

The Common Good

Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor

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Parihaka Day – 5th November

Jim Consedine

The armed invasion by Crown troops and militia of the small Taranaki Maori settlement of Parihaka on 5 November 1881 stands as one of the most infamous events in the colonial history of land-grabbing in Aotearoa. But it also stands as a day of huge spiritual witness and heroism, as the occupants resisted through nonviolent means the armed soldiers and militia who confronted them. It has taken 136 years for the Crown to formally acknowledge and redress the harm they caused. This has now been done.

On 9th June 2017, the Crown represented by Hon Chris Finlayson in his role as Attorney-General, signed a **Deed of Reconciliation** with the people of Parihaka. It resulted from the events preceding and including the attack, when a Crown military force of 1598-armed constabulary and volunteer militia invaded and occupied Parihaka, seeking to quell the opposition to the land confiscation and prepared to take it by force.

Confronting the armed invasion on that day on the local marae, 2500 unarmed adults including their leaders, the Christian pacifist prophets, Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi, sat waiting. The armed soldiers advancing were made to walk past rows of singing children, dancing and playing with tops, past rows of hundreds of women, to where the men waited. The two leaders along with 634 others were arrested and led away. Despite the extreme aggravation, no one resisted.

Honouring Non-violent Resistance

In the days that followed, 1600 people were forcibly dispersed, while about 600 were allowed to



Te Whiti o Rongomai
David Stones

remain. Houses and crops were razed, women raped, animals slaughtered. After Parihaka was destroyed, the troops then fanned out over the countryside to wreak more extensive damage. Still there was no violent resistance. Not one shot was fired in retaliation, not one life lost. Despite the eventual theft of 800,000 hectares of land by the Government, peaceful non-violence prevailed among Maori.

In the Deed of Reconciliation, which is not a Treaty Settlement but a legal recognition of the unique situation that unfolded at Parihaka, the Crown

apologised for their brutal dealings with the people of Parihaka, the theft of their land, the arrest of their leaders and the pillaging, rape and destruction that followed.

Despite not having lifted a finger to oppose the invasion, Te Whiti and Tohu were charged with sedition. Both were found guilty and sent to Addington Prison in the South Island, where they served 16 months.

In the **Deed of Reconciliation**, which is not a Treaty Settlement but a legal recognition of the unique situation that unfolded at Parihaka, the Crown apologised for their brutal dealings with the people of Parihaka, the theft of their land, the arrest of their leaders and the pillaging, rape and destruction that followed. The Crown troops had seized the land and imprisoned several hundred non-violent resisters without trial in prisons as distant as Wellington, Hokitika, Christchurch and Dunedin. There they remained for up to two years in sparse cold damp conditions. Many did not survive, the



Deed recording that 18 died before release. Many other lives were markedly shortened as a result of the harsh prison conditions.

Among many other things, the Crown in the **Deed** apologised for the way the NZ Government had legislated away the right to a fair trial, legalised the continued detention of the resisters without trial, and retrospectively legitimised the destruction of their homes and possessions. As Chris Finlayson pointed out, ‘To one of the most shameful events in our history, the Crown responded to peace with tyranny, to unity with division and to autonomy with oppression.’.

Modern Day Lessons

Given the impact of the Parihaka people and their leaders on these historic events and the almost universal disquiet at the high levels of violence in contemporary society, one wonders why neither Te Whiti nor Tohu have gained the status due them. Surely, they are role models for what most want our society to become – a just, fair, peace-loving, non-violent nation. They deserve the status that Mahatma

Who are we?

Members of Te Wairua Maranga Trust, which publishes this paper, have since August 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

www.catholicworker.org.nz

Gandhi has in India, Martin Luther King in the US, and Edmund Hillary, Kate Shepherd, Michael Joseph Savage, Suzanne Aubert and Whina Cooper have in New Zealand. They should be immediately identifiable as iconic New Zealanders.

Along with the creation of our welfare state and nuclear free laws, shouldn’t knowledge of these remarkable men and their leadership at Parihaka form part of the spiritual DNA of every person born in this country? The ongoing legacy of Parihaka is one of passive nonviolent resistance to tyranny and a belief in the peaceful and respectful co-existence of Maori and Pakeha. It is also a legacy of living in harmony with the environment, the land and humanity.

The Crown troops had seized the land and imprisoned several hundred non-violent resisters without trial in prisons as distant as Wellington, Hokitika, Christchurch and Dunedin.

This campaign of non-violent resistance to tyranny preceded those of Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King by many decades. Gandhi knew the Parihaka story. And according to the Waitangi Tribunal’s *Taranaki Report – Kaupapa Tuatahi* (Ch 8), Martin Luther King’s principles of nonviolent resistance were the same as those of Te Whiti and Tohu.

The **Deed of Reconciliation** is a very positive step forward for the people of Parihaka and for all New Zealand. But it is only the first step. The lessons of Parihaka of passive resistance, peaceful non-violence and co-existence are lessons we should carry forward with us as a part of who we wish to become as a nation in the future.

Why isn’t Parihaka’s story as well known in NZ as the Gallipoli and Passchendaele stories, or the lives of Charles Upham, Peter Snell or Colin Meads? Why isn’t this spiritually inspired, Christian-led nonviolent resistance story taught as a compulsory part of programmes in our schools, particularly our Church-based schools? And finally, why is 5th November still known as Guy Fawkes, when we could further develop some real independent national identity and pride by renaming it Parihaka Day? Who in NZ cares about Guy Fawkes?

Despite not having lifted a violent finger to oppose the invasion, Te Whiti and Tohu were charged with sedition and imprisoned. Te Whiti told the judge, ‘It is not my wish that evil should come to the two races. My wish is for the whole of us to live peaceably and happily on the land.’

Isn’t that a vision that we should all aspire to today?

Parihaka – Crown Apology

Hon Chris Finlayson, 9 June 2017

For imprisoning Parihaka residents for their participation in the ploughing and fencing campaigns of 1879 and 1880, and for promoting laws that breached natural justice by enabling those protestors to be held in South Island jails without trial for periods that assumed the character of indefinite detention; for depriving those political prisoners of their basic human rights, and for inflicting unwarranted hardships both on them and on members of their whānau and hapu who remained behind and sustained Parihaka in their absence; for invading Parihaka in November 1881, forcibly evicting many people who had sought refuge there, dismantling and desecrating their homes and sacred buildings, stealing heirlooms, and systematically destroying their cultivations and livestock.

For the rapes committed by Crown troops in the aftermath of the invasion, and for the immeasurable and enduring harm that this caused to the women of Parihaka, their families, and their uri

until the present day; for the arrest and detention of Tohu Kākahi and Te Whiti o Rongomai for sixteen months without trial in the South Island; for its imposition of a pass system which regulated entry into Parihaka, denied residents the freedom of movement, and prevented supporters from providing Parihaka with supplies following the invasion; for compounding these injustices by returning land under a regime that deprived owners of control and ultimately the ownership of much of the Parihaka reserves, and which remain in place to this day.

The Crown now joins Parihaka in paying tribute to the men, women, and children who responded to the Crown's tyranny with dignity, discipline and immense courage. It is the Crown's sincerest hope that through this apology, Parihaka and the Crown can now acknowledge their shared past, move beyond it, and begin to work together to fulfil the vision of peaceful coexistence that Tohu and Te Whiti described. (*abridged*)

Editorial 1 Post-Election Challenges

It was surely a grace that on the Sunday following the General Election, the gospel gave a special insight into the **Justice of God**. The parable of the day-labourers in the vineyard (Matt 20/1 – 16), who all started work at different times yet were paid the same amount, taken on face value is a trade unionist's nightmare. Surely this working situation is unfair we all think?

Yet it gives a fascinating insight into the justice of God, which reflects a deeper more fundamental perspective than our modern understanding of justice allows. God's justice starts with peoples' basic needs being met from both personal and communal sources – be it through employment opportunities, community support, loving relationships, financial reward or equitable distribution of resources.

Like the vineyard owner, God wants everyone to have what they need for their wellbeing. In that local culture, at the end of a day's work it was vitally important to provide for the family, otherwise they faced hunger. There was no welfare system. Earning enough money was the major focus of a day-labourer's life – to feed the family, pay the rent, afford medical care, provide vital necessities. Reflecting on this very common situation, this parable seeks to illustrate what God's justice is about – honouring human dignity by feeding,

clothing, housing, nurturing, caring for and providing the basics of life.

Most agree the recent NZ election campaign was among the liveliest in recent years and possibly the most interesting. The main issues which dominated were: providing affordable housing; better health care (particularly mental health); child poverty; addressing deprivation and disparities of income; climate change; creating more jobs; keeping economic control over our water, land and forests; cleaning up our dirty waterways and replenishing our declining rivers; providing affordable and relevant education. These are all issues of social justice. They concern the love of our neighbour.

With the advent of a Labour/NZ First/Greens Government, our political leaders now have the opportunity to address these issues with a fresh focus. The new government needs to keep its word from the campaign trail. People are starving for good moral and ethical leadership. We hope the government will keep its nerve. We are trusting them with a mandate to attend to the issues they campaigned on. Only that way will democracy be respected and justice achieved, for ourselves, our country and our planet. We wish them well.

—Jim Consedine

Editorial 2 *A Consistent Ethic of Life*—20 years on

It is 20 years since the document, *A Consistent Ethic of Life – Te Kahu-O-Te-Ora*, was produced by the NZ Catholic bishops. Its image of the garment of life – *Te Kahu o te Ora* – was a wonderful metaphor for the ideas the letter embraced and the document is aptly named. Like the ‘seamless garment’ that Roman soldiers dived over at the crucifixion of Jesus, *te kahu* was a cape or cloak for Maori. It was also the membrane enveloping a foetus, and the veil that at times covers the head of newborn babies

Under eight headings, - **the integrity of creation, discrimination, poverty, the arms race, peace, abortion, euthanasia and the death penalty** – the bishops presented an understandable platform of live-giving (pro-life) moral teachings to enable us all to see life in its integrated fullness from birth until death. New Zealand was the first country in the world to add the Integrity of Creation to the seven other categories. Twenty years later, we can surely see how important that decision was.

It is very disappointing to have such a marvellous document, synthesising so many of the Church’s social teachings, remaining generally unknown within the Church itself. *A Consistent Ethic of Life – Te Kahu o te Ora* covers so many important matters concerning life, integrated into

one easily understandable moral teaching. While some of these teachings may be difficult to live all the time, we believe them to be basic to Catholic practice and Christian life in the modern world.

As the document concludes, ‘The purpose in presenting a *Consistent Ethic of Life* is based on the belief that concern for any of the matters threatening life requires a concern for the broader issues in society of respect for all human life. One aspect of life affects another. All are important. Together they make a whole. This sacred cloak of integrity, of wholeness, *Te Kahu-o-te-ora*, embraces them all.’

In a world spinning further and further from its moral compass, we are happy to honour this document on its 20th anniversary as a reminder of how valuable good solid moral teaching can be in working to develop, enhance and protect the common good. It could become a simple but profound moral catechism for our times. Maybe it would be timely for the bishops to re-issue it and back it up with some good educational resources so it becomes better known?

The full document is available from the website of the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference, www.catholic.org.nz.

—Jim Consedine

A Zoo Beneath our Feet

Kevin Burns

Recently, in our local paper, *The Press*, an article caught my eye, under a catchy heading, ‘A Zoo Beneath our Feet’. As you would expect, the article expanded on the wonders of the world that lie in the soil beneath our feet. We know that worms and beetles inhabit the soil and are part of the life chain. But I gained further information from the article which had the aim of expanding our appreciation of the soil and the whole subterranean life beneath our feet.

Such articles like this increase our knowledge of our planet. They also increase our sense of wonder that leads us to be more responsible citizens, who will protect and love our whole eco-system. In modern times, we have already widely explored above the ground. We have explored outer space, discovering the vastness of the universe. We have gained a sense of awe and wonder at new discoveries in space. We have also discovered so much more about the hidden treasures in the subterranean life underneath us. Information about the universe and about our planet helps us to

appreciate life and feel a responsibility to protect the inter-connectedness of all life.

All of us surely have accepted by now the fact that our planet is in the midst of climate change. We have only to look at the changing weather patterns of cyclones and droughts that have developed in recent decades to know this. Look at the devastation caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Jose and Maria in September in the Caribbean region. September was the most active month for hurricanes since records began in 1851! Hundreds killed, hundreds of thousands made homeless, economies devastated. Rising ocean temperatures are the main reason, creating more hurricanes and leading to these changes. We also know that conservation of our fragile planet is the key to the future of the planet itself - and to most living species, especially human beings.

In recent decades and in response to these changes, most people now take seriously the issue of air pollution. They have also introduced a habit of recycling waste as much as possible. There is also a

growing concern about pure water and the urgent need to clean up our polluted rivers and streams where so much life is being poisoned. Recognising that all life is interdependent, we are learning to accept the challenge to care and love the planet more as a common home where all life, not just ours, can flourish.

When Pope Francis wrote his encyclical two years ago entitled *Laudato Si'* (Praise Be), it was an attempt to redefine the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation. He called for a world order where our basic human needs are met in a way that does not endanger the rest of creation or irreversibly damage it. The urgent call of our age is to protect our common home and together seek sustainable development. Our brother in Christ, the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew, over these last three decades, has focused constant attention on our moral responsibility to protect creation. The Patriarch and Pope Francis together have nominated 1st September each year to be a day to pray for the care of the earth.

In *The Press* article, recent discoveries have revealed there is much to learn from what lies beneath our feet. But it boils down to this: that plants

nurture a whole world of creatures in the soil; they in return feed and protect the plants including trees. Under our feet there is a whole community of worms, insects, mites and amoebas we have never heard of plus bacteria and fungi. They all work together, yes sometimes even by eating one another. Soil is beautiful and I learnt from reading the article to refrain from calling soil 'dirt'. Soil is rich in giving life!

So now as we re-enter our gardens during spring and prepare them for summer, let this dark crumbly soil slip through our fingers and let us enjoy its moist pleasant earthly aroma. And give forth praise perhaps with words from the Psalmist: *O Lord how marvellous are your works; in wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures!* Ps 104:24

Yes, the soil and growing things and living things can lift our being into a song of praise, and bring sheer delight as we see the beauty in all these creatures.

Fr Kevin Burns of Christchurch gave this homily at a recent Sunday Mass at St James Parish Church, Aranui.

Around the traps

Inequality – the hard facts. The richest 1% of New Zealanders own 20% of the country's wealth, while 90% own less than one half. The two wealthiest New Zealanders own more than the poorest 30% combined. Between 1984 and 2011, the richest 10% increased their incomes by 80%, while the poorest 10% were left with less than what they had after housing costs are taken out. Over 80% of problems with dampness and mould in housing are reported by the poorest 20% of households, with 10% of children living in households with a major dampness or mould problem, and 13% in households struggle to adequately heat their homes. NZ Statistics Department, 2017

Food parcels - In 2002 the Auckland City Mission gave out 2000 food parcels. In 2016, it handed out 160,000, eighty times as much in just 17 years. *Tui Motu*, July 2017

Widening the Gap – Congratulations to Theo Spierings, CEO of Fonterra, whose salary last year was \$8.32 million. This means he received \$160,000 per week, \$22,850 per day. He must have worked ever so hard! According to latest inflation adjusted figures, CEOs incomes increased 228% between 1997 – 2015, while the average worker's pay increased 91%. The CEO of one of our biggest

retailing stores earns a base annual salary of \$1.4 million, a possible bonus of \$700,000, while a shop assistant might earn \$35,212 in a year. As one commentator said, we are now a nation who live comfortably with this inequality. People no longer seemed appalled at this obscenity. *Fairfax*, 26 September 2017

Partial Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty – This treaty, was signed by 122 states on 7th July. Those signing did not include the nine nuclear armed powers, nor 62 other countries (mainly allies of the US). The Treaty prohibits the development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use and threat of nuclear weapons. It is grounded in international humanitarian law, and includes steps for states that rely on nuclear arms to take to get rid of their arsenals. The permanent members of the Security Council still cling to Cold War plans that require an unshakeable commitment to 'mutually assured' nuclear destruction (MAD) and to a nuclear 'balance of terror'. *Justpeace*, Pax Christi, UK, August 2017.

#Ngairie Clark RIP. Ngairie Clark, mother of our great friend Cathy Harrison and grandmother of Matthew, died in late September. We offer our condolences to her family.

the cap

with four days of stubble
tiredness etched deep
on a once-handsome face

he sits, lotus-like
cap extended, begging
under the lights at South City

squatting on asphalt
homelessness is no joke
at Christmas peak hour

inside this secular cathedral
spending sets new records
gifts he can only dream about

the weary face, the stubble
the loose coins
tell only half his story

a family, a history
five decades in the making
living, loving, working

people pass, embarrassed
lest they hear his plaintive plea
'any spare change?'

with no room at the inn
he sits, cap extended
the face of Christ at South City

—*Jim Consedine*

the world

crimsons moons
earth relay
people ever
environment collapse
time going fast
night and day
we live together
religion true
art and music
money and madness
rich and poor
season for change

—*Grace Malloch*

lament

watch you flowing by
river of rippling waters
Waimakariri

O when will you be restored
your depths flowing
clean and swift?

—*Sally Dunford*

Unity of All Creation

We live in an interconnected world marked by instant communications. Geographical distances seem to be shrinking. We can immediately know what is happening on the other side of the planet. Communication technologies, by bringing us face to face with so many tragic situations, can help, and have helped, to mobilize responses of compassion and solidarity. Paradoxically though, this apparent closeness created by the information highway seems daily to be breaking down. An information overload is gradually leading to the 'naturalization' of extreme poverty.

In other words, little by little we are growing immune to other people's tragedies, seeing them as something 'natural.' We are bombarded by so many images that we see pain, but do not touch it; we hear weeping, but do not comfort it; we see thirst but do not satisfy it. All those human lives turn into one more news story. While the headlines may change, the pain, the hunger and the thirst remain; they do not go away.

-- *Pope Francis, June 13, 2016*

The Catholic Worker movement – a brief history

Jim Considine

Dorothy Day, the daughter of a journalist, was born 29 November 1897 in Chicago. In her teens, she became a social activist and militant feminist and was first arrested outside the White House in 1917, demonstrating for women's suffrage. After several affairs of the heart and one abortion, she developed a de facto relationship with Foster Batterham, a fellow radical, with whom she had a daughter Tamar in 1927. They separated over difficulties concerning Tamar's upbringing, as Dorothy wanted Tamar to have stability and a faith tradition and insisted on having her baptised Catholic, into 'the Church of the poor.' Foster disagreed. Dorothy herself was baptised the following year.

Though separated from her activist friends, Dorothy's heart still beat with compassion for the poor. In 1932, while living in New York City raising Tamar, she met Peter Maurin, a French immigrant with a peasant background, who was a passionate fighter for social justice. Peter saw the need for radical action to meet the challenges of the immense poverty of his era caused by the Great Depression. He challenged people to remember the social justice traditions of the Church, its early tradition of pacifism and non-violence, personal involvement with the poor, and the importance of justice for all. Central to this were the Works of Mercy found in the Beatitudes (Matt 5; Luke 6). He educated Dorothy on these issues. Together they decided in 1933 to form the Catholic Worker movement.

The ministries of Catholic Workers have expanded and vary from place to place. All houses typically do some form of hospitality and action for justice and peace. Catholic Workers are pacifist, practice personalism, voluntary poverty, hospitality, environmental care, non-violence and take a 'small is beautiful' decentralised approach to economics.

Based on prayer and voluntary poverty, Dorothy and Peter initially proposed a three-point programme of action. **Houses of hospitality** (shelters and soup kitchens), **clarification of thought** (via discussion and publishing a newspaper) and **farming communes** ('where scholars would be workers and workers could be scholars,') all based on the social teachings of the Church. Five months after they began, on 1st May 1933, they published a newspaper in New York, the

Catholic Worker, (100 000 circulation by Christmas that year). It was sold for one penny a copy – a price it retains to this day. It has spawned many other CW papers around the world, including *The Common Good* and *Bread and Roses* in NZ. They opened a soup kitchen at their first House of Hospitality, taught Jesus's message of non-violence lived out by the early Church, and campaigned against all wars. Even when under extreme pressure, they have held to a pacifist position during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, both the Korean and Vietnam wars, and all subsequent ones.

The ministries of Catholic Workers have expanded and vary from place to place. All houses typically do some form of hospitality and action for justice and peace. Catholic Workers are pacifist, practice personalism, voluntary poverty, hospitality, environmental care, non-violence and take a 'small is beautiful' decentralised approach to economics. This enables individual people retain better control over their own destinies in the face of transnational economies and corporate banking systems. The movement grew throughout the US and beyond and is now present in about 15 countries. In 1980, it helped spawn the Ploughshares movement of non-violent direct action and resistance to war making.

Dorothy Day joins Archibald Baxter, Dr Martin Luther King, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Ormond and Nell Burton, Arch Barrington, Trappist monk Thomas Merton, Elsie Locke, Daniel and Phillip Berrigan, Sisters Ardeth Platte and Carol Gilbert O.P, Kathy Kelly, Kate Dewes and CWs Ciaran O'Reilly, Jim Dowling and Jeff Dietrich among many outstanding prophetic witnesses to peace-making and non-violence during this past century.

Today there are more than 190 Catholic Worker houses and farms throughout the world, including six in New Zealand. Each one is autonomous. All are inspired by Dorothy and Peter's original vision, 'to build a new society within the shell of the old in which it would be easier for people to be good'. In his September 2016 address to the joint Houses of the US Congress, Pope Francis hailed Dorothy Day, along with Abraham Lincoln, Dr King and Thomas Merton, as one of four great American role models.

Peter Maurin died on 15 May 1949, aged 72 and Dorothy Day on 29 November 1980, aged 82. Her canonisation is under active consideration in Rome.

Corruption: the Scourge of the Philippines

Fr. Shay Cullen

The apparent triumph of evil is what troubles so many in the world today. Reports of crime, bribery, wrongdoing, exploitation and frame-ups appear on almost every news bulletin. Evil reigns supreme when people in power abuse their position for their personal or family gain. In business, in politics, in the judiciary they defraud and steal, smuggle, peddle drugs and hide behind a mask of innocence. This is what we call corruption. Sadly, the Philippines in 2016 ranked low, 101 out of 176 countries, on the *Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*. Scandinavian countries ranked in the top five.

It is a brutal and painful reality that we live in a corrupt society. That may be pessimistic perhaps but also very true. Politicians are considered the most corrupt of all. Even senators are on trial in the Philippines for looting the public coffers. They allegedly set up false charities and foundations to hide the public money given to them for development and community projects and then channelled the billions into their private accounts. One was able to get a Supreme Court decision to post bail for a crime for which there is no bail allowed. The decision was a miracle of compassion, some said. The accused have every opportunity to present evidence and a strong defence and benefit by the rule of law, due process and plead innocent until proven guilty. Not so the suspected drug users that are killed daily on the spot with no evidence needed.

The Judiciary?

The judiciary is open to corruption. A recent case in the Philippines is that of a female US national who kept five Filipino children in her house illegally and severely neglected them. When rescued and medically examined, it was found that they had been sexually abused and used in making pornography. Despite strong evidence of guilt, the judge dismissed the case on the slim and questionable grounds that the children's rescue by government social workers and police was illegal. Massive bribery was suspected.

The good people who would never pay a bribe or act in a corrupt manner are disadvantaged as they are inhibited and prevented by their good conscience from doing wrong, taking advantage of others, committing an injustice, stealing, lying or cheating. There are many good Filipinos but they must not remain silent. They are Filipinos of integrity and honesty. They are the moral people

with a conscience built on knowledge of right and wrong. When temptation presents itself, they resist. But when threatened, they fear for themselves and their families.

The corrupt person has no conscience and is continually looking out for a way to exploit others, advance his ambitious goals of greed and dominance. In any situation where the official has power to give or withhold anything to which the member of the public has a right to receive- a driving license, a business permit or a police clearance- the official will be thinking, "Aha, what's in this for me?"

Our challenge

We are challenged and called upon to speak out and expose corruption wherever we suspect it is happening. Pope Francis is calling on us to say "No" to corrupt practices and to take a stand for integrity, honesty, human dignity, justice, good governance and human rights. Exposing corruption is dangerous as the powerful will silence the whistle-blowers and the human rights advocates who take a stand against corruption. In the Philippines, the president has said he will order the police to shoot human rights advocates.

However, corruption in developing countries is on a different level. It permeates all levels and all branches of government. Child abuse is widespread as government officials look the other way and issue permits to the sex bars where teenagers are trafficked and exploited by the local and foreign sex tourists. Everyone makes money and the children and young women, victims of human trafficking, are sexually exploited and held in slavery by debts, which they can never pay off. Corruption is so widespread that even police and officials frequent the sex bars and protect them from investigation for crimes against women and children.

Saying "no" to corruption can cost you your life. Over a hundred journalists and human right workers have been killed for exposing the corruption and injustice in the Philippines. Yet the people of conscience and integrity need to take the risk and stand up and say "No More Corruption" and act to expose and oppose all such evil practices.

Fr Shay Cullen SSC is an Irish Columban priest who has worked with marginalised children in the Philippines for over 40 years.
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Film Reviews

Seven Rivers Walking – Haere Maire.
Directed by Gaylene Barnes and Kathleen Gallagher. 84 minutes. Reviewer: Michael Malloch

Water is the holiest resource on the planet, essential to life. When we turn on a tap in our part of the world, we expect pure clean water. In Canterbury, this expectation was reasonable up until 20 years ago. Canterbury drinking water from the aquifers is now threatened with toxins seeping through alluvial soils largely due to the contamination of 6.5m cows and the fertilizers required.

Many of the rivers are depleted, some almost drying up. Why? In simple economic terms, in the 1980s, the floodgates were opened in NZ to *laissez-faire* free-for-all economics, advancement of which had few boundaries. This economic virus has now spread around the planet and is causing similar problems wherever it goes, especially the exploitation of resources.

This exploitation is what *Seven Rivers Walking* is about. It shows how desperate things have become, and shows, with stunning views, how urgent the real situation for the health of our rivers has become. Pope Francis expects us to get off our sofas and act. This is the message of *Laudato Si'*. This is what Kathleen Gallagher and Gaylene Barnes have done in this remarkable documentary, filmed following a group making a hikoï up seven Canterbury rivers. The hikoï began as an act of repentance on Ash Wednesday 2017.

Caring for our common home is a key commandment for modern Christians. I urge you to go and see this marvellous film. We need to raise consciousness of this environmental disaster happening in our own back yard. It is a great film for schools too.

An Inconvenient Sequel, Truth to Power, 98 min, NZ wide theatre distribution.
Directed by Bonni Cohen. Reviewer: Jim Considine

Al Gore is a prophet. His relentless advocacy over decades of the dangers that climate change is bringing to our planet is providing a legacy of prophetic utterance equal to some of the great prophets of our time.

If people had taken note of Al Gore's first

award winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), this latest film would never have needed to be made. Unfortunately, those with the most power in the world, particularly governments and huge transnational corporations like *Exxon Mobil*, refused to listen and take on board their global responsibilities for the protection of our planet earth. They haven't listened or acted with enough vision, commitment or courage. This includes our own NZ Government, whose weak-kneed response to the Paris Climate Accord is a case in point.

This film follows former US Vice-President Al Gore in his persistent efforts to speak 'truth to power.' It highlights graphic changes at the very centre of our planet's surface structure, with the ice caps melting, increasingly more frequent destructive storm patterns contrasting increasing drought conditions, and the hundreds of millions of people being adversely affected. It ends on a more hopeful note with the Paris Accord (which the US has since rejected) signed up to by 195 nations but with a clear message that everyone needs to be involved in the fight to protect our fragile planet.

As I write this review, in India, Bangladesh and Nepal, more than 1200 people have drowned in unprecedented floods and 40 000 homes have been destroyed, affecting hundreds of thousands of people. This has received little news coverage in western media. At the same time, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Jose and Maria have hit the Caribbean, Mexico, and US southern states, including Puerto Rico. Houston, Texas, for the third time in as many years, (November 2015, April 2016, August 2017) is under siege from, a 'once in 500-year flood', a catastrophic storm of epic proportions which has caused widespread destruction and loss of 40 lives. Despite their previous experience of flooding and hurricanes on both continents, it seems the authorities had refused to take appropriate action to prepare for such an event.

Denial of the obvious is a strange phenomenon. It involves straight-out deception and lies, followed these days by 'fake news'. Donald Trump is its patron. But ordinary folk are not so easily fooled. Most know that the climate is changing irrevocably. We all need to prepare. *An Inconvenient Sequel* is an important film and it encourages us to do that. It screens at a critical time in our history.

Paraparaumu
20 September 2017

Dear Jim,

Many thanks for printing Ann-Marie Stapp's very moving poem/song *Drones – Will I be Next?* in your recent issue of *The Common Good*. Our Lady of Kapiti Justice and Peace group shared it at last night's inter-denominational Peace Gathering which commemorated The United Nations International Day of Peace and which was a fitting conclusion for our own Social Justice Week of Weaving Bonds of Belonging!

Twelve groups of varying faiths shared in beautiful prayer, silence, chant, dance, poetry, reflection and food at our gathering. Some wore their white poppy of peace and we remembered Rev John Murray RIP, a brave and wise advocate of peace and promoter of the white poppy.

Thanks also for printing Thomas Merton's *Prayer for Peace*. It most certainly is as relevant today as ever before!

Blessings.

Barbara Henley rndm

41 Kedleston Drive
Christchurch, 8042

Dear Jim,

I picked up a copy of *The Common Good* (CG82) at Mass today because I was interested. That is, until I read your article on Institutionalized Poverty. Like you, some of the things that are happening in NZ concern me greatly. I would like to be able to do something about them. I am afraid that once we got to neo-liberal *laissez-faire* capitalism I was totally lost. I believe I am well educated, reasonably intelligent. I have held senior management positions as well as done a reasonable amount for the church through my lifetime. But what the heck is neo-liberal etc etc.

Since 1984 unions and the public service have been deliberately undermined. How? And how has this contributed to poverty in your view? What are the social equality piles that have been knocked away, and who are the knockers? What are the lopsided movable structures? How specifically did the new economic era leave more and more people in reduced circumstances? At least you give specific detail about spiritual deprivation which I guess is a

reflection on the seriousness of the way you view your vocation.

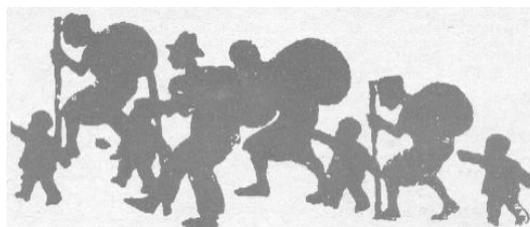
I made a genuine attempt to try and understand your article. It left me confused and angry with what I would interpret as left wing communist jargon. It wasn't the place I wanted to finish up.

Caring for the underprivileged is something we all need to do.

Kind regards.

Dave Holland

(*Jim Considine responds:* Thank you Dave for your thoughtful inquiry. I'm sorry if the language was confusing. To attempt to briefly answer you. **Re reduced living circumstances:** in NZ, 295,000 children (28%) live in poverty (UNICEF 2017). In 1984 there were virtually no people homeless and most adult workers could aspire to buy their own home. Not so now. The poor have been shut out of the market and million-dollar mortgages are breaking middle-class backs and marriages all over the country. Currently, there are approximately 41 000 people including thousands of children either sleeping in cars, garages, in overcrowded bed-sits, sub-standard houses or on the streets. Ask the Salvation Army, the City Missions, the Monte Cecilia housing people! **Re workers undermined:** union membership is now below 18% of the NZ workforce, cut dramatically by new legislation (*Employment Contracts Act, 1991*) under this new economic regime. This has led to less solidarity and bargaining power among workers, leaving most worse off on individual contracts. **Re social inequality:** check out any low-income area or drop-in centre. You will see what I mean: few resources, little hope of advancement, no jobs, lives being wasted, all by-products of poverty. There are few avenues of escape from these measures. Neo-liberal economic structures are entrenched, institutionalising poverty. This is a national disgrace – and contrary to the Gospels and the Church's Social Teachings. Gospel yes, communist no way!



Woolston
Christchurch

Hi Jim,

I've had some thoughts on institutionalised poverty and the destructiveness of capitalism (CG 82). While a multi-faceted approach is needed, I have been particularly struck by Ecuador's decision in 2008 to write into its Constitution that 'nature has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles.'

I realise that there is a vast gap between the identification and analysis of a problem and the implementing of a better alternative. However, the timely reminder that we are not alone, that globally so many seek a more just world, reinforces the sense of hope and optimism that we have a duty to nurture and share, and encourages the struggle toward a fairer, healthier paradigm on which to base our society. There have been many false starts, blind alleys, and periods in the doldrums along the way. There will be more. That model will not come overnight. It will not come next week or next year, but it will come. The goal which we strive for, whether we realise it or not, is the Reign of God proclaimed by Jesus.

Best wishes,

Rex Knight

St Mary's Star of the Sea Parish
Gisborne 4010

Dear Jim

I recently picked up the No. 82 Spring edition of *The Common Good* with great delight, as it was perfect timing to contribute to the contents of a quiz I was writing for our parish response to social justice week. As the Caritas spokesperson for the parish, I was racking my brains trying to come up with a way to raise awareness of social justice teachings and issues when my friend suggested a quiz.

As the writer and facilitator of the quiz, I wanted to have a social justice focus but I also wanted it to be fun. Your editorial, 'Buying Purple Undies' fitted the bill perfectly. I condensed the story and concluded by asking which of seven Catholic social justice teachings was this story an example. There was much merriment as the teams came to their answer. But more importantly, the conversations that continued afterwards around

people saying things like, 'Gosh, I shop like that all the time. I had never thought of it as a social justice issue.'

Each of the five teams in the quiz also had a copy of *The Common Good* on their table. I asked them which social justice teaching the magazine was founded on. It was wonderful to see people thumbing through the magazine, some admitting they had never seen it before, while others commented on what a great publication it was.

Dorothy Day also featured in the inspiring people section. I was delighted when several people won the point by being able to name her as a strong advocate for social justice and now on the road to sainthood.

So, your writing does not go unnoticed and the magazine has had a refreshing airing in our parish.

Kia kaha,

Tracy Robinson

gpohanlon@gmail.com

Dear Jim

After reading your article re purchasing purple undies, I too have been at a loss as to how we can combat the exploitation of workers in the garment factories of Asia, especially as most of us do not know what wage the garment workers receive and if it is a fair wage for their country. Then one day I was in the supermarket looking to purchase bananas. I saw one lot of bananas was promoted under the 'Fair Trade' label, which is a guarantee that farmers growing them are paid a fair price.

So perhaps an extension of the 'Fair Trade' label to cover a 'fair wage' to those producing the garments on the factory floor - or even a separate 'Fair Wage' label. Then we would know which garments are manufactured using labour that received a fair wage. We could then base our purchasing decisions on that. Our change in buying patterns would then encourage manufacturers to pay a fair wage.

The idea would need a lot of work before it could become reality. So I hope someone with the required expertise can make it happen. Keep stirring our conscience on matters of social justice

Cheers,

Gerard O'Hanlon

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The Common Good

Te Wairua Maranga Trust
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Pope Frances condemns neo-liberal capitalism

We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf (Ex 32/1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose. The worldwide crisis affecting finance and the economy lays bare their imbalances and, above all, their lack of real concern for human beings. Man is reduced to one of his needs alone: consumption. While the earnings of a minority are growing exponentially, so too is the gap separating the majority from prosperity enjoyed by those happy few. #55 – 56.

—Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel* (2013)