

The Common Good

Taking a Preferential Option for the Poor

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Nonviolence – the Way of Jesus

Jim Consedine

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in the final part of his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in 1984, put the case for the nonviolence of Jesus to the world when he said,

‘When will we learn that human beings are of infinite value because they have been created in the image of God, and that it is a blasphemy to treat them as if they were less than this and to do so ultimately recoils on those who do this? In dehumanizing others, they are themselves dehumanized. Perhaps oppression dehumanizes the oppressor as much as, if not more than, the oppressed. They need each other to become truly free, to become human. We can be human only in fellowship, in community, in koinonia, in peace.

Let us work to be peacemakers, those given a wonderful share in Our Lord’s ministry of reconciliation. If we want peace, so we have been told, let us work for justice. Let us beat our swords into ploughshares.’

Here is a man, a world famous archbishop no less, whose cathedral was bombed, his home, family and wellbeing repeatedly threatened, but who faced down the teargas and beatings common on the streets during the apartheid era in South Africa and refused to compromise the teachings of the nonviolent Jesus and the gospels. What a Christ-like response to violence. Don’t compromise! Stand firm! Pay the price!

Pope Francis on nonviolence

This understanding of the nonviolence of Jesus is one shared by Pope Francis. In his World Day of Peace letter, 1st January 2017, Francis issued the first comprehensive statement on nonviolence from the Catholic Church – in its 2000-year history!

He said that ‘Jesus lived and taught nonviolence,’ which Francis calls ‘a radically positive approach.’ He went on, ‘Jesus unfailingly preached God’s unconditional



Pat Marrin

Francis writes, ‘To be true followers of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence.’

Francis urges, ‘that we need to make active nonviolence our way of life’, and that nonviolence become our new style of politics. ‘I ask God to help all of us to cultivate nonviolence in our most personal thoughts and values. May charity and nonviolence govern how we treat each other as individuals, within society and in international life.’

The cleansing of the temple*

When preaching the nonviolence of Jesus, there is often a problem explaining his overturning of the moneylenders’ tables in the Temple. It is one of the few occasions recorded where Jesus expressed anger. But if we understand context, we can see clearly that rather than being interpreted as a blessing for violence, this should be interpreted as an act of nonviolent civil disobedience. There is no hint that anyone was hurt and one would need a whip-type cord to drive the oxen and other animals out –



if that is what happened.

In Luke, Mark and Matthew's version, it is a Holy Week event in the last week of his ministry, not the first. Jesus had arrived on a donkey to the acclamation of the crowds and gone to the temple to pray and preach – and found it to harbour 'a den of thieves.' The wording is similar in each version. Driven no doubt by the anger he felt at the desecration of the Temple in this way, he upended their tables and 'drove them out'. It seems factual that Jesus did an action that drove the merchants and bankers out of the temple, on the basis that 'it was his father's house.'

Writing 60 years after the event, John's slightly longer version is the only place where whips and cords are mentioned. The cleansing in John is recorded, not in Holy Week, but in Chapter 2 immediately after the wedding feast at Cana – at the very start, not the end, of his public ministry. It takes place in order to make a statement and pave the way to the nonviolent revolutionary message that Jesus was to preach for the following three years. With this action, he drew a line in the sand as to what was acceptable 'to the living temple,' he himself was to become, which is how John presents him.

John Dear – apostle of nonviolence

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.. Layout: Barbara Corcoran burkespass@gmail.com.

www.catholicworker.org.nz

The modern-day prophet, priest and frequently arrested and often imprisoned peacemaker, Fr John Dear writes, 'the fact that Jesus would have violently hurt animals or people would be entirely inconsistent with the Jesus portrayed throughout John's Gospel, as well as the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus was nonviolent from Cana to the Cross and back to Galilee. With such spectacular nonviolence, one cannot even imagine Jesus striking the poor animals. Indeed, he was liberating them from their impending execution!'

He suggests that this one Temple incident has been used to justify countless massacres, crusades, wars and even nuclear weapons. He asks whether perhaps we want Jesus to have some trace of violence in order to justify our own violence!

He suggests that this one Temple incident has been used to justify countless massacres, crusades, wars and even nuclear weapons. He asks whether perhaps we want Jesus to have some trace of violence in order to justify our own violence! Perhaps we desperately hope he was violent so we can dismiss his teachings and act violently, wage war and build nuclear weapons guilt free.

He points out that John, like the other three gospel writers, has an underlying agenda with his writing. He invokes the punch line: 'Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days.' Jesus is the new temple and he will rise, John teaches. This is why the action in the temple in John has a different contextual meaning to that of the three Synoptic writers.

John Dear concludes that it is clear from the basic underlying agenda in Mark, Matthew, and Luke that Jesus organizes the poor and disenfranchised in Galilee and then heads toward Jerusalem on a walking campaign of nonviolence. He enters the city riding on a donkey in a peace march, cases the Temple, and the next day, engages in peaceful civil disobedience by turning over the tables of the money changers and preventing people from coming and going. After denouncing this 'den of robbers,' Jesus teaches the good news of love, compassion and justice. In contrast, in the other Gospels there is no mention of a whip, no talk of violence, no notice of the animals. The whole event probably lasted a mere five minutes.

John Dear concludes, 'As anyone who has engaged in nonviolent civil disobedience knows, the temple cleansing was classic symbolic direct action. And it needed to be done. It was a challenging symbolic confrontation with power being abused.' At its most sacred site.

Conclusion

The critical question is – which Jesus do we follow? The saccharine Jesus of many established churches, the tabloids and popular culture, or the biblical nonviolent Jesus who started a revolutionary nonviolent movement and continues to lead us to rich empowerment in our lives via service, the Cross and the Empty Tomb?

*Temple cleansing - Jn 2/13-16; Mk 11/15-17; Mt 21/12-16; Lk 19/45-47

Editorial 1 An Advent like no other

In the year that Covid-19 has shaken up the world order, postponed national elections, stunted many economies, killed hundreds of thousands of people, made tens of millions sick, pushed even more out of work and into dole queues, placed political leaders and the medical profession under a daily spotlight like no other time in modern history, we come to celebrate Christmas – the birth of God incarnate into the world in human form.

Is there anything worthwhile to celebrate, one may ask? With our fragile planet under increasing stress due to exploitation and environmental degradation, it seemed inevitable sooner rather than later that some event would emerge which would call the world to pause and reflect on the most basic of questions: What is life all about? How do we lead it meaningfully? What has been going wrong? Why so much injustice? Where does my neighbour fit in? What part should nature and the environment play in our human existence?

Thank God it was not a nuclear war, our biggest fear of the past 75 years, that caused us to rethink! That is still a possibility, given the incredible destructive weaponry held by the nuclear powers. The Doomsday clock has crept ever closer to midnight these past few years under the threat posed by current world nuclear-powered leaders – Xi Jinping, Boris Johnson, Benjamin Netanyahu, Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump.

Rather than a giant nuclear explosion killing millions in an instance, who would have thought the catalyst to taihoa and re-jig our priorities would be the opposite in size – the tiniest invisible virus imaginable which has the proven capacity to bring the world to its knees? Less than 12 months ago, we would never have believed it.

The birth of Jesus

Two thousand years ago, the birth of Jesus was a revolutionary divine entrance into a world dominated by a brutal occupying power, the Roman Empire. Rome ruled its colonies by violence. Jesus was born into that culture where fear dominated life at every level. After some years, he emerged as a brave, talented and courageous leader, a

great sign of hope to his followers.

His teachings were radical – love and nonviolence were God’s pathway to a full life. He would face down the violence and might of Rome not by taking up arms but by proposing a new way of living whereby every person is treated as a precious child of God. Love, justice, compassion, mercy and forgiveness were the guiding principles.

His movement would be led by the most disaffected, those with the least status. Women and the poor, including fisherfolk, cripples, the blind, the unemployed, ignored in society for their poverty and powerlessness, became the bearers of his radical message – that the only power worthwhile was the power of love. Every other semblance of power – status, wealth, position, physical presence, health, wellbeing, and education – was illusionary unless placed in the service of love.

As an adult, he received his mandate directly from God as confirmed in the scriptures, ‘to bring good news to the poor, liberty to captives, sight to the blind, and announce that God is among you’. (Lk 4) It was a message that God’s Reign was under way already in our midst, a message of hope and liberation for the people, but one that placed his own life under constant threat. Eventually he paid the ultimate price – arrest, a mock trial and death by crucifixion.

Where to this Advent?

As Christian disciples of Jesus in modern times, we have been left with the same mandate of the Gospels to live out in our lives. We are offered the same hope, the same Spirit of divine insight, who has guided believers through major crises in the past and will do so again. Unlike the early disciples, we have also been given a marvellous array of teachers and scholars, as well as a crowd of courageous witnesses, to walk with us and guide us.

This Advent, we are not alone.

—Jim Consedine

Editorial 2 An opportunity missed

Pope Francis, in his latest encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, teaches that it is ‘very difficult’ to continue to hold to the Church’s ‘just war’ theory because nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and new technological combat systems have granted war an uncontrollable destructive power. War is never a solution because its risks will always be greater than its supposed benefits. Civilians are all too often innocent victims.

Why equivocate? Why not ban ‘just war’ thinking completely? Why not strengthen and expand teachings on nonviolence and pacifism, the original Christian positions?

Why can’t the modern Church, so clear in many moral

stands, return to the teaching of Jesus and what it taught for its first 300 years, that war is always wrong, violence is sinful, and followers of Jesus may not support erroneous beliefs to the contrary?

With the world arguably in its most dangerous state due to inequality, political instability, and arms build-up, could our teaching not have been made clearer? Is it not time to return to the teachings of Jesus and our earliest tradition of pacifism of the first three centuries of the Church?

This is an opportunity missed.

—Jim Consedine

Mosque verdict – unanswered questions

Jeph Mathias

On August 27, for the first time in New Zealand, a man was sentenced to life without parole. Grieving relatives, journalists, our eloquent and humane Prime Minister, legal experts – everyone, in fact – applauded. Our message to Muslims, immigrants, everyone on the margins, is that New Zealanders reject, no repudiate, hatred and violence against anyone. Bringing to a close our darkest of days, this sentence lets us move on. Except ...

Unanswered questions gnaw into a neat story. Firstly, the impact. Ninety-one victims' relatives spilled their complex humanity out before the court, before the country. In an often cathartic process some spoke of closure, others validation from being heard, some shouted angrily, several called him cowardly, a few voiced forgiveness, all grieved. They are not the only victims.

On March 15, 2019 I was working in the Himalayas. News of murderous religious and racial profiling in Christchurch was like bitter seeds from Bosnia, Rwanda and Northern Ireland falling in my Garden City. 'No!' I silently screamed as something in me died. I needed Jacinda Ardern or a Māori elder in court voicing my grief, our collective loss. I felt unheard.

Four days and it was done. Looking the killer in the eye, Justice Mander detailed drone-assisted plans, indiscriminate cruelty, lack of remorse and almost no mitigating circumstances. 'Your crime without precedent,' he intoned, "deserves a sentence without precedent ... life without parole." Case closed.

Dealing with evil hypocritically

For accountability, denouncement, deterrence and protecting the community, the sentence is absolutely right. But ... In 1985, when I was doing biological research on a Kenyan mountainside, one tiny column inch in a local newspaper told of a bombing in Auckland harbour. That terrorism was meticulously planned too. The masterminds showed no remorse for killing a Greenpeace photographer to protect European supremacist rights to test obscene nuclear weapons in distant lands. France desecrated New Zealand, Tahiti and justice that day. Something in me died.

Oh, for a legal process for terrorist governments, super-powers and tin-pot dictatorships alike. Citizens' impact reports should be heard and judges should read out crimes, call them evil and impose severe sanctions. The real world doesn't work that way. Back then France threatened NZ with EEC sanctions, we handed the killers back, France released them. Case closed. We moved on – rugby against Les Bleus then, grovelling for trade and tourism with the USA and Britain now, despite Iraq. If Julian Assange is extradited from Britain this month he might get 175 years without parole for Wikileaksing the USA's dirty politics and filthy weaponry used to invade countries and kill Muslims. Ah, but UN Security Council permanent members are more powerful than lone Australians, and justice, it transpires, answers to power, not truth.

The mosque killer stays in prison until 'his last gasp',

said Jacinda Ardern. If anyone deserves that, surely he does. Yet we can't lock up the bigger questions. Why did his world, my world, routinely pair 'Muslim' with 'terrorist'? Did pictures of men chained and humiliated in orange jumpsuits warp his brain? George W Bush went untried after his helicopter gunships killed Afghan women and children on video. Obama got a Nobel Peace prize after keeping Guantanamo open and adding killer drones. We repudiate the mosque killer yet stood by as Blair's soldiers killed Muslims in oil-rich Iraq. Blair is still at large, Bush too.

New Zealand, my New Zealand, self-righteously cancelled cricket with Mugabe's Zimbabwe but happily hosted the British and Irish Lions, twice. We desperately chase trade with China despite atrocities against Uighurs and welcome British and American tourists until their last dollar. It's the economy, speaking power to truth.

Him and Us – the difference?

'You are not us,' said Jacinda Ardern, vowing never to use the killer's name. Life without parole is us saying 'Disappear, unseen, unheard, unthought of. For you, redemption is impossible'. It's the death penalty for a country that doesn't believe in the death penalty.

But he is us. The difference between the killer and my darkest self is but the difference between shades of jet black. I stereotype 'consumeristic Americans', stay silent in the face of casual sexism, see systemic racism in India or Aotearoa and turn away. I don't speak my small truth to power by boycotting the Orwellian state that calls kidnap 'extraordinary rendition' and torture 'enhanced interrogation'. If I look into myself I see everyday acts of violence, cowardice, discrimination, exclusion and collusion. As much as him I need redemption, courage and hope. *'Je suis Brenton! You too'*.

Some years ago as an ED doctor here in Christchurch, my Ōtautahi, an unconscious white skinhead who had overdosed was my patient. 'F... off Blacks' was irredeemably tattooed on his forehead. Resuscitation came first but later I was treating him, not just his physiology.

Satisfied he was safe, I wrote a discharge summary, advised him to see his GP, and gave him helpline numbers. Cheerily thumbs-upping he said 'Thanks Doc' and slunk back to his small world. I'm ethnically Indian, but he didn't see my colour. I saw hope for redemption.

For me the mosque case is not tucked neatly away in a small cell forever. Uncomfortably 'unclosed', its big themes – redemption, collusion, silence, truth and power – lie wide open inside me, to my last gasp.

Jeph Mathias, a New Zealand doctor and international development specialist, moved back to Christchurch from the Indian Himalayas with the advent of Covid-19. He and his family attend the CW Wednesday weekly liturgies. This article is reprinted from The Press, 10 September 2020.

Around the Traps

Pat Crawford's diamond jubilee – We take great pleasure in congratulating Fr Pat Crawford on his 60th anniversary of ordination. Pat has always been a great supporter of the Catholic Worker in Christchurch and is much admired for his visionary theology, his generous heart and sense of justice. *Ad multos annos*, Pat!

New birth - We are delighted to announce the arrival of our baby boy, Francis Puawai Briggs Leason. He was born at the Paraparaumu birthing centre on Saturday 1st August at 12.45pm. We are especially grateful for the support of our amazing midwife Sahra, and for the prayers of so many of you all over the last days and weeks. He is a beautiful wee lad. A tremendous kicker right through pregnancy, a talent which helped him in his journey into Te Ao Marama. We feel incredibly blessed to have Francis in our lives.

—Jack Leason and Hanneke Lewthwaite

#Grant McLeod RIP. With sadness we record the death in late October of an old friend, Grant McLeod. Grant and his family were regulars at our Christmas gatherings. Jim and Francis presided at his funeral in Christchurch.

#Requiescat in Pace. On 24 October 2020 Mrs Louise Cecilia Corcoran (Cec to all who loved her) died in Liverpool, UK. Cec celebrated her 100th birthday in February with friends and family from near and far, only to find a few weeks later that Covid required lockdown in her home of 95 years. A lifelong socialist and devout Catholic, Cec regularly asked her daughter-in-law Barbara how *The Common Good* was faring and read and shared each issue.

#Driven to extinction. Almost three billion koalas, kangaroos, reptiles, birds and other wildlife are estimated to have been killed or displaced in the bushfires which swept through Australia from September to March, according to The World Wide Fund for Nature. This was enough to drive some species to extinction. It is estimated 143 million mammals, 2.4 billion reptiles, 180 million birds and 51 million frogs were killed or displaced. The fires were comparable to the worst fires to have hit the natural world, such as the Exxon Valdez in Alaska in 1989 and the Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill in Mexico in 2010.

The Times, 29 July 2020

Child Poverty in NZ – Currently, 254 000, or 23 per cent, of our children live in low-income households, with 148 000 experiencing material hardship, defined as going without six or more essentials for a decent standard of living, including adequate food, warm clothing and appropriate shoes. *The Press*, 22 August 2020

No water - In cities and rural areas worldwide, the lives of many women and children revolve around fetching water. About 2.2 billion people — more than one-quarter of the world's population — do not have safe water piped to their homes, according to the World Health Organization, and 3 billion lack basic facilities for washing their hands. And that's in the middle of a health crisis in

which handwashing is a key preventive measure!

EarthBeat, NCR, 4 Sept 2020

The US spends 55% of its discretionary budget on the military, more than the next top seven countries combined. Add together the defense budgets for China, Saudi Arabia, Russia, India, UK, France, and Japan, and the tally still falls well below what our government doles out to the Pentagon each year: nearly \$700 billion in 2020.

That staggering allotment apparently does not satisfy. In February, President Trump proposed a defense budget of \$740 billion for fiscal year 2021. There are, after all, foreign bases (nearly 800 around the world) to maintain, a Space Force to design and develop, weapons contractors to satiate. . . . The killing list goes on and on. In a country where war is an open-ended proposition, the line items for the military's budget can be extensive.

Claire Schaeffer-Duffy, NCR November 2020

nor'wester

on a spring evening at dusk
hundreds of sea-birds wheel
soaring above New Brighton dunes
buffeted by their old foe
a Canterbury nor'wester
visiting from the Coast
dry as a Saharan desert
bringing havoc to the seas
white, choppy, angry
eating away at the shoreline
mother nature's
ten-thousand-year constant

high in the sky
red-billed gulls race ahead
like frantic tourists
running the bulls in Pamplona
ballroom dancers
swirling up and around
performing an ancient tango
before dive-bombing to shelter
near the pier
where lights twinkle
modernity
never far away

—Jim Consedine

Dialogue with Rome

Letter from Jim Consedine to Cardinal John Dew
– 25 October 2018

Dear John,

Pope Francis said on the 2017 World Day of Peace, ‘to be a true follower of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about non-violence?’ Francis went on to write, ‘We need to make active non-violence our way of life,’ and suggests, ‘non-violence become our new style of politics.’ Jesus lived and taught non-violence, which Francis calls ‘a radically positive approach.’

Worldwide, we need a divorce from our official military association. Many countries in Europe, the Americas and especially the US, create life-long well-paid career opportunities for priests in the military. ROTC recruitment programmes, paid for by the US military, are widespread on US Catholic campuses. It is hard to argue with the notion that the military buys our complicity. Why do we continue to allow this scandal to continue?

I am writing this (on behalf of the Catholic Worker) to you as a cardinal of the Church and partly also in your capacity as Military Ordinary of the Armed Forces of NZ. If we are to implement Francis’ teaching about Jesus, a starting point internationally could be to make ministry to the military the same as to any other industry. Let’s provide chaplains funded by the Church – but serving as industry chaplains and not paid uniformed officer-priests in the military. Our mission is that of Jesus (Lk 4:16-21). That is not the mission of the State.

The ‘Just War’ theory has long passed its use-by date. As successive popes have said, you cannot have a just war in the nuclear age and an age of modern weaponry. Yet even today, the ‘Just War’ theory is still entrenched in most Catholics’ DNA. It continues to undermine the teaching of Jesus and of Pope Francis. What is going to be required to correct this now-false teaching?

Apostolic Exhortation for Peace?

Given the analysis above, do you think it is possible that Pope Francis would consider issuing an Apostolic Exhortation or something similar to the effect that from now on, in order to witness to the Gospel better, chaplains to the military would engage on the same basis as other civilian industry chaplains i.e. be available to do pastoral work while not compromising the integrity of the message and life of Jesus and being paid by the military?

Are you in a position to personally put to the Holy Father this option to help the renewal of the Church and help restore some integrity on this issue of peace-making?

Would the New Zealand bishops consider such a proposal? New Zealand has a proud heritage of legislating against nuclear weapons in the face of the power of empire. We know we can make a difference.

Blessings on your life and ministry,

Jim Consedine

Jesus lived and taught nonviolence’
– Pope Francis, January 2017

Cardinal Dew’s response – 31 October 2018

Jim, many thanks for your letter. The question of the Military Chaplaincy in New Zealand is one that I have often raised and have also said to bishops that I think it is time we asked for the Military Ordinariate to be disbanded. As you say, ‘chaplains dress in military uniforms and are paid from state coffers. No chaplain is going to preach the non-violence of Jesus in a military barracks.’

Your suggestion is a very good one. I think the NZ bishops will favourably consider your proposal. I think I will also probably have the opportunity to say something to the Holy Father personally and am prepared to do so. The idea of an Apostolic Exhortation for Peace is a worthwhile one. Thank you for your suggestion. (It will be on the agenda for the NZ bishops meeting next week.)

Best Wishes

+John Cardinal Dew,
Archbishop of Wellington

Jim’s response – 12 March 2019

Dear John,

Thank you for your response to the letter I wrote regarding the Military Vicariate back in October and the clash it presents with the teachings of Pope Francis on the non-violence of Jesus.

You said you would raise it with the pope when you had a chance. I wonder if you have done so at this point? I know your last visit to Rome was about the clerical abuse crisis and that was the only major topic of your meeting. But I wondered whether you had shared a Sav Blanc with him on the Vatican lawn at some stage and chewed over this issue?

Blessings,

Jim Consedine

Letter from Jim to Cardinal Dew - 11 December 2019

Warmest greetings. Firstly, how did you make out in Rome regarding the question of an encyclical/apostolic exhortation re the Church’s teaching on the non-violent Jesus? Was it presented to Francis as a *take* from the NZ bishops?

Secondly, was the question of the aberration/contradiction that is military chaplains discussed? Any progress?

Thirdly, did Francis give any indication of the possibility of a substantive teaching to come on the non-violence of Jesus?

Cardinal Dew's response – 11 December 2019

Jim, I have been thinking for some time of contacting you to tell you about the ad limina visit. At the visit when we spent time with Pope Francis, I asked the question had he ever thought of an encyclical or apostolic exhortation regarding the Church's teaching on non-violence. He immediately responded that he has things that he has been working on and that it is something that he keeps coming back to. Obviously, his time is very much taken up with all sorts of appointments, but he was very emphatic about that. He has some notes and he keeps building up the file of various things that could be used in an encyclical or exhortation of some sort.

When asked about the question of military chaplaincy, he just smiled and said that there was a conference coming up a few days later of military chaplains and while he indicated that he too thinks it's a contradiction, he knows that many people would be opposed to that. So I don't think we are going to see anything much about that at the moment.

You asked did he give any indication of the possibility of a substantive teaching to come on the non-violence of Jesus. I think that would come in something such as an encyclical or apostolic exhortation which as I say he has material for but he does not know when he can get around to writing such a document. Obviously, it takes a lot of time but he is gradually building up material.

So I hope that this is helpful, once again many thanks .

+John Cardinal Dew,

+John Cardinal Dew, Archbishop of Wellington

Hope is not for easy times

Joan Chittister OSB



Hope is a thin and slippery thing, sorely tested and hard to come by in this culture. We have seen the social fabric of the country rent, not only by others but even by our own hands. We have sold violence and defended violence for years. We have cut back on social programs and increased our military spending on

Neanderthal weaponry that wounds the national infrastructure and gives little or no security. We have substituted power for hope and found ourselves powerless. We feel hopeless.

But hope is not for easy times, Advent reminds us. Hope comes only when hope is gone, when our 'hands are feeble' and our 'knees are weak' over what is coming upon our worlds. Then hope and only hope reigns supreme.

Hope is not insane optimism in the face of palpable evil or dire circumstances. It is not the shallow attempt of well-meaning but facile friends to 'cheer us up' in bad times. It's not the irritating effort of ill-at-ease counsellors who work to make us 'reframe' our difficulties so that everyone around us will not have to deal with them, too. No, hope is not made of denial. Hope is made of memories.

Hope reminds us that there is nothing in life we have not faced that we did not, through God's gifts and graces—however unrecognized at the time—survive.

Hope is the recall of good in the past, on which we base our expectation of good in the future, however bad the present. It digs in the rubble of the heart for memory of God's promise to bring good out of evil and joy out of sadness and, on the basis of those memories of the past,

takes new hope for the future. Even in the face of death. Even in the fear of loss. Even when our own private little worlds go to dust, as sooner or later, they always do.

Or as former Czech president Vaclav Havel put it: 'Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.'

Advent calls us to hope in the promise that God is calling us to greater things and will be with us as we live them.

—*Sr Joan Chittister OSB is a prophet for our time and lives in Erie, Pennsylvania.*

on the vigil of Advent

as I'm soaking in the Advent retreat
marvelling in this oppressive heat
how you can reach so deep within
there's a Visitation:

as if on cue, an unseen blackbird fires up
its exuberant whistle
mirroring the thrill of being steeped once
again
in the heady winds of Advent

—*Sally Dunford*

On Holiness and Climate Change

Kathleen Gallagher

Human-caused deforestation, intensive urbanisation and animal farming have all led to the rise of the infectious diseases and deadly viruses that have emerged in the last 20 years and others will follow at an accelerating pace. We need to bend modernity in a safer direction.

—Dr Anthony Fauci.

We cannot use the same thinking and action that got us into this catastrophic situation, to get us out of it. How do we bend modernity in a safer direction?

I was enjoying everything : the rain, the path wherever it was taking me, the earth roots beginning to stir. I didn't intend to start thinking about God, it just happened. How God, or the gods are invisible, quite understandable. But holiness is visible, entirely.

—Blue Horses by Mary Oliver

Jesus invites us to wholeness, through the practice of holiness - to be unworried, to stay awake and to be loving. All of the great religions along with their enlightened mergers like Māori Christianity and Javanese Hinduism, invite us to holiness.

Be unworried. Jesus says "Do not worry" over and over again. Taoism invites us to become worry-free by observing with our minds, thinking with our hearts and centering our awareness in our puku. In Māori, Puku inoi is to pray silently.

Stay awake, aware, mindful, become conscious of our relationship to all beings.

Become wholly conscious of the impact of our food, clothes, travel, purchases, conversations and actions.

Be loving, compassionate, kind – these are the hallmarks of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Taoism. As the Buddhists would say, behave with Loving Kindness to all beings. In Māoritanga, we are the potiki, the youngest sibling. The earth Papatuanuku is our mother, and Ranginui is our father. We must treat our older siblings and our mother and father with respect and with aroha, with love.

*When I see water, water sees me
when I see kahikatea roots, the kahikatea roots see me
when I see the blue whio duck, the blue whio duck sees me
when I see Kopua rising in the night sky, Kopua sees me*

*When I feel wild wind buffeting me, the wild wind feels the weight of me
when my feet feel the spongy black soil, the spongy black soil feels my feet
when my skin feels sunlight, the sunlight feels my skin
when my body feels icy cold water, the icy cold water feels my body*

These are intimate loving relationships that we engage in all day everyday.

If we ignore water, sky and earth and pour poisons into them through our eating and gardening, clothing and travelling, farming and sewerage disposal practices, this is unloving. The earth, water and sky were here long before us and must be treated mindfully and lovingly in the same way we would treat our parents and our older siblings.



Gospel insights

In the gospels, three key women, all called Mary, illustrate the actions that blossom from these practices of holiness.

Ask with clarity - Mary, Mother of Jesus, at the wedding in Cana in Galilee, says to Jesus "They have no wine". Jesus says, "My hour is not yet come". His mother says to the servants "Do whatever he tells you." (John 2) It is then and only then that Jesus takes action. Here Mary is very clear about what it is she is asking for.

Be still and listen - with all of your senses. In the story of Mary and Martha, Martha is busy and Mary who sits at the feet of Jesus and listens, has "chosen the better way". Prayer, meditation, watching sunrise and sunset, kneeling and praying the Rosary, or with beads, the ninety-nine names of God, or with the Buddhists in sessin. All of these regular practices once, twice, or thrice or more a day, are the practice of being still and listening.

Create compassionate communities - Mary Magdalene who is healed by Jesus, worked together with the women who followed Jesus, and the male disciples, to form compassionate communities to make sure all were fed, clothed, had a place to sleep and were loved and part of the community.

Māori Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism and Javanese Hinduism are explicit and very clear that our compassionate community does not only include people. We give thanks to the fish we eat, the water, the ants, the tree where we sit under to shelter from the sun, the garden where we gather herbs, greens, vegetables, the korimako who sings to us at dawn, the wave we catch surfing at the beach, or the puddle we splash in the muddy track, the cloud that darkens the sky with rain, or the kumara we pull up from the earth for our dinner.

This is a time of great turning, a great bending in a safer direction. Taoism says a man is like a mountain and a woman like the ocean. We need, all of us, to become like

both ocean and mountain. Naomi Klein in "This Changes Everything" quotes Henry Red Cloud of the Lakota who says there are times when we must accept small steps forward and there are times when we need to run like a buffalo. This is the time when we need to run. How do we run like a buffalo in a safer direction?

Through holiness - being unworried, staying awake and being loving to all beings, and holy actions - asking with clarity, being still and listening, and creating compassionate communities inclusive of all beings - we

work together with nature, with ocean and mountain, not against her. When we turn and run with her, she is able to move swiftly - us together with earth, water and sky, all together bending modernity in a safer direction.

CW Kathleen Gallagher's talk to a Christchurch EcuAction forum in August.

Heroic US Peace Witnesses sentenced

Seven non-violent peacemakers have been sentenced after a non-violent action at the largest US Naval base at King's Bay, Georgia. A jury had unanimously found them guilty in October 2019 of conspiracy, destruction of government property, depredation and trespassing.

The group was arrested in the early morning hours of April 5, 2018, where they broke in to the base to perform a protest known as a 'plowshares action,' taking its name from a verse in the book of Isaiah that says, 'nations will beat swords into plowshares.' The protest included symbolically hammering on statues of nuclear missiles, pouring human blood around the base and hanging banners with messages denouncing nuclear weapons

The seven defendants, five of them Catholic Workers, known together as the Kings Bay Plowshares 7, were Elizabeth McAlister, 80; Jesuit Fr. Stephen Kelly, 70; and CWs Martha Hennessy, 64; Patrick O'Neill, 63; Clare Grady, 60; Mark Colville, 58; and Carmen Trotta, 57.

Bill Quigley, who represented Elizabeth McAlister, widow of legendary peacemaker Phil Berrigan, is a law professor at Loyola University New Orleans. He said in a statement outside the courthouse that it was an 'honour to be with these seven brave, courageous, faithful people. They have told the truth about the sinfulness of nuclear weapons despite the cost. They have taken their actions despite the risks.'

'It's been an incredible experience and it's not over yet,' said Martha Hennessy, a granddaughter of Dorothy Day. 'The efficiency of the State can never be underestimated yet we proceed in humility. The

weapons are still there, the peace treaties are being knocked down one after the other, but we are called to keep trying and we will do this together. We have no other choice.'

'The Pentagon has many installations and, in walking from this courthouse, we just walked out of one of them. The court is a place where they weaponize the law and they wield it mostly against the poor. Once in a while people of privilege like us get a taste of it, and when we do, we should hear the word 'guilty' as a blessing on us because it gives us an opportunity to stand with people

who hear 'guilty' all the time, every day,' said Mark Colville.

During the trial, Patrick O'Neill told the jury that a dramatic protest was necessary to alert the world to the dangers of nuclear weapons.

Judge Lisa Godbey Wood, who tried the case, ruled that the defendants would not be allowed to bring in expert witnesses to speak to the dangers of nuclear weapons or the motivations of the defendants. They had to restrict themselves to addressing only strict issues of law – did they do damage? Issues surrounding morality were not relevant. Morality and law were totally separated!

The sentencing was delayed until October/November due to Covid-19. Elizabeth McAlister was sentenced to time already served (18 months), plus probationary conditions and damages payment of \$25 per month. Steve Kelly to 33 months imprisonment and Patrick O'Neill to 14 months. The remaining four expect a 12-24-month jail term when their sentencing time comes in late November.



The Purpose of Economics

The industrial economy itself is not a sustainable economy. It is a failing system. It is closing down the planet in its most basic modes of functioning. The difficulty comes when the industrial mode of our economy disrupts the natural processes, when human technologies are destructive of earth technologies.

Yet we can be sure that whatever fictions exist in Wall Street bookkeeping – for example, that the national GDP is our only measurement - the earth is a faithful scribe, a faultless calculator, a superb bookkeeper. We will be held responsible for every bit of our economic folly.

Our industrial economy is closing down the planet in the most basic modes of its functioning. The air, the water, the soil are already in degraded condition. Forests are dying. The seas are endangered. Aquatic lifeforms in lakes and streams and in the seas are

contaminated. The rain is acid rain.

Only now have begun to consider that there is an economics of the human as well as an economics of the earth as a functional community. We have begun to recognise that the primary objective of economic science, of the engineering profession, of technological invention, of industrial processing, of financial investment, and of corporation management, must be the interaction of human well-being within the context of the well-being of the natural world. This is the primary purpose of economics. Only within the ever-renewing processes of the natural world is there any future for the human community.

Not to recognise this is to make economics a deadly affair.

—Thomas Berry, 1988

Rocket Lab News

If there was any doubt that Rocket Lab is simply an American-owned contractor for the US military/intelligence empire, further proof came in September 2020 with the revelation that: Rocket Lab's new board member headed the CIA's venture capital firm and is a proponent of deploying high-powered laser weapons in space. Michael Griffin, until recently an Under-Secretary of Defense in the Trump Administration, was welcomed onto the Board of the aerospace and small satellite company in August. In the 1980s he held a senior role in then-President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative ballistic missile defence programme ('Star Wars'), and later headed NASA'.

Griffin also once served as the President of In-Q-Tel, which he described in a 2013 NASA oral history as the venture capital fund of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). 'I was running what was essentially a technical venture capital fund whose purpose was to make products and services available to the

intelligence community', he said'.

'In 2016, Rocket Lab Chief Executive Beck was among the speakers at a summit with In-Q-Tel. [A programme from the summit](#) indicated Rocket Lab was among the firm's portfolio companies at the time. Rocket Lab is not currently listed as a portfolio company on In-Q-Tel's Website. Nor would the company disclose how much money it had received or what products it had developed for the spy agency venture capital firm'.

'Griffin appeared at a 2019 summit focussed on directed energy weapons – which include lasers, microwaves and particle beams – hosted by US consulting giant Booz Allen Hamilton...He was described in the New York Times as an 'unabashed defender of American military and political supremacy' and is also a proponent of hypersonic missiles'

—Murray Horton, Stuff, 18/9/20

<p>CW Website Leading articles from the first 24 years of <i>The Common Good</i> Alternative funerals Restorative Justice Other theological issues www.catholicworker.org.nz</p>	<p>FUNERAL CHOICE A Catholic Worker Project Cheaper alternatives to consumer funerals www.funeralchoice.co.nz</p>
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Letters

Brisbane
Australia

Hi Jim,

Just to let you know, I enjoyed *The Common Good* Pentecost edition. My family and I support the views on Euthanasia. Even my 38-year-old paramedic son who is realist. He concludes it is a slippery slope. I particularly liked your article, 'Expanding our Hearts', and also your poetry.

I'm just about finished a big voluntary job - editing (with Sr Keiti Kanongata'a as second editor, who is also a contributor and also wrote the Foreword) the book, *Weaving Theology in Oceania: Culture, Context, Practice*, from papers presented at our APTO/CEPAC Suva conference in 2018. Good to touch base.

God bless,

Bet Green

Kibbutz Kenneret, 15118
Israel

Kia ora CWs,

Greetings from Israel. Everything is chaotic here and we are just going into a new lockdown tomorrow. (We were in the new lockdown for 3 days and then they decided to make it stricter.) Non-compliance is a major problem - its source being lack of confidence in the govt. They are bending to business and ultra-religious pressure at every stage. So people are in the mood of eat, drink, and be merry - for tomorrow we die.

Because they are not getting clear instructions from sources they trust in the first place. You can see how all these things feed back into one another, making for an awful spiral of fear and non-compliance. hospitals are now getting 'to a point' and that is a huge worry for me as I would get triaged out at the gate as too sick already to bother saving.

And the irony of sitting here with the world's most sought-after NZ passport is not lost on me either! I just was not in a situation to get to Aotearoa. I wish I was there ... it all started so well here in Israel and has collapsed in a screaming heap.

Blessings and blossoms,

Margaret Ingram

109A Condell Avenue
Christchurch 8053

Dear Jim

Thank you very much for the Catholic Worker to Parliament submission on the assisted dying bill. I found it absolutely excellent in explaining the Church's teaching in a consumerist and economically obsessed world.

God Bless

Maureen Heffernan

Christchurch

Hi Jim

I read the feature article on Euthanasia in Spring 2020's *The Common Good*. I was a bit disappointed with the amount of misinformation in it. The article ignores the strict criteria that would have to be met and uses emotive terms such as 'outlived their usefulness,' 'burden to others,' 'should I be getting out of the way,' and, 'am I using too many resources?'

None of those have any chance of getting anywhere near the actual criteria that would have to be met, including, '... must suffer from a terminal illness that's likely to end their life within 6 months, and 'must have significant and ongoing decline in physical capability,' and 'must experience unbearable suffering that cannot be eased,' among other criteria. And that's after the person makes (and is able to make) their own informed decision, and two doctors have to sign it off!

So the article's fear of euthanasia being used because one feels they are a burden to their family hasn't got a show!

Regards

Stephen Graham

Stephen is right to point out the proposed legislation has tighter criteria than when our submission was first presented to Parliament last year. But he is wrong to say, 'it doesn't have a show'. Of course it does, for the reasons we outlined in the submission. We stand by its tenor that pressure, both formal and subtle, will be ever-present on the dying person in many instances once euthanasia becomes a legal option, and that a foundational principle of our society is being eroded. The slippery slope will always be slippery! This position is also held by British Medical Association, NZ Medical Council and the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference among many others. Ed.

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The Common Good

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Mystery

The shepherds of the galaxies, the Hubble telescope astronomers, have released photos of the universe from fourteen billion years ago. As I attempt to fathom the very notion of billions of years, my gaze settles on a large maple tree outdoors. Nestled in the fork of the trunk and a snow-covered limb, a squirrel wrapped in its tail is sleeping. Its ability to slumber while so precariously balanced is as mind boggling as the distance of light years – equally deserving of the ‘I-don’t-know-what’ of God. Awareness is a gift. Meditation on God’s mystery, whether it be the creation of the universe or the ingenuity of providing squirrels with tails for winter sleeping, is gift. The presence of God in one’s life is a gift.

—*Carmelites of Indianapolis, Hidden Friends, p 67.*