TUI MOTU InterIslands

Independent Catholic Magazine CELEBRATING 24 YEARS 1997–2021 Issue 258 April 2021 $7

Hope in Cooperating

Tumanako ki te mahi tahi

MIKE RIDDELL, GILLIAN SOUTHEY, ROGER ELLIS & GREG MARCAR on countries' cooperation giving hope

THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN and **KATHLEEN RUSHTON** discuss the resurrection

ELIZABETH MACKIE on 150 years of Dominican Sisters in New Zealand

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Cover photo by Shutterranger/Shutterstock.com

Child in an orphanage in the leper colony at Okobaba, Lagos State, Nigeria, which is supported by international charities.

Tuimotumag TuiMotuInterIslands Tuimotu

EDITORIAL

Rising to Cooperation

Easter is drawing us into resurrection. We can feel hope rising in our world with Christ — the anxious wait for the COVID-19 vaccine is nearly over. For the first time in history humanity has shared a common vision and goal to beat COVID-19. A new spirit of cooperation has emerged among countries for the common good. And it's evolving. We've heard that governments of richer countries are purchasing COVID vaccines for neighbouring countries. This is because all people need immunity from the virus to limit its hold on the world, but many poorer countries' budgets don't stretch beyond the basics. For them the vaccine can be a much-desired but out-of-price-range extra.

Rich countries may be motivated to share and cooperate by nothing more than self-interest. But the outcome of their actions — shared scientific findings, vaccine manufacture, patent negotiations, equitable distribution — will be quashing the virus and improving world health. This COVID-19 cooperation can be a dress rehearsal for tackling other global goals.

Pope Francis and the United Nations are at one in encouraging countries to continue cooperating to restore the world to health. Francis reminds us that we have responsibility as sisters and brothers in humanity to care for all life in our common home, Earth — this is participating in God's mission.

The UN flags the sustainable development goals which provide a universal vision of a transformed world. Both Francis and the UN say it's time, now, to embrace that vision with renewed energy so that everyone the world over has healthy lives, healthy societies and a healthy environment. This vision can be the basis for reenergised global coordination to meet the goals. And we learnt during the pandemic that cooperation was successful because of the interconnected way of thinking about how to limit the virus's effects in the world. We could see how good health is related to economic wellbeing, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

At the heart of Francis's and the UN's encouragement is equality — the desire that no country is to be left behind. Cooperation around global goals needs to focus on closing the gap between countries rather than widening it. We have seen, now, how connected we are — as individuals and as nations. Our interconnectedness has been a great peril — a virus spreading, person-to-person, across the globe — but cooperation will see us rise again to a hopeful future.

Contributors to this Easter issue tell of small and global cooperative efforts in neighbourhoods and across countries. We thank all, who in sharing their thoughts, expertise and creativity in writing, art and craft, give this magazine life.

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

COOPERATING for World Health

With great challenges come great opportunities. Just one year from the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, scientists have achieved something truly remarkable: a series of effective vaccines that will eventually inoculate us all. And what we have learned from the development and rollout of the vaccines — the swift, organised, global cooperation — could be used to address other world problems.

The timeline of COVID-19 vaccine development is impressive. Researchers from around the world worked at breakneck speed to produce at least half a dozen approved vaccines in the space of months. For comparison, the typical time it requires to develop and test a standard vaccine is somewhere between 10 to 15 years.

If unrelenting pressure can produce such miraculous results, then what other crises could be managed by a strong global effort? Could we show the same effort when addressing the threat of climate change? If so, could this mitigate its onset and the worst of its impacts?

The development of the vaccines shows that we we are capable of much more than we usually care to imagine. To address a global crisis with urgency, all that was required was focus, dedication and cooperation on a scale rarely seen. As the vaccines now begin making their way from labs to doctors, we have more lessons to learn.

We must acknowledge our immense ability to provide for others in need. Take the New Zealand-led effort to provide vaccines to the Pacific Islands, including Samoa, Tonga and the Cook Islands. In more recent days, a similar agreement has been struck between the USA, Japan, India and Australia to purchase, manufacture and deliver vaccines to countries in South East Asia.

There is a recognition in such decisions that countries not only can but must lend a hand to those who require it. Yet it is bewildering that the same necessity is so often ignored when the crisis is considered to be less imminent, be it rising tides or providing refuge.

While there are certainly moments during the pandemic to be proud of, it has not always brought out the best in us. Italy blocked a shipment of 250,000 Astrazeneca vials to Australia in early March, as the European Union found itself millions of doses short.

There is sense in this: with Australia almost free of the virus, it is hardly the end of the world if we go a month or two without the shipment, particularly as Italy records more than 20,000 new cases a day and begins to fight yet another wave.

In response Australia's federal government argued that Italy's decision would only delay efforts to vaccinate Australia's neighbours, most of whom are in a far more precarious situation than Australians themselves.

It represents another unfortunate reality. Just as wealthy individuals have experienced the impact of the pandemic in very different ways from the poor so, too, are wealthy countries prioritised over poorer ones. A new study suggests 47 of Earth's poorest countries have not administered a single vaccine. A push to remove vaccine patents temporarily would help the developing world receive the critical mass of vaccines they require. Big pharmaceutical companies and the countries they are home to have so far rejected the campaign.

It is a shame to see this kind of greed and self-preservation bubble to the surface in times like these. While the rich have sidestepped the worst of the pandemic for months, it has been the poor who have truly suffered. The virus will hit hardest those people unable to afford treatment for complications, unable to take sick leave, unable to work from home.

I am unsure whether we will emerge from the pandemic as a more empathetic people, or more capable of taking on the next crisis, whether it be climate change or another unforeseen peril. But unless we truly learn from our triumphs as well as our errors, we will be doomed to make the same mistakes. We have all now glimpsed what we can achieve when we work cooperatively and with urgency for a common cause.

Image: Moonhonor/Shutterstock.com

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STOKING AN ENDURING HOPE

MIKE RIDDELL reflects on why countries need to support each other to overcome ingrained, systemic injustices.

"Am I my sister's keeper?" Between that question and "Who then is my neighbour?" lies the entire spectrum of religious and political responses to societal structure and international relations. Individual responsibility and world order are at once very simple and hugely complex.

From our relatively intact democracy here in Aotearoa we watch events unfolding in other nations that are scarcely credible. Protestors in Myanmar are systematically shot dead by fellow citizens who work for the police or army. Dissidents in Hong Kong are imprisoned routinely by Chinese authorities. School children in Nigeria are kidnapped and used as political pawns.

A Saudi journalist is imprisoned and butchered inside the embassy he visited to obtain travel documents. A Russian politician is the victim of a deadly poison attack by his own compatriots. We see these things and, thanks to an unfettered media, are fully aware of the human rights abuses that have become commonplace internationally. For the most part, we tut and scowl, but then dwell on happier subjects so that the cruelty and oppression doesn't intrude on our lives.

Our Part

Like me, you may wonder "What can I do?" A sense of helplessness pervades our souls, and we would rather escape from unpleasant realities than assume responsibility for change. We rely on others to take up the mission. It's much simpler to allow people to take up the cudgels on our behalf, and hope that someone might do something. But as the parable of the Good Samaritan suggests, that makes us passers-by.

I look at examples of change agents who have made a difference in history, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Without doubt these are exceptional leaders, but they were only successful because they sparked grassroots movements that caused people to rise from the grind of their oppression and take dangerous risks for the sake of a better and more just world.

Imagine a New Future

If I understand the methodology of such changemakers correctly, there are several components to their campaigns. The first, and most important, is what Walter Brueggemann describes as prophetic imagination. This is the ability to see beyond history and propaganda delivered to us by "the powers that be". In essence, such vision is a gift that often falls upon enlightened individuals who act as lightning rods for divine grace.

Risk Taking Action for Change

Gandhi, for example, said: “It’s the action, not the fruit of the action, that’s important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there’ll be any fruit. But that doesn’t mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.” He personally led others to put their lives on the line to create change.

And Martin Luther King challenges us: "There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but take it because one’s conscience tells us it is right.” His own campaign for justice resulted in his assassination by the enemies of change. King also challenged us with this reminder: “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

Join a Movement for Change

These are our prophets, but we are God’s children. Social change is not generally effective or lasting unless it involves a movement of people. We cannot delegate responsibility for historical justice to heroic individuals. Instead, it’s necessary for their voices to find a response in our hearts, and to replace the lethargy or fear that prevents us from being activists.

Change Is Worth the Risk

What is it that motivates ordinary people in Myanmar to go out onto the streets day by day, in the realistic expectation that it may be their last day in Earth? Surely it’s because they believe in something larger than themselves, and have accepted the cost of achieving it. Through such risky behaviour, the protestors achieve a freedom that shames the military and other forces of oppression.

Non-violent resistance exposes the powers that be in all their misguided hatred and lack of dignity. And correspondingly, those on the streets achieve humanity and community through their willingness to hazard injury or death for the sake of others. There is no power in these protestors in the military sense. They are totally vulnerable. But there is massive moral force that can’t be denied.

Hope and faith appear to be such fragile notions, and yet when they sustain action and ways of living, they are unrelentingly subversive.

Movements Need Support from Other Nations

Nor are there any guarantees of success. As we reflect on the mass movements in Hong Kong calling for the retention of democracy, it is apparent that the sheer authoritarian force of China has snuffed out the cause. Largely this is because we in the West have refused solidarity, with our only resistance being that of words. Our leaders fear the retaliation of a major superpower, and so speak but do nothing.

Be Shaken from Comfort by the Gospel

Where is the hope in all of this? It seems inevitable that before long China will seize Taiwan and oppress her people. Should we be concerned? We live on the edge of the world, and are preoccupied with our own problems. China continually responds with the slogan that no one should interfere in that nation’s internal affairs.

Here is where the Gospel bites. There are no borders to justice. We are followers of Jesus the Liberator who paid with his own life for suggesting that the Realm of God is coming, and that it will upend the order of the day. His first followers were persecuted and reviled — often subject to the full force of such powers as the Roman Empire. And yet here we are still, two millennia later, abiding exponents of “soft power”.

When things look darkest, we find the rise of hope within us. It may appear in the lives of individuals such as Aung San Suu Kyi (at least in her earlier days), but it will only find fulfilment when the hope becomes established in the hearts of communal movements.

Underlying such undaunted faith is the idea that we are indeed each other’s neighbours and keepers. We have a responsibility toward one another and for one another.

Strength of Enduring Hope

Hope and faith appear to be such fragile notions, and yet when they sustain action and ways of living, they are unrelentingly subversive.

In the Easter season we recall that what seemed the utmost defeat has been transformed into an ongoing historical revolution that is yet to reach its climax. Hope has entered history and will never be defeated in the long game.

And we, if we are followers of Christ, are agents of that eternal hope. However, hope is not an idea. It’s a way of living and a force for change. Only when we accept that the Realm of God is deeper and more substantial than any military power, and are prepared to act out the truth of that belief, will we translate our hope into change.

It may come at a cost to our physical safety, our reputations, our social standing, our freedom, and our self-belief. But without action, hope becomes a word devoid of love and solidarity. “We must accept finite disappointment,” said Martin Luther King, “but never lose infinite hope.” And then he lived it.

Painting: ***Sun Surf*** by Reina Cottier © Used with permission
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Mike Riddell writes novels, plays, films and apology notes. He cooks when he can and breathes intentionally on a daily basis.

Giving YOUTH & ENERGY

GILLIAN SOUTHEY tells of how young refugees from the Camp in Lebanon contributed to the clean up after the Beirut explosions.

A story from Lebanon after the August 2020 explosion in Beirut turned the tables on the usual portrayal of disasters. It was not of a large-scale relief effort by international aid agencies, but a group of 16-24 year-olds wielding brooms, shovels, gloves and masks. They were refugees — many having fled Syria years before. Eager to help after the dreadful disaster, the 20 or so young people climbed thousands of steps in multi-storeyed apartments without electricity to respond in whatever way they could.

This group made hope into a verb — they were "doing hope", something they have learned in the community they have created with Christian World Service partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), Lebanon.

Becoming Volunteers

In August 2020, a massive explosion at Beirut's port rocked the city. Some 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate killed more than 200 people, injured over 5,000 and left 300,000 homeless.

Immediately after the catastrophe, a member of a DSPR youth group contacted their leader Elias Habib, and insisted that he take them to help in the cleanup. Within an hour, with shock still written on their faces, they began making plans.

Elias dreaded the sights that awaited the young people. He had grown up during Lebanon's vicious 16-year civil war and had worked as a foreman on construction sites. He knew the group was not prepared for what they would soon see.

A few days later they headed to a tiny destroyed restaurant which would become their base. Elias picked up a broom and began to work. The young people quietly followed suit.

Once the restaurant was cleared, the young people with Elias volunteered with hundreds of others in Beirut's marathon cleanup effort. Month after month, the young people helped those who needed them.

Giving to Community

Reem Haddad, from the Joint Christian Committee for Social Services in Lebanon, describes the way the young people helped. What follows is Reem's account.

A group of DSPR teenagers was carrying debris down to street level. It was arduous work — a task that only the very young can do and still have

the energy to run up the road to the next shambled house with equal zest while joking. "Hey, Rawad!" cried out Jubran, 18. "Look at your shoes. Still pristine white. Mine are dark. Ha! I guess it means I was working harder."

Rawad, 19, stopped in his tracks to think of a retort. Finally, he grinned at his tormentor: "Well, maybe my shoes are just made better than yours!"

Laughing, the teenagers made their way to their "rest stop" — a restaurant in the middle of the destroyed Mar Mikhael Street. Carole, 16, quickly set about distributing much-needed water bottles. It was here that the various groups met several times a day to rest, drink, eat and take on new assignments from their leader, Elias.

For the past few weeks, the teenagers have been sweeping glass shards, setting aside torn doors and windows and scrubbing blood off walls and floors. Since Lebanese government officials were absent from the field, it was up to the volunteers to help the distraught victims and salvage whatever they could from the debris.

At first, the devastated area was swarming with volunteer workers. But as universities and schools prepared to reopen their doors, the number of volunteers dwindled considerably.

"I think there is only us and another group or two now remaining," Elias observed. "But there is a lot of work to be done. People still need us here."

As if on cue, a woman in her mid-60s entered the base. She greeted the teenagers warmly. "Hello, Auntie Norma," they responded, "how are you today?"

Norma Irani took a seat among them. "I am well, darlings," she responded, obviously trying to sound cheerful. "I am well."

But suddenly she erupted into tears. She addressed Elias, the only adult in the group: "I want my home like it was, I want my life back." She looked at him pleadingly as her tears intensified. The young people lapsed into silence as they listened to their new friend. One handed her a tissue.

Norma's home was on Alexander Fleming Street — a quaint area, known only a month before for its busy boutique-like restaurants. Irani herself owned one of the tiny restaurants. It was her only source of income.

"I have nothing now," she continued to cry. "My home is gone. My shop is gone. It was my only source of money. What do I do now?"

When the blast hit, Norma was in her home, tending to her 96-year-old father. Her two brothers were in the next room. She watched in horror as blood began to seep from her father's forehead. Glass shards had covered them both. In an attempt to stop the profuse bleeding, she pressed on her father's head, calling for her brothers.

We don't have money to help. All we can offer is our youth. Our ability to clean and carry things for all these people. If we don't, who will?

Were they even alive? She continued to scream but to no avail.

She finally managed to guide her disoriented father to the street below, practically carrying him over rubble and glass which was blocking her building's staircase. Relieved to see her brothers alive and well, she ran to help other blood-soaked neighbours descend the stairs.

The teenagers listened in subdued silence. Finally, 17-year-old Vanessa Al Akl broke the silence: "I was there that same day," she said quietly. "I was with my family going to Damour (south of Beirut). We had crossed the port when the explosion happened. We got out of the car. There were people covered in blood everywhere. Some people were dead. I tried to help. There was so much blood."

Miguel, 17, looked at her. "My father was there too. He had work to do. He didn't come home and wasn't answering his phone. We thought he had been killed," he said. "But he made it out somehow and came home."

Next to him, Oliver added quietly: "That's why I come here every day with DSPR. I want these people to go home as well."

Another silence ensued as young and old delved into their thoughts.

"I was there too," said Mark Abu Sleiman, 19. "There were people dead in the cars. I wanted to help them. I couldn't. That's also why I am here now. I want to feel that I can help."

The youngsters looked at each other. "I didn't come," said Elie Boulos, 19, looking shamefaced. "I didn't realise how much devastation there was. Not until we came here."

These teenagers had grown up together in their hillside Palestinian residences, known as the "Dbayeh camp". As Palestinian refugees, their futures are bleak. Palestinians are barred from acquiring Lebanese citizenship and thus acquiring Lebanese identity cards, which would entitle them to government services, such as health and education. They are also legally barred from owning property and prohibited from working in over 60 skilled jobs.

"Even if we are Palestinians," said Jubran, "we live here. We must help."

"We kids cannot rebuild Norma's home," said Rudolph Habib, 16. "We don't have money to help. All we can offer is our youth. Our ability to clean and carry things for all these people. If we don't, who will?"

Beirut Now

It is now eight months since the Beirut explosion and efforts to repair and rebuild the destroyed area of the city continue but progress is slow. Unemployment has surged across the country. The government is at an impasse and provides little leadership. COVID-19 has spread rapidly.

DSPR Lebanon continues to support refugees, like the young volunteers, through its all-age education programme and, as well, by delivering relief assistance.

Photo by Hiba Al Kallas/Shutterstock.com

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NEW VOICES of PROTEST in MYANMAR

A military coup has quashed the elected government in Myanmar which has ignited protests especially by the young. The writer pleads for the world to support their struggle.

Myanmar has known six long decades of totalitarian military rule. Then from 2010-11 began five years of loosening up, followed by five years of the first civilian government, elected in 2015.

Everyone said Myanmar could never go back to those dark days. Too much progress had been made towards democracy and an open society, they insisted. They are proved bitterly wrong.

On 1 February 2021, the very day that a second civilian government was to be installed after winning an 83 per cent landslide victory in the November 2020 vote, Myanmar woke to the news that there had been a military coup at 2am.

Military Coup and Manipulation

The democratically elected leaders, including the President Win Myint and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, were all arrested on spurious charges. Soldiers and military vehicles appeared on the streets in cities throughout the country. The Commander-in-Chief installed himself as supreme leader and claimed for himself all the three powers of government: judiciary, legislature and executive.

Since then, every night there are arrests of activists, artists and prominent persons who might be an active opposition.

Over 23,000 criminals were released from prison and encouraged to wreak havoc, freeing space for a new intake of political prisoners. As demonstrations grew, rubber bullets and water cannons have been used; snipers have taken lives in Mandalay and the capital, Naypyitaw.

Older People Reject Coup

For a few days there was stunned silence. Rumours flew and confused people. The older ones remembered August 1988 (8-8-88) when 3,000 student demonstrators had been shot and bayoneted in cold blood and thousands thrown into prison where they remained for years.

They remembered 2007 when the feared 77th Light Infantry Division had shot at the monks who marched in protest, killing hundreds.

By late February, demonstrations had grown to hundreds of thousands in a hundred townships across Myanmar. The people reject the coup. They have glimpsed a new light. "Let democracy's dawn grow to a full day!" they cry. They refuse to go back to those too familiar shadows. Education, a decent job, public health, a future for their children — all this was promised. It is now stolen.

Young Create Novel Protests

The young in Myanmar have no personal memory of those events of 1988 and 2007. They are

Generation Z, raised on the internet and with new ways of communicating. Their emotions overcome fear.

Gen Z meets the deadly threat with humour and creative protest. Ten cars stop on the main road, lift their bonnets and tell police they have broken down. Then a bus and more cars will also stop. Brides will appear in wedding dress with a placard to say "I don't want my babies to live under martial law". Students will go on the street with bags of onions, only the bags have holes. So the cars must wait while they keep picking up and bagging the same onions.

Every night across the country from 8pm there is banging of pots and pans for 15 minutes: the "metal bucket protest". Everyone joins in! Traditionally it is a way to drive out evil spirits. Now it also gives vent to deeply held feelings.

Non-violent Civil Disobedience

Meanwhile a non-violent civil disobedience movement (CDM) has sprung up. Doctors and nurses refuse to go to work in government hospitals. The pandemic remains a reality, demonstrations are even super-spreaders, but the coup is considered a greater evil.

Clerks in the banks don't report for work, so the flow of money slows to a trickle. How long can it go on? How long can people wait without being paid? Can the neighbourhoods protect them from the marauding thugs?

The new generation protesters are confident, seemingly carefree, savvy in new technologies, but most importantly they know a return to the past will rob them of everything. For the moment their tactics are working.

Myanmar Society Divided

But Myanmar is massively divided on ethnic lines. Few people stood up for the Rohingya when it mattered. What is truly needed is an understanding that cuts across ethnic lines, focuses on discrimination felt by the minorities and is conscious of the depravations suffered by the poor. There must be a strategy that unites a divided society.

Myanmar is rich in natural resources and rich in culture. The majority of its 54 million people follow Theravada Buddhism, while at least a third of the population belongs to a myriad of ethnic peoples, among whom there are Buddhist, Christian and animist. There is also a significant Muslim minority.

Independence Did Not Achieve Unity

At the beginning of independence, seven decades ago in 1948, representatives of seven major ethnic groups were co-founders of the Union. They committed to principles of equality and autonomy.

If the ethnic groups will unite in rejection of the coup, if the festering armed struggles can be disentangled, then Myanmar will have a chance to find peace.

But the yearning for equal partnership so clearly expressed then has never become a political reality. Representation available to minorities is limited, and of course that leads to disaffection. Feelings of exclusion have driven conflicts for generations. Over 20 ethnic armed organisations battle on and off with the Tatmadaw (armed forces). Myanmar is not a land of peace.

Military Control in 1950s

It was argued in the 1950s that military intervention was then justified because political leaders could not agree among themselves. The army stepped in, and over 70 years later, has clearly shown that it has no intention of stepping out. It eyes single party rule, like its neighbours, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

Although the Tatmadaw is drawn almost exclusively from the majority Burman ethnic people, this current coup appears to be principally a civil war among the Burman people.

If the ethnic groups will unite in rejection of the coup, if the festering armed struggles can be disentangled, then Myanmar will have a chance to find peace. But how can those who have relied so long on the strength of arms be inspired to thoughts of peace?

Protestors Need World Support

No people, no social group, can single-handedly achieve peace, prosperity, security and happiness. None. The lesson learned from the pandemic, which continues with force in Myanmar, is "the awareness that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all" (Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, par 32).

Nowadays, every local oppression and denial of human rights has international repercussions. The protesters have successfully demonstrated to the world the feelings of millions of ordinary people in Myanmar.

Pope Francis addressing diplomats accredited to the Holy See in February, lamented the military coup in Myanmar: "My thoughts turn particularly to the people of Myanmar, to whom I express my affection and closeness… The path to democracy undertaken in recent years was brusquely interrupted by last week's coup d'état. This has led to the imprisonment of different political leaders, whom I hope will be promptly released as a sign of encouragement for a sincere dialogue aimed at the good of the country."

What we see clearly on the streets of over 200 towns and cities across Myanmar is that, as Pope Francis has said: "Our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people — often forgotten people" who "without any doubt are, in these very days, writing the decisive events of our time."

To Myanmar, Pope Francis has said: "Release the imprisoned leaders, honour the votes of millions of people, return to democracy, support dignity and freedom. And pray for the people of Myanmar."

This article has been left anonymous to protect the identity and safety of the author.

Republished from *Eureka Street*, 2 March 2021

Painting: ***Via Controversia*** by Haitz de Diego © Used with permission www.haitzdediego.com

JOIN A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE

LAURELEI BAUTISTA writes that the dehumanising treatment of Māori prisoners in Waikeria prison is a symptom of a Corrections system that needs transformation.

Earlier this year, protests arose in Waikeria Prison after its prisoners had come forward with demands for clean water, soap, toilet paper, and many other basic human necessities — of which they had been deprived. One of New Zealand's largest prisons, Waikeria, in the Waikato, has around 750 inmates. A recent Ombudsman report showed that the prisoners had been stripped of their human dignity for months and that their multiple attempts to resolve the matter internally were ignored by the authorities. Instead of addressing the issues immediately, lack of action from authorities resulted in a six-day standoff before the prisoners' demands were finally met.

Meeting those demands was the least the government could do in the grand scheme of things — these issues are a result of everything that's wrong with Aotearoa's justice system and its decades of systemic discrimination.

The Manifesto of the Waikeria protestors illustrates how these problems develop and persevere, along with why it took so long for them to be resolved finally.

Prison System Punishes Rather than Restores Inmates

New Zealand prisons are modelled after European modes of punishment developed over hundreds of years. These modes were imported to Aotearoa and imposed upon the indigenous people with no thought to whether they were fitting or just. Indigenous modes of justice and reparation were devalued. But the system suited colonisers — the majority population — and so it has persisted to this day. Māori make up 50 per cent of the incarcerated population despite being 15 per cent of the general population. If the situation was otherwise, the abuse at Waikeria would probably not have reached the point of an uprising.

This oppression harms us all — collectively, we are all affected by the inequalities and stigmas perpetuated by prisons and other institutions. Prisons affect more than

just the people within them. They reach families, towns, schools and workplaces. A community cannot truly thrive if the success of one group means the oppression of another.

An even wider issue arises in that Waikeria is not an isolated case. For decades stories have come to light of extreme mistreatment against prisoners throughout our entire Corrections department. Ombudsman reports continually identify inhumane conditions in prisons throughout the country. Last year Auckland prison at Paremoremo was found to be in breach of the UN Convention Against Torture for the unjustified use of pepper spray and keeping prisoners in cells for up to 23 hours a day.

Reform Needed

Prison reform is needed now more than ever. Recently the story of Mihi Bassett being held in a wing known for its harsh conditions for longer than the legal limit, was broadcast. She had been threatened with pepper spray and was handled violently following a suicide attempt. The cruelty shown to her and others at Auckland Women's Prison is reflective of the power imbalance between Māori prisoners and a Corrections system grounded in Pākehā values.

There are rules in place meant to protect people like Mihi from the harms that they've faced, but the willingness of those around her to both ignore and perpetuate those problems shows that a holistic overhaul must be carried out. If prisons are meant to promote justice and safety in our communities, they cannot be synonymous with degradation and cruelty — as they are today.

Negligence towards prisoners' needs for basic hygiene accompanies severely damaging approaches to mental health. While prisons exist to limit freedoms, they ought not also restrict rights to services that fulfil the most fundamental parts of life.

The argument that people deserve deprivation as punishment is rooted in deep prejudice: *no one* deserves to be robbed of their human dignity and *everyone* has the right to decency and fair treatment.

Questioning the deservedness of abuse is a product of the failure to address the real issue — that such cruelty is allowed to happen in the first place.

Clearly a system is flawed if the people enforcing its rules are the same ones who are breaking them.

Towards Meaningful Change

With this in mind, how can we achieve meaningful change?

We cannot address the Waikeria protesters' demands without addressing the systemic discrimination that has unfolded over decades.

Give Reform Urgency

Allowing Waikeria to become just another fleeting news story would be an injustice. What happened should serve as a wake-up call to push for and prioritise urgent and restorative action.

Transforming our justice system not only benefits those in prison, but also the communities prisons serve. A serious overhaul that focuses on rehabilitation would promote safety for citizens both outside of and within prisons — exactly what the institution is meant to do. Going months without clean water or clothing is damaging to a person physically and mentally: when we take away the bare necessities of life, we are complicit in a broken system.

Allowing Waikeria to become just another fleeting news story, would be an injustice. What happened should serve as a wake-up call to push for and prioritise urgent and restorative action.

Analyse Our History

The starting point for transformation is analysing our history and knowing what works and what doesn't. The Waikeria uprising shows us that a system built by and for white people is oppressive of Māori and other minorities.

Listen to Māori

Past reforms have often excluded or drowned out Māori voices, despite Māori being those most affected negatively by the status quo. The 2019 Hōkai Rangi strategy from Corrections illustrated that reform looks a lot more doable on paper than it does in practice. But change is always possible when people in power choose to act differently.

More energy and resources must be put towards transforming the system. We need to listen to the voices of those most affected, and also amplify them, especially by taking a tikanga-based approach.

Learn from Mistakes

Rather than being an institution that fosters cruelty, we need Corrections to own up to its faults and practise compassion. A system that deflects and distracts from the abuses happening within its own walls, cannot be aligned with justice. People in prison are human — our brothers, mothers, uncles and cousins — and they have the right to be treated as such.

Image by Millenius/Shutterstock.com

Laurelei Bautista, an 18-year-old JustSpeak volunteer passionate about transformative justice, is studying Law and Arts at Victoria University of Wellington.

HOPE — Like Living Water

ROGER ELLIS outlines how Caritas Aotearoa is supporting our Pacific neighbours during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the Church calendar we prepare for Easter in Lent. A season of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving prepares the way for the Passion of Christ and the resurrection in which all things are made new and the hope of Christ's new life is displayed. In his Lenten message Pope Francis reflects on hope as "living water" enabling us to continue our journey. No matter what the difficulties that lie before us we can count on the character of God to grant us grace and hope. The hope and grace we receive can be passed onto others in many different ways.

Caritas Team during Lockdown

The first case of COVID-19 was reported in Aotearoa New Zealand on 28 February 2020.

Like the rest of Aotearoa, in March our Caritas team was at level 4 Lockdown and had to take what we needed for working from home for an unspecified period of time. One of our team volunteered to continue to bike into the central city office with the appropriate "essential worker" designation to collect the regular sack of Lenten Appeal mail and then bike to another colleague's home where the incoming donations were counted — keeping COVID-19 safety requirements.

Another of the team letterboxed her neighbourhood, offering to shop at the local Wellington supermarket for people who were on their own or too afraid to venture out. Each action of hope counts.

At home we spent more time talking with donors and listening to their stories while working from home. Many needed reassurance and the support of being heard: an elderly person who was feeling lonely and isolated; a couple who were concerned about their son who was living overseas; and parishioners who were feeling lost when they could no longer attend Eucharist at the local parish.

Each of the team had a role to play and we got on and did what we could whether that was large scale, such as providing urgently needed funds in an emergency situation overseas; or smaller scale, such as offering a listening ear or sharing words of encouragement and compassion. All large and small actions of hope were needed.

As well as the challenges of the pandemic, we can also celebrate the moments of joy. For example, seeing native birds coming back to the silent streets of our Wellington suburb or having time over lunch to talk and share with other family members in our bubble.

The global media has rightly highlighted the courage and commitment of the nurses, doctors, pharmacists, supermarket workers, cleaners and other frontline workers. Yet each of us in our grace-filled responses help to maintain the tapestry of interwoven actions and prayers that support community.

Caritas Working with Others

Around the world, Caritas's relationships with partners on the ground help us to respond to their unique needs in the context of their communities. Our focus is on prevention, preparedness and response. We strive for:

- Consistent messaging, including debunking myths, understanding the risk of infection and how the virus spreads
- Raising awareness on personal hygiene and shared spaces
- Designing activities to help convey messages throughout communities
- Gathering resources such as food, water and beds
- Distributing life-saving supplies such as soap and hand sanitiser

Caritas funding helps to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on local communities across the Pacific and around the world.

Papua New Guinea

In Papua New Guinea we're working with the Diocese of Rabaul and the Vunapope Hospital to support community prevention and preparation. We are also involved with the Kimbe Diocese in West New Britain

as they provide hygiene training, water drums, soap and hand sanitiser ingredients for eight local communities in Bitokara.

Kiribati

In Kiribati, the Kiribati Health Champions were put into action by the Public Health Service to deliver personal hygiene training and COVID-19 awareness to households throughout South Tarawa. They are passing on key messages from the Ministry of Health, including posters and flyers, and leading demonstrations on proper hand-washing techniques.

Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa

In Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa we have pre-positioned emergency stock, including food, water, blankets and sanitation supplies. We will be working with our local partners to determine when emergency supplies should be distributed.

Fiji

In Fiji, we're working with the Social Empowerment and Education Programme (SEEP) in Suva to provide awareness and hygiene resources such as hand sanitiser to 10 villages, with a special focus on schools. We've also been working with our local partners to manage pre-positioned emergency supplies.

The point is that each action is a ripple of hope in the building of community that upholds human dignity, that comforts the lonely and that provides practical assistance to the vulnerable.

Cambodia

Our partners in Cambodia, Development and Partnership in Action (DPA), are working with local police to deliver hygiene kits containing soap, hand sanitiser spray, masks and food to all 36 villages included in our partnership. Along with these supplies, they are delivering pre-recorded cassette tapes which contain advice on best practices for the prevention of COVID-19. Portable loudspeakers are being set up in public areas to reiterate public health messaging in local languages and dialects.

Challenges of COVID Disruptions

The COVID-19 crisis means that health systems in many countries have been strained to breaking point. In some Pacific Islands the supply of imported food items was interrupted. Disruptions to domestic and international food supply chains — caused as rising health risks lead to major travel restrictions—have undermined food availability and accessibility.

Mobility restrictions and worker illnesses during planting and harvesting have disrupted local supplies.

In short, the pandemic has exposed weaknesses in the old globalised economic and political systems. Poor and vulnerable communities that were already hit hard by the effects of climate change have to cope with those effects, plus the threat of COVID, and the consequent decline in incomes arising from the economic downturns and over-reliance on tourism.

Advocating for Action

I have finished a submission on the New Zealand government's Budget Policy Statement. Caritas is advocating that we learn the lessons of COVID-19 and create new ways forward. In particular, we need to adopt an intergenerational perspective on issues such as climate change. And we need to move towards a sustainable economy that is driven more by the needs of people than by an incessant drive for higher levels of profit.

We need the interconnected economic, social and environmental crises to be addressed in new ways and for the cry of Earth and the cry of the poor to be heard more clearly. I hope the government takes up the challenge.

By acting in hope, we create the possibility of advancement and support of those to whom we are connected — both here in Aotearoa and overseas.

No one will emerge from the pandemic unchanged. We will all carry our scars, our experiences, our joys and sorrows. But we can choose how we respond — either with despair, anger and bitterness or with faith, hope and love.

We may not all be able to send funds overseas or help communities to prepare for a pandemic. But every action of hope and love counts. As Pope Francis reminds us: "In order to give hope to others, it is sometimes enough simply to be kind, to be willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference" (*Fratelli Tutti*, par 224).

Photos courtesy of Caritas Aotearoa

Roger Ellis is the Engagement Manager at Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.

Welcome Home
SISTERS AND BROTHERS

GREG MARCAR recommends adopting Pope Francis's understanding of refugees as our sisters and brothers at home with us in the world.

Since the end of World War II, 149 States have committed themselves to recognising the rights of those fleeing persecution to refuge under the United Nations' 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol. In recent years, these commitments have been tested by some of the worst refugee crises since the Holocaust. Many States have suspended their refugee resettlement programmes, with no clear indication as to when they will resume. I believe that our Christian understanding of the world and of one another can lead us to a more expansive, inclusive and hopeful refugee policy.

Seeing the World Like a State

Colin Harvey, a human rights law expert at Queen's University Belfast, points out that refugee law is akin to "seeing the world like a State." A statist perspective considers individuals primarily as "citizens" of particular nation-states. Each person has somewhere to belong, and is capable of having (State-given) rights (we could think here of Hannah Arendt's well-known framing of nationality as "the right to have rights").

Refugee rights exist because when someone can no longer live in their original State due to fear of persecution by agencies connected to that State, the socio-political umbilical cord between the individual and the State is severed, and the person may thereby be deserving of surrogacy by another State.

The State is like a parent providing safety and security to citizens. Like a parent, the State is duty-bound to protect the interest and livelihoods of its citizens. As a result, concerns such as "national security" to the limited resources and public-service infrastructure will often trump the moral imperative to adopt refugees into a new home. Under the auspices of "national security" many States deny refugee status to those they would otherwise have a duty to foster — thereby circumventing their responsibility to *non-refoulement*, the principle under Article 33 of the 1951 Convention that refugees not be returned to States in which they would face persecution, torture or degrading or cruel treatment.

This is what happens when we "see the world like a State". If our identity and security lies in our citizenship, we will want to protect our rights and benefits against threats from outside — from refugees.

But a Christian vision of the world, as exemplified in Pope Francis's recent encyclicals *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, paints a very different picture.

Seeing the World Like a Home

At the heart of our thinking on the ethics of refugee resettlement is the question of "where do I/you *belong*?" Despite its apparent simplicity, this question is loaded with an ambiguity which goes to the heart of what we believe human beings *are*.

Within theological anthropology, the classical expression of this ambiguity is that while angels are spiritual, and non-human animals are material, human beings are, somehow,

Greg Marcar is with the Centre for Theology and Public Issues, University of Otago. He has been involved in many non-profit organisations.

both. Christian theologians have often described the human condition as one of being a pilgrim, traveller or sojourner: residing in a place which is nevertheless not our final destination.

In this sense, neither the State, nor any other human social-political collective body, can ever be regarded as the human being's true "home".

At the same time, no specific place can be said to "belong" to any one group of human beings over-and-against others. No place belongs to anyone and every place belongs to everyone.

from her own experience of grace and sin, the beauty of the invitation to universal love" (*FT* par 278). The Church, Francis contends, should witness the outreach of God in Christ towards all humanity: universal love.

Unlike the State, membership of the Church transcends geographic, ethnic, or socio-economic boundaries. It is also, in Francis's view, underpinned by a very different paradigm of care.

Speaking of the solidarity and love between all human beings which the Church should represent and advocate, Francis writes that "for many Christians, this journey of fraternity also has a Mother, whose name is Mary" (*FT* par 278). At the foot of the cross where her son Jesus was being executed, Mary receives "universal motherhood" over all humanity, following which she wishes for "a new world, where all of us are brothers and sisters, where there is room for all those whom our societies discard".

In reorienting ourselves to Mary's Christ-centred sense of belonging in universal love and care for every human being, we hope to begin to see humanity with Pope Francis as "more and more as a single family dwelling in a common home" (*FT* par 17).

Welcome Home

While the difficulties which refugees continue to face in reorienting themselves into unfamiliar societies, languages and cultures should not be underestimated, the vision set forth by Pope Francis should encourage all of us to recognise refugees as sisters or brothers, and welcome them as those who are *already*, in a fundamental sense, home.

"How important it is to dream together. Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same Earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all" (*FT* par 8).

For Catholics and other Christians it is the Church rather than the State which forms their identity and shapes how they act within the world. Drawing on Pope Paul VI's vision in *Ecclesiam Suam*, Pope Francis in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (2020) writes that "called to take root in every place, the Church has been present for centuries throughout the world, for that is what it means to be 'catholic'. She can thus understand,

Photo by Orlok/Shutterstock.com
Sanliurfa, Turkey. Syrian refugees walking on the Turkey-Syria border in Suruc district.

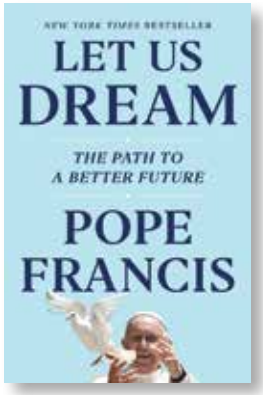
Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future

by Pope Francis, Austen Ivereigh
Published by Simon & Schuster, 2020
Reviewed by Anton Spelman

BOOK

Let Us Dream, a collaboration by Pope Francis and his biographer, the journalist Austen Ivereigh, was born out of the excitement Francis experienced last Easter during the COVID-19 Lockdown.

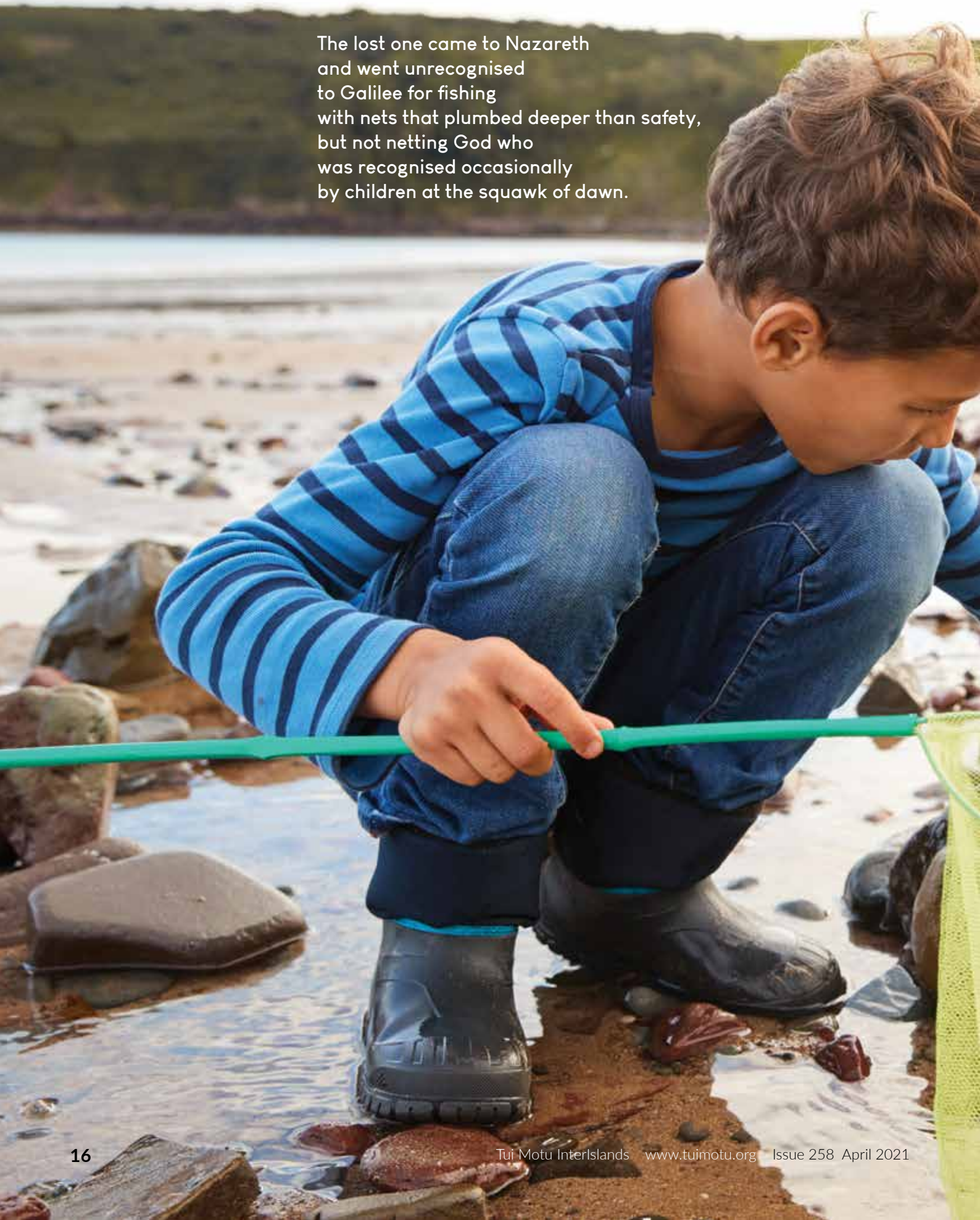
The book focusses on how we might manage our lives more positively post-COVID-19. It is divided into three parts using the see-judge-act methodology. Francis says we need to take a hard look at the margins of society to observe what is really going on (see). Once we identify the issues at the margins, we can analyse (judge) the different forces at work noting what builds up and what destroys, what humanises and what dehumanises. Action that flows from this analysis can then reflect the intentions of the Creator to restore and heal the people and the world we live in (act).



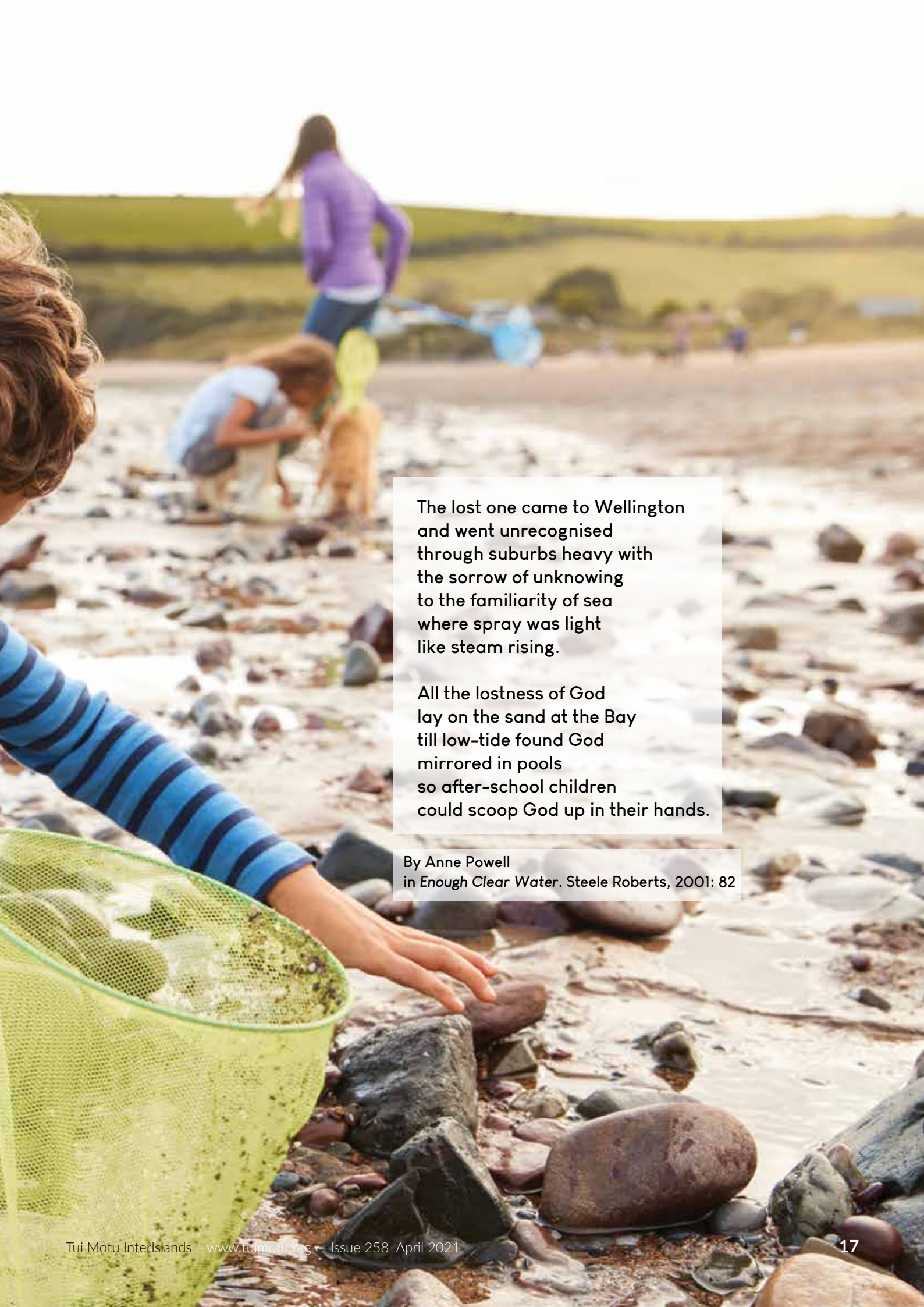
Written in his usual free-flowing style, Francis's autobiographical use of concrete applications is a strong challenge to the Church at this time. He sets out the struggles that exist at all three stages of the see-judge-act process and explores their use in three recent Synods involving bishops worldwide.

This is a serious book from Pope Francis and a complex read — though at just 144 pages it is not a long one. It is encouraging for those hoping for a different future post-COVID-19 and makes for rewarding reading.

IN THEIR HANDS



The lost one came to Nazareth
and went unrecognised
to Galilee for fishing
with nets that plumbed deeper than safety,
but not netting God who
was recognised occasionally
by children at the squawk of dawn.



The lost one came to Wellington
and went unrecognised
through suburbs heavy with
the sorrow of unknowing
to the familiarity of sea
where spray was light
like steam rising.

All the lostness of God
lay on the sand at the Bay
till low-tide found God
mirrored in pools
so after-school children
could scoop God up in their hands.

By Anne Powell
in *Enough Clear Water*. Steele Roberts, 2001: 82

GOD'S WORK AWAITS

ELIZABETH MACKIE tells the story of the first Dominican Sisters to come from Ireland to New Zealand and their legacy 150 years later.

It is now 150 years since the first Dominican Sisters arrived from Dublin to begin Catholic education work in Dunedin, New Zealand. In Toitū Otago Settlers Museum there is a realistic installation of a cabin typical of those on sailing vessels which brought early settlers to Otago from around the world. Each time I see the cabin's confined space and stark furnishing, I marvel that the first 10 Sisters from Sion Hill Priory in Dublin, lived in such confined quarters during their four-month journey from Gravesend, England to Port Chalmers. They came by sailing vessel, because a steamship passage was too expensive for them. Undoubtedly they were crowded and uncomfortable, yet their records of the journey mention nothing of this. They write of the regular rhythm of prayer they arranged for themselves, their study of Italian (the more advanced students among them read Dante!), the social activities on board and their wonder at each new experience.

Dublin Priory Sends Sisters to South Africa

The Sisters missioned to New Zealand were not the first group to leave the Sion Hill Priory for distant countries. The Sion Hill convent was established in Dublin, first in Mount Street and then moved to St Mary's parish in Booterstown in 1840. Eight years later the newly ordained Patrick Moran was appointed to Booterstown and there came to know the Sisters and their educational work. When he became the Bishop in the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, he asked the Sion Hill Priory to send Sisters. Sisters set out for Africa in 1867 and soon after opened schools in Port Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Mackie Dominican Sister and former assistant editor of *Tui Motu* magazine, lives in Dunedin.

Priory Sends Sisters to Aotearoa

Just three years later, Pope Pius IX created the new diocese of Otago, Southland and Stewart Island in New Zealand and he appointed Bishop Moran as its first bishop. Moran went back to Sion Hill to seek Sisters for his new diocese. Although their numbers had been depleted by the African mission, the whole community voted in favour of the Aotearoa mission. Ten Sisters were chosen from those who had volunteered and they accompanied Bishop Moran to New Zealand.

The records of the time describe them as "some of the brightest stars in Sion's firmament". They were well-educated, talented women. The oldest was 59 and the youngest just 19. The Prioress of the new venture, Mother Gabriel Gill, was 33. They left Dublin on 5 October 1870, sailed first to Gravesend and then boarded the *Glendower* to travel round the Cape of Good Hope and arrive in Sydney on 2 February 1871.

During their few days in Australia they were "courted" by the Sydney bishop, who wanted to divert them from New Zealand to schools in his diocese. He showed them several fine locations for convents and schools and insisted their standard of education was excessive for the residents of Dunedin! But the Sisters, remaining loyal to their purpose and Moran, continued on and arrived in Port Chalmers on 18 February 1871 — 150 years ago this year.

Getting Established

The newly arrived Sisters faced the hardships and privations involved in settling into a new land, a new diocese with limited finances and a new society. Many of the settlers were also Irish Catholics who had migrated to Otago after gold was discovered in 1861. The Church in the diocese was under the care of French Marist priest, Delphin Moreau. He had organised a welcome and had furnished a seven-bedroom house for the Bishop. Through miscommunication he thought that just one Sister was coming with Moran. Faced with 10, he offered to get the disused hotel, the "Robin Hood", further up the hill for them. Instead, the Bishop gave his house to the Sisters and rented a small cottage nearby for himself.

However, within days he called on Mother Gabriel with a sheaf of bills for all the furniture and fittings ("mirrors in every room") for the house, which he had no way of paying. She cheerfully took the bills, sent back all but the most basic furniture, and paid for the rest from

in Otago

their first school fees.

The Sisters' energy was breathtaking. Two days after arriving they took over the existing school and a week later they opened a small high school for girls. They offered after-school classes in piano, singing, the harp, wax flower making, painting, needlework and European languages. The income from these classes provided for their keep. They began fundraising with bazaars, raffles and variety concerts at which their pupils performed. So successful were they that six years later, they were able to move into the newly built main wing of St Dominic's Priory. Later other buildings were added, including a novitiate, boarding school and classrooms. The first New Zealand novice was professed in 1878 and a steady stream of other young women joined the Congregation through the years.

Sisters Spread Further from Dunedin

From their base in Dunedin, the Sisters moved into the main centres and the goldfields of Otago and Southland. By 1900 they had established schools and convents in Invercargill, Oamaru, Queenstown, Milton, Lawrence, North East Valley (Dunedin) and Cromwell. In the 20th century they continued to send Sisters within Otago and into the Auckland and Wellington dioceses. They established the only New Zealand Catholic school for Deaf children in Island Bay. And for a short period in the 1980s the Sisters lived and taught in a mission station in Vanuatu.

Aotearoa Sisters Send Sisters to Western Australia

Mother Gabriel, whose energy, vision, planning ability and commitment to the Church's part in mission were such a driving force at the beginning of Dominican life in Dunedin, was seldom daunted. In 1899 Bishop Kelly of the new Diocese of Geraldton (West Australia) asked the New Zealand Dominicans to make a foundation in that diocese. So Mother Gabriel, along with another of the first Sisters (foundresses) and four other Sisters, volunteered to go. They left New Zealand in April 1899, and Gabriel never returned. She celebrated her golden jubilee of profession in 1904 in Cue on the Murchison Gold Fields. The next year she died quite suddenly on Holy Saturday in a small two-roomed convent in Day Dawn.

Sisters Have Grateful Hearts Today

It's 150 years since the Sisters arrived in Dunedin. Today we are a small Congregation of Dominican women. Although we are autonomous, we are part of the worldwide Dominican Family and retain strong links to the Irish Dominican Sisters, whose missionary generosity started our New Zealand Congregation. We are rooted in this land as Nga Whaea Arahi Rongopai O Aotearoa. We belong to the Oceania Federation of Dominican Sisters and are founding members of Dominican Sisters International, which connects Dominican women around the world.

Even while we celebrate our 150 years in Aotearoa, the worldwide Order is remembering the 800th year since the death of St Dominic. Our hearts are overflowing with gratitude as we recall our origins and our heritage. We give thanks for our 10 intrepid foundresses and all that they brought with them. We are grateful for the early Catholic people who supported the Sisters generously. We give thanks for all our students and their families through 150 years for all that we learned from them and for their loyalty to us. And we are grateful for all our Sisters over 150 years and for all the women and men with whom and for whom we have ministered. For all this and much more we wholeheartedly sing: "Alleluia!"

Photo: Dominican Sisters at their first General Chapter, 1892, 21 years after arriving in New Zealand.

Key to the Sisters' dress:

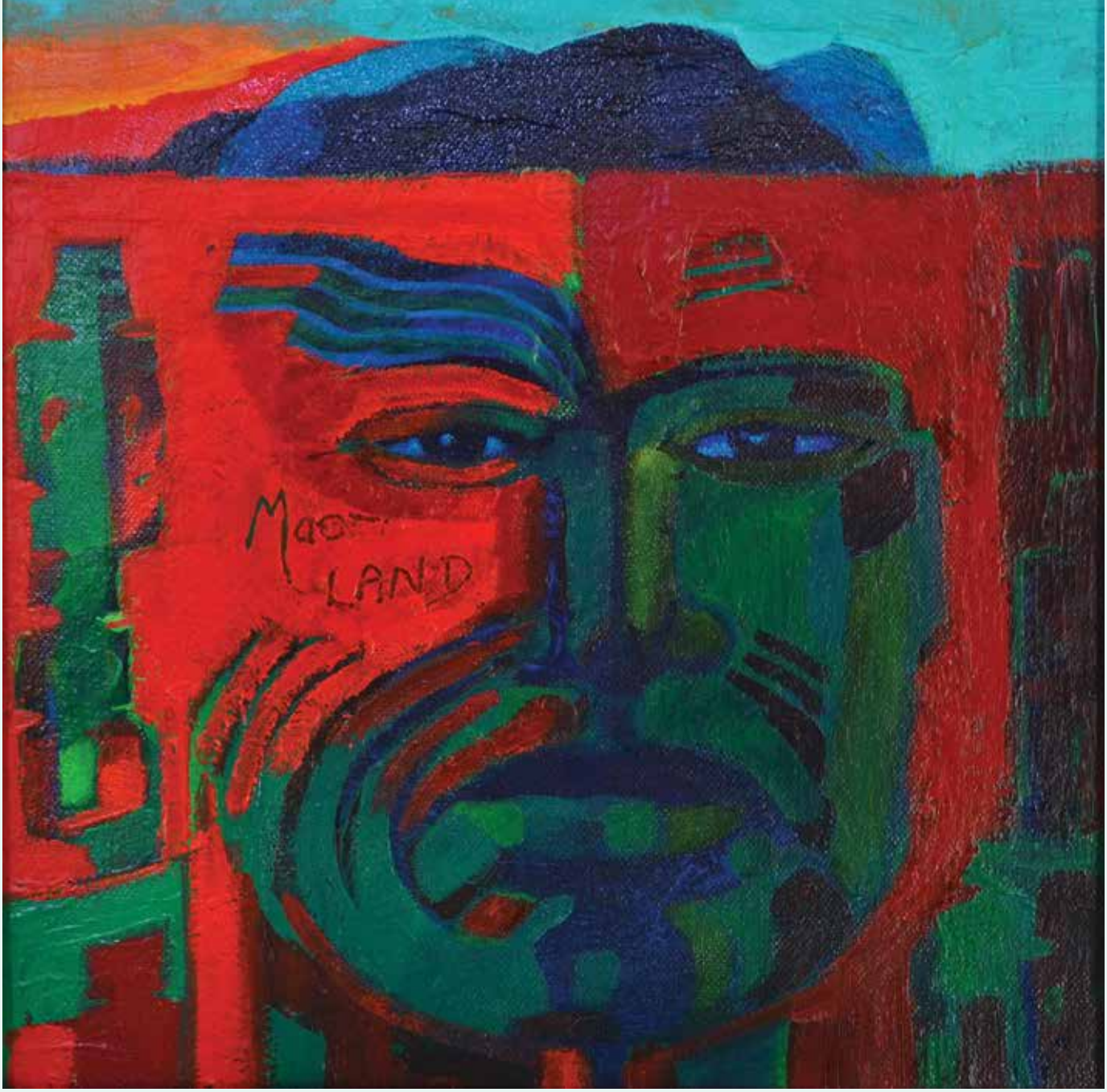
Woman in black hat and dress is a "postulant" — in her first year of formation as a Sister.

Sisters with white veils and habits are "novices" — in formation before they make their vows and become members of the Congregation.

Sisters in white habits and black veils are "choir" sisters — vowed members who taught and also sang the Office in chapel each day.

Sisters in black veils with black scapulas over their white habits are "lay" sisters — vowed members who did the domestic and nursing work.

After Vatican Council II the distinction between choir and lay sisters ceased.



SELLING CHURCH LAND

JOE GREEN suggests that there is a need for dialogue with Māori before Church land in Wellington is sold.

In 1995 in a statement about the Treaty of Waitangi today the New Zealand Catholic Bishops wrote: "We have an opportunity to heal wounds that have been present for too long."

I've been thinking about this statement as the Wellington South Parish prepares to sell one of its churches. According to the Waitangi Tribunal's Report on the Wellington District (2003), large tracts of land were taken from Māori for Wellington's settlement. In light of this colonial history we need to ask if the church land is actually ours to sell — did the Church buy it validly? If we find that it is, we can ask further if there are justice issues we need to address in selling the land.

The "See, Judge, Act" method for decision-making helps us research and analyse the situation, make judgements using justice principles and work out ways forward to ensure justice prevails.

Seeing and Understanding

The history of how land was acquired from Māori for the settlement of Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara is documented in the Waitangi Tribunal report (2003).

In 1840 several iwi and hapū held customary rights established through conquest, occupation and use of resources within the Port Nicholson Block. These included habitations, cultivations, urupā (burial grounds), wāhi tapu (sacred sites) and large tracts of land that provided hunter-gathering opportunities. The land possessed by the Wellington South Parish lies in the latter area.

On 27 September 1839, knowing the Crown intended to sign a treaty with Māori, the New Zealand Company nevertheless obtained the signatures of 16 chiefs to a deed of purchase. The boundaries of the "purchase" were

not delineated on a map, and Māori received no adequate explanation of the document or its implications.

In April 1840 the Treaty of Waitangi was signed at Port Nicholson. Two years later, William Spain was appointed land claims commissioner to examine land purchases before the signing. His inquiry "led him to form the opinion that most of the land claimed by the company at Port Nicholson had not been validly purchased from Māori."

Spain's investigation was replaced by a process of arbitration between the Company and the Crown. Māori were largely excluded from this process. "There was a clear expectation between the Company and the Crown that Māori were to retain their pā (villages), cultivations, burial grounds, and native reserves." This condition was inserted into all "agreements", including the final Crown grant of land. However, these were not surveyed, and the condition not respected by the company, settlers nor, eventually, the Crown which "sought to accommodate the Company".

An increasing number of settlers arrived and occupied land in the town of Wellington, pulling down fences erected by Māori, destroying cultivations and urupā and evicting the residents. George Clark, the Protector of Aborigines, described it as "systematic robbery".

In March 1845 Spain awarded the Company land, based on the survey completed and mapped the year before which expanded the town of Wellington from 71,900 acres to 209,000 acres to include the Hutt Valley, Wainuiomata, Ōhāriu, Island Bay and Brooklyn. No additional compensation was paid to Māori. Even though Māori pā, cultivations, burial grounds and native reserves were excluded from the grant, because they were not surveyed the exclusion was essentially ignored.

The process to settle the Company's claims included "exchanges": Māori were offered land held in reserve in exchange for allowing settlers to occupy the more productive land. But the land Māori was offered was land they already owned. The Company wanted the Te Aro pā land because of its position near the shore and was "unhappy" that Māori would not sell it.

From 1845 on, by various legislative and administrative means, Māori were systematically alienated from their land and marginalised economically. Between 1866 and 1868 Pipitea and Te Aro pā were surveyed into allotments and allocated to settlers. The Te Aro foreshore was allocated to the Wellington City Council which built a main thoroughfare, Taranaki Street, through the Te Aro pā in 1875. The pā could no longer function. A large number of Maori left the Wellington region permanently and by 1881 the Māori presence in Wellington was effectively extinguished.

Judging the Situation

Our questions are: Did the Church buy the land validly? Are there justice issues we need to address in selling the land?

The Waitangi Tribunal, after painstaking research, concluded that the "1839 Port Nicholson deed of purchase was invalid and conferred no rights under either English law or Māori lore on the New Zealand Company or those to whom the Company subsequently purported to on-sell part of such land." Clark's record of the time, that it had been "systematic robbery", was confirmed by the evidence. Subsequent treatment of the land and Māori did not change this situation.

It is clear that the land the parish occupies now, was acquired originally when it was divided and allocated to settlers by Deed. Then the 1888 Land Transfer Act came into effect and land was transferred under this legislation. The Church purchased the property after 1892 under the Land Transfer Act — which does not acknowledge Māori ownership.

While not directly taking land from Māori during the colonial period, the record shows that the Church land was aquired under this process.

The question remains about how we might proceed with the sale of Church land taking into account the issues of justice and reconciliation with Māori.

It is a principle of law that "the possessory title of a thief or knowing receiver of stolen goods is based upon no more than the physical fact of possession. The appearance does not match the reality, and the thief, although in fact in possession of the goods, has no other right to possess them" (Cynthia Hawes, *Canterbury Law Review*, 2005).

The question remains about how we might proceed with the sale of Church land, taking into account the issues of justice and reconciliation with Māori.

Actions for Going Forward

In 1990 the Catholic Bishops had written: "The review of our history clearly indicates that the promises and guarantees made in 1840 have not been consistently upheld and that the Māori partner has suffered grave injustices. The Māori have not always been given the protection of the State as promised under the Treaty. Worse still, the State has often deprived them by law of many of the promised guarantees."

It seems to me that the Wellington South Parish occupies land that was originally invalidly and unlawfully obtained, despite subsequent legislation making it "lawful".

As a Church and parish we need to take action to address this injustice arising in our history and find "just and peaceful solutions".

Before selling the land, we need to enter into dialogue with Māori who claim historical occupation rights to that land. As the goal of the process is justice and healing, we need to listen to and be responsive to the Māori position regarding the land.

The outcomes of this dialogue need to form part of the submission to the Archdiocese around the land that is now no longer needed by the Church.

Painting: ***Māori Land*** by Darcy Nicholas © Used with permission www.darcynicholas.co.nz

Joe Green is a Lay Pastoral Leader participating in the pastoral care of the parish of Wellington South.

Risen Christ in the Easter Icon

THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN describes the story of Easter using an icon from the Eastern Church.

Religious statements are different from facts. Since the 16th century, Western culture has worshipped the idea that "this is how it happened" can be equated with "this is the truth". It was given its most famous exposition in the work of John Locke (1632-1704): if I can see it, touch, or at least imagine it as taking place in the world of seeing and touching, then it is true. Likewise, if I cannot imagine it in the world of time or space then it is a "myth" – and a myth, for most of us, is no different from a fairytale. We can think that everything real must be empirical — see-able and touch-able.

Faith Needs More than Empirical Evidence

This way of thinking works well for many aspects of life. But it makes religious statements meaningless. Some Christians assert that religious statements — or statements about Jesus of Nazareth — are also "facts": they can be checked out in the same way that a statement about any other historical actor can be checked out. They suggest that if we could travel back in time with a video camera and stand outside the tomb into which Jesus was placed, then we would see the stone roll back and the empty space. They think this would be "proof" that the resurrection happened. But this does not mean we understand why the resurrection is central to Christian faith.

Myth Helps Describe Mystery

But surely, these stories allow us to talk about a reality beyond the empirical — which we use to see through to the wonder of God's love.

We need myths to allow us to speak in the world of everyday experience about the mystery of God's love which is greater than our words. Whenever we think we have captured "God" in words, we have become slaves to that self-made idol.

And yet a fascination for empirical "evidence" persists to this day. The idea of the resurrection as "the empty tomb" — as distinct from an older interest in the tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the location linked to God's wondrous love — goes back to the Renaissance. It was then that images of empty tombs which are in continuity with our normal landscape became part of the imagery of Western Christianity.

Eastern Church's Easter Story

But in the East there was no equivalent to this turn towards empiricism and the dominant image of the resurrection remained that of the Christ surrounded by heavenly light bridging a chasm, while offering new life to all humanity in greeting Adam and Eve as they stand up in their graves.

The icon of the resurrection — *He Anastasis* (the word written in red letters at the top of the icon) — cannot be confused with our world because it is deliberately mythic within a mythic landscape.

Risen Christ Freeing People from Evil

The earliest version of the story shown in this icon is found in a homily for Holy Saturday that probably goes back to the second century. Extracts from that text say: "Today ... the Christ goes seeking out that lost sheep, our first parent. He wishes to visit those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He goes to free imprisoned Adam and his fellow prisoner, Eve, from their pain. He who is God and Adam's son."

The icon shows Adam and Eve rising from their tombs. The Christ is taking each of them by the hand to lead them into the new life. Beneath the Christ are the two doors of the underworld — the gates of hell — shattered and thrown down. They have taken the form of a cross and this cross is a stepping stone across an abyss. There, too, are thrown all the fetters and jailers' tools that can imprison humanity. This visit by the risen Lord to deliver these prisoners only finds a direct echo in Western Christianity in the line in the Apostles' Creed "he descended into hell" and a faint echo in Eucharistic Prayer IV.

And below it all lies the enemy bound up, the "strong man" who has held humanity bondage. Evil is defeated, its effects limited, and we proclaim that its reign will pass away. Resurrection is not about some miraculous event that happened "back then" but about something that is happening now and in the future.

As those who believe we have been offered freedom, how do we offer liberation to those bound in any number of prisons?

The ancient sermon continues: "The Lord goes to them holding his victorious weapon: the cross. When Adam sees him ... he cries out to all around: 'My Lord be with you all.' And the Christ replies to Adam: 'And also with you.' Then grasping Adam's hand he lifts him up and says: 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and the Christ will give you light. ... I am your God, who for your sake became your son. For you and your descendants I now command those in prison: 'Come out!' And I command those in darkness: 'Have light!' And I command those who sleep: 'Rise!'"

Christ Calls All Humanity to Stand Up

We tend to think of the resurrection as something that happened to Jesus, but for this ancient homily and our icon the "standing up again" is about what the Christ does for all humanity. So on the left of the icon are the representatives of all those who waited for the Christ's coming: the kings, David and Solomon, and the Baptist; while on the right we have those who have followed Jesus: three disciples.

Myths Celebrate Our Ongoing Challenge

The icon is not a simple alternative to the ways we Western Christians imagine Easter. The icon is an alternative myth to those we read, sing and imagine — and has, in its own way, just as many problems as our own myths. It is the nature of myth that is limited, tied to our cultures, and that it speaks, in the first place, to our imagination: and we find this difficult.

Swapping one myth for another achieves nothing, but a new image, a different myth, reminds us that faith is greater than our stories of faith — and that Easter is the celebration of a challenge, not a nostalgic commemoration.

Engage Truths of Faith Through Myth

The value of the icon is that it reminds us that we must engage with the great truth of faith *through myth*. That one group of Christians can imagine the central moment of our story in a way completely different from that of another group of Christians reminds us all that we must not confuse any image with an empirical "fact". The variety in the ways we tell our story demonstrates that faith is about today and the future, not about historical details — much as they may fascinate us.

The icon invites us to explore faith rather than to desire a photograph. On Easter morning — confessing faith amid a world of fears and hatred — the question is not: "Did it happen?" or "How did it happen?" The question facing us as disciples is rather: "What does the Christ 'rising' mean about God's relationship to humanity?" And, "As those who believe we have been offered freedom, how do we offer liberation to those bound in any number of prisons?"

Thomas O'Loughlin is Emeritus Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Nottingham and author of several books.

JESUS IS RAISED UP

KATHLEEN RUSHTON discusses Mark's story of the resurrection of Jesus in Mark 16:1-8.

Mark wrote to offer hope to people who suffer and fail. Jesus is presented as alone and abandoned. His disciples do not get it. Mark, therefore, is assuring his households that Jesus, who *"has been raised,"* (MK 16:6) is not only risen among them but also raises them — and us today.

The "household" *(oikos)* operates at three levels. First, in Palestine during the time of Jesus, a household with an extended family was the basic social unit which gave identity, community, protection, status, well-being and honour. Jesus forms the new household of God where all are welcome including lepers, sinners and outcasts. The second level, 40 years later in the Roman Empire, is the new household of God where Christians gathered for worship in large houses. And the third level is now. We are to reflect, discern and apply the gospel message of the first two levels to our life in our households.

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

Mark Tells of the Death-Resurrection

The tomb is open. The women expect to enter into the world of death. However, a young man explains to them they are to enter into another world. They grapple with this new world, a new creation. We read that "He has been raised" after Jesus is identified as the one "who was crucified" (Mk 16:6). Jesus has been raised but he does not cease to be "the Crucified One".

The mystery of death-resurrection is integrally connected in Jesus and in our lives because a Gospel has two concerns. It is both an interpretative narrative of the life and death-resurrection of Jesus *and* an invitation to embrace the significance of that story for how we live in this world.

Jesus Has Been Raised Up

The timing of "the sun had risen" gives the first glimpse that the darkness surrounding the death of Jesus (Mk 15:33) is finally overcome. The women's concern is the heavy stone. Their being unable to roll it back symbolises the utter powerless of humanity before death. Then they "look up" — a biblical image for recognising God's action. They see that the stone is already rolled back. God has entered the story: "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised …"

The verb "raise" *(egeiro)*, which here hints that a more-than-human force has been at work and describes God's answer to Jesus's suffering, is a keyword in Mark's households.

Several characters are raised up, healed and minister.

Jesus Raised Her Up

In the first household, the first character "raised up" is a woman. Jesus "raised up" the mother-in-law of Peter (Mk 1:29-31). Bibles stating that she then "served/waited on" obscure the Greek word *diakoneo* meaning "to minister". Like the woman, angels minister to Jesus in Mk 1:13. Jesus says: "I came not to be ministered to but to minister" (Mk 10:45). Minister also describes what the women did (Mk 15:41), although translations say "provided for/looked after" him.

Diakoneo was a term for ministry in the early Church. Women exemplify this ministry (Mk 15:41; Lk 10:40; Jn 12:2). Their ministry frames Mark's Gospel (Mk 1:31; 15:41). Women's ministry in early Christianity is in continuity with Judaism. For example, there is evidence of Jewish women who were synagogue leaders. The obscuring of these foremothers' ministry by confining them to kitchens and "women's roles" needs to be exposed in order to "raise up" and recover women's ministry in the Church today.

Jesus Raised Up the Marginalised

Mark tells of three marginalised persons who are "raised up". Sickness and deformity brought shame and exclusion from the community. In Mk 2:9. 11, 12 friends lower a man who is paralysed into a household. Jesus "raised up" him and sent him "to his own household". In the synagogue on the Sabbath there was a man with a withered hand (Mk 3:1-6). Jesus takes the initiative: "Be raised up" (Mk 3:3). Bartimaeus, who was blind, sat by the wayside calling to Jesus. Those nearby call out: "Take heart, be raised up, he is calling for you" (Mk 10:49). Jesus declares that his faith has made him well. And Bartimaeus follows Jesus "on the way".

People Are Overcome with Amazement

Jesus takes the hand of the daughter of the synagogue official saying: "… be raised up" (Mk 5:41). People are "overcome with amazement *(ekstasis).*" A related word is used by "those close to" Jesus who thought he was "out of his mind" (Mk 3:21). The women at the tomb (Mk 16:8) are out of their minds. They experience a shock of transition as they undergo a transforming experience. *Ekstasis* carries the sense that God is creating something new (Gen 2:21; 15:12). It is the root of the English word "ecstasy", which means literally "out of a normal state of being". The word translated as "afraid" (Mk 16:8; 4:41; 9:6) has the sense of awe. The people are overwhelmed with reverence before divine mystery.

Continued Raising Up

How are we called to reflect, discern and apply the gospel message of raising up, healing and ministering in our households? A place to begin is with prayer where we become aware of God who is aware of us. Christ continually raises us, heals us and missions us.

During the Easter season we could read the whole of Mark's Gospel aloud. When we read aloud we tell ourselves the story — the story of Jesus's words and actions provoking amazement and giving energy to raise up, heal and minister.

Hearing this story, we can also be "overcome with amazement", because death-resurrection is a transforming, reoccurring experience for us. We experience through our lives big death-resurrections, like the loss of a loved one, as well as little death-resurrections, like the collapse of plans. We take these experiences with us each time we walk over our doorstep into our wider households of family, work, school, parish, neighbourhood, among the marginalised — to raise up, heal and minister. We have been assured that Jesus "will go ahead" of us (Mk 16:7).

At times, we cannot rely on our own strength, like the person who was paralysed and unable to approach Jesus. We need others to carry us, and sometimes we may carry another away from spiritual darkness, confusion and weariness, towards Christ. We are raised up by Christ, healed and sent in mission to our "own households".

Both ecology and economy, (derived from *oikos*), call us to be to raised up, healed and ministered to by Earth, our common home — to live aware of its beauty and how it provides for us. In turn, we reciprocate by raising up, healing and ministering to Earth, our common home. "Ecology" (German *ökologie* from Greek *oikos*) reminds us of our relationships with the household of interconnected ecosystems. And "economy" (Latin from Greek *oikonomia*) calls us to work for interconnected systems of well-being. Interconnecting, we go "into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15).

4 April: RL Mark 16:1-7 RCL Mark 16:1-8

Painting: ***The Rising Up*** by Michele Renée Ledoux © Used with permission www.mledoux.com

LEARNING FROM PROPHETS

Prophet: hermit in the desert, chosen, getting answers and coming back to tell people how it is.

Prophet: unafraid of speaking hard truths, willing to be unpopular, able to see through veils of money and power to what is truly important.

Prophet: out of time, expressing ideas within and beyond their culture, animated by the Divine.

Through time the biblical prophets spoke the truth to their people summoning them to live their Creator's dream in the world. Many people ignored them. The prophets did not often see any positive response to their message of social justice and transformation, yet enough people listened so that change happened — sometimes slowly.

We have prophets of a different sort today. While many amazing people speak against injustice and destruction, an excellent example is Greta Thunberg. She has courageously called out world leaders and big business for their refusal to respond to the barrage of evidence of the gritty reality of climate change. She has found listeners among the young, many of whom are advocating for action. By choosing to be vegan and not travel by air, Greta is also practising what she preaches.

The number of systemic, awful injustices I want to speak up about feels as numerous as the sands in a desert. There is dire news from every part of the world. Not a single country met any of its UN biodiversity targets in the last year. Terror is inflicted on Myanmar's protestors. The Gulf Stream is at its weakest point in a millennium, signalling dramatic climate shifts. New Zealand is placed 35th out of 41 countries for child well-being. The list of tragedies makes me feel empty and helpless. I imagine biblical and contemporary prophets feeling the same — burdened by the sandstorm of knowledge yet unable to bring about rapid change.

I dream of a world that is more just, more safe and more ecologically protected, yet feel exhausted by my responsibility to make this happen. Attending an Ōtaki Summer Camp a few months ago surrounded by peers who cared and took action for justice, environment and equality, helped me. I was totally inspired by them and left infected with everybody's energy and boldness. It gave me hope in real change and showed me that solving a massive systemic problem begins with the small actions of many people.

The prophets encourage us to take big and small steps to change systems — like breaths of wind grinding a stone to sand. Meeting other dreamers and changers like I did in Ōtaki keeps me thinking about the practical ways of working for change. Big world change will not come overnight and we will need not one but many prophets to show us a new world. Rather than being overwhelmed by the magnitude and number of problems we can see, we can ask what small things we can do.

I am taking action, even if the scale is small. I write submissions with patience, choose to bike places rather than drive, try to make ethical consumer choices, join volunteers in weeding lupins from our national parks, belong to a group that spends time with youth from the disadvantaged part of town, and study a subject that enables me to work in conservation.

With many others, the prophets are helping us make changes within the world we live in. As followers of the risen Christ, we are given an opportunity to look beyond ourselves for God's justice and speak up about it. In a world of stark injustices, I pray for strength to do my part to challenge them, thinking big and acting small. Just like a prophet.

Photo by Lev Radin/Shutterstock.com

Shar Mathias enjoys reading, running, tramping, music and a lot of other things. She studies ecology and lives in Dunedin.

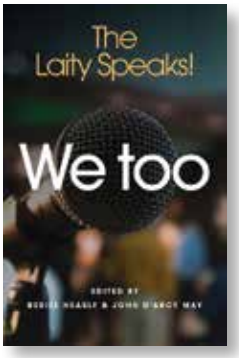
We Too: The Laity Speaks!

Edited by Berise Heasly and John D'Arcy May
Published by Coventry Press, 2020
Reviewed by Christina Reymer

BOOK

As the title suggests, this book presents a cry from the people to be heard, in regard to the gathering momentum for change, reform, regeneration or "refounding" of the Catholic Church. In the Australian context, it comes in the wake of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and an increasing awareness of clericalism in the Church, but the issues are in fact global. These include a failure to address inequality and injustice, particularly for marginalised peoples, whether they be women, LGBTQI or first nations peoples; and the failure to address climate change and hear the cry of Earth.

This book comes in the lead-up to the Plenary Council scheduled for October 2021, a once-in-a-century opportunity to institute canonical change in the Church. Its 12 high-calibre contributors present different perspectives on these issues, although a common thread is an overwhelming concern for the lack of openness and transparency in governance structures of the Church, in particular the exclusion of the laity and women in the decision-making process. The fear of many is that the bishops will attempt to "manage" their way through the process rather than embrace the Synodal Path as called for by Pope Francis.



I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in being part of the future of our Church.

Living With the Climate Crisis: Voices from Aotearoa

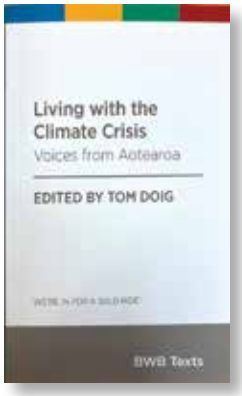
Edited by Tom Doig
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2020
Reviewed by Elizabeth Mackie

BOOK

In *Living with the Climate Crisis* editor Tom Doig has assembled 13 New Zealand writers to explore the climate crisis from a variety of perspectives. They include recent graduates from secondary schools, academics in relevant fields, economists, writers and poets, a landscape architect, a young city councillor, environmental activists. Māori are well represented, as well as Pacific voices from Niue and Samoa.

The chapters reflect the specific contexts and personal experience of each writer. This is not a heavily scientific volume; in fact, it is eminently accessible for a general readership. For those who wish to go further there are 20 pages of detailed notes to guide additional research and reading.

The 2020 publication date captures realities such as Australian bush fires, COVID-19, rising sea levels, drought and storms. But writers also reflect on the social and political contexts in which climate change is accelerating. There is emphasis on the importance of indigenous cultures, practices and language, the ongoing impact of colonisation and the effects of structural racism. And it has a strong emphasis on future generations and the responsibility of this generation to halt further environmental destruction, loss of biodiversity and to protect the future security of food sources on land and sea.



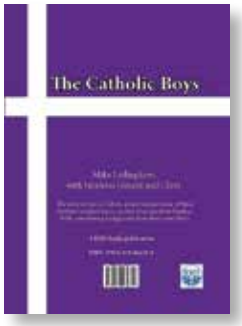
Contributor Tamatha Paul writes: "If we begin with harnessing our imagination, and work together so that everybody — truly everybody — in Aotearoa recognises this future as deserving of all our efforts and energies, for the people who will come long after we are gone, then that is the truest essence of being a good tūpuna."

The Catholic Boys

By Mike Ledingham with brothers Gerard and Chris
Published by BMS Books, 2019
Reviewed by Ann Gilroy

BOOK

The Catholic Boys is difficult reading. It is the personal story of three brothers who were sexually abused by Francis Green, one of the priests in the Auckland Onehunga parish in the 1960s and 70s. None of the brothers knew that the others were also victims of the priest. Each kept the abuse to himself until 2001 when, according to their sister Mary, the youngest brother was urged by his counsellor to share his story with his family — rightly assuming that he wouldn't have been the only victim. By this stage their mother was dead and the siblings no longer needed to protect her from the truth about the priest she had trusted.



It's a heartbreaking account of the mess that abuse makes in the lives of the brothers, the shame they felt, the self blame they endured, the betrayal by the Church, their impulse to keep the truth secret, the clerical culture that allowed the abuse to continue unnoticed and the dissatisfaction they felt with the Church's response to their revelations.

The brothers' siblings rallied around them when they heard the story, as did their families and some professionals.

This book is sad, even harrowing, because it is the voice of men who have been silenced for too long.

Cousins

Directed by Ainsley Gardiner and Briar Grace-Smith
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

FILM

Cousins tells the story of three Māori women – Mata, Missy and Makareta – who are swept together as children, lose track of each other, and are brought together again in circumstances that measure the distance each has travelled. Based on the novel of the same name by Patricia Grace, the text has been interpreted for the screen by Briar Grace-Smith, who also co-directs the film and plays the older Makareta.

Through the story of three remarkable wāhine, the film encompasses the Māori world of the mid-20th century, a time when it might easily have been swallowed up by a more aggressive European culture and society. It traverses the key concerns and values of Māori society, from family and community to the whenua, nurturing soil of the people and shaper of indigenous identity.

The cousin at the heart of the film is Mata, who is ironically the one most uprooted from her Māori identity. Abandoned by her mother and sent to the Mercy Home for Desolate Children, she is "adopted" by a stony-hearted Pākehā woman rather than being placed with her whānau. Mata turns her hurt inward, detaching herself from ordinary human feelings, keeping harm at bay by reciting a nursery rhyme as a kind of talisman.

Cousin Missy is the best adjusted of the three, mischievous as a child, practical and hardworking and the heart of a loving family. In a central scene, she replaces an unwilling Makareta at a marriage ceremony on the marae that links her people to another hapū – an alliance that they hope will enable them to hang onto their threatened lands. Makareta, the "spoiled one" as a child, is picked out by her mother as a future leader of her people. A gifted scholar, she takes the academic path, schooling herself in the legal knowledge drawn from the Pākehā world needed to supplement the efforts of grassroots folk like Missy in protecting their ancestral land from development.

Cousins is beautifully filmed, with every detail deftly supporting the unfolding of plot, theme and character. It is also a fluent and fluid piece of work, weaving the stories of three women (played across the generations by nine actors) into a seamless whole that commands our attention and respect throughout its 99 minutes. Highly recommended for readers wanting to understand more about the complex and often abrasive strands that have made up and continue to shape this country and its peoples.

CROSS CURRENTS

BY MARY BETZ

Iraq Pilgrimage

Television stations here gave surprisingly good coverage to the March trip by Pope Francis to Iraq: enough to see a dearth of masks and social distancing which seems at odds with Francis's usual ethic of care. The historic meeting with Iraqi Shiite leader Grand Ayatolla Sayyid Ali Al-Husayni Al-Sistani gleaned talk of "friendship, mutual respect and dialogue" among people of all ethnicities, cultures and religions, and a new Iraq National Day of Tolerance and Coexistence.

In the ancient city of Ur, Francis spoke with Muslims, Jews, leaders of other Christian Churches and religious minorities. Just as Abraham was called from Ur so, too, are we "called to leave behind those ties and attachments that, by keeping us enclosed in our own groups, prevent us from welcoming God's boundless love and from seeing others as our brothers and sisters." Francis set us this task: "May the great Patriarch help us to make our respective sacred places oases of peace and encounter for all!" A possible or impossible dream?

The Lifelong Fast

In this Easter season we may have stored away fasting along with our summer clothes. Marist leader Tim Duckworth called on his brothers to remember Isaiah 58:1-9, and our perennial and God-desired fast: sharing bread with the hungry, housing the homeless and releasing the oppressed. Like Pope Francis, Tim suggests the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a worthy focus for such fasting.

The 17 goals, from ending poverty and hunger to promoting well-being and the health of our planet, put the Gospel into action. Jesus, in the prophetic tradition, taught care for the poor, sick and hungry (Mt 25) and freedom for the oppressed (Lk 4), and lived his life accordingly. Tim Duckworth holds up a mirror to show us what young people think of us church-goers: "overly concerned with ourselves as related to God and not that much concerned with the gospel message" — a disturbing image we would do well to examine more closely.

When Millionaires Pay Less Tax than Lowest-income Earners

Stuff's Thomas Coughlan recently reviewed last year's Treasury finding that 42 per cent of the wealthiest New Zealanders were paying less than 10 per cent of their total income in taxes — even less than the 10.5 per cent rate paid by our lowest income earners. These wealthiest New Zealanders hold most of their wealth in parts of the economy which are taxed lightly or not at all — for example, housing or trusts. The wealthiest 5 per cent (188,000 people) keep $263 billion in trusts.

The wealthiest 10 per cent of New Zealanders hold 59 per cent of the country's assets; the middle class who comprise the next 40 per cent of population own 39 per cent of our wealth; and the poorest half of our population share only 2 per cent of New Zealand's assets. Our wealth inequality is in the worse half of OECD countries.

Over the last 30 years, the lower 90 per cent of us have become between 1 and 17 per cent worse off financially, according to New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services project Closer Together Whakatata Mai. As studies have consistently shown, countries with high inequality have higher rates of child poverty and imprisonment, and poorer physical and mental health outcomes. Our government frowns upon capital gains and wealth taxes so how does it intend to address this insidious problem?

TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

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

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

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Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd,
52 Union Street West,
Dunedin North, 9054
PO Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9059

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Email: editor@tuimotu.org

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Editor: Ann L Gilroy RSJ

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Design & layout: Greg Hings

Proofreader: Christine Crowe

Printers: Southern Colour Print, Dunedin

Board Directors: Judith McGinley OP (chair), Neil Darragh, Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey, Cathrine Harrison, Agnes Hermans, Chris Loughnan OP

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Bank: BNZ 02-0929-0277471-00

ISSN 1174-8931
Issue number 258

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

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

DISAGREEING WITH CHRIS FINLAYSON

Chris Finlayson's "Being Catholic in Political Life" (*TM* March 2021) is an unpleasant read. Having used the term "smorgasbord Catholics" to condemn political opponents Biden and Pelosi, he admits he "diverge[s] from the mainstream view of the Church hierarchy on many matters". He himself picks and chooses.

Without evidence he claims those Democrats get "a special exemption from the Church" ignoring the US bishops' conference attack on President Biden, mentioned by Phyllis Zagano (see p15). He says the State should not be involved in any kind of marriage, but cannot see that the State has a huge interest in not letting people take five wives, or marry 11 year-olds, and more.

He credits/blames Catholicism for joining the National Party, listing four reasons, but it is false to say that individual worth, a society governed by laws, or reconciliation and forgiveness distinguish that Party. It is also untrue that individual effort and creativity are the defining features of Catholicism.

He complains that Catholic social justice teaching is used as a "cover for left-wing redistributionist views". How appalling that everyone should be fed and housed! Would life in NZ be improved if poor children were not educated? Could it be that he is far, far from the teachings he thinks he represents? He was a respected lawyer, so well regarded that his party made him a minister, but he has nothing to teach your readers.

Laurie C Williams, Auckland (abridged)

ENCYCLICAL FOR US IN AOTEAROA

Thank you for publishing the pieces on *Fratelli Tutti* in *TM* March and Letters with readers' views in *TM* April. The fact that Pope Francis's letter may be wordy or use awkward turns of phrase should not let it overshadow the fact that it brings together so much of value.

Many paragraphs have real relevance to us and our country: par 14 cultural colonisation; par 35 post-pandemic life; par 158 the concept of "a people"; par 162 employment; par 142-3 the value of local as opposed to universal (perhaps turangawaewae); and par 219 cultural covenant.

Neil Darragh challenges the reader to pick out a single sentence that could serve us in this part of the world as a motto for our own social friendship and mission action. I couldn't go past this from par 53: "A land will be fruitful, and its people bear fruit and give birth to the future, only to the extent that it can foster a sense of belonging among its members, create bonds of integration between generations and different communities, and avoid all that makes us insensitive to others and leads to further alienation."

Graeme Siddle, Palmerston North

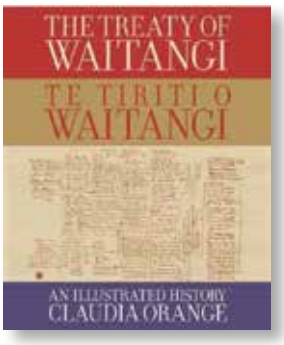
Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi: An Illustrated History

by Claudia Orange
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2021
Reviewed by Joe Holland

BOOK

Claudia Orange delivers a compelling, beautifully presented book illustrating the journey of tangata whenua and other New Zealanders with the Treaty of Waitangi as the foundation. She describes those personally involved in the story from the signing of Te Tiriti to the Land Wars, land confiscations and protests. It is a very real and revealing volume of New Zealand history.

Claudia aims to educate the reader, providing a balanced account of the signing of Te Tiriti to the present day. The book has an emotional impact, as the reader is moved through the spirit and principles recognised now as underlying the Treaty. From Te Pahi to Ihumātao, it exposes the sheer volume of kōrero and intent of the people wanting redress for the wrongs of our past. Claudia's account is the anchor allowing us to settle on a deeper understanding of our past as we look to the future, and to acknowledge what the people of Aotearoa have accomplished together.



It's a captivating read, supported by marvellous illustrations and photographs and an excellent resource and reference text for all New Zealanders, especially those involved in education or with an interest in history. As a history teacher I know I'll use this book extensively for years to come.

Looking OUT and IN

Yesterday it was before dawn when we started cycling up the Port Hills. The sky was a dark navy but as we climbed higher, we noticed that the rounded cloud bellies (a row of full, sleeping puppies) were brushed by a dark crimson. Slowly we puffed our way up and watched the sky arched over the Canterbury plains play through its *adagio* of dawn colours. Phrases of rose and apricot danced across the clouds and floating impassively on the western horizon were the eggplant hues of the Torlesse foothills. This was a fanciful dawn. But then Jeph's bike brakes stopped working and he flipped the bike upside down on the gravel. While he fiddled with Allen keys, I looked about and noticed more purple: on the roadside was a blackberry bush grinning with a mix of red and dark purple berries. As the tart berries sparked tang and sour in my mouth and the bike repair job took longer and longer, I thought back to other blackberry memories.

In my early teens, autumn would find me and my favourite older cousin clambering along the banks for the Ngutawera stream near Putāruru, chattering, as we filled farm billies with blackberries. Often enough we would "fall" into the river and then make our bedraggled way back to the Rāpuke kitchen with our contribution to the evening's blackberry and apple crumble feeling jubilant and generous.

A golden Sunday on the Guatemalan highlands in 1991 was also etched in blackberries. I was a 21-year-old taking a gap year and volunteering for World Vision. I was tasked with teaching a group of village health volunteers and struggling to learn Spanish. I felt lonely and inept (how absurd for a Kiwi med student with little idea about the social and cultural health determinants of this place, to teach health to this indigenous community). But that morning, newly-married Jorge and Maria said they planned to skip Mass, and invited me to join them collecting *moras* at a favourite spot an hour's walk away. The blackberry bushes were covered with fruit as black, shiny and sweet as any in Aotearoa. We tied up the mule loaded with the picnic lunch and after we had eaten as many blackberries as we could, we lay in the sun and talked about small and easy things that I could understand. When it was time to head back to the village, Jorge filled his sombrero with blackberries to share with his younger siblings. I felt so happy to belong and to be able to converse.

On a farm above Ngongotaha one April 10 years later, I remember many scratches on my arms from reaching into prickle fortressed bushes for the purple berries. One of my six-month-old twin daughters was dozing in a backpack with me, while my friend Marion was loaded up with my other baby daughter. As we filled ice-cream containers for blackberry jam, we talked about raising children with music in their lives, harvesting honey and forming community in the rural Bay of Plenty. My sleep-deprived and exhausted self felt sustained to be in relationship, to be doing something together and to have something to show for my day.

Each time, blackberry gathering was a welcome excuse for doing something together, for finding treasure through the thorns, building relationships and learning boundaries.

Jeph's mountain bike repairs were finally done. The sun now splashed us generously with morning warmth. As we cycled off, I resolved to return to these blackberry bushes in another week when more berries should be ripe. Arriving home, I found the kupu for today in my inbox was waiporoporo (purple). An onomatopoeia perhaps for this dawn and for these beautiful fruit linked so inextricably to relationships and autumn.

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May cooperation become the currency among countries to solve the problems of excess and want in Earth Risen Christ.

From the *Tui Motu* team