

Tui Motu

InterIslands

October 2005 Price \$5

Tree of Life

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Cover:

Tree of Life sculpture made from decommissioned weapons in the Great Court at the British Museum.

See also *Act of grace*, p.13

The peace sculpture

There it stands, the peace sculpture made of twisted metal in the midst of the British Museum, mute and stark – and standing barely a hundred yards from where the London bomber blew up a No 30 bus.

As I write, there are huge demonstrations in London and Washington being

held against the Iraq war. The voice of the little ones is being heard.

Meanwhile New Zealand awaits the outcome of an election: will it be Helen or Don? Will we stay neutral, out of ANZUS and faithful to a noble tradition of nuclear disarmament – or will that all be gone by lunchtime?

Mainstream Jesus

It was exciting, wasn't it – Election Night, I mean. There's nothing like a race which finishes neck and neck to get the heart thumping. Eventually I went to bed – and I had a dream.

I dreamt I met this lively little man with pointed beard and receding hair. Goodness gracious, I thought, it's the Apostle Paul! "What are you doing down here?" I asked.

"Jesus sent me to check up on the Election," he replied – with quite a cultivated Tarsus accent, I noticed.

"So what did you make of it?"

"Well it was a huge improvement on elections I remember in Rome, where the bully boys sent out their street gangs to make sure you voted the right way. Funny thing though – I discovered my name was on the electoral roll!"

"That's not surprising," I said, "there was a 16-year-old in Auckland on the roll and a dog in Central Otago! So which way did you vote?"

"It wasn't easy," said Paul. "I tried to compare the parties with the way things were 2000 years ago. I took one look at the Christian Heritage crowd and saw at once why Jesus said: 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's'. Then I listened to Rodney Hide. He reminded me of Herod: all noise and bluster – and in his eyes that lust for power."

"What about Winston?" I teased.

"I thought of Pontius Pilate actually.

That old opportunist. He'd sell his soul for a few extra votes. All the time I kept asking myself how would Jesus have voted?"

"United Future? Some good Catholics among them."

"Yes," mused Paul, "their message has a familiar ring. Like what I used to say before I got knocked off my horse. I was a good Pharisee and loved to go round condemning people."

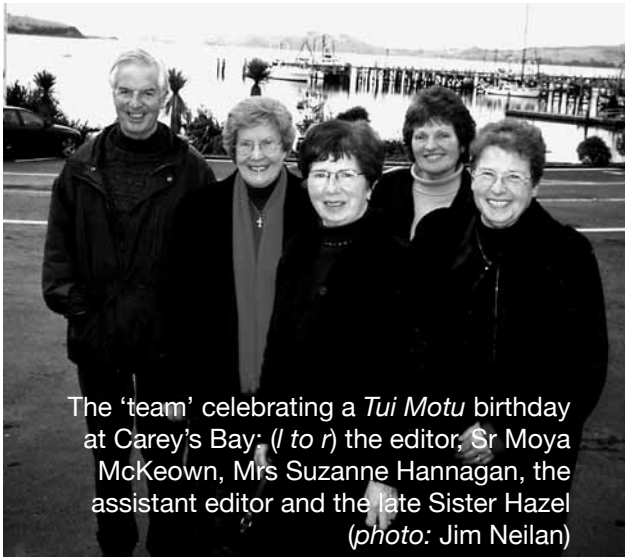
"Did you see that debate when Don Brash told Helen she wasn't 'mainstream'? Do you think Jesus was 'mainstream'?"

"Absolutely not," said Paul vehemently. He's soon gotten into the latest jargon. "Jesus went against the tide: he turned everything upside down. Just look at the people he made friends with: prostitutes, tax-collectors, lepers. You don't get lepers much now I know, but I suppose today it would be the gay community. Jesus went for people on the margins: they were the folk he loved most, the ones right out of the mainstream."

"So, come on tell me, how did you vote?"

"Well," said Paul, "I thought, who really does care for the little ones? And who behaves as if they really are grateful for the world God has made for them? So (I noted he dropped his voice – in case some 'Christians' might hear!) I voted for the Greens."

M.H.



The 'team' celebrating a *Tui Motu* birthday at Carey's Bay: (l to r) the editor, Sr Moya McKeown, Mrs Suzanne Hannagan, the assistant editor and the late Sister Hazel (photo: Jim Neilan)

Tragic death of *Tui Motu* volunteer

In the week before going to press the *Tui Motu* community was shocked by the sudden death of one of its volunteer workers. Sr Hazel McDonald OP has for five years looked after all parish sales as well as being on hand every month as part of the posting out team. Sr Hazel was an industrious and generous supporter of the magazine, always cheerful, friendly and willing.

We extend our deepest sympathy to the Dominican family and to all her many friends. She will be greatly missed.

May she rest in peace.

Experimenting in the liturgy: 1

Congratulations to Fr Peter Murnane on his wonderful article: *Should all experimentation cease?* I fully agree with everything he says. When will these Congregations in Rome learn we are not children to be talked down to? The Spirit is alive and well in all our communities and will lead us where we should go.

I have long been in favour of those on the altar receiving Communion last, and if there is a shortage they the 'servants' are the ones to miss out. Having spoken to several priests on this matter I have not had any favourable reply; one priest told me that if he waited till the last and was not able to receive Communion, the sacrifice that he had just celebrated would be invalid! As a Communion Minister for several years, it has always been my practice to receive Communion after I have distributed it to all the congregation.

A few years ago at *St Peter and Paul's*, Lower Hutt, I witnessed the priest and all the Communion ministers gather round the altar after all the community had been served, then receiving Communion themselves. It made a lasting impression on me. These people were servants in the true sense of the word.

There are many reasons why people are

letters to the editor

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

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

leaving the Church, and I think that this is another, when they see those on the altar as 'Masters' not 'Servants'.

Paddy McCann, *Paraparaumu*

Experimenting in the liturgy: 2

I began a sabbatical year at the University of Colorado in Boulder, in December, 1969, four years after the close of Vatican II. Being in the university parish in a high tech town, the spirit of Vatican II was very much alive.

I was invited to a house Mass performed by a Jesuit as might have been performed in the earliest Church. There were about a dozen of us seated around a low table. Mass began with prayers and readings from the Scriptures, then preparation of the bread (a small oval loaf from the supermarket) and a glass of wine (poured from a bottle from the same source). After the consecration the priest passed around what was the loaf after breaking

off a piece himself. We were then invited to eat together. Then he passed the wine-glass around for each of us to drink some. Mass was then concluded with a prayer.

This was a far cry from the outdated symbols and signs described by Mike Noonan (*Tui Motu* September). It was a real getting-back-to-basics. It should have felt like a deep breath of fresh air. Maybe it was for some, but for Catholics brought up on Jesus hidden in a tabernacle and genuflected to on both knees when exposed in a monstrance, it was simply too much to take. It all happened too quickly. I guess that is why so much of the Vatican II spirit has been lost.

Maybe as a result of the Reformation, the Catholic Church has insisted too much on uniformity. If individual parishes or groups had been allowed to continue 'experimenting' (the Jesuit priest in the account above assured us it was allowed then), variations in the liturgy as described by Peter Murnane (same issue of *Tui Motu*) and House Masses might have become common. I would also hope that Latin Masses and Benediction would still be available as now for those who find these more comfortable. Surely we can be one in faith but have differing liturgies?

Richard Dowden, Dunedin

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

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letters to the editor – continued

Pastoral consultation

In common with many other dioceses in New Zealand and around the world, Christchurch is addressing the problem of a shortage of priests. Bishop John Cunneen has initiated a pastoral plan that will be unveiled to the laity in the near future. As yet the only released detail involves grouping parishes, so that ageing priests can be spread even more thinly, coupled with a prayer crusade for more vocations. Apparently we will eventually be involved in discussions as to how to implement this plan.

At this time when the church is potentially at a point of major change, we have some serious concerns. Why has the laity (the church) not been involved in this process from the outset? Why are the laity only becoming involved at the point where a solution is being imposed? Given the crusade for more priests, how serious is the Bishop's commitment to recognising the priesthood of the baptised?

The fact that this plan was released to the media before the laity only serves to reinforce the apparent lack of respect for all the baptised.

The example set by the Archdiocese of Westminster in England is just one indication of how this consultation process may be properly undertaken. <<http://www.rcdow.org.uk/greenpaper.pdf>>

We invite other members of the Christchurch diocese who have concerns about this process, or others through-

out New Zealand who are experiencing more inclusive processes, to contact us at <chchlaity@hotmail.com>

Maybe together our voices can yet be heard.

Bert de Jong & 9 others. Christchurch

Praying for more priests

When are we going to stop praying for more priests and start praying for God's will to be done. Surely 30 years is more than enough time.

Are we staying God's hand for what He/She may want for the church? Perhaps if we let go, we may see exciting new things happen. I am 83 years old, but I do hope to see a great movement in our church before I die.

Just give God a chance.

Kathleen Taylor, Waipawa

David Lange

The September issue of *Tui Motu* was full of interesting and thought-provoking reading. I was particularly interested in Kate Dewes' piece on David Lange because it gave much more information about his contribution to the peace movement than in anything else I've seen.

I'm glad to know that he received the honorary *Alternative Nobel Peace Prize* but sorry that this did not gain more publicity.

Janet Crawford, Auckland

(See also page 28 of this issue - ed)

Mission works both ways

It was very good to read the article by Principal Paul Ferris on his visit to South Africa (*Tui Motu* September) and how much he was impressed by that 'Land of Reconciliation'. Particularly moving was the challenge he faced himself – an Irishman – about personal, social and political forgiveness, from a Xhosa taxi driver, from Daniel of Soweto and from Desmond Tutu.

And it was also good to read of the immediate, compassionate response of the Kavanagh Junior Assembly children to the news of a South African school without chairs or toilets or running water – and their hope to adopt that particular school.

So far, so good; but will the 'adoption' scenario miss the very point that Paul Ferris is making, unless the adoption is mutual and Kavanagh invites the South African school also to adopt them?

The article surely implies that although New Zealand children can build a toilet block – which is a good thing to do even if it is only a 'band aid solution' (his words) – the South African children have something more significant to offer to us: their African spirituality of forgiveness and reconciliation?

I feel deeply about this new missionary-movement in reverse – this partnership that avoids the patronising – both as a Celt like Paul Ferris and as former Principal of the oldest High School in Kenya.

Laurie Campbell, Newport UK

Colloquium in Palmerston North

About a hundred people gathered in Palmerston North last month to celebrate 25 years of the diocese – as well as the Silver Jubilee of Bishop Peter Cullinane who hosted the Colloquium. They came from all over New Zealand, lay and non-lay in roughly equal numbers.

Over four days some 13 papers were given by 18 different contributors, three of whom had come from Sydney. *Tui Motu* columnist Fr Humphrey O'Leary was one attender and testifies to the free discussion and amicable interchange of widely divergent theological opinions (see p 31) which characterised proceedings. The atmosphere was an eloquent tribute to Bishop Peter's open and welcoming spirit.

Excerpts from some contributions will be printed in future issues of *Tui Motu*.



Jubilarian Bishop Peter Cullinane, with his organising team (l to r) David Mullin, Katrina van der Water and Lynette Roberts-King



ACPA awards dinner: (l to r) Michael Hill and Frances Skelton (TM); Suzie and Pat McCarthy (NZ Catholic), with Marcelle Mogg of the Australian magazine Eureka Street

NZ does well at Melbourne media awards

commended *NZ Catholic* Pat McCarthy: "Pope of the Millennium".

15. Best newspaper layout and design – *NZ Catholic*.

21. Best ecumenical/Interfaith story–

Marist Messenger. Peter Janssen SM: "Report on the ecumenical Kirchentag, Berlin".

22. The *Bishop Phillip Kennedy Memorial Prize* for Magazines was awarded to the *Kimberley Community Profile*. The citation also said this: "The quality, content and intelligent discussion offered by *The Nathaniel Report* was most impressive, as was the design and comprehensive coverage offered by *The Summit* (Melbourne) and by *Tui Motu*."

In early September the annual conferences of ACPA (*Australasian Catholic Press Association*) and ARPA (*Australasian Religious Press Association*) took place in Melbourne. New Zealand publications did especially well in the media awards.

ACPA awards

3. Best editorial – *Tui Motu*:

"All Shall Be Well" (May 2004). Highly commended – *The Nathaniel report* Michael McCabe: "Abortion – technology and truth".

4. Best column – *Tui Motu*:

Humphrey O'Leary CSsR:

"The Cardinal's condom" (August 04)

9. Best feature ... Magazine Highly commended–*Tui Motu*:

"The Cistercians" (July 04).

10. Best feature ... newspapers – *NZ Catholic* Nicholas Reid: "Politics and art cause problem for saint". Highly

Marilyn Pryor

At the ARPA Conference which followed on, the top accolade (the *Gutenberg Award*) was awarded posthumously to Marilyn Pryor, who died of motor neurone disease earlier this year. The ARPA report reads: "Marilyn was a long-time stalwart of ARPA and an untiring advocate for the faith, for justice and for humanity". Marilyn was very prominent in the pro-life movement and until she became too ill, she was editor of *Wel-com*, the Wellington and Palmerston North diocesan paper. The prize is a fitting and overdue recognition of her sterling work for the Catholic Press. ■



A former recipient of the Award, Julia Stuart, with Geoff Pryor at the Award presentation

Photo: Barry Edwards

Propose, not impose, says media bishop



Bishop Prowse with Brian Connell SM

During the course of the ACPA conference delegates were addressed by Bishop Christopher Prowse, assistant bishop of Melbourne and media spokesperson for the Australian bishops.

The bishop spoke primarily on the church's relations with the secular media. Our aim, he said is

to 'perfume' the world with Christ. That does not mean being pietistic or apologetic. We have to acknowledge that the secular society we live in wants to separate culture from faith. Yet a culture without Christ is a culture against humanity. So we have to inform the media what the Christian viewpoint is.

We need to engage with the world via the media. We know we

haven't all the answers, but we must explore the problems of the world together. As Pope John Paul II said, the church's task is *to propose, not to impose*.

The decree on communication *Communicatio at Progressio* (1971) used the notion that the communicator "stands at the window" so as to get the full panorama, a wider picture. The bishop explored this metaphor. The communicator does not stand back. As Pope Paul VI said in his speech to the UN "we Catholics are experts at humanity". The wider picture means thinking in 100 year blocks. For instance the Catholic teaching regarding the control of AIDS is not popular with secular opinion. Yet the Uganda solution of urging abstinence and not having multiple partners may well be 'tomorrow's solution'.

We need to invite people in the world to come and look from our viewpoint. Regarding the sex scandals the bishop contended that if allegations against priests or church workers were correct, then we must apologise not excuse. It is our duty to correct misinformation, but never to run away from the truth. ■ ,

Eucharist

October concludes the Year of the Eucharist.

In Rome the Synod on the Eucharist is meeting. The pieces below attempt to penetrate to the heart of this most profound mystery of faith

Through artists' eyes

Both these contemporary representations of Eucharist have appeared in *Tui Motu* during the past year. The artists are seeking a more transcendent meaning behind the words of Scripture which describe Jesus at table with his disciples.

Australian Margaret Ackland (*right*) gathers men, women and children, the young and the old around the table of the *Last Supper* – not the traditional Twelve. The mood is sombre. All eyes are fixed on the Christ figure at the head of the table.

The Passover they celebrate goes back to the very roots of their existence as a people. In sharing with them the broken bread and the poured wine, Jesus invites each one present to become part of a journey to death which he is about to undergo.



Nothing could be more contrasting than Emmanuel Garibay's *Emmaus* (*left*). At a wayside tavern the 'disciples' suddenly realise that their guest is Christ risen from the dead. In an instant their mood of despair and hopelessness is transformed into a paroxysm of mirth and delight. Garibay paints them as being the ordinary working men of his native culture. He brings the moment of Eucharist right into the present time.

Both artists have deliberately abandoned traditional forms. Eucharist is drawn as a contemporary event impacting forcefully on the lives of ordinary people. In each case the emphasis is on communion, on common faith, on celebration of a special moment – giving the occasion a transcendent quality.

Mystery

The meaning of things, and their purpose,
is in part now hidden
but shall in the end become clear.
The choice is between
the Mystery and the absurd.
To embrace the Mystery
is to discover the real.
It is to walk towards the light,
to glimpse the morning star,
to catch sight from time to time
of what is truly real.
It is no more than a flicker of light
through the cloud of unknowing,
a fitful ray of light
that is a messenger from the sun
which is hidden from your gaze.

You see the light but not the sun.
When you set yourself to look
more closely,
you will begin to see some sense
in the darkness that surrounds you.
Your eyes will begin to pick out
the shape of things and persons
around you.
You will begin to see in them
the presence of the One
who gives them meaning and purpose,
and that is He
who is the explanation of them all.

Basil Hume OSB

The spirituality of communion

*Here is an abridged version of a spiritual – and practical – teaching on Eucharist
prepared by Archbishop John Bathersby, of Brisbane*

Introduction

Communion is the Divine Trinity – Father, Son and Spirit – joined in a relationship of mutual and abundant love. Their love overflows into our world so that we and all creation are drawn into this Godly communion. Through the Incarnation, the Trinity becomes the very communion itself in which we live.

Communion exists at different levels of intensity in creation, humanity in general, Christianity, the church and the family. It is at its most intense when the church gathers as the Body of Christ in Eucharist. Because all creation lives in Christ, we and all creation past and present are caught up in the Trinitarian relationship of love between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The life of the Trinity consists in the eternal flow of each divine person into the others, and of the others into each. Life is expressed in mutual self-giving. Here we are challenged to imagine how we relate to each other in terms of mutual indwelling which reflects the union existing between Father, Son and Spirit. In such a life each nourishes and sustains the being of the other.

We are not outside the Trinity looking in, but on the inside caught up in the endless vitality of the divine life. It is our vocation as Christians to proclaim the communion that already exists, by sharing our experience and understanding of life in God, imperfect as it may be, with people unaware of the mystery in which they live.

Creation

Communion exists between God and all creation. This communion can be greatly enhanced by faith when we see ourselves existing in God in whom we live and move and have our being (*Acts 17:28*). We are inspired by St Francis who referred to creation as ‘brother’ and ‘sister’. Theologian Denis Edwards puts it: *We are made from stardust, but we know it is a stardust created by God.*

Humanity

We are also in communion with all people... brothers and sisters in the one family of God. By faith we become aware of our common relationship with God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – especially the risen Christ in whom we live.

At Eucharist, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ is sacramentally present in the celebrant, in the living word of God, in the shared body and blood of Christ, and in the congregation which is the Body of Christ. Our sacramental communion joins us with other Eucharistic communities

throughout the world present, past and future, as well as with the saints before the throne of God.

Ecumenical aspect

Ecumenism aims to deepen our present interactions so that they become the communion prayed for by Christ (*Jn.17:20-21*). God’s Holy Spirit drives us towards ever deeper communion, never more strongly than when we gather (despite our separation) in worship, dialogue or action, longing in the Spirit for an ever deeper communion.

Communion of all faiths

With other faiths we acknowledge a spiritual vision of life. Dialogue, contact or action can immeasurably deepen the communion we share through creation and a religious understanding of existence. This is a ‘wider ecumenism’.

Small groups

Whenever two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus (*Mt.18:20*) there is communion: in prayer or scripture groups... never more powerfully than in the family itself, where spouses embrace each other and their children in a communion of love and the children reciprocate... also in the school community. But only the communion of the church gathered in Eucharist approaches the perfect communion for which Christ prayed.

Ways we can practise communion

- by spending time watching a sunset or smelling the perfume of a flower: thus we acknowledge our oneness with all creation and our common relationship with God.
- by recognising that those we pass in the street belong to the one family of God – especially our brothers and sisters who are poor or needy
- by becoming aware that we worship God not as individuals but as family. When we say *Amen* to the body and blood of Christ we ‘put on’ the body of Christ (*Gal 3:27*). The broken bread and poured out wine remind us of the cost of communion, which is to follow Christ to Calvary.
- by interceding in prayer for *all* our brothers and sisters, who may be Catholic or non-Catholic, people of every faith or no faith at all, especially people who are suffering or have died.
- by taking every possible ecumenical opportunity in order that we may experience communion with our fellow Christians and fellow believers.
- by seeing every social experience – in family, at work or recreation – as a moment of communion.





The Body of Christ

On the road to Damascus (*Acts 9:5*) Jesus accused Paul of persecuting him, because Paul was persecuting the Christian community. It was the moment of Paul's conversion. Over the next ten years he developed his theology of the Body of Christ (*Eph.4:11-16; 1Cor.12:27*). Paul challenged his followers to become part of Christ's risen body.

Once convinced we live in Christ's Body we no longer see ourselves in isolation but united with a multitude of brothers and sisters 'in Christ'. In the good actions of others we recognise Christ, and in our sins we become aware of preventing Christ acting through us.

Ways to practise being the Body of Christ

- by acknowledging, during the celebration of Eucharist, the presence of Christ in the celebrant, in the word of God, in the body and blood of Christ, but most especially in the entire worshipping community.
- by acknowledging outside Eucharist that Christ Risen is present in the people we encounter each day – as well as in ourselves. If holiness is 'practising the presence of Christ at ever more frequent intervals', then communion is 'practising the presence of Christ in ourselves and others also at ever more frequent intervals'.
- by recognising the action of Christ in the lives of others: when they minister to each other, in their gestures of greeting, kindness, forgiveness, justice or peace. In like manner the presence of Christ is stifled by selfishness, impatience, anger, envy, jealousy, lack of forgiveness or desire for revenge. Christ can touch our lives in unexpected ways – through acts of

kindness, forgiveness or compassion. It is almost impossible for people to totally suppress the presence of the risen Christ within themselves.

- by seeking the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in learning to recognise the presence of Christ in ourselves and in others.
- by prayerfully reflecting on our lives and recognising the touch of Christ in the actions of others or in our own; for instance, by recalling an occasion when someone surprised us with their goodness.
- The Body of Christ is a mystery we learn slowly. Therefore children at home and at school should be encouraged to understand the presence of Christ in word and deed. Sound faith education is the strongest defence against the pervading materialism of our age.

In conclusion

We were never called by Christ to be simply *individual* Christians. Sadly down the centuries Christ's vision embracing all people and all creation got lost: religion became focused on individual life and eternal happiness. This undermined the mystery of the Body of Christ and the urgency of establishing the reign of Christ now; it narrowed down the rich sense of Eucharistic communion to the spirituality of the individual.

However, the emphasis on the 'People of God' which goes back to the Old Testament was retrieved by Vatican II, making us aware once again of the communal dimension of salvation. By renewing our sense of Eucharistic presence we have the potential to acquire a completely new understanding of the Christian vision, without in any way neglecting the spiritual riches of the recent past. ■

Do this in memory of me

How do we 'ground' the gift of Eucharist in our ordinary, earthly experience?

Ron Sharp tries to answer this through the eyes of Jesus the Galilean

How much time would Jesus have given to his own memorial? It wouldn't be a statue on a pedestal or an image on a coin. Did it just come naturally out of his peasant background and his awareness of the usual end meted out to those who challenge the rule of the powerful?

He grew up among the neglected rural survivors marginalised in Galilee, for whom Jerusalem was an unimaginable world. Handyman/carpenter, with

basic hand-tools and donkey transport. For Galileans there would have been little money to come and go on – their 'economy' was their working with and for each other. They would have relied on their own food production, eked out of a harsh, dusty soil unless you happened to be lucky enough to access land on the banks of the river Jordan.

Jesus would often have seen his neighbours sowing wheat seed. He would have sowed it himself and

watched the seed respond to rains and sun. Surely here he discovered for himself and developed his understanding of the mysterious dichotomy he called Father/Mother: God within creation. Not God 'out there' or 'looking down on'. But God in the tiny seed that had died only to sprout from its disintegration into a new life.

It was from nature itself he would have learned that everything is inter-dependent. Seed, soil, pollen insect,

parasite predator, semen ovum, male female, light dark, winter summer, spring autumn, sun moon, animal human. All interrelating through the pulsing energy of his *Abba*: Father/Mother co-creatively involved with matter, causing everything to come alive with their Spirit ever-unfolding in evolutionary growth. That growth full of unpredictable spurts and lulls, violence and peace, blossomings and fallings, fresh new growth and naked shedding, plunging to the depths and rising to the heights.

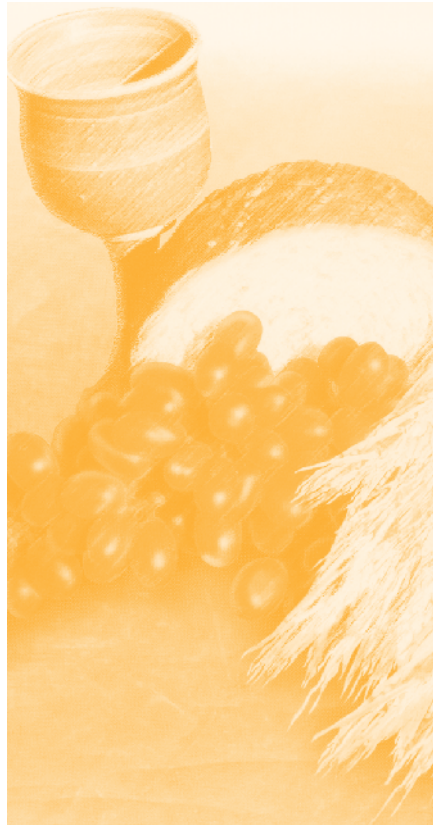
Jesus would have observed how each season had its own character and how each species reacted accordingly to each breathing in and breathing out of Earth. Each Word spoke a new shape, each plant and creature carried its own story and sang its own song distinct even from its own kind.

Each year saw a new dance unfolding, and each species of creation was full of the boundless potential of the Creative Mystery, originating and ever sustaining it. Dreams would become a reality, all kinds of colour and shape would become possible. Capacities would be limitless. The universe would be the ever-unfolding body of God, forever expressing itself in new forms, yet all part of a Whole and each part containing the Whole, of which it is an image.

From his relationship with the land and with nature, Jesus came to know and understand wheat and bread, grapes and wine. “The grain of wheat just remains a grain of wheat unless it falls into the earth and dies. But if it dies it produces abundant fruit”. The wheat grains are harvested and crushed into flour, kneaded into dough and baked to become sustenance for our daily living. He sees all life as bread; he is bread; God is bread. Bread is the basic symbol of life nourishment.

Grapes are crushed, trodden by bare, earthed feet, fermented into a changed new form, symbol of painful growth, breaking through suffering into well-being and happiness. “This is my Blood,

which is poured out for many... (*Mk. 14:24*)”. How more grounded than that can God get? Both symbols of Jesus’ memorial sum up the mystery of the life cycle of birth, death and rebirth that Jesus saw and experienced every day around him.



This is true of all matter whether it be human, animal, plant, soil, molecule or atom, nucleus or gene, land or ocean, galaxy or universe – sustaining love, parental nurturing, caring touch, spilt blood unpredictable or planned, catastrophic or minute, random or uniform. Always maintaining balance and integrity and eucharistic transforming power and celebration of evolving becoming.

No wonder the great priest scientist Teilhard de Chardin, finding himself while on a palaeontological expedition without bread, wine or altar, decided to raise himself above those symbols and make the whole Earth his altar – and on it offer all the labours and sufferings of the world. “Over there on

the horizon the sun has just touched with light the uttermost fringe of the eastern sky. Once again, beneath this moving sheet of fire, the living surface of the earth wakes and trembles, and once again begins its fearful travail. I will place on my paten (*the plate for holding the eucharistic bread*), O God, the harvest to be won by this renewal of labour. Into my cup I shall pour all the sap which is to be processed out this day from earth’s fruits. ...Grant me the remembrance and the mystic presence of all those whom the light is now awakening to a new day.

“This restless multitude, confused or orderly, the immensity of which terrifies me: this ocean of humanity... it is to this depth that I desire that all the fibres of my being should respond. All the things in the world to which this day will bring increase; all those that will diminish; all those too that will die; all of them, Lord, I try to gather into my arms, so as to hold them out to you in offering... nothing less than the growth of the world borne ever onwards in the stream of universal becoming.

“Therefore, I will this morning climb up in spirit to the high places, bearing with me the hopes and the miseries of my Mother, and there, upon all that in the world of human flesh is now about to be born or to die beneath the rising sun, I will call down the Fire.”

So, transformed by Eucharist and grounded in God we proceed, aware of new births in the local hospital, blossoms on the trees, children suffering from abuse, injustices causing anger and violence; aware also of the care of caregivers, the pain of political elections, the floods in New Orleans, the father wheeling the pushchair – and all life happening in and around us, grounded in God, consumed by love. ■

Ron Sharp is a member of the St Peter Chanel parish, Motueka, with a special interest in environmental concerns



In praise of beauty

Daniel O'Leary

Tui Motu is very pleased to welcome another regular contributor to its columns. This is the first of a series of articles from the distinguished Irish priest-author, Daniel O'Leary. Fr O'Leary's writings appear also in the London Tablet

It was a dark, eerie Friday afternoon in early spring. The children were racing from our local school to the waiting bus. Suddenly one of the girls noticed a magnificent rainbow. There it was – an arc of beauty, elegant as a ballet dancer, stretching gracefully across the bloodshot sky of our little town. Fine-tuned as they were to the play of light and shade, to the dance of colours, from their Lenten class preparation for the Feast of brightness, their young eyes missed nothing in that ring of wonder that hung like a silent blessing almost within reach of their small hands.

Their teacher joined them. I know what she was thinking. Would she talk about God, about Easter, about a prayer of thanks? She didn't. Instinctively she knew that the still surprise of the children was already an act of worship – there was nothing more, just then, to add. To experience that tiny theophany

was in itself to adore. And maybe that timeless moment had more to do with the transformation of our universe than we shall ever know. "It is only beauty", said Simone Weil, "that will save the world. Beauty is a sacrament; it is Christ's tender smile coming through the world."

*beauty is a sacrament –
it is Christ's tender smile
coming through
the world*

The vocation of a priest is to be a prophet of beauty, to remind people of the light within them; to reassure them that they are, as Thomas Merton realised in his moment of intense disclosure in a city street, "shining like the sun"; to tell them that they, like those schoolchildren, can almost touch the rainbow. The calling of the

priest, like it was for Jesus before him, and like it is for the church and her sacraments now, is not to introduce something new to God's creation – but to reveal, purify and intensify what is already there.

I recently read *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks. It was the time of the great 17th Century plague in the village of Eyam in Derbyshire. The small community heroically decided to close off all contact with the outside world so as to contain the deadly disease within their village. Most of them died horrible deaths.

Towards the end of these fateful months, Mrs Mompellion, the vicar's wife, despite her illness, whispers these words of hope to her distraught, despairing helper, Anna. "I wonder if you know how you have changed. It is the one good to have come out of this

terrible year. Oh yes, Anna, the spark was clear in you when you first came to me – but you covered your light, afraid of what would happen if anyone saw it. You were like a flame blown by the wind until it is almost gone. All I had to do was to put the glass around you. And now – oh how you shine!”

At the splintered threshold moments of their lives the priest puts the glass round the fragile hearts of his people. And strange as it may seem, he may have to walk across the broken glass of his own shattered vows before he can do this with a new innocence. He knows that if he is ever to name, protect and reveal the mysterious place in others, he himself must first, like Anna, be broken and then put together again by loving hearts.

Irenaeus, the second Century writer, was talking about beauty when he said that the glory of God was the fully alive human being. So was St Paul when he reminds us that “our unveiled faces reflect like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, growing brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image we reflect”. And in the most wonderful words St Thomas Aquinas assures us that “God is beauty itself, beautifying all things. God puts into creatures a kind of sheen, a reflection of God’s own luminous ray, which is the fountain of all light.”

A few years ago our parishioners organised *A Day of Beauty* on the Sunday of the Transfiguration. We sent posters to other churches, put them in shop windows, placed news items in the local papers. It turned out to be a day of tears and smiles, of memories and dreams. Everything about that day was special, and all who came with their own creations of what was beautiful were pampered and spoiled and made to feel unique.

Moir wrote to us afterwards: “Bodies danced our yearning to reach God, and lovely stories led us into the invitation of the day – to recognise and trust the beauty in ourselves, awakened by the

call of beauty from others. I felt my heart grow bigger, pushed outwards full of thankfulness and wonder at this vision of what life can be like – much as I imagine James, John and Peter felt on the mountain that day.”

Few things in life have the compelling power of beauty. Beauty beckons us once we have recognised it. It points beyond itself. We know it is a sacrament of God because that is what the beautiful humanity of Jesus is.

*on judgment day
we shall be called to account
for all the beautiful things we should
have enjoyed – and didn’t*

Beauty awakens us to our mystery and transforms us more deeply into it. It tells us our name and names our horizons. For beauty we are born; by beauty we are nourished; without it we decay; our seeds of beauty may sleep through many a winter, but they never die.

Ronald Rolheiser reminds us that taking care of these seeds is priestly work: “At the deepest level of our being we already know beauty and resonate with it because we ourselves are beautiful. In the depths of our souls we carry an icon of the One who is Beautiful. We have within us the image and likeness of God, the source of all beauty.

“That *imago Dei*, that deep virginal spot within us, that place where hands infinitely more gentle than our own once caressed us before we were born, where our souls were kissed before birth, where all that is most precious within us still dwells, where the fire of love still burns, and where ultimately we judge everything as to its love and truth – in that place we feel a *vibration sympathetique* in the face of beauty. It stirs the soul where it is most tender.”

In Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* Shug reminds us how fed up God must be when we walk through a field

of poppies and fail to notice the colour purple. Rabbi Lionel Blue refers to an admonition in the Talmud: on the final Judgment Day we shall be called to account for all the beautiful things we should have enjoyed – and didn’t.

The Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh explains why a parish priest worried about the spirituality of his new curate. The younger man was never afraid when the sun opened a flower. Because sin is blind to beauty – it is grey, it has no imagination and misses the purple.

Every priest is called to be a sacrament of the mystical, a reminder to people of their divine loveliness. There is a beautiful way of celebrating Eucharist, of preaching the Word, of being present to the hurting, of embracing sinners, of dancing with the limping on this precious Earth. The people will then believe that, by their very presence, every word and every meal they share becomes a small but vibrant sacrament of God’s beauty, warming people’s hearts when they grow too cold, and bringing the morning early when the nights are too dark and too slow. And that’s when people will start going to Mass again.

If birthdays, anniversaries and sacred moments are celebrated in heaven, if ever the Lord of Life takes to the floor as Lord of the Dance, it must surely be at such poignant incarnations on this earth of the everlasting beauty of our Tremendous Lover. Because, in the first instance, that is why the Word became flesh in Jesus. ■

Daniel O’Leary is a priest of the Leeds diocese, England. He has been parish priest of Ripon, in Yorkshire.

Last year he spent time with school Principals and DRSs in Wellington. His gift is to bring a sense of God into the everyday. His latest book Travelling Light is published by Columba Press

Brighter than a thousand suns

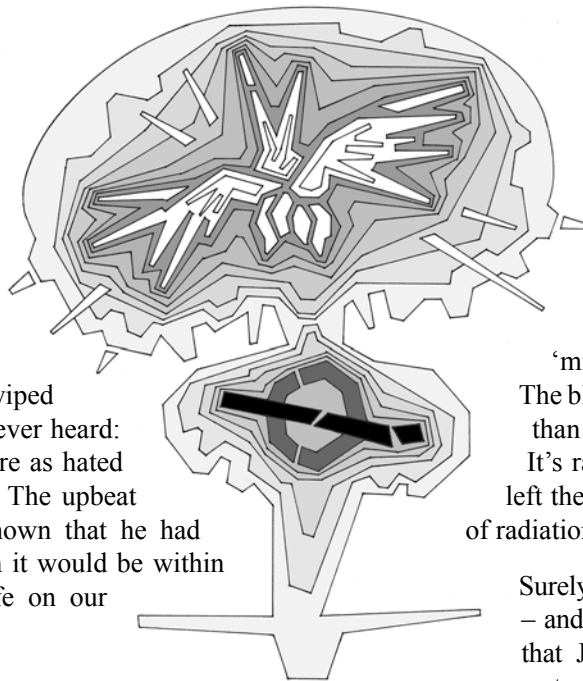
Among all of New Zealand's peacemakers, no one has achieved more than Canon Paul Oestreicher. Paul was chairperson of the campaign for nuclear disarmament and led the great Aldermaston Marches against the Nuclear Weapon's Establishment in Southern England in the 60s.

It was a rainy New Zealand winter's day as I pedalled my bike to school against the wind, trying to make what I could of the morning's news. The day before, one bomb had wiped out a Japanese city of which I'd never heard: *Hiroshima*. Not even Germans were as hated as the Japs. This was great news. The upbeat announcer could not yet have known that he had heralded a new age. From now on it would be within human capacity to destroy all life on our small planet.

Our physics teacher was one of the best. We asked him to explain this new bomb. But how does anyone explain nuclear fission – or was it fusion – to a class of 13-year-olds? 'Lord' Roberts (no schoolmaster lacks a nickname) did his best. I can't remember a word of it. But I have never been able to forget his words as he left the classroom: "Boys, one thing is now clear. If we don't manage to abolish war, war will abolish us." Might his prophetic wisdom help to explain why I'm now a vice-president of the *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*?

By 1945, the conventional carpet bombing of German and Japanese cities, deliberately targeting the civilian population, had already killed hundreds of thousands of men and women and children. These nations had sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind. The fathers of the doctrine of the justifiable war – long, long ago – always insisted that not only the cause of a war had to be just but also the means of fighting it.

Indeed so stringent are the conditions of the 'just war doctrine' that few, if any, real wars have met the criteria of Aquinas and the medieval schoolmen. In real life the secular proverb that *all's fair in love and war* has been the unacknowledged guiding principle. And to make that palatable to Christians, their wars have been turned into holy wars, crusades, Church and Empire in unholy alliance ever since Constantine.



And so it was too on the Feast of the Transfiguration in 1945. The bomber had a woman's name, Enola Gay. She was sent on her 'mission' with a chaplain's prayers. The blinding light was even more effective than the bomb's architects had expected. It's rays killed not only immediately but left the land poisoned and thousands dying of radiation sickness for a generation to come.

Surely this had sufficed to end a world war – and thus been justified. Today we know that Japan had already made diplomatic moves to surrender. There was a second bomb waiting to be tested on human guinea pigs. Three days later *Nagasaki* followed. It was a differently constructed bomb. The result was the same. This was total war taken to its logical conclusion. Science wedded to technology had demonstrated that there were no limits. The 'father of the bomb, Robert Oppenheimer, when he saw the results, turned against his own child and denounced the next step, the hydrogen bomb. Albert Einstein ruefully reflected that he had helped to make it all possible.

If one thing makes this crime bearable, it is that since then no one can say: *we did not know*. The bomb, now carried by missiles, has become ever more devastating, the ultimate symbol of national prowess. At least once, during the most critical cold war stand off between the Soviet Union and the United States, the world came close to melt-down. It is only due to the wisdom of two men, Khrushchev and Kennedy, who pulled back from the brink over Cuba, that millions of us owe our survival. And that thin thread poses as security!

Today there is a consensus that the only true security lies in the universal abolition of all weapons of mass destruction, internationally policed and with unlimited rights of inspection, everywhere. That is the ultimate purpose of the *Non-Proliferation Treaty*, which commits the signatories

not to acquire these weapons – and those who have them to negotiate them away.

When the superpowers began to take the first timid steps to reduce their vast arsenals, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Albert Schweitzer wrote these hopeful words to the White House: “Mr President, had my friend Albert Einstein but known, he would have died in less despair”.

Schweitzer’s hopes have not been fulfilled. Those in the nuclear club see themselves as policemen, the United States to the fore, preventing others from joining the club. Not surprisingly, with little success.

The British bomb, sanctioned by a Labour Government under Clement Attlee, was Britain’s last gasp of imperial greatness. The bomb had become a status symbol, a weapon not of war but of power politics. The bomb in safe British hands? Anthony Eden, when he was mentally ill, took Britain at Suez to a disastrous war. We would do well to remember.

And today another British Labour Government under Tony Blair shows no sign of being willing to negotiate away our missiles. At the Aldermaston atomic weapons research establishment in Southern England new nuclear technology is being developed.

Meantime Britain joins America in invading Iraq on the false premise that it had or might have the bomb. Iran is threatened – “don’t you dare!”

– while Israel stays unchallenged and persecutes Vanunu, the new Palestinian leader, who’s done no more than tell the truth. With Russia and China equally unchallenged, who wonders now at India and Pakistan. Who’s next ?

Many years have passed since the Church of England’s General Synod, still in the midst of the cold war, debated the bomb and lacked the courage to back its own working party and simply say, “in God’s name, No!” At least the Synod did demand adherence to Britain’s commitment to disarm by multilateral negotiation.

Is it not time, almost past the time, for all Christians to demand a negotiated end to this madness? Trident missiles are not instruments of diplomacy but incentives to others to have them and, in the last resort, a threat to commit mass murder. With a commitment to end all that, Tony Blair could even go out with a halo and the respect of those who elected him with hope.

I revisited Mr Roberts, my old teacher, when he was nearly 90. He remembered that fateful day in 1945. “Wonderful” he said “we’re still here, still with time to end war.” And that indeed would be transfiguration. ■

The author is an honorary chaplain at the University of Sussex and a founder member of CANA – ‘Clergy Against Nuclear Arms’.

An act of grace....

Our pilgrimage took us through the city in the early morning light. The pavements were increasingly crowded with hurrying figures. Whole crocodiles started to appear as we entered the courtyard and made our way slowly up the steps. Inside the light was pearly clean. The *Tree of Life* stood in a circle of silence. Leaves and fruit festooned its branches.



Under it strange birds hopped and pecked, lizards slithered and large insects strutted stiff-legged. A monkey – or maybe a lemur scrambled up its trunk. The people stood contemplating, serious and then smiling at the liveliness of the birds and beasts. It was good to be here. To see weapons that had killed and maimed, transformed into something of beauty and goodness. An act of grace.

– Anna Holmes

McIndoes ad

Make me an instrument of peace

Katie O'Connor interviews Australian peace activist, Donna Mulhearn. Donna's daily prayer is the prayer of St Francis: it has led her into the world's most tragic places

In recent times I have become more and more aware of Jesus' teaching on non-violence and peacemaking. During the lead up to the Iraq war I was confronted

by this teaching. My own government was about to go to war with a country it had no conflict with. My daily prayer has been – with St Francis – that God would make me an instrument of peace. The opportunity to live this prayer came to me when I heard the call from a former US marine for human shields to go to Iraq.

So I went and spent a month in Iraq before the war started, coming to appreciate the overwhelming warmth and hospitality of the people. We were accepted into their homes and families. Iraq I found to be a sophisticated and technologically advanced society, a very attractive place totally different from the media stereotype.

Then the war started. It was something I had never before experienced – and, please God, our countries will never experience it. The chaos and the noise: bombing, anti-aircraft fire, planes and helicopters. All day, every day. We were taken to civilian areas which had been bombed, where buildings had been destroyed by missiles. We saw toys and tennis racquets and ordinary household things scattered by bomb blast.



The people said to us: "You have come here to be with us despite what your governments are doing." There was no resentment. My own family has stood by me: otherwise I might have struggled.

I went back to Baghdad a second time in December 2003 and stayed for six months. I returned for a third time in November 2004 just for a month. During the second tour I went to work with homeless children. We opened a shelter with funds raised in our home countries. We worked with about 20 boys aged 9-19, trying to get them away from criminal activity and back to normal living.

Most Iraqi children have been traumatised by the events of war and display disturbing symptoms. So we set up a centre where such children could receive counselling. We also assisted poor families in refugee camps. It was six months' hard work at the grass roots; no administration, no red tape, and we got a lot done.

Fallujah

Towards the end of the six months, we

were invited to Fallujah which was then under attack. Some doctors asked us; they were trying to provide food and medicine for people in the city. So they hoped the Coalition forces would not shoot

at the ambulances, since we were Americans or Australians on board.

We went into the city by back roads to deliver aid. But we still got shot at by American soldiers. They would not let us deliver the aid. It was my worst experience. Women and children who had been shot were being brought into the clinics. The media were shut out so never reported the atrocities that were taking place.

On the way out we were caught in crossfire and found ourselves surrounded by insurgents, who captured us. At first they treated us with suspicion, thinking we were spies. The men were handcuffed; the women were not touched. It was very frightening. We thought we might get used as hostages. Since I was Australian I received a lot of attention during the questioning. They said: "Why do you Australians want to harm us? Are you not our friends?" They appeared to be personally offended by the fact that Australia had chosen to take a stance against them.

Eventually we were able to prove to them that we really were what we said

we were, so the next day they let us go. But they kept repeating: “We are Muslims. We won’t hurt you.” I believed them and that took away my fear.

I am convinced that the root problem in Iraq is the presence of a foreign occupying force. Remove that presence and Iraq will be on its way to a better future. People keep saying to me: “But what if... What if there’s civil war?” Such opinions come from the media. Iraq is perfectly capable of governing itself. The Iraqi people live together and never refer to themselves as Shiite or Sunni. They are neighbours even if they come from different traditions.

The root cause of violence is the presence of the coalition forces. Remove those forces, and the incidents will reduce dramatically. Even the insurgent troops are saying to the

funded by taxpayers – and supported by our governments.

Withdrawing from the Gaza strip is certainly a step in the right direction: the settlements were illegal in the first place. But it isn’t enough. Gaza does not control its borders or its air space; the people are not free to move in and out. That is not freedom. In the meantime more settlements are being built on the West Bank – also against international law and UN directives. An apartheid ‘wall’ is being built right through the Holy Land. To build it, agricultural land is being stolen and houses knocked down. This is not peace. It is for one side only. Peace without justice is never peace.

The checkpoints have to be dismantled. The Wall has to be torn down. Extremist settler activity has to cease. There is constant harassment of Palestinian people in their towns and homes. It has to stop.

Going to Texas

Camp Casey started with one grieving mother’s stand. Cindy Sheehan, whose son Casey was killed in Iraq, is seeking answers from President Bush. Bush states that her son died in a noble cause. She wants to ask

Bush, face to face, ‘what is that noble cause?’

Cindy went to Crawford, Texas, where the President has his ranch. She is waiting at his gate, and has been joined there by hundreds of others from across America. When I heard about what she was doing I knew I had to be there too. I found a huge cross-section of US society, young and old, Democrat and Republican, from every cultural background. What they are saying is: “Enough is enough. We are not leaving until we get an answer.”

This was such good news for me. My Prime Minister is President Bush’s ‘deputy sheriff’ – that is what Bush calls him! I say to my American friends: “We are with you and support you.” I was able to carry hundreds of messages of support to Cindy from Australians. I feel history was being made there. It is the turning point.

Cindy is not a politician. She is a grieving mother, and lots of Americans agree with her. They have planted white crosses along a road, one for each American killed in Iraq. They stretch right down the road. I thought: there isn’t a road long enough to count all the Iraqi deaths. I felt within me a coming together of the grief of American families and of Iraqi families. The grief caused by this terrible war is universal. No one is untouched. ■



government: “Give us a timetable when the occupying forces are due to withdraw – and we will cease our insurgent activities.” The Iraqis want to be left to themselves.

Palestine

Having seen how the media misrepresented the situation in Iraq, I suspected the same might be true in Palestine. I wanted to see for myself. So I went and stayed there four months. Palestine is worse than Iraq. Iraq is messy. No one is too sure where the violence is coming from. But in Palestine the violence is deliberate and it is targeted. It is state-sanctioned terror against a civilian population,

My apologia

I was brought up a Catholic. As a teenager I became an Evangelical fundamentalist, and stayed there 15 years. After suffering a significant loss in my life I found I needed a more contemplative stance rather than the somewhat superficial, black and white attitude of fundamentalists.

I was drawn to the Christian mystics, and began to seek God in stillness and silence. I had spent years searching for experiences of God across the five continents:

but all the time the answer lay within me. I was in this Benedictine monastery and had a moment of transformation.

The Christian teaching on non-violence and the Sermon on the Mount have impelled me. My call now is to do more than simply hold a placard at a demonstration. I have to connect daily with God within me to enable me to learn to love God and my neighbour. Doing that is a full-time job!

Glynn Cady

with weeds, as far as good gardeners were concerned, he became one.

The interesting question about the embrace with the leper is, who hugged whom? Why do we assume Francis initiated the hug? Maybe it was the faith of the leper, who could have lost his life by touching someone of Francis' class, that we should be remembering? What if it was the leper who took the first step? If so, is it not unreasonable to suggest that the Franciscan Movement was not only founded by Francis but by a nameless leper? A nobody founded the movement?

One of the qualities of the mustard plant, and intrinsic to its inclusion in the law of diverse kinds, is its take-over properties. It is dangerous even when domesticated. Not only does it mingle with other seeds, it tends to take over where it is not wanted. It gets out of control and attracts birds within cultivated areas where they are not desired. As a farmer you would only want mustard in small and carefully controlled doses, like in the corner of a large field.

The similarities between nobodies and mustard are striking. Someone is always trying to control them, making sure they don't upset the status quo, pushing them out to the boundaries where they will do least harm and not attract similar unwanted ilk. Think if the City Mission was located in Remuera or in Fendalton – or in your street or mine. Jesus instituted a reign of nuisances and nobodies. It was a kingdom of weeds. And we, against our common gardening sense, are invited to mingle. ■



start with churches, especially those that present God as a pre-packed TV dinner. Rather look among the despised and insignificant.

St Francis

Economically and socially 12th century Italy was in a state of great change. There was a new sense of identity and the possibility for power. The source of this power lay in money. With the old feudal structures collapsing the barter culture was changing to the money culture. The emerging *petit bourgeoisie*, to whom Francis' family belonged, realised the power that they possessed through their wealth and began to exercise it.

Francis's heart, however, wasn't in it. His sympathies were with the nobodies and nuisances, those who were outside of power and possibility. In the documents we have of the early Franciscan movement the lepers particularly stand out. Francis' embrace with an unclean leper has become legendary in Franciscan literary history.

Lepers were not recognised as existing in society. They did not benefit from the great economic and social changes. They had no share in the power structure; they did not participate in societal decision-making.

When Francis said following that leprous embrace: "after that I did not wait long until I left the world", what was 'the world' he left? He was not talking about physically dying. The world he left was the value system brought about by the new-found wealth of the middle class. Francis did not just leave his family; he left everything that was familiar to him to go into another world – a world of nothingness, not even promise, the world of the despised and insignificant, a world of weeds.

The lepers of Assisi lived outside the normal world. They had no names; they had no society; they had no voice. Thus they were not just excluded persons – they were nobodies. They did not exist. They were nameless weeds in the garden of life. In this context, when Francis found himself among them, he did not exist himself. By mingling

The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in their garden. And it grew and grew and became a great tree with large branches so that the birds made nests in it (Lk.13:18).

A Kingdom Of Weeds

The power of this parable relies upon us knowing some basic botany. The mustard plant is an annual that grew wild in Palestine. Pliny, that great Roman observer, writes: “It grows entirely wild... when it has once been sown it is scarcely possible to get the place free of it, as the seed when it falls germinates at once.” It was, in other words, a weed. It was the oxalis of the ancient world.

In the parable the person plants the mustard weed in their garden. Apart from being a stupid thing to do – think oxalis – it violated the law of diverse kinds (Lev.19:19). This law was designed to maintain order and separation, keeping plants in their proper place. Normally mustard was sown in small patches on the edge of a field. It was prohibited to plant it in a garden because it would result in mingling. By planting it in the garden, the planter makes the garden ‘unclean’.

The mustard seed grew and grew and grew – as weeds do. This creates a conflict for the hearers of the parable. Is growth a good thing? Is it a blessing or a problem or a violation?

Mustard seeds don’t grow into great trees with branches. They grow into shrubs with a maximum height of 1.2 metres. It takes a lot of imagination, digital re-imagining, or GE, to make mustard into a large tree.

In *Ezekiel 31* there is reference to the cedars of Lebanon – great trees, large branches, and nesting birds. Similarly in *Ezekiel 17* and *Psalms 104*. There is a metaphorical association of God being a great tree in which all manner of birds (i.e. peoples) can find a home. There is also metaphorical reference to Israel. As the ancients told it, Israel began life as a sprig and was raised up to tower over the other nations, like a mighty cedar over other trees.

Now Jesus was either botanically challenged or was deliberately mixing it up. The lowly, virulent and problematic mustard can hardly be mistaken for the lofty, virtuous, and powerful cedar. Indeed his audience was probably smiling at the thought. What was Jesus trying to do in stirring his metaphors? Was he trying to prick the fantasy balloon of Israel regaining its past imperial glory, and suggest that its destiny would be lowlier?

Jesus often did the reversal thing, trying to turn people’s thinking upside down. Consider, for example, the man beaten on the road to Jericho. The hero of that story is the unclean and despised Samaritan. Think of Jesus relating to sinners, including the tax collector Matthew, eating with them and sharing in their unclean status. The planting of a mustard seed in a garden likewise associates the reign of God with uncleanness.

The reign of God is meant to be mighty, exalted and significant, like a cedar. The mustard seed though is proverbially small, despised, and insignificant. Yet in the top-sy-turvy, upside down mind of Jesus, God is seen clearest of all in the small, despised, and insignificant.

There is disorder contained in the mustard metaphor. The reign of God is not like the Botanical Gardens where everything is carefully laid out, well tended and watered, named and admired. The reign of God is not orderly, where people all have allocated places and behave themselves. Rather the reign of God is like oxalis. It crops up all over the place, despite our best efforts to keep it out. Just when you had that patch of garden looking great, up she pops with her little yellow flowers.

The reign of God is not under our control. It is out of control, despite our best efforts. The Holy Spirit of God moves where She wills, sowing some love here, some discomfort there, some radical thought everywhere. If you want to find Her, look first in the least likely places. Don’t





The Spiritual Imperative

This is the first of three articles which present Satish Kumar's
Schumacher Lecture given in Bristol, United Kingdom,
in October 2004

Matter and Spirit are two sides of the same coin. What we measure is matter; what we feel is spirit. Matter represents quantity; spirit is about quality. Spirit manifests itself through matter; matter comes to life through spirit. Spirit brings meaning to matter; matter gives form to spirit. Without spirit matter lacks life. We are human body and human spirit at the same time. A tree too has body and spirit; even rocks which appear to be dead contain their spirit. There is no dichotomy, no dualism, no separation between matter and spirit.

The problem is not matter but *materialism*. Similarly there is no

problem with spirit, but *spiritualism* is problematic. The moment we encapsulate an idea or a thought into an *-ism* we lay the foundations of dualistic thought. The universe is universe – one song, one poem, one verse. It contains infinite forms which dance together in harmony, sing together in concert, balance each other in gravity, transform each other in evolution – and yet the universe maintains its wholeness and its implicate order. Dark and light, above and below, left and right, words and meaning, matter and spirit complement each other, comfortable in mutual embrace. Where is the contradiction? Where is the conflict?

Life feeds life, matter feeds matter, spirit feeds spirit. Life feeds matter, matter feeds life, and spirit feeds both matter and life. There is total reciprocity. This is the Oriental world-view, an ancient world-view, a world-view found in the tribal traditions of pre-industrial cultures where nature and spirit, Earth and heaven, sun and moon are in eternal reciprocity and harmony.

Modern dualistic cultures see nature 'red in tooth and claw', the strongest and fittest surviving, the weak and meek disappearing, conflict and competition as the only true reality. From this world-view emerges the notion of a split between mind and

matter. Once mind and matter are split, then debate ensues as to whether mind is superior to matter or matter is superior to mind.

This world-view of split, rift, conflict, competition, separation and dualism has also given birth to the idea of separation between the human world and the natural world. Once that separation is established, humans consider themselves to be the superior species, engaged in controlling and manipulating nature for their use. In this view of the world, nature exists for human benefit, to be owned and possessed, and if nature is protected and conserved, then the purpose is only for human benefit.

The natural world – plants, animals, rivers, oceans, mountains and the skies – is denuded of spirit. If spirit exists at all, then it is limited to human spirit. But even that is doubtful. In this world-view humans too are considered to be nothing more than a formation of material, molecules, genes and elements. Mind is considered to be a function of the brain, and the brain is an organ in the head and no more.

Spirit in Religion

Sometimes the words spirituality and religion are confused, but spirituality and religion are not the same thing. Politics should be free from the constraints of religion but should not be free of spiritual values. The word religion comes from the Latin root *religio* which means to bind together with the string of certain beliefs.

A group of people come together, share a belief system, stick together and support each other. Thus religion binds you, whereas the root meaning of spirit is associated with breath, with air. We can all be free spirits and breathe freely. Spirituality transcends beliefs. The spirit moves, inspires, touches our hearts and refreshes our souls.

When a room has been left closed, doors and windows shut and curtains drawn, the air in the room becomes

stale. When we enter the room after a few days we find it stuffy so we open the doors and windows to bring in fresh air. In the same way, when minds are closed for too long we need a radical *avatar*, a prophet, to open the windows so that our stuffy minds and stale thoughts are aired again.

A Buddha, a Jesus, a Gandhi, a Mother Teresa, a Rumi, a Hildegard of Bingen appears and blows away the cobwebs of closed minds. Of course we don't need to wait for such prophets: we can be our own prophets, unlock our own hearts and minds, and allow the fresh air of compassion, of generosity, of divinity, of sacredness to blow through our lives.

Religious groups and traditions have an important role to play. They initiate us into a discipline of thought and practice; they provide us with a framework; they offer us a sense of community, of solidarity, of support. A tender seedling needs a pot and a stick to support it in the early stages of its development, or even the enclosure of a nursery to protect it from frost and cold winds.

But when it is strong enough it needs to be planted out in the open so that it is able to develop its own roots and become a fully mature tree. Likewise, religious orders act as nurseries for seeking souls. But in the end we each have to establish our own roots and find divinity in our own way.

There are many good religions, many good philosophies and many good traditions. We should accept all of them and accept that different religious traditions meet the need of different people at different times, in different places and in different contexts. This spirit of generosity, inclusivity and recognition is a spiritual quality. Whenever religious orders lose this quality, they become no more than mere sects protecting their vested interests.

At present the institutionalised religions have fallen into this trap. For them

the maintenance of institutions has become more important than helping their members to grow, to develop and to discover their own free spirit. When religious orders get caught in maintaining their properties and their reputation they lose their spirituality, and then they, too, become like a business without spirit.

As it is necessary to restore spirit in business and in politics we also need to restore spirit in religion. This may seem a strange proposition because the very *raison d'être* of every religion is to seek spirit and to establish universal love. The reality is otherwise. Religions have done much good but also they have done much harm, and we can see all around us that tensions between Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jews are major causes of conflicts, wars and disharmony.

The rivalry among religions would cease if they realised that religious faiths are like rivers flowing into the same great ocean of spirituality. Even though the various rivers with their different names give nourishment to different regions and different peoples, they all provide the same quality of refreshment. There is no conflict among the rivers. Why then should there be conflict among the religions? Their theology or belief system may differ but the spirituality is the same. It is this spirituality which is paramount. Respect for a diversity of beliefs is a spiritual imperative.

Spirituality and Social Change

The environmental and social justice movements need to embrace a spiritual dimension. At present most social change movements concentrate on negative campaigning. They present doom and gloom scenarios and become mirror images of the institutions they criticise.

The real impetus for ecological sustainability and social justice stems from ethical, aesthetic and spiritual visions. But this focus gets lost when campaigners get caught in false goals such as their desire to attract media





attention or their need to gain more members for their organisations. These concerns become ends in themselves and the presentation of a holistic, inclusive and constructive vision is forgotten.

Love of nature and the intrinsic value of all life, human as well as other than human, is the essential ground in which environmental and social justice movements need to be rooted. The basis of all campaigning is reverence for life, and this is a spiritual basis. There is no contradiction between pragmatic campaigning and a spiritual overview. Mahatma Gandhi's political programme was founded upon spiritual values. Martin Luther King's *Civil Rights Movement* was rooted in a spiritual vision. Contemporary environmental and social justice movements also require that broad world-view rather than be limited to the science of ecology and the social sciences.

Spirituality and Civilisation

My land, my house, my possessions, my power, my wealth are the cravings of small minds. Spirituality frees us from small mind and liberates us from the small I, the ego identity. Through spirituality we are able to open the doors of big mind and big heart where sharing, caring and compassion are the true realities. Life exists only through the gift of other lives: all life is interdependent. Existence is an intricately interconnected web of relationships. We share the breath of life, and thus we are connected.

Whether we are rich or poor, black or white, young or old, humans or animals, fish or fowl, trees or rocks, everything is sustained by the same air, the same sunshine, the same water, the same soil. There are no boundaries, no borders, no separation, no division, no duality; it is all the dance of eternal life where spirit and matter dance together. Day and night, Earth and heaven all dance together, and wherever there is dance, there is joy and beauty.

The religion of materialism and the culture of consumerism which have been promoted by Western civilisation has blocked the flow of joy and beauty. Once, Mahatma Gandhi was asked, "Mr. Gandhi, what do you think of Western civilisation?" He replied, "It would be a good idea." Yes, it would be a good idea because any society discarding spiritual values and fighting for material goods, going to war to control oil, producing nuclear weapons to maintain its political power, cannot be called a civilisation.

The modern, consumerist culture built on unfair, unjust and unsustainable economic institutions cannot be considered to be civilised. The true mark of civilisation is to maintain a balance between material progress and spiritual integrity.

How can we consider ourselves to be civilised when we don't know how to live with each other in harmony and how to live on the Earth without

destroying it? We have developed technologies to reach the moon but not the wisdom to live with our neighbours, nor mechanisms to share food and water with our fellow human beings. A civilisation without a spiritual foundation is no civilisation at all.

The way we treat animals is a clear example of our lack of civilisation. Cows, pigs and chickens live as prisoners in factory farms. Mice, monkeys and rabbits are treated as slaves as if they felt no pain: all for human greed and human arrogance. Western civilisation seems to believe that all life is expendable in the service of human desire.

Racism, nationalism, sexism and ageism have been challenged and to some extent eradicated, but humanism still rules our minds. As a result we consider the human species to be superior to all other species. This humanism is a kind of *speciesism*. If we are to strive for civilisation we will have to change our philosophy, our world-view and our behaviour. We will have to enter into a new paradigm where all beings are interbeings, interdependent, interrelated and interspecies. ■

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A page from a mother's journal

A cold southerly came through last night. Cars hiss on wet roads outside. Church yesterday felt dull, irrelevant and frankly, not worth the effort. Rain coldly piddles in puddles outside. Spring blossoms turn bedraggled in the cold like sodden popcorn. The chickens out the window grimly peck in the mud, wet and unfluffy. This is not their idea of fun either.

Staying in this warm bed all day is alluring option. Sadly it is not an option! For urgently children yell from their bedroom. It is time to rise, dress up, make porridge, bravely march into this greyness...

Please God, be my friend this Monday. Give me some chirp. Help me to be kind and think past my own sorry skin. I think that's all I can manage today..... Amen

Kaaren Mathias



Finding the right rhythm

Tui Motu interviews Michell Hughey who speaks
about the vocation to be a Teacher and a
Christian Educator

I was brought up in Manurewa, so I am a South Auckland girl. Before entering the Josephites I taught for three and half years at McAuley College, Otahuhu – economics and religious education, mostly to Maori and Pacific Islands girls. It was a great school to begin my ministry of teaching.

I had met the Josephite Sisters when I was at Training College. During my time of postulancy I still continued to teach at McAuley, but I lived for a time at the Josephite house of hospitality, the *Manaaki* community, in Onehunga. I was able to get to know the Sisters. A policy existed at the house whereby women were able to stay there for a few weeks or months or a year. We had to commit ourselves to community living, sharing prayer and life together. This happened during 2000, and it helped me decide on the religious life.

So I went to Sydney for noviciate. There were five of us. I was the only Kiwi; there were two Australians and two originally from elsewhere. I was professed in July 2003. I will have at least three years in temporary vows. Our spirit as Josephites, since Mary McKillop's day, is to go where the need is – which may be to a remote place.

Rural ministry has been a tradition with the Josephites from the beginning. That appealed to me personally. In fact

we have a choice where we go. The discernment process involves both the leadership team and the individual religious. The team calls us to mission. I expressed a preference for a rural ministry – so I found myself in Gore! And St Peter's College, Gore, is a wonderful school.

The teaching vocation

Teaching is something I really enjoy and feel passionate about. I believe teaching young people is similar to creating music. Beautiful music can be created when musicians not only listen to the sound of their own instruments, but also to all others. In this way, each person finds his/her own rhythm in harmony with the beat of the song.

Education then, using this metaphor of music, requires those of us who are teachers (and certainly others whose work/ministry resonates with this image) to listen attentively to young people, and to create a space for our young people to find their beat – their *rhythm* so to speak – and thus experience the joy, esteem and beauty of true learning. It's about good timing. You have to listen to the children and come in at the right time with the right question. And that's especially true of Religious Education. Sometimes there are 'rests' – you have to stand back and give each student the time to articulate. Of course, this is the ideal to which we all strive within the nitty gritty of each day.

For example, I teach RE to Year 10 (Form 4) and also Years 12 and 13. There is quite a big jump when they come into the Sixth Form, and the presence of Seventh Formers in a mixed group works well at St Peter's. RE is a challenging subject to teach because many teenagers have not yet reached the stage of owned faith. It's hard work to make RE relevant to where students are at in terms of their life experience – but often it's rewarding when you least expect it.

I really believe in Religious Education in Catholic schools if it is respectful of the faith stage of where students are at. In my experience of teaching so far, I have found that students are interested to learn about the Bible, and the teachings and history of the Church if they know that where they stand in terms of their faith development – and indeed who they are – is respected, and they can ask questions. The young people I have experienced working with continue to surprise me with incredible generosity, honesty and goodness.

As well as this, RE can help students to learn how to self-reflect, it gives them the opportunity to pray during the day and it can companion them in their search for God. For some, RE may simply be a lesson about a historical event 2000 years ago, because as we know, faith is a gift. For others, RE may mean more than that. However, ▷▷

▷▷ all, more than anywhere else, I believe RE should be a time where students experience profound respect for who they are and where they stand in their faith development and life journey.

Retreats

Retreat times are very important. On retreat we need people who can come in and meet the young people where they are at – especially through the liturgies. I really believe the students are deeply spiritual.

I am passionate about good liturgy, because it is so important for the young to experience the sacred. Good liturgies bring it out and they feel it. We have liturgies for the whole school on special feasts – like the Assumption of Mary, Ash Wednesday and Easter. We make the liturgies creative when that is called for. We use music a lot. For instance on Holy Thursday we sang a song about Jesus on the Cross – but it asks what it means for us in our lives today.

In our school leaving liturgy last year, we explored the experiences of the Year 13 students during their final year at school and reflected on them. I think it helped them to ‘leave well’. That is what good liturgy is about. When kids say that liturgies are ‘boring’, what they are saying is that it isn’t achieving for them what it is meant to achieve. It is not resonating with their experience.

I try to listen to the students: what language, for instance, they respond to and what turns them off. Sometimes, old church language turns them off: some of the old prayers have no

meaning for them. But if the prayer is reworded for them, then the meaning of the prayer will get through. Similarly, Scripture has to be broken open for them. Someone may ask: “Did Jesus really rebuke people?” You then have to show them how he challenges us by what he says.

The young often struggle to articulate their beliefs. So RE is helping them discover a language. It is giving them the tools to be able to express their beliefs. Sometimes I will take my class into the chapel, play them a piece of music or read them a piece of Scripture. Then we sit in silence, and if they want to share a prayer out loud, some of them will. I do this at every level I teach. I find it works well here at St Peter’s.

As a teacher I may be ‘over’ them – but really I am companioning them in their search for God. The boundaries consist in the respect they need for themselves, for each other and for me. The students here are loyal to each other, and you can trust them. This is something I really value about St Peter’s College, and it is one of the reasons I love teaching here.

Religious Life

I was impressed by much of what the Dominican priest Timothy Radcliffe said to us in Wellington at Christmas about religious life. For instance, he said the young are like hounds chasing the fox. When they catch the scent, they will go after it until they find it. My family are quite religious, and basically they are very loving people. They have a spirituality, although they

were not rigid in their observance. The seeds of a vocation were sown for me through their love.

Now I have joined the Josephites, I feel I belong. I may be a lot younger than most of them, but there is also an enrichment when you are in the company of older women. In a High School too there is a very diverse community. But I also need to spend some time with my own age group, and sometimes I meet up with people of my own age, sometimes other teachers.

Community

Hospitality is crucial to religious life. Getting vocations was not the goal of the Josephite *Manaaki* community. We had community meetings and prayer together every morning. A prayer group met each Friday. We also celebrated Eucharist in the house every few weeks. People learned to be open and to share their spirituality. In a sense we are also doing this here in Gore. In this house people come and go all the time!

When I was first at Manaaki – just for a three weeks’ stay – it was great because I could experience community life without feeling that I suddenly had to make a commitment or decision about a vocation in religious life. I was free to go whenever I wanted, and it worked vice-versa for the Sisters too.

For me, religious life is becoming my *turangawaewae*, my ‘standing place’. It is where I stand as a woman of faith alongside other women who are strong in faith, loyalty and compassion. The most important aspect of religious life for me at this time is knowing that we (the Sisters) share life together and are bonded together not because we think the same, or are the same age, or have the same personalities, but because we share a vision and are giving our lives together for the mission of the church, which is the will of God.

In the future, or today, I do hope that more young people respond to the call of religious life with generosity and love for the Mission of the church, the will of God. ■



Taking the plunge

Paul Andrews tells a couple of vocation stories

The Price of an Engine

In the 1950s there was a Franciscan boarding school in Multyfarnham, beside Lough Derravaragh in County Westmeath. It wasn't expensive as boarding schools go: fees were about £70 a year. These days it would hardly buy you a night's foodless lodging in a city hotel. Still it was a lot of money for a Dublin family of six children, where the father was an invalid. Malachy was

the youngest. When he was ready for secondary, the most expensive years were over, so they scrambled the money together and sent him off to Multyfarnham, to his great delight. He liked it from the start, liked the lads from all over the country, liked the friars and other teachers, and loved being in the country.

One warm and windy St Patrick's Day in his last year, Malachy and two friends were out walking while the rest of the school were listening to a match on the radio. They found the friars' boat at the lakeside, fitted with a brand new 6-horse-power Evinrude engine on the stern. There was nobody around, so they hopped in, started the engine, and went buzzing out to the middle of the lake. The engine was sweet, the sun was shining on the waves, and life was glorious. Suddenly there was a choking sound, then silence. The engine had not been properly secured, and had fallen off into the middle of the lake. This was before the days of scuba divers. The precious Evinrude was lost, down in the mud in deep water.

The catastrophe was so overwhelming that for a few min-



utes they could not think. Malachy knew that the cost of the engine would be as much as two years' fees. He could not see what he or his family could do to compensate for it. But he had to face it. They rowed back to shore and that evening he went up to the Vice-Rector, Father Ailbe, told him the story, and waited for the worst.

So there were three of you out in the middle of the waves, on a windy day! Did you not think about safety? What would we have said to your parents if anything had happened to you? This is beyond my powers. Go up and tell the Rector.

Still quaking with anxiety Malachy told his story to the top man, and heard the same reaction. It took some time before he appreciated what had happened. Neither man had mentioned the engine. Neither talked about paying for it. Neither man reported the incident to the boys' parents. But both had been really concerned over the danger the boys had been in.

As
These
about
that

relief took over, Malachy reflected: *people really do not make a fuss about property or money. It is people matter to them.* So he became a Franciscan, and today in middle age

A jubilee reflection

With sixty Jesuit years under my own belt, I sometimes have to answer questions about vocation. I was so young in 1944, but of course I thought I knew what I was doing. I had seen Jesuits at work, in a school marked by high standards in both studies and sport, by the respect that teachers had for the boys and boys for one another, and by a sense that the staff enjoyed teaching us.

On one occasion, when I had to collect something from the room of a Jesuit, I was struck by how functional the room looked, bare of any luxury. While I was a pupil there, it never occurred to me that I would ever join them. But the memory remained fresh and warm, and years later it was part of what prodded me to this decision.

Once I entered the noviciate, a sort of pious rhetoric took over. We talked

of taking vows, of the profession as an offering of one's life. It was easy to idealise. The many happy weddings I have witnessed share the same atmosphere. The commitment of marriage, like that of religious vows, is a solemn and free act that touches us as deeply as any act can. This gift, of all that we are and may become, suggests the image of a silver chalice, filled with all that is precious. Alas, it does not work that way. All of us who live by





Abandon all roads

Diane Pendola

When Moses crossed the Red Sea he made a leap of faith. Here, the poet challenges us today to make that same leap of faith

Once upon a time there was a poet who found herself walking upon a country road. The road rose and fell with the gentle terrain of the surrounding land. It was the first day of summer and the grasses were wild and moving down and up the hillsides as though a living breath parted the way before them.

There were groves of oak trees contrasting their branching canopies of dark leaves against the fields of green light. Quilts formed of small white wildflowers with crossed purple hearts, golden-petaled poppies and extravagant lupins lay tossed about like patchwork blankets. Marching up spring-fed canyons, where in winter the water swells and falls in torrents, pine trees ascended to the ridges where they spread out in evergreen grandeur against the swept horizon.

The poet stopped at the crest of a hill overlooking all this lushness. She looked out over the land and found herself wanting to leave the road, to enter the land more intimately. And as she looked, and as her heart longed towards the Ponderosa Pines, her mind began to form something that was not quite a thought, not quite an image, but akin to a marriage of the two.

“That line of pines...”, she mused, “is the first line of the poem...”. Not that she had been thinking of a poem. In fact, she had not been thinking at all. Rather, it was a ‘beingness’ that came over her, a sense that the Pines and the Poem and Herself were all one continuum of being, sharing an identity even in diversity. “The first line of the poem is the line of Pines. The body of the poem is the land. The body of the land is the poem.” The image of trees and land and poem began to coalesce in her body as the words began to form in her mind.

But suddenly she was no longer on the crest of the hill overlooking the beautiful countryside. Instead she had lost herself on a dark road, inside of a gate, posted with a sign that read ‘KEEP OUT’ and another that said ‘PRIVATE PROPERTY’. She had passed through the gate and was standing on someone else’s ground. She had believed this to be the access road to the line of pines, to the first line of the poem. But this road felt guarded and uninviting.

She stopped in her tracks. What stopped her? She had no permission slip, no identification papers, no right of passage, no authorisation to be here on someone else’s property. Did fear of being caught stop her? Fear of punishment? Fear of



vows, whether in marriage or religion, know that a goblet of precious wine is an inadequate image for a personal commitment. Our lives and relationships are inevitably a mixed drink, bitter-sweet. As we look back over ten – or 30 or 60 years we can see what a mixture it was, at once richer and more painful than when we took our vows. Only a jubilee shows what a complicated and unexpected mixture

is there. The God we serve is a God of surprises, and as we look back, it becomes clear that it is God’s plans, not ours, that counted. He does not call us to help him out of a jam. He calls us because he loves us.

We will celebrate the jubilee, a small gathering of those who entered the Jesuits with me 60 years ago. One is too sick to come back from Africa.

Two have died as Jesuits, and two after leaving us. In spite of hugely diverse life-stories, we are linked by a sense of vocation which is at least as strong as that in most marriages. As Edith Piaf famously sang: *Je ne regrette rien*. ■

Irish Jesuit priest, Paul Andrews, spent four months in New Zealand early in the year

confrontation with the unseen guardian of the gate? Or was the fear inside of her? Fear of the unknown? Fear of what lay ahead? Or was it fear at all?

How was it she had come to be on this dark forbidding road, full of rules, of caveats and the contrivances of proprietorship? Who was this controlling access to the land that called her, the poem that lay like a lifeline of trees whose roots bore down into her very core?

Maybe it was neither fear nor doubt nor her inadequacy that stopped her. Maybe it was the land itself. Maybe it was the trees calling. Maybe it was her knowing that this was the wrong road. If this were the only access road to the Love that called her, maybe she should abandon all roads. She turned inward toward her love, and the trees called and they said:

Come to us. Come on your own two feet, on your own strong legs. Come cross-country, without roads, without trails, Come. We will be your signposts, your lodestars. Keep your eye on us and you will find your way. Do not be afraid. Come. The Poem and the Pines say, come. The Land says, come. Do not be afraid, just Come.

Then the poet left the road. She left the private road with the 'KEEP OUT' sign. And she left the public road that so many travel to this day. She followed the call of the trees. She disappeared into the land.

If you happen to be travelling one of these roads,
 if you listen carefully,
 if you become very still inside,
 and for a moment rest in a continuum of being
 where poem and pine and person meet,
 Just there
 you might hear her voice rise to greet you
 like a living breath
 parting the green grasses
 of your own red sea.

Speaking of a red sea, do you remember the story of Exodus: the story of Moses leading the people of Israel out of the oppression and slavery of Egypt? After their escape, when the Israelites found themselves cornered by Pharaoh's army on the banks of the Red Sea, they asked Moses, Were there no graves in Egypt that you must lead us out to die in the wilderness? What good have you done us, bringing us out of Egypt? We spoke of this in Egypt, did we not? "Leave us alone", we said, "we would rather work for the Egyptians!" Better to work for the Egyptians than die in the wilderness.

They had no idea the seas would part for them, that they would make the crossing safely. They were afraid. And so are we afraid. I feel that in our time and across our

planet, we are facing a similar moment of truth. Whatever the institutional framework we work within, whether it be government, education, healthcare, agriculture, religion, even the arts, we find ourselves at the threshold of transformational change that necessitates a leap of faith, a leap into the unknown.

Acquiescence to the oppressive status quo may give us a sense of security, but it is erosive to our souls whose true territory is freedom, not safety. Yet safety is a temptation: better to work for the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. The people made this response to Moses out of their fear, their lack of vision and imagination, their lack of faith. Who are the Egyptians in our own time, our own age? With whom have we made the Machiavellian trade?

Moses responded saying, "Have no fear". This fearlessness is always being asked of us if we are to become more than we already are – more loving, more compassionate, more fully human. We are always being asked to enter the unknown with no guarantee that any sea will part for us. And yet if we continue on this side of the known, let us at least recognise the road we are travelling: the road of vanishing species and overpopulation, the road that widens the gap between rich and poor, the road that diminishes the planet and threatens life itself.

How do we find the courage to re-imagine ways of being human? How do we honour our common roots in the earth? How do we reverence the divine breath that unites us as relatives to all life forms? The leap of faith is a leap into that living breath that encourages us to have no fear. It invites us to abandon all roads, for the new creative path our own hearts long to beat upon the untrodden earth.

For me, that leap is into the land and the woods and the community of life, both human and other-than-human, where I live. It is an entrance into the world of the Ponderosa Pine and the Incense Cedar, the mountain lion screaming from the rocky northeast ridge at dawn and the rattlesnake riveting my attention into the immediate present at noon. It is the risk of relationship with the wilderness we have feared. It is the corresponding surrender to love, which that relationship requires. And it is love that leads to the death of what separates us, into the new life of what unites us.

It speaks through me in a poetry that the universe may not abide, but which the Universe celebrates. It is a leap into humility, the roots of the word itself deriving from the Latin, humus, meaning ground, soil, that rich mixture of organic matter from which all life has been fashioned. It means remembering who I am, made from this earth. It means being faithful to that from which I came, trusting that the living breath that breathed life into this mortal frame will part the red seas before me – if only I have courage enough to set off upon the journey. ■

Printed permission Diane Pendola: medushiim@cs.com

Love on Mars

It was explained to me
patiently
by a very clever theologian
that all life
is an expression of love,
so it came as no surprise to me
to read
on The Daily PlaNet
that after 16 million years of celibate night
a rock
finally reached
the White Monastery of the Southern Cross
(that minds the great library
of the southern polarity)
with a cryptic, carbonic message
telling all with ears to hear
– and spectrometers to believe –
that there is indeed
love on Mars.

Stephen Liddle

Blood Red

My heart beats life-giving blood
My skin is white or pink maybe
It has pores and little hairs
And stretches across all my body
My thumbprint is mine alone
I wonder if anyone shares my print
Who knows, a brother or sister somewhere
In a country far away may be, my thumb print double

My heart beats and beats sending blood to my body
My skin is different in colour from yours
But that is all
My voice utters sounds as does yours
My arms work and carry and hug
My fingers are able to weave and write
My legs have ankles knees and joints
As do yours

Your heart beats and beats as mine does
In tune with life
My mind thinks and learns and questions
Your mind thinks and learns and questions too
You have a family
You belong to someone you are special
Your mother and father love you

Your heart beats and bleeds
For we share the colour of blood
We are blood brothers and sisters
We cry we bleed we laugh we hurt
A thin tissue separates us
But under this we shine and share
Our blood with each other
Our colour is red.

Barbara Wilson

THE GARDEN OF EDEN,
a MYTH
for our TIME
for Tomorrow, the
children of Adam might
wonder only, at the
Innocence of the
Apple

Joanna Paul

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Reflecting on Mark

Susan Smith

M*att 22:15* introduces another conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees who “went and plotted to entrap him in what he said”. It seems they succeeded in antagonizing Jesus because *Matt 23* is devoted to Jesus’ harsh denunciation of the Pharisees and scribes. Jesus condemns the Pharisees as “hypocrites, blind guides, full of greed and self-indulgence, a brood of vipers” – strong language that seems to have paved the way for Christian persecution of the Jewish community down through the centuries. Such texts have been influential in encouraging anti-Semitism, and have led to extravagant statements about the perfidy of the Jews. For example, 19th century German nun, Blessed Anna Emmerick, had several visions regarding the Jewish people that led her to claim that “pity was indeed a feeling unknown in their cruel breasts”. Her visions were collected in book form under the title of *Dolorous Passion of Anna Emmerick*, a work that influenced Mel Gibson’s film version of the Passion and led to accusations of anti-Semitism being leveled against him. (It is possible, though not recommended, to buy the book on Google along with a free copy of Gibson’s *Passion*!!)

What are we to make of *Matt 23*? Vatican II teaches that the gospel writers “explicated some things in view of the situation of their churches” (*Dei Verbum* #19). Scholarly research suggests that Matthew’s community was initially composed of converts from Judaism, and that these Jewish

Christians understood Jesus as the one who fulfilled the Law. This brought them into conflict with those Jews who thought that the Law of Moses needed explaining and interpreting, but not fulfilling.

There is evidence that these two groups – Jewish Christians and Jews who thought the Law of Moses was sufficient to bring about the salvation of Israel – were often and not surprisingly in conflict. Around the mid 80s this conflict was resolved by a definitive split between Matthew’s community who now included Jewish and Gentile Christians and rabbinic Jews.

Back to *Matt 23*. Certainly Jesus encountered opposition from some Pharisees and scribes in his ministry. As he makes it clear in 23:36 he is referring to “this generation,” not

to all subsequent generations. More importantly, the text points to the tension that existed between the followers of Jesus and the followers of the rabbis after the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 AD. Jesus’ words are not intended as a blanket condemnation of Jews for all time.

Finally, such a strong attack on the Jewish leadership probably has much to do with how Matthew thought leaders in the Christian community should live and act. They were to be the reverse of the negative portrayal of leadership found in *Matt 23*. This is a text that contemporary leadership ignores at its peril. ■

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

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Celebrating the peacemakers of Aotearoa

Breath of Peace, Tau te Mauri

Winner of the 2004 Sonja Davies Peace Award

Review: Eileen Shewan

Kathleen Gallagher has created a touchstone of hope for the future in this land and beyond with her film *Breath of Peace, Tau Te Mauri*. Sprinkled with moments of humour, this film celebrates humanity and honours the intrinsic human desire to live peacefully. Featuring eight committed peacemakers in Aotearoa New Zealand, Ms Gallagher pays tribute to the integrity and bravery of those who challenge the prevalent concept that war is an acceptable aspect of society.

Their stories represent a strong tradition of pacifism in this land. Taranaki Rangatira, Te Whiti O Rongomai, and the community at Parihaka set the benchmark for staunchly non-violent resistance to colonial military power in the 1880s. Since that time peacemakers here, as elsewhere, have continued to vehemently proclaim their abhorrence of violence and war through numerous innovative protest actions.

As each peacemaker's story of participation in non-violent protest and active resistance to militarism unfolds, viewers begin to perceive the tapestry of the global peace movement. From the personal insights and experiences of these eight people we glean a collective vision of peace as a tangible goal – a real possibility for the world today. Beautifully crafted scenes of the ocean, exquisitely interwoven with the narrative sequences, remind us of its life force.

Wonderful imagery of wildlife evokes a sense of awe in viewers and alerts us to the vulnerability of all life. Kotuku/heron, aihe/dolphin, toroa/albatross and tohora/whale, which is recognised as kaitiaki connecting the tangata whenua of Aotearoa with indigenous peoples everywhere, become symbols of peace. Our appreciation of the spiritual dimension of the peace initiative is further heightened by the overlay of waiata. In contrast, the personal experiences of those who suffer the stark realities of the horrific devastation wrought by nuclear weapons present a bleak situation indeed.

As we glimpse the shared holistic vision of humanity, deep conviction, and collective wisdom held by these peacemakers, we are presented with an alternative worldview attainable through collective action. Although some actions may seem beyond the realm of many, the range of practical, direct actions portrayed here fall within the scope of everyone. Writing to newspapers, networking, street leaflet drops, riding surfboards as part of a flotilla, and taking part in protest marches are the basic activities of peacemaking.



Producer Kathleen Gallagher (left) and one of the eight contributors, Dr Kate Dewes, at the Dunedin launch of *Breath of Peace*, on 21 September.

From the protest actions of World War 2 conscientious objectors to those who symbolically dismantled a B52 bomber in 1990, from peace flotilla protests against nuclear warships in the 1980s to the 1996 World Court Project to declare nuclear weapons illegal, this film provides a record of the inspirational strong thread of peacemaking based in this land. In so skilfully combining artistic qualities and political action, Ms Gallagher has produced a fitting accolade to the human endeavour of peacemakers in Aotearoa New Zealand and a treasure for future generations. ■

Eileen Shewan, of Otautahi/Christchurch is a former active supporter of the Peace Movement and currently a member of Network Waitangi Otautahi

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The redemption of a paedophile

The Woodsman

Review: Paul Sorrell

Hooray for Hollywood. When the editor asked me to review this American film about a paedophile newly released from prison, I expected the usual sentimentalized issue-of-the-month kind of movie. Far from it. *The Woodsman* is a surprising, nuanced, intelligent film that avoids manipulating our superficial emotions while stirring deeper feelings of understanding and even compassion.

The film, beautifully crafted by first-time director Nicole Kassell, is based on the play of the same name by Stephen Fechter. Walter (played by the ubiquitous Kevin Bacon) has been released into an inner-city suburb after spending a 12-year stretch in prison for molesting pre-pubescent girls. His room looks out on an elementary school playground (a dramatic device

rather than a logical one), a situation which does nothing to turn him away from the urgings that still torment him.

The story of Walter's struggle to rehabilitate himself is told through his encounters with a range of characters, some sympathetic and even loving, others openly hostile. Determined to become 'normal', Walter gets a job in a timber factory and, when one of his co-workers – Vickie (Kyra Sedgwick), a young woman brimming with mature female sexuality – befriends him without judging, he accepts her as his girlfriend. But the road is not easy for Walter, and his discordant internal life is compounded by conflict with his family, communication difficulties with his appointed counsellor, police harassment and animosity from his workmates.

The setting of the movie is appropriately sombre and subdued, played out in a gloomy blue-collar

world of rooming houses, pick-up trucks and pool parlours. The dialogue is a real strength of the film – sharp, intelligent and understated – and the camerawork effectively underscores the themes of the film, offering us numerous close-ups of a pale, delicate-looking Walter registering sorrow, confusion and occasionally even a suggestion of pleasure.

The film's title refers to the story of Little Red Ridinghood, and the woodsman's heroic act in killing the wolf and allowing the little girl it had devoured to step out unharmed. Walter's commitment to "kill the paedophile within" takes some dramatic turns as the film advances, and his personal journey holds the story together and offers a fragile hope for his future. The turning-point of his inner journey, involving an encounter with an 11-year-old girl whom he riskily befriends, is almost unbearably intense and shocking.

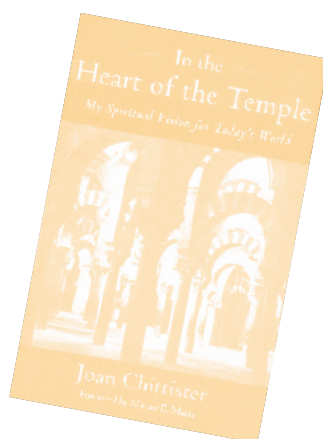
While confronting us with the horror of child-abuse and the destructive effects of one man's compulsions, *The Woodsman* nevertheless holds out real possibilities for redemption. ■

Joan Chittister

In the Heart of the Temple

A collection of her most powerful, influential and celebrated writings. The author considers these to be her spiritual vision for today's world. 158pp.

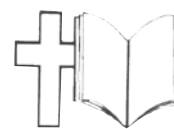
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The Maori party destined to call the tune

Practical Politics consists in ignoring Facts
– Henry Adams

We're going to bring the Maori people's voice to Parliament" said the newly elected Pita Sharples on election night. It was said in triumph. We can but hope for Maori that this pronouncement will not bear too much influence on the necessity for cool heads. Barring any change to the balance of the parties after counting over 200,000 special votes (on which this column is predicated), the ability to negotiate wisely will be vital.

The Maori party's win of four seats was phenomenal. In an election where the distinct swing was to the right, it is even more astonishing when one considers that Don Brash's Orewa speech fiercely criticised the "Treaty Industry" and promised to abolish the Maori seats. His popularity in the polls, based on race relations, rose from that moment and continued to rise throughout the campaign.

It is worth noting that all the minor parties lost considerable support, the votes going to National, both in the Party vote and in the electorate vote, except for the Maori vote. For Maori, the vote was focused and unequivocal. The party vote went to Labour and the electorate vote resulted in a new force in parliament, the four Maori Party members.

Maori have sacked John Tamihere and punished two under-performing sitting members Parekura Horomia and Dover Samuels. Maori have echoed George W Bush's triumphal message, "I have made political capital here and I intend to spend it". The foreshore and seabed issue is back on the table. Orewa, as well as Labour's inept handling of Maori affairs has divided the country. Ironically, the Maori Party, without a wise and patient approach in a coalition with Labour, could do the same.

Crosscurrents

John Honoré

It would be hypocritical for either Don Brash or Tariana Turia to suggest that together they could form the nucleus of a coalition. Their ideologies are diametrically opposed. Such a coalition would be the end of Maori aspirations to political power and would signal a snap election within twelve months. This would spell the end for both leaders.

The MMP system has added an anomaly to the result. Winston Peters, rejected in Tauranga as its representative, returns to Parliament to hold the balance of power. He was defeated by a candidate who seems to have more to say about his own masculinity than anything else. Perversely, Peters is still there although Tauranga does not want him and Clarkson, until now an embarrassment, gives the impression of being a political nonentity. Such is politics.

A Brain of Feathers and a Heart of Lead

For all the world to see, the sociological and political disaster wrought by Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast of America focused an unforgiving light on a deeply divided society. The Bush Administration's woeful response resulted in photo opportunities being hastily organised by the White House. Days later, there they were, George W Bush flying over New Orleans in a low-flying Air Force One, Condoleezza Rice putting a few oranges in a box for the starving, Rumsfeld looking concerned "on the ground" and Cheney saying help was on the way – from Halliburton of course.

In American politics image is everything but these pictures will come back to haunt the Administration. The increasing use of sanitised versions of reality is becoming so outrageous as

to become self-defeating. An example is Bush's infamous appearance in May 2003 on USS *Abraham Lincoln*, where he trumpeted, "Mission Accomplished!", referring to the war in Iraq. The photo opportunity was designed as propaganda to be used for his re-election.

The whole conceit of his Presidency, that of a war President invoking God to justify his leadership, is in tatters. Bush's tardy response to the hurricane, the abysmal mismanagement of the rescue operations and his indifference to or self-delusion concerning questions on the environment have fatally weakened America's image abroad. The most powerful nation on earth cannot care for its poor and homeless but can pretend to spread "freedom and democracy" with the most powerful army in history.

The army finally arrived in New Orleans, as did a Corps of Engineers, aid agencies and the inevitable looters, all bristling with guns. The armoury was there to protect, to threaten, to kill in accordance with the sacrosanct Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights which gives all Americans the inviolable right to bear arms.

It is difficult not to juxtapose these images with the identity of America as a nation constantly at war. Pictures of marines belatedly rumbling to the rescue on huge war machines and carrying firearms seemed to supersede the horror of corpses and the total devastation. The impression was that people in New Orleans reached for their guns as a natural response to a natural disaster. And those who had neither guns nor cars, perished. The offers of aid demonstrated the world's deep concern for the people of Louisiana. That same concern must also be extended to all Americans, as they try to cope with an Administration which has lost the ideals of a just and caring society. ■

In all things charity

There is a right and a wrong way to disagree in the church.

A Melbourne parishioner took it on himself to tax his parish priest with what he construed as serious departures by the priest from the prescribed rituals of the Eucharist. He would attend Sunday Mass with his clipboard, note down what he considered as departures from the rubrics and confront the priest after the celebration with a list of his supposed shortcomings. Eventually the parish priest had a breakdown and had to go on sick leave.

On his return to duty, to protect the parish priest the Archbishop of Melbourne allowed the self-righteous parishioner to attend Sunday Mass in the parish – but without writing material. And he was in no way nor at any time to confront the priest about how he celebrated Eucharist.

I wrote several months ago in *Tui Motu* expressing the view that we should not look on the importation of foreign priests as the path to follow to solve the ever-increasing shortage of celebrants of the Eucharist. So many of them do not fit into our culture. Fr John Bland IC

wrote to *Tui Motu* disagreeing – but with moderation and courtesy. I have not changed my basic stance, but I certainly learnt from what he wrote.

Bishop John Crowley, of Middlesborough diocese in England in a recent article in *The Tablet* on the issue of ordination of married men, had this to say. “Rancour can too quickly infiltrate what would otherwise be good, healthy, horizon-widening discussions within the church on important issues.

“Just this weekend a colleague, recently on the receiving end of some vituperative and astonishingly personal letters, called me on the phone to say, ‘our Catholic community, at its best, is second to none in its breadth of vision and generosity, but at its worst...’ That art of being able to disagree with one another, vigorously if necessary, but always with courtesy and grace, is one we need to cultivate more attentively within our contemporary Church.” The reception of “vituperative and astonishingly personal letters” is not an experience limited to the United Kingdom, though fortunately in my case a limited experience.

I have just returned from attending a Colloquium held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the diocese of Palmerston North. The topic was *Creed and credibility in a critical age*. Many sensitive issues came up: the legitimacy or otherwise of contraception, the assertion that our church is very much a male-dominated one, the unwillingness of Roman authorities to discuss the ordination of married men, much less of women.

A great many views and positions were expressed, many of them in direct opposition to others. No one could have been in agreement with all that they heard. But I cannot recall even one occasion during the four days of the gathering when a voice was raised in bitter and angry confrontation of another participant’s contribution.

The colloquium brought together Australians and North Americans as well as Kiwis. We cannot take all the credit to ourselves. But I believe it was an admirable example of the “good, healthy, horizon-widening discussion” of which Bishop Crowley spoke. Full marks to Bishop Peter Cullinane, our host also celebrating his jubilee, and to all who took part. ■

Humphrey O’Leary

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

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Whatever happened to humility?

Ron O'Grady

Watching a game of rugby can teach you a great deal about Christianity. I was watching a one-sided game of rugby on television one recent Saturday afternoon, and at the end there was the usual interview with the captain and the man of the match to get their comments. You will already know what they said because you have heard the same thing after every match you have recently seen. Rugby players are not known for their brilliant conversational skills so the script goes something like this:

To the captain: "Great game Steve you beat them by 60 points was it too easy?"

Captain: It was hard game mate. Full credit to the other team. They have some good young players. Our boys did well to hold them.

To the man of the match Five tries eh! That's a record. You must be pretty stoked.

Man of the match: The whole team played well today mate. I was just lucky to be at the end of the line.

That was it. I went upstairs to write a sermon. The sermon was to be based on *Philippians 2*, that great passage in which Paul speaks of Christ's humility. In most versions of the Bible this section is headed by titles such as: *Christ's Humility and Greatness* (Good News), *Imitating Christ's Humility* (NSV). Then I looked at the Jerusalem Bible and sat there transfixed. The heading for the section reads: *Preserve Unity in Humility*. It was a moment of revelation.

I thought immediately of the football. Obviously a rugby team will only be successful if every one of the players is committed to complete and total unity. The many psychologists and social engineers who manage major teams these days are fully aware of the importance of 15 men working together as a single unit. It is for this reason they instil a sense of humility into every player.

No player is allowed to be a prima donna or an individualist. Even the rugby greats like Jonah Lomu and Sean Fitzpatrick ooze humility. When interviewers praise them to excess they shuffle uncomfortably. They have been infused with a culture of humility.

In the past we have also talked *ad nauseum* about the importance of the unity of the church. We know that unity is an important requisite of genuine Christian

belief. Christ left no doubt about that – but the lesson of the rugby field is that we have forgotten that the way to create and preserve unity is humility. And that is what *Philippians 2* is saying so bluntly.

"There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead." (*Philippians 2:3,4*).

Look no further for the sad state of church unity today. The church has absorbed the cultural philosophy of 'me-first'; self-affirmation good, self-effacement foolish; our denomination is still better than yours. And our tolerance of differences is very slight indeed. Whatever happened to humility?

The instruction to the *Philippians* that "everybody is to be self-effacing" sounds hollow when you visit many of the 'successful' churches and watch evangelists on television. The arrogance with which we put forward our particular version of Christianity and the ease with which we dismiss those with different views gives little hope that the church will one day fill Christ's prayer for unity.

Humility seems often to be dismissed as a weak virtue. The last refuge of wimps who cannot take a strong stand. But in fact humility is itself the strongest of all virtues. As *Philippians 2* goes on to say, it was humility which enabled Christ to accept the ugliness of death on the cross. To follow Christ is to have the courage and strength to accept the consequences of humility. In the process we will discover what unity can be.

One last postscript about the lessons of rugby. Have you noticed that whenever the New Zealand rugby sevens team completes a series of games the whole team forms a circle and kneel down in the field to pray? They have a short prayer of thanksgiving to God and it happens whether they win or lose. It is a beautiful symbol to see powerful men with bulging muscles kneeling in an act of humility.

Perhaps this new approach to rugby is one of the contributions which Polynesian players have brought to the game. If so, it is yet one more reason to be thankful for the contribution other cultures are making to our Aotearoa New Zealand ethos. ■

(Ron O'Grady is an associate minister at the Onehunga Cooperating Parish, Auckland.)