

TUI MOTU

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**LEARNING
THROUGH
THE GENERATIONS**

**AKO IROTO
INGA
WHAKATIPURANGA**

MARY THORNE, ROSEMARY RIDDELL & PAUL TANKARD
on parenting, grandparenting and faith

LUKE JONES on modern slavery legislation

FRANK BRENNAN, MASSIMO FAGGIOLI & PHYLLIS ZAGANO
on Church

CONTENTS

FEATURES

Parenting & Grandparenting 4
MARY THORNE

Children — Our Best Hope for the Future 6
ROSEMARY RIDDELL

Faith Needs Understanding 8
PAUL TANKARD

My Thoughts Are Not Your Thoughts 10
JESS

America's New Catholic Issue 12
MASSIMO FAGGIOLI

Protect All Life 15
PHYLLIS ZAGANO

Back from the Abyss 18
FRANK BRENNAN

Legislation to Stop Modern Slavery 20
LUKE JONES

Women Join the Dicastery for Bishops 22
BRENDAN DALY

SCRIPTURE

Living Into Our Future 24
KATHLEEN RUSHTON

COMMENT

Editorial 2
ANN GILROY

Facing Uncertainty 3
PATRICK SNEDDEN

Christians Living in the World 23
PAUL COLLINS

Isolation Offers Time 26
SHAR MATHIAS

Cross Currents 29
JANE HIGGINS

Looking Out and In 32
KAAREN MATHIAS

REFLECTION

The Oars and the Stove 16
ANNE POWELL

REVIEWS

Book Reviews 21, 27, 31

Film Review 28

LETTERS

Letters to the Editor 31



Cover Photo:

COVID-19 requires social distancing among family — grandma and grandchild touch on the windowpane

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EDITORIAL

A Thought About the Generations



My parents lived long lives. When they died, our family — spanning at least three generations — gathered from around the world for their funerals. Admittedly this was in pre-COVID times when travelling and gathering were easier. My father died first and my siblings with Mum organised his vigil and funeral Eucharist. When Mum died — the last of her generation in our family — my nieces and nephews were adults with new ideas of how we should celebrate her life. We siblings prepared Mum's funeral liturgy while the next generation set up a painting bee to decorate her coffin, shared personal memories, made floral arrangements, put together a photo collage, created music, organised the burial, cooked, cleaned and comforted us all.

Most of my young adult family members are not church-going but it was evident that they had a keen sense of the ritual needed to express their relationship with their grandparents. My parents had surrounded themselves with photos documenting the new generations growing up: milestones, travels, relationships, gatherings and visits. Now these young people brought their children to say goodbye, to see Nana laid out in the bedroom (likely seeing a dead person for the first time), and to explain what death means and where Nana is now. Their contributions to the "goodbye" symbolised aspects of the story recorded around the walls — of valuing family, belonging, taking part, welcoming new members, celebrating, being grateful. Their symbols joined with those of the funeral liturgy — where personal, family and Christian symbols coalesced in expressing love of Nana, our gratitude for her long life and our hope for our family in the future.

Like many of my generation, our nibbling generation (nieces and nephews) is now in the parenting role and I'm often in awe of them. I find they reflect on their practices and are learning how best to parent their children in these times. (And I remember their parents doing the same!) The virtues valued by the "nibbling generation" are largely the same as those of their forebears — values firmly rooted in the Christian tradition, passed down to them as they have been passed down so many times before. Today's parents might not call themselves Catholic, but they work at patience, fairness, honesty and inclusion — all Christian values, all vital for forming family and community.

It's true that I sometimes grieve at the nibblings' shrugging off Church — but I am also impressed by their making their own way, their innovation, that they are not just "doing what Mum and Dad did" or practising religion-by-rote.

From this generation we can learn new ways of caring, and witness new ways of expressing the Source of Love at the heart of all life.

We are grateful to all those who by sharing their research, expertise, experience, stories, reflections, art and craft have filled this issue with wisdom and thought-provoking discussion on parenting and grandparenting and much more.

And, as us our custom, our last words are of blessing and encouragement.

The end of June saw the closure of the District Health Boards (DHB) and the start of Health NZ and the Māori Health Authority, both changes that I applaud. But now as a former DHB Chair I am nearly jobless, certainly underemployed. From a computer full of emails to nothing is quite a leap in a single day. This is new territory for me. It's not that I have nothing to do. It's just that being responsible for holding Auckland's health service clear about its purpose in a pandemic was a huge task and pretty consequential. It sucked up much of the creative oxygen and my attention in a working week and now that experience is someone else's.

I first went into business for myself in 1984 after five years of running *Zealandia*, the Catholic weekly newspaper of the time. From there to now I have been in charge of my own employment outcomes as I have contracted my services to commercial and not-for-profit and Government entities. It seems like years of heavy-duty activity have framed so much of our family life that the idea of having space to read, to sit and think, to "do the garden" is new territory. Like a holiday without being on holiday. At 67 I am not sure that I like it. Yet.

So I am doing what I have advised many of my friends and colleagues to do over the years and that is to "take a sabbatical". Simple really, if you can. Take three months and don't agree to do anything more than you are doing right now. Live and experience the new spaces that are developing in your life. Where once there was formal work time, don't race to fill it up (if your money allows) and consider what the world has to offer that you might have missed. This is the time for an interior journey that is permissioning.

For more than 20 years I have walked in the mornings — for an hour at least five times a week. Mostly I start at 5.30am when it is dark and I walk the hills and valleys that are now familiar friends. I have found in this regular process the calming of my mind. I have trained myself when waking in the night in a cold sweat, simply to say to myself: "I will fix it on the walk in the morning". Mostly this has worked and I returned to sleep.

Facing Uncertainty



Walking has been my wellness tool.

Since my email inbox fell silent on 30 June I have hardly walked. I am not sure whether this signals a struggle with significance or, if it is my responding normally to the lack of pressure that comes with less to do and without the jolt of a fixed timeline in which to do it. I am hoping I will get the insight from this sabbatical. Time will tell.

But these are all tiny matters in a world where life is taking a spin for the worst. The heatwave in Europe is producing the highest temperatures ever. The war in Ukraine retains incredible intensity as the superpowers press with maximum power looking for solutions that will bring the warring parties to the table. Our own country has inflation rising but with an almost fully employed workforce we can't seem to pay people enough to keep ahead of rising costs. The food shortages for the poor remain at record levels and social agencies are pressed beyond their capacities. The pandemic remains determined to sneak up on us, take us by surprise.

We are living at a level of intensity that worries us — it's not within our experience and we don't like it. We want to be released from the burden but we don't seem to be able to flick the switch.

So our household has made one decision at least in this sabbatical moment. We will encourage kindness as an antidote for despair and as a remedy to dark intensity. We will personally take the time to listen to the person who is worried. We will invite those whom we have not seen for a while for a meal. We will replace busyness with hospitality. It won't stop the war or cure inflation but it will address in a small way the need we all have to be noticed. That alone is worth the effort. 🍷

Photo by Guille Pozzi on Unsplash

Patrick Snedden lives in Tāmaki Makaurau. He is taking a sabbatical after finishing his role as Chair of the ADHB. He wrote *Pākehā and the Treaty*.





Parenting & Grandparenting

MARY THORNE reflects on the experience of mutual learning from different generations in a family.

“There’s no such thing as the perfect parent”, we tell each other, our children and ourselves when we’re feeling slightly inadequate. The parental continuum reaches from the king who locked his daughter in a tower to keep her perfectly safe, to the hands-off parent who abandons most rules and boundaries to allow children free expression and trusts experience to teach them life’s many lessons.

My parenting style was towards the latter end of this spectrum. I have vivid memories of sitting with another mum in a playground while our children played, expounding my theory of not passing on our anxiety to our children, while my small son climbed to the top of the “big kids’ slide”, fell off and had to be taken to the emergency department of the

local hospital to be checked out for broken bits and concussion! He was fine but I still squirm at the memory!

Parenting Is Complex

Although loving our children unconditionally sounds straightforward, people are complex. As parents, we are on a steep learning curve. We try to foster the understanding of belonging to a larger group whose wellbeing is important. So ordinary life holds laughter, struggle and hazards. Parenthood requires constant growth in self-awareness and careful attentiveness to the particular needs of each child. The strength of our connection determines the level of influence we have over our children.

I remember assuring my sociable teenage children that I was very happy to be the Dragon Mother. It

wasn’t the least bit unreasonable to want to speak to the parents hosting the party to discuss how things were being organised and what time to collect my party attendees. And that, one day, they would thank me for this inexplicably weird behaviour. Truth is, they still roll their eyes when this comes up! But they haven’t experienced teenage offspring yet.

So, as in every other aspect of human life, we move backwards and forwards along the continuum between extreme behaviours and do our best according to the situations we find ourselves in. Learning to regulate our own emotions is the hardest and the most important lesson we teach our children.

Grandparenting Is Different

Being a granny is a whole different

kettle of fish!

I came rather late to this grandparent role. For some years my friends would assure me how much I'd love being a grandmother. "Yeah, yeah!" I'd think. "There are plenty of young people in my life whom I love and enjoy!" And there are. And I really do! But somehow, this little girl, whose name is Edie, is an extraordinary gift to the whole family.

The rhythm of my life is slower now and I no longer carry the massive responsibility of nurturing the development of my own children into mature adult human beings. There is time for meandering and contemplating. I've certainly rediscovered, in my older age, that when you hang out with little people, there is so much laughter, gratitude, hope and wonder.

Observing and participating as this little one watches, mimics and figures things out, is a wondrous experience. Edie is now three and complicated notions like relationship and gender are becoming clearer in this sponge-like, busy brain.

Some months ago, this conversation occurred between Edie and Granddad who had lagged behind on a walk. "Come on, Granddad!" "I'm coming, Edie." "Good girl, Granddad!"

But yesterday, the conversation went like this: "You're my girl, Granny." "Yes, I am, Edie. I'm your Granny-girl and you're our little Edie-girl." "Mummy's a girl, too, and Daddy's a boy." "That's right, Edie. And Granddad's a boy, too."

Today's parents seem well able to keep these emerging understandings free of stereotypical images that have, in the past, done so much damage to people's wellbeing. The breath-taking openness of a child's developing mind is precious, and vulnerable to absorbing all the nuanced information it encounters.

Our Responsibility for their Future

Along with the delight in our mokopuna/grandchildren, there is some anxiety. We see clearly that ours is a world beset by continuous natural calamity — unprecedented storms, fires, landslides, droughts, floods and

winds that destroy communities and livelihoods. In addition to this there is nationalistic, political polarisation and outbursts of hate and aggression. The human species on our planet have proliferated and consumed to such a degree that we have upset a delicate balance and radical change in our lifestyles must be implemented now. Our little ones will lead lives that are very different.

Such change can only occur if it is underpinned by mindsets that prioritise connection and empathy and we must examine whether our habits and actions demonstrate the values that we wish for future generations.

Grandparents play an important role in the matrix of memory, reflection and thoughtful engagement with the world. Less burdened by the pressures of busyness and competitiveness, they have time to tell stories and model alternate, simpler ways. Time, also, to stop and look and share in the wonder of the natural world around them.

Life-sustaining ways of living are possible if we work together, as one human family, recognising and celebrating our diversity, learning from each other's values and wisdom. This comes naturally to our children, who show us that humans are "hard-wired" to encounter each other and the world with openness and empathy. They are interested and they care about every aspect of the world they live in and the people who share it with them.

We Can Follow their Lead

No wonder it is our young people who are leading the challenging to make meaningful change today. Nationalism, clannishness and xenophobia preclude humankind working together cooperatively across all the divides that separate us. The young don't understand what it is that is stopping us from working together globally.

The recent creation of the June Matariki public holiday in Aotearoa is a great opportunity to ponder the deep meaning in our lives. Matariki is connected to life and death, planting and harvesting, summer and winter, fishing and navigation. The pre-dawn rising of this cluster of stars encourages us to remember, to reflect, to hope, to prepare and to celebrate. Tiny children, like Edie, are learning at kindergarten by singing, performing actions, creating art and sharing food. Our children will teach us!

I once learned that the most important prayer to teach children was "Wow!" It is the expression of openness and curiosity and excited anticipation of discovery. It is an expression that grows out of a worldview that feels a positive connection with all matter, from muddy puddles to rainbows.

It certainly seems to me, these days, that we must recover the child-like "wow" in our hearts, minds and spirits, to keep us moving ahead, persevering at change. Edie has taught me heaps. Perhaps the experience of being a grandparent reminds us of our own fallibility and vulnerability and we realise more clearly that all learning is reciprocal. From me, she may learn to go slowly sometimes, to go quietly and listen carefully and at other times to sing and dance and fall down laughing in "Ring-a-ring o' roses". She will learn from sitting around the table with the extended family for Sunday dinners and exploring Granny's boxes of strange, old things. From her, I learn again about the "wow" — about wonder and fun and laughter and hope. 🍷

Painting: *In Her Hands* by Kellie Edwards ©
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Mary Thorne is retired and derives great delight from exploring the inner reaches of the Manukau Harbour with her granddaughter.





CHILDREN

Our Best Hope for the Future

ROSEMARY RIDDELL shares about the hopes, joys and the reality of parenting.

I recall a conversation with my daughter in which I bemoaned the things I did or shouldn't have done as a mother. Katherine stopped me and said, with remarkable prescience: "Mum, you take too much credit for our failures."

We mothers start out with all the best of intentions for our children. We'll raise them to be loving individuals who will have a deep faith of their own and make a contribution

to society in their life's work. For our part, we won't yell at them, or ever call them stupid. We'll be endlessly patient and tolerant.

For me, that resolve weakened early, sitting night after night with our first-born, Matthew, who had colic and, it seemed at the time, rarely slept. But two daughters followed who restored my faith in the joys of motherhood. By the time they were all at school, it felt like the really good years had arrived.

They were bright happy kids, who loved to hold Mum's hand in the street, who delighted in our overseas travel, gazing out the window of our van as we traipsed through Europe. Occasionally a small voice would call out from the back: "What country are we in now?"

Different Challenges

They gave Mike and me a wealth of treasured memories. And then they hit their teenage years with a

resounding thump and life got more complicated. I had to learn not to sweat the small stuff. A messy room wasn't that important. A sulky mood or a monosyllabic reply was a stage not a permanent state. What their friends said or did held more sway than the voice of their parents. They would rather die than be seen walking alongside either parent in the street. Thankfully all this was in the days before cell phones and Facebook, but peer pressure was big.

I remember taking Polly to an evening seminar on teenagers and trying to employ the "I feel" rather than "you make me feel" mantra. But she was a bit scornful of my efforts. They didn't ring true for her. What she heard was me trying on a line I'd been fed by others.

I read a book on sibling conflict which advocated allowing them to resolve their own conflict instead of us barging in as parents. I tried it once. But our children were very articulate and the argument about who should sit on the sofa and where went on for so long that I gave up and shouted: "Both get off! Now!"

That was mild compared with what followed as each child tried to negotiate their way to adulthood. It was a rocky road and it took a toll on us as well as them. But I can say that for all their failings and heartache, Mike and I loved them.

We loved them when we hated what they were doing. We loved them when we didn't hear from them. We loved them when we longed for all this pain to end.

It often gave me an insight into what it must be like for God. That unstoppable love in the very midst of our darkness and fear. Unending love when we throw it back at God with a sneer.

We Learn and Understand

My daughter Katherine is a family therapist. She works with troubled teenagers. She understands how their brains are not yet developed, how they make instinctive decisions, not thinking through the consequences, precisely because their brain function is still in the making. Even very wise parents can struggle with an

undeveloped amygdala. But parents with struggles of their own, be it mental health issues, alcohol or drug abuse, poverty or homelessness, are way behind the starting line when it comes to addressing the needs of teenagers. Lashing out, trying to control them, hating them instead of their behaviour, abusing them, are all providing the gateway to a troubled adult lacking in the necessary skills to live a good life. And, inevitably, that troubled adult will become a parent themselves and so the whole sorry cycle will continue.

Control and Love

I have spent enough years in the Family Court arena to see the effects of parents trying to control their children rather than love them. They wouldn't say they were doing the former. In fact they would resist it vehemently. But theirs was the authoritarian approach with little room for flexibility.

**I wanted to control
their behaviour,
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so eloquently: "Ah, but
I may as well try and
catch the wind."**

I saw children crushed by the weight of their parents' expectations. Those children withdrew inwards, or had self-esteem issues, or started bullying others.

Yes, those children needed boundaries and a firm guiding hand. But love exemplified as control isn't, in my view, really love at all.

The father who insisted on early morning outdoor baths in all weather wasn't showing love, but his own distorted view of control.

The mother who fed negative stories to her child, before he went on a contact visit to Dad, wasn't exercising love, but a warped control of his mind in the hope he, too, would hate Dad as she did.

I do understand how we want to control people. A two-year-old needs

to learn a hot stove will cause pain if she touches it. We must control that behaviour.

A 14-year-old wants unlimited access to Facebook and Twitter and to socialise with people we don't think are good for him. We want to control that.

But by 14, the control methods look very different from those we employed when they were two. Subtlety is called for, coupled with a dash of cunning and laced with prayer. Oh yes: prayer, great dollops of prayer. All the prayers I threw heavenward, desperate aching prayers, some just an inward groan, others an exercise in plea bargaining. And all because I wanted this pain to go away, I wanted to control their behaviour, suggest to God a better way of doing things. But, as Donovan put it so eloquently: "Ah, but I may as well try and catch the wind."

And Now

So here I am now, my husband recently died, our daughter Polly dead some three years now. The family has been severed, leaving just Katherine, Matthew and me. Those childhood years are a memory, the hard years too. And what am I left with?

Well, by the grace of God, I can say two children who love me to the ends of the earth, who are kind and loyal, who have turned out to be just the kind of adults I had hope for. But I don't say that with any boast. I've known parents who were just as loving, who did what they thought was the right thing by their children and who never hear from them. And to them I would say, never give up. Never, never. Even if it's from a distance, we must always pray for our children, holding them up to the God who never gives up.

After all, our children are our best hope for the future. 🙏

Painting: *Collecting Pipsis III* by Claire McCall © Used with permission www.clairemccallartist.com

Rosemary Riddell lives in Otarehua, Otago. She is author of *To Be Fair: Confessions of a District Court Judge*.



Faith NEEDS Understanding

PAUL TANKARD writes that intelligent engagement on religious teachings are necessary for young people to grow in a Christian worldview for these times.

I'm a university teacher of English, and it's not my business to discuss issues of religious faith with my students. But one of the papers I teach is about essay writing, and essays are about what people think — so such issues (and many others) inevitably arise.

In my most recent class, I have had (as I always do) a number of students who've written about having come from church-going families or having been educated in faith-based schools. Sometimes it's a topic they've addressed directly, more often it's just been mentioned.

Usually, my students who've been exposed to "religion" while growing up have come to regard it as unscientific, intellectually and ethically limiting, out of step with the semi-official public pseudo-morality they've picked up from school and/or the internet and generally not worth taking seriously. I'm sure many of you with late- or post-teenage children will recognise the phenomenon.

University students as a whole are mostly bright, or at least brightish. But they increasingly know very little about many things that used to be taken for granted and in particular they know very little about the Christian faith. Given that there are still plenty of public manifestations of Christianity in our communities (such as church buildings), they are oddly uncurious. But no one will be surprised by this. If it's a problem that needs a solution,



I'm not at all sure that that solution is religious education in schools. Even when secularists allow religious education in state-based schools, it's not clear to me that it is (from a faith-developing perspective) of any real use.

Attitudes Dismissing Religion

I'm more concerned about those young adults who I've observed, who have some genuine Christian background: I'm concerned, in particular, that most of what they think they know about the propositional content of the Christian faith is wrong.

In my last class I had students from church-going families or religious

schools tell me that Christians think the world was created 6,000 years ago, that the Bible is a book of fairy tales, that all Christian people throughout history have been oppressed and uneducated, that science disproves Christianity or that Christianity is anti-science, that Christian beliefs about sexuality are uniformly negative and ignorant, that all religions teach the same things, that their parents' best advice about religious doubts is: "You've just got to have faith," etc. In other words, quarter-truths at the most, which could not bear half a minute's scrutiny.

For anyone with a sense of the Christian faith as life-enhancing, and based on teachings of profound intellectual and imaginative power, this is annoying and depressing.

Christian Students

Every year I have such students; but last year's class was a bit different, in that I also had a number of noticeably Christian students. In the discursive space that I strive to establish in class, I try to give my students the freedom to write from their own minds; so, the formal teacher/student relationship can and should become personal: because, after all, what does one write as, if not as a person?

These three students, all young women, have self-identified as Christian in things they have written freely for me for assessment. I like to think they were given the confidence to say what they think and believe, by various allusions to my own reading and experiences, and little worldview-related thoughts and observations that I drop into my lectures for the exclusive delectation of those who have ears to hear. But still, they were taking a bit of a risk.

These three have been circumspect — as one must be in the contexts of present-day secular fundamentalisms — but surprisingly articulate about the relation between their faith and world. They seem thoughtful, quietly confident, well-instructed and with a wry outlook on practising the life of faith in the contemporary world and university. They were all three among the better students — conscientious and well-organised — but also among the better writers.

Relying on Uninformed Opinions

If you look back over the things I've said I was told by students with some Christian background but who have pretty much dismissed Christianity, it will be clear that they can have never had a meaningful discussion with anyone who took Christianity seriously as a reasonable and coherent body of ideas about issues of fundamental human importance. (I am not, of course, saying that a coherent body of ideas is all that Christianity is; but it is that among other things.)

They will not, for instance, have read a single book about Christianity — a book about Church history, or Christian ethics, or the canon of scripture or of theologically-informed reflections by a contemporary Christian thinker. They will not have been told (or thought in an informed way) about the Christian view of humanity and nature, the relation between the Church and the world, the nature of good and evil, the call in Scripture to stewardship of creation, the deep psychological wisdom of the teachings of Jesus or the unfolding of salvation history.

My recent experience . . . has confirmed me in my suspicion that, while not all young people will be incipient intellectuals, many of them hunger for intellectual honesty and integrity.

What's most noticeable and dispiriting about their scepticism and what, if anything, they offer as an alternative, is how shallow it is and how inarticulate they are about it.

I would like to think that being brought up in a Christian family, or church-going, or education at a Christian school would be of some assistance in helping thoughtful young people to faith. But too often young people emerge from such experiences with (perhaps) an affection for the Church and the faith, a sense that it is comforting but vaguely childish, unmodern, something that it is right to grow out of.

Hunger for Intellectual Honesty

My recent experience of having in class a number of unembarrassed and self-identifying Christian young people has confirmed me in my suspicion that, while not all young people will be incipient intellectuals, many of them hunger for intellectual honesty and integrity.

They will notice and be impressed and moved by talk and teaching at home, school and Church which makes crystal clear that orthodox faith is for thoughtful people with a critical spirit — and not just for little children, or members of the patriarchy, or the unreflective or old-fashioned or insecure. Being engaged while growing up in such a

discourse will contribute to satisfy the deep adolescent need and desire for guidance and meaning.

Need to Engage Intelligibly

Churches and Christian people who minister to young people, and who rely mainly or solely on habit, family tradition, affection, aesthetics, sentiment, convention or personal or institutional authority to develop and nurture faith, have always been doing the wrong thing. But they are particularly doing the wrong thing today. Habit and tradition, etc. are fine things, but they cannot resist the

sustained attacks from the powerful spirits of this age. A love for Jesus can do that, but that is only likely to develop for bright young people when it is made intelligible by a Christian worldview.

Some Christian parents and institutions, concerned about young people losing (or failing to develop) their faith, will opt for taking a more relaxed and liberal approach to Christian teachings, religious practice and real-world ethics.

Faced with the challenges of the postmodern world and its strange new moralities, some will respond by simply teaching less of the faith, or teaching it with less conviction, or only teaching those aspects that conform to the climate of the times.

I don't think that this is a solution. My own observations suggest that, rather than making it easier for young people to own their faith, such an approach makes it easier for them to give it up altogether. 🙄

Painting: *Education* by Leon Zernitsky ©
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My Thoughts **Are Not** Your Thoughts



JESS shares her experience of living with Obsessive Compulsion Disorder (OCD) and how key figures in Christianity who suffered from religious scrupulosity-themed OCD have been a comfort for her.

As a young child, I was plagued by incessant, tormenting thoughts about whether I or my family was going to hell, whether I had sinned, and whether I may have accidentally blasphemed the Holy Spirit. I attempted to neutralise these thoughts, or reduce the anxiety they caused, by confessing, praying the same prayer over and over again, or seeking reassurance. When I was 15 years old, my distress culminated in an episode which was misdiagnosed as psychosis. I completely believed my

terrifying thoughts to be true. Following this, I had to take some time out of Church because it was too triggering an environment.

Like many people living with OCD, I was high-functioning and worked hard to hide my distress. I achieved high grades at university and later worked as a lawyer. It was not until my mid-20s that I learned from a counsellor that there was a name for my suffering — obsessive compulsive disorder — and that I was suffering from a common theme: religious scrupulosity. Everything suddenly made sense.

Manifestations of OCD

Everyone has occasional distressing or unwanted thoughts. However, individuals with OCD get caught in a repetitive cycle involving unwanted thoughts, feelings, sensations or urges (obsessions), and responses, sometimes purely mental, which are performed in an attempt to alleviate the associated anxiety or discomfort (compulsions).

Research suggests that OCD has a biological

component. Differences between “normal” and OCD brains can be seen on MRI and PET scans.

During pregnancy and following the birth of my daughter, I suffered from perinatal OCD. In this theme of OCD, a parent has distressing thoughts that their baby might be harmed in some way. I had countless scans during the pregnancy to provide reassurance that everything was okay. Hiding my distress at work was exhausting, and once I finished for the day I would go straight to bed.

I enjoyed my job but I did not return to work after my maternity leave. I told people this was because: "I wanted to focus on the baby." While this was partly true, the other half of the story was that I could barely function with perinatal OCD, let alone work. I became incredibly distressed about my baby's safety and would repeatedly check her fontanelle to make sure it was not sunken or bulging. My daughter is nearly two, now, and I still struggle to let anybody else drive her in the car.

Other areas of my life that OCD has manifested in are relationships (what if I am not attracted to my husband and we should separate?), health (what if I have an undiagnosed rare, terminal illness?), and contamination (chemical residue from the dishwasher tablets might cause me to get cancer in 20 years so I cannot eat off this plate).

My plea is to have compassion for people who experience OCD and resist the temptation to give advice. People are usually aware that their obsessions are irrational, but that does not mean they can just "stop thinking about it".

Learning to Manage OCD

Individuals can learn to manage OCD, but treatment is generally unable to completely cure it. Despite my treatment, I still suffer every day from obsessions and compulsions. In some cases, medication can help to decrease the intensity of the obsessive thoughts.

I am currently on a waiting list for access to Exposure and Response Prevention therapy. This gold standard treatment involves deliberately exposing oneself to situations that trigger the obsessive thoughts and refraining from performing any mental or behavioural compulsions. Compulsions feed the obsessive thoughts, so refusing to perform them helps to break the cycle.

Managing Religious-themed OCD

Experiencing religious OCD forced me to strip back my faith and question whether my beliefs were "of God" or "of OCD". I had to ask whether I was acting from a place of love or fear. In the case of compulsive prayer, it was a greater act of faith in God to not pray than to pray. I had to hold on tightly to the message of grace; otherwise, my faith would undoubtedly fail.

Embracing this place of weakness allowed me to experience God's peace, love and strength in a new way. The oft-recited passage of 2 Corinthians 12:9 – "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" – takes on a new meaning when one is truly weak. To not be able to trust one's own mind is incredibly distressing. But to know that God is not my mind, nor is God confined to my thoughts, is a comfort. I think of Isaiah 55:8: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord." I can trust God's goodness, mercy and love, regardless of what my mind is telling me.

I am also comforted by Christ's approach to his "doubting"

disciple, Thomas. OCD has been dubbed the "doubting disease" because it latches onto areas of uncertainty. I love that Christ did not condemn Thomas but allowed him to touch the holes in his hands and his side. God "remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14) and shows us mercy, compassion and endless kindness, even in our shortcomings.

Encouraged by Others

It's thought that some key figures of Christian history suffered from the disorder. St Thérèse of Lisieux, Martin Luther and John Bunyan are all believed to have had OCD. Psychiatrist, Dr Ian Osborn, argues that OCD drove these individuals to their respective positions on the grace of God. Thérèse of Lisieux came up with the "Little Way", whereby she embraced her weakness and took a childlike approach to her faith. She believed both in being "little" and in doing the littlest actions with great love. Her approach to Christianity is an encouragement to me.

Learning and Responding Appropriately

One of the most painful aspects of OCD as a mental health disorder is the lack of awareness around it. It forces me to hide a huge part of myself because, if I share it, I am met with blank faces and a lack of understanding. Or, perhaps, an insensitive comment regarding orderliness or handwashing (neither of which affect me). I long for the day where I can share that I live with OCD and be met with an understanding look and the words: "Wow, that must be really hard."

My plea is to have compassion for people who experience OCD and resist the temptation to give advice. People are usually aware that their obsessions are irrational, but that does not mean they can just "stop thinking about it". While someone may appreciate your prayers, bear in mind that God often works through doctors and mental health professionals too.

It is exhausting not only to suffer from this disorder but also to have the role of educating others. If somebody makes a comment about being "so OCD" to describe their preference for tidiness or organisation, please point out that this is insensitive and perpetuates misconceptions about OCD. 🙏

For more information visit: ocd.org.nz

OCD Awareness Week – 9-15 October 2022.

"Fixate" is a Facebook-based community for people in Aotearoa New Zealand living with OCD or supporting someone living with OCD.

Painting: *Considering* by Marie Fox © Used with permission www.mariefox.com

What does ongoing learning mean for those who experience mental distress? New Zealander Jess shares what spiritual wellbeing means for someone who lives with OCD.





AMERICA'S New Catholic Issue

MASSIMO FAGGIOLI discusses how the key role Catholics are playing in the Supreme Court and in the Republican Party is likely to affect the reputation of the Church in the United States.

The date 24 June 2022 will go down in history for the United States and especially for the Catholic Church in the country. That's when the Supreme Court ruling on "Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization" effectively repealed the right to abortion in the United States, overruling "Roe v. Wade" (1973) and "Planned Parenthood v. Casey" (1992).

The Dobbs ruling has been harshly criticised not only by the Democratic Party (the "pro-choice" party) and the feminist movements, but also by all the major medical and health associations. Important components of the business world have also signalled their stance on the issue, in a system like America's where healthcare through private

insurance is part of the employment contracts (which often means a lack of effective and timely health care for low-income workers and pregnant women).

Large companies such as Amazon, Apple, Disney and Netflix have expanded benefits to include expenses for employees and their families who will now need to travel elsewhere to access a range of medical procedures such as abortion, family planning and reproductive health.

This latest court decision is not the end of the half-century battle over abortion rights in the United States. But it marks a fundamental milestone, which is the result of former President Donald Trump's appointment of three conservative Supreme Court justices.

US CATHOLICS TAKE CHARGE IN THE CULTURE WARS

It is also largely a Catholic story, and not just because all the six justices who decided Dobbs are Catholic.

The "culture wars" were initiated by evangelical Protestants in the 1970s, but a few years later, the participation of conservative Catholics in the culture wars especially facilitated a mutation of the anti-abortion movement. What started out as a popular movement with street demonstrations ended up an elite movement that transformed the political class of the Republican Party (the "pro-life" party) and entered the intellectual and academic world.

Beginning in the 1990s, a movement reframed the relationship between the Catholic Church and

American culture in ways that have become evident in the 21st century.

Some of the leaders of the "culture wars" — pastors, intellectuals and politicians with an important following — converted to Catholicism as they saw the Church of John Paul II and Benedict XVI as the best possible home for social and political conservatives. With the overturning of "Roe v. Wade", which codified the right to abortion in radical terms, an American dystopia has ended for these religious conservatives.

However, another dystopia has now begun for those in the liberal-progressive world, who face the nightmare of Catholics who are intent to impose their morality on the entire society. The Dobbs ruling is a victory for Catholics in the pro-life political-religious movement allied to the Republican party (the "pro-life" party). But for those who defend the right to abortion this is largely a Catholic dystopia.

For many Americans and observers in other parts of the world, this American dystopia has been manufactured and engineered by the Catholic Church, or at least by conservative sectors of Catholicism and its ruling elites (including bishops and influential lay persons).

CATHOLICS RULE THE COURT

This latest ruling is the mirror image of the ideological composition of the Supreme Court today — six conservatives appointed by Republican presidents vs three liberals appointed by Democratic presidents. The six judges who chose to give back to individual States the possibility of legislating on abortion, denying that reasons of constitutional equality impose federal legislation on the matter, were raised and are Roman Catholic.

Two of those six justices (Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh) attended Georgetown Preparatory School, the same prestigious Jesuit high school in Washington DC.

Most of them in recent years have been invited to speak and received honours from Catholic academic institutions and other circles affiliated with the Catholic Church in the USA.

Dobbs was celebrated and deplored with street demonstrations from opposite fronts, in Washington and other cities, mostly without incident. But that's just the beginning.

Other rulings by the Republican majority in the Supreme Court in recent years amount to a defense of the role of Christianity in the public space (the right to pray in sporting events in public schools, public funding for Christian schools).

It is a Supreme Court that is reminiscent of the US of the 1950s and which signals an epochal defeat for the secularist front which favours a strict separation between Church and State. It is a new season of judicial activism, but no longer by progressives (as the Republicans complained until a few years ago).

The voice of the Church needs to be prophetic and sometimes unpopular on certain issues, especially on the right to life. But the question is about . . . what it means to be prophetic from what it means to be subversive of the democratic system.

Rather, this is the victory of the conservative legal movement, largely fuelled by Catholics in the law schools, in Congress and State legislatures, op-ed columnists and intellectual in-circles close to the bishops and donors to the Republican Party.

REPUTATION AND STANDING OF THE CHURCH IS AT STAKE

While some talk about a second civil war coming to America, it is unlikely that the country will go back to a 19th-century style civil conflict. However, we have already seen some signs of a resurgence of 19th- and early-20th-century-style anti-Catholic bigotry coming from liberal politicians denouncing the Dobbs ruling.

Catholics should not underestimate the key role their co-religionists are playing in this Supreme Court and in today's Republican Party, and how that is likely to affect the reputation and standing of their Church in the United States. It was a coincidence that the Dobbs verdict was published just as congressional

hearings were underway revealing the most shocking details of the 6 January 2021 attempt to overturn the result of the November 2020 presidential elections.

The hierarchical leadership of the Catholic Church in the United States, the national bishops' conference, refrained from commenting on that attempted coup. But at the same time, it's more than just a coincidence. This ruling must be seen in the context of the calculated silence on the most visible features of Trumpism, if not the embrace of Donald Trump, by important voices within the US Catholic Church.

Part of the context is also a conservative legal and political movement in the United States where conservative Catholics are mostly

absent when it is about social and economic justice, the protection of the environment, and effective gun control.

The voice of the Church needs to be prophetic and sometimes unpopular on certain issues, especially on the right to life. But the question is about the line that separates what it means to be prophetic from what it means to be subversive of the democratic system.

This is something the Catholic Church, including papal magisterium, has clearly spoken about since the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). On the one side there is a tension between conservative American Catholicism and the teaching of the Church; on the other side there is clash between American Catholicism today and its tradition.

CATHOLIC CRISIS OF FAITH IN DEMOCRACY

In the last century, Catholics in the United States worked hard and delivered on the promise to become good Americans and defenders of democracy — not just as an ideal, but

in practice, of the democratic system: from the ballot box to the beaches of Normandy during World War II.

But now there is a new Catholic issue in the USA. The crisis of American democracy is also a crisis of the faith that many American Catholics have in democracy.

The embrace of Donald Trump by influential segments of American Catholicism was partly just a cynical ploy against the Democratic Party in a two-party system. But it was also an embrace of the anti-democratic turn that has taken place in conservative circles. This represents a rejection of an important, century-long intellectual development within the Church in the United States. The acceptance of liberal constitutional democracy by the Catholic magisterium, which took place in the 1900s after centuries of antagonism between the two, is a distinctly American story — from the American exiles of Jacques Maritain and Luigi Sturzo to the contribution of American theology to the development of a modern theology of religious freedom, especially in the work of the Jesuit John Courtney Murray before and at the Second Vatican Council.

The present crisis of faith in democracy is not just rooted in the undeniable failures of the liberal order

in keeping its promises in terms of social, racial and economic justice: for Catholics, it also has theological roots.

The rejection of Vatican II has gone way beyond simple nostalgia for the pre-conciliar Mass in Latin; rather, it has taken the form of a rejection of theological and political modernity, with all that such a neo-fundamentalist and exclusivist Catholicism would mean with regard to, for example, the rights of Jews, atheists, and other Christians in society.

The Supreme Court's June 2022 ruling on abortion should not be identified with violent disruptors of the constitutional order that assaulted Capitol Hill on 6 January 2021. But it's an integral part of the larger context of growing disillusionment and distrust, if not disorderly anger against democracy that is in the heart of many Catholics.

In most cases, it is just a desensitisation of the value of democracy or an ignorance of the teaching of the Catholic tradition and magisterium about it.

REJECTING DEMOCRACY FOR VERSION OF MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY

The phenomenon of bishops, priests and Catholic theologians who sympathise with the subversion of or cynicism about democracy and the constitutional system should not be underestimated. The Catholic anti-liberal critique of democracy in the USA today is part of a larger phenomenon — a new quest for identity that takes various forms.

It can be expressed as enthusiasm for the Tridentine Mass and disgust for the conciliar liturgical reform, or an interest in countercultural communities such as those of "the Benedict Option" or other types of strategic retreat intended to prepare the counterattack.

But it can also take the form of a theo-political vision that rejects constitutional democracy in favour of a postmodern version of medieval Christianity.

It is impossible to understand the history of the reconciliation of Catholicism with democracy without appreciating the role that the United States and of US Catholicism have played in this process.

All Catholics, wherever they are in their judgement about the Supreme Court and abortion in the USA, should keep this in mind. Also because this will have effects on the entire Catholic Church. Contrary to the significance of the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960, the presidency of Joe Biden, a practising Catholic, could paradoxically coincide with a step backwards in the relations between Catholicism and American democracy as well as between American Catholicism and the papacy. This will have an influence on both the next presidential election and the next papal conclave. 🇺🇸

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Painting: *The Temptation in the Wilderness* by
Briton Rivière (1898) Guildhall Art Gallery
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Protect All Life



PHYLLIS ZAGANO writes that the abortion question may be decided politically but the real test is moral.

The late Cardinal John O'Connor of New York often said women who had abortions were "invincibly ignorant" — they did not understand what they were doing. He blamed the bishops for not teaching convincingly.

The question of abortion may be decided politically, but the real test is if morality is taught.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson* changes our politics. For nearly 50 years, *Roe v. Wade* allowed abortion across the land. Now it doesn't. For nearly 150 years before that, U.S. states made their own determinations about abortion. Now they do again.

Because the court has ordered that "the authority to regulate abortion is returned to the people and their elected representatives," a pastiche of state laws will kick in, some more restrictive than others.

Ever since the May leak by Politico of the draft decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson*, pro-abortion groups pressed their positions, for example, suggesting overturning *Roe* would put in vitro fertilization at risk, even arguing that pregnancy is bad for your health. Both are key to pro-abortion strategy.

Since September 2021, a bill called the "Women's Health Protection Act of 2022" has been sitting in the Senate. The proposed legislation allows all abortions before fetal viability and those "after fetal viability where it is necessary, in the good-faith medical judgment of the treating health care professional, for the preservation of the life or health of the person who is pregnant."

Strongly supported by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the law passed the House of Representatives by a narrow (218-211) margin. Three representatives did not vote. When it went to the Senate, the vote to proceed failed 49-51. Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia crossed the aisle to vote with the Republicans.

The Catholic Church has always allowed the "life of the mother" exception under the concept of double effect, for example, termination of an ectopic pregnancy or removal of the uterus to treat cancer of the womb.

But the "life or health of the person who is pregnant" presents possibilities for wide interpretation. On the one hand, the sentence protects the practitioner who determines the baby is dead or dying in the womb. On the other hand, it seems to allow for abortions up until the moment of birth where the mother claims a traumatic psychological condition. Or maybe she's not ill, just worried about her health.

So, what now? The Catholic Communion rail controversy can only increase. A few bishops have banned Pelosi from the sacrament in their dioceses. A few others steadfastly remain silent, about her and, perhaps more importantly, about President Joe Biden.

Biden has said he is not sure when human life begins. Before you send him a biology book, consider that he is perhaps thinking about the Catholic concept of ensoulment — not conception, implantation, quickening or viability. The Church prefers to recognise the sanctity of all human life, and there is no argument that every stage is human.

The controversy will not end soon, but if the bishops address "invincible ignorance", there may be fewer Catholic politicians supporting laws allowing abortion. Maybe the bishops can redouble their efforts to teach Gospel values. Maybe they can teach that "respect life" includes Catholic social teaching, which in turn requires just wages and proper working conditions. Maybe they can expand Church efforts to assist the poor.

Politics is not the point. The point is to make abortion unnecessary. 🕊

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Phyllis Zagano is senior research associate-in-residence and adjunct professor of religion at Hofstra University, in Hempstead, New York. Her most recent book is *Women: Icons of Christ*.



The Oars and the Stove

Michael lived with his widowed mother in a small white house near the headland.
Every day, Michael went out fishing in the boat made by his father.
Every day, Michael's mother would watch keenly for his return.

When she spotted the small boat bobbing on the sea, and himself straining at the oars, she would turn from the window and move to the stove.
She'd lovingly lie the four rashers in the pan, wait for their sizzle and spit like the tide upon sand.
She'd break the three brown eggs fresh from Hartigans hens, and watch as the golden yolks set in their frill of white.
She'd cut the four slices of white bread, lavish them with butter.
She'd make the tea.
She'd open the door to Michael and the wind or the patch of sunlight.

Every day for years and years she followed this ritual. The watching, the waiting, the breaking, the lavishing.
Every day she did this, and even on the days when she no longer saw the small boat bobbing in the waves and her son straining at the old oars.

And this is my story.

(in memory of Róisín O'Donnell, PBVM)

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Steele Roberts Publishers, 2018



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BACK from the ABYSS

FRANK BRENNAN reflects on the Australian Bishops' response at the Plenary Council to the proposal that men and women have equal dignity in the Church.

I recently attended the week-long Fifth Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic Church. I was one of the *periti* — one of the so-called experts invited to observe proceedings and to provide advice when sought. A plenary council is a legislative body of the Church.

There were up to 277 members in attendance. Those who were not bishops were able to cast consultative votes on motions. There were usually about 211 consultative voters in the room.

There were 47 bishops and “ordinaries” who held a deliberative vote. For a motion to get up, it required a two-thirds “yes” vote of those with a consultative vote and a two-thirds “yes” vote of the bishops. Members could vote “yes”, “no”, or “yes with reservations” (*placet juxta modum*, to use the technical term).

Council Began Well

The week started on a high with several motions acknowledging the place and contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the life and liturgy of the Church, and affirming their place in the life of the nation.

For example, the motion “endors(ing) the Uluru Statement from the Heart and encourag(ing) engagement with processes for implementing the statement, including local, regional and national truth-telling efforts” was passed with 185 consultative voters voting “yes”, four voting “no”, and 20 voting “yes with reservations”. 44 bishops voted “yes”, with just one voting “yes with reservations”. No bishop voted “no”. It was a

delight to hear the Aboriginal speakers on the floor of the assembly being so well received.

Stumble at Equal Dignity of Men and Women

But then came the issue of “Witnessing to the Equal Dignity of Men and Women”. This is where things went very pear-shaped.

The aim of the drafters of the motions was to reflect the concerns of Church members who over the last four years of consultations had expressed views on the need to enhance the role of women in the Church and to overcome obstacles to equality if there was to be a true witnessing to the equal dignity of men and women.

The main motion attracted 148 “yes” consultative votes, 36 “no” votes, and 27 voting “yes with reservations”. This was enough to win the necessary two-thirds majority.

But of the 47 bishops, only 25 voted “yes” with eight voting “no” and 10 voting “yes with reservations”. The vote would have required 32 “yes” votes from the bishops to succeed.

The room was dumbstruck. It wasn't only women who were in tears.

Women Refused to Continue

The assembly broke for morning tea. After the break, about 60 members, mainly women, spontaneously stood to the side of the hall and refused to take their places.

The bishops were on notice that they could not simply proceed to the next item of business. It was no longer “business as usual”.

A decision was made to listen to those who had taken a stand. Ursuline Sister Ruth Durick spoke for many when she said: “We acknowledge this as a disruptive moment which can also be seen as a gift of the Spirit. We also acknowledge the confusion caused by the number of [votes ‘yes with reservations’]. We call on the Plenary Council to affirm that the Catholic Church in Australia in 2022 will witness to the equal dignity of women and men.”

Over lunch, the bishops held their own meeting. About 90 others, including some of us *periti*, met in the library, listening particularly to the women who had taken a stand.

Bishops Asked about their Reasons

One of the members, Emeritus Professor John Warhurst, reports



the situation after lunch: "Three women members of the 'Library group' gave a comprehensive report, while Bishop Shane Mackinlay reported on how the bishops planned to deal with the situation. After he did so I rose from the floor to ask why the bishops had rejected the motions. If the Assembly did not know this, then any further discussion was fruitless and a waste of time. I continued this discussion with the top table and later with Shane himself by text. No satisfactory answer, almost no answer at all, was forthcoming from anyone in authority."

The bishops issued a media release saying: "Plenary Council vice-president Bishop Shane Mackinlay ... proposed that the members spend additional time discerning what reservations and concerns are being expressed" by the 10 bishops who had voted "yes with reservations".

Bishops Give No Reasons

So the afternoon was spent with members having to surmise what might be the reasons in the minds of the 18 bishops who had voted "no" or "yes with reservations". Not one of those 18 bishops saw fit to inform the assembly of their reservations about the motion.

Not one of those 18 bishops had the pastoral solicitude, moral courage, clarity of thought and expression to get to his feet and explain his misgivings. There was of course no legal requirement for any bishop to do so. But this was the moment for episcopal leadership. This was the moment for a pastor with the smell of the sheep to stand and lead the people from the wilderness.

It would have been for the good of the assembly and the good of the Church if even one of these bishops decided to forego the confidentiality of his vote and provide a solid basis for discussion of how things might be put right.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, later told Geraldine Doogue: "Something had to happen, not just something to be said. You see the problem with explaining the vote, you run the risk of disclosing or disrupting the anonymity of the process. That's an essential part. That was a bit of a difficulty."

In a synodal church, there are things that matter much more than the anonymity of bishops voting down a motion which would have left the plenary council saying nothing about witnessing to the equal dignity of men and women in the Church.

Everyone presumes that the major sticking point for the 18 bishops was that part of the motion which raised the possibility of women deacons. The defeated motion spoke of the Plenary Council committing the Church to "considering women for ministry as deacon — should Pope Francis authorise such ministry".

New Proposal

By Friday there were only 44 bishops voting. The new motion which passed with 37 "yes" votes from the bishops proposed: "That, should the universal law of the Church be modified to authorise the diaconate for women, the Plenary Council recommends that the Australian Bishops

examine how best to implement it in the context of the Church in Australia."

It's hard to see that the change in wording led to the mammoth change in "yes" votes. We just don't know, because none of the bishops who changed his vote thought it appropriate to tell us the reasons for the change of vote.

All other motions on Friday which were derived from the originally rejected motion on Wednesday attracted even more support from the bishops, most parts winning their approval by 43 to 1.

The bishops had clearly come to their senses, realising the enormity of what they had done on the Wednesday. Bishop Shane Mackinlay was masterful in the way he led his fellow bishops back from the precipice.

Thank God for those in the room, including some of our bishops, who witnessed the wounds and pain of the women on Wednesday, and discerned the disruptive presence of the Spirit. Business as usual can no longer mean our bishops remaining silent when they vote down a motion aimed at acknowledging the equal dignity of men and women in our Church and in society. 🙏

Sculpture Photo by Dag Heinrichowski on Unsplash

Frank Brennan SJ is the Rector of Newman College, Melbourne, and the former CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia.

Listen to full homily: <https://soundcloud.com/frank-brennan-6/homily-10722>



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Legislation to



LUKE JONES tells about his involvement in promoting modern slavery legislation in Aotearoa New Zealand.

No child should be forced to work instead of attending school. No person should lose control of their movements and finances. Everyone should be free from worldwide networks of modern slavery. These simple things should be a reality everywhere. Yet they are not. There are beautiful aspects in our world that we should celebrate and promote, there is no doubt about it. But it will take our collective aroha and passion to end terrible practices like modern slavery which leave a stain on humanity. Last month we celebrated the United Nations' World Day Against Trafficking in Persons — a day when trafficking, a significant aspect of modern slavery, is brought to the attention of global governments and they're called to combined action to prevent this obscene behaviour continuing.

Slavery denies people their freedom — it denies their human dignity. "Freedom" has become very politically charged recently. I think it has been hijacked by those not willing to do their bit to protect our community and who have displayed

extremely antisocial behaviours in doing so. It shows that people in these groups have never considered the reality for so many across the world who, quite genuinely, have had their human rights and freedoms taken from them every single day.

Getting Involved

The freedom I have now, and experienced growing up, is a privilege. And it's something that I often took for granted. Receiving an education, accessing healthcare, being paid a fair wage, controlling my activities, exploring my hobbies, are all things that we hardly give a second thought to, but they allow us to live full and happy lives.

I'm passionate about stopping modern slavery and returning freedom to those enslaved. After graduating from high school at the end of 2020, I entered the "real world". While this can be an intense thing for many, it gave me the opportunity to jump right into a mix of systemic and community advocacy. While exploring these opportunities, I began working with World Vision New Zealand. They were preparing to launch a national campaign seeking the implementation of a Modern Slavery Act in Aotearoa New Zealand. This was to address the gap in New

Zealand law which essentially allows for the exploitation of workers in supply chains. The information was startling, and something I desperately wanted to help change.

Many Support Legislation

Two years into this campaign, we have seen an incredible response from so many stakeholder groups. Everyday people, when asked their thoughts on the matter, would commonly be shocked that there aren't already such laws in place here and that the issue of modern slavery is so endemic.

Local businesses were some of the first to speak out in support of modern slavery legislation. Dozens of them signed an open letter to the Honourable Michael Wood, the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety, demanding action. We've had responses from politicians from a diverse range of political parties. This is why I can confidently say that people in New Zealand care about the well-being of the people who make the things they use and that they want to play their part in ending modern slavery. We're calling for legislation that would help Kiwis to know that the products they're buying are made by people who are treated with dignity and fairness at work.



Christchurch student **Luke Jones** is a lobbyist, community advocate, election strategist and Local Government candidate.

We Can't Ignore Slavery

For me, this issue is simple. I believe that no matter where you live, people should be safe at work, treated with dignity and rewarded fairly. Right now, modern slavery stands in the way of those things for 40 million people around the world. And here in New Zealand, we're connected to the problem. Many of the people stuck in slavery right now are producing products we use every day.

Every household in New Zealand spends on average \$34 a week on goods associated with either forced labour or child labour – that's only slightly less than we spend on electricity a week. Right now, there is no requirement for businesses to do basic checks on their supply chains. This "don't ask, don't tell" approach means that it's almost impossible for Kiwis to have confidence that what we buy and use is slavery-free.

Legislation Is Close

As I've said, the public agrees. Last year, over 37,000 Kiwis signed a petition calling for modern slavery legislation. In February this year, the petitions committee recommended that the Government bring legislation addressing modern slavery before the House as soon as possible.

On 8 April, Michael Wood announced that the government would be seeking feedback over an eight-week consultation period on a proposed law to address modern slavery and worker exploitation in supply chains and operations.

More than 2,500 Kiwis made submissions in support of modern slavery law through World Vision, calling for the government to put legislation in place that prioritises fairness and dignity for the people in Kiwi supply chains. This is not counting those who made submissions through the Government website.

Keep Government on Target

I have been beyond grateful for the opportunity to make a change in this space and will continue in my advocacy on this issue. However, the mahi is not yet done. With a General Election coming next year,



Every household in New Zealand spends on average \$34 a week on goods associated with either forced labour or child labour.



the future of a Modern Slavery Act is uncertain. It could be set aside for the sake of issues perceived to be more important. While there has been support in principle for modern slavery legislation from centre-right political figures – who knows if it will be acted on.

My hope is that the current Labour Government can have legislation passed before the end of this parliamentary term. But this will only come about through continued public pressure and advocacy. This is something we can all do! We can tell our MPs about our modern slavery related concerns. We can write to Ministers recommending they progress the legislation. These actions have a good chance of success. And that success will translate into full and free lives for those who are currently oppressed in slavery. With these immoral and broken business models which rely on slavery resolved, we can focus on moving forward on issues critical to humanity. One step at a time. 🐼

REVIEW

Being a Jesuit in Renaissance Italy

Biographical Writing in the Early Global Age

by Camilla Russell

Published by Harvard University Press, 2022. (NZD 118.02)

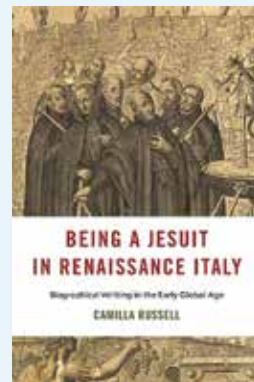
Reviewed by Peter Matheson

Who would have thought that Camilla Russell, a lay Australian woman, would be appointed Publication Editor of Catholicism's most elite male Order, and be given access to the most intimate correspondence and records of the earliest Jesuits? On top of that, she has produced a book "utterly original in its approach" tackling some of the most persistent myths about the Jesuits.

Russell unveils the dynamics of a fiercely hierarchical yet impressively dialogical system which harnessed

the very specific gifts of the gifted young men who flocked to join up, offering them alluring avenues of thought and action. Unlike other Orders, the Jesuits were out in the world, without walls, except, that is, the intricate "paper walls" of the vast web of correspondence that bound them to Rome.

Russell lets the individual voices emerge: their yearning to help souls, to find a glorious death in martyrdom. Who could forget the story of Giovanni Eliano, Jewish, fluent in countless languages, who converted to Christianity and joined the Order after encountering Jesuits in Venice. Truly a fascinating book! Not a smidgin of hagiograph. All the difficult topics are broached in this eminently readable book. 🐼



Women Join the Dicastery for Bishops



Pope Francis has appointed three women as consultors of the Dicastery for Bishops: Sister Raffaella Petrini, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, who is secretary-general of the office governing Vatican City State; French Salesian Sister Yvonne Reungoat, former Congregational Leader of the order; and Dr Maria Lia Zervino, an Argentine who is president of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations.

During the pre-conclave discussions in 2013, before Pope Francis was elected, the cardinals asked for a revision of the Roman Curia, the central government of the Church. Progress was slow, and it was not until March 21, 2022, that Pope Francis announced the changes with his apostolic constitution "*Praedicate Evangelium*" (Preach the Gospel). This document replaces the constitution of Pope John Paul II, "*Pastor bonus*" (1988).

The title Pope Francis gave the constitution emphasises that the reform is aimed at facilitating the preaching of the Gospel more effectively. Changing how the curia operates is not easy. When Pope Paul VI reformed the Curia with his apostolic constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae* in 1968, he legislated for curial personnel to have an appointment term limit of five years. This has not always been observed. However, Pope Paul VI succeeded

in making the Curia more international, especially with his appointment of cardinal prefects from around the world. However, by the time Paul VI died in 1978, only 8.62 per cent of Curia personnel were women.

The Dicastery for Bishops is responsible for overseeing the appointment of bishops in many countries around the world such as Australia. The appointment of bishops for New Zealand is overseen by the Dicastery for the Evangelisation of Peoples. The dicasteries differ because New Zealand is regarded as a missionary country. For a number of years some women have been consulted as part of the process of consultation within a diocese, but the appointment of the three women to the Dicastery for Bishops will mean that some women will be involved at the Vatican level in the process of choosing new bishops. This is a major development in appointments within the Roman Curia.

Pope Francis in 2019 had already appointed the leader of an institute of consecrated laywomen as a full member of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. Currently there are a dozen women working as officials inside Vatican departments and even more as members and consultors to various dicasteries.

In 2021 Pope Francis appointed 53-year-old Xavière Missionary Sister Nathalie Becquart as one of two undersecretaries of the Vatican's General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops. This means she holds the right to vote at the next Synod of Bishops, a first for a role traditionally held by men. Her predecessors were all bishops.

Franciscan Sister Raffaella Petrini, also aged 53, was appointed in 2021 as the new secretary general of the Governorate of Vatican City State. She oversees the administrative operations of the world's smallest state, which includes the Vatican museums, post office and police. Her appointment marks the first time a woman has held the position, which a bishop has traditionally filled.

And Daughters of Mary Help of Christians Sister Alessandra Smerilli, an economist, was appointed secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development in 2021.

Pope Francis also added in the July interview that in the future he foresees the possibility of laypeople being appointed to lead the Dicasteries for the Laity; Family and Life; Culture and Education; and the Vatican Apostolic Library.

The appointment of the three women to the Dicastery for Bishops means they will have a voice not only in the appointment of bishops, but also when the misconduct of bishops is discussed. A few bishops have personally been accused of sexual abuse, but especially since *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* in 2019, many bishops around the world have been removed for failing to act appropriately on reports of sexual abuse by clergy and religious brothers and sisters.

The appointment of the three women to the Dicastery for Bishops will not immediately change procedures and processes, but this is an important step in the involvement of women in Church decision-making. ☞



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

CHRISTIANS LIVING IN THE WORLD

The 2021 Australian Census shows that in the five years between 2016 and 2021 the number of self-identifying Christians has declined from 12.2 million to 11.1 million. That's 43.9 per cent of the population, down from 61.1 per cent in 2011. The "no religion" category has grown from 22.3 per cent in 2011 to 38.9 per cent in 2021. All the evidence points to these trends continuing.

Catholics have dropped from 22.6 per cent of the population in 2016 to 20.0 per cent in 2021, while still remaining the largest Christian community.

But what do the figures really tell us? Perhaps what's happening is that, at least at a superficial level, people are being more honest, or "authentic" to use the in-word. They're no longer pretending they belong to churches whose interiors they rarely enter.

The usual argument is that contemporary growth in the "no religion" category is the product of the secularisation that began in the 18th-century Enlightenment, when reason and science replaced faith as the dominating narrative.

Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, in *A Secular Age*, characterises secularity as the retreat of religion from public life, leading to a decline in religious belief and practice which, in turn, is linked to a change in the conditions of belief, leading to the emergence of a humanist alternative. He also argues that while secularity began among the intellectual elite, it has now spread across the whole of Western society.

One of the core issues in the culture wars is the claim that conservatives are trying to preserve the Christian message. However, as journalist Paul Bongiorno said recently, we need to make an important distinction here. It's not so much genuine Christianity that our culture is abandoning; it is "Christendom" that is being repudiated.

Christendom is what medieval people called *christianitas*, the totality of the social, religious, cultural and political realities that underpinned and constituted European society from the late-11th century to the 16th-century Reformation and beyond. Often what conservatives are trying to preserve is not Christ's message of faith commitment, but rather a largely imagined "Christian" polity.

Nowadays Christianity is just one private option among many. What's more, it's widely perceived as oppressive of women, opposing gender diversity and promoting a patriarchy leading to sexual and mental abuse. The result: faith is a purely private option that one keeps to oneself.

What is valued now is authentic individualism, equality, minority rights, this worldliness, the desire to re-imagine and re-invent oneself, all eventually leading to the discovery of one's own "meaning".

These values have both strengths and weaknesses. While

they are expressions of autonomous individualism, they are often given social expression through collectives of common interest working for justice or a perceived common good.

So what should the churches do? First, they need to understand what is happening in society before bishops and clerics rush in pretending they know both the questions and the answers. Committed Christians need a deeper, more forensic analysis of contemporary culture.

Next, we all have to recognise that Western culture has entered into a secularising process that is essentially irreversible. There is a kind of structural determinism operative, a kind of inexorable process that won't be reversed, no matter what anyone does.

So, is the situation hopeless for Christianity? My answer is unequivocally "No".

Christianity will most certainly survive and this isn't the time for pessimistic despair. In fact, it's a time when faith is being liberated from the detritus of a Christendom that weighs the churches down. The statistics will eventually consolidate and committed

people from all the churches will constitute somewhere between 10-15 per cent of the Australian population. And here it is essential that the churches unite into a genuine communion.

Christians need to recover a profound sense of freedom to discover what is essential to faith and what is mere cultural baggage that can be jettisoned. At the same time they need to embrace the extraordinary spiritual community and cultural tradition of great music, art and literature that they have inherited.

Christians need to become a committed, intentional minority whose primary task is to create the lineaments of a better society by living the Gospels and Christ's message of service to the broader community. Committed intentional communities are really the initiators and drivers of change in any society.

The fundamental task facing the churches is to live in the secular world, not in some separate spiritual sphere. The world is not "a vale of tears" and French theologian Yves Congar is absolutely right when he says that the Church is challenged "by the world to re-join it, in order to speak validly of Jesus Christ."

No one takes much notice of carping critics who have set themselves outside and "above" the mainstream community. That's a lesson Christians, and particularly church hierarchs, need to embrace. 🙏

Painting: *Potluck Mural* by David Fichter from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.



Paul Collins is an Australian historian, broadcaster and writer. His most recent book is *Recovering the 'True Church'*.



Living Into OUR FUTURE

KATHLEEN RUSHTON discusses the slave parables in Luke 12:32-48.

Painting: *The Harvesters* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder [Google Art Project]

That the universe is expanding has yet to permeate deeply into Christian understanding. Our devotional life, worship, biblical interpretation and theology are still based on presuppositions of a static cosmos. The Church continues to focus on longing for the perfection lost in the Garden of Eden and is weighed down by working towards salvation in an other-worldly heaven.

Yet science has shown beyond all doubt that our universe is unfinished and is still coming into being. The natural world is a work in progress, and so are we human beings. We are prompted to think about God and our faith in new ways — and we need not lose any of the great treasures of tradition in doing so.

Abrahamic Hope

Abrahamic hope is the hope of living into a future that will come into being by God's grace and human participation. Abrahamic hope permeates Scripture and the teachings of Jesus. In Luke 12:32-48, Jesus invites us to live with hope into the promise of God's unfolding future.

Slave Parables

Jesus tells two parables (Lk 12:36-38 about the night shift and Lk 12:42-46 about faithful and unfaithful managers) and gives two brief descriptions of incidents which need to be read as parables (Lk 12:39 the thief in the night and Lk 12:47-48a the well-informed slave and the badly-informed slave).

Three applications to the situation of the disciples



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

are clearly stated: "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit" (Lk 12:35) and "be ready" (Lk 12:40). The third, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required, and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded" (Lk 12:48b), follows Peter's question: "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or is it for everyone?" (Lk 12:41). The word slave (*doulos*) does not appear in these applications even though the images are drawn from the life of slaves.

Enslaved in the Roman Empire

To be enslaved in the Roman Empire was a matter of daily experience. These parables brutally depict that reality and the absolute power of slaveowners. After becoming prisoners in the Jewish-Roman War of 66-70 CE, many Jewish people were enslaved. Christianity spread as a house-church movement so it is likely that there were Christian communities with enslaved members.

The hymn of Philippians 2:6-10 tells us that Jesus "took the form of a slave" which makes him a companion of slaves. In being crucified, he died the death of a slave. This made the Christian movement suspect to slaveowners.

Luke's Gospel

In Luke's Gospel, we hear of God's great promise which is for slaves both male and female: God's anointed One is sent "to proclaim release to the captives" (Lk 4:18). Included would be not only prisoners of war or debt slaves but all enslaved people. Jesus proclaimed the Messianic year of release which like the vision of Mary in the Magnificat is comprehensive and worldwide. The humiliation of the lowly, which Mary embodies, has "been regarded with favour" by God. Mary calls herself God's "handmaid" (*doulē*), the term for a female slave.

The power and arrogance of the masters of the world

will come to an end. Even if the parable is only a fictional story, in this context, the slaveowner's lowering of himself in Lk 12:37 is a sign of hope.

Relationship with God

New Testament and feminist scholar Luise Schottroff suggests that the Gospels apply the slave parables to a relationship with God which the Old Testament described as "*ebed*". This word "does not mean being subjected to other human beings. It is the idea, unique in antiquity, that slaves of God reject all subjection to earthly masters."

Following this tradition, Luke's Gospel describes the children of God as God's slaves. Jesus teaches that God liberates women and men from subjugation and gifts them with the spirit of prophecy. The metaphor of "slave" of God is the opposite of Roman slavery. The *basileia* of God is the opposite of the *basileia* of Rome. As God's slaves, disciples live into God's new future having the great task of hearing and doing the word of God.

"Let your loins be girded" (literal meaning Lk 12:35), "be ready" (Lk 12:40) and God has entrusted a great task to you (Lk 12:48b) is the message of liberation and hope for the future. This message is linked to the Exodus, and addressed to us, the community of the disciples of Jesus. We are to be like the Hebrews whom, on the eve of the Passover, God instructed to tie up their robes in order to be ready to travel into a new future (Ex 12:11). A similar expression for us might be "to have our boots on" ready for action and work.

Passover and Eucharist

"Let your loins be girded" evokes how the Hebrew people were to eat the Paschal lamb while remembering their journey from slavery in Egypt. To "have them sit down" (Lk 12:37) means literally to "make them recline" on the dining couch where people ate their meals — as, for example, in the Upper Room in John 13:3-8.

For Christian communities today the Paschal Mystery of the life and death-resurrection of Jesus is celebrated at the Eucharist which not only remembers the past and empowers the present but anticipates the future and is the foretaste of a future event into which we live. Our participation in the Eucharist in the present can transform and empower us.

Reading these parables with Abrahamic hope — the hope of living into the future — invites us towards the horizon of fuller being to which God is calling us. Internally and outwardly, many Christian Churches are in crisis. American theologian John Haught is convinced that "at the bottom ... the problem is both cosmological and metaphysical." Because the Church is anchored in a "worldview that lacks sufficient hope for the world's future, it clings to a sense of being that has yet to face the fact of the world's becoming." As long ago as 1919, Teilhard de Chardin wrote: "God is as vast and as mysterious as the Cosmos" and any God who seems smaller than the world revealed by science is unworthy of our worship.

Imagining God's Alternative World

Imagination plays a vital role in our understanding of reality — ourselves, the world, the universe and God. Our imagination is the means through which we participate in reality as whole. Our understanding of the "world" is rich and multi-layered. We are missioned to the *good world*. We confront the *evil world*, resisting "all subjection to earthly masters" who exploit the Earth, human beings and the other-than-human. We seek the *alternative world* of God's new unfolding future into which we are called to participate with Jesus in God's work of ongoing creation. 🙏

7 August

RL 16th Sunday of Ordinary Time — Lk 12:32-48

RCL 8th Sunday after Pentecost — Lk 12:32-40





Isolation Offers Time

I'm writing this while isolating with COVID. I've a lot less to do than usual — my busy schedule has been temporarily set aside. It's easy to see COVID as something out to ruin my life, and to be frustrated by all the ways that isolating and lockdowns have changed plans, ruined fun activities, and made life more challenging. But I'm trying to see this time as a gift, a chance to breathe in and give time to what I might usually not give time to. This column is about some of the activities I have been using to be less frustrated and more appreciative of during this time of isolation.

Firstly, I have been able to think about friends and family I don't see every day. I have a stack of postcards written, ready to send when I'm no longer an infection risk. I've also written a few emails to friends and family with whom I've been out of touch. It has been great to call friends who are overseas; being at home means it's easier to align to different time zones.



Shar Mathias reads, writes, explores the mountains and enjoys cooking. She is an ecologist and lives in Dunedin.

Having this time is also excellent for reading, watching and listening to media. I was particularly inspired by a film about three Kiwi women who biked across Central Asia from Switzerland to Singapore. It is lovely to have the chance for some more light entertainment as well: the TV show *Everything I Know about Love*, while somewhat ridiculous, celebrates the fun and challenges of being in your early 20s and the importance of friendships that hold you together in this time. Watching a show about four girls flatting together reminds me of how much I love my flat and friends. I've also greatly enjoyed two podcasts: *Ologies*, which interviews scientists about their research and areas of interest, and *Poetry Unbound*, which sees poet and theologian Pádraig Ó Tuama interpreting poems in his gentle Irish accent.

Most importantly, I'm using this time to press pause when I'm outdoors. I love being outdoors — I can often be found running, tramping, cycling, swimming and skiing all over the show. But while isolating, I have been walking around my neighbourhood quietly. This is good because it's hard to go very fast when my nose is blocked. But walking slowly rather than speeding around gives me time to listen and look. I've been appreciating frosty grass, frozen

puddles and winter sunsets. Walking gives me reason to leave space for the "still, small voice" Elijah heard, as described in 1 Kings 19.

I don't exactly know what this still, small voice can be. Maybe it's present in the soups and cups of tea my friends have been making for me while I am sick. Maybe it's present in having long, healing sleeps. Maybe it's present in good conversations, in postcards written and the enjoyment of finishing a good book.

I'm grateful for this time, and for not being too sick (or cold, or hungry, or anxious) to appreciate it — privileges I know not everyone has. I am going to keep leaving space for that still, small, voice even as I look forward to seeing again in a week everybody who isn't in my bubble. ☕

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**"There is the Judaic awareness
that male and female walk
together in the image of God,
whereas the Catholic Church has
been hopping on one foot for a
long time." — Joy Cowley**

REVIEWS

The Pandemic and the People of God

Cultural Impacts and Pastoral Responses

by Gerald A Arbuckle

Published by Orbis Books, 2021. (USD 25.00)

Reviewed by Ruth Mather

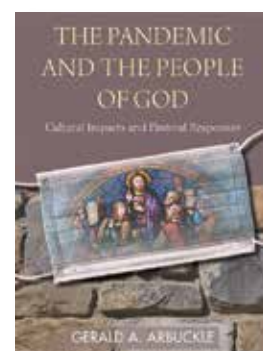
It's a cliché, but COVID has changed our lives forever. It has brought chaos to our health systems, economies and confronted many with the inherent uncertainty of life. Gerald Arbuckle, an anthropologist and New Zealand Marist priest, analyses the various responses of different countries to the pandemic; individual-oriented nations like USA and the UK, community-oriented nations like Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia and autocratic-oriented nations like China, Brazil and Russia.

He examines the issues of poverty, racism and institutionalised racism and how COVID has exacerbated the suffering of those already vulnerable from these issues.

This resonates with Aotearoa, where a disproportionate number of COVID cases and deaths affect the homeless, Māori and Pacific Island peoples.

Arbuckle turns to the story of the Good Samaritan to provide the prophetic values and action required to alleviate suffering. He proposes the creation of intentional communities, challenging institutional injustice, understanding Catholic fundamentalism and avoiding the business ethos in our ministries. As Jacinda says, be kind, and act as the team of five million (or eight billion)!

This is a book for those who work in Church structures, or want to make their parish a vibrant responder in this time of chaos, or want to understand COVID in the light of God's people. Summary and reflection questions at the conclusion of each chapter will aid such reflection. 📖



Julian of Norwich

Voice of Divine Love

by Margaret Paton RSJ

Published by St Pauls Publications, 2022. (AUD 24.95)

Reviewed by Helen Bergin

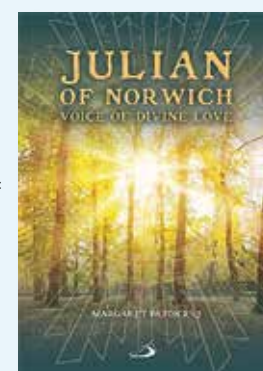
Julian of Norwich: Voice of Divine Love reveals careful scholarship and is creatively presented.

I must admit that my first impression of Paton's chapters suggested that her text would be "a breeze". I was happily mistaken. I found particularly helpful Paton's reflections at the close of each chapter, inviting the reader to respond personally to a question focused on a theme — Mary, the Trinity, prayer and bliss, among others.

Second, Paton's choice of a "monstrance" as a

background sketch and prayer concluding each of the 20 chapters did not initially excite me. In fact, I felt like an intruder into another's prayerful space. However, the monstrance seems to be an image of Paton's engagement with the divine, and it is that relationship which is pre-eminent.

Third, Paton's study offers readers a way into understanding Julian of Norwich when they may not have access to the longer manuscripts. Nevertheless, after reflecting on Paton's book, readers may well be encouraged to seek fuller and further studies on Julian, such as Paulist Press's *Julian of Norwich: Showings*. 📖



Mary's Boy, Jean-Jacques

and Other Stories

by Vincent O'Sullivan

Published by Te Herenga Waka University Press, 2022. (NZD 35)

Reviewed by Marie Skidmore

The title for this collection of stories comes from the novella at the end. It imagines that the creature in Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein* is rescued from Arctic ice by two English officers who, though they have differing philosophies, are together circumnavigating the globe. They After reading *Frankenstein* they reconsider their charitable deed — deciding on a solution to their problem when the ship visits Fiordland. This is when the captain's ambition to follow in Cook's footsteps and the lieutenant's obsession to capture a moa are explored.

There are six short stories in the collection. Each packs a punch with layers of family, memories, relationships and history. O'Sullivan takes the reader into other hearts and minds — we are often taken to an unexpected place. Many of these stories are clearly located in New Zealand and encourage deeper consideration about life.

I found it difficult to put down this book. Vincent's stories explore the human condition in his skilful, almost lyrical style, which evokes empathy, surprise and delight.

I wholeheartedly recommend *Mary's Boy, Jean Jacques* to anyone interested in exploring our common humanity. 📖





McCurry

The Pursuit of Colour

Directed by Denis Delestrac
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

I've been fortunate to see and review two outstanding documentaries about photographers over the last couple of months. Following *The Velvet Queen* (TM June 2022), this study of American documentary photographer Steve McCurry was screened in the 2022 Resene Architecture and Design Film Festival and is available on at least one online streaming service.

Famous for his iconic image of an Afghan refugee girl with piercing green eyes, as a young man McCurry determined to shape a career around his creative instincts and liking for solitary adventure. From his base in New York City, he began travelling the globe as a freelance photographer, gradually picking up commissions from the likes of *National Geographic* magazine and Magnum Photos. The film tracks him as he returns to the scene of his earlier work (Afghanistan) or similar places (Syrian refugee camps) where he "reshoots" his most famous images decades on.

Inspired by New Zealander Brian Brake's 1960 photoshoot of the Indian monsoon published in *National Geographic*, McCurry travelled through Indian and Pakistan, then into Afghanistan,

where he was embedded with the mujahideen. His images of wounded soldiers and civilians in Afghan hospitals collectively form a powerful anti-war statement. A procession of shattered figures meet the viewer's gaze, imploring our concern.

Always on the move, McCurry's coverage of conflicts in the Middle East include apocalyptic images of burned-out tanks and strewn corpses against a backdrop of flaming oil wells. Not all he sees is horror: camels silhouetted against plumes of desert fire appear engaged in a macabre but hauntingly beautiful dance.

Seemingly a confirmed bachelor, McCurry married an indigenous Hopi woman in later life. The respect for the land and its creatures he shares with her marked a new phase of his career

as he turned his lens to animal subjects. 9/11 triggered his latest foray into war photography, with much of his footage shot from his New York apartment.

Despite his new interest in wildlife, the images McCurry will be remembered for are his soulful portraits and vibrant crowd scenes, full of action and saturated colour, inspired by his early encounter with Brake's work. McCurry avoids the mistakes of many Western photographers visiting "exotic" settings, where it is all too easy to patronize one's subjects by failing to enter their world. Rather, he shows respect for those whose images he captures, inviting us to share his compassion for the impoverished and war-weary of this world who might otherwise elude our privileged gaze. ☕



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Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins



We are on the slow haul out of winter. The nights continue long and cold, the days are still short and often grey. What a joy it was to welcome Matariki with its celebration of lights, its family/whānau gatherings, its sharing of remembrances of the year gone by and promises of the year to come.

With things looking grim on many fronts, let's hold on to the promise that we can build towards a better world over the next year. Here are three recent signs of hope.

The diocesan summary documents of the synodal process have now been published on each diocesan website. They are worth reading. The degree of congruency across them is profound. It's clear that those who participated in this process of prayerful discernment warmly welcomed the opportunity to do so. It's also clear that Catholics have taken seriously the call by Pope Francis to "scrutinise the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel." The result is a compelling vision of a welcoming, inclusive, participatory Church with a renewed model of leadership and an urgency to be out in the world on Christ's mission of love, truth, justice and peace.

Secondly, the launch on 1 July of Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand) and Te Aka Whai Ora (the Māori Health Authority) addresses at last the inequitable health outcomes Māori experience compared with non-Māori in Aotearoa. Far from creating separatism, as some

politicians have claimed, this new arrangement sets out to deal with the actual separatism that has existed in our health system for far too long, in which appalling inequities produce tragic consequences: Māori experience higher mortality from many cancers, shorter life expectancy, and inequitable access to healthcare overall.

The new authority's chief executive Riana Manuel (Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāti Maru, Ngāti Kahungunu) has stressed that a kaupapa Māori approach is not a Māori-only approach. She observed to news website *Stuff*: "If you look at the COVID response, it wasn't just

Māori who were seeing the benefits of our kaupapa Māori providers who were out there in the car parks, at the marae, providing care for people at a time when everything else closed down. There they stood, rain, hail or shine, and they were there for everybody. That's the real beauty of what we'll do in the Māori Health Authority." This is about doing health differently to include rather than exclude people.

Finally, the recent UN Ocean Conference 2022, brought together over 6,000 participants. In host country Portugal. More than 150 Member States made voluntary commitments to protect 30 per cent of national maritime zones by 2030, reduce plastic pollution, increase renewable energy use, and allocate billions of dollars to research on ocean acidification and climate resilience.

These are all signs of hope. In each case, there is a recognition that "business as usual" is unsustainable and damaging. In each case, voices long unheard are being heard at last. But none of these initiatives offers a guarantee of transformation. For that to happen, the marginalised need to be empowered to speak, and those in power need to listen, to collaborate and to support new ways of being and doing. 🙏



TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

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

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

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EVENTS AUCKLAND/WELLINGTON 18/9/22
PLEASE KEEP SENDING YOUR SHOES AND STORIES

SEND US YOUR SHOES OR STORY

Attach a tag to the shoes with your first name and a line or two about YOU and your journey with the Church. Anyone can participate. No spare shoes? Just post your story.

We need the shoes by 31 AUGUST. Post to:

Pink Shoes into the Vatican Project
26 Hopkins Road
RD6, Hamilton 3286

BE THE CHANGE

www.bethechangecatholicchurchaotearoa.wordpress.com



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

The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters while keeping the meaning.

Opinions in letters are not necessarily those of the Magazine.

FRANCIS'S AMORIS LAETITIA WORTH STUDYING

In the conclusion of her wide-ranging article on families (TM May 2022), Mary Betz comments: "The people of God need thoughtful, inclusive theologies and guidelines". I suggest that in *Amoris Laetitia* Pope Francis provides both.

In Art. 203, Francis reminds us that he is here quoting "many Synod Fathers". These are the bishops representing countries from throughout the world, including Francis himself. They are the voice of the universal Church: they insistently affirm that pastoral discernment must take into account that many people live in very difficult circumstances which so severely limit people's decisions and actions that their best option must often be an imperfect one; and they cannot be held responsible for their imperfect life situation.

In Art. 303 Francis makes this position even clearer with his statement on conscience: "Conscience can do more than recognize that a given situation does not correspond objectively to the overall demands of the Gospel. It can also recognize with sincerity and honesty what for

now is the most generous response which can be given to God, and come to see with a certain moral security that it is what God is asking amid the concrete complexity of one's limits." Francis also points out that he refers to "relationships which do not objectively embody our understanding of marriage" though no true relationship is excluded.

Francis is presenting a guideline that is breathtaking in its radical inclusiveness, its complete acceptance that every person in the world has her or his own individual pathway to God. And Francis restores conscience to its rightful position as supreme guide of our decisions and actions on our pilgrim way.

Jim Howley, Auckland

NO WOMEN PRIESTS PLEASE

Although I am a woman I'm not in favour of women priests. Reasons: our Church uses symbolism in many rituals and traditions. In several places in Scripture the Church is referred to as the Bride of Christ. I believe that in the Mass the priest represents Christ. With the priest a male, that symbolism is upheld. If the priest is not a male that symbolism is lost.

David More (TM Feb 2022) states the Church is out of step with society by not allowing women to be priests. We do not live in a Christian society but in one that accepts sexual immorality, and particularly with regards to women, immodesty in dress and abortion. Jesus and his followers were out of step with their society. I fear many Catholics in Aotearoa are not distinguishable from anyone else. Most of us know that Baptists and other Protestant denominations do not drink alcohol. What distinguishes Catholics besides having no women priests?

I have no problem with our Church having married priests, or women as permanent deacons. Will ordaining women solve the shortage of priests? It may split the Church. I hope the Synod restructures the Church so that members are encouraged to live as true Christians and not conform to our society's norms. That environment may produce our priests.

Kaye Kenrick, Dunedin

REVIEW

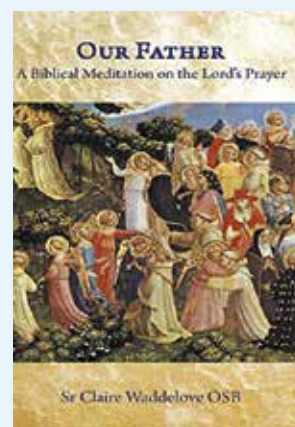
Our Father A Biblical Meditation on the Lord's Prayer

by Claire Waddelove OSB

Published by Gracewing, 2020.

(USD 17.95)

Reviewed by Teresa Hanratty



Our Father: A Biblical Meditation on the Lord's Prayer reflects Claire Waddelove's deep knowledge of Scripture, liturgy and theology as resources for prayer, belief and daily living. The book draws from both the First and New Testaments based around the Lord's Prayer. The scriptural texts are to be read slowly following the Benedictine tradition of attending with the eyes and ears of the heart.

The Introduction describes meditation as *Lectio Divina* or Sacred Reading. Claire quotes Cardinal Sarah's description of *Lectio Divina* as "a moment of silent listening, contemplation and profound recollection in the light of the Spirit."

Each chapter title is a line of the Lord's Prayer. Claire uses prayer from the Mass, commentary, (often quoting scholars such as St Benedict, Pope Benedict XVI and Church documents) and biblical quotes as the basis of the meditation.

Our Father is only 188 pages. I found some of the non-inclusive language jarring. Those who wish to pray with the Scriptures could read the book in short excerpts. It would be a useful resource for a small prayer group. 🙏



Looking OUT and IN

Our whole household was bundled up with COVID-19 last month. We were exhausted and irritable and several evenings we were all ready to go to bed at 7.30pm. I was grateful that we all got sick at the same time so our isolation period was limited, but most of all I really appreciated the gestures of kindness by people in our community.

Friends up the road dropped us a box of vegetables and fruit (traffic lights of green broccoli, red peppers and orange mandarins). Someone from my office put a tin of lemon drops in the letter box, saying she found them soothing for a sore throat. My mountain biking friend Emily lent us board games and a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle. I was happy to receive texts and emails from family and friends from far away. Church friends made us carrot soup and a date cake which turned out to be perfect for COVID fighting. Although it was a week of feeling grotty, I was reminded of how many good people are part of our lives and how privileged we are. It has been over two years since our family returned to Ōtautahi from our years overseas. All the thoughtful generosity we experienced that week with COVID helped me notice communities that I am becoming part of.

Community is one of my favourite words in the whole wide world. It is central to my work, in community mental health. Community suggests a group of people who share something in common (the place they live, a shared interest

in coin collecting), and also proposes communities as groups of people who do things together. Communities require that we are in relationship with other people, and that we share some level of mutual interdependence. Community is undergirded by other words like collaboration, forgiveness, faithfulness and connection.

Richard Powers' novel *Overstory* has been one of my best reads this year. Through a fascinating story of people who work together to protect trees, it also tells of how trees, like people, are rooted in connection and community. The intertwined roots of trees act as a form of communication that exchange carbon, nutrients and communications through fungi that are symbiotically part of trees' root systems (mycorrhizal networks). This "wood-wide web" as some biologists have named it, serves trees so that when one tree is sickly, other trees will pass on nutrients. Plants attacked by browsing animals or disease send chemical distress signals into the air which provides an early warning so that other trees have time to ramp up their own defences. I love it that communities are active in the worlds of plants and animals as well as humans.

But unlike trees, we're sometimes more connected to people on the other side of the world than to the people who are geographically nearby. Community is more vast than what's right around us. The trinity of God (the Parent, Jesus the son and the hovering Holy Spirit) is in relational community with each other and with all people. At all times and places. I am always part of the community of living beings in this beautiful Earth. I can hold onto the fact that I cannot fall out of the community of relationship with God. In *World as Lover, World as Self*, Buddhist teacher Joanna Macy reminds me that I can never fall out of the vast net of life: "Out of that vast net you cannot fall . . . No stupidity or failure or cowardice can ever sever you from that living web."

Te ao Māori acknowledges the breath of life expressed on the paepae/orators' bench during mihimihi/speeches or whai kōrero/themes of discussion. Strangely, the nasty beastly of COVID has underlined to all humankind that we are linked, and our exhaled clouds of breath affect one another. We, all humankind, are one community. Tihei mauri ora! 🙏

Kaaren Mathias lives in Ōtautahi. She cooks naan on a barbeque, forages for free fruit, mentors public health doctor trainees and talks to friends in India.



Bless us God of all generations
with openness, integrity and wisdom
in nurturing our tamariki
in faith that seeks understanding
in hope that compels participation
and in love that never ends.

From the Tui Motu Team

Photo by Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock