

The Common Good

Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor

A newspaper of the Christchurch Catholic Worker

No 61, Pentecost 2012

Price: free or donation

Ideology or Faith – Which Comes First?

Jim Consedine

I must say that it has been an area of fascination for me to observe as I have got older the widely differing positions practicing Catholics take on the myriad of social questions that face us every day.

We are a Church founded on Christ and supported by the twin foundation stones of Scripture and Tradition. The command of Jesus that we should 'love God and love our neighbour' is central to our faith. We should be able to measure our practice of faith by the litmus test of how well we lived these teachings. Yet from the time of the Reformation onwards into the middle of the 20th century, we downplayed the role of Scripture in our daily lives and put Tradition on ice.

Vatican II

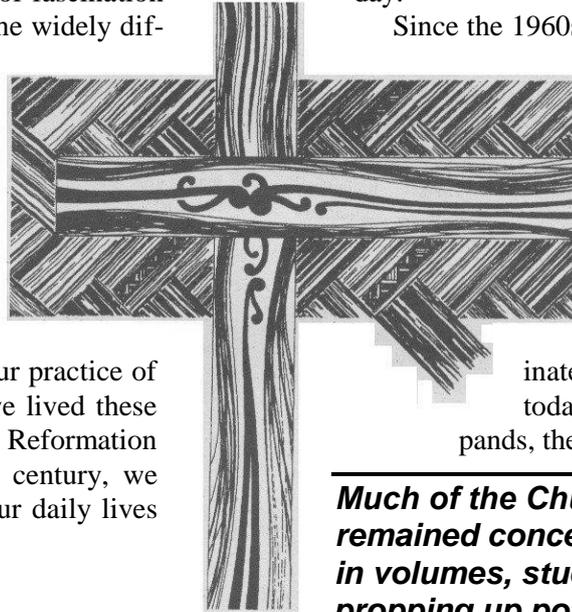
The Second Vatican Council dealt to those positions by re-evaluating the role Scripture should be playing in our spiritual journeys and encouraging us to see the theology of Tradition through fresh eyes. In particular, what we taught in relation to 'love your neighbour' became a source of great development. We had, so we thought a bit smugly, the 'best set of social teachings' of any of the Churches. Mention any social issue, and the Church had evaluated it and proposed ways forward to live what this dimension of 'love your neighbour' should mean for the practising Christian.

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Issues relating to poverty and hunger, violence, war and peace, monetary policy, corporate capitalism, communism, sexual ethics, issues around birth, marriage, social relationships, community, health and illness, death and marriage, all fell under the judicious eye of the Church's senior teachers and often ended up in what we called 'social encyclicals,' written by the Pope of the

day.

Since the 1960s, when television brought the crisis in food distribution, world hunger and war into our evening lounges, Church social teaching has often returned to the problems thrown up by capitalism, and its modern incarnations, corporate capitalism and global finance. This is the monetary system that dominates the lives of most on the planet today and perpetuates, indeed expands, the division between rich and poor.



Much of the Church's social teaching has remained concealed for too long, bound in volumes, stuck on dusty shelves, propping up pot plants. Someone once said that 'the Word became flesh and didn't remain newsprint.' That's true.

Social Teachings

The Church has responded by setting out very clear guidelines for the practice of monetary policy based on justice and the dignity of people and promoting 'the common good' as the basis for the use and distribution of wealth. This was a doctrine first developed in detail by St Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century and fine tuned ever since. It recognizes that the resources of the world belong to all and not just those with power, education and political influence. It highlights that Jesus came to 'bring Good News to the poor' as a primary goal of his mission and that of the Church.

Much of the Church's social teaching has remained concealed for too long, bound in volumes, stuck on dusty shelves, propping up pot plants. Someone once said that 'the Word became flesh and didn't remain newsprint.' That's true. And it was that wandering French philosopher, Peter Maurin, co-founder with Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker, who wrote, 'Scholars have taken the dynamite of the Church, have wrapped it in nice phraseology, placed it in a hermetic container and sat on the lid.'



It's about time to blow the lid off' (*The Common Good*, Spring 1996).

For a couple of decades after Vatican II there was a flowering of fresh teaching. Scripture groups popped up all over the place, justice and peace groups sought to best present the social teachings, prayers groups rooted in local communities flowered and the Church became a place of real spiritual nourishment and heightened expectation. The 'dynamite' was taken out of the dusty tomes and used as it was meant to be. Sad to say, those halcyon days appear to be over.

The Dominance of Ideology

One issue however that was never resolved properly was the issue of ideology. What part does it play in our faith journeys?

I well remember the first time I raised the issue of the negative effects of the ideology of capitalism in a sermon. It was Palm Sunday in 1979. It was in front of a packed ecumenical service in the Anglican Cathedral in Christchurch. I was reflecting on the teachings of scripture about the need for Christians to reach out to the poor and how the economic structures of the time impeded that process. By the time the homily had concluded, about one third of the congregation had left. They simply got up and walked out.

I was surprised and dismayed. That day I learnt a valuable lesson. The full teaching of the Gospel of Jesus

placed in a modern context will have people walking away. Jesus had the same problem in his time. 'They walked no longer with him.' Christianity, properly understood, contains a dangerous and subversive message.

Since then I have often reflected that one of the main reasons why social justice ('love your neighbour') is preached so rarely in parish churches is that congregations are wedded – consciously or otherwise – to the dominant culture of consumer capitalism and its benefits for them. They are not prepared to hear how exploitative and sinful and dangerous it can be for billions of people. Seemingly, few preachers are prepared to remind them.

In Aotearoa/NZ, some of the very worst social legislation ever passed (some negative effects are still with us) came at a time when Jim Bolger, a practising Catholic, was prime minister and Ruth Richardson was finance minister. Their faith seemed to make absolutely no difference to social policy. Ideology ruled, not faith. Both the economically poor (as in beneficiaries) and the trade unions, the chief protectors of workers' pay and conditions, were wacked by individualistic ideology and punitive law changes. It was all done in the name of freedom of choice, but it undermined the Church's social teaching on labour relations at every turn.

If you think the case is overstated, ask yourself – when was the last time you heard the mission of Jesus 'to bring Good News to the poor' highlighted in a homily? Or growing levels of poverty preached in relation to the crisis in capitalism? Or the non-violence of Jesus preached? Or the evils of war?

Having several Catholics in the current Key Cabinet over the past four years seems to have made little positive difference to social policy. Beneficiaries again have been scapegoated as the country tries to weather the economic crises engineered by the rich and powerful. Currently, unions are again being targeted as a means of further controlling monetary policy.

Conclusion

So what takes precedence in our thinking, faith or ideology? Sadly, ideology is winning in a landslide, as the poor and disenfranchised are disappearing into garages, back sheds and overcrowded tenements. The Church's social teachings run a very distant second.

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Need we wonder why our churches are in decline when 'the dynamite' of the Church's social teaching remains wrapped in hermetic containers? As Peter Maurin said all those years ago, we need to blow the lid off.

Jim Consedine lives in South Brighton and is a member of the Christchurch Catholic Worker.

Who are we?

Members of Te Wairua Maranga Trust, which publishes this paper, have since 1989 been operating as a community following a Catholic Worker spirituality. We view the Treaty of Waitangi as our nation's founding covenant. We try, however inadequately at times, to live the Sermon on the Mount and its modern implications. We operate three houses of hospitality in Christchurch named after Suzanne Aubert, Thomas Merton, and Joseph Cardijn. We offer hospitality to people in need either on a temporary or more permanent basis. We have a continuing outreach to a number of families offering friendship and support. We usually receive back more than we ever give. We promote non-violence and a 'small is beautiful' approach to life, practise co-operative work and peace making, focus on issues of justice, support prison ministry, help create intentional communities, and try to practise voluntary poverty and personalism. We also engage in regular prayer and generally struggle along like everybody else.

We celebrate a liturgy every Wednesday at 6:00 pm at the Suzanne Aubert House, 8A Cotterill St, Addington, (off Poulson St, near Church Square), followed by a shared meal. Anyone is welcome – phone Francis, 338-7105.

We do not seek funding from traditional sources. We hope to receive enough to keep our houses of hospitality open and our various works going. Catholic Worker houses do not issue tax receipts since they are running neither a business nor a church social agency. We invite people to participate personally and unconditionally. Should you wish to make a regular contribution, you may do so through our Te Wairua Maranga Westpac Trust holding account (number 031703-0036346-02). Donations may also be made to **Te Wairua Maranga Trust, Box 33-135, Christchurch.**

Editorial 1 Back in ANZUS?

After nearly 30 years of independent foreign policy, a respected voice in the international community, NZ has sold its soul to the Devil. Ten years of intrigue and subversion by military and foreign policy leaders has returned NZ to the status of an American ally. Compliant media have played their part. Recent announcements have highlighted that the previous diplomatic impasse is 'fully defrosted' and NZ exercises with US forces are 'hugely symbolic' (*The Press*, 12/5/12). We are to 'celebrate' the 70th anniversary of the arrival of US Marines here in 1942.

The subliminal messages are blatant. Even more worrying are the signs of a concerted public relations campaign to undermine public resistance to a closer relationship with the Pentagon, and potentially, NZ's nuclear free policy. There has been a cunning manipulation of Anzac Day commemorations to infiltrate US troops into this country. The 'Wolfhound' Regiment made a brief appearance at Burnham Army Camp, near Christchurch and, apparently, at Anzac Day ceremonies. Everywhere we are suddenly confronted in the media with the idea of 'celebrating' the historical arrival of US Marines in Wellington in 1942. More deviously, NZ schoolchildren are being conned into identifying a long past event in a long ago war with military manipulations of today: a competition, set up by the NZ Defence Force, Archives NZ, and the American Embassy, is asking kids to compete to make the best video about the 1942 event.

In June 2012, a small number of NZ Army engineers is scheduled to take part in military exercises in California. The Kiwi Navy, and some soldiers, are to take part in the large scale Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise, which is one of the world's largest international maritime exercises, hosted by the US, for the first time in almost 30 years. Sadly 'military exercises with the US are now back on the agenda' (*The Press*, *ibid.*). It is clear that NZ's military and foreign policy officials have, against the general public opinion, and in secretive and probably ethically unacceptable manoeuvres, managed to reorient this country's foreign policy.

As far back as 2002, schemes to get NZ back in bed with Washington were in train. According to Nicky Hager in his book *Other People's Wars*: 'A senior military officer who helped plan the Iraq deployment explained that it was 'all pushed by the senior policy leaders at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)'....It was seen as a 'low risk, high reward' deployment to advance US relations'.

US Covert Action with NZ Collaborators

The first real signs of success in the satanic crusade appeared when a large United States military delegation took part in *Exercise Maru*, an international security exercise in New Zealand in September 2008. Kiwi soldiers had been operating in Afghanistan alongside Americans for some years (mostly not in the humanitarian role the

media proclaimed) and in 2010 New Zealand and the United States held military exercises together and shared intelligence on Afghanistan. These had been announced by US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, Kurt Campbell, who was launching a major new study into New Zealand-US relations. The study, backed by both countries' governments and agencies including the Pentagon and US State Department, was sponsored by the New Zealand and US Business Councils. Standard Washington covert action in full flight!

Cables released by WikiLeaks have revealed that this subversion of New Zealand independence had been going on for some time. New Zealand's collaboration with United States intelligence agencies was 'fully restored' in August 2009 but both governments decided to keep the decision secret (*Sunday Star Times*, 12/12/10). The cables also made it clear that New Zealand had quietly increased its military cooperation with the US and that the then American Ambassador Charles Swindells put pressure on New Zealand to change its nuclear free policy ahead of the 2005 election.

And what have we been pressed into signing up for? Working with a military that runs courses that 'America's enemy is Islam in general, not just terrorists... and the [USA] might ultimately have to obliterate the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina without regard for civilian deaths' (*The Press*, 12/5/12), these Pentagon courses also taught that the Geneva Conventions which set standards for conduct of warfare were 'no longer relevant'. While these courses have been suspended by the embarrassed US military, we have a clear indicator of the military mentality with which Kiwi soldiers are supposed to integrate.

So has a proud era of NZ foreign policy come to an end? With the insidious machinations (is treachery too strong a word?) of senior defence and foreign policy personnel, with the compliant role of an incompetent media, with the silence of a defunct peace movement, this country has sunk back into the depths of Pentagon depravity - the way of lies, atrocity, and brutality.

The collateral damage in support of a resource-addicted failing empire is now official policy for New Zealand.

Warren Thomson

Warren Thomson is a long time peace activist based in Christchurch who has monitored NZ defence relations since the Vietnam War. He is co-editor of Peace Researcher)



How easy it is to reciprocate the sins of our fathers. Our history is fraught with the trickery of the powerful over the powerless; a few trinkets and beads for a slice of godzone. The colonising Europeans saw a bargain and took advantage as they grabbed land from our Maori brothers and sisters. How can we allow even a hint of this past to revisit us?

In 2011-12 the New Zealand Government has gone about acquiring land from its own people in Canterbury using power and spin. The land zoning called 'red zone' land is nothing more than land clearances by Cabinet decisions to avoid the Public Works Act. The latter would give all people market value for their homes and the right of first refusal to buy back the land if it is sold in the future.

By creating an all powerful body in the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA), and an all powerful Minister to oversee this body, the Government have been able to dictate terms without any reference to the people on the land. No consultation or dialogue has ever taken place with any people or groups being forced to leave their land. Instead the Government used a brush stroke rateable valuation to buy homes knowing many would not gain the equity from their properties. CERA is very clear. *'It is unfortunate that some will benefit from the Government's offer and others will lose some of their investment.'*

The government has always known at least a third will not get the equity from their land especially in areas where people have low rateable values and little damage to their land. Kaiapoi has streets with significantly less quake damage than Fendalton and Redcliff areas with high rateable value. In fact, Kaiapoi streets I saw had no liquefaction, lost no infrastructure services like water, power or sewerage in the quakes and have almost no damage to their homes. One house earlier this year won the prestigious garden of the year award. Soon it will be demolished. The elderly couple had no damage so the insurance company would not honour their full replacement policy and they could only take rateable value \$180,000 less than a similar type home in Kaiapoi. These equate to large beads for an undamaged home and quarter acre section!

This immense injustice and land clearance is able to

happen because the country has believed the spin 'all is extremely fair' - the distorted catch phrase Gerry Brownlee uses to win the minds of New Zealanders.

What is even more alarming in this 'democratic' country of ours is people's total powerlessness to question any decision. There is no right of review for any person who disagrees with the government's decrees on land zoning. We have no right of judicial review on any decision made by Cabinet and Mr Brownlee. Letters have been written to the Ombudsmen, Earthquake Minister's Office and the Prime Minister's Office and there is nothing but flowery shutdown responses. The Wider Earthquake Communities Action Network (WeCan) drew up a Crisis Paper highlighting the main areas of struggle for people and suggesting ways forward. It was backed by community and residents groups across the city and placed in Parliament by Christchurch East MP Lianne Dalziel. The National Party disgracefully blocked this important document being tabled.

A crucial report prepared on the housing crisis was released by Housing Minister Phil Heatley with 95% of the report blocked out as it was too sensitive to Christchurch. Recently, I placed an Official Information request to ask EQC for the scope and costings on my 'red zone' home and they refused to release information as it was too sensitive and they needed to protect themselves. What third world country dictatorship are we living in?

It is in the midst of powerlessness that people use desperate means to fight for their families. The new New Zealand Land Wars have only just begun as groups like the Brookland Stayers are adamant they will not be moving. Kaiapoi 'red zone' people will battle the bulldozers. Petitions are being prepared on all manner of issues. Class actions are now appearing against insurance companies and another soon to challenge the Government itself.

Transparency, democracy and basic human rights are being abused for too many Cantabrians. In the end people will fight back regardless of how much power one group has over them. History reveals when ordinary people realise their collective strength, they can battle even the greatest odds.

Rev Mike Coleman

CW website

- Leading articles from the first 14 years of *The Common Good*
- Alternative funerals
- Restorative justice
- Other theological issues

www.catholicworker.org.nz

Funeral Choice

www.funeralchoice.co.nz

A Catholic Worker project
Cheaper alternatives to
consumer funerals

Anzac Day Vigil

In our small village in Northland, we CW pacifists have been donning our white peace poppies and standing in silence and pain with our friends from this wonderful community. We have gathered at dawn on Anzac Day to commemorate the soldiers from this place who died in the war. There was never any talk of wars being untenable or illogical but there was usually a sense of regret.

Of recent years however there has been a growing military presence of people from this area in uniform, and returned service people also in uniform. We have sensed a foreboding change in atmosphere where even that sense of regret gets stifled by military fanfare and patriotism. For some of us it has become intolerable. Others of us just kept on attending and growing more and more uneasy.

This year we decided to hold a night of vigil and prayer for peace up in the little church on the hill on the eve of Anzac Day.

Then something unexpected and mindboggling happened. My husband Joseph, who was one of the ones who had stopped attending the dawn service when the military got involved, was asked to be the prayer leader! We went through being flabbergasted, very amused, full of consternation and 'pretty sure it wouldn't be right to participate', through to becoming convinced that it would be right and good and an excellent opportunity to place peace at the heart of the ceremony. We still expected to be uncomfortable throughout the rest of the proceedings – but our night of prayer would carry us in good stead.

So 14 of us gathered at midnight. We prayed and read, talked and sang of peace all night. The highlight of the night was the reflections of the Stations of the Cross. We chose one each and just shared what it could mean for that time and these times. The younger ones were particularly inspiring and insightful.

Before dawn we made our way down with a bit of trepidation to where everyone was gathering. Joseph led the prayer service, not in any confrontational manner, but in unequivocal peace-loving words and with humbleness of heart. We found the whole ceremony flowed easily, and without the militarism of the past few years.

Then the next unexpected and wonderful thing happened. The people loved it!

In retrospect, how could we think it might be badly received? How unfaithful of us, indeed! Four individual ex-service men – and many others – told Joseph how much they appreciated his prayers. One said it was the best Anzac service he'd ever been at. Another, that it was exactly how the services should always be, that the message of 'no more war' needs to be heard at every Anzac service throughout the country.

It just goes to show that the people of Aotearoa would probably all welcome the idea that Anzac Day should be a day of remembering and a way of building the ways of peace.

Catherine Land

Honorary doctorate for ethical educator



A man with a passion for social justice and a long-serving member of justice and peace groups in the Palmerston North diocese, Emeritus Professor Ivan Snook, has been awarded an honorary doctorate from Massey University. He received a Doctor of Literature for his outstanding service to the University and outstanding contributions to education

in New Zealand and internationally.

Professor Snook initially trained to be a priest but lat-

er enrolled at Teachers' College in Christchurch, and then the University of Canterbury. He started his career as a secondary school teacher, was a research fellow at the University of Illinois and became a lecturer at the University of Canterbury in 1968.

In 1981, he moved to Massey University as a Professor of Education, rising to department head then dean of education before retiring in 1993. He has maintained a strong association with the University.

Ivan's passion for social justice is obvious to all who know him. Besides belonging to a variety of justice and peace groups, in its early days he served on the advisory board of McAloon House, a forerunner to the current Palmerston North Catholic Worker.

The Catholic Worker in New Zealand congratulates Ivan on receiving this award.

In the recent United Kingdom Audit Office Report comparing prisons in 11 western countries, the NZ imprisonment rate was the second highest after the United States. At 199 prisoners per 100 000 population, we were 29% higher than England and Wales, 48% higher than Australia, 70% higher than Canada, and 232% higher than Finland. Of the 11 countries reviewed, NZ had the second highest rate of remand prisoners, behind America. Remand prisoners in NZ make up 21% of the total prison muster. The world prison population has grown from 9 million in 2005 to 10.1 million in 2011.

Seventh National CW Hui

Held at St Francis Farm, Whirinaki, in the Hokianga, on the weekend after Easter, 13 – 15 April 2012, the seventh national Catholic Worker hui attracted more than 50 adults and half as many children to the three day fest. This year it was held in conjunction with the national Christian anarchist gathering, which made for a memorable mix of people.

The hui opened on the Friday night with a powhiri for the visitors. Joseph Land, Auntie Raina Paniora and Auntie Isabel Dalton were on hand to welcome the southern visitors along with the tangata whenua of Whirinaki. The wharenui was a newly acquired marquee which suited the occasion. People were able to settle under its warm flaps for the welcoming mihi before sharing the first of many meals. This was followed by a reporting in session open to everyone. Then it was bunk down time under the big top.

The rooster crowing at 4.20am the next morning awoke many to the fact that things are different in the country. It repeated its welcome again at 6am just to remind people not to sleep too long.

The two keynote speakers on the Saturday morning both reflected on ideology and its relation to faith. Graham Cameron spoke of the roots of anarchism and how useful he had found it as a means of directing his life as a Christian and envisaging the future. He pointed out how it was essentially a philosophy of non-violence, despite the widespread media misrepresentation and what some of its practitioners did. He used it himself because of its focus on freedom and on personal development. In a Christian perspective, this meant a God-given dignity was given to each person.

In the second input, Jim Consedine talked on the history of the Catholic Worker. He traced its anarchist roots in the 1930s and pointed out how, in an age dominated by hugely influential mass movements of communism, socialism and capitalism, it had focused on a commitment to every individual and his or her dignity. This had been what appealed to CW founders, Dorothy Day and

Peter Maurin and why it became a foundation stone of the CW.

Over decades these origins had evolved into a philosophy of personalism, a philosophy which continues to dominate CW thinking. When operated in conjunction with the practice of the Beatitudes and ‘spiritual and corporal works of mercy’ of the Gospel, alongside pacifism in an age of war-mongering and the arms race, ‘good’ work at a time of worldwide unemployment and ‘slave’ factory and rural wages, and a decentralized society promoting ‘small is beautiful’ (and manageable) at a time when cities were exploding from immigration, the CW had developed a programme to challenge everyone who wished to build a better future. It would be ‘a new society built within the shell of the old’, a phrase much loved by Peter Maurin.

Workshops held at the hui throughout the weekend focused on climate change, family life, gardening, young people and the Church, modern technology and militarism. There was a special presentation from Christchurch visitors – Francis, Kathleen, Mike and Jim – on the ongoing effects of the earthquake and how dislocated and stressed thousands still were in that city.

The sense of community which prevailed was astonishing. People, from a wide variety of backgrounds, interacted respectfully with one another, shared the vision, and developed new friendships. Aided by regular prayer and liturgical opportunities, all came away feeling nourished by the experience.

The hui was brilliantly served by the young people who prepared the food. Led by Teresa, they produced volumes of tasty fare at every available opportunity and served it piping hot. The hangi on the Sunday afternoon was a high point, a beautiful meal with plenty left over. It led into the *ceilidh*, where the music was supplied by people from the hui led by Val and Nancy, with dancing held in the marquee. It was a fitting way to finish – exhausted but on our toes!



Sam Land and Raina Paniora



Catherine Land and Kathleen Gallagher



Nga Tamariki

Sowing and Reaping – Reflecting the Seasons

Abraham Land

In a fine week in late winter, two of us hitch up the horses and start the year's ploughing. Throughout Spring, as soil and weather dictate, we till the earth until one sunny day everything is ready for planting. Many people help, some rubbing skinny sprouts off the seed, some labeling the different varieties, some placing the small shriveled seed potato one every twelve inches apart in a long furrow bottom, and some covering the seed, filling the furrows with soft rich loose soil. For the rest of Spring, there is weeding and hilling up until the potato tops are touching across the rows. Then for Summer, there is nothing but faith.



In Autumn when the potato tops are withered and brown and dead, one or two people do an exploratory dig and a harvest day is announced. Again many people help, some on one job, some on another. Hoeing the weeds, digging the potatoes, picking up and bagging seed for next year, large potatoes for long storage, small for eating sooner and damaged ones for eating immediately.

The difference between the planting and the harvest is most striking in the ambience of the work. There is the boast of the diggers when they find a big one and the report of the carters on the ever growing pile of full sacks in the storehouse. There is also an often unspoken collective joy reflected in the fresh plump vibrant food that has just been uncovered. And there is the sense of mystery in that where one little wrinkled seed potato was placed several large and half a dozen smaller potatoes are unearthed.

Our Effort – God's Effort

Many years ago my father gave us children a lesson in planting. All plants need three things – sun, soil and water. Different plants need them in different proportions but all need them. These three things have only one source. We humans rely on God to provide the necessities and trust the Creator to do so. In fact, any effort of our own also comes from God because God made us. So with any activity in the potato patch we are aware of God's gifts. One of the reasons we do not get complacent and take these gifts for granted is that they are not always

given in the order and proportion we human's desire. A cold Spring. A wet Autumn. A dry Summer. These can make a less than satisfying harvest. So when we get a good crop, we are always grateful.

This trust in God is good for growth in faith. Summer is that time of year when we can't see what is happening under the soil. One big aid in trusting God is the evidence of all the harvests since Adam and Eve ate in the Garden. In this case, the gift of Mother Earth is a trustworthy friend and we trust her as humans have for millennia.

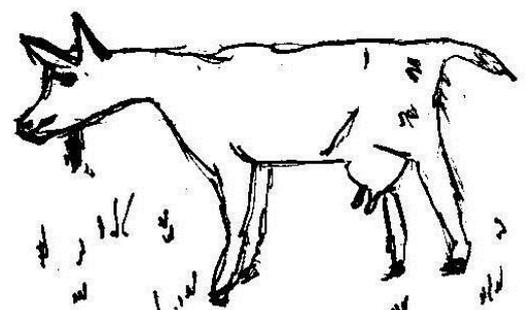
Religious Images of the Potato

Working in the garden often gives time for the mind to wonder and all sorts of garden related images come to mind. Sometimes I am reminded of the Trinity. God the Creator has created the potato in the first place; Jesus, Bread of Life, nourishes our spirit just as good home-grown food nourishes our bodies; and the Holy Spirit, whose action is seen in the growing of the plants and the joy of the people working together.

The potato story from ploughing to harvesting, I see as a parable of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Just as his ministry prepared his disciples and himself for his Passion, so is the tilling of the soil in preparation for planting. Like the last station of the Cross when Jesus is laid in the tomb, the old wrinkled seed potato is laid in the furrow and buried. And of course, digging up the big life-giving vital potatoes has its similarities with the resurrection. Even our exploratory digs and questions are like the disciples going to the tomb and asking 'Is he really alive?'

Recalling these images while gardening adds to the joy, the dignity, the sacredness of manual labour.

Abraham Land lives at St Francis CW Farm in Whirinaki with his wife Nancy, and their two small children.



The Eucharist's new covenant of nonviolence

by John Dear SJ



It's helpful to ponder the passion, arrest and death of the nonviolent Jesus, in light of our own tumultuous times and personal journeys. In light of his teachings of peace, love and compassion, the Last Supper is certainly rich and hopeful, yet profoundly sad and mysterious. Holy Week is filled with drama, tension

and danger as the authorities stand on the lookout to arrest and kill Jesus.

Just days before, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey using street theatre to fulfil Zechariah's vision of a nonviolent messiah who comes to abolish war and establish a permanent reign of peace (see Zechariah 9:9-10). Then he engaged in civil disobedience in the temple, enraged the authorities, and drew the crowd's rapt attention with his teaching. The whole city was aroused by his public activity.

The Synoptic Gospels then describe the moment in the upper room.

When he offers the bread as his body and the cup as his blood, Jesus becomes the Passover meal. As others have written, he fulfils humanity's exodus out of slavery, symbolically demonstrates what will happen the following day on Calvary, memorializes his own life and witness, and invites us to participate in that Paschal Mystery by partaking of his very body and blood.

But as I ponder these words and gifts within the context of our world of permanent war, the Eucharist takes on another level of meaning. There in the upper room, Jesus reaches the epitome of creative nonviolence. He starts a new covenant 'in my blood, which will be shed for you.'

A New Covenant

Of course, any mention of a covenant in the Bible is critically important. Here, to my way of thinking, Jesus invents 'a new covenant of nonviolence.' He will not hurt others or kill others for us, but he is willing to suffer and die for everyone, and wants us to do likewise. He wants us all to join his underground movement of transforming nonviolence, his campaign of resistance to injustice, war and empire. He calls us to give our bodies, our blood, our hearts, our very lives for one another, for suffering humanity, for the reign of God.

When Jesus invites us into his new covenant of nonviolence at the Last Supper, he throws away the old covenant of violence. With this historic, salvific breakthrough, he frees us from the old rules, laws and ways of violence, war and empire. He dismisses the ancient fundamentalism that once sanctified violence. He

does away with every justification of violence. From now on, in his new covenant of nonviolence, we live by a new set of boundaries, based on peace, love, forgiveness and compassion, and so we dwell in Christ's peace.

At the Last Supper, with this new covenant, Jesus sets humanity on a new path toward peace. The days of violence and killing are formally declared over.

Perhaps we don't often think of the Eucharist in light of Gandhi's hermeneutic of nonviolence. I think that's because we're still stuck in the old covenant of violence. Few live this new covenant, or teach it, or preach it, yet it remains at the centre of our faith, at the heart of our weekly worship.

There are so many things Jesus could have said and done. For instance, he could have said, 'Break their bodies for me! Shed their blood for me!' That's the kind of violent messiah Peter and the others were hoping for. That's the logic of the old covenant of violence, the logic of the Roman empire, the U.S. military and every nation/state throughout history.

But Jesus turns that logic upside down and offers a new covenant of nonviolence, saying: 'This is my body broken for you! This is my blood shed for you!' And he follows this profound gift of sacrificial nonviolence with a commandment: 'Do this!' In other words, 'Do the same with your bodies and blood. Don't break the bodies of others; don't shed the blood of others in war. Give your lives non-violently for others, as I have done for you. This is the best way to remember me.'

The Non-violent Jesus

In this new covenant of non-violence, we prefer, with Jesus and the martyrs who followed him, to shed our own blood for others, rather than shed the blood of others. We prefer to accept suffering rather than inflict suffering on others as we struggle for justice and peace. We prefer to die rather than to kill. This is the dynamic which Jesus sets in motion at the Passover meal.

Theoretically, at every Eucharist we join his nonviolent campaign and enter his Paschal Mystery for strength to pursue his vision of a world where no more bodies will be broken and no more blood will be shed. And we pledge to give our lives non-violently for humanity until that vision comes true.

In this way, as the church teaches, Jesus uses the bread and the cup to reconcile everyone with one another and with God. Through our sharing in his body and blood, and therefore, theoretically, through our sharing in his active nonviolence, we become the body and blood of Christ. We 'remember' him and join his work to disarm and heal the human family.

Today, however, many of us participate in the Eucharist, in his new covenant of nonviolence, yet still cling to the old covenant of violence. We want the Eucharist, but not his new covenant of nonviolence. We might believe

in transubstantiation -- but we're not about to give our lives for peace or join the paschal way of creative nonviolence.

This gets to the heart of our problems. Do we really want Jesus, his gift, his way, or not?

One way to describe our culture of violence, war and empire is to call it 'anti-eucharistic.' War is the ultimate anti-Eucharist. It destroys the bodies of our enemies, sheds the blood of our enemies, divides us all, severs any efforts at reconciliation and kills the body of Christ.

When we partake of Jesus' Eucharist, we take a public stand against the culture of war, violence and empire, and its anti-eucharist. But it's one or the other. We can't have it both ways. We can't celebrate the Eucharist of Christ's peace and still support the culture's ongoing anti-Eucharist of war and destruction.

This Eucharist of nonviolence summons us to re-

nounce the old covenant of violence, accept Jesus' new covenant of nonviolence, and persistently reconcile with every living human being as sister and brother. The body and blood of Christ disarms us, heals us and gives us a peace not of this world. Bound by this new covenant of nonviolence, we are sent forth as peacemakers into the world of permanent war to give our lives in the struggle for justice in his memory. As keepers of the covenant of nonviolence, we espouse a consistent ethic of life, and resist war, executions, nuclear weapons, greed, environmental destruction and violence in all its forms. We no longer partake of the anti-Eucharist of war. We celebrate the Eucharist of peace.

Fr John Dear SJ is an American Jesuit priest who visited New Zealand in 2009 at the invitation of the Catholic Worker.

Obituary Larry Ross

Lawrence (Larry) Ross died in Christchurch aged 84 on 18 April 2012 after suffering a massive stroke on Good Friday. Tributes poured in from around the country to honour him for his 50+ years of commitment to the anti-nuclear and peace movement.

In 1964, he was asked by Bertrand Russell to establish the Australasian branch of his Peace Foundation after he emigrated with his wife and six young children from Canada to escape the threat of nuclear war, post Cuban missile crisis.

This is how Gael Johnson, who knew Larry as a child from about 1967, described him: 'Larry, a hyperactive speaker and thinker, rushed hither and thither in the chaos, his dark hair flopping over his furrowed forehead. The words and letters I remember ... run together in my mind now; LBJ, Vietnam, the CIA, the Bomb, Nixon, the Bomb, CIA, Vietnam, the Bay of Pigs, Robert McNamara, JFK, the CND, intercontinental ballistic missiles Larry's sunroom was stacked from floor to ceiling with papers; falling out of boxes, lying on the desk, leaking from the shelves....'

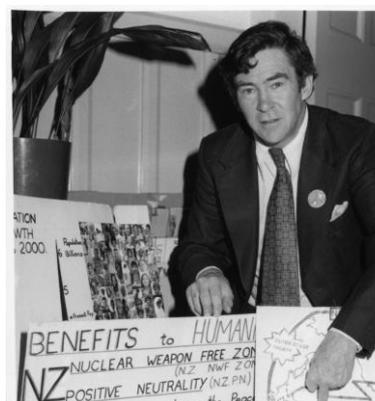
From 1967-1980 he returned to his advertising business in order to support his family. In his mid-fifties he joined the Christchurch Peace Collective, and committed the rest of his life to helping secure New Zealand's nuclear free policy and shift public opinion towards a more neutral peacemaking role in the world. In December 1981 he established the NZ Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Committee which became the NZ Nuclear Free Peacemaking Committee in 1988. Following the lead of Devonport in March 1981 which had become a nuclear free borough, he then led the campaign to get other local councils declared nuclear free. Christchurch became the first nuclear free city in March 1982, the same night as Lyttelton. Over the next two years Larry visited 25 centres nationwide helping establish local peace groups es-

pecially in small towns.

By the time our now famous nuclear free legislation was passed 25 years ago in June 1987, over 72% of the population lived in locally declared nuclear free zones. He encouraged people to act locally, to dress formally, meet MPs, collect petitions by door knocking, write letters to papers, and have stalls in main streets. Even after the National Party adopted the policy in 1991, Larry did not give up. He toured 17 towns warning that NZ must not return to ANZUS. He also spoke in Australia, Italy, Japan and Canada. When Christchurch became the first UNESCO Peace City in 2002 Larry received one of eight Inaugural Peace City Awards. His amazing collection of papers is safely stored in the MacMillan Brown library at Canterbury University.

It has been a privilege to work closely with Larry for over 32 years. He leaves a remarkable legacy. His fundamental role in our nuclear free heritage is yet to be properly documented and extolled. When it is, he will be acknowledged for his passion for world peace, his intellectual capabilities and his dogged perseverance despite meagre funding and other challenges. Larry nurtured a compelling obsession that called us all to reject violent solutions and embrace a constructive altruism based on mutual respect, interdependence and peace. May he now rest knowing he has helped create and shape a policy that New Zealanders will always identify as fundamental to who we are as a nation.

Kate Dewes



Review

Sky Whisperers Ranginui by Kathleen Gallagher.
Reviewer: Liz Remmerswaal Hughes.

The third in this series of films, following *Earth Whisperers Papatuanuku* and *Water Whisperers Tangaroa*, holds a magic all of its own.

Maybe it's the ever-present image of the starry night enveloping us, or the feel of a heavenly, spiritual dimension which has such power as a back drop to the 16 inspiring interviewees in this film.

Somehow Kathleen and editor Therese Gallagher-Power manage to weave all these diverse characters together creating a positive dimension to what is often a depressing genre- the environmental film.

The timelessness of the stars and their role in celestial navigation as well as planting crops unites us with ancient civilisation and a time when people's knowledge was valued, handed down and sustained life and journeys. That a similar journey retracing the Polynesian migration but leaving from New Zealand using eco-waka with solar and wind energy has been captured in this film too is very satisfying and heartening.

It was surprising to hear that half of the world's population can't see stars because of smog, though we know that dirty air due to carbon dioxide poisoning is increasing, as described graphically by Canterbury engineer Susan Krumdieck.

Nor had I ever heard of the concept of a national park in the sky before, such as is being created in Mt John Observatory at Lake Tekapo as the first World Heritage Starlight Reserve, an amazing concept and tourist site.

As Kathleen Gallagher says, 'This environmental feature calls us to a closer intimacy with our skies – celestial navigators, climatologists, a Nobel prize winning scientist, biodynamic, Maori, and radio astronomers, farmers, fishermen and business folk who observe the sky, the air, the stars, the moon and sun cycles. Together they show

how we can establish a way of observing, living and doing business which results in non pollution of our skies.'

Once again the film is embraced and softened by the wonderful music of Aroha Yates-Smith, while the cinematography by Mark Lapwood is outstanding and makes one want to go and stand outside on a still, clear night.

Just one criticism though - perhaps a slight over-use of the sped up sky panorama which I found unnerving after a while.

There is no time or space unfortunately to describe all the participants in this film in any detail. These include Ken Taylor, scientist, Makere Chapman, Waitaha kuia, David Whitehouse, Nobel Prize scientist, Pouroro Ngarepo, Ngati Awa koro, Richard McKenzie, NIWA scientist, Graeme Murray, businessman, Hotoroa Barclay-Kerr and Jack Thatcher, celestial navigators, Ropata McGowan, Rongoa Maori healer, James Waiwai, Tuhoie healer, Rachel Proctor, biodynamic astronomer, Jenny Mauer, biologist, Cathie Dunsford, writer, Ken Ring, forecaster, and Sergei Gulyaev, radio astronomer.

However make sure you get hold of this film which is available via www.wickcandle.co.nz or by contacting the director on 03 332 9192. The DVD price is \$30, plus \$3 p/p. Share it with your family and friends soon. You will be in for a treat.

Matariki Mid-Winter Screening
Kathleen Gallagher's
Sky Whisperers Ranginui
Court Theatre, Addington
Sunday, 24 June 2012
Tickets \$12 at theatre
or phone 9630870

Letters

Box 22
Gizo,
Solomon Islands.

Greetings Friends,

Our Easter liturgies are something special. While the novices were dramatising the gospel in the Gizo cathedral, I was - as on most Sundays - at Vanga Point, on the island of Kolombangara for three nights. This time, instead of the 22km canoe ride, I went in the Marist Brothers' aluminum cabin launch, which carried more than 20 people. Some young men sat on the roof, celebrating the Easter holiday with the odd can of Sol Brew, the (excellent) local beer. In a rolling sea, I had doubts about their safety.

The congregation at Vanga Point is made up of stu-

dents and families involved in the small primary and secondary schools plus the teachers' college and agricultural institute. Different groups took responsibility for each Easter ceremony, Thursday to Sunday.

Having found that in this country women are sometimes included in the foot-washing during Holy Thursday Mass, I requested that six of our twelve be women. This was well-received, but I later found that many of the congregation are not Catholic... including some of those whose feet I washed. A new experience for a Seventh Day Adventist!

On Good Friday morning we began the Stations of the Cross down by the shore, against a backdrop of glorious blue horizon seen through a line of coconut palms. The cast of Roman soldiers, officials, high priests and bystanders were clad in creative costumes: armour made from sak sak leaf, silver roofing insulation or strips of

cardboard carton dyed with berries. As the ancient drama unfolded, grasshoppers cavorted, quite unaware, around our feet, where the students had slashed the grass with saraphs on the previous day.

For me, this is the land of the 'double take'... what seems at first sight is not always what is. We, the crowd following Jesus, had climbed the hill to the area around the chapel where the last few stations were to be enacted. From a distance two large crosses on a grassy knoll caught my eye. My first impression led me to admire the excellent, life-like black wood carvings on those crosses. Because they were not in any Local carving style, I thought they must be from Europe, perhaps from Italy, since the bishop is Italian. A split-second later, I realised my foolish mistake: these were not black wood, but real human beings!

Jesus was lifted up between them shortly after, and his last moments brought tears to many eyes, including my own: 'This day, you will be with me in paradise.' As a slightly different twist – excuse the black joke - at the centurion's command the two thieves were killed by a soldier placing a ladder behind their crosses and wringing the neck of each. Apparently leg-breaking isn't the done thing in Melanesia.

But despite some 'rough edges', I experienced perhaps more than in an Australian or New Zealand parish, the joy of Jesus' resurrection bursting forth through the Easter fire ceremony and the following Vigil, and again at the 8am Mass next morning. Alleluia!

Easter and Pentecost blessings to you all,

Peter Murnane OP

NZ Credit Union South,
Shop 125, Hub Hornby Mall,
418 Main South Road,
Christchurch

10 April 2012

Dear Friends,

I read with interest Murray Horton's article titled 'Increase the Tax on Profiteering Aussie Banks' in your Lent issue.

I thought your readers would be interested to know there is another way. Please allow me to introduce you to the wonderful world of Credit Unions. Credit unions have been formed by communities who have come together with the aim of making individuals, families and their communities financially stronger. Credit Unions are owned by their members and profits are re-invested back into those communities. Credit Unions provide services such as savings, loans, mortgages, Kiwisaver, insurance etc. The staff members are employed to help the members as the members are the owners.

In the 1950s, Fr Marion Ganey SJ, who had been active in promoting Credit Unions in the South Pacific, met with Tom Mitchell, a Catholic layman of Hamilton, and Fr H. Boyd of Matata. Both were so impressed with his ideas that as a result two sister parish Credit Unions were established: St Joseph's (Matata) Credit Union in the Bay of Plenty (now known as Credit Union North) and St Mary's Parish Credit Union in Hamilton (now known as First Credit Union).

Here in the South Island our oldest Credit Union started at St Mary's parish 50 years ago this September. This Credit Union is now part of NZCU South and to celebrate this occasion, NZCU South's AGM will be held in Nelson on Thursday, 27 September. All are welcome.

NZCU South has 15 branches around the South Island (in Christchurch at the Palms Shopping Mall, Shirley, and at the Hornby Hub). If you want your own banking service provider and keep all the profits reinvested in your local community, please call into your local Credit Union branch and talk to someone who works for you. You can also visit www.nzcusouth.co.nz. We are proudly a credit union - not a bank!

Best wishes,

Bevan Killick
Chairman – NZCU South

St Francis CW Farm
Whirinaki,
Kaikohe

Dear Friends,

I have been thinking about you all. I really enjoyed the hui. I wonder though whether some were expecting something a bit more powerful and more challenging which could have been a better use of the time. But for me personally, I really like the process initiated by the Christian anarchists and was inspired and challenged by all the talks we had. And of course, just being together was wonderful. So I am quite happy for all that.

I know Forest mentioned he'd be glad if we had more Church teaching in our hui. To me that sounds a bit boring but I guess that may be faulty thinking. There was something I felt was missing in retrospect. I think we should have had different people prepared to share a short prayer of reflection in between each part of the programme. So maybe that could happen next time.

Thinking of you all. Much love,

Catherine Land

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The Common Good

Te Wairua Maranga Trust
 Box 33-135
 Christchurch 8244
 New Zealand



The Holy Spirit writes no more Gospels except in our hearts. All we do from moment to moment is live this new Gospel of the Holy Spirit. We, if we are holy, are the paper. Our sufferings and our actions are the ink. The workings of the Holy Spirit are his pen, and with it he writes a living Gospel.

Jean-Pierre de Caussade (1675 – 1751)