

Tui Motu

InterIslands

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deep wounds healed by love

lent

Paul Oestricher's remarkable tale of 'deep wounds healed by love' places reconciliation clearly before us as Lent begins. Reconciliation can work on so many levels. To name a few, with friends or relatives who are estranged from us; countries, or groups within them, that find it difficult to communicate (think of the Orange and the Green in Ireland, or the India-Pakistan standoff over Kashmir); or those things locked up inside ourselves that we find tough to move; and so many more! How are we reconciled? Jesus calls it metanoia: being turned around.

I have the strong image of someone tapping me on the shoulder, turning me around and giving me a huge hug. Schmalz? On the contrary, unexpected love can sear us; it can certainly bring newness of heart. The question is: will we allow ourselves to be turned around? At the least we can prepare the path. Reconciliation requires us to work and think differently. This is the plea of Andrew Dakers' article – an effort to see things anew. What do you see? What can you change?

May our prayer, fasting and

almsgiving this Lent help all of us to see more clearly.

tumult and creativity in the Arab world

Rob Ritchies' article on 'The Last Taboo' raises, as well, the tumult of recent events in the Arab world. Bahrain has exploded in blood, and it seems Libya may also react in this way. Small demonstrations have begun in the traditionally quiet Kingdom of Morocco, and continue in many other Arab countries. We watch, wait, and pray for these people and for a just and peaceful outcome to their efforts: another good Lenten discipline.

What took place in Egypt was amazing. It occurred entirely from within, at the initiative of the Egyptian people, and without serious structural violence. I am wondering how far the Ghandian principles of non-violence, and techniques built upon them, were in the minds and hearts of those involved. Clearly, hard-to-control Information-technology (IT) structures, through internet and its burgeoning offshoots, were used in a creative way.

The calling of the people to express their will by rallying in public spaces

like Tahrir square, was swift and effective. It is hard for an army to manoeuvre crowds in their hundreds of thousands. This path was new, and creative use of IT will be mimicked in other countries as they seek to find innovative ways of empowering people to participate effectively in change.

non-violent revolution

The revolution affected the whole of Egyptian society, ranging across the army, police, the professions, to the ordinary men and women in city and town, those who have been completely without political clout – until now.

Professor Joseph Camilleri calls this 'one of the great nonviolent revolutions of the last 100 or more years'. (visit www.onlineopinion.com.au and search for "Camilleri Egypt"). He highlights the fact that it was not so much Mubarak's eventual downfall that is important. He says that the moral potency of the nonviolent change was such that those countries in the west (and Israel) who were the former President's supporters could do nothing to stop what happened. In fact the US, a consistent supporter

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front cover illustration by Donald Moorhead

of the Mubarak regime, was forced to give the people its unreserved support.

the future

The next phase in Egypt will focus on the relationship and struggle between the rich and the poor, and how far those who are without power will be enabled to flex their new-found political muscle – before the elites, especially the army, regroup to impose their already potent economic will upon the people. Ordinary folk will want an end to obvious economic inequalities, the trade and investment which continues to favour the rich and disadvantage the poor, an

end to corruption and terrible poverty.

It is to be hoped that in the August elections and through the political parties that will hurriedly arise, they are able to turn around some of these disadvantages. Otherwise, their successful non-violent revolution will become a hollow victory.

STOP PRESS

The horror of the 6.3 “after-shock” earthquake in Christchurch is numbing. Expressions of concern and material support for the ongoing welfare of the people of Christchurch have flowed in from overseas, as well as at home.

Stories of bravery and remarkable neighbourliness abound. That trapped people are still being taken alive from the rubble a day after this tragedy buoys our hearts.

Our prayerful condolences go the families of those who have been killed. Our prayerful concern, as well, goes out to the injured and their families, and all whose homes have been devastated, to the extent even of being homeless.

As Mary Woods said in her guest editorial last month, “God is still with [you], waiting.” We are, too – to help in every possible way.

K.T.

from the chair

Wonderful things happen because of *Tui Motu*. I know you are not surprised!

In Whanganui at Mt St. Joseph's retreat centre and in Johnsonville, people are coming together each month in faith sharing groups to discuss and pray about one or more articles that have appeared in that month's edition of *Tui Motu*.

Sr Margaret Butler, who is involved in Johnsonville, says that their group began almost spontaneously as a result of hearing about the Whanganui group. Now eight people meet regularly in one home, and their enthusiasm for meeting and discussing is

contagious. There is talk of a second *Tui Motu* group beginning there.

Other parishes tell me that they often use an article from *Tui Motu* as part of a scripture group that meets regularly – because of its relevance to their task or simply to give variation to their study once in a while. And I am aware that teachers in schools, both primary and secondary, have found material from the magazine helpful at staff meetings or as a starter in a teacher reflection group.

In whatever way, I would encourage people to come together and discuss and pray from articles in *Tui Motu*. Those based on spirituality or around social justice are always easy starters, as they are gospel based. And it only takes the goodness of one person with a little time and energy to bring about a simple way in which we may continue to build the Kingdom of God.

Elizabeth Mackie OP (interim chair)



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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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Lefebvrist society

It is appalling that the Lefebvrist Society has publicly protested against Pope Benedict's proposed interfaith prayer meeting in Assisi (*London Tablet*, 22 Jan, 11).

Humanity is on the way to destroy its very own habitat and has failed to halt our steady progress towards disaster. Prayer is the final refuge in our quest for survival because of its power to transform hearts.

More than ever do we need unity, not division. Hans Kung, in reference to the Middle East, once declared that peace is not possible without prior understanding between the religions. Now that Christians have come closer to one another in their quest for unity we do not need divisive remarks which insult other faith communities by alleging that they are praying to false gods.

Does Bishop Bernard Fellay wish to incite another 30 years' war?

Frank Hoffman, Papkura (abridged)

the new text

After experiencing the new text of the Mass and reading the reasons proposed for it I have to speak out for the ordinary Mass going Catholic who suffers it in silence.

On reading the justifying arguments one feels that a straw man has been created to be knocked down. They speak of errors, over-simplifications, inconsistencies and ambiguities. Says who? Where is all this dissatisfaction coming from? Over the last 40 years I have heard nothing but praise for the former text.

As far back as I can remember, spiritual writers have been encouraging us to acquire an intimate relationship with God. Surely that relationship reaches its best expression in the Mass. Now to have to use these strange and awkward words and phrases undermines any attempt at intimacy.

The phrase 'greatly sinned' or the words 'consubstantial' or 'men' (instead of 'us all') obscure the meaning and leave people feeling estranged. Just take the word 'men'. Surely there is a feeling of exclusion here. Perhaps some obscure group of theologians can interpret it to include all mankind, but the ordinary person accepts it as meaning just what it says – 'men' denotes members of the male sex. It smacks of the long past historical attitude that prevailed when women were not being counted.

Another concern is to translate the Latin works directly from one language into another and still preserve the meaning – so why do they try? As Fr. Peter Janssen says we lose readability, clarity and idiomatic expressions.

It can only be regarded with regret that so much time and resources were poured into this venture by the Church when there are so many causes crying out for attention.

Tony Scott, Timaru

can the church reform itself?

I wish to offer a response to Robert Consedine (Feb, 11).

Amen, brother. I came through the uplifting expressions of renewal that flowered in the 70s and 80s following the second Vatican Council. I am still hanging in despite what I see as the "powers" that be try to undo all that promise. I am tempted to suggest that Jesus must be turning in his grave at the nonsense that is going on.

Please let me offer a little whimsy that keeps me sane in these troubled times. As I travel through time and experiences I have gradually formed some opinions. About 30 years ago I came to suspect that the Holy Spirit had withdrawn her support for the clerical model as espoused by Rome. I also concluded that, short of an atomic device on Rome, there was little hope

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not changing the meaning. Response articles (up to a page) are welcome –but please, by negotiation.

for the RC church in its current form.

There were many happenings within the church that made me uneasy. The most distressing was the activities of that great grandstander JP2, rushing around the world kissing tarmacs, sandbagging the gullible, while he appointed bishop after bishop from the ranks of the anti-change brigade.

Perhaps, I thought, God has a sense of humour. How's this as a possible example? Rome needs nuking, so God obliges. How? When? Remember what happened when the great peace loving people of the United States wanted to deal to Japan. They used nukes, namely: "Fat Boy" and "Little Boy".

God is a quick learner. He called his weapons JP2 and B16. They were/are pretty effective in facilitating the destruction of the Roman church. Have a look around your church on Sunday. What is the average age of parishioners and clerics? And no, I do not blame the spirit of Vat2 for the exodus that followed that event. Many members had been there because of fear. Once the fear was downplayed and love was emphasised, those who found making the decision to love too challenging, moved on. Others left because the Roman church refused to encourage the spirit of Vat2 when it challenged the leadership's unbridled power.

I trust in God completely. Something better will come from this. I also go along with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ (1881-1955) who said, "Above all, trust in the slow work of God".

Phil Wilkinson, Whanganui

gold in christchurch

Jim Consedine

I had a strong feeling that the International Paralympic Games in Christchurch in late January would be something special. Believe me, they were. The sight of more than 1,100 athletes with impaired faculties from 78 countries all around the world competing at the highest level takes some beating. All told, 57 world records were set in various events during the ten day festival.

What initially really struck me when I first saw the athletes competing was their absolute professionalism. This was no Saturday afternoon jaunt. That, coupled with the friendliness and openness of the competitors, made these Games a standout. It was a joy to be present.

To appreciate it fully, you needed to be there to see it all at first hand, to see the guides, carers and other helpers, to soak up the atmosphere. Watching blind athletes competing with guides is something really special. The runners, who train just as hard as able-bodied competitors, steam along next to guides at high speed (around 22 sec for the 200 metres). To see the long jumpers, whose guides lead them to the take-off marker and then go and call them from the landing pit, and the blind javelin throwers being called as a direction pointer, is amazing. A one-legged high jumper doing the fosby flop took my breath away.

Then there were the wheelchair athletes racing their carts at a crazy pace down the track and around the bends – amazing stuff. It seems you can do most things in a wheelchair. At one stage I watched the women's F38 long jump closely. This catered for athletes with impaired function through spasticity or involuntary movement. The skill gap and degree of physical impairment between competitors was marked. The winner jumped 4.8 metres, the main bunch around 3.5m. But they all stuck to

their task as if their lives depended on it, even though most had no hope of winning. I found it inspiring.

Early on Sunday morning, I stood outside my house to urge on the marathon competitors as they passed three times on a circuit of New Brighton streets. In particular, I recall three women flying along in Indian file in their wheelchairs, going nose-to-tail flat out. None had legs. And the blind runners with guides at their side, having to be guided past the various obstacles. A busy road has – including kerbs – potholes and loose gravel. Eventually back at QEII, the top seven placings in the T54 category (who use their trunks to steer and have double above-the-knee amputations) finished within two seconds of each other – with the three medal winners virtually triple-heating. All this after 42 kms. Stunning stuff!

There were competitors with no arms or both arms, no legs or both legs, blind or all seeing, palsied or otherwise disabled. It was all about competing, about being there, about participating. I presume they are mostly amateurs. It seemed like the traditional Olympics used to be before the money men arrived and turned them into a corporate free-for-all.

A major difference from other international events I've observed was the lack of overt nationalism. While countries of origin were proudly recognized and their anthems played at medal times, that nationalism which has become so much a part of the international sporting movement in the past 40 years appeared almost absent. People recognized each other for their sporting ability and their humanity. While the local print media (a major sponsor) gave it reasonable coverage, the TV people (except for SKY with some coverage) were noticeable by their almost complete absence. Each evening as I watched the sports news on national

TV, the Games were passed over in favour of pre-season training runs of rugby teams, more English soccer or the feats (or otherwise) of the Black Caps. I guess the paralympics weren't considered important enough.

Sadly, the people of Christchurch also failed to support the Games in numbers, despite the cheapness of the tickets. What a show they missed!

On the Friday of that week, we reflected at our morning Eucharist on Mark's gospel speaking of the seeds growing while no one was watching. I thought of the Games. 'The Kingdom of God just creeps up on you unheralded,' the priest explained in his homily. I thought, 'Yeah – right on.' These Games reflected something of the reign of God in our time. It was an insight for those with eyes to see. The spirit among competitors present, their openness to one another, the friendliness, the helpfulness of the officials, the tenderness of the carers, the sheer joy of being together, the fact that so many had struggled so hard to attend and compete, all reflected something of the presence of God's reign in our midst that day.

These were all people who had been dealt a major blow, either at birth or some later stage of their lives. All had had huge handicaps to overcome. Yet overcome them they had, to the point where they had arrived on the world stage to demonstrate what they could do. That had to be a major achievement in itself. Getting into the medals was a culminating effort for some – but most had already won more important medals before they ever arrived. Medals in determination, in self awareness, in courage – all great virtues which help make us truly human. Those of us lucky enough to see them were enhanced by the experience. They typified the very best of the human spirit. ■

no bounds to reconciliation

Canon Paul Oestricher reflects on how a most remarkable event of murder most foul was transformed into reconciliation most profound. "Deep wounds can be healed by love."

An East German Lutheran pastor with a brave record of resistance to many injustices retired to West Germany, to the village of Huchenfeld where his son lived. There he unearthed a story that the villagers did not want known. Soon after an air raid on Pforzheim, as devastating as Dresden's, a British reconnaissance Flying Fortress was hit by anti-aircraft fire. Its wing ablaze, the captain ordered his crew to bail out. His own parachute had jammed. He flew on, expecting to die but, surprisingly, the fire went out and he landed safely behind allied lines.

The nine who bailed out came down near the village of Huchenfeld on the edge of Pforzheim. Two, some distance from the others, were taken prisoner in an orderly way but as anger at the devastating British bombing of Pforzheim was running high, a local Nazi officer rounded seven of them up and locked them in the cellar of the village's town hall. The next morning he put pistols into the hands of members of the Hitler Youth, probably 15 or 16 years old, and drove the airmen through a jeering crowd into the village church-yard. Two, in the confusion, managed to escape into the forest and were later lawfully taken prisoner. Five were murdered.



Soon after the war the Nazi officer was tried by a British military court, sentenced to death and executed. Some 40 years later, Pastor Heinemann-Grüder had retired to the village and heard rumours of what had happened. He was determined not to let things rest until there had been a public acknowledgment of this lynching and a memorial placed to the victims. He faced a great deal of hostility but persevered. Knowing of Coventry's work for reconciliation with Germany, he invited me to the village to discuss all this with the mayor and with others. The village council was not willing to erect a memorial. It would be too upsetting. Those boys might still be around. Failing that, Heinemann-Grüder persuaded the church to act. A memorial plaque on the church wall would be solemnly unveiled, just feet from where the men were killed. This would follow a eucharist in the Church at which I was invited to preach.

Once this was agreed, the mayor was shamed into officially associating the

whole village with this act of penitence. *The Independent* and *The Mirror* cooperated in finding the widow of one of the murdered men. She was deeply moved and readily agreed to come to the ceremony. Other relatives were not found. The bodies of the murdered airmen had been buried by the British War Graves Commission not far away. The boys who had obeyed the order to kill were never held to account.

At the eucharist one man who came to receive communion was crying bitterly. I quietly tried to comfort him. His were not the only tears that day. But through his tears he managed to say to me: "I'm so ashamed, I was one of the boys who killed them." He had come for forgiveness, almost 50 years later.

After the service I shared this with Marjory Taylor, the widow of Flying Officer Harold Frost. She had come from England. Her immediate response was: "Find him. I'd so much like to put my arms around him and forgive him." We did not find him, nor did anyone



know him. He had gone quickly and evidently did not live locally.

All this was published in several British papers. On a sheep farm in North Wales, the aged surviving captain of the aircraft, Wing Cdr John Wynne, read the story. Until then he had never been told the fate of his crew. He was moved beyond measure, wrote to the mayor, asking what he could do to express his gratitude to the village. A new kindergarten was being planned. He agreed to come to its opening and brought as his gift a Welsh rocking-horse. The children queued to ride it. It was a wonderful village festival.

That led to the twinning of the villages of Huchenfeld and Llanbedr and to an annual exchange visit of school children that continues to this day. In an RAF publication the two who had escaped now also read the story. They too have become friends of Huchenfeld and a part of this remarkable reconciliation story.

Without Kurt Jürgen Heinemann-Grüder and his stubborn insistence on penitence being seen to be done, there would be no story to tell. He died on 4 November 2010 aged 90.

No other *Cross of Nails* Centre expresses as dramatically as Huchenfeld what reconciliation can mean in practice. Remarkably, an almost exact parallel story can be told of the city of Rüsselsheim, the home of Opel cars. There, six American airmen were lynched while, as in Huchenfeld, two escaped.

One of them returned a generation later when a memorial was erected to his comrades by the City. He was a devout Baptist, a simple working-class man from the deep South. I interpreted for him as, in tears, he embraced a university professor, the son of one of the murderers of his comrades whose father had been tried and executed. Such deep wounds can be healed by love. ■

Canon Paul Oestricher, Anglican priest and political scientist, is a former Director of the Centre for International Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral. Paul has been a tireless campaigner for peace and nuclear disarmament



Above: The plaque by which the five murdered airmen are commemorated.

Right: The church yard in which the murders happened.

Opposite page, top: Curt-Juergen Heinemann-Grüeder, at whose insistence the whole story unfolded.

Opposite page, bottom: The presentation of the Welsh rocking horse to the new Kindergarten. On left, at rear: Wing Cdr. John Wynne who brought the horse. On right, at rear: Curt-Juergen Heinemann-Grüeder.



On 14 November 1940, much of the City of Coventry was reduced to rubble by German bombs. The Cathedral, at the heart of the city, burned with it. In the terrible aftermath that followed, Provost Howard wrote the words 'Father forgive' on the smoke-blackened wall of the sanctuary. Two of the charred beams which had fallen in the shape of a cross were set on the altar and three of the medieval nails were bound into the shape of a cross.

The Cross of Nails is a very powerful and inspirational symbol world-wide of reconciliation and peace. After the Second World War, Crosses of Nails were presented to Kiel, Dresden and Berlin, cities shattered by Allied bombing. Out of the ashes grew a trust and partnership between Coventry and the German cities. There are now 160 Cross of Nails Centres around the world, all emanating from this early courageous vision, and all working for peace and reconciliation within their own communities and countries. This has no boundaries: it may focus on issues of politics, race, religion, economics, sexual orientation or personal: it can have broad and far-reaching national consequences, or it can make just a small – nonetheless significant – difference to people's lives.

Centres can be churches, reconciliation centres, prisons, NGOs and schools, any body of people who have a heart and a need to pursue reconciliation in their own lives and the lives of others. The Centres range over all continents – from Africa to Australia, Europe to Asia: truly a global network, with Centres being encouraged to support each other – practically and prayerfully.

- from Cross of Nails website: www.crossofnails.org



the last taboo

Journalist John Pilger and Palestinian essayist Edward Said have both referred to the questioning of Israel by the United States as “The Last Taboo”.

Rob Ritchie reflects on this for *Tui Motu*.

For six decades Christian preachers in the West have rejoiced at the creation of the State of Israel. Countless times they have quoted from the Book of Genesis where God says to Abram:

*I will bless those who bless you:
I will curse those who slight you.
All the tribes of the earth
shall bless themselves by you.*
(Gen 12: 3)

By this verse Christians know to bless the descendents of Abram and Sarai. Also by this verse we are reminded of our spiritual origins: in Jesus’ own culture and ancestry.

God’s word to Abram and God’s love from Jesus absolutely compel us to bless Israel. Yet preachers who bless Israel so enthusiastically, often seem oblivious to what the appearance of this new nation has meant for the people of Palestine.

These preachers are not alone in ignoring the plight of this ancient people. Almost all Western media carefully edit any news of Palestine’s suffering and even WikiLeaks appears to have been persuaded to exempt Israel from its recent revelations, by holding back leaked material on the Israel-Lebanon conflict in 2006 and Israel’s most recent assault on Gaza in 2008-9.

Some will assert that the West fails to question Israel because it feels too much guilt about centuries of Western anti-Semitism and a Holocaust it ignored for too long.

Anyone who has raised questions at church will be aware that the subject of Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians can be taboo. In some churches, to mention Palestine’s suffering is to invite outrage. Sometimes the response is so strong, it is as if the person replying in defense of Israel has been personally offended – and in effect they have. Acutely embarrassing parallels with our lives in the West can be seen to lie behind this defensive response.

One embarrassing parallel is visible where the wealth of expanding Jewish communities contrasts sharply with the homes of their oppressed Palestinian neighbours. Careful city planning over long periods render similar contrasts far less obvious in the West. But Israel has not had the time, nor has it the will apparently, to hide such contrasts. Instead such inequality is sanctioned by government

policy and maintained by force of arms.

Because material inequality and militarism are so much at odds with Jesus’ teachings, the social disparities of the West – so starkly reflected in modern Israel – present both a dilemma and an opportunity to Western Christians.

The early Church began with faith-communities in which members shared their material wealth with each other and the poor (*Acts 2: 42-47*). A refusal to take up arms was another defining mark of these communities and this continued for around 150 years. Ever since then Christian apologists for war have held sway.

In the same decade that the state of Israel came into existence, a doctrine of Nuclear Deterrence and the threat contained in the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) was developed in the West – enveloping the whole world in a situation of precarious threat.

Consistent with our founders’ faith in a divine love which casts out all fear (*1 John 4:18*) the rise of Nuclear Deterrence has also seen many Christians around the world actively seeking to subvert its threat.

Still others have elevated Nuclear Deterrence almost to a state of holy writ. Nuclear Deterrence is, however, deeply problematic for all the Abrahamic faiths because it offends a foundational scriptural direction: to worship no other gods than God (*Ex 20: 3-6*).

Never declared in those rhetorical sermons supporting Israel without question, is a religious gamble whose logic says: “If we bless Israel, with its wealth and weapons, maybe God will go easier on us for ignoring two of the signature teachings of our faith?”

Tragically the vast majority of Western Christians have for decades been rendered silent by this shameful and self-serving rhetoric. Yet for those who are aware of the inequality and sufferings of Palestine, an urgent question remains: how are we to bless Israel without blessing our own failings?

One of the clearest answers to this dilemma comes from the Palestinian Christian Archbishop Elias Chacour, who says:

“...if you are pro-Israel, on behalf of the Palestinian children I call unto you: give further friendship to Israel. They need your friendship. But stop interpreting that friendship as an automatic antipathy against me, the Palestinian who

is paying the bill for what others have done against my beloved Jewish brothers and sisters in the Holocaust and Auschwitz and elsewhere. But if taking our side would mean to become one-sided against my Jewish brothers and sisters, back up. We do not need such friendship. We need one more common friend. We do not need one more enemy, for God's sake."

A group of Israelis desperately needing the blessing of our common friendship is the *Parents Circle*: an organisation of Jewish and Palestinian families who have lost loved ones to the violence. Jews who dare to belong to the *Parents Circle* are shunned in their community and often spat upon and shouted at in public.

Some *Parents Circle* members are breathtakingly outspoken and thereby invite particular condemnation. One is Yitzhak Frankenthal who lost his son: a soldier first kidnapped and then killed by Hamas. However, this past chairman of the *Parents Circle* and an Orthodox Jew says he does not blame Hamas. Instead Frankenthal says:

"...it is we who are unwilling to make peace with them. It is we who insist on maintaining our control over them. It is we who feed the cycle of violence ... I regret to say it."

Another group opposing state-sanctioned violence is the Jerusalem-based Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD). Its director is anthropology professor and human rights activist Jeff Halper, who spoke recently to Radio New Zealand's *Morning Report* about the demolition of non-Jewish families' homes in East Jerusalem.

However, many equally newsworthy stories never reach us. For example, in the same week the *Nobel Peace Prize* was awarded to imprisoned Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, Israel barred its nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu from travelling to Germany to receive an international human rights award, the *Carl von Ossietzky Prize*. The award is named after a German pacifist who received the *Nobel Peace Prize* in 1935, but died in a Nazi concentration camp only a few years later.

A supporter of the Palestinian cause since the 1970s, Vanunu was imprisoned in 1986 for 18 years after releasing information about the Dimona nuclear plant. Despite his revelations, Israel has continued to build its own clandestine nuclear arsenal, coercing successive US Presidents into allowing it to deny this – even after Vanunu provided proof. It is extraordinary that most Western media, including WikiLeaks, comply with Israel as it attempts to silence all dissenting voices, including those of its own citizens.

As Christians in the West we must refuse to be silenced any longer by those who so conveniently favour militarism and inequality.

Instead we can heed that most ancient of scriptures by pledging our support and friendship to those Israeli citizens, Jew and Palestinian alike, who are calling for peace by daring to oppose the continuing and violent dispossession of Palestine. ■

Rob Ritchie is a Christchurch writer and spiritual director

The Point

Every time the Abbot opens his mouth
emerald birds fly out
and sit on my shoulder.
The speech of birds is the sound of wisdom.
I long to tame such a bird
take it home to Wellington.
"The point," said the Abbot,
"is to leave the bird untamed."

© Anne Powell



get on living

diary of a cancer sufferer

Jacq Dromgool MBE was diagnosed with cancer in 2003 and died six years later in Mary Potter Hospice in Wellington, aged 69. She had a very full and busy life – principal of Holy Cross Primary School in Wellington, wife of Chris and mother of four children. Jacq experienced all the fears and agony that go with a diagnosis of cancer, and its subsequent spread. Over several years she endured the range of invasive cancer treatments

which bought her precious time. The journals that she kept during the course of her illness reveal an indomitable spirit and a deep faith that transformed her grief and suffering. As these inspiring excerpts written over several years show, she embraced the challenge to live her life happily until she died. Jacq lived to see a dream fulfilled – the birth of her third grandchild, Alfie.

"I have taken the first step and the journey has begun. Most of it will take care of itself. All I have to remember is no pain, no suffering can touch my will. My heart, my love and my faith give me the power to triumph."

"Really it's just like being on a different train. The other one was slower with the destination a bit hazy and lots of choices and stopping-off places. Now the train is hurtling somewhat to a very clear destination but there are still choices to be made and that's the power God gives us... to continue to try to make good choices, especially for our family and time together."

"I will live as I have lived and enjoy my life in peace. No need to make big changes."

"We're all afraid. It's going on that matters."

"Grief is the loneliest road in the world. One minute you are tripping the light fantastic and the next minute some ridiculous memory, picture or thing makes you cry – and it has to be handled alone in the dark and often in fear."

"As long as you are alive, you have choices."

"In the end three things matter most: How well did you love? How fully did you live? How deeply did you learn to let go?"

"Decide to be happy now and the process has begun."

"I cannot do anything about illness but I can accept it, let go and get on living."

"Acceptance is the only source of serenity."

"In silence listen to the whisper of God."

"Give thanks!"

"Love keeps me going. My love for them and their love for me. Let my heart sing in the midst of sorrow."

"Make a home within your own heart. There you will learn to be alone without being lonely."

"I will not die before my time. I will live life to the fullest every day."

"I am not my illness. God has given me an invincible spirit so I can remain me in spite of my limitations, pains, illness, short-comings."

"All will be well. Embrace whatever comes. I love you, Chris. You are my life. Happy Valentine's Day."

"Could Chris ever fathom how much I love him? Could he know how thinking of leaving him fills me with indescribable grief? Why, I ask myself? Because I have always been there for him and he for me. Something precious will be broken and it will be my fault. I have let him down – same with the kids. A mother should always be there – hovering on the outskirts to listen – to be – to anchor. Will they remember my love and pass it on to their children? I pray for their comfort and that memories will sustain them. I pray that I can show them all that accepting this challenge leads to deeper love and wisdom. I pray I can really live happily until I die."

"Another two months!"

"It would be easy, very easy to be resentful about one's lot in this life but as I look around I realise nobody escapes the hand of fate and no one 'blow' can be said to be any worse than any other. So gratitude for what we have is the only response. Gratitude for love, life and laughter."

"Time goes by. I must use every minute of the NOW for good, for happiness, for reflection."

"May my spirit always sing through seasons of despair."

God to whom my days belong may there always be a song."

"To really LIVE with cancer is an amazing challenge. It is trying to LIVE fully alive with a shadow. I know that tomorrow, today even, things could turn to custard. I accept this. I am prepared for it but I refuse to sit in the shadow and wait for it to happen. I refuse to be miserable or worried or preoccupied. I choose to live and enjoy each day to the fullest for two reasons. One, why waste the precious life left to me with those I love? And two, I care for the happiness of family and friends. I don't want them to live close to the shadow. I want them



to be happy in my company enjoying everything and making wonderful memories. I trust in God's love and strength. I thank him for my health and healing and pray for more happy days. Up to now I have had a fabulous life surrounded by love. I will let nothing now ruin the end of it. This is the only power I have. To choose 'life' and 'happiness', accepting the setbacks on the way. Health is not only in the body. Health of spirit is more important. My spirit sings with love, gratitude, fellowship and faith."

"Blood tests show cancer in the liver. Deep love makes the agony of loss more terrible. But would I wish to have loved less – No. My pain and grief is the measure of my love for all of them."

"Grieving may be one of the most fundamental life skills. It is the way that the heart can heal from loss and go on to love again and grow wise."

"There is no place I cannot belong." ■

These diary excerpts were made by our associate editor, Michael Fitzsimons, with the permission of the Dromgool family

holiday reflection

my critical question

Andrew Dakers

Holidays provide an opportunity for us to detach from the normal day-to-day demands and reflect on life. Over the last few weeks my reflection has been on the question, what is really important and real in our rapidly changing world, and where should my God-inspired efforts be best directed? My question was prompted by the recent discussions around the introduction of the new English translation of the Mass.

theological underpinnings

There are a number of us who believe that Gospel values and our love for God call us to not only care for and love one another, but to also practise non-violence and social justice, walk gently on the earth, care for our ecological systems and use the earth's resources responsibly and sustainably. One should receive strong support and encouragement from the official church bodies and faith communities in this endeavour, but my experience is that we don't.

facts and figures

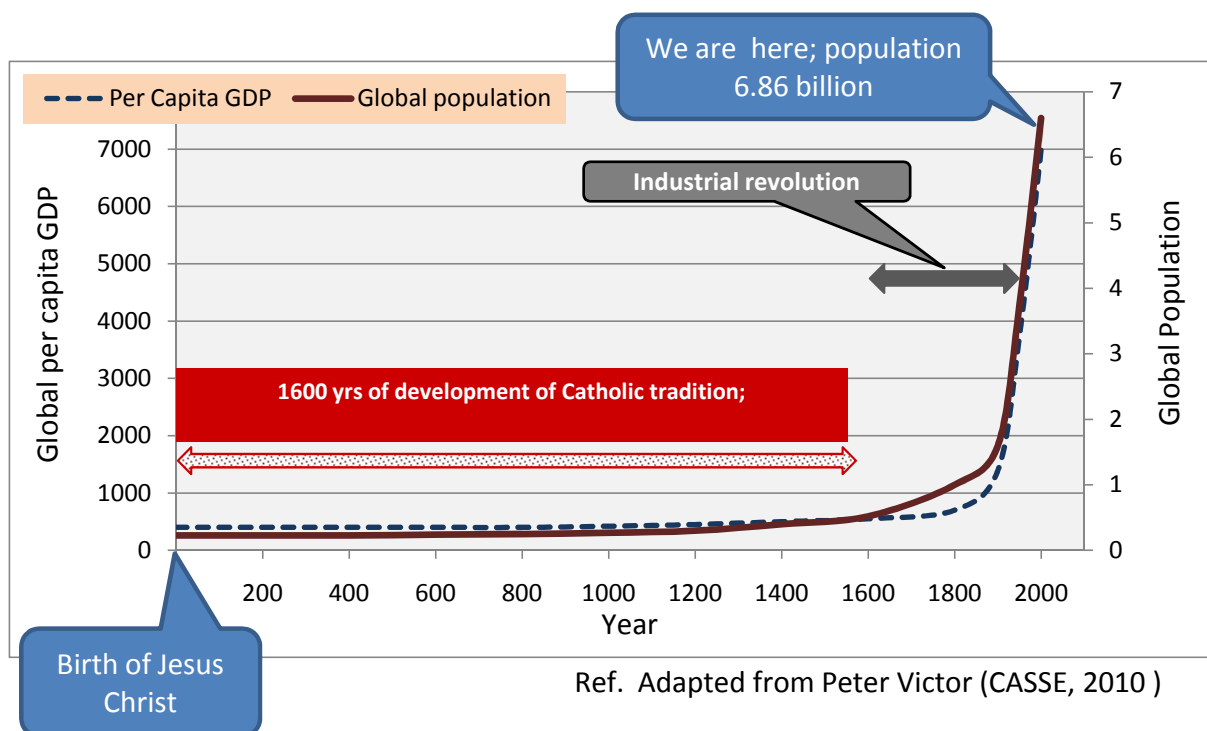
On 19 June 2010 a conference was held in Leeds on Steady State Economy. It was organized by the Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy (CASSE), and the report titled *Enough is Enough* resulted from this conference. The following figure has been adapted from a paper presented at this conference by keynote speaker, Peter Victor, York University.

The graph in Figure 1 plots the average global per capita GDP and human population from the time of the birth of Christ to the present time. Both the GDP and population illustrate a dramatic increase over the last 200 years. Between 1900 to 2006 world population increased from around 1.5 billion people to 6.5 billion – a fourfold increase. At the same time, average per capita GDP increased from \$1200 to \$7300 per person – a sixfold increase. Peter Victor notes that the result is that the world GDP increased by an astounding factor of 24 over the last century, from \$2 trillion to 47 trillion.

Victor explains that economic activity is closely tied to energy and resource use. Humanity now uses 11 times as much energy and eight times the weight of material resources every year as it did only a century ago. The vast majority of this increase has occurred during the last 50 years. Victor notes the global economy is now so large that it is undermining the natural systems on which it depends. The result is a wide range of global environmental problems: climate change, biodiversity loss, stratospheric ozone depletion, deforestation, soil degradation, and the collapse of fisheries. The list goes on.

There are many other indicators in addition to GDP and population growth that would show equally dramatic and unprecedented growth and change patterns since the Industrial Revolution.

Victor refers to a paper by Johan Rockström and colleagues (*Nature*, Sept 2009) who identified the specific areas in which the economy is placing an excessive burden on the biosphere.



Why are these excellent church documents not being vigorously presented and promoted to the Catholic communities to guide us through our currently challenging times?

Rockström et al analysed a set of nine “planetary boundaries”, each of which defines the safe operating space for humanity on the planet. The nine boundaries relate to the following earth-system processes:

- climate change
- biodiversity loss
- nitrogen and phosphorous cycles
- stratospheric ozone depletion
- ocean acidification
- global freshwater use
- change in land use
- atmospheric aerosol loading
- and chemical pollution.

exceeding planet's safe limits

According to the detailed analyses of this team, three of the above processes (climate change, biodiversity loss, and the nitrogen cycle), are now exceeding the planet's safe operating limits, and by a large margin in some cases. The potential consequences are severe: the authors warn that transgressing one or more of the planetary boundaries could lead to catastrophic environmental change at the continental to planetary scale.

After painting this disturbing picture Peter Victor discusses the question of whether technology can save us. He provides clear arguments as to why it won't. Technology has not reduced the demand on global resources in the past and is unlikely to in the future.

call for change

The Victor paper is just one of several presented at the Leeds conference supporting the call for a change in culture, attitude and traditional behaviour to one of 'enough is enough'. The challenge is to move to a sustainable economy in a world of finite resources and one in which there is economic justice for all.

There are many thoughtful, objective, well researched and authoritative

reports on humankind's relationships (material and spiritual) with the ecosystems within which communities are embedded. These same reports are particularly concerned for the sustainable and equitable well-being of present and future generations. The over-riding conclusion of the writers is that we all face unprecedented challenges in our relationship with the ecosystems within which we live. These writers are not doomsayers. Figure 1 is real and unprecedented in the history of humankind.

It is clear that neither technology nor prayer on their own, or both together, will save us and future generations from the ecosystems and resource crises that humankind is heading towards. What the CASSE conference delegates are clearly calling for is a different form of economy, different ways of doing things, different ways of relating to each other, different consumption patterns. They are talking in terms of the urgent need to transition away from growth.

significant culture change

A significant culture change is therefore required. Culture change is very difficult and slow to achieve and requires a substantial shift in personal and collective values. This surely is where the Church has a very challenging and critical role to play. Can the Catholic Church, and particularly its leaders, meet this challenge? It is not difficult to find the official words that would support some of the issues identified above. Some of the recent social teachings and encyclicals issued by Catholic leaders have been notable in identifying many of the key contemporary social and environmental issues. Why are these excellent Church documents not being vigorously presented and promoted to the Catholic communities to guide us through our currently challenging times?

What is lacking is the commitment,



The author with grandchild

leadership and resourcing that turns fine words into action in the real world – the sort of commitment and action that was executed to implement the revised language change of the Mass.

revised mass changes

Late last year *The Press* (26 Nov, 10) published an opinion piece by Fr John O'Connor, on 'New translation revives Mass of old'. The article set out to justify the effort and resources (about 10 years of study and consultation according to this article) that the Catholic Church committed to revising the translation of the Mass. According to this article the reason for doing this was to ensure that the mass was more “dynamically equivalent” to the Latin version and to ensure a robust and theologically rich translation, that was more consistent with other translations (French and Spanish were mentioned). Fr O'Connor lamented the diminishment of the language of the Mass as a vehicle for the traditional doctrine and theology of the people of God. It would appear that the desired outcome of the Catholic leaders was that we as Catholics are drawn nearer to God through the language of the Mass. This language, the article tells us, has been updated to reflect more precisely the tradition of worship of the Church's ancestors.

As I reflected on the article in the context of the Fig. 1 showing GDP and population growth, it was very clear that the most formative phase of the development of Catholic tradition occurred in the pre-industrial age which is at least 80 percent of the total Catholic/Christian history. The social, cultural, technological and economic circumstances in which Catholic traditions originally evolved were very different from what we and future generations are having to deal with. For example, levels of education of the average citizen, social and hierarchical structures, longevity of life, information technology and work place conditions are hugely different today for many in Catholic communities, than they were when Catholic “tradition” was being moulded in the hands of, and imposed by, a few elite Catholics – predominantly men. We face very real challenges and responsibilities that our ancestors could not even imagine let alone experience. As is very clear in Fig. 1, in the last 100 years humankind has experienced dramatic and rapid changes in which the process of learning new ways is essential to enable us to cope. It is equally essential to unlearn some of our old ways. Some traditional attitudes, behaviour and values are inappropriate and sometimes obstructive.

‘free thinking’ to blame

The article in *The Press* accuses “free thinking” of throwing out our grandfather’s old oak kitchen table for a modern formica table that is unmarked with memories of family stories and traditions. It is not uncommon to embellish our ancestors with undeserved wisdom and goodness. Some of the actions and attitudes of our Catholic forebears are much better forgotten. The article concluded that the revised language of the Mass will bring us to a better appreciation of the timelessness of faith, wonder and the presence of God. We also clearly understand that God is ‘timeful’. In every place and in every moment of time, we can experience God as time-in-action. Every single aspect of our

living world is crafted by time, from the big bang to now; and every language is crafted by time.

For example, we are beginning to understand the term “sustainability”, a word not used in the traditional Church language but common in today’s language. It is the sustainable processes, from the planet’s first moment to now, that have made life possible. For me “sustainability” is a spiritual connection to all that is, incorporating the dynamics of time and scientific discovery in our present living world, providing a sense of permanence, purpose, place and mutually enhancing relationships in our social, cultural, economic and ecological world.

**It is blatantly clear
we need strong,
informed, enlightened
moral guidance
to move to a new
responsive and
relevant culture**

We are called to use our personal gifts and talents as responsible, free thinking, loving citizens in the real world of today – anything else is at risk of being pretence and mind manipulation.

The ten year effort by the official Church to get the language of the Mass right in the context of the issues we are being called to respond to has been a very disappointing failure on two significant fronts.

First, it has failed to embrace inclusive language. This must have been a very conscious decision by those in authority. To many of us this is a very significant statement in itself. Nearly every other organisation, profession, social group that I know has been required to adopt gender inclusive language. It is the norm for most of us. So why is Catholic leadership so obstinately opposed to its adoption?

Secondly, the revised language of the Mass is not only a tragic loss of

opportunity to move forward but also directs us backwards to a culture that has been surpassed by the signs and urgent needs of the times. It is blatantly clear we need strong, informed, enlightened moral guidance to move to a new responsive and relevant culture. I imagine that Fr Thomas Berry C.P, well known author, historian, ecotheologian and leader in the tradition of Teilhard de Chardin, would ask that the language of the official Church, in its role as teacher of the faith (including the language of the Mass), guides us to the new ecologically and socially aware era in communion with God.

Using time-crafted tools (such as language) to bring us closer to a timeless God would seem to me to be a very complex task. If it can be done, then I am in no doubt that the timelessness of faith, wonder and presence of God can only be communicated by a language that is fully inclusive, responsive to both the signs of the times and the burning questions and concerns deep within us all. In my view the revised new translation of the Mass has failed in this respect. This missed opportunity by Catholic leaders to translate living Gospel values into a very challenging and changing 21st century is a huge disappointment if not an abrogation of responsibility – the failure to take up values that could be, and certainly need to be, the transforming and sustaining spirit and power that would lead us to a mutually enhancing human presence on the planet — an idea of Thomas Berry.

I will continue to contemplate my original question. What is really important and real in our present rapidly changing world, and where should my God-inspired efforts be best directed? ■

Andrew Dakers is a consultant ecological engineer based in Christchurch with a concern for the future well-being of his six grandchildren

Center for the Advancement of the
Steady State Economy (CASSE):

<http://steadystate.org>

sacred planning and secular planning

All planning needs to begin by recognising what is sacred, suggests **Tony Watkins**.

The most significant outcome of the new Auckland Council during its first year of existence is to be the development of a new 'spatial plan'. The brief for this anticipates going back to first principles and re-thinking those assumptions which underlie our planning processes. This is not a job for planning bureaucrats. They have little experience of thinking creatively and we can be certain that they will only advocate traditional failures such as a static planning process which paralyses a dynamic world.

Nor is rethinking a job for our problem-solving politicians. Negative thinking only spawns infighting over competing grand-gesture solutions, each seeking for both immortality and votes. If charismatic leadership is needed then the task, as usual, is over to you and me.

A good first move might be a plan which sees the city as sacred. This is not a new idea but rather one which has been forgotten by our materialistic world. Seeing the Auckland volcanoes as sacred, for example, has immediate ritual consequences. The Victorians went up mountains to celebrate a wedding, or another community event, in a symbolic kiosk, and then they went down again to live out their lives in the suburbs. If this sounds biblical it is only because people have been doing it for thousands of years. Moses did not see Mount Sinai as real estate.

In the same way when a community sees the coastline as sacred there are immediate practical consequences. You do not dump sand from somewhere else onto a sacred site, or change the "image" to something more like Bermuda, because that is a favourite holiday destination. The foreshore and seabed debate could be quickly resolved if everyone agreed that some things in life are sacred.

Unfortunately changing our way of thinking is not easy. The leaky home syndrome, for example, has been generated by the myth that homes need to keep the water out. For all the millions of dollars spent on repairs and lawyers, no one seems to have realised that buildings need to let the water out. Yet every tramper had this sorted out long ago. Put on a vinyl raincoat

in a storm and very soon the inside of your parka will be wetter than the outside. It would be foolish to add insulation to the inside as very soon the insulation would be sodden and just another burden for the tramper to carry.

Gore-Tex changed all that. With a coat which could breathe, the moisture could escape and your woolly jumper stayed dry. In the same way, houses need a skin which breathes. If we changed the myth we could stop building homes certain to rot and fall apart because of all the moisture inside the house. We would also need to change our language. We say "leaky" because we believe we need to seal our homes, while at the same time putting warning labels on plastic bags to alert people to their potential to kill anyone foolish enough to put their head inside.

The challenge for Auckland is to see life itself as sacred. Once that change is made the rest of the planning process becomes concerned with the details. We do not sell our children and yet we have no hesitation about selling our houses or our land. Why should we sell our stories, our memories, and our heritage? Again we will need to change our language to reflect this new way of seeing. "Developers" should be known simply as "destroyers" for that is what they are. They do not develop anything. We do not need them. They buy and sell our birthright for a mess of pottage, leaving the rest of us to clean up the mess.

The traditional desire to distinguish between sacred and secular was driven on the one hand by the capture of "sacred" by the institutional church and on the other hand by a struggle for power between church and state. This era, however, has passed us by, and with the world facing environmental catastrophe the time has come for some fundamental re-thinking.

The brief for the new Auckland Council has asked the right questions. It is up to us to provide the right answers. ■

Tony Watkins is a retired professor of architecture, town planner and well-known writer



the crucifix

The crucifixion of Jesus lies at the heart of Christian faith. This brutal form of justice introduced by the ancient Roman emperors still appalls us with its inhumane way of dealing with the victims. But incredibly, this symbol of death and shame has become the symbol of life and hope for millions of earth's inhabitants.

Early Christians made numerous images of Christ in places such as the catacombs of Rome. These showed Jesus in his earthly life, but for the first four centuries after his death none of their sketches portrayed the image of Jesus on the cross. Only after the church became organized and the sacrificial death of Christ was seen as more central to the faith did artists begin to portray the figure of Jesus. And then it became a flood. Many of the world's greatest artists began to paint the crucifixion.

The German artist Grunwald painted a magnificent altar piece which showed Jesus as a leper. This painting still attracts a stream of pilgrims and visitors to the town of Colmar. Gauguin painted a yellow Christ on a cross in Brittany. Picasso, Chagall and Salvador Dali placed the crucifix in the modern world. Colin MacCahon painted an impressive crucifix scene with Jesus being crucified in the hills of Nelson. Artists attempt to place the Christian message into the context of their time.

Some contemporary artists struggle with the cosmic significance of the crucifixion and among them is the artist whose work dominates this page. The Brazilian artist Guido Rocha reflects the feelings of many Church leaders in Latin America who work to help the poor. The outspoken Archbishop Hélder Camara famously said, "When I gave food to the poor, they called me a saint. When I asked why the poor were hungry, they called me a communist." This was at a time when Brazil was under military dictatorship.

Inspired by Archbishop Camara, Guido attempted to help the poor and suffering in the slums. As a result he was falsely accused of being a member of a subversive group and thrown into prison.



Along with other prisoners he was tortured to try to make him confess to crimes never committed. Later he claimed that the only way he could survive the terrible torture was to concentrate on

crucifixion of jesus



the crucifixion and try to draw strength from that image. Eventually released, he sought asylum in Chile but within a short time Chile also had a military take-over and he faced prison a second

time. He fled to Switzerland where he was given asylum and died there in 2007.

During his time in Switzerland he again turned to sculpture but by now his work had become totally dominated by memories of his imprisonment. His sculpture pieces almost always show the suffering and humiliation of torture.

His work was little known until he was asked to prepare a carving for the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Nairobi in 1975. The result was *The Tortured Christ* – a lifesize carving which stood out from one of the walls in the auditorium.

I attended that Assembly and the carving was the talk of all the delegates. For many, it became the dominating image of the gathering. Seldom has the suffering of Christ been portrayed in such a vivid manner.

Nobody can say they like this sculpture. It challenges us with the raw reality of the crucifixion, the suffering of the cross, the sheer evil of an innocent man being tortured. Here in the relative peace and security of New Zealand it will not be a popular image for people to see as Easter approaches. Yet it portrays the raw horror of the crucifixion which we commemorate.

The death of Christ on the cross should not be glamorised – it was sheer evil. Guido's sculpture speaks of the agony and suffering of that event and challenges us to remember the suffering that continues to exist in the lives of many people around the world. It is uncomfortable but it is a challenge to us to consider the real meaning of the Easter celebration.

And in the background we hear that disturbing voice

“Take up *your* cross
and follow me.”

*Ron O'Grady is a minister in a Union parish in Auckland.
He is the author of several books on art and human rights*

be bold and choose

Daniel O'Leary

In the first month of the new year, millions are ready to overcome their natural fears of the unknown and throw off the habit of the familiar to embrace a journey that requires patience, determination and boldness to change not only the way of looking at life but life itself.

It is very early on the first day of the year. Intent and attentive, I'm sitting here at the window of my new home. The dark sea stretches before me. Out at the edges, the shifting shadows slowly reveal the shores of dawn. And deep at the centre of my being, I strongly sense the stirrings of a new beginning.

I both love and fear these beginnings of the soul. They require courage – courage to live differently, to disturb the routines, to reach beyond, to question our glib absolutes. We carry a great fear of change. But habit is often a false comfort. Everything about great religion calls us to explore depth. Everything about great souls does so, too.

"If you continue to do what you have always done," wrote professional strategist Anthony Robbins, "you will continue to get what you have always got." When everyone is thinking the same, no one is thinking very much. The theologian Bernard Lonergan wrote of a human condition that blocks our openness to vision and wisdom. He reckons that we all have a personal *scotoma*, a blind spot that we develop to ward off knowledge that might upset our customary way of viewing things. Our relentless resistance to change results from the original sin of a personal and institutional fear.

Maybe the poet-priest John O'Donohue had something similar in mind when he believed that something inside us "watches us play with the seduction of safety, and the grey promises that sameness whispers, and wonders if you would always live like this". In the presence of life's mystery, it is wise to be uncertain. "Sell your cleverness," counselled Rumi, "and buy bewilderment."

The new year is surely a threshold of transition. Fresh from celebrating the mystery of the Incarnation, our purified eyes are now open to astonishing possibilities

– possibilities fired through pain. In spite of her awful torture and a life that was closing in on her, Sheila Cassidy could write:

*And so we must begin to live again,
We of the damaged bodies and
assaulted minds,
Starting from scratch with the rubble
of our lives
And picking up the dust of dreams
once dreamt.*

We need courage to shift our perception of things, to transform our consciousness of the mystery that we are. Where do we begin? One suggestion is to recognise that we have a choice about how we see things. One way leads to a more creative, abundant way of living; the other feeds all that is negative within us.

"Every time you make a choice," wrote C.S. Lewis, "you are turning the central part of you into something different from what it was before. You are slowly turning this central thing either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, or into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with itself."

Human thought and creativity have an astonishing power. It is God's imagination, the Christ-imagination, our imagination. They are all expressions of a divine presence. What amazing good news this is, especially at a time of widespread hopelessness. People are lost because they are disconnected from their souls' true spirit.

God created us, and became one of us for no other reason than to draw us towards transcendent shores of joy and peace and justice. These shores do not belong to heavenly landscapes. They are the shores on which we live – where terrorists strike, where recession hurts, where churches fail, where families collapse, where fear lives. In the face of the terrible evidence of a fallen humanity, beginnings are still epiphanies of God's faithfulness and of human hope. A beginning is its own truth. It is always a blessing and always timeless. Nor does it need an ending.

Beginnings remind us that we are all magnificent possibilities in disguise. We sense their muted insistence. One day, if we are ever to unfold into our God-given destiny, we must listen to this inborn whisper.

Life's best teachers warn us against staying on

the circumference of our lives too long, or we will never know either ourselves or God. They remind us that we all have a mystical call to journey forth and undergo great testing in order to save our soul, and save the world.

This, too, is the vision of Jesus. It must not get lost in ecclesiastical translation. When we set out to begin again, spiritual forces that we cannot even imagine are unleashed both to support us and to frighten us. Because this enterprise isn't just a head-journey alone; nor is it the pursuit of perfect external behaviour. It is much more. It is what Christians call *metanoia* – a going beyond the mind, a reconnecting with the divine, a confrontation with our demons of doubt. That is why Carl Jung taught that it requires patience, determination and boldness. It is a deliberate embracing of the darkness, of what he termed “the night sea journey”. And this is an act of the purest courage. Theologian Martin Buber said: “All spiritual journeys have a hidden destination of which the traveller is unaware.” Humble before mystery, R.S. Thomas agrees:

*I think that maybe
I will be a little surer
Of being a little nearer.
That's all.
Eternity is in the understanding
That that little is more than enough.*

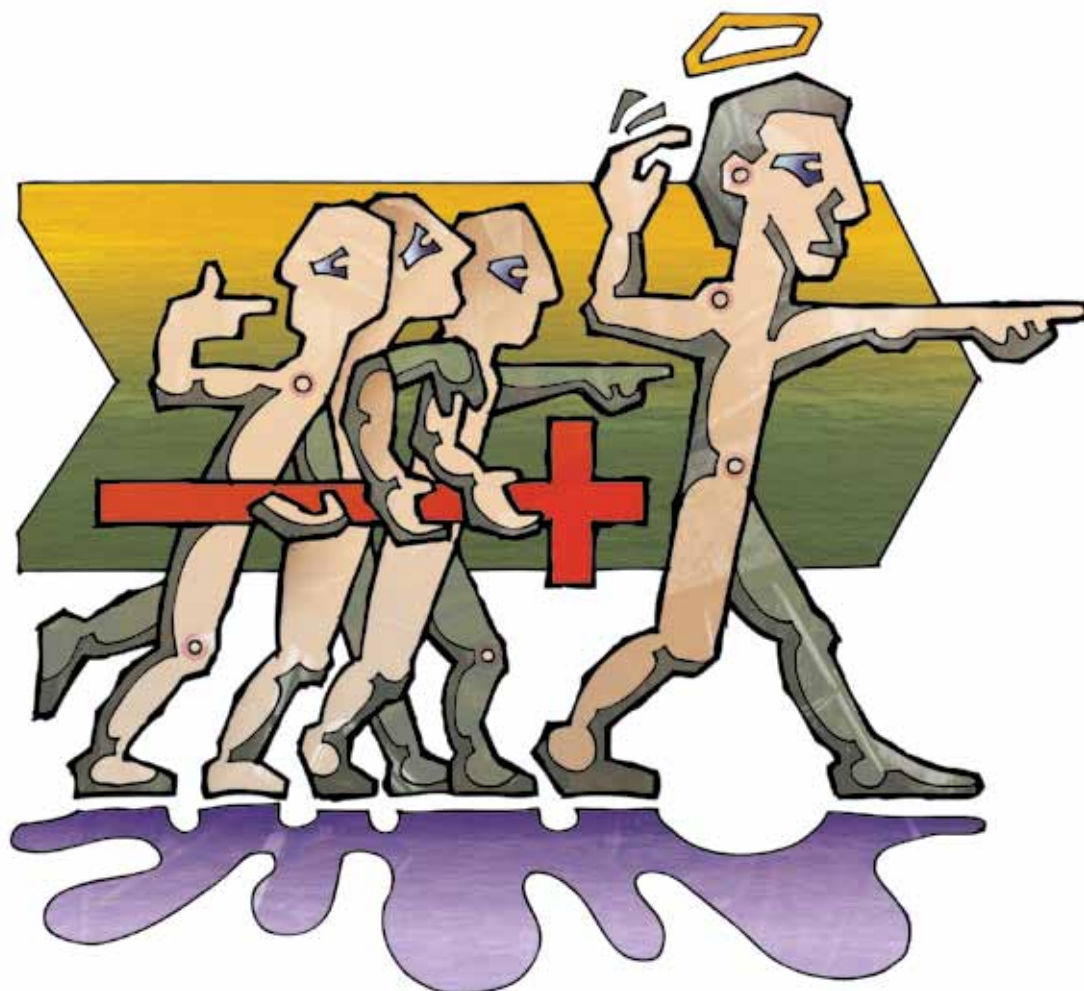
Given our congenital facility for getting lost, Buber believed we need teachers to negotiate the journey of the soul. These guides will come in all kinds of disguises, at the most propitious moments. There is the teacher within as St Augustine reminded us, there is the *anamchara* (soulmate) beside us, and there is the guardian angel above us. And all are the manifestations of the Gracious Mystery so utterly in love with us.

Too many die with their minds still shackled by a blinding, compulsive uniformity. Liberated thinking can transform the world. When you change the way you look at life, the life you are looking at will change too. “Let a person in an attic but burn with enough intensity,” a poet wrote, “and soon the whole world is on fire.”

It's still January. Millions are ready for a radical shift in their lives and in their thinking. The start of every year calls for a moment of stillness. This moment will reveal the possibilities waiting painfully to emerge from the soil of our soul. ■

Daniel O'Leary is a priest of the Leeds Diocese. He can be contacted at 12A Weston Court, Burbo Bank Road South, Blundellsands, Liverpool, Merseyside L23 6SR.

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Good Friday: Reflections

A crisp Autumn morning and fingers of sun
bless outstretched arms of stately turbines,
like waiting crosses on dappled hills.

Belying its turbulent underbelly
the river glides, stealthy, silver, resolute,
like the tears of so many women who have wept
for what has been done to their sons,
for what their sons have done.

My dogs dance in anticipation,
their barks puncturing the still air,
like raucous cries of jeering bystanders.

River rocks determine our passage to the
water's edge.
Grey, cold, smooth, they wait impassively
like hearts of stone,
some big enough to seal a tomb,
some small enough to be thrown.

The caws of magpies in macrocarpa trees mingle
with the clink of distant golfballs meeting clubs,
like rocks striking nails that pierce.

I stride out along the river path,
take deep breaths of fresh crisp air and
give thanks, for health and life and love,
for every Simon who helps to carry a cross,
for every cross which helps reveal that Simon.

Morning dew on grass seeps
through well-worn shoes, dampening my toes
like blood mixed with dust on a hot, dry road.

I make my way homewards,
Look forward to dry socks, a cup of tea,
hot cross bun.
My clothes will not be divided,
no vinegar offered to quench my thirst.

The sun's rays stretch over the hill and
stroke the back of my neck.
I am warmed and the chill is banished with
a promise of resurrection.

Helen M Sligo

-written on the banks of the Manawatu River



ian bayliss, chaplain

In conversation with **Trish McBride**, Ian Bayliss shares memories of joys, learnings, changes, and hopes.



Thirty-two years as chaplain in the same psychiatric hospital is a record! This was recognised on 10 December last when Rev Ian Bayliss was farewelled from many roles at Porirua Hospital. The chapel was full. Speakers representing hospital management, health board, city, chaplaincy, and, most significantly, patients and former patients paid tribute to his caring presence.

The joys were in getting close to the patients, students and clients, and wrestling with their spiritual issues about life in God's world; and working closely with the staff, who have huge hearts. Life in all its fullness has to be fostered among mental health patients. They too yearn for faith and meaning! A community is judged by how we care for the marginal ones who are invisible until we notice them and respond to their needs.

Ian began as the Presbyterian-Methodist chaplain at Porirua in 1978. There were then over 700 patients. It was like a rural village, but the city had gradually grown round it. It was the main employer in the region. Chaplaincy provided for the spiritual needs of this community, visiting and taking worship services to those who could not attend – and lots of funerals, mostly with very few mourners, sometimes none! Chaplaincy was also a part of multi-disciplinary teams, all seen as bringing spiritual resources to the healing endeavour.

In 1985 Ian completed training as a *Clinical Pastoral Education* Supervisor and has run courses most years since then. Recently the 100th student completed the course. CPE is the only internationally-recognised course for hospital chaplaincy training. Ian is currently a vice president of ANZACPE.

In the late 1980s the programme *A Better Life* was initiated: long term

patients were assessed for placement outside the hospital environment. Perhaps 70 percent of patients did get a “better life”. But there were tragic incidents where managed in-hospital behaviours became the basis for criminal charges.

In the mid 90s, the hospital focused on forensic mental health and intellectual disability rehabilitation, and was rebuilt away from the hospital chapel. This meant special patients could not visit the chapel. The District Health Board said if \$100,000 was raised to move the chapel, they would fund the rest. The chaplains formed a trust, and with huge support, raised more than enough. The chapel was moved in 2007. In the process, chaplains experienced much community goodwill towards their service, and gained more chaplaincy volunteers. The hospital administration noticed this goodwill, and when church-sourced funding declined, they paid the finance for the foreseeable future. Chaplains were very relieved, as they too have families and mortgages!

Ian recognises that with the ‘Maori Renaissance’, spirituality overall achieved a higher profile. Chaplains worked closely with Maori mental health staff, and the Pacific Island services. The local *iwi* gave the newly-moved Chapel a name: *Te Karakia i te Koraha*, The Prayer in the Wilderness. So apt!

The question the chaplains ask patients, families and staff is “What do you want from us?” – just as Jesus often asked those he encountered. This forms the basis of the pastoral care chaplains offer. Patients often say they need “family” – theirs are often dead, far away or care-weary. So chaplains try to make the chapel a home – hospitable, safe, a place to get some clothes, and have birthdays honoured.

The Christmas play performed by

patients is a very important event in which people who were never ‘allowed’ to be in plays at school are applauded and valued. “Each year” said Ian, “there is a moment of pure awe when God’s gift of Jesus is truly received by the congregation”.

The hospital and Inter-Church Hospital Chaplaincy supported Ian in training as a psychotherapist, after he had become a CPE tutor. This enabled him to be a more formally therapeutic presence and met his need to grow as an effective chaplain. He is grateful to his (Presbyterian) denomination for recognising his call, investing in educating him in ministry and pastoral skills, and then leaving him to pursue the ministry to which he was called. He is also very grateful to colleagues, staff and family who have understood and supported his work.

Ian stayed so long because he felt he could offer something people needed. God’s call was for him to be present to the *anawim* – present for the long haul, with significant relationships developed and information held.

Ian would love to see the wider community taking more personal responsibility for noticing people with mental health issues and finding ways to share life with them. Churches could lead the way in learning wisdom from those who have least status and resources. And he wants health funders to understand more fully that people with disabilities spend their whole lives advocating for what should be theirs as of right, and asks, “How can funders relieve them of this heavy burden?”

For Ian, *The Servant Song* says it all, “I will hold the Christ light for you in the night-time of your fear. I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.” ■

don't muzzle the holy spirit

Father Anthony Gittins CSSp was in Dunedin recently to give a seminar entitled Transforming Mission. *Tui Motu* was there and had the opportunity to interview Anthony.

Mission is a job description for God,
Evangelization is a job description for Jesus,
Discipleship is our job description & that of the Church.

And the metaphor for God's mission, is 'breathe',
God's breathing out is creation. God's breathe hits the creative fan.
God's breathing in draws all people into goodness and intimacy with God.

Jesus is God's mission brought to earth: evangelizing, good newsing.
Jesus makes the Good News sing!
God's mission in Jesus has a church, not the other way around, as we commonly think.
In baptism we are co-missioned into the 'good newsing' of Jesus.

The church doesn't have a mission: God's mission has the church.
Parishes don't have a mission: God's mission has a parish.
I don't have a mission: God's mission has each of us.

This is the 'simple theological shell', around which Anthony talked: and like Jesus, he used story, as well as the Gospel narratives and Acts, while always interacting with our own daily experience of life: breathing-in and breathing-out. Talking later to participants, some said there were many ideas to take home, and things they could then distil and do. They found this was empowering. Here are two seminal ideas Anthony talked of.

being missional

How do you see the parish now?

It very much depends upon whether the pastor is sufficiently collaborative and not intimidated by the fact that there are people in the parish who have more gifts than he has and a variety of gifts. But the old distinction between the 'maintenance' parish and the 'mission' parish is still good. If the 'maintenance' parish is constantly trying to breathe in, to protect its boundaries and protect its members, it loses that other dimension (of breathing out) and then it's got nothing to live for.

The true parish that survives is not the parish with the big bank balance; it's the parish that has the big outreach. US Presbyterians took up the word 'missional',

and it's become widespread there. It's a very good word, because the word 'mission' polarizes the missionaries we send abroad against the rest of the world. We say the missionaries are doing the 'mission' thing and because of that we, or I, don't need to do mission. Moreover, the Presbyterians would say that parishes are dying on the vine because they are not missional. You have to get the sense that it is the going-out, the movement from the centre to the edge, that is critical.

Many Catholic parishes have taken this idea on board and identified with this 'missional' idea as a basic characteristic of what parish must be. How do you get to be 'missional'?

Well, you say to the people who come to church, it is not just the breathing in (being in church on Sunday) that is important. Just as vital is the dismissal, that 'go, this liturgy is ended, go and breathe out' and you go to those people who need something for whatever reason. It is putting flesh on the skeleton. It's an old idea, but it needs repeating over and over.

One of the reasons why the early church grew was because they were absolutely committed to the idea of loving God and neighbour. And they had a very specific idea of the neighbour as the people you know **and the people you haven't yet met.** We have largely lost this idea of those we have yet to meet.

Our neighbour is someone like ourselves or somebody who was a christian or a woman or a man like us. But the people you haven't met means you've got



to reach out and meet them, and not in a kind of narrow proselytizing way. There are so many shut-ins, so many people in hospital or in prisons, of all faiths and none, and they are the way the Kingdom is built. You may not build the church, but you will build the kingdom. This gives people a sense of purpose. What else can I do, they ask, after they have arranged the flowers on the altar and cleaned the brass. That 'else' is so many things.

The most important things are the least important things usually. And people need to be helped to see again and again that baking or cleaning or wall papering or visiting are as much an act of ministry (or potentially so) as being at your prayers or saying the rosary. It's got to be integrated – this breathing-in and breathing-out. That's the crucial thing. All it demands is a little bit of imagination and a little bit of commitment.

imagination

what about the imagination?

You often see a diocese that seems run down, where priests and laity think you can't do anything. Often the reason they think they can't do anything is that they are operating out of reason or rationality, good in themselves. Imagination asks fundamentally different questions from reason.

Reason asks 'what can we afford' or 'can't we afford'; and why we should or should not do something. Imagination asks 'What if?' and 'why not?' The 'what if' question is not just directed outwardly; it is directed inwardly too. What if I thought differently? What if I acted differently? And why not? The kids will say why can't we do this, and the parents bat back: 'because we can't afford it', or 'because your mother doesn't like it'. But the imagination says, 'but why not?' – like the kids, who keep saying, 'but why not?' 'but why not?'

And if we are a church of imagination then we would keep on asking the question 'why not?' The problem is that our church institution has little or no imagination. It says 'I'll tell you why you can't do something, even before you ask the question.'

It seems to me that imagination is just another word for the Holy Spirit, God's imagination. And yet we put the Holy Spirit in a box. Some think the Church runs the Holy Spirit. You hear it said so often: the official church speaks for the Holy Spirit – preposterous! Let the Holy Spirit speak, for God's sake! In the *Acts of the Apostles* the Holy Spirit is speaking to the church and the Holy Spirit is saying, 'don't go into Bythania' – and Paul and Barnabas know they are led by the Holy Spirit. But we have got so used to the idea that it is somebody in Rome or high up who will speak for the Holy Spirit, who will clip your wings, and stick you in a box.

Again at local level, the questions 'what if' and 'why not' are very important questions. It doesn't matter so much what Rome is doing, life still raises the question for me 'what if?' and 'why not?'

I have an adopted daughter. When my prospective adoptive daughter first came to me and said, "I need a father", my response was a rational response, "I cannot possibly do that". And she said, "Why not?" That's not what I wanted to hear, and for long time I said, "I can't possibly do it". She kept on saying, "You're a priest. You are supposed to be responding to people's needs". And I'm saying, "I could, but no, no, no". And she said, "But why not?" Finally she wore me down, and now I have a much greater appreciation of the simple things that one can do – with imagination.

In Chicago I have worked at a women's shelter for many years as part of my ministry. It's the place where I can be myself, cook food and serve meals. The women who come to the shelter go to a central place, get their social welfare and a calendar which tells them whether there is a volunteer that night at the women's shelter, or whether they have to cook for themselves.

When my name is on that calendar many will come, because I bring fresh food – and they never have fresh food. And there's ice cream, chocolate or whatever, and they love it. And all the while I am saying to myself this is Eucharist. This is Eucharist, 'do this in memory of me'. 'Feed the hungry'. And I don't have to be in their face, like saying grace in a stentorian way! I can serve the meal for God's sake, and they can say thank you, which is Eucharist. So there's one 'what if' and 'why not' for me. ■

Anthony Gittins is professor of mission and culture at the Catholic Theological Institute, Chicago, and a giver of retreats and seminars on mission around the world.

west papua revisited

Budi Hernawan ofm

Tui Motu interviewed a young Indonesian priest concerned to raise awareness of the plight of the West Papuan people

Recently Father Budi Hernawan, a young Franciscan friar of Indonesian origin, visited New Zealand to raise concern about the plight of the West Papuan people among whom he works.

Father Budi was born in Malang of Indonesian parents. His father was a captain in the Indonesian army. As a university student in Jakarta, Budi had experienced the way in which the Suharto government used the army and police to exercise complete control over student demonstrators and anyone who wished to express differing views.

In 1998, after Budi finished his studies as a Franciscan, his provincial sent

him to West Papua, initially for a year only, but he has worked there ever since. His first priestly work was with a local pastoral team of Franciscans and lay people, especially catechists. Weekly, catechists came to prepare their homilies with the pastoral team – there were more churches than pastors so the catechists gathered the communities for prayer.

Soon Budi realised that the Indonesian army controlled the indigenous people, to the point of terrorising villages and torturing as well. Once, soon after he arrived in West Papua, many catechists did not turn up for homily preparation. In private they told Budi that military groups had

arrived in villages in the dead of night. They asked where the local members of the Free Papua Movement (OPM) were operating in the area. When the people denied any knowledge, in one village the men were taken down to the pond and forced to stand in its freezing water for hours while the military interrogated and tortured them in turn. Nights are freezing cold in the highlands. Budi's parish priest wrote a report of these events to the bishop who talked with the area commander. Some of these troops were then withdrawn but there was no disciplinary action at all. Budi said "I was very angry and ashamed of our army's performance. The oppression was done so openly. This has been



Despite having been given special autonomous status, they have no input into defence, trade, economic and foreign policy.

going on for decades without the army being held accountable”.

Budi has helped document similar incidents in the 13 years that he has been in West Papua. In the archdiocese of Jayapura alone, more than 242 individual cases of torture by the Indonesian army have been recorded between 1998 and 2008. This led Budi to bring the situation of the indigenous people to the notice of surrounding countries. He is grateful that slowly the plight of the people is being recognised abroad. Papuan leaders have recently talked to the US Congress and other international bodies, especially the UN Human Rights Commission – unthinkable even ten years ago.

Poverty levels among the people have worsened. *Bahasa Indonesia* is the language of the education system, but its standard is very low compared to Indonesia, and health services are still very limited. All this, despite the fact that much more money is being poured into Papua. This gets used in the built-up areas where Indonesians have migrated to Papua to live under the policy of *transmigrasi* – to relieve the population congestion in Java, and to mingle the local cultures with the dominant Indonesian culture. Migrants benefit more than the indigenous people do. As well, in the last year, new palm oil projects have been started which will lead to massive deforestation of the country.

Why is it important to speak now? In the last few months, the indigenous people have been expressing their frustration anew against the Indonesian government. Despite having been given special autonomous status, they have no input into defence, trade, economic and foreign policy. As well, they are frustrated that local

government and indigenous councils are unable to formulate local law nor have access to finance, despite a steep increase in the province’s budget over the past five years. Human rights violations have not ceased.

What are Budi’s hopes? Budi wishes that countries like New Zealand – the closest neighbours to West Papua – won’t forget their neighbour and its recent history. Helen Clark had been helpful when she was Prime Minister. The Finnish government also has been active.

Budi hopes that an agreement like Aceh’s can be worked out for West Papua also. The sticking point of the Aceh agreement was that it was brokered from outside by a third party, the European Commission. As well, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who accepted the Aceh agreement, is in his second term and cannot be re-elected. So it is crucial that people, at home and abroad, be active now, using Aceh’s experience as a model. The next Indonesian president may not be as amenable. Budi asks that concerned New Zealanders raise these matters with our New Zealand government, in the hope that the ongoing injustices will be addressed peacefully, and independence given to West Papua. ■

fr Budi Hernawam ofm is completing his PhD in sociology at the Australian National University.



Opposite page: the Bishop of Timika blesses the coffin of Bartol Yolmen, an pro-independence leader, who died in July 2010 as the result of torture.

Above: girl at Merauke.

Below: protest in Jayapura against the Special Autonomy Provisions of 2001 and demanding a referendum for independence, 8 July 2010.



paradox of life/death and presence/absence

Kath Rushton

A commentary on John 11:1-45

No matter how 'prepared' one is for the passing of a loved one, when it happens, the experience of death shatters. Last year, my mother died just before her ninetieth birthday. Nothing prepared me for her absence and, yet paradoxically, for her presence.

The paradox of life/death and presence/absence is explored in the narrative of the raising of Lazarus which the biblical scholar, Sandra Schneiders, points out integrates history, theology and spirituality. The story of a community's tragedy, the untimely death of Lazarus (history), is framed by two dialogues which explore the meaning of life/death and presence/absence (theology). In the face of the reality of death, the reader is drawn first with Martha and then with Mary into a new horizon of experience in which the reality of death is not denied but transfigured. We are helped to unite the ever-ambiguous experience of death – that of our loved ones, that of our own and that in the universe – in our faith vision (spirituality). Let us explore this a little.

However, let us begin by being mindful that perceptions of Martha and Mary are shaped by knowledge of *Luke 10:38-42*. Martha is often overshadowed by interpretations which stress her busyness and the perceived rivalry between the sisters. Let John be John!

In *John 11*, the gospel for Fifth Sunday of Lent, the community experiences the death of a member, Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, whom Jesus loved (11:5). The death occasions the need to make meaning of this tragedy which is explored in two theological dialogues.

The First Dialogue

The first dialogue (11:17-27) is between Martha and Jesus on the meaning of life and death. Jesus proclaims: "I am the resurrection and the life." In answer to Jesus' question, "Do you believe this?" Martha replies, "Yes, Lord, I have believed that you are the Messiah (*christos*), the Son of God, the one coming into the world" (v.27). Her confession of faith is remarkable in itself and also in the context of this gospel for three reasons.

First, there are several confessions of faith: Nathanael (1:49), the woman of Samaria (4:42), Peter (6:69), the man born blind (9:38) and Thomas (20:28). However,

Martha's reflects most closely the purpose of the gospel: "... that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." (20:31) Second, her expression of faith is threefold. She acknowledges Jesus as 'the Messiah,' 'the Son of God' and 'the one coming into the world.'

Finally, most remarkably, Martha's confession echoes that of Peter in Matthew's gospel. In the context of receiving the keys of the kingdom, Jesus proclaims him to be the rock on which he will build the church. Peter confesses, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." (16:16) Only on the lips of Martha is found such a similar confession in John. How might Martha's dialogue with Jesus on the mystery of Jesus' presence in absence reflect the situation of John's community and my own?

The Second Dialogue

The second theological dialogue is between Jesus and Mary (11:28-37), who is described as having "anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair," an event found later in 12:1-11.

Mary hears that Jesus "is calling for you." (11:28) In John, the phrase 'his own' is a special one used for Jesus' relationship with his loved ones who hear the voice of the good shepherd calling and follow him. Mary is cast as such a one. She hears his call and goes out to meet him on the way. How might Mary's dialogue with Jesus on the mystery of Jesus' presence in absence reflect the situation of John's community and my own?

Comforted by the Jewish Community

The grief and sadness of death is not denatured. Jesus is described as "greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved" and "he wept." Grief is real and deep as can be seen also from the sisters who are vitally part of their local Jewish community. Although, as followers of Jesus, they may have made choices that set them aside from the larger Jewish community, they continue to live within it and relate to it. Neighbors and friends comfort and mourn with them by participating in traditional Jewish mourning customs. This overlooked fact contrasts with the



depiction of relationships with 'the Jews' implied elsewhere in this gospel.

Life/Death and Presence/Absence

The paradox of life/death and presence/absence of Jesus, opened up by this narrative's integration of history, theology and spirituality, resonates with the ever-ambiguous experience of the death of our loved ones and the shadow of our own death. Our faith vision stretches to encompass the paradox of life/death and presence/absence of Jesus in the immense suffering of death in such events as the earthquakes in Haiti and the appalling ongoing aftermath. So too, our faith vision stretches to encompass the paradox of life/death and presence/absence of Jesus in the death and catastrophic extinctions built into the evolution of life in all its forms over billions of years. How is Jesus' death-resurrection foreshadowed symbolically in this story, in my life, in the world and in the expanding and unfolding universe? How is Jesus' presence found in his absence and how, in his absence, is he present? ■

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gaze in wonder

Most people have not had the privilege of standing squashed with hundreds of other tourists to be able to view the wonders of the Sistine Chapel. Now the Vatican has recently put up on the web a site where we can have full access to the glories of the Sistine Chapel. It is possible to see any fresco and also to zoom in and out of a particular part of the wall or ceiling. For all those who have seen the Chapel, and those who haven't, you may now take delight at home in this greatest of Michaelangelo's works.

This site was established by the Villanova University in the United States at the behest of the Vatican.

The link is:

www.vatican.va/various/cappelle/sistina_vr/index.html

Or you can find it easily using a Google search for "vatican sistina cappelle vr"



articulating a common humanity

The King's Speech

Reviewer: **Paul Sorrell**

I once knew a man who suffered from a severe stutter, but could speak normally when he 'remembered the method' he had been taught. What exactly this method entailed I never found out, but it always seemed to work for him when he recollected it. Such advanced therapy was unknown to Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush), the self-taught Australian speech therapist who took on the task of curing Prince Albert, Duke of York, later King George VI (Colin Firth), of his crippling stammer, and whose remarkable true story is told in this excellent film.

The King's Speech traces not only Logue's painstaking course of treatment,

but the personal relationship that develops between the two men. It goes further still and explores the familial and psychological origins of such disorders, class relations and the structure of power in 1930s Britain, as well as guiding us through the abdication of the feckless and self-absorbed Edward VIII, his brother's accession to the throne and Britain's entry into the Second World War.

If there is one overarching theme in the movie, it is that of common humanity. The king's incapacitating speech defect places him on a level with his humblest subject. From the start, Logue demands that Albert visit him in his spacious but tatty rooms and insists that they call each other Lionel and Bertie. Both men enjoy a warm family life, and the scene where Albert is seen playing with his children, the little princesses Elizabeth and Margaret, struggling to articulate his affection for them, is especially appealing. Helena Bonham Carter does a low-key but exceptional job of playing his wife Elizabeth, the future Queen Mother, and manages to steal the odd scene.

One of Logue's tasks is to unravel the king's inner story, to seek out and heal

the sources of his disability. Revelations of his ill-treatment as a toddler at the hands of a nurse, and being forced out of his natural left-handedness provide some valuable clues. Albert's overbearing father, the silver-tongued George V, makes no allowances for his son's handicap. At the beginning of his relationship with his therapist, Albert has difficulty expressing any emotions other than anger and frustration, his face an unresponsive mask. It is a measure of Logue's success when, at the end of the film after the king has delivered a major speech announcing that Britain is at war with Germany, Albert lays his hand on his shoulder and says the simple words, "Thank you, my friend."

For a film that I had expected to be another glossy, blue-chip production about the lives and loves of the British upper classes, *The King's Speech* covers a great deal of ground, and in considerable depth. Apart from one or two cardboard cameos – notably a rigidly conventional Archbishop of Canterbury and Timothy Spall's unintentionally comic Winston Churchill – the performances are superlative.

Little wonder that it's expected to sweep the board at this year's Oscars. ■



an 'everest' for interfaith dialogue

The Rhythm of Being

Raimon Panikkar
Orbis 2010

Reviewer: **Fr Kevin Connors**

The son of a Spanish Catholic mother and Indian Hindu father, Raimon Panikkar (1918-2001) was ordained priest in 1946. Through a visit to India in 1954 his profound appreciation of the Hindu and Buddhist religions was awoken. "I became a Hindu and a Buddhist while remaining a Catholic." A friend of Pope Benedict, he continued to be a priest in good standing with the Church.

In the academic year 1989-1990 Panikkar's reputation as one of the greatest religious thinkers of the 20th Century was put beyond doubt when he was invited to present the Centennial Gifford Lectures. The list of Gifford Lecturers includes Josiah Royce, William James, Karl Barth, Gabriel Marcel, Hannah Arendt, Paul Tillich and others of the same renown. He was the first Indian and Asian invited to present them.

After 20 years these lectures have been worked into the form of a book *The Rhythm of Being*. It is not an easy book, but it will nourish your faith to read it. It unites Eastern and Western thought in an astonishing synthesis of 400 pages. It is an Everest – an indispensable source for inter-religious dialogue. A few days on its slopes are worth a lifetime musing in other books. It is dedicated to a New Zealand academic, Scott Eastham, who is a noted Panikkar scholar and senior lecturer in media studies at Massey University.

The book's main difficulty is emotional rather than intellectual. It takes prayer and patience to sit with such an enlightening diet of Sanskrit terms. There are also quotes in Ancient Greek, Latin, Spanish, German, French and other languages, all translated by the author. While it is easy to read these

translations, it takes time to absorb such enormous erudition.

His treatment of the Hebrew Scriptures is not profound and his studies in Philosophy do not include Heidegger's successors, most notably Levinas and Derrida. This suggests there is more work to be done, especially with the help of Panikkar's application of *advaita*. His contribution remains radical, new and indispensable.

What does he say? The final paragraph of the final chapter ("The Emerging Mythos") gives an extremely succinct account of the book which provides remarkable access to a discussion of his work. (The italics below are Panikkar's).

"Summing up: a new *mythos* may be emerging. Signs are everywhere. I have already given names to many fragments of this dawning: cosmotheandric insight, sacred secularity, kosmology, ontonomy, radical trinity, interdependence, radical relativity and so on. I may also use a consecrated name: *advaita*, which is the equivalent of radical Trinity. Everything is related to everything...".

Advaita is the crucial contribution that Panikkar's Eastern genius brings to Western Philosophy. The use of "consecrated name" and "Trinity" both indicate the sense of holiness that *advaita* brings. It expresses the Indic idea of non-dualism. Reality is not one, it is relational. It is not two, it is relational. It expresses the holiness of the incomprehensible responsibility/co-responsibility that is Being or Wholeness (i.e. infinite Wholeness).

An appreciation of radical Trinity can also bring some illumination to *advaita*. ("*Advaita*" enables there to be non-dual or relationally whole co-responsibility in the members and elements of various traditions without renouncing those traditions. Religious traditions in their depth are intrinsically *advaitic*.)

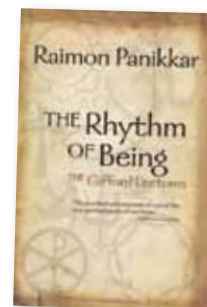
Radical Trinity brings a deep vision to our Christological Trinity. It articulates the absolute identity of the Immanent Trinity (the Trinity in God) with the

Economic Trinity (the Trinity communicated to creation). If they could be thought of distinctly, one would be eternal, the other would be temporal. Yet they cannot be. God is one and the same Trinity in the "divine dimension" as in creation.

Therefore this triunity of life shared by God and creation is tempiternal. Furthermore this expression of the Trinity in creation is triune. Each part is related, yet bears intrinsically the character of its own identity. Thus God, Man and Kosmos form an interdependent whole. (The "K" of Kosmos and "M" of "Man" belongs to Panikkar's profound linguistics.)

It took me a day or two of thinking to get the idea of "interdependent". It was worth it. This interdependence leads us to the "cosmotheandric experience" (*cosmos, theos, andros*).

This a profound book, and for Catholic scholars it is essential reading. ■



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Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

poor aiding the poorer

A report in the UK *Independent* newspaper recently outlined the enormous contribution Cuba has made over the past 50 years to countries in need of medical assistance. A case in point is Haiti, where medical personnel are working. In recent years Cuba has trained 500 Haitian doctors for free as part of its aid programme, with another 300 currently in training. In 1960, Cuba began sending medical workers to other impoverished countries. One programme, *Operation Miracle*, has seen ophthalmologists restoring the eyesight of 1.8 million people in 35 countries. Another team was the first to arrive in Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake and the last to leave. Currently a third of Cuba's 78,000 doctors, along with 10,000 other health workers, are working in 77 poor countries.

Medical graduates look after about 300 Cuban families for at least 3 years. According to the OECD Cuba's per capita health cost was \$400, whereas the US spent \$7,500 per capita. Infant mortality was 4.8 per thousand, better than the US. Cuba has been forced to produce 80% of its medicines, and import the rest from non-US aligned countries. As well as providing assistance, the scheme has allowed doctors to supplement their poor pay, and furnish the government with diplomatic kudos.

Originally a Spanish colony, Cuba gained independence early last century, but was greatly dominated by US interests. During the 1950s various resistance movements arose aiming to overthrow the corrupt Batista regime, with Fidel Castro prominent. Castro eventually took over, brutally marginalizing other resistance groups and individuals and imprisoning and executing opponents. Those fleeing the country included half the country's 7,000 doctors. Cuba has suffered trade sanctions from the US

ever since.

Retired Bishop Owen Dolan, who recently visited Cuba, said "Fifty years of Cuban socialism has been harsh, but one does not meet an oppressed people."

death penalty disruption

Italy's parliament has insisted that therapeutic drugs not be used to bring about death. Consequently, the Italian firm supplying sodium thiopental to US states for use in death penalty cases has ceased production because it couldn't guarantee preventing its misuse. *The Wall Street Journal* is quoted as saying the death penalty system in the US "is potentially thrown into turmoil". The Community of Sant'Egidio's lobbying played a major role in effecting the decision. It was founded 43 years ago and works in many fields, including AIDS, peace, poverty, ecumenism, with active participants in many countries.

Sodium thiopental is already in short supply after the British government last November also banned its manufacture following a campaign by a British group. States can attempt to use another anaesthetic instead – Oklahoma, for example, has switched to a drug used to put down cats and dogs.

israel and democracy

The US is a strong supporter of Israel as part of its Middle East strategy (pursuing stability at the expense of democracy – and failing), reinforced by strong pressure from the 'Jewish Lobby'. But underlying all this is a widespread religious attitude among voters, arising from an interpretation of the bible known as Dispensationalism.

In 1909 the Scofield Reference Bible was published in the US. It presented this interpretive scheme that claims there are seven ages ('dispensations') into which

history is divided. When Israel rejected the Messiah, God stopped history and established God's Church – a purely spiritual fellowship – and true believers will eventually be 'raptured' into heaven. 'Armageddon' is imminent. Russia, the base of world communism, was expected to be destroyed by God's instrument, the US. Islam has now replaced Russia.

When the Church is 'raptured' God will accomplish God's purposes through the modern state of Israel, which is essential for the return of Christ; therefore its government must be supported unquestioningly. While not all fundamentalists are dispensationalists, many are influenced by it. The same views are promulgated through evangelical media.

On the other hand, a pre-election-2008 poll showed a majority of US Jews, as distinct from the 'Jewish Lobby', disagreed with Bush's policy on Israel. Last May pro-Israeli writer J.J. Goldberg wrote of "... a larger community ... that operates on the national and international plane and involves us all, like it or not. It consists mostly of a handful of big-budget organizations and assorted tycoons and activists speaking in our names and defending what they think are our interests."

Goldberg recently expressed concern over the future of democracy in Israel, describing four groups, each growing in influence, that appear to have scant regard for democratic conventions. He outlines some possible scenarios (one with "the Putin-like Avigdor Lieberman" as PM) aimed at further disadvantaging Palestinians. He doubts the many Israelis who value democracy would possess the strength to fight a dictatorship... "and most of American Jewry would be so disgusted by Israel's abandonment of democratic principles that I think the majority would simply write off Israel as a tragic, failed experiment." ■

word made flesh

In November last, Saint Margaret's College, Dunedin, hosted the Anglican and Catholic Bishops for a few days to listen to some fascinating speakers.

Among them was the Right Honourable John Battle, in Tony Blair's Cabinet as a Trade and Industry Minister, a Foreign Minister, and lastly the Cabinet Envoy to faith communities. John talked to us about faith and politics, and interfaith questions. I was surprised to find that some senior Muslims in his own community were not trying to convert Christians but calling on them to be more Christian.

John and Mary Battle visited the yellow-eyed penguin colony on the Otago Peninsula and were struck by how careful the observers were to make certain that they did not destroy their habitat. John wrote about this for a British paper and urged the media to make certain that in observing Prince William and Kate Middleton they took care not to destroy that happy couple's habitat.

John was amazed that Aotearoan Anglican and Catholic Bishops (and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church) could just sit and enjoy one another's

company – not something he had experienced in England. The high point for me came during relaxation at the end of one meal when Bishop Richard Ellena, the Anglican Bishop of Nelson, played the keyboard. Richard is a gifted musician, and a former music master at St Bede's College. It was so uplifting to hear him playing in this setting.

At another session my parish priest, Father Mark Chamberlain, spoke about his work with young people. After outlining a punishing work schedule he was asked about his own prayer life. Apart from the hour in prayer from 5.30 am, saying the morning, midday, and night prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as time spent in Holy Name church from 1 pm to 3 pm, it seemed fairly ordinary – that is if you were not busy! I feel privileged to work with him in Dunedin.

Both John Battle and Mark Chamberlain are witnesses to the incarnation, that God is dwelling in the midst of God's people. They and other presenters were inspiring to me, and the others who attended.

In December we had a concerted effort in church to inform people about changes to the wording of some Mass prayers. In many ways these prayers

are remarkably similar to older ones that were themselves changed. A lot of money and time has been spent on producing missals, missalettes, and compact discs, as well as running seminars.

Money is traditionally the index of sincerity and the church is very sincere about these changes. I was reflecting on the energy going into these texts, when a retired priest friend of mine reminded me that the liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas should be celebrating the Word becoming flesh. Some of our textual obsession, now, and at other times, could easily lead us to think that the Word remains word.

My experience at the November Bishops' event where I heard John and Mark reminded me that the Word is still living among us. The Bishops, as good people, reminded me of this.

My hope is that, following Christmas, we are not so obsessed with the accuracy of texts, and their identity with the Latin, that we forget that the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. The Word is still dwelling among us. ■

Fr Peter Norris is Master of St. Margaret's College, University of Otago

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a Mother's Journal

Saturday afternoon. The low sun sifting through the trees paints camouflage designs behind me. Grandma is chopping onions for dinner. Dad's gone for a short run. Four children flotsammed around the living room floor reading, puzzling, playing.

Sunday breakfast this week is pancakes and lime juice. We're talking about the sweet, soft and sour bits of church. Most of us don't like seeing only men up the front. We mostly enjoy the singing. We each have days when we wonder whether we belong here. All of us like the shared lunches. We're hanging in for the meantime.

Monday morning and Grandma sits on the sofa reading stories to our bright-eyed two year old. She often feels bereft after 'the Big Kids' go off to school. I am so grateful for story books and Grandmas today when I have a neo-natal survival training course to plan and the ever-present emails and phone calling me.

Tuesday: I look out at dawn and see the sun rising up and over the steep hills. It rises every morning. Like God's mercies new every day. My mug of tea swirls up a Steam Prayer on my behalf.

Wednesday at noon Jalori and I stroll up the path to meet our new neighbour, Preeti, with her toddler. The two of them play. We drink *chai*. She tells me about her 30 year old brother who died only six months ago. She shows me a photo. He's looking straight ahead earnest, unsmiling. She says she still can't help crying.

Thursday. Too many details fill my head. Shopping lists and we're right out of fruit and vegies. Photocopying to do. Chase that washing machine repair bill again. Ask the internet and phone line office how many more weeks we



have to wait for a line. They drive me mad. When does Lent start? It can't be far away. What could our family do this year to build in ideas of discipline, making do, walking the narrow path and making space for mystery.

Friday. TGIF. Walking to school early with 11 year-old Shar for her flute lesson, we talk. Notice the violets quietly flowering on the bank. She tells about the British Raj history focus this term. The class trip to Lucknow next month. Wonders if her emails to NZ friends are getting through or else why aren't they answering. We laugh about little Jalori's imaginary puppies and how she cried till we 'found' them and tucked them into bed with her last night. Must walk to school more often.

Each moment, each day, each week – God is with us. ■

Kaaren and Jeph, with their four children, live and work in health and community development in North India. Jeph's mother is presently visiting them.



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