

# NZ Catholic

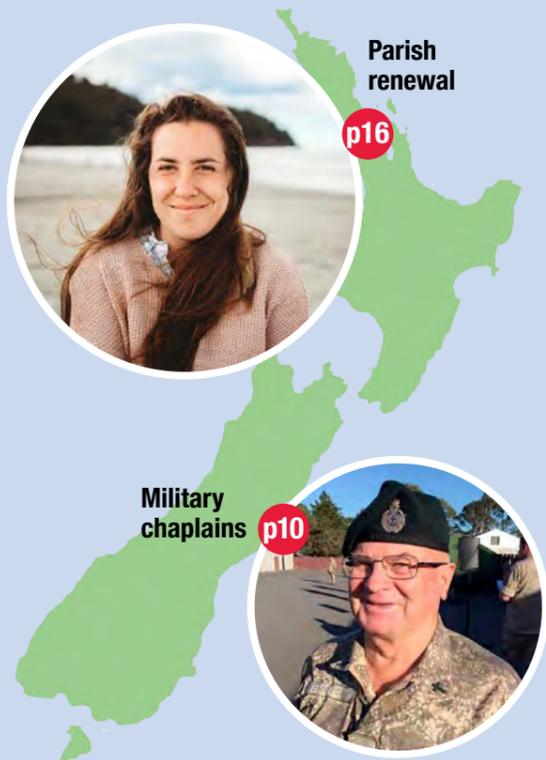
The national Catholic newspaper

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## EASTER HOPE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



- p4** Varsity encounter with Marists led to seminary
- p5** Survey shows softening attitudes on blasphemy
- p8** Oberammergau Passion Play to resume
- p9** Call for Church to be community of peacemakers

**On the front cover:** The Women at the Empty Tomb is depicted in this stained-glass window by artist Guido Nincheri at Notre Dame Cathedral in Ottawa, Canada. Reflecting on the women who come to Jesus' tomb in the early hours of that very first Easter, Pope Francis said, "Jesus, like a seed buried in the ground, was about to make new life blossom in the world; and these women, by prayer and love, were helping to make that hope flower." (CNS photo)

**NZCatholic**

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# Hospices facing funding challenges

by MICHAEL OTTO

The chief executive of Te Korowai Atawhai Mercy Hospice in Auckland is facing funding challenges as a result of Covid-19-related restrictions.

In a video message in a Whanau Mercy Mission newsletter, Dene Coleman said that many institutions like Mercy Hospice are currently facing such issues.

"We don't receive full funding. Palliative care gets less than half a per cent of the total [Government] health budget," Mr Coleman said.

Mercy Hospice has to raise about half its operational budget itself, to go on top of what it gets from Government.

"I agree [with others who have spoken out on this] that it really questions the sustainability of the model going forward," Mr Coleman said.

"How do we continue to provide a service that is fit-for-purpose, is funded and supports people through what is an incredibly challenging period of their life — arguably the most challenging part of their life? We can't afford to get it wrong for them," Mr Coleman said.

Since the delta Covid-19 outbreak and restrictions in August last year, Mercy Hospice's shops lost about 14 weeks of retail operation, which was "incredibly difficult", he noted.

And with Omicron in the community, "people have changed behaviours — they are being much more cautious, they are not going out and shopping, they are not going to retail as much as they were before".

Moreover, Covid-19 restric-



Mercy Hospice in Auckland

tions meant Mercy Hospice could not run its "marquee" fundraising event last year. The event, which had been running for 15 years, is titled "10", and features ten of Auckland's top restaurants in a celebration of food and wine. It has been rescheduled for May this year.

But Mr Coleman praised the efforts of Mercy Hospice's fundraising team, which ran an emergency campaign before Christmas. A new "Lights to Remember" campaign saw \$67,000 in donations come in. A cascade of lights adorning a large oak in the grounds of College Hill was the stunning centrepiece. The BNZ boosted the total by running a Double Donation Day during the campaign, a newsletter stated. This will be a yearly tradition at Mercy Hospice, and will let locals come and see "magical lights".

Mr Coleman said that this campaign, in remembrance of loved ones who had died previously, "created a connection from our supporters back to

Mercy Hospice, which I think is very important".

Mr Coleman encouraged people with links to the hospice to stay connected with the organisation.

"We appreciate it is difficult times for all in the community and, if you can't contribute now in a financial way, maybe you can in the future? So, we just ask that people stay connected with us, stay understanding that we are in a challenging environment like many in the community. We don't get fully funded, so we need so much more support. If you in the future are able to give in any small way, we would really welcome that."

He also encouraged people to support Mercy Hospice shops.

"People should go away knowing that what they purchase from a hospice shop is going to support patients in one of those very challenging times of their lives."

A recent "Tennis for Mercy" event raised more than \$16,300 for the hospice.

## Diocese leads plan to sponsor refugees

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The Catholic Diocese of Auckland is the lead organisation in a partnership formed to resettle Iraqi refugees under Immigration New Zealand's Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship programme.

The diocese is in a partnership with the Chaldean Catholic Community of St Addai, Papatotoe, and the Refugee Sponsorship Group.

Under the CORS programme, a total of 150 sponsored refugees will be resettled in New Zealand in the period up to June 2024.

The general manager of the diocese, James van Schie, said

"the diocese is pleased to help facilitate this opportunity for the generous Catholic community to directly assist refugee families to find peace and a generous welcome with us here in New Zealand".

Under the initial CORS pilot scheme, an Iraqi family was happily resettled in Hamilton in 2018, with the assistance of a similar partnership involving Hamilton diocese, with Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand as the lead organisation.

This time the partnership plans to resettle two Iraqi refugee families in Auckland.

Participation in the CORS programme was instigated by two members of the Refugee Spon-

sorship Group, Suzie and Pat McCarthy, following meetings with Iraqi refugees in Jordan during pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

The St Addai parish community was founded in 2003. Many of its families came to New Zealand as refugees or asylum seekers after being displaced by armed conflicts in Iraq. The community has previously assisted more than 50 refugee families to resettle in New Zealand.

The St Addai parish priest, Father Douglas al-Bazi, previously lived in Iraq, where he established a refugee camp that sheltered more than 500 war refugees who had escaped from Islamic State militias.

## Position of proposed train station applauded

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Families living in the wider West Drury district have applauded the location of the train station proposed by KiwiRail, and believe it represents the greatest long-term benefit for residents — and for those attending a future Catholic school.

It will be especially convenient for students who will attend the new co-educational St Ignatius Loyola Catholic College which is due to open in 2024. Construction has already begun on the site at Burt Road, Drury, and the college will eventually accommodate up to 1000 students.

The KiwiRail proposed site will ensure safety

for the students, as it will be only a short walk of 300 metres to the college, and within a network of integrated pedestrian and cycle access pathways focused around the station.

KiwiRail, Auckland Transport and Waka Kotahi have already undertaken wide consultation and community feedback regarding this site.

"Families in the area have been working for over 20 years to establish this college and, with this dream now in sight, the addition of a further train station is going to be a huge support to thousands of students and parents," said local Karaka man, John Mills, who is deputy chair of the Establishment Board for the college.

# Auckland's Marist Seminary faces repair job

by ROWENA OREJANA

The Marist Seminary at Hopetoun St, Freemans Bay, Auckland, will be repaired "at a significant cost" after its foundations started showing structural issues.

Marist Seminary rector Fr Patrick Breeze, SM, told *NZ Catholic* that they decided to temporarily move to Vermont St because the buildings at Hopetoun St had become unsafe for the priests and seminarians living there.

"It was a safety issue, really. There were engineering reports and it was decided that we should move out for repairs to take place," he said.

They moved into what was previously the house of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master. Sisters Teofana and Christiane left New Zealand on the morning of April 4.

Fr Breeze said they were sorry to hear that the sisters were leaving, but finding out that the house was available "was a great grace for us to learn".

"We heard through the diocese that it was available. We negotiated with the diocese and they . . . first Bishop Pat, then Bishop Steve . . . very kindly allowed us to lease the property for two years while the repairs are done at Hopetoun St," Fr Breeze said.

"We're incredibly grateful to the sisters and to the diocese for this opportunity. It really is a wonderful solution to our difficulty. Also, a very wonderful location for the seminary to be in. Near the diocese and seminary and theological college and parish," he added.

Fr Breeze said that work hasn't started at the Hopetoun St property because they are still waiting for additional reports.

"It's highly likely that repairs would start in the next few months," he said, adding, "the repairs may involve a significant amount of capital outlay".

*NZ Catholic* understands that the two sisters were asked to go back to their communities, one in South Korea and the other in Ireland.

Auckland diocese vicar for religious Sr Jane O'Carroll, SM, said that the congregation first



The temporary location of the Marist Seminary in Vermont St, Ponsonby

established their community here in 1974.

"After careful and compassionate discernment, the sisters have decided that their presence here is no longer sustainable," she said.

Sr Jane said that the sisters came with a three-fold ministry and way of life which involved the eucharistic apostolate, priesthood apostolate and liturgical apostolate.

"The perpetual adoration is their principal apostolate and is the source and root of all their activities. In Auckland, the sisters pray each day at St Patrick's Cathedral, and each Friday at Sacred Heart Church, Ponsonby, together with a number of others," Sr Jane said.

From 1985 to 2021, the sisters led an hour

of adoration at St Patrick's Cathedral and were extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

"The contemplative prayer dimension of the lives of the sisters is greatly appreciated and has deepened the sense of prayer for others, especially at St Patricks. The sisters have been a visible witness on a daily basis," Sr Jane said. "The sisters will be remembered here especially for this liturgical apostolate [which was] well-known to many."

In 2002, the sisters entered into an agreement to take responsibility for the management of St John Vianney House as part of their priesthood apostolate. They have also prayed for more vocations to the priesthood.

# Aubert's path to sainthood delayed by Vatican 'no miracle' ruling

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The path to New Zealand sainthood of missionary Mother Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert has been delayed, with a Vatican medical council deciding a potential miracle attributed to her can be explained by medical science.

The case for a miracle, the details of which remain private to protect the privacy of the person concerned, was put in 2019 to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, the Vatican agency responsible for studying sainthood nominations. The congregation appointed a medical council to study it.

New Zealand's Catholic bishops approved the introduction of the Cause of Suzanne Aubert's sainthood in 1997. A formal diocesan Inquiry was held in 2004, when the available evidence for promoting her as a saint was gathered. The results were sent to Rome and approved for further consideration. Included with this material was Jessie Munro's biography, "The Story of Suzanne Aubert".

As a result, Suzanne Aubert was given the title "Servant of God". Subsequent presentation and approval of the relevant material led to Pope Francis declaring her "Venerable" in 2016.

After someone is declared venerable, the Catholic Church requires proof of two miracles before they can be declared a saint. Recognition of a first miracle would have resulted in Pope Francis awarding her the title "Blessed", the penultimate step on the path to her being declared "Saint". She continues to be known as Venerable Suzanne Aubert, a woman of outstanding Christian virtue.

Sister Margaret Anne Mills, DOLC, leader of the Sisters of Compassion in Island Bay, Wellington, said that the medical council's ruling means it is time to consider the future path of the official process towards Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert's canonisation.

"From my point of view, the miracle is in the life of those concerned in this process. I witness

daily the gift we have of asking Meri Hōhepa to intercede for us on our behalf. It is extraordinary. It is tangible," she said.

"We have much to be grateful for and we are on a journey of faith. I have witnessed the faith and healing of people as they request Meri Hōhepa's intercession. This will continue."

"Meri Hōhepa would say at this moment: 'It is God's will.' She said that 'when all else fails this is the moment of God'. We need to rest in that moment for a while, before deciding where to go next."

Suzanne Aubert (1835-1926) founded the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion (the Sisters of Compassion) in 1892. She was a friend and advocate for Māori, children, the poor and the



An artist's depiction of Suzanne Aubert

sick, with the sisters continuing her work to this day. Thousands lined Wellington's streets for her funeral in 1926, an extraordinary tribute to a woman who dedicated herself to "people of all religions or none"

Cardinal John Dew, president of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference said: "No matter the outcome of the Cause for Beatification, Suzanne Aubert is remembered, through her writings, prayers and sayings, and her life of working for those most in need. All of that lives on. There is no doubt that Suzanne, Meri Hōhepa, was a holy woman, she was greatly loved and respected. All she would want is for us all to

follow her example and carry on with works of compassion."

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# Encounter with Marists led to vocation journey

by ROWENA OREJANA

The Society of Mary has welcomed a new young seminarian this year.

Marist Seminary rector Fr Patrick Breeze, SM, said that they have been blessed as their order can still plan for ministry in New Zealand with younger people joining them.

"Most religious orders are struggling for vocations, but we are still getting a few. And we are very grateful for that," Fr Breeze said.

Vincent Brzozowski, 23, who is from Papatoetoe, south Auckland, said that he met the Marists while he was a student at Victoria University of Wellington, doing a Bachelor of Music with Honours in 2017. He studied classical performance on piano and trumpet.

"Fr Peter McAfee, SM, invited me to join the altar servers at the parish. I experienced more of, I guess, the light-heartedness of the priests there, and learning about the community of Marist priests in the parish," he said.

Mr Brzozowski said he hadn't felt the call to a vocation during his school days. He knew priests but

didn't think he would become one.

"I never thought that I would be a priest, and I didn't even really consider it until 2020," he said.

"I was in prayer, and I was thinking about vocation, and the idea of priesthood came across my mind. And for the first time, I saw it in a positive light."

He decided to give it more thought, and spoke with Fr McAfee.

"[Fr McAfee] suggested that I come to the 'Come and See' weekend in 2021 in Hopetoun St with the Marists, which set me up with the accompaniment process which led me to applying in 2022," he said.

He said that, so far, he's enjoying the experience.

"I've learned a lot and enjoyed the community life," he said.

Mr Brzozowski said he worked as a teacher in 2021 in two different schools, as well as privately teaching music.

He said that his parents were supportive of his decision. He is one of five children who "are all musical".

"I am grateful to inherit the faith from both sides of the family," he said.



Marist Seminary rector Fr Patrick Breeze, SM, seminarian Lachie Bartlett, Fr Christopher Skinner, SM, and new seminarian Vincent Brzozowski, at the new seminary location in Vermont St, Ponsonby

## Legion of Mary ceremonies held in Auckland

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

On Saturday, March 26, one day after the feast of the Annunciation, the Legion of Mary gathered to take their annual promise: "I am all Yours my Mother and my Queen, and all that I have is Yours."

The Legion of Mary held two Acies ceremonies this year due to the Covid pandemic. One was for the South Auckland Curia, and one for the Northern Auckland parishes.

Fr Tony King Archer and Fr Andrew Matthew offered Mass, and joined the Legionaries in taking their annual promise and consecration.

Fr Alfredo Garcia (Glenfield) and Fr Andrew Matthew joined the North Shore parishes.

In the homily, members were reminded that

the colour of the Legion is red, not blue, as they are firstly a charismatic group, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Fr Matthew said that the Legion of Mary apostolate could be summarised by this short phrase: "The Father sends the Son, to give us the Holy Spirit."

Father Matthew also reminded the Legionaries that this is the first work of the Church, and that is why the Legion of Mary is completely united to the heart of the Church and to every parish to which they belong.

He added that the closest companion to this work, of sending the Holy Spirit, is the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary fully cooperated with the mission of her Son. Every baptised person is called to this work of cooperation and love.

The Legion of Mary members are called to attain "holiness in their own lives, through prayer and active cooperation", and through guidance of the Church they are to actively search for lost souls, souls disconnected from the life of the Church. Once found, these souls are assisted to begin anew their spiritual lives. The Legion has always maintained this spiritual work to be their only work.

Totus tuus (Totally Yours), was used by St John Paul II as his own pontifical motto, to express his personal consecration to Mary. Based on the spir-



A scene from the Legion of Mary Acies

itual writings of Louis de Montfort, he famously wrote this prayer:

Immaculate Conception: Mary my Mother: Live in me, act in me, speak in me and through me, think your thoughts in my mind; love through my heart, give me your dispositions and feelings, teach, lead me and guide me to Jesus; correct, enlighten and expand my thoughts and behaviour; possess my soul, take over my entire personality and life, replace it with yourself; incline me to constant adoration, pray in me and through me, let me live in you and keep me in this union always. Amen.

## Consider national education strategy

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The chief executive of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office has challenged political parties to consider committing to a national education strategy.

Writing in an NZCEO e-zine in April, Dr Kevin Shore applauded many aspects of a Literacy, Communication and Maths Strategy and Hei Raukura Mō te Mokopuna launched by Associate Education Minister Jan Tinetti on March 25.

He was positive about much of the detail, "with its emphasis on a common practice model of teaching, clear sequencing of learning, teacher support at the regional and national level in promoting effective practice, additional support to struggling learners, an emphasis on partnership approaches with the whānau, and continuous evaluation of the delivery and effectiveness of these new approaches".

But Dr Shore warned that the strategy would only deliver transformative change "if the necessary resources are applied at the right level and there is a continuing commitment over the long term".

"This has proven to be the Achilles heel of many

attempts at education innovation, and hence my challenge to our political parties to consider the merits of committing to a national strategy in education," he wrote.

Dr Shore stated that "It will take courage and the ability to put the common good of our wonderful young men and women at the forefront, while seeking to put aside personal agendas".

"I do not believe that the educational philosophies of our major political parties in New Zealand are so far apart that an agreement on a ten-year national education strategy could not be reached."

Dr Shore admitted that there might be some who would disagree with his views, but added that he would like to think that "living with hope, particularly when serving our young men and women who are our future leaders in society, requires a coherent and consistent commitment to their needs, and is not something that is impossible".

In 2020, *The New Zealand Herald* reported that the latest Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (Timss) showed that Year 9 New Zealand students dropped from a score of 493 in the last survey in 2015 to a score of 482 (ranking 23 out of 39 countries). In 1995, New Zealand year 9 students scored just above the 500 average.

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# Survey shows softening attitude on blasphemy

by MICHAEL OTTO

A softening of attitudes among New Zealanders towards blasphemy, evident in a survey on offensive language on radio and TV, has surprised and saddened a New Zealand theologian.

A 2021 survey of 1505 people aged 18 and over conducted for the Broadcasting Standards Authority showed that an expletive expression involving the Lord's name was considered the twelfth most unacceptable in all broadcasting contexts of the 31 offensive words or phrases suggested.

This was a drop from being the third most offensive in a similar survey in 2018.

In the 2021 survey, 46 per cent of respondents considered the phrase involving the Lord's name as totally unacceptable in all contexts. This was down 10 per cent on the figure for the 2018 survey and down nearly 20 per cent on the figure in a 2013 survey, according to a report on the BSA website.

The BSA stated that this research helps track evolving public views on offensive language in broadcasting. The results are used by the BSA and broadcasters to help ensure programmes and BSA decisions reflect current community attitudes, the BSA website stated.

Theologian Fr Merv Duffy, SM, who teaches at Te Kupenga — Catholic Theological College, told *NZ Catholic* that he is "surprised and saddened by the survey results".

"I knew that New Zealand society

was becoming less influenced by religion, but this indicates the speed of the change," Fr Duffy said.

This is something Christians in this country should be concerned about, he added, because a softening attitude towards blasphemy "goes hand in hand with a diminishing respect for the sacred".

Fr Duffy noted that "this blasphemous expression", as used in the survey, "was the only religious phrase to be surveyed, [and] for the over-65 age group it was among the three worst expressions in the list, but for younger New Zealanders their taboos are more related to race or gender than to religion, dropping it to twelfth overall".

One difference from the 2018 survey was that the terms "God" and "Jesus Christ" were not included among potentially offensive terms put before survey respondents in 2021.

Fr Duffy said the Catholic Church "should and does encourage respect for the name of God".

"It does it by teaching the Ten Commandments," he said.

The second commandment is stated in Exodus 20:7: "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name." (New International Version).

"Reverence and respect are things which can and should be taught," Fr Duffy said. "The role of the domestic church is particularly important here — the language patterns developed in the home affect a person's whole life."



Fr Merv Duffy, SM, is surprised and saddened by the survey results

"We need to be shocked by bad language, and to curate the language we ourselves use so that we treat the holy as holy. Everyone's name is important because of their dignity as a person, and the names of the divine persons are supremely important."

But in New Zealand, religious things are used in advertising and branding (for example, Hell Pizza), and many New Zealanders consider this to be funny.

"New Zealanders are regularly surprised that the rest of the world care strongly about their sacred things," Fr Duffy said.

Several years ago, a New Zealand man spent several months in a jail in Myanmar after he posted an irreverent image of the Buddha online.

New Zealand's Parliament took the offence of blasphemous libel out

of the Crimes Act in 2019. There had only been one previous attempted prosecution under this provision, in the 1920s.

An explanatory note in a supplementary order paper connected with this stated that "the overwhelming opinion of churches and religious groups is that faith does not need statutory protection of this kind".

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that respect for "[God's] name is an expression of the respect owed to the mystery of God himself and to the whole sacred reality it evokes". (CCC 2144).

The BSA survey also found that the Christians questioned were less accepting of most of the offensive terms suggested than were respondents of other religions or those with no specific faith.

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# Why doing what is right in your own sight is such a bad idea

What does the Bible think about our current cultural fascination with finding our own voices, setting our own agenda, doing things according to our own lights? (By the way, if you doubt that this attitude is dominant today, I would invite you to watch practically any movie, listen to practically any popular song, or read practically anyone's latest blog or Facebook posting).

Is the Bible for or against this ego-dramatic approach to life? Might I suggest we look at the close of the book of Judges, a text marked by enough murder, mayhem and miscreancy to put

## Robert Barron

Martin Scorsese or Quentin Tarantino to shame.

After the death of Samson, the last of the judges of Israel, the tribes, we are told, drifted into disunity, and commenced to manifest shocking violence to one another. The most remarkable and frankly sickening story, again in a book filled with such stories, concerns the outrage at Gibeah. We hear of a man from Ephraim in the north who had taken a concubine from Bethlehem in the south. When the woman escaped and returned home, the man came after her and took her back into his possession. He then set out with her and came to the town of Gibeah. We are told that "scoundrels" from the city that night surrounded the house. Exactly duplicating the infamous tale from the book of Genesis, the mob shouted to the owner of the place: "Bring out the man who has come into your house, so that we may get intimate with him." With astonishing moral turpitude, the owner of the abode replied, "Do not commit this terrible crime. Instead, let me bring out my virgin daughter and this man's concubine. Humiliate them or do whatever you want; but against him

do not commit such a terrible crime." At that, they shoved the concubine outside, and the men, we are blithely informed, "raped her and abused her all night until morning".

Utterly indifferent to her suffering and humiliation, the man placed her, next morning, on his beast of burden and commenced the journey to Ephraim. When he arrived home, "he got a knife and took hold of the body of the woman, cut her up into twelve pieces, which he then sent throughout the territory of Israel. Was she dead when he found her that morning? Did she die on the way? Did he kill her? We're not told, which only adds to the horror of the narrative. When the gruesome message was received across the nation of Israel, the elders assembled an army and attacked the city of Gibeah, effecting a general slaughter of the people.

Now, why do I rehearse this awful tale? Though there is a good deal of competition for the distinction, I believe that this gruesome and cruel episode represents the low point of human behaviour described in the Bible. We have cruelty, crude physical violence, utter disregard of human dignity, sexual immorality, rape, cooperation with sexual abuse of the worst kind, murder, mutilation, and genocide. As an aside, I am always slightly amused when some Christians primly criticise me for watching, and in some cases recommending, films in which violence and immorality are on vivid display. I wonder, "Have they ever even read the Bible?" If the Bible were depicted honestly in film, the movie would receive at least an "R" rating. One of the great virtues of the Scriptures is that they are brutally honest about human beings and the myriad ways that we go wrong, the thousands of bad paths down which we walk.

Another virtue of the Bible is that its authors know precisely where all this dysfunction comes from. The book of Judges clearly indicates that

the moral chaos it describes is a function of the disappearance of anything like moral leadership among the people. When the judges faded away, the law was no longer taught and enforced, and hence the people wandered into appalling behaviour. Rudderless and without a captain, the ship simply smashes into the rocks. The final line of the book of Judges sums up the spiritual situation: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in their own sight." I would not interpret this necessarily as an endorsement of kings in the political sense, but rather of leadership in the moral sense. A healthy society needs leaders — political, economic, cultural, religious, etc. — who are animated by a keen sense of objective moral value, who have risen above mere subjective self-interest. The scriptural authors knew that the strident assertion of one's own private prerogatives, so on display today, is fundamentally adolescent and morally catastrophic for any human community. This is why the heroes of the Bible are never those who "find themselves", but rather those who heed the voice of God and remain obedient to the mission that God has given them.

Mind you, as is often the case, the Bible trades in exaggeration and overstatement in order to get our attention, similar to the method employed by Flannery O'Connor in her macabre stories. So the almost cartoonish violence displayed in Judges is meant as a warning to a society such as ours that is increasingly losing its moral bearings: you might not be there yet, but this is where the road that you have embarked upon is leading you. Next time you find yourself wondering why the world is in such a precarious state, call to mind the final lines of the book of Judges: "Everyone did what was right in their own sight."

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles. This article was originally published at [www.wordonfire.org](http://www.wordonfire.org). It is republished here with permission.

## Ronald Rolheiser

# The therapy of a public life

Forty years ago, Philip Rieff wrote a book entitled *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. In essence, he argued that today in the Western world so many people need psychological therapy, mainly because our family structure has grown weak, and many community structures have broken down. He contends that, in societies where there are still strong families and strong communities, there is much less need for private therapy; people can more easily work out their problems inside of family and community. Conversely, where family and community are weak, we are mostly left on our own to handle our problems with a therapist rather than with a family.

If Rieff is right, and I suspect he is, it follows that the answer to many of the issues that drive us to the counseling couch lie as much, and perhaps more, in a fuller and healthier participation in public life, including Church life, than in private therapy. We need, as Parker Palmer brilliantly suggests, the therapy of a public life.

What's meant by this? What's the therapy of a public life?

Public life, life shared inside a family and community, beyond our private selves and private intimacies, can be powerfully therapeutic, because it draws us out of ourselves and into the lives of others, gives us a certain rhythm, and connects us with resources beyond the poverty of our own lives.

To participate healthily in other people's lives can take us beyond our private obsessions — it can also steady us. Public life generally has a certain rhythm and a regularity to it that helps calm the chaotic whirl of restlessness, depression, and sense of emptiness that can so often destabilise our lives.

Participation in public life gives us clearly

defined things to do, regular stopping places, regular events of structure and steadiness, and a rhythm — commodities no psychiatric couch can provide. Public life links us to resources beyond ourselves, and sometimes they are the only thing that can help us.

While doing studies in Belgium, I was privileged to attend the lectures of Antoine Vergote, a renowned Doctor of Psychology, and the soul. I asked him one day how one should handle paralyzing emotional obsessions, both within oneself and when trying to help others.

His answer surprised me. In essence, he said this: "The temptation you might have as a priest is to simplistically give the advice: 'Take your troubles to the chapel! Pray it through. God will help you.' It's not that this is wrong. God and prayer can and do help. But obsessional problems are mainly problems of over-concentration, and over-concentration is broken largely by getting outside of yourself, outside of your own mind, your own heart, your own life, and your own space. So, my advice is, get involved in public things, from entertainment, to politics, to work. Get outside of your closed world. Enter with resolve into public life!"

He went on, of course, to qualify this, so that it differs from the simplistic temptation to bury oneself in distractions and work. His advice here is not that one should run away from doing painful inner work, but that solving one's inner private problems is also dependent upon outside relationships, both relationships of intimacy and those of a more public nature.

Here's an example. For more than a dozen years I taught theology at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, Canada. Our campus was small and intimate, and we had a strong community life. Occasionally a man or woman who

was working through some emotional fragility or instability would show up on campus, not enroll in any formal classes, but simply hang out with the community, praying with us, socialising with us, and sitting in on a few classes. Invariably I would see them slowly get emotionally steadier and stronger, and they found that new strength and balance, not so much from what they learned in any of classrooms as they did by participating in the life outside of those classes. The therapy of a public life is what helped heal them.

For us as Christians, this also means the therapy of Church life. We become emotionally stronger, steadier, less obsessed, and less a slave to our own restlessness by participating more fully and healthily within the public life of the Church.

Monks have secrets worth knowing. They have long understood that a regular programme, a daily rhythm, participation in community, a mandate that you must show up, and the discipline of a monastic bell calling everyone to a common activity (whether this suits him or her or not at the time) have kept many a man and woman sane and emotionally stable.

Regular Eucharist, regular prayer with others, regular meetings with others, regular duties, and regular responsibilities within an ecclesial community, not only help nurture us spiritually, they also help keep us sane and steady.

Private therapy can sometimes be helpful, but public, ecclesial life, with its consistent daily rhythms and demands, more than anything else, can help keep us steady on our feet.

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/)

# Most important Christian feast

## Guest Editorial

This year marks 25 years since NZ Catholic's first Easter editorial in 1997. It was written by then-Emeritus Bishop of Auckland Bishop John Mackey. We think our readers would still appreciate what he had to say, all those years ago.

Christians everywhere celebrate Easter Sunday as their most important feast day. They do so because they believe that, in the event of Easter, God has revealed to humanity, not only that he exists as a loving God, but also that he has destined us to live forever with him in indescribable peace, vitality and joy.

We need to be clear about Easter. The Church does not celebrate the return of Jesus from death to life by way of his teachings and influence, as in slogans such as "Elvis Lives". Nor is Easter celebrated as the return of Jesus by way of resurrection to live our type of life and then die later.

No, the Church celebrates Easter as the continuation of the life and personality of Jesus through death into a new mode of life, in which the restrictions of time and space and mortality are now no more.

Obviously, Christian belief transcends the laws of necessity and causality that govern science and technology. The dynamic for the Easter event is the power of God, creator of heaven and earth.

Deny God and creation and Easter is meaningless. Affirm God and creation and Easter becomes a key to the understanding of human destiny. St Paul puts his finger on this when he writes: "If for this life only we had hoped in Christ, we are, of all people, most to be pitied."

Humankind is a mystery because we are intelligent, free, and open to a future that may not end in death. We are responsible for those futures to which we aspire, both personal and social. History confirms this statement.

Today, we have seen these aspirations flower, not only in science and technology, but also in the sweep of imagination that produces such stories as *Star Wars*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. It needs but little more than reflection on the mystery of the human person to make the jump of faith that sees how compatible the Easter event is with our deepest aspirations. Christmas may stir our sentimentality, but Easter should stir our minds and hearts.

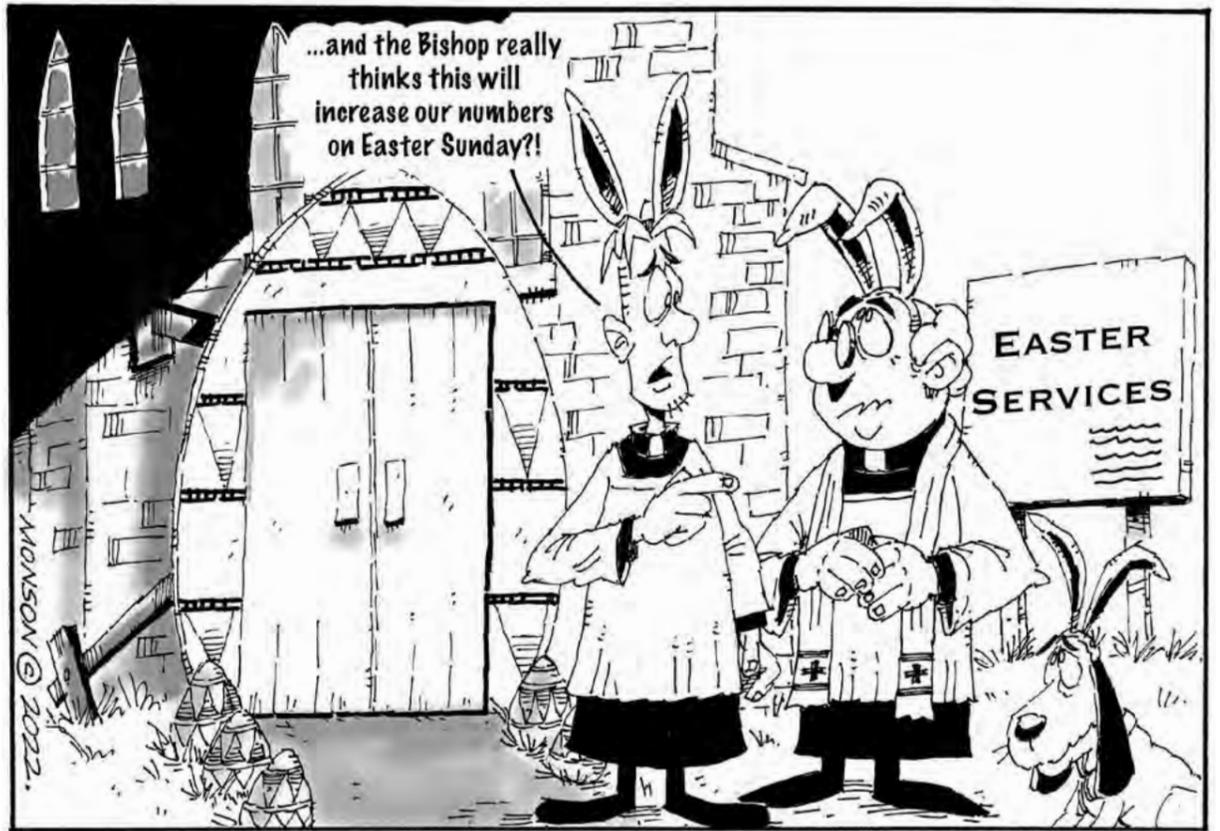
But Jesus and Easter signify more than our own individual responsibility for our lives and destiny. Jesus also signifies that fate of the universe, because his body is made of the stuff of earth.

*Star Wars* and their like have scenarios. Creation, too, has a scenario. Scientists have written scenarios for the universe in mathematical symbols few can understand. Kolakowski, an Oxford philosopher, describes his scenario thus: "Ultimately, the history of the universe appears to be the history of the defeat of Being by Nothingness: Matter, life, the human race, human intelligence and creativity — everything is bound to end in defeat; all our efforts, suffering and delights will perish forever in the void, leaving no traces behind."

The Christian scenario for the universe, animated by the Spirit of the risen Jesus, is different. The symbols are more homely and are food for thought. As we read in Scripture: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had passed away . . . God is with his people . . . He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Easter is the most important of Christian feasts because it encapsulates in a remarkable way the whole of salvation as this is revealed to us in the Sacred Scriptures. The various levels of meaning in the Resurrection of Jesus flesh out his words: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12).

## The Habit



## Letters

### Mandates

The letters on the possum cartoons (NZ Catholic, March 27) made me think of my grandfather. He was born in Goldsbrough in 1873, one of ten children. Seven died before their first birthdays and one at 20, mostly of respiratory ailments. This mortality rate was not unusual.

This makes me bless my parents, who had me vaccinated against diphtheria, measles, and all those other diseases that killed previous generations in infancy.

It makes me conscious of those whose children are particularly vulnerable, and who depend on community effort to control these diseases. The 2019 measles outbreak shows what happens when we drop our guard.

It makes me want to not pass Covid-19 to others, so I have taken my shots, despite the risk of a reaction, and I wear a mask.

It makes me support the mandates which ensure that those who work with the vulnerable take the same steps.

It makes me frustrated at the sense of entitlement shown by those who refuse to take those steps, yet demand to keep their positions. We fail in our responsibility to our children if we allow this. We haven't cast them out; they have taken a decision which for now disqualifies them from being entrusted with our mokopuna.

I pray that God will reward our efforts to

keep our community safe during this pandemic, and heal our divisions once it is over.

John Sullivan,  
Wellington.

### Radicals

The current imposition of gender ideology throughout much of the world, certainly in the West, is not about making adjustments to societal arrangements so that people can be included.

Rather, it seems increasingly obvious that there is a radical movement to deconstruct long-held societal norms that are seen to be an ideological oppression, when viewed through a radical Marxist lens. What starts with changes in language ends in a total reordering of society, which is the goal of the extreme left.

Revolutions always have casualties. One casualty is women's opportunity to play sport in competitions restricted to biological women. More and more examples of biological men participating in women's events are hitting the headlines.

Women are speaking out against this, as it is not fair, and it is not safe. But safety, one of the oft-cited shibboleths of the radicals, is set aside in the name of "inclusion". But certain speakers they don't agree with are cancelled and not included, on the grounds of "safety". Contradictions are accepted when reason goes out the window.

Safety means safety for radical ideas, not safety

for women in sport or people's right to freedom of expression, it seems. Thank heavens some politicians are starting to resist this relentless advance. Pope Francis, too, was right to criticise ideological colonisation.

One of the hallmarks of radical takeover is the "long march" through the institutions, such as universities, where false ideologies are dressed up as liberation. Catholics should be taught ways to effectively resist these ideas, wherever they present themselves.

Name and address supplied.

### Phones

One of the advantages of the recent changes to Covid-19 rules for the community is that people have much less reason to bring their cellphones to church liturgies. There is no longer any need to produce vaccine passes at gatherings, and there is no mandated need to have to scan in using a QR code.

Hopefully, that means that fewer people will be scrambling for their phones as Mass is about to start with a message on the overhead having stated — please turn your phones off!! If phones are off, is there any reason to bring phones into church in the first place? Some might say that they are needed in case of emergency. But if they are off, what good are they in an emergency? Why not leave them in the car? It might be protested that some

people walk to church or catch public transport, but in my parish, at least, most people drive to Mass.

So, could I make a plea that people leave their phones in their car during Mass? Or leave them at home? Some people who arrive late don't see the message to turn their phones off. I find few things more annoying than someone's phone going off during Mass. It really disrupts the liturgy for me. Or if leaving phones in the car is too much — some might say there is a security risk — then at least switch them off before going into the church.

T. Robinson,  
Auckland.

### Nicknames

There has been debate in the media as to whether nicknames should be given to certain politicians or not. Critics don't seem to remember the time when a Prime Minister of this country was referred to by the name of a character from "The Lord of the Flies". And I can remember a venerable Australian PM of the yesteryear being referred to "Ming" — being Sir Robert Menzies. What about "Tricky Dick" (Nixon), "The Iron Lady" (Thatcher) and even "Kiwi Keith" Holyoake?

In the Church, I am thankful that we seem to have grown out of the habit of referring to Popes in TXT language terms. No more JP11 or B16. It seems difficult to reduce plain "Francis" in such a manner.

John Cowen,  
Te Atatu, Auckland.

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# Passion Play makes a post-pandemic return in Oberammergau, Germany

by GUNTER SIMMERMACHER

MUNICH (CNS) — In 1633, at the height of the Reformation, the Black Death was sweeping through Europe, including the southern German region of Bavaria. The terrified people of one small village decided to do something to protect themselves from this pandemic: The villagers vowed that every 10 years they would perform a "Passionsspiel" — a play depicting the Passion of Christ — should their hamlet be spared.

The pandemic spared the village of Oberammergau, and on Pentecost the following year the villagers staged their first Passion Play, at the town's cemetery. It has been performed by the villagers at regular intervals ever since, most recently in 2010.

Now, 389 years after that pandemic, Oberammergau is ready to stage another Passion Play, at a time when the world is waiting to mark the end of another pandemic. The Passion Play was originally planned to be performed in 2020, but Covid-19 caused a cancellation. With foresight, the organisers decided to delay the play for two years. This year, from May 14 to October 2, the play will be performed five days a week.

Oberammergau, population 5400, is near the winter sports resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, and the village subsists on the revenue of the play and the associated tourism. While those who produce and act in the play are driven by local pride and piety, the organisers of the modern Oberammergau Passion Play are motivated by economics.

Performances are sold out well in advance. In 2010, half a million people attended the 102 performances. One day, fights broke out at the box office when 300 people came to compete for 40 available tickets. Many of these multitudes come from afar, and they must sleep somewhere, eat, drink, buy souvenirs. The whole region around Oberammergau benefits.

The souvenir shops are plenty, and the village's world-famous woodcarvings are popular with visitors. Not all wood carvings on sale are produced in Oberammergau; some are made in China.

But it would be unjust to dismiss the Passion Play as a purely commercial exercise. The Catholic faith infuses the air in Oberammergau, as it does throughout the region — most of Germany's remaining 21 Passion plays are performed in Bavaria. The sincerity of those who take part should not be doubted. Only locally born people or residents of at least 20 years may act in the



Jesus on trial before Pilate, as depicted during the 2010 Passion Play in Oberammergau

play; musicians and members of the chorus may be drawn from surrounding areas. The cast also includes animals, which need not be local.

For the 2100 villagers who take part, it is a labour of love and, for many, an exercise in evangelisation. There is not much in it for most of them, but the sacrifices are many. Some actors take unpaid leave to participate. Outside the leading roles, the actors do not earn much. And there are fines for transgressions, such as laughing on stage.

In return for their modest remuneration, the cast members invest many hours of practice every night from January to the opener in May. The men must grow long hair and beards — by a traditional decree promulgated by the mayor.

Since November, 2018, everyone has known what their role will be, from the leads to understudies to ushers. One of the two Jesuses, Frederik Mayet, a 41-year-old art director at a Munich theatre, played that role in 2010. Years before that, he played St John — and 2010's John has been promoted to the role of Judas in 2022.

This year's alternate Jesus is Rochus Rückel, at 25 the second-youngest actor to play the part in the Passion Play's almost 400-year history. The two actors playing Annas, the high priest Caiaphas' ruthless father-in-law, have been performing in the play since 1950.

## ■ Medieval

Oberammergau did not invent Passion Plays. These were widespread in medieval times, performed throughout the German-speaking region, as well as in countries such as France, Italy and England. Before and for long after Oberammergau's villagers made their plague-dodging bargain with God, the most famous Passion Play was that of Benediktbeuren, also in Bavaria. The oldest complete script of a Passion Play dates to the 14th century.

With the Reformation, Passion Plays fell out of common usage in most parts of Germany, but in the solidly Catholic Bavarian Alps and Austria they became increasingly popular. It was in that context that the Oberammergau play was born, along with 40 others in the region between 1600 and 1650.

Oberammergau gained a measure of pre-eminence in 1750 when its script was thoroughly reworked by Benedictine Father Ferdinand Rosner of the nearby Ettal Abbey. That script was adopted by other Passion Plays throughout Bavaria. In 1780, when Passion Plays were banned in Bavaria, Oberammergau's was one of two plays granted an exemption. This near-monopoly helped establish Oberammergau's Passion Play and, in the mid-19th century, it began to attract international attention and increasing popularity.

By the 1930s, Oberammergau attracted 400,000 spectators. Among them in 1934 — the play's 300th anniversary — was Adolf Hitler.

Throughout their history, Passion Play runs generally were not a good time for a Jew to be seen in public — and not only in Germany. Stoked on by the assertion that Jews were responsible for the execution of Christ, and the blood libel

(the rumours that Jews used the blood of Christian children for the production of matzos for the Passover), Christian crowds would attack Jews, even burning their homes.

Oberammergau did not solve the problem of anti-Semitism in its script until the 1990s, almost three decades after the Second Vatican Council decree "Nostra Aetate", which put an end to the final remnants of institutional anti-Semitism.

The reworking came with Christian Stückl, who first directed the play as a 29-year-old in 1990, and has done so ever since. He supervised two comprehensive revisions to shed the play of any trace of anti-Semitism. The script now presents Jesus as the leader of a Jewish movement, rather than as a non-Jewish victim.

The theology of the Passion Play is modern and profoundly Christian: the play does not condemn, but seeks to understand motivations. Judas does not betray Jesus for greed, but in a tragically misguided strategic gambit. Likewise, Caiaphas' concerns are mostly political: Jesus is a danger to a delicate peace between the Jews and the Roman occupiers.

It is not spoiling any plotlines to reveal that the story culminates in the Resurrection. In 2010, the last words in the Oberammergau play belonged to the choir, which declared: "Hallelujah! Praise, honour, adoration, power and majesty be yours, forever and ever!"



A painting of the Crucifixion is displayed on the wall of a building in Oberammergau, Germany, in 2017 (CNS Photos)

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# Call for Church to be community of peacemakers

by ROWENA OREJANA

Christians need to go back to the understanding of themselves as “a community of peacemakers”, and that the call to become a peacemaker is not to an individual, but to the whole Church.

This was gist of the workshop “Peace-making and the Pursuit of Justice” held by Dr Jeremy Simons on Zoom on March 25. The workshop was organised by JustPeace Dunedin in response to Pope Francis’ call to reflect on peace during Lent.

Dr Simons, who teaches part-time at the University of Otago, has a doctorate in peace and conflict studies, as well as 20 years of experience in peacebuilding, human rights advocacy, community organising, and restorative justice, both in the US and in the Philippines.

In an interview with *NZ Catholic*, Dr Simons said that he started the workshop by sharing his experiences working with the Lumad communities in Davao, a province in Mindanao, the southern island of the Philippines.

“To be a datu or a chief, one has to have a proven ability to resolve conflicts in the village or the community,” he said, explaining that peace-making is a core competency for leadership in that tribe.

The Talaandig tribe of Bukidnon (also in Mindanao), on the other hand, has a creation story that “is a story of peace-making among three spiritual beings”, he said.

“They have a collective identity that is defined by the stories of creation, and of their epic narratives that indicate they were appointed as peacemakers,” he added.

“[My] takeaway from that . . . we need to go back to our creation story. We need to go back to our understanding of us being a peace-making people, a community of peacemakers,” Dr Simons said.

With so much conflict in different parts of the world such as Ukraine, Tigray, Myanmar and even the recent Wellington protest, people are

becoming quite concerned.

It is important, he said, for Catholics to ground themselves in spiritual and social resources of our faith, like the Beatitudes.

“I see this as a catechism for peace-makers, because all the things here are things that are needed: blessed are the poor in spirit, humility, mourning, meekness, hungering and thirsting for justice, mercy, purity, peace-making, and acknowledging that we will be persecuted when we do this,” he said.

Dr Simons said that being persecuted for peace-making, loving our enemies and praying for our persecutors seems like paradoxes or contradictions.

“What we consider contradictions or paradoxes are ways of understanding the complexity of what is involved in peace-making,” he said, adding that “things like mercy and justice and truth and peace are all in the heart of this process of reconciliation”.

Dr Simons also emphasised that our understanding of peace should not just be the absence of conflict, but should be grounded in the Hebrew understanding of the word “shalom, which is a holistic well-being, harmony with God and creation itself and the world around us”.

“That is something that takes intentional work, and that is why we are called to do that as a community,” he said.

Dr Simons also told *NZ Catholic* that intentional peace-making requires “really thinking strategically and critically about how we use power in the world, and moving to forms of power that are non-violent, that are egalitarian, [and] that seek to come alongside those who are the least, the most marginalised”.

“[We need to] think very critically about how to work against the marginalisation, the oppression, the violence that impacts our communities. That’s what we call active non-violence,” he said.

Dr Simons said that research shows that non-violent struggles are



French Dominican Father Oliver Catel serves Muslims during an iftar at Abraham’s House on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem on April 9, 2022. The meal offered by Christian volunteers to Muslim neighbours on the eve of Palm Sunday served as testimony to the principles of peace and fraternity, said the events organisers (CNS photo)

much more successful than violent struggles in the long run.

“Research tells us that the most effective transformation or change around violent realities is through non-violence. This produces more lasting, more democratic and more effective results,” he said.

Dr Simons said that he sees peacebuilding as a vocation, “something that I’m called to do”.

“It has a prophetic role, actually. There is an element of speaking out for justice, for those who are margin-

alised and oppressed, and that can be sometimes, quite difficult, quite confrontational or confronting.

“But I’ve also realised that within that role is also a call to be healers, and to be about healing and restoring relationships and making things right.”

He said that, over the years, he learned to be “more sensitive to walking with people through the process of bringing justice, and how [one] is trying to extend that invitation, not just confrontation”.

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## Lest We Forget

## More Catholic military chaplains wanted



by JENNY McPHEE

Fr Brian Fennessy of Selwyn in Christchurch diocese, and Fr Tony Harrison from the Invercargill North parish, are the last two active Catholic chaplains working with the New Zealand Defence Force. They are both looking at retirement from this role later this year, and are keen that other priests might put their hands up to replace them.

Fr Fennessy, who has been a military chaplain for 33 years, recently celebrated his 40th jubilee as a priest.

He has a long-standing connection with the military, with his father having joined the RAF while on an OE in 1939. Fr Fennessy's father served in the ground crew for a bomber squadron and as a mechanic working on Wellingtons. He saw service in France and, after its fall, was evacuated. He served in Britain during the Battle of Britain. He was then posted to Malaya, Singapore, India, and then Burma. He transferred to the RNZAF in 1945.

So the young Brian Fennessy had family ties to military service and to aviation. When the young Brian went to Holy Cross College in Mosgiel, he used to pilot a plane. In those days, students needed a dispensation to own a car to get to the college, but he was allowed to fly an aircraft over the college.

The discipline of flying in and out of airports would stand him in good stead to later comply with military rules, and have an appreciation and respect for the chain of command.

All in all, six South Island pilots went on to become priests, with two of them serving as military chaplains.

Fr Fennessy's priestly connection with the Defence Force started in 1983, when he relieved the priest at Burnham Military Camp near Christchurch.

Six years later, Fr Fennessy joined the Territorial Force and, along with lawyers, doctors and other professionals, attended a special officers' induction course at Waiouru Military Camp. He was posted to the local infantry battalion, serving the northern part of the South Island.

In 1999, Fr Fennessy joined a peace-keeping contingent to Bougainville. This was the first time in many years that a territorial army chaplain had been deployed with regular army forces. A peace accord was eventually reached. Fr Fennessy recalled celebrating Masses in the Bougainville villages. The liturgies could have as many as 800 people present, including military personnel. He recalls the people, many of them Catholic, as being well-educated and having a great history.

"It was a delight to work with them. They were positive in working with the peace process."

Father Fennessy was also deployed to East Timor in 2000, and to Afghanistan in 2004, and was also fortunate to have a six month exchange to England in 2008.

In addition to his service as chaplain, he has



Fr Brian Fennessy



Fr Tony Harrison working in the Solomon Islands in 2016

also put his writing skills to good use, researching and writing a booklet about Fr Robert Richards, MC, a former Lincoln parish priest who served as a military chaplain in World War I.

Fr Richards was a Chaplain Class III (as is Fr Fennessy). This is the equivalent of being a major in the army. Fr Richards was the fourth Catholic chaplain sent to serve with the New Zealand forces during the Great War. He survived his ship being torpedoed on its way to Anzac Cove, Gallipoli. An account in the *New Zealand Tablet* in 1915 had Fr Richards stating that the night before the attack on the ship, he had heard confessions for four and a half hours and had a big congregation, and 60 at Communion at Mass the same morning, including a general and a number of Catholic officers.

#### ■ Father Harrison

Father Harrison's 18 years as a military chaplain has also seen him involved in a broad variety of service.

In 2005, his chaplaincy to the Solomon Islands was with the Hauraki and Auckland Regiments. In 2011, he joined the International Task Force to East Timor, which was an ANZAC deployment under Australian command. The Timorese people he worked with were 97 per cent Catholic. Fr Harrison visited villages and communities with the soldiers, and celebrated Mass in the Aimuntin parish on Wednesday evenings and Sundays.

In 2016, Fr Harrison joined nine New Zealand Defence Force personnel in working with Pacific Partnership, a large annual multilateral humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Asian Pacific region. This was on the USNS MERCY, an 894-foot former oil tanker, further converted to a hospital ship (at a cost of US\$208million).

The ship carried 900 military and civilian personnel from the United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom. Each day, the US Navy chaplain and Chaplain Harrison visited the patients who were on board. Prior to the patients heading for their surgery, the chaplains visited the patients and offered a prayer, as well as providing patients and escorts with rosary beads, which were well-received.

Observing a US military custom at 8pm each evening, one of the chaplains offered a prayer over the ship's broadcasting system. A civilian crew ran the physical management of the ship, for example the engines, while a military crew ran the hospital of fifteen wards, 12 operating theatres, four intensive care units, with the capacity to take 900 patients.

Fr Harrison said: "A parish in Legazpi in the Philippines, where the ship berthed, held 10 Masses on a Sunday, starting at 5am and finishing



Fr Tony Harrison (2013)

“It was a new experience presiding over a congregation of well over 1000 people. It was very inspiring for me, and the ship's personnel who were present.”

— Fr Tony Harrison

at 8pm. It was a new experience presiding over a congregation of well over 1000 people. It was very inspiring for me, and the ship's personnel who were present.”

But as both Fr Harrison and Fr Fennessy approach the day in June when they will retire from being military chaplains, Fr Fennessy said that efforts to find their replacements are a “work in progress”. (June is also when Fr Harrison celebrates 50 years of being a priest.)

They have produced a “situations vacant”-type flyer outlining the qualifications and experience required to succeed in this role. Being non-combatants, chaplains nonetheless have to be able to handle weapons for safety and self-defence. They also have to be physically and mentally fit, be New Zealand citizens, or have permanent residency, and have to swear allegiance to the Crown. A chaplain may sign up with the Army, but could be deployed with the Air Force or Navy, wherever the need is most urgent.

# A festival of Nordic insights

by NEVIL GIBSON

Some years ago, British journalist Michael Booth wrote *The Almost Nearly Perfect People*, which was subtitled, "The truth about the Nordic miracle". It was based on personal observation (Booth is married to a Dane and lives in Copenhagen) and interviews with various experts.

Readers may recall an earlier New Zealand example, Gordon McLauchlan's *The Passionless People*. Instead of just one, Booth had five countries to write about, and he did so with gusto.

The Swedes were obsessed with social engineering to the extent that they had a quasi-totalitarian state; the Danes had an unhealthy lifestyle ("jingoistic greenwashers"); Icelanders were spendthrift and economically irresponsible; Norwegians were insular; while the Finns were dour and superstitious.

"All are heavily taxed, drink too much, support far-right xenophobic political parties, have monopolistic businesses, and offer little attraction to all but Third World foreigners seeking a free ride in a welfare state," I wrote in a review.

"Crime-ridden immigrant ghettos in Sweden rivalled anything in France or England, despite the high levels of trust, social cohesion, gender equality, work-life balance and so on, that are characteristic of these advanced societies."

I couldn't resist the temptation to point out that New Zealand hadn't sacrificed such gains for personal rights, freedom, tolerance and inclusion of different races. Nor did New Zealand have such eco-unfriendly wealth generators as Norway's oil industry, or Denmark's coal-burning and pig-farming practices.

The first Scandi Film Festival offers an opportunity to update these Nordic insights, with 10



A scene from the movie *Ladies of Steel*

## Movie Review

movies from all countries except Iceland. They shed more light on these societies than you might expect, as all are primarily aimed at domestic audiences.

None is political or related to social issues such as immigration. The closest exception is a disaster story about Norway's oil fields, *The Burning Sea*. Most have comfortable middle-class settings, with a mix of drama and humour that many would find acceptable.

However, there are some jarring notes. One constant theme is the negative view of marriage taken by women directors. This is not new. Denmark's *Happy Ending* (2018) was about a wife's reaction when her retired businessman-husband decided to spend the family fortune on a wine venture without consulting her.

The Swedish couples in *Diana's Wedding/Dianas Bryllup* (Limelight), reviewed in the

previous issue, find it difficult to resolve their differences without others suffering. This is also the starting point for three Finnish sisters in *Ladies of Steel/Teräsläidit* (Limelight), who relive their pasts when they take off on a road trip to their rural childhood home after one bangs a frying pan on her husband's head.

The culprit is the middle sister (Leena Uotila), once a "free girl" radical in the 1960s, but denied her own career path in a marriage of 50 years. She is egged on by her older sister, who brags of seeing off some rich husbands, and enjoys life on the proceeds.

Director Pamela Tolabrings lets everything hang out at the boozy fiftieth wedding anniversary party that is a familiar Nordic climax (see reviews in Clips for more on the festival).

Rating (*Ladies of Steel*): TBC. 91 minutes.

## CLIPS

### Tuesday Club/Tisdagsklubben (Umbrella)

When a badly behaving husband is hospitalised during his fortieth wedding anniversary party, his wife (Marie Richardson) realises he has not just been unfaithful, but that she has spent a lifetime just looking after him and an ungrateful 40-year-old daughter who has done little with her life. The answer is taking a cooking class with two friends, where the chef (Peter Stormare) puts her on a new path toward the career she never had. Last year, the Danes produced a similar movie, *The Food Club/Madklubben*, set in Italy. This sticks to Göteborg, Sweden's second largest city, which is noted for its historic and modern architecture. As a port, it also has access to a wide range of food, which is richly displayed in the cooking sessions. Director Annika Appelin's climax, naturally, is a big birthday bash where everyone, including the hapless husband and redeemed daughter, gets what they always wanted. Rating: Mature audiences. 103 minutes.

### The Jonsson Gang/Se Upp för Jönssonligan (Limelight/Studio Canal)

In a change of pace for arthouse director Tomas Alfredson (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, *Let the Right One In*), a criminal gang of misfits embarks on a heist for a missing piece of the last king of Finland's crown. The political digs at the Finns wanting to restore their monarchy, and a safecracker who sets his ingenious thefts to music (Hugo Alfvén's Swedish Rhapsody No. 1, *Midsummer's Eve*), are just two of the delights for those unfamiliar with Jonsson Gang movies, that were popular family entertainment in Sweden in the 1980s. Lena Olin, one of Sweden's best-known faces in international cinema, and last seen in *The Artist's Wife* (2019), has a minor role as the manager of an illegal warehouse. Rating: Parental guidance advised. 122 minutes.

### All the Old Knives (Amazon Studios)

This spy thriller aims to be more John Le Carré intrigue than James Bond car chases and explosions, but it has a flaw that undermines its credibility from the get-go. Although undated, but looking like the present day with its tone and casting, the premise of a post-9/11 jihadist hijacking of a landed aircraft is unlikely. The hijackers would not have been able to storm the cockpit in the manner shown, while the passengers, knowing their fate with suicide bombers, would be unlikely to submit meekly. More doubts set in as the plot unfolds with a surfeit of simplistic exposition as the CIA's Vienna station attempts to save the passengers. These events are staged in flashbacks from eight years on, when an agent (Chris Pine) is recalled from retirement to interrogate his former lover and colleague (Thandiwe Newton) during an extended lunch in California. Fortunately, the plot thickens as their conversation gets closer to revealing the Vienna station "mole" who was in touch with the hijackers. Directed by Janus Metz from a screenplay by Olen Steinhauer and based on his book. Amazon rating: R18. 102 minutes.

# Retracing the life of Jesus Christ through archaeology

**JESUS OF NAZARETH: Archaeologists Retracing the Footsteps of Christ** by Michael Hesemann. Ignatius Press (San Francisco, 2021). 322 pp., US \$21.95. Reviewed by ALLAN WRIGHT (CNS)

Michael Hesemann studied history and cultural anthropology at Goettingen University, has participated in archaeological excavations in the Holy Land, and has previously written extensively on topics related to archaeology and Christianity.

The author's research and observations are well-documented and informative, transporting the reader back in time, uncovering the footsteps of Christ and other biblical and historical figures who impacted the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Early on in his book, "Jesus of Nazareth: Archaeologists Retracing the Footsteps of Christ", in the chapter titled "Where the Word Became History", he writes about the relationship and proximity of the tomb of King Herod to the birthplace of Jesus:

"Still in his lifetime, not in the splendour of a palace but in the semi-darkness of a stable-cave, the true king of the Jews, the promised messiah, the redeemer of mankind,

was born there. His tomb, too, was shattered, but is still venerated today as a holy place by 2 billion people."

The impact of the proximity of Herod's palace to Bethlehem, which cast its long shadow over the tiny village, has implications for the life Jesus experienced living under the constant shadow of Roman rule and terror.

Hesemann's accurate description of the house where Jesus was born is an example of his exegetical knowledge that is aptly displayed throughout his book.

In understanding the differences in the words St Luke chose for the English word often translated as "inn", combined with the archaeological evidence that Hesemann puts forward from how first-century, Middle Eastern peasant homes are built, gives light and understanding to the most momentous event in history, which nearly everyone gets wrong in the retelling of the Christmas story.

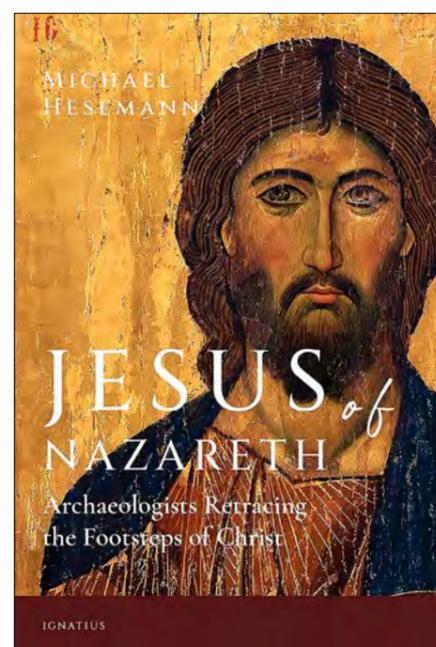
Engaging chapters include familiar biblical sites such as Nazareth, Cana, Jerusalem, the Temple Mount and the pool at Bethesda, as the author delves into historical events,

archaeological findings and connections to Scripture.

One of the most intriguing chapters focuses on Sepphoris, a major Roman city located four miles from Nazareth where Jesus and St Joseph would have found ample work, yet the city is never mentioned in the Gospels. The excavations point to a vibrant city, the "jewel of the Galilee" as it would become, yet would faithful Jews, Jesus and St Joseph, work to build a pagan city? A lively discussion indeed.

The archaeological landscape of Israel and the Middle East is fluid, with new discoveries each year. A few of the conclusions Hesemann makes are of a minority view, so each position he takes can't always be backed up with certitude. The author presents a definitive answer for the birth date of Jesus and, while he may be correct, other scholars would disagree while observing the same evidence.

This book is an excellent resource for anyone interested in the Bible, and for Christians who seek the "story behind the story". Hesemann successfully brings the reader back 2000 years and then right back to the present time, never



losing sight of Jesus of Nazareth, without whom the book would be a collection of historical facts and lose its soul.

Allan Wright is principal of Koinonia Academy in Plainfield, New Jersey.

THE CHURCH YEAR

We are here: ▼ Second Sunday of Easter

Advent

Christmas

Ordinary Time

Lent

Eastertime

Ordinary Time

# Worldwide significance for the good of every human being

## Scripture

by Fr Kevin Waldie sm

**April 24:** Second Sunday of Easter. **Readings:** 1. Acts 5:12-16; **Psalm:** 118; 2. Revelation 1:9-13,17-19; **Gospel:** John 20:19-31.

This set of readings presents a sequence of post-Resurrection events that highlight the almighty power revealed to people of all kinds in the first century CE.

In the excerpt from Acts, many people readily recognise that the risen Christ continues his healing and saving work in and through the apostles. But here, Peter is mostly in focus. The great numbers he attracts, and the fully visible benefits, are evidence enough that the Easter mystery is truly extraordinary and yet real.

Today's text from the book of Revelation also underscores the extraordinary made possible when the fact of the Resurrection is proclaimed

boldly. The author's vision, like many a biblical character before him, channels a direct communication from the Almighty. What he sees and hears is the cause of great awe and reverence. It is through this vision of the risen Christ that we and many others come to believe wholeheartedly in the Son of Man who rules from his heavenly throne.

The section of John's Gospel chosen for today also testifies to the early Church's conviction that we must cherish and hail the Resurrection as a fundamental truth. The risen Christ's two appearances are a vivid form of witness for all believers down the centuries. The presence of

Thomas in the second instance is cause for great rejoicing, and the pronouncement of a blessing upon all who have welcomed this Good News handed down by the first disciples.

A simple presentation in these three readings heralds the fact that Christ is risen from the dead. But it is not merely a simple fact that has captured us in the company of all believers. It is rather a totally astounding and extraordinary sequence of events that has drawn us into a mystery that has a worldwide significance for the good of every human being.

# The lasting significance and power of the Resurrection

It is of some note that each New Testament text heard or read in this Easter season adds to a deepening appreciation for the early Church and its powerful proclamation of the risen Christ.

The verses from Acts have as their point of reference the preaching of Peter and the other apostles. That preaching bears witness to the profound faith and great enthusiasm that typified those early post-Resurrection days. A fearless man like Peter did not let fierce opposition deter him from declaring his obedience to the will of God. The driving force for the Church of those days was utter commitment to teaching about the continuation of Jesus' mission. And strength for that came from the Holy Spirit, who

empowered Peter and his companions to proclaim the truth in the face of opposition.

Today, the author of Revelation expands upon his visionary experience of the heavenly throne-room where the Lamb of God reigns in universal splendour. Every creature stationed around him does him honour, inspiring all future believers to know instantly that they are heirs to a strong faith tradition about the risen Christ. This, therefore, reminds us that we are wonderfully resourced to live confidently and boldly.

The fishing scenario in John's Gospel rather dramatically confirms what it means to believe in the risen Christ. And it is through the character of Simon Peter that we in the present are

**May 1:** Third Sunday of Easter. **Readings:** 1. Acts 5:27-32,40-41; **Psalm:** 33; 2. Revelation 5:11-14; **Gospel:** John 21:1-19.

taught to comprehend more acutely the lasting significance and power of the Resurrection. This is a moment in the Gospel narrative attesting to a necessary element of Christian faith.

Aided by these readings, our ongoing celebration of the Resurrection leads us to connect with the earliest days of the Christian message. And so, in our current witness to Christ risen, we gladly recall the strength and sureness of the first Christians.

## SAINTED GLASS



On May 2, we remember St Athanasius. I had never heard of him until I saw this window in St Mary's Church, Manly, Sydney. He was Bishop of Alexandria from about 298 until his death in 373. He was the author of many theological writings, of which the most important was a denunciation of the Arian heresy. He was driven from his diocese five times by the Arians, but each time returned just as inflexible as when he left. And the faith of Christ triumphed afresh. Yet he is written of as a gentle, softly-spoken man. He was a faith-filled saint to model myself upon today.

— Glen McCullough

# Finnish politician, bishop cleared of hate crime charges

(HELSINKI, Agencies) — A court in Finland has dismissed all hate-speech charges against an MP and a bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese after a trial that had attracted international attention.

MP Päivi Räsänen, who is a physician and a mother-of-five, had been charged after writing a pamphlet about the Christian understanding of marriage, and tweeting a picture of a Bible verse in 2019, while criticising the Lutheran Church for co-sponsoring the Helsinki Pride parade. Bishop Juhana Pohjola was tried for publishing a pamphlet on the Christian teaching on marriage, over 15 years ago.

The pair were reportedly subjected to over 10 hours of police interrogation and a two-day trial, where they were cross-examined by a public prosecutor about the "hateful" beliefs in the Bible.

CNA reported that the court in Helsinki said, in a unanimous 28-page ruling on March 30, that "it is not for the district court to interpret biblical concepts".

It said that Räsänen, who served as Finland's interior minister from 2015, had sought to "defend the concept of family and marriage between a man and a woman". If some people found the statements offensive, it said, "there must be an overriding social reason for interfering with and restricting freedom of expression".

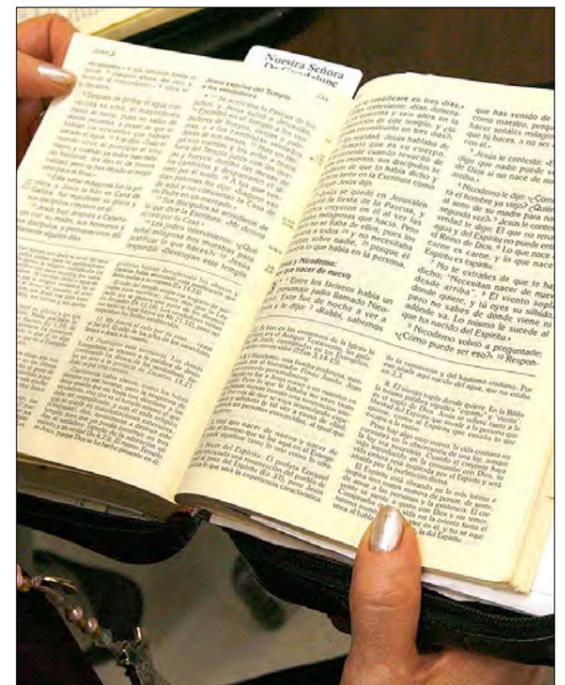
The state was ordered to pay legal costs to the defence of more than 60,000 euros. The Finnish prosecutor-general had argued that Räsänen's comments were incitement against a minority group and were "likely to cause intolerance, contempt and hatred towards homosexuals".

CNA reported that Räsänen said: "I am so grateful the court recognized the threat to

## Bible News

free speech and ruled in our favour. I feel a weight has been lifted off my shoulders after being acquitted."

"Although I am grateful for having had this chance to stand up for freedom of speech, I hope that this ruling will help prevent others from having to go through the same ordeal."



A person reads the Bible (CNS Photo)

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# Pope Francis calls for Easter truce

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Jesus obeyed the most challenging of commandments: to love one's enemies; and he invites humanity to do the same by breaking a vicious cycle of evil, sorrow and hatred with love and forgiveness, Pope Francis said on Palm Sunday.

"As disciples of Jesus, do we follow the master, or do we follow our own desire to strike back?" he asked in his homily April 10.

Pope Francis began Holy Week with Palm Sunday Mass in St Peter's Square with an estimated 50,000 people — the first time large numbers of people could participate since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic two years ago.

He also made a heartfelt appeal for a cease-fire by warring parties and the start of a "real negotiation", even if it requires "some sacrifice for the good of the people".

"What kind of victory will it be to plant a flag on a pile of rubble?" he said after the Mass and before leading the Angelus prayer. "Put down the weapons. Let an Easter truce begin."

Clearly referring to the invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces, the Pope did not specifically name which conflict he was talking about, saying Christ died to be victorious over sin and death, "not over someone and against someone else".

However, he denounced this "endless" war, which "daily places

before our eyes heinous massacres and atrocious cruelty committed against defenceless civilians. Let us pray about this".

A war aiming for victory according to the logic of the world, the Pope said, "is only the way to lose". It is better to let the victor be Jesus, who carried the cross and died to free people from evil, so life, love and peace might reign.

Because of ongoing difficulty walking and his doctor's advice to rest, Pope Francis did not take part in the traditional Palm Sunday procession to the obelisk in the centre of the square, but was driven by car to the altar before the start of the ceremony.

In his homily at the Mass, Pope Francis highlighted how Jesus "obeyed the most demanding of his commandments: that we love our enemies".

"How often we spend time looking back on those who have wronged us! How often we think back and lick the wounds that other people, life itself and history have inflicted on us," he said.

Instead, Jesus teaches humanity "to break the vicious circle of evil and sorrow. To react to the nails in our lives with love, to the buffets of hatred with the embrace of forgiveness", he said.

When people resort to violence, he said, they forget about God, their



Pope Francis greets the crowd after celebrating Palm Sunday Mass in St Peter's Square at the Vatican on April 10 (CNS Photo)

father, and "about others, who are our brothers and sisters. We lose sight of why we are in the world, and even end up committing senseless acts of cruelty".

"We see this in the folly of war, where Christ is crucified yet another time," the Pope said. "Christ is once more nailed to the cross in mothers who mourn the unjust death of husbands and sons. He is crucified in refugees who flee from bombs with children in their arms. He is crucified in the elderly left alone to die; in

young people deprived of a future; in soldiers sent to kill their brothers and sisters."

If people want to see if they truly belong to Christ, "let us look at how we behave toward those who have hurt us", the Pope said.

At the end of the Mass, the Pope rode in the open popemobile to wave to and greet the crowd in the square, and along the long boulevard leading to the main square, again the first time since before the pandemic began.

## English police to allow priests to give last rites at crime scenes

MANCHESTER, England (CNS) — Police in England have produced national guidelines to allow priests to give last rites to Catholics dying at crime scenes.

The change follows the outcry by Catholics at the denial of permission to Father Jeffrey Woolnough to pass through a police cordon and administer the sacrament of the anointing of the sick to Sir David Amess, a Catholic politician, after he was stabbed repeatedly in a suspected terrorist attack on October 15.

The College of Policing published the guidelines online following meetings of a joint group convened by Dame Cressida Dick, Metropolitan Police commissioner, and Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster, president of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, in the aftermath of the murder.

The updated guidelines make it clear that police may permit priests to visit crime victims to administer the sacraments.

It also sets out situations in which such access might be limited, including, for instance, "the need to secure and preserve the crime scene and the material within it".

Archbishop John Wilson of Southwark, who represented the Catholic Church in the joint group, said in a March 31 statement that he was pleased that a common position could be found.

"At a critical time, such spiritual and/or family support can make all the difference for those for whom it is important," he added.

"For Catholics, this means access by a priest who will be able to offer absolution, anointing and prayers of accompaniment — often referred to as the last rites. We are very grateful for this."

Sir David, Conservative Party member of Parliament for Southend West, was attacked at Belfairs Methodist Church in Leigh-on-Sea, where he was meeting voters to discuss their concerns.

Ali Harbi Ali, a 26-year-old British Muslim of Somali origin, is standing trial at the Central Criminal Court in London accused of the murder and of preparation of acts of terrorism. He denies the charges.

Hearings scheduled to begin April 4 were adjourned for at least four days after the judge tested positive for Covid-19 and was unable to attend.

## Soldiers storm Myanmar cathedral

MANDALAY, Myanmar (CNS) — Nearly 100 soldiers stormed the Sacred Heart Cathedral compound in Mandalay and forcibly entered the cathedral, archbishop's house, parish priest's residence and clergy centre on April 8.

Archbishop Marco Tin Win, some priests and staff, were present during the raid, but all were safe and none were detained, Church sources told

ucanews.com.

Soldiers arrived around 2:30pm, and some stood guard outside the compound of the cathedral, the second-largest in Myanmar, while others with guns carried out a search of all the buildings inside the compound.

"They claimed to have been tipped off about weapons being hidden in the clergy centre," said one of the sources.

The soldiers left after nearly three hours without finding any weapons. The news of the military raid spread quickly among the local Catholic community in the city's five parishes, causing much concern. "We were relieved that no one was hurt or arrested and we could resume our church services," said a parishioner, who joined the Way of the Cross after the soldiers left in the evening.

## Bishops concerned about Germany's Synodal Path

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In an open letter, 74 bishops from North America, Africa, Italy and Australia have expressed their "growing concern" about the German Synodal Path process and content, warning about its "potential for schism".

Joining recent letters of concern by the Nordic and Polish bishops, the "fraternal open letter to our brother bishops in Germany" said "the Synodal Path's actions undermine the

credibility of Church authority, including that of Pope Francis".

The signatories warned that the Synodal Path's example could undermine the concept of synodality, and therefore impede conversation on the Church's mission of converting and sanctifying the world.

Signatories included Nigerian Cardinal Francis Arinze, South African Cardinal Wilfred Napier, Australian Cardinal George Pell, and US Cardinal Raymond Burke.

All told, 49 bishops from the US, four from Canada, 19 Africans, one Italian and one Australian signed the letter, which was sent to the German bishops on April 11, and made public on April 12.

The German bishops, responding to clerical sexual abuse and how bishops mismanaged cases, see the Synodal Path process as addressing the exercise of power and authority in the Church; sexual morality; the priesthood; and the role of women.

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# Caritas event to support Holy Land school

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand has launched a new initiative for New Zealand Catholic schools.

For 15 years, the New Zealand Catholic Primary Principals' Association (NZCPPA) and Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand partnered with Catholic schools across New Zealand to raise almost \$300,000, to support small schools in need across the Pacific through an annual event known as Mufti Mania. In 2022, a new chapter begins, and Mufti Mania has been re-branded as YCC Day.

YCC has several meanings, including Young Catholics Care and

Youth Creating Change and Your Choice of Clothing.

According to a Caritas statement, when thousands of young people gather together in solidarity for a good cause and have fun by wearing non-uniform for the small cost of a gold coin, lasting change can be brought for a school which may not enjoy the same privileges as ourselves.

While the name may have changed, the legacy will live on. Michael Stewart, who is part of the Caritas education team, said that "Mufti Mania has always been an amazing event, and I've been privileged to see the impact on young people, both here

in New Zealand and overseas. Now is the right time for a change, and we are super excited to keep the legacy going with the new YCC Day! We know that Catholic schools will get involved, as we have so many kind and generous young people across the country who are always willing to respond to the call for justice and love".

"This year's YCC Day is for a great cause," said Roger Ellis, engagement manager at Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand. "I'm hoping young people from all over Aotearoa will join in this work of justice to give a helping hand to Laura Vicuna School in Bethlehem. It's a small school situated in

the Holy Land. The school began in 1988, and is in dire need of support to fix and repair toilets, purchase new laptops and projectors, as well as round tables for small group learning activities. Here in Aotearoa it is easy to take these things for granted. We're very thankful for the generosity of students here in New Zealand," Mr Ellis said.

YCC Day takes place this year on Friday, July 8, and funds received from this event will help support Laura Vicuna School in the Holy Land. Everyone is invited to join in. More information and activities can be found online at [www.caritas.org.nz/ycc-day](http://www.caritas.org.nz/ycc-day)

# Royal commission faith inquiry broadened

by NZ CATHOLIC staff

The Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry has formally extended the scope of its Anglican investigation to include the Methodist, Presbyterian and Salvation Army faiths.

Known as the Protestant and Other Faiths Investigation, it will also be seeking evidence from survivors of abuse in three closed community faiths: Gloriavale, Exclusive Brethren (more recently known as Plymouth Brethren Christian Church), and Jehovah's Witnesses.

According to a statement on the inquiry's website, since the royal commission started, it has been

gathering evidence of abuse in the care of these faiths as part of its investigations.

The scope is being formally extended to recognise increased numbers of survivors from these faiths and their institutions — including schools and care homes — who have disclosed abuse to the royal commission.

The royal commission continues to ask survivors to come forward. Further evidence gathered will add to the inquiry's existing evidence base and understanding of abuse in these faiths, and findings about them will be included in the royal commission's interim faith report.

The Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Salvation Army faiths engaged in care provision throughout the royal commission's 1950-1999 period of inquiry.

The inclusion of the three closed community groups, while not overly large congregations, will mean that the royal commission could learn from more survivors of abuse while in the care of these groups, and examine abuse in faith contexts that are usually closed to the wider community.

Survivors of abuse in other faiths, while not specifically referenced in the scope document, are also encouraged to come forward to the royal

commission.

Survivors who want to share about abuse by any of these faiths are encouraged to call the royal commission confidentially on 0800 222 727, or register on its website and they will phone.

The Protestant and Other Faiths Investigation will be reported on in the Royal Commission's Faith Interim Report, to be presented to the Governor General before June, 2023.

The royal commission is also conducting an inquiry into abuse in care of the Catholic Church in this country. This is one of nine investigations being conducted by the royal commission.

## 40 YEARS AGO

### BISHOPS: ARMS RACE IS 'MADNESS'

The Catholic Bishops of New Zealand have strongly condemned as "madness" the arms race, the use of nuclear weapons and, specifically, the so-called "clean" neutron bomb.

They say that political powers which put their faith in armaments to ensure peace are gambling with the future of the world.

The bishops' statement came at the end of their traditional Low Week meeting in Wellington. They also attacked the abuse of alcohol, laid the foundations for a national Catholic Maori body, and appealed to Catholics on behalf of those suffering the pain and loss of marriage breakdown.

In their condemnation of nuclear weapons, the bishops said that any other stance would be inconsistent with what the Catholic Church expects.

Referring to the neutron bomb, they said there is a "crazy irony"

to saying it is "clean" because it leaves buildings untouched but destroys life. "To applaud the preservation of things while seeming to accept the annihilation of people is to deny God," the bishops said.

They warned of the "appalling inventory of horror that could turn the globe into a giant crematorium," and called for renewed efforts for peace based on human dignity. . . .

The bishops' 2500-word statement on those who have experienced marriage breakdown, called "When dreams die", is to be issued in printed form. It calls on the Catholic community at large to be supportive of those who have suffered pain and loss in marriage, and said that the widowed, separated and divorced should not be "mere recipients" of the concern of others, but have a positive vocation to fulfil.

— *Zealandia*, May 2, 1982



## Papal Prayer

**The Pope's universal prayer intention for April: For health care workers.**

We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.

## CAPTION CONTEST



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Send in your ideas by Tuesday, May 3 to Caption Contest 634, NZ Catholic, PO Box 147000, Ponsonby, Auckland 1144. Or email: [design@nz-catholic.org.nz](mailto:design@nz-catholic.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 633 (right) was **Kerry Dawson, Wellington.**

Some other suggestions were:

"Transmission Gully here we come!"

— **David Tennent, Auckland.**

"Awaiting the start at Le (old) Mans!"

— **John Harris, Auckland**

"With the skyrocketing price of petrol these days, this is the only type of car we can afford to drive." — **Patricia Jackson, Auckland.**

"The Incredible Race"

— **Julie Cameron, Auckland.**

"Righto let's go and have a smashing good time." — **Russell Watt, Auckland.**

"Who said there never used to be traffic congestion in Auckland?" — **Karen Reid, Auckland.**



Formula one — plus 87

"Life in the fast lane." — **Linda Jennings, Auckland.**

"No driving licence required here!"

— **Joan Leonard, Auckland.**

"Who said electric cars were a modern invention?" — **Carmel Anne Malone, Christchurch.**

Family Matters

Helen Luxford



# Should we take kids to funerals?

Thankfully, we have not been to too many funerals in recent times. Covid has made celebrations of life, such as funerals and weddings, very challenging. The last time I had to decide about this was a few years ago. A very close friend of my parents died. She had lived on the same street as them, and we'd had a close association with her for many years. She had loved seeing my young son, and, as I was attending the day-time funeral in company with my parents, I didn't have many options for childcare. It seemed quite natural to take my son. He also wanted to say goodbye to her in his own way, and attending helped him to realise and mark the permanency of our loss. I think it also helped him to understand why the adults around him were a bit down and sad and sometimes crying. It helped him to understand it wasn't anything he'd done.

Last year, I did go to a beautiful funeral Mass for the mother of a dear friend of mine. There were some children there, her grandchildren who had adored

her, and whom she adored very much. So, in that sense, I think the context matters. I am a firm believer that children are welcome at any Mass at any time. They are the future of the Church, and Jesus himself said "Bring the children to me". I don't think it can be wrong to take children to funerals. I do acknowledge that each person has their own set of circumstances, and for some, perhaps they would rather not have children there. For instance, at weddings, if the couple request "no children", then I respect that.

I remember going to a few funerals as a child. The first that I remember was for a great aunt who was a nun. My middle name was given to me in honour of her. I always adored her, and she was a very special woman in my life. I would have been devastated to miss that funeral. It felt like a very important part of saying goodbye to her. I'm not sure that I remember going to any funerals until, as a teenager, we farewelled an uncle. That was an extremely traumatic experience, as he was in his 30s or 40s, and left behind

three young girls. Everyone was in so much pain, and we as children were part of that whether we wanted to be or not. We wanted to be there as much as we didn't want to be there.

I think these experiences prepared me somewhat for when my grandparents died. I am grateful that I was able to attend all four of their funerals. To me, having children at funerals makes me think of the circle of life. As one person leaves the world, others continue to grow and take their own place in the world. There is something very profound and natural about this circle. When my beloved grandma was dying in her private hospital bed, I left for my anatomy scan for our first child. My grandma was still with us when I returned, and I was there when she passed. The immensity of this moment was even stronger knowing that I was bringing the new generation into the family.

Funerals are an uncomfortable, confronting part of life, where we are reminded of our own mortality and that of those around us. With

our Catholic faith, we can live in the hope of our loved ones joining Jesus in heaven. I often think, though, about people who turn up to a funeral who haven't seen the deceased person in a long time. Why then do we feel so strongly about going to a funeral and turning up on that day, when they missed all the times to connect when the person was still alive? I think showing up while people are alive is more important, and even more important in this social media world, where we kind of keep in touch, but don't actually see people and talk to people as often as we used to. Fellowship and community are most important in our Church.

John 14:2; "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?"

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.

# Divine Renovation model works in parishes

◀ Continued from page 16

really beautiful relationships between people. I was seeing vulnerability — people being able to share and talk openly and honestly about their struggles or their questions or their family backgrounds, all sorts of things."

Mrs Surrey said that she was surprised and humbled by it. In her younger days, she had been sceptical about Alpha, thinking it wasn't really for Catholics.

"When I was in London, my best friend worked for Alpha, we were both Catholic, and I had a very negative attitude towards it," she said. Alpha, which started in the Church of England, has been adapted for use in the Catholic Church.

Mrs Surrey, who has been in her current role since January, said that Pukekohe didn't have to go it alone — people from the parish worked with Meadowbank parish in Auckland to get Alpha up and running. This involved, among other things, training leaders and identifying people's gifts and talents that could be used in extending hospitality.

"Hospitality is fundamental," Mrs Surrey said. "Building relationships is crucial."

She estimates that about 20 parishes in New Zealand have embarked on the Divine Renovation journey. Some are further ahead than others, she added, citing Waimakariri parish in Christchurch diocese and Taupo parish in Hamilton diocese as good examples of where Divine Renovation has really taken off, and the fruits of parish renewal can clearly be seen.

"Divine Renovation is offering a solution, and it is not the only solution to parish renewal, but it is a pretty good model," she said.

Mrs Surrey's role involves networking with New Zealand parishes and working with priests. This can involve helping priests gauge where their parish is at and what trajectory it is on.

"We want parishes to come alive — so many priests are struggling with where they are at. They

are overburdened, they are overwhelmed, so it is finding the priests who are thirsty to go deeper to transform their parish to be more missional; priests who really have a vision for what their parish might look like, but don't know how to make it happen.

"There are so many different ways in which we can help priests, but also help the parish, because it is not just about the priest, it is about helping him choose faithful, available, and teachable parish members with whom he can lead out a team — with people who will support him in the parish vision, but who will also challenge him in the right ways, and complement his particular gifts and strengths of ministry."

She had a lot more to say about evangelisation

work — people are not projects; relationships and trust have to be built — and the need to be reliant upon the Holy Spirit to animate and guide people in parish renewal.

She added that Divine Renovation has regular events, including online webinars, in-person events, podcasts, and books. For more information, visit [www.divinerenovation.org](http://www.divinerenovation.org) or email [cheryl.surrey@divinerenovation.org](mailto:cheryl.surrey@divinerenovation.org)

**Upcoming events:**  
 Leading Through the Power of the Holy Spirit with Bishop Michael Gielen: Wednesday, May 25 at 1pm — Priests Only Event.  
 Sharing the Journey — Auckland Diocese Event: Wednesday, July 13 at 6.30pm (Dinner included)  
 Email: [stephenf@cda.org.nz](mailto:stephenf@cda.org.nz)

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# Cheryl working for parish renewal

by MICHAEL OTTO

The Divine Renovation framework for parish renewal is underway in several parishes in New Zealand, and Cheryl Surrey is inviting others to embark on this journey.

Mrs Surrey, from Pukekohe, has been appointed as Divine Renovation's New Zealand Relationship Guide. New Zealand is one of some 75 countries in which the ministry is operating, guiding parishes from "maintenance to mission".

Divine Renovation relies on three "keys" — the primacy of evangelisation, the best of leadership, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Mrs Surrey's work includes accompanying and offering regular support to priests and parishes, promoting and building the profile of this ministry in New Zealand, and actively pursuing opportunities to invite parishes to adopt Divine Renovation principles in order to connect, inspire and equip parishes on their journey of renewal.

A mother of three children aged 10, 6 and 4, she brings broad experience in working and studying in Catholic settings to the role. Raised in Scotland, she did tertiary studies at St Mary's University in London, gaining a bachelor's degree in theology and a masters in pastoral theology. After working with orphans in Uganda and attending World Youth Days in Germany and Australia — the latter where she met her husband Cameron — she, and her husband, a Kiwi, settled in New Zealand.

With her husband, she helped run the Catholic Discipleship College for



Cheryl Surrey (supplied)

four years, and later took up the role of parish secretary and joined the Pukekohe parish council. She also worked as vocations coordinator in Auckland diocese. In her home parish, she saw that running an Alpha Course — a key component of the evangelisation aspect of Divine Renovation — had been on the agenda, but had not progressed.

"So I thought — why don't we just start it?" she said.

"When it came up, I thought, all right, we don't really have anything else happening, in terms of a tool for evangelisation, we don't have an intentional life in the parish that is bringing new people in and helping them to go deeper. When it came up,

it was kind of a no-brainer for me."

Mrs Surrey did the training and Alpha started in Pukekohe. How Alpha works was succinctly summarised by Bishop Michael Gielen in a webinar last year — "It says, put a meal on, get people to provide it, extend hospitality, then put on a video that has been honed and chiselled for 30 years, then get together in groups".

Mrs Surrey said that "doing it was really incredible. I was really surprised at the transformation we started to see early on with regular people in the parish".

"In a really short space of time, I was seeing how Alpha was fostering

► Continued on page 15

## WIT'S END

My doctor told me to drink less, sleep more, eat healthily and exercise every day. So today I'm making a big change in my life. I'm no longer going to that doctor.

An exercise for people who are out of shape: Begin with a five-pound potato bag in each hand. Extend your arms straight out from your sides, hold them there for a full minute, and then relax. After a few weeks, move up to ten-pound potato bags.

Then try 50-pound potato bags, and eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-pound potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute.

Once you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.

In the May 8 issue:  
Dame Lyndsay Freer retires

## 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**.

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