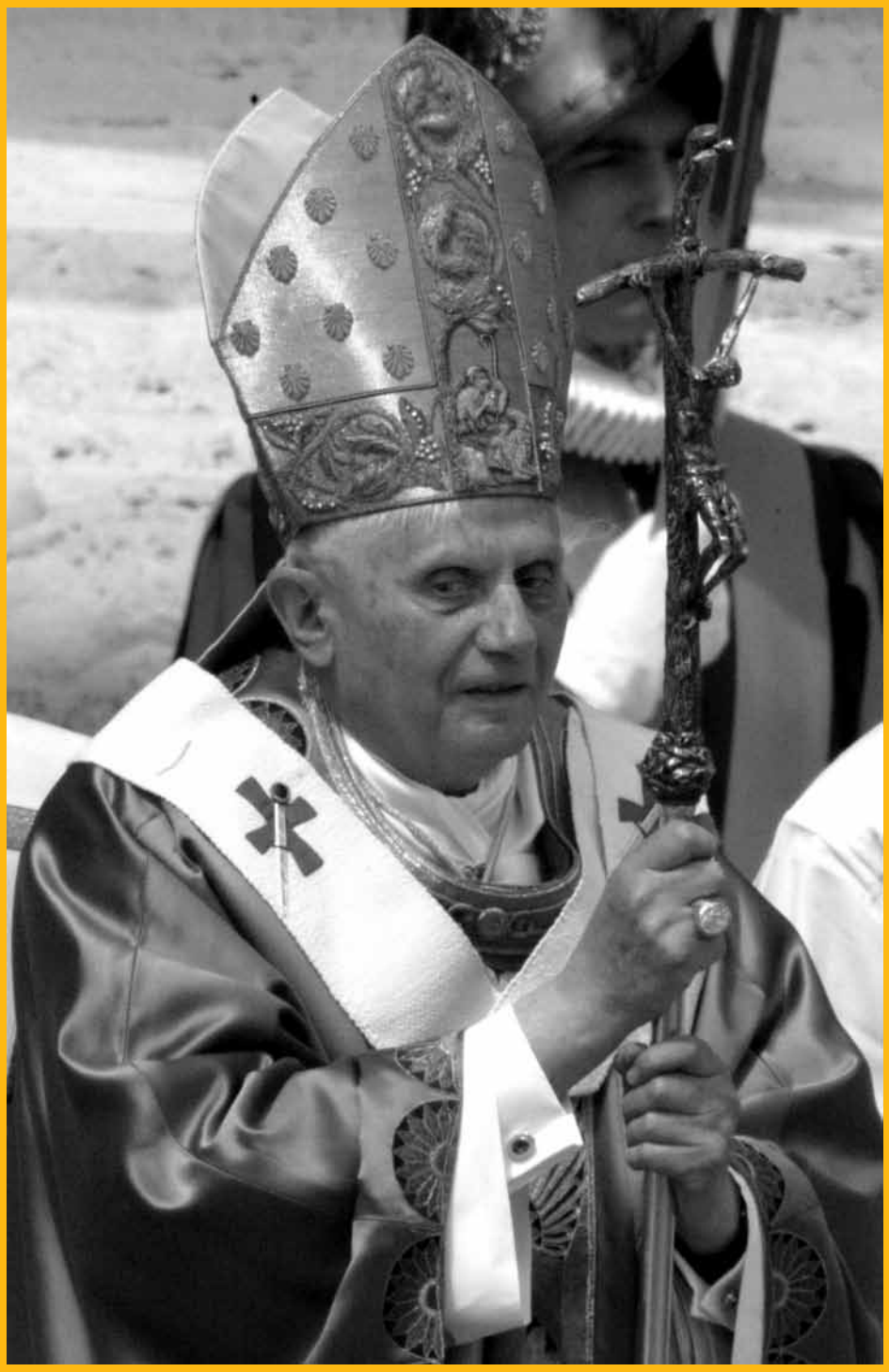
Tui Motu
InterIslands

May 2005 Price $5



Pax

Contents

Changing the pilot

A Pope has died; another Pope is elected. It seemed as if the whole world stood still and watched. The unprecedented world interest can clearly be attributed to the eminence of John Paul II. Perhaps only Mother Theresa and Nelson Mandela could challenge him for the title of most influential human figure of our times. Nevertheless it was astonishing how preoccupied the media have been with every detail of the drama in Rome. The new Pope did well to call a special press conference specifically to thank them for their outstanding service and care in reporting events. The tribute was just.

Hundreds of articles and discussions have attempted to assess the historical place of John Paul and his heritage. What we can offer is a trifle by comparison, but we hope readers enjoy the atmospheric pieces (from Merv Duffy, our correspondent on the spot, and from Bishop Len Boyle) as well as appreciative comment from people of other faiths. We are specially fortunate to be able to reprint material from a very distinguished pen, Richard Allen, who assesses the place of Pope John Paul in the collapse of Communism. In particular he lays to rest the theory that the Pope was somehow hand in glove with the Pentagon. They were, Allen states, moving along parallel tracks.

John Paul strove mightily to build up world peace. No one will forget his gesture at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem or his calling together world religious leaders to Assisi. In this respect he was faithful to the tradition of his predecessors, John and Paul.

Another role he chose pre-eminently was to teach, to instruct and cajole. No Pope in history has spoken to so many people all over the earth or issued more allocutions and encyclicals. His writings lacked the crystal clarity of Paul VI; perhaps it was the tortuous mind of the philosopher, never being content with one word when ten will do! Often his gestures and *ad lib* sayings spoke more eloquently.

In one respect he was consistently true to one great tradition of the Second Vatican Council. He proclaimed, in season and out, the dignity and preciousness before God of the human person. Each human being is a special creation of a loving God; each deserves a chance to live decently; each is redeemed by the blood of Christ; none is too unimportant not to be cherished. He spoke out against various forms of human enslavement, and after the collapse of Communism he did not hesitate to turn his critical eye on the iniquities of the capitalist system. Sadly he had something of a blind spot regarding liberation theology. Oscar Romero, the 25th anniversary of whose martyrdom we commemorate (*see page 16*), he chose to ignore, in life and in death. These are blemishes on what is otherwise a splendid record in promoting human justice.

He is one of three Popes of the 20th Century who have earned a popular title. Pius XII was called 'Pastor Angelicus', which well described his otherworldliness. My personal memory of Pius was being wafted around St

Tui Motu-InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed. The name Tui Motu was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.
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Peter's on the sedia gestatoria, looking like a piece of fine porcelain. He spoke 'from above', as if it was his business to commune with the Almighty and then instruct his subjects down below. His successor, 'good Pope John', was in total contrast. John was no great orator or theologian, yet he brought to the papacy an unrivalled experience as pastor, teacher and diplomat. But it was his essential humanity and the soundness of his instinct which endeared him to the whole world. He wrote little, yet two of his encyclicals, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris,* are major statements of Catholic social teaching. And of course it was he who summoned the Vatican Council.

Pope John Paul has already been canonised by the Polish people and acclaimed as 'John Paul the Great'. His chosen motto was ***Totus Tuus*** – 'all yours'. And he surely lived up to that exalted standard. He gave himself totally. Even as he grew frail he continued to teach, travel and fulfil his role as universal pastor. No one will forget his final appearances as he struggled to appear at the window of his hospital ward or his window over the Piazza of St Peter's. He could no longer walk or speak, but he could still bestow his blessing – his final blessing to the world.

Ten days ago I was with a group of a dozen Catholic lay people In Christchurch. As we concluded our meeting I asked them what qualities they would look for in the new Pope (not yet elected). They came up with three ideas: that he should *listen*; that he should *communicate* well; and that he should be a *holy* person. I suspect, if one were to conduct a poll of the world's billion Catholics, they would not come up with better answers. Interestingly no one suggested he should be 'great'. Perhaps one great Pope is enough.

At the conclave Cardinal Josef Ratzinger received the vote, quickly and decisively. He chose the name Benedict, which was a surprise and has roused much speculation. The last Benedict (1914-1922) was a fervent striver for peace both within the church and outside, and desperately tried to end the carnage of the First World War. The motto of the Order of St Benedict is PAX – 'peace'. It is the quintessence of their spirit. The Benedictine tradition is one of the noblest in the church, represented here in New Zealand at the Abbey of Kopua – and in the numerous meditation groups who follow the contemplative way of John Main, described in the interview with Dom Laurence Freeman (*see pp 20-21*).

The Benedictines also have a noble tradition of democratic governance. In their prayer they listen to the voice of God: in their daily chapters they listen to the voices of one another. They are great listeners. Perhaps this is one attribute of the way of St Benedict that we shall look for in our new Holy Father. If he listens to his people, if he seeks to read the 'signs of the times', like good Pope John, then he will be tapping into wisdom 'from below'. Last thought: will he reinstate his old friend and colleague, Hans Küng? What a magnanimous gesture that would be ! ■

M.H.

Another Benedict, another conclave

One hundred years ago the then Pope Pius X, with his Secretary of State Cardinal Merry del Val, was waging a relentless war against so-called 'Modernist' trends in the Catholic Church. The works of many theologians were condemned and the official church set itself against new ways of interpreting Scripture, especially among Protestant scholars. One Catholic churchman to suffer was Giacomo Della Chiesa, who was banished from Rome to become Archbishop Of Bologna, in north Italy.

Whenever a list of bishops was presented to the Pope to be made cardinals, Della Chiesa's name was always included, only to be pencilled out by Merry del Val. This happened for the last time in 1914 – but Pius X thought again and included Della Chiesa, who at last became a Cardinal.

Four months later the Pope died. At the conclave, who should be elected – as Benedict XV – but Giacomo Della Chiesa! The Cardinals processed up to greet the new Pope. When Merry del Val came, Benedict said to him: ***'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone***'. Merry del Val lost his job. The bitter battle against Modernism was over. ■

(This story was told to the Editor by a distinguished New Zealand priest, the late Mgr Tom Liddy, who claimed it was authentic oral tradition)

The hundred days of Benedict XVI

(Dr Hans Küng offered these comment on the new Pope)

We must wait and see, for experience shows that the role of the Papacy in the Catholic Church today is so challenging that it can change anyone. Someone who enters the conclave a progressive cardinal can emerge as a conservative (such as Montini – Pope Paul VI), and someone who enters the conclave a conservative cardinal can, indeed, emerge as a progressive (Roncalli – Pope John XXIII).

We should note that the first signals of the present Papacy will be important:

- The nominations to the most important offices in the Curia, above all the Cardinal Secretary of State and the Head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith.
- The inaugural address, which will indicate the program.
- The first encyclical, which will mark the way forward.
- The first decisions about the organization of the Curia and further statements on questions of doctrine, morals and discipline.

The name Benedict XVI leaves open the possibility for a more moderate policy. Let us therefore give him a chance; as with any President of the United States, we should allow a new Pope 100 days to learn. ■

letters to the editor

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

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

Make Easter the climax

What is it about the Christian psyche that every Easter we seem to need a morbid guilt fest that centres on the passion and death of Jesus rather than on the wonder of his Resurrection? It seems that the most important happening of the last year or so for many of us is Mel Gibson's infamous Hollywood depicting of his version of *The Passion of the Christ*.

For the last week now my six-year-old daughter has been counting the sleeps until Easter just as she does for Christmas. But unless I find a way to help her to focus on and celebrate Easter other than with the eggs she is looking forward to, in our church it will be just another Sunday for her, and Easter will go by unnoticed apart from the Easter bunny.

Why? Because all the energy will be on commemorating Good Friday with a severe sense of guilt rather than with a sense of hope and joy at the great love of Jesus who gave his life... to save us. So much so that the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday seem like an anticlimax.

I hope that one day we can stand on Good Friday proud and hopeful because of the triumph of the Cross and because God loved us so much he gave his only Son for us. Much in the same way we commemorate Anzac day – not forgetting the dead or the atrocities of war but grateful for the sacrifice of so many.

I think until Christians develop a psyche that is centred on the promise that the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus offers, without overemphasis on attributing guilt to ourselves and others, we will offer very little consolation to a world already overburdened with hopelessness and guilt.

Teresa Homan, Upper Hutt

Millions spiritually starved

Joan Chittester (*TM April)* says that in some parts of the world some communities have not seen a priest more than once a year for decades. I know a nun who has been working in Peru for many years, and the only way she can minister to her community is on a horse; her people have not seen a priest for eight years. I write this on *Good Shepherd Sunday*. What kind of shepherd treats his flock like this, when, by ordaining the nun, they could share in the Eucharist on a regular basis?

In October the Synod of Bishops will be discussing *The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church*. Who are we kidding here? We baptise countless thousands of people all over the world and then spiritually starve them to death, because we do not have enough celibate men to minister the Eucharist to them...

Do we have to wait for the situation here to become like Peru? That is the way we are heading. The laity need to bring pressure to bear on the bishops to bring us back our married priests, and ordain women and married men to feed these spiritually starving millions.

Paddy Mc Cann, Paraparaumu

Religious Terrorism

While I agree with Dr Chris Marshall (*TM February & March*) that in the 'war against terror' the focus should be on preventive measures, I find his concept of *religious terrorism* with its defining characteristics very problematic.

Firstly, if you read Bin Laden's statements and interviews, he has specific grievances: Israeli atrocities in Palestine, the suffering of the Iraqi innocent people, stationing of American troops in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, the Western support of oppressive Arab regimes. He is not absolutist at all; he does not advocate an all-out war against the West, and I am not sure if he thinks he knows "with absolute certainty that (he is) doing good" when he targets innocent civilians.

Secondly, all terrorism – not just religious terrorism – is symbolic and more or less "contagious." Contagiousness depends on popularity of the terrorists' cause and severity of grievances felt by their supporters. Both causes and grievances are usually political, rather than religious. Dr Marshall mentions the beheading of hostages in Iraq as an example of "heightened symbolism" of religious terrorism. Oliver Roy, the renowned French scholar, however, believes that the 'trial' of a blindfolded hostage under the banner of a radical organisation and the 'confession' of the hostage followed by his execution, are borrowed from the Italian Red Brigades when they captured and killed the former Prime minister Aldo Moro in 1978. No one would consider the Red Brigades as religious terrorists.

I think it is very unfair to call Afghan resistance groups, who valiently fought against all odds to defend their homeland, "pan-Islamic terrorist organisations. It is to the credit of the Afghan people that they faced the enemy in the battlefields and suffered more than a million casualties without committing a single terrorist act agaisnt Russian aggression either inside the Soviet Union or in a third country.

Finally, it is not true that "religious terrorists are not concerned with success". Bin Laden, for example, seems confident of ultimate victory against the U.S. The time scale that he has in mind, however, is much longer term than the one we ordinarily use.

Najib Lafraie, Dunedin

Mary's house at Ephesus

The article on the House of Mary (*TM February*) was an interesting coverage of this place of pilgrimage, but the writer is correct to imply that its value lies chiefly in its ability to speak to the heart of the faithful.

Historically it is quite untenable. The actual house structure is Byzantine and no earlier than the 8th Century A.D.

Mary's scriptural link with the apostle John in the Gospel of *John* and his supposed identification with John of Ephesus who wrote *Revelation* accounted for her presence in that city. Ancient Ephesus had a focus on the virgin god-

dess cult of Artemis; the Virgin Mother of Christ replaced Artemis there.
But why would a Galilean tradesman's widow from a country village wish to live in this vast and decadent Graeco-Roman metropolis? A reason such as persecution lacks any historical verification. The house, like so many other shrines,remains a testament to faith alone.(***abridged***)

Norman McClean, Gisborne

Young priests

When I first read the comments of Timothy Radcliffe (*February* issue) regarding the 'fancy dress' loving young priests I was angry! The suggestion that these young people need sympathy until they take the next step (the step that all 'right-thinking' people will naturally take) is patronising.
The whole passage is a great example of 'othering': the young priests are not like 'us' (the people who know what our Faith is really all about). They are merely seeking identity, which, the interview seems to imply, is not as good as what we sought.
The fact that the young priests may actually be seeing some worth in what they do or believe about their religious practice, which goes beyond the superficial, does not seem to be up for debate. The 'othering' is also implied by the very tone of the response. It is written for 'us' with no recognition that 'they' may also read it. The last sentence in the response, regarding the young having something to teach, should have made me feel better but it doesn't. It seems rather like a Band-Aid hurriedly slapped on a bleeding knee.
I find it disturbing that in *Tui Motu* more conservative points of view are often dismissed with little debate... I would like to see more vigorous engagement with other points of view so that I am forced to reconsider my own position, no matter how uncomfortable or in what direction that may finally take me.

Laurel Lanner, Botswana

Tui Motu *has its own quite unambiguous editorial stance – but is always prepared to publish contrary viewpoints – Ed*

NZ a wealthy country?

The *April* editorial, by Caritas Director Michael Smith (*Tui Motu p 3.*), obliges me to remove a widely held misconception about this nation's wealth. To say "New Zealand is a wealthy country" (*second paragraph*) is an illusion. We give this impression because of luxurious spending on unnecessary 4WD and expensive motor vehicles, overseas holidays and expensive homes. This 'wealth' derives largely from externally borrowed funds with their inherent interest burden, which necessitates the sale of productive and strategic assets to foreigners.
Our nation's foreign debt exceeds $NZ120 billion. Many of our successful companies have been sold overseas; those listed on our share market are 80 percent foreign owned, with their profits leaving the country. So we continue to spend more than we earn, working hard towards financial and ecological collapse. It will need a multiparty accord to give us the incentive to save – and 'live simply so that others can simply live'.
This government claims a $7 billion tax surplus, but this money is urgently needed to reduce debt and for essential social services.

G van den Bemd, Mangere Bridge

Magnanimity of Prince Charles

In Prince Charles' article, *Time to Heal.* (*Tui Motu April*), he says, "As I have grown older I have gradually come to realise that my entire life so far has been motivated by a desire to heal – above all to heal the mortally wounded soul that alone can give us warning of the folly of playing God and of believing that knowledge on its own is a substitute for wisdom".
On that score alone Charles could well be the among the leaders we need in our times. Maybe he recognised a kindred soul in Pope John Paul II and for that reason wished to attend his funeral, despite any frustrations and embarrassments to his own personal plans.
Thomas Aquinas is said to have placed *magnanimity* – big-heartedness or big-mindedness – among the greatest human virtues. These two qualities are sometimes better understood by contrast to their opposites, meanness or petty-mindedness. In the decision of Prince Charles to attend the funeral of Pope John Paul II, I recognise the mark of magnanimity, too often lacking from the pontifications of media voices.

Paul Scott FMS, Wellington

Apocalypse now

I have always read with eagerness and approval Michael McCarthy's articles in the London ***Tablet***, but on rereading this one (*April Tui Motu*) I was not altogether happy with his presentation.
Prince Charles' piece, however, comes unmistakably from a deeply religious, mystical background. I believe the "distant voice coming from another dimension", as Charles puts it, is like a small, flickering flame in each one of us and that the church has the resources to nurture it, but needs the will to fan it into the raging fire of conversion which alone can save our planet.

(letters continued overleaf)

Response to Fr Pat McMullan

Genetic Engineering and the Bishops' Statement

In his article (*Tui Motu, February*), Pat McMullan claims that the New Zealand Bishops have accepted Genetic Engineering technology uncritically, and that the ethical principles we proposed effectively "betrayed" the people of NZ. He also speaks of "a lack of probity" and describes as "naïve" the distinction between GE technology as such and its uses. McMullan rightly rejects any use – i.e. misuse – of GE technology that exploits or oppresses, and he is rightly concerned to avoid the risks of unintended harmful consequences. Missionaries of the Society of St Columban have done well to draw attention to examples of outrageous misuse and exploitation.

However, it is Fr McMullan's own failure to accept the distinction between the technology and how it is used that lands him in the position of having to reject all possible uses of it. According to this extreme and negative position, GM is intrinsically wrong, and therefore every possible use of it is wrong, and conferences to discuss its possibilities shouldn't even take place.

A more positive approach to this scientific development explores its potential for enhancing the quantity and quality of food supplies in a world where "the loss of a quarter of the world's topsoil over the past 50 years, coupled with the loss of a fifth of the agricultural land that was cultivated in 1950, indicates clearly contemporary agriculture is not sustainable"; where over the same period the world's population has grown from 2.5 billion to 6 billion; and where, "even now, an eighth of the world's people go to bed hungry" (***Study Document on the use of Genetically Modified Food Plants to Combat Hunger in the World***. *Pontifical Academy of Sciences*).

The positive approach presupposes that the risks of negative consequences are being thoroughly researched and reduced to acceptable levels – just as we do in other areas of life. The position of the NZ Bishops is based on the positive approach of exploring GM's potential for benefits while regulating against its misuse and against unacceptable risks.

Fr McMullan would have done well also to recognise that the scope of our submission to the Royal Commission was limited to the scope of the warrant given to the Commission itself. The scope of the warrant was limited specifically to the New Zealand situation, whereas Fr McMullan's focus is on the international situation. Developing countries, by their very nature have little or no capacity to regulate GM technology. This is not the case in New Zealand or in the developed world. Developing countries should be encouraged to place a moratorium on GM, as New Zealand did until there was an adequate regulatory framework in place.

The Pontifical Academy's study document points out that "cross-breeding of different plant varieties and species, followed by the selection of strains with favourable characteristics, has a long history… and involves exchanging genetic material, DNA, from one organism to another". What is new is that "the new technology has changed the way we modify food plants, so that we can generate improved strains more precisely and efficiently than was possible earlier."

What is also new, however, is technology's ability to transfer genes across unrelated species. This highlights the need for even greater caution and responsible management of the technology. The distinction between "a natural process (and) a human technology" should not be overdrawn. The human capacity for technology is itself part of nature! Of course, so too is the imperative to use it responsibly, because that is a requirement of authentic human nature.

Readers who would like to study the positive approach can find a very useful summary in the study document of the *Pontifical Academy of Sciences* quoted above. ■

P J Cullinane, Bishop of Palmerston North

(letters continued)

Our church has all the scriptural and traditional resources to throw into ecological discussion based on faith, but I had to search them out for myself and have found them to be more persuasive than the scare stories.

The purely pragmatic environmentalist can easily fall by the wayside. Early enthusiasm can be weakened by the imperatives of the economy, then further seduced away by doubts over 'exaggerated' scare stories; global warming seen as a natural occurrence; 'it won't happen in my lifetime', and so on... McCarthy, with his well-intentioned pragmatic environmentalism, will be tempted to give up his fight against what is now seen as inevitable disaster. Why spend energy on a lost cause?

The Christian by contrast will continue to work for God's creation with hope in his heart, because giving up would amount to withdrawing his/her love from God. We need to cling to the hope Thomas Berry (in *The Great Work*) gives for the planet's survival – if only we change our ways in the next 35 years.

Frank Hoffman, Drury

A little group of ex-pat Kiwis find themselves drawn together night after night, keeping vigil on the death of the Pope and the succession.

Marist Father Merv Duffy describes the atmosphere and the chatter

View from the Pizzeria

Habemus Papam – We have a Pope!

The Piazza of St Peter's has been the focus of the world's media. Every rooftop has sprouted its media tent where power-suited media personalities with mellifluous voices confidently analyse and pontificate.

Meanwhile, four blocks away at a cheap and cheerful pizzeria, a group of Kiwis are doing their best to make sense of it all. It is not just the price that dictates the venue. This place is over the road from Lyndsay Freer's hotel, is handy to the Metro as well as the Piazza, and is near to the *Sant'Anna* gate into the Vatican. Lyndsay is spokesperson for the New Zealand Catholic Bishop's Conference, here to liaise with the NZ media.

Il Calabascio has become the regular refuge for a mixed assortment of Kiwis, clerical and lay, plus whoever they happen to bring along with them. During the death watch outside the window of John Paul II, we would retreat here for food and wine. In fact it was here that we were alerted to the Pope having died. Simultaneous ringing of journalists' cellphones at the next table prompted us to return to the mysteriously silent Piazza – how can 75,000 Italians be so subdued?

In the nights after that we felt the need to keep gathering. While the incredible file of mourners walked past the body of the Pope we talked here of why, and how long it was taking to get into the Basilica. David, a young Jew from Wellington, waited seven hours before respectfully filing past John Paul II lying in state. He is still not sure why he did it. The fact that John Paul prayed at the Wailing Wall is part of why it is important to him. David has been caught up into the 'Pope-watching' phenomenon, and he was in the Piazza again this evening when the white smoke went up and when Pope Benedict XVI stepped out onto the balcony.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger is very familiar to us here in Rome. One of our group lives in the *Teutonic College* where the Cardinal celebrated Mass every Thursday morning. For those of us studying theology his name, his books, and the documents that issue from the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* are a daily part of our lives.

It is the evening of Tuesday 19 April, and we are in the pizzeria yet again. David has given us a blow-by-blow account of the events in the Piazza. Lyndsay is fielding phone calls from NZ radio and television. I am psyching up for an interview on BBC World. (It lasts for 2 minutes.) An Irish girl wants to know why we are all so het up about the election of Josef Ratzinger. The answers go something like this:
"He is a German!".

"He is the guy they use to scare theologians into being orthodox!"

"He has been the 'bad cop' to John Paul's 'good cop'. John Paul is associated with the lovely document *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, while Cardinal Ratzinger gets the credit for the niggly *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (Subtitle: 'An Instruction on certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist')".

"He has been demonised by the Western media!"

An Irish priest assures us that Cardinal Ratzinger is personally warm and charming, entirely unlike his stern media image. Comments are made about how good he is with languages. His Italian is better than ours, but the waiter assures us: "It is obvious from his accent he is a German."

The *padrone* of the restaurant joins the discussion: "No, he's not a German, he's from Bavaria – that is completely different and much better: it is like saying that a Calabrese is Italian!" We do not point out that Calabria *is* part of Italy (way down south); we recognise his point that European countries are not monolithic, and there are great variations in culture from one part to the other. Okay, Benedict is Bavarian.

Then someone tells a story about travelling on the Metro next to an American studying here in Rome. Her backpack

is decorated with two badges one reads: '*Pro Life at Yale*'; the other '*Cardinal Ratzinger Fan Club.*' The badges are worn with pride. She is an example of a movement of young Catholics seeking certainty and clear leadership. Benedict will appeal to this segment of the Catholic population.

We are certain that he is going to attend the World Youth Day in Cologne (August 18 – 21). These were terrifically successful for John Paul, Benedict will have the home ground advantage. But will he be able to wow the young people as John Paul did?

Benedict is bright! We all know his reputation as a deep thinker and is unafraid of dialogue with today's world. We hear about his recent debate with the neo-Marxist philosopher Jürgen Habermas. It was billed in the German newspaper as the *Clash of the Titans* – two formidable intellectuals debating at length. The outcome was that they found more common ground than anyone had expected. John Paul was a philosopher, Benedict is a theologians' theologian.

Why did he choose the name *Benedict*? We speculate: "Wasn't it Benedict XV who condemned 'Modernism' (or was it Pius X?) – it could be a sign that he is reactionary!"

"No – it will be for *Saint* Benedict, one of the Patrons of Europe. The Cardinals have chosen a European because they are concerned for the decline of the faith in Europe. Think of the Benedictines keeping culture and learning alive through the Dark Ages. He is signalling a focus of his Papacy – St Benedict founded monasteries in reaction to the slack living of Christianity in his day. This Benedict is going to challenge us to live radically our Christianity." Plausible.

So, what will Pope Benedict XVI be like? Is it a bit like appointing the Dean of Discipline as Principal of the school? In the Vatican there is strict division of labour. Today, Joseph Ratzinger is no longer Cardinal Prefect of the *Congregation for Doctrine and Faith*. He is the Servant of the Servants of God, Pastor of the Universal Church.

Later we are joined by a Kiwi priest who works in the Vatican. It's been a long day. His comment: "I think the Holy Spirit's surprise for us might well be: not the man – but *how* the man will shepherd."

What Benedict XVI is like we will have to wait and see. I have to go for my interview just when the *padrone* has brought a wine from Calabria with which to toast the new Pontiff! ■

Parallel tracks – *two world leaders with a like aim*

Richard V Allen

In the early '90s I was approached by the Watergate reporter, Carl Bernstein. He told me he had become interested in Pope John Paul and was writing a book with an Italian journalist, Marco Politi.

During my interview with Bernstein, and searching for an adequate concept to describe the parallel objectives of Rome and Washington vis-à-vis the East bloc, I said that their relationship could be described as 'the greatest secret alliance in history'. It was meant as a metaphor, not as a statement of fact.

Bernstein published a long cover story article in *Time* magazine, entitled ***The Holy Alliance.*** The summary description of the article read, "Faced with a military crackdown in Poland, Ronald Reagan and John Paul II secretly joined forces to keep the Solidarity union alive. They hoped not only to pressure Warsaw but to free all of Eastern Europe."

Well, I'll say that Reagan and the Pope both acted to keep Solidarity alive and that both hoped to keep the pressure on Polish the Communist leaders, Gierek and then Jaruzelski, but they did not "join forces." Rather, think of two separate and distinct policy lines, each with its own purposes but in no way contradicting or undermining the purposes of the other, actually reinforcing each other merely because they were *not* formally connected. Parallel tracks, not a single track; convergence of interests, not identical interests.

Besides, while the Vatican was interested in the radical transformation of the Eastern Bloc, its primary focus was on Poland, whereas President Reagan and the United States thought of Poland as a means to the disintegration and collapse of the main danger, the main adversary, the Soviet Union.

Pope John Paul in Poland

On the first and historic visit of John Paul II to Poland in June 1979, I happened to be with (the then) Governor Reagan at his home. We turned on the television set in his study. Some networks were carrying footage of the Pope's visit, and Reagan became intensely focused.

The crowds, the masses of people acclaiming the Pope as he moved among them, were astounding. Reagan remained silent for the longest time. I saw that he was deeply moved, and noticed a tear at the corner of his eye. This, I think, was a tear of pride, of admiration, perhaps of astonishment at what he was witnessing.

The Pope used as his Scriptural theme for the visit, ***Be not afraid!*** As one scholar, Cezar M. Ornatowski put it: "The leitmotif was renewal, expressed most emphatically in John Paul's dramatic call: *Let Thy Spirit descend and renew the land, this land!* The words, spoken on Warsaw's Victory Square at the conclusion of John

Paul's first homily on Polish soil, galvanized the demoralized nation and became the most famous quote of this visit, and, arguably, of all his words ever spoken on Polish soil." Reagan had seen the Pope's visit as an extraordinary wedge into the very centre of the Communist domain.

On March 30, 1981, in office scarcely ten weeks, the President was shot and narrowly escaped death. While recovering in the hospital he had much time to think and reflect. He scrawled a long personal letter to Leonid Brezhnev. It was a remarkable letter, one in which Reagan described his brush with death, and appealed to Brezhnev to sit down with him and discuss the resolution of issues in the best interests of the American and Soviet people, and in the interest of world peace.

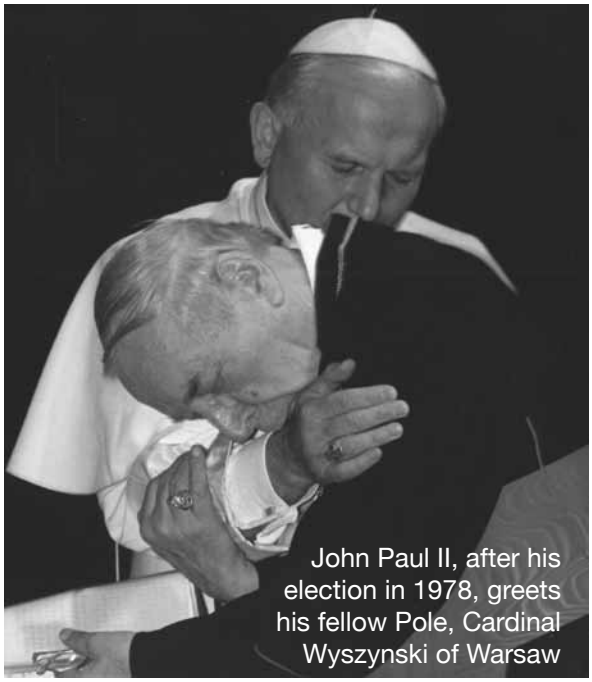
Back in harness but not totally restored, the President was shocked as he we brought him the news on May 13 that the Holy Father had been shot by a Turkish extremist, Mehmet Ali Agca. The President's affection for the Pope was greatly magnified, and he asked me every day for weeks thereafter about the Pontiff's recovery. I thought even then about the striking parallels in the lives of these two extraordinary men.

A 'conspiracy'?

Did they consciously align their respective pursuits, coordinate, conspire? The short answer is '***no***'. But – this demands an explanation. Not once, to my knowledge, did Washington and the Vatican plan jointly to achieve a policy objective. But in Washington we wanted to keep the Holy See well informed of what President Reagan intended to do and when he would do it.

The President's close friend, William Wilson was our Ambassador in the Vatican, and it was not lost on anyone that President Reagan had elevated the relationship with the Holy See to full diplomatic relations. Archbishop Pio Laghi, new in 1981 as Papal Nuncio, also played a key role in the years that followed.

We did indeed brief the Holy Father regularly. This was initially done by CIA Director William J. Casey... With the President's blessing, he would fly to Rome, be taken under cover to the Vatican and brief the Pope, frequently with satellite photographs. It was his practice only to offload information



John Paul II, after his election in 1978, greets his fellow Pole, Cardinal Wyszynski of Warsaw

– nothing more. If the Pope requested additional information, it would be supplied. Casey was able to show the Pope, for instance, very detailed photographs of the deployments of Soviet troops in and around Poland, and the photographs of Soviet S-20 intermediate range mobile missiles hidden in the forests of Czechoslovakia.

What was the purpose of these exercises? Merely to assure that Pope John Paul II had indisputable evidence of what was happening in areas of interest not only to the United States and the European countries, but also to the Vatican. What Rome did with the information it received, if anything at all, was entirely Rome's business.

Rome was not a consideration over what Reagan wished to define as our own interests. But if we look at his decision, made in early 1981 and eventually implemented in 1983, to deploy medium-range ballistic and Cruise missiles in Europe as part of a decision to negotiate with the Soviets while responding in kind to their continuing deployment of S-20 missiles, there can be no doubt that the process of briefing the Pope paid handsome dividends. While generally opposed to the spread of weapons, the Vatican did not publicly oppose this deployment, and one can only conclude that it was the result of the constant briefings that Pope John Paul had received from Casey and Walters. The Pope also knew that our CIA was clandestinely assisting the *Solidarity* movement in Poland.

That the Communist empire imploded is an historical fact. That communism as a system is now on the ash-heap of history, as Marx declared in 1848 would be the ultimate fate of capitalism after the worldwide proletarian revolution, is undeniable.

Many of my Republican friends now proclaim that Ronald Reagan 'won' the Cold War, ignoring many other contributing factors. This is a real mistake – Ronald Reagan was, however, the first President to enter office with the goal of bringing down the weakened, oppressive and contradictory political system of Soviet Communism, and relentlessly pursued that goal by providing the resources to accomplish it. Pope John Paul II had a similar prayerful vision, remained steadfast and determined, and lived to realize his objective.

But on one thing everyone is agreed: neither His Holiness nor President Reagan ever actually claimed credit for the historic achievement. I prefer to speak of the 'collapse' of Communism, not just triumphantly of a 'victory' over Communism, and I judge the similarity of purpose between the Pope and the President to represent a most

Richard V Allen was Foreign Policy advisor and National Security Assistant to President Ronald Reagan. This extract is printed, with permission, from an unpublished work: ***all rights reserved.***

Man of grace

For Anglican priest Glynn Cardy, the death of Pope John Paul triggered off this reflection on what is meant by grace. Glynn is vicar of St.Matthew-in-the-City, Auckland

This week a large portion of the world mourns the death of Pope John Paul II. He was an incredible man by anyone's reckoning. His courage and belief in human rights, his relationship with the Jewish community, and his willingness and ability to connect with people around the world, are just three attributes that come to mind. Needless to say many of his views and beliefs don't resonate with me. Yet resonance is not necessary to admire the great humanity and pastoral presence of Karol Wojtyla.

I feel for the Roman Catholic community for whom the Pope is pivotal. My prayers and condolences are with them as they grieve and say goodbye to their beloved Father in God. I feel too for the nation of Poland for whom the Pope was probably their greatest ever leader. May the peace beyond our understanding comfort you.

On Saturday the Pope gave his last message, "***I am happy and you should be as well.***" Or as our local newspaper succinctly put it: "***Be happy***". Happiness is a popular word. In addition to numerous books on the subject, there have been a number of recent articles in magazines and newspapers. The other week I was invited to appear on a TV show on the topic – along with an actress and psychologist! We left the viewers with a bag of sound bites. One bite was: ***Happiness is to know love, to allow grace, and to see beauty.***

Happiness is usually grounded in love. It is grounded in our relationships with other people, and sometimes pets. It is grounded in self-respect. A healthy, well-adjusted child, or adult, needs to have experienced unconditional love. A healthy, well-adjusted theistic spirituality needs to understand God as unconditional love.

Being loved and spirituality are both about connection. They both can provide a framework of meaning, a sense of purpose, friendship, and help in developing compassion. I think children often get a very different message about happiness. ***Happiness is eating***, says the advert. ***Happiness is buying***, says billboard. ***Happiness is being popular***, says the TV show. ***Happiness is having beautiful body***, says the magazine.

> *"I am happy. . .*
> *and you should be as well"*
> (last message of Pope John Paul II)

It's not only children who get these messages. I read a more sophisticated version that told me I needed to eat more essential fatty acids, be careful about what I put on my skin, stretch in lycra, and make time for water. This article was decorated with fit-looking 30-year-olds. Wouldn't it be great to see pictures of fat, bald, 50-year-olds instead?

I find such 'outward vestures' to be rather superficial. We are hung up on looks. Of course self-care is important. Yet we are a society addicted to self-care. How about shifting the focus to caring for others, being kind, and allowing grace. How about working to build structures both here and abroad that express care, kindness, and grace.

An example of grace: a few weeks back I watched a TV reality show (not my favourite genre!) about a family of Americans who had gone to live for a few weeks in a Ghana village. The show highlighted the cultural differences, the difficulty of cross-cultural adaptation, and the generosity of the human spirit as people tried to support and encourage each other. It's easy to be cynical about this type of show: the 'rich man' using the 'poor man' to increase his ratings. Yet, as I watched it with my children, I could see the grace that both families were extending to each other. One of the truths of Christianity is never underestimate the power of grace.

The art of loving, of living in community with others, is learning when to hold on and when to let go. It is about learning to graciously hold one's tongue, and also graciously reach out beyond one's comfort zone. Grace is about being other-centred. The person who allows grace is not only exhibiting their inner strength but is also building it.

As individuals we do need to take some responsibility for how we live our lives and how we might change. I am aware that some people have been badly damaged by others or circumstances in the past. They will need more support and patience from others. Yet they too have some choices to make.

A friend, Celia, teaches her children little poems. "I can choose to be happy, I can choose to be kind, I can choose to have lovely thoughts flowing through my mind." On the one hand, this is child-oriented training in positive thinking. It's about giving children the mind skills to cope with

disappointment, hate, and despair. On the other hand, this is spirituality training. When we choose to centre our mind on the love that is God we increase the likelihood of growing generosity, forgiveness, peace, and purpose in our lives.

Wealth is no guarantee of happiness. Yet neither is poverty. We need a certain level of income in order to participate in society. Poverty lines are statistical measures within a country that tell us the point below which participation is extremely difficult if not impossible. The economic and social structures of society are important for happiness. To use an agricultural metaphor, such structures are significant in preparing the ground in which individuals can make choices about their growth.

The American Psychological Association, as recently reported in *Time Magazine* (17th Jan 2005), has published a number of studies on happiness. Factors such as riches, youth, sunny days, and marriage aren't significant indicators. A far more positive correlation with happiness is strong ties and time spent with family and friends, and a faith that lifts the spirit.

Happiness is directly related to connection with people and God. In being other-centred we find our centre. In being loving to others, we find the source of love within ourselves. Meaning. Friendship. Compassion.

I feel honoured to have been invited to attend a special service for the Pope at St Patrick's Cathedral on Friday evening. When I think about the Pontiff's ministry and message over 26 years, those words meaning, friendship, and compassion, are writ large. ■

A moment of grace

No, not two popes – but the late Pope John Paul with Dominican Ambrose Loughnan, pictured here (*from our wall*) being received in audience, in 1983. Ambrose's last home in New Zealand was what is now *Tui Motu*'s editorial office in Dunedin. Fr Ambrose died on the mission in Port Moresby a few years ago.

Man of commitment

What was Pope John Paul like face to face?
We asked Bishop Len Boyle to share his experiences of the late Pope

I would have met Pope John Paul about seven times, apart from his visit to New Zealand when the bishops all accompanied him. Once was at the World Youth Day in Manila. Cardinal Williams and I were invited to attend and spent the week giving talks.

Then it came to the great papal Mass (the biggest ever – attended by over four million people). Our bus couldn't get through the crowds, so the bus driver stopped and said: "I can't go any further. You'll just have to push your way through on foot".

Cardinal Tom and I were the first off, and a voice came from the back of the bus: "That's right. Put the All Blacks in first!" The bus was full of clergy, but I suspect that it was one of the Aussie bishops.

I thought Pope John Paul was at his best in public when he departed from his formal text and spoke *ad lib*. At the end of his homily at Manila he carried on a spontaneous interchange with the young people. All the time he was twirling his stick like Charlie Chaplin used to do. He had no notes. He was just himself. He was so good.

The 'lad from Nightcaps' addressing the Pope.
Bishop Len Boyle giving the formal address at an *ad limina* visit to Rome. Also visible, seated, Bishop Max Mariu, auxiliary bishop of Hamilton(*l*), and Cardinal Tom Williams (*r*)

I went on three *ad limina* visits to Rome, when you go with the rest of the New Zealand bishops; and also I attended the Synod on Religious Life. On each of these occasions the Pope entertained a group of us to a meal. We were with him for perhaps a couple of hours, and the wine and the conversation flowed freely.

He was a 'wizard' at hospitality. I noticed if anyone at the table wasn't saying anything he would always make a point of addressing him and including him. He was a great host.

One time I had met an Australian bishop in St Peter's Square who was attending a papal commission dealing with immigrants. The following day at dinner the Pope turned to me and asked: "What's the situation on immigrants in New Zealand?" He never missed the chance to use his time with us effectively.

One time he and I had a long discussion on hip replacements: we had both had one. I asked him what he did for exercise. Nothing special, he said. "You should use your swimming pool," I said.

"I haven't got a swimming pool", he replied.

"Haven't you got one at Castel Gandolfo?", I asked. Of course he had.

When he was in New Zealand, in Christchurch Bishop Dennis Hanrahan and I looked after him. When he came off the altar after the Mass he knelt, still fully vested, and stayed in complete silence for what seemed like several minutes. That really impressed us.

After that I accompanied him back to the airport in the car, and he chatted freely about the children in the crowd who were watching. Just before we got to the airport he spotted some sheep. "They're the first sheep I've seen in New Zealand", he exclaimed. It showed how rushed the whole visit was. He was very relaxed to be with. I found him very easy to talk to.

Among his entourage there was very dour looking man. I enquired who he was and was told: "Oh, that's the Pope's blood donor." I wondered what he would say when he went through Customs and was asked the purpose of his visit! Apparently, very important people travel with a personal blood donor as a member of the touring party.

Once when I was in Rome with two friends, both with big families, we were able to attend a small Papal Mass. Afterwards John Paul was delighted to meet my friends and give them rosaries for their children and make a fuss of them. He seemed to have all the time in the world on those occasions.

When I was on the *ad limina* as chairman of the Bishops' Conference, it fell to me to give the formal address to the Pope at our audience with him. That experience struck me as a true comment of the nature of the church: that here was the Pope listening to someone from Nightcaps! But I didn't feel at all nervous about it.

When I was on my own with him, he looked at Dunedin on his world map; then he said: "You are the bishop in the whole world who comes furthest to see me."

The first time I went to Rome I thought it might take him a gift. I was chatting to the children at St Joseph's parish school in Oamaru, and the children volunteered to put something together. When I showed it to the Pope it gave him a talking point, just to see what the children did. Then I was able to report back to the children what the Pope had said about them. It was wonderful for them.

What struck me most about Pope John Paul was his commitment. He would give every bishop ten minutes or quarter of an hour of his time, no matter how busy he was. And that happened even during the Synod, when he was also attending every session. He had members of the Synod for a meal at lunchtime and each evening. He just gave himself totally.

I didn't meet Cardinal Ratzinger personally. But one quite amusing thing happened when we went to his Congregation (of the Doctrine of the Faith). He was absent, but his deputy read us out a paper from him on girl altar servers. The article was totally in favour of them – much to our delight!

I have been most impressed by the way he presided over the Pope's funeral. His homily was wonderful. In fact I heard of a professional man up north who was so impressed by that homily, he rang the local bishop and announced he was going to become a Catholic! ■

Bishop Len Boyle was bishop of Dunedin until his retirement last year. He lives at Mosgiel, helping out and and giving parish retreats

A yearning for unity

The day Pope John Paul died Jenny Dawson was at an ecumenical gathering in Thailand. She describes her thoughts and expresses a lament for the failure of ecumenical initiatives in New Zealand

Last night Pope John Paul II died in Rome. This morning I am attending Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Chiang Mai, Thailand, with a group of delegates to the 12th General Assembly of the *Christian Conference of Asia* (CCA). Mass is said in the chapel, dominated by a vast wooden crucifix: Christ with an Asian face. We realise again that the Risen Christ is encountered profoundly in the church unified.

As diverse Christians, (others are from Mar Thoma, Lutheran and Methodist, and my own Anglican background), our passion for the quest for unity is sharpened by the Gospel reading: Thomas is putting his hands into the wounds after Christ appeared to the disciples through a closed door. In the homily we are told a story from the latest *Readers' Digest* about a young Karol Wojtyla helping a teenage girl who had come out of a Nazi prison camp. In a situation where his action could have easily been misinterpreted by others, he still did it.

Not receiving communion – always my practice when I am formally representing the Anglican church in a Catholic context – reinforces the hard reality of division. But what is much stronger is that sense of our shared commitment to work for unity in, around, and despite, the churches. Yet some of us know that in our own context at home there are fewer vehicles left through which to move this commitment forward.

At the Assembly, the General Secretary of the All-Africa Council of Churches, reminded us that the ecumenical movement is about treating all humanity as neighbours rather than as producers and consumers. '*Who are my mother and my brothers and my sisters?*' (*Mk 3:33*) is as much a key verse as is '*...that they may be one even as we are one*' (*Jn 17:11b*). So it's how we live our lives, together. Big ecumenical gatherings like the Assembly in Chiang Mai give us the confidence to believe that if a seed is planted in the dark womb, something will eventually happen – and that the birthing will bring forth new life.

I am back in New Zealand. Around the usual local activities with people from other churches, I remember that the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa-New Zealand (CCANZ) will go out of existence this September and I am sad.

I remember the experiences of the CCA Assembly, especially how *Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga* was represented there for the first time. The end of CCANZ leaves an aching gulf, a waiting time which is painful to contemplate. Perhaps, as Kiwi ecumenists, our calling is to be ecumenical people in an impossible time.

Surprisingly, new ecumenical steps are still being taken – but who would know? We need the gingering-up offered by a national movement, we need a place to theologise deeply together about what it means that God's household is the whole inhabited earth, and we need to know that our church leaders believe in ecumenism enough to take some risks. I grieve as the autumn days get shorter and colder.

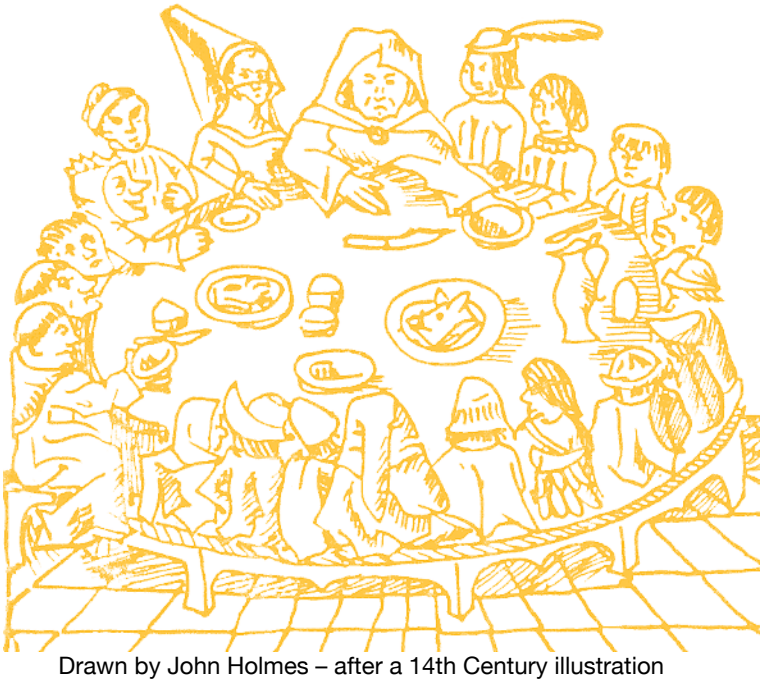
It is only later, days later, that I read the Last Rites declaration of John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla): "The unforgivable sins this earth must confront and overcome are nationalism, capitalism, and hoarding. The idea of every nation should be forgot, price should be struck from the commons, and princes should be seen for the devils they are. The sins include our church, secret societies, and other religions which make of the spirit of God a divide." ■

Hospitable Conversation

The Church in the 21st Century

Anna Holmes

The beginning of a new Papacy seems a good time to look at the model of church. There has been much conflict in the Catholic Church since Vatican II over the appropriate model. The last Pope Benedict was a peacemaker in Catholicism after the bitter battles over Modernism. I pray that the new Benedict may be able to heal some of the hurts inflicted in the past 40 years.



Drawn by John Holmes – after a 14th Century illustration

Conversation

Reading the New Testament I am always struck by the hospitality and conversation of Jesus. He eats with sinners, and is fed and given water by women of dubious status. We do not hear him sorting out the worthy from the unworthy while feeding the 5000. We do not hear of him dismissing the woman taken in adultery or refusing to speak with the woman at the well with five husbands and more. He asks her for a drink.

He does not turn away from the argumentative Syro-Phonoecian woman who wants her daughter healed nor from the ranting Gerasene madman. He does not even refuse to share the Last Supper with Judas. Such hospitality treasures the uniqueness of persons with all their shortcomings. That is what all Christians are meant to do. It is also the model for institutional churches.

The first piece of furniture as a family we ever possessed was a round dining-table. I cherish that table still, because a round table allows conversation between all who eat at it. There is no head, no hierarchy at a round table. All are equal. That table has heard some memorable conversations.

Conversation is talk shared between equals who both speak and listen to each other – in other words, who are hospitable to one another. It is the time when people face each other openly and freely. Conversation is at the heart of faith. The centre of the Blessed Trinity is an eternal, loving, conversation. I was reminded of this very forcibly on the first Sunday after Easter. On the road to Emmaus two disciples converse with a stranger. They then offer him hospitality. It is only when they share bread that they realise who he is.

Hospitality

Some of my greatest experiences of hospitality have been in communities that were not Christian. I have had my hands washed and been given hot mint tea by Muslim villagers. I have even been fed fish baked over a fire on a beach by a Sri Lankan fisherman, a darker version of St Peter. Another one fished me out of the water by the hair when I was in grave danger of drowning. I was given milk and cassava in Africa by people who shared with me what little food they had. It was a real experience of Eucharist.

My church experiences, sadly, have not always been so positive. I have been prevented from going into church because my arms were bare. I have gone into church unwelcomed, as a stranger in a strange land. I have been frowned at and avoided by priests in a church at the sign of peace, because I dared to ask awkward questions.

Reflecting on church history I think a major reason for a lack of conversation and hospitality in the church is the notable absence of women in management and decision-making. This is odd, when you think that in the New Testament it was usually the women who welcomed and fed Jesus. He was born of a woman and showed himself first to women after

his Resurrection. Women image God when they give birth and when they breast feed. This maternal image of God is present in the Gospels and in the Old Testament, but somehow it gets ignored today.

Time and again in the Gospels and in Acts the apostles are made to reshape their ideas of the church. It was to be inclusive of all, hospitable to all, led by people whose agreed faith in the overwhelming love of God shown in the presence of Jesus, gave them unity.

The imperial model

Unfortunately, after the church became the state religion in the fourth century, the imperial model of church was embraced. Conversations became discussions, and even these ceased when the Roman centre was able to impose its will on the rest of the church. This only became a universal reality when the distant edges of the church could be reached by cable, telegram or wireless. Now they are instantly accessible, with a consequent push to make the church even more centrally controlled.

The theology of church has, over the past 1600 years, been imposed by Popes and a Vatican Curia – an odd name for a civil service – with a rigid vision of church as a pyramid with Pope and Curia at the top and lay women at the bottom. It is a strictly patriarchal view of God as male, as only being imaged by males.

Until Pius XII died in 1958 the institutional church and the Popes really did believe that social status was God-given and should not be questioned; and that, consequently, democracy was a creeping evil. The ideal society was seen to be an absolute monarchy with ruler at the top and peasants at the bottom. Therefore oppressing, ejecting or banning people who merely asked the sort of questions which might change social structures, was perfectly in keeping with this model.

It all was supposed to change for the Catholic Church after Vatican II, but somehow the inertia in the system prevented real change happening. Civil Services tend to be like that. They manipulate sameness around those who appear to be in control but actually are not.

The hierarchical and vertical model of church ignores the fact that we are all created equal before God. The hierarchical model has, unfortunately, re-emerged in recent years, even to the point of demanding assent from priests and theologians for non-infallible teachings, like that on contraception, even if they disagree with it. To demand such assent seems to deny their freedom of conscience. Pope Benedict, as Cardinal Ratzinger, commenting on the teaching of Vatican II, wrote:

> *I yearn for a conversational church where listening is the prime means of communication*

"Over the Pope as the expression of the binding claim of ecclesiastical authority, there still stands one's own conscience, which must be obeyed before all else, if necessary against the requirement of ecclesiastical authority."

To sum up

If we take seriously the teaching of Jesus, lack of hospitality and, even more, lack of conversation cannot be countenanced as a matter of faith. The church early in its history enshrined the idea of Trinity as the way God is. Not as a distant father or an earthbound son – but as three persons in community and continued conversation: Father/Creator, Son/Redeemer and Spirit. If that is the image of God and human beings are made in that image, then why is the Catholic Church not similarly in hospitable conversation?

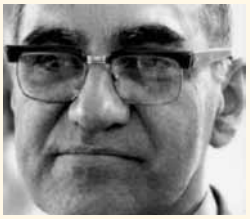
There is a factor, however, that has opened up possibilities for revolutionary change. The *internet* allows discussions and support to be shared across all boundaries and on a worldwide basis. This means that those who are oppressed by the church, who in former ages might have been isolated, are no longer so. People who wish to discuss and explore alternative ways of church can do so freely over the internet.

What I yearn for is a conversational church – a church in which all are welcome and problems of theology can be worked through, in the same way that glitches in communication are worked through in families. I yearn for a church where *listening* is the prime means of communication. I have a sense that many have left the Catholic Church because they hear only complaints and criticism from their church leaders rather than words of encouragement and love.

I long for a church where people, each bearing the image of God, can speak their truth and be heard. We do not yet live in the fulness of the church – that can only happen after the end of the time.

In the meantime, wouldn't it be wonderful to have a church of Trinitarian conversation, of making, of caring, of creating? It would be a splendid counterpoint to a world where there is so much destruction, hatred, and indifference. ■

Oscar Romero – Bishop of the Poor



"I have frequently been threatened with death. I must tell you as a Christian, I do not believe in death but in resurrection. If they kill me, I will rise again in the Salvadoran people." (Oscar Romero)

Christopher Carey

Twenty five years ago, on 24 March 1980, a few minutes before a sharp-shooter killed him as he celebrated Mass, Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador said during his final homily; "One must not love oneself so much so as to avoid getting involved in the risks of life which history demands of us, and those who fend off danger will lose their lives." A shot rang out. The first bishop to be killed at the altar since Thomas à Becket in the 12th century fell dying.

These words followed a day after the Archbishop had again publicly denounced the violence of the military and called for outside intervention in El Salvador. It was a call which sealed his fate. The military, government officials and politicians already hated him. Now they killed him.

Oscar Romero, like many martyrs before him, was an unlikely hero. He came from a well-to-do, conservative background. Initially, priestly work for him was about prayer, administering the sacraments, preaching to the converted and protecting the church. Social justice was of little interest. Military leaders and the country's oligarchy, the powerful wealthy élite who ran El Salvador, welcomed his appointment as Archbishop of San Salvador in 1977.

He was especially welcomed by the United States Government who had sent $1.5 million in military aid every day for 12 years to fortify the El Salvadoran government with weapons and other military assistance. This included military training at the *School of the Americas* in Georgia. Romero was someone with whom the powerful could do business. He had all the right credentials – respectful, conservative, intelligent – but pious, scholarly and safe.

But they hadn't counted on the power of the Holy Spirit. Oscar Romero had a conversion experience: not exactly like Saul riding into Damascus, but equally as powerful and far-reaching. His friend, Fr Rutilo Grande, a priest of his archdiocese and a man committed to social justice and the poor, was killed by the military. During the days of Fr Grande's funeral the scales fell from the Archbishop's eyes. He suddenly realised that he had been largely oblivious to the structural violence affecting the poorest right under his nose.

In a country rich with resources, poverty was killing the poor. As the Archbishop moved among the peasant people Fr Grande had served, he saw the suffering Christ in every one of them. The silent question each was asking – 'will you stand with us as this martyred priest did?' – was one that touched him in his innermost core. His unequivocal answer, after anguish and prayer, was 'yes'. He underwent a profound transformation. From being a timid and conventional priest, he emerged as their champion – fearless and outspoken.

His weekly sermons, broadcast by radio around the nation, electrified the people – and stunned the rich and the military. His understanding of the Gospel as being a Word of liberation from poverty, from violence, from oppression, took root. This Word was not to remain newsprint. It was to be enfleshed in the hearts of the people and lead to their transformation and the transformation of society.

People's dignity and human rights were to be respected. Along with his preaching of God's love and justice came denouncement of the government and its excesses. He became the conscience of the nation. His constant cry was: "we either believe in a God of life or we serve the idols of death".

Persecution of the church intensified. The poor loved and defended him with a passion. Romero received many death threats. The church was being persecuted because it challenged the rights of the rich to oppress and exploit the great mass of poor. The state waged violent oppression on all who opposed government policies. Local leaders and catechists, especially progressive priests and nuns, became a favourite target. Hundreds of church workers were killed. Local community organisers and trade union officials disappeared in their hundreds.

Terror ruled. Whole villages were sometimes slaughtered in cold blood for alleged complicity with anti-government forces. By 1980 the war against the poor was killing 3000 every month. In those few years, 75,000 Salvadorans were killed and more than one million fled the country; another million were left homeless – all in a country of 5.5 million people.

Romero had felt he had no option but to speak on their behalf. They had no more eloquent speaker. A bullet stopped the voice. But, as he predicted, his "spirit rose in the Salvadoran people". His assassination ironically brought increased hope to millions who acknowledged his heroic defence of life and canonised him by popular vote. When peace finally broke out, Oscar Romero was acknowledged as a principal architect. It was a tribute well deserved.

Few are as honoured in the Latin world today as this man. Bishop for only four years, he died in his own blood that others might be free. A modern prophet. A saint for our time. ■

Easter Sunday – a new dawn

Max Palmer

Mary Magdalen at the tomb: Cristoforo de Predis

Can you imagine a Gospel of Jesus Christ, complete to the last detail, but omitting any mention of Christ rising from the dead? Such a gospel would disappear into oblivion. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are all adamant that Christ rose from the dead: what is remarkable is the sheer brevity of all four accounts of the greatest morning in the history of the world. Although these accounts are brief, each evangelist has left his personal imprint.

Matthew is the great lover of signs and wonders. Remember how he closes his Passion story: 'Darkness covered the world... the veil of the Temple was rent in two... the earth quaked... the rocks split... the dead arose and appeared to many.' That was Good Friday evening; come Sunday morning, Matthew is still at it: 'A violent earthquake... an angel with face like lightning... and robe dazzling whiter than snow, rolling back the stone... the guards like dead men.'

Matthew is like General George 'Blood and Guts' Patton sending the US 3rd Army into hell-fire on the Normandy beaches on D Day. Or like the Redemptorist preachers we knew in our young days.

Mark is the complete antithesis of Matthew. Mark is the monastic writer, cool, calm, detached, aloof, unmoved by signs and wonders, brief and to the point. Mark is a role model for preachers, like Ronald Knox's dictum, "A good sermon is like a bikini, brief and covers the essentials!" St Benedict is very much a man after Mark's own heart.

Luke is the physician, the healer, the carer, the one most thoughtful of others. Luke is the son every mother wants to have; the man every woman wants to cuddle. Luke follows up on the three women sent by Christ to proclaim the Resurrection to the Apostles, who, point blank, refused to believe the idle talk of women. And Christ backs them up: when he appears to the Apostles, he upbraids them for their hardness of heart, and their refusal to believe the women he had sent to them.

Noli me tangere: Cristoforo de Predis

John: While we listen to Matthew, Mark or Luke at the Easter Vigil, John holds centre stage every year on Easter Sunday. John focuses on the chief witness, Mary Magdalen, and in so doing gives us the most human, touching, intimate and personal account of all. Mary Magdalen discovers the empty tomb and runs to tell the Apostles. We hear how Peter, and presumably John, run to the tomb to see for themselves, then head for Jerusalem, totally ignoring Mary standing weeping by the tomb.

We have no less than four references to Mary weeping at this moment. Tears are a part of our Christian dispensation. The psalms are soggy with tears. Jesus wept. Peter wept. Br Colm Keating tells us that "many of the deep things of life can only be seen through eyes that have wept". Mary Magdalen's eyes were the first to see the Risen Christ.

By Divine decree from all eternity, on a hillside outside Jerusalem, in the absolute quiet and stillness of the moments before sunrise, two words are gently and softly spoken, '***Mary***', '***Rabbouni***', two words that are destined to re-echo and resound throughout the whole world until the end of time, because these two words are the proclamation and the manifestation of the Risen Christ to the world.

Immediately, the sun rose, and the birdsong exploded in a thunderous crescendo of harmony and cacophony, as every bird in the world burst its lungs in praise of its creator. John doesn't mention the birdsong, he forgot all about it by the time he got around to writing his Gospel 50 or 60 years later. All the more remarkable then that he did not forget the two immortal words, '*Mary*', '*Rabbouni*', that were seared and burned into his heart and soul forever.

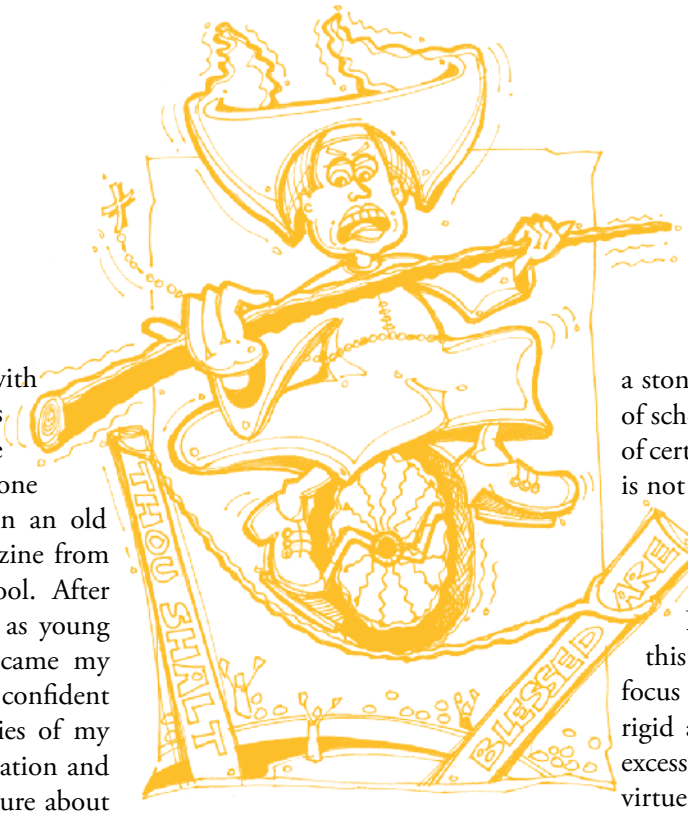
A final word. Tradition also has its place in our Christian dispensation, and the oldest of all Christian traditions tells us that Christ appeared first to his Mother Mary after rising from the dead. It would be passing strange if he didn't. But because his mother Mary could not represent the human race at that moment, Mary Magdalen got the job instead.

May we also join our hearts and minds and voices with all creation in praising our Creator, whose only begotten Son rose from the dead on this day.
And God bless you all. ■

Max Palmer OCSO is a monk of Kopua Abbey in Hawkes Bay

WOBBLING ON

Sandra Winton looks back over her life and notes the times she made an idol of the law – and how that can hamper one's spiritual growth



This week I was faced with a couple of glimpses back into my young life. The first happened when someone salvaged from a clean-out in an old convent a copy of the magazine from my final year at high school. After my surprise that I was ever as young as the girl in the photos, came my embarrassment as I read the confident and rather priggish certainties of my essays on womanhood, education and literature. Was I really that sure about things of which I knew so little? I can now acknowledge that behind the apparent confidence and certainty I was deeply troubled by fear, doubt and the necessity of making life decisions in the face of huge unknowns.

The second trigger to memories was the website of a religious congregation of the Society of St Pius X. The photographs of the round young faces, the fitting of the novice's veil, the daily timetable took me back to my earliest years in religious life. Alongside an attraction to the divine and to community went something far less healthy – an escape from my own deep fears and uncertainties into a system which timetabled my day with rules that reassured me that I was on the right path, doing the right thing, becoming the right person.

None of this need be too harmful, I think now. It was a stage in the journey. But it has made me think about the tendency to seek in laws and rules, especially of the religious kind, an other, or a system to which we can hand over ourselves – to create, in other words, an idol.

It is not hard to see in religious fundamentalism, whether Christian or Muslim, this kind of deification of law. It is harder to look at it in ourselves. But, for myself at least, the temptation to this and other kinds of idolatry is something I've often tripped over, like a stone in my path. Keeping the rules of school, of novitiate, of church, even of certain political or social movements is not a bad thing, but it may become idolatrous. It can be led more by fear than by love.

How can I recognise when this might be happening? When I focus overly on law, when I become rigid about performance, when I am excessively certain about defining virtue and sin, and tend to judge or exclude those who do not follow my system, when I am reluctant to relinquish my idea of rightness to what seems to be outside it: these are signs that I may be tending to elevate law into an idol. The clearest sign that an idol has indeed been created is the old one that Jesus spoke of in the gospels: when a focus on small regulations leads me to neglect 'the weightier matters of the law'.

To live without the idol of law is not to live a totally selfish, indulgent life. It means facing my limits – I do not know it all, I can never do 'it' perfectly, there is no human system that can fully prescribe behaviour or solve all dilemmas. It means realising, 'making real' at a deep level, my weakness, my

capacity for error, the reality that life is larger and more full of exceptions than my rules might allow. In short it makes real that God is God. I think that to live this way is profoundly difficult for humans. We do not want to feel so small, so helpless, so foolish. We flee to attach ourselves to strength, certainty, power.

Paradoxically, to live without the idol of law is also to assume full human dignity and responsibility – choices are mine, I need to make judgements, I can persist in the effort to live with justice and love. And these are my tasks. I can not hand them over to any system, even religious. God is in me.

To live humanly and to live religiously is to balance these two truths – God is in me and God is far more than any human mind can ever conceive.

Coping with the human tendency to give too much to laws and rules, also, I suspect, involves moving between two poles. As the days pass I wobble between openness and restriction, between acceptance and judgement, between not knowing and thinking I know, between fearfulness and trust, flight and settling. Like a child learning to ride a bicycle, it is by wobbling that I move forward.

It would not be surprising that it might be so for the church also. It too has had its heroes of orthodoxy and its unruly saints, its periods of freedom, largeness and openness and its times of constriction. Vatican II, for instance, is remembered as a time of hope, of openness to the world, when human conscience was valued and trusted. There have been other times when, under perceived threats to its unity or the known way, law has been used to control, when it has excluded, prescribed and been rigid. When this is happening, what are clearly human regulations, belonging to a time and place, may be endowed with divine attributes of infallibility, immutability and with eternal sanctions.

At the best it is not so. When I was a child, my family lived in a very small town. We had Mass once a month. One year the local Presbyterians had no organist for their Christmas Day service. My mother was approached and she played for their choir practices and worship. Even as a child I remember the clarity of her moral decision – how could she not help these good people to celebrate Our Lord's birth? She knew, of course, that she was going against strict Catholic law. She awaited the visit of our elderly Irish priest. She was ready. When he came he, wisely, did not tackle her on the issue of law but confined himself to a pastoral enquiry about whether she had found anything among the protestants to tempt her away from her Catholic faith. Her faith, like her moral conviction was solid. They made a good-humoured truce. Weightier matters won out and law was in its place.

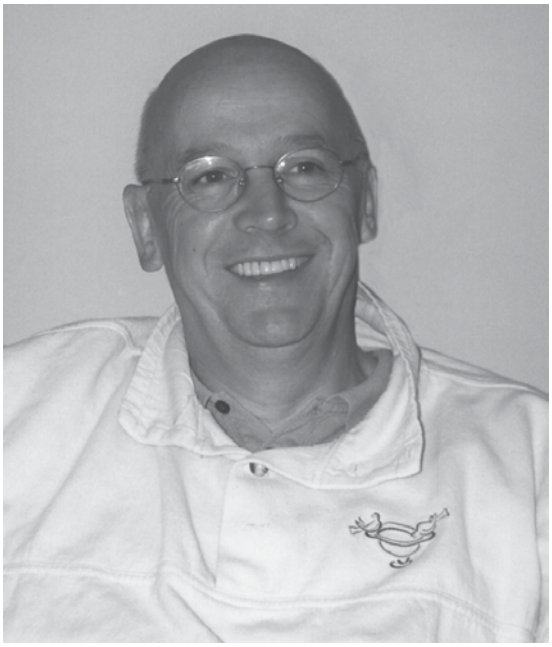
In 1935 T.S. Eliot said, 'Humankind cannot bear very much reality'. In the 1990's Alan Curnow used the image of the cancer sufferer:

> *I try to balance*
> *the two, as little pain*
> *as possible, as much reality*
> *as possible.*

To deify law is akin to taking so much morphine that complex, painful and endearing reality is dimmed. Yet we may veer back when the dual weight of responsibility and fragility seem more than we can bear. Both individuals and churches may oscillate between the two.

When I was 17 I pretended certainty and believed that when I was older I'd know more about what to do with my life. Now I am older I know a lot less. But at least I know that 'it' is an idol and perfection an illusion. I just need to wobble on. I am invited to live less in fear than in trust. Like the young man looking for another commandment to follow, I am given an invitation to live. ■

Sandra Winton is a Dominican Sister and psychotherapist living in Dunedin.



Silence and Honeycakes

. . . the heritage of John Main

Dom Laurence Freeman is a Benedictine monk and Director of the World Community of Christian Meditation. In April he visited meditation groups in New Zealand including Christchurch, where Tui Motu *caught up with him. Laurence was educated by the Benedictines and joined a lay community founded in 1975 by John Main, a monk of Ealing Abbey in London.*

We were in effect living the monastic life, but meditation was our principal focus," says Laurence. "We lived in the monastery and worked around the place to earn our keep. The first 'John Main' groups started to form at that time. People would knock on the door and ask John if he could teach them how to pray.

"Then I joined the monastery and did my novitiate. Two years later, the Ealing community was invited to start a Benedictine foundation with a lay community attached, in Montreal in Canada. I accompanied John to Montreal – there were just the two of us. Montreal became the focus from which John Main's teaching spread throughout the world. John died in 1982, after we had been there five years.

"John said to me as he was dying: 'you must do what you have got to do'. So we simply carried on his work. It flourished. Since what we were doing was a bit 'different' to the normal Benedictine life, we were placed under the direct control of the Abbot Primate.

"In 1990 I returned to London, and joined another Benedictine community – *Christ the King* – also in London. That is now my monastic home. In a sense I have two monasteries: one with walls – *Christ the King* – and one without walls. There are now meditation groups in 60 countries, so I have to travel a lot. There are over 300 groups in Australia. This is my fourth visit to New Zealand, where we have a lot of groups. I also try to nurture the places where the movement is just beginning, like China and Japan. It all grew out of that little seed sown by John Main in Ealing 30 years ago.

"I spend much of my life leading retreats, which may be just a weekend – or may last a full week. The one I have just been to in Sydney was a week-long silent retreat and 250 people attended. We had a good team leading it. There is a really impressive group of lay leaders which have grown up around these meditation communities."

How do the regular Benedictine monks see you?

"They appreciate the movement. It's an overflow from the old Benedictine tradition. A few vocations come to the regulars from the meditation groups. John Main had a gift of recognising the practical essence of the meditation tradition as he had learned it – from Cassian and the Desert Fathers. And he also had a gift ot being able to communicate it in contemporary terms."

How important is the community aspect?

"I think it's a natural growth. '*Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I...*' said Jesus. People respond to the call and begin to meditate on a regular basis. Then they share their experience with a friend. It may start with a single person, but it usually grows into a small group. They start to meet weekly to pray together and reflect on the teaching.

"People sometimes ask: 'should we pray on our own or in a group?' I think they complement each other. Meditation is a solitary experience. No one can do it for you. But solitude isn't isolation: it is the basis of relationship. When you meditate on your own, you are still part of the group. Likewise, when you are together with the group praying, you know that for each one it is a solitary experience.

"We recommend that people spend two half-hour periods each day in prayer. Early morning before the business of the day begins: and early evening before it is too late. Very busy people seem to be able to manage it, even with very burdensome jobs. I know a prominent businessman in Singapore. I asked him if he still managed to meditate during the Asian financial crisis a few years ago. He said: 'I had to. I had to

maintain the appearance of calm and being in control'.

"You build up the habit during ordinary times. But in crisis times it becomes your lifeline. Some people get into the practice straight away. They seem to have been waiting for it to come into their lives. But most people are a bit more erratic at first. They need the support of the group to keep going."

What happens at the weekly meeting?

"There is a format we use. First, a short teaching on meditation. The taped talks of John Main are exceptionally useful here. Or maybe a reading. About 15 minutes is enough. Then there is a half hour of silent individual prayer. It can be ushered in or rounded off by music.

"At the end there is a chance to share and discuss. Not so much what happened to me in my prayer, but perhaps a discussion of some point in the talk. Sometimes we use *lectio divina*, but if the groups use it, they add it on afterwards. They do not substitute it for the silent prayer.

"I think there has been a confusion in the history of the church between the classical prayer elements. Following this simple method helps clarify that confusion, I believe. What is particular about John Main's teaching is the experiential aspect of silence.

"John Main in his writings emphasises the importance of that experience of silence which is an experience of faith. Without that the whole process remains in the head: it is what Cardinal Newman called 'notional assent'. You can say 'I believe', but it doesn't mean much if you haven't actually experienced what you believe. Another way of describing the experience is 'conversion'. St Benedict invites the monk to take the vow of conversion, which entails the ongoing change of one's way of life, not just a one-off event."

How does this connect with a person's normal daily living?

"Recently I was meeting with some businessmen in London, and they were concerned about the decline in business ethics: the egoism, the cut-throat methods, the seeking quick returns. These appear to be rampant in the capitalist world. I have no doubt that these were all religious and good-living men. But in the business world people may be forced into a sort of double life: at home they uphold high ethical values and principles. But when they get on the train on Monday morning they move into a different world where those standards don't seem to apply. And they feel very uncomfortable. Most of their fellow workers are living in a jungle.

"I think the contemplative experience is necessary today for these people. It's not an escape from the reality of the jungle. Rather, it is the one thing which will 'change our minds' sufficiently to be able to confront and challenge those other values.

"Two years ago I was invited to speak to the Academy of Management in the United States. It was just about the time of the great corporate scandals. Their solution, at first, was simply to put more ethics into their curriculum of economic management.

"I told them that wasn't sufficient. People know very well what cheating and lying is all about. They know they are doing wrong. What they need is an experience of goodness at the core of their being – which is precisely what meditation gives them. Whereas if they come at it from a purely rational viewpoint they will soon find a way round the ethical solution. They will say their first duty is to their shareholders – and then they will do anything to achieve that.

"What meditation teaches us is self-knowledge. I come to know myself as created by the love of God, to be loveable, and to have an innate goodness within me. It also teaches me to be selfless – and therefore other-regarding. And this helps me live ethically in the world."

Does spiritual direction help?

"It certainly can. The meditation group itself provides something of that dynamic. The desert fathers showed that there are times when we need guidance and encouragement from another person. I think their writings have a lot to teach us today. What they say is not speculative; it's not preoccupied with institutions; it is personal, experiential and deeply communal. They are concerned especially about the relations of the monks with each other, not judging each other but supporting and correcting each other. At the heart of the wisdom of the desert is the paradox of solitude and community.

"I think people in the meditation groups are actually living today that same 'desert' spirituality. When you pray regularly with people in silence and simplicity, you feel closer to them and build up trust. Barriers of reserve and suspicion break down. In 2001 the Archbishop of Canterbury came out to Sydney and gave a seminar on the Desert Fathers: it has been published as a book called *Silence and Honeycakes*. It has been a best-seller in the UK. Sometimes you need silence and sometimes you need sweets!

How ecumenical is this movement?

"We are not an ecclesiastical organisation. We are a community welded together by the contemplative spirit and by friendship. John Main always believed that meditation creates community. And we have been very happy to let it become ecumenical. We didn't monitor that; we just let it happen.

"Cardinal Kaspar and Archbishop Rowan Williams have said that they see the way forward today as being via spiritual ecumenism. I know that sounds a bit vague. What it means is that contemporary spirituality allows Catholics and those of other faiths to find unity in Christ. ■

The website for getting information on the World Community of Christian Meditation is: www.wccm.org
The on-line bookstore is: www.mediomedia.org

Stories from the forgotten Pacific

Peter Zwart of Caritas recently visited the Indonesian province of Papua whose people continue to struggle for basic human rights and aspirations for independence.

Take any atlas of the Pacific, and you will see a scattering of familiar islands against the broad blue backdrop. Turn to the west and you will find the margins of New Guinea, which, like New Zealand, is no small island, but a large long landmass, with a soaring backbone of mountains, a rich dense forest of unique ecology and wildlife, a permanent snowline, and a population of several million.

Go still further and you will reach the official boundary of the Pacific, formed by a ruled cartographers line. This line, a legacy of a colonial history and of divisions in Europe rather than New Guinea, slices through peak and forest, deflecting only once to skirt the great Fly River which drains the New Guinea highlands into its flat southern swamps.

More than likely your atlas page will also end at that line, leaving the western half of New Guinea to drop off the edge of a flat world.

To the West is a mysterious little known land, variously termed West Papua (the preferred name of local Papuans), Irian Jaya (to many Indonesians), or simply Papua (the official name since a recent official name change). Yet it is a land with many more parallels to New Zealand than geography. Less to the New Zealand of 2005, than to that of the 1860s. The New Zealand of the land wars, and of the struggles of government to impose its rule, of settlers for land, and of Maori to assert their tinorangatiratanga.

For all its flaws, the Treaty of Waitangi provided legitimacy to the government in New Zealand. In West Papua, no such treaty was signed with traditional Rangatira. Once a late Dutch colony, on a path toward independence, this half of the island was acquired dubiously by Indonesia in 1969.

With the consent of the United Nations, Indonesian administrators hand-picked a group of 1,200 Papuans, brought them together under the intimidating presence of the Indonesian military, and arranged for them to vote unanimously for West Papua to join Indonesia. This act, rejected by the majority of Papuans at the time and still today, has been accepted by the world including New Zealand as a legitimate process.

Following annexation, came migration. Throughout the latter half of the 1800s, organised migration to New Zealand from Britain occurred at a rate which Maori had never envisaged. A century later, Indonesia ran a similar organised transmigration scheme in which people from other islands in Indonesia were offered land and resettlement costs to move to Papua. For this to occur, both governments needed land and found ways to acquire it.

In Indonesia, via the constitution, land that is not freehold, is regarded as state land. In Papua many people practise hunting and gathering and shifting cultivation across a broad tribal area. Few could demonstrate consistent occupation of traditional lands, much less prove legal title. Many large tracts of land simply became government property overnight.

Land purchase has also been prevalent. In a manner which has many parallels for New Zealand, deals have been negotiated with individual Papuan chiefs who were prepared to sell, and often without the consent of the paramount chief with authority over the area nor with the consent of the wider tribe.

In 2005 there are now over one million non-Papuans to just 1.5 million Papuans. While organised "transmigration" has officially ended, spontaneous migration of people attracted by the wealth of the mining and logging industries continues apace, akin to New Zealand's gold rushes. And like the gold rushes, these industries are dominated by settlers from outside, creating a base of wealth for these migrant groups. Papuans fear becoming a minority in their own land, looking on, as others exploit their natural resources, legally and illegally.

In 1860, New Zealand still retained a large blanket of forest as West Papua does today. But West Papua's forests are also under threat. Its virgin stands of hardwood and sandalwood have attracted logging companies from across Asia. Though these are the forests on which many Papuans depend for food, shelter, building materials, and medicines, large areas are now subject to unsustainable and illegal logging.

Not surprisingly, West Papua is experiencing conflict. Just as many Maori resisted the sale and confiscation of land, Papuans are also resisting. Most such conflicts are local, and are directed against loggers or transmigrants and also the police and military who are in collusion. Under Te Whiti O Rongomai,

symbol painted outside a local military checkpoint

Maori at Parihaka sought the right to remain on their ancestral lands and to resist confiscation. But they were labelled rebels, suppressed, and killed by the military. In West Papua tribes who resist the illegal logging or outright loss of their ancestral lands are labelled separatists and are dealt with fiercely by the Indonesian armed forces and police. In 1881 these were shameful acts on the part of the New Zealand government and settlers. These days, we call them gross human rights' abuses.

In Aotearoa, imported diseases also took a toll, exacerbated by the loss of land and impoverishment of many Maori communities. Disease too has a part to play in the sad drama that continues to unfold in Papua. Certainly endemic diseases TB and malaria are of concern. But looming on the horizon is a modern killer which has come from outside. The first case of HIV in the Timika area was discovered in 1996, and now, in a region of just 50,000 people, there are over 730 known cases. Experts estimate that for every known case there are another three unreported. With poor nutrition, other diseases, and lack of access to health care, Papuans who contract HIV generally die within three years.

With the mining and logging industries has come a mobile external workforce. The infamous Freeport McMoran mine in Timika alone has 15,000 single male employees, the vast majority from other parts of Indonesia, spawning a prostitution industry to rival that of any modern city. One location alone, an area known as Kilometre Ten (see picture below) because of its location outside of Timika town, houses some 300 prostitutes, mostly women trafficked to Papua from elsewhere, who provide services for the single miners and for the local Papuans.

Miners who visit Kilometre 10 are issued with condoms by the mine which provides some degree of protection against HIV. Papuan men do not have access to condoms and, as a consequence, rates of sexually transmitted diseases, and most particularly HIV/AIDS, have rocketed among the local people. And while it is men who spread the disease, increasingly it is women who contract it and die.

In New Zealand the Maori population dropped from 115,000 in 1840, to around 40,000 just sixty years later, with much of this fall due to disease. What the eventual impact of HIV in West Papua will be is not known. But it is already making deep inroads into the local structure and demographics of the society.

There are of course other parallels. Around Timika town, one sees industrious and active migrants running the businesses and building a prosperous future for themselves. On the margins are Papuans, losing their economic base, suffering deep racism, and experiencing declining self-esteem for themselves and their culture. And

This young Papuan girl could be from any Melanesian country. Will she enjoy her right to an education which builds her self-esteem, identity, and ability to participate in her society?

while Indonesia has built schools in Papua, these schools teach the language and curriculum of Indonesia. Papuans grow up without knowledge of their own history, nor the opportunity to achieve literacy in their mother tongues.

And like New Zealand, West Papuans struggle to find a balance between the laws of Indonesia and the customary law which has governed the lives of ordinary Papuans for many thousands of years, and between the rights of the indigenous Papuans and those of the increasing number of migrants who now make Papua their home.

Whether these tensions can be resolved is not helped by the heavy militarisation of Papua, meaning that conflicts, where they occur, tend to be solved by muskets and not by dialogue.

Many Papuans while remaining hopeful, are not optimistic that the situation will improve soon. They call for peace, with the church loud among these voices, and for a withdrawal of the large military presence stationed there. But the outside world is largely silent, perhaps unwilling to damage sensitive relations with Indonesia. Or perhaps, we in New Zealand are aware of the shaky ground on which we ourselves stand. ■

Whitby Abbey

The Abbess who prevented a schism in the Church

Joan Firth

My favourite place in all the world is Whitby, a fishing town in north Yorkshire, England. Its name dates from the Viking invasions of England in the tenth century. It means 'Hviti's village' or 'farm'. A good many place names in the north-east of England end in '-by'. Before the Vikings came, it had an Anglo-Saxon name, Streanaeshhealh. This place is mentioned in the Venerable Bede's *History of the English Church and people*.

When I was a child my family used to go there, year after year, for our annual week's holiday in August. Sometimes we children went in the sea, but it was always very cold. Since I came from the north of England to live in the south of New Zealand, I have never experienced a warm sea.

The mouth of Whitby harbour faces north and so the town has an east and a west cliff, on either side of the estuary of the River Esk. The most interesting thing to a New Zealander on the west cliff is a statue of Captain Cook on a tall pedestal (*right*) poised right on the edge, giving a landmark to ships at sea. On the side of the pedestal is a plaque presented by the people of New Zealand when the statue was put up. Captain James Cook was born in 1728, and although he was not born in Whitby, he lived there while he studied seamanship. He set sail on his voyage to New Zealand from Whitby, in the *Endeavour*, a converted Whitby collier – a shallow-draughted vessel for carrying coal down the coast.

The east side of the town is old Whitby, with an 18th century market-place, quaint, crooked houses, and an old stone jetty pre-dating the two present piers. If you continue to walk through the old town, you come to a flight of 199 stone steps. (It's true! I have counted them many a time). Parallel to them is a steep cobbled street, for donkeys to use, and indeed for as long as I can remember there were donkeys in a field at the top. And up there at the top is Whitby Abbey, the oldest place of all. The ruins of the abbey on the clifftop dominate the town.

An abbey was first founded in Whitby in 657, under King Oswy of Northumbria. It was a double monastery, for both men and women, and was founded and governed by an abbess, St Hild – or Hilda (614 to 680). It was a great centre of learning, especially the study of sacred scripture. The arts and sciences too were so well established by her that it was regarded as one of the best seminaries for learning in the then known world. No less than five of her subject monks later became bishops, including St Wilfred of York.

She was especially revered for her ability to recognise spiritual gifts in both men and women. Her kindheartedness can be seen from the story of Caedmon, a famous Anglo-Saxon poet, who was one of her herdsmen. His poetic gift was discovered and nurtured by Hilda; she encouraged him with the same zeal and care she would use toward a member of the nobility, urging him to use his gifts as a means of bringing the knowledge of the Gospel truth to

common folk. He was invited by her to join the monastery.

The Venerable Bede reports that Caedmon had a vision in which he was told to "sing of the beginning of created things". In modern English it begins:

Now must we praise the Guardian of heaven.
The power and conception of the Lord,
And all His works, as He, eternal Lord,
Father of glory, started every wonder.
First He created heaven as a roof,
The holy Maker, for the sons of men.
Then the eternal Keeper of mankind
Furnished the earth below, the land for men,
Almighty God and everlasting Lord.

There is a Celtic cross to his memory on this windswept cliff.

Hilda is especially famous for hosting the *Synod of Whitby* in 664. This was a debate between Celtic and Roman Christianity. After Emperor Constantine made the Roman Empire Christian, Christianity flourished in Britain for the next two centuries, until the invasion of Angles and Saxons caused the Britons to flee to the west, taking their Christianity with them. St Patrick was one, and he took Christianity to Ireland where it spread rapidly. There it gathered its characteristics, such as scholarship and a fierce asceticism. Celtic monks produced beautifully illuminated books such as the Book of Kells. They were vigorous and energetic with a spontaneous passion.

The Roman party at the Synod had its origins in a mission sent by Pope Gregory I – Gregory the Great. He is said to have seen fair-haired slave boys for sale in the market, and on being told they were Angles from Britain, he said: "Not Angles, but angels". So he determined to send missionaries to convert Britain back again to Christianity. Gregory's style of Christianity was rigid and orderly. He composed a textbook for the training of priests. His idea of the church was based on dioceses, with the most important person being the bishop. His monks followed the Benedictine rule, taking a vow of stability – being loyal to one monastery for life. St Benedict said that wandering was bad for a monk's soul!.

These two quite contrasting versions of Christianity met at Whitby. We are told the Celts were quite indignant at this proposed takeover by the Romans, that the Roman representative was rude and arrogant, and that the debate was violent and long-drawn-out. There is not much recorded of the details, except that they had different methods for determining the date of Easter and therefore celebrated Holy Week at different times. Colman, the Celtic representative, insisted that their way had been handed down from St John the Evangelist. There was also a question of the shape of monks' tonsure, which doesn't seem to us to be a huge issue. Roman monks shaved the centre of their heads, leaving a circle of hair which represented Jesus' crown of thorns. The Celtic monks shaved a strip from ear to ear, which may have been copied from the Druids. The Romans said it was Satanic.

Eventually King Oswy, the chairman, stepped in, and asked Colman whether or not our Lord gave St Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and Colman had to concede that he did. And so the

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A place of interest in Whitby is the shop of the famous 19th Century photographer, Frank Sutcliffe. The photograph of Whitby Abbey as well as all the Whitby scenes above are prints from Sutcliffe's original plates.

Reflecting on Matthew

Susan Smith

Jesus' important teaching on the Reign/Kingdom of God occurs halfway through his public ministry in the great parable discourse located in his thirteenth chapter. Jesus' parables are concerned with the coming of the Reign of God which Jesus sees as having a 'here and now' significance as well as an eschatological or 'end of time' importance.

Matt 13 begins with the well known story of the sower going to sow the seed. It is a parable that serves as a useful tool for examining ourselves, for examining who was who in first century Palestine, and for helping us to understand better church and society in our own age. That Jesus explains this parable, found in all three synoptic gospels and in the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas, signifies its importance. Such explanations do not follow other parables.

The first seed that Jesus speaks about is the seed that falls on the path and is immediately eaten by the birds of the air. This is commonly thought to refer to the scribes, the Pharisees, the Herodians and the Jerusalem Jews. From their first appearance in the story to the last, they oppose Jesus and they calumniate his powerful word as blasphemy.

For our purposes, the second group is more interesting. This is the seed that falls on rocky ground, where it does not have much soil. It springs up quickly but soon scorches and withers away. This verse serves as a pointed criticism of the twelve. In particular it is probably a reference to the first four who were chosen – Peter and Andrew, James and John. Halfway through the gospel, Peter, James and John are privileged to be witnesses to the Transfiguration. Later when the going gets tough, they desert Jesus in the garden. They are surely rocky ground and one could be forgiven for wondering if the gospel writer does not intend a pun on the word "rocky." As Catholics we hear much about the rock on which the church is built, but the seed that falls on rocky ground does not survive. Finally we hear about the soil in which the seeds are choked by thorns, which symbolise "the cares of the world and lures of wealth". This surely refers to the rich young man about whom we read in Matt 19. Like Peter and his companions, he is called but cannot respond to Jesus' invitation.

So who are the good seed? Raymond Brown rightly suggests that Mary is the one in whom the seed brings forth grain a hundredfold. It is also possible to argue that women disciples who faithfully follow Jesus to Jerusalem, who are there at the crucifixion, who are the first witnesses to and apostles of the resurrection are those in whom the seed bears fruit sixty and thirty fold. Today this parable can be understood as a resounding affirmation of women's faithful and usually unacknowledged ministry in our church, and perhaps too a wakeup call for leaders in church and society. ■

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Celts gave in and the Celtic church was unified with the Roman.

Hilda was a strong supporter of the Celtic party. Nevertheless, once the *Synod of Whitby* decided to observe the Roman rule and customs, Hilda used her moderating influence in favour of its peaceful acceptance. Her influence, persuading her followers to adhere to the decision, was one of the key factors in securing unity in the Church thus preventing an acromonious debate becoming a schism.

This famous and successful effort at ecumenism took place under the wing of her hospitality.

The Abbey ruins that are there now are not of that first monastery. The first abbey was destroyed by invading Danes in 867, and there was nothing there but ruins for two centuries. A new monastery was founded in 1078, and this lasted until the monastic orders were dissolved under King Henry VIII (1491-1547). The monks and nuns were turned out of their homes and wandered the countryside in great poverty and hardship. When this happened, some monastic buildings were taken over as stately homes by King Henry's favourites. The buildings were also a quarry of shaped stones for building. Shortly, nothing was left of Whitby Abbey but ruins again. Now it is a tourist attraction.

Between the two dark cliffs of Whitby the old harbour lies cuddled, where the fishing boats tie up in thick green water. As children we used to hang about on the quayside, watching them unload fish and live lobsters, and sell them to wholesalers with waiting lorries. Some evenings we watched the fishing-boats go out, tossing and bobbing, so frail in the enormous strength of the sea. They were painted wooden boats, with hopeful names, like *Morning Star* and *Resolution* (the name of another of Captain Cook's ships).

Which brings me back to the 21st century. Tucked into a narrow street in the modern part of the town is the Catholic church, dedicated, naturally, to St Hilda. And here in New Zealand I still see Whitby occasionally, in the television series *Heartbeat*, which is set in north Yorkshire. It sometimes makes me so homesick for my favourite place. ■

An interim verdict on John Paul II

The Pontiff In Winter: Triumph and Conflict in the Reign of John Paul II.
John Cornwell
Doubleday USA 2004
ISBN 0-385-51484-0
Review: Anna Holmes

This is not, the author claims, a biography, but a comment on the reign of John Paul II as it drew to a close. It shows a man who, from his earliest days was schooled in survival and fortitude. His sister and mother both died by the time he was nine. His father coped with loss by praying. His much loved brother died a painful death when he was twelve. He responded by saying "It is God's will". He was 21 when he found his father dead.

He lived in a community steeped in traditional Marian piety with shrines to Our Lady and festivals in her honour very much part of his childhood. His Marian devotion continued with visits to Fatima and Lourdes and his conviction that Our Lady of Fatima saved him from an assassin's bullet in 1985. He also believed that the third 'secret' of Fatima referred to him.

He was at Krakow university studying the literature, drama and history of Poland when the Nazis invaded. Poland lost 2500 priests and 5 bishops in the war. Priesthood was, therefore, for him both heroic and self-sacrificing. After his father died he entered a clandestine seminary. Ordained in 1946, he was immediately sent to Rome to study.

His supervisor at the Angelicum was Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, a conservative known as 'The Rigid', who believed that the orthodox source of all theology and philosophy in the church was Thomas Aquinas. He was in a savage battle with all who suggested that the church needed theology more in touch with the modern world, including many who would influence Vatican II. Fr Wojtyla did not get his Roman Doctorate because he refused to rewrite his thesis in line with Thomist limits. While in Rome he visited Padre Pio, a famous mystic, who told him he would have the highest post in the church. John Paul beatified Padre Pio in1999.

On returning to Poland he was assigned to a rural parish. He modelled himself on the Cure d'Ars and kissed the ground of his parish each time he entered it. After eight months he was recalled to Krakow to work as chaplain to students. He also continued his interest in theatre, and published poetry and prose in the Catholic newspaper. He enrolled for a second doctorate on the ethics of the human person. For this he studied the works of Max Scheler, whose proposals rested on reflective and subjective experience in total contrast to the detached logic of Thomas Aquinas.

Appointed auxiliary Bishop of Krakow in 1958, in 1959 attended the second Vatican Council. Five of his interventions were about freedom of conscience, including the statement "Let us avoid moralizing, or suggesting we have a monopoly of truth".

For all his ordained life until elected Pope, Wojtyla lived under oppression from the Communist government. He was a stout defender of human freedom. In his first speech after his election he spoke of collegiality five times. Yet as his papacy proceeded, he was fearful of freedom and change and responsible for suppressing debate over a number of issues – the most striking being Liberation Theology and women's place in the church. He maintained that he alone had the right to appoint bishops and appointed a number who then had to be removed. He firmly believed in a monarchical rather than collegial model of church.

He was always a man of contradictions. He tried to make sense of both Aquinas and Scheler, one logical and objective and the other subjective and personal. He was also described as a mystic. He tried to maintain both a God who is always present and a papacy that needs to be in control. He canonised and beatified more people in his reign than all the preceding popes together.

He believed passionately in free will as the basis of true humanity, yet allowed the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) to demand internal assent for non-infallible doctrine. He had seen and experienced oppression in the name of orthodoxy while in Rome. He set the Eastern European countries free from communism but tried to bind the local churches to a Roman model. He believed all humans were on a journey, yet caused many to leave the church as a result of his rigid teaching about marriage and sexuality. He wrote high-flown praise of women but tried to claim their exclusion from ordained ministry forever. He claimed solidarity with the poor and marginalized but suppressed theologians who might be influenced by Marxism in their questioning of unjust systems. He did not respond rapidly enough to the scandals of sexual abuse.

He removed a number of people who were working for the most marginalised, both in South America and in the USA where those working with gay people were targeted. He made considerable headway with ecumenical developments and then allowed the publication of a document form the CDF that undid thirty years of work.

He had tremendous presence and presented himself as if he was the church. If you are interested in the papacy, read this book. It gives a broad look at the quarter century of John Paul II's reign. He was a remarkable human being and a man limited by his history and culture. ■

Fiction masquerading as fact

The Da Vinci Code
by Dan Brown
Corgi books
Price: pbk $24.95
Review: Glynn Cardy

There were three of us sitting in a café talking religion. With me was a woman whose child I had baptized, and a fellow who painted portraits. Neither was particularly enamoured with the institutional church. Spirituality, however, was another matter.

The conversation drifted to Dan Brown and his murder-mystery novel, *The Da Vinci Code*. "I like how he makes Jesus accessible," said Amelia. "I can relate far more to a Jesus who was married and had kids than a Jesus wrapped in piety and divine purpose." The portrait artist added, "I liked the tourist guide through European churches and galleries."

The Da Vinci Code opens with the grisly murder of the Louvre's curator. The crime enmeshes hero Robert Langdon, a professor of symbolism, and the victim's granddaughter, cryptologist Sophie Nevue. Together with millionaire historian Leigh Teabing, they flee Paris for London one step ahead of the police and a mad Opus Dei monk named Silas who will stop at nothing to prevent them. Spliced into the action are snippets of history, codes, mysteries, and conspiracies.

I read it at the beach last year, murder-mystery being one of the genres I save for holidays. I found it entertaining, at times a bit of a groan, but generally enjoyable. It also made for good post-dinner conversation with fellow readers.

I'm not an academic, though I have collected a few degrees in my time. I knew enough to pick up some of Brown's more obvious pseudo-historical leaps into fantasy. University degrees can help you develop a 'bullshit detector'.

Two problems. Firstly, if you know Brown has made an error in one thing, how reliable is everything else? Secondly, the book – whilst fiction – gives the impression when it comes to history, art, and architecture, it is relating fact. That's as spurious as saying Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 911* is a documentary. Brown, like Moore, twists his facts to fit his thesis. Never let historical accuracy get in the way of decent fiction! The problem arises when his readership does not have the knowledge to distinguish between the two.

Let me give an example: Jesus' being unmarried. Brown states that Jewish men were expected to marry and celibacy was condemned. Therefore Jesus must have been married. Brown uses two of the Gnostic gospels, those of *Philip* and *Mary*, to support his thesis.

The *Gospel of Philip*, however, is a compilation of Gnostic sayings written maybe as late as the 2nd half of the 3rd century (the canonical gospels having been compiled before 120 CE).

The *Gospel of Mary*, likewise Gnostic, was written sometime in the 2nd century and contains no reference to Jesus being married. One has to do some mind-leaps from "love" to "sexual love" to "marriage" to support Brown's thesis.

On the other hand, we know of Jewish men from the time and place of Jesus who were single and not condemned for it. One group, for example, was the Essenes who were predominantly single, celibate men. The Essenes were 'the-world-is-coming-to-an-end' types, not too dissimilar to some of the thinking amongst the *Jesus* movement.

"Sorry Amelia, no reputable scholar supports the thesis that Jesus was married."

I think *The Da Vinci Code* is trying to create a Jesus that is palatable to our 21st century understandings of humanity and spirituality. In order to promote his new improved Jesus, Brown criticizes the church, the Roman Catholic variety in particular, as distorters of the true Jesus.

Now, I have some sympathy with Brown. The Christian God is packaged and promoted in a male guise. The deity has been gendered for a long time, and trying to change that is extremely hard work. I think movements, like *Wicca,* in promoting the divinity as masculine and feminine in balance, are helpful in broadening our thinking.

Church leadership is similarly male. Look at the Lambeth line up, let alone the Vatican, and play spot the woman. The power structure of the church is very male. There is reputable research that in the early days of the *Jesus* movement women were in significant leadership positions.

Brown is correct in saying that Mary Magdalene, one of the great leaders of the *Jesus* movement, had her reputation unjustly sullied. It's just that Brown gets the details wrong.

Let me explain. In *The Da Vinci Code* Mary is no penitent prostitute but Christ's royal consort and the intended head of his church. She is supplanted, though, by Peter and defamed by church men. She flees west with her offspring to Provence.

Brown is correct in that nothing in the New Testament says Mary was a prostitute. Although she is confused in some people's minds with the sinful (sic) woman who anointed Jesus' feet and with Mary of Bethany, the Eastern Church has always kept the three woman separate and said that Mary Magdalene was the "apostle to the apostles" and died in Ephesus. It was Pope Gregory the Great in the sixth

century who gave a sermon in which he characterized Mary Magdalene as a harlot.

It is unsubstantiated conjecture that Peter supplanted her. There have been, however, over the centuries repeated attempts to deny the leadership of women in the *Jesus* movement. The legend of Mary's voyage to Provence is no earlier than the ninth century, and her relics weren't reported there until the 13th. A groundbreaking book was *In Memory Of Her* by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, 1983.

This mingling of fact and fiction is rife throughout Brown's book and would make any academic cringe.

In my café conversation I try to express my disquiet around these issues. I am though thankful to Brown that the conversation is happening at all. In a bygone age the censorship brigade would have prevented such ideas about theology and history even being circulated and discussed. I also think the church, in entering the conversations generated by *The Da Vinci Code*, needs to honestly confront its own theological shortcomings – including the gap between 21st century spirituality and what is publicly offered by mainstream religion. ■

Becoming alert to God's presence

The Sacred Art of Listening
Forty reflections for cultivating a spiritual practice
Kay Lindahl
Wild Goose Publications
Review: Sue McGregor, PBVM

I was talking when I noticed the book *The Sacred Art of Listening* and I was probably still talking when I picked it up and started flicking through it. The circles caught my attention – unusual and powerful illustrations by Amy Schnapper. They complement each of the 40 meditations of listening as a sacred practice. Kay Lindahl, (founder of the Listening Centre) leads the reader from Silence to Reflection and into Sacred Presence. She does this by vignettes of her own life's experiences and observations, drawing the reader to listen to the presence of God in all of life.

This is a book to be picked up at any time, at any chapter. What Kay does with words, Amy echoes with mandala illustrations and the reader is invited to continue in contemplation.

I am enjoying this book – hopefully becoming a little more aware, perhaps more observant of my responses to myself and others, in behaviour and in attitude. This work is "Dedicated to the flow of the Spirit through all forms of art, and to the possibility of Listening as a key to Peace in the world".

I recommend the *Sacred Art of Listening* as a wonder-filled treasure to read and to be led to an inner place of prayer. ■

Israel behaves like a robber State

The *World Council of Churches* (WCC) has issued an open letter on the status of Jerusalem, condemning the government of Israel for cutting off the holy city from the West Bank by the addition of 3,500 illegal Jewish houses. This will deny any hope of a contiguous Palestinian State. Yet again, Israel contravenes international law and the directives from the International Court of Justice. How long will the world continue to ignore the plight of the Palestinian people?

One third of the Palestinians already live in exile or live as refugees, in terrible conditions, with no citizens' rights. By this latest move they will be effectively denied access to Jerusalem, they will be surrounded by an ever-growing wall of separation and subjected to further harassment both by Israeli settlers and the Israeli government.

These contraventions to the now-defunct road map further undermine Israel's legitimacy. The definition of Israel as a Jewish state is based on expelling Palestinians and depriving them of equal rights to common land, which are reserved for 'real Israelis' – Jews. From a moral and legal standpoint the status of Israel must be based on coexistence with the Palestinians, whom they are displacing by every possible means. Yet the world, and in particular, the United States, turns a blind eye.

On another visit to the George W. Bush ranch in Texas, Ariel Sharon was mildly rebuked but received tacit approval for the linking of Maale Adumin to Jerusalem. Silvan Shalom, Israel's foreign minister, put it succinctly when he said, "This issue should not be dealt with in the media but in a quiet way between us and the Americans."

There is not the slightest consideration for the Palestinians. The arrogance of the Israeli government is only matched by the unbelievable complicity of the Bush administration. The persecution of the Palestinians will continue. With American support, Israel has consistently and blatantly flouted UN resolutions demanding that it withdraw from illegally held land.

Crosscurrents
John Honoré

Last month, the United Nations Commission for Human Rights adopted three resolutions condemning Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestine and the Syrian Golan Heights and Israel's abuses of the human rights of Palestinians in occupied Arab lands.

Washington's unconditional support for Israel is becoming so blatant and unjust that the rest of the world no longer believes in America as the honest broker. American backing for Sharon's settlement project destroys the possibility of a Palestinian state and subjects Israel to perpetual conflict. WCC has expressed powerful support for oppressed Palestine. Public opinion must make this cause universal and questions must be asked about the continuing massive support given to Israel by the United States. Because of this, Israel can continue its encroachment into Palestine.

Tiger Turia poised (to spring)

It must be election year. Helen Clark, reeling from the slings and arrows of outrageous abuse hurled by John Tamihere, is back to her conciliatory, smiling best. Despite Tamihere calling various Labour MPs "tossers", "queers" and accusing her of having "butch" advisers, he is still a Labour MP. Game, set and match to Tamihere, but how can that be? In a less than brilliant line-up of Maori MPs, John Tamihere is the best bet to maintain the Labour stranglehold on the seven Maori seats. He is popular, outspoken, intelligent and perhaps even charismatic. He must remain in the fold.

The horror for Helen Clark is that Tamihere might be voicing the opinion of a lot of knuckle-headed 'blokes' who have popped their heads out of the scrum and want a change. A change from a Labour Party which, in part, due to a lack of opposition, is in constant cruise mode, promising a lot and dismissive of any criticism. Another concern for the Labour Party is the smile on the face of an unlikely tigress – Tariana Turia.

Helen Clark cannot afford to expel John Tamihere. In the climate of MMP, the Maori Party is beautifully positioned to take advantage of any political fall-out attributable to the demise of one of Maoridom's favourite sons. In some respects, John Tamihere is the proverbial loose cannon. Had he been expelled, a prepaid Turia taxi would have been at his door in a flash.
The Labour Party is losing the Maori vote, and the Maori Party can now play subtle tunes on the MMP bandwagon. All the incumbent Maori Labour MPs have a fight on their hands. This is the strength of the MMP system – it is a pity that the National Party has not yet learned to play.

There is also a small feeling amongst voters that Tamihere might have exposed the existence of unrest in the Labour caucus, a dissatisfaction with the autocratic rule of the Prime Minister, the unshakeable policies of Michael Cullen, and the domination of the small coterie of front benchers. Who ever hears from those blokes on the back benches?

Honoré misses the cut

It is with regret that I have to inform readers that Cardinal Jean Honoré, Archbishop of Tours, has missed the cut for the papacy. When informed – or so we hear from a hitherto unimpeachable source – that at 84 he was no longer even eligible to vote, he got very upset, threatened the man with his zimmer, and declared that he would not accept the post, even if it were offered. ■

Benedict XVI – watch this space!

Cardinal Josef Ratzinger had no sooner undergone a name change and become Pope Benedict XVI than discussion erupted as to what would be the tone of his pontificate. Clearly he would be carrying on closely in the footsteps of his predecessor, John Paul II. Doctrinal purity would be a priority. But what would be the overall pattern of his pontificate ? Would things be set in stone, as many feared. Or would the openness that he signaled in his very first address have a real meaning.

Much has been written and argued on such issues. But it seems worthwhile to draw on a source that may well in the welter of words have been overlooked.

Cardinal James Stafford, the American Cardinal who heads the Sacred Penitentiary, a section of the Roman Curia, stood in for the late Holy Father and conducted this year's Good Friday liturgy in St Peter's. After the event, he told Vatican reporter John L.Allen that he tried to put himself imaginatively into the Pope's mind and prayer.

"I thought about the concerns of the Holy Father over the last year, how he would have approached this. He's been concerned about the abuse of power by secular states, the challenges in central Africa, in southern Sudan, the problem of AIDS in Africa, the inability of states to intervene in these problems in a way that would bring about dramatic change. He's worried about the abuse of power in the form of torture, that states are using torture as an instrument of power. He's concerned with the destruction of civilian populations. All of that came to focus in my mind."

Few would be in a better position than Stafford to know the mind of the late pontiff. If the Cardinal's reading of John Paul's mind was correct, the Pope's deepest concerns were not about churchy matters. Not that he would have dismissed these as unimportant. But they were not his greatest concerns. He was concerned about justice right across the world, and the right of those who cannot speak up effectively on their own behalf to have the followers of Christ do so for them. Human beings did not have to be Christians to attract his solicitude. Made in God's image, all men and women possessed rights that needed to be proclaimed and defended.

No one would not want to underrate the importance of in-house church matters. Such issues as the ordination of women, the admission of the divorced and remarried to the sacraments, the place that those of diverse sexual ordination should be accorded in the Church, touch many Catholics deeply and personally. The easing of pain and the righting of wrongs must not be delayed.

But this is not all to which the new pontiff will have to give attention. The Cardinal's reconstruction of John Paul's Good Friday sentiments may help us to form a better judgment as to what will the late Pope's legacy be, given that all agree Benedict XVI will endeavour to follow in his footsteps.

Benedict XVI may not prove to be utterly a second Oscar Romero, brought to a complete change of mind by the issues he has to face. He is hardly going to so disenchant ardent conservatives that one of them will shoot him down at the altar. On the contrary, we can be fairly sure that our new Pope is not going to be all that liberals would wish for. But the realities of the papal office may lead him much further in their direction than many would have anticipated. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

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

Jamie Oliver – chef turned social reformer

The cleverest piece of public health education we've had in many years", says a dietitian, – not referring to a book, a lecture series, or a campaign by Britain's Ministry of Health, but to *Jamie's School Dinners* – a television series by Jamie Oliver (the Naked Chef).

Since the time of the Great Depression, lunches have been provided each day for British school pupils. The standard of food was never very high but it dropped dramatically with Margaret Thatcher's privatisation policies. Profit-driven, competing catering companies served up cheap, child-friendly food that has produced untold problems of obesity and diet-related illnesses.

In what reviewers call a remarkable Channel 4 series, Oliver sets out to persuade schools, parents (and the government) to replace the processed, ready-made junk the students are used to eating, with fresh, tasty, nutritious food.

'TV has rarely been scarier than this," wrote one reviewer. He was referring to the ghastly burgers, chips and "Turkey Twizzlers" that were being served.. " The horror of it all hits home early in this first episode", he notes, "when Oliver shows schoolkids a bunch of celery and asks them what it is. Not a single kid knows."

Jamie exposes what the young people are eating and then demonstrates healthy and easy-to-prepare alternatives. Introducing children to new, healthy food, he had first to re-educate their palates (one child throws up at the first taste of a nutritious serving). With his natural enthusiasm, he appeals to the children's curiosity, showing them how fresh produce is grown and prepared and then letting them loose in the kitchen for some hands-on food preparation.

The results of the series have been quite dramatic. A study by a private medical insurance company revealed that a quarter of the adults who saw the programme have changed their eating habits, and have a much better attitude to nutrition.

The *Guardian* published a photograph of Jamie having breakfast with Prime Minister, Tony Blair, after delivering a 271,000-signature petition for a *Feed Me Better* campaign, which he organised in conjunction with his TV series. Shortly before this meeting, Education Secretary Ruth Kelly announced an extra £280 million for school meals. (She had "not been influenced by the TV chef." she insisted!)

Viewers in this part of the world have seen Jamie Oliver's series on teaching a group of unemployable youth to run a restaurant. It seems that this new series is just as frustrating and draining for the young man. One can only admire his dedication in helping improve the expectations and health awareness of millions of children, as well as adult viewers. This sounds like reality television at its best.

Watch for *Jamie's School Dinners* when it comes to our screens – and watch the Queen's Birthday Honours' list! ■

Jim Neilan