

The

# Common Good

Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor

A newspaper of the Christchurch Catholic Worker

Price: free or donation

No 100, Lent 2022

100<sup>th</sup>  
Edition!

## Taiao - Our Natural Environment

Kathleen Gallagher

*Tena koutou ko Ranginui, ko Papatuanuku, ngā maunga, ngā awa, ngā roto, ngā tahuna, ngā kōreporepo, ngā kaiawhina katoa. Warm regards to you our stars, our moon, our sky, our earth, our mountains, our rivers, our lakes, our beaches, our wetlands, and to all who help, have helped, and continue to help in this mahi of reclaiming, restoration, and re-creation of our relationship with taiao, the natural world.*

### Indigenous Knowledge

David Abram, in *The Ecology of Magic*, tells us that in non-Western societies, the other half of the world, tohunga, shamans and druids live at the edge or just outside the village and they are the intermediaries between the human world and the more-than-human community. The animals, plants, trees and even whole forests are considered to be living, intelligent forces. Even the winds and the weather patterns are seen as living beings. Everything is animate, everything moves.

The primary work of these spiritual leaders is to heal the relation of the people to the land, to balance the equilibrium between the human and more-than-human field of forces. Humans take so much from the land. The leaders' task is to ensure humans return something to the land, that there is a two-way flow, so the boundary between human culture and the rest of nature stays porous.

In the film *Rohe Kōreporepo*, Rongoa Māori healer, Ropata McGowan says, *We are not the centre of the universe, we are part of her. Our mana (influence, psychic force), our mauri (life force, vital essence), and our hauora (spirit of life, health), are implicitly woven inside the mana, the mauri and the hauora of our ngahere our tree places and our water places. If the ngahere - the places which bind all*

*together - and our water places are unwell, we are unwell. If the ngahere are cut down or poisoned and the wetlands are filled in and poisoned, and we cannot safely gather and eat healing kai from them, our health fails. If we restore and replant our forests, our ngahere, reflood our rivers and our rohe kōreporepo our swamps and wetlands, then we recover and restore our own mana, our own mauri and our own hauora.*

Ngāti Awa tohunga, Pouroto Ngaropo, tells us that

the world is in a state of being disconnected from whanau, those four things which make you who you are - our spiritual base, the whenua (the land where we come from), our ancestors and our family.

But the matrix we live in today is the physical world and the realm of making money. We have disconnected ourselves from the spiritual world, from the land we come from and from the ancestors.

### Human-centred, not integrated

Esther Woolfson in *Between Light and Storm*, says that over this vast territory physical, temporal, cultural and intellectual included in the term 'Western' half of the world, we've held a system of beliefs known as 'Scala Naturae' / 'Great Chain of Being'. This is derived from a fusion of biblical ideas, Greek philosophers and Christian theologians who assured the 'West' that being human gave us ascendancy over every other species and whatever was done to them or required of them as individuals or entire species, was justified, as everything was put on earth specifically for human benefit.

This belief has resulted in cruel inequity and the pollution and poisoning of the earth, the waters and the air - all of the natural world. These are the real



problems that we face.

Pope Francis talks about us living in a throwaway culture that generates an immense pile of filth. The poor displaced by rising oceans and diminishing natural resources crowd into cities to battle social breakdown and disease, while the rich, bombarded with trivia, live hamster-wheel lives in a bubble of consumerism and ignorance.

In *Laudato Si*, he teaches that our age has been dominated by a misguided anthropocentrism, which leads to a misguided lifestyle. When human beings place themselves at the centre, they give absolute priority to immediate convenience and this can result in the rise of a relativism, which sees everything as irrelevant unless it serves one's own immediate interests, resulting in both environmental degradation and social decay.

### Who are we?

Members of Te Wairua Maranga Trust, which publishes this paper, have since August 1989 been operating as a community following a Catholic Worker spirituality. We view the Treaty of Waitangi as our nation's founding covenant. We try, however inadequately at times, to live the Sermon on the Mount and its modern implications. We operate three houses of hospitality in Christchurch named after Suzanne Aubert, Joseph Cardijn and Thomas Merton. We offer hospitality to people in need either on a temporary or more permanent basis. We have a continuing outreach to a number of families offering friendship and support. We promote non-violence and a 'small is beautiful' approach to life, practise co-operative work and peace-making, focus on issues of justice, support prison ministry, help create intentional communities, and try to practise voluntary poverty and personalism.

We engage in regular prayer and we also celebrate a liturgy every Wednesday at 6:00 pm at the Suzanne Aubert House, 8A Cotterill St, Addington, (off Poulson St, near Church Square), followed by a shared meal. Anyone is welcome – phone Francis, 338-7105.

We do not seek funding from traditional sources. We hope to receive enough to keep our houses of hospitality open and our various works going. Catholic Worker houses do not issue tax receipts since they are running neither a business nor a church social agency. We invite people to participate personally and unconditionally. Should you wish to make a regular contribution, you may do so through our Te Wairua Maranga Westpac Trust holding account (number 031703-0036346-02). Donations may also be made to **Te Wairua Maranga Trust, Box 33-135, Christchurch.** *The Common Good:* Editor: Jim Consedine, [jim.conse@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jim.conse@xtra.co.nz). Layout: Barbara Corcoran burkespass@gmail.com.

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### A Spiritual Awakening

Job writes, 'Ask the beasts to teach you. The birds of the air to tell you, the plants of the earth to instruct you, the fish of the waters to inform you.' Job 12 7-10.

Fred Litwark tells the story of Raglan Harbour. In 1990, it had the worst fish count in Aotearoa. Local iwi, farmers, fisherfolk and gardeners acted together. Ten years later, Raglan Harbour had the highest fish count in Aotearoa, despite being told it would take 90 years!

Tuhoe tohunga James Waiwai states, 'The relationship we have with everything in the universe we have as potiki or the youngest sibling. Plants, insects, birds, fish created before humans are senior to us. Our relationship with everything in existence comes from that knowing, People are starting to wake up. The spiritual realm is using nature to reach out and tell us, be careful, don't forget your place.'

Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si*, nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. 'In today's world, hunger, violence and poverty cannot be understood apart from the changes and degradation affecting the environment.' We are part of nature, included in nature and in constant interaction with her. He invites us to rediscover the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. And the spiritual works, counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead.

On 1 September 2016, Pope Francis added, 'Care for nature, our common home', as the eighth corporal work of mercy, and 'Contemplation of nature, our common home,' as the eighth spiritual work of mercy.

### Conclusion

Through 'simple daily acts of mercy which break the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness', we contribute to healing the chaos present in the world. This can be our transformation through prayerful action and includes contemplation of and care for our environment. We can travel without polluting, garden and build without poisoning, replant native forest, re-flood wetlands.

When we act in concert and with nature, she gives us wings and change can happen exponentially.

—Kathleen Gallagher was a founding member of the Christchurch CW. Her film *Rohe Kōreporepo* is reviewed on page 11.

# Editorial 1 The Church's Social Dynamite

Our very first edition of *The Common Good* (Spring 1996) led with an article 'Dusting off the Church's Social Dynamite', which attempted to give, in the words of Catholic Worker co-founder Peter Maurin, an indication of what we were setting out to do in our quarterly paper. Referring to the Church's social teachings, Maurin had written in 1933, 'Scholars have taken the dynamite of the Church, have wrapped it in nice phraseology, placed it in a hermetic container and sat on the lid. It's about time to blow the lid off'.

It has been a humbling exercise to track back through the subsequent 98 editions of *The Common Good*, looking at stories which have attempted to 'take off the lid' on the Church's social dynamite and light a fuse. Every edition was set in prayer before we got started and often a small miracle turned up at the last minute to rescue an issue from collapse. But turn up it always did!

For 26 years, we have carried leading articles on issues of social justice including Parihaka, refugees, euthanasia, nuclear weapons, child poverty, the Covid pandemic, climate change and various environmental issues, NZ's high imprisonment rate and penal abolition, Waihopai and our Five Eyes entanglement, the Christchurch mosque attacks, the US Capitol insurrection, restorative justice, the necessity of forgiveness, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, our CW spirituality, voluntary poverty, the non-violent Jesus, APEC, the Church synodal process, apartheid in Israel and oppression of Palestinians, the infamous 'three-strikes' law, various Ploughshares disarmament actions, the immorality of international banking, and twice we ran copy from our beautiful late friend and wise guide, Sr Pauline O'Regan RSM, on the Church's call to take 'a preferential option for the poor', something she lived all her life.

In line with Dorothy Day's insight, with rare exception, we have avoided 'institutional Church' issues and focused always on igniting the gelignite in the Gospel for our time. That has enough power of its own! That said, in this 100th edition, at the invitation of Pope Francis, we have responded to his call to reflect on the future of a synodal Church of which we will be part (p5-7).

## Centenary Issue 100

In deciding what to lead with for this centenary issue, we felt that the most pressing social issue of the day needed to be highlighted once again - the plight of Mother Earth. Without a healthy planet, we are all

doomed to extinction. We have had huge wake-up calls from various reputable intergovernmental reports (the latest in August 2021) and most recently from the Glasgow climate summit, COP26, three months ago. They have issued dire warnings about the life on Planet Earth continuing to deteriorate if urgent action is not taken - now.

One of our most environmentally conscious Catholic Workers, filmmaker Kathleen Gallagher, was invited to write the lead article for this edition. Having just toured the country with her new film, *Rohe Koreporepo – the Swamp, the Sacred Place*. (cf Review, p11), she is in an ideal position to help us focus on what needs to be done to save the planet.

While I have done the editing, needless to say there is a committed team behind each publication which makes for a successful roll-out. Since the beginning, Francis Simmonds has co-ordinated the mailout, Sister Helen Goggin RSM was the last 'set of eyes' before printing (replaced recently by Maria Fresia), Barbara Corcoran our layout editor.

Tui Amahanga, her partner Mike and sister Natalie folded 550 individual copies, Sally Dunford, Mike French, Leonie Miller, John Ruane, Rex Knight, Carmen McIntyre, Mike Coughlan, Sister Judith Murphy RSM, Martin Gasting, Brian (Jock) McKenzie and Robert Consedine have all played important roles. Our friends at New Century Press, Bryce and Gemma, have helped keep prices down and been helpful allies in our printing, while Maree Williamson with great diligence has kept track of the labels and mailing list these past several years.

We are so grateful to those parish communities who have promoted *The Common Good* all these years. About 3000 are sent around the country and made available in so many parishes. We value and appreciate this support. Thank you.

We come to this 100th edition with hearts full of gratitude to God for the gift of faith which continues to nourish and guide us, for the strength of our little movement, for the loving support of so many CWs up and down the country and around the world, and for the generous affirmation from so many subscribers and supporters. *Deo gratias!*

— Jim Consedine



## Editorial 2 Desmond Tutu – a moral giant

The death in late December of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, aged 90, signalled the end of the life of one of the most important moral leaders of the past 100 years worldwide.

Famous for his opposition to the brutal apartheid regime in South Africa which he was subject to for much of his life, (and for which he was awarded the 1984 Nobel Peace prize), as a Christian leader for decades he challenged with courage and fortitude through the power of the Holy Spirit the separatist government and civil authorities of South Africa.

Even in the darkest days, he preached the message of Christian hope of the non-violent Jesus that all people were equal in God's eyes, regardless of race, class or colour. Justice for all meant just that - the abolition of apartheid and development of just social structures for all, including the poor, the marginalised, refugees and LGBTQ+ minorities. No one should be excluded. All were children of God made in God's image.

Among a wealth of images, I vividly recall him on the eve of national elections in September 1989 joining other Church leaders in a peaceful protest as Archbishop of South Africa outside St George's Cathedral in Cape Town. The police reacted viciously. People were beaten, teargassed and arrested (including him) for defying the law banning gatherings. What an image!

Arguably, this moment proved to be an important tipping point for the apartheid regime. Released from the cells, Tutu spent much of the night in prayer before next day calling on the people to defy the authorities and rally again. He said that God told him to do it. Three days later 30 000 people – from all races and backgrounds - marched peacefully through the city. The incoming de Klerk government wisely decided to withdraw the police and military who were nowhere to be seen. One senses that de Klerk intuited that the game was up. Five months later, 2 February 1990, he announced the unbanning of all political parties and the freeing of all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela.

Desmond Tutu hated injustice of any form. In later years, he became very critical of the ANC leadership for their corruption and their failure to live up to the Freedom Charter ideals that had inspired the struggle to bring transformation to his country. To him, all South Africans, especially the poorest, deserved better from a post-apartheid government.

### Israel's racism in Palestine

In more recent times, having visited Israel and Palestine, he became an outspoken opponent of the racist policies of the Israeli government. As early as 1989 he described Israel's treatment of Palestinians as 'worse than that suffered by black South Africans under apartheid'. He supported boycotts and disinvestment campaigns against Israel and called on the world 'to call Israeli's policies apartheid and to disinvest'.



He was a firm friend of New Zealand and visited in the 1980s, touring and speaking to thank ordinary people for their support over many years in the struggle against apartheid. He even gave evidence at a trial of a group of anti-Springbok tour activists as a defence witness. They were acquitted.

Arguably his most lasting legacy came after apartheid ended with the magnificent way he steered the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) through treacherous racial, class, religious and emotional minefields to help set in place an ongoing nonviolent pathway for the future. He was determined that it should not be based on revenge which could lead possibly to civil war, but on respect, forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing.

Only a man of enormous faith in God could do that. Such was his mana that he managed it when few thought it possible. Rejecting retributive justice, he saw the TRC as a process of restorative justice on a grand scale. The book he wrote subsequently, *Without Forgiveness - there is no future*, (1999), is a spiritual classic. It remains a fitting epitaph to his life and legacy.

Desmond Tutu was a prophetic Christian leader, a deeply prayerful and reflective man, a visionary with infectious joy and hope, a man who inspired not just a nation but the world. He stands among that smallish group of figures who have transcended national, religious, political, racial and moral divisions to leave the whole world a much better place for having lived.

May he rest in peace and his legacy live on.

— Jim Consedine

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# CW Synodal Response

## Dear Pope Francis,

*‘The purpose of the Synod, and therefore of this consultation, is not to produce documents, but to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another, create a bright resourcefulness that will enlightened minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands’ – Pope Francis*

Thank you for the invitation to be involved with preparations for the forthcoming Synod of Bishops. It has come at a critical time in the history of the planet and of the Church. We believe our Church needs a paradigm shift in its structures and approach to mission if it is to unleash the fullness of the Gospel message to our threatened planet. Our current tamed tired Church is often a hindrance to proper evangelisation.

As members of a longstanding Catholic Worker community, like you, we take as our starting point the mandate from God given to Jesus, recorded in Luke 4/18-19. *‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and give new sight to the blind, to free the oppressed, and announce the Lord’s year of mercy.’*

In so doing, sadly it seems we part company to a large degree with many for whom the Catholic tradition is wedded to the promotion of the Constantinian Church in the 4th century with all the compromises that went with that and subsequent developments.

### Context - a planet under siege

If we accept, as do most scientists and world religions including the Catholic Church, that everything is interconnected, that the whole of life forms a cloak of woven fabric with each part dependent on the other, that one strand unravelling can undo all the others, then we need to make these connections ourselves every day in every way.

The August 2021 *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report* (IPCCR) and the subsequent COP26 global climate summit in Glasgow have issued massive wake-up calls for the human community highlighting the damage we are continuing to do to the planet. Their warnings were stark, graphic, urgent. They came from the best sources – the IPCC Report reflecting the combined work over decades by more than 200 scientists from 60 countries, and COP26 bringing together the

world’s political leaders and the frontline groundwork of tens of thousands of climate activists and experts. They all agree we are living on a rapidly deteriorating planet.

### The People of God – a vision undermined

For many centuries, the Church has taught that its teaching authority was built on Scripture and Tradition. Yet the Church generally has failed to disseminate our up-to-date scholarship in these matters leading to them becoming largely irrelevant to modern minds.

The Decree on the Church agreed to at Vatican II was a transformational document, filled with challenges and alive with expectation. Along with other documents on ecumenism, the Church in the Modern World, the Laity, Liturgy, Religious freedom and Revelation, a new vision of Church emerged from the Council. Had it been implemented, it could have charted the Church on a road to a sustainable meaningful future in tune with the rapidly changing times and flowing from the initial mandate in Luke Ch 4 to Jesus and the practice of the early Church itself.

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***Nearly sixty years after the Council, the ignorance of the vast majority of Catholics of an in-depth understanding of scripture is appalling. We have failed to liberate them with the very Word that the early Church gave us as a vital tool. And the teachings on social justice, which form a substantial section of ‘the love of neighbour’ Tradition, have always been marginalised. They have proven to be too challenging.***

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Alas, the clerical powerbrokers decided to undermine this Vatican II model in subsequent years, minimising its implementation, resulting in the broken model we have today. Clericalism, condemned so often as one of the major sins of our time, re-asserted its powerful voice. With bureaucratic power centralised at the Roman centre, control by clergy has become almost absolute in some countries. Canon Law has become the guiding ‘bible’ of the Church, not the original guides: the Holy Spirit, sacred scripture and a dynamic Tradition.

The fallout has been dramatic. Nearly sixty years after the Council, the ignorance of the vast majority of Catholics of an in-depth understanding of scripture is appalling. We have failed to liberate them with the very Word that the early Church gave us as a vital tool. And the teachings on social justice, which form

a substantial section of 'the love of neighbour' Tradition, have always been marginalised. They have proven to be too challenging.

As the saintly and prophetic Cardinal Carlo Martini said in his final interview (NCR, 2013), *'The Church is 200 years behind the times. Why doesn't it stir? Are we afraid? Is it fear rather than courage? In any event, the faith is the foundation of the Church: faith, trust, courage. Only love defeats exhaustion. God is love. The Church is tired, in the Europe of well-being and in America. Our culture has become old, our churches and religious houses are big and empty, the bureaucratic apparatus of the Church grows, our rites and our dress are pompous. Do these things, however, express what we are today?'*

*'Well-being weights on us. We find ourselves like the rich young man who went away sad when Jesus called him to be a disciple. Theologian Karl Rahner often used the image of the embers hidden under the ash. I see in the Church today so much ash under the embers that often I'm hit with a sense of impotence. How can we liberate the members from the ash, to reinvigorate the fires of love?'*

### **A timid, ineffectual Church**

Catholicism has become largely irrelevant within the modern consumer culture. This is partly because we have not presented our message in ways that are transformative and have too often placed our emphasis on complicity with the culture. For too long, we have developed a corporate model of Church, rather than a sacramental model of community, with participation and spiritual growth at its centre. So, for example, money, control and appearance have grabbed centre stage instead of our care for the earth and the poor, witnessing to social justice, promoting community development and providing prophetic leadership.

We have failed since Vatican II to make the three-pronged approach necessary to an adult understanding of faith and commitment, where the teachings of Scripture and the Church's social teachings, (love of neighbour), sit alongside the dogmatic truths. The result is we have produced generations of Catholics inadequately grounded in the basics necessary for a life commitment to a Church built on Scripture and Tradition and capable of supporting its members and reaching out to the wider world.

Instead, many clergy have found it easier to foster a Church of supplementary devotional practices which in many dioceses take priority over the real food that truly nourishes. They fail to see that the Word becomes flesh only when it is not left as newsprint!

Church buildings have been used to protect medieval theology as if the divine presence wasn't manifest everywhere. And leadership has been left in the hands of celibate clergy too often with little understanding of family pressures and of the mature relationships needed to develop and expand Christian communities. We have often talked community without allowing people the tools and theology to develop it.

We have also become badly wounded by the sexual abuse scandals which have surface in recent decades and which, in some countries, have almost gutted the Church to a point beyond repair eg Ireland, Chile. Too often, we have failed to tackle the issue of abuse of power that clericalism portrays and simply tried to reshuffle the card pack to adjust and hope the problems might disappear. They won't. We haven't addressed the core problems associated with the abuse of power and underdeveloped sexuality. We still have structures in place and follow teachings that led to these scandals occurring in the first place.

To a considerable extent, we have also lost our sense of **sin and redemptive grace** to the point where our moral teachings are no longer meaningful to the average Catholic. We have always been clear about personal sexual ethics but failed miserably to recognise more prevalent and damaging sin in its structural forms.

We have virtually ignored the teachings of successive popes going back more than a century who have condemned unfettered capitalism, environmental degradation, war, the arms race, economic exploitation, racism and gender inequality as being unworthy of God's people. And we have failed to teach the non-violence and radical nature of Jesus and his teaching and highlight the presence of grace everywhere. Placing social justice at the heart of the nature of God as Vatican II did has proved too challenging for most.

### **Women in the Church**

Go to any parish in the world and the main force holding it together will be its women members. How ironic – considering how badly the official church structures have treated women over the centuries. Gospel accounts confirm that, beside the male apostles and disciples, Jesus was also accompanied (against the cultural norms of the time) by a group of women who alone remained as witnesses to his crucifixion when the men fled. In addition, they were the first to experience and proclaim the Risen Christ, even when they were doubted by the men.

One could even argue that they fulfilled the criteria for apostleship far better than the chosen Twelve! They clearly played a leading part in the early Church.

Yet, in subsequent centuries, their role has been discounted in the official tradition that has historically affirmed the authority of an all-male sacramental and governance leadership.

Even in the face of a hugely influential modern women's movement, we have continued a patriarchal power structure to limit women's full recognition and participation. In the wider world, such male structures are maintained now only by groupings like the Taliban and Isis and in countries like Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iran. How dare we claim as they do that this discrimination somehow has divine authority?

While cultural arguments about the roles of men and women may have held sway in earlier centuries, this clearly is no longer the case. Yet we continue to deny women full participation in sacramental and governance roles in the church. In so doing, we are continuing to treat women as second-class members. This is sinful.

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Among many things, for the past 50 years, the Church has been tone-deaf in the matter of inclusive language about which we still have insulting debates. Our credibility has been shot to pieces by self-inflicted wounds. The miracle is that any women at all have stayed with the Church!

### **Transformative**

But stay many have because they, like many men including a strong minority of priests, have found within the tradition, despite its shortcomings, a road to holiness in a message of life and hope for our times. Many Christians in their discipleship journeys still find and commit to the transformative message Jesus brought.

They meet the Risen Christ in their daily lives and seek to find in a hopefully nourishing community a source of grace, support and transforming love. They recognise how essential belonging to a collective ecclesial community is for the development and sustenance of their faith. Their response to the question of St Peter, 'to whom do we go?' is the same

as his to Jesus – 'you have the words of eternal life'. They stay and they persevere.

Ministries should not be controlled by gender. Both women and men, through their baptism, qualify for such roles. Other Christian Churches – including both Protestant and Anglican - have already pioneered the way forward and opened their ministries to all. The Catholic Church is called to humbly acknowledge these ground-breaking prophetic journeys others have undertaken, learn from them and implement similar appropriate changes.

### **Conclusions**

Just as the tectonic plates of the earth shift from time to time and bring about realignment, so do the Catholic Church's structural plates need a paradigm shift at this time. Our planet is in crisis. So is our Church. Our Catholic tradition of Church continues to ignore many signs of the times and the desperate need for change.

For the first time in centuries, as pope you have created a *Kairos* moment of opportunity to change before it is too late. Thank you. We dare not squander it.

## *Catholic Worker Community*

Christchurch, New Zealand.

### **expanding hearts**

hearts are intricate vessels  
the size of a sausage roll  
or a lunchtime pie  
bought from the local dairy

compact vital pumps  
sacred, cosmically aligned  
these memory banks  
can be shining lamps  
burning mid-night oil  
guiding human behaviour

inclusive, ever-expanding  
lenses for love and justice  
open hearts can transcend  
even the widest oceans

— Jim Consedine

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# Dorothy Day – Saint and Troublemaker

Jim Forest



I was 20 years old the first time I saw Dorothy Day in 1960. She was ancient, that is to say, 62 years old. I met her at the Catholic Worker Farm on Staten Island in the days when the island still had rural areas, its only link to the rest of New York City being the

ferry. People sometimes think of her as the personification of the simple life, but in reality, her days tended to be busy, complicated, and stressful. Often she was away traveling — visiting other Catholic Worker communities; speaking at colleges, seminaries, local parishes; getting around by bus or a used car on its last spark plugs.

Her basic message was stunningly simple: we are called by God to love one another as God loves us. If God was one key word for her, hospitality was another. She often repeated a saying from the early Church, ‘Every home should have a Christ room in it, so that hospitality may be practiced.’ ‘Hospitality,’ she explained, ‘is simply practicing God’s mercy with those around us. Christ is in the stranger, in the person who has nowhere to go and no one to welcome him. Those who cannot see the face of Christ in the poor are atheists indeed,’ she often said.

She helped us understand a merciful life has many levels: There is hunger not only for food, but also for faith; not only for a place at the table, but also for a real welcome; not only for assistance, but also for listening; not only for kind words, but also for truthful words. There is not only hospitality of the door, but also hospitality of the face and heart. As she said, ‘We are here to celebrate Christ through these works of mercy.’

If she was one of the freest persons alive, she was also one of the most disciplined. This was most notable in her religious life. Whether traveling or home, it was a rare day when Dorothy didn’t go to Mass, and she went to confession weekly.

Occasionally she spoke of her praying: ‘We feed the hungry, yes. We try to shelter the homeless and give them clothes, but there is strong faith at work; we pray. If an outsider who comes to visit us doesn’t pay attention to our praying and what that means, then he’ll miss the whole point.’

Dorothy was never too polite to speak about God. Nothing we achieved was ever our doing, it was only God’s mercy passing through us. Our own love wasn’t our love. If we experienced love for another

person, whether wife or child or friend or enemy, it was God’s love. ‘If I have accomplished anything in my life,’ she said late in her life, ‘it is because I wasn’t embarrassed to talk about God.’

## CW life 1960s

One of the miracles of Dorothy’s life is that she remained part of a conflict-torn community for nearly half a century. Still more remarkable, she remained a person of hope and gratitude to the end.

People sometimes tell me how lucky I am to have been part of the same community that Dorothy Day belonged to. They picture a group of more or less saintly people having a wonderful time doing good works. In reality, Catholic Worker community life in Manhattan in the early sixties, had much in common with purgatory. The staff was made up of people with very different backgrounds, interests, temperaments, and convictions. We ranged from the gregarious to the permanently furious.

Dorothy was and remains a controversial lady. There was hardly anything she did which didn’t attract criticism. Even hospitality scandalizes some people. We were blamed for making people worse, not better, because we were doing nothing to reform them. A social worker asked Dorothy one day how long the down-and-out were permitted to stay. ‘We let them stay forever,’ Dorothy answered. ‘They live with us, they die with us, and we give them a Christian burial. We pray for them after they are dead. Once they are taken in, they become members of the family. Or rather they always were members of the family. They are our brothers and sisters in Christ.’

What got her into hot water the most was her sharp social criticism. She pointed out that patriotism was a more powerful force in most people’s lives than the Gospel. While she hated every kind tyranny and never ceased to be thankful for America having taken in so many people fleeing poverty and repression, she was fierce in her criticism of capitalism and consumerism. She said America had a tendency to treat people like Kleenex; use them and throw them away. ‘Our problems’, she often said, ‘stem from our acceptance of this filthy, rotten system.’

She had no kind words for war or anything having to do with it war. It was simply murder wrapped in flags. She was convinced Jesus had disarmed all his followers when he said to Peter, ‘Put away your sword, for whoever lives by the sword will perish by the sword.’ A way of life based on love, including



love of enemies, left no room for killing. You couldn't practice the works of mercy with one hand and the works of vengeance with the other.

No stranger to prison, she was first locked up as a young woman protesting with suffragettes in front of the White House during World War I and was last jailed in her seventies for picketing with farm workers.

Dorothy Day's main achievement is that she taught us the 'Little Way of Love', which it so happens, involves cutting up a great many onions. The path to heaven, it seems, is marked by open doors and the smell of onions. 'All the way to heaven is heaven,' she often said, quoting Saint Catherine of Siena — 'because Jesus said, I am the Way.' It was chiefly through the writings of Saint Therese of Lisieux that Dorothy had been drawn to the spirituality of 'the Little Way'. No term, in her mind,

better described the ideal Christian way of life.

It's more than a century since Dorothy Day was born and nearly forty-two years since she died, but she continues to touch our lives, not only as a person we remember with gratitude, but also as a saint, if by the word 'saint' we mean a person who helps us see what it means to follow Christ.

It is the living from day to day, she once said, taking no thought for the morrow, seeing Christ in all who come to us, and trying literally to follow the Gospel that resulted in this work.

*Jim Forest was a former managing editor of the Catholic Worker, internationally acclaimed writer, former Secretary-General of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (1977-88) and lifelong pacifist. He died 13 January 2022 in the Netherlands, aged 80.*

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## US military budget is an affront to God

Art Laffin

In Advent season, as we prepared to celebrate the birth of Jesus our saviour, the Prince of Peace, the US Congress passed a bill that prepares the way for more suffering, death and destruction.

In December, the Senate passed the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, authorizing an enormously expanded military budget which, according to *Democracy Now*, is the largest military spending bill since World War II.

In this time of pandemic and peril, when the ranks of the poor and homeless are increasing; when basic human services are being cut; when inadequate measures are taken to halt the climate crisis; when millions worldwide lack the basic necessities of life and die prematurely, this exorbitant military spending is an affront to God and a colossal crime against the poor. It reinforces a system of white supremacy and domination nationally and globally, while increasing the profits of weapons contractors and arms dealers.

Fabricated national security threats from Russia and China are being promulgated by US officials to justify this dramatic spending increase. The truth is that the Pentagon is committed to military domination on earth and space, and it will spend whatever is necessary and use whatever military force is needed to achieve its imperial aims.

The 70 congressional representatives who voted against this bill are to be commended, along with the many religious communities and grassroots groups and organizations who are actively working to convert the war economy and bring about racial, economic, environmental and social justice and the abolition of war and all weapons. But where is the

massive public outcry regarding this misappropriation of money and resources? Why haven't the US bishops, leaders of all faith denominations and the people of God everywhere unequivocally denounced this immoral military spending bill?

Over 50 years ago, Martin Luther King Jr. declared: 'A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defence than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.'

Pope Francis has called for the creation of a new international fund that would reappropriate 'the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures in order to permanently eliminate hunger and contribute to the development of the poorest countries.'

Now is the time for all followers of Jesus to embrace Gospel nonviolence, resist all violence and killing, and stand for life and creation wherever they are threatened. Now is the time to rise up and demand an end to this sinful misuse of resources for weapons, war, the exploitation of the earth's resources, the destruction of the environment for profit, and political and economic domination!

During this holy season let us follow Jesus's peacemaking mandate and act in the hope that he prescribes: 'All things are possible for one who has faith.'

—Art Laffin is a member of the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker in Washington, D.C.

## Obituary Desmond Tutu (1931-2021)

Cape Town,  
South Africa  
30th December 2021

Dear Jim,

This morning was a deeply moving experience for me in many respects. I had the privilege to be part of the guard of honour of cassocked clergy to receive the mortal remains of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the world's Archbishop, arriving for the last time at the People's Cathedral.

Then there was an opportunity one by one to kneel and pray in front of the cheapest available (as he had requested) unvarnished coffin, with rope handles. As I prayed that our beloved Arch rests in peace...if he is not busy telling jokes to Madiba (Nelson Mandela) and passing angels...my heart was filled with grief and gratitude.

He will remain lying in state in front of the high altar till the end of the State Funeral tomorrow. I was also touched when two of the Arch's daughters walked across to hug me and even a brief moment to greet Mama Leah Tutu.

Yesterday, I was recalling a particular experience with the Arch. After my bombing by the apartheid state 'security forces' in Zimbabwe in 1990, I spent seven months in two Australian hospitals. On my return to Zimbabwe, I went to see my bishop. He looked surprised to see me. He said, 'but you are disabled now, what can you do?' When I said, 'I can drive a car,' the bishop looked terrified. I said, 'I think I can be more of a priest with no hands than I ever was with two hands.' By sharp contrast, Archbishop Tutu said, 'come and work in my diocese. I have one priest who is blind, one who is deaf and now, one with



no hands, Wow.' One bishop saw me as a liability. The Arch saw me as an asset. Both good people but wearing different spectacles.

The Arch believed in the work of the Institute for Healing of Memories and at a critical moment in our history, helped us survive. He was our patron in word and deed.

I have been thinking about how even in death he has been showering the whole world with gifts. Across the planet we have been telling Tutu stories. When was the last time the world focussed on the relationship between spirituality and justice, especially restorative and transformative justice?

Tutu's life is an invitation to spend time alone with our Creator every day and then out of the depths of our spirituality to act in solidarity with those at the margins.

Like millions of others, I am a better person because of his presence in my life. He has become part of who I am, albeit a pale reflection

I resolve to pray and be silent more and to work for justice regardless of whether the cause is popular or not. The Arch lives.

—Michael Lapsley SSM

## Obituary Richard (Dick) Keough (1934-2022)

Richard (Dick) Keough of Syracuse, NY has died. He passed away peacefully on Saturday, January 8, 2022.

In 1993, after the ANZUS Ploughshares action against nuclear-prepared planes at the Griffiths Air Force base in Syracuse, Catholic Worker Moana Cole of Christchurch with four others was arrested. While on bail and during the 3-week trial, she and Jim Consedine were billeted with Dick and Mary Keough and their family, who provided first rate hospitality.

As a parishioner at St Lucy's parish on Syracuse's Near Westside, Dick preached frequently on Jesus'

call to love one another and often ended his homilies with, 'stop the killing.'

He organized two Peace Walks, one in 1995 in New York State that was to reflect on the devastation caused by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and another in 1997 in Ireland to bring reconciliation and honour to the victims of the Potato Famine.

His first act of civil disobedience was in 1970 at the NYS Fair, where he painted symbols of peace on tanks; he believed that the fair was a place to celebrate life not death. Dick participated in numerous non-violent protests. He was inspired by his faith to draw

attention to injustices in our community and throughout the world. He was one of the founding members of the Oxford Inn, a shelter for homeless men in Syracuse and a supporter of Unity Acres in Orwell, NY. He was a member of Pax Christi and created a campaign in 1997 to declare Syracuse a Human Sanctuary to combat gun violence.

Dick's faith was the driving force in his life, and he acted on that faith courageously and with relentless dedication. Dick and his wife, Mary, were profoundly

committed to hospitality, opening their hearts and their home to many in need over the years. When Mary founded Sarah's Guest House in 1994, Dick was her partner in all aspects of the hospital hospitality house.

In recognition of his life of service, with Mary he was awarded the Dorothy Day Award in 2003 and the Brady Faith Award in 2006. May he rest in peace. Richard (Dick) Keough – *Presente!*

## Film Review

**Film Review - ROHE KOREPOREPO - The Swamp, The Sacred Place, a film by Kathleen Gallagher, directed by Kathleen Gallagher and Kate Goodwin, 70 minutes. Reviewer: Mary Lynch**

Kathleen Gallagher's latest film is a stunner and has inspired and challenged me to take more interest in our land, our place. I grew up in Ireland in the 1950s when the vast bogs in the centre of the country produced untold tonnes of turf each year to fuel our fires. Swamp and wetlands absorbing thousands of years of carbon dioxide and creating fuel.

Before being absorbed into *Rohe Koreporepo*, I did not really understand the importance of the swamp in filtering the water run-off of the land, of purifying water before it flows into our rivers. I enjoyed visiting the wetlands in and around Christchurch, marvelling at the variety of wildlife and relishing the peaceful tranquillity of the areas. But I was ignorant of their importance in the survival ecology of Otautahi Christchurch and Aotearoa New Zealand.

As always, Kathleen's film is far more than just a lesson in climate change. It is a beautiful exploration of nature, of creation. *Rohe Koreporepo* tracks and celebrates the restoration of our wetlands. It acknowledges our destructive past while opening up the potential for our future survival. Our swamps store carbon, create the environment for diversity of plant and animal life and are very much part of the solution to the threat of global warming.

Kathleen introduced us to many of the kaitiaki of *The Swamp, The Sacred Place*. We met guardians of the land whose whanau are integral to these places. We met men and women of all ages and from one end of NZ to the other, who are working with passion to undo our thoughtless destruction carried out in the name of progress and development. We met scientists who are climate experts who shared their expertise

with gentle encouragement.

As we travelled the length of New Zealand, Kathleen put us in touch with the past, grounded us in the present and opened up the wonderful vista of a future where the wetlands are restored. As Ropata McGowan says, 'if our water places are unwell, that diminishes us and we become unwell. If we restore our rohe koreporepo (wetlands) and they become healthy again, we too recover our mana, our mauri and our hauora.'

—*The film is available from wickcandle.co.nz, ph +6433329192. Accompanying book from Scorpio Books, Christchurch.*

## Letter

St Francis and Therese CW  
Worcester, MA  
December 2021

Dear Jim,

Peace! The latest *The Common Good* was hot stuff indeed. I liked your article on Covid and Climate. I also appreciated your editorial on vaccination. Opposition to vaccination seems so dangerous. I was also glad to see you take up the cause of the Palestinians. We have raised their cause many times, but not lately. Keep up your fine work and witness.

Greetings for Christmas,

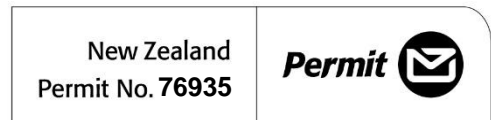
*Scott Schaeffer-Duffy*

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*Read The Common Good online at <http://wp.catholicworker.org.nz/the-common-good/>*

***The Common Good***

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



***A moral universe***

This is a *moral* universe, which means that, despite all the evidence that seem to be to the contrary, there is no way that evil and injustice and oppression and lies can have the last word. God is in charge. That is what had upheld the morale of our people, to know that in the end good will prevail. It was these higher laws that convinced me that our peaceful struggle would topple the immoral laws of apartheid.

—Desmond Tutu, *God has a Dream* (2004)