



# Tui Motu

InterIslands

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Growing gorgeous  
boys into good men

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Cover photo: Mary Ann Bishop

## Educating teenagers

At the beginning of this year young people are much in the news. A couple of brutal homicidal assaults by 16-year-olds – and the talk back pundits have a field day. Our political leaders vie with one another for knee-jerk solutions. Meanwhile the schools are starting afresh and the tertiary institutions fill up. A *Tui Motu* focus on youth is timely.

The scene is by no means all negative. Starting with Jim Consedine opposite, our writers dismiss the punitive solution. The source of the trouble lies in *adult* stupidity, or outright corruption, or simply neglect.

We have major interviews with former prison governor Celia Lashlie and experienced Auckland school counsellor, Fran Cahill. Celia's question regarding wayward boys is simple: *where are the Dads?* Young people need love and attention, but they also need firm boundaries. For adolescent boys, these should be provided by fathers and male teachers.

Fran looks at pastoral care in some of our large urban co-ed high schools. She gives case histories and analyses some basic causes of trouble, besides offering solutions.

The really good news lies in the largely unsung stories of parents, teachers and youth workers who lavish time and love in all manner of generous projects: youth clubs, sports coaching, outdoor pursuits, cultural activities. We print a really admirable initiative from Christchurch (pp15-19), but coming originally from St Peter's College,

Auckland. This concept exposes young people to a third world culture, giving them opportunities to serve the least fortunate. The generosity of adults in organising ventures such as this is commendable. The Indian experience is something these teenagers will learn from and never forget.

Another piece comes from Aquinas College in Tauranga, where the DRS offers a way of weaving the message of Waitangi Day with Jesus' 40 days in the desert. We hope these stories may inspire other schools and groups.

Finally, a less edifying observation from nearer home. Each year the University of Otago commences with a dubious ritual known as Orientation. While there is much harmless fun and high spirits, new students are also initiated into a culture of booze and vandalism, which gets worse by the year. The streets around student pubs become paved with broken glass and vomit – giving the new 'crime' of tagging a novel meaning. Long suffering citizens have their sleep disturbed and their city made grubby.

Who is to blame? Primarily the University authorities for permitting such a disgusting culture to develop; the 'hospitality industry' who profit by it; and the state for the system of student loans. And ourselves for continuing to tolerate alcohol abuse – a curse in Western society, but especially here in New Zealand.

How fortunate that in this Election year we shall soon hear wise solutions to all these problems!

M.H.



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

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# Giving Youth a Chance

Both major political parties have recently released policy regarding young people and what they would like to do about problem areas. Problems associated with disaffected youth are not new. Aristotle complained about them nearly 3000 years ago. But it seems they do get more complex with each passing year, as our society goes global and continues down its destructive path of seeking primarily economic and material success while knocking spiritual values and options.

Our dominant philosophy of ‘personal freedom’ leaves the whole area of what constitutes the common good of humanity virtually untouched. In this country, these past 40 years have seen a massive shift in consciousness about what constitutes a good, fair, just and stable society. The prevailing ideology indicates that individual rights rule. Power, advancement and prestige lie with the elite – primarily with successful individuals.

We are now reaping what has been sown. We have developed a society where alienation is widespread, particularly among youth. Belonging is no longer an automatic component of their lives. Yet it is what all long for. There are more than 80 youth gangs in South Auckland alone. Gang culture is mainly about belonging.

The competitive education policy of *Tomorrows Schools* produces some winners and many losers. There are also nearly 5000 teenagers under 15 years of age who don’t attend school. Their number is rising by eight percent per year. Principal Youth Court judge Andrew Beecroft describes them as “unexploded human time bombs”.

There are several thousand young drivers who delight in hooning around in souped-up cars and annoying their neighbours. They too seek to belong. There are those who tag indiscriminately, subjects of a recent government initiative. They tag to belong. The list could go on.

The society we have created is a long way from the Christian vision of the Scriptures and contained within so much of the social teachings of the Catholic Church. There, we are commanded to build a world where God’s justice is the prevailing ethic and not an optional extra. There, individuals are placed within the context of the wider human family. The poor and the disadvantaged have a particular focus.

The Scriptures are all about relationships with the community and with God, not individuals. Yet often the churches themselves are dominated by the individualistic ethic. Try a small litmus test: *how many parishes do you know that have active social justice committees?*

So what did the major parties offer regarding youth? Sadly, very little that attacks the root causes of the issues. Largely the political focus has been on the culpability of the young people rather than any reflection on the sort of world adults have made for them.

It is election year and, as is the custom, each party wants to ratchet up penalties to appeal to the punitive negative side of voters. Showing toughness with miscreants is part of perennial political posturing. During its nine years in office, *Labour* has expanded the youth prison system as well as doubling the adult prison population. That has been an expensive miscalculation and disastrous policy for the thousands affected.

Like *Labour*, *National* wants more education for longer. Their financial entitlement carrot may not be enough. Getting young people to stay in education longer could be a pipe dream for both parties. *National* have spent some time saying that they weren’t advocating ‘boot camps’ for youth offenders – a 1980s’ policy that failed dismally, yet has appeal to those seeking simplistic solutions. They may yet categorise 12-year-olds as adults, a favoured *New Zealand First* policy with no merit.

Obviously, there is no silver bullet. Getting the right philosophy (and theology, for those of faith) is the first necessary step to positive policies. Public discussion about non-violence could be a good start. Everyone screams about the violent culture we live in.

Where is the discussion about non-violence and non-violent strategies? Develop a bigger range of youth work schemes and more apprenticeships. Subsidise them if necessary. Why not, if the social benefits are positive? Train more community and youth workers on the ground to engage the disaffected.

And provide better resources for family group and restorative justice conferences. These processes are a modern application flowing from Christ’s Death and Resurrection inviting accountability, respect, a change of heart, forgiveness and healing. They are the Christian option. Make restorative justice processes mainstream and an alternative to retributive justice.

But please – no more prisons; no boot camps! Let’s bury the philosophy of vengeance forever. It is destructive and unchristian. It has never worked. Let Christians operate from a life of creative faith, not punitive ideology. And let the whole nation benefit.

*Jim Consedine*



## Paul VI

I have not ever thought much about the role of Paul VI in the church. Indeed, any opinion I had was rather negative.

So, thank you for the splendid article on this much maligned Pope (*TM Feb. pp 12-14*). What a remarkable leader of the church he was, inheriting the flood of new thinking released by John XXIII, and then incorporating those ideas. I also liked your comparison of Paul with previous and succeeding pontiffs.

Mary King, Dunedin

## No lasting city

In your February issue two articles seem to me to miss the truth. Zella Horrell (*pp4-5*) writes about the 'identity crisis' we are all experiencing, and I think wrongly attributes this to the breakdown of home life, so that we become unable to say: "I belong here". The article about Bruno Forte (*pp 6-8*) also suggests something similar: "There arises a nostalgia for a hidden face, the need for a common homeland to give horizons of meaning without violence."

I can understand what these writers are saying, but feel that they are misleading their readers. Horrell claims that "being rootless causes deep unhappiness – being rootless also hinders the development of an identity", overlooking the need we all have to plumb our own depths, our deep unhappiness, our innate rootlessness, in order to come into our full identity. Forte misuses the story of the Lost Son, placing emphasis on the prodigal son's return to the loving father, rather than on the prodigal father welcoming his unscrupulous son.

These ideas seem to me to lead backwards, away from the Christian gospel, to a warm cosy traditional family environment in which we will all feel at home. Surely it is only in the context of our recognition of rootlessness that we are able to "struggle with time, success, sexuality,

## letters to the editor

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

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

confidence, role, ideologies and leadership".

The New Testament is full of suggestions that point dramatically away from homelike churchy cosiness. I quote the following, for example: *Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the child of humanity has no home, no place to lay his head*; and *Anyone who obeys my Father in heaven is my brother, sister and mother*. Rejection by the world, the painful way of the cross, is the only route to our real identity as adult and free children of God. *Here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come*.

Forte says: "Rejection of father-mother stems from a basic need to find independence, to escape from being possessed, enslaved or dominated." Yes! and I believe that in this modern world we are particularly fortunate in finding ourselves alienated from the cosy, enslaving family, and thus forced by our rootlessness to look for the city of God. Certainly there are going to be casualties along the way; but the coddling of those who are struggling for their own identities in a 'return to the church' leads only to the church's abandonment of its true role in the world.

Ian David Beattie, Nelson

*While the 'city of God' will always contrast with worldliness, is there never an experience of it on this earth? See Acts 2, 44-47 and 4,32-37. –ed.*

## Dawkins and Darragh

Thanks to Neil Darragh for his recent review (*TM Feb. pp 28-9*) of Richard Dawkins: *The God Delusion*. Dawkins makes atheism into a fundamentalist

religion, and I am at a loss to know why he gets so much attention.

Rather, I propose for readers' interest some books which are not biased nor bigoted. They are all written by world class scientists. Many have received the prestigious Templeton Prize.

*Religion in the age of science* (Harper 1990), by Ian Barbour.

*Nature and God* (Westminster 1965), by L Charles Birch.

*God and the New Physics* (Penguin 1983); *The Fifth Miracle* (Simon & Schuster 1999); *The Goldilocks Dilemma* (Allen Lane 2006); *The Mind of God* (Simon & Schuster 1992).

All by Paul Davies.

*Deep Simplicity* (Penguin 2005), by John Gribbin.

*The Promise of Nature* (Paulist 1993); *Deeper than Darwin* (Westview 2003); *Mystery and Promise: a Theology of Revelation* (Liturgical Press 1993); *The Cosmic Adventure* (Paulist 1984).

All by John Haught.

*Science and Belief* (Sapientia 2005), by Peter Hodgson.

*What is Process Theology?* (Paulist 1975), by Robert Mellert.

*Paths from Science towards God* (Oneworld 2002), by Arthur Peacocke.

*Beyond Science* (Cambridge Uni 2006), by John Polkinghorne.

*At Home in the Cosmos* (Orbis 2001), by David Toolan.

*God, Faith and the New Millennium* (One World 1998), by Keith Ward.

Bosco Camden fms, Mangere

## The Pope & paedophile clergy

I have not heard mention here of a report from *The Australian* (Jan 8) that Pope Benedict has instructed Catholics to pray in perpetuity to cleanse the church of paedophile clergy.

Each parish or institution is to designate a person or persons or group to pray that the church rids itself of the scandal of sexual abuse by the clergy. There is no known precedent for a call for global prayer on a specific issue such as this.

Lance Bardwell, Dunedin

# The 'Sacred Cow'

## *a response*

*In November '07 Tui Motu Wendy Ward wrote from the King Country a critical piece using Scripture parallels – “The Golden Calf” – on the rapid growth of dairy farming throughout New Zealand.*

*Two dairy farmers from Kaeo in Northland claim right of reply.*

*This creation that lives and moves is to provide food for you. I make it all over to you by the same title as the herbs that have growth, I have now given you everything. (Genesis 9,3)*

Ancient Biblical texts can indeed inform our modern lives. As dairy farmers we note that Moses was given by God “a beautiful spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3,8). And indeed New Zealand is enjoying the fruits of this land of milk and honey.

Surely it is a time to celebrate the best payout dairy farmers have received in 50 years. Rejoice with us dairy farmers who are now receiving the fruits of our hard work and commitment by producing food. Remember that this wealth permeates the economy in all sections of the community and regions throughout New Zealand to the benefit of all.

New Zealand has a dairy herd population of 5.2 million cows who produce 5.2 million calves annually. The excess 4 million calves cannot be pastured and reared on current grassland area. They are slaughtered at the freezing works where every part of them is sold overseas, again to the betterment of our economy.

It is naive to suggest that every calf must remain with its mother. This is emotional and romantic propaganda. Biblical texts tell us frequently that calves, lambs, bullocks and goats were slaughtered and sacrificed to the Almighty.

Surely it is not appropriate to compare milk with gold. Milk is food, and grass is milk. The land is being used to produce food; it is not being plundered. The people who farm this land care for it and the stock on it. It is they who fence the bush, who keep the streams clean, who plant trees, who kill possums and look after the kiwi.

They have a vested interest in making sure it is a renewable resource. Good animal husbandry is essential for sustainable dairy farming. Farmers are mightily aware of their responsibility to the environment and every farmer is conscious of this in his daily workplace. Fonterra leads

the way in promoting sustainable productivity. Fertiliser companies promote nutrient budgeting to reduce the excess use of superphosphate.

British farmers have been forced from their land and out of productivity by the supermarket conglomerates, not by farming practices. Minimum prices are paid for product and excessive profits paid to shareholders. The British dairy farming industry is almost defunct, causing the Anglican Church hierarchy to speak out publicly about the plight of the British farmers.

Dairy farming is transforming the pumice land of New Zealand bringing in families, employment, schools are growing not closing. The South Island similarly has had a resurgence.

We are disappointed that the lift in dairy farming incomes has not been well received by the New Zealand community, starting with Mr Bollard, the Reserve Bank governor, who castigated the dairy farmers for causing inflationary pressure.

The Green Party is pushing for farmers alone to pay for the effects of climate change. The 11,000 dairy farmers produce 13.5 billion dollars for the New Zealand economy and are amazed and disappointed that this attitude should prevail among the non-farming public.

Rather than castigating dairy farmers for “chasing gold”, the more worrying aspect is the growing lack of food production worldwide. Millions of hectares of maize in the USA are going in to fuel production, millions of hectares of sugar production in Brazil are going into fuel production, wheat is being grown for fuel production. These changes are limiting food production worldwide so that globally, famine is imminent.

“The world is running out of food. In the last six out of seven years, it has eaten more than it produced”, says Mr Bernard Card, NZ Institute of Primary Industries Production. (*Rural News* 412)

*Morris and Margaret Pepper*

# Growing gorgeous boys into good men

Celia Lashlie

*Celia Lashlie admits loving adolescent boys as a species  
– but she knows well how vulnerable they are while growing up.  
Her experience working in prisons and in single-sex boys schools  
convinces her that what boys need most is a firm but loving male  
presence to launch them into responsible adulthood*



## Men and boys

Celia Lashlie maintains that for young men to grow effectively through adolescence into manhood, the influence of the father is crucial. “Many boys I observed for my book,” she says, “spoke freely about what mattered to them about their fathers – or what they missed from them. Many men are either missing altogether or are ‘emotionally absent’ because of their own inadequacy.

“The boys yearn for their fathers to ‘see’ them; they want their dads to enter their world. A father may be all too keen for his son to follow him into

his world, but when the boy says: ‘Come and see my mate’s car, Dad’, Dad’s not interested. When his father rebuffs him, a boy is heartbroken. In effect, the father is saying: ‘If you want to talk to me you have to be interested in what interests me’.

“As regards the schools the boys go to, one key issue is to get more men back into teaching. The boys’ schools

I visited had mostly male teachers, but the co-eds have fewer and fewer male teachers. Primary schools are even worse off. The men are pulling out – and for all the wrong reasons. We have taken ‘risk’ out of the lives of boys; every man is seen as a latent paedophile; we have created environments where many men become so frustrated they walk away. The pay factor is there, but I don’t think the economic issue is the driving one.

“I think the key issue for male teachers is the paedophilia scare and the ‘no touching’ regime. They feel it is now dangerous just being there for kids.

They no longer dare to hug a child who has fallen over. Men are naturally physical, and boys love men. They will happily climb all over them. And of course the men teachers really fear accusations from young girls.

“I say to the teachers: ‘talk about what constitutes good male touch and get on with it. Ignore the PC rubbish!’ I observe how very skilled male teachers do employ touch. They simply go ahead and do it. Physical touch, whether it be a headlock they might put a boy in or simply a hand on the shoulder, is a huge part of healthy communication with boys. The physicality of boys means they need that touch more than girls do. It doesn’t need to be a deep and meaningful hug! Boys – men! – often punch each other for fun.”

## Problem children

Celia Lashlie spoke with feeling about the prevailing political climate. Both political parties favour competitive funding in schools and have layered it with bureaucracy.

“As a country,” she says, “we are focused on a philosophy of ‘user pays’. There is no generosity any more. The old adage

was: *it takes a village to raise a child*. New Zealand has lost its 'villages'. We have lost our sense of connectedness with one another. Relationships have become diminished.

"We need to start again at the beginning. We should be funding Plunket nurses and the equivalent Maori services. These are the only women who can get into the kitchens of the homes where there is real need. But the current funding mechanism allows these women 15 minutes per visit and no longer. The families at risk may have 20 agencies dabbling in their lives – but no one who is actually there for them when they really need someone.

"It is easy to identify 'at risk' families; we need a case worker to go in and sit with them, then negotiate for them with government agencies. We have become a society that goes in and preaches to people what they should be doing – instead of helping them.

"Take the extreme case of a child who has been physically harmed: if the mother had been persuaded she was the most important person in that child's life, that child would not have been left in the hands of the wrong person, who then proceeded to harm the child. The mother herself may have come from a situation where her decisions and opinions did not matter.

"In Polynesian families we need to find the matriarch of the extended family, make use of her and work with these families in a prolonged, sustained way – properly resourced, working to bring about change.

"In New Zealand we are locked into a system of three-year election cycles, six-month funding cycles before someone demands accountability for spending. The general public has become a nation of bleaters. We fear to take risks. And more than anything, we lack moral leadership. The politicians are forever covering their own backs or 'hanging the bureaucrats out to dry'."

### Remedial facilities in schools

Celia says: "There is a pressing need for social workers in schools. Children with special needs require mentors. The government expects the schools to furnish this backup, but do not provide the funding. Teachers themselves are, in fact, social workers. But teachers have such huge demands made on them through *Tomorrow's Schools*, they have no space or encouragement to spend time and ask: 'How are you getting on?'

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### *we are not holding up good standards of behaviour for our children to follow*

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"Suppose you have a mentor in a high school alongside one boy, someone who is well paid, who sits in class alongside the boy, builds a relationship with his family and spends time with him outside school. We are told we can't afford a salary of \$60,000 to employ such a person. Yet if the boy offends and finishes up in prison, it is a wasted life, and we spend \$70,000 a year keeping him locked up."

### Moral leadership

What our children are missing out on is leadership and example from the adults around them. The important thing is they should have a belief system and therefore have a reason for following some standard of behaviour. In recent years we have seen an absolute dearth of moral courage, even a dearth of morality, from our leaders. We are not holding up before our children any standards of upright behaviour for them to follow.

"Young Maori offenders are sometimes reconnected to their culture, becoming aware who their *tupuna* were and where they came from. Once they have a place to belong, be it moral, religious or cultural, they know where they stand. And that is what we all need: somewhere to belong.

"There also needs to be someone who holds adolescents to account. Offenders often come from a shocking background. But they sometimes need to hear the word NO said to them – and perhaps they never have. A prison inmate once said to me: 'You are the first person I've met who cares enough to say NO to me'. Too often parents kow-tow to their kids. Particularly fathers. So their boys stretch their behaviour. But what the boy is looking for is for the father to say to him: 'Enough; you're my boy and this is what I expect from you'.

"Many boys today are quite frightened about the world; they see the mess it's in, so they wonder about their place and why they are here. That accounts for the devil-may-care attitude some of them adopt. We keep talking about the binge drinking culture young people fall into – but where did they get it from? They got it by observing us. We are the problem, not them. We are not brave enough to own our own behaviour. If we say to them: *don't do as I do, do as I say*, they simply won't buy it.

"We adults know that it is really a wonderful world, and we have developed an ability to manage it. But as adolescents, they don't yet know how to manage it. They are frightened of the future, and that accounts for a lot of their problems, alcohol abuse or even suicidal behaviour."

### The good news

"There are some amazing people throughout New Zealand – ordinary people, largely invisible – working away in communities. They understand the world as it is and simply get on with doing what needs to be done. They ignore the government and all the obstacles which get put in their path. They are making sure a bad situation does not get a whole lot worse. They are the true unsung heroes." ■

Celia Lashlie's book: *He'll be OK* is published by Harper Collins (2005): price \$34.99



# Success and failure at high school

*With a lifetime's teaching experience and 17 years as guidance counsellor in large Auckland co-ed secondary schools, Fran Cahill knows well why some students succeed – and too many fail*

*Fran Cahill describes the statements of Opposition leader John Key and PM Helen Clarke as “typical of the instantaneous response often expected of politicians” but without the backing of any commitment to substantive policy development. She considers both to be wide of the mark: they appear to assume young people themselves are the primary problem. Whereas she believes that a variety of issues beyond their control impact on and influence the behavioural choices of the young.*

## Failure of youngsters in Secondary school

“When Pacific Island families arrive in Auckland with school-aged children, simply to dress them in uniform and enrol them at the nearest school is not enough. Some form of introduction or orientation is required.

“Quite apart from the problems facing immigrant families, many of our own intermediate schools fail to prepare children adequately for the transition to secondary school. Students regularly arrive at college with reading ages anywhere between seven or eight to 13 plus years, and all of them, irrespective of intellectual capability, are expected to survive and flourish.

Secondary teachers commonly assume that when students enter secondary school they should be capable, self-disciplined, self-managing; that they can understand and comprehend class content and are willing and able to participate in class forums. In reality many are not. Instead, many are overwhelmed by their new

environment and its expectations. Without support, a vulnerable percentage of pupils quickly give up and become alienated from learning and the effort required to progress.

“Schools need to identify students who have learning needs and create targeted programmes aimed at deficiencies in basic literacy and numeracy. A well-motivated child can make up several years of ‘reading age’ in six months. Time, space, lack of suitably trained staff and curriculum pressures all combine to ensure that this commonly does not happen.

“The system fails these young people. In a competitive environment bright, confident youngsters easily win recognition. But affirmation whether negative or positive is vital for the well-being and self-esteem of all children. Without it, the poor achiever will become a ‘discipline problem’, the ‘class clown’ or will find kindred spirits with whom to disrupt every class.”

## Parents

When parents have themselves attended a New Zealand secondary school they are familiar with the system and better equipped to encourage their own children, check homework and generally support them. However, many immigrant and refugee parents have no such experience or how teaching and learning occur in the NZ context. Some naively think that ‘the teacher’ will look after their child, whereas the reality is that up to six different teachers may interact with a given class each day. So who is it that supports the child?

‘The greater the distance between pedagogic communication of school

and home, the more difficult it is for students to access the knowledge distributed through schooling’ (Singh, 1999). This communication deficit can be addressed by schools if open, two-way links are established with the communities they serve.

“This sort of consultation takes a lot of time and effort,” Fran observes, “and it’s not easy to maintain in communities as fluid as some Auckland suburban populations. A survey taken four years ago at Avondale College identified 67 different ethnic groups among the student population. The Asian students generally come from tight-knit family structures and value education highly, so they adapt well.

“But many Pacific Island parents – but not by any means all – are ignorant of the system while at the same time pushing their children to do well. Their children will often separate school and home as a protective mechanism, and withhold





key information from their parents. The parents are then surprised and disappointed when they find out what has been going on at school.”

Fran explains that it’s difficult for teachers to identify students who may benefit from referral to a guidance counsellor. Often this occurs via a dean “sick to death of a student’s misbehaviour or erratic attendance”. The counsellor will listen to the student’s story and dig back in the hope of uncovering likely causes.

One recent case: “A third form girl, Helen – not her real name – was referred to me last year after being discovered drunk by the police at night in a central city park. She was totally uncommunicative. Her parents had split up several years earlier and both were in new relationships. The mother’s current partner had a daughter the same age as Helen whom her father allowed to do as she liked. This made it even more difficult for Helen’s mother to control her.

“On fortnightly custody visits to her Dad’s, Helen used the couch as her bed. Effectively she had no adult interested enough in her experiences to listen without judgment to her feelings. For her parents, it was enough for Helen to have a home to return to at night. Whenever her mother tried to engage with her, Helen verbally vented her anger.

“Neither parent seemed able or willing to create the necessary space to give her the emotional attention she craved. After two months work, only promises were forthcoming. CYFS (*Child, Youth and Family Service*) was consulted. Their position was that Helen was not immediately unsafe, and at 13 she was old enough to take care of herself! Though Helen’s grandparents were willing to help care for her, past relationship issues between grandmother and Helen’s mother meant that this was not an acceptable option. With CYFS support a *Strengthening Families* meeting is now being negotiated so that all parties can

come together. Helen is a very bright but very angry young woman, whose progress in school is impeded by the pressures of family life.

“This 13-year-old” suggests Fran, “is the victim of a situation sadly all too common. A child’s failure very often reflects family circumstance, financial and employment pressures, or simply the struggle parents have in making positive life choices for themselves and their families. It is very hard nowadays for parents to simply say: *No. We don’t have much money, but we do love you and are here for you* – and mean it.

### Schools

Some years ago, when Fran was employed at a ‘decile one’ South Auckland secondary school of more than 1000 students, she observed that only one person on the then Board of Trustees was professionally able to help the Principal manage the school in the way *Tomorrow’s Schools* envisioned.

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*being known by name,  
having a place to belong  
makes the difference*

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No one possessed the managerial skills required to run what is effectively a big business enterprise. “I believe in such situations a Principal can either become an autocratic leader or retreat behind an office desk content in the role of manager. Educational endeavour is then left in the hands of each classroom teacher.

“There was a time when teachers did know students personally, but the sheer size and complexity of today’s schools mitigates against this. Some schools have addressed the issue by dividing the roll into smaller, discrete units led by Deputy Principals. However this requires a greater pupil/teacher ratio than allowed under current government policy.”

Yet as Fran insists, it is by being known by name, being acknowledged as an individual and having a place of

belonging, that makes the difference between simply teaching subject content to a whole class or ensuring the learning of each child within it.

Today’s teachers struggle under the demands of an ever-changing curriculum. There never seems to be a time when things settle down into a regular, manageable routine. The *National Certificate of Educational Achievement* (NCEA) is only one of many national certificates taught in some schools in order to meet the needs of their particular student population.

Teaching is not as well paid as some professions in the private sector and it is often difficult for schools to attract and retain committed and experienced teachers. More often than not, it is male teachers who leave the profession early for better remuneration elsewhere. Fran believes gender imbalance among staff is probably greater in primary schools, partly because of the fear of possible sexual abuse accusation. Yet, that is where good male role models are vital, given that in 35 percent of NZ families are one parent families.

### Adequate Pastoral Care

Children today are different, just as the world they experience is different. They spend much longer hours in front of TV, chatting on-line or using cell phones, often unsupervised. They lack the security and confidence in themselves that past generations once had, when family life was more stable. Many children are unaccustomed to being corrected. Social skills and basic courtesies have frequently not been learned.

However, by the time students get to Years 12 and 13, most have moved through this immaturity and blossomed into fine young people – unless of course they have already been dismissed from school for antisocial behaviour or have chosen to drop out.

Fran instances the example of ‘Paul’, a young Tongan boy. “Paul arrived at his



▷▷ first secondary school immaculately dressed in a brand new uniform. Three weeks into the first term he assaulted another child. It appeared that another boy had said ‘something mean’ to him. Paul retaliated with his fist.

After Paul had been sent to the Principal for gross misconduct I was asked to speak with him. I discovered that his own Dad dealt to his children in the same way. Paul had simply done what he knew to do. While I was able to persuade both father and son to undertake an anger management course together, the school chose to stand by its suspension declaring him ‘unsafe’ around other students.”

The problem is made worse if neighbouring schools refuse to accept a child dismissed for violence. Fran recalls accompanying a child to a new school in hope of persuading the Principal to give him a second chance. She then negotiated with *Work and Income* to cover the cost of a new uniform and provide necessary bus fares. Large city schools do not appear to have organised or adequate liaison processes whereby the rehabilitation of difficult pupils is an integral part of re-enrolment.

These students are adolescents struggling with the fears and confusion of learning to live inside a rapidly changing body. While schools have a duty to provide quality academic programmes, they must equally acknowledge the confusing mix of emotional, behavioural and physical changes which characterise adolescence.

Under converging pressures some students even attempt suicide. Some cut themselves or resort to alcohol or drugs in order to call attention to their needs. In recent years the Ministry of Education has addressed what was becoming an alarming problem in NZ by making available specialised training for guidance counsellors. Family work through the intervention of mental health professionals can help to address underlying issues and

provide much needed support for all involved.

“I remember one such conference,” Fran recalled, “where after much talking the boy eventually got up, knelt in front of his father and asked for forgiveness. That one action – laden with cultural meaning – enabled reconciliation within the whole family and allowed the father to soften his attitude without losing face. Later on, Dad paid for his son to take up a building apprenticeship. That lad had made four serious attempts on his life.”

### Pacific Islanders

Figures from 2004 revealed that 68 percent of Pacific Island children attended decile 1-3 schools compared with a figure of 23 percent for the rest of the population. And roughly some 65 percent of Pacific Island immigrants live in Auckland. Their children are usually well brought up.

They are used to firm boundaries, strict discipline and gifted with huge potential. However, teachers in schools where numbers of Pacific Island students are enrolled often struggle to accept and understand them whether as individuals or within the unique cultural context which has moulded them.

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*immigrant children  
should be placed in grades  
one year lower than  
their age group*

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Nothing in the NZ curriculum remotely equates with the experience of those students born on ‘the Island’, where life is simple and a basic rhythm is the norm. If children find themselves constantly unable to contribute to class discussions from their own experience, slowly but surely they slip away to the periphery of the learning group.

Fran believes that language, both the comprehension and speaking of it, can

pose problems, though most students eventually become fluent English speakers. Well-adjusted Pacific Island students cope by learning to live in two worlds, keeping one foot in school and the other at home. At school they are Kiwis with their mates, while at home they are obedient and willing children and fluent Samoan speakers.

Interestingly, when Samoan students choosing the Samoan language option at Avondale College were taught by Samoan teachers in the Samoan way, they all did amazingly well. The students felt secure, accepted and understood.

“In my opinion,” Fran says, “struggling immigrant children should be placed in grades a year lower than their age group would assume, to enable them to adjust. Social promotion does not work for them. I am convinced we can do far better for these students than we are currently doing.”

### One sound solution

Some schools successfully manage difficult student behaviour by helping students in constructive ways to understand the consequences of antisocial behaviour and to actively participate in restoring impaired relationships. To do this some have adopted a restorative justice model which helps students know ahead what is expected of them and the consequences of failure to make efforts to meet expected standards, whether in classroom or playground. Massey High School is one among many that has worked hard school-wide to establish this proactive system.

Issues of discipline are dealt with positively where they occur – and by the teacher responsible for the class at the time. The routine and effective use of restorative classroom practices quickly results in little need for students to be sent to deans over discipline issues. There is the added bonus of a consequent reduction in stand-downs and suspensions. And that is an outcome no one would quarrel with. ■

# Re-Imaging the Cross

Trish McBride

The Cross as the central symbol of our faith has had many profound meanings attributed to it over the centuries that have both helped and hindered those to whom it matters. Symbols, however precious, develop new meanings and shed older ones as times and contexts change.

A few years ago I was asked by a young man from an evangelical church: “Are you a Christian”. “It depends what you mean by Christian”, I replied cautiously. If he’d said: “Do you lead a Christ-centred life?” he’d have got an immediate “That’s what I aim for!”

But no – his response was to ask: “Do you believe that God the Father sent Jesus to die for our sins?” I pondered a few minutes before replying: “No, I don’t think I do”.

In evangelical/charismatic circles where once I worshipped, this statement is the touchstone, the *shibboleth*: if you can say it, you’re in; if not you’re out! So what has happened to my understanding of the Cross of Jesus? And not just mine – there are many who have wrestled with the traditional theology and its implications, and have needed to develop a new understanding of the world-changing event of Jesus’ death.

The Romans used the brutal punishment of crucifixion as a matter of course. That it happened is undeniable; what it *means* has caused soul-searchings for many in recent times. Many have come to reject atonement theology as simply not working any more, especially as the community has come to grips with the suffering inflicted on children by some adults. I was shocked when I first heard the phrase ‘divine child abuse’ as a description of “*God sent His Son to die...*” but over recent years that has become for me an accurate enough description.

There are also many who have observed that the Christian injunction to *carry your cross* has been inappropriately used as a way to keep people in life-sapping situations: peasants in poverty, women in violent marriages, blacks under

apartheid, and the rest. A belief that passive suffering is redemptive benefits those in power, not those who suffer.

The God of the Exodus who cares enough about those sufferings to want people to be brought out of oppression seems a lot more lovable, trustworthy and on the side of the poor!

Personal powerlessness is unhealthy for human beings, and whatever endorses it is, to use another evangelical phrase, *not of God*.

The Cross is also implicated in the Christian origin of anti-Semitism, as the Jews were blamed for the death of Jesus. And also, since the time of Constantine, in militarism, colonisation and enforced conversions.

So what else could the Crucifixion mean? When one speaks out for truth, justice and compassion against the vested interests of the powers-that-be, crucifixion is a highly likely outcome. Crucifixion, literal or metaphorical, happened to the prophets, it happened to Jesus, it happens still. We need only remember the stories of Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King and early complainants to churches about sexual abuse.

The Catholic Church has moved to being much more Resurrection-focussed since Vatican II. The Mass is more often now described as ‘Sacred Meal’, rather than as ‘Unbloody Sacrifice’, which was a standard description in my youth. What we need is a theology of the Cross that works for people of faith now, on both personal and structural levels. What does it mean? How can its message and significance be reframed and absorbed into the depths of our souls? And adapted to times where violence is ‘never okay’?

For me, the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus are his trail-blazing for us for those times in our lives when absolutely everything we’ve worked towards lies shattered, finished, destroyed. By the power of divine love he transcended that very experience, and the same divine love is there for us too. It brings life after death, spring after winter, light after dark, healing after devastating pain, and





# Fasting in Lent

Glynn Cardy

The supermarkets are already selling Hot Cross buns and Easter eggs, foods that are traditionally eaten only on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. This is not surprising in a culture that finds it difficult to limit consumption of any product to just one day a year. Our culture has little interest in gastronomic constraint.

Lent, the 40 days prior to Easter, is a time when the Christian Church has emphasised constraint. In Western Christianity Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday until Holy Saturday. It is a solemn, preparatory time. There are no flowers in church. The faithful are encouraged to pray, give to the needy and give up rich foods.

Curtailling the intake of calories may have originated for practical reasons. In the northern winter, by March food that had been stored the previous autumn was running out, or had to be used up before it perished. The joys of spring were not just the flowers popping up but the arrival of fresh food.

The Lenten fast could be quite rigorous in times past. Socrates Scholasticus, writing from Constantinople in the early 4th century, reported that in some places all animal products were strictly forbidden, while others permitted fish and others ate only bread. In some places believers abstained from food for an entire day. In most places, however, the practice was to abstain from eating until the evening when a small meal without meat or alcohol was eaten.

In the days of authoritarian church leadership abstinence like everything else was enforced. It resulted in numerous ways to circumvent culinary prohibitions. An elderly priest once told me with a twinkle in his eye that there were many and varied saints days in Lent – it being permissible to drink alcohol on such days. Of course, as the church slowly learned, enforced piety soon ceases to be piety at all.

Enforced piety however was profitable. If the rich or unrestrained wanted to indulge then dispensations were granted – for a fee of course. It is popularly believed that such monies built several churches including the Butter Tower of the Rouen Cathedral – butter being one of the products prohibited in Lent.

Today, in the West, the practice of fasting is considerably relaxed. In the Roman Catholic Church it is traditional to abstain from meat every Friday for the duration of Lent. On Ash Wednesday it is customary to fast for the day, with no meat, eating only one full meal. A number of Christians, Protestants included, give up meat, alcohol, sweets and other types of food during Lent.

Anglicans generally don't favour self-denial. We have preferred a theology that affirms the good things in life and our participation in them. Instead of abstinence Anglicans have prepared for Easter by trying to be generous towards others. This Lent, for example, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York encouraged their

▷▷ birth after labour.

And on the last of these, it was moving to hear of a local gynaecologist who told a patient, "If you want to see Jesus on the cross, watch a woman in labour!" The parallels don't stop with the pain: we are told that the blood and water that came from his side were the symbolic giving birth to the church.

Besides the various theologies/beliefs about its meaning, the Cross continues to be a fruitful source for prayerful reflection.

- *On the nailings: how do we fasten Jesus down so that he is unable to walk through our lives to touch and heal?*
- *On his thirst: a recognition that he thirsts for each one of us personally.*
- *The Cross is sign of the God who suffers with us. Some*

*members of the Disability and Spirituality community speak of a strong identification with Jesus crucified; naming the disabled God who deeply understands the constraints and unfreedoms of their condition. God is 'in it' with them.*

- *And the Cross is a sign of his identification with all marginalised people – he did not simply eat and drink with them, he died criminalised and naked, which is about as marginalised as a human being can get!*

To those for whom questions and doubts have arisen during their spiritual journeys, know that you are not alone! All of us come to the same Cross, even if we understand it through different windows! ■

*Trish McBride is a Christian writer from Wellington. Her interests include ecumenism, liturgy and the place of women in the church*

followers to “help to make our communities, local or global, clean and secure places of generosity.”

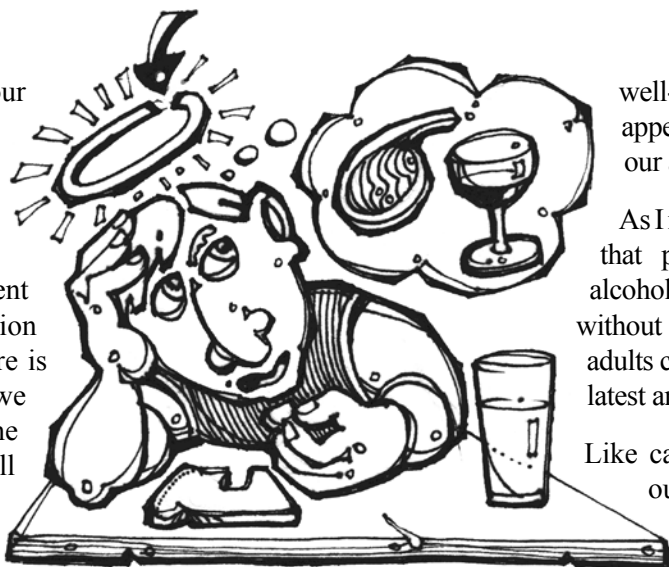
Yet at its best the ancient admonition to fast for Lent invites Christians to question what we need and why. There is a deep truth that the more we depend on possessions, the greater the danger that we will worship them.

Many New Zealanders go camping over the summer.

Prior to departure campers have to ask the question about what they need and why. The young daughter who proudly fills a case with a dozen sets of clothes is gently instructed in the art of discerning between necessity and luxury.

Once away campers become much more attuned to the environment than is the case in their suburban existence. The ground underfoot, the weather forecast, the bugs, and the sun play a much greater role in their daily activities. Campers too often find in the absence of work pressures and usual avenues of entertainment more time to talk with friends, go for walks, play with children and watch sunsets.

New Zealand society I think is in danger of losing the art and discipline of self-constraint. Whether it is the desire to drink to excess, eat until obese or spend unrestrained, time and again our values of community, family and individual



well-being are compromised by our appetite for more. Do we control our appetites or do they control us?

As I move around Auckland it seems that parties can't happen without alcohol, children can't be entertained without television and computers, and adults can't feel successful without the latest and greatest products.

Like campers we need to take time out. We need to pause and consider what we need as opposed to what we want, and the social and physical

costs of both. One way to do this is by observing a self-imposed period of going without food. A Lenten fast can help us differentiate between what is a necessity and what is a luxury. It can help us consider what kind of possessions and power we want in our lives, and the consequences of having more.

For those who practise self-constraint there are also other benefits. Our awareness of our land and climate and our impact upon them is enhanced. Our social relationships can also benefit. Alcohol in particular often distorts and impairs relationships. Lastly, and maybe most importantly, we usually begin to feel better within ourselves, freer and happier. Self-constraint does not impair, indeed it can enhance, our enjoyment and love of life. It is nourishment for the soul. ■

*Glynn Cardy is parish priest at St-Matthew-in-the-City and Archdeacon of the Anglican diocese of Auckland*

## A Disgrace To Fashion

*Dear Jesus,*

You were never easily labeled.

Branding you by the clothes you wore didn't work.

You were an advertiser's nightmare.

For with one lot of losers you'd wear their t-shirt,  
then change with the next lot to their logo.

Each party you'd turn up to you'd be wearing  
something different,

as different as one party was to the next.

We just couldn't nail you down. . .

Until we stripped every garment off you,  
and hung you up  
as a disgrace to fashion.

*Glynn Cardy*

## Rogan McIndoe advert

# Facing radical change

## – an Easter meditation

Dennis Horton

### Old hearts made new

Five days in coronary care was not the lead-up to Christmas I had been expecting. But with admission to hospital came new awareness of how Advent can mean waiting for a God whose ways of appearing are beyond both our hope and ability to control.

In the event, there were no signs of cardiac disease or lasting damage. My discharge came just in time to let me keep my word by assisting with the funeral of a friend who had been battling with terminal cancer. Neither he nor his wife had links with any church, but both wanted the celebration of his passing to be led by someone who had known him.

With his own wry sense of humour, my friend may well have viewed my spell in hospital as an appropriate apprenticeship for the task he had asked me to do. The challenge of having to depend on others' care and skill was one we shared: he over years of chronic illness, I for just a handful of days. But like all shared experience, it can form a bond to deepen human encounters.

There is something about being ill that makes it a bittersweet event. There's the sharp, sometimes sudden realisation that we are not indestructible, but finite; that in the end, our bodies do let us down. At the same time comes that heightened awareness of how precious life is, how every moment needs to be cherished and lived to the full, and how exquisitely beautiful each sound and scent and colour become.

Facing the prospect of our dying is an issue, not just for individuals and

those close to them, but for the faith-based communities and organisations to which many of us belong. Like many others in the First World, the Religious Congregation I now work for is ageing: new membership falls well short of the gaps left by retirement and death. Ministries begun in decades when vocations were plentiful are increasingly being placed in other hands to govern and develop. Structures built years ago for one purpose have been reshaped, sometimes for a succession of new roles.



The critical questions today are whether the demise of religious life as we have witnessed it can be life-giving, and how mission might be nurtured and grown by others, whose vision of faith and sense of commitment may be very different from those who began the work and kept it going for so long.

Living at the edge as they do, facing the reality of their own finiteness and inviting God to create something new from the gift of what they are ready to surrender, women and men in our Religious Congregations may simply be pointing to where the Christian church itself needs to go in answer to God's call. Dialogue amongst the world's great religions will never produce much of worth, so long as each holds on to its own ways of thinking and acting, waiting for others to change.

Race Relations Day, brought forward this year to March 18 to avoid clashing with Good Friday, has as its theme the topic of *Finding Common Ground*. The poster produced by the Human Rights Commission highlights the diversity fern, each pair of fronds representing one of our major cultural traditions, with a slogan to remind us that "we all sit under the same stars." A draft statement on race relations has been issued for community discussion and feedback, with an invitation for all of us to help chart the way ahead.

Perhaps the best sign that God is at work, reshaping our hearts and placing a new spirit within us, lies in our ability to see our world and our call to be part of it in a new light. Easter's grace is not that we have entirely new hearts, but that our old ones beat with new vigour and urgency. Learning to face our death may be the first step towards the full life promised by Jesus. ■

Dennis Horton is Director of Mission  
for Mercy Mission Services  
Te Tairere Oranga, Auckland





## Total immersion – in India

*At Christmas, students mostly from St Thomas's College, Christchurch went to India. It was part of the Edmund Rice Network Immersion Programme initiated in 1998 by Br Paul Robertson out of St Peter's College, Auckland,*

“We would look at each other in amazement, even disbelief at times, looking for validation of the sights – the endless ribbon of ghettos and slums, people squatting, others standing alone gazing into the distance, many disfigured, including children, many huddled and chatting around little fires. Even in the darkness and through the thick, smelly Delhi smog, we witnessed poverty like never before. We caught our first and lasting impressions of a frenetic, overcrowded and extremely polluted India but more importantly, it was profoundly spiritual, innovative and resourceful.

“While our eyes and hearts were firmly fixed on India, the eyes of India were upon us. Except in our rooms, we were never to experience privacy again until our departure. Yet, we were to experience contrast and contradiction, excavating memories from ancient streets and the reigns of mughals, through to the inspiring and colourful images of a resilient, youthful India today.”

## India Immersion Programme

India Immersion involves one month of living and travelling in India. In 2003, this programme, started initially at St Peter's Auckland, was taken up by St Thomas of Canterbury College, Christchurch. The two schools now go to India in alternate years.

The 2007/08 group comprised 22 students, staff and family members mostly from St Thomas of Canterbury College, but also from Villa Maria College (in Christchurch) and St Kevin's in Oamaru.

Students and their families prepared themselves thoroughly. At preliminary monthly gatherings they reflected on New Zealand and Indian society and culture, faith and spirituality, risk management, health and other practical matters. Fundraising was undertaken with all students and families working very hard to raise the fare and travelling costs.

While in India the group was privileged to encounter and companion for a while people at the very margins of society particularly the very poor. The 2008 group travelled to Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Goa.

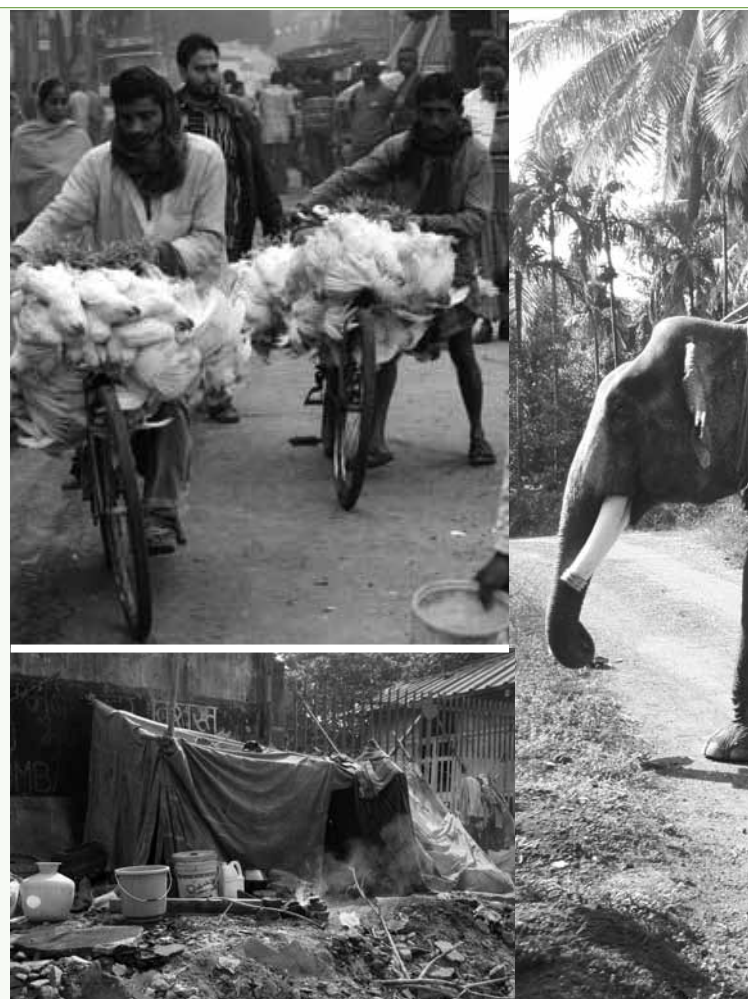
### Journey across India

While we were pleased to leave the pollution of Kolkata – the heavy smoggy air, the urine-infested streets and litany of rubbish piles, there was a tug on the heart from the *City of Joy* where strangers soon became friends. While we tried not to collude with the varying mafias we were alerted to, at the end of the day some of our group members spent time colouring with beggar children; buying provisions for the next meal on the street and finding common ground.

On one occasion Ron Puni negotiated a ride on a rickshaw. However, this brilliant and creative negotiation resulted in Ron pulling the rickshaw driver in his rickshaw! Apparently the driver delighted in this experience, wearing the amused and delightful smile as Ron navigated his way around the chaotic street! This came to an abrupt end when the owner noticed the police ahead! Rickshaws, human pulled, are outlawed in every other city and country, including Kolkata, but this ruling is ignored.

In saying this there are intolerable conditions for many people and one would hope that by a movement from within, the poorest of the poor will soon feature more deservedly on the map and in the psyche of India, especially in relation to primary health, education and environment. One can only be inspired by the intelligence and resilience of the poorest of the poor to endure the daily grind of mere survival. What keeps them going? Many people tell me it is 'community spirit'. When one listens from the 'inside-out' one hears of great love and sacrifice. I have heard that a slum may be described as a *constellation of stars*. It is the brightness and genius of people that transcend the superficialities, which enable them to survive against the odds.

However, alongside these stories one feels the weariness of many people who age very young and where infant mortality is high. Sanitation (especially water and toilets) is greatly needed in order to reduce serious but



Slum dwelling  
restaurants (ab

preventable disease. One man told me his father was an "antique" at 45! What does that make those of us on the other side of that age?

Interestingly, Indian people use the term "expired" for death. One man told me "his son expired at age three years". The same term is used in the country after crops are finished. Quaint! There are staggering numbers of dowry deaths and other violent incidents against women in particular. Children in many places are most vulnerable to sexual and other abuse and labour.



**I**ndian Immersion has the three hallmarks derived from a rite of passage – separation, transition and re-entry. The students leave all that is comfortable and familiar and learn to ‘live yet again’.

They are exposed to a new culture being guided through the social process of living in a culture different from their own; it provided opportunities to visit and observe those at the margins of society; to develop an understanding of their role in a global world, including developing a social conscience; and to take part in the wider Edmund Rice Network.

It is not a cultural exchange or an educational tour, but an immersion experience. The participants come together each day in small groups to talk about their experiences and about what is happening within themselves. Some of their reflections are reproduced on pp 18-19.

For most, the highlight of the trip was visiting the homes run by Mother Teresa’s Missionary Sisters of Charity, in Kolkata. They were able to spend time with people who are dying, or have some form of disability, or who are abandoned or orphaned. There they really did meet the ‘poorest of the poor’. ■



in Mumbai (below left); Market in Kolkata - chooks off to (above left); the students on elephants in Goa (above right).

### On the Kolkata-Mumbai express

**T**here were thousands on the platform and huge quantities of produce, all hand packed, arriving on hand-pulled wooden carts to travel with us to Mumbai! We estimated there would be up to 5000 people on our train. It was hard to see the end of the train, losing sight of carriages!

This year we travelled 2nd Class sleeper carriage – 1960km of track and countryside and companionship. This turned out to be a bonus with everyone delighting

in the events. Shakespeare said ‘life was a stage and every man and woman had their part or many parts, entries and exits . . .’ (or words to that effect). How true! There was a constant procession of beggars (children, disfigured, often limbless adults, the visually impaired and aged), chai tea, coffee, food, books and toy men (about every five minutes), all with their distinctive Indian Railway signature voices and memorable chants all with incredible tones!

However, the great surprise was a group who had seemingly arrived from Transylvania (*Rocky Horror Show!*). We were taken aback and left in initial disbelief when these characters boldly approached mainly men passengers, propositioning some, touching (tapping) others in private places and then putting their hands out for ten rupees! Fortunately our group was exempt from the touch but there were approaches!

### ... and later ...

**W**e all awoke and arose at varying intervals the next day with utterances about the night and hopes for the day. Toilet stops were avoided but not preventable! Train toilets certainly favour blokes – say no more! It was refreshing to be in rural India and out of the city.

As we ventured further into the interior of India a whole new world opened up. How pleasing to the eye were the colourful crops of wheat, sugar, rice, marigolds and others. Closer to Mumbai we found ourselves in an extensive vineyard. Wine is on the up in India. The rural sector in many respects brought many of us back to our roots and even more than that, it enabled us to be touch with our primal selves, our ancestors. From the train window which served as camera lens (perhaps 900,000 frames or more clicking form an invisible shutter as we moved) we found a ‘little slow in the hurry’ of our train.

Our gaze was filled with this great expanse of fertile land, small villages and towns. Out in the quiet and seemingly loneliest of places, individuals and family or community groups would appear before us (undisturbed







Victor McCarthy and Louis O'Brien at Daya Dan home, in Kolkata: residential service for severely disabled children

### 1. Louis O'Brien, College Captain 2008

India helped me to realise the meaning of true equality amongst people. In a place of much poverty I appreciated that I may have more money, a better education and more opportunities available to me, but at times I felt challenged to evade the feeling of having a greater worthiness than others – those forced to beg, live on the streets and rely on the compassion of others for their survival.

One man has stuck with me in my mind, a memory to humble me. He was an old man we walked past one night, homeless and filthy, dressed in nothing but rags in the chill of the Kolkata night. He was a beggar, sitting there bawling his eyes out. We were told he was trained to bawl like that, but maybe that's an excuse for me to overlook his situation. I realised I can't begin to fathom what this man has seen and been through in his life to be able to act, to cry so legitimately and convincingly.

The man faces me with huge challenges. Compared with him I know nothing in terms of the harshness and truth of life. His resilience is something I may never be able to comprehend, and it places him in a category far superior to me. A reminder to me of the strength that so many people have, despite what the eye initially



by the train). Among the many, some faces and events remain firmly present in our consciousness, imprinted now in our memory – a woman in a purple sari stood in the middle of a large field of orange marigolds; there were strong bullocks complete with man and plough digging the quiet earth; other bullocks pulled ancient, rickety carts full of wheat or hay and young boys stretched out reflectively on the top for the ride to. . . wherever; a woman in an orange sari riding a bicycle was illuminated in a shaft of late afternoon light; other women with bent backs plant rice (there are so many ageing women with bent backs – we do not need to ask why?). Then there were the cricket games whether in small villages or those huge fields in the middle of somewhere.

## Student reflections on

sees. A reminder to help keep issues and challenges in perspective. To be able to let the small stuff slide into oblivion and, thinking of the man of Kolkata, to always remember the greater picture.



(r to l) Amy Eastwood, Ron Puni and Victor McCarthy on the Ganges at Varanasi

### 2. Ron Puni, College Captain 2007

During my time in Kolkata I was lucky enough to work in Kalighat, the first home set up by Mother Teresa. One moment or one ritual really got to me, and that was the removal of the bodies of the deceased residents. The whole process is quite moving: the whole world seems silent and the only noise is coming from you and Brother.

First we remove the dead man's clothes except for the pants he is wearing. We then take a cream-coloured sheet and begin to wrap him. As there are 50 odd residents in a confined area plus volunteers, we are careful to conceal his genitalia as we are removing his pants, out of respect for this resident, maintaining his dignity even through death, an important philosophy in Kalighat. We then continue wrapping, making sure the blanket is tight – which is difficult as the body is rigid and hard to move and you must be quite forceful in order to wrap tightly.

### Journey's end

We arrived to a mild Mumbai early after 32 hours, mostly in good spirits and all in good health. After a short taxi ride we were soon in our rooms at the YWCA rewarded with fresh clean rooms complete with white sheets and sparkling bathrooms! Tonight we catch the overnight train to Margao in Goa and will relax and take in some of the Portuguese history and aspects of this Indian state.

We in *Leadership* continue to be inspired by the group. In Delhi we discussed at the High Commission the fact that we are always *Ambassadors for New Zealand* while in India. We continually catch people in the act of unconsciously being 'ambassador' in many and varied ways.

# the India experience

Once he is wrapped we move him onto a cold steel stretcher and carry him to the morgue at the back near the washing area. As we pass through, the Sisters, the Brothers and the volunteers all pay their respects. When we reach the morgue we lay the stretcher on the shelf. Then it is our turn to pay our respects with prayer, and then we make the sign of the cross and leave the morgue.

The two dead residents I helped Brother with had been very sick and, even though the whole process is quite sad because they have passed away, it is comforting to know that they are finally at peace. Besides funerals, I had never been so close to death as such, and I believe after my experience at Kalighat I have a more meaningful respect for death – which in turn means I have a better appreciation of life.

### 3. Mikaela Hood, Villa Maria Year 13.

My trip to India opened my eyes to a world of new experiences. Leaving all the comforts of home, leaving family and friends and spending Christmas away from my loved ones was a personal challenge. But as soon as I arrived in India these challenges were forgotten. I then faced a new challenge – spending a month with a bunch of strangers, dealing with different surroundings, different culture and a totally different way of life.

Being on an immersion trip awakens you to many issues that in the past you had not even given thought to. You begin to compare your lifestyle to those who live in India and try to comprehend the difference. I will never complain again about not enough food in the fridge or throw away unwanted school lunches – all because of what I saw in India.

Seeing a homeless person going through rubbish to find a bite to eat or beggars asking for food, dramatically

This group has extended safe boundaries, generally conducted themselves with great sensitivity and maturity, and have sought to build and extend a variety of relationships. They have taken initiative and pursued many places, undertaking many events and places extending their comfort zones.

We know that as we leave for Goa we are also mindful that we are drawing closer to the end of this intrepid journey throughout India – this amazing ‘heart journey’ and encounter which has shaped and continues to shape us in most unexpected ways. ■

*Cathy Harrison is Pastoral Chaplain at St Thomas of Canterbury College, Christchurch and co-leader of the India Immersion journeys.*

Mikaela Hood, at a picnic for staff and residents of a *Mother Teresa* home, in Kolkata



changes your way of thinking. I no longer take for granted the food I receive. Instead, I’m thankful and think about those who go hungry. You began to realise what poverty really is. At home I never truly understood how a poverty-stricken country could function. Seeing the poverty from the window of your hotel room makes you question your lifestyle and ask yourself how you can help.

Although it is hard to make a difference in a country that has remained the same for so long, it is important to not ignore the issues that need to be addressed. You must have the courage to change the things you can. Working as a volunteer at a *Mother Teresa* home has enlightened me to understand issues of social justice and help those in need. I personally gained far more than the people I helped. Yet I still believe I made a small difference. India has been a turning point in my life.

### 4. Joshua McLean, St Thomas’s Year 12

India immersion has awoken me to many important matters as a young citizen of the world. I realise that I need to take more seriously the opportunities I have, including education which many children in India and beyond do not have access to. I feel more acceptance of the diverse ways people live life. Difference is good. Their cultures work for them, make sense to them and are logical to them.

Many Indian people on the margins of society remind me that their identity is not tied up in labels and brands. It appears to me that their identity is connected to family, class, religion and history.

While in Mumbai, I was moved by some children I observed in Dhravi, the biggest slum in Asia, where one million people live on 175 hectares. From the main highway I watched three boys jumping off a large water pipe into piles of rubbish. This rubbish tip was their backyard. They were having a great time, doing what kids their age do.

I reflected that at home kids might be doing the same in sand, on grass or in water, but here for many children their playground is the rubbish tip with goats chewing away on the side. Home is home wherever children may be born and live. ■

*Our thanks are due to the St Thomas’ Board for permission to print this material and to the students for sharing their experiences.*

# The Path of Love



*Te Hei Mauri Ora  
Ko Bobby Acworth  
Ko Sinai te Maunga  
Ko Jordan te awa  
Ko Te Aquinas te marae  
Ko Karaiti te Tupuna  
Ko Roman Catholic te Iwi*

*Having Ash Wednesday  
fall on Waitangi Day was  
for most of us a real cultural  
clash. Not so for Bobby  
Acworth, Director of Special  
Character at Aquinas College,  
Tauranga.*

*Bobby draws a powerful  
parallel between the troubles  
of the Maori people and Jesus'  
40 days' struggle  
in the desert*

Three years ago Pa Henare Tate named me *Whakatumatuma*. The role that the Spirit has called on me to play in this life is to act defiantly: to provoke and to be outspoken. I ask forgiveness now if my words or my thoughts or my dreams cause any of you unease. It is not my intention to upset but to *hold fast to the truth of my Iwi*.

Today marks two moments in history that are of crucial importance to my story; and stories are important, for when we lose our stories we lose our dreams, and when we lose our dreams our spirit dies.

Today marks the 168th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Today also marks the 1982nd anniversary of the time my *kaumatua*, Jesus the Christ, went into the desert of Israel. These two anniversaries, these

two stories, may seem unconnected – but like many stories, and like many events in life they really are connected, for all is one. All is One.

Why did Jesus the Christ go into the desert? He went into for 40 days and nights to discover who he really was: to distil his dreams, to discern his task, and to discover in himself, through God, the strength, the courage – the *Mana* – to accept his task.

The path that Jesus had to tread and the path that he and so many of our *Tupuna* have travelled so painfully is quite simply the path of love. Jesus *Karaiti* had to love all he met: rich or poor, men or women, clean or unclean. He had to love them with a love that required nothing in return. He had to love those who laughed at him, who turned their back on him, who hated him, who spat on him, who hit him,

who whipped him. He had to love even those who nailed his hands and feet to a cross of wood and hung him high and murdered him. And he did it. He loved even in his dying breath.

So what has all this to do with 1840? What has it to do with a piece of paper signed by an incompetent Government official and then signed in good faith by a group of proud *Rangitira*? The story of Christ in the desert has *everything* to do with the signing of the Treaty. It seems thus to me, a mere Pakeha, newly arrived in this beautiful rich land of yours from my land of Scotland.

It seems to me that since 1840 you Maori have travelled deep into your own desert. It seems to me that since 1840 the Maori people have also been laughed at, spat upon and whipped. It seems to me that once the British



Government had the signed piece of paper they too turned their backs on the Maori, who asked them time and time again for help, for protection, for the respect that was owed to them as the ancient inhabitants of this ancient land.

It seems to me that since 1840 Maori have been abused, hit, nailed and even murdered. It seems to me that the *Mana* of the Maori has been stolen as your sacred items have been desecrated, and the Pakeha have cast lots for your land as the Roman soldiers cast lots for Jesus' robe.

Those of my *Iwi* of Christianity who enter the darkness of Lent today, do so in the sure knowledge that the dawning light of the Resurrection of Christ is only 40 days and nights away. It seems to me that the Maori people have endured 168 years of darkness,

168 years of wandering in the desert, but that their resurrection as a people is dawning with the returning of this sacred mountain into your strong hands. The resurrection of your people can also be seen today in these young people who have joined in honouring us with their *Haka*, the young men that I am blessed and privileged to teach at Aquinas.

---

*each of us needs  
to travel our own hikoi  
into the desert darkness  
to discover who we are*

---

Perhaps we each need to travel our own *hikoi* into the desert darkness of our lives to discover who we are and who we are to be. And if we do find

the courage within to just begin the journey, we discover that we are never alone in the desert. Our family and friends travel with us. Our ancestors travel with us. The spirit of *Tē Atua* travels with us.

It seems to me that it is through the light of tolerance for each other, Maori and Pakeha, *Tangata whenua* and *Tauīwi*, that we discover that we are travelling in the same desert after all. It seems to me that through the light of patience as we listen to different stories from distant lands, we are bathed in the light of love that guides us along *Tē Wa*. This light draws us back to our home in *Io* from where we all came, and towards who we are all travelling.

*Kia tau nga manaakitanga o te  
Kaihangā ki runga I a tatou katoa.*

*Amene.*

Photo: Bobby Acworth delivering this address to local iwi, Ngaiterangi, at the top of Mauo, a place of huge significance to iwi

## sideways tears : sideways prayers

the cross  
like a twig  
or a small  
sprout of growth  
or a flag  
not setting itself  
up as "the ultimate"



but as  
something that grows out of  
a bedrock of other  
things ~  
a shifting bed  
of pain & traumas

*Trish Harris*

## Life

*Clothesline again  
beloved place of solitude  
and freshness  
and sharpened senses*

*today sun's breath  
birdsong  
and the unbearably exquisite dance  
of a monarch*

*I am captured  
and anointed  
with GRACE.*

*Silent still waiting  
Easter Saturday dawn  
encountered resurrection glory  
in my garden*

*motionless  
clutching washing  
a bright golden butterfly  
swept and circled and glided  
around my wond'ring head*

*I wept for the  
beauty of it  
the joy of it  
the hope  
OF NEW LIFE*

*Mary Thorne*

# Can you recover?

Paul Andrews

It started with a row between the children, a fight over nothing, but one that blew up into an earthquake. As young Michael and Fiona argued with their older brother Hugh, their tone suddenly changed. Beside themselves with rage, they accused him of messing with them – meaning sexual abuse. Hugh was furious and appalled, but he did not deny it. The can of worms had been opened.

This was not what you would call a dysfunctional family – quite the

apart the illusion of harmony as they voiced their fury with Hugh. The two parents supported one another and their children as best they could. But they felt that nothing could be the same again. Both they and the children showed the various signs of trauma: inability to sleep, unprovoked rages, difficulty in coping with the daily demands of work, feelings of guilt and self-reproach – *How could I have missed what was happening under my nose?* – and above all an overwhelming sadness at the loss of

the sorrows that can afflict a family over the years that they lean on one another. The bitter Irish novel that won the *Man Booker* prize in 2007, *The Gathering*, is a catalogue of such miseries. They are the stuff of our lives.

It remains true that success is what we do with our failures. Can you show me a family without failures, a family with no cupboarded skeletons, a family where all topics of conversation are safe? I doubt it. Yet the differences are enormous between those families



opposite. They looked like the original happy family: two devoted parents, a comfortable income, lovely home. They had coped with the difficulties and expense of one daughter with Downs Syndrome. The other children, handsome and intelligent, made friends easily and passed exams. A teacher once puzzled the parents with the remark that Fiona seemed a sad child. They remembered that later, after the earthquake.

Those two images, the earthquake and the can of worms, were the two sides of what Brendan and his wife had to endure. The worms were the dirty, slimy details of the abuse that gradually came to light. The earthquake was the effect on the family, shaking

what they had worked so hard to build, a sense of home.

“Nothing can ever be the same again.” It is not just Brendan and his family who feel that. Look under the surface of almost any family and you find sad secrets. They weigh heaviest on the parents who have worked to create a family. Something happens that seems to blow the family apart: a daughter has an abortion, a marriage comes apart painfully, a son is in trouble with the law or spends time in prison, father loses his job because of sharp practice, mother gets depressed and tries to kill herself, one of the children is so disturbed or needy as to require institutional care. There is no end to

or individuals that can move on from their past, and those that cannot let it go. I think of a young man whose talk gravitates all the time to a mistake he made four years ago. His self-reproach absorbs all his energies, so he does not face present tasks, and goes on repeating his mistakes.

If you live long and listen hard, you learn one consoling fact: it *is* possible to recover from past trauma. You remember that old James Bond film: *Never say never again*. In fact the papers are always reporting people who say *Never again*. “Since my daughter was mugged, or my son was killed, my life is over. I can never be happy again.” That is simply not true. If people want to recover a zest for life, they can. We

# Gandhi's 'Trinity'

Last month was the 60th anniversary of the death of Mohandas Gandhi, world visionary and founder of modern India. Below is an extract from the editorial by Satish Kumar from *Resurgence* magazine for Jan/Feb 2008



While the independence struggle was in progress, Gandhi was working on ideas of a new social order for post-colonial India. He believed that there would be no point in getting rid of the British without getting rid of the centralised, exploitative and violent system of governance and the economics of greed that it pursued. Just replacing white rulers with brown rulers would be no freedom at all. So Gandhi designed a new 'trinity' to achieve his vision of a new nonviolent social order for a truly free India.

- The first part of this trinity was *Sarvodaya*: upliftment of All. The Western system of governance is based on the rule of the majority, so-called democracy. This was not good enough for Gandhi. He wanted no division between the majority and the minority. He wanted to serve the interests of each and every one: of all.

Democracy is also limited to care for the interests of human beings. Democracy working with capitalism favours the few who have capital. Democracy together with socialism favours the majority, but is still limited to humans. *Sarvodaya* includes the care of the Earth: of animals, forests, rivers and land as well as all people. For Gandhi, life is sacred and so he advocated reverence for all life, humans as well as other than humans.

- The second part of the Gandhian trinity is *Swaraj*: self-government. *Swaraj* works to bring about a social transformation through small-scale, decentralised and participatory structures of government on the one hand, and, on the other, *Swaraj* implies self-transformation, self-discipline and self-restraint on a personal level.

"There is enough in the world for everybody's need, but not enough for anybody's greed," said Gandhi. So a moral, ethical, ecological and spiritual foundation in the personal, social and political sphere is necessary to build good governance.

- The third part of the trinity is *Swadeshi*: local economy. Gandhi opposed mass production and favoured production by the masses. Work for him is as much a spiritual necessity as it is economic. So he insisted on the principle that every member of society should be engaged in manual work.

Manufacturing in small workshops and adherence to arts and crafts feeds the body as well as the soul, professed Gandhi. He believed that long-distance transportation of goods, competitive trading and relentless economic growth would destroy the fabric of human communities as well as the integrity of the natural world.

Gandhi was a great champion of Hindu-Muslim solidarity. This was appreciated by neither the fundamentalist Hindus nor the fundamentalist Muslims. Against the wishes of Gandhi, India was partitioned on religious lines and hundreds of thousands of Hindus and Muslims were massacred or made refugees.

One Hindu fundamentalist, Nathuram Godse, assassinated Gandhi on 30 January 1948, just six months after India's independence. As a consequence, Gandhi lost the opportunity to work for a new social order, and his trinity had only a limited impact. Now, 60 years on, we see the influence of Gandhi being revived through the rise of interest in ecology, peace and social justice. ■

are creatures of time, which can be a marvellous healer if we allow it. Some people do not allow it. They keep the wound open, keep their anger or sorrow at the point of pain, and do not allow anything but the past onto their agenda. They imagine that moving ahead is a betrayal of loved ones. Not so.

I started with the earthquake in Brendan's sad family. The names and details have obviously been changed, but there is a true story behind them, and part of that story is the long journey to recovery. The parents sought help for their children, the abuser and the abused. The home remained a place of

refuge and healing, despite the tensions between the children. Every step of that journey to recovery was difficult and dangerous; but it is working.

If you want stories of healing and recovery, turn to the gospels. Jesus stresses the joy at the goat that is found, the lost sheep that is brought home. In the parable of the prodigal son, he reports the boy's remorse – *I have sinned against heaven and against you – I am not worthy to be called your son*. But his father will not let him brood on the past. He hugs his son, dresses him in the best robe, and throws a party.

Or think of the two apostles who betrayed Jesus. Judas cannot escape from his past. He broods on it, and hangs himself. Peter takes the path of recovery. Though he wept with remorse at his betrayal of Jesus, he put it behind him, and Jesus pulled him into the present by confirming him as leader of the Twelve.

We all have sadnesses in our history. There is no virtue in getting stuck in them. God is in the *Present Moment*, in the *Now*. ■

*Fr Paul Andrews is a Jesuit priest resident in Dublin – but at present supplying in Otago and Southland – and catching fish in the Mataura river*



# The Benedict Report

*One of the most influential Catholic books in the late 1900s was The Ratzinger Report written by the present Pope, which presented a critical view of church developments since Vatican II.*

*In this article Jim Neilan assesses the first years of Pope Benedict's pontificate and his possible influence on the Church's future*

It is almost 3 years since Joseph Ratzinger became Pope. He will be 81 in April. Already there is speculation as to how his pontificate will be judged by historians. Like his three immediate predecessors, he took part in the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s and, keeping in mind that this was the single most defining event in the Catholic Church for centuries, it will be the background against which any assessment must be made: how effectively has the spirit of the Council been implemented during his pontificate?

Bishops on their official *ad limina* visits to Rome have invariably been impressed by Benedict's courteous and friendly manner and his willingness to listen carefully to what is being said. This is confirmed by his two encyclicals – on *Divine Love* and the *Virtue of Hope*. There is nothing authoritarian about them. They read more like the thoughts of a spiritual director.

But his documents on the restoration of the 'Tridentine' Latin Mass and Catholic relationships with other churches are quite a different matter. They seem to suggest an ambivalent attitude towards the spirit of the Council.

Vatican II called for a humble change of heart towards people of other Christian communities. It speaks of them as "separated Churches... whose actions can truly engender a life of grace," even though the "fullness of grace and truth is entrusted to the Catholic Church".

This heralded a fruitful period of unprecedented fellowship with fellow Christians. But then, in 2002, Pope John Paul II's *Dominus Jesus* was promulgated: a document which went a long way to undermine 35 years of ecumenical progress. It stated that these churches could not be called "churches" at all. And now, six years later, under the new Pope, the same assertion that had caused so much offence has been repeated. It has caused consternation from people working at all levels on the ecumenical scene, from parish level right through to Cardinal Kasper who heads the *Vatican Council for Promoting Christian Unity*, who says it has "aroused perplexity and created discontent". Incredibly, his Council experts were never consulted about the wording of the statement.

The Council's hoped-for road to unity with other Christians is not making headway at present. What about unity *within* the Church? Unfortunately, the signs are not good here either.

Last July, Pope Benedict gave assurances that his restoration of the Tridentine Mass would not cause division in the Church nor undermine the authority of local bishops. But it has! Many bishops found themselves having to make rulings to settle disputes about when and where this liturgy was acceptable in their dioceses, and were then humiliated by a senior Vatican official accusing them of rebelling against the Pope. This was Archbishop Ranjith, chosen by Pope Benedict to be spokesman for the *Congregation for*

*Divine Worship*. "Certain theologians, liturgists, priests, bishops and even cardinals have issued interpretative documents that inexplicably try to limit the Pope's instruction and are therefore guilty of one of the gravest sins – pride", he said. Hardly words of unity and reconciliation!

I recalled what Pope Paul VI said after the Council. The old rite of the Mass was to be replaced. "We have rediscovered the most ancient and primitive tradition, the one closest to the origins. This tradition had been obscured in the course of centuries, particularly by the Council of Trent", he said, and warned that people were making the old Mass into a symbol of rebellion against the Council itself. Asked about allowing the use of both rites, he said, "If this exception were allowed, the whole Council would be subverted". Prophetic words?

No one doubts that Pope Benedict considers he is acting for the good of the Church in making these new decrees, but people at all levels are equally convinced they are causing harm to the People of God. He seems to be giving greater weight to a small group of advisers rather than to bishops who are more in touch with the pastoral life of the Church. Their voice should be more important than that of Curia officials in Rome who are supposed to serve the bishops.

Jesus said, (*Mt 18:18*) "I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be

considered loosed in heaven". He was speaking, not only to the apostle who would become bishop of Rome, but to all the Twelve.

That is why Pope Paul VI, in line with the wish of the Council fathers, set up the Synod of Bishops in 1966. But it has never functioned as intended. Under the authoritarian rule of Pope John Paul II, bishops again found their rightful place in the Church being usurped by Vatican officials. The Council's doctrine of collegiality was virtually reinterpreted. When Synods were held, the whole process was so heavily influenced by the Roman Curia, that most of the real concerns and suggestions raised by the bishops never saw the light of day in the official reports.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of John XXIII becoming Pope. It's a good opportunity to assess how well the Church of 2008 is being faithful to the achievements of the Council he called.

If, as I have suggested, we are not moving forward in such key areas as the liturgy, ecumenism and collegiality, are we not being disloyal to the spirit of Vatican II? An Ecumenical Council is a watershed in the Church's history. Its teachings provide signposts for the way forward. Yet divisions are growing in the Church and that should worry us all. Catholics need to know precisely what Vatican II is asking of us and be loyal to the task of fulfilling it.

It may be that what is called for is another General Council. One task of such a Council would be to look seriously at our recent Church leadership, especially in the light of the sex abuse scandals. At least, it would be a precious chance for our bishops to come together, listen to each other – and listen to the Holy Spirit.

*Jim Neilan is a parishioner at Sacred Heart, NE Valley, Dunedin*

## **Binding Ties**

*"Lift Jesus higher. Lift Jesus higher."  
Thus we sing as together we bring  
our voice of worship  
half way to the rafters.*

*He's bloody heavy don't you think.  
If He was up, the way He ought,  
what a stink He'd cause, what a ruckus.  
Lives would change! Catholic lives.*

*So, what's the rub?  
The Son of God, King most splendid,  
Rendered tame, His cause suspended.  
What a shame.*

*Here we are, the one true church,  
Struggling on, in the lurch,  
while all around, thanks be to God,  
Our separated fellows flourish.*

*But, we've got it all, God's living home.  
The Tabernacle. The rosary. Rome?  
Vibrant flocks, about aged sixty.  
Our Alleluias muted whispers.*

*"Don't get carried away" our mantra  
You want some goodies? Believe in Santa.  
This Christ of ours, our risen Lord,  
We'll fix Him with another sword.*

*You want to worship? Here's some rules.  
You want to dance? Sit on these stools.  
You want some priests? Here's some men.  
You want a place to call your own? Here's Rome.*

*"Lift Jesus" now, would be you'd think,  
post two millennia, a nectar we could drink.  
With our great scholars, saints, and humble hope.  
Instead, a curia and a problematic Pope.*

*What ties Him down? What makes the rafters a place too far?  
The world, the flesh, and Satan's wiles,  
Sure sing the spirit, and close the smiles.  
But we trudge on. Diminishingly.*

*I saw on my TV tonight  
A revelation most revolting.  
Pedophiles protected!  
By Rome, my spiritual home.*

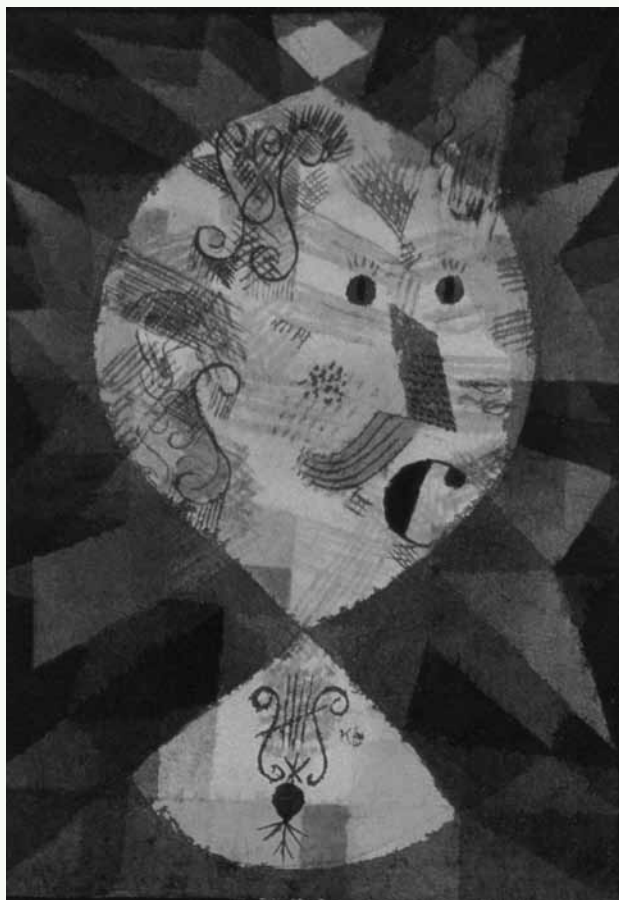
*Can Christ survive? Of course He can.  
He is God not just a man.  
But we, who try to be His body,  
Should we settle for so much shoddy?*

*We're called to live with Christ's own mind.  
Instead we have this prostitution  
where Christ, so gentle, caring, loses:  
"Just protecting the institution."*

*What sacrilege!*

**Phil Wilkinson**

## The Order of the High C



Paul Klee (1879-1940)

### *Aiming high*

Paul Klee was a great lover of music: he taught the piano, and he himself was a violinist of professional quality. He saw music – like art – as sacramental, a way of communion with God. But real communion is rooted in our own reality, our pathetic and almost humorous littleness. Of all Klee's countless music pictures, this is one of my favourites, both delightful and profound.

He imagines that those few singers who can reach High C should be given an 'order' – a decoration like the order of the garter; and so this little singer's head is shaped like a medallion, with presentation ribbons behind.

But it is only medal-shaped because she has put all that is in her into her high note. Her very mouth has become a 'c', her hair is formed from musical staves, and her throat has dwindled to nothing but a source of song.

In her intense concentration her desire to be wholly and purely that true high note, she doesn't see that she has drawn into herself all the brightness of the picture. When the faint background colours reach this dedicated head, they spring into light. She is almost a light bulb, radiating song.

And in another sense this is 'The Order of the High C', the religious order of those who wholly give themselves to the highest.

We are not High C, Jesus is. He forms himself on the lips of those who narrow and compress all their energies into becoming his music.

Funny little singer, but the more we look (and listen) the more we can be lost with her in the only thing that matters, the Jesus proof, the clear high note that he will sing within the self-forgetful heart. ■

*Wendy Beckett*

**Apology:** We apologise to readers and to author, Susan Smith, for the fact that the final two lines of her *February* article dropped off the page. The trouble arose from a font discrepancy between our computers and the printers. The eagle eyes of both editors failed to spot the glitch in the proofs. A diet of carrots is being prescribed – preferably bought at the farmers' market!

The final paragraph of the article reads:

"Consultation, participation, and involvement in decision-making are messy and often protracted processes yet in the long run, their alternatives are worse for the spiritual unity of the community. Sometimes it is difficult to see that we belong to a church that is 'of one mind'."



# Being Missionary

*Acts 2 and Acts 17*

In *Acts 2*, Peter addresses the Jews, Palestinian as well as the diasporic Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. In proclaiming the good news of Jesus, Peter who knows his audience well, draws on great prophetic texts and psalms of the *Old Testament* to explain who Jesus of Nazareth really was. *Luke* tells us that “when they heard this, they were cut to the heart,” and that “those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day 3000 persons were added.”



In *Acts 17*, *Luke's* other great hero, Paul, speaks to a very different group of people, the Athenians gathered in front of the Areopagus. Paul never refers to the *Old Testament*. Instead, Paul directs the attention of his audience to classical Greek poets from whom he quotes: “In him we live and move and have our being”; and again “for we too are his offspring”. Some scoffed, but others said: “We will hear you again about this,” while others joined him.

Two great missionaries but two very different approaches to proclaiming the good news. *Luke* refrains from suggesting that one approach enjoyed priority over the other. Peter draws on the OT traditions so well-known to his Jewish audience, while Paul challenges the Greeks to find new meaning in the great Greek classical tradition. Both men are aware of the situation of their respective audiences and speak into their different realities.

Today, there is ongoing debate among Catholic missiologists and missionaries about how we should live out our missionary vocation in today's complex, multi-cultural world. On 14 December 2007, the Vatican's *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* (CDF) issued a statement on mission, *Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelisation*, which teaches that mission be understood primarily as the verbal proclamation of the good news, having as its goal conversion of the other. Many Catholic missionaries apparently are neglecting this important goal because of a misplaced emphasis on the value of cultural diversity, or an uncritical acceptance of religious pluralism.

Both Peter and Paul prioritised the preaching of the good news, but at the same time the context in which they worked was very different from that obtaining today. Followers of Jesus then numbered one or two hundred, whereas today there are more than a billion Catholics. Neither Peter nor Paul was blessed and burdened with two thousand years of history which included forced conversions during the

Carolingian era, the mistreatment endured by native Americans in Latin America, and the unhappy alliance between missionary endeavours and imperialism in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Such aberrations deter many missionaries from embracing proclamation as the privileged way of being missionary. A sensitive

awareness of the context of the other, as demonstrated by Peter and Paul, may be a better way forward for the contemporary missionary rather than through prioritising proclamation and its corollary of church growth. ■

*Susan Smith*

*Susan Smith is a Sister of Our Lady of the Missions and teaches in her congregation's Asian provinces*



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## An elephant climbing European stairs

*God's Continent: Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis*

by Philip Jenkins

Oxford University Press 2007

Review: Mike Crowl

Philip Jenkins must have a team of researchers at hand when he writes one of his books: the sheer wealth of information from innumerable sources could hardly be conjured up by one man. Although, if anyone could do it, I suspect Jenkins could.

And then there's the way he puts his books together. A lesser writer would cobble all the facts and figures into something resembling an academic survey and leave it to the reader to wade in up to their neck. Not Jenkins. As another reviewer said, "who but Jenkins could enliven this storyline with an ocean of sociological data poured into a novel-like book that's impossible to put down?"

And that's exactly how it is. Jenkins has published some 20 books since 1979 – the first just after he completed his PhD in History at Cambridge – and he continues to produce them with great regularity.

I first came across him in *The Next Christendom*. It took a detailed look at the way Christianity is the prime religion in the Global South – by which he means the southern part of the Northern Hemisphere. Enthused by that book, I tracked down the latest, and I've been thoroughly enjoying it.

Well, 'enjoying' may not be the best word, but considering how much information it conveys, and how many hobby horses it knocks down, it comes across as immensely refreshing.

His aim is to show that while Europe appears to be in the throes of a takeover by Muslims from a wide variety of

backgrounds, the truth is that they still form a very small percentage of the overall population. Furthermore their influence is far less than the media would imply, and Jenkins says the likelihood is that the younger generation of Muslims scattered throughout the continent will become more secular with time rather than more religious.

This is the good news. Islam isn't about to take over Europe.

The not so good news, of course, is that there are plenty of radicals amongst the Muslim population, and plenty of warmongers and firebrands. There are plenty of reactionaries who want to turn their area of influence into a stronghold of Islam, a home away from home. But mixed with this is the fact that there are just as many radicals who lean more to the European way of life than the Islamic one.

Jenkins never claims that everything is peaceful, that Europe can carry on as though nothing had changed. The huge influx of Muslims from all sorts

of former colonies and the immense variety of them doesn't mean there won't be an upheaval. But his claim is more that Islam will not be taking over the Continent as the religion of choice any time soon.

And what about Christianity in Europe? Again, Jenkins offers a different scenario, based on facts rather than fluff. Because of wars and famines, Christians from the Global South are also pouring into Europe, and like the Muslim immigrants, they also face a continent that is hugely secular in its outlook. Strangely, the fact that Christianity has become threatened in countries that are still essentially Christian beneath their secular skin, is slowly bringing about a revival of the religion. It may be rather like an elephant climbing the stairs, but it is happening.

The ancient quote goes: *May you live in interesting times*. The joy of reading Jenkins' book is that we discover just how interesting are the times we're living in. ■

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# Her father's daughter: a life of Judith Todd

*Through the Darkness, A Life in Zimbabwe*

Judith Garfield Todd

Zebra Press, 2007

Review: Nina O'Flynn

Judith Todd, daughter of Sir Garfield and Lady Grace Todd, was born in Rhodesia in 1943. As an adult she actively shared her parents' belief in majority rule. Garfield Todd was a missionary from New Zealand who eventually became an MP and Premier of Southern Rhodesia, later to become Zimbabwe. The 1950s were not propitious for changes to benefit Africans. Under Ian Smith's UDI rule both Judith and her father were imprisoned because of their political beliefs. Judith was even force-fed.

Judith has written an authoritative book on the present one-party state of Zimbabwe. With her father she attended the independence conference at London's Lancaster House under Lord Carrington in 1980. She was eventually allowed back into Zimbabwe from which Ian Smith had expelled her, and became Director of the *Zimbabwe Project*. This was a non-political organisation set up to help detainees, war veterans, extending education, business training, setting up collectives, and all activities required to help and support people crushed by war adjust themselves in a new environment. This was to be her work for about 12 years. This book tells in detail what kind of person she was (helped) and why.

She tells the story of 'Lookout' Masuku who was the General of the ZAPU forces during the war for liberation. There were two armies involved: Mugabe led ZANU Patriotic Force (PF) and Nkomo lead ZAPU. After independence injustices were heaped on ZAPU followers and the soldiers who were treated more like deserters.

At the close of the war combatants of all armies were to leave their arms and report to Assembly Points within the country. Most ZAPU fighters were left in these Assembly Points for years. ZAPU party officials and members became dependant on organisations like the *Zimbabwe Project*. Masuku himself was arrested in 1982, placed in detention and stripped of all decorations, rank and power. He was held for four years.

In prison he developed serious health problems. Judith went to various specialists and was told he had AIDS. In Zambia during the war he had part of his hand blown off and was given blood transfusions. Unfortunately the blood was contaminated. But Masuku was too far on for effective medicines. His wife was informed of his state and came from Bulawayo to be with him before he died. There is no doubt at all that Masuku died a victim of Mugabe.

The Zimbabwe Project was anxious to find land which ex-soldiers could turn into farming of some kind. The Todds

provided 3000 acres near Bulawayo where the men were able to sell timber, grow vegetables, chickens and cattle. Soon a medical clinic was also built on the land.

With the *Zimbabwe Project* Judith approached organisations such as CIIR (Catholic Institute for International Relations) to fund those in the community who needed a fresh start. She was frequently in danger from the forces of Mugabe. Her Zimbabwean passport was due to be renewed early in 2003 but her request was denied. She was stateless again. She then applied to New Zealand for citizenship and her application was accepted with a note from Helen Clarke saying she was glad that New Zealand could help.

Judith writes of her parents with profound love and respect. She is surely her father's daughter. The Todd legacy in Zimbabwe is not dead. Their spirit goes on. ■

*Nina O'Flynn spent about 2-3 years in Zambia and Rhodesia in educational work and met Sir Garfield Todd.*

## Come and See

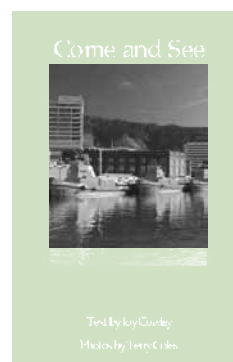
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## China poised for Olympian glory

Anything to do with China is always on a massive scale, both in numbers and in impact on the rest of the world. The preparation and building of new amenities for the Beijing Olympic Games, being held in August, have been in progress for years. Now the event is attracting a huge debate among politicians, participants and among the Chinese themselves. Politics and sport can never be separated at the Olympics.

New Zealand Olympic officials tried unsuccessfully to make athletes sign contracts forbidding political statements at the games. Who is prepared to criticise the repressive Chinese regime and risk trade with potentially the biggest market in the world? But some individuals are already protesting.

Steven Spielberg, the artistic adviser to the Olympics, has resigned citing China's role in the atrocities in the Sudan. Myanmar, Zimbabwe and North Korea, countries dependent on Chinese financial aid, will ignore the human rights abuses rampant in the host country. Beijing will be presented as a model of progress. There is a danger yet of countries boycotting the games. After all, America boycotted the 1980 games in protest at the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Beijing is being transformed by architectural wonders. The huge Olympic Stadium and the *Water Cube* built for swimming events will be flanked by luxury hotels and new ring roads around the city. An enormous lake will surround the titanium *National Grand Theatre* as well as the largest fountain in the world that can shoot 134m high. Nearly a hundred golf courses, which occupy 20,000 acres of land with imported turf, have been laid out in greater Beijing.

There is one problem. The city's water resources are dwindling fast. Some brave Chinese have pointed out that

the Guanting Reservoir, Beijing's main source of drinking water, is three-quarters empty. Most of Beijing's water now comes from its underground aquifer. After the Olympics, China's looming environmental catastrophe will have to be addressed.

### Balkan tinderbox

The extraordinary declaration of independence by Kosovo from Serbia is the latest development in the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and one which will have repercussions throughout Europe. Kosovo's independence could well spark other separatist movements particularly in Russia, and it will certainly be opposed by China and by several European Union member states such as Cyprus, Greece and Spain.

The United States will support Kosovo which will bring American influence and power in direct conflict with Russia. Serbia, supported by Russia, will not recognise Kosovo as a separate state, and has called American support unlawful and a humiliation for the European Union. Russia called an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council to block independence, but it failed to gain support. In any case, the United Nations is powerless in this situation when both Russia and US have a veto to forestall any resolution against their perceived interest.

Albanians are celebrating in Kosovo, while in Belgrade angry Serbs set fire to the US Embassy. Memories of Milosevic's infamous Serbian rule over Kosovo run deep in Albanian minds. This latest attempt to disengage from Serbian domination has the potential of escalating into an explosive confrontation, not only between Serbs and Albanians in both Kosovo and Serbia, but also between families

split by allegiance and geography in the whole region.

The declaration of independence will test the solidarity of the European Union and the ability among all its members to develop and support a multi-ethnic secular society in a free and democratic state. The two-headed eagle of the Albanian flag has become the metaphor for a complex political situation which could well divide Europe once again.

### Crisis in the hospitals

The report on fatal medical errors made in hospitals administered by New Zealand's district health boards in 2006/7, was released in February and highlighted the seeming impossibility of maintaining a public health service capable of meeting the needs of everybody. Despite the best intentions of governments to allocate more and more funds for health services and hospitals, it is never enough.

Last year the hospitals had to contend with strikes from underpaid cleaning staff, the departure of health professionals to the private sector and the inability to retain doctors trained in New Zealand. The latter case was due to professionals leaving for better paid positions overseas in order to repay excessive student loans. There is of course a common factor in all of this – money, or the lack of.

The most powerful determinant of health is wealth. Life expectancy and childhood survival are enhanced when families can afford access to doctors, or 'go private' if necessary. High quality health services should be available to all, but the rich always fare better than the poor.

At the risk of oversimplification, the real problem is one of a widening gap between the rich and the poor. The allocation of more money to hospital boards is not the solution. A higher basic wage for menial work together with a fair remuneration for professional skills would be a start. ■

### Crosscurrents

John Honoré

## It ain't easy being Pope

On Good Friday, as you take part in the series of intercessory prayers that follow the reading of the Passion, think of the Pope with sympathy during two of the prayers. Certainly during the one that is a prayer for his welfare. But also during the prayer, later in the series, that is for the Jewish people. How that second prayer should be worded has been, as one commentator put it, a further example of “it ain't easy being Pope”.

Those who believe in Christ have over the centuries related to the Jews in varied ways. Much of that story causes us embarrassment today. Relations have in recent times taken very much a turn for the better. But the wish to do the right thing by the Jews has recently put the Holy Father, Pope Benedict, in a quandary.

For centuries the introduction to the Good Friday prayer of intercession referred to the Jews as a ‘perfidious people’. Back in 1959 John XXIII removed those words from the missal. But other uncomplimentary terms were retained. Jewish leaders understandably took umbrage at being negatively described in official Catholic worship.

It seemed a few years ago that the problem had been solved. The old pre-Vatican II form of liturgy was no longer in use. The prayer that was henceforth to be used in the Good Friday ceremonies recognised the Jewish people as the first to hear the word of God and simply prayed that they might grow in the love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant. The offensive words were a matter of history, to be regretted, yes, but no longer a current insult.

But then things changed again. In his endeavour to bring back to full union with the Church the followers of Archbishop

Lefebvre – folk who are enamoured of the Mass in its old form – the Holy Father recently has permitted much wider use of the earlier liturgy. It has been given a recognised status as a current form of Catholic worship. If this liturgy were to be celebrated with continued use of the offensive expressions, Jews could only conclude that this expressed today's Catholic evaluation of the people of Israel. Little more than a month before Easter, Benedict put out a modification of the text. But the modifications were limited ones. They were still not enough to satisfy Jewish critics.

It is surprising that the Pope put out the modified text in this form. Why did he not simply prescribe the prayer be the same as in the current Roman Rite? This nuanced text describes the Jewish people as “the first to hear the word of God” and prays that they “may arrive at the fullness of Redemption”.

The problem seems to be the self-styled Traditionalist Catholics whom the Holy Father has sought to bring back to the fold through permitting wider use of the pre-Vatican II liturgy. They would see wider changes to the text as further surrender to inter-faith pressure, something they proclaim has already widely taken place in the main-line church. This being their view, modifying the text in any substantial way could further lower the already dim chance of reconciling with the Church the disciples of Archbishop Lefebvre.

We are all at times tempted to criticise the Pope for what he does or for what he does not do. In this matter, pity the poor Holy Father. What is he to do? Damned if he has the words in one form and damned if they are in another. Pray for him with sympathy on Good Friday. ■

*Humphrey O'Leary*

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

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## John O'Donohue

1954 – 2008

*The celebrated writer on Celtic Spirituality  
died suddenly while on holiday last month*

### The Abbey Iona

It was after dinner in the refectory on the first night, John stood up and said, "Everyone is invited to Mass in the Michael chapel at 7 o'clock." Later, someone asked him, "When you said, 'everyone,' does that include Presbyterians?" He smiled, "Of course it does."

We gathered in the little chapel, about 35 of us from 30 different countries. There was no electric light. Candles burned. He came in with his vestments over his arm. He got them on, a great green Celtic cross down his back.

He was young, quite tall, with a wispy beard, sparkling Irish eyes, and a beautiful West of Ireland brogue. He whispered, *Let us pray* and he said, *O God, you look upon us with compassion, with tenderness, sometimes even with delight – help us to look upon ourselves in the same way.* In the candle light I could see tears running down cheeks, with my own. It was an epiphany for me. He gave me a new vision of God and a new understanding of myself. My faith, my life and my ministry have grown from that moment.

John O'Donohue died suddenly, aged 53, on holiday in France. He had been a parish priest in the diocese of Galway. He was an academic (PhD Tübingen) and a poet. He carried in himself a fine intellect and the dreaming of a Celt.

### Anam cara

His wonderful book *Anam cara: Spiritual Wisdom from the Celtic World* took the world of spirituality by storm. *Anam cara* (soul-friend) has profound insights expressed in his unique and charming use of language.

We see something of that in the *Beannacht (for Josie)*

*On the day when  
the weight deadens  
on your shoulders  
and you stumble,  
may the clay dance  
to balance you.*

*And when your eyes  
freeze behind  
the grey window  
and the ghost of loss  
gets in to you,  
may a flock of colours,  
indigo, red, green  
and azure blue  
come to awaken in you  
a meadow of delight.*

*When the canvas frays  
in the curach of thought  
and a stain of ocean  
blackens beneath you,  
may there come across the waters  
a path of yellow moonlight  
to bring you safely home.*

*May the nourishment of the earth  
be yours,  
may the fluency of the ocean  
be yours,  
may the protection of the ancestors  
be yours.*

*And so may a slow  
wind work these words  
of love around you,  
an invisible cloak  
to mind your life.*

### The Creation

John engaged in the spirituality of the natural world. In one of his talks he said, "Stones are wonderful listeners. They just sit there and take it all in. Stones have heard the sounds and the silence of the creation." He looked around the great stones of the abbey: "These stones have heard the prayers, tears and songs of people who have come here through the centuries." He whispered, "If we are very quiet and listen with our hearts, they might share with us something of what they have heard."

On the face of it, his words are nonsense. At a deeper level, we know we sense a Presence in an ancient place of worship and on a mountain top: he speaks of something true and wonderful, or as he would often say, "magic!"

We can be sad that his beautiful voice is silent; we will have no more of his glorious words. We can thank God for the words we have.

*Deep peace... John*

*John Hunt*

*John Hunt is a Presbyterian Minister  
in Christchurch*