

Tui Motu

InterIslands

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Each of us is the result of a thought of God.
Each of us is willed, each of us is loved,
each of us is necessary.

Pope Benedict XVI



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Spirit of reconciliation

Sometimes when an issue of *Tui Motu* is being put together, a theme appears almost unbidden. You may call it coincidence or serendipity – or inspiration! This month the emerging theme is reconciliation.

The interview with school Principal Paul Ferris (*pp 18-20*) describes his recent experience visiting the Rainbow Nation. He was astonished by the sense of forgiveness for past injustices which he experienced among black South Africans. Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and many others have been the inspiration of this movement. But he remarked also on the important contribution made by the churches.

Kate Dewes, of Christchurch, pays tribute (*pp 8-9*) to the significant role played by the late David Lange in the cause of world peace and New

Zealand's special contribution. It is interesting that David visited India at least 20 times, and was a passionate admirer of Gandhi. His travels led him to appreciate the variety and talents of other nations. It made him a consistent advocate for oppressed peoples.

Coinciding with this month's General Election, *Caritas Aotearoa* has chosen to celebrate the cultural diversity of our population as theme for Social Justice week. Hopefully it will help remind voters that welcoming migrants and caring for minorities is a bounden duty of Christians everywhere – and of Christian voters here in particular. Refugees, political or economic, have a special claim on our care.

Politicians playing on electors' fears by rattling the racist drum deserve to be consigned to political oblivion.

September 17

A General Election provides an opportunity for the country to take stock and for the churches to evaluate political leadership. We have no intention of telling readers how to vote, and here we have simply highlighted one or two issues:

- The scandal of child poverty was dealt with in previous issues (*July TM pp 6-7*); several leaders have alluded to it, and Labour has announced a boost to the *Working for Families* programme.
- Care of migrants and refugees (*above*)
- The environment. Only the Greens give this vital issue the priority it

merits. Their energy policy (*pp 9-10*) is summarised.

- It is vital that Christian voices are heard across the political spectrum. Unfortunately, 'Christian' for most people these days means a voice from the political Right. Steve O'Connor, a Baptist minister, (*pp 10-11*) makes a plea that this imbalance be remedied.

We ask: *where are the strong Catholic voices we once would hear in the Labour Party?* Has Catholicism in New Zealand taken on the cloak of respectability? That surely is a betrayal of its origins. ■



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

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Synod on Eucharist

Bishops from all over the world gather in Rome next month to discuss Eucharist, what the Vatican Council termed 'the source and summit' of our Christian lives. We publish letters on this page and on page 4, which highlight several vital issues calling for discussion. There is also a cry from the heart by Dominican Peter Murnane regarding a recent liturgical document which has upset many people (pp 6-7).

If the Eucharist is seen as the heart of Christian community – and yet its very celebration is seriously threatened across the world because of an acute shortage of priests, then this issue must be put top of the Synod agenda. If that means that the Vatican has to swallow its pride and allow priestly celibacy and the ordination of women to be discussed, then so be it. But the bishops who gather must demand a full debate without censorship.

In previous Synods bishops have complained that the programme was too controlled 'from above'. This time we have a new Pope, and Archbishop Schotte is no longer there as general organiser. A renewed church requires a re-invigorated leadership – lay and clerical. Let us hope and pray that the cry of God's people will be heard, and that this Synod will in later years be hailed as a turning point in the rebirth of Catholicism.

M.H.

The upcoming Synod

an open letter to my Catholic friends

Dear Friends,

I have heard of the forthcoming *Synod of the Eucharist*, read some things about it, and write to wish you well.

Of course what will be discussed has nothing really to do with me. I'm just a friendly neighbour watching from over the fence. Mind you, what happens in your great big old house does impact on the whole religious neighbourhood. So, for what it's worth, from a friend who lives next door in a draughty house with a leak or two in the ceiling, I thought I'd offer some comments.

Firstly, you've got a lot going for you. One of the neat things about being big is that all sorts of people can come to visit. May the doors of your international house continue to be open to the great diversity of humankind. Those doors though I suspect will only stay open if you avoid having too many rules, resist the dominance of any one culture, and value the big-heartedness that is at the core of Roman Catholicism and drives your commitment to justice.

Secondly, the priest thing. The world has moved on from having jobs with the subtext 'women don't apply'. I know you have all sorts of historical and theological reasons for your policy – but really, for the person on the street and many of us who aren't, they don't hold up. Gender discrimination is deeply offensive and impacts significantly on your credibility.

It also must make recruiting ordinands very difficult. I'm involved in assessing vocations in my diocese and

if we had to discount all women and all married men, let alone those who plainly aren't suited, we would not have many left! I think you diminish God's offering to the church by dismissing so many people before you've even tested their vocations. Anyway, no doubt you'll work this through in your own way and in your own time.

Lastly, Holy Communion. The other day at the end of Mass a gentleman came up to me, told me that he enjoyed the service, and then whispered furtively, "Don't tell Fr Bernard I took communion." I cheekily replied, "Do you think God minds?" I think God would be glad that he's in church, any church, and opening himself to the grace that is offered in the sacrament of Holy Communion. After all, none of us has a monopoly on grace.

We churches all try to be faithful to the understandings of Holy Communion we have been taught, understandings rooted deeply in our histories and theologies. Yet we need to remind ourselves that God initiated this sacrament, not us. And that sacrament was offered to both Peter and Judas, and to those that bickered afterwards about who was the greatest (*Lk.22:24-27*).

The Sacrament is still offered, in season and out of season, to the pure and impure, the humble and the egotists, by those who aren't that different. It is God's sacrament, and we are constantly in danger of making it ours.

So, my friends, I wish you every blessing as your representatives confer, listen and learn from each other.

Ka kite ano, Glynn

Glynn Cardy is an Anglican priest; vicar of St. Matthew-in-the-City, Auckland

Wholesome meat to chew

In response to your editorial: *Is the Meat Too Tough?*, our short answer is 'No!' We have subscribed to your magazine since it first started and we have never regretted that decision.

Although we are not Catholics, we read the entire *Tui Motu* every time and find all of it interesting. There is a depth of perspective that we really appreciate, and we expect some articles to be lengthy and sometimes requiring close engagement. There are few Christian magazines around that do this. In a world of short sound bites, it's great to have more time spent on issues, without the need to move on fast before you get to the serious stuff. We lead a home-group and share *Tui Motu* among our members. We also use some of the articles as springboards to discussions. Recently we used Glynn Cardy's piece about Noah, where our view of the story as a child may not have matured since then. We value your contribution to our spiritual lives.

Janet & Hugh Scott, Motueka

Pastoral leadership & evangelisation

We know that to be healthy our bodies need nourishment and exercise, otherwise the ensuing malnutrition or obesity will lead to weakness and disease. Likewise for the Body of Christ. The Eucharist is the main source of nourishment for its members, and that source is drying up.

As Humphrey O'Leary (*Tui Motu* August) says, our bishops have a very restricted field to choose from. But he, along with Ray Knight, has put his finger on the other cause of weakness in the New Zealand Church – neglect of exercise. A significant number of parishes are preoccupied with domestic matters to the exclusion of the duty to evangelise.

As Pope Paul VI put it: "what matters is to evangelise human culture and cultures... in a vital way in depth and right to their very roots". Could it be that the dearth of priestly vocations is somehow related to our failure to evangelise? Why is it so often left to

letters to the editor

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

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

individuals working independently of parish support?

I have known many priests who exemplify Colin Durning's description of their role "to support the priesthood of the laity" in the broad sense of the term. But there are still too many who are prey to the myth that ordination equips them automatically to be pastoral leaders who alone have all the answers. It is a myth that feeds on, and in turn strengthens, clericalism.

John Bland's point that we need a short-term solution seems fair enough. The problem is we have relied on this 'short-term' solution (importing priests) for over a century. Worse, some priests do not understand legitimate lay independence, destroying the work of others who formed their parishioners to be evangelisers in the many ways described by our popes and bishops. Often there are cultural factors involved. Over my lifetime many who recognised this call to evangelise found support among those of other faiths and eventually abandoned their unsupportive parishes as irrelevant.

Yes, we have a shortage of priests, but we have an even greater shortage of pastoral leaders. But some priests see others with leadership abilities as a threat to their own status, and set about undermining them. Consequently apostolically inclined young men are presented with an image of the priesthood that engenders disdain rather than inspiration.

These priests do not present a vision outlined by John-Paul II in his recent letter on the Eucharist: "The Eucharist expresses and reinforces our communion with the Church in heaven. (This vision)... increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility for the Church today." The Pope continues that he wants to "reaffirm this forcefully... so that Christians will feel more

obliged than ever not to neglect their duties as citizens in this world."

Personal conversion is essential, but that takes place within the response to Christ's call. And that call is not simply to us as individuals, but as members of the community of faithful. John Paul II again: "The ethical and social aspect of the question is an essential element of Christian witness: we must reject the temptation to offer a privatised and individualistic spirituality which ill accords with the demands of charity to say nothing of the implication of the Incarnation..."

Jim Elliston, Orewa

Terrorism in London

In your editorial titled 'Hiroshima 2005' (*August TM*), you described Tony Blair's assertion that the London bombings had nothing to do with the invasion of Iraq as being "dangerous nonsense". Is it?

As we learn more about the nature of terrorists it becomes clear that their intentions are solely destructive, that their venom is targeted against Western society in general, based on an extremist interpretation of Islam. Regardless of the actions of America or Britain in the Middle East, the London bombings would still have taken place.

To believe that suicide bombers' motivation for mass murder is their disgust at the 'secular humanism' so dominant in our society is a little too far-fetched. Hitler's Nazism was based on a hatred of Jews lacking any foundation. Despite this he was able to proceed with his Holocaust on the flimsiest of justifications, because hatred had taken over. Muslim extremists are operating on the same premise.

Hatred is insecurity at its most extreme, based on fear and ignorance. Using the invasion of Iraq as justification for the London bombings is nothing more than convenient.

Joseph Elliott (emailed)

Terrorism is not the monopoly of Islamic extremists. But it is no coincidence that Al Qaeda-inspired terrorism has been directed at those who launched an unjustified war against Iraq. – ed.

Making Christ's Church

We love our church,
with all her limitations,
and her riches too;
she is our Mother.
For this reason we respect her,
and while we do so,
we dream that she will never lose
her beauty.

May she be a church
where it's good to live,
where you can breathe,
and say what you think.

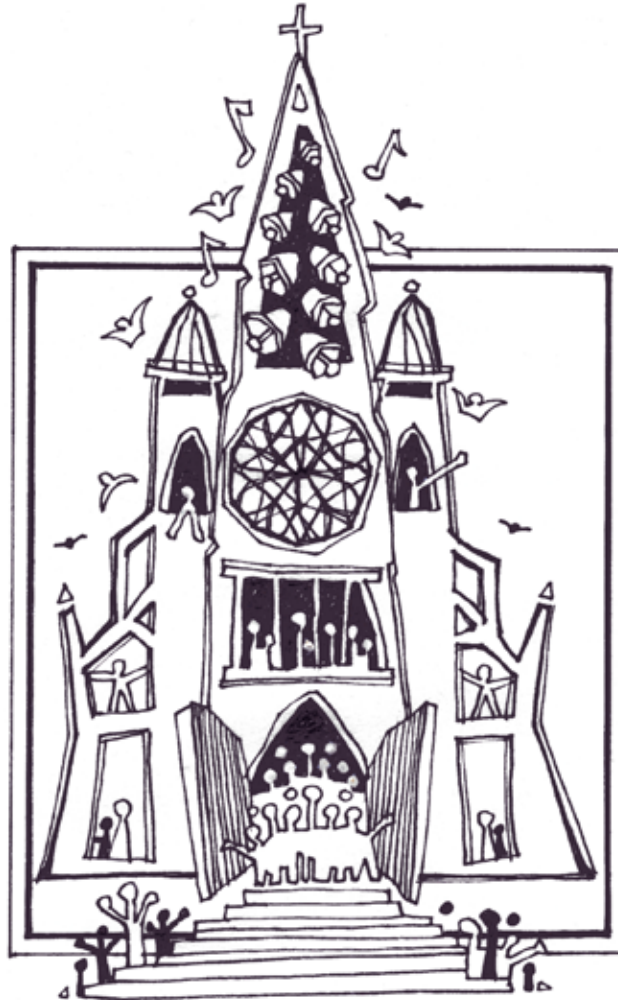
A church of freedom.

A church
which listens before speaking,
which welcomes instead of judging,
which forgives without wishing
to condemn,
which announces rather than
denounces.

A church of mercy.

A church
where the simplest
of our brothers and sisters
will understand what the others are saying,
and where the wisest of leaders
will know that s/he doesn't know;
where the people of God
will be revealed in its entirety.

A church of wisdom.



A church
where the Holy Spirit
will be able to feel at home
because everything hasn't
been foreseen,
settled and decided in advance.

An open church.

A church
where the audacity to do
something new
will be stronger
than the habit of doing things
as they've always been done.

A church
where everyone can pray
in their own language,
express themselves
according to their culture,
live with their own history.

A church
of which people will say,
not *See how well organised they are*
but *See how they love one another.*

Church of Saint-Denis,
church of suburbs and streets and housing estates,
you may still be small
but you're making progress.
You are still fragile,
but you are full of hope.

*Lift up your head and look:
The Lord is with you.*

Bishops regularly write pastoral letters. They rarely
write pastoral poems. But Guy Deroubaix, of Saint-
Denis in France, often did.
Here is one pastoral poem he wrote to his people.
Bishop Guy became bishop in 1977 and died in 1995.

This poem, in its English translation, presents an ideal
of church offered by a wise pastor.
We offer it as an appropriate reflection for the bishops
of the Catholic Church as they gather in Rome next
month for the Synod on the Eucharist.

Should 'all experimentation' cease?

*Is liturgy a static thing? Is it frozen in time?
Is hospitality part of a celebrant's role?
An incident prompts Peter Murnane
to ask some basic questions.*

This year on Holy Thursday, for the first time in 40 years as a priest, I chose not to take part as co-celebrant at the altar but instead received Communion among the congregation. It was a painful decision, on the day when we remember Jesus first giving us himself in Eucharist, but was prompted by recent attempts to control how our community celebrates this gift. As I saw it, the power given to priests had been misused, and I did not want even to *seem* to be part of the structure doing this.

For some years our parish custom has been to give Holy Communion to the congregation *before* the celebrant and other ministers. This custom – practised widely in this country and overseas – echoes our cultural practice of hostess or host serving guests before they sit down themselves. It obeys what Jesus taught us at the Last Supper, to put others first (*Lk 22:24-27; cf Mk 10:42-45*). People often complimented us for making this simple change; but just before Holy Thursday this year, without any consultation of the community, it was suddenly stopped.

Someone had written a letter to the Bishop, their complaint based on the 2004 document *Redemptionis Sacramentum* from the Congregation for Divine Worship. That Instruction presumes to take central control of every detail of the way Roman Rite Catholics worship God in hundreds of different cultures.

A flawed concept

Astonishingly it declares: "As early as... 1970, the Apostolic See announced

the *cessation of all experimentation...* Accordingly, individual bishops and their conferences do not have the faculty to permit experimentation with liturgical texts or the other matters..." (27)

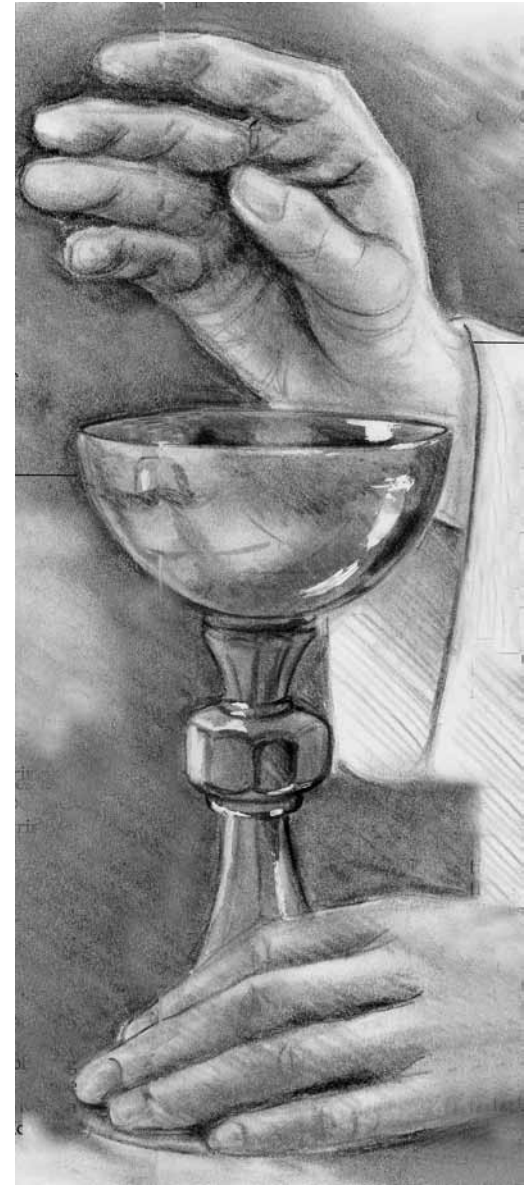
The document promotes a static liturgy, but the concept is flawed:

First, because it asks the impossible, commanding humans to behave with unvarying, mechanical sameness. Experimentation and creative innovation are intrinsic to human life. We humans creatively produce diversity in language, art and even law, which originates in human custom.

Secondly, the document is flawed because the Congregation's absolute statement tramples on important principles taught by Vatican II. Surely the teachings of this General Council, endorsed by subsequent popes, outweigh the claims of a Roman Congregation?

Some principles which *Redemptionis Sacramentum* flouts are:

- The role and responsibility of Bishops' Conferences. Bishops are "successors of the apostles, ...with Peter's successor, ...(they) direct the house of the living God." (Vat II: *Lumen Gentium* 3,18)
- The *Principle of Subsidiarity* requires that power be shared, not centralised. Christians are gifted with free will and have the Holy Spirit within them. It is wrong for any person or group at a 'higher level' to dictate to them, unless truly necessary for the common good. Numerous popes have repeated this principle of Subsidiarity in their social teachings.



The Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) called this a "most weighty principle in social philosophy. It is an injustice... a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organisations can do" (79). Pope John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus* (1991) repeated: "A community of a higher order should not interfere in the life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions... (100)".

- The need to inculturate the Gospel, letting it bring life into each local culture. This applies particularly to liturgy; but in sad contrast *Redemptionis Sacramentum* mentions Inculturation only once, to smother it in a network of new regulations (27).

- *The nature of the Magisterium.*

Ill-informed Catholics sometimes mistakenly imagine that Magisterium means merely what Roman authorities say. Much more, it is the teaching authority of the *whole* church: statements from General Councils, popes, bishops and the collective faith of all who live in the Risen Christ. Before any item of belief can be declared a doctrine of our Catholic faith, it must be found to conform to this *sensus fidelium*. Every document needs to be tested against the whole of Church teaching.

Perhaps most important of all:

- The freedom Christ won for us. St Paul says: “Christ set us free... Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be fastened again to the yoke of slavery”. (*Gal. 5:1*)

“The well-being of society requires absolutely that individuals and groups be free to exercise initiative.” The role of authority is essentially positive, “not to create difficulties or to suppress... (though sometimes it is necessary to correct)” (*Pastoral Instruction on Media*, 1971. 85-86)

The danger of tyranny

Persons wielding power and authority always face the temptation to abuse it. When this power is linked to the Sacred, the temptation is the more dangerous. But we who have to obey authority must also resist the temptation to accept *passively* what it tells us to do. Part of the burden of our freedom is that we need to use our conscience to examine how power is being used in our midst, even while we co-operate with it to build up the community.

We cannot afford to forget the terrible dictatorships that have terrorised our era. These could arise only when they had brought about a culture of fear, subservience and the “informer

mentality”. Dictatorships feed on fear; particularly the fear that informers will report you to Authority. Difficult as it is to believe, this Christian document *Redemptionis Sacramentum* tries to bind “each and every one” with the “most serious duty” of informing on their fellow Christians! On what should they inform?

The list is interesting: “any and every irreverence or distortion” and all ‘abuses’. In making every mass-goer a potential informer, Cardinal Arinze (who authorised this document) lumps together the heinous ‘sin’ of ‘distortion’ – which apparently includes rubric-altering – with the worst possible sacrilege (183).

It was such an informer who precipitated our local crisis, complaining in a letter to the Bishop about how we receive Communion. Under the influence of *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, hasty decisions were made. Authority was appealed to and drastic change was announced without consulting the people who *are* the parish. It was to protest against this that on Holy Thursday I stood among the congregation, rather than at the altar as priest co-celebrant.

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exercise initiative*

Many people were deeply hurt by what seemed like dictates dissolving the earlier decisions of pastors and liturgy groups; and some stayed away from our Easter liturgy. The sorry event highlights the way that our church’s over-centralised authority structures can push people to make quite flawed decisions.

Thankfully, through later consultation, solutions are being worked out. Every crisis is an opportunity. The conflict that wounded our parish during Holy Week was also an opening to display and evaluate the flaws embedded in our church’s current structures.

Is it mature, adult behaviour to want world-wide sameness in rubrics? Or zealously to inform on those who do not conform in every detail to such an artificial norm for liturgy? Would Jesus, who came promising “life to the full” (*Jn 10:10*), expect from us total uniformity of word and action in our public prayer, or reasonable flexibility?

Consultation and interpretation

We have made some progress. Forty years ago consultation was much less common and priests and bishops used power more despotically than now. Even today, although a pastor might consult the parish he knows that Canon Law gives him power of veto over Parish Councils. Does this imbalance of structure need to be changed before we can live more accurately Jesus’ words: “The greatest among you must behave as if... the youngest; the leader as if ...the one who serves”? (*Lk 22:26*)

Our local parish disagreements are trivial when compared to the trials of people in the Majority World: lifelong hunger, suffering and premature death. But our incident exposes the vital question: is *Redemptionis Sacramentum* faithful to what Vatican II taught about the Church: that we are a community, all joined in Christ?

This demands that we find the courage to talk openly in the parish community and to bishops about what each sector needs. When our conscience detects manipulation or bullying we are called to exercise loyal dissent as Paul criticised Peter (*Gal. 2:10*). We need to study the history of liturgy and the theology underlying Magisterium, while showing “in all things, charity”, as Pope John XXIII said echoing St Paul.

But four decades after his death we may well wonder about the condition of the windows in the Vatican and our own houses: how shall we get the strength to open them as far as we need? ■

*Peter Murnane OP is a member
of the Dominican Preaching team
working out of Auckland*

David Lange's Peace Legacy Lives On

Kate Dewes

A few days before David Lange left home for his final journey to hospital, he phoned to encourage us in the peace movement to maintain our vigilance regarding nuclear-free policy, to thank us for our work – and to say goodbye. It was also an opportunity for us to thank him for his outstanding contribution to peace both in Aotearoa/New Zealand and the world.

Between bouts of coughing and voice loss, he apologised for being too emotional when opening the Gandhi photographic exhibition in Christchurch in August 2002 – the very day he had learned he might have only a few months to live. Gandhi was his guru; India his 'second home' (he'd been there 28 times), and he had been determined to come.

The 200-strong audience experienced vintage Lange: no notes, a perfect balance of heart and head, enriched with personal anecdotes and humour. As he described how Gandhi was "shot dead with three shots, and died with God's name on his lips", the tears flowed. Full of emotion, he concluded: "We have the capacity to love and be loved. They're pretty old fashioned words. That's the guts of it; and that's why I'm here tonight".

Like Gandhi, he reminded us of the spirituality which had sustained him to withstand death threats, ridicule from the media and ostracism from colleagues and officials for his peacemaking leadership. So it became urgent to seek formal international

recognition for David – our 'giant kauri'. As a result of our nomination, 15 months later he went to Stockholm to receive the honorary *Alternative Nobel Peace Prize* for his "steadfast work over many years for a world free of nuclear weapons".

As Prime Minister from 1984-1989, he travelled extensively throughout the world exploding the myths of nuclear deterrence. His government helped negotiate a South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone and demanded compensation from the French for the *Rainbow Warrior* atrocity. He addressed the UN General Assembly three times and was the first Prime Minister ever to address the *Conference on Disarmament*.

The celebrated 1985 Oxford Union debate, where he argued that "nuclear weapons are morally indefensible", was seminal in the creation of a more independent foreign and defence policy. As he warned at

*rejecting nuclear weapons
is to assert what is human
over the evil nature of the weapon;
to restore to humanity
the power of the decision;
to allow a moral force to reign supreme*

the time, the speech "would change everything. We would cut ourselves adrift economically, militarily, culturally – the umbilical cord to our past would be severed." With great pride he articulated what many New Zealanders felt: "This is who we are,

this is what we believe, and damn the consequences!"

The experience of leading New Zealand as the first Western-allied state to legislate against nuclear weapons bolstered him later to call for formal withdrawal from the ANZUS Treaty; rejection of the frigate purchase from Australia; reform of the United Nations; a moratorium on all nuclear tests; and respect for international law. Later, he was highly critical of the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, and the "war on terror".

He also championed the causes of ordinary Kiwi peace activists and citizens. In 1976 he defended Peace Squadron activists in the Auckland courts following protests against visits by United States nuclear warships. In 1990 he risked his life by going to Iraq to negotiate successfully for the release of some 30 New Zealand hostages. In 1991 he sent a statement to a US Court about the importance of "demonstration as an instrument of international political betterment", in support of Moana Cole's direct action against US bombers during the Gulf War.

He became a strong advocate for the Christchurch-led international campaign to obtain an advisory opinion from the World Court on the legal status of nuclear weapons. He officially launched the *World Court*



David Lange, at the 2002 Gandhi Photographic Exhibition, speaking with the daughter of the photographer

Project in Auckland in 1992, and led the challenge to the National government to argue strongly for their illegality in the World Court. In 1996 the Court confirmed that it was generally illegal to threaten or use nuclear weapons.

There is a need for David Lange's peace legacy to be formally documented so that future generations can be inspired by his visions for a nuclear free and peaceful planet, his intellectual understanding of issues of disarmament, and how small states can make a difference.

One of my daughters, who was six when she first corresponded with

David in 1989 opposing the frigate purchase, was able to thank him recently for giving her the courage to become a youth outreach worker for the Peace Foundation, and to address a youth rally of 3,000 in Hiroshima.

With the nuclear-free legislation again under threat, let us be sustained by David's powerful closing words from his Oxford Union debate speech:

"The appalling character of nuclear weapons has robbed us of our right to determine our destiny and subordinates our humanity to their manic logic. They have subordinated reason to irrationality and placed our very will

to live in hostage. Rejecting the logic of nuclear weapons does not mean surrendering to evil; evil must still be guarded against.

"Rejecting nuclear weapons is to assert what is human over the evil nature of the weapon; it is to restore to humanity the power of the decision; it is to allow a moral force to reign supreme. It stops the macho lurch into mutual madness." (David Lange, *Nuclear Free: The New Zealand Way*, Penguin, 1990. ■

Kate Dewes is a Christchurch-based peace educator and campaigner. She holds a doctorate in peace studies. Website: www.disarmsecure.org

ELECTION 2005

What about that fuel bill?



Jeanette Fitzsimons, co-leader of the Green Party, launched the Greens' Energy policy, on 22 August in Dunedin. Here are some salient points.

Two major factors influencing energy policy are climate change and the dwindling reserves of oil. The public are much more interested in dwindling oil reserves – because it hits their pockets – than in climate change, which most will scarcely be aware of until it's too late. The response to the two problems is basically the same.

First, a look at oil reserves. In 1998 a barrel of crude oil cost \$12; in December 2003 it cost \$30 – and now it is costing around \$60. Already this crisis has 'grounded' part of the Nelson fishing fleet – a first indication of major economic consequences. If the cost were to go up to \$100 a barrel, that would adversely affect the economy and inevitably result in hardship and unemployment.

The Labour government, however, is counting on these prices coming down again. But no one denies now that the age of cheap and abundant oil is over. The International Energy Agency (IEA) predicts that demand will ultimately outstrip supply in 2037, after which oil will begin to run out. This is probably an optimistic figure – it could happen as soon as 2013. But it does suggest that we still have some time to prepare for a revolutionary change regarding energy supply – but not much.

Some solutions

(1) The fundamental answer is to create smaller, conservation-minded local communities which are much

less dependent on imported energy resources. Self-sufficient communities make themselves secure against soaring world oil prices. Local individual, action is the basic response. Governments can supplement this but never replace it.

(2) Other sources of energy need to be urgently developed: wind and wave power, the use of sustainable carbon sources like wood (but not coal), solar power, fuel cells. And more efficient motor vehicles.

(3) Continue to support world efforts to counter adverse climate change. We cannot meet our Kyoto obligations unless we cease burning coal. If we continue coal use, we can hardly be critical of the USA and Australia because of their profligate use of fossil fuels. New Zealand needs to be in the forefront of energy conservation as well as reducing its own carbon emissions.

(4) Provide the public with good information on energy policy, so that people will not only understand the problems but will move willingly towards solving them. For instance, the average car on New Zealand roads is 13 years old. Such vehicles are not fuel efficient.

We should cease importing vehicles more than seven years old, and let people know that running an old car will cost them \$500 more in fuel per year than it used to. Buying cheap old cars is false economy. We propose introducing a rebate system for more efficient imported vehicles.

(5) The road transport lobby continues to have the loudest voice, seeing new roading as the top priority for solving





A religious voice from the political left?

For many people the term 'Christian' suggest the political right.

But Steve O'Connor thinks this betrays a fundamental message of the Gospel.

Tui Motu recently interviewed him



Steve's religious background on one side is Catholic. He admits to having been a somewhat rebellious and agnostic teenager; coming back to religious faith, aged 18, in a lively charismatic Baptist congregation in Morrinsville.

Later he became involved in youth ministry and was trained in ministry at Carey Baptist College in Auckland. His family had a strong social justice background. Steve's father was an active member of the local Labour Party, and his faith and his politics went together.

"That made perfect sense to me," says Steve, "but I was surprised to find some of my Baptist colleagues thought quite differently. If saving souls is the main thrust of your religious vocation, that can become very individualistic. I once probably thought that way too, but now my 'world' has become bigger and more complex. I reject all exclusivism: exclusivism is one reason many Christians today are opposed to Muslims.

"I sometimes think that one's politics influence one's theology more than vice versa. I came here through an

evangelical formation, but a few years down the track I see myself as 'post-evangelical. To call people to the causes of social justice is a valid form of evangelism.

"In our church here in North East Valley" – in Dunedin, where Steve is Baptist Minister – "we have been hosting a group on Sunday evenings trying to explore faith beyond the boundaries of church. This provides a forum for people who want to talk about their faith but don't warm to the institutional church, as well as for people who have 'burned out' of church.

▷▷ transport problems, especially in Auckland and Wellington. Alternative means of transport are essential substitutes. For instance, revamping the southern and western rail links in Auckland – making it into a unified, double-track, electrified system – would provide as much extra transport mobility as would an eight-lane motorway, at a fraction of the cost to tax and rates budgets as well as to the environment.

(6) Centralisation of schools, hospitals (and businesses) must be reversed. Centralisation of facilities is always more costly in terms of transport. Local schools and hospitals are inevitably more accessible to their communities.

(7) Rail transport of goods is five times more efficient in terms of fuel costs – and coastal shipping is ten times more efficient – than road transport. Therefore, our rail system must be radically upgraded.

We also need to look at designing ships which partially use wind power in a modern, high-tech manner. Ships are much more efficient transporters of goods than aircraft.

(8) Government needs to co-operate with farmers, forestry companies, tourism operators and so forth to introduce long term planning for more efficient energy use. For instance, if it is going to cost more to transport goods in or out of the country by sea or by air, what does that say about the sort of goods we export or import?

If air transport is going to cost significantly more, it means that tourists will probably be fewer but would need to be encouraged to stay longer – thus reversing the present 'market' trend of more visitors coming for shorter stays.

(9) Growing trees for fuel is more environmentally friendly than burning coal, because trees are a renewable resource and take as much carbon out of the atmosphere growing as they put back when they are burnt; whereas burning coal is always a one-way process.

(10) How efficient houses are in conserving heat should become a factor determining their sale value. New houses also must conform to top economy standards. ■

The voice of the religious right

"Often at these meetings we hear quoted the 'public voices' of Christianity – Radio Rhema or the Destiny church or the Maxim Institute. This really irks some of the people who come on Sunday evenings. These 'voices' seem to be the only ones being heard in the media. For instance, if the discussion touches on homosexuality, the stance of the Destiny Church will always get quoted.

"You need to understand the history of this. In recent years US cultural influence has become very strong here, and this has swung evangelism to the political right. Fundamentalism and right wing politics came together in America in the 19th Century.

"Fundamentalism and revivalism seem to go with economic prosperity. In the '70s and '80s in the USA the Moral Majority became a dominant voice especially in the Republican Party, and this has had its influence in New Zealand.

"The evangelical churches here constantly draw on America for their courses and for speakers. The televangelists we see and hear are often from the USA. In the US there has been a very comfortable alliance between George Bush and these right wing Evangelical churches."

"The Destiny Church here is, I think, punching way above its weight in terms of the publicity given it by the media. I'm sure there are many sincere people who belong to it, but I am very uncomfortable with what I hear from it in the media.

"I think the public perception of the Christian church is often damaged by many of the things these people stand for. People in the community who hear their message write off the church as archaic, legalistic and dogmatic. I object to this: all I stand for as a believer is actually being undermined by this false perception of Christianity.

"I like to interpret the right wing stance in terms of Fowler's stages of faith (see *Tui Motu June* pp14-15). Church people who simply pass black-and-white judgments and are satisfied with pat answers, are still stuck at stage 2 or stage 3.

"But society as a whole has moved beyond that. People want to be allowed to ask questions; to disagree with the party line; to enquire and not just to be told. Christian fundamentalists reject Fowler's model because they don't believe Christians ever move beyond Stage Three.

"One of the ills of our present situation is that the Christian Right takes the high ground – it speaks with the loudest voice. Anyone who dissents from this voice becomes marginalised, and is often afraid to speak out.

"It happens even in church leadership. Our own Baptist National Office has issued an opinion that the Labour Party should not be re-elected. It makes it difficult for me as a Minister to stand up and say the opposite. I believe the Gospel needs to inform the human rights discourse, and the church needs to remind us that God has given us freedom to debate issues and to decide them on conscience grounds.

"My stance is to support people's freedom to decide for themselves even if I don't necessarily agree with their views. An example would be the life-style people choose to have. For example, I think people are wrong to eat too much junk food, but I would wish to persuade them to change, but not force them.

An alternnative voice from the left

"For all these reasons I think our churches need to hear an alternative voice proclaiming Gospel values. This is what FOCAL is all about.

"What I am proposing is: first, to set up a web site offering left wing Christian opinions. People can read here that on many of these issues there may be another view from the one they usually hear.

"At the moment there are four of us in the core group, all quite young and from different Christian denominations. We are trying to recruit people who can write media releases for us and make parliamentary submissions. We are still in a very early stage. FOCAL is a focus point; it isn't yet big enough to be a lobby group. Our aim is to set up a network now and hope that it will grow from here. We are interested to hear from any *Tui Motu* readers who may wish to support us." ■

The web address of FOCAL is
www.focal.org.nz.



A wake-up call is due for this suburban household: seven vehicles on one steep driveway. Rising petrol prices are adding \$500 per car to the annual fuel bill



Your Huddled Masses . . .

'Migrants' are becoming a dirty word.

Mike Riddell looks at the Biblical tradition

There was a time when America defined itself in terms of the words emblazoned on the Statue of Liberty: *Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shores*. It is achingly ironic that a nation which once welcomed the world's outcasts to a haven of liberty should now defend that apparent freedom through exclusion and the politics of fear. No longer do the world's poor look to that once-great democracy with much in the way of hope.

Nor, perhaps, do they regard New Zealand as quite the sought-after refuge that it might once have seemed. With the election campaign in full swing, immigration policy has again become the lightning-rod for prejudice and misinformed anxiety. The strategy of heightening fears in the community in order to offer salvation from them is a tactic which Winston Peters might have promoted, but no longer has a monopoly on. Visions of 'Asian invasion' and 'Muslim infiltration' are touted by many candidates as genuine threats to 'our way of life'.

It is timely to remember that our way of life, such as it is, is built entirely on a history of migration. There is no person living in this land who did not at one time have their cultural roots in another place. At some point in our genealogical journey, one at least of everyone's ancestors left the land of their birth in search of something. The experience of being an 'incomer' is thus our common heritage, however many generations distant it might be. For that reason alone it ill becomes us to demonise those who follow in our footsteps.

But for those of the house of faith, there are deeper grounds for us to resist

the fear-mongering of politicians. Our attitude to those who are 'outsiders' among us is to be one of hospitality, scripture tells us. *Exodus 23:9* warns: "You shall not oppress a resident alien: you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." And *Psalms 146:9* reminds us that "The Lord watches over the strangers." That category of people that the Bible names 'aliens' and we might term 'immigrants' are the protectorate of God.

We might in fact argue that Christians are the disciples of a refugee: Joseph and Mary fled with Jesus into the land of Egypt, escaping the infanticide of Herod. The experience of dislocation is central to our Christian heritage; a tradition celebrated both in Passover and Easter, where we remember that "Jesus also suffered outside the city gate" (*Heb. 13:12*). We belong to a movement which had its origins on the margins of society, and is called forevermore to make friends with the outcasts and excluded.

Throughout all of history there have been people displaced by persecution, poverty or war. They are made homeless through no fault of their own, and rely on the compassion of strangers for their very survival. They are *refugees*; those who seek the solace of refuge so that they might begin again in life. Traditionally, New Zealanders have taken pride in exhibiting a generosity which includes finding a place among us for those exiled from their homes.

Admittedly, that generosity has become rather grudging and parsimonious. Our annual quota for refugees, we are told, is 750 people, with an extra 300 places provided to family members of those already here. That equates to something in the region of 0.025 percent of our

population – hardly a flood or a threat to our national security. If there were some misgivings about our refugee intake, one might hope it was because the figure is so low.

It is a sad state of affairs when politicians adopt the methods of the witch-hunt (or, dare we say, the Inquisition) – creating identifiable scapegoats to bear the anxieties and insecurities of the population at large. History teaches us that there can be terrible consequences when such demons are released, and attacks on certain sections of our community in recent months serve as warning signs.

Neither nations nor individuals fare well when they turn in on themselves and regard those who are different as potential enemies. Is it too much to hope for leaders who might proffer a vision of the sort of society they seek to build, rather than ferreting among fears in a desperate clamour for votes? New Zealand certainly has the geographical space to welcome strangers; the more searching question may be whether we have the will and the grace to make it available.

Christian faith reminds us that our primary belonging is not to tribe or nation, but to the 'family of God' which is universal. Every one of us is dependent on the low threshold for acceptance there, and the abiding security of our place within that family.

It is timely to remember that *manuhiritanga*, the embrace of the stranger, is at the core of our allegiance to Christ. Without it we ourselves would have no place to stand. The 'huddled masses' stand at our door, and knock. Whether the door opens or remains shut is our decision to make. ■

Mike Riddell is a Dunedin-based author, playwright and theologian

God's blessings are for all people

*Social Justice Week 2005 focuses on celebrating cultural diversity.
Missionaries have always lived at the cutting edge of cross cultural communication.
Wainuiomata is the mission field for Fr Sunil Paul, SVD.*

“Have you ever been excluded from a club because you did not meet the membership requirements?” Fr Sunil Paul asked Wainuiomata parishioners recently. “The belief that God’s blessings are limited to peoples of certain tribes or cultures has been around for a very long time.”

Fr Sunil was commenting on the Gospel story of the Canaanite woman in *Matthew 15*, who challenged the initial rejection by Jesus to her pleas to heal her daughter. “Such a belief was very much alive in the society in which Jesus grew up. When he said: ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel’ Jesus was expressing popular belief. Up until this moment Jesus believed his mission to be directed solely to his own people. The Canaanite woman opened Jesus’ eyes to see that God’s blessings are for all people.”

Fr Sunil, a priest of the Divine Word Missionaries, understands well the cultural and religious barriers between people. As a member of an Order that describes itself as crossing frontiers, he sees the cultural frontiers he has crossed in coming from India to New Zealand as being part of the essence and flavour of his ministry.

Since Vatican II, Fr Sunil says, the church in Asia began to change, so it was no longer just a receiving church which depended on European priests, religious and theology, to a sending church, which recognised that it also had much to contribute to the universal church. “In the 1980s, two-thirds of Divine Word Missionaries came from Europe. In 2005, a good number are coming from Asia.”

Fr Sunil has served in two Wellington parishes, first in St Anne’s Newtown and now in St Patrick’s Wainuiomata. To entice him to come to New Zealand his superior gave him a copy of the video of *Once Were Warriors*, saying it represented ‘Kiwi culture’. Despite this start, he has many observations about the cultural differences he has observed in New Zealand parishes. “Europeans have a

more individualistic faith, which isn’t much expressed outwardly. Asians and Pacific Islanders like to express their faith, through devotions, song and dance, and symbols.”

His first Christmas in Melbourne, he found a cultural shock. “It was a 7.30 Mass, like any other celebration. Everyone said ‘hi’ and ‘bye’ and then they were gone to their own parties and beaches. There were no people around for the festival day.

“I was used to the midnight Mass in a cold winter with a lot of flowers and decorations in the Churches, a lot of festivity. Here there were a lot of decorations in the supermarket but not many in the churches.”

Fr Sunil says Asian cultures see a sacredness in creation which sees the earth as a gift of God. This sense of the sacred leads to more sustainable environmental practices, which protect nature rather than destroying it. “When we have a sense of sacredness,

we value what we eat and how we need to share with others. When we lose that sense, we treat things just as objects. The poor know that the little they have, it’s a blessing from God, for looking after and caring for.” However, he said the diversity of cultures and religions in India made it easier for him to understand and adjust to cultural differences in New Zealand.

He sees much hope in the example New Zealand could set for the world as a small nation which stands up for justice and integrity of creation, such as the rights of refugees and Pacific nations. “God’s plan initiated in a small nation, amongst the Israelites. God intended not to stop there, when he told the disciples to go out and preach to all nations. From that small nation God intended to bless every nation.

“May our nation be blessed with the aroha of Christ.” ■

Lisa Beech sent this for Social Justice Week, which happens to fall close to Election Day – and immigration is one issue



Wall of shame



Bethlehem 2005. The town buildings are to be seen on the hillside (top left). The seven-foot-high wall built by the Israelis often passes very close to Palestinian houses and cuts them off from access to their fields

*In July Fr Damian Wynn-Williams led
an Australian pilgrim group to visit the Holy Land.
What he saw there left him deeply shocked*

The irony was that the man's complaint echoed that of Israel's psalmist thousands of years before: *Rouse yourself! Why do you sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not cast us off forever! Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?* (Ps. 44:23-24).

The wretched man had been trying to sell us postcards outside the *Church of the Nativity* in Bethlehem. When he met with little response – how many postcards does one need? – he suddenly vented his frustration: “Fifty seven years! How much longer? Why does no one care? Why does the world remain asleep?”

During my recent visit to the Holy Land, I felt overwhelmed, as I had been 24 years previously, by a mixture of conflicting emotions. With my fellow pilgrims I was thrilled to spend time in places so hallowed in Christian memory: the lake of Galilee, Nazareth, Mount Tabor, Capernaum, Bethany, Gethsemane, the Holy Sepulchre. In Tiberias it was lovely to see families enjoying themselves, to hear little children speaking Hebrew unselfconsciously, calling to their parents “*abba*”, “*em*”.

Clearly these families feel ‘at home’. But once again, I was saddened and depressed to see the squalid living conditions of the Palestinians in the West Bank. Deprived of any meaningful economic or political independence, their suffering and humiliation are plainly visible.

Some things had changed since my previous visit. In Israel proper the signs of material development are striking. Fine new buildings, new highways around Jerusalem (including one that goes right underneath the Old City).

But other ‘facts on the ground’ are more troubling, such as the big increase in the number of Israeli ‘settlements’ in Palestinian territory. The new town of Ma’alleh Adumim (population 32,000) on a ridge just east of Jerusalem reminded me of the Crusader castle city of Al Karak in Jordan built by Western colonizers many centuries before.

The ‘fence’

The suffering of the Palestinians has been hugely exacerbated by the *intafada* which has resulted in so much destruction. A vivid symbol of its catastrophic outcome

is the high concrete wall (euphemistically described by Israeli politicians as a 'fence') stretching some 200 km between Israeli and Palestinian territory. It is meant to keep Palestinians out and protect Israelis from terrorist attacks. But it also causes untold hardship to thousands of ordinary civilians, impeding their access to work and in many cases even to their own property.

I know well that what the Jews of Europe and Russia suffered during the *shoah* (holocaust) was a diabolical evil. Moreover the anti-Semitism which lay behind it was (is?) to be found not just among the Nazis but throughout Europe – witness the way in which Jewish refugees were turned back at national borders. Perhaps it was partly out of a sense of guilt that such countries so quickly acknowledged the state of Israel in 1948. The plight of the survivors of Auschwitz etc was truly awful.

The problem is that in attempting to redress this terrible injustice, another injustice has been perpetrated. In effect the non-Jewish people who had been living in Palestine prior to 1948 were made to pay for the sins of Europe.

According to the **Law of Return** (one of the first laws enacted by the new Jewish state) any Jew anywhere has the right to immigrate to Israel. In 1970 this was extended to non-Jews who are either children or grandchildren of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew or the spouse of a child or grandchild of a Jew.

So it is that often the settlers one hears speaking to reporters in such places as Gaza have accents from Brooklyn, Toronto, Manchester... Citizens of elsewhere, often well educated and able to travel at will, they are deemed to have rights which override those of Palestinians who have lived there for generations. Those are confined to narrow enclaves, stateless and without passports.

Generally religious people in the West who regard the Old Testament as a sacred text take it for granted that 'the land of the Bible' belongs properly to the Jews. After all, a major theme in the Biblical narrative is that 'God promised the land to Abraham and his descendants'. But, dare we ask, should one people's religious story (or 'national myth') be given geo-political effects in international law at the expense of another?

After all for most of the Old Testament period, 'Israel' was rarely truly independent and never in possession of all the territory said to have been given to Abraham "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates" (*Gen. 15:18*).

What tribunal has the authority to adjudicate such religious claims? Is it just a matter of 'might being right'? Furthermore, the fact that Israel is officially a secular state and that most Israelis are non-believers in a conventional

sense makes a credal argument for ownership of the land even more questionable.

Will there ever be peace?

Will there ever be peace in this troubled land? One thing is certain and that is that it cannot be imposed by military force! There can be no peace without justice. The injustices so deeply entrenched in this land must be properly acknowledged.

Memory is long in the Middle East. The Palestinians remember that the Israelis created their state after a period of armed struggle (including acts of terror) which forced the British to abandon their mandate in 1948. With what is perhaps a foolish and defiant optimism, they also remember another armed struggle many centuries earlier which defeated the alien Crusader kingdoms. These collapsed once their supply lines with Western powers were broken.

The Jewish people too have a remarkable gift of memory. Significantly much of the ethical teaching in their Scriptures appeals to their own experience of oppression and servitude, for instance: *You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow's garment in pledge. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. (Deut. 24:17-18).*

Fr Damian Wynn-Williams is a Scripture scholar. He is parish priest of Forbury, Dunedin

Rogan McIndoe advert

Natural Spirituality

What reason could be more compelling for honouring
the natural world than to know that it is the prime source
of our spirituality?

Thomas Moore

*Don't you ever,
You up in the sky,
Don't you ever get tired
Of having the clouds between you and us?*
(A Native American prayer)

I live on top of a hill. When I awoke this morning I looked out over many miles of rolling valleys and ridges, a thick mist settling among them like the waves of a vast ocean. The low-lying fog touched and mirrored the red-edged clouds of the sky. Beyond being mesmerised by the beauty of that morning sky, I also recalled Botticelli's famous painting of spring, *La Primavera*, where the god Mercury points with his magic wand to overhanging clouds, an image of his own shifting nature.

Clouds also evoke the realm of spirit that in Botticelli's painting is intimately engaged with the lush gracefulness of the green and floral garden-world of Venus. For millennia, human beings have appreciated and honoured the sublime implications of the most familiar displays of nature and have found there the rudiments of a spiritual life.

The clouds in Botticelli's painting have long charmed me because they represent a certain sublimation of the rich life of nature into a higher level of experience, yet one that is not stratospheric in its loftiness. Clouds hover. Where I live in New England, the mountains are small, yet, with my family, I can make a modest climb and still be higher than the clouds.

Clouds dwell in a mid-realm between the infinite sky and the familiar earth, and in that mid-range they give image to a kind of spirituality that I aspire to – one that never completely abandons the lower levels of ordinary life and yet at the same time offers a degree of contemplative loft, a perspective and a vision that is not swamped by things earthly and quotidian.

One significant implication in *La Primavera* is the idea of spirituality as an emanation of earthly life, or a sublimation, not in the Freudian sense of a defensive transformation of raw emotion, but in the Jungian and alchemical sense of a rising of plain experience into subtle forms of thought, image, fantasy, reflection and memory. In this sense, the spiritualisation of nature does not escape Earth's full physical presence and wild concreteness. Rather spirituality is a subtle refinement of nature as it meets the human imagination.

Contemplating nature, we find lessons about life in general that give a foundation for a spiritual perspective, qualities such as its overwhelming beauty, immense powers of destruction, unimaginable reaches of time, the extraordinarily small and the unfathomably great, the unpredictable and the complex. Like Mercury standing firm on the Earth and raising his wand into the sky, nature shifts our gaze from the literal world at our feet to the higher, spiritual implications of that world.



This nature-rooted brand of spirituality has the advantage of not creating a dualistic way of life where body is opposed to mind and matter separated from spirit. Classically, the mid-realm of Mercury was known as the domain of the soul, which has both material and spiritual elements. In the words of Marsilio Ficino, the Renaissance priest-philosopher I take as my guide in these matters and who, historians say, may actually have had some influence on the themes of *La Primavera*: “the soul lives both in time and in eternity”.

Unnatural spirituality

In recent decades we have come to think of the spiritual life in such abstract terms that it seems almost by definition to be opposed to the mundane world. Generally we emphasize belief



– not faith. Rather than an open-ended deep trust in life, we are wrapped by an intellectual attachment to certain ideas, values and opinions.

This highly mental approach to the spiritual life tends to be anxious and defensive; for, as much as we study nature and human life, we simply can't answer the ultimate questions. Death remains a profound and confronting mystery. In spite of our advances in technological medicine, illness still arrives as a shock and a mystery. Even in our daily emotional lives, we are confronted by inexplicable depressions, loss of meaning, and the sense of failure. In the face of these mysteries, we tend to latch onto a comforting explanation, theory or spiritual programme and give it our loyalty.

Often, it seems, the provisional answers given by science or religion serve simply as palliatives to the fundamental anxiety of human life. We hold them tightly because they are all we have in the face of threats to our safety, health, happiness, and indeed our very existence. We defend our spiritual positions, feel wary about anyone who takes a different stance, perhaps try to convert everyone to our point of view, or at least champion our particular spiritual organization or leader. These days, in many places, people go so far as to hope for a 'hagiocracy', a government that imposes the values of a certain belief system, blind to the fact that spiritual fervour can easily turn into intolerance, violent action, and suppression of human freedom.

Around the world we see that many of

the bloody conflicts that terrorise and inhibit the peaceful and creative life of citizens can be traced to religious and spiritual differences. Spiritual convictions usually seem so pure and right to their adherents that it is difficult for them to be critical and reflective. Spirituality loses its soul. And yet, it is the soul that makes us human. It is the soul that accounts for compassion and tolerance. It is the soul that grants the deep feeling of community and commonality. Without soul the spiritual life can become belligerent.

Strangely, spirituality can also turn against nature. Even though theoretically the natural world may be seen as good and divinely created, the thrust of the spiritual life is often in an upward direction, away from the ordinary and the natural. Indeed, the





human body and the body of the world may be seen as obstacles to the spiritual life. The world, the flesh and the devil occupy the same lower terrain.

Personally, we may feel a strong tension between our upward yearnings and the pull of the body and the world. We may believe that to live a healthy and successful life, we have to overcome our own natural inclinations toward sexual desire, unhealthy or incorrect foods, depressive and other unwholesome moods, claims of family life, and the wish to make money. Unconsciously perhaps, we may agree with the culture at large that successful living requires that we overcome nature, inwardly and outwardly.

Natural Spirituality

Two years ago, when I was travelling with my family through the west of Ireland to prepare myself to write a book on enchantment, I came to a new degree of appreciation for nature's contribution to the spiritual life. One day in particular, as we were stumbling over rocks at a site near the ocean, where hundreds of years ago monks had practised a remarkably rich spiritual life, I was overwhelmed by the conjunction of nature – the winds, the waves, the sheep, the steep mountain terrain, the rocks and the rains – and intense spiritual activity. There, too, the clouds hung low and left their mist on our bodies as they swept off over the sea, and I envisioned those early monks praying and living their communal life hard in the face of nature.

Medieval monks described the world as *liber mundi*, the book of the world, where they could read eternal truths and divine mysteries. What I learned on that visit to Ireland was how to read this book. You don't turn it into intellectual discourse, making a theory out of nature's ways. Rather, you live in the midst of howling winds and azure waters and take your initiation from nature's overpowering beauty and presence. You transcend the limitations of your own personal life not by looking above the Earth, but by sensing in the whole of your body and with the blood-

swirling testimony of your emotions the tact of nature's eminence.

Just as clouds appear out of the evaporation and condensation of the deep waters of the sea, so a spiritual sensibility rises directly out of the human encounter with the natural world. In this way, soul and spirit remain united. In nature we find both the depths of our mysteriousness and the heights of our possibilities. We encounter in nature the most ordinary aspects of our creatureliness and the most extraordinary and sublime possibilities of creation.

Those Irish monks had to be tough, earthy, strong and physical individuals, living as they did at the edge of their world, where nature is most tangibly known. They can offer us a model for reaching as high as possible in our spiritual aspirations while never for a moment avoiding the full impact of nature. They seem to have known that only in this paradoxical overlap of the natural world and the spiritual imagination does the human being find honest transcendence.

Regaining a serious appreciation for nature as a spiritual presence might also help us deepen our ethical and moral sensitivities. A highly mentalised spirituality gives rise to morality based on principle, a source that may seem reasonable, but it has its limitations. Being intimate with nature, we might discover new bases altogether for moral behaviour, such as a deep sense of community, love of places and the things of nature, and a degree of loyalty to persons and places that could nurture a strong ethical attitude.

The feeling that nature loves us, even though it is sometimes threatening, offers an important family sense of the relationship between nature and human life. St Francis's poetic image of "Brother Sun and Sister Moon" reveals a mystic's way of imagining the relationship, a mode out of vogue in our time but not necessarily off the mark.

The mystic, magus and poet of the past considered our relationship with

nature as a loving one – not merely a sentimental appreciation on the part of humans, but rather a kinship and attraction among all elements. Eros keeps the planets in orbit, the seasons on time, and the organs of the body in harmony. We have moved far from an erotic perception of nature and an appreciation of the sympathy that keeps the natural world in harmony. We look for the laws that govern natural objects, not the mutual affection that holds it all together.

A cold, rational, observer's attitude toward nature fails to reveal the spiritual potential in nature. But a warm, imaginative, participant's perspective invites a more mystical and therefore a more spiritual engagement with the world. The former leads to millions of words and statistics analysing the natural world, while the latter leads to stories, poetry, prayers, rites and meditation on that same world.

To safeguard and nurture both the natural world that is our environment and our spiritual lives, we will have to challenge the dominance of the scientific mythology that with much superiority and authority shrinks our approach to nature in a culture obsessed with gathering information. Studying nature is not our only option. We can also mediate upon it and find there a solid basis for spiritual sensitivity.

We can be educated by nature, becoming persons of broad vision and subtle values. In nature we can find our place, our identity and our affections. Nature offers a way to discover the riches of our own souls rather than the powers of the ego. In this way, nature deepens our very sense itself.

What reason could be more compelling for honouring and protecting this natural world in all its particularity and ubiquitousness than to know that it is the prime source of our spirituality, the root of our personal meaning, and the starting point for any soul journey? ■

Thomas Moore is the author of *Care of the Soul*, *The Re-enchantment of Everyday Life* and *The Soul of Sex*. (Permission Resurgence)



Spring

Now the oak trees unfurl their tight buds
into fresh yellow leaves,
feathery in their arrival so soon
from the Source of wing and wind.
Now has song risen again in my soul,
finding voice in the chanting cadences of life's ebb and flow.
Now the rooster crows.
Now the wind rises.
Now the woodpecker drums against the oak's trunk.
Now branches scrape across the roof of the loft
where I sit scratching these words across the page.
Life is now.
Life is this.
It enters me:
circulates as blood, as breath;
awakens in my mind;
lifts itself into word,
into song,
into prayer.
Life whispers itself, I am;
shouts itself, I am. I Am!
It shapes itself
through tongue and breath,
brain and bone into embodied being:
life at home in me.

Diane Pendola

A page from a mother's journal

Today turned out to be a prayer walk. First signs of spring. A sunny day. Bouncy pre-schoolers needing a walk. Bouncy parents needing a walk too for that matter. Up a hill. With a view. I wasn't even meaning to think about God, but He came along walking too. Patient and encouraging, we herded erratic three-year-olds upward. We pointed out sheep with their lambs, suckling, frantic tails wriggling in delight. One-year-old Rohan in the backpack leaned and nearly fell out in surprise at the flocks of yellow hammer birds flitting. Autumn leaves blown in the wind. Higher up, our girls wove unsteady paths through tussock clumps higher than their heads.

Sitting on rocks near the top, we share honey sandwiches, apples and cold, fresh water. In the first moment of quiet

in the day, children munch and rest. Adults stop talking... (that's good for me to remember – stop talking and start listening!) God gently lifted my eyes to the extravagant snowy mountain. A picture postcard of the Alps from the Port Hills of Christchurch. God pointed out the grace and gifts of healthy children, strong legs, good food and a warm sun on a winter's day.

I wondered whether I would get time to myself this afternoon, and God pointed out quietly that this was time for me, time for renewal. In the bounding of lambs and small children on a green hill, here is Grace and Goodness.

Here is God with us. ■

Kaaren Mathias

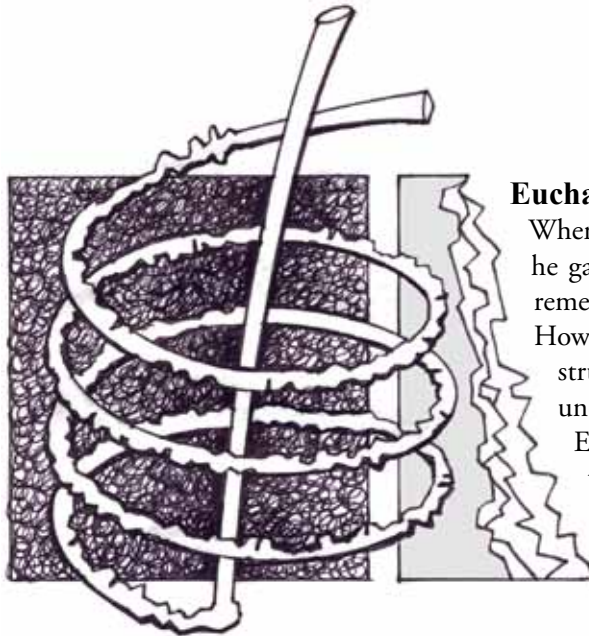
When symbols become idols

Mike Noonan takes a critical look at church symbols, specifically those which express the Eucharistic mystery

One Easter, when our daughter was very young, my wife Maria and I explained what would happen at the Easter Vigil. Wide-eyed wonder greeted the thought of going to church at midnight. The eyes widened still more when we explained that we would all be in the dark until the light from the big Paschal candle was passed from one candle to another until the church was a sea of lights shining in the darkness. "Then," we said, "we will know Jesus has risen".

Sure enough, when Holy Saturday night came she awoke from her bed and struggled to stay awake during the half hour journey to church. By the time the Paschal candle had been lit from the brazier, she was sound asleep in my arms. The passing of the tiny wavering lights was nearly complete when she stirred, pulled herself up to look over my shoulder, smiled in happy relief, whispered: "Jesus is risen!", and relaxed once more into a deep sleep.

It was a different story the following week. We were running late for church. I'd swung my daughter onto my shoulders as we ran up the steps. Mass was just beginning as we reached the door. From her high vantage point on my shoulders, over the heads of the congregation, she spotted the large old mission cross at the front of the church. I heard her cry of disappointment, and then, in a voice that all could hear, she exclaimed: "Oh no! He's gone and died again!" Mirth, fiercely suppressed, surged through the shoulders of the congregation.



What our daughter was responding to so strongly in both these incidents was the unspoken language of the church. The language of sign and of symbol is powerful because it doesn't need our intellect to engage with it – it appeals directly to our hearts.

Signs are fairly straightforward. They usually have a communally understood meaning. A symbol however is a much more tricky thing. The word symbol comes from the Greek *sym* and *ballo*: literally, "I throw together". One of the ways of verifying a person's identity in the ancient world was through a token that would be broken in two. The holder of each part could then verify the identity or legitimacy of the other when their symbols dovetailed and could be placed together to form a whole. For symbolic language to mean anything, the symbol must dovetail with our experience in such a way that, as if by magic, what is lost is found, what is broken is made whole and recognised, and what is unknown may be known.

Eucharist as symbol

When Jesus instituted Eucharist, he gave us a context and a way of remembering and understanding. How could the disciples, who struggled to understand, have understood anything about Eucharist, had Jesus not taken the symbols from their everyday experience? Bread, wine, the intimacy of table fellowship, the experience of Jesus in their daily lives meant that each disciple had, as it were, one half of the broken token which dovetailed with the symbols Jesus chose and gave them, that last night together.

Last year I attended a very special end-of-year prizegiving at the *Otago Youth Wellness Learning Centre*, where Maria works with young people who have been excluded from school. At the beginning of the year I had met some of her students and had been left silently wondering what, if anything, Maria and her team would be able to accomplish. The students – all of whom had been excluded from their schools – were anarchic, foul-mouthed and unable to understand any world which did not revolve around them and their immediate concerns.

One year on – and I marvelled at the growth in maturity and openness to others that the young people displayed. Many factors had brought this about, but a significant factor was that of cooking for each other and sitting down at table to eat food together. An increasing number of the families

Maria works with have not been used to eating at a table. If they eat together at all, it is around the television, but often they eat individually and alone. It is an increasing trend in westernised society which fast food outlets are determined to encourage. Without learning the give-and-take or the family rituals that grow up around sharing mealtimes, how will they discover table fellowship and that “where two or more are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them”? What sense can these families make of white cloths, candles, gold chalices and the round white wafer which bears so little resemblance to the bread which most people eat? Their half of the token, needed to match the symbolism of what takes place at the altar, is itself broken. And if broken, so too is the understanding by the family – the domestic church – of the reality that takes place at the altar.

Pope Benedict XVI, in the homily of his inaugural Mass, identified a growing experience of desert in our lives. “There is the desert of poverty, the desert of hunger and thirst, the desert of abandonment, of loneliness, of destroyed love. There is the desert of God’s darkness, the emptiness of souls no longer aware of their dignity or the goal of human life. The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast.” I believe the desert is encroaching on households where table fellowship is a thing of the past. This desert places our religious symbols and signs under threat because they have acquired ambiguity as society has changed.

Broken springs

As we take and eat in our divided Christian churches, what sign does our disunity offer our world? The challenge for today’s church is not to take and eat the Eucharist; it is to *share* it. What does it mean that (at a time when televisions in every Western home were reminding us of the daily starvation of thousands) the Catholic Church abandoned the practice of experiencing hunger prior to Eucharist through a twelve-hour fast?

Psychologists tell us that the most important language that passes between people is non-verbal. Since the closing of Vatican II, much effort has been made by the church to update its spoken liturgical language. But who is looking at what the *unspoken* language is communicating? The drive by the Council towards liturgical simplicity has meant abandoning the signs and symbols, opulence, pomp and ceremony of another age. And yet, as the power of our signs and symbols has leached away, so has the church lost a formidable way of touching people’s consciousness in a transformative way.

In his poem, *Rhapsody on a Windy Night* T S Eliot crafts the following image:

*A broken spring in a factory yard,
Rust that clings to the form that the
strength has left
Hard and curled and ready to snap*

Jesus knew a thing or two about rust. His advice was to not store up treasures on earth “where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal” (*Matt. 6:19*). Rust, moths and thieves work silently, but are devastatingly effective over time in their destruction. It is important that we do not allow our language of signs and symbols to be stolen by time or consumed by rust and moth.

In his book, *God of Surprises*, Gerard W. Hughes invites us to imagine we have opened our home to Jesus who has come to stay. Our initial delight gives way to consternation as Jesus, true to form, begins to invite prostitutes, tax collectors and those on the margins of society to come and eat with us. Eventually it all becomes more than our hospitality and patience can cope with. Our solution is to lock Jesus in his room, tastefully arrange flowers in a vase in front of his door, put lighted candles either side, and be sure to genuflect each time we pass. Locking someone up has particular connotations in today’s society. It may even lead those who do to believe they have the authority to decide where Jesus will be revealed and who may receive him.

Gaudium et Spes, the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, tells us that if the church is to carry out its task, “it carries the responsibility in every age of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. In language, intelligible to every generation, it should be able to answer the ever-recurring questions which people ask about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come.”

While it may be convenient, it is unfortunate that we have symbols and signs in our liturgies which serve to confirm the growing individualisation of feeding habits. Our tabernacled God-in-a-box is the wrong language for today’s fast food generation, just as is queuing, self-service cafeteria style, for the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Our Eucharistic liturgies are presided over by men who have taken a vow of celibacy. Jesus made a strong a reference to the experience of table fellowship and daily intimacy when he instituted Eucharist. Celibate priests often eat alone and miss that. In a world of devalued relationships priestly celibacy has come to be regarded with suspicion. In our time there have been too many stories not only of the betrayal of celibacy, but also the betrayal of innocent children. It would be naive to believe that celibacy is any longer an unambiguous prophetic sign.

Conclusion

Symbols and signs which capture the priesthood in compulsory celibacy, pin God to tabernacles, wafers and particular communion rituals, appear as a failure to speak clearly in language that is intelligible in this age and a refusal to read the ‘signs of the times’. Our ‘greying’ church is a testament to that.

If we cling to signs or symbols, despite their meaning shifting, we are making idols of them. Our church needs a careful review by ecclesiastical authorities of the non-verbal language it uses. We need a renewal in sign and symbol lest we become guardians of a rusting form that the strength and meaning has left. ■



Land of reconciliation

Every two years Secondary Principals from all over the world gather in conference. This year the meeting was in July, in Cape Town. Paul Ferris, of Dunedin's Kavanagh College, was one of 2000 Principals to attend – part of a group of 14 from New Zealand. On his return Tui Motu interviewed Paul, who was blown over by the astonishing spirit of forgiveness he had encountered.

What impressed me more than anything," says Paul, "was the genuine spirit of reconciliation which I experienced coming from the African people. We met it wherever we travelled. Everyone there speaks about a 'reconciled society'.

"The European South Africans, however, are perhaps less enthusiastic about it. In the south the whites are fully committed to integration, but around Johannesburg I found people generally more regretful that their life had changed. They resented the fact that African people were becoming more prosperous, and claimed that their children were going to have to leave South Africa because the blacks would get jobs ahead of them. They were even disconcerted because the blacks had been so generous. It had taken away any excuse for them to perpetuate divisiveness.

"From some white South Africans you even hear some venom – but we never heard it from the blacks or coloured peoples. On our way to airport when we were due to leave, the white taxi driver told us his son was a paid mercenary in Central Africa and was earning money

shooting blacks. It was an unpleasant memory to leave South Africa with.

"On the other hand there was a Xhosa driver, called 'Major', who drove us for part of our trip. He had been in the African National Congress (ANC) and had spent a year in gaol. He was now a tribal leader of his 'formal village' in Port Elizabeth. He said that any white person who came into his area would be fully protected, and if anyone molested them in any way, then the molester would have to answer to him! Nelson Mandela had told them to forgive and forget.

"I said to him, 'I'm Irish. I've never even been to Ireland, but I haven't forgiven the English for the way they treated the Irish. How can you forgive the injustices you suffered?'

"He replied, 'We have to! Even though I thought Mandela was wrong for a start, I now know that reconciliation is the only way forward. There are 100,000 of us in our 'village'. We know that if we don't treat a white person correctly we are not practising reconciliation.'

"He showed us the gaol and he also took us to the building where the police had held him and questioned him. They took the windows out on the eighth floor, and they would sit the prisoners on the window ledge and say to them

it would be better for them to jump, because if they came back in they would get beaten. He climbed back in and was beaten. Apparently many of the black prisoners did jump.

"Some of the Principals told me that during the troubles they had to take refuge in Bishop Desmond Tutu's seminary. They knew that for them sanctuary was to be found in the Christian church. From them I learned that the Anglican and Catholic churches in particular had been the core of the ANC strength."

Visiting Soweto

"After the Conference we flew to Port Elizabeth and stayed in this glorious, luxurious hotel. On the final day two black African drivers arrived to take us on a day trip – to visit a slum! One was a Zulu and one a Xhosa. We felt totally safe in their hands.

"They took us to the 'informal village' of Soweto, outside Johannesburg, where 3.5 million people live. Ninety percent of the people there are housed in conditions where you would not house animals in New Zealand. The house would be slightly bigger than a garden shed with a corrugated iron roof. You could fit in a single bed and three or four people would probably sleep on a concrete or mud floor. No ventilation: a door and no windows.

“In summer and winter these houses would be extremely uncomfortable. The winter temperature would fall to minus 2-3 degrees, followed by fine, clear days – but not warm. In the summer the temperature could go up to 40 degrees. It was like Central Otago.

“They took us to a house where there was a woman with three or four young children. My wife Marie was reduced to tears when she saw the conditions this woman was living in. We felt obliged to buy carved objects we didn’t really want: it was a way of giving these very poor people some money.



“Then they took us to the centre of their struggle against apartheid – the Catholic church of Regina Mundi. It is quite a spacious church, and is clearly the church for the black people of Soweto. The young people used to go there for political meetings. Bishop Tutu frequently went there to speak about freedom and justice.

“It was in Regina Mundi that the first victims of apartheid were killed. One night when Bishop Tutu was preaching, the police came and said it was an illegal meeting and they were to break it up. But the young people refused to go. So the police sprayed the church with machine guns and fired tear gas into it. Some were killed by bullets; others were suffocated in the stampede.

“You can still see bullet holes from about head height going up into the roof. All the

glass has had to be replaced. In fact the church has been much restored, because the current Bishop has stated that if they are to be a reconciled community they cannot preserve the symbols of hatred. But of course the bullet holes cannot all be repaired.

“The corners of the marble altar were smashed by the guards who came in to break up a meeting. Another evening the police arrived, took the young black assistant priest, marched him at gunpoint to the foyer of the church, stood him in front of the life-size statue of Christ the Redeemer and said: ‘We’re going to shoot you, you Kaffir bastard!’ But instead they turned their guns round and shot the hands off the statue. Then they taunted the priest: ‘Now you have no hands, your religion is useless.’ They left him there quaking.

“The people have left the statue without its hands. The teaching is that Christ, even without hands, is still a loving Christ. They don’t need their hands in order to be a community of love! They have turned whatever is negative into something positive.”

The story of Daniel

“The young man who showed us over the church was called Daniel. He was eight years of age at the time the church was desecrated. He had made his brother, who was 14 or 15, to take him along to hear Bishop Tutu. The ANC deliberately encouraged these high school children to become involved, partly as a tactic to command the attention of the outside world.

“When the police attacked, his older brother threw himself on top of Daniel to protect him. Then he hid Daniel under a seat while he escaped out a side door with some of the other youths. They ran up a hill to where there was a Chinese butcher’s shop. Eight of these youngsters tried to hide inside a refrigerated chamber. The police arrived, locked the door of the chamber and forced the owner to leave. So the eight froze to death. “I said to Daniel: ‘You can’t tell me you have forgiven such an action.’ But he was absolutely clear: ‘If I don’t forgive, I can’t live.’

“We were all extremely moved by Daniel’s story – and especially at his forgiveness. He told us he didn’t wish to be a priest or religious. He felt his calling was to tell the story of Regina Mundi... not how much hatred they





Daniel showing us the Black Madonna icon in Soweto

suffered, but how they had forgiven the pro-Apartheid regime. The non-Catholic Principals were clearly impressed by the way the churches had led the way in the struggle for justice and freedom.

“One of our group, Maurie Abrahams who is Principal of Whakatane High School, had been a protester at the Hamilton game during the Springbok Tour in 1981. Some of the Africans we met were delighted about that, because they remembered the stance that had been made by many New Zealanders for their cause. It had meant a lot to them at the time. They would say: ‘New Zealanders have been so good to us.’ They were so grateful, they would embrace Maurie!”

What of the future?

“To rehouse the poor people in these ‘informal’ settlements – 3.5 million in Soweto and 2.5 million in Cape Town, it would be necessary to build 600,000 new homes every year for five years. It is a huge issue. There are signs of change especially in Cape Town. Thana Mbeke has inherited the leadership, because Mandela was brought up by Mbeke’s family, and so Mandela sponsored him. He was not in South Africa during the struggle.

“The whites especially lament the fact that South Africa is where all the displaced black people tend to go to escape problems at home. Which simply adds to the housing problem. It was noticeable that most of the restaurant staff we met were immigrants from other parts of Africa.

“Yet it is such a rich country. When you drive up the East Coast from Cape Town, you can’t help but remark on the wealth and beauty of the towns along the coast. A lot of white South Africans seem to retire there.

“We were told that in some areas it wasn’t safe for white people to circulate in the streets. We were told in Johannesburg not to go down town. Two of our party did so, and they said they did feel intimidated. In Cape Town we went down town during the daytime. We saw a lot of poverty, but it was a mixed area and there were a few beggars on the streets – all blacks. There were also a lot of street traders.

“You also see the after-effects of the slave trade. The Dutch settlers in the Cape didn’t make slaves of the local people, but imported them from places like Zanzibar further north. Hence there is quite a mixed population of descendants of the slaves. There are quite a number of Muslims who live in their own quarter. I could not help

wondering how much these Cape Coloureds participate in the new democracy of South Africa.

“One of the themes of the Principals’ Conference was Ubuntu, which means that ‘I am nothing unless I am uplifted by the people around me. I don’t live in isolation; I only live in community’. It reminded us of the Maori concept of whanau.

“On the last day we were addressed by Archbishop Tutu. He was called into the gathering by one of the black women. The Africans treat him with great reverence, and I felt we were in the presence of a very holy and special human being. I wondered to myself who will they have when Tutu and Mandela finally go. Because they have held the whole unity movement together.

“Tutu is so delightful and sincere; he has an aura of faith. He moved us to tears. He seemed to be so happy to be with us. At the beginning he danced down the aisle. He insisted that however important the struggle for freedom had been, at the end of the day if we do not forgive and become fully reconciled, the building will not stand up. He was preaching the gospel, but in secular terms. His anecdotes were all happy and full of hope. His focus was on being a community of spirit, of life and of energy. He was not simply reflecting on a negative past.” ■

A school without chairs

“I spoke to one Principal who had 900 children in his school – the same roll as Kavanagh – but they were 75 to a class. He only had 400 chairs for them. I said at once I would get him 500 chairs! He said: ‘There’s no point. I haven’t got room in the school!’

“Until all the infrastructure problems are addressed, there is no point in band aid solutions. And we are talking about one of the richest countries in the world. There are more privately owned aeroplanes there than anywhere else on earth! Yet that is the state of the native schools.

“When I got back, I told the children in our Junior Assembly about it – I told them that the African children would have to go to a school where there were not even toilets or running water. Immediately they wanted to do something about it. So we already have determined to raise \$9,000 towards building a toilet block at one particular school. Our hope is to adopt that one school.

“Scots College in Wellington have also adopted a school in Africa, and have been able to build facilities for the children there. I felt that many of the Principals there from European countries were equally moved to want to do something for the indigenous schools. Like me, they were embarrassed by our relative affluence.”

Beer and Balance

... contemplating success and simplicity

Glynn Cardy

The World's Best Beer'. It's a coveted accolade that would put the froth on any brewer's smile. It would translate into mass sales and massive profits. Orders would come in from around the world. Tourists would seek it out. Travel brochures would proudly proclaim the local origins of the beverage. Imagine the billboard: "The world's best – right here!" The best beer is found in Flanders, Belgium. Not far from the French border, just outside the town of Poperinge. The beer is called Westvleteren Abt 12. (You can tell that no one in marketing created that name!) Indeed few in marketing have probably ever tasted it. It is only sold where it's made. It isn't distributed to retail stores in Belgium, let alone exported. Worst of all, local demand has been so great that they've run out. You can't buy it.

Abt 12 is made by a little boutique brewery that doesn't want to expand. While they are happy to receive nice accolades, they don't want to grow. Even before their Abt 12 achieved fame the customer was limited to 24 bottles. The brewers wanted to share their beer around. They didn't even charge astronomical prices.

Being a small-time consumer of fine beer, the news about this superior product caught my eye. Yet it was the brewers who intrigued me. From a commercial perspective they were doing everything wrong. They had a great product but they weren't branding, expanding, charging, and making millions.

Indeed, and this is the really shocking thing; they didn't want millions. They just wanted enough profit in order to live. "We don't live to make beer," their spokesman said, "we make beer to live."



You might ask, are these people religious nutters or something? Well, yes, they are. Abt 12 is made at Saint Sixtus Monastery. The Abt is short for Abbot. They are Cistercians – a silent order who live a contemplative life.

They embody a spirituality of simplicity and balance. (See Web Link below.)

Probably the most famous Cistercian was the late Thomas Merton, an extraordinary man who managed to rattle the pro-Vietnam War regime from his monastery in rural America. He spoke a clear truth in a time when people too easily believed in self-serving deception. You can find out more about him at <http://www.merton.org>.

Merton's beer-brewing brothers at Saint Sixtus are again offering clear

truth. The meaning of life is not to work. The meaning of life is not to achieve fame. The meaning of life is not to make millions. Notoriety and accolades, while nice for a season, can bloat the ego.

The brothers got brewing in 1863 in order to fulfill their obligations to the labourers constructing the monastery. The labourers were entitled to two glasses of beer a day. In time they refined their brewing craft to finance the needs of the monastery. Now they are carefully trying to balance fame and need, money and spirituality.

Balance is not just a monk thing. It's a human thing. And the economic orthodoxy of 'more', 'money', and 'growth' has tipped us off balance.

As Thomas Merton wrote, "What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we are not able to cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves? This is the most important of all voyages of discovery, and without it, all the rest are not only useless, but disastrous."

We need a potent, full-bodied reminder that prayer, community, work, leisure, and service, held in balance, are values that go to the heart of what it is to be human. The creators of Westvleteren Abt 12, with its 10.2 percent alcohol content, are one such potent reminder. I'd love to shout the world a round of that. ■

Glynn Cardy is Vicar at the Anglican Parish of St Mathew-in-the-City, Auckland

The paradox of our age

We have bigger houses but smaller families;
more conveniences, but less time.
We have more degrees, but less sense;
more knowledge, but less judgement;
more medicines but less healthiness.
We've been all the way to the moon and back,
but we have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbours.
We have built more computers to hold more information,
to produce more copies than ever,
but we have less communication.
We have become long on quantity,
but short on quality.
These are the times of fast foods but slow digestion.
Tall man but short character;
steep profits but shallow relationships.
It is a time when there is much in the window,
but nothing in the room.

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

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Reflecting on Mark

Susan Smith

Both Mark and Matthew point to the inability of the twelve disciples in general, and to James and John in particular, to understand the implications of Jesus' passion predictions. After the first Passion prediction (*Mark 8:31-33* and *Matt 16:21-23*), Peter demonstrates his unwillingness to follow Jesus in his suffering and death, and he is soundly rebuked. In *Matt 20:17-19* (see too *Mark 10:35-40*), for the third time Jesus speaks of his coming passion, death and resurrection. After this last prediction Mark relates how James and John demand places of honour in the Kingdom. Matthew, perhaps in order to spare the disciples, whom he represents as slightly more receptive to the message of Jesus, replaces the disciples' own request with one made by their mother. The woman, identified as the "mother of the sons of Zebedee," appears only in Matthew. Apparently Matthew provides us with a negative portrayal of a demanding mother, so that the good reputation of her two sons is preserved. As happens elsewhere in the gospel tradition, the woman is unnamed, and identified by her relationship as wife and mother to men. Given that Mark is our oldest gospel, we can reasonably assume that the original tradition has James and John asking this question.

However, the mother appears again in *Matt 27:53-55* at the crucifixion of Jesus. All four gospels have a tradition that a group of women disciples from Galilee followed Jesus throughout his

Galilean ministry. Unlike the male disciples, they followed Jesus on his journey to Calvary. The mother and other women function as a counter-group of disciples whom Matthew ironically contrasts with the male disciples who appear so prominently particularly Peter and Andrew, James and John, the first four disciples called by Jesus. Jesus has earlier challenged the two disciples to drink of his chalice of suffering. They cannot take up this challenge but their mother has embraced it. Her response to Jesus is in stark contrast to that of her sons and the rest of the twelve.

There is little point in trying to argue that women embrace suffering more readily than men as our human story shows that both women and men experience pain and suffering in similar measure so we are not called to take that

kind of message from our text. I suspect though that there may be a message about power and who seeks it.

The media have recently been trying to 'frighten' us with suggestions that within 20 years women in New Zealand would be dominating the political, judicial and private sectors in our national life. I would be willing to bet (though I could well have departed to where such matters are of no import) that women will not be dominating such sectors. Even if they are we can be sure they will not be dominating the ecclesial sector. However, when you look at the way men exercise power not only in New Zealand but elsewhere would it be such a bad thing if women had their rightful turn? ■

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

Bible Society advert

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The early life of JP2

Karol: A man who became Pope

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Video VHF: \$29.95

DVD: \$34.95

Review: Michael Hill

A historian friend of mine recently observed that historical films are either high in drama and low in historical accuracy, like Mel Gibson's *Braveheart*; or they are careful in recording history as it really happened, but can be a bit dull and dour – his verdict on the recent film about Luther. So where does that put the recently released video *Karol: a Man who became Pope*?

There can be no doubt that this absorbing account of John Paul's adult life up to the moment of his election as Pope, richly captures the atmosphere of what it was like for a young man to live under successive, brutal totalitarian regimes. And it pays due testimony to the indomitable spirit of the Polish people, their Christian faith and their courage even when it seemed that the rest of the world had forgotten all about them.

The film starts with the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939. The young Wojtyla is a student: a poet, an actor and something of a romantic. The cruelty and menace of the Nazi occupation are vividly depicted, especially their horrific treatment of the Jews. His priest friend and mentor is shot by the Germans in cold blood, but Karol is not deterred from offering himself to the church – to the evident horror of his Madonna-like girlfriend.

After the war, when the Russians come and establish their puppet Communist regime, one tyranny is substituted for another: less bloody but in some respects more sinister. We follow Karol's career as a young priest, never

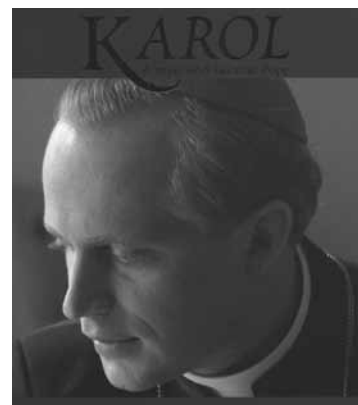
happier than when in the company of the young. Then his ordination as Bishop of Cracow.

His interaction with Cardinal Wyszyński, Archbishop of Warsaw, is fascinating. Wyszyński is uncompromising in his opposition to the Communist government, and for a time he is thrown in prison. Bishop Wojtyla's style is quite different: he avoids direct confrontation. Tirelessly he preaches peace and love. The Reds put a tail on him, who even succeeds in bugging his confessional. But when it comes to political deviance, Karol is squeaky clean.

The difference of approach and character of the two bishops is very well drawn. Eventually Wojtyla demonstrates his steel by heading the workers' demand for a church in the new industrial city of Nova Huta. Their confrontation with the police is dramatic and authentic. Religious freedom is asserted.

One advantage of seeing a film as long as this (180 minutes) on video is that you can take breaks. However – significantly – I felt compelled to see it through to the end. Even though it is quite slow-moving, it is never less than gripping. One reason is the excellence of the acting of the minor parts. (... in contrast to the film *Mother Theresa* currently doing the rounds, where apart from Olivia Hussey in the lead role, the characters especially the ecclesiastics are largely cardboard).

So how does *Karol* line up in the current vogue for hagiographic cinema? It is certainly not in the same league as *Gandhi*, which in my opinion was a truly great film. I found myself comparing it with *Molokai*, the captivating study of Damien the leper. Fr Damien comes across as a real human being, flawed but truly



admirable. I could not say the same about the young John Paul as depicted here. Well acted, attractive – but seamless and lacking charisma.

This film left me with some quite profound questions about this 'man who became Pope'. For instance, how could a man who himself had to challenge and resist the corrupt and ruthless Polish Communist regime, be so unsympathetic when dealing with an almost identical scenario in the case of Archbishop Romero, of El Salvador? Would Romero have been so ruthlessly gunned down, had he received more support from the Vatican and John Paul?

The film ends with the election of Karol Wojtyla as John Paul 2. The theatrical version suddenly gives way to reality when, in a clip from a newsreel, the real John Paul is shown appearing for the first time on the balcony of St Peter's. Here at last we see the consummate actor. He apologises for speaking to this Roman audience "... in your tongue – no in *our* tongue! If I trip up however, you will correct me!" A little self-deprecating joke – and he has the crowd all eating out of his hand: the first of many hundreds of occasions when John Paul was to do this. This power to command and captivate an audience, so much part of John Paul, did not come across at all in the film.

However, that is not a reason for not seeing it. It is a fine film, well made. It gripped me. I hope it will please you. ■

A judge finds forgiveness

Old Filth

by Jane Gardam,
Chatto and Windus, London, 2004
Review: Sandra Winton

A legendary, old, retired judge sits in a hotel dining room, an open newspaper before him. He weeps and weeps, silently, behind his hands for his dead wife.

Jane Gardam is a prolific and much-awarded novelist. In this latest book she focuses on the last months on the life of Sir Edward Feathers, *Old Filth*, judge, husband and Raj orphan after the death of his wife. Drawing on the life of Rudyard Kipling she portrays the early life of Sir Edward from his infancy and earliest years with a Ceylonese family. At the age of 4 he is abruptly torn away from the family and young woman to whom he has become deeply attached, is taught English and taken to England to be fostered and educated. He emerges from this a charming, successful, happily married, childless judge. But after the death of his wife he finds that his maturity and achieved balance are crumbling:

As he stood beside the grave and thought of his long life with Betty and his achievement in presenting to the world the full man, the completed and successful being, his hands in their lined kid gloves folded over the top of his walking stick, he was aware of something, somewhere. He looked up at the sky. Nothing, yet he was being informed, no doubt about it, that there was something in him unresolved.

Now the judge is obliged to face and come to peace with his childhood. He talks to a priest but interestingly does not want absolution from the church. Instead he finds forgiveness in himself, he who had judged and condemned so many. In a moving scene he attends Christmas Day church and prays, prays right through the service, for all whom he has loved, for those who puzzled him and even those who hurt and deserted him.

A profound and touching meditation on the lasting impact of childhood and the need to understand and integrate the impact of earliest experience, this book also celebrates the power of acceptance and forgiveness to heal and free. It isn't just the theologians who speak to us of these matters. This is a very enjoyable and enriching read. ■

Aesthetic theology

Grace and Necessity – reflections on art and love

by Rowan Williams
Morehouse 2005-hardcover only
Price: \$39.95
Review: Mike Crowl

In this new work (based on his 2005 Clark Lectures) Williams explores the borderlands between theology, art and literature in order to pioneer a new theological expression of grace and human creativity. Profoundly influenced by some of the most original and creative minds in the recent Catholic tradition (Jacques Maritain, the artist Eric Gill and the poet and painter David Jones), he explores a new aesthetic and the concept of an artwork as a structure in itself and not as a 'reproduction'. The sign or symbol, whether verbal or material, is a necessary vehicle of meaning and not an illustration of it, calling not for reduction or explanation but response.

In Dr Williams' development of his theme he discusses modern philosophy including Wittgenstein's aesthetics, but also examines modern art, the work of the American writer Flannery O'Connor, David Jones' own writings on art and sacrament, and the underlying theology of artistic production. ■

JANE ANDERSON

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Casting your party vote – with due care

One month before the General Election, when the campaign strategies were becoming clear, two ex-Prime Ministers of New Zealand appeared in the media within a day of each other. The irony would have delighted one of them.

The death of David Lange was mourned by all New Zealanders. The eulogies flowed in praise of a politician who led the country for six years down the path of independence from foreign influence and re-established an economy in the best right-wing tradition. This writer admired the man for his wit, his *bons mots* and his acerbic assessments of political rivals. He was unsurpassed in this field. He entrenched the iconic nuclear-free policy in the psyche of New Zealand and won global recognition.

With unfortunate timing, Jim Bolger called for a reassessment of the nuclear free policy and was seen as cuddling up to the Americans (a National Party trait). Bolger, famous for his “no ifs, no buts” promise to win an election, inadvertently put Don Brash’s “gone by lunchtime” remark under scrutiny once again. It was not a pretty sight. All the polls have confirmed that Lange’s nuclear policy is sacrosanct.

This incident demonstrates the perception of the ‘*first past the post*’ mentality and the fact that New Zealand seems not to have appreciated and embraced the changes in the political landscape wrought by MMP. The minor parties are languishing in the polls. Some, like the Act Party, seem destined for oblivion. Others are marginalised by the unacceptability of their leaders’ policies, like those of the fundamentalist Brian Tamaki and the xenophobic Winston Peters.

The United Party and the Maori Party are in a sort of limbo. How they will poll is anybody’s guess. That leaves the Greens who have decided to rely on the party vote and therefore must poll at least five percent to be represented in Parliament. Jim Anderton is now the Jim Anderton Party. What can one say?

Crosscurrents

John Honoré

The gist of all this is to accept the fact that the two major parties have, in many respects, similar agendas. Both promise to rob Aladdin’s cave in order to increase spending on health, roads, the poor and whoever else wants a handout. After all, this is election time. Historically, both Labour and National have broken election promises; so we, the voters, have an especially important decision to make in a week’s time.

There is the obligation to cast a vote, a well-considered one, to use the inherent advantages of the MMP system and create a critical balance between all the parties for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

Gaza – and after

The staged evacuation of 8000 Jewish settlers from their illegal settlement homes in the Gaza Strip ends 38 years of death and destruction wrought upon the hapless Palestinian people. The evacuation has been carefully manipulated to hide Israel’s US-backed takeover of the West Bank and the encirclement of Jerusalem.

The completion of Israel’s monstrous Wall in East Jerusalem will deny access to Palestinian Christians and Muslims to their holy sites of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Noble Sanctuary (Haram al Sharif) respectively. In July 2004, the *International Court of Justice* declared the Wall unjustified on grounds of security. It ordered Israel to take down the Wall and pay compensation. Israel has refused.

Ariel Sharon’s demands that Palestinians unilaterally renounce terror are outrageous. His policy of home demolition, targeted assassination, curfew and overall destruction of the infrastructure of Palestinian territory is unadulterated terror. The possibility of a viable Palestinian State recedes by the day.

According to Zionist doctrine, land that is possessed collectively or individually by Jews is ‘redeemed’. This redemption agenda for the West Bank is underwritten with almost unlimited US political, economic and military support. The ‘road map for peace’ now leads one way to a nine-metre high wall with electronically controlled machine-guns in surveillance towers. They overlook Bantustans of Palestinians who have no rights whatsoever and have restricted access to the outside world.

For Palestinians, the disengagement plan is therefore a prelude to a cultural death under apartheid or a repeat of the ethnic cleansing that led to the founding of Israel in 1948. A third *intifada* is inevitable.

Cindy Sheehan

The phenomenon of Cindy Sheehan’s protest against the death of her son in the illegal war in Iraq has given President George W. Bush a huge problem. This bereaved mother has sparked a nationwide uprising of the anti-war movement, reminiscent of the student protests which marked the beginning of the end of America’s war in Vietnam.

Cindy Sheehan’s simple question: “why did my son have to die?”, has left Bush not only nonplussed but also in danger of a political meltdown. The White House publicity machine has failed to establish her as a left-wing rabble-rouser, and far-right conservative pundits have unsuccessfully attempted to smear her as a dangerous anti-Semite.

Her simple question is a reminder that courage and moral righteousness can prevail. It is a credit both to the rule of law and to the American democratic system that one aggrieved mother can perhaps change the course of history.

Cindy Sheehan has claimed the moral high ground. How does George W. Bush, the self-styled war President, combat truth and justice? ■

Funerals – ‘don’t shoot the pianist’

Church funerals receive varied evaluations from those attending. Some say a certain funeral was well conducted and utterly fitting. Others have less positive reactions. “Too ritualistic”, they complain. They compare what was done in the church with what they considered were better conducted funerals they attended in funeral parlours. How can we ensure that a church funeral is all that it ought to be?

The basic option is between a funeral Mass and a funeral service. While a Mass is admirable, in certain circumstances a service may be preferable. Middle-aged children of an elderly deceased person may not be in a position to receive Communion due to being in uncanonical marriages or may simply be non-practising. It seems invidious that others go to Communion and these key mourners are left stranded and immobile at that climactic moment of the ceremony.

A Requiem Mass or a funeral service are of their nature matters of ritual. But much can be done to, in the best sense of the word, ‘personalise’ the proceedings. The family should be involved in the selection of readings and hymns and in the preparation of the Prayers of the Faithful. There can be a card or booklet with the format of the Mass which facilitates the participation of all those attending. A personalised Order of Service, produced by the Funeral Director, can supplement or incorporate any such card.

Eulogies prevent the celebration from being a purely ritualistic one. They are much better sited at the beginning of a Mass than after the Communion. They thus provide the setting for the worship that is about to get under way. After the Communion they are an intrusion on the flow of events. Every Mass-goer knows that once the tabernacle

door clicks shut at the end of Communion, the service will be ended within three or four minutes. This is not the best time to insert sometimes lengthy reflections on the life of the deceased.

As well as a Mass or funeral service there is the further option, the previous evening, of having the Rosary or some other form of funeral wake. A straight-through, five decade recitation of the Rosary is today quite alien to many. Two formal mysteries well rounded out with other prayers and hymns can go well. But I have heard of folk objecting when the full five mysteries were not recited. You can’t win on this one!

There is a *Scripture Wake Service* available that fits on an A4 sheet folded. I can supply an example, and details of where copies can be procured in bulk, to anyone who cares to contact me on: holy1@xtra.co.nz.

The wake can be free-flowing, leaving the Mass or funeral service next day to be a fairly straight-down-the-middle ritualistic affair. The wake does not have to be conducted by a priest, but could be led by a lay person. Eulogies might best go here. At least, have only at a wake the invitation, sometimes given disastrously after the formal eulogies at a Mass: “Would anyone else like to come up and say something?”

Priests vary in their ability to relate to the occasion and to ‘personalise’ (within legitimate liturgical boundaries) the funeral Mass or service. If a funeral director failed consistently to strike the right tone in conducting funeral services, he or she would soon be out of business. After all, they are specialists in this field. Priests are not. Let us be sympathetic to the limitations that ritual and his own personality place on a priest’s creativity. Even if the melody is sometimes a little off key, let us not shoot the pianist. ■

Humphrey O’Leary

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

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Apostle of Reconciliation

Sister Jan Ogilvy was shocked when I told her that Brother Roger, the founder of the ecumenical Taizé community, had been stabbed and killed. A Romanian woman attacked him while he was conducting a service for young people at a Catholic festival in Germany on August 17.

Jan, a Dominican sister, told me about meeting Brother Roger at Taizé in 1985. She unexpectedly came face to face with him and spent some time talking to him about her work with tertiary students in New Zealand. She clearly remembers his response to her question: "Is there one message you would give me for young people?"

"Life is about reconciliation," he said, "reconciliation! reconciliation!"

What an appropriate message for today's world. And what a living example he was of his own spiritual message. Roger Schutz, a Protestant

theology graduate, devoted his life to the reconciliation of all Christian denominations. The small community of Catholics and Protestants he established in the abandoned French village of Taizé in 1940, has grown into a youth pastoral centre, visited by 6,000 young people every week and 100,000 pilgrims every year. "Let all who enter here be reconciled, brother with brother, sister with sister, nation with nation", reads the multi-language sign outside the community church.

People all round the world have experienced and benefited from the simplicity and beauty of Taizé worship – no emotional charismatic prayers or healing sessions, no sterile liturgies, but long periods of meditation and silence and uplifting, gentle chanting. Brother Roger's mild nature and simple message posed no threat to the authority of church institutions, and

the leaders of all world churches paid tributes to his work for ecumenism and reconciliation.

"This is an indescribable shock," said Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury. "Brother Roger was one of the best-loved Christian leaders of our time." Pope John XXIII invited Roger to attend the Vatican Council as a non-Catholic observer, and Pope John Paul II visited Taizé in 1976. But perhaps the most unexpected acknowledgment of the spirit of reconciliation and ecumenism was seen when Cardinal Ratzinger gave Brother Roger communion at Pope John Paul's funeral and again at his own installation as Pope this year.

In a recent letter, this truly saintly man, perhaps prophetically, wrote his own epitaph: *Love life on earth, and at the same time long for a beyond, for a life that will never end.*

May he now enjoy that life. ■

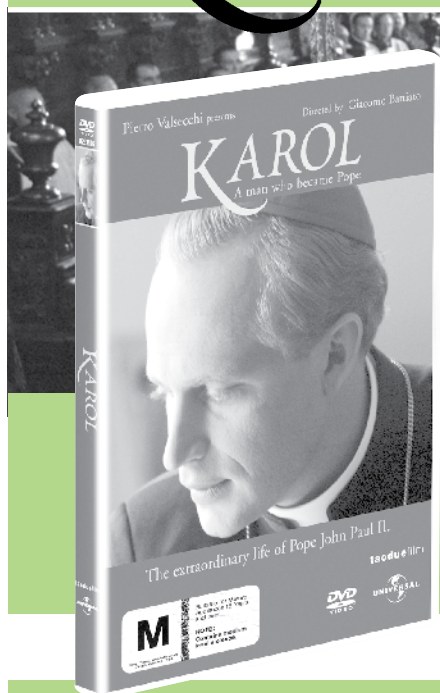
Jim Neilan

KAROL

A man who became Pope

*"...a word of admiration to the director and writer
and especially Piotr Adamczyk
who played the part of John Paul II."*

- Pope Benedict XVI



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A man who has marked an era

A man who has made history

A man who was Pope John Paul II

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