

Tui Motu

InterIslands

monthly independent Catholic magazine

April 2015 | \$7



easter is here!

All through Holy Week we focus on the tissue-thin closeness of death and life in story, ritual and faith. We hear again scripture stories of the people's close shaves with death and of Jesus' unjust crucifixion. At Easter we plump for life, rejoicing with light, singing, flowers and bells when we hear again of Jesus' rising. We sleep in the light of the full moon and the southern cross.

Last summer I joined the crowd at the Tower of London to see the poppy installation commemorating the UK and Commonwealth soldiers who died in WWI. As you'll see in this month's centrespread, over 800,000 poppies flowed around the moat, each signifying the life of a soldier. (The red river would have overflowed the moat and swamped the Thames if poppies had been planted for all the dead of the countries who'd battled in that war.) In the crowd I heard around me repeatedly: "There are so many ... I can see what the number means now." And the concern: "But the killing is still going on today."

While the artists, Paul Cummins and Tom Piper, created a means for understanding the magnitude of the fatalities, the visitors were connecting the poppies with contemporary conflicts and loss of life around our world. They realised that life is fragile — especially if you live in the wrong place at the wrong time — as the faces in the rivers of refugees testify.

As much as death is with us, so too is our hope and delight in life. Those who have experienced a birth, coming through the other side of chemotherapy, or waking from a coma, will recognise the overpowering feelings of gratitude, relief and love for life. Those who watch their gardens dying back, foliage dropping and composting and lettuces going to seed, will understand the hope for the regeneration of life. Those who study climate change, conserve delicate species, or try to live more simply, appreciate the efforts made for the continuance of life. Those who stand with the downtrodden, watch their children and grandchildren play, or attend an accident, feel the intense urgency for the protection of life. All of these are aspects of the fullness of

life sourced in the presence of God with us and celebrated again in the risen Christ in the evolving universe.

This Easter theme flows through the articles of the month's issue. Helen Bergin begins the "golden pages" that explore aspects of the Easter season.

Joy Cowley captures the intimacy and immensity of Easter love in *Knowing*, placed alongside the poppies in the centrespread. It invites a contemplative pause — maybe over a cup of tea.

Wendy Kissel reflects on her pilgrimage with her daughter to El Salvador to the shrines preserved in the places where Archbishop Romero and other martyrs of the civil war died.

Allan Davidson reminds us that the centenary of Gallipoli is not a cause for celebration as much as a challenge to increase our efforts towards neighbourliness and peace in our world.

And the last word is a blessing for all our readers from the *Tui Motu* team. Enjoy your reading. ■

Ann Gilroy

homeless in iraq

Elizabeth Mackie OP

In January a small group of Dominican women and men from the USA and England met with their Dominican sisters and brothers and many others in northern Iraq. They spent time among the 500,000 Christians, Muslims and Yazidis, driven from the city of Mosul and other locations by the "Islamic State".

"The numbers and statistics are numbing," they reported. The visitors were shocked by the situation of the displaced people. Shocked when they found whole families living in tiny spaces, including one extended family of 26 persons living in a small caravan and 400 families (nearly 2,000 persons) housed in cubicles within containers, set up on the concrete floor of an unfinished mall. And this in a particularly severe winter. "It is beyond terrible," they wrote. "We met a woman in this situation. She is overwhelmed and sad. It is so cold. It is shockingly cold."

They were appalled too by the poverty of the refugees, most of whom had left all their possessions behind when they fled. Some had only an hour or two to gather a few belongings and leave on foot or in cars. Many refugees told of the sense of betrayal they felt when they learned that their former Muslim neighbours and friends had occupied their homes and appropriated

or sold their possessions. This had taken away all hope that they could ever return. "They have every reason to be sad. Families that have shared life together in villages on the Nineveh plains have been uprooted from their homes, their land, their traditions — with no resolution in sight." Even that position is insecure and not exempt from suicide bombings and other violence. "Their suffering is hard for us to comprehend."

Yet the visitors were inspired by the refugee families. They were humbled by the courage and commitment of those who chose to stay, even though they might have been able to leave Iraq for other countries. They remain there in solidarity with those who have no way of escaping. They stay to serve others — Christian, Yazidi and Muslim — in whatever ways they can. They remain to preserve the remnant of an ancient Christian community, dating back almost to the time of Christ.

The visitors were inspired by the hope to which these displaced people still cling, despite the bleakness of their situation. As one refugee said: "Hope means that I live now, whatever may happen tomorrow." They were inspired by the resilience of children, who ran to meet them with smiles of welcome; by the courtesy of women, who offered flat bread freshly baked in difficult circumstances; by the friar who took the time

to gather up centuries-old archives of the Dominicans' presence in the region, keeping alive memories of the past; by the sign of peace that so many Christians offer, despite the violence around them. One of the visitors told of soldiers who came searching for weapons in a Christian home. When they saw a Christmas crib in the house they said: "You are Jesus. There are no weapons here." And they left immediately.

The Dominicans left with a fourfold message from the Iraqi people:

- "Tell your people the truth of what is happening." The truth is that this is a vast humanitarian catastrophe, which is crushing millions of lives. We should inform our politicians, ask them to visit the area and to work for a negotiated solution.
- The people ask for our prayers. "We must pray frequently and insistently for peace in Iraq."
- "Come [to Iraq], especially if you have some skill that could help the refugees."
- Contribute funds for the purchase of food, shelter, medicines.

While the world focuses on overpowering the Islamic State, may we listen attentively to these voices of the displaced. ■

Elizabeth Mackie OP is the Assistant Editor of Tui Motu.

contents

Editorial	2
Guest editorial: Homeless in Iraq	3
ELIZABETH MACKIE	
Letters to the editor	4
Domesticating Francis	5
JIM CONSEDINE	
Easter hope	6–7
HELEN F BERGIN	
Pull the tent pegs up again	8–9
MARY CAYGILL	
Transforming new life	10
AMY ARMSTRONG	
New life in 'little Ant'	11
PAUL ARMSTRONG	
Song of the Earth	12–13
DANIEL O'LEARY	
Poem: Easter in the south	13
M K JOSEPH	
Dialogue between Christians and Muslims	14–15
PETER J CULLINANE	

Poem: Knowing	16–17
JOY COWLEY	
Joy Cowley's story	18–19
SHAUN DAVISON	
An ecological reading of the gospel of Mark (part three)	20–21
ELAINE WAINWRIGHT	
Centenary reflections of Gallipoli	22–23
ALLAN DAVIDSON	
El Salvador pilgrimage	24–25
WENDY KISSEL	
Resurrection of Jesus (and the disciples)	26–27
KATHLEEN RUSHTON	
Book and film reviews	28–29
Crosscurrents	30
JIM ELLISTON	
The culture of lying	31
ROBERT CONSEDINE	
A mother's journal	32
KAAREN MATHIAS	

Cover illustration: Painting *Supper at Emmaus* by He Qi. Used by permission of the artist. [www.heqiart.com]



Tui Motu
InterIslands

ISSN 1174-8931
Issue number 192

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.

address: Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd,
52 Union Street, Dunedin North, 9054
P O Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9059

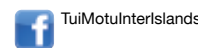
phone: (03) 477 1449

fax: (03) 477 8149

email: editor@tuimotu.org

email for subscriptions: admin@tuimotu.org

website: www.tuimotu.org



editor: Ann L Gilroy RSM

assistant editor: Elizabeth Mackie OP

illustrator: Donald Moorhead

directors: Susan Brebner, Rita Cahill RSM, Philip Casey (chair), Neil Darragh, Paul Ferris, Elizabeth Mackie OP and David Mullin

honorary directors: Pauline O'Regan RSM, Frank Hoffmann

typesetting and layout: Greg Hings

printers: Southern Colour Print, 1 Turakina Road,
Dunedin South, 9012

a good dose of hope

We have been receiving *Tui Motu* for some years and I always look forward to it but this edition (February issue) is particularly excellent. I am encouraging everyone to read it. The articles cover so many topical issues in such a readable form. It is all so full of hope. I sometimes get quite depressed with the economic reality we are forced to live in. It is wonderful to know others are similarly affected and able to voice their insights into other possible scenarios.

You have a powerful instrument there. I will work to increase your sales.

Mary Engelbrecht rsj, Perth

our troops: who will benefit?

The Prime Minister asked, whose side are we on? Presumably we should all have the guts to join the club that has gone to war with ISIS. However much we hate what Al-Qaeda, ISIS and Boko Haram have done and are doing we must surely understand that the military interventions by western powers in the Levant and Africa have been occurring for centuries and the 2003 invasion of Iraq boosted recruitment to the terrorists and expanded conflicts throughout the region.

The questions that need answering are:

- Will it succeed in bringing peace to the countries of the region?
- Will it defeat terrorism or eliminate organisations like ISIS or Boko Haram?
- Will it contribute to the empowerment and well-being of the people who live there?

The only people who have benefited thus far are the commercial and financial corporations who continue to rip off the resources of third world nations. If the control of the region's oil resources was the motivating factor in 2003, it served mainly to drive up the world price of oil and enrich the oil cartel and the multi-national corporations, who were given reconstruction and security contracts there. From all reports, the Iraqi people still

lack basic services and infrastructure. Unemployment remains high and the disruption of education, home life and communal structures and relations has been horrific.

If you consider the 2003 attack worthwhile, it has surely failed to bring democracy, peace and the defeat of terrorism. Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden have been killed, but Al-Qaeda grew larger and branched out. It has been displaced by a more militant branch, that aims to create an Islamic State. Their command system of morality is only one interpretation of Islam, but it is a serious, albeit fundamentalist one, something well known among Christians and Jews. Those religious minorities who feel persecuted, exploited and dominated by those who are irreligious or apostate, will inevitably dedicate their lives to regaining their ideal of the good society. Al-Qaeda was armed as an anti-communist fighting force and has now morphed into a crusade to build an Islamic caliphate that ultimately aims to convert or defeat all enemies and infidels. Thus far western interventions against terrorism have done nothing but inspire more recruitment to this holy cause. If such force is to be used again, we should be prepared for the loss of many lives and our troops will undoubtedly be at risk.

The prospects for peace and prosperity in the region would seem to be rather dim. The people displaced by warfare, by the terrorists, by crop failures, by climate change and by economic developments that privilege the rich and displace the poor, are growing in number as human poverty and inequality increase around the world. These factors play an even larger role here than in other areas, and they do so because of the interventions as well as the terrorists they created. The fact that there are now militants who are willing to use extreme violence to regain control should come as no surprise. Their vision of a unified Muslim state may become increasingly attractive to young Muslims wherever communities remain divided by prejudice and injustices that can radicalise their youth.

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 changing the meaning. We do not publish anonymous letters except in exceptional circumstances. Response articles (up to a page) are welcome — but please, by negotiation.

If we respond to the growth of terrorism by treating all Muslims like potential terrorists, by profiling, monitoring or trying to recruit them, we add harassment to the sense of persecution and injustice felt by many Muslims. The real challenge is how to reach out to our Muslim communities to build bridges of cooperation and make joint efforts to assure social justice. If we permit fear and suspicion to dominate our communal relations, we will effectively allow the fundamentalist extremists to suck us all into the whirlpool of conflict and violence. If we do nothing, we leave the field to those who are turning it into a battlefield.

Rather than join the club, would it not be more courageous to play our role as a nation of independent peacekeepers? It was our nuclear-free stance that showed our independence and that took real courage. When a nation chooses sides in a battle that is not theirs, they are aligning themselves in a way that compromises their potential role as mediators and peace keepers. We can be sure that the extremists will not fail to define the interventions of this club as today's manifestation of an old imperialist tradition.

To try and sell this troop-posting as a humanitarian exercise is a travesty. For the refugees and victims of the ongoing violence, a contribution to UNICEF, Caritas, Oxfam or the Red Cross would surely make more sense.

Paul Green, Wellington

domesticating francis

Jim Consedine

When Francis of Assisi burst on the scene in the 12th century, the Church became enamoured with his radical vision. While praying, he had heard the call from God: "Francis, repair my church which has fallen into disrepair."

The vocation of St Francis was to recall the Church to the radical simplicity of the gospel, to the spirit of poverty, and to the image of Christ in his poor. His movement spread like bushfire. Soon there were hundreds of friars committing their lives to his simple vision of renewed Christian life.

But then the problems began. Many wanted to be part of this new movement, but not as radically committed as he envisaged. Soon there was dissent in the camp. Even in his life, the Franciscans were divided about how literally to accept Francis' call to radical material poverty.

So what happened? As with many other religious orders, the process was one of "domestication" of the founder's vision and practice. Often followers cannot cope with the demanding nature of what the founder is saying and what they are expected to live. They respond by "pulling the teeth" from the founder's vision.

The same thing happened to Jesus. Is this not what we often do in the Church? Jesus sought to give dignity and positive affirmation to those excluded: the poorest, sickest and most marginalised in his society, whom he described as "closer to God" than the leaders, and "first inheritors of God's Kingdom and God's grace". The powerful couldn't accept that. They had domesticated their own radical prophetic tradition. They had built a theology around their own lives and established status. This man threatened their whole social structure. He had to go.

the challenge

Will we follow the same domestication process with the teachings

of Pope Francis? He has had an unprecedented positive response to his reform mission so far, from both Catholics and people from the wider community. They all love Francis. People with little interest in religion talk about him in supermarkets, at the pool, in the pub. Church leaders are supportive of him in public utterances. In public at least, he has found almost universal acceptance.



But where is the implementation of the changes he is proposing? There are certainly internal Church structural changes underway. But what about his message to the wider world? Francis constantly condemns war. We have just committed to another in Iraq. How many Catholics have looked at their financial dealings in the light of his repeated condemnation of corporate capitalism and the accumulation of wealth in a hungry world? Or his calls to stop trashing the environment?

He has repeatedly called for countries to be more open to refugees fleeing war, violence, ethnic cleansing and poverty. A good portion of the New Zealand Cabinet are Catholics. Where are the moves from within government to broaden our immigration policy, to welcome some of the poorest and most desperate, and not just the wealthiest? How seriously do they take his message on the evils of an unbridled "free" market, on structured inequality for women and

the poor, on climate change? The words of Francis need to be fleshed out — and not just remain newsprint.

prophet for our time

I think most of us will be tempted to domesticate Francis to one degree or another. He is challenging us with the Gospel of Jesus at a very primal level. Most of us probably need to change. Change is usually uncomfortable. It certainly is for me. It certainly has been for Francis over the years.

He's a changed man, widely recognised as a prophet in our time. He speaks about the gospel, from the heart, off the cuff. Previous popes have often been circumspect to the point of irrelevance. This man is not. He is Spirit-filled, highly educated, open, honest, and speaks to the topics of the day. He seems fearless. However, history shows that prophets are not welcomed, nor heeded, and are usually ignored, sometimes killed.

Francis is not accepted universally by those who hold political and ecclesial power. Admired, yes; accepted, no. Many can't wait for him to go. Like St Francis, he is being marginalised by opponents every day, even from within the Church — under cover, behind closed doors. Many feel threatened. They see their power eroding, their status under threat.

Francis presents the message of Jesus for our time. It is our responsibility to implement that message. As demanded by the Conclave that elected him, he has already begun major reform within the Church. But he cannot do it all alone. He recognises us, the People of God, as the Church. He needs us to play our part. We cannot stand passively by, spectators in this moment.

In supporting Francis, let us not domesticate him — nor his message. ■

Jim Consedine is a priest of the Christchurch diocese.

easter hope

The author discusses how the gift of hope is the Easter promise of life in our world.

Helen F Bergin OP

I recall one Easter Sunday when a guest asked to “raise a toast” before lunch. Imagining that the toast would be either to the hosts or to “the risen Jesus” I was astonished when it was Winston Peters who was receiving the toast! Peters had just succeeded in introducing the Gold Card and the proposer of the toast had just become a beneficiary! Today, thousands of New Zealanders receive that gift as senior citizens.

However, our focus here is on another gift — Jesus’ resurrection. The celebration of Jesus’ having been raised from death is not

simply a “holy day” bringing respite from daily concerns. It honours a momentous experience within the Christian story when life conquered death. It is the feast of hope.

from grief to amazement

In the Easter Vigil gospel (Mk 16:1-7) we meet three bereft women — Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. They visit Jesus’ burial site to anoint his body. Their world suddenly changes when a young man addresses them: “You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he has risen, he is not here.” The women are then

urged to tell this news to the disciples, including Peter, and to go to Galilee where they will see Jesus. In this gospel, one feels little of the enormity of the women’s experience as they move suddenly from grief into amazement. No wonder that artists such as Chinese He Qi have expressed the mixed emotions of these women — perhaps fearful of hoping for too much!

John’s gospel on Easter morning (20:1-9) also includes Mary of Magdala. On discovering Jesus’ empty tomb Mary informs Simon Peter and friend that Jesus’ body has disappeared and must have been removed. The two disciples rush to the tomb. We then learn that the unnamed male disciple who enters the tomb after Peter and encounters only cloths, “saw and he believed.” Both Easter gospels attempt to express an unimaginable experience.

The Easter story describes a movement from sadness and confusion to joy and faith. The listener is enveloped in bewilderment and delight. Jesus’ resurrection is fundamental to Christian faith and while celebrated solemnly at Easter it is honoured weekly at Sunday Eucharist. Easter lays the foundation for Christian hope since, despite everything, life triumphs.

towards the fullness of life

“Hope” is sometimes depicted as wishful but unrealistic yearning. Yet, hope as the fruit of Easter is neither “wishful” nor “unreal”. Resurrection hope, according to theologian Edward Schillebeeckx

is “the most powerful religious symbol of what is truly possible as the future, the future which has already ‘de facto’ commenced in Jesus Christ.” Schillebeeckx suggests that resurrection belief invites individuals and communities to be reconcilers with one another and with creation. Since it is through Jesus that God re-directed the world towards fullness of life, it is in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection that Christians look for foundations of hope.

In his life, Jesus sought both the company of friends and solitude with God. Jesus rejoiced among tax collectors yet felt the fear of God’s abandonment. In approaching death, with faith in God, Jesus entrusted himself to the One he called “Abba”/Dad. Ultimately, thanks to the experiences of these first women and men, Christians believe that Jesus was raised to new life and lives now through his Spirit working among those who try to create a better future for planet earth and all its life-forms.

easter people everyday

Being “Easter people” is a challenge met by communities and individuals — annually and daily. Christians believe that Jesus has been raised from death and therefore that he accompanies all who bring life to others. Christians also know that despite everything, death opens into eternal life. Easter people are grounded in hope. So what might this gift of hope look like?

Here in Aotearoa NZ, we are graced with thousands of people who offer life and hope to others. For TV viewers, there are Sunday evening “Good Sorts” who willingly place their gifts of tutoring, carpentry or sports coaching . . . at the service of others. For newspaper readers, there are regular accounts about generous locals such as the recently deceased Wanaka helicopter pilot lauded not for “doing great acts but rather for small individual acts of kindness.”

For web enthusiasts, organisations such as avaaz.org invite the global community to engage in petitions, including the present-day freeing of economic slaves, offering moral support to displaced communities and standing against the desecration of Earth. Through each response, the human community offers a gift of hope into this world.

eastering at eucharist

When Christians gather on Sundays in local Eucharistic communities, we remind ourselves of the reason for our hope. Globally, thousands of communities gather on the first day of the week to remember Jesus of Nazareth who lived and died for all and who was raised to new life as God’s ongoing gift for all. Jesus is the Living One!

Jesus raised to new life lives through his Spirit working among those who try to create a better future for planet earth and all its life-forms.

In *gathering* at Eucharist, Christians gradually come to grasp that God, revealed in Jesus, is not a stranger, our wicket keeper, or our judge. God is love!

In listening to our Hebrew and Christian stories, we remember Jesus who reached out to all, drew in outsiders and challenged self-appointed “superior” persons. We learn about God’s vision or reign which includes the children, the broken-hearted, the ostracised, the repentant and all seekers of the good. We are challenged personally to respond to God’s vision when each Sunday we hear biblical stories expressing Jesus’ desire to bring life to all humans and to all creation.

In coming to the Eucharistic table we are fed, enlivened and amazed at

the gift we have been given to nourish us on our weekly journey.

Each Eucharistic celebration has potential to remind us of all that has brought life during the week, as well as the “deathly” moments and the reconciling encounters or moments of joy. Eucharist invites us more deeply into the journey of Jesus. We sometimes come with disappointments and experiences “too hard to bear” trusting that Jesus will accompany us into the promise of resurrection. At least, this is our hope!

easter people of hope

Above all, Sunday Eucharist has the potential to remind us that as disciples of Jesus we are indispensable participants in Jesus’ mission of bringing hope to all. The resurrection is about people being sent out with joy and courage for the sake of God’s mission. As inheritors of the resurrection, Christians witness to the greatest gift of all time, namely, death is not the end. God has conquered death.

Despite the above, many of us live with deep paradox. While Eucharist recalls Jesus’ death and resurrection for “the world”, many family and friends feel unable to participate. In such circumstances each community experiences deep absence while trusting in the hope of resurrection.

So, might there be a point to the Easter “toast” with which this reflection began? The Aotearoa Gold Card and many other gifts have been given to some people for a limited time. Most are grateful. Yet, all Gold Cards pale before an eternity of joy. It is the gift and practice of hope which enable Christians to live as people open to God’s future. And, it is Easter which keeps such hope alive! ■

Helen Bergin, OP teaches theology at The University of Auckland and is the editor of a series of books published by Accent Publications.



Noli Me Tangere by Nik Helbig. Used with permission. [www.nikhelbig.com]

pull the tent pegs up again

The author describes her Methodist congregation's nomadic journey around the city after their church was destroyed in the Christchurch earthquake and the Easter hope towards which they keep journeying.

Mary Caygill

*When we set up camp and settle
to avoid love's risk and pain,
you disturb complacent comfort,
pull the tent pegs up again;
keep us travelling in the knowledge
you are always at our side;
give us courage for the journey,
Christ our goal and Christ our guide.
Joy Dine*

This year the first Sunday of Lent found the congregation of the Christchurch Central Methodist Church (Durham St Methodist) on the move again. It was our sixth shift from one side of the city to another since the beginning of the earthquake events of September 2010. The liturgical seasons certainly have a new resonance for us these days.

How appropriate that this year the first Sunday of Lent also marked the fourth anniversary of the earthquake of 22 February 2011. We remember the total

destruction of the physical building of Durham St Methodist. And in its collapse to the ground we remember the tragic ending of the lives of three men working inside dismantling the pipe organ.

After four years as nomads, we return to the inner city, not yet to our "own" rebuilt home on our historic church site, but no more than five minutes' walk away. We're resident in the Knox Presbyterian Centre hall. We're enjoying the hospitable embrace of the Knox congregation and also that of another inner city neighbour, the St Luke's Anglican Church community, who have their temporary home in the Knox Centre.

Collectively we know well the physical movement and emotional upheaval associated with "pulling up of tent pegs" yet again. We know the need to pause and gather ourselves in the new surrounds before making a settled "home" in them for the next stretch of time.

remnants and memories

On this Sunday we have reminders of our travels especially in words and symbols. Lying before us are remnants from our old church — our "portable tabernacle". We have the brass cross and the oversized offertory plate unearthed from the earthquake rubble. The chalice and plate snatched from the overturned communion cupboard, are placed on our new sanctuary and communion table for this Sunday. A purple cloth purchased and hastily sewn to size the day before, covers the table. The fun and laughter in getting it all ready expresses a wonderful creativity of adaptation in making this new space as "at home" as it can be for all who gather.

And alongside all of this is the simple, stark reminder of the fragility of life and power of nature. A vase holding three red roses symbolises the three who lost their lives when the earth's foundations heaved violently, dismantled, and disturbed our complacent comfort. We are one faith community — human life within creation.

back in the inner city

The air is alive with muted excitement. We're back in the city again. After the months of sharing with another Methodist community in unfamiliar territory in the city's western neighbourhoods, today we're a single congregation. We're smaller in number too since our nomadic travels began after September 2010.

This stage of our journey, though unnerving and unsettling, tinged still with grief, marked with farewells to those we have been

part of for a season, holds within it the seeds of creative purpose. Here and now in this new place, so close to where we have been before, we can if we will, sense, hear, see and experience anew the living contours of a city emerging, rebuilding. It is a new physical entity flexing itself, feeling for itself its outer and inner spaces in a new and living way.

lenten journey ending

The liturgical words call us to attention in the here and now, to the Lenten journey of *metanoia*. It is the seasonal call to openness and movement within and without.

*Here is the journey that moves beyond
where we are now.*

Come, trust the God whose journey it is.

*Come, and trust in the steadfast love of
God.*

This is Lent. This is the journey.

*Here is the journey, for all who long to
travel.*

*Come, for God makes known love's path,
And invites us to follow, trusting in the
steadfast love of God.*

This is Lent. This is the journey.

*Here is the journey that takes us farther
than we have been before.*

*Come, for God leads the humble into
what is right,*

Surrounded by the steadfast love of God.

This is Lent. This is the journey.

We light the first Lenten candle remembering Jesus' journey towards Jerusalem. We're like the somewhat bewildered and unsettled disciples yearning for a sense of permanence and settled times again. The simple act of lighting marks a new phase in our journey, never alone, always in the company of others.

We light the second candle remembering that we've been nomadic for four years. That journey has held the fragility and uncertainty of the way to Jerusalem. The purity of the flame illuminating



Roses and other tributes cast into the river

the richness of the three red roses connects life and death — the lives lost and our own. In memory they remain part of our community and they are the community of those who have gone before us.

Later in the day we'll take the red roses and with countless other tributes of love and remembrance we'll throw them into the river where they'll join the flow in the river making its way onwards and outwards to the sea and beyond.

moving into easter

We sing our faith as we Methodists do almost instinctively when we gather. Elisabeth Havens Burrowes' words say it for us as with one voice we fill our new space and place with sound:

*God of the ages, by whose hand
through years long past our lives were led,
give us new courage now to stand,
new faith to find the paths ahead.*

*You are the thought beyond all thought,
the gift beyond our utmost prayer;
no farthest reach where you are not,
no height but we may find you there.*

*Lift up our hearts and set us free
From wild alarms and trembling fears;
In your strong hand eternally
Rests the unfolding of the years.*

*Though there be dark uncharted space,
with worlds on worlds beyond our sight,
still may we trust your love and grace,
and wait your word: "Let there be light."*

We have journeyed from death to life. We are part of the new life arising in the city around us. We are experiencing the living reality of resurrection. We sing it loudly as our affirmation of faith. We know that Good Friday in all its forms can never be the last word. For us God's yes of resurrection resounds as an unwavering promise of new life and new beginnings. Easter is our sharing in life — and we're rejoicing to the full even with our hands still full of tent pegs. ■

*Rev Dr Mary Caygill is the
minister of Christchurch
Central Methodist Church.*



Rev Mary Caygill and congregation in Knox hall, Christchurch

transforming new life

Parents Amy and Paul reflect on the new life and the new experience of God the unexpected birth of their son brought them.

Amy Armstrong



When thinking about new life at Easter I cannot help but think of death as well. Our faith shows us that death and life are linked inextricably and somehow between the two, transformation is possible. We need only to look to Jesus to see how.

We have our own transforming journeys to new life. One of mine recently, perhaps the biggest in my life, was the birth of our son, Anton. This was a long journey that started many years before his conception.

As a young woman I discovered my chance of having a child was unlikely. Health issues had caused infertility. I started a long road of grief and hard work. However with time, faith, trust and support I found my peace in the knowledge that my life would involve birthing God's unique plan for me. I knew I could be happy doing other generative work in my life. This was my great gift of life "after death". As a young couple Paul and I were content, enjoying the children of our friends and family and our calling as tertiary chaplains.

Our story could well have ended there. But as a not-so-young couple new life came to us in another way. At

40 years old I found myself pregnant for the first time. What a gift, blessing and joyful surprise!

And the cycle started all over again. Death came in many ways even amongst the news of this miracle. I was dying to my life as I knew it. Many things changed for me — when I had thought they never would.

And my body — I watched in awe as it changed and morphed in ways I never dreamed physically possible! It was uncomfortable to move, eat, sleep. It may sound petty but for me these were small dyings to the life and person I was, all the while making room for the new. And this was before the birth!

new life

Oh the blessed, painful, joyful, excruciating birth of a baby. I have never experienced what felt like life and death so closely together. Eventually he came, our precious gift of new life in all his glory, changing our lives forever.

New life has continued every day with Anton. Each morning as I walk into his room it's as if I am seeing him for the first time. I am overcome with awe, love and gratitude when I see his

face anew. As I watch each exploration and discovery in his development he shows me the joy of new life offered to us each day. If only we too could delight as a child in the simple gifts set before us.

In all my journeys from death to life I have found comfort and wisdom in Jesus. He struggled with letting go at times: "Take this cup from me." "My God, why have you forsaken me?" We know the ending to his story. Jesus persevered. He transcended. He rose again to offer new life to us all. His story becomes our story if we let it. Jesus shows us the journey of transformation. It is our faith to take up our cross. It is also our faith to be graced inexplicably with new life bursting forth, if we have courage to say "yes" to the journey. It's not an easy road but life comes after death. This is the age-old story and promise of the Paschal mystery. Jesus has risen within each of us. *Alleluia.* ■



new life in 'little ant'

Paul Armstrong

"He has an effect on more than my five senses. He has inhabited my soul."

soul. I cannot explain his presence. Just as Thomas Aquinas was at a loss for words for his ultimate experience of God, so I have never had an experience of love as profound as my son, Anton. We found when googling his name its approximate meaning in Spanish is, "beyond praise".

He is the smallest person in our house and exhibits the greatest influence on my heart — even more than Jesus. Why? Because for me he is the face of God incarnate. I know some may baulk at my asserting my son is on a par with experiences of God directly. I would have questioned too until, a little later in life than most, it happened to me. (And believe me, I've had some real whopper Godly experiences along the path!)

a wee incarnation

Every time I get angry, rant, cry, or just feel real "weirdy beardy", Anton walks into the room (of my heart) and changes everything. He is right and just! I get overwhelmed by his sparkling eyes, his profound actions of love; and the greatest thing is, they are so pure, he doesn't know he's doing them!

Here's one of the best examples. This past week has been a bit rough in the "work" area of life. Dad here, had had enough and decided to walk out the door and do a walking circuit of the block to get himself right. He thought it was the best thing to do, as after all, he'd had a



rough week. As he sat on the couch, head in hands, "Little Ant", (as his cousin calls him), plain as day picks up Dad's slippers from one side of the lounge, walks over to Dad and plonks them on the coffee table in front of him. He then gets down on the ground at his Dad's feet and with the gentleness of Jesus, proceeds to untie both laces on his Dad's running shoes. If that didn't make me weep, what would?

knowing god

That simple action of profound gentleness, complete absence of words, along with a smile of utter love from little one-year-old Ant, (my mini-Messiah), showed me the purity and profound humility of God's limitless grace. Now I know God, for I know Anton Paul Armstrong and it is one in the same. ■

Amy and Paul Armstrong are partitioners of Holy Name Church, Dunedin.

song of the earth

From the Good News of Easter Day, everything is born anew. What once seemed dead bursts into life as spring enfolds the northern hemisphere. A crocus in the mud can transform our understanding of God — this evolving planet is his body and our true home.

Daniel O'Leary

Walking home with my shopping one dark, chilly evening in early March, I went through a small park in Crosby. Impossible to miss, I stared at the sudden appearance of the crocuses — violet, white and blue — translucent in the shadows, staked out like a rosary between tree trunks. Overnight, from drab patches of lifeless leaves and muck, something beautifully fragile and life-giving had soundlessly emerged.

Pope Francis was sensitive to this phenomenon of early spring. It mirrored something of Easter for him. In one of the loveliest passages in *Evangelii Gaudium* he writes: "When all seems to be dead, signs of the Resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force ... In the midst of darkness something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces fruit. On razed land, life breaks through, stubbornly yet invincibly ... Each day in our world beauty is born anew. Such is the power of resurrection" (276).

walking in paradise

In his challenging book *Nostos*, Irish mystic John Moriarty reflects on the unexpected epiphanies he noticed around him as he walked through muddy patches in the meadow near his Kerry home. He wondered how those "hints of heaven" could emerge from such a drab place. "How could something so yellow as a buttercup come up out of soggy, brown earth?" he asked. "How could something so purple as an orchid and so perfect as a cowslip come up out of it?"

Clearly for him this was a spiritual experience, a call from his own isolation into the creative mystery below the surface of the ordinary. "Where

does the colour and perfection come from?" he asked. "And what else is down there? What else am I walking on? To me, to inhale the fragrance of a primrose, down to the soles of my feet, is a Eucharist. Only then can I walk beautifully on the earth without hurting it. Right here in our own hill meadow, I can walk in paradise."



To walk in paradise in our own fields. Pope Francis asks whether we can carry this treasure of insight safely in our distorted perception — that Heaven is here, always present, growing like the seed, struggling to flourish anew in an indifferent environment? God is always coming to be in everything that happens. And in a statement that points to his next work, he writes: "All of these [epiphanies] encircle our world like a vital force-field. The resurrection is already secretly woven into the fabric of history."

earth is God's body

Easter is not about escaping into Heaven; it is about recognising this evolving earth as God's body and our true home. Resurrection does not sweep us away to a painless place but reveals the redemption in our suffering now. The lost paradise is regained in the soil of our fields and in the seasons of our souls. There is no sin, loss, betrayal, shame or despair that is final. Somehow

or other, in the end, all is harvest.

The spirit of Easter is utterly free, utterly beyond our control. It is the deepest meaning of all our experiences, of everything that exists. It is in the harshness of war, in the tenderness of touch. It lives in the darkness of despair, in the glimmer of hope. It parts the veil, it rolls away the stone, it changes the focus, it transforms our way of understanding ourselves and our world. It points away from the perfection of angels to the damaged beauty of the human miracle.

"The fact that the Risen Christ returns to embodiment tells us that salvation is first of all in this world and that embodiment is good," writes Richard Rohr OFM. "He meets the disciples back at their jobs, the women in their very human grief, two men walking along a road, and first of all a very human friend, Mary of Magdala. He does not leave this world. He re-enters it as it is and reveals its radiance."

where life is, God is

Everywhere accessible but contained nowhere, God cannot be confined any more to people of a certain race or religion. Where life itself is, God is. The energy of being is the breath of God. Incarnate in the heart of flesh the divine heart beats. "There is no Catholic God," said Pope Francis. "There is God, and I believe in the incarnation. This is my Being. And there is a spark of it in everyone."

And in everything. When contemplated lovingly, a crocus in the mud can transform our understanding of God. Thomas Aquinas said that if we get creation wrong, we get God wrong. The magnificent Easter Vigil celebrates two revelations — the first

is God's incarnate presence in nature from the very beginning, the second is the full, final and definitive incarnation of God in Jesus Christ.

easter energy

The stirrings of life in the darkness of the earth fill Pope Francis with a unique insight into the meaning of Easter energy. He senses the impulse that runs through all creation. The mystic in Dylan Thomas recognised these invisible connections too:

*The force that through the green fuse
drives the flower*

Drives my old age ...

*The force that drives the water through
the rocks*

Drives my red blood ...

What begins in the soil is completed in the soul. Nothing that happens is unimportant or irredeemable. Even in the most neglected and most desperate victims across our planet, the seeds of an Easter lie hidden. Resurrection is what we were created for. But we perennially celebrate it and perennially forget all about it. We remain blind to its wonder, deaf to its transforming harmonies. Bad religion worships itself.

But grace goes on. Irrespective of religion, God's energy flows through everything. The landscape does not change but our eyes do. We watch for the small hourly miracles deepened and defined against eternal meaning. Easter perennially emphasises the utter earthiness of divinity, and the divinity of each daily act. Was the poet Pauline Matarasso pondering the "paschal mystery" when she wrote this?

*Reaching her arms so high
she thrust them through
to peg love's laundry in the sky.
And white against the blue
her banners flew. ■*

*Fr Daniel O'Leary's website is
www.djoleary.com*

*This article is republished courtesy of
The Tablet. www.thetablet.co.uk*

Easter in the South

Inverted on the other side of the earth

Easter and Lent, its harbinger, take new meaning.

Are not the wheeling festival of birth and death

In spring, but ripe and round in autumn's waning?

Northern spring miraculous lifts with feeble fists

Of shoot and budding leaf the stone from the frozen

Sepulchred heart of the earth, the embalmed air pours in gusts,

Bird-call and shock of wind cry, Christ is risen.

Our Easter comes pontifically in purple and gold

With grape on vine and corn in field, the wine and bread

Feeding the hollow mouth, warming the body filled

At last, the sacrament of flesh and blood.

— M. K. Joseph



*From: Imaginary Islands. Whitcombs & Tombs, Christchurch 1950.
[Used with permission of Whitcoulls.]*

dialogue between christians and muslims

Bethlehem skyline

Peter J Cullinane

The Second Vatican Council spoke for all Catholics when it said the Church looks upon Muslims “with esteem”. Inter-faith dialogue is a blessing. Its aim is not proselytism but to better understand and respect each other. However, it needs to go deeper. A tranquil relationship between us should not depend on not asking the questions people need to ask; a kind of stand-off—respectful, but afraid. A deeper level of trust, mutual esteem and genuine dialogue, depends on and generates deeper friendships.

However justified it may be to meet jihadist force with force, ultimately, military action does not deal with the root causes of the problem. It is necessary to engage at the level of ideas, and in respectful dialogue between mainstream Christians and mainstream Muslims.

Christians readily identify with devout Muslims who object to the violence committed by jihadists claiming to be honouring “the prophet”. Many Muslims regard their religion as being damaged by the atrocities carried out in the name of their religion. Christians, too, have sometimes felt embarrassed and un-represented by narrow and even bigoted interpretations of our faith by some of our own.

We can, however, also identify with Cardinal Reinhard Marx, president of the German Catholic Bishops’ Conference, who has called

upon Islamic authorities to “go more deeply into the question of why some Muslims, especially young ones, are so susceptible to such an extremist and misanthropic understanding of their own religion”.

worthwhile questions

One former jihadist, now an advisor to British security authorities, has said that the savagery and cruelty shown by extremists are really coming from sociopaths, who interpret their faith as giving them permission for violence, even giving it heroic and virtuous status. So, while acknowledging references to mercy and peace in the prophet’s teaching, it is still fair to ask: is there within Islamic religion something that suits the purposes of people with a disposition for violence, coercion and punishing others?

Similarly, allowing that the radicalisation of young Islamists has been fuelled by oppressive foreign policies by some Western countries, it is still fair to ask whether Islam’s apocalyptic tradition leads them to expect and welcome confrontation.

While making a distinction between Islamic faith itself and cultural aberrations practised in some predominantly Muslim countries (e.g. female genital mutilation, etc) it is still fair to ask: how effective is Islam in purifying cultures within its own territories in accordance with human

dignity and a more humane world?

Notwithstanding a tradition of respect for education, it is fair to ask: is it something within Islamic faith, or is it a cultural phenomenon, that leads to the oppression of women and excludes them from education?

And, even though the Prophet himself allowed the practice of other faiths within Islamic countries, is there something within Islamic religion that allows governments today to forbid religious freedom for others?

christian journey

Christians can ask these questions humbly knowing we have been guilty on all counts. Our history shows that we have been non-inclusive, oppressive, fundamentalist, coercive and violent. These things always start at the level of ideas, including misunderstandings of our own faith. Aberrations we have had to correct include the following:

For centuries it was assumed that “error has no rights”. It was then assumed that people in error had no rights, which justified torture and persecution. The crusades against Islam, persecution of the Jews, and sometimes of fellow Christians, followed. We now realise that to say “error has no rights” is meaningless because it is persons who have rights, even persons perceived to be in error. The Church now repudiates every form of persecution against anyone.

For a long time Christians believed salvation was not possible outside the Church, effectively consigning everyone else to hell. Today we accept that no one has the right to make that judgment, and that God offers all people the possibility of being saved.

Sometimes we relied on overly literal interpretations of the scriptures. We quoted words and sentences without allowing for their historical, cultural and literary contexts. Now we realise that it is the meaning of scripture that God has inspired, and that to know the meaning we must take seriously the historical, cultural and literary contexts.

For hundreds of years it was assumed that the State could impose Christian beliefs and punish dissent. We now realise that all persons have the right to follow their conscience freely and to practise their beliefs. The role of the State is to create the conditions in which this can happen without enforcing religious beliefs or practices.

muslim journey now?

The Church has come to realise that there is no place for exclusiveness, coercion, violence, fundamentalism or killing in the name of God or religion. This requires openness to other people’s thinking and to the discoveries of the sciences. We used to think we had nothing to learn from others because we saw our Catholic faith as complete. But, through interaction with others we learn to interpret our own faith better. The Spirit guiding the believing community from within is also at work in the world around us. Discovering God’s presence within creation and within human history involves no disloyalty to God’s presence within one’s own community.

Is this a journey that Islam has yet to make? Has the memory of persecution and of grave injustices on both sides left Muslims reluctant to engage with the wider human community? Does their understanding of “God’s word” allow for the fact that when it is received by human beings it enters the processes of human understanding which can err? God is the source of both reason and faith, and we honour God by

engaging both. Reason does not challenge revealed faith, but challenges us to examine our interpretations of it. Is it good enough merely to quote from the Qur’an — ignoring the requirements of hermeneutics — when the same can be done by others to justify violence and murder?

Renewal and reform are part of God’s agenda for all of us.

Any religion that is afraid of honest questions is insecure, living in fear that it might be found wrong. Nothing that God has revealed can be found wrong, but our human interpretations can be found partial, incomplete or wrong. Whether we are Muslims, Jews or Christians, we are not immune from the limitations of human understanding. Only God is perfect. Renewal and reform are part of God’s agenda for all of us.

call to mutual respect

If this suggests that the leaders and scholars of Islam have work to do, so too do Christians. We have our own act to clean up, as zealous Muslims don’t hesitate to remind us. It is well known that Muslims feel offended by both the secularism and the neo-paganism in modern life. A culture that places a low premium on honouring God, as ours does, invites criticism from a religion that places a high premium on honouring God.

Some offending against Muslims today comes from deliberate insult. The claim that “freedom of expression” includes a right to insult and mock is symptomatic of a culture that has lost its sense of connection between rights and duties. A civilized culture recognizes that rights and duties go together, and that respect for persons, civility and common sense provide the common ground on which true satire, and honest, robust debate and dissent belong. When these aspects of civilization go missing, so does satire and genuine dialogue.

The traditional aim of satire was to bring about some social or political

change. Ridiculing others’ ideas ran the risk of offending, but the real aim was to change opinions. Mockery, with disregard for causing hurt, does not win over hearts and minds. As it is unlikely to bring about change it is hardly true satire.

If freedom of expression includes a right to mock or insult, then what is meant by respecting other people’s right to practise their sincerely held religious convictions without harassment or persecution? It shows that secularism has its own form of intolerance and totalitarianism.

The question facing both Muslims and Christians is how to respond to ridicule in this environment. Jesus taught his disciples to regard themselves as “blessed ... when people hate you and revile you and speak all manner of evil about you on account of my name.” The prophet Muhammad personally reacted without violence when he was insulted.

The “je suis Charlie” campaign was liberal democracy’s way of protesting against violence and defending “freedom of speech”. Freedom is fundamental to human living. But freedom itself is diminished when it is misused. Respect for other persons is just as essential to human living. Gratuitous insult provokes violence, and so is itself the beginning of violence. Jean Vanier’s comment on the “je suis Charlie” campaign was right: “instead of the protest that infuriated many Muslims, there should have been a call to mutual respect”.

It is wrong to think of freedom and self-restraint as being opposed to each other, or needing to be balanced against each other. They belong to each other. Freedom for everybody depends on self-restraint and self-restraint comes out of free choice. They both presuppose respect for others.

For Christians, deep respect for the dignity of every person is a requirement of discipleship. ■

Bishop Peter Cullinane is a theologian and the former bishop of Palmerston North. In “retirement” he continues his pastoral ministry.

The background of the entire page is a composite image. On the left, there is a close-up of a stone wall with several arched windows. A small cross is visible in one of the lower windows. To the right of the wall, the background transitions into a bright, hazy orange and yellow light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. In the foreground, there is a field of red poppies. Some poppies are in sharp focus, while others are blurred, creating a sense of depth.

For Mary Magdelene -

Knowing

You knew it would make you wide open to pain,
yet you took the risk and gave up the heart of stone
for a heart of flesh that had no horizons;
so that when he taught you how to love
with a love that was like no other,
you saw his presence in everything.
A sparrow was like an angel.
A stone was a gift from God.

You didn't know you would lose him.
How could you be prepared for that?
Your heart of flesh echoed the pain
of thorns and scourges and nails
and then the temple of your body
ripped in two as darkness descended.
He was gone, and your tears
fell on the ground outside his tomb.

You didn't know he had risen.
You didn't know he was behind you
until he said your name. Mary, he said,
Mary. As he always said your name.
And that's when you knew
that all your weeping and cries of pain
had been turned into a love song
for the world.

Joy Cowley

joy cowley's story

New Zealand writer and poet, Joy Cowley, shares her spiritual journey with the interviewer.

Shaun Davison

"I cannot remember a time in my life when I didn't have a relationship with Jesus. My mother was Brethren, my father old Scottish Presbyterian, and in those traditions children are brought up with a focus on the second aspect of the Trinity. Jesus was the children's friend and that relationship meant a lot to me. It is still pivotal to my faith. In my youth I explored Christianity in a number of churches. I didn't consider the Catholic church, because it seemed to be in isolation, shut off from other Christian churches.

From each church I attended, I gained something but not enough to satisfy the hunger. I fed that hunger with scripture, especially the St John gospel. Looking back now, I realise that this beautiful Gospel was my ongoing sacrament.

In my 30s, the search extended to other religions and I discovered that the mystical traditions of world faiths were all saying the same things. Cultural references aside, they all talked about God as love and light beyond division, and the "knowing" of the heart. It connected with my sense of "otherness" and my relationship with my beloved

Jesus. I read about the Christian mystics and a significant book was *The Cloud of Unknowing*.

I see the Catholic Church as a very wide umbrella of faith with room for people at all stages of formation ... a pilgrim church always moving to a larger place and always growing.

mass for the first time

In 1978 I was staying with a family on Easter Island and I went to my first mass. It was at 6.00am and they'd taken me to a party the night before. I wanted to sleep but they kept knocking on my door: "*Senora, la misa! la misa!*" and my response: "*Soy protestante!*" had no effect. I dressed, was given a scarf to wear on my head, and was led across the road to the church. Exhausted, head aching from bad local brandy, I stumbled into that little church, and although the Spanish liturgy was too

fast for my Anglo ears, I had a sense of coming home. This was it — even if I could not explain to myself what "it" was. After that I travelled around the South American continent, sitting in on masses in each country, feeling that I was an outsider on the inside.

finding the mystic tradition

In 1980 I was in Madrid and wanted to go to Toledo. I got on the wrong bus and found myself with a group of Spanish pilgrims heading for St Teresa's convent at Avila. I was annoyed at my mistake; but once again God had hijacked me. When I entered the convent, I was wrapped in ineffable silence and had the extraordinary experience that I ceased to exist in that place and was instead a part of everything and everyone.

Back in New Zealand, I attended some interfaith lectures at Victoria University and met a Ramakrishna monk from Fiji, Swami Damodaranada. He had an extraordinary breadth of faith and as a Hindu, had a particular devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. His view of God was "The Divine Mother." He said something that summarised my search: "The Divine Mother is calling you to be a Catholic. You are like a hen, scratching here, scratching there. That is no way to dig a well."

taking the first step

It seemed that the Catholic Church was closing around me, and I actually felt quite oppressed. One evening, I was at a cocktail party and unable to join the light-hearted talk. Eventually, I said to our host who was Catholic: "How can I become a Catholic?" It was a bit of a conversation stopper but the wise man took me into his office and phoned Fr Grahame Connolly at Futuna, who came to see me the next day. He in turn took me to see the local



Joy and Terry

parish priest and instruction began. In July 1982 I was received into the church and came home to stay.

For me the Catholic Church is "wholeness". I love the mystery, that feeling of being at home with God and myself. I love the idea that we are a church of sinners and I feel comfortable with human messiness. If the church were perfect it would have no room for me. I sometimes think of the Catholic Church as a ship that has been sailing on a sea of light for 2000 years. In that time it has collected a lot of barnacles, experienced some interior division, but it is still the same boat launched by Jesus and still has him at the wheel.

Do I have any concerns? Well, yes. I believe that mandatory celibacy for priests is detrimental. The apostles had wives, and the tradition of married clergy came into the early church. The rule of celibacy was made to protect church property — and financial interests do not make a good foundation for spiritual structures. Besides, when we walk away from nature it tends to pursue us and cause all kinds of problems.

what's important

Essential aspects of my faith are most importantly prayer, and the sacraments especially Eucharist, community worship, seeing the church as "home" and "family, hospitality around the dinner table, the importance of forgiveness, scripture as lectio divina and prayer.

Terry is part of all of this and an essential part of me. I feel that everything I do comes from a person called "us".

I see the Catholic church as a very wide umbrella of faith with room for people at all stages of formation. While I don't agree with some of the political elements, I also accept that it is a pilgrim church always moving to a larger place, always growing. I rejoice every time I see or hear the words of Pope Francis because they invariably draw us back to the Gospels. Has there ever been a pope who has had so much attention and respect from the secular press? I have heard conservatives call him "left wing." Yes, he is. So was Jesus.

My own Christian journey has become deeply

embedded in the Catholic Church. My commitment is contained in Mary's words to the servants at the marriage in Cana: "Do whatever He tells you." This means being guided by the inner voice I have always known. These directions have found expression in writing and retreat work and while I may appear as the "front" person, everything comes from the team of Terry and me. We both relate strongly to the second person of the Trinity.

still being surprised

Terry and I went on a thirty-day retreat late last year. I had done the thirty-day Ignatian Exercises nine years before and wasn't expecting significant results a second time. It was Terry's first long retreat and I thought he would find it life-changing. Actually the graces of November 2014 were huge for both of us, thanks to Ignatius and the wisdom of our directors. I realise now that I had gone in with the feeling that I had "arrived" in my faith. How wrong I was! I felt that a dam of insecurity was broken and I was flooded with God's love in a way I could not have predicted. For Terry, the effect was similar. We came into a new freedom that both releases us and directs us. It is too soon to say where those blessings will take us, but we absolutely trust what will be." ■

Shaun Davison is the Director of Religious Studies at Pompallier College in Whangarei.



Joy, the writer.

the
Lent
appeal
2015

ADDRESSING THE
CAUSES OF POVERTY
ADVOCATING
AGAINST INJUSTICE
SUPPORTING
EMERGENCY RELIEF

Caritas
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND
The Catholic Agency for Justice,
Peace & Development

LIGHT A
fire
IN THE
Heart
OF THE
World
EVANGELII GAUDIUM:
JOY OF THE GOSPEL

TO MAKE A DONATION, VISIT US ONLINE
AT WWW.CARITAS.ORG.NZ
An appeal on behalf of the New Zealand
Catholic Bishops Conference.

an ecological reading of the gospel of mark

In this third article in the series the author explores Mark 3:20-27 and the New Testament worldview as a way of understanding demon possession.

Elaine Wainwright

Last month's ecological reading article closed with Jesus casting out demons (Mk 1:39) — "many demons" in an earlier verse (1:34). We gave this demon theme brief attention yet it is one of the key characteristics of Jesus' ministry in Mark's gospel. Jesus named his ministry as the *basileia*/kin[g]dom/empire of God being near at hand (Mark 1:15). I suggested that we might express that metaphor today as God's dream or God's transformative dream for the universe and for the Earth community within that universe. In light of this, how then might we re-read demon possession and the casting out of demons? The text which I've chosen as a focus is Mark 3:20-27.

Jesus' proclamation of the *basileia* of God has been characterised by healing or the restoration of right relationships with/in human bodies (1:29-31, 32-34, 40-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-5, 10). It is also characterised by the confronting of unclean spirits or demons which were said to possess human persons (1:21-28, 32-34, 39; 3:11-12, 15). The interpretation of aspects of first century sociality as demon possession was characteristic of a cosmology that we do not share today. However, we need to understand this cosmology so that we can do an ecological reading of the Markan theme of demon possession.

from classical worldview

Much of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament reveals a classical cosmology, namely a three-tiered universe: the heavens above, earth in the

middle, and the underworld or Sheol below. God, or the gods, inhabited the heavenly realm, the human community the earth and those humans who had died, the underworld.

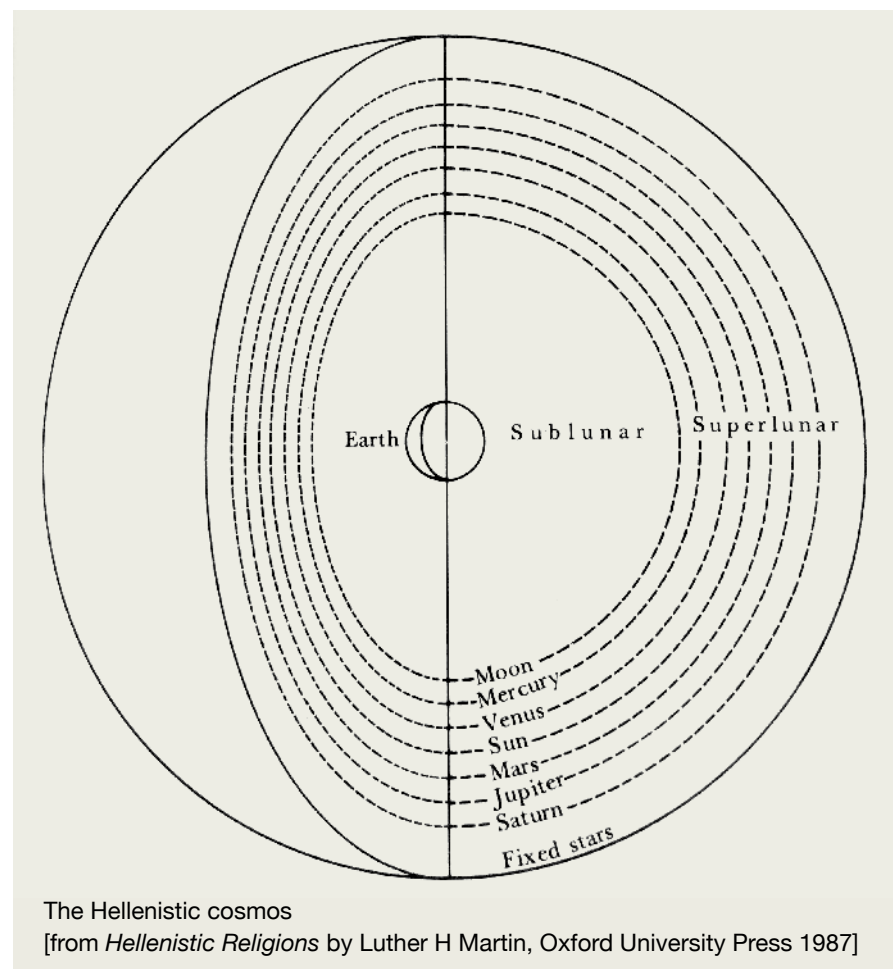
to hellenistic worldview

In the Hellenistic period there was a significant shift in cosmology as a result of the insights of philosophers, astronomers and other ancient thinkers. They taught that while the earth was at the centre of the cosmology, and it was surrounded by seven planetary spheres or orbits. The moon, as the closest to earth, marked

out the sublunar realm while the other planets and stars made up the superlunar realm. The cosmic space that constituted the sublunar realm was populated not only by humans as earth-dwellers but also by powers and spirits, including the demonic. It is this shift in worldview which led to the significant presence of the demonic in the gospel narratives.

to copernican worldview

As contemporary readers, we know of two further cosmological revolutions since the Hellenistic. The first was the Copernican or heliocentric,



namely that the earth and other planets revolve around the sun in an elliptical orbit.

to evolutionary cosmology

The second is that which is currently unfolding: a universe that can be traced back to the Big Bang around 14 billion years ago. Planet Earth is estimated to be approximately 4.5 billion years old, with the first signs of life emerging on this planet between 2 and 3 billion years ago and human life only in the last two million years. All these processes are part of a creative unfolding.

It is with this scientific knowledge and worldview, or cosmology, that contemporary readers approach the gospel narrative with its world of demons and demon possession. As ecological readers we know we are not reading with a Hellenistic lens. We use the lens of contemporary ecological justice, informed by the gospel's socio-historical context that has left its traces in the text.

order is disturbed

Returning to the Markan gospel, we find Jesus in Mark 3:20 in his house after having called twelve followers to share his ministry. Crowds have formed spontaneously seeking his healing and liberating ministry. They disrupt any attempt to withdraw, even time to eat. The Greek draws into the narrative the material substance, bread, in the concluding phrase "not able to eat bread" (3:20). The ecological reader notices the materiality of the bodies of those gathering as "crowd" around the physical structure of the house. Traces of all these elements remain in the text. As the narrative unfolds, the reader encounters two responses to this summary description of Jesus' ministry.

The first is the response of Jesus' family (3:21). They hear things about Jesus. Their senses are alert as information is conveyed. They respond by going out into the public forum where the crowds are gathered, in

order to take hold of Jesus. This is a physical response — one body meets another, either forcibly or not; the verb leaves the ambiguity in place. They verbalise their reason. The bystanders in the narrative hear it and so do the readers of the story — he is out of his normal state of mind or one could say, out of his normal way of being human body in a socio-political context. In a world in which kinship was the foundation of society, the family's criticism of Jesus points to his profound revisioning of the fundamental socio-cultural structure and belief system. This is augmented in the story by the later verse about Jesus' family in 3:31-35, a short text that you might want to read here.

It is with this scientific knowledge and worldview, or cosmology, that contemporary readers approach the gospel narrative with its world of demons and demon possession. As ecological readers we know we are not reading with a Hellenistic lens.

The second response to or interpretation of the crowd's acclamation of Jesus' ministry comes from 'the scribes' (3:22). They are described in relation to place, but a place other than that in which Jesus' ministry has unfolded. They have come down from Jerusalem. Previously in the story (1:5) people from Jerusalem came to John to be baptised, and they came from Jerusalem to Galilee (3:8) as a result of hearing what Jesus was doing. In 3:22, the scribes come down from Jerusalem to critique Jesus. The worldview in which they

express that critique is the Hellenistic world view of demon possession. They accuse Jesus of "having" Beelzebul, the ruler, the one with power over all demons. Jesus is said to be possessed by the most powerful of demons, those powers who inhabit the sub-lunar realm of the Hellenistic world view. The scribes go further to interpret the work of Jesus that freed people from the power of demons as being informed, empowered by Beelzebul. This language of power demonstrates one of the arenas in which demons and demon possession functioned — in the realm of power. In this instance, the power being constructed and attacked is primarily religious and then political.

As the encounter between Jesus and the Jerusalem scribes continues, Jesus uses two parables that draw in material and socio-political language and imagery (that of a kingdom and of a house) to speak of the demonic. Divided within they will destroy themselves. Clearly Jesus cannot belong to that world if he casts the demons from their places of power in that world. The segment closes with language and imagery of power but here it is the imagery of a householder who would defend his property from the thief unless he was himself tied up. Jesus' casting out of demons, his power as spirit-infused restorer of right ordering in the universe (1:10-11), is understood in relation to the right order of the cosmic sub-lunar realm through a Hellenistic cosmological lens. The contemporary ecological reader can read it in relation to the restoration of right ordering of/on planet Earth.

During the Lenten and Easter season, this language, imagery and cosmology take on an even more profound hue. ■

Elaine Wainwright, a Sister of Mercy and scripture scholar, recently retired as the foundation Professor of Theology at the University of Auckland. She continues to research and write.

centenary reflections of gallipoli

The author suggests that rather than making the Gallipoli centenary a cause for celebrating it should galvanise us to redouble our efforts for peace in our war-weary world.



Allan Davidson

High above North Beach at Gallipoli, on the summit of Chunuk Bair, with views of the Dardanelles in the distance, stands the New Zealand Memorial. This stone monument carries the inscription: “In Honour of the Soldiers of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force 8th August 1915. From the Uttermost Ends of the Earth.”

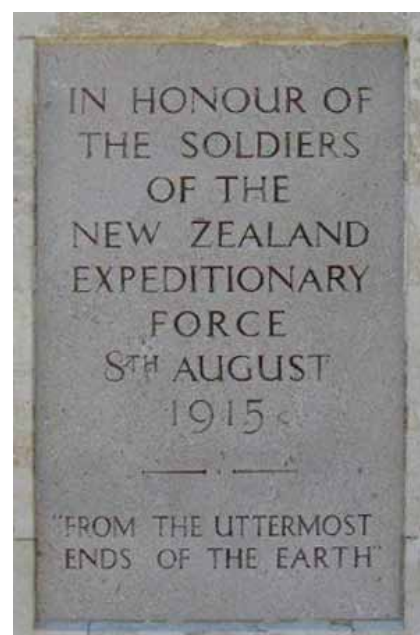
Close by is the huge statue of Kemal Atatürk, the Turkish commanding officer (and later President of Turkey), who oversaw the repulse of the allied forces from Chunuk Bair. Further memorials nearby are to the Turkish casualties, and the “New Zealand Memorial to the Missing”.

New Zealand soldiers came “from the uttermost ends of the earth”; but what on earth in God’s name were they doing there?

constructing the anzac story

The narrative of Gallipoli is woven into our national mythology. The centenary of the landing at Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915 and the invasion of the Ottoman Empire at Gallipoli

still raise questions which resonate in our national consciousness. The construction of the Anzac story from the very beginning was embroidered by war rhetoric which mixed duty to God, King and Country with the language of sacrifice, honour, courage, bravery, patriotism and heroism. Small New Zealand, far away from the theatres of war, was answering the call of Empire, paying the price of belonging to the British Imperial



“club”, and sending young men to fight in a war which originated out of convoluted European politics.

“Imperial preference” locked New Zealand into an economic reciprocal arrangement with military implications, in which British imports were received and New Zealand exports sent “home” to Mother Britain. The British Navy provided a protective umbrella over the high seas, providing New Zealand with a maritime security blanket. The ties of kinship were still very close with the majority of Pākehā linked by DNA to England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

The deifying of duty in the supporting rhetoric provided by churches meant that not only were men called to serve their nation but also to serve God in what was seen as a righteous cause. Sacrifice, the giving up of one’s life for the sake of one’s country, or even more significantly, for the cause of Empire, was sanctified and blessed by churches. At the extreme end, war rhetoric invoked the ideals of a just war and righteous crusade, without always appreciating the historical incongruity of Christians engaging in

warfare with Muslims, reviving thereby the memories of bitter conflicts from the medieval past.

a dreadful campaign

The invasion of Gallipoli was from the outset a disaster. The Reverend Charles Bush-King, an Anglican chaplain, referred to the “slaughter” as the troops landed. The question was even raised as to whether the soldiers should abandon the peninsula and re-embark less than one day into the conflict. The Ottoman soldiers were defending their land; they held the high ground; the terrain was a mixture of precipitous cliffs, narrow valleys and ridges covered by rough, unforgiving vegetation. The weather brought the extreme heat of summer and the rain and snow of winter. Why had these soldiers come to this place from the ends of the earth?

The Methodist chaplain, the Reverend John Luxford, writing in mid-May from Gallipoli, told of witnessing: “the wounded by hundreds”, “pilgrimages of pain and death”, reciting the burial service kneeling with the dead bodies in the grave “because of the bullets flying round”, seeing “men fall within a few yards of where I stood”. At the same time he testified to the soldiers’ bravery under fire and instances of their self-sacrifice. Aware of “the tears of bitter sorrow” New Zealand has wept “because of the loss of her brave sons”, Luxford tried to make sense of the carnage by encouraging New Zealand to “rejoice for their bravery, endurance and patriotism”. New Zealand has through this, he claimed, “helped to cement the empire with her best blood”.

difficulty of critiquing story

In August, writing from his dug-out, Luxford reflected that “the Empire’s call ... was for God, truth and righteousness, and our men will be true to death.” With hindsight, one hundred years later, this sacralising of the allied cause meant that it was very difficult to raise a critical voice either against the war itself or the way that it was fought. Dissident or alternative voices were crowded out. The families of those killed in war did not want to hear that their sons, fathers, brothers, uncles, had died in vain. Death and injury on a vast scale, bringing with it huge human suffering, required justification. In appealing to God or to the righteousness of the allied cause, the supporters of the war were ennobling that death and suffering, but failing to question war itself.

That was not surprising. For a chaplain, dealing with the overwhelming pastoral demands, brought by what Luxford called an “Inferno”, was all-consuming. For the generals and politicians it was hard to admit that they had made strategic blunders and launched

their men into a futile campaign. The illusive hope of victory led to attacks and counter-attacks without enduring success.

never again

It has taken the passing of several generations and the distance of time to begin to face the hard questions about the disastrous Gallipoli campaign and the wasteful loss of life and immeasurable grief that it brought. Out of the successful withdrawal and the mythologising of the Anzac spirit we have often tried to turn a defeat into a near-victory.

This critique is not to diminish the acts of bravery and courage, the strong ties of comradeship, the devotion to duty which New Zealand soldiers displayed one hundred years ago at Gallipoli, which we still honour. Reflections on Gallipoli do, however, raise serious questions for contemporary citizens and their government about both the reasons for going to war and the way that war is fought.

Father Patrick Dore, a Catholic Chaplain, wrote in June 1915: “I have seen any amount of war and would not mind, for the sake of the boys and for the world’s sake, if peace were declared.” His confrere on Gallipoli, Father Joseph McMenamin, who in August 1915 “was up in the thick of it during those four awful days” of fighting at Chunuk Bair, recognised how “Our boys fought nobly”, but hoped he would “never see anything like it again”.

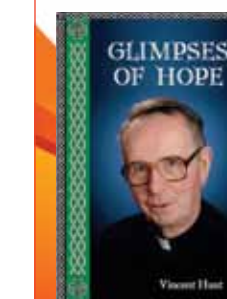
The Gallipoli anniversary is not a cause for celebration, but rather a time for humility and solemn reflection on how we can pray and work for peace and prevent conflict in our weary war-torn world. ■

Allan Davidson is a Presbyterian minister, a Church historian and former lecturer at the Anglican St Johns’ College, Meadowbank and at The University of Auckland.

GLIMPSES OF HOPE

Theological Writings by Vincent Hunt

This positive view of the Church from inside a lifetime of ministry will give every reader a sense of optimism for the future.



Available from
ACCENT PUBLICATIONS
www.accentpublications.co.nz
**16 Waterloo Quadrant,
Auckland 1010**

\$30 plus post

el salvador pilgrimage

The author tells of her long-held desire to visit the sacred places in El Salvador where Archbishop Oscar Romero and other women and men were assassinated during the civil war of 1979-1992.

Wendy Kissel

The recent announcement that Archbishop Oscar Romero is to be beatified took me back to my experience in his homeland.

In January 2006 I stood with my daughter, Clare, in the Romero Centre in El Salvador, the former home of the six Jesuits killed there alongside their housekeeper and her daughter in 1989. We had been in the memorial rose garden outside where they were massacred. Now we saw their garments, blood-stained by the assassins' bullets. We stood silently and we saw. It was beyond words.

The next day we stood in the chapel where Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated in 1980. Minutes after he had read John's gospel: "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit," the assassin's shot rang out.

We entered his small house nearby, lovingly kept as in his time, and we saw his blood-stained garments. Later, we stood beside his burial place in the cathedral of San Salvador.

Another burial place awaited us in Chalatenango, a two-hour bus ride into the countryside. We stood at the graves of the three Maryknoll Sisters who died in 1980. One had drowned accidentally and the other two were killed. We remembered the two other churchwomen also killed with them. Again we stood silently, remembering.

Even today, years later, words are inadequate. These places are holy ground.

why go on pilgrimage?

Why did we go there? The seed was sown for me when, reading the Maryknoll magazine, I discovered people who had responded to the call to serve suffering and persecuted people — and had been killed. They knew the reality of Romero's words: "Our persecution is nothing more or less than sharing in the destiny of the poor."

Each year these martyrs were remembered on their anniversaries so their presence was never far away from me. When I read about a pilgrimage to El Salvador I wanted to go.

It wasn't till late in 2005 when I was travelling in southern Guatemala with Clare on vacation from her Mexican university exchange programme, that I realised we were only a few hours from El Salvador. Unexpectedly, we made a series of helpful connections and arrived there.

The civil war in El Salvador from 1979-1992 led to the deaths and disappearances of over 75,000 of its people. The dead included: Fr Rutilio Grande on 12 March 1977; Archbishop Oscar Romero on 24 March 1980; Sr Maura Clarke, Jean Donovan, Sr Ita Ford and Sr Dorothy Kazel on 2 December 1980; Jesuits at the Central American University — Fr Ignacio Ellacuría, Fr Joaquín López y López, Fr Armando López, Fr Ignacio Martín-Baró, Fr Segundo Montes, Fr Juan Ramón Moreno, their housekeeper, Elba Ramos, and her 15 year old daughter, Celina Ramos on 16 November 1989.

It was different for Clare. She hadn't known of the martyrs but was happy to help me fulfil my long-held dream. Also her Spanish is much better than mine for which I was grateful.

She told me: "I'll just get you to the places you want to go, then come back when you are finished." That was not what happened.

standing on holy ground

When we reached the Romero Centre we roamed the meeting room with walls covered in posters. From then on Clare never left my side. She copied the inspiring words of Romero, the Jesuits and the gospels. Although she doesn't consider herself a religious person she has a deep awareness of social justice issues. She shared: "They are such courageous examples of living what they believed. Their solidarity with people who have little and live in a situation of violence, fear and oppression is inspiring."

Romero's words, from a homily not long before his death, captured us: "I am simply the shepherd, the brother, the friend of the people, who knows their suffering, their anguish. In the name of these voices, I raise my voice."

On another occasion he said: "The cry of liberation of the people is a clamour that goes up to heaven and which nothing and no one will be able to stop."

One of the murdered Jesuits had written: "What does it mean to be a Jesuit today? To be committed under the banner of the cross in the crucial

Oscar Romero mural, San Salvador.

struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and the struggle for justice that faith itself demands."

And Matthew 5:10: "Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Then we moved into another room that took us beyond words.

lives poured out

Early the next day we travelled by local bus to the Maryknoll Sisters' graves and were accompanied by Sister Teresa (Terry) who was in El Salvador when they died. En route, Sister Terry pointed out the road where Fr Rutilio Grande and two local people had been assassinated in 1977. It was that killing that caused a radical change in the newly appointed, conservative Archbishop Romero. He became the voice of the persecuted by using radio to reach the people and report on the weekly deaths and atrocities in the raging war. He knew he was risking his life but said: "If I die I will rise up in the Salvadoran people."

At Chalatenango we entered the church where the Sisters had sheltered refugees during the war. Sister Terry pointed out the army headquarters across the square, telling us

that their guns were trained directly on the front door of the church. She said: "So we used the side door."

As we walked the steep hill to the cemetery Sister recalled the funeral processions of Carla in August 1980, who had drowned after being swept away in a flooded river while her companion, Ita, survived. Then the processions of Ita herself and Maura in December 1980.

At their graves we stood in poignant silence before sharing *Prayers at Martyrs' Graves*, words from each of them.

From Dorothy Kazel: "I came to El Salvador thinking the people needed my help. Instead they have helped me to deepen my own faith and I suffer with them."

From Maura Clarke: "The poor really strip you, pull you, challenge you, evangelise you, show you God."

"It's a privilege to come to a Church of martyrs and people with a strong committed faith," from Ita Ford.

Jean Donovan wrote: "Several times I have almost decided to leave El Salvador. I almost could except for the children, the poor bruised victims of this insanity."

From Carla Piette: "The walk continues and the Lord of the Way

leads each day with no map and no clear weather, but rather fog and total trust."

We had much to ponder on the bus-ride back to San Salvador where we farewelled Sister Terry. It was our privilege to share her memories and experiences of that time.

remembering

A park in downtown San Salvador was our final visit. Here the Monument to Truth and Memory stood in witness. It's a long wall featuring the names of over 25,000 of the estimated 75,000 women, men and children who had died or disappeared in the war years. The long lists of names etched on the wall were a visible reminder of the extent of the suffering of so many people.

We knew we were standing on holy ground in El Salvador and that it had touched our lives. ■

Wendy Kissel has been an ESOL teacher in Christchurch for many years.

See also:

www.romerotruster.org.uk

YouTube: Who was Msgr. Oscar Romero?

resurrection of jesus (and the disciples)

Easter Sunday and Second Sunday of Easter — John 20:1-9; 19-31.

Kathleen Rushton

The story of John 20 is shaped around giving a theological answer to the spiritual question: “Where is the Lord?” Although this question is posed by Mary Magdalene, it is not presented as a personal problem but a community one for she answers in the plural “we do not know where they have laid him.” (20:2). Mary represents those who have not understood the meaning of “the hour” of Jesus. She is seeking Jesus whom she associates with his corpse. Equating the person with the body and body with flesh is precisely what Easter faith must transcend. Personified, in Mary, is the theological problem of how the earthly Jesus (the Word made flesh) relates to the glorified and risen Jesus. Later, the scene with Thomas suggests this is precisely the problem for the disciples of Jesus for all time. Sandra Schneiders sums up this concern as: “The historical experience (of the disciples) of the nonhistorical reality (the glorified Jesus) somehow mediated by the body (which is what we mean by the risen Jesus).” What is the significance of the body? What does body mean?

body as a symbol of the self

In our materiality, the body is a symbol of the self in four ways. First, the body grounds identity through change — every cell is replaced every seven years. The same person, the same individual is revealed through photos at aged ten, twenty and sixty. The body holds both change and identity.

Second, the body makes a person one in her/himself and distinct from all others. The embodied self is marked off inwardly and outwardly from everyone else.

Third, the body is the ground of



The family tomb of Herod (37–4 BCE), Jerusalem.
[Photo: Veronica Lawson RSM]

interaction with others, allowing one to be present, to speak and hear, to touch and be touched, to interact with others physically and spiritually.

Fourth, the body enables each person to be part of a network of relations among others. This means that all of the people who relate to an individual in some way relate to one another.

Let us consider the post-Easter Jesus. All the differing biblical accounts of Jesus’ resurrection attest to the fact and significance of how Jesus is present among his disciples.

First, the risen Jesus was recognised as being identically the same person whom the disciples knew pre-Easter in his earthly life.

Second, in the appearances of the risen Jesus, his disciples encountered someone who was really present, able

to be seen as a distinct person.

Third, the disciples could interact with Jesus — they could see him, talk to him and touch him.

Fourth, the disciples found themselves sharing in common their relationship with Jesus in the present. As they talked about their experience with one another, they knew they were talking about the same person.

“saw and believed”

Gaze at the photo of the family tomb of Herod the Great (37–4 BCE). Jesus may well have been laid in a similar tomb by the well-to-do Joseph of Arimathea. Imagine Mary Magdalene as she discovers the sealing stone had been removed. For Jews of Jesus’ time, the tomb, with its sealing stone, was the final sign of being cut off from life. A sign that

Jesus was not in the power of death and was alive with God is that the tomb was open and empty.

Imagine Mary running to Simon Peter and the other disciple. Run with them to the tomb. The other disciple waited for Peter to enter. The evangelist tells us: “the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, [was] not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself” (20:7). We are told the other disciple “saw and believed.” What is going on here? What did he believe? The next verse relates that “as yet they did not understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead” (20:9). Possibly, not the empty tomb or the linen cloths led the other disciple to believe but the face veil. This was not a normal burial cloth because the word used for face veil is related linguistically to the face veil worn by Moses to protect the people of Israel from the glorification of his face when he encountered God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:27-35). In John, Jesus’ death is the victorious culmination of his life. “Exalt” or “lift up” speaks of the lifting up of Jesus on the cross (e.g., 3:14; 8:24; 12:32). The word “glorify” describes the effect on Jesus of his “lifting up” in crucifixion (e.g., 7:39; 12:16; 12:23; 13:31-34).

re-creation

The narrative enters its second phase, 20:19-29, not at the garden tomb, not with the first disciple but on the evening of the first day of the week “where the disciples were gathered” as a community. The focus now is a new question: “How can the Risen Jesus be experienced?” The centrepiece of Jn 20 is the verses 19-23 when Jesus “stood in the midst” of the community. Two actions, initiated by Jesus, unfold. His “Peace be with you” fulfills his promise to give a peace the world cannot give (cf. 14:27; 16:33). He shows them his hands and his side. Even though glorified, his bodyself wears the marks of his paschal mystery, continuity and discontinuity with his pre-Easter body, his taking on the flesh of all living creatures.

We are not told that Jesus leaves or departs. He has returned to his own. He never leaves, he will come and come again. He is present and knows what happens in his community.

Repeating the gift of peace, Jesus commissions the new People of God as God had commissioned him. He “breathed on them” saying: “Receive the Holy Spirit” (20:22). The verb “breathed on” is found only here in the NT and three times in the Greek Bible (of the early Church) referring directly to creation. Jesus’ action, for example, evokes God giving life to the Earth creature (*adam*) who was formed from the Earth (*ha’adam*) with God’s breath (Gen 2:7). As the Holy Spirit is poured into the hearts of the disciples, the Church is founded. We are not told that Jesus leaves or departs. He has returned to his own. He never leaves, he will come and come again. He is present and knows what happens in his community as is seen in what follows.

Where does the final scene, 20:24-29, with Thomas, and the concluding 20:30-31 fit? Nothing suggests anyone was missing on Easter night. Thomas, however, was “not with” the gathered disciples and is one of generations who will know the Resurrection not through the experience of Easter but through

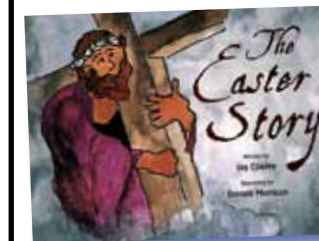
the testimony of the Church: “We have seen the Lord.” Thomas refuses this new structure of faith. He does not doubt. At that point, he refuses: “I will not believe.” (20:25). Believing or not believing and their implications are always a choice in this gospel.

Implications? The background comes into the foreground. As I am piecing this together, Radio NZ’s Kim Hill is interviewing Chris Clarke, World Vision NZ’s CEO, who visited Iraqi Kurdistan and Lebanon recently before the launch of the Syrian refugee appeal on 7 March. Some 3,500,000 refugees have left Iraq in the biggest movement of people since World War II. About 2,000,000 refugees are in Lebanon, a country about the size of Northland, where one in three people are refugees. He quotes a woman refugee who looked him in eye and said: “Go back and tell our story, make sure we are not forgotten.” ■

Kathleen Rushton RSM is a scripture scholar and adult educator.

The Easter Story

by Joy Cowley



\$19.99
+\$4.50 p/pkg

Pleroma
Christian Supplies

With beautiful original colour illustrations by Donald Morrison complementing Joy Cowley’s text on the story of Easter and what it means for us. The stress is on love and healing, on growing in prayer through talking to Jesus, leading the reader to gratitude for “the wonderful Easter Story”.

Published by Pleroma Press

Freephone 0508 988 988
order@pleroma.org.nz

38 Higginson Street, Otane
Central Hawke’s Bay

www.christiansupplies.co.nz

his words live on

Glimpses of Hope: Theological Writings.

By Vincent Hunt

Accent Publications, Auckland, 2014.

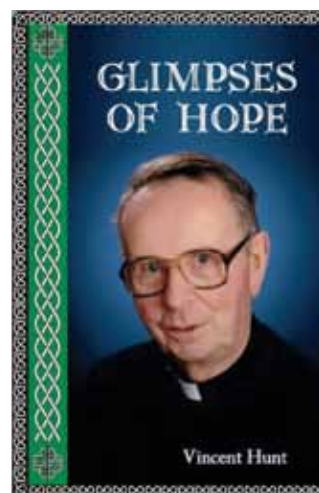
Reviewed by Damian Wynn-Williams

For nearly 30 years Vincent Hunt, an Irish priest who came to Auckland in 1952, taught seminarians in New Zealand. For four years he served as rector at Holy Cross College in Mosgiel. *Glimpses of Hope* was published shortly after Monsignor Hunt's death in 2014.

It comprises a selection of 12 articles, most published previously. They bear testimony to the wisdom and humanity of this exemplary priest and teacher. The essays range over a variety of subjects — spirituality, education, priestly formation and moral theology. Despite his disposition towards philosophical discussion, Hunt writes here with an attractive simplicity and clarity.

A dominant theme throughout the book is the uniqueness of each individual. To see the person primarily in terms of their social classifications and roles does not do justice to their God-given uniqueness. For example, Hunt suggests that in the Church "concern for order and stability has at times gained precedence over the demands of dignity" to the detriment of people's sense of identity. "The awareness of who one really is, of one's identity, and how it is to be expressed, is the foundation of all spiritual life; it is the guiding factor in the whole of the person's existence."

Another dominant theme is the importance of imagination and emotion in human behaviour, including prayer and liturgy. Without imagination, memory, and



symbol we cannot see things as they really are. "An important part of the task of the poet and the artist is to lead us to notice and pay attention to what we might otherwise only see in passing ..." Tellingly, Hunt observes that besides having a sound knowledge of theology, the homilist "needs to be a poet, to know the associations and overtones and power of language in a way that does not concern the theologian as such."

Given that these essays were written over several years, it is not surprising that several of Hunt's examples are repeated several times, with some repetition of the same quotations. However, the effect is as though one is engaged in a dialogue with the author as he continued to refine his ideas.

A book should not be judged by its cover, but in this case, especially for those who knew Vincent Hunt, the cover is noteworthy. For me the photo of the author captures magnificently his readiness to listen and debate, with a quizzical twinkle in his eye. This book will be of particular interest to all those who knew Vincent as a teacher, a priest, a friend. ■

encouragement for christians

Being Christian: Bible, Eucharist, Prayer

By Rowan Williams

SPCK, 2014 Available from Epworth books: epworthbooks.org.nz

Reviewed by Patrick Mahony

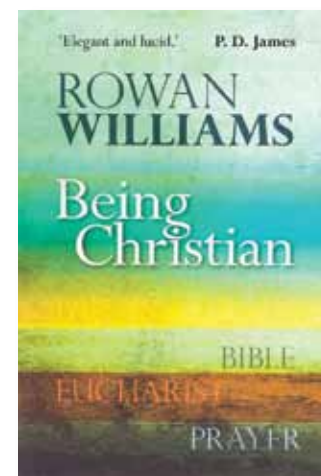
Being Christian has four chapters covering four essential elements: baptism, bible, Eucharist and prayer.

The author, Dr Rowan Williams, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, theologian and pastor of many congregations, expresses profound insights simply and clearly.

The meaning and significance of baptism developed through the Church's ongoing reflection is explained as a new expression of God's creative work. It is life within the human condition as God's sons and daughters with the right to call God "Father" achieved by our being with Jesus. Christians are not a privileged elite insulated and protected, but rather are exposed to the risks of daring to live the Christian life of love in a chaotic world.

Dr Williams says the story of the Bible is about God speaking and humans responding. As it is an essential part of Christian life and worship Williams outlines an approach to hearing God's voice behind and through the diverse biblical material. Ultimately and finally everything in the bible points to Jesus, whose life, death and resurrection shed light on everything else. A Christ-centred reading and listening to the Scriptures is a lifetime's work. It leads to prayer and to understanding who we are.

The Chapter on the Eucharist contains many profound and beautiful insights. In Communion Jesus extends hospitality — an essential part of his life. We are welcomed and we welcome him. Communion is a gift not



a reward. We need it not because we are doing well but because we are doing badly. It is immediate, transforming and changes the way we see others and the world.

Williams describes prayer as a new way of talking to God gifted to us by Jesus in teaching us to call God, "Our Father", with him. It is letting Jesus pray in us. Williams summarises the teaching of three early Christian writers from the third, fourth and fifth centuries: Origen, a teacher, St Gregory of Nyssa, a bishop, and St John Cassian, a monk. He makes three conclusions: that prayer is essentially God's work in us; that prayer is linked to living justly; and that fidelity in prayer — keeping at it and not giving up — is important.

This excellent book is written with the general reader in mind. Questions for personal reflection or discussion are at the end of each chapter. Suggestions for further reading are at the end of the book. ■

family crisis on the piste



Force Majeure

Director: Ruben Östlund

Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

Billed as a black comedy, *Force Majeure* might more accurately be described as a subtle, intelligent film about gender relations and family dynamics, notions of manliness and male pride. While the film does contain moments of humour and even hilarity, director Östlund allows the camera to linger over the action — often simple domestic scenes such as a family tooth-brushing session — and extract valuable information about the characters and their changing relationships.

Tomas and Ebba are a Swedish couple who decide to take their two young children, Vera and Harry, on a five-day skiing holiday in the French Alps for some family bonding time. Although we are told nothing about their background, they present as a model family — a clean-cut, attractive "Euro" couple with the regulation two kids and the money and leisure to spend on a holiday in an upmarket ski resort.

However, a shadow falls across this wholesome picture when Tomas briefly abandons his family when a controlled avalanche appears to threaten the lodge. Disturbing the apparently secure boundaries of their middle-class existence, the snowslide opens up clefts in the couple's relationship, fissures that threaten to become crevasses. The

slow unravelling of family bonds that follows raises questions about commitment and loyalty, focussed sharply on the husband's traditional role as protector of the family.

These questions are further played out through Tomas and Ebba's interactions with other guests at the lodge, in particular through their friendship with another Swedish couple, the jovial, hirsute Mats and his sparky girlfriend Fanni. It takes little prompting from Fanni to stir up Mats's guilt over the young family he has left behind in the care of his ex-wife as he enjoys a hedonistic weekend with a woman almost half his age.

Just when things seem to be getting bogged down in a gender war, a series of unexpected events allows Tomas to restore his threatened masculinity — at least in his own eyes. In the film's final scene, his macho swagger and acceptance of a cigarette (he doesn't smoke) appear to signal his renewed self-acceptance and restoration of male pride — a shift in which Ebba seems to collude.

But have they really become the perfect family once again? Has anything been learned from their experience? The film leaves us to ponder whether Tomas has truly been vindicated or is merely deceiving himself so as to be able to resume his place as head and protector of this tight little nuclear family. Whatever the answers, *Force Majeure* is well worth a visit to your local cinema. ■

church diplomacy

Both Presidents Obama and Castro thanked Pope Francis for his part the US-Cuba reconciliation. In a recent *Tablet* article the UK Ambassador to the Holy See, Nigel Baker, gave a background to the Papal Diplomatic Service. (Holy See is the usual translation of *Sancta Sedes* = Holy Chair = formal authority of the Pope.)

Francis summarised Holy See objectives in his first speech to Ambassadors in March 2013: “Achieving peace, ending poverty, respecting the human dignity of people and protecting the planet.” Baker summarises a speech given by the then 2IC of the Papal Diplomatic Service, Archbishop Mamberti, last November as follows: “It doesn’t have particular commercial, military or political aims to defend or pursue. Its diplomacy is based on its primarily spiritual mission. It draws on its social teaching, especially as developed over the past 200 years.”

The objectives include defence of the Church's rights and freedom, and of religious freedom generally, the promotion of an ethical vision in the various questions which affect human life, society and development, the defence of human dignity and human rights, the promotion of reconciliation and peace, the promotion of integral human development and humanitarian interests, the protection of the environment, and when requested, the mediation of disputes.

Regarding mediation, Secretary of State Parolin puts it thus: "The Holy See might build bridges; it is for others to cross them." As a non-voting member on international bodies its ability not to take sides gives it an unparalleled advantage as a potential honest broker.

who speaks for the jews?

The controversial address of Israeli PM Netanyahu in March to the US congress stirred up a lot of negative reaction among the Jewish community both in Israel and in the US.

Forward, a paper founded a century ago to serve Jewish immigrants (mainly from Eastern Europe) to the US, claims to “continue to carry on the founding vision of Abraham Cahan, serving together as the voice of the American Jew and the conscience of the community.”

In February *Forward* editors published a response to the question: “Who speaks for the Jews?” This arose from remarks made by Joe Scarborough, the conservative morning talk show host on MSNBC, who backed Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu’s recent claim to that effect. *Forward* commented that given how diverse and sometimes fractious Jews can be, prudence would judge it a complicated question.

The editorial continues: “Well, Joe, ‘they’ are actually ‘us.’ We are the Jews that you claim are represented by Netanyahu. Perhaps we shouldn’t blame you for making the connection. After all, the prime minister himself has repeated that claim in his defence for circumventing the White House to address a joint meeting of Congress in March at the invitation of the Republican speaker of the House. ‘I went to Paris not just as the prime minister of Israel, but as a representative of the entire Jewish people...Just as I went to Paris, so I will go anyplace I’m invited to convey the Israeli position against those who want to kill us. Those who want to kill us are, first and foremost, any Iranian regime that says outright it plans to destroy us’.”

Forward claims there are about 14 million Jews world-wide, of whom about 6 million are in Israel and 5.3

million in the US. Netanyahu legitimately assembled a ruling coalition in 2009 and again in 2013. It concedes Netanyahu has expanded that position to encompass a far greater constituency abroad, and not just on what he considers the “existential” issue of Iran’s nuclear capabilities. It criticises Netanyahu’s “rushing to Paris to march, lecture and promote immigration to Israel after the terrorist attacks in January (where) he rankled many of the Jews he ostensibly was there to help, by turning what should have essentially been a call to comfort the grieving into an uncomfortable political exercise.”

The editors continue: “Let’s pause for a moment, put aside the unforgiveable harm this invitation has done to the crucial American-Israel diplomatic relationship and examine the deeper issue here. Who does, indeed, speak for the Jews? Can anyone? ...moreover, by claiming to represent all Jews in his plea to a GOP Congress to defy a Democratic president, Netanyahu risks the ‘Israelization’ or even the ‘Judaization’ of the debate over Iran’s nuclear weapons ... Israel’s best hope to stop Iran is to persuade America and her allies to stop Iran because it is in their interests, not just in Israel’s interests. And certainly not just in the interests of global Jewry.”

The editors conclude: “Scarborough said that unless you accept the anti-Semitism displayed in France as a pervasive reality, ‘you don’t understand what Jews are going through.’ Well, he doesn’t understand what Jews are going through. Not all our lives are consumed with terror and hate. Not all our lives revolve around Israel. Editors at *Forward* have been penning editorials for more than a century, but we wouldn’t presume to speak for all Jews. Neither should anyone else.” ■

the culture of lying

There was a hilarious book published after President Ronald Reagan left office called, *Ronald Reagan's Reign of Error*. The book recorded how Reagan lied to the American public on a regular basis during his presidency. Reagan was handsome, charming and credible and treated the White House as a Hollywood film set.

What the public didn't see was his dark side. Reagan, with a superficially sunny disposition, had a ruthless political strategy. He was a pathological liar. His answers to serious questions were often completely false.

None of this would have mattered if his Presidency had not been so destructive for the majority of Americans and the world.

Reagan reduced all Government programmes designed to assist the poorest Americans while increasing corporate welfare for the rich. He dismantled a nationwide mental health system and environmental protection programmes and deregulated banking (which ultimately led to the Global economic crisis). He cut taxes for the wealthy.

Reagan used drug-funded insurgents to overthrow violently democratically elected Governments in Latin America. He broke the Unions and shipped manufacturing jobs abroad while he starved people at home to feed the military machine. He handed much of the national wealth over to a few wealthy people and called it “privatisation”.

Reagan was a voice for the wealthy, the greedy and the lucky who worked for private interests not the public good.

brand 'key' – nz politics

We have just witnessed the same phenomenon with the John Key election win last year.

Most corporate media in New Zealand toe the Key party line. It is a measure of the power of the National PR machine that the few journalists

who try to uncover lies are often damned for their efforts to seek the truth. They become (they are made out as) villains.

Key, although not alone, used a number of well known “negative campaigning” techniques.

- Stay on message: This requires that you give the same pre-packaged answer regardless of the question. The current spin to persuade New Zealanders to support the war against ISIS is to call it a “human rights issue”. In fact these wars are about corporate profits and oil. It is widely accepted that the growth of ISIS is a direct result of the illegal invasion of Iraq by the American Government in 1993.
- Demonise the critics: The Nicky Hager book, *Dirty Politics*, was dismissed by Key as a left wing conspiracy. The book has now been fully vindicated by the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security, Cheryl Gwyn.
- Attack the journalist/interviewer: Accuse them of being wrong — with no evidence. Witness the debate about oil drilling and oil spills.
- Plausible deniability: Key’s advisors

know exactly what he doesn't want to hear. In fact some of his staff were deeply involved in the "dirty politics" saga.

- Perception Management: PR firms exist whose sole role is to sell unpopular policies to the electorate. They originated to promote American wars.
- Spin half the story: Key has done this consistently about the gambling concessions and the SkyCity convention centre.

National Party strategist, Simon Lusk, sums up the success of “negative campaigning” for the National Party with a chilling quote: “It lowers turnout. It favours the right more than the left as the right continues to turn out ... Many people stop participating in politics.”

One million New Zealanders did not vote in the 2014 election; the lowest turnout in percentage terms in 120 years. This is surely the response of people who are sick of the lies or have come to realise that democracy and elections are in danger of becoming a farce. ■

Robert@waitangi.co.nz

Subscribe to *Tui Motu InterIslands*

<input type="checkbox"/> Name		<input type="checkbox"/> \$33 for five issues (unwaged \$28)
<input type="checkbox"/> Address		<input type="checkbox"/> \$66 for a one-year subscription 11 issues (unwaged \$56)
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> \$132 for a two-year subscription 22 issues
<input type="checkbox"/> Post code	<input type="checkbox"/> Subscr No	OVERSEAS
<input type="checkbox"/> Email		Australia & S. Pacific \$80 (1 yr) \$160 (2 yr)
		All other regions \$85 (1 yr) \$170 (2 yr)
<input type="checkbox"/> I am enclosing an additional donation to secure the future of <i>Tui Motu</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> I have included a cheque for \$..... GST No: 68.316.847		
<input type="checkbox"/> or, please debit my credit card (Visa/Mastercard)		
Card No:	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Signature
Name on card		Expiry date
<input type="checkbox"/> or, pay by direct credit to: BNZ, University of Otago branch, Tui Motu-Interislands, 02-0929-0277471-00. (Please use subscriber number and name, and confirm by email that payment has been made.)		

a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

An Ashing service and a funeral. This month I have been feeling so grateful for this family, and a friend who is staying with us, as community with whom I can share the daily rhythms and lilt of life. We're all busy. We've all got to be out of the door by 7.45am each weekday. But mixed in with action, work and responsibility I am anchored by times when we can share ritual and reflection together. It helps keep me on an even keel.

Ash Wednesday we decided to have our own early morning Ashing service as I couldn't make the early evening church service. As we finished breakfast we set the parameters of engagement.

"I have to leave for school by 7.40am OK, so please can we be finished by 7.35am so I can brush my teeth."

"For sure."

"Can I wash the ashes off my forehead so kids in my class don't think I'm weird?"

"Of course."

So we sat together in a circle. Stilled ourselves with some silent time. Not too long. Read a scripture. Shared some thoughts about Lent as a time of preparation and turning. Talked about what deserts and fasting can teach us. Went around and shared about how we

each hoped to mark the Lenten period.

"I'm going to go totally vegetarian," said our meat-loving 12-year-old son.

"I'm going to bath only with a bucket and a dipper," said one 15-year-old daughter who loves hot showers.

"I'm going to try to take time to spend an extra 10 minutes for prayer in the mid-morning," said Dad.

"I'm not going to watch any movies," says 6-year-old daughter.

And so the circle continued. Then Jeph marked each of our foreheads with a grey cross, ashes mixed with oil and water. We prayed. It was 7.34am.



We brushed our teeth and raced out the door. My heart was warmed that we could manage this short time of ritual together somehow and by the commitment by each to think and make space for God in some way during this Lenten season.

Then last weekend we were rung by a neighbour who lives down the hill.

"I think I've found your cat. It's a

black and white one right? I'm sorry, but I found her body lying on the path beneath our house. It looks like she was attacked by that pack of stray dogs from the bazaar."

Our lithe and lively little Allegretto/Legra who has been part of the Mathias family for the last two years. Who equitably sleeps on a different bed each night. Who is loved by all of us.

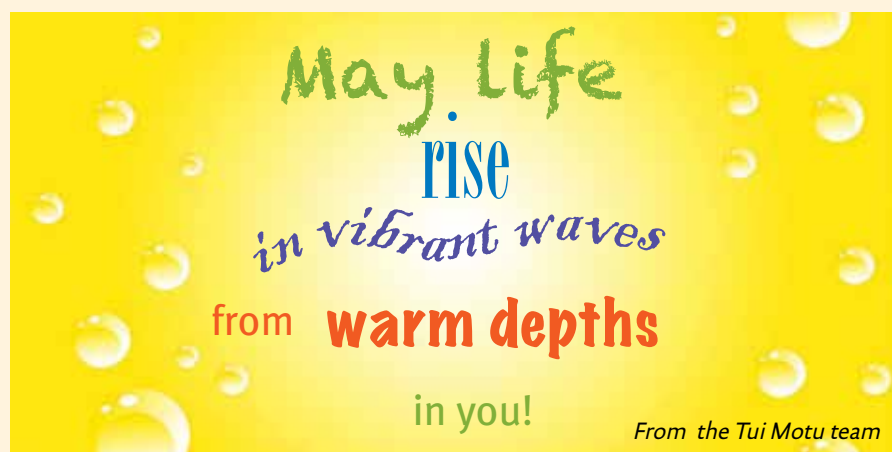
Twelve year old came with me down the hill to bring her body home. Six year old helped me dig a grave for her in the corner of the garden.

By the time everyone was home from Saturday activities it was well after dark. We all felt very sad.

As we ate dinner we talked about Legra when she was a kitten who loved hiding under beds. About her wounds and long convalescence after her fight with a pine marten last Maundy Thursday. About how she ventured long distances through the forest. About how she was such a good mother to her kittens.

At the graveside service we held candles and each read aloud a letter or message for Legra.

We shared what we loved about this cat. What she'd taught us. What a gift she'd been for us in the last two years. We cried. We wished we'd brought hankies out with us. We each threw dirt on her cold stiff body. We prayed together. We held each other. We cried a bit more. We went back inside. ■



From the Tui Motu team

Kaaren Mathias lives with her husband Jeph and four children in North India, where she works in community health and development. Her email address is: kaarenmathias@gmail.com