

Tui Motu

InterIslands

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those lazy, hazy, crazy days
of summer

New Year

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a new postscript —

Eve Adams, a Catholic laywoman, shares her musings on church, life and the spiritual journey

The first day of the year is celebrated in Catholic churches as the World Day of Peace. Pope Benedict delivered a fine statement for the day, extracts of which we print on pp 16-17. He notes the signs of hope, specifically a diminution in the number of conflicts across the globe and some progress in peace initiatives, even in the Holy Land.

However, the Pope also insists that a prerequisite for peace is telling the truth, something political leaders are not always good at. He goes on to describe the nuclear deterrent as "not only baneful but completely fallacious"

— strong words indeed. I wonder if Messrs Bush and Blair troubled to read them, not to speak of Monsieur Chirac. Nuclear disarmament, he says, must become "progressive and concerted" and the resources thus freed up given to the poor. In view of the present sabre rattling over Iran, these words could not be more timely.

Immediately following the Papal address is a long interview with two of New Zealand's most stalwart workers for peace, Kate Dewes and Rob Green. The whole package is excellent food for thought at the start of a new year.

Who is God?

There was a beautiful book in circulation a few years ago called *Mister God, this is Anna*. The child in the book has no problems with whether God exists, and chats away to God as her closest friend. The greatest victory Enlightenment thinking has had in the world of the West is to relegate God to the privacy of the internal forum — okay for chapel, but not for the market place or the coffee bar. To talk religion (or politics) is the ultimate social solecism. It is little wonder that what is not talked about in polite society soon fades into total irrelevance.

Fortunately a religious magazine is not bound by such shibboleths: we can chat away about God as much as we like. Yet religious people are not exempt from a certain squeamishness when it comes to talking openly about the things that should matter most; a bit like a Board of Directors which will take ten seconds to decide to spend a million dollars, but occupy an hour discussing how much to spend on the cleaner's tea break.

For this issue of *Tui Motu* we have assembled a series of great pieces which are all undisguised 'God-talk'. Dick

Dowden criticises the way scientists (and theologians) compartmentalise human knowledge. Yet God is as real as the atom, or a gene or a lightwave — and therefore just as relevant to the 'real world'.

Diane Pendola discovers God's presence while she is engaged in heavy manual work: her plea is for a more sacramental approach to living. It is not only the heavens which are constantly revealing to us the glory of God. All of nature does so.

Roger Dowling warns us against becoming preoccupied with sin and guilt. Religion should concentrate primarily on the graciousness of God. The Bible reveals a God who walks towards us, who in Christ gives Himself totally for us — and that paradigm of self-giving should become the *leitmotiv* of our lives too. And Pauline O'Regan looks at the way we pray: what does it say about the sort of God we believe in?

I cannot think of a better way to launch ourselves into a new year than re-connecting with the God in whom we live and move and have our being. Good reading!

M.H.

cover: The mammoth cruise ship *Diamond Princess* coming into Port Chalmers on 16 January.

Those lazy, hazy, crazy days . . .

Summer is the time for slowing down, for being instead of doing, for giving oneself to others rather than taking advantage of them. When used well, it becomes God's special time. Glynn Cardy describes this beautifully, on the beach beside the waves (pp 7-8). In a different way Trish McBride (pp 8-9) captures much the same spirit in those God-moments of the imagination when the Christmas story is brought into the present.

Summer also heralds the arrival on our shores of the great cruise ships – one after another, 44 visits this year to Dunedin, up 16 from 2005. So *Tui Motu* resolved to take a look at these modern day Leviathans and the people who voyage on them. We called upon Fr Tony Ives.

Since retiring from active parish ministry some five years ago Fr Tony has lived in Mosgiel – except when he is voyaging. He is just about to launch forth on his fifth trip: eight weeks at sea, round New Zealand, the Eastern seaboard of Australia, PNG, Indonesia, the Philippines, S Korea, China, Japan and ending in Hong Kong. He will in effect be chaplain for four or five consecutive 'cruises'. The passengers join and leave the ship at various ports along the route. But as chaplain, Fr Tony is one of the crew and stays aboard.

So is he ministering to the 'filthy rich', I enquire? Not at all, he insists. Obviously many are well-to-do. But for some it is a once-in-a-lifetime trip. At the other end of the scale Fr Tony met a widow who had done nearly a hundred cruises. The ships are her home, and she is well looked after. You have good company, great entertainment, good food – and you are constantly seeing new sights and, for those who wish it, enjoying new experiences.

Judging by the huge increase in numbers, cruising has ceased to be the exclusive prerogative of the very wealthy. A passenger from San Francisco visiting on the *Diamond Princess*, said: "Where else can you get a first-class motel, all your food and a new city to see every day, for \$US110 a day?" The pattern of these cruises is to arrive in port at 7 am, spend the daylight hours at anchor and move on

to a new destination during the night. A huge variety of onshore entertainments are laid on and tourists may spend \$200-\$300 on average each day. Or spend nothing. It is their choice. It is anticipated that every time the *Diamond Princess* calls it will, inject half a million dollars into the Dunedin economy.



The *Diamond Princess*, biggest cruise ship to visit New Zealand, docking at Port Chalmers, 16 January. It is three times the size of the *Titanic* and carries 2700 passengers

So what does the job of tour chaplain entail? Fr Tony says he celebrates Mass everyday and his congregation may be 15-20 or as many as 60. At the weekend he may have up to 200 (from 1200 passengers on board) at Mass or at the ecumenical service which he will hold if there is no other

chaplain aboard. And on Sunday evening he celebrates for the crew and he may get up to 30, many being Filipinos or Koreans. This is an important aspect of his work, since his ministry is under the care of the *Apostleship of the Sea*. They oversee the chaplain's work, and an unsatisfactory chaplain will be struck off. Why? For not doing his job – or spending too much time in the bar or at the casino!

As chaplain, Fr Tony usually wears his clericals so that he is recognisable. Some people will make appointments to see him, but mostly his ministry is 'casual' – on the Promenade deck or at the cafeteria. Because of the regularity of life on board people find it easy to come to services. Indeed, having an opportunity for prayer and worship is welcomed by many – as well as time to reflect on one's life. Sometimes it is an opportunity to return to regular faith practice. Passengers generally emphasise how much they appreciate the presence of a chaplain; one good reason why his employer, the *Holland America Line*, are so keen to have chaplains on board.

Most people enjoying this kind of holiday are retired, often having an experience of travel denied them during their working life. On his trips Fr Tony has never seen any excessive drinking or social misconduct. People go on cruises to relax, to escape the treadmill of commercial living, or simply for a new experience: a *kairos* time. For a semi-retired priest, it is in his opinion a most worthwhile apostolate – as well as being a very enjoyable one.

M.H.



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

Your publication of the article *Creed and Credibility in a Critical Age* (Nov. 2005) carried some strong messages for Catholicism in this country.

First, it revealed to readers that a diocese chose to celebrate its 25th anniversary of existence by sponsoring a theological symposium. Second, its organisers chose to invite a woman to present a keynote address. Third, *Tui Motu* made it available to some thousands more people by publishing what is in my view a superb critique of where we are at (or not at) in terms of how we represent our faith to the world. All Catholics whether at the top of the organisational pyramid, the bottom, or any place in between, should find it immensely encouraging.

Considerable thanks are due to all who brought this article to the light of day.

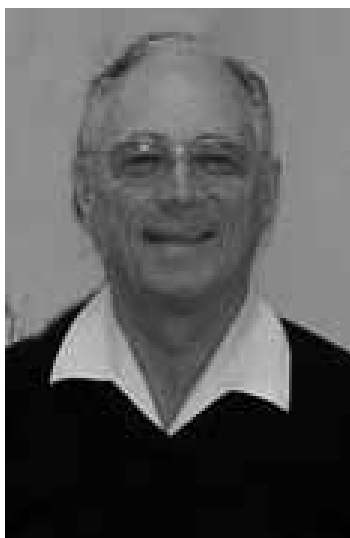
Bill Brannigan, Auckland.

(See below)

Sue Bradford and abortion

If there was one word which summed up the Green philosophy, then I think that word would have to be 'life' - respect for life in all its forms. My problem with the Green Party is that it is not sufficiently Green because it lacks a consistent respect for life.

Award for Bishop Peter



In the New Year's Honours list Bishop Peter Cullinane was made a Companion of the *New Zealand Order of Merit* (CNZM) - for services to the community.

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

The Green Party has an excellent Children's policy. But it contradicts their lack of action for the right of a child to life. Sue says the Greens "campaign hard ... to reduce violence against children". And they do. But they don't campaign against the violence of abortion.

The Green Party will eventually come to oppose abortion because they are good people who care passionately for justice, for peace, and for life. But first they will need to wake up to the slaughter going on all around them and decide to take action to defend the innocent.

(abridged)

Chris Sullivan, Pakuranga

Building more & more prisons

In January it was reported that a 20-year-old woman with a Maori name, of no fixed abode, was convicted of trespass at the Work and Income office and also of assaulting a police officer. This

was within hours of her release from jail, where she was on remand awaiting sentence. That means being locked up for 23 hours a day in a cell.

She was dragged by police from the WINZ offices because she refused to move. She assaulted the police officer who tried to remove her hair-ties by force. Also, she refused to speak in the dock.

It was said in court that she was not a mental patient. Technically, this may have been correct. From my experience, such people feel rejected and unloved and come from dysfunctional homes. More prison is only going to reinforce these feelings of rejection.

Mother Teresa would describe this woman as 'Jesus in the distressing disguise of the least of his sisters.' Of course Mother Teresa would be echoing Jesus own words: *Whatever you did to the least of my brethren you did to me* (Mt 25). And he referred specifically to the hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless and imprisoned.

Slavery has been abolished. Women now have equal rights. Isn't it time that we New Zealanders stopped building more and more prisons as a way of removing the least of Christ's brothers and sisters out of our sight?

Tom Keyes, Invercargill

Promoter's Corner - a 'gospel' engagement

Promoting *Tui Motu* is a privilege. Good news is scarce these days so it is a privilege to introduce a publication that carries plenty of it. Christian publications are nothing if not an extension of the gospel.

It is also a privilege that works the other way. It provides manifold opportunities for promoters to witness the liturgy at work in a variety of settings. In my own experience, in dozens of parishes in all dioceses of the country (but one), I can honestly say that I have never once seen the liturgy poorly presented. This reflects great credit upon readers, commentators, and ministers of the Eucharist as well as celebrants. It represents a veritable revolution for those of us who can remember the exclusiveness of the liturgy of yesteryear, when the altar rails were a barrier between priest and people. The inevitable passivity of the laity of that era has been transformed. It is now customary to encounter highly participative and competent congregations who enhance the liturgy on a consistent basis. It is occasion for rejoicing.

But so is the presence of *Tui Motu*. Its express purpose "to invite readers to question, challenge and contribute to discussion of spiritual and social issue in the light of gospel values" shares a similar vision of participation and engagement.

Tom Cloher

The Black Death of 2006

Madeleine Bunting

A glossy catalogue from Oxfam illustrated goats, chickens and farmers' tools you could 'buy' as Christmas presents to be sent in your name to Africa. It was a clever idea but it underlined how far last year's special focus on the needs of Africa failed to shift public understanding of the continent's plight and how dramatic a redrawing of our relationship with its millions of inhabitants is required.

There are two memories I will take from my work commenting and editing on Africa in 2005. The first is [Live8](#); a fantastic musical feast, which had me and my daughter transfixed, but this party was supposed to be achieving a radical political breakthrough. The message conveyed was: "We want your voice, not your money". But while they certainly didn't get the money, I'm not sure they got the voice either. What's needed is a voice which expresses how Africa will require from the developed world a long-term distribution of resources (financial, technological, human expertise) well into this century.

The single most important reason for this is HIV/Aids. This disease presents an unprecedented challenge to human societies by wiping out the age group that supports the economy and raises the next generation. We now know that every one of the Millennium development goals for 2015 is already missed in Africa, and HIV/Aids has been a critical contributory factor. Life expectancy, infant mortality, female education: the advances in all these areas are already in reverse, or about to be, across many parts of southern Africa. And always because of HIV/Aids.

That brings me to the second memory of 2005. A shack off the main road out of Maputo, Mozambique; on one side of the wall, the 4x4s of the aid agencies and the booming Mozambican economy roar by. On the other side, Arminda Gabriel feeds a two-month-old baby, Carlos, while her three-year-old, Juan, has the sickly listlessness of Aids. She is HIV positive, yet still supports the family – her husband is crippled by terrible foot sores – from her meagre washerwoman's wages.

The options for Arminda are either a slow, painful death over the next six or eight years or anti-retroviral treatment for life. It costs \$NZ40 a month now to provide the drugs for Arminda and the millions like her. In recent years the cost has fallen dramatically as the pharmaceutical companies have been forced to allow the manufacture of

generic drugs in India. Former US President Bill Clinton is even managing to bring the costs down further as he uses his famed charisma to arm-wrestle further concessions through the Clinton Foundation.

But \$40 per month for the next 20-odd years adds up to \$10,000. Multiply that by millions and you see the implications of treating the 25 million currently infected. Many of the aid agencies, unnerved by the medical expertise required by this crisis and of the implications of being locked into such long-term financial outlays, have preferred to invest in prevention programmes. But prevention is too late for Arminda and her children.

There is a huge challenge here for aid agencies as to how they should respond to a disease whose scale of devastation and suffering dwarfs even last year's tsunami. And have we, the givers of those Christmas cheques, quite grasped that all the benefits of the goats will be wiped out unless we commit ourselves to the long-term funding of anti-retroviral treatment?

The most radical breakthrough of 2005 was the commitment in Gleneagles at the G8 conference to achieve access to universal treatment for HIV/Aids by 2010. It was an ambitious target, and I can only believe that it got past the G8 leaders after a good lunch. The costs of the commitment are huge, and sure enough, the sceptics were proved right in September when the Global Fund (which raises money for HIV/Aids) struggled to extract the pledges needed for its work.

In researching HIV/Aids in recent months, I was struck by the comment of one of Britain's foremost experts on the disease in Africa; he told me that we are currently dealing only with infection rates of 40 percent in countries like Swaziland, but imagine, he said to me, what it will be like when those infections become full-blown Aids. How does nearly half a country die? It's simply beyond our imagination. But when it happens we can't wring our hands and say we didn't know.

If enough people in the West took on the responsibility of each keeping one person on ARV treatment, the impact on the next few decades would be dramatic. We could begin to think of this monthly \$40 as the first kind of global tax. Equivalent of a fancy face cream or a pair of summer sandals – yet it's enough to keep a mother alive and her children from becoming destitute.

(reproduced by courtesy of the London Tablet)

Glory Be. . . to One God

Pauline O'Regan

Some time ago our community listened to a series of tapes called *The History of God*, by Karen Armstrong. The depth of her scholarship and the density of her presentation pushed us to our limits. Much of what I heard is now lodged away below the level of my conscious memory. But one thing remains very clear and comes back again and again to unsettle me.

When Armstrong was elaborating on the Islamic understanding of God, she said that Moslems feel passionately about the *oneness* of God. For them, nothing must blur the fact that there is only one God, holy and undivided. One of the things that makes them very uneasy about Christianity is that we believe there are three Persons in the one God. It is not so much the belief itself that disturbs them, but it is the effect that particular belief has on our spirituality and, more particularly, on our prayer.

Moslems think that we Christians separate the three Persons of God too much in our prayer, and in so doing we tend to undermine that tenet of our faith that claims unequivocally that those three Persons constitute only one God. They are saying in effect that our practice could appear, at least in their eyes, to be at variance with our belief that God is one.

It seems to me that any risk we run of separating the three Persons of God too strongly in our prayer stems from one of the most precious aspects of Christian spirituality, namely that we can have a personal and loving relationship with God. We would surely never have the audacity to cultivate this love relationship with the Creator-God had not Jesus himself given us the confidence to do so by telling us to call God our Father. *When you pray, say 'our Father'...*

Of course, we love Jesus too. How could we not? How could we not have a loving relationship with Someone who has demonstrated such unbounded love for each one of us? He is the Person of God who became a human being, inconceivable as that may seem, and because of that we tend to conceive of Him as being the most accessible to us in prayer.

Finally, there is the Third Person who was for so long the *Forgotten God*. Now, in the joy of rediscovering the God of Love, we turn more and more to our beloved Holy Spirit, our Wairua Tapu, seeking wisdom, counsel, advice, direction, sanctity.

As I pondered the validity of the Moslem anxiety on our behalf, I felt the need to balance my prayer in such a way as to express my belief in the unity and oneness of God. It was while doing this that a childhood memory came back to me, and with it came a question I had never thought to ask before. I recalled that my mother, when saying the *Glory Be*, always said the following: "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, *One God*, world without end, Amen".

The question is: "what happened to those two words *One God*?" At what point were they dropped from that particular prayer? And why? My mother was born in 1878. She would have been taught that prayer early in her childhood, say at five or six years of age. She was still saying it 50 years later at the time of her death.

My memory tells me that I stopped saying it while at boarding school in the mid-1930s. I have begun to say it again in my old age. I listen for it in every prayer now, and it seems to me that the older the prayer the more likely it is to be there. In the Litany of Loreto, for instance, one of the invocations is: "Holy Trinity, *One God*, have mercy on us." When I am saying the Rosary, I see that single bead after each decade as an important symbol, and I press it firmly between my fingers to remind myself that I am praising One, Holy and Undivided God.

All of which brings me to the purpose of this article: does any reader remember saying those two extra words in the *Glory Be*? Does anyone know why we stopped saying it? Is there anyone who still says it? I would love to know.

Sr Pauline O'Regan is a Christchurch Sister of Mercy. She has been a teacher and is a popular author

A time for loving

*Glynn Cardy rejoices in the great
Kiwi escape to the beach and the bach
where the clock is switched off and we
find time to stand and stare*



When the Hebrew text simply says: “the Lord called Samuel” (1 Sam 3:4) we aren’t told the details. If the writer had been Irish, maybe he would’ve said a fairy was poking him in the ear. The dreams, legends, and fables of ancient people invite us into different worlds with their own understandings of time and the place of the human heart. Dreams have their own time, as does love, as does God.

There is a time for everything. Importantly, there is a time to slow down. I’ve been musing about coffee, that wonderful stimulus that is so much a part of city life. The award-winning cafés are all within easy walking distance of my home and office. For the last week, however, my consumption has taken a dive.

I’ve been camping far from the seduction of computers, cellphones, and baristas, surrounded instead by the stimuli of native bush, sand and surf. The rising and setting of the sun is my watch. The casual conversation is my news. The walks on the beach are my Morning Prayer and Compline.

I’ve been musing on coffee, not because I’m in withdrawal, but because I haven’t missed it. The stimulus of this slower life creates its own energy. Speed, efficiency, and performance – all the so-called essentials of modern living – don’t necessarily produce the dynamism they purport to. When you live at a fast pace, slowing down is a spiritual discipline that can bring its own rich rewards.

Matakana is a small town north of Auckland. Unlike their near neighbours they’ve decided to be a slow town. In Matakana you won’t find fast food outlets cuddling close

to large red sheds. Gross megastores with their lure of cheap goods and employment aren’t part of the town plan. Rather, slow food, aesthetically pleasing buildings, locally made products are being woven into a commercial success. Assisted by entrepreneurial nous they are developing a different brand. It is a slow brand.

There is a 1970s book of theological reflections by Kosuke Koyama called *Three Mile An Hour God* – three miles an hour being the pace of walking. Koyama’s point is God is not in a hurry. When the world speeds up, God goes slow. Following God means going at a different pace than others.

It’s like love. You can’t love fast. When a couple tells me they have known each other for six weeks and want to get married I tell them, very politely of course, to get lost. I tell them to get lost in each other in order to find the truth of each other and of themselves. Sometimes this can take only six months, but usually it takes a number of years.

Despite what magazines or soap operas tell you, you can’t pull into a drive-through and order a double, crispy love-burger with a side of meaning and a large commitment. For the simple reason it won’t be love. Love takes time – both the time on the clock and the pace of the heart. Love is more akin to my nana’s Christmas cake with multiple ingredients soaked for days and slow baked for hours.

There are two words in Greek for time: *chronos* and *kairos*. The first is chronological time, the time on the screen, minute upon minute. The second is the right time, the time of the heart, grace upon grace.

In *Mark* (5:22ff) there is a story of Jesus responding to the request of Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, to come and heal his daughter. Jairus, out of his love for his child, had humbled himself asking assistance from a man that his colleagues and maybe even he strongly disagreed with. The need was urgent. His daughter was close to death. Time, *chronos*, was of the essence.

Yet as Jesus hurried to the child’s side he was violated. A haemorrhaging woman, ritually unclean, had grabbed his garments. Jesus stopped. He was now, in the eyes of the



Some 'God-moments' at Christmas

Trish McBride describes two pre-Christmas experiences – where imaginative reconstructions of the Nativity of Christ bring the mystery into the present day

Last Advent brought two extraordinary experiences. They could not have been more different! One was at the Presbyterian St Andrew's on the Terrace, Wellington, and the other at the interdenominational Porirua Hospital Chapel. In retrospect they highlighted the paradox of Christmas, one focussing on its complexity and the other on its simplicity. Both are real!

St Francis of Assisi is traditionally credited with setting up the first representation of the story of the manger in his church, to let people see the humanity of the Christmas event. In his younger days Francis was given to dramatic gestures, like kissing lepers and taking off his clothes to demonstrate the Gospel and make the watchers think. I surmise then that he would have been delighted with the

Christmas installations at St Andrew's on the Terrace.

Judith Dale, a member of GalaXies, and Fionnaigh McKenzie from the staff of St Andrew's envisioned the display, and elicited art works from friends and other artists. A tour round the church revealed treasures that ranged from the traditional to the potentially shocking.

High above the aisle a life-size figure of a woman, fashioned from chicken wire, lay on her side (*see illustration of Christmas at St Andrew's opposite*). She had newly given birth, the placenta had not yet been delivered, and the baby hung from a red ribbon. Near the altar was a Christmas tree decorated with AIDS red ribbons, and a black boy doll lay in the manger beside it,

to remind us of the children of sub-Saharan Africa.

At the other side was a model of Bethlehem – *O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie* – but the town was surrounded by wire and Ken-dolls with guns. There were three (life-size) Wise Ones near the door – and they were women, who brought their gifts – food in a shopping trolley, to be donated later to the food-bank of *Downtown Community Ministry*. Visitors were invited to add further contributions.

There was a New Zealand summer corner where towels, togs, flax, pohutukawa were interwoven with traditional Christmas images. The New Zealand theme was carried too by the altar frontal – a painting of a Maori Holy Family.

▷▷ law, himself unclean. Her stain had become his stain. As a holy man he should have distanced himself from others and performed the necessary ritual ablutions. Instead Jesus called the woman forward and spoke words of comfort and courage. Time, *kairos*, was of the essence. This was a moment of grace for that woman.

Yet chronological time did not stand still. There was a child dying. Indeed as Jesus was speaking to the woman a messenger arrived from Jairus' household saying the little girl was dead.

Life often seems to be a conflict between *chronos* and *kairos*, between the deadline and the lifetime. The more *chronos* dominates the less likelihood that moments of grace will occur, and the energy from that grace be absorbed into and shape the community. Yet there are consequences when we

disregard *chronos*. We know that in Jairus' case everything turned out okay in the end. But our lives are seldom like that. Usually we have to make choices.

Summer is a time for slowing down. Long may January be a time when shops keep shorter hours, when the economy slows, when newspapers are thinner and New Zealand goes on a picnic. If we like it this way we need to work to keep it this way, chiefly by lowering our expectations of others and ourselves.

There is a time for everything – a time to slow down, to turn around, and see the agapanthus and the fairies dancing on top. ■

When not at the beach Glynn Cardy is parish priest of St-Matthew-in-the-City, Auckland

Behind the altar hung a quilt depicting the four elements Earth, Air, Fire and Water. We are all made of these and thus connected to the universe, and so was Jesus the baby, the man. Two quotations reminded us of the Christmas invitation to each of us towards inner birth-giving: Meister Eckhart's *Of what use is Christmas if he be not born in me?* And the Nietzsche words: *The chaos inside you is needed, in order to give birth to a dancing star.* For so many in the world, there is chaos at Christmas! Entering into it can bring something new to birth!

There was a play-tent for children where they could have a hands-on play with a baby doll and some animals, a do-it-yourself crib. And these were only some of the offerings! They were there for the seeing and the pondering from early December well into January.

From the global and wide-ranging to the simple and the basic: patients, staff and families gathered in the Porirua Hospital Chapel for the annual Nativity play. I was there to support a participant, and was startled to be greeted with "Hi, Trish, can you be the inn-keeper?" An unexpected honour! So I was clad in a curtain, and equipped with a lantern, and a copy of the script.

I took my seat with the angels and shepherds around the altar. Ian Bayliss, chaplain at Porirua hospital for many years, was the narrator, barefoot, in T-shirt and shorts. It was actually God's version of the story, scripted by Ian and Kath Maclean, another hospital chaplain. Most of the actors were people with mental illnesses, patients and former patients.

So, said God, *when I wanted to send my Son, the priests and important people weren't much use, so I thought I'd ask a woman. Must say Mary was pretty spooked when I asked her, but she said 'yes' anyway. And when I wanted people to tell others about the baby arriving I chose the shepherds. People who thought they were unimportant have been very important to My plan.*



Christmas installations in the Presbyterian church St Andrew's on the Terrace, Wellington: three Wise Ones bringing gifts in a shopping trolley (right); a wire effigy of Mary in labour (top right); quilt above the altar table depicting the four elements of the Earth, connecting the Nativity with the whole world.

And as I, the innkeeper, prepared for my moment of action, God went on: *Here come Mary and Joseph now. They'd better sort something out fairly soon, because she's having contractions already.* I did my best to make my stable sound appealing, and settled them onto the hay-bales. Joseph, whom I know as a very spiritual person, leaned over the back and produced the Baby which was laid tenderly on Mary's lap.

Good, said God, that was a nice quick labour! And so we proceeded through the familiar story with the familiar carols interspersed. There were sundry variations and interruptions along the way, but nothing unmanageable. They simply entered the flow of what we were doing together.

When *O Come All Ye Faithful* had been sung, God held the Baby up high, and there was much clapping and cheering, and we sang *Happy Birthday to You*. Then came one of the most moving Christmas moments I have ever had. God passed the Baby to the Angel Gabriel, a woman who has been ill for many years.

As she took the Child and cradled Him to her breast, her face became transfigured, radiant, and I could hear the invisible angels singing, as they did on that first occasion. She held Him for a long time... then handed Him on to the older man next to her, another angel, and his face too became alive in a new way. My tears were not the only ones. Christmas had happened before our very eyes! Nothing more was needed.

And the afternoon tea of juice and cake, served as we sat in the chapel, became Eucharist. And yet again the anawim, those with nothing, had given the rest of us a great gift in the simplicity of the story and the depths of their response.

To the chaplaincy team and patients at Porirua Hospital, and to *St Andrew's on the Terrace*, my heartfelt thanks for the gifts of special God-moments for Christmas 2005! ■

The hanging sculpture is the work of Eve Black. It is called An Out-of-Body Experience. The quilt is the work of the author

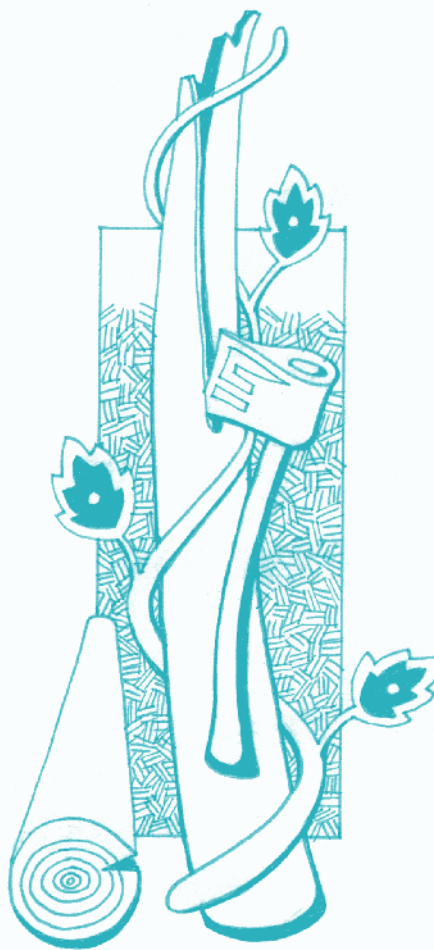
This is My Body

Backbreaking manual labour prompts Diane Pendola to reflect on the balance – so much under threat today – between human industry and the resources of the earth. For Diane there is a eucharistic resonance

With an axe I carefully slice along the edge of a douglas fir log. Rather than buy 4x6 fir at the lumberyard, Teresa, Mike and I decided to invest the money in a portable Alaskan chain-saw mill and saw our own trees into lumber. Now we have coaxed from windfalls and widow-makers and trees still ailing six years after our forest fire, 25 twelve-foot 4x4, 4x6 and 4x8 inch slabs of lumber. They are stickered and laid out, one on top of the other, in an impressive stack.

Now I peel away the bark that adheres to the unhewn sides. I aim for the place where the dark bark is separated from the light wood by a thin red skin. There is some deep satisfaction that comes when the blade slides perfectly between them, the bark pulling away in long swaths from the hard white bone of wood now newly revealed and glistening.

I find myself chanting within my mind: *This is my body, given for you*, as the tree's body surrenders herself into my hands. I labour over her, sweat over her, marvel at the gift of her life that will now provide stability under my feet as we raise a bridge across our creek. *This is my blood*. The chant continues. May it not bring condemnation but health in mind and body. May it not bring condemnation, this taking of life to serve my life, my needs and desires.



At one point I come down hard against my index finger as the axe handle pinches it against the solid outer edge of log. At first it hurts a lot. I fetch an ice pack from the chest we bring to keep our water cold and gingerly press it against my finger. And then it hurts a lot more! I wonder if it is broken. I feel myself breaking into a sweat and the blood draining from my face. My breath feels short and my legs weak. I can't believe I feel faint! I sit down and put my head between my legs – my body having its own response to pain, while my thoughts are shocked and a

little embarrassed. I'm surprised when the pain subsides, and I'm able to wield the axe again.

This is my body. This is my blood. As I move down the length of the log I contemplate how we give ourselves to the world. We give our pain, our effort, our grief, our loss, our joy and our satisfaction. And the world gives itself to us. We eat the body and drink the blood of this Earth. Her soils yield our grains and fruits, her grasses sustain the animals, her forests build our houses and our bridges, her waters are the very essence of life. We take and eat of the world and the world eats us. It's a grand communion, a eucharist, a potlatch, a great and awesome give-away! May it not bring condemnation, but health in mind and body.

How might it bring condemnation? I ask myself this as the chant continues to run through my meditations. My mind turns to the human and ecological catastrophe unfolding in these first days and weeks of September, 2005. Surely Hurricane Katrina was a natural disaster. The Gulf coast has seen such disasters before. Still, I can't help but suspect that it was further enraged by the warming offshore waters, waters heating up as a direct consequence of our massive consumption, our seeming insatiable thirst for oil, power and convenience.

Haven't we seen, in just the last decade, many more ferocious storms all across the planet, storms that climate scientists link to warming oceans and rising sea levels? And haven't we heard for years just how important the coastal wetlands are as buffers against devastating storm surges? And yet we've dredged and developed and bulldozed over a million acres of Gulf coast wetlands until what was left to meet Katrina was a denuded landscape, a withering body of emaciated shoreline. *This is my body.*

I fear we will not learn the lessons, as I hear the prideful talk about rebuilding that city of New Orleans, lying six feet below sea level, even bigger and more populous than before. Will we build it to withstand a category five hurricane? Will we earth-fill the city, raising it six feet? Will we construct all buildings on stilts? Will we restore the wetlands? How do we bring condemnation on ourselves? It is not an act of God.

We cannot blame God for our hubris, for our stubborn unwillingness to admit our dependence on nature. We

assert our superiority over the natural world and our separateness from it – and the mutuality of our communion with it becomes our condemnation. We want to take without giving. We take more than we need. We take without thanksgiving. We take without reverence.

My lower back is beginning to ache as I lever the heavy log I'm working and flip it to its opposite side. My heart aches to take these few trees. Since the fire, there are so few trees left. And we've committed hundreds of hours to bringing the forest back, tending the newly planted trees, releasing them from encroaching brush, hovering around them like mother hens.

My heart aches when we take the life of one of our grown chicks, raised from tiny yellow fur balls, to bring to our dinner table. And I do not look forward to the time when the cow that gives us our milk gives birth to that bull calf who we will know and love, raise and – yes – kill and eat. *This is my body, given for you. This is my blood, given for*

you. May it not bring condemnation, but health in mind and body.

I admit that I do not know how to live this different consciousness, a consciousness that, according to Thomas Berry, participates in the world as a “communion of subjects to be revered, not a collection of objects to be exploited.” But the native peoples of this continent lived in close communion with the natural world and have much they can teach us.

And the Earth herself will teach us if we only have eyes to see and ears to hear. She is pleading now. She has delivered a warning through Katrina, and it is not the guiltiest among us who suffer and die. The consequences of our actions are indiscriminate and seemingly without mercy. But we can turn around. We can change. As the hundreds of thousands on the Gulf coast, we can begin again. ■

Diane Pendola medushiim@cs.com

This Land

I have my apologies to make
as I kneel on your soft earth,
bow to your inmost heart.
Even so, the flow of your waters
roar in caverns
deeper than my bones
and the spine of me
is every tree that has aspired
towards the sun's light
and sunk its root
into the earth's
maternal grasp.

My forebears
laid your
forests down.
My family
ate at your table
(five generations that I know).
And the ancestors I don't
are certain to have eaten, too:

flesh of your flesh,
blood of your blood.
Take and eat, this is my body
we heard you say
but did you mean
this
stripping bare?
mountains mined?
forests cleared?

I have my apologies to make
and more.

My body prostrate upon your body,
your grief cry breaks over me
as my heart-break floods over you.

Too late?
Or is there hope yet
that some green shoot
will rise again from sorrow's plain?

Diane Pendola

Science, Truth and God



*Retired Physics Professor
Dick Dowden explores the
frontiers of science and faith.*

*To believe in the Big Bang theory
of the origin of the Universe and to
profess faith in the Holy Trinity
are asserting two aspects
of one universal truth*

Richard Feynman, born in 1918, is one of the greatest physicists of the 20th century. In his book, *The Pleasure of Finding Things Out*, Feynman stresses the necessary but totally different roles of science and religion. His writing is a far cry from the mutual antagonism between science and religion of the late 1800s, and more in keeping with Einstein's view that "science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."

Feynman, however, could give the impression that science is irrelevant to religion and vice versa. When I say I disagree with him, I am not putting him down – and he is in no way putting down religion. I strongly recommend you to read the whole book. It's an easy and pleasant read.

Feynman believes "that more than half of the scientists really disbelieve in their father's God; that is, they don't believe in a God in a conventional sense." Well, count me in! My concept of God is quite different from that of my parents and uncles of some 60 years ago. The scientists which Feynman had in mind had only a Sunday school concept of religion, which in their scientific maturity appears as childish as the tooth fairy.

Feynman sees the essential feature of science as **doubt** – the scientist is never certain and is constantly querying 'facts'. In contrast, the essential feature of religion, he

suggests, is **faith** – in the sense of belief or certainty. I have four comments to make on this.

1. Only great scientists at the cutting edge are like this; whereas the vast majority believe 'on authority' just like ordinary lay Christians do on religious matters.

2. In both science and ordinary life, belief is not certainty. It is confidence or trust. If you catch a bus into town, you believe it will get you there safely. You take it on trust. Feynman claims that "the statements of science are not of what is true and what is not true, but... of what is known

to different degrees of certainty..."

You, the reader, don't think in terms of probabilities. You realise there is a small probability that the bus won't get you there safely. The same thing happens in science.

3. Doubt plays the same role in religion as in science. Some 35 years ago, the Catholic theologian Hans Küng, also at the cutting edge of his field, cast doubt on the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. Regardless of whether Küng's arguments were valid or not, isn't it good for religion (and the good of the church) that such doctrines are re-examined from time to time?

4. Finally, and far more importantly, all great scientists like Feynman have one unshakeable belief, one absolute certainty on which all their research depends: they believe in universal truth!

*all great scientists...
have one unshakeable belief
– in universal truth*

What is universal truth?

This fundamental belief is so deeply held by scientists that they are hardly aware of it and don't have a name for it. Let me explain by an example. There is a sort of clueless crossword puzzle called *Code-Cracker* which appears every day in *The Dominion Post* and the *Otago Daily Times*. Each number in the Code-Cracker grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. All the words are English words and there is only one solution. Making blind guesses is of little use. You need to make intelligent guesses based on letter frequency (*e* is common, *j* is rare etc). Tests can usually be made every one or two steps, but sometimes 'experiments' work out for several steps until a test shows you have gone wrong. Nonetheless, you'll get the solution in the end, provided there is one and only one solution.

Scientific research is remarkably like that: intelligent guesses or shrewd observation, carefully devised experiments and, above all, a firm belief that there is one and only one solution. Sometimes a theory will explain many features and pass tests but eventually fail a crucial test and so be proved wrong. However, in the long run the correct answer will be found and the incorrect one exposed.

Why **universal** truth? This means that it is the same everywhere and everywhen (meaning for all time past and future). For example, Einstein has shown that the speed of light in empty space is exactly the same everywhere and everywhen. In our units it is 299,792,458 metres per second. The laws of physics are the same everywhere and everywhen. The elements are numbered and identified by the number of protons in the nucleus, beginning with 1 (*hydrogen*), 2 (*helium*), 3 (*lithium*)... up to 92 (*uranium*) and beyond. Within this range there are no missing ones to be found anywhere anywhen. All this we know from research on Earth augmented by data from satellites.

Here is an example of research done here on Earth but applying to the furthest reaches of time and space. In 1927, Georges Lemaître proposed that the Universe began with the explosion of a primeval atom (later called the *Big Bang*). Lemaître's proposal came after observing the red shift in distant nebulae. Years later, Edwin Hubble found experimental evidence to help justify Lemaître's theory. He found that distant galaxies in every direction are going away from us with speeds proportional to their distance.

The theory also predicts the existence of cosmic background radiation (the glow left over from the explosion itself). The *Big Bang* theory received its strongest confirmation when this radiation was discovered in 1964 by Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson, who later won the Nobel Prize for this discovery.

Belief in universal truth, without which scientific research would be impossible, is the scientist's counterpart to belief in God. Curiously, it was not always universally held – being largely confined to the Western world. The East saw the material Universe as chaotic, not ordered and so not understandable.

In the Christian world the accent has been on 'revealed truth', as read (and often misinterpreted) in the Bible. Even pointing out obvious misinterpretations was frowned upon. In a long letter in 1612 to a Benedictine monk,

Galileo wrote: "*Holy Scripture cannot err and the decrees therein are absolutely true and inviolable... (but) its expounders and interpreters are liable to err in many ways... when they base themselves always on the literal meaning of the words. For in this wise many contradictions would*

be apparent... it would be necessary to give God human and bodily emotions such as anger, regret, hatred and sometimes forgetfulness of things past".

Comparing science and religion

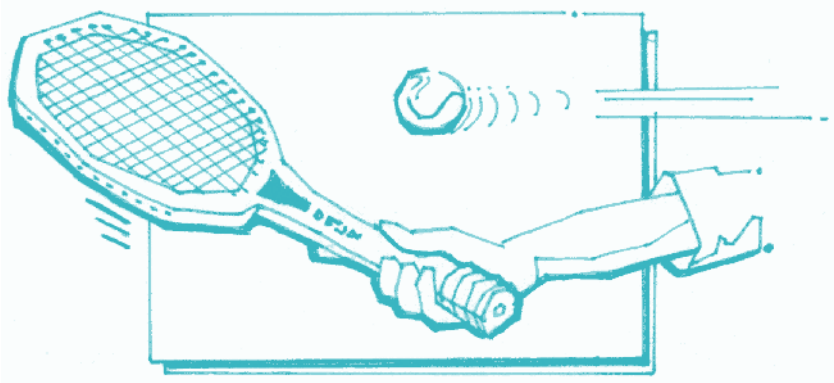
Logically, belief in universal truth is the starting point for research in science and belief in God is the starting point for theology. These two fundamental beliefs are more than counterparts: each requires the other for consistency.

Firstly, in science. The extraordinary progress in physics, and science in general, is owing to this belief in the one system of universal truth. Ultimately what we are seeking is the complete plan and explanation of the entire Universe. Think of it as the entire 'software' of the Universe. It had to exist before the *Big Bang*. In whatever way matter (the 'hardware') comes together to form stars by chance and according to the laws of physics, how could the infinitely complex software come to be by chance? The simplest way out to a scientist is to postulate God. The mystery of the existence of universal truth is resolved by the existence of God. Many scientists accept this but don't believe in what they call a 'personal God'. Both Einstein and Feynman put themselves in this category. Paul Davies, a great scientist and a writer of many of popular books on this subject, is more specific.

Now let's see this from the point of view of the theologian. The theologian uses the term 'revealed truth'. But how is truth revealed? Did an Angel appear from God and present the truth in a Book in perfectly clear contemporary English? Some people believe that. Does the Book include the universal truth which scientists are seeking? Like Feynman, theologians would hate that. Gone would be *the pleasure of finding things out!* I find such a belief absurd. If the Book clearly stated that God created the Earth in 4000



Learning to hit the ball differently



*Br Roger Dowling
shows how faith needs
to grow into a fuller
understanding of the essence of
the Gospel, which is to follow
the sacrificial self-giving
of Jesus Christ*

Each weekday morning, in our little Marist community at Ngaruawahia, we meet to say morning prayer together. From time to time we will use the form of morning prayer in the Mass and Psalm book. The final prayer of this session asks God who has “brought us to the light of a new day” to “keep us safe... from every sinful inclination” and that “all our thoughts, words and actions” be “pleasing in your sight”.

Such a prayer, like so much of the formal language of the church, no longer speaks for me. It is like saying that the main purpose of my driving in from Ngaruawahia to Hamilton each day is to avoid being stopped by the traffic police. The value to me of my morning drive is that I get to

work with people I have grown fond of and do work that challenges me. The purpose of the journey is not to avoid a traffic ticket.

And what does “keep us safe from every sinful inclination” mean? Again it is a very negative orientation. It suggests to me that I might do well to spend the day with my glasses off. Without my glasses I could probably lead a blameless life!

In our garage there is languishing a tennis racquet which once did great things. I can still recall at my first tennis lesson being taught *the grip*. Everyone used that grip. But not any more. No one uses that grip any more, and no one uses wooden racquets like mine any more. *They hit the ball differently.*

The tennis court looks the same, the scoring system is the same. But it's a very different game because they hit the ball differently with racquets brilliantly designed.

The ‘game’ of being a Catholic in 2005 is very different from the game my parents played – or that I once played. So I go back to the source: the Gospels, and especially *John*.

God walking towards us

The abundance of faith, hope, and love to be found in being Catholic is to be found in its source; we believe in a God who is love without limit, who is always ‘walking’ towards us. For *John*, the God we seek and the God who seeks us is a God of love without limit, defined by love.

▷▷ BC along with all the evidence to the contrary, then belief in the Book is belief that God is a liar.

Okay, then let's start again. The theologian seeks the revealed truth from all available sources. An obvious source is the Bible, but that originated as scrolls in various languages, mostly ancient and some no longer used. These scrolls have been discovered in different places and in different times. There are other books sacred to the non-Abrahamic religions which should not be overlooked.

The theologian uses linguistics, scientific study of languages, the science of philology to determine the structure and historical development of the language under study and the relationships with other languages. The

theologian needs to understand the culture of the people to whom a Biblical statement was originally addressed.

In all this, theological research is not fundamentally different from secular scientific research. I could give further examples of similar approaches to the search for truth. If we believe that all that exists is made by God, there can be only one truth – not Divine ‘revealed truth’ and secular ‘universal truth’, not two separate ‘truths’; and certainly not two ‘truths’ in conflict.

There is nothing new in this. Galileo also wrote: “*Holy Scripture and Nature are both emanations from the divine word: the former dictated by the Holy Spirit, the latter the observant executrix of God's commands...*”. Precisely. ■

But we are limited by the inadequacy of words, so we tell stories to try to get closer to the truth. Stories explain things, open them out. In telling the story of the Apostles caught in a terrifying storm on Lake Galilee, *John* emphasises “Jesus walking on the sea coming towards them (6:16-21). The central point of this Gospel is just that: *our God walks towards us*.”

In Ngaruawahia, over three or four months last year, I was taking Holy Communion out to Jan McAlpine of Waiterimu, dying of a brain tumour. Jan and her husband, Rod, farmers for years in Te Akau, had adopted four children early in their marriage. As part of the little gathering around Jan’s bed, I read the story of the storm on the lake, and said to Jan and Rod: “You did that. You made the move to bring four children into your life.” Jan replied, “but they brought us great love.” “But you made the first move,” I said.

It is said that John the evangelist lived to be a very old man. His three years with Jesus way back in his late 20s had turned his life upside down. He now knew that our God is Father and that Jesus, freely taking on our human nature, is part of God’s self-giving. The coming of Jesus into the world is God coming towards us. To him, *self-giving* is what God is about. When we walk towards other people in love we walk with God. Pope John Paul II put it this way: “at a mysterious hour God’s self-giving became Jesus becoming man – and the Kingdom of God took root among us”.

This revelation of God as loving Father did not come easily to the apostles. After three years Philip asked Jesus: “will you now show us the Father”. Very simple, says Jesus: “if you have seen me you have seen the Father”. But it was not that simple for the Apostles; even at their last meal with Jesus they were squabbling about power and pecking order. But fired by the Spirit, they came to understand many things: servant leadership, a messiah who washed their feet, a messiah who

healed people, a messiah who spoke of forgiveness from the heart every time; one who spoke of justice for all.

And they saw the ‘wisdom’ of the world turned upside down. The first to hear the good news were not people in power but shepherds freezing on a midnight hill; God-at-the-heart-of-the-world born in a stable; God entering Jerusalem riding a donkey; God sharing a meal with prostitutes and tax-collectors.

To give one’s life

Above all, the John who wrote the Gospel came to understand that the nature of our redemption set in motion by the Father is *love freely given*. By its very nature love freely given is sacrificial – it will go to the last nail. Which is what Jesus did. To me the power of Jesus dying is that he went to the last nail: it could not have been more ultimate. The power, the grip of our faith, for me lies there: that God identified with our greatest possibility – to give my life. God identified with what we know as the ultimate gift – the giving of my life. ‘Giving my life’ is not a Catholic thing – it is human thing. What is so Catholic is that this is what we celebrate at Mass.

This is where we meet Jesus emotionally. We all know that we respond to the action of God emotionally at Christmas time – the appeal of a Messiah come as a helpless baby born into poverty light-years away from the rich and the powerful disarms us all. I think Catholics similarly understand the crucifixion emotionally. With Pope John Paul II we know that “the great truth of history is to be found in the cross”.

We understand sacrifice. We understand love freely given. Everyone I have put those words to has said “Yes” without having to think about it. It’s of the heart; we don’t need words to understand it.

We understand Rosemary Hosie who gave her life to save the Robinson children; we understand that

Archbishop Romero had to make a stand against the military of his country – even to death; we understand Maximillian Kolbe being prepared to give his life that a father and husband might survive to see his wife and children again. Above all we understand the sacrificial quality of being good parents – the grain of wheat must die.

Please don’t talk to me any more about “keeping safe from sinful inclinations”, but let us together tackle things the way Jesus did. In the face of evil choose what is good; in the face of greed be unselfish; love your enemies; let your light be seen. I would like you to be within reach encouraging each other to push back the darkness. ■

*Marist Brother Roger Dowling
works in pastoral resources at the
Hamilton Diocesan centre*

**Bible Society
ad**

The very name Benedict, which I chose on the day of my election to the Chair of Peter, is a sign of my personal commitment to peace. In taking this name, I wanted to evoke both the patron saint of Europe, who inspired a civilisation of peace on the whole continent, and Pope Benedict XV, who condemned the First World War as a “useless slaughter” and worked for a universal acknowledgment of the lofty demands of peace.

The theme chosen for this year’s reflection – *in truth, peace* – expresses the conviction that wherever and whenever men and women are enlightened by the splendour of truth, they naturally set out on the path of peace. The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, promulgated 40 years ago at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, stated that human beings will not succeed in “building a truly more human world for everyone, everywhere on earth, unless all people are renewed in spirit and converted to the truth of peace”. But what do those words, “the truth of peace”, really mean? Peace cannot be reduced to the simple absence of armed conflict. It has an intrinsic and invincible truth of its own, and corresponds to an irrepressible yearning and hope dwelling within us.

Seen in this way, peace appears as a heavenly gift and a divine grace which demands at every level the exercise of the highest responsibility: that of conforming human history – in truth, justice, freedom and love – to the divine order. Whenever there is a loss of fidelity to the transcendent order, and a loss of respect for that ‘grammar’ of dialogue which is the universal moral law written on human hearts, whenever the integral development of persons and the protection of their fundamental rights are hindered or denied, whenever countless people are forced to endure intolerable injustices and inequalities, how can we hope that the good of peace will be realised? The essential elements which make up the truth of that good are missing.

Peace depends on truthfulness

Who and what, then, can prevent the coming of peace? Sacred Scripture, in its very first book, *Genesis*, points to

the lie told at the very beginning of history by the animal with a forked tongue, whom the Evangelist John calls “the father of lies” (*John 8:44*). Lying is also one of the sins spoken of in the final chapter of the last book of the Bible, *Revelation*, which bars liars from the heavenly Jerusalem.

Lying is linked to the tragedy of sin and its perverse consequences, which have had, and continue to have, devastating effects on the lives of individuals and nations. We need but think of the events of the past century, when aberrant ideological and political systems wilfully twisted the truth and brought about the exploitation and murder of an appalling number of men and women, wiping out entire families and communities.

After experiences like these, how can we fail to be seriously concerned about lies in our own time, lies which are the framework for menacing scenarios of death in many parts of the world? Any authentic search for peace must begin with the realisation that the problem of truth and untruth is the concern of every man and woman; it is decisive for the peaceful future of our planet.

Positive signs

Peace is not the mere absence of war, but a harmonious coexistence of individual citizens within a society governed by justice, one in which the good is also achieved, to the greatest extent possible, for each of them. The truth of peace calls



Pope Benedict at his co

One would be forgiven for scratching one’s or raising an eyebrow when first looking at Pope Benedict’s coat of arms. What do these three strange objects signify? A dark-skinned monarch, a bear with a first aid kit and an ad for Shell petrol?

Wrong on all counts! The objects are very rich in personal and spiritual symbolism for Joseph Ratzinger and date back to his appointment as Archbishop to the German diocese of Munich and Freising.

Two of the symbols are directly related to Freising. The *Moor of Freising* has been on the coat of arms of that city since 1316. The original relevance of the

brown-faced Moor with red lips, crown and collar is unclear, but the Pope said that, for him, “it is an expression of the universality of the church which knows no distinction of race or class since all are one in Christ”.

The brown bear is linked to an old Bavarian legend about the first bishop of Freising, St Corbinian. While on his way to Rome, a bear attacked and killed his horse, so Corbinian forced the bear to carry his belongings the rest of the way. Traditionally the bear symbolises the ‘beast of paganism tamed by the grace of God’.

In his 1997 autobiography, Cardinal Ratzinger wrote: “Meanwhile, I have carried my pack to Rome and



Consecration (April 2005)

upon everyone to cultivate productive and sincere relationships; it encourages them to seek out and to follow the paths of forgiveness and reconciliation, to be transparent in their dealings with others, and to be faithful to their word.

Looking at the present world situation, we can note with satisfaction certain signs of hope in the work of building peace. I think, for example, of the decrease in the number of armed conflicts. Here we are speaking of a few, very tentative steps forward along the path of peace, yet ones which even now are able to hold out a future of greater serenity, particularly for the suffering people of Palestine, the land of Jesus, and for those living in some areas of Africa and Asia, who have waited for years for the positive conclusion of the ongoing processes of pacification and reconciliation.

All this must not, however, lead to a naive optimism. It must not be forgotten that, tragically, violent fratricidal conflicts and devastating wars still continue to sow tears and death in vast parts of the world. Situations exist where conflict can flare up anew and cause immense destruction.

The nuclear threat

What can be said about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? Along with countless persons of good will, one can state that this point of view is not only baneful but also

completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. The truth of peace requires that all – whether those governments which openly or secretly possess nuclear arms, or those planning to acquire them – agree to change course, and strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament. The resources saved could be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor.

The arms trade

One can only note with dismay the continuing growth in military expenditure and the flourishing arms trade, while the political and juridic process established by the international community for promoting disarmament is bogged down in general indifference. How can there ever be a future of peace when investments are still made in the production of arms and in research aimed at developing new ones? It can only be hoped that the international community will find the wisdom and courage to take up once more the process of disarmament.

The first to benefit from a decisive choice for disarmament will be the poor countries, which rightly demand, after having heard so many promises, the concrete implementation of their right to development. That right was solemnly reaffirmed in the recent General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation, which this year celebrated its 60th anniversary.

Conclusion

I would like to invite all believers in Christ to be once again attentive and generous disciples of the Lord. Every community should undertake an extensive process of education and witness aimed at making everyone more aware of the need for a fuller appreciation of the truth of peace. Peace is above all a gift of God, a gift to be implored incessantly. With confidence and filial abandonment let us lift up our eyes to Mary, Mother of the Prince of Peace.

At the beginning of this New Year, let us ask her to help all God's People, wherever they may be, to work for peace and to be guided by the light of the truth that sets people free. ■

(Extract from the message for the World Day of Peace, 1 January, 2006)

wander for some time now through the streets of the Eternal City. When release will come, I cannot know". So there is an allusion to the burden of office carried by bishops.

The third object on the coat of arms is a scallop shell. This links Benedict to his great mentor, St Augustine. A legend relates that the saint was one day walking along a beach meditating on the mystery of the Trinity and saw a boy pouring seawater into a hole in the sand with a shell.

"I'm emptying the sea into this hole," the boy told Augustine when he asked what was going on. The lesson – we can never penetrate the depths of the mystery of God.

The scallop shell is also a symbol of Baptism, often being used to pour the water over the person receiving the sacrament. Again, a scallop shell on the top of a staff is the sign that the owner is on a pilgrimage. This fits well with the title for the church which Joseph Ratzinger championed at the Vatican Council, 'the pilgrim people of God'.

So in this coat of arms we get a hint of the personality and spirituality of the Pope – the burden of his office, his humility and sense of being at one with the other pilgrims, supporting each other on a journey of faith.

Jim Neilan

Campaigners for peace

In a leafy Christchurch suburb Tui Motu recently visited the home of Kate Dewes and Rob Green, also the headquarters of the Peace Foundation's Disarmament & Security Centre (DSC). Kate and Rob have a common passion for world peace and nuclear disarmament. This joint quest has brought them together personally.

Rob's story

In January 1991, at the height of the first Gulf War, Rob Green was invited to address an antiwar rally of some 20,000 people in Trafalgar Square, London. Here was he, a retired Commander in the Royal Navy, at the foot of Admiral Nelson's column speaking out against the validity of the nuclear deterrent. It was the climax of a long journey of disillusion and the discovery of a new faith.

Five days later the futility of that deterrent was amply displayed when Iraq launched its first SCUD ballistic missile attack against Israel. The missiles fell on Tel Aviv, Israel's second city. A nuclear state had been attacked by a non-nuclear one. The Americans responded by ordering air attacks on the SCUD launch sites, but the United States could do nothing to prevent Israel going on full-scale nuclear alert. Israeli missile launchers, armed with nuclear weapons, were pointed at Iraqi sites. In the event, the SCUD attacks caused only minor damage; America and its allies quickly defeated Hussein using conventional weapons only. And Israel was praised for exercising restraint. But what sort of escalation might have occurred if the SCUD missiles had caused massive loss of life or had been carriers of germ warfare?

Over his years serving as a Naval Officer, Rob became progressively disenchanted with the effectiveness of the British nuclear deterrent. As a 25-year-old he had been a navigator in the

Buccaneer nuclear-strike jet squadron based on the aircraft carrier HMS *Eagle*. Their assigned cold war target was a military airfield on the outskirts of Leningrad, Russia, now known by its original name, St Petersburg. They had the capability of dropping a 100 kiloton thermonuclear bomb close to a civilian population in one of the world's most beautiful ancient capital cities. "I accepted without question an élite role with my pilot as 'nuclear crew'", Rob writes.

Later he was switched to antisubmarine helicopters. Their role was to defend the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* from possible Soviet submarine attack. Because the latest Soviet submarines went too deep and fast for the conventional homing torpedoes, the helicopters were armed with a nuclear depth bomb, more powerful than the weapon which devastated Hiroshima. It would have caused huge nuclear fallout (as did the experimental underwater explosions on Bikini Atoll in 1946) and, incidentally, the helicopter could not have escaped. Rob was cast in the role of a suicide bomber. "Because I was ambitious and was assured there would almost certainly be no need to use it, I decided to obey."

When Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister, she was obsessed with the need to strengthen the nuclear



Rob with photo of his aunt, Hilda Murrell

deterrent and opted to replace the ageing US Polaris submarine-launched ballistic missile system with Trident. This was done despite misgivings among the Naval Staff at the huge cost: Trident was dubbed 'a cuckoo in the Naval nest'.

Britain's possession of these horrendous weapons, however, proved to be no deterrent to Argentina when the Falklands War started in 1982. Rob was by that time a naval Staff Officer. He comments: "I know what a close-run thing that war was. If Argentine aircraft had sunk one of the troopships before the landing force had got ashore,

the British might have had to withdraw or risk defeat. What would Thatcher have done?... I later heard a rumour of a very secret contingency plan to move a Polaris submarine south within range of Buenos Aires."

After the Falklands War Rob left the Navy no longer believing in the validity of the deterrent strategy. Although he did not become an active peace campaigner until 1991, his conversion journey had started a long time earlier. He found his political affiliations changing gradually towards the left. "In the Navy", he says, "even to vote Liberal was considered radical. No one would ever have voted Labour!"

"As a young man I felt I had a 'vocation' to be a naval officer, so I became totally immersed in the naval ethos including Intelligence. I acquired the professional skills. But I also experienced the corruption – the covering up of incompetence, the neglect of the deleterious side-effects which weapons use may have. There was blind loyalty to orders, pride in tradition. What I call the *Charge of the Light Brigade* approach – as in Tennyson's Crimean War poem : 'Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die' – was alive and well."

"At one time we were shown Peter Watkins' film *The War Game*, a black and white documentary on the effects of nuclear bombing in Britain, including live shots of the firestorms. It made a lasting impression on me."

"The British Navy goes back to King Alfred. It has very long traditions, and there is an ethical undercurrent. A noble image was a way of attracting top quality recruits. If you were no more than hired killers you would not attract the right personnel! To change away from this was to break away from the tribe, to lose most of my former friends and colleagues."

Rob was also greatly influenced by his Cambridge educated aunt, Hilda Murrell, who had been an early environmentalist and, in her retirement, an antinuclear activist. She was brutally

murdered in 1984 near her home in Shrewsbury in the West Midlands. The police inquiry concluded that it was a random act by a burglar whom she surprised while he was ransacking her home; but other, more sinister explanations have been suggested.

Murrell was busy at the time of her death preparing a paper criticising the building of a new nuclear power plant. She contended that it was wrong to build such installations which not only were uneconomic, but for which there was no safe disposal of their highly radioactive waste. She was also opposed to nuclear weapons and supported the Greenham Common women's protest.

Under Thatcher's government British security services routinely put anti-nuclear activists under surveillance, and some UK media have suggested that Hilda Murrell was the British 'Karen Silkwood', the US nuclear technician who died mysteriously when she was about to expose dangerous aspects of the US nuclear industry. The police inquiry indicated that Murrell's house had been methodically searched in a manner unlikely from a random burglar.

Another sinister scenario involved Rob himself, suggesting that the intruder was looking for documents belonging to Rob concerning the notorious sinking of the Argentinean warship *Belgrano* during the Falklands War. Rob denies that he was involved in any way with the famous leaking of secret intelligence to the Labour MP Tam Dalyell about this; and his aunt never raised such matters with him. Nevertheless, her violent death had a profound influence and helped motivate him to pick up Hilda's torch regarding nuclear issues.

Chernobyl and the end of the Cold War also influenced Rob's thinking – to move from opposing the peaceful use of nuclear energy to the nuclear deterrent itself. When the first Gulf War started, he became afraid that nuclear weapons could be used, either by the US or Israel, and this moved

him to become active. Rob joined Ex-Services CND, and also a think tank called 'Just Defence'.

In 1991 he became British Chair of the World Court Project. This was a world-wide network of citizens' groups lobbying the United Nations to bring the legal status of nuclear weapons before the World Court. It was while working at this project that Rob met Kate who was one of New Zealand's leading peace campaigners. Later they married, and Rob came to live in New Zealand.

Kate's story

Kate Dewes grew up in Hamilton with a strong Christian background, although most of her family supported New Zealand's participation in World War II including the dropping of the atomic bombs. While she was at University she became aware of the anti-Vietnam war protests. While teaching in Auckland she helped organise the *Peace Squadron* protesting against the visits of US nuclear armed ships. Kate recalls that her very first involvement was religious: communion at Bastion Point followed by a Maori blessing of the water before the Peace Squadron held its first event in 1975.

At the time she was teaching at Epsom Girls' Grammar School, which was quite conservative. That involved some conflict. "I was undergoing quite a shift within myself," says Kate, "because I believed that it was God's will that we didn't kill people and that nuclear weapons were not part of God's plan." Kate became interested in Hiroshima and its aftermath and read up some personal accounts of survivors. At High School she had also seen *The War Game*, which had a profound effect on her.

In 1977 she went with her first husband, John Boanas, to study Peace Studies at Bradford, in England. She discovered that there was a lot of ignorance in Britain about the protest activities in New Zealand, and this made her all the more eager to learn the historical base for the NZ peace movement. "In



▷▷ 1979 I had my first child and began to run the Peace Foundation office from home in Christchurch. I worked with Fr John Curnow and other church people at that time.”

She initiated the visits of Dr Helen Caldicott, an Australian peace activist and paediatrician, who was a key person influencing mothers, doctors and politicians towards an antinuclear stance. “Those early years were very important for building up peace groups and preparing to take our case to the World Court. I become involved with the Quakers, many of whom were strongly involved in the peace movement. We worked with the churches – to reach people who had not been challenged about these issues. There was a women’s spirituality group I belonged to, who were very creative and looking for change. I started teaching Peace Studies at Canterbury University.”

Kate also found herself involved with conflict resolution: *what causes conflict? Where does it all start?* Teaching teenagers to be pro-life in the widest sense was more effective than just shock treatment, using scare tactics. “There was a backlash to Peace Studies in the mid-’80s. I was called a communist because I was pushing peace education in schools. I received abusive phone calls. They weren’t easy times before we got the antinuclear legislation through.

“One evening my parents went to a Concerned Parents’ Association meeting of over 2,000, in Hamilton. At the meeting I was denounced by name as being a communist. My father was so angry that he stood up and said his daughter was not present and therefore unable to defend herself. He demanded that the speaker withdraw what he had said. That night was the turning point for my father. He phoned me to say that he had publicly owned me. And he became supportive of our work.

“My family became concerned for my safety, especially when I became a solo mum with three children in 1991.

In the 1990s when we were taking the case to the World Court, David Lange warned me I was possibly being watched by operatives of the British and US governments. However, we have not let that put us off. I still stand alongside my church. I have never broken my links with the Anglican church, and now I feel at home in a Maori Anglican church.”

Going to the World Court

The World Court Project (WCP) grew from an initiative of the *Christchurch Peace Collective*. Kate was one of the leaders. She helped organise a speaking tour by US international law Professor Richard Falk of Princeton University, in 1986. He suggested that New Zealand should take the US to the World Court on the subject of nuclear ship visits. The idea of going to the World Court for a judgment appealed especially to retired Christchurch magistrate Harold Evans, who decided to approach governments to sponsor a UN resolution, but with a much wider scope – the legality or otherwise of nuclear weapons.

Among the crucial phases in the WCP process we may note:

- *mobilising citizens’ support* – by lobbying organisations such as doctors and lawyers via their international representative bodies; and by collecting *Declarations of Public Conscience* throughout all countries where there were active antinuclear movements. By 1995 nearly 4 million had been gathered, mostly from Japan.
- *the ending of the Cold War* in 1990-91 took away the excuse which had been offered by the Lange government that the move to the World Court was inopportune.
- a doctors’ organisation IPPNW



Rob Green and Kate Dewes

(International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) lobbying the *World Health Organisation* on the basis of the indiscriminate medical and environmental consequences of using nuclear weapons. In 1993 the WHO adopted a resolution asking if nuclear weapons use constituted a breach of international law – by 73 votes to 40 (10 abstentions).

- In spite of intense opposition by nuclear states, more and more governments were persuaded to support *a direct approach to the UN*: specifically the 110-strong NAM (non-aligned movement) group of states; Australia and New Zealand, both of whom were incensed by the continuing nuclear testing by France at Mururoa; and many of the Pacific Islands states. On 15 December 1994 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to refer the nuclear issue to the World Court ‘urgently’. The vote was 78 votes for, 43 against with 38 abstentions and 25 casting no vote.
- In October 1995 the case was put before *the World Court at the Hague*. The governments of the US, UK, France, Germany, Russia and Italy defended the right to use nuclear

weapons. 14 governments condemned such policies as illegal and immoral. Deliberation by the 14 judges went on for some months. The climax came on 8 July 1996. The NZ Government delegation, led by National's Attorney General Paul East, stood in solidarity with the WCP holding their huge rainbow banner outside the Court proclaiming 'Nuclear Free Aotearoa New Zealand'.

The World Court findings are summarised as follows:

"A threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law". This latter confirms that the Nuremberg principles apply to nuclear weapons.

However, a caveat was added, that "the Court cannot conclude definitively whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful in an extreme circumstance of self-defence, in which the very survival of the state would be at stake". Nevertheless all the judges confirmed that an obligation existed for international negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament.

No distinction was made by the Court between the *use* of nuclear weapons and the *threat* to use them: both are declared contrary to the law. In so doing, it implicitly outlawed nuclear deterrence. The part played by New Zealand in this whole process – notably by the Lange and the Bolger governments – had been crucial.

Nuclear-powered ship visits

Earlier, under the Bolger government, there had been an attempt to declare that nuclear-powered submarines were perfectly safe and should be allowed to visit. Kate determined to get Rob out to New Zealand to counter these claims. Rob came and spoke in seven cities. At his very first public meeting David Lange was on the platform and was publicly supportive of the WCP.

Rob presented a UK documentary *Polaris in Deep Water* made in 1991, which revealed that nuclear subs had developed cracks in their Reactor Cooling Systems. For that reason British subs were banned by the Royal Navy from visiting foreign ports for fear of causing an incident. The submarines were still running because the Navy had to maintain its deterrent. The cracks were the result of ageing stainless steel coolant pipes being rendered brittle under the constant neutron bombardment. The cracks were not easy to detect, and it was expensive to replace the pipes.

Currently, no British nuclear submarine is allowed to visit even a UK commercial port – for the same reasons.

Where to today?

According to a leaked document the Pentagon has recently authorised the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons to attack potential enemies who possess weapons of mass destruction. The type of weapon envisaged is a small, tactical 'bunker buster'. The US accepts that nuclear deterrence probably will not work against extremist groups, who are now the principal threat. This new initiative authorises the use of tactical weapons irrespective of their collateral damage. They may be described as 'small' – but in fact they are hugely destructive, and would cause long-term and indiscriminate poisoning of the environment from radioactive fallout. This appears to be a final justification for possessing nuclear weaponry.

Rob has written an updated and expanded edition of his book *The Naked Nuclear Emperor: Debunking Nuclear Deterrence*, to be published in the UK and US later this year, in which he proposes alternative non-nuclear security strategies to deter war and achieve peace. It is vital also, he thinks, for New Zealand to maintain its antinuclear stance, and indeed to export it.

Nuclear propulsion, says Rob, continues to carry a small risk of accidents, but the unacceptable worst

case consequences mean that the ban must be maintained.

Meanwhile the corporate lobby is on the march in support of reviving the use of nuclear energy for electricity generation, exploiting growing concerns about climate change and the cost of oil. Rob warns that the international nuclear energy industry is extremely powerful and ruthless, and has not solved problems of safety and how to deal with radioactive waste. Both nuclear power plants and submarines are vulnerable terrorist targets. There are cheaper, safer and more effective alternative solutions to the challenge of climate change.

Young people need to be told about the extraordinary achievements of New Zealanders in the cause of world peace and nuclear disarmament. As part of their work at the DSC, Kate and Rob publish articles and speak nationally and internationally about the *World Court Project* based on Kate's PhD thesis documenting the history of this campaign. They are preparing an exhibition at the Canterbury Museum in June 2007 to mark the 20th anniversary of the Nuclear Free legislation and the beginning of the WCP. With a team of keen young people, they are working closely with the City Council to implement recommendations adopted by the Council when Christchurch became a Peace City in 2002. These include teaching Peace Studies at Canterbury University; promoting the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Exhibition and a Gandhi exhibition to museums and schools; a World Peace Bell in the Botanic Gardens; hosting Mayors for Peace meetings; and organising a sculpture from New Zealand for the Nagasaki Peace Park.

They believe it is important that they leave a legacy of hope rather than despair and that future generations can be proud of their peace heritage. ■

See www.disarmsecure.org and the Peace City web site www.ccc.govt.nz/Christchurch/PeaceCity

Photos: Martin Hunter

Living with Illness

Paul Andrews S.J.

A year ago I left my community in Dublin to spend some months in New Zealand. I described it as an experiment in redundancy and wrote: *How will my 15-strong community manage without their superior? Will I come home to find the brethren at one another's throats, the staff on strike, the bank foreclosing on Manresa in a crisis of confidence, the whole operation drifting rudderless towards the brink? Or will I find that the good man who is filling the role in my absence is doing it better than me? Watch this space.*

A Dublin parishioner who watched this space asked me what I found on my return. The good man who filled the role in my absence met me at the airport and was happy to hand over the chores of superior and return to his regular work of writing books. The brethren were peaceful, the staff were working contentedly, the bank was still civil, and there was no sign of rudderless confusion.

However there was one sad change: Paddy Meagher, a wise old priest and good friend, had died at the age of 87. Over the years he had become a model of how to live with a wacky heart. In early 2003 we worried about his stomach aneurysm which could not be mended because the operation might kill him. On the last day of 2003 he was anointed. Seven days later he asked about prayers for the dying. But he bounced back.

In 2004 he left this note to his Rector – “to be opened when I die”:

Paul, I would wish that the homily at my funeral Mass be short, i.e. three and a half to four minutes – no more. I was a small man, so there is no need to make me seem bigger than I am (was). Just ask the SJs and people to thank God for whatever good I may have done, and ask his pardon for all my shortcomings.

And end with Cardinal Newman's prayer: May he support us all the day long....

Thanking you for all your caring for me in my last years. Paddy.

It is no accident that at the end he reverted to reading P.G. Wodehouse and took a light-hearted view of life. He showed how to shuffle off responsibilities in this passing life, and face the beatific vision with a contented and hopeful heart. He was still interested in his friends and all the happenings in *Manresa*. Sickness had not narrowed his horizons – as it sometimes does, reducing your talk to your pains and medi-

cations. He loved the prayer of the old nun:

Lord, keep my mind free from the recital of endless details – give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains – they are interesting, and my love of rehearsing them becomes sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to listen to the tales of others' pains, but help me to endure them with patience.

You could see Jesus' life as a struggle against sickness and death. He was a healer, and reached out to cure the pains that disabled people. He wanted them to forget about their bodies and be fit to serve, like Simon Peter's mother-in-law, whom Jesus cured of a fever; once her temperature dropped, she got up and made the tea. I have known Religious who would feel a headache coming on and would offer up the pain and continue talking about it. That is not the Christian way: better to take an aspirin, forget about the headache and get on with the job. I knew an Ethiopian who had a sore shoulder and was urged to go to a doctor. Knowing the sort of medical care he might receive, he said: *Now I am a healthy man with a sore shoulder. If I go to a doctor I will be a sick man with a sore shoulder. No thank you.*

Ignatius Loyola spent the last years of his life sitting at his desk in Rome and writing letters to Jesuits all over the world. For an ex-soldier and man of action it was not the life he would have chosen; yet his friends remembered him as a cheerful man. He lived with an underlying current of overwhelming mystical joy, which could explode and take him over as soon as he gave it a chance. Lainez described him going up to the flat roof of his Roman house at night: *He would sit there quietly, absolutely quietly. He would take off his hat and look up for a long time at the sky. And the tears would begin to flow down his cheeks like a stream, but so quietly and so gently that you heard not a sob nor a sigh nor the least possible movement of his body.*

Yet he lived with chronic, often crippling, stomach pain – and we know what caused it. The distinguished Dr Colombo, who performed the autopsy on Ignatius in 1556, reported: *With my own hands I have extracted countless gallstones of various colours, from his kidneys, lungs, liver and portal vein.* Those who have had gallstones say that the pain is agonising. Ignatius lived with it from at least his time in *Manresa*, without any painkillers or prospect of surgery. He grew used to it as the background of his existence, and it did not make him a wet blanket. Consolation was the normal state of Ignatius, and it coexisted with vicious pain.



Jack's Sunset

With Flaming golden brilliance it begins its descent.

It moves like a procession – its passing marks the contrast

Between its being and its absence.

At once, brings quiet and diminishing light.

At once, moves on to awaken distant loved ones with a luminous touch.

Jack's sunset – at once brings darkness. At once, brings light.

A sunset to mark the passage of time.

A serene sunset of heart-soothing warmth.

A sunset of unnerving beauty.

A sunset to honour a gentle life.

At this moment in time, heaven meets earth in a vision of splendor.

Do I witness a moment of exchange between here and there?

A soul to heaven for a body to soil.

The passing of this beautiful soul

Must surely steal with it some beauty of sun.

Will the eminent day wield a slight shade of grey?

I hold that this could not be true.

For the sequence of days and nights shall follow,

With a warmth cast from higher planes

From which neither time, nor breath, nor day, nor night

Are of matter or consequence.

Age has wearied him,

And the years condemned,

But with the going down of the sun,

And in the morning,

We will remember him,

... lest we forget ...

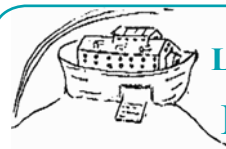
Emma Mitchell

(Emma lives in Australia and wrote this on the day her grandfather died)

▷▷ Pain and sickness are obviously bad, something to be fought and resisted. Yet the Lord touches us through them, and a time comes when we can no longer feel God's touch in prayer, but we sense how He is shaping us through our suffering. It is remarkable how many people find the grace, as Ignatius did, to seek whatever help medicine can offer, and then to accept the remaining pain as the background of a peaceful existence – and without talking about it.

When Paddy Meagher had not a pick of flesh on his bones, and was too weak to lift a cup to his lips, he could still ask eagerly for his friends, and laugh at a good story. Dr Winnicott used to pray: *May I be alive when I die.*

Paddy was. ■



Long-term person/s wanted for Mt Tabor Community

We are a Christian community – Kiwi grown – inspired by L'Arche and established in 1978 as a charitable trust. We live with and support people with an intellectual disability and some who are deaf – and offer long-term community friendships. Houses are in Helensville, Henderson and Mt Albert.

Contact: Lorr 09 420 6184; Irene 09 420 7007;
Marie 027 672 6794

Light in darkness

. . . a dissident parish in East Germany

Paul Oestreicher

While most Catholic parishes in 'old Europe' can look back over a history of many centuries, a *Festschrift* has just appeared documenting the first 50 years of a parish in communist eastern Germany that is, in almost every way, unique. The city of Halle, birthplace of Handel, was an almost entirely Lutheran city until thousands of German Catholic refugees started arriving, expelled after the war from territories that were now Polish or Czech. In 1955 the authorities permitted the creation of a new parish to be called *Heilig Kreuz* – Holy Cross – at the heart of a city under Soviet occupation still scarred by the ruins of war.

Parish life began in makeshift borrowed premises until a license was issued to build a simple hall in a back garden. It was to become a treasured sanctuary of prayer, of community and of resistance. When the Wall came down and the German Democratic Republic ceased to exist, it took two volumes to tell one part of the story: the attempt of the Stasi, the security police, to infiltrate and undermine the life of the parish and to destroy the ministry of its principal priest, Dr Claus Herold.

While the Catholic Church in Poland, the unofficial voice of the Polish people, received worldwide admiration, hardly anything was known about the Catholic Church in Poland's German neighbour. In what was the heartland of the Lutheran Reformation it was Protestantism that presented a serious problem for the communist rulers. Its policy of critical solidarity with society remained a thorn in the side of the ruling Communist Party

and an important factor in leading to the eventual peaceful collapse of the regime.

Under the leadership of Cardinal Bengsch and his successors (the word *under* is not lightly chosen) the Catholic minority adopted a strategy tested nowhere else in Eastern Europe, a strategy of almost total abstinence from public life. Bengsch was an admirer of Pope Pius XII and an unbending anti-communist. For the reforms of John XXIII and Vatican II he had little sympathy. He made that very clear. His priests were firmly told: "this is an alien society in which we have no active role to play. We shall not at any point give any acclamation to the state nor accept office in any of its organisations. Neither, unless the church's interests are directly threatened, will we ever criticise the state. The church will be a place of holy life and sanctuary for its members." This is best described as the politics of 'inner emigration' or of the holy ghetto.

Within its terms, this policy worked well. Unlike in countries further east, there was not a single 'peace priest' to give comfort to the Party. This strategy, however, amounted to an unwritten concordat with the state: "you leave us alone, and we promise to give you no trouble." That suited the Party well. It fitted every communist conception of the church, an alien but irrelevant and dying foreign body. The Party did not even mind these misfits being largely financed by the church in the West. That also applied to the Protestant majority. It brought in much needed hard currency and underlined that

Christians did not really belong. No open conflict with the church might also mean better chances of good relations with Rome, if possible over the head of the Cardinal.

Especially among intellectuals, for whom Vatican II had become a great inspiration, there was inevitable frustration. Were Catholics really to settle for social irrelevance? Some, particularly in the universities, made common cause with Protestant groups. Were they to be condemned to silence in the face of social injustice?

Holy Cross, Halle, was to stand out as a dissident beacon, a thorn in the side of the state and an embarrassment to the bishops. Its first priest, Friedhelm Wortmann, was so unguardedly outspoken, that he was simply exiled by the Bishop, at the State's request, to a West German parish. When Claus Herold, who had been a popular diocesan youth chaplain, came in the late '60s, that could not be repeated. Such was the local solidarity, that neither bishop nor Party could remove him.

In those years I was Secretary of the East West Relations Advisory Committee of the *British Council of Churches*. Building ecumenical bridges across the Iron Curtain was my job. Although the Protestant Churches were my primary partners, I found my spiritual home as an Anglican priest at *Holy Cross* in Halle. A parish retreat was an uplifting experience. A lay council, unlike in other parishes, worked with but not under the clergy. Ecumenism was writ large. The documents of the Council, and specially Pope John's *Pacem in*

Terris, counted more than edicts from Berlin. It was a place of freedom and of joy, happy to become part of Coventry Cathedral's ecumenical *Community of the Cross of Nails*. The emancipation of the laity, and particularly of women, was refreshing. It was a eucharistic community that prayed, that thought and that danced.

And it was a parish with a social and political conscience. Fr Herold, against much church and state opposition, even managed to obtain a doctorate at the Protestant Faculty of Theology. It was under his protection that an association with a nationwide membership was formed: *the Aktionskreis Halle*. It was to enable Catholic intellectuals to debate and take an active part in the life of society.

Almost like a miracle it survived, though infiltrated by the Stasi and disliked by the hierarchy. So obviously was its agenda taken from the social teaching of the church, that to proscribe it ecclesiastically would have been ludicrous and a favour to the state. To shut it down on political grounds would simply have created unwanted martyrs. When the secret police files were opened, it emerged that not a single member of its leadership had

Cold-shouldered by the hierarchy, Joachim Garstecki was the expert on issues of peace and human rights in the theological research department of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Berlin. His intellectual output was influential throughout Europe. In a reunited Germany he was to become the Secretary General of *Pax Christi*. *Holy Cross* was his spiritual home, unconstrained and free.

Heinrich Pera, the Assistant Priest, was the third star in this constellation. A state registered nurse, he was the only Catholic priest in the GDR paid by the state. A nurse and in practice a pastor as well, he was respected and loved in the University Hospital, even a member of its football team, with a broken nose to show for it.

Fr Heinrich discovered the hospice movement almost by chance on a visit to Nova Huta in Poland. "That's what we need", he concluded. He asked me, would I invite him to England to learn more? I did. The state agreed he could go. His Bishop did not. So I asked Cardinal Hume to invite him. That did the trick. Heinrich went first to St Christopher's where he met Dame Cecily Saunders, then to St Joseph's,

Garstecki, when the Wall came down his responsibilities extended to the whole of Germany. He became chair of the national hospice movement. So impressed was Rome with his work and writings that he was invited to become an advisor to the Curia on terminal care. Fr Heinrich felt he needed to stay closer to the grass roots. He declined.

When communist rule collapsed, it is not surprising that the people asked Claus Herold to chair the citizen's Round Table that filled the immediate power vacuum. He and the people of *Holy Cross*, together with their Lutheran neighbours, had earned a modest place in history. No one had taken seriously the faked Stasi montages that had shown Claus Herold cavorting with half naked girls in a night club. It was not that easy to bring down this priest. Neither he nor Fr Heinrich lived to join the anniversary celebrations last year. Huge crowds, far beyond the church's membership, came to their pontifical requiems. With hindsight, the diocesan bishop now had only words of warm appreciation.

Party Secretary Walter Ulbricht had once declared: "the only new spires in our land will be communist spires". *Holy Cross* had no need of a spire to bring light into dark places.

Now, still on the same site, there is a beautiful new, but still modest, church. Times have changed, new crises have arisen. With an economic downturn and a dire shortage of priests, parish amalgamations have become unavoidable. Given its strong lay leadership, Holy

Cross is better placed than most to face the future with hope. ■

Dr Paul Oestreicher, priest and political scientist, is a former Director of the Centre for International Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral.



been drawn into the army of state informers.

This East German version of Christian Action, unmistakably Catholic and with an open agenda, was lay led. Its intellectual head had been a seminarian who had married instead of seeking ordination.

then to Dr Sheila Cassidy's Hospice in Portsmouth. Despite his minimal English, he learnt well and quickly.

Back in Halle, against enormous odds, he founded the first hospice in the GDR, attached to the Catholic Hospital of St Elisabeth. Like his friend

Jesus – a new way of being human

John Bruerton

When we read about the life of Jesus we notice that Gospel records are not all the same because they were written by different authors and presented to different audiences 30 or more years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. *Matthew* and *Luke* put a particular stress on the identity of Jesus and his Jewish credentials: his genealogy and birth in Bethlehem, the visit of the shepherds and wise men to the stable, the naming of the child, his circumcision and his presentation, as a firstborn male child, in the Temple, before returning to Nazareth.

Mark and *John* however, begin with the adult Jesus. Both wanted to demonstrate the divinity of Jesus as well as the facts and actions of his ministry.

Matthew 1:23 ties the birth of Jesus into the Hebrew scriptures and quotes the prophet Isaiah “and they shall name him Emmanuel which means God is with us”.

John 1:14, however, uses the symbolism from the *Genesis* account of Creation and the origin of light and life: “and the Word became flesh and lived among us and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth”. Notice how the writers emphasise both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus.

It took the disciples and the Early Church quite a long time to understand the person and ministry of Jesus. Some thought he was an outstanding teacher, a rabbi, while others thought he was a great healer and social worker. Others hoped he would be a political leader and help them to get rid of the Roman occupation. Gradually it began to dawn on them, and on the church later, that Jesus did not come to found a new religion or a new ethical system. The Jews already had one in place, for over a thousand years, as recorded in their scriptures, which they referred to as the Law and the Prophets.

And just as the Jews, in all time and in all seasons, saw the Exodus as the pivotal

event of their faith community so too the Christians saw Easter as their beginning place. Why? Because the Resurrection changed everything: it signified the presence and love of God, it signified the possibility of a new humanity after the Jesus-model, it changed the way people experienced God.

‘Son of Man’

Over time the Early Church stumbled into the understanding and the possibility that *if* Jesus was the Emmanuel, God-with-us, *then* that really was a new way of being human. And we get a strong clue about this from the fact that throughout his ministry Jesus avoided special titles and special expectations. He even avoided the name *Jesus*. Rather he preferred to describe him self as ‘the son of man’ which is a Hebrew phrase that simply means ‘a human being’. In other words the ‘son of man’, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus of the Resurrection, was the agent/the catalyst for a new humanity, a transformed humanity, because this is what God intended and expressed.

The child Jesus came into a society that seethed with pain, that groaned for a better future. And these human longings were expressed in dreams about a Messiah who would liberate Palestine, fantasies about the end of the world or an apocalypse, suicidal nationalism, rigid and exclusive religion and hopes for religious reform.

The adult Jesus stepped into the brutal and violent cauldron of the Roman occupation of Palestine, the subversion of the law by the defenders of privilege, hierarchical power arrangements that always benefited the strong and disempowered the weak, exploitation of the poor and oppressive levels of debt, puritanical religion and male domination in all aspects of domestic and public life.

The ‘good news’

But in contradiction of all of this he came preaching the ‘good news’ that the rule of God was not only coming in the future but had already dawned in his healing

ministry and the casting out of demons; he proclaimed a new family not based on your bloodline but on doing the will of God; he promoted non-violence as a means of breaking the spiral of violence without triggering a destructive reaction; and he called on people to repent of their accommodation and collusion with all the forces and structures and beliefs of dominating others; and he healed and restored all those who had been dehumanised by the domination system and the domination mindset.

When a nation or community degrades others politically, economically or socially it degrades life itself; it degrades its own values and invites protest, retaliation and revenge. Just think for a moment about slavery or white supremacy in South Africa or the United States of America, the Protestant domination of the Catholics in Northern Ireland, of market capitalism operated by Europe, North America and Japan over the third-world nations like Africa and South America, of white racism directed against Maoris, Asians and Muslim immigrants, as well as outbursts of homophobia, during the New Zealand parliamentary elections, in 2005.

The Good News revealed the agenda and the person of Jesus, the ‘son of man’, of ‘Emmanuel’, God-with-us. The Good News reflected the new humanity he incarnated and demonstrated in his own community and society. Transformation was the purpose of Incarnation. Which led him to challenge his own religious tradition and those who protected it; to challenge a social system (present in every human culture) that dominated others. And in so doing he generated a frenzy of hatred from the religious and political leaders in Jerusalem and the determination to get rid of him and his followers. He even had the temerity to claim that his way was God’s way!

Jesus for today’s world

One of the deep concerns of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Lutheran pastor and

Reflecting on Mark

Susan Smith

The story of Jesus' baptism, and his subsequent time in the desert wilderness is replete with symbolism that allows us to understand more about the mysterious Son of God. We learn that the heavens are torn apart, words which echo *Isaiah 64:1*: "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down." This is *Mark's* way of revealing that the Jesus-event is an earth-shaking happening.

Immediately after his baptism, Jesus is driven out into the desert to be tested. Like the people of Israel, Jesus is tested in the wilderness, and again an OT text, *Ps 91:13*, "You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot" appears to have influenced our author. Jesus is not threatened by the wild beasts, often so dangerous for humankind. Unlike Israel during its 40 years in the wilderness, Jesus passes all these tests. He leaves the wilderness and immediately begins his ministry. We can see that baptism and ministry are essentially linked.

As we begin the new year, it is good to reflect on our own baptism, and our own call to mission. Vatican II states that the mission of the laity flows from their baptism. This teaching, found in *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, represents a significant advance on an earlier understanding that ordained ministers were responsible for mission in virtue of their ordination. The Council teaches that through baptism and confirmation, "all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord himself... Now the laity are called in a special way to make the church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can she become the salt of the earth" (*Lumen Gentium 33*). Prior

to this, the mission of lay people, including non-ordained religious, was considered subordinate to the sacramental ministry of the ordained minister.

The *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* likewise emphasised that laity are full members of the church, and therefore share in the church's mission, "not simply by leave of the hierarchy but 'from their union with Christ their Head. Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself'" (*AS 3*; see Richard McBrien, *Catholicism*, p.680). These teachings concerning the missionary vocation of all the baptised represent an important development in the Catholic tradition.

In the 19th century, the church had held that mission was about establishing or planting the church where it had not yet been established. This emphasised the role of the ordained minister in mission because of the foundational nature of the priest's sacramental ministry in establishing a new church. The work of lay women and men, including non-ordained women and men religious, was best seen as a preparatory stage prior to the real missionary work of the priest.

Our gospel text makes the link between baptism and mission explicit, something that perhaps God is affirming today given the decline in vocations to the priestly and religious life. It is time for lay women and men to stand up and be counted as missionaries. ■

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

▷▷ theologian, while he was in a Nazi prison in 1945, was "Who will be Jesus for the world?" He never wavered in his opposition to a perverted church-state relationship. The body of Christ was the centre of his concern. That which the church proclaimed must take effect within the proclaiming community. And the church must learn afresh that God's primary concern is with this world.

The question, "Who will be Jesus for the world?" must still be asked. Why? Because, for centuries, the church has failed to understand or continue the mission of Jesus. Over centuries the church has encouraged anti-

Semitism, collaborated with oppressive governments and oppressive economic systems, established hierarchical power arrangements in the church and sidelined women from leadership positions, been silent on male domination in family life. That has too often led to broken hearts and abused children, imposed puritanical rules on families and churches and generated much emotional bleakness and social misery.

It really is a bit rich for the church, then, to turn round and say our reward, our compensation for this domination system, will be in heaven.

Jesus came into the world to show us

the way to become more human, more compassionate, to internalise God's spirit which Jesus mirrored in his thinking and his spirituality. "I am come that they may have life, and to have it abundantly (*John 10:10*). And the disciples could never again think of God apart from Jesus.

Jesus is the new humanity: Jesus, the catalyst, offers the whole world the invitation, the possibility and the choice to become the new humanity. Jesus says, to the whole world, "Follow me." ■

John Bruerton is an Anglican layman living in Christchurch. He is a passionate worker for ecumenism

A fair assessment of one of the church's most secretive movements

Opus Dei

John L Allen

Penguin Books 2002 (403pp)

Review: John Broadbent

The *Da Vinci Code* made many Catholics aware for the first time of the *Opus Dei* movement within the church. For others who had been reading about it in books which stressed its negative aspects, Brown's rather superficial and mythical treatment confirmed them in their opposition to it.

John Allen, a Catholic press correspondent in Rome, felt there was a need for a more balanced treatment of what had become one of the strongest movements in the Catholic Church. Because the leadership of *Opus Dei* in the last two decades had felt the sting of many of its ex-members' criticisms culminating in the writing of the *Da Vinci Code*, Allen found the *Opus Dei* leadership in Rome and at the local level open to his enquiries and honest appraisal.

What has been produced is probably the best book to date presenting both sides of the enquirers' questioning. Allen is critical, but he tries to give the *Opus Dei*'s answer to these criticisms and to demonstrate its mindset in the process. He ends the book with his own appraisal and suggests how the future might eventuate for this movement.

Much of *Opus Dei*'s spirit comes from its founder, St José María Escrivá de Balaguer, born in Aragon in 1902, beatified shortly after his death in 1975 and canonised in 2000. Aragon has given rise to a word in English and other languages which describes how other Spaniards see the Aragonese, and it has applied the following proverb to them: "Give a man from Aragon a nail and he'll hammer it in with his head".

Escrivá's stubbornness, obstinacy and courage carried him through many



Book review

years of opposition to his vision and its implementation. He was ordained priest in 1925. In 1928 he had his famous vision when he saw *Opus Dei* as the Lord wanted it and as it would be in the future. Long before Vatican II he saw the need for a strong lay movement in the church not under clerical domination, which would provide a theological training for its lay members. They would go about their ordinary professions and work with the help of a community which could be lived in as a support, or in a wider community where people, single or married, could live in their homes but have a background of community aiding their spiritual needs and giving them guidance.

Opus Dei (which means, literally, the 'work of God') was founded in the few years prior to Spain's Civil War (1936-39) and grew during those years. It emerged as a force in Franco's conservative Spain and provided him in his dictatorship years with at least eight cabinet ministers. This of course gave rise to the accusation that it was just a conservative, right-wing and pro-fascist movement.

Profile of Opus Dei

Escrivá in those first few decades spelt out his vision into structures, the present set up. The movement is divided up into:

- *supernumeraries*. These are 70 percent of the membership who live in their own homes who "transform ordinary life, their work and still remain members off their local diocese or parish". They have regular meetings and a spiritual director.

- The *numeraries* who number about 20 percent of the membership and are in a sense its backbone. They are celibates and live in *Opus Dei* centres pursuing their life's work as a professor or painter. Some are TV personalities, lawyers and bank managers. Whatever money that is not used for personal living expenses, goes to support the centre and *Opus Dei*. They often use the *cilice*, spiked chain on the upper thigh, for certain times during the day. Included among the numeraries are women who live separately from the men.

- *Numerary assistants* are 4000 women who provide domestic care for the centres – they look on themselves as 'mothers' rather than lay-sisters.

- The *associates* are celibates but live at home.

- The *priests* are twofold – the *Holy Cross* priests whose primary pastoral care is for the *Opus Dei* members, but some run parishes, teach at universities and seminaries. As well there are some 2000 other diocesan priests under their bishops but still they are members.

- To round off this complex membership there are the *co-operators*, who are like third order members and do their ordinary work with help from *Opus Dei*. They number 164,000.

Early on after the Spanish Civil War, the movement spread to Portugal, Italy, Great Britain, France and Ireland followed closely by Mexico and the United States and is currently in 62 countries (New Zealand 1989).

One of the most pertinent points Allen makes is – yes, it is a conservative movement; but because of its discipline and the fact it has unswerving loyalty to the Holy See and church teaching, it attracts mainly conservative people.

But Escrivá was adamant it must be above politics and not be drawn into any one political party, which is why

A C.S. Lewis classic to satisfy all ages of filmgoers

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Review: Paul Sorrell

I enjoyed almost everything about Andrew Adamson's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the engaging first film of a projected series adapting C. S. Lewis's classic series of children's books.

Lewis's Christian fantasy/parable was first published in 1950 and is well known to generations of readers. Sent to the country to escape wartime London, the four Pevensey children, Peter, Edmund, Susan and Lucy, enter a magical kingdom through a capacious wardrobe in the rambling mansion occupied by the mysterious Professor Kirke and his housekeeper. Here, in Narnia, the exiled lion-king Aslan is locked in a fatal conflict with the White Witch who has frozen the kingdom in perpetual winter. The part the children play is crucial to the outcome of events in a world that they have literally stumbled into.

In the process of turning a well-loved classic into an instantly popular film that engages audiences of all ages, the producers have shown skill and taste at every level. First, the parts are well cast, with the four children all credible and – young Lucy especially – charismatic. The human characters are well integrated into the digitized world of fauns, centaurs, giants and talking beavers – if not as quite seamlessly as in



Film review

King Kong. The dialogue is especially well handled, steering a path between the “jolly hockeysticks” patois of the original and 21st-century youthspeak.

I was also impressed by the film's pacing – while it clips along, it never leaves the audience behind, glosses over important

links in the plot, or skimps on characterisation. It is also remarkably faithful to the book.

And here lie my misgivings. The film contains a very clear statement of the medieval theology of “the Devil's rights”, whereby the White Witch (Satan) agrees to relinquish her undisputed claim to the renegade Edmund (sinful humanity) in return for ritually murdering Aslan (Christ). Here the underlying allegorical scheme of the book is at its clearest, but also its most unsatisfactory.

The image of God as the Great Punisher is a manipulative and damaging one, as Paul Oestreicher argued eloquently in the December 2005 issue of *Tui Motu*. All attempts to spell out the mechanics of salvation are surely bound to miss the mark, if only because the dimensions of our redemption in Christ are too wonderful and mysterious – reflecting the “deep magic” that Lewis himself celebrates – to fit into any prefabricated box.

But that is my one quibble. If Andrew Adamson continues as he has begun, the *Narnia* series looks set to knock Harry Potter off his pedestal. ■

▷▷ he opposed a Christian Democrat party in Spain when Franco's powers were fading before his death. In reality most *Opus Dei* members go into conservative politics; but there are exceptions whom Allen names.

I think Allen treats fairly the principal objections to *Opus Dei* – its secrecy, mortification, treatment of women, money, its attitude to church and state, blind obedience and a method recruiting which involves interviewing both its friends and enemies.

To write an objective assessment, as many would agree, is an almost impossible task. Of all the previous works on *Opus Dei*, Allen is as near as one gets, and this work is to be commended. ■

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Ariel Sharon – embodiment of Zionism

Ariel Sharon, the nemesis of the late Yasser Arafat, is himself falling into the bloody pages of history that mark the creation of Israel in 1948 and the relentless persecution of the Palestinians that has followed. Sharon has succeeded so well in painting Arafat and Hamas as terrorists that a Palestinian state is now only a remote possibility. Palestinian land is still being overrun by Jewish settlements in the West Bank and a concrete wall divides communities and families, one from another. Inexorably, Jerusalem is being annexed to Israel.

Yet the myth of Sharon as ‘a man of peace’ is already being subtly fostered by the Zionists among the political and financial leaders of America. Zionism has always believed itself to be under threat. Its messianic view of world history is one of Israel’s existence being forever in danger. This justifies the atrocities of leaders like Sharon as being necessary to stop terrorism against Israel. It immediately labels those who would oppose Sharon’s brutal tactics as being anti-Semitic. The poet and critic, Tom Paulin, insists “you’re either a Zionist or an anti-Zionist. Everyone who supports the state of Israel is a Zionist.”

By demonising the Palestinians, Sharon has embodied the Zionist rhetoric of an Israel forever at war, in defence of its borders. He has practised the concept of an ‘Iron Wall’ of Jewish military might. From the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the futile war which lasted 18 years, to the settlement and seizure of Palestinian land, military power has dominated his leadership. He will be forever associated with the massacres of Sabra and Shatila in 1982 and the savagery with which he has maintained and enlarged the borders of Israel. Under his leadership, the Israeli army has become the real terrorist in the Middle East. Sharon has been incapable of bringing peace and security to Israel, yet the Zionist support for him continues unabated.

Crosscurrents

John Honoré

In December, a bipartisan resolution in the United States House of Representatives and a letter signed by 73 of 100 Senators reiterates the claims of Congress that “the first provision of the Road Map to Middle East Peace calls for the Palestinians to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure” and further, that Hamas “should not be permitted to participate in Palestinian elections...”. American democracy is selective and conditional. Injustices will continue against Palestine and Sharon’s successor already has US support.

Zionism is one of the most powerful pressure groups in the modern world without which Israel would falter. One wonders whether this power is not self-defeating, whether leaders like Sharon will not be remembered for having jeopardised the very aspirations of Zionism – a secure State of Israel promised to the Children of Abraham.

Iran – Nuclear Terrorist?

Iran insists on being able to enrich Uranium, a process that can produce fuel for domestic power or for nuclear bombs. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s intention of continuing to seek nuclear power highlights Pope Benedict’s concern about governments seeking nuclear arsenals. In Iran’s case, the problem is to ascertain whether nuclear power is for genuine civilian purposes or for national security, or both.

In modern times Iran’s relations with the West have been fractious, particularly with the United States. The CIA-organised coup that toppled Muhammad Mossadegh, Iran’s nationalist prime minister in 1953, was followed by the US-backed regime of a new Shah. This was an increasingly unpopular power élite, dependent on US patronage, which led to *The Islamic Republic* of Ayatollah Khomeini. An

Islamic republic is still anathema to Western concepts of democracy.

Iran’s nuclear programmes are seen as aggressive, but Iranians see their tactics as a deterrent against the US that has invaded two of their neighbours over the past three years. Iranians want security for their Islamic Republic just as much as Israel wants its own right to exist. Iranians resent the fact that near and not-so-near neighbours such as Pakistan, India and Israel have nuclear weapons. Further, America’s efforts to determine the future of the Middle East and promote its own policies there, pose a threat to Iran.

Ironically, the era of the Cold War, when only two super powers had nuclear capability, seemed a simpler time. Pope Benedict rightly worries about proliferation, and talk of pre-emptive strikes, sanctions, illegal invasions and self-preservation would seem to guarantee proliferation. What is needed is an international coalition to deal with Iran’s nuclear ambition. Unfortunately, the world’s superpower only believes in coalitions that will advance its own hegemony.

CANUTEXTGPA?

Thanks to having the teenage grandson for a few days, this technologically challenged columnist is now conversant with texting on the cell phone, which is “s-o c-o-o-l, Grandfather!” Press this, press that, scroll, edit, send to granddaughter ILUVU (acronym for I love you) and wait for reply. It comes, WAT R U 2 doing? And so it goes, with little fingers frantically pressing, scrolling and sending all at the same time as surfing the internet.

Grandson has never seen an Apple Mac G5 before, but Hey! no problem. Systems examined, rearranged and explained in rapid monosyllabic terms. Grandfather’s way of accessing files is “so not cool”, “gotta change that”. The mouse works overtime and presto!

2 MUCH! C U! ■

The Pope who did nothing

Time magazine's annual *Person of the Year* is always an interesting choice. All sorts of individuals have figured there in the past, either for their virtues or their vices.

This time, the Persons of the Year (please note the plural "s") for 2005 were what the US publication entitled "The Good Samaritans": Melinda and Bill Gates, and along with them, Bono. The Gates for setting up a foundation to bring medical aid to the impoverished world, and endowing it with 29 billion dollars of their *Microsoft* riches. Bono for his work as a rock star in raising consciousness in the developed world of the need to share our affluence with those in nations less fortunate than ours.

Leafing through further pages of that issue of *Time* one had a shock. In the section, *Persons Who Mattered* in 2005, we find Condoleezza Rice, the new and more conciliatory face of the US administration, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the wave-creating president of Iran, also Ariel Sharon, the promoter of tentative Israeli steps to make peace with the Palestinians. But ahead of all these, with a page entirely to himself, was Benedict XVI. Fascinating that he should be so highlighted in a secular magazine. The paragraph about him explained the inclusion by saying that, despite seeming too polarized a conservative to succeed John Paul II, his closeness to the late Pontiff, his intellectual substance and his high profile entering the conclave made him the obvious choice.

All quite true. But not the full story. With all due respect, I would say the reason the one-time Cardinal Ratzinger stood out at the end of 2005 was that he had been 'The pope who did nothing'.

It is of course not quite true that Benedict has 'done nothing'. He acquitted himself admirably at the *World Youth Day* in Cologne.

At the end of the year he approved the reining in of the liturgical excesses of the Neo-Catechumenate movement and proved he was not the prisoner of the New Religious Movements. But the latter action was very much an in-house and churchy matter, hardly likely to attract the applause of secular journalists.

What he has done, and done well, is prove the prophets of doom to be wrong. At his election so many feared he would move at once to take a number of hardline decisions and make in the Roman Curia and elsewhere a succession of conservative appointments. That has not taken place. None of us are going to be satisfied with all the decisions and all the appointments that will be made in the future. But there is every evidence that they will be much more measured and even-handed than many feared.

There is one thing that 'the pope who has done nothing' has most certainly done. Thirty years ago Hans Küng lost his license to be deemed a Catholic theologian. Four times during the pontificate of John Paul II he requested an audience with the Pope. Each time he was refused. Within months of his election Benedict XVI received him and their meeting was amicable. There is more to this than simply that a German finds it easier than does a Pole to dialogue with a German-speaking theologian, even if Swiss.

Only time will tell if the Lord will give Joseph Ratzinger enough years of life to show us the man he really is. But our American journalists may have had a whiff of the Spirit when they decided that the Pope who has done nothing stood out among the *People Who Mattered* in 2005. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

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

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On the stile

Eve Adams shares her musings on church, life and the spiritual quest

It's lonely standing on the fence line, a foot on either side of a rickety wooden stile that marks some unofficial boundary of church 'belonging'. The changing colours of my toenail polish remind me of just how long I have been standing here. I used to believe this was a comfortable place for me, one with a voice and one of integrity, but I'm less and less sure of that.

There is much I do still believe in however: belief in God; in the love, compassion and fullness of Christ; a belief in the Holy Spirit that weaves her love within and between us all; a belief in worship and ritual; and a belief in this spiritual pilgrimage we call faith, and in the need for mentoring and companionship along the way. The Christian journey is never a solitary one.

But it is the *form* of this mentoring and companionship that has once again become a real issue for me. The *persona* of the church, its structure, dogma and face to the world has become increasingly hard for me to align with my experience of God's love. Before finding myself on this fence line, I'd spent years circling the core of the institution, highly involved, trying all sorts of different roles and relationships, trying to make it work.

So yes, I've even been on this fence line before. And the truth is, I could continue to make it work if I were prepared to ignore the still, quiet voice within me. But since I'm here again, I guess that answers that. Don't get me wrong, this is not a simple Catholic church/women in priesthood kind

of issue. Although feminizing the institution of the church has certainly played a large part in my own journey, that particular problem is multi-denominational regardless of individual priesthood criteria. This is not about church hopping.

So, what now? *Be still* immediately springs to mind. It is enough for now to just recognise the pain; my own and that of all who have stood here before me. The reality is that I find myself here not through some individualistic notion of choice, but the sense of a very real spiritual call that reaches deep into my heart and soul. There is no right and wrong in any of this for others, only a need to answer the call for myself and ask the hard questions. To see where it leads. You might be interested to tag along. ■

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