

# The Common Good

*Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor*

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## Justice and Charity: One Coin – Two Sides

Jim Consedine

**Charity provides crumbs from the table; justice offers a place at the table.**

—*Bill Moyers*

I have often wondered why charity is preached so easily in our churches while issues of social justice take a back seat and are rarely addressed. This has always seemed to me to be contrary to the teachings of Jesus, the teachings of the Church as found in her extensive social justice tradition, and contrary to what Pope Francis insists is the Mission of the Church today.

I remember 20 years ago spending a year in Ireland and attending Sunday masses in several counties. Not once did I hear a homily on social justice. This was in a country where at that time the ‘Celtic tiger’ economic bubble had burst leaving many unemployed, the peace talks were in progress in Belfast, and there were growing divisions of inequality throughout the land.

In addition, many were becoming homeless as banks sought to reclaim unpaid mortgages through the ‘fire sale’ of properties. All this injustice was crying out for moral leadership and teaching. Not once did I hear any of these issues addressed in a meaningful way from the pulpit.

It left me wondering, what is it about social justice that Christians often turn away from and leave in the too-hard basket? Why are so many Catholic parishes and publications devoted to piety and devotional practices when the gospels are so full of challenges that require a response in justice?

Clearly Jesus was not on about pious practices and indeed challenged the scribes and Pharisees to leave such things aside if they interfered with the practice of justice. It was a hard teaching then, as it is now. It did not make him popular with the authorities. Prophets are not welcomed in their own towns.

I recently put a case to the St Vincent de Paul Society in New Zealand to re-consider their almost



exclusive focus on the works of charity and reclaim the thrust of their founder, Frederic Ozanam, to include social justice as part of their outreach. Where had their justice focus gone, I asked?

Born only 24 years after the French Revolution, Frederic Ozanam, besides being devoted to charitable works, promoted social justice and progressive thinking in the Church. And he challenged the Society he founded to be creative, innovative, not to be afraid of new beginnings.

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Such was his focus that, in 1848, with poverty endemic all over Europe, he started a newspaper, *The New Era*, dedicated to securing justice for the poor and the working classes. He wrote, ‘The poor person is a unique person of God’s fashioning with an inalienable right to respect. You must not be content with tiding the poor ones over the poverty crisis. You must study their conditions and the injustices which brought about such poverty with the aim of a long-term improvement.’ At that time, the Society in France with 50,000 members, became so effective with public advocacy for justice that the civil authorities took measures against it, accusing it of ‘acting as political opposition’.



## One coin, two sides

In biblical terms, charity and justice are two sides of the same coin. Both are dimensions of the central command of Jesus 'to love our neighbour'. In so doing, we are loving God and recognising Christ in others. Our central teaching is clearly a 'both/and – not, an either/or' mandate. Why then have we separated charity and justice out so much and given so much emphasis to charity rather than to justice? I wonder whether fear and a lack of faith sit at the heart of the answer.

My Irish experience and subsequent thinking has led me to the view that charity, while it flows from a generous heart and is a gospel value of immense worth, generally **leaves the donor in control of the process of gifting** – how much, how often, with whom. It can leave the donor unmoved and possibly unaware of the underlying causes behind the need that has arisen. Charity calls forth our sense of generosity, but not always our sense of justice. It does not necessarily challenge us to try and put things right. Philanthropy often represents the corporate version of such giving.

On the other hand, seeking justice, which can also include a charitable response, **demands a deeper understanding of the issues involved**. It may involve change on our part. Such change may mean that, unlike

charity, we no longer control the situation nor its outcome. Why is this unfair situation like it is? Who is responsible? What changes are needed to make it more just? What is fair? What is possible? What is needed to attempt to redress this situation? What must I do?

Change is something none of us seeks readily. We usually shy away from it unless it is forced upon us. We prefer the comfort of what we know. Through seeking justice, we are being asked to love at a deeper level, usually without knowing or controlling where the process will lead. There is often some struggle required to bring about the change.

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***Seeking justice requires courage, sometimes personal sacrifice. It often comes at a cost – suspicion among friends, loss of popularity, occasionally inviting scorn even persecution. Marginalisation is often the lot of the person/prophet who stands for justice. One is not welcome in one's home town! Knowing the warning of the gospels, why do Christian communities continue to allow this to happen?***

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## Seeking Justice

Seeking justice requires courage, sometimes personal sacrifice. It often comes at a cost – suspicion among friends, loss of popularity, occasionally inviting scorn even persecution. Marginalisation is often the lot of the person/prophet who stands for justice. One is not welcome in one's home town! Knowing the warning of the gospels, why do Christian communities continue to allow this to happen?

This is where reluctance kicks in, the fear of the unknown. Our response may require a change of attitude on our part, even the development of some fresh values like solidarity, power-sharing, commitment to the common good, a greater sharing of our own resources. Didn't the St Basil the Great teach in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, that what we owned over and above what we needed, did not belong to us but to the poor who have nothing?

It seems most of us don't mind helping – but not to the point where we have to change our views and our level of involvement. A level where there is personal cost. The positive graces for those who do engage can be immense – a deeper spirituality, wider vision, more courage, a more mature faith, less fear, development of lifelong relationships.

We can control our charity but cannot control the outcomes of seeking justice. I wonder whether this helps explain the contradiction I mentioned earlier – as to why the social teachings of the Church get so little light shone on them, why in 12 months in Ireland I didn't hear one homily on justice, and why so few Christians are prepared to challenge issues of injustice? Seeking justice may demand a response from us we are not prepared to give, a price we are not prepared to pay.

Is it a challenge too far for many?

### 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](http://www.catholicworker.org.nz)

## Editorial 1 Dumping the ‘three strikes’ law

We were delighted to see the new government signal their intention to abolish the infamous ‘three strikes’ law.’ In a sane balanced society, this should never have been on the law books in the first place. Officially part of the Sentencing and Parole Reform Act 2010, ‘three strikes’ (based on American baseball terminology) was gifted as a sop to ACT as part of a Coalition deal with the National Party.

We railed against it at the time, headlining our front-page article, *‘Is Three Strikes Sinful’* (CG53, Pentecost 2010) and arguing it clearly was. It was to National’s shame they allowed it to pass. We have no need to allow America’s horrendously unjust sentencing practices to influence the justice system here. Because the urge to punish forms part of the unredeemed ‘shadow’ side of human nature, it cannot be appeased. It is insatiable. Even if we again were to hang pickpockets, as the English once did, the tabloids and talk-backs would demand they be drawn and quartered as well!

Thank God, most judges here have shown a marked reluctance to impose ‘a strike’ as a penalty, witnessed by the fact that to date only two people have become eligible for a ‘third strike’ and the sentencing judges have found mitigating circumstances not to impose it.

Paradoxically, ‘three strikes’, was presented as ‘a better deal for victims.’ It was never that. It was vengeance pure and simple, not justice. Innocent children of offenders and partners would have suffered as much as anyone, with a partner and parent locked away for years. The cycle of social deprivation was guaranteed to expand.

## Editorial 2 Where is the Repentance?

March 20th 2018 marked the 15th anniversary of the US ‘Shock and Awe’ bombing and invasion of Iraq. On that day, 15 years ago, I was privileged to be among the 25 arrested who went over a barricade outside the White House to make a final prayerful appeal to the powers that be not to bomb Iraq. On Ash Wednesday 2003, at our weekly Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Pentagon peace vigil, I held a sign calling for repentance for the sin of US war-making in Iraq. In our closing prayer, I remembered and prayed for the countless people killed in this sinful bombing and invasion as well as for all who were injured and still suffer.

Prior to this build-up for war fifteen years ago, millions marched worldwide calling for **NO War Against Iraq**. Despite these pleas, as well as those from Pope John Paul II and some other religious leaders and politicians, the US proceeded with this fabricated deadly venture. There is no indication that the US government and military will ever repent for this unspeakable war crime. And there are few leaders who will unequivocally decry this mortal sin today—15 years later! But during

All the evidence is that most of the offenders affected have themselves been victims many times over. Most have been deprived of the basic necessities of life, raised in poverty, have poor education, an inadequate home life, lack skills, and are themselves victims of crime. Many come to see imprisonment as their only pathway in life.

There is a huge amount of research around now to show that by fairly facing up to the causes of criminal offending, crime will be reduced and our communities will become safer. In this country, prevention is the bullet politicians rarely want to bite. They do bite this bullet in many other countries where crime and the imprisonment rates are much lower.

Drug and alcohol addictions, male violence, sexual aberration, and addiction to motor cars are just five of many obvious causes of crime. Facing this fact head-on, coupled with a realistic attack on social conditions which spawn much criminal offending – unemployment, social deprivation, lack of healthcare, educational opportunities, the lack of good parental skills - are tough but mature ways of addressing crime before it happens.

New Justice Minister, Andrew Little, is taking a cautious but positive response to the horrendous NZ prison rate – second only to the US in OECD countries. History shows that if you raise the standard of living and provide employment, addiction treatment, and development programmes, crime rates and imprisonment numbers fall. It can be that simple.

—Jim Consedine

this time the people of Iraq remember and continue to mourn and grieve, and still ask why?

Jesus teaches His followers—then and now—the command: ‘Thou shall not kill!’ ‘Love one another.’ God forgive the US for defying these divine commands. Let us pray that our nation will truly repent for this crime, part of a much larger crime of 27 years of US war-making in Iraq, which has resulted in several million Iraqi deaths from bombings and sanctions, social upheaval, over four million refugees, immeasurable trauma, political instability, and a seemingly endless cycle of violence. All of these factors served to create the conditions for the rise of the Islamic State.

Every effort must be made to resist US plans to continue the cycle of violence by waging war against ISIS. If there is any hope to make true peace with Iraq, the US must express forgiveness and make reparations to the Iraqi people for its war-making, withdraw all troops, CIA and private contractors from Iraq, and seek a path of genuine dialogue and diplomacy.

Art Laffin, Dorothy Day CW, Washington DC.

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# Airbrushing History – 1917-2017

Jim Dowling

*Who controls the past, controls the future. Who controls the present, controls the past.* George Orwell, 1984

It was with great interest that I recently read the following news item: ‘The newly-elected president of Timor Leste, former guerilla fighter Francisco Guterres, will lead a 30-person delegation of veterans to Brisbane this Anzac Day. The visit by Timorese war veterans to participate in Anzac activities honours the commitment of Australian troops supporting the people of Timor Leste – both in the Second World War and since 1999 when Australian troops have helped restore civil order after a fractious vote for independence.’

I have been moved by the plight of the East Timorese since I was a young man and read about the Indonesian invasion in the daily news. In the 80’s and 90’s I became active in trying to end the shameful role Australia was playing in supporting the genocide in that country. Through all those years, Australia was providing military training and equipment as well as diplomatic support to cover up and excuse murder, rape, and torture on a massive scale.

While it is true that the Australian military finally led a peace keeping delegation in 1999 after the Indonesian military left (with one final looting, burning and killing spree), the history of the 24 years prior to this was one of betrayal and almost unlimited support for the oppressors. This has largely been airbrushed from history in a way that would have made the ‘Ministry of Truth’ in Orwell’s novel proud. Most of the present generation see us as liberators of East Timor.

## **Australian anti-war efforts in history**

I think a comparison can be drawn to the airbrushing of the history of WWI in this country. Most people today know nothing of the bitter division in Australia and the strong opposition to our taking part in the war. The opposition was largely led by Irish Catholics, many of whom saw themselves as enemies of British colonisers of their homeland, and trade unionists. How many know that trade unionists were jailed for merely speaking against the war? How significant is the fact that the Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix, could lead the anti-conscription campaign in this country? Two referendums were held and twice Australians voted against conscripting young men to go to war. Mannix famously described WWI as a ‘Trade War’. But, war being the ‘health of the State’, and in this age of patriotic fervour, the large number of Australians who opposed WWI have been largely relegated to the cutting floor of history.

I believe the turning point for East Timor came when the horror of the Dili massacre of 1991 was broadcast around the world. But still we were apologists for the Suharto regime, with Australian Foreign Affairs minister Gareth Evans famously called it an ‘aberration’.

In its aftermath even the US refused to train Indonesian troops. Australia promptly took up the slack and increased the numbers trained! A great friend of Suharto, Paul Keating visited Indonesia six times in just over four years. In 1995 he oversaw the signing of a defence pact with Indonesia. Gareth Evans had many years before he signed the Timor Gap treaty to divide up East Timor’s oil with the Indonesian Generals.

When the Howard government first came to power in 1996, Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer promptly went to Indonesia where he fawningly described Suharto as ‘perhaps the world’s greatest figure in the latter half of the 20th century.’ Right up until the Indonesians withdrew in 1999, Foreign Affairs minister Alexander Downer was lying for them by claiming the Indonesian death squads were East Timorese fighting a civil war.

## **East Timor betrayal**

Not only did we betray the people of East Timor, but we betrayed our own journalists murdered by the Indonesians as part of the invasion. Every Australian should watch the video of Greg Shackleton reporting from Balibo the day before his murder. The Australian government heartlessly covered up the knowledge of the five journalists’ deaths even from their own families, once again to appease the Indonesians.

It was not until 2007 that an inquest made the government face the facts of the murders. Still no apology was ever given to the families. In fact when I thought to verify this fact and googled ‘Balibo five apology’, the only article there was about the government apologising to a former Indonesian officer of the invading force, for asking him to give evidence at the 2007 inquest!

As for Australian troops supporting the people of Timor Leste, in WWII here the truth has been turned upside down.

Over 40,000 lost their lives at the hands of the Japanese because they helped the Aussies. Our air force dropped leaflets on the island after we left saying ‘We will never forget you’.

But we did worse than forgetting them. Over 200,000 lost their lives at the hands of the Indonesians because we were more interested in oil, trade, and diplomacy than the lives of these poor neighbours.

No lessons have been learned. We continue to train Indonesian troops as they oppress the West Papuan Independence movement. Recently an Aussie soldier put up a West Papuan poster at the SAS WA training facility where Indonesian Kopassus are trained. The shocked Indonesians temporarily withdrew their forces, until the Prime Minister offered enough apologies!

Lest we forget?

*Jim Dowling has been a CW for 40 years. He is a parent of three other CWs and lives in Brisbane.*

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# Ploughshares Action at US Nuclear Base

On 4<sup>th</sup> April, the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's assassination, seven Catholic peace activists (average age 63) were arrested after they made their way onto the US Naval Base in Kings Bay, Georgia, where nuclear-armed submarines are stationed.



It is the largest nuclear submarine base in the world. There are six ballistic missile subs and two guided missile subs based at Kings Bay. Carrying hammers, a criminal indictment charge and baby bottles of their own blood, the seven attempted by symbolic action to follow the

prophet Isaiah's dictate, *'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares,'* (Is 2/2), to convert the nuclear warheads into symbols of peace.

The seven peacemakers involved in the action, including five from Catholic Worker communities, were: Elizabeth McAlister, 78, of Jonah House, Baltimore; Steve Kelly SJ, 69, of California; Carmen Trotta, 55, a NY Catholic Worker; Clare Grady, 59, of Ithaca Catholic Worker; Martha Hennessy, 62, of NY Catholic Worker; Mark Coleville, 55, of Amistad Catholic Worker in New Haven, CT; and Patrick O'Neil, 61, of Fr. Charlie Mulholland Catholic Worker in Garner, NC.

Kings Bay opened in 1979 as the US Navy's Atlantic Fleet port, home to US ballistic nuclear submarines armed with Trident missile nuclear weapons.

The peacemakers went to the administration building, the D5 Missile monument installation and the nuclear weapons storage bunkers. They brought an indictment charging the US government for crimes against peace, and used crime scene tape, hammers and banners reading: *The ultimate logic of Trident is omnicide, and Nuclear weapons: illegal - immoral.* The seven face trespassing and defacing government felony charges. All have been remanded in custody.

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## Usury Humiliates and Kills

### Pope Francis

Usury is an ancient, unfortunately still-concealed evil that, like a snake, strangles its victims. Usury humiliates and kills. It must be prevented, by removing people from the pathology of debt accrued to get by or to save their business. It can be prevented by educating in a sober lifestyle, distinguishing between the superfluous and the necessary, promoting responsibility in not assuming debts to obtain things that could be renounced. It is important to restore the virtue of (evangelical) poverty and sacrifice. Of (voluntary) poverty/simplicity, so as not to become slaves to commodities, and of sacrifice, because in life you cannot receive everything.

At the base of economic and financial crises, there is always a conception of life that places profit first and not the person. Human dignity, ethics, solidarity and the common good should always be at the centre of economic policies implemented by public institutions.

Usury is a serious sin. It kills life, tramples on the dignity of people, is a vehicle for corruption and hampers the common good. It also weakens the social and economic foundations of a country. In fact, with so many poor people, so many indebted families, so many victims of serious crimes and so many corrupt people, no country can plan a serious economic recovery or even feel safe.

Fighting usury involves collaborating to render human the social-economic system and to ensure that the Gospel message can illuminate the heart and soul of people. This happened one day to Zacchaeus, the rich and corrupt leader of the 'publicans' of Jericho (Lk 19: 1-10), and his colleague Matthew, upon whom Jesus looked with mercy and chose as a disciple (Mt 9: 9-13).

May the Lord inspire and support public authorities so people and families can enjoy the benefits of law like any other economic reality; inspire and support the leaders of the banking system, so that they may monitor the ethical quality of the activities of banks. It is worth pointing out that many banks were born and spread throughout the world precisely to lift the poor out of usury with loans without a pledge and without interest.

Keep your eyes and hearts fixed on Jesus, to concentrate on the pages of the Gospel in which He meets the poor and beggars, lepers and paralytics and 'puts them back on their feet', restoring their dignity and future. Facing usury and corruption, we too can transmit hope and strength to the victims so that they can recover confidence and recover from their needs. For the (credit) institutions, you are a stimulus to the assurance of practical answers to those who are disorientated, at times desperate, and do not know how to support their family.

I also encourage you to enter into dialogue with those who have responsibility in the field of economics and finance, so that initiatives may be promoted that help prevent usury. The people helped out of usury can testify that the darkness of the tunnel they have passed through is dense and distressing, but there is also a stronger light that illuminates and gives consolation.

Together, let us make an appeal for a new economic humanism, which 'puts an end to the economy of exclusion and inequality', an end to the economy that kills, to economic systems in which men and women are no longer people, but are reduced to the tools of a throwaway logic that generates profound imbalances.

## Around the traps

**# Linwood Community Centre Closes** – It is with sadness that we note the closure of the Linwood Community Centre in Linwood Avenue, Christchurch. Its battered appearance on the outside gave little indication to the warmth of welcome that awaited inside. Its co-ordinator, Ann Kay, who helped found it 30 years ago, and her wonderful offsider Mary, made thousands of visitors welcome over its three decades of almost subsistence existence. In years past, Sr Margaret Quinn OP and more latterly Jim were long-time supporters and drank more than their share of coffee in always pleasant company. Ann, Mary and friends, we thank you for your years of service to the poor and marginalised in Eastern Christchurch.

**# Maori Inequality** – Inequalities in education, employment and income for Maori are costing the NZ economy \$2.6 billion a year- and if the issue isn't fixed it will increase every year to reach \$4.3 billion by 2040. \$2.6 billion is the potential income Maori could be taking home each year if they earned the average NZ income. But at every level Maori, receive a much lower income. It equates to taking home \$140 less per week, per person for the current working Maori population. Maori workers between the age of 40 and 59 are taking home \$200

dollars less per week. In 2038, Maori will make up one fifth of NZ's working population.

Maori are working the same hours as the NZ average, but one third of the Maori working population have no qualifications and over half have lower skilled jobs. Maori are losing income potential because they are in lower paid jobs. 'These issues aren't caused by laziness. We work very hard, we work more. The issue is that our efforts are expended but our profile in the workforce is low skilled, low qualifications.' *Report - Change Agenda: Income Equity for Maori. The Press, 31 March 2018*

**#NZ Wealth Gap Wider** – New Zealand's richest man – Graeme Hart – added \$4 billion to his coffers last year as more Kiwis joined food banks. He is now worth \$13.4 billion. According to a new Oxfam report, 28 percent of all wealth made last year went to the richest 1 percent of Kiwis, while the poorest 1.4 million got just 1 percent of that wealth. Oxfam's NZ executive director, Rachael La Mesurier, called for a fairer tax system. 'By ensuring the wealthy and multi-nationals pay their fair share of tax by cracking down on tax avoidance – then using that money to make our country and the global economy a fairer place.' *The Press, 21 January 2018*

## CWs Wedding

**Kathleen Gallagher**

A stunning summer's day at Whirinaki in the far north of Aotearoa

Theresa Land radiant on a great snowy white draft horse riding to her wedding dressed all in white, a wreath of tiny flowers in her hair

In the little church on the hill in Jacksons Valley, Fr Peter Murnane celebrating the wedding service, with music led by two wonderful violinists - Nancy Land and Judith Woolston from up the valley

In the lower area of St Francis Farm by the river near the entrance, it is all cleared a great marquee is set up there with flowers everywhere above the marquee is a special archway where Theresa and Culley plant a tree

Everyone follows them through the archway scattering flowers



**Theresa Land and Culley Palmer**

then to drinks, kai - fresh vegetables, salads, hangi for the meat, fish, kingfish, paua prepared by the brothers and the sisters and all the whanau with a great wedding cake to top it off

Couple of hundred folk gather here together in Eli's marquee to wish them well and on their way big Catholic Worker contingent from Brisbane and from throughout New

Zealand country dancing outside called by young Tim, long into the night

After the feast Theresa and Culley disappear high up into the valley for their honeymoon no one dares disturb them the following morning, we are packing up, eating together and saying our goodbyes Theresa and Culley are off to Nimbin, Queensland, to farm and live on the land after the wedding

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# An issue of social justice

Rex Knight

The Catholic tradition of Christianity teaches justice and fair treatment for all. Justice for the poor, for the homeless, for the refugee, for children, for the exploited, opposing any form of discrimination on grounds of ethnicity or gender. One area it has long neglected is the full participation by women in the Ministry of the Church.

The ban on the ordination of women, never taught by Jesus, does great hurt to our mothers, our daughters, our wives, our sisters, our friends, to half the human race. All of us, congregation and clergy, who passively accept the situation because Rome has spoken, are at fault. Rome is not the Church. The People of God are the Church. That Jesus was born male does not confirm masculinity as a prerequisite for priesthood. To be human, he had to be either male or female. Realistically, if he was to be listened to, to make an impact in the culture of the age into which he was born, he had to be male.

Never, though, in his entire prophetic mission, did Jesus treat women as being of lesser status. Rather, he confronted and contradicted the dominant paradigm of the era, treating women as equals. In the early Church, women had authority and leadership roles, and were listened to and respected. Not real disciples? How many men were at the foot of the Cross? Who discovered the Empty Tomb?

The relegation of women to secondary roles crept in from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and the adoption in the 4<sup>th</sup> century of Christianity as an approved religion of the Roman Empire, brought with it the Empire's male dominated model of society. Sadly, revered figures like St. Augustine, who taught that 'Man, but not woman, is made in the image of God,' reinforced the quarantining of women, ring-fencing and reserving for men all positions of power in the Church. This was in direct contradiction of Jesus example, and of St Paul's, 'There is no longer Jew nor Gentile, slave or free, male and female, for you are all one in Christ.' It also contradicts those words of the Church's baptismal rite, which say to ALL, not just male initiates, 'Just as Jesus was anointed priest, prophet and king, so may you live always.'

Today, women are Prime Ministers and CEOs, scientists, philosophers, astronauts; world leaders in every field. Just as children's understanding and behaviour matures, so has society's, and so should our theology. It's time the Catholic Church joined other Christians Churches and stopped discriminating against women by opening all roles to

them. When we disenfranchise women, we disenfranchise and disadvantage our society as a whole, cutting ourselves off from the huge enhancement that embracing fully women's perspective and wisdom would bring our lives. The time for accepting patronising assurances from Rome that, although priesthood is a male sphere revealed undeniably by the fact that Jesus was male, women have a very important but subservient part to play in the Church, is long gone. It should never have existed.

A wagon train laagered up in a defensive circle, fearing real or imaginary dangers, never reaches the West. A Church whose wagonmasters huddle with their flock behind a wall of 'Thou shalt nots', doesn't make much progress on the journey to the Kingdom either.

*Rex Knight is a member of the Christchurch CW.*

## the outsider

heavily clad, coat, beanie, boots  
he plods along, head lowered  
defying searing heat

I hand him food, a bagful  
fresh bread, sliced ham, grapes  
left-overs from a 70th birthday

shyly he nods thanks  
swiftly cramming the ham  
through cracked lips into a dry mouth

'my name is John', he murmurs  
a faint smile creasing his whiskery face  
weather beaten, but not defeated

'I sleep in the cemetery,  
warmer last night, humid, sticky;  
hate it when it rains'

this outsider, this dishevelled Christ  
prowls around Bromley  
sheltering among tombstones

oh, the irony!  
it is the dead not the living  
who welcome him without judgment

—Jim Consedine

## Diary entry Meeting Winnie Mandela



*With the death of Winnie Mandela, I searched out my diary entries from a double visit I made to her in 1982. She was banned at the time. The tumultuous 1981 Springbok tour of NZ had happened the previous year and Nelson Mandela was into his third decade of imprisonment. She was 46 and living in a two-bedroom clay-brick hut in the black squatter township outside the white town of*

*Brandfort, in the Orange Free State. I felt very privileged to meet with her and her daughter Zindzi. Things later changed for her. Apartheid brutalised everyone, especially black women leaders like her. Winnie had suffered much for decades before liberation came. These diary entries reflect a small sacred slice of her turbulent life. May she rest in peace.*

**Thursday 26 August 1982.** I arrived in my rental car about 3pm in Brandfort, in the Orange Free State, having driven from Johannesburg where I had stayed with the Dominicans. I went in search of the local Anglican priest who was to be my contact for meeting Winnie Mandela. He wasn't there.

So, I spoke to Topsy at the bakery seeking directions. Topsy was very defensive and said I had to get the permission of the magistrate. He said it was all right by him to visit Mrs Mandela, but the police had to be told. My heart sank. They were the last people I wanted to see. However, I went next door to the police station and asked a huge Afrikaner cop where to find Winnie. He growled that I had to go to the National Security Police, 55 km away in Bloemfontein, to get their permission.

I scuttled out the door and with him watching, took off in the direction of Bloemfontein, I parked up for 15 minutes around the bend out of sight. Then I drove back past the police station and up to the township location nearby. There I was blocked by a barrier over the road and had to alight and go to the Bantu Affairs Office. Having deliberately hidden my passport, I bowled in, told the young official I was an Anglican priest, Jim Smythe from Australia, coming to bring greetings from the National Council of Churches of Australia to Mrs Mandela. The deception was all to do with security in a police state. No problems, he said. I got the permit, he gave me directions to her home and I drove there.

I stopped a short distance from her home and a young man approached me to inquire of my business. Shortly later Winnie emerged from inside and she gave me the warmest welcome. She seemed so young and so easy going. She was delighted when she heard I was from

the anti-apartheid movement in New Zealand, and suggested we sit in my car as there were regular police patrols up and down the street.

What a wonderful 90 minutes! She was so thrilled to hear of the anti-apartheid movement in NZ, the ANC support group and the solidarity of so many. She spoke enthusiastically of the AA movement worldwide, declaring the NZ people were indeed friends of the liberation struggle.

We laughed and joked and hugged and cried. It was really emotional. She is so beautiful – her spirit so strong. I will never forget that first meeting. The clay brick hut. The red dusty road. The two communal taps, one for her, one for the township of 6000. She was given her own special tap to prevent the breaking of her banning order at the communal tap! As the sun settled, I took photos and slides and promised to return after my visit to Lesotho.

**Monday, 30 August, 1982.** On my return from Lesotho, I again went through the routine with the Bantu Affairs people. Then it was straight up to Winnie's place. We met in her yard, she in a long flowing gown with her hair under a close-knit African style beret. We went inside. Zindzi, her daughter was there, 19 years old, studying at Swaziland University. She had a baby.

Winnie spoke again of her feeling for New Zealand. This time I got it all on tape: 23 minutes of passion and conviction. We talked of the ANC and PAC, economic boycotts, government banning orders, and being a Christian in the struggle. It was that wonderful Anglican woman Helen Joseph, a defendant acquitted along with Nelson Mandela in the famous treason trial (1956-1961), who later told me of Winnie becoming an active Christian, having been a lapsed Methodist. She told how they used to go to Mass together at St Mary's Anglican Cathedral in Johannesburg and kneel side by side. Yet neither could speak to the other as Winnie was banned and Helen was a 'listed' person!

Then after the interview concluded, we celebrated Mass in the gathering gloom – no electricity, of course. It was beautiful, using a little wine and bread and her bible. We prayed for the liberation of South Africa. When she prayed her chosen psalm, 'the Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want', I was so moved.

Banned, isolated, far from home, husband in jail for life, Winnie's psalm literally came alive. I have never heard it prayed with such vibrancy. It was the voice of a true believer: she believed what she prayed. I read from Luke 4, where Jesus quotes Isaiah 'to bring good news to the poor'. Then we prayed the Eucharistic prayer and shared a beautiful Our Father and sign of peace. She cried as we clung to each other: it was beautiful. Finally, holy communion and a final prayer.

It grew dark. We stayed sitting.

—Jim Consedine

## Reviews

**EARTHQUAKES AND BUTTERFLIES, a Theatre of Transformation, written by Kathleen Gallagher, directed by Helen Moran, with movement by Fleur de Thier. 7th Earthquake Anniversary theatre event, 22-25 February 2018, at the Christchurch Transitional Cathedral. Reviewer: Sally Dunford.**

This was a phenomenal happening. So compelling was it that I returned for a second dose - total immersion theatre! Fast moving scenes from Kathleen Gallagher's novel *Earthquakes and Butterflies*, were created before our eyes, with shaking vibrating our very bones. Seven talented actors and a cast of crashing cardboard tubes, great heavy-duty paper sacks, and a fearsome tower of scaffolding with its clanking rattled joints and ladder.

We were transported right back to the terrible time of the 2011 earthquakes in Christchurch, when Ruaumoko, the earthquake god shifted restlessly, turned over in his dreaming perhaps, and the tectonic plates split, shifted, and ground broke open seeking a new settling deep inside earth's bowels.

Music was integral to the fast-changing scenes. Two very talented musicians, Phil Norton and Geoff Lowe, performed on an array of taonga puoro - traditional Maori instruments of conch-shell, nose flute, mouth flute and more, backgrounded by guitar and piano and a tube making water sounds. Extraordinary moments were created by bird impersonations of piwakawaka (fantail), kotuku (heron), kahu (hawk) - and most impressively by the karoro (seagull), whose incessant squawking led to the unearthing of the buried injured victim, Tess.

The metaphor of Otautahi/Christchurch as a birthing canal for the new order that requires we work together to create, climaxed as caterpillars found themselves unfurling velvety new wings and from the high scaffold tower, two gorgeous silky orange-and-black butterfly wings were let loose. They gently folded in and out as the newly born butterfly flew into new life to the accompaniment of a hearty haka from the cast.

Altogether, like the season of earthquakes, quite unforgettable.

**Dylan Night – Christchurch Folk Music Club. Reviewer: Jim Consedine**

I haven't been to the Christchurch folk club for many years. So my re-introduction to its warm and friendly atmosphere on a night honouring Bob Dylan was something I looked forward to with eager anticipation. I wasn't disappointed. Tony Kiesanowski set the tone followed by Ken Hunter. Both showed their experience as they waltzed through a variety of Dylan ballads, including *Boots of Spanish Leather*, *Lay Lady Lay* and *Knocking on Heaven's Door*. Good old stuff, well done.

Patrick O'Connor, accompanied by the marvellous Martin Kraakman, gave a lovely rendition of *Long Black*

*Veil*, one of Dylan's saddest songs. Patrick's voice is deep and rich and commanded the audience. It was suited to this song. Kristina Godfrey's rendition of *Diamonds and Rust*, Dylan's haunting song for Joan Baez, his erstwhile lover, was beautifully done and provided another tender moment. Tony Hale accompanied her on guitar.

After the break, Eileen Reid, dressed in her Woodstock outfit, sang a couple of lovely softer songs including *Love Minus Zero (No Limit)*, opening the way to the wonderful Graeme Wardrop, master musician, to show us just why he is such a world class act. His skill with the guitar and generous engagement with the audience through five songs provided a fitting finale to a wonderful evening. I loved his *Blind Willie McTell* and the anthem, *Forever Young*. That is the way he left many of us feeling.

A laconic Russell Dann, as compere, kept up a low-key quiz on Dylan memorabilia throughout the night. The man sitting two away from me had an answer for nearly every question as did a woman over the back somewhere. I was impressed. For me, it was the icing on the cake, capping a wonderful night of music.

## Obituary Denny Anker



Denise Winsome Anker (1946-2018), one of Christchurch's best loved social justice advocates, died late March. This widowed mother of three, had been ill for some time and her death was not unexpected.

Denny had a heart for justice. Gentle but determined by nature, she had a passion for the environment and for peace-making.

As a young woman in the 1970s, Denny was a foundation member of the Values Party, the forerunner of what became the Green Party. She campaigned on many issues over the years, played a key role in the launch of the Habilitation Centre's Taskforce, the Restorative Justice Network and the Christchurch Parihaka Day Committee.

Traumatised by the 2011 Canterbury earthquakes and through subsequent battles with insurers, she also struggled for decades with multiple chemical sensitivities – a condition that few have heard of and even fewer understand. As her long-time friend Ruth Gardner wrote, 'She worked as a mediator with the Human Rights Commission, for Restorative Justice Services, for Patient's Rights, for the Green Party, and for many other causes. She also continually worked to raise awareness of the need for fragrance-free venues and events, so that people in her situation might take part in ordinary, everyday activities in safety.'

Her warm presence at meetings around the city will be missed. May she rest in peace.

—Jim Consedine

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# Nonviolence – Implementing the Message

Johnny Zokovitch

For over 70 years, Pax Christi International has been the preeminent organisation with the Catholic Church promoting and practicing active nonviolence. Beginning with Pope Francis's 2017 World Day of Peace message, 'Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace', Pax Christi International has been making a special effort to 'affirm the vision and practice of active nonviolence at the heart of the Catholic Church'. We've been featuring stories and images that speak to the vitality and strength of active nonviolence being practiced throughout our movement around the world.

Pax Christi has come a long way since the 2016 Rome Conference on *Nonviolence and Just Peace* co-hosted with the Vatican. The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, set up after that gathering, has created international 'Round Tables', developing the themes of nonviolence and Catholic theology, nonviolence and scripture, nonviolence and a new moral framework, integrating nonviolence into church structures and models of contemporary and effective nonviolence, which will inform thinking, teaching and practice within the Church. In addition, we recently have hosted four seminars on the theme Nonviolence Works!

A sports programme training kids who live in poverty stricken areas of Haiti on the values of cooperation, respect, consensus-building, and fair play. Students in the Philippines demanding their leaders stay committed to a peace agreement for victims of historical injustice. Members of the Pakistan Catholic Church raising awareness about discrimination against minority

communities. Indigenous communities organising to stand up to international mining communities that threaten their land and their way of life. Typically, when we think of nonviolence, the images we conjure revolve around stopping war and ending armed conflict. But within our network, Pax Christi member organisations are employing nonviolence in broad and creative ways to create a more peaceful world today.

Since January 2017, we've been crafting a promotional campaign under the theme of 'This is what NONVIOLENCE looks like!' and using the hashtag #ThisIsNonviolence throughout social media to highlight the work of our member organisations around nonviolence. The campaign gives us the opportunity to define and articulate what nonviolence is in all its variety and diversity, as evidenced by the breadth of work being done in our network that uses an active nonviolence approach. We're seeking to broaden the popular understanding of nonviolence for those in the church and the larger culture who would narrowly define it as being associated with pacifism or passivism. Anyone familiar with the variety present within the Pax Christi International movement understands and has witnessed nonviolence in all its variation — from protest to prayer, diplomacy to education, advocacy to lifestyle choices, and more.

*Johnny Zokovitch is Communications Officer for Pax Christi International*

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## Converted to what?

Joan Chittister OSB

**Metanoia, conversion**, is an ancient concept that is deeply embedded in the monastic worldview. Early seekers went to the desert to escape the spiritual aridity of the cities, to concentrate on things of God. 'Flight from the world'—separation from the systems and vitiated values that drove the world around them—became the mark of the true contemplative. To be a contemplative in a world bent on materialism and suffocated with itself, conversion was fundamental. But conversion to what?

The answer never changes. In every great religious tradition, the concept is clear: to be a contemplative we must be converted to the consciousness that makes us one with the Universe, in tune with the cosmic voice of God. We must become aware of the sacred in every single element of life. We must bring beauty to birth in a poor and plastic world. We must restore the human community. We must grow in

concert with the God who is within. We must be healers in a harsh society. We must become all those things that are the ground of contemplation, the fruits of contemplation, the end of contemplation. The contemplative life is about being in the world differently. What needs to be changed in us? Anything that makes us the sole centre of ourselves. Anything that deludes us into thinking that we are not simply a work in progress, all of whose degrees, status, achievements, and power are no substitute for the wisdom that a world full of God everywhere, in everyone has to teach us. Anything that drowns out the voice of the Ultimate within must be damped. To become a contemplative, a daily schedule of religious events and practices is not enough. We must begin to do life, to be with people, to accept circumstances, to bring good to evil in ways that speak of the presence of God in every moment.

—from *Illuminated Life* (Orbis)

# Letters

Camden County Jail,  
Woodbine, GA 31569

25 April 2018

Dear Friends,

We of the Kings Bay Ploughshares action, say, 'the ultimate logic of Trident is omnicide'. And yet, the explosive power of this weapon is only part of what we want to make visible. We see that nuclear weapons kill every day by their mere existence. Their production requires mining, refining, testing, and dumping of radioactive material, which poisons sacred Earth and Water, all on Indigenous land.

We see the billions of dollars it takes to build and maintain the Trident system as stolen resources, which are desperately needed for human needs. We see nuclear weapons as a cocked gun, the biggest gun, used 24/7 to ENFORCE the many layers of state-sponsored violence and deadly force required to maintain white supremacy, global capitalism, and global domination.

We invite others who have been privileged by these systems to join us in withdrawing consent from their deadly function and purpose. We live with hope for a nuclear-free, decolonized world.

Blessings and peace,

*Clare Grady*

*Clare Grady, 59, of the Ithaca Catholic Worker, is in prison with six other peacemakers, awaiting trial for her part in symbolically disarming a nuclear submarine at Kings Bay Naval Base in Georgia.*

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Woolston  
Christchurch

Dear Jim,

I really appreciated Stephanie Rodger editorial (CG84) about poverty being violence, enforced and not freely chosen. Of course the economy is structured that way. She hit the nail right on the head!

The advent of Roger Douglas and his fellow wreckers in the fourth Labour Government preaching the gospel of selfish greed masquerading as personal responsibility and 'user pays', triggered the epidemic dog-eat-dog scramble for wealth which followed. Labour frantically legislated removal of any regulations which might prevent wholesale pillage and set the stage for National's follow-on campaign. This was compounded by Bill Birch's Employment Contracts Act and the crippling of the unions, with the exception of the country's two biggest and most influential, the Federated Farmers and the Employers Association.

The elite made fortunes on a scale never before seen in New Zealand. However, the massive lay-offs and wage stagnation which followed the auctioning of the public assets saw a steady slide into intergenerational

unemployment and poverty for many thousands of ordinary New Zealanders. This was no accident. It was inevitable, and it was deliberate. Those who caused it planned it --- high unemployment keeps wages down and profits up, employees became a commodity like any other raw material; coal, steel, electricity, land etc.

While it's true that our belief in the egalitarian society we once had is influenced by the rose-tinted rear vision mirror through which we view it, the struggling thousands of low-income, poorly housed families are not a natural phenomenon. They're the result of several decades of well-organized effort which have seen the steady migration of the bulk of the nation's wealth to the top 10% of the population. Whatever happened to Christ's teachings on justice and the dignity of every person?

Stephanie, thank you for making us think and cut through the spin!

*Rex Knight*

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Linwood Community House  
Christchurch

Dear Jim and CW,

After 30 years, the Linwood Community House Incorporated Society has done its work. The staff and community wish to thank those who have supported us including yourselves. The last 30 years have taken a lot of hard work and times when things seemed insurmountable. But with that we also experienced a lot of growth, sharing, fun, and community coming together.

We thank you for all your time, money, commitment and efforts and most importantly the confidence you placed in us delivering the services over the years.

Kind regards,

*Ann Kay (Co-ordinator)*

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Christchurch Central, 8013.

Dear Jim,

Once again a splendid issue just out (CG84) to prick our consciences and encourage us in all things working for the common good. Of the many thought-provoking words to be pondered over, I would like to single out the practical help offered in the article *Ten Rules for Addressing Beggars*. Like many other, this always presents a quandary to me. What to do?

Thank you for gathering together so many articles of value into this issue. The pen is truly mightier than the sword!

Yours faithfully,

*Sally Dunford*

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**The Common Good**

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



When I give food to the poor  
 they call me a saint.

When I ask why the poor have no food  
 they call me a communist.

*—Dom Helder Camara (1909-1999)  
 Archbishop of Recife, North East Brazil*