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Tui Motu

InterIslands

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JUBILEE YEAR 2025
SUSAN SMITH, JANE HIGGINS

WORK OF HOPE
HELEN BOWEN, COLETTE BLOCKLEY,
MAKARETA TAWAROA, ZAIN & MAYA ALI

SYNODALITY IN AOTEAROA
BRENDAN DALY

NEW COLUMNIST
OAK JONES

Being Pilgrims of Hope
He Manene Tūmanako

INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC MAGAZINE

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- Together as Pilgrims of Hope** 4
Susan Smith
- "Love Youse!" A Success Cry** 6
Helen Bowen
- South Sudan: Forgotten by the World** 8
Colette Blockley
- The Treaty Unites Us in Aotearoa** 10
Makareta Tawarua
- Remember, Imagine and Act in Hope** 12
Zain and Maya Ali
- Implementing Synodality in Aotearoa** 14
Brendan Daly
- Catholic Church and Trump's Second Term** 18
Massimo Faggioli
- Walking the Camino de Santiago: Our Start** 20
Barbara Henley

SCRIPTURE

- The Sermon on the Plain** 22
Kathleen Rushton

COMMENT

- Editorial** 2
Ann Gilroy

COLUMNS

- Acceptance and Change** 3
Clare Curran
- Know Our History** 24
Patrick Snedden
- For What It's Worth** 25
Rosemary Riddell
- Grappling with Conflicting Values** 26
Oak Jones
- Cross Currents** 29
Jane Higgins

REFLECTION

- Soul Space** 16
Anne Powell

REVIEWS

- Book Reviews** 27
- Film Review** 28

LETTERS

- Letters to the Editor** 31



COVER PHOTO

Pilgrims walking the Camino de Santiago.

FSC

OUR NAME *Tui Motu InterIslands*

Tui Motu is te reo Māori (Māori language) meaning "stitching the islands together". We pronounce it: to-ee maw-to.



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Editorial

WE CAN TICK off our first new year's resolution with this 300th issue of *Tui Motu*. We've taken a leaf from the Jubilee Year and explored how to be pilgrims of hope. The 300th issue is cause for an early celebration in a year where storms are brewing at home and abroad. In Aotearoa, despite the spectacular hīkoi protesting against the Treaty Principles Bill, Prime Minister Luxon has said he will not be at Waitangi for our national day this year. His decision is hard to reconcile with an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi's place in New Zealand democracy and his responsibility as leader to develop good relationships with the Treaty partners. Luxon has spent most of his working life away from New Zealand and so has missed out on the growth of bi-cultural relationships, not least the contribution of te reo Māori and tikanga in public and private life. But this is no excuse. In these hard financial times, Aotearoa needs leaders with vision for uplifting the spirit and well-being of all citizens, not just those who have enough, or more than their fair share.

It's worrying, too, for the ecological and social well-being of the world when governments espouse divisive, exclusionary approaches towards their own constituency and their dealings with other countries. The prominent lineup of billionaires at President Trump's inauguration witnessed to an uncritical faith in the power of money for fulfilling society's hopes. Such faith develops narcissistic leaders who have no interest in working on the complexity of community living within our planet.

By declaring 2025 a Jubilee Year, Pope Francis is encouraging the world to be critically alert to how populist opinion and power, often founded in untruth, revenge, ignorance and superiority, can drain our hope and courage. Francis uses the image of a pilgrimage — a faith journey over all sorts of terrain with all sorts of companions focused on how, walking together, we can increase unity in diversity, cooperation with our neighbours, acknowledgment of and making amends for our individual and institutional offences and promote healing, peace and participation for the common good. Traditionally, pilgrims were walkers. The pace and length of the journey gave plenty of time along the way for conversation, reflection, learning, reassessment and change before reaching the end and making a commitment to live in the new way.

This whole year is our opportunity to walk in synodality, drawing on the experience of one another, weighing decisions with the challenges of the Gospel, so that we become more committed to participating in God's dream for the world.

This 300th issue offers support for our journey. We thank all the contributors for sharing their scholarship, reflection, experience, art and craft. We're pleased to introduce our new columnist Oak Jones who will write bimonthly.

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



ACCEPTANCE & CHANGE

THE BEGINNING OF a new year always takes me some time to adjust to. Cynicism about new year resolutions aside, it's hard to resist the reflexive urge to reset and reflect on where I am at.

I still get asked a lot whether I miss being a member of parliament and what I think about various political happenings. The answer is always no, with the rider that I sometimes miss the work I did with constituents in the electorate, but I don't miss the Wellington political hubbub.

As to what I think about the political fray, whether in this country or elsewhere, I find it increasingly hard to engage in deep conversation about politics with people I don't know very well. I've been reflecting on why that is, concluding that I have deliberately, or otherwise, reduced my focus to the things I can control or have influence over.

Overexposure to toxic politics, alongside the rise and dominance of social media reckons by anyone and everyone in the public domain, have without a doubt led to my withdrawal from most public discourse (bar this column). I know I'm not alone as I see more evidence of people withdrawing from social media platforms.

The dilemma for an activist, such as myself, is how to play any meaningful role in progressing action on matters of social justice that don't require taking an overt public stand, which doesn't lead to frustration and angry helplessness through being unable to see change occur or, even, witness a worsening of circumstances.

As I write, fires continue to ravage Los Angeles and major weather events wrack parts of Europe. Donald Trump is, again, about to be inaugurated as US President as anxiety swells inside and outside the US regarding his agenda. Intractable divisions between Palestine and Israel continue.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the minority ACT Party led by David Seymour is using the Treaty Principles Bill to crack

open a nasty divisive debate, reinterpreting and weakening Te Tiriti o Waitangi and widening social division, ultimately legitimising racism. On its heels is the Regulatory Standards Bill seeking to establish principles for creating laws and regulations in New Zealand, yet failing to honour Te Tiriti. An utter travesty. Meanwhile, actual social and economic inequality deepens as policy settings increasingly favour those with money and influence.

This is but the tip of the iceberg in a world where anxiety disorders multiply, especially among the young.

My day job is now in mental health. In that world there is recognition that life is often full of challenging and painful situations, which are sometimes unavoidable and out of our control. While it's normal to feel anxious when dealing with difficult or stressful situations, instead of becoming overwhelmed, learning to practice radical acceptance reduces the risk that this pain turns into lasting suffering.

The more I look into radical acceptance the more I think there is valuable resonance for those of us trying to live our lives in a constant state of anxiety about the world. Radical acceptance is most often applied in situations when someone is unable to fix or change what has happened or when something has happened that feels unfair — such as losing a loved one or a job.

Grief and disappointment are normal emotions. However, prolonged suffering can result from a lack of acceptance.

Radical acceptance does not mean agreeing with what is happening or has happened to us. Rather, it enables a chance for hope through acceptance of things as they are.

None of this is easy. It certainly does not mean we pull up the covers and avoid interaction with the world or abrogate responsibility for taking a stand, exercising our vote, or standing up for a set of values. Radical, or rather intentional acceptance, is an option to allow ourselves some space.

I am reminded of a quote read long ago from the Serenity Prayer attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr: "to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Perhaps this is a message for 2025. ♦

Dancers 4 by Inge du Plessis © Used with permission
www.ingeduplessis.com Instagram: @ingeartist

Clare Curran, former politician, is a member of the University of Otago Council, and a committed advocate and representative on social justice issues.





TOGETHER AS PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Susan Smith discusses possibilities for the Church if we act together for ecological and social justice as pilgrims in this jubilee year.

ON CHRISTMAS DAY a dear friend died. A committed Catholic, she, like others of us who had grown up in a pre-Vatican II Church in Aotearoa, was excited by the promises that Vatican II meant for many of us. Could there be movement beyond an institutional Church, for centuries committed to patriarchal and hierarchical structures? Could the long-needed acknowledgement that our call to mission flowed from Baptism be realised for lay people? Could the institutional church move beyond the mandate of Vatican I (1870) that required condemnation of a free press, or democratic processes?

Being a Pilgrim People

Vatican II invited us as a pilgrim

people towards a new relationship with the society in which we lived. In 1965, the Council's "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" reminded us that "the joys and the hopes, the griefs, and the anxieties of humankind of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts" (*Gaudium et Spes*, par 1).

Disciples of Jesus — lay, religious, ordained — were to be in solidarity with those who were poor and oppressed as they struggled to build a more just society. Pope Paul

VI's 1967 encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*, identified the ever-growing economic disparities between and within nations, and between different classes, as something that required us to be in solidarity with the victims of social injustice.

Being in Solidarity

In 1971, the Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome stated that "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel" (*Iustitia in Mundo*). This action and participation involved many of us. Involvement could mean:

- demonstrating against rugby matches

with apartheid South Africa;

- moving out of highly-regarded secondary schools to live and minister in deprived neighbourhoods;
- learning more about the history of colonisation in Aotearoa, and its impact on Māori;
- speaking out against the poor housing to which increasing numbers were condemned;
- advocating for those who were voiceless in distant countries, eg, Filipinos oppressed by the dictatorial government of Ferdinand Marcos from 1972-1986.

Church Focus Turned Backwards

My friend was one of those Catholics who responded to the Vatican II challenge to be active on behalf of justice — and to work for the transformation of the world. She was not alone in this as others felt excited and exhilarated by the possibility of change in the institutional Church and in the wider community, as we worked with others for a more just world.

But it is some time now since we experienced such feelings of hope and excitement. There are different reasons for this — our own old age, physical frailty, vulnerability, or a certain disenchantment with Church leadership here in Aotearoa. In some instances, dear friends have voted with their feet and moved away from the institutional Church. What has sometimes been identified as the “creeping restorationism” of both Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI did not help. Although both popes authored encyclicals critical of capitalism and the consumerism it spawned, both were highly critical of liberation theology.

New Impetus of Spirit

And then Francis burst upon the church scene and more importantly on the world scene. I recall neighbours with no church connections whatsoever calling on us in 2015 to tell us how excited they were by *Laudato Si'*. They were not alone in this — we were all challenged by Francis's words.

Then came the 2023 and 2024

synodal meetings. A wonderful idea but ... I think that the jury is still out on the synod. Although Francis endeavoured to ensure it was representative of the whole Church, photos from the synod showed the dominance of bishops. And women deacons were a no no.

What We Can Do Together

Pope Francis has declared 2025 as a year of Jubilee with the theme “Pilgrims of Hope”, demonstrating his desire to foster a greater sense of global sisterhood and brotherhood, solidarity with the poor, and care of the environment. This is heartening indeed. We could contribute by:

- involvement with those committed to reducing the ever-growing gap between rich and poor in our society. A practical step that parishes could take would be advocacy for a living wage rather than a minimum wage;
- working to resolve the housing crisis that confronts so many people today;
- entering positively into conversations/debates with others about race relations in Aotearoa today, and rejecting the individualistic and libertarian ideologies that seem to drive some political initiatives around Māori.

How We Can Practice Synodality

We can think, too, about how we can be pilgrims of hope in a Church that sometimes seems committed to reversing some of the wonderful changes initiated by Vatican II. We can ask:

- what about homilies that address some of the social and environmental issues facing us today?
- what about exploring the possibility of solar panels for heating and lighting our churches?
- what about church leaders inviting parishes to share what they see as

the way forward at a time when Pākehā numbers are diminishing while migrant communities are enjoying extraordinary growth?

Francis tells us: “The coming Jubilee will thus be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God. May it help us to recover the confident trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation. May the witness of believers be for our world a leaven of authentic hope, a harbinger of new heavens and a new earth (cf. 2 Pet 3:13), where men and women will dwell in justice and harmony, in joyful expectation of the fulfilment of the Lord's promises.”

And I love this text attributed to another famous but also often misunderstood Jesuit, Teilhard de Chardin: “Be gentle with yourself for you are living through a major expansion of your faith and how you use it in the world. You are rewiring decades of old beliefs and shifting how you live your life. This is no small feat. It is OK to feel uncomfortable. Great change often brings with it discomfort and second-guessing one's self. Do not shrink back from this mission. Not now.”

Being Pilgrims of Hope

Our challenge is to move forward in hope into this new year. The words of Francis and Teilhard need to be made flesh in our lives so that God's promises are realised for all creation. The bishops' words from 1971 are as needed today as they were then: “Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel.” ◀

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross by Sieger Köder. From stained glass window in chapel in Jesuit cemetery, Pullach, Germany. Photo by Zvonimir Atletic/Shutterstock.com

Susan Smith RNDM lives in Northland. She has researched and written on mission and has authored books on missiology as well as editing *Zeal for Mission: The Story of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions 1861-2011*.





“Love Youse!” A Success Cry

Helen Bowen reflects on working as a defence lawyer in the specialist Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Court — an alternative system to prison for offenders with addictions.

WHERE ELSE IN the world would you hear the words: “Love youse!” from an offender/whaiora as he leaves the drug court? For some years now this has become familiar to many of us involved in the Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Court.

For the past 12 years Te Whare Whakapiki Wairua, the Alcohol and other Drug Treatment (AODT) Court has been in operation in Auckland and Waitākere, and since 2021 in Kirikiriroa/Hamilton. The name “Te Whare Whakapiki

Wairua/the house that uplifts the spirit”, was gifted by Tā/Sir Pita Sharples.

The courts provide an evidence-based best practice treatment pathway for whaiora that includes intensive monitoring, case management, drug testing and mentoring. It aims to break the cycle of offending which is driven by addiction and is an alternative to an immediate prison sentence.

Sentencing is deferred while whaiora work through their treatment programme with a view to an intensive monitoring sentence at the conclusion of their time in the AODT. It usually takes a total of three years.

Cultural and Spiritual Well-Being

One of the most important supports of the AODT is the role of Pou Oranga, a Māori spiritual leader who guides participants in tikanga/customary system of values and practices and acts as an intermediary between the court (law) and Māori spiritual lore. As Pou Oranga Matua Rawiri said: “The AODC’s focus is about well-being, is about treatment to get well. You know, addiction lives in disconnect. Recovery lives in connections, reconnecting with whānau, reconnecting with hapū and reconnecting with iwi.”

I am a lawyer in the AODT Court now and I first encountered the power of karakia/ritual chant or prayer in the Youth Court in 1989. I found that karakia provides us with a break in the daily proceedings and is a gift — a reminder to dedicate our time and to focus on the young person without interruption.

Karakia is said at the beginning and end of the family group conference. I have witnessed rangatahi/young persons soften in the presence of karakia and become open to hearing about the harm they have caused. They seem better able to face the consequences in the presence of whānau and victims after karakia.

Similarly in the AODT Court we have daily karakia and waiata/song gifted by Rawiri Pene.

We open with the karakia:

E te Atua
Ko koe te timatanga
O nga mea katoa
Aroha mai ki a matou
Mo enei mahi katoa I tenei
Ake ake Amene.

To the Creator
You are the beginning
of all things seen and unseen.
Keep us in your caring embrace
in all that we do this day
and forever, Amen.

And we close with the waiata:

Kia tau te rangimarie
Ki tenei Whare Whakapiki Wairua
Kia piki te kah
Kia piki te ora
Kia piki te maramatanga
Haumi e, hui e, taiki e
Let there be peace
in this house that uplifts the spirit
Uplifting in strength
Uplifting in wisdom
Uplifting in well-being
Gather, unite, it is done!

Collaboration to Support Recovery

I'm emphasising the role of the Pou Oranga and of karakia at the beginning and conclusion of the day because I have experienced the courtroom in a different and more positive way, as a result. The respect for tikanga and Māori in these rituals opens the potential for healing and respect for the journey of our whaiora. I've found it is a courtroom experience like no other.

We also start our pre-court discussions with whakawhanaungatanga/establishing of relationships, where each member of the team — police, lawyers, peer support workers, probation officers, clinical case managers and the judge — describes their current state of mind. This coming together after karakia and waiata feels like a natural next step for collaborating well as a team. It brings us together in the spirit of good will.

The Power of Hope

I love my job as a drug court lawyer for many reasons but mostly because I get to share the journey of those in recovery. As a team, we walk alongside whaiora and we learn so much about ourselves in the process. Most importantly, we hear how grateful whaiora are to know that we care about them. Sometimes it is their first experience of personal support and care.

I have learned, also, that we are all in recovery from something and that we are never too old to learn. I have learned so much about myself in the journeying with others. I'm learning to challenge my internal biases, my laziness and my lack of transparency. These are all mechanisms that may have kept me strong in the advocate role, but have also been obstacles to healthy, transparent communication with my clients.

I've been challenged about mutuality. If we demand open, honest and transparent communication from our whaiora, we have a duty to reciprocate.

Connection and Relationships Transform

I have witnessed absolute transformation of whaiora who entered the court completely broken. Their past inevitably included abuse, disconnection and neglect.

I have seen children rediscover their dads, mothers reunite with their sons and sons get to know the children they may have never met before.

And emotions are part of court proceedings. Tears flow, shame is acknowledged, disappointment is admitted,

sorrow is expressed, hope is felt. We celebrate the joy of whaiora slowly building trust and rediscovering their self, hidden deep within.

A Long, Painful Journey

It pains me when my whaiora slip up — and they do. That's why they are in drug court. They are the cohort considered to be in the "too hard" basket and they need the support of the drug court.

It is not an easy ride. The grip of addiction is an extreme force in their lives, greater than one person can overcome alone.

So we walk alongside our whaiora to help share the load and reduce the pressure of wanting to use.

Whaiora learn to share their lives with others in recovery. The strength they gain from connection is a force that grows to withstand their need to use. Watching whaiora grow in this strength is witnessing a miracle.

Connection is the opposite of addiction and so whaiora must gather and maintain good, sober friends as well as their sponsor. The 12-step community provides immense support and anyone is welcome to join.

I've seen whaiora develop a warmth towards the "God of their understanding". And as they develop security in understanding a power greater than themselves, the longer they are able to stay clean and sober.

I am in awe of their bravery, the sheer courage and the determination of all concerned each time I am in court.

It's about hope and love. Our whaiora, like ourselves, don't know if they will make it — all we can do is hold the hope that they have the strength to hold their own. And we witness their recovery as it grows.

It is pure joy and the best therapeutic work I have experienced. For this I am grateful. Singing together Te Whare Whakapiki Wairua Court waiata at the beginning and the end of each court day uplifts our spirits and keeps us hopeful.

Kia tu tika — whakapono — te aroha
Te Atua — hei oranga — te tangata
Kia kaha — kia toa — manawanui
Te whare whakapiki wairua
Kia kaha — kia maia — manawanu
Te whare whakapiki wairua
Tau ana

Stand upright in truth and love
God is restoring humankind.
Be strong, be courageous, stouthearted
in this house that uplifts the spirits.
Be strong, be brave, stouthearted
in this house that uplifts the spirit
It is settled. ✦

For further info: www.tinyurl.com/yva7j3ax

As well as the above, **Helen Bowen** is a trustee of Hei Tatu Pounamu (Tikanga-led Post-sentence Restorative Justice), and on the Global Advisory Committee of Restorative Justice International.





South Sudan: Forgotten by the World

Colette Blockley *writes about her experience as a volunteer in war-torn South Sudan.*

SOUTH SUDAN HAS been embroiled in a nasty civil war since 2013. The two political leaders are from opposing tribes. They cannot agree on anything of importance and sadly, their presence is lacking. I first volunteered with Solidarity with South Sudan in 2015, teaching nurses and midwives in the classroom and at the local hospital in the country's second largest city, Wau. Last year I spent from July to October there.

Since my children became independent, I have had opportunities to volunteer in Kolkata at Mother Teresa's Home for the Dying Destitute, in Chile at a mobile clinic in a Santiago slum, at an AIDS hospice in Edinburgh and an orphanage for children with AIDS in rural Thailand. But South Sudan was my most challenging mission.

Situation in South Sudan

A snapshot from the South Sudan 2022 statistics portrays the grim situation:

- 7 million of the 12 million people go hungry every day.
- Only 46 per cent of children go to school. Out of 123 countries, South Sudan ranks second-to-last

for providing primary school education and last for providing secondary education.

- Due to the war, 65 per cent of the population are women. 92 per cent of the women are illiterate.
- 38 per cent of adults are illiterate, one of highest rates in the world.
- 37 per cent of primary school children are girls but only 27 per cent of secondary school students.
- 42 per cent of girls are married between the ages of 15-18 and 7 per cent of girls are married under the age of 15.
- The country has the highest maternal and child death rates in the world.
- 78 per cent of the police are illiterate. Because many are not paid regularly, they are open to bribes in order to support their families.
- There are 64 tribes in the country. The majority, 6-7 million people, are Dinka and within the Dinka there are 25 clans, many of whom are fighting one another.
- The life expectancy is 47 years.



Health Education and Training

Solidarity with South Sudan is a Catholic organisation whose mission is to empower the people to be independent by training teachers, nurses and midwives. Solidarity with South Sudan also offer trauma healing workshops for those severely affected by the war and provide education on basic agricultural practices. Many of the population are third generation refugees and so farming practices, previously handed down over generations, have been lost.

As a nurse and teacher, I lived and worked with five sisters and one priest from various religious congregations in the Catholic Health Training Institute. I was the only lay person. We lived in a convent on a 60-acre compound, guarded 24/7 by armed guards. The students lived in dormitories on the compound which also contained the school and the administration block.

The nursing and midwifery students come from all over South Sudan and for the three years of their education, they live on the compound. Three quarters of the students are men (many girls are not educated to the standard required to be accepted for training).

During both missions, I was amazed by the dedication of the students, many of whom left their families for the three years of their training because they could not afford to go home during the semester breaks. English was the third language for all of them: their tribal language is their first language, Arabic is the most widely-spoken language and English is spoken by those lucky enough to go to school.

Scale of Deprivation

I often despaired as I wandered the wards of the Comboni Hospital, at the seemingly hopeless plight of so many. Hundreds of people lined up patiently, waiting to be seen at the Outpatient Clinic or Emergency Department. If they couldn't be seen on the day, they would sleep in the hospital compound overnight, risking being bitten by the ever-present mosquitos carrying malaria, and the snakes. They had often walked a long way from distant villages for treatment. Vultures loom close by, waiting for morsels of food.

Malaria is rampant and is the highest cause of death. I acquired malaria on both missions. I have never been so ill. The fatigue is debilitating. I remember thinking as I lay on my mosquito-net covered bed, that if my nightie caught fire, I wouldn't have the energy to move.

Malnutrition is rife and two wards were full of desperately sick children as a result of malnutrition.

Traditions Dangerous for Women

A wealthy man is a man with many cows, many children and, lastly, many wives. Women are very much third-class citizens. I met one man who had 14 wives and 67 children. Another 70-year-old man came to the clinic with his seventh wife, aged 19 years.

I met a woman who was pregnant with her 15th child. When I asked her when she was going to stop having babies, she exclaimed that she wanted 20 children.

Because I am white, I was a kidnap risk in the war-

ravaged country. When I travelled from the compound to the hospital, an armed guard as well as a driver were present at all times. An interpreter was also present when I was at the hospital because I am not fluent in Arabic. The people are so desperate that crime is a way of surviving.

God Is There

As I worked with students in the wards at the Comboni Hospital, visited the sick with Sister Bibiana at the leper colony and witnessed the extreme poverty wherever I went, I initially questioned: "Where is God here?"

I remember an article by Elizabeth Julian about the Irish concept of "thin places" — the boundaries between heaven and earth being so permeable that God seeps through. She says: "No matter how unlikely or horrifying the place, God can break through anywhere."

South Sudan needs the attention, compassion and resources of the global community to survive.

Despite the terrible suffering in South Sudan, God is present — in the sisters who provide education and health care, in the priest who was also a teacher and provided spiritual care to the students, in the students, in the mothers with their children, in everyone and everywhere. God is especially present in those who are suffering.

It was tough! I was sustained by living with the sisters, attending daily Mass and participating in the Prayer of the Church. The heat and humidity is oppressive. War and climate change have ravaged the country. I noticed a huge difference from 2016 to 2024. The people are disillusioned because the war has continued for so long and no help is available from the politicians. Refugees filtering in from the Sudan are creating more famine and subsequent crime.

It Is Tough to Keep Hope Alive

Is there hope for South Sudan? At this point, without the missionaries and the intervention of the global community, I don't believe so. Solidarity with South Sudan intends to withdraw slowly over 10 years and hand over to suitably trained people. However, many of the nurses and midwives travel to Kenya or Uganda where they can earn more money to help their families. South Sudan needs the attention, compassion and resources of the global community to survive. ✨

Please pray for South Sudan. Consider donating to the Catholic Health Training Institute of Solidarity with South Sudan.
www.solidaritysudan.org

Photo by Richard Juilliant / Shutterstock.com

Colette Blockley is a mother and grandmother and the author of *The How and Why of Surviving a Poor Prognosis Cancer* (2024). She runs a private practice providing professional supervision.





THE TREATY *UNITES US* IN AOTEAROA

Makareta Tawaroa describes how Māori iwi and supporters joined the hikoi to Parliament calling for unity in Aotearoa and for respect of their rights and relationships as Tangata Whenua and Tiriti o Waitangi partners.

TE HĪKOI MŌ TE TIRITI was a defining moment in our history. From 10–19 November last year thousands of Māori and supporters marched from Northland to Wellington to protest the proposed Treaty Principles Bill which would redefine the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Māori, who co-signed Te Tiriti in 1840 on which our democracy in Aotearoa is built, had not been consulted about the Bill. Iwi from across the motu/country decided to rise and hikoi/march to Parliament in protest.

The collective experience of walking through Wellington to Parliament grounds with thousands of like-minded people carrying signs with slogans like “Ka whawhai tonu mātou, Toitū te Tiriti, Ake Ake/Commitment to fight for the land, culture and sovereignty of Māori people”, was an experience of a lifetime. Joy and unity were palpable as thousands chanted and sang with one voice flying high their rangatiratanga flags. They spilled

into streets surrounding Parliament, all the while observing cultural protocols as they watched stirring performances and listened to speeches by charismatic leaders. Then came the presentation of the petition with 200,000 signatures to the government.

Something profound was happening in Aotearoa. I am no stranger to protest but this hikoi was very different from my other experiences.

Springbok Tour 1981 — Against Apartheid

In 1981 I took part in protests against apartheid by opposing the South African Springbok rugby team's tour of Aotearoa. I remember the baton-wielding police of the Red Squad trying to stop our group from marching up Molesworth Street to the home of the South African Consul in Wellington. The Tour divided communities and families. While one of my sisters was protesting in

Whanganui, another sister was watching the Springboks play at a local rugby ground.

Pākaitore 1995 — Highlighting Grievances

I was among the Whanganui iwi who occupied Pakaitore for 79 days in 1995, protesting inaction over historical grievances. That protest had dark moments. We were threatened by police on a number of occasions but didn't panic. We were given the deadline to remove ourselves from the park by 31 March, but we left when we were ready on 18 May.

Foreshore and Seabed Hīkoi 2004 — Contesting Ownership

Then in May 2004 I drove to Wellington and met up with my niece Marama, a day before the Foreshore and Seabed Hīkoi reached the capital. We took her four tamariki/children with us to join the hīkoi. Joseph was 10, Manaaki 5, Te Au Maro 4 and Moetahi was just 5 months old. The hīkoi was about ownership of the foreshore and seabed around Aotearoa. The Crown thought they were the owners, while Māori groups believed they had a rightful claim to indigenous title, based on historical possession and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Something profound was happening in Aotearoa. I am no stranger to protest but this hīkoi was very different from my other experiences.

The late Kahurangi/Dame Tariana Turia, a Labour Party Member of Parliament at the time, listening to her conscience and the aspirations of the people she represented, voted against her party in government. Parliament ruled that the Crown held the title of ownership.

At that, Tariana left the Labour Party and created an independent Māori voice — Te Pāti Māori. In 2011 the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act was passed, giving no one outright ownership, but allowing Māori with existing rights and uses, such as fishing, aquaculture and public access, the right to continue.

Kaupapa of Te Kahu o Te Raukura

But the 2024 Hīkoi mō te Tiriti had a different feel and tone altogether. Taranaki Whānui chief executive Kara Puketapu-Dentice explained that part of its success was in the “laying down of Te Kahu o te Raukura [cloak of three feathers of aroha, peace and honour] to ensure the hīkoi was conducted in accordance with tikanga of peace, honour and goodwill ... This collective expression revealed the beauty of te ao Māori and the extraordinary power of kotahitanga — a unifying message carried forth to the nation by Te Arikini Kuini/Queen Nga Wai Hono I te Po”. All concerned in the hīkoi ensured that the mana/spiritual power of the kaupapa/intention of hīkoi was upheld with dignity and strength.”

Tangata Tiriti in Action

Support from Tangata Tiriti/People of the Treaty was strong as thousands of other New Zealanders supported the hīkoi. I was buoyed by comments I heard, like that from an Asian-New Zealander: “It is Te Tiriti that gives us the opportunity to live here and to belong and that belonging is like a reciprocal relationship with hapū and iwi Māori who have so generously opened their arms for us to live here.

“I’m a Tiriti facilitator, and usually people ask, why is Te Tiriti relevant to me? Why is this relevant to me ... I think it’s also just going back down to the basics and saying, actually, it’s an invitation for everybody.”

I read about a young man from Hastings saying: “As Tangata Tiriti we need to put our voices out there and make it clear that we are with tangata whenua ... if tangata Tiriti lent their voices of support to Māori, it would make a world of difference”.

Lise joined the hīkoi as it passed through Manawatū because “Pākehā must not be afraid to take a stand on Māori issues ... So many of these really important te ao Māori causes get shunted aside by Pākehā ... this affects all of us and we need to be there to support our whānau because Māori are our whānau and we are all part of Aotearoa.”

Michelle from Hamilton said: “The reason I am here today is really to encourage all Pākehā — all Tangata Tiriti, but mainly Pākehā in this country — to really learn our history.”

Te Whare o te Rangatiranga — Ways Forward

In early January this year, iwi leaders met at Omaha Marae in Hastings to discuss a proposed Te Whare o Te Rangatiranga, an assembly representing all Māori, to promote a collective response to government challenges without replicating parliament structures.

The concept is new and there is no decision, but as one member of the working group of the proposal said: “even if the model is far from perfect, Māori need a way to pool their power efficiently.”

In the meantime the Waitangi Tribunal submitted a 200-page interim report on the Treaty Principles Bill and made four recommendations.

- The abandonment of the Treaty Principles Bill policy.
- The Crown constitute a cabinet Māori-Crown relations committee to oversee the Crown’s te Tiriti policies.
- the Treaty clause review policy be put on hold while it is re-conceptualised through collaboration and co-design engagement with Māori.
- The Crown consider a process in partnership with Māori to undo the damage to the Māori-Crown relationship and restore confidence in the honour of the Crown.

Te Hīkoi mō te Tiriti was a powerful demonstration of unity and advocacy for Māori rights and it is crucial to keep the momentum going for the good of all people in Aotearoa. ✦

Makareta Tawaroa, Te Awa Tupua, lives in Whanganui. She is a Sister of St Joseph, Nanny (Auntie) and Community Worker for Nga Paerangi, Whanganui.





REMEMBER, IMAGINE & ACT IN HOPE

Father and daughter Zain and Maya Ali reflect on the effort needed to live in hope in these times.

I HOPE MY children do well at school. I hope that summer means many days of warm weather. I hope to go the beach and swim. I hope to be a good father. I hope that there will be peace in the Holy Land. I hope that I will do what is right by my parents as they head into their golden years. I hope to be true to myself and I hope that on the day when I am called to stand before God, there is forgiveness.

There are many elements to hope. Hope is an acknowledgement that some things are beyond our direct control, that there is no guarantee that what we wish or strive for will eventuate, and there is an underlying sense of optimism about what is possible.

Hope Lives in God

The Qur'an encourages believers to ground hope in God: "Do not lose hope in God's mercy, for God certainly forgives all sins" (Q 39: 53). God's mercy encompasses all things and it is never too late to turn toward God.

This verse seems to imply that a healthy faith is one that involves hope.

There is also a *hadith*, an anecdote, attributed to Muhammad: "When one of you calls upon God, let him hope for the greatest of things. Verily, nothing has any greatness over God."

At face value, this *hadith* invites us to be optimistic and it also gives us permission to hope for great things. God is great; why not hope for what is great? This form of hope may depend on circumstances. We can imagine a

person who hopes to meet someone good to fall in love with, or someone hoping to make a lasting contribution to their community, or hoping they can be at peace with the will of God and be of good character.

Reflecting on hope, Rumi, the great Sufi poet, writes: "Where there is ruin, there is hope for a treasure." This way of thinking about hope is enigmatic. How can there be hope where there is ruin?

Perhaps the message is about resilience. That when we face ruin, or failure, there is also an opportunity for a new start and to learn from our mistakes. To face ruin does not mean that everything is at an end. We may awaken to new possibilities.

Maya's Reflections

My daughter Maya also shares her understanding and experience of hope.

Hope is not linear. It doesn't sit neatly on a shelf waiting to be picked up when convenient. Instead it is as if it becomes fractured, reassembles and then grows further. Hope is defiance. It is not a passive wish wafting in silence but an active engagement with the world and its surroundings, no matter how broken it is.

Hope Can Live with Uncertainty

I think of hope as paradoxical — both fragile and unyielding. A weed emerging from cracked concrete seems fragile yet it displays the strength of a thousand weeds, forcing its way towards the light. The same is true for us.

When I think of people displaced by war, forced to leave behind their homes, cultures and histories, I wonder how hope persists in those places. Perhaps it's because hope thrives in its smallest forms. A whispered prayer in a collapsing building. A family holding hands at a border. A stranger offering bread when they barely have enough themselves.

It's in the stubbornness of a refugee planting a garden in a barren camp, knowing they may never see it bloom.

It's a father reading bedtime stories to his child in a war zone, his voice steady, as though tomorrow is guaranteed.

It's the mother who braids her daughter's hair when the next day isn't promised.

Hope Resists and Persists

Hope in its purest form exists in the smallest acts of resistance against a reality that offers no guarantees. It is not the absence of struggle but the defiant choice to struggle towards life.

Hope is both an act of surrender and defiance. Surrender to the unknown — because hope cannot guarantee results — and defiance against resignation. It's important to

understand the conviction that to live fully is to give and to do, without knowing what we will receive.

Memory Assists Hope

Hope begins with memory, though not in the nostalgic sense of longing for what is lost in the past. Memory is the recognition of survival. It's the decision to look back at a history



To imagine is to rebel against the present mess, to refuse to accept that suffering is the final truth and to make space for futures ... that might, one day, become possible.

filled with suffering and perseverance, finding the proof that even the most unforgiving winter always gave way to a beautiful spring.

Nietzsche believed that "to live is to suffer; to survive is to find meaning in the suffering." Memory offers just that. It tells us not to dwell on pain but to transform it. It reminds us that we may have been here before, yet we still stand. Despite it all we stand — changed, yet still moving forward.

Imagination Nourishes Hope

But memory alone is not enough. It is a foundation, not a blueprint. Then comes imagination and its audacity

to ask: "What if?" For the oppressed, imagination is nothing less than rebellion. Imagination refuses to accept the inevitability of injustice and the permanence of suffering.

Without imagination, hope stagnates. In Gaza, artists paint murals on crumbling walls, turning destruction into beauty. The beauty of imagination is that it forms a vision of what a healed world might look like.

If memory says, "we have endured", imagination asks, "what more can we create?" To imagine is to rebel against the present mess, to refuse to accept that suffering is the final truth and to make space for futures that do not yet exist but that might, one day, become possible.

Action Strengthens Hope

And action is the response that turns a vision into a reality.

It begins in small, deliberate choices that are often obscured, but nonetheless are felt deeply. Planting a single tree won't restore a forest, but it is a start. It's an assurance that life can return to what seems barren.

Similarly, teaching children their history in a land where such stories are contested, is an action of resistance — the refusal to let truth be erased.

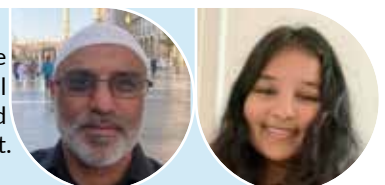
Simple, quiet acts breathe life into hope, proving that even under the crushing weight of injustice, human dignity endures.

Action gives hope weight and presence in the world because it reminds us that hope does not need certainty.

Action needs only the willingness and courage to begin, to feel something, to take a step no matter how small — and hope is released despite it all. ♦

Cherubs by Banksy on the Separation Wall at Bethlehem in Palestine
Photo by Richard Juilliant/Shutterstock.com

Zain Ali is an honorary academic at the University of Auckland. Maya Ali is in her final year of high school. She enjoys reading and writing and is planning to become a vet.





Implementing Synodality in Aotearoa

Brendan Daly highlights some of the outcomes of the Synod on Synodality and anticipates that the local Church has much to do to implement its teachings.

THE MEMBERS OF THE XVI Synod approved the final document “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission”. This document epitomises the approach of Pope Francis to reform in the Church. Pope Francis, as he noted in his apostolic exhortation after the synod on the Amazon region, seeks to challenge rigidity in the Church, clericalism and any approach that would narrow our vision or restrict our understanding of the Church to its functional structures. Synodality is a path of spiritual renewal and structural reform that enables the Church to be more participatory and missionary so that it can walk with every man and woman, radiating the light of Christ.

Pope Francis Demonstrates Synodality

Normally a year or two after a synod, the Pope issues an apostolic exhortation about the synod topic. This time, however, Pope Francis announced he would not be writing an apostolic exhortation but would simply publish the

final document that had been voted on by the bishops in attendance and the 70 non-bishop members. Pope Francis said: “What we have approved is sufficient.” By using the word “we”, he emphasised the contribution of the laity to the magisterium and thus the governance in the Church.

Pope Francis was sending a message that the synodal process involved all members of the Church, and that all had been listened to and were part of the approval process of the final document. In that sense, the synod was operating in a model way for the entire Church.

Transparency and Accountability

The final document, “For a Synodal Church”, recognised the need for greater transparency and accountability in the Church. It is obvious that both are lacking at present: in the processes pertaining to abuse cases, financial decisions and around decision-making itself. Many issues are not dealt with promptly – instead of prompt action, a decision is

delayed in favour of forming a committee to look into the matter concerned. At other times, as canon law researcher and theologian Judith Hahn notes, power is sometimes used to delay clarifications on points or what can be done. Pope Francis in his final greeting to the synod members said true reform comes about by “listening, convening, discerning, deciding and evaluating ...[with] pauses, silences and prayer.”

Lay employees of the Church often have performance reviews, but currently few clergy have them. This will change in the future as the final document requires ministers and ministries to be evaluated.

“A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church. How does our Church community identify the goals to be pursued, the way to reach them and the steps to be taken? How is authority or governance exercised within our local Church? How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice? How are evaluations conducted and by whom?”

Study Groups Formed

After the 2023 synod meeting, 10 study groups of experts were to deal with complex or controversial topics such as women deacons and changes in canon law. Some changes may be forthcoming in canon law, but much of the application of synodality has been left to the local Churches to implement in ways that suit their local circumstances and realities.

In his final greeting to the synod, Pope Francis said of the final document: “It will largely fall to you, together with many others, to make what it contains accessible in the local Churches. The text, without the witness of lived experience, would lose much of its value.”

To Allocate Personnel and Resources

Sometimes structures in the Church exist, but are not used, or nothing of importance is referred to them and they die. This can happen with parish councils and diocesan pastoral councils. Too often there is a lack of application of real consultative processes in the Church. Therefore, episcopal conferences are encouraged to allocate personnel and resources to facilitate the growth of a synodal Church in mission.

Participation of Baptised

The final document quotes from John 21 where Peter says to the other disciples: “I am going fishing.” They reply: “We will go with you.” This scriptural passage symbolises the synodal journey of going together. We are all called to “go together” because mission involves all the baptised: women, men, children, married, single, religious and clergy. Lay people should have increased participation in the discernment processes and in all phases of decision-making processes (drafting, confirming and making decisions), more opportunities to qualify as judges in all canonical processes (New Zealand has one married woman judge), and more involvement in seminaries and decision-making about ordinations and who is in active ministry.



Synodality — much will depend on what bishops and other church leadership will allow or promote.

Women's Leadership in Church

Article 60 in the Synod document on the role of women's leadership in the Church was the most contested issue. While 72 per cent of delegates voted for the article, changes to women's leadership still may not happen. Nevertheless, article 60 is a strong official Church

statement: “There are no reasons that prevent women from taking on leadership roles in the Church: what comes from the Holy Spirit cannot be stopped. The question of women's access to the diaconal ministry also remains open. We need to continue discernment in this regard.”

Problem of Clericalism

While women deacons remains an unresolved issue, it is clear that some canon law needs to change. In fact the biggest obstacle to the involvement of women in decision-making is the culture of the Church — its clericalism.

Pope Francis has spoken often about how the Church has been bedevilled by clericalism and patriarchy so that things like abuse have been ignored, covered up or minimised.

The synod specifically mentioned that “the Church must acknowledge its own shortcomings. It must humbly ask for forgiveness, must care for victims, provide for preventative measures, and strive in the Lord to build mutual trust.”

In response to these systemic problems, Pope Francis promotes synodality not by creating new laws (which are not always followed anyway), but by developing a customary approach to the law that is built on living relationships in the Church with all its members of laity, religious and clergy moving together as a real community in mission.

Much will depend on what bishops and other local church leadership will allow or promote.

Hope for Synodality in Aotearoa

Synodality is the path that God expects from the Church of the third millennium. A synodal Church will engage, listen and learn as it preaches and lives the Gospel in a way that re-establishes trust. The big challenge for the Church is to make synodality real, alive and active in the lives of individuals and the Church as an institution. To be a synodal Church there has to be change in our Church in New Zealand. For that to happen there must be more transparency, co-responsibility and accountability throughout Church life and that is the challenge for everyone. ✠

Image from www.synodresources.org 7 March 2022

Brendan Daly teaches canon law at Te Kupenga Catholic Theological College. He is a Judicial Vicar of the Tribunal for New Zealand and author of *Canon Law in Action* (2015).



Soul Space

Your soul is a space
for great flocks of kōtuku
to rise up

or a forest
of quiet rimu
attentive to wind

or water
transparent, quick
in a Tongariro stream.

Birds

Trees

Water

Plant the wisdom tree close to water.
White birds will dance
wing to bright wing
transforming your ruin into joy.

Anne Powell ©
In *A Stake in the Ground: Poems* (2024) p32



CATHOLIC CHURCH & TRUMP'S SECOND TERM

Massimo Faggioli *discusses the deep cultural and political divides as the Church grapples with its role in a polarised nation.*

JOHN F KENNEDY, the first Catholic President of the United States, inaugurated a new era in the history of American Catholicism. The same could be said for the second Catholic president, Joe Biden, but under a very different mood and in a different direction.

Kennedy's presidency and its tragic, martyr-like end, elevated a "poor Catholic" (in the words of his wife, Jackie) to the status of a quasi-saint in US collective imagination and signalled the arrival of the Church in the centre of American politics, culture and society. It was no longer a church of poor immigrants.

Biden's presidency also ends in a tragic way — with his defeat by the convicted felon and attempted coup-plotter Donald Trump — but also in a more banal way: Biden aged out.

Kennedy helped lead Catholics into a new era: an alignment between post-World War II America and the church of Vatican II — at least from a sociological and cultural perspective, less from a theological one. When Kennedy was assassinated, there was a newly elected and relatively young pope, Paul VI, whose firm intention was to lead Vatican II into port, which he accomplished. There was a plan for the future of the church.

Now, Catholicism in the United States is not just polarised at the ballot box but is also deeply divided from a religious and ecclesial point of view: at the altar, in the schools and universities, in a state of mutual, virtual excommunication.

GROWING DIVIDE BETWEEN CHURCH AND AMERICAN POLITICS

President Biden's decision in January to award Pope Francis the highest US civilian honour, the "Medal of Freedom", cannot conceal the widening gap between this pontificate and American politics. Notwithstanding



the personal connection between Francis and Biden, US liberals and progressives (Catholics and others) needed Pope Francis much more than Francis needed them. But American progressives' embrace of Pope Francis's signals on LGBTQ Catholics and teaching on the environment and immigration was no substitute for what has been missing in these years — a moral vision of the future of the country that was not just an opposition to Trump.

Compared to 60 years ago, Biden's presidency ends with both America as a country and the Barque of Peter in the United States in much less safe waters and without a map.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD IN JEOPARDY

One of the greatest contributions of American Catholicism to the development of doctrine in the 20th century, and especially to the role of the Church in the public square, was the theology of religious liberty and constitutional democracy.

With the re-election of Trump, also thanks to US

Catholic votes, it is not clear what the contribution of American Catholicism will be to the fight for the survival of democracy in the United States and around the world.

Even if we accept the idea that the United States was the bastion of democratic ideals in the world, it's not clear what the role of Catholics will be and on which side they will be found. The problem now is how to keep the contagion of this slow death of democracy away from Europe and the rest of the world.

The role of US Catholicism as the leading ecclesial and theological hub for the path of the Church in political modernity, might be over. There are reactionary, authoritarian and outright neo-fascist voices. But the real novelty is the emerging forces within US Catholicism that are converging around post-liberal ideals, or a neo-Thomistic revival, or small-community projects, in a retreat or sometimes angry rejection of the vision of Vatican II and Pope Francis's worldview of *Fratelli Tutti*.

ANTICIPATION OF CARDINAL MCELROY'S LEADERSHIP

Rebuilding a relationship between competing American political philosophies and Catholicism is one of the Herculean tasks before the new archbishop of Washington, Cardinal Robert McElroy, appointed by Pope Francis in January.

McElroy is a scholar of the relations between US politics and Catholicism. His PhD dissertation from Stanford was on morality and US foreign policy; the thesis of his doctorate in moral theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome was on the Jesuit US theologian John Courtney Murray and American political philosophy. McElroy is the most notable thinker among US bishops today, and his appointment could be the harbinger of a new season in Pope Francis's efforts to reshape the US episcopate.

REBUILDING CENTRE OF CATHOLICISM

The re-election of Trump is not just a political defeat but also the consequence of a theological and cultural downfall. Moving Cardinal McElroy from San Diego to the nation's capital is more than just the Vatican's response to the new Trump administration. It must be seen as a step in the long march to rebuild American Catholicism around a centre — not a political centre located ideologically somewhere between the two aisles — but a moral and spiritual one.

CHALLENGE FOR THE RIGHT

On the right side of the spectrum, there are leading US Catholic intellectuals who are opposed to Vatican II's embrace of constitutional democracy and despise many of Pope Francis's teachings. Social media bishops and Catholic influencers meet the demands of the market and therefore offer their platforms to those voices: to be sure, they are more visible than the institutional channels of church authority.

The constitutional agnosticism of the US bishops' conference in the last few years, and especially after the attempted coup of 6 January 2021, has offered a most

stunning profile in cowardice. As *New York Times* columnist Ezra Klein wrote: "Democracy degrades through deal-making — a procession of pragmatic transactions between those who have power and those who want it or fear it."



THE RE-ELECTION OF TRUMP IS NOT JUST A POLITICAL DEFEAT BUT ALSO THE CONSEQUENCE OF A THEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DOWNFALL.

CHALLENGE FOR THE LEFT

On the left, the sectarianism of "identity politics" makes it impossible to understand that the effort to rebuild a viable centre of gravity in US Catholicism requires a cautious but courageous ideological promiscuity — dialoguing also with voices that do not exactly correspond to the profile of the progressive-liberal Catholic. The alignment of leftist academic theology, focused in a monothematic way on social issues, with today's Democratic Party has led Catholic thought into the same ideological waste land in which the party of Joe Biden finds itself now.

CHURCH MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CENTRE

On 20 January, the United States and US Catholicism entered new, dangerous territory. Much will depend on the ecclesiastical and Vatican politics of the new administration. We have an idea of what Donald Trump and his vice president JD Vance (a Catholic) have done and intend to do to the body and soul of America. What the US Church has to say to America and the world today is much less clear. »

First published in *La Croix International* 17 January 2025

Images by AI / Shutterstock.com

Massimo Faggioli is Professor of Theology at Villanova University. His recent book *Global Catholicism: Between Disruption and Encounter* (2024) is co-authored with Bryan Froehle.





Walking the Camino de Santiago: Our Start

In this first article in a series, **Barbara Henley** shares her pilgrim experience on the Camino de Santiago from southern France to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain.

"BARBARA, COME AND walk the Camino with me." This was Anne's invitation early in 2012. I had a vague notion of this ancient, pilgrim journey as my friend Dermot and Cardinal John Dew had shared their experiences of it and I'd recently seen and loved the movie, *The Way*.

In 2012, my Mission Sister friend Anne Sklenars was having a sabbatical year and, as I was looking forward to a renewal programme, we decided to combine energies, resources and dreams and hike the Camino de Santiago.

It was the year our Congregation was celebrating 150 years of its foundation. That was another motivation for Anne and me to celebrate and acknowledge the years of missionary endeavour of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions. Thank you Euphasie Barbier for your missionary zeal and sense of adventurous outreach which has inspired my vocation over many years.

I felt excited to have this opportunity for renewal after 44 years of Religious Life and some years since my first sabbatical. I was grateful for the support and encouragement of our Provincial Team and all my Sisters.

I researched about the Camino de Santiago and thoroughly enjoyed reading other people's stories of their pilgrimage. I determined to keep a daily journal of my reflections along *The Way* and that little notebook is my cache of memories for this assignment.

Origins of the Camino

The Camino de Santiago, or the Way of St James, is an ancient network of pilgrim walkways leading to the shrine of the apostle James in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwest Spain. Tradition holds that the remains of the apostle are buried in the cathedral.

We chose to walk the Camino Francés which begins in the French

village of St Jean Pied de Port and travels about 800kms across the north of Spain to our destination.

By way of preparation, I applied myself more seriously to my regular exercise routine, adding the Waikanae River walkway and the Hemi Matenga bush walk to my morning workouts. That's where it all began: in the town of Waikanae on the Kāpiti Coast, one hour north of Wellington..

My walking was my praying and I loved those early morning, reflective walks with my 8kg pack on my back and walking pole for security. I was careful to wear out neither my shoes nor my body before the real adventure began.

At the Sunday Eucharist before my departure date, my parish community prayed the pilgrim blessing over me and the late Fr Brian Fletcher blessed my pack and walking pole. I felt really fired up and ready for the unknown. What new challenge was God offering me? How would I respond?



Pilgrim's Prayer

Buen Camino.

*O God, who
brought your
servant
Abraham out
of the land of
the Chaldeans,
protecting him
in his wanderings,
who guided the
Hebrew people across
the desert, we ask that
you watch over us, your
servants, as we walk in the love*

*of your name to Santiago de Compostela. Be our companion
on the way, our guide at the crossroads, our strength in
weariness, our defense in dangers, our shelter on the path,
our shade in the heat, our light in the darkness, our comfort
in discouragement and the firmness of our intentions; that
through your guidance, we may arrive safe and sound at the
end of the road and enriched with grace and virtue return
home filled with joy!
Apostle Santiago, pray for us
Santa Maria, pray for us.*

The Pilgrim's Prayer began my five-week Camino journey with Anne and the many pilgrims we were to meet along The Way.

I walked out the front door of Bishop Snedden Retirement Village where I worked as Supervisor and Pastoral Carer, and headed down to the railway station. I wanted my pilgrimage to begin from home, because in pilgrimage style it was to end back home.

I was nervous on the train ride into the city, wondering if I had packed everything. I fretted that I'd forgotten some essential item, but too late — I was on my way.

I love travel and enjoyed the flight to Christchurch and the long leg to Singapore. There I spent time in both the Christian and non-denominational prayer rooms — beautiful, quiet spaces where I handed over my anxieties and fears to Santiago/St James and doubled down my dependence on our caring, faithful, protecting God.

Meeting Up with Anne

I met Anne at Terminal Two in Paris which, I considered, was the first miracle of The Way. She had flown in from Dublin and I had come from the other end of the world to meet in one of the largest airports in Europe. After a short train connection and a long walkway trek, we found each other.

We had a few days' orientation in Paris, buying our distinctive pilgrim scarves and continuing our training routine along the banks of the Seine, through busy boulevards, into small sacred chapels and magnificent cathedrals like Sacre Coeur de Montmartre and the inspiring Notre Dame de Paris.

We divested ourselves of all the non-essentials which we'd previously considered essentials — an early

challenge. Repacked and reorganised it was finally time to farewell Paris and the Charenton Mission Sisters' Community, who sent us off with a blessing, a packed lunch and lots of good wishes:

*"Set your feet on your road today.
May God bless you with a safe journey
May the angels and saints travel with you
May you live each day in justice and joy"*

Arriving in Lourdes

Our adventure had begun, but not our walk because we went by fast train to Lourdes, not on foot. The journey was a blur of vineyards and valleys, fields of ripe corn and canola, lush green pastures, busy highways, industrial towns and sleepy villages.

France is a beautiful country. In just over four hours at a cost of 40 Euros we had travelled almost the length of the country and arrived safely in Lourdes where our long walk on The Way would begin. ✦

Barbara Henley RNDM now lives in Napier. Her ministries have included teaching, prison chaplaincy and pastoral care.



STRIDE ORTHOPAEDICS



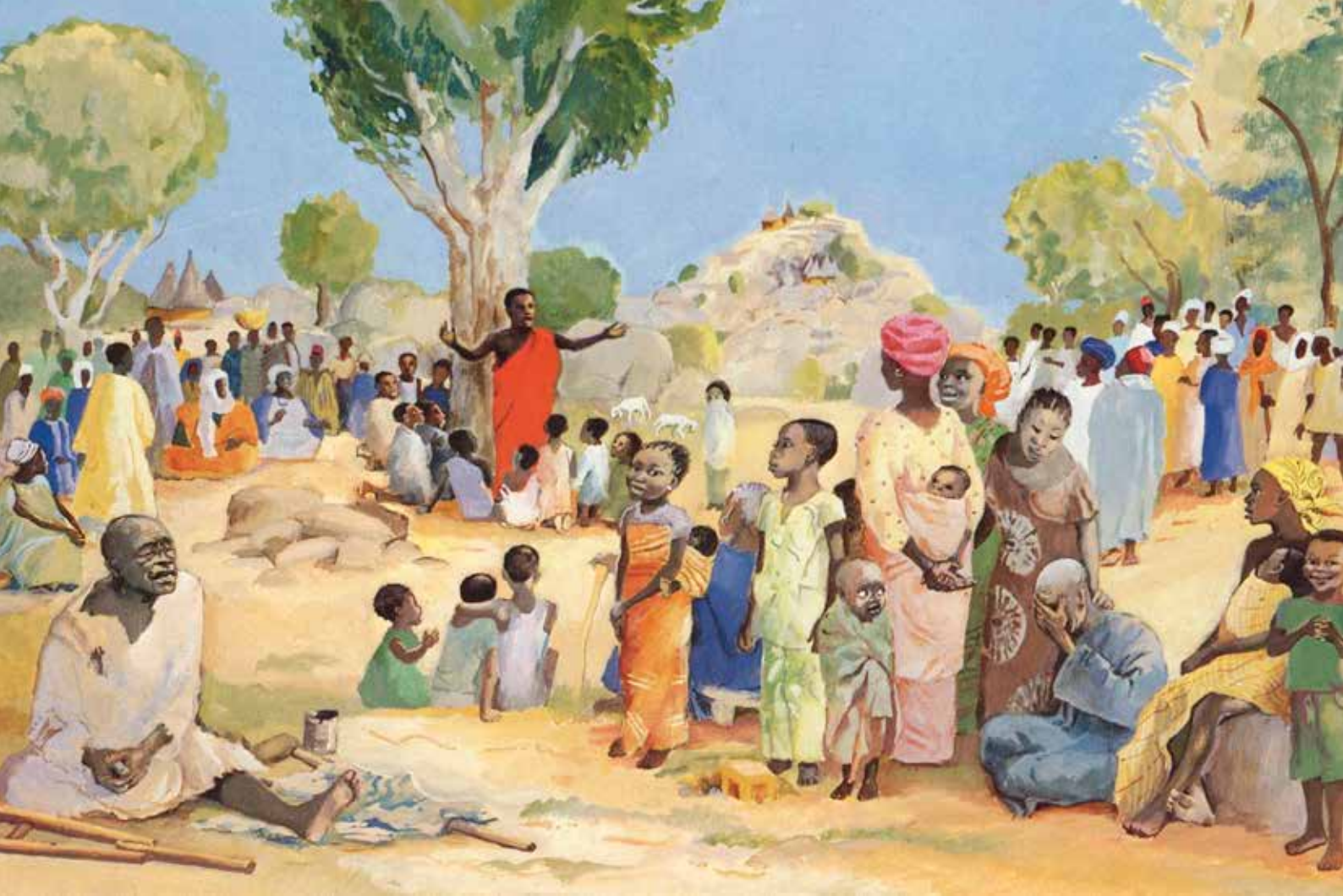
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The Sermon on the Plain

Kathleen Rushton *highlights significant aspects of the Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6:17-49.*

WE WILL HEAR sections from Jesus's Sermon of Plain (Luke 6:17-49) on three Sundays in February and March. Before the Sermon, Jesus had been carrying out the mission which he announced in the synagogue when he began his ministry. He was proclaiming "the year of the Lord's favour" (Lk 4:19).

Jesus moves away from the synagogues, towns and people "out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God" (Lk 6:12). Jesus is presented as praying in Luke more than in the other Gospels. And the place, the mountain, is rich in biblical symbolism for communicating with God. The mountain prayer pattern is repeated when Jesus is transfigured (Lk 9:28) and with his disciples on the Mount of Olives (Lk 22:39-46). The narrative implies that Jesus was not alone, he had called some disciples up the mountain with him — "when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles" (Lk 6:13).

FROM THE MOUNTAIN TO THE FLAT

The story continues when Jesus "came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea,

Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon" (Lk 6:17). Luke suggests those closest to Jesus are his chosen apostles, then the wider group of disciples and then the crowds, who had gathered from near and far. Luke describes the crowd's circumstances vividly: "They had come to hear him and be healed of their diseases ... all in the crowd were trying to touch him for power came out from him and healed all of them" (Lk 6:18-19).

Jesus instructs his disciples in the presence of this crowd — a gathering of afflicted and burdened humanity longing for him. This is context in which Luke desires us to hear the sermon on the plain. Brendan Byrne suggests that we can see this context graphically as follows:

\Jesus/
 \The Twelve/
 \The wider group of Disciples/
 \Crowds from Judea, Jerusalem, Tyre and Sidon/

Luke presents Jesus in the midst of his Galilean ministry giving formation instruction to the Twelve about who they must be and how they are to behave towards those they are to serve.

BLESSINGS AND WOES

Luke has four beatitudes followed by four woes. Jesus “looked up at his disciples” whom he called “blessed” (Lk 6:20-23) and invited them into ongoing conversion (Lk 6:24-26). Brendan Byrne suggests that “congratulations” conveys the meaning of “blessed”. The blessed person is “in a fortunate or advantageous position in view of a coming action of God” while “woe” means “unfortunate.”

The text upends our ideas of the poor and rich being fortunate and unfortunate. It seems shocking to congratulate the poor on being poor, the hungry on being hungry, and those who weep and who are reviled on their situation. It is crazy to assert that the wealthy, well-fed, happy and those of great reputation are unfortunate. But this is what Luke’s Gospel asserts.

The sermon begins by Jesus addressing explicitly, “you”—the disciples, who are poor and rich now (found four times in 6:20-26). Good news for the poor spirals through Luke’s Gospel (Lk 1:52-55; 4:18). It is clear that God is on the side of the poor and pledges to act on behalf of the poor and marginalised.

Jesus certainly speaks to the economically poor. In the biblical tradition, the poor also includes those waiting for God’s salvation in the fullest sense, for economic and social justice as well as those with a deep spiritual longing. The vulnerability, openness and emptiness of these poor provide scope for God’s way and action. They are not passive victims.

Jesus is speaking to the disciples out in the countryside, where they are surrounded by the multitude, whose suffering and vulnerability allows room for God to act.

LOVE FOR ENEMIES

As if the Beatitudes are not sufficiently radical, Jesus begins a long instruction in which the extraordinary command to “love your enemies” unfolds as a central theme (Lk 6:27-42). Jesus gives examples of what that might mean such as to return blessing for a curse and to turn the other cheek. He says that when faced with injurious and unreasonable behaviour, the response is to be generous and set aside all claim to retribution.

Jesus is not asking us to take the actions and attitudes literally. Rather he is inviting us to be vulnerable in a way that may seem foolish by common standards. As Brendan Byrne explains: “as in the case of the Beatitudes, everything makes sense only in the context of the distinctive vision of God and relationship to God that Jesus communicates to his own.” Jesus assures us: “You will be children of the Most High; for [God] is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.” We are to “be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:35-36).

INTEGRITY

In our context the Beatitudes challenge our integrity such as removing a speck from our neighbour’s eye rather than taking the “log out of your own eye” (Lk 6:41-42). The image of the tree and its fruits suggests congruence between our heart and our actions (Lk

6:43-44) as does the image of building the house of our existence on a solid foundation (Lk 6:48-49).

YEAR OF JUBILEE

Pope Francis has called 2025 a Jubilee Year and encourages us to be pilgrims of hope. He invites us to imagine how we can “restore access to the fruits of Earth to everyone” and to rediscover a spirituality of creation in which we are humble “pilgrims on Earth”. The concept of whakawhanaungatanga/being in right relationship with God, with one another and with all of creation describes the work of the pilgrim. Like the disciples being instructed while surrounded by a crowd of oppressed people, we need to identify and walk in solidarity with those being demonised and marginalised in our context. They are the blessed and God stands with them. We can engage in relationships that bring about ecological and social justice and peace for all creation. ✨

Luke 6:17-49 is read on 16, 23 February and 5 March.

The Sermon on the Mount by Jesus Mafa From Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN

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Sister Eveleen Retreat House on
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Know Our History

I HAVE BEEN directly involved in Treaty settlements since 1987, first as a negotiator with Ngāti Whātua-o-Ōrākei and then as a Chief Crown negotiator from 2010–2016 with settlements in the Muriwhenua and on the East Coast. I have been appointed by both National and Labour governments.

It is therefore so disappointing that the authors of the Treaty Principles Bill pay so little intelligent attention to our proud history of successful settlement of claims. I refer to a process that has resulted in Aotearoa reconciling its history related to colonisation in a contemporary and broadly acceptable manner celebrated by our whole population. A success that shows no obvious parallel worldwide.

A small example from the Waitangi Tribunal in the 1987 Ōrākei claim illustrates the point. “Ngāti Whātua were dispossessed not by fate. They were not newcomers, their roots to the land were planted before the Normans invaded Britain. They were not conquerors but victors in civil warfare and peaceful nonetheless for they welcomed and supported the establishment of Auckland in their midst.

“As a tribe they did not willingly sell the Ōrākei block but fought for over a hundred years to keep it. Relocation was never in their best interest, their spiritual links to the land made a mockery of that suggestion. Nor were the wrongs all committed in the days of blankets and beads when one race barely knew the other. They began much later and worse, they continued to modern times as though one race has yet to know the other today.”

In my 35 years of direct engagement with Māori over treaty issues (including with the Ōrākei claim) there has been a theme of reconstruction that has largely rescued New Zealand from a bitter conflict over the impact of colonisation on the dispossession of Māori.

The decision of the Labour Government of 1984 to introduce the Waitangi Tribunal to examine Māori claims back to 1840 was a courageous act and one that took the lid off this boiling pot of resentment. At last Māori were able to make their case in front of a legal tribunal of historically literate New Zealanders who could weigh their arguments and address their deepest apprehensions. That some of the judgments managed to irritate governments of different stripes only added to the authenticity of their independence.

The Tribunal has been an immense force for good, but there is still so much to be done.

Therein lies the deficiency of the Treaty Principles Bill. It is unable to pay any heed to the historical anthropology of engagement demonstrated by the above examples and takes us no further as a nation. It does not increase the equality of citizens under the law. Nobody is made



safer or more secure in their vision of “belonging”. The Bill’s primary aim is defensive, to ensure that Pākehā New Zealand does not feel encroached upon by the demands of tangata whenua asserting rights that have already been extinguished.

It has already misfired. The recent hīkoi to Parliament, the largest in our history since the introduction of the Waitangi Tribunal, points to the failure of the Treaty Principles Bill strategy. Our population is now more alert than ever that there is much to be lost by the reckless critique of this Tribunal, an independent body that has served us as a nation to reconcile in our race relations those elements that parliamentary politics has often found too confrontational.

I remain of the opinion that the demands of coalition politics are to be respected. It is the method of government we have freely chosen and thus the agreement among the coalition partners that the Treaty Principles Bill should go to the Select Committee for a first reading is all part of our legitimate parliamentary process.

My greatest hope is that the majority makes sure it goes no further. It would do immense harm. ♦

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Patrick Snedden works with
Odyssey House in drug rehabilitation and
with Manaiaakalani in education in
Tāmaki Makaurau.





For What It's Worth

DEATH GETS US all, no getting away from it. I lost both a few friends and family members in the past year, among them the lovely Rev Laurie Rankin whom I wrote about in an earlier column.

But perhaps the quirkiest, if such a word is appropriate for death, would be my sister-in-law Rae. Her life was tough in the way that someone who had lots of babies starting at 16 would be. Married at 18, her husband later committed suicide. She raised their son, doting on him, while allowing her five other babies to be adopted out. When her son Darren died of a drug overdose in his 30s, Rae never got over it.

She smoked like the proverbial chimney, bought her first car at 19 but never got a driver's licence until she was in her 50s. Rae didn't follow the rules. And even when she developed lung cancer, she refused to give up smoking. She would have been sent home with an oxygen machine to help her breathe, but acknowledged sheepishly to me that the machine in the same room as her habit wasn't a good idea. "I'd rather have the smokes" she proclaimed defiantly.

After another stint in hospital late last year, she discharged herself. I asked if she had a Will. I offered to draft one. She was adamant she wanted everything to go to the SPCA. So I sent it to her with instructions, and then when she said she never had any visitors, arranged for two friends to be the witnesses. The document duly came back to me in the stamped addressed envelope I'd provided.

A week later Rae died. I'd given myself the unwelcome job of executor of her Will. So off I went to sort out her flat. Rae

had died of a heart attack. The woman who found her said she looked pretty peaceful. She never had in life, so I'm hoping God gathered her up and somehow made her whole again.

Her flat would have been on Marie Kondo's wish list. I sifted through endless belongings and paraphernalia, anxious to keep only one thing. Her brother Kevin had died in June. Rae had been his Enduring Power of Attorney for property and Kevin's son alleged she'd spent his Dad's money. Bank statements would help. I found a few but there was a more interesting discovery. Tucked in corners, under chairs, in a tea caddy were a total of nine ziplock bags of cannabis. What does a retired judge do, I asked myself. Throw them out? Take them to the police? Or was there another possibility?

The next day I held an afternoon tea at Rae's flat. Friends that she denied she had came from all over. When I produced the ziplock bags, all eyes lit up (save her 89-year-old neighbour) and I — fairly, it must be said — distributed them. Whereupon they smoked the lot. It was a fitting send off. ♦

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





Grappling with Conflicting Values

I RECENTLY MOVED from South Dunedin to Te Anau. I had found room in a modest two-bedroom home with a ginormous lawn. My new backyard would easily fit 10 South Dunedin houses. As I familiarised myself with the town, I realised big lawns are the rule, not the exception. Homes are set well apart and most of the intervening space is filled with grass. On top of the residential layout, the public green spaces are also mostly lawns. Without a doubt, Te Anau is a town of lawns.

Manicured lawns have long been a symbol of status and class. In 17th-century Europe, the wealthy elite began cultivating lawns to display their abundance of land, disposable servant labour and dominance over nature. Lawn ownership skyrocketed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as millions moved into suburban landscapes. Petrol-guzzling mowers replaced manual labour but their role as a status signal remained. Unproductive grass lawns are a nice-to-have but not a necessity. They are a dividing line between the haves and the have-nots, a visible marker of our focus on social status and conformity.

Considering this context: I already had a chip on my shoulder as I started up the lawn mower and spent two hours roaring around my new yard at the landlord's request. The smell of gas, the deafening whirr of blades and slow progress, drove me into a sour mood. I was being complicit in a practice I disagreed with, and mowing with a frown did nothing to combat systemic inequality or raise my mood. This Te Anau lifestyle was hard to pair with the knowledge that globally, millions of people live in single-room homes without a garden, let alone an unproductive field of soft grass.

My office had a barbecue at the end of my first week

of work. The host's home had a generous supply of flat grass on which we ate, exchanged stories and relaxed. The children ran raucously about with plenty of room to indulge their youthful energy. A few of us played Kubbb, a backyard game perfectly designed for a lawntopia like Te Anau. My supervisor made a brilliant throw and performed an amusing victory dance. Laughter rose from the lawn into the evening air like pollen on the breeze. The visible and invisible threads of hospitality were drawing me into community. I believe that community in its many forms is of God.

In the paradox of lawns as places of community and places of division, a healthy tension exists. I feel called to challenge the norm of private lawn ownership, as it does not serve us or the planet, and to take action when the opportunity arises. But I also feel motivated to hold this indignation alongside an appreciation of how God nourishes us despite, and even through, our thoughtless habits and broken systems. The barbecue did not justify the lawn. The gathering could have taken place in a public green space just as well. But it did make a broken thing shine.

This is a new place for me, that of righteous indignation paired with radical appreciation. Perhaps I will come to call it home. ✨

A Lakeside Stroll, Wānaka by Amanda Jane Wilkes ©
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Oak Jones has a passion for plants, poetry and wild places. He is currently living and working in Te Anau.



Reviews

Catholic Women Preach: Raising Voices, Renewing the Church (Cycle C)

Edited by Elizabeth Donnelly & Petrus Russ

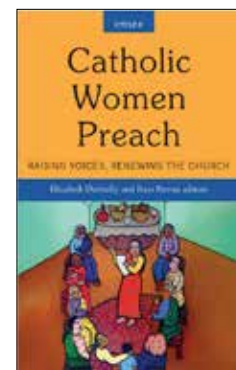
Published by Orbis Books, 2024. (USD 25)

Reviewed by Margaret McLean

Catholic Women Preach is the third volume in the series and follows the Sunday Lectionary readings for Cycle C. The 62 women authors wrote these homilies in 2022 during the last year of the Covid pandemic. *Catholic Women Preach* illustrates the abundance of women in the Church who are well-equipped to reflect and speak on the Good News, discerning the signs of the times and attentive to the social-economic and environmental conditions of their communities. These tasks are the goals of a new Dicastery of Evangelisation outlined in *Praedicate Evangelium*, the apostolic constitution issued by Pope Francis in 2022. The

reorganisation of the Curia suggests that positions are not limited by ordination or gender.

The contributors to this book are both gifted preachers and witnesses to the reality of modern times. One of them observes that people “have stopped listening to one another — or are selectively listening to the voices they agree with.” *Catholic Women Preach* is algorithm free and the diverse and interesting collection of sermons challenges us to listen and to connect with the readings of a liturgical cycle in new ways. Better still, it invites us to anticipate a future where women contribute fully to the Church and its structures. 🌟



Everyday Sacred, Everywhere Beauty: Readings from an Old Monk's Journal

By Mary Lou Kownacki

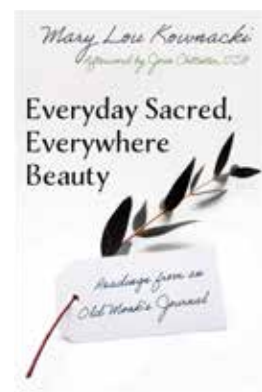
Published by Orbis Books, 2024. (USD 26)

Reviewed by Kristine Bennett

Everyday Sacred, Everywhere Beauty is a treasure. It won't be stored on my bookcase. Instead, it will be placed on their bedside table when visitors stay. The book contains short journal entries selected from three distinct times in Kownacki's life. The first selection had been published previously on her blog “Old Monk's Journal” (along with the work of her writing partner Joan Chittister), on their *Monasteries of the Heart* website which explores ancient Benedictine spirituality within the context of issues in our time. The entries encourage action within the

community for peace and justice, provide insight into Benedictine community life and encourage and support daily prayer and *lectio divina*. The third section spans Kownacki's cancer diagnosis during the covid pandemic to her final writings before her death in January 2023. Joan Chittister provides a very moving love letter as an afterword.

For me, the insights, joy and journey of this book come from Kownacki's gentle, grateful writings. They give comfort and they call to action. Also, they gave me a springboard into the meditative writings of others she quotes from. I'm delving into these other writers and theologians — they, too, are Kownacki's gift that will accompany my own journey. 🌟



The How and Why of Surviving a Poor Prognosis Cancer

By Colette Blockley

Published by Austin Macauley Publishers, 2024. (NZD 33.50)

Reviewed by Marie Skidmore

Blockley interviews 18 New Zealand cancer survivors in this book: 10 women (average age 58.5 and 9.5 years free of cancer) and eight men (average age 68 and 12 years free of cancer). All were told that their cancer would be terminal within a year of diagnosis.

The first section is a verbatim, easy-to-read record of the interviews. The interviews show the importance of being assertive when dealing with the New Zealand health system and what these patients found helpful or otherwise.

Then Blockley works through “stages” in their journey, giving pointers about how to get through each phase of

“The Eternal Roller Coaster” to regaining fullness of life, albeit a life completely revised.

I found some of the appendices — including a table of perceptions about the experience of having cancer — detracted from the immediacy and intimacy of survivors' stories. But the message of *The How and Why* shines through: We can't control what happens, but we can choose how we respond to the challenges life throws to us. The resources of determination, hope and true friends are invaluable on the journey.

I recommend Blockley's book as a very helpful resource for those who have been diagnosed with cancer and for their loved ones. It provides wise guidance. 🌟



Reviews



A GENTLEMAN IN MOSCOW

TV Mini Series (8 episodes), Paramount Plus, 2024

Directed by Sam Miller, Sarah O'Gorman

Reviewed by Paul Tankard

The best-selling novel *A Gentleman in Moscow* (2016), by New York writer and former investment banker Amor Towles, filtered through to me last year. I found it a charming and effortless read, which despite its quirky and comedic aspects has, from its historical context and exotic locale, a rewarding sense of thematic depth. This remarkable combination ensured it would promptly attract bidders for the film rights.

The set-up is easily summarised. In 1921, a minor member of the Russian aristocracy Count Alexander Rostov, returns from Paris to Moscow after the Bolshevik revolution, is arrested for being an aristocrat, spared a death sentence and condemned instead to spend the rest of his life under house arrest in Moscow's luxurious Hotel Metropol. Rather than retaining his accustomed furnished suite, he is stripped of most of his possessions and banished to a tiny room up the back stairs.

The Count is in his early 30s, and his deeply internalised understanding of world affairs and the Russian people and history enable him to adapt, seemingly wholeheartedly, to his radically changed circumstances. Played with panache (and an outrageous moustache) by Ewan McGregor, he is disciplined and discreet, always immaculately turned-out, with a talent for conversation and friendship. While doing his best to make himself a small target for the regime — whose operatives include the hotel's deputy manager — his culture and decorum make him an asset to the hotel.

We almost forget that the hotel is Rostov's prison, as he insists on treating it as a place in which to live, so far as possible, for kindness, conscience and beauty. He approaches his life there as a calling, like that of an artist.

The Metropol is a vantage point from which he can safely view the distressing history of the Soviet Union: the forced labour camps, the Soviet famine, the Great Purge and World War II and changes of leadership — Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev. He is increasingly aware that in his prison he is living a better life than most of his countrymen.

His life might have had no trajectory if he had not allowed himself to trust, help and be helped by a range of people: the troubled policeman Glebikov; young Nina, daughter of the hotel manager; his childhood friend, poet and activist Mishka; the glamorous movie actor Anna Urbanova (McGregor's real-life wife, Mary Elizabeth Winstead) and later, Nina's daughter Sofia, who comes to regard Rostov as her papa.

There are certain oddities to the adaptation, but in terms of its lush emotional and aesthetic character, its light but assured touch, it is almost as delightful and satisfying as the book. 🌞



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Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins

2025 IS A Holy Year. Pope Francis invites us to keep faith with this tradition in time honoured ways: by undertaking pilgrimage, by participating in works of mercy and by abstaining from “futile distractions” and “superfluous consumption”.

What might these actions mean for our engagement with the daily news? Much of the news is grim and it's tempting to simply switch off in order to avoid wave after wave of stories coming at us so fast and at such volume that we feel bulldozed into a kind of anxious passivity.

But perhaps the tasks of Holy Year give us a different way to engage with what's happening in the world. The sacred focus of pilgrimage, the relationship-building of works of mercy and abstention from both the distractions of social media and the superfluity of unnecessary consumption — all these invite us to make space in our encounters with the world so that we aren't swept along helplessly on the tide of bad news.

This space makes possible the exercise of hope and of imagination.

Hope and imagination are connected. How can we build a

better world if we can't imagine one? Imagination is powerful and often challenging to the powerful. Tusiata Avia's poem "In Praise of Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke", reproduced in December's *Tui Motu*, is a magnificent celebration of a challenge to the Treaty Principles Bill.

Daily, in our newspapers, our editorial cartoonists capture with singular and telling images the injustice and ideologically-driven nature of much current policy. Recently in the United States, celebrated cartoonist Anne Telnaes resigned from the *Washington Post* after her cartoon illustrating billionaires bending the knee to Donald Trump was cut from the paper. Imagination is powerful.

Not all of us are artists, but we can all use imagination to build a more hopeful world.

If we encounter racism in discussions about the Treaty Principles Bill and Waitangi Day, let's engage with this by imagining what our nation would be like if Te Tiriti had been honoured. If conversations tend towards climate change denial, let's think about what our cities would be like if they were built for the future, for our mokopuna, and

what our landscape would be like if biodiversity were allowed to flourish. If church news is dispiriting because renewal seems so slow, let's imagine what the Church could be like if it truly engaged with the major issues of our country and our world.

And let's feed our imaginations. Not by doomscrolling through social media, driving our thoughts into dismal places. But by actions: by going along to a Toitū te Tiriti gathering or a Waitangi Day hui and relishing the whanaungatanga and manaakitanga that is to be found there. By planting seeds in a pot, finding a spot in the sun to raise them and watching them push through the soil in nature's wonderful drive to flourish. By walking in local parks or along the seashore and listening to the birds. By joining local community groups regenerating native bush and watching this thrive. By joining (or starting) a parish social justice group and celebrating Catholic Social Teaching.

The news this year will be hard, and this column will reflect on some of that. But let's meet it in the spirit, and with the actions, of this Holy Year. With hope and imagination. ◀



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 acknowledges its role in honouring and fostering relationships arising from Te Tiriti o Waitangi. 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

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and regular digital postings on social media. 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 the theology, spirituality and history, as well as on ecological and social justice.

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Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument in the spirit of the magazine of up to 200 words.

WOMEN'S VOICE IN SOCIETY BUT WHERE IN CHURCH?

I was fascinated by the visual contrast in the *TM* December issue. In the article on synodality the photo of the large conclave pictured the participants. They would obviously be discussing women in the Church but one had to look carefully to find any women among the sea of red caps. Flip to the centrespread and there was the brilliant portrait of a young Māori woman very energetically having her say in the parliament of our country and the words of Pasifika poet dedicated to her daughter. Is there a lesson here for us?

Dennis Veal, Timaru

MERCY AND FORGIVENESS

Mary Betz (*TM* December 2024) posits the life and message of Jesus threatening the religious and political powers of his time is a theology of the present. Her writing seems to suggest that the choices Jesus made in front of Pilate, with the denials of Peter as a backdrop, led to crucifixion without a consequence of forgiveness of sin. Rather, the mission entrusted to Peter to feed and tend the lambs and sheep of Jesus Christ, reveals a trinitarian forgiveness of Peter's sins. If there had been resistance to keep Jesus from being handed over to the Jews for crucifixion we would have known neither Jesus nor his values of feeding the world with understanding, graciousness and forgiveness. History can contribute towards knowing God. History reveals the incarnate Son of God as sent by the Father through the Holy Spirit. The three persons of God reveal Jesus's faithfulness to his belief in, and loving practice of, God's mercy and justice. Mercy and justice have a foundation

in at-one-ment — in the forgiveness of our sins, love for love. Atonement rekindles relationships across creation foundational to the mission of the basileia — feeding and tending to that which belongs to the Good Shepherd. Sharing in the mission of feeding, according to our talent, time and energy, depends upon forgiving hearts. Forgiveness is surely our hearts' desire at this point in history.

*Lita van Bunnik, Te Awakairangi/
Upper Hutt*

SALE OF CATHNEWS TO THE BISHOPS

I'm deeply concerned in the wake of the *CathNews* sale to the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference that New Zealand Catholics will be deprived of journalism that fosters open dialogue and tackles controversial subject matter. *Tui Motu*, it seems, is all we have left where the people of God have the freedom to speak frankly. The *NZ Catholic* was ostensibly a mouthpiece for the pro-life movement. It encouraged conservative opinions. Is this what we are to expect from a re-formed *CathNews*? Staff lost jobs — yes lost jobs at Christmas — and regular contributors, such as Joe Grayland, were editorially excommunicated. I cannot help but see this move as a gagging order by the bishops. Joe Grayland's column was refreshing — it made you feel the Church was alive. *CathNews* was always an interesting read; it held to true journalistic principles by publishing an array of views even when those views may have run counter to the views of the editorial team. In times when Catholic laity are supposed to be encouraged to take up leadership roles, it's beginning to feel as if the clergy are clawing their way back to dominance. So, *Tui Motu*, just thanks for keeping it real.

*Clarice Stewart, Te Papa-i-Oea/
Palmerston North*

THE LITANY OF LAMENT FOR ABUSES

I think it was unfair and displaced to make those celebrating Sunday Eucharist in November 2024 participate in the "Litany of Lament"

as some sort of collective liability of blame. We parishioners had already suffered much humiliation and shame when the abuses were raised in social situations without making us responsible for the sin as well. This did not belong to us. Instead, to respond genuinely to the findings of the Royal Commission our six bishops should have exercised courageous humility and asked the survivors of abuse for their forgiveness. If they had entered into a spirit of regret, it may in some way have restored the survivors' dignity and begun the long-haul process of self-forgiveness in the Church.

Sue Seconi, Whanganui

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