and the gays and lesbians. I went to both their meetings and learned how excluded these people were feeling from their churches.

That set me off on a path I could never go back on. The church has so easily shut its doors on certain sorts of people and so been unfaithful to the essence of the Gospel. As a woman, I knew what it was to be excluded and not have my voice heard. I believe people who suffer from AIDS are still in this situation. Recently I wrote a hymn for AIDS memorial services after a friend of mine died that way.

The Nativity. For me the Incarnation is very important because we can ‘feel’ it within ourselves. Resurrection lies in the future. Birth for me is far more important than death! Who can resist babies? And I extend this innate sense to having a care for all life. I love babies and children, and I like to write so as to help protect the world’s children.



▷▷ I also like to write carols which make sense in the Southern Hemisphere – I call them snow-free carols!. I love carols, but they are the most difficult songs to write.

I feel the community at large is distanced from the mystery of Christmas. We have to accept the goodness of the secular family feast, even its commercialisation. Nevertheless we must never lose sight of what lies at the heart of the Christmas story and connect that story with the world we live in. Carols can do this.

The Passion. Paul Oestreicher noted in *Tui Motu* (December 2005, pp 16-17) that Jesus was the original ‘prisoner of conscience’. I have always been a very keen supporter of *Amnesty International*. I used to feel that the churches saw Easter too much in an ‘otherworldly’ way. The sacrifice of the Cross was strongly emphasised. But I thought our Holy Week hymns were crying out for some connection with the world about us, where there is so much unjust imprisonment, unjust trials and arrests. I was fired up to write such hymns.

The world too is bleeding and dying. My writing is perhaps critical of how badly our churches have dealt with the issue of injustice in the past. Are we the kind of Christians who actually work to heal the world? The world is hanging on a Cross. That is why I find it hard to write Resurrection hymns – but I am much happier using the words of Jesus like Father forgive them... : the challenge is to save people from what happened to Jesus. You cannot be a passive spectator. Even writing a letter may help save one oppressed person.

Can our hymns sometimes be too personal and individual?

That brings up a real challenge for the hymn writer: is it to be a plural hymn – or is it to be written in the first person singular? Most of us in the middle of the night and in the depth of our hearts have a ‘first person singular’ necessity. It is I who am the needy one.

However, when we celebrate the great feasts we cannot neglect the we. This is when the business of torture and the death penalty should be dominant. It astounds me that Christians are not the first to leap up and work against these injustices.

Hymns, however, shouldn’t preach! They should catch you up and make you act on the words and sentiments you are singing. They are hymn-poetry. Hymns help to form our faith. Every good revolution (or evolution) has had songs to go with it. But hymns also help us keep our faith. Repetition reinforces faith. And we are conscious that there are many others with us on this journey. Music especially provides the bond, and good words reinforce this. Music imprints on one’s soul.

Let My Spirit Always Sing

A hymn on growing older

Let my spirit always sing,
Though my heart be wintering,
Though the season of despair
Give no sign that you are there,
God to whom my days belong,
Let there always be a song.

Though my body be confined,
Let your word engage my mind,
Let the inner eye discern
How much more there is to learn,
See a world becoming whole
Through the window of my soul.

Let your wisdom grace my years,
Choose my words and chase my fears,
Give me wit to welcome change,
To accept, and not estrange,
Let my joy be full and deep
In the knowledge that I keep.

Let my spirit always sing,
To your Spirit answering,
Through the silence, through the pain
Know my hope is not in vain,
Like a feather on your breath
Trust your love, through life and death.

© Shirley Murray 1995

Preferred tune: Lucerna laudoniae.

I write myself into faith. I hope to be able to sing right to the end of life. So I once wrote a hymn about growing old echoing the words of that 17th Century nun: let my spirit always sing.

Perhaps we might end by talking about another of your favourite themes – peace.

Yes. I feel strongly that New Zealanders should not be singing the hymns of other cultures, especially when we are singing about our own identity on occasions such as Anzac Day. I wrote a hymn for Anzac Day recently for those reasons. We must be able to own our own identity and all facets of it. So I wrote this hymn and included a verse about conscientious objectors. I sent it to the RSA – but they haven’t yet said they want to use it! Yet I feel we must respect the consciences of those people who would not go out and slaughter others.

My passion for peace is long-standing. When I was young I was involved in the Student Christian Movement alongside Paul Oestreicher, who of course became a champion for peace. I felt very angry about our involvement in the Vietnam War. I became part of the peace movement, and I share the pride we have in being antinuclear. If there had to be one word at the heart of the Gospel, was it not that Jesus preached and lived peace? ■

The New English Mass

what can we expect?



Msgr Bruce Harbert, secretary of ICEL, discussing the new texts of the Mass with Dunedin Catholics

Tui Motu went last month to hear about the new English text of the Mass straight from the source. Msgr Harbert, Secretary of ICEL, went around New Zealand telling priests and people what to expect.

Here is a summary of what he said – with comment.

The present English text of the prayers and common of the Mass has been with us for over 30 years. However, plans are well advanced to replace the present texts by an entirely new translation in the very near future. The body responsible is ICEL, which met recently in Auckland (*see also Humphrey O'Leary p 31*).

ICEL is the *International Commission on English in the Liturgy*. Strictly speaking it consists of eleven bishops – and this includes Bishop Denis Browne, of Hamilton – who represent 11 Bishops' Conferences of major English-speaking countries.

ICEL was founded in 1963 during the Second Vatican Council when it became evident that the use of the vernacular in the Roman Rite was going to come quite quickly, and therefore a careful preparation of new translations was urgent. The hope was that one text would become the norm throughout the English-speaking world.

This, in fact, happened. The current text was in universal use by 1975. The story is a little bit more complicated because some of the longer prayers we use in the Mass such as the *Credo*, the *Gloria*, the *Holy Holy Holy* are the work of another body, ICET (*International Consultation on English Texts*), an ecumenical body. ICEL incorporated them in their 1975 version.

Currently, the work of ICEL is done by a team of experts who draw up texts and present them to the 11 bishops for approval. These in turn consult with their respective Bishops' Conferences before coming to a decision. This work is co-ordinated by Mgr Bruce Harbert, an English priest based in Washington DC

After the Auckland meeting Fr Bruce toured New Zealand talking to priests and people in three diocese. The normal reaction of most people, says Fr. Bruce, is: "we've got used to this version so why change it?". *Why change it indeed*, we asked him.

The need to revise the 1975 text became evident very early on, says Fr Bruce. A survey in the 1980s indicated that what was needed was a more complex and 'elevated' style of writing, especially for the Collect prayers. Also, the first translators had, with Roman approval at the time, favoured a method of translation later called in question. So ICEL was bidden to start again.

Fr Bruce suggests that the changes after the Council were in some cases too radical, sweeping away more 'formal' elements of the old liturgy, such as choirs, elaborate altars, traditional church music. Now, he thinks, is the time to restore many things which were lost. The decree *Liturgiam Authenticam* provides the guidelines.

The work of writing a new text is done by one 'base translator', with three revisers monitoring his or her work. A new version of the Mass texts was completed in 1998 and was well received by the majority of bishops. But the Vatican *Commission for Divine Worship* (CDV) rejected it. So the whole process had to start again once more. The present hope is that the revision will be completed by October 2007.

Principles of translation

- The task is to produce an English text which will be received world-wide. It will look back to the tradition, even as far the words of Scripture itself. It is hoped, says Fr Bruce, that the new translation will truly reflect biblical language, phraseology and mindset. This will help give it a certain universality.

- Like the law, liturgy has its own language forms. The Catholic church in its liturgy frequently uses what is known as *performative language*. Thus "I absolve you" or "I baptise you" are not merely describing an action: they *are* the action.

Our liturgy often employs threefold repetitions ("Holy, holy holy"; "Lamb of God..."): a form of rhetorical emphasis which people often use in public speech. Liturgical prayer is a form of proclamation. Preserving such repetitions conveys the feeling behind the words as well as the simple, bald meaning.



- ▷▷ • The new translation aims for what is called *formal equivalence* rather than *dynamic equivalence*, which influenced the first translators after the Council. In *dynamic equivalence* the translator seeks to achieve the same impact in English as the original text did in Latin or Greek. Strict fidelity to the original words is less important. Paraphrase is often used. This method is found in the *Good News* version of the Bible.

However, *formal equivalence* seeks to preserve the form of the original as well as the meaning.

- *Gender Inclusive Language.* ICEL policy is to avoid exclusive language where possible. Translations of *homo* – ‘man’ – cause problems. ‘Humans’ is not liked because it has a science fiction ring. ‘Humankind’, although a bit clumsy, has been in use in English for three centuries. Sometimes exclusive pronouns can be avoided by using plural forms. Rome is often reluctant to allow singulars to be changed into plurals, particularly where there is a hint of referral to the person of Jesus Christ, who is the ideal human person. Speaking of God requires the use of pronouns and these, Fr Bruce thinks, will remain masculine.

- ‘Churchy’ or pompous language is to be avoided, even though the new translation will be more formal. Words like ‘deign’ are no longer acceptable; likewise, translating the latin word *festina* as ‘hasten’ rather than the more colloquial ‘hurry’. Polite forms of English often use questions: these are not really acceptable for addressing God.

Examples of the new translation

The greetings. “The Lord be with you”. R: “And with your spirit”. This is a literal translation of the latin *et cum spiritu tuo*. It preserves the reference to ‘spirit’, a form of wording which harks back to St Paul’s distinction between ‘spirit’ and ‘flesh’ (see *Rom:8*). It has been in use in the liturgy since Hippolytus in third century Rome. “May the blessing of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the

communion of the Holy Spirit be with you...” “Communion” is a better translation of the Greek word *koinonia* than is ‘fellowship’.

In place of “The grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you”, the new version is “Grace to you and peace...”: a very ancient Christian formulation, found eight times in the writings of St Paul. This form was used by Luther, by the Authorised Version, the Douai and by RSV. So it has a strong place in the tradition.

The Gloria. Some of the groupings of three which became obscured in the early ICET version will be restored.

The introduction to the preface. In the version we now use the sense of a dialogue with God has been lost and this will be restored.

The Eucharistic prayers. In rewriting these attention has been paid to the fact that these may be chanted as well as spoken. The metre of the new translation must fit the chant. Fr Bruce promised that some very fine musicians are being used as consultants.

Greater unity is given to the eucharistic prayers (likewise to the new Collect prayers) by the use of “who” to link clauses. The latin text is full of such relative clauses. For example, in the words of institution (‘consecration’) a ‘who’ link reminds us that the God whose grace we are calling down on the offerings is the same God whose Son’s death we are commemorating.

Using short sentences tended to obscure these connections.

The Fourth Eucharistic Prayer has provided the biggest headache in trying to avoid exclusive language. The new version declares its inclusive intent by using plural forms and also by inserting the *Genesis* verse (1,27) at the beginning – “male and female God created them”.

Before communion. “Behold the Lamb of God”, instead of “This is the Lamb of God...” is a direct return to the Scriptural text. John the Baptist not only proclaimed faith in Jesus Christ but also pointed to his eventual Second Coming.

Conclusion

People are conservative when it comes using liturgical forms. In fact the text helps to ‘form’ the culture: the Anglican Prayer Book is a celebrated example.

The Eucharist is itself a tradition. St Paul said, concerning the Eucharist: “the tradition I received from the Lord and also handed on to you...” (*1 Cor 11,23*). Pope Paul VI counselled that while liturgy must evolve, there should not be sharp breaks. The ‘unity’ of the liturgy – down the years as well as across the continents – contributes to the unity of the church.

Therefore ICEL hope that this new text of the Mass will be satisfactory enough to be with us for many years: for the lifetime, Fr Bruce suggests, of those who are being baptised today. ■

Comment

Why choose “and with your spirit” as translation for *et cum spiritu tuo* when it does not make sense in English? Fr Bruce had no satisfactory answer; but he noted that ICET offered an alternative which does make good sense: viz. “The spirit of the Lord be with you”; “...and also with you”.

Et cum spiritu tuo is an ancient form (3rd Century), but is not Scriptural.

The Our Father. Fr Bruce kept ominously silent on whether the ICET form used in New Zealand is to be retained. People here are used to it. It is a good version to pray. The simplicity of its form is pleasing. It avoids using archaisms such as “thou” and “art”. It seems clear that it is under threat.

It would be ironic if the principal greeting of the new English Catholic Mass is to be that of a 3rd Century heretical anti-Pope Hippolytus – and the version of the *Our Father* the one imposed by Henry VIII!

Spirituality of Truth – Bringing the Word Alive

Celebrating a Dominican Jubilee



This year, 2006, marks 800 years since Dominic de Guzman founded a convent of nuns in France, the beginning of the Dominican Order. Right around the world, Dominican women and men, priests, religious and lay people celebrate the surprising reality, that the dream of a charming, slim, red-haired Spaniard in the 13th century might have life and value in the 21st.

To honour this landmark, the New Zealand Dominican Sisters are offering a series of six articles considering the place of core Dominican concepts in contemporary living.

The purpose is not to return to some nostalgic reenactment of medieval life with its long robes, doctrinal absolutes and moral certainties. It is to use these pillars of Dominican life as springboards to reflect on our own times. Our hope is that people will think, question, engage and go more deeply.





Sandra Winton O.P.

The motto of the Dominican Order is Truth – *Veritas*. The search for truth is at the heart of the Dominican vision.

People of today are called worldly, materialistic, their pilgrimages are shopping trips, their stained glass windows, computer screens. Yet they, no less than people of the 13th century, thirst for truth and meaning. I believe that the way they are doing this, however, has changed to match the profound changes in human life since that age.

Some years ago I remember a university student regaling a group of friends with an account of how he and his friend had experienced a papal promulgation as small boys at a Catholic school. All the day before they marched about chanting, 'I don't believe, I don't believe' and then woke up on the day of the declaration repeating, 'I do believe, it's true'. In a humorous way this reflects a child's understanding of truth. Truth was a matter of submitting to the pronouncement of an authority.

Veritas and the search for truth

Sandra Winton and Elizabeth Mackie

(this page)

(opposite page)

This is no longer enough for contemporary people. Concepts of democracy, equality and freedom have settled in the human psyche. The heart thirsts as well as the mind. People today want truth and meaning to come from within, to be personally assented to not by a 'suspension of disbelief' but by individual conviction and experience. Truth must ring true.

Very many people no longer trust authority: presidents and princes alike, millionaires and lawmakers, soldiers and generals have revealed moral hollowness. Sports heroes are caught with drugs and film stars cannot find marital bliss. Some clergy have sexually abused children and there are rumours even about papal elections.

Meaning arises out of questions and loss of certainty and is as likely to be expressed in poetry as in dogma

But just when wise authority seems absent, modern people are faced with serious dilemmas of meaning. Who can make sense of the death of their child to a terrorist attack? Or of their parent in a road accident? Why do some groups hate and kill others? How can a tsunami rip away life in an instant? How can some of us enjoy superfluous riches while others die of starvation? How can we watch species become extinct and rivers dry up? Why all this when we know more than we have ever known and can do more than we have ever been capable of?

For people today, I suspect, truth and meaning are found less in volumes than in glimpses, pinpoints of light, like stars through clouds. We seek truth as we struggle to bring together the incomprehensible parts of existence – love and sorrow, good desires and venality, generosity and greed, violence and tenderness. Meaning arises out of questions and loss of certainty. It is as likely to be expressed in poetry as in dogma. It may be served by psychology as much as by theology. It is lost and re-made over and over again. It grows firmer when we dare to share our questions and tentative wonderings with one another.

An individual may experience divine truth when what was heedless or compelled becomes choice – of restraint over greed, love over revenge, freedom over apathy, acceptance over hatred. These are moments of moral choice, of psychological shift, spiritual opening. At such times, said the Dominican mystic, Meister Eckhart, we act 'from our own inner self which is God in us'.

The divine may be glimpsed in moments of human connection whether in pain, anger or compassion. It flickers through our lives in times when we truly see things – beautiful, incongruous or ugly. It opens us to difference, to humility, to laughter.

Eight hundred years on, the human heart thirsts for truth as much as it ever did. This desire is, I believe, God-given and invites us to fuller life.

A few years ago I had the opportunity to sit with very poor rural women in a small village in central Sri Lanka. They were Sinhalese by race and Buddhist by religion. After 20 years of civil war there was now a ceasefire. These women had gone to visit the war-ravaged north.

One woman (let's call her Shantha) described her experience. She had been brought up to fear Tamils as dangerous terrorists. The media told her of suicide bombings and political assassinations. It presented the Hindu religion as a threat to her Buddhist faith. Her husband had died fighting as a soldier in the Sri Lankan army.

To travel to the north was a frightening risk. Yet she went. There she met and was hosted by women living in destitution. She sat up all night speaking with Tamil women. When she heard their stories of bombing and pillage and rape and massacre, she was ashamed to mention that her husband had been a soldier and had served in this very area.

Later, as trust grew, Shantha thought about the woman who hosted her:

"She is a widow too.

We have a similar experience. She has lost a husband and so have I. She has been left to try to provide for four children

and so have I. I am poor but I can see that her poverty is even more profound than mine. We suffer in the same way." So Shantha explained her husband's role in the war. The women wept together, embraced each other, shared stories and reached beyond the propaganda and hostility which had divided them to a new and deeper truth.

Like Shantha, we too find ourselves immersed in constant information – from billboards, TV screens, radio

programmes, the internet, newspapers and a bewildering assortment of printed matter in libraries, bookshops and newsstands. But these are slick snippets, around and behind which lie layers of meaning, complexity that is rarely acknowledged. To stop at this level is to fall short of truth.

Shantha opened herself to a reality she saw as alien and even hostile. She engaged at the level of feeling and intuition and profound personal experience.

In the technological cacophony of our lives we too need to remind ourselves that truth is found in unexpected places and can be reached through respect, listening, careful questioning and reflection on our lived experience. This means taking the trouble to read more than the daily news. It means seeking opinions from those whose views are not usually considered important. It can mean talking with others who think differently from us. After all, the Word, who is ultimate Truth, lives among us.

A second element which more and more frequently confronts the truth seekers among us is certainty. Listen

to the sureness of President Bush, or that of any Jewish, Muslim or Christian fundamentalist. Truth lies elsewhere. Truth which binds and con-

stricts us is not truth at all. Truth which denies us all questioning or doubt is not the truth which sets us free.

To live in uncertainty, to delight in or to struggle with our own and others' questions, to refuse easy answers and to wait patiently and humbly for deeper insights is a more honest approach to our complex world. And to be surprised by truth may be the richest reward for the questing spirit.

Ultimately, truth is lived. On her return from northern Sri Lanka,



Elizabeth Mackie O.P.

Shantha and her friends gathered rice and dried foods and clothing from their own meagre stores and sent them off to the Tamil women they had met. They told the story. They wrote to their government. Their lives, attitudes and actions were changed.

So too for us. There are lives which shine with integrity and authenticity, offering glimpses of truth which can touch us deeply. Perhaps our own lives, in all their uncertainty, offer such shining glimpses to others, without our knowing. ■

*the women wept together,
embraced each other,
shared stories*

Sandra Winton is a Dominican Sister and psychotherapist living in Dunedin.

Elizabeth Mackie is also a Dominican Sister and works for Christian World Service. She lives in Christchurch.

Just a little respect

(with acknowledgement to Aretha Franklin)

*Suddenly, offensive cartoons, in newspapers and on TV, have hit world headlines. What are the boundaries? Mike Marshall suggests **respect** as the quality we all need to cultivate*

On Waitangi Day, newspaper headlines reported outrage at the recent inclusion in the NZ national press of the Danish cartoons depicting Muhammad. The editorial in the Christchurch Press predictably defended the decision to publish on the grounds of 'freedom of speech', and in the interests of wider information sharing. Initial negative public and political reaction seemed to be more motivated by the consequence of the actions, fear of reprisals or loss of trade dollars. By the time this article is published, events will, no doubt, have moved on considerably, and a wealth of comment will have passed under the proverbial bridge.

One of the words that has appeared regularly in relation to this episode, from a varying range of perspectives, is *respect*, and I would like to explore this in a slightly wider context.

First though, what are the wider ethical considerations in satirising religious beliefs? It has been widely pointed out that Judaism and Christianity have long been 'tolerant' of humour at their expense. Religion has always provided a rich source of humour, and boundaries have constantly been pushed, especially in the latter part of the 20th Century. Rosemary McLeod, in an earlier newspaper column, observed that programmes such as *Popetown* and an upcoming episode of *South Park*, both of which mock the Catholic Church, are scheduled to go to air despite complaints from a variety of Christian denominations as well as Jews and Muslims. She concluded that this kind of finger-pointing is 'a form

of bullying, masquerading as creative risk-taking.'

Now I don't believe that religion should be sacrosanct, because humour is often the best way of identifying and deflating pomposity or downright silliness, but are there limits, and what is the relationship between freedom and respect?

What are the boundaries?

In the wider world of entertainment and art, there are many examples of boundary pushing; the ubiquitous use of the 'f' word; inventive ways of killing people; graphic displays of sexual activity or dismembering corpses, all justified because 'it reflects the real world'. Symbolism in art, markedly referring to religious, ethnic (Maori), and cultic (swastikas) themes – are guaranteed to offend someone somewhere. How far should an artist go to make what could be considered a very valid statement, but seen by some to be simply insulting?

Consider the case for changing the New Zealand flag. "We fought and died for that flag" so the argument goes. Well no, you didn't. You fought and died for what the flag symbolised, and that will remain constant even if the graphics change. Do those who want to change the flag have any less respect for the commitment and sacrifice made?

How is respect manifest in wider society? Most young people seem oblivious to older folk they encounter on the footpath, let alone holding doors open or offering seats on a crowded bus. Nor is there any

apparent understanding that behaviour acceptable at home needs to be modified for the supermarket, the movies, public transport, other people's houses or a church. But respect, or lack of it, is not solely the domain of young people.

None of us is immune from our own prejudices. That engaging columnist, Joe Bennett, seems increasingly to take swipes at the anti-smoking lobby, the church, greenies or rock music. All couched in such superbly entertaining prose you almost don't notice it. We need these insights to burst our balloons and point out the follies of our ways, but when do they become hobby-horses, and thence into the realms of offence?

The litany of things I have been known to loudly question the value of, includes talkback radio, Botox, phones that take pictures, supermodels, free trade, corporate sponsorship, professional sport, casinos, text messaging, employment contracts, Sunday shopping, tabloid press, fast food, reality TV, weekly gossip mags, sound bites, infomercials, 0800 yes/no opinion polls... the list goes on forever. Oh, yes, and cigarettes. Potentially I have managed to offend just about everyone who is reading this article in some way.

So where do we cross the boundary from opinion to disrespect? Does a strong opinion expressed in the pub differ from one circulated in the media, no matter how well-intentioned?

As a society we need to be challenged, informed and stimulated. Is freedom of the press the only criteria? Consider

the consequences of anti-Hitler cartoons in a 1940s Germany; anti-party cartoons in communist Russia. Challenging the church a few hundred years ago would have brought down the wrath of the Inquisition. Today we are faced with the wrath of Muslim fundamentalists, and, maybe now, not so fundamentalists.

Some suggested criteria

So, what is up to be challenged and how should it be done? Do the offending cartoons have any valid content? Would it have been more palatable to describe them in words rather than show them, for instance? When, and what kind of wisdom should prevail? So far I have posed numerous questions without providing answers. Maybe what follows is the closest I can come.

Rosemary McLeod concludes her February 2 article... "We have a saying that nothing is sacred. Actually quite a lot is." Joe Bennett, in an articulate

and thought-provoking article, February 8, commented "It is our duty, the argument runs, to respect other people's beliefs. I, for one, have never had any idea why. Anything true can withstand mockery."

These seeming extremes are both examples of what might be viewed as absolute truths, but answers do not always lie with absolutes. What offends one individual or group may not offend another. One dictionary defines *respect* thus: "to show consideration or thoughtfulness in relation to somebody or something". While we should not need to walk through life on eggshells for fear of giving offence, considered judgment surely indicates that the age and stage of an individual or group must have a major bearing on what we do to challenge them. Respect, therefore, may rarely be mutual. But no individual or group, in my humble experience, has ever matured, grown or developed from a situation where they

simply do not feel respected.

Scripturally, Jesus did not point the finger at the obvious target; the violent, but spiritually naïve, occupying army of the Romans, even though they were ultimately the instruments of his death - "forgive them for they know not what they do." He respected the needs of those denigrated in his society, healing the centurion's daughter, the disabled, the diseased, and engaged with tax collectors and prostitutes. The scribes and pharisees, the religious hierarchy, who should have known better, he criticised directly - "you hypocrites", and in story, *The Good Samaritan*.

Possibly January's timely readings from Paul (*Cor.10:23-33*) say it strongly - he counsels that not offending others supersedes the right to freedom of preaching! It's a challenging message. ■

Mike Marshall is a Christchurch Catholic layman with a special interest in music and liturgy

Archbishop Oscar Romero

Idolatry of wealth

What else is wealth when you do not take God into account? It is a golden idol. They adore it, bow down before it and make sacrifices to it. What enormous sacrifices are made out of idolatry of money! Not just sacrifices, but injustices. People are paid to kill. People are paid to sin. And they sell themselves. Everything is commercialised. Everything is licit for money.

The poor church

The church today does not rely on any power, on wealth. Today the church is poor. Today the church knows that the powerful reject her, but that she is loved by those who put their faith in God... This is the church I want. A church that does not rely on privileges and the worth of earthly things. A church ever more detached from earthly things, human things, so that she can judge them more freely from the perspective of the gospel, from her poverty.

Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, outspoken advocate of the poor and oppressed of El Salvador, was gunned down while saying Mass some 26 years ago.

All His Blood and Wine (for Oscar Romero)

*The other night
I was in the office of
the chief of secret police
with Oscar Romero
pleading for the lives of
those who even then were turning
into their own screams
and rubbish thrown
on the city dump*

*I was so angry
I cried, "Stop the movie!"
and I'll be Jackie Chan
and kick those dogs of hell
to their deserved death
(What a performance
that would be!)*

*But Oscar smiled
and took me by the arm
and said, "They are already dead,
and dead within dead,
come, stand here, by me"*

*And I stood there
and the bullet found his heart
and all his blood and wine
were spilt, upon the altar
of this world.*

Peter Rawnsley

Guilt

During Lent we may find ourselves a prey to feelings of guilt. Here Jesuit Paul Andrews describes some cases where guilt feelings, projected or imagined, may torment a person without cause

I was once on radio with Ruth, a Jewess, discussing guilt. *We are the ones who invented guilt*, joked Ruth. *You Catholics only have it on loan*. Well we may have it only on loan, but we make a lot of it. Priests hearing confession constantly meet people who feel guilty about matters that are innocent, and who sometimes feel no qualms about matters that should burden their conscience. Guilt as a state – you have done something wicked – is quite different from guilt as an emotion, which can attach to something quite innocent.

When Robert McCartney was beaten to death outside a Belfast bar, his killers and the silent witnesses were in fact guilty – but they seem to feel no guilt. The opposite is true of penitents in Confession who say: *I missed Mass on Sunday – I was sick*. Boys feel guilty over a wet dream, because sexual experience stirs something deep that can provoke anxiety. It may take us years to distinguish real guilt from the emotion or shame we may feel for all sorts of odd reasons. In an argument people often try to make the other feel guilty, with some bizarre results.

Remember a familiar picture from St John's Gospel (Ch 8). The Pharisees have dragged before Jesus a woman caught in the act of adultery. They have gathered stones to execute her, and we can sense their excitement and blood-lust as they ask Jesus for his verdict. He marks the hunger of the self-righteous to project their own guilt onto others, and answers: *Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her*. And they went away, beginning with the

elders. Jesus did not point the finger of accusation. He doodled in the sand while his listeners looked into their own hearts.

Danny and Sandra were lovers, living together but uncertain how long their affair would last. After a night of heavy drinking, Sandra became pregnant – by accident, not design. When she realised her state and told Danny, he was at first shaken, then excited by the prospect of a child. Sandra, a woman of private means, was far from excited. She declared herself suicidal and said she would have to abort the child. Danny protested, but could not stop Sandra going to England for the abortion.

She came back more distressed than she went. She felt guilty – she had every reason to – but would not

Liam and his wife Eileen were different. All through their married life, and the rearing of their children, they felt a deep bond with one another, but Liam was aware of one threat: Eileen was an alcoholic with no will to change. She was a good wife and mother except when she started drinking. Then she became an unstoppable monster. She had been dried out in two hospitals and spent a while with AA, but did not stick with them. The pressure for change came from her family, not from her. So the problem persisted. In her cups Eileen became uncontrollably abusive, and one night as she was ranting at Liam, she took a kitchen knife and went for him. He was able to disarm her and settle her down, but the following morning he fled the house.

It takes time to see where real guilt lies, and recognise the ingenious tactics people use for shoving guilt onto someone else

accept that the guilt was hers. So she launched an attack on Danny, blaming him for not sharing the cost of her abortion trip. She kept at him about what he owed her, trying to make him feel guilty, pressing the buttons as from long acquaintance she knew how. For a while she succeeded, and though he had no job, he was on the point of paying her something, until he came to his senses. The next time she brought up the matter he said: *Are you asking me to pay you for killing my child?* Sandra was silent. It often takes time to see where real guilt lies, and to recognise the ingenious tactics people use for shoving the guilt onto someone else.

When Eileen sobered up she begged him to come back: *Don't abandon me. I miss you*. He was tormented by her accusations and felt guilty and selfish. But he knew that if he went back to Eileen he would be walking on eggs, living in fear. She had turned over a new leaf so often in the past that he could not trust her words. Instead he laid it down: *If you can stay dry for six months, then I'll come back*.

Liam worked out how to monitor her drinking, and now he is waiting and watching. He has learned to live with his own unease. He realises that he is not the guilty one.

A mother's journal... moving continents

It's been brewing for months, no, years... now the leap to the great unknown is upon us. We're moving from comfortable, familiar Christchurch to a small mountain village in Himachal Pradesh, India. I'm still trying to unravel it.

In my early teens I decided I'd like to become a doctor in a resource poor part of the world, preferably India or Nepal. Meeting and later marrying my soul mate Jeph, who originally hales from South India was a good first step. We've tried to gain skills and qualifications that should be useful: medicine, public health, development studies, Hindi lessons, chapatti making and hot curries. We have worked together in public health, health promotion and primary health care in Tairāwhiti, Ōtautahi, Guatemala, Colombia and Cambodia. We dabbled into expeditions, adventures, writing, political and peace activism, community development, and living in community. We worked with Mother Teresa's sisters in Calcutta and Lima. Everything has been formative, unsettling... important. Now India, country of my birth, was calling me back.

These last four years in Central Christchurch are the longest stop on our journey since marriage. It's been comfortable, happy time... a fulfilling time. Our children have been a passport to the community of kindy, school, pre-school music, the *Te Whare* playgroup... the local community. But Big Mamma or Papa God's Hand is on our shoulders. Maybe it's just a lust for adventure, itchy feet or a gut feeling. Whatever we call the deep restlessness/yearning/call/vocation, we can't ignore the clamour in our hearts. We want to go – to get less comfortable... to risk living and sharing our lives with people very different to us, in a place where we won't get the jokes, won't know the best place for a bargain and can't easily buy our staple foods of oats and cheddar cheese.

We have been invited to work with a Christian Indian NGO. Lady Willingdon Hospital is based in Manali in the mountains of Himachal Pradesh, a 16-hour bus trip north of Delhi. We'll volunteer at the clinic at Jibhi, 100km from the main hospital in Manali. It will be a 7km bike ride to the nearest telephone line... it will be under snow when we get there in a fortnight... we'll need to home-school our children... we'll watch the rhythm of rice- growing and harvesting... we'll wrestle further with Hindi. It will be a big adventure!

And so our house has been packed into a shipping container, now parked in a paddock on the edge of Christchurch... We savoured barbeques, beech forest and beaches through January in a patchy mix of sun and drizzle which seem to be what NZ summers have become. We left a snail trail of salty tears from Whangarei to Wigram as we said farewells to precious friends and family. Our postal mail has been stopped or re-directed, we've been prayed for at church and as we piled suitcases onto the scales at the airport, we were only 4kg over the limit!

It will be lonely at times. Our children are vaguely apprehensive and hope to find Skippy's cornflakes, a pet kitten and a gymnastics club in the hamlet of Jibhi. We might be in luck with the kitten. And I'm hoping for a way to use e-mail and some kind souls to make friends with! Today a chorus from our Mainly Music group is my mantra. It makes me smile and gives me courage:

*I'm going to stomp thru the swamp
Motion thru the ocean
Fly thru the sky – low or very high
On our adventure, anything can happen
And it sure is good to know, God is everywhere*

Kaaren Mathias

My last example is a gentle one. Mary has reared her five children, buried her dear husband, and is left to enjoy the house where she has lived all her married life. It is a small house with a big garden in a lovely location, full of warm memories for Mary. Some friends, who know the price of everything and the value of nothing, advise Mary: *Why go on living in a place that you could sell for millions? Sell it,*

and you could help your children when they are setting up their own houses.

For a woman as soft-hearted and dutiful as Mary, it is cruel advice. It preys on her easy guilt. She has given herself to her children all these years, reared them and educated them. She loves them dearly, but she owes them nothing. She has probably 30 or 40 years of life still to live, and she owes

herself a bit of respite, the chance to enjoy her friends, do something for the parish community, maybe take on some paid work, and in time welcome her grandchildren into the house where their parents grew up. Guilt – the feeling that she should be contributing to her children's house-purchases – would be a bad counsellor here.

Lord, give me the wisdom to recognise when I am guilty – and when I am not. ■

The Hole In The Roof Gang

Glynn Cardy

I was asked to be a pallbearer this week. An old mate had died. Six of us, robed priests, carried him shoulder high out of St Mary's Parnell. A thought stayed with me afterwards: Occasionally we carry each other in death, but do we carry each other in life?

It is possible to read the Gospels and conclude that Jesus was never carried. That he was a complete, self-sufficient human being who wasn't dependent upon anyone. He was powered by heavenly tonic. He didn't need followers, they needed him.

Yet, as Jesus movies portray time after time, he wasn't a loner. He needed the intimacy of Mary, the tenderness of John, the volatile strength of Peter, the critique of Judas. Those around him influenced him.

This is the way love is. There is no such thing as independent love. Love is not a solo affair.

I think we need to be bold in our interpreting of Scripture and re-envision Jesus as one carried by his friends, who at times carried them, and together carried others.

It takes though some effort to carry one another. It takes time, patience, and sometimes strength. We also need to let others carry us. This can often be a harder thing to do. Asking for help doesn't come easily.

There is a story in the *Gospel of Mark* about four friends who in order to get their paralysed mate to Jesus ripped



open a roof. As their wives would have said: 'Most houses have a door darling.' These guys though weren't listening – they were on a mission from God. Knocking on doors and politely asking to enter wasn't for them. No, they had the bright and novel idea of making a hole.

They sound like some guys I know who enter each year in the Birdman competition. If there is a wacky way to fly they'll find it. 'Conventional' is a swear word. And I confess that without the brilliant stupidity of these guys life would lose some of its shine and many of its laughs.

Now this 1st century hole in the roof was no small thing. They were able to

fit a whole stretcher through it with their mate attached. Can you imagine the dust as the boys went to work with gusto ripping through the mud brick and wooden struts? The debris would have showered down upon Jesus and the crowd below. As the four patient wives would have said, 'Darling we think you overlooked something.'

Jesus though kept his cool. Maybe he recognised the potency of that divine blend of male friendship, compassion, enthusiasm, and stupidity? Maybe his actual words to the paralytic were: 'If I had friends like that mate I'd learn to walk.'

But before Jesus could say much O.S.H. materialised. That is the theological O.S.H., guardians of the rules and protectors of convention. These were the guys who reckoned Jesus needed a license to preach, absolve and heal. Just as the guys on the roof needed a license to be compassionate and make a hell of a mess. That was the whole problem: they'd taken license, just as Jesus was now taking license. If this continued things would get out of control. And control was very important.

Sin was, and still is, a game. It's a control game. Those in power define what sin is and set the rules about how it's dealt with. The sinners are absolved when they recognise their failings, feel guilt and genuine remorse, and make recompense. Most religions get in on this game and some make a feature of it. But it all seems to me to be largely about keeping people paralysed lest they do something we're afraid of.

Reflecting on Mark

Susan Smith

I see life as like riding a bike. From an early age you teach a child the basics of riding, hold the back of their seat, and then let them go. From an early age you encourage them to venture forth, to explore what's around the corner or over the hill and far away. Sometimes that can be scary for you as well as them. Sometimes they return with scratches, and sometimes with wildfire in their eyes.

Falling off is part of cycling. Believe me, as one who has taken part in a number of cycle races, falling off isn't just a kid thing. Sometimes it's a car thing, or a corner thing, or an I-can't-get-my-foot-out-of-the-ruddy-clip thing. Like in life people fall, hurting themselves and often others. If you want to call falling 'sin' then do so.

But the important thing is not the fall, the 'sin' so to speak. It's not blaming yourself or others, feeling guilty or saying sorry. No, the important thing is getting back on your bike, aches and all. The important thing is getting up and getting going again. There is still a huge wide world out there in which to go exploring and in which to find God.

'Is it easier to say your sins are forgiven or to say take up your bed and walk?', said Jesus. This is getting on your bike language. The boys have done their outrageous thing, ripping the roof off convention. Jesus has done his outrageous thing defying the sin-police. Now it's time to do your outrageous thing – get up and on your bike. Don't be stuck within the limits and vision of others. Head for the horizon and make your own vision.

I wonder what the guys up top thought as they saw their mate walking off with his stretcher over his shoulder. 'Crikey, it actually worked', said one. 'Gee I'd love to see his kids' faces now,' said another. 'I think he owes us a beer,' said the third. The fourth asked as they walked away, 'Who's gunna fix the roof?' ■

Glynn Cardy is parish priest of St-Matthew-in-the-City, Auckland

In *Mark's* Passion Narrative, (15:21), we read that the Roman authorities "compelled a passer-by, who was coming from the country, to carry the cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus." This verse has generated a significant amount of scholarly writing, as research indicates that Roman law usually prohibited assistance for a condemned person. Simon's carrying of the cross suggests that Jesus was so weak from the flogging that he was unable to carry the crosspiece.

Some New Testament scholars argue that Simon of Cyrene – Cyrene, present day Libya was home to a significant community of Diaspora Jews – was included in *Mark's* story because he was an important eye-witness of Jesus' suffering. In *Rom 16:13*, there is reference to a Rufus, and perhaps this Rufus was the son of the important eye-witness, Simon of Cyrene.

On the other hand, a minority opinion believes that Simon's role has theological rather than historical significance, and is used to dramatise Jesus' teaching located in *Mk 8:34*: "Jesus called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me'." However, *Mk 15:21* does not speak of Simon following Jesus. Rather, the gospel tradition suggests that Simon was forced to carry the cross.

What is interesting about Simon is his name and the names of his two sons, Rufus and Alexander. Simon is a Greek name, although it frequently serves as the Greek equivalent for the Jewish name, Simeon, while Rufus is a Roman name, common for slaves, and Alexander is Greek. *Mark's* choice of names perhaps says something about the ethnic diversity of the young Christian community – it was a community made up of Jews, Romans and Greeks. From its earliest days, the Christian community was extraordinarily diverse.

Living with diversity is perhaps one of the great challenges we face today in our part of the world. In last year's election campaign, there were frequent references to something called '*mainstream New Zealanders*'. We never really learnt what this meant, but one was left with the feeling that it referred to white, middle class New Zealanders, preferably men, who did not approve of support for the disadvantaged in society. In December, there were racial riots in Sydney as young Australian men attacked those whom they thought looked Middle Eastern. Given their prime minister's anti-terrorist and anti-refugee rhetoric, perhaps we should not find this surprising.

One of the big challenges that faces us today as a nation is accepting that ethnic difference is not a good reason for disapproval or dislike. Difference does not mean inferiority. In fact difference and diversity are gifts that point to the wonderful variety of God's creation, and which reflect something of the mystery of God.

Learning to accept people who are different from us should not be a cross but it can be a challenge. Our contemporary world demands that as followers of Jesus in a world riven by racial and ethnic conflict and tension, we embrace cultural diversity. ■

Dr Susan Smith is a Mission sister who teaches Biblical Studies at the School of Theology, University of Auckland

*At a recent Bioethics Conference at Otago University,
Paul Mullen, Professor of Forensic Psychiatry at
Monash University, gave a public lecture, the gist of
which is summarised below*

Hatred in the age of terrorism

"I have nothing but hatred for Saddam Hussein" (George Bush Sr)

After 9/11 his son, George W Bush, interpreted the new situation America found herself in also in terms of 'hatred'. *These people hate us. Why? What have we done to deserve it? The ideology we are faced with is hateful. There is no room for discussion or for appeasement.*

However, it is not a whole nation that is under threat: it is the individual American, Briton or Australian. According to Bush and Blair, the people must be prepared to sacrifice their liberties to defend their individual selves. Professor Mullen examined these political reactions in terms of the emotions that lay beneath them – and, in particular, hatred.

What is hatred?

Hatred is not a rational thing – it is a form of passion. It focuses on a person, a person who cannot be negotiated with. All other circumstances have to be put aside. Hatred generates new attitudes and values. It bestows new qualities on the person who is the object of hate. So Hitler becomes a homicidal maniac; Mussolini becomes a figure of fun; Osama Bin Laden is spotted lurking behind every fence – a furtive, omnipresent threat, like bird flu. There may or may not be evidence for any of these allegations or suspicions.

While the object of hatred is denigrated and despised, the subject is constantly reliving experiences of alleged humiliation or deprivation. Fantasy transforms the subject into the *abject hero* figure. Anger may at first be kept in check, but the victim broods on the perceived wrong that is being suffered. Revenge is subconsciously being plotted while the 'injury' is being rehearsed.

One characteristic of the brooding victim is eventually to lash out against others, even against his own people. The whole world becomes hateful. Among 'oppressed' minorities, violence increases – the murder rate, violent crime, domestic violence. This was certainly the case in Northern Ireland. After the Good Friday agreement the bully boys of the IRA turned on their own.

Actual terrorists are almost invariably found to be educated

people who have not themselves been victims of the alleged wrong but who identify completely with the victims. The terrorist becomes the victims' champion. All four of the British Muslims responsible for the London bombings fell into this category.

Here we may note a total cultural contrast between East and West. Western liberals, whose basic life ambition is self-actualisation, cannot comprehend the self-sacrificing altruism of the suicide bomber. Muslims collectivise hate; the 'Christian' West individualises it. A Muslim will give his life for a cause. A Christian might take a risk, but by and large the sight of body bags in TV news clips is enough to send support for war among Western audiences spiralling downwards.

Muslim fundamentalism is simply a contemporary example of what Msgr Ronald Knox described, in a memorable book, as *enthusiasm*. Religious enthusiasm takes the victim over, so that revenge becomes a religious cause. The enthusiast is a person obsessed (even a fanatical collector will sacrifice everything to possess a desired object). This form of religious enthusiasm presently flourishes among the religious Right in the USA. There is nothing new in this. Some centuries ago Hazlitt noted that "hatred turns religion into rambling spleen". Yet the underlying cause of contemporary terrorism is not religion but nationalism; religion simply exacerbates the hate.

Political power will manipulate paranoia and will evoke hatred among the masses. Thus, Margaret Thatcher bought herself another 12 years in power by stirring up hatred against Argentina over the Falkland Islands. Professor Mullen described being spat upon by onlookers when he took part in a demonstration against the navy being sent against Argentina. In New Zealand we all recall the passion and violence aroused against those who demonstrated to stop the 1981 Springbok Tour. The tabloid press are past masters at evoking this kind of hatred against those they choose to demonise.

The terrible thing about the so-called *War Against Terror* is that the sense of being hated by so-called terrorists ▷▷

Spielberg studies the anatomy of violence – how hate leads to hate

Munich

Review: Paul Sorrell

Steven Spielberg has made a compelling film about an historical tragedy that both horrifies and provokes reflection about the springs of violence within the human heart. In September 1972, Palestinian terrorists captured 11 Israeli athletes from the Olympic village in Munich and took them to a military airport where the terrorists had been promised a flight to Egypt by the German authorities. However, they were double-crossed and killed their hostages before being killed themselves.

In the wake these events, the Israeli premier, Golda Meir, authorised a clandestine campaign of vengeance against Palestinian activists in Europe. The world must know the terrible cost involved in killing Jews, she asserts in the film. Weighing up the ethical issues involved, she declares that “every civilisation finds it necessary to negotiate compromises with its own values”.

This ethic of compromise lies at the heart of the film, and adherence to it leaves no-one untouched. At one point we are privy to a discussion by the Israeli hitmen involved – a rag-tag team led by a young operative, Avner Kauffman – over the ethics of their mission. The debate is ended when the most gung-ho assassin states: “Unless we learn to act like them, we will never defeat them”. As target after target is eliminated with brutal efficiency, and the Israeli team suffers its own casualties, moral corrosion bites deeper and deeper, reaching its lowest point when the team murders a young Dutch prostitute in cold blood.

Spielberg struggles to find a rationale for this unrelenting carnage. The idea of ‘home’ is a major theme in the movie. After the mission, Avner’s mother praises his actions as helping to secure Israel as a ‘home for Jews’. Avner’s intimate home life, serving as a counterpoint to his soulless mission, is the only thing that keeps him sane. He knows that New York,

where he relocates his wife and baby girl, will never be “home” for a family whose wider ethnic history is a story of endless dislocation.

Spielberg is aware that Palestinians also long to claim their land as home. At one point, Avner’s team and a group of PLO fighters are double-booked into the same “safe house” for the night. Accepting Avner’s story that he is a Basque hitman, one of the Arabs explains, in broken English: “We want to be nations. Home is everything”.

While *Munich* is not a film for the faint-hearted, the ethical and political issues it raises are sharply relevant to our fractured 21st century world. Spielberg knows that the ethic of revenge leads only to carnage and despair and an ever-spiralling cycle of violence, but he offers no solution. The film shows graphically how, by hating the enemy, we become the enemy. What difference might forgiveness and reconciliation make? ■

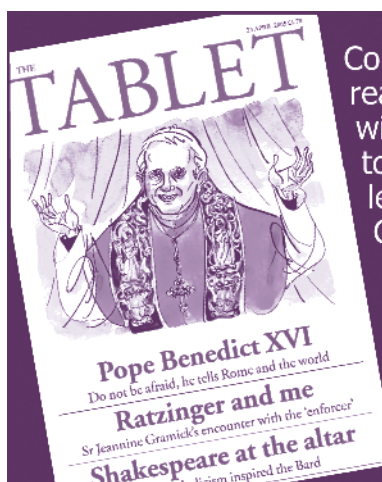
▷▷ eventually arouses a contrary hatred on the part of ‘victims’. So, passions and barbaric actions – the scale of terror – escalate. Those who bear grudges become driven to extremism. Western powers justify their retributive actions as a form of liberation which will spread democracy among the unenlightened.

What are the future prospects? Is there hope?

The present world political crisis may lead to the West launching a crusade to crush those who perpetrate terrorism or shelter alleged terrorists. The alternative is to defuse the situation by a campaign of forgiveness. Nelson Mandela followed that route in South Africa.

In fact, no solution is possible unless the root causes of the alleged grievances are identified and resolved. To achieve peace in Northern Ireland, Britain had to climb down from its self-righteous posture, co-operate with Dublin and bring Sinn Féin to the negotiating table. There will never be peace in the Middle East until the civil rights of the Palestinians are recognised and restored. There will continue to be tension between the Christian West and the Muslim East unless the huge discrepancies of wealth and power are removed.

As with individuals, so with nations: unless the sources of grievances are identified and a process of healing is undertaking, there can be no final resolution. ■



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Exploring the theology of a Crucified God

The Cross in our Context: Jesus and the Suffering World

By Douglas John Hall

Fortress Press 2003

Review: John Bruerton

One of the responses to a recent questionnaire sent to Co-operating Ventures in North Canterbury, inviting topics for discussion at a forthcoming Mini-Forum, was “What has the Church to offer to a broken and stress-filled culture that is of ultimate worth, wonder and fulfilment?”

In a profound and compelling theological reflection, which is particularly rewarding in our post-9/11 world, Douglas John Hall challenges readers to think afresh through one of the church's most fundamental confessions, the theology of the cross. This doctrine confesses that God, in the person of Jesus Christ, takes on human form and, in a life of complete identity and solidarity with our creaturely condition, suffers with us and for us. It is a theology of the Crucified God, “acquainted with grief” because it applies to God's own being and acting and not just to that of Jesus Christ.

It is a theology of grace, revelation, faith and waiting on God. For we too, all humanity, are ‘crucified’, broken and vulnerable people caught up in war, natural disasters, political tyranny, injustice, anguish and death. It is entirely surprising, unanticipated and unpredictable as a confession because for some 1500 years Christendom held and promoted a theology of glory, of a triumphant God and an equally triumphant church which articulated certainty and infallibility and comforting insulation from the reality and suffering of daily existence. A triumphant and transcendent God, however, cannot suffer.



Book Reviews

The theology of the cross is about God:

- that God thinks humankind and the whole of creation is so good, so beautiful, so precious in its intention and potentiality, that its actualisation, its fulfilment, its redemption is worth dying for.
- it is also about engaging the world, not private piety, withdrawal or self-protection. It involves risk and sensitivity because the companions of the Crucified, the companions of the suffering, are bearers of the message – outside the safety of the church plant and our preference for security and peace.

A theology of the cross is therefore inherently contextual and incarnational. In 2005 we need to learn the ‘time’ we’re in, to know what ‘time’ it is, because contexts change meanings, and former church attitudes and practices become increasingly irrelevant, hollow and disabling as we engage with new generations and cultures. The church, at all times, must shed comforting lies and grapple with uncomfortable truths.

We are ‘thinking animals’ and we need to maintain the struggle of faith, to ‘wrestle with God’. Theology involves a lifelong commitment to thought and conscientious vigilance against the tendency of individuals and communities to turn the products of thought into ironclad systems of ‘truth’ and to discourage or preclude any further thought, to refuse to

enter deeply into the unknown, or the indifference, that is around us and within us. (This can be a serious situation in ageing congregations.)

The ethic of the theology of the cross, says Hall, is *discipleship*, and it is based on faith in the Triune God, especially in the presence and authority of the Holy Spirit. Discipleship is the cost of engagement, solidarity and responsibility in and for the world, being willing to enter the moral wilderness of our time – and the perennial newness of our context. We know neither the questions nor the answers in advance, but we are positioned to enquire the appropriate ‘word of the Lord’ and to recognise and welcome the companionable presence of others. Discipleship is a role initiated by God himself (*John 3:16*) of being *in* the world but not *of* the world. The world as a whole is the creation and locus of God's activity and compassion.

A missional church is not only a church with a gospel to proclaim, not only an

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evangelical church. It is also a church that tries to understand and conduct itself according to that gospel on a journey that is virtually limitless in its demand for involvement. The first and only unqualified ground for Christian mission is love, God's love, the love that we, being first loved, are learning to show others. Mission is not the quest for numbers, control or power.

"The late Henri Nouwen stated the matter with complete clarity: *The temptation to consider power as an apt instrument for the proclamation of the gospel is the greatest temptation of all. We rationalise and justify the use of power as something good. With this line of thinking crusades took place, inquisitions were organised, Native Americans were enslaved, positions of great influence were desired, episcopal palaces, splendid cathedrals, and opulent seminaries were built.*" (p199)

All too often the theology of glory attempts to be a theology of sight, not faith; of finality, not hope; of power, not love. The missional church must guard against all ideologies of expansionism and triumphalism, and all notions of inerrancy, conformity and aggressiveness. The suspension of disbelief and debate was implicit, also, in the secular dictatorships and imperialistic ideologies, including market capitalism, of the 20th century. "The mission of the Christian Movement in the 21st century is to confess hope in action." (p196)

We walk by faith, not sight; by hope, not finality; by love, not power. We do not possess the truth but bear witness to the truth, the One toward whom our faith is oriented (2 Cor 4:5). And we walk in the knowledge of our own mortality and the mortality of the particular people we know and love. Be we can also take the grace of God seriously in our lives and be content to leave heaven to God, and hell also (Psalm 73:26).

In the church, tell the story; in the world, live the story. ■

Lenten Book Bytes

Quantum Grace: The Sunday Readings
Judy Cannato.
Ave Maria Press
Price: \$22.50

This follows on from this author's first title *Quantum Grace: Lenten Reflections on Creation and Connectedness* and seeks to stir the reader to look at scripture through a slightly different lens – one that reconciles our Christian tradition with modern scientific discoveries.

Walking the Via Dolorosa Today
Rev. Laurin Wenig
23rd Publications
Price: \$4.50

One of the *Praying the Stations* Series this book enables the pray-ers to imagine they are walking the streets of Jerusalem.

Two complementary Stations of the Cross booklets for teenagers are *Way of Reconciliation for Teens* by Colleen Rainone, and *Teenagers* by Gwen Costello \$4.50 ea. Specially designed to connect teens with the reality of Jesus suffering and its relevance to their lives.

Raising the Dust: Reflections for Lent
Theology House, Christchurch
Price: 12.95

A booklet of homespun reflections – a page for each day of Lent related to the Sunday Lenten readings, written by a selection of local authors. Each page evokes a scene, a memory, a piece of living theology which may resonate with something in the reader's own life. If you want a gentle but often profound way of keeping Lent, this could be your pick.

The Scriptures, the Cross and the Power of God
by Tom Wright
SPCK 2005
Price: \$19.95

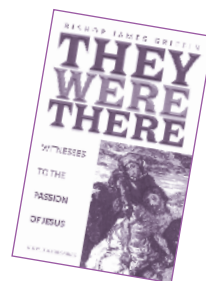
Taking Jesus' words to the Sadducees that they were wrong because they knew neither the Scriptures nor the power of God, Wright examines accounts of the events from Palm Sunday to Easter as they appear in the gospels of Matthew and John.

There are nine sections based on a series of sermons Wright gave at Durham Cathedral in 2005.

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Crusade for freedom becomes a litany of atrocities

“The United States is committed to the worldwide elimination of torture and we are leading this fight by example. I call on all governments to join with the US and the community of law-abiding nations in prohibiting, investigating, and prosecuting all acts of torture and in undertaking to prevent other cruel and unusual punishment.”

President George Bush, Washington Post, 27 June 2003.

New images of the torture and abuse of Iraqis in Abu Ghraib prison by American security guards and beatings of teenage protesters by British soldiers demonstrate the depths to which the occupying forces in Iraq have sunk. The photographs are destined to become the indelible images of the rape of a country under the deluded excuse of spreading freedom and democracy.

The contempt of the invading powers for a civilian population, whom it has ostensibly liberated, is appalling. The US government stated that the images should not have been released and could incite violence. Tony Blair announced that the majority of British soldiers were “doing a good job” in Iraq. Donald Rumsfeld has defended other atrocities with the remark, “stuff happens”. How can anyone view these shocking photographs and fail to grasp the brutality and cynicism of those who would justify this behaviour?

What is the future for Iraq? As the US continues to pursue its intentions of permanent bases in the strategic areas of oil reserves and other countries declare their intentions of withdrawing their troops, what will be left of Iraq? Not only has this war been fought on false and possibly deliberate intentions, but it has also alienated an entire people from contact with Western powers. The war will live indelibly in the minds of future generations. After years of suffering and humiliation, Iraqis will be loath to adopt any Western idea of

freedom and democracy. Such hypocrisy is unforgettable and unforgivable.

Those cartoons

Images of a different sort appeared last month in the form of cartoons satirising the Prophet Muhammad. Two NZ metropolitan papers belonging to the Fairfax Group chose to publish them, thereby sparking an intense debate. A ‘free press’ having the right, indeed the duty, to publish, as against the ethics and responsibilities of that same ‘free press’ towards respecting the sensitivities of another faith was the issue.

Lyndsay Freer stated, “there are limits to free speech when it promotes hatred or derision based on race, religion or gender” and this column agrees. It now looks more and more like a decision to sell more newspapers, with no regard for the predictable reaction to such crass commercial imperatives.

In our secular society, the first concern was the danger of trade boycotts against our exports and the loss of revenue. On this basis, business leaders and the government voiced their disapproval of the publication. The two editors concerned gave a Clayton’s apology but the damage was done. People overseas have died as a result of the cartoons. The Muslim world exploded with protests, riots and bomb threats. It seems that the war on terrorism is being understood more and more in the Muslim world as the war against Islam. The reproduction of these images has just added more incitement to an already volatile situation.

The Guardian Weekly summed the situation up well by stating that it is “senselessly provocative to reproduce a set of images, of no intrinsic value, that pander to the worst prejudices about

Muslims”. One hopes that The Fairfax Group will learn by its mistakes.

Battle lines drawn

Parliament’s opening week consisted, as usual, of defining the battle lines between the National Party and Labour, with the minor parties sniping around the edges. Prime Minister, Helen Clark, was taken to task for the cost of her pledge card, and Don Brash was grilled for his involvement with the Exclusive Brethren pamphlets. The question being, who was going to pay for the expense involved?

However, the real battle lines seem to be in the internal squabbles of the parties themselves. Helen Clark is busy defending a Labour administration which is falling short of expectations in health, education and employment. At the same time, she must defend the dubious record of David Benson-Pope’s former career as a school teacher. Her front bench is beginning to look jaded. Also, the front bench cannot decide whether the dollar is too high or too low.

Don Brash insists that he is not retiring, but John Keys is breathing down his neck. Factions are forming for and against the leader, with Gerry Brownlee losing weight by trying to hold them all together.

Both leaders have problems. They could follow the lead, or the bead, of vice-president Dick Cheney. ‘Deadeye’ Dick Cheney, the *terrorist du jour*, has the answer. After a few beers at the ranch in order to sort out problems, he then invites friends to share the thrills of a quail hunt. ‘Deadeye’ Dick shoots first and asks questions later.

Le Monde supplied a succinct post-script to last month’s item on Ariel Sharon:

“There was a double standard to media coverage: Sharon’s death would be a ‘threat to peace’, while Arafat’s removed an ‘obstacle to peace’. ■

Challenging the Roman liturgical straightjacket

Mid-January saw a week-long meeting in Auckland that was unique in the history of Catholicism in our country. Bishops from 11 English-speaking countries across the world came to New Zealand for a conference. It was a session of ICEL, the International Commission for English in the Liturgy. The bishops' task in these sessions, currently taking place twice a year in one country after another, is to complete the fine-tuning of the English text used in the celebration of the Mass and other sacraments. The translation was made in haste over 30 years ago and is universally agreed to be in need of review.

ICEL has for over 30 years brought together the resources and authority of the bishops' conferences of the English-speaking world. After decades of work, a revision of the Mass text of 1973 was at the end of the 1990s submitted to Rome for final approval. This was not given.

Instead, without consultation of the bishops charged by the church with preparing and approving liturgical texts, new and highly debatable rules were issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship in a document entitled ironically *Liturgiam Authenticam*. The goal posts were changed. Translation was to be more literal than in the past. Language that was more formal was to be preferred. Inclusive language was not supported. No heed was to be paid to ecumenically agreed texts for the Gloria, Creed and Our Father, such as we employ in New Zealand. The rules descended to such minutia as demanding that the Creed be recited as beginning "I believe" not as "We believe", and that the people's response to the priest's greeting be not "And also with you", but rather "And with your spirit". As part of the exercise, the then leadership of ICEL was forced from office and others more acceptable to Rome took their place.

The tragedy is that Catholic worship, already an area in which there are strongly divergent views as to how it should be conducted, has become the battleground between two views of how the church should operate. One is that it should move towards ever greater centralization, the other is that of making collegiality a reality.

Sure, within this Roman imposed straightjacket there is currently, back and forth between the bishops and Rome, an interchange about the details of how the straightjacket applies. That is what the conference in Auckland was about. But there is to be no questioning of the straightjacket itself. What should have been an exercise in collegiality, producing the optimum English text, has become the opposite.

The depth of feeling against Rome's takeover was manifest during a conference held in Rome in 2003 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Vatican II's document on the liturgy. At one session, a Catalan, Fr Ignacio Calabuig, departing from his text, turned to Cardinal Francis Arinze, the current head of the Congregation for Divine Worship and in a trembling voice said (in Italian): "I feel I must tell the Prefect the devastating impression the Congregation is making. The view that people of great culture in their own lands are not capable of translating liturgical texts into their own mother tongue, is causing great discontent and concern in the Church." The entire audience of 600 people clapped for several minutes, for so long that Cardinal Arinze felt compelled to join in.

Those working at the meeting in Auckland were doing their best to produce a workable English text for the celebration of the Mass. We can justly applaud their efforts. The misfortune is that they have been constrained to work within highly debatable limits. ■

Fr Humphrey O'Leary is rector of the Redemptorist community in Glendowie, Auckland

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On the horns of a dilemma

Eve Adams

To survive the conflicts that inevitably arise between faith and institutional religion, I have like many others, tried to separate the institutional church from the parish community. I feel increasingly over-parented by some distant committee who make huge ethical/faith statements on my behalf and then attempt to regulate and in some cases even proscribe any responses/challenges to them. The edict against formal discussion on women in priesthood is an example. What I struggle with is not the imperfect humanity of the church, but its own inability to accept and live that truth for itself. Certainly the words of humility are there, but there is often a jarring discrepancy between them and the institution's ethos and processes.

We all live daily in membership with communities that we have major differences of opinion with, our families above all. It is less important for everyone to agree than it is for individuals to feel they have a voice and that the community offers a genuine ear. But within the church there seems to be an invisible but very real glass ceiling between the two. And this is where the neat separation between parish and institution fails. There seems to be a prevailing attitude that says, "just ignore it and get on and do your own parish thing".

This sounds suspiciously like an old style marriage where one partner gets what they want by being manipulative and selective with truth; pretending submission while quietly getting their own needs met some other way.

I recently had a dream about being on church property. A woman was being turned away because of some doubts the church group had about her not being 'proper' enough. She was being told not to take it personally, it was just how it was. In the dream, this dismissal of the woman 'woke' me up from where I had been 'asleep' on the grass just outside the building (on the fringe).

I was horrified to realise what was going on and knew that I was facing an important decision. I was a member of this same group, had some standing within it and a voice. I knew I could ignore it and stay comfortable where I was. Instead, in the dream I went up to the woman and put my arm around her shoulders. I stood alongside her and said that I couldn't be part of a group that excluded in this way.

For me, membership in the church has become a two sided sword. On one side sits the warmth of shared faith and worship, but the other increasingly reflects my unwilling complicity in what I find to be at times painful and destructive attitudes and practices. The dream begs the question. Where does the balance lie? What does waking up mean for me? And what choices will that waking bring with it? ■

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