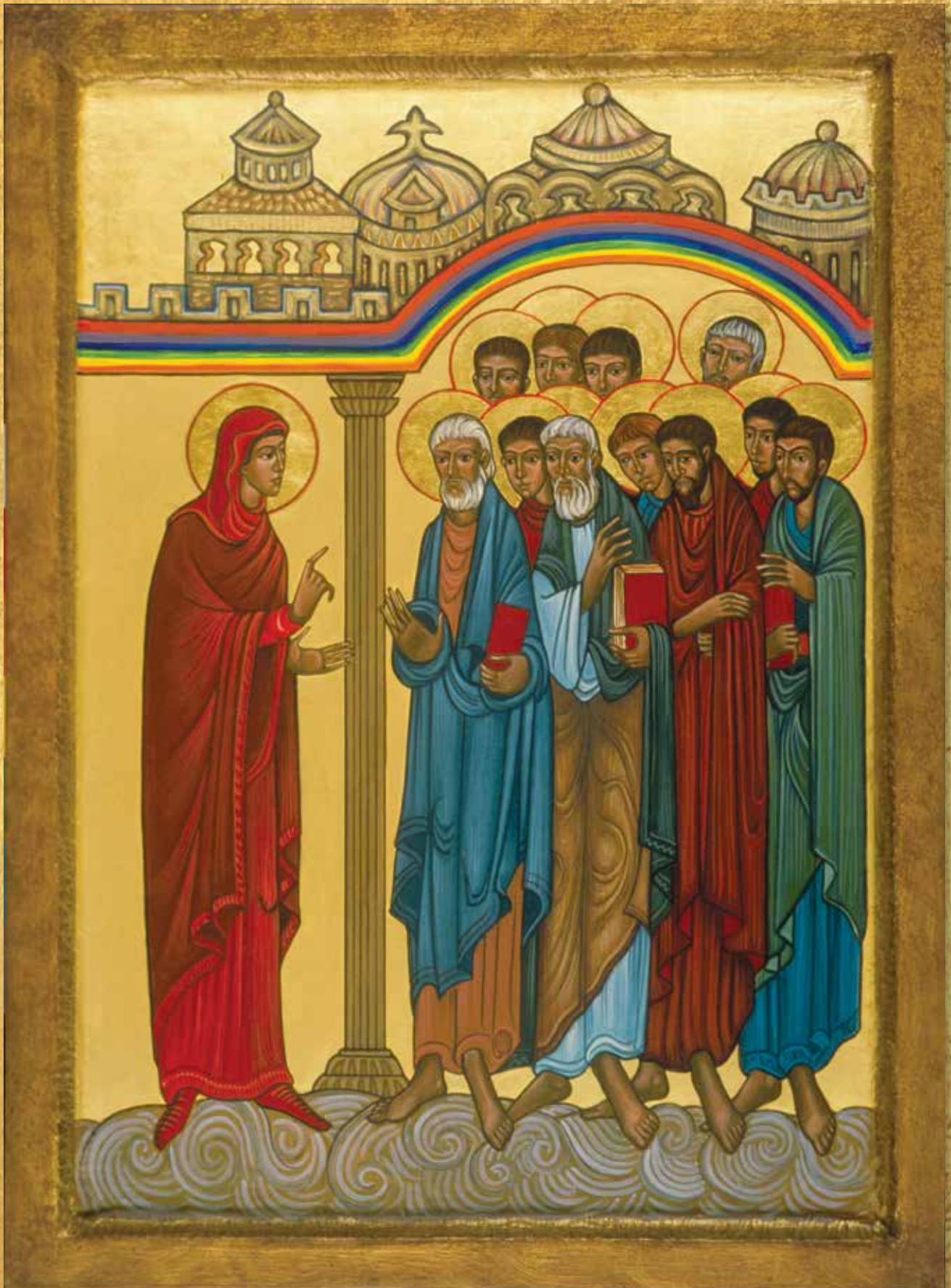


# TUI MOTU InterIslands

CELEBRATING 21 YEARS 1997–2018

Issue 225 April 2018 \$7



**GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERING WOMEN**

**TE MANA TAURITE ME TE WHAKAMANA I NGA WĀHINE ME NGA KŌHINI**



## CONTENTS

### FEATURES

What Gender Equality Means ..... 4

ANN HASSAN

Now Is the Time for Change ..... 6

MARY McALEESE

Women and Partnerships ..... 8

GINA BRADLEY

Girls, Mercy and Taking Part ..... 9

DEBORAH BROSNAHAN

We Are All the Kin of Christ ..... 10

JANET MARTIN SOSKICE

I Am an Artist ..... 12

NIKKI MARINER PESETA

Liberating Women from Violence ..... 14

RENA MACLEOD

A Practice of Mentoring in Spirituality ..... 18

ANNE SHAVE

Our Inspiring Women ..... 20

MERYN GATES, ANYA BROOKES,  
EMMA CROXSON PAGE, NAOMI MELVILLE

### COMMENT

Editorial ..... 2

Trading in Weapons; Trading in Death ..... 3

SUSAN CONNELLY

### COLUMNS

Struggling for Women's Equality ..... 26

JACK DERWIN

Valuing Community ..... 27

ALICE SNEDDEN

Crosscurrents ..... 30

SUSAN SMITH

Looking Out and In ..... 32

KAAREN MATHIAS

### SCRIPTURE

Abiding in the Vine ..... 22

KATHLEEN RUSHTON

A New Time for Everything ..... 24

ELAINE WAINWRIGHT

### REFLECTION

The Girl Child Who Refused to Be Missing ..... 16

TUI BEVIN

### REVIEWS

Book, Play and Film Reviews ..... 21, 28

### LETTERS

Letters to the Editor ..... 30



Cover: Icon of St Mary Magdalene Announcing the Resurrection to the Apostles. Written by +Sister Mary Charles McGough OSB © St Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, Minnesota. Printed with permission.



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## EDITORIAL

### Listen to Women

I imagine my amazement discovering a book in a religious library called *Autobiography of Our Lady* by Father Superior (I've forgotten his name). Admittedly the book was old but it set my teeth on edge to think that the priest presumed to speak for Mary – autobiography no less – in pious lectures to Catholic women.

The feminist movement has helped us analyse institutions and societies and shown the gender inequality operating in them – to the detriment of women and girls. When liberation theology was introducing God as having a preferential option for the poor and challenging the socio-political systems that kept the poor in poverty, feminists highlighted the reality that women and children were the bottom of the heap, the poorest of the poor. Whereas earlier men had done theology for everyone assuming that God could be spoken of only from their point of view, feminism encouraged women to engage in theology beginning with their own experience. We have now a rich variety of theologies by women across the world – black womanist theology, Asian, African, Latina, biblical, queer, contextual feminist theologies – discussing their insights of God from their experience and scholarship. This theological engagement soon shone the light on behaviours which were impoverishing the planet and so women included care of Earth as God's concern and as integral to liberation, gratitude and respect for life.

In our Easter issue women have a lot to say. Our cover is an icon of Mary Magdalene announcing to the apostles the incredible news that Jesus is risen and, as Janet Soskice points out, that means we all belong to a new family, we're kin with God. Page by page we are introduced to discussions about the fullness of life intended by the UN global goal of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in every society, institution (including Church) and country. Ann Hassan, Elaine Wainwright, Mary McAleese and Rena MacLeod recommend changes we need right now for the common good of our human and Earth communities. And Gina Bradley, Nikki Mariner Peseta and Deborah Brosnahan tell about works of development, art and education involving women and girls. Individually and together our contributors give voice to challenge, love and hope for women and girls at home and around the world.

We are grateful to all who by sharing their writing, faith, reflection, research, art and craft have given us a thoughtful magazine.

We are delighted to announce that Kaaren Mathias is the guest speaker at our Subscribers' Evening in Wellington, Friday 11 May. Details are on our website.

As is our custom our last word is of blessing. ♀

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Hassan'.



Photo: Bombed out vehicles in Aleppo, Syria.

# TRADING IN WEAPONS IN DEATH

Australia is planning to become a major player in the arms trade. This means that our elected representatives are willing to increase national wealth through the sale of weapons and other military items. A nation has the right to defend itself, but to unite this reality with generating profits from the sale of weapons overseas is morally wrong.

This Australian decision ignores a monumental shift in the exercise of warfare. War is no longer conducted as it has been for millennia. It is now ill-defined, more aligned to ideology than nation and is conducted not on designated battlefields but in populated cities and towns across the globe. The effects of this change are disastrous. At the turn of the 20th century 5 per cent of war casualties were civilians. According to UNICEF now 90 per cent of deaths and injuries are suffered by civilians, many of them children.

Warfare has also been irrevocably changed by the increasingly lethal power of the weapons used. Never before has the human race been able to annihilate itself. In a similar acceleration, the technical development of small arms and explosives enables individuals and small groups to inflict mayhem. As weapons become more sophisticated so their trade becomes more immoral.

The whole concept of “trade” in enhanced weaponry illustrates the circular spiral of its evil threat. The expansion of this industry depends on instability between nations and groups and the continuation of wars. Arms traders thus require the maintenance of war in order to exist. No war, no profit. This is the situation which the Australian government seeks to exploit.

The Australian defence industry argues that to protect people and to serve the “national interest” Australia must have the best capability affordable. We are told that competition and export are necessary for the industry. This claim is made despite the fact that the current defence capability is adequate for Australian needs. It is an argument based solely on profit and expansion, as though what is being produced and sold are wheelbarrows, fishing lines or hats.

Government replies to letters on this subject omit the word “weapon”. Instead, the products of the industry are listed as “vehicles, life rafts, radars, software, medical supplies and surveillance goods”, and items which “save lives” such as battlefield hospitals.

This type of argument resembles that used for the incarceration of hundreds of genuine refugees now in Australian offshore detention centres. They are there, we are told, to save lives at sea. We are to believe that the Australian government’s concern for potentially drowned asylum seekers requires that actual refugees be criminalised and abused for years. In the same way, the manufacture of items peripheral to the business of killing in war is presented as good reason for trade, but the actual weapons causing death and suffering are omitted, evaded, concealed.

Yet there are alternatives to Australian cooperation with this violent “escalation to extremes”. Australia could invest in climate and water security, support the renewables industry and create new high-tech industries as sources of economic growth. Export of these initiatives and expertise would help to eliminate poverty. It is clear that aid to developing nations helps to decrease the disenfranchisement which generates conflict. But the level of Australian overseas aid continues to slip.

The government claims a robust control process to ensure that the unmentionable weapons are not misused. It is asserted that exports are measured against five criteria: “human rights, international obligations, regional security, national security and foreign policy.” This claim is not supported historically and is tragically laughable. Australia continued to provide weapons and military training to Indonesia between 1972 and 1999 during the occupation of East Timor where up to 183,000 people died violently. Can it credibly be claimed that no Australian weapon was used during that time? Similarly, Australia is supplying funding, equipment and training to Detachment 88 — an anti-terrorist section of the Indonesian Police Force. Successful though it may be in relation to terrorism, it is also used against people working for human rights in West Papua.

The Australian government’s desire to become a major arms trader is deeply disturbing. It bears out René Girard’s observation that “politics is part of violence, not violence part of politics”. ♀



**Susan Connelly** RSJ analysed the relationship between Australia and East Timor in her recent PhD dissertation using René Girard’s insights on violence, scapegoating and forgiveness.





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## *What* GENDER EQUALITY *means*

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ANN HASSAN shows that gender inequality has many different faces and explains why equality is essential for women and girls to flourish.

**T**he United Nations' fifth Sustainable Development Goal is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The UN asserts that this goal is essential for two reasons. First, gender equality is a human right. Women are entitled to equality; we have a moral responsibility to achieve it. Second, providing women and girls with the same opportunities as men and boys — with equal access to education, healthcare, decent work and political representation — will benefit societies and humanity at large.

In New Zealand today we can look to every institution — the hospital, the

school, the court, the Beehive — and find women in positions of power. And yet women everywhere, and at every level of society, continue to suffer violence and discrimination.

The Boko Haram kidnappings in Nigeria in 2014 showed us that women are used as political leverage and that their plight is ignored. Closer to home, rest home worker Kristine Bartlett showed through her pay parity case that equal pay is a fallacy. And recent revelations about the culture of leading law firm Russell McVeagh show that harassment and gender discrimination is a feature of life for even the most privileged

women. True, freedoms have been slower and harder won in some countries. But here, too, equality is a goal rather than a reality.

### **Boko Haram**

Boko Haram was a Jihadist group based in northeastern Nigeria. Since 2015 it has been rebranded as part of the Islamic State. Known for its extreme violence, it was ranked as the world's deadliest terror group by the Global Terrorism Index in 2015.

On the night of 14 April 2014 the group kidnapped 276 schoolgirls from the Nigerian town of Chibok. Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau initially announced that the girls would be sold as slaves. Some reports suggested that the girls would be used as living bargaining chips to negotiate the release of imprisoned

Boko Haram commanders, but Shekau later made statements suggesting they had instead been “married off”. Some 50 girls escaped soon after capture, but the fate of the remainder was mysterious, with conflicting reports reaching the media.

Beginning with local posters, which President Goodluck Jonathan worked to suppress, the slogan “Bring Back Our Girls” became popular, trending as a hashtag on international social media. United States First Lady Michelle Obama was a vocal champion of the cause, but in general the Western media was criticised for not giving the story the airtime it deserved, and international governments were accused of inaction.

It is now four years since the kidnapping. Some girls have escaped, some have been released, some have died, some have borne children to their captors. Video footage of the remaining girls has been released, but its verity is questionable. Perhaps the most depressing element of this story is that released or escaped girls have often found themselves rejected by their own communities, stigmatised by the sexual violence they experienced while in captivity.

What is so shocking about the Chibok kidnapping is that the girls themselves do not matter. They are not, like the kidnapped children of the very rich, for instance, or abducted political figures, taken for who they are, but rather simply for the terror that the act of kidnapping 276 people can produce. And, arguably, the international community was able to ignore the plight of the taken because they were “just girls” — in and of themselves essentially powerless and unimportant.

### Pay Parity

In 2014, Lower Hutt rest home worker Kristine Bartlett brought a case to the Employment Court. She argued that her low rate of pay — \$14.32 per hour — was evidence of gender discrimination. Bartlett proved that the almost all-female rest home workforce was paid less than males doing similar work in other areas, and that if a legion of men suddenly became rest home workers, pay rates would increase.

The success of Bartlett’s case led to unions and employers forming a working group to establish the parameters for future pay discrimination claims. The group considered not just health and disability support workers but all female-dominated industries.

Aged care providers have always argued that wages were paid at a minimum because their industry was under-funded by government. But over the last quarter century, the rest home industry has proven to be lucrative, with shareholders receiving impressive returns. Ryman Healthcare, for instance, returned a full year underlying profit of \$178 million in 2017, up 17 per cent on the previous year.

*All women – kidnapped, harassed, working the hardest, most important jobs in our community – have a right to equality, and we have a collective responsibility to ensure they get it.*

After the success of Bartlett’s case, the Employers and Manufacturers Association immediately warned that New Zealanders may have to pay more tax to cover these mandatory pay increases, showing that for many paying a fair wage to women is seen as an unnecessary burden rather than a moral obligation.

### Russell McVeagh

Russell McVeagh is one of the “big three” law firms in New Zealand. Established in 1863, with 350 staff and partners at offices in Auckland and Wellington, it is a national institution. Along with other large firms, it operates an aggressive recruitment strategy, touring university campuses to pitch to the brightest and best.

But earlier this year the firm, which describes itself as “committed to operating at the cutting edge of legal practice”, found itself at the “cutting edge” for all the wrong reasons. It is alleged that senior male lawyers routinely engaged in consensual and non-consensual sex with female interns. Over the course of a few weeks’ news,

a picture of the firm’s culture emerged: a boozy boys’ club in which male staff are acutely aware of the power they wield over young women in junior roles — and are keen to use it.

Dame Margaret Bazley has been appointed to conduct an internal inquiry. Other accusations of gender discrimination in the legal profession have since emerged: several alumni of Otago University reported inappropriate behaviour at a second-year law camp, and the University is now investigating these.

The women at Russell McVeagh are not what we typify as the “usual” victims of discrimination. They are high-achieving university students, admitted to a limited entry course and winning internships at a top firm. They are articulate and — as students of the law — they have a better-than-average understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

### Our Responsibility

No one is immune. Nationality, wealth, education, religion, family support — none of these inures women against violence — sexual or otherwise — and discrimination. It is easy to look back on the enormous, hard won achievements of last century and think: “Well done us. We’ve made it”, but we’re not there yet. For women in some countries, those battles for structural equality — the vote, the right to work, even to live freely — are still to be won. In countries like our own, we need to face the reality that there is still a mountain of work to do. All women — kidnapped, harassed, working the hardest, most important jobs in our community — have a right to equality, and we have a collective responsibility to ensure they get it. And as the UN asserts, an equal society will benefit all of us — women and men. ♀

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**Ann Hassan** is Assistant Editor and Administrator of *Tui Motu*. She has two young boys and loves reading and op shopping.



# NOW is the Time for CHANGE



MARY MCALEESE discusses why Pope Francis, bishops and priests need to take women's full participation in the Church seriously.



The Israelites under Joshua's command circled Jericho's walls for seven days, blew trumpets and shouted to make the walls fall down (Josh 6:1-20). Women don't have trumpets but we have voices — voices of faith and we are here to shout, to bring down our Church's walls of misogyny. We have been circling these walls for 55 years since Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* first pointed to the advancement of women as one of the most important "signs of the times".

At Vatican Council II Archbishop Paul Hallinan of Atlanta warned the bishops to stop perpetuating "the secondary place accorded to women in the Church of the 20th century" and to avoid the Church being a "late-comer in [their] social,

political and economic development". The Council's decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem* said it was important that women "participate more widely . . . in the various sectors of the Church's apostolate". The Council's pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* said the elimination of discrimination based on gender was a priority. Paul VI even commissioned a study on women in Church and Society. Surely, we thought then, the post-Conciliar Church was on the way to full equality for its 600 million female members. It is true that since the Council new roles and jobs have opened up to the laity, including women. But these have marginally increased the visibility of women in subordinate roles, including in the Curia, and have added nothing to their decision-making

power or their voice.

Back in 1976 we were told that the Church does not consider herself authorised to admit women to priestly ordination. This has locked women out of any significant role in the Church's leadership, doctrinal development and authority structure since these have historically been reserved to or filtered through ordained men. Yet in divine justice the very fact of the permanent exclusion of women from priesthood and all its consequential exclusions should have provoked the Church hierarchy to find innovative and transparent ways of including women's voices as of right, and not in trickles of tokenism, in the divinely instituted College of Bishops and in the manmade entities such as the College of Cardinals, the Synod of

Bishops and episcopal conferences — in all the places where the faith is shaped by decision and dogma and doctrine.

Just imagine this normative scenario — Pope Francis calls a Synod on the role of Women in the Church and 350 male celibates advise the Pope on what women really want! That is how ludicrous our Church has become. How long can the hierarchy sustain the credibility of a God who wants things this way; who wants a Church where women are invisible and voiceless in Church leadership, legal and doctrinal discernment and decision-making?

In 1995 the Irish Jesuit theologian Gerry O'Hanlon put his finger on the underpinning systemic problem when he steered Decree 14 through the Jesuits' 34th General Congregation. It is a forgotten document but today we will dust it down and use it to challenge a Jesuit Pope, a reforming Pope, to real, practical action on behalf of women in the Catholic Church.

*"We have been part of a civil and ecclesial tradition that has offended against women. And, like many men, we have a tendency to convince ourselves that there is no problem. However unwittingly, we have often contributed to a form of clericalism which has reinforced male domination with an ostensibly divine sanction. By making this declaration we wish to react personally and collectively, and do what we can to change this regrettable situation."*

The "regrettable situation" arises because the Catholic Church has long been a primary global carrier of the virus of misogyny. It has never sought a cure though a cure is freely available. Its name is "equality".

Down the 2000-year highway of Christian history came the ethereal divine beauty of the Nativity, the cruel sacrifice of the Crucifixion, the Hallelujah of the Resurrection and the rallying cry of the great commandment to love one another. But down that same highway came man-made toxins such as misogyny and homophobia, to say nothing of anti-semitism, with their legacy of damaged and wasted lives and deeply embedded institutional dysfunction.

Today the Catholic Church lags noticeably behind the world's advanced nations in the elimination of discrimination against women. Worse

still, because it is the "pulpit of the world" to quote Ban Ki Moon, its overt clerical patriarchalism acts as a powerful brake on dismantling the architecture of misogyny wherever it is found.

There is an irony here, for education has been crucial to the advancement of women and for many of us, the education which liberated us was provided by the Church's frontline workers clerical and lay, who have done so much to lift men and women out of poverty and powerlessness and give them access to opportunity.

*Today we challenge Pope Francis to develop a credible strategy for the inclusion of women as equals throughout the Church's root and branch infrastructure, including its decision-making.*

Yet paradoxically it is the questioning voices of educated Catholic women and the courageous men who support them which the Church hierarchy simply cannot cope with and scorns rather than engaging in dialogue. The Church which regularly criticises the secular world for its failure to deliver on human rights has almost no culture of critiquing itself. It has a hostility to internal criticism which fosters blinkered servility and which borders on institutional idolatry.

Today we challenge Pope Francis to develop a credible strategy for the inclusion of women as equals throughout the Church's root and branch infrastructure, including its decision-making. A strategy with targets, pathways and outcomes regularly and independently audited. Failure to include women as equals has deprived the Church of fresh and innovative discernment; it has consigned it to recycled thinking among a hermetically-sealed cosy male clerical elite flattered and rarely challenged by those tapped for jobs in secret and closed processes. It has kept Christ out and bigotry in. It has left the Church flapping about

awkwardly on one wing when God gave it two. We are entitled to hold our Church leaders to account for this and other egregious abuses of institutional power and we will insist on our right to do so no matter how many official doors are closed to us.

At the start of his papacy Pope Francis said: "We need to create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church", words a Church scholar described as evidence of Francis's "magnanimity". Let us be clear, women's right to equality in the Church arises organically from divine justice. It should not depend on ad hoc papal benevolence.

Pope Francis has said that "women are more important than men because the Church is a woman". Holy Father, why not ask women if they feel more important than men? I suspect many will answer that they experience the Church as a male bastion of patronising platitudes to which Pope Francis has added his quota.

John Paul II has written of the "mystery of women". Talk to us as equals and we will not be a mystery! Francis has said a "deeper theology of women" is needed. God knows it would be hard to find a more shallow theology of women than the misogyny dressed up as theology which the *magisterium* currently hides behind.

In 1995 the Jesuit Congregation asked God for the grace of conversion from a patriarchal Church to a Church of equals; a Church where women truly matter not on terms designed by men for a patriarchal Church but on terms which make Christ matter. Only such a Church of equals is worthy of Christ. Only such a Church can credibly make Christ matter. The time for that Church is now, Pope Francis. The time for change is now. ♀

[The full address to the Voices of Faith International Women's Day Conference in Rome is published on the *Tui Motu* website.]



**Mary McAleese** was the 8th President of Ireland 1997–2011. As well as earning a reputation in law, Mary studied canon law and is a member of the Council of Women World Leaders.



# Women and Partnerships



GINA BRADLEY writes about her work in *ethica*, a Fair Trade enterprise in Australia selling goods made by women in Peru.



Gina Bradley has been the manager of Ethica for 10 years. She believes in empowering and educating women and the ripple effect that has on communities.

I've had the privilege of working with Ethica for over 10 years. Ethica is a social enterprise selling quality products in Australia that have been crafted by women in Peru. My work and my passion combine in providing opportunities for artisan women to earn an income through Ethica and be able to improve their lives.

## Investing in Women

As a not-for-profit social enterprise we are committed to providing sustainable jobs for women artisans in Peru — widely proven to be the key to community development and family well-being. When women receive an income we know it will go back to the family.

The idea for Ethica developed over 30 years when the Sisters of St Joseph living in a poor area of Lima would answer the door to find a woman in need offering to sell them something she had made. In good fashion and following Mary MacKillop's legacy they helped the woman by buying the items but they realised they needed a system whereby women had a channel through which to sell their goods to international markets. After discussion, research and trials Ethica was founded and it now operates under the umbrella of Mary MacKillop International.

Our artisans live in marginalised areas — the outskirts of Lima and in isolated rural areas — where there are few opportunities for them to earn an income. Some speak only Quechua (indigenous language) and not Spanish, some don't read or write and some haven't been able to finish primary school. Through the artisan groups the women receive training in a skill — a skill for life, we like to think — and a fair income. But not only that, they also have workshops in such areas as leadership, women's rights, Excel spreadsheets and more.

Our aim is to set them up the best way possible with a skill that will allow them to have a sustainable future and be able to break from the cycle of poverty. The income they receive from their craft helps them with basic needs, such as better food for their families, medicine and schooling for their children. But much more is happening: they are being educated, leading by example for their children and passing the rich traditions of skills and artistry from one generation to the next, teaching and learning from one another.

## Community Collaborations

Since Ethica started as a small business in 2003, we have partnered with four artisan groups, and we have now formed a further three new partnerships. We are helping to design and bring to market the Fair Trade, handcrafted products these groups make.

Women artisans who create products for Ethica earn reliable, fair living wages and gain experience that benefits all aspects of their lives. When I travel to Peru to visit the groups I see firsthand the difference that making and selling goods through Ethica makes in these women's lives — a family is able to put a roof on their house, a woman knits her orders at home while watching her pre-schoolers, a wife can buy her husband spectacles and afford medicine for a sick child and women have friendships in the workshop group.

In return, Ethica invests all the proceeds from product sales in providing training and developing sustainable employment to enable the women to prosper and thrive into the future, and to create opportunities to join the international market.

## A Success Story

Valentina makes beautiful, soft alpaca-wool scarves. Through the sale of her scarves in Australia she has been able to earn an independent income supporting herself and her family and as



well, learn skills such as design, time management and participation in urban society.

She spoke to me about how she now understands that men and women are equal and should be given equal opportunities to work, education and roles in local leadership. However, the most important change for Valentina is that her income allows her son to complete his high school education. Thanks to his mum's hard work, and those who buy her scarves in Australia, Valentina's son will have opportunities that his parents never had. It demonstrates something I see over and over, that when women have access to employment and education, their entire family and community can benefit.

Valentina's is just one story, about one woman and one community. However, hers is one of many stories of lives changed thanks to the support of Ethica and those who buy from this source. It is inspiring to see growth and to encourage a future for women like Valentina, where a door has opened to new possibilities. This, I believe, is a road to success.

### Buying from Fair Trade Outlets

By choosing to buy Fair Trade products we have the power to lift women out of poverty and bring lasting positive change to them. We have a part in making a more just world possible.

And when we buy something from an artisan we are buying more than an object. We are buying the end product of something developed over hundreds of hours of experimentation, correcting errors and bringing to perfection — beautiful and lovingly crafted goods. We are buying years of frustration and moments of pure joy. We are not just buying one item, we are buying a piece of a heart, a piece of a soul, a small piece of someone else's life far away in Peru.

Ethica and similar Fair Trade outlets with their range of products — bags, purses, computer bags, scarves, hats, jerseys, blankets — are a wonderful choice when we are choosing a gift for a friend or family. And we'll know that we are choosing a gift that makes a difference. We can think of the person behind the product, and of the very real difference our purchase can make to her life. ♀

## Girls, Mercy and Taking Part



**V**illa Maria College in Christchurch has just celebrated its centenary.

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy, it reflects Catherine McAuley's legacy: "No work of charity can be more productive of good to society, or more conducive to the happiness of the poor, than the careful instruction of women since whatever be the station they are destined to fill, their example and their advice will always possess influence".

Deborah Brosnahan, the principal of this flourishing school, spoke about what concerns and delights her in educating girls today.

"The period from the end of WWII till now has seen massive social change. For example one of the Sisters, an earlier principal, told of having her report delivered by the Chair of the Board while she had to sit at the back. He wasn't the most articulate speaker and she just had to listen — she had no voice. There has certainly been a shift in the role of women!

"Today we work at building our girls' sense of confidence, their articulateness, their willingness to give things a go. We battle with this a bit because we've found that our girls tend to be perfectionist — not trying something if they don't think they'll get it right. They have an inner critic, which must come from the way we raise our girls. There's a lot of international research that focuses on this gap of confidence in girls.

"I've seen in studies from the States and Britain that there is a rise in anxiety particularly among young girls. It is affecting boys as well but we notice it particularly with girls. We're seeing an incredible rise in mental health issues. It's quite

disturbing. We can connect some of that to the earthquakes here, but I'm hearing of it showing up across the country and internationally. It is the rise in health issues that worries me.

"So we encourage our girls to risk, to develop their willingness to put themselves out there. We use collaboration and cooperation in our teaching. For example, the lovely thing about technology is that it enables collaboration in creative ways and enables girls to develop a piece of work together using different electronic platforms. It's quite exciting to see what girls can do."

And collaboration and participation is reflected in the mercy values developed in the College community.

"Our girls see opportunities for service as of immense value. They love getting involved in service. We've identified three key values we work with through the College. Manaakitangi incorporates Catherine McAuley's sense of hospitality — welcoming and making people feel at home. Whakaute is respecting each individual as a hallmark of the way we relate. And Tika is about justice. It's not just to do good works for the poor but to look to the causes and get justice. It's Catholic Social Teaching.

"Villa is a wonderful place to work — we have fantastic young women, a committed staff and a sense of shared mission, purpose, working together. We value our relationship with the Mercy Sisters. We're in a time of change and development. We love to see young women stepping up and their passion for service is a hallmark." ♀



**Deborah Brosnahan** is Principal of Villa Maria College in Christchurch, a Catholic secondary school for girls in Years 7–13.



# We Are All the Kin of CHRIST

JANET MARTIN SOSKICE explains that the kinship titles of father, brother and son in the Bible signify revolutionary relationships for all rather than gender essentialism.

I want to point to new avenues for Christian theology that can come from attending to language and scriptural titles whose revolutionary power has been overlooked.

There are many divine names — Rock, Wisdom, Light, Tower. The debates over whether gendered language in the Bible should be replaced with more inclusive terms brings attention to our forgetfulness of the challenge posed by a particularly intimate register of scriptural titles — father, brother, son. These names are all kinship titles and should be rare and strange to us, yet they have become worn and stripped of the power to shock by their very familiarity.

All official documents in English-speaking countries, whether university, government or business, use inclusive language. Where all persons are intended, we must write “he or she”, we cannot, as formerly, say “men” when we mean “men and women”. The only place where I regularly hear “exclusive” language is at Mass where week by week we pray “for us men and for our salvation”.

## “First Born Son” Means New Status for All

When the biblical translation debates first became vivid, now over 30 years



ago, I found myself sympathetic to the anguish felt by many women (and men) but cautious, as a philosopher of language, about some of the proposed solutions to the Bible’s gendered language, particularly when it comes to kinship terms. We cannot, without textual irresponsibility, simply go through the New Testament and replace every reference to God as “Father” with “Mother”, or supplement every reference to “son” and “brother” with “daughter” and “sister”.

For example, the author of Letter to the Hebrews in 12:22-3 writes to the faithful that “you have come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God . . . with the whole Church of first-born sons, enrolled as citizens of heaven”. It would make a theological nonsense of the text to change “first-born sons” to “first-born daughters”, or even to “first-born children”

because the metaphor depends on the notion, standard at the time of writing, that the first-born son was the son of privilege and heir of the father. The audacity of the text, its revolutionary power, comes from the fact that, absurdly, it is *all* the faithful who are named “first-born sons”, including presumably all the women. All are to occupy this privileged status and do so, in the wider theology of the Letter and most of the New Testament, because they are one with “the” first born Son who is Jesus Christ.

## We Are A New Family

Biblical authors use many gendered terms, not because they are interested in sex but because they are very interested in kinship and kinship terms which, in most natural languages, are gendered. Kinship



titles are titles of intimacy, of blood relation. Kinship imagery is both compelled and resisted by the Hebrew scriptures – compelled for reasons of intimacy and resisted from fear of idolatry. The remarkable “Song of Moses” at the end of Deuteronomy not only provides one of the few instances of naming God “Father” in the Old Testament (“Is he not your father, who created you, who made and established you?” Deut 32:6) but goes on to follow this with a graphic maternal image, accusing Israel of being “unmindful of the Rock that bore you” and forgetting “the God who gave you birth.” Paternal and maternal imagery in quick succession effectively rules out literalism, as does the astonishing invocation of a birth-giving rock. The text both gives and takes away, for it is on the face of it preposterous that we, creatures, should be the kin of God.

The African New Testament scholar Teresa Okure draws our attention to a neglected feature of the commission to Mary Magdalene in John 20:17 where Jesus says: “Go and tell my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God’” (Jn 20:17).

Okure notes that this is the first time in John’s gospel that the disciples are told that the Father of Jesus is to be their Father, too. At the Last Supper, they are named as friends and not slaves, and now, with Mary’s message, they are told “that they and Jesus now share the same parent ... in God. They are, in truth, brothers and sisters of Jesus in God in much the same way as children are related who share the same father and mother.... Only now does Jesus make his Father and God, in the full sense, the Father and God of his disciples.”

This revelation of the new family takes the reader back to the Prologue where the believers are referred to not only as children of God but as being born of God. This birth, Okure adds, has been “brought about by Jesus’s passion, death and resurrection”, and through his pierced side on the cross.

The commission to Mary Magdalene is not only to testify to the resurrection but to a new family,

a new relationship of kinship now established among the followers of Jesus. Jesus’s words to Mary “my God and your God” echo the words of Ruth to Naomi (Ruth 1:16) precisely at that juncture where the demands of patrilineage are put aside in favour of a family bound by faith.



*The commission to Mary Magdalene is not only to testify to the resurrection but to a new family, a new relationship of kinship now established among the followers of Jesus.*

### Kinship Means Mutuality

Kinship titles are mutually implying – if I am your kin then you are mine. Once one has a brother or a sister one is a brother or a sister. This is not merely a matter of emotional and domestic ties. A shepherd who ceases to look after sheep is no longer a shepherd. He might become a farmer or, as in David’s case, a king. Kinship terms are not similarly disposable. A woman who gives birth is made a mother by the arrival of the child and this is so, formally, even if the child is taken away without her seeing it, or dies within a few days of birth. The relation of mother to child is formal as well as, in most cases, emotional. To claim that God is our Father, or Christ our brother, is thus to make a strong claim not only about God but about ourselves.

### Challenge to Live Our Kinship

Kinship may seem, in our egalitarian times, to be a dangerous theological

direction, not least if we associate kinship titles with dominance and subordination. Without doubt kinship terms have been used in the past to enforce a certain rigidity into Christian anthropology (what used to be called the “Christian Doctrine of Man”), but if we return to the texts of Scripture and the classical texts of theology many of these fears will be dispelled.

In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus exploded normal expectations by asking: “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” (Mt 12:48). We should not underestimate the revolutionary importance of the manner in which Christianity broke and breaks the ties of blood. As Michael Banner in *The Ethics of Everyday Life* points out, the Christian rites of baptism “intend to unkin us, only to rekin us with new bonds that dispel childlessness as much as they eliminate orphanhood”.

If we are all to be “rekinned” with one another, if the title “brother” is extended to all human beings – women as well as men – the theological justification should be, I suggest, not simply the charitable argument that Jesus taught us to treat all people as brother, sisters and mothers, but the Christological argument that, by the incarnation, death and resurrection God became our kind and our kin and that consequently we – all humanity and perhaps all “flesh” – have become “the kin of Christ”, a family of “first born sons”. It is by participation in Christ that we are made one with one another. ♀

[This is a shortened version of Janet Soskice’s keynote address to the European Society for Catholic Theology in August 2017.]

Illustration: *Mary Magdalene Announcing the Resurrection to the Apostles*. St Albans Psalter © Dombibliothek Hildesheim, Property of the Basilica of St Godehard, Hildesheim. Used with permission.



**Janet Soskice** is Professor of Philosophical Theology at Cambridge University, and a renowned writer and speaker. She lives in Cambridge with her artist husband Oliver.





## NIKKI MARINER PESETA reflects on her journey to becoming an artist in Samoa.

I never planned to be an artist living in Samoa. Five years ago I was in Canberra at the Australian National University making headway in my doctoral research in Pacific history. In 2012 I fell madly in love with a Samoan artist, Lalovai Peseta, while we were both on a temporary work assignment in the Solomon Islands. This meeting changed my life.

### The Journey

I'm the eldest of four sisters — the daughters of a Samoan father and Pākehā mother. They met while both studying nursing in Christchurch, New Zealand, and have been married now for 45 years. We moved around quite a bit as my father worked for the Seventh Day Adventist Church. I have many memories of sitting in the front row at church watching my father preach. My mother has an artistic leaning and introduced me to poetry, literature, music and the visual arts. She is the kind of mother who tells

stories and encourages wide learning and experience.

At high school in Auckland I studied art for a couple of years and thoroughly enjoyed it. My marks weren't bad either. But my social life and love life were my primary occupations.

Art re-entered my life years later when I was living in Queensland and hit rock bottom as an exhausted and depressed single mother of two beautiful boys. A friend arrived at my door with canvas, brushes and paint. She said: "Just paint!" — and I did.

Painting was my medicine. It soothed and comforted me. Painting freed me when I felt trapped. No one outside my family saw my artwork. As I got happier, I painted less. I got better, stopped painting and turned my attention to academia. History, Pacific history, literature and gender studies.

It was love that brought art back into my life. And love brought me to Samoa. It was an opportunity to

live in my father's homeland and understand my own cultural heritage better.

I married my Samoan artist 18 months after we met. We started a new life together and began our own art studio at the end of 2013 — Manamea Art Studio. We do custom designed carvings, tattoos and paintings.

Manamea is Samoan for sweetheart/darling/beloved. "Love and Art" is our studio motto.

### Our Dream Takes Shape

I went directly from Canberra to Samoa — my first experience of living there. We set up in my mother-in-law's backyard in the village of Avao on the island of Savaii. I was surprised to find a sense of tranquility I'd yearned for in our village life. No TV, limited internet and no car. My three suitcases of shoes, cosmetics, handbags and clothes quickly became redundant.

And the beginnings of our art adventure were also modest. Our studio was a small *fale* (traditional Samoan house without walls) surrounded by banana trees. Our customers occasionally paid for their tattoos with pigs. So the pigs lived under the *fale* and the chickens slept in the ceiling rafters at night. We set up a Facebook page on the smartphone as our "online shop". Although we didn't have much we upheld our principles of original artwork done exceptionally well and reliable, efficient customer service. To our delight and almost disbelief, the orders kept coming in and we began to grow.

### Our Dream Surprises

After some time we moved to the main island of Upolu, rented a two-bedroom house in Vaitele Fou, got a puppy and named her Frida Kalo (slang for taro), and hired two full-time artists. It was hard work and we were constantly on the go — consultations, exhibitions, travel and rapid growth.





Then just three months ago we took a huge step in faith by signing a five-year lease for an old restaurant on the main road in Vaigaga and set it up as our Manamea Art Studio. The premises are big enough for all our art ventures and also to be able to host workshops and exhibitions. And we increased our staff – a third artist, an online reception staff member, an apprentice and a receptionist. We have renovations underway and we're covering the walls with murals. We now export made-to-order carvings and paintings all around the world. I'm astonished by how fast we've grown and genuinely proud of what we are contributing to the arts and the economy in Samoa.

## My Artist Emerges

And this is how I came to be living in an art studio in Samoa. The studio is my art school. My gallery. My home. My collective. It is where I work and learn. I have no formal art training. My husband, a former art teacher, has taught me the most about techniques and theory.

In the early days I focused solely on building our art business since it was our only source of income. But as our team grew and took over some of those responsibilities, I was able to experiment with my own art practice, inspired by my experiences of living in Samoa. My paintings have sold internationally and can be found in Oman, Italy, Scotland, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and around the Pacific.

I painted a series about being married to a *matai* – a Samoan chief. When my husband received a *matai* title, I discovered that by default I would be known as his *tausi* – helper/support. A good *tausi* would not only support her husband in his responsibilities, but also exemplify virtues of Samoan womanhood such as modesty, humility and hospitality. These expectations were more than slightly daunting for someone like me raised outside Samoa – so I painted about them.

In my *Tausi* series, I painted female figures in a demure stance wearing white *elei*, as is the standard church outfit for Samoan women, with their long black hair rolled up in a bun. This represents the societal role of a *tausi*, the public face. But behind the figure, I used colours, shapes and patterns to represent internal conflicts and passions

and emotions of these women as wives. These contrasting and dynamic elements depict the complexities of women's private versus public life.

I've also explored the bonds between sisters, focusing on the interplay of facial expressions and eye contact. I've been playing with paintings of mermaids as a twist on a Samoan legend of Sina being pursued by an eel. These paintings are known informally as the "Sina's Lovechild Series".

Another collection is the "Suga Series" (*suga* is girl/female). These works are characterised by *suga* in bright Samoan *pule* outfits, flowers in their flowing hair, backgrounds of colour, motifs and textures – all saying something about the identity and personality of individual *suga*. I wanted to capture the diversity among women and girls in contrast to cultural uniformity.

I've found that there are very few professional women painters in Samoa, or indeed, in the world. While Island women have long been a favourite subject in art – muses for many and fodder for fantasy – their depiction as slim, scantily-clad women dancing on a beach or set against tropical scenery is misleading, unrealistic and involves a projection. I'm passionate about telling Island women's stories from the inside, including the things that matter to us and the conflicts between cultural responsibilities and contemporary life we grapple with.



I'm determined to raise the profile of women in the arts in Samoa. I'm working to create opportunities for women painters to exhibit their work and nurture their talent. Next year we plan to host and curate an exhibition for Samoa-based women painters. It will be the first ever in Samoa.

This is my story of rediscovery, love, art and being a painter in Samoa. ♀

All photos: Nikki Mariner Peseta.



**Nikki Mariner Peseta** is a New Zealand-born artist of Samoan and Pākehā descent who lives in Samoa and works from Manamea Art Studio with her husband.



# Liberating Women from **VIOLENCE**

RENA MACLEOD writes that by reading and discussing biblical stories of violence against women, rather than ignoring them, we can be challenged to work for gender equality now.

I am deeply heartened by the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal to achieve gender equality for all girls and women by 2030, but I am also despairing of the scale of violence against females still to be surmounted. Advances towards gender equality have been made, but the overall picture remains bleak. Though most countries outwardly condemn violence against girls and women, the reality is this form of violence is pervasive as it is deeply-rooted in political, economic and cultural structures, which in turn are anchored within an entrenched social consciousness that females are of lesser value than males.

The damaging effects of this hierarchical gender consciousness are plain for all to see. Globally women are significantly under-represented in politics. Across developing and developed nations alike, women are especially prone to poverty and economic disadvantage through gender wage gaps, occupational segregation and the expectations that they perform domestic labour without pay.

Estimates indicate one in three females will be physically or sexually victimised in her lifetime. Women and girls are most vulnerable to harm and homicide from male family members and intimate partners. Millions of girls and women are subjected to abusive cultural practices where their bodies and lives are conditioned according to male privilege. For example, girls are given as brides to much older men. Single husbands possess multiple wives. Female genitals are mutilated

to inhibit sexual pleasure. Mothers beat flat daughters' developing breasts to protect them from molestation. Wives are burnt on kitchen fires for failing dowry demands. Females are murdered for breaching family honour. Millions of girls and women live in fear with injured minds and bodies and little freedom.

## **Women Are Silenced**

The degree of violence against females is staggering. Even more when current measurements are considered conservative due to extensive under-reporting. Gendered violence against females is without doubt a phenomenon acutely intertwined with the silencing of women's voices and concealment of their experiences.

There are many reasons why women don't speak out. Some lack funds, knowledge, or avenues to pursue legal redress. Many fear the police and formal processes. They anticipate that reporting abuse will achieve little, or lead to further retaliation, humiliation, blaming, or stigmatising. Some blame themselves for provoking the violence. Some feel compelled to prioritise protecting their family or the offender from additional shame. Others are silenced by death as their trauma leads to fatal self-harming, or their murders have been construed as accidental deaths or suicides.

Some women are so conditioned to violence they do not identify their abusive experiences as violence at all. For countless girls and women an insidious silencing occurs as they



*Tamar, Dinah and the unnamed societies structured upon hierarchy brutality that targets girls and oppressors and*

conform to prescribed female roles and expectations without realising how they diminish them, reduce their agency and make them more vulnerable to victimisation.

Violence against girls and women is so multifaceted, ingrained and obscured that it is almost impossible to quantify. But we know that the majority of females live within societies that are either explicitly or implicitly violent towards them.

## **Biblical Stories of Violence Against Women**

We have a long history of violence against women — and there are many examples in the Bible. The social context may be different, but the Bible witnesses to the same





*concubine call us to realise how hierarchical gender lead not only to women, but also make men into perpetrators.*

fundamental gender hierarchy that privileges and empowers males over females.

We learn, for example, of men's capacity to gift wives to other men (Gen 29:15-30), and of households where one man possesses numerous wives, handmaids/concubines (1 Sam 1:2; 1 Kgs 11: 1-3). We learn of Tamar — raped, humiliated and socially disgraced by her brother, who lured her to his room under the pretence of caring for him while he was ill (2 Sam 13: 1-21). We read of Dinah, raped by Shechem after she dared to venture out alone; and then hear that her father arranges for her to marry her rapist (Gen 34). We learn of a man who throws his concubine out to pacify a sadistic mob. They pack rape

her throughout the night and she is finally dismembered (Judg 19). The list goes on and on.

Clearly the Bible does not shy away from confronting us with horrific texts of male violence against females. These stories are made more disturbing by the fact that the victims are often unnamed and have little or no voice of their own. Troubling too is the silencing of these texts in our own time. They are typically censored out of homilies and lectionaries, and are usually lesser known.

### Encountering Biblical Victims

We gloss over these stories because they are gruelling, with content we would rather not face. However, I think there is a positive, generative power in them that challenges us to resist gendered violence.

If we look at these violent narratives through a lens which is highly sensitive to the women and their plight, the women can become characters who speak to us — we can hear their voices. They draw us in, beyond their namelessness and silencing, asking us to be in solidarity with them, to sense their fear and isolation, their helplessness and anguish, to see how they are caught in a world that has empowered men at their expense.

Tamar, Dinah, and the unnamed concubine challenge us to see the explicit gendered violence and injustices of a world dominated by men. They plead with us to think about how women are objectified, degraded and dehumanised by distorted male desires and power. They implore us to see how women's bodies and lives are controlled by males in contexts that give them little freedom to flourish. Tamar, Dinah and the unnamed concubine call us to realise how societies structured upon hierarchical gender lead not only to brutality that targets girls and women, but also make men into oppressors and perpetrators of abuse.

Female biblical victims are capable of inspiring women and men to transform their relationships with each other, because they force us to confront the damage caused by inequality. They also cause us to question the image of

God portrayed in these stories and to ponder a deep dynamic at work within these texts calling us to overcome gendered violence.

### Learning Solidarity for Change

Reading these stories challenges us to reach out to women victims in our own time. Hearing the horror of the violence in the biblical stories forces us to take seriously the terror experienced by women today.

*Violence against girls and women is so multifaceted, ingrained and obscured that it is almost impossible to quantify.*

We are not helpless. We can stand in solidarity with them — listen to their stories — and by standing with them we undermine the social and political structures that deny and ignore their experiences. We can insist on substantial and effective laws and practices that protect women from discrimination and violence. We can insist that boys and men are educated to recognise gender equality and behave accordingly.

Girls and women may then nurture their self-worth, defy gender codes attempting to dominate them and live with greater freedom and authenticity alongside men as equal subjects.

It is critical, then, that stories of female biblical victims are not overlooked. They are narratives of potent female figures who can help us to liberate and empower women in our own time. Adding our voices to theirs, we speak in unison with the United Nations' pursuit of gender equality. ♀

Painting: *Me Too, Sexual Assault Voices of Women* by Consilia Karli © [www.theshebee.wordpress.com](http://www.theshebee.wordpress.com) Used with permission.

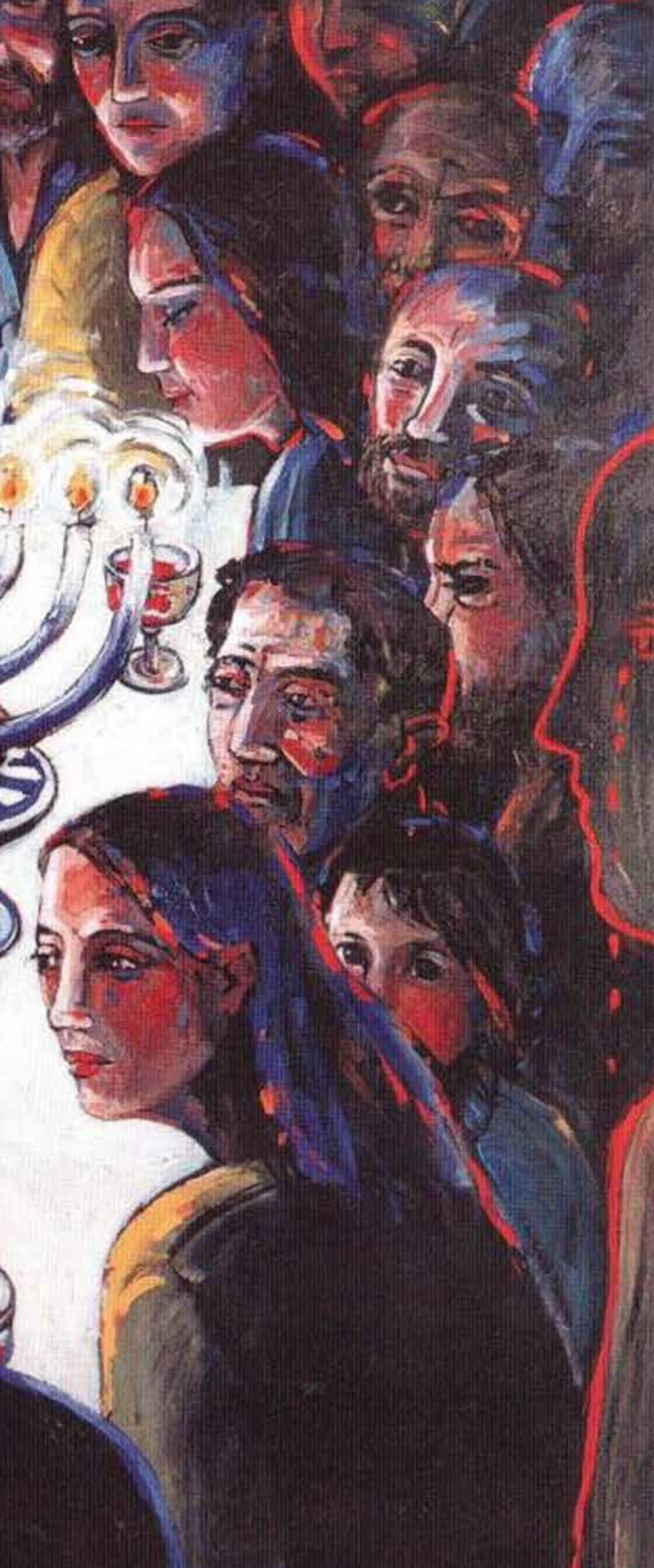


Originally from the Wairarapa, **Rena MacLeod** currently lives in Brisbane, completing her PhD on the biblical representation of female victimhood.









## THE GIRL CHILD WHO REFUSED TO BE MISSING

The sun slipped behind Silver Peaks.  
It was evening.

A girl child was there. *I want to go  
to church with you*, she'd said.  
*I don't want to stay home.*

There were women, one pregnant,  
another the preacher. There were men.  
The girl child did not know  
they were only men  
at that last but first table.  
She had not seen da Vinci's tableau.

In the room up the stairs she sat on Morfar  
as they squeezed around the table:  
a bowl and water, candles and coins,  
glasses and cloths, bread and 'wine'.  
They sang: *Tama ngakau marie,  
tama a te Atua, tenei tonu matou,  
arohaina mai.*

There was silence.

Into the silence erupted a short, sharp fart.  
*That was me*, owned up the girl child's  
two-year-and-ten-month voice.

The girl child shared supper:  
fragrant fresh bread  
'wine' from kitchen glasses.  
She spoke again into silence,  
*I want some more.*

No-one left quietly. Instead  
they ate more bread,  
drank more 'wine' and chatted  
about how the last supper  
was incomplete

without women, without children.

— Tui Bevin

(First published in the Otago Daily Times, July 2017)

Painting: *Last Supper* by Margaret Ackland 1993 ©  
Used with permission.





## A Practice of Mentoring in Spirituality

ANNE SHAVE  
discusses the value  
spiritual direction can  
have in our lives.

“**W**hat is spiritual growth and how do I foster it in my life?” When we find ourselves asking this question we may appreciate being able to discuss it with someone else. We might do so in small groups, among friends, or with someone in our parish. We may not be aware that within the Church there is a long-standing tradition of support offered to those who would like to converse with another person about the spiritual life. This article is an introduction to the ministry of spiritual direction. In *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, the authors William Barry and William Connolly define

spiritual direction as “help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God’s personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with God and to live out the consequences of the relationship.” For this article, trained spiritual directors and attendees (people who engage in spiritual direction) tell me what spiritual direction means to them. Their names are pseudonyms.

Spiritual directors usually meet with individuals on a regular basis, often over a period of months or even years. At each appointment, lasting about one hour, the director asks open-ended questions to encourage attendees to reflect prayerfully on their lives and faith. As one spiritual director, Brian,

explains, time and space is provided for attendees to “sift through what’s happening for them inside.” He adds: “What the director is helping them do is to notice, as they look back over their daily lives, notice the moments where there is an experience of God or an experience of mystery breaking into their lives.” Richard, who attended spiritual direction regularly for several years, told me that a “very basic question” of spiritual direction was: “Where is God in this stuff that’s happening here?” Richard felt “that’s a very good question.” He described his time at spiritual direction, and his reflection afterwards, as really helpful because “it’s hard to see God at times.”

### Practice of Listening

Susan Phillips, a sociologist and spiritual director writes: “Talking



to another who takes an interest in our spiritual experience allows us to narrate our lives, weaving coherence and meaning as we do." For Presbyterian minister and retreat director Andrew Dunn: "There is a shortage of listening in life today, whether between spouses, parents and children or in life in general, and not least in the Church." Spiritual director Louisa agrees it can be an "utter relief" for some individuals — perhaps especially for those in helping professions or in familial situations that demand constant care of others — to be able to talk to someone who will listen attentively to them for an hour.

Reflecting on her experience of spiritual direction, Raewyn, a mother with three children, says, "To have someone just to give their time up to listen to me is just amazing." Linda, who works in a parish, explained that one difference between spiritual direction and conversations she has with close friends is that she need not be concerned about providing space for them to talk, or, as she put it, needing to be "a little bit more discerning and not coming in with your own story. In spiritual direction you've got the floor!" Spiritual director Frances observed that often people "just feel they need someone to talk through what's happening for them."

### Exploring and Discovering

Many people who attend spiritual direction do so initially because they sense that there may be more to the spiritual life than they are currently experiencing. They "want to go deeper into God" and "grow in their relationship and understanding", said spiritual director Carol. Others may feel that they have reached a "stuck place" in their faith, when spiritual practices which had formerly provided nurture and nourishment no longer seem to be so helpful. Spiritual direction may be of particular value for those who find themselves at what Sandra Schneiders calls these "growing points" in the spiritual journey.

There are vast resources of prayer within the Church for people to discover. Spiritual directors may

## Interested in Spiritual Direction?

- Speak to someone who attends spiritual direction and ask them about their experience.
- Look for "Spiritual Direction" or "Spiritual Directors" on diocesan websites, such as <https://chchcatholic.nz/pastoral/spiritual-direction/>
- The website of The Association of Christian Spiritual Directors in Aotearoa New Zealand [www.acsd.org.nz](http://www.acsd.org.nz) provides a list of spiritual directors by location and gives further information about the training and responsibilities of its members.

be able to point individuals towards forms of prayer that could be helpful to them, or introduce them to spiritual frameworks, such as Ignatian spirituality, that encompass "long-tested wisdom", as spiritual director Matthew points out. Tony explains that spiritual direction provides space for tentative exploration. He told me that he sometimes suggests to directees: "Why don't you go away and try that, and let's talk about it next time?" Liz, an Anglican priest, also thinks of spiritual direction as a place where "a lot of people" can have "great fun exploring things. And I am too." Judith, who has received spiritual direction for over 20 years, describes some forms of spirituality she was introduced to as being "life-giving" for her.

### Making Sense of Life

In the context of spiritual direction people may also find a safe and accepting place to talk about some of the paradoxes and hard questions of faith. Matthew accepts that the journey is hard: "Not all of life is the same, and the spiritual journey is not some smooth path, not some smooth upward incline and you just get holier and holier. There are times when you feel like the wheels

have fallen off. And it's OK. This has happened to God's people ever since the beginning." When difficult life events occur — such as relationship breakdowns, redundancy, illness or bereavement — some of our beliefs may be thrown into question. Some of us may find it difficult to talk with others about such things, and opportunities to discuss deep questions about life and faith with our minister or priest may be limited. Tony said that at spiritual direction people "can say whatever they need to say, and be really honest, and know it's held and it's confidential and someone else cares."

Susan Philips writes that spiritual directors can also "extend the gift of memory" to people experiencing disequilibrium in their faith. Speaking with someone who recalls "the ups and downs of the path we have walked, and continue to walk" can be very reassuring. At times of uncertainty or upheaval, a spiritual director can gently remind us that God has been with us in the past, is with us now, and that God's faithfulness "endures forever" (Ps 117:2).

### Spiritual Directors

In New Zealand, spiritual direction training is currently offered through an ecumenical programme provided by Spiritual Growth Ministries (SGM), and through programmes grounded in Ignatian spirituality, such as Te Wairua Mahi: Forming Spiritual Directors in the Ignatian Tradition. The Association of Christian Spiritual Directors in Aotearoa New Zealand includes members from a range of denominations. Registered members receive ongoing supervision of their practice and they attend spiritual direction themselves. They agree to a code of ethics. ♀

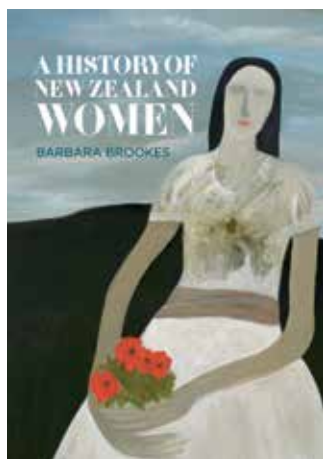
Sculpture: *Jesus and the Woman of Samaria* at Chester Cathedral, UK.

Inscription: "Jesus said: The water that I shall give will be an inner spring always welling up for eternal life" (John 4:14).



**Anne Shave's** doctorate research explored the needs and experiences of New Zealand churchgoers in midlife.





# Our Inspiring

We asked a group of friends to read Barbara Brookes's *A History of New Zealand Women* and tell us about a woman they admired.

*Meryn Gates introduces the book:*

In *A History of New Zealand Women* Barbara Brookes reviews New Zealand's history through a woman's lens. The book begins with Aotearoa being named by a woman, Hine-te-Aparangi, and ends with images of Dame Silvia Cartwright, Helen Clark, Tariana Turia, Marama Fox, Jacinda Ardern, Annette King, Metiria Turei and Paula Bennett — women who have contributed to the public and

## ANYA BROOKES

My name is Anya. I'm 16 years old and I go to Wellington High School. I love playing the piano and my favourite subject at school currently is Biology.

Despite still facing major issues with equality and women's rights in our society today, major leaps of progress have been made over hundreds of years by the amazing women featured in this book.

After having read various enlightening stories of empowerment and success, I was able to better understand that all gains come with true struggle and hardship. This is why I am now so grateful to have gained a better understanding and a whole new appreciation for the effort

women throughout New Zealand's history have put into making far less grief for our lives in society today.

Although all stories in this book are outstanding and inspiring, I found myself most drawn to the story of courageous Therese O'Connell. Therese was just 18 years old when she made the brave and daring decision to move to Wellington, leaving her home and family back in New Plymouth. In Wellington, Therese attended University and joined a women's liberation group, eventually helping to set up the Women's Liberation Front. Together the women fought for issues such as liberating "men-only" bars, promoting a free 24-hour crèche on campus and contraception on demand. These are all things that Therese acknowledged needed doing — and simply, with the Women's Liberation Front, did. To me, that's probably the most inspiring thing about Therese's story. Along with

## EMMA CROXSON PAGE

I'm Emma and I go to Wellington East Girls' School. I like drawing and history.

Dr Marilyn Waring is a feminist New Zealander. She has been a politician, environmental and social rights activist, author, academic, feminist economist and more. I had never heard of Marilyn Waring before I read *A History of New Zealand Women*. But what made her stand out to me was the impact she has made in all spheres of women's lives. She was one of the youngest New

Zealand politicians at the time and one of the only women, yet she held onto her values and stood firm. She pushed for marital rape to be criminalised. When it was time to vote on the issue of New Zealand allowing nuclear ships to visit our ports she withdrew her support of her own party and caused then-Prime Minister Robert Muldoon to call a snap election. Muldoon lost the election and Labour won with one of their main policies being a Nuclear Free NZ. Reading about this story, about how Marilyn possibly changed the course of New Zealand's history by stubbornly sticking to her values and not giving in, made me even more intrigued. After resigning from parliament Marilyn

## NAOMI MELVILLE

My name's Naomi and I go to Wellington High School. I play netball and draw in my spare time.

After flicking through and skim reading the many pages of this book, I was struggling to find a New Zealand woman who truly resonated with me. They all had such amazing stories to tell and I couldn't connect. However, these stories did give me an understanding of the hardship that New Zealanders have faced, and

I could then connect that with the advantages that I have in my own life. I am a Gen-Z fourth-wave feminist and many people have the idea that all feminists believe that females are better than males or that they themselves aren't feminist because they "don't hate men". I came across Ann Hercus, who was a Labour MP for Lyttleton, and reading what she had to say really interested me — she says that "all issues are women's issues". She also believes that "women's perspective can be different from men's — equally valuable, equally deserving of being



# Women

political life of this country. Through the journey from then until now we see how the threads of women's lives weave through our country's history. Brookes recounts the struggles of both famous and less well-known women, and there is also the acknowledgement that while some women have broken the glass ceiling, so many others are prevented from realising their full potential by limiting attitudes. ♀



many other women in this book, she saw something that she knew wasn't right or that needed changing and took action to improve equality in our society.

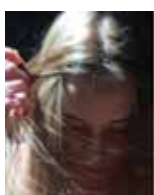
This made me understand that as a feminist myself, it's my responsibility and the responsibility of those around me to ensure that people are educated on what feminism really is and how it affects our society. So much progress has been made and these powerful women have shown us that with the right determination and passion, we can make our voices heard. The onus is on us to carry their legacies forward, to continue educating people so that we can all improve our standards of equality and women's rights in New Zealand. ♀



returned to university lecturing and published her book, *If Women Counted*, which was all about the amount of unpaid and unrecognised work women contribute to countries' economies. A documentary film based on the book was later made. Marilyn is working now on a range of issues for the United Nations and is still a prominent activist for gay and women's rights. I find Marilyn Waring inspiring because she fought hard for women to be recognised and valued and is still fighting for these rights. ♀



heard, but different". In saying this she is validating the idea of equality, because that's what feminism is about – equality. Ann Hercus was the first Minister for Women's Affairs, and also the first female to hold a Police portfolio. In doing these "firsts" she has helped many women in New Zealand to do their own "firsts" – and so much more. ♀



## Earthquakes and Butterflies

Directed by Helen Moran

Reviewed by Jane Higgins

PLAY

"I write this journal to re-member myself." So writes the narrator of Kathleen Gallagher's *Earthquakes and Butterflies*, a story, a poem, a meditation on the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and the years following.

Remember: from the Latin *re*, meaning "again" and also a prefix expressing intensive force, and *memorari*, meaning "to be mindful of".

During the week of the seventh anniversary of the February 2011 earthquake that claimed so many lives both



immediately and in the days and months following, *Earthquakes and Butterflies* was brought to life in a moving and beautiful production directed by Helen Moran along with

movement director, Fleur de Thier.

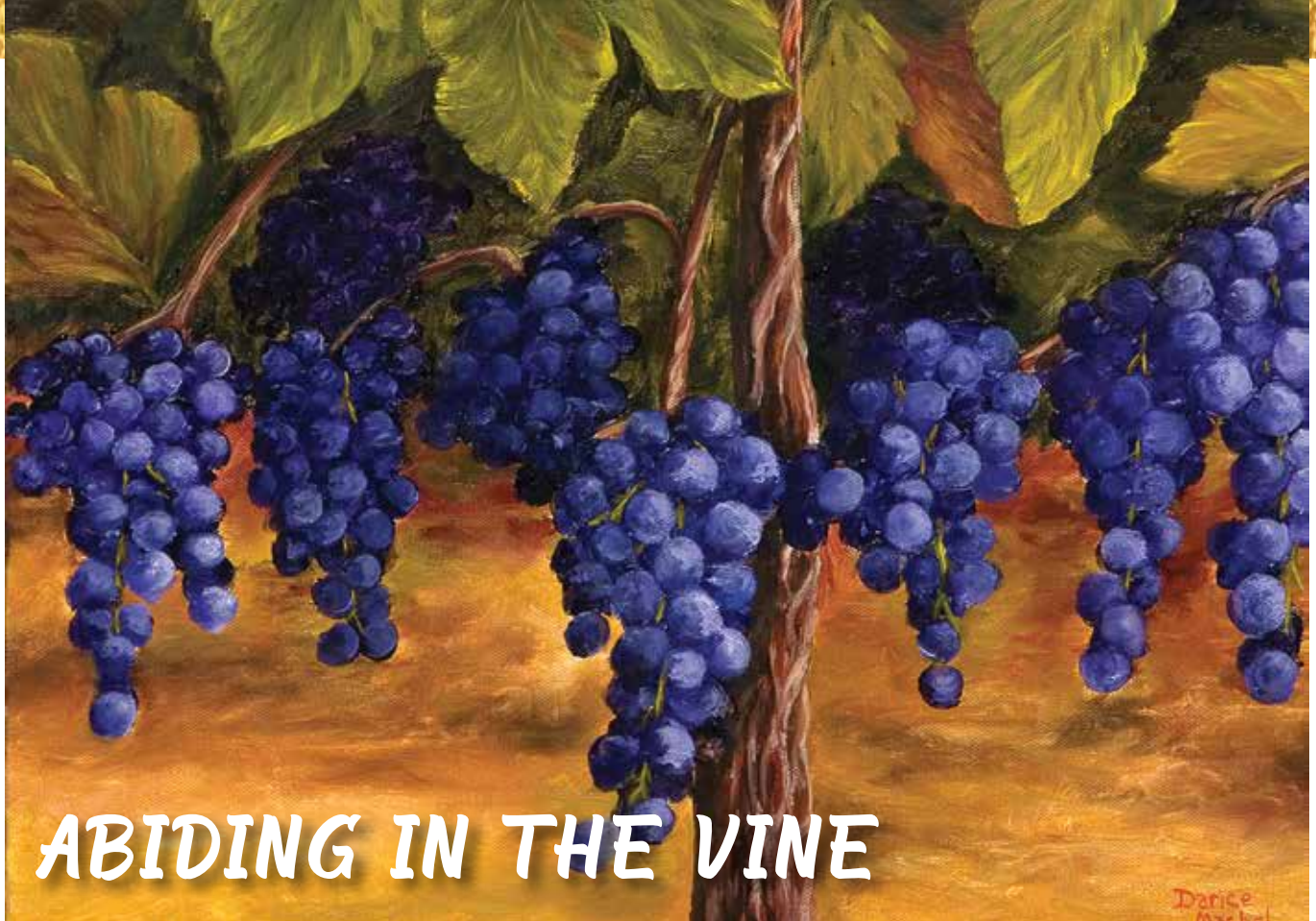
The venue, the Transitional "Cardboard" Cathedral, was itself a creation of those times. Its exposed cardboard tubing and provisional feel made it a perfect place to be mindful of the experience of the quakes and their aftermath and, for those who experienced them, to continue the work of putting ourselves back together.

The performance space extended for the length of the interior, with the audience ranked along the sides. In that space, the props were simple: large cardboard tubes and brown paper bags, a few grey boxes and some tall pieces of scaffolding. With these, and a haunting soundscape of piano, guitar and taonga pūoro (Māori wind and percussion instruments) the performers brought to life a city, a riverbank, a seashore and a hillside.

Their movement through this setting called to mind the strength and fragility of vulnerable human bodies, especially when they recreated a sense of the abrupt, loud, violent upheaval of the quakes.

It brought to mind, for me, the suddenness of many things happening at that time, all of them requiring immediate practical and emotional responses: the loss of beloved people, the trauma of injury, the crashing to the ground of houses and other buildings and of treasured natural landmarks, the urgent need to care for the vulnerable while also finding ways to attend to the daily basics. The production wove these strands together through symbol and dance, through music, song and story, in Te Reo and English, yet it never felt cluttered. It had space to remember the outpouring of generosity from so many and to ask, of both faith and science, the question we were all asking: What on earth, literally, is going on? ♀





## KATHLEEN RUSHTON explains how the vine imagery in John 15:1-7 speaks of friendship with Jesus and abiding in God.

**T**he culture of the Hebrew people was rooted deeply within an agricultural world. They were familiar with wine making and the delight of wine. Viticulture and wine played a major role in daily life, and so they became rich sources of imagery for describing the relationship of God with people and land. Israel is the vine God brought out of Egypt, planted in cleared ground, yet it was burnt with fire and cut down (Psalm 80:8-16). Jeremiah tells us that Israel, the vine planted by God as “a choice vine from purest stock”, then degenerated, becoming “a wild vine” (Jer 2:21). God is the keeper of the vineyard (Isaiah 27:2). Jesus knows his audience will not only understand agricultural language and imagery, but also will be reminded of many scriptural associations.

Today, biblical vine imagery is a challenge for today's readers. We are surrounded by large commercial vineyards and supermarkets where the focus is on mass production, economic investment and profit. In *A Spirituality of Wine*, theologian Gisela Kreglinger writes of her experience of growing up on a family winery in Bavaria where wine has

been crafted for centuries. Kreglinger insists on using the terms “viticulture” and “vintner” to describe vine growing and wine making because these terms carry with them age old practices which enable us to rediscover the image of God's planted vine.

### Productive Where Little Else Grows

The grapevine is able to survive and thrive in the most adverse conditions, in ways that other plants cannot. It flourishes in stony soils and on steep hillsides. There where little else grows, vines are most productive. Natural and living organisms of root and soil interact to produce fruit. A great mystery is how the combination of sun, soil, rain and vines is able to produce such a delightful liquid. Likewise, the great mystery of Jesus's fruitfulness — his finishing the works of God, his “handing over the Spirit” to the women and the beloved disciple (Jn 19:30) — is that it comes to pass where seemingly no life can be found: on the cross.

### Significance of Pruning

Pruning is an unsettling image. Its purpose is not the cutting back in itself but the hope for fine, abundant fruit. Like the branches of the vine, people are “pruned” to abide in the vine, so that they may be more fruitful. This promise of abundance (Jn 10:10) is not without being pruned of our addictions. A journey of pruning and healing is a life-giving practice of restraint and cutback, which along with “abiding”, offers a language of love and fullness to describe discipleship. This differs from the language of self-sacrifice and self-denial in the synoptic Gospels which require taking up our cross to

**Kathleen Rushton** RSM lives in Ōtautahi Christchurch where, in the sight of the Southern Alps and the hills, she continues to delight in learning and writing about Scripture.



**John 15:1-17 5th Sunday of Easter 29 April  
and 6th Sunday of Easter 6 May**



follow Jesus (Mk 8:34; Mt 16:24; Lk 9:23) — language not found in the Fourth Gospel.

“Abiding” suggests a community of interrelationship, mutuality and indwelling. It expresses Jesus’s relationship to God (Jn 15:10), Jesus’s relationship to the community (Jn 15:4, 9) and the community’s relationship to Jesus (Jn 15:1, 7). For Dorothy Lee, “abiding” is “an icon of wholeness and intimacy” which moves “through suffering, to accept the reality that life and fecundity come through pain and death, through pruning and the pierced side” (Jn 7:38; 19:34).

## Being A Community of Friends

The vine and the practices of viticulture were used to describe the process of training students in philosophy. Pupils were to be shaped in the way that young vine shoots are tended. The vine is associated with the wisdom of God. In the Torah we find Divine Wisdom compared to a vine: “Like the vine I bud forth delights, and my blossoms become glorious and abundant fruit” (Sirach 24:17). For the philosophers, joy came from virtue. For the Evangelist, the joy and virtue summed up in Jn 15:13, comes from friendship with Jesus who lays down his life for his friends.

When pruned, the vines are tied to wires which are supported by poles spread throughout the vineyard. The vines are supported by this wiring structure (called “trellising”) and directed in their growth. These vineyard wire structures are like the structures and rules in a community which guide, support and give stability to the common life. When we live without such structures — when we try to live an entirely independent life — we become easily hurt and have no direction. We wither and bear no fruit.

Vine and branches constitute a group of friends. The disciples are Jesus’s friends, not his slaves (Jn 15:13-14). The directness with which Jesus spoke about pruning is in line with the ancient ideal of a true friend. The opposite was the flatterer who sought to curry favour and so would avoid commenting on another’s faults. Jesus’s authentic friendship is the both the source and norm for the disciples’ relationships with others.

When we open ourselves to the love of God in Jesus — when we permit God, the vintner, to prune our lives to bear fruit — we become free to love one another. As a vineyard is to grow good grapes for good wine to bring joy to humanity, so the members of the Church are to love one another, discover true joy and share this with the world.

## God’s Garden and Economy

Disciples are to be grounded in God’s economy which is based on mercy, forgiveness and love not on competition and maximum profit. We are not autonomous and isolated consumers but branches connected together and nurtured by Jesus. We are cared for by God the vintner, who tends the vineyard by watering, pruning and protecting day and night (Isaiah 27:2-3), by guiding it to thrive and be fruitful (Hosea 14:7) and by growing it to become a fruitful nation and a blessing to others (Is 27:6).

The viticulture image conveys the biblical hope of transformation through justice for all. The neglect of the poor affects the whole vineyard. God, Isaiah warns, “enters

into judgment with the elders and princes . . . you who have devoured the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?” (Is 3:14-15). God’s vineyard will only flourish if the powerful and strong reach out to the poor and vulnerable.

This is a very different understanding of human flourishing from the contemporary focus on maximising production and profit. Production of wine now often interferes with natural organisms by the use of chemicals and fertilisers. This can tend towards a posture of working against something — *against* nature, against problems — rather than working *as part of* creation. Consumerism, which for many is like a spirituality offering a sense of identity, belonging and comfort, needs to be pruned.

The pruned vines — our abiding communities — offer peace and belonging. The image of vines declares that wars will cease. Soldiers are to turn swords into pruning hooks. The Hebrew word for pruning hooks refers to the special knife a vintner uses to prune vines. Then people “shall all sit under their own vines . . . and no one shall make them afraid” (Mic 4:3-4).

Although we may read biblical imagery differently today, vines remain an interconnected and dynamic reality. The language of viticulture can refresh the Christian imagination and what it means to be Church today. Creation and redemption are intertwined. The vine offers a rich and organic view of the Christian life through a spirituality of joy in the earth and our senses. ♀

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# A New Time for Everything



ELAINE WAINWRIGHT interprets the well-known text Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 from an ecological perspective.

**W**hen I began my search for a Hebrew Bible/Old Testament text from the April lectionary, I discovered that in the post-Easter period, the first readings for each Sunday are all from the New Testament Acts of the Apostles. However, in the readings for Anzac Day liturgies I was given a choice of two Wisdom texts. The first was Wisdom 3:1-9, a very familiar text as it is often read at Catholic funerals: “The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God.” The second, Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, is equally or even better known: “There is a season for everything.” I have chosen to focus on Ecclesiastes as it will yield rich insights.

## Wisdom Tradition

The Book named *Ecclesiastes* (Greek), or *Qoheleth* (Hebrew), belongs to the Wisdom tradition in Israel’s scriptures. In it a sage reflects on life

and in the particular text that is our focus, reflects on the movements or particular moments of life — birth and death (Eccl 3:2), killing and healing (Eccl 3:3) among others. The foundational life experiences highlighted by the sage mean that this text can be read anew in each new age. In this reflection we are invited to read the familiar Ecclesiastes text in light of the new ecological age in which we are living.

## Significance of Time

*There is a time . . . a time . . . a time . . .* Time is a key element of life that grounds us ecologically. “Everything”, in the words of Qoheleth, “every occupation under heaven”, has a time (Eccl 3:1). Everything takes place in chronological time as the word *chronos* in Eccl 3:1a indicates. But when particular “moments” are highlighted, as repeatedly they are beyond Eccl 3:1a, the sage uses the designation *kairos*, which has the sense of “season” or “opportunity” as well as crisis — an appropriate rallying call in our present *ecological crisis*. The human community maps its

very being in its generalities and its particularities by *time*.

## Extending Our Vision in This Time

The ecological reader can extend the vision of the sage in Eccl 3:1 at least to the entire biotic community, to all living beings. For them too, there is a time, a season for everything, for giving birth and dying in particular (Eccl 3:2). And perhaps the words of the sage allow us to extend the “everything” of Eccl 3:1 even further to include the abiotic — the rock, sand and water to name but an “abiotic” few. We can think of these physical elements, too, as being birthed from Earth’s processes and dying or coming to an end as those same or similar processes unfold. The sage’s evocation of a season for everything is expansive and inclusive.

The way in which this evocation of times and seasons unfolds is by pairing. It would be possible to think of the pairs as opposites, setting them over against each other and evaluating them. In thinking ecologically, we are invited into the movement or the dance between the pairs, between the life processes that the sage evokes. Ecclesiastes 3:2 immerses the reader/listener in foundational movements, into life and death, planting and uprooting.

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





## Universe Time

The universe itself was born in all its incredible complexities from a massive explosion of energy that scientists call the Big Bang. And in the unfolding of the universe, its elements — stars, for instance — die, even though their deaths may take millions of years. There is, indeed, a time to die. Birthing and dying take place on a cosmic as well as a microcosmic stage and involve all that is.

The second part of Eccl 3:2 emerges from the microcosmic — we see the life and death cycle in human agriculture. Agriculture, though, has never been exclusive to the human realm. Researchers have discovered that “several non-human species have developed farming-like relationships with organisms they’ve encountered” ([www.bbc.com/earth/story/20150105-animals-that-grow-their-own-food](http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20150105-animals-that-grow-their-own-food)). This too belongs now to the sage’s song.

## A Time to Question

Ecclesiastes 3:3 invites us to reflect on violent action. We are to consider killing and its opposite — healing. There are many cycles of killing and healing in the other-than-human world as species need other species for survival. The human community is also no stranger to these processes. However, many today question our violence towards animals, for instance, which we do in order to serve our food chain. Perhaps the ecological reader/listener needs to ask a new question: Is there still a time to “kill” or are we in a cosmic moment that needs to be characterised by healing?

In Eccl 3:4 the sage focuses on the human community evoking our activities of weeping and laughing, mourning and dancing. And we can confine these to the human community. But in his TED talk Bernie Kraus introduces us to the “voice of the natural world” including a soundscape of a mourning badger whose home and family have been blown up by careless rangers. The poignancy of the badger’s cry affirms the words of the sage: “There is a time to weep or to mourn.”

## Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

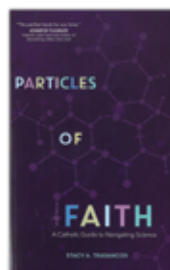
- 1 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
- 2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
- 3 a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- 4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- 5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- 6 a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
- 7 a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
- 8 a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.
- 9 What gain have workers from their toil? 10 I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. 11 God has made everything suitable for its time; and moreover has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

The sage has listened attentively to the cycles of life, to the *kairos* moments in human unfolding, concluding in Eccl 3:8 with the claim that there is a time for love and hate and for war and peace. And then in the concluding verse, Eccl 3:11, affirms this right ordering of human activity; God has made everything suitable for its time, for its *kairos*, for its opportune time. Although the sage’s perspective is human, the reflections of the sage can be read through an ecological lens. His poem can have the cosmos and its unfolding together with all its biotic and abiotic constituents as its referents.

## Our Invitation

A new invitation comes with the words of Qoheleth when we engage with our ecological perspective. We’re invited to hear the text not just as it captures the dynamic of human activities, but as it celebrates the movements and moments in a cosmic unfolding — of birth and death, uprooting and planting; of tearing and mending; of loving and hating, together with making war and making peace. During April, as — attuned to the ecological voice — we listen to the words of the sage, we will be open to transforming our consciousness to that of an Easter people who read, think and pray ecologically. ♀

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yet seem to fail substantially on one of the most important measures: keeping women safe. To me it looks like there is a growing preoccupation with representative measures over realities. Obviously equal representation is a worthy goal, but we shouldn't focus on it at the exclusion of focusing on women's safety.

Political representation doesn't necessarily translate into equality at a more basic level. Rwanda was ranked fifth by the World Economic Forum in terms of gender equality. No doubt this is largely to do with its parliamentary makeup: in 2003 the nation's new constitution mandated that 30 per cent of all MPs were to be female. Today the actual representation is almost two-thirds of their Parliament – the highest in the world.

But this political participation has not achieved the kind of equality we might hope for. Instead this female-majority Parliament presides over a country with one of the highest rates of gender-based and domestic violence in Africa.

While it's reassuring to know that women can aspire to political office in great numbers, it means little if they cannot feel safe in their own homes. Beyond that it appears that such representation may not even have empowered its elected officials. A PhD student recently documented how nearly all female Rwandan MPs – who hold some of the highest offices in the country – were still expected to go home to polish their husbands' shoes, wash, iron, and prepare dinner. Yet still we laud Rwanda? It makes me question what we are willing to accept when it comes to the treatment of women.

This is not to say that political representation and equal pay are not worth fighting for. They absolutely are, but not at the price of women's lives. Rather than be disheartened by these examples, we must redouble efforts to bridge the gender divide in all areas. It is a reminder that equality is hard fought and hard won, and we must always scrutinise our progress. To achieve real change we must look at the big picture, and work to ensure real equality for all women in all facets of our lives. ♀

I was in Madrid for International Women's Day where celebrations kicked off at midnight with the unceremonious sound of banging pots and pans. This was one of many protests that took place across the country. The slogan "If we stop, the world stops" was everywhere and this year saw Spanish women collectively strike for the first time, walking out of worksites nationwide.

As the action disrupted trains and blocked roads across the country, polling by the national newspaper *El Pais* found that more than four in five Spaniards supported the strike, and more than three-quarters thought women had it worse than men. I can see why. In the workplace women are paid around 13 per cent less than men for performing similar tasks.

From the outside, though, Spain appears in general to be a fairly equal country. It is among those countries with the highest representation of female parliamentarians, averaging

almost 40 per cent between their upper and lower houses. But as important as equal pay and political participation are, there were some significant statistics that didn't seem to receive as much attention on International Women's Day.

The number of violent abuse reports is on the rise in Spain and surpassed 150,000 in 2017. The Spanish government was required to provide official protection to around 28,000 women last year. To me, this demonstrates a huge discrepancy between image and reality, particularly when talking about gender violence.

Take, for example, Sweden which despite being so often ranked as one of the most gender-equal countries on Earth, experienced a 61 per cent increase in sex crimes between 2007 and 2016. In our own backyards, New Zealand police attend a family violence incident every five and a half minutes. And in Australia, one in six women have experienced at least one incidence of violence from a current or former partner/boyfriend since age 15.

These are all countries that are normally ranked highly when discussing the treatment of women,

Jack Derwin is a journalist and writer currently living in Córdoba, Spain.





# Valuing Community

I have often talked with my parents about the possibility that an absence of religion in my life might mean an absence of a community. Their concern, as I understand it, is that by not prescribing to a religion I won't have access to a community, outside of family, in the same way that they had. That I wouldn't have support from a wider network of people. Community, in their own lives, has been a huge driving force and it subsequently played an enormous part of my childhood. Values around hospitality and service were drilled into us as kids. We understood that it was important to open our home to people who needed it and to always cook more than enough dinner in case someone dropped by. To me these values were ones that started with my parents. For them, they were derivative of their relationship and experience of their religion.

I know that throughout my parents' lives the Church was a community that supported them and provided them with a reliable

network of like-minded people. When our house burned down, for instance, it was people from the Church who rallied and provided help. There is a comfort that I believe comes with religion: it immediately groups you with people who are like you, with the same priorities and values. Without that structure it can feel challenging to find this group of people for yourself. As I've grown up I've started to think about what a lack of religion might mean for me and my own community. Where will my community of people congregate, what rituals will we have, what will our shared values be?

When I studied improvised comedy, (which I'm aware doesn't sound like something you should be able to study), I found for the first time an organised community with a shared set of values that I could relate to. The values were not spiritual and not ideological. Instead, they were a set of rules about how you behave on stage when you're creating an improvised scene. The central rule of any improvised scene is that you respond to everything with "yes, and". You accept whatever offer a person gives you and you build upon it. You don't block them. If you're in a scene and someone says: "It's great to be at the zoo today", you immediately accept you're at the zoo and add to it — you:

"Isn't it! Those lions are terrifying." You accept what they've offered and you build on it, you "yes, and." In this way, improv is about constantly adapting to your new reality and finding a way to contribute to it meaningfully. It's a way of thinking that encourages you to trust your scene partner and to grow on their ideas. It teaches you about flexibility and collaboration.

In many ways, the rules of improv, have naturally kept a check and balance on my life. So often our instinct is to judge, or to roadblock an idea because it's not what we're used to. We can get caught in patterns that tell us our line of

thinking is the correct way, or sometimes we just steam roll ahead without noticing that the world around us is changing. The joy for me in my life has been finding a community of people who also take this way of thinking into their lives. That's not to say all people who improvise think

like this. In my time studying in New York I did many classes and shows with an assortment of people, all obeying this philosophy to varying degrees. And it's not to say, that you have to improvise to operate like this. But I've found it works for me and I've noticed that I've begun to surround myself with like-minded people. I have found in my adult life that there is still opportunity for community outside of religion.

I've come through comedy and university, with a strong network of friends. Some I live with, some I just socialise with and many I work with. We have a shared values system, but it isn't framed by a religion. The ideology of the group is self-regulating. We hold each other accountable. And as relationships fall apart or friendships hit hard times, it refines what your own boundaries and priorities are. I've been extremely lucky in my life to be brought up with parents who derived their values from their religion but then gave me a way to live those values outside of it. ♀



**Alice Snedden** is a writer and comedian from Auckland who identifies as culturally Catholic and religiously agnostic.



## Healing the Nightmare Freeing the Soul: A Practical Guide to Dreamwork

By Margaret M Bowater

Published by Calico Publishing, 2016

Reviewed by Marie Skidmore

BOOK

Exploring dreams establishes communication between the conscious and unconscious levels of the mind and allows wisdom from the inner self to surface, resulting in inner peace. This book is about how nightmares, while revealing pain, also hold the seeds of healing.

Margaret Bowater describes nightmares as having a predominance of fear and anxiety; recurring themes; often reflecting primary relationships and pointing to a possible solution. They often use symbols, although if based on trauma experience they tend to be literal. Being unfinished, they usually leave dreamers in a state of helplessness, although their abrupt awakening often avoids the feared consequence.

Margaret shares her 30 years' experience of dream therapy in the book's three sections. The first is groundwork – interpreting symbols, the importance of context and story, and possible meanings of the figures in dreams.

The second section deals with dreams related to traumatic experience. It includes a helpful chapter on children's nightmares, along with those of sexual abuse survivors, and physical and mental illness sufferers.

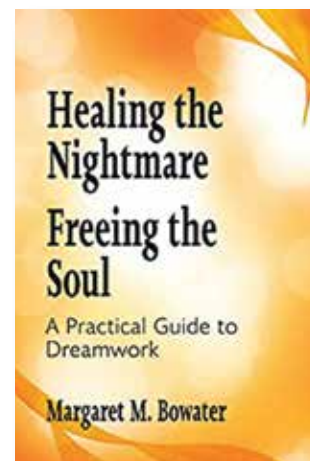
Part three refers to spiritual nightmares noting the thin border between spiritual experience, visions and

premonitions. The dreams of those approaching death and near death experiences are also explored.

In each chapter Margaret uses examples from the dreams of real clients, enhanced by intriguing visuals. She is able to give practical suggestions, gleaned from this treasure trove of client work, which invites the reader to explore further.

While many therapists hold that every figure in a dream is a part of the self, this is not Margaret's belief. For example, she does not believe a rape victim would have to see herself as the rapist in a trauma dream. Margaret generously shares her therapy process of unearthing the wisdom which the dream wants to reveal. It incorporates telling the dream, drawing it in context, identifying what the dream ego is doing and feeling, exploring associations, giving dream roles a voice, creating new endings when the story is unfinished and discerning how the dream connects with the client's real life. The book provides guidelines for exploring dreams, further reading and useful websites.

I appreciated the comprehensive, accessible nature of this book. It will be useful for health professionals, counsellors, parents, caregivers, teachers and clergy. It is a valuable tool for all who wish to journey towards authenticity or to assist others in their quest. ♀



## Night Horse

By Elizabeth Smither

Published by Auckland University Press, 2017

Reviewed by David Schaumann

BOOK

There are things in her book of poetry that Elizabeth Smither is not telling us. Somewhere in the white space at the end of lines, and most particularly, at the end of each poem in *Night Horse*, there is more to discover – but it is up to each of us alone to uncover this invisible ink, and doubtless, its story will be different for every reader.

The words on the pages draw us into Smither's world, one that will be familiar to us all. Her subject matter is largely the everyday – people, families, animals, trips, food. She senses, examines and reflects on the characters and events that pass through her life, so often in a gentle, accessible style that is imbued with an understated affection for her subjects. From the charming little girl who "shapes the air as she passes through it" to the wistful mother in *A Fall of Hair*: "So your sleepy child could fill her hand / with an anchorage of shining silk."

Often as a poem concludes, there is a gentle tugging at the consciousness – the understated and the implied –

draws you back to read again, to see what more of Smither's world can be seen and felt. The titular poem for example, paints an image of the Night Horse that is richly observant and evocative, then ends with "so otherworldly / It doesn't see our headlights", giving pause for thought, for gap filling and wonder.

This is striking, too, in *Oysters* which recounts errant dinner guests making off with a silver bucket of the delicacy, and ends with: "She smiled back with thin oyster lips. / The Rape of the oysters was talked about / all next week by the watercooler."

Witty and wry in places, warm and subtle throughout, *Night Horse* will appeal to those who wish to be invited in to observe the workings of Smither's familiar world, to contemplate all that is revealed and all that is hinted at. Ultimately this world though remains partially obscured in the white space where Smither's words have ended. ♀







## The Party

Directed by Sally Potter  
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

FILM

As we all know, dinner parties can reveal tensions and animosities that usually remain hidden beneath the decorous surface of social convention. *The Party* is full of such revelations, accompanied by sharp social satire and plenty of laughter — at least on the part of the audience. Not the least of its virtues is its length — a brisk 71 minutes at a time when two-and-a-half hours has become the norm.

Left-wing politico Janet (Kristin Scott Thomas) has invited a few friends around to celebrate her elevation to ministerial rank — not in the government, it transpires, but in the shadow cabinet. In dribs and drabs, her guests arrive. Apart from Janet and her — visibly troubled — husband Bill (Timothy Spall), we are introduced to three more couples: elderly hippy Gottfried and his cynical wife April; Martha and Jinny, an intergenerational lesbian couple; and Tom, a smart young city financier whose wife, Marianne, has been delayed. Other couplings are hinted at...

Beginning as a gathering to celebrate Janet's success, the spotlight falls on Bill when he reveals that he has an announcement of his own to make. This sets off a stream of further revelations — mostly with Bill at the

centre — that upset the characters' self-satisfied lives and the comfortable roles they have assumed.

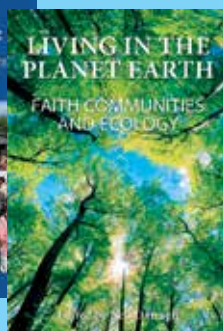
Strongly suggestive of a play, the film observes the dramatic unities of action, time and space — it's set in and around Janet and Bill's home over one evening. More than that, it uses the conventions of the stage farce — sudden confessions, miscommunications, the mysterious absent guest — to progress the action. Director Potter's ability to keep multiple story lines in motion, using only dialogue and a superlative cast, is handled with unobtrusive skill — like a juggler keeping half a dozen balls in the air at once.

But unlike the average farce, *The*

*Party* sets out to skewer a certain kind of left-wing posturing and puncture middle-class pretensions. The fault lines begin to show as soon as a new character walks into the living room. Gottfried (Bruno Ganz) takes more than his fair share of barbs. A self-styled life coach and healer, he has a nice line in feel-good clichés and psychotherapeutic jargon. His attempts to mediate between the furious Tom and Bill produce some of the film's best comic moments.

Shot in luminous black and white, *The Party* is a small gem of a film that deserves to become a contemporary classic. ♀

## Theology and Spirituality from New Zealand



**A CHURCH IN CHANGE: New Zealand Catholics take their bearings**

Edited by Helen Bergin and Susan Smith

**LIVING IN THE PLANET EARTH: Faith communities and ecology**

Edited by Neil Darragh

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# CROSS CURRENTS



by Susan Smith

## Speaking Out For the Voiceless

On Ash Wednesday I was part of a gathering in Whangarei where the Salvation Army launched "Kei a Tātou – It is Us", its State of the Nation Report for 2018. The report looked at 10 key emerging trends that should concern us. For example, did we know that NZ Superannuation costs have now reached \$13,000,000,000 annually, significantly more than is paid to any other beneficiary groups? Did we know that while GDP growth has been positive since 2008, economic inequality has grown significantly too?

But what really struck me was that once upon a time our Church – after Vatican II and the emergence of liberation theology – was truly a prophetic voice on behalf of the poor and oppressed at home and overseas. This no longer seems to be the case. When did we last have a bishop speaking out on TV or radio about homelessness, or about growing economic inequality, or about child poverty? The Church's voice in Aotearoa is all too silent.

## Commodification of Water

I recently heard a great story about one of the streams that flows from Poroti Springs, Northland. Before Māori and Pākehā soldiers from the area headed off for World War II's sites of conflict, they were blessed in the stream. None of those soldiers was killed in battle. This story may be apocryphal. Nevertheless, it points to the life-giving quality of water, of all the waters of Aotearoa, waters that governments, land-owners, and business concerns now primarily consider as commodities.

Currently, Māori living near Poroti are concerned that an Auckland-based company is seeking consent to open a water-bottling plant to export spring water to China. Zodiac Holdings states

in its application that it wants to build a bottling facility that would "meet the production efficiencies and resulting price competitiveness expected in a modern-day export-based facility of this type". Māori worry that the 50 litres of water per second needed to flow into the spring to keep the levels up will be lost. Further, climate change and exploitation also make it difficult to know if such flows can ever be guaranteed.

Care of water or commodification of water? Which is more important for us today? Well, Mammon wins out against God most times as far as local and national governments are concerned. On 21 March, Radio New Zealand announced that the Whangarei District Council had granted Zodiac Holdings consent for a 500 square metre loading shed near Poroti Springs, but tanker movements on a state highway where there are already horrendous accidents involving logging trucks would be limited to 30 a day. Is this supposed to make residents feel better? ♀



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

## PARTNERSHIPS FOR FEEDING THE WORLD

With concern about the world's deteriorating availability of food I write you this, wondering whether the Christian World Service is aware of the Agricultural University of Wageningen's efforts to educate people in diverse countries to grow food in efficient ways. Wageningen is in the Netherlands. Their methods can potentially feed the world, resulting in no longer hunger anywhere. There was an extensive article in



**TUI MOTU InterIslands**  
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

*Tui Motu - InterIslands* is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual, social and ecological 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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the (American) *National Geographic* magazine of September 2017 showing us the methods used to enable the hungry to be fed, generally from their own country's soil.

I would think that the CWS and this university could work together if they were aware of each other.

**Gerard van den Bemd, Auckland.**

[Editor: A copy of the NG article is on the Tui Motu website.]

Tui Motu March 2018 is full of interesting thoughts, prayers, people's experiences in helping to feed people. You may know of THE HUNGER PROJECT [www.thp.org](http://www.thp.org). Frances and I belong to it and have been regular monthly contributors for 20 years. We know of several individual major contributors here in Auckland. There are probably contributors in the South as well. The website tells of how ANIMATORS are trained and then pass on their knowledge. Women building businesses (however small to start with) then growing in confidence, knowledge, ability. Many go on to local politics. They grow crops, feed their families, teach neighbours. They live a new life. We encourage readers to look up their website.

**John and Frances O'Ferrall, Auckland**

## ISSUES TO THINK ABOUT

Well done Alice Snedden! I'm sure there are many, particularly younger, Catholics who would cheer you for writing "Pride and the Church" in TM March 2018.

In the Catholic-based theology book edited by Neil Darragh, *But is It Fair? Faith Communities and Social Justice*, I outlined a theology in support of same-sex marriages by tracing the journeys of two faith communities (one Catholic) who had done the prayer, discernment and theological reflection that moved them from the traditional bible-based church position on homosexuality (sinful, perverted, etc.) to a fully accepting and supportive one. Hearing the stories was an important component, and accepting the now-authenticated genetic component.

Maybe even more important was the recognition of Jesus as the Great Includer who actually preferred the company of the marginalised. On the basis of this consideration there had been a progression over several decades to embracing liberation theology and feminist analysis, hearing anew the voices of indigenous people, the disabled, and then of LGBT people. The mandate to "love your neighbour" took precedence over all else.

So yes to the stories of people we know and love, and yes to prayerful reflection and rigorous thinking on the whys of changed understanding!

**Trish McBride, Wellington.**

Alice Snedden in her article *Pride and the Church* (TM March 2018) seems to find the Vatican's teachings on homosexuality oppressively negative but if we winnow out the negative chaff of these documents we often find a life-giving kernel beneath. The 1975 Vatican *Declaration* does not express approval of same-sex relationships but they are referred to respectfully as "a genuine partnership in love and life similar to marriage". The document emphasises that persons in such relationships *should certainly* be treated with kindness and consideration and it warns that the culpability of such relationships be judged with prudence, which is probably Vatican code for saying there is no culpability.

All of that is in keeping with the 2013 statement of Pope Francis: "If gays and lesbians have good will and are seeking God, who am I to judge?" So there is no condemnation and only two considerations: a desire for wholeness and a desire for God; and these are already built into us. Our desire, including our sexual desire, is an echo of God, an echo of God's passionate desire for us.

Snedden finds that the Church is flawed. Of course it is flawed, it

is human. Our flawed humanity is the nearest thing to God on earth. That's why there is room in our flawed Church for absolutely everyone.

**Jim Howley, Auckland**

## NEW COVENANT WITH EARTH

In response to the article by Elaine Wainwright TM March 2018 let me extend the challenge.

Jeremiah's announcement of a new covenant was a radical proclamation that the old covenant at Sinai was superseded. The Israelite priests, who had long sought to keep the covenant revealed to Moses on Sinai, must have been shocked. How dare Jeremiah announce a new covenant and declare the covenant revealed by YHWH at Sinai the way of the past with God.

Of course, Jesus follows the new way and declares the new covenant to be a vibrant reality sealed by his blood! If we now return to the rainbow covenant revealed after the flood, we hear God declaring that the rainbow is the sign in the "covenant between me and the Earth" (Gen 9.13). Whenever God sees that rainbow, God will remember his covenant with Earth and all the creatures on Earth and never again destroy Earth with a flood. But could Earth eventually be destroyed by the forces of climate change? Elaine claims a new covenant is called for, "one that will engage us in our local regional and global communities who are seeking to attend to the challenges to Earth and our covenant with Earth". Is Elaine — or perhaps Pope Francis — the new Jeremiah calling for a new covenant with Earth? Are we ready to listen to the call of Earth — or the Spirit of God in Earth — and prepare for a new covenant with our God, ourselves and Earth? How would we make such a covenant and promote it across the globe? I wait the next word from Prophet Wainwright!

**Norman Habel, Adelaide.**

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# Looking OUT and IN



I spent a week walking through bush, tussock, rocks and rivers in the southwest corner of the South Island. It is a tramp two friends and I have been planning for many months and even getting to the carpark at the start of the tramp felt like an achievement. We had to delay our start for several days due to inclement weather, two of us had knee and ankle problems, and with 10 children between us, we felt grateful for our husbands who juggled paid work and other responsibilities to support our time away.

Many days walking in terrain with no tracks, no huts and only occasional cairns required skills in navigating, route finding, tent pitching in high winds and demanded I pay attention. I needed to take notice of the big picture (What direction and how fast are the clouds crossing overhead? Could we camp on the pass tonight?) as well as the middle-sized picture (Is crossing the river here going to commit us to walking down the left bank for the next hour? Will we be able to cross back?). I also needed to

pay attention to small details (Tape the hot spot on my heel before it becomes a big blister. Make sure the fuel pipe attached to the white spirits cooking stove is wound up tightly every time).

My senses were sated with the sights, smells and textures of wild places. It's a landscape that is almost unchanged from 1,000 years ago — except for drastically diminished birdlife and glaciers. The Rockburn swept fast and milky blue after the rain, the turpentine bushes felt spikily abrupt on my legs and the mud around the Cow Saddle tarns smelled musty and acidic.

Stiff and almost foreign muscles in my thighs and shoulders made themselves felt after hauling my body and a heavy pack through sub-alpine scrub and down steep hills.

A thousand cameos pointed me to the infinitely playful and creative God who authored this corner of the South. Alpine gentians subsisting cheerfully in a cracked boulder; 20 waterfalls cascading in chorus off the steep mountainsides of Theatre Flat

after the day of rain and the generous glow of rocky peaks above the Dart River in the setting sun. Creating this complex eco-system of alpine daisies, beech tree weevils, keas, sandflies and greywacke required vast quantities of time, attention and patience. But it is complete, balanced and beautiful.

I return to my responsibilities and tasks in the city with sore knees, but filled again with hope, noticing anew that a job well done will always require large doses of time, attention and patience.

Here's to the flourishing together of glaciers, birdlife and humans for the next millennium in the self-actualised valleys of the Olivine, Hidden Falls Creek and Beans Burn in this magical corner of New Zealand. ♀

Photo by Jane Jones



**Kaaren Mathias**, with her family, is on a sabbatical-sort-of-break away from community mental health work in India, and will be staying in Christchurch until June 2018.

May your resurrected presence  
light and warm the human family  
exposing then melting away obstinate positions,  
making room for all women and girls  
to flourish in the fullness of life,  
Easter Christ.

From the *Tui Motu* team