

# NZ Catholic

The national Catholic newspaper

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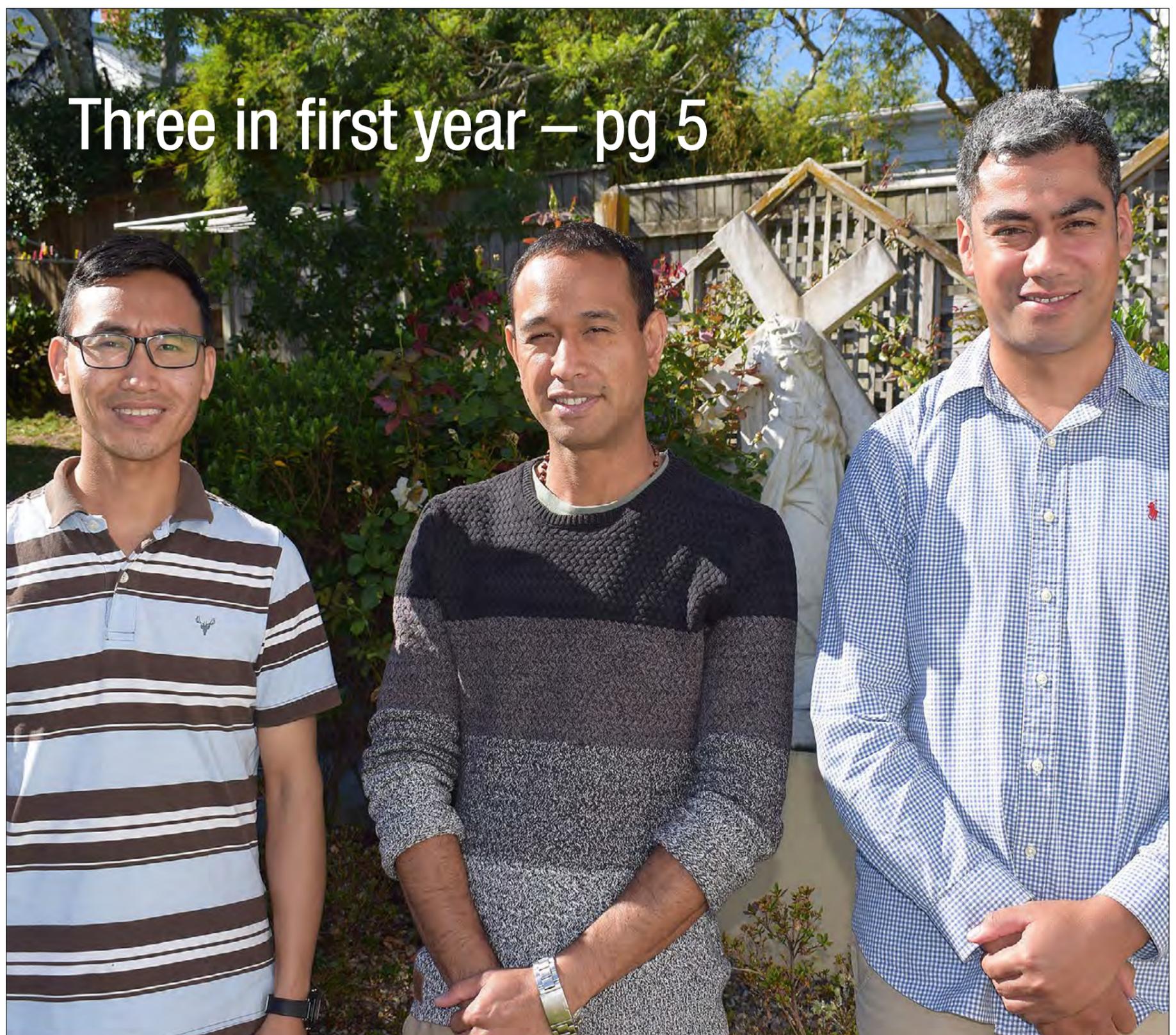
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**On the front cover:** New seminarians, from left, Joseph Tang, Vaka Fatongiatau and Mineva Bob Fe'ao. See story on page 5.

# NZCatholic

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## St Dominic's Catholic College

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- Francine Bacho and Drishtee Verma in Yr 13, cultural leaders for 2022.
- A happy St Patrick's Day, remembering our ten Irish Dominican Foundresses.
- Successful Tongan relief mufti day.
- Focused Ukraine mufti day for Caritas.

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# SVDP delighted with kumara donation

by MICHAEL OTTO

Society of St Vincent de Paul staff in Auckland were delighted when a priest turned up at their centre in Onehunga with more than 4 tonnes of kumara to help fill food packages.

Panguru parish priest Fr Maliu 'Otutaha organised and transported the donated kumara down from Dargaville.

A March 12 post on the Vinnies Youth Auckland facebook page thanked Fr 'Otutaha, describing him as "an awesome servant of God caring for our communities".

SVdP Auckland spokesperson Delphina Soti told NZ Catholic that they are currently servicing up to 1200 households each week, with a quarter of these experiencing Covid-19 and isolating.

Food insecurity is a big issue for some families, who are also facing decreased working hours, she added. The increases in petrol and food costs have made things even tougher.

Ms Soti said SVdP Auckland are still dependent on donations, as well as the proceeds of Vinnies shops, and MSD grants help support people, especially those who are isolating.

The New Zealand Food network also brings in 20 per cent of the food we need each week," she said.

"Most of the food is purchased. We have great helpers who assist with the procurement through their networks, like Fr Martin [Wu, Otahuhu] who has been assisting us with this mahi."

"Sometimes we run out of something, and then people like Fr Maliu turn up with 4 tonnes of kumara which is a great help."

**Fr 'Otutaha and Mosese Uele. Thanks go to Soane Toala of Auckland for his generosity.**



(From left) Fr Maliu 'Otutaha, driver Mosese Uele, Bernadette Pereira and Delphina Soti — with kumara. (Photos: Facebook)



# Fuel tax drop helps but not enough

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Monte Cecilia Housing Trust chief executive Bernie Smith has welcomed the Government's move to reduce fuel taxes for a time, but he thinks more can be done to help people.

Mr Smith's comment came a week after he pushed back on Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's statements on March 7, that, while rising living costs were having an impact, she wouldn't describe the situation as a crisis.

On March 14, Ms Ardern admitted that the cost of living was affecting people, and the Government responded by addressing fuel tax, cutting road-user charges, and reducing public transport fares by half.

"We're very happy to hear the Government's announcements around reducing fuel taxes temporarily — it will provide much-needed relief for a lot of families who are struggling right now," Mr Smith said.

"However, it's important to remember that, compared to four and a half years ago, the Government is currently taking in an additional 55.3 cents per litre,

generating an extra \$1.5 billion in revenue each year. They really could have offered a 50 cents per litre reduction, which would have been more meaningful."

In his earlier comments, Mr Smith stated that there certainly is a cost of living crisis.

"From Monte Cecilia's perspective, we're working with hundreds of families every day who were already struggling to keep a roof over their children's heads and food in their bellies, who are now being pushed well past the line. If that's not a crisis, I don't know what you'd call it," he said.

"Between rent, food, fuel and other basic necessities, families are expected to somehow find thousands of dollars extra a year to cover the rising costs. That's a tough blow for those of us who are doing ok, but for families who were already struggling it's crushing."

Monte Cecilia, which is based in Mangere, Auckland, had to stop taking referrals earlier in the year after its waitlist grew to almost 400 families, and the Government restricted its ability to contract new homes from

landlords.

"The level of need in our communities right now is staggering, and it's a gut punch each time we have to tell a family that we're not able to help them right now," Mr Smith said.

"If we as a country don't do something urgently, the number of families in serious need, and the severity of that need, is only going to continue to grow."

Mr Smith acknowledged that much of the current cost of living pain is being driven by events happening internationally, such as Covid and the war in Ukraine, but he said that isn't a reason not to act.

"It doesn't matter that the cause is global because this isn't about handing out blame — what matters is what we're doing to help our most vulnerable families," he said.

"Prime Minister Ardern has said that she expects things to improve over the course of the year and I hope she's right, I really do, but families are being forced into poverty right now. We can't afford to sit still and hope the situation improves — we need to act."

# Bishop failed to act on abuse complaint

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

A former Catholic Bishop of Dunedin, Bishop John Kavanagh, failed to act on a complaint of abuse against one priest, but did take action appropriate for the time after a complaint against another priest, an inquiry process has found.

Cardinal John Dew, Metropolitan Archbishop of Aotearoa-New Zealand, requested an inquiry in 2020, after a number of victims of abuse in the Dunedin diocese complained that Bishop Kavanagh — who died in 1985 — had not properly dealt with their complaints of sexual abuse by priests.

At the cardinal's request, the Church's complaints body — the National Office for Professional Standards (NOPS) — engaged independent Christchurch senior investigator Micky Earl of the firm Corporate Risks, to conduct an investigation into abuse complaints in the Dunedin diocese while Bishop Kavanagh was in office from 1957 to 1985.

Mr Earl's report has been considered by the NOPS Complaints Assessment Committee under the Church's A Path to Healing process, and then by Cardinal Dew as the final arbiter.

"The records showed that seven priests, two brothers and one lay teacher sexually abused children, and in one case an adult, during Bishop Kavanagh's time as Bishop of Dunedin," said Cardinal Dew.

"The investigation found that Bishop Kavanagh knew of complaints related to two priests: Father Freek Schokker in about 1963; and Magnus Murray in about 1972. He did not know of the other cases, because complaints were not made until some years after Bishop Kavanagh had died.

"In the case of Murray, the Complaints Assessment Committee found that Murray admitted abuse to Bishop Kavanagh and was sent to Australia for treatment," said Cardinal Dew. "Because of that admission, and by sending Murray for treatment, Bishop Kavanagh did what he was required to under the Church canon law at the time.

"In the case of Father Schokker, Bishop Kavanagh should have investigated the complaint, but failed to do so," Cardinal Dew added.

Freek Schokker was a priest from the Netherlands working in the diocese at the time of the complaint. He was accused of abusing two young people. He left New Zealand at some stage after the complaint. He died in the Netherlands in 1993, age 81.

Magnus Murray became a priest in Auckland diocese in 1979 after returning to New Zealand.

He was jailed for five years in 2003 after admitting 10 offences against four Dunedin boys from 1958 to 1972. Murray was laicised — removed from the priesthood — in 2019, and lives in a rest home.

Cardinal Dew has formally written to the Bishop of Dunedin, Michael Dooley, telling him of the findings. Bishop Dooley has announced that Kavanagh College is to be renamed Trinity College from January 1, 2023.

"I accept that some survivors may not be happy with the decision that Bishop Kavanagh acted properly in respect [of] Magnus Murray. But that was in the context of canon law of the time. We take immediate action on complaints of abuse today. We are committed to a safe environment for all within the Church com-



Bishop John Kavanagh

munity. Any form of abuse, misconduct or inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable," said Cardinal Dew.

Cardinal Dew urges anyone who has any concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour or abuse in a Church setting to contact NOPS or the police: "NOPS operates independently of diocesan and congregation structures. As in the Bishop Kavanagh inquiry, NOPS contracts professional, experienced and independent third-party investigators to conduct investigations on its behalf."

NOPS can be contacted by free phone on 0800 114 622, or by email at [prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz)

The NOPS website, which includes the latest edition of A Path to Healing, is [www.safeguarding.catholic.org.nz/](http://www.safeguarding.catholic.org.nz/)

## New name for Kavanagh College

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Kavanagh College in Dunedin will be renamed Trinity Catholic College from January 1, 2023.

The Catholic Bishop of Dunedin, Bishop Michael Dooley, has said he has decided on the new name for the college after consultation with the college and diocesan community.

It follows an inquiry finding that the late Bishop John Kavanagh — after whom the college is named — did not act on a complaint of abuse when he was Bishop of Dunedin from 1957 to 1985.

"A number of survivors of abuse in the Dunedin diocese have asked me to change the name of the college," Bishop Dooley said.

This comes after the Church's National Office for Professional Standards found Bishop Kavanagh had not acted on a complaint against a priest from Europe, Father Schokker, but had acted under the Church canon law of the time on a complaint against former priest Magnus Murray, by having him sent to Australia for treatment. Murray was eventually convicted and jailed in

2003 for abusing four Dunedin boys from 1958 to 1972.

"Given that Magnus Murray then went on to abuse other children after returning from Australia, I believe the Church at the time let victims down badly. The issue is the attitude of the Church at the time which often did not believe victims of abuse, and made it difficult to pursue justice and the protection of children and vulnerable adults," Bishop Dooley said.

"Having the college named after the bishop of that time represents for a number of people the systemic failures of that time and contributes to their trauma. I would hope that the renaming of the college will contribute to some healing, and reaffirm our desire as a Church to listen to victims of abuse, and work hard to provide a safe environment for those in our care.

"The new name for the college affirms our Christian belief in the Trinity, which is God revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a community of love. This name reaffirms the Christian values and faith in God that are at the heart of the school's mission."

# Pro-life groups disappointed after 'safe areas' law passes

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Pro-life groups have expressed disappointment at the passage through Parliament of a law enabling the creation of "safe areas" banning protest near abortion facilities.

On March 16, the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion (Safe Areas) Amendment Bill, sponsored by Louisa Wall, passed its third reading in Parliament in a 108-12 conscience vote.

The Minister of Health, in consultation with the Minister of Justice, can now recommend to the Governor-General that "safe areas" be created within 150 metres of specified abortion premises. A person convicted under the new law would be liable for a fine of up to \$1000.

Certain actions, including engaging in protest about abortion, are prohibited behaviour in a safe area when they can be easily seen or heard by a person "accessing, providing, or assisting with providing, abortion services". Also prohibited in most circumstances is someone advising or persuading such persons to stop accessing or providing abortion services, or giving out information about abortion to that person.

According to the Attorney General, an individual engaging in silent prayer will not risk being criminalised.

In a post on their website, Right to Life stated that the new legislation "violates our human rights of free speech, assembly, communication and freedom of religion".

Among the facts that Parliament ignored when passing the law, Right to Life stated, was that an Official Information Act request revealed that New Zealand's 20 DHBs had received no complaints of

intimidation or harassment in the last two years.

Written submissions on the bill opposed it by a large majority, with 70 per cent opposed and only 19 per cent in favour. The Law Commission did not consider safe areas necessary. Other laws were held to be sufficient.

What the new act does do, Right to Life stated, is "distract attention away from the real intimidation and violence that is inflicted on women and their unborn [children] in the abortion facility", and prevents the presence of persons within a safe area offering help to a woman to choose life for her child.

Voice for Life said that the it "intended to

silence the charitable voices of pro-life dissent" outside abortion facilities.

The passing of the legislation "was about state overreach and might-makes-right ideological domination . . .".

"It also speaks to a growing twilight of authoritarianism which has begun to cast its long shadow over the people of Aotearoa New Zealand."

"We will continue to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves," Voice for Life stated.

After the law came into force, Family Life International said that its "small team is working hard to ensure that our 40 Days for Life prayer vigil outside of AMAC remains peaceful and within the law".

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# Media advice given for justice and peace work

by ROWENA OREJANA

Respected senior journalist-turned-Society of St Vincent de Paul Otahuhu financial mentor Simon Collins encouraged the Auckland diocese Justice and Peace Commission to use both the mainstream and social media to further their fight in the public square.

"It always seems like a drop in the ocean, but . . . I believe every contribution, every opinion contributed, especially in the mainstream media, but also on social media, is worth it because it all contributes to the fight. If we don't speak, we don't have any impact," Mr Collins said.

Mr Collins and another SVdP Otahuhu financial mentor, Alana Baker, presented the commission with six social justice issues that their clients in South Auckland are facing. This presentation was given on February 26, 2022, through Zoom.

Broadly, these issues are housing, debt, welfare traps, Work and Income, life insurance and Covid-19 emergencies.

Mr Collins said that, of all these issues, housing is the one that frustrates him the most.

"With most financial issues, we can do something. We can negotiate with creditors to deal with debt. We

can get entitlements with Work and Income that people are not getting. But with housing, we've just struck a big wall because there just aren't enough houses," he said.

"We have whānau stuck in motels or transitional housing, and they stay there for years because there is no social housing to move into, or they are paying unaffordable private rents, and they can't get into the social housing queue because there aren't enough social housing [properties] available."

Mr Collins said that, because the building industry is already at capacity and can't deliver houses fast enough, they support the Government's buying private homes.

He said this move is not popular with the real estate industry, because it could push up house prices further. However, he said that increasing house prices can be addressed through other means.

Ms Baker presented the issue of "parasitic credit providers".

"Often our clients would pay their debt to them before they pay their rent," she said. "These credit providers know about what the cultural pressures are on the families, and they take advantage of that. They (lenders) totally rip them (creditors) off."



Simon Collins (Photo: facebook)

She said the strengthened Responsible Lending Code has largely seen "home-trucks" and "payday" lenders put out of business, but they have been replaced by pawnbrokers.

"Most of our clients have huge debts and are struggling with it. It affects their quality of life," she said.

Mr Collins, who finished work at the New Zealand Herald in March last year, told the Justice and Peace Commission that issues such as these can be pitched to mainstream media. "Public opinion is formed by me-

dia coverage: mainstream and social media. The goal in using media is to raise public awareness of issues, and public support for action," he said. "In a democracy, elected politicians, public servants, businesses and individuals all respond to public opinion."

He suggested coming out with news stories that are unexpected, unusual, or of human interest.

"The media want public engagement, and we should use all these opportunities," he said.

Mr Collins, who was described by former New Zealand Herald editor Gavin Ellis as "the paper's social conscience, ever striving for greater public good", added in his JPC talk that human stories are needed to illustrate issues; for example, a homeless family, or a whānau exploited by unscrupulous lenders.

He suggested that the Justice and Peace Commission and agencies like SVdP may be able to collaborate to bring the issues and the human stories together.

In response to a question, Mr Collins suggested that the Justice and Peace Commission could well advance the cause of those in greatest need by re-framing some of their oral presentations to select committees as media opinion pieces.

# Defeat of anti-life thinking needed for peace

by MICHAEL OTTO

The Apostolic Nuncio to New Zealand has said that working and praying for peace must involve defeating mentalities and ideologies that seek to put aside the human right to life and the human right to exist.

Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa spoke about this at a Mass for Peace in Ukraine, celebrated at St Teresa's Pro-Cathedral in Karori, Wellington, on March 17. He made his remarks after thanking members of the Diplomatic Corps and others for their presence at the Mass.

The archbishop quoted the constitution of UNESCO, adopted in 1945, that stated "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

After noting the power of prayer and fasting

for peace, Archbishop Rugambwa asked — who is it that can effectively change the human heart and mind?

"Only God can change our mind and heart; his grace is powerful and, for him, nothing is impossible," he said.

"Pope Francis' appeal for prayer for peace is an invitation to collaborate with the grace of God in order to construct true peace, and to bear in our minds and hearts that every human person is created in God's image and likeness and, for that matter, we are brothers and sisters in God who created us all.

"Wars are — among other things — the negation that we are all created in the image and likeness of the same God and that every human life is sacred," Archbishop Rugambwa continued. "Consequently, war is when any human life is disregarded or is considered as a threat, and as something that should be eliminated.

"Any culture that entertains ideas, ideologies, and social, political, religious and legal systems opposed to the human life — at any stage of its development — generates in the society the mentality, not only to despise the human life, but also to justify its elimination.

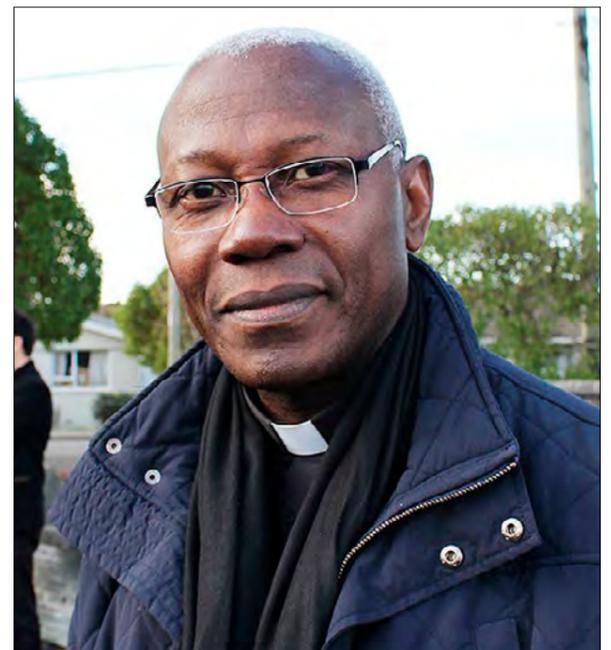
"Prayer for peace, just as diplomatic and other efforts to stop hostilities, should not be confined to the silencing of arms and the signing of peace treaties; they should also construct the defences of peace by seeking to eradicate from our society all ideologies and mentalities that can lead men and women to violate the human being's right to live and the right to exist. Our prayers and our fasting should also aim at inculcating in our minds and hearts the 'sacredness' of all human life, and at avoiding all that leads to the culture of death."

Archbishop Rugambwa asked those at the Mass to "continue to pray for Ukraine, and for many other parts of the world that are experiencing armed conflicts generated by the rampant mentality to disregard, discard and to eliminate . . . human life".

"Let us hope and pray that diplomacy will be given a chance to successfully play its role in obtaining true peace and development among the nations," he added.

Cardinal John Dew presided at the Mass, and in his homily noted that "war is never glorious".

He recalled his visit to France a few years ago to visit the grave of his grandfather, who was killed in the final days of World War I. The cardinal reflected on the pain and suffering that



Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa

comes from war.

"War is a trauma that lingers deep in our hearts, and that is why we feel profound disquiet at this time. We need to pray."

Speaking of the war in Ukraine, Cardinal Dew said that "we weep for those on whom this war has been inflicted. We can only imagine the gut-wrenching turmoil for the people of Ukraine as they defend their homeland, and as they also seek safety for their children and the vulnerable".

The cardinal added that God knows what the people of Ukraine are going through.

"We pray that all Ukrainians know something of the comforting presence of Christ."

Near the end of his homily, Cardinal Dew said that "none of us are likely to be in a position of being able to influence the Russian President or the course of this war . . . some of you from the Diplomatic Corps will have colleagues around the world who are active in this noble task".

"Here in Aotearoa, our call and our gift is to pray."

Archbishop Rugambwa, who had organised the Mass, thanked Cardinal Dew for agreeing to preside, and also thanked the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, the High Commissioner of Samoa, for facilitating the invitations to the Mass.

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# Three new seminarians on their journey

by ROWENA OREJANA

Holy Cross Seminary welcomed three young men on their vocation journey, two of them preparing to become priests of Auckland diocese.

**Joseph Tang**, 30, is a seminarian for the diocese of Dunedin. Mr Tang comes from the Vinh diocese in Vietnam.

"When I was about 12 years old, I decided to become a priest. I went to my neighbours and I watched a video with them. A lot of times, I watched that video. In that video there were some nuns and priests singing Catholic songs," he said.

He told his parents he wanted to become a priest because, in that video, the nuns and priests looked so holy.

Around the same time, he was also given a rosary by his parish priest, who asked him to pray the rosary every day.

"I tried to do it every day. I went to church to do it with people in the parish, and when I went back home, I did another one," he said.

He lived with the parish priest for two years after high school, and then went to study cultural management at the university.

However, he said he wasn't sure what path to take, so he worked in construction, marketing, and even handed out fliers to make a living.

"I felt it was really complicated. It is not my life. I wasn't happy. People in my life were very competitive and used bad language. I thought, this is not my environment," he said.

He thought about going to Indonesia to be a priest but his brother, a priest in the Christchurch diocese, asked him if he wanted to be a priest in New Zealand.

When Christchurch diocese didn't work out for him, he applied to the Dunedin diocese. "They opened their hands and welcomed me," he said.

Mr Tang said he wants to become a "holy priest, humble and simple".



From left, Joseph Tang, Vaka Fatongiatau and Mineva Bob Fe'ao.

**Vaka Fatongiatau**, 34 is studying to be a priest in Auckland diocese.

"I started to have the feeling to become a priest in 2019. It was a strong feeling, a desire to be a priest, to be a servant for the Church and to serve the Church," he said.

Mr Fatongiatau came to New Zealand from Tonga in 2014. Even back then, he said, he already felt the desire to be a priest. "It took me almost ten years (to decide)," he said.

He said the attraction to the vocation started in his teenage years.

"Over the years, I wasn't thinking about it. I just ignored the feelings for priesthood. But it kept coming back," he said.

In the meantime, he worked for Fisher and Paykel Healthcare.

"I met with some priests and spent time with seminarians, and I started to have the feeling that priesthood is my calling," he said.

He said his parents were happy that he has finally decided to pursue this vocation.

"I see myself as a loving priest . . . who will preach the Gospel," he said.

**Mineva Bob Fe'ao**, the youngest of the three at 29, hopes to become a priest for Auckland diocese.

Mr Fe'ao was born and raised in Auckland by Tongan parents.

"I felt the call when I was a child of seven years old. And in my teenage years, I attended De La Salle College and I still felt the call," he said.

Mr Fe'ao recalled that he used to spend his intervals at De La Salle in the chapel, either praying the rosary or just sitting in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

However, after high school, unfortunate circumstances made it necessary for him to seek employment. His parents suffered health setbacks and he had to look after them, as well as his siblings.

"I've been working in the hospitality and manufacturing industry, supporting my family financially. During that time, I've had a lot of life experiences. And from these life experiences, I've kind of become deaf to the call," he said.

After putting his younger siblings through university, Mr Fe'ao felt at a loss. "I asked myself, 'what do I want to do with my life?'," he said.

That's when he turned to Mother Mary.

"She was the one who directed me to maybe re-listen again to the call that was given to me in my younger days. It was like I had a St Paul conversion moment. Mother Mary was my Ananias. St Paul went to Damascus and Ananias opened his eyes. Mother Mary was my Ananias who made me listen to the call again," he said.

Mr Fe'ao, who used to be a member of the Tongan Catholic Lataki and the Mangere Catholic Youth, said he aspires to be like St Alphonsus Liguori and St Joseph.

"I was emotional coming here. I'm really happy having God as the captain of my compass. I trust in him," he said.

"I felt like I'm fulfilling what God wants for me. It's in God's love that he has called me to this vocation and I'm responding with love for him."

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# Burning love that endures to the end

**T**hen many will fall away, and they will betray one another, and will hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved." (Matthew 24: 10-13)

On February 1, the Te Rōpū Tautoko research findings reported the extent of reported alleged abuse within the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand. The research was undertaken by the Church at the request of the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care.

## John Evangelista

Though this might not have been a surprise to many, reading the report breaks one's heart. I am confident that the Church will be working closely with the royal commission to address the reported alleged abuse cases and bring justice to the victims.

This will address the historical abuse issues, but we need to move forward and ensure, not only that history should not repeat itself, but that lessons are learned from the mistakes of the past. How should we face the future then? The words of our Lord in Matthew 24: 10-13 bring me great consolation and hope in these most difficult times regarding the Church.

"Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another, and will hate one another." We continue to witness the effects of these betrayals by those who perpetuated abuse within, as well as outside, the Church. Many lives of victims of abuse have been broken. And these have resulted in repercussions at all levels of the Church and society. I have listened to so many disillusioned young people and

adults who have chosen, not only not to live their faith, but have also totally questioned the very existence of God. We are also witnessing the hate and division within the Church brought about by the way the abuse cases have been handled. One can palpably touch the ongoing grief and hate just by reading the news on the issue of abuse.

"And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray." It is precisely the betrayal by the ones who were supposed to lead, direct, and protect others, especially the most vulnerable, that has resulted in many faithful going astray. They have betrayed Jesus Christ and those he has put in their hands to care for and to love. In many ways, it is also a betrayal of the many other faithful and dedicated Church leaders, ministers and faithful who, through the centuries, have "left all and followed our Lord" (Luke 18:28).

"And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold." It is time for each one of us to reflect on these words and ask ourselves: In the face of these abuses and injustices perpetuated by people within the Church, has my love gone cold? Indeed, this is a very hard question that demands a lot of soul-searching and faith-seeking. However, this is a question that needs a response for us to move forward.

In the face of pain and afflictions, our Lord invites us to ponder in our hearts the Beatitudes. It is through the practice of the Beatitudes that Jesus will bring "joy" into our lives, and bring us back to the path towards the kingdom of God.

The Beatitudes also echo the words of the Lord in the face of the peoples' sin and infidelity, as written in Jeremiah 17:7-8: "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is in the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought, it is not anxious, and it does not cease

“And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold.” It is time for each one of us to reflect on these words and ask ourselves: In the face of these abuses and injustices perpetuated by people within the Church, has my love gone cold?

to bear fruit.”

"But the one who endures to the end will be saved." This promise of our Lord gives us hope and confidence that this is not the time to allow our love to grow cold. Behind all these betrayals and lawlessness, our Lord is speaking to us. It is a time for renewal, a time of cleansing for each one of us personally and for the whole Church. It is a time for prayer — a time to renew our friendship with God. More than ever, it is a time for all of us to multiply our God-given talents so that we will be able to bear fruits that will last. It is a time for holiness — "to be perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

We need to heed what the Lord tells us so that our love will continue to burn. Like the two disciples who encountered the Risen Lord on their way to Emmaus, we can say: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road . . . ?" (Luke 24:32).

Dr John Evangelista is Dean/Tumuaki of the Catholic Theological College, Te Kupenga — Catholic Leadership Institute.

## Ronald Rolheiser

# Trying not to make God look bad

**F**or fifteen years, I taught a course entitled "The Theology of God". The students in that course were predominately seminarians preparing for ministry, along with a number of lay students who were preparing to serve as ministers in various capacities in their churches. I would always teach what the curriculum called for: the key biblical revelations about the nature of God and God's actions in history, some salient perspectives from the Patristics on God's nature and actions, the historical development of the dogmatic definitions about God, plus some speculative notions on the Trinity, ranging from Saint Augustine to Karl Rahner to Catherine Lacugna. But my overriding emphasis, like a leitmotif, was always this. I would tell the students: whatever else you do in your pastoral practice and preaching, try not to make God look stupid!

Nothing is as important in our teaching, preaching, and pastoral activities as is the notion we convey of the God who underwrites it all. Every homily we preach, every catechetical or sacramental teaching we give, and every pastoral practice we engage in reflects the God who undergirds it. If our teaching is narrow and petty, we make God look narrow and petty. If our pastoral practice lacks understanding and compassion, we make God lack understanding and compassion. If we are legalistic, we make God legalistic. If we are tribal, nationalistic, or racist, we make God tribal, nationalistic, and racist. If we do things that befuddle common sense, we make God the enemy of common sense. Crassly stated, when we do stupid things in our ministry, we make God look stupid.

In all of our preaching, teaching, and pastoral practice, we need to work at rescuing God from arbitrariness, narrowness, legalism, rigidity, racism, tribalism, nationalism, and everything that's narrow, legalistic, and petty that, through us, gets associated with God. Anything we do in the name of God reflects God.

It's no accident that atheism, anti-clericalism, and most of the negativity levelled against the Church and religion today can always point to

“Nothing is as important in our teaching, preaching, and pastoral activities as is the notion we convey of the God who underwrites it all. Every homily we preach, every catechetical or sacramental teaching we give, and every pastoral practice we engage in reflects the God who undergirds it.”

some bad theology or Church practice on which to base itself. Atheism is always a parasite, feeding off bad religion. So too is most of the negativity towards the churches which is prevalent today. Anti-church attitudes feed on bad religion, and thus we who preach, teach, and minister in the name of God need to scrutinise ourselves in the light of those criticisms.

As well, we need the honesty to admit that we have seriously hurt many persons by the rigidity of some of our pastoral practices that do not reflect a God of understanding, compassion, and intelligence, but instead suggest that God is arbitrary, legalistic, and not very intelligent.

I say this in sympathy. It's not easy to reflect God adequately, but we must try; try to reflect better the God that Jesus incarnated. What are the marks of that God?

First, that God has no favourites. No one person, race, gender, or nation is more favoured than others by that God. All are privileged. That God is also clear that it's not only those who profess God and religion explicitly who are persons of faith, but also those, irrespective of their explicit faith or church practice, who do the will of God on earth.

Next, that God is scandalously understanding and compassionate, especially towards the weak and towards sinners. That God is willing to sit down with sinners without first asking them to clean up their lives. Moreover, that God asks us to be compassionate in the same way to both sinners and saints, and to love them both equally. That God does not have preferential love for the virtuous.

In addition, that God is critical of those who, whatever their sincerity, try to block access to him. That God is never defensive, but surrenders himself to death rather than defend himself, never meets hatred with hatred, and dies loving and forgiving those who are killing him.

Finally, and centrally, that God is first of all Good News for the poor. Any preaching in God's name that isn't good news for the poor is not the Gospel.

Those are the attributes of the God whom Jesus incarnated, and we need to keep that God in mind in all of our preaching, teaching, and pastoral practices, even as we are sensitive to proper boundaries and the demands of orthodox teaching.

Complex pastoral questions will always be with us, and this is not suggesting that these issues be resolved simplistically. The truth sets us free, and the demands of discipleship are, by Jesus' own admission, harsh. However, with that being admitted, the compassion, mercy, and intelligence of God need always still to be reflected in every pastoral action we do. Otherwise, God looks arbitrary, tribal, cruel, and antithetical to love.

Christianity, as Marilynne Robinson says, is too great a narrative to be underwritten by any lesser tale, and that should forbid especially its being subordinated to narrowness, legalism, lack of compassion, and lack of common sense.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He can be contacted through his website [www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com) Follow on Facebook [www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser/](https://www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser/)

# How do we return to normal?

## Guest Editorial

As the world begins to emerge from the most recent surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, how do we return to normal? And what should normal mean?

The feeling that we are ready for the return to normal is as much a product of exhaustion as of progress. While there is much to be celebrated, especially the unprecedentedly rapid development of vaccines, the coronavirus remains both present and dangerous.

The costs and burdens of mitigation measures, especially as they affect young students and their parents, have also become clear. A conversation about how to relax various pandemic protocols coexists with more than 900,000 total Covid-19 deaths in the United States, and with hospitals still filled to capacity in many areas.

The politicisation of public health guidance, and cynical efforts to use the pandemic to further divide us into ideological tribes, spent down resources of trust that are difficult, if not impossible, to renew quickly.

As formal Covid-19 mitigation protocols are relaxed, it will be important to avoid worsening this tribalisation. The temptation will be to either hold onto maximum precautions, even in the face of smaller risks, or to abandon all precautions, even the least onerous. But even while Americans may disagree about the balance of caution and risk, we need to be united in refusing to impute motives.

The Church . . . will face any number of practical questions on the way back to normal, especially at the parish level. Pastors and lay ministers will have to balance the relaxation of various mitigation practices with continuing care for those who are still at heightened risk, even as the coronavirus becomes endemic.

They also should take the lead in encouraging parishioners to be patient and generous with one another, even when they are not on the same page about how comfortable they are in returning to Mass or, eventually, ceasing to wear masks.

One important contribution the Church can make is to continue to remember in public prayer those who suffer and are at risk from the coronavirus. Our society will need ways to continue to mourn the lives lost to the pandemic, and those who remain on its front lines need ongoing support in their labours, and comfort for the trauma they face on a daily basis.

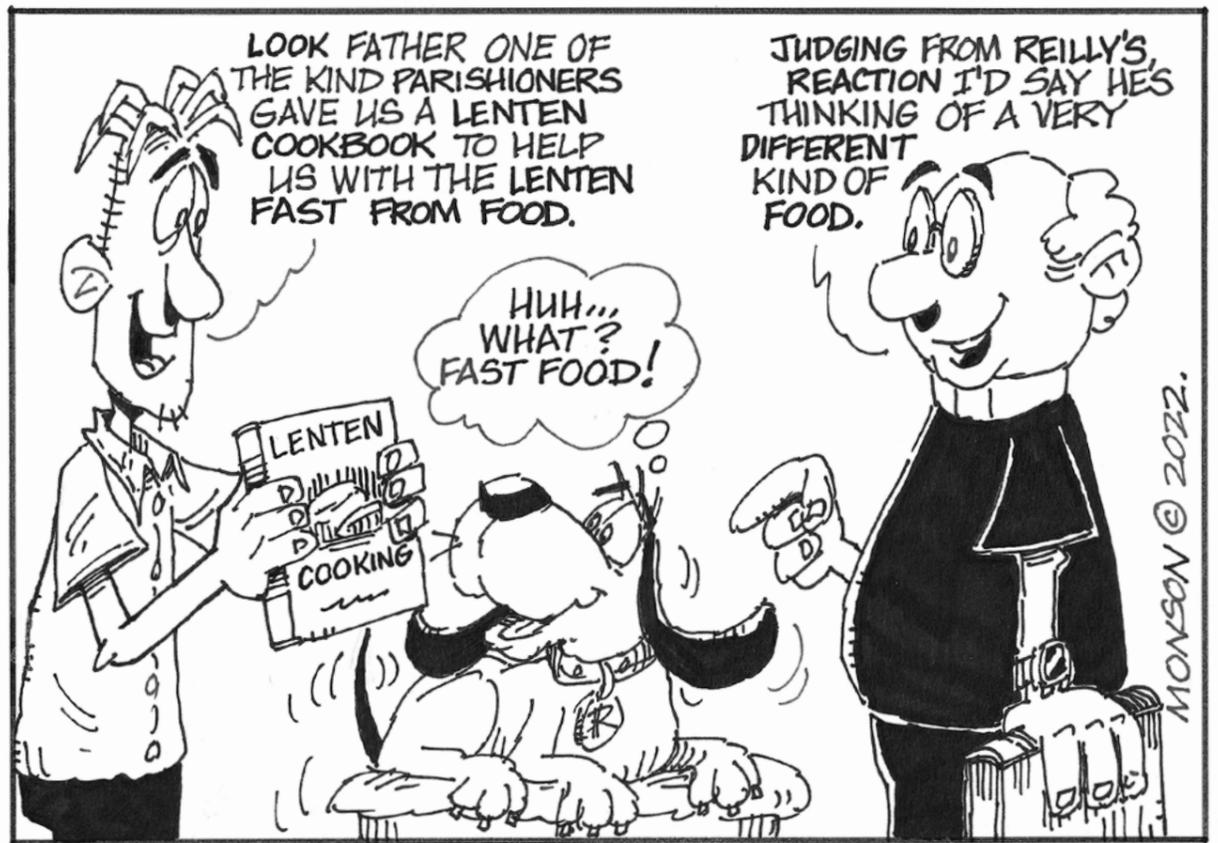
Last September, Pope Francis counselled that the world must not return to its previous "sickened normality", but instead must aspire to the normality of the Kingdom of God, where "the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor".

This call, which Pope Francis has reiterated throughout the pandemic, is for the world to use the experiences of these past two years as a kind of examination of conscience. The sickened normality the pandemic laid bare is that of inequality and lack of solidarity; it has been exploited, as he has said more recently, through an "infodemic" of misinformation and a "distortion of reality based on fear". While those who perpetuate these lies bear the greatest responsibility, there also is the need for a sober appraisal of why responses to such misinformation have so often been ignored. The spiritual question that must be asked is why fear has become so seemingly attractive, and trust so seemingly impossible? Misinformation must not merely be corrected, but also confronted. And the truth that it obscures must not only be explained clearly, but also explained in a manner that invites trust. As society begins to build the "new normal" of emergence from the pandemic, efforts to rebuild and strengthen trust and solidarity are of as much importance as the ongoing distribution of vaccines and vigilance against coronavirus variants.

While the timeline is not certain, figures of authority, particularly within the Church, have a responsibility to bridge the fissures created during the pandemic.

Excerpts from an unsigned editorial titled: "The key to a post-pandemic 'new normal'? Solidarity", published online on February 17 by America magazine, published by the Jesuits. (CNS)

## The Habit



## Letters

### Cartoon 1

I write concerned about your cartoons in issues 631 and 632 characterising protestors as animal pests.

Our daughter reported how the Anglican Cathedral in Wellington allowed use of their facilities to the protestors, and made efforts to return belongings to those who were thrown off Parliament Grounds on that dreadful Wednesday.

I lost my job as a registered nurse on November 15, 2021, because of the mandates. I am prepared to wear the cost, even though it has been so difficult financially. But to hear again in a Catholic newspaper that protestors and children, including my grandsons, are compared with animals is highly offensive and frankly not Christian. I wonder what Jesus would say?

M. Andersen, Hamilton.

■ Abridged. Editor.

### Cartoon 2

I am writing to express my dismay at the recent cartoons in the NZ Catholic portraying the protestors at Parliament as vermin.

These people have been cast out by society and, in many cases, the Church and, despite having legitimate concerns, our "kind" leader refuses to listen to them.

They were left with few options to try to be heard. Sadly, I think many

Except for our own editorials, opinions expressed in NZ Catholic do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the newspaper or of its owner, the Bishop of Auckland, unless otherwise indicated.

Catholics are going to have something to answer for regarding treatment of the vaccine-marginalised when they get to the pearly gates . . .

[The cartoons] are uncharitable and dehumanising, and contribute further to the terrible division and othering that has been started by the Government and gleefully carried on by so many.

They need to stop, and an apology needs to be made. We are one Church, and there were Catholics - very faithful ones - in that "mob". Let's sow unity instead of division.

Rosemary Roberts, Via email.

■ Abridged - Editor.

Cartoonist Steve Monson responds: "I apologise for the cartoons. It was never my intent to portray the possums as vermin, but rather as the cheeky, noisy and playful creatures that they are. So I sincerely apologise to any readers who have been upset by the content of my cartoons."

## Language

Thank you to Fr Waldie for his reply to my letter in NZ Catholic (February 13).

Referring to the Mass reading of August 15, what I was saying is that the final sentences (the gross part) should be deleted from the reading. Those sentences destroy the beauty, the imagery, and the uplift of the first part.

In respect of the Christmas Eve reading, I am glad we agree on the preferred

phrase, "they came together". New biblical translations should reflect the culture of the countries and populations where they are used. Tolerating "intercourse" in this edition might translate to "having sex" in the next. It might be worth putting a stop to such language while you can - reflecting that congregations generally prefer more delicacy.

C. Wheeler, Rangiora.

## Workplace

I appreciated the article on the three young people sharing their experience of living their faith in the workplace (NZ Catholic, March 13). Catholics certainly have to walk the talk, if they are to have any credibility in giving witness to their faith.

Looking back on my time in the workforce - admittedly a few years ago - there tended to be three main themes of discourse where the Church was concerned. The first involved the sex abuse crisis. There really was no answer to this. All one could do was admit that the Church should be doing much better, and then add some comments about Jesus, millstones and the sea.

The second theme involved fundamentalist Christians challenging Catholic practice in a host of areas - the place of Mary, the authority of the Pope, the Real Presence, confession to a priest and so on. I'd been reasonably well catechised, so was able to gently put aside many a misconception. My interlocutors were on shakier ground when I quizzed them on the can-

on of the Bible, *lex sola Scriptura*, and the relationship between faith and works.

The third group was what I would describe as the interested atheists or agnostics. Among other things, they would ask me about the Church's position on evolution, and how this could be reconciled with the notion of original sin and the first two chapters of Genesis. We had some interesting discussions about Revelation and biblical interpretation, and papal documents like *Humani Generis* and *Dei Verbum*.

In our post-modern age, do people argue about such things anymore? Or is it a case of "I'm OK, you are OK"?

S. Maitland, Auckland.

## Candidates

Once again, I would ask, through the pages of your paper, for people to put their name forward as a candidate for the local mayoralty under the banner of Christians Against Abortion CAA.

This is an entirely non-confrontational action which anyone can undertake, so long as they fulfil the requirements to be a candidate. These requirements and specific dates can be found by going online to Local Body Elections.

Wouldn't it be great to have a pro-life candidate standing against abortion in every single electorate in New Zealand come Saturday, October 8, election day?

Phil O'Connor, Panmure, Auckland. ■ Abridged - Editor.

NZ Catholic welcomes readers' letters, although receipt of a letter does not guarantee publication. No correspondence will be entered into concerning publication. Letters should be no longer than 220 words and should be topical, to the point, and include the writer's address and phone number. *Ad hominem* attacks are not welcome. Emailed letters should be sent as part of the text message - not as an attachment - to [editor@nzcatholic.org.nz](mailto:editor@nzcatholic.org.nz) and include the writer's physical address. Pseudonyms are not accepted, except by special arrangement.

# The diminishment of attentiveness

**STOLEN FOCUS; WHY YOU CAN'T PAY ATTENTION** by Johann Hari, Bloomsbury Publishers, 2022, US\$19.00 (Available from Amazon), 368pp, reviewed by NEIL VANEY, SM

Every so often, a book comes along which helps to make profound sense of a number of apparently unrelated issues in society and in our individual lives. Hari's work does precisely this — and at great depth. He examines trends such as diminishing attention span, sleep deprivation, obesity, the impact of social media through engines such as Facebook and Twitter, and the massive drop-off in the reading of books, showing convincingly how they are organically linked.

What helps to make this work so impressive is the range and depth of the study within it. The author spent three years researching this material, interviewing at length world-reputed experts from Scandinavia to New Zealand. He is also utterly honest about the impact of this study on his own life. He describes how, at the end of his work, he retreated to a small cottage at the tip of Cape Cod, without cellphone or television, to try to digest what he had learned, and the intense struggle and the inward journey that entailed. At the conclusion of *Stolen Focus*, he details five ways by which he has attempted to change his life in major ways, but also told of the struggles that came with that. (pp263-64)

Another impressive dimension of this study is Hari's efforts to be as honest as can be with his evidence. He evaluates what experts have to say. Where there are disputes, he presents both sides of the case, for example, in his examination of the steep increase of ADHD in children, where genetic and environmental experts are in sharp disagreement. (pp209-32)

In a brief review, it is impossible to do justice to the author's material, but I will select a few areas that stood out for me.

First of all come the brief indicators of the growing inability to focus and concentrate in contemporary societies. Hari cites a study on the computer use of US college students. On average they switched tasks every 65 seconds; a different study by a University of California professor of infomatics revealed that adults working in offices stuck at one task for just three minutes. (p8) Shifting the focus to concentration among car drivers, Hari presents the results of a cognitive neuroscientist from the University of Utah. Using driving simulators, the researcher checked to see

what was the impact that a single act such as receiving texts while driving had on effectiveness; it was very similar to what happens if you were drunk. This has deadly consequences; about one in every five car accidents is now due to distracted drivers. (pp38-39)

## ■ Reading loss

Two interconnected factors that Hari examines at length are the dramatic drop in book reading, and the increasing amount of time that users of cellphones devote to their devices. The proportion of Americans who read books for pleasure has dropped dramatically. The number of US citizens who never read a book in a year trebled in the period 1978-2014. Fifty-seven per cent of American citizens do not read a book in a single year. By 2017, whereas the average citizen spent just 17 minutes a day reading, he or she has spent 5.4 hours on their phone. They also touched their phone 2617 times every 24 hours. (pp75-76, 18) Children between 13-17 in the USA were sending a text message every six minutes that they are awake. (p110)

These statistics point to a huge shift in the way in which people have come to understand the world and human life. Whereas books encourage reflection in depth and questions that may reverberate days, even weeks, after reading, social media such as Twitter operate on the model that the world can be digested in bites of 280 characters. (p79)

## ■ Sleep Patterns

The last five years have seen the publication of a number of studies on the role of sleep in a healthy lifestyle. Studies indicate that 40 per cent of US citizens are sleep-deprived, getting less than the minimum of seven hours needed each night; 23 per cent are having less than five hours a night. So it is no wonder that only 15 per cent of respondents answered that they woke feeling refreshed. (p62) It is in this context that Hari begins to analyse some of the deeper causes of this trend. As he points out, TV channels and phone networks make most of their revenue by selling advertising time. The longer you stay awake watching programmes, the more profits grow, so one of their goals is to keep you watching as long as possible.

## ■ Algorithm

In chapters 6 and 7, the author delves into the strategies that social media companies use to increase their viewer numbers, and the length of time these viewers devote to them. This develops into a study of what is now being labelled "surveil-

lance capitalism". Briefly, it is the ability to record and analyse the interests, desires and opinions of each individual user so as to construct mathematical tools (algorithms) that will suggest more and more items of interest, so keeping viewers scrolling more and more to feed these desires, fantasies and hates. In this context, it is the influence of "negativity bias" that is most worrying. For a long time psychologists have known that we will stare at something disturbing and violent much longer

than placid and peaceful scenes. A study of YouTube clips showed that words such as "hates, obliterates, slams, destroys" will raise ratings by 20 per cent for each such word. Posts filled with indignant disagreement will double likes and shares. (pp125-26)

Algorithms that record such trends automatically focus on them, then offer more and more similar clips. This is one of the factors feeding the anger and violence that featured so strongly in the American 2020 presidential campaign, and is now evident in anti-vaccination demonstrations all over the world. As Hari notes, "A study by the MIT found that fake news travels six times faster on Twitter than real news, and during the 2016 US presidential elections, flat-out falsehoods on Facebook outperformed the top

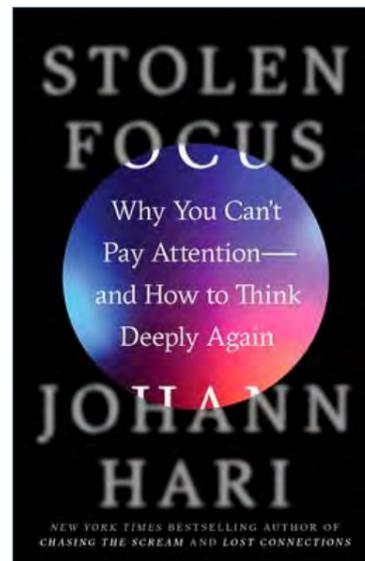
stories at nineteen mainstream news sites put together." (p129)

A secret 2020 Facebook study by a group of its analysts reported that 64 per cent of all those who joined extremist groups had found their way there directed by algorithms that Facebook had recommended. This confidential report was leaked. The company executives completely rejected the group's recommendations to abandon such practices, making instead just a few minor tweaks. (p157)

Near the end of the work, there are fascinating studies around the mushroom growth of ADHD in children, and the virtual demise of outdoor unsupervised play by groups of children, sadly too detailed to examine here — yet both with strong links to social media.

## ■ Conclusion

My recommendation, especially if you are a parent, is to make it a priority to read this book. It does suggest ways forward, but they will be difficult and controversial. That is the note on which Hari concludes. At the end of the work he comes to the conclusion that the one factor that underlies all these phenomena is the still-dominant economic philosophy that every firm, every enterprise and every nation must increase its output and productivity year by year. Till enough people challenge this assumption, significant change will not come about. (p273)



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## Online Ignatian ecospiritual conference aims to inspire care for God's creation

In this Ignatian year when the Society of Jesus is celebrating the 500th anniversary of the conversion of St Ignatius of Loyola, the Australian Jesuit Province is hosting the online International Ignatian Ecospiritual Conference.

Fr Arturo Sosa SJ, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, will open the conference, to be held on April 25-30.

Peter Saunders, one of the keynote speakers, said the conference aims to "invite participants into a greater experience of God's presence in all Creation" leading to "ecological conversion and a deeper desire to commit to caring for our com-

mon home".

"In 2015 Pope Francis published his landmark encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care of Our Common Home*," Dr Saunders said.

"For Pope Francis, 'The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dew drop, in a poor person's face'.

"Pope Francis is encouraging us to undertake an ecological conversion, whereby we come to appreciate that 'Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage,

woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.' This is what we are hoping all participants will come to appreciate more deeply at the conference."

Dr Saunders said the Australian Jesuits had a strong commitment to Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, created in 2021.

"The conference will encourage participants to consider how they will help to care for our common home."

Details: [www.iiec.org.au](http://www.iiec.org.au)  
• See advert on page 5

# Visit your church, pray in solidarity for peace on March 25

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Catholics in Aotearoa New Zealand are being asked to visit their churches on Friday, March 25, to join with Pope Francis in a special day of prayer for Ukraine.

Pope Francis will consecrate Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary next Friday, 25 March, during a service at which he will preside in St Peter's Basilica.

New Zealand's Catholic bishops are asking Catholics here to offer special prayers for everyone caught in the Ukraine war by going to their local parish church on Friday to pray the rosary.

Bishop Stephen Lowe, the Bishop of Auckland and secretary of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, said visiting a church next Friday would be a show of solidarity.

"All over Ukraine, people are having to flee their homes because of the war. Leaving our homes here in Aotearoa New Zealand to go to our local church to pray on this special day would very much be showing solidarity to the people having to leave their homes in Ukraine.

"Normally we would have a Mass or advertise a time for the rosary, but with the current Covid-19 restrictions

imposing a limit of 100, we are hoping people will visit their local church throughout the day. The bishops too will also be heading to their respective cathedrals to pray the rosary on Friday in support of Pope Francis.

"What is important is leaving your homes on Friday to visit your local church, at a time that suits you. We will be asking all churches to be open from 7am to 7pm so as many people as possible can visit at different times during the day, in keeping with the Covid-19 restrictions."

Bishop Lowe said that Friday would be a day of prayer for everyone affected by the war: "We will be praying for those who have been wounded or killed. We will be praying for those who care for the wounded. We will be praying for those who have suddenly become refugees, and for those that care for them. And we will pray that the Russian leadership and soldiers may have a change of heart.

"This is the season of Lent, which is about the change, the conversion of the heart. Christ calls us to love our enemies and to embrace each other as brothers and sisters. And as we pray for Ukraine we also remember those caught in other conflicts, including Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Libya and elsewhere."



A boy lights candles at the Catholic Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in Lviv, Ukraine, on March 13, 2022. (CNS photo)

The Church's National Liturgy Office was to send prayer material, especially for March 25, to parishes.

On the same day, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the papal almoner, will carry out a similar consecration at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal. According to the Vatican's translation of the messages of Fatima, when Mary appeared to the three shepherd children in Fatima in 1917, she told them, "God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved, and there will be peace".

Warning of "war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father", Mary told the children, "to prevent this, I shall come to ask

for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart".

The Eastern- and Latin-rite Catholic bishops of Ukraine had been asking Pope Francis for the consecration.

Some groups have continued to argue that Mary's wish was never fulfilled or that it was never done properly because the Pope consecrated the world and not "Russia". The Vatican, however, has insisted St John Paul II did so in 1984 when he led the world's bishops in the consecration of Russia and the world. The late Sister Lucia dos Santos, the last surviving visionary, and the one who received the instructions for the consecration, had said that it was properly performed.

Additional reporting CNS.

## Pope speaks with Russian Orthodox Patriarch

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill spoke via video conference about the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and the hopes for a peaceful solution, the Vatican said.

In a statement released on March 16, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said the meeting "was motivated by the desire to show, as shepherds of their people, a road to peace, to pray for peace so that there may be a cease-fire".

Both the Pope and the Patriarch agreed that "the Church must not use the language of politics, but the language of Jesus", Bruni said.

Bruni said the Pope also told the Russian Orthodox patriarch that, as shepherds, both have a "duty to stay close and help all people who are suffering from the war".

"There was a time when we spoke, even in our churches, of a holy war

or a just war. Today we cannot speak like that. The Christian conscience of the importance of peace has developed," the Pope said.

The Vatican spokesman said Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill agreed that the Catholic and Orthodox Churches are called "to contribute to strengthening peace and justice".

The Moscow Patriarchate also released a statement, saying the two religious leaders had "a detailed discussion of the situation on Ukrainian soil", and that "special attention was paid to the humanitarian aspects of the current crisis and the actions of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church to overcome its consequences".

"The parties stressed the utmost importance of the ongoing negotiation process, expressing the hope that a just peace can be achieved as soon as possible," the statement said.

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Enquiries to Sister Veronica Casey, Senior Catholic Prison Chaplain, [vcasey@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:vcasey@nzcbc.org.nz) or phone 027 523 3983.

# The fragile and complex concept of “peace” – a personal reflection

by ANTJE DUDA, with assistance from BARBARA TE MIHA

These thoughts come just 30 minutes after the news came through that Russia has attacked the Ukraine, explosions have been heard in several cities, the sirens are howling, and people flee to underground shelters.

I realise how fragile, complex and interwoven the concept and feeling of peace is for me, my whānau and the world, and different thoughts come to mind, interwoven with the stories of my experiences and that of my family . . . while I try to take in the situation.

On our video chat that evening, my son's girlfriend is clearly upset, crying, being scared of what will happen next. She has grown up in a united Germany, educated and brought up with the concept and treasure of democracy. She never witnessed anything hostile politically close by. What just started and seems to be a potential threat, does not make any sense to her. And she can't really put this into perspective and not fall into apocalyptic views or worst case scenarios . . . just at a time where she got a glimpse of a peaceful time after the pandemic.

I try to catch up with my mother as well, a post-war child, her parents refugees from the East (internally-displaced). She wasn't able to speak much at all, glued to the news, “No sorry, I have to watch this, I remember this all from my mama.” And suddenly the memories from her mother are present again, that became a feature for her childhood: The sound of sirens. When the sirens went on, her mother shushed the whole family under the table, to pray the Hail Mary. The same happened during thunderstorms, it reminded her of the air raids. My grandmother escaped Dresden with two young children, in the morning before the big bombing, following an inner instinct . . . Even today my mother does not like the sound of sirens, not even on TV. She watches in disbelief and fear.

My father could still remember the flight from the East, and the time before, where he was not allowed to speak his mother tongue outside the home. Much of the stories that left his parents' families scattered over the whole of Poland and East and West Germany are buried somewhere in his memory, he does not talk or want to remember . . . I was too little to remember, he says. He keeps his peace with an everyday routine, that keeps him stable and sane. It helped him to keep his peace through the time of the pandemic.

And here I am, in the safe haven of Aotearoa New Zealand, encouraging my students to find inner peace and the peace of Christ in their everyday lives. How naive this feels, looking at the global complex picture of peace at the moment, bringing my own experiences to the mixture.

Belonging to generation X, I have not experienced “non-peace” first hand, but second hand. I grew up with my grandparents in our home and with their constant stories about the war and flight. Fighting in a war or being on the flight myself from somewhere were regular dreams I had as a child and teenager.

When Māori talk about generative trauma, I do understand that historical trauma can be inherited to the next generation. I saw the changing borders in Europe due to wars from afar, but I also witnessed the unbelievable time of the coming down of the Berlin Wall, I was in Year 13 that time in the West. A movement that started as peace prayers in East German churches (as people were not allowed to demonstrate publicly) spreading to the whole of Europe.

My grandparents were, and my parents are, people of faith; hope therefore was not just a distant concept, but an essential practical approach to life, that I have learned from them.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Christian hope is “the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises, and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit” (CCC 1817).

And in these complexities of peace shaped by memories, emotions, politics and history, hope seems the only right thing to do, to continue to teach our children and to move forward.



A woman in Przemysl, Poland, plays with her child March 9, 2022, in a sports hall of a high school transformed into temporary accommodations for people fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine. (CNS photo/Yara Nardi, Reuters)

## ■ Teaching

The world yearns for peace, but the invasion of Ukraine evokes memories of the Iron Curtain and the brutality that existed behind it during the Cold War.

For many years the world has feared a nuclear war — the Cuban Missile Crisis was one example — and now allies of Ukraine have received a veiled threat of nuclear retaliation if assistance is given to this unfortunate country.

### Fifteen Million Plastic Bags

I was walking in a government warehouse  
Where the daylight never goes  
I saw fifteen million plastic bags  
Hanging in a thousand rows.  
Five million bags were six feet long  
Five million bags were five foot five  
Five million were stamped with Mickey Mouse  
And they came in a smaller size.  
Were they for guns or uniforms  
Or a dirty kind of party game?  
Then I saw each bag had a number  
And every bag bore a name.  
And five million bags were six feet long  
Five million were five foot five  
Five million were stamped with Mickey Mouse  
And they came in a smaller size.  
So I've taken my bag from the hanger  
And I've pulled it over my head  
And I'll wait for the priest to zip it  
So the radiation won't spread.  
Now five million bags are six feet long  
Five million are five foot five  
Five million are stamped with Mickey Mouse  
And they come in a smaller size.

(Adrian Mitchell, 1932-2008)

Arms of mass destruction — whether biological, chemical or nuclear — represent a particularly serious threat. Those who possess them have an enormous responsibility before God and all of humanity. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 509, pp 255-256).

Catholic Social Teaching on international order teaches that “The international community is a juridical community founded on the sovereignty of each member state, without bonds of subordination that deny or limit its independence.” (Pius XII, Christmas Radio Message on a Just International Peace, (December 24, 1939).

Further, the cultural dimension of the sovereign state takes on particular importance as a source of strength in resisting acts of aggression or forms of domination that have repercussions on a country's freedom.

In the attack on Ukraine, the deaths and shattered lives of fellow human beings are viewed by the aggressor as mere collateral damage in his pursuit of ego, power and greed. “Violence destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, the freedom of human beings.” (Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 37: AAS 68 (1976), 29.

The pursuit of peace, however, offers our world new opportunities to grow and extend love for our neighbour, to protect human dignity and the earth we live on.

Peace is one of the greatest gifts God offers to humankind. It begins with us, with the inner peace of Christ which surpasses any temporary peace the world can give:

“*He rangimārie tāku e waiho nei ki a koutou, tēnei tāku rangimārie te hoatu nei e ahau ki a koutou. E kore e rite ki tā te ao hoatu tāku hoatu ki a koutou*”. Hoani 14:27.

“My peace I leave you, my peace I give you. My peace is not the peace the world gives you.” John 14:27.

The earth and its beauty reflects God and his peace.

“*Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes -  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*”  
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh IV)

Considering all this, it is more than apt that Pope Francis chose the Lenten theme of “Called to be peacemakers”.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

Barbara Te Miha and Antje Duda are members of the Christchurch Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

# Musical remake for the times

by NEVIL GIBSON

The Hollywood studios know the dangers of remaking much-loved classics, but figure they are commercially less risky than trying something new. So it was a no-brainer to reboot one of the all-time great musicals for a new generation without upsetting those with memories of the original.

Yet the new version of *West Side Story* (20th Century Studios) failed to attract both new and old audiences over the Christmas holidays. It now features in the lineup at the Disney streaming service.

It deserved a better reception, as director Steven Spielberg and screenwriter Tony Kushner retained all of what many consider Broadway's best score — composed by Leonard Bernstein with words by the late Stephen Sondheim, who died last November — while improving on its storyline, stagings and visual impact.

Sixty years ago, *West Side Story*, co-directed by Robert Wise and choreographer Jerome Robbins, was daring for its handling of culturally-diverse immigration and its associated issues of crime, poverty, gentrification, and assimilation.

If anything, these are more pressing today than in the 1950s. The stage show was first produced in 1957 and the movie followed in 1961. The latter cast white Hollywood star Natalie Wood in the lead role of Maria, a Puerto Rican who falls in love, echoing *Romeo and Juliet*, with an outsider.

The remake drops this baggage and uses an all-Hispanic cast for the Puerto Rican community, including Rita Moreno, now in her 90s, who is given a new role, and was the only Puerto Rican performer in the original movie.

The updating isn't limited to cosmetic changes. The physical setting is a New York where inner-city tenements are being torn down in an urban renewal



Ariana DeBose and David Alvarez star in a scene from the movie *West Side Story*. (CNS photo/Niko Tavernise, 20th Century Studios)

## Movie Review

plan to create cultural facilities for the middle class. This is also displacing left-behind poor whites, who make up a gang called the Jets.

The Sharks gang of Puerto Ricans rationalise their violence as defending their racial identity, while the Jets blame their delinquency on bad parenting, drugs and poverty ("Gee, Officer Krupke").

The romance between Maria (Rachel Zegler) and Tony (Ansel Elgort), who wants to renounce his Jets connection after a jail term, is aspirational America's answer to this negativity.

In a new staging of "America", all the women positively embrace the migrant dream of a better life, in contrast to the men who cling to their gangs and old ways. This is reinforced

by Maria's rejection of her culture's machismo in "I Feel Pretty", which is set in the upmarket Gimbels department store.

All sides of the gender issue are catered for, with the tomboy character Anybodys being played by a non-binary actor (Iris Menas).

The nuances in the alterations to the flow of tunes, characters and dialogue (much of it in subtitled Spanish) are easily overlooked in the dazzling spectacle of the big song-and-dance numbers (choreographed by Justin Peck), and Spielberg's dynamic handling of the dramatic scenes. Strangely, at 74, this is his first musical, and one of his best movies.

Rating: Mature audiences. 156 minutes.

## CLIPS

### The Batman (Universal/Warner Bros)

The latest chapter in the saga of Gotham City's wealthy crime-busting crusader returns to its comic book origins in the 1950s. It's so "noirish" that not a shaft of sunlight is seen, giving credence to the boast of Bruce Wayne/Batman (Robert Pattinson) that "I am the shadows". The darkness also pervades the convoluted plot that has so many characters that the story feels unfinished, even after three hours. Pattinson is not ideal, given comparison with past actors, but his lack of charisma suits the depiction of civic affairs as a conspiracy of corrupt politicians, police and criminals, and this is not likely to change. Among the alter-ego characters, The Riddler (Paul Dano) does the heavy lifting with a series of murders and puzzles. These reveal back stories that incriminate the hero himself, who has only one trustworthy cop (Jeffrey Wright) on his side, and a potential enemy-turned-ally in catwoman Zoë Kravitz. Director Matt Reeves (the last two *Planet of the Apes*) breaks up the expository scenes with the mandatory fight scenes, car chases, explosions, and an Ark-sized flood. Rating: Restricted to audiences over 13. 175 minutes.

### Bergman Island (Umbrella Entertainment)

Fans of Swedish director Ingmar Bergman will revel in this triple-layered romance about an American film-making couple's sojourn on Fårö, a tiny island off the bigger Gotland in the Baltic Sea. It was Bergman's home, and he used it as the location for *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961) and *Hour of the Wolf* (1968), among others. These and others are referenced as the couple stay in one of Bergman's properties to finish writing projects, attend the local cinema, and tour various locations. Danish writer-director Mia Hansen-Løve, once in a partnership with French film-maker Olivier Assayas, draws on her own experience as the Americans (Tim Roth and Vicky Krieps) debate careers, family and the balance of the sexes. One screenplay project morphs into a movie about another young film-maker (Mia Wasikowska), who arrives for a wedding and hopes to rekindle her first romance. The merging of these threads has the bonus of seeing inside Bergman's designer house and immense library. Rating: Mature audiences. 113 minutes.

### Autumn Girl/My Wonderful Life (Netflix)

These two Polish productions highlight the difficulties in weighing the desire for satisfying career goals with those of meeting the demands of family responsibilities. Maria Debska plays Kalina Jedruski, the real-life "Autumn Girl", who shocked and delighted audiences on stage and screen in the 1960s. Communist authorities were keen to quell any challenge to their power, and the hypocritical use of it to exploit women in show business. On the domestic front, Agata Buzek's ironic "wonderful life" is sharing an apartment in a four-generation family. She cares for her ailing mother, whose vacant apartment is used for tutoring and other extra-curricular activity that makes life bearable. The married son, his wife and child covet the flat for themselves, setting up a string of disasters that threatens her teaching job as well as that of her philandering husband, who is the headmaster. Ratings: Autumn Girl: R13. 105 minutes. My Wonderful Life: R13. 99 minutes.

# Cookbook for Lent offers much more than just delicious recipes

**THE LENTEN COOKBOOK** by David Geisser and Scott Hahn. Sophia Institute Press (Manchester, New Hampshire, 2022). 224 pp., US\$29.95. Reviewed by NANCY ROBERTS (CNS)

This beautifully written and illustrated guide features 75 delectable international recipes. Ranging from breakfast dishes, soups and salads, to main dishes, breads and desserts, they honour distinctive Catholic Lenten traditions.

Eggplant salad, snow pea curry with prawns, spelt-nut bread and ginger broth with noodles, are among many recipes that don't contain meat, eggs, milk products or alcohol. The many full-colour photos of various dishes are tantalising.

All of the book's recipes are newly developed by David Geisser, an award-winning chef and former Pontifical Swiss Guard, who has written several cookbooks including *The Vatican Cookbook*. Here he includes many meatless dishes, such as cottage cheese frittata with cucumber and radish dip, and lentil and eggplant moussaka.

But this is much more than a cookbook.

Along with five variations for the Lenten hot cross bun recipe, we learn that they are traditionally eaten on Good Friday: "The cross etched on the top of the buns symbolically ties it to Christ's crucifixion, while the raisins often used in the recipe symbolise the spices used in the embalming of Christ's body for burial".

This is but a small sample of the engaging essays contributed by Scott Hahn, a well-known biblical scholar, who has written or edited more than 40 books. Here he covers the history of fasting and its place in modern practice.

You may be surprised to learn that "fasting wasn't invented by Christians (or Jews, for that matter) but is a universal human practice that the Lord and his Church have sanctified".

Historically, Christian fasting has been tied to particular days or seasons of the year, and is "meant to be shared by entire Christian

communities rather than invented by individuals to meet their own needs".

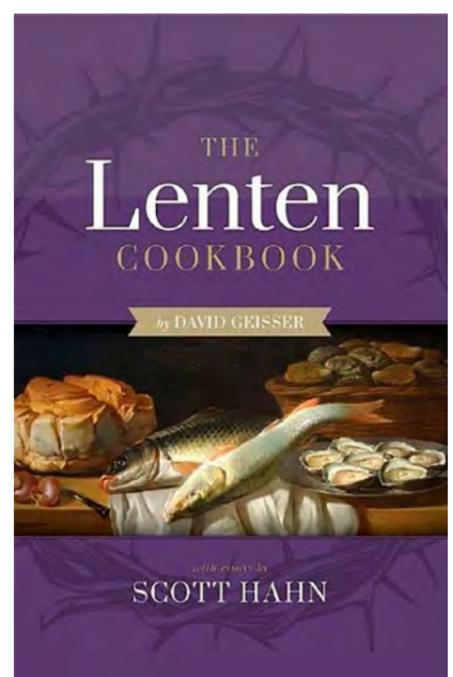
Today, while the tradition of liturgical fasting has faded in many regions, in some locales it still has a powerful cultural impact.

Indeed, "in parts of the country with significant Catholic heritage, major fast-food chains promote fish sandwiches during Lent", Hahn observes. "This is a vestige of a real, living Catholic culture, one that transforms spiritual truths into embodied realities."

Both a cookbook and a guide to Lenten history and practices, this well-designed and edited book encourages personal spiritual growth through the rediscovery of Lent.

Occasional Scripture verses and quotes from the saints enrich it, along with inspiring reproductions of classic paintings such as Millet's *The Angelus* and Raphael's *Disputation of the Sacrament*. Any Catholic will find much of interest here.

Nancy Roberts is a journalism professor at the State University of New York.



We are here: ▼ Fourth Sunday of Lent

THE CHURCH YEAR

Advent

Christmas

Ordinary Time

Lent

Eastertime

Ordinary Time

# Deeper awareness of becoming a new creation in Christ

## Scripture

by Fr Kevin Waldie sm

**March 27:** Fourth Sunday of Lent. **Readings:** 1. Joshua 5:9-12; **Psalm:** 34; 2.2 Corinthians 5:17-21; **Gospel:** Luke 15:1-3,11-32.

In essence, today's scriptural passages aim to highlight the saving presence of God in our midst. And it is in the context and story of everyday life that this reality finds its expression.

Joshua helps us to focus in on Israel's new state of being settled in the Holy Land. After their wilderness wandering, the Israelites' new life shows all the signs of being guided by God's hand.

Taking possession of the promised land and cultivating crops on it is, therefore, evidence enough that they are truly God's people, called to remember their God at every turn of life.

At a later stage in Israel's history, Paul re-

minds the Corinthians and us that what God achieved through Christ is worthy of reflection. It is particularly because of Christ's sacrifice that we have been created anew. And with that in mind, it is the mission of the Church to reach out and draw into God's presence all who have veered off-track and sinned.

This view of liberation from sin makes known the new creation into which we have all been initiated.

Luke's parable of the father and his two sons brilliantly illustrates another angle from which to view human sin in connection with divine love and forgiveness. Both sons in this story offer us

a valuable insight into the uneven relationships we may form with God. Also, their story shows us how enlightened we need to be if we are to know our true selves, and so believe in the pure graciousness of divine love. This is a parable, then, that suggests ever new ways of improving our standing in God's sight.

With these readings, we surely learn what it means to live in God's presence. And acknowledging our human weaknesses nurtures in us a deeper awareness of becoming a new creation in Christ.

# Seeing ourselves as being empowered by the Father and the Son

This is a rather interesting set of readings. For in each one of them we hear a distinctive, yet slightly different, message.

Isaiah's prophetic words direct us to consider the work of God in the past, and then the promise of what God has planned for his people in the near future. The new way forward under God's sure guidance makes the chosen people's future a reality in which to put their faith. This happy prospect therefore makes the way ahead a hope-filled and transformative means of proceeding with divine assistance.

Today's striking passage from Philippians captures Paul's personal and deeply-felt conviction that he is a divine instrument for the

sake of passing on the Good News about Christ Jesus the Lord. He sees his mission as one that demands energy and commitment. He even pictures himself in a race towards the finish line, a race in which a great deal of effort is demanded of him. What he expresses so vividly in these verses serves to inspire us too in our efforts to become ardent and faithful proclaimers of the Gospel he preached.

The story of Jesus' encounter with the adulterous woman, found in John's Gospel, adds another powerful piece of biblical text to the other two impressive readings. How Jesus deals with her public humiliation at the hands of the scribes and Pharisees serves to teach us a salient

**April 3:** Fifth Sunday of Lent. **Readings:** 1. Isaiah 43:16-21; **Psalm:** 126; 2. Philippians 3:8-14; **Gospel:** John 8:1-11.

lesson. Sin is a reality. But encountering Jesus as we go about our daily lives can be a precious experience of sheer grace.

The impact of today's selections from Scripture may be different for each one of us. Yet here, in each instance, there is a clear message that we are called to see ourselves being empowered by God our Father and his Son, Jesus the Lord.

## SAINTED GLASS

This Sunday, we have the Gospel story of the Prodigal Son.

This window, that was in the ruined Anglican Cathedral, Christchurch, shows the father embracing the son, the servant ready with the best cloak, and the other son in the background.

As a father, I empathise with the father in the story, because I hope I would be able to forgive my children anything. But I totally empathise with the son, because I have been forgiven all by God, and know the feeling of walking on air with the weight of my transgressions taken away. I hope you have experienced that total forgiveness. — Glen McCullough



# Bible on 'content warning' list

LONDON (Agencies) — An English university named after a saint has issued a content warning for the Bible.

The *Daily News* website reported that Newman University in Birmingham told students in certain courses that a module in their study "includes themes of sexual violence and abuse — in images and biblical texts". Among the passages concerned are some from 2 Samuel, concerning King David.

A spokesman for the university, named after St John Henry Newman, who was canonised in 2019, said: "The guidance is not a commentary on the Bible, any sacred texts or any Christian thinkers."

But other commentators cited by the *Daily Mail* article, thought the university was leaning towards being overprotective.

Former Tory MP Ann Widdecombe said: "I can remember when children, let alone undergraduates, felt able to read all parts of the Bible without fear of coming to any harm."

Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, the former Anglican Bishop of Rochester, reportedly said: "Works of history, literature, theology and the classics will sometimes include material about violence, including sexual violence."

"University should be a time when students are exposed to different aspects of the human condition, albeit with the support of sympathetic teaching staff."

"My issue with warnings is, how far do you go before you end up with some form of censorship?"

Among Cardinal Newman's writings was "The Idea of a University" published in 1852 and 1858.

An article by Michael Lanford in *The Literary Encyclopedia* stated that, alongside the various other points made in the work about the nature of knowledge and the role of religious belief in higher educa-

## Bible News



Cardinal John Henry Newman, the British Anglican priest who, in 1845, entered the Roman Catholic Church (CNS photo/courtesy of the Catholic Church of England and Wales)

tion, "Newman makes a twofold argument concerning the nature of education for students. He passionately defends a liberal education that prizes the development of individual intellect over institutional measurement and narrowly-defined skill development. He also believes in the potential of the university to bring together diverse perspectives and areas of expertise in service of greater understanding".

"Newman's writings on education for university students are notable for their repudiation of the utilitarianism of Locke (1700) and Mill (1859), who argued that a primary objective of educational institutions should be the development of marketable skills in service of broader economic goals," Lanford added.

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# International programme graduation for NZ theologian

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

New Zealand-based Catholic theologian Dr Christopher Longhurst has graduated from the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID)'s 2020 International Fellows Programme, at a high profile ceremony in Lisbon, Portugal, this past February. Longhurst was KAICIID's first fellow from New Zealand, and first from the Oceania region to complete the competitive programme.

KAICIID is a unique intergovernmental organisation with a dual governance structure: a Council of Parties made up of states, and a board of directors composed of religious leaders. It was established in 2012 to promote interreligious dialogue, to prevent and resolve conflict, and to enhance interfaith understanding and cooperation. Its member states are the Republic of Austria, Kingdom of Spain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Holy See as a founding observer.

Dr Longhurst is a comparative theologian and former Professor of Comparative Religion at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. He has taught religion and theology in the United States and Italy, and currently lectures in theology at Te Kupenga Catholic Theological College of Aotearoa New Zealand. He is also a member of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Committee for Interfaith Relations, the Wellington Interfaith Council and the Hawke's Bay Interfaith Council.

The recent event in Portugal included the 2020 fellows' final training and the graduation ceremony, which saw 61 fellows from around the world reunite. The fellows represented six different religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Bahai, and Islam. During the training they visited three major religious sites in Portugal's capital: The Central Mosque of Lisbon, the Catholic Church of São Domingos, and Saint Paul's Cathedral of the Lusitanian Anglican Church.



Dr Christopher Longhurst (left) and Archbishop Ivo Scapolo

The KAICIID Fellows Programme gives participants the tools, experience, networking opportunities, and knowledge to design and promote interreligious dialogue projects in their home countries, as well as train their students to become facilitators of peace, and leaders in interfaith collaboration. The programme comprises a transnational community of interreligious dialogue practitioners, who train religious leaders and teachers so that interreligious dialogue can become a common feature of their home countries, whatever the religion might be.

Throughout the programme, which lasted two years instead of one because of the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, fellows attended numerous online classes and virtual courses, along with residential training sessions, all geared towards interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

The graduation ceremony formally marked the end of the training. It featured a welcome message from Elham Alshejani, KAICIID's interim deputy secretary-general, and a keynote speech by Sonia Pereira, Portugal's High Commissioner

for Migration. Ministers of State and ambassadors of the fellows' respective countries attended, including Archbishop Ivo Scapolo, Apostolic Nuncio to Portugal.

Ms Alshejani said in her welcome message: "Through education, capacity-building, training and many other opportunities for innovation and creativity, KAICIID empowers the fellows as powerful agents for social change, equipping them to address challenges both locally and regionally."

A key element of the fellows' training is the funding provided to them to implement grassroots initiatives in their home communities. Collectively, the 2020 fellows designed and implemented 61 different projects, including dialogue training sessions, conferences, lectures, and field visits. Several pieces of educational material were also produced, including artwork, books, written publications, and documentaries. Dr Longhurst published "Pictorial Art for Interreligious Dialogue", a handbook for teaching and learning interreligious dialogue through pictorial art. He claimed that the use of pictorial art is "an effective and innovative technique to undertake interreligious dialogue", and he hopes that the book will be used in classrooms and academic centres throughout New Zealand and elsewhere.

Given the challenges presented by the pandemic, Kyfork Aghobjian, KAICIID fellows senior project manager, explained why "the 2020 fellows will enter the history of the KAICIID Fellows Programme as one of the most resilient, hopeful, determined, and creative cohorts. Their constant engagement with the programme over the last 26 months reaffirmed the notion of when there is a will, there is a way".

Dr Longhurst still hopes that KAICIID's worldwide mandate to promote peace through interreligious and intercultural literacy will be taken up by the New Zealand Government and key stakeholders across Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Church's missionary nature seen in reform of Roman Curia

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican dicastery responsible for supporting the Church in New Zealand is to undergo major changes after a new constitution reforming the Roman Curia was promulgated by Pope Francis.

"Praedicate Evangelium" ("Preach the Gospel") will go into effect on June 5, the feast of Pentecost.

To emphasise the importance of the Church's missionary nature, in the new constitution Pope Francis specified that he is the prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelisation; he will be assisted by a "pro-prefect" for "basic questions regarding evangelisation in the world" and a "pro-prefect" for "the first evangelisation and the new particular churches", those previously supported by the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples. The Church in Aotearoa New Zealand is one of these churches.

In a similar way, until 1968, the Popes were prefects of what became the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In "Praedicate Evangelium", the merging of some congregations and pontifical councils and raising the status of others - particularly the charitable office of the papal almoner - Pope Francis said he hoped the constitution would ensure that the offices of the Vatican fulfil their mission in helping promote the Church as a community of missionary disciples, sharing the Gospel and caring for all those in need.

Part of that effort, he wrote, requires including more laypeople in Curia leadership positions.

"Pastor Bonus", the apostolic constitution promulgated by St John Paul II in 1988 to reform the Curia, began its description of the doctrinal congregation's responsibility saying, "The proper duty of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is to promote and safeguard the doctrine on faith and morals in the whole Catholic world; so, it has competence in things that touch this matter in any way".

The new constitution begins its description by saying, "The task of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith is to assist the Roman Pontiff and the bishops-eparchs in the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world, promoting and safeguarding the integrity of Catholic doctrine on faith and morals, drawing on the deposit of faith and also seeking an ever deeper understanding of it in the

face of new questions."

The new constitution does away with the previous distinctions between "congregations" and "pontifical councils", referring to all of them simply as "dicasteries". The reform of the Roman Curia is a project Pope Francis began with his international College of Cardinals shortly after taking office in 2013.

In addition to creating the Dicastery for the Service of Charity in place of the almoner's office, the new constitution merges the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples and the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation into the new Dicastery for Evangelisation, and it merges the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Council for Culture into the new Dicastery for Culture and Education.

In the ordering of the Roman Curia, the Secretariat of State maintains its position of leadership and coordination, but the new Dicastery for Evangelisation is placed above the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

"Praedicate Evangelium" replaces "Pastor Bonus", but, unlike it, does not reserve the leadership of certain offices only to cardinals and bishops, although the individual statutes of those offices may make such a specification. However, Pope Francis wrote in the document that offices that have "their own statutes and laws shall observe them only insofar as they are not opposed to the present apostolic constitution and shall propose their adaptation for the approval of the Roman Pontiff as soon as possible".

Insisting that every Christian is "a missionary disciple", the constitution said, the reform of the Curia also needed to "provide for the involvement of laymen and women, including in roles of governance and responsibility".

Pope Francis described the reform of the Curia as part of the "missionary conversion" of the Church, a renewal movement aimed at making it reflect more "the image of Christ's own mission of love".

He also linked it to the ongoing process of promoting "synodality", a sense of the shared responsibility of all baptised Catholics for the life and mission of the Church.

Pope Francis wrote that in reorganising the Curia, he wanted to promote a "healthy decen-

tralisation" that would, at the same time, promote "co-responsibility" and communion with the bishops and among the Vatican offices.

The constitution places the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors "within the dicastery" (for the Doctrine of the Faith), which commentators say puts the protection of minors within the central government of the Church.

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40 YEARS AGO

NEW SELF-IMAGE NEEDED

Catholics in this country must learn to see the Church as a community of believers, instead of an institution dominated by the hierarchy, according to Archbishop Thomas Williams in Wellington.

And he has cited the reaction of some Catholics to last year's Springbok tour, in order to make a point.

In a lecture last week, given as part of the Tertiary Christian Students programme at Victoria University, the archbishop said that the Springbok tour had shown a wide divergence in the way Catholics understand the Church nature and mission.

He said that when the Catholic Bishops' Conference had told the New Zealand Rugby Union that a Springbok tour would not serve the common good, and when the bishops, individually or as a conference, spoke on the tour issue, "I receive letters from different people, telling me they were ashamed of the Church — as if the bishops

were the Church".

"The letters betrayed an image of the Church in the minds of their authors that was restricted to institutional and authoritarian aspects," Archbishop Williams said.

"I have come to see that national issues, such as the Springbok tour proved to be, will always have the power to polarise the Church — just as they polarise government, cities and towns, families and workmates — as long as its members lack a unified vision of the Church."

The archbishop said he had met a similar reaction to his efforts to develop pastoral care in the Wellington archdiocese, particularly by encouraging basic church communities (the small-group concept which has proved so effective in Latin America), lay ministry and the new adult catechumenate.

— Zealandia, April 4, 1982



Papal Prayer

The Pope's universal prayer intention for March: For a Christian response to bioethical challenges.

We pray for Christians facing new bioethical challenges; may they continue to defend the dignity of all human life with prayer and action.

CAPTION CONTEST



Write the best caption for this photo and win a \$30 Countdown voucher. Send in your ideas by Tuesday, April 5 to Caption Contest 633, NZ Catholic, PO Box 147000, Ponsonby, Auckland 1144. Or email: [design@nzcatholic.org.nz](mailto:design@nzcatholic.org.nz) Please include your postal address so that your prize, if you win, can be sent to you.

The winner of the Caption Contest from issue 631 (right) was David Tennent, Auckland.

Some other suggestions were:

"We want the tooth, the whole tooth and nothing but the tooth." — Paul McKee, Christchurch.

"Scared of dentists so calls on fun friends to yank his bad tooth." — John Lewis, Hamilton.

"The pull of the dames." — Rosanne Wills, Auckland.

"Come on, man up!! We're only removing one of your wisdom teeth today!" — Carmel Anne Malone, Christchurch.



"I thought these RAT tests were meant to be easier than the PCRs?"

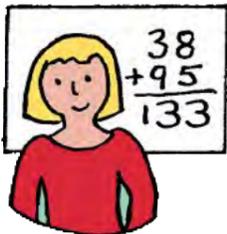
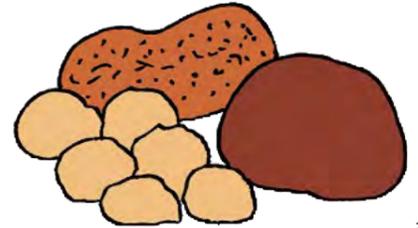
"You can have my teeth but there is no way you are getting my ladder!" — Linda Jennings, Auckland.

And who said we are the weaker sex? — Russell Watt, Auckland.

Kit's Corner



There are so many **different kinds of bread** at the supermarket that sometimes it is hard to choose! There are all sorts of different **shapes**. There is **soft** bread and **crunchy** bread, **fat** bread and **skinny** bread. Bread can be **white** or **brown**, with all sorts of grains and seeds and fruit inside. There are even breads from different countries.



Every time we pray the **our father** (the **Lord's Prayer**), we say "Give us today our daily bread." Of course this does not mean that we ask God for only bread. Imagine a supermarket full of bread and nothing else! It means that we are **asking God** for the **food** we need each day to keep us **healthy and strong all over**. That means our **body**, our **mind** and our **spirit** (soul).

We need **Healthy food** to feed our **body**. We need **things to learn** to feed our **brain**. We need **happiness and love** to feed our **spirit**.

Where did the **Our Father** come from? Jesus gave us this prayer. That is why it is called **the lord's prayer**. Next time you pray it, **think** about all the words and what they mean.



Find the story



in the Bible  
Matthew  
6:9-15

*Hallowed be your name  
Your kingdom come, your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread  
Forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass against us  
And lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil. Amen.*

We have to **help** to make sure that **other people** get the food they need every day, not just us. It is a **good idea** to sometimes put **food** in the **St Vincent de Paul** basket or give some to the Food Bank near you.

Family Matters

Helen Luxford



# Covid caught up with us and then there's Ukraine

**W**e've managed to keep Covid-19 at bay for the better part of two years in Aotearoa. We've seen the overwhelmed health systems overseas and the ventilators running out and people dying. And now it's caught up with us. We've been told all sorts of things over the last two years. One comment that I always found odd was that kids don't spread Covid. I always found that one a bit hard to swallow. I've spent two years fastidiously wearing PPE and N95 masks, and using so, so, so, much hand sanitiser — and Covid came into our house via school camp, not through my workplace.

So far we've had two pretty sick kids. And I'm feeling utterly miserable as I write this. The virus we've spent so long trying to avoid is here. For us, it hasn't been mild or asymptomatic for half of our family. For me, it has been worse than any cold or flu I've had before. There certainly seems to be a wide variety of what people are experiencing, how long they notice it and how sick they feel with it. I think most of us are really over it and just want to get it over with and move back to "normal" life.

It seems our world is facing many difficult foes at the moment. While we are struggling with Omicron, the people of Ukraine are facing a much more pressing and imminent danger. The images and stories of war are beyond comprehension. Families leaving their homes with nothing



“Let us pray, asking Mary to intercede for the people of Ukraine, to bring about a conversion of heart, and an end to the atrocity of war in Europe.”

A mother holds her daughter after arriving by a train transporting refugees fleeing the ongoing Russian invasion, at the main train station in Lviv, Ukraine, March 12, 2022. (CNS photo/Kai Pfaffenbach, Reuters)

but the clothes on their back, and becoming refugees wherever they could flee to. The terror and fear of those hiding in bomb shelters and trying to escape to safety. There are so many women and children and babies hurt and some killed, the attack on the Maternity Hospital being the most barbaric example at this time.

President Volodymyr Zelensky is now known as a very brave and wise man. He has been standing up for freedom and against his aggressor. He has made several "famous" quotes now.

He said, "Even if you destroy all our Ukrainian cathedrals and churches, you will not destroy our faith, our sincere belief in Ukraine and God, belief in people". This shows a deep conviction of faith, even in the face of such terror. Many of his people will, no doubt, be calling out to God and feeling forsaken. Those of us watching from this side of the world may feel like all of our prayers for Ukraine are not being answered.

There is a lot of evil in the world, and greed and power

make for powerful enemies with disastrous consequences. I have always been one to look to Mary in prayer, and the rosary is believed to be one of the most powerful prayers we have. Let us pray, asking Mary to intercede for the people of Ukraine, to bring about a conversion of heart, and an end to the atrocity of war in Europe. With the extraordinary rise in cost of living we are seeing in Aotearoa, not everyone will be able to donate to help people in Ukraine — there are many options for those who can and feel moved to do something to help them.

Our world is having a hammering at the moment. From the Covid pandemic to the current situation in Ukraine and many other concerns. I find I have to switch off from the news and media to try to keep my head above water, otherwise it can feel overwhelming. Especially when it doesn't feel like anything we do will effect a change. We can hold up the world and all these situations in prayer, and stand in solidarity with people suffering.

Matthew 27:46; "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me'"

Helen Luxford is a physician, working part-time. She is a parishioner of St Michael's, Remuera. Together with her husband Michael, they are raising their children in the Catholic Faith and reflecting on the challenges and joys that brings.

WORDS TO PONDER

“Why not learn to enjoy the little things — there are so many of them.”  
— St John Chrysostom.

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# Two Pauls play key roles in Dunedin Catholic education

by JEFF DILLON

The Dunedin diocese may have no obvious connection with Damascus, but it is clearly taking note of the story by having two Pauls on the road supporting Catholic education in the southern region.

Former St Kevin's College principal Paul Olsen from Oamaru and former Sacred Heart School (North East Valley) principal Paul Richardson have, in recent times, taken on complementary roles to facilitate the promotion of Catholic education in Otago and Southland.

Mr Olsen took up the reins as manager of the Education Office for the Catholic diocese of Dunedin about January 20 this year, and he has been coming to grips with its wide ranging nature since then. His contract involves a 32-hour working week.

It was in May 2021 when Mr Richardson began in his role. His position involves a part-time contract as the lead reviewer for visits to Catholic schools in the diocese for special character evaluations.

Mr Richardson, a fourth generation West Coaster, had an earlier occupation until he sought a change of direction and entered teacher training in the early 1990s. His first teaching appointment came in 1993. In 2002, he became acting principal at Sacred Heart School in North East Valley, Dunedin. The following year, he was confirmed as principal, and remained in that role until he resigned at the end of 2020.

The typical pattern for the evaluation visits involves Mr Richardson as

lead reviewer visiting a school, along with another principal and a DRS from other schools, for two days in one week. The emphasis is more on an in-depth discussion of the various aspects of the special character, and the effectiveness and impact of that on the school community.

In the week following the visit, Mr Richardson then writes up his report, which will be provided to the bishop. Copies are sent to the relevant school's management and to the New Zealand Catholic Education Office in Wellington.

The pattern of visits is arranged over a three-year cycle, with the intention of visiting and evaluating every school in the diocese once in that period.

As manager of the education office, Mr Olsen comes with a familiarity with the diocese's high schools. He is a former pupil of St Paul's High School in Dunedin. His first teaching appointment was as a science teacher at St Peter's College in Gore in 1985. He became HOD Science there five years later. Then he took on the position as HOD Science at Waitaki Boys' High School in 1995, and became assistant principal two years later.

His next advancement was as deputy principal at St Kevin's College in 2000, where he remained until 2007. In June 2007, he moved to become the principal of Verdon College in Invercargill until June 2010. At that point, it was back to St Kevin's as principal, where he remained until the end of 2021.



Standing beside the newly-acquired painting by Sr Mary Horn, OP, in the Dunedin Catholic Education office are lead Catholic character reviewer Paul Richardson (left) and newly-appointed manager of the Catholic Education office, Paul Olsen

Mr Olsen intends to remain living in Oamaru and commuting to the Dunedin office for two days a week, with an overnight stay. Many of the situations with which he needs to deal can be handled by phone, email or Zoom. Obviously, he will also be on the road making visits to see principals or management as needed.

Recently, the two Pauls met in the Dunedin office to discuss arrangements for this year, and the further complications posed by the continuing presence of Covid-19. Despite the frustrating difficulties for planning posed by the virus, Mr

Olsen took pleasure in showing off a recent acquisition for his office. It is a painting by noted artist, Sr Mary Horn, OP, who has recently shifted to Dunedin after many years in Oamaru.

Both Mr Olsen and Mr Richardson look forward to aiding the work of the schools in the diocese. As Mr Olsen commented, "our Catholic education network south of the Waitaki is deeply connected, it's like a village. We all know each other well and support each other for the common good. We are a small team achieving some outstanding results because of this mutual support".

## SUPPORT A SEMINARIAN

Jesus left His Church the gift of the **priesthood** to ensure the **faith was spread** and the **sacraments were brought forth** to **nourish** and **bring life to His people**.

Photos © Ismael Martínez Sánchez / ACN



"If I were to meet a priest and an angel, I should salute the priest before I saluted the angel. The latter is the friend of God; but the priest holds His place...When you see a priest, you should say, **"There is he who made me a child of God, and opened Heaven to me by holy Baptism; he who purified me after I had sinned; who gives nourishment to my soul"**

St John Vianney

While we currently experience less priestly vocations, it is **not the same everywhere**. In many countries the faith is flourishing, and an abundance of young men have discerned a call to **leave everything and follow Christ**.

However, the road is not always easy. Their families may be **poor**. Their bishops may **lack resources**. They may live in areas experiencing **persecution towards Christians**.

We are all part of the **one Church**; therefore, **it is up to us**, as members of the body of Christ, to **help the seminarians of today become the priests of tomorrow**.

For 75 years, the Catholic charity **Aid to the Church in Need** has worked to **keep the faith alive**, relying solely on the prayers and financial resources of people **just like you**. Each year, as part of our mission, we support some **15,000 seminarians** on the path to priesthood.

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