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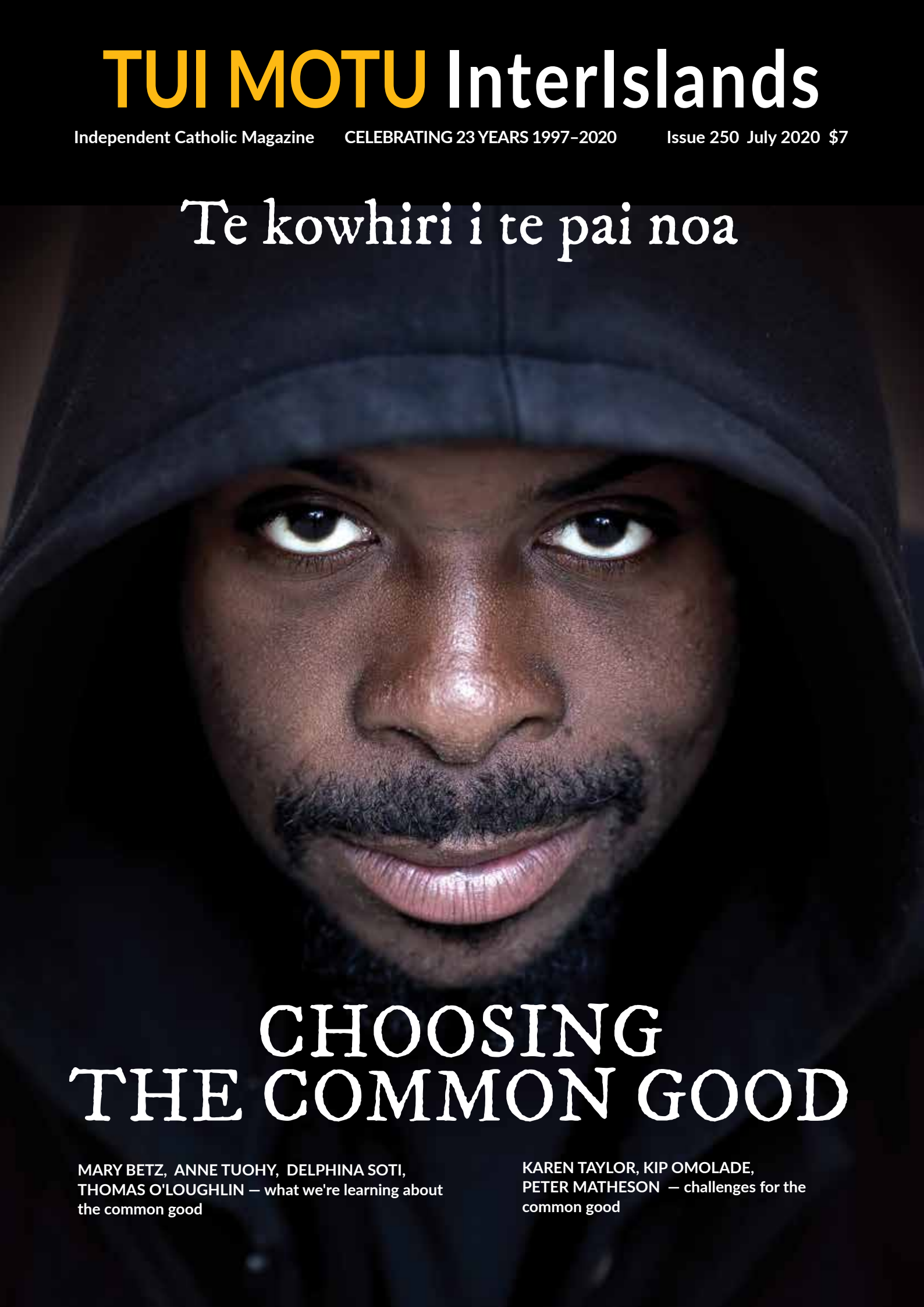

CHOOSING THE COMMON GOOD

MARY BETZ, ANNE TUOHY, DELPHINA SOTI, THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN — what we're learning about the common good

KAREN TAYLOR, KIP OMOLADE, PETER MATHESON — challenges for the common good

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Tuimotumag TuiMotuInterIslands Tuimotu

EDITORIAL

Nourish the Common Good

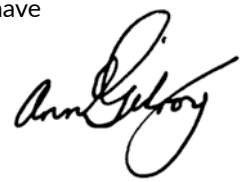
The new cases of coronavirus at our borders highlight the skin-thin fragility of our coronavirus-free Aotearoa bubble. They also emphasise our dependence on those assigned to protect our borders and those entering the country fulfilling their requirements responsibly. As we discovered, one lapse endangered a web of over 300 people. The threat to our hard-won safety, and the relief of new rigour at the borders, increases our gratitude and pride in what we did as a team of five million. It's that commitment we want to nurture among us.

While we're in our national bubble we have the opportunity to work towards healing some of the wounds in our society. George Floyd's murder in the USA, a catalyst for the Black Lives Matter movement around the colonial world particularly, struck chords in Aotearoa. White supremacy is alive and well in this country, as we have heard from young Māori and other New Zealanders of Pasifika, Asian, African and Middle Eastern heritage. They weren't talking about stereotypical white supremacists but the avuncular and obstructive attitude of people like me and you towards them. Our superiority, often unconscious and so unexamined, limits their access to the resources of the common good. Most of us are not novices at addressing racism in ourselves and in society. But it's like the virus — entrenched —and if we give up our vigilance, we become oblivious to the damage it is doing.

Now is a good time to examine this issue again, to inform ourselves and in doing so change our attitudes. We probably all know women and men who are more conscious than we are and who can help us understand our racism. We may enjoy reading and discussing some of the documents about the history of different areas of New Zealand prepared for the ongoing Treaty claims. Many in our Churches and local organisations can encourage us to become conscious of our racism. As the neighbourly people we discovered ourselves to be during Lockdown, in this time we will find people and avenues for changing our solidity into solidarity and our racism into priority for the common good.

In this milestone 250th issue of *Tui Motu* magazine our writers discuss their experience of choosing for the common good and there's much more. We thank all involved in producing this thought provoking issue. Their reflection, faith, research, art and craft have provided a feast — enjoy it.

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



KEEP MOMENTUM for CHANGE

I've been reading about the French Revolution and it's taken on a new meaning given the historic moment we are living through.

The Revolution (1789-1799) for a time delivered on its proclaimed values of liberty, equality and fraternity. It abolished the institution of slavery, in spite of the riches from sugar cane colonies in the Carribean. The cost of the cruelty required to maintain slavery was deemed too high. Former slaves were freed and black Frenchmen were given the title of citizen and for a time were afforded equality with other citizens. But the First Republic failed to cement the change.

Social upheaval may have abolished slavery but eight years later when Napoleon seized power he reinstated it. The same few black Frenchmen whose equality in society was so hard-earned, were forced to forfeit it in their lifetimes. Individuals may have overturned the social order, but the nation had not moved on.

A similar hypocrisy can be seen in the earlier American Revolution (1765-1783). Slave masters declared all men free and equal —but the nation they founded would nearly tear itself apart before relinquishing the right to own their black brothers.

To date there have been no reparations made to Black people for that period in USA history and the underlying inequality is seen everywhere in the social fabric. We have not been able to sustain betterment for all. While the lot of some has been made far better, it's been at the expense of others whose welfare has worsened.

Progress, after all, is not linear. The Russian revolutionary Lenin wrote: "There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen."

These last few weeks have seen rapid change. The death of yet another Black man in the custody of white US police officers sparked mass protests both there and abroad. While the US has a plethora of problems — from a gun culture bordering on delirium to the militarisation of local police — there's reason the cause has been picked up all over the world.

Black Lives Matter protesters in Australia and New Zealand aren't protesting America's justice system, although they may stand in solidarity. They are focused on their own problems, which, again, are hardly scarce.

While the shooting of unarmed civilians of colour isn't a weekly occurrence in Australia, the plight of our Aboriginal people is just as severe. Indigenous Australians represent 3 per cent of the general population, but nearly a third of its imprisoned.

In New Zealand, the situation is little better. Māori make up less than 17 per cent of its population but more than half of those sitting in jail cells.

Those figures are illustrative of just one outcome of a system that is clearly not working for people of colour. Incarceration is the end product of a litany of failures that range from literacy and education, health, work, justice and many things in between. African American, Aboriginal, Māori and Pasifika people aren't killed or jailed directly because of the colour of their skin, but because of the myriad social injustices our embedded racism produces.

It's hardly a new phenomenon. It has compounded over decades and centuries that stretch throughout the history books. The death of George Floyd has simply sparked a need to say the name of all those who have been killed unnecessarily due to a climate of fear and racism. As history shows, signing an abolition bill is not enough. We must address the racism that keeps inequality in place in society.

The anger we've seen has long been bubbling beneath the surface and the action required to alleviate it may take just as long. The improvements that need to be made are immense and the problems that are apparent are as many as they are complex.

Racial inequality has proven it requires many hands. The solution will not be found as quickly as protestors took up signs, but that does not mean the protests are futile nor naive. Rather they need to be a catalyst for change. The appetite and will for this work seems to be in many communities of all stripes. It's now upon all of us to achieve it, peacefully but surely. We're not free until we all are.

Photo by James Eades on Unsplash

Jack Derwin is a senior reporter at *Business Insider Australia*. His interests include all aspects of social justice particularly in the South Pacific region.

New Companions in the Common Good

MARY BETZ discusses how the meaning of the common good now includes all of the Earth community.

Like many of us, I have walked more over the past few months. I often "loiter with intent" at Paturoa Bay on the Manukau Harbour, where hundreds of oystercatchers overwinter, resting single-legged at the water's edge. Stilts elegantly prod the shallows. A pair of shelducks squeal and "galumph" as they scour the intertidal zone. Kingfishers perch on overhanging branches, and herons wade knee-deep, alert for the movement of small fish below. A lone cormorant glides along water, then dives, surfacing with a beak full of wriggling smelt. Entranced, I sometimes spend most of an hour with this avian community, grateful that its members share their space with me, allowing me simply to be there as they interact, feed and rest.

Non-human Creation as Family

We, humans, are created beings like the ones I spend time with by the sea. In the experiential knowledge of indigenous peoples all over our globe, the natural world is full of beings as sentient as ourselves. Māori whakapapa includes people, land, sea, forest and all living creatures as family.

Genetics confirms human relatedness to other beings: we share 90 per cent of our DNA with our cats, 80 per cent with cows, 65 per cent with birds and 50 per cent with bananas. As biologist Christopher Uhl reminds us, we are "a part" of the Earth, not "apart" from it. Genesis names the first human "the earth creature" *(hā-'ādām)* from the earth *(hā-adāmâ)*. Our English word "human" comes from the same root as humus, the rich nutrient layer of the soil. And Māori name themselves tangata whenua, people of the land.

Kinship in Earth Community

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis calls us to this almost forgotten kinship relationship with non-human creation using the example of St Francis of Assisi: "He would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of 'brother' or 'sister'. Such a conviction cannot be written off as naïve romanticism, for it affects the choices

which determine our behaviour. If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs."

American Indian theologian George Tinker draws this same conclusion about human behaviour toward the rest of creation: "As fellow createds ... there can no longer be any rationale for exploitation and oppression ... If we believe we are all relatives ... then we must live together differently than we have."

My avian relatives gift me with awe and wonder. But unbeknown to them, I endanger their survival by the consumer society I am part of. In our "need" for cars, electronics and other possessions, and truer need for food, clothing and homes, humans participate in the destruction of waters, forests and landforms which are always the existing home of other branches of our family. Relentless extraction and processing of minerals and petroleum and intensive, often wasteful and destructive agriculture and forestry practices must give way to kaitiakitanga.

Humans differ from our wider family because we can see the big picture and change the large scale narrative. We know how ecosystems work, how past choices have proven enhancing or damaging, and how today's decisions will shape the future of our common home. This knowledge and the ability to take action, which can bring our common home to ruin or flourish, give us a huge responsibility.

Teaching on the Common Good

The phrase "common good" has been in Christian parlance since the time of Augustine. Popes from Leo XIII to Francis have spoken of it as the good of *all* of us, the good of the *whole*. But that *whole* has been conceived of as *humanity*, not our whole Earth community.

In Catholic Social Teaching, the common good is linked with the equitable distribution of social and economic "goods" and more recently, ecological ones like water and climate. We have been charged with the responsibility (accepted or not) to ensure that decisions on the "goods" of Earth are made for the common good of all people.

Extending the Teaching

But the teaching of Pope Francis on kinship with our Earth, coupled with his (and others') insight that our attitudes toward non-human creation affect our behaviour, leads us to another step in our understanding. What would it mean to work for the common good of our *whole common home* rather than solely the common good of human beings?

We know how ecosystems work, how past choices have proven enhancing or damaging, and how today's decisions will shape the future of our common home.

Governments would then have the *raison d'etre* (John XXII, *Mater et Magister*) not only to create *social* conditions, but *ecological* conditions, to achieve the common good.

The economic sector (industry, business and finance), meant to be used not for wealth creation but as a means of distributive justice (Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*), would be charged with ecological responsibility for its use of or impact on the non-human community (which we currently call "natural resources").

Individuals, already obliged to bring our own interests into harmony with the needs of community (John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*), would make decisions not only for the betterment of all human life, but of the whole Earth community.

Living Our New Understanding

My graced avian encounters feed my spirit. But if I don't translate those kinship experiences into how I live the rest of my life, mine is a false spirituality. As our economy gains traction after COVID-19, I want to be more reflective about how I consume petrol, clothing, meat, electronics or anything I buy. *If* I need it, was it produced ethically and sustainably or was our common home wantonly damaged because I generate demand for it? Opening our eyes about how production of our "necessities" has led to the tearing of the ecological fabric of our common home — almost beyond repair — should impel us to live differently.

To live for the common good of our common home means not only changing our individual choices, but advocacy. Government, councils and corporations need our support and critique to make decisions on transportation, energy, infrastructure, construction and agriculture which will protect the land, freshwater, sea, animals, plants and climate of our common home.

We can applaud recent policy and standards for freshwater in New Zealand which will make rivers and lakes swimmable again for humans, and habitable for aquatic life, as well as reduce carbon emissions through more tree-planting.

We can push for further reforms to the Emissions Trading Scheme and our carbon emissions budget to ensure we are doing our part to keep climate change from tipping our world into further ecological and social chaos.

We can ask for long overdue adjustments to building standards so solar energy can heat more water and space, water tanks supply more of our water, and buildings are constructed with low-carbon materials. And why aren't we gradually phasing out petrol vehicles in favour of electric ones?

Living the common good of all our Earth community will protect this wide interdependent family we live among, as well as our own.

For courage and perseverance, and our willingness to learn from all members of our common home, we pray.

Painting: ***Spoonbills Taking Off*** by Sheila Brown © Used with permission www.sheilabrown.co.nz

Mary Betz is a writer and spiritual companion with a background in ecology, theology, justice and peace, and spirituality.

DOING OUR PART

ANNE TUOHY writes that our smallest loving contribution helps to create the common good.

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

In their 2019 Social Justice Statement our Bishops expand on this quote by Mother Teresa noting: "Jesus himself was well aware of the power of small steps. He would constantly use small, seemingly mundane moments and encounters to heal those whom he met along the way of ordinary daily life, bringing to them great renewal of purpose and life." They encouraged us to "do our part, however small" to create communities of equity, justice and hope.

In many ways, their statement reflects our national experience over the last months when New Zealanders came together to respond to the global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus. No one particular person or group could on their own achieve the task of keeping Aotearoa New Zealand safe from the loss of life or the levels of community devastation this pandemic has caused in countries across the globe. That we are an island nation with a small population in a relatively remote geographical location offered some advantages. However, while this was helpful, size and location alone could not have achieved our present outcome without the expert advice of our public health officials, the leadership of a government who listened to them and the unselfish commitment from the "Team of Five Million". Guided by government and their public health experts the collective response from communities around the country gave life to the power of the principle of the common good.

Common Good Is Church Teaching

The Catholic tradition teaches it is in community that the dignity and the flourishing of the human person is both secured and realised. So at the most basic level, Catholic Social Teaching (CST) affirms the social nature of human persons. Because humans are relational in nature, community is essential for our growth and development.

Dignity of the human person and the principle of community or the common good provide the two overarching themes of CST. The relationship between these two principles is mutually constructive. This means that even as our community shapes and secures our identity as people, so too do we shape and direct the identity of our communities.

In light of this relationship we are required to pay attention to the attitudes and behaviours we use to structure our communities because they will have a direct impact on the health and well-being of the whole community. We create community together and so together we need to take responsibility for the sort of communities we create.

Our Social Commitment

Consequently, the Gospel imperative to "love our neighbour" cannot be understood as a personal pledge or an individual commandment. Rather it has a "social dimension that requires a broader social commitment to the common good."

Caritas defines the principle of the common good as the commitment to working for the good of all — hei painga mō te katoa.

In *Evangelium Vitae* Pope Francis claims that authentic commitment to our communal life and welfare "cannot justify a social structure which silences or appeases the poor, so that the more affluent can placidly support their lifestyle while others have to make do as they can. Demands involving the distribution of wealth, concern for the poor and human rights cannot be suppressed under the guise of creating a consensus ... or a contented minority. The dignity of the human person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges."

Look Out for the Vulnerable

One of the most fundamental obligations of CST is the focus given to the poorest and most vulnerable in the community. While this is true of all CST principles it is particularly visible in relation to the principle of the Common Good. Pope Francis often speaks of the need to be critically attuned to the heart of justice which can only be achieved through a deep commitment to the most vulnerable in our communities.

In both *Laudato Si'* and *Evangelli Gaudium* Francis critiques the "trickle down" approach which disenfranchises the poor as not only deeply flawed and unsupported by research or evidence, but inequitable and destructive.

Feminist scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza also highlights the deep connection between the well-being of our most vulnerable and the flourishing of our whole communities, maintaining that until the "poorest and most despised" are loved and respected, justice and equality can never be achieved.

The conscious attention to place the vulnerable and marginalised at the centre of public policy and community consideration is something of a counter-cultural approach in our predominately neo-liberal world. And it would seem the experiences of countries like Sweden, Brazil, the United States and Britain stand in stark contrast to those in countries where the common good rather than corporate and partisan interests have guided the response to this global pandemic.

Choosing the Common Good

In an era marked by free market consumerism and vocal attention to individual privilege, the collective commitment and generosity of New Zealanders towards the common good of our communities has been surprisingly transformational.

Not only has it enabled our country to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus, but it has encouraged New Zealanders to be more communally present.

As people were locked down in their bubbles they became more active in their communities and did "small things with great love" around their local area. From buddy systems to support the elderly and frail with mundane activities like grocery shopping and rubbish collection, to the more light-hearted bear hunts that engaged children on their daily walks around their neighbourhoods, many New Zealanders developed a new appreciation for their local community of friends, family and neighbours.

Our government and public health experts remind us that this pandemic is not over and we still have a long way to go. In spite of the provision of a range of economic and employment packages, the loss of jobs and the increasing burden of poverty many of our families are facing is a daunting prospect. This is a time of hardship for many, and we need to hold onto what we have learnt about ourselves and one another over the past few months.

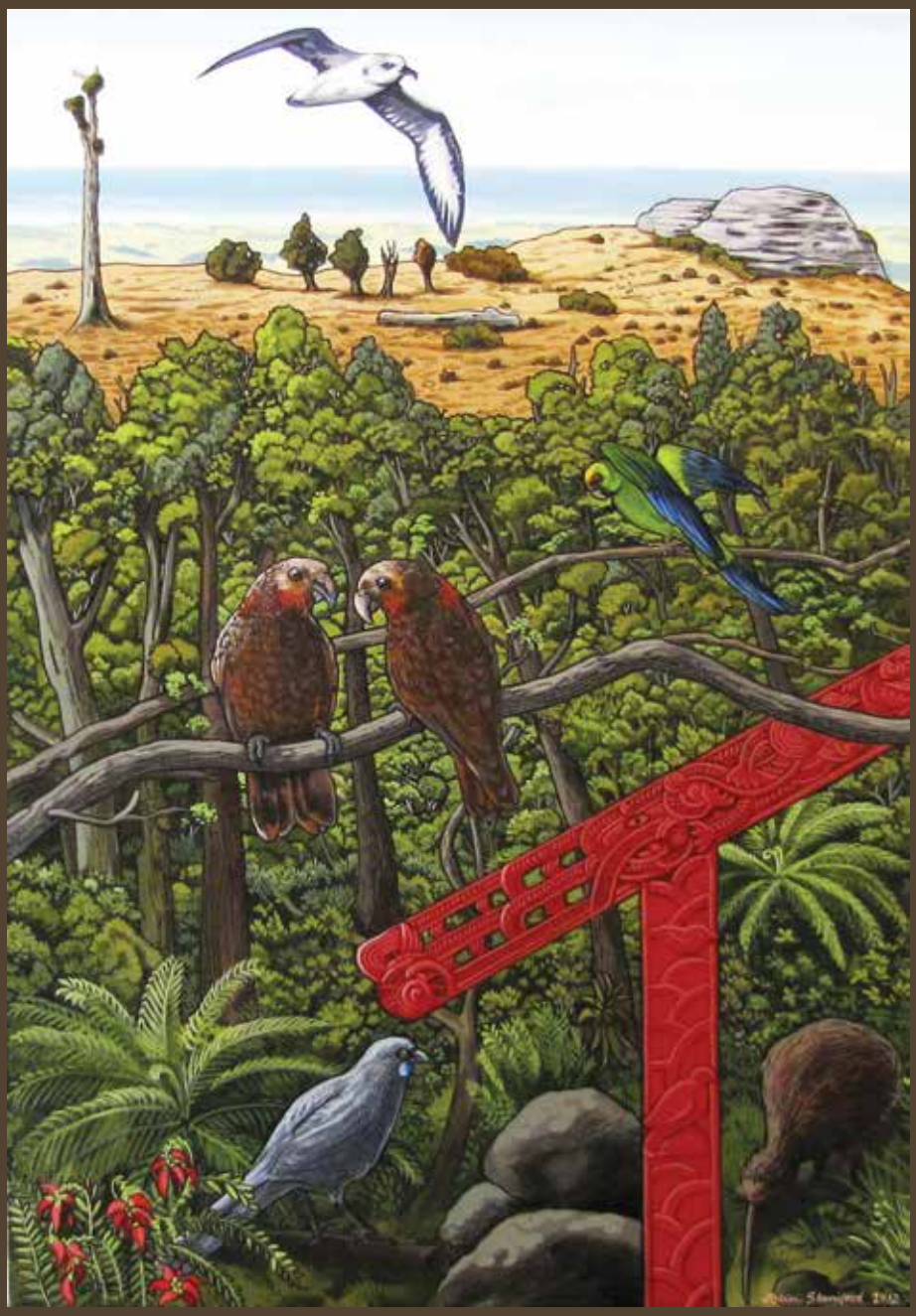
We need to remember that community emerges when everyone is offered the opportunity to participate in communal life. And community is strengthened when all are able to benefit from the community we create.

The common good "cannot exclude or exempt any section of the population" from participating in or benefiting from the life of their community.

We need to remind one another that we are all called to "do our part, however small" to create communities of equity, justice and hope for, as we have experienced over the last few months, "great things" can indeed be achieved when everyone does "small things with great love".

Photo by Sarah Kilian on Unsplash

Professor Anne Tuohy is the Academic Dean and Head of Theology at The Catholic Institute of Aotearoa New Zealand.



Living a Sacred Kinship

KAREN TAYLOR describes belonging in a world where everything is interdependent, inseparable and interrelated.

Haruru ana te maunga! Haruru ana!
Tangi ana te wai! Tangi ana!

Rumble mountain! Rumble!
Weep waters! Weep!

Genealogy connects me to six ancient iwi/tribes within Aotearoa New Zealand. Each ancestral collective is at the core of my being and each one is the centre of a universe to which I belong.

I am a descendent of a divine source, Io. Within my Māori world flows a profound belief and understanding in a sacred kinship with all of creation deriving from Io and a most heartfelt sense of belonging in a world where everything is interdependent, inseparable and interrelated.

Connectivity

It is from Io that the notion of connectivity is created by whānau/family, hapū/sub-tribe and iwi. Ancestral values and practices support a sacred, inclusive and holistic view of the universe and are interwoven into the fabric of my reality. Everything around me, on spiritual and physical levels, is an extension of my living world ngā tāngata/the people, whenua/land, moana/sea, awa/rivers — everything. It stands to reason that whatever affects the sacred primal parents created by Io — Ranginui and Papatūānuku — affects me and the well-being of my whānau, hapū and iwi.

Though similarities exist among all iwi regarding mātauranga Māori/relatives, beliefs and values such as aroha/love and compassion, whanaungatanga/relationships, manaakitanga, kotahitanga/unity, wairuatanga/spirituality and taiāo, each iwi is uniquely different. The localities and realities, the stories and histories, the priorities, needs and attitudes of each of my iwi are distinctly different. Te Āo Māori, therefore, is an entirely subjective paradigm.

Governed by tapu and arranged by tikanga, Te Āo Māori is connected by whakapapa/genealogy and whanaungatanga/relationships. Learning is passed down as the manifestation of the attitudes and aspirations of each of my iwi. Ancestral knowledge and understanding comes from being tribal and not pantribal.

The sacredness and holistic nature of Te Āo Māori invokes kaitiakitanga of everything handed down to me from my tipuna/ancestors — my identity, my culture, language and practices and the environment. To uphold the teachings of my tipuna, it is incumbent upon me to take up the challenge of kaitiakitanga for the benefit of my children and future generations.

My Iwi Marangatūhetaua

Ka tuwhera a Maungaharuru,
ka kati a Tangitū
Ka tuwhera a Tangitū,
ka kati a Maungaharuru

When the season of Maungaharuru opens, the season of Tangitū closes
When the season of Tangitū opens, the season of Maungaharuru closes

This proverb defines the boundaries of Marangatūhetau, my iwi. Maungaharuru, our sacred mountain and guardian, lies approximately 34 kms from Napier. Whakapapa connects me to Maungaharuru —

Ko te maunga ko au,
ko au te maunga.
The mountain is me,
I am the mountain.

He Whenua, he Wai, he Oranga — Land, Water, Life

Maungaharuru was a signifcant food source, in particular its prolific birdlife. During winter, whānau hunted food and gathered plantlife in the ngahere on Maungaharuru.

Tangitū is kaitiaki/guardian of the coastal waters and shore. Ko te wai ko au, ko au te wai. The water is me, I am the water. Tangitū is another important source of sustenance. During summer Tangitū, once rich in fish species, supplied bountiful food. Our roto/lakes, pūaha/estuaries and awa/rivers within our whenua provided additional freshwater sustenance. We took only what was needed.

In my world the whenua and the wai are tipuna/ancestors, living entities to be loved, cared for, protected, respected. My relationship with them is sacred and symbiotic — I look after my tipuna, they look after me.

By adhering to the traditional teachings and tikanga of my iwi, I help enrich the mauri and mana of my tipuna, more especially my iwi. Traditional knowledge, sustainable and unique living practices have remained integral to the cultural existence and survival of my people.

As a child I learned that karakia/prayer is pivotal to developing deep and respectful relationships and connections with whenua and wai and their ecosystems. Whatever the activity — collecting kai/food, gathering firewood — everything began and ended with karakia.

The narratives and histories of Marangatūhetaua are embodied in karakia tawhito, pūrākau/stories, waiata/songs, whakairo/carving, tukutuku, kowhaiwhai and preserve the teachings and protocols of our pakeke/elders. Thus we retain the ways to interact with one another and our environment.

Kaitiakitanga — Guardianship or Protection

In my rohe/district, kaitiakitanga of the mauri, mana and tapu of whenua and wai rests with Marangatūhetaua. It is an ethos of managing and taking responsiblity for the environment based on a Māori worldview.

However, the historical development of Aotearoa has given rise to commercial and agricultural activities predominating land usage and at the same time almost annihilating Māori land ownership and control over natural resources. My iwi struggles to exercise guardianship, to retain and maintain the mana of our tipuna, and to uphold their wishes and aspirations.

Iwi-based Solutions

The Maungaharuru-Tangitū Trust is the representative body for my iwi. Like other iwi representatives, the Trust has had to inject significant human and financial resources into various projects, to preserve and protect our tribal natural resources. These involve working collaboratively with adjoining landowners, farmers, the Department of Conservation and other government and local body agencies.

Their initiatives include: The Marae Development Committee which aims to protect and future-proof our marae against flooding. They have a three-phased development plan to rebuild an existing stopbank, improve drainage, repair and upgrade existing buildings and also they will build a new wharekai.

Another project, Tūtira Mai Ngā Iwi, is working to improve the mauri of Lake Tūtira and Lake Waikōpiro by removing invasive weeds and plant species and planting native plants and shrubs. They will also install an artifical aeration system to improve oxygenation and will continue wānanga (learning) on how to improve the lakes and their water quality.

A third project, Te Waiū o Tūtira, is a partnership with the local regional council to improve land management practices and reduce harmful run-off. Poutiri Ao ō Tāne is a collaborative ecological and social project for restoring and protecting natural wildlife by creating a predator-free environment.

Our efforts to restore and protect our interests are often opposed by commercial or special-interest groups. As a consequence, our tikanga and mana motuhake are subjected to legislation, social bias, commercialism and neo-liberalism.

I acknowledge my tipuna, pakeke and whanaunga. I am very proud of the generations of whānau, and my iwi under Maungaharuru-Tangitū Trust for all their hard work. I am deeply grateful for their love, resilience, courage, knowledge and the tenacity they have shown, often against seemingly imsurmountable odds. Mauriora!

GLOSSARY

Io: the Supreme God
Kaitiakitanga: guardianship or protection
Karakia tawhito: ancient prayer
Kowhaiwhai: ornamental paintings
Mana: spiritual power
Mana motuhake: self-determination
Manaakitanga: respect and supporting one another
Mauri: life force
Mauriora: the living life force
Ngahere: forest/bush
Papatūānuku: the Earth mother
Ranginui: the Sky father
Taiāo: interactions with the environment
Tapu: sacred restrictions
Te Āo Māori: the Māori worldview
Tikanga: values and practices
Tipuna: ancestors
Tukutuku: lattice-work
Wharekai: dining room

Painting: ***Boundary Stream, Hawkes Bay 2012*** by John Staniford © Used with permission www.johnstaniford.co.nz

Karen Taylor with husband Peter Moeau is a director of consultancy company EduCul Ltd. She loves spending time with whānau and friends.

EUCHARIST at Our Tables

Most religions make a very clear distinction between the holy and the plain, between the sacred and the profane, and between religion and the mundane, the ordinary. One is wonderful, the other is unremarkable, "just there". The religious has a character of permanence and solemnity, while the world about us is tatty even if it is where we work and live. This distinction is not the same as a moral dualism — a world of good and evil at war such as Manichees lived within and which has infiltrated Christianity from time to time — but is more akin to the way we treat clothes. There are ordinary everyday working clothes which might be smart and practical, and then there are our special clothes — our glad rags, best suit, or formal wear (which you hope you can still fit into) — that come out for special occasions.

The ancient religions of Greece and Rome, which focussed on the city, are perhaps the best expressions of this distinction. For them, the temples represented the holy and the temple precincts were marked off from the ordinary. The priests functioned inside the holy area working on behalf of "the great unwashed". The gods were to be appeased, their help and protection sought. Their benign smile was needed for the happiness of the city. This divine benefit required the service of the people in terms of sacrifices. This was the "deal" between the city and the gods; with the various priesthoods as intermediaries. This relationship was summed up in three words: *do ut des* ("I give to you in order that you give to me") and the priests (there are various words in Latin such as *sacerdotes* and *pontifices*) acted as "go-between". Into this world came Christianity with a very different vision — a vision far more radical than most of the converts to Christianity at the time seem to have realised.

Christian Belief Is Very Different

For Christians the whole of the cosmos — every last bit of it from the sun, moon and stars to the stones we stub our toe on — was the handiwork of God. God had created in freedom, and was infinitely more than the creation.

The shock of this belief was captured in the mid-second century by Hermas in a little amusing tag that would pull up short any pagan: the Christians believed that "God created everything out of nothing" (*creatio ex nihilo*). All, ALL, depends on God's will and love. All is ordinary in comparison with God. Only God is Holy. The whole creation is a sacred space because it is God's handiwork.

All Creation Is God's

This means that wherever I am I can be as close to God as anywhere else — the creation is our temple.

This was expressed in John's Gospel: "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem … But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:21–4).

Wherever a human is, God is present there and in that place the person can be present to God. Divine love extends to each person, so each person is able, and had the dignity, to stand there in God's presence and offer worship.

Hence we stand when, through Jesus the Christ, we all intercede for the world in the Prayer of the Faithful. We can all, not just a specially selected few, enter the divine presence.

Slip Back to Pagan Vision

This is what saying "we are a priestly people" means. It is also the reason why the early Christians never referred to their leaders as *sacerdotes* (priests) but as *presbuteroi* (elders).

By the time Christians started to use the word *sacerdotes* for presiders at the Eucharist, they were already thinking in the pagan way of a "chosen someone" who worked on their behalf in the "sacred area".

Christians had by then forgotten the cry of Irenaeus: "Christian be aware of your dignity" and that there is only one chosen one, one priest in the New Law: Jesus. He is "great high priest over the house of God" (Heb 10:21), and we all "are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Pet 2:9) who pray through him.

So if all creation comes from

THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN writes that our new Christian normal is giving thanks around our tables.

God, and all depends on God, then trading with God is blasphemous, and the attitude of love to love is that of gratefulness. We are to be a grateful people. We are to recall what God has done for us in creation and in the Christ — and return thanks through our high priest — hence the name of our great assembly is "the thanksgiving": the Eucharist.

That we gave it another name by accident, "the Mass", is a warning of just how easily we made it into one more act of service on the pagan model. Sadly, many still do not even appreciate (as when a parish priest uses it on a notice board) how it is a symptom of forgetfulness!

Thanksgiving at Our Tables

At the end of the second century an apologist for Christianity, Menucius Felix, who was all too aware of the difference between the pagan and Christian visions, made this his great cry. The great Christian act of praise and thanks took place at a table: it was a shared meal of the community at which the Christ is among us.

We do not need to go to a special place. Our thanksgiving takes place in the ordinary world of tables and chairs in our everyday life. We are called to make Eucharist happen at every meal. Then, having been thankful alone or in families, we can appreciate our gathering as a larger family, sisters and brothers in Christ, who celebrate the great meal of thankfulness.

We have just come through a weird three months. We could not gather at the church table to share the loaf and the cup with our sisters and brothers. But if we have not been eucharistic at our own table, and seen thanksgiving as a fundamental feature of our lives — thankful for our lives, our health, our loved ones, our neighbours, all who care for the sick, those who make life liveable — then we just might miss the fundamental Christian vision.

God is here, the Risen One is among us in our lives, and it is from out of the ordinariness of our lives that, through, with, and in Christ, we must act eucharistically.

The Christian "new normal" is that we can engage in the fundamental expression of our attitude to God — thankfulness — at all our shared tables.

Painting: *A Party, Una Fiesta* (2020) by Eva Armisen

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

BEING OF SERVICE

Members of the Vinnies Auckland team reflect on their experience of service during Lockdown.

We have only just begun to reflect on our experience of the pandemic and Lockdown. We know that it was an incredible opportunity to realise what it means to be the hands and feet of Christ. We're the Vinnies team and the level of need we saw during Lockdown has changed us. The passion, drive, the generosity of our young people, our Vincentians and in fact our country, has moved us deeply.

Photo by VinniesYouth Auckland.

Managing the Day to Day

I glance in the rear view mirror at the food boxes I have yet to deliver to two families. I wonder how long it will take me. As I sit on the Western Motorway in gridlock traffic having just finished work, my mind goes back to the eight weeks of Lockdown. Oh, how things have changed. I remember being on this same motorway a few weeks ago, at the same time and feeling completely alone — not another car in sight.

The COVID-19 Lockdown still doesn't feel real. My mind drifts to a conversation I had earlier today with a volunteer who was managing the foodbank database and she said that we had given out over 9,000 food boxes since Lockdown began. Later, scarcely believing the number, I told another person and I flinched when they congratulated me. I am confused. It doesn't feel right. I am certainly uncomfortable with accolades!

In Lockdown the days blurred as the team worked all hours packing boxes, answering emails and phone messages, setting up Excel sheets and rosters, posting on social media.

A mother rang to tell me she had stayed up really late sharing our 0800 Food Bank number with everyone on her Facebook. The phones didn't stop ringing with people asking for food and comfort. The incoming Facebook and email notifications beeped on our phones day and night.

On the second day of Lockdown we were told to close the foodbank and go home as it wasn't safe to operate as we were. I spent a wakeful and restless night not helped by the texts from our young people wanting to know if Vinnies was doing anything to help others through the Lockdown.

We'd hoped all our preparations would have been enough, but we hadn't realised the hugely significant changes that kept coming to make our work possible. We reached out to skilled young adults who started operating triage from their home offices and redirected the phone lines to our mobile phones. Young adults started turning up in their vehicles to deliver the hundreds of parcels. Pallets of food arrived from KiwiHarvest, the Auckland City Mission and the Civil Defense Emergency Management Team. We received funding from the Catholic Caring Foundation and from so many generous individual donors.

The Vincentians contacted us to offer supplies from their own food banks, the use of their vehicles and letting us know we had their blessing. I felt anxious at times when the food was going out so quickly that I thought we would run out. But then the money started coming in. It seemed that just when we finished one food stock another pallet or donation arrived.

We are giving 120 parcels a day to families. In normal times we averaged between 50-120 per week. The number steadily increased and more volunteers came on board. Then the day came when we hit 9,000 food parcels — it represented the hunger in our city and the 9,000 times families had been fed.

Delphina Soti, General Manager, Vinnies Auckland

In Comforting Comes Comfort

Lockdown was hard for me. I live alone and I was feeling more and more isolated. Then, I was called by a good friend from Vinnies and asked if I would be part of the Vinnies' Face-to-Face team calling vulnerable and isolated, elderly whānau. It was the beginning of something beautiful. I was blessed because in supporting others I supported myself — also one of the vulnerable, isolated, older members of society.

I quickly found out how essential this service was to the clients I called. Their immediate response was joy and relief that somebody cared enough to call. Many had essential needs and the Vinnies' triage team was able to attend to them.

Now that we are at Level 1 I don't continue calling but I have left them with the ability to reach out directly to Vinnies if they have a need. My favourite story is when I called an old man. His instant response was: "I was so hoping it would be a male caller because I am surrounded by female voices." As I was the only male on the team, he'd struck it lucky! And yes, this man has become a lifelong friend. I have been blessed.

A B Moana, Face to Face Programme Volunteer

In Giving We Receive

With Lockdown my work as a house painter stopped. My wife and I have four children. My young adult daughters were Young Vinnies volunteering as essential workers. They kept appearing in the car with loads of food boxes and lists of families to deliver them to.

The first time I went delivering with my daughters, I was touched when I saw the families — suffering and scared. I felt something strong move inside of me. I wanted to help more. I knew they were looking for people to offer their homes to be Vinnies satellite foodbanks to deliver in the local areas so I went home and painted and renovated our garage to become a foodbank. The Vinnies staff gave me all the PPE gear, briefed me and stocked up our foodbank and we started taking vanloads to families in Central and South Auckland.

One day a staff member said the Auckland City Mission was urgently looking for men to help supervise and support the men at a new hostel for homeless men in the city. It was hard work, sometimes dangerous and they were struggling to find people — would I consider applying? I was unsure because I didn't feel qualified but in my heart I wanted to do it. I went with courage and I was offered a job. I still work there, now, and I love my job. I love the men there — they are God's children. I still operate a Vinnies satellite foodbank and my family is so blessed.

Te'omatavu'i Fili, Satellite Foodbank Coordinator

Importance of Visiting

I finally get it! I never really understood why the Vincentians made a point of visiting people's homes.

So I got a list and then I discovered that three lots of boxes were going to one small house and there were three different mobile numbers. I instantly felt annoyed that someone was taking us for a ride.

I rang the first number and the elderly lady in the house explained that she and her three mokopuna (grandchildren) were one bubble in the house. A second bubble family of four with a baby was in the garage and a third bubble, a couple, lived in the shed. I let them know the food was outside. As I climbed back into my car I saw them emerge from their different abodes. I drove away feeling … let's just say that experience and life lesson will stay with me for life.

(The family was contacted by social workers and moved to more suitable accommodation.)

Reuben Su'a, Vinnies Youth Mobiliser

So Many Hungry

Today two Vinnies food trucks and a car went into a large caravan park to deliver boxes of fresh produce, meat, milk, cereal, yoghurt, etc. to individuals and families in the hundreds of flats, units and caravans. Many didn't have transport, wifi or credit or they felt too overwhelmed by shame to ring a 0800 Helpline.

Our vehicles moved slowly on two different routes and stopped intermittently as team members on the back worked hard with the park management to unload and distribute parcels. It was getting dark and more people lined the road, some pushing up to the truck with outstretched hands asking for a box. It was heartbreaking as many were elderly and some people seemed unwell.

We weren't allowed to hand the boxes over for safety reasons but they were determined for fear of missing out. I became conscious that several people had touched my arms and were really close to my face. Others wanted to shake hands or pat me on the back with gratitude.

We ended up having to run and carry the boxes to many houses as the occupants were too old or frail and we could keep the safe distance. It was a major workout and we were puffing hard and our faces were dripping with sweat trying to keep up with it all.

I came away feeling sad and wanting to cry, confused, angry and affected by what I had just seen and experienced. I was also fired up and full of empathy, compassion and hope for the people and for my team members.

Miliama Setefano, Visual Media Editor

Watch the YouTube clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHKDumrRZN8

ADDRESSING VIOLENCE TOGETHER

KARA DUNCAN-HEWITT and MICHELLE EGAN-BITRAN write about the part faith communities can have in ending family violence.

There is a growing awareness that family violence and abuse occurs in our Christian congregations as it does in society. This preventable epidemic is damaging families and individuals across every demographic represented in our congregations. Individuals and families are suffering and are living in pain. Faith communities need to address abuse and violence for the Common Good.

No one was created to be abused. No one.

Abuse goes against everything that the Gospels show us about God's heart of love, compassion and grace towards us.

Jesus challenged the misuse and abuse of power, and walked alongside those who had been oppressed, showing them God's unconditional love, and bringing healing on multiple levels to wounds left by harsh and unjust treatment.

The *National Safeguarding Guidelines* of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference and Congregational Leaders' Conference Aotearoa New Zealand state: "Every person has a value and dignity which derives from their creation in the image and likeness of God. This implies a duty to value all people and therefore protect them from harm. The Gospel values of *love*, *dignity* and *justice* demonstrated by Jesus remind us that the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church."

Informing about Violence and Abuse

To create environments within our faith communities which respect and acknowledge the dignity of everyone and where people feel valued and safe, we need to understand family violence and abuse, know how to recognise the signs and learn how to safely and appropriately respond to those involved — both victims and perpetrators.

Forms of Violence and Abuse

Violence and abuse come in many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, mental, social, financial and spiritual.

Spiritual abuse is using faith, religious beliefs or mana to justify the abuse. It includes misusing sacred writings, objects or sayings to hurt or control the person. It includes destroying or desecrating sacred items, cursing, controlling prayers and making a victim think that God is against them.

Control by Violence

The person using violence tends to utilise whatever tactics are most successful — those that cause the most harm, humiliation and fear, or are the most effective form of control.

Most victims do not know that this behaviour is called abuse. Some may think that it is a punishment from God, or some sort of penance they need to do.

This lack of understanding may hinder a victim from reaching out for help from a faith leader because they fear being perceived as failing in their faith or being blamed for the abuse. As a result many people may suffer silently, hoping and praying that somehow God will intervene and stop the abuse.

Identifying and Naming Abuse

Giving things the right name helps us to find the right solutions. We often give euphemisms for abuse — it's because of an anger problem, we say, or marital issues or communication breakdown or low self-esteem or strict parenting. But it is abuse. When we call it by its right name it demands an appropriate response.

Violence and abuse will continue if we remain silent and do not take informed action.

Facing Up to Reality

Faith communities are uniquely positioned to receive and walk alongside people who have been abused. Communities can be places of healing. To do this they need to name the violence and abuse and stand up for the oppressed.

We are called to "bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free" (Isaiah 61:1). Binding bandages around broken hearts is messy and bloody. It poses a challenge to the Christian community. Are we prepared to get our hands dirty? Are we willing to peel back the pristine veneer to face the truth of the hurt and abuse going on in our communities?

What are the belief systems we are holding onto that are supporting abuse of women, children or men? Any belief system that leads to abuse is not of God.

We often give euphemisms for abuse — it's because of an anger problem, we say, or marital issues or communication breakdown or low self-esteem or strict parenting. But it is abuse. When we call it by its right name it demands an appropriate response.

Giving the Right Support

This does not mean that faith communities need to become experts on family violence and abuse. It is important that they build relationships with specialist agencies in family violence and child abuse and help connect people who need support to these agencies.

The unique role faith communities play is in the reparative work of healing. They can be a loving extended family promoting self worth.

This does not mean forcing people back into abusive situations under the guise of keeping marriages together — to do so would be to advocate for torture and slavery. It would allow marriage, something we hold as sacred, to be misused and misappropriated.

To be an inclusive, reconciling people is to practise God's love. To let the person experience their preciousness beyond measure as a child of God — not made to be abused, or to abuse. As communities we need to help parents care for their children and each other in a way that promotes love, safety and well-being.

Sharing in the Wider Community

Our wider community needs faith communities to recognise their role in stopping violence and abuse.

Let's nullify messages of hate and cruelty playing over and over by speaking the truth about violence and abuse and promote messages of life, acceptance and love.

Let's bring heartfelt compassion to counter wounds inflicted by hate and rejection.

Let's not tolerate violence and abuse and let's take responsibility for wrongs done. Let's commit to rectifying them — especially where abuse has occurred within faith and religious systems.

Let's know and observe the guidelines and policies for safeguarding in our faith communities and recognise the value and dignity of each person.

Let's choose the common good for all at all times.

Let the "Spirit of God be upon us, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release the prisoners from darkness" (Is 61:1).

Painting: ***Finding Comfort*** by Twan De Vos (RIP 19 June 2019) © Used with permission of his family
www.twandevos.nl/indexe.html
www.wur.nl/en/newsarticle/Exhibition-Twan-de-Vos.htm

Kara Duncan-Hewitt is a consultant and trainer addressing violence and abuse in faith communities. www.libertytrainingnz.com

Michelle Egan-Bitran is a doctoral student researching partner violence and child abuse and neglect at the University of Auckland.

The Difference

This Holy Thursday
we re-set the table.
Why is this night different
from other nights
ask the children.

We are in lockdown.
We re-set the table.
We gather babies and old ones.
Around the world
so many empty chairs.

Around the table
are the small gestures of kindness.
There is receiving and
there is giving.
We break the bread.
Lamb and wild herbs are our memories.
Salt is shaking us
up in this strange season.

We re-set the table where
all our stories belong.

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PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT IN MINISTRIES

MARILYN WELCH **explains the purpose of supervision for those involved in pastoral work in churches and communities.**

Supervision, particularly pastoral supervision, has great value for those in pastoral roles to assist them to reflect on how they are and what they do in their work role in order to improve their practice. Many faith communities, along with caring professions, now make it mandatory for those working on the front line to meet regularly with an external supervisor. This includes most people who are in roles contributing to well-being in our communities — those working with children, youth, pastoral care and social work, chaplains, lay ministers, priests, nurses and administrators — to promote their personal growth in pastoral care. Supervision is envisioned as a mutually respectful and supportive relationship where the supervisee is able to discuss their work, its impact on how they function in their role, as well as how it may be influencing their values.

The process of supervision can happen in face-to-face meetings, by telephone or other technology such as Skype or Zoom. These different options were especially helpful during the COVID-19 restrictions when many were under considerable stress and realised the benefits of being in supervision.

Purpose of Supervision

Pastoral supervision focuses on the interface between the person's belief and practice. It is an action/reflection process encouraging future-facing thinking and reflection on spirituality in each particular context. By recognising the impact of our particular influence in terms of culture, relationality and experience on situations, supervisors can give new insights and understanding.

One group offering pastoral supervision is CAIRA, funded by the Anglican Church of Aotearoa NZ and Polynesia. The National Advisory Group (NAG) continues to ensure people from diverse cultural groups are available as supervisors including from our three tikanga of Māori, Pasifika and Pakeha as well as from ecumenical backgrounds.

CAIRA has five key principles — collegiality, accountablity, identity, responsibility and authority.

Collegiality is grounded in our experience of community. It is an acceptance of our relationships and partnership with each other as we hold faith and spirituality respectfully.

Accountability is rooted in our relationships. It is symbolised by codes of practice, boundaries, rules and regulations. It is also an internal state of being, of owning and practising these in an integrated way, holding ourselves to account in good faith.

Identity formation is a life-long development of knowing who we are, both as a person and practitioner. It is a key element in working with others.

Most of those involved in regular supervision recognise its value and importance in keeping them safe in their roles of caring for others and in their ministry to others.

Responsibility is grounded in our relationship with God who cares for us and calls us to care for others. It has a dual focus of being responsible and response-able and we need to attend to both.

Authority is often spoken of as leadership, power or autonomy. However, it especially says something about confidently owning the truth of our calling in relation to the caller, "the one who still leaves a calling card to invite us to become".

Supervisors' Perspective

Those offering supervision have reflected on their role in a number of ways. One counsellor explained: "Supervision gives an assurance of a safety net in a professional and pastoral arena for practitioners who have decided to stand up and be counted for owning their Christian faith. It has given a depth to how I approach areas of professional delivery and also to my view of other areas of church ministry."

Support and encouragement are important to those who may not have a team around them all the time. As a hospital chaplain said: "Pastoral supervision for me means support and encouragement; a place to debrief concerns relating to my work in ministry, and chiefly, to allow the work to change and grow me as a person by paying attention to my own reactions. I choose to both be, and go to, a CAIRA supervisor because the practice examines our everyday reactions and challenges in relationships."

A nursing supervisor said that as a supervisor she could "bring Christ into the discussion in the supervision room and provide a focus for all other thoughts, behaviours and questioning on which to be anchored. This provides a place to reflect, re-charge, care for yourself and rest. CAIRA also presents the challenging questions and holds the supervisee while they examine themselves under a supported Christian lens."

Supervisees' Perspective

There is no doubt that the supervision relationship is valued by practitioners. A community worker commented: "Supervision has helped me with professional development, case planning, support, personal mental health and encouragement to deal with issues as they arise with clients."

"The supervision I have received has been very holistic including my working, family, personal and spiritual life," a chaplain working in the rest home said. " This has really helped me self-reflect and move forward in many aspects of life. I look forward to supervision and feel privileged with my supervisor's wisdom, integrity and humour."

Most of those involved in regular supervision recognise its value and importance in keeping them safe in their roles of caring for others and in their ministry to others. As in every relationship there are moments of tears and a lot of laughter.

Painting: *Listen Deep* by Annamieka Davidson © Used with permission www.annamieka.com

Marilyn Welch is the National Director of CAIRA New Zealand. For more information https://caira.org.nz

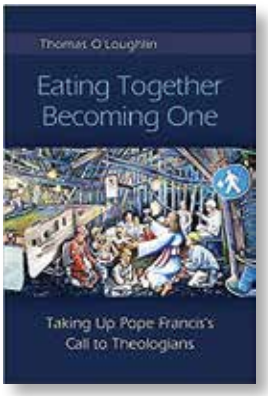
Eating Together Becoming One: Taking Up Pope Francis's Call to Theologians

by Thomas O'Loughlin
Published by Liturgical Press, 2019
Reviewed by John O'Connor

BOOK

Five hundred years after the Reformation in a November 2015 visit to an Evangelical Lutheran gathering in Rome, Pope Francis encouraged renewed reflection on the possibility of intercommunion among believers of different Christian faiths. Thomas O'Loughlin's *Eating Together Becoming One* is a welcome, down-to-earth and inspiring response to the pope's invitation.

O'Loughlin begins with an all too common experience: a well-intentioned priest inviting Catholics to communion adding that others are welcome to come forward for a blessing. He writes that what should be an open and hospitable welcome is communicated as restriction and rebuff.



The author provides readers with a sound and generous invitation to understand that the Eucharist is both the summit and satisfaction of healthy human desire, and essential food for the human journey. It needs to be available to all who seek Christ.

A next step in this necessary dialogue might consider what it means to earnestly seek communion with Christ. This conversation may highlight that many Catholics fail to appreciate the Eucharist call to full communion with Christ in every thought word and deed, while many who are not Catholic desire union with God which is celebrated in this sacrament of communion.

It's All about Race

Several months ago, I was showing paintings to one of my art dealers. They were from my series, "The Difference Between Me and You" which is about race relations between Haitians and Dominicans. He said: "With you everything is about race."

He was absolutely right. As an African American man in this country, everything is reduced to race. Whether it's reporting the news live on television (Omar Jimenez) or watching birds in Central Park (Christian Cooper) or allegedly using counterfeit money at a store (George Floyd). I know that when I navigate in the world, my actions are perceived in a heightened way because of my race. These Black men in recent events showed that even if you are graceful, peaceful and compliant your mere existence is fragile under weaponised racism.

As a young man, I attended the Art Students League of New York. One morning an older white woman accused me of making an inappropriate gesture towards her in the elevator. It was so surreal because I was simply fast-forwarding a song on my Walkman. She got off the elevator but then turned back to interrupt the closing doors to say I was being "fresh" or something. Then she scuttled off. I could not understand how my hand gestures could possibly be taken offensively.

Another time when I attended The School of Visual Arts, I got into a loud argument with one of my white male painting teachers. He constantly yelled with a bunch of insults, but I remember him saying: "Do you think Rembrandt would paint like that?" To me it was goofy, because it was just an intro to painting from life. Later in "Originality", an art theory class conducted by Adrienne Leban, a fellow student was surprised during student introductions. She was a young white woman who heard about me from the painting teacher. She said: "You seem nice. I thought you would be bigger."

I'm thankful that Garin Baker suggested I take his painting class. He changed my life by teaching painting from life with compassion. Another time at SVA, I attended painting sessions with some of the top painters in the country. One day I was collecting my canvas from the previous week. The most prominent painter accused me of stealing. I explained that I had been attending the sessions for weeks, but he didn't believe me. I was so thankful that the late painter Irwin Greenberg vouched for me.

My way of fighting against systemic racism has been to use my art. My protest has been to vandalise the internet with beautiful images of African American people. I've painted other races, like my Latina friend and model Janderie Gutierrez and the Russian model Sasha Edelman, because I truly see humanity in everyone. But as an African American man it's imperative to show the humanity of my people.

With my series "Luxury Graffiti and Avoid a Void", I began including images of my children. The decision expanded my artistic vision and challenged my skills, but perhaps more importantly, it was a way to show the value of their lives. I've been specifically concerned with the lives of my boys Kace and Kent. In a naïve way, I hope that the world will spare their lives if it's known that they are worthy of being represented in a work of art. Already at the ages of 14, they've experienced racism and prejudice on an amplified scale compared to my daughter Adison. She hasn't been immune to society's racist gaze, but with my teenage boys, it's a matter of life and death.

Through a vicious, hypocritical, sociopathic system, America was designed around race. It's societal, political, religious and financial infrastructure is about race. The very existence of the United States is predicated on the subjugation and murder of the Black man. In America, everything with me is about race.

Kip Omolade is a New York born fine artist who began his career as a graffiti artist.

TIME TO CHANGE

Will the extraordinary wave of protests following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, coming on top of the COVID-19 pandemic, dissipate like yet another nine day wonder? This insurrection on the streets of the USA seems to signal something far-reaching in its consequences. The people who rallied in New Zealand obviously sense that what policeman Derek Chauvin snuffed out went far beyond George Floyd's life. This incident, caught forever in that terrible video, feels like the end of an era, a caesura, the utter betrayal of the great American dream. For all its obvious brokenness the dream had something magnificent about it — the glimpse of a new world of opportunity for the downtrodden and oppressed. It situated the US as a place where every last citizen could have dignity, irrespective of race and class and gender.

But who can believe that now? The raw wounds have been exposed for everyone to see. And a shock wave of rage has convulsed the US, with spontaneous outbreaks of frustration and fury in some 40 cities from east to west, north to south. Nothing can ever be the same after this. The movement spread with extraordinary speed and its slogans are now universalized — Black Lives Matter! Am I Next?

The media have focused on the most spectacular aspects — looting of shops and warehouses, the incineration of police cars, the smashing of prestigious frontages, all these symbols of power and affluence. However, most protests were peaceful, in New York as elsewhere. We need to remember that. Yet as the nights wore on another dimension emerged — anarchic groups intent on raiding the temples of consumerism, on burning and destroying. I'm reminded of the slogan of Europe's 1968 revolts: "*Macht kaput was Euch kaput macht!* Destroy what's destroying you!"

The images are unforgettable — the policeman's knee on George's neck; the police station in flames. It's harder for us to take the pulse of the ordinary, good people, white as well as black, whose patience with a defective justice system had finally snapped. And it's harder, still, to grasp the outrage about the abyss of cultural, social and economic inequities, from which generation after generation in the US has suffered, especially its Black citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic had already demonstrated the glaring disparity between rich and poor in the health system. The confrontation of Chauvin and Floyd brought it all to the surface. And the people had had enough.

For innumerable Americans it appears that the US has reached a tipping point, and that nothing can be the same again. Their flawed justice system, a philistine approach to scientific knowledge, a know-nothing President and the fiasco of their response to environmental challenges, are seen to be interconnected. What we are witnessing in these protests is public lamentation on a massive scale and a fierce determination to strike out on a better way.

I am an historian of early modern history and one analogy immediately occurred to me. In 1524-1525 the greatest insurrectionary movement prior to the French Revolution spread across central Europe like wildfire, fed like today's protests by the social media of the time, by pamphlets and by word of mouth. Tens of thousands of mine-workers, artisans and peasants swarmed over the land, calling for an end to an economic system which crushed their every aspiration. Wealthy monasteries and entire cities were stormed and taken over. The call of the insurgents for personal and spiritual liberty was drawn up in biblically based articles which they attempted to negotiate with the civic and princely authorities. They gained the support of many artists and preachers, the public intellectuals of the day.

They were soon to be crushed by the superior artillery and discipline of the princely armies, of course, but the shock continued to sit deep. Things were never the same again. Once the feudal authorities had drenched their hands in blood, they began to learn their lesson.

May our neo-liberal régimes and the gloating authoritarians in China learn their lesson today before more lives are lost and wasted.

Peter Matheson is a peace activist, a Church historian, Emeritus Professor of Knox Theological College, Dunedin and author.

SOWING THE SEEDS

ELAINE WAINWRIGHT gives an ecological reading of the parable of the sower, Matthew 13:1-22.

Matthew 13:1 That same day Jesus went out of the house
and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds gathered
around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while
the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them
many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out
to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path,
and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Other seeds fell
on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and
they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil.
6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since
they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell
among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8
Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some
a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 Let anyone with
ears listen!"

. . . 18 "Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone
hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it,
the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the
heart; this is what was sown on the path. 20 As for what was
sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word
and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet such a person
has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble
or persecution arises on account of the word, that person
immediately falls away. 22 As for what was sown among
thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares
of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it
yields nothing. 23 But as for what was sown on good soil,
this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who
indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in
another sixty, and in another thirty."

Elaine Wainwright is a biblical scholar specialising in eco-feminist interpretation and is currently writing a Wisdom Commentary on Matthew's Gospel.

We have celebrated the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis's encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, influential within the Catholic community and in the global religious and scientific communities. It marked the growing consciousness within the human community that we share our common home, Earth, with all its other inhabitants and

life-forms. This consciousness is deepening.

One contribution to this shifting consciousness is through reading the biblical text being attentive to the human characters and to the other-than-human participants in the biblical drama. Such a reading, in its turn, re-reads us.

Matthew 13:1-9, the Parable of the Sower accompanied by an explanation Mt 13:18-23 is well known. Like many parables, it is grounded in the material. We read of sowers and seeds and types of soil. Reading ecologically invites us to allow this materiality to function in our making meaning of the text.

Parables Taught by the Sea

Jesus's teaching in parables is located specifically — and explicitly — in a particular location: at the edge of the Sea of Galilee. Because of the crowds gathering, Jesus gets into a boat and teaches from there. The location is significant as the earth and its constituents together with the sea will provide the material elements which Jesus parables while a boat on the edge of the sea provides the context from which he will teach. There is a rich web of interconnected material elements that set the context for Jesus's teaching in parables.

Drawing on Everyday Experience

Jesus begins the collection of parables with the invitation: "Imagine a sower". The crowds probably imagined a slave or tenant farmer working on one of the large Herodian or Roman estates that were becoming numerous in first-century Galilee. Some may well have been slaves and tenant farmers themselves. The crowd probably imagined wheat or barley seeds being sown, two of the most common grain crops of the regions of Nazareth and Sepphoris at that time.

The parable draws readers into the ecosystem or ecocycle of sower and seeds: "Some seeds fell on the path", "other seeds fell on rocky ground", "other seeds fell among thorns" and "other seed fell on good soil".

Even though this first parable does not contain the formula repeated as the introduction to most parables in Matthew, "the kin(g)dom/*basileia* of the heavens is like ... ", it concludes with the invitation: "Let anyone with ears listen". Listen to what the parable has to say.

To listen to the parable is to listen to Earth's processes and to human engagement in those processes so that all Earth's beings may flourish.

Our Participation

Classical scholar Stephanie Nelson in *God and the Land*, her study of ancient agriculture, says "because farming is inescapably a part of human life ... it may provide a clue to what is most basically human and so a clue to our place in the cosmos."

Her words affirm Jesus's use of parables informed by his agricultural experience of Galilee which draws us to discern how farming may be considered "inescapably a part of human life" today.

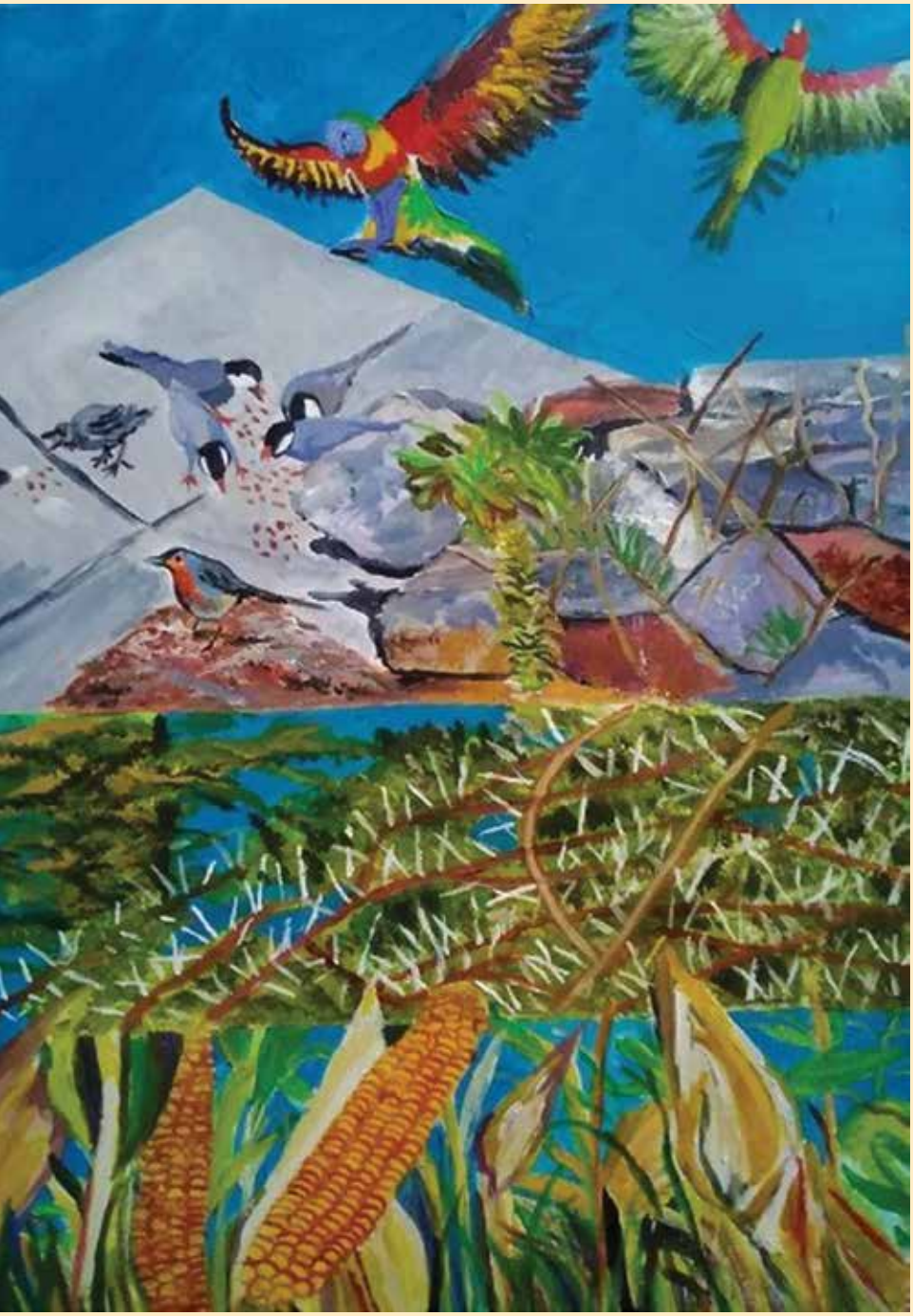
Compared to the sowing method described in the parable and still practised in some poorer regions of the world, most of us rely on farming done by machinery. In our so-called "developed world", we can live without contact with agriculture, or even gardening on a small scale, and so be divorced from the processes which the parable speaks of.

Perhaps with this parable comes our invitation to engage with the processes of sowing, tending and harvesting on a small scale in our own garden, or in a local community garden.

In Mt 13:10, the disciples ask Jesus why he speaks to the crowds in parables. His reply indicates that they have not the eyes nor the ears to engage with what the parable is evoking. This is illustrated by the explanation of the parable that is attributed to Jesus. For example Mt 13:19: "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart: this is what is sown on the path."

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus uses familiar, earthy imagery — seeds, stone, soil — to bring the listener to greater understanding. Matthew 13 with its agricultural and ecological parables extends to us the invitation: hear then the parable of the sower. And if we hear the parable with the deep consciousness of being one life form on Earth among others, our understanding of the Gospel of Matthew can function to inform an ecological conversion or a deepening of an already formed ecological consciousness.

Photo by Roberto Sorin/Shutterstock.com



Listen, Understand & Bear Fruit

KATHLEEN RUSHTON discusses the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:1-23.

Painting: ***Parable of the Sower*** by Jacqueline Norman © Used with permission
www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/jacqueline-norman

Jesus was steeped in the Scriptures which are Earth-centred — focused on the land and the agricultural life humanity builds around it. Beginning with Genesis the relationship between God and humanity is interconnected with the relationship between humanity and Earth.

A fertile, habitable Earth indicates the health of the covenant relationship between God and the people. Thorns and briars abound when the people are disobedient (Gen 3:17–19); rain is withheld (Deut 11:11-17) and the land mourns (Is 18:8). In the Prophets and the Psalms, we find extravagant images of the loveliness of lavish growth. Therein people are living in, or are restored to, right relationship and intimacy with God.

Sitting in a boat, Jesus tells of a sower casting seed on a path, on rocky earth, among thorns and on good earth. The crowd on the beach would have grasped the agricultural allegory and understood that Jesus was evoking their ancestors' relationship with God and the fertility of Earth.

This parable is one of seven in Matthew 13 dealing with the hostility and rejection which Jesus has provoked. His ministry is failing. Only a few come to believe in him. Opportunity does not guarantee response. People are free to respond. How does this earthy parable, with a surprising ending of abundance, make space for fresh insight to hear both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor?

Outer Landscape

Matthew expresses God's vision of right relationship as "the basileia of the heavens." God's vision contrasts with the basileia (empire) of Rome's version of reality. Elites exploited the land and the local people who depended on it. "The heavens" name what we would call the universe in which the Earth and human communities are interconnected.

If we wish to understand the Scriptures deeply today, we need to learn about the nature of the ecological crisis and especially its agricultural dimensions because it is principally a moral and theological crisis. What do we hear regarding a path, rocky earth, thorn-covered earth and good earth? The reader will notice I am using "earth" instead of "soil" or "ground." I do so because Matthew uses one word *(gē)* for these words and for the wider sense of Earth.

Earth (soil) is one of nature's most complex ecosystems and one of the most diverse habitats on the Earth. One cubic centimetre can take up to 1,000 years to form. Nowhere else are species so densely packed as in earth communities. Many terrestrial insect species are earth dwellers for some stage of their life-cycle. A gram of healthy earth can contain millions of species of vertebrate animals, worms, mites, insects, fungi and several thousand species of bacteria. We don't notice this diversity because it is invisible to human eyes.

I find the poet and farmer Wendell Berry's words challenging: land must be "kindly used" so that it may be available from generation to generation. The kindness we showed during our COVID-19 Lockdown needs to extend to the land which directly and indirectly produces about 95 per cent of our food.

Inner Landscape

Jesus appeals to our awareness of earth because our outer and inner landscapes are interconnected. His parable is a statement to hope, of confidence in God to transform communities in social and environmental situations. It is not about a single response but about weaving hope into the pattern of our lives. We are invited to explore more deeply the fertility and harvest in the "earth" of our inner landscape. Jesus offers a spirituality not for one season but for the long haul. "Listening" and "hearing" must be accompanied by "understanding" and the action of "bearing fruit".

We could refect on why the ecological crisis is principally a moral and theological crisis. I suggest this is because people approach life with one of two attitudes. We can adopt an "exploitative" attitude to everything — approaching all people and creation from the standpoint of our own advantage. But having a "contemplative" attitude ensures reverence and respect for the uniqueness of every person and all creation outside ourselves — it's seeking to live whakawhanaungatanga/making right relationship happen with God, Earth and people.

Bearing Fruit in Our Time

Land grabbing and the cutting down of forests led to loss of traditional values. Kenyan Professor Wangari Maathai, seeing that women and girls were walking miles for water and firewood each day, founded the Green Belt Movement (GBM) which has planted over 51 million trees. GBM works at the grassroots, national, and international levels for environmental conservation; to build climate resilience and empower communities, especially women and girls and to foster democratic space and sustainable livelihoods. Wangari explained that "in the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach the higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to one another." And that time is now. We can act locally with a "contemplative" attitude.

We can be more aware as we shop, maybe asking: Where was this made or grown, locally or overseas? For example, a pandemic-induced potato glut in Europe has led to cheap imported frozen chips being dumped here. This threatens local growers and processing industries in places like South Canterbury and Pukekohe.

We can tend to earth in our backyard. The average household throws about a kilo of organic waste into landfill daily, that could be composted. All organic matter will eventually break down through the action of hungry bacteria, fungi and larger creatures. But composting speeds up this natural process. In just a few months, it can create topsoil to add to earth improving its structure by allowing air and water to enter easily and be retained.

A recent *Country Calendar* TV episode featured the conversion of a hill country station in Maniototo, to regenerative agriculture. The farmer replaced monoculture with a diversity of plants and found the water retention and nutrient availability benefited the land and animal health.

Benedict XVI wrote: "The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast." What can we learn from the ecosystems of Earth to prepare our inner landscape for "listening" and "hearing" and "understanding"? How can we "bear fruit' and move to regenerative ways in whakawhanaungatanga/making right relationship happen with God, Earth and people?

12 July Matthew 13:1-23 — RL 15th Sunday Ordinary Time
Matthew 13:1-9: 18-23 — RCL 6th Sunday After Pentecost

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

In Journeying We Discover

When I go home from Oamaru, I leave the Pacific Ocean and turn towards the mountains. I can see both the Kakanui Ranges and the St Marys Range. The road meanders towards them past a limestone outcrop, up and down towards the creek and the one-lane bridge. It's one lane, not just one way, for it is possible to travel in either direction depending on what I wish to do. Before I get to my home, I pass one other house. It's on the other side of the creek — looking back I can see it from my dwelling.

Journeys, to arrive home, make me think of the spiritual journeys we make on our way home to the God who is often unknown. Finding this unknown means moving towards the mountains or doing a U-turn back to the Pacific. Catherine of Siena often used the sea as a metaphor for God. In one dialogue, God says to her: "Only the sea itself can fully contain itself. In the same way I, the sea of peace, am the only one who can fully contain and value myself. I share with each of you according to your capacity. I fill you and do not leave you empty."

I, too, am drawn to the sea but it is the mountains that speak the most to me. They are a challenge and the road disappears quickly into their valleys and heights. I think of the many times I've travelled a spiritual road to have it disappear in a turn into a valley I was unable to traverse, or a little afraid that the crossing would take me somewhere unexpected and frightening. When I did venture it was difficult but rewarding.

These new one-lane bridges make us stop and consider. I encounter travellers heading in the other direction — should I be going with them or against them? This time in our lives, when the whole world has had to stop and deliberate, is an interesting one for us all. Will we just go back to what was before? Maybe our Church structure will take a turn — from the sea to the mountains, or, from the mountains to the sea.

A few nights ago I looked across the little valley with the creek and saw to my astonishment that the house I pass on my way home had disappeared into a mist along the creek. Yet there was no fog near me. It was a strange image because when I looked upwards there were stars shining above where I knew the house to be. God is not only in the sea and the mountains but in the stars of hope shining above the fog of life. "I fill you and do not leave you empty."

Painting: *God in the Mystery of Sea, Mountain and Sky* by Mary Horn OP © Used with permission. www.mary-horn.blogspot.com

Dominican Sister **Mary Horn** lives at Teschemakers, North Otago and is a renowned painter and organic gardener.

It's Not Either/Or

Every day for a week during Lockdown I noticed a particularly fat kererū settled on the tarata/lemonwood tree outside my window. Her weight shook the branches with a pleasing rustle. Below her, clusters of pīwakaka flittered about, feeding on the harakeke around the lawn. I looked it up and apparently they had just emerged from their breeding season, so were gathering in larger groups than usual.

Like many others, I felt more connected to the wildlife around me. Pausing the majority of industry, transport, work and busyness gave the birds less noise and bustle to compete with, and us more time to notice them. It was an opportunity to appreciate green spaces and nature when our living can disconnect us from the rest of nature. This phenomenon was observed across the world; air pollution decreased and people were able to appreciate fresh air. Many people went on walks and used green spaces.

While COVID-19 has been undeniably harmful to humanity, it has given us, also, the gift of a new start.

We can recognise that what drives profit and civilisation is built on capitalist structures that cause inequality and injustice in society. They disconnect us from the living world that nourishes our souls and bodies.

Many have argued that the disease and its spread is itself a symptom of globalisation and disconnection from nature. Now, as New Zealand starts to rebuild its economy in the wake of COVID-19, we have the opportunity to reform our economic system into one that promotes both equality and environmental health.

It is often claimed that policies that protect the environment from exploitation are at the expense of the livelihoods of those in the industries. For example, mining grants on the West Coast are often justified because they create jobs for locals who need them. And this is sometimes true. Ultimately, though, a safe environment is better for everyone, especially the most vulnerable.

In Dunedin the poorest residents live in the areas most likely to be inundated by rising sea levels. They usually cannot afford somewhere safer to live.

Those with respiratory diseases in the world suffer most from air pollution especially when they cannot afford medical care.

Overfishing by large, profit-driven fisheries has led to thousands of job losses — among small-time fishers worldwide.

The idea that we have to sacrifice environmental for economic health is false. That argument is mostly used to justify systems that exacerbate inequality.

I will continue to seek environmental and social justice by the way I will vote this year. I'll select the candidates and parties that protect and prioritise the environment and people with fairer health policies and higher taxes for the rich to subsidise benefits.

I'd like to protest policies that are unfair. I'll make submissions to the government on their directions. For example, on the Zero Carbon Bill that excludes methane emissions to appease farmers.

My worry is that coronavirus hasn't shifted our thinking enough, despite highlighting so much of what is wrong with an unequal world. But I also hope in the One who created the world that has been so scarred by human activity.

I celebrate the kerurū, the clean air, the frosts and sunny days. I pray for my role in injustice and the courage for change.

I pray this can be our turning point that makes society more equal and our planet habitable for generations to come.

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

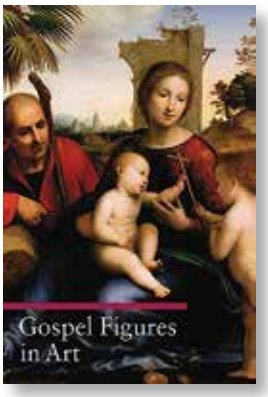
Gospel Figures in Art

by Stefano Zuffi
Published J Paul Getty Museum, 2003
Reviewed by Brendan Bergin

BOOK

Gospel Figures is an art book in the Getty Museum's "Guide to Imagery" series introducing readers to the visual vocabulary of Western Art. It depicts stories and characters of the Gospels as they have been portrayed in art through Christian history. Each image has a brief description of the Gospel episode along with information about the characters, customs and historical nuances shown in the art.

The book shows paintings of characters and events as they appear in chronological order in the Gospels. The opening chapter presents illuminated images of the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John together with their identifying symbols. The book includes helpful appendices of Gospel episodes and image titles and artists. As well as the four Gospels the book also has images from the Apocryphal gospels.



Gospel Figures would be a valuable reference book for Art History, Biblical Studies and Religious Education. Although the book has full-page painting reproductions it is small enough to fit in the rucksack of an intrepid art traveller. The size of the print could be a challenge for some readers.

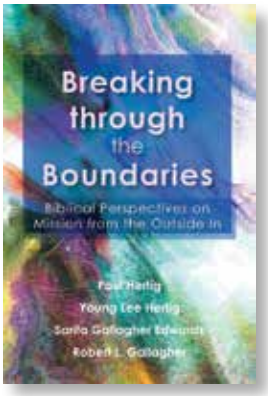
Breaking through the Boundaries: Biblical Perspectives on Mission from the Outside In

by Paul Hertig, Young Lee Hertig, Sarita Gallagher Edwards, Robert L Gallagher
Published by Orbis Books, 2019
Reviewed by Louisa Rani

BOOK

In John 17:20 Jesus prayed: "Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you." Through Baptism we are called to promote unity in the Christian traditions (ecumenism) and build relationships with people of other religions (interfaith). This is imitating the unity of the Triune God.

Breaking the Boundaries sheds light on interreligious and intercultural differences and encourages us to look at mission in a new way. It highlights an "outside in — inside out" interpretation of Scripture where God calls "outsiders" to come in, forms them and sends them out as mission vehicles to the "outsiders". The biblical narratives show how God was actively breaking boundaries between the "people of Israel" and the gentiles. For instance, God calls the gentile migrant Abraham, blesses him and he becomes the vehicle of God's blessing to the nations. Hagar, a young Egyptian, gentile woman, socially and religiously marginalised, helped the people of Israel discover God's faithfulness to all humanity. The Scriptures show how God calls for engagement, generosity and reciprocity with people of cultural and religious diversity.



It is a readable book and draws stories from both the First and New Testaments to illustrate mission. I recommend it to all and especially to those seeking to build interfaith relations.

Saints in Art

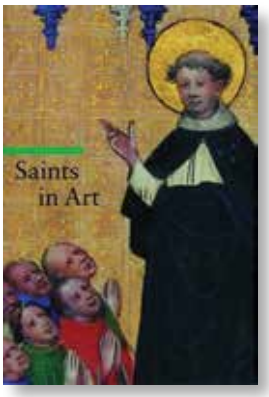
by Rosa Giorgi
Published by J Paul Getty Museum, 2003
Reviewed by Katrina van der Water

BOOK

This is a wonderful "go to" book of art masterpieces — over 120 saints imagined in beautiful art and with clear, informative descriptions of each saint's life and the symbolic references in the artworks. It belongs to the Getty Museum's "Guide to Imagery" series.

The paintings are classics from the 15th to the 19th centuries all held in the Getty Museum. The accompanying text helps the reader understand the artwork and the artist's interpretation of each saint. Each explanation is connected by a line to the particular symbols, cultural aspect or characters in the painting.

The one-page factual description of each saint includes the name, early life, patronage, special devotions that arose and the feast day. I think this book could easily help direct discussion in Religious Education, history or art lessons. A great book to use before confirmation.



A difficulty is the book size — roughly A5 — which is too small for viewing by a class. I recommend it for the RE teacher's toolkit. It's also a wonderful little book for anyone who is fascinated with the lives of the saints — without heavy hagiography — and how they have been imagined in art over time.

Celia

Directed by Amanda Millar
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

FILM

As my local cinemas are still operating below par, I've once again chosen a film from the excellent free streaming service, Beamafilm, offered by Dunedin Public Library. I missed *Celia* when it featured at the 2018 New Zealand International Film Festival and did not regret the opportunity to see it here.

An intimate portrait of Celia Lashlie, social reformer and passionate advocate for at-risk women and children, the film was made by her longtime friend and experienced television journalist Amanda Millar. The core of *Celia* was filmed in February 2015 over the last few days of her life as Lashlie lay stricken with pancreatic cancer, surrounded by family and friends in her Wellington villa. Having begun to clear out her house to allow her space to reflect and write, she is now faced with sorting out her spiritual and emotional furniture as she prepares for the ultimate journey.

Celia Lashlie's long career in Corrections, twinned with a compassionate heart, gave her the tools to probe New Zealand's all-too-familiar social ills, especially the family violence spawned by intergenerational dysfunction and fuelled by poverty and substance abuse. Happy to wear the term "bolshie", she was wary of the plethora of social service agencies that treat symptoms rather than causes and had no time for state bureaucracy with its box-ticking solutions.

By contrast, Celia always focused on the individual, their needs and potential. Harking back to her time as manager of Christchurch Women's Prison, she recalls that she would tell inmates: "I'll always stand beside you if you want to change." Celia had the rare ability to see the precious jewel buried deep within every damaged person.

Millar's final interview with her subject is supplemented by interviews with people Celia worked with over her long career in the justice system, and real-life stories of individuals on the cusp of change. These include scenes shot at Whakakotahitanga Domestic Violence Rehab Camp, where couples caught up in the cycle of family violence learn trust and understanding and acquire new tools to change their situation.

Director Millar skillfully inter-weaves her heavy subject matter with creative responses to Celia and her legacy, including an uplifting song written and performed by 12-year-old Naia Alkhouri and a lovingly crafted portrait by friend Heather Main, gifted to the New Zealand Portrait Gallery in Wellington. But perhaps the finest tribute to Celia is Millar's compassionate and challenging film.

Corita Kent: Gentle Revolutionary of the Heart

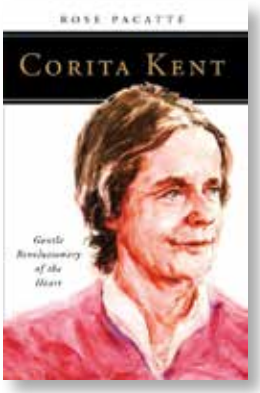
by Rose Pacatte FSP
Published by Liturgical Press, 2017
Reviewed by Joan McFetridge

BOOK

This engaging little book tells a big story of the life of the artist Corita Kent. I thought I knew Corita Kent, but I was unaware of how amazing her life was until I was captivated by this biography. It is provocative, fascinating, heartbreaking and inspiring.

Corita's life, in this book, spans the 1950s to 1980s and shows how this tumultuous, painful, challenging, exciting period in religious life, Church and society shaped her life.

Corita was a woman and artist ahead of her time. She totally believed and felt herself immersed in the interconnectedness of everything. This inspired her worldview and flowed into her art and spirituality. She saw infinite beauty in the world around her, and as a teacher she pushed her students to find that beauty in unexpected places. She believed we do not need to be limited by the expected, ordinary or obvious.



I think most people will like this book and especially parents and teachers. It was a joy to read. And, expect surprises.

CROSS CURRENTS

by Susan Smith

The 2020 Budget has been delivered and conversations about its significance are on-going. These conversations, some informed, some uninformed, often focus attention on how our lives have been changed and how we can retain some of the good aspects of Level 4 and 3 lockdowns. Because there were benefits: pollution levels have dropped, flora and fauna looked healthier and neighbourhoods became communities.

Grant Robertson's budget will be remembered as one of most significant in the country's history, up there with Michael Savage's 1938 budget which promised to care for all New Zealanders from "the cradle to the grave," and the National Government's 1991 "mother of all budgets," which set out to reverse many of the key elements of Savage's budget. Jim Bolger and Ruth Richardson, building on the so-called reforms introduced by Roger Douglas, wanted a smaller government, more market-driven policies and a competitive labour market, thereby diminishing the power of trade unions.

I was living in Ruatoria in 1991 and will not forget the shock that Richardson's budget had on a small, depressed Māori community.

So, what about Robertson's budget? $30 billion of the $50 billion of the Covid Response and Recovery Budget will be directed towards on-going wage subsidies and loans to businesses. I hope this will be monitored more rigorously than when significant subsides were paid to some of the country's best-known law firms, to SkyCity and to at least two American billionaires, initially.

Air New Zealand received $900 million plus a further $72 million and has laid off staff around the country. It terminated its contract with Altus Enterprises, a not-for-profit organisation which locates work for the disabled. Altus provided staff to refurbish more than 20,000 headsets for Air New Zealand's international flights. Staff were paid less than $4 per hour which is well below the minimum wage thanks to a special government directive. Air New Zealand, like many other airline companies, pay very little tax on aviation fuel, just the 15 per cent GST. Air New Zealand is 52 per cent owned by the government, that is, we taxpayers. It must surely be the highest paid beneficiary in the country's history.

I am pleased the government is investing $1.1 billion to ensure the well-being of Papatūānuku. Such funding will help our ever-threatened environment, but will it address the environmental threats posed by a rebounding tourist industry?

In 2019, tourism contributed more than $17 billion to the national economy, more than 20 per cent of the total exports of goods and services. Yet even before COVID-19, we felt an unease about tourism — its impact on the environment, the numbers on our great walks, the air pollution of increased plane flights. Some in the tourist industry seem to have only one objective — to make as much money as fast as possible.

Unlike the agricultural and horticultural sectors, the tourist industry appears to be built on foundations of sand — disposable income and discretionary spending by the better-off. Though the agricultural and horticultural industries have sometimes taken serious shortcuts to the detriment of the environment, they are meeting basic needs.

As we move into an uncertain future, we need to get a better balance between environmental losses and financial benefits in the tourist industry. These need to be for those directly involved and for the wider community.

It would be wonderful if the environment took precedence over tourism. And if quality tourism, that respected the environment, took precedence over quantity tourism.

TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

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

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

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We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters while keeping the meaning.

LOCKDOWN THOUGHTS APPRECIATED

I would like to thank *Tui Motu* for the daily emails during Lockdown. I was able to share them with parishioners and I know they were greatly appreciated.

Ron Bennett, Otari Parish

GRATITUDE FOR STORIES OF TINO RANGATIRATANGA

Tēnā koe, Makareta, for sharing wonderful stories of tino rangatiratanga during COVID-19 Lockdown (*TM* June 2020). I'm deeply grateful. You've given a voice to those whose voices were not represented in any meaningful way during the daily updates by government. Yours is a story of the gospel in action — of caring for those most vulnerable, of community, of manaakitanga. While I believe our prime minister and public health leaders have done an excellent job at managing the pandemic to date here, in Aotearoa, the success of the response owes much to the efforts of Māori and Pasifika on the ground. You have explained why. Thank you.

Pat Neuwelt, Waiheke Island

CALL TO BISHOPS

The Catholic bishops of Aotearoa-NZ are to be congratulated on their responsible and encouraging communications to their people throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hopefully they will now communicate with the same constancy, clarity and concern as we celebrate the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis's landmark encyclical *Laudato Si'*. Humans' continued abuse of our Common Home (principally by those of us in "developed" countries) is largely what has contributed to the increase in natural disasters, including the growing frequency of killer viruses.

Surely this is the urgent moral and ethical issue of our time. Until we are brought to realise the interconnectedness of all life, our degradation of Mother Earth will continue. Our rabid consumerism underlies so much of the poverty and displacement of peoples throughout our world. Churches, governments, nations, businesses and individuals can no longer ignore this reality.

Please, bishops of Aotearoa-NZ, call our government to account about this global emergency in the same way you challenged them about opening the churches.

Adrienne Dunlop rndm
Elisabeth Beeler rndm

RETURN TO CHURCH

Many theological and canon law based persuasions are being offered to entice me from my computer to return physically to Mass. I have a taste of what it must have been like trying to be faithful to Rome even as Luther's influence spread during the Reformation. Clericalism in those days was sufficient to bring Catholics into line and even kill to preserve their beliefs. Contemporary clericalism has no such bite.

Counter Reformation, modernism, post-modernism, an enlightenment and other reforms of influence have followed. Luther has been shown in the main to have got it right — the hierarchy is not the only realm in which the Spirit moves. Then, as now, clericalism and its call for obedience was found wanting. A secular prime minister has led us in being kind, looking out for one another and taking personal responsibility. More importantly, I have been given cause and the means to celebrate as Lockdown finishes.

As if it were necessary, the Church "fathers" offered us a "dispensation" from church gatherings and now will declare such dispensation finished. When the Spirit desired to meet the needs of Catholic people during Lockdown — "cyber-Mass" evolved. Now I ask: Why should I return to a community whose leaders do not know how to speak to me as an adult and say "please" when they ask things of me?

Dave McCann (abridged)

Looking OUT and IN

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Trying to pray in recent times, I have felt somewhat unmoored. Yet rather than something I do, prayer unexpected and unwitting overflows, on encounter with God among us on Earth. The patch of beaten silver-tin on the dark sea past Godley head. A new neighbour aged 11, exuberant to climb her first-ever tree in our backyard. A friend who abandoned her morning plans to sit and talk when I needed company. The poetry of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* captures the surprising and playful way God breaks into my everyday. The ancient mariner is weighed down by his foolish, hard-hearted killing of an albatross. He is then lost at sea carrying the heavy weight of regret around his neck, when watersnakes beyond his boat draw his attention:

> Beyond the shadow of the ship,
> I watched the water-snakes:
> They moved in tracks of shining white,
> And when they reared, the elfish light
> Fell off in hoary flakes.
>
> Within the shadow of the ship
> I watched their rich attire:
> Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
> They coiled and swam; and every track
> Was a flash of golden fire.
>
> O happy living things! no tongue
> Their beauty might declare:
> A spring of love gushed from my heart,
> And I blessed them unaware:
> Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
> And I blessed them unaware.
>
> The self-same moment I could pray …

For our family, COVID-19 has required us to shift continents (and schools, work, friends, languages, churches and cuisine). We had to leave our home in India in a hurry and even now, many weeks later, we feel uprooted and bewildered. This month we moved into a new house for the 25th time in our 25 years of marriage. Reassuring and recognisable are the colourful and unmatching cushions, the pictures of wild mountains on the walls, the smug sacks of flour and lentils by the washing machine and the bicycles, ungainly grasshoppers, leaning crazily. As in every other house we have lived in, the grater (shredder of carrots and cheese) has no fixed abode and we cook pancakes on Sunday mornings — and I guess it will soon become home.

Yet prayer is difficult. How to pray for my friends and workmates in India who have been in Lockdown for 12 weeks now. Many are anxious, some are despairing, but most are responding with creativity and resilience. A young woman living in a slum I have visited many times described how much she and her brother have enjoyed caring for a fledgling bird. An older mother described the solace she gets each evening, sitting with a cup of chai on the roof, and talking on the phone to her sister. Another young woman described how she has loved the quietness, the clean air and reduced traffic, even though they did not have money for tealeaves. Prayer, whether I am here or there, might be as simple as recognising God at work beside and within me, among us. As simple as allowing the "spring of love to gush from my heart".

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May the tenderness of grace
and the liveliness of hope
confirm us in community-mindedness
in respect for those disrespected
and in choosing justice and well-being for all
Spirit of Communion

From the *Tui Motu* team