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LOOK TO THE EDGES
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PRACTISING HOSPITALITY
THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN, CATHY ROSS

HAVOC OF WAR
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Leave No One Out
Kia Whakauru

INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC MAGAZINE

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In Need of the World's Attention by Jeanette Atherton from Pixabay

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Editorial

Reach to the Edges

THE BOARDING HOUSE fire in Wellington last month opened our eyes, again, to people living precariously in our society. They're those around the edges. True, the house was a permanent home among friends for some, but for others it was a roof over their heads, a temporary and unsatisfying living arrangement. Among them were workers, deportees, post-prisoners and elderly people, all of whom must be rehoused at a time when most housing options are already stretched. And we don't want these people to be housed in worse conditions than in the boarding house. If we are called to leave no one out, we can't house the homeless in places we would not like to live ourselves. The challenge for Christians is "to do unto others as we would want done to us."

Initially the rehousing task may seem impossible, but there are ways in which we can commit to leaving no one out. We are voters and can elect governments which seek to address inequalities in our society. We can support Church and not-for-profit groups — St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army, City Missions, emergency housing groups and others – who step up regularly and who keep going even when they're not successful in providing for every need. They don't allow the inadequacy of resources to become an excuse for doing nothing. And there is will in the community — we want to help, and together we can help.

We want to be a society where everyone belongs and is appreciated. In order for that ideal to move from wishful thinking to reality we need to act on the Gospel command to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. In his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* Pope Francis used the parable of the Good Samaritan to teach about social friendship — about putting ourselves out for the sake of the vulnerable person, whether or not the person is known to us. It also means that our approach or invitation is not always accepted — but that is not an excuse to stop. Because acting for social friendship is an opportunity to draw those on the edges into the network of belonging, we may need to adjust our usual way of relating and learn new sensitivities towards others. Social friendship requires a mutuality of respect so that the other is seen by us with the same understanding that we want them to see us.

The writers in this 282th issue provide us with a challenge to view society critically so that we're more aware of who is being pushed to the edges. They describe situations that need our attention at this time. We thank all our contributors whose reflection and writing, lives and ministry, art and craft draw us to see new possiblities for collaboration and action.

And is our custom, our last word is of blessing and encouragement.

Learning Our History

LIKE MANY OTHERS I'm embarking on a journey to better understand the history of our country. I'm learning the history of the relationship between Māori and the Crown, and grappling with what this means for the future.

This kind of process has many names — Treaty training, cultural sensitivity and de-colonisation workshops, among others — and I'm doing it through two of the organisations I work with: a small mental health not-for-profit and a large tertiary education institution with a 150+ year history. I've found a deep-seated colonial bias embedded in my own thinking and daily practice.

When I lived in Australia I learnt about the concept of *terra nullius*, which derives from the Doctrine of Discovery — a legal ruling from the 15th century which gave monarchies of Britain and Europe the right to conquer and claim lands, and also to convert or kill the native inhabitants. The Doctrine asserted that non-Christians on discovered lands were not human and, therefore, the land was empty: *"terra nullius"*. Australia had inhabitants for over 65,000 years. By the time Captain James Cook arrived there would have been up to 750,000 people living there, yet he declared the land *terra nullius* and thus its people non-human. Despite eventually being granted the right to vote in 1962, it was not until 1984 that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were required to enrol and vote like other Australians.

That's terrible enough, but what I hadn't realised is that when Lieutenant William Hobson first arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand, he declared Te Waipounamu (The South Island) to be *terra nullius* — the indigenous people of the South Island non-human. We didn't learn that in our history books, but it informed every aspect of Aotearoa: education, health, income, poverty, family violence, self-esteem.

Our trainer (I'll call him Jordan) at one of our sessions described his own upbringing and the harsh messages delivered to him by his grandparents to not speak te reo Māori at home or at school. His childhood was one of misery and violence, with parents dislocated from their culture and tribal affiliations. He didn't feel that he belonged. He didn't feel that he deserved to belong.

To understand the Treaty of Waitangi we need to understand its historical context. In 1840 Māori outnumbered Pākehā by around 40 to 1. In 1831, 13 rangatira (chiefs) wrote to King William IV seeking protection from the French and expressing their concern about the misconduct of British subjects. The rangatira requested the king become a friend and guardian of the islands of New Zealand. Subsequently, Māori chose a flag to represent united tribes on the high seas as a trading nation and then received British support for the Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand in 1835. Without the Declaration there could never have been a treaty, because a treaty could only be made between two nations recognised internationally.

The meaning of the Māori text, which sits alongside the oral debates that accompanied the signing process of Te Tiriti, was that rangatira intended to retain their authority and sovereign power and grant a form of governance to the Governor of New Zealand on behalf of the Queen of England (Victoria). Māori contend that they only signed Te Tiriti after key oral promises were made around protecting Māori land — which is why many interpreters came to regard the Treaty as one in which the Crown was granted rights of "protection" rather than "sovereignty".

How Māori understand Te Tiriti is essential to all of our contemporary conversations and debates. As New Zealanders we need to embark on a journey to understand our flawed past — the promises made but not kept — in order to approach the future on fairer terms. It's true that we can't be held accountable for the sins of our forebears. But we can take responsibility for what we know and how we act today.

Photo: Tobias Keller on Unsplash

Clare Curran, former MP, is a committed advocate and representative on social justice issues and writer of novels.

MAKE A PEACE DAY

John Weir *reflects on the damage war always wreaks.*

A LONG, LONG time ago, my father and three of his brothers sailed away from New Zealand to play their part in the Second World War.

The three oldest took part in battles in North Africa. My father was one of them. He was a sapper. About six weeks after the Battle of El Alamein he and five of his fellow sappers were detecting and neutralising mines in order to make a safe corridor for the passage of men and vehicles. They worked cautiously that blazing hot afternoon, making good progress until one of them stepped on a mine and they were all blown to bits.

The three other brothers didn't fare much better. One of them was trapped for hours under an artillery barrage. He was shipped home with shrapnel in his head and locked in a psychiatric institution where he lived for the rest of his life, completely out of touch with what we call "reality".

The third brother survived the war — if you can call it survival. The truth is that he was so haunted by the terrible images festering in his memory that he became an alcoholic and a vagabond, wandering New Zealand roads, earning some money here and there, scrounging a meal, sleeping wherever he could. His family never saw him again.

The fourth brother drove a tank in Italy until it was destroyed by a dive-bomber. The other crew members were obliterated, but even though he was traumatised and injured he escaped. He was, you might say, the lucky one.

Four brothers sailed from New Zealand and in four different ways, like dust before a broom, all four were swept away by the terrible, annihilating winds of war.

Nothing Good Comes from War

I'm not a fan of war. I don't watch war films. I don't like the colour khaki because it makes me think of army uniforms. War not only devastates the lives of its combatants, it also mutilates the lives of parents, wives, children, friends — all who drown in its dark, devouring tide.

Then there are the ripple-out effects of war — the killing, torturing and maiming of civilians, the raping of women, the dislocation of communities, starvation, anguish, hopelessness and terror. Sometimes, too, a secondary violence erupts when a traumatised ex-soldier — uncounselled, unhealed, unassisted — explodes in anger and violence, victimising his wife and children.

War is duplicitous, toxic, all-embracing. Nothing good ever comes of it. Paradoxically, even the so-called victors are really victims of the violence they perpetrate.

Attitude that War Is Inevitable

I remember, as if it were yesterday, an occasion in 1965 when Pope Paul VI pleaded before the United Nations General Assembly: "No more war, war never again!" But he died more than 40 years ago and since then there have been at least 120 wars or regional conflicts between nations or ethnic groups. Today's arenas of war

and terror include Ukraine and Sudan, but where will tomorrow's be? The question needs to be asked because in one or other of the world's outposts the poisonous pot of nationalism is already being heated and will soon boil over.

In these unpredictable times when people are divided into "them" and "us", when stealth fighters fly stealthily and missiles are launched from below the surface of the sea, when a person sitting at a desk in one country can kill, by remote weaponry, a person in another country, when dictators insist that they are entitled to develop or deploy weapons of mass destruction, we may feel that resistance to war mania is futile.

We Must Resist War

But that doesn't exempt us from trying to do what we can. We could join or support a peace group; we could pray for peace every day — peace in the latest hotspot; we could write letters to politicians or the media; we could make financial donations to help victims. Or we could broaden our thinking and our tolerance by making friends with people of other ethnicities, people who, at first glance, may appear to be not "like us", but who actually are, because we are all learning the difficult art of becoming more human.

Attend to the Divisiveness Within

Above all, we can address the shadows of violence in ourselves. For, sometimes, the true enemy is at war within us and it has many faces — racial intolerance, arrogance, ignorance, timidity, prejudice, avarice, selfishness — this is an enemy with which we can grapple and, with help, overcome.

Cultivate Love and Hope

The most formidable weapons we possess to counteract both the war without and the war within are love and hope. There is, after all, an essential goodness within people that may come to the fore even when the smoke of battle is drifting over the battle-field, for the "enemy" is really a potential friend, a friend in disguise.

I once read about an improbable event which happened on 25 and 26 December 1914, during the First World War, when a Christmas truce took hold on the Western Front.

On those two days German and British soldiers abandoned their trenches and met in No Man's Land where they buried the bodies that lay stranded there. They introduced themselves, mingled, talked about home, played football, took photographs and exchanged Christmas greetings and small gifts.

At the time, it must have seemed like a miracle — the smiles, the hand-clasps, the unexpected friendships, the banter and cheering, the friendly rivalry, the soft thud of the ball, the singing, the unfolding conversations.

In a theatre of conflict a brief peace reigned until shouted orders announced the restoration of normality and the soldiers were forced to return to their trenches to begin again the ancient game of killing the enemy.

Predictably, the military authorities on both sides never permitted another Christmas truce because they feared the loss of the fighting spirit — it's not easy to kill a friend.

Promoting Peace

And what of memorials? Yes, they have their place because they remind us of war's victims. But something greater than memorials is needed if we are to keep the frail sprig of peace alive. I am convinced that our fractious, divided world needs a new event, a "Peace Day" when we celebrate the fact that our differences are less significant than what we have in common, when games are played and songs are sung, as in a global Christmas truce. A time when, if only for a day, the lion lies down with the lamb.

I knew my uncle quite well, the one who drove a tank. He never talked about the War. Before he joined the army he used to drive a car, but after the War he never drove again. When I asked him why he said he didn't really know, but that he was perfectly happy for his wife to do all the driving.

After he died I heard for the first time about his experiences in Italy with the New Zealand Armoured Division and I knew straightaway why he gave up driving. It was because he remembered too much. Our problem may be entirely different: we may remember too little.

There is … an essential goodness within people that may come to the fore even when the smoke of battle is drifting over the battle-field, for the "enemy" is really a potential friend in disguise

Note: An earlier version of this article was published as an online reflection by Edmund Rice Formation.

Photography: Sharomka/Shutterstock.com

John Weir is a Marist priest, a poet, editor and literary scholar who specialises in New Zealand literature. His latest book of poems *Sparks Among the Stubble* was published in 2021.

WHAT DOES LOVE FEEL LIKE?

Delphina Soti *describes the many people who contribute to the St Vincent de Paul Food Hub in central Auckland.*

"MORNINGS START AT 7am when our warehouse lead hand checks the gear — forkhoists, trucks and cars. I join him to bring all the pallets of food up from the warehouse ready to go in the trucks three days a week. Every parcel has four different components: dry goods, frozen goods, sanitation goods and other goods. The trucks take the food to three Vinnies centres we partner with. We run a drive-thru here at the Hub on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and the centres run their own drive-thru."

OUR DRIVERS

"Our volunteer drivers are great men, retired in their 60s and 70s, and so faithful. They deliver and collect stuff in the trucks. It takes a certain type of person to be a driver for a charitable organisation. We have a lot of people who have said goodbye to their loved ones and are giving us their house lots — they need someone to have a cuppa and a conversation with them. You can't be just in and out. And also there are the hard conversations where people want to give us their beloved stuff but it's not fit for purpose and the driver has to say that to them."

THE SHOP

"Our shops have been the face of Vinnies for a long time. We realise how many people are regulars — they may be socially isolated and come just to have a look and to get the 'hello'. The shops have been little hubs of community.

"We have about 30 volunteers in our shop here and two managers. On any given day there are about five working in the shop. They might be able to give only certain hours, or they specialise in records, or Trade Me, or they're truck drivers."

IN THE HUB

"People ring up, or turn up, or use our online registration form. We're connected to over 50 social service providers, health providers and government services, too. Starship might ring and say: 'I want to bring a family down. They have a kid in here but they need this or that.' So they turn up with the family. Then there is [government housing agency] Kāinga Ora and PARS, the prison rehabilitation service. We say that if there is already someone working with a whānau there is no point in bringing them to see us — they don't need to tell their story five million times. But if the whānau's primary relationship is with us, then we will continue with them and get the other services to them.

"If people had enough [money] then places like us wouldn't have to be working as hard as we are at the moment. Just to give you a sense — in a week there are 350 to 400 families we service, that means food and a bit of support.

"When people ring the helpline, or turn up for food support, we give it to them. Each parcel is around $120-130. We need to establish a

rapport with them to get the sense of where they're at without affecting their dignity.

"Some we refer to budgeting. We call it Building Financial Capabilities (BFC) — a face-to-face service. South Auckland holds the contract for us. It's not an easy job because the families actually don't have enough money to 'budget'. We're finding that some are accessing their Kiwisaver for food or going online and using Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) for essentials. The BFC is finding ways to make sure that families can access the help they need.

"There are four BFC workers and they book a lot of appointments but there's the issue of people not turning up because it's too hard on the day. The BFC often find that at bottom of what seems like a financial issue, there may be real family issues going on — like family violence or health issues."

BEHIND THE SCENES

Our youth team is getting about 60 students from five schools here at the hub around 4pm. We have a big warehouse plus a commercial kitchen. It's a special space for our young ones to talk about what's important for them. They have their kai and kōrero and then get into their hi-vis and go straight into the aisle where they pack. We have different stations set up — packing of dry goods, toiletries, and also cooking of prepared meals.

The real miracle that shifts and changes people is building connections. It's nurturing the sense of belonging. They feel like they're at a camp — it's a peak experience. After their debrief they leave about 7pm. There are usually six big gatherings a month for our schools.

THE DRIVE-THRU

"The drive-thru operates three times a week. Since Covid people have become socialised in knowing they can ask for help. It is tough. I've never seen the cost of living as high as it stands at the moment. There are more working families coming in than before. We did the stats last week and found that 24 per cent of the families who came in had not sought assistance from a food bank before — that's out of the 370 families who came.

"We're also finding that it's harder for people to do the face-to-face when they're desperate and feel whakamā/shame or embarrassment, especially around kai. If you can't put kai on your table for your kids and family it's hard to tell that to someone.

"For the drive-thru people register online and we return the call and find out a little more about them. We take their licence plate number and then it works like KFC. So the workers fill the trolley and roll it out to the car saying: 'How's it going?' You have children in the cars and they know it's the special supermarket. We don't have 'food bank' on our signage. It's Vinnies and it's where there's music and people.

MOTHERS ON THE LINE

"Our alumni from the schools come and help with our infrastructure and their mothers come, too, and some are employed here. They're the best people to work the drive thru line because they know families. They'll tell me: 'Eh! that's not enough. You need 3kg of this ...' They know how to tell off the naughty ones on the line, too! People will accept that from an older Māori or Pasifika woman. It helps, too, that we have a young Māori man here. He'll say: 'That's too Pasifika. That's not tikanga. This is how we do it...' So we're learning. We're quite young in this, especially coming from a space where we don't have food hubs in our own cultures. We're working out how to socialise and normalise it without it being a harmful process. I wish there was a better way still.

CARE OF OUR WORKERS

"Our communities are time poor and to do something together is important. We've got 70 people coming with their kiddies on Saturday. It's like a birthday party and they process and pack enough food for about 800 families. Then they sit down and celebrate what they've done. It's wonderful.

"We've heard the conversations: 'Do you believe in love? What does it look like?' And then the sharing: 'If we pack in a certain way the family will feel the love.' We've had families come back and say: 'Your boxes feel different.' And I've noticed that the children have the Mums saying: 'Pack it properly. It's not a race.' And there's a spirit. Love is a real energy and we feel it and pass it on. And it starts the questioning: "Why don't people have enough?" This opens the discussions of inequities, what makes people socially isolated.

"I look at the staff — they used to be youth workers and now they're driving forkhoists or trucks. They fill your cup until it's overflowing and next minute it's 10pm and time to go home!"

"DO YOU BELIEVE IN LOVE? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?" AND THEN THE SHARING: "IF WE PACK IN A CERTAIN WAY THE FAMILY WILL FEEL THE LOVE" ... LOVE IS A REAL ENERGY AND WE FEEL IT AND PASS IT ON.

Photos: Supplied by St Vincent de Paul

Delphina Soti is the General Manager of St Vincent de Paul Auckland. She began as a volunteer and has been influential in promoting service in the schools and businesses.

Be Better Neighbours

Irene Ayallo *suggests ways we can engage with former refugee people.*

THE LIVES OF former refugee communities are intricate, beginning with a complex refugee journey that involves many processes and actors (people). I do not have a lived experience of being a former refugee. I come from an ethnic migrant background. My experience with former refugees stems from engaging with these communities on professional (social work, pastoral care, and community work) and personal levels.

Migrants Different from Refugees

In my experience, not many people understand this journey which often leads to many misconceptions, including using the terms refugee and migrant interchangeably. Although there are some shared experiences between the two groups, their journeys are very different and affect the support needed and provided. Conflating the two groups takes attention away from the specific legal protections that refugees require.

There are specific realities that inform and shape the lives of former refugees, particularly those who arrive under the Refugee Quota policy. This group is different from Conventional Refugees (Asylum Seekers). Using the concepts "former" and "background" is intentional, highlighting that refugees who arrive in Aotearoa under the Quota programme are granted automatic citizenship on arrival, giving them the same rights as citizens. They cease to be refugees. Therefore, the most accurate and preferred terms include former refugees, refugee backgrounds or resettled communities.

The refugee journey begins with a disruptive event that is life-threatening and forces a person to move outside their country of nationality or habitual residence. This often happens without warning or time to prepare, plan or say goodbye to loved ones. I am from a migrant background, and before making my way to Aotearoa 18 years ago, I had time to plan, say goodbye to my family, and choose the country where I wanted to build a new life.

These choices are not available to refugees. Often the push factor is so perilous and intolerable that a person, a family together or individually, must cross national borders to seek safety. Returning home is dangerous, and the Refugee Convention further prohibits this.

Refugee Status

War, conflict and persecution continue to be the top causes of displacement. A glance at current global figures as of mid-2022 shows 103 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. 32.5 million of these people are refugees. The refugee status is mandated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), working in about 137 countries.

To be granted refugee status and a chance for resettlement, a person fleeing for safety must go to one of the UNHCR refugee camps for identification. Only one per cent of 32.5 million refugees are resettled yearly, as States are not obligated to accept refugees. It is entirely voluntary.

New Zealand is one of the few

countries that accept and have formalised a refugee resettlement programme. We take an annual quota of 1,500 people. This significant increase happened in July 2018 and was the first since establishing the Quota system in 1987. Before this, the Quota was 750-800 people per year. Many refugee advocates continue to wonder if the country could do more — even double or triple the Quota.

Resettlement Journey

The resettlement journey continues when the selected people arrive in the country, spend six weeks at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, and receive priority housing in the eight regions. Formalised support is provided for 12 months, after which much of the integration process depends on the individual and, if lucky, volunteers within the community.

Barriers to Safe Resettlement

Having a safe place to live is one of the many advantages of resettlement. However, many barriers hinder resettled communities from enjoying this safety fully. A major one is a lack of understanding of the refugee journey, often demonstrated in hostile behaviour and language. People sometimes think that former refugees have a choice and can "go back to their country". Or that refugees in the country are taking jobs and houses, which often stems from conflating refugees and migrants. Notably, this is misinformation regarding both groups. Constructing former refugees as the "other" or second-class citizens reinforces racism and discriminatory behaviour. Our role as good neighbours is to advocate for proper and correct information about these communities.

Refugees often arrive without strong support networks, and for most, English is an additional language, making it difficult to access support and critical systems. This can often lead to isolation and contribute to other negative health and well-being outcomes.

Some communities across Aotearoa have devised creative ways of supporting former refugee communities to build strong support networks. These include "English for conversation" gatherings, having vital information in other languages, and supporting and participating in cultural events by these communities.

Don't Ask: "Where Are You From?"

"No, where are you REALLY from?" I want to conclude with a courageous conversation about this common question, which to many appears harmless but to resettled communities, is loaded and often received with racist implications.

To the person asking the question, it may be a genuine conversation starter or a friendly gesture to learn more about the person being asked. To these communities, it is the kind of language that a good neighbour should use cautiously.

To someone who already feels "different" or as the "other", and often also visibly different because of elements such as skin colour and accent, asking this question has been reported to have harmful (perhaps unintended) implications. It conveys a strong sense of exclusion. That you look different, so you must not be from here.

The complexity of the refugee journey, leaving the country of origin, staying in the country of asylum, and finally being resettled in a third country, finding a place of belonging is already a struggle. So to ask: "Where are you REALLY from?" can be a painful reminder that they are perpetual outsiders. It causes ambivalence about the place, a feeling of not "authentically" belonging anywhere. Each time the question is asked of resettled communities, they are figuratively returned to the countries of origin, places often filled with sadness and pain for the things that have been lost while fleeing for safety.

Ask: "Where Is Home for You?"

Aotearoa provides former refugees with a new home and an additional identity. Many are proud to embrace their now multiple identities. The assumption embedded in the question "Where are you from?" again categorises resettled communities in terms of pre-migration, denying the many identities they now hold. In my conversation with people from these communities, an alternative question, or conversation starter, would be: "Where is home for you?" Home is much more than where a person was born.

The refugee journey, getting to Aotearoa, and resettlement are complex and highly stressful. Proper knowledge about this journey and the challenges faced can help us support former refugees in establishing a home in Aotearoa. This is what good neighbours do. Help each other find where they belong, are accepted and are included.

Further information:
Amnesty International:
www.tinyurl.com/54pyvu33

Artwork: ***Refugee Children's Feet*** by Harem Jamal © Used with permission www.haremjamal.com
Instagram: @haremart

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HOME IS HERE NOW

Zadran Safi *speaks with Ann Gilroy about life in New Zealand after arriving with his family as a refugee.*

WHERE'S HOME FOR YOU?

"THIS IS MY third year living in Dunedin and going to Otago University. Home for me is where I've been for a long time. I consider living here in Dunedin my home. But I've got more than one home — here in Dunedin and with my family and friends in Christchurch. I've lived in Christchurch mostly. There was a time after the 2010 earthquake when we moved to Hamilton for a couple of months. I think my Dad moved us back to Christchurch because I was unhappy and getting bullied at school in Hamilton. I can't really remember why I was being bullied as I was only seven or eight, but it got to where I was hiding under my bed not wanting to go to school."

WHY DID YOU COME TO NEW ZEALAND?

"I was born in India — most of my siblings were. New Zealand is my asylum country. I was in a Refugee camp in Auckland [Mangere Refugee

Resettlement Centre] when I was three. My parents had fled to India from Afghanistan. They both considered India and New Zealand their asylum countries. I was made a refugee by the United Nations in March 2007.

"We came from India to New Zealand with my Dad's cousins and their kids whom we'd grown up with. And with two other families as well. We knew each other because we'd lived in the same village in India. It was hard living in India — a real struggle getting food on the table. We were homeless at one point. My Dad would go out trying to sell stuff so he could bring us food.

"We're from Afghanistan. I've never been in Afghanistan but I know it from photos, videos, weddings and the like that my Mum shows me and from family stories. It's very cultural, very colourful. My Mum considers Afghanistan her home and she'd love to go back."

HOW ARE YOU MULTILINGUAL WHEN YOU'VE LIVED IN NEW ZEALAND MOST OF YOUR LIFE?

"I speak quite a few languages. My family didn't speak English when we came here. At home we spoke Pashto to communicate with our parents and I spoke Hindi with my brothers and others from being so long in India. I just picked Farsi up from being around my mother and others. That's the language I know the least of the five languages I speak. Urdu is basically just another dialect of Hindi but it is still a different language. I speak Hindi in Dunedin with our neighbours and Uni friends and Urdu with Pakistani friends. Then the Qur'an is in Arabic."

FAITH IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

"My family is Muslim. We pray five times a day, we make our prayers, we help one another. We give our share to the world, to charity. I think being Muslim makes me who I am.

"I thought my parents were really strict when we were growing up and then I realised that they were just trying to look after me. They'd sacrificed everything they had to bring us over here and I failed to realise that till later in my life.

"We're very close as a family. I personally don't keep contact with family in Afghanistan or India but my Mum does and some of my older brothers do. I say 'Hi' to them on Facebook but I didn't grow up with them so I don't know them as much. I grew up with the people here. I was three years 11 months when I came here.

"I'm sociable. I tend to be loud — it's my culture, and it's my family. I have two brothers who are quite quiet but my sister and other brothers are similar to me. I talk to everyone."

HOW DID YOU GET ON AT SCHOOL?

"I went to school in New Zealand. At school I liked sports — running and basketball especially. I liked learning things. I really liked maths of all the subjects. I was really good at maths in primary school and intermediate school but in secondary school it got boring. The teachers weren't passionate about it and learning went downhill for me. I had a pretty tough high school life. My Year 13 was rough after my Dad's death in Year 12."

THE MOSQUE ATTACK

"My Dad — he passed away in the mosque attack in 2019. Just imagine if you were 15 years old and it happened to you — your Dad was shot while he was praying in the mosque. How would you feel? My Dad was shot multiple times and finding that out while cleaning his body was devastating. The reason why we came here, my Dad and my Mum, was to flee the war but the war followed us. We came here on 21 March 2007 and he left us on 21 March 2019. It was 12 years on the dot. When I saw him on the morning of his burial he was smiling and that gave me reassurance that he was OK.

"The attack changed our family. I didn't like to be at home in Christchurch and I kept going out because it reminded me too much of our loss. But I love my family and I'll do anything for them."

WHAT ARE YOU STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY?

"I'm now at Uni and I like it. I'm studying Bachelor of Oral Health in my final year. So I'll graduate with my first degree when I'm 20. I'm too young to stop studying so I'm going on to do either medicine or dentistry, I hope. I'll graduate at the end of the year and next year will enrol in the compulsory year of Health Sciences to get into medicine or dentistry."

WHAT ARE YOUR DREAMS FOR AFTER GRADUATION?

"New Zealand is very fortunate with the healthcare we have. Good healthcare should be worldwide — everyone should have access to it.

"When I graduate I want to have multiple dental clinics and employ dental assistants who may not speak English well yet. That kind of job doesn't require good English and is a way into employment where they can improve their English. In those roles they can respond to body movements. They can get money for their families.

"My parents didn't work while we were growing up and the school paid for us. They paid for our camps and everything because we didn't have any extra money for that. I want to be able to help families who are in a situation like mine were. My brothers now have made a good future for themselves. They have a cleaning business that's successful and a shoe business that's doing well — they're entrepreneurs so they will be able to help me with my business."

Zadran Safi is studying at Otago University, works in the Dental School and in a student hostel kitchen and enjoys working out at the gym.

REPORTING THE TRUTH

Lois Griffiths *tells the story of Shireen Abu-Akleh, the renowned Palestinian-American journalist, who was shot last year while reporting on an Israeli assault on a Palestinian refugee camp.*

IT IS JUST over a year (11 May 2022) since Shireen Abu-Akleh, a long-standing Palestinian-American Al Jazeera journalist, was assassinated in Jenin, in the Occupied West Bank. Shireen and her Al Jazeera colleague were there covering an army raid in the Jenin refugee camp. They thought they were prepared for the dangerous work by wearing protective gear including flak jackets clearly labelled "Press" and they had informed the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) of their presence. Shireen was shot in the head by a sniper and died instantly.

Israeli officials first claimed that she had been caught in crossfire but later backed down. An Israeli military report on the incident said it was Israeli fire that killed her but there would be no criminal investigation into her death. Shireen's family have since filed an official complaint to the International Criminal Court to demand justice for her death.

BECOMING A JOURNALIST

Shireen Abu Akleh was born in 1971 in Jerusalem in a Palestinian Arab Christian (Melkite Catholic) family from Bethlehem. She went to the Rosary Sisters' High School in Beit Hanina, a Palestinian neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. Then she studied journalism at Yarmouk University in Jordan and after graduating returned to the West Bank where she worked as a journalist for Radio Monte Carlo and Voice of Palestine. In 1997 she joined the newly-founded Al Jazeera, the international news network, as a field journalist. She had gained American citizenship, as well, after living with family in New Jersey.

A VOICE FOR PALESTINIANS

For over two decades Shireen reported from nearly every flashpoint in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, including the Gaza wars of 2008, 2009, 2012, 2014 and 2021. She said: "I chose journalism to be close to the people. It might not be easy to change the reality but at least I could bring their voice to the world."

Because of her work Shireen was loved by the Palestinians but hated by the Israeli regime. Not only did she report on violent incidents, but she visited Palestinian people in their homes, listened to their stories of what life was like under occupation and shared these stories on

Al Jazeera. Shireen, affectionately called "the daughter of Palestine", was the face of Palestinian news coverage for millions of Arab households.

VIOLENCE INTERRUPTS FUNERAL PREPARATIONS

Hours after her killing, Israeli police stormed the Beit Hanina home where Shireen had lived with her brother and his family. Family and friends had already gathered there to mourn her death. The police confiscated their Palestinian flags and tried to stop them singing their national song and anthems but they were shouted down by the crowd and forced to leave.

Shireen's violent death sent shockwaves throughout the Arab world and led to an outpouring of emotion across the West Bank and Gaza. They took her body in procession from Jenin to Nablus for an autopsy.

The next day they travelled to Ramallah where a state service was held for her at the Palestinian Authority's Presidential Compound. And thousands — Christians and Muslims — attended. After the ceremony, her body was taken by ambulance in a convoy to the St Louis French Hospital in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem.

The following day, determined to prevent a funeral march, Israeli police stormed the grounds of the hospital. They attacked the pall-bearers with batons and stun grenades almost causing the coffin to fall to the ground. This incident was filmed by a reporter who said that he'd never witnessed such disrespect, contempt even, for the dead and for the mourners.

MESSAGE: LIFE IS SACRED

Despite the disruption, the coffin was driven in a hearse to the Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Virgin in Jerusalem's Old City for a funeral Eucharist. The priest who conducted the funeral Father Fadi Diab told Al Jazeera that Shireen's death would have influence all over the world: "Shireen Abu Akleh was a messenger for Palestinians and for their rights. Life is sacred and we're not allowed to assassinate life. God created life not to be assassinated, but to be nurtured."

Her niece Lina Abu Akleh, who has since become the face of her family's global campaign for justice, remembered her aunt's "love for the people in making sure they know the truth." Shireen was laid to rest beside her parents in the Mount Zion Cemetery.

It is well known that the Israeli regime does not want Palestinians to have a voice in the world. But Palestinians value education, are articulate and want the Western media to listen to them. Theirs is not a case of "voice for the voiceless" but rather of "media for the media-less". They find it frustrating and demoralising to realise that the world is looking the other way from their continued suppression by Israel. For most of her 51 years Shireen reported the plight of her people tirelessly.

Her championing of the truth of Palestinian occupation is not forgotten. Archbishop Atallah Hanna, head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem, said: "She was a symbol of our nation, our people, our cause and oneness as Palestinians. We, both Muslims and Christians, will remain forever proud of her."

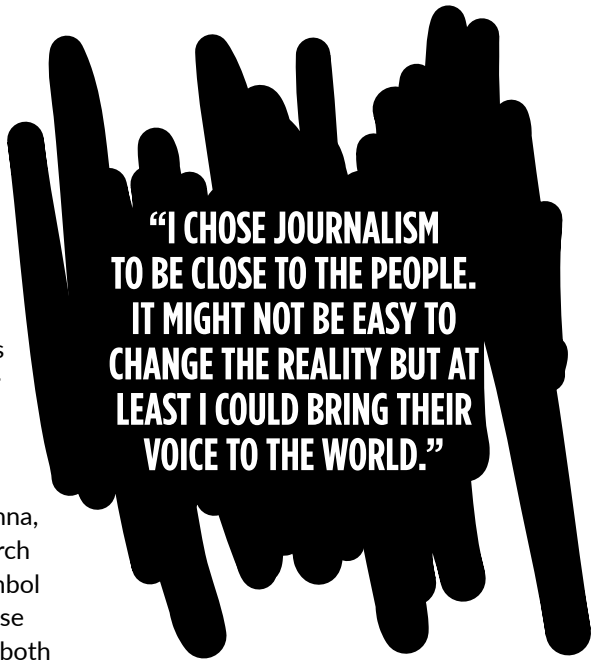
CALL FOR JUSTICE CONTINUES

In October last year, Shireen's brother Tony, his wife and two daughters attended a memorial Mass for Shireen at the Basilica of Saint Mary in Cosmedin in Rome. They met with Pope Francis briefly at the pilgrims' audience.

Many in Aotearoa know of and remember her work. Last year local Palestinian leader Rami Al-Jiab organised a rally in Palmerston North to protest Shireen's killing and to show support for the Palestinian cause for a peaceful solution.

There is no doubt that true journalism, the telling of the truth, is very dangerous in many parts of the world. Will Shireen's work be remembered and continued by others?

The Palestinian people have not forgotten. Neither have their supporters, including their Jewish supporters. Religious difference is often cited as the cause of war in the Middle East. But the issue is not religion. The issue is justice, the right of people to tell their stories, the right of the wider world to hear the stories. Bir Zeit University, near Ramallah, launched an annual Shireen Abu Akleh Award for Outstanding Achievements in Media to be given to Palestinian journalists and reporters covering life under Israeli occupation.



On her anniversary Shireen Abu Akleh is remembered for bringing the story of Palestine to the world despite the ever-present danger of conflict. It cost her life — a price no one should pay. Her devotion to journalism is inspiring a new generation of Arab women journalists.

Photo: Shireen Abu Akleh mural on the West Bank barrier in Bethlehem. Creative Commons

Lois Griffiths and husband Martin have followed closely what is happening in the Middle East since their first trip there in 2009.

HOSPITALITY FROM THE HEART

***Thomas O'Loughlin** reflects on hospitality as expressing the Gospel and the Christian way.*

LETS PLAY A little game. Imagine ourselves in the position of guest arriving for a party. It is not a family party where everyone knows everyone for years and can trace how each is related to the other, but a party of friends and acquaintances. We can sense from the moment the door opens whether the reception we receive is really warm or just formal. We cannot but notice if we are put at our ease — and we know that is "how it should be": our host is being hospitable.

Hospitality has been commented upon for as long as human beings have been keeping written records. This affirmation of the importance of hospitality can be found in some of the oldest strands of the Pentateuch (Lev 19:34): "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."

But back to our game: now imagine what it is like not to be welcomed with hospitality. Again we arrive at the door, but we are "processed" rather than welcomed and told we can "leave your coat over there". We cannot help noticing that there is an "in" group — VIPs or people the host wants to impress — and there are "also-rans" who are there to swell the numbers. We cannot help feeling that some are more equal than others, or that there is a very defined limit on the food and drink, or that the atmosphere is very transactional. The whole event

has a cold feel, but we might console ourselves that we had to go anyway.

We Recognise Hospitality

Inhospitality has also left a trail in our memories. In Matthew's Gospel hospitality is offered as a key to discipleship, and inhospitality is presented as the key to the failure of following Jesus: "I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me" (Mt 25:43).

Now switch sides and play the game again, this time from the side of the host. Think of planning even a small gathering of a few friends — and notice how welcome and hospitality, just putting people at their ease, is a higher-level concern than whether you are going to have this or that food.

And yes, think of the darker side: those times when we hosted people but it was not hospitality that was uppermost, but "welcome" and a shared meal was used as an instrument to serve another purpose. We have all tried to offer real hospitality, and, yes, as imperfect humans, we have all gone through the motions and put up a front of hospitality.

Four Modes of Hospitality

It is at this point that we can consider the hospitality that is part of the Christian Way. There are at least four dimensions to hospitality within the Gospels. Let's look at just one passage for each.

Hospitality — Love for Strangers

The hospitality of love for the stranger. The most succinct expression — some would argue containing the core of the message of discipleship — is in Mt 25: 31-45: the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory … he will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right: 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took me in, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you visited me' … 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these, my sisters and brothers, you did for me.'"

Offering hospitality is to be a pattern for our way of living.

Hospitality of Reconciliation

A second is the hospitality of reconciliation. In Luke 15 we have a sequence of three parables that highlight the hospitality Jesus showed to sinners — even when it scandalised those who would not "go soft on sin". The chapter opens with these words: "Now all the tax collectors and sinners were gathering around to listen to Jesus. So the Pharisees and scribes began to grumble: 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.'"

Then we have the Parable of the Prodigal Son whose high point is the wonderful hospitality of the father's meal welcoming back his lost son: "'Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let us feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again! He was lost and is found!' So they began to celebrate" (Lk 15:23-4).

Hospitality of Mercy

A third is the hospitality of mercy. Faced with the question as to who is our neighbour (Lk 10:29), Jesus told the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-37). The Samaritan is the one who showed mercy, cared for the sick man and paid for his stay in the inn.

Hospitality of Gratitude

A fourth is the hospitality of gratitude. We recall that Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10), the crooked tax collector, had his sins forgiven and promised to repay those he had defrauded, but we may not notice, or we may forget, that the conversion comes when Jesus is staying in his house. Zacchaeus offers Jesus hospitality, and "salvation comes to his house". In giving and receiving hospitality we can be transformed.

Challenge to the Church

In the coming weeks we are going to celebrate two feasts in the Church with a hospitality dimension. The first is the feast of Corpus Christi when we reflect on the centrality of the Eucharist. And the second is the feast of the Sacred Heart when we reflect on the mercy of the Christ who offers us love and forgiveness.

These cause us to pause and ask: Are our celebrations of the Eucharist events when we actually experience hospitality and practice it? Many are simply "had to be there" events which feel very unlike a welcoming meal. Many are more marked by who cannot eat and drink than by the forgiving welcome of the Lord.

Is our presentation of Jesus that of the one who ate with sinners? And if we recall that mercy, do we practise it towards strangers, outcasts and refugees?

We know what hospitality feels like, it is practising it that is our challenge.

Artwork: ***Clifton Al Fresco*** by John Staniford © Used with permission www.johnstaniford.co.nz

Thomas O'Loughlin is Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology. His latest book is *In Christ Now We Meet Both East and West: On Catholic Eucharistic Action* (2023).

Refuge of spices

The woman from Iraq tows
her children through the park.
Wind troubles her black
robes painting a ship
sailing on a green sea.
Her children run free as waves.
The woman sits by the lake
oasis in a strange land
lacking the hospitality of raisins and sweet tea.
She throws bread to the two swans
that paddle her lostness to the other side.
Allows the solitude of swans
to carry her home where palms
and palaces welcome her
beneath the blue dome of sky.
Feels the desertion of exile
beneath her breast
beneath her fingernails
refuge of spices.

CREATING SPACE FOR ONE ANOTHER

***Cathy Ross** discusses the giving and receiving of hospitality as essential in God's mission.*

Hospitality is a rich concept, full of potential and part of a rich Biblical and Christian tradition echoing through the ages. Most of the ancient world regarded hospitality as a fundamental virtue and practice, as do many cultures still in our world today. In the West, we have tended to water it down or commercialise it into an industry with training courses, certificates, five-star ratings and "meet and greet" attitudes.

It has also become a contested idea as we face ambivalence towards engaging with the other and fear of the stranger. Britain has become notorious for its reluctance to accept, let alone welcome, migrants and Aotearoa/NZ experienced a fortress mentality during the Covid pandemic. While these actions may be politically expedient and some might say, necessary, they are a long way indeed from being either welcoming or hospitable.

Hospitality as Welcome of Guest and Stranger

Jesus is portrayed as a gracious host, welcoming children, tax collectors, prostitutes and sinners into his presence and therefore offending

those who would prefer such guests not to be at His gatherings. But Jesus is also portrayed as vulnerable guest and needy stranger who came to his own but his own did not receive him (Jn 1:11).

So we can see the importance of not only the ambiguity but also the fluidity of the host/guest conundrum. We offer and receive as both guest or stranger and host. The three major festivals of the Church — Christmas, Easter and Pentecost — all have to do with the advent of a divine stranger. In each case this stranger — a baby, a resurrected Christ and the wind of the Holy Spirit — all meet us as mysterious or strange visitors, breaking into our world, challenging our worldviews and systems, and welcoming us to new worlds.

The stranger, the other, becomes a person of promise. Remember the injunction from the book of Hebrews: "Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it" (Heb 13:2). Strangers save us from cosy, domesticated hospitality and force us out of our comfort zones. Strangers may transform and challenge us.

Hospitality as Seeing the Other

To be able to practise hospitality we need the gift of sight. This is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Go-Between who opens our inward eyes and makes us aware of the other.

The concept of sight and recognition of the other are clear in the parable in Matthew 25 when the righteous say to Jesus: "Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go and visit you?" (Mt 25:37-9) The parable reminds us that we can see Christ in every guest and stranger.

Who are we blind to in our contexts, which prevents us from seeing the other person and, wittingly or unwittingly, means that we practise a theology of exclusion rather than of embrace? Might it be the young people whose music is so loud, whose language is incomprehensible, whose body-piercing and head shaving is so alien? Have we ever stopped to look them in the eye, to appreciate their music, to consider the pressures they may be under — the bleak prospect of unemployment, broken homes, student loans, an uncertain future — have we ever stopped to look them in the eye and tried to understand them in their context?

Might it be those migrants who never learn our language, who never even try to integrate, who take over whole streets and suburbs in our cities? Have we ever had them in our homes, offered them hospitality and tried to "see" their culture? In humility, let us ask ourselves whom the Holy Spirit might be calling us "to see."

Christianity is a way of seeing and here we are trying to see or envision a world where hospitality becomes a way of life. God's universal welcome is displayed and as we see the other, we are welcoming Jesus.

Hospitality as Nourishment

Offering food and drink to guests is central to almost every act of hospitality. This takes time. It requires attention to the other, it requires an effort. It requires us to stop and focus. This is a challenge in our time-starved culture. Hospitality emerges from a willingness to create time and space.

The theme of banqueting is central in the ministry of Jesus. Accused of being a glutton and a drunkard and of eating with sinners, Jesus with his followers celebrated the abundance of God — think of all the stories of food and drink overflowing, of parties enjoyed, of the feeding of the 5,000. God's household is a household of superabundance, of extravagant hospitality, where food and wine is generously shared and the divine welcome universally offered. Jesus's rejection of social and religious categories of inclusion and exclusion was offensive to the authorities. As theologian Robert J Karris expressed it: "Jesus got himself crucified by the way he ate" *(Luke: Artist and Theologian).*

To be able to practise hospitality we need the gift of sight. This is a gift of the Holy Spirit ... who opens our inward eyes and makes us aware of the other.

Eating together is a political act. What we eat, how we eat, from where we eat, with whom we eat are important acts. We need to be

mindful about where our food comes from and to be grateful to Earth that feeds us. These themes of gratitude and reciprocity are profoundly linked to the practice of hospitality to one another and to the planet.

Perhaps this idea of nourishment is most powerfully expressed in the Eucharist, where this ritualised eating and drinking together re-enacts the crux of the Gospel. Jesus is, quite literally, the Host as we partake of his body and blood and we are the guests as we feed on him by faith with thanksgiving. In this way, the Eucharist connects hospitality at a very basic level with God and with the *missio Dei* as it anticipates and reveals God's heavenly table and the coming Kingdom.

Hospitality from or at the Edges

Poverty makes a good host — poverty of mind, heart and even resources where one is not constrained by one's possessions but is able to freely give. Hospitality from the margins reminds us of the paradoxical power of vulnerability and the importance of compassion. To make ourselves vulnerable reminds us that both hospitality and engagement in mission require authentic compassion and genuine love.

People at the edges are actually at the centre of God's story. English priests Al Barrett and Ruth Harley write about life at the edges in their parish context in Birmingham. They would like to see the Church formed at the borders in encounters with others and believe that this would invite us to think more in terms of "encounterology" — the way in which we can become Church precisely because of these encounters on the edges. Perhaps we could imagine the Church as listener, guest at other people's tables, in need of being served — in other words the Church as the guest which could change and challenge the power dynamics in new ways.

Hospitality as Creating Space

Our Trinitarian understanding of God means that we experience God in relationship with the other, within community. So each person of the Trinity has their own divine nature, expressed in relation to the other persons of the Trinity. There is the space to be each divine person, as each person relates to the other. They cannot each exist without this relationship. There is space for each divine person; there is space for the other and so there is space for us, created in the divine image to be who we were created to be.

Mission, the divine invitation from God to enter into a loving relationship with God, is about allowing people the space and the time to come to God in their own way; to become the person God created them to be. It also means allowing for the possibility that they may not want to change. As English theologian Paul Fiddes writes in his book, *Participating in God, A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity*: "Respect for others, of course, means that we must also be ready to be resisted by them."

North American theologian Christine Pohl reminds us that hospitality is a way of life: "In God's economy … a practice that was good for everybody." (*Making Room, Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition)* Pohl reminds us hospitality can come to us as an interruption and that if our schedules are so busy, we are not going to see the opportunity for hospitality. That is why it is so important to see it as a way of life and to create space in our lives to practise it.

Hospitality involves welcome, listening, learning, seeing and nourishing the other and negotiation of space by all parties. Hospitality can embody the sacrament of God's love to the world. Ultimately hospitality is a way of life and requires a reorientation in how we live our lives. I think of the Celtic prayer that ends: "And the lark said in her song: 'Often, often, often goes the Christ in the stranger's guise.'" AMEN.

Artwork: ***Big Burger*** by Tjalf Sparnaay ©
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Praise by Alexis Lavine, NWS ©
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(Painting is available for sale)

Cathy Ross is the head of Pioneer Leadership Training in the Church Missionary Society and a lecturer in Mission at Regent's Park College, UK.

SUPPORTING OUR NEIGHBOURS

OUT OF THE lingering economic and health impacts of the Covid pandemic, and in the face of the growing impact of climate change, Caritas partners across the Pacific and Asia are working to provide food and water security, build healthy lifestyles and strengthen agriculture and income-earning opportunities.

This is being done through He Oranga Taurikura — A Thriving Life — a five-year partnership between Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand and the New Zealand Aid Programme. For every dollar that Caritas supporters provide to the programme, the New Zealand Government will match it with three dollars.

Working through nine established community organisations, the programme aims to reach over 90,000 people in Cambodia, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Tonga.

Caritas has just released its first report to the Government on the programme covering July 2021 to December 2022. It shows that Caritas's grassroots partners have been highly adaptable through the impact and disruptions of the pandemic and other crises and disasters.

An important part of the programme is recognising and supporting local and indigenous ways of being and measuring their impact. Underlying the approach of He Oranga Taurikura is the whakataukī: "Na tō rourou, Na tāku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi. With my fruit basket and your fruit basket, our people shall thrive."

This proverb encapsulates important wisdom for community living. Among them is the recognition that for a community, environment or individual to thrive, an integrated and collective effort is needed.

FIJIAN FARMERS ADAPTING

The Tutu Rural Training Centre on Taveuni Island in Fiji is recognised as a national leader in providing agricultural, business and life skills to young men and women farmers. A meeting of young farmers at Tutu RTC midway through last year highlighted the ongoing economic and social impacts of Covid-19, and how farming in rural areas was supporting people and those returning from urban areas.

Apakuki, one of the Tutu students, formed a group of six young farmers in his home village. Building on his learning from Tutu, Apakuki helped each farmer start a planting programme for cash crops yaqona (used to make kava) and dalo (taro).

Another student Pate had his parents and younger siblings return from Suva to live with him in the village of Korotasere in Vanua Levu. His mother had lost her city job as a sports journalist. While they were in the village they planted 1,000 cassava plants. When the schools reopened, his parents, with the children, returned to Suva knowing that when the cassava was harvested, it would be sent on to them in Suva and would be their food mainstay.

The young farmers at Tutu recognise that many people are falling into the trap of thinking about quick money, a kind of thinking which is little help in building a sustainable future. They have learned from the pandemic crisis that they needed to have many baskets and not rely on a single source of income, such as tourism. They said: "People before used to look down on us as farmers. Now we are the ones who the people from the urban areas look up to."

FINANCE AND SEWING SKILLS FOR WOMEN IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

He Oranga Taurikura Solomon Islands is strengthening the training provided in 10 rural training centres through the umbrella organisation Solomon Islands Association of Vocational and Rural Training Centres (SIAVRTC).

A good example was a "training the trainers" course, a combined financial literacy and sewing course, for 20 women in the capital Honiara last year. Ten of the women were life skills teachers or instructors from remote rural training centres and the other 10 women were from the community around each of the rural centres. So each training centre would have two women who had learned from the course and be able to teach others.

During the first week, the women learned basic financial knowledge and the skills necessary to manage their finances and those of the organisation they worked in. The second week was devoted to enhancing their sewing knowledge and skills. They learned about pattern making, measuring, fitting and the technical skills for making finished garments such as dresses and shirts. The women would be able to return to their homes and teach others to earn an income through their sewing and keep the business side of the centres.

Photo: Supplied by Caritas

Ben Sokimi (21) is a Fundraising Communications Assistant at Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand. He is studying towards a Bachelor of Commerce and went to Aquinas College Tauranga.

LIVING AS A QUAKER

I was brought up in a Quaker family and the values of Quakerism were instilled in me from early on. One of the most important of those values is the emphasis on action. "So then, the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without actions is dead" (James 2:26). My life as a Quaker has therefore always been about action, initially guided by the faith of my parents and more recently by an understanding of my own faith as it has evolved within the framework of Quaker values.

Quaker values, founded on the belief in "that of God in everyone", find expression in what we call our testimonies, which include: integrity, equality, peace, community, simplicity and sustainability. I have endeavoured to follow these testimonies in all my actions in the world, from bringing up children to the choice of career and to the voluntary organisations I have worked for or supported.

I have fond memories of joining my parents on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament marches from Featherston and then Waikanae to Wellington, the first being in 1961 when I was in my teens. I was also active in the Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Committee on Vietnam and other peace groups as a youngster.

Facing the decision about a career after university study, my choice of community and social work was influenced by the same Quaker values and when I subsequently moved into management positions, where most of my career was spent, my approach was also infused with those values.

As a manager I identified strongly with the "Quality Management" school. Management as a discipline had initially focused on the perceived need for hierarchical layers of supervision and tight control of individual performance. In contrast, the Quality Management school was founded on the idea that people were generally well-intentioned and, provided with the right tools and work environment, would work hard and well. For me, this more positive view of human nature resonated with the idea that there is "that of God in everyone". As a manager, I focused on my responsibility to create the positive organisational environment that enabled and empowered individuals to deliver their best.

On retirement, my life continues to reflect my Quaker values in the voluntary work I choose, and the organisations I join and support. These have included working for Peace Movement Aotearoa, and the boards of Rethinking Crime and Punishment and Arts Access Aotearoa, running workshops on Te Tiriti o Waitangi and supporting Greenpeace, Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne, Action Stations, Oxfam and Amnesty International amongst others.

Quakerism in Aotearoa follows the liberal English tradition and is described as having a true "priesthood of all believers" in that we are all responsible for the ministry and have no ministers or priests. We are also responsible for our own spiritual learning and development. Through much of my life, busyness with family and career meant that my life as a Quaker was more action-oriented with less reflection on the spiritual underpinnings of that action. More recently I have begun to explore my perspective in greater depth and enjoy the freedom to do so that is created by the absence of creed and dogma in Quakerism.

I am catching up with ideas that have been around for a while. For example, while I have long questioned the idea of God as the all-powerful creator and controller, I hadn't reflected on alternatives much. I am now exploring the idea of God as relational Spirit, who is made manifest in I/Thou encounters, which Martin Buber wrote about in the 1930s. It fits well with the many passages in the Bible that point to God as spirit and love between rather than within the I and the Thou. "For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them" (Matthew 18:20).

My life as a Quaker has changed and evolved as I have changed and evolved. The balance of spirit to action has always been shifting, and I am now enjoying exploring the spiritual side of my faith. Quaker life, for me, remains as challenging and fulfilling now as when I was a protesting teenager.

Murray Short is married to Niwa and they have two adult children. In addition to family time, Murray enjoys gardening, fishing, reading and writing.

The Crash

Bex Va'ai-Wells became ill with ME/ chronic fatigue syndrome following a bout of glandular fever as a teenager, necessitating a couple of years off school. This chronic condition has waxed and waned over the years, but she graduated university and holds a professional position, as well as successfully raising young children. After a period of recovery, she has in the last few months succumbed to this illness again and is now unable to sit up. She is very reluctantly having to accept help from others.

The days are long, but the weeks and months fly by. Days totally slept through. Total body fatigue.

There is no strength to sit up yet. Extreme pain. Orthostatic intolerance.

A walk to the toilet feels like wading against the current of a river of silt. Showering is the daily exercise, after which a nap is required.

Frozen meals reheated, grandparents helping with parenting duties, husband working at 200 per cent to keep the household running.

Being wheeled into the doctors. Embarrassment. Head down. Feeling robbed. What I would give to sit upright. It will come, I remind myself. Be patient.

Sun shining, puppy cuddles, kids' stories from school, friends who pop in to chat and make a cuppa. Plants flowering. The beauty is still there.

A good day, take it slow. Walking on eggshells.

Able to do some work from home while horizontal, feeling blessed the brain is still functioning for a couple of hours.

Well-meaning questions: "Are you feeling any better today?" The improvements are "sloth slow". Frustration, fear … Will I get better? Is this the new normal? Do I need to learn to dance in this storm, or will it subside? Kids ask questions and reassurances are given as they brush my hair.

Mobility card issued, excitement about being able to get out of the house soon? But fear at how an invisible illness may be seen in a carpark.

Feeling guilty for not having the energy to call and check in on friends. Hoping they understand. Not wanting to start a conversation with "How are you?" What is the correct reply? How do you explain being bedbound for five months?

Realising that accepting help is sooo much harder than giving it!

Promises made to myself to never take for granted the ability to sit, walk, drive to work, play with the kids, visit friends and whānau.

A few hours a day managed back in the office. Smiling faces, coffee and chats, desk cleaned up and work caught up on. Aware of eyes watching the slow corridor walks.

Normality of some description returns for a few weeks. Driving kids to school. Sitting and watching sport. Walking to the letterbox. Watering the garden. Remembering to Take. It. Slow.

Then, without warning or reason, another crash. Back at square one. Tears, frustration, guilt. Allow myself the space to feel the feelings. Remember I did improve so it is possible.

"Sick mum" routine re-enabled. Endlessly grateful for family, friends and colleagues keeping the wheels turning. How to ever thank these people?

Reminding myself daily: "This too shall pass". It's just part of the journey. The kids will learn acceptance, patience and independence.

Reminder to enjoy the little things.

For 25 years now I have battled and "managed" this invisible illness but in November it decided to entirely manage me. I have been missing at Christmas, graduations, birthdays, work, coffee, the dinner table, the sidelines of the kids' sports, catch ups with friends and countless other events.

I don't want pity. Writing this is a way for me to express my frustration. And the hope that it will create an awareness of how invisible illnesses can affect lives — both those living it and their support people. Millions in the world are "missing" from this cruel illness.

Always be kind. Don't judge — for EVERYONE you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about.

Artwork: ***Hidden Beauty*** by Pauline Julian © Used with permission

Bex Va'ai-Wells is a radiation therapist, a wife and mother of two energetic children.

A Heart Moved with Compassion

Kathleen Rushton *discusses the merciful God Jesus revealed in Matthew 9:36 –10:8.*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING to Matthew unfolds within a framework of "Emmanuel — God-with-us." In the first chapter Jesus is named as "Emmanuel" when the prophet Isaiah is quoted (Mt 1:23). Three times Jesus highlights this: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Mt 18:20); "Truly, I tell you, just as you did it (or did not do it) to one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it (or did not do it) to me" (Mt 25:40, 45); and in his very last words: "I am with you always to the end of the age" (Mt 28:30).

Within this "Emmanuel — God-with-us" framework expressions of mercy and compassion are integral to Matthew's Gospel. The power of the biblical tradition of mercy is in the Beatitude: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall be mercied" (Mt 5:7, usually translated as "will receive mercy"). This is the only time the passive form of the verb "to mercy" *(eleein)* is used in the Gospels.

John Paul II in his encyclical *Rich in Mercy* wrote: "The concept of 'mercy' in the Old Testament has a long and rich history. We have to refer back to it in order that the mercy revealed by Christ may shine forth more clearly … the people of God of the Old Covenant, had drawn from their age-long history a special experience of the mercy of God. This experience was social and communal, as well as individual and interior." (*DM* par 4).

The Israelites believed God was a God of *raḥamim* (womb-compassion) and of *ḥesed* (steadfast love). "God is gracious and merciful *(raḥum)*, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love *(ḥesed)"* (Ps 145:8).

Mercy is action-orientated. We see this when we link the two words Matthew uses to express the mercy of Jesus with the Hebrew *raḥamim* and *ḥesed*.

"I Desire Mercy"

Jesus crosses the sea to Capernaum, his own town. He calls Matthew, a tax collector, to follow him. Then Jesus and his disciples have dinner in Matthew's house (Mt 9:10-13). The

Pharisees question his disciples about his dining with tax collectors and sinners. Jesus responds by directing the Pharisees, respected teachers of the Torah, to learn from Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy *(eleos)*, not sacrifice." This Greek word for mercy, which is found many times in Matthew, translates the Hebrew word *hesed* meaning steadfast love, enduring love, loving kindness.

The Greek *"Kyrie eleison"* is still used in the Eucharist but more often in the English translation "mercy".

The Womb-Compassion of Jesus

The story continues with Jesus responding. He heals a woman with haemorrhage, two men who are blind and a demoniac — all were marginalised in society (Mt 9:18-24). He travelled the countryside "proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and sickness" (Mt 9:35).

Then when Jesus saw the crowds "he had compassion for them" (Mt 9:36 NRSV). This is the first time the Greek word for compassion *(splagnizomai)* is used. It literally means "having a heart moved with compassion".

This deeply-felt response to suffering evokes the Hebrew word, *raḥamim*, meaning the womb-compassion of God. It is also related to the Hebrew *reḥem*, the word for womb, and suggests the love of a mother. This is explicit female imagery for God.

A Triad

Matthew draws us into a triad. First, there is a description of a need: Jesus saw the crowds who "were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

Second, seeing this need Jesus is described as "having a heart moved with compassion."

And third, the movement to action because something must be done to address the heartfelt need.

Something Must Be Done

Jesus acts. He turns to his disciples reminding them that "the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few." Then he calls together the twelve and delivers his second mission discourse (Mt 10:1-11:1) which reflects both the time of Jesus and the time of the early Church. While Jesus confines the mission of his disciples to the people of Israel (Mt 10:5-6), the time of the early Church is suggested by the mention of disciples being dragged before governors and giving testimony to the Gentiles (Mt 10:18; cf. 28:19).

All disciples are called to participate with Jesus when something must be done — we are to be like him who sees a need and "having a heart moved with compassion" responds by taking action. Jesus gives the twelve disciples authority to respond to the suffering of the crowd.

This triad form (seeing a need, "having a heart moved with compassion," and then doing something to address the felt need) is repeated four more times in Matthew — being sick (Mt 14:14); being hungry (Mt 15:32); in huge debt (Mt 18:27); and being blind (Mt 20:34). It is also in Luke — the death of widow's son (Lk 7:13); the wounded one (Lk 10:30); and the lost son (Lk 15:20).

"Mercy-ing" in the World

Moral theologian James Keenan wrote: "Our entire theological tradition is expressed in terms of mercy, which I define as the willingness to enter into the chaos of others." And Biblical scholar Veronica Lawson explained: "Mercy is a way of being in the world, a way of seeing and of hearing and a way of responding."

Pope Francis uses the verbal noun "mercy-ing" to translate the first word of his Latin motto *"Miserando atque eligendo"*. He said: "The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person … wherever the Church is present, the mercy of God must be evident. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy." (*Misericordiae Vultus* par 12).

The mercy related word "having a heart moved with compassion" which is linked to the womb *(reḥem)* connects Christians, Jews and Muslims. We all speak of God as mercy-ing.

In Arabic, the word *Rahm* meaning "womb" is related to *ar-Raham* which is translated as "the merciful". Zain Ali wrote that *ar-Raham* is "used in the Qur'an as an attribute, or name of God — that is, God the most merciful."

If we wish to relieve suffering and eradicate inequalities, we will need to see the needs around us, have our hearts moved with compassion — and then we will need to act.

Just as we are "mercied", so we will need to be mercy-ing to others, so that all experience God-with-us — a mercy-full, compassionate, loving Divine.

Mercy is a way of being in the world, a way of seeing and of hearing and a way of responding."

Lectionary Reading for 18 June — Matthew 9:36-10:8

Correction: The phrase describing Jesus's last discourse should have read "a well known form of address" not "a form of oratory" (*TM* May 24).

Kathleen Rushton RSM is a Scripture scholar and author of *The Cry of the Earth* and *the Cry of the Poor: Hearing Justice in John's Gospel* (2020).

ANGRY ABOUT INEQUALITY

I've been reading a book about tuberculosis and it's made me angry. It is desperately unfair that our health systems are biased against people who are poor. I've talked to my flatmates (both healthcare professionals) about the issue and have borrowed a book from my parents about power systems and health. I keep getting upset when I think about all the people who are denied crucial care because circumstance makes lifesaving treatment inaccessible to them.

Here are a few things I learned from the book *Phantom Plague* by Vidya Krishnan. The rise of drug-resistant TB (which is much harder to treat) has been exacerbated by drug companies keeping drugs locked under patent laws, governments who refuse to approve medications and update treatment protocols, and out-of-date World Health Organisation programmes that treat TB patients with the expectation that they will not take their medicine. Standard TB treatment includes taking 14 pills a day for months; some of these drugs can cause deafness and would never be approved for use today. Tuberculosis kills more people worldwide than HIV or Covid. I am full of righteously angry facts.

Krishan ends the book with a cry for justice: "No one should be poor because they are sick, or sick because they are poor." Since I finished the book, I've been thinking about this non-stop, because it seems so right.

One story in particular stood out: that of a middle-class girl in India who got sick and was able to access treatment because her parents and doctors relentlessly fought the government and pharmaceutical companies for months. This reminded me of the story in Luke where a group of friends bring their paralysed mate to Jesus, so dedicated to his treatment that they lower him through the roof. Jesus sees the faith of the friends, as well as the faith of the sick man, forgives his sin and heals him.

This story has a metaphorical meaning: it's about the idea of authority and power, and how it is exercised, and by whom, and how physical and spiritual healing are linked. All of this is very interesting, but on a literal level the story is still powerful because it remains true today. Profound inequity still impacts who gets sick, limited resources still circumscribe who can get healed, and communities that want things to change have to push hard for it — against systems that are often not designed for it.

I feel angry about healthcare inequity, and I also feel sad, and most of all I am very aware of how many injustices I am unable to attend to because there are too many of them. I don't always know what to do with these complicated feelings, what it means to act against things which are embedded and wicked.

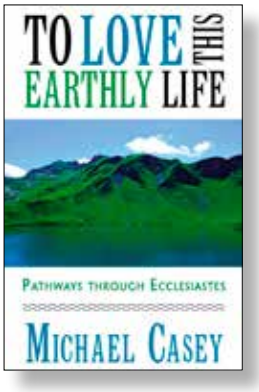
But the contemporary experience of TB patients and the first-century experience of paralysed Palestinians offers one certainty: healing of physical ailments and vicious systems is urgently required. We will need to lift up not just our daughters and our friends, but those who are strangers to us, so that each of us has access to healing not as a child of the rich — or even as a child richly loved by family, or as a cherished friend — but as a child of God.

Shanti Mathias is a journalist living in Tāmaki Makaurau who loves Jesus and is usually enthusiastic.

Reviews

To Love This Earthly Life: Pathways through Ecclesiastes

By Michael Casey
Published by Orbis Books, 2021. (USD 24)
Reviewed by Kathleen Rushton

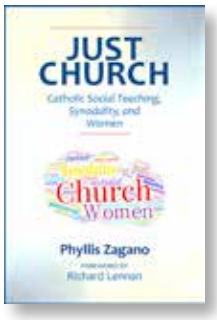


I highly recommend this accessible, 153-page book which invites us, through wondering contemplation, to take pathways through the puzzling Book of Ecclesiastes to celebrate what we do not know about God. Chapters entitled "Vanity," "God," "Wisdom," "Time," "Hard Times," "Good Times" and "Carpe Diem" guide today's searchers to fully love and live this present earthly life. A method of seeing, reflecting, judging and then speaking in the middle of the ambiguity of delighting in beauty and encountering negativity leads to understanding that happiness and pain are an integral part of human experience. God who seems absent is found in human experience. Qoheleth, the preacher, is addressing his contemporaries in about 250 BCE, however, his knack of deconstruction and asking questions speaks to our generation.

While Casey uses the 1562 Geneva translation of Ecclesiastes to slow down the reader in order to ponder its implications and as reminder of the inherent foreignness of the text, I found the frequency of its non-inclusive language jarring. That said, for me, as Casey exhorts, reading Ecclesiastes with its text (I recommend NRSV), the text of his book and the text of life leads us to explore, live and love this earthly life. ★

Just Church: Catholic Social Teaching, Synodality and Women

By Phyllis Zagano
Published by Paulist Press, 2023. (USD 18)
Reviewed by Gerard Aynsley



Just Church is brief and well worth the read. Zagano asks: "Catholic Social Teaching is specific in its tenets, as is the concept of synodality as recovered by Vatican II. Where does the confluence of these two rivers of Church teaching and thought leave women?" This question sums up Zagano's book well.

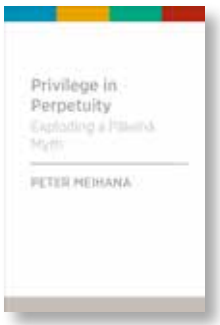
Chapter One considers the Catholic social teaching river and advises how the seven key themes need to be applied inside the Church as much as outside. Chapter Two introduces the second river outlining recent synods leading to the current synod on synodality and how each of these presents an inclusive vision of Church.

The third chapter centres on Zagano's key question: "Where does all this leave women in the Church?"; noting the complex and often unjust place women have in the Church. The final chapter sees the convergence of the two rivers.

It is a timely publication. Anyone who participated in the recent synod, and who hopes for a more authentic Church, will be encouraged and emboldened by Zagano's insights. Those responsible for implementing the aspirations expressed in the synod have a challenge presented to them. ★

Privilege in Perpetuity: Exploding a Pākehā Myth

By Peter Meihana
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2023. (NZD 18)
Reviewed by Jordan Riddell



Peter Meihana's *Privilege in Perpetuity* explores the power imbalance between Māori and Pākehā and dismantles the historic misconception of "Māori privilege". Meihana argues that the current perception of Māori privilege is deeply linked to its roots in the emergence of humanitarianism and colonisation during the 18th and 19th centuries, resulting in a paradox where Māori were only privileged because it was politically convenient. He suggests that "Pākehā privilege" would be a more accurate term than "Māori privilege".

This book is an interesting, refreshing and thought-provoking read. Meihana's turn of phrase is elegant and coherent, although he doesn't shy away from sociological and political jargon (it definitely expanded my vocabulary). But this can be expected from a PhD thesis in book form.

I come from both Māori and Pākehā families, so Meihana's heavily-researched perspectives on privilege in Aotearoa was especially stimulating for me. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in examining the true meaning and significance of privilege and gaining a wider understanding of the social and political relationships between Māori and Pākehā. ★

Reviews

My Octopus Teacher

Directed by James Reed and Pippa Ehrlich
Available on Netflix
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

ONE OF THE benefits of being a wildlife photographer is getting close up and personal with the natural world. Over the last few months, I've been following the progress of a female ngirungiru (South Island tomtit) at Orokonui Ecosanctuary near my home in Dunedin. I have been privileged to photograph her feeding, hunting, calling, even playing as a fledgling. Now when I enter her territory, she often comes out to greet me.

When I mention this project to people, they will often say, "Have you seen *My Octopus Teacher*?" So, needing a film to review, I sat down to watch it on Netflix.

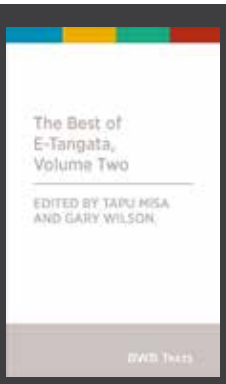
Brought up on the Western Cape in South Africa, spending summers in a bach on the edge of the ocean fossicking among the rockpools, filmmaker Craig Foster returns to his childhood haven to recover from work-induced burnout. His therapeutic project takes him on a daily swim in the coastal kelp forest, tracking a female common octopus. To help him bond with the undersea world, he dives without an air tank or wetsuit.

The film he makes — each take limited by a single lungful of air — not only reveals a magical underwater world, full of exotic creatures, constant dramas and brilliant colours, but charts his developing relationship with his animal companion. She becomes curious about her human visitor, but remains wary. When on Day 26 she reaches out a tentacle to caress Craig's hand and explore it with her suckers, we scarcely dare to believe what we are witnessing.

In what follows, Craig develops a close relationship with his "octopus teacher", following her movements as she hunts crabs and lobsters while herself avoiding predation by packs of stripey pyjama sharks. We are given an intimate portrait of this beautiful creature which is able to transform its body into a myriad forms and hues. Formidably intelligent, she uses complex strategies to hunt prey or escape danger in an instant.

Survival in the undersea forest is always poised on a knife edge, and Craig manages to be present with his camera at critical moments. As he notes, he has learned to think like an octopus.

Not only does *My Octopus Teacher* present some of the finest natural history footage you'll ever see, including numerous adrenalin-pumping chases through the kelp forest, but the human protagonist offers us a glimpse into an unfamiliar natural realm where the stresses of the surface world dissolve and communion with the nonhuman creatures that share this planet with us can become a reality. ★



The Best of e-Tangata, Volume Two

Edited by Tapu Misa and Gary Wilson
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2022. (NZD 18)
Reviewed by Margie Johnson

This book of 16 short stories and interviews is a commentary on racism, disenfranchisement, mental health struggles and suicide, land courts, single motherhood, whānau dynamics and upbringing.

Some of my favourites include an interview with Justice Joe Williams — I could feel his humility and mana. His perspective is enlightening and optimistic although he says it's "realistic, stuff is changing". There is an evocatively written piece by Becky Manawatu about a beloved cousin who died as a young child in family violence. Joanna Kidman captures the time and feelings of young, single mothers during the 80s. Emmaline Pickering-Martin and Patrick Thompson chronicle the mental health journey of youth and how hard it is for them to access help and support especially when they're studying overseas.

Andrew Robb writes a commentary on his friend Huirangi Waikerepuru's long, hard fight to have te reo Māori broadcasting.

Dale Husband interviews Professor Rangi Matamua, who was the driving force behind Matariki becoming a public holiday.

I could comment on all the stories but I'll leave them to you to discover. *The Best of e-Tangata* is an inspiring "small book on big subjects". I thoroughly enjoyed it and wanted more. I'm confident you will too. ★

Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins

UNEQUAL SOCIETIES ARE unhappy societies. The more unequal they are, the worse they perform in a host of areas including life expectancy, infant mortality, mental illness, addiction, imprisonment, literacy and numeracy, and trust. We know this from hard data presented in the pioneering work, The Spirit Level, by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, and in hundreds of subsequent peer-reviewed studies.

Aoteaora New Zealand's own path into high levels of economic inequality accelerated under Rogernomics in the 1980s. Now, the Inland Revenue Department's High Wealth Individuals Research Project Report, released In April, tells us emphatically that we are continuing on this path.

This report found that the wealthiest New Zealanders pay an effective tax rate less than half the rate paid by New Zealanders with middling levels of wealth. And it's all legal. That's largely because we don't tax increases in the value of businesses, properties and financial portfolios, where much of the wealth of this group arises. We don't tax capital gains.

We are unusual in this. Many countries that we compare ourselves with do have a capital gains tax. But every time this issue is raised here, there is a great outcry from those who would have to pay, and the matter is tucked away for later.

But this is an immensely important driver of inequality in our country. Our tax system is fundamentally unfair because of it.

Systems of inequality are not self-correcting. In fact, they are self-reinforcing. If we don't act, inequality here will grow.

The good news is, we can act. As citizens we can make our concerns known to MPs and we can raise the issue through the many communication tools available to us. As Church, we can organise in our parishes to educate and lobby, call on our Bishops Conference to speak, and support our diocesan Justice and Peace Commissions.

For example, the Auckland Diocesan Justice and Peace Commision recently made a submission to the Auckland Council on its proposed budget cuts. It expresses concern about suggested cuts to homelessness initiatives and notes that the proposed cuts are weighted heavily towards programmes that support vulnerable people. The cuts include stopping Council grants for the Citizens' Advice Bureau and reducing funding for community-focused initiatives, including community gardens and the development of groups working with Māori, Pasifika, youth, refugee, new migrant and rainbow communities. The submission notes that "cost-saving options excluded consideration of options that affect more well-off members of the community, such as repurposing some of the 13 Council-owned golf courses valued at $2.9 billion."

Sometimes, when people organise and speak out, change does come. For example, in April the Environment Court made a pivotal ruling against a new opencast coal mine on a mountaintop at Te Kuha on the West Coast. This pristine environment is home to the country's rarest butterfly, the forest ringlet, as well as to roroa (the great spotted kiwi) and many other native species threatened with extinction. It was a long haul to get to this ruling: Forest and Bird, which pursued the case, supported by the Coal Action Network, had been in the courts since 2017, funded not by the public purse, but by people concerned about climate change and biodiversity loss. This is good news for the planet and a great example of ordinary people making change.

TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

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

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

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Letters to the Editor

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.

Opinions in letters are not necessarily those of the Magazine.

CO-GOVERNMENT DIFFERENT FROM CO-GOVERNANCE?

There is an error in the article "Should We Be Afraid of Co-governance?" by Susan Healy (*TM* April 2023). I heard Chris Finlayson and Maui Solomon interviewed at the 2022 Auckland Writers' Festival. Finlayson was clear "that co-governance is not co-government". Susan's article employs a banner using "co-governance" and from then on she uses the term "co-government". I believe the article will confuse readers and contribute to the unease surrounding the issue. The Gordon Campbell opinion piece in the *Nor-West News* (2 Feb 2023) "Finlayson's case for co-governance" suggests that "the notion of joint stewardship" is what is inherent in co-governance which, if we have the terminology correct, is a useful way to understand the concept. It would be useful to explore with Healy, Finlayson and others the difference between "co-governance" and "co-government".

Tony Silvester-Clark

Response for Clarification

Thank you this feedback. At the time I started writing the article, some key politicians and others were using "co-government" a good deal and the article was a response to that. Now, the word "co-governance" is being used commonly, I have asked *Tui Motu* to republish the article (on the web) using that term. The key point in my article is that "it is still the desire of Māori leaders and their communities that the relationship with Government authorities is one where their mana is recognised and respected, and working together is based on real co-operation, mutual support and reciprocity — not just token consultation". This lies at the heart of the Treaty relationship and connects to the global issue of what is needed from states to address the effects of colonisation and build just relationships with indigenous peoples.

Susan Healy, Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland

Recommended reading in *e-Tangata*:
www.tinyurl.com/4jbmyfj4

Reviews

Kāinga Tahi, Kāinga Rua: Māori Housing Realities and Aspirations

Edited by Fiona Cram, Jessica Hutchings and Jo Smith
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2022. (NZD 40)
Reviewed by James Molnar

Kāinga Tahi, Kāinga Rua is a collaborative effort that brings together a range of voices and perspectives from Māori community leaders, academic researchers and government officials, offering a comprehensive view of Māori housing in New Zealand.

The book highlights the benefits of community-led housing initiatives, which prioritise community ownership and involvement in housing design and development. Such initiatives can ensure that housing is sustainable in the long term. The book also looks at the legacy of colonisation and its impact on Māori housing.

Overall, *Kainga Tahi, Kainga Rua* offers insights into the challenges and aspirations of Māori communities in the housing sphere. The book's interdisciplinary approach, combining personal stories, academic research and policy analysis, offers a comprehensive understanding of Māori housing in New Zealand.

My family lived in Porirua but I knew that wasn't where my Māori ancestry was from. It always felt like it was only one part of me, while the rest came from where our whakapapa resided in the Manawatū and Heretaunga Pōrangahau. Reading this book made me realise how disconnected I had been from my original home. A big part of knowing myself, was learning whakairo and working with extended whānau on the marae and waka. This book will appeal to people who are interested in the interplay between indigenous culture, identity and housing. ★

For What It's Worth

I'VE HAD THE opportunity recently to reflect on life and living and how I might do better. I had a couple of days' retreat at a tiny cottage above Dunedin's Port Chalmers armed with food, three books and an intention to spend time in prayer. Rising early to catch the misty dawn, looking at bush, really looking, following the antics of various birds and listening to my breath. There's a lot to do on a retreat; a lot to think about. Engaging in a tussle with my brain about the unknowable, facing the impossible and staring down the unthinkable.

It was a welcome distraction to turn to the three books I'd brought along. The first, *The Book of Joy* was a wonderfully engaging conversation between Archbishop Desmond Tutu and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. That's what I'd like to embrace I thought as I read "untethered by the ruminating memories of the past and not lured by the anticipatory worry about the future."

To live in the moment, to be kind and to practise gratitude — these are simple concepts which cross any religious borders. But what seems simple is really quite profound.

And that is what I discovered as I turned to the second book, *When I Talk to You*, by Australian cartoonist Michael Leunig. Leunig was asked by a newspaper editor to draw a weekly cartoon — instead he wrote a prayer accompanied by his signature man and a duck motif. The prayers are simple: "God give us rain when we expect sun, Give us music when we expect trouble". They reminded me again of the joy there is in simplicity. When my life gets complicated with things beyond my control, I need the sustenance of a Leunig prayer, giving thanks for "the invention of the wheelbarrow and the existence of the teapot". They are real and true with an honesty that is touching.

The third book, *Let Your Life Speak*, was by an author I've returned to again and again, partly because I admire his honest recounting of his dark days of depression. Not all Christian writers are willing to go there in such a public way with their struggles. But Parker J Palmer uses depression as a springboard to dive deep into his own search for selfhood. He writes: "Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you." *Let Your Life Speak* is subtitled *Listening for the Voice of Vocation* and, while at 71 I am hardly in the market to start reflecting on my vocation, I found much wisdom in his emphasis as a Quaker on inner simplicity and the paradox that is life.

My dear friend Father Michael Hill had recommended a book to me when we last met and I managed to find a second-hand copy online. But *Sister Wendy On Prayer* arrived on the day of my return from retreat — too late for my stay in the cottage, it is a treat to look forward to.

I used to find that a rare retreat or weekend away from the children when they were young was so refreshing. It would strengthen my resolve to return as a kinder, more patient mother. That never lasted long. Life poked holes in my intent, just as it has now I'm home. But that's the thing, isn't it? Life gets in the way of our good intentions.

Rosemary Riddell lives in Oturehua, Otago. She is the author of *To Be Fair: Confessions of a District Court Judge* (2022).

Our last word

Be blessed with insight to find ways of hospitality which unite and share, leaving no one out.

From the *Tui Motu* Team