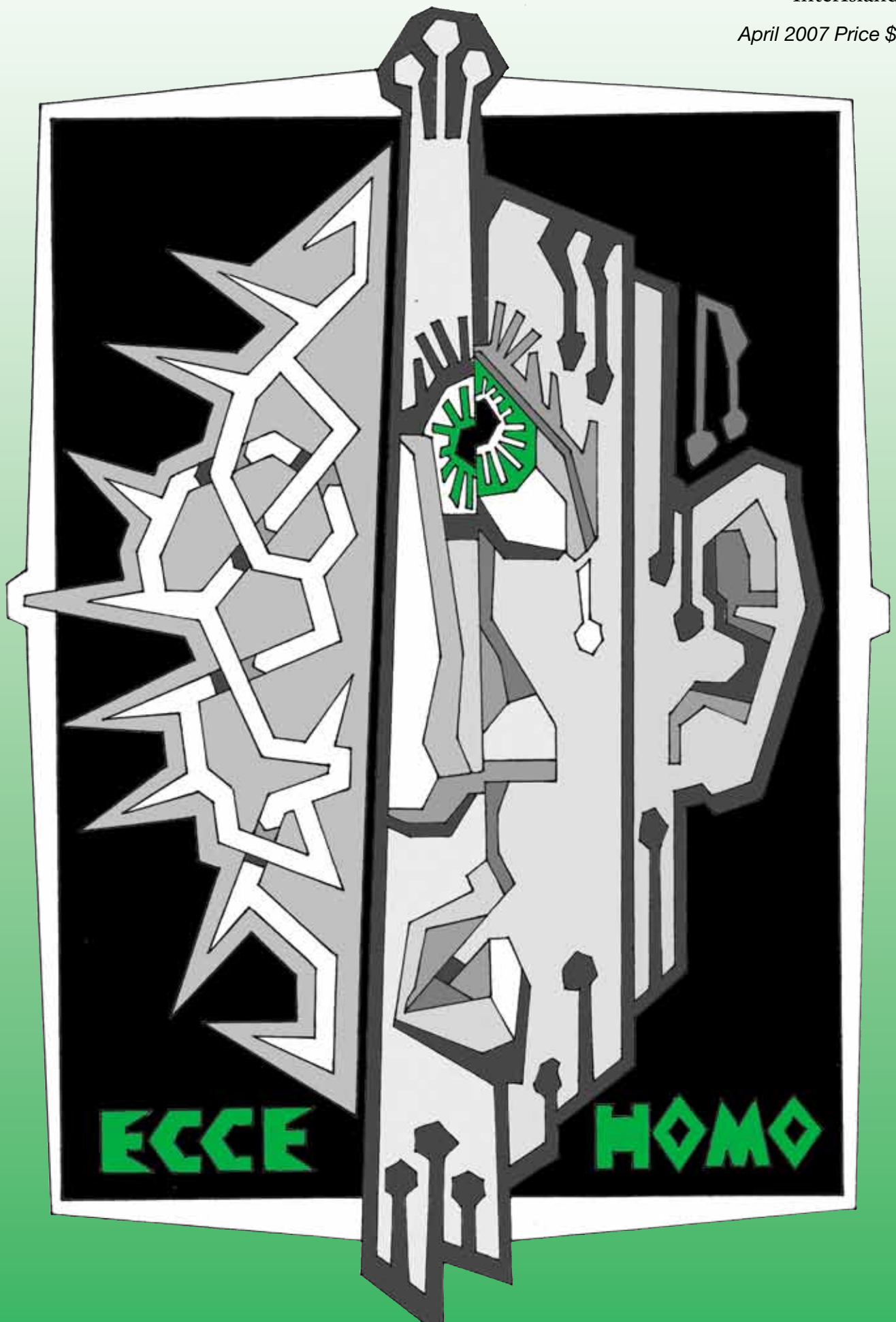


Tui Motu

InterIslands

April 2007 Price \$5



Behold the Man!

Contents

2-3	Editorial <i>Mary Betz</i>
4	letters
5-7	Ecce Homo! – <i>a meditation</i> <i>Paul Oestreicher</i>
8-9	Choosing life <i>Dennis Horton</i>
10	On Emmaus road <i>Mike Riddell</i>
11-12	Saving the planet <i>Ron Sharp</i>
13-14	The cry of the trees of the forest interview with <i>Michael Mrong</i>
14-15	A hitchhiker's guide to God <i>Jeph Mathias</i>
16-17	Face values <i>Tina Beattie</i>
18-19	The call of the soul: pilgrimage to Hiruharama <i>Kathleen Gallagher</i>
20	The smacking debate – we need to change <i>Glynn Cardy</i>
21-23	Aussie panorama interview with <i>David Ranson</i>
24-25	In Lent we grow by dying <i>Daniel O'Leary</i>
26-27	Remembering our religious teachers with gratitude <i>Sean Brosnahan</i>
27	Reflecting on <i>John</i> <i>Susan Smith</i>
28-29	Film and Book reviews <i>Paul Sorrell, Kevin Toomey, Michael Hill</i>
30	Crosscurrents <i>John Honoré</i>
31	Document on Eucharist <i>Humphrey O'Leary</i>
32	A mother's journal <i>Kaaren Mathias</i>
poetry: <i>Dennis Horton, Mark Laurent</i>	

April cover:

Ecce Homo! – Behold the man!
The words of Pontius Pilate as he
presented Jesus to the people
before condemning him to be
crucified

All our sunsets lead to dawns, said an early church writer. He was referring to Easter – or rather what theologians call the paschal mystery. Jesus suffered that he might rise again: the two are inseparably linked. And it is the pattern of our own lives too. No achievement happens without pain. The joy of new life is preceded by the pangs of birth. No forgiveness can happen without genuine contrition.

So when we gaze on the face of the crucified Christ we know by faith that this is how it had to be: this was the price of human redemption and the measure of God's love for each human being. Our leading article this month is a wonderful meditation by Paul Oestreicher on Epstein's statue of Christ *Ecce Homo* in the ravaged ruin of the old Coventry Cathedral.

The visitor passes by this horrific image of Good Friday into the fine modern cathedral which rose on the ashes of the old, there to behold Grahame Suther-

land's magnificent tapestry of *Christ in Majesty* – from Calvary to Easter.

Pilgrimage is one way of identifying one's own life journey with the paschal event. Most pilgrimages have a penitential aspect. In the Middle Ages thousands of pilgrims journeyed on foot for months to go to Compostella, to Rome or other shrines. Three articles in our Easter issue are about journeys – all vernacular pieces, told with the immediacy of events experienced and reflected upon.

Mike Riddell gives us a countryman's account of the journey to Emmaus. Jeph Mathias describes a challenging conversation he had while hitchhiking with a friend. And Kathleen Gallagher writes of an actual pilgrimage to Jerusalem on the Whanganui River in the footsteps of Suzanne Aubert and James K Baxter. In each case we read of a moment of grace, a faith-enhancing change which is what I hope this Easter will be all about for each of us.

Saving the earth

Global warming is the single most serious challenge which the world is facing. Yet many political leaders and most industrial magnates are in denial, in spite of the now overwhelming scientific evidence. The Catholic church has until recent times had a blind spot regarding the ecology of the earth. Yet, as Fr Sean McDonagh has pointed out on his recent speaking tour, we are talking essentially of issues regarding the *common good*, a recurrent theme of Papal statements on justice.

Another fundamental tenet of Christian belief which underpins any campaign to care for the earth is echoed in the *NZ Bishops' Statement* cited by Mary Betz opposite. It was central to the writings of the eminent Jesuit scientist and spiritual writer,

Teilhard de Chardin. For Teilhard, every human action – for good or evil – is part of ongoing creation. "There is a sense," he writes, "in which God is at the tip of my pen, my spade, my brush, my needle – of my heart and of my thought" (*Le milieu divin*). We are co-creators of the world we live in – and not just the parts we touch or see, since everything is interconnected.

"By virtue of the Creation, and, still more, of the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane." So it is no exaggeration to say that we are in part responsible for the world our grandchildren will enjoy. To preserve this beautiful world, and indeed to enhance it, is a sacred, profoundly religious duty. What a truly Paschal ideal!

M.H.

Respecting Creation

Mary Betz

The New Zealand government's long overdue documents, *Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change* and *Draft New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy*, offer discussion and action options both for adapting to climate change and for contributing to global efforts to decrease its severity. As the 12th highest greenhouse gas emitters per capita, will New Zealanders finally be galvanised to salvage our endangered clean green image?

New Zealand's Kyoto commitment requires that we reduce carbon emissions in the years 2008-2012 to 1990 levels or face penalties. We are set to overreach our limits by 30 percent, primarily due to increases in deforestation, agricultural animals and motor vehicle emissions. The government estimates that international penalties will amount to \$1.2 billion if no action is taken to address the issues. Hence the documents full of proposals.

Ironically, many of the proposals for mitigating the effects of climate change are ones which environmental scientists have been hoping to integrate into agriculture and forestry practices, building codes, industrial standards and transportation planning for the last 40 years. Home insulation, incentives for renewable energy, cost or incentive measures for efficient vehicles, reforestation, and the reduction of nitrogen fertilisers and energy-wasting

appliances will be beneficial both for the climate and the rest of the environment. Such measures will help prevent water pollution, soil erosion and flooding; they will also cut energy consumption, especially from non-renewable carbon-emitting sources like coal, oil and gas.

It is not only our government which is being environmentally motivated by climate change economics. In October of last year, United Kingdom Treasury and Former World Bank economist Nicholas Stern produced an economic evaluation demonstrating that the cost of reducing greenhouse gas emissions now would be a fraction of the cost of dealing with environmental and social impacts of severe climate change later.

The report prompted the United Kingdom's 2007 climate change Bill and a pledge to reduce carbon emissions 60 percent by 2050. Now that it looks to be in the economic interests of governments and corporations to clean up their environmental acts, market forces may be allies in our conversion to environmental sustainability. Climate change is making strange bedfellows!

Climate change is surely one of the most important challenges facing our world in this century: even if we are able to limit it, it will exacerbate all existing social problems – whether poverty, hunger, disease or war – and it is affecting poor countries sooner and more severely than developed countries.

In their 1997 statement, *A Consistent Ethic of Life: Te Kahu-o-te-Ora*, our Bishops reminded us that “Within creation all life forms are interconnected. Our actions, the things we use, the way we use them, and the wastes we produce need to respect the integrity of creation.” It is this deep respect for our earth, and an understanding of our oneness with it and with all peoples, that must be nurtured within each of us.

Last year in their environmental justice statement, the New Zealand Bishops called us to “bring our spiritual and moral attention to the environmental problems we are facing, because our society needs to generate the political will needed to make hard decisions.”

Our government may well find its political will to mitigate climate change partially aided and abetted by economic imperatives. We too may be encouraged to live more sustainably if we can see a decrease in our power or petrol bills.

But our moral imperative to make good lifestyle choices and involve ourselves in societal change ultimately comes from a spirituality which understands and respects the integrity of creation. It is from this kind of inner conviction that we can make the hard decisions – individual as well as political – that will enable us to pass our earth in all its sacredness into the hands of our children and grandchildren. ■

Mary Betz is an environmental scientist and theologian working as the Auckland Regional Coordinator for Caritas.



ISSN 1174-8931

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

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd, P O Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9030

Phone: 03 477 1449; Fax: 03 477 8149; email: tui motu@earthlight.co.nz; website: www.tuimotu.org

Editor: Michael Hill IC; **Assistant Editor:** Frances Skelton; **Illustrator:** Don Moorhead

Directors: Margaret Butler OP, Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey, Tom Cloher, Robin Kearns, Chris Loughnan OP, Elizabeth Mackie OP, Katie O'Connor (Chair), Kathleen Rushton RSM

The 'art' of liturgical translating

I write with reference to the *International Commission on English in the Liturgy* who plan to introduce new phrasing to the words of the Consecration at Mass. They translate the words *pro multis* as "for many" in the new English translation of the Missal, saying that this is a closer rendition of the Latin (*hoi polloi* in Greek). Personally, I think that the words "for you and for all" should be replaced with "for you and the riff raff" as being much closer to the Good Lord's intentions than the much narrower and potentially exclusive "for you and for many."

I'm not certain how to get this onto the agenda of the ICEL, but I would also like to nominate another word for reinterpretation. The word *Lent* seems to me to be singularly inappropriate for Southern Hemisphere use. It means "lengthening" and refers to the fact that, at this time of year, in the Northern Hemisphere the days are getting longer. We of the other hemisphere could usefully adopt this type of thinking and rename the season "Shortening". Not only would such a name reflect that our days are shortening, but it would also remind us of the diminishing time left to us in which we can prepare to meet our God.

I look forward to seeing tasteful, powerpoint presentations in my parish to the words of a new Lenten - sorry, that should read - "Shortening" hymn: "Mama's little Baby loves shortening, shortening ..."

Mike Noonan, Dunedin

letters to the editor

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not altering meaning.

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

A bouquet for Tui Motu ...

Tui Motu is a warm and wondrous way to share growth in faith – without the confining boundaries imposed by 'church'. There almost seems to be a quiet evolution going on, outside church structures, where people on God-seeking journeys are recognised and relating to each other.

Maybe it is happening as a reaction to the strident, frightening fundamentalism in world religions and to the rigidity of power-focussed religions.

Maybe – if we remain still enough for a few moments – we might just hear and come to like our neighbours. Now there's a radical thought!

Peter McRae, Whakatane

... and a brickbat

To give up some pleasure for Lent, to say extra prayers and to donate to charity is an heroic effort for many people who are less gifted than the Editor. He is wrong to so patronisingly belittle them.

Joan Firth, Dunedin

The plight of the Pacific peoples

I was glad to read articles in the last year on global warming and especially the reference to Kiribati.

Two ministers in the Australian government have recently expressed real concern for refugees and succeeded in having a particularly horrific Bill withdrawn from the Senate. *Rural Australians for Refugees* will be keeping an eye on the problem of environmental refugees from now on.

A recent statement from *Friends of the Earth Australia* stated that "following the Australian government's refusal to accept any Tuvalan environmental refugees, New Zealand agreed to accept all 11,000". However, it is noted that the elderly and poor are excluded as 'principal applicants'. Will they be accepted later?

Pam Green, Eagle Heights, Q'land

Ms Bradford and anti-smacking

I read with interest your article on the anti-smacking' Bill. You commend Sue Bradford as a 'person of principle, standing for the underdog and not afraid to stick her neck out'.

Did we ever hear her champion the rights of the unborn child? There was her chance to uphold human rights for the most vulnerable. Did she lack courage as so many do and prefer to bury the talent which could have made your description complete?

R.J.Kavanagh, Wanganui.

I do not know Ms Bradford's views on abortion. However, we commend her – and will continue to support her – in the many excellent and truly Christian causes she espouses.

– ed.

Tui Motu Foundation

The Trustees of the *Tui Motu Foundation* recently held their first meeting in Dunedin. The Trust has been set up by the *Tui Motu* Board to accumulate capital either by gifts or interest received from loans (debentures). The Fund will need to be a steadily growing cash asset. It is hoped that this Fund will secure *Tui Motu* for the foreseeable future.

The five Trustees appointed by the *Tui Motu* Board are: John Gallaher (*chair*); Rita Cahill RSJ; Malcolm Farry; Elizabeth Mackie OP; and Mrs Jackie Wood. The Fund is growing steadily. To date gifts and donations have been received from some 70 organisations and individuals.

The Trustees are very pleased with progress so far.

ecce homo!

a holy week meditation

Jesus before Pilate – defenceless, tortured, about to shed the rest of his blood – is one of the most moving moments of Good Friday.

For Canon Paul Oestreicher this figure, this moment in the Passion, personifies the dignity of every tortured human being



Not many of us have the inner resources to look suffering in the face. What we have not seen, we have not seen. As with the priest and Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan, there is always some good reason to look away. After World War II many Germans, when the killing was over, swore they had no idea what had happened to their Jewish neighbours. Today newspaper editors think twice before publishing the photos of the humiliation of hooded and naked Iraqis. It's doubly hard when the perpetrators are ours, not theirs.

For many years it was my privilege to take visitors to Coventry, in central England, on a dramatic Cathedral pilgrimage from crucifixion to resurrection: through the bombed medieval ruin to Basil Spence's visionary modern Cathedral.

The first station was always at the altar with its cross of charred beams, inscribed behind it, the words of Jesus on the Cross: **Father forgive** – not **forgive them**, which would have pointed only at the bombers of 1940. War-time Provost Richard Howard never tired of preaching that all have failed and need to be forgiven, that it must always mean us and them.

Many people were so moved by this simple message that they were in no hurry to move on. From there it was only a few steps to Jacob Epstein's *Ecce Homo*, Jesus arraigned before Pilate, awaiting the sentence of death. When they looked up at the massive stone figure with its powerful tortured face, their most common reaction was one of estranged rejection. They wanted to move on quickly. My pointing out that this was probably the most valuable and most profound work of art the Cathedral possessed was often met with puzzlement.

*when they looked up
at the massive stone figure
with its powerful tortured face
they wanted to move
on quickly*

It took me time to realise that this was the measure of a great sculptor's success, not failure. So deeply had one Jew identified with the suffering of another that producing a popular depiction of Jesus was not an option. So devastatingly alone, abandoned, is Jesus at this moment, facing a hostile, scoffing crowd. *Behold the*

man! just look at him! – that is the last thing we want to do.

Epstein wanted his Jesus, the product of more than a decade's arduous work, to be placed in a church. Selby Abbey was not the only place that turned his offer down.

That rejection of the artist and of his vision was both hurtful and symbolic. *Ecce Homo* was to remain in the sculptor's studio for the rest of his life. Only later did it find its spiritual home in the Coventry ruin.

The block of Subiaco stone that eventually became *Behold the Man* was "the toughest, most difficult piece of stone I had ever tackled. All the tools I had broke on it... until I finally hit on one that began to make an impression on the stone". "This was a sculpture", wrote Richard Cork, "that was concerned above all with suffering and endurance. So the long travail experienced by its maker... informed the meaning he conveyed" (*Epstein As Carver* by Richard Cork).

Epstein had abandoned the orthodox Jewish beliefs of his family. That gave him the freedom to identify spiritually with the dissident Jew, Jesus of Nazareth. *Ecce Homo* was followed by an equally monumental work *Consummatum Est – It is Finished*, inspired by listening to the *Crucifixus* section of Bach's B Minor Mass. He experienced "a feeling of tremendous quiet, of awe... I see immediately the upturned hands, with the wounds in the feet, stark, crude, with the stigmata". Is it possible to get closer to the Suffering Servant than that?

Jesus facing the judgment of the world is an example of carving that is simplified to the point of crudeness. "There is about this bruised yet resilient face", comments Richard Cork, "a hint of self-portraiture, suggesting that Epstein identified himself with a man battered by hostility and ridicule but stubbornly undismayed by the humiliation he had suffered.

"*Behold the Man* is a partially autobiographical work, evincing the sculptor's determination to continue carving in the face of the most dispiriting antagonism. In that respect it seems appropriate that the statue remained in Epstein's studio until his death".

It would nevertheless be a misreading of Epstein's intention to personalise this totemic symbol of suffering or to reduce it to its Jewish origins. Nor is Epstein an evangelist. The redemption of the world is for theologians to interpret. His theme is the humanity of Christ, the universal, timeless martyr. Hence the face of Jesus that bears no visual relation to Jewishness, let alone to the classic Renaissance Jesus of so much Christian art.

The face that Epstein carved was outside a conventional historical framework. It seems to belong to pre-history. Epstein had studied what we condescendingly call 'primitive' art and found it to be moving and spiritually perceptive, particularly in ancient South American civilisation. This strong, noble, suffering face of Jesus would not feel alien

even to modern native Americans. Their ancestors had been hunted and decimated by the European conquistadors. That left its mark on Epstein's sensitivity.

Timeless, yes. But the artist was working in the century of Auschwitz and the Gulag, of apartheid and of bloody military dictatorships in that same Latin America. Perhaps no century has produced more martyrs. This abandoned Jesus is their prototype, personifying the dignity of every tortured human being.

That dignity found its ultimate expression in his limitless compassion. He could and he did empathise with his torturers and executioners. He was with them,

even in their invincible ignorance: *Father forgive them for they do not understand what they are doing*. Is that not a generic description of the human condition?

A great deal of Christian devotion notwithstanding, Jesus was like us. I see his face in Gordon Wilson, Protestant Ulsterman who was standing beside his daughter when an IRA bomb tore her apart. Forgiveness for the terrorists was his immediate response. The Irish Republic perceptively made him a Senator. Here is an illustration of what George Fox, the father of Quakerism, called 'that of God' in each of us.

I see the face of Jesus in every solitary witness to humanity, abandoned by most other Christians and so often by the leaders of the church, left to the mercies of a cruel state. Did not Jesus' own congregation in Nazareth, disturbed by the challenge of his preaching of Yahweh's indiscriminate love for Jews and foreigners alike, turn into a lynch mob?

In the resolute face of Jesus I see the devout peasant Franz Jaegerstaetter, who confronted not only Hitler's state but also his patriotic bishop in a lonely act of spiritual insight which, in that context, was astonishing: "If I take part in a war of aggression against the people of other nations I will be betraying my Lord".

He knew he would be beheaded. He was. Somewhere in heaven he will be allowed a wry smile when later this year he is beatified by a German Pope in the presence of his aged widow, if by then she has not been called to join Franz.

In the tortured face of Jesus I see many a zealous Russian priest, abandoned by a compliant hierarchy and left to his fate in the Gulag. I see the visionary Socialist Rosa Luxemburg, in love with life, in love with the poor, tossed into a Berlin canal by those who feared for their riches.

I see Sophie School, the Munich student, distributing leaflets denouncing a murderous state and facing the hangman without hate. I see the four Jesuit priests, friends of the poor, preachers of liberation, murdered by the military in Central America.

It is an endlessly unfolding, universal tale recorded in the annals of God's Kingdom and, more mundanely today, of *Amnesty International*. Its heroes, most of them unsung, are women and men of every race, of every religion and of none. In an act of imagination, Westminster Abbey has found a place for some of them carved in stone on its West Front.

Was Jesus really just one of them? Classically so, for there is no hierarchy of suffering. His death was the product of an unholy alliance of church – Temple, to be accurate – and state. The protection of established religion and of public order made it necessary. The common good demanded it, an old and very modern tale.

It is for example the story of William Tyndale, to whom we largely owe the best of the English language. To put the Bible into the people's hands was held to be dangerously subversive of both church and state. On reflection, it still is.

That is not where this reflection ends but before it does I must reveal that, in the heart of London, I encountered a sculpted companion, a soul-mate of Epstein's Christ (I take the risk of calling *Ecce Homo* Christ for the only time, for might it not be that in some indefinable sense the sculptor did glimpse something of the mystery beyond his subject's humanity?)

I was walking through London to an ecumenical meeting. My path took me through a narrow passage between the Royal Festival Hall and the railway line from Charing Cross to Waterloo. I was stopped in my tracks by a sculpted massive head, a strong and suffering face, the face of Nelson Mandela in the days of his imprisonment on Robin Island.

Ken Livingstone's *Greater London Council* had commissioned it as an act of prophetic courage at a time when to Downing Street and much of Britain Mandela was simply a terrorist. This was no likeable head. No site more prominent could be found for it. This was not the genial and adored statesman the world now venerates. This was the unpopular suffering face of courage. The aesthetic and spiritual bond with *Ecce Homo* was and is amazing.

Some will ask: *am I daring to compare Jesus to lesser mortals, albeit to the best of them?* Of course I am. That is what Incarnation means. The child in the stable and the man dying between two robbers was of our kith and kin. Superman is for Hollywood. That does not invalidate the

mystical theology on the other side of the coin, God in man made manifest.

When the Coventry pilgrims have passed Jesus facing Pilate and moved to the sculpture of reconciled enemies embracing, they are on the way into a 20th century Cathedral that is testimony to the reality of Christ today living in the hearts of all who share their love which is also his love with a world waiting to be healed. It is the journey from Good Friday to Easter, from a sentence of death to the affirmation of life.

But when the Hallelujahs have been sung, a few, like the beloved disciple and the women at the cross, may quietly return to the ruin and sit in the stillness of the evening before the gates are shut to contemplate gratefully as they behold the man. ■

Paul Oestreicher is a Canon Emeritus of Coventry Cathedral and Quaker Chaplain to the University of Sussex. This piece is also being published in the English Church Times, who kindly forwarded to us the picture of Epstein's Ecce Homo.

Creation

(Psalm 131)

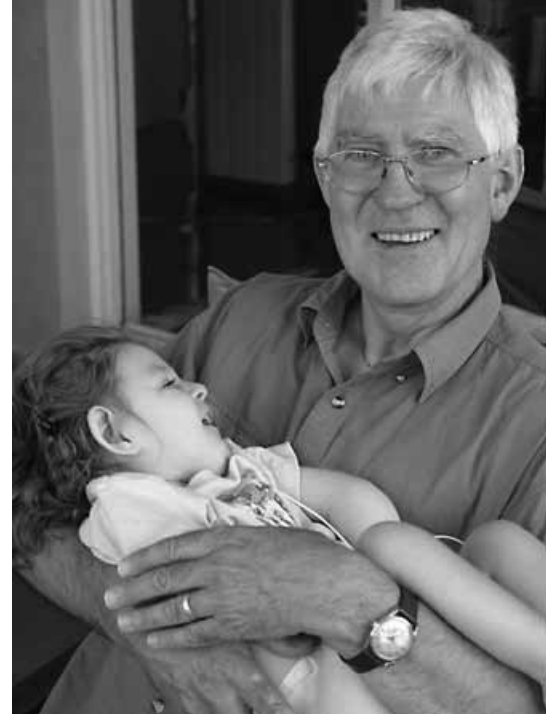
When you created the world, my God,
you didn't rest for long.
The seventh day passed, you were up early,
baking bread, planting out the garden,
tending to your children,
all of which was a surprise to me
who'd thought of creation as a one-time event.
I believed that somewhere out there
you'd pointed the remote control
at darkness for a single big bang.
I was so busy seeking evidence in the sky,
I missed the simple truths of the heart,
the warm soup and wounds kissed better,
cod liver oil in a teaspoon
and being told to eat my greens.
I discovered that no need is too small for you,
no domestic detail is ever missed.

I guess that when school gets out
I won't be looking for some dazzling angel
but a floury apron and a warm hand
to lead me home.

Joy Cowley

Choosing life

*All human life is precious –
never more so than when it is fragile.
For Dennis Horton, to help bear
the cross of another human being
is an Easter experience*



Dennis Horton with grandniece Aria Clarkin
– surviving with love against all the odds.

A weekend visit across the Tasman earlier this year, spent with a family member battling a life-threatening illness, coincided with coverage in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Australians who travel to Switzerland in pursuit of assisted suicide. With five already dead, among them Sydney GP John Elliot whose death in January was widely publicised, another 30 Australians have registered with the Swiss organisation *Dignitas*. Describing assisted suicide as “the last freedom” for people with terminal illness, its founder Ludwig Minelli quips that life is “a sexually transmitted disease, with a 100 percent mortality rate.”

Concern in Australia over the procedures adopted by *Dignitas* centres on both the speed with which foreign clients die (some admitted to the Zurich clinic in the morning are dead by 4pm that day) and on the fact that some whose lives have ended there were not terminally ill at all, but depressed

or old. Yet in the long run, neither these concerns nor the NZ\$7000 that *Dignitas* charges may be enough to dissuade a growing number in societies like ours, which equate life with wellness and struggle to see any purpose in sickness or pain, from wanting to end it all when life seems too difficult, for themselves or those close to them.

Against this backdrop, Auckland’s newly resited *Mercy Hospice*, officially opened by the Prime Minister in March, stands for a trend that is increasingly counter-cultural. Hospice care is not aimed at curing people or enabling them to live well, but at helping them to find meaning in illness and to die well. It’s this kind of care, described by Pope Benedict in his message for *World Day of the Sick* this year as “integral” – offering both professional skill and spiritual accompaniment – that is the heart of real palliative care and, in the Pope’s estimation, the right of every

person who lives with incurable disease or terminal illness.

Walking close to those facing the spectre of death has been a hallmark of Mercy care since Catherine McAuley’s own time, so much of it spent with the sick and dying. The reward for those privileged to share the journey is to discover that the true measure of every life lies not in health or illness, but in a love that enriches lives, lightens the burden of care and reaches out beyond grief and loss.

It was that same kind of love which suffused our family gathering in Sydney, as three generations saw a visit from their Kiwi brother and uncle as a reason for being together. In a simple home Eucharist we were able to give thanks that at the heart of our world is a God who can turn even our falling apart at the seams into something that brings life.

Each one is precious, whether it’s a grandfather in his mid-60s whose lungs are wearing out, or two-year-old Aria, born with multiple complications, for whom each day is fraught with challenge as, with her parents’ tender and tireless care, she continues to survive against all the odds. Both she and her granddad live with the surety of our love; and all of us are enriched in its giving and receiving.

Calling all new Irish or Polish immigrants to New Zealand.

Here’s a chance to find friends and establish networks.

Write or call to:

John Joe Lynch, 15 Loch St., Remuera, Auckland
phone: 09 522 1728

He inoi: Prayer

A world in process

*E TE ATUA, hau taiao,
Breath of the cosmos:
be with us in our labouring
to bring to birth,
to nourish and sustain all life,
rejoicing to see at every turn
the myriad images
of your love.*

*Be with us in our living,
in our zest for life,
in our growing and maturing,
claiming our place in the world,
at home in our earth,
with our hopes and dreams
of a future we strive
to build for our children.*

*Be with us in our struggle,
in our disappointment and pain,
when our dreams shatter
and our lives fall apart at the seams.
Give us hope to believe,
not that things will turn out well,
but that life makes sense,
come what may.*

*Be with us in our dying,
losing all, to find ourselves anew.
Show us a world unfinished,
still in the process of unfolding.
Let us seize every moment
as a gift to be cherished,
knowing that in the end,
only what we do with love
will last, in mercy's name.*

Amen

Dennis Horton



ADULT EDUCATION TRUST

Spirituality, Personal Formation, Social and Environmental Concern
www.aet.net.nz

Sr Joan Chittister OSB

NZ Visit July 2007

“Spirituality & Culture: Sacred Challenges to a Secular World”

Joan is a significant visionary spiritual voice in the world today – a Benedictine sister from Eire, Pennsylvania USA, social psychologist, author of over 30 books, and a regular columnist for the National Catholic Reporter. Joan has an MA in communication arts, and has received a number of honorary degrees and awards in recognition of her outstanding work in justice, peace and equality in the church and society. She is Executive Director of Benetvision, a resource & research site for contemporary spirituality: www.benetvision.org

Christchurch: Friday 6th July – Evening Lecture (\$10) 7.30 - 9.00pm: St Margaret's College Chapel
Saturday 7th July – Day Event (\$45) 10am - 4pm: St Margaret's College Chapel
Enquiries/bookings: www.aet.net.nz or adulthoodeducationtrust@xtra.co.nz

Wellington: Tuesday 10th July – Evening Lecture (\$10) 7.30 - 9.00pm: St Mary's College Hall
Wednesday 11th July – Day Event (\$45) 9.30am - 3.30pm: St Joseph's Church, Mt Victoria
Enquiries/bookings: marcellinrsm@xtra.co.nz

Auckland: Saturday 14th July – Day Event (\$45) 9.30am - 3.30pm: Cecilia Maher Hall, St Mary's College, Ponsonby. Enquiries/bookings: mercycentre Auckland@xtra.co.nz – Ph 09 638 6238

Sunday 15th July – 10.30am St-Mathews-in-the-City

On Emmaus Road

Mike Riddell

I remember thinking it was a bit dodgy, having this guy stay with us the night. I mean we'd only just met him that day, and we weren't exactly in a good state of mind to suss out his credentials. He joined us on the way to Emmaus, when the two of us, Cleopas and me, were going over everything that had happened. Morose as mules with constipation we was – and faces looking like the product of it.

I thought he was a bit thick at first, asking what we were talking about. Everyone from the pigeon-sellers at the Temple to the dung-boys at the stables knew what had happened. Jesus had been big news by the time he got to Jerusalem, and his execution by the Romans was the talk of the town. But when we'd set him straight about it all and told him how the world had dropped out of our bottoms, he started quoting Scripture at us.

Not like some of them with their lecturing and prattling. It was like he knew it all from the inside, and understood what it was all about. The way he talked, well we thought about it afterwards... but that's getting ahead of the story. Enough to say that he had us by the 'short and curlies', you know what I mean? We were caught up in it all, and it seemed to make sense in a way it never had before.

So before we know where we are, we've arrived at the turnoff for Emmaus. The stranger makes to carry on, and I looked at Cleopas and raised my eyebrow. He said *yeah*, but I was in two minds like a tax-collector with a conscience. Then Cleopas runs after him and talks him into staying the night with us. I was happy enough at the time.

But now, sitting down at the table with him about to eat, I started to have second thoughts. I mean he could have been anyone, couldn't he? A Syrian throat-cutter or a Roman spy

or a Samaritan nancy-boy. But we were stuck with him, so that was that. I don't remember anyone asking him to pray; he just did it. Picked up the loaf of bread, and said a few words of blessing, and then broke it in half.

That's when it happened, see? Like the loaf of bread had been full of light, and when he tore it apart the light just flooded out everywhere. Time stood still... this bright white light, it poured over Cleopas and me and lit up the whole room. But the truly amazing thing was the way that it fell on this stranger's face.

It wasn't that his face changed itself around or his nose moved or his eyes changed colour or anything... it was just that the light fell on him in a way that drew him out of the shadows somehow, and we *saw*. Everything was absolutely still and yet charged with energy at the same time. There he was sitting looking at us from the other side of the table. *Jesus*. As large as life. Well, larger.

I look at Cleopas and he looks at me and then we both turn back to look at Jesus, and he's gone. Vanished. Quick as a flash! Just the broken bread lying there on the table. We laughed, the two of us. We laughed and laughed and laughed until we stopped. And our hearts were on fire again, just the way they had been when we'd be listening to him talk on the way there.

Course it's all commonplace for you lot now, isn't it? Happens every time we break the bread like that, and he shows up. The way that the boundaries shift, and suddenly you find yourself sitting in the place where he lives, and all the faces around you are shining. Magic, isn't it? But just for that first time, it took us by surprise. We thought he was a stranger, see? But he turned out to be even stranger than we thought. ■

May Blessed Peace be with you this season.

If the dynamics of the Universe from the beginning shaped the heavens, lighted the sun and formed the earth, if this same dynamism brought forth the continents and the atmosphere, if it awakened life in the primordial cell and then brought into being the unnumbered variety of living beings, and finally brought us into being and guided us safely through the turbulent centuries, there is reason to believe that this same guiding process is precisely what has awakened us in our present understanding of ourselves and our relation to this stupendous process. Sensitised to such guidance from the very structure of the universe, we can have confidence in the future that awaits the human venture.

Thomas Berry
The Dream of the Earth

Saving the planet

Ron Sharp was one of many hundreds who gathered across New Zealand to hear Columban priest Sean McDonagh on his recent tour.

*His message is urgent and his solution obvious:
we have to live more simply*

There is no doubt in the heart and mind of Sean McDonagh that unless humanity's footprint on the earth changes drastically, we are doomed to destroying ourselves and thousands of other species with us.

Sean is an Irish Columban missionary, who, in the 1970s and '80s saw the devastating effects that the clear-felling of timbers by Corporate, government-approved giants was having on the land and people of T'boli in the Philippine Island of Mindanao. He was also incensed by the murders of Chico Mendes, the champion of the rubber tappers of the Amazon, and three brother priests, Karl Schmitz, Mark Estorba and Nerelito Satur, by logging companies in the late '80s.

After his conversion among the T'boli people Sean retreated into his Scriptural 'wilderness', where he ravenously devoured all the scientific and theological (at the feet of Thomas Berry) information available, so that he was transformed into a passionate missionary against global poverty and environmental degradation. He has a huge capacity to absorb knowledge and develop new theological paths into the mysteries of creation and the power within them.

Climate change

Sean admits there are natural factors that contribute to climate change: the elliptical orbit the earth makes on its 100,000-year-journey around the Sun; the tilt in the earth's axis with its 42,000-year-rotation and the 'wobble' in the earth's rotational axis, which occurs every 22,000 years. We

can't do anything about those changes, but there is now a consensus among scientists that the current warming of the planet is due to human activity.

The famous naturalist, David Attenborough, was a long-time sceptic of climate change, but in a BBC documentary last year he came out sounding the alarm. When asked why, he said: "How could I look my grandchildren in the eye and say, *I knew about this and I did nothing.*" Scientists estimate that global warming will drive temperatures up in the temperate zones by up to eight degrees Celsius – and up to by five degrees in the tropics – within this 21st century. Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and Australia's Governor General have all issued warnings.

By far the greatest contributor to climate change is the increase in carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Prior to the industrial revolution 200 years ago, the average parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide was 280. In 1958 it had risen to 315 and by 2005, 378 – a 35 percent increase. By 2050 it will be 500 ppm. Human activity also contributes increases in methane, nitrous oxide, hydro-fluorocarbons etc: all of these contribute to global warming.

Al Gore's documentary film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, has helped put climate change on the world's political agenda, but Gore was careful to avoid putting the blame on the real culprits – the Corporate giants.

Species extinction

Rain forests cover only six percent of the earth's land area, yet at least

50 percent and possibly 80 percent of the world's plant and animal species live there. Many of the drugs in our chemist shops come from the rain forests, but this does not deter the bulldozers and chain saws of the global timber corporations. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimated that between 1990 and 2000, more than 150 million hectares of tropical forests had been cleared. This is an area about the size of Mexico. If that rate of felling continues, the tropical forests of the earth could all be gone in 50-70 years.

We humans know more about the stars than we do about the species we share the planet with. There are 210,000 species of marine animal and plant alone known to science. The true number could be close to two million. Recently, off New Caledonia, marine scientists found 130,000 molluscs belonging to 3000 species in just three cubic metres of coral reef. The inventory at Kew Gardens lists 1.7 million species of plants. A research on a single tree in Panama revealed almost 20,000 species of beetle.

Of the known volume of species on our planet, it is estimated that 24 percent of large animals, 30 percent of the 25,000 fish species and 12 percent of the 10,000 bird species are now in serious danger of extinction. Rhinos are down to 12,000 in Africa and Asia, tigers to between five and seven thousand, with the Siberian Tiger on the brink – with only 200 individuals left alive. Evidence of extinction is here at our back doorstep: all 32 chicks of the Yellow-Eyed Penguin born this year

on Stewart Island died. Almost daily we are hearing of the threat to icecaps, glaciers, ecosystems, rivers, oceans, coral reefs and sea-level islands, coastal areas, towns and cities.

The church and ecology

Sean had some timely questions about traditional theological 'givens'. For centuries there has been an overemphasis on the human and the divine to the detriment of the natural. He recalled that his seminary training contained no study, activity or theology of our natural world.

Before St Augustine and his proposition that original sin is innate in the human and natural worlds, the early Fathers of the Church, like Irenaeus of Lyons in the 2nd century, insisted that creation is not sinful by nature. Unfortunately the church has been plagued for the last two millennia with a dualism of natural/supernatural, body/soul, good/bad, light/dark. It was not until Teilhard de Chardin in the mid-1900s that the rift between the two began to lift and the interdependence of spirit and matter was restored.

The first Papal document devoted to environmental and ecological issues was John Paul II's *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all creation*; but Rome has been quiet on the issue since his death. In fact, it is said that Pope Benedict, in a Lenten retreat to the bishops of Rome, told them to be wary of conservationists and ecologists! The *World Council of Churches* has produced some strong statements on these issues and also recognised Sean's expertise by using him as a consultant.

Unfortunately church leaders of all traditions, in common with their counterparts in the educational, industrial, political and financial establishments, have been slow to understand the magnitude of destruction and -urgency with which we must heal the earth. "Could it be," Sean asks: "that the Catholic position on birth control as enunciated in *Humanae Vitae* might be one of the reasons why the church has

been slow to enter the ecological debate, because one of the principal causes of environmental degradation and extinction is both the growth in human population and, more specifically, the growth in human demands on the planet, as more and more people aspire to a Western affluent lifestyle."

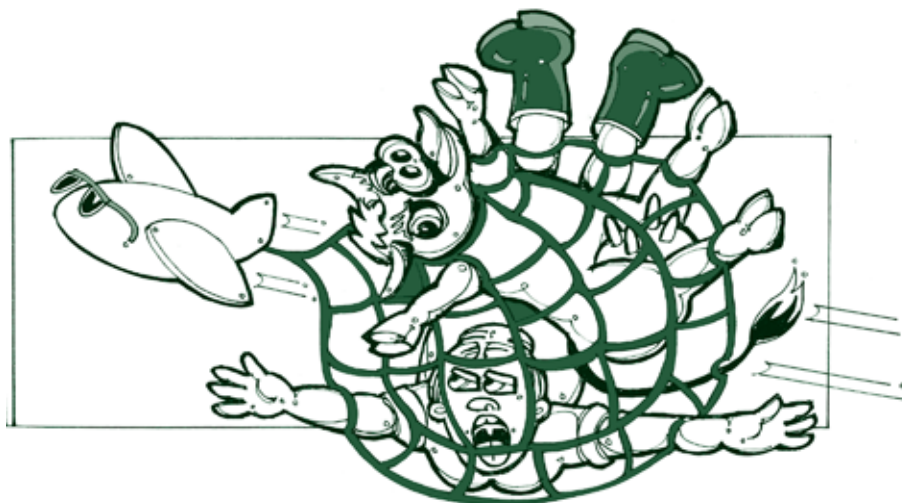
Again he asks: "Why are we raping the oceans of the earth?" Could it be that our fear of the ocean comes from the only reference to it in the whole Bible being Jonah swallowed by the whale and the dark tomb of its belly! (Remember *Jaws*!) No wonder we have exploited our oceans.

Sean tells the story of a scientist who compared the fishing of the ocean depths with heavy nets that bounce along the bottom of the seabed, to

types of each species delicately keeping life on the planet in balance. If the corporations are successful in getting life patenting rights, a handful of them will control the seeds of all the staple crops globally.

Living lightly

At the heart of an earth-centred spirituality is the need to live more lightly on the earth and to work for a more just and equitable human community. Everyone will admit that greed, covetousness and other commonly recognised human vices have contributed to our present crisis. Nevertheless, the principle cause of ecological devastation in our world today has been the unrelenting pursuit of what many people consider a good and desirable thing – the modern, growth-oriented, industrial model of



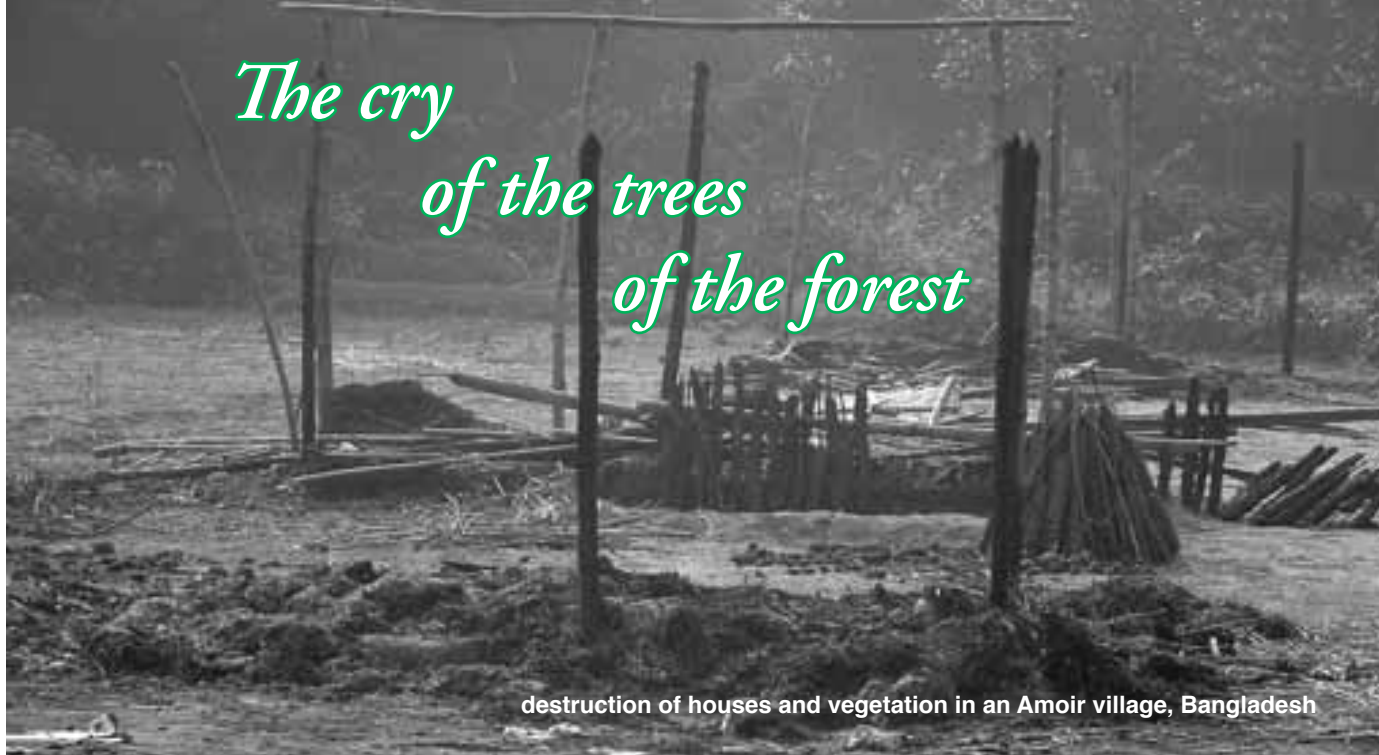
an aeroplane dragging a cage across a farm in order to catch a cow. The first drag might pick up the dog kennel; the second the tool shed; the third the wife and/or child; and eventually it might get the cow. This without mentioning the damage to the pastures, gardens, animals and insects with each bounce.

Sean is opposed to the Corporate promotion of biotechnology through agricultural genetic engineering and patenting of life forms, not only because of the fear of the safety of the resulting foods but also because eco-scientists now realise that life thrives on biodiversity – the thousands of

development. What many people feel is the good life, something to be aspired to and worked for, is in fact destroying the world.

The T'boli people had learned to live using the forest for over a thousand years without consuming or diminishing its diversity. The forest provided them with food, clothing, building materials and artistic and spiritual inspiration. Then the loggers arrived. We need to learn from the T'boli people, change radically and develop a new respect for all life, seeing it as precious and ultimately mysterious. ■

The cry of the trees of the forest



destruction of houses and vegetation in an Adivasi village, Bangladesh

Michael Mrong, from Bangladesh laments the plight of his people

Michael Mrong of *Caritas Bangladesh* tells the story of the forestry ‘experts’ who visited an area of forest inhabited by Adivasi – the indigenous people of Bangladesh. “They roped off an area of seven square feet and asked the experts what they saw there. They said they saw two trees and some small plants. Then they brought an Adivasi elder, who had no formal education. He said he saw 63 medicinal plants – and two big trees.”

Michael, who recently visited New Zealand as *Caritas* Lenten speaker in schools and parishes, says eviction of indigenous peoples is always a precursor to environmental destruction of the forests. As recently as 10 February, the village of Amoir containing the households of 29 families was burned to the ground (*see above*). Villagers were beaten and some left with serious injuries. They had no food for four days.

Michael who is himself Adivasi, of the Garo people, said his people believe that when trees fall, the other trees of the forest cry. “When Adivasi are evicted, they hear the cry of the land, the cry of nature, and they also cry.” Eviction of indigenous people, alienation of their lands, and the environmental destruction that follows is not the history lesson that many New Zealanders consider. In Bangladesh, it is a relatively recent experience.

Michael grew up on traditional lands where his family had lived “from time immemorial”. As a child he remembers his family having a field for grazing, and plentiful food from the fruits and vegetables available in the forests. Traditional harvesting methods ensured that sufficient roots and crops were left to regenerate for the following year.

At that time, around 100,000 people lived in the area. There are now more than 20 million people living off the

same land. Newcomers to the area found they enjoyed the taste of the forest food but knew nothing of sustainable harvesting. “They collected everything, and there is no chance to regenerate.”

The introduction of individual land titles in the 1950s began the alienation of Adivasi land. “Many influential people falsified land titles, and after some years they forcibly took the land. The Adivasi could not show any documents.” Some cases went to court “but without documents they could not get a decision in their favour.”

The situation had worsened after the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, with many Hindus migrating to India and Muslims arriving in the then ‘East Pakistan’, which is now Bangladesh. The Adivasi people, who make up 65 percent of the Catholic population of Bangladesh, were considered Hindus by those making decisions to redistribute land to Muslim arrivals.

In the name of development, the recent past government of the present day – at times with overseas aid assistance – has continued the eviction of indigenous peoples. One 2005 case involved the destruction of an Adivasi village of 65 families to make way for a government ‘model village’ funded by the European Commission. After EC representatives visited the area, Michael says they announced that “not one more euro” would be spent on the model village project. But the evictions continue.

The *Caritas* response has been to establish six Integrated Community Development projects, including one in the area of Dinajpur which is supported by *Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand*. In Dinajpur 57 percent of Adivasi are landless, and many work as low-paid labourers on their traditional lands.

A Hitchhiker's Guide to God

Jeph Mathias and friend are thumbing their way round the S Island. Suddenly there is a precious moment to say what personal faith is all about

OK. Give me the guts of your faith, all the key stuff, no waffle. Ya've got thirty seconds.

This was classic Nick. He's one of my best friends for his heart of pure steel but he's also got a mind like an arrow: unwavering in its rationality, its skepticism – and its honesty.

We were medical students then, hitchhiking around New Zealand's South Island for our summer holidays. As the thousandth driver drove past, Nick decided to finally sort out all this religion stuff.

"Give me five minutes to think, Nick"

"It'd better be worth the wait" he pseudo-growled.

What should I say? I rifled through the

book of faith inside my head trying, trying, to find words for my answer. Did he want to be told he should sign up now and wave his membership card as he cruised on in through the pearly gates to eternal life? Nah! Not from me anyway. I reckon we are all saved, not just Christians.

Even then I saw God as a parent, and no parent has 'in' children and 'out' children. Nick would have thrust his rationality like a rapier at me with Why? Is God's unlimited love limited to those who love or better still serve him? Nick wanted the guts of *my* faith and trying to win a 'get-out-of-hell-free' card is not me.

What about the Lord as my shepherd?

The strong loving God who wards off enemies and dangers, looks after me,

makes me lie down in green pastures, gives me everything I need and more. Beautiful! Yeah! I could tell him I have joined the herd with the big powerful God on its side. No again! He'd ask why the psalm goes on to beg warm, fluffy God to let me feast, and gloat, in the sight of my enemies (where is their loving father?), he'd ask where the shepherd is today and who feasts in whose sight.

"Easy", he'd have said, "for us in our rich world with all our aircraft carriers and cluster bombs to lie down in green pastures and control people to work for \$1 a day to make us shoes as their children die of malnutrition." He'd tell me to take my chances alone rather than bow to a power hungry God like that. Maybe God does send miraculous healing to phone-in call-

The scope of the projects includes agricultural work, such as seed banking and breeding new crop varieties, through to supporting social organisation in the villages and communities. When villages and communities have committees and other forums for discussing the issues they are facing, often for the first time they are finding a voice in legal and political protest against evictions. Michael says the experience of indigenous people in facing so many layers of cultural and political

disadvantage is summed up in the Bangla proverb: *I have the pain in my whole body, where to put the medicine?*

For Michael, the actions of those who destroy both the lives of indigenous people and the forests in which they live are actions against God. "Adivasi living in the forests live peaceful lives, close to God. Eviction of the Adivasi who live close to God is eviction of God's love. Oppression of the Adivasi is oppression of nature, and oppression of God." ■

Interview for Tui Motu by Lisa Beech, of Caritas Aotearoa

Adivasi people in Bangladesh protesting against evictions



ers on tele-evangelist shows and maybe He answers prayers for parking places in congested cities.

Maybe, but that's not me and Nick asked about *my* faith.

I never even considered talking of God's righteousness and truth because long before Nick, I cringed about a God who allegedly "decided to win glory for himself at the expense of Pharaoh", killed thousands and watched his 'chosen people' dance with tambourines over the bodies washing ashore. Today I'd say following God for fear of His righteous retribution is like swearing an oath of allegiance to the US president: "I follow your words of freedom and justice *because* of all those WMDs in your back pocket".

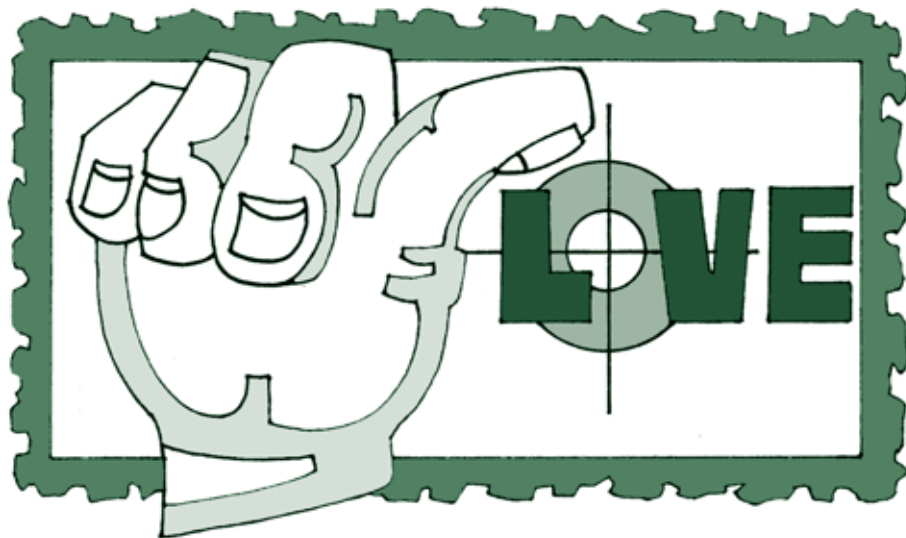
Back then I knew I couldn't face Nick's steely eyes as he asked about God loading a 12-year-old's sling for him, then tousling his golden boy's locks as he returns gloriously with his victim's head. I had no answer should he ask about God playing His special effects trump card to cook Elijah's meat, gathering in the winning trick and applauding his playing partner cutting 400 prophets of Baal's throats. "Magic and power. You'd better follow, or else," Nick would have said, "that fear stuff's not for me." It's not for me either. Never was.

So no shepherds, no righteousness, no salvation, no retribution... what do I say? In my head I flung down my book of faith to see what page it would open.

It was Lent. I'd been turning and turning over this story of the carpenter's boy who is suddenly talking to the devil. "Pull a trick then," wheedles little Lucifer, "turn stones into bread. Ya'll have the masses all over you."

"Yeah, I could but it's not what I am here for," says a confused young man, not sure what he *is* here for. (OK Jeph, don't tell Nick God will magically skate you over life's slipperiest ice or that he'll solve the world's needs.)

The Devil tries another angle. "Alright. Don't give 'em anything, just wow



them with your magic powers. Jump off the temple, mate. Ya've got talent boy... yer'd be an idiot not ta use it," he taunts.

"Yup, could do that too," says the young man, "but that's not the way." (Hmmm...If God reckons that just displaying power is wrong I won't try to sell God's power and glory to Nick.)

"OK then, Listen! Just quietly between you and me let's make a deal – a hierarchy of power. You'll have everything under you – except me. They'll never know," he whispers seductively. Shake on it?"

"Get lost," shouts the boy, "Power sucks."

Yeah! It's all about power. Not wanting it when you don't have it, not using it, displaying it or even accepting its legitimacy when you do. It's an idiot's story.

We all know where the story led. Particularly me, that Lent morning sweltering on the Blenheim roadside under the blaze of Nick's question. The story leads to an anguished young man at midnight in a garden sweating blood because now he knows what it's about: He is here to live love and truth while avoiding the temptations of power, and it's going to kill him. It's an idiot's story and he's the hero. Look! Here they are for him...

"Have you learned nothing?" he shouts when his best friend desperately draws his sword "even injustice doesn't warrant power."

And so it goes. He walked on water, brought the dead to life, controlled the weather... now he's nailed up in the sun. "I believe in you. Pull one of your tricks for the three of us," begs the man in agony beside him. "Nah, leave him alone. We shouldn't ask" says the other criminal, also slowly suffocating.

"Man, you're the first who's ever understood. I'll see ya on the other side," Jesus says. And he dies.

Waving my hopeful thumb at the cars whizzing by, it was that story, beautiful and hard, that I'd found in my hand. *Love over power.* Blindingly simple! Yeah! It's all about power. Not using it when you have it, not wanting it when you don't. Freedom from power is true Freedom!

It might be the most important meditation of my life, those five minutes Nick gave me one February day 15 years ago. I remember it every Lent.

Love not power, no matter how seductively the world whispers. I am truly free if I refuse to use the power I have, nor lust after the power I don't have. That's Love: relationship without power! As hard and as beautiful as that. It's an idiot's story.

Nick, it's about an all powerful God who chooses love instead. And you're free... , I said, "to use my 25 left-over seconds to think that over. ■

Jeph Mathias and his wife Kaaren, both doctors from Christchurch, are serving in Himachal Pradesh, India.



Debates surrounding veils and face transplants have raised issues about what our physical appearance reflects of our true nature. But as the pressures put on us by modern culture to conform to unrealistic ideals of perfection create distorted standards by which people – particularly women – are judged, can we really find truth in what some-one looks like?

The earliest known portrait of a human face was recently discovered in a cave in France, and it is believed to date from 25,000 BC. Our fascination with the face reaches back to the most primal stages of human consciousness. Which of us has not experienced a sense of our very self being laid bare by a steadfast gaze, looking into the depths of our being. The face is a window of the soul and reveals our innermost nature.

Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* transposes the murderous character of the ageing Dorian to his portrait so that, while he remains young and virile, this depiction of him gradually acquires the hideous characteristics of his personality. Dorian quotes Shakespeare's Hamlet when he describes the painting as "the painting of a sorrow, a face without a heart". When at last he stabs the image with a knife, the roles revert so that the painting becomes young and beautiful again, and Dorian is found in all his grotesque ugliness with a knife through his heart.

Perhaps this sense that there is an intimate connection between a person's character and his or her face helps to explain some of the recent controversy both with regard to the Muslim face veil (niqab), and in terms of public reaction to the news that a British surgical team has been given ethical approval to carry out this country's first face transplants.

These issues invite reflection on why we invest so much significance in the face when it is less vital to our physical well-being than our body organs. Perhaps it is because the face is uniquely and inseparably associated with the social aspect of our being, so that the concealed or disfigured face affects that fundamental dimension of our humanity which we experience only in relationship with others.

When the world's first heart transplants were performed, people expressed concerns similar to those being expressed about face transplants. But while it is the brain that is responsible for feeling, the face is indeed what we perceive it to be – the window through which others look to see who we

are. Each individual's face is invested with his or her sense of being, and the faces of our loved ones occupy a unique place in our affections and responses.

That's why, when discussing face transplants, people ask what it would feel like to have another person's face, or how that person's loved ones might feel if they encountered his or her face on another's body. When we have to communicate with a veiled face, we may feel that person is resisting interaction by withholding some-thing vital. Hence British politician Jack Straw's admission that he feels "uncomfortable" when a veiled woman visits his electorate offices.

We intuitively learn to read the faces of those closest to us, for we know that they can reveal more than words can say. But that revelatory capacity of the face also makes us adept at manipulating our faces in public, and this is particularly true of those in the media and the public eye. The white smile of the film star and the botoxed leer of the celebrity tell us little of the person within. It is when public faces are away from the cameras that we sometimes see the masks slip and quite different characters revealed.

There is also a gendered dimension to all this, in a society in which young girls and women go to ever greater lengths to acquire the perfect, ageless face. Our culture has a very narrow concept of beauty, so that the result of this striving after perfection is an increasingly costly conformity to an ideal which in itself masks the true beauty of the human face with its capacity to reflect the stages and ages of life.

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to age alongside a beloved spouse or to see our children grow from infancy to adulthood know with what particular grace time sculpts the face of a loved one, so that the lines of old age are only a different kind of beauty from the youthfulness that first attracted us. But in the relentless pursuit of youth and beauty,



Tina Beattie



some feminist critics would argue that a pornographic gaze now infects our modern culture, so that the female face has become objectified as just one more commodity in the modern marketplace.

All this should make us pause for thought before we condemn those who withdraw behind the veil as a way of dealing with the conflicting pressures that women face with regard to these distorted concepts of femininity and sexuality. Some Muslim women describe the sense of freedom and self-respect they experience when, having decided to adopt the veil, they are able to position themselves in public in a way that protects them from being seen primarily in terms of sexual availability.

Many of us would argue that the veil is not a solution to this problem, but we need to acknowledge the extent to which the male sexual gaze dominates our public spaces in images and representations of women. The commodification and exploitation of female sexuality is a far greater threat to society than the decision of a small minority of Muslim women to veil their faces.

We also need to re-examine the association between physical appearance and moral characteristics inherent in Wilde's novel and in the equation of beauty with goodness and ugliness with moral depravity. Christianity has had an ambiguous relationship with such ideas.

While face transplants may offer hope to those who have suffered extreme facial disfigurement, the burgeoning demand for cosmetic surgery suggests that superficial concepts of beauty have become a form of personal delusion, as if an attractive face can compensate for a sense of inadequacy and a lack of self-worth. In these situations, far from the beautiful face being a window into the beautiful soul, it is a mask whose artifice seals off the anxious, needy person within. The singer Michael Jackson

is perhaps the most tragic example of a person whose preoccupation with outer appearances has, paradoxically, given him a damaged and distorted face which may well be a window into his soul.

The Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas argues that our primary sense of ethical responsibility is awakened by the face of the other. Prior to any sense of individual subjectivity, it is the irreducibility of difference and the vulnerability that I recognise in the face of the other that evokes a response in me, allowing me to position myself in the world in relation to the other's need. This is an ethical vision with the ability to help us refocus our gaze away from an aesthetic dictated by the advertising and entertainment industries, and instead recognise beauty in the ordinary claims that the human face in its desire and pathos put upon us, in encounters of mutual vulnerability and trust.

From the beginning, Christians have been drawn to imagine the face of Christ. Christians have longed to gaze upon the face of God incarnate in Christ. "Such are those who seek your face," says the liturgy for All Saints. Christian art has tried to represent that which many say cannot be visually represented – the human and divine natures in Christ. The physical beauty of the Greek gods was seen as a reflection of their divinity, and in Christianity Christ is represented as a heroic figure.

But Christianity also recognises Christ in the suffering servant of whom Isaiah writes, "He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him" (*Isaiah 53: 2*). This reminds us that the graced vision is that which sees the beauty of God where others see only ugliness, and which takes pity on the diminished soul that we sometimes glimpse behind the most aesthetically pleasing visage. It is only when we resist the seduction of the beautiful mask that we are able to glimpse the face of the human made in the image of God, who stands before us as an invitation and a challenge to our own sense of what it means to be human. ■

Across the centre. Faces of Christ:
(above) **Christ at Emmaus**, Caravaggio, .
(below) **Ecce Homo!** Photographed by Jan Kelly
in a German cemetery

Tina Beattie is Reader in Christian Studies, University of Roehampton, England. This article first appeared in The Tablet, November 2006. Reproduced by kind favour.



The call of the soul

Pilgrimage to Hiruharama

Kathleen Gallagher

We were unsure when and where to hold the next *Ploughshares Catholic Worker Hui*. But at the meeting, Teresa Dickson, our oldest member, said: if we don't get on with it and have it now – and in Jerusalem – then she's going up there herself to have it. Because she could be dead if we wait another year, or a few months even.

So we come to Hiruharama, 40 of us from both North and South islands.

In 1858, Fr John Vianney, the saintly Cure d'Ars, described in detail to Suzanne Aubert a house which would be very important in her future life. When she first arrived at Hiruharama, on 4 July 1883 after three days travel up the Wanganui River, Suzanne gazed in wonder at the building the Cure d'Ars had described to her so many years before.

Many years later, in Dunedin, James K Baxter had a dream that he was to go to Jerusalem and set up a community there. So he hitched and walked his way up the Wanganui River to Jerusalem. Ngati Hau and the Sisters of Compassion found him a house to rent. Up there at Jerusalem, like us he

read Peter Maurin, the great mentor of the *Catholic Workers*.



On Tuesday night we pass Jim Baxter's poems around the whare, reading a poem each, one that touches us. He understands how walking barefoot connects you with the soul of the earth, with the *mauri* (life principle) and this way you can feel your way safely in the dark. The five water-worn stones he carries - *Arohanui* (love of the many), *Manuhiritanga* (hospitality to the stranger), *Korero* (talk, begetting peace and understanding), *Matewa* (the night life of the soul), and *Mahi* (manual work). I'd like to swap *Korero* (speaking) for *Whakarongo* (listening) – listening with all of our senses!

Ron, of Ngati Hau, says this place has its own rhythm, draws people to itself at

intervals and then has a quiet time for a while, a lull, and then it opens itself again. There is here an ancient *whare wananga* (place of wisdom) that carries the *mauri* of this place. He can feel it now, beginning to open itself again. It feels like the spirit of the place, and the ancestors of Hiruharama come in and carry us through the *hui* (gathering), the *korero* and the food preparation, the *powhiri* (welcome), the clean up. Hemi Baxter says there are three *taniwha* (water spirits) in the river and the one at Hiruharama is a good *taniwha*. No one has drowned in this part of the river.

Hiruharama opens the heart and soul, brings clarity to the mind and body. This place holds sacredness in its being – a village wrought by human hands, not by machines; so everything in the village is human size – the church, the *whare* (meeting house) and houses all built in perfect proportions. The *wharenui* sleeps around 30 people. Sleeping here in the small *whare*, I feel whole.

Before he died, Noel Ginn told Srs Anna Marie and Susan they are making a place of loveliness in this

unquiet world. So are the old man originally from Rarotonga and his *kui* (lady) from here, and Ron and his *whanau* (tribe) and the other people who live up here and care for the *whare* and the *marae*, the river, the trees and the gardens, a place of loveliness, of clarity, of stillness.

Morning prayer at dawn in the *whare*: the 'Our Father' in Maori, our own prayers in Maori, this language in which it is easy to pray, in which you can say beautiful things to each other that would never cross your lips in English.

The *urupa* (cemetery), where Hemi Baxter is buried high above the river, looks across the treetops to the spire of the St Joseph's church. After I have been there, I take off my shoes and never put them on again, touching the wood floors in my bare feet, the wet grass, the odd stone underfoot.

When I get home I don't use the vacuum cleaner anymore. I sweep the mats with a sharp bristle broom – that does just as good a job. I check out the noisy machine tools we have around the place – the food processor, the lawnmower, the washing machine, the motorcar; and see what we can replace them with – the grinder, hand mower, wringer, feet walking and bicycle. A little slower, a bit of physical effort and so quiet I can hear the water squelching, feel the wind blowing my hair.

Like a bell from a small, clay-coloured church with a red painted roof and a slim heavenward pointing spire, the *mauri* of Hiruharama rings through me and I can't shake it off. On the second night the moon is shaped like a boat above the hill. We see the comet falling through the sky. The small, simple, white-painted *whare* with the red roof – an entrance door and two windows on either side beckoning.

(right) Meeting of the pilgrims on the first morning, in the *whare kai*, Jerusalem

Walk through the dark across the wet grass to the *whare*, barefoot on wet damp grass, all the stars out in the sky. Warm inside the *whare*, people sleeping, one beside the other, all around the walls. The ancestors of the *marae*, on the furthest wall. All the people sleeping safe and warm inside the body of the *whare*, safe and warm and whole.

River swimming, rocks, stones, mud sticking to my toes. River big and brown and old. Moving, moving in my sleep at night high above the river. River touching, river talking.

Swimming wide across the river, floating downstream in the current of the river, river taking us on her back.

I don't drive to the supermarket and fruit and vege shop today. Instead I put a pack on my back, and walk and bus there. Bought only what I could carry and only what was on the list. The shop assistant and the bus driver smile, encouraging this 'plasticbagless, carless' approach to purchasing food. One small step.

Kathleen Gallagher is an active member of the Ploughshares Catholic Worker group, in Christchurch

Mike goes to Sumner beach, but he doesn't drive the car. He walks, following the rivers most of the way. Takes him about five hours, with stops. He comes back, his face and his body full of river and sky.

This morning I hand-wash my pants instead of dumping them in the washing machine. These are the gifts from Jerusalem.

I wonder if, when we stop driving the car and get out, our heads are still travelling at 60 miles an hour. Is this how I slow down, respond to the constant busyness of the world that gets inside me – just get out of the car?

Prayer, te reo Maori, gardening, washing, food preparation, walking and manual labour, and *matauranga Maori* (Maori culture) – all these connect us in our bodies with the *mauri* of these rivers, these beaches, these islands – this our earth. It's the call of the soul, because it asks us to look deep inside ourselves, to where we are located on the earth and to connect, to enter into the *matewa* – the night life of the soul. ■



The Smacking Debate – *we need to change*

Glynn Cardy

There are many of us who want to address and eradicate the epidemic of violence in our land. There is widespread tolerance in New Zealand of violent behaviour, whether it is on sports fields, visual media, or in our homes. It is wrong to assume that the majority, even in the Church, want this epidemic to stop.

For years, however, good people have worked to prevent or minimize violence. From anger management, to television censorship, to police family violence prevention programmes, to restorative justice conferences, to Playcentre groups... there has been and is a desire to halt the hitting. Yet change is both hard work and emotionally costly.

Sue Bradford's bill before Parliament, seeking to change section 59 of the Crimes Act, is part of the movement to stop violence. Currently the law allows a parent to physically discipline their child if the parent's peers, i.e. a jury, deem it to be reasonable.

Yet many parents don't want change. Smacking is a tool in their parenting kit. They've used it from time to time when they felt the occasion warranted. They consider it part of their parental rights to smack. Usually they themselves were disciplined in this manner when they were young.

Although there is no denying that a minority of parents overuse this tool, and that there are many children each year who suffer broken bones or fractures from that minority, those opposed to this bill don't think a law change will prevent this. Further, opponents think the proposed change will criminalize law-abiding parents who do smack their children. Sue Bradford and her supporters refute this.

If we want to prevent violence in our society we will need to change. Is it too

hard to build a world without violence? There was a time when beating slaves, women, and animals were seen as beneficial to slaves, women, and animals. Why do we still consider it beneficial to smack children, when smacking wives or employees is not?

Smacking is an indicator of a paucity of disciplining tools in a parent's kit. The most effective discipline is crafted around the individual offence. If a child hits his or her sister the best discipline is one where the child is coached in repairing the damage by doing something kind for her. In addition the child is taught some simple non-violent conflict resolution techniques. This though takes time and commitment. A smack on the other hand is quick and seemingly effective. However, the smack teaches the child that violence is warranted when administered by someone bigger. It does nothing to help the child with the sister next time round. It does nothing to build respect for the parent. Violence merely engenders submission, and without respect submission will in time become resentment.

In the case where a young child persistently attacks power points with a fork, it is incumbent upon the parent to put forks out of reach and buy plug covers. A smack can easily be misunderstood as pertaining to playing with forks in general, or one particular plug but not others in the house, or exploring anything attached to a wall. A smack administered to a young child will teach them nothing – only the confusing message that the one who cuddles them will also hurt them. Discipline needs to be age-appropriate and related to the offence.

The argument that 'smacking never hurt me' is based upon the notion that only a minority suffer ill effects from smacking. This may be true. Just as it may be true regarding not wearing car seat belts or crash helmets.

Nevertheless there are some who significantly suffer, and a number who sustain emotional injury. For the safety of all children it is better to learn more effective and less potentially damaging disciplinary techniques.

Occasionally, some, particularly those from a religious background, refer to smacking as a 'God-given right'. God gets brought into these arguments to lend metaphysical support to the status quo. What they mean is that some religious people in ancient times hit children, and that it is justified in their holy texts. It therefore follows, they reason, that because it is in holy texts, hitting children is not only permissible but also necessary. Others of us also from a religious perspective simply think that the people of old got some things wrong. Just as they were wrong about polygamy, slavery, and homosexuality.

For Christians it is difficult to argue that Jesus wanted us to smack children. His actions towards children treated them as full members, rather than appendages, of the religious community.

If it is agreed that the biggest contributor to a child's well being is a stable, fear-free environment where respect and love are the norm, we need to ask what are the best strategies when it comes to discipline. Does smacking consistently engender freedom from fear, respect, and love? If not, why don't we craft and encourage alternatives that do?

It is easy to use arguments that justify smacking. It is easy to keep on doing what we've always done. However if we want to build a violence-free world then we need to undergo the hard, and often emotionally costly, change to achieve that. ■

*Glynn Cardy is parish priest at
St-Matthew-in-the-City, Auckland
Website: www.stmatthews.org.nz*

Aussie panorama

Tui Motu took the chance at a recent Wellington gathering to get some up-to-the-minute opinions about our friends across the Tasman



David Ranson is an Australian priest, from Launceston in Tasmania. In 1980 he joined the Cistercian community at Tarrawarra, near Melbourne, and was ordained priest there in 1992. However, by 1998 he was drawn into a more active ministry. Thomas Merton, he notes, was a good example of how the spiritual and the political become co-joined, a synthesis which he encapsulates both in his life and his writings.

David's spiritual and intellectual journey was similar to Merton's, except that eventually David moved out of his monastic community. He went first into hospital chaplaincy in Melbourne, and then to teach theology in the Catholic Theological faculty in Sydney. He is now incardinated as a diocesan priest in the diocese of Broken Bay.

David was principal speaker at the 2007 Mixed Commission (bishops and congregational leaders) at Waikanae, Wellington in early April. A summary of his talks – on the relationship between Religion, the needs of our world and Spirituality – will appear in the May issue. However, Tui Motu also interviewed David on the current political and religious scene in Australia.

The Australian Political Scene

Kevin Rudd, the new star on in the Australian political firmament, is a Catholic by birth but now practices as an Anglican. He would say himself that he has moved beyond denominational boundaries. He grew up in comparative poverty with a farming background. His father died when he was a child; his mother had to move out and for a while they were homeless.

Rudd had a very successful school career, went to ANU (Australian National University) in Canberra and graduated in Chinese. He is a fluent Mandarin speaker. He then went into the diplomatic service and served overseas in various posts. Eventually he returned to the public service in Queensland, and was prominent in helping put through the reforms of Labour premier Wayne Goss in the early '90s

His wife is Anglican and they have several children. She too has a high public profile, having pioneered a programme enabling people coming in to Australia to qualify for the workforce. They both have a social justice background. Rudd has been strongly influenced by the writings of the Lutheran Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He challenges the liaison between right-wing Christians and neo-conservative political and economic agendas.

Recently Rudd wrote an article in the prominent Australian magazine, *The Monthly*, which caused a storm especially in government circles. The article especially celebrates the heritage of Bonhoeffer, who sought a "just world delivered by social action, driven by personal faith". Rudd firmly maintains that political action should be inspired by Christian faith – and

especially by the Christian traditions of social justice.

He applies this to contemporary Australia in terms of: option for the poor, countering economic individualism, action on climate change and on the scandal of global poverty, offering a home to asylum seekers, and applying gospel principles to the morality of war. He is especially critical of those politicians of the right who loudly defend "family values" especially regarding sexual morality, at the same time saying and doing nothing for the socially deprived.

Catholics in the Australian government challenge Rudd's implication that the Labour Party has a monopoly on social justice. The article continues to cause a major stir. Up to this time, the Labour Party in Australia has been striving to re-establish its economic credentials and has been wary of producing an alternative economic agenda.

Rudd also stands for a move away from the 'Americanisation' of Australian politics. There has been a silent transformation of Australian society moving it into a two-tiered system affecting the labour market, labour, health etc. In consequence, there is maximum advantage for those who have initiative to help themselves, while leaving the majority of the population struggling.

This sort of aspiration is a favourite theme of Prime Minister John Howard. He speaks of 'work choices', which do away with many protections to employment. In the forthcoming election Rudd will make a key issue of the 'work choice' legislation, introducing more protection without however unwinding it altogether.

The Iraqi war and the environment will also be key issues in the next election, and Howard has so far been unyielding on these. Howard has got himself into a corner, and Australia as a whole is catching up with the global disillusionment on these issues.

The fact that David Hicks, an Australian, has been held without trial in Guantanamo Bay for five years has become a huge bone of contention. Howard has had no sympathy with Hicks, nor had the majority of Australians until this recent groundswell demanding that he be brought home. Howard – too little, too late – is beginning to make noises to ensure the US releases him.

Howard has debunked the whole notion of climate change, refusing even to meet Al Gore when he came on a visit six months ago. The government ridiculed the visit as ‘good theatre’, but now they are starting to change tune because public opinion is changing. Howard now says we have to become “climate change realists”.

David Ranson believes it is all too little and too late. The cutting edge in Australia at this very moment is the drought now gripping much of the

country: cities like Perth and Adelaide could very well run out of water altogether. Desalination plants are being built. Howard is saying that the drought and climate change are quite independent. But it doesn't ring true. Issues of sustainability have suddenly become urgent.

Robert Mann, a media commentator from the left, points to a contemporary Australian paradox. On the one hand people have never been as comfortable and wealthy; on the other there is huge anxiety at the levels of debt. “Debt is the ghost at the national banquet”, he says. The percentage of people's income which goes into servicing their mortgages has never been as high. So any rise of interest rates is critical.

The Labour Party is recognising its electoral opportunity. It is much ‘greener’ in its policies. The Party has brought in David Garrett, a former rock idol, as their advocate on Green issues. The Green Party itself has risen electorally, and could well hold the balance in the Senate in the next federal election. Labour has tried to capture back some of this agenda.

For years, John Howard has been the preferred Prime Minister in the ratings. Kim Beasley was always well liked, but

has never done well electorally. But since Rudd took over leadership six months ago, he has shot ahead and is leading Howard by 10 percentage points. The Labour Party itself is well ahead. Rudd appears as a younger man, very dynamic, apparently a good manager. His experience in Queensland has shown he can make difficult decisions and wear the consequences.

He will no doubt be presented to the media as the classic Aussie battler, brought up on a dairy farm, living in poverty, pulling himself up by his own bootstraps. He has been so successful that Howard is even vulnerable in his own constituency. The Liberals' hold on power is now in serious question.

It's too early to tell whether, in the person of Kevin Rudd, we have another Bob Hawke coming on stage. Rudd hasn't yet got the charisma nor the common touch of Hawke. Aussies usually look for a different type of ‘hero’ than an intellectual like Rudd. The ‘larrikin’ Bob Hawke fitted that image perfectly! Rudd is going to need a lot of marketing, bringing the ‘common touch’ to the fore. But if he succeeds, it will indeed be unprecedented to have an Australian Prime Minister who can speak fluent Mandarin. ▲▲

Pioneer

The Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was founded by Fr James A Cullen, SJ in Dublin on 28 December 1898

Aim of Association:

Peace and harmony in the home

The Pioneer contribution:

The spread of the christian virtue of temperance throughout Ireland and abroad

Means:

- Prayer; an alcohol-free lifestyle and public witness to the infinite love of the Sacred Heart by wearing the pin
- Support for the young and victims of drug and alcohol abuse
- Alternative social and cultural activities
- A monthly family magazine and use of other media
- Promoting Pioneer membership worldwide

For more information, please write or phone:

John Joe Lynch, 15 Loch St, Remuera, Auckland, Ph: 09 522 1728 after 7pm
Father Leo Doyle, 97 Galway St, Onehunga, Auckland, Ph: 09 636 4647

Holy Cross Primary School, Henderson

75th Jubilee Celebrations
1932 - 2007

Friday 01 June 2007:

Meet and Greet Evening
7pm – 10pm: at the School Hall
Finger Food/Cash Bar-Cost: \$15.00

Saturday 02 June 2007:

Formal Dinner
6.30pm – 12.00midnight
at the Croatian Centre
Buffet Dinner/ Cash Bar – Cost: \$60

To register either go to website:

www.holycross75jubilee.myevent.com

Or Contact school for registration form:

Ph (09) 838 8802

Early Registration advised as limited number of tickets available.

Registrations close 27 April 2007

How healthy is the Catholic Church in Australia at the present time, do you think?

There is a high level of migrant participation in the Australian church. In the cities the congregations have large numbers of recent immigrants, which gives a continuing sense of vitality in parishes. Without the recent migrants you would probably see a different picture. There are pockets of life all over the country but it isn't a uniform picture.

The church as a whole still plays a significant part in national life. A quarter of the population calls itself Catholic on census night. A third of the present Federal Cabinet is Catholic, which is the highest proportion ever. John Howard is not a Catholic, of course, but many of his senior ministers are. That means Catholics have enormous influence on public policy. The church has an active voice in politics. Its education system is highly developed and continues to have great prestige.

Within the church itself things are a bit different. *World Youth Day* in Sydney in 2008 is having a huge impact within the church. It remains to be seen what sort of global outcome there might be. Moving around the parishes as I do, I continue to be impressed by the quality of Sunday liturgies and the level of lay participation. Liturgies are well choreographed and very inclusive. By and large they are a joy to attend. I would say that where the bishops really present the church as the "people of God", then these good things will happen. The people get a sense they *are* the church. It may be an ongoing consequence of Vatican II catechesis. So, good leadership is a paramount need. There is, of course, a backlash from those who want to return to the past – but they are a strident minority and are hardly represented at parish level.

How are you coping with the priest shortage?

The leadership, the Vatican II generation, is now in its 60s

and 70s. They are being followed by migrant groups whose theology and spirituality is more devotional.

At the present time there is a new breed among those presenting themselves for priestly formation. We have to be prepared for these tensions. These young people are looking for a package which is secure. They are looking for apologetics, not catechetics. We have to listen to them and respond to them in a pastoral way.

I'd withdraw newly-ordained priests three months every year for ongoing formation

They seem to come from a generation which suffers from more anxieties than in the past, and which hungers for a sense of identity. The former sources of identity are no longer there for them. They have grown up in a sea of change. In their religion they find a stability which does not exist for them elsewhere.

We have to look for ways of working with this attitude and ameliorating their fears. For them, I think their ongoing formation will be more critical for their maturity as pastors than was their initial formation. Speaking personally, I would withdraw newly-ordained priests for at least three months every year for serious pastoral reflection and integrate this with theological insights. The real education of these young priests starts *after* they have been ordained! Because of the degree of change there has been, they no longer look to the older priests as their mentors. They look internationally for their formative influences.

There are also many overseas clergy being brought in, not so much to service the new migrants as to prop up a thinning presbyterate leading non-migrant communities. Sometimes this

has been successful: sometimes it has worked abysmally and can even be destructive of Christian communities. The problem, therefore, is how to integrate these overseas recruits.

And the position of women?

I believe the women's issue is more to the fore in New Zealand than in Australia. It does not seem to be at the raw edge in quite the same way. But then, only recently you had a woman PM, a woman Governor General and a woman Chief Justice all at the same time – that would still be unimaginable in Australia.

The women's movement, however, is alive and active in the Australian church. Most parishes, for instance, have adopted inclusive language in the liturgy without any fanfare. Women are active in the higher echelons in the church. But in Australia the women's movement hasn't had the high profile as a campaign for change that seems to have been the case over here in New Zealand. ■

Bible Society Advert

In Lent we grow by dying

*The search for the real self is central to the Lenten journey.
In facing one's shadows, one begins to know truly the light of
one's soul. It is a Lenten grace when we are able to hold within
us, as Jesus did, the tension of such paradoxes*

Lent is here. It stirs something in us – a strange, unsolicited desire. There are intimations of a journey to be made, a river to be crossed, a hill to be climbed. Beyond “giving something up for Lent” a deeper echo reminds us of a waiting desert. And something tells us that this is a dangerous place to go.

We resist the call into our own mystery, our own depths. We fear further hurt by unknown demons in the barren places. We rightly suspect that our wounds are deeper than we think – and often hitched to each other all the way back to childhood. It truly is the uncomfortable way we would rather not go. But something tells us it is necessary. There are palaces, we read in the Zohar (Jewish mystical text), whose gates open only to tears. “In the desert of the heart let the healing fountain start.”

Some time ago I arrived in Dublin to do a week's retreat in Lent with a group of priests. A few of them were adamant right from the start that there would be no inner exploring, no revisiting of past hurts; in short, as one put it, “no digging”. Keep it light, please. Talk, yes; feel, no. After the first three days there was still no real breakthrough. I felt a complete failure. It was an experience I will never forget. On Thursday morning the topic was “The Wounded Healer”. What could I do? I asked two very open and brave members of the group to offer a brief witness to their particular addiction and condition. It was an intensely moving moment. And everything changed. The ice melted.

Great work was done during the last few days.

By exposing their own wounds, the speakers enabled the others to open theirs. As Henri Nouwen wrote, we must live them through instead of thinking them through. “It is better to feel your wounds deeply than to understand them, to let them into your silence. You need to let your wounds go down into your heart. Then you can live them through and discover that they will not destroy you. Your heart is greater than your wounds.”

Instead, we cover the hurts of our hearts with the bandages of the mind. We bury our painful emotions and think that they are dead. We forget that our presence and personalities are profoundly influenced and shaped by these underground and often violent realities. We live and act out of the invisible shadow-world that turns, silently, within us. Pain needs light. Nothing heals in the dark. Michael Leunig writes:

*When the heart is cut or cracked
or broken*

*Do not clutch it, let the wound
lie open*

*Let the wind from the good old
sea blow in*

*To bathe the wound with salt and
let it sting*

The scars of Jesus, inside and out, were always there for all to see. He let Mary wash them, Thomas touch them, his mother hold them. He openly wept, openly cursed, openly blessed. He mourned losses with others, he was

angry in a crowded temple, he carried his cross in public places. His was a transparent life. And it cost. He was always dying so as to achieve that state. Nothing less will do for us.

Lent perennially pursues the goal of authenticity. The issue is not one of being sinless or perfect – but of being self-aware and integrated. Jesus had no trouble with life's failures, those lost on the margins, or locked in their bad habits. Because it was for them he came. It was with the hypo crites that he lost his temper. The question that Lent, the season of truth, asks is: “how much reality about yourself can you bear?” Are you aware of your ambiguous motives, your rampant ego, your inner envy, your urge to power? Most of us try to live the Christian life without ever entering those raw and searing cellars of our own unbearable darkness. This avoidance is easy, but costly. Beyond the surface habits of a passionless piety there is a fierce intensity about Lent that relentlessly examines the integrity of our innermost heart.

In *The Divine Milieu*, Teilhard de Chardin describes the terror of this surrender to pure, demanding Love: *At each step of the descent, a new person was disclosed within me of whose name I was no longer sure, and who no longer obeyed me. And when I had to stop my exploration because the path faded from beneath my steps I found a bottomless abyss at my feet and out of it came, arising from I know not where, the current I dare call my life.*”

We forever endeavour to short-circuit the relentless call of Christ. We want to equate the increase in our religious behaviour during Lent with growth in holiness. There is, however, no cheap grace. We can weave the notion of Jesus' suffering and death into coats of many colours, we can sing and ritualise *The Washing of the Feet* and *The Seven Last Words* – but we are truly lost if we think that these rites alone will ever save our souls. Worship without sacrifice is worthless. So is ritual without painful, personal surrender. We miss the dark truth of Tenebrae.

In our mistaking of the outward ego for the inner essence we are unknowingly denying ourselves the possibility of any radical conversion. We need to face the awful emptiness and nothingness of our lives behind the masks and performances, even the holiest ones. How hard this is to do! "Forging in the smithy of my soul" is how W.B. Yeats described the hard, inner work of

gaining self-knowledge. "Now that my ladder's gone," he wrote, "I must lay down where all the ladders start, in the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart."

It is a Lenten grace when we are able to hold within us, as Jesus did, the tension of the paradoxes of our lives. The greater the soul, the greater the shadow. Lent teaches us that we must befriend that shadow, even at great personal cost. Otherwise our soul disintegrates, loses connection. We carry no transforming resonance. We become inauthentic within ourselves, empty before others. Worst of all, we feel false before God.

In Lent we grow by dying. There is no other way. In this dying we recognise the false face we've grown used to, the daily lies we tell, the thoughts of deception that crowd our minds, the infidelities we do not commit only because we might get caught, the lovelessness of our lives parading as shallow compassion, our collusion with conformity, our fear of beauty

and big dreams. Nowhere else, but in this awareness of our sins, can we ever be reached and saved. We die to self when we sweat blood to stay faithful, when we sacrifice the ego of our vanity for the essence of our truest being.

This is the dying that daily scrapes the self-renewing fat of pride from the ribs of our soul bringing a fearless, inner lightness and clarity. When the eye is unblocked, the Buddhists tell us, the vision is sure. This is the liberating dying that puts the truth in our eyes, the resonance in our voice, the power in our presence, the depth in our listening. Since we are now all connected up inside, our heart is no longer divided. Rinsed and cauterised, all that is inauthentic is zapped from our infected being. When the small gods go, God arrives. Heaven, in the end, is where we belong.

Daniel O'Leary is based at Our Lady of Grace Presbytery, West Yorkshire

Autumn leaves Falling

I like to sit
in the garden
when I'm thinking
or praying

*And because God
hears both
perhaps
they're the same...*

This morning
I ask him to tell me
something
and soon
seven red-brown
leaves
fall on me

As I look at one
– turning its dryness
in my fingers –
I'm thinking of mortality
and that lately
I've been feeling
thin and worn
like this
too...

However
this is a beautiful
shapely thing
I hold in my
hand

I'm also thinking
that
after all
autumn leaves are the colours
we remember
autumn leaves appear most beautiful
autumn leaves are the subject
of paintings
and
poetry

Just when you think
they're dying
they come
into
their
own

Mark Laurent

from Throw Away the Stones, a book of poetry by Mark Laurent available from Christian booksellers and Whitcoulls

Remembering our Religious Teachers with Gratitude

Sean Brosnahan

Lately I've been thinking about the passing of the teaching religious orders. Teaching priests, Brothers and Sisters were a dominant presence in the New Zealand church of my childhood. Before the *Integration Act* the whole Catholic school-church complex was powered by their low-cost labour. Catholic schools in those days were scrappy places, starved of resources by a century of chronic underfunding and well behind the infrastructural standards of the state system. Yet, to my mind, there was something magnificent about them, something that our present-day 'top of the line' Catholic schools lack.

The 'X' factor of yesteryear's Catholic schools was undoubtedly the Religious teachers. In recent years they've had a bad rap. The iniquities of a few, exposed in high profile court cases, have besmirched their reputation. Disaffected ex-pupils have published hypercritical memoirs. It seems doubly unfortunate that the last generation of teaching Religious should pass into history under such clouds. Even worse, if our old teachers should go to their eternal reward unacknowledged and unthanked by the thousands of New Zealanders who cherish positive memories of their Catholic schooldays.

Many readers will have their own memories of a priest, Sister or Brother who mentored, cajoled or inspired. Some of these characters loom hugely in our recollections, larger than life. Few could have been more memorable than Brother Egbert FMS. Born in Christchurch in 1880 as Michael Jackson, Egbert was one of the first generation of New Zealand-born Marist Brothers. Professed in Sydney as a 16-year-old, Egbert began his

teaching career in Australia where he claimed to have had up to 200 boys under his care at the same time. "And none of them ever gave me any trouble!"

Egbert returned to New Zealand in 1906. From then until his retirement in 1950 he taught at Marist schools all over the country. He was a man of many idiosyncrasies and obsessions, described by one Marist Provincial as "our most eccentric Brother". Stories of his exploits are legion. Many touch on



his enthusiasm for singing: long and loud, in any place and on any occasion. Perhaps his most notable 'performance' was during his 1931 visit to Rome when Egbert climbed up on to the dome of St Peter's and boomed forth over the famous square below with *God Defend New Zealand* - in Maori.

Egbert was also notable for his sporting fixations. Like many Marist Brothers he was a fervent rugby enthusiast. Unlike his confreres Egbert constantly sought to improve the game with his own innovations. He devised 'New Rugby', a combination of rugby, league, soccer and Gaelic football. New Cricket or 'hit-trick' followed

– a forerunner as it turned out of the limited-over versions of the modern game. Indeed Egbert came up with his own versions of just about every sporting code. His favourite pastimes, however, were handball and cycling. In every town where he was stationed he became a notorious figure on his huge, specially reinforced bicycle, riding with gay abandon through the traffic, his cloak flapping in the breeze and his Homburg hat held fast with a long piece of elastic.

One of Egbert's most public obsessions was with the political cause of Ireland. Son of an Irish mother, Egbert had visited the country for a month in 1932 and ever after championed it with a passion that was quite out of kilter with his colonial surroundings. One of his pupils in Greymouth was the late Patrick O'Farrell, subsequently to become the doyen of Australasian Irish history. In one of his last books *Vanished Kingdoms: Irish in Australia and New Zealand* (1990) O'Farrell provided a vivid pen picture of Brother Egbert's Irish extremism:

By the 1940s Egbert habitually used all or most of his Latin periods to teach Irish history and verse. Or, more accurately, to teach a world view which integrated Irish, English and New Zealand loyalties and identity. My own Latin notebook began (copied out from dictation) with the complete words of God Save the King, then followed God Save Ireland; then God Defend New Zealand, with the Irishness of its author, Thomas Bracken, much detailed and emphasised in later lessons. Then followed one of Egbert's many compositions ... through eight ... stanzas, all performed with callisthenic exercises, in class unison, as a warm-up device in the bitter cold of winter classrooms."

Reflecting on John

Believing without seeing (Jn 20)

Susan Smith

Believing without seeing is not easy, and in *John's* resurrection narrative we have different examples of how Jesus' disciples come to belief. In 20:1-10, the Beloved Disciple and Peter go to the tomb, where they find the risen Jesus' discarded linen wrappings. These do not lead Peter to belief, but the Beloved Disciple "saw and believed." She/he then disappears from the story and there is nothing in the remainder of the chapter that suggests the Risen Jesus appeared to the Beloved Disciple. In 20:11-18, the author tells how Mary Magdalene came to the garden and initially failed to recognise Jesus, mistaking him for a gardener. When Jesus calls her by name she recognises Jesus and wants to cling to him, an action that Jesus does not permit. Then the other disciples, minus Thomas, see the Risen Jesus and believe, while Thomas later insists that he will only believe if he receives more than the other disciples. He states that he will believe only if he can probe the wounds of the Risen Jesus.

The author disapproves of Thomas's request as Jesus rebukes Thomas: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" (Jn 20:29). Jesus' words echo those to the official in Jn 4:48: "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe." In the healing miracle that precedes those words, Jesus had cured the son of the royal official (Jn 4:46-54),



not through his healing touch but through his healing word.

The example of Thomas is important for two reasons: first, he refuses to accept the word of the other disciples; and, second, he is pre-occupied with establishing the miraculous aspect of Jesus' appearance. But when Jesus does appear, Thomas does not touch Jesus' wounds, instead he confesses, "My Lord and my God."

I feel a certain sympathy for Thomas. Our education has trained us to demand empirical proof, to critique and to argue toward a logical conclusion, so probably our response to the proclamation of the other disciples would have been similar to that of Thomas. "Unless I see, I shall not believe."

How should the contemporary Christian grow in their belief given the absence of the physical Jesus? Jesus' words to Thomas make it clear that we ought not to rely on supposedly miraculous events such as those associated with apparitions of Mary. Rather, because Jesus has gifted the Spirit to his followers, the absent Jesus is present through the mutual loving of members of the Christian community, through their shared mission in the wider society in which they live, and through their celebration of the Eucharist. ■

Another of Egbert's star pupils was the noted expatriate New Zealand writer, Dan Davin. It was Egbert who recognised his scholastic potential while teaching Davin in Invercargill in 1929. Egbert pulled strings to ensure that Davin would finish his schooling at the Marist Brothers' top college, *Sacred Heart* in Auckland, and solicited financial support from the Invercargill community to get him there. This final year of first class tuition set the brilliant Southlander up to win the university scholarships that would take him on to a glittering academic career at Otago and Oxford.

Thousands of ordinary boys benefited just as much from Egbert's efforts. In

Timaru in the 1920s he pushed for the improvement of the *Tussock Domain* beside Marist School into a proper playing ground for rugby. His letters to the editor as 'Mother of Ten' (he was an inveterate newspaper correspondent under a range of nom-de-plumes) are credited with securing local Council support. Anzac Square was the result, a playground for generations of Marist schoolboys and home ground for decades to the Celtic Rugby Club.

Brother Egbert was a unique individual but in many ways his story stands here for hundreds of other Brothers, Sisters and teaching Fathers. They lived and worked in spartan conditions, received little material reward and yet devoted

their entire lives to Catholic education. Over the generations a whole ethnic community climbed out of poverty through their efforts. They weren't all angels but in a different era they acted according to their best lights. Most were at least on the side of the angels. Wouldn't it be great if those of us who remember them with gratitude let our old teachers know, before it is too late?

Footnote: One of the most famous survivors of this merry band, Br Gerard "Rardy" Mills CFC, celebrated his 100th birthday recently in Christchurch. He is in retirement at Nazareth House.

The author is Director of the Early Settlers Museum, Dunedin and a Mornington parishioner.

A frightening exploration of Godzone

The Last Resort – God Defend our Free Land ...

Film Review: Paul Sorrell

The *Last Resort* is a home-grown documentary which shows in compelling detail the ways in which ordinary New Zealanders are becoming strangers in their own country, priced out of the market for land and housing by aggressive developers and wealthy foreign investors. The picture painted is a grim one, but the film shows that the seeds of hope lie in the strength and independence of the Kiwi spirit and our capacity to work together for the common good.

Producers Errol Wright and Abi King-Jones weave interviews, old footage, sound bites and home-grown music into a coherent, if complex, tale of “colonisation by corporation” and the ongoing dispossession of the small people of this country by wealth and power. Commentary is provided by a line-up of the usual suspects on

both sides of the battle-lines: Murray Horton, Roger Kerr, John Minto, Moana Jackson and the late Rod Donald, to name a few.

But the real stars are the everyday people who act out their real-life roles in the story around which the film is built – the tale of a long-established family camping ground at Mahia Beach in northern Hawkes Bay and its sale by a venal local council to developers who plan to turn it into a luxury subdivision.

Under the leadership of a group of strong women the local Maori community launch a campaign against the development, based on a claim over the land involved under the Treaty, culminating in a seven-week occupation of the site. Sadly, the battle is lost as the developers outmanoeuvre the protesters with the aid of compliant council officials. Original footage taken on-site and at public meetings adds to the immediacy and tension of this part of the film.

The issues raised so pointedly at Mahia Beach are further teased out as one disturbing question after another is raised. We are given an insight into the workings of the *Overseas Investment Commission* – a body which facilitates the damaging investment it is charged with regulating – and the *Overseas Investment Act*, passed in 2005. The film points out the cost to locals of development and speculation, such as higher rates and unaffordable housing. The argument is widened to include the sale of high-country properties to wealthy foreigners, the implications of recent seabed and foreshore legislation and the environmental degradation caused by industrial pollution and planned ironsands and oil prospecting.

While this broad-brush approach creates a comprehensive context for the Mahia debacle at the heart of *The Last Resort*, it also threatens to overwhelm us with the enormity and complexity of the issues raised. But, as indigenous rights lawyer Moana Jackson reminds us at the end of the film, while power and privilege will not weaken their grip without a struggle, neither will they last forever. ■

Pleroma Christian Supplies is live!

Visit us at

<http://www.christiansupplies.co.nz>

Thousands of items to view

New product added daily

Purchase online!



Freephone 0508-988-988
Freefax 0508-988-989
Freepost 609, PostShop,
Waipukurau
Email: order@pleroma.org.nz

We will find those books for you

Books mentioned in this paper, or any other books you can't find, can be ordered from:



O C BOOKS

Use our email to order – or to receive our fortnightly email newsletter

Tollfree 0800 886 226
99 Lower Stuart St, Dunedin
Ph/Fax (03) 477 9919
email: shop@ocbooks.co.nz

Visit our website

<http://www.ocbooks.co.nz>

Differing perspectives on a great Christian luminary

Remembering Henri: the Life and Legacy of Henri Nouwen
Ed. by Gerald S Twomey and Claude Pomerleau CSC.
Maryknoll NY, Orbis Books, 2006. Pbk.159 pp
Review: Kevin Toomey

For anyone who loves the works and spirituality of Henri Nouwen, this is a gem of a book, not to be missed. If you don't know of this spiritual genius, reading it would be a good way to begin to enter into his mind and heart before choosing to read particular books he wrote. As an appreciative reader of Nouwen from way back, I thought that I knew quite a lot about him. How wrong I was. This book expanded my knowledge, so that I feel that I have come as close to entering into the inner life of this gifted writer and spiritual guide as I will ever get. I cherish that gift.

The book consists of 13 reminiscences by men and women who worked closely with Nouwen over the major part of his 64 years. Many of these writers are part of the 'Henri Nouwen industry' that has spawned itself since Henri's untimely death in 1996, people who have already written about his life, his spirituality and his influence on the church and beyond. Some are internationally known figures, such as *Sojourner's* founder, Jim Forrest and peacemaker, John Dear SJ.

Henri's principal spiritual insights are highlighted. Some of these are: his yearning and gift for deep friendship; his focal attachment to the Eucharist as the heart of his life; his "downward mobility", not being sucked into the mesmeric power of the university and publishing world but finding his way to work with the profoundly disabled as the heart of life; his remarkable ecumenical and interfaith ministry; his wisdom gift for cutting to the heart of difficult situations and unifying people; his love of art and his ability to draw valuable insights from the lives and paintings of Van Gogh and Rembrandt; and (notably shown in this book) his great encouragement of people, especially lay people.

As one of his most sought after books was titled, he himself was a 'wounded healer'. By reflecting intimately on his own human fragility, he drew out universal and timely insights to which all are drawn.

Because this book is a series of short independent essays, I found it hard to put down. I hope others will be similarly moved. ■

Henri Nouwen: His Life and Vision
Michael O'Laughlin
Orbis Books Price: \$52.80 hdbk
Review: Michael Hill

It is hard to imagine a richer or more multifaceted life than that of the celebrated spiritual writer, Henri Nouwen. This book briefly but faithfully chronicles its many phases. It is an easy read – brief chapters, 3-4 page each and lavishly illustrated. Nouwen appears to be constantly on the move: teacher, writer, public speaker, contemplative monk, social activist, pastor and finally carer to the disabled.

His magnetic personality drew a vast circle of friends. As a teacher he always preferred the intimate group where he could relate personally to his students. The book's author was his assistant during his last teaching post at Harvard Divinity School, so was in a good position to assess Nouwen's complex character – the 'wounded healer' *par excellence*.

The early part of the book suffers from being something of a kaleidoscope of stories, like the diary of a journey. Just when we begin to wonder whether we will ever meet the real Henri, O'Laughlin pauses and gives us a profound analysis of his subject. Nouwen was homosexual, yet he resolutely refused to 'come out', preferring, as the author suggests, to be known by the merit of his writings and teachings rather than just 'that homosexual priest'. Was this the reason for his psychological crises and eventual breakdown? Did he ever come to fully accept himself as he really was?

In his maturity Nouwen became more and more committed to social justice. He lectured and wrote – and he acted. There is a strong parallel here between Nouwen and Thomas Merton, in many respects his mentor. Nouwen interrupted his academic career and took off for South America. On return, he was fired up to help North Americans understand the plight of their cousins in the south.

Nouwen's very vulnerability as a person brought him to the successful summit of his life's work: his years at *l'Arche*. There he found his immense academic gifts were of absolutely no use in the daily routine of housekeeping and personal caring. With wonderful humility he totally accepted this limitation – a resolute step on the road to holiness.

This book is very satisfying. It certainly gives a wonderful insight into one of the great Christians of the 20th century. ■

(Supplied by Pleroma Christian Supplies)

getting enough?
try
www.inspirationaltv.net

The Old Order Changeth

*The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways
Lest one good custom should
corrupt the world.*

– Tennyson

The Christian calendar is centred around Easter not only in order to solemnise the death of Christ but also to celebrate the hope and the expectation for a better world that is signified by the Resurrection. The political leadership of our world is changing. The ethos of total wars and territorial empires has ended. Can we not be optimistic about the future?

The hypercriticism, censure, even abuse of George W. Bush and Tony Blair, for the fiasco in Iraq, presage their departure. All those associated with them in the past, over the chaos in the Middle East, have also lost political favour. Wiser heads will prevail. The changing of political parties in both these countries would tend to confirm this. Those who aspire to leadership must now state categorically that war is no longer the answer to supposed terrorism. Equality and justice are now espoused by responsible leaders.

Empires built on conquest have proved to be self-defeating. Consider the history of Europe. It previously consisted of warring countries within the continent. However, Europe is now being painfully but persistently formed into a body politic under the rubric of the European Union. Therein, new leaders now have policies which favour all citizens. What was thought to be an impossible dream, a common currency, is accepted in Europe as the obvious means of trade. Jean Monnet thought so a hundred years ago.

Wars of self-determination are the most lengthy and the most difficult to resolve. The conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians, Russia and Chechnya or India and Pakistan illustrate the

tragedy of the human condition. But here also voices are being raised worldwide, demanding solutions. A good example is the Israeli academic, Haim Bresheeth, who argues the case for a cultural boycott of his home country because of its brutality and lawlessness against the Palestinians.

Christ himself was a political agitator who railed against injustice and was crucified for his ideas of universal peace. For over 2000 years, Christians have attempted to follow his example. It is not impossible, nor is too late, to hope that his life was not in vain. After all, Easter ends in celebration.

The delight of books

After visiting houses for sale on the 'open days', I sometimes wonder whether we are witnessing the decline of reading. Bookcases have been replaced by plasma screens, computers and 'sound lounges' with not a book in sight – well maybe a J.K. Rowling or a Stephen King pot-boiler. Is anybody reading Dickens, Waugh, Marx, Austen, Shakespeare, the romantic poets or *The Book of Common Prayer* for that matter? Is anybody reading Tolstoy (fondly remembered when, on my mother's insistence, I had to put *War and Peace* aside after reading non-stop for a week: "Go and play outside!")?

Books are a source of wisdom from *Ecclesiastes* to Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking*, but what happens when your house becomes too small for all the books collected over a lifetime? When every room has overburdened shelves full of books that will never be referred to again? Which tome do you discard? Surely, Graham Greene's novels, Churchill's *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (4 Vols.), the

writings of Dante, Honoré de Balzac or Kipling will not be read again. Why keep them?

Books should be part of everyone's experience. They become old friends whom I find difficult to abandon. Certainly not for a plasma TV screen. Every book has a significance for me, and I imagine that I will go back to it at some stage. I rarely do, but the sight of them confirms that I am among friends. They remind me of the history of my life, intellectually and emotionally. When upset, I revert to the poets. I reread Tennyson for the beauty of language or T.S. Eliot for the sheer power of his ideas. For enjoyment, *Brideshead Revisited* comes off the shelf again. Books matter to me, as they indicate the paths I have taken in life. They can also point to the way ahead.

Gaffes to avoid

As of this writing, the Prime Minister is off to Washington in search of The Holy Grail or a Free Trade Agreement with George W. Bush. On behalf of *Tui Motu*, I proffered the following advice on questions to be avoided with George during their chat.

- Do not ask what he meant when he said, "The vast majority of our imports come from outside the country". Refrain from commenting on the latest good news from Guantanamo Bay and whether it's true that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed will be seen live on *Sixty Minutes*.
- Refrain from asking about the health of George's mate Dick and whether Carl has been rendered or retired. Avoid all references to "Scooter" being found guilty of perjury and obstruction of justice, rather ask when George is going to pardon him – this year or next.
- Above all, don't mention that you had heard some nasty gossip about impeachment and what were the implications of that word. That would be undiplomatic. ■

Crises ignored

Benedict XVI has just released the Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the concluding act of the Synod of Bishops on the topic of the Eucharist, held in Rome in October 2005. Let me recall what I wrote in *Tui Motu* at the time:

“Even the most casual watcher of racing on TV knows one thing. The position of the contenders as they round the corner coming into the straight does not tell you who will be in front at the winning post.

“The opening days of the Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist saw long taboo topics being aired as real problems and concrete remedies being proposed. Our New Zealand bishops played a prominent and honourable role in this. Bishop Denis Browne spoke of the increasing shortage of priests, raising the possibility of the ordination of married men. Archbishop John Dew spoke of the need for a rethink of the rules that exclude divorced and civilly remarried Catholics from communion. Their remarks caught worldwide attention and were echoed by many other participants.”

I wrote at that time that the prospects that the Synod and the Pope would back such moves were not good. Sadly my forecast was correct. For all the good points that are in the *Exhortation*, the two issues outlined above get no mention. Benedict XVI emphasises the precept and the profit of Mass attendance every Sunday. He acknowledges that in some regions provision of Mass on a weekly basis is impossible. But he passes over the matter lightly. No doubt living in Rome where some 5000 priests are at hand, it is hard to envisage the situation of remote islands in the Pacific. A priest reaches them once or twice a year. The best that can be done is to send by aircraft a biscuit tin of consecrated hosts to enable a weekly communion service.

How differently some of the Eastern Churches would tackle the problem. A respected member of the local community would be selected for ordination to the priesthood. Supported by his wife and family, he would then minister to the community and provide weekly celebration of Mass. Furnishing the faithful with the Eucharist would have precedence over any rule of priestly celibacy.

As to the possibility of the re-married being allowed to receive communion, the path followed by the Eastern Churches has been equally ignored. Those churches have the discipline of *economia*. This means that the bishop has power to allow in individual cases behaviour that on the surface seems contrary to the law of God. A person now living in a second marriage wishes to receive communion. According to the doctrine and practice of *economia*, the bishop, having ensured that there is genuine repentance for any contribution to the breakdown of the original marriage, can permit reception of the sacraments. Benedict makes no mention of the Eastern discipline – not even to reject it.

Such ignoring of Eastern Church practice has a precedent. Almost all the points that the 1980 *Synod on the Family* made regarding the situation of divorced and re-married Catholics were incorporated by Pope John Paul II in his subsequent Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*. But the section that called for “a new and extensive study to increase the effectiveness of pastoral care, taking into account the practices of the eastern Churches” was not incorporated. There seems no evidence that any such study ever in fact took place.

The churches of the East have over the centuries responded in these matters to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. Disadvantaged members of the Latin Church may have some further time to wait before our church does the same.

Humphrey O’Leary

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

If you know a friend who might enjoy reading – and maybe subscribing to Tui Motu – then fill in the name below and send it to us at:

Freepost 97407
P O Box 6404
Dunedin North 9030

– and we will send them a free back copy

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

Tui Motu InterIslands Subscription

Name:..... Sub No:.....

Address:.....

.....Area Code.....

\$24 for FIVE issues: ☐ \$48 for ONE YEAR’S Subscription (11 issues): ☐

Unwaged \$22 for five and \$44 for eleven issues

Overseas: Australia & S. Pacific \$65 ☐ All other regions: \$70 ☐

• I am enclosing an additional donation to secure the future of *Tui Motu*: ☐

I enclose a cheque for \$.....

or please debit my credit card (Visa/Mastercard)

Card No:

Expiry date..... Signature.....

Mail to P O Box 6404 DUNEDIN NORTH 9030

email: tui motu@earthlight.co.nz

website: www.tuimotu.org

A cloudy Sunday afternoon

It would be easier to go and play outside on bikes than think about all this. The trouble was we came across the *Sermon on the Mount* in our family morning prayer time (a new idea for the New Year. We've managed prayer times several times a week so far and we've made it to the end of February). Anyway – we were reading that bit about “Give to those who ask you and do not turn away those who want to borrow from you.” And Daughter asks “Well we don't really do that eh, Mum, ‘cos everyone here asks for money’.”

And she was right. On both counts. I much prefer to give money to people who I think ‘need’ my help rather than those who come with their hands out. And there are plenty of people around us who ask for money – to have or to borrow. More than I feel I can lend to.

But actually our neighbours in Himachal Pradesh nearly all have less money than I do. And if they defaulted on re-paying a loan, would actually anything bad happen to me? I think not. A friend says when he lends money he never expects it back. And if it does get re-paid – well, that's an extra bonus.

Church doesn't seem to be the forum for such discussions. Church often feels like a cosy and ‘nice’ club that has little to do with the transformed community of topsy-turvy values that Jesus seemed to be about. When I am honest with myself and feel brave enough to read that irritating *Sermon on the Mount*, I recognize my life as distant from Jesus' teachings of generosity, clear talking, humility, forgiveness and grace. He challenges my unneeded preoccupation with physical needs.

So how do I make sense of those verses? And of the church? And of the whole of Christianity? And where I belong in this all? Perhaps I'll start asking friends how they deal with the Tricky Bits of Jesus' teaching. Ask others how they deal with it. Maybe other pilgrims (or wannabes) have the same quandaries as I have.

I'm delighted to find others journeying the same paths. Asking the same questions. A friend decided that their family will call God ‘She-He’. I like that idea. I want my kids to know God as Mother and Father, Sister and Brother. *Tui Motu*. A website www.spiritedexchanges.co.nz where others toss about faith journeys, disillusionment with churches, ideas of god and life.

And I think I'll try giving away to the next person who asks me for money. It may not even hurt.

Kaaren Mathias

Rogan McIndoe advert

our love
is to be
real and
active

Your generous support makes a tremendous difference in the lives of others around the world. If you would still like to contribute you can still send in your freepost envelopes, or make a \$20 donation by phoning 0900 4 11 11

Thank you for making your love real and active this Lenten season

the
Lent
appeal
2007

Caritas
Aotearoa New Zealand

FREEPHONE
0800 22 10 22
www.caritas.org.nz