

TUI MOTU InterIslands

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DIANNE GILROY, CANDICE WILSON,
MIKE TONKS and JOHN DUNN
on gaining maturity by working
with others

NEIL DARRAGH and MARY BETZ
discuss Pope Francis's *Beloved Amazon*

Mahitahi Working together

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Young man taking his
12-year-old brother for
a walk.



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EDITORIAL

Working Together in Uncertain Times

We're sending this magazine into a different world from the one we imagined a month ago. Passion, fear, uncertainty and death, the focus of Holy Week liturgies, are rawly visible at home and in our world disrupted by Covid-19.

Coronavirus has lit up our networks of connections to one another around the world in an unprecedented way. Whereas we may have had a theoretical belief before, now it is reality. From hour to hour we're moving our lives into our homes to keep our families "safe" and to try to stop the virus spreading further.

Measures to stop Covid-19 have impacted on *Tui Motu* magazine. New Zealand is in lockdown and so we cannot publish a hard copy of this April issue. We will extend your subscriptions to cover any issue we are unable to publish. We will continue to post articles on our website and social media as usual.

But rejoice — the Easter magazine is with you! The theme of this issue is working together. At this time, when every public communication about the virus is accompanied by the message to be kind and to think of others, the articles and reflections in this issue remind us that we know how to be community and to support the common good.

We're in a new time, an extended "passion", and we will need to create new ways of being community. We're embarking on our own Emmaus walk where we're trying to understand everything that is happening, find ways to respond with support and hope and be open to the influences of Divine love in this crisis.

We thank all our contributors who have shared generously their research, experience, faith, reflection, art and craft in this issue. We are always in awe of what we can produce by working together. We hope that it will give you a few hours of reading when feelings of being cooped-up, afraid or worried will slip away.

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

As Well As COVID-19

This is not another coronavirus story. I've no doubt by the time you read this the media will have reached saturation point in its wall to wall coverage of the pandemic. The outbreak is definitely concerning — it is spreading quickly in the world, and we are taking measures to protect ourselves and others and relieve stress on the healthcare system.

The news coverage of coronavirus has reached fever pitch. It sometimes appears life has all but been put on pause. But life does go on and will go on when Covid-19 eventually slips from the headlines.

In light of that, I'd like to take a moment to cover the news that has, due to that same virus, fallen by the wayside. They're positive news stories that actually do us good to hear, but that recently haven't received the airtime they deserve.

For example, you'd be forgiven for not knowing that Colombia has just agreed to grant working rights to hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan refugees. With those rights they won't be forced to return to the country they fled. And, after emerging from the world's longest civil war, Colombia is also on track to remove every single landmine from its territory by 2021.

Meanwhile, neighbouring countries India and Pakistan have just opened up a peaceful corridor that allows Sikhs to visit their second most holy site for the first time in more than 70 years.

India is taking climate action, too: one of the world's fastest growing economies, it has committed to stop importing thermal coal over the next four years. And across the Himalayas, clean energy now supplies very nearly half of all of Turkey's power needs, while Vietnam is 10 years ahead of its own clean energy targets.

The UK will ban petrol cars after 2035, and Singapore has just become the first country in South-East Asia to implement its own ban for 2040.

China has completely banned the



killing, hunting and eating of wild animals, while globally, overfishing at half the world's fisheries is now being reversed.

The latest statistics show that since 2000, there are some 130 million more children in schools around the world, and almost 100 million fewer child labourers.

And adults have even largely stopped killing each other, with global homicide rates having dropped by a fifth since 1990.

That's not even to mention what's happened in the last few months in our own neck of the woods.

New Zealand has banned new oil and gas exploration nationally, passed a bill to become carbon neutral by 2050 and run on entirely clean energy by 2035 as well as to plant one billion new trees by the end of the decade. That will probably help with the extra 64,000 hectares of national park it just added, the largest expansion of national parkland in its history. Meanwhile, the land of the long white cloud also recently became only the second country in the world to offer 10 days of paid leave for victims of domestic violence.

Over the ditch, Australia has managed finally to get Norwegian oil giant Equinor to abandon its plans for exploration of the Great Australian Bight, after sustained pressure from activists over many years. Not far from there, we've also started "The

Great Australian Ark", the world's largest rewilding project, which aims to reintroduce 20 native species to a protected piece of land.

Of course, if it is superbugs that keep you up at night I've got good news for you, too. Researchers at the American University MIT have discovered a new antibiotic compound that kills the majority of known drug-resistant bacteria.

According to the World Health Organisation, global cholera cases fell by 60 per cent last year, while we've actually wiped out Type 3 polio, meaning only one strain of it remains in the world, existing in just two countries.

I'd like to think there's a message in all of this for us. That beyond the doom and gloom that so often dominates media cycles, and drives us into petty fights and temporary hysteria, the world is getting a little brighter each day.

But we only take a step forward when we take that step together. It's in times like these, faced with great challenges and seemingly unparalleled crises, that we need to remember cooperation — not division — brings progress, and patience will always beat panic. 🙌



Jack Derwin is a senior reporter at *Business Insider Australia*. His interests include all aspects of social justice particularly in the South Pacific region.



LITTLE SCHOOL BIG HEART

DIANNE GILROY explores how the everyday working in their tiny school in Bluff contributes to the children's maturity.

Among the millions of Google descriptions of maturity, one that attracted me was: "Maturity comes through working with others, through dialogue, and through a sense of belonging and searching together. Human beings need to be encouraged to make choices and be responsible for their own lives and for the lives of others."

I'd taken this communal aspect of maturing for granted until I realised that the description sums up our experience of a day, a week, a term and a year in our wee school of 27 children, two teachers (me and Rosi), our teacher aide and secretary. We do so much work together and we comment so often about the ways our children grow and develop – but usually as individuals. This description puts the emphasis on how we encourage and practice responsible choices through the everyday working of our particular school whānau.

I have children from Years 1 to 3 (aged five to seven years) in my

classroom and the children in Years 4 to 8 (aged eight to 12) are next door. There's a sliding door between the two rooms but we seldom close it.



Handing On

Like any Catholic school we start our day with prayer. However, this prayer is a whole school event, with everyone including parents participating. A group of children – a couple of senior children and one or two littlies – organise the prayer. They choose the

songs, the readings and the prayers. We think of it as our "family" time. Every so often Rosi or I may assist because of a particular theme or season, but we don't take over. We join the group. I've noticed over my six years here that the morning prayer routines are being "handed down". The big ones are teaching the younger ones who in turn are growing up and becoming the leaders.

Playing Together

Another area where the smallness of our situation contributes to children's maturing is in getting along and resolving conflict. As in all schools our children have disagreements, but ours "fight" like brothers and sisters. All the children play together. We don't have enough of any one age group to make up teams for a particular game or sport. So whatever game they introduce in the playground the big ones have to play in such a way that the little ones can join in safely and with enjoyment. The older ones develop a certain sense of patience, empathy and encouragement. I think of them as maturing in sensitivity and kindness. And the little ones learn to speak up, to take part and to hone their skills.

Projects

We are an Enviroschool, having joined the environmental action based programme that encourages children to design and lead sustainability projects in the school and the neighbourhood. As well as joining with other children in New Zealand and the world, we are practising the call of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* to love creation and do everything in our power to protect the environment in our area.



So we plan for and with our students activities that not only enhance the environment but ones that lead to developing an ingrained understanding of the issues, factors, principles and actions that are needed to protect our local environment and ultimately the planet.

Usually we devote one day a week, "Enviro Friday", for intentional activities. The kids buddy up – always little ones with older ones – engaging in discussion and tasks. They range from art projects, to weeding, to writing to organisations around an issue. Rosi and I delight in seeing the students feeding ideas off one another. They are growing in knowledge of their environment and also developing a passion for protecting it.

And it is having a ripple effect – the children are influencing the local community. When the local Bluff Hill/Motupōhue Environment Trust has a "working bee"-type activity, like a beach clean-up, a very large proportion of our school whānau turns up to help.

So the children are changing their families and the local community – and the learning experiences of the school are assisted by professionals

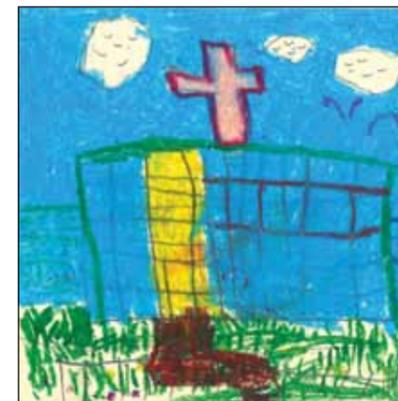
and activities organised by the local community.

Our School Anniversary

This year our school is celebrating its 120-year anniversary. Our preparation is growing increasingly exciting as the children delve into the past finding stories of the Catholic community, the children and the teachers through that time. They are talking with their whānau who may have also gone to the school, to some of the older townspeople who came to the school. They're digging into the local news for the people and the stories in the history of our school.

We're inquiring together and developing a sense of belonging to this much bigger school community – one that stretches over 120 years. It's more exciting than having the history already printed in a book. The children are finding information and discovering their connections to past stories and people. And those related to family who have gone to the school in previous generations are sharing with those whose families are the current generation. Together our children are "making" the book of our school.

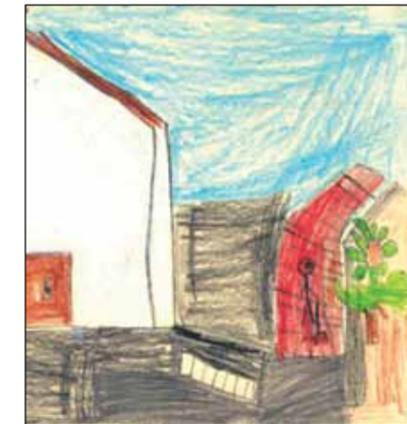
One fascinating story came from Hayley (aged six) who was really chuffed to share it with us. "When the convent was on fire (1958), Leo Hawke, Hayley's great-great-grandad, saw it from work and raced up the hill on foot. He found his way inside the chapel and saved the tabernacle, just in time." A small but significant piece of history that has pride of place in the "book"!



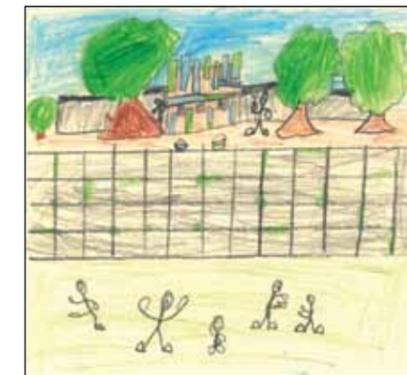
We're Together

I was discussing writing this article with some of my students and asked them what they thought. Students in

the senior class commented that they can be friends with everyone. Ziggy said: "We just all know each other." Kanon, aged seven, observed: "We are brighter together, I mean brainier together, because we can connect our ideas together. You know, we are a little school with a big heart."



I love the children's comments. It makes me feel that in working together, we are all maturing – the children, the teachers, the other staff. We're all continuing to learn. And comments like the children's remind Rosi and me that we're not the only ones with wisdom in this little community.



I think of wine developing flavour and depth with age. It's like our children and adults maturing by working together intentionally, with purpose and with reflection. I'm finding the African proverb very true: "If you want to go fast – go alone. If you want to go far – go together." 🙌



Dianne Gilroy recently from Auckland is Associate Principal at St Teresa's in Bluff. She loves DIY, art and is an active member of Coastguard.

L'Arche People

CANDICE WILSON offers a glimpse of the women and men she's learning from by being involved in a L'Arche community.

Last month we were reeling with the news that Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, had sexually abused at least six women over the span of 35 years. This was all within the context of spiritual direction in the original L'Arche community of Trosly-Breuil in France. It has left L'Arche and Faith and Light communities around the world in a place of deep sorrow and pain, not to mention the victims.

L'Arche – with its 154 communities spread over 38 countries – will continue to thrive despite this devastating news. That's because we unabashedly trust that God called us into being and is holding, sustaining and guiding us in all of our fragility. And we have remarkable members – Core Members (those with an intellectual disability) and Assistants (personal support workers) – who share life together with all of its ups and downs, joys and struggles.

At L'Arche on the Kapiti Coast we live together in three homes. Visiting us, you could witness anything from an impromptu Abba dance party, Tim running laps around the homes or relaxing in a tree, Tamzin making an acrostic card for a housemate who's feeling down or the garden club busy at work.

The primary mission of L'Arche is to make known the gifts of those who are differently abled. These stories give a glimpse of that, and in doing so show the great extent to which these remarkable individuals are our teachers.

Claudia – Have Self-Confidence

Core Member Claudia is a self-confident person – a role model to the rest of us. When Claudia meets others, she proudly tells

them she has autism and what that means for her and her life. Several months ago when she was chopping vegetables in the kitchen, she stopped and said to an Assistant rather matter-of-factly and with pride: "You know, I'm so happy when I'm around!" Another time when it was her turn to pray during the house evening prayer, Claudia said: "Dear God, I thank you for . . . I thank you for, ME! I made an amazing dinner tonight, yes I did, and I'd like to thank you for that." She is also remarkable for remembering others in prayer. I wonder how the world would change if we all looked upon ourselves with a little more kindness?

Brian – Know When It's Time to Move On

Brian was a Core Member in my previous L'Arche community in Canada. He is a gentle person who loves coffee and Canadian "timbits" (mini doughnuts) more than anyone. But, if a new Assistant comes into his home who isn't working out as he expected, Brian will let them know. At an opportune time he'll covertly make his way to their bedroom and proceed to pack their belongings into whatever suitcase or bag they came with. Then, not so subtly, he'll leave the bag by the front door. Hint! Brian, who can't speak, can make himself crystal clear in his communication! It could be that the Assistant wasn't up to the intricacies of rug-hooking (Brian's favourite shared activity), or maybe their colouring was sub-standard

(Brian's second favourite activity). Brian sometimes gives them a second chance, but they had better shape up quickly! He has sent packing many a university student over the years. Brian knows how to sit on a couch and be present without turning to social media, or to learn rug-hooking simply because it means so much to someone else. These are the things a university education doesn't teach – but Brian can.

Photo by L'Arche Kapiti



Peter – Have Your Cake and Eat It Too

Peter is a chocolate aficionado and he certainly won't let us forget it, especially when chocolate cake is concerned. Chocolate is of utmost importance at birthday parties – it can do wonders at turning Peter's mood around. He mentions chocolate about 100 times a day along with other matters of importance in his life. These include birthday parties themselves (especially

that they humour him even when it's hard for them. Peter reminds us to remember and celebrate birthdays, to honour the individual and to take the time to savour good chocolate cake. Peter's rule is always to leave some chocolate cake for next day's lunchbox – another hot topic of his.

Julie – The Face of God Surprises

Julie knows her own mind. She

at their side asking details of their life and offering prayer. I've seen her at Wellington Hospital walk right up to people saying: "Hi. I'm Julie from L'Arche! What's your name and why are you here?" In no time flat, Julie has people recounting their medical histories and what has brought them into hospital.

Several years ago, a woman visiting Ngatiawa River Monastery was having profound difficulties in her personal life and identity. One night at chapel she started sobbing quietly. Julie left her seat and went to sit beside her. She took the woman's hand saying over and over: "I love you, I love you, I love you." Later the woman said that night for the first time in her life she felt God's presence and love.

Living the Resurrection

These stories show that at L'Arche we try to be resurrection people, in all our imperfect and bumbling ways at times. From day to day, life is as surprising and radical as it is ordinary. Through all of our quirks and idiosyncrasies we learn from one another about life, pain and joy. It's certainly something to celebrate.

A few years ago chocolate lover Peter acted as Jesus in our Good Friday Stations of the Cross walk. When it came time for Jesus to be buried in the tomb, we simply threw a white sheet over him in a symbolic gesture. As we stood around reflecting on the darkness of the tomb and the sadness of Good Friday, contagious giggles came from under that sheet. We half-heartedly tried to shush him. But, I thought, even in the darkness God knows how the story ends and giggles foreshadow the deep

joy of the resurrection. Thank you, Peter, for teaching us that. Even as L'Arche communities now go through a difficult, dark time – a tomb time – we know that the light will come. Pass the chocolate cake please. 🙌



Candice Wilson, originally from Canada, has been the Community Leader for L'Arche Kapiti for almost six years.

BECOMING BETTER

MEN AND DADS



MIKE TONKS shares how men in a parenting group influence one another to think about their behaviour and attitudes.

For the last 10 plus years I've been involved in running "Game On" – a parenting course for dads at Catholic Social Services in Dunedin. One night a dad was complaining about a situation with his ex-partner and how he was going

to sort it out. Another guy pulled him up on his planned course of action saying: "One thing the world doesn't need is another angry man."

The following week the complaining dad spoke about what he had done in the week to resolve the

situation with his former partner. His response was really mature – a world away from what he had said he was going to do. The guy who had pulled him up the week before asked him what had brought about the change. He responded a little sheepishly: "I

decided it was time to grow up."

I remember I had to make that decision consciously, too.

Coming to the Decision

When I was a young man I thought that the words "wisdom" and "maturity" went together like Ian and Curtis. But while I wanted wisdom immediately, I could do without maturity. In my young mind maturity meant I was old, conservative, responsible, thoughtful and aloof. In other words, I was no fun, dull and ultimately really boring. "Blessed are the childish," is how a friend of mine put it. My mandate was having good times. Maturity could wait and as for wisdom – well, I knew everything already.

But then life changed. The first major interruption came from God. I had a religious conversion and embraced the idea that God had a purpose for my life. Then I got married, got a job, had a child (actually four) and somewhere along the line I realised that something in my attitude had to change. It was time to grow up.

I remember the impact of Paul's words in I Corinthians 13:11: "When I was a child, I did and thought like a child, but when I became a man I put childish things away." I realised I had a choice – to carry on in the same manner or to put away my childish things and embrace acting and thinking like an adult. My decision would influence the future of my family, my ministry and my life.

Men Have Similar Experiences

Many of the men I have worked with, young and old, have also identified this decision as one they needed to make. Yet many struggle making it.

Some struggle because they fear or don't want the responsibility it will bring.

Others are influenced by their own childhood experiences. Regardless of the particular struggle, it is an important choice that we make for our well-being and for those close to us.

Interestingly, I recently had a 40-year-old say to me (I've worked with him since he was about 30) that he had decided that it was time he put childish things behind him and become the man he needs to be.

A Gospel Call

There were two ways I could approach my journey to wisdom and maturity: the way of the guru alone on the hilltop, or the way of Jesus.

I took my inspiration from Jesus. Sure, Jesus had a few mountaintop moments, but most of the time he was in the valleys with the people. As I read about him in the scriptures, I saw that many of his exchanges showed that he actually learned from his interactions with others.



We encourage one another to put aside our judgements and to connect with empathy to other men's stories. We share the wisdom we are discovering in trying to be our best selves.

These experiences influenced his teaching and the wisdom he shared – so much so, that people were "amazed at his teaching". For example, the parables Jesus told made a connection with his hearers because he had obviously listened, experienced, felt and knew what it was like to be human in all its joy and suffering. And on occasions, Jesus wept.

Jesus has inspired my journey to be my best self by revealing that my interactions with others are a two-way street. The truly wise do not spout truth from afar, rather, they engage in conversation in such a way that all are affected and influenced by the experience of being human together. I have been profoundly affected by interacting with diverse people over the years. These connections have shaped, challenged and helped me for good. But only when I chose to let them.

Working Together for Maturity

Working with the dads in Game On has been a privilege and an amazing opportunity because it has helped me as much as it has helped the other dads.

I think part of the reason for this success is that everyone in the course – facilitators and participants – is there to learn. We encourage one another to put aside our judgements and to connect with empathy to other men's stories. We share the wisdom we are discovering in trying to be our best selves.

I remember a gang member and a university academic being on the same course. The academic shared a problem and it was the gang member who provided the important advice and support. The academic took the gang member's words to heart and later thanked him for this help.

Another time, one of the men's stories struck a chord with me during a course. It made me reflect on the way I was reacting to one of my daughters. I'm a better dad because of acting upon that advice.

To Become Better People

This is the point: to become a better person and more loving man. As Paul says: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up". I have found that my capacity to be loving grows. There continue to be personal things that I need to change so that others experience my love as building them up – be they family, staff or clients. Working on these personal changes doesn't often feel like fun, but it's not boring and it is quite fulfilling!

Through my connections, interactions and relationships with others I have become more compassionate, more organised, more responsive and more clear about my boundaries.

I still have so much more to learn (including how to say "no" to taking on more stuff) but I'm up for it and I choose to be up for it. Game on! 🙌

Photo by Loreanto/Shutterstock



Mike Tonks is the Director of Catholic Social Services in Dunedin.



DEVELOPING CHURCH COMMUNITY

JOHN DUNN shares his perspective of parishioners' participation in parish organisation, ministry and mission.

Ministry is the perennial issue parishes have to deal with – particularly the ministry of lay people in the parish. How do we maximise the contribution of the laity to help a parish come alive?

All ministry has its source in Baptism. In the Baptismal Rite each of us is anointed and called to share in Jesus Christ's ministry. Just as Jesus is our one priest, our one prophet, our one servant leader, so we are called to follow Christ by being priests, being prophets, being servants in our day. Thus we share in and continue Jesus's ministry in our contemporary world.

Enabling Lay Ministry

A priest has a vital role in enabling lay

ministry. I think a priest needs two qualities for this. He must be able to gather a community around him. And, he must be able to show his vulnerability. This might mean saying "I can't", or "Help me". And for him to ask questions such as: "What do we need?" and "What can we do?" Ministry is then free to flourish.

Parish Experience

I want to offer, humbly, my experience in St Ignatius parish. We are a happy, small parish (about 360 people at Sunday Mass; a quarter of whom are under 12), with large lay involvement. The congregation is mostly pākehā, young-ish, well-educated and exposed to the prevailing secular

culture of our day. We follow a community model of Church.

Our aim is for everyone to know and interact with a reasonable number of other parishioners – to experience and understand ourselves as community.

Our starting point is our parish vision: To be a Christian faith community that reflects God's love for everyone.

It is simple, inspiring and inclusive and all of us, including children, can understand it and be involved.

Welcome and Hospitality

Our first way to reflect God's love is by welcoming visitors. We all need to be involved but some have the ministry of welcoming directly. Newcomers are welcomed at the door and given a newsletter and, if relevant, a children's activity sheet. Before Mass starts, a hospitality minister welcomes everyone

with the invitation (in pre-Covid-19 days!): "In order to gather as one Body to celebrate this Eucharist, let us stand and greet those all around us." Our intention is to help one another move from our private prayer and to connect with our neighbours as community so that we continue the Eucharist as one. The priest's invitation: "Let us pray" stresses our community involvement with the "us".

After Mass we invite everyone to stay for tea and coffee. We have parishioners whose specific gift and task it is to engage with those standing on their own and then to introduce them to others. This makes new connections immediately. We've found that over time – months and years – we've developed a strong feeling of belonging and owning "our parish".

Care by the Community

We have developed a widespread network of relationships in which people feel comfortable reaching out to others. We have a great parish "grapevine". When we hear of someone in need people mobilise quickly – picking up children, delivering meals, visiting in hospital. Likewise, feedback comes very honestly through the grapevine. Of course, there are always some instances we miss but we are continuing to work on this.

Focusing on Children

Part of our goal is to make young children feel welcome. We have developed an environment where children's movement and noise is tolerated for two reasons – first, the children can be themselves (their attention span is under 5 minutes!), and second, their parents are present and we can open up the Gospel to them in ways that speak to them.

Our aim is to give every child happy experiences of God, the community, the priest and even the church building. We pray that this experience will go deep and will keep young people connected with the Church, or reconnect them in their later life.

Calling People to Ministry

How do we get people involved in ministry? Usually we do this by

shoulder-tapping and telling someone that they would be great in this or that ministry. Sometimes the parish council highlights a specific need at the end of Mass – and that usually draws a generous response. However, like all parishes we have our ups and downs.

Working Parish Council

Our Parish Council is active. We aim to elect six women and six men for the council. It is the reflective and executive body of the parish. What the council decides is what happens.

Our starting point is our parish vision: To be a Christian faith community that reflects God's love for everyone. It is simple, inspiring and inclusive and all of us, including children, can understand it and be involved.

In my early years, I approached the council as an act of faith in the people, but over time I've changed to being one with the council. Our people realise they can get involved and make a difference and the council suggests initiatives and provides common-sensed oversight. Although the council has its ebb and flow, its mana is clear in the parish.

Alongside the parish council is a small team that meets weekly – the council chairperson, the pastoral worker and the priest. This group provides a further layer of oversight, encouragement and action for carrying out the council decisions.

We're working on new initiatives to meet the challenge of making our young people feel they are valued participants in the parish. And we are lowering the age profile of those in ministry to reflect the profile of our parishioners. This in turn focuses us on where to look for our next ministers.

Going beyond the Church Community

Sometimes a new project can inspire new ministers to emerge. For eight years we have shared a partnership with a nearby State school that is very poor. Many people became involved and the well-being and educational opportunities of the children remain our concern.

Care of Ministers

We recognise that on-going change is necessary to keep the parish alive and flourishing. We gain and lose families regularly as many of our parishioners are on transfer for their work. New families bring new experiences and can contribute new ideas. We also have members who find change hard. Our challenge is to move incrementally without great ruptures and with the principle that following Jesus Christ calls us to change.

We have two practices to assist parishioners from becoming overburdened or entrenched in a role or ministry. The first is that parish councillors serve a term of three years, renewable once. The second is that a person has only one ministry at a time. So a communion minister would not also be a reader. We sometimes struggle to put aims fully into practice.

Burnout can be an issue for all who are heavily involved. In theory, we address this by saying that while everyone is called to ministry, there is a time and a season for every person to serve. We all have times in our lives when other commitments need to take precedence – so it is not our time to be involved in ministry. As our circumstances change we can take our turn.

My issue as a priest is more about ageing than burnout. I love being a priest in this community. Everything works around and with me and I can relax and enjoy the parish. St Ignatius is one parish in these challenging times where lay people are shaping the Church into the future. ✎

Painting: *Valley of Decision* by Brian Kershnik © Used with permission www.kershnik.com



John Dunn is the parish priest of St Ignatius Parish in St Heliers Bay, Auckland.



Listen to the WHISPERINGS

SUE BENNETT writes about her call to a new pathway and affiliation with the Sisters of St Joseph.

I shall never forget the day I made my first profession of Private Vows with the Sisters of St Joseph – the Josephites. The Chapel was filled with family, friends, colleagues and of course many Josephites. The sheer joy on the faces of all those gathered

during Eucharist and lunch afterwards resounded in me. I felt grateful for the powerful and healing witness of the Mass, my commitment and the spirit of the Josephite community. It was an inpouring of the Holy Spirit, as if I had been re-confirmed, empowered and strengthened to a new level.

Mary MacKillop once wrote: "Listen to the whisperings of God to your own heart." I decided to follow this advice. My journey was gentle, consistent but varied. I grew in

Sue Bennett lives in Auckland and is the incoming Principal of St Joseph's School in Ōrākei. She shares mindful prayer and connection with nature.



connection and awareness of being "at home" with the Josephites. I noticed my thirst for the silence of retreats. First with one-day retreats and slowly building to six-days. I joined in Saturday retreat days at the MacKillop Centre and began to make the chapel there my place for Sunday Eucharist.

A Starting Point

At one retreat my spiritual director suggested I use Haggai 2:23 for reflection. "When that day comes," the Holy One declares, "I shall take you, my servant and make you like a signet ring for I have chosen you." I felt a need to deepen my commitment to God and to respond to my long term searching for either a Third Order or Religious Life. I was attracted to the Josephites' different ways of belonging: as a member of Religious Life through public vows; through Affiliation and with private vows; through a Covenant; or as a Companion.

Which was for me? I began to discern purposefully. Each month I met with a Sister as my Discernment Guide and I entered into immersion gathering regularly with a Josephite community for prayer and a meal and engaging in different ways with the local community. I also had opportunities to be part of Congregational meetings.

Phases on the Way

The discernment journey had different phases and we marked my moving from phase to phase with a ritual.

"Come and See" (John 1:35-39) was a time for me to reflect and explore. Do I seem at home with Josephite spirituality? Do I have a genuine desire to be in communion with the Josephites? Do I wish to be involved in serving others in the spirit of Mary MacKillop?

"Enter into the Land" (Leviticus 25:2-7) was a time to read, write and reflect. I explored each "pathway" of Josephite commitment, asking: How would this enrich my life? How would my life be different? How would God's plan/desire for my fullness of life unfold in this way? Is this enough for my life?

I felt drawn to stability – to remain in ministry where I currently work and live – rather than to

mobility – like the Sisters to be called to other places for ministry. I felt energised when we began discussing the pathway of Private Vows. For this I would need to write my Rule of Life. I was excited about creating my personal way of life in the context of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience within the Josephite charism. The Rule would formalise my living and also my connection with the Josephites.

I continued discerning this pathway over the months and as it settled in me – sinking more deeply – I felt confirmed in the decision.

"Finding the Treasure" (Matthew 13:44-46) was when I began to read contemporary writings on the vows more carefully to discover how they could apply to my life and ministry in affiliation with the Josephites. I began creating my Rule.

I outlined my journey of call and how I was drawn to the Josephite charism. Then I wrote how I would live the three vows. I understand the vow of chastity as loving with Christ, to "love tenderly" with gratitude and kindness. My vow of poverty is being poor with Christ, to "act justly" with simplicity and sustainability. My vow of obedience is being obedient with Christ, to "walk humbly with your God" by listening, receiving and responding.

I proclaimed my vows: "In the context of God's mission of love, peace and justice in our world I promise to express this commitment through being conscious of nature and all creation, through joyful loving service in my teaching and daily encounters, and through prayer and contemplation." My call is to God's mission in the world, to participate in that mission, to be in community with the Josephites and to live contemplatively.

Being Part of a Group

I wrote in my Rule of Life: "I feel at home, one with the Josephite spirit – charism. A sense of what I have been seeking I have found, a homeland, a place to settle – yet able to keep open to growing and learning. I appreciate and am at one with the eclectic spirituality of the Josephites as it resonates with my

own. I am at one with their down to earth, practical, inclusive, welcoming, friendly and joyful way of being.

"I am inspired by their sense of Mission which never ends. I admire their 'living on the edges' and 'seek the most vulnerable' ethos. Their example strengthens me to do the same. This encourages me in my own life's mission. The Josephites have a teacher heart and way of thinking which I find easy to connect with. I feel a connection with their desire to look after Earth and to live in sustainable ways."

Living the Call

How does being a Josephite affect me and my ministry? I am never not a Josephite. Wherever I am, whoever I am with, whatever I am doing I am encouraged and strengthened to be my best self, to be inclusive and welcoming to all, to go out of my comfort zone, go the extra mile.

I engage in my ministry as a Catholic teacher and leader with the spirit of Mary MacKillop and the spiritual body of Josephite women. I am keen to share the Josephite charism and words of our founders, Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods. As I am inspired, I also hope to inspire others. I am energised by being part of this group.

After my Private Vows ceremony I reflected on the journey that led to recognising my call: "I thank God for planting a seed of yearning and patiently waiting for the perfect people, time and setting for it to come to fruit. Thank you Josephite Sisters for creating different pathways for belonging. I appreciate the discernment journey which values and respects yourselves as a Congregation and the person seeking belonging."

Not long after my profession I wrote: "I look forward to my new way of belonging with you, as it unfolds. I am prepared for almost anything!" Now "anything" has arrived. I have been appointed as the principal of my school – a first for me! So it began and so it continues with joy. 🙌

Painting: *Thinking Woman* by Marlina Vera © Used with permission www.marlinavera.com

Birth of a Dancing Star: My Journey from Cradle Catholic to Cyborg Christian

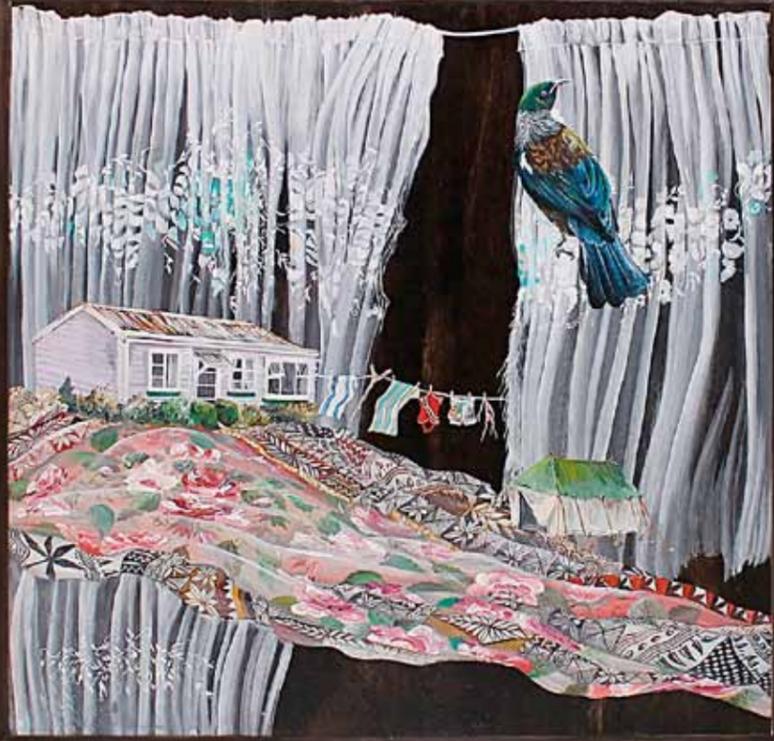
by Ilia Delio
Published by Orbis Books,
2019
Reviewed by Ann Gilroy

BOOK

Birth of a Dancing Star is the autobiography of Ilia Delio, a USA theologian and author who has been on speaking engagements in this part of the world. The book sets the author in her family, the late child in an Italian-American family. Ilia recounts her life focusing on



her breakthroughs into new understandings of herself and reality: family and schooling, university studies in science, entering a Carmelite monastery and leaving, joining a Franciscan community and discovering theology, then leaving that community and beginning a new Franciscan community and a full time university position. The last few chapters I found the most stimulating. Ilia invites the reader to join her in understanding the wholeness of religion and science – of everything – in the energy of the love of God. This brings alive her studies of Bonaventure and Teilhard de Chardin and many people along the way. While some accounts in the early chapters sound contrived and observations about people are frank and even dismissive, in the last part of the book – not easy reading – a great teacher is inviting the reader into a whole new consciousness of cyborg Christianity. 🙌



Nothing is Wasted

JUDITH BALARES SALAMAT reflects on what she has learnt by working with others.

I remember the nugget of wisdom: “Nothing is wasted”. It has helped me survive as a migrant, a member of the “global community”. The community includes people of all colours, races, ages and generations. It embraces living “home away from home”. For me, this is in New Zealand now, away from my geographical home, the Philippines.

All the experiences I’ve had as an employee, family member, student and parishioner have been fruitful and meaningful in helping me to my “now”. But I want to focus on work – an integral aspect of my life here in New Zealand.

I’ve been a migrant worker for

nearly eight years in healthcare and education. Now I have a more promising role in the education industry, a role within my comfort zone.

Back then, during the earlier years, I challenged myself: What can I do in work here that takes me beyond my comfort zone? How will I accept changes to convenient settings including pay rates, titles and tasks?

Throughout this time I’ve called on the values of gentleness, humility, prayer, cheerfulness, selflessness and kindness. Only on reflection did I realise these fruits of the Holy Spirit are the key to my coping.

Migrant workers most often work with colleagues and leaders of different cultures from places around the world. We experience different customs, food and eating habits and work traditions. I found that if I was open to these people and the experiences offered, I grew in understanding and knowledge. I

Judith Balares Salamat tutors ESOL, Adult Literacy and Numeracy, and Beginners’ Computer Literacy. She is also studying NZ Diploma in Adult and Tertiary Teaching.



found, too, that I needed to practise more prayerful listening – listening that was deeper than just hearing. This was particularly challenging when emotions and the quest for security could ruin my rational judgements.

There are a few nuggets of wisdom that I’ve learned from my work experiences with others.

First, is the need for adjustment. This means to adapt to the new environment with open-mindedness, humility and patience.

Then, to develop a capacity to understand languages, both verbal and non-verbal, together with the accents, idioms and slang of co-workers. It means learning to find what’s in the heart of the communication, which can be different from the spoken words or silence.

Another nugget is respecting work colleagues, including not talking in my own language when others will be excluded from participating. I follow the Golden Rule in that matter.

Fourth, is to appreciate and value my home and culture and also to adopt the new culture so that I’m at home there, too. But having the confidence to share my own culture is important.

Fifth, is my daily practice of prayer. I’ve found relating my work to the day’s biblical passage and vice-versa very helpful. And, in the evening, asking how I have been able to serve the Lord is very rewarding.

Looking back, I’m grateful for these nuggets of wisdom I’ve learned over the years that have helped me survive and thrive in the cross-cultural dynamic of work. Faith has sustained me in adjusting, coping well, accepting differences and appreciating my own identity and culture more.

While no workplace is perfect, I’ve learned to focus on the good, the true and the beautiful. I’ve grown and matured through working with others. I’ve found, too, that I’ve learned from every experience: “Nothing is wasted.” Each experience is an opportunity for using God’s gifts for others. 🙌

Artwork: *The Shadows (Sleeps 18)* by Nicky Thompson © Used with permission www.artbythesea.co.nz

Share as we do Cake

THOMAS O’LOUGHLIN outlines the significance of one loaf of bread for Eucharist.



Luke writes about Paul aboard a storm-tossed ship. Everyone was panicking. Paul urged everyone to eat. He “took a loaf of bread; and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. Then all of them were encouraged and took food for themselves” (Acts 27:35-36). And soon the ship was safely beached on Malta.

Whether or not Luke had an actual historical source for this near shipwreck is not important. What is significant is that Luke (writing at least 30 years after Paul’s death) could not imagine any follower of Jesus taking part in a shared meal without that meal having the hallmarks of the Christian Eucharist. What Luke was concerned to show was that Paul was thanking in the Jesus-fashion as distinct from the more common manner of being eucharistic that was found among Jews. What made Jesus’s eucharistic activity – and so that of the Churches to whom Luke preached – visibly different from the normal eucharist practised in all pious Jewish households was that Jesus took a loaf, then blessed God, and then had the group share the loaf.

Since it was this *action* that was distinctive of the Jesus’s Eucharist – just as Paul practised on the ship in the storm – we can now understand why in all our early accounts (eg, Mk 14:22-5) we are given the description of Jesus’s actions not the words of blessing he used. Expressed in later terminology, we do not have the text

of Jesus’s Eucharistic prayer, but only the rubrics, such as the instructions to those present: “Take this, and divide it among yourselves” (Lk 22:17).

Given this emphasis on breaking and sharing a loaf it is simply amazing that what is most distinctive about the Eucharist as Jesus celebrated it has all but disappeared in our practice. Most Catholics have never experienced anything but little round wafers, and have never paid any attention to the priest breaking his loaf into two pieces. Indeed, most priests pay little attention to the fraction and see it as merely a bit of arcane if symbolic ritual.

One priest said it let him fold his own “large host” into two so that he could eat without difficulty. Moreover, when it is suggested that we use larger breads that can be broken up and shared with those gathered, many dismiss the idea as impractical or just a lot of fuss about nothing!

The significance of Jesus’s action still speaks to us. The imagery of sharing a loaf still has meaning for us. We know that a cake – as distinct from a bun – is not just for one person but for sharing. We offer “a piece of cake”. We take care as we cut a cake so that each person can have a piece.

And we have cakes for special times. We have Christmas cake and sometimes a simnel cake at Easter. We celebrate birthdays by cutting and sharing a special cake. We have a wedding cake and the cutting of

the cake is a moment of importance. Sometimes a slice of wedding cake is sent to those far away to join the absent person to the party. And, at a First Communion party there is often a cake to cut and share bringing the symbolic link with Eucharist full circle.

Jesus’s actions spoke directly to his followers. For some, like Paul, the various pieces of the loaf were like the parts of the body of Church. “Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:17). For others, it was sharing the loaf which was itself a gathering of the scattered people who have been transformed by Baptism into a new wonderful unity. For others, it was a moral lesson of sharing the same food so that in the Christ there was neither Jew nor gentile, male nor female, slave nor free – but all had received adoption as sons and daughters and so were sisters and brothers.

I think we need to return to a real loaf in our Eucharistic celebrations today so that we see how it is divided for all those gathered. This will connect us with Jesus’s actions in praise to the Father through, with, and in the Christ. 🙌

Photo by Mike Kenneally on Unsplash



Thomas O’Loughlin is Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Nottingham and author of several books.



Send Us a Sign

A young girl is lost.
She is deaf and cannot speak.
“I put her on the train in Wellington
this morning” says the mother.

We imagine the girl
the slow plodding of steps
the long brown hair
the Adidas back-pack
the mind crammed with silence.

“Her aunt was to collect her
from the train in Otaki”
says the mother.

We imagine the mother
the running of steps
the hands through the hair
the spine damp with terror
the mind’s low cry.

“She can communicate by sign”
says the mother.
“Oh send us a sign!
A star, or rainbow or
some drummer whose beat
the feet of the deaf can hear.”

By Anne Powell ©

From: *Enough Clear Water*. Steele Roberts, 2001: 27

BELOVED AMAZON



NEIL DARRAGH and MARY BETZ summarise and discuss the significance for the Church of Pope Francis's recent exhortation *Querida Amazonia*.

Neil Darragh is a pastor, writer, and theologian with a long-term interest in the impact of the Christian Gospel in New Zealand society.



Francis writes of four dreams for Amazonia:

1. A social dream: "I dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples and the least of our brothers and sisters, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced."

2. A cultural dream: "I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways."

3. An ecological dream: "I dream of an Amazon region that can jealously preserve its overwhelming natural beauty and the superabundant life teeming in its rivers and forests."

4. An ecclesial dream: "I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features."

These are the four "dreams" of Pope Francis for the Amazon region.

In October 2019 the bishops of the Amazon region in South America met in a Synod on the theme "The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology". The ecological region of the Amazon River is a huge area taking in parts of Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam, Venezuela and the territory of French Guiana. The Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (2

Feb 2020) is Pope Francis's response to the discussions that took place in that Amazonian Synod.

This is a passionate and poetic document. It puts social justice, the appreciation of culture, ecological conversion, and a generous Church at the centre of Christian spirituality. These four dreams are like a refocusing of the vision of Christianity for all of us not just for the people of the Amazon region.

The section on the "ecclesial" dream has turned out to be the most controversial. It is a call for generosity, inculturation of the Gospel, collaborative ministries, the participation of women in the Church, and a Church with an Amazonian face. Here there is also a call for Church reform and a new style of ministry. At the level of exhortation this "ecclesial dream" is powerful and visionary.

On ground level, however, when it comes to who's in charge and who makes the important decisions, it is an option for the status quo. It does not address the issues of clericalism and sexism that the Amazonian Synod was trying to overcome.

One of the issues raised in the Synod, for example, is that millions of Amazonians cannot take part in the Eucharist because of a shortage of priests. The cause of the shortage is the current rule of the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church (there are 23 such "Rites" in the Catholic Church) that priests must be celibate males (except in a few specific circumstances).

The Exhortation, rather than

resolving this issue, drops back here to old formulas: pray for vocations (the reply we already have isn't the one we wanted); don't clericalize the laity (yet the current clericalism of bishops and priests remains intact); bring in priests from other countries (yet these priests are foreign to Amazonian cultures).

This does not mean these issues are closed, but they are not resolved in this Exhortation and it will be up to the Amazonians themselves to carry out the reforms proposed in the final document of the Synod. The Exhortation deals specifically with the Amazonian region, but it is addressed to "the People of God and all persons of good will". It recommends that we all read also the final document of the Amazon Synod itself: *The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology* (www.sinodo.amazonica.va).

What then of the nations of the South Pacific? The four dreams are a powerful presentation of a vision for the future – in social justice, the recognition of cultures, ecological conversion, and a lively, participative local Church.

We could take these dreams as our own vision. In our nations we face similar, even if smaller and less intense, issues.

Within the Church itself we will need to face issues of clericalism and sexism. To make these dreams our own will need a refocusing of nearly all our Church attitudes and activities. ✎



Mary Betz is a writer and spiritual companion with a background in ecology, theology, justice and peace, and spirituality.

Beloved Amazon (*Querida Amazonia*) is the title Pope Francis gives to his latest exhortation – a lyrical, practical, prayerful and reflective "love letter". Like *Laudato Si'*, it bridges and blends the spiritual and political but focuses on issues critical to Amazon peoples and ecosystems. It is addressed, however, to "all persons of good will" because Francis intends that it "assist other areas of our world in confronting their own challenges".

Four "dreams" of Francis are set out in Neil's article. The first, a "social dream", challenges "colonising interests" like timber, ranching and mining, which have treated indigenous peoples as "an obstacle" and driven them to cities where they experience uprootedness, poverty and inequality. He calls for a prophetic accompaniment of indigenous peoples to enable them to decide for themselves what is needed to preserve their values and way of life.

A loving care of our roots is Francis's "cultural dream": "from the roots comes the strength that will make you grow, flourish and bear fruit". He encourages people of different cultures to "sit around the common table" to learn one another's treasures. He hopes that the darker sides of Western cultures – "consumerism, individualism, discrimination, [and] inequality" – may give way to openness to "the world of

symbols and customs" of others.

Acknowledging that indigenous cultures arose from intimate contact with the natural environment, Francis shares his "ecological dream", which for Western cultures is to better appreciate creation through indigenous wisdom and scientific knowledge. Can we understand that "to abuse nature is to abuse our ancestors, our brothers and sisters, creation and the Creator"? Do we realise that we "mortgage the future" in our continuous extraction and consumption from nature's treasury?

To achieve this ecological dream, Francis asks us to "awaken our God-given aesthetic and contemplative sense" and "enter into communion" with nature, allowing ourselves to be transformed into people of serenity and respect. Only then can we change the lifestyles and behaviours which are devastating creation.

The "ecclesial dream" of Francis is to proclaim the gospel of love and carry forward the genuine tradition of the Church, one which "is not the worship of ashes but the passing on of the flame". Inculturation – of the Gospel, liturgy and ministry – is a key to this dream, a deep knowing and wonder before nature and life as they are known by people of many cultures.

Three times Francis repeats that Amazonian ministry must be "at the service of a more frequent celebration of the Eucharist". So, far from ruling out married priests, the exhortation leaves the door wide open for Amazonian bishops to petition him for the married priests they requested in the Final Document of the Synod. As Cardinal Oswald Gracias (who is on Francis's

advisory council) has recently pointed out, current canon law does provide for such exceptions to priestly celibacy.

In that Final Document, the Amazon bishops also asked for women's leadership of communities to be recognised, citing a large number of requests for women deacons. Francis's response is again indirect, but this time it is a repetition of the papal theme that "women make their contribution to the Church in a way that is properly theirs", "proper to women" or "reflects their womanhood". For all his openness and suppleness of spirit when it comes to cultural, social and ecological issues in the Amazon, Francis unfortunately continues to demonstrate a closed mind and heart when it comes to women in sacramental ministry.

Beloved Amazon is indeed a document, as our New Zealand bishops have pointed out, which we can read into our own context. We are called, for example, to deeper relationships with tangata whenua in which we learn their tikanga, kōrero about what is important to them, and accompany them on their quest for justice in this land of Aotearoa.

We are called, too, to enter into a contemplative and just relationship with creation that sustains us.

We can legitimately ask for married priests whose calling and ministry arises from within our own diverse social and cultural backgrounds.

And we have much praying and advocating to do when it comes to bringing the hierarchy to a genuine recognition of women's gifts and ministry. ✎



growing disaffiliation of women from the Church is an urgent issue that needs to be heard, understood and addressed. Large numbers of people under age 60 are disillusioned by what has been happening in the Church in many countries.

Beginnings

After the sexual abuse crisis broke in the United States in 2001, the Leadership Roundtable was established in Washington to promote best practices and accountability in Church management, finances, communications and human resources development. Since the further crisis surrounding bishops in 2018-2019, there have been renewed efforts to bring about change in the United States. A second leadership summit was held this year. The Church in Germany is also making efforts to bring about change in how the Church makes decisions.

Royal Commission Recommendation

I am involved with the Australian Church Governance Review. People in Australia rightly point out that if mothers had been involved in meetings about reassigning predator priests, these men would never have been reassigned or allowed to minister. The final Report of the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017) commented adversely on the lack of responsibility, transparency and accountability within the Catholic Church's practices in respect to decision-making as it impacted on the protection of children and responded to concerns about, and allegations of, child sexual abuse.

"In accordance with contemporary standards of good governance, we encourage the Catholic Church in Australia to explore and develop ways in which its structure and practices of governance may be made more accountable, more transparent,

more meaningfully consultative and more participatory, including at the diocesan and parish level."

The Royal Commission criticised the failures of Australian bishops to give moral leadership in the sexual abuse crisis and recommended:

"The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference should conduct a national review of the governance and management structures of dioceses and parishes, including in relation to issues of transparency, accountability, consultation and the participation of lay men and women. This review should draw from the approaches to governance of Catholic health, community services and education agencies."

It is important to be clear about what we mean by "governance". Governance encompasses the framework of rules, relationships systems and processes within and by which authority is exercised and controlled in an organisation. Governance includes the practices by which leaders exercise authority and control. Governance describes what actually happens at present and, in an aspirational sense, holds out a model that an institution should have as a blueprint. In the broad perspective, governance is about accountability and stewardship.

Need for Lay Involvement in Governance

The revelations of the Australian Royal Commission have had a devastating effect on the Church in Australia. Sunday Mass attendance, once over 20 per cent, is now 9 per cent of Catholics. The financial giving has plummeted. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of "nones" (no religion) and the "dones" (was a practising Catholic, now done/finished with religion). Many people are disillusioned with episcopal dishonesty and the lack of inclusiveness.

Some people respond to the dislocation and despair by desiring certainty and a return to a "golden age" — a past that no longer exists. Theologian Richard Lennan said recently: "The Church is made up of human beings. If you want a perfect Church, then start your own Church.

Don't let anyone else join it and most importantly don't join it yourself." We accept that institutions involving human beings will never be perfect. The Gospel calls us to conversion — conversion for the institution and for ourselves as disciples.

The "normal" has gone. We now have a lack of trust and commitment in institutions and politics in many countries. Mistrust of organisations is high and widespread. We see, for example, media personalities raising more money for victims of disasters than aid agencies.

The Church can learn procedures and standards for governance from society. The Royal Commission certainly thought that parishes, dioceses and religious institutes could learn governance practices from some well-run agencies in the Church as well as in other areas of society.

Concerns for Governance

The question then is: What do we see in wider society that would be best practice in the governing the Church? We must discern and commit to what can be changed and move forward. Discernment is about listening to where God is calling us from the future. This future is different to our past.

Some of the areas of a change in governance include:

Many are asking for lay involvement so that all members can

live fully their vocation as members of Christ's faithful and the people of God.

They want a Church more in tune with people in society today.

They want the full expression of the human person involved in Church governance. This means that members in their diversity — gender, age, culture, etc — have full involvement in Church decision making and management. Change to best practice is needed in the Church.

For the Church to proclaim the Gospel effectively we need to build trust again. No one will listen to the Church until it has cleaned up its act and has moral integrity especially in its leadership.

The Church cannot solve the problems with laws alone. It is not possible to legislate for holiness. Likewise, government legislation cannot change the culture in the Church or anywhere else.

We can hold the critic's position — pointing out what needs changing — but to bring about real change we have to be involved. We know that God is the future of the Church and the God of the future meets us now. The Church is never finished and is always becoming. And as Pope Francis said, authentic holiness "is the most attractive face of the Church". 🙌

Painting: *Outcast for Dyed Hair* by Miki de Goodaboom © Used with permission www.miki-fonvielle.pixels.com

Rethinking CHURCH GOVERNANCE

BRENDAN DALY writes about the Church's need to explore governance structures that promote transparency and accountability.

The global sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church has resulted in calls for change in governance in the Church. There are some efforts being made to bring this about. It is the moral authority that the Church vests in the priest that makes the sexual abuse by the clergy so egregious. The consequences of poor governance practices within the Church have impacted on the integrity of the Church and the well-being of the People of God in instances of fraud and financial misconduct in dioceses

and parishes and of inappropriate relationships between clergy and other Church personnel and vulnerable adults.

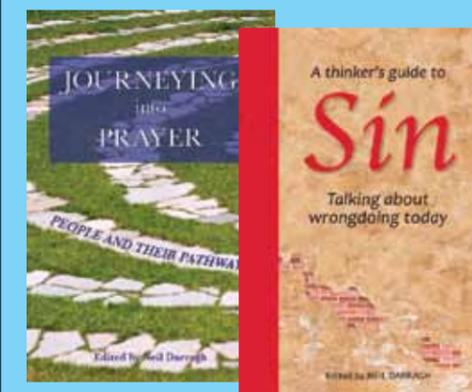
Only one third of Australian dioceses have Diocesan Pastoral Councils. Only one Diocesan Finance Council has a woman as chairperson and most members of these Councils are men. Many parishes don't have functioning parish pastoral or finance councils. The failure to utilise the knowledge, skill and expertise of lay women and men has been a significant contributor to poor governance practices.

Many women in the Church have experienced inequality and exclusion. Increasingly young women assume their participation is unwelcome. This

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Jesus Breathes the Spirit

KATHLEEN RUSHTON explores the story of the risen Jesus breathing the Spirit on the disciples in John 20:19-31 and invites us to reflect on participating in God's creation.

“Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take . . . but by the moments that take our breath away.” These words attributed to Maya Angelou, the American poet, singer and civil rights activist, relate the experience of awe and wonder as being intimately connected with our breath and with fullness of life.

We can think of breathing as purely functional, of breath and breathing as movements: in and out, internal and external, inspiration and expiration. The process of breathing essential to all life on Earth features uniquely in the second part of John's resurrection story. There breathing is associated with the work of creation and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Breathed the Spirit on Them

Jesus “breathed on them [the fearful disciples locked in the room] and said to them: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (Jn 20:22). Jesus gives the Spirit to the disciples after he “hands over the Spirit” to the women and the beloved disciple at the foot of the cross (Jn 19:30). Several times

before these givings, in the farewell discourse, Jesus commissions the community through the power of the Holy Spirit to finish the works of God (Jn 14-17). By breathing the Spirit in, the disciples grow as a community for mission.

Jesus had promised to bring a recreating Spirit. The disciples are to be born of this wild, uncontrollable Spirit (Jn 3:3-8). The Greek for Spirit can mean wind, breath or spirit. Each is unpredictable — the wind that blows where it will is not seen or able to be grasped but is essential for life and has great power.

The word “breathed” is unique in the New Testament and is found only twice elsewhere in Scripture to describe God creating. In Genesis we read that God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” and in doing this created the Earthling (*adam*) from the Earth (*ha’adam*) (2:7). The Book of Wisdom speaks of God “who breathed a living spirit into them” (15:11). In John, too, Jesus’s breathing is connected with God’s creating.

Before considering what Jesus is creating, we need to look at where he speaks the creating words. Jesus is not at the tomb nor with the first disciples but is instead with disciples in a house where “it was evening on that day, the first day of the week” (Jn 20:19). This evokes the day on which, from the earliest times to today, disciples gathered as a community.

Kathleen Rushton RSM lives in Ōtautahi Christchurch where, in the sight of the Southern Alps and the hills, she continues to delight in learning and writing about Scripture.



Mission Community of Peace

The basis of God's mission in John is *shalom*, Jesus's peace. Whereas in Matthew Jesus gives the disciples his power and authority to baptise in the name of the Trinity (Mt 28:18-20), it is different in John. Jesus breathed on the disciples creating them into a new community. Through the Holy Spirit this community will carry on the work of Jesus, the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” by “forgiving sin and holding fast in communion those who are thus reconciled to God” (Jn 20:23).

Consciousness of our breath and breathing can take us deeply into Jesus, the incarnation of God in the world God so loved. In the Book of Wisdom we find: “When I was born, I began to breathe the common air and fell upon the kindred earth” (7:3). All life in Earth — the community of life — shares the atmosphere.

For Us Today

The process of breathing evolved about 3.77 billion years ago. Eventually plants which breathe through the pores in their leaves evolved over 470 million years ago. Living creatures which move air into and out of their lungs evolved about 395 million years ago. Then, breathing the common air in Earth our common home, modern humans emerged only about 100,000 years ago.

We latecomers are intimately connected with Earth. From earliest times Christian teachers have taught that God speaks to us through two books: the little book of scripture and the big book of creation. Pope Francis introduced the phrase “integral ecology” in *Laudato Si'*. The air of our common home is interconnected through atoms or subatomic particles between plants and living creatures and among species in ecological systems and networks. When the Australian bushfires raged, the air we breathed changed colour. The deforestation of the Amazon reminds us that each breath is fed to us by Earth — it is a natural resource but not an infinite resource. The airborne spread of Covid-19 reminds us that we all share the same air — we are not enclosed in our own hermetically sealed bubbles of personal space. Climate scientist James Renwick sees that some of the changes being forced on us because of Covid-19 give us insight into a cleaner world. Appeals to fly less and live lighter have been around for some time. Now people are being forced to change. In China there has been a dramatic drop in air pollution because of fewer cars and factories not running. In some places air pollution is down a quarter to a third and the sky is clearer.

New Structure of Faith

Thomas, one of the twelve, “was not with them when Jesus came” (Jn 20:24). He does not doubt but declares firmly, “I will not believe.” He refuses to believe. There is a new structure of faith. Thomas is one of the generations who are called to believe, not through their actual experience of the resurrection of Jesus, but through the testimony of others — the

community of the Church. We are like Thomas when we refuse to believe and act.

With the myriad threats to our environment and well-being, we are perhaps better placed than ever to understand the significance of life-sustaining breath, to believe, to participate in the mission of God. When Jesus breathes on the disciples his is — literally — the same air we breathe. Jesus breathes out a gift — the Spirit — and as disciples we breathe in. Jesus's breathing is intentional and life giving. “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who will come after us, to children who are growing up?” Pope Francis asks in his video message (<https://laudatosiweek.org/>). “Motivated by this question”, he says, “I would like to invite you to participate in *Laudato Si'* Week from 16-24 May 2020. It is a global campaign on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the encyclical letter *Laudato Si': On the Care of Our Common Home*.”

We who breathe in a culturally Christian, yet pluralistic country, became aware of our Muslim sisters and brothers and reached out to them. A year later we are hearing stories of the friendships created through this tragedy. We can be inspired to join this on-going work of community making through simple everyday acts of friendship and inclusion. So breath, crucial to individual life, is shared. When we inspire we become inspired. Maya Angelou's words on how to measure life remind us to pause to treasure our moments of awe — the *breathtaking* moments when we become aware of our participation in God's creating. 🙌

Reading for 19 April, 2nd Sunday of Easter

Painting: *Treesongs #5* by Stephen Howard © Used with permission www.stephenhowardart.com www.parnellgallery.co.nz



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days since it all happened”, “at the tomb”. They describe the resurrection as material – not ethereal. The women from their group, they say, witnessed the empty tomb and returned to tell the other disciples.

The new companion begins to speak, telling of “all the passages throughout the Scriptures that were about himself.” The disciples are then able to interpret the Scriptures in light of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Then we hear that the three companions arrive at the crossroad “when they drew near to the village to which they were going” – either they enter the village as the two disciples intend to do, or continue further along the road, as Jesus begins to do. But at this point the two disciples offer hospitality and Jesus accepts and “went in to

stay with them”.

The narrator continues the story. “While Jesus was with them at the table, he took the bread and said the blessing, then broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised Jesus.” Jesus, the risen one is seen and recognised in his risen body, through the eyes of the two disciples. All the people, places and time in the story convey meaning allowing us to see the interrelationships at the heart of the story.

Many poets and artists through the years have interpreted the Emmaus scene. Among them is 17th-century Spanish artist Diego Velázquez who painted “The Kitchen Maid”. The maid occupies the centre of the painting and shadowy figures of three travellers seated at a table are framed in the background in the top left-hand corner. Though the maid is leaning on the wooden bench surrounded by kitchen materials her focus is not on kitchen matters: she is listening to the conversation in the adjoining room – to the words of resurrection. We could say of her what the evangelist said of the disciples: “Did not her heart burn within her?”

For Us Today

As ecological readers we can draw on all that Jesus did and taught in the context of our beautiful, life-giving and threatened world. Resurrection takes place in bodies and is encountered in and through bodies. And the encounters are not limited to human bodies but to other forms of life and matter around us. Our Emmaus journey can be to see more clearly that we are enmeshed in the

communion of the planet and cosmos. We can allow our hearts to burn within us as we too walk with the Risen One and have our eyes opened by words and actions of gratitude and in the simple but sacred ritual of breaking and sharing bread in hospitality.

The spread of Covid-19 is through contact with bodies. In order to understand how the virus is spread scientists and others had to trace every bodily contact in place and time to get to the source of the infection. Ideas and theories themselves offer little protection whereas simple bodily acts like wearing face masks, handwashing, covering our mouths when coughing are effective, as is staying away from people and places where the virus can be spread. The spread of this illness is another opportunity to open our eyes to our interconnection as a community on the planet. And to respond with sensible precautions but also with compassion for the ill. Pope Francis has asked priests to go out and visit the sick, not hide in fear.

At the heart of the Emmaus story is an urging towards a deeper faith: to recognise and discern, not just to see. Like Cleopas and companion we need to open our eyes to what is before us. As ecological readers, this means being attentive to the material – eyewitness to everything we see around us – but also maturing in our understanding so that we recognise the relationships that form the Earth community. 🙌

Painting: *La Mulata* by Diego Velázquez National Gallery Dublin Public Domain www.commons.wikimedia.org

New Way of Seeing

In her interpretation of the Emmaus story in Luke 24:13-35

ELAINE WAINWRIGHT

suggests we open our eyes to see resurrection in the world around us.

The Emmaus story (Luke 24:13-35) is one of the post-resurrection “appearance stories” – where Jesus “appears” in a bodily form albeit a resurrected bodily form. Materiality fills these narratives: details of time and place, eyewitness accounts. This Gospel speaks of resurrection as an enhanced experience of body and body in place, not as an escape from the body.

The beginning of the story immediately grounds the people in the material of the road, the distance and in the immediacy of “all that has just happened”. Two of Jesus’s disciples are walking together on the road from Jerusalem

to the nearby village of Emmaus. The evangelist does not name the two disciples at first and so they could be “any disciple”, male or female. We can all enter this story in the corporeality of our own bodily experience in place.

Then another traveller joins the two disciples on their Emmaus journey and he asks what they are discussing. The narrator tells the reader that this fellow traveller is Jesus but the disciples do not recognise him.

This raises the issue of “seeing”. The disciples “see” the person but they do not “see” his identity. This can prompt us to reflect on our own facility for seeing. How much do we take for granted without actually seeing? How might our relationships change with a new “seeing”?

The two travellers, one of whom is now named as “Cleopas”, tell their new companion the story of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is placed in a geographic location – “of Nazareth”, a small village in Galilee and the disciples call him a “prophet” because of what he said and did before his death. Their account of Jesus holds together the human and the holy. As they continue to speak, we hear that all their hopes have been dashed by the death of Jesus. The horrifying aspects of the materiality of his death are evident as they tell what happened: “Our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death and had him crucified.”

But that is not the end of the story. There is a further confusing event. They tell about the resurrection, setting the story in time and place – “early in the morning”, “two



Elaine Wainwright is a biblical scholar specialising in eco-feminist interpretation and is currently writing a Wisdom Commentary on Matthew’s Gospel.



Drawn to Follow the Road of Fire

Teilhard and Struggle

A Residential Retreat with Kathleen Duffy SSJ PhD

In this 5-day retreat, we will explore some of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s major life challenges – as a scientist, a believer, a lover, a Jesuit, a mystic and a faithful member of the Church, noticing the profound influence his evolutionary worldview had on his approach and what it can offer to our spiritual journey. There will be opportunities for input, prayer, contemplative dialogue, sharing and ritual.

VENUE: St Francis Retreat Centre, Hillsborough, Auckland

DATES: 26 - 30 Oct, 2020

COST: \$775.00 (retreat, accom & meals)



Kathleen Duffy SSJ is Professor Emerita of Physics and Director of the Institute of Religion and Science at Chestnut Hill College. She has extensive experience guiding evening, weekend and week-long retreats on topics related to Teilhard’s life and work.

REGISTRATION: <http://ignatianspirituality.nz/retreats/>

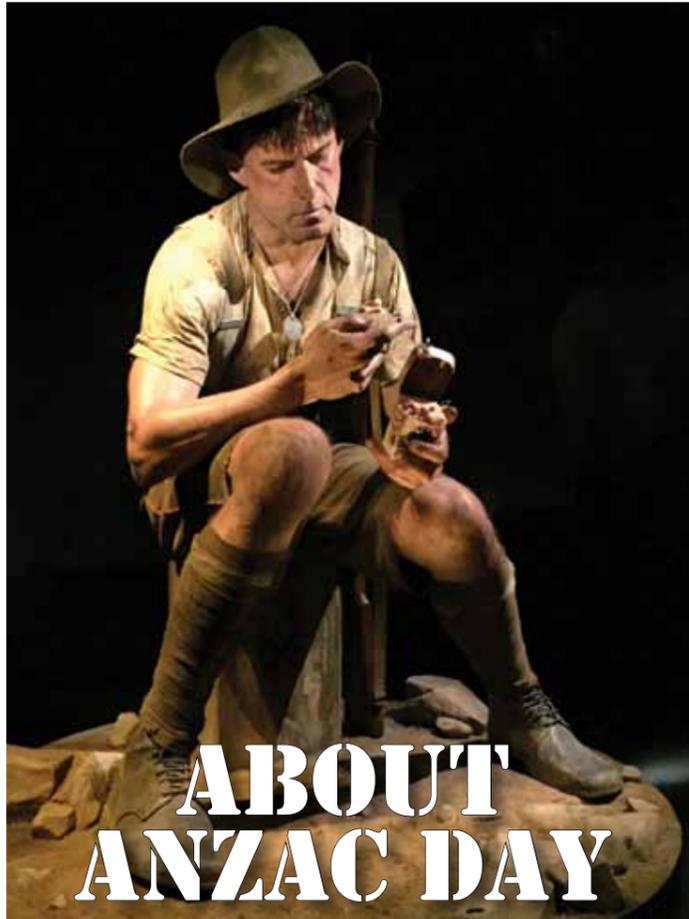
I think we need to rethink what we celebrate on Anzac Day. The signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 ending WWI, was when the victorious allies Britain and France, as French Premier Clemenceau put it: “squeezed Germany till the pips squeaked”. That policy was to come back and bite France in the bum as a humiliated Germany fell to the Nazis’ resurgent and aggressive nationalistic ambitions, a resurgence that was fuelled by Versailles.

Now, 100 years on, it’s worth reflecting on the meaning and significance of that “War to end all Wars”, a war remembered primarily around Anzac Day.

Over recent years that remembrance has motivated secondary school students to write about what Anzac means to them. Quite often the comments read like: “We remember our great uncles and grandfathers whose ultimate sacrifice meant the preservation of liberty and democracy in this land of ours.” Or: “We are free because of their fighting.”

This Anzac Day I appeal for a reconsideration of these sentiments and think on the following questions. In what way did the Allies’ victory in WWI make the colonised millions in Africa, India or elsewhere throughout the British, French and Belgian empires any freer than before the war’s outbreak? How did the torture carried out on notable conscientious objectors like Archibald Baxter, as shown in the film *Field Punishment No. 1*, display “our” democratic and freedom-loving values?

In reality, WWI represented



troops, and also stained Churchill’s reputation for many years after.

Nevertheless, Anzac Day is remembered solemnly in New Zealand in both civic and religious rituals, honouring the brave sacrifice of those who lost their lives in such brutal fashion in the “cause of freedom”. The refrain is: “Lest we forget”. Yet there are myths around Anzac Day we ought to forget and put behind us in favour of a more honest evaluation of the invasion of Turkey. Renouncing the motivation for the obscene and futile conflict is not to dishonour those involved who undoubtedly committed acts of heroism and kindness. But we need to recognise that they were fighting under false pretenses.

Recently, while attending the Gallipoli exhibition *The Scale Of Our War* at Te Papa Museum, I was gratified to hear a mother explaining to her children that “we” were invading “their” land. That is the kind of honesty I am referring to.

I’m not arguing for Anzac Day to become a symbol for opposition to war in general. Inevitably I think some armed conflicts are necessary, where one side is intractable and not amenable to negotiated peace settlements. For instance, Yugoslav partisans fighting the fascists of Croatia and Germany, or the Viet Cong fighting French then American imperialism from the 1950s onwards. In those conflicts there were sides to take in causes that were just and honourable. In WWI there were no sides with a just and honourable cause. If we cannot admit this, can we on Anzac Day at least resist perpetuating the propaganda that it was a war to defend our “freedom and democracy”? 🙌

Photo from *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* Exhibition Te Papa Museum Wellington

nothing less than a conflict between Imperial powers bent on global domination, whether they were British, German, Austro-Hungarian or Russian. Even “poor little Belgium”, whose defence was yet another justification for the slaughter, ran a brutal colonial regime in the Congo under which hundreds of thousands died. The British, Dutch and Germans along with other European powers were all either scrambling for more colonies or endeavouring to hold on to their existing ones.

Millions of men, mostly workers and peasants in uniform, were sacrificed in an obscene slaughter that had nothing to do with freedom or democracy but a lot to do with naked imperial ambition and patriotism.

On 25 April 1915, at the request of “Mother” England, New Zealanders and our Australian cousins embarked on Churchill’s foolhardy gamble to take the Turkish peninsular of Gallipoli. It was a failed enterprise that led to the mutual mauling and slaughter of Anzac, British and Turkish



I was at a wedding in February up north. The couple were lovely — congratulations, Sarah and Tim! — but I most enjoyed meeting so many people.

Weddings — especially Catholic weddings — are great mixers. I danced with a friend of the Catholic Worker house in Brisbane. I swam in bioluminescence with my friend’s flatmate while we talked about her community. I got a ride with someone from the South Island and talked about activism in Wellington, mountains and belonging. I talked about what I’m learning at university with someone who recognised me from this very magazine. I heard about the father of the bride’s recent trip to India.

It was a wedding where every guest was interesting and had something to say. Or maybe it’s that I was more ready than usual to listen. I felt connected to everyone: we were brought together to witness a commitment, and we found other connections and commonalities among us as well. I felt expansive with the possibility of conversations, journeys and dances with the new people around me.

I’m well-known in my everyday life. I have neighbours, church friends and regular rhythms to sustain me. But sometimes I feel anxious being away from the familiar — like going to the wedding. It’s like the uncertainty

when you need Google Maps to navigate to a new place. But I found I was met with grace at the wedding.

I was not an important wedding guest. I’m a friend from the wider circle of Sarah and Tim’s community. As we gathered to witness their vows — their courage to hold fast to each other against the unknown future — I was reminded that my idea of community is more than geographic location. Those who offered to pick me up from the bus stop in Whangarei, those who made sure I was fed, did so because I was present, not because I had a special role.

And then I returned home. I

thought I might feel let down — I was certainly exhausted. But instead I felt exhilarating joy. I returned with a little more perspective on my own community. Sometimes I narrow down to whom and where I belong. But when I experience hospitality such as at the wedding, I’m reminded that when we invite people into our lives, we are trying to know them as they are known by God. Opening my table, or house, or life isn’t because I need to feel special, it’s an act of inclusivity. Just to be willing to listen, to make an effort for others is to act against the alienating influences in our world.

I’m reflecting now on how to make the hospitality I felt at the wedding a source of inspiration for a new practice in my life — to have an attitude of inclusiveness. It’s in the practice, I guess, that I’ll learn.

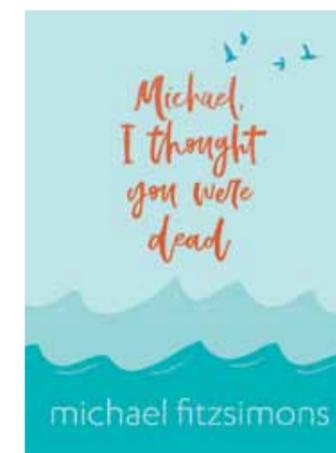
In the Prayer of St Francis we hear that we should not seek so much “to be loved as to love”. I felt that kind of love and joy at the wedding. And I want to grow into this kind of love and develop this kind of joy in my everyday life. 🙌

Photo by Alasdair Elmes on Unsplash



Shanti Mathias is at Victoria University, Wellington, enjoying using long words and immersing herself in the intricacies of media, politics and literature.

Michael, I thought you were dead is a life-affirming book of poems and reflections written in the aftermath of a cancer diagnosis.



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GREGORY O'BRIEN

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Mike Gourley lives in Wellington, where he was a broadcaster and educator. He worships with the Wellington parish of St Thomas’s in Newtown.



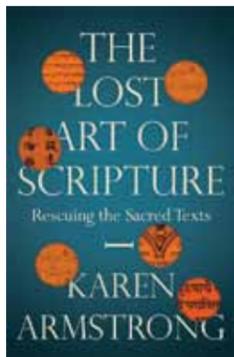
The Lost Art of Scripture: Rescuing the Sacred Texts

by Karen Armstrong
Published by Bodley Head,
2019
Reviewed by John Meredith

BOOK

In all religions sacred texts – scriptures – emerged from oral traditions concerned with the moral and spiritual transformation of the group.

In *The Lost Art of Scripture*, Karen Armstrong argues that we have lost the ability to read the Scriptures well. Instead of the Scriptures being read to inculcate compassionate attitudes and altruistic action in the modern world, too often they are used to confirm prejudice and hostility. It is like seeing a music score as marks on a page without hearing or recognising the tune those marks intend to convey.



Armstrong says that interpreting Scripture in a doggedly literal manner, or plucking texts out of their historical context to prove a point, gives Scripture a bad name. For hundreds of years these texts were read as spiritual tools. They were understood as fluid and adaptable for living rather than as rigid rules or “truths” that had to be “believed”. If we engage with the texts meaningfully they will influence our living today.

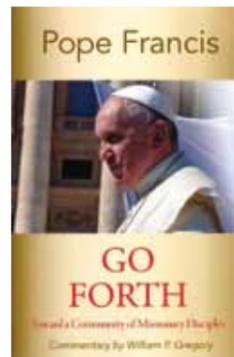
This book is long (ca 500 pages), comprehensive and dense. But the reader will be richly rewarded as it opens ways of interpreting Scripture that inspire imagination, compassion and creativity. 🙌

Go Forth: Toward a Community of Missionary Disciples

by Pope Francis. Edited by William P Gregory
Published by Orbis Books,
2019
Reviewed by Greg Coyle

BOOK

Some books are like a beautiful dessert to be consumed immediately and the memory will live on. *Go Forth* is not a cover-to-cover read but more like an epicurean pantry. You will need to open it regularly and use the ingredients to enrich your faith and your Christian life. It is not written as a book by Pope Francis. William Gregory has coordinated extracts of Francis's encyclicals, speeches, writings, homilies and stories into themes to present the message of how we must live the Gospel in every aspect of our lives. Each chapter presents an angle of what mission looks like for all people who belong to the Church anywhere in the world.



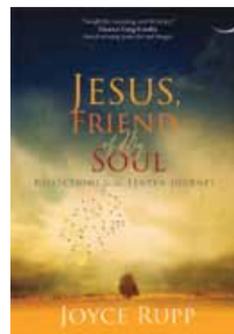
Mission is the central focus of Francis's papacy. Chapters about witness, closeness, mercy, hope, humility, joy, solidarity, peace, vitality, proclamation and accompaniment express the ideas beautifully and encouragingly. *Go Forth* has hundreds of references which makes it a resource for theological students. It's a book for all thinking people and I suggest you put it in your library and savour it often. 🙌

Jesus, Friend of My Soul: Reflections for the Lenten Journey

by Joyce Rupp
Published by Ave Maria Press,
2020
Reviewed by Ann Gilroy

BOOK

Many readers will be familiar with Joyce Rupp's writing on everyday spirituality. *Jesus, Friend of My Soul* is another gem – a small book with a two-page reflection for each day of Lent. Each day offers a brief Scripture quote followed by a longer meditation on it, then a prayer and finally a suggested action for the day. And all relate to the purpose of Lent as conversion of heart as we journey through the 40 days to Easter.



I am impressed with this book. Rupp doesn't offer piety. Her reflections are intended to challenge and encourage the reader to become intentional about the Christian call to be a “living exemplar and conduit of Christlike virtues”. So the thoughts, prayers and action are written in an easily accessible style and language. And though the format is the same throughout there is no repetition of content and ideas from day to day. Although Lent is nearly over for this year, this little book is worth getting now for next Lent. 🙌



Parasite

Directed by Bong Joon-ho
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

FILM

Parasite became a must-see for me after I heard Donald Trump, spouting his crude brand of nationalist rhetoric to a crowd of supporters, castigating the Academy for having the audacity to grant “best picture” to a foreign film in the 2020 Oscars.

The latest offering from South Korean film industry veteran Bong, *Parasite* is a sharp critique of social relations in 21st-century Korea, but also offers audiences a good deal more to take away from their two hours in the cinema. The title itself gives a clue to the subtle and ambiguous territory that the film traverses.

So, who exactly are the parasites? The upper middle-class Parks, cocooned in their mansion that offers every conceivable convenience, or the Kims, living hand-to-mouth in a vermin-infested, semi-subterranean slum dwelling and who proceed to inveigle their way into the hearts and home of their wealthy neighbours?

This superficial contrast between the two families conceals numerous complexities. Despite their poverty, the Kims are resourceful, clever and socially well connected – advantages which, if put to ends other than deception, might have brought them a comfortable living. On the other hand, things in Korea are perhaps not that simple. As the Kim son remarks, when a chauffeur's job is advertised, 500 university graduates apply.

For me, the best thing about *Parasite* is the skillful way in which the characters are created and then played off against one another. The bored and vapid Mrs Park is twinned with her energetic but jaded businessman husband; the family is completed by their two over-indulged children. The Kims by contrast are as cunning as sewer rats and just as hungry for success, yet with a vulnerable humanity always just about to break the surface of their (double) lives.

The Kim son, Ki-woo, stands at the centre of the film; his swap with his suave college friend Min-hyuk as the Park

daughter's tutor sets the action in train, and his aspirations for a better life are explored in the wistful coda. His sister Ki-jung is a talented actress and artist (and forger) – driven into a life of mimicry and fraud in order to achieve success in a society that rewards diplomas and pretty make-up. Their parents are pulled into the deception on their children's coat-tails, but also perform their parts effortlessly.

Parasite is further complexified by the “genre bending” characteristic of Korean film, swerving between social realism, broad comedy, French farce and horror, capped with an apocalyptic finale. For viewers who prefer their films to come with a consistent tone, this raises problems.

See this film to discomfit Donald Trump, if for no other reason. 🙌

“I see the Church as a field hospital after battle.”
POPE FRANCIS

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CROSS CURRENTS



by Susan Smith

State of the Nation Report

The Salvation Army published a *State of the Nation Report* in February 2020. Organisations committed to finding solutions to inequality in our community appreciate the *Report's* analyses, tables, graphs and conclusions about what is actually going on in society. It measures the effectiveness of government policies in resolving economic and social injustices — grading by improvement, no change, or decline. The *Report* provides the hard data that is required if Churches and NGOs are to target the right areas and work intelligently and effectively for a better future for all New Zealanders.

Even in our Covid-19 climate we need to keep the *Report's* recommendations in mind.

Vote for Fulness of Life

In the 2016 American presidential elections 52 per cent of American Catholics voted for Trump. Why would Catholics vote for a man twice-divorced, who seems to regard women as sex objects and whose appointment of family members to key positions in his administration smacks of nepotism? Why vote for a liar who demeans and belittles others regularly? Why vote for a president who does not believe the poorest should be able to access adequate healthcare?

This was the first time more than half of Catholic voters had voted for a Republican president. It seems that Trump's anti-abortion position and appointment of conservative Catholics to the American Supreme Court swayed many Catholics. In January thousands of Catholics supported by some of their bishops affirmed Trump as a pro-life saviour at the March for Life rally in Washington DC. Trump may be pro-life when it

comes to the unborn child and that is great, but he is certainly not pro-life around the environment (more onshore and off shore mining), around refugees (don't let them in), around economic migrants from south of the US borders (they are rapists), or Kurdish fighters (siding with Turkey's President Erdoğan and withdrawing the protection of US soldiers).

Catholics will always be pro-life — this is integral to our lives as disciples of Jesus. But Trump, aided and abetted by many American bishops, has allowed the American Catholic Church to be in Tom Roberts' words: "used and manipulated by the era's most unconscionable con artist".

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops, ignoring the whole spectrum in the care of life, declared at their November 2019 meeting that abortion should be the "pre-eminent" consideration in Catholics' choice of a

candidate in the coming presidential elections. The conference president Cardinal Daniel DiNardo called climate change "important" but not "urgent".

It would be scary if the New Zealand Church was to go down the same track as we approach 2020 General Election.

Fertiliser Use and Water Quality

The fertiliser companies Ballance and Ravensdown have developed the software programme "Overseer". Among other things, Overseer helps farmers work out how much fertiliser they should use to ensure maximum pasture growth and it estimates fertiliser run-off. The Ministry of Primary Industries and AgResearch helped finance the software.

Simon Upton, Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, has rightly questioned whether Overseer should be a regulatory tool for the farming industry. However, scientists question its value and to date neither central nor regional government has shown any concern that a software programme produced by fertiliser companies is being used to test water quality. They should watching very carefully because fertiliser run-off is one of the biggest dangers to our rivers and lakes. 🙄



TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

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

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

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We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters while keeping the meaning.

HONOURING SHIRLEY ERENA MURRAY

Along with Colin Gibson, Shirley Murray was one of New Zealand's leading hymn writers. This talented pair regularly worked together. From Shirley's hymn text, Colin would scan the words, looking for the key thoughts and images that might prompt a melody. Her hymns went all around the world because they were so contemporary and always testified to modern beliefs about God and the world.

Shirley's carol "Upside Down Christmas" reminds us that we don't worship Christ's birth with holly and ivy but with pohutukawa and rata. Her work with Amnesty International raised her awareness of issues of human rights and led to her identification of Jesus as prisoner of conscience in a hymn.

When first introduced to a rural parish she wrote "These hills where the hawk flies lonely". The response from an 80-year-old farmer: "What beautiful words", and everyone nodded!

Richard Jones considers how uncomfortable many of today's churchgoers feel singing the evangelical hymns of the 18th and 19th centuries. The exuberant and passionate hymnody meant a great deal to former generations but they cannot be the staple diet for today's parishioners.

Shirley Murray transformed the

transplanted Christian message to serve our times. She died 25 January 2020.

Beverley M Smith

VULNERABILITY OR RISK CAN BE TEMPORARY

I absolutely endorse the articles by Virginia Noonan, Susie Hayward and Philip Sheldrake (TM March 2020). As a survivor of abuse as an adult, I take issue with the term "vulnerable adults". It actually feels quite demeaning. There are, of course, those whose health and cognitive abilities may render them permanently "vulnerable". Others, as I was, are entrapped at a vulnerable time of their lives. I was newly widowed, newly employed and understood that my minister-employer was giving me bereavement counselling. Any woman seeking pastoral guidance is temporarily vulnerable, but not necessarily for the rest of her life. Others again are vulnerable because of roles that actually require deep vulnerability. Retreatants, religious women, spiritual directees and others seeking spiritual guidance open their lives in trust. Hardly all "vulnerable adults"!

Then there is the question of power imbalances and professional boundaries. Clergy, like doctors and other health professionals, both have

institutional power and are fully responsible for the maintaining of professional boundaries. They should be aiming single-mindedly at healing, and at the very least at "causing no harm".

I would much prefer the more respectful term "adults at risk". Risk can be temporary and situational!

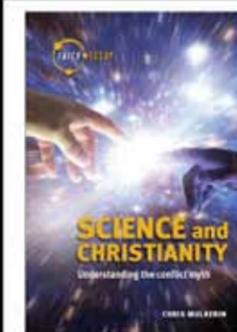
Regular professional clinical supervision for Catholic clergy should be mandatory, as it is in other denominations. Yes, an expense, but cheaper humanly and financially in the long run!

Trish McBride (abridged)

CHILD RAPE

In law and fact a child cannot give consent to engage in sexual activity with an adult. If an adult lures or forces a child into sexual activity, that is child rape and should be so called. I lived for years next door to a man who had been raped as a child. Every night of that man's adult life he relived in nightmare the terror of being raped. By our use of bland, soothing euphemisms like "molestation" and "sexual abuse" are we seeking to deny the grim reality of child rape and the horrendous damage it can and does cause?

Jim Howley



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SCIENCE and CHRISTIANITY: Understanding the Conflict Myth

Embark on a journey of exploration into some of the most significant questions we can ask ourselves. Some of these are scientific questions about the wonders of the physical universe. Other issues are philosophical and religious: they are concerned with the meaning and purpose of life on this dust-speck planet called Earth, which floats through an unimaginably vast cosmos. This book is about two of the most powerful cultural forces in the Western world, and the relationship between them.

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Looking OUT and IN

The sour-lemon sun was filtered through the trees as amber shafts. Birds twittered, banal and cheerful. On the road above, motorbikes tooted horns and people went relentlessly about their daily business. A group of mourners, we picked our way past gravestones and wooden crosses. Early spring violets, clusters of curling pale-purple fingernails, were scattered among the soft grass and pine needles. Ahead a jostling group of men carried the coffin on their shoulders. An eclectic mix of schoolteachers, unschooled Nepali labourers and taxi drivers: Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, atheists and Hindus.

We stood around the gaping hole in the ground, raw gums after a molar extraction. This is a final farewell to an old man who had lived faithfully and well. A father and grandfather, a teacher and preacher, a fan of ABBA and Boney M., now entering into his rest. Setting the coffin on boards above the hole, a flurry of men started attaching the coarse ropes to lower it down. They tugged and teetered around the piled rim of dark earth and boulder-sized rocks, inexpert but eager. While men were disputing rope placement and who would hold which end, women stood further back, quietly talking together and watching.

“Move the ropes further forward, the top end is much heavier than you think!” instructed the vicar from the Church of North India.

“More men down this end,” called an athletics teacher, leaning back as he took the weight through his end of rough hemp rope.

A cell phone rang and one of the Nepali gravediggers answered, his head cocked sideways to hold the phone against his shoulder:

“Arre, I am busy for 20 more minutes. Call me back then.”

The minister read a Bible verse, and the coffin was lumpily lowered into the gash of a hole.

“From the earth we came, and to the earth we shall return.”

The grieving scattered handfuls of cold dirt onto the

coffin, now nestled way down with walls of rock and earth around. The tumult of the actual burying ebbed, now that this good man was now fully at rest. Gravediggers started to fill the hole, using just their hands to shovel in damp dirt and heave blind rocks into the grave. Some of the rocks were huge and needed two men pushing together from below to tip them over the rim.

This graveyard service was at once sacred and secular. The lack of polish and slight mayhem seemed fitting for the untidiness and disruption we each experience with the death of a loved one. The when, how and where of this final passage are unknown to all of us. Somehow the unrehearsed rawness seems a better stage for a final farewell than the manicured graveyard scenes I have attended in New Zealand. At those highly-polished ceremonies, green plastic grass politely covers the dirt and rocks around the grave and the shiny hearse and the sequenced positioning of specially designed straps and devices smoothly lowers a coffin into the waiting hole.

Here, the size and weight of the mountainside-rocks, the shouting and teetering involved in lowering the coffin and the cell phone calls, each reminded me that life and death are messy but go inexorably on. The gaping hole reflected the raw loss and grief. And yet solemnity is threaded through – the gathering of people from many walks of life come to farewell a life well-lived, the beauty of huge trees and early signs of spring. Absurd, comical and painful – death is mixed with life.

Among the deodar cedars and motorbike horns, this cemetery is a hallowed place. It is a sacred time. In this disorder and sadness, God is among us. 🙌



Kaaren Mathias lives on the outskirts of a busy bazaar, on steep forested hills above the Gangetic plains of North India. She is a parent, adventurer, public health doctor and follower of Jesus of Galilee.

Photo by Pure Himalayan/Shutterstock.com



May
courage
compassion
and community mindedness
rise among us
overpowering fear and foolhardiness
Resurrected Christ

Painting by Ronald Patrick Raab CSC ©
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From the Tui Motu team