

The Common Good

Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor

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War and the Non-violent Jesus

Jim Consedine

The visit by President Obama to Japan in late May was historic for several reasons. With China a growing influence in that region and perceived by the West to be a threat, it seems that politically the visit ticked most of the boxes. And with the current Japanese Government seeking to re-arm its forces after 70 years of constitutional pacifism, it was an even bigger coup for US business interests and arms manufacturers.

But President Obama failed dramatically in one respect. While his visit to Hiroshima was filled with sentiment, morally he failed the Japanese and his own country and the wider world community by not issuing a heartfelt apology for the atomic bombing that obliterated that city on 6 August 1945. It killed 120 000 people on impact and tens of thousands later through radiation poisoning. He squandered an historic opportunity.

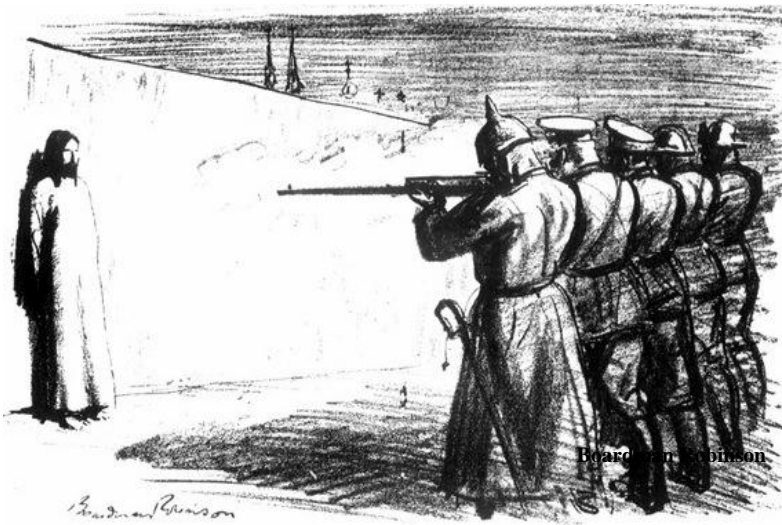
The US argument is that the bombing was needed to finish the war. The reality is that the war, as subsequent government papers have shown, was in effect almost over. Japan was on its knees in nearly every respect. Even if it wasn't before, it certainly was after the bombing of Hiroshima. But that wasn't enough for the US, anxious to display its superior power to the Russians. Three days later, they bombed Nagasaki, the most Catholic city in Japan, aiming the bomb at the spire of the Catholic cathedral! It killed a further 80 000 people.

The Madness of War

Obama's visit was a reminder of the evil and madness of war. It has never better been illustrated than in WWI when soldiers on both sides stopped fighting on the Western Front on Christmas Day to exchange gifts, fraternise, sing carols, play soccer and acknowledge the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

The irony of a cease-fire on Christmas Day is truly

breath-taking. More than 100 000 soldiers joined the truce. Jesus was the spiritual source of belief, values and tradition of both sides, the supposed Supreme Power behind both thrones. Truce over, they forgot the message and one half of the Body of Christ went back to slaughtering the other half!



What in God's holy name were two supposedly Christian countries doing in the mud and slush and bitter winter weather shooting, gassing and killing each other? By war's end, at least 17 million people had died and a further 20 million were wounded. Tens of millions of families were ripped apart forever. Survivors were nearly all greatly damaged. All for what?

Both sides were believers in Jesus and his teachings. How come they were ignoring teachings that the Church had strictly maintained for its first 300 years? No violence. No war. Put down the sword. Forgive. Love your enemy. Practice justice. Live at peace with all.

Clearly the message had been corrupted and watered down by the Church. All governments try to co-opt and then corrupt the message of the Gospel when it doesn't suit them. Sadly, the Church has too often acquiesced.

The Just War theory

During its first three centuries, the Church taught and practised non-violence. No Christian would take up arms. Many were executed for refusing to fight for the Roman Empire. They lived the radical teachings of Jesus. And sometimes paid the price.

When the Emperor Constantine signed the Edict of Milan in February 313, all that changed. Basically the deal brought Christians in from the cold of persecution, allowing full participation in all things in the Empire, including conscription.

Late in the 5th century, St Augustine developed a



Just War theory, expanded by St Thomas Aquinas in the 12th, which enabled Christians to fight if certain criteria were met. The criteria included that the cause must be just, proper authority must have called it, all efforts had been made to resolve the conflict peacefully beforehand (last resort), the violence inflicted must be proportional (not more than required), and civilians must not be targeted. Each piece of criteria had to be met, or the war was not 'just'.

The Just War theory, elastically applied, has allowed Christians ever since to take up arms and fight. Hence the enormous irony enacted at Christmas 1914 on the Western Front.

The truth is that there hasn't been a major war in the past 100 years that has remotely met the criteria for a Just War. Modern weaponry negates any possibility. If for no other reason, such is weaponry these days their use cannot ever be proportional or not kill civilians. More than 90% of those killed in Syria and 98% in Gaza these past few years have been civilians. There cannot be a Just War!

The Message of Jesus

Jesus himself grew up in a culture of extreme violence. Occupation by the Roman empire of Palestine meant that he was aware of public executions, floggings, stonings and other horrific acts of violence for most of

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, Joseph Cardijn and Thomas Merton. 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 promote non-violence and a 'small is beautiful' approach to life, practise co-operative work and peacemaking, focus on issues of justice, support prison ministry, help create intentional communities, and try to practise voluntary poverty and personalism.

We engage in regular prayer and we also 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.** *The Common Good:* Editor: Jim Consedine - jim.conse@xtra.co.nz; Layout - Barbara Corcoran - burkespass@gmail.com

the 33 years of his life. History records regular violent uprisings against Roman occupation that were suppressed with brutal force, including mass crucifixions along the main highways. That was the context of his own personal history. He knew it well.

So when he started his own public ministry, many thought he would become another political force and come riding in like a conquering king to lead his oppressed people to political liberation. His mission was never like that. 'Respond with the only weapon I give you. Love. Respect. Forgiveness. Non-violence'. It sounded crazy. Many refused to walk with him once they had heard the message. But he never budged from it. Love is the strongest weapon, he taught.

He knew he would be rejected. But he taught it was the Will of the Father, the Creator God, that this was to be the way forward for God's people. It still is. The mission of Jesus was to proclaim it even to death, death on the Cross.

A Path of Non-violence

The life and message of Jesus is one of non-violence, sharing, and the building of community. This enables all to be supported and loved especially the poor and marginalised, thereby creating peace and ensuring justice is practised. As the Acts of the Apostles affirms 27 times, we were to be followers of 'the way', following in the steps of Jesus. What a beautiful image of Church!

Pope Francis clearly thinks so. The Vatican-based Justice and Peace Commission and the international peace organisation, Pax Christi, recently jointly sponsored a conference in Rome of 80 of the world's leading practitioners of non-violence. (cf p7 'Rome Manifesto') They unanimously rejected the Just War theory as being obsolete and dangerous in an era of weapons of mass destruction, thousands of nuclear warheads and lethal drone strikes. They proposed a Just Peace theory based on the teachings of Jesus and practised by the early Church and adapted to our times. They challenged Christians to work through the processes involved at every level in a modern context.

People sometimes say this is starry-eyed idealism and ask, what should we do about Hitler and the Nazis? ISIS? Other despotic regimes? There are no simple answers. There never has been. But terror from the skies through obliteration bombings and drone strikes are no answer. Neither are nuclear weapons. That is obvious. Ask the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Of Agent Orange and napalm in Vietnam. Of Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq today. Ask the thousands of refugees currently fleeing war zones every day.

Non-violence and love of neighbour were the ways that Jesus left his followers, not war and violence. The early Church knew this and suffered for it. Jesus invited us to take up our Cross daily, and walk in his footsteps, sustaining one another through familial and community bonds on the journey.

This is the road to implementing his message and witnessing to the Reign of God, both now and in eternity.

Editorial 1 Holding onto hope

What do Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, Nigel Farage of UK Brexit fame, new Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and Pope Francis have in common?

At one level very little. However, they are all ‘outsiders’ who have tapped into a backlash of widespread discontent and anger of hundreds of millions of people who feel disenfranchised by the political, ecclesial and economic establishments who have taken a stranglehold on the global levers and benefits of power and capital. Each has been a catalyst in unleashing a tidal wave of social upheaval of tsunami proportions.

Each has offered new hope. It may be based on nationalism, sexism, xenophobia, racism, a socialist dream or the Christian gospel of justice, mercy and liberation. Whatever the driving force, hope is on offer.

In a world of infantilised 15-second TV sound bites, high unemployment, widespread poverty and clear signs that the divide between the rich and the poor is widening by the minute, these leaders have given hope to those who feel shut-out of the mainstream. A huge groundswell of people has finally managed to have a say, to have their voice heard. They have felt disenfranchised, that nobody cared about them. What comes may not all be good, in fact some of it may be disastrous, but the people in their millions have voted for radical change. They are saying, ‘we want something different.’ We have had enough of this inequality.

Carving up the planet

At the heart of this disenfranchisement (but not the only issue) lies a core problem, the god of neoliberal economics. In every corner of the world including NZ with Rogernomics, its forces have divided people into winners and losers, haves and have-nots. They have carved up the public purse for their own ends through the privatisation of public assets like transport, health and medicine and slashed proportionate expenditure on public housing, welfare and programmes for the poor. In addition, their systematic attacks worldwide on trade unions have weakened worker rights. The result is a time-bomb ticking in the middle of the planet.

The winners and the haves have accrued power and wealth beyond anything previously dreamed of in human history. The sagging middle-class, workers and the poor have been left behind to fight each other for the leftovers. Neo-liberal economics, whose value base is greed and competition in which only the strongest survive, creates hundreds of millions more victims each year. Its rapaciousness is insatiable. Witness the TPPA and RCEP (the Asian trade deal) and similar negotiations still proceeding at pace and in secrecy. These Agreements, which are all about further disempowering people and allowing corporations to steal even more, show contempt for the common good.

The myth of free trade without protection for local industries and workers is part of the creed of neo-liberalism. Neoliberal politics blames the victims it

creates. The ‘globalisation’ of the economy has provided welfare for the rich and capitalism for the poor, freedom for capital and restrictions for labour. Just 62 individuals hold the same amount of wealth as 3.5 billion people, one-half of the world’s population! In NZ, 10% of the population holds 60% of the wealth, up from 55% in 2010. The bottom 40% hold just 3%! (*NZ Statistics, June 2016*)

Millions are reacting against these lies, this giant fraud. What we are ending up with is not a society of equal opportunity, inclusiveness and equality, ‘but a permanent capitalist theocracy that ensures a two-thirds society, with the majority divided and indebted, managed by a corporate class, and a permanent working poor.’ (John Pilger, *Counterpunch*, June 2016).

Listening to the Holy Spirit

We teach that God speaks to us in these ‘signs of the times’. These sinful international structures are clearly against the common good of the human family and the well-being of the planet. But as Christians we have hope. So what signs can we read?

First, we recognise that the empowerment of the poor and the hope it brings is a central Gospel teaching, part of the New Covenant enacted by Jesus. Are these movements a sign of possible empowerment?

Second, that this huge global empire of financial greed and injustice sits on shifting sands and will implode, partially or fully, sooner or later. The conglomerates and international banks and their allies in governments won’t have the final word. The Reign of God doesn’t allow for it. Our faith teaches us that God’s Will cannot be thwarted forever. (Amos 2/6-9; Luke 6/17-49). They will fail as they have failed before.

Third, these millions sense that small and local is better than big and brassy as found in Washington, Rome, London, Manila and Brussels. They want smaller, more personal, more local, more say. That has been Catholic teaching (the principle of subsidiarity) and a Catholic Worker tenet for 80 years. Through smaller structures, people feel a better sense of belonging and of having some control over their futures. Is this what the Holy Spirit is saying through these events?

Pope Francis can read the signs of the times. Gospel in hand, he condemns the neo-liberal economic system calling it ‘grossly sinful’; highlights the plight of the poor, their need to be respected and their voices heard; challenges the wealthy to share out of a sense of justice not just charity; repeatedly begs for an end to war and condemns the arms industry that keeps fuelling it; calls for tolerance and hospitality for immigrants and refugees.

Francis has addressed these issues fearlessly. He preaches a gospel of hope and acts with courage. These are gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is inspiring leadership in these troubled times.

—Jim Consedine

Editorial 2 The homeless Christ: no room at the inn

According to the UN Refugee Agency, 65.3 million people around the world were displaced in 2015, the highest number on record, most of whom have ended up as refugees. Most came from the war-torn countries of Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia. This has created the biggest refugee crisis since records began, with 24 people being displaced every minute. Put together, they would constitute the 21st biggest country in the world!

Last year, 5 million Syrians escaped the war. No less than 86% of refugees fleeing these catastrophic events end up in low income countries, not First World countries. Turkey took in 2.2 million and Lebanon 1 million. Lebanon is smaller than New Zealand and has far fewer resources.

There are refugee camps all over the Middle East area, with 58 camps in Palestine alone. A further 5 million Palestinians live in refugee camps scattered elsewhere. Some have been in these camps since 1948 when they were effectively forced to leave their homes as the State of Israel was created.

According to the UN (*June 2016*) there are 64.9 million refugees in the world. These are men and women with families, children with dreams and hopes, forced against their will to escape from appalling often violent intolerable situations in their homeland and now living in intolerable conditions in camps for up to 30 years.

I wonder how any of us would feel to be born into that type of situation, beyond our control and beyond

reasonable hope of re-settlement?

The NZ Government has made the miserly response of agreeing to admit a further 250 refugees to bring its annual intake to 1000 people. This amounts to 0.00038462% of those needing resettlement. Whatever else this may say about us as a nation, it signals a mean-spirited lack of compassion, not generosity.

New Zealand is hiding behind its isolation in the South Pacific. The United Nations has for many years been requesting NZ to radically increase its numbers. All groups working with refugees in NZ are unanimous in requesting a much bigger intake, up to 3000 annually. They know refugee resettlement done intelligently is an investment not a cost, an asset not a burden.

The truth is, we simply don't pull our weight.

—Patrick O'Connor

SOME

Some stood up once and sat down
Some walked a mile and walked away
Some stood up twice then sat down
I've had it, they said
Some walked two miles then walked away
It's too much they cried
Some stood and stood and stood.
They were taken for fools
They were taken for being taken in
Some walked and walked and walked
They walked the earth
They walked the waters
They walked the air
Why do you stand they were asked, and
Why do you walk?
Because of the children, they said, and
Because of the heart, and
Because of the bread
Because
The cause
Is the heart's beat
And the children born
And the risen bread

—Daniel Berrigan SJ

Hiroshima Day - Avon River

candles burning
in white paper lanterns
on the river
no wind
only when Elsie Locke's granddaughter stands
a single breath of wind comes
and blows the oldest banner down
the singing plays like air out across the water
people gathering by water
again
and again
and again
standing together
like rain
and sky
and sand
and dust
over the years
chanting marching floating
paddling out into Lyttelton harbour together
against the US nuclear powered warship
putting our bodies on the line
again and again
tending the flame here
with our hands and feet
carving out the peace
through the years
since 1945
so it burns a hole in the armour
so they don't come here anymore
so other people
light flames in other places
so the single candle
becomes a river of candles
burning

—Kathleen Gallagher, August 2001

Around the Traps

Jim Simmonds RIP – CW Francis Simmond’s brother Jim died on 1st July after a long struggle with kidney and heart disease. Francis, his children Melanie and Joseph, and Jim’s sister Chris were with him when he died. Jim had a deep heart for justice and a great relationship with his God, which continued to broaden as he descended deeper into his illness. His love of nature and God’s creation and lifelong participation in the sacraments were marks of his cosmic spirituality. A large crowd gathered for his Requiem Mass at Christ the King parish church and later burial rites at Waimairi cemetery, all carried out in the CW fashion, without a funeral director. May he rest in peace.

A papal encyclical on non-violence and peace is ‘plausible,’ said Cardinal Peter Tuckson, head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. He was responding to the call from the jointly sponsored Vatican – Pax Christi three-day conference held in Rome in April 2016 that the Church abolish its ‘out-dated’ teaching on the Just War theory and re-focus on the teachings of Jesus and the early Church. They taught and practised non-violence in all matters in people’s relations with others. ‘Too often the ‘just war theory’ has been used to endorse rather than prevent limited war.’ He warned, however, that ‘a possible encyclical is plausible only as the fruit of much dialogue, not as a starting point.’

NCR, 26 April 2016

All Black tour opposed. Over forty years ago, after joining protestors on the street at a rally opposing the All Black tour to South Africa, Bishop Brian Ashby of Christchurch, told an ecumenical gathering of 3000 people in the Anglican Cathedral, ‘We Church leaders believe that South Africa’s system of positive legislation to promote apartheid puts it in a unique position in the family of nations. It is the only country which has a whole legal and political system based on racial discrimination. While we can understand the growth of apartheid, we do not condone it and see its continuance as a threat not only to South Africa, but to the world. It is a form of oppressions Christians are unable to ignore. Our stand is a moral one’.

Zealandia, June 13th 1976



The Common Good

In late May, it was with sadness that we recorded the sudden death of **Malcolm Twaddell** of Timaru. Malcolm had a great heart for justice and was a prominent opponent of various all-white Springbok rugby tours in the 1970s and 80s. He sprang to national consciousness in 1981 when he and three friends – Mike Gillooly, Robin Woodsford, Robert Consedine – refused to sign bail papers after arrest for a non-violent action. They subsequently went on an 11-day hunger strike in Addington Remand Prison, which helped focus the government and nation’s attention on the pending tour and what non-violent action was possible.

Prior to that Malcolm had been one of 12 arrested after taking over the Canterbury Rugby Union offices on 16 June, Soweto Day, and declaring them an Embassy of Black South Africa. This action gained international attention. Rugby Union officials were not amused as became evident at the four-day trial held in September where all were found guilty of ‘unlawfully detaining a building.’ Later he spent many years as an exemplary probation officer. May he rest in peace.

A plastic bag can take up to 1,000 years to fully decompose. And if it doesn’t end up in a landfill, it could end up in the ocean and in the stomach of a fish, bird or dolphin—a fatal occurrence that happens all the time. In China, a staggering 3 billion new plastic bags enter into circulation every single day. The Pacific Garbage Patch, a massive swirling collection of plastic trash in the North Pacific Ocean, is estimated to be anywhere from 270,000 square miles (about the size of Texas) to more than 5,800,000 square miles (up to 8 percent the size of the entire Pacific Ocean).

Casa Cry, May 2016

America has a 40-year history of mass incarceration. This year alone, roughly 20 million people will be held in one way or another in the US, in federal and state prisons (2.3 million), county jails (1.2 million) and under supervised release (5.9 million). More than 11 million people churn through jail each year for a short period. In the US, the prison-industrial complex is second only to the military-industrial complex in size, cost and employment numbers. Approximately 700, 000 inmates are released annually while roughly 80,000 are held in solitary confinement each day. A hugely disproportionate number are from minority groups.

US Department of Justice June 2018

Globally, it is estimated that a total of NZ \$11.4 trillion of individuals’ wealth sits in offshore tax havens, and 188 of 201 leading companies have a presence in at least one tax haven.

Pentecost – An Ecological Transformation

Kevin Burns

Sister Dorothy Stang was an American religious sister who was assigned to Brazil in 1966 to work alongside people in the Amazon region.

The people she lived with made a living by farming in small plots and extracting forest products without deforestation. It was a large part of the communal life of the people of the Amazon to be nourished by their forest and to protect their forest. The Amazon is the largest remaining rain forest in the world and is called the earth's lungs.

Also 20% of the earth's fresh water runs through the Amazon Basin.

In spite of local protection and mounting protests, loggers and land speculators moved further and further into the Amazon, trees were felled, land was cleared and agribusiness grew.

Other people got wealthy while the local people became poorer; the Amazon became big business through huge destruction of the forests.

So much did the loggers and ranchers want to keep control they went so far as to have a hit list to remove agitators like Sister Dorothy and other environmentalists.

The community, however, acknowledged the worth of Sister Dorothy and she was awarded Woman of the Year in the state of Para for her enlightened work for the poor and for the protection of the ecosystems in the Amazon.

Brazil honoured her as the Humanitarian of the Year for her tireless efforts to save deforestation and uphold the rights of the small farming communities.

But many people, especially those involved in illegal logging and the cattle ranchers who burnt huge tracts of rain forest to increase pastureland, considered Sister Dorothy a menace who had to be got rid of.

She knew she was on the hit list along with others who were at the forefront of protesting against the devastation of the rain forest.

She was arrested on one occasion for passing out subversive material which turned out to be the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights.

On 12th February 2005 she was murdered in cold blood. On her way to a meeting on human rights she was



Sister Dorothy Stang

ambushed by two men. They asked was she carrying a weapon and she replied 'I only have the bible.' She then proceeded to read aloud from it, and this is what she read, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' Those were her last words. A shot rang out and a bullet went through her abdomen. As she fell more shots were aimed at her head and at her back. She was shot dead, thoroughly!

In December that year a rancher was convicted of her murder; he had hired the two hit men.

He was found guilty and sentenced to 30 years in prison but was released 3 years later in 2009. Such is the level of corruption!

Fater Sean McDonagh SSC, a world-renowned eco-theologian who wrote of Sister Dorothy's life, claims she and others are becoming martyrs for the earth, a rather lovely acknowledgement of modern martyrdom and sacrifice – a martyr for the earth and for the poor.

Dorothy is at the forefront of upholding a new view of humanity that we in the 21st century must aspire to – we need to live in harmony with nature, we need to live in harmony with one another and we need to live in harmony with the leadership of the Risen Christ.

In other words, we must aspire to an ecological citizenship, we must aspire to be eco-citizens, which means we live on this planet in love with the whole of its life and as well as being users, become true carers and protective dwellers.

Dorothy Stang was transformed by the Holy Spirit, enabling her to be Christ's presence in the Amazon. That was where God called her to be. Pentecost tells us that we too can be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit enabling us to be Christ's Risen presence in our own situations of life. We don't need to go to the Amazon to be ecological citizens. All that is needed is that we seek and be open to that gift.

Fr Keven Burns preached this homily at Pentecost at St Mary's Church, New Brighton, in May 2016.

Communion of brothers and sisters

If we understand 'love of God' and 'a brotherly/sisterly communion' as two expressions basically denoting the same thing — and if we say 'communion of brothers and sisters' rather than 'love of neighbour' because this expression is less likely than the other to be misunderstood, then we may safely say that with a 'communion of brothers and sisters', in its necessary oneness with the love of God, we have expressed *the single totality of the task of the whole human being and of Christianity.*

—Karl Rahner

Rome Manifesto: Re-Commit to Gospel Nonviolence

As Christians committed to a more just and peaceful world we are called to take a clear stand for creative and active nonviolence and against all forms of violence. With this conviction, and in recognition of the Jubilee Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis, people from many countries gathered at the Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International on April 11-13, 2016 in Rome.

We are grateful for the message to our conference from Pope Francis: ‘your thoughts on revitalizing the tools of nonviolence, and of active nonviolence in particular, will be a needed and positive contribution’.

Jesus and nonviolence

In his own times, rife with structural violence, Jesus proclaimed a new, nonviolent order rooted in the unconditional love of God. Jesus called his disciples to love their enemies (Matthew 5: 44), which includes respecting the image of God in all persons; to offer no violent resistance to one who does evil (Matthew 5: 39); to become peacemakers; to forgive and repent; and to be abundantly merciful (Matthew 5-7). Jesus embodied nonviolence by actively resisting systemic dehumanization, as when he defied the Sabbath laws to heal the man with the withered hand (Mark 3: 1-6); when he confronted the powerful at the Temple and purified it (John 2: 13-22); when he peacefully but determinedly challenged the men accusing a woman of adultery (John 8: 1-11); when on the night before he died he asked Peter to put down his sword (Matthew 26: 52).

Neither passive nor weak, Jesus’ nonviolence was the power of love in action. In vision and deed, he is the revelation and embodiment of the Nonviolent God, a truth especially illuminated in the Cross and Resurrection. He calls us to develop the virtue of nonviolent peace-making.

Clearly, the Word of God, the witness of Jesus, should never be used to justify violence, injustice or war. We confess that the people of God have betrayed this central message of the Gospel many times, participating in wars, persecution, oppression, exploitation and discrimination.

We believe there is no ‘just war’. Too often ‘just war theory’ has been used to endorse rather than prevent or limit war. Suggesting that a ‘just war’ is possible also undermines the moral imperative to develop tools and capacities for nonviolent transformation of conflict.

We need a new framework that is consistent with Gospel nonviolence. A different path is clearly unfolding in recent Catholic social teaching. Pope John XXIII wrote that war is not a suitable way to restore rights; Pope Paul VI linked peace and development, and told the UN ‘no more war’; Pope John Paul II said that ‘war belongs to the tragic past, to history’; Pope Benedict XVI said that ‘loving the enemy is the nucleus of the Christian revolution’; and Pope Francis said ‘the true strength of

the Christian is the power of truth and love, which leads to the renunciation of all violence. Faith and violence are incompatible’. He has also urged the ‘abolition of war’.

We propose that the Catholic Church develop and consider shifting to a Just Peace approach based on Gospel nonviolence. A Just Peace approach offers a vision and an ethic to build peace as well as to prevent, defuse, and to heal the damage of violent conflict. This ethic includes a commitment to human dignity and thriving relationships, with specific criteria, virtues, and practices to guide our actions.

We recognize that peace requires justice and justice requires peace-making.

Living Gospel Nonviolence and Just Peace

In that spirit we commit ourselves to furthering Catholic understanding and practice of active nonviolence on the road to just peace.

As would-be disciples of Jesus, challenged and inspired by stories of hope and courage in these days, we call on the Church we love to:

- continue developing Catholic social teaching on nonviolence. In particular, we call on Pope Francis to share with the world an encyclical on nonviolence and Just Peace;
- integrate Gospel nonviolence explicitly into the life, including the sacramental life, and work of the Church through dioceses, parishes, agencies, schools, universities, seminaries, religious orders, voluntary associations, and others;
- promote nonviolent practices and strategies (e.g., nonviolent resistance, restorative justice, trauma healing, unarmed civilian protection, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding strategies);
- initiate a global conversation on nonviolence within the Church, with people of other faiths, and with the larger world to respond to the monumental crises of our time with the vision and strategies of nonviolence and Just Peace;
- no longer use or teach ‘just war theory’; continue advocating for the abolition of war and nuclear weapons;
- lift up the prophetic voice of the Church to challenge unjust world powers and to support and defend those nonviolent activists whose work for peace and justice put their lives at risk.

In every age, the Holy Spirit graces the Church with the wisdom to respond to the challenges of its time.

In response to what is a global epidemic of violence, which Pope Francis has labelled a ‘world war in instalments’, we are being called to invoke, pray over, teach and take decisive action. With our communities and organizations, we look forward to continue collaborating with the Holy See and the global Church to advance Gospel nonviolence.

—Issued in Rome, 14 April 2016 (Condensed)

Obituary

Daniel Berrigan SJ

Prophet, priest, poet, peacemaker (1921-2016)

Peace-making is tough, unfinished, blood-ridden. Everything is worse now than when I started, but I'm at peace. We walk our hope and that's the only way of keeping it going. We've got faith, we've got one another, we've got religious discipline.

—Daniel Berrigan SJ

The great priest, prophet, poet and peacemaker Daniel Berrigan SJ died 30 April 2016 in New York. One of the most influential Catholics of his time, Dan Berrigan was known world-wide for his active peace-making and principled stands for justice. Arrested innumerable times and jailed often, he was also an internationally known writer and poet and had published more than 50 books in a life spanning nine decades.

Like most great prophets, he was never comfortable doing ordinary things in a world where injustice is the norm and billions cry out for redress. He feared no one no matter what their authority and thus could make people uncomfortable, particularly those who were abusing their authority. In earlier years, he often ran foul of his superiors who wanted him to be more conformist. In one famous episode he publically challenged New York's Cardinal Francis Spellman over the latter's blessing of an American warship destined for the war in Vietnam. He challenged Spellman with the non-violence of the gospel and the teachings of Jesus. Spellman retaliated and had him transferred to South America for a period.

On his return, he joined his brother Phillip and seven others at Catonsville, MD in the 1968 burning of draft files of young men destined to fight in Vietnam. Popularised as the Catonsville Nine, it was a hugely successful prophetic action against the war and took non-violent protest in the US to a new level. In 1980 Dan was also part of the first (Swords into) Ploughshares action (Is 2/3-4) at the General Electric Nuclear Missile facility in Pennsylvania where they poured their own blood and hammered onto two nuclear warhead nosecones. He was again imprisoned. There have been more than 100 similarly inspired ploughshares actions since.

A great friend and ally of both Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker, and Thomas Merton, fellow poet and monk, Dan led hundreds of retreats and workshops and

protests opposing the militarisation of American culture which he considered demonic. He frequently celebrated Mass and gave many talks at the CW in New York. In later life, he also worked alongside Aids patients and the terminally ill for many years. To the end he remained a committed Jesuit priest.

On the day he died, his family wrote, 'It was a sacrament to be with Dan and feel his spirit move out of his body and into each of us and into the world. We see the future in him – his commitment to making the world a little more human, a little more truthful. We are aware that no one person can pick up this heavy burden, but that there is enough work for each and every one of us. We can all move forward Dan Berrigan's work for humanity.'

—Jim Consedine

Dan was my greatest friend and teacher for over 35 years. We travelled the nation and the world together; went to jail together; and I edited five books of his writings. But all along I consider him one of the most important religious figures of the last century, right alongside Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and his brother Phillip Berrigan. Dan and Phil inspired people around the world to speak out against war and to work for peace, and helped turn the Catholic Church back to its gospel roots of peace and non-violence. I consider him not just a legendary peace activist but one of the greatest saints and prophets of modern times.

Thank you Dan. May we all take heart from your astonishing peace-making life and carry on the work to abolish war, poverty, nuclear weapons and environmental destruction, and welcome God's reign of peace in our midst.

—Rev. John Dear



The Waging of Peace

We have assumed the name of peacemakers, but we have been, by and large, unwilling to pay any significant price. And because we want the peace with half a heart and half a life and will, the war, of course, continues, because the waging of war, by its nature, is total – but the waging of peace, by our own cowardice, is partial. So a whole will and a whole heart and a whole national life bent towards war prevail over the mere desire for peace.....There is no peace because the making of peace is at least as costly as the making of war – at least as exigent, at least as disruptive, at least as liable to bring disgrace and prison and death in its wake.

- Daniel Berrigan SJ

Letters

Christchurch
13 June 2016

Dear CW,

The situation in Gaza is dire. A population of 1.8 million is facing 'slow motion genocide', thanks to the illegal siege imposed by Israel.

What else can you call it when fishermen are shot, farmers trying to harvest their water are shot at, basic medical supplies are in very short supply, the water is unsafe to drink. The UN has said that Gaza will be 'unlivable' by 2020, although one could argue that it is just about un-livable now.

Dr Mona El Farra, Vice President of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society of the Gaza Strip, is extremely concerned about the effects on the children of the latest assault on Gaza. 'Actually, not only those who were subjected to direct trauma — because there is indirect trauma as well, which the whole [population of] children of the Gaza Strip have been subjected to in the darkness, hearing the sound of the shelling, listening to the rubble on top of their homes. Maybe it did not hurt them directly physically, but they were living in such an atmosphere for 51 days, surely it has affected most of the children of the Gaza Strip.

There are two parts of the trauma in children — direct effects, those who lost their homes and family, and those who were indirectly affected because of the sounds and shelling, insecurity, being terrified most of the time, including the sound of the airplanes, the sound of the shelling. It has affected all of us. But when it comes to children, it's even harder.'

She also has explained how distressing it is for the people of Gaza that the world does not seem to care. So efforts to break the siege are important. The world's political elite are comfortable to look the other way. However, around the world at the grassroots /flaxroots level, there are citizens of conscience who feel strongly about the urgent need to break the siege.

In September, there will be another attempt to sail into Gaza. Women's Boat to Gaza (WBG), is a Freedom Flotilla Coalition initiative seeking to challenge the Israeli blockade and bring a message of hope to the Palestinian people. This time, the boats, two small boats, will have women-only crews. We are raising funds to send a Kiwi woman to join the crew. Please send donations to - Kia Ora Gaza Trust, 03-0211-0447718-000, Westpac Bank, Onehunga, Auckland. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Lois Griffiths
03 355 4715

Christchurch

8 May 2016

Dear Jim,

Terence J. Rynne's analysis of Just War theory offers in most respects a measured analysis of the challenges of applying Just War theory to contemporary conflicts. However, it seems fundamentally inaccurate to call this discourse an 'abandonment' of the doctrine.

It is rather telling neither Rynne nor yourself defined the conditions for Just War in your articles, instead referring the reader to Augustine, Aquinas and the Catechism in the vaguest of terms. These conditions are Proper Authority, Just Cause, Probability of Success, Proportionality, and Last Resort. The last of these conditions demonstrates the fundamentally peaceful nature of the doctrine: war may only be used when all other options have been exhausted. In this sense, it is perfectly reasonable to argue that both the Vietnam War and the Iraq War failed to meet the criteria for Just War, and that the current diplomatic alternatives mean that there are almost no wars currently being waged which can be pursued as a last resort.

I (largely) agree that there is no such thing as a justified war in our age. To say that this constitutes a volte-face in Catholic doctrine, however, is fundamentally misleading. Although there may still be isolated situations where war is a genuine last resort (the misery inflicted by ISIS comes to mind), we can still consider peace to be the ultimate objective and something more than the mere absence of war. Positive Peace is truly a gift of Christ, not false dichotomies.

In Christ,

Julian Vesty

Julian provides some very helpful points, though I question whether the Just War doctrine has ultimately proved to be peaceful in nature. I suggest that history proves the contrary. I understand the thrust of the Rome conference and its subsequent document (published in this issue) was to re-examine the Just War theory and to challenge the Church to take a fresh look at the teachings of Jesus and the early Church tradition. This is in the light of the current dangerous escalation of arms spending and production, sophisticated new weaponry, accelerating numbers of lethal drone strikes, many contemporary wars and their horrendous casualties, including millions of refugees. Ed.

Funeral Choice
www.funeralchoice.co.nz
A Catholic Worker project
Cheaper alternatives to consumer funerals

89 Tyne Street
Invercargill

Dear Jim,

I have enjoyed reading and sharing *The Common Good* for some years now. I find it gives a voice to many issues which most, if not all denominations of Christianity in NZ largely ignore. They treat it as almost irrelevant by not speaking about them from the various pulpits, and on TV and radio. This is a crying shame. So well done on being a unique and important voice.

The only criticism I've got is that there is no emphasis on ecological issues, environmental issues, green issues. I have been to many denominations of Christianity in NZ including Catholic and find there is no preaching or teaching on the care of the planet. It's like no-one cares in the churches what humans do to the natural environment. It's like the churches don't care there's an ecological crisis on earth of unparalleled proportions TODAY.

Hopefully this absence of awareness can be addressed in *The Common Good* and some articles on the ecological crisis will appear in your paper.

Yours respectfully,

Patrick Burrowes

2/305 Ferguson Street,
Palmerston North 4410

Dear CW

In support of your leading article (CG77), I find no case in the teachings of Jesus to support to support the idea of a 'just war.' As Christians we need to witness to the love of Christ, who gave his life, while forgiving those who brought about his death.

When did any good ever come from war? I was astounded to read in a recent *National Geographic* (August 2015) that, 'The US dropped more than 2 million tons of bombs on Laos from 1964-73 during the Vietnam War. They spent \$13.3 million a day conducting the air war over Laos.' That's the equal to a plane load every 8 minutes for 9 years!

Laos is a small Asian country about the same size and population of NZ. In the Vietnam War, 200 000 South Vietnamese soldiers, 1 million North Vietnamese soldiers and 500 000 civilians were killed. Also in Cambodia, a neutral neighbour, 1 million were killed or wounded. *Hutchinson Encyclopaedia*, (3rd ed. 1996)

Why don't we try loving one another instead? There is no cost except the sacrifice of putting the other first, and forgiving our enemies. I have tried it myself and it works. Surely I'm not the only one who believes in the power of love? Let us study war no more!

Yours sincerely,

John Pepperell

Christchurch

Dear Jim,

I absolutely loved Kevin Burns homily on Pentecost in CG77. Those insights into the all pervasiveness of the Spirit, and the oneness of everything in the universe sum up my vision of the God / Creation relationship over many years now. Once such thinking would probably have been condemned as heretical, but for me this is the only way to make any sense of That Which Exists. There are no contradictions, merely developing understandings, and the parallels between today's growing scientific understanding of the universe and the Spirit-given insights of the early thinkers and writers of the Hebrew Scriptures are amazing. Every day of my life I feel blessed to have the privilege of being a part of this magical cosmos.

The uplifting spiritual appreciation of Creation is, of course, only half of the equation. In the day to day physical reality of life we are called to live justly and compassionately with the Earth and everything and everyone, especially the vulnerable, on it. Some days we fly, our feet hardly touch the ground. Other days we struggle, we stumble, and make little or no progress. That's life, but beside us we have always Jesus. That's why He came, not to DIE for us but to LIVE for us, and in so doing show us how to live.

He knew that the Establishment, threatened by his message, would kill him, but his death was the ultimate example of the commitment asked of us, not a ritual holocaust. God the Infinite, All Knowing, All Loving does not need blood offerings. What God asks is total commitment, and that's a big, big ask, which over a lifetime will involve many sacrifices, some big, some not so big. Let us pray that we and those we share our lives with will have the strength to handle them, and let's not judge one another when sometimes we don't.

God bless.

Rex Knight

westportrex@yahoo.co.nz

www.catholicworker.org.nz

Leading articles from the first 20 years of
The Common Good
Alternative funerals
Restorative justice
Other theological issues

Book Review

Nothing is Impossible; stories from the life of a Catholic Worker, by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy. 217 pp, Publisher: Haley's, 488 South Main Street, Athol, MA, 01331, USA. haley.antique@verizon.net; See: www.nothingisimpossiblebook.com Price US\$25, plus p/p. Reviewer: Forrest Chambers

Catholic Workers often have the problem of what to say when someone asks: so, what is the Catholic Worker all about?

We might mumble something about personalism (and try to explain what that means), then we might mention voluntary poverty (and try to explain what that means), then we'd have to make sure we covered hospitality, low-tech farming, peace activism, round table discussions and publications. And lastly, make it clear that there really is no set of rules for what Catholic Workers have to do, except follow what Jesus shows us to do!

A far better way to explain is through stories. And Scott's book is full of great stories of some of the things

Film Reviews

Notes to Eternity - a documentary by Sarah Cordery. NZ wide release. Reviewer: Maria Fresia

I felt privileged to be at the Hollywood Cinema on Friday 13th May for the Christchurch premiere of the NZ documentary, *Notes to Eternity*. The film director Sarah Cordery was present and, at the end of the screening, the audience had the great pleasure to meet her and ask her questions.

This locally made crown-funded documentary, completed over 10 years, bills itself as 'a meditation on the Israel-Palestine conflict', a choice of words that is as reflective of its pace as its style, 145 minutes long.

The longstanding Israel-Palestine conflict can be difficult to understand. Sarah Cordery approached four respected international observers and commentators and interviewed them several times over ten years.

Three are Jewish – Noam Chomsky, Sara Roy and Norman Finkelstein. All academics, Finkelstein is regarded as such a pariah he can't get hired in the US or Europe any longer because of his support for the Palestinian cause. The fourth is veteran war correspondent and long-time resident of Beirut Robert Fisk who, for several decades, reported eloquently on the region for major papers including Britain's *The Independent*. All four share a common opposition to the prevailing general acceptance of Israel's and the United States' support of military action and occupation. They do so because of the structural injustice involved and the chaos it has caused on the ground, including virtual imprisonment of the population of Gaza.

In the documentary, Sarah makes sure we experience the injustice with old footage of previous wars, long shots on desolated areas of Palestine, the huge

that Catholic Workers do. Scott is a natural and funny storyteller, and through living the Catholic Worker life (with his wife Claire & family) in Worcester, MA, he has some amazing experiences to relate. In describing the gallery of colourful characters who have come through their Catholic Worker house over the past 30 years, Scott shows how we can be enriched by helping those in need.

The description of his peace activism and reflections on the meaning of his time in jail show the transformative power of these experiences.

As the book is essentially autobiographical, certain chapters are not always relevant to CW themes, but they simply show that he is a rounded person with a life that is not confined to serving soup and bread.

Our daughters particularly enjoyed his chapter on the haunted house - which is indeed very strange and creepy, the more so, because it sits alongside his other chapters of straight documentation of CW life.

A great book, told with a great sense of humour (including Monty Python references) and the best way to explain to someone what the Catholic Worker is all about. Inspiring.

Berlin-style wall built by Israel that divides the two countries (the so-called apartheid wall), poor and desperate people walking amidst rubble with seemingly no hope for their futures, and living with the constant everyday threat of violence.

The documentary is a stark reminder for us all of the struggle Palestinians have been going through for many decades. It reflects everyday experience for them. A must-see!

Boxes – A documentary on casket making, by Joseph Coughlan, 7 min 25 sec, YouTube. Reviewer: Barbara Corcoran

This upbeat little film shares the life and work of CW Mike Coughlan: 'I make the odd coffin or two. When somebody dies it's a real roller-coaster process. If they can sort out a casket beforehand, it helps the process of dying. It's one of those things that people can feel more relaxed about. I make the caskets. That's my role.'

We see the construction, the careful use of recycled materials, the collection of macrocarpa for handles, the ordering of a coffin, but this is much more than a short documentary about carpentry. Through Joe Coughlan's eyes and his uncle's voice, we see the deep love and calm commitment to this work. It's a visually engaging film that includes a great childhood sequence of kids on a home-made cart and a philosophical walk through the forest to collect branches for coffin handles. The neatly edited script includes a plethora of information and philosophy for such a brief film. Search for *Boxes Joseph Coughlan Youtube* and prepare to be quietly delighted. Having seen more of his work on Youtube, I'm delighted to see the emergence of this NZ filmmaker.

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The Common Good

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



Over the years, I have come to believe that the important thing in life is to live with integrity, regardless of the consequence. I think the road to Hell is paved with indifference, conformity, hypocrisy and fear. As soon as someone stands up at personal risk to save lives, we all achieve victory. A criminal conviction and jail sentence do not diminish that victory.

—Scott Schaeffer-Duffy