

# Tui Motu

InterIslands

monthly independent Catholic magazine

August 2015 | \$7



Independent Catholic Press

# a questioning searching journey

The figure striding in the universe spanning Earth and space in a sweeping coat and shining figurenails on the navy cover is an image of creating God. (You are excused for mistaking it for Mary in this month of the feast of the Assumption.) I first chose the painting as an image of Mary before changing my mind after reading Elizabeth Johnson's new book, *Abounding in Kindness*.

We speak of, see images of, think of and address God in male terms almost exclusively. We seldom see God portrayed as woman as on our cover, and we never hear God addressed as woman in our liturgies. Such is the strength of our patriarchal church's tradition that when we hear: "Queen of Heaven" and "Mother of Earth", we don't recognise God. Some even believe in the depths of their hearts that portraying God in womanly images is to disparage God. Yet all the qualities of God we experience we find distributed also among women as among men — who are made with the same human dignity in the image of God. So this cover is an invitation to reconsider our prejudices

of an exclusively manly God and to risk exploring divine graciousness in other images.

The main theme of this issue delves into the vision, hopes, risks and responsibilities of an independent Catholic press. We've reprinted a section of Michael Hill's first *Tui Motu* editorial — nearly 200 issues ago — where he writes that our magazine is "for adults whose faith is a questioning, searching journey".

The editors of two world-renowned Catholic papers, *The Tablet* 175 years old and the *National Catholic Recorder* 50 years old, reflect on their roles in print media in church and society. And Daniel O'Leary highlights the process of the independent Catholic magazine's search for truth. These writers acknowledge the foresight of the founders in giving us an independent voice — especially in the current climate when our daily newspapers are struggling with political interference and journalistic limitations. We have a reputation and a trust to uphold.

Other articles in this issue feature themes close to the Catholic heart — of social and economic justice. From

her experience in a budgeting service Susan Smith outlines the rocky road of families whose income is stretched to breaking point. Patrick Snedden provides further analysis of the Auckland housing situation and foreshadows his recommendations of partnership-forming in his next article. There is also an account of the toll on our children exploited for sex work in our cities — and suggestions towards stopping it.

We have young voices too. Louise Carr-Neill reflects on her work in international development and the religious questions it has raised for her. And Sarah Atkinson takes readers on a faith journey in the story of the universe.

These and more, along with the contributions of our regular writers and of the artists, make the August issue. We are grateful for each contribution. And as is our practice we give you this magazine with our blessing.



## contents

<b>Editorial</b> .....	2	<b>Attracting not preaching</b> .....	18–19
<b>Guest editorial: All black and bland</b> .....	3	BRIDGET TAUMOEPEAU	
GRAHAM-MICHOEL WILLS		<b>An ecological reading of the gospel of Mark (part seven)</b> .....	20–21
<b>Letters to the editor</b> .....	4	ELAINE WAINWRIGHT	
<b>Editorial, TM issue 1, Sept 1997</b> .....	4	<b>Cherish and protect our children</b> .....	22–23
MICHAEL HILL		ANN L. GILROY	
<b>Rocky road not rock star economy</b> .....	5	<b>Story of the universe</b> .....	24–25
SUSAN SMITH RNDM		SARAH ATKINSON	
<b>Let us discuss</b> .....	6–7	<b>"I am the bread of life"</b> .....	26–27
DENIS CODAY		KATHLEEN RUSHTON	
<b>Dialogue and faith at the centre</b> .....	8–9	<b>Book and film reviews</b> .....	28–29
CATHERINE PEPINSTER		<b>Crosscurrents</b> .....	30
<b>Furrows for the seeds of truth</b> .....	10–11	JIM ELLISTON	
DANIEL O'LEARY		<b>JFK killed for peacemaking</b> .....	31
<b>Poem: The learning tree</b> .....	11	ROBERT CONSEDINE	
ANNE POWELL		<b>A mother's journal</b> .....	32
<b>Tales of (trying to) work in international development</b> .....	12–13	KAAREN MATHIAS	
LOUISE CARR-NEILL			
<b>Disrupting the housing market</b> .....	14–15		
PATRICK SNEDDEN			
<b>Poem: Waterfall</b> .....	16–17		
JENNY BLOOD			

**Cover illustration:** Painting *Queen of Heaven Mother of Earth* by Bro Mickey O'Neill McGrath osfs.  
<http://bromickeymcgrath.com>  
<http://clearfaithpublishing.com/beestill/>

# all black and bland

Graham-Michael Wills

In recent years a great deal has been written about the new liturgies and formats of the Missal, some of it complimentary, some of it not. Both Catholics and Anglicans continue to sort through the melee that followed Vatican II with mixed agendas and a massive assortment of ideas, feelings, freedoms and, at times, disappointments. Where has the past half-century been leading both churches — indeed, where are we now?

Seated in a Catholic church in Wellington recently, I pondered the surroundings. It was clearly a house of prayer as indicated by the devotion of the quite elderly congregation gathered that day.

My eyes wandered over pale brick, white paintwork and blond oak. Underfoot a nondescript grey carpet led to a sanctuary almost devoid of colour. The Stations of the Cross were so uninspiring they melded into the brickwork. It was hard to recognise them as anything other than period wall plaques of no real motivation or encouragement. There were only two hints of colour — a tabernacle cover of a shade so dark it too fused into the background and a bright portrait of the patron saint of the parish, tucked away almost hidden from view.

It occurred to me that I could have been sitting in a non-Conformist chapel. Perhaps things would lighten and brighten when the Mass began. Certainly the priest gave a very warm welcome — but the vestments he wore for Ordinary Time were just as bland as the rest of the building. They were a muted green reminiscent of the paint of state institutions of 30 years ago. The people too were dressed in varying shades of black or grey. To me the whole effect reflected a dumbing down of the liturgy and worship, sacred song and vocabulary and a loss of the sense and excitement of Vatican II's liturgical revival.

Many Christians today don't feel a fully-fledged connection with God. It is for them as if God has been on vacation for too long to provoke any conscious passions in them. If you would attempt to rob them of their subconscious bond with God, would they fight till their last breaths? If you were to demand they stop calling themselves Christian, would they be perturbed to the very core of their souls?

Our conscious heart may feel detached from God — but God is one with us. The colourless worship of many churches simply does not encourage a deeper, emotional connection. While I admire the desire to keep the sung Evensong

going in some Anglican churches I also wonder if its beauty really brings people into communion with God.

Has our New Zealand psyche turned dark? Have we become so All Black, and Black Cap — or even All White — that we are now failing to celebrate freshness, colour and emotion in our liturgies? Will we allow the richness and beauty of Samoan and Tongan worship to influence our mainly European Christian heritage? I believe the overall lack of richness — art, colour, poetry and music — in our churches and liturgies is moving our culture more deeply into a colourless assembly-line suited only to the consumer society.

Can we not look around us and drink in the staggering beauty within this remarkable land? Maybe the answer might be for our national rugby team to reflect this amazing place Aotearoa New Zealand and become the "All Greens". That could be a start. Though better still, let the God of Creation into every church building to spread a rainbow bouncing off the walls and out through the doors. ■

*Br Graham-Michael Wills SH is an Anglican contemplative religious living in Wellington.*



**Tui Motu**  
InterIslands

ISSN 1174-8931  
Issue number 196

*Tui Motu – InterIslands* is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed.

The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

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

**phone:** (03) 477 1449

**email:** editor@tuimotu.org

**email for subscriptions:** admin@tuimotu.org

**website:** www.tuimotu.org



TuiMotuInterIslands

**editor:** Ann L Gilroy RSJ

**assistant editor:** Elizabeth Mackie OP

**typesetting and layout:** Greg Hings

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

**board directors:** Neil Darragh (chair), Rita Cahill RSJ, Philip Casey, Paul Ferris, Elizabeth Mackie OP, David Mullin, Kevin Toomey OP

**honorary directors:** Pauline O'Regan RSM, Frank Hoffmann



## subscriptions are *Tui Motu's* life-blood

Sharing interesting reading with friends is a good practice especially for those fat periodicals many pages thick as it saves paper, printing cost and postage. But I like to encourage regular borrowers of *Tui Motu* to take out a subscription. This prize-winning magazine has much to offer every month and keeps going only through the generous contribution of a number of unpaid volunteers and a cost-conscious management.

I am not familiar with its financial position but would guess that an increase in subscriptions would help to lift the shadow of not being able to continue giving us the monthly fare of the cream from its regular contributors as well as a selection from the widest range of opinion.

As a regular reader for many years I am anticipating with pleasure its monthly arrival in my letter box.

Frank Hoffmann, Papakura

## invitation to move on

The strong and almost fortress-like views towards other faiths of Val Southcombe in her *Letter to the Editor* in the July issue concern me. These are indicative of most of the Church prior to Vatican II and totally different from the proclamations and encyclicals of Pope Francis.

May I suggest she read the

authorised biography of Pope Francis by Austen Ivereigh. Then she could say "*Vale*" to entrenched thinking.

Denis Power, Christchurch

## keeping us informed

I thought your June issue was brilliant. I have always been interested to know what other peoples' beliefs are and the articles in that issue were very well written and interesting.

Also, I appreciate the way each magazine of late deals with an important issue. Thank you for keeping us so well informed.

Rosemary Lamb, Timaru

## text and art enhance each other

I read Ann Zubrick's article (*TM* July 2015) and it's wonderful! No wonder you wanted to use Kim Novak's painting "They Left Laughing" to accompany it. I have forwarded the article to her and will let you know if she has any comments. I have a strong feeling she will enjoy and appreciate it. Thank you so much.

Hannah West, Oregon, USA

(Kim Novak's agent)

## image holding our gaze

I received my July copy of *Tui Motu* and was delighted. I think Mary Horn's image of Wisdom is profound ("Harnessing energies of Love" p.25). I gazed at it for what can only be called

## letters to the editor

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

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

a mystic moment — the beautiful stillness of the woman who is obviously deep within herself with God. I especially loved Ann Zubrick's article, "Grow where you are planted". I hope I will be able to do that.

Mary Engelbrecht rsj, Perth

## moved to reflection

What a beautifully evocative poem by Michael Fitzsimons in the July issue of *Tui Motu*. I have meditated on the same journey many times since — at home and especially when parked on the South Coast of the North Island as the Inter-Island Ferries pass in the distance, as depicted so well by the artist Christian Nicolson.

June Swain, Wellington

## For adults on a questioning searching journey – Editorial, *TM* issue 1, Sept 1997

On my desk is a heap of really successful religious papers from around the world ... They have one thing in common: They nourish and challenge one's faith.

One aspect common among the quality overseas papers is that they are usually independent. They are not controlled by the church hierarchy nor are they official mouthpieces. That should please those in authority because they don't have to pick up the tab if a publication falters. There is one compelling reason for being an independent voice. It reflects the post-Vatican II church which is a church of adults whose faith is a

questioning, searching journey. The official church defines and guides, but it too is human and needs to be challenged and questioned as well as listened to and supported.

One classic sign of a healthy, free society is the independence of its press; and that is true of church as well as state. And independence allows for a taste of salt in the product. If a paper is to be truly prophetic it must afflict the comfortable as well as comfort the afflicted!

*Tui Motu InterIslands* is born here from an initiative of the Dominican Sisters and Friars. They have been generously supported financially

by other religious congregations as well as a host of laypeople. These have provided the potting mix. If the mustard seed is to grow it will need to support itself on income, that is, on its circulation. The response of readers is vital — in dialogue with and through the paper, and by promotion.



— Michael Hill

# rocky road not rock star economy

Susan Smith RNDM

Early in 2014, an economist identified New Zealand as a "rock-star economy", but what he perceived as remarkable economic growth has damaging consequences, one of which is the rapidly growing gap between rich and poor. I am a part-time budget adviser in Northland and so am working with people whose experiences of "rock-star economy" tend to be "rocky" rather than "starry" — boulders to trip them, potholes into which they can fall.

It is not uncommon to prepare a weekly budget with sole mothers with two or three children under the age of 12. I am constantly shocked when I ask them how much they spend a week on groceries and learn that they spend whatever money is available after they have paid rent, school costs, energy or car costs. When we see that they have between \$70–80 for groceries, which also includes household items other than food, I am shocked. We hear a lot about beneficiaries ripping off the system and while there are a few instances where this happens, most clients are simply struggling to survive.

The potholes into which they fall include unexpected but necessary expenses like new tyres for the car, sickness, toothache, a court fine because there is not enough money to pay for the car registration, and before you wonder about why they don't use public transport, the system leaves much to be desired in Northland where cars are not a luxury but a necessity.

Rocks on the road include the difficulties in getting credit to pay for unexpected costs. Banks are wary of such clients who then turn to finance companies where the interest rates are scary indeed, and before too long they are significantly in debt. Rocks can also include the different truck stores that you see working in poorer suburbs selling clothing, food or furniture at supposedly "good rates". Their rates are never good and clients sign papers that they do not really understand and before long find they have even more debts to pay off.

This brings me to another reality about people seeking budget advice. Sometimes clients' reading and literacy skills are not so

great and this weakness can be exploited.

For example, I recall being at a seminar for budget advisers and we were asked to read through a document that was being presented to potential car buyers in South Auckland. This document was badly photocopied, in type font 10 and in single-spacing. I usually think of myself as quite a good reader as did the other advisers. None of us had time to finish the document and identify three key points people were signing up to. We all wondered what happened when poorer people for whom English may have been their second language, or people who had issues around literacy and numeracy would make of such a paper. The scary part was that they would sign up to something they really did not understand.

We often hear that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, which is so true. I remember once talking with a client about her vehicle expenses and said that it was great there were good reductions coming up for petrol in the next two days. She pointed out that such cuts applied only if you spent over \$40 to fill your car. She could budget only \$20 per week for petrol. Something similar happens in respect to Christmas clubs in the big supermarkets — if clients could put in \$5 per week it would make a big difference to their Christmas celebrations but usually this is not possible. Limited monies for groceries and lack of good freezers also mean they cannot buy specials and store them for later consumption.

Budget advisory organisations up and down the country are doing a wonderful job but government and government departments want to see the problems of the poor only as the result of their personal inadequacies, not as the consequence of deeply flawed economic and political structures. Until New Zealand's political and economic elites can engage more constructively and innovatively with present structures, the poor will continue to get poorer. ■

*Susan Smith RNDM is a budget adviser in the Whangarei area.*





# let us discuss

*In its golden jubilee year the editor of the National Catholic Reporter, a weekly in the USA, says why it's a great time to be an independent Catholic newspaper.*

Denis Coday

Pope Francis did it again in Paraguay.

On the evening of July 12, surveying the throngs of mainly young people gathered before him, Francis set aside his prepared text. "They wrote a speech for me to give you. But speeches are boring," he said.



Denis Coday, *NCR* editor

Looking into the eyes of thousands, as the cheers rose, he repeated for them in Paraguay a message he delivered to the World Youth Day gathering in Brazil two years earlier: "Make a mess ... A mess which gives us a free heart, a mess which gives us solidarity, a mess which gives us hope."

In *The Great Reformer*, Austen Ivereigh's biography of Pope Francis,

the author says that English-language media mistranslated Francis's words in Rio de Janeiro in July 2013. Francis told the youth "*Quiero lío*," which got translated "I want to create a mess," but should have been rendered "I want havoc."

Ivereigh writes in *The Great Reformer*: "*Hacer lío* has a particular meaning in Argentina, where going out into the streets to bang saucepans and shout at the top of your voice indicates exuberant passion for a cause." Ivereigh is referencing the uniquely Latin American protest called *cacerolazos*, or cooking pot protests, popular demonstrations that have denounced political corruption, economic calamities and neglect of the social contract.

Ivereigh's translation makes sense when one hears the rest of Francis's message to the young people in Paraguay: "We don't want young weaklings. We do not want young people who tire quickly, who live life worn out with faces of boredom. We want youth with hope and strength," Francis told the rally.

I'd like to think that the making of havoc has been the mission of *NCR* since its inception 50 years ago.

## honest reporting

Your editor had asked me "to explore the benefits of an independent press," and that's what I want to do. I do not want to write a puff piece in praise of my one newspaper, but you'll have to indulge me a little. We are marking our 50th anniversary of publication and I have been imbued — and inspired — by the history of our newspaper these recent months.

*NCR* was born out of the Second Vatican Council, coming to life in

the council's third session. A new time was emerging from the council and lay people, already steeped in Catholic culture and love of church and becoming more educated, were beginning to find new places and ways to serve the church. The founders of *NCR* believed that they could use their professional tools as journalists to serve the church.

Everything was up for discussion and *NCR* reported on those discussions in the church — the vernacular Mass and church architecture, the renewal of religious life, pastoral councils and theology schools opening to women religious and laity — and in society — the Vietnam war, independence movements in Africa, poverty and the underclass. The paper always had a bold, distinctive editorial voice, but it earned its early reputation and wide readership not just because of editorials, but by honest reporting on critical issues of the time.

The earliest, biggest controversy *NCR* was embroiled in had to do with the Vatican's birth control commission. People who remember this controversy know that in 1967, *NCR* printed the majority report of the commission, which recommended that Pope Paul VI rescind the church's ban on artificial birth control. Few, it seems, remember that the newspaper also printed the minority report, the recommendation that Paul followed the next year when he issued *Humanae Vitae* and renewed the church's ban. This is what I mean by "honest reporting." The editors then made sure that both sides got equal treatment. For them, the important part was the discussion.

## independence allows discussion

What the editors did at our founding and what we try to do now is allow the discussion to happen. What we have found over the course of 50 years is that this honest discussion can happen only with an independent media outlet. Diocesan and religious order publications can be fettered with official ties. Bishops and superiors can withdraw funds and fire personnel.

Many church people fear discussion, because they fear disagreement. Somehow they have the notion that disagreement is the same as disloyalty. Even in the 1980s as *NCR* began to break news stories on clergy sex abuse, people accused the paper of disloyalty to the church for "airing dirty laundry." As if the rape of a child could be dismissed as "dirty laundry." We know today that it was the persistent reporting by a very few pioneering news outlets including *NCR* that forced church leaders to deal with this vilest of institutional sins.

Those familiar with the *NCR* story cite our reporting (and editorials) that have been critical of bishops and church structures, but I like to remind them that *NCR* has a history of similar critical analysis based on Catholic social teaching of economic systems, racism and militarism. These are the critical issues of our times and we relish a robust discussion on these topics, too.

## need independent catholic voice

This is a great time to be an independent Catholic publication. The upcoming Synod of Bishops on the family could well be a watershed event in the church. It could be as historic as the opening sessions of Vatican II. The synod has a raft of issues that need critical attention: divorce and remarriage, families in difficult situations, single parent families and families of same-sex couples. The church faces

tough questions on these issues. Let's hope they get a full airing. *NCR* is eager to deal with the bold discussions that we hope will come from the synod. We will seek out and report on all sides of the issues.

We feel like we have a well-placed advocate. Pope Francis opened the extraordinary synod last October by telling the synod fathers that they should speak openly and without fear.

"A general condition is this," the pope said. "Speak clearly. Let no one say: 'This you cannot say.' You need

to say all that you feel with *parrhesia*," he said, using the Greek word that means to speak candidly or boldly. "And at the same time," he continued, "you should listen with humility and accept with an open heart what your brothers say."

We'll take that as our marching orders. ■

*Dennis Coday has been editor of National Catholic Reporter in the USA since January 2012. Since 2003 he has served as the newspaper's web editor and managing editor.*



# dialogue and faith at the centre

*The editor of The Tablet celebrating 175 years of publication reflects on the weekly as a forum for progressive and responsible Catholic thinking and discussion.*

Catherine Pepinster

It was about midday on 11 February 2013 and my phone rang. It was a contact in Rome, from a global news corporation. “Catherine, I’m getting word that Pope Benedict has resigned. Have you any idea if this could be true. Popes don’t resign, do they? Don’t they die?”

Good question — but what on earth was going on? It was not something we’d heard about. I called my Rome correspondent who was working in his office at home, about to cycle in to the Vatican. He was as stunned as I was, made calls, and dashed off.

**Our readers are people committed to matters of justice and want to know the role that the Church and people of faith are playing in the world**

This was one of the most dramatic moments I can ever remember in 11 years of editing *The Tablet*. And it was not surprising that Benedict XVI caught me on the hop: he caught everyone on the hop. As he read out his speech in Latin, even the cardinals listening politely couldn’t quite believe what they thought they were translating.

The consequence for *The Tablet* was that we ripped up everything we had planned to do with that week’s edition and started all over again, with analysis, reaction, news stories, pictures, leaders: the edition we sent

to the printers a little over 48 hours later was a Pope Benedict special.

A few weeks later, it was again obvious what the story was: the election of Pope Francis, although in the first edition we produced after his election, we had only three hours to cover it. The following weeks gave us the time and space for more considered coverage.

What these two episodes illustrate is that the biggest, most dramatic stories are often the easiest aspects of journalism. It was also the case when I worked in secular journalism and the twin towers came down on 9/11 and when Princess Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris. It is obvious that all your time and energy need to be focused on such historic, world-changing events.

## reading the signs

But not every edition of *The Tablet* is like this. Our role at *The Tablet* is to keep people appraised, week by week, of what is happening in the Church and also in the wider world, even when there is no apparent political, theological or ecclesiological earthquake. That takes diligence, keeping abreast of announcements, documents, speeches, monitoring all kinds of events, noting what people say. It also requires us to try and understand the underlying ebbs and flows of life, to read the signs. It means, for example, that even if you don’t publish details of every parish closure, you take note, realise that bit by bit these closures add up to a problem, and start exploring whether or not there is a manpower problem. And you might even start to think

about solutions to that, which in turn leads you to revive the case for married priests to keep our parishes open and the sacraments available — which is exactly what we have done in the last few weeks.



Like journalists around the world, those of us at *The Tablet* make judgments about what is interesting, what is important, even what is entertaining for our readers. While these journalistic values are constant, the issues that meet these criteria change from publication to publication. Sometimes, what we think matters overlaps with what general, national newspapers want to follow, or television stations. If the Queen visits the Vatican, then we’re going to be jostling with these media organisations to cover it. But a publication like *The Tablet* stays put when these other outlets have moved on to the next headline-grabbing event, wherever that might be.



## church around the world

I began with a story about Pope Benedict's resignation but *The Tablet* is about much more than the papacy, however large it looms in Catholicism. Our post-Vatican II Church is one of priests and people, and we try to respond to that by focusing on what is happening in the different corners of the globe, not just in Rome. Inevitably we give considerable coverage to what is happening at home in the UK and in Ireland. We find, though, that our readers want to understand what is

concerned with Church news but about the wider world and the issues that affect people's lives profoundly. A case in point is the economic and political crisis in Greece at the moment: we recently ran a piece of analysis by an expert commentator, explaining the situation of Greece in the wider context of conflicts in the EU and the philosophy behind the European project, which of course includes Catholic Social Teaching values of solidarity and subsidiarity, as well as an account of Germany's power in the

a place for dialogue and conversation. And that seems particularly apposite during this pontificate. Francis has tried to open up debate around issues to do with the family, while holding true to core values. That is very much what we are about as well.

## interfaith and ecumenism

The broad interests of our readers mean that they are interested in other faiths and other Christian denominations too, so we regularly focus our attentions on interfaith dialogue and



happening elsewhere, whether it is Caritas helping Burundian refugees in Rwanda, or the work of Catholic universities, educating under-privileged African Americans, preparing them to take on leadership roles. In other words, our readers are people committed to matters of justice and want to know the role that the Church and people of faith are playing in the world.

## church in the world

Nor are our readers people whose faith exists in a vacuum. For them it is a seamless robe and they want to be informed about the world around them, not just about the Church. So our pages are not just

EU, and a more human story from a Franciscan friar about the work his church does helping Greeks and refugees in trouble.

## dialogue and conversation

How we see the world needs to be different from how secular papers see the world: we are above all, a Catholic paper. So our take on the banking crisis, for example, was very much an ethical perspective. The utilitarian approach to life, evidenced in attitudes to euthanasia, is not one *The Tablet* would ever support in its leader columns. But that does not mean that there is not room to explore ideas in our paper; I've always wanted *The Tablet* to be

on ecumenism. But going by the response we get to articles, nothing moves our readers quite so much as liturgy or church closures. In other words, their faith is at the core of their lives. It is something we try to reflect week by week in *The Tablet*, a publication which, as I wrote in my first leader in 2004, is a forum for progressive but responsible Catholic thinking, a place where orthodoxy is at home but ideas are welcome. ■

*Since 2004 Catherine Pepinster has been the editor of The Tablet, the independent Catholic weekly magazine published in London.*

# furrows for the seeds of truth

*Independent Catholic publications sometimes face a dilemma between loyalty to the Church and the pursuit of veracity. Daniel O'Leary writes that braving such tensions requires courage, wisdom and perseverance.*

Daniel O'Leary

**I**nter Mirifica, the Decree on the Means of Social Communication (“Among the Wonderful”), one of the first documents issued by the Second Vatican Council, reminded us that the future of humanity is daily becoming more and more reliant on and shaped by the media. And so is the future of Christianity. But when the awesome, life-altering power of communications in the contemporary world is combined with original sin — humanity’s ingrained tilt towards greed and fear — the truth is often the first victim. The household of the faith is not exempt, as the depressing history of recent years testifies.

Since 1840, *The Tablet* has been an impressive presence among church media in the English-speaking world. It has a proud history. Alongside other Catholic media, it finds itself “among the wonderful” in its calling to speak the truth, to disclose and reveal the depths of things, both good and bad, to follow a path of conviction and passion but with openness and balance.

*Inter Mirifica* (IM) calls for a media that will “foster unity in truth”. This is a tall order, especially today, when a uniformity of opinion in the Church, even among clergy and hierarchy, has been replaced by a discordant variety of voices on many issues. (Pope Francis seems more comfortable with this more discursive and argumentative approach to reaching truth than his immediate predecessors.) In this emerging climate, it takes a special kind of publication to pursue the truth relentlessly, and to hold the tension between divergent views, while bringing these tensions into a creative synthesis.

We should remind ourselves here that of course “the truth” is not something already defined and complete, possessed by certain individuals or Churches. To say something is “true” does not mean it is “the whole truth”. Against the horizon of a God who is ultimate truth, there will always be far more to its mystery than we can ever know or express.

## advancing towards truth

Every vocation and profession has its own particular culture, theology and spirituality. That of the journalist is one of the most subtle and intriguing. Truth is notoriously elusive. It is pursued most effectively with care and humility. We don’t so much reveal it as gingerly advance towards it, respectful of its slipperiness and complexity. Without what might be called a spiritual dimension, some deep, sensitive and inner authority in its journalists and contributors, the authentic “truth-telling” of a publication is in danger of being coloured, even controlled, by fears and bribes, even by threats and coercion. Free enquiry and independent thinking is muzzled and truth suffers. We have seen the Church acting sometimes as brave defender of the truth and sometimes its cynical suppressor, sometimes the victim and sometimes the perpetrator.

## tightrope walk

There is also the tightrope that has to be walked by religious communicators between the Church’s Magisterium and the *sensus fidelium*, between a defensive institution and the transforming experience of personal and communal radical grace. The sins of the Vatican in this respect are well known — the relentless lies around the child-abuse scandals, the sacking of editors of church periodicals, the silencing of priests and authors, the brazen denials of financial irregularities, the firing of insufficiently compliant staff in education centres, and the readiness for a spot of “witch-hunting” whenever its attention is drawn to suspects. Francis himself is sometimes vilified from within as well as without the Church for his candour in criticising the defects of the clerical system and pointing the way beyond it.



Daniel O'Leary



Used with permission.

### cost of telling the truth

This walking of the narrow line between loyalty to the Church and doggedly taking a story wherever it might lead is a sensitive challenge for those who flesh the Word through contemporary media. For publications, journalists and writers, telling the truth can sometimes be hard and costly. If we are seeking an icon for the vital role of the media in speaking truth to power, and an illustration of the deadly price it sometimes exacts, there is no better example than Archbishop Oscar Romero.

In the context of a brutal and oppressive political regime in El Salvador and of the Church's seeming lack of a deep compassion for its victims, Romero's insight into the power and impact of the media stands out. His defence of the poor, his horror at the unreported killing of countless innocents, fired the intensity of his homilies, his writing and his broadcasting. He surely knew that such a ministry would bring him into conflict, not only with the State, which he understood and was prepared for, but also with some in the Church, including fellow bishops and some figures in Rome, which was to cause him great anguish.

Though the threat of violence and death pressed in on him the more he spoke out, so too, and perhaps even more painfully, did the lack of understanding from many within the institution of the Church which he loved

deeply and served faithfully. For much of his ministry as Archbishop of San Salvador Romero lacked the support of the bishops' conference, nor did he always have the backing of Rome. His remarkable gift was to be able to hold this tension within himself, as Jesus did, confident that both Church and State needed to hear the gospel truth.

### courage, wisdom, perseverance

Journalists and writers who, in different contexts and cultures, wish to be a prophetic voice for the poor, the homeless, for prisoners, for those discriminated against, for those persecuted because of their beliefs, or who

feel passionate about challenging the Church to engage honestly with difficult and complex issues, may not face the same level of threat or violence. But there is the same tension between obedience and courageous critique. Catholic newspapers and magazines of every stripe know that to be outspoken, and to create a space for an uninhibited conversation about injustice and prejudice within and without the institution they love, demands discernment, mercy, wisdom, faith — and perseverance.

### into the future

The Catholic media, of which *The Tablet* has been a distinguished part for 175 years, faces an exciting future. Maybe its best days are yet to come. This paper and its journalists have been among those who have striven boldly to share the light and shadows of truth “beyond national frontiers, making each individual a citizen of the world, and to share with them the beauty of God” (*IM*). May it long continue its work in God's universal acre, sowing the seeds of truth along its new furrows. ■

*Irish-born Daniel O'Leary is a priest of the Diocese of Leeds UK, an author and teacher. His website is [www.djoleary.com](http://www.djoleary.com)*

*This article is republished courtesy of The Tablet. [www.thetablet.co.uk](http://www.thetablet.co.uk)*

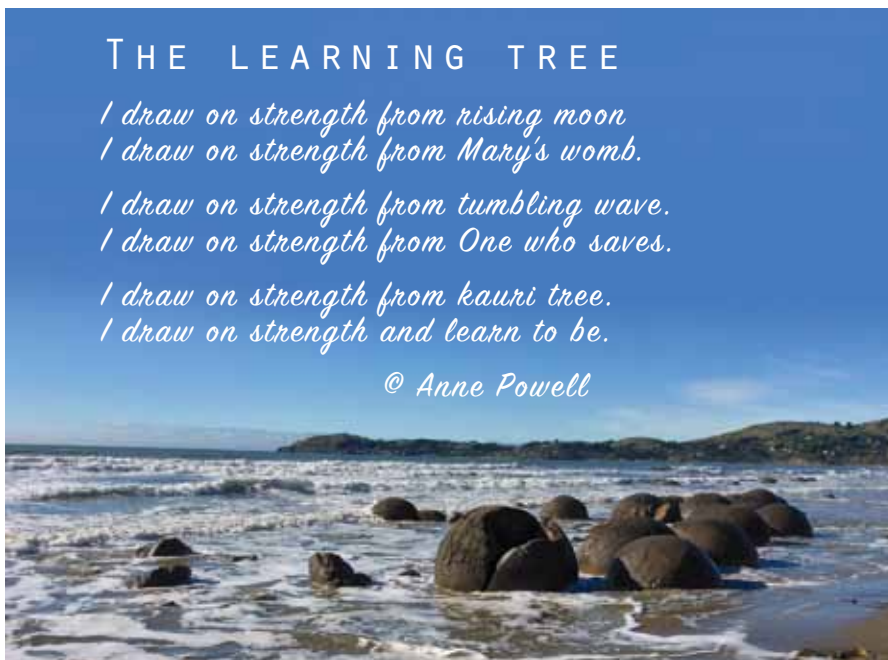
### THE LEARNING TREE

*I draw on strength from rising moon  
I draw on strength from Mary's womb.*

*I draw on strength from tumbling wave.  
I draw on strength from One who saves.*

*I draw on strength from kauri tree.  
I draw on strength and learn to be.*

© Anne Powell





# tales of (trying to) work in international development

*Louise Carr-Neill reflects on her experiences over the last few years since leaving university in the difficult and rewarding work of international development.*

Louise Carr-Neill

International development is my passion. Since I finished my postgraduate studies in Development Studies in 2012, every major life decision I have made has been geared towards creating a career in gender equality in the international sphere. It's a tough path to tread, the not-for-profit sphere has limited capacity in funding and every job posting attracts a ridiculously high calibre of candidates. I recently interviewed for a role in which the successful person had 10 years of experience working for the World Bank. In saying that, I am incredibly proud of the experience I have gained thus far. I have an enjoyable job in fundraising, and every day I look around at my colleagues and think "how can so many brilliant, passionate minds be in one room?"

## a foot in

My first true venture into international development came after I finished my studies and moved to Cambodia in 2013. It's safe to say that if you are looking for a case of extreme culture shock then the first three weeks of my time would be a very good example. I couldn't eat for days on end because I was so nauseous. I was so terrified of malaria that I wore 40 per cent DEET (mosquito repellent) to the office every day, and wouldn't go out at night for fear of being mugged. Inevitably, after six weeks I was head over heels in love with Cambodia, Khmer people, and my life there. I loved getting up early on Saturday mornings to go to the markets, and my colleagues were determined to teach me one new *Khmer* word every day,

meaning that I could communicate more easily. I also gained the practical experience I craved, interning with an NGO that worked with women who had been victims of sexual violence under the Khmer Rouge.

## understanding development

The practical skills I learnt around monitoring and evaluation, research and programme delivery were great, but perhaps more importantly I was able to think about the nuances of being a *pākehā* woman working in development.

Development on a global scale has made inroads into ensuring that the communities themselves are defining what development means to them, and leading the change that they want to see. Traditional models of decisions being made in powerhouses such as New York and London are slowly starting to change, and with this the concept of the "white saviour" is also consistently challenged. Westerners working in development should support and build the capacity of the communities they are working in, rather than arrive in a community only to decide what needs fixing, and then self-appoint themselves as leader. I recently heard Helen Clark make a very succinct point about this at an NGO forum in Auckland. Development organisations should be judged on their exit from a community — meaning that when it is time for a programme to finish, the community has been given the tools and training to continue to change their own situation.

## encountering another faith

My under-graduate degree in theology gave me much to ruminate upon

while I was living in Cambodia, the first time I have spent a long period in an other than Christian country. Buddhism is the official religion of Cambodia and it is estimated that ninety-five per cent of the country identify as such. Buddhist practice is certainly alive and strong, with beautiful temples dotted all over the city and in every province. Moto drivers (the easiest and cheapest way to get around Phnom Penh) often don't know the names of roads or buildings, so most expats learn the names of local temples as a way to navigate. "Take me to Wat Lanka" is often much more effective than "I need to go to street 278". Buddhist festivals and celebrations are also a strong cultural force, and just as temples are key landscape markers, Buddhist celebrations guide you through the *Khmer* calendar.

## experiencing pluralism

My AHA! moment in my journey through studying Theology was an exploration into the idea of religious pluralism. Pluralism suggests that all world religions are equally as valid as one another and all hold Truth, and a recognition that the religious diaspora of the world is a result of thousands of years of historical process. Importantly, this viewpoint emphasises that Christianity is not the one and only way to salvation. Pluralism can be understood in opposition to the concept of exclusivism, in which only one belief system is valid, and all others are false. While pluralism is certainly a controversial viewpoint, it is one that sits well with me.



Louise Carr-Neill in centre-left photo. (All photos of Cambodia supplied by Louise).

In observing Cambodia as a Buddhist country and participating indirectly through conversations with colleagues, as well as more directly through attending meditation sessions at local temples and reading books on the history and philosophy of Buddhism, the necessity to approach religion with a pluralist frame of mind became more important in my thinking. Naturally my interest in both religion and development led my thoughts to the

successes, complexities and challenges of Christian organisations working in a Buddhist country. In returning to New Zealand, I found myself curious about the models that organisations use simultaneously to uphold their commitment to Jesus by serving the poor, whilst also holding Buddhist beliefs in the highest respect in honour of the communities they are serving. I certainly do not have the answers to this question, but in conversing

with Christian friends who were also working in Cambodia, I was heartened to find that not only is this practice alive and well, it can have tremendous impact on the lives of those living in poverty. ■

*Louise Carr-Neil is a 26-year-old Auckland native, who is passionate about gender equality and human rights. In her spare time she enjoys running and vegetarian cooking.*



# disrupting the housing market

*In part two of his three-part series Patrick Snedden describes how five forces work together to push up the price and availability of housing and hints at how those forces could be disrupted.*

Patrick Snedden

In my last article I suggested the Auckland housing market needed disruption. This disruption must derive directly from an appeal to a value we hold dear. It must speak to us of a sense of social inclusiveness where home ownership digs down roots, grows equity and increases societal coherence. If we still want housing to be accessible and to remain the ground on which societal cohesion and durability are formed then passivity in the face of market forces simply won't do. We need to take control of the levers that drive market forces where we can.

Five of these forces are interest rates, land costs, building supplies, labour availability and specialisation and new ownership structures.

## interest rates

Interest rates in NZ function under the Reserve Bank's (RBNZ) control and are largely immune from external pressure and advocacy. We have possibly the most independent Reserve Bank in the world economy. Today we have some of the lowest interest rates in living memory, facilitating the cost of borrowing but perversely playing into the hands of the already housed. They leverage off such rates to buy additional property and are prepared to pay higher prices in anticipation of endless capital growth. History tells us that simply can't and won't go on but as NZ attracts record immigration Auckland feels to be solidly a sellers' market.

So we need to consider other tools beside minimum deposits, capital adequacy limits and adjusted loan-to-value ratios (LVR) if the RBNZ is to play a valuable role in this disruption. This must be part of a wider strategy.

## land costs

Take land supply for instance. The government is fast releasing surplus land for building — a good initiative — but changing virtually none of the parameters around that land. A small group of large developers is commissioned to bring the land into service quickly and they model their developments using the same indices that they have always used. The result is more of the same. Even developments earmarked for affordable housing have such a low proportion of affordable property that the options to house the many are reducing. And the capital profit on the sale of the new houses rises.

Unfortunately this analysis is not theoretical. I was involved in the creation of the Hobsonville land development as chair of the company from 2005–10. This was to create 3,000 new houses over a ten-year period. The *kaupapa* laid down by the government of the time was that 30 per cent, or 900 of these houses, were to be either state rentals (Housing Corporation) or affordable houses (less than \$350,000).

Today the project extends to 4,000 houses and fewer than 400 are deemed affordable at \$475,000 or less, or available for rental. In short a project designed to disrupt the market supply in favour of less well-off citizens has been co-opted to feed the investor market. Now significant ownership is in the hands of owners who don't live there. The affordability agenda has been sidelined as the project is developing in accord with market orthodoxy.

## building supplies

This will happen to the new Special Housing Areas unless the rules

change. But the energy for tipping the market in favour of the less well-off is not at the core of these developments. Market orthodoxy is felt most clearly in the area of building supplies. A handful of companies dominating supplies have proved to be reliable, mostly safe and profitable. The leaky building fiasco was nearly their nadir but they have recovered and business is booming.

But they have no incentive to gear their pricing to serve first home-buyers. The market is comfortably rising, the number of higher priced houses being built is proceeding unabated and new housing areas are opening up. It is business as usual — with zero incentive to change.

However unless the price of materials falls, affordable housing is beyond us. So the status quo just won't do and we need to think in a deeply disruptive manner to change future outcomes.

## labour availability and specialisation

Disruption is also needed in our view of the labour market around construction. House costs are a function of the bespoke nature of our desires. We New Zealanders tend to want our own home to be our dream come true.

This biases us against too many of the same. However in 21st century Aotearoa this dream kills the capacity to house ourselves within our budgets. Our bias affects both our land requirements and our labour skills price. The more land with the house the greater the base cost; the more specialised the building function the higher the labour cost. Both



costs have to change for affordability. This will mean more intensity, people living closer together, more design efficiency and less variation.

### **new ownership structures**

Finally to enable low to middle-income earners to get a start in housing we will need new ownership structures modelled on legal

by banks for partnership arrangements through lower LVR for approved schemes.

### **land supply via special housing areas**

Government and local bodies adopt a fixed value for sections exclusively released for sale to 70 per cent first home owners (including Kiwi Saver

### **design and build**

Government and local bodies sponsor an international tender process for design and build solutions that increase housing intensity within a new set of rules applied to Special Housing Areas. The rules will allow for greater flexibility in design footprint and in mass delivery of new houses and will require less labour specialisation.

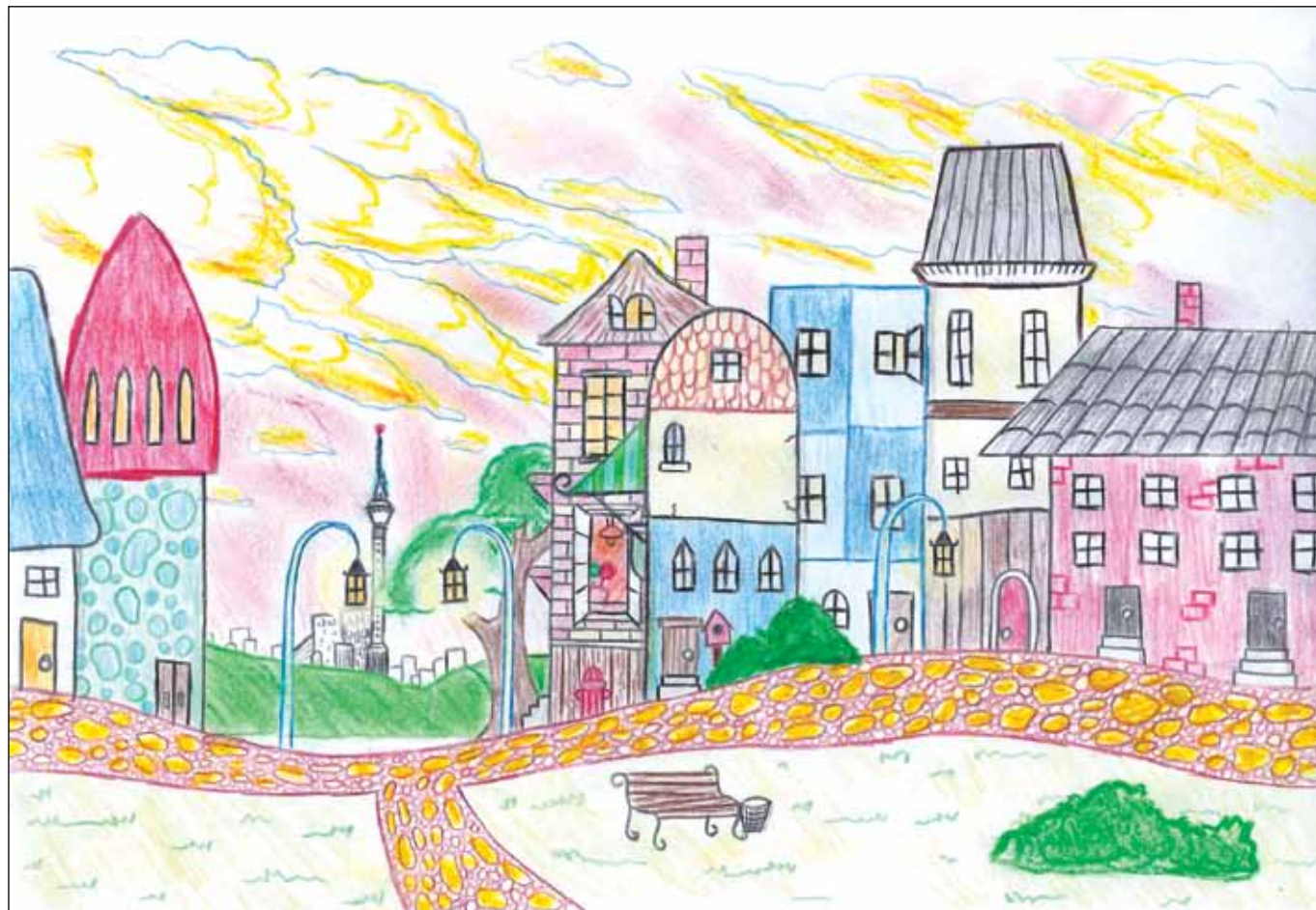


Illustration by Jordan Riddell aged 13 Christchurch

partnerships. Some partnerships will allow for multiple owners within single dwellings. Other partnerships might allow for a single development with multiple dwellings. These decisions are normally the constructs of the developer. However in the right circumstances they can become a tool of the first home-owner partnership.

In my last article in this series I will discuss how the following five market disruptions will address the current social inequity around housing:

### **reserve Bank action**

RBNZ support first home-buyers to receive preferential treatment

re-start), 30 per cent social housing operated under a ballot system with a fixed period and cost for resource consent, site development and full house construction.

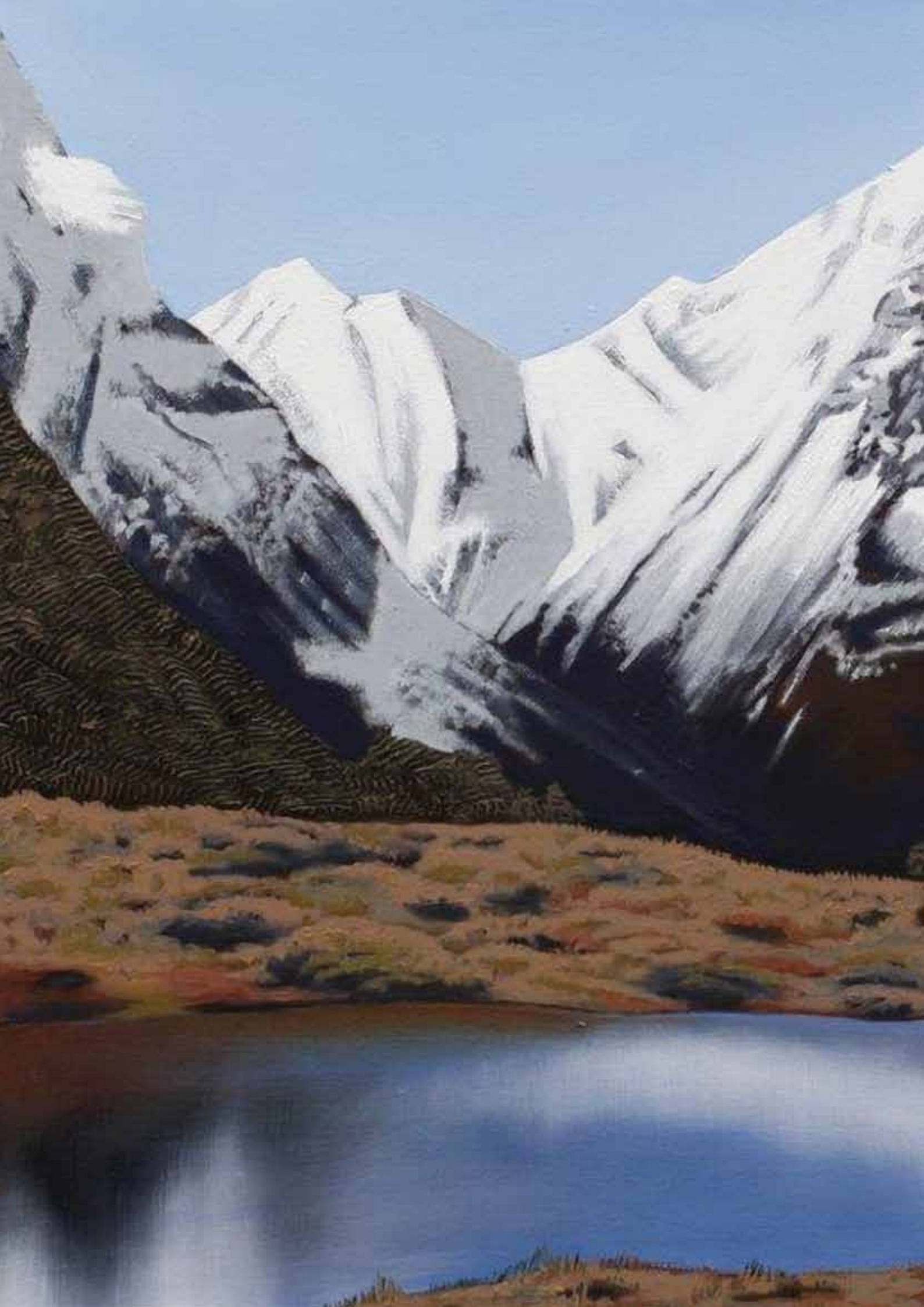
### **building supplies**

Government and local bodies sponsor an international tender process for the building materials supply that conforms with NZ regulations. This would allow into the market at scale companies that can immediately supply at competitive prices the building requirements for the houses to be built in the Special Housing Areas.

### **new forms of ownership**

The disruption required in this market is expressed in one word “partnership”. To have any show of getting equity in housing we will need to form different partnerships. These could be non-family in their nature. They will need RBNZ preferential support for their structure in order to succeed in getting low to middle-income earners into house ownership. ■

*Patrick Snedden is a former chair of Housing New Zealand and works as a company director in Auckland.*





The background is a painting of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a calm lake reflects the sky and the surrounding terrain. The middle ground shows a dark, rocky area with a waterfall cascading down. The background features large, rugged mountains with patches of snow or light-colored rock under a clear blue sky.

## *Waterfall*

You come upon it at the end  
of the track  
this sudden gleam of light  
bisecting the bush  
a painter's brushstroke  
falling

a mist hovers eternally over  
the face of these waters

you may, if you will,  
kneel on the loose river stones  
cupping your hands to receive  
and see a fish  
rising

— Jenny Blood



# attracting not preaching

*Bridget Taumoepeau suggests seven reasons why the new encyclical, Laudato Si' is receiving such public attention.*

Bridget Taumoepeau

It is quite extraordinary watching the response to the much anticipated encyclical, *Laudato Si'*: *On the care of our common home*, and pondering why the process should be so different from the publication of previous Vatican documents. Firstly, there was a novel presentation of the encyclical to the world by the Vatican, with a panel including representatives of the Curia, the Orthodox Church, a prominent American business woman, an Italian woman scientist (reputed to be agnostic, if not atheist) and a member of the Sant'Egidio community, who is a teacher and historian. Opinions are flooding in, both in praise and in criticism. The timing has been planned to try and have maximum impact on the Paris meeting later in the year to address Global Warming. Relatives and friends are commenting. Many hearts in the church are soaring. The New Zealand Bishops are thrilled to be quoted.

In the document there are references to previous Popes and their interest in the environment and care of creation. I felt ashamed that I was not familiar with these documents, so to inform myself, also with the prompting of my parish priest, I read *Populorum Progressio* — written by Pope Paul VI in 1967. Much to my surprise it is very easy to read and much to my sorrow it traverses much of the same material — sorrow, as it seems the world, including the Church, has not taken much notice. Paul VI addressed startlingly similar topics to those close to Pope Francis's heart. For example, the relevance to all humankind of the development of peoples; the effect of richer nations on poorer ones; the widening gap of inequality; the clash of industrialisation



Bridget with her grandchildren.

with traditional ways of life; issues of justice; the nobility of work; the importance of education and the family; the inadequacy of free trade principles; the duty to welcome the stranger; and appeals to individuals and governments to work co-operatively to better the world.

So why is the response to *Laudato Si'* so different? There are many reasons.

## communication

Pope Francis is a master communicator. His Jesuit training and tradition mean that he consults a

lot, so many people both within and outside the church have been able to contribute, including our own Caritas staff. This makes us feel connected to the document. His writing style is easy to absorb. One commentator said that if you can read a newspaper you can easily read and understand this encyclical.

### role of curia

The Pope's view that the Curia should facilitate the work of the Church in the world has been put to the test. Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice (interestingly founded by Pope Paul VI at the time of *Populorum Progressio*), was charged with getting the first draft together, which he did with wide consultation. Things moved fairly quickly from there.

### ecumenism and collegiality

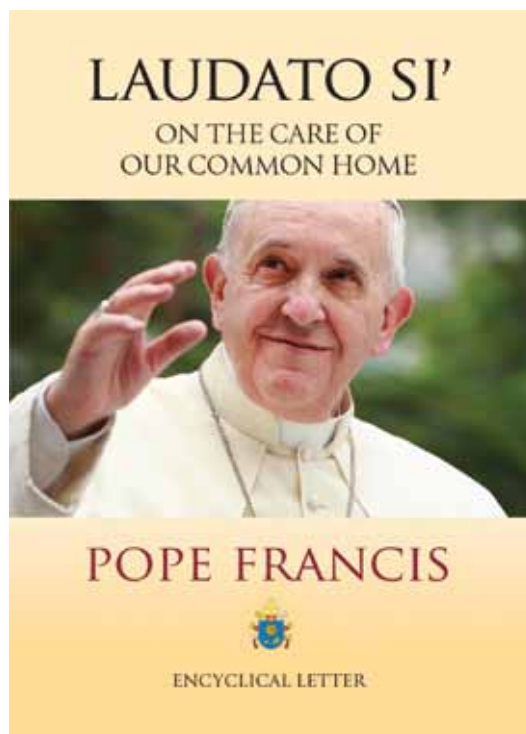
The Pope's interest in incorporating these concepts into the philosophy of the Church are well demonstrated in the body of the text and in the footnotes. Whereas previous documents have been primarily theological in nature, *Laudato Si'* is linked with the church in the world, drawing on experiences of bishops and people in their own environments. Francis acknowledges the importance of the teachings of the Orthodox Church on environmental and ecological matters.

### papal popularity

The Pope's wide popularity has meant that this is not a document confined to the Catholic faithful. Politicians know that he has great influence and that their constituents, Catholic or not, may share many of his opinions. His ability to show that he is in touch with the world of the everyday person, in all its messiness, encourages people to respond to his challenges.

### internet and media

The internet has led to the widespread knowledge of this document. The up-to-date translation has allowed us to read it immediately, in conjunction with commentaries. The Vatican Press office has done a good job in keeping us fully informed about upcoming events and presentations.



### current world situation

The world is moving towards a crisis in terms of global warming, destruction of habitat, carbon emissions, as well as the increase in wealth inequality; the lack of access of many to food and health facilities; the grinding poverty of millions; the increased migration of peoples due to war, political unrest or financial reasons. People are, on the whole, much more educated about these phenomena than they were in 1967. In this part of the world we have seen the concrete results of sea level rise with the impact on low lying islands such as Kiribati and parts of Tonga. We know we must act urgently to turn things around, so the fact that the Pope is adding his considerable influence to the debate is welcomed.

### role of laity

Vatican II changed the role of the laity. No longer are edicts from Rome filtered down through the hierarchy. The distance between Pontiff and people is much closer. Laity contribute to the composition of the documents and, probably even more importantly, they will be greatly involved in the discussions that follow.

### attraction versus proselytising

Pope Francis has often mentioned the importance of attracting people to our faith, rather than preaching at people. *Laudato Si'* follows that example. It encourages us to contribute to the care of the planet; to combine individual effort with political will; to work together and with God; to live out our responsibilities of stewardship. It finishes with prayers both for us as Christians, following the Gospel of Christ, and also for all who believe in a creator God — beautifully inclusive, attractive and echoing the inspiration of St Francis. Pope Francis's comment that his reflection has been "both joyful and troubling" touched me deeply. Here is a spiritual leader so in touch with the beauty and sorrow of our world.

So there are many differences over the nearly 50 years that separate the reception of *Populorum Progressio* and *Laudato Si'*. I am deeply grateful to Paul VI for his great encyclical, as well as to other Popes who have written in similar vein. I am sure they are smiling on what is happening now. I am excited about the ability and opportunity we have to disseminate the current Pope's teaching and, above all, I am hopeful that we will at last take note, and all work together for the care of God's creation — Our Common Home. ■

*Dr Bridget Taumoepeau is a retired psychiatrist living in Waitarere Beach and a volunteer in her parish and various agencies for the care of children and youth.*



# an ecological reading of the gospel of mark

*In this seventh part in the series Elaine Wainwright focuses our attention on time, location and the permeable space between human and holy in the story of the transfiguration in Mark 9:2-8.*

Elaine Wainwright

<sup>2</sup> Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, <sup>3</sup> and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there

appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” <sup>6</sup> He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

<sup>7</sup> Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him. <sup>8</sup> Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus!”  
NRSV. (Used with permission)

The story we name the “Transfiguration of Jesus” has a number of features that invite us to read ecologically.

## time – six days

The narrative begins with a very explicit time designator: six days later. Had we been first-century listeners to the Markan story-telling, we would have had ears attuned to details such as the “six days” reference that we, as contemporary readers, tend to miss (we can always go back and re-read, so we are not as attentive as those early listeners would have been). The “six days” seems to link this story back to the previously located event, which was when Jesus and the disciples visited the villages in the region of Caesarea Philippi (Mk 8:27). There, Peter proclaimed Jesus as the *Christos*, the anointed one, the liberating one, the one engaged bodily with the poor and the suffering — touching bodies and taking and blessing bread. But Jesus immediately introduces another aspect of his unfolding role as *Christos*. It is that he will suffer bodily degradation caused by leaders who are threatened by the way he lives out his appointed task as God’s anointed (Mk

8:31-32a). Jesus will face death as all Earth-beings face death — but his will be a premature death visited on him by other human hands.

## place – up a high mountain

Having noted the time explicitly in the opening phrase of Mk 9:2, the ecological reader will be attentive to the grounded place in which the narrative is located: up a very high mountain. Habitat and human are intimately connected here as the narrator recounts Jesus’ taking of Peter, James and John with him up this “very high mountain”. This seemingly simple description encodes layers of meaning in the narrative texture of the text. The materiality of the “mountain” holds the reader’s attention initially, an engagement that would be very familiar to New Zealand readers from their own experiences of a “high mountain”. Its materiality is near the surface of consciousness.

At a second level of meaning-making, the mountain can evoke for readers Moses’s journey/s up the high mountain of Sinai (see Ex 24:15–18) and hence the mountain as place of

encounter with the divine, the Holy One. Both layers of meaning play in this text.

## seeing and experiencing

The senses give access to what is material. The sense of “seeing” functions powerfully in this particular scene. The disciples have to “see” Jesus to know he is “transfigured” before them. The translation of the verb *metamorphoein* as “to transfigure” can tend to obscure the sensory experience. A dictionary explanation “to change in a manner *visible* to others” (*italics mine*), evokes the bodily sense of seeing. Jesus is changed in a manner visible to the three disciples and yet this change is one that is more than human: his garments became glistening, intensely white in a way unknown to human experience — “as no fuller on earth could bleach them” is the Markan phraseology. The evangelist grapples with language that will articulate the change that the disciples “see” and “experience”. The human and the holy intersect in the materiality of the body and of the clothing of Jesus transfigured and this is “seen” by attentive disciples. The space between



the human and the holy is permeable.

The verb *horaein*/ “to perceive by the eye” in Mk 9:4 continues to evoke the material sense of seeing or perceiving. The verb is in the passive and carries the connotation of “appeared” or “made an appearance in a transcendent manner”. Two “holy ones” from Israel’s history, Moses and Elijah, are speaking with the transfigured Jesus. They too experienced transformative encounters with the holy (Moses in Ex 24:15–18 as noted above and Elijah on Horeb, 1 Kgs 19:11–15), encounters that took place in their bodies. All these transformations occur in a grounded/earthly space — on a mountain. Indeed, Peter seeks to capture this extraordinary experience, to “earth” it in “three booths”, rather than to let it function at that point of radical intersection between the human/earth and the holy. Peter is “exceedingly afraid” in the face of such radical intersection. On the other hand the text invites us as readers into such a space.

### hearing and listening

The materiality of the mountaintop experience continues as a cloud over-shadows the group while a voice from out of the cloud confirms the radical intersection of human and holy. The voice engages another of the senses, that of hearing. Its very invitation is to listen — to listen to him/Jesus. He is the one who is named by the voice as the beloved of the Holy One.

### place, human and holy

As the scene comes to a sudden close (Mk 9:8) the sense of seeing is once again evoked, linking human and habitat. In the grounded context in which transfiguration took place, the three disciples see no one but “only Jesus”. The final verse in Greek concludes with the phrase “with them” — they no longer see anyone but only Jesus with them — still on the high mountain. The extraordinarily subtle interweaving of habitat, human and holy together with the evocation of the senses in this short



Mount Tabor

narrative functions as an invitation to ecological readers to an encounter with just such radical intersection.

### need ecological reading

We are encouraged in such ecological readings of our sacred story by Pope Francis. In his recent encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home* he offered the following challenge: “If we are truly concerned to develop an ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done, no branch of the sciences and *no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it*” (par 63).

The scriptures, our sacred story,

are one “form of wisdom” and are included in “religion and the language particular to it”. As we attend to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, we are invited to hear our sacred story anew, particularly to hear the voice of Earth in the many voices rising up from various habitats. Thus, we will, continuing in the words of Pope Francis, attend to our “Judeo-Christian tradition” in ways “which can render our commitment to the environment more coherent” (par 15). ■

*Elaine Wainwright RSM is Professor Emeritus University of Auckland and an independent biblical scholar.*

## Laudato Si'

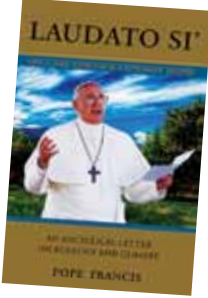
### (Praise Be to You):


### On Care For Our Common Home

**An encyclical letter on ecology and climate**

**By Pope Francis, (Author)**

Possibly one of the most important encyclicals of our time, Pope Francis addresses humanity's relationship with the natural world in *Laudato Si'*. The Christian and secular world have been captivated by the papacy of Pope Francis, and this encyclical has drawn huge attention globally to the critical ecological and environmental issues facing us all.





**Misericordiae Vultus**

**Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy**

**\$4.99** +\$4.50 p/pkg

**\$14.99** +\$4.50 p/pkg

Freephone 0508 988 988  
order@pleroma.org.nz

38 Higginson Street, Otane  
Central Hawke's Bay

**www.christiansupplies.co.nz**

# cherish and protect our children

*The reality of commercial child sexual exploitation in our country was revealed recently through the research of social worker, Natalie Thorburn. Ann Gilroy examines Natalie's work and suggests that we make a combined effort to protect our children.*

Ann L Gilroy

Our stomachs turn cold at the thought of men in dark corners of our cities seeking out children to pay for sex. It is a crime against humanity as the Pope recently reminded us. It's illegal in our country to buy sexual services from those under 18, and New Zealand is a signatory to the International Labour Conference (ILC) that covers child labour including child prostitution. It's immoral. Yet numbers of our men exploit vulnerable children — ruining their lives and strangling their spirit. We can't let this continue.

## what pushes a child into sex work?

Natalie Thorburn, researcher in child sexual exploitation in Auckland, identified some of the common factors that can set a child on a pathway of selling sex for survival. They included caregivers failing to provide appropriate care, sexual abuse, intermediaries introducing children to commercial sex, involvement in crime and gangs, use of drugs and alcohol, homelessness or being placed in alternative care.

She noted: "Poverty was a big thing with the families of the children I interviewed. Very few came from a family that worked. If they did, most of the income was going on methamphetamine. Meth use was normalised in their families. But poverty is not the entire overarching reason. We're finding a number of vulnerability factors. If there are one or two of those factors in a kid's life they can usually survive but if they have eight or so, they seek survival in a more extreme way than perhaps other people would."

Certainly the stories collected by ECPAT in *Speaking for Ourselves: Children of the Streets* confirm the links

between underage commercial sexual exploitation and backgrounds of deprivation and physical, psychological, and sexual abuse.

## the toll on children

Many of the children aged around 12 who drift into sex work have been sexually abused. Kim Kiri, Senior Investigator in the Digital Department of Internal Affairs and formerly a detective in Counties Manukau said: "New Zealand has one of the worst rates of child sexual abuse of developed countries and conservative estimates show that one in four girls and one in seven boys are sexually abused before they reach the age of 16."

Natalie found: "Child sexual abuse is highly correlated with every type of psychiatric disorder. It often has far reaching impacts on sexual health decision-making. This means that people who have been abused as children often have higher rates of teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, unprotected sex, or sex while they have been drinking — and ultimately entry into underage sex work."

The devastation of sexual abuse in children's lives is borne out repeatedly by witnesses speaking to the on-going Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Natalie explained that there are quantifiable changes in children's brains when they suffer trauma such as sexual abuse. The traumatic memories get stuck in the primitive region of the brain and cannot be processed through the rational sphere. This means a child may experience numbness or intense memory flashbacks and be unable to process them. At the same time the trauma sets off their emotional

alarm system so that the child becomes hyper-vigilant. The trauma is constantly alive for them. And trauma is associated with strong feelings of fear, powerlessness and horror.

## violence as normal

The young people Natalie interviewed were unaware of their right to refuse sex or of what constituted a crime or abuse and were desensitised to violence.

"All the girls I interviewed had been raped or sexually abused, often by multiple perpetrators in multiple contexts. Being raped or sexually abused or beaten up was simply considered a natural part of being female. Unless it was violent or by strangers they hardly ever labelled it as "abuse" or considered it to be against the law. Physical violence by partners, families and clients was normalised. It never occurred to them that they had the right to refuse any of the sexual actions that were proposed to them. One girl spoke about being repeatedly punched in the breast and how she was paid \$50 extra per time for "the privilege".

## mental illness, self-harm, suicide

Kim Kiri outlined the impact on four boys abused by a man they knew:

"Three of the four boys have attempted suicide as a result of the offending against them. Three of the four at some time are drug dependent and two of them have been diagnosed and battle with mental health issues. Two of the four boys' mothers continue to blame themselves for not seeing the signs of the perpetrator before the offending happened. One of the four is the man's son and now





# story of the universe

*Sarah Atkinson explores the story of creation from scientific, cultural, biblical and theological perspectives and finds that faith in a creating God is truly life-giving.*

Sarah Atkinson

“**T**o know the story of anything you must know the story of everything.” And to know the story of everything we find that different bodies of thought and belief encourage different theories for seeking the truth.

Catholicism encourages us to understand our connection within our universe and all that is in it. If we are to understand our connection within the universe, where it came from, how it came to be and why it came to be will be, a natural part of our search.

## traditional stories

All cultures have their own stories of the origins of the universe. While these stories may not be scientifically accurate in a 21st century understanding, they are equally important to the culture they belong to in explaining the beginnings of creation. For example in Māori myth Earth Mother, *Papatuanuku* and *Ranginui*, the Sky Father, were pushed apart to create the sky and

earth, night and day.

For Christians the biblical Genesis account is on the same wavelength. It speaks of similar components: the creation of light and dark, and of the earth and the galaxies and of both woman and man. These components are not unique to Genesis and Māori myths; they are common themes expressed in many other creation stories in the world.

## scientific stories

But what our modern world has been discovering since the scientific revolutions of the Renaissance and after are powerful tools to know why and how things happen. Great thinkers like Galileo Galilei and Charles Darwin continue to influence our scientific ideas of the world. They formed their ideas based on fact and theory, filling the placeholder gaps that myths and legends seem to occupy.

The *Youcat* youth catechism states that “God has placed in us a longing to seek and find”. This desire is expressed in different ways through different bodies of thought. These bodies of thought may develop different ideas about how things were made but we are all working towards the greater answer of “why?”

The prophet Isaiah acclaims God as creating: “The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth”. As creator God did not just trigger the start of the universe and let it unfold by itself. God guides and protects creation just as new-born children are not left after birth to their own devices. They are born into the arms of loving parents who protect, love and guide their creation.

## big bang story

The modern scientific study of the origins of the universe revolves around the theory of the Big Bang. Astronomers have come to the conclusion that the universe began around 14 billion years ago. They think that it all began with the smallest particle which was “hotter and denser than anything we could imagine”.

An “explosion” is an understatement for the action of this particle. According to astronomers, all that we now know — space, air, time, matter, energy — came from this abrupt phenomenal expansion which started as a tiny ripple or instability. That tiny particle accounts for such a vastness of the galaxies that we can barely begin to imagine let alone understand them. After the expansion, a period of time allowed for cooling, in which the effect of the laws of physics and complex chemistry developed. All the conditions of this expansion were perfectly tuned to allow life to form.

## faith seeking understanding

So science explains the “how”, while sometimes trying to do away with the “why” — but the “why” remains the greater question.

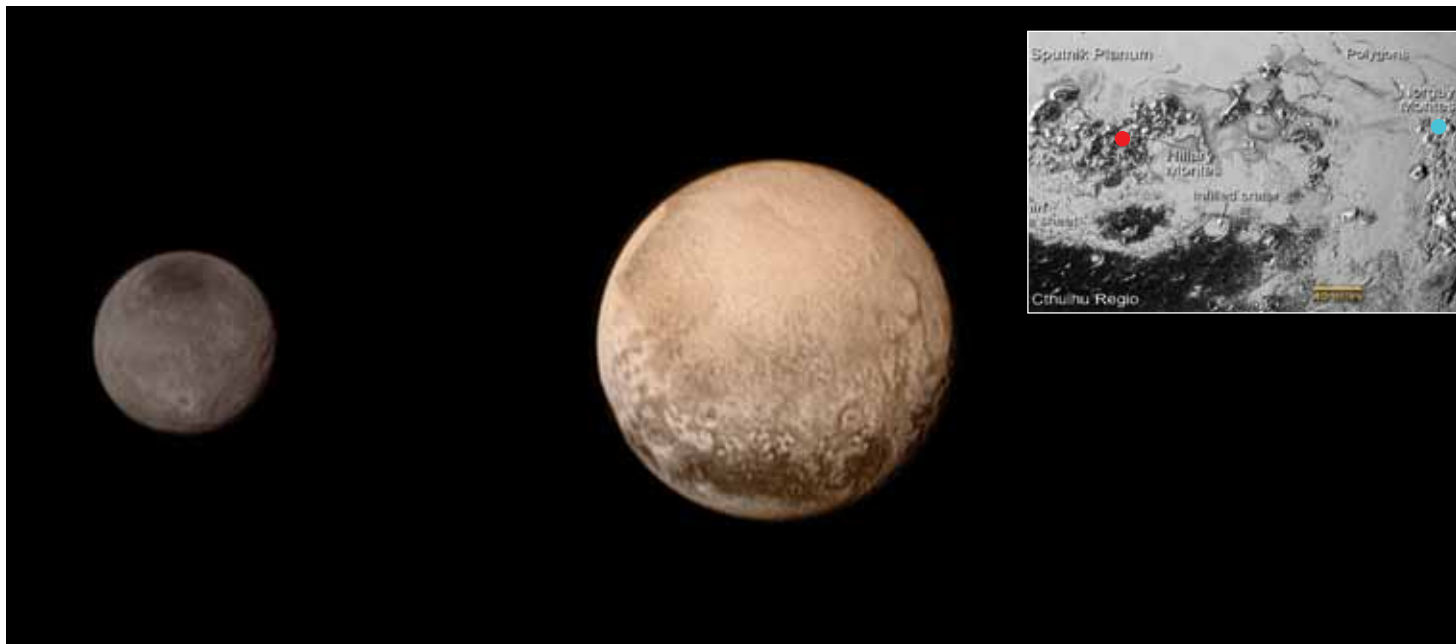
When reading the Bible we cannot take literally what the pages say. As we know, the Bible did not fall from heaven and enter our midst as a scientific document. It was written by humans transmitting the inspired word of God and therefore contains human error in interpretation.

For example, the Psalms are works of great poetry but are not necessarily scientifically accurate. “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all their stars by the breath of his



Sarah Atkinson





Photograph of Pluto (right) and its moon Charon taken by NASA spacecraft *New Horizons*. Inset: Close up of the surface of Pluto, showing the mountain ranges named after Sir Edmund Hillary ● and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay ●. [Image credits: NASA/JHUAPL/SWRI]

mouth.” (Ps 33:6). From the perspective of science “breath” is made of the usual exhaled gases and water vapour. For the Lord to create the stars from the breath of God’s mouth, that breath would have to be made of burning hydrogen and helium!

For Catholics to have faith, while correlating their beliefs with science, we must look at why our God is Creator. If God creates then it would go against God’s nature not to create us and our universe.

But if God could create us in any way that God wanted then why did God choose a path of evolution rather than instantaneously forming Adam and Eve with the capacity to reproduce?

It is because our God is creator and wants creation to continue. God wants us to see that creation in its whole essence is not just a one-off event; creation is continually cascading. We are active participants in creation not simply bystanders or recipients.

As Catholics we acknowledge God’s creating and all creation as good. We also understand that science is a by-product of our longing to seek and to find. We have adopted science to help us learn more and more the deep complexities of our universe and everything in it.

### participating in love

We know that God is loving and creates from love alone. In love God creates the universe including you and me. Our response is to use our time, talents and our scientific minds to enhance creation. As Pope Francis said our responsibility “means caring, protecting, overseeing and perserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature. Each community can take from

the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations.”

We will bring forth new human life which we will love, guide and protect. We will do this as crucibles of love in the name of God Creator.

This is the story of everything. ■

*Sarah Atkinson is in Year 13 at Pompallier Catholic College, Whangarei. She has an interest in social justice. She is in a group of students who sell Tui Motu magazine in the parish.*



### Visit by Rabbi Fred Morgan

to mark 50 years since  
the Vatican II document  
*Nostra Aetate*.

**Dunedin:** Annual Peace Lecture — “Pursuing Peace in a Time of Peace and a Time of War”  
Wednesday 9 September 5.30-7.00 pm  
St David Lecture Theatre, University of Otago

**Wellington:** Monday 21 September 6.00-9.00 pm  
Lecture Room 1, Victoria University of Wellington,  
Pipitea Campus, Old Government Buildings

**Auckland:** Tuesday 29 September 7.00-9.30pm  
St Peter’s College, 23 Mountain Rd, Epsom

# “i am the bread of life”

*Kathleen Rushton invites us to sense and imagine the interconnections of place, human and divine in her interpretation of John 6:41-51; 60-69.*

Kathleen Rushton

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis points out that the biblical creation accounts suggest “that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely entwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself.” (par 66). These three interconnected relationships have been kept alive in Aotearoa in the Māori world and offer a lens through which to read the gospels with attention to the divine, the human and creation in its widest sense. The word *whakawhanaungatanga* means “making right relationship” in a series of interconnected relationships with *Atua* (God), *tāngata* (people) and *whenua* (land). The rich tradition of Ignatian spirituality, with its emphasis on the imagination and the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, encourages reflection on the materiality of the gospel world and ours. May the following reflection inspire interconnection and imagination!

## **crowd of tired people**

Stories of Jesus’ actions in John’s gospel are followed by a discourse in which he explains what has just happened. In John 6, the discourse begins after much movement on the mountain, sea and waterfront. A large crowd followed Jesus up the mountain above the Sea of Galilee. Imagine that crowd trailing up, over and down what we would call a hill: tax collectors, peasants, lepers, the sick, small farmers, labourers, widows, women, children, the

well-to-do. That crowd were Jews living under Roman occupation which included the collaboration of a local king and the upper priestly classes. The crowd was mostly poor people, earning their living on land, sea or by trade. They had a collective history of exile and deportation, of being ruled by other nations, of working day and night and of paying huge taxes from which they got no benefit.

Jesus understood then, as he does now, that so many were adrift from the faith of their ancestors. Sitting on the ground, he taught and fed the large crowd which later dispersed. Jesus withdrew by himself. That night disciples set out in a boat to the busy waterfront fishing town of Capernaum on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus startles them as he comes walking towards them on the water. The next day, the crowds who had been fed go in search of Jesus. From Tiberias (named after the Roman emperor), a waterfront city further south, crowds came in boats to Capernaum to find Jesus. When they found him there “on the other side of the sea,” they questioned him and the dialogue began. Some of this teaching took place in the Synagogue.

## **bread discourse - 2 parts**

The bread discourse consists of two parts (Jn 6:35-47 and Jn 6:48-58) which have three sections containing

parallels and differences. In the first section of both, Jesus claims: “I am the bread of life” (Jn 6:35-40; 48-51). Murmuring (Jn 6:41-42) and disputing (Jn 6:52) follow in the second sections. In the third sections, Jesus says: “I will raise him/her up on the last day.” Eternal life is promised. The responses differ. “Whoever *believes* has eternal life” (Jn 6:43-47) later becomes: “Whoever *eats* and *drinks* has eternal life” (Jn 6:53-57). Complicated? All this is summed up in two words: *believe* and *eat*.

## **believe**

Significant shifts happen as Jesus continues to evoke biblical manna and wisdom traditions. The crowd attributes the feeding with the manna during the Exodus wandering to Moses. Jesus points out that God gave their ancestors “bread from heaven to eat” (Jn 6:31). When he declares “I am the bread of life: (Jn 6:35), Jesus claims to be the manna and also Wisdom Sophia who invites: “eat of my bread.” This is consolidated by: “I have come down from heaven” (Jn 6:38) as did the manna and Wisdom Sophia. The response Jesus invites is: “Whoever comes to me, will never be hungry, and whoever *believes* in me will never be thirsty.” The “I am” statements are not about who Jesus is but what he does. In response “the Jews began to murmur” as did their ancestors in the wilderness.



## eat

The second part of the discourse has Eucharistic overtones: “I am the living bread” which will last forever and “the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (Jn 6:51). Bread, the staple food of people then and throughout the ages, takes on further symbolic dimensions to reveal Jesus, the Word made flesh (Jn 1:14). The word “flesh” implies human nature in its completeness. In becoming flesh, God’s continuing relationship with creation is inclusive of human beings and all living creatures (Gen 6:13). Flesh suggests that which perishes and fades like the grass, while blood is the inner life force. Using two different verbs for “eating”, Jesus repeatedly invites those who “eat my flesh and drink my blood” to life in its fullness.

Pope Francis reminds us that “our body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings. The acceptance of our bodies as God’s gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from [God] and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation” (*Laudato Si'* par 155).

## movement towards the death-resurrection

The title “Son of Man,” found three times in this discourse and which would be translated more accurately as “Son of Humanity,” refers to the Word made flesh who will experience death. There is another layer to Jesus’ speaking about “flesh” and “blood.” In the Scriptures and in the Jewish environment of earliest Christianity these terms refer to a human being who suffers a violent death. “Flesh” and “blood,” therefore, evoke the violent death of Jesus. Here, as in other discourses in John, there is a movement towards Jesus’ death.

A pattern of meal, rejection and betrayal becomes apparent. Jesus’ words led to division and rejection as did Wisdom Sophia’s. The crowd did not get it. They asked for signs. “The Jews murmur.” They knew his parents. Who does he think he is! A larger group of disciples “complain” having found this teaching difficult and no longer went with him. Jesus turned to the Twelve, asking whether they, too, would leave. The words of Simon Peter echo through the centuries: “To whom shall we go? ... We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” Further references to Jesus’ ultimate betrayal are made. Later, the supper of John 13 is followed by rejection and betrayal.

In the image of the vine in John 15, Jesus claims:

Gospel readings for the 19th and 21st Sundays of Ordinary Time (9 and 23 August)



Artist's reconstruction of Capernaum.

“I am the true vine.” This parallels: “I am the bread of life.” The language of “abiding” is found in both passages: “those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them.” Yet again, the point is made that Eucharistic tones flow throughout this gospel in the actions and words of Jesus and of the disciples. John 6 evokes Eucharist as meal when Jesus as Wisdom-Sophia gathers friends to “eat of my bread and drink of my wine.” The Eucharist as sacrifice, willing self-giving for others, is evoked when Jesus speaks of his flesh and his blood. ■

*Kathleen Rushton RSM is a scripture scholar and adult educator.*

Join us in working for a world free from poverty and injustice



Join the **oneworld** partnership

As a regular donor with our One World Partnership you will be supporting whole communities – not just individuals – in their struggle against poverty and its causes. Contribute any amount at a frequency that suits you.

For more information contact  
Caritas on 0800 22 10 22  
or visit [www.caritas.org.nz](http://www.caritas.org.nz)



AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

 The Catholic Agency for Justice, Peace and Development

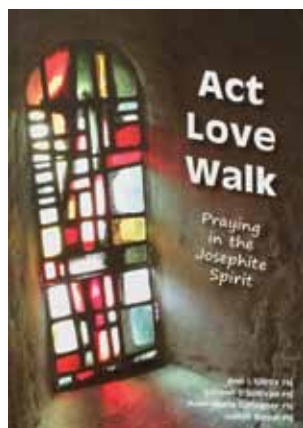
# invitations to pray

## Act, Love, Walk: Praying in the Josephite Spirit

By Ann L Gilroy rsj, Colleen O'Sullivan rsj, Anne-Marie Gallagher rsj & Judith Sippel rsj

Published by Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart

Reviewed by Catherine Birt



This delightful prayer book was written cooperatively by four Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart together with Sandy Leaitua the book designer.

The prayers follow a reflective rhythm — the gathering and settling into prayer; the context, which provides a background for the scripture; listening and reflecting on a scriptural passage; breaking open and reflecting on how the passage engages with our life; responding and finally a blessing.

The beauty of the book comes in the carefully chosen images — some are photos taken by the Sisters themselves and others are from art collections or donated by artists. They are arranged with fainter mirror images, reflections, on the facing pages. The images provide the settling into prayer, as gazing on the image and allowing it to connect with our own life experiences forms the beginning of each prayer. The words of the Josephite founders, St Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods, are selected to resonate with the image also.

The prayers are grouped into four sections. Firstly “Journeying through the year” has reflections that can be used on particular feast days or in sections of the liturgical year. The next three sections are grouped under the three themes of the prophet Micah — to “Act Justly, to “Love Tenderly” and to “Walk Humbly”. These three

are chosen because they name values and relationships underpinning Josephite spirituality. The prayers can be used in any order to suit the occasion and be prayed by either individuals or groups.

If you are a leader of a prayer group you will find this book invaluable. If you are a person who prays alone you will love it too. It is a great resource for use by school staffs and Boards of Trustees. It is beautiful, inclusive, nourishing and life-giving. I have given away to my friends all the books I could get my hands on — except my own copy of course, which I use often.

We had been eagerly anticipating the arrival of this book, which has followed two others that were produced for the Sisters to use in prayer themselves. We have longed, hoped and prayed for it to come to fruition and we have not been disappointed!

As Julian Tenison Woods says: “All creative things give us ideas and glimpses of the beauty of the infinitely beautiful Creator” — and this book certainly does that. ■

Available from: Sisters of St Joseph, Regional Administration Centre, 30 Holgate Road, Auckland 1071.

Phone 09 528 5204 or email: [transpacifconz@sosj.org.au](mailto:transpacifconz@sosj.org.au)

\$15 +postage

# journeying t

## Whale Years

By Gregory O'Brien

Published by Auckland University Press

Reviewed by Peter Slocum

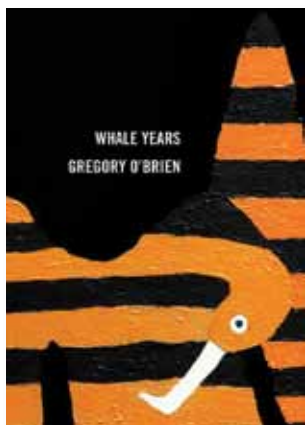
As I was driving home recently the car-audio randomly selected the 3rd Movement of Beethoven's 5th Piano Concerto (the “Emperor”). Every time I listen to this movement I am both annoyed by and intrigued with occasional and unexpected changes of pace. At first I am disappointed that my expectation has not been realised, and then I realise that it is precisely that change of pace and inflection which makes the music actually work. I feel that Beethoven had difficulty deciding how to end the Concerto: maybe he realised that the Piano Players Union would take industrial action over 40 minutes — so he stops, leaving the impression that he has something more to say.

By way of stretched analogy, Gregory O'Brien's recently published collection of work *Whale Years* is characterised by at times annoying, and at times intriguing, changes of pace. However unlike Beethoven's time constraints, O'Brien had some three-four years in and around the South Pacific Ocean and beyond and he saves the best to the last. In the earlier parts of this slim volume he dangles thin threads of barely detectable promise before revealing what he really wants to get off his chest: the calamitous grounding of the *MV Rena* on Astrolabe Reef near Tauranga on 5 October 2011.

The collection's frontispiece says that between 2011 and 2014, poet and artist Gregory O'Brien “found himself following the migratory routes of whales and seabirds across vast tracts of the South Pacific Ocean”.



# the pacific



With that introduction, and the collection's title *Whale Years*, this reader expected whales of stories and images about whales and birds; but of whales themselves there is virtually nothing. We learn very little about O'Brien's actual journeys and the migratory routes of whales and seabirds; but the gift we are given is glimpses of the sketch book of O'Brien the artist. Many of the pieces of the collection are like dangling conversations — a line here, a squiggle there and a promise of something to come, or not.

This is an interesting collection of O'Brien's personal musings and images while he visits remote places around the Pacific. In keeping with the theme of the sea, there is constant movement, mostly slow: there are also hesitant pauses where the tatty makings of humankind despoil the majesty of the natural world.

One of the shortest pieces of the collection perhaps says it best: "Ocean-sound, what is it you listen for?" The finale about the grounding of *MV Rena* and its environmental consequences is quite gripping.

I am left wondering at the juxtaposition of O'Brien's distaste with humankind's clash with nature on the one hand and on the other, the fact that he spent some three to four years releasing weather balloons all over the South Pacific Ocean. ■

# parable of war and peace

## Tangerines

Directed by Zaza Urushadze

Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

In a world riven by ethnic and religious tensions, and torn by disputes over land and resources, this film delivers a powerful message of peace and hope. It tells the story of two tangerine farmers, Ivo and Margus, both Estonian migrants living in the Abkhazian region of Georgia, who are desperate to gather their harvest and send it to market before war erupts around them, making normal life impossible. It is a story of hatred and suffering but also of love and loyalty — of ties forged across ethnic divides that at the beginning of the film seem like unbridgeable chasms.

The year is 1992 and, in the wake of the breakup of the Soviet Union, this small corner of Georgia is being fought over by roving bands of Georgian fighters and Abkhazian separatists. The last of their community to leave, Ivo patiently makes fruit boxes while Margus struggles to pick the abundant crop on his own. When the war at last reaches their land, Ivo takes in two wounded combatants, a Chechen mercenary fighting for the Abkhazians and a Georgian volunteer, housing them in separate rooms in his cottage. Ivo is no softie, employing an

iron discipline to keep his two charges from carrying out their threats to kill each other. As armed bands range the district, we fear that Ivo's evenhanded compassion and generosity will have terrible consequences for him.

As the two recovering soldiers are thrown together in the domestic life of the cottage under Ivo's stern but fatherly eye, their implacable hatred begins to crumble, along with the national, ethnic and religious stereotypes that have locked them into separate worlds. The only female presence in the film is a photograph of Ivo's granddaughter, which catches the eye of the young Georgian, Niko. She represents everything — beauty, order, domesticity, life itself — that the wounded combatants have forgotten. Like the tangerines which provide the only splash of colour in this dark-hued film, she offers a powerful reminder of the beauty and joy of ordinary life.

*Tangerines* is uncompromising in its presentation of the reality of war and what genuine peace might mean — there is never a hint of sentimentality or falseness. We have no idea where the film will take us next and it held me gripped till the very last scene. It is worth staying for the credits, where all the countries involved in the conflict are listed as co-producers of this important and never more relevant film. ■



# Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

## the budget, part two

The first step in rectifying a problem is to recognise that it exists and the second to agree on ways to address it, which requires analysis. Only then can remedial action be effective. The government is in denial. Their reliance on profit for private enterprise to rectify social problems is ideology not management.

Although the distinction between the global and local is diminishing — through economic restructuring, climate change and burgeoning information technology — and NZ is a small cork in this stormy ocean, steps can be taken to remedy our skewed system.

Internationally there are signs that change could occur. First a growing consensus that, in Lord Glasman's words, the three ideologies — state control, unregulated markets and the attempt to combine a strong welfare state with robust financial markets — are all failures. Glasman, an observant Jew, is the leading force behind "Blue Labour" in the UK — an attempt to reform the Labour Party's economic policies

In his *New Statesman* article entitled "Francis Leader for our Times" Glasman gave his re-presentation in terms of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The Church of England bishops are supportive to the dismay of Conservative politicians.

Glasman points out that Jorge Bergoglio was a priest in Argentina under its military dictatorship and bishop of Buenos Aires during the Washington-led free-market economics that ended in disaster. "Argentina experienced austerity and a financial crash nearly two decades before the rest of us, and the bishop was witness to the destitution and institutional breakdown involved."

"The Pope is unusual because he articulates a constructive alternative (to neo-liberal economics) that is for private property but against financial

centralisation, and stills holds on to certain concepts, such as vocation, virtue and value, a century after they have fallen out of fashion with monetarists, Keynesians and Marxists alike."

In June Francis's *Laudato Si'* set CST in the wider context of universal creation which "has a broader meaning than 'nature'; for it has to do with God's loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance."

## management approach

You have just been appointed to run a large business. You are faced with two major problems — to fight some fires and to ensure the business implements its mission. How do you cope?

One way is to deal with the most serious fires first while developing a plan to prevent their recurrence. Meanwhile the business must carry on. But lack of a plan means continual outbreaks.

Benedict XVI made great progress regarding the removal of pedophile priests and the promulgation of guidelines for episcopal conferences. But Francis inherited the problem of dealing with non-complying bishops. He had to tread carefully because of widespread resistance. Bishops are not branch managers — they have great autonomy.

Now Francis has established a process of accountability for bishops regarding "crimes of abuse of office when connected to the abuse of minors". It has high level authority and guaranteed resources.

## theology of sexuality

Popes don't contradict their recent predecessors although they sometimes introduce ideas that ultimately lead to different conclusions.

John-Paul II developed a theology of sexuality based on "complementarity" which sees the two sexes with different roles that together create a unity. His teaching presumed an unchanging view of humanity.

Last November Pope Francis addressed participants in an international colloquium on complementarity between man and woman in marriage and affirmed the ideal of lifelong commitment. Michael Lawler and Todd Salzman analysed the ideas used by Francis as a basis for developing further a theology of sexuality.

They found that for Francis complementarity in general "refers to situations where one of two things adds to, completes, or fulfills a lack in the other" but he added that complementarity "is much more than that". He gave four nuances as to how complementarity applies in marriage between a man and a woman.

First, in Paul to the Corinthians: "The Spirit has endowed each of us with different gifts so that — just as the human body's members work together for the good of the whole — everyone's gifts can work together for the benefit of each." This impels humans to create harmony and unity, to overcome division and exclusion and to acknowledge and affirm the Spirit-created varieties of human relationships with God, neighbour, and self.

Second, he emphasised complementarity as a dynamic and evolving idea rather than a "simplistic idea that all the roles and relations of the two sexes are fixed in a single, static pattern."

Third, he recognised the "ecological crisis" plaguing marriage and family. (This includes relations between human groups, the social patterns those relationships create, and the material resources available to them).

Fourth, he focussed on family as an "anthropological fact" which cannot be qualified "based on ideological notions or concepts important only at one time in history."

The authors concluded: "the acts judged by those norms are morally evaluated in light of evolving human knowledge and understanding." ■



# jfk killed for peacemaking

Robert Consedine

Most people in my generation still know where they were when the fatal shots were fired which killed President Kennedy in Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas, in 1963.

We shared the extraordinary grief which crossed countries, borders, religions and cultures. But why was he killed?

Kennedy had campaigned for the 1960 Presidential race as a cold war warrior always worried about being accused of being soft on Communism.

His redemptive moment emerged in 1962 when he had to confront the possibility of total nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis. This issue created "the most dangerous moment of the Cold War and the most perilous moment in human history." The Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted to use nuclear weapons on Cuba and the Soviet Union. They calmly predicted that 130 million people would die initially. Kennedy thought they were mad.

It was a transformative moment for Kennedy. He underwent deep *metanoia* — a spiritual transformation. He resolved the Cuban Missile Crisis through negotiation with Nikita Khrushchev. The mentor for the back channel talks between JFK and Khrushchev at the height of the crisis was Pope John XXIII.

However this brought JFK into direct conflict with his own national security state. They hated him.

Seven months later at the American University, JFK declared that the cold war had ended. It was subsequently named "the speech that got him killed". It was the culmination of a series of extraordinary peacemaking events which included:

- Negotiating peace in 1961 with the Communists for a neutralist government in Laos.
- Cancelling the "Bay of Pigs" invasion in 1961, which was designed

by the CIA to overthrow the Cuban Government. The CIA had deceived Kennedy.

- Keeping the Congo together and independent between 1961-3. Kennedy had been shocked at the assassination of democratically elected Patrice Lumumba in 1961 by the CIA and Belgian Governments.
- Issuing a Presidential order to pursue a nuclear test ban and a policy of complete disarmament. In 1963 he signed a Test Ban Treaty.
- Opening diplomatic relations with the Third World Leadership of President Sukarno.
- Engaging in a back channel dialogue with Fidel Castro.
- Selling wheat to starving Russians. The Republicans called this treason.
- Ordering the first withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam.
- Joining with the Russians for a joint expedition to the moon.

James Douglas sums up the meaning of JFK's death: "Because JFK turned to peace with our enemies, he was assassinated by the covert forces of his own national security state."

This is the "unspeakable; a hypnotic collective denial of the obvious": a term

Thomas Merton coined at the heart of the sixties after JFK's assassination in the midst of the escalating Vietnam War, the nuclear arms race, and the further assassinations of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. In each of these soul-shaking events Merton sensed an evil whose depth and deceit seemed to go beyond the capacity of words to describe. He anticipated Kennedy's assassination.

Merton believed that hope came from confronting the unspeakable.

Kennedy believed that there could be a *coup d'état*. He was acutely aware of the prophetic warning issued by President Eisenhower in 1961: "The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced military/industrial power exists and will persist". No President since JFK has dared challenge the military-industrial complex with its tentacles in 130 countries on 750 bases.

With his commitment to a more peaceful world JFK had confronted that military/industrial power and paid the ultimate price. ■

*Robert Consedine is a workshop leader in Waitangi Associates Ltd and lives in Christchurch. robert@waitangi.co.nz*

## Subscribe to *Tui Motu InterIslands*

Name

Address

Post code  Subscr No

Email

☐ \$33 for five issues (unwaged \$28)

☐ \$66 for a one-year subscription  
11 issues (unwaged \$56)

☐ \$132 for a two-year subscription  
22 issues

### OVERSEAS

Australia & S. Pacific \$80 (1 yr) \$160 (2 yr)

All other regions \$85 (1 yr) \$170 (2 yr)

☐ I am enclosing an additional donation to secure the future of *Tui Motu*.....

☐ I have included a cheque for \$..... GST No: 68.316.847

☐ or, please debit my credit card (Visa/Mastercard)

Card No:

Signature

Name on card

Expiry date

☐ or, pay by direct credit to: BNZ, University of Otago branch, Tui Motu-Interislands, 02-0929-0277471-00. (Please use subscriber number and name, and confirm by email that payment has been made.)

POST TO: PO Box 6404 Dunedin North, Dunedin 9059 Email: admin@tuimotu.org

# a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

Genuine participation is an increasingly important value for me.

Our 13-year-old boy was not very keen to come on our tramping holiday this year. "We always go tramping. Why can't we have a lying around sort of holiday? I don't like the long bus trips on winding roads." So in a democratic-ish way over the last 12 months we have sought out breaks and holidays that suit this boy better. But now we haven't been tramping for over a year and the rest of us are itching to get into some wild, alpine lands. So Middle Boy had the choice of staying back with a friend or coming along. And strangely but happily he chose to come with us. He was not all delighted participation but he showed up. Thanks Rohan!

Our community mental health project is working hard to increase participation of people with mental distress in all spheres of life. They must also be welcome to join our Burans project as team members. Last month someone we hired, relapsed

to his previous life in addiction and left after three weeks in the job. We all felt disappointed and a few team members said we shouldn't have hired him in the first place. I said: "No, I'm glad we gave him a chance." We need to mean what we say and share opportunities to participate in employment. We all need second chances, and 5th and 49th chances.

Participation in worship is also important to me. A mass where old and young, male and female, highly educated and high school dropouts all play a role up the front, is a great representation of the Reign of God. Nadia Bolz-Weber, the tattooed woman priest at the Episcopalian "House for All Sinners and Saints" in Denver, USA talks about the importance of a democratised worship space — sharing the liturgy in a circle rather than being led by one or two special people.

Worship led exclusively by white, able-bodied males makes me feel uncomfortable and excluded. It is distant from the messy kind of scene

Jesus was into. A broken woman breaks into a *tête-à-tête* with disciples and synagogue leaders and pours perfume over Jesus' feet, crying. Illiterate fishermen join tax collectors as part of the "Main Team" with Jesus. A roof-crashing person with paraplegia drops himself and building debris into the middle of a sermon. Sermon is stopped. He is welcomed and healed. It is much more important to have generous and welcoming participation than a stumble-free liturgy.

Messy, time-consuming, tokenistic even — participation is like a wave I cannot stop. The challenge is whether I sit and watch or choose to join in, grabbing others' hands in this big party celebrating belonging and participation for all — and the coming of God's reign on earth. ■

*Kaaren Mathias is a Public Health physician and the programme manager for Mental Health in the Emmanuel Hospital Association in North India where she lives with her family.*

May we walk humbly  
alert to our questions  
open to freshness  
encouraged to do justice  
fortified by daily bread  
saturated with your rainbow tenderness  
Gracious God.

*From the Tui Motu Team*

